

Accessible Together

A Framework
of Collaboration
for an Accessible
Travel Chain



Creative Commons CC BY 4.0 2023
Gabriel Fuentes, Katrina Hoffmann,
Suvi Onne, Mina Rostami

1. Executive Summary

Finland is envisioning the future of the national transport system. A large part of this is anchored in the *National Transport System Plan for 2021–2032* written by the Ministry of Transport and Communications (LVM). One goal of this vision is to be “**accessible and equal** to all user groups” (Ministry of Transport and Communications, 2021, p 33), with a focus on **accessible travel chains**—considering a traveller’s whole journey—to cement a human-centred approach in making this happen. As part of the Design for Government course held by Aalto University, our team worked together with LVM and other relevant stakeholders to create a solution that would aid them in their work toward this.

Through our research, we have mapped the thoughts and problems of our partners and other relevant actors in the transport sector and contrasted this with our research. From this, we pinpointed “the current transport system does not encourage shared work toward accessibility” as the focus of the intervention together with our partners. Within this, it was unanimously decided that ‘collaboration’ was the key piece for unlocking it. As such, we approach the challenge of accessible travel chains in the public transport system by stating that ‘effective collaboration’ is a prerequisite for the start of a cohesive effort toward accessibility.

Our proposal is a three-level framework to set up a structure for collaboration that is designed to last. The three levels and their respective parts of the intervention are as follows:

- 1. The decision-making level** is represented by a formed **accessibility branch of LVM**.
- 2. The coordination level** is represented by an **accessibility committee** consisting of LVM,

service providers, and invited expertise. Their main task is to work with accessible transport chains and form a way to collaborate.

- 3. The action level** is the **pilot project** and subsequent projects toward accessibility. This level gives a tangible starting point for working with accessibility and trial how to collaborate with each other.

The goal of the pilot is to prototype a mode of collaboration to make impactful changes to the accessible travel chain for the end user. By anchoring this in the real world, it allows for work on collaboration as well as setting up the structure for—and start working with—a unified effort toward accessibility that is refined as time goes on.

This cohesive effort ties in with feedback received from our partners. This is why we are suggesting setting up a **permanent structure** rather than a one-off project – a reason to come together and work toward a **common goal of accessibility that feeds back into the system**.

Another key value is the ability of replicability and to spread in steps. Any ministry could adapt this structure of collaboration to its own needs, and it does not have to include all parts to begin building it. This, we hope opens the discussion for visualising a future of full accessibility as part of how the system works. How might collective efforts toward accessibility between ministries and their sectors work then?

In the end, we found that our partners already have the expertise and experience necessary to ensure effective collaboration. What we are proposing is simply a way to start, a structured way to approach it, and a way of jointly creating a model to make it last.

2. Contents

1. Executive summary	2
2. Contents	3
3. Our Team	4
4. Introduction	5
5. Overview of Our Journey	6
6. Part 1: Finding the Core	7
6.1. Research	8
6.2. Analysis	10
7. Part 2: Defining a Design Intervention –from Ideation to Action	12
7.1. Research	13
7.2. Analysis	16
8. Design Intervention	17
8.1. What could we see?	17
8.2. What are we trying to change?	18
9. Final Proposal	19
9.1. What is it?	19
9.2. How does it work?	20
9.2.1. Decision-making: LVM	20
9.2.2. Coordination: Committee	20
9.2.3. Action: Pilot project	21
9.3. What is its value?	22
9.4. Evaluation	23
9.5. Limitations	24
9.5.1. Resources	24
9.5.2. Establishing a culture of collaboration and transparency	24
10. Conclusion	25
11. References	26

3. Our Team



Gabriel Fuentes
MA Collaborative & Industrial Design
gabriel.fuentes@aalto.fi



Katrina Hoffmann
MA Collaborative & Industrial Design
katrina.hoffmann@aalto.fi



Suvi Onne
MA Creative Sustainability
suvi.onne@aalto.fi



Mina Rostami
MA Creative Sustainability
mina.rostami@aalto.fi

All visualisations in this report are owned by us unless otherwise stated.

4. Introduction

Core societal functions are complex. Due to the sheer number of institutions, organisations, and people involved, it can be difficult to make changes—and difficult to ensure that these changes will reach the desired outcome at the end of the chain. This is true for functions such as public transport as well.

Finland is currently in the process of both envisioning and implementing the **future of the national transport system**. A big part of this work is connected to the *National Transport System Plan for 2021–2032* (Ministry of Transport and Communications, 2021) with the *Ministry of Transport and Communications* acting as the group author. This document outlines the current state of the system, their vision for the future, and steps to get there. As part of the vision for 2050, the system plan states that **“the transport system will be accessible and equal to all user groups.”** (Ministry of Transport and Communications, 2021, p. 33) While the system has some barriers hindering it from already being on this level (*Joukkoliikenteen matkaketjut vammaisryhmien näkökulmasta, 2022*), it already has what it needs to start working towards this goal if we can start unlocking these barriers.

As part of the *Design for Government* course held by *Aalto University*, we worked together with the *Finnish Ministry of Transport and Communications* (LVM), the *Finnish Transport and Communications Agency* (Traficom), the traffic management company *Fintraffic*, as well as other relevant stakeholders such as the service providers HSL and VR, user organisations, and the association of Finnish municipalities *Kuntaliitto* to propose a way to aid them in their work toward **accessible travel chains**. This

means to look at the journey from the perspective of the end-user: from planning the trip to closing the door at their destination. **The result is a service where many parts must come together to form a working experience.**

During the project’s 12 weeks, we used an iterative approach in our research and analysis stage to allow the process to be led by those experiencing these issues first-hand. This work was based on extensive documentation of our activities, presented during the duration of the course. These are not as a general rule included in the report.

However, by repeating the loop of research, analysis, and outcome, the project was divided into two distinct parts: finding the core of the issue and determining the intervention. Due to this divide, this report follows the same structure to make our process clear.

With that, let us begin.



*Visualising the journey of an end user.
By Gabriel Fuentes*

5. Overview of Our Journey



6. Part 1: Finding the Core

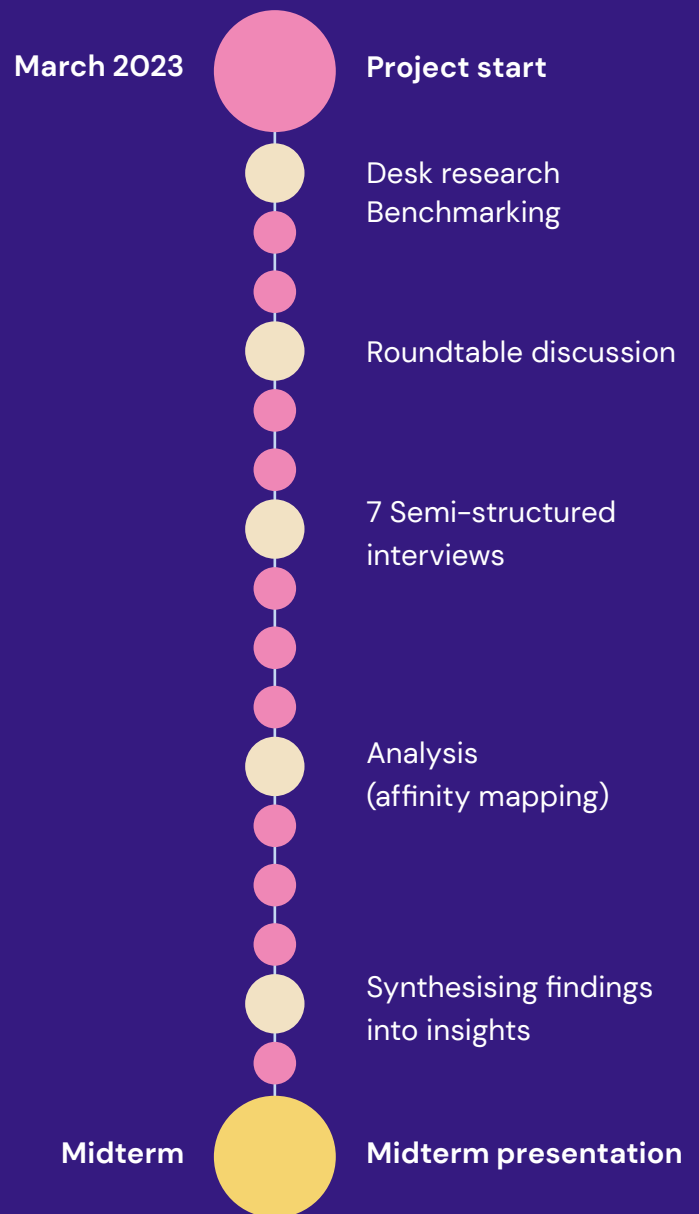
A key part of any project is forming a solid foundation of research and understanding for it to stand on. To decide on a more focused direction, the scope needs to start wide before becoming increasingly concentrated. The first part of the project covered the journey from the initial understanding of the subject area to defined insights.

Research Methods

- Desk research
- Benchmarking
- 1 Roundtable discussion (and combined workshop) with our partners
- 7 Semi-structured interviews

People Involved

- 7 People interviewed
- 10 Institutions & organisations involved (LVM, Traficom, Fintraffic, VÄYLÄ, VR, HSL, Kynnys Ry, Matkahuolto, Kuntaliitto, Finnish Transport Association)
- 1 Individual representing a user group without organisational affiliation



6.1 Research

To approach the task at hand, our team started with **desktop research** to get an initial overview of the area and prepare us for stepping into the role of partnership with our stakeholders. This meant reading up on material handed to us by our partners, looking into articles and reports concerning accessibility in transport, and gaining an understanding of who is involved in the Finnish transport system and what their responsibility is. This was paired with **benchmarking** efforts together with two other student groups where we investigated other countries and different cities' approaches and trials concerning accessibility within the areas of infrastructure, projects, climate impact, data organisation, and communication between stakeholders.

To make sure both our team and our partners were all on the same page about expectations and terms connected to the task at hand, we offered an opportunity for co-creation: a shared **round-table discussion** where representatives from the *Ministry of Transport & Communications (LVM)*, *Fintraffic*, *Traficom*, *HSL*, *VR*, and the *Finnish Transport Infrastructure Agency (VÄYLÄ)* were present. This moment was crucial for the first part of the project.

In this discussion together, we were able to pinpoint some key elements and issues our partners and the end-user faces today. Current challenges touched upon missing data (and difficulties finding information) regarding accessibility; barriers concerning communication between stakeholders; and a perceived divide between legislation and service providers in the system. To us, these could be summed up in **two areas of interest: 'communication' and 'systemic mindset.'**

While these were important to anchor the project, our group found the shared vision expressed by our partners particularly inspiring. The vision that



Network mapping with our partners held during the roundtable discussion.





*Visualising the journey of an end user.
By Gabriel Fuentes*

the transport system should be accessible to everyone guided our subsequent research, further cemented by discovering the term “universal accessibility.” (Aarhaug & Elvebakk, 2015). This encompassed what we pictured in terms of accessibility goals: where instead of conforming to the ‘standard’ of the majority, it is the ‘standard’ to conform to all.

This was influential to the point of forming our two main research questions together with the areas of interest:

1. What motivates stakeholders to ‘go beyond’ what they need to do as stated by the law?
2. What is the current communication flow (and where are the issues) in the transport system?

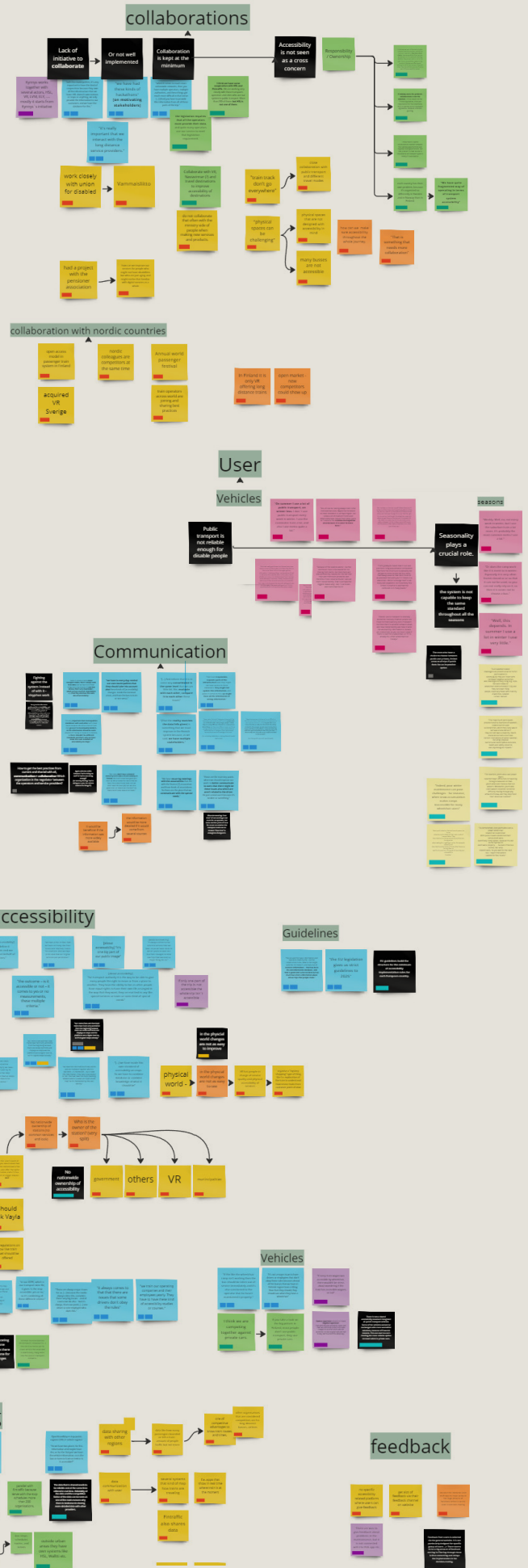
This gave us the starting point for our interviews. In total, **7 semi-structured interviews** were conducted with different actors in the system to gain a deeper understanding and differing views. These can be categorised into four positions that cover the relevant levels in the system:

- **Government and institutions** (represented by LVM, Traficom, and the Finnish Transport Association)
- **Service providers** (represented by HSL, VR, and Matkahuolto)
- **Relevant organisations** (represented by Kynnys Ry and Kuntaliito)
- A **user** with special needs that does not represent an organisation

Together with the research already conducted, these interviews were the main source for further investigation and understanding of the system as we stepped into the analysis of our findings.

6.2 Analysis

To make sense of our gathered data, we made use of **affinity mapping** to analyse it in a structured way. By methodically going through each interview transcript to extract lines of interest, we could then categorise and sort these. This enabled us to find larger themes present throughout the interviews and compare them to our previous research to find the crux of the issue using abductive reasoning. (Otieno, 2023) This means that while we are not able to have all the information due to time and resource constraints—for instance, we would not be able to interview everyone in the transport sector—we can still make a best prediction or explanation providing the sources are chosen well to cover the specific area we wish to investigate. (Douven, 2021)



Part of our affinity mapping

The outcome of our affinity mapping was general themes of uncertainty connected to trust, empathy, the need for reliability, a gap between vision and action, lack of a clear agenda to follow, the system having obstacles for shared work toward accessibility, as well as the fact that each stakeholder wanted more accessibility.

These themes formed the basis of our collected insights for this part of the project, where we aimed to synthesise our findings for our partners to have their feedback.

From the subsequent discussion with our partners, the insight that **the current transport system does not encourage shared work toward accessibility** was deemed the most promising to focus on as we stepped into the second part of the project.

"We have quite [a] fragmented way of operating in terms of transport system accessibility"
—Service provider

"[...] and this combination of different actors and responsibilities and boundaries between them [sometimes make it] very difficult to agree on things."

—Municipality network

Insight 1

The system is not allowing for shared work toward accessibility

The current transport system does not encourage shared work toward accessibility, and may at times hinder it by putting other aspects, such as economical, as a priority.

This causes actors to focus on their short-term survival over the long-term goal.

"often, municipalities really don't have kind of this long term planning of accessibility in the public transport. We do that thing in our regional level. So we kind of have the mandate from our own municipalities to do these things on behalf of them towards the government and the state."
—Service provider

"And again, considering that this is an open market, in the future we might get other train operators interested in running business, and in that sense, we want to keep the data that is purely our competitive advantage to our self"
—Service provider

"We have quite [a] fragmented way of operating in terms of transport system accessibility"
—Service provider

Insight 2

Reliability (no continuous standard)

The reliability of a transport service is perceived differently by operators and users, stemming from the different scopes they view the system.

Operators may consider occasional malfunctions as a minor setback within a larger transport system with many journeys. Users are directly affected by one journey, where a single instance of unreliability could significantly impact their trust of the entire transport mode.

This can cause users to disregard public transport as an option in the first place, acting as the tipping point to choose another solution for travelling.

"These are always major issues for us, [...] because the media always takes this, considers these very big issues – and of course we do also – but it's always, from our point, [...] one driver or one employee who does this."
—Service Provider

"Or does the ramp work like it is meant to in winter. Especially it is very often frozen, closed or so that it can not be used, so you can not really rely on it, so then it is easier not to choose a bus."
—User

"If only one part of the trip is not accessible the whole trip isn't accessible."
—Disability organisation

Insight 3

Lack of a clear agenda to follow

The lack of a clear agenda concerning accessibility leads to a clash of interests; different ways of prioritising; and a lack of overarching responsibility.

Despite all actor's positive outlook on improving accessibility, this causes scattered actions that do not fit together as a whole. A common standard is therefore difficult to achieve.

"It's very split who is the owner of the station. So I think that's also part of it that, because it's not very clear who has, or there, I don't think there is this nationwide ownership of these stations."
—Service provider

"[...] and this combination of different actors and responsibilities and boundaries between them [sometimes make it] very difficult to agree on things."
—Municipality network

"If nobody owns the problem, collaboration is not the solution."
—Service provider

Insight 4

Gap between vision and action

Despite the vision of creating accessible public transport, there is often a gap between vision and action. Municipalities may lack long-term planning for accessibility, leaving regional actors to take on this responsibility on behalf of the government and state.

While some modes of transport have been designed with accessibility in mind, information about accessibility may not be widely available due to competition between actors.

"Our metro lines and then local trains have been very accessible from the beginning because there are announcements and displays on stops and the platforms are a higher level so, so it's in good shape already."
—Service provider

"During the demo trip, various challenges were identified, such as accessibility of station buildings and equipment, signage, information accessibility and service. Some of the shortcomings can be remedied relatively easily and quickly, while others require a longer time span and more resources."
—Public transport chains from the perspective of disabled groups - Accessibility demo" (Report on behalf of LVM, 2022)

Our insights with supporting evidence as presented to our partners.

7. Part 2:

Defining a Design Intervention –from Ideation to Action

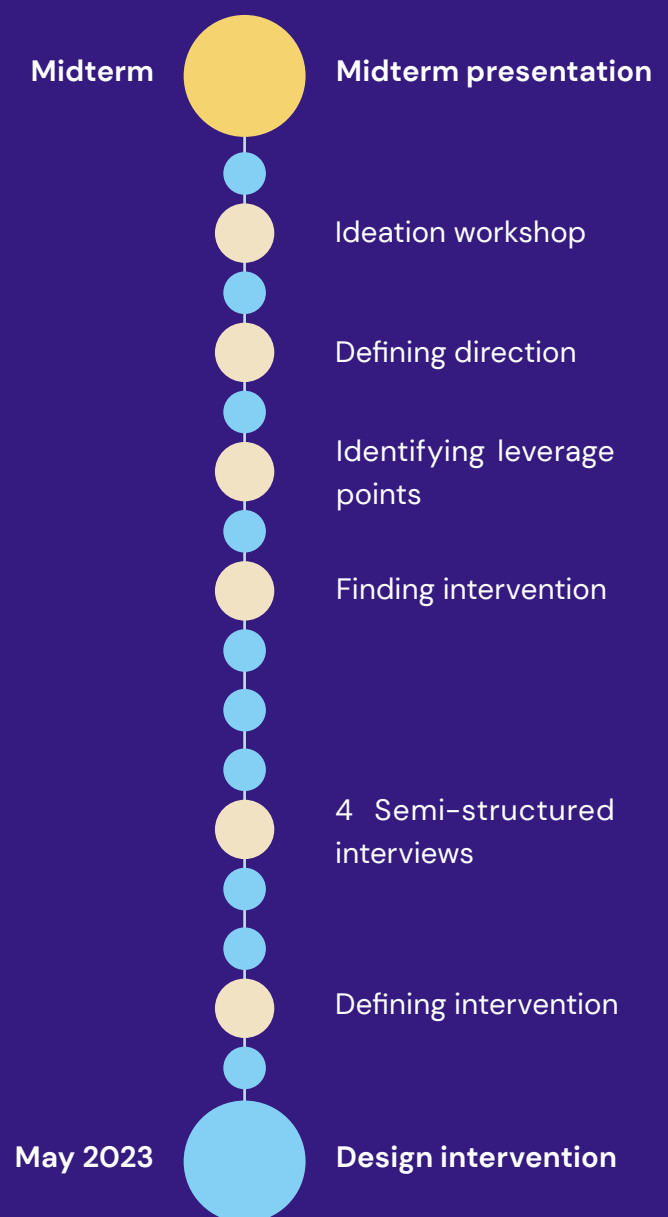
In the realm of intervention within complex systems, understanding the needs of stakeholders and navigating project constraints is essential. Validating key insights and developing creative solutions that meet the requirements of all involved parties play a crucial role in successful interventions. The second stage of the project focused on finding and defining this intervention together with our partners.

Research Methods

- 1 Workshop with our partners
- 4 Semi-structured interviews

People Involved

- 8 People interviewed
- 7 Institutions & organisations (LVM, VR, HSL, Traficom, Kynnys Ry, Kuntaliitto, Finnish Transport Association)
- 1 Individual representing a user group without organisational affiliation



7.1 Research

Shifting from the main research stage to the intervention phase, a pivotal meeting with the stakeholders helped us move forward in our design process: an ideation workshop.

By utilizing the power of **storytelling** and **scenario creation**, we aimed to make our insights more tangible for the participants and provide a conducive environment for idea generation. Our in-depth analysis of interviews and datasets in the first part of the project led us to construct two fictional characters, Mikko and Anna, whose narratives shed light on the perspectives of both users and service providers in travel chains. Our challenge was effectively engaging the stakeholders during the ideation workshop, where we presented the stories and key insights as a basis for discussion.

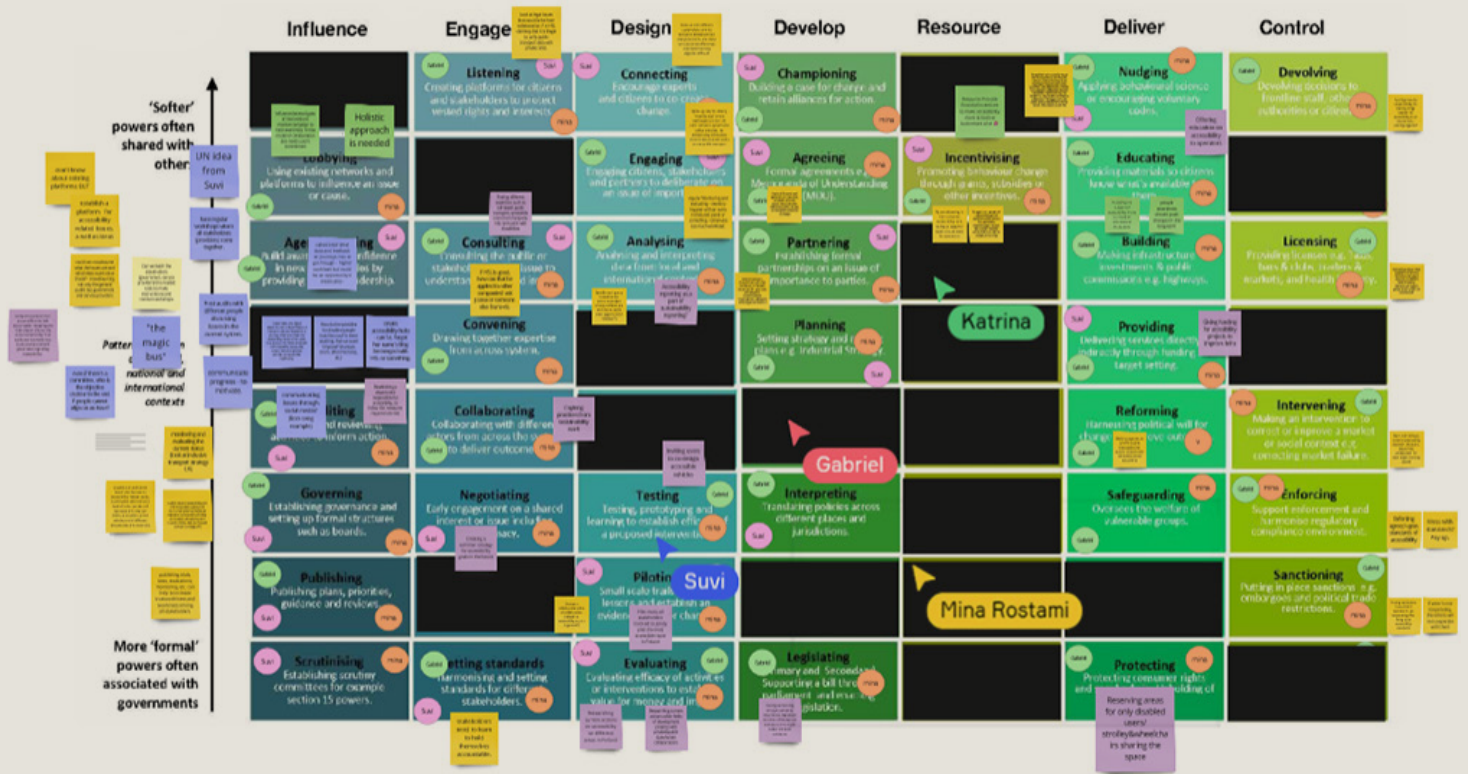
Ultimately, this **workshop** became a stepping-stone for further progress in our project. By analysing stakeholder feedback and settling on a particular direction, we continued in the process of formulating action plans to address the identified issues. Throughout this journey, various methods and tools have guided us in defining our design intervention. Notably, the 'Government as a System' toolkit by Policy Lab and the concept of 'Leverage Points' introduced by D. Meadows were instrumental in shaping our approach.

In the end, this workshop emerged as a critical point for the final direction of our project. Together with our partners, it was unanimously decided that the focus of the intervention should be '**collaboration**.' By receiving feedback and direction from our partners, we let them steer our next step of formulating action plans to address the identified issues. To tackle this, our team made the distinction of '**effective collaboration**' to go from looking at **what** is needed, to **how** it could be promoted.



Top: The first slides of Anna's and Mikko's stories.

Bottom: Discussion during the workshop



Various methods and tools guided us in defining our design intervention from this point on. Notably, the *Government as a System* toolkit by Policy Lab (Policy Lab, 2020; Siodmok, 2020) and the concept of ‘leverage points’ introduced by Meadows (1999) were instrumental in shaping our approach.

The *Government as a System* toolkit proved to be a valuable resource, offering a comprehensive collection of 56 different approaches to generating innovative policy ideas. This toolkit played a pivotal role in facilitating **brainstorming sessions** and generating diverse proposals aligned with our project’s objectives. The abundance of ideas and pathways that emerged from this resource opened new possibilities for moving forward, most notably by helping us find different interventions that together cover several layers of the system.

Fig. 1: Working with the Government as a System toolkit by Policy Lab (2020) as a base for brainstorming.



Our team discussing the outcome of our brainstorming session.

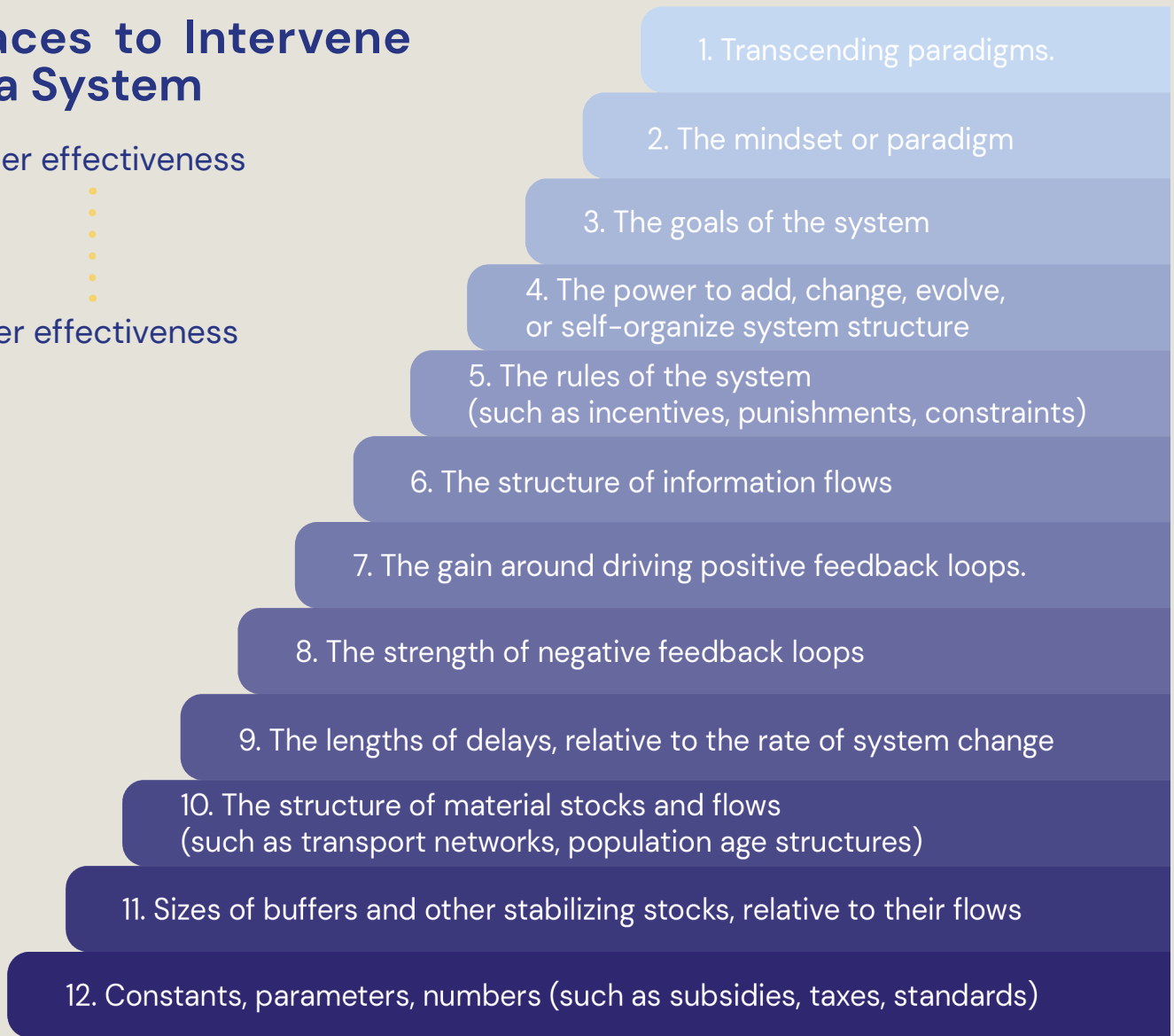
Another valuable tool, the ‘**Leverage Points**’ framework by Meadows, presents strategic areas within a system where interventions can yield significant impacts. By challenging prevailing paradigms, stimulating systemic shifts, and unlocking new patterns, these leverage points enable us to identify critical areas for intervention. Through a careful comparison of our project direction with these leverage points, we identified areas of overlap and specified our focus area.

Places to Intervene in a System

Higher effectiveness



Lower effectiveness



In the end, the leverage points of “[changing] the structure of information flow” and “the power to add, change, evolve, or self-organise system structure” (Meadows, 1999) were our remaining focus. This was due to how we perceived them as the middle ground between the direction of ‘effective collaboration’ given by our partners together with our insight that the barriers hindering this are on the structural level of the system. This was further validated by a round of interviews with our partners.

Throughout our journey of intervening in the system, the ideation workshop and the subsequent analysis of stakeholder feedback have provided us with insights that propelled us forward. The continuous process of learning and refinement enabled us to navigate the complexities of our project with a strategic mindset, ensuring that our intervention would be effective and impactful.

Fig. 1: Meadows’ leverage points visualised by Katrina Hoffmann.

Adapted from Meadows (1999).

7.2 Analysis



Going back to our tool of **affinity mapping**, we could create a visual representation of the collected data, grouping related ideas and insights into clusters. As we analysed the clusters and examined the relationships between different ideas or insights, we evaluated their relevance and significance to the intervention project. This process enabled us to validate the importance of certain areas and prioritise them based on their impact and alignment with stakeholder needs and project constraints.

If we go back to the previous section, it was unanimously decided that the key part to focus on should be **'effective collaboration'**. Combining this with the two **points of intervention** and **brainstormed approaches** to address these (covered in the previous section), we began to fully understand the need for our intervention to **cover different layers of the system to act as a bridge between them and last over time**.

At this point, we yet again asked our partners for their insight and feedback on the multi-level structure that was emerging as the final intervention, validating its value and trying to work proactively with potential issues.



Top: Ideation session with partners

Bottom: Our insight cards to guide the ideation session.

8. Design Intervention

8.1 What could we see?

The public transport system in Finland has barriers hindering shared accessibility.

What is needed is to ensure effective collaboration –to unlock these.

Collaboration is a fundamental element for achieving collective goals and addressing complex challenges (Woodland & Hutton, 2012). However, we recognize that many collaborative initiatives have faced obstacles that make it difficult to sustain their momentum and impact over time. **To address this challenge, we propose a 3-level framework that continues indefinitely.**

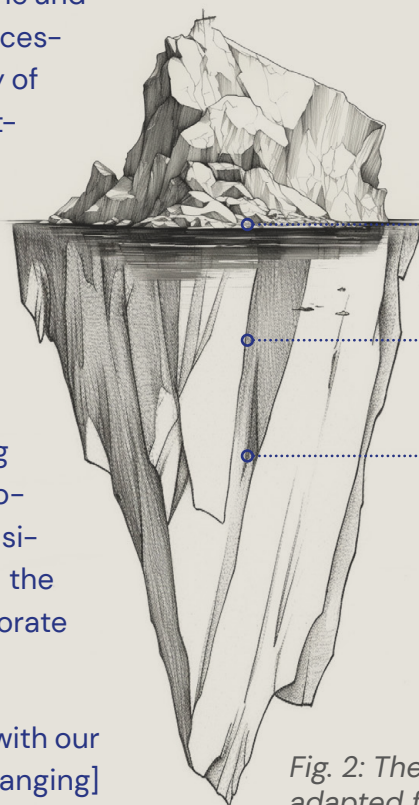
With our multi-level approach, we aspire to ensure **strategic alignment, efficient coordination, and effective implementation**, leading to improved outcomes and long-term viability.

8.2 What are we trying to change?

In the first part of our project, we introduced the fictional characters Anna, working for LVM, and Mikko, a user with special needs, to our partners to show our findings of the situation today in a distilled way. Anna faces events at work where service providers do work toward accessibility, but in different ways, and not together. While both she and the service providers want to work with accessibility, other things get prioritised. This way of working leads to Mikko facing obstacles getting to his destination, leading his trust in the reliability of public transport to drop.

There are **structural barriers to effective collaboration**. One of these barriers is that there is no pre-existing model for long-term collaboration across the sector. Mental models that may be hindering further accessibility work could be the notions of the need to have someone responsible before efforts can be made, as well as the perceived roadblocks for starting to collaborate further.

Working with these causal layers together with our already identified leverage points of “[changing] the structure of information flow” and “the power to add, change, evolve, or self-organise system structure” (Meadows, 1999), we landed in an intervention that tries to **connect different layers** as well as integrates **building the structure for collaboration** and **allocating responsibility** together with **cohesive efforts** toward accessibility.



Causal Layer Iceberg Model

Events

What happened?

Patterns

What is happening over time?

Structures

Why is this happening?

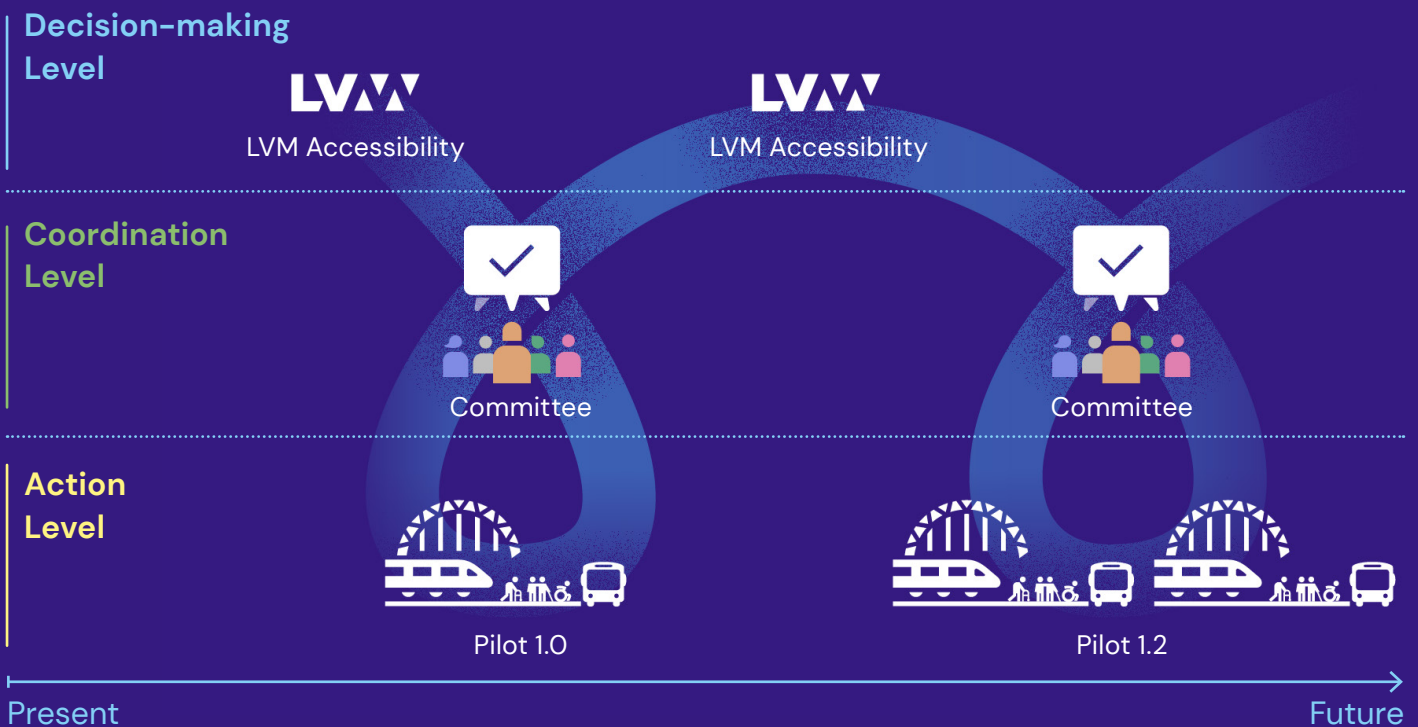
Mental models

In what ways our mental models created and sustained the structures in place?

Fig. 2: The causal layer iceberg model adapted from Inayatullah (2019) by Gabriel Fuentes.

9. Final Proposal

9.1 What is it?



A Framework of Collaboration for an Accessible Travel Chain

Our proposal is a 3-level framework aimed at establishing an enduring collaboration for improving accessibility.

Our intervention consists of three interconnected parts, progressing from the **decision-making level** to the **coordination level**, and finally to the **action level**. The latter acts as a bridge between the coordination level and the real world.

By emphasizing structured collaboration, our framework aims to create a cohesive approach that leads to enhanced accessibility for end users.

9.2 How does it work?

9.2.1 Decision-making Level: LVM Accessibility



At the foundation of our proposed framework is a branch within LVM, dedicated to working with accessibility within the Ministry's scope. This branch takes responsibility for establishing and maintaining the committee, as well as the final decision-maker in setting the goals of the framework. By having a specific branch dedicated to accessibility, a focused approach to address the challenges effectively is ensured.



9.2.2 Coordination Level: Committee



The core committee consists of LVM and different service providers. Their primary task is to work on developing accessible transport chains and fostering effective collaboration within this domain.

The committee should include decision power and expertise. Decision power is needed to mandate and put priority on accessibility issues. In addition to the knowledge gathered from the core committee, they can involve further expertise as needed for later projects.



9.2.3 Action Level: Pilot Project



To provide a tangible starting point for the framework, the committee initiates a pilot project. Essentially, a trial on a smaller scale to evaluate and gather information to take the project further, potentially seeing how it may be scaled up if it goes well.

In this case, stations on a travel chain may be something to be considered as the basis for the pilot. For example, the goal could be to create “the most accessible transfer stations as part of a travel chain” by focusing on three stations located in cities of different sizes, such as Helsinki, Tampere, and Jyväskylä.

Stations have been identified during interviews as areas with lacking responsibility but involve multiple stakeholders, which is why we offer this as a suggestion. They serve as a connection point between operators and users.

While the committee collaborates, their actual objective is to prototype a mode of collaboration among themselves to be able to make impactful changes in the accessible travel chain for end users at later stages. This collaborative effort becomes the core focus rather than the pilot project itself.



9.3 What is its value?

We know there has been previous initiatives that ended with a final report. Our suggestion is to **set up a permanent structure that acts as a reason to come together** and work toward a common goal of accessibility.

By an **iterative process that feeds back into the system**, the model of collaboration is refined for each cycle, while also allowing actual work with accessibility in chunks. Together, these align actions from the policy level to the action level, which in the end leads to **better accessibility for the end-user**.

This cohesive effort also ties in with feedback received from our partners: the issue of commitment, and how to make it last. It is important to emphasize that the focus of this framework extends beyond the pilot project itself. This is why we are suggesting that the **core committee is supported through the invited expertise**. While the core consists of larger actors in the system that we believe have the commitment and resources necessary to keep going, other actors can still be a part of the larger process on a project basis, offering a lower threshold to join and be part of the work in at least some instances in addition to their added expertise.

In addition to this, the framework is also **replicable** – it can be adopted and spread to other ministries. It can do so in steps as well: the framework does not require that all steps are done at once, which lowers the threshold to simply start.

9.4 Evaluation

Measuring the impact and effectiveness of the collaborative efforts within the framework may be challenging. Establishing appropriate evaluation metrics, data collection methods, and monitoring systems to assess the outcomes and progress of the initiatives will be essential. Regular evaluations should be conducted to identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement, allowing to make necessary adjustments and optimize the collaborative framework.

The key indicator of success lies in the extent to which the proposed framework facilitates effective coordination, information sharing, and decision-making among the committee members. The evaluation should assess whether the collaborative efforts result in streamlined processes, enhanced communication, and tangible progress toward the shared goal of improving accessibility. Gathering feedback from participants, evaluating the quality of the outcomes, and monitoring the sustained engagement of stakeholders can provide valuable insights.

Since the framework is **built around long-term collaboration, the way of working is not static.**

It evolves from what is learnt in the process and through feedback from participants, noting the need for **continuous evaluation**. Evaluating during the ongoing collaboration allows participants to act early and adjust the structured long-term collaboration as necessary.

9.5 Limitations

9.5.1 Resources

Implementing a long-term collaborative structure requires substantial resources, including financial, human, and technological support. Limited resources could hinder the effective functioning of the framework, leading to delays in decision-making, reduced capacity for collaboration, or inadequate implementation of initiatives. It is essential to secure sufficient resources and allocate them appropriately to ensure the framework's success.

9.5.2 Establishing a culture of collaboration and transparency

Stakeholders involved in the collaboration may face challenges to change, particularly if they have established routines or organizational cultures that hinder effective collaboration. Overcoming this resistance and fostering a culture of openness, flexibility, and innovation will be key to the success of the framework. It may require dedicated efforts to raise awareness, provide training, and create incentives to encourage stakeholders to embrace collaborative practices.

Ensuring efficient decision-making processes, clear roles and responsibilities, and effective communication channels will be vital for avoiding conflicts, delays, or decision paralysis. It is important to **establish guidelines and protocols** that promote transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in decision-making.

10. Conclusion

One day, both you and we will have difficulties performing ordinary activities in our day-to-day life. Or perhaps that time is now, whether this is due to age, health, or differing needs. The fact remains that the ability to travel to meet friends and relatives, participate in social activities, and manage our everyday chores retain their importance in our quality of life. What if the public transport system of the future in Finland could adapt to our individual abilities and ensure our needs were met?

The system for public transport is a complex solution with its roots in a simplified mould of the citizen. The future will, however, see expanded public transport as a necessary tool in adapting to travel patterns caused by climate change (*Sustainable Transport, Sustainable Development, 2021*), as well as supporting an ageing population (Christensen et al., 2009). In addition, the influx of people to larger urban areas also stresses the need for creating a system able to adjust to larger differences between geographical areas. (Karhula et al., 2021) What is needed is not assistance, but support for people's mandate over their own lives.

A common issue in problem-solving in complex processes is the sheer number of stakeholders with different agendas and suggestions for improvement. Collaboration is a key component for solutions in such a situation. But the question is not **what** but rather **how** to achieve this.

As a first step, we suggest LVM investigates and decides what the exact goals of the committee are and who should be involved. From this, they would have a starting point to explore what would attract and keep these participants over a longer period,

thus laying the groundwork for the next steps of gathering the committee and setting it in motion.

What we appreciated in this project is that it allowed us to dream, to try to visualise a future of full accessibility as part of how the system works. This stayed with us. A key value of this intervention is that it can spread – and spread in steps. What would it be like if other ministries adopted a similar framework? How would these working groups and their respective committees work on challenges concerning accessibility in tandem?

From our research and joint work with our partners, we have found that they already have the expertise and experience necessary to ensure effective collaboration.

What we are proposing is simply a way to start, a structured way to approach it, and a way of jointly creating a model to make it last.

11. References

- Aarhaug, J., & Elvebakk, B. (2015). The impact of Universally accessible public transport—a before and after study. *Transport Policy*, 44, 143–150. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tranpol.2015.08.003>
- Christensen, K., Doblhammer, G., Rau, R., & Vaupel, J. W. (2009). Ageing populations: The challenges ahead. *The Lancet*, 374(9696), 1196–1208. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(09\)61460-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(09)61460-4)
- Douven, I. (2021). Abduction. In E. N. Zalta (Ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2021). Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University. <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2021/entries/abduction/>
- Inayatullah, S. (2019). Causal Layered Analysis A Four-Level Approach to Alternative Futures REL-EVANCE AND USE IN FORESIGHT. *Futuribles*.
- Joukkoliikenteen matkaketjut vammaisryhmien näkökulmasta—Esteettömyysdemon luonnos 7.11.2022 (p. 29). (2022). LVM – Liikenne- ja Viestintäministeriö. https://www.traficom.fi/sites/default/files/media/file/MatkaDEMO_yhteen-vetohuomioistaAvaava.pdf
- Karhula, A., McMullin, P., Sutela, E., Ala-Mantila, S., & Ruonavaara, H. (2021). Rural-Urban Migration Pathways and Residential Segregation in the Helsinki Region. *Finnish Yearbook of Population Research*, 55, 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.23979/fypr.96011>
- Meadows, D. (1999). *Leverage Points: Places to Intervene in a System*. The Sustainability Institute, 21.
- Ministry of Transport and Communications. (2021). *The National Transport System Plan for 2021–2032* (p. 142). Finnish Government. https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/163391/VN_2021_77.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y
- Otieno, M. A. (2023). Affinity Research Approach. In J. M. Okoko, S. Tunison, & K. D. Walker (Eds.), *Varieties of Qualitative Research Methods: Selected Contextual Perspectives* (pp. 21–28). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-04394-9_4
- Policy Lab. (2020, March 6). *Government as a System Toolkit*. <https://openpolicy.blog.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/35/2020/03/2020-03-09-Policy-Lab-Government-as-a-System-toolkit.png>
- Siodmok, A. (2020, March 6). *Introducing a ‘Government as a System’ toolkit—Policy Lab. Blog: Policy Lab*. <https://openpolicy.blog.gov.uk/2020/03/06/introducing-a-government-as-a-system-toolkit/>
- Sustainable transport, sustainable development (Interagency Report for Second Global Sustainable Transport Conference, p. 120). (2021). United Nations. https://sdgs.un.org/sites/default/files/2021-10/Transportation%20Report%202021_FullReport_Digital.pdf
- Woodland, R. H., & Hutton, M. S. (2012). Evaluating Organizational Collaborations: Suggested Entry Points and Strategies. *American Journal of Evaluation*, 33(3), 366–383. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1098214012440028>