

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NÄKYMÄTÖN MENESTYSTARINA
NEOGAMES | SELVITYS 2019



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: INVISIBLE SUCCESS STORY

During summer 2019, Neogames mapped the status of game culture activities in Helsinki for the City of Helsinki's Culture and Leisure Sector. Neogames finalised the **Invisible Success Story** (Näkymätön menestystarina) report in October 2019, and it is available in Finnish on the City of Helsinki's website (<https://www.hel.fi/static/kanslia/elo/kuva-neogames-2019.pdf>).

The report is based on the Action Plan to Strengthen Game Industry in Helsinki, published in March 2019 as part of the Baltic Game Industry (BGI) Interreg-project. However, the report itself was funded through the

6Aika – Ecosystems of Growth EU funded project (European Union Regional Development Fund / European Social Fund - Leverage from EU 2014-2020). The resources of the BGI project will be only used for translating the main report outcomes in English to share identified best practices with other project partners.

The report identifies potential support measures for young games industry talents helping them to integrate in the industry (BGI Action 3) and the best practices to support talent attraction through games culture services (BGI Action 2).

“Näkymätön menestystarina” -report is part of 6Aika – Ecosystems of Growth project. The full report (in Finnish) can be downloaded from: <https://www.hel.fi/static/kanslia/elo/kuva-neogames-2019.pdf>.

Leverage from
the EU
2014–2020

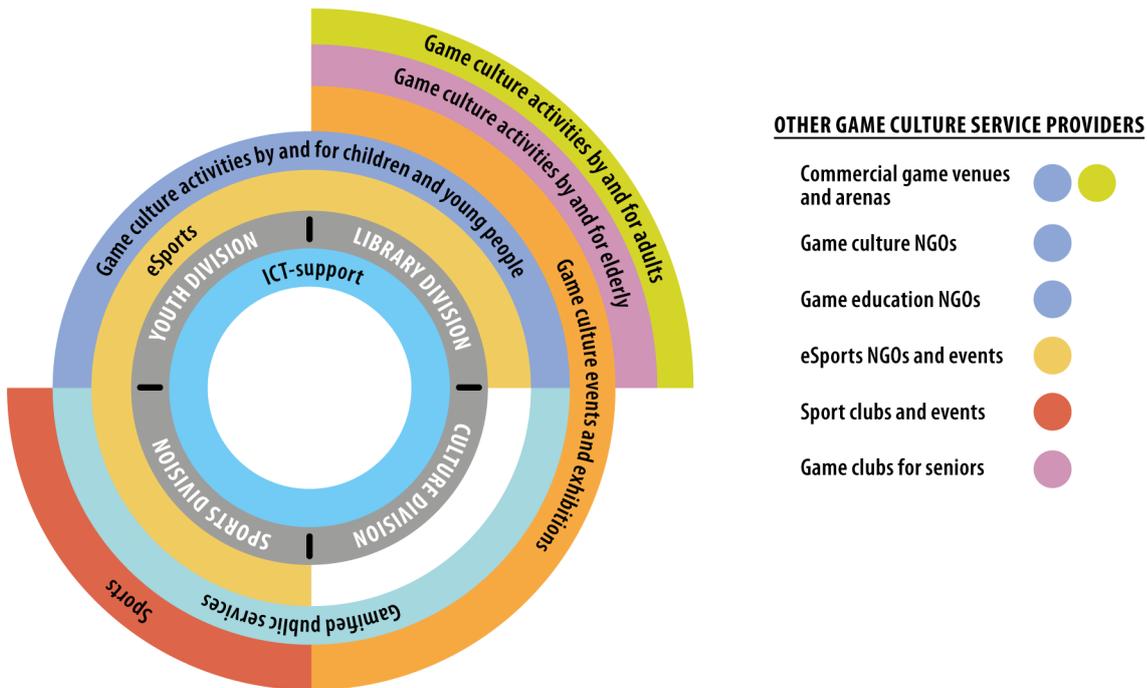


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1. Key findings of the report

PUBLIC GAME CULTURE SERVICES AS A KEY ENABLER OF LOCAL GAME CULTURE IN HELSINKI



1. Game culture is an invisible success story of the City of Helsinki

The work the City of Helsinki does to promote games culture is unique globally. This long-term work has supported the journey of the local industry ecosystem from a small group of amateurs in 1990s demoscene to one of the key mobile game industry hubs in the world. In Helsinki, strong games enthusiasm and commercial success feed each other. Furthermore, the local city government has built a solid base for taking advantage of quickly changing games culture, as it is not afraid of new experimentations, is able to nurture industry expertise within its' organisation and is constantly improving in reaching young people, different minorities and other underrepresented people with its activities.

2. The City of Helsinki is a key enabler of local game culture

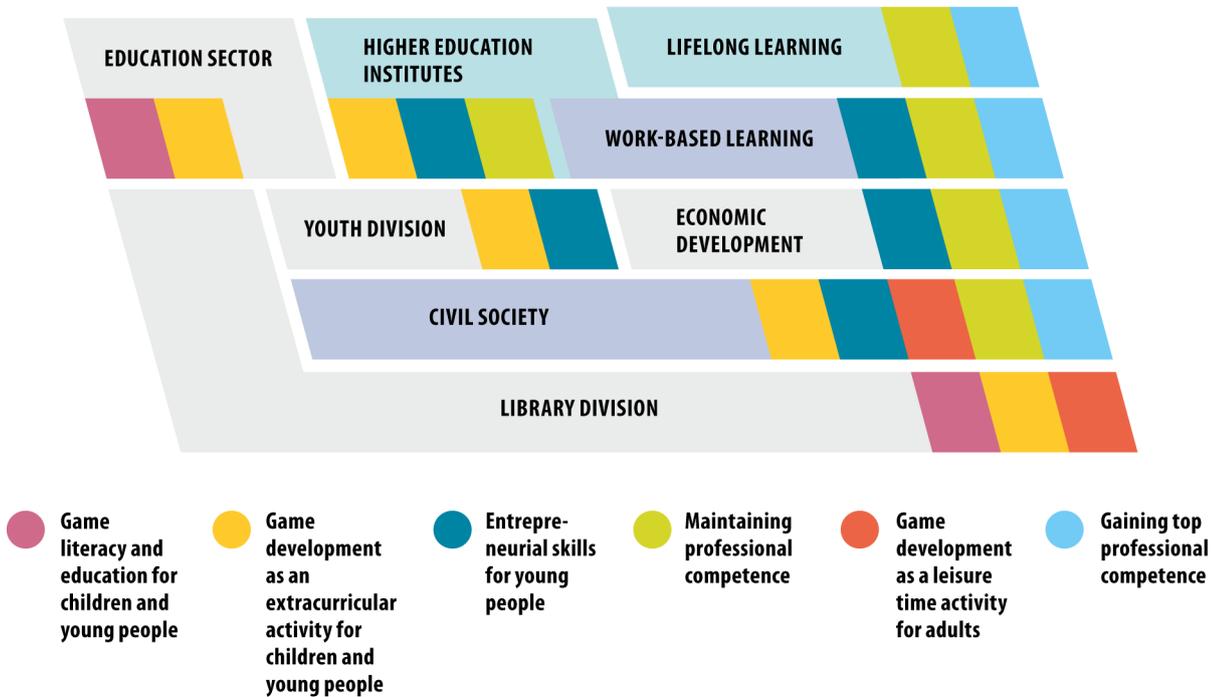
Public libraries in Helsinki provide access to diverse game culture for all. City youth services secure youth engagement in both playing and creating games as a cultural activity and developing those services further. The culture and sports divisions of the city are experimenting with both gamification of and introducing games to their services.

Local games culture NGOs see the public services provided by the city as a key platform and source of resources for their work. The associations would like to deepen and institutionalise the co-operation between the city and civil society. Furthermore, the civil society actors call for more ambition from the city government and concrete steps towards more massive and prominent joint games culture events and experimentations.

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HELSINKI MODEL FOR GAMES INDUSTRY TALENT BUILDING



3. The City of Helsinki needs to invest more resources on its game culture services, as the demand for them is continuously increasing

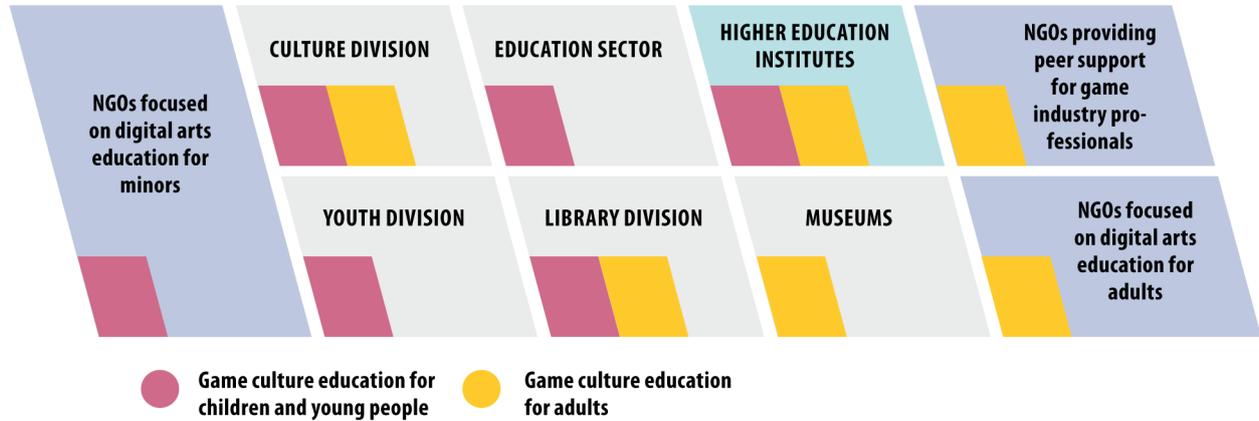
Public game culture services, such as playing and making the games, have become so popular among people living in Helsinki that Culture and Leisure Sector no longer has sufficient resources to meet the steadily increasing demand.

Consequently, the City of Helsinki has to invest more resources on both the services themselves and the support services like ICT support.

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THE ROLE OF PUBLIC SERVICES IN GAME CULTURE EDUCATION IN HELSINKI



4. The City of Helsinki has to find new ways for making its game culture services more accessible for minorities and other underrepresented groups

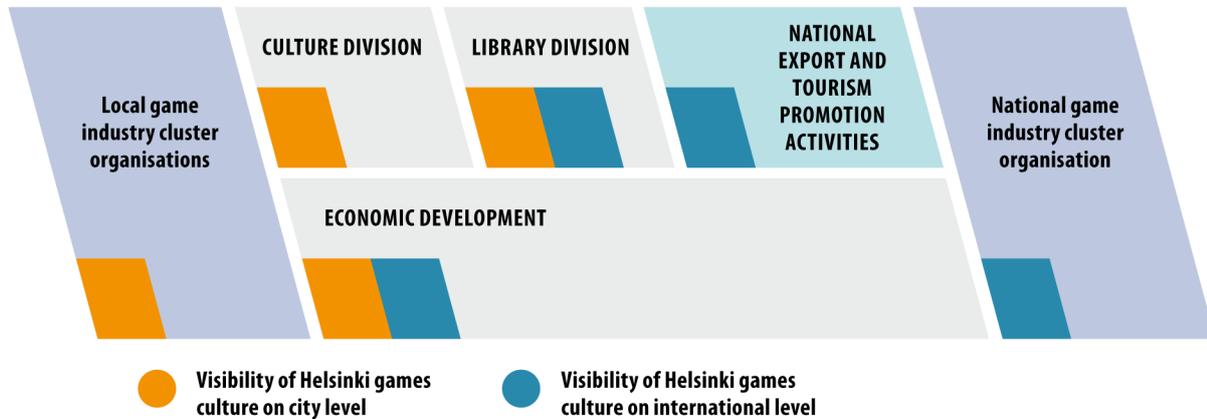
The City of Helsinki provides access to support and guidance, different game devices and spaces to play and create games. These services play a crucial role in making game culture accessible for women and girls, immigrants, seniors, as well as people with low socio-economic background. The city has to identify and tear down the barriers these groups are facing on accessing games culture, for example, by providing more services in English and making these service more visible among underrepresented groups.

Accessibility of game culture services relies on continuous long-term commitment on maintaining games culture facilities and infrastructure. At the moment all city premises, where game culture services are provided, are not fully suitable for playing and creating games, for example, due to poor network infrastructure.

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THE ROLE OF PUBLIC SERVICES IN GAME TOURISM AND EXPORT PROMOTION IN HELSINKI

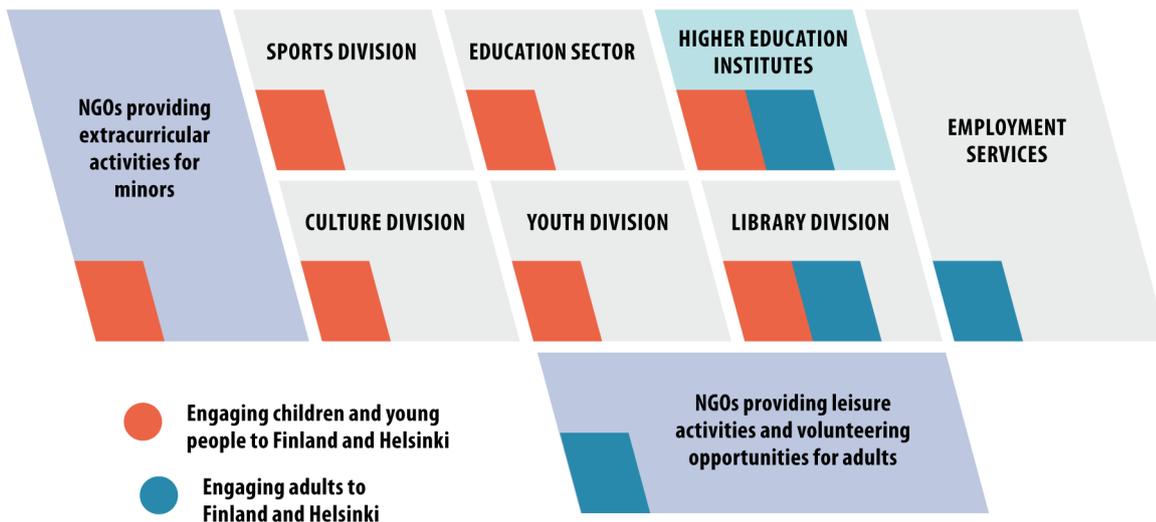


5. The City of Helsinki should make its support available for all forms of game culture

The game culture services provided by the City of Helsinki focus on PC, console and non-digital games. As mobile games have become increasingly more popular among players, the city should explore ways to widen the scope of its game culture services to include them.

During recent years, eSports has started to grow in Finland, in particular among young people. The Culture and Leisure Sector should approach eSports as a cross-sectoral topic and experts from all divisions should be engaged in addressing eSports related challenges.

THE ROLE OF PUBLIC SERVICES IN TALENT ATTRACTION



6. The City of Helsinki has to move from silos to co-operation in supporting game culture activities

Culture and Leisure Sector has to build united vision for building game culture services and this vision has to be mobilised through cross-department co-operation and coordination. The city needs a games culture coordinator that has an overview of all game culture activities and develops them as a consistent whole.

Games, games culture and games industry have to be approached as a cross-sectoral topic in the city government, and thus the Culture and Leisure Sector has to co-operate widely with local civil society as well as other sectors in the city government while supporting them.

2. Recommended measures to support and improve game culture activities of City of Helsinki

1. Defining joint objective – City of Helsinki needs a strategy for game culture

Culture and Leisure Sector provides key services for enabling the growth of local game development and eSports ecosystems. It has an essential role in game industry talent building and talent attraction. The Sector has to define a joint overall objective for its' services and increase co-operation between different divisions in reaching those objectives. It has to find ways to widen the scope of its game culture services to cover all forms of game culture, integrate them in hobby guarantee and find ways to protect the fundamental rights (in particular privacy) of people taking part in those services.

In particular, the city has to:

- Provide a clear route for those willing to become eSports professionals and identify divisions that are responsible of each part for the training route.
- Build a roadmap on making game culture activities more accessible for people who are not speaking Finnish or Swedish
- Build a roadmap of using local game culture to pull international talent, tourist and investment in the city

2. Functional and reliable ICT system

Access to games culture is based on functional and reliable ICT system:

- All public ICT systems have to be secure and protect the privacy of their users.
- ICT systems have to be built in a way that secures that minors do not have access to digital content that is not suitable for their age
- The city ICT infrastructure has to enable the analysis of the impact and reach of the public services targeting games culture
- The City of Helsinki has to become a global forerunner in enabling e-lending of games through its public library network.

In order to achieve these goals, the city has to provide sufficient resources for its ICT services. Currently, the ICT services have slow respond-times on support requests. If the resources of ICT services cannot be increased, the game cultures services have prioritised.

3. Game culture needs sufficient resources and coordination

As playing games is nowadays mainstream cultural activity, also the Culture and Leisure Sector has to be able to meet the increasing demand for game culture services. For example, the city has to be able maintain and scale up its facilities for playing games based on the demand.

Many divisions in Culture and Leisure Sector hope to see more coordination and further development of already existing game culture services. Also local games culture civil society welcomes increased coordination, as they hope it would facilitate their cooperation with the city of Helsinki.

4. Cooperation, training and internal communication

All the divisions of the Culture and Leisure Sector call for more cooperation with each other and more coordination of their activities. Many divisions would also welcome further joint training, knowledge sharing and exchange of best practices with each other. These activities would be especially beneficial for those divisions which are not that familiar with gamification and game culture services. Those divisions that are providing access to non-digital games would also welcome joint public procurement of new games and shared resources on maintaining them.

5. Equality in game culture services

As playing games, eSports, streaming and developing games are relatively young cultural phenomena, they are not yet fully established. This also means that the City of Helsinki has an opportunity to have a remarkable role in making the game culture more accessible for all genders, age groups and any other group. The city has to secure that all underrepresented groups find a way to game culture services and find them safe and comfortable.

Even though the City of Helsinki has already paid attention to minorities in game culture services by organising events for specific target groups (e.g. Gaymers' Night, or Game night for girls) there are still many ways of making game culture services more accessible.

Game culture services for youth play a key role in fighting toxic behaviour and teaching young people a good gaming etiquette and proper language registers in games.

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City of Helsinki's strategy 2021-2025 – the recommendations for strategic goals

The city secures sufficient resources to meet basic necessities of game culture services

Meeting the basic necessities of game culture services makes Helsinki the best place on Earth to participate in games culture. City of Helsinki maintains the high level of its facilities enabling access to game culture and game culture activities.

Culture and Leisure Sector strengthens the coordination of game culture services between its' divisions. The coordination defines the joint objectives of public game culture services and strengthens the structures making those services possible. All divisions in the sector and in ICT department have sufficient resources for game culture services.

The city acknowledges the importance of and supports the local work of games culture NGOs

Civil society associations supporting local game culture are the corner stone of game ecosystem in Helsinki. The City of Helsinki support the associations by providing office and event spaces, funding and support for communication. City of Helsinki actively engages the civil society in its decision making.

More co-operation in building the best games ecosystem and culture hub in the world

Each division in the Culture and Leisure Sector have their own clear role in providing the game culture services. These roles function together well, and the divisions share knowledge and best practices with each other.

The City of Helsinki has more cross-sectoral cooperation between different sectors and also with local games culture civil society and games industry outside the city government. The increased cooperation in finding mentors for young people helps them to get employed in the industry. Early-stage games industry start-ups have access to business incubators. The cooperation of this kind benefits both the city and the local game ecosystem as a whole.

Co-operation with game culture associations is institutionalised. City and associations organise together different game culture events.

City of Helsinki identifies itself as the best place on Earth for game industry. Game industry supports City's brand in its activities. City of Helsinki co-operates with associations and companies to organise new events and activities. Big events and different co-operation models provide a route to global recognition. As City of Helsinki is identified as game culture hot spot, Helsinki attracts more tourists, companies and top talent.

Support for new experiments and statutory activities

City of Helsinki continues constant experimentation and supports the experiments with micro budgeting and grants. If and when those experiments are successful, the City of Helsinki provides a clear route for making success experiments part of permanent activities.

eSports and playing, streaming and making games are mainstream activities in the city

Even today, games and games culture face prejudices. The City of Helsinki actively promotes responsible and sustainable game culture activities having a positive impact on the city. City of Helsinki organises game culture events and scales up GameDev Club activities together with partners.

The City of Helsinki defines its' objectives on eSports and creates a strategy for reaching these objectives. The strategy identifies the roles of different divisions of Culture and Leisure Sector as well as civil society and private actors. eSport team are recognised as official sports clubs.