



## **SOLARIS-ART: Engaging with Solidarities in Flood Risk Management Through Community Art**

Planning: Nov 2021-June 2022

On site: Aug 11-31 2022

Location: Kokemäki and Huittinen, Finland

**Matthew Mazzotta**

Artist and Community Engagement

41 E Main st Canton, NY 13617 USA

[matthewlouismazzotta@gmail.com](mailto:matthewlouismazzotta@gmail.com)

matthewmazzotta.com

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

There has been a marked increase over the last few years of valuing and understanding the potential impact of cross-disciplinary engagement on societal mega-trends and daunting global problems. Climate change is at the top of that list. Being both an environmental and societal issue, it breaches disciplinary boundaries between science and social science. Additionally, it is recognized that to be able to engage the public in a just way, solidarity in climate mitigation and adaptation policies have come to the forefront. The Finnish Environment Institute (Syke) is a national key player and is internationally recognized for its work on flood risk management. Furthermore, Syke is working closely with policy makers regarding environmental and climate issues through the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry; therefore, it is encouraged to follow new strands of research and engagement that support the acceptance of climate-related policy going forward. The Government of Finland has one of the most ambitious climate targets in the world, aiming for carbon neutrality by 2035.

Syke is currently conducting a research project called “Solidarity in climate change adaptation policies: towards more socio-spatial justice in the face of multiple risks” (SOLARIS), as part of a consortium consisting of partner organizations from the United Kingdom, Belgium, and France. One component of the project is engaging with exploring solidarities in flood risk management through community art. My practice lies at the intersection of art, activism, and urbanism, focusing on the power of the built environment to shape our relationships and experiences. My community-specific public projects integrate new forms of civic participation and social engagement into the built environment and reveal how the spaces we travel through and spend our time living within have the potential to become distinct sites for intimate, radical, and meaningful exchanges.

Implementing artistic sensibilities provides a valuable opportunity for engagement through art-based methodologies. In practical terms, this includes traveling to the site; data gathering based on art installations and engagement of local inhabitants and stakeholders in the chosen location; considering options to involve local actors, such as the city; contacting and negotiating with the local actors; and planning and executing an on-site engagement project with support from the research organization and chosen local partners.

Each project starts by creating a temporary public space for listening called the **Outdoor Living Room (OLR)**. This is a unique method that I have developed to set up a living space in public places to engage people, who would otherwise not feel comfortable attending more formal meetings. This approach yields far-reaching research outcomes in the area of public perception and attitudes. The Outdoor Living Room has garnered international attention and I have performed them in Asia, the Middle East, Europe and the US. Beyond using this technique for the projects I lead, I was invited by the City of Athens, Georgia, to conduct several Outdoor Living Rooms to produce a specific type of data to help them make key decisions for their master plan. In the case of the SOLARIS project, my OLR method is used to gather information from the public with SYKE to address two questions:

i) How can we assess and map socio-spatial inequalities related to the implementation of climate change adaptation policies? We explore the factors that make specific groups less involved in climate change adaptation policies and analyze their distributional impacts.

ii) How are inequalities addressed by adaptation policies? We examine what solidarity mechanisms are implemented and how the affected groups are engaged in adaptation policies. Integration in the decision-making process is studied through citizen participation during the processes of definition and implementation.

In the following chapters, I describe the OLR method in more detail, give a reflection on the process as implemented in Finland in two case areas, and provide guidance for organizing similar events in the future.

## 2. THE OUTDOOR LIVING ROOM METHOD

Outdoor Living Room (OLR) is a unique method that I have developed to engage people who would otherwise not feel comfortable attending more formal meetings. This method can be applied to a series of different contexts and for different purposes, incl. providing data for scientific analyses and identifying relevant actors to contact for further data gathering (snowballing) as well as providing input for future art-science engagement. In this section, I describe the core features of the method, and some principal guidelines to consider when designing an OLR.

The OLR method builds on a set of guiding principles that guide all activities related to OLRs:

- **Openness:** local residents are encouraged to take part in the OLR through active prior marketing of the OLR event through different channels, incl. local newspapers and social media, and through active ad-hoc engagement with residents on site.
- **Fairness:** all participants of the OLR are treated equally, meaning that each participant's voice and opinions are heard and valued. This involves making sure that no participants take on a significantly larger role than others during the discussion, and that less vocal participants are encouraged to speak
- **Transformation:** participants of the OLR are encouraged to present criticisms and solutions to local problems. An important part of the OLR is to discuss and drive change to address problems.
- **Triangulation:** in real time, the moderator reframes to the entire group information previously given by a participant, to see if it is corroborated by the other participants as a way to more accurately verify or draw out multiple perspectives about info that was vocalized during the OLR. The OLR also makes use of document analysis and additional interviews to achieve a greater understanding of the issue(s) at hand.

These guiding principles should be strived for when designing and implementing the OLRs. Achieving all of them requires careful consideration of the context in which the OLRs are organized. In practice, it is hardly surprising that every OLR does not necessarily align perfectly with these principles, but attempts to achieve these should, nevertheless, be secured.

The OLR is based on a selection of elements and artifacts:

1. **“Physical space”**. The actual physical space for community input gathering. The event is organized in a way that public engagement and sharing of views and opinions are facilitated. This includes organizing the physical space to best resemble a living room and should resemble a domestic living room to the greatest extent possible. Domestic furniture is brought to the space to be composed as a living room that is set in an unlikely public setting i.e., outside a grocery store, in the middle of the street, a public park, a night market, etc. This ensures that there will also be impromptu, organic encounters and engagement, in addition to people joining the OLR because of prior marketing. The physical space can be designed in a multitude of ways and must be adapted to the local context in which it is planned in order to create resemblances to common living rooms in the community. Based on previous experiences of organizing OLRs, the list of furniture includes 4-8 Living room chairs, 2 area Rugs, 4 lamps (table or floor lamps), 2 couches, 2 coffee tables, real or fake plants, 4 side tables, Older (box) TV, Vacuum, Folding chairs or camp chairs if more people need to be accommodated. The selection of items to include in the physical space is based on the idea of creating a **home-like environment**, where participants can feel more at ease compared to more formal settings of public engagement events organized by local government or other organizations. Equally important, the design of the physical space helps to create a **disruptive space** in their local communities: setting up the physical space with furniture and other items serves to break the status-quo of the use of space in their particular area, which can induce interests among the residents. This also serves to generate favorable conditions to induce more transformative ideas and thinking among the OLR participants.
2. **“Questions”**. Although the OLR is an open event to gather views, ideas, and suggestions in an organic manner, based on my experience there is a clear need to include a list of preformed questions that are printed and handed out to the participants. The printed questions keep the participants on pace and let them know what will be asked and that there is a conclusion to the event (end of questions). This also allows for people to join the event mid-way through the OLR, and to be able to understand and

situate themselves in the ongoing discussion. Although the questions are listed in a particular order, it is necessary to remain flexible and adapt the questions and the sequence of questions to the ongoing debate. This includes focusing on particular questions that the OLR participants find relevant and interesting, and paying less attention to questions that do not resonate with the participants. If that particular question is of central importance to the project more in general, probing and clarifying the question might be needed. This should not, however, be done at the expense of keeping the discussion relevant for the OLR participants.

When planning each OLR, I generally start with these questions and make changes to them according to each event:

- What are some unknown histories of this community?
- What is something that you have seen in another city or neighborhood that you would like to see here? What's missing?
- What do you think about your community's identity?
- What are the challenges that face the community?
- What brings people together in this community?
- Can you think of any underutilized resources in this town? (physical materials, skills people have, etc.)
- What is the biggest resource?
- What is something special or something secret about this community?
- How do you see this community in 10 years?

3. **“Moderator”**. The person who asks the questions from the printed paper copies that are disputed to the participants. The role of the moderator is important for the success of the OLR. The moderator is in charge of 1) ensuring that the discussion relates to the list of questions discussed above, 2) making sure that the discussion flows in an efficient way and that changes to the questions are done during the discussion, and 3) balancing between the voices of the OLR participants, so that all participants are treated equally. As the name of the role suggests, the moderator does not impose their own views on the participants and strives to direct the actual discussion to a minimal degree. This does not mean that the moderator cannot ask for clarifications from the participants if the responses are unclear or if the responses of individual participants are internally

inconsistent. Having previous experience of moderating discussions is naturally an asset when leading OLR discussions, but even more importantly is the ability to “read” people and situations in order to identify, among other things, power dynamics between OLR participants.

4. **“Team”**. The group of people I am working with in order to produce the OLR and have an interest in the findings from the event. The team can be composed of people from one organization (in this case SYKE) or a number of organizations (for example City departments, volunteers, arts and community organizations, etc.). The team provides a useful and necessary platform through which planning of the OLR can be improved and through which results from the OLR can be critically discussed and debated. The team can either be present during the OLR or be engaged after the event. The team can also take on a larger role during the implementation of the OLR, depending on the nature of the OLR and questions to be discussed.
  
5. **“Participants”**. The participants of the OLR form the core of the method. The participants are composed of residents of the local community that join the OLR to listen and answer the questions. The role of the participants is in other words two-fold: 1) they provide answers to the questions and 2) potentially raise issues that were not mentioned in the list of questions and provide novel framings of the problem at hand. The former is of course somewhat intuitive, but the latter role should not be overlooked: the very idea of the OLR is to provide an open space to discuss topics of central concerns for the residents. These concerns may be different from the ones that were envisioned as important by the Moderator or Team.

By combining these five elements carefully, the OLR begins to take shape. In the following sections, I will describe more in detail how the OLRs played out during my visit to Finland and conclude by drawing on my experiences from Finland and abroad to highlight important issues to consider when planning similar events in the future.



## 3. THE SOLARIS-ART PROJECT

### 3.1 Presentation of the project

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The main focus of the “SOLARIS-ART: Engaging With Solidarities in Flood Risk Management Through Community Art” project was to advance a portion of the goals set by SYKE’s SOLARIS project, i.e. collecting community input from stakeholders in the townships of Kokemäki and Huittinen that are located on the Kokemäenjoki River watershed. In order to collect firsthand testimonials and gather data via observation we conducted two Outdoor Living Rooms (OLR) - one in each town.

Kokemäki and Huittinen are located on the Kokemäki river, and the area has for a long time suffered from flood risks. The Kokemäki river is the outlet of the fifth largest catchment area in Finland, the river Kokemäki catchment area. The Kokemäki river flows through two significant flood risk areas: Huittinen and Pori. In the former, floods present challenges to local farmers, local inhabitants, owners of summer cottages, to name a few. Intrinsicly linked to the issue is also nature protection, as one of the most discussed proposed flood risk management actions in the area, building the Säpilänniemi adjustment stream, would most likely involve increased pressure on protected areas in the region.

Interestingly, the second township included in the project, Kokemäki, does not suffer from significant flood risks. However, to combat flood risks in the area, an adjustment stream has been propagated for multiple decades. This adjustment stream would be situated in Kokemäki. In other words, the flood risks of Huittinen could be mitigated by implementing a measure in Kokemäki, although the latter would not directly benefit from it in terms of flood risks. This raises an important question of solidarity across the two townships: to what extent is flood risk in Huittinen a concern for Kokemäki? And how do the people of Huittinen view the position of Kokemäki in potentially alleviating flood-related concerns in Huittinen? This situation can be

classified as an upstream vs. downstream dilemma, which is often the case in flood risk management. How can we better ensure that the interests and needs of the communities across the river are addressed in an equitable manner?

This presents an interesting opportunity to implement the OLR approach to distill the emotions, views, and opinions of the people of the two different towns to better understand how flood risks are discussed and how concerns are mediated across the towns. By conducting two separate OLRs, we can potentially identify interesting contrasting discussions and issues being raised in the two towns.

Through "SOLARIS-ART: Engaging With Solidarities in Flood Risk Management Through Community Art" we aimed to hear directly from residents that suffer from flood risks or have experienced flooding. We were particularly interested in discussing how flood related issues could be handled in an equitable way, and how the residents felt about this issue.

## 3.2 An illustration of the OLRs in Kokemäki & Huittinen

Kokemäki, Aug 18 2022

Huittinen, Aug 19 2022

Leading up to the two events (Outdoor Living Rooms in Kokemäki on Aug 18 and Huittinen on Aug 19) was a year of meetings over Zoom and in person to coordinate logistics, funding, goals, detailed performance script, and schedule. I was on site in Helsinki from Aug 11-31 with the exception of 2 days in Kokemäki and Huittinen for the OLR events. Afterwards we debriefed as a team to collect our findings.

During my stay in Finland, we were able to set up two separate Outdoor Living Rooms, which is my signature process of collecting data directly from residents, in the towns of Kokemäki and Huittinen. We also interviewed residents about their lived experiences and specifically about their relationship with the river. To prepare for the event, as a team we shaped the questions that were handed out to the residents/participants of the OLRs with a focus on collecting stories and testimonials that directly related to their experience with the river and its flooding.

As a team (Aino, Johan, Sara, and Venla - all SYKE employees) we rented a moving truck and went to a secondhand shop in Helsinki and rented all the furniture we needed to produce the event. We also advertised in local papers and in social media as well as contacted relevant stakeholders to use the locations of the “Night Market” in Kokemäki and the parking lot of a local Grocery store in Huittinen for our two OLR events. These spaces were selected based on earlier discussions we had with local government stakeholders, which helped us to identify potential locations for the OLRs. The main criterion was that it is a place that people are expected to visit anyways (visiting the market & grocery shopping), which increases the likelihood of attracting OLR participants impromptu and not only relying on prior marketing of the event. We also organized with a local vendor in Kokemäki for refreshments and in Huittinen we bought refreshments from the grocery store where we set up the OLR. Refreshments included coffee, tea, water, juice, and cookies.

On Aug 18, in Kokemäki (which was our first of the two events) we arrived with the moving truck to the night market and set up the OLR. As a team we made people aware that there were refreshments available, and the Team walked around the location talking to residents about the OLR event. When talking to the residents, the Team presented the main theme of the OLR, what it is about, who the moderator (in other words, I) was, and why it would be important for them to join the discussion and to get their input into the process. Many of the residents were quite surprised by the event and the request to participate. Some of the residents joined in without much need for explaining, others were more hesitant and required more background to the idea of the event. Unsurprisingly, some declined. It became clear that some of the participants had become aware of the event before due to our marketing of the event and arrived timely to the discussion.

Once we had a group of about 10-15 people, we started with an introduction about why we were here and doing this OLR. We identified ourselves as an artist from the US who works with communities to create artworks for those communities and as scientists who work with SYKE. The Team presented themselves as employees of SYKE, explaining what that organization is and does, but stressed the fact that the OLR is organized as part of an ongoing research project funded by the Research Council Finland. As will be discussed later on, the fact that the Team represented SYKE may have influenced the discussion both positively and negatively.

After this, the actual discussion commenced. I started with the first question asked in English and translated to Finnish by Venla, who was the dedicated translator for the event who sat next to me (see image below - Matthew in blue shirt with notebook and Venla translating on the left of Matthew).



The questions that were being discussed during the OLR were the following:

1. What are some unknown histories of this community?
2. How would you describe your community's identity?
3. What is something that you have seen in another city or neighborhood that you would like to see here? What's missing?
4. What are the challenges that the community faces?
5. Where do you meet people outside your immediate family? What brings people together in this community?
6. The Kokemäki river flows through many cities and communities from Tampere to Pori. Do you feel connected to other communities along the river?
7. What is the biggest asset of this location?

8. What is something special or something secret about this community?
9. How do you see this community in 10 years?

These questions were asked of the participants, and a separate sheet of paper was handed out to them to be able to follow the discussion better. For me and the Team, we constructed a parallel document including follow-up and clarifying questions to steer the discussion toward the river and flood risks. The main questions and follow-up questions (in parenthesis) are listed below:

1. What are some unknown histories of this community? (Histories about the river)
2. How would you describe your community's identity? (Does anybody here use the river? How do you use the river?)
3. What is something that you have seen in another city or neighborhood that you would like to see here? What's missing?
4. What are the challenges that the community faces? (What are your concerns about floods? What kind of experiences or confusion about the floods have occurred in the community? Have you experienced injustice because of the flooding water? Who are you worried about?)
5. Where do you meet people outside your immediate family? What brings people together in this community? (Do people meet on or by the river?)
6. The Kokemäki river flows through many cities and communities from Tampere to Pori. Do you feel connected to other communities along the river? (Their identities, their problems? Do you feel a sense of belonging to other communities? Can you appreciate the problems and struggles of other communities?)
7. What is the biggest asset of this location? (When a flood occurs who helps you? (authorities, neighbors, etc.) How do they help? Does someone help you after a flood, how?)
8. What is something special or something secret about this community?
9. How do you see this community in 10 years? (Do you think that climate change will affect this community, if so, how? When talking about floods, I also heard about the Säpilänniemi channel. How do you think that it would affect this community and other communities along the river?)

We found that this process of asking the question in English and then having it translated as well as having the conversation stop each time there was an answer from the participants so it could be translated into English became a significant hindrance to the flow of the event. Consequently, about 25 minutes into the discussion it was proposed by the Team to have the

questions asked only in Finnish by Aino and have Venla translate the questions and answers to me. I was able to stay with the conversation and ask questions through Aino if I wanted any follow-up.

This event seemed to attract a cross section of middle-aged and elder residents, and full-time residents and summer-only residents as well as those that were at the Night Market and did not know about the OLR event, but were willing to join. Some participants came specifically for the event due to the advertisement that they had seen for the event. The range of occupations, backgrounds, official and non-official relationships to the town was a wide spectrum. The participants included highly ranked administration representatives, local council members, a local journalist who lives in the town and wrote an article on the event, local full-time residents, and summer-only residents - many were raised in Kokemäki while others had moved to the area more recently or some just came to Kokemäki as a summer location.

The list of participants did generate some prior concerns, as it was expected that the representative from the administration and other politically active participants would have stifled the discussion and made it harder for residents to participate. These concerns mostly did not materialize. The discussion in the OLR was quite free and residents had few problems in expressing their opinions and views - in fact one participant actively challenged the representative from the administration in some of the questions that were being discussed. A couple of residents joined the discussion later on and made it clear that they only came to listen in to the ongoing discussions.

The OLR was quite successful in engaging a wide range of people at Kokemäki, and the discussion was well moderated. Different opinions and views were expressed and there was enough time to ask clarifications and the participants could themselves ask for clarifications. As a side note, the weather that day was quite warm, if not hot, by Finnish standards, which also raised some concerns about how well the OLR would attract people to participate. This turned out to be less of a concern.

On Aug 19, in Huittinen we essentially repeated the previous process from the Kokemäki event. In Huittinen we set up the OLR at the local grocery store. The flow of people was a bit different than Kokemäki in that many people were on their way into the store to shop and did not plan to participate in the OLR which gave a wider range of voices. Some participants were not from the

area, but came to Huittinen only for business, while others were part of the town government, concerned residents, or felt they wanted their voice heard about issues related to the river. A journalist also attended the event.

However, this time we started the event with Aino as the moderator and Johan was my translator. In this event there were also a range of participants that joined that did not know about the OLR event beforehand, but were willing to join, and participants came specifically for the event due to the advertisement that they had seen for the event. This particular OLR had a livelier debate amongst residents. Also, to be noted is that there were participants that did not live in the town and their opinions were challenged and refuted by some local residents.



Kokemäen liikekeskuksen parkkipaikalle pystytetty ulkoilmaolohuone kokosi paikalle toistakymmentä keskustelijaa. Suomen ympäristökeskuksen harjoittelija Venla Isomäki tulkkasi osallistujien suomenkieliset vastaukset yhdysvaltalaiselle Matthew Mazzottalle.

## Kokemäenjoen tulvaongelmia ratkottiin ulkoilmaolohuoneessa

Matalan kynnyksen keskustelukavanavan kautta pyritään saamaan kuuluville sellaisetkin äänet, joita ei yleensä kuulla päätöksenteossa.

**Ida Korokoski**

■ Kun keskelle toria on tuotu sohvia, nojatuoleja, huonokäveleitä ja musiikkipöytäsovitinta, ei ensimmäisenä tule mieleen, että kyse on Suomen ympäristökeskuksen (Syke) tekemästä tutkimuksesta.

Yhteistyössä yhdysvaltalaisen yhteisötaiteilija Matthew Mazzottan kanssa toteutettu ulkoilmaolohuone kokosi Kokemäen iltaotiolle torstaina 19. elokuuta toistakymmentä paikallista keskustelemaan paikallisyhteisöistä, Kokemäenjoesta ja tulvariskistä.

Mazzotta kuvaillee ulkoilmaolohuoneen tuovan yhteiskunnallisia aiheita käsittelevät kokoukset ihmisten luokse.

Olohuoneeseen saa kävellä kuka tahansa, eikä välttämättä vastauksia esitettynä kysymyksiin ole.

"Tavoitteena on kuulla sellaistenkin ihmisten ääni, jotka eivät tulla kokouksissa tekemäsi päätöksiä. Tavallisilla ihmisillä on paljon paikallistietoutta, ja

ulkoilmaolohuoneen kautta se tulee kuulluksi."

Ulkoilmaolohuone on osa SO-LARIS-tutkimushanketta, jonka tarkoituksena on selvittää tulvariskien hallinnan oikeudenmukaisuutta Suomessa. Kokemäenjoen on yksi alue, jonka varrelta kerätään tietoa ihmisten tulvakokemuksista ja siitä, miten paikalliset saavat tulla kuulluiksi. Kokemäen lisäksi vastaavanlainen keskustelu järjestettiin Huittisissa perjantai-ilta-iltoina 19. elokuuta.

**KYSYMYKSET**, joita paikalle tulolle esitettiin, käsitelivät enimmäkseen paikallistiedon perusteella. Parin tunnin keskustelun aikana muun muassa pohdittiin, mitä Kokemäeltä puuttuu, mitkä ovat paikallisuuden suurimmat voimavarat ja mikä merkitys Kokemäenjoella on paikallisille. Tutkijat kysyivät myös paikallisten tulvakokemuksista ja siitä, aiheuttavatko tulvat pelkoa.

"Kokemäenjoen on pitkä, ja sen varrella on erilaisia tulvariskialueita. Keskustelun kautta



Kokemäen ulkoilmaolohuoneessa keskustelua heräsi muun muassa Sääpääniemen oikaisu-uomasta, joka on puhuttanut Kokemäenjoen mahdollisena tulvasuojeluratkaisuna ja vuosikymmenten ajan.

haluamme ymmärtää paremmin, mikä on paikallisten suhde tulviin", Syken tutkija Aino Rekola kertoo.

"Kiitävää on myös se, subtaututaanko korkean tulvariskin Huittisissa tulviin eri tavalla kuin Kokemäellä", Syken tutkija Sara Torodovic sanoo.

**VAIKKA** puheenaheet eivät aina edes suomen kieltä tulviin, ulkoilmaolohuoneen keskustelut ja niiden pohjalta tehty tutkimus voivat olla tärkeä osa ilmastotietoisuuden rakentamista. Tutkijoiden mukaan tulvariskien torjuntaratkaisujen oikeudenmukaisuudesta paikallisten kanssa keskusteleminen voi auttaa päätöksentekijöitä tekemään paremmin kohdennettuja ratkaisuja.

"Ilmastomuutos tulee lisääntymään erityisesti tulvisin tulvariskillä, ja tulvien ennustettavuus saattaa vaikeutua. Yksi oleellinen kysymys on, kohtaako järjestelmä todellisuuden epäkohdat ja ihmisten käytännön ongelmat", Torodovic sanoo.

**SYKE** järjesti ulkoilmaolohuoneen ensi kertaa eivätkä vastaväinlaiset keskustelufoorumit ole toistaiseksi yleistyneet Suomessa. Mazzottalla kysessä on tuttu keino käsitellä yhteiskunnallisia aiheita, sillä hän on järjestänyt ulkoilmaolohuoneita ympäri maailmaa.

"Syke tuottaa keskustelun pohjalta tieteellistä tietoa, raportteja ja tutkimusta, ja minä liheksyn aiheita tällä keinoilla", Mazzotta kertoo.

Kokemäkeläisistä ulkoilmaolohuoneessa oppimansa pohjalta Mazzotta tekee vertailevan tai muun taideteoksen, joka on tarkoitettu tuoda Kokemäelle.



# Kokemäenjoen tulvaongelmia ratkottiin ulkoilmaolohuoneessa Kokemäen torilla

Matalan kynnyksen keskustelukanavan kautta pyritään saamaan kuuluville sellaisetkin äänet, joita ei yleensä kuulla päätöksenteossa.

**Iida Kerokoski**  
Kokemäeltä

Kun keskelle toria on tuotu sohvia, nojatuoleja, huonekasveja ja maustikkapiirakkua, ei ensimmäisenä tule mieleen, että kyse on Suomen ympäristökeskuksen (Syke) tekemästä tutkimuksesta.

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Mazzotta kuvailee ulkoilmaolohuoneen tuovan yhteiskunnallista aihetta käsittelevän kokouksen ihmisten tuoksi. Olohuoneeseen saa kivellä lukea tahama, eikä väärin vastauksia esitettyihin kysymyksiin ole.

"Tavoitteena on kuulla sellaistenkin ihmisten ääni, jotka eivät istu kokouksissa tekemässä päätöksissä. Tavallisia ihmisillä on paljon paikallistietoutta, ja ulkoilmaolohuoneen kautta se tulee kuulluksi."

**ULKOILMAOLOHUONE** on osa SOLARIS-tutkimusammetta, jonka tarkoituksena on selvittää tulvariskien hallinnan oikeudenmukaisuutta Suomessa.

Kokemäenjoeki on yksi alue, jonka varrella kerätään tietoa ihmisten tulvakokemuksista ja siitä, miten paikalliset suhtautu-



Kokemäen ulkoilmaolohuoneessa keskustelua heräsi muun muassa Sääpilänniemen oikaisu-uomasta, joka on puhuttanut Kokemäenjoen mahdollisena tulvasuojeluratkaisuna jo vuosikymmenten ajan.

vat tulviin. Kokemäen lisäksi vastaavanlainen keskustelu järjestettiin Huittisissa perjantai-iltapäivänä 19. elokuuta.

**KYSYMYKSET**, joita paikalle tulleille esitettiin, käsitelivät ensimmäiseen paikallisidentiteettiä. Parin tunnin keskustelun aikana muun muassa pohdittiin, mitä Kokemäeltä puuttuu, mitkä ovat paikkakunnan suurimpia voimavaroja ja mikä merkitys Kokemäenjoella on paikallislle.

Tutkijat kysyivät myös paikallisten tulvakokemuksista ja siitä, aiheuttavatko tulvat pelkoa. "Kokemäenjoeki on pitkä, ja

sen varrella on erilaisia tulvariskialueita. Keskustelun kautta haluamme ymmärtää paremmin, mikä on paikallisten suhde tulviin", Syken tutkija Aino Rekola kertoo.

"Käytössä on myös se, suhteutaanko korkean tulvariskin Huittisissa tulviin eri tavalla kuin Kokemäellä", Syken tutkija Sara Torodovic sanoo.

**VAIKKA** puheenaiheet eivät aina edes suoraan liittyneet tulviin, ulkoilmaolohuoneen keskustelut ja niiden pohjalta tehty tutkimus voivat olla tärkeitä osa ilmastutiivistä ratkaisemista. Tutki-

jöiden mukaan tulvariskien torjuntaratkaisujen oikeudenmukaisuudesta paikallisten kanssa keskusteleminen voi auttaa päätöksentekijöitä tekemään paremmin kohdennettuja ratkaisuja.

"Ilmasto muutos tulee lisäämään erityisesti talvisin tulvariskiä, ja tulvien ennustettavuus näyttää vaikeutuvan. Yksi oleellinen kysymys on, kohtaako järjestelmät todellisuuden epäkohdat ja ihmisten käyttämien ongelmien", Torodovic sanoo.

**SYKE** järjesti ulkoilmaolohuoneen ensi kertaa eivätkä vastaa-

vanlaiset keskustelufoorumit ole toistaiseksi viciistyneet Suomessa. **Museotilalla** kyseessä on tuttu keino käsitellä yhteiskunnallisia aihetta, sillä hän on järjestänyt ulkoilmaolohuoneita ympäri maailmaa.

"Syke tuottaa keskustelun pohjalta tieteellistä tietoa, raportteja ja tutkimusta, ja minä lähesyn aihetta talteen keinoin", Mazzotta kertoo.

Kokemäkeläisistä ulkoilmaolohuoneessa oppimansa pohjalta Mazzotta tekee veistoksen tai muun taideteoksen, joka on tarkoitettu tuoda Kokemäelle.

# Ulkoilmaolohuoneessa haettiin ymmärrystä tulvariskeistä

Huittisten tulvat ovat tuttuja, mutta mitä ne ovat aiheuttaneet alueen asukkaille? Suomen ympäristökeskuksen tutkijat haluavat selvittää tulvariskien hallinnan oikeudenmukaisuutta Suomessa.

**SOLARIS-HANKE**  
Satu Ojara

Lautturin eseen välikko siten perjantaina käännettiin, sohvot ja nojatuolit heitettiin monessa kauppareisullaan olleesta ilmeestä. Olohuoneessa kahvit, leipä ja muun tarjoiluun loimassa Suomen ympäristökeskuksen tutkijat halusivat kuulla, mitä tällaisilla ajatuilla tulvista.

**”Kun vesi on Kokemäenjoessa korkealla, Lauhassa kastutaan ensimmäisenä.”**

Eetu Nurmi

–Halusimme tulla juttelemaan paikallisten ihmisten kanssa siitä, miten tulvat täällä koetaan. Herättävääkö ne huolta, hämmennystä, epätoivonmukaisuuden tunnetta, ja kaivataanko täällä ymmärrystä vianomaisilta, kertoo Suomen ympäristökeskuksen tutkija Aino Rekola.

–Meidän tutkijoiden tapana puhua esimerkiksi juuri tulvista on toisenlainen kuin täällä ovat paikallisten ihmisten kokemukset. Halusimme antaa asukkaille tilaa puhua omista kokemuksistaan.

■ **Ympäristökeskuksen** tutkimus on osa Solaris-hanketta. Solaris on lyhenne sanoista sosiaalinen oikeudenmukaisuus ja resurssit riskit alueellisesti ilmastomuutoksen sopeuttamisessa.

–Keräämme tietoa, joka palvelee päätöksentekoa. Suomessa tutkimuskesk-

kohteita ovat pääkaupunkiseutu ja Kokemäenjoen seutu. Ollaamme toivoneet, että tällaisi olohuonekeskusteluihin olisi osallistunut enemmän niitä henkilöitä, jolla on henkilökohtaisia kokemuksia tulvista.

Rekola kertoo, että tutkimukseen haastatellun vielä paikallisia ihmisiä ja syksyn aikana järjestetään avoin tilaisuus, jossa on mukana myös viranomaisia ja kaupungin edustajia.

Rekolan mukaan tulvia on toki tutkittu aiemminkin, mutta politiikan tutkijan näkökulmasta on edelleen syytä vähän sovellettu tulvariskien hallinnassa.

–Olemme mukana eurooppalaisessa konsortiossa yhdessä Belgian, Ranskan ja Britannian kanssa. Täällä tutkitaan tulvia solidaarisuuskäsitteen kautta. Eri maat tuottavat erilaisia ratkaisuja ja oikeudenmukaisuus nähtävästi on maissa hyvin erilaiselta. Meillä ei ole onneksi ollut niin isoja tulvia, että niissä olisi menettänyt ihmishenkiä, sanoo Rekola.

■ **Ulkoilmaolohuoneessa** oli mukana myös amerikkalainen yhteistyökumppani Matthew Mazzotta. Hän on pyytynyt yhteistyöä osallistavista olohuoneista muun muassa Yhdysvalloissa, Hollannissa ja Suedi-Arabissa.

Huittisissa hän kyseli asumisyhteisöistä, sen identiteetistä, haasteista, voimavaroista ja tulevaisuuden näkökulmista. Mazzotta on aiemmin osallistunut rakentamistyöryhmään yhdessä Aino Rekolan kanssa.

–Selvitettiin on suunnitella myös Kokemäenjoen varrella, mutta sen toteuttaminen vaatii lisäohjeita, sanoo Aino Rekola.

Matthew Mazzotta kysyi meidän yhteistyöstä Huittisista asumisyhteisöistä olohuoneessa poikenneet vastasivat olemassa olevista tulvista. Jos joku asukas huittisissa toivoisi, se olisi järkevä.

■ **Eetu Nurmi** asuu vaimonsa kanssa Lauhassa Kokemäenjoen rannalla ja tul-



Tutkija Aino Rekola lupasi, että Huittisiin tuliaan vielä uudestaan tämän vuoden aikana.



–Talvella 2018 tulva kesti 46 vuorokautta, yritimme pitää omilla pumppuillamme kellaria kuivana, kertoo Eetu Nurmi, jolle Kokemäenjoen tulvat ovat turhan tuttuja. Hän asuu vaimonsa kanssa Lauhassa joen varrella.



Matthew Mazzotta (vas.) kyseli olohuoneeseen päihtaneilta huittisilaisien mielipiteitä kotipaikkakunnastaan ja asuinryhteistä. Vastauksia hänelle tulkkasi erikoistutkija Johan Munck af Rosenschöld Sykestä.



Heikki Sallin mielestä Säpilänniemen oikaisu- ja koskien pilteen perkaaminen olisi helpoista tulvatilanteeseen.

vat ovat heille liiankin tuttuja. Hän penäsi keskustelutilaisuudessa inhimillistä näkökulmaa ostenkin voima-

latoxyhteisöä.

–Tulvia ei pyritä välttämään, vaan etusijalla on voimavarojen energiantuotanto, sanoo Nurmi.

Talvella 2018 vesi oli tulvakorkeudessa 46 vuorokautta. –Koko ajan yritimme omilla pumppuillamme pitää kellaria kuivana. Voimavaroja ei löytynyt ymmärrystä tulvariskien, koska niitä sattu useammin kuin 50 vuoden välein.

■ **Nurmi** näkee tärkeinä myös ennakoinnin.

–Jo kesällä ja syksyllä 2017 oli nähtävissä tulevan talven tilanne. Kesä oli saateinen, samoin syksy. Juok-

sutuksia olisi voinut aloittaa jo hyvissä ajoin. Syksyllä niitä ei kuitenkaan isäntä, vaikka Syyntuon mittauspisteessä oltiin koko ajan lähellä tulvakorkeuksia. Juoksuksista lisätilaa vasta sitten, kun tulva oli päällä ja vetäytyneissä.

Letu Murmen mielestä säännötölyyksiä olisi hyvä myös tarkistaa.

–Nyt tavoitteena on optimaalinen energiantuotto. Kun vesi on Kokemäenjoessa korkealla, Lauhassa kastutaan ensimmäisenä. Ja toisinaan, vaikka Vammalan seudulla vesi on alhaisella, Lauhassa se on tulvakorkeuksissa.

Nurmen mielestä Huittinen on vesialue, josta kaupungille pitäisi kertyä verotuloja. Nyt Huittinen ei hyödy näistä voimavaroista välisenä vesialueena olemisesta mitään, päinvastoin.

■ **Heikki Salli** näki ammuksa ratkaisuna huittisten tulvien Säpilänniemen oikaisu- ja koskien perkaaminen.

–Käikkä koskissa ovat piät tulvoja. Tulvat ovat kuin sirkushuone. Silloin kiertäisiin katsellessa tulvatilannetta, mutta kun tulvat ovat ohit, mitään ei tapahdu, sanoo Salli.

## 4. LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE OUTDOOR LIVING ROOMS

In this final section, I will discuss the outcomes of the organized OLRs in Kokemäki and Huittinen. The focus will be on identifying central findings of the OLRs from the point of view of how well the OLRs operated in practice, including opportunities and challenges they presented, rather emphasizing the specific issues being debated in the OLRs.

### 4.1 Central findings from the two outdoor living rooms

The most significant positive outcome of the OLRs was that we were able to reach out to people with whom we had had no previous engagement. Since our focus in the OLRs was on flood risk management and how flood risks affect the local population, we were interested in getting in contact with people, who are suffering from floods in the areas. The OLRs proved quite effective in allowing us to find these people through the bottom-up process of the OLRs. Some of the participants affected by flood risks came to the discussion due to having read the advertisement in the local newspaper or by “accident”, being at the right place and at the right time. Especially in Huittinen, where flood risks are more prevalent and significant, the participants had more first-hand experiences and insights into the question. Through the OLRs, we were able to identify individuals with whom we did additional interviews and they also provided contact details to additional informants (snowballing). For the project, this was very important, as identifying these individuals and getting in contact with them is very challenging, if not impossible, without the OLRs.

In the OLRs, we were also able to gain new valuable insights into issues that were not known to us beforehand. As mentioned earlier, in the OLRs, we had a predetermined interest and focus on flood risk management and experiences of flood risks by local residents. Based on this interest, we crafted a list of questions that were used to direct the discussion. The OLRs proved effective in spurring new topics of discussion that we had not planned for. For example, the OLR participants raised the question about the role of the power companies in regulating the flow of the river. Among the participants, there were some critical voices directed toward the activity of

the companies, claiming that they are driven by short-term financial gains rather than by the common interest of the area in minimizing flood risks. This experience of injustice became an important additional issue that was discussed further in the OLR and that also directed the subsequent follow-up work after the OLRs among me and the project team.

More generally, the role of the OLRs in generating data to be used for scientific analyses proved to be important. Based on discussions I have had with the project team, the OLRs provided a novel form of data, which was valuable for the research project. Compared to similar data gathering methods, where multiple individuals are engaged in a discussion or interview, such as focus group interviews, the OLR provided a more open and flexible opportunity to engage with local stakeholders. As the participation in the OLRs was not capped or fixed in a predetermined fashion, we were able to create a different dynamic between the participants, which will be interesting to explore more in detail in the data analysis phase of the project. This dynamic also created additional challenges from the perspective of scientific analysis, which will be discussed later.

Lastly, from the perspective of citizen engagement, the OLRs also proved to be quite successful in providing a platform to express their opinions and have their voices heard. In addition to the value of the OLRs from a project's perspective, the OLRs are valuable "interventions" in that they offer additional opportunities for enhancing the agency and inclusion of individuals, who are not necessarily actively engaged in public affairs on the local level. During the OLRs, the participants thanked for the opportunity to attend the discussions, and one could argue that the common ambiance in the OLRs were mostly positive. This also shows that implementing an OLR-type of an intervention can be beneficial for both research and public engagement perspectives, given that participants feel that their voices are heard and that they are met with acceptance.

The two OLRs we organized also raised some issues and highlighted some challenges related to the OLR method. From the perspective of research, one critical issue relates to the representativeness of the OLRs in their respective communities. How can we ensure that the ones who participated represents at least to some extent the local population in the two towns? Given that the OLRs are temporally limited interventions on the local level, we cannot assume that the OLRs alone are able to reach out to all potentially relevant social groups and/or balance the configuration of participating individuals in the discussions. For scientific analyses, this

means that relying on the OLRs exclusively to gather data about a specific locality or community will most likely not suffice. Rather, the process needs to be complemented by additional methods, such as document analysis or interviews with selected parties. This ensures that the OLRs are equipped with the necessary context in which they are organized.

Another challenge relates to the balancing of interests and voices during the OLR discussions. As the OLR is an open and inclusive method of engagement, the method itself does not include tools to limit the participation of individuals and/or interests. As is quite normal during discussions, the ones with clearly defined opinions and arguments, extroverts, and the ones who are used to speaking in public have the upper hand in defining the flow of the discussion and can also subdue the opinions and views of other participants.

In the two OLRs that we organized, this dynamic was also visible. Some of the participants represented the city council and other individuals working within the administration of the two towns. Not all of them took an active role, but in some instances their engagement in the discussion was very noticeable. This presents challenges to the OLR, as we try to secure a fair playing field for all participants. Equally so, we are also interested in hearing different opinions and views, which also includes the ones of those who are involved in politics and administration. Here, the role of the moderator becomes crucial, as they can use their role to ensure that all participants have equal opportunities to partake in the discussion. In the two OLRs we organized, the moderator did take an active stance in balancing between the different participants and their use of time to present their opinions, but this issue is something that the OLRs need to deal with in order to ensure equal opportunities to engage.

On a related point, and in addition to the need to balance between interested parties, the openness of the OLRs brings about additional challenges for the OLRs. Compared to other forms of methods of gathering data, such as interviews, the OLR platform is situated in a public space and tries to engage as many individuals as possible. The publicness of OLRs means that the discussions can be followed by anyone (including journalists as mentioned above), anyone can share their thoughts, and anyone can react to or refute others' views or arguments. These elements are certainly important and can shed light on topical local problems and issues in a deliberative manner. However, this openness can also form an obstacle for some individuals to fully engage in the OLR. Not everyone is comfortable with sharing their opinions in front of

strangers, possibly having their picture taken, or having their opinions criticized by fellow participants.

The question is: does the OLR, then, encourage the participation of a specific type of individuals, who can deal with the aforementioned issues? The answer is both yes and no. On the one hand, it is clear that the OLR method sets certain boundary conditions on participation and favors individuals, who are able to articulate their opinions in an effective way and are not afraid to engage in a public manner. On the other hand, based on the two OLRs organized in Finland, they also engaged individuals, who by most standards did not fit into the description above. Again, the role of the moderator is crucial in making sure that individuals, who feel less at ease with the OLR method are able to participate in the discussion in a meaningful way.

A final challenge relating to the OLR concerns the role of the organizer. It makes a difference to the communities who is in charge of the OLRs and what their connection to other organizations is. In the two Finnish OLRs, SYKE had an important role in contacting the communities when organizing the events and advertising the events. The SYKE team was also significantly engaged in facilitating the actual discussions. Before the discussion, the SYKE team presented themselves and it was stressed that even though they are participating in the OLR in the role of SYKE researchers, the main function of the event is to contribute to the research project (that SYKE participates in). In one of the OLRs, the institutional position of SYKE did influence some of the discussions. In this case, SYKE was referred to as “nature conservationists” by a few participants and SYKE was constructed to represent the interests of individuals, who value protecting ecosystems rather than mitigating flood risks. The reaction of the participants was understandable, given SYKE’s institutional role. These kinds of issues cannot be fully mitigated if the OLRs are organized in conjunction with organizations known to the participants. It is of course clear that some organizations are perceived as more neutral than others, but there is of course no guarantee that this is shared among all OLR participants. It is important that the role of the organizing parties state clearly their role and involvement in the OLR.

## 4.2 Comparing outdoor living rooms in Finland and around the globe

Having executed several OLRs in different parts of the globe, it is interesting to compare my experiences in Finland to previously organized OLRs. It is important to remember that each OLR is developed specifically for its own unique context. This specificity includes:

- Location - It is important to understand where a diverse demographic of local people will naturally congregate i.e., public parks, in the middle of the street, in front of grocery stores, outside of malls, lobbies of subways, etc. Depending on where the OLRs are organized physically, it will influence the selection of participants, the discussion, and more generally the OLR itself. Sometimes the selection of location within one community or region may be more significant in generating variation across OLRs than across communities and regions. The location of the OLR in other words influences very strongly the OLR method itself.
- Time - a specific time is selected for a location that allows people to be at the location naturally and also have the time to sit and have refreshments, listen to others, and answer the questions from their perspective. The time of the day during which the OLR is organized will also influence the OLR itself. Choosing a time when people are normally “on the move” or doing their business in town can drastically influence the number and type of participants involved in the OLRs. It is not always easy to know beforehand which times of the day and times of the year are necessarily the most suited for a specific community (holidays etc.) to implement the OLR. Here, the value of engaging with local people during the planning phase becomes crucial.
- Furniture - the OLR is to be composed of familiar domestic living room objects. Although the OLR can be considered a spectacle when people sit in a living room in an unlikely site, there should be a familiarity to the experience in how it looks and how participants join the experience - “sitting in a living room with guests”. One way to accomplish selecting the right furniture is to use a thrift store for secondhand items that were given by locals. For example, an OLR in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia will look much different from an OLR in Singapore.

In Finland, the location we chose was a “night market” for one of our two OLR. The night market is a type of planned public gathering, where locals bring both goods to sell as well as the portable tents to sell their goods in. Although there are other locations around the world that have night markets, this was not a type of location or public space that I was familiar with and could see the benefits and drawbacks of doing an OLR in retrospect. I think the demographic that attends the night market is narrower than a grocery store or a shopping mall, where it appeared that the attendees were more of an older generation that might also see the night market as their type of social event. One benefit of the night market is that the firsthand stories about the community and town spanned multiple generations. The other OLR was set up outside a popular grocery store, which has been a common successful location for OLRs to capture the voices of a broad range of ages, economic backgrounds, and social diversity.

The time of the OLR was tied to the night market event which started in the evening. Evenings, when people are done with work, and also afternoons, when people are out taking care of errands are both common. The furniture we procured for these two OLRs were from a secondhand shop in Helsinki and worked seamlessly with our plan.

Outside of the three main factors of the OLR (location, time, and furniture) is the social component, which is different in each community. Local residents in each town were respectful of the content of each other's voiced experiences to the questions. One notable difference I found to be unique to the Finnish context was the participants' adherence to being honest and non-performative beyond speaking their point of view. In certain locations I have worked around the world, there can be residents that attend an OLR that seem to be telling a story they believe others would like to hear or that would reflect them in a favorable light, whereas the Finnish participants held up authenticity as a higher motive. This proved to be very valuable, as it provided a solid foundation for engaging with and critically reflecting on the topics at hand during the OLR.



## 4.3 Best practices for organizing outdoor living rooms in the Finnish context

In this report, I have gone through the background of the OLR and the process of planning and executing the event. In addition to the experiences already discussed, I would like to raise some final points for facilitating the organization of similar types of OLR events in Finland in the future to ensure their success.

The formulation of the questions is an important step in the process of organizing the OLR. As has been highlighted earlier, I generally start with a specific set of questions for each OLR that I organize. The rationale of selecting these questions is to spur discussion among the OLR participants and let them explain to me what are the things that are the most relevant for them. These initial questions form the backbone of the planning, but I encourage OLR organizers to critically evaluate these questions based on the objective of the OLR and the context in which they are organized. In cases where my involvement with the OLR is linked to an ongoing research project (as was the case with the SOLARIS project), it is crucial that the OLR questions are discussed between me and the research project team in order to identify synergies and common interests. It is important to spend enough time on this task - only by carefully considering the different objectives and expectations of the OLR across the project team and myself are we able to craft a well-functioning collection of questions that serve multiple purposes.

When planning the questions, it also is recommended to think about potential follow-up or clarifying questions to accompany the main questions. In cases where there are challenges to initiate the discussion (which was the case in Finland with few of the questions), it is really helpful to probe the participants using more specific questions or ask them to critically react to the question itself. We translated the questions into Finnish and then printed copies that had both Finnish and English questions for the participants (each question in Finnish had its English counterpart below it). This set of 9 questions were given to the public. We also produced an alternative set of questions just for the team which had in parentheses with coordinated follow up questions we as a team wanted to ask to steer the conversation if it was not going there naturally. We would ask these questions as a follow up question to the participants' answers in a way that seemed like they were not scripted but generated from the conversation. This was a

way to help make sure we as a team were getting a certain level of specific information we were interested in if it was not offered through asking the question on the participants' paper handout of questions.

As mentioned earlier, advertising plays a significant role in the participant attendance for these unique events. In some communities, feeling that they are attracting interest from “the outside” can be empowering and the OLRs provide a venue for the local population to talk about things that interest or worry them. Paying enough attention to making sure that the population is aware of the event is crucial. Marketing can happen through more traditional channels such as local newspapers and posters attached to local public bulletin boards, or more contemporary ones such as social media. In Finland, we made use of both channels to maximize the exposure of the OLR event. Both approaches have their purpose: marketing in traditional channels ensures that especially older generations and others who feel that newspapers are more “valid” sources of information are reached out to & marketing in social media can attract a broader spectrum of participants across ages. In Finland, using both approaches could be deemed necessary, as some of the participants indicated that they joined the events because of the advertisement in the local newspaper. The use of newspaper ads is especially important if the OLR is organized in localities with an older demographic.

In the Finnish OLRs, the ones who were lacking were mostly people in their 20s and younger. Reaching out to this demographic can be challenging and social media alone may not be the final answer. I do not believe that the OLR method itself is the culprit here, rather the topics that were being discussed in the Finnish OLRs may not have raised enough interest among this group. Nevertheless, paying close attention to attracting the broadest participation possible is important for the OLRs.

In the Finnish OLRs, it quickly became apparent that language can form a barrier to discussion. This was something that was discussed between me and the team during the planning phase of the OLRs, but it became very clear that implementing the OLRs in English is not an option in the locations of the SOLARIS project. The two selected towns, Huittinen and Kokemäki, are relatively small and the participants were perhaps not very used to speaking English. My presence may also have caused more nervousity among the participants. Based on this, and if conducting OLRs with English speakers, using a Finnish translator is essential in especially

smaller towns. This does not mean that English cannot be used at all, but the main conversation should be conducted in people's mother tongue.

In communities that do not prefer to speak English, I as an English speaker, would benefit from rehearsing with the chosen native speaking moderator. A system could be more developed to drill down deeper into the participants comments if a structure was developed beforehand between myself and the native speaking moderator. In both of our OLRs we did attempt this by making two question sheets (one for the participants and one for the team) however this could be looked at in more depth with the next non-English speaking community.

Moderating participants is a required skill. In Huittinen, one participant was very vocal and was kindly asked by the moderator to let others speak several times, however they would not. In this case there must be a coordinated effort from the team to ask a participant like this to leave the living room in a positive way i.e., asking the participant if one of the team members can speak to him and take notes to make them feel heard, but to do so without being in the OLR. Asking this person to explain their thoughts and ideas in a bilateral discussion can indeed be valuable for the project, and at the same time ensure that the OLR is not negatively disrupted by the lack of fairness between the participants.

On the level of moderating technique, for each OLR there is a list of questions that are printed (usually 10 questions) that get handed to the participants that sit in the OLR. If someone new joins the OLR after it has started, as part of the process of moderating the conversation I refer back to these questions i.e. "For those who just joined we are on question #4 which is.... and we have already heard about ...from some of the people here, is there anything else that has not been said about question 4?". This ensures that the newly joined participants feel welcome in the discussion and can more easily follow where the discussion is going.

## 4.4 Ways forward in developing the outdoor living room method

**Multiple OLRs.** One idea to develop the OLR method further would be to do multiple living rooms in one specific community. In other words, the same furniture would be used, but the OLR would be organized in different locations and times. For example, to target different age

groups (which was deemed challenging in the two Finnish OLRs), one OLR could be done outside of the local high school in the afternoon, another one could be done at the grocery store during mid-day, and one could be done at a location, where people are out at night like a shopping district, near bar, restaurant, music venue, or festival. An advantage of doing multiple OLRs in the same community is using the technique of the “call back”, where the moderator can pose a question using previously stated information from one of the participants, for example “We heard earlier that this location is a very accepting community of new residents, however has anyone had a different experience or heard of someone else having challenges integrating as a new person, and what do you think were the reasons why?” By doing multiple OLRs, the info from previous OLRs could be brought directly into the conversation i.e. “We are on question #5 and when we asked another group earlier, they stated “xyz”, does that resonate with you as true or do you think there is more to the story or a completely different way to look at it.”. If setting up and performing more than one OLR per day, it can, however, be difficult from the point of view of the team’s focus and energy. I would suggest not doing more than two per day to make sure that each OLR gets the necessary attention by the team.

**Experimental elements.** The OLR was designed to be both a spectacle and at the same time familiar. The added benefit of the OLR structure is that not only do people know how to occupy a living room, but the physical structure of the seating facing inward helps to facilitate listening and being able to see each of the people taking their time to speak. However, thinking of a next generation of OLR formats could entail an element of technology or a performative aspect.

- Visual projection of ideas and discussion points: One idea would be to have participants write down or draw ideas that could be projected on a building in real time so that their ideas could be seen by people passing by. The idea would be that there would be a system, where one participant would express their thoughts or ideas and while they have the floor their idea is projected on a nearby building or large vertical surface. This could increase the visibility of the OLR and attract more interest among passers-by. This could also enhance the feeling of being heard among the participants, by, literally, making their ideas more visible. Needless to say, some OLR participants may feel uneasy about making their ideas or arguments visible to anyone. To mitigate this, participants could be asked beforehand whether they accept that their ideas are projected or not, which would also allow for more intimate discussion.

- Use of models to spur discussion: Another idea is to be more analog and have participants make either small paper models (simple 2D or 3D shapes made of paper and tape that have been colored with markers) or other pieces (such as LEGO or others) that would symbolize the issues and ideas they are focused on, and these models could be either placed on a vertical board or a larger flat table so that a mixture of ideas could be seen next to each other, in relation to each other, or combined together, to push the conversation into new territory. In this scenario the benefits would be that the ideas or experiences that are made into these models would be visually present the entire duration and referred to while new ideas from participants are being expressed.

# APPENDIX

## Presentation of Matthew Mazzotta

Matthew Mazzotta's projects have been named "Architecture Project of the Year" from the Dezeen Awards at the Tate Modern to Huffington Post's "9 Design Projects Tackling America's Poverty Crisis, One Community At A Time" and have received dozens of international art and architecture awards such as Architizer's A+ Award, Azure's AZ Award, The WAN Award, CODA Award, SXSW Place By Design Award, The Chicago Athenaeum's American Architecture Award, The Congress for the New Urbanism's Charter Award, as well as, six of his projects have been recognized by the Americans For the Arts. His work has been featured on CNN, BBC, NPR, The Huffington Post, Discovery Channel, and ScienceMagazine to name a few, and presented at the Cooper Hewitt – Smithsonian Design Museum in NYC. Matthew Mazzotta received his BFA degree from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and Master of Science from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Program in Art, Culture and Technology. He is a TED Fellow, a Guggenheim Fellow, as well as a Loeb Fellow at Harvard University.

## Photos from the two Outdoor living rooms

### Kokemäki







Huittinen











