

# Participation game

## The facilitator's instructions

Come and play the participation planning game! The aim of this game is to help the players think of ways in which participation can be achieved in the City of Helsinki's various sectors in order to make participation part of the City's everyday operations and Helsinki a user-based, customer-centred city.

## The goals of the game

- To learn about the participation model and to involve the entire staff in the creation of a participation plan.
- To reach a mutual understanding of what participation entails in each person's own work and how well it is currently being achieved.
- To define concrete measures for improving participation in the future.

## Roles

### Facilitators

A facilitator prepares the workshop, leads the discussion, monitors the amount of time spent and takes care of the documentation. Ideally, a game will have two facilitators: one will focus on the game progress, encouraging the players and keeping the discussion on the right track, while the other will be in charge of making sure that the allowed timeframes are not exceeded and documenting the discussion.

### Players

The players consist of staff members, people in charge of the operation. The workshop works best with 3–5 players. If there are more players, the individual exercises can be done in pairs.

### 'The leader'

It is important that one of the players has the power to make decisions on the measures that are to be implemented.

## The City of Helsinki's principles concerning participation and interaction

The participation of the municipality's residents and the interaction between the City and its inhabitants is based on the utilisation of the skills and expertise of people and communities, the enabling of volunteer activities, and the creation of equal participation opportunities.

*Chapter 27 of the Administrative Regulations, Participation right of the residents and service users*

The leader takes part in the game and during the discussion will highlight the elements that the organisation must improve in order to increase participation. In the event of disagreements, the leader will have a final say in the joint decisions.

## Before the game

### Preparation

- Find a place where the players can talk in peace. The location should also have a small table around which the participants can either stand or move. The location must allow for the use of a computer.
- Invite 3–8 people who are part of the plan preparations to the workshop. The intended duration of the workshop is 1.5 h. If you do not yet have any experience of being a facilitator, you should plan for a 2-hour session. When sending the invitation, include a link to the game's demonstration video.
- Before playing, go through the action cards that come with the game and remove those that are not suitable for your specific field. A good number of action cards per game is 20–30. There are a total of 66 cards (10–17 for each area of participation).
- Make sure you have some post-it notes and pens with you. Also make sure that the chosen location has an internet connection and that the sounds from the computer are audible.

## Preliminary exercise

Ask the participants to read through the Helsinki City Strategy [www.hel.fi/helsinki/en/administration/strategy/strategy/](http://www.hel.fi/helsinki/en/administration/strategy/strategy/) and the participation model [www.hel.fi/participationmodel](http://www.hel.fi/participationmodel). Ask that they also consider beforehand the benefits that participation can yield for their own organisation and Helsinki's residents.

## Playing

### 0. Introduction (10 min)

- Thank the players for attending.
- Tell them why the participation game is being played and what the intended outcome is.
- Watch the participation game video together. It explains what the participation model is and how the game is played.

### 1. Determining the scope (5 min)

- Determine together which organisation, initiative or project your discussion on participation will focus on.
- Decide which people, organisations or businesses are the ones whose participation you will aim to promote.
- Write down both of these decisions on a post-it note and attach it to the gameboard.

***Pitfalls:** If the group is not familiar with the concept of participation, they might find it difficult to determine the participating parties. Therefore, you may update the list later during the game.*

### 2. Why do we promote participation? (10 min)

- Each player takes two post-it notes and writes down their thoughts on how participation benefits us and the residents of our municipality. Use the gameboard questions for support.
- Discuss what you have written down.

- As a summary, choose three things that you feel are the most important ones. Write down each of them on a separate post-it note and attach these notes to the gameboard.
- Finally, thank the players for this value discussion and explain that next you will focus on the measures that are already being taken to promote participation.

***Pitfalls:** Do not yet talk about any concrete measures. Instead, you should first form a shared understanding of the benefits and effects of participation.*

### 3. What does participation promotion mean to us? (10 min)

- Tell the players that the City's participation model describes the aspects of each area of participation, introduces them at the header level, and illustrates them with slogans about the goals
  1. The City's approaches: Open and participatory Helsinki
  2. User participation: Functional and fair services
  3. Regional cooperation: Distinct areas with a strong community spirit
  4. Supporting civic activities: Meidän Stadi ('Our Helsinki')
  5. Customer experience: I have come to the right place
- Ask the players to tell you how the different areas of promoting participation have been affecting their department's operations so far.
- Ask them to think whether all of these areas are essential, based on the scope determined before the game. Conversely, is there an area that has so far been left without consideration?

### 4. Current measures (15 min)

- Explain to the players that you will next map the existing measures that enable participation among the City's residents.
- Deal the action cards to the players so that everyone has the same number of cards. Ask the players to separate those things from their deck that are already being done well, things that have been tried, and things that should be tested. Any irrelevant cards can be discarded.
- Ask them if the gameboard is missing any important actions. These can be written down on the empty joker cards.

- Discuss the distribution of the cards and the experiences that the players have of different measures.
- Finally, ask the players to give a score from 1 to 10 on how well participation is being achieved with the current measures.

**Pitfalls:** *Not all the cards are relevant to all of the departments. Remind the players that the areas of participation are not mutually exclusive and that the scope of the measures may vary. People are likely to have different views on different methods; some of these have been explained on the rear of the cards.*

## 5. Necessary improvements (15 min)

- Now ask the players to focus their attention on things that require improvement.
- Remind them of the participation benefits discussed in phase 2 and ask them to compare the current state to these. What are the areas and things that need improving?
- Ask the players to write down their own thoughts on the post-it notes, and then go through these together. The most important points will be attached to the board with the post-it notes.

**Pitfalls:** *When playing the game, the improvement goals can easily be forgotten. Remind the group about these goals regularly, for example, by using slogans that describe individual focus areas*

## 6. New measures (10 min)

- Now, lead the players from the goals to practical applications. Ask the players to take those cards placed in the 4th area that they felt were worth trying out. Ask them to consider whether these could be used to address those areas that require improvement. If not, should the methods that have already been tested be used more, or have the players come up with completely new ideas during the game on how to increase participation?
- To conclude the discussion, select two methods that you want to try out to increase participation.
- Write down the aims of both methods, who will be in charge of implementing them, what kind of resources will be needed, what the timetable of the process will be, and how the success of these methods will be measured.

**Pitfalls:** *The discussion will easily veer off topic into the analysis of the measure. Lead the discussion back to concrete things.*

## 7. Documentation (15 min)

- Write down the participation game results in the online survey. You can also take pictures of the players, as well as the gameboard and cards.

[bit.ly/ospe-kirjaaminen](https://bit.ly/ospe-kirjaaminen)  
[bit.ly/ospe-tulokset](https://bit.ly/ospe-tulokset)