Updating collaborative planning for self-organising cities

Maija Faehnle
maija.faehnle@syke.fi

Suomen ympäristökeskus
Finlands miljöcentral
Finnish Environment Institute

The civil society has changed

↓

The ways of thinking about citizens' roles and potentials in urban development must be updated

↓

Application of the revised thinking in planning practices

Suomen ympäristökeskus
Finlands miljöcentral
Finnish Environment Institute

The civil society has changed

- **Digitalization** has brought people multiple opportunities to start developing their societies directly by themselves

- Internet + social media → actor networks

- Collaborative consumption, sharing

- Ecological turn: recycling, circular economy, climate action

- Changing work: Start-up spirit, social and ethical entrepreneurship

- Disappointment with politics → direct action

Suomen ympäristökeskus
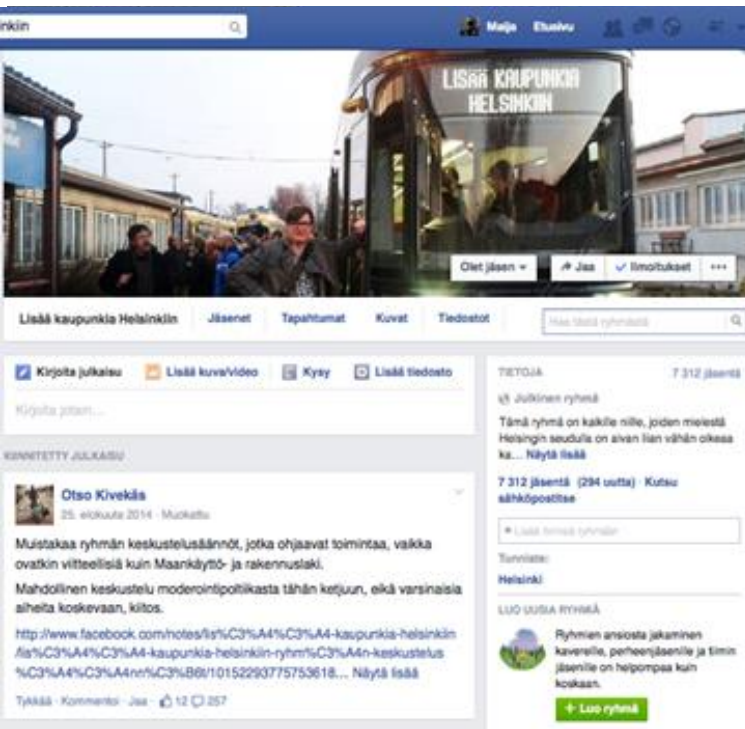Finlands miljöcentral
Finnish Environment Institute

Activism on the rise

- From resident and consumer to **multiple roles**: service provider, community manager, platform manager, mediator, funder, co-creator, developer, civic designer/planner, hacktivist…

- Self-organised **peer networks**, usually avoiding hierarchies (at least in principle)

Civic activism on urban planning

- Social media YIMBY groups – suggestions, discussion, argumentation
- Alternative planning studies and plans – including engagement of peers
- Hacktivism – creative use of data for apps, visualizations

FB group 'Lisää kaupunkia Helsinkiin' – making Helsinki more urban, 21 500 members

Based on our research the group has:

- Changed the planning context by making urbanism a phenomenon

- Helped the city planning department in implementing densification

- Enriched the planning discussion and widened the knowledge base

- Presented a new model for political action

Photo: Mikko Särelä

Urban Helsinki: proposals for Hernesaari

Suggestion by
the City of
Helsinki:
6000 residents

urbanhelsinki.fi/project/hernesaari/

Plan B: 10 000 residents

Plan C: 15 000 residents

More in FInnish: https://www.paikallisaktivismi.fi/fi/varjokaava-kohtaa-kaavoittajan-tapaus-hernesaari

Suomen ympäristökeskus
Finlands miljöcentral
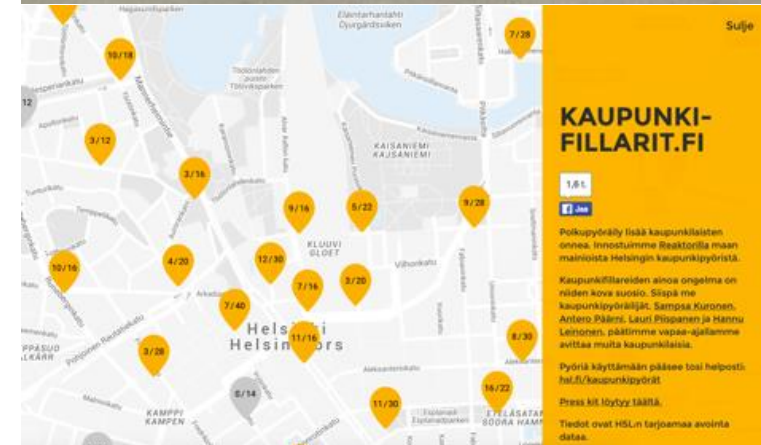Finnish Environment Institute

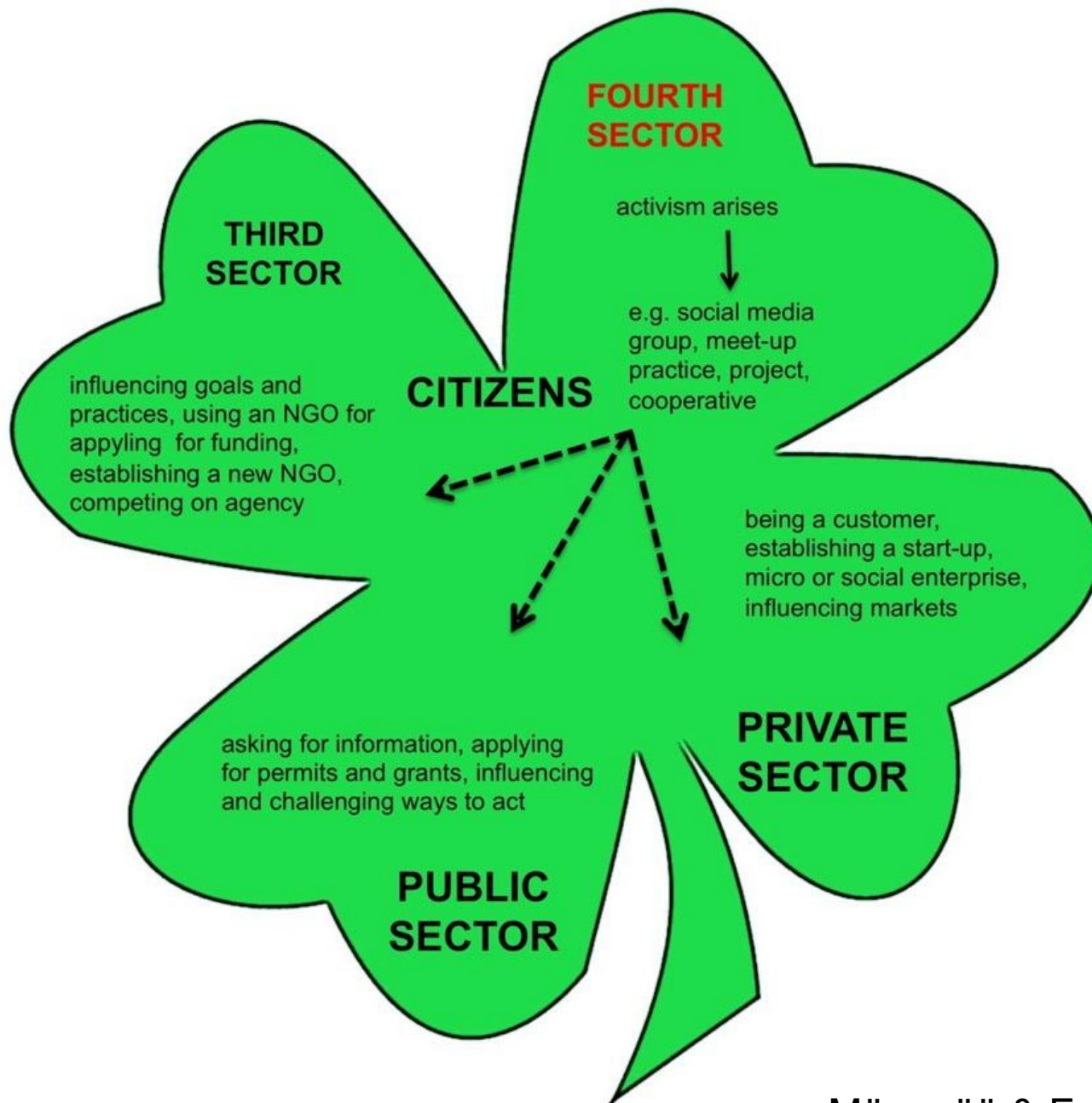# URBAN HELSINKI

LAAKSON
SAIRAALA-ALUE

(Urban) Civic activism

- Self-organized, proactive and constructive **co-action**, typically outside of formal NGOs

- Primarily **DIY-action** instead of orienting towards decision making system or political engagement

- 'Let's just do it!' attitude (Pulkkinen 2014)

- Based on networking in social media and **internet** solutions

- People-driven bottom-up urbanism; takes place in urban space or is related to cities and urban life

A system level view: rise of the 4th sector

- NGOs (the third sector) still important, but nowadays much   of all civic action organized in other ways

- The non-NGO-based civic actors worth recognizing as the fourth sector

- But **any actor** can have **fourth sector type of action**

- Fourth sector type of action can take place between public, private and NGO sector, and blur their borders

Suomen ympäristökeskus
Finlands miljöcentral
Finnish Environment Institute

Mäenpää & Faehnle 2021

Suomen ympäristökeskus
Finlands miljöcentral
Finnish Environment Institute

Types of civic action - characteristics

Fourth sector type of action	Traditional NGO action
Organisation: for example a social media group only	Organisation: NGO
Social media essential	Social media as extra
Influencing: hacker attitude	Influencing through official planning and decision-making
Events, action, DIY	Meetings, statements
Sense of community	Power to influence
Networking, enterprises etc.	Partnership with municipality
Openness, sharing	Representativeness
Visibility	Continuity
Momentariness	Controlled development
Avoiding hierarchies	Hierarchy
Drive to act, creation of new	Doing because that's what's done in the past
Proactivity, YIMBY	Also counter-action, NIMBY

Mäenpää & Faehnle 2021

Civic engagement

Traditional thinking

- To get engaged with the society, citizens must above all have opportunities to influence the official planning and political decision-making by the city government.

Civic engagement rethought

- Engagement can be created in **multiple processes,** through **multiple roles**. Opportunities to influence the official planning and decision-making are still important for many, but engagement can also arise when people help each other, provide services, contribute to their community, even fund local projects, and so on. Activisms create preconditions for the less active to get engaged as well.

Faehnle et al. 2017

Suomen ympäristökeskus
Finlands miljöcentral
Finnish Environment Institute

Hybrid governing

The government
- identifies fourth sector as specific group of actors
- seeks ways to align and match governmental activities with actions of the fourth sector, by experimenting and learning

Mäenpää & Faehnle 2018

Relationship between activisms and administration

Sustainable utilisation of activisms is an established, dynamic part of administrative activities (including the top levels of the 1–8 scale)

Relationship of activisms and administration developed on a determined and long-term basis

Activisms recognised and utilised in a routine manner

Activisms recognised in goal-setting; administration aims for active use of resources

Activisms and resources occasionally recognised and utilised

No attention to activisms

Levels of collaboration

8 Activisms and administration form an integrated system

7 Continuous collaboration

6 Project-based cooperation

5 Administration's support to activism

4 Dialogue between activism and administration
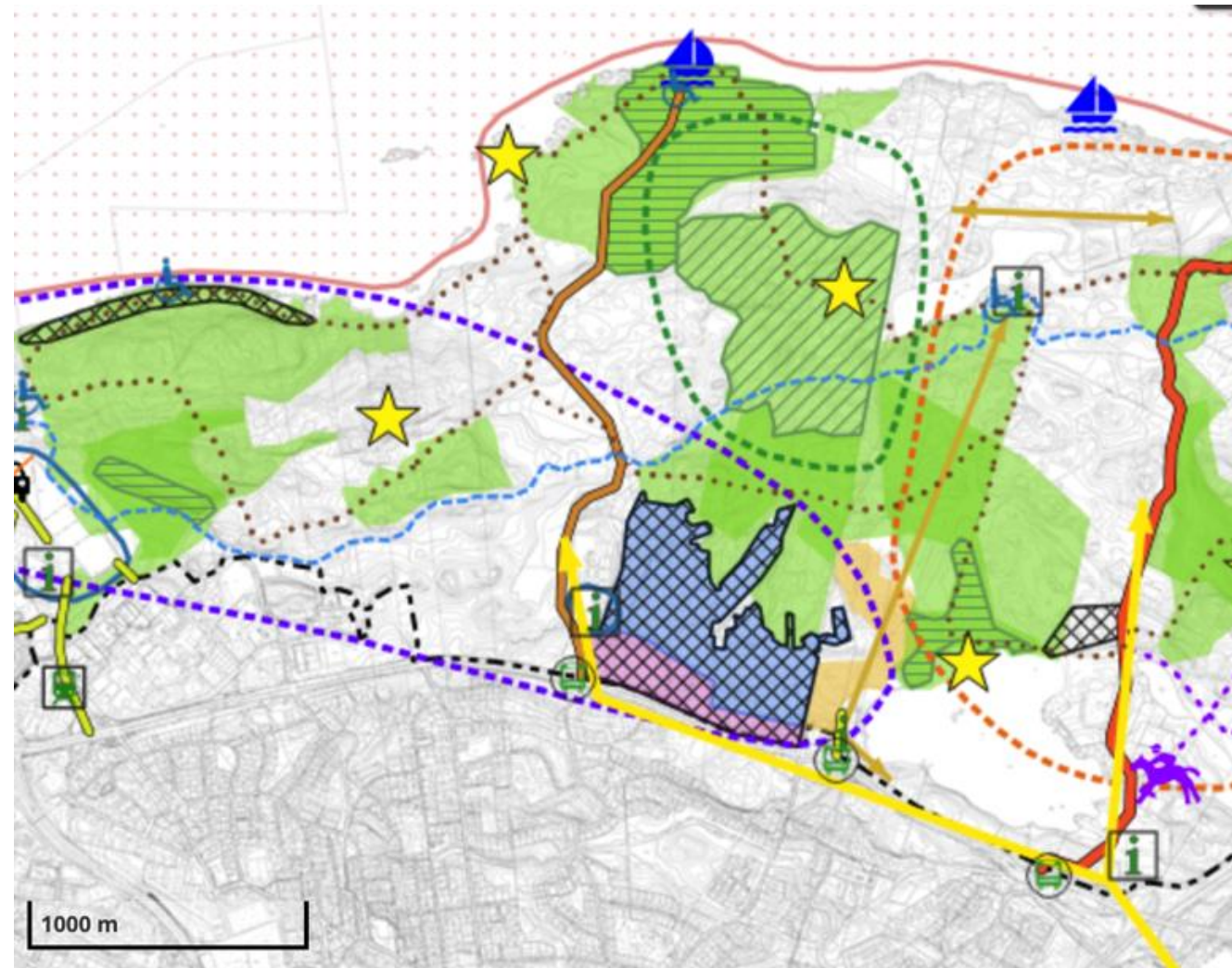
3 Active communication especially to activists

2 Activism as a source of information

1 Activism on its own

FIGURE 3.
Development of the relationship between activisms and city administration, and the levels of co-operation in hybrid governance.

Kauppi-Niihama area, Tampere: Civic planners invited to create plans as material for the official planning processes

https://www.tampere.fi/asuminen-ja-ymparisto/kaavoitus/yleiskaavoitus/hankkeet/kauppi-niihama.html

https://kartat.tampere.fi/suunnitelmakoonti/strateginenkartta.php

Supporting alternative planning

- **Timing**: make the planning task and the basic data open immediately and announce it in social media

- **Guidance**: design the process of **handling** and **using** alternative plans and give guidance for the officials concerned

- **Fairness**: develop fairness practices, for example 'support packages' for co-planning, ways to balance different voices

- **Give reward**: show appreciation for citizen planners e.g. in city media. Tell how their activism made sense!

- Notice alternative plans **as worth more than 'one of the many individual views'** – take them to the planning board

Suomen ympäristökeskus
Finlands miljöcentral
Finnish Environment Institute

Criteria for supporting civic action

- "We can't support you because then we would need to support all the others too and there are no resources for that"

- But activism flourishes differently in different areas and needs differ as well

- How about using new support criteria?

'Our suggestion:

- Openness, commoning

- Inclusiveness

- Self-correction

- Synergy benefits

- Innovativeness

- Scalability

- (In compliance with the city's stratgic goals)

(Mäenpää & Faehnle 2021)

Suomen ympäristökeskus
Finlands miljöcentral
Finnish Environment Institute

Forthcoming: civic action and resilience

- In a VNTEAS project* we will study (2023-2025) the role of local civic action in enhancing resilience in the society; regional differences; ways to support

- Urban planners could use the results in developing their collaboration with civic actors; approaching them and themselves as part of an actor ecosystem affecting resiliece of the city and its communities in the long run

*Kansa osaa, sopeutuu ja muuntaa! Paikallinen kansalaistoiminta yhteiskunnan resilienssin lisääjänä
https://tietokayttoon.fi/-/kansa-osaa-sopeutuu-ja-muuntaa-paikallinen-kansalaistoiminta-yhteiskunnan-resilienssin-lisaajana

Suomen ympäristökeskus
Finlands miljöcentral
Finnish Environment Institute

Forthcoming: check-list for collaboration between planning and schools

- In Urgent* project we studied how schools and urban and regional palnnig could collaborate: young people participating in planning as part of their education

- Practical output: check-list for teachers, planners and their managers for designing, implementing and developing school-planning-collaboration
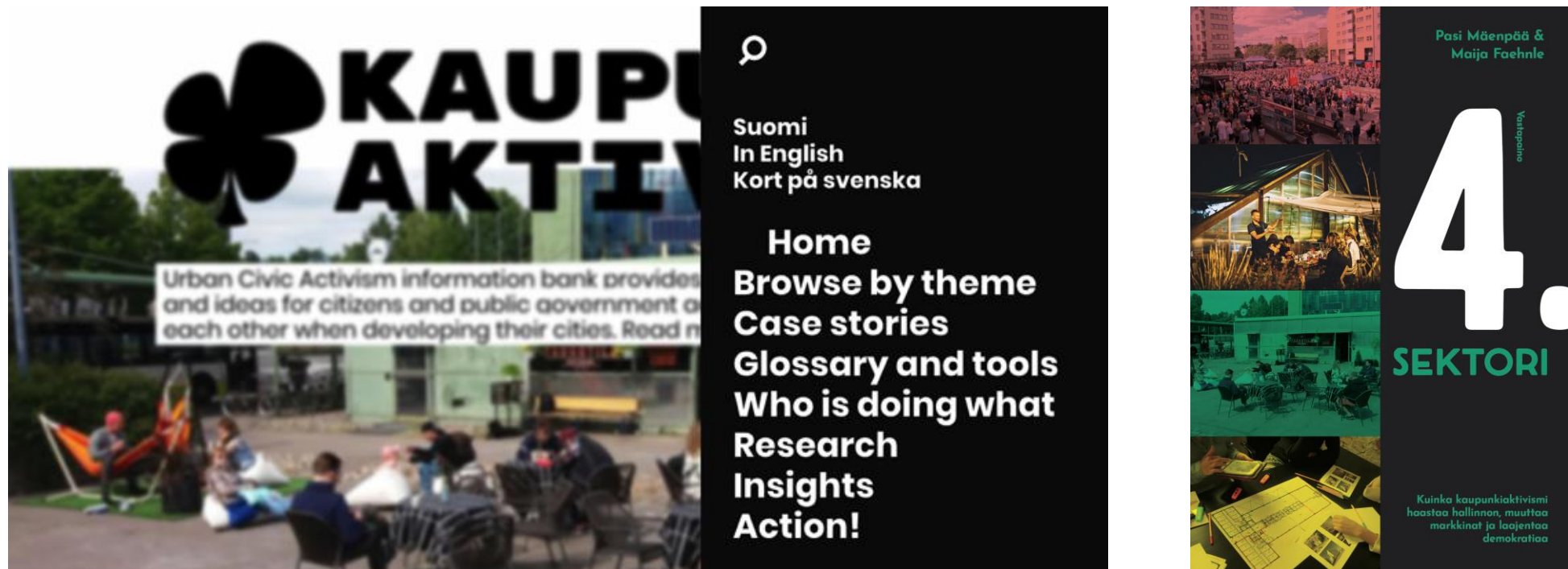

*Urban and regional planning with the young generation - collective and intergenerational learning encouraging sustainability transformations

www.syke.fi/projects/urgent

Suomen ympäristökeskus
Finlands miljöcentral
Finnish Environment Institute

Paikallisaktivismi.fi – information bank

- Helps find ways to act so that the resouces of citizens can benefit the community in a fair and sustainable way

- Knowledge, tools, ideas, visions to support above all public authorities, and also civic actors in their actions for urban development

Planning cities with self-organising citizens – key points

- Treat citizens as **humans**, and respect and use them as **resource**

- Make civic activists feel welcome. Remember **openness**!

- Notice the **multiple roles** of people and the related resources, in all stages of planning

- Inform citizens about the planning task **immediately when possible**

- Think about interaction and collaborative activities **long term**

- How does a planning process influence the **collaboration capacity** in the future?

- How do cities manage their relations with the civil society?

Suomen ympäristökeskus
Finlands miljöcentral
Finnish Environment Institute

Project: Civic activism as resource for the metropolis

- University of Helsinki, Department of Social Research 2015−2017

- Pasi Mäenpää & Maija Faehnle

- How does civic activism contribute to the development of cities? How could cities and state organizations utilise and support it?

- Focus on ecological sustainability, local innovations, local communities and civic engagement

- Advocative action research: working together with activists and authorities by identifying and solving their problems

- Partners: Cities of Helsinki, Espoo, Vantaa, and Lahti; Ministries of Environment, Finance, and Justice; The Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, The Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland, Finnish Environment Institute

- Funding: Helsinki Metropolitan Region Urban Research Program, The Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland, The Finnish Cultural Foundation/Uusimaa Regional fund, The Fund of Heikki von Hertzen, The Finnish Association of Non-fiction Writers, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Finance, SITRA

Publications in English

- Rantanen, A. & Faehnle, M. 2017. Self-organisation challenging institutional planning: towards a new urban research and planning paradigm – a Finnish review. The Finnish Journal of Urban Studies 55:3.

- Faehnle, M., Mäenpää, P., Blomberg, J., Schulman, H. 2017. Civic engagement 3.0 – Reconsidering the roles of citizens in city-making. The Finnish Journal of Urban Studies 55:3.

- Mäenpää, P. & Faehnle, M. 2017. Civic activism as a resource for cities. Helsinki Quarterly 1/2017, 68-81.

- Mäenpää, P. & Faehnle, M. 2018. Urban civic activism: solutions for the governance of a self-organising urban community. Helsinki Quarterly 2/2018, 38-45.

- Mäenpää, P. & Faehnle, M. 2017. The fourth sector is reconstructing the society. Yimbycon blog post 5, yimbycon.com.

Suomen ympäristökeskus
Finlands miljöcentral
Finnish Environment Institute

Publications in Finnish

- Mäenpää, P. & Faehnle, M. 2022. Kaupunkiaktivismi ja demokratiaa uudistava neljäs sektori. In: Tapio, Mari & Wevelsiep, Anneliina (toim.) Kansalaiset, toimikaa! Kansalaistoiminta 2020-luvulla. Sivistysliitto Kansalaisfoorumi, 32-47.

- **Mäenpää, P. & Faehnle, M. 2021. Neljäs sektori - Kuinka kaupunkiaktivismi haastaa hallinnon, muuttaa markkinat ja laajentaa demokratiaa. Vastapaino. Book collecting the results of the project.** Summary: https://www2.helsinki.fi/fi/kaupunkitutkimusinstituutti/kaupunkiaktivismi-haastaa-hallinnon-muuttaa-markkinat-ja-laajentaa-demokratiaa

- Mäenpää P. & Faehnle, M. 2017: Itseorganisoituva kaupunki: hallinta, talous ja demokratia. Futura 4/17.

- Mäenpää P. 2017: Jakamistalous tekee pikkukodin. Rakennettu ympäristö -lehti 4/17.

- Mäenpää P. & Faehnle, M. 2017: Hommelit haastavat himmelit: järjestelmästä vuorovaikutukseen. Teoksessa 100 vuotta suomalaista aluekehittämistä. Työ- ja elinkeinoministeriön julkaisuja.

- Mäenpää, P., Faehnle, M. & Schulman, H. 2017. Kaupunkiaktivismi, jakamistalous ja neljäs sektori. Teoksessa Kansalaiset kaupunkia kehittämässä (toim. Bäcklund, Häkli & Schulman). Tampere University Press.

- Harmaala, Toivola, Faehnle, Manninen, Mäenpää & Nylund 2017: Jakamistalous. Alma Talent, Helsinki.

- Mäenpää, P. & Faehnle, M. 2017. Neljäs sektori suuntaa kaupunkien elinvoimaa, yhteisöllisyyttä ja kestävyyttä. Helsingin seudun suunnat 2/2017.

- Mäenpää, P. & Faehnle, M. 2017. Kaupunkiaktivismi: ratkaisuja itseorganisoituvan kaupunkiyhteisön hallintaan. Kvartti 2/2017.

- Mäenpää, P., Faehnle, M. & Lehtonen, T. 2016. Laiturilla ruodittiin Lisää kaupunkia Helsinkiin -ryhmää: "Jälkistalinistinen hirviö" vai suunnittelukeskustelun uudistaja? Yhdyskuntasuunnittelu 54:4.

- Mäenpää, P. & Faehnle, M. 2016. Kaupunkiaktivismi voimavarana. Kvartti 3/2016, 16-33.

- Faehnle, M., Immonen, H., Mäenpää, P., Nylund, M., Träskman, T. 2016. Jakamistalous ja verotus: Eväitä yhteiskunnalliseen keskusteluun. Arcada Working Papers 4/2016.

Suomen ympäristökeskus
Finlands miljöcentral
Finnish Environment Institute

Further reading

Practical guidance

- WCVA 2021. Voluntary sector futures - co-designing a future vision for the voluntary sector in wales 2030 to support strategic thinking.
https://f.hubspotusercontent30.net/hubfs/6703033/WCVA%20Voluntary%20Futures%20Report/English_lang_Public_Report_Voluntary_Sector_Futures_WCVAxFuturice.pdf

- Headd, M. 2016. How to talk to civic hackers: Strategies for engagement
https://www.civichacking.guide/strategies_for_engagement.html

- LabGov 2019. The co-cities open book. http://labgov.city/co-city-protocol/the-co-cities-open-book

Research

- Donovan, F. 2014. DIY urbanism: implications for cities. Journal of Urbanism: International Research on Placemaking and Urban Sustainability 7:4, 381–398.

- Patti, D. and Polyák, L. (eds.) 2017. Funding the Cooperative City. Community Finance and the Economy of Civic Spaces. Cooperative City Books, Vienna.

- Pulkkinen, K. 2014. A bottom-up way of building a system and changing perceptions – urban pioneers as a model for transformation for sustainability. Systema 2:2. http://www.systema-journal.org/article/view/275

- Westerink, J., Kempenaar, A., van Lierop, M., Groot, S., van der Valk, A. and van den Brink, A. 2017. The participating government: Shifting boundaries in collaborative spatial planning of urban regions. Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy, 35:1, 147–168.

Thank you!