ENGAGE.EU Winter School "Cultural Perspectives on Sustainability"

Workshop title: Finance, Equality, and Sustainable Future

Lecturer + Status & affiliation: Associate Professor Emilia Vähämaa, Hanken School of Economics, Finland

Workshop description:
This workshop explores the complex relationships between finance, digital transformation, sustainability, and social equality, with a particular focus on how financial systems, technologies, and policy frameworks can both reproduce and challenge gender- and sexuality-based inequalities. As societies increasingly rely on digital technologies and financial innovations to address sustainability challenges, it is crucial to critically examine who benefits from these developments and whose voices and experiences may remain marginalized.

Participants will engage with current debates on sustainable development and financial inclusion, considering how economic structures, investment practices, and technological solutions shape opportunities and outcomes for different social groups. The workshop will also address the digital dimensions of sustainability, including the role of data, platforms, artificial intelligence, and fintech in advancing or hindering equitable transitions toward more sustainable futures. The session welcomes country-specific, sector-specific, and comparative insights. Participants will be encouraged to reflect on how sustainability policies, corporate initiatives, and financial markets interact with issues of gender, sexuality, diversity, and social justice across different institutional and cultural contexts.

Learning objectives:
By the end of the workshop, students should be able to:

- Understand how financial systems affect gender and equality
- Compare how different countries approach inclusion and sustainability
- Critically analyze digital finance and AI from an equality perspective
- Reflect on whose experiences are prioritized in "sustainable" societies

Content:
Part 1: Interactive opening: Who is the system designed for? (30 min)
Part 2: Mini-lecture: Finance, equality, and power (45 min)
Part 3: Main interactive exercise (75-90 min)
Part 4: Reflection and critical discussion (40 min)
Part 5: Closing (10 min)

Input/examples:
Sustainable finance; ESG and diversity; financial inclusion; fintech and equality; AI and algorithmic bias in finance; climate finance and gender; digital sustainability; DEI in financial institutions; LGBTQ+ and intersectional perspectives; sustainability reporting; social justice and economic systems.

Duration/number of students: 4 hrs / ?