

Results and impact

World Design Capital Helsinki 2012 reached its objectives

World Design Capital Helsinki 2012 widened the use of design in Finland in a number of ways. It also increased the understanding of the possibilities design offers and gained exceptional international attention. The major project, which was launched in spring 2010, reached its objectives.

The essential results have been compiled into ten theses which World Design Capital Helsinki 2012 published on Tuesday, 27 November, 2012. In accordance with the objectives, the city residents gained a deeper insight into the importance of design and its impact on their daily life; the user's perspective in design was highlighted, and design was used to solve problems in different environments.

550 projects and 2,800 events

Design had a wider impact on Finns this year than ever before. WDC Helsinki 2012 promoted design with 550 projects and 2,800 events. The programme was implemented by a network of 290 organizations in Finland and abroad. The year's exhibitions, events and sites attracted 2.5 million visitors. About 90 percent of the events were open to the public and 80 percent were free of charge.

New inspirations, places and cooperation were created

During WDC Helsinki 2012, the use of design methods widened in various ways and the programme had an impact on a huge percentage of residents through the extensive development projects. They were used to find solutions for healthcare and social services, student library services, airport security checks, our working habits, work wear and revamping signage systems, among other things.

Of the 580 World Design Capital Helsinki 2012 projects, approximately one third was carried out by the public sector. Thousands of users participated in the projects through different product and service design workshops, training events and interviews.

New shared spaces for local residents were created in all five cities: in Helsinki, the Abattoir area, Kamppi Chapel, the Pavilion, Turn Table - the Urban Garden and Kulttuurisauna; in Espoo, the Design Espoo event facility and the Finnish Nature Centre Haltia, due to open in March 2013; in Vantaa, the Design Window and the Suvanto lounges open to the general public at the airport; and in Lahti, the Muotohuoltamo Centre. These spaces shaped the urban landscape either temporarily or permanently, giving people new meeting places that were designed from the start with communal activities in mind.

Furthermore, the increase in the amount of design education provided for children and youth tells about the wide impact of World

Design Capital Helsinki 2012. As an example, 11,000 six-year-olds in five cities opened the Designer's Treasure Chest this autumn, and the Danish INDEX: NPO's design education was tested in five upper secondary schools.

Worldwide recognition and interest for World Design Capital Helsinki 2012

As the World Design Capital, the Helsinki Metropolitan Area has attracted extensive international attention. The message of design's new role was convincing as well as interesting: the project was featured in 7,000 Finnish articles and in almost 8,000 international articles published in nearly 100 countries.

Over 80 international seminars, conferences and events were organised during World Design Capital Helsinki 2012, which brought more than 2,000 experts worldwide into Finland. Between 2010 and 2012, more than 200 international events in 44 different countries were organised within the framework of WDC Helsinki 2012.

World Design Capital Helsinki 2012 had also an effect on the development of tourism. The Cities of Helsinki, Espoo, Vantaa, Kauniainen and Lahti were pleased with the growth in 2012, adding to the previous successful tourism years. In Helsinki, according to estimations, the growth was 1,3 per cent. According to research carried out by IBM analysts, the special effect of 2012 in Helsinki's tourism was 2,5 per cent.

Funding exceeded expectations, project shows a surplus

The total funds managed by International Design Foundation during 2010–2013 were 17.8 million euro. The Finnish State provided 5 million euro and the participating cities a total of 6 million euro for the project. The additional funding came from corporate partners and foundations, exceeding expectations. International Design Foundation's final accounts show a surplus of 100,000 euro.

The finances of WDC Helsinki 2012 were only partially channeled through International Design Foundation. Projects had their own budgets and were mainly financed from other sources, such as public and private funds and foundations as well as through project financing and corporate partnerships. No estimate is available of the total economic scope of WDC Helsinki 2012.

Final Report: Helsinki as World Design Capital 2012 achieved goals and grew larger than planned

International Design Foundation, the managing body of WDC Helsinki 2012, stated in its final report that the project grew larger than planned. The detailed 109-page final report was published in Finnish on 26 March 2013.

The programme content exceeded the plan, and the media attention exceeded expectations



Kamppi Chapel with its curved wood façade was opened in June 2012. Chapel is located in the Narinkator square in Helsinki. Photo: Lauri Rotko



Graffiti knitting event Knit n Tag in Old Church Park in August 2012. Photo: Maarit Hohteri / Youth Department.

on both national and international levels. The budget managed by the foundation increased from the initial 15 million euro to nearly 18 million euro.

The final report concludes that design became a topic of public discussion in Finland and Helsinki emerged as an increasingly appealing design city. The citizens understood how design is connected in everyday life and the corporate sector found new ways to utilize design as a source of growth.

Impact assesment by Deloitte and a report by the participating cities

In addition to the International Design Foundation's own Final Report, two other reports on the World Design Capital Helsinki 2012 have been published.

World Design Capital Helsinki 2012 thrives in the Place Marketing Award 2014 competition

World Design Capital Helsinki 2012 was awarded in October 2014 with a Place Marketing

Award 2014 in a competition for regional marketing practices. Helsinki's Design Capital year has won the competition's series New Strategies for Events and Congresses, and Territorial Marketing.

This award, conferred for the second time, recognizes successful international cases of place marketing. The jury paid special attention to the Design Capital year's extensive international media coverage and the project's innovative operation model, which united private and public actors.

The jury cited also the strong strategy of Helsinki's Design Capital year. This strategy made design a part of city development on a long term, in addition to emphasizing design events. According to the jury, one example of the strategic focus on long-term city development is Design Driven City, a project that has continued the work of the Design Capital year promoting the use of design in city development. The jury also cites the role of design in strengthening local identities.



*Helsinki region was presented with WDC2012 theme at the Helsinki Travel Fair in January 2012.
Photo: Rebekka Lehtola*