

An aerial photograph of a large, multi-level wooden deck or terrace situated on a rocky shore next to a body of water. The deck is constructed from light-colored wood and is furnished with numerous tables and chairs, suggesting an outdoor dining or social area. The water is a deep greenish-blue, and the sky is not visible. The deck has a complex, angular shape with several levels and walkways.

# UNESCO Creative Cities Network

Helsinki UNESCO City of  
Design Report 2014—2018

Helsinki



# What distinguishes Helsinki as a City of Design

Design is said to be in the DNA of Finland as a nation. This is manifest most clearly in Helsinki, Finland's design hotspot, the World Design Capital of 2012 and UNESCO's designated City of Design since 2014.

Helsinki is home to the main design institutions and organizations of Finland – from design schools to museums to industry associations – and it is the creative hub of Finland with the vast amount of the nation's design talent concentrated in the city. The city is the place to experience good design in the cityscape, in exhibitions, with installations and in special events.

Good design is all around us in Helsinki. It is evident in harmonious neighbourhoods that each have their own distinct identity. It is evi-

dent in good public transport and other public services. It is evident as a well-functioning city: a city where people can lead rewarding lives in every area, where all schools are good, where all areas are developed on an equal basis to create pleasant environments.

But design is even more in Helsinki. It is not only what it has produced but what more it can produce. Design in the city is an attitude. It has its own identity marked by participation and openness. It is manifest as great talent, powerful doers and interaction that together build a community capable of creating things far bigger than themselves.

Design in Helsinki is design for people, with people, putting their needs and desires first. Design in Helsinki is quintessentially humane.

## Executive summary

The current report has been prepared by the City of Helsinki for the UNESCO Creative Cities Network as a Membership Monitoring Report to describe the activities of Helsinki as a City of Design, so designated by the UNESCO Creative Cities Network in 2014. The report describes Helsinki's commitment to

design and utilization of design thinking in the development of the city. The report presents Helsinki's design initiatives both at local and international levels and Helsinki's contribution to the UNESCO Creative Cities Network as well as the international community at large.

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### General Information

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Country:	Finland
Creative field:	Design
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Submission of report:	Report for 2014–2018 submitted 30 November 2018
Report prepared by:	Office of Economic Development, City Executive Office, City of Helsinki
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# Helsinki's contribution to the global operations of UNESCO Creative Cities Network

Helsinki has contributed to the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) by attending, organizing and hosting a number of network meetings in 2015–2018.

Helsinki attended the following UCCN annual meetings: Kanazawa 2015, Östersund 2016, Enghien Les-Bains 2017 and Krakow-Katowice 2018. At all these meetings, Helsinki participated actively in the exhibitions, panels and workshops organized by the hosts.

Helsinki organized its first UCCN event on 7 September 2015 as part of the Helsinki Design Week's official programme, with representatives of other UNESCO Cities of Design attending: under the title *How Can Design Change a City*, the event explored how cities can solve their current and future challenges with design. As the world's population living in cities is estimated to grow from more than 50% at present to 70% by 2050, cities will face challenges in transport, housing, energy production and services. With the event, Helsinki underscored how the designation as a UNESCO City of Design strengthens Helsinki's position to help solve global urban challenges with design.

Two days later, on 9 September 2015, Helsinki organized a *Design Driven Society* event, also

as part of Helsinki Design Week. This event focused on the ways that design can help the public sector improve their management policies and practices. The event included a panel discussion and a workshop to identify systemic problems in public sector management, chaired by **Brenton Caffin** of British innovation charity Nesta.

Helsinki hosted *DesignCommons*, a major summit of Design Weeks on 14 September 2017, as part of Helsinki Design Week. At the summit, Helsinki emphasized its new strategic goal to be the world's most functional city and how design, together with digitalization and dialogue, helps Helsinki to achieve the goal. After the launch in Helsinki, DesignCommons events would later be held at design weeks worldwide. DesignCommons is produced by Helsinki Design Week and Design Indaba of Africa.

Helsinki has supported the operations of UCCN by providing the graphic design for the network bulletin of 2017. Helsinki has also supported UCCN by participating in the evaluation of network membership applications in 2017 (a total of 12 applications).

# Helsinki's local activities to achieve the objectives of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network as a City of Design

Helsinki is committed to the use design in building better and sustainable society, convinced that design plays a crucial role in finding optimal solutions in cities. Helsinki relies on design to achieve its strategic goals in seeking to be the world's most functional city. As a member of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, Helsinki contributes to the co-creation of solutions to global urban challenges in collaboration with other network cities.

Design is rooted deep in Finnish society. Design has played a major role in defining and building Finnish identity and the nation. Today, good design is present in the everyday lives of citizens, ranging from utilitarian objects at home to well-designed neighbourhoods. Design has emerged as a powerful force in Finland's public sector to maintain and improve services to citizens. Design is utilized by Finnish businesses to boost their competitiveness in the global marketplace.

The City of Helsinki has systematically built awareness of the power of design and its own

expertise in design over the past ten years. The City has evolved from viewing design as a tool for the built environment to design thinking, which is now incorporated into management processes and service production. Service design should be an integral part of all processes to develop services for citizens, in order to ensure that the services fulfill true needs of their users. Design thinking has already been applied in more than **200** City projects.

Helsinki sees design as a strategic strength and utilizes design at the strategic level in city administration. As proof, Helsinki appointed a Chief Design Officer in 2016.

"The citizens of Helsinki possess both the will and the ability to develop the user experience of their city, to make a good city, and they take ownership in their city. The City organization wants to be oriented to the users – that is, the citizens. Helsinki seeks to be constantly improving for every citizen," says Helsinki Mayor **Jan Vapaavuori**.



# Major initiatives implemented by Helsinki at local level in 2014–2018

## Design Driven City 2013–2015

### Description:

Design Driven City was a two-year programme to carry on the legacy of World Design Capital Helsinki 2012. The programme was managed by International Design Foundation, founded by the City of Helsinki. The strategic goal of the programme was increasing design thinking in the processes of the participating cities (Helsinki, Espoo, Lahti and Kauniainen) and the Finnish Government, as well as creating new demand for the expertise of designers in the public sector. Design Driven City's three City Designers played key roles in the programme to educate public sector actors in the use of design. Design Driven City actively advised the public sector and promoted design through active participation in public discourse.

### Background:

Rather than being the machinery for bureaucratic local government, the City of Helsinki is today a platform for service creation. This platform is built on the same principles as underlie the success of traditional Finnish design: usability that improves people's everyday lives, functionality, affordability and high ecological standards – without compromising high aesthetic qualities.

Design complements the City's diverse expertise. The Design Driven City programme analysed the added value provided by design as follows:

1. Using empathy to bring in the humane: Design brings forth the needs and viewpoints of citizens. Design could create joy and completely new benefits to users!
2. Increasing participatory co-design processes: Design offers people easy and inspiring means for co-design. Co-design brings together diverse areas of expertise and experts!
3. Visualizing possibilities and shared futures: Design helps to turn plans and visions into joint and concrete action. Communication flows into two directions, from developers to users and back!
4. Developing through experiments: Design helps us to proceed and to improve continuously through experiments. The value of experimentation is in the lessons learnt from it, so it should never be used in the development of a city as a synonym to lack of discipline. The results should always be evaluated!

**“Cities are for users. Cities need design in order to function. Design creates better services for residents. A functional city is a good city.” – 4 of the 10 theses of Design Driven City**



*Design Driven City worked as a facilitator between the planners and the users of the city.*

### Outcomes and partnerships:

The Design Driven City programme, with its 3 designated City Designers, held 60 Help and Inquiries counselling sessions for Helsinki City units, guiding them in the use of design. The project helped to embed design in 15 City development projects and created a Design Agents network consisting of designers and 500 City employees.

**“Youth homelessness isn't solved by focusing on buildings and walls, but through design experiments and finding possibilities within communities.” – The Design Driven City project A Home That Fits**

## Web publication 2015–2018: Design Stories from Helsinki

### Description:

*Design Stories from Helsinki* is an online publication launched in 2015. It describes how design can change the world. It presents best practices and illustrates the impact of co-creation in the development of public services through projects implemented in Helsinki using design thinking to create new solutions for a better city. The objective of the publication is to raise awareness of the power of design thinking. Many of the projects presented as case studies were initiated during the Design Driven City programme and developed with the help of the programme's City Designers.



“In Finland, design has always belonged to everyone. These stories are about how design can also be a key method in building a better city.”

*Selected case studies illustrating the power of design thinking (please see the publication for more case studies):*

- Helsinki used the methods of design in the public bid for a new *City Bike* bike-share programme to select bikes that would best meet the needs and desires of users.
- *Ohjaamo* is a new type of youth guidance service that has put all service desks and application processes into one place. *Ohjaamo* was designed in collaboration with young people, to make sure that it best serves its users.
- The new *Kalasatama* area of Helsinki is developed as a smart city district with the help of agile pilot projects with local residents and businesses to test new urban living and business concepts.
- *Kutsuplus* was an on-demand bus-ride

service that can revolutionize public transport. Using Helsinki as a development platform, Kutsuplus has evolved into new transport concepts in other cities.

- *The Future of Trams* is an information design project that explains to the general public in plain language and with clear visuals what the upcoming complicated changes in the Helsinki tram system are and how to use the system.
- *Helsinki Central Library Oodi*, a major new public library in the Helsinki city centre, was developed with active participation of customers to design service concepts for a contemporary library and library of the future.

#### *Outcomes and partnerships:*

*Design Stories from Helsinki* encourages other players in Helsinki and in other cities worldwide to use design thinking as a creative force in cities. By disseminating best practices, the publication seeks to strengthen sustainable urban development.

*Design Stories from Helsinki:* <https://www.muotoilutarinat.fi/en/>

## Helsinki Design Path for Schools 2016

#### *Description:*

Design thinking in Helsinki is not only a tool for the public and private sectors to improve their operations, services and products. Design thinking is also a method for educating our children. It helps schools to meet their goals in developing transversal skills (21<sup>st</sup> century skills), such as learning to learn and participation. In essence, design thinking is a tool for problem solving to build a sustainable future.

Finland adopted a new national curriculum for comprehensive schools in 2016, emphasizing active involvement of students, meaningfulness and joy of learning, and school cultures promoting interaction between students and teachers. At that time, the City of Helsinki Education Department and Finnish design organizations produced a tool to be used in the development of schoolwork, *Helsinki Design Path for Schools*. This is a hands-on guide for applying the methods of design in schools. The guide is an instrument for solving everyday challenges and for developing instruction and learning environments.

Helsinki Design Path for Schools walks the users through the various stages of design thinking, explaining what each stage means and suggesting what concrete action to take.

1. **Challenge:** A design process starts with a challenge to solve. Illustrate the challenge, make lists of causes, shortages, expertise needed, who is affected and targets of action!
2. **Observation:** What attempts have there been to solve the challenge before? Visualize the challenge, interview key people, research, put yourself in the place of the user!
3. **Ideation:** This is the brainstorming stage. Record, document and illustrate ideas! Share ideas and gather feedback!
4. **Experimentation:** Ideas should be tested so that they can be refined. Collect experiences, ask for critique, produce and test prototypes, and study similar ideas and how they worked!
5. **Plan:** An idea can't be realized without a plan. Prepare models, drawings and definitions!
6. **Implementation:** What steps to take? What outside help do we need? Make lists of resources!

*The success of the Helsinki metropolitan City Bikes bike-share programme has exceeded expectations. On average, each bike is used for 9 journeys per day in Helsinki; the international average is 4 journeys.*

*Helsinki Design Path for Schools was co-designed together with teachers and key experts in education and design.*



7. **Evaluation:** A vital part of any design process is evaluation. How did we do? What could have been done differently? Discuss, compare, document, measure, publish!

**Outcomes and partnerships:**

Helsinki Design Path for Schools brought together key experts in education and design to co-create new applications of design thinking. By taking design thinking to schools and children, they expanded the relevance of creative approaches in society.

Helsinki Design Path for Schools: [https://www.hel.fi/static/liitteet/kanslia/Design\\_Path\\_for\\_Schools.pdf](https://www.hel.fi/static/liitteet/kanslia/Design_Path_for_Schools.pdf)

## Helsinki Participation Model and Participation Game 2017

**Description:**

The Helsinki City Strategy states that Helsinki strengthens its position as an international forerunner in inclusion and transparency. To achieve this strategic objective, Helsinki has built a model for public participation, which taps into the knowhow and skills of citizens and local communities. By integrating those with the capabilities of the City organization, as well as by enabling citizen activity and by ensuring equal opportunities for all to participate, Helsinki can build a better society, counteracting polarization and social exclusion of citizens.

The Helsinki City administration has co-designed a board game for City employees, entitled *Helsinki Participation Game*. The game board presents elements of public participation in the daily work of City employees, and the playing cards contain elements for engaging citizens. By playing the game, players gain better understanding of citizen engagement in the development of City services, and they can test different engagement methods. The development and active use of the game by diverse City units illustrate how the City utilizes design in a systemic change process.

An exhibition on display at the Helsinki City Hall during Helsinki Design Week 2018, *The City Shaped by People*, highlighted the

activities to develop City services with design and the people behind the design processes. The exhibition underscored how Helsinki integrates design, digitalization and continuous dialogue with citizens. International Discussion on *How to Increase Participation* was arranged in conjunction with the exhibition to the fellow design cities.

### “The players of Helsinki Participation Game are City staff but the winners are citizens.”

**Outcomes and partnerships:**

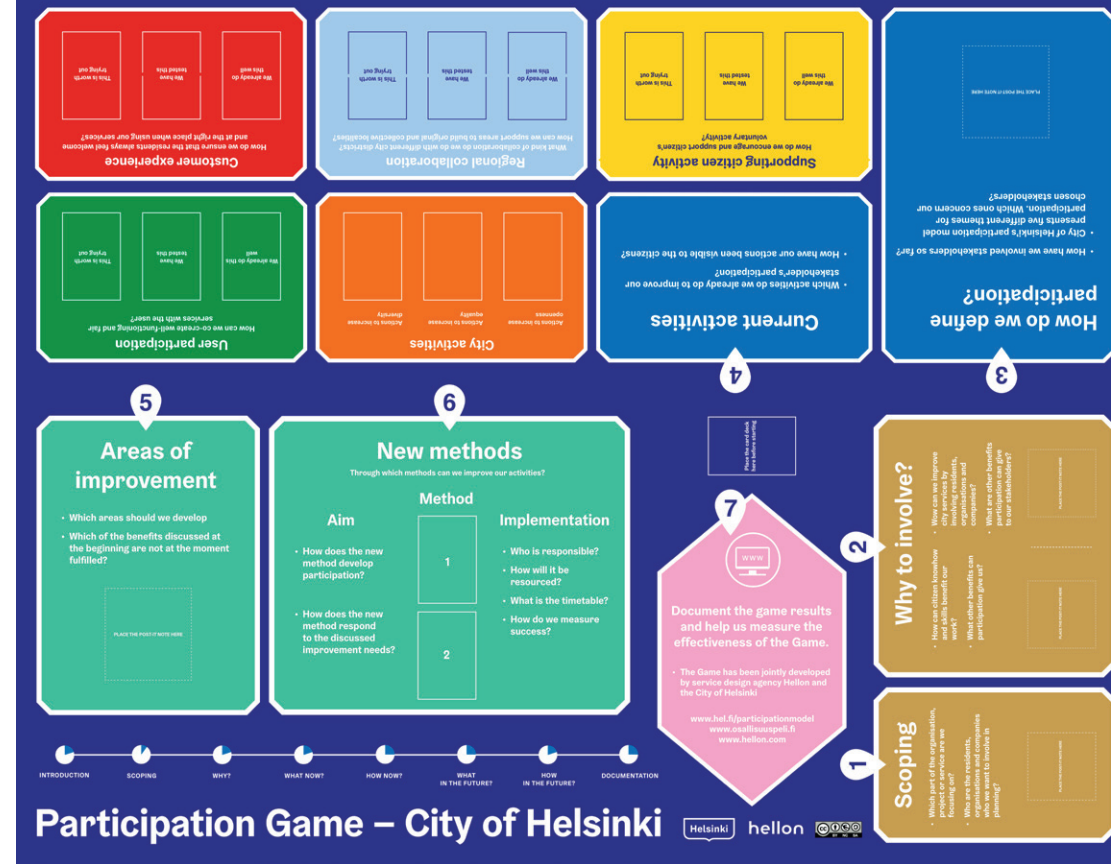
Helsinki Participation Game helps the Helsinki City staff to understand what public participation can be and how to apply citizen engagement methods in their work. Wide international interest in the game helps to increase awareness of the importance of open dialogue with citizens and how design can be used holistically to produce a public participation model. Helsinki has published Helsinki Participation Game and related materials under the Creative Commons Licence and shared them with several UCCN cities. Helsinki Participation Game is also available as a digital version, which can be used to realize the goals of participatory budgeting in Helsinki.

Helsinki Participation Game: <https://www.hel.fi/helsinki/en/administration/participate/channels/participation-model/participation-game/>

## Helsinki Lab 2017–2018

**Description:**

According to the Helsinki City Strategy, a good user experience of the city to its citizens is created through a combination of design, digitalization and dialogue. This strategic goal is pursued with the help of Helsinki Lab. The lab is both a developer community and an open city laboratory where various city development projects meet. The lab seeks to ensure the utilization of design and user orientation in development projects. The lab is a window to the use of design in the City organization and enables external partners to join City units for co-creation. Helsinki Lab has had an operational base in the Helsinki City Hall lobby, which has been an open working environment for the partners and citizens.



The City of Helsinki Participation Game helps City employees consider how operations and services could be developed in better co-operation with residents.

**Helsinki Lab:**

- Promotes design thinking in city development
- Provides a Help Desk for City of Helsinki units in the procurement of professional design services
- Serves as a platform for knowledge sharing and learning
- Combines design, digitalization and dialogue in order to create a better user experience of the city

**Helsinki Lab spearhead projects:**

- **City Hall lobby:** The co-design project creates a new concept for the area of entrance to the City Government building;

how to make the area an open, inclusive and engaging urban space for citizens, stakeholders and the staff.

- **Social and public health care services:** The service design project creates a new model for designing spaces for the needs of City social and health care services ensuring customer orientation and the best possible user experience.
- **Education:** The co-design project produces a manual of phenomenon-based learning through cooperation among students, teachers and parents. The project analyses good practices and compiles experiences with phenomenon-based learning.
- **Education:** The service design project has produced a digital path to enter



school afternoon activities. The digital path is a prototype that can be used as a model to design digital services in other education services.

**“Helsinki combines design, digitalization and dialogue to create a good user experience of the city to its citizens.” – Helsinki City Strategy**

The City of Helsinki applies a Service Design Partnership Agreement 2018–2022 in the procurement of professional design services that enable City units to respond to citizen needs under the pressures of our fast-moving world. The goals with the use of service design

providers are to produce a better user experience of City services, to produce increasingly functional and user-oriented public spaces, to improve City processes, and to support the City’s organizational change.

*Outcomes and partnerships:*

Helsinki Lab offers counselling to City units on how to use design for the best impact. The lab has selected design service providers for use by all City units. It promotes the use of design by advocating the added value produced by design, and it collaborates with universities. Helsinki has exchanged benchmark information related to Helsinki Lab with several UCCN cities.

*Helsinki Lab is both a developer community and an open city laboratory where various city development projects meet.*



# Major initiatives implemented by Helsinki through inter-city co-operation

## *Helsinki at Bilbao Design Week 2015:*

### Case study Helsinki: How to make better cities

*Description:*

Bilbao became a member of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network and a UNESCO City of Design together with Helsinki in 2014. Bilbao hosts an annual design week entitled Bilbao Bizkaia D Week, which focuses on creative industries at large. Helsinki attended the first edition of the design week in 2015, invited to the week as a guest of honour to present Design Stories from Helsinki – the role of design in making better cities. Helsinki contributed to Bilbao Bizkaia D Week 2015 by organizing a professional seminar, Cities & Design 2015, under the theme Design Stories from Helsinki, as well as a Helsinki food event.

“Helsinki is changing and design is the key driver for the change,” said **Laura Aalto**, Director of Communications for International Design Foundation’s Design Driven City programme, in her address to the Cities & Design 2015 seminar. She shared with the audience Helsinki’s experiences in the powerful role of design in urban development and presented the Helsinki region’s service design projects.

Cities & Design 2015 seminar contributions from Helsinki:

- *Helsinki – A Design Driven City*, **Laura Aalto** and **Anu Mänttari**, Senior Specialist and Coordinator of UNESCO City of Design at the City of Helsinki Office of Economic Development
- *Design in the City of Helsinki*, **Pablo Riquelme**, a City Designer for Design Driven City, International Design Foundation
- *Building the Future – Architecture and Design Education to Children*, **Pihla Meskanen**, Director, Arkki School of Architecture for Children and Youth
- *Helsinki Design Week – Demonstrating the Change*, **Kari Korkman**, CEO and Founder, Helsinki Design Week
- *Designing the New Central Library of Helsinki*, **Pirjo Lipasti**, City of Helsinki

*Helsinki Cultural Dinner*, the Helsinki food event at Bilbao Bizkaia D Week 2015, was held at a pop-up restaurant at the Azkuna Zentroa cultural centre as part of the design week’s *Urban Cities* programme. The event was organized by Cultural Kitchen of Finland. It presented Finnish creative talent ranging from culinary arts to interior design to music. The dinner gathered together opinion leaders representing design and urban culture.

The menu was created by Finnish Master Chef **Sami Tallberg** known for his creative use of wild herbs, and the audience was entertained by singer-songwriter **lisa**. The design partners

were highly visible at the event. The dining experience was enhanced by design items from Lokal, unique LED lights by **Marjukka Takala**, Diina shot glasses by **Markku Salo**, and Finlayson textiles used to create a costume for Lisa, napkins and goodie bags.

*Outcomes and international collaboration:* The event highlighted the variety of Helsinki's creative sectors. They joined forces with local creators and, for instance, the food served at Helsinki Cultural Dinner was prepared by local chefs. Master Chef Tallberg also held a Fusion Gastronomic Master Class for the students of the culinary schools in Bizkaia.

**Helsinki at Singapore Week of Innovation and Technology 2017:**

## Designing better life: Helsinki events focusing on solutions

*Description:* Helsinki joined the Singapore Week of Innovation and Technology SWITCH of 2017, presenting Helsinki's strengths in Smart & Clean, the maritime technology, the health technology, education and design in a four-day series of B2B events themed *Helsinki – Designing Better Life*, 18–21 September 2017. The events were joined by close to 100 Finnish enterprises, half of them startups, which presented themselves at Slush Singapore, an extension of the Slush mega event for startups and investors held annually in Helsinki. The Helsinki events consisted of discussion forums, workshops and seminars, which brought together leaders and experts from Helsinki and Singapore.

Helsinki presented its strengths in design together with Singapore, both UNESCO Cities of Design, at a SWITCH seminar entitled *Designing Future Cities: Service Design and Design Thinking for a Better Life*. The half-day seminar on 20 September 2017 was organized by the Executive Education Academy of Aalto University of Finland, the City of Helsinki and the DesignSingapore Council. It was aimed at producing concrete ideas and sharing solutions for building a better future in cities with the help of design.

According to the organizers of the Designing Future Cities seminar, "New ways of using design have become a topic in public sector development. Fully embracing the creative and transformative power of design requires the courage to do things differently, including using trial and error. Harnessing design methods and thinking has a great potential in developing cities and public services. The ultimate goal is to create a better life."

Helsinki and Singapore focused in their seminar presentations on the role of design in the evolution of their cities. Helsinki presented case studies highlighting the ways in which Helsinki has systematically used design to transform the city. The DesignSingapore Council presented the new vision for Singapore, laid out in the DesignSingapore Council's Design 2025 master plan, and the role of design in the plan.

*Outcomes and international collaboration:* Helsinki's presentation at SWITCH raised awareness of the varied creative solutions available to cities in preparing themselves for the future. Helsinki and Singapore strengthened their mutual relations through the collaboration of the DesignSingapore Council and Aalto University.

## Design education in Helsinki: Equipping children for the future

*Description:* In addition to Helsinki schools, a number of Finnish design-related organizations have advanced various design education initiatives in Helsinki during 2014–2018. These organizations include the City of Helsinki's Annantalo Cultural Centre for Children and Young People, Arkki School of Architecture for Children and Young People, The Finnish Association of Design Learning Suomu, Design Museum, Museum of Finnish Architecture and The Finnish Association of Designers Ornamo. Helsinki Design Week organizes a major design education programme annually in connection with the festival.

# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



The City of Helsinki seeks to integrate design education into the comprehensive school curriculum. The City school administration emphasizes that design thinking increases students' problem solving abilities and develops creativity. Design thinking helps to improve learning environments, teaching and the content of subject studies. So design helps schools to provide students with the skills that they will need in the future's workplace and society.

Design education in Helsinki comprehensive schools is not limited to visual art studies but permeates all areas of schoolwork. For example, a Helsinki school class used design methods to produce a plan and symbol for the school's sports day.

The Arabia Comprehensive School of Helsinki has a special emphasis on design. The school organizes design-focused afternoon activities for 3–6 graders, "Children's Academy of Design". Among its many projects, the academy held an ideation session on the design of hospital clothing for New Children's Hospital in Helsinki at the Habitare design fair of

2015. The Arabia Comprehensive School is a partner school of Design Museum of Finland; for example, the school joined the production of the museum exhibition *Century of the Child* (2015–2016).

Helsinki Design Week 2015 took designers to schools in an effort to promote design education for 3–6 graders, and Design Museum offered schools free-of-charge programme during the week. Helsinki Design Week 2015 reached tens of comprehensive schools and hundreds of students.

Over years, Helsinki Design Week has systematically stepped up its offering for children and young people. The 2018 design week expanded the offering into a full Children's Design Week, which included creative content for children, raised their awareness of the built environment and promoted design education. Events were organized throughout the city including the City Hall.

Phenomenon-based learning is a key learning concept in Helsinki comprehensive schools. (This is learning in which students study



a theme in a holistic manner rather than through a subject-based approach.) The Executive Director of the City of Helsinki Education Division, **Liisa Pohjolainen**, was presented with the highly esteemed Helsinki Design Award in 2017 for promoting phenomenon-based learning in Helsinki. Helsinki is currently producing a manual of phenomenon-based learning through a co-design process.

*Outcomes and international collaboration:* Helsinki attracts global interest as one of the leaders in education. Helsinki actively

presents its education policies, practices and successes on the global arena, such as in connection with SWITCH 2017 in Singapore. To disseminate best practices in education, Helsinki launched Helsinki Education Week in November 2018 in partnership with HundrED, an organization that advances excellence in education. By integrating design education into its school curriculum and by taking its best practices around the world, Helsinki helps to make design part of the toolkit that equips the children of the world for the future.

*The Children's Urban Research Lab used the City Hall lobby as a classroom during Helsinki Design Week 2018. The lab explored the surrounding urban environment as designers do in order to mold behaviour, movement and actions.*



# Helsinki's proposed action plan for the next four years

## ***Design is embedded in the Helsinki City Strategy 2017–2021:***

Helsinki's vision is to be the world's most functional city. In pursuing this vision, Helsinki seeks to create the best conditions possible for urban life. A functional city means concrete actions and choices that make everyday life smoother.

Comprehensive understanding of design and its possibilities is among the key qualities that create conditions both for a stimulating everyday life in Helsinki and for finding solutions to major global challenges.

Design is a significant distinguishing factor that makes Helsinki stand out internationally. Helsinki strengthens its international profile as a design metropolis. A good user experience of the city to its citizens is created through a combination of design, digitalization and dialogue.

## **Local initiatives with international dimensions**

### *Helsinki Central Library Oodi:*

Library Oodi is a major new public library located in the heart of Helsinki. The library is the flagship of the Helsinki City Library function. Oodi will both serve as a traditional library and foster digital culture. Many services rely on robotics and artificial intelligence. The library building is an architectural landmark designed by ALA Architects of Helsinki. The design was

the winning entry to an open international competition that received **544** proposals.

In addition to producing an architecturally outstanding public library, the library project has focused on producing an inclusive, user-oriented urban space and new types of library services. The library functions and services are outcomes of a long design process, which was based on design thinking and incorporated service design.

Representatives of a broad range of communities from education to digitalization as well as opinion leaders gathered together in workshops to brainstorm for library contents. The feedback and ideas were analysed and utilized to draw up the library project plan.

Helsinki City Library invited citizens to share their wishes for library services, for example, by posting them on a Tree of Dreams in 2012. In the same year, Helsinki City Library tested participatory budgeting, in which residents could decide which pilot test could receive 100,000 euros in funding. Citizens were invited to propose a name for the library, and the proposal Oodi was selected. Friends of the Central Library was a participatory pilot project for community development, in which 28 user developers offered their inputs for the library's design from the user perspective.

To finalize the library concept, service design professionals produced spatial solutions and plans to bundle services. Service design was used in the design of the signs and the furniture, as well as the placement of the library's materials.



Citizens' dreams helped build the new library long before the building construction started.

**“I began experiencing ownership of the city, and for the first time in my life I felt I was truly a Helsinkian.”**  
– A Friend of the Central Library

### *Museum of architecture and design:*

A major new architecture and design museum complex is expected to go under development in Helsinki. The new museum would be the focal point of presenting Finland's achievements in architecture and design. It would replace the current Museum of Finnish Architecture and Design Museum. The new museum is proposed to be located in a new building.

The objectives of the new museum should be to attract and to speak to wide audiences; to act as a databank for architecture and design; to act as a learning environment; to be a new visitor attraction in Helsinki; and to inspire dialogue. The museum would benefit all of Finland and the global community by preserving

the Finnish architectural and design heritage, through education, and by promoting the power of architecture and design to affect change.

### *Helsinki Design Week:*

Helsinki Design Week is an annual design festival, which presents design on a broad basis – architecture, fashion, industrial design, service design and urban design. The design week comprises more than 250 events and attracts a total audience of up to 170,000. The programme is produced by Helsinki Design Week in cooperation with other design organizations, educational institutions, businesses, designers and the City of Helsinki. Apart from the festival, Helsinki Design Week organizes domestic and international events, and it publishes Helsinki Design Weekly, which is an international online publication. Helsinki Design Week promotes international exchange and supports the role of Helsinki as a global forerunner in design.

### *Helsinki Biennale:*

Helsinki has established an international maritime biennale for contemporary art, to be held on Helsinki seafronts and islands. The first edition of Helsinki Biennale will be held in 2020. The location will be Vallisaari, a recreational island in Helsinki. Helsinki Biennale is curated by Helsinki Art Museum HAM. “Helsinki Biennale will strengthen Helsinki as a versatile and international cultural city,” says HAM Director **Maija Tanninen-Mattila**.

The biennale will invite artists to create temporary artworks. The maritime biennale displays will be complemented by a programme produced by several other organizations and implemented throughout the city.

## **Initiatives at international level**

### ***UNESCO Cities of Design – International collaboration in design education***

#### *Background:*

Recent years have witnessed a growing interest in design as a promising pedagogical framework to meet the requirements of 21st century learning (Heikkilä, Vuopala & Leinonen, 2017; Vartiainen, 2014). Current research (Vartiainen 2014; Griffin et. al. 2012) suggests that learning should be more active, evidence-based and confront real-life situations and problems.

The Cities of Helsinki and Kobe of Japan have initiated international collaboration aiming to “create more creative and sustainable cities by nurturing and utilizing the design mindsets of children”. The development of the collaboration started in Krakow in 2018 and will continue throughout 2019. The partners have begun the collaboration by collecting case studies in order to share information on design education and learning with participating cities. The focus is on children and youth. The cities are requested to share experiences and lessons learned from each other. The case studies will also underscore that design education is a means to work towards a more sustainable

future, as presented in The UN Sustainable Development Goals.

By collecting case studies and by organizing a “teachers and educators” meeting in the spring 2019, the cities can initiate new design education “city experiments” with schools in Creative Cities. The experiments will be a powerful way of sharing experiences and expertise within Creative Cities. These experiments, which could also be called urban laboratories, will give rise to a new way of thinking about the possibilities offered by design to education systems, as well as highlighting the potential of urban areas used as learning environments. For instance, the whole city is viewed as one big classroom in Helsinki, and design thinking is a tool for and an essential part of phenomenon-based learning.

**“The basic idea of design and design-driven education is that students and teachers participate together in the planning, implementation and evaluation of learning projects. It emphasizes the comprehensive, phenomena-based and creative nature of learning and recognises that ICT can enhance these kinds of learning processes.”**  
– Source: Heikkilä, A-S., Vuopala, E., & Leinonen, T. 2017

The project will be presented to all Creative Cities as an example of new ways of using creativity to build a more sustainable future. The case studies and lessons learned will be published in 2019 at <https://www.designcities.net/>.

## **Estimated budget to implement proposed action plan**

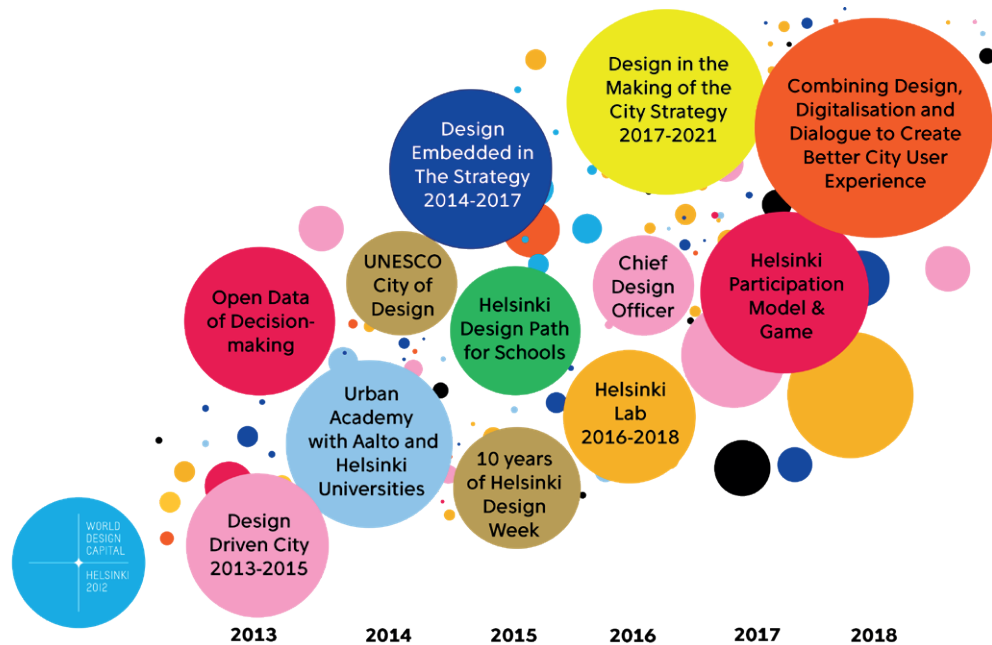
The City of Helsinki budgeting is done one year at the time according to the resources allocated to the City. The use of design, and



thus the UNESCO City of Design operations, are embedded within the development projects done by the different disciplines of the City organization. The development by using design, digitalization and dialogue as tools are supported by the services of Helsinki Lab. The proposed action plan highlights some of the functions and creative development related to design. The annual approximate budgets are to be confirmed:

- Helsinki Design Week: City of Helsinki annual support EUR 80,000
- International Collaboration (including topics such as Design Education): EUR 30,000
- Design projects including Helsinki Lab: EUR 500,000

Key highlights of Helsinki's journey as a design city.



# Plan for communications and awareness

Design and architecture have always been key themes in the City of Helsinki communications and public affairs. In recent years, service design and design thinking have been increasingly brought up in the City communication channels, which include the following:

- [www.hel.fi](http://www.hel.fi): The City of Helsinki website covers comprehensively all affairs of the City and includes an active newsroom covering current affairs and the latest news from the City. The main site is published in three languages (Finnish, Swedish and English), and there is content for immigrants and travellers in close to ten other languages.
- [www.hel.fi/designhelsinki](http://www.hel.fi/designhelsinki): The Design Helsinki pages compile all design-related aspects of Helsinki into a compact presentation.
- [www.myhelsinki.fi](http://www.myhelsinki.fi): The website is maintained by the City of Helsinki marketing company Helsinki Marketing. It provides information on Helsinki to visitors and international audiences. Design is featured prominently on the site.
- [www.muotoilutarinat.fi](http://www.muotoilutarinat.fi): Design Stories from Helsinki is a web publication that describes through case studies and with articles how design can change the world.

The City of Helsinki social media channels are used extensively to publish design-related content:

- Twitter: [twitter.com/helviestinta](https://twitter.com/helviestinta) and [twitter.com/elohelsinki](https://twitter.com/elohelsinki)
- Facebook: City of Helsinki

The City of Helsinki produces several print publications that include design content:

- *Helsinki-info* (to be named *Helsinki-lehti* as of 1 January 2019) is a quarterly newspaper distributed to all Helsinki households free of charge.
- *Helsingin Henki* is the City's employee magazine.
- *Helsinki News* is an international news bulletin.
- Helsinki Marketing produces various publications for international audiences.

The City of Helsinki conducts international media relations campaigns and hires media agents for selected international markets. Design and architecture, as well as other creative sectors of Helsinki, are constant and important themes in the media relations work.

Many design partners of the City of Helsinki have their own online communication channels:

- [designdistrict.fi](http://designdistrict.fi): Design District is a district of Helsinki with a high concentration of design.
- [www.helsinki.designweek.com](http://www.helsinki.designweek.com): The website of Helsinki Design Week is also home to Helsinki Design Weekly, an online international design publication.
- [www.ornamo.fi](http://www.ornamo.fi): This is a website of The Finnish Association of Designers Ornamo.
- [www.designcities.net](http://www.designcities.net): Helsinki as a City of Design is featured on the website of the Cities of Design Network.



# Annex

## Creative City Helsinki

### Statistical highlights

Helsinki is a city that belongs to citizens. It is a unique mixture of urban life and nature:

- **40%** of land area is publicly accessible green areas
- **123 km** of shoreline, almost all of it publicly accessible

Helsinki serves its population of **643,000** and **1,181,000** international visitors per year with Finland's highest concentration of culture:

- **3** national museums
- **70** other museums
- **69** listed theaters
- **9** multi-use cultural centres
- Over **200** annual cultural festivals and events
- **40** publicly funded libraries
- **7,114,000** library loans every year

### Helsinki as the creative hub of Finland

Depending on the criteria used in the definition, Helsinki is home to **27%** of enterprises, **30%** of personnel and **33%** of sales (2016) in the Finnish creative sector. The fields most heavily focused in Helsinki are film, television, radio, graphic design and industrial design. The definition of creative industries in Finland differs highly from the definitions used in other countries, so reliable comparative data is not available.

### Design sector in Finland

Finland's latest national design programme of 2013 does not provide a definition of design but states that the concept of design has expanded from traditional design, that is, product and industrial design, to services and other areas included in intangible property rights.

The Finnish Association of Designers Ornamo states that the use of design is expanding to all sectors of the economy, which is manifest as growth in intangible design and as growth in strategic design in service industries. Growth areas making efficient use of design include digital content and game development. Service design, a concept that has emerged to general awareness in the 2000s, emphasizes the use of design thinking in service production. Helsinki has been a pioneer among cities in the use of service design in the public sector.

The following numeric data from 2016 on the Finnish design sector are from a survey by Ornamo:

The total sales of Finnish design enterprises were **EUR 10.7 billion** in 2016. The trend is clear: services show growth, manufacture shows a decline.

Segments of Finnish design sector from biggest to smallest measured by total sales in 2016:

- Digital design, total sales EUR 6.65 billion (up by 82.5% from the previous year)
- Architecture and landscape management, total sales EUR 635 million (up by 18.3%)
- Design services providers, total sales EUR 233 million (up by 38.2%)
- Art, total sales EUR 75 million (up by 16.4%)
- Design products manufacture, total sales EUR 3.1 million (down by 3%, the only segment of the design sector that showed a decline)

Finnish design enterprises are small in size. **71%** of the enterprises employed less than **2** persons on average in 2016. **8%** of the enterprises employed **10** people or more. All industries included in the Finnish design sector employed a total of **55,000** people, according to Statistics Finland. This was **2.3%** of the total workforce.



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City of Helsinki  
City Executive Office  
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