



COMMITTED VANTAA PROGRAM

Approved by the city executive board on April 11, 2022



BRAVE, RELAXED AND ATTRACTIVE VANTAA IS THE FORE RUNNER OF SUSTAINABILITY

Vantaa residents experience social inclusion in their own lives, as well as feel that they belong in the city and in their neighborhood. They have communities where to act and be appreciated. They actively impact the city and the society.



Goal of the program

We want to provide all Vantaa residents with the opportunity of being heard and feeling included. The city's employees, management, and trustees shall promote wellbeing and trust; in this, community involvement work can be a significant aid. Participation does not only entail voting and making an influence; it also means independent activity, social interaction, and feeling of belonging.

Our vision is that Vantaa residents experience social inclusion in their own lives, as well as feel that they belong in the city and in their neighborhood. They have communities where to act and be appreciated. They actively impact the city and the society.

Different ways of participating and influencing are needed to supplement representative democracy, to increase safety, and to create a bridge-building atmosphere for discussion. Realization of non-discriminatory involvement demands that everybody have equal participation opportunities, as well as support for different groups of residents. The goal of the Committed Vantaa program is to integrate promotion of involvement into all employees' actions and perspective of all activities.



All city employees can make an impact on residents' experiences of involvement in their everyday encounters with the residents!

Contents of the program



The Committed Vantaa program consists of this program as well as of the longer document that provides backgrounds for it.

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Foreword



Here in Vantaa, we plan and develop services together with Vantaa residents. We want to be a city where people feel good and a city that cares for its residents' future prospects.

Social inclusion is not a given; to succeed, it demands systematic and long-term support, as well as various interaction methods. Even though voting translates into one important means of influencing, we presently need myriad versatile ways of involvement, as well. Moreover, our city's internationalization requires new forms of involvement. In addition, it is important to be able to make an influence in the here and now, not just at regular intervals such as election years.

Boosting involvement primarily means building trust. In order to create a trustful relationship between the municipal organization and the members of the municipality, interaction must be tight and equal.

When developing involvement, we must remember that at issue is not only fulfilling a statutory obligation but also offering a genuine influencing possibility, which means giving power to the member of the municipality, too. Let's not just pretend to be listening, let's genuinely listen and search for solutions together!

A municipality also has the important task of acting as the residents' support in difficult life situations, and to promote—by various means—Vantaa residents' involvement in their own lives. A lot of this important work takes place as part of everyday ordinary chores and is not necessarily even considered promotion of involvement.

Involvement must also be easy, and it must bring joy. The culture of cooperation and trust is the foundation of all activities to all Vantaa residents. Brave and relaxed Vantaa wants to be the forerunner in this, too.

Mayor Ritva Viljanen

Introduction



Vantaa has long tradition of involvement

The City of Vantaa's model for social inclusion dates back to 2013. It was updated in 2017 into the Committed Vantaa model.

With the model, a team coordinating community involvement was set for the City of Vantaa.

Cross-administrative strategic themes for years 2020-2021 were devised in 2019. One of the themes was involvement.

Basis of promoting involvement

The foundation of involvement is statutory.

The Constitution of Finland stipulates on an individual's right to participate in the development of the society and environment, as well as in decisionmaking related to him/herself.

According to **the Local Government Act**, the city council must ensure versatile and effective influencing possibilities of impacting a municipality's activities.

What do we mean by involvement?

You can view involvement from the perspectives of wellbeing, community spirit, and influencing; as steps; or through various forms.

In this program, we will handle involvement primarily as inclusion in a municipality and communities; as influencing the city's services and the neighborhood; and as prevention of exclusion.

Changing ways of influencing



When preparing the Committed Vantaa program, the following future trends affecting involvement were identified:



Influencing must be easy

Despite the low voting percentage, Vantaa residents are interested in influencing the neighborhood through everyday choices. More than half of Vantaa residents were interested in developing their city and own neighborhood, but less than a third knew how to participate. The majority wants to make an impact and to take a stand if they can do it easily at home or through everyday choices.



Interaction builds trust

Trust in public institutions is relatively high in Finland, but the share of people that believe they can influence political processes is small compared to other high-trust countries. In Vantaa, too, the majority trusts the municipality acts on behalf of the residents, but less than a fifth felt that the residents' opinions are listened to. Insufficient communications was deemed to be the biggest obstacle to involvement.



From ostensible involvement to genuine influencing

Seeing the residents' thoughts and opinions reflected in decisions motivates them to participate. Motivation is maintained by fast reaction to feedback, as well as grounds when somebody's opinion is rejected. Badly executed involvement and especially ostensible involvement may weaken the residents' trust in the municipality.



Residents' movements as partners

The popularity of community activities outside organizations has increased and it challenges established organizations and institutions. In the future, cities and municipalities must think of ways to engage in dialog between popular movements, as well as to support residents' activity and enthusiasm outside organizations.



Changing municipality

The creation of wellbeing services counties will radically change the municipality's tasks and operating environment. In the future, too, members of the municipality and residents of wellbeing services county must be able to influence their own lives and services, as well as development and assessment of services.

Leadership in the Committed Vantaa model



The next page describes leadership according to the Committed Vantaa model and its structure of coordination. The top of the figure shows the most important guideline documents and main areas of use.

The city executive board decides on community involvement work in the Committed Vantaa program, in other programs, as well as in the strategy. Progress of the Committed Vantaa program is reported to the city executive board. **The city's management group** is responsible for strategic management of involvement, that is, it monitors the realization of the program and decides on operational issues during the next program period.

The community involvement coordination team is responsible for preparing the Committed Vantaa program, for coordinating its implementation, for monitoring, and for reporting. In addition, the team coordinates the updating of the departments' social inclusion plans. **Community involvement services** acts as the preparer of the coordination team.

Departments' management groups participate in preparing the Committed Vantaa program and decide on their own departments' social inclusion plans. The management groups are also responsible for leadership according to the Committed Vantaa model in their own departments, for example, through HR and other resources.



Guideline documents:

Strategy:
Policies, focuses:

Committed Vantaa program: Goals, joint measures

Department's social inclusion plan: Implementing the Committed Vantaa program in its own department, own goals and measures

Policy-making,
setting of goals

Coordination,
monitoring,
reporting, preparing
the program

Line management

Community
involvement
services

preparation

Community
involvement
coordination team

Departments'
management
groups

City executive
board

City executive
board

Department's
coordination

Cooperation
between the
department and
service areas

Activities,
development of
activities

Kaku's communication
and interaction team

Kaku's community
involvement forum

Service areas

Kajo's community
involvement team

Community
involvement contact
persons

Service areas

Kaso's communication
and interaction team

Kaso's community
involvement
coordination team

Service areas

Kato's communication
and interaction team

Communication and
community
involvement team

Service areas

Coordination structure of wellbeing services county replacing the structure of Health and Social Welfare Department

Tasks of Community Involvement Services



Community Involvement Services—part of Urban Culture Department’s Communication and Interaction team—coordinates community involvement work on city level.

Development

Development of local democracy and community involvement (e.g., national local democracy network)

City-level involvement processes (e.g., the city’s strategy)

Piloting of new methods and support for using them

Measurements and assessments

Coordination

Committed Vantaa program and departments’ social inclusion plans

Events

- City management’s residents’ forums
- Area Days

Methods

- Resident pools
- Community involvement helpdesk
- Timeout dialogue

Services

- Support for community-involvement planning
- Support for planning and facilitating resident events
- Support for reaching residents
- Online community-involvement environment
- Regional newsletters
- Employee training
- Community-involvement network
- Community-involvement website on the intranet

Cooperation - partner

Local networks

Citizens' houses and town events as places of low-threshold participation

Civic activity grants

Premises for civic activity

Goals and measures of the Committed Vantaa program

The goals and measures of the Committed Vantaa program are divided into [main goals](#) as well as under five themes. The measures that also promote each main goal are listed below the themes.

The themes of the program consist of:

1. [We will boost regional community involvement](#)
2. [We will test and develop digital solutions for involvement](#)
3. [We will meet and conduct deliberative discussion](#)
4. [We will support involvement of silent groups](#)
5. [Direct involvement supplements representative democracy](#)



Main goals



The main goals and their indicators of the Committed Vantaa program dictate and measure not only the goals over the program period but also continuous activities. The measures that also promote each main goal are listed below the themes.

Goal 1: Vantaa residents feel that they are part of the community.

Indicator: The results of the involvement survey concerning the involvement indicator.

Goal 2: Vantaa residents are satisfied with their participation and influencing options.

Indicator: The percentage of the satisfied and of the fairly satisfied in the involvement survey.

Goal 3: Vantaa's voting percentage rises in the municipal election.

Indicator: Voting percentage of the municipal election.

Goal 4: The residents' interaction channels are widely known.

Indicator: The results of the involvement survey concerning the familiarity with the communication channels.

Theme 1: We will boost regional community involvement

Goal 1: More local involvement together

Measure: We will develop the residents' forum concept into a more interactive direction.

Measure: We will support residents' activity. We will collect best practices from the current residents' movements; we will create a model for the city's participation and support; and we will test new means to promote both regional and district-based involvement.

Measure: We will revise the Area Day concept.

Goal 2: Participatory budgeting increases the residents' influencing options

Measure: We will establish participatory budgeting as part of the city's ongoing activities and expand it to be cross-administrative.

Goal 3: More local communication

Measure: We will improve our local newsletters.

Measure: We will join social-media groups.

Measure: We will have a clear presence in local papers.

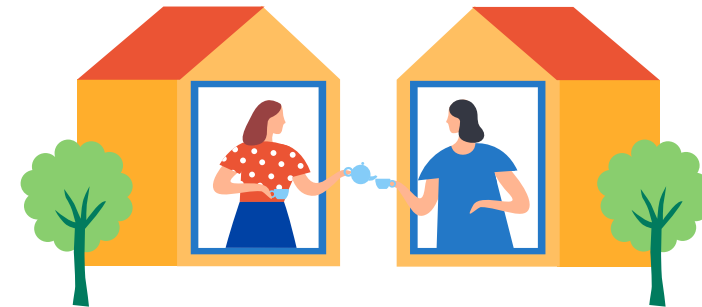
Goal 4: The city's open meeting places build up community involvement

Measure: We will chart the city's meeting places.

Goal 5: Supporting independent activities

Measure: We will look into the possibilities of the partner-financing model.

Measure: We will support arrangement of events.



Theme 2: We will test and develop digital solutions for involvement



Goal 1: User-oriented and low-threshold digital services

Measure: We will improve the online community-involvement environment together with the residents.

Measure: We will develop versatile, expansive, and lively online community-involvement environment together with our employees.

Measure: We will design joint digital solutions with the wellbeing services county.

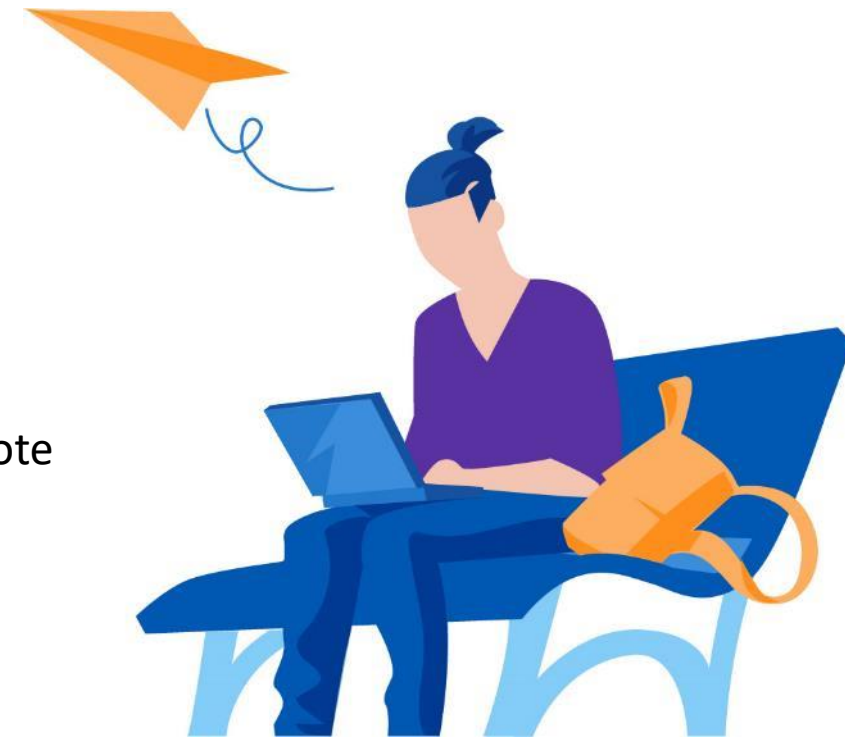
Goal 2: We promote digital trials

Measure: We will experiment with games.

Measure: We will test digital city models.

Goal 3: Interactive participation by remote access

Measure: We will develop and continue the interactive participation by remote access methods we adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Theme 3: We will meet and conduct deliberative discussion



Goal 1: Deliberative discussion as an established part of preparation of decisions

Measure: We will utilize resident pools when preparing for decisions.

Goal 2: High-quality and constructive discussion methods used in services and joint development

Measure: We will utilize Timeout dialogues.

Measure: We will keep up our dialogical networking competency.

Measure: We will promote adoption of the social-listening method.

Measure: We will train our employees to utilize the residents' feedback and everyday innovations with the help of dialogical and service-design methods.



Theme 4: We will support involvement of silent groups

Goal 1: Bolstering the involvement of children and the young

Measure: We will bolster the involvement of children and the young according to the Child Friendly Cities action plan, for instance, by tightening cooperation between home and early childhood education, as well as between home and school.

Goal 2: Bolstering the involvement of foreign-language speakers

Measure: We will invest in plain-language and in foreign-language participation and influencing possibilities.

Measure: We will create new methods and operating ways.

Goal 3: Supporting the involvement of those at risk of marginalization

Measure: We will create new operating models.

Measure: We will promote utilization of experts by experience.

Measure: We will increase our knowhow about arranging barrier-free and accessible events.

Goal 4: Removing obstacles to digital involvement

Measure: We will develop the community involvement helpdesk into a flexible alternative to digital participation.



Theme 5: Direct involvement supplements representative democracy



Goal 1: Systematical interaction with residents

Measure: We will focus on planning and implementing interaction with the residents.

Measure: We will add interaction with the residents as part of decisions.

Measure: We will clarify the updating processes of community involvement plans, and our goal is to submit them for handling by decisionmaking bodies and committees in the future.

Goal 2: Bolstering dialogue between trustees and residents

Measure: We will adopt new places and methods for dialogue between trustees and residents.

Measure: We will test online chat.

Goal 3: Increasing the transparency of decisionmaking

Measure: We will adopt more transparent communications in city-level decisionmaking.

Measure: We will enhance utilization of the feedback service.

Goal 4: Increasing the effectiveness of influencing bodies

Measure: We will arrange at least one annual meeting that is open to the residents.

Measure: We will make our influencing bodies' communications more visible on social media and on websites.

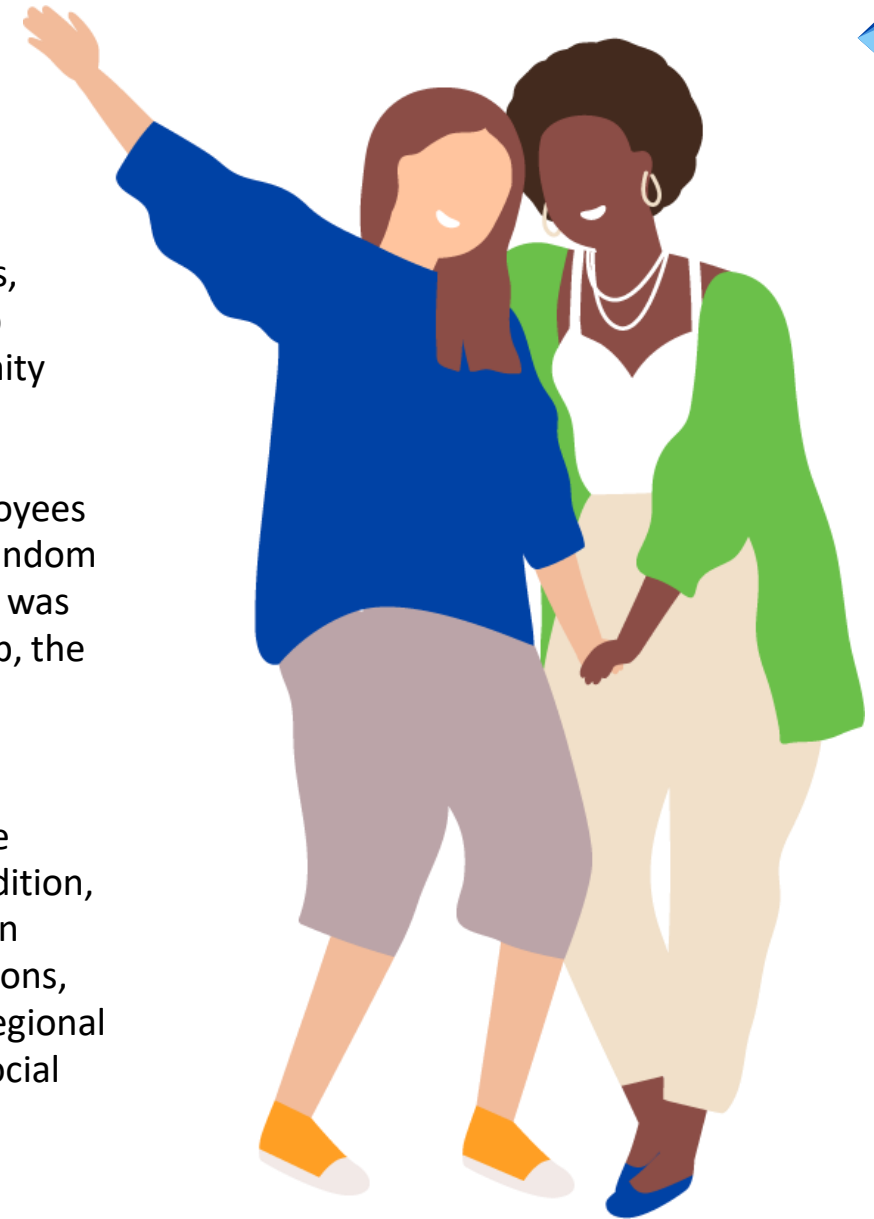
Preparatory process and appendices



The Committed Vantaa program was prepared in interaction with the residents, employees, and trustees. The involvement strategy theme management group supervised the preparation, as well as coordinated and implemented Community Involvement Services.

In the spring of 2021, altogether 912 Vantaa residents, trustees, and city employees answered the surveys related to the program. A resident pool—formed by a random sample—participated in the preparation in May-August 2021. The preparation was handled in spring 2021 by the influencing bodies, the city's management group, the city executive board, and the leisure committee.

The program was open for comments on the [OsallistuvaVantaa.fi](https://osallistuva.vantaa.fi) (Committed Vantaa) platform in summer 2021. Separate interest-group meetings, an online discussion, and a seminar were arranged on the themes of the program. In addition, the preparation of the program accounted for the departments' social inclusion plans, the departments' annual reporting on participation and influencing options, municipal surveys conducted in Vantaa, the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities' Kuntalaistutkimus, as well as topical discussion and research on social inclusion. The preparation of the program also accounted for other programs including guidelines for social inclusion.



Appendices



Goals and measures of the Committed Vantaa program, table

The Committed Vantaa program's background document

The departments' social inclusion plans

- Urban culture
- City Strategy and Management
- Education and Learning
- Urban environment
- Health and Social Welfare Department

