

Study visit: Youth Participation in Finnish Municipalities

Finland, Helsinki, December 12 - December 16, 2022



The study visit “Youth participation in Finnish municipalities” took place from the 12th to the 16th of December in Helsinki, Finland. The aim of this study visit was to get to know the Finnish youth sector and youth participation work in Finland, especially in the municipal field and locally. The event was organised by [Nuva Ry](#) and the [Finnish National Agency](#).

There were around 35 participants from all over Europe from the youth work field, from municipal workers to NGO youth workers. Not only did the participants get to know each other and learn from each other’s realities, there were also fantastic speakers, and the participants got to visit several good practice.



A map which shows where some of the participants are coming from

The first day

On the first day, Petri Honkonen, the Finnish minister of Science and Culture, gave an opening speech. He also used to be part of the youth council of his hometown as a teenager.



Petri Honkonen, the Finnish minister of Science and Culture, answers questions from participants



Group picture with Petri Honkonen, the Finnish minister of Science and Culture

Laura Kuusio, the Ombudsman for Children in Finland, presented the [National Child Strategy](#). This strategy was launched in 2021. Its aim is to make Finland more child- and family-friendly. You can find the publication, how Finland aims to implement the strategy, and more information on this [English website](#).

Georg Boldt, doctor of social sciences and a grant-funded researcher at the [Academic Disciplines of the Faculty of Social Sciences](#). He talked about his dissertation on institutional youth participation during his presentation “does participation create better citizens? Observations on international youth participation in Finland”. He talked about the difference between participation vs. participatory democracy and about observations he made in the field. His conclusion is that different kinds of means for participation should be offered to reach a more diverse group of young people. [You can find his study here](#).



Georg Boldt presents his dissertation

Elisa Schanzer from Europe Goes Local presented EGL, the [European Charter for Local Youth Work](#) and the [Changemakers Kit](#). She explained how EGL is a European cooperation project to develop and strengthen local youth work and the youth work community of practice at the local level.

At the end of the evening, the participants visited [Ohjaamo Helsinki](#). This is a guidance center that offers easy access to information, guidance and advice for all young people under the age of 30. Young people can walk in without an appointment. Depending on their questions or problems, different experts will help the young people, ranging from career counsellors to social workers.



The second day

On the second morning, the participants were divided into three groups to visit one municipality each. They went to the municipalities Vantaa, Siuntio, and Kerava.



In the afternoon, there were again a couple of excellent speakers.

Nuorten Helsinki came to talk about Participatory Budgeting, which lets young people decide where part of the city budget goes. Young people can submit plans and initiatives, on which young people can vote. After the voting has been concluded, the plans go to the advisory board, which also includes young people from the area. The selected plans then get implemented during the next budget year. Read more about it [here](#).



The Vacant Job Funding Programme aims to ensure that every young person has a job. We wrote an article about them here, and you can find their website here.



Digiraati is a digital platform where young people in Finland can discuss various topics anonymously. Past themes included “stereotypes and prejudices”, “NGOs working with young people”, “we should make noise about this!”, “regional representatives and youth council members”, and more.



The third day

The last day started out with a visit to the Finnish Parliament. The participants received a tour by the Member of Parliament Saara Hyrkkö, and by two assistants Siiri and Heikki Härkönen.



Afterwards, the participants reflected on the last days in small groups. Most participants found the study visit interesting, and want to try to implement some good practices they learned of in Finland or from other participants. Some participants are planning to cooperate with other participants they've met during the study visit.

All participants of the study visit will be getting a Youth Pass. This is a tool that recognises non-formal and informal learning in youth projects. The participants received more information about it.

Charter Ambassador Elisa from EGL gave a second short explanation about Europe Goes Local's activities. She also talked more about EGL's intranet. The participants can keep on using this tool to stay in contact with each other and with other partners, members, and past participants of activities of Europe Goes Local.

Charter ambassador Elisa from Poland talk about the European Charter on Local Youth Work and the Changemakers Kit. She explained how the youth workers can use the Charter to reflect on their local realities and how the Charter can support creating policies and strategies for youth work and help recognition. She also showed the Changemakers Kit, which is an online toolkit to guide municipalities and local organizations in starting a quality development journey, assessing the quality of youth work, creating dialogue with the different stakeholders and making an action plan together.



Elisa from EGL (left) and Charter Ambassador Elisa (right) are presenting Europe Goes Local, the Charter, and the Changemakers Kit - Photographer: Sanna Nuutinen

The study visit ended with feedback from the participants. Everyone got a chance to say what they

found of the study visit. There was also an anonymous feedback tool participants could fill in. Afterwards, during the free time, some participants went to visit the city together for the last evening.

More info

You can find the application deadline [here](#).

More info about Nuva Ry:

- [Website](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [TikTok](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [Facebook](#)

More info about the Finnish National Agency:

- [Website](#)
- [Facebook](#)
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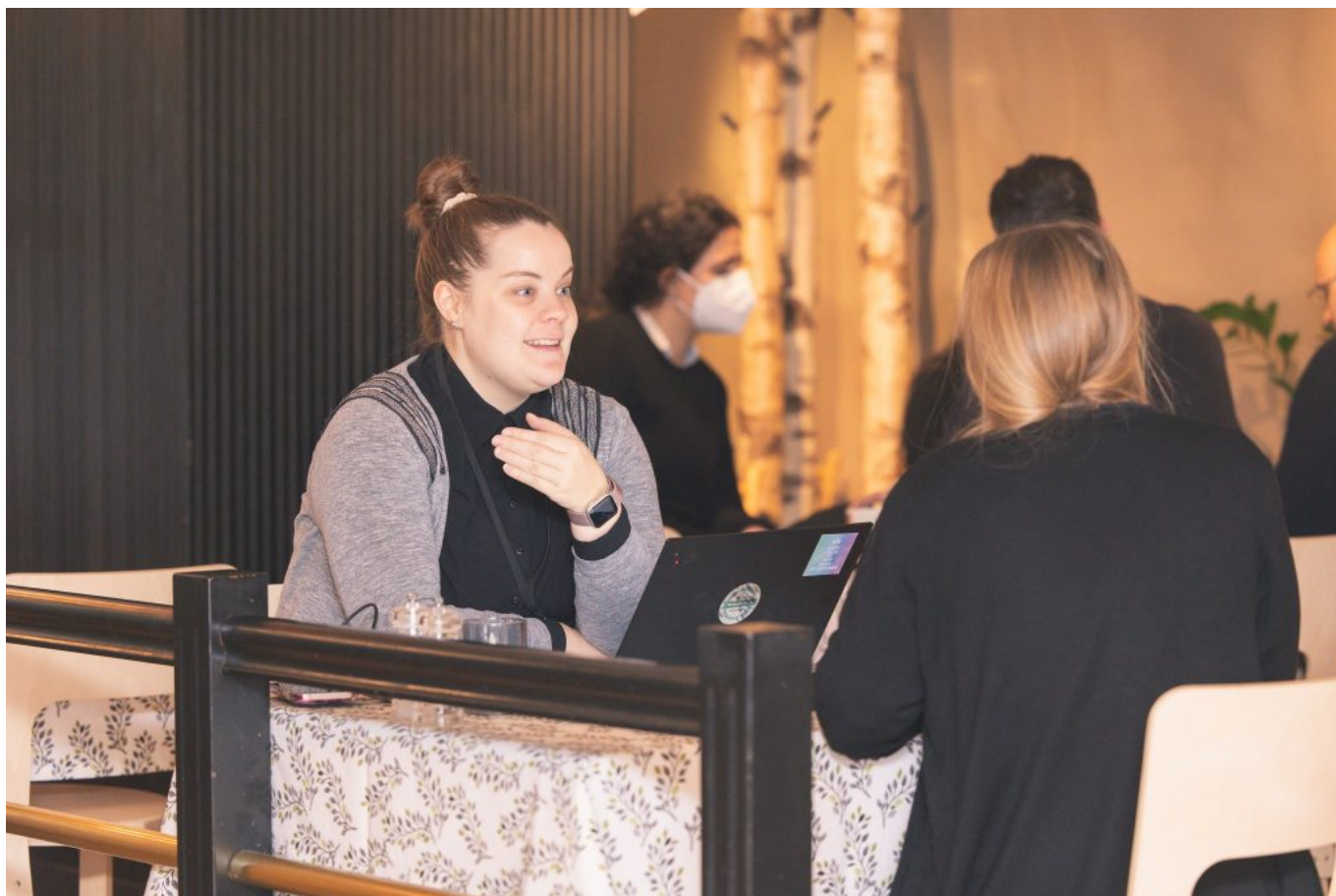
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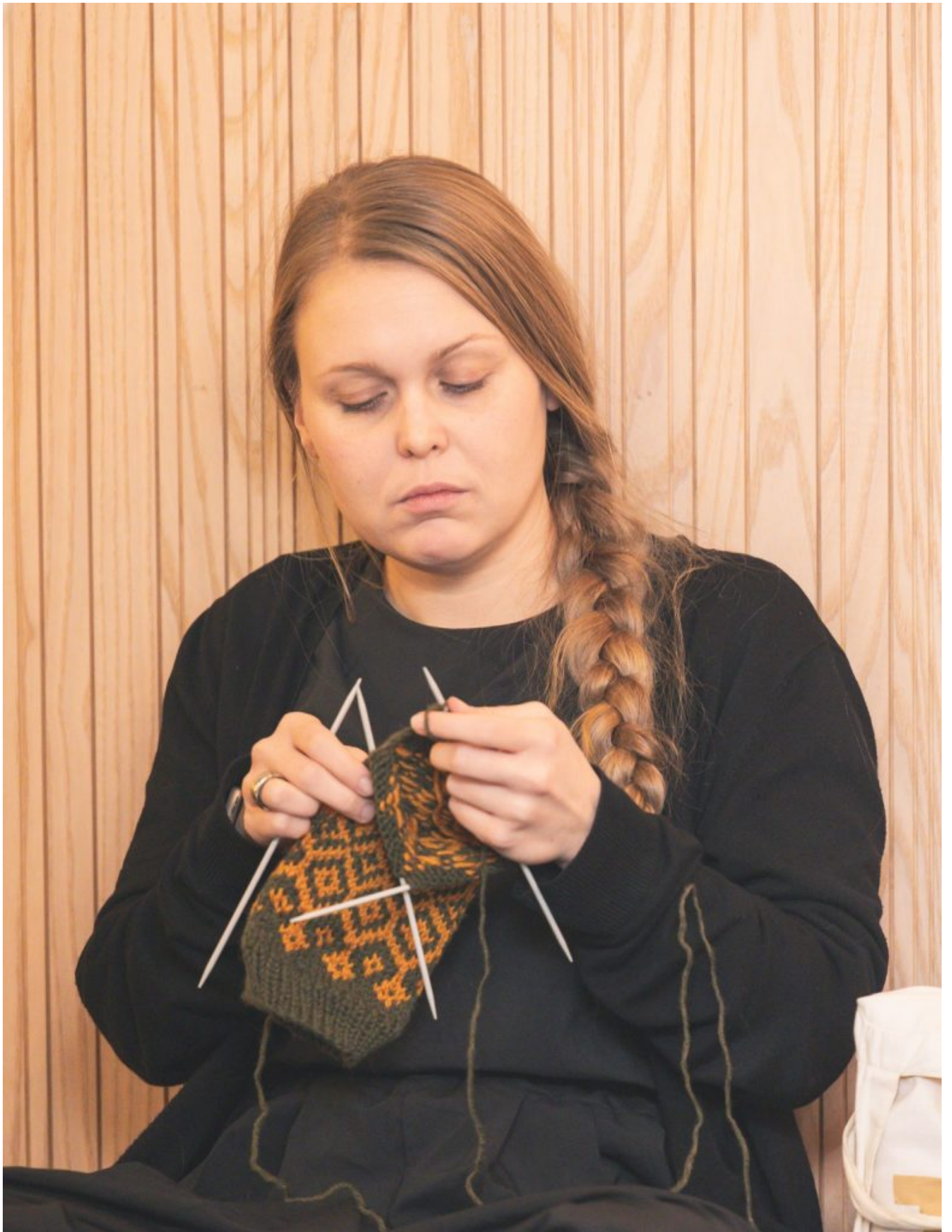
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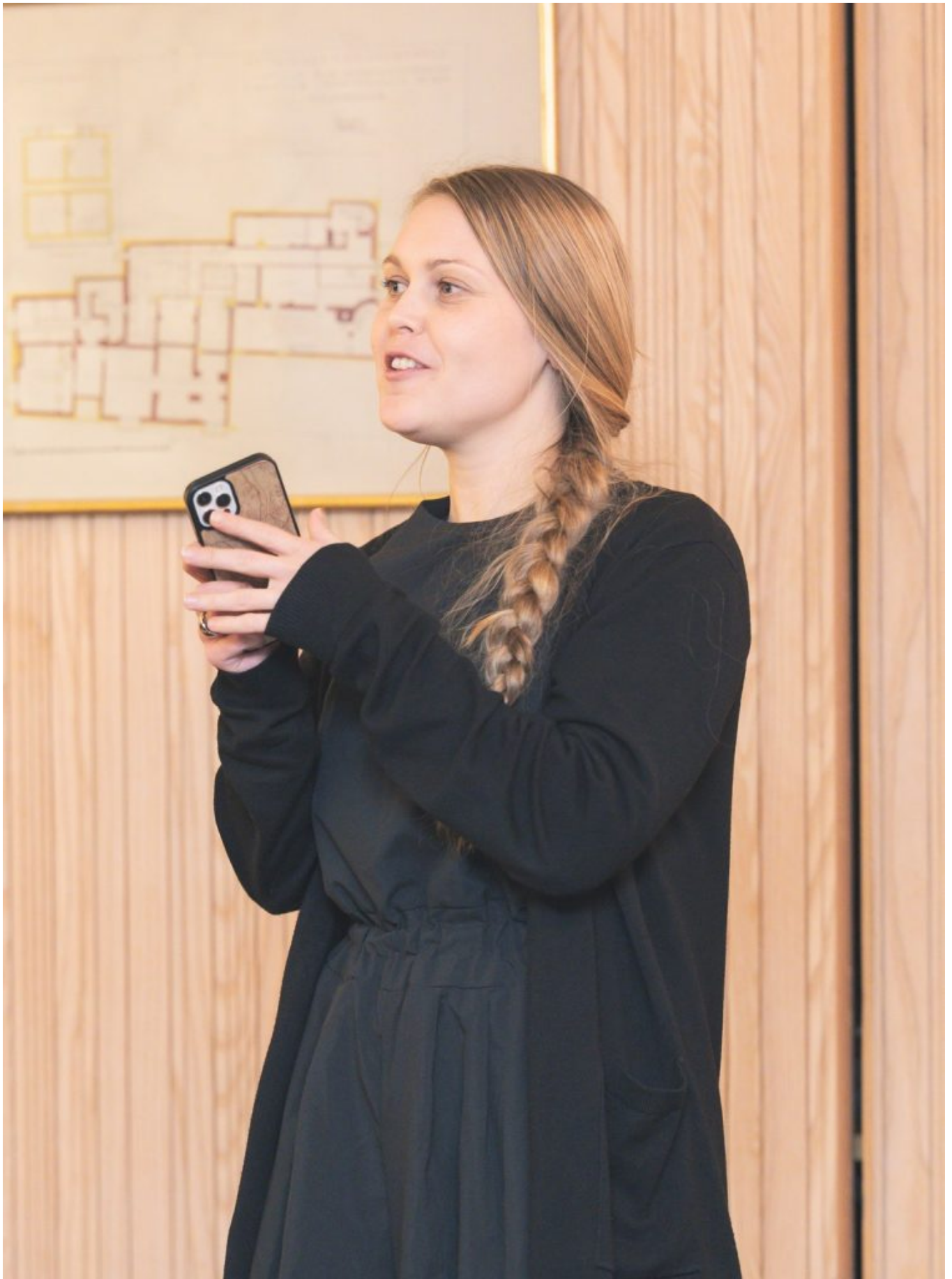
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