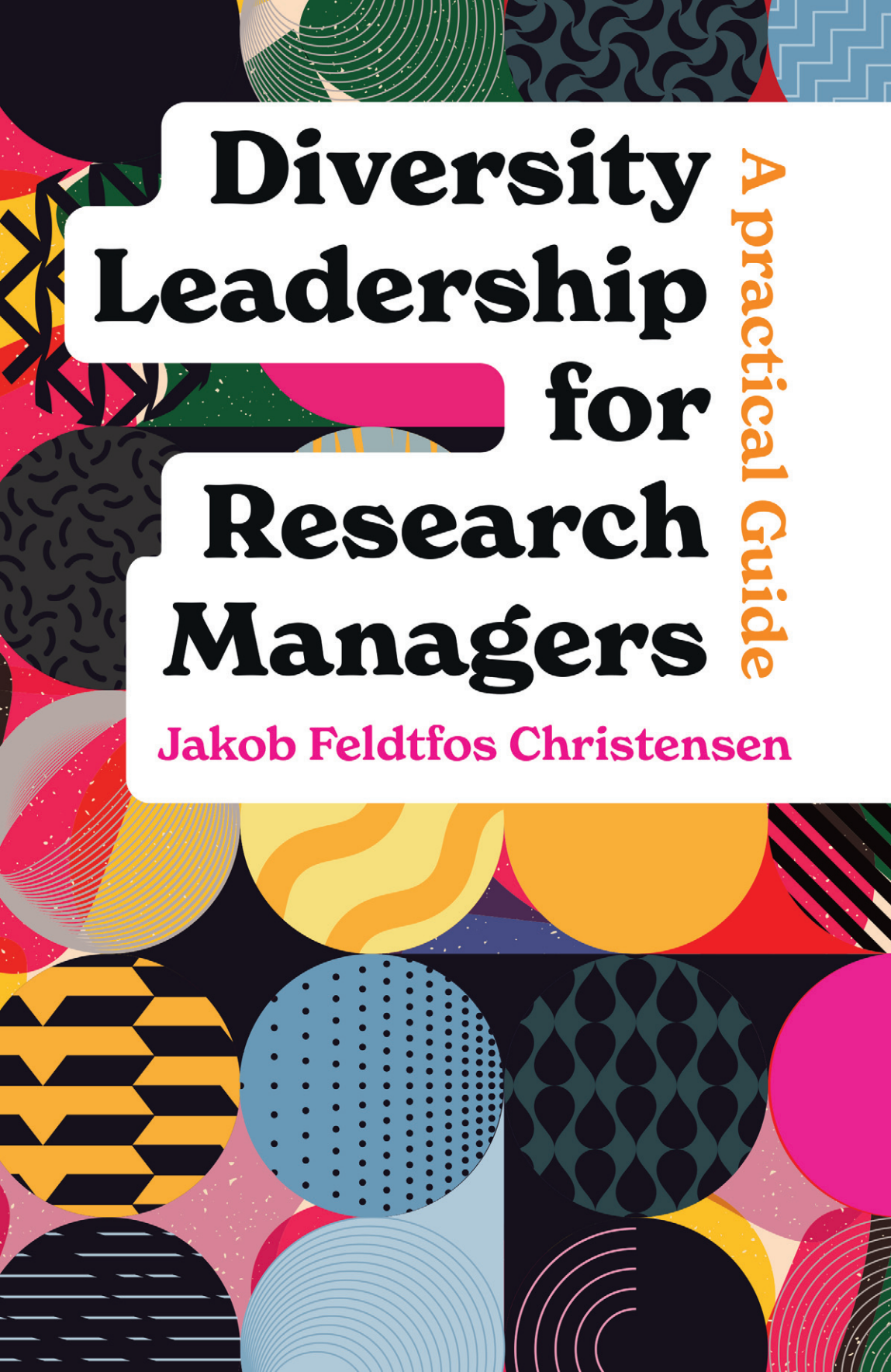
# Diversity Leadership for Research Managers

A practical Guide

Jakob Feldtfos Christensen



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# Diversity Leadership for Research Managers: A Practical Guide

BY

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United Kingdom – North America – Japan – India – Malaysia – China

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

*To Merle, Asta, Henry and Alfred*
*May you grow up in a world where you can be whoever you are*

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# About the Author

**Jakob Feldtfos Christensen** is the director of DIVERSIunity, an international consultancy based in Denmark dedicated to making diversity and internationalisation work in research and research management. He holds an MA in comparative religion and rhetoric. Jakob has worked in research management and internationalisation for more than 10 years, first at Aarhus University and later at DEFACTUM, a public health research centre in the Central Denmark Region. He was part of the first cohort of EARMA's certification in research management. He founded DIVERSIunity in 2020 and has since then run training and consultancy at research institutions across Europe, and supported EU-funded projects. With Lachlan Stephen-Smith, he co-hosts 'The Diversity in Research Podcast'.

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# Foreword

In our excellence-centred world of research, the everyday work of research managers is too often invisible, unappreciated or even disrespected – well in line with metrics-obsessed cultures that behave as if institutional value was embodied solely in prestigious publications and those who produce them. For me, this is a keenly felt issue. It signals institutional imbalance and poor leadership that fails to recognise the diversity of roles and tasks required to actually do good science – and to give credit where it's due.

The same invisibility often shadows equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). The importance of research managers in promoting and implementing EDI remains neglected in many policies and practices. Jakob Feldtfos Christensen's *Diversity Leadership for Research Managers: A Practical Guide* shows us otherwise. In its pages, the role of research managers comes into vivid view as the capillary life of institutional care work, centred on belonging, ownership and accountability and, crucially, as the practical engine that moves commitments from paper into practice.

This is not just an HR topic. The levers that shape research culture and practice also live in research management: how we architect proposals and budgets; compose and support teams; design governance; plan mobility without disadvantaging caregivers or those facing legal and visa risks; set goals, KPIs and monitoring that serves institutional learning rather than box-ticking; make open science and AI choices that balance transparency with the security of vulnerable groups; and create clear reporting and feedback loops so issues are addressed before they become crises. If we want EDI to travel – from policy into proposals, from grant agreements into team meetings, from legal compliance into lived culture – then we must recognise research managers as central actors and invest in their skills.

Jakob's approach is visionary yet deeply practical. First, it moves us beyond battles over which argument wins: justice, excellence or competitiveness. Using different frames strategically is a way to build allies, while having a shared vocabulary to anchor our value orientations. Second, it insists on building a **learning culture** of EDI in which honest mistakes occur, should be addressed with respect and learnt from. Culture is something we do together, every day. And in today's high-stakes climate, we can't afford to destroy potential allies because a blunder in language becomes unforgivable. Third, it insists on **diversity literacy** across the profession. Research into intersectional inequalities often paints a bleak picture of minoritised groups being disrespected when seeking help in the most mundane and deeply hurtful ways. It also shows how institutions tend to

offload EDI work on these groups, essentially responsibilising them for creating a culture that will take care of their own well-being and rights. Representation matters, but expecting minorities to carry culture change is unfair and often unsafe.

All of this connects directly to **research integrity and academic freedom**. Safe, respectful and fair environments are preconditions for trustworthy science. Integrity is not only about methods and misconduct; it is also about how we treat people, manage power and implement projects. In some contexts, collecting ever more 'diversity data' is neither neutral nor risk-free. Where identity information can be misused or where it is unlawful to gather, trust building must be the point of departure. And honestly, what more evidence do we need to acknowledge discrimination and work towards reducing harm? This is where research managers need leadership that shows institutional courage, in order to anticipate where inclusion may clash with hostile laws or practices and build safeguards from the outset.

Our world has become one of polycrisis, from escalating environmental degradation, though a world order being remade, to the social fabric of growing inequality, polarisation and authoritarianism. We place high hopes on research and innovation in addressing these issues, but these hopes will be met only if researchers are free and safe to work, if workloads and incentives recognise the labour of building safe and equitable environments and if resources are provided for this work. This goes beyond the life of a single institution. Jakob's attention to the transnational nature of our research collaborations and researcher mobility highlights issues we currently tend to underestimate. This includes the different risks posed to minoritised researchers in different parts of the world. Jakob's insistence on the expansion of our EDI work from an inward looking focus to a globally anchored intra-institutional responsibility strikes a deep chord. Recognising this aspect as part of the research management roles is truly novel. Moving beyond declaratory statements contained in our policies towards concrete implementation in transnational networks – mobility, data governance, ethical review, supervision, risk management – is our shared, continued challenge, and research managers are indispensable to meeting it.

This handbook is clearly not just for research managers, though it rightfully places them at centre stage. It is a resource for us all in the research community: a reminder of the critical role research managers have in our institutional life and in supporting researchers as well as institutional leaders, creating the capillaries through which EDI work can flow. It underscores the myriad of ways in which the often invisible 'back-end' of research organisations can congeal the different functions towards expanding our notion of research integrity beyond strict research-related tasks to the entire research organism. In such an organism, we can build recognition for all tasks and functions, including research management, and we can build stronger allyships for EDI within and across institutions, at home and globally.

Marcela Linková
Institute of Sociology, Czech Academy of Sciences

# Acknowledgements

I gave my first presentation on the role of diversity and internationalisation in research management at the INORMS conference in Edinburgh in 2018. A few people came up to talk after the session. One of them was Lachlan Stephen-Smith. Or emails turned into writing opinion pieces together and later to DIVERSIunity and 'The Diversity in Research Podcast'. If you hadn't come up to me after the presentation, none of this would have happened. This book is as much yours as it is mine.

The participants in the first cohort of the EARMA certification in research management are some of my best colleagues, discussion partners, advisors and friends, particularly Evelina Bränvall, Esther Phillips, Eleonora Zuolo, Deidre Caden and Ignasi Estivoll-Salvado. You have formed my professional development and thinking (including this book) more than you know.

Much of the material in this book is based on the work we have done with our clients at DIVERSIunity and our guests at 'The Diversity in Research Podcast". Your questions, comments, challenges, stories, examples, dilemmas and theories form the basis for this book.

Early in the process, people took time to listen to my vague idea, look at the book proposal and have endless discussions with me: Kris Monahan, Joey Gaynor, Geerte Slappendel, Mads Berggren, Rosie Madnick, Nyle Lennon, Sapna Marhawa, Julie Bayley, Patrycia Buxton and probably many others whose names escape me right now. Sorry. Your words of encouragement, ideas and challenges to the concept made it a better book from the outset and made it easier to write.

My colleagues at DEFACTUM have listened to my endless talk about this project for the last year and have shown nothing but interest and support. A special thanks to Camilla Palmhøj Nielsen and Thomas Maribo for showing flexibility when I needed time to write.

The book was saved by the many people who not only listened to me and discussed ideas but took time out of their busy lives to comment on sections of the book: Lachlan Stephen-Smith, Evelina Brännvall, Saher Ahmed, Kevin Guyan, Clemens Striebing, Esther Phillips, Patrycja Buxton, Emmalynn Hansen, Lorna Wilson, Andreja Zulim de Swarte, Joana Porcel, Jonas Åkerman, Kris Monahan, Ignasi Estivoll-Salvado, Teresa Rosas, Geerte Slappendel, Joey Gaynor and Molly Occhino. All mistakes, incoherencies and inconsistencies are my fault and mine alone.

The interviews in the book were very important to me. I am so grateful to Vanessa Boarati, Mariam Aisha Fatima, Jaylene Wehipeihana, Anita Sharma and Dembo Kanteh for taking their time to answer my questions and help put a real face to this work. It means the world to me.

Thank you to graphic designer Andrea Ruano for bringing the models in the book to life. My drawing skills haven't developed significantly since I was 5 years old, and Andrea managed to turn my thoughts and helpless drawings into actual models.

Having Marcela Linková, a force of nature in research on gender and diversity in research, writing the foreword, was a great honour, and I'm truly grateful for the kind words.

As a first-time author, I have relied heavily on the team at Emerald Publishing, Daniel Ridge, Lydia Cutmore and Abinaya Chinnasamy, who always had an answer and a word of support when needed. You took the scary out of writing a book and let me focus on the content.

Thank you to friends and family for supporting me, bearing with my constant talk about the book and for my absence over the last few months while I was finishing it. I haven't necessarily been the most inspiring company this last year. I'll try to make it up to you.

Most of this book was written on mornings, evenings and weekends. Behind me, our two pugs, Peanut and Tristan, have been snoring, keeping me company and reminding me from time to time to get up and get some fresh air – the best co-authors in the world. More importantly, the book would never have been written without the support of my husband, Søren, who supported me from the moment I floated the idea, even if he knew how demanding and unreasonable I would be throughout the process. That is true love.

# Introduction

## 1. Why This Book

'I think it's a little more complicated than that', was my thought after eight hours of training in gender and diversity when I was part of the first cohort of the certification in research managers at European Association of Research Managers and Administrators (EARMA). For eight hours, we had been talking about gender, which was relevant, but as a gay man, I had expected LGBTQ+ issues to be part of it as well, and what about all the other underrepresented groups?

Like many others, I entered research management by chance. After completing my master's degree in comparative religion with a minor in rhetoric, I considered pursuing a PhD but ultimately decided against it. I knew myself well enough to know that I would probably be a rather terrible researcher, no matter how interesting I found research. I landed a couple of jobs fundraising for projects in municipalities, leading me back to the university as a pre-award research manager at Aarhus University in Denmark. Here was a way of working with research without being a researcher. I loved the interaction with the researchers, sparring with them and developing ideas and projects. I'm still in contact with some of the people I helped with their first postdoc application, who are now full professors.

But that day at that training event, something felt off. I could see why the focus was on gender. That was what we meant when we said 'diversity' in the context of European research funding. But where was I as a gay man in this? From a professional perspective, it was unsatisfactory to have a standard paragraph on gender on my computer that could be copied and pasted into every European application in the gender section. That wasn't how everybody did it, but it was a common practice and not that far from today's practice of outsourcing a gender analysis to an artificial intelligence (AI).

Finally, from my time studying comparative religion, where I took a semester living in Cairo, I could see that the increased focus on internationalisation in recruitment and collaboration could cause problems for someone like me and other underrepresented groups. Yet we only talked about all the possibilities and positive outcomes.

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There are also possibilities and positive outcomes. Internationalisation is, for good reasons, the new normal in research. However, ignoring the challenges comes at a significant cost to many people. I began by reading, thinking, talking to people, writing and presenting at conferences. In 2020, I founded DIVERSIunity, a consultancy dedicated to making diversity and internationalisation work in research and research management.

This book is an attempt to write the book I needed during that training and the book I wish I could have referred to later, when, with my business partner, Lachlan Stephen-Smith, I took on the training of that very module in the EARMA CRM.

Shortly after launching DIVERSIunity, we saw the murder of George Floyd, and the #MeToo movement found its way to academia, with horrifying (though not surprising) stories to come out. At the same time, we saw how the term 'political correctness' increasingly evolved into discussions about being 'woke'.

The Black Lives Matter Movement and the #MeToo movement inspired people to want to change things in academia. But they also left them paralysed. The paralysis had two main causes: one, that we had created an environment where it was easy to get shamed, and where no matter what one did, it was never enough. Second, many research managers had good intentions and wanted to make a difference but lacked the necessary tools to do so. Hopefully, this book will be that toolbox. It is based on the experiences of running workshops, consultancy and presentations around Europe, as well as the many conversations we have had with people from all parts of the research ecosystem globally on our podcast, 'The Diversity in Research Podcast'. There is no shaming, and all action is welcome.

My hope is that the book will also show how diversity is at the core of research management and a core skill. Research management is still, in most countries, a relatively new profession that is developing and seeking recognition. The point of this book is that diversity is not only a moral imperative but also a basic condition for excellence in research and so a fundamental skill for the professionals who support that research and the researchers.

In my work at DIVERSIunity, a core principle has been that we're ambitious in our goals but pragmatic in our approach. Some people will likely disagree with that and adopt a more ideological stance or refuse to compromise anymore. I fully respect that, and in other contexts, I would agree; however, in the context of research management and the role they fulfil, I believe that in the initial steps of exploring the role of diversity in research management, the approach should be practical, pragmatic and idealistic, yet grounded.

It is a guidebook and toolbox for supporting scientific excellence and thriving in diverse research environments across international cultures and under-represented groups. In the book, we'll explore why this is easier said than done, how diversity and internationalisation don't necessarily go very well hand in hand and, most importantly, how we move on and try to make it work.

While the primary audience of the book is obviously research managers – hence the title – I hope that the practical approach, the visions on the role of diversity literacy in leadership and the coverage of the different aspects of

research management from strategy and lobbying to proposal development, project management and the open science agenda will make it a valuable handbook for researchers, university management and leadership and other actors in the research ecosystem.

Finally, I should say that this book draws on my own experience and background and therefore comes from a particular perspective. Despite all the reading, talking and exploring other perspectives, at the end of the day, I'm a white, cisgender, able-bodied gay man living in Europe with all the privilege and responsibilities this entails. I have tried to make it as relevant as possible for research managers globally, but writing extensively about being a Black woman in research, being neurodiverse or Indigenous knowledge systems would not be credible, authentic or respectful. I will touch on some of these topics, but briefly. Not because I don't care, but precisely because I care.

## 2. The Importance of Diversity in Research Management

Research managers are changemakers. It might not always feel that way when you're drafting the fifth budget of the day or writing a memo on a policy issue to support someone in a leadership position within your institution, or when you're addressing the institution's political stance. However, what is a tedious task for research managers is, as we know, tremendous support for others. The challenge is that we tend to focus on the specific tasks. My point about changemakers is that research managers, regardless of their role in pre-award, post-award, strategy or leadership in the research support office, are architects of trust, culture and consistency in research.

With that role comes a big responsibility, and that is perhaps a point where I differ slightly in discussing the development of the research management profession. One thing is our idealistic reasons for doing this job, but to whom or what are we responsible? Do we feel responsible for achieving an institutional goal of attracting funding? If so, at any cost? Towards the research? If so, is the goal to attract the most money and ensure they don't break the law? Implementation of institutional strategies?

While this can all be true, I also hope we do it for something bigger, because we think research is essential. In our own way, we want to make the world a better place by supporting these fantastic research ideas and projects. And if we are there to support and promote excellence, there is no way to get around diversity for several reasons:

- Some forms of diversity are visible, some are not. As a gay man, I can hide my sexual orientation or dial it down, but imagine the energy that takes. Imagine if you could create an environment where researchers and research managers used that energy to produce and support excellent science instead.
- Being part of an underrepresented group means cultural behaviours, language and ways of seeing the world that can differ, so you must constantly adjust. You are confronted with biases, stereotypes and narrow definitions of

'normal' and 'professional', and we spend energy adjusting. But that also means organisations not fully tapping into the energy and cultural resources that person has.

- If the research doesn't address the world in all its diversity, can we call it excellent? Can we call it relevant? Research managers are in a position to make a significant impact throughout the lifespan of a research project. We should expand our notion of curiosity-driven research to ensure its relevance. We should be curious about the people around us and create an environment where they can relax, be themselves and honestly share how their background influences their perspective on the world, the problems we don't see and how our solutions don't work for them.
- Funding is increasingly vital to research institutions, and research funders increasingly have requirements for research teams, data, societal impact and outreach, which impact how research managers work and how they best support researchers. My hope is that we can move beyond funder compliance to embrace diversity as a driver of research excellence.
- Internationalisation is the new normal in research. We recruit globally, collaborate with people worldwide and attend conferences, meetings and other events. Many of the collaborations and even many of the recruitments are based on external research funding, which puts research managers at the centre of this development. But internationalisation can also be a challenge. National laws and cultural norms towards specific underrepresented groups differ, creating boundaries, challenges and perhaps even opportunities from time to time, but we must navigate them. The global complexity surpasses the institutional solutions we often think of when working with diversity.

These points demonstrate that diversity isn't solely about underrepresented groups but also about the quality of research, researchers and research management. As such, it benefits everybody, making everyone part of diversity work. But how do we ensure this works in practice?

In research management, diversity isn't just about representation; it is also about who gets access, whose voices are heard and whose perspectives shape decision-making. That is why we need diversity literacy as a core skill in research management, as having all identities represented everywhere all the time is unrealistic.

Diversity literacy means being able to recognise biases, stereotypes, structural barriers and systemic inequalities and take practical steps to address them on behalf of oneself and others. In research management, this involves understanding how diversity impacts research and research culture, developing inclusive policies and practices to support diverse research teams in inclusive research and communicating about diversity in a culturally sensitive and constructive way. Finally, it means navigating how to ensure that different international norms, values and laws don't lead to exclusion or marginalisation of underrepresented groups in the context of research projects.

By doing this, research managers can help build trust, transparency and institutional credibility. Just like financial literacy in budgeting and grant management helps build a financially sound and trustworthy organisation. Diversity literacy is a skill.

A note on the vocabulary of this book. Some of this will be further discussed in Chapter 1, where I delve into definitions. But there is a choice of words that is important from the beginning. Some will talk about diversity, others about inclusion, and some will insist on equity (in other cultural contexts, equality is more commonly used). In contrast, others argue that we have gone beyond inclusion and should instead focus on belonging. I have chosen to use the term 'diversity' in this book, as it is the term most people new to the field will be familiar with. That is not to say that words don't matter, but I have made a pragmatic choice to make it relatable for as many people as possible. That is also why I haven't used equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) or DEI (the acronym used in the United States) – I don't want newcomers to feel that they need to learn a whole new set of acronyms.

As for the groups we discuss, some would use the term 'minorities', while others would name the specific groups. To keep it as general as possible, I have chosen to refer to these groups as underrepresented groups in order to avoid stigma and negative connotations associated with other words. The focus is also on the tools to address the challenges, rather than the needs of individual groups. Not that that isn't important – it just isn't the aim of this book.

And with that, let's look at the book and how to use it.

## 3. How to Use This Book

This book could have taken many different forms, and through the process of developing the proposal and later writing it, it has undergone numerous iterations. So, let's run through who this is for, why it looks like this, how to use it and, finally, a little about what this book isn't.

As mentioned at the beginning of the introduction, the target audience of this book is research managers and administrators globally. This already poses some challenges because research managers are many things today. Traditionally, it involved working pre-award, supporting researchers in writing proposals, primarily with administrative tasks and occasionally performing post-award administrative work once the funding was secured. Today, that is still the case, but it also involves developing policy work, research strategies, impact advisors, career development, open science advisory services and many other tasks. Working pre- and post-award has also changed, and research managers are often more involved in all parts of the application and embedded in research groups and environments.

Another challenge is the significant differences between roles. These include being part of a large central research support office at a comprehensive university, serving as a decentralised research manager in a department, where you

essentially act as the research support office, working for a research-intensive private company or serving as a policy adviser.

And finally, there is, of course, a difference between working in Western Europe, the US, high-income countries, low- and middle-income countries, the Global South and all the other ways we can divide the world.

I have tried to make this book relevant to all these research managers. With that, there is, of course, a risk that it is relevant to nobody. However, as a key point, we need to develop diversity literacy, understand the context and see that our work in this field has a broader impact. I hope that these glimpses into other roles and perspectives will help readers better understand diversity.

I also hope the nuanced and practical perspective can make it relevant for researchers and other actors in the research ecosystem, despite having different titles.

This book is based on research but doesn't have many references. That is not due to a lack of respect for the research I built upon, but rather because this book is intended for practical use. I have tried to keep it concise and conversational enough that the reader can sit down and read it in one (ambitious) sitting, whether a native speaker or not. As such, the book is considered a strategic tool for long-term development and professionalisation, where one develops one's diversity literacy and leadership. However, I've also tried to write in a way that allows you to pick it up from the bookshelf in your office and quickly brush up on a topic where you're currently facing a challenge, making it a daily toolbox. This means that, when reading it from cover to cover, there will be some repetitions. I hope the reader will bear with me.

This also means that this is not an HR book. We will briefly touch on recruitment, retention and the rules and regulations that frame working with diversity. Still, HR's work on these issues takes place within the institution. A key point of the book is that many of the benefits and challenges of diversity are found in the interinstitutional collaboration aspect of international research projects, and that is very much the arena of research managers. We rely on HR and collaborate with them, but this book focuses on the skills necessary to navigate the no-man's land that research managers often find themselves in.

While the book isn't academic, we begin with some definitions in the first chapter. That is not to quarrel about semantics but to establish a shared vocabulary. A lack of vocabulary is one of the main challenges keeping us from moving this agenda forward. This chapter also sets the stage for what is meant by diversity, why diversity and internationalisation can support each other and work against each other and how understanding the structural and cultural elements of both helps us understand and work with them.

Data are a key element in research generally, research management and in working with diversity specifically. So before diving into the specifics, we explore some of the challenges with data. When working with research institutions, one of the first comments we will get is: 'We need more data.' However, collecting data on underrepresented groups presents its own set of challenges and unforeseen consequences related to trust and transparency. And does the data

even say what we think they say? Before moving on to the tools, we need to make some decisions about the data.

The next chapter is about diversity leadership for research managers. The leadership element is so crucial that I wanted it in the book's title. Because research management is primarily a support function, and many roles focus heavily on compliance, diversity leadership may require a new way of thinking about what we do. The chapter explores values and how we translate them into action, as well as how leadership can be demonstrated in both big and small ways to make a difference.

We then explore how to develop an inclusive research support office that structurally supports diversity, both within the office, in its support functions and institutionally. There is no question that the structural approach of an office can create a greater impact and a more supportive structure for the change agents.

However, not everyone has the luxury of being part of a research support office, so the next chapter covers how individual research managers can make diversity a part of their daily, practical work. There is a small section for four functions: Strategey and policy, pre-award, post-award and open science advisor. The lines between the functions will, in reality, often be blurry, but the chapter aims to make diversity work practical and tangible, serving as inspiration.

We then zoom out to discuss how to create an inclusive culture. We can create checklists and twists and turns in daily tasks, but at the end of the day, we want to create a culture where inclusive approaches are the norm throughout the organisation. In this chapter, we will explore strategies for promoting diversity and cultivating an inclusive culture. Finally, we will address the negative aspects holding us back: discrimination, harassment, microaggressions and biases.

To succeed with our endeavours, particularly on a larger scale, we need an implementation plan. To achieve this, we need to engage stakeholders and build strategic alliances. I introduce a model for implementing inclusive programmes and initiatives and finally cover the challenge of resource allocation.

I chose to dedicate a single chapter to monitoring and evaluation. Still, when reading the book from cover to cover, you will see that accountability is a recurring theme throughout, as it is vital to move beyond good intentions. Metrics are just a part of the research ecosystem. We examine the data collection process to identify meaningful metrics and then discuss reporting and accountability, ensuring both the institution and underrepresented groups benefit.

It would be ideal if everyone considered our diversity initiatives brilliant and implemented them without discussion, but in reality, we will face challenges and resistance. We will begin by identifying barriers and then move on to ways to overcome them.

While this is very much not an HR book and I am not a lawyer, there are legal and ethical frameworks that guide our work with diversity. The chapter focuses on laws related to discrimination, as well as how funder requirements shape the work. We then cover how research ethics also provides frames and requirements, and finally, how frameworks for research integrity and responsible research can reframe diversity – not as compliance, but as core to research excellence.

In the last chapter, before the conclusion, I look into the crystal ball and guess how diversity in research and research management will evolve in the coming years by examining trends in funders, political developments, global tensions and AI.

In between some of the chapters, there are interviews with five research managers from other parts of the world to give you examples and inspiration in new and different ways.

When you begin reading, remember that diversity leadership is a journey, and it's okay to start small. We are not going for a grandiose announcement; consistency is key. With that in mind, let's look at some of the goals and philosophies behind the work.

## 4. Philosophy, Principles and Goals

When founding DIVERSIunity, I established a philosophy and core principles for our work, which serve as the framework for this book as well. And the philosophy and principles shape the goals.

The philosophy behind this book has four elements:

- We say that we are idealistic in goals but pragmatic in approach. I am very clear on where I stand on LGBTQ+ rights, racism, accessibility, ageism, inclusion of neurodiverse persons etc. But I'm a small consultancy in Denmark. That makes it easier and comes with numerous privileges. If you are a 300-year-old institution in an old European city, accessibility is a challenge. If one of your research centres is heavily funded by money from the Middle East, you can face a political balancing act on gender and LGBTQ+ issues. As a research manager, you can hope that the institution's leadership lays out the balance, but that isn't always the case. In that situation, I understand the need for pragmatism, because while we have ideals and principles, we also have our everyday tasks that need to be completed, where deadlines often take precedence.
- Another key part of our philosophy is that working with diversity requires skills. It isn't about personal virtue signalling, kindness or having the correct opinions. Those are not bad things, but they are not the work. In many cases, you could say they are the point of departure. However, if the problem is structural, it necessitates structural solutions. If the problem is cultural, we require a cultural shift, which entails more than simply being kind and stating our desire for change. Working with diversity is a skill, just as it requires skills to draw up a budget.
- Scientific excellence begins with thriving researchers. A challenge in working with diversity is that we often assume a shared scientific culture exists everywhere. Which, to some extent, is true; however, research institutions are also national institutions embedded in a national culture that shapes both the culture and the people. And ignoring that can force researchers and research managers from underrepresented groups to hide who they are and make us ignore culturally determined discrimination and harassment against them. This leads to hiding who you are, dealing with discrimination on your own and not bringing your perspectives to the work.