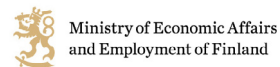




BETTER TOGETHER

*An action plan for creating a collaborative working culture
for Finnish civil servants*



Summary

This project report is an outcome of Design for Government 2017 course at Aalto University. The Design for Government course develops design which addresses many of the complex challenges of the Government of Finland and the public sector.

The project, based on the Civil Servant 2.0 brief, was carried out in collaboration with the Government of Finland, and aimed to envision and develop design concepts that develop the next generation of civil servants and their work. The project was commissioned by representatives from the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Transport and Communications and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment.

The project and the report have been completed by an international and interdisciplinary group of masters level students at Aalto University: Yuri Fukamati, Vilma Hämäläinen, Brad Mullen, Emilija Veselova and Chinny Wong.

The first section of the report showcases the context of the project, outlines the process of the team, which consists of research, analysis, development and delivery phases, and describes methods used by the team in each of the phases.

The second section of the report presents the key findings of the project which are divided into three categories: key structural challenges and key cultural challenges for introducing collaborative ways of working into the Finnish Government, and examples of successful collaboration. The section ends with a clear problem statement.

The third section of the report presents the Better Together Action Plan, the final proposal developed by the team. Better Together aims to encourage collaboration among civil servants as a way to transition from the existing outdated working process for civil servants, to a way that would address the new types of complex challenges affecting civil servants' work now and in the future.

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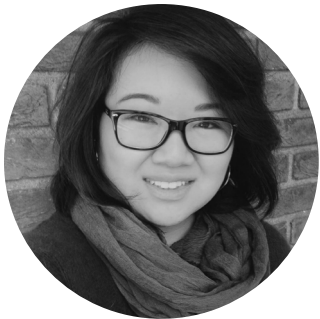
Introduction

The **Better Together** project was developed during the Design for Government course at Aalto University, which took place during the spring of 2017. This 14-week long course is an advanced studio project within the Creative Sustainability master's program. It brings together a variety of students from different educational backgrounds interested in design for the public sector.

Our team of five students from Aalto University came together in February 2017 with the common goal of solving a complex problem for the Government of Finland. In this report we describe the process and methods that our team undertook, present the key findings of our research, state a clear problem that we uncovered, and present our solution: the **Better Together** action plan.

01 Our Team

Our international and multidisciplinary team of Aalto University students brings together expertise in human-centered and collaborative design, qualitative research, systems thinking and communications.



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02 The Brief

Our project “Civil Servant 2.0: Future Work of Civil Servants,” was commissioned by several stakeholders from the Government of Finland: Virpi Einola-Pekkinen, Ministry of Finance; Susanna Metsälampi, Ministry of Transport and Communications; Tiina Hanhike, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment; Kaisa Lähteenmäki-Smith and Johanna Kotipelto, Prime Minister’s Office.

The brief focuses on civil servants, their work and the transformations occurring in society which require civil servants’ work practice and culture to change.

“

Responsive and effective policy-making processes, nowadays, demands a high degree of awareness, collaboration, agility and trust within diverse ‘ecosystems’ of stakeholders, as well as abilities, skills, capacities and attitudes. Today, we have both a critical moment and an appropriate window of opportunity – during Suomi100, Finland’s centenary year – to look back and forward to how civil servant work must be transformed. **How does the work of the civil servant at the cross-roads of designing policy-making and implementing it look now, how should it look in future?** The Suomi100 theme of ‘togetherness’ raises a concrete question of what new kinds of working processes, environments, tools and experiences are necessary within the ministry and its stakeholders and citizens, as well as across multiple ministries.

”

Our Process

Through the 14-week design process, our team worked to address the problems highlighted in our brief by utilizing three key frameworks: **emphatic approaches** to identify the needs of the client and stakeholders, **systems thinking** to analyze the wider context of policy-making, and **behavioral insight** to identify and create relevant solutions. These frameworks guided our work through research, analysis, concept development and delivery phases, which are identified in the illustration of our design process in the next page. It should be noted that these phases took place in a dynamic and iterative fashion.

Research

During this phase our team conducted a broad ranging investigation of the entire landscape related to the topic through various methods including an ATLAS Workshop, interviews, a Future Vision Workshop and secondary research.

Analysis

The analysis phase allowed our team to make sense of the data through creating thematic links with affinity diagrams and systems level understandings. This led to the creation of our key insights and a clear problem statement.

Development

In the development phase we set out to understand how to address the identified problem. We used ideation, evaluation workshops, initial concepts and iteration in this phase.

Delivery

During the delivery period, our team finalized the Better Together Action Plan by detailing a strategic goal, policy changes and a development process. In addition, we developed the final deliverables for the project.

The following chapter will depict a detailed description of our process and showcase the methods that our team used to understand the problem landscape, analyze the data, create concepts, develop and test prototypes and deliver a final proposal for the client.

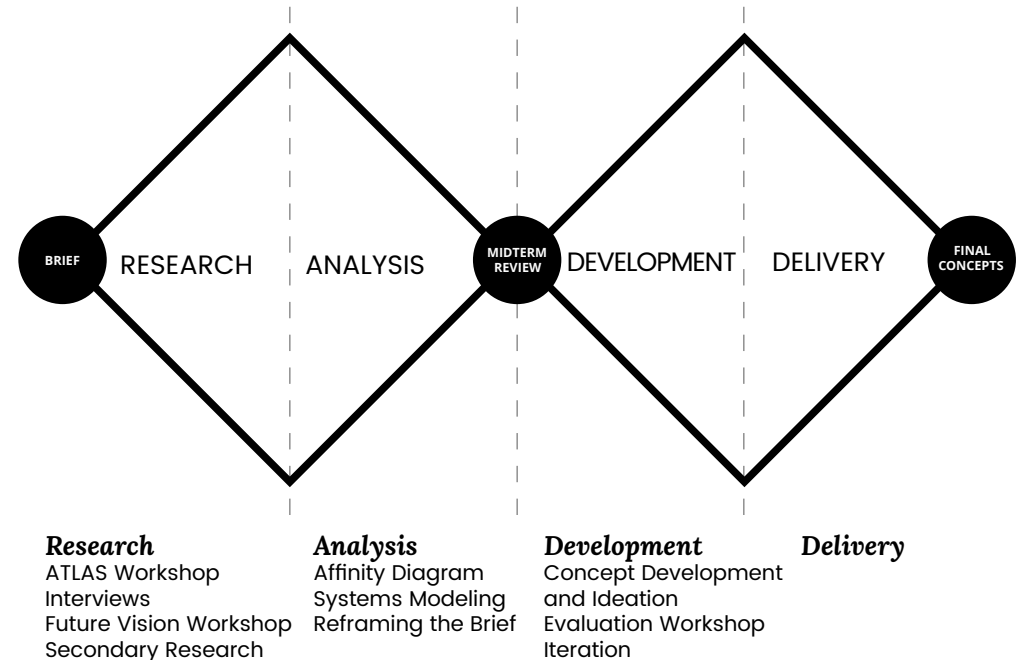


Fig. 1 Illustration of the design process

03 Research

Research marked the most prominent endeavor of the 14-week design process, reflecting the wide scope of the brief. We conducted comprehensive and critical research with the aim of building a deep understanding of the client's design problem. This chapter provides an overview of the methods our team used in the investigation.



ATLAS Workshop (photo by Yuri Fukumati)

ATLAS Workshop

The [ATLAS game](#) is a design tool developed within Aalto University to bring together designers and stakeholders to plan service co-development projects. We kicked off our investigation into the brief with an ATLAS workshop organized on February 28, 2017, the second week of the course. The main objective for this activity was to use the co-development tool to create a shared understanding of the client's motivations and goals behind the project.

Three client representatives from the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment took part in the game, which we had modified to fit our research needs. The workshop helped us gain initial perspectives into the client's needs while also revealing bits about hierarchy, power relations and different ideas of the civil servants' future within the Finnish Government.



Interview with Ministerial Advisor (photo by Eeva Lehto)

Interviews

By leveraging the combined resources of the two teams who were investigating the Civil Servant 2.0 brief into a 'supergroup', we were able to interview 22 Finnish Government employees between March 8 and April 20. We met with a diverse group of individuals ranging from junior specialists to heads of departments from several ministries and the Prime Minister's Office. Among the interviewees we had both long-term civil servants as well as individuals who had recently joined the Government from the private sector.

The interviews followed a semi-structured format, lasted an hour on average and were typically conducted in the interviewee's office building

or a nearby cafe. The interviews initially covered a broad perspective of topics ranging from the interviewees' background, education and path to being a Government employee to their daily work. We also asked about challenges and frustrations toward their work and projected the future by asking how they thought civil servants' work would change in the next 20 years.

As we kept interviewing, we refined our interview topic guide week by week to dig deeper into emerging themes. Overall, interviews served as a key source of information from the user-perspective and allowed us to understand the realities of civil servants' day-to-day work.



Future Vision Workshop (photo by Emilija Veselova)

Future Vision Workshop

After the first longer stretch of interviews we facilitated our second client workshop for six Government employees at Valtimo, an informal collaboration space for all ministries, on March 22, 2017. The future vision workshop had three parts: envisioning the future, mapping out the present situation, and exploring how we might bridge the gap.

The key finding of the workshop included a consensus about the increasing importance of three-dimensional thinking; whereby, there is a mutual understanding that approaching matters horizontally rather than vertically is becoming a necessity. A shift towards this type of approach was described as a significant departure from the common

working cultures of the traditional civil servant specialist within the Finnish Government.

The discussion around the future, present and bridging the gap, was not the only source of insight; we were able to understand more about civil servants by observing their participation in the workshop. Observations of the group's interactions provided additional insight into how the civil servants work together. The group dynamics of the workshop made it clear to us that the civil servants did not have a shared future vision for the Finnish Government and their own work.

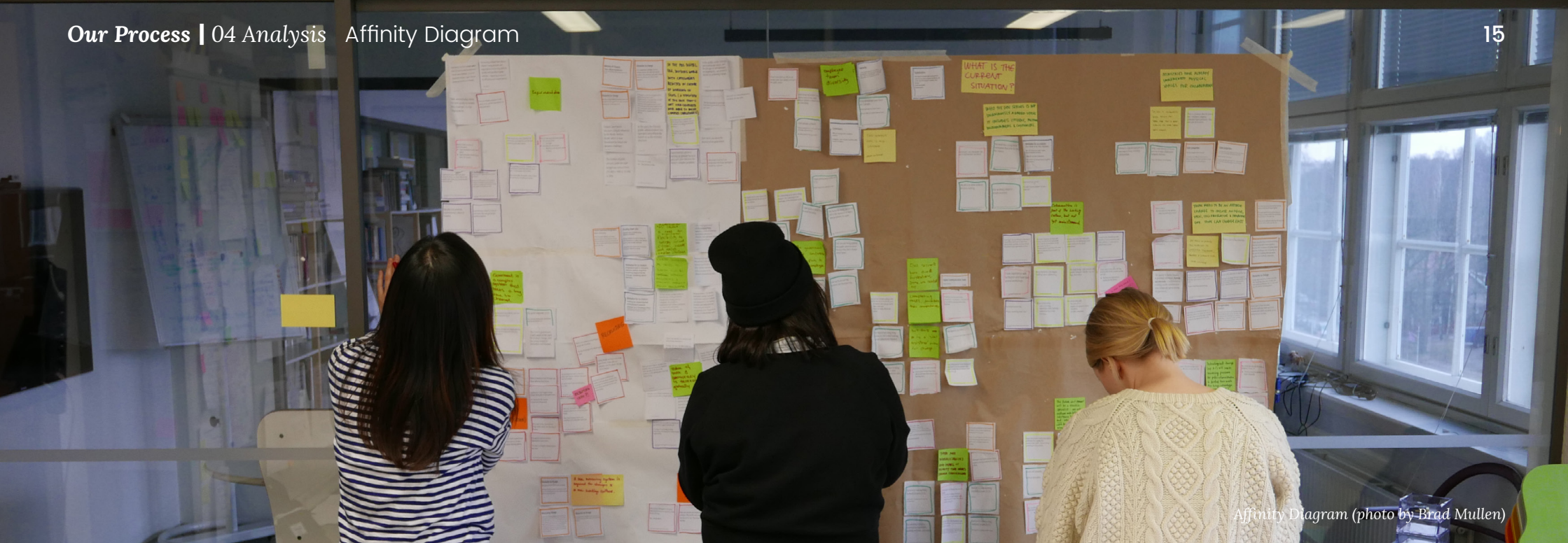
Secondary Research

Our team began investigating secondary research sources within the first few days of the course. We looked into the structure of the Finnish public sector, the development of the Changemakers Network, and the current and future activities of the public sector, both in Finland and abroad, through a number of reports and articles.

Secondary research also supported our work in later stages of the project; it allowed us to benchmark existing design solutions, especially in the public sector. While our research emphasized empathic and collaborative approaches, secondary research provided us valuable comparative information from diverse contexts.

04 *Analysis*

Although our research process allowed us to conduct a broad inquiry and collect large amounts of data related to the topic, it was the two analysis methods that we utilized to build an understanding of the data and the design context at hand. In the following section we will outline two main analysis methods we have used in our process: affinity diagramming and systems modeling. After analyzing and reframing the brief we were able to crystallize three key structural and three key cultural insights related to our project which are presented in the Insights section of this report.



Affinity Diagram (photo by Brad Mullen)

Affinity Diagram

During our research process we gathered a large amount of data, and we used affinity diagram to build a joint understanding of it. Affinity diagram is a method used to distill clear insights from large amounts of data. We dissected information, quotes and ideas from the interviews, workshops and secondary research into individual pieces of data – over 500 in total – and then thematically organized them into clusters, grouping related ideas and similar topics together.

Throughout the process we created three affinity diagrams. Two of them were physical, and one of them was digital. In the process we created a shared understanding of the data, which was essential for us to move forward in the design process as a team.

Link for a time lapse of our affinity diagram: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kH0I8zEpzBo>



Systems Modeling

In addition to affinity diagrams we created several systems models in order to better understand the larger context of the civil servant. A systems model is a conceptual representation of reality which visually represents the complex processes and links between various elements of a system.

The use of systems models allowed us to identify feedback loops, cases in which an element of the system influences other elements and eventually influences itself. These feedback loops and elements which create them can serve as powerful leverage points, a critical point where a small change can create a large impact towards systemic change.

Our final systems model is represented in Figure 2. It highlights that understanding and practical know-how influences which ways of working civil servants use in their day-to-day work. Moreover, it showcases the importance and influence of managers on the way civil servants work. These two aspects of the model guided our understanding of the design problem and allowed us to select a clear focus for our project.



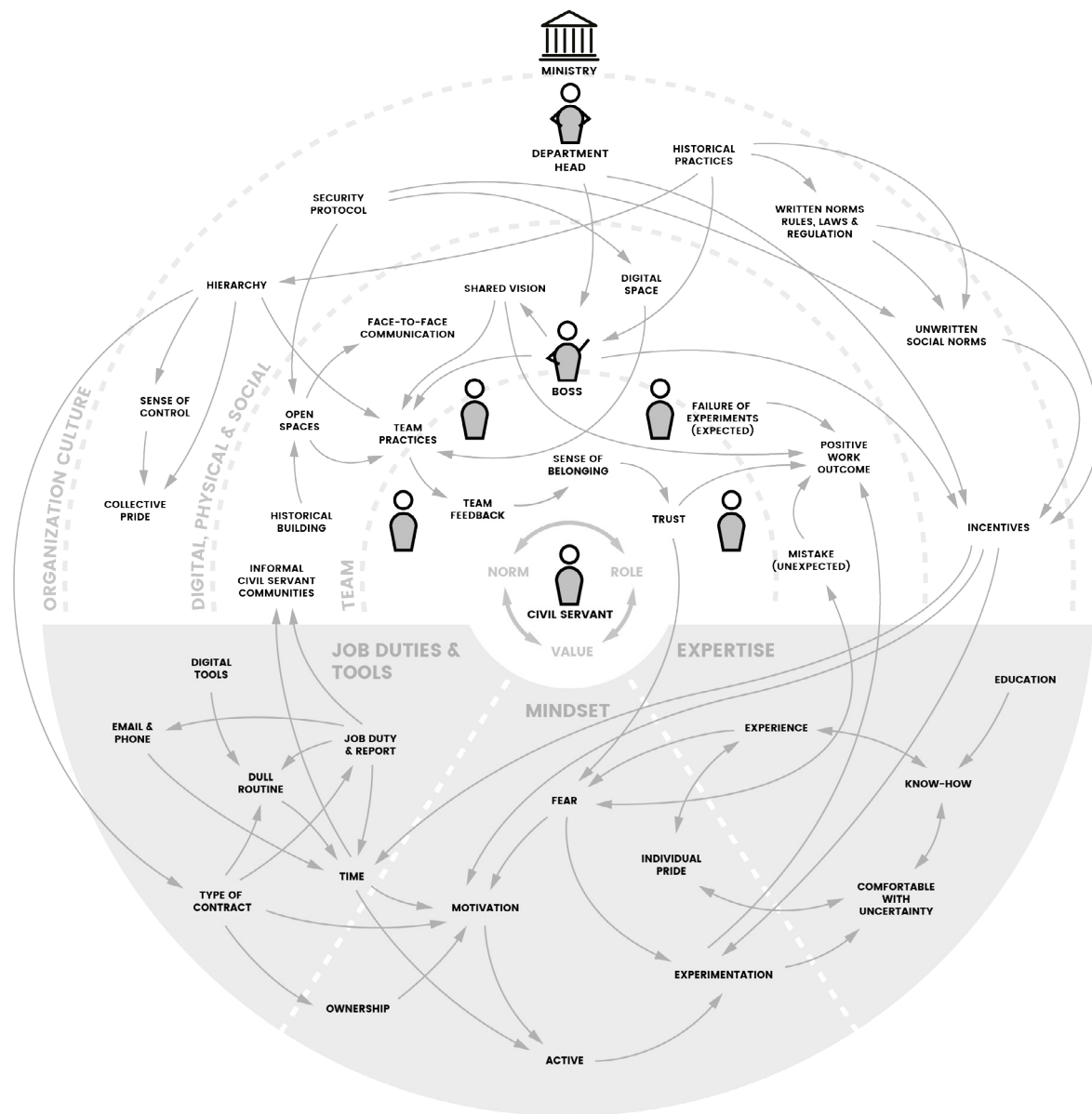


Fig. 2 Systems Model (illustration by Chinny Wong)

Reframing the Brief

The generous scope of the original brief allowed us to conduct a broad research investigation about the Finnish Government as a system, why it is aspiring to change, how it had innovated in the past and what civil servants' work currently encompasses. By early April, we faced the need to converge and evaluate the research that we had conducted. We decided on the final focus of the brief to utilize both our research findings and our team's competencies.

Based on the analysis of primary and secondary research we identified several potential areas: decreasing routine work and its implications, creating a user-centric mindset, managing change and finally, boosting collaboration within the Government. We made a decision to reframe our brief in order to focus on the latter, **collaboration**, as a key aspect of future civil service work.

This focus area cut across every key painpoint identified in our systems map, making it a powerful leverage point for creating systemic change. Moreover, collaboration as a topic and practice allowed us also to utilize our team members' expertise within the scope of the course.

Vision

**WITHIN 2 YEARS,
CIVIL SERVANTS WILL
UNDERSTAND WHAT
COLLABORATION MEANS
AND HOW IT BRINGS VALUE
TO THE GOVERNMENT.
ALSO, MANY WILL BE ABLE
TO ACHIEVE A MEASURABLE
SUCCESS IN WORK BY
USING COLLABORATION
AND ITS METHODS
APPROPRIATELY.**

05 *Development*

Reframing the brief and setting a clear vision gave us the necessary lens of focus to begin developing concepts. At this point, our team iteratively ideated, developed, critiqued and prototyped concepts. We tested two initial concepts with the client and civil servants in an evaluation workshop, and, based on the outcomes, we were able to iterate further and develop our final solution.



Concept Development and Ideation (photo by Yuri Fukamati)

Concept Development & Ideation

To address the structural and cultural challenges that we outlined during the analysis phase, our team began ideating using various collaborative concept generation techniques. Through snowballing, a formal technique that allows team members to build upon each other's ideas, and a brainstorming exercise with an established protocol to encourage creativity, our team ideated eight unique strategies to address the structural and cultural insights. The strategies included a professional exchange program, a Design in the Government conference, a partnership with Aalto University, an applied Design For Government course for the civil servants, utilizing thesis workers, utilizing micro practices, monthly meetings with changemakers and a collaboration tool.

Our initial ideation phase led us to create a concept which included both an exchange program and a collaboration tool. We developed an exchange program for collaboration to provide driven civil servants the opportunity to experience collaborative ways of working and implement them into their day-to-day work. The collaboration toolkit, on the other hand, was created to serve as a quick and easy introduction into collaboration in the workplace, specifically for the Finnish Government. It would provide practical tools for anyone to introduce collaborative ways of working in their day-to-day work. We brought these concepts forward to evaluate with several civil servants in our proposal evaluation workshop.



Evaluation Workshop

We held our third client workshop for four Government employees from three of the four commissioning ministries at Valtimo on May 8, 2017. In the workshop we aimed to evaluate the two initial concepts, a collaboration tool and an exchange program, and to test how these concepts are perceived by the civil servants.

Before the workshop we prepared a mock-up of the tool and a leaflet that described the envisioned exchange program. During the workshop we introduced the concepts to civil servants to get their initial reactions. We then explored the challenges, limitations and benefits of our proposed solutions.



Evaluation Workshop (photos by Brad Mullen)



Iteration (photo by Emilija Veselova)

Iteration

After the workshop we analyzed the potential of our two proposals to tackle the problems we had outlined. The workshop results showed that the toolkit we had envisioned would not be able to provide practical know-how and skills within the current structures of the Government. Several limitations of the envisioned exchange program, such as lack of focus, large time commitment and inability to use the gained experience in one's work due to the cultural and structural challenges, surfaced during the workshop.

Based on the reactions and outlined challenges, we decided to discontinue our initial concepts, which we based on a bottom-up approach, to develop a more top-down approach that would address both the structural and the cultural challenges.

06 *Delivery*

After iterating on the concept, we developed the final version of our proposal. A detailed account of the Better Together concept can be seen in depth from page 34 onwards.

Additionally, we created all the materials that would be necessary to deliver our design concepts in a clear, understandable and inspiring way. We created a 15-minute presentation on our research findings and the concept Better Together for the final show of the Design for Government course on May 23, 2017. Furthermore, we created this report that overviews our design process, clearly outlines the research findings, the problem statement and our solution including its benefits.

Proposal *Key Insights*

In this section of the report we will overview the key insights we uncovered during our process. We will introduce why collaboration is key to the Government in the 21st century and outline six key insights, three structural and three cultural, we link to introduction of collaborative practices into the Finnish Government. Additionally, we will introduce two examples of successful collaboration within the Government, and showcase why these cases have been possible within the Government context. Finally, we will outline a problem statement which we aim to address through our solution.

07 Preface: Why Collaboration

Big global phenomena such as the digital revolution, changing demographics and climate change are fundamentally changing the way different societal actors live, work and operate. Importantly, these phenomena create interconnections between areas that the Government used to be able to divide into neat categories. The divisional structure of the Finnish Government continues to reflect this history.

Because of the increased interconnectivity and thus, complexity of issues, there is now pressure for the public sector to renew their working practices in order to address this unprecedented complexity in a comprehensive way. Collaborative approaches have been offered as one of the most effective ways to do this because they embed diverse perspectives into decision-making to achieve high-performing outcomes¹. Without this approach, the public sector risks creating limited or flawed policy and services.

What we mean by collaboration

A group of people working together towards a common goal by:

- actively sharing knowledge and perspectives,
- continuously negotiating and making decisions together,
- having a collective sense of ownership over the job.

The foundational elements of collaboration include:

- Equality
- Accountability
- Trust
- Diversity

¹ See for instance [Wicked Problems and Network Approaches to Resolution by Nancy Roberts](#) (2000) and [Designing for Public Services by Ideo, Design for Europe and Nesta](#) (2017).

08 Structural Insights

We have understood that the following three characteristics of governmental structures prevent civil servants from being more collaborative.

- 01** Organization of work is individualistic and collaboration with others is perceived as extra on top of regular work.
- 02** Hierarchy blocks direct communication and collaboration between civil servants.
- 03** Though managers have high influence on working culture, professional development of managers, especially new managers, is not enforced.

Insight 1:

Organization of work enforces individualism

“In practice we don't really do teamwork. We get a request and we discuss among the team who'll do it.”
Junior Specialist

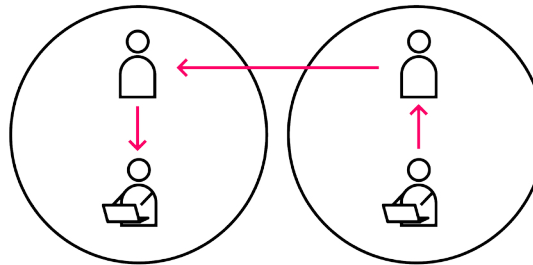


There are teams within the Finnish Government. However, working in the same team with others does not mean working together with them. In most cases, each team member focuses on individual assignments and works hard to complete them. Often there is no allocated working time for anything extra. Collaboration is perceived as extra that comes on top of regular work.

Insight 2:

Hierarchy blocks direct communication

“I am used to being able to call anybody. Here I can't. I need to take [matters] to my superior and they take them forward.”
Senior Specialist



There is a strong hierarchy and line of command within the Government. When a civil servant needs assistance from others, they cannot reach out directly to that person, especially, if this person is from another department or ministry. Instead, they need to contact their direct manager who will take the issues forward.

Insight 3:

Professional development of new managers is not enforced

“A new position gives you a higher salary, but you are still a specialist doing the same job (...) This is a big challenge because people should see the new position as a completely new profession.”
Strategy Manager

Many civil servants accentuated that civil servants in managerial positions are a critical leverage point within the governmental structures. Middle and high level managers directly influence the work of their subordinates, and more often need to collaborate in cross-department and cross-ministry projects.

A strategy manager elaborated that the promotion point, specifically, is a large opportunity for development of the managers; however, currently newly promoted managers rarely change their ways of working and there are no structural incentives or opportunities for these people to develop into collaborative leaders.

09 Cultural Insights

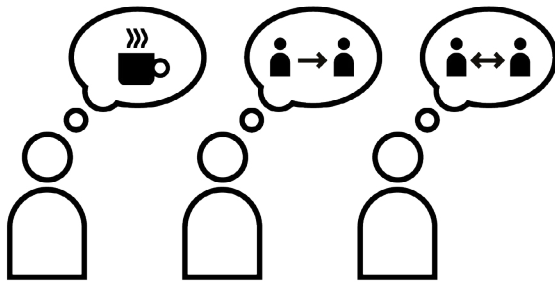
Alongside structural challenges there are cultural challenges for introducing collaborative ways of working into the Government.

These three characteristics of working culture are large roadblocks to effectively utilizing collaboration within the Finnish Government.

- 04** The understanding of collaboration among civil servants is fragmented.
- 05** Civil servants lack practical skills, tools and experience in collaboration, which makes it difficult to utilize collaboration in day-to-day work.
- 06** It is difficult for civil servants who are eager to use collaboration to establish connections and links with those who are not.

Insight 4:

There is no shared understanding of what collaboration means



Civil servants understand word “collaboration” in a different way. For some, it means having a coffee with a colleague. For some collaboration means assigning a specialist, for example a graphic designer or a translator, to complete a task. For others it means giving a 5-minute talk at an event organized by another ministry. While some mean writing a new piece of legislation together, in one shared document, constantly giving feedback and supporting each team member.

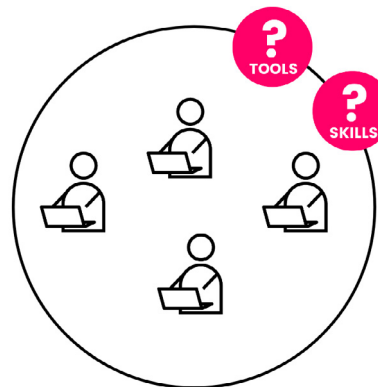
In sum, it is very challenging for a civil servant to know what exactly someone means if they were to say “hey, let’s collaborate!”

Insight 5:

Civil servants lack practical know-how

“We haven’t had that many tools nor the time and ability to implement [collaborative ways of working].”

Ministerial Advisor



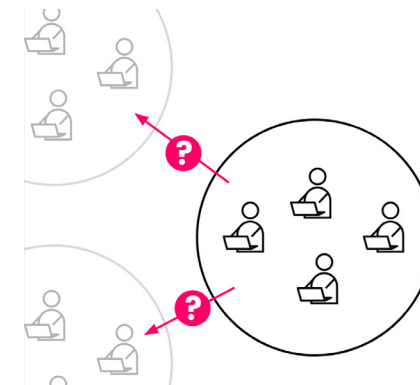
There are civil servants in the Government who know a lot about collaboration; unfortunately, many of these civil servants lack practical skills, tools and experience in utilizing collaboration in their work.

Insight 6:

Establishing collaborative links is difficult

“The others [civil servants] don’t see [our team’s] policy as part of their main activities or interests. It’s easy to involve those whose task is to work with [this] policy.”

Ministerial Advisor



For those who understand collaboration and have practical expertise with it, it is challenging to involve those without the understanding and experience. For example, one of our interviewees had spent several month having countless meetings at other ministries and departments to showcase that there is a link between her agenda and the other departments’ work.

10 Examples of Successful Collaboration

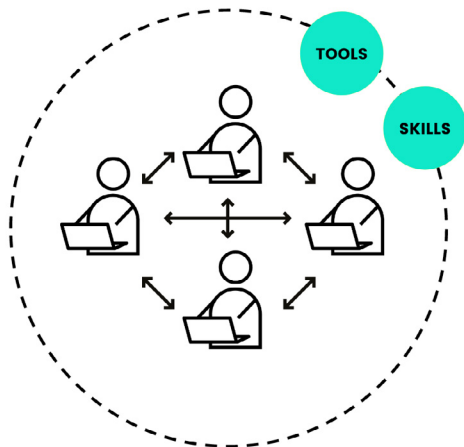
During our research we came across several examples of successful use of collaboration within the Finnish Government. In the upcoming section we will shortly present two of them. Both of them have their flaws and challenges; however, in our opinion, these initiatives have successfully introduced some aspects of effective collaboration and have overcome some of the challenges we have outline above.

Example 1:

Transport Code

“It’s been kind of confidence building when we look at things together, we realize that none of us are perfect, we all can make mistakes, and it’s really good when someone has your back, when someone is watching what you are doing and asking questions.”

Head of Department



The new process utilized in creating the Transport Code allowed new transportation legislation to be collaboratively written by a team of legislators. The experts gather together to write, edit, question and discuss.

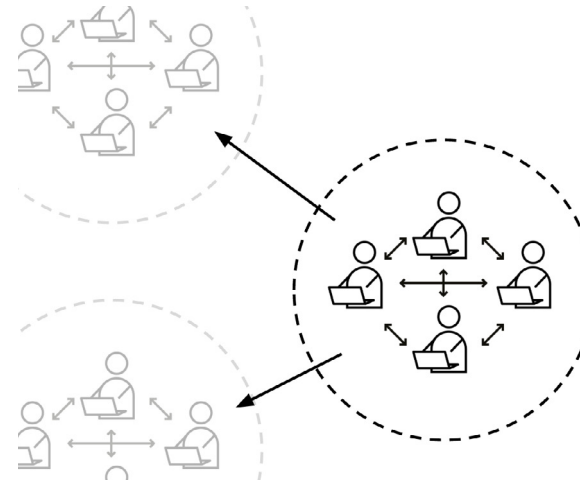
The Transport Code team has successfully adopted different tools, for example shared online documents to support their collaborative work. They are continuously developing collaborative skills of all legislators, even those who are not fully comfortable in working together.

Example 2:

D9

“Also, I let the team decide, I’m not like ‘you do this and that.’ They know best of what they know and their skills. Every case we plan together, and plan our shared deals and responsibilities, and the way of working... everything like that, we do it together.”

Digital Director



The recently established D9 team also utilizes collaboration which is embedded into its structure. The team works as an internal consultancy unit to support digitalization related projects across the Government.

D9 has been successful in adopting a low hierarchical structure to organize their work. All members of the team, who were specifically hired to be a part of this unit, have extensive collaboration skills and know-how. Additionally, the team effectively establishes collaborative links with many others departments in the whole Government.

Why have they been possible?

These two teams prove that collaboration is possible within the Finnish Government and that there are opportunities to overcome the cultural and structural challenges. Therefore, it is important for us to understand why these initiatives were possible.

Both of the initiatives have four elements which made them possible within the current context of the Finnish Government:



- 01** They have a strong support from the highest level leaders of the Government.
- 02** They are working to implement strategic goals of the Government, which are outlined in the current Government program. The D9 team works on implementing the strategic goal of digitalization of public services, and the Transport Code works on the strategic goal of deregulation.
- 03** As initiatives that work towards strategic goals, they have been given a sufficient budget to carry out the activities.
- 04** As initiatives that work towards strategic goals, they have been given a strong mandate to carry out their work. This mandate includes collaboration.

11 Problem Statement

There are promising seeds of effective collaboration within the Finnish Government, however, collaborative teams are an exception, not the rule.

Overall civil servants are having a difficult time to collaborate because:

- 01 There are structural challenges:**
- Organization of work enforces individualism
 - Hierarchy blocks direct communication
 - Professional development of new managers is not enforced

- 02 There are cultural challenges:**
- There is no shared understanding of what collaboration means
 - Civil servants lack practical know-how
 - Establishing collaborative links is difficult

- 03 And, most importantly, collaboration is not a priority in civil servants' work:**
- No top level buy-in for collaboration
 - Collaboration is not a strategic goal of the government
 - Budget allocated to collaboration is not sufficient
 - Civil servants do not have a mandate to collaborate.



**STRUCTURAL
CHALLENGES**

**CULTURAL
CHALLENGES**

**PRIORITISING
COLLABORATION**



BETTER TOGETHER

*An action plan for creating a collaborative working culture
for Finnish civil servants*

Better Together

Based on the identified key insights and the problem statement, our proposal for boosting collaboration within the Finnish Government is Better Together – an action plan for creating a collaborative working culture for Finnish Civil Servants. It has three components:



A STRATEGIC GOAL
THAT PROVIDES
A UNIFIED VISION
ACROSS ALL MINISTRIES.



A POLICY CHANGE
THAT SETS FORMAL REQUIREMENTS
WHICH VALIDATES THE IMPORTANCE OF
COLLABORATION WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT.



A DEVELOPMENT PROCESS
THAT CREATES A CONCRETE PLATFORM
FOR CIVIL SERVANTS TO DEVELOP
THEIR COLLABORATION SKILLS.



12 Strategic Goal

We claim that the Government needs to prioritize collaboration. Therefore the proposal contains a strategic goal to guide the overall strategy within the Finnish Government. This goal would clearly communicate that collaboration must become part of the working culture for every civil servant, specifically managers, who must know how to collaborate with others to help address the complex issues our society is facing.

**CIVIL SERVANTS
EFFECTIVELY UTILIZE
COLLABORATIVE WORKING
METHODS TO ADDRESS THE
INCREASINGLY COMPLEX
ISSUES FACING THE
FINNISH SOCIETY.**



13 Policy Change

To achieve the strategic goal, policy changes are necessary. We propose that collaborative skills and know-how is a requirement for all civil servants. Expertise is crucial, but collaboration skills are needed to unite civil servants in working in this new era.

This policy change could be implemented in several ways. For example, collaboration could be added to the job descriptions of civil servants, making it clear that it is part of everyone's job. Additionally, job ads could explicitly list collaborative skills as a requirement, and should have a clear description of which exact skills, competences and know-how is required. These two actions would showcase that collaborative skills are a necessity, and create a mandate for civil servants to adopt collaboration.

**COLLABORATIVE SKILLS ARE
A REQUIREMENT FOR CIVIL
SERVANTS.**



14 Training Program

Setting structural requirements is key to fundamental organizational change – yet not enough on its own. The Better Together Action Plan proposes that the Government should provide a concrete way for civil servants to develop their competence in collaboration through a training program.

Training Blocks

We envision a training program that consists of 3 blocks.

- Block 1 builds the foundation. It is mandatory for everyone taking part in the program. After Block 1, civil servants will have a shared vocabulary and understanding of why and how to use basic collaborative methods in their daily work.
- Block 2 allows civil servants to build more collaborative skills on top of the foundation, focusing on leadership, project management and facilitation of collaborative work.
- Block 3 offers high-level civil servants strategic understanding of collaboration in the public sector, and how it can help them to embrace organizational change in complex and uncertain situations.

Target Audience

The program should initially target civil servants who are entering a new managerial position, be it through internal promotion or external hire. This group is strategically targeted because they are entering a phase of transition where they may be more receptive to changing their habits, and because they serve as a leverage point for influence over other civil servants in different levels of the Government.

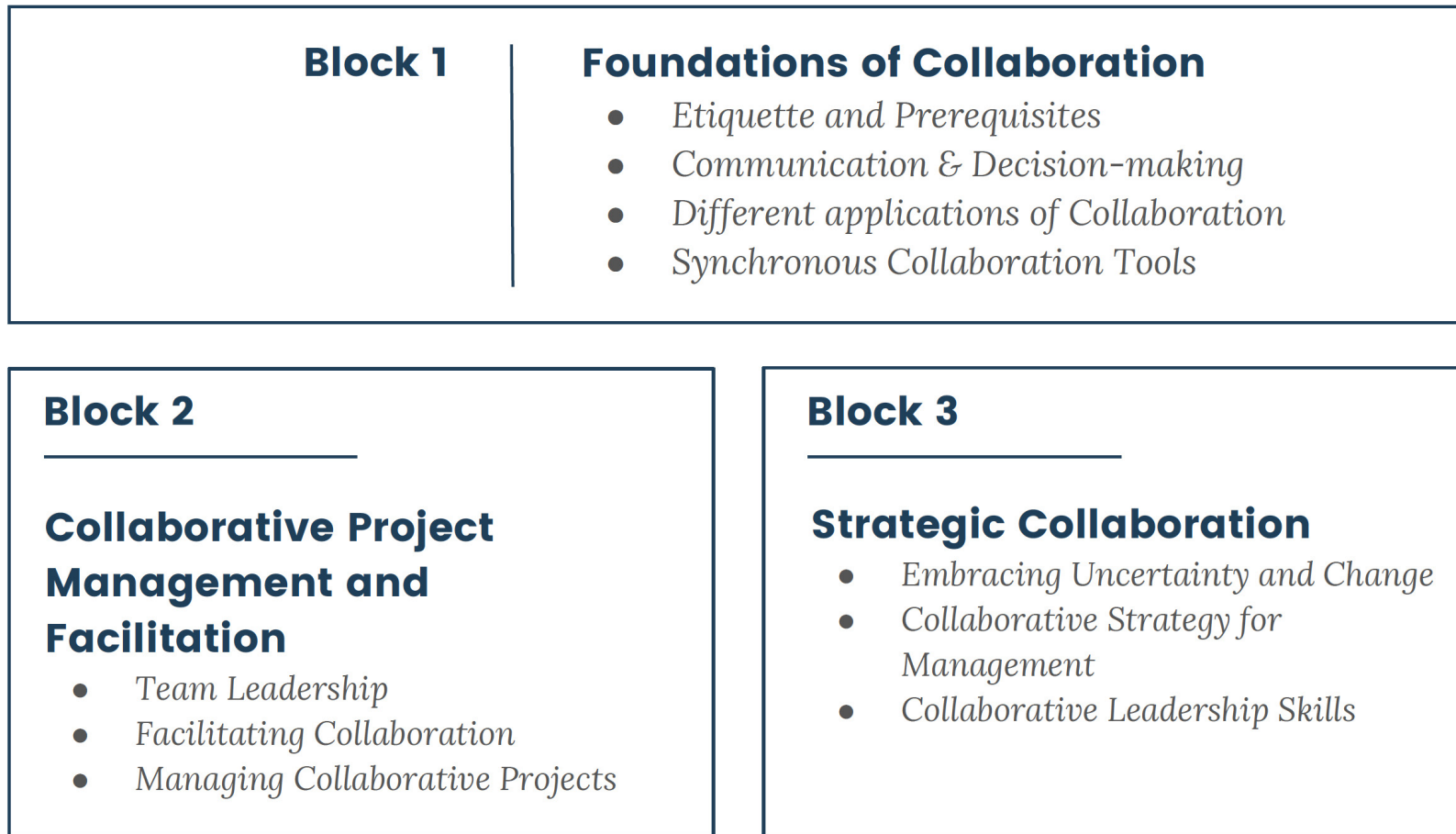


Fig. 3 Training Blocks



1



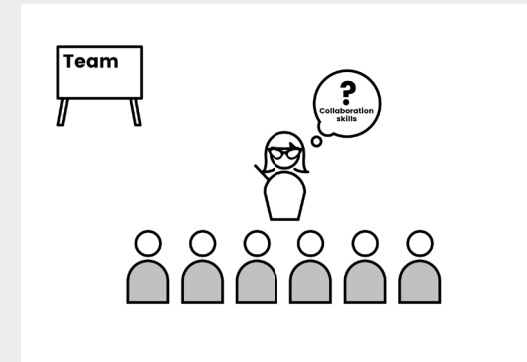
Meet Suvi. She has been a civil servant for 6 years. Currently, she is a specialist in her field, and most of the time she works independently.

2



Suvi get's promoted to senior advisor in her department.

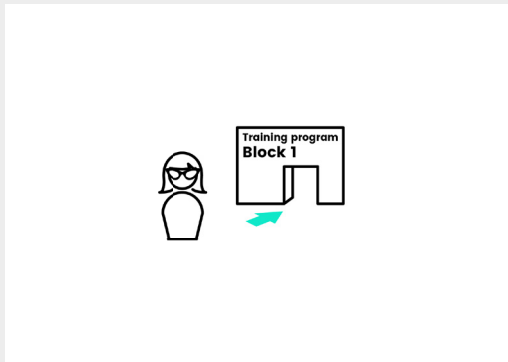
3



This new position will require her to lead a team of 6 specialist and actively participate in cross-ministry projects. She has heard about new ways of working and especially collaboration for the past few years, but she feels that she is lacking the practical know-how of how to do these things.

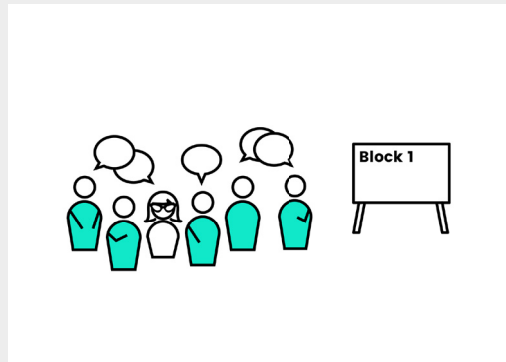


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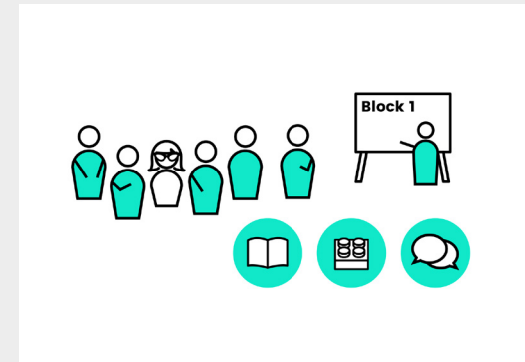
Suvi is eager to begin Block 1 of the training program, which is mandatory for all new managers.

5



She arrives at the first class and meets 15 other newly promoted or hired managers from various ministries. The class is guided by a professional in collaboration.

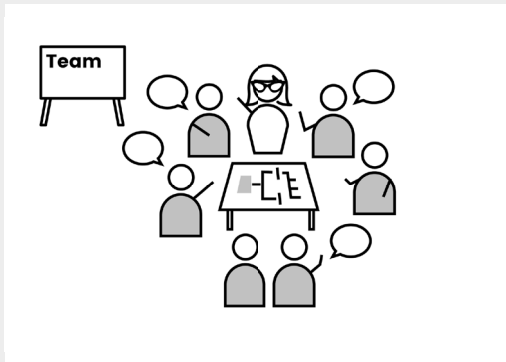
6



During the class the participants do various hands-on exercises, play out potential scenarios, discuss their learnings and reflections and look at the theory behind the activities.

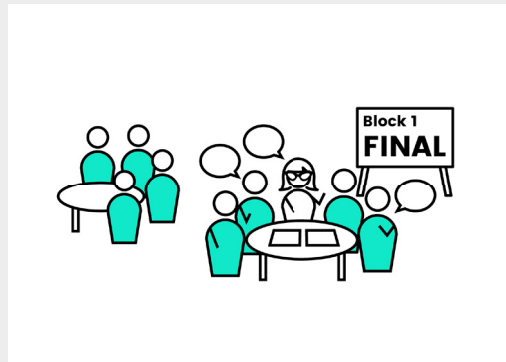


7



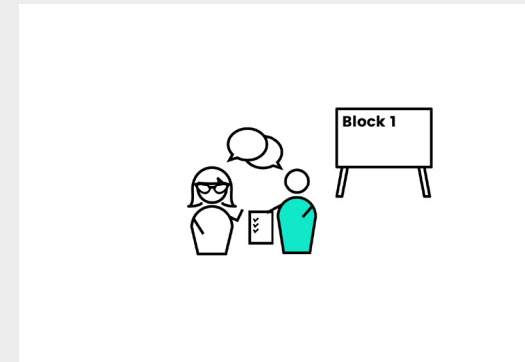
After the class Suvi goes back to her team, where she needs to complete her at-work assignment. It includes several exercises that she needs to facilitate for her team. Doing these exercises enables Suvi to deepen her own knowledge while developing the skills of her team.

8



Not only that, but in the classroom she gets to know other managers better when working in small groups. Together they need to prepare and facilitate a 20-minute collaborative workshop for the last class. This is her final assignment for the training.

9



Finally, one month after completing the course she has a checkpoint with the teacher to review her progress and get extra support and guidance. At this point she is issued a certificate of completion.



15 Benefits

Our three-part proposal can help tackle the current roadblocks for collaboration within the Finnish Government in several ways. First, we would see a change in the cultural challenges we outlined earlier. The solution will build a shared language and understanding of what collaboration means within the Finnish Government; moreover, initially managers, and soon their teams will be able to actually start using practical collaboration methods in their work. As collaboration will be a priority for the Finnish Government, we will also see civil servants increasingly establishing collaborative links and joint projects.

In the long-term, our solution will address the structural challenges we

found to be crucial in our research. With every trained group of managers, more and more teams, units and departments will start adopting new practices and the values of trust, equality, accountability and diversity. With time, this will help the Government move away from the individual-centric culture and become able to effectively utilize collaboration when the situation calls for it.

As a whole, the three components of Better Together can fundamentally shift the way the Finnish Government works, making it better equipped to create policy and public services that succeed in addressing the complex societal challenges of our time.



BETTER TOGETHER

*An action plan for creating a collaborative working culture
for Finnish civil servants*

