

UNESCO Creative Cities Network

Helsinki UNESCO City of Design
Report 2019—2022



Helsinki

Design creates good life in Helsinki

Design helps to create a well-functioning and egalitarian Helsinki. Design is an all-inclusive concept for Helsinki that embraces all City of Helsinki operations from social services and health care to education and to the development of the urban environment.

Design creates value in Helsinki in many ways:

- Design helps the City of Helsinki to understand the needs, hopes and challenges of residents. The City uses design to develop services together with residents and to improve their customer experience.
- Design improves the employee experience of the City staff by developing the City's organization and operating culture.
- Design strengthens the competitiveness of Helsinki by helping the City to build a brand that distinguishes Helsinki positively from competitors.

Every resident of Helsinki benefits from design, and design is present at all stages of their lives. City services produced with design ease and support the everyday routines of everyone in Helsinki.

Executive summary

The current report was prepared by the City of Helsinki for the UNESCO Creative Cities Network as a Membership Monitoring Report to present 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 at both international and local levels, as well as Helsinki's contribution to the UNESCO Creative Cities Network and the international community at large. The report presents Helsinki's action plan for the four-year period 2023–2026. The report also outlines Helsinki's response to the Covid-19 pandemic with design.

Cover photo: Vesa Laitinen

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General information

City:	Helsinki
Country:	Finland
Creative field:	Design
Time of designation:	November 2014
Submission of report:	Report for 2019–2022 submitted 31 January 2023
Report prepared by:	City of Helsinki
Previous reports:	Report 2014–2018 submitted 30 November 2018
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Introduction: Design city Helsinki

Helsinki is the centre of Finland's creative sector. Helsinki's role as a design city strengthened in 2012, when Helsinki was World Design Capital together with the cities of Espoo, Vantaa, Kauniainen and Lahti, so designated by World Design Organization.

During the design capital year 2012, design became a topic of wide discussion and a concern of society at large, and the role of the user perspective in planning processes was emphasized. New cooperation developed among various actors in a wide range of fields, and new approaches and places for joint activities emerged in the city.

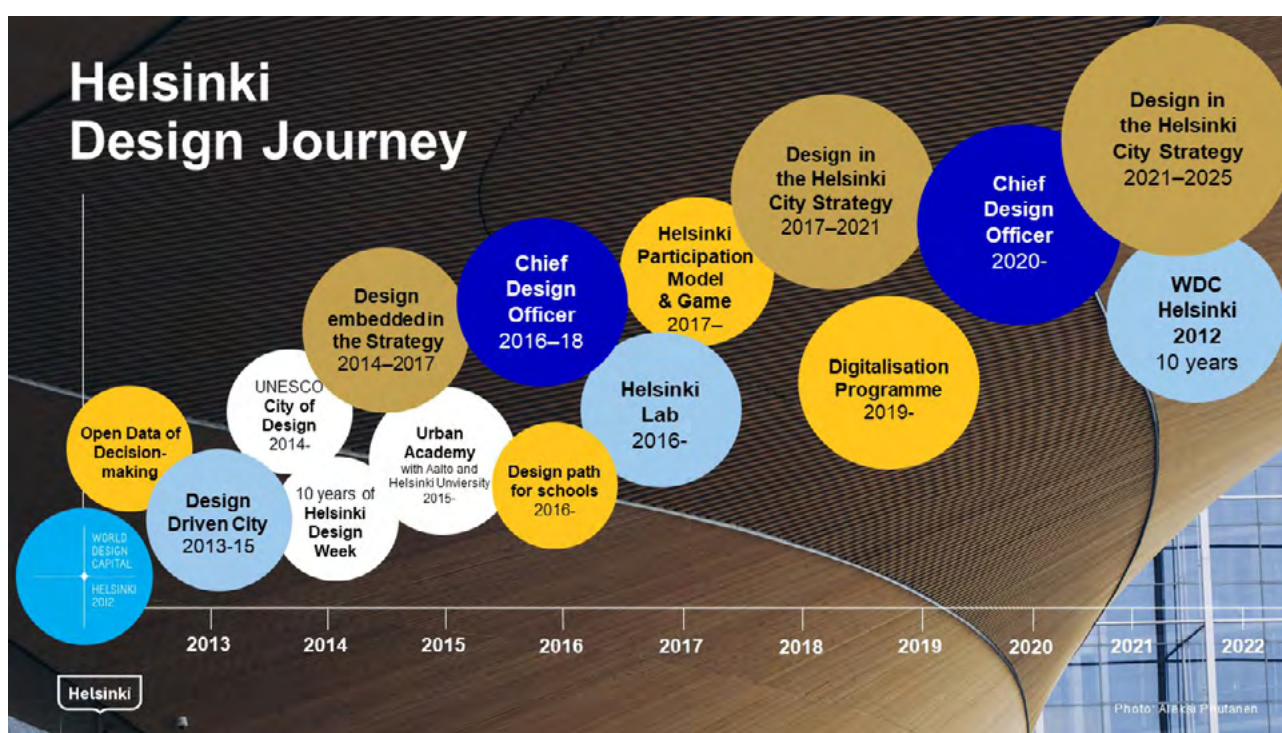
Helsinki's World Design Capital year launched wider uses of design throughout the City organization. Helsinki has consistently built and strengthened the role of design as part of the City's core operations over the City's ten-year design journey.

Helsinki is committed to the use of design in building better society. Helsinki is convinced that design plays an important role in the development of new solutions for sustainable lifestyles and a sustainable future. Design featured prominently in the Helsinki City Strategy 2017–2021 and strengthened its position in the City Strategy 2021–2025.

In order to further enhance the role of design in the city, Helsinki joined the UNESCO Creative Cities Network as a City of Design in 2014.

In 2022, Helsinki celebrated its ten-year design journey together with its partners with many design events and invested in international design communication.

Helsinki has consistently built and strengthened the role of design as part of the City's core operations over its ten-year design journey.





Helsinki as a member of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network

Helsinki's contribution to the network and inter-city cooperation

Helsinki contributed to the UNESCO Creative Cities Network during 2019–2022 both by participating in City of Design meetings and by producing a programme for Beijing Design Week 2021.

City of Design meetings

Helsinki participated in an event organized by Design Core Detroit in Detroit, MI, USA on 18–19 September 2019. The event served as an arena for drawing up the network's new action plan. Helsinki proposed that the action plan should include attention to sustainable development and presented a preliminary draft for the consideration of environmental aspects at events. Helsinki and Kobe led a working group that decided to continue compiling case studies and to launch preparations for a possible teacher exchange programme. Helsinki invited all participants to attend Helsinki Education Week on 4–8 November 2019.

Helsinki visited Montreal, one of the network's founding cities, on 20–23 November 2019 to meet with the design team of Montreal's economic development department. On the team's request, Helsinki presented its public participation model to Montreal's economic development director and other key persons of the department as well as to the representatives of the public participation and innovation units.

From the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020 to October 2022, all UNESCO City of Design meetings were virtual meetings. These meetings were attended by Helsinki's Chief Design Officer **Hanna Harris**, who took office in the spring of 2020. At the July 2020 meeting, Ms Harris presented to the network Helsinki's initiatives for the city's public spaces during the pandemic. She continued discussions on the theme with Montreal, Dundee and Detroit, sharing information especially on winter-time activities.

As concerns sub-groups, Helsinki especially took part in the work of Design and Policy. The work included sharing information on the cities' design and architectural policies and preparations for participation in a possible inter-city research project on design ecosystems. Helsinki proposed that the sub-group's future agenda should include the role of design in city strategies.

Helsinki updated its own UNESCO City of Design team in 2020–2022. **Meri Virta** was appointed as the new Contact Point in 2022, and the role of communication was strengthened.

Helsinki at the Creative Cities summit 2020

Helsinki Mayor **Jan Vapaavuori** played a prominent role at the UNESCO Creative Cities Beijing Summit 2020, which was titled *Creativity Empowers Cities, Technology Creates the Future*. Mayor Vapaavuori spoke at the summit's opening ceremony on 17 September 2020. He also participated in a panel discussion on science, technology and creativity as cities' response to global challenges.

Helsinki at Beijing Design Week 2021

Helsinki participated in Asia's biggest design festival Beijing Design Week, held from 18 September to 7 October 2021, as a Guest City. With examples from Education and Urban Development, Helsinki's programme titled [Designing Better Life](#) explored how

good design creates solutions for the future and better life for urban residents.

Helsinki's programme was a hybrid programme due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Two seminars for experts presented innovations for learning and sustainable urban development. Helsinki organized a virtual pop-up school with learners from Helsinki and Beijing.

The in-person part of the programme in Beijing presented well-designed everyday life in Helsinki as well as smart solutions in learning and urban planning in an installation consisting of seven wooden, cube-shaped spaces. The installation's programme was produced by Helsinki Design Week, which had played an important role in securing the Guest City status for Helsinki.



Helsinki presented innovations for learning and sustainable urban development in hybrid seminars in Beijing Design Week 2021.

Helsinki's main design initiatives at local level

Helsinki focused on reforming city services and urban spaces with the help of design and emphasized digital design during 2019–2022. Helsinki introduced several initiatives related to urban public spaces and architecture.

Chief Design Officer and the organization of design activities at City of Helsinki

Helsinki hired a chief design officer in 2016 as the first European city and as one of the few cities in the world. **Hanna Harris** was appointed as Helsinki's Chief Design Officer in 2020. The duties of the Chief Design Officer are to promote the use of design and architecture in the development of City of Helsinki operations and urban public spaces as well as raising awareness of Helsinki as an internationally renowned design city.

The Chief Design Officer is supported by Helsinki Lab, an in-house design team, which promotes the use of design in the City's development together with an in-house design network consisting of more than 200 design experts. Helsinki Lab's resources are targeted at significant City design projects.

Helsinki implements design projects in close cooperation with design agencies. In 2019–2022, Helsinki had a partnership agreement for service design with 8 design agencies. The volume of design procurement increased by nine-fold from 2016 to 2022. Helsinki completed more than 130 design projects in 2021 and procured design services with approximately 3.6 million euros.

Helsinki's design activities made visible with effective communication

The City of Helsinki launched a new website on the City design activities, design.hel.fi, in 2021. The website presents Helsinki's design activities through case studies, news, events and current affairs.

Design.hel.fi is Helsinki's main communication channel for design. News on design is also published on the City's main website hel.fi, on the City's social media accounts and on [MyHelsinki.fi](https://myhelsinki.fi).

Helsinki's design expertise and architecture are of high interest to both the international media and visitors. The City of Helsinki organizes annually several design-and-architecture themed press trips to Helsinki together with Helsinki's marketing company [Helsinki Partners](https://helsinki.com) and other partners.

Helsinki's design experts are coveted speakers at international seminars and events. The City's communication experts have produced a range of communication and presentation materials on design for the City leaders and staff.

Helsinki's design expertise is also made known by the City's partners on their channels. These include the web publication [Helsinki Design Weekly](https://helsinki.com) and the Helsinki city centre concentration of design [Design District Helsinki](https://design.districthelsinki.com).

Helsinki Central Library Oodi: Helsinki's most prominent design project

Helsinki Central Library Oodi opened on 5 December 2018 as a signature project to celebrate 100 years of Finnish independence. The opening culminated a user-centred design process of more than 10 years to develop and build the library into a much-beloved meeting place for residents. Oodi is an outstanding example of the use of design to produce popular services together with users.

The library has earned many international recognitions. In 2019, Oodi was named the [Public Library of the Year](#). In 2020, Oodi was named a [Project of Influence](#) at The Best in Heritage conference and won the main [DETAIL Prize 2020](#) for its design concept.

User experience has been the predominant theme at Oodi from the first stages of planning onwards. The library is never finished: Oodi's services, spaces and

signage are developed constantly on the basis of feedback from customers and employees.

In addition to the customer experience, Oodi has also focused on the employee experience. Oodi has developed a new operating model based on stronger self-direction of teams. The key elements of the model are agile decision making, fast response to customer needs and co-creation of services. According to a 2020 survey, Oodi's staff is marked by high job satisfaction, an exceptionally good team spirit and top-level work motivation.

Design education enhances learners' problem-solving capabilities

Design education is creative problem-solving across subject boundaries and gives learners tools to meet the challenges of the future. Design education gives teachers new tools to develop their teaching and for phenomenon-based multi-disciplinary learning.

Central Library Oodi is Helsinki's most prominent design project.



Design education and Culture Path for schools were included in the Children's Design Week of the annual Helsinki Design Week.



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Photo: Aleksii Poutanen, Helsinki Design Week

During 2019–2022, Helsinki sought to strengthen design education in the local curriculum. Helsinki offered teachers training in the use of design methods. Design methods were also utilized in the development of learning environments.

Helsinki strengthened art and cultural contents in early childhood education, in pre-primary education and in basic education in comprehensive schools with Culture Path for schools. Culture Path ensures that every child and young person in Helsinki has the opportunity to be familiarized with various cultural contents and events at every level of education and in every grade. Culture Path was extended to secondary education, to be launched in secondary schools in 2023.

Helsinki offered comprehensive-school teachers further training in design education in the pilot project Exploration into Futures in the autumn of 2022. Helsinki implemented the project with [A&DO – Learning Centre for Architecture and Design](#) – and the Futures School of the [Children and Youth Foundation](#).

Helsinki’s design education and Culture Path for schools were included in the Children’s Design Week of the annual [Helsinki Design Week](#). Design education was used to explore topics related to the city of the future and climate change.

In Helsinki Design Week 2021, children and young people from Helsinki schools attended a virtual pop-up school organized with partnering schools in Beijing.

Helsinki educated children and young people in design in the [Design Academy project](#) implemented with Finland’s Design Museum and the design professionals’ community Ornamo. Young learners carried out design projects under the supervision of design professionals.

Many schools also participated in the activities of the Alvar Aalto school network and joined the annual Architecture and Design Day celebrations on the 3rd of February.

Design thinking solves challenges of low physical activity among the elderly

Helsinki seeks solutions to global challenges both through international cooperation and with design. The complex problems of our times require new types of solutions that cross organizational boundaries. One such problem is low levels of physical activity among the elderly.

The number of Helsinki residents aged 65 and older is increasing rapidly, and only a small percentage of them are physically active enough for their health. Helsinki tackled the challenge of inactivity with a design project.

Interviews of elderly people revealed that it was difficult for them to find information about physical activity services, and they needed social support to engage in some physical activity. Ideas for solutions were formulated in co-creation workshops and with experts and elderly people. Ideas from the workshops were worked into prototypes, which were tested with users.

Helsinki implemented the project in 2018–2019 as part of an innovation programme of Bloomberg Philanthropies and Harvard University based on design thinking. The goal of the programme was to strengthen user-oriented service design in local governments. Helsinki participated in the programme with a team comprising representatives of every City division.

Helsinki was the first European city to join the innovation programme. The programme gave Helsinki a human-centred, forward-



Solutions for challenges of low physical activity among the elderly people were formulated in co-creation workshops.

looking model and tools to approach multi-faceted challenges such as low physical activity among the elderly.

The design process generated thorough understanding in Helsinki of factors related to physical activity among the elderly. As a result of the process, all City divisions committed themselves to promoting physical activity among the elderly in 2021–2022. Helsinki started to organize regular, touring events, in which the City informs local elderly people in city districts about physical activity opportunities. The events are organized with local NGOs and businesses.

Design in Helsinki’s digitization programme: re-designing hel.fi

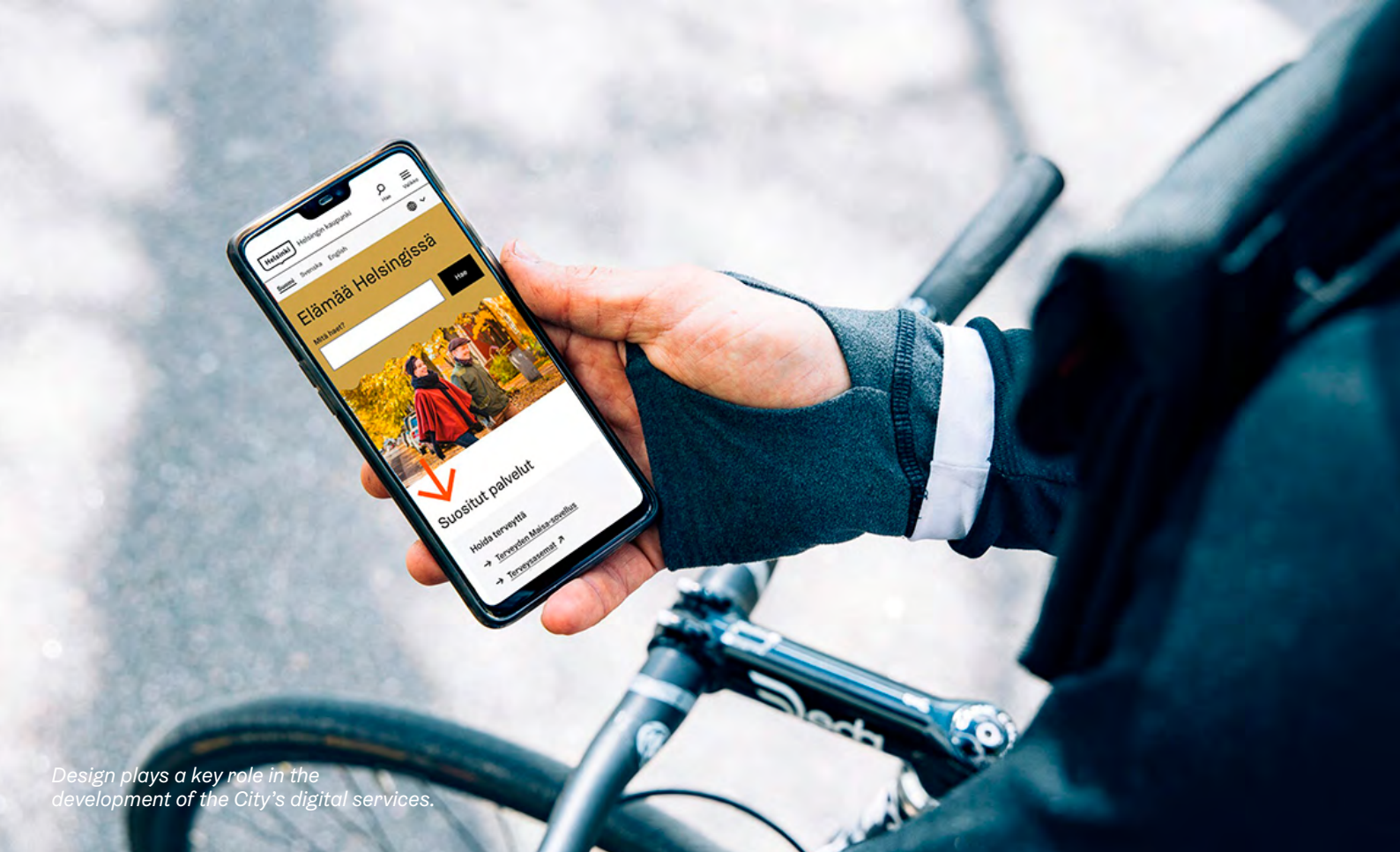
Helsinki strives to be the city that makes the best use of digitalization in the world. Design plays a key role in the development of digital services and in the implementation of the digitalization programme in Helsinki. Design

helps to ensure that services are developed together with residents, truly from their needs. At the same time, the possibilities of design are recognized in the development of City operations and for improving the employee experience.

Digital design at the City of Helsinki incorporates service design, user interface design, content design and customer research.

Helsinki’s top-priority project in digital services development in 2020–2022 was the re-design of the City’s website hel.fi. Helsinki focused on creating a uniform digital service experience associated with the website.

Hel.fi is Helsinki’s main website and communication channel. It is also one of Finland’s biggest online portals. The site was fully transformed in 2020–2022 with the help of service design. A total of 850,000 webpages were re-conceptualized through



Design plays a key role in the development of the City's digital services.

cooperation among the design team and various user groups.

Customer research and user testing ensured that the website would be truly user-oriented. With the help of design research steered by service designers, Helsinki learned to understand residents' everyday lives, needs and concerns.

The main goals of the service design work were to organize the website by theme, to ensure inclusivity and to function across administrative boundaries. The extensive re-design process served as a driver for user-oriented development. At the same time, the City generated a great deal of new user information for the development of City services. The hel.fi project taught the City a great deal about the operation of design teams and how to systematize design activities inside the City organization.

The website re-design utilized [Helsinki Design Systems](#), a tool for design and development to ensure that the City web services are uniform both visually and in terms of their user experience.

“[Read more about Helsinki's design initiatives at design.hel.fi](#)”

Major initiatives with partners

Helsinki continued to implement design projects together with many design partners in 2019–2022.

New museum of architecture and design

The City of Helsinki is preparing to develop and build a new, internationally first-class museum of architecture and design together with Finland's Ministry of Education and Culture, the Museum of Finnish Architecture and Finland's Design Museum. The [new museum](#) will combine the current two museums and their collections. It will provide an arena for the presentation of Finnish architecture and design and for international dialogue. The new museum's concept has been developed using service design and in cooperation with the museums' staff, customers and stakeholders.

The new museum will be located on Helsinki's historic seafront, at the Makasiiniranta area in the South Harbour. The City of Helsinki organized

an international [quality and concept competition about the area](#) in 2021–2022. The competition was of crucial significance for the future development of the Helsinki city centre. The winner of the competition was a team named Konsortium Gran with their entry titled *Saaret* (islands).

The museum building was not part of the Makasiiniranta competition. Another competition will be organized on the building after decisions have been made on the realization of the museum. The museum project is promoted by the Foundation for Finnish Museum of Architecture and Design, which was founded in April 2022. The City of Helsinki and the Finnish Government will make the final decisions on the realization of the museum during 2023.

Close collaboration with Helsinki Design Week

Helsinki Design Week (HDW) is the largest design festival in the Nordic countries. The festival has been held annually since 2005. HDW presents design extensively



The museum of architecture and design will be located in the Makasiiniranta area.

with approximately 250 events every year, covering multiple categories of design. HDW's activities include the web publication [Helsinki Design Weekly](#), which serves as a platform for dialogue on design and presents Finnish design all year round.

The City of Helsinki is HDW's main supporter. The City and HDW have collaborated to promote the use of design and advanced the visibility of design both in Helsinki and internationally. The festival week's extensive programme for the public is enhanced with information at public places, flags flown for design in front of the City Hall, and events for the media and invited guests.

Collaboration between the City of Helsinki and HDW deepened at the Children's Design Week during 2019–2022 and included joint programmes at Annantalo, which is the City arts centre for children, young people and families. Joint Children's Design Week programmes produced city installations at workshops for children and young people (2021–2022) and included Pecha Kucha events for schools (2021–2022).

The HDW festival programme has focused on contemporary social themes in recent

years. A sustainable future and climate-friendly solutions were the themes of Climate School for children and young people organized by the City of Helsinki and HDW at the 2019 festival. They were also the themes of Climate College for professionals and students in 2020.

HDW celebrated Helsinki's ten-year design journey in many ways in 2022. The City of Helsinki and HDW presented a joint [Helsinki Design Award](#) in recognition of design that had made Helsinki a better place to live. The award winner was **Päivi Raivio** for her long-term, consistent work to develop attractive public spaces. As part of the festival programme, the City organized a [10th anniversary seminar on urban design](#), which featured architect **Indy Johar** and illustrator, author **Linda Liukas** as keynote speakers.

The City of Helsinki's and HDW's international collaboration includes the Helsinki Guest City programme at Beijing Design Week 2021 (read more on page 7). The HDW founder and producer Luovi Productions curated an installation for the festival programme titled Designing Better Life.



Cooperation with design organizations and educational institutions

Helsinki is home to a significant concentration of creative professionals and businesses as well as education in creative fields. The City of Helsinki cooperates closely with design professionals, design agencies and other design partners. Helsinki collaborates closely with the Helsinki metropolitan area's universities and other educational institutions in its design work.

Aalto University is internationally recognized for notable strengths in design. The university and the City of Helsinki have for long collaborated to strengthen Helsinki as a design city. In 2019, the City and Aalto University's Department of Design carried out a joint project to assess the effectiveness of the City's design activities. This was the first extensive survey of the City's design projects including their strengths and challenges.

The project produced an [analysis of the City's design activities and a City design activity map](#). The design activity map can be used to categorize the City's design projects by type and to assess the projects' characteristics and effectiveness. The map also helps the City to record information on projects and to communicate about the City's design activities.

After the first phase of the project, students of the Strategic Co-Design course processed the results of the analysis, took a closer look at the City's design projects and refined the City design activity map. The collaboration produced concrete tools for the City to assess the effectiveness of design activities.

Collaboration between the City of Helsinki and Aalto University has deepened in recent years as a result of a partnership agreement signed in 2020. One of the main purposes of the agreement is to strengthen preconditions for design and creative city activities. Other areas of

The Helsinki Design Award winner in 2022 was designer Päivi Raivio. The award was presented by Mayor of Helsinki Juhana Vartiainen.



collaboration include joint international project applications and support for the conceptualization of the new museum of architecture and design to be developed and built in Helsinki. Aalto University students collected ideas for the museum from future and potential museum guests by asking them to envision the museum of their dreams. In their dreams, museum guests walked in a public garden, journeyed with Captain Nemo in his submarine, and saw themselves as small people confronting big questions.

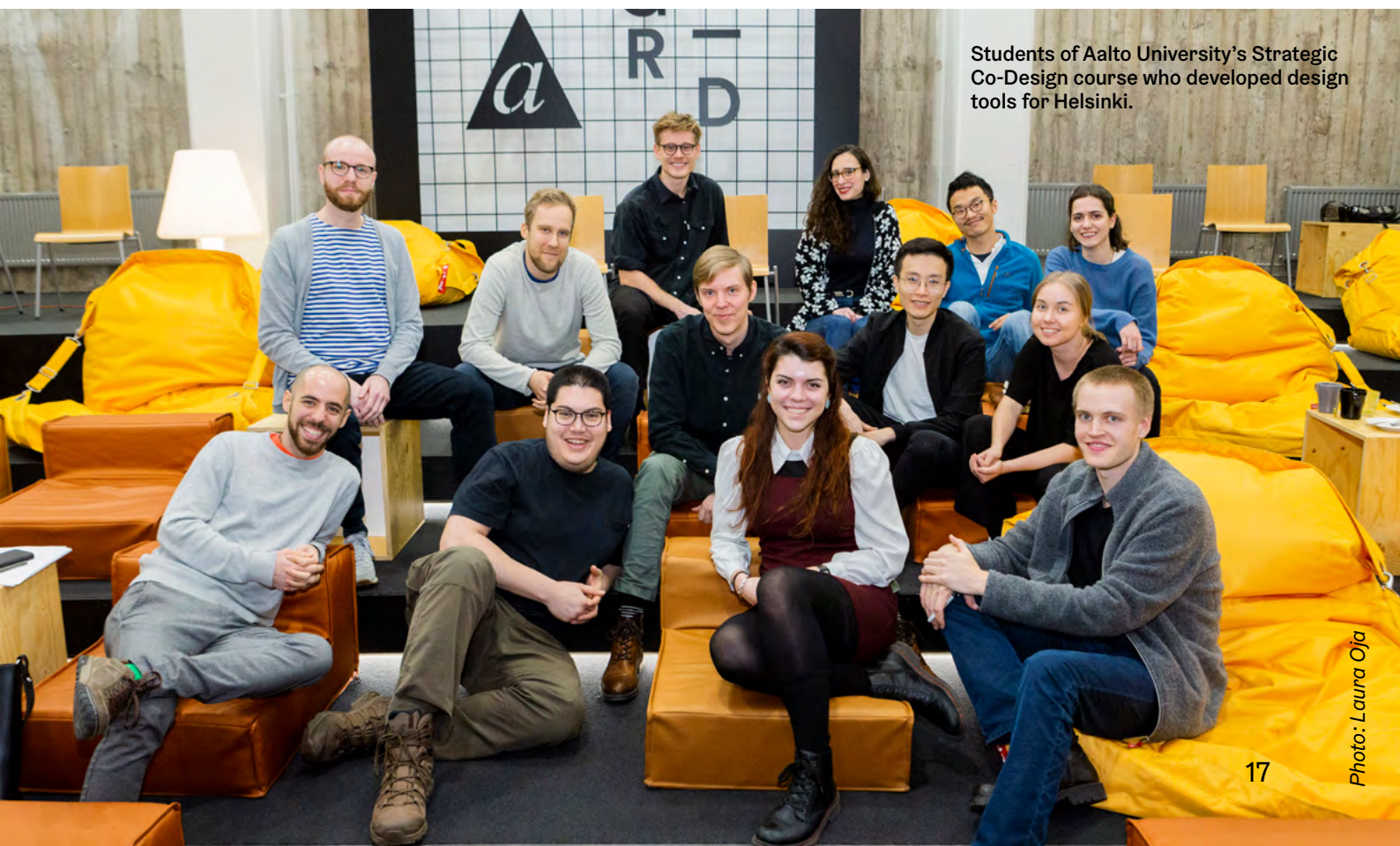
Helsinki in international design and architecture networks

Helsinki is active in international networks of design and architecture.

In addition to the UNESCO Creative Cities and Cities of Design networks, the most important international design networks for Helsinki are World Design Organization and its World Design Capital alumni network. In 2022, Helsinki served as a member of the

steering group for World Design Capital Valencia 2022 and participated in that project's closing conference *Global Design Policy*, in which Helsinki's Chief Design Officer delivered a keynote speech. Helsinki also joined an alumni cities' meeting in Valencia.

Helsinki is a member of Alvar Aalto Cities, an international network of cities with prominent Alvar Aalto sites. As a new initiative, Helsinki joined the Placemaking Europe network in 2022.



Students of Aalto University's Strategic Co-Design course who developed design tools for Helsinki.

Challenges of Covid-19 pandemic tackled with design

Initiatives in response to the pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic closed public places, schools, offices, restaurants and events in Helsinki, as elsewhere, in 2020–2021. The crisis prompted the City of Helsinki to develop creative solutions to keep the city functional while protecting residents from the pandemic.

The use of digital services advanced rapidly in Helsinki, and many in-person services and events were turned into virtual services and events.

May Day on the first of May is normally a huge mass celebration in Helsinki parks, streets and squares. Public in-person celebrations on May Day 2020 had to be cancelled, but the City of Helsinki organized a [May Day party online](#). A virtual concert held in a virtual Senate Square was a success: it was watched by 700,000 people.

Helsinki's participation in [Beijing Design Week 2021](#) was a successful example of hybrid events: some of Helsinki's events under the theme *Designing Better Life* were realized as virtual events.

The importance of urban public spaces for well-being became increasingly important during the pandemic, and the need to strengthen public participation increased in the development of public spaces.

After restaurants had to close their indoor floors, they could still continue operations outdoors. As a response, Helsinki built a

giant outdoor restaurant terrace in the Senate Square for the summer of 2020. [The project was a great success](#). It both invigorated the city centre and supported the restaurant business suffering from the pandemic. The outdoor summer terrace was built onto another central city square, Kasarmitori, for the summer of 2021. The City plans to make the initiative a more permanent feature of Helsinki from summer 2023 onwards.

When events that support public participation were transformed into virtual events, their attendance increased. For example, virtual events to present new city plans to residents reached a wider audience than similar in-person events before the pandemic.

Digital cultural and sports services expanded and reached new users. Cultural events were realized as virtual productions from City premises. Museums could be visited online, for example, through the Helsinki web channel [Helsinki-kanava](#). Author and community singing events were held online.

Physical exercises could be done at home, for example, with the instructors of an exercise programme produced by the City of Helsinki with Finland's public broadcaster YLE. A total of 45 exercise videos for the elderly were produced for Helsinki-kanava, and interactive, supervised sports was organized in Microsoft Teams.

Helsinki built a giant outdoor restaurant terrace in the Senate Square for the summer of 2020.



Photo: Camilla Bloom, Torikortteit

Design activities in Helsinki in 2023–2026

Action plan for the next four years

Strategic objectives of Helsinki's design activities

The roadmap for Helsinki's design activities in the four-year period 2023–2026 is defined in the [Helsinki City Strategy 2021–2025](#).

The City Strategy states that design will play an increasingly systematic role in human-centred reforms of services and efforts to enhance the City organization's productivity. Design will be used in projects shared by City divisions and units, and design will be utilized to prepare Helsinki for the future. Furthermore, Helsinki will further strengthen its profile as a design city and be an active partner to other cities, design-sector businesses and universities.

According to the City Strategy, design will be an important factor that distinguishes Helsinki positively from competitors, and the City will support this goal by promoting the development of the new museum of architecture and design (read more on page 14). The architectural competition on the museum building, to be organized after the decisions to realize the museum are made in early 2023, will be a key international design project in Helsinki in the four-year period 2023–2026.

Design, architecture and urban public spaces

The current Helsinki City Strategy recognizes the importance of design and architecture for well-being, for the creation of better resident experience, and for the

city's brand. The appeal of urban public spaces is enhanced by means of insightful planning and experimentation. During the City Strategy term 2021–2025, Helsinki will complete the execution of an architectural policy programme. The programme is being finalized, to be complete in the spring of 2023.

Helsinki launched [placemaking activities in 2022](#), with the objective of producing a model for the co-creation of urban public spaces. The gist of placemaking is testing various planning solutions and activating spaces together with their users before permanent changes are made to these spaces. The appeal of urban public spaces improves as a result. At the same time, planners source information directly from users to serve as a basis of further planning.

Various experiments will be conducted on placemaking principles in many Helsinki suburbs and in the city centre in the next few years. Some of Helsinki's first placemaking experiments, carried out in 2022, included co-creating attractive public spaces for recreation and communal events at two locations in Malmi, as well as a [guide for creating shared residential courtyards](#).

An example of more permanent, user-centred new planning solutions is a thematic public playground in Ruoholahti, to be realized in 2023–2024 as a pilot project. This playground will combine Helsinki's unique public playground tradition with the City's powerful position in learning, coding and games development. The Ruoholahti playground will be an environment for

children to immerse themselves in the world of computers through play, without computers. The playground is designed by the award-winning author and illustrator **Linda Liukas** together with the landscape-architecture firm Näkymä.

Effectiveness of design activities in focus

Helsinki's current term for the procurement of service design under a partnership agreement started in the autumn 2022. In order that this four-year agreement can serve the City's future needs in the best possible manner, the competitive tendering for the agreement was based on extensive background research.

The research indicates that future themes in City of Helsinki operations will be futures thinking, data and knowledge-based management. In addition to digitalization, spatial projects should emphasize user participation. The City's design activities should be increasingly shifted towards

the strategic level, with an emphasis on effectiveness.

In addition to service design, the new partnership agreement includes strategic design, organizational design, digital service design and the design of service environments. The monitoring and effectiveness of design projects are emphasized increasingly systematically during the new contract term.

Helsinki collects both numerical and qualitative data on design projects, which deepens understanding within the City organization of the benefits and effectiveness of design activities. Helsinki includes design in the Voluntary Local Review of its implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Cities will play a growing role in solving global challenges. Design is a tool for cities to understand these systemic challenges and to produce future-proof solutions.

Green spots for recreation were part of a placemaking project in the Malmi neighbourhood in summer 2022.

Annex

Helsinki

Capital of Finland	
Population 2020	657,000
Population of Helsinki region 2020	1.5 million
Population density	3,020 per land sq.km
Land area	217 sq.km
Shore line	123 km
Islands	327
Green areas managed by City	34% of land area
Cultural services 2020	
City libraries	45
Library visits	3.4 million (1.1 million to Oodi)
Museum, approx.	40
Movie theatres (2019)	59
Professional theatres	11
Concerts by two symphony orchestras	204
National opera and ballet performances	87

Finland

Population	5.5 million
GDP per capita (2021)	USD 53,655
European Union member state since	1995
Currency	Euro

Finnish design sector

The image of Finland as a design country based on Finnish design classics is changing fast: Finnish design has shifted from classic products design to design-driven data and technology business. In 2020, the turnover of the digital design industry was EUR 9.1 billion. The employment and turnover of software and video game companies that make strong use of design have continued to grow rapidly over the past ten years. Service design has also been growing strongly. The future outlook of the Finnish design sector is good: 72% of companies in the sector reported a positive outlook on the future in 2022.

Source: [Ornamo](#)

Development of turnover and employment in the Finnish design sector 2010–2020

Turnover in 2020 (change from 2010, %)

Total turnover in the sector 2020	EUR 13.5 billion
Digital design (up by 143%) Software design & manufacturing, software and game publishing	EUR 9.1 billion
Design service companies (up by 61%) consisting of	EUR 278 million
Interior design (up by 35%)	EUR 120 million
Industrial design (down by 5%)	EUR 108 million
Graphic design (up by 35%)	EUR 51 million
Architecture and landscaping (up by 35%)	EUR 743 million
Design industry (down by 2.5%)	EUR 3.29 million
Artistic activities (up by 35%)	EUR 89 million
Number of companies in 2020	14,000
Employment in 2020	
Total number of employees	68,400
Digital design	43,661
Service design companies	2,041
Architecture and landscaping	6,189
Design industry	15,731
Artistic activities	753

Source: [Ornamo](#)

City of Helsinki
City Executive Office
design.hel.fi

