

# Involving youth in neighbourhood planning - Nordic methods and cases

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# Introduction

Smart urban planning involving citizens can lower carbon dioxide emissions significantly. To solve the climate change citizens of urban areas should be involved in planning and decision-making processes. Especially young people's participation is urgent. Youth is the best target group in which to raise awareness, change perceptions and overcome myths.

That is the reason there are several initiatives and methods aiming to participate young people in urban planning and different decision-making processes. It seems though that the public sectors lack the methods, tools and overall understanding of the value of participation.

In Finland there are 5 303 000 inhabitants, which 22,8 percent (1 222 959) are 0-19 years old children and youth. Lately the participating them has been arising from marginal phenomenon to a bigger scale. According to research of the Ministry of Education and Culture, the youth are aware of political processes but the practical methods of participation are not well-known. Also the participation structures does not take account the needs of special groups such as asylum seekers, handicapped and other youth that are in weaker position than mainstream youngsters.<sup>1</sup>

Why does participation matter then? Why public organizations and private sector aim to engage their stakeholders far more than they used to? Multilevel perspective (MLP) is one helpful tool to understand the ongoing reorganization or organizational behaviour.

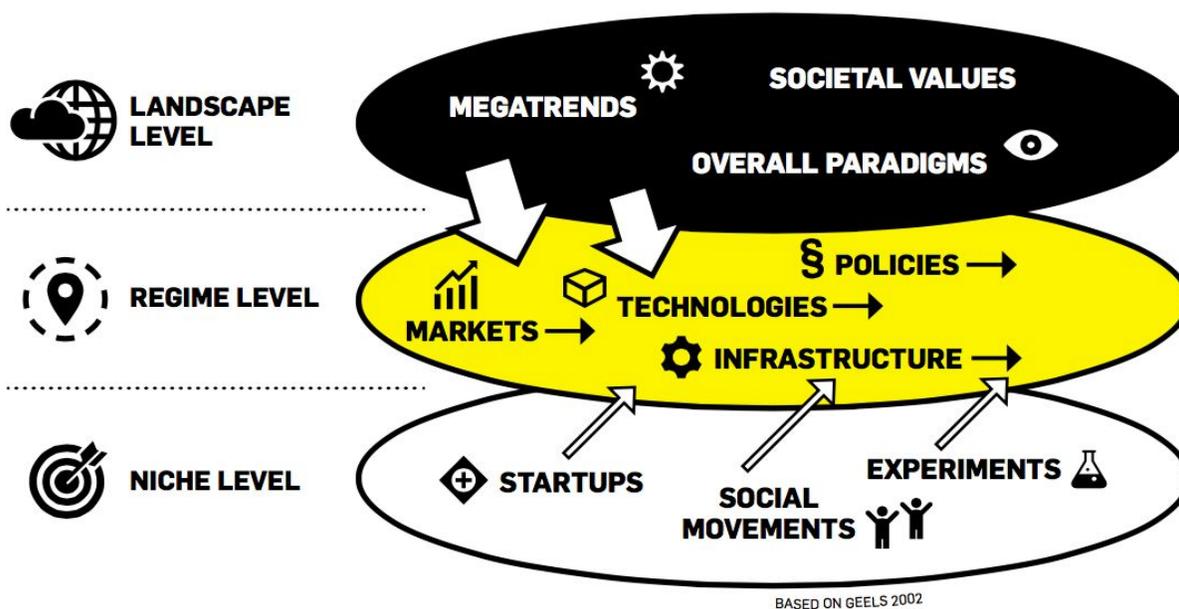
MLP is a theoretical framework and a planning tool for understanding socio-technological change. One of the most well known thinkers related to MLP is Frank Geels, whose work distinguishes three distinct levels of action: 1) The niche level where innovations, experimentation and new protocols are born. 2) The regime level, where markets operate and policies are enforced. 3) And finally the landscape level where the vast and slow societal change operate.

The core idea of the MLP is to show how do transitions and broad social change happen. According to MLP the regime level is always at turbulence due to the new innovations and agile organizations that

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.minedu.fi/export/sites/default/OPM/Julkaisut/2011/liitteet/OKM27.pdf?lang=en>

disrupt the seemingly stable regimes. At the same time the regime level is shaken by the megatrends that impacts the regime intensively. An par excellence example of such transition is mobility and Uber. Uber has led the way in the realization of the potential of mobility as a service (MaaS). Simultaneously the digitalization as a megatrend in the landscape level enabled the creation of the new system and Uber as a niche innovation was a success. At the moment the mobility markets in Finland and elsewhere are struggling to find ways to cope with Uber. Uber is also challenging the legislators since it operates in a rather grey zone.<sup>2</sup>



For the public sector the adoption of participatory methods is increasing their capability of getting along in an ever more complex world. Participation of youth ought to be seen as widening the scope of operating: traditionally the public sector has operated in the regime level. By participating youth the public sector is able to convert landscape level megatrends from risks to possibilities. Participating youth is a window to the future, it is a method to understand the values, attitudes and aspirations that will become more common in the future. At the same time participating youth is a tool to better understand the niche level and constantly seek for new alliances with potentially disruptive players. In the future we might see a public sector that is more of an enabler for the niche level actors rather than constraining

<sup>2</sup> For more about MLP and Frank Geels see for example Bulkeley et al. 2013, *Cities and Low Carbon Transitions*, 13-27

bureaucratic supervisor. The greatest value of community and even neighbourhood level participation and co-operation with niche actors is when new and scalable services and policies are created. Therefore both the process and outcomes matter.

Participation is clearly a rising trend in policy making and also private corporations. Here we will focus in the participation methods and tools of Finnish public sector presenting the most inspiring examples of how public sector participates young people. First, the structures of youth participation in the municipality level of Finland is introduced. Second, we present some core methods to involve youth and citizens in the decision-making in the national and regional level. The structures are illustrated with the cases that have inspired us in Finnish and Nordic context. In final chapter we present the Safari-model which is an effective tool for youth, public organisations and private companies to solve the societal problems of our era.

## 2. Methods of youth participation in municipality-level

### 2.1. Legal background

Participation and hearing of youth in Finland is defined in Finnish Youth Act, which requires in section 8, that *young people must be given opportunities to take part in the handling of matters concerning local and regional youth work and youth policy. Further, young people shall be heard in matters concerning them.*<sup>3</sup>

Legislation does not define, how hearing and participation should be done. That's why municipalities, cities and youth associations have developed different kind of methodology and tools to do that. In this initial research we are presenting the most influential ones.

In the new Local Government Act (to be implemented in 2017) the require municipalities to involve two new methods to increase youth's participation in decision-making in municipality level:

- 1) When person is 15, he/she has right to initiate referendum. If 2% of population of municipality signs the initiative, it needs to be considered in local government within six months.
- 2) Local governments are obliged to set up youth council or other group that represent young people in decision-making process of municipalities.<sup>4</sup>

We are living in a world with big, wicked problems, such as climate change, which demands us to think the participatory processes in new manners. That's why the involvement and participation of citizens should be taking account already in policy-planning processes. Good example of that is Climate Street (Ilmastokatu) –project of City of Helsinki.

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<sup>3</sup>[http://www.minedu.fi/export/sites/default/OPM/Nuoriso/lait\\_ja\\_saeaedoekset/Youth\\_act\\_Nuorisolaki\\_amend\\_2010\\_en.pdf](http://www.minedu.fi/export/sites/default/OPM/Nuoriso/lait_ja_saeaedoekset/Youth_act_Nuorisolaki_amend_2010_en.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.localfinland.fi/en/association/research/newmunicipality2017/Pages/default.aspx>

The Climate Street<sup>5</sup> –project seeks for solutions that decrease citizen’s energy consumption in a micro level, namely street level, and on the meanwhile increase the livability and vitality of the urban area. Chosen streets work as experimental platforms for new services and products. It connects the citizens and companies and creates model that can be scaled to other places as well. The main driver behind the project is to find means for the local authorities to facilitate the transition to sustainable lifestyles and sustainable businesses. It is also an interesting case of what might be the future role of the public sector in the green transition: to enable, offer information, empower people and facilitate the complex transition.

## 2.2. Youth councils

The aim of Youth Act is to ensure that young people under 29 years of age have the opportunities to participate in handling matters concerning local youth work and youth policy and that they are heard in matters concerning them. The most common way to achieve that, is to establish youth councils and similar bodies, web-based channels and through structures established in schools and youth facilities. In 2017 all the municipalities in Finland need to have a youth council.

Youth council is a group that present the young people in decision-making processes. They are heard in the issues like educational guidance of young people, hobby opportunities and international and multicultural youth activities, young people's environmental education and when needed, youth workshop services or other forms of activity suited to the local circumstances and needs. <sup>6</sup>

## 2.3. Participation in schools

The Finnish schools are obliged to organise student union to represent students in the decision-making processes of the school and organise leisure activities among students. The practices, and influence of unions vary widely among the schools <sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://6aika.fi/in-english/>

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/Nuoriso/nuorisotyoen\\_kohteet\\_ja\\_rahoitus/kuntien\\_nuorisotyoe/?lang=en](http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/Nuoriso/nuorisotyoen_kohteet_ja_rahoitus/kuntien_nuorisotyoe/?lang=en)

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.kunnat.net/fi/palvelualueet/demokratia/osallistuminen/vallakas/Documents/Vallakas%20-%20kuntalaisen%20vaikuttamisopas.pdf>

Students think that unions represent their views and defends their rights well. However, unions don't work well in everywhere and some schools lack of student councils totally<sup>8</sup>. In addition the system has been criticised of not participating youth in individual level<sup>9</sup>.

In addition, Finnish curriculum includes the aims to participate young people in a more comprehensive manner than in youth councils. That should be happened through improving so called 'citizen skills' in all the subjects and practice the concrete participatory methods.

## 2.4. Inspiring tools combine digital and physical worlds

Young people in Nordic countries think the best way to influence in societal things are the blogs and online communities (like Youtube and Facebook)<sup>10</sup>. The virtual communities operate in digital space which link to physical world and urban planning might be weak. It is very important to develop the methodology and tools that combines digital and physical world. Here are two inspiring examples from Finnish cities:

### **Whole city in Minecraft**

Vantaa is a city and municipality of about 212 473 inhabitants in the capital area of Finland. In 2015 the whole area of city was modelled in a three-dimensional Minecraft -world. Resembling a real-world 3D urban environment includes buildings, roads, parks and a lot other details. Aim of the project is to encourage especially young people to explore their city and to get interest in urban planning.

### **Urban planning in online game**

Hämeenlinna is a city and municipality of about 68,000 inhabitants in Southern Finland. During the spring 2016, the city organises urban planning competition with Skylines game. City offers map to the game, where players develop and maintain a city. Through the competition Hämeenlinna is looking for creative and new urban planning solutions for certain neighborhoods.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.minedu.fi/export/sites/default/OPM/Julkaisut/2011/liitteet/OKM27.pdf?lang=en>

<sup>9</sup> <https://plan.fi/osallistavakoulu/>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.minedu.fi/export/sites/default/OPM/Julkaisut/2011/liitteet/OKM27.pdf?lang=en>

### 3. Ruuti

To step forward from youth council is **Ruuti**<sup>11</sup>, which is a participation system for the young people (13-20 years) of Helsinki. It is created by Youth Department of City of Helsinki. It provides a wide range of different platforms for young people to communicate and act.

On websites of Ruuti, young people can send their own ideas, take part in conversations, comment and support other people's ideas and so on. Young people can leave their initiatives individually, but Ruuti is based on supporting young people's groups, where ideas can be evolved together. Ruuti helps the decision-makers, officials and other agents in the city to listen to young people in matters concerning them. They organise annual events, where decision-makers and young people, on their own terms, negotiate the issues chosen by the young people themselves.

Ruuti has a core group of twenty young people that is elected annually. The core group acts as a link between the decision-makers and the young people of Helsinki. Furthermore, the core group takes the ideas developed in the Ruuti.net website and by the activity groups forward in cooperation with the decision-makers of the city of Helsinki.

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<sup>11</sup> <http://ruuti.munstadi.fi/en/ruuti/>

## **Young voices (Nuorten Ääni)**

Ruuti is providing young people facilities to produce relevant media content to some Finland's most important medias. Editorial office is located at youth centrum of Helsinki, and it's called Nuorten Ääni (Young Voices). It wants to raise up questions that are usually unspoken or especially important to young people. Editorial office and participating is open to everyone aged 13-19 in metropolitan area.

Their video inserts have been displayed for example at the discussion programs in national TV. They have written articles to Helsingin Sanomat (biggest newspaper in Finland) and other big magazines of Finland.

## **RuutiBudget -participatory budgeting with youth**

RuutiBudget utilises the participatory budgeting (PB), which is a different way to manage public money, and to engage people in government. It is a democratic process in which community members directly decide how to spend part of a public budget. It enables taxpayers to work with government to make the budget decisions that affect their lives.

The Youth Department of Helsinki city wants to empower young people and include them in the planning and decision-making of their local districts. The Youth Department sees young people are the experts on their own districts and on how young people spend their time in them. It's participatory budgeting model called RuutiBudget gives young people authority over the funds and the activities of their local youth work units.

All the young people in the RuutiBudget area can take part in the RuutiBudget. Participatory budgeting in the form of RuutiBudget is one way of developing Helsinki into an even more democratic city for young people. RuutiBudget always deals with the action plan and the budgeting for the following year.

RuutiBudget has four phases. The kick-off takes place at RuBuFest, which is an event organised for the upper stage comprehensive schools in the area. At RuBuFest, young people get to present ideas on how to develop their area and its leisure time activities. These ideas stemming from young people's perspectives are collected and assembled into themes for the workshops taking place in autumn, where young people turn the ideas into proposals for action. The proposals are then brought to local upper stage comprehensive schools for election. A jury made up of young people and Youth Department employees

verifies the voting results. In late autumn, the jury gathers to confirm the voting results and decide on the proposals for action that will be executed the following year together with young people.

The proposals made so far have ranged from making public spaces tidier and livelier to building a BMX practice track.

## **Youth welfare story**

Municipalities are obliged by the Finnish Youth Act (7§) to form a coordination network for counselling and planning services for the young. The network shall include representatives of the local authorities for education, social & health care and youth work and of the employment and policy authorities. In Helsinki, the network was established in 2014, and its tasks include, for example, gathering information on young people's welfare and living conditions and, drawing on that information, to evaluate the situation of the young with a view to back up local planning and policy making. The president of the network in Helsinki is the Deputy Mayor in charge of this sector.

The network gave Helsinki City Urban Facts and the Youth Department the task to write, in cooperation with the people concerned, an annual report on young people's welfare in Helsinki. The aim of the Report on Young People's Welfare in Helsinki is to consolidate facts-based policy-making and thereby create better public services for the young<sup>12</sup>. We therefore set out to present easily accessible open information that is updated regularly, and set up this website with its background database.

Their idea of young people's welfare is based on Amartya Sen's and Martha Nussbaum's capability approach, and they put the question whether young people have the skills and opportunities to cope in everyday life, to do things that they value and to have a good life. They are investigating for example if groups of young people have equal opportunities for a good life.

In their work, they have divided welfare into eight aspects: life and health, developing yourself, managing the future, safety, emotions and interaction, active citizenship, equality, and nature and sustainability.

The website includes statistics, research, experts' opinions and the experiences of young people themselves. By matching these sources of information they try to form an overall picture of young people's situation in Helsinki. At present, there are around 40 indicators on the website. These indicators

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.nuortenhyyvintikertomus.fi/>

have been selected from existing data (registers/surveys) that are updated regularly and they may be both objective or subjective. The pages also include a summary of various research conducted on young people in Helsinki, as also the opportunity to set up blogs on the subject.

The pages also include around 50 interviews with young people. From these interviews they developed a tool that groups of young people may use to reflect over what things in life are important. This way they are also able to provide a wide range of experience information. They have also developed a process model for facts-based policy-making and developing. To facilitate the process, they organize seminars for that purpose.

## 4. Tools to influence decision-making in national and regional levels

### 4.1. The Finnish Children's Parliament

The main aim of the children's parliament is to help to create culture of democracy to the comprehensive schools. Every child should be heard, get information about the matters which concern him/her, should be able to participate and influence on decision making, should learn the principles how to influence on a democratic society and should experience how to be important and respected in his own community. Within their activities, children and adults work together to develop new means for discourse between children and adult decision-makers, and to create evolving methods for children to have an influence within our society.

The Finnish Children's Parliament functions mainly in a web-based, password protected environment where very few adults are allowed. The virtual parliament building provides children with a place, independent of time and location, to interact. The children have various online tools at their disposal. The representatives discuss different issues online in weekly chat discussions and discussion forums, respond to surveys submitted by decision-makers and hold a two-week long online plenary session twice a year where they first draft initiatives on for children relevant issues and then debate on and develop them before voting. Children act as chairpersons for discussions with adult support written agendas. All representatives also meet in person once a year for a plenary session where they get to know each other, discuss issues they want to influence and meet with decision-makers.

Nearly 20 municipalities have established local children's parliaments who work with children aged 7-12 and meet at local level and The Finnish Children's Parliament Foundation supports municipalities work with child participation at local level by helping to establish new child parliaments and conduct surveys on the issue at the municipality. Parliaments have conferences four times a year, where they make initiatives about the topics that are important for kids. Initiatives then go through internal process and then are sent forward to schools/municipalities/parliament or Ministries of education, depending on case.

Also Finnish national board of education organizes another venue for children to have an influence to local and national decision making. This venue is national Forum of kids and youth. It's aim is to listen young people about education and other issues that matter to them and deliver these matters to decision-makers. This year's theme is UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Participating municipalities are chosen every spring in a co-operation with part taking provinces.

## 4.2. Associations and online services

Finland is notorious for it's civil society. There is a saying that there is an NGO for everything in Finland. Therefore it is not a surprise that there is a plethora of different associations that work on the theme of youth participation in public affairs. Also, by law, municipalities are obligated to offer information to young people related to their issues. In addition there are different kind of public information services for youth. The most interesting ones are presented further down.

One of the most influential is youth related NGO's is Allianssi. It is a national service and lobbying organization for youth work. It is also politically and religiously non-aligned. The purpose of Allianssi is to "...encourage young people to become responsible members of the society and help them to participate in decision making processes and international activities." The focus of Allianssi is on improving well-being for the young, reinforcing their participation, improving their employment and equal treatment, and safeguarding the funding of youth work. One of the most interesting events organized by Allianssi are the shadow elections where underaged youth vote for real candidates. Often the results are quite different than in the actual elections<sup>13</sup>.

Another interesting actor in the field is The Union of Upper Secondary School Students in Finland<sup>14</sup> which is a "hobby and service association for upper secondary school students". The association has approximately 55 000 members. The association is devoted to lobbying, a "students' sturdy watchdog". The union is involved in various policy bodies such as the Ministry for Education in Finland. One of the

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.alli.fi/english/>

<sup>14</sup> <http://lukio.fi/english/>

main values and principles in youth policy in union is to increase young people's capabilities to impact political decisions concerning their lives and also youth involvement.

Nettinappi.fi is an online information service for all young people living in the city of Oulu. It is maintained by the city of Oulu. It offers help to the youth in a variety of problems related to living, getting by, sexuality, studies etc.

Valtikka.fi is an online service for youth seeking for ways to have an impact in the society. It is an information hub for societal issues concerning youth and also a community of active young citizens.

Nuortenideat.fi is nation wide impact service where youth can easily make suggestion and take part in discussions concerning youth policy. It is available for individuals and also for municipalities, schools, associations and informal groups. The service is linked to the most modern digital platforms that enable participation: otakantaa.fi is a service where anybody can discuss current policy issues and therefore participate in policy process.

There have also two new initiatives that enhance the capabilities and power of citizen in Finland. Namely the citizens' initiative and municipality initiative. The former works quite simply so that everybody are able to start an initiative and if it gets the support of more than 50 000 citizen the Finnish parliament will discuss the initiative. The best known case in Finland is the gay marriage initiative which succeeded to change the legislation. There have also been initiatives such as the prohibition of fur farming. The municipality initiative works accordingly but applies of course to the matters relevant for the municipal councils. 2% of the people living in the municipality must agree and sign online to support the initiative in order for it to get processed. There is for example such initiative at the moment in Helsinki which demands a bike lane to be build in a street called Hämeentie.

Demokratia.fi (democracy.fi) is an online service which gathers all information and news about participatory methods in policy making to one place. It is the front page of democracy.

### **4.3. Nordic Youth Council**

The Nordic Youth Council is the organisation for political youth groups in the Nordic countries. The NYC is based on the Nordic Council. They hold their first proper session in 1971.

The NYC deals with important questions that are relevant to Nordic youth, such as easier access to education and jobs in the Nordic countries. However, the NYC doesn't deal with youth issues only. The organisation also lobbies for stronger Nordic co-operation, concerning environmental and climate issues, equality etc.

Suggestions agreed upon by the NYC are sent to the Nordic Council. Members of the NYC board participate in Nordic Council meetings and the NYC chairperson is a speaker at the annual NC sessions. NYC's ideas are heard by the Nordic Council and have the potential to start debates amongst Nordic youth. This enables the NYC to affect agreements made by the Nordic Council and, by extension, Nordic politics. The NYC wishes to further connections and co-operation between Nordic Youth. Because of these co-operations NYC is a good example of a tool to influence decision-making in regional levels.

#### **4.4. Radical participation: crowdsourcing the constitution in Iceland**

The frustration to the finance crisis and the following political crisis in Iceland led to a radical redrafting of the Icelandic constitution<sup>15</sup>. The Icelanders got to vote for the members of the Constitutional Council, which was responsible for leading the renewal process. There were 522 candidates out of which 25 were selected to be the drafters. By random sampling about 1000 citizens were invited to make the first draft. The work of the Constitutional Council was extremely transparent: all of the meetings were open for anyone to participate and the meetings were streamed online. By the end of the week the Council would publish the work online and invite citizen to comment and discuss the results in social media. Almost 3000 different discussion threads were created during the process. Some of comments and ideas given by the people were taken into account when editing the proposals whereas others were incorporated as new sections to the constitution. Five of the main proposals were subjected to a referendum.

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[http://www.slate.com/articles/technology/future\\_tense/2014/07/five\\_lessons\\_from\\_iceland\\_s\\_failed\\_crowdsourced\\_constitution\\_experiment.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/technology/future_tense/2014/07/five_lessons_from_iceland_s_failed_crowdsourced_constitution_experiment.html)

The new constitution was altogether subjected to a referendum and it got 67% popularity. The new constitution has not yet been enacted by the parliament. The former MP in Finland Oras Tynkkynen explained the failure of the new constitution by the lack of time, the enormity of the mission, the unclarities in the processes and practices, the Constitutional Council presented the new constitution as take it or leave it question to the parliament and fifth the people elected to the Council were more radical than “usually”. For these reasons Tynkkynen<sup>16</sup> provides a list of recommendations for such projects in future:

- 1) Take your time
- 2) Plan the procedures carefully
- 3) Limit the tasks
- 4) Define clear rules for the discussion and deliberation
- 5) Engage with the citizens
- 6) Compliment participatory methods in the internet by other tools than just discussion
- 7) Think in advance that how are you able to deliver
- 8) Be flexible when needed

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<sup>16</sup> <http://www.orastynkkynen.fi/?p=4665>

## 5. Safari - journey to societal impact of youth

In 2013 Safari was developed to address the absence of tools and practices for participating youth in political decision making, city planning and to improve the social impact of private companies. According to a survey carried out by the Union of Upper Secondary School Students in Finland in 2013 showed that 63% of high school students are interested in participating in the development of their city but 61% found that their capability to have an impact is little. According to the youth barometer in 2013 Finnish youth are in the top Europe when it comes to knowledge about society and politics. On the other hand Finnish youth is one of the most passive ones in social and political activity. The youth argued that among the most important reasons for not being active was that 'Nobody never asked me to participate'.

Since 2013 there have been 4 five day Safari camps in Helsinki. Also two series of workshops that utilized Safari methods have been arranged. Both of these lasted for a year.

Safari is a camp of social impact for 14-20 year old youth. At it's core is the idea that private companies, public sector and NGO's give challenges to the camp where youngsters take five days to first understand and define the problem and then create interesting solutions to the problem. These solutions are then after the camp utilized maximally by the partner organization. Ideally the partner is eager to implement the developed solutions. There are about 6 challenges and therefore six groups (one group for each challenge) in the camp. One group takes maximum of 8 participants. Smaller groups are also possible but if the group gets bigger than 8 the management of the group becomes more challenging. There is also a trained and experienced facilitator with group all the time. The facilitator is not a teacher nor a friend. The facilitator acts mostly as team member. A big part of the camps are the participants from earlier years. The tutors have various tasks in the camp. The aim is to share some of the responsibilities with the tutors. This way the tutors get valuable work experience and get to see how a project is run.

Besides the camp Safari is an versatile toolbox and an agile process for participating youth. There are some fundamentals in process but the great thing about Safari is that it can modified and re-modified endlessly. The fundamentals of the process include three elements. The first is the creative interaction with experts from different backgrounds. The role of these experts is to provide the youth with some general and specific information about the subject, the challenge they are trying to solve. Secondly there

is the ethnography element. Complimenting the expert and research knowledge the youth in the seek and collect data themselves. Ethnographic methods are used in the gathering. Thirdly there is the co-creation element. After the initial solution ideas are created, the group of youngsters are brought together with the partner of the challenge. The partner and the youth then together co-develop the solutions further and co-create new ones. This is how the process guarantees the developed solutions tackle the challenge given by the partner.

The process of Safari is developed each year iteratively. In 2016 the process has the following phases:

1. The design of the challenges with partners. (October-May)
2. Recruiting the youth → visiting schools, giving teaser workshops, having public speeches and presentations in relevant events. The network of schools is highly important for the success of the camp. (January-May)
3. The design of each project in the camp together with the partner. (May)
4. The camp (June)
  - a. Grouping and getting to know the team → Trust
  - b. Introduction to the challenge with experts and researchers → Information
  - c. Ethnography → Knowledge and practices
  - d. Ideation → Group work and creative skills
  - e. Co-creation → Development of the idea
  - f. Presentation → Convincing the public and presentation skills
5. Analysis and deployment plan for the ideas (August)
6. Re-participating of the youth to the elaboration and further development of the idea

## **City planning Safari in 2014**

Together with the City planning department in the City of Helsinki a series of 12 workshops were organized during 2014. Over 200 youth took part in the workshops. 8 of the workshops took place in high schools around Helsinki. 4 weekend long workshops were organized in Laituri - a hot spot for city planning in the center of Helsinki. The results of the project were used in the master plan 2016 for Helsinki.

During the workshops the future of Helsinki was envisioned by youth. The central idea was to create an ideal city from youth's perspective. According to the participated youth, nature and green areas in the city, liveliness and personality of the city, communities and doing together, mobility, living and construction and urban services were the most relevant themes related to the master plan 2016. All these were included in the final report which summarized the results of the year.

### Main findings of the project

- Conventional ways to impact the development of city planning such as voting in local elections and taking part in participatory workshops do not reach or apply to youth aged 12-18. Therefore there is pressing need to develop meaningful and inspirational participatory methods for the needs of the public sector.
- Participating youth is a tool to deepen local democracy. Participatory democracy ought to be seen as complementary to representative democracy.
- Participation of youth should be based on active planning and creating together rather than consulting the youth. Collecting feedback is not participation.
- Talking in person is one of the most effective ways to increase understanding between generations.
- The best thing about participating youth is not necessarily the ideas they propose. It is most likely the new ways of doing things together that stem from constant confluence.
- The most important question is why. Why do youth think the way they do? Why is A more important than B?
- Remember to constantly tell youth how important their ideas are.
- Do not limit your scope and interest according to the responsibilities of different authorities and bureaus, that is not how life is lived in the real world.

### **Safari 2015 - Racism free Helsinki**

One of the most interesting and influential projects in the year 2015 camp was the group 'Racism free Helsinki'. The challenge of the group was to create influential and practical tools for the City of Helsinki Youth department and Finn Church Aid. The main finding of the group was that in racism the most pressing issue is the banality of racism in everyday interaction. Racism is mainly about often unconscious

attitudes and values that are seen and felt by the minorities and sadly dismissed by the majority. The best solution to the problem is to make racism visible. The group made various interventions to the city space by holding signboards that said for example 'A 12 year old girl was mocked for her skin color and publicly shamed here, nobody did nothing.'. These racist interactions are also hidden and remain unseen for the majority. That is why city planning should also explicitly make social problems visible and raise awareness. In this project youth gave the city authorities many valuable solutions. Perhaps their biggest contribution was to bring the *experience* of youth to support the policy design.

The main finding of the project was that it is truly worth of the time and resources to take time to define problems before creating solutions. Without understanding the problems and the different dimensions of the problem, will the solutions also most probably fail. That is why youth ought to be participated in different stages of policy planning and implementation. It is not enough to ask feedback from a final draft. It is very valuable to have youth participated from the beginning when problems are defined.

### **Safari 2013-15 How could an energy company speed up the transition towards ecological lifestyles?**

The Helsinki based energy company Helen partnered with Safari for 3 years. The focus was to find out ways for the energy company to help people change their resource wasting lifestyles to ecological ones. During the first year the group of youth created inspiring communication concepts, which could be used for raising awareness about the urgency of energy decision and climate change. In 2014 camp another group created concepts related to food and mobility. In 2015 a third group of youth developed tools for the energy company to test their energy saving ideas in a microlevel, the case was about one street in the center of Helsinki.

One of the main findings was that energy companies are really eager to participate youth. The energy market is probably the biggest market in the world and for the producers and intermediaries understanding future trends is vital in a very competitive market. Also the decentralized energy production and transfer revolution lies ahead of us. For energy companies participation is about understanding the future customer and his needs, proofing new services and products and especially in the case of Helen it was about CSR. The company in general has chosen a very participatory approach to customer relations for example. Also the energy company is publicly owned and it has agreed in the climate roadmap of the City of Helsinki. Climate roadmap is a very significant policy paper, which guide the whole city administration (and

energy company Helen) towards the long run aim: to achieve carbon neutrality and climate resilience until 2050. Participation of youth, and experimentation in private companies and the public sector, should always be connected to a defined aim: what are we trying to learn with this experiment? What could come out from this participatory process? The longer run aim should be a point of reference, which also determines what should we pay attention to when we participate youth.

## 6. References

Bulkeley, Harriet; Castán Broto, Vanesa; Hodson, Mike & Marvin, Simon. *Cities and Low Carbon Transitions*, 2013. Routledge