

# Merja Hovi and Mervi Ahola

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Behind every EGL Project there are people - those incredible, energetic and enthusiastic humans who make things happen on the field. People who manage the activities, build relationships, share knowledge, inspire local communities, keep an eye on the social impact of their work. Who are the faces of EGL? We want to get to know them, hear who they are, what are their passions, dreams, goals, how did they find themselves in the Europe Goes Local network. Youth work needs many talents and the people of EGL are bringing in a diversity of resources - skills and knowledge together with their vision of how empowered youth looks like. Meet them. Hear their story: **Merja Hovi - Helsinki Youth Services project officer and Mervi Ahola - SPAM tool trainer.**

## Who is Merja?

I am Merja Hovi (Meiju) and I have been working in the Youth sector for almost 30 years now. Most of

the time I worked in Helsinki City as a youth leader, manager of a youth center, a project coordinator, area manager and a planning officer. One of my professional passions is to develop the quality of youth work. I find it crucial to seek better ways to describe the essence, aims and desirable outcomes of the important work we do in the youth work field. SPAM started in 2005 and I was involved in it from the beginning. To be honest, I was not very inspired in the beginning. When we started to modify the origin model so that it fits our principles and values of youth work, I could see the potential of the model and really get excited. Idea of peer learning inspires me most.



**Merja Hovi, Helsinki, Finland**





### Who is Mervi?

I have been working in the youth field for 21 years. In my career have worked in the different fields of youth work, but most of the time i have worked in Vaasa city youth services administration as youth secretary. I have been involved with SPAM since 2009. At first, we just used the tool (SPAM) here in Vaasa City but somehow over the years I got more involved. For the past 7 years I have been more connected to quality work, as a trainer of SPAM, but also involved in developing peer and self assessment criteria for YIC in Finland. In my free time, especially in the summer, I love to go to our summer cottage. I like gardening and nothing is as relaxing as planting bushes, flowers and herbs. Planting is best when listening to music so I have headphones on every time. Any kind of music goes except for heavy music, opera or modern jazz.

**Would you like to know more about the 'SPAM, I AM' - Self and Peer Assessment Model in Action? [Read our article in the Actions in EGL series!](#)**