



PRESS RELEASE
18 June 2012

Finland at the Forefront of the International Open Knowledge Movement as OKFestival Comes to Helsinki

Open Knowledge Festival 17–22 September 2012

Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture, Hämeentie 135 C, Helsinki, Finland
www.okfestival.org

A major international open knowledge event, OKFestival, is taking place in Helsinki 17–22 September 2012. Hundreds of change-makers and experts from private, public and community sectors from around the world will come together to build a common open knowledge ecosystem.

The festival week is a bold experiment in international collaborative event organising. It involves a global team of experts building a diverse programme with topics such as open democracy and government data, open and smart cities, open business and corporate data, open design, open hardware, data journalism, and many more. The main organisers of the event are the **Open Knowledge Foundation**, **Aalto Media Factory** and the **Finnish Institute in London**.

The festival offers a week of participatory sessions, keynote lectures, workshops, hackathons and satellite events in Helsinki with links to other events around the globe. Some of the first confirmed speakers include **Hans Rosling**, the data visualisation wizard, **Carsten Berg**, champion for participatory and direct democracy, and **Farida Vis**, data journalism advocate.

One part of the festival programme focuses on the international **Open Government Partnership** (OGP) network, which includes 55 countries, promoting transparency, citizen empowerment and harnessing new technologies to strengthen government. The Finnish government has just announced that Finland will also become a member. Other examples of festival programme include preparing a new **European Citizens' Initiative** and developing Finnish sauna diplomacy into an **Open Sauna** citizens' movement.

In addition to the main organisers, a team of over 50 guest programme planners from around the world are collaboratively engaged in building festival content. An advisory board of international leaders steers the programme planning, including Janet Haven from Open Society Foundations, Peter Troxler from the International FabLab Association and Andrew Stott from the UK Cabinet Office.

Open knowledge is a comprehensive concept that involves sharing knowledge in all its forms – from genes to geodata, from literature to programming code – so that it can be freely used, modified and shared by anyone. This provides an opportunity for positive transformation within an information society, where stable hierarchies are replaced by agile, diverse, networked and experimental progress. In an era of global digital communications, significant benefits are gained in all sectors of the society by opening up knowledge, including science, culture, governance and economy.

OKFestival's co-organisers and supporters include Finland's Ministry of Education and Culture, Finland's Ministry of Justice, EIT ICT Labs, Aalto Service Factory, AVO Open Networks For Learning, Open Ministry, and Aalto Pro. Festival partners are Forum Virium Helsinki, Helsingin Sanomat, IBM and Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra.

Ticket sales open 18 June, please see the website: www.okfestival.org

For more information, interviews and press accreditation, please contact:
Animaya Grant, Head of PR, The Finnish Institute in London
animaya.grant@finnish-institute.org.uk / +44 207 404 3309

NOTES FOR EDITORS – SPEAKERS

HANS ROSLING

Hans Rosling is an award-winning academic, statistician and co-founder and chairman of the Gapminder Foundation. Gapminder developed the Trendalyzer software that converts international statistics into moving, interactive graphics. Rosling is known for his TED talk that has been viewed over 4 million times. Rosling was also featured on Time Magazine's list of 100 most influential people in the world.

CARSTEN BERG

Carsten Berg is a political scientist, who has campaigned for participatory and direct democracy, including the successful campaign for the inclusion of the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) into EU law. Since then he has contributed to the emergence of the European Citizens' Initiative as the Director of the ECI Campaign.

FARIDA VIS

Farida Vis is a lecturer at the University of Leicester's Department of Media and Communication. Her work on open data and data driven journalism has been published on The Guardian Data Blog and elsewhere in the mainstream media. She is the co-author of the Data Journalism Handbook. She is one of the developers of the Guardian's data visualisation on rumours spread by tweets in the London riots.

NOTES FOR EDITORS – PROGRAMME

OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP

Open Government Partnership (OGP) is a multilateral initiative promoting transparency, citizen empowerment and harnessing new technologies to strengthen governance. The Finnish government has just announced that Finland will also join the initiative. With the help of a wide international network of collaborators, OKFestival will provide an opportunity for both government official and civil society actors to debate the opportunities and impacts of OGP, and thus also prepare Finland's participation.

EUROPEAN CITIZENS' INITIATIVE

A new European Citizens' Initiative will be prepared during OKFestival with the help of the Finnish Open Ministry (Avoin Ministeriö), which utilises crowdsourcing in the preparation of citizens' initiatives. Ideas for a new initiative will be collected from the festival guests and taken forward with the ultimate goal of getting one million EU citizens, coming from at least 7 out of 27 member states, to back up the initiative and propose a legal act for the EU level.

OPEN SAUNA

Open Sauna calls for Finnish companies and organisations to open their saunas and to invite festival guests to experience sauna and get to know their hosts in a steamy environment. With the help of Demos Helsinki, this kind of sauna diplomacy will be turned into a full-scale citizen movement, so that Finns will have the opportunity to make full use of their saunas also in the future.

NOTES FOR EDITORS – ORGANISERS

OPEN KNOWLEDGE FOUNDATION

The Open Knowledge Foundation is a not-for-profit organization that promotes open knowledge, including open content and open data. It was founded 24 May 2004 in Cambridge, UK. The foundation has published the Open Definition and runs several projects, such as CKAN, and Where Does My Money Go. As well as technical tools, the foundation also provides advocacy and licensing advice around open content issues.

AALTO MEDIA FACTORY

Aalto Media Factory is a platform for collaboration and development in media-related research and education within the Aalto University, a university created from the merger of three Finnish universities: The Helsinki School of Economics, Helsinki University of Technology and The University of Art and Design Helsinki.

THE FINNISH INSTITUTE IN LONDON

The Finnish Institute in London is a Finnish London-based private trust. Their mission is to identify emerging issues relevant to contemporary society and to act as catalyst for positive social change through partnerships. The Institute works with artists, researchers, experts and policy makers in the United Kingdom, Finland and the Republic of Ireland to promote strong networks in the fields of culture and society.