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00:00:04,590 --> 00:00:11,760
Sustainability unwrapped a conversation new podcast about responsibility, ethics, inequalities,

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00:00:11,760 --> 00:00:22,320
climate change and other challenges of our times where science needs practise to think about evolve and how to make our society more sustainable.

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00:00:22,320 --> 00:00:32,030
One podcast at a time. Hello and welcome to this podcast from the Honkin School of Economics,

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00:00:32,030 --> 00:00:40,580
serious sustainability unwrapped our topic today is fostering diversity and inclusion in the digital games industry.

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00:00:40,580 --> 00:00:43,940
My name is Marquetry Harvey and I am your host.

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00:00:43,940 --> 00:00:52,130
I come from the Baylor University School of Business and Economics, where I work as Academy of Finland postdoctoral researcher.

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00:00:52,130 --> 00:00:59,060
In my current project, I looked at women's careers in the games industry, in Finland and in Canada,

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00:00:59,060 --> 00:01:09,020
and I have really learnt that women encounter multiple challenges when they try to establish a career in this, yet very much male dominated field.

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00:01:09,020 --> 00:01:18,360
For example, they often lack access to email networks or simply don't feel like they fit in to this rather masculine culture.

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00:01:18,360 --> 00:01:22,620
However, these entry barriers, they actually go beyond the cis women.

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00:01:22,620 --> 00:01:28,350
Previous studies have also demonstrated that building a career in the digital games industry is

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00:01:28,350 --> 00:01:35,460
challenging not only for women but also other marginalised groups like racial and sexual minorities.

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00:01:35,460 --> 00:01:42,100
And these groups can also feel excluded from the game of culture at large.

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00:01:42,100 --> 00:01:51,520
There need to foster diversity and inclusion is increasingly addressed both within the industry as well as the wider society in the industry.

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00:01:51,520 --> 00:01:59,460
There is a shortage of games. Workers and women are recognised as one big underutilised resource.

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00:01:59,460 --> 00:02:03,540
The industry makeup is still male, male dominated globally.

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00:02:03,540 --> 00:02:10,140
Women constitute about one fifth of the workforce and the situation is the same here in Finland,

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00:02:10,140 --> 00:02:15,960
according to the game industry of Finland 2020 report, which was published by NIA Games.

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00:02:15,960 --> 00:02:23,280
Women comprise 22 percent each of the industry workforce, in addition to the gender imbalance.

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00:02:23,280 --> 00:02:26,790
There is also a desire to bring in more foreign talents.

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00:02:26,790 --> 00:02:35,430
This is something that, particularly the industry veterans and organisations representing the industry have promoted in the media.

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00:02:35,430 --> 00:02:44,050
Overall, there is a great business motivation to attract, to recruit and hold on to a diverse workforce.

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00:02:44,050 --> 00:02:45,610
On the social level,

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00:02:45,610 --> 00:02:52,900
we can see that there have been a number of social media movements regarding the discrimination and marginalisation faced by gender,

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00:02:52,900 --> 00:03:01,540
racial and sexual minorities in different social spaces, including the digital games, culture and the industry.

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00:03:01,540 --> 00:03:09,430
And I'm sure you have also seen these some of the recent examples of the Stop Asian Hate movement,

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00:03:09,430 --> 00:03:21,910

which was launched against racism and the global MeToo campaign, which exposed sexist behaviour and harassment and systemic discrimination of women.

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00:03:21,910 --> 00:03:28,180
While these issues are seemingly very topical at the moment, they are actually not new.

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00:03:28,180 --> 00:03:37,540
In fact, the discriminatory and non-inclusion aspects of the games, culture and industry have been talked about ever since 2014,

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00:03:37,540 --> 00:03:47,700
when the Gamergate online harassment movement against women, game developers and feminist media critics brought these issues to the wider public.

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00:03:47,700 --> 00:03:54,450
And the way I see and study diversity and inclusion is that they pretty much go hand in hand.

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00:03:54,450 --> 00:04:01,350
And for us to be able to have diversity, that is people with different kinds of ethnic and racial backgrounds,

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00:04:01,350 --> 00:04:05,460
gender identities, sexual orientations and so on,

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00:04:05,460 --> 00:04:12,150
you will definitely need to ensure that there are opportunities for these people with varied kinds of

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00:04:12,150 --> 00:04:20,670
identities to feel included that they feel like they belong and that they are accepted as the way they are.

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00:04:20,670 --> 00:04:25,830
A very important share of work towards more inclusive organisational cultures and

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00:04:25,830 --> 00:04:32,370
gamer cultures is done through voluntary work in various non-profit organisations.

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00:04:32,370 --> 00:04:38,040
And today I have great pleasure to talk with two games industry activists who do

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00:04:38,040 --> 00:04:43,530
volunteer work to support diversity and inclusion in the games industry spaces,

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00:04:43,530 --> 00:04:49,110
as well as the wider tech sector. I'm very happy to welcome our guests.

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00:04:49,110 --> 00:04:56,610
Yemeni entrepreneur works as communications consultant within the tech and games industry at its profile,

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00:04:56,610 --> 00:05:02,320
and she's also a community volunteer at an inclusive, welcoming any.

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00:05:02,320 --> 00:05:11,590
Thank you. It's great to be here. We also have with us, Marion Nimrod, the co-founder and president of Female Gaming Finland.

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00:05:11,590 --> 00:05:20,360
Erin, welcome Molly. And thanks for the invitation, and I'm happy to join.

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00:05:20,360 --> 00:05:29,450
So during this broadcast, we will be talking about your personal experiences from the games, industry and gaming cultures.

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00:05:29,450 --> 00:05:40,550
We will also ambition and try to figure out some solutions to how diversity and inclusion can be supported and how to prepare for that to begin.

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00:05:40,550 --> 00:05:48,160
Would you like to tell a little bit more about yourselves? Jenny, maybe you could start.

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00:05:48,160 --> 00:05:55,570
Sure. So as my day job, I work as a communications consultant within the tech industry,

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00:05:55,570 --> 00:06:03,130
that profile and diversity is a key theme for me due to my work at a very white and male dominated field.

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00:06:03,130 --> 00:06:11,230
I work with tech companies on a daily basis, and one of the key challenges is finding enough skilled workforce with diverse backgrounds.

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00:06:11,230 --> 00:06:17,200
But it's also about creating better products and services, as well as doing the right thing.

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00:06:17,200 --> 00:06:20,980
I'm also a community volunteer at the inclusive, would you say,

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00:06:20,980 --> 00:06:30,940
non-profit organisation founded in 2019 with the mission to support organisations in their diversity, equity and inclusion journey.

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00:06:30,940 --> 00:06:35,110
Thank you again. How about you? I met you.

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00:06:35,110 --> 00:06:45,340
Well, I'm the president of female gaming in Finland, y it k FGF and also one of its founder members.

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00:06:45,340 --> 00:06:53,920
I'm also a social work student in the University of Bhaskara, and I work as a game educator in School of Gaming,

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00:06:53,920 --> 00:07:03,310
and FGF just founded a basically because of a diversity issues in gaming culture.

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00:07:03,310 --> 00:07:12,760
We felt like a female gamers and people thought of gender minorities could benefit from a gaming community of their own.

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00:07:12,760 --> 00:07:18,790
That's why inside our organisation, we discuss a lot about diversity issues,

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00:07:18,790 --> 00:07:25,740
and we also work together so that we could have a more diverse gaming culture.

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00:07:25,740 --> 00:07:35,790
Thanks, Mary, I'm happy to have you here as well. So how would you describe your personal relation and involvement in digital games?

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00:07:35,790 --> 00:07:42,240
Do you play yourselves and what kinds of experiences do you have from the gaming culture?

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00:07:42,240 --> 00:07:50,190
I play a lot of video games myself ever since from my early childhood, really, so I have a lot of mixed experiences.

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00:07:50,190 --> 00:07:55,830
Overall, I have always had a supportive gamer friends who have made me feel welcome.

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00:07:55,830 --> 00:08:02,520
But of course, I also have faced a lot of prejudices and assumptions based on gender stereotypes.

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00:08:02,520 --> 00:08:07,920
I mostly play story based single player games myself, a lot of speeches and so on.

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00:08:07,920 --> 00:08:12,840
So I think I do get it somewhat easier than people playing online games, for example.

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00:08:12,840 --> 00:08:20,130
But I still face gender based harassment, bullying and even disdain at gaming related online communities.

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00:08:20,130 --> 00:08:25,500
For example, some people assume I can play or have a certain taste because of my gender.

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00:08:25,500 --> 00:08:33,230
Like, I'm only into easy or casual games or don't really know much about gaming or the history of games.

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00:08:33,230 --> 00:08:38,700
And for some reason, some people often feel like asking for random, irrelevant trivia.

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00:08:38,700 --> 00:08:46,830
So I can prove I'm this mythical real gamer, which I'm sure a lot of women have faced during their game years.

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00:08:46,830 --> 00:08:52,680
And I think it's a form of gatekeeping, which also often happens based on gender alone.

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00:08:52,680 --> 00:08:57,900
And we do have plenty of studies and data that shows that women play games almost as much as men.

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00:08:57,900 --> 00:09:01,740
Have people latch on to these stereotypes and keep on repeating them?

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00:09:01,740 --> 00:09:05,520
And of course, a lot has changed since my youth.

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00:09:05,520 --> 00:09:14,400
I'm 30 something right now and we have more initiatives, organisations and activists trying to improve the space for all.

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00:09:14,400 --> 00:09:17,960
And that's something I'm extremely happy about personally.

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00:09:17,960 --> 00:09:27,450
It's today are all used to playing something, and I hope my generation of 30 somethings is the last one to get gaming.

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00:09:27,450 --> 00:09:38,400
OK, my turn. I haven't been playing video games since I was a child, my first console wasn't indigenous and

I've been playing ever since.

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00:09:38,400 --> 00:09:47,190
Nowadays, I mostly play on PC, but I also play on PBS, PlayStation and on Nintendo Switch.

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00:09:47,190 --> 00:09:55,120
I have lots of experiences from gaming culture since I've been a part of it for a quite long time.

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00:09:55,120 --> 00:10:01,870
I also belong to different gamer groups on social media, which are directed towards women.

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00:10:01,870 --> 00:10:09,040
I don't play that much with random people, but when I do, the experiences are not always so nice.

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00:10:09,040 --> 00:10:18,600
For example, I remember this one time when I grew up with some random guys on Overwatch and we played like many matches together.

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00:10:18,600 --> 00:10:27,850
Oh, well, eventually they found out I was a female because people usually think that I sound like a young boy.

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00:10:27,850 --> 00:10:35,620
But yeah, when they found out I was a female, they started laughing and discussing something in their own language.

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00:10:35,620 --> 00:10:44,720
And then they kicked me out like it was OK to play multiple matches with me until they found out I was a woman.

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00:10:44,720 --> 00:10:50,900
Also, the harassing on voice chat is quite familiar to me.

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00:10:50,900 --> 00:10:57,470
Female Gaming Finland, we decided to found when I was feeling for this one over tournament,

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00:10:57,470 --> 00:11:02,410
I met some female players during the tournament and we became friends.

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00:11:02,410 --> 00:11:05,770
We discussed a lot about the gaming culture in Finland,

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00:11:05,770 --> 00:11:12,910
and we wondered why women didn't have a gaming community here at all since we felt like it was needed.

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00:11:12,910 --> 00:11:22,270
Then we decided to fund it ourselves. When we started to plan the founding, we decided to include people part of gender minorities.

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00:11:22,270 --> 00:11:33,290
The female gaming in Finland to be new gender minorities also counter lots of discrimination in the gaming culture.

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00:11:33,290 --> 00:11:38,660
Thank CNN, Marianne, for sharing your own gameplay experiences.

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00:11:38,660 --> 00:11:45,980
I must say that these two resonate quite well with the the the experiences that I have heard from so

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00:11:45,980 --> 00:11:53,030
many other women in working in the industry and who are involved in the in the gaming communities.

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00:11:53,030 --> 00:11:57,740
And also for me personally, because I am not a gamer.

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00:11:57,740 --> 00:12:06,500
I have played some games when I was a child, but to enter this kind of a field and to do research in the games industry,

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00:12:06,500 --> 00:12:13,820
it has been quite interesting because I very often bumped into this assumption, first of all.

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00:12:13,820 --> 00:12:19,490
But since I am studying games industry, I must be a gamer. And then when I say that I'm not.

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00:12:19,490 --> 00:12:26,600
People are like, Well, how can you study? Why do you want to study this and how can you even understand anything that is going on here?

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00:12:26,600 --> 00:12:36,800
So I think that this resembles the the assumption, very strong assumption that you have to be a certain kind of gamer and very knowledgeable of games.

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00:12:36,800 --> 00:12:41,900
But I'm sure that for both of you, as you explained your own experiences,

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00:12:41,900 --> 00:12:50,240
it must be very meaningful to do voluntary work in a community where you are also yourselves active

participants,

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00:12:50,240 --> 00:12:54,980
and you can relate to some of the issues through your own personal experiences.

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00:12:54,980 --> 00:13:07,470
And at this point, I would be curious to hear what you perceive as the key issues regarding diversity in gaming and the games industry.

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00:13:07,470 --> 00:13:16,590
Yeah, and gaming women and minorities still face a lot of online harassment and bullying simply because their gender, sexuality or ethnicity.

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00:13:16,590 --> 00:13:21,120
Women make nearly half of all gamers and have done so for quite many years now.

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00:13:21,120 --> 00:13:26,460
Yet many are discouraged to continue playing games because of the poor treatment they receive.

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00:13:26,460 --> 00:13:34,790
Some have even chosen not to participate using voice chats or opt to use male characters to hide their own gender.

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00:13:34,790 --> 00:13:45,110
Yeah, I agree. For women, it might be harder, for example, to play games competitively, since many are afraid to use the voice jets.

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00:13:45,110 --> 00:13:48,470
It's also common to create a neutral gamer attack zone.

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00:13:48,470 --> 00:13:59,720
No one knows your gender. If we look at is e-sports scene, for example, there are hardly any women or people who belong to gender minorities there.

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00:13:59,720 --> 00:14:04,630
That means there aren't any role models for young people, either.

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00:14:04,630 --> 00:14:09,370
It may be harder for women, for example, to start even practise gaming skills,

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00:14:09,370 --> 00:14:15,120
since we all know the gaming culture can be quite sexist and misogynistic.

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00:14:15,120 --> 00:14:19,470

Gaming was considered a boy's immense thing for a long time.

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00:14:19,470 --> 00:14:24,900
Even today, I find that games are often advertised with the male lead,

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00:14:24,900 --> 00:14:31,050
even though you can create quite diverse characters nowadays in games in the cover picture.

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00:14:31,050 --> 00:14:41,080
There is often a white male. Overall, there are lots and lots of structural barriers when it comes to women, gender minorities and gaming.

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00:14:41,080 --> 00:14:50,680
In the last few years, we have been moving forward with this topic, but there's still lots to be done.

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00:14:50,680 --> 00:14:56,470
As for the games industry, they sure seem to go hand in hand with the larger issue to field.

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00:14:56,470 --> 00:15:04,030
The industry is still bitter, white and male. Dominant company culture may not be inclusive enough for all the voices to feel welcome or

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00:15:04,030 --> 00:15:10,660
even heard making many minorities uncomfortable to apply for certain positions or companies.

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00:15:10,660 --> 00:15:16,360
Sexual harassment and poor treatment at industry events make women steer clear, and according to many studies,

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00:15:16,360 --> 00:15:20,800
the lack of encouragement and role models impact their career paths early on

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00:15:20,800 --> 00:15:25,060
so they may never enter the industry regardless of their initial interest.

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00:15:25,060 --> 00:15:33,670
And as Mark mentioned in the beginning, we do need more workforce in tech and games, and the demand is only growing in the future.

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00:15:33,670 --> 00:15:37,210
If you succeed in creating a diverse and inclusive company culture,

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00:15:37,210 --> 00:15:43,030
this will attract diverse applicants as more people are encouraged to enter the industry.

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00:15:43,030 --> 00:15:51,550
There are also other motivations to foster diversity. Homogeneous teams are less efficient and design less optimal products and services,

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00:15:51,550 --> 00:15:59,880
whereas diverse teams increase customer satisfaction, are more efficient and help create more revenue to.

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00:15:59,880 --> 00:16:09,240
And yeah, I think this all sounds very interesting, and when I listen to you, I would maybe like to get some more details.

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00:16:09,240 --> 00:16:20,750
So can you tell a little bit about how you actually tackle these issues in your organisations, at inclusive and at female gaming Finland, for example?

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00:16:20,750 --> 00:16:27,010
What types of activities do you arrange to support diversity?

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00:16:27,010 --> 00:16:32,200
We'll have to see if the entire mission is to make work life more diverse, patient information,

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00:16:32,200 --> 00:16:41,230
offering concrete learnings and consultation, and acting as a resource hub for companies looking to kick start their diversity journey.

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00:16:41,230 --> 00:16:48,160
The volunteer community, which I'm in, as well as the employees of the non-profit organisation,

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00:16:48,160 --> 00:16:55,630
are all from various backgrounds as diversity is a key value internally at inclusive as well.

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00:16:55,630 --> 00:16:58,360
And as for my day job as a consultant,

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00:16:58,360 --> 00:17:06,340
I help my clients to recognise the most common pitfalls and support diversity throughout their PR and marketing efforts.

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00:17:06,340 --> 00:17:13,810
Many of my clients are recruiting a lot, and they need to have their employer brand in a great shape to attract enough

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00:17:13,810 --> 00:17:20,380

talent and diversity and inclusion are one of the key cornerstones in that work.

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00:17:20,380 --> 00:17:21,250
Yeah,

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00:17:21,250 --> 00:17:31,000
I'm sure that managing sort of the employer brand is particularly important in this type of a field where
companies are really competing for talent.

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00:17:31,000 --> 00:17:37,570
And I think it's also more challenging because it's nowadays quite common that people are looking for jobs.

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00:17:37,570 --> 00:17:41,530
They actually look for information from social media platforms.

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00:17:41,530 --> 00:17:50,110
You ask around from current and former employees your friends and try to do this sort of an informal
background checking.

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00:17:50,110 --> 00:17:56,290
So to have your brand in a good shape, it's really important.

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00:17:56,290 --> 00:18:04,360
And I think that with this sort of public acknowledgement of the importance of diversity and inclusion,

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00:18:04,360 --> 00:18:18,160
people are becoming more aware of these issues and they are more concerning or considering these issues
more when when they look for jobs.

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00:18:18,160 --> 00:18:24,850
So Jenny, you mentioned these pitfalls. I was wondering, based on your experiences,

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00:18:24,850 --> 00:18:32,140
can you give some examples of the typical diversity barriers that these companies have and

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00:18:32,140 --> 00:18:39,130
maybe what kinds of changes they can make to improve the sense of belonging and inclusion?

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00:18:39,130 --> 00:18:46,240
Yeah. If we talk about external communications alone, which is pretty much the field I work in,

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00:18:46,240 --> 00:18:51,850
it's the seemingly small little things like what is the tone of voice of your brand?

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00:18:51,850 --> 00:18:57,940
Which type of image is being used on your social feeds or websites or whatever?

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00:18:57,940 --> 00:19:05,800
If you use overly masculine language or a white male dominant imagery, which is very common in second game sexually,

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00:19:05,800 --> 00:19:14,620
it might be hard for someone to picture themselves working for your company if they don't see themselves fit into the team.

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00:19:14,620 --> 00:19:21,160
So diverse images make it easier for people from diverse backgrounds to feel welcome to even apply.

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00:19:21,160 --> 00:19:23,830
So I make sure my website,

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00:19:23,830 --> 00:19:33,310
social feeds and other channels would attract the people I would want to reach if I was someone looking for diverse applicants.

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00:19:33,310 --> 00:19:40,420
Also, don't just settle with what the diverse people just want, apply and leave the efforts there.

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00:19:40,420 --> 00:19:50,080
I've heard this so many times yet there's been no actions made to reach or attract the diverse audiences they want to reach out to.

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00:19:50,080 --> 00:19:58,270
So if you have 20 white dudes on your company page and keep looking for a great culture for you, what are the odds than other than white men?

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00:19:58,270 --> 00:20:02,920
Feel welcome and even want to apply? And on the cultural side,

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00:20:02,920 --> 00:20:07,660
it's better to make sure your company culture actually is inclusive throughout

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00:20:07,660 --> 00:20:13,330
and supports diversity before communicating that through external audiences.

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00:20:13,330 --> 00:20:21,340
Because if your current employees don't feel included, they will react poorly to the misalignment between your words and actions.

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00:20:21,340 --> 00:20:30,430
Thanks, Jenny. It is quite interesting what you said about this issue, how you need to represent your company visually.

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00:20:30,430 --> 00:20:40,660
And I find this to be a really nice hands-on example that is quite easy for companies to accomplish and to pay attention to.

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00:20:40,660 --> 00:20:49,240
Because for companies who are interested in diversity, it may be easier to start off with something very practical, such as this.

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00:20:49,240 --> 00:20:54,610
And as you also mentioned this larger scale change in the company culture,

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00:20:54,610 --> 00:21:00,190
it requires then a longer term commitment where you really need to examine the various

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00:21:00,190 --> 00:21:09,200
practises in the company and evaluate how well all of those align with supporting diversity.

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00:21:09,200 --> 00:21:16,220
How about Marion? What do you actually do, what female game gaming Finland?

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00:21:16,220 --> 00:21:23,990
Well, we have been organising events related to gaming and working in game industry in these events.

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00:21:23,990 --> 00:21:27,800
We've had speakers from different organisations.

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00:21:27,800 --> 00:21:36,260
For us, it is also extremely important to create at least one safe community where everyone can, where everyone can feel safe.

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00:21:36,260 --> 00:21:43,590
Discuss about these topics or experiences and look for gaming friends of similar people.

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00:21:43,590 --> 00:21:49,230
That's why we also organised normal gaming related events to our members.

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00:21:49,230 --> 00:21:54,500
And you can just come hang out there and have a chat with others.

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00:21:54,500 --> 00:21:59,870
OK. So how does this issue of safety actually arise?

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00:21:59,870 --> 00:22:08,500
What does safety mean in this context and how can you then ensure a safe environment?

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00:22:08,500 --> 00:22:14,690
Well, in our events, we've had some people joining in just a drop.

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00:22:14,690 --> 00:22:17,330
It's quite usual in gaming culture.

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00:22:17,330 --> 00:22:26,450
Some people join our Discord server, for example, just sent hateful and sexist messages or something hateful in boys channels.

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00:22:26,450 --> 00:22:36,880
This is why, for example, moderation and zero tolerance are super important, and we need to intervene immediately when something like this happens.

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00:22:36,880 --> 00:22:45,550
Also, if we, for example, organised gaming events, we need to think about the way people, the the way we let people talk.

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00:22:45,550 --> 00:22:53,890
This is something that, for example, also e-sports organisations should consider like it's not good if people, for example,

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00:22:53,890 --> 00:23:02,260
let's go boys when the game starts, even though it would feel a bit dumb to intervene in something like that.

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00:23:02,260 --> 00:23:12,040
You definitely should. It takes a lot of patience and dedication to create a safer environment for everyone.

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00:23:12,040 --> 00:23:17,080
Yeah, for sure. And what you said about this way of talking?

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00:23:17,080 --> 00:23:29,620
What kinds of words do you use? It's very important, actually, and I think it has to do with the fact that both gaming and also the games industry,

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00:23:29,620 --> 00:23:40,210
they have been sort of traditionally very up boys playing field and and boys playing together and boys also establishing companies together.

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00:23:40,210 --> 00:23:47,740
And then it has been sort of normal to assume that everybody around us are also boys or men.

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00:23:47,740 --> 00:23:54,160
And then you adopt this certain type of language sensitive type of joking and so on.

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00:23:54,160 --> 00:24:05,660
And now it's just something that we actively need to remind ourselves and remind our community members that, hey, there are also women.

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00:24:05,660 --> 00:24:13,670
There are also other other types of people who are very much involved in this hobby and in this industry.

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00:24:13,670 --> 00:24:23,170
And how do the two of you then see the role of the non-profit sector in the work towards more inclusive gamer cultures?

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00:24:23,170 --> 00:24:31,110
Why do you think that organisations such as the ones you are involved with are needed?

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00:24:31,110 --> 00:24:38,400
Oh, yeah, well, the entire point of inclusive is to make diversity and inclusion or related knowledge accessible to everyone,

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00:24:38,400 --> 00:24:42,960
as well as support companies and organisations to make an impact.

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00:24:42,960 --> 00:24:48,600
And of course, we have many commercial entities offering beer by training, for example.

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00:24:48,600 --> 00:24:52,800
But I think it's important to have non-commercial organisations operating in that

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00:24:52,800 --> 00:25:00,060
space to ensure support and latest information is indeed available for everyone.

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00:25:00,060 --> 00:25:00,960
We, for example,

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00:25:00,960 --> 00:25:08,550
don't work directly with the gamer culture app or say but can offer insights to game companies to improve the inclusiveness of their company,

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00:25:08,550 --> 00:25:13,810
as well as the communities around their games.

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00:25:13,810 --> 00:25:23,920
Well, like I earlier described, we felt like an association like FGF was needed because there wasn't anything like it yet in a field.

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00:25:23,920 --> 00:25:31,810
Our association, for example, helps raising the knowledge about the state of women and minorities in gaming culture.

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00:25:31,810 --> 00:25:42,280
We also help lots of researchers and work together with different colleague colleges and universities through this kind of cooperation.

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00:25:42,280 --> 00:25:49,120
Our members get more knowledge about topics, for example, working in the gaming field.

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00:25:49,120 --> 00:25:57,310
We organise events that are related to gaming or working in the gaming field, and our events have been really liked so far.

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00:25:57,310 --> 00:26:09,060
And people usually wish for more. That's why I myself see us as a connecting link between gamers and different organisations.

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00:26:09,060 --> 00:26:19,970
Yeah, I'm sure that this this kind of breaching that the different communities and reaching different people is very important.

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00:26:19,970 --> 00:26:29,990
And have you encountered any challenges when you try to foster diversity and what kinds of issues are we possibly looking at?

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00:26:29,990 --> 00:26:32,510
I quite often, yeah, for a minute,

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00:26:32,510 --> 00:26:41,090
it might be difficult to recognise their own privileges and they may even start feeling guilty or if someone is playing them personally,

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00:26:41,090 --> 00:26:48,020
and that's when people start shutting down from the possibility that not everyone gets the same opportunities.

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00:26:48,020 --> 00:26:51,290
Sometimes people just choose to downplay any issues,

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00:26:51,290 --> 00:27:00,110
and sometimes people trying to foster diversity and inclusion are seen as party poopers or just challenging
personas.

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00:27:00,110 --> 00:27:11,360
Even though the aim is to make sure many voices are heard. And of course, there's always the people who
think diversity is merely a PR stunt,

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00:27:11,360 --> 00:27:16,790
and they only want you involved to make their organisation or themselves look good.

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00:27:16,790 --> 00:27:22,070
I've faced this a lot. And for me, it's very hard to take part,

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00:27:22,070 --> 00:27:32,660
but it's also very hard to refuse because I'm I'm someone or I'm trying to be someone who often aims to
raise awareness and create impact.

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00:27:32,660 --> 00:27:39,950
So that's something I've faced a lot. It's a yes for me, too.

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00:27:39,950 --> 00:27:48,410
Like I said earlier in our own events, we've had some people who just saw a joint there to draw.

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00:27:48,410 --> 00:27:54,650
I've noticed that also in social media, this topic always seems to heat things up a bit.

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00:27:54,650 --> 00:28:02,240
I see a lot of comments like if women are so good at gaming, how come there is none in the sport?

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00:28:02,240 --> 00:28:12,810
Women always complain about pointless stuff. Everyone gets commenting on gaming, and it's no different
for women, for women and so on.

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00:28:12,810 --> 00:28:22,230
Yeah, I'm sure we are all familiar with these kinds of sort of counter discourses or counter arguments that
question the issue.

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00:28:22,230 --> 00:28:30,660
That's why why we need to talk about this. And it's very interesting that that you both addressed here this
this social

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00:28:30,660 --> 00:28:37,560
controversy that we have around this equality initiatives and also in research.

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00:28:37,560 --> 00:28:43,230
I can see that it's widely recognised that minority people often experience very

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00:28:43,230 --> 00:28:49,740
difficult to speak out exactly because you quite easily become labelled as difficult.

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00:28:49,740 --> 00:28:53,010
And this is something that women in particular experience,

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00:28:53,010 --> 00:29:02,550
and that is one of the reasons that many of the discriminatory practises and many of the harassment cases,

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00:29:02,550 --> 00:29:13,440
whether they are big or small, they they are silenced because there are not enough spaces where you can
actually speak out about them.

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00:29:13,440 --> 00:29:21,570
Well, if we then look at all the work that nonetheless is done for promoting diversity.

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00:29:21,570 --> 00:29:25,620
Do you think that we are doing enough and the right types of things?

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00:29:25,620 --> 00:29:33,580
Or would you like to see some changes in how in how we approach diversity issues?

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00:29:33,580 --> 00:29:37,000
For an organisational or or the company's side,

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00:29:37,000 --> 00:29:47,950
we are seeing organisations using more data and hiring specific roles to support diversity and inclusion
related initiatives within their companies,

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00:29:47,950 --> 00:29:54,940
but we also see a lot of companies merely starting their efforts. So what we could use, I think,

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00:29:54,940 --> 00:30:05,590
is more diversity consultants who already exist and offer tailor-made trainings and assessments to see where
your company actually stands.

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00:30:05,590 --> 00:30:10,210
We need to create diversity as the company wide business transformation.

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00:30:10,210 --> 00:30:17,620
It is rather than something that the PR or marketing or H.R. does on the side if there are other tasks.

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00:30:17,620 --> 00:30:23,410
So get a professional off this field to support that transformation.

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00:30:23,410 --> 00:30:30,220
This ensures that we take the right steps and the actual impact gets done as well without impact.

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00:30:30,220 --> 00:30:40,790
Your wasting time. After all. Well, in my opinion, progress has been made, but we still need to do more in this situation.

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00:30:40,790 --> 00:30:48,440
It wouldn't be bad, for example, to organise different leagues in esports for female players and gender minorities,

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00:30:48,440 --> 00:30:56,540
for example, like Riot Games planned through. I feel like it's easier to take part in those.

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00:30:56,540 --> 00:30:57,380
For example,

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00:30:57,380 --> 00:31:07,520
I've seen lots of questionnaires where female players don't even want to consider e-sports because the gaming community is so toxic towards women.

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00:31:07,520 --> 00:31:13,130
Also, the penalties in games for toxic behaviour could be more severe.

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00:31:13,130 --> 00:31:18,260
Usually you get like two days mute in chat as a penalty, and of course,

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00:31:18,260 --> 00:31:23,870
the penalties get more severe depending on how much you keep breaking the rules.

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00:31:23,870 --> 00:31:31,940
Eventually, you might get your account banned, but it will take a little take a lot of rule breaking before that happens.

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00:31:31,940 --> 00:31:40,480

In some games, people get banned because of toxicity. But then they just create a new account and keep on being toxic.

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00:31:40,480 --> 00:31:50,440
In addition, I think it would be really important to make more diverse game characters and use them in the adverts to role models are really

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00:31:50,440 --> 00:32:00,830
important so people can see that gaming industry is also available for people like them and something they can choose to do.

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00:32:00,830 --> 00:32:06,350
Yes, I think that you both raised very important aspects here.

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00:32:06,350 --> 00:32:13,730
What you said, Mariane, about this idea that we might create women only spaces,

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00:32:13,730 --> 00:32:21,890
so that's something I've also run into in my research that they can be sometimes very helpful because,

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00:32:21,890 --> 00:32:31,490
like you pointed out, even female players in involved in high performance EA Sports, they also encounter dismissive comments.

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00:32:31,490 --> 00:32:35,330
So it's not even though they are very skilled players.

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00:32:35,330 --> 00:32:43,730
There is still a lot of mitigation against women, and this has, I think, a lot to do with the masculine gamer culture,

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00:32:43,730 --> 00:32:51,380
which pretty much assumes that men are prototypical the hardcore, highly skilled gamers.

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00:32:51,380 --> 00:33:02,360
Whereas girl gamers play skills, they are often questioned and women also experience sexualised comments and harassment in online game situations.

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00:33:02,360 --> 00:33:06,450
And because of this, women are often experiencing big pressure.

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00:33:06,450 --> 00:33:15,440
Sort of. You need to prove that you can play as well, or even better than the men men in your team or in the other team.

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00:33:15,440 --> 00:33:27,030
And in this respect, the the all female tournament, they can help relieve these pressures and allow women the space where they can just enjoy playing.

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00:33:27,030 --> 00:33:33,810
There's yet one other thing now that I have been listening to your your experiences.

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00:33:33,810 --> 00:33:37,650
So there's one thing I would like to talk to you.

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00:33:37,650 --> 00:33:47,700
From how I see it is that it seems to be quite common that when we talk about diversity issues in games and in tech at large,

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00:33:47,700 --> 00:33:51,130
we think mostly about women. Also,

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00:33:51,130 --> 00:34:00,930
many of the campaigns that are targeted specifically at getting more women to study coding or getting women interested in the STEM field in science,

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00:34:00,930 --> 00:34:09,150
technology and mathematics and engineering. For example, the limit order programme Women Who Code Programme,

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00:34:09,150 --> 00:34:18,330
which is powered by the Finnish Software and E-Business Association, is one well-known initiative from this this field.

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00:34:18,330 --> 00:34:27,480
However, I've been wondering and I would like to ask you that how do the challenges of other marginalised groups appear?

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00:34:27,480 --> 00:34:37,350
Because on the other hand, there has been an increased interest in the society and in research to address marginalisation through intersectionality,

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00:34:37,350 --> 00:34:44,670
where we try to understand inequalities sort of as a result of multiple intersecting identity categories.

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00:34:44,670 --> 00:34:52,290
Let's say, for example, how does it feel to be a non-binary immigrant in this in this space?

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00:34:52,290 --> 00:35:02,250

So do you have any thoughts on this? How do the challenges of different marginalised groups appear in gaming cultures and all this?

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00:35:02,250 --> 00:35:06,620
First of all, recognised in the companies?

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00:35:06,620 --> 00:35:14,870
This is a very important notion, and I personally hate when diversity related conversations revolve around gender alone.

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00:35:14,870 --> 00:35:24,710
There's a lot of different aspects to it, whether it's sexuality, ethnicity or socioeconomic status and a bunch of other factors too.

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00:35:24,710 --> 00:35:31,880
I don't think companies in my field recognise this as well as they should, although working with people from various different cultures,

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00:35:31,880 --> 00:35:37,730
for example, is very familiar to many game studios and tech companies as well.

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00:35:37,730 --> 00:35:45,710
But what we also hear is that the culture isn't us inclusive and welcoming as it could be.

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00:35:45,710 --> 00:35:53,120
I mean, make it so nice on switching the conversation to finish might alienate a lot of people.

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00:35:53,120 --> 00:35:56,840
As for gaming culture, there are still plenty of racism, for example,

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00:35:56,840 --> 00:36:04,400
so we still need to do a lot of work to improve that culture for everyone, not just women alone.

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00:36:04,400 --> 00:36:14,900
I think this is a really good question, too, and because FGF is juror towards gender minorities, do we need to think about this topic a lot?

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00:36:14,900 --> 00:36:27,350
I, for example, as a president of FGF, gets a lot of questions or cooperation requests, but the questions we see are almost every time about women.

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00:36:27,350 --> 00:36:32,060
I usually want to remind that we are an association that is also Jared,

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00:36:32,060 --> 00:36:38,770
what's gender minorities, and we want to include their experiences to the topic as well.

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00:36:38,770 --> 00:36:47,530
In my opinion, this thing alone describes a lot in equalities faced by gender minorities in the gaming culture.

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00:36:47,530 --> 00:36:56,560
Also, I want to do my research on topics, especially when speakers, beats or something is coming up and related to this,

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00:36:56,560 --> 00:37:10,290
I've noticed there isn't any research data about gender minorities and gaming, and I really feel that you do need more data about that topic.

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00:37:10,290 --> 00:37:18,390
Also, the experiences in the gaming culture may differ quite a lot between women and minorities,

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00:37:18,390 --> 00:37:27,390
with people thought of gender minorities, that discrimination in gaming may be, for example, related to their voice in voice jets.

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00:37:27,390 --> 00:37:31,620
People may also just assume their gender wrongly.

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00:37:31,620 --> 00:37:42,330
Games can be described as a fateful for gender minorities, and some games are thought to be inferior because of that.

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00:37:42,330 --> 00:37:48,780
However, there are also some similarities with women and gender minorities as well.

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00:37:48,780 --> 00:38:02,710
For example, gaming skills are often westernised if you don't fit the profile, a proper gaming profile which is often a young adult or sexual male.

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00:38:02,710 --> 00:38:15,550
Yes, indeed. I really recognise these features from from the research and how it observes this old game of culture and the industry,

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00:38:15,550 --> 00:38:21,060
it is the ideal gamer is often portrayed as a young man,

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00:38:21,060 --> 00:38:30,940
as you said here and then also an ideal games industry worker is often imagined as a young man who

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00:38:30,940 --> 00:38:39,430
can devote a lot of your time to to also build your skills outside the office hours and so on.

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00:38:39,430 --> 00:38:49,510
But there is actually a minor shift going on not only in our society, but also in the research,

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00:38:49,510 --> 00:38:56,890
because what I notice is that more and more researchers are starting to pay attention to,

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00:38:56,890 --> 00:39:04,150
to addressing the different challenges that these minority groups are experiencing.

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00:39:04,150 --> 00:39:15,210
So I think that in the next two years, we will definitely have more information about also other minorities than women.

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00:39:15,210 --> 00:39:24,810
And what else? Well, you both emphasised that there is perhaps this need to to be more sensitive to these factors that

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00:39:24,810 --> 00:39:34,200
alienate people with different backgrounds and to sort of to pay attention to their unique experiences.

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00:39:34,200 --> 00:39:44,520
And as I said, I think that this is the direction where we are definitely going towards and I think maybe to wrap up,

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00:39:44,520 --> 00:39:49,830
I think this has been a really engaging discussion and it's been very good to learn

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00:39:49,830 --> 00:39:56,820
about the things that are being done in the field in your voluntary organisations.

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00:39:56,820 --> 00:40:07,440
But before we leave, I was wondering if if we could maybe hear one or two key takeaways for those

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00:40:07,440 --> 00:40:14,280
individuals and organisations who really want to do their part in supporting diversity?

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00:40:14,280 --> 00:40:20,290
How would you maybe advise them based on your own experiences?

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00:40:20,290 --> 00:40:27,640

From my view as a comms consultant, you should start with inclusion and internal processes,

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00:40:27,640 --> 00:40:34,450
external communications and actions come after your current employees feel included unheard.

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00:40:34,450 --> 00:40:41,200
Diversity is not a PR stunt or a tool for marketing, and it should touch the entire organisation.

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00:40:41,200 --> 00:40:50,530
So make sure your internal affairs are in order before communicating all that to external audiences.

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00:40:50,530 --> 00:40:58,660
Well, I could actually continue a little bit about what I said earlier about toxic behaviour in games.

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00:40:58,660 --> 00:41:08,410
In my opinion, it is important to intervene if you encounter a situation where someone is treated badly in games.

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00:41:08,410 --> 00:41:16,870
So I think it's also the responsibility of the whole community and also each in the individual.

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00:41:16,870 --> 00:41:23,080
It always helps if the person doesn't have to be in the situation alone and that there

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00:41:23,080 --> 00:41:28,720
is someone who is telling the toxic person that it's not OK to behave like that.

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00:41:28,720 --> 00:41:35,410
Also, it is always very important to report toxic behaviour in games.

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00:41:35,410 --> 00:41:42,430
In my opinion, for organisations, it is important to show that everyone is welcome just as they are.

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00:41:42,430 --> 00:41:54,010
That's why I think we need more diverse characters in games, for example, and also overall work in the games industry for organisations.

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00:41:54,010 --> 00:42:00,250
I think it is also extremely important to intervene if something happens.

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00:42:00,250 --> 00:42:09,700
We also need to raise overall knowledge about gaming, and we need to show that gamers are a really diverse group.

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00:42:09,700 --> 00:42:15,700
Thank you again, and thank you, Marion, that great piece of advice from both of you.

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00:42:15,700 --> 00:42:20,440
And I must say that it's been really wonderful to hear your experiences,

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00:42:20,440 --> 00:42:27,130
and I think you have offered us many interesting viewpoints to how we can think of diversity and inclusion.

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00:42:27,130 --> 00:42:35,050
On the one hand, what both of you have emphasised is that it requires commitment from companies and organisations to

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00:42:35,050 --> 00:42:43,330
really critically examine their own cultures and engage in this organisation wide change initiative.

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00:42:43,330 --> 00:42:49,510
However, as you showed, there are also smaller possibilities to make an impact.

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00:42:49,510 --> 00:42:55,330
Whether you are a member of a gaming community or if you are working for a game studio,

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00:42:55,330 --> 00:43:00,520
you can always look for the opportunities to make a change in the everyday interactions,

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00:43:00,520 --> 00:43:07,210
such as what you suggested earlier, paying attention to the type of language we use,

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00:43:07,210 --> 00:43:16,960
the types of jokes that we tell, or the types of images we choose when we represent our company.

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00:43:16,960 --> 00:43:26,230
I think it's time for us to wrap up. So thank you so much again and Marianne there for joining us today.

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00:43:26,230 --> 00:43:30,320
Thanks. This was really nice. Thank you.

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00:43:30,320 --> 00:43:34,750
I think this was a great discussion. Thank you.

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00:43:34,750 --> 00:43:40,120
And to our listeners, I hope that you have enjoyed listening to this podcast.

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00:43:40,120 --> 00:43:46,600
I would like to add that this podcast is accompanied by a short blog where we have

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00:43:46,600 --> 00:43:52,120
included additional readings regarding diversity and inclusion in games industry,

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00:43:52,120 --> 00:43:59,860
as well as links to some of the non-profit organisations and diversity initiatives, particularly in the Finnish context.

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00:43:59,860 --> 00:44:27,852
In case you are interested in learning more. But for now, thanks for staying with us.