Next Era Governments - Beyond Experimentation

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Demos Helsinki is the leading independent think tank in the Nordics. We work to solve societal problems and challenges. We aim towards a **fair and sustainable society** in which everyone can shape the future.

Demos Helsinki always has **two customers** – the one who orders the project and the society, which benefits from each project.
Our work supports governments in reimagining and reinventing governance for the future world.

We provide support in finding new ways to engage with people as well as in transforming global challenges into long-term policy missions and measurable experiments.

We believe that bringing these changes into the core of public governance enables the translation of collective visions about the world of tomorrow into reality.
Why do we need to change the way of governance?
The Context: Navigating with the Lights Out

The present century can be characterised as a century of complexity, uncertainty, and rapid change. This changing operating context requires new ways of governing and delivering well-being to the people.
The 2014 European Parliament Elections had lowest vote turnout ever with

43%

of EU28 citizens voting\(^1\)

Since the first European Parliament Elections held in 1979 the voting rate has gone down nearly\(^2\)

20%

Global voter turnout has also gone down about

10%

since the 1980s\(^3\)
Experimental framework in Finland – and what have we learnt from it?
The Case of Finland

How did experimentation find its way into the core of policy making?
Core Motives for Creating the Experimental State in Finland

“Finnish governance is under pressure, so tools of governing must be developed to become even more efficient and targeted.”

Need for trust, wellbeing, and equality
Scarce resources
Digitalisation
Wicked problems
There was a high-level support for “fixing the engine”: OHRA project (2014-15)
Prime Minister’s Office in 2015: Could experimentation respond to the challenges?

1. Can experimental methods, design thinking and behavioural insights be utilized in Finnish policy making?

2. If so, what is the best way to incorporate them in the policy design process at the highest level of Finnish policy making?
1. Demos Helsinki and its partner Aalto University won the tender
2. Desktop study to review the best practices in the world
3. Co-creation process with a broad group of Finnish civil servants: 10 workshops for drafting versions of the model
4. Interview round with politicians and experts to validate functionality and validity of the model
Summary of The Finnish Model: Co-Design of Policy

“In Finland, the Nordic think tank Demos Helsinki could challenge the modus operandi of public sector institutions, thus creating the conditions for introducing experimentation in government.”
The Learning State of Finland: Experimentation Framework

**EXPERIMENTATION MODEL**
National model for integrating experiments into policy-making process. The model is highlighted by the OECD as one of the world's key examples of systemic level innovations.

**NATIONAL CODE OF CONDUCT**
National code of conduct for making strategic experiments in the public sector.

Finland is the only country in the world with this type of ethical code.

**DIGITAL PLATFORM FOR EXPERIMENTATION**
Digital platform for supporting and crowdfunding of citizen-led experiments connected to the government’s goals.

**EXPERIMENTATION PROGRAM**
Integrated in government program. It builds experimentation into ministries’ policy making functions.

**EXPERIMENTATION IN LEGISLATION**
Experimentation laws are implemented, results i.e. in allowing driverless vehicles to be tested in urban conditions.

**PORTFOLIO OF 25+ STRATEGIC EXPERIMENTS**
These experiments are run by the ministries and their agencies. Basic income experiment is one of them.

**CULTURE OF EXPERIMENTATION**
Networks and ‘godparent’ models to support experimenters, day of failure to celebrate failure experiments.

**DECENTRALISED NETWORK**
There is a central experimentation office in the Prime Minister’s Office, but there are also various sectoral innovation labs facilitating multistakeholder collaboration.
Now experimenting with education, mobility, employment, arts and health...

Tied to the goals of the government

27 policy experiments.

Ministries giving policy recommendations in 2019.
Basic Income Experiment

Finland’s experiment in a nutshell:

- Duration 2 years
- Nationwide pilot
- Started on January 1, 2017.
- Covers 2,000 unemployed Finns
- Age between 25 and 58
- Guaranteed sum of 560€ / month, which equals average monthly unemployment benefits in Finland.
- Unemployment benefits were replaced
- Payments take place even if the recipient works or has other income.

Free Cash in Finland. Must Be Jobless.

Finland will soon hand out cash to 2,000 jobless people, free of bureaucracy or limits on side earnings. The idea, universal basic income, is gaining traction worldwide.

By PETER S. GOODMAN  DEC. 17, 2016
Experimentation as a part of the Government Program

The Government Programme → The Experimentation Programme → Experiments → Evaluation of experimentation as part of steering mechanisms
We have applied the learnings from Finland with governments around the world.
Some of our innovation projects worldwide

- Government of Assam, India
- Queensland Government, Australia
- MBR Centre for Government Innovation, United Arab Emirates
- Prime Minister's Office, Finland
- Ministry of Finance, Finland
- Finnish National Agency for Education, Finland
- Prime Minister of Latvia and Cabinet of Ministers, Latvia
- UNDP Regional Office, Egypt
- Ministry of Finance, Finland
- Finnish National Agency for Education, Finland
- Prime Minister of Latvia and Cabinet of Ministers, Latvia
- UNDP Regional Office, Egypt
- MBR Centre for Government Innovation, United Arab Emirates
- Tanzania Planning Committee, Tanzania
- Queensland Government, Australia

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It’s not just experimentation...
IN FINLAND: PHENOMENON-BASED LEARNING AND BUDGETING
IN THE EU: MISSION-ORIENTED INNOVATION

Missions provide **legitimacy to the EU**: we are working towards shared goals, together.

Missions enable **cross-cutting policy actions**.

Missions create space for curiosity: Missions don’t only help us to achieve remarkable goals but also **create innovation spill-overs**.

The mission-driven model is promoted for FP9 to **inspire and legitimate the European science scene**. It gives **direction for research and innovation** and creates **sustainable growth**.
Three lessons learnt along the way

1. Mainstreaming experimentation in government requires mainstreaming an experimental mindset.

2. Solve what can help government to better interact with the rest of the society.

3. Innovation requires ‘boring things’.
Most important thing is to change your thinking

- Long-lasting planning
- Avoiding errors
- Aim for certainty
- Working in sectors
- Post-evaluations

✔ Learning by doing
✔ Making use of errors
✔ Dialogue with uncertainty
✔ Working in ecosystems
✔ Continuous learning
A systematic approach to redesigning governance is needed.
So, time to go back to our title: Next Era Governments - Beyond Experimentation
Traditional Government

- Planning and execution happens predominantly in siloed structures.
- Limited utilisation of knowledge networks.

- Policy approaches are presently fragmented and lack alignment.
- Policy and service design are challenged by increasingly pluralistic and diversified needs.

- Low tolerance for failures in public governance.
- Primary focus on reactivity and on updating existing policies and services.
Next-Era Government

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UNBOUNDED GOVERNMENT

VISION-DRIVEN GOVERNMENT

CONTINUOUSLY LEARNING GOVERNMENT
Building a Vision-Driven, Continuously Learning, and Unbounded Government
Thank you!

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