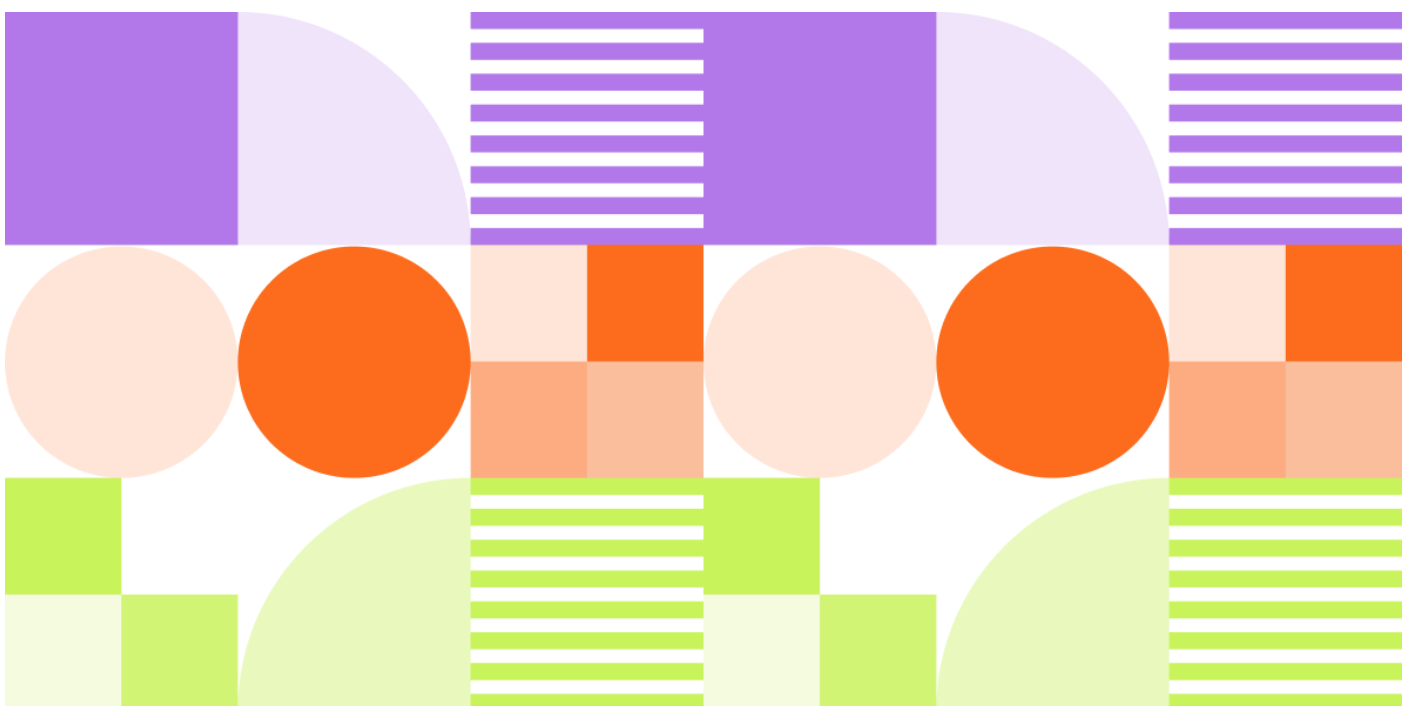


OPEN GOVERNMENT FINLAND

Building Democratic Resilience



TEAM



© CREATIVE COMMONS CC BY 4.0 2025. Daniela Bianchi, Sanjana Punjabi, Vu Trang, Jaakko Vuorenkoski, Thalia Zelißen. DESIGN FOR GOVERNMENT. AALTO UNIVERSITY

The group includes

Sanjana Punjabi from Collaborative and Industrial Design program (Aalto ARTS)

Thalia Zelißen from the Environmental Engineering Program (TU Munich)

Jaakko Vuorenkoski from Information and Service Management program (Aalto BIZ).

Vu Trang from the Sustainable Entrepreneurship program (Aalto BIZ)

Daniela Bianchi from Collaborative and Industrial Design program (Aalto ARTS)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This proposal was developed by students of the Design for Government (DfG) course at Aalto University, as part of a national-level policy challenge commissioned by the Ministry of Finance and specifically Open Government Finland. This proposal is intended for the Open Government Finland team and relevant actors responsible for implementing the Open Government Strategy and Action Plan 2023–2027.

Initially, the team was tasked with exploring how Open Government could better include older people in digital and democratic participation for an ‘age-friendly Finland’. The research, however, unfolded a broader underlying issue of how democratic disengagement affects diverse population groups, regardless of age. Therefore, the proposal takes a needs-based rather than age-based approach and focuses on strengthening democratic resilience in Finnish society.

To address these challenges, this proposal outlines two strategic opportunities for Open Government Finland.

1. Positioning Open Government as a direct link between the people and policy-makers

By leveraging its unique role at the intersection of civil society and governmental bodies, Open Government can elevate insights from citizens and grassroots organisations into national-level discourse. In addition, the inclusion of policy-level actors at initiatives and events to promote face-to-face interaction with the public could help to bridge the gap between citizens' realities and national policy.

2. Advocating for Open Government Principles at the policy level

By embedding the principles of transparency, participation, and accountability into

institutional structures and decision-making routines. This includes aligning Open Government actions with political agendas, integrating the initiative into parliamentary processes, and producing reports that not only summarise public input but translate it into concrete policy proposals.

Implementing these opportunities is essential not only to make democratic participation more accessible and inclusive but also to future-proof Finnish democracy. As the population structure changes and societal needs become more diverse, democratic systems must be able to adapt, listen, and respond effectively. Open Government Finland is uniquely positioned to lead this transformation, both as a connector of people and as an advocate for systemic change.

By rethinking its current role and strengthening its visibility and policy relevance, Open Government Finland can move from being a network facilitator to becoming an institutionalised driver of participation. This will help bridge the growing gap between citizens and decision-makers, restore confidence in the value of civic engagement, and position Finland as a resilient democracy prepared for the challenges ahead.

INTRODUCTION

Finland has lately suffered from declining trust and democratic engagement, representing a risk of running into a democracy crisis.

In 2024, the OECD published a wake-up call: public trust in the national government in Finland dropped by 14%, the largest drop of all OECD countries. Still, the trust level is one of the highest among OECD members, and citizen satisfaction with public services ranks near the top globally. However, only 21% of people in Finland believe that the political system allows them to have a say in what the government does, which is 9% lower than OECD average (OECD, 2024). In other words, while people trust that government institutions work well, they often doubt their own ability to influence them. This is what the OECD calls the “Finnish Paradox” (OECD, 2021).

Due to this Finnish Paradox and the growing trust decline in the national government, it is crucial to build democratic resilience in Finland.

Therefore, Finland’s Open Government initiative is advancing the values of trust, security and confidence inside Finnish society. It is guided by the Ministry of Finance’s Open Government Strategy and is a member of the Open Government Partnership. The Partnership itself was formed in 2011 to spread open-governance values worldwide and now counts more than 80 member countries and hundreds of local chapters that pledge to uphold transparency, accountability and civic participation. Open Government Finland is responsible for drafting successive national action plans—most recently the 2023–2027 roadmap, which is the country’s national commitment to drive Open Government Principles. Furthermore, Open Government Finland builds a network at civil society level and within which events to exchange insights

and best practices fostering democracy are exchanged.

In the original brief— “Open Government for an Age-Friendly Finland”— the task was to find answers on how to ensure that older citizens are neither left behind by digital transformation nor sidelined in public discourse. However, throughout the investigation, it became clear that participation problems extend far beyond age but encompass all sides of Finnish society. Thus, there is a need to foster an Open Government in Finland based on diverse needs instead of age. This report refers to people, meaning all citizens and residents living in Finland, to not exclude immigrants who might not be incorporated in the term citizens of Finland. Following the needs-based approach, the goal was to understand how Open Government team currently works and how the principles can become a commitment in the Finnish society to ensure every voice is heard as an integral part of shaping policy. The aim was to find out how to turn widespread confidence in Finnish institutions into genuine, ongoing dialogue, and how to ensure every voice is heard as an integral part of shaping policy. In the upcoming chapters, this document will explore what it would take for Open Government Finland to become a nationwide movement, championing the fight against a looming crisis of trust.

METHODS

At the beginning of the course, the research was divided into 4 workstreams, which were tasked to examine the themes of:

- Ageing population and public services
- Open Governance
- Elderly Participation Initiatives
- Action Plan and elderly inclusion

After this, the final project teams were formed to start the next research process:

Desktop research: The team began by surveying existing literature, policy briefs and partner-provided reports on civil-society engagement and co-creation frameworks. This phase brought up the core themes of:

- Participation opportunities inside Finnish society
- Visibility of Open Government
- Reach and influence of Open Government

Roundtable: In the third week of the course, the projects' internal 'supergroup' convened a roundtable with representatives from the partnering organisations, which allowed the researchers to gain valuable knowledge on how Open Government Finland currently operates, and how they view their challenges



Figure 1: Roundtable session conducted with members of Open Government Finland and a member of Helsinki City Elderly Council

Field Work: The team attended the Open Government Finland's Civil Society Academy Day event to observe stakeholders in action. This enabled the assessment of event formats, participant demographics, and the range of issues under discussion, as well as the dynamics between all participants.



Figure 2: Civil Society Academy Day, March 26th, 2025. Held in Helsinki City Hall.

Midterm: At the midpoint of the course, initial findings were presented to the project partners, after which valuable feedback and insights to direct the research were provided.

Co-creation session: Building on earlier insights, an ideation workshop was hosted with the Ministry of Finance team, where 3 main insights were presented, which served as

starting points for feedback and collaborative brainstorming.



Figure 3: Ideation session with team members of Open Government Finland and the design for government team.

Interviews: To capture diverse stakeholder perspectives, ten interviews were conducted with experts and representatives from the following organisations related to the work of Open Government Finland:

1. Valli ry
2. Dialogue Academy
3. Erätauko
4. Deaconess Foundation
5. Jade
6. City of Helsinki
7. Youth Council Helsinki
8. Elderly Council Helsinki
9. City of Oulu
10. Open Government Finland

Each interview lasted around 60 to 120 minutes and followed a semi-structured guide.

In the following chapter, the main insights from the research process are presented in more detail.

INSIGHTS

This chapter presents the main insights from the research process on Open Government and its efforts to build an inclusive participation model. As previously stated, this was an effort gathered from a series of methods such as interviews, observation, desktop research, etc. The analysis of this information allowed for the development of two main insights, which are explained in the following sections.

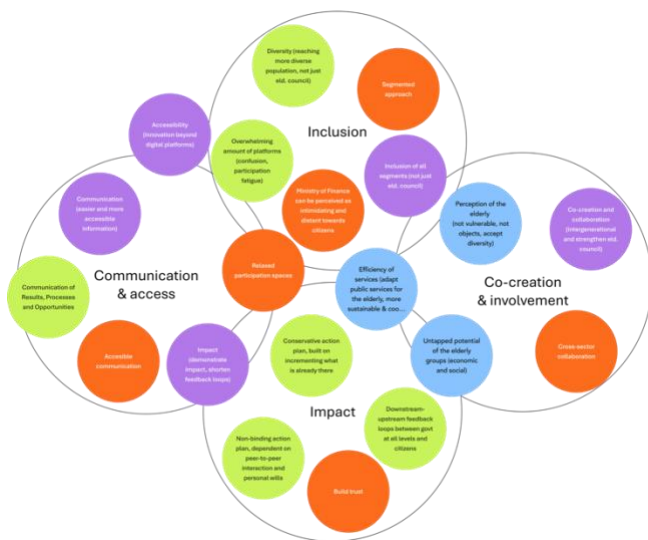


Figure 4: Thematic analysis of information gathered during initial desktop research, which allowed for the definition of interview objectives and samples.

Insight 1: Open Government feels distant and unclear, limiting its reach to citizens

Information about Open Government and how to participate is perceived as complex and distant by many in society, making it feel inaccessible, particularly to underrepresented groups. This perception stems from several factors:

Participation without tangible impact: As part of a joint effort among different government agencies, there appears to be a

multitude of platforms, organizations, and initiatives working in parallel, often perceived as doing similar things without coordination. This contributes to confusion rather than clarity. For example, when National Dialogues are conducted, reports are passed to civil servants who then determine relevance, with no visible feedback loop to participants.

"There is a bit of a contradiction, first and foremost, Finland is a very pragmatic society, we face a problem, we solve it, not much talking in between. And dialogues are the opposite, we seek to have discussions, but then some people expect something from this, some result." - Civil society actor.

Communication barriers: Open Government can sometimes make use of abstract language, and digital exclusion - especially among elderly or marginalized groups - creates further barriers. Moreover, the broad framing makes it unclear how topics relate to individual peoples' lives.

"Open Government is a way of thinking but as a term it feels too branded. The Ministry of Finance feels official and distant." - Civil society actor

“Not all people feel that institutions are accessible. I might feel like it is, but my neighbour might not. That’s why we always say you have to be present (as in physically there), there is a symbolic value in going to the people, letting them see you is important.” - Civil society actor/participation expert

Relevance: *This limits Open Government's ability to build trust, reach underrepresented groups, and strengthen participation. When people don't see the link between their input and real change, it weakens democratic engagement and contradicts core goals of transparency and trust.*

Insight 2: Open Government is perceived as an (in)visible movement, supported by a core network of enthusiastic individuals, but beyond this circle, it remains hidden

Open Government perceives itself as a coordinator between public sector and civil society, but this has created two spheres: 'insiders' who are deeply engaged, and 'outsiders' who find it distant or inaccessible. The initiative relies heavily on personal willingness among committed individuals, creating vulnerability when these people leave their roles.

Network dependency: The culture of open governance depends on active individuals, particularly top managers, creating a 'trickle down' effect in organizations. Some civil servants work across multiple organizations, and success varies significantly based on personal commitment levels.

"In an organization, if one or two individuals, especially the top managers are active, this creates a trickle down effect and creates a better overall effect on the organization." - Civil servant

Invisibility challenge: Many organizations and citizens are unaware of Open Government initiatives. The non-hierarchical approach, while intended to be approachable, risks being perceived as invisible.

"Open government as a term is not familiar to many... Open government is not discussed actively with civil society." - Civil servant

"I'm not familiar with Open Government, its team or anything related to it" – Civil Society Actor, expert on inclusion and intergenerational exchange

Relevance: *This limits Open Government's reach and prevents it from becoming an established movement, creating vulnerability regarding within its operational model.*

Insight 3: Silent voices exist across all demographics, requiring strategic policy-level engagement

Despite Finland's reputation in Open Government, civic engagement is challenging for silent groups. These groups exist across both marginalized populations and majority populations. Crucially, reasons for citizens' political silence differ based on their individual realities rather than age.

"The term age-friendly already means age discrimination to me! Society should be more friendly, regardless of people's backgrounds! This categorization into groups already leaves people behind, because nobody can be put into one box!" - Civil servant/participation expert

"There is still a lot of work to be done to move from hearing silent voices to bringing that into actionable level." – Civil Society Actor, expert on inclusion and intergenerational exchange

Interviewees across youth, elderly, and immigrant groups feel decision-makers do not understand their needs and realities,

suggesting a fundamental disconnect between policy levels and citizen experiences.

Factors contributing to silence include:

- Limited digital skills in the context of increasing digitalization: *"Around 60% of people over 75 years old cannot use digital services or tools"* - Senior civil society actor
- Language barriers: *"Data and decisions are often available for the public but not understandable, and in the Finnish culture, people are shy and don't say, 'I don't understand'"* - Civil servant/participation expert
- Time and interest gaps: Distance between personal life and political processes, or when discussion subjects appear distant from day-to-day life
- Discrimination concerns: Particularly for immigrants who *"don't trust the public administration body and the civil servants representing it because of their coldness"* - Civil society actor

Relevance: *Unlike previous assumptions, 'silent groups' cannot be addressed only through age-based or minority-focused approaches. Understanding and addressing the reasons behind their silence is crucial to empower democratic tools that are genuinely inclusive.*

These insights reveal strategic implications that help develop a new vision for Open Government, which is further developed in the following chapter.

Finland is a resilient democracy where citizens actively engage and have confidence in their ability to shape society.

In this democracy, Open Government is a collective commitment of all policy-level actors and supports administrative and political processes.

The insights from the research show that current Open Government approaches, while valuable, are insufficient to address this challenge. Open Government has successfully built extensive networks at the civil society level, creating strong connections with organizations and government agencies. However, three critical gaps are prevalent:

1. Distance between policy-makers and people's realities. Our interviews consistently revealed that decision-makers are perceived as not understanding the needs and experiences of people. This disconnect means that even when participation mechanisms exist, they fail to translate their input into meaningful policy influence, reinforcing feelings of powerlessness.
2. Invisibility of Open Government's impact at policy level. While Open Government coordinates numerous activities, the pathway from people's input to policy remains opaque.
3. Dependence on individual relationships and wills rather than systemic commitment. Open Government's current approach relies heavily on certain individuals within organizations rather than embedded institutional practices. This creates vulnerability and prevents Open Government Principles from becoming integral to administrative and political processes.

Our vision addresses these fundamental challenges by reimagining Open Government's role. Rather than primarily coordinating civil society participation, Open Government must become the mechanism that ensures direct connections between policy-makers and people while advocating for its principles to be ingrained across all levels of society.

Confidence in people's ability to shape society can only happen when people see clear pathways from their input to policy outcomes and when they trust that decision makers understand their realities. Collective commitment from policy-level actors ensures that Open Government becomes a structural feature of Finnish democracy rather than depending on individual champions. Support for administrative and political processes means Open Government Principles guide how decisions are made, not just how people are consulted.

This vision responds directly to Finland's democratic resilience needs. It creates the conditions for active democracy through meaningful agency while ensuring decision-making processes are accessible and responsive. It transforms Open Government from a coordinating group into a democratic infrastructure that strengthens the connection between people and their government, building the resilient democracy Finland needs to navigate future challenges.

THE PROPOSAL

As previously discussed, research identified a critical need for Open Government to shift its focus. The Open Government team has already successfully co-developed a network where insights and practices are exchanged to foster democracy on civil society level. As stated by a member of the Open Government team, this is a “democracy family”, where the principles are fostered through dialogues and exchange of perspectives and best practices. This “democracy family” includes municipalities like Oulu or Helsinki, civil society associations like The Finnish Association for Elderly and Community, Deaconess Foundation or Timeout Foundation. Open Government team perceives itself as an enabler and part of this network. Thus, it was concluded that the Open Government Team Finland already enables a “growing [...] interconnected community” of Open Government supporters (Open Government Partnership, 2023). This aligns with Strategic Goal 1 of the Open Government Partnership Strategy for 2023-2028. However, cooperation and exchange of information also happen outside Open Government events. In Finland, where civil society actors often know each other personally, the network also grows outside the reach of the Open Government team.

Referring to the Open Government Partnership Strategy, Finland’s civil society network could still be improved by adding more commitment in terms of actively practicing Open Government Principles to drive a “committed [...] community of Open Government reformers, activists and champions”. This assessment was reinforced by fieldwork observations at the Civil Society Academy. Open Government's deliberate background approach contributes to a perceived distance of the team and the concept. This suggests that it is hard to foster commitment to

something that remains hidden compared to something that is visible and understood.

The Civil Society Network is already in place and growing. However, it highly relies on personal relations and the engagement of individuals. The dependence on individuals makes it a fragile network and poses questions on whether such a network is a sustainable concept to improve Open Government in Finland.

The initial understanding of Open Government and its principles (see Figure 5) indicated that Open Government represents a concept that makes the governmental level and its actors more accessible to the public. In fact, the initial idea of an Open Government is to be “more accessible, responsive and accountable to citizens, and that improving the relationship between people and their government has long-term, exponential benefits for everyone” (Open Government Partnership Approach).

Contrary to that, it emerged that the Open Government team has minimal interaction with the national government. There seems to be little feedback in terms of improving Open Government and applying its principles effectively in Finland with policy-level actors. Insights from interviews showed that policy-level actors might think that they already practice Open Government Principles and that the Finnish Government thus already is an Open Government. This is partly contrasting to discoveries from interviewing participation and dialogue experts, as well as several other civil society actors. Based on these, it was revealed that the principles are not all realized to the same degree. Some seem to be currently more implemented, some less – but generally interviewees wished for most of the principles to be further improved.

“In theory the principles are very much true, but in practice, for multiple reasons, they can be a bit foreign for a lot of people. For example, ‘easy to understand’ and ‘access to information’ are good in theory but in practice can be quite distant.” – Dialogue Expert



Figure 5: Open Government Finland Principles (Open Government Finland, n.d.)

Seeing the growing decline of public trust in the national government, there is a need for action - to make the principles a reality at policy-level, to enable Open Government to become a stronger reality in Finland. There is huge potential to address the Finnish paradox and the perceived gap between government actors and the people by shifting the focus of the Open Government team. In fact, the proposed shift incorporates moving from further fostering the principles at civil society level to implementing them on the policy-level.

Thinking of how the perceived gap between policy-level actors and the people could be decreased and how Open Government as a concept can become a commitment in the whole Finnish society, two main opportunities are identified.

1. **Open Government works as direct link between policy-makers and the people**
2. **Open Government advocates its principles at policy level**

These opportunities evolved from the insights gathered through interviews and desktop research. Moreover, international Open Government practices provided valuable insights.

OPPORTUNITY 1: DIRECT LINKS BETWEEN POLICY-MAKERS AND THE PEOPLE

Direct links between policy-makers and people can address the growing trust decline and the Finnish paradox, which is peoples' perception that they do not have a say in decision-making. This can be achieved, for example, through **using the knowledge created by the Open Government team for learning at the policy-level.** According to the Open Government Partnership Strategy 2023-2028, “there is a huge potential to use [the] community-generated information in more strategic ways that empower reformers with what they need and to advance the other strategic goals.” In fact, the Open Government team is a resource of knowledge. Through being part of the international Open Government Partnership network, they are acquainted with international Open Government best practices and receive recommendations by partners like the OECD on how to improve Open Government in Finland. Being part of the Civil Society Network, they also gather insights on what the people of Finland might need and wish for from the government.

This understanding of needs and realities of the people is gathered through collaboration with civil society associations that represent the groups of society they stand for. For instance, the elderly council represents the needs and realities of elderly people in Finland. But according to interviews, citizens and residents might feel like decision makers do not understand their needs and that “people in the decision-making bodies can be far from

reality” (participation expert interview). Thus, it is important to utilise all insights gathered by the Open Government team during their various activities, such as Elderly Council Days.

This report recommends the need to share all learnings about these needs and realities so that policy actors can reflect this understanding in the public political discourse. As citizens or residents of Finland, individuals acknowledge that decisions are not based on their needs and realities since policy level actors' responsibility is to steer the country into a decided direction. However, they want their needs and realities to be integrated into the political discourse prior to deciding. To show the people that decision makers understand realities and needs, advocates encourage them to communicate this understanding in the public political discourse.

Besides using learnings of the Open Government team on policy level, another example on how to create direct links between Open Government and the people is **expanding current Open Government Actions including policy and peoples' level.** To give an example among Open Government Actions, National Dialogues could be an ideal tool to create direct links between policy level and the people. So far, National Dialogues have been a series of dialogues including civil society and people across Finland, who are mainly reached through these civil society associations. As such, they have not included policy-level actors and decision makers so far. The inclusion of these actors, as well as civil servants, has the potential of addressing the growing public trust decline in the national government and the Finnish paradox. When people do not trust in their ability to have a say and feel like policy-makers do not understand their realities and needs, it is the role of Open

Government to “*promote everyone’s right to understand and be understood*” (Open Government Strategy Finland). Through this strategy, there is huge potential in creating face-to-face interaction spaces for policy-level actors and people in these dialogues. As stated by a participation expert: “*There is a symbolic value in going to the people*”. Face-to-face meetings between policy-makers—including both civic decision-makers and national parliament members—and citizens demonstrate a genuine commitment to understanding and valuing public perspectives. Such personal engagement can inspire greater democratic participation and strengthen the collective will to build society together.

The Finnish mentality plays into the opportunity to address the public trust decline in the national government through the proposed National Dialogues form. Finnish people in general have high trust into other people - trend increasing (see Figure 6). When public authorities interact with people, their goal would be that people would not perceive them as powerful, high-up figures, but like their usual fellow countrymen. Since “people rarely give over their trust to institutions [but] trust other people” (Trust Advisor Associates, n.d.) this proposal envisions that trust in the national government can increase by creating personal, trustful relations between public authorities and the people.

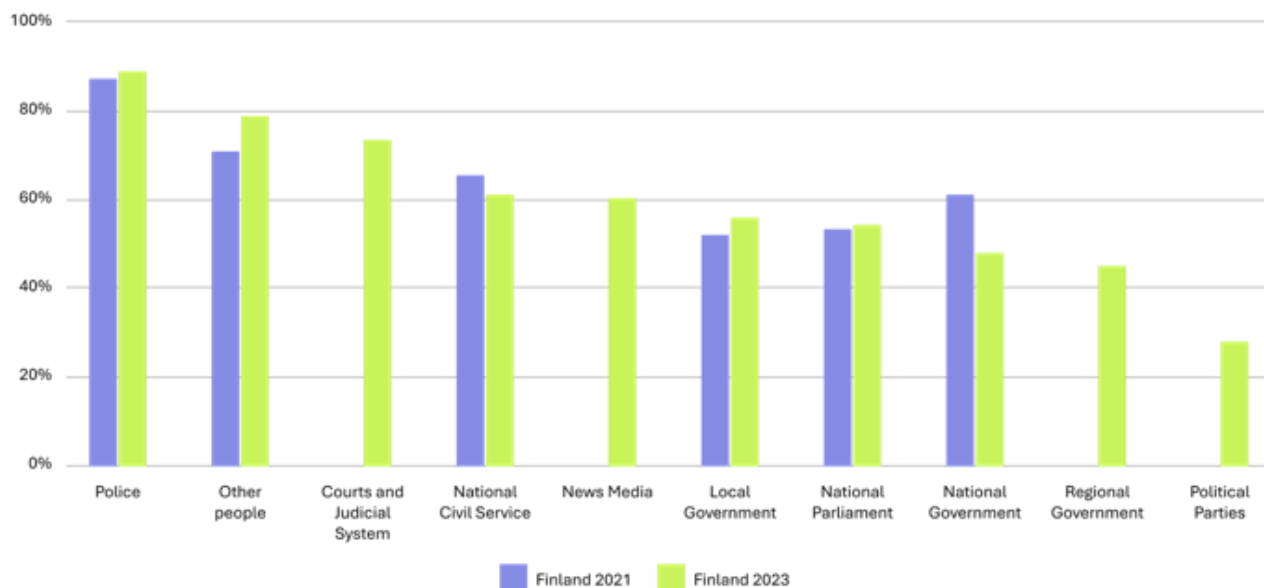


Figure 6: Share of population with high or moderately high trust in different actors in Finland (OECD, 2024)

increase trust, address the Finnish paradox and foster broader democratic engagement of the people.

On the other hand, policy-makers can benefit from these interactions in terms of expressing their realities. Thereby, people can understand the political processes of decision-making and the required time and effort for a change to happen. Thus, according to this proposal, National Dialogues are a tool to express the different realities of the whole society, from people to parliament members, and foster mutual understanding.

Following up on this understanding of realities, this report suggests that policy-level actors should publicly communicate this gathered understanding. According to a dialogue expert, “people might expect something from this [dialogue], some result”. Thus, it is crucial that politicians reflect people’s needs and realities in the public political discourse.

To sum up, through using insights of the Open Government Team for learnings on policy-level and creating National Dialogues that include policy-level actors, civil servants, civil society associations as well as the people, direct links between policy-makers and the people can

OPPORTUNITY 2: OPEN GOVERNMENT ADVOCATES ITS PRINCIPLES AT POLICY LEVEL

For Open Government to influence policy, advocates must connect with current political priorities and agendas. This requires using evidence and framing issues in ways that resonate with decision-makers. Stakeholders also highlighted that Open Government often feels abstract or disconnected from the lived realities of different societal groups. Currently, Open Government principles, such as transparency, participation, and accountability are often seen as distant from everyday political processes. To improve its impact and relevance, it is essential to advocate these principles more directly within policy-making processes.

To influence policy effectively, the Open Government team must connect with current political priorities and agendas. This requires using evidence and framing issues in ways that resonate with decision-makers. This proposal includes three examples to do so.

First, it is suggested to align the **Open Government Principles with Political Agendas**. Open Government topics should be closely linked to politically relevant issues to support decision-makers and empower the people to voice their concerns on matters of public importance. Creating political incentives for action is key to sustaining engagement and implementation.

Moreover, this proposal recommends **integrating Open Government institutionally**. Open Government should have a formal, continuous space for discussion within the parliament. This combats complacency and ensures Open Government remains on the agenda. Actions and reports should have a permanent space for discussion within a selected parliamentary committee that

oversees future actions for Open Government. International best practices can guide how to integrate Open Government insights institutionally. As a member of the Finnish Open Government team explained, the Estonian Parliament, for instance, discusses the summary reports of a National Dialogue series in the parliament. This enables an Open Government that is responsive to the people's needs and prevents the clash of realities between policy-level actors and the people.

A third opportunity lies in using **Reports to Drive Action**. Reports from initiatives such as National Dialogues should not just summarise input; they should also include concrete policy proposals. This makes it easier for decision-makers to act on public feedback. Based on the Independent Reporting Mechanism Review OGP 2023, the impact of National Dialogues could be strengthened. This can be done through expanding the perceived usefulness of National Dialogues and effectively use them in public decision-making and forecasting.

By including policy proposals in the National Dialogue summary reports, a course of action to address issues and opportunities identified through the report analysis can be followed. This would make decision-makers more aware of people's opinions and experiences, create effective feedback loops, and improve the public's sense of agency.

In conclusion, using and expanding the value of documents like the National Dialogues reports, integrating Open Government institutionally, and aligning political agendas with Open Government principles, the ministries' team can advocate for its principles at the policy level. Thereby, Open Government can become a collective commitment of all policy-level actors and support administrative and political processes.

Following the proposed opportunities for improvement, Open Government Finland can now steer the Finnish democracy to a better future. In this future, Finland is a resilient democracy where people trust not only their government but also their ability to shape it. Open Government is no longer perceived as an invisible network; it has become a widely understood and structurally embedded mechanism that connects everyday people directly with policy-level actors. Participation is no longer complex or fragmented, but intuitive, transparent, and seen as meaningful. Silent voices (across all ages, backgrounds, and demographics) are not only heard but acted upon.

Open Government bridges the gap between people's lived realities and national-level decision-making. Civil society networks thrive not because of a few passionate individuals but through sustained institutional commitment. Trust grows from visible actions and clear feedback loops that reflect people's contributions in actual decisions. The democratic paradox of high institutional trust but low personal agency is resolved, not by doing more of the same, but by shifting power, visibility, and voice toward the people.

FINAL REFLECTIONS – **An age-friendly Finland**

Building an age-friendly Finland must not be limited to empowering the growing aging population alone but all members of society – youth, middle-aged, and elderly alike. This is because a society specifically designed to accommodate one demographic group might inadvertently marginalize others. For example, while the incorporation of digital tools into public services is welcomed by younger individuals, it can pose significant challenges for certain older individuals. Similarly, proposed changes such as raising pension, if not comprehensively communicated, could lead to concerns among the youth.

Ultimately, it is crucial for people, regardless of their age, gender, and socio-economic backgrounds, to be able to express their personal realities and be heard by fellow citizens and policy-makers. In that sense, this proposal envisions a Finnish society strengthened by democratic resilience – the quality that binds together different groups in times of crisis against global or national shocks. Democratic resilience here is defined as the confidence in a person's own ability to have a say on societal matters parallel to their trust in the government – a feeling of all actors building society together through upheavals.

In fact, Finland has had a strong tradition of civic trust and democratic engagement, enabling the country to navigate turbulent times in the past—from post-war industrialization to the ICT revolution of the early 2000s. These instances prove that democratic resilience, in fact, has been a deeply rooted value in Finnish society and, therefore, can be restored and fostered.

It is also worth mentioning that Finland is not the only state experiencing this demographic trend. Given projected global birth rates, most countries will need to adapt to evolving population structures over the coming decades. Democratic resilience can position Finland not only to respond to this shift but to be a pioneer on the global stage.

While the lack of tested models and tools is an inherent challenge for a pioneer, Finland benefits from a wealth of public discourse on the topic of the elderly's needs and expectations, as well as other age groups' concerns for the future. These discussions offer valuable insights that should be systematically integrated into long-term policy development for public innovation.

However, seeing the absence of a public commitment to Open Government Principles, Finland's national government runs at risk of further losing public trust. Public authorities might feel distant and people needs and desires might not reach decision-makers. Thus, Open Government Finland, with its principles and position, is now given an opportunity to be the creator of alternative engagement channels for the people to pass their words to the policy level and vice versa. If Open Government Finland is committed to strengthening Finnish society in anticipation of the challenges and opportunities presented by demographic changes, then the time to act is now—with bold strategy and decisive implementation.

REFERENCES –

Open Government Partnership. (2023).
Strategy 2023–2028.
<https://www.opengovpartnership.org/strategy-2023-2028/>

OECD. (2021). *Drivers of trust in public institutions in Finland*. OECD Publishing.
[https://doi.org/10.1787/52600c9e-](https://doi.org/10.1787/52600c9e-en)
[en\]\(https://doi.org/10.1787/52600c9e-en](https://doi.org/10.1787/52600c9e-en)

OECD. (2024). *OECD Survey on Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions 2024 Results – Country Notes: Finland*. OECD Publishing.
https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/oecd-survey-on-drivers-of-trust-in-public-institutions-2024-results-country-notes_a8004759-en/finland_596ba5da-en.html

Trusted Advisor Associates. (n.d.).
Understanding the trust equation.
TrustedAdvisor.com.
<https://trustedadvisor.com/why-trust-matters/understanding-trust/understanding-the-trust-equation>