

Migrants' Trust, Equity, and Inclusion in Digital Public Services: A Focus on Information Access and Use

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Abstract

This study explores the challenges affecting migrants' access to digital public information in Finland and how these challenges influence their inclusion, trust, and sense of *belonging*. Drawing on qualitative interviews with migrants from diverse backgrounds, the research identifies socio-cultural interconnected challenges, including language proficiency, digital literacy, information resources and channels, communication networks, system familiarity, and migrants' perceptions and attitudes. These dimensions collectively shape how migrants engage with public services and navigate everyday life in their host society. A total of 10 Iranians from diverse backgrounds participated in semi-structured interviews to share their experiences with digital public services in Finland. The findings of this study portray information access as a socio-cultural process strongly influenced by institutional design, rather than simply a technical task for service providers. Digital service providers often create systems tailored to local users' needs, which can make it challenging for migrants to access information. This reduces migrants' trust in the ability of digital public service portals to meet their needs. The decline in migrants' trust in these institutions' equal access to information not only stems from their service provision but also diminishes their inclusiveness. This paper discusses how interconnected socio-cultural and technological elements shape this process. It emphasises the importance of the diversity, equity, *inclusion*, and *belonging* framework, proposing a more inclusive and equity-focused approach to digital public services to foster a sense of belonging for migrants. The study underscores the necessity of cross-sectoral strategies to ensure that migrants are not merely served, but meaningfully included.

Keywords

information access, trust, inclusion, equity, migrants

Introduction

Migration is not merely a demographic or political process; it is a profoundly social phenomenon that intersects with questions of identity, systemic access, and the sense of *belonging*. While acquiring language skills and securing employment are essential for migrants' integration, the experience of respect, recognition, and equal treatment is equally critical for fostering trust in government institutions and promoting a sense of *inclusion*. Conversely, experiences of personal or systemic discrimination erode trust and contribute to social exclusion. As Keiff (2025) demonstrates, supportive narratives and robust anti-discrimination laws are positively associated with higher levels of institutional trust and stronger feelings of belonging among migrant populations.

Most European host countries are dedicated to anti-discrimination policies to promote *equality*. However, empirical research consistently highlights persistent inequalities and discriminatory practices across key domains such as employment, housing, and healthcare. For instance, Guzi et al. (2021) found that migrants continue to face structural barriers to employment, wage penalties, and hiring discrimination, inequities that persist even when controlling for factors like education and language proficiency. Similarly, access to adequate housing remains limited due to discriminatory rental practices, and evidence suggests a systematic bias against migrants, often accompanied by employment discrimination that undermines their confidence and overall life satisfaction (Esses, 2021). In the healthcare sector, migrants and refugees frequently report unequal treatment, language barriers, and bureaucratic exclusion, all of which negatively affect access and health outcomes (Lebano et al., 2020).

While access to information is widely recognised as a fundamental human right (United Nations General Assembly, 2015), it can also become a mechanism of exclusion when distributed unequally for marginalised populations. Discriminatory barriers to information access arise when individuals are denied equal opportunities to obtain, understand, or use online government information because of characteristics such as race, gender, disability, language, or migration status (Jaeger & Bertot, 2011). These inequities are often embedded in structural factors, ranging from inaccessible digital platforms and the absence of multilingual resources to institutional practices that fail to accommodate diverse communicative needs, ultimately undermining equitable access to public services and participation in society. Migrants' vulnerability stems in part from their difficulty accessing reliable information sources, which contributes to discrimination in information access, a critical yet often overlooked dimension of inequality. When migrants are unable to access or understand institutional information, their trust in public systems can erode, reinforcing their marginalisation and exclusion.

Based on this understanding, the present study examines the challenges migrants face in accessing and using public services concerning trust, equity, and inclusion. Recognising and addressing these challenges is essential for designing inclusive and equitable information systems.

Theoretical Framework

This study examines the deeper structural factors affecting migrants' access to information with digital public services through the lens of *diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging* (DEIB). DEI stands for *diversity, equity, and inclusion*. It encompasses the institutional frameworks and practices that ensure individuals participate actively, feel valued and respected, have equal opportunities to succeed, and receive fair treatment in communities, especially for those who have been historically marginalised.

The foundational components of the DEI have been widely implemented in modern organisations, organisational leadership (Holcombe, 2024), education systems (Corsino & Fuller, 2021), and corporate governance (Hamidullah et al., 2024) to address systemic disparities and enhance representational justice (James & Fantasia, 2023). DEI in the context of migration means:

- *Diversity* acknowledges variation in backgrounds, identities, and experiences.
- *Equity* ensures migrants have equitable access to services (healthcare, education, legal aid) and opportunities (employment, housing) regardless of their background or status.
- *Inclusion* refers to welcoming societies and communities where migrants can actively participate in social, economic, and civic life.

However, many scholars and practitioners have increasingly argued that DEI remains incomplete without the concept of *belonging*. Migrants with strong community ties benefit from informal support and improved digital confidence (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014). Additionally, digital tools help migrants connect with communities. Thus, enhancing digital literacy requires more than just technical training; it needs a human-centred, inclusive design that is intuitive, linguistically accessible, and culturally sensitive. Without this approach, digital systems may unintentionally reinforce existing inequalities.

The DEIB framework includes four concepts that work together to boost team dynamics, productivity, and innovation within the organisation. Despite its widespread application in organisational development, training, and evaluation, particularly in healthcare contexts (Hogan et al., 2023; King et al., 2024; Rohan et al., 2024), the use of DEI frameworks in migration policy research remains limited (e.g., Medina & Magdaleno, 2024). In particular, DEI has rarely been employed in migration contexts. This study addresses that gap by adapting the DEI framework to explain the dynamic challenges of migrants' access to public services and building trust in government.

Methodology

This qualitative research examines the challenges faced by Iranian migrants, a specific ethnic group within Finland's diverse migrant population, in accessing and using

public services that shape their trust, *equality*, and *inclusion*. Finland's public service infrastructure is broad and multi-tiered, encompassing healthcare, education, social security, and public employment services, among others (Safarov, 2021). These services are delivered through a combination of central and local government structures. The central government includes the State administration, universities, the Social Insurance Institution, unincorporated State enterprises, and social security funds. Local municipalities and the newly established wellbeing services counties are responsible for essential services such as public health, transportation, infrastructure, and libraries.

Participants of this study were recruited through invitations shared on social media platforms, particularly Facebook group pages targeting Iranian communities in Finland. Eligible participants had resided in Finland for at least five years to ensure sufficient experience with public services and the broader processes of social inclusion. Their varied backgrounds in employment, education, and arrival conditions yielded a rich, diverse set of narratives that highlight both systemic issues and individual pathways of adaptation.

Interviews were conducted face-to-face using a semi-structured format, in accordance with ethical guidelines for research involving sensitive populations, such as migrants. Each participant contributed a unique perspective, reflecting on their interactions with various public services. Data from the interviews were transcribed and translated, and then analysed thematically to identify recurring patterns and meanings in the participants' narratives.

Socio-Cultural Dynamics of Information Access and Use

This study identified relevant socio-cultural factors influencing migrants' access to and use of digital public services in Finland. These include language proficiency, the quality and availability of information (resources and channels), digital literacy and navigational frustration, system familiarity, communication networks, migrants' perceptions and attitudes (Figure 1).

Language Skills

Learning the Finnish language is widely recognised as one of the most important factors for migrants' integration in Finland (Ghaffar Ahmed & Mwai, 2014). In this study, limited Finnish language proficiency emerged as a primary and recurring barrier across participant narratives, particularly in navigating bureaucratic processes and understanding institutional communications. Participants struggled with complex terminology and condensed formal language when attempting to interpret and complete official forms, access service portals, and engage with administrative procedures. As Participant#3 explains: "I need someone to explain to me how I can find a job, how to apply, and how to find and complete the forms. These are still big challenges" (Personal interview, June 11, 2023).

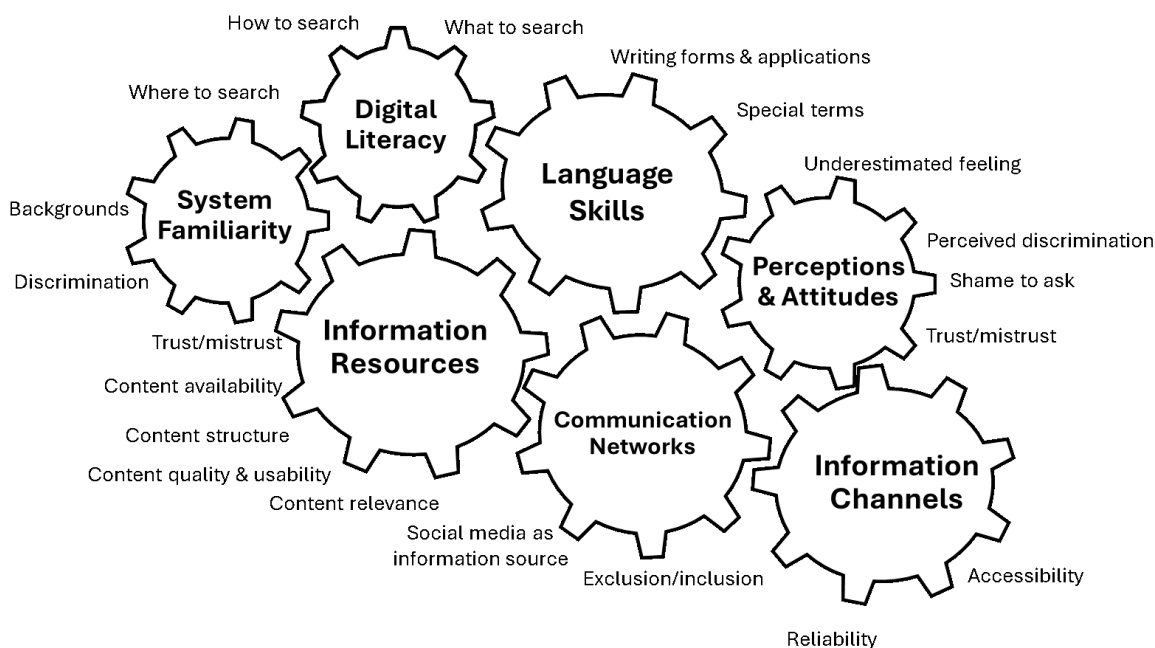


Figure 1. The interrelationship of socio-cultural elements affecting access to information

Some respondents reported relying on informal interpreters, such as family or friends, when dealing with critical documents, often without fully understanding the legal or financial consequences themselves. Also, limited language skills restrict migrants' ability to build diverse communication networks, which are crucial for both social integration and access to accurate information. This linguistic isolation can lead to misunderstandings, reinforce perceptions of discrimination or exclusion, and negatively shape migrants' broader perceptions and attitudes toward the host society. A recent study indicates how migrants' attitudes become more negative the longer they stay in a European country (Šedovič & Dražanová, 2025). A lack of fluency restricts interaction with official information resources and access to valid information channels. The deficit in communication networks increases migrants' reliance on potentially unreliable or misleading sources, such as informal social media communities, which can propagate misinformation (Hosseini et al., 2020). From the perspective of DEIB, *diversity* stemming from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds can influence *equality/equity*. Consequently, immigrants with limited language skills may lack access to the same clear and comprehensible resources available to native speakers.

Moreover, poor language proficiency significantly limits migrants' ability to engage meaningfully with digital public platforms. While essential services and instructions may technically be accessible online, participants often lacked the linguistic and digital competencies required to locate, interpret, or trust that information. This undermines *inclusion*, as migrants are prevented from participating on equal terms in digital society. Ultimately, repeated experiences of exclusion weaken a sense of belonging.

Quality and Availability of Information (Resources and Channels)

While official digital platforms in Finland often provide accurate information on public services, their design and structure may fail to meet the needs of some migrant users. This study revealed that what may appear intuitive or common knowledge to native users may be entirely opaque to newcomers unfamiliar with the Finnish administrative, cultural, or digital landscape (Hosseini & Hytönen, 2022). In some cases, when content is available, inadequate language skills and digital literacy can make it difficult for migrants to identify relevant resources, navigate websites, or interpret procedural language. Content availability is often linked to their familiarity with the Finnish system, regulations, and institutional processes. Participant#6 underscores this issue: "I know that access to this information is bad. I know one migrant who has worked here for five years and was unaware of the unemployment funds" (Personal interview, July 13, 2023).

In many cases, users are expected to process compact, multi-page texts without guidance on which sections meet their needs, as Participant#5 points out, leading to signing forms before carefully reading them. Moreover, even digitally literate migrants often struggle to identify which channels are official, trustworthy, and up to date, especially when Finnish-language labels and page titles are unfamiliar and difficult to search.

Finnish public services are digitalised, and most people are confident in finding information through official portals. While many English-speaking migrants may rely on information on multilingual portals, these English versions are often inferior in detail, depth, and clarity to their Finnish counterparts. Participant#1 reflects this disparity: "If you have a rare question, there is a rare probability that you can find your answer. That means you have to search in other languages through other sources" (Personal interview, June 9, 2023).

Such issues lead migrants to be disconnected from official sources for details or practical information, to distrust digital institutions, and to disconnect from communication networks. Over time, this reinforces a sense of information deprivation, institutional alienation, and the internalised belief that migrants are not meant to be fully informed participants in society. As Participant#7 succinctly put it: "the locals know things that we don't. It's obvious to them but hidden from us" (Personal interview, July 15, 2023).

Viewing through the DEIB lens, migrants' unequal access to information and digital literacy opportunities erodes *equity*. This lack of access weakens their *inclusion*, preventing them from fully participating in digital and institutional spaces. Consequently, their sense of belonging is compromised as they come to feel like outsiders in systems that are primarily designed for the majority.

Communication Networks

Communication networks, both formal and informal, are vital pathways through which migrants access information about services, rights, and opportunities. These networks serve both social and informational functions, bridging the gap between institutional structures and everyday migrant needs. To be effective, communication networks must be culturally sensitive, linguistically inclusive, and grounded in trust. Migrants who lack such networks often find themselves disconnected from reliable information resources, instead relying on hearsay, outdated guidance, or even misinformation, a dynamic that increases their vulnerability (e.g., Dekker & Engbersen, 2014).

A strong communication network is deeply intertwined with other systemic barriers. For example, limited language proficiency can reduce migrants' confidence to communicate with peers or service providers. As a result, migrants may withdraw from public interactions, leading to isolation, which affects their access to information and ultimately their success in personal and social activities. Participant#10's experience illustrates the importance of informal, local ties in overcoming these barriers: "the most positive experience I had in Finland after the COVID pandemic era was related to a fund. There are many foundations in Finland, which I learned about through a Finnish friend" (Personal interview, August 14, 2023).

This example underscores the importance of network quality. As Participant#9 noted, migrants with Finnish-born friends are more likely to receive accurate information about available support. In contrast, exclusion from these networks lessens their understanding of the Finnish system, hindering their ability to access public services and entitlements. This lack of familiarity perpetuates weak communication networks.

Moreover, poor communication experiences significantly shape migrants' perceptions and attitudes toward institutions and integration. Feeling misunderstood or dismissed can lead to disengagement and mistrust. Participant#9 reflected on the human dimension of trust-building in service settings: "one of the reasons I prefer non-digital communication is that face-to-face communication and eye contact make people trust me more" (Personal interview, July 28, 2023).

This preference points to a gap in digital inclusion efforts. *Diversity* is often ignored when interactions overlook cultural expectations of respect and trust. *Equity* suffers when digital communication prioritises speed over the relational qualities migrants need for fair treatment, while a lack of empathy in digital spaces reinforces feelings of being "outsiders". Thus, effective communication networks are crucial not just logistically but as a strategic tool for migrant empowerment and integration.

Digital Literacy

In contemporary digital societies, digital literacy extends far beyond the basic ability to operate devices; it encompasses the capacity to search, navigate, evaluate, and critically interpret online information. In Finland, where public services have undergone

extensive digital transformation, digital literacy is an essential competence for accessing rights, fulfilling bureaucratic obligations, and engaging with institutional systems (Helsper, 2021). Educated migrants in this study were satisfied with digitalisation in public services in Finland. As Participant#5, a postdoctoral researcher, noted: "I have had no problems with going digital, and I love that everything is digital. For example, paying bills is so easy" (Personal interview, July 12, 2023).

Yet such fluency is not representative of all migrants. Migrants unfamiliar with e-governance tools or institutional platforms often encounter steep learning curves, which can lead to missed deadlines or lost opportunities, not due to lack of will but because the path to information is not intuitive (van Deursen & van Dijk, 2019). These users are at greater risk of falling into disinformation traps, especially when institutional interfaces are not designed with multilingual or culturally inclusive principles.

For migrants, digital literacy intersects with multiple factors, including prior exposure to digital governance, language proficiency, and familiarity with local institutional structures. As Participant#3 noted: "perhaps digital services would be easier if they were offered in different languages" (Personal interview, June 11, 2023).

Technically skilled migrants may struggle if information is hidden behind bureaucratic jargon or only accessible through Finnish-language portals. Likewise, digital literacy requires familiarity with institutional logic, understanding the types of information available, which sectors provide it, and how to identify reliable sources. Without this knowledge, access remains superficial. Participant narratives revealed fear and mistrust around digital systems: "sometimes they [employees] ask me why I sent that [document] wrong... That's why I'm afraid of the digital system. Or my information can be leaked and destroyed. Or if I have the wrong password. It's so scary" (Participant#9, Personal interview, July 28, 2023).

Digital literacy and communication networks enhance each other. Migrants with strong community ties benefit from informal support and improved digital confidence (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014). Additionally, digital tools help migrants connect with communities. Thus, enhancing digital literacy requires more than just technical training; it needs a human-centred, inclusive design that is intuitive, linguistically accessible, and culturally sensitive. Without this approach, digital systems may unintentionally reinforce existing inequalities.

Migrants' Perceptions and Attitudes

Migrants' perceptions and attitudes toward institutions, technology, and public services are shaped by prior experiences, emotional well-being, cultural norms, and levels of trust (Safarov, 2021). These internal dimensions affect how migrants interact with host society systems and whether they feel empowered to seek help, ask questions, or navigate digital tools. For many, a fear of appearing uninformed or inadequate, particularly in the face of language difficulties, creates a psychological barrier to participation. As Participant#1 noted: "because I did not speak Finnish, she thought I was illiterate".

Such interactions often result in feelings of humiliation, reinforcing perceptions of exclusion or discrimination and discouraging engagement in both social and institutional settings. This alienation may feed into a downward cycle: diminished motivation to learn the host language reduces communication capacity, narrows access to reliable information sources, and limits familiarity with bureaucratic procedures. This cycle is well-documented in integration literature. As Ager and Strang (2008) explain, factors influencing integration, such as language, cultural knowledge, and safety, are strongly interlinked with migrants' sense of belonging and agency. When these facilitators are absent, migrants' trust in institutions declines, and their capacity to actively participate in public life declines as well. Participant#1's response illustrates this point vividly: "I'm a person who doesn't let anyone look at me like that [underestimating]. If someone ignores me, I force them to look at me".

Such statements reflect a resilient posture and a reaction to repeated micro-exclusions, often internalised as indicators of being undervalued or deliberately excluded. Phillimore (2022) highlights that perceived exclusion and low trust in public communication systems hinder integration efforts, deepening migrants' isolation from mainstream networks during the COVID-19 pandemic. Likewise, Safarov's (2021) findings in Finland show that individual efforts and personal attributes, such as habits, trust, and fears, play critical roles in shaping digital engagement.

Furthermore, attitudes toward technology, particularly digital government portals, are often shaped by anxiety about making errors, privacy concerns, or unfamiliarity with the administrative system. These perceptions can discourage the use of online tools, even when those tools are technically accessible. Emotional readiness, trust in institutional fairness, and previous interaction experiences all influence whether migrants view themselves as legitimate users of state systems (Wessendorf & Phillimore, 2019).

System Familiarity

Familiarity with public systems is a critical but often overlooked component of migrants' successful engagement with digital services and institutional processes. This refers to recognising bureaucratic logic and institutional structures and understanding how services are accessed and delivered. While language skills, digital literacy, and communication networks support this process, they do not automatically confer the cultural or procedural knowledge required to navigate complex State systems. Some organisations in Finland, such as Kela and Yrittäjät, may not have counterparts in other countries. It seems much of the digital infrastructure in Finland, and other highly digitised societies, is designed with native users in mind, often presuming a shared understanding of how government, employment, health, or education systems function (Hosseini & Hytönen, 2022).

For migrants, especially those from non-European Union countries with dissimilar legal and administrative traditions, this presumption creates a hidden barrier to *inclusion*. Even when services are technically available and translated, migrants may

lack the required experiential and institutional context to recognise which services exist, what they offer, and how to access them. Participants in this study echoed this disconnect. One described how her local spouse unintentionally hindered her access to essential services: “for years, I didn’t know that there were free Finnish language courses. My husband is Finnish, but even he didn’t know about free language courses for immigrants” (Participant#3, Personal interview, June 11, 2023).

Another participant linked systemic unfamiliarity to feelings of exclusion and even economic marginalisation: “the reality is that business in Finland is going very badly, especially for foreigners... You have to do business with the Finns themselves [as a business partner]” (Participant#9, Personal interview, July 28, 2023).

These narratives show how a lack of familiarity with the system can diminish *equality*. Some migrants interpreted the lack of guidance not as accidental but as intentional opacity, which eroded their trust in public institutions. This interpretation resonates with findings from Wessendorf and Phillimore (2019), who show that migrants in highly diversified urban contexts often struggle with integration not due to overt exclusion, but because of unspoken systemic assumptions that render them invisible or unsupported.

Asylum seekers in Finland typically receive structured orientation programs that provide basic information about services and integration. In contrast, many non-European Union migrants arriving through family, work, or education channels often lack formal guidance and may remain unaware of available services for extended periods (Rössel et al., 2025). This leads to unequal starting points within the host society and increases informational inequality among migrants.

Building on this discussion, true inclusion means recognising and responding to the socio-technical dynamics, such as language, digital skills, system familiarity, and so on, that shape how migrants engage with information in everyday life.

Information Access as a Driver of Migrant Inclusion, Trust, and Equity

Access to and use of information play a fundamental role in migrants’ integration into host societies. Effective information access facilitates interaction with essential services, such as healthcare, employment, and language learning, and fosters *equity, inclusion*, and institutional trust. Essex et al. (2022) argue that trust is a complex yet essential element in the resettlement of migrants, particularly refugees. It must be intentionally cultivated to foster genuine inclusion. However, while migrants need to trust information providers and believe they have equal access to digital services, inconsistencies in the information provided can lead to informational discrimination. The Finnish version was translated into English using the built-in translation function in Google Chrome, enabling direct comparison of the content. Figure 2 highlights substantial differences in information quality, scope, and recency available to users depending on language choice. The Finnish version provides more detailed descriptions, links to application

subpages, and an updated map (2025), whereas the English version contains less information, a lower-quality map, and an earlier update (2023).

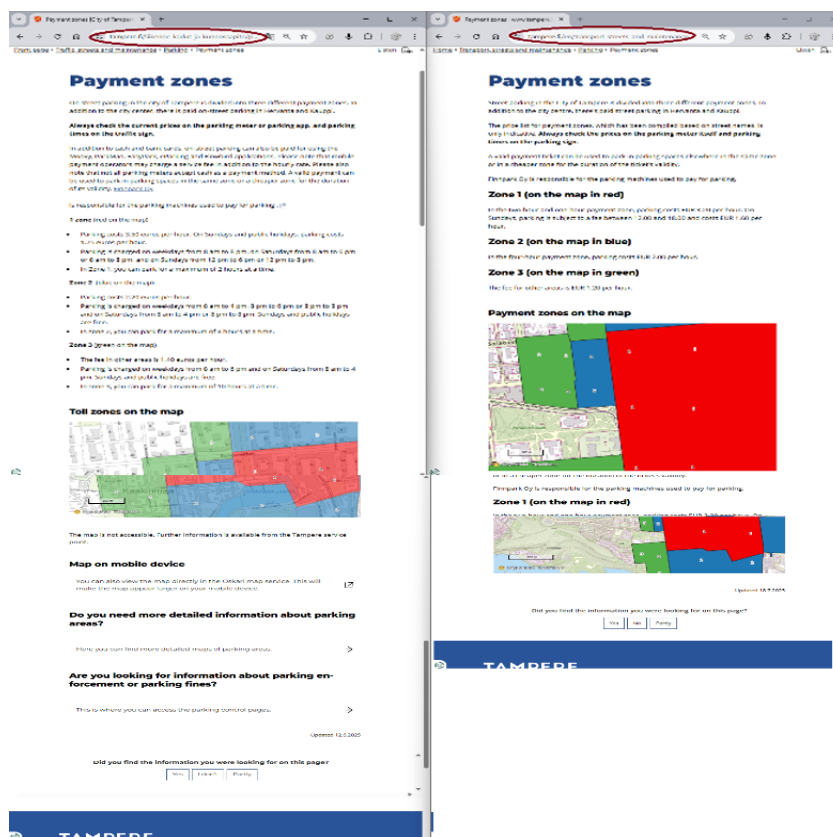


Figure 2. Comparison of Finnish and English versions of the same official webpage

Such discrepancies often remain unnoticed or overlooked. Yet, for migrants who depend on translated or English-language content, these hidden asymmetries in information quality and timeliness become significant barriers to equal access.

The findings of this study illustrate that information barriers do not operate independently. Instead, they exist within a relational ecosystem in which language proficiency, digital literacy, system familiarity, and communication networks influence one another. Figure 1 shows the interconnections of these elements and how they shape migrants' capacity to interact with public services. Language skills, for example, are foundational to enabling migrants to access valid information resources, participate in communication networks, and increase digital literacy. Language proficiency supports successful keyword searching, comprehension of official websites, and recognition of trustworthy platforms. In turn, a higher level of digital literacy enables users to familiarise themselves with the logic of Finnish systems, contributing to a reduction in informational discrimination and promoting *equity* in service access. The quality, usability, and relevance of online content, especially when aligned with migrants' linguistic and cultural needs, can significantly improve communication between migrants and native residents. This enhanced cross-cultural connectivity reinforces social inclusion, both online and offline.

All of these elements, illustrated in Figure 2, have been examined in the preceding sections with detailed evidence and narratives from participants, highlighting how each factor operates as both a barrier and an enabler of migrants' information access.

Numerous studies have emphasised the interconnection between information, communication, and trust. For example, Kyriakides et al. (2019) found that pre-arrival social media communication played a crucial role in building trust between migrants and host countries. When communication extended beyond procedural matters into more relational or empathetic content, information was perceived not merely as functional but as a "resettlement knowledge asset", a resource carrying emotional and strategic value. In contrast, where communication was absent or overly bureaucratic, trust was not built, and its absence was often not even recognised as such by the migrants.

Similarly, Nickerson et al. (2019) found that lower levels of trust in the host society were associated with reduced engagement with local communities. Interestingly, this disengagement did not extend to other refugee or migrant networks, highlighting how trust is selective and conditional. Moreover, the study reported that trust correlated with mental health outcomes; migrants experiencing higher psychological distress tended to exhibit lower levels of trust in host-country institutions.

These findings suggest that access to information for migrants is not merely a technical challenge; it is a complex process shaped by their cultural and individual backgrounds, as well as the social dynamics of the host country. This understanding is essential for fostering trust, *inclusion*, and *equity* within host communities.

Conclusion

The findings show that access to information is not neutral or merely a technical issue. Instead, it is profoundly social, emotional, and cultural, tied to wider themes of trust, *belonging*, and legitimacy of institutions. When migrants face challenges in using digital systems or feel their informational needs are unmet, it not only delays their practical integration but also diminishes their trust in the institutions designed to support them. As Allen et al. (2021) highlight, trust-based cooperation among stakeholders is essential to building socially cohesive communities and fostering a genuine sense of belonging. Yet when institutional systems appear opaque, exclusive, or indifferent, trust is undermined, and exclusion is perpetuated.

In response to these challenges, this study proposes employing the DEIB framework to reframe how migrant information access is understood and addressed. While DEI has gained traction in organisational settings, its application to migration policy, particularly as a lens to implement and assess government-led integration strategies, remains limited. Drawing on the work of Hogan et al. (2023), this study emphasises the importance of DEIB leadership in driving systemic change across five key domains: inclusive planning, public service equity, transparent feedback, operational alignment, and cross-sectoral collaboration. In the context of digital public services,

these dimensions are essential for building systems that are not only accessible but also respectful, empowering, and trustworthy.

Digitalisation presents both a challenge and an opportunity. While most governments have made strides toward expanding digital service delivery, these systems are often designed with native users in mind, overlooking the diverse needs and prior experiences of migrant populations (Hosseini & Hytönen, 2022). To increase equity, consideration of groups with special needs should be incorporated at the design level through inclusive digital architecture that allows all users, regardless of language, education, or cultural background, to fully and effectively engage (Hosseini & Mehdizadeh, 2024).

Moreover, *inclusion* efforts must extend beyond formal systems to incorporate social and cultural strategies that foster engagement, agency, and reciprocity. The International Organization for Migration (2023) highlights the importance of creating spaces where migrants are not just recipients of support but active contributors to the social fabric of the host society. When migrants are empowered to share knowledge, build networks, and engage in culturally meaningful interactions, they begin to transform from users of a system to trusted members of a community.

The findings of this study confirm that trust, *equity*, and belonging are foundational to effective digital access; they are not simply the results of it. To genuinely enhance migrant *inclusion* in an age of rapid technological change, public systems must embrace innovation and also prioritise empathy, accessibility, and justice. More empirical studies on implementing DEIB principles within service delivery are recommended. Such approaches should not be merely symbolic but considered a structural necessity for building societies where all individuals, regardless of origin, have the tools and trust needed to participate fully and with dignity.

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Ethics Statement

This approval was received from the Research Ethics Review Committee at the University of Tampere on March 23, 2023, following the ethical policy guidelines of the Finnish National Board for Research Integrity.

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