

# FAMILIA'S LANGUAGE STRATEGY



We are the leading expert and advocate of intercultural families in Finland. Our mission is to support intercultural families' two-way integration process in Finland. At the centre of our work is to make equality and non-discrimination an integral part of Finnish society. That is why we promote linguistic diversity and the parallel use of languages in the community.

With this mindset, our language policies follow these principles:

## 1. Our Lingua franca (*common language*)

Finnish is the official document language.

Internally, our working languages are Finnish and English. There is no need to be fluent in both languages, but we encourage everyone to have the courage to use them. We want to be a safe place to learn, use and hear Finnish in a working environment.

We have a legal obligation to do our communication for the board in Finnish. As not all board members are necessarily fluent in Finnish, we engage ourselves to share documents/attachments for board meeting in advance and/or provide English translation when it is possible.

## 2. Multiculturalism

Everyone may participate in discussions, with no regard or judgement of each other's fluency.

Multiculturalism is a strength. Any other language skill is welcomed.

## 3. Communication

Our communication is always done in Finnish and English to be more inclusive. Sometimes, our communication can also be done in another language when it's related to a language club, a celebration, etc.

In case we are sharing a research publication or article on a subject only available in English or Finnish, we offer a summary of it in the other language.

Our website is published and maintained in Finnish and English and, when necessary, in any other language (ex: guides and surveys in Arabic, French, Russian, Spanish, ...). Our target is that the English website is equivalent to the Finnish version. In the future, we will try to offer our material and the static website section also in another domestic language, Swedish.

We offer and encourage opportunities to learn about Finnish culture and to learn Finnish.

## 4. Services

Because we are working with intercultural families, we try to offer as many resources to support them as possible. One of these ways is to provide services in different languages.

Our events, when hosted by our team, are conducted in Finnish and/or English. The languages that can be used during the event are mentioned in the event's information and publications. Participants should not feel limited by the language chosen during the event and can ask questions, interact in the language they are most comfortable with, between Finnish and English.

Volunteering can be done in Finnish and English. We want this experience to be accessible as possible, that's why training is possible in both languages. Our groups and activities are mainly in Finnish and English, but we encourage our volunteers to lead an activity in another language.



Here some examples:

- **Support and Advice:** we offer advice and support in different languages. The languages spoken by our team can be seen in our contact page and from the notice board on the wall of our office.
- **Finnish courses:** they are under the guidance of professional teachers. In addition to practicing the Finnish language, the courses also provide information about Finnish society. Familia also organises Finnish language discussion groups led by volunteers. You can practice the basics of the Finnish language or practice the language skills you have already acquired with others in the same situation.
- **Bilingual project:** the goal is to enhance the well-being of under school age, intercultural children, and their families by guiding and supporting the development of children's bilingualism and intercultural identities as well as supporting their parent's educational work using social pedagogic methods.
- **Advocate multilingualism:**
  - [mother tongue/home language survey](#) conducted in February 2022,
  - Citizens' initiative to register more than one mother tongue "ÄIDINKIELENÄ MONIKIELISYYS" launched in January 2023. [www.monikielinen.com](http://www.monikielinen.com)

## 5. Implementation and support for multilingualism

The implementation of the language guidelines is the responsibility of Familia's team.

It's part of our day-to-day operations to ensure that these guidelines are understood and respected.

One of our values is solidarity, and Familia's team shows every day that it knows how to do it:

- by helping each other to translate documents,
- by checking the language (misspelling and grammar),
- by helping to improve our language level, and our understanding.

With this mindset, we understand and respect the fact that it can take longer to work in both languages, especially when we are not fluent in both.

We understand and respect the fact that we can make mistakes when writing or speaking in any language. We want to be a safe place for our team to learn, progress and try. If we don't feel comfortable writing or speaking in one language, we can ask for help. We can't judge or blame someone's mistake and should work together to improve ourselves.

As Finnish is the language of official documents, we encourage our team to learn, practice and listen to Finnish during their working hours. We offer Finnish language courses, and our team can attend these courses if they wish (their working hours can be adapted to allow them to follow the courses).

Another way to improve our language skills is to set up "language buddies". A language buddy is a person with whom we'll speak during the day in a defined language. It is not limited to Finnish and English.