

Open Government

Building Democratic Resilience

Daniela Bianchi | Sanjana Punjabi | Vu Trang | Jaakko Vuorenkoski | Thalia Zelißen

Did you know that only **21%** of people in Finland believe that the **political system allows them to have a say** in what the government does?

This is 9 percentage points lower
than the trust average among OECD countries

OECD Survey on Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions 2024

This has led to what the OECD calls

The Finnish Paradox

High trust in national
government



Low trust in ability
to have a say



OECD Survey on Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions 2024

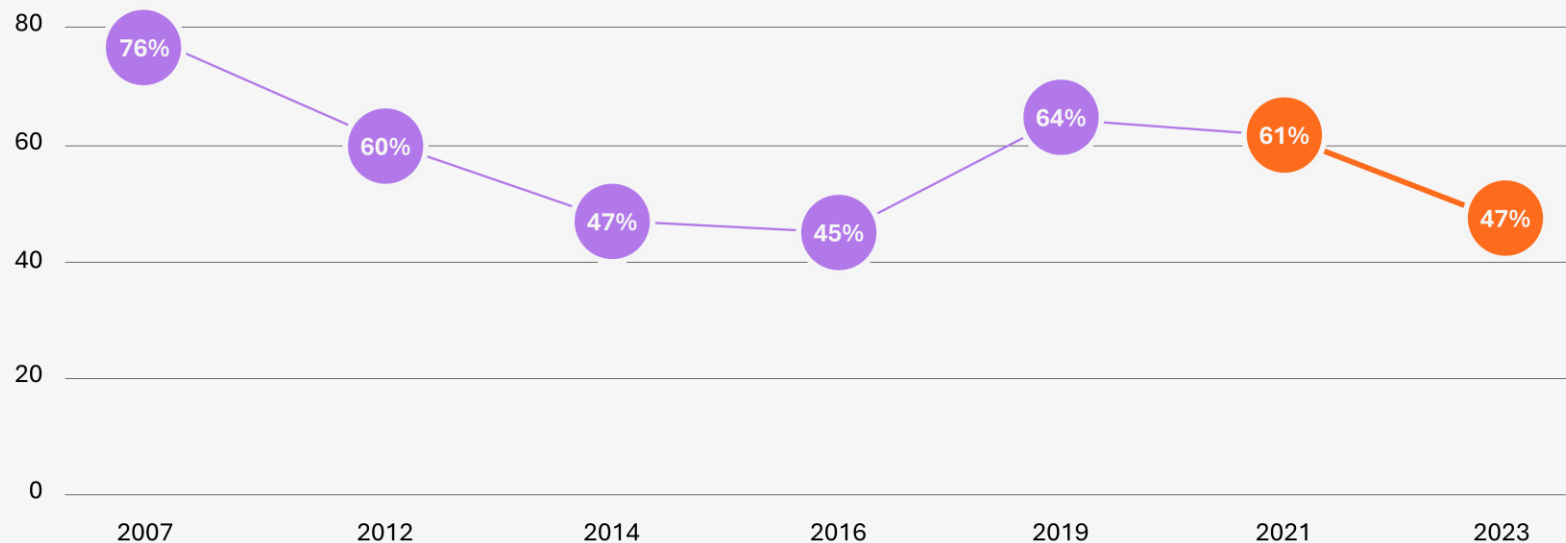
But also,

⬇️ 14%

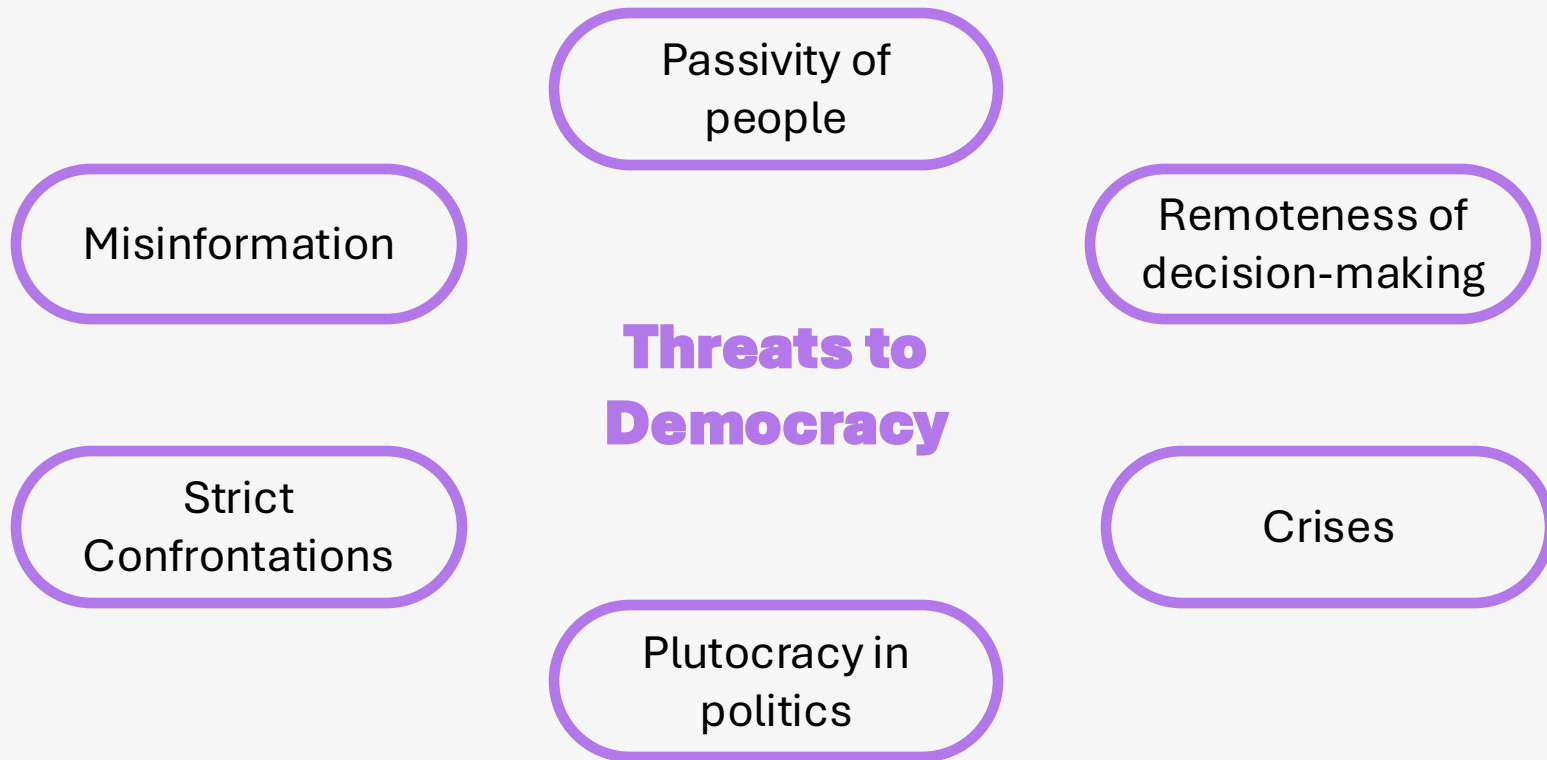
decrease in public trust in the national government

2021 - 2024

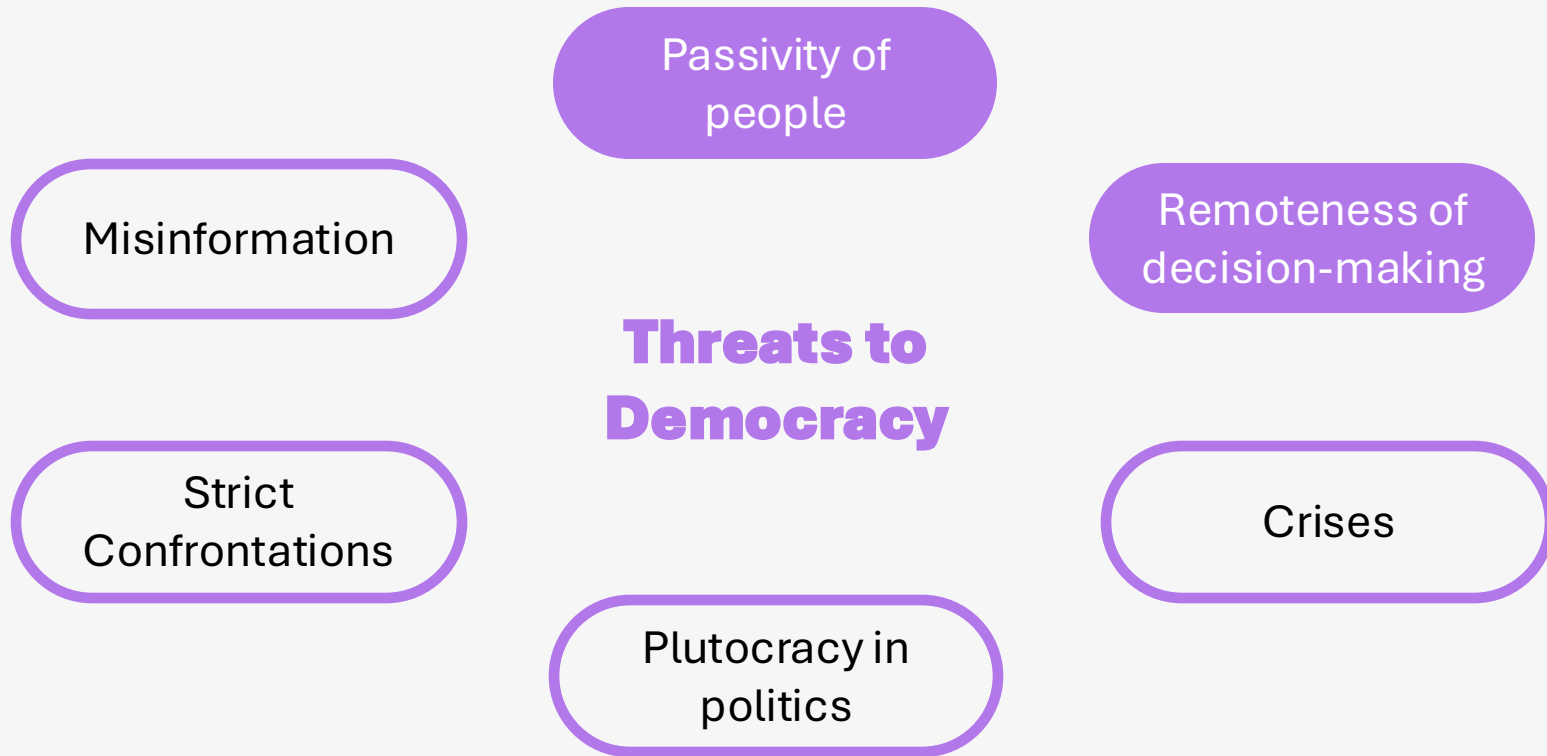
If this trend continues, Finland runs a risk of having a trust issue in the upcoming years



Public trust in the central government of Finland (2007-2023)



Democracy Defence Dialogues, Sitra 2022



Democracy Defence Dialogues, Sitra 2022

Seeing this growing trust decline, are we running into a **democracy crisis?**

In response,

Finland is actively strengthening its
democracy through **Open Government.**



**Avoim
hallinto**

(Open Government Finland)

“Open government is a **joint programme** of the whole **public sector**.

It includes **ministries** and **agencies** on the national level and **municipalities** and **regions** on the local level.

The main goal is to increase the **trust of citizens** in the government and to stabilise it on a high level

Policy Brief 2019. Open Government Finland.

Open Government actions include...



Action Plan



Civil Society
Academy



Elderly Council
Day



Topical Day on
Children's Rights



Open Democracy
Network



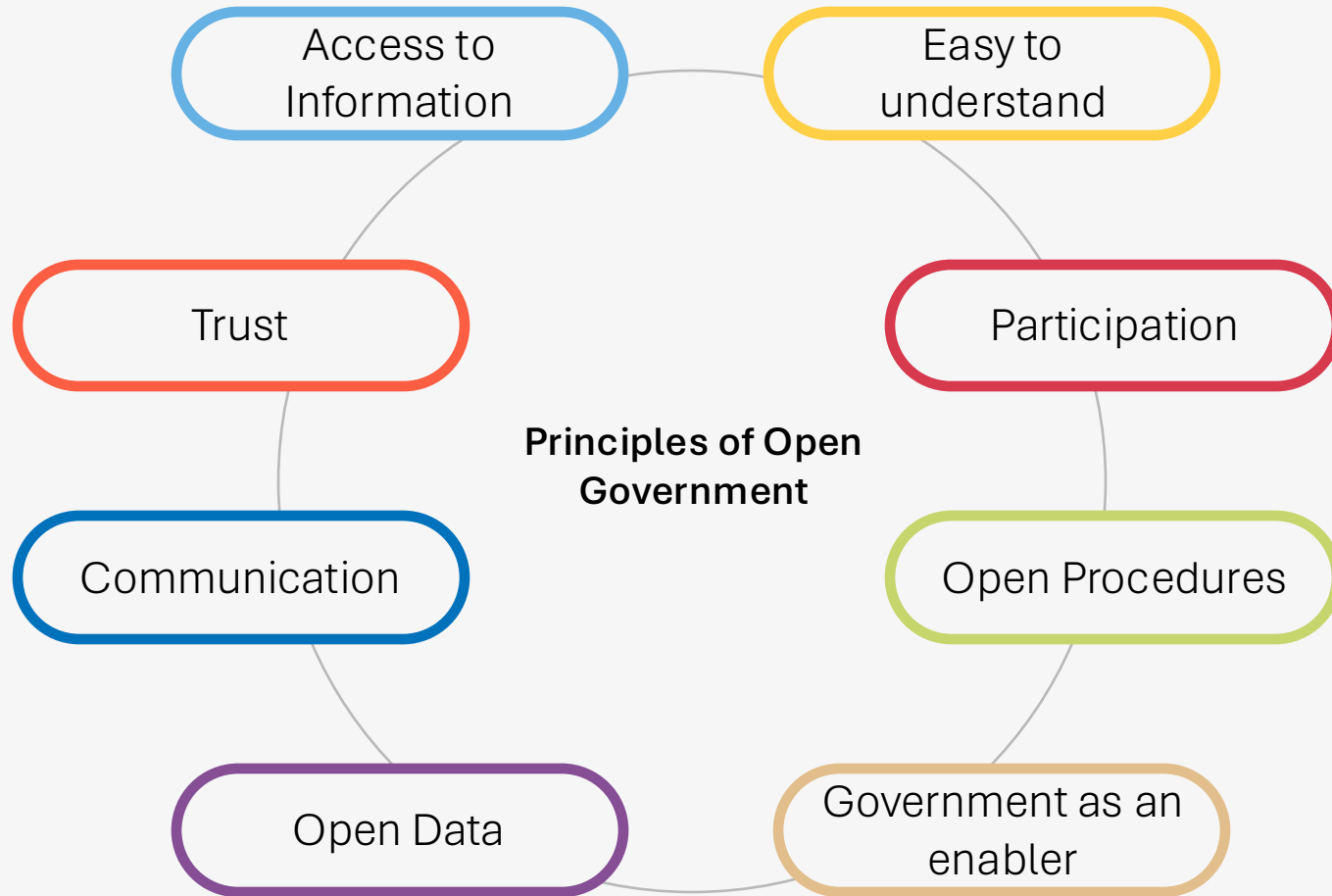
National
Dialogues



Disability Council
Day



Training



What is Open Government **in Practice?**

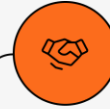
Research Focus



Awareness and
Perception of
Open Government



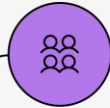
Capacity Building and
Knowledge Sharing



Age Friendliness in
Civic Life



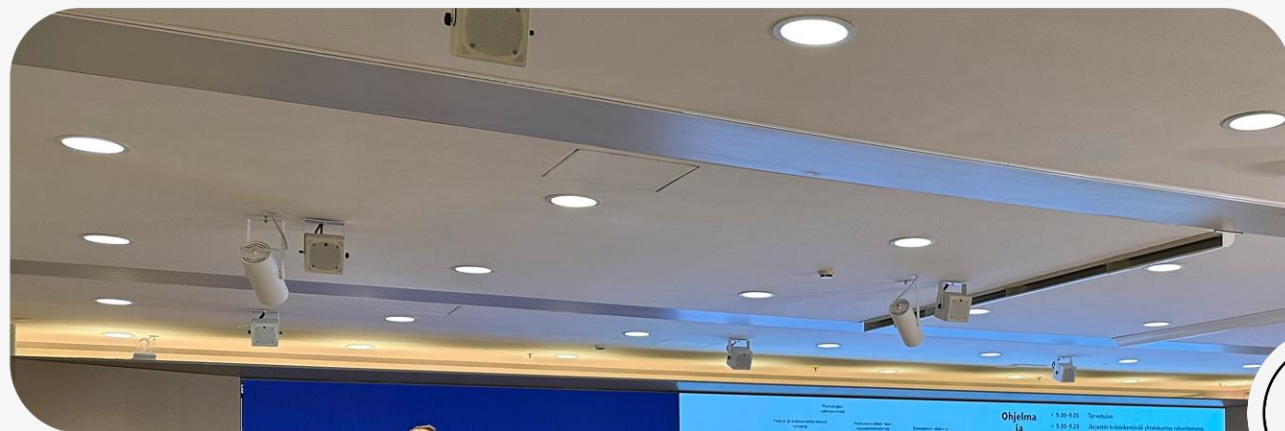
Cooperation and
Feedback loops



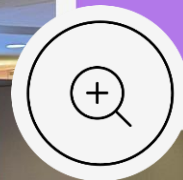
Inclusive Participation
and Diversity



Meaningful Dialogues
and their Impact

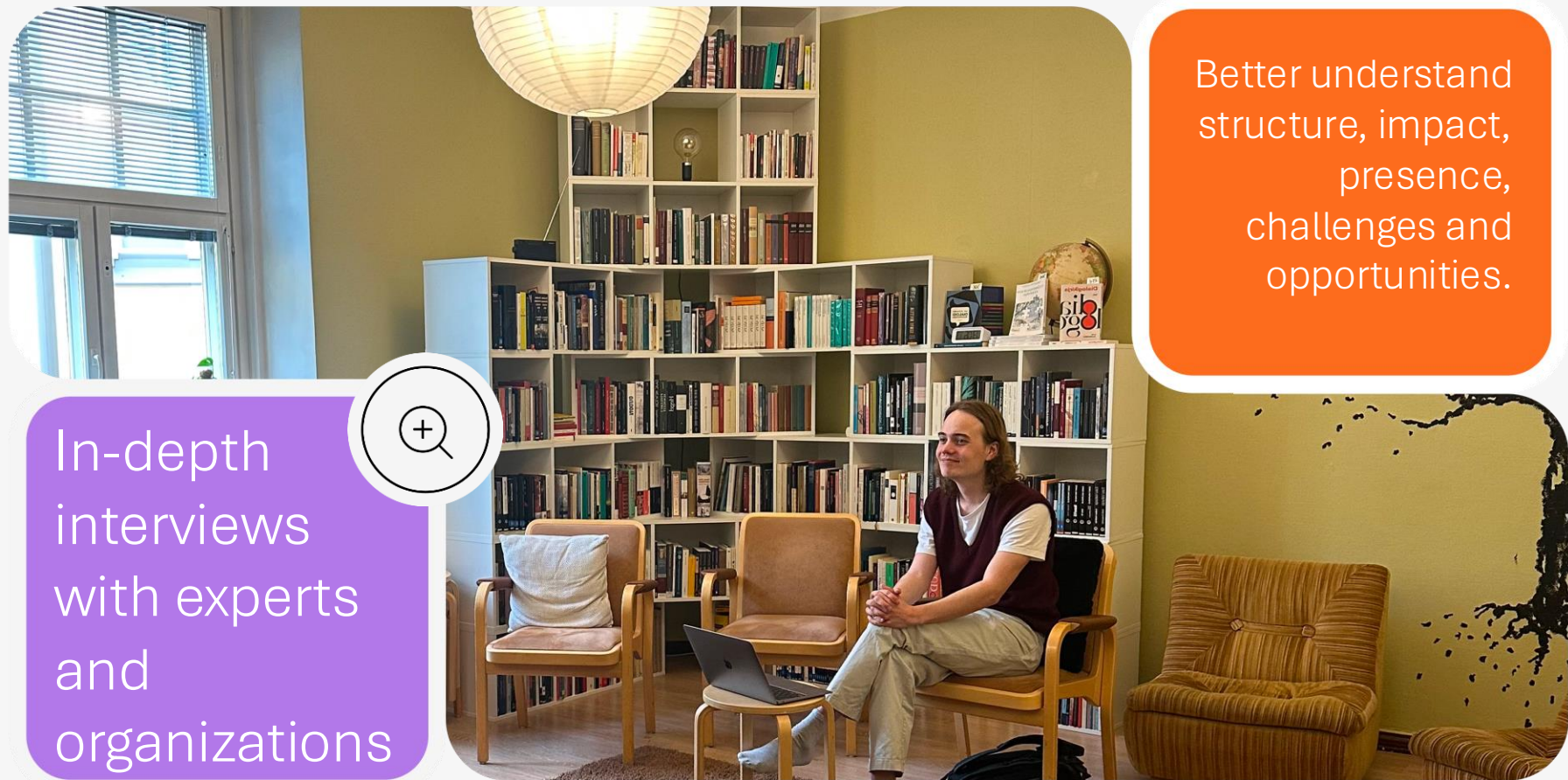


Intentionally
staying in the
background,
allowing speakers
to have the
spotlight

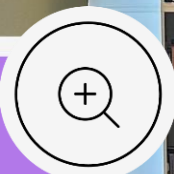


Field work:
Civil Society
Academy
Day 2025





In-depth
interviews
with experts
and
organizations



Better understand
structure, impact,
presence,
challenges and
opportunities.

Interview with Open Government



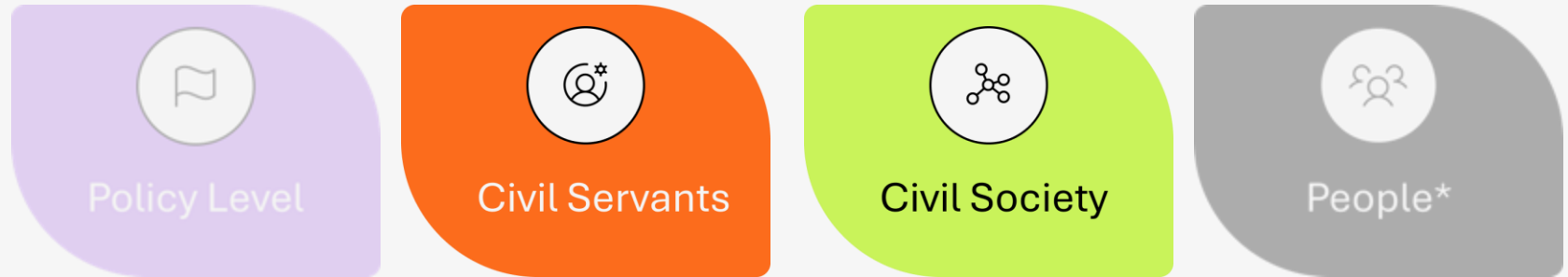
Understanding
Open Government's
way of operating
and building its
network

Stakeholders of Open Government



* People: Citizens and residents of Finland

Current Focus of Open Government



* People: Citizens and residents of Finland

Outside perception of Open Government

“I like the concept behind it, but it’s still a **bit distant**, even for me. I can relate to the idea that they are **not very visible**, there’s not enough discussion about it and **how citizens build society.**”

- Participation expert

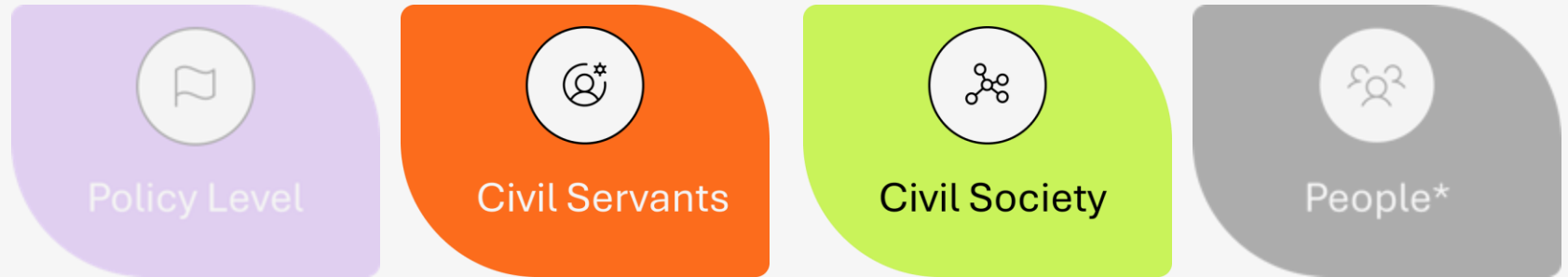
Insight from interviews

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

- Youth Council, Elderly City Council and Immigrant Advocacy
Organization

To prepare for an age-friendly Finland, Open Government must demonstrate **tangible impact of democratic participation** and **involve decision makers** to reach a larger audience.

Current Focus of Open Government



* People: Citizens and residents of Finland

We propose a shift in focus

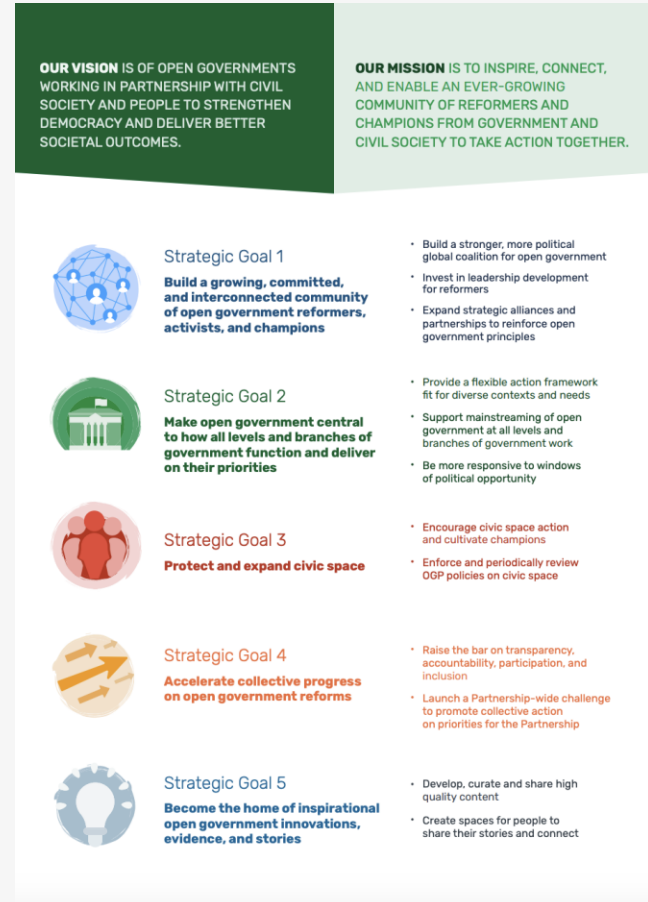


* People: Citizens and residents of Finland

Our focus shift aligns with the OGP Strategic Goals



Strategy for 2023-2028



OGP Strategic Goals



Strategic Goal 1

Build a growing, committed, and **interconnected community of open government** reformers, activists, and champions



Strategic Goal 2

Make **open government central** to how all levels and branches of government function and deliver on their priorities

Our vision

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 a support for **administrative and political processes.**

What **opportunities** arise from this new vision?

Opportunity 1

Open Government works as a **direct link between policy makers and the people**



Direct links between policy-makers and the people

Open Government has already built an extensive and valuable network at the **civil society level**.

Now it's time to **shift the focus to building a strong network at the policy level**.

How do we want to achieve these direct links?

Knowledge created by the Open Government Team is used for learnings on policy level



“There is a huge potential to **use this community-generated information in more strategic ways** that empower reformers with what they need and **to advance** the other strategic goals.”

- Open Government Partnership Strategy Report 2023-2028

How do we want to achieve these direct links?

Expand current Open Government Actions including both policy and peoples' level



“People in the decision-making bodies can be **far from reality.**”

- Participation expert

For example



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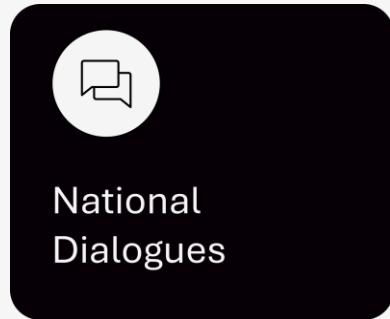


Disability Council
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Training

For example

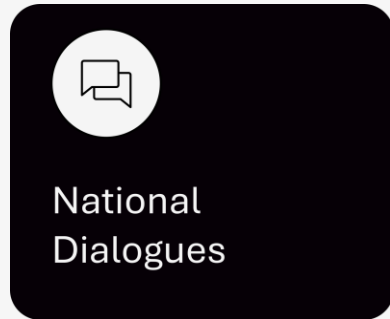


Dialogues are a **powerful tool to express different realities.**

“The main objective [of dialogues] is to get people to talk, but then there are people that expect something from this, **some result**, so there is a bit of a contradiction.”

- Dialogue Expert

For example



Face-to-face interactions through national dialogues can help **build trust among the whole society**.

“That’s why we always say you have to be present. There is a **symbolic value** in going to the people, saying their voices matter.”

- Dialogue Expert



Direct links between policy-makers and the people

“Open government promotes everyone’s right to
understand and be understood.”

- Open Government Finland Strategy



trust among the whole society.

Opportunity 2

Open Government **advocates its principles at Policy Level**



Advocacy of principles at Policy Level

Some interviewees feel like open government as a **concept feels distant** and **principles are lacking in friendliness** regarding different groups of society.

How do we advocate for the principles at policy level?

Alignment of agendas
between Open Government
and policy level to support
decision-making



"Open Government advocates need to **connect better with politically relevant agendas** and priorities and create the political incentives for action.

This means being armed with evidence, (...) and **appeal to political leaders.**"

- Open Government Partnership Strategy
Report 2023-2028

How do we advocate for the principles at policy level?

Open Government should have a permanent space of discussion within a selected Parliament Committee



“There is a challenge that we think we already have it (Open Government), so **it’s not a priority, this creates complacency.**”

- Dialogue Expert

How do we want for the principles at policy level?

Reports should be strengthened with policy proposals and shared



One of the additional steps that could strengthen the impact of National Dialogues is to expand on the perceived **usefulness and actual use of input from dialogues in public decision-making** and foresight.

Independent Reporting Mechanism Review -
OGP 2023

For example



National Dialogues reports could include **policy proposals** outlining recommendations and course of action to address **issues and opportunities that arise from the analysis** of the reports.

This would make decision-makers aware of peoples' opinions and experiences, create **feedback loops** and improve sense of agency among the people.



Advocacy of principles at Policy Level

“Open government needs to be **supported by relevant legislation**, guidelines and guidance.

It is important that compliance with these laws and guidelines is also adequately **monitored.**”

OECD Open Government Recommendation

Open Government

Building Democratic Resilience

Through ...



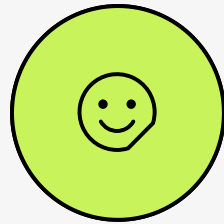
Direct links between policy-makers and the people



Advocacy of principles at Policy Level

Seeing the growing trust decline in the national government and the risk of running into a democracy crisis...

... our **time to act is NOW!**



Kiitos!

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