

QUICK GUIDE

You can change your organization and community by applying the behavioral designs called Inclusion Nudges. By doing this, you can make inclusion the norm.



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INCLUSION NUDGES

A short introduction to this change approach



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The Power of Inclusion Nudges





Learn **what** Inclusion Nudges are all about and **why** and **how** we can all be a part of re-designing our organisations, communities, and society to make inclusion the norm everywhere, for everyone, by everyone.

Introduction

We assume that you are involved with or interested in driving change in organisations, communities, or society in a more inclusive and fair direction. We also assume that means that you, like us, have had the experience of moving three steps forward and then one step back, or maybe even one step forward and three steps back. We assume you have felt the frustration of seeing change moving forward only to find out later that many people have reverted to default behaviour. We also assume that you are concerned about how to get many people to move in the same direction towards more inclusive behaviour, leadership, collaboration, decision-making, development, and culture – while at the same time allowing them to get there in as many different ways as there are people in the organisation or community.

Like us, some of you might have found that the change efforts for issues such as diversity, equality, gender parity, human rights, anti-discrimination, and inclusion, didn't pay off as fast or as much as hoped for or anticipated. For sure, this was the case for us when we worked as internal change makers in multinational corporations. And it turns out we were not alone. Across our wide global networks, we heard similar experiences from our peers in other organisations. We knew a new solution was needed!

This led us to experiment with applying insights from the sciences of behavioural economics, nudging, psychology, anthropology, linguistics, neuroscience, and complex system and microeconomic theory. We found this made a crucial difference for impact. This is what we want to share with you.

Let's start by taking a look at what we are up against and why designing and nudging for inclusion is a must.

Absurd or an absurd reality?

Imagine a group of leaders discussing a pool of qualified people for a senior management position. They just interviewed them and one of the leaders says,

"The best qualified candidate is definitely the tallest of them. No doubt."

"Tall leaders are the best at executing strategy."

"Tall people have the most presence and are most resilient in tough times."

"They are the best leaders."

They know they made the best choice about the best candidate for that position. No doubt in their mind.

But which mind?

That is potentially the most important question you should be asking yourself because this is what is at the core of what we need to change.

Surely, no leaders who have the intention to hire the best qualified candidate would rationally believe and consciously argue that tall people are the best leaders because they are tall. No, we wouldn't. We don't do that with our conscious and rational mind.

So, the above scenario is absolutely absurd.

But the catch is that we do this with our unconscious and instinctive mind, and thus, also in our behaviours and decisions. And so, it becomes an absurd reality.

Evidence from around the world and a wide body of research have proven over and over that height influences more heavily in decisions about leaders than their merit. This is a reality resulting in a population of top leaders where 60% of them are at or above 185 cm (6 ft 1 in) tall. On its own, perhaps this fact may not seem so absurd to you. But when compared to the general population, the irrationality emerges when knowing that only 14% of people have that height. This height-leadership effect is also seen in greater high-status opportunities available to tall people, with more promotions, and higher incomes. Tall leaders are the normative pattern. Local cultures do not mitigate this effect.

This happens because the unconscious mind has an instinctive and intuitive reaction based on associations (connections) between 'tall' and 'leader' and certain traits, such as 'strong', 'presence', 'powerful' and 'capable'. These characteristics make our unconscious mind believe that the tallest person is the best leader. Once that belief is activated, the rational mind searches for the evidence to prove it. This is when we become blind to the facts and merits that other people (who are not tall) could be better leaders. We make flawed judgements and conclusions. And we are blind to this.

Important insights about the human mind

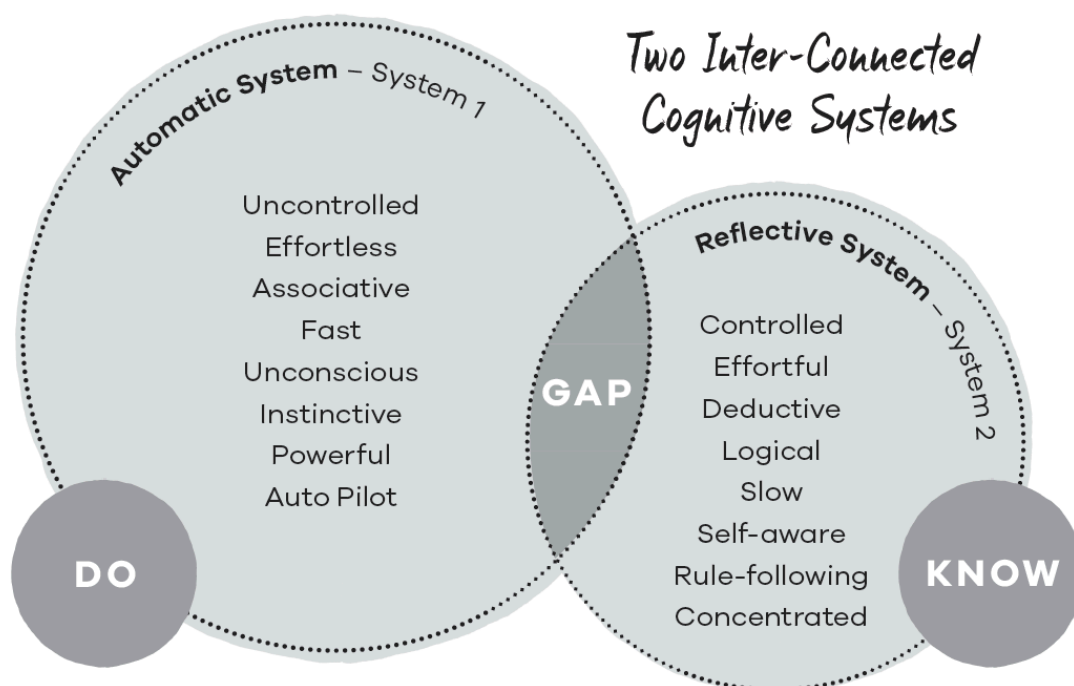
In judgement and decision making, there is often a gap between our rational knowledge and our unconscious doing. In the example of leaders-height effect, this means that even when a hiring manager, HR professional, and citizen know that being tall does not guarantee you are a good leader, they still make a judgement and choice in their unconscious mind as if it did.

We like to believe that we are rational thinkers who would hire based on merit. We believe that we would make the needed changes according to the evidence showing the benefits from equal opportunities and from having diverse and inclusive teams, leadership, and cultures. But we don't do this. The reality is that we are not rational. Why is that?

There is a gap between our intentions and actions because there is a gap between the two interdependent modes of thinking in our mind.

Here is a brief overview of these two modes of thinking. We have an **automatic system** characterised as unconscious and fast, instinctive, effortless, associative, and uncontrolled. It is like an autopilot. It dominates the majority of our behaviours and choices. While the **reflective system** is defined as conscious and slow, effortful, rational, logical, self-aware, rule-following, and controlled. All people use these two modes of thinking and reacting at all times. These are universal across all human beings.

These two inter-connected cognitive systems and the gap between them are a source of the perpetuation of the many absurd realities in our lives and work.



Researchers estimate that as much as 90-99% of our thought processes, choices, and behaviours occur automatically in our automatic (unconscious) brain. Our unconscious thinking uses mental shortcuts, such as associations (perceived connections between elements or input) and biases (errors in processing and interpreting information or stimuli) to make judgements, to process, to make sense, to make choices, and to act.

These mental mechanisms and shortcuts enable our functioning to occur without using a lot of energy on interpretations and complex evaluations. In most cases, this works well, but in many other cases, errors in judgement and choices are made due to our split-second associations and biases, such as 'tall' equals 'strong leader'. And when faced with situations requiring mental effort due to ambiguity, complexity, and time pressure, we rely even more on mental shortcuts. While the unconscious brain evolved to ensure our survival and keep us safe, it also holds us back from being objective and inclusive.

The hiring example with the height effect is just one example out of many unreflective mental processes that trigger thoughts, decisions, and behaviours in both negative and positive ways towards people, ideas, situations, language, objects, solutions, and more. If we have positive associations, we are more likely to process more of the information a person shares with us, or like their idea better, than when negative associations are triggered. This will influence if we include or exclude people, information, and ideas. This is not registered in the conscious, reflective mind. Thus, we behave and make choices that are against our own intentions, knowledge, and values. We are often blind to this gap. This is why applying the Inclusion Nudge change approach and behavioural design is so important.

When it comes to issues such as diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), this gap means that even when we know and state how important it is and we perceive ourselves as being a fair and inclusive person, we nevertheless still in our actions do the opposite. This happens without us even knowing or realising this. Knowledge and willpower are not enough to change this and close the intention-action gap. This is the core of the challenges that we need to address.

Knowing is not enough. Designing for inclusion is a must.

Let's be clear on what we mean by diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.

See the Inclusion Nudges blog article ["Definitions Matter--Just Don't Talk About Them. Diversity, Equity, Belonging, Inclusion"](#) for our understanding of these terms and the definitions that we have assigned to the terms.

The power of nudging and Inclusion Nudges

Behavioural economics and nudge theory target the false assumption that almost all people, nearly all of the time, make choices and act in ways that are in their own best interest or the best interest of their groups and society. But this is not the case. Therefore, designing the environment and processes in which people make choices is necessary to influence people to act in a predictable way and direction that is in alignment with their intentions and self-interest. This is done by designing a nudge that steers people to make better choices. This 'pushes' (nudges) the unconscious mind in a non-intrusive way to change behaviour without taking away the freedom to choose something else.

We can apply the same approach when it comes to combating discrimination, reducing the influence of bias, altering stereotypes and prejudices, reducing exclusion and increasing the feeling of belonging. We can do this by increasing the experience of inclusion, giving people a voice, engaging people in change, and acting as allies.

Perhaps you might be thinking,
"Surely, we humans are evolving and getting smarter."

But that's not the case. A body of research shows that rather than diminishing, the power of the unconscious mind is actually increasing. This is due to cognitive overload as a result of increased complexity, social media echo-chambers of homogeneity, and increasingly busy and stressed lives. All of this intensifies our need for mental shortcuts and effortless judgment and choices. This results in greater homogeneity and exclusion at the expense of our collective need for inclusion of diversity.

We can and need to close the gap by targeting the unconscious mind with inclusive behavioural design.

An Inclusion Nudge is a design based on insights from behavioural and social sciences to steer the unconscious mind to change behaviour in direction of inclusiveness by targeting the behavioural drivers, judgment and choice processes, and perceptions.



Inclusion Nudges help the brain change behaviour and close the intentions-actions gap by addressing the implicit norms in our cultures and systems. Nudging for inclusion is about making it easy to do inclusion as the norm, without the need of convincing with rational arguments, threats, or punishments, nor requiring effortful, conscious thinking.

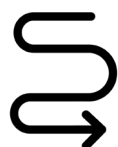
Three ways you can make it happen with Inclusion Nudge designs

The Inclusion Nudges **change approach** has three purposes and thus, **three types of designed interventions and actions** that work – sometimes separately and sometimes together.

1 Show the hidden issue and make people **FEEL THE NEED** to engage in the change

The human mind works in mysterious ways. We don't change behaviour by knowing what is good for us or our organisation or community or society. We change behaviour by seeing and feeling. So, you have to apply a design to show people the issue you want them to engage in changing. By doing this, you motivate the unconscious mind. Telling people that they are biased is not going to mitigate bias, but showing them the implications of bias without talking about bias, will make a difference.

This kind of design below makes the invisible patterns visible and makes people feel the need to change the status quo. We call these Feel the Need Inclusion Nudges. **Nudge everybody to be inclusive.**



Inclusion Nudge Example

Seeing those not seen and sponsoring them

- Show with visuals what leaders don't see. Create two visual views with small pictures of the leadership pipeline (top talents), one visual with all the top talents and one with only the women.
- Show the first visual.
- Ask the executives to call out the names of the people they know. Then, show the other visual with the pictures of only women.
- Ask them to call out the names of the people they know.
- Ask them if they notice a pattern.

Purpose: Show that many people are not seen for their performance, and that there was not gender equality in the senior executives' formal & informal networks. Reduce the leaders resistance on the need for greater visibility of women talents through a sponsorship program. Increase their buy-in for the sponsorship program by realising the limited gender equality in their networks. By calling out the names of a lot of men, but only a few names for the second visual of the women, they felt the need for a change.

Use this kind of design, what we call a **FEEL THE NEED INCLUSION NUDGE**, to motivate people to change behaviour and engage groups of people in making profound change for inclusiveness by making the brain's unconscious system feel the need for change.

2 PROCESS DESIGNS to make inclusion the norm without talking about inclusion and diversity

Sometimes motivating people to engage in change and helping them see an issue they are blind to or a behaviour that goes against their own values or intentions, is not enough. Often, it's much more powerful to help people do inclusion automatically without showing them the need or talking about inclusion. The ability and simplicity to do inclusion is key. You can enable this by designing the facilitation of collaboration or idea generation, or a decision processes, or an IT system, or the physical environment to be inclusive by design. This will ensure the ability in yourself and in others to be and do inclusion automatically in daily actions to reduce the negative influence of bias and be inclusive of diverse perspectives by default. This is an effective way to engage people in making the culture in teams, communities, and organisations inclusive as the norm. We call these Process Design Inclusion Nudges.

This **PROCESS DESIGN INCLUSION NUDGE** is about empowering and enabling as many people as possible to do inclusiveness automatically without reflection. These designs mitigate bias, and help people make better judgements and decisions and be more inclusive in ways of working and collaborating as the default.

The design below is addressing the challenge of many people not speaking up in groups and in the way the group does not have access to the diversity of perspectives that is so important for making good decisions and solutions. In groups, people conform to the view of the majority, people self-silence, people use power games, and much more. Creating an inclusive culture where everybody feels heard and has a voice requires psychological safety. This is one example, out of many, of how you can contribute to that. **Nudge everybody to be inclusive.**



Inclusion Nudge Example

Share with a peer to access diversity in groups

- Each member in the group shares their perspective with one other person (peer) in the group.
- They, then, share each other's perspectives to the larger group in plenary.

Purpose:

Ensure all people feel safe to share their perspective (this intervention does require a level of trust in the group), ensure that individuals do not conform to the view of the majority of group members, and ensure that communication misunderstandings are captured and corrected.

3 FRAME PERCEPTIONS of issues in ways that alter understanding and support action

You can change your own perceptions and split-second judgements, as well as those of other people by the words you use, the way you communicate, how you present a problem, issue, task, or set up the physical space. Yet, often stuck perceptions or focus, stereotypes or narratives and discourses are in the way of achieving inclusion even with all the right intentions. By flipping the numbers, priming specific associations, appealing to identity, altering the frame, or changing the anchor of the thought process, we can influence what people see and pay attention to, how people perceive an issue, a situation, other people, merits, data, and thus their behaviour. By framing perceptions, you can increase inclusion as the norm.

The design below helps our unconscious mind perceive issues related to inclusion, diversity, gender parity, equality, and human rights in a new perspective, and it alters a perception of diversity and inclusion as a burden to be instead something valuable. **Nudge everybody to be inclusive.**



Inclusion Nudge Example

Show the hidden people by reversing the numbers

- Re-frame the perception by reversing the numbers to show the hidden facts.
- Ask the leaders: *"How many people are working here?"*
Ask: *"How many is 35 % out of the total number of employees?"*
- Then say:
"If 65 % feel empowered and growing, then 22,000 (35 %) of your employees do NOT feel empowered and do not have opportunities to grow. That is a lot of talent to miss out on!"

Purpose: Reverse the numbers to change perceptions to see the full picture and see the hidden people behind the numbers and also the consequences.

This kind of **FRAMING PERCEPTIONS INCLUSION NUDGE** design is just one of our many ways you can change the narratives, discourses, and stereotypes that influence our behaviours towards others.

These three simple actions are examples of behavioural designs and the change approach that we call Inclusion Nudges. So, how can these be so powerful in making changes that will get people to act in more inclusive ways?

You can make it happen!

In The Inclusion Nudges Guidebook and Action Guide series books each example is described in a user-friendly way with icons and step-by-step guidance.

Visual guide

In the books, we use icons to help guide your reading focus. Here are the elements used in each of the Inclusion Nudge examples.

Readers guide for icons



Challenge

Context on why the intervention is needed and the challenges it's addressing



The Inclusion Nudge

Brief description of the designed intervention and the purpose



How to

What was done in the design process, facilitation, and how you can do it



Impact

What were the outcome and impact



Authors' Comments & Behavioural Insights

Insights on how to expand the intervention, other contexts where it could be applied, and research insights from behavioural and social sciences on why this works.



Publicly Available Resources

Free resources and tools you can find online



Acknowledgement

Thank you to the people who have inspired with examples

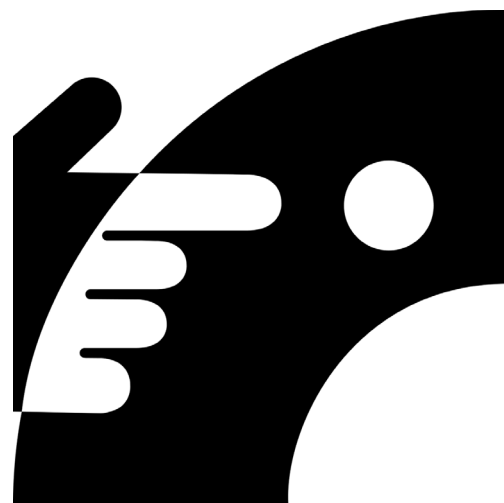
The Purpose and Mission of Inclusion Nudges

In our work with many communities, organisations, teams, leaders, and individuals worldwide, we have seen first-hand how this approach of applying behavioural insights and designs for inclusivity makes it so much easier to be an impactful change agent. It also helps to keep your own motivating force intact. By you co-creating changes with 'the people it's about', it makes for a more impactful change that sticks. We can all take part in designing systems, processes, cultures, technologies, policies, environments, and cities based on behavioural insights to foster inclusive behaviour, interactions, and decision making. This is the purpose of the Inclusion Nudges change approach.

The need for fundamentally changing how we make inclusive changes for inclusive outcomes has perhaps never been greater. But being inclusive in our actions is easier said than done. That's why the mission of the Inclusion Nudges global initiative is to empower you to apply Inclusion Nudges to engage all people in making systems, cultures, and behaviours inclusive as the norm everywhere, for everyone, by everyone.

You can easily make inclusion the norm by applying these types of behavioural designs in your daily actions. All action matters, both in our own local context and collectively in a global context. With Inclusion Nudges you can make everyday experimentation and make this happen without having it feel as a burden. Instead make it a natural and integrated part of your daily work, interactions, and decisions.

To learn more about what kind of actions are needed to achieve true inclusivity in organisations, communities and societies, check out the Inclusion Nudges **INCLUSIVE Action Model** in The Inclusion Nudges Guidebook and in the Action Guides. We created this model based on our decades of experiences working with people from many contexts and also from our internal work leading change efforts in organisations.



The INCLUSIVE Action Model

I

Include people, information,
ideas, & knowledge instead of exclude

N

Nurture & embrace differences with empathy
instead of polarising

C

Conquer outdated social norms & discriminatory practices
instead of maintaining them

L

Leverage diversity of perspectives & backgrounds
instead of under-utilising people's abilities & the mix

U

Undermine the negative impact of unconscious biases
instead of focusing on awareness

S

Seek out diversity
instead of homogeneity

I

Implement redesigns of practices, processes, & systems
based on facts & behavioural insights

V

Verbalise support & actions for inclusion, diversity,
& equality instead of silent consent

E

Empower people and groups
instead of disempower

*The INCLUSIVE Action Model developed by Inclusion Nudges Founders,
Tinna C. Nielsen & Lisa Kepinski, © 2020*

Inclusion Nudges is a change approach & a global movement

Inclusion Nudges is more than a change approach and inclusive designs, it is also a global change initiative and community of sharing. The core, and why we started this, is empowerment of many people and joining forces with many people to achieve our mission of making inclusion the norm – everywhere, for everyone, by everyone.

We don't know about you, but we often experience that people who are working one way or another on social change don't share how they do what works. At conferences, we repeatedly experience people talking about what they do, but not how they do it – so we might feel inspired but we don't feel enabled and empowered to do it on our own. When we were both working internally in multinationals and part of many corporate, professional, and social change networks, we experienced the same tendency. Not enough people were willing to share the 'how-to' information. Well, for us that does not make sense because how else would we create a better and more inclusive world, if not by sharing? We were so fed up with this that we decided to share all our own examples of effective change designs in detailed step-by-step descriptions. That's why we pass on so many how-to details in The Inclusion Nudges Guidebook and in the Action Guide Series, as well as in this quick guide. That's why we founded the Inclusion Nudges global initiative on the principles of sharing, reciprocity, and open source.



Sharing

This initiative is based on collaboration, co-creation, and sharing to enable and empower other change makers. Sharing with the founders, Lisa and Tinna, how you have designed inclusive cultures, processes, and behaviour based on behavioural design and Inclusion Nudges, is the foundation of this initiative. As behavioural designers and inclusion experts, we write up all examples step-by-step and add the behavioural insights explaining why it works. The sharing happens through the guidebook, action guides, and other writings, as well as through bespoke support directly with change makers. This is the foundation for improving progress, pace, and scale of the changes we need. Your insights and experiences are needed. **Sharing of your knowledge and experience is an inclusive action that you do for other people!**



Reciprocity

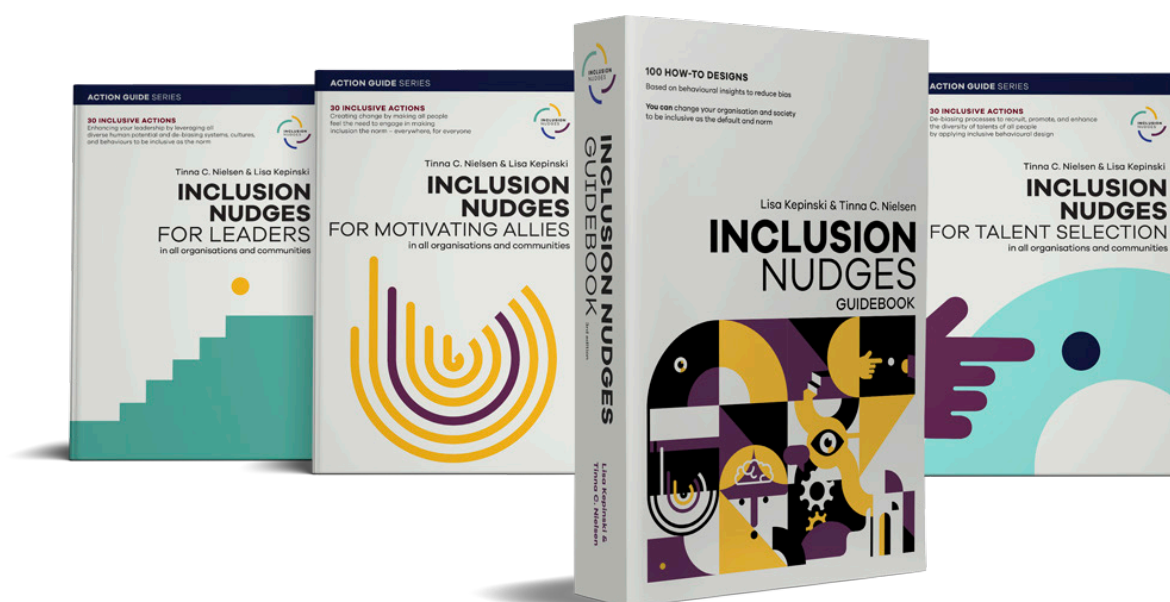
You can make social change happen by joining forces. Receiving examples and giving examples to others are important to enable as many people as possible to make inclusion the norm. You can do this by exchanging examples of Inclusion Nudges, offering support to each other, and sharing with people in your network that these resources exist for the greater good of all. These are all vital ways to keep this movement of change going.

You are at the centre of this. **Joining forces through reciprocity of experience sharing is an inclusive action that you can do!**



Open source

The Inclusion Nudges global initiative is for everybody. It is for those who want to use the examples being shared, those who design without applying, and those doing both. It is also for those who are curious and want to learn more. We all need ideas for what can work and to be able to easily access these. This is why we didn't copyright the concept or approach. We share under the Creative Commons License. Knowledge shouldn't be hoarded to one's self or for sale to a select few, but shared with all in the world. This is how social change can happen. **Open access for all people to ideas and how-to designs of what works is an inclusive action that you can do!**



**Get the Inclusion Nudges books
with many actions for you
to make inclusion the norm**

[The Inclusion Nudges Guidebook](#)
[Inclusion Nudges for Leaders](#)
[Inclusion Nudges for Motivating Allies](#)
[Inclusion Nudges for Talent Selection](#)

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Lisa Kepinski and Tinna C. Nielsen co-authored The Inclusion Nudges Guidebook and co-founded the non-profit Inclusion Nudges global initiative in 2013. For this innovative work, Lisa and Tinna were named to The Economist's and The Telegraph's Global Diversity "Top 10 List" in 2015, 2016, and 2017. Also, the Inclusion Nudges Initiative was shortlisted for a European Diversity Award in 2019. In 2020, they received an Honorable Mention for The Winds of Change Award from the Forum on Workplace Inclusion. We also write for the World Economic Forum's blog Agenda.

We invite you to become a part of the Inclusion Nudges movement by applying this approach.

Get the Inclusion Nudges books to see how you can make inclusive change happen. Together we can make inclusion the norm—everywhere, for everyone, by everyone!

[Read more about the authors at the website
https://inclusion-nudges.org/authors/](https://inclusion-nudges.org/authors/)