

ONE PROJECT, FIVE QUESTIONS

TAIMI began on 1 October 2025, and this autumn we turned one. Our official kickoff took place in Helsinki on 14 January 2026. Behind the launch was a worry many of us know from our own workplaces. Finland needs skilled workers, and migrants are already essential in care, IT, manufacturing and transport. Yet their skills are too often overlooked. At the same time, AI is changing what work looks like. Nobody can answer that alone. So TAIMI, led by consortium PI Niina Nurmi (Aalto University) and funded by the Strategic Research Council, brings together six institutions and five research teams, each following a different thread of the same story. This newsletter highlights the most important activities of our first year.



WHEN THE ALGORITHM BECOMES THE BOSS

Some jobs are changing faster than others. In care and on-demand delivery, digital platforms and algorithmic management are already shaping the working day, and many of the people doing that work are migrants. WP1 follows these changes closely, and migrant workers take part as co-researchers, recording what happens at work and helping interpret the findings.

This year, the team in WP1 set out to hear from all sides.

On 17 September, researchers from TAIMI and our sister projects EGRUiEN and CareQuAI brought together academics, trade unions, care sector representatives and business at Hanken in Helsinki to ask: *what happens when platform work enters care? Should care platforms be regulated more strongly? How will the EU Platform Work Directive affect workers' rights? And how can platform workers, including migrants, be included in collective agreements?*

The talks ran in Finnish and English, so everyone could take part in their own language.



WHO GETS TO SHAPE THE DIGITAL FUTURE?

WP2 follows skilled migrants working in IT and healthcare: what brings them to Finland, what keeps them here, and how AI changes their choices. Its interviews and surveys are still under way, but one study already tells part of the story.

Ilona Bontenbal and Quivine Ndomo asked 68 migrants from outside the EU how easy it is to make friends in Finland. Almost everyone wanted close ties with Finns, yet many had none, and for the rest the connections stayed weak, even among people who worked or studied alongside Finns. The barriers: too few shared settings, social norms and stages of life. Published open access as "No man wants to be an Island" in the International Journal of Intercultural Relations, the study backs up WP2's starting point: a job is not the same as integration.

Meanwhile, Yannick Lahti took the wider debate to the public, from a podcast on polarisation to a Yle interview on AI and election campaigns.



ARE WE SPEAKING THE SAME LANGUAGE ABOUT SKILLS?

Employers say they value diversity. Migrant workers say their skills go unnoticed. WP3 listens to both, in care and IT teams, and asks whether they are even talking about the same skills.

In April, the question travelled to Rovaniemi. Markku Sippola, Shahnaj Begum and Wanying Nicole Yan met NODEwork researchers Jaanika Kingumets and Paul Jonker-Hoffrén to ask how Finland can better recruit and keep migrants in its labour market. With Lapland's forest all around, the talk kept returning to one idea: ecosystems stay resilient through diversity, adaptation and coexistence, and so do labour markets.

Diversity is not an obstacle to overcome but a resource, and inclusion is a skill that can be learned. The team also joined a seminar at the University of Lapland and visited Rovala to learn about local initiatives.



CAN AI MAKE WORK FEEL LIKE IT BELONGS TO EVERYONE?

WP5 looks at manufacturing with a hopeful question. Can AI be designed to support migrant workers' wellbeing and inclusion, instead of adding to their burdens?

The team starts by listening. At Valmet Automotive, where employees come from over 50 nationalities, WP5 first asks what makes work harder and easier for migrant colleagues, and only then where AI could help.
Meanwhile, a bigger question about AI in factories has reached print. Picture a machine that runs smoothly until the day it doesn't, and nobody beside it can tell what it was doing. Bastian Tammentie and Vivek Kant of IIT Kanpur warn that this is the risk when AI arrives as a "black box". Their article, "Steps towards meta-theoretical foundations for resilient human-AI transformation in industrial systems", sketches another path: AI that keeps operators meaningfully involved and able to diagnose problems when automation fails, supporting human expertise instead of replacing it.



ONE ASK

Do you hire internationally, work alongside migrant colleagues, or shape policy? We want to hear what would help most in your workplace. Write to us at https://www.taimi-consortium.fi/contacttaimi/ , follow us on LinkedIn, or visit taimi-consortium.fi.
This was a special edition, a look back at our first ten months. From January 2027, a regular issue with our latest publications and activities will arrive every two months.

Website

LinkedIn

CAN INCLUSION BE LEARNED?

WP4 believes so.
DEI, meaning diversity, equity and inclusion, is not only a policy but also a skill that people and organisations can learn.
Sometimes the skill is simply learning to notice. Imagine a company with all the right equality policies, and a small room where some colleagues step out for a cigarette. On paper, nobody is excluded. Yet in that room people chat, swap news and build friendships, and the circle that forms is mostly men.
Rebecca Piekkari, Linyu Liu and Jo Angouri followed that smoke into a Finnish multinational's operations in China. The smoking room, they found, was far more than a room. The act of smoking, the room and the circle gathered around it worked together, and the circle was mostly male. Inside it, relationships formed and information passed from person to person. Outside it were the women. Nobody had to be turned away. The smoke simply lingered, and so did the inequality. The real question, the authors argue, is not who smokes, but who gains access to the networks that form around it.
Their paper, "Where smoke lingers", won the Best Paper Award at the GEM&L conference in Oslo in May. Its lesson for WP4: inclusion is built in everyday moments, and we can learn to see them.
WP4 asks the same question for hybrid and AI-mediated work, and Hanken is where part of the answer is being tested. Hertta Vuorenmaa, who also leads TAIMI's societal impact work from Hanken, joined Niina Nurmi of Aalto to take students at Hanken in Vaasa through simulations with Digital TeamTwins, AI versions of team members that help people see how misunderstandings form.



NEW ON OUR WEBSITE: MEET THE RESEARCHERS

Behind every study is a person with a story. We've started a series of interviews with TAIMI researchers about where their questions began, and the first five are now live on our website. You can read them at taimi-consortium.fi

