

# **FINNISH YOUTH RESEARCH NETWORK**

Concepts and principles of youth  
participation

**TOMI KIILAKOSKI**



# Bit of my background: why the chosen themes are in the presentation

- Research on child and youth participation
- Reflecting on the experiences in promoting participation on the local and national level (work with Unicef to develop child friendly cities in Finland, developing participatoin in the National Core Curriculum of Finland, development project on the local level with youth work and schools)

# Why youth participation is important

- Participatory turn (Bhekker 2016)
- Emphasis on rights: children and the young have a right to participate and to be heard
- The emphasis on the importance of engaging customers and citizens to make better decisions: " Engaging citizens in policy-making is an *advanced two-way relation* between government and citizens based on the principle of partnership." (OECD 2001)
- Emphasis on the active role of the young, the impact of new forms of participating and the importance to engage with them not only in the field of representative democracy

# Why youth participation needed

- the developmental perspective: helping young people to learn how influence, discuss together, how to make a difference
- service perspective: organising services more efficiently by listening to the actual users
- democracy perspective: the more citizens are interested in common matters, the more likely they are to engage democratically
- rights-based perspective: children and young people have a right to participate and be heard in the matters concerning them
- community perspective: the more groups feel they are accepted as legitimate members of a community, the safer and more comfortable and creative the community is likely to be
- participation is not only about the young, it concerns all of us.

# Example 1. Youth councils (source: city of Espoo web page)

Vuonna 2019 Espoon nuorisovaltuusto on 22-vuotias, ja yksi vanhimmista ja suurimmista nuorisovaltuustoista Suomessa. Nuorisovaltuusto on nuorten vaikuttamiskanava, joka edustaa kaikkia Espoon nuoria. Nuorisovaltuusto lisää ja parantaa nuorten osallisuus- ja vaikuttamismahdollisuuksia, huolehtii, että nuoria kuullaan heitä koskevissa asioissa ja toimii sanansaattajana nuorten ja päättäjien välillä.



Espoon nuorisovaltuusto 2020-2021

# Ladders of participation (in Dibou 2019)

Youth participation	Arnstein (1969) levels of citizen participation	Hart (1992) levels of youth participation
<b>ACTIVE YOUTH PARTICIPATION</b>	8. Citizen control	8. Young initiated, shared decisions with adults
	7. Delegation	7. Youth initiated and directed
	6. Partnership	6. Adult initiated, shared decision with youth
	5. Placation	5. Consulted and informed
	4. Consultation	
<b>PASSIVE YOUTH PARTICIPATION</b>	3. Informing	4. Assigned but Informed
		3. Tokenism
	2. Therapy	2. Decoration
	1. Manipulation	1. Manipulation

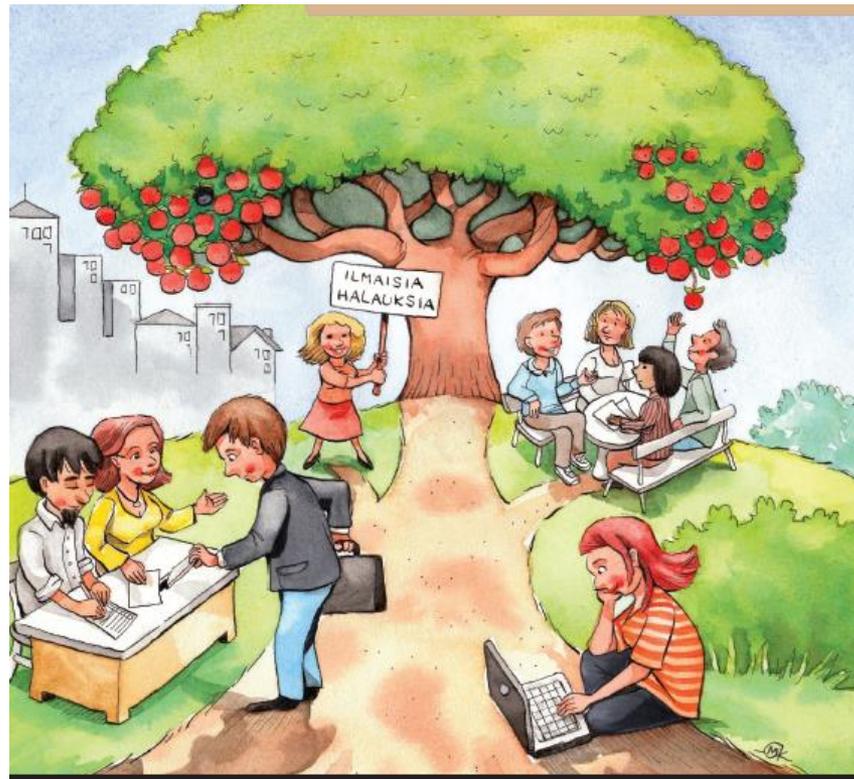
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Co-management

# Roles of young people in the process (in Dibou 2019)

Lofquist (1989) attitudes to young people	Approach to youth policy
Youth as partners	Youth policy FOR and WITH
Youth as resource	Young people ( <i>Youth is active actor of YPG</i> )
Youth as consultants	Youth policy FOR Young people ( <i>Youth is passive actor of YPG, involved in moderate way</i> )
Youth as objects	Youth policy TO Young people ( <i>Youth is not involved in YPG at all</i> )



Tomi Kiilakoski

# Example 2. EU Youth Dialogue



## What is the EU Youth Dialogue?



The EU Youth Dialogue is a dialogue mechanism between young people and decision makers taking place in the framework of the EU Youth Strategy.

### Why the EU Youth Dialogue?

This is a way to ensure that the opinion, views and needs of young people and youth organisations are taken into account when defining the EU's youth policies.

It supports the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027 which focuses on three main core areas 'connect, engage and empower' and encourages cooperation between the EU countries in respect to all issues concerning young people.

# Different ideals of democracy

<p>Participatory democracy</p>	<p>Citizen as participant: gives feedback, takes part in discussion/action.</p> <p>Political culture that supports participation and the opportunity for influencing common issues.</p>	<p>Right to set up local initiatives, user or residential inquiries, hearings, meetings, panels and forums, distribution of funds for carrying out different residential projects.</p> <p>Action in NGOs.</p>	<p>Right to set up a local initiative and other similar methods to those described in the neighbouring column for all children and young people.</p> <p>Representative forms of participatory democracy: youth councils, representatives of youth councils in committees or the council of a local authority.</p> <p>Action in NGOs.</p>
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# Different ideals of democracy

Deliberative democracy	<p>Citizen as a deliberative actor: takes part in public debate, offers arguments, and takes part in forming considered and elaborated view on society.</p> <p>Political culture where issues are discussed with citizen and where the decisions, laws and actions are justified so that people can understand. Politics is about individuals and common discussion.</p>	For example citizens' juries, consensus conferences, deliberative discussion days.	Citizens' jury for young people, deliberative discussion days for young people.
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# Different ideals of democracy

Counter-democracy	<p>Citizen as an activist, who monitors, controls, repels questions and tries to reform the content and the actions of decision makers through action (not only by discussion).</p> <p>Political culture where the actions of the decision makers have caused lack of confidence amongst citizens and stimulated political action instead of apolitical passiveness.</p>	<p>Demonstrations, Internet writings and other social media operations, meetings, organisational activities, legal and illegal activism.</p>	<p>Demonstrations and similar methods to those described in the neighbouring column. Also youth and pupil's councils use the methods of counter-democracy (for example walkouts and demonstrations).</p>
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# Example 3. Participatory budgeting (source: City of Helsinki web page)

**Ruuti**

Suomi/ English/ Svenska

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## Young people make a better Helsinki



[What is Ruuti?](#)

[Participatory budget](#)

[Youth Council](#)

### Participatory budget

RuutiBudjetti is a participatory budgeting model aimed at upper stage comprehensive school students for the purpose of making Helsinki more their own. In RuutiBudjetti, decisions on the leisure time activities and services offered to young people are made together with the young people.

There, ideas are collected and refined in several stages, so that as many young people as possible are able to influence the development of leisure time activities, hobby opportunities, their own living environment and Helsinki as a whole. RuutiBudjetti gets close to young people because it is implemented regionally in cooperation between youth work units and upper stage comprehensive schools.

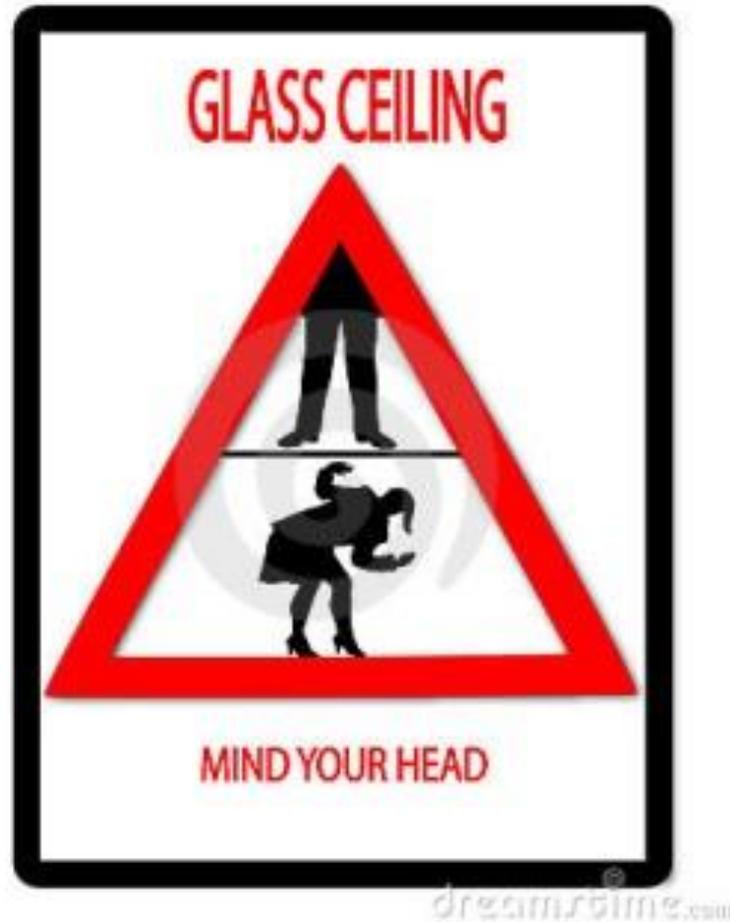
The results of RuutiBudjetti can be seen around Helsinki in tangible measures such as events, new hobby opportunities and improved services. The most important thing is that, in addition to brainstorming and negotiations, young people are involved in implementing the measures of RuutiBudjetti.

RuutiBudjetti is part of the City of Helsinki's budget

# Door mats



# Glass ceiling



# On Participation

- Girl 1. ” *They always ask us our opinions and enquire what we want*”.

# On participation

- Girl 2. "but whatever you say, nothing ever happens"

# On Participation

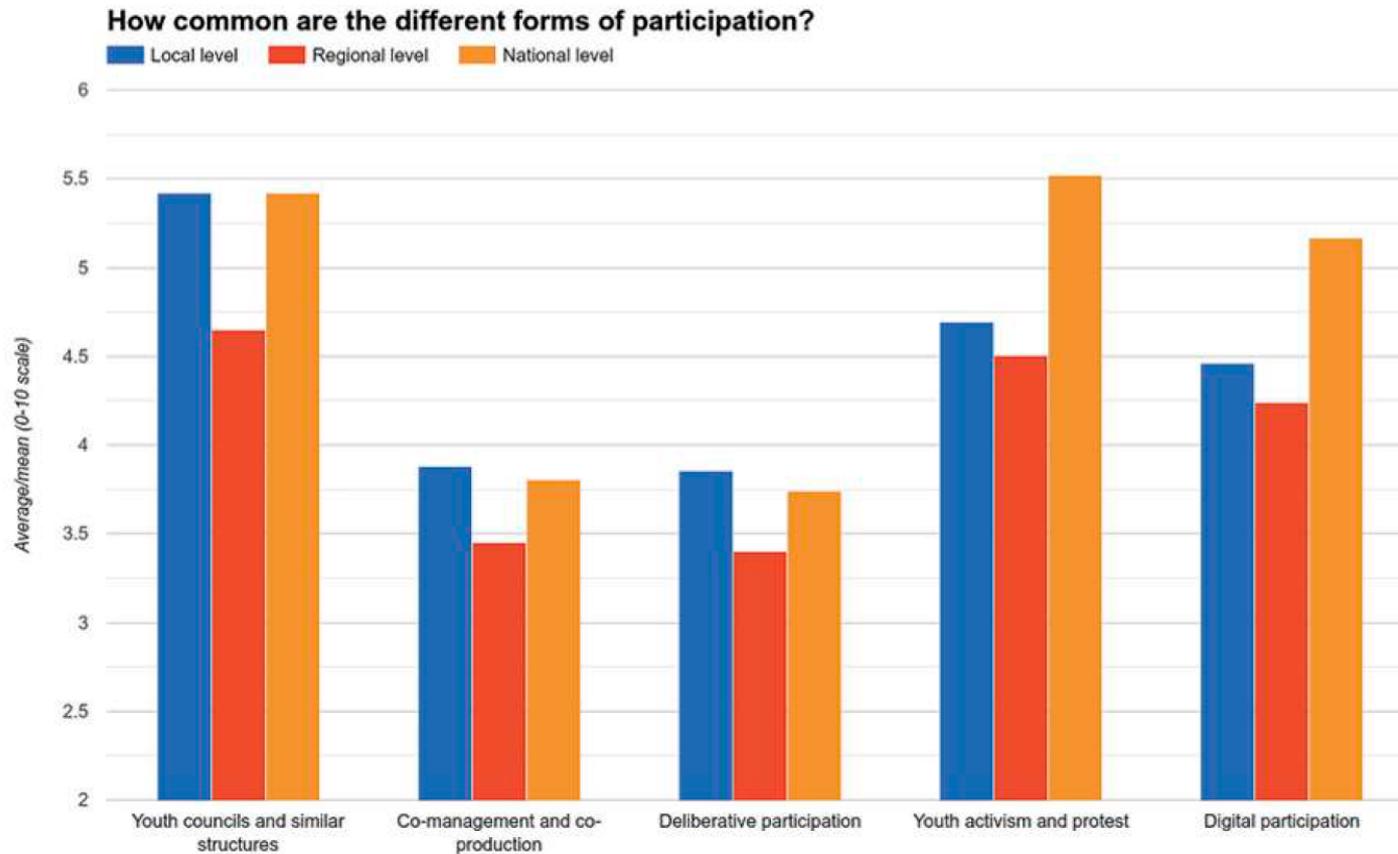
- Girl 3. "it's about that: nothing ever happens, things never work out"

# Key message on participation

- “Hearings are of no use, if you are not ready to give us power” (Interview of a young person)
- “Participation without influence is mere window-dressing” (Mary John).



# Crowley & Moxon 2017: New and innovative forms of youth participation in the decision-making process



# Kurt Hahn on working with the young (1960)

There are three ways of trying to win the young. There is persuasion, there is compulsion and there is attraction. You can preach at them, that is a hook without a worm; you can say “You must volunteer,” that is of the devil; and you can tell them, “You are needed.” That appeal hardly ever fails.

# Didi madloba - დიდი მადლობა

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