Impact evaluation of Puistokatu 4

Summary of key conclusions and recommendations

October 2025.

The assignment was conducted by 4FRONT Oy.

PUISTO
KATU 4

Summary

The purpose of the impact evaluation was to support understanding of Puistokatu 4's theory of change, as well as the development and scalability of its operations. The methods used were document analysis, interviews, and surveys. The data covered experiences and opinions of Puistokatu members, event participants, and communication audience. The evaluation was carried out between August and October 2025 and conducted by 4FRONT Oy.

- Puistokatu 4 has, in a short time, succeeded in building a unique and well-functioning concept that provides participants with clear added value and strengthens their thinking and motivation, considering themselves as an actor.

- Puistokatu 4 activities are guided by a strong value base and a vision of change that starts at the individual level, reflected in the community culture, physical spaces, and events.

- Key strengths include a strong community, high-quality facilitation, and multidisciplinarity — elements that together foster new ideas, networks, and forms of collaboration.

- The historic premises and atmosphere further enhance these experiences.

- Central areas for improvement In Puistokatu 4 include reaching broader target groups, and implementing more systematic monitoring and documentation of impact of operations.

- Scaling the current Puistokatu 4 model is challenging due to the uniqueness of the physical space and resources, but Puistokatu 4's impact can be expanded through alumni activities and documenting and disseminating best practices.

- The evaluation recommends securing the continuity and development of operations and clarifying the added value and unique features of Puistokatu 4.

- Fostering impact of the operations can be supported via the alumni network and by broadening outreach through events and communication.

- Furthermore, systematic impact monitoring combining both quantitative and qualitative data should be developed to support continuous learning and evaluability.

Conclusions 1/4: General Observations

- **The members of the community are highly satisfied with Puistokatu 4's activities and feel they gain concrete added value from participation.** The community is diverse, covering multiple disciplines and actors from various backgrounds — an aspect worth nurturing also in the future.

- **Events at Puistokatu 4 are very popular, with participants giving highly positive feedback. Public events** offer participants new knowledge, inspiration, and "peer support" for making more ecologically sustainable choices. **Invite-only events** in turn bring together a wide range of stakeholders and decision-makers, creating opportunities for informal networking.

- Many participants are repeat attendees, indicating Puistokatu 4's established position. A key development need is to engage **broader and more varied audiences** in future activities.

- **Puistokatu 4 communication** is active, inspiring, and encouraging. However, a major challenge remains expanding reach **to new and more diverse audiences.**

- Considering the scale and depth of its activities, events, and communication, **Puistokatu 4 uses its resources efficiently and effectively.**

- **Stable foundation-based funding and strong trust from the funders** have enabled the launch and development of activities and the creation of new experimental concepts.

- **The reputation and networks of the funding foundations** add legitimacy and attract influential actors.

Conclusions 2/4:
Added Value and Key Characteristics of Puistokatu 4

The evaluation identified several **features that jointly generate added value for participants and distinguish Puistokatu 4 from comparable initiatives.** These features are evident particularly in the **community** but also in **events and spaces**:

- **Value-based approach:** The goal of an ecologically sustainable future is integrated throughout the Puistokatu 4 operations and everyday practices (e.g., community guidelines, application and onboarding processes, event themes and implementation).

- **Change at individual-level:** In the core of the Puistokatu's activities is a change that starts at the individual level and influences on individuals' values and way of thinking. The aim for 'awakening on an emotional level' is supported, for example, in the facilitation of community and events and in combining art and science in the activities.

- **Community and trust:** One of the major strengths of Puistokatu 4 is a strong sense of community built on shared values and aim for change at individual level. In addition, deliberate facilitation and curation are also central elements of the operation.

- **Multidisciplinarity:** Bringing together representatives from different fields and sectors fosters new ideas and ways of thinking.

- **Dialogue and low-threshold encounters:** Puistokatu 4 enables informal interactions and facilitated discussions that create dialogue across different stakeholder groups.

- **Credibility and reach:** Supported by its founding organisations, Puistokatu 4 can effectively engage and attract various stakeholders, decision-makers, and international experts.

- **Space and environment:** The historic building and Kaivopuisto setting provide a distinctive atmosphere that reinforces the above-mentioned elements.

Conclusions 3/4: Impact and impact paths

- The conclusions regarding Puistokatu 4's activities and added value **provide a strong foundation for impact**.

- Puistokatu 4 has a **clear theory of change linking individual-level transformation to broader societal effects**. Examples of such **impact paths** include e.g.:

  - Strengthened multidisciplinarity among research members (new topics, ideas, collaboration projects).

  - Use of research-based knowledge in decision-making (e.g., "Invite a Researcher to Lunch" concept).

  - Increased awareness and understanding of ecological sustainability among both the community and event participants.

  - New contacts and informal encounters leading to concrete actions and follow-up initiatives.

- In the future, **more systematic impact tracking and documentation using both qualitative and quantitative methods** should be included in Puistokatu 4 operation.

Conclusions 4/4: Scalability

- One goal of the assessment was to explore the **scalability and transferability** of the Puistokatu 4 concept. Regarding this objective, a distinction must be made between four types of scaling :
  - A. Scaling up the **volume of activities**
  - B. **Replicating the model** (e.g. in new cities)
  - C. **Broadening focus** horizontally (reaching new target groups)
  - D. **Disseminating** operational models and good practices

- **Scaling up volume** (A) is unrealistic due to physical space constraints at Puistokatu 4.

- **Replication** (B) is also challenging due to the uniqueness of space, resources and networks. At least replication would require significant resources and investments and carries high risks.

- **Horizontal expansion** (C) — reaching more and diverse audiences — is feasible and recommended, especially through communication and events. However, it is essential to maintain the special features and added value of Puistokatu 4 (including value-based approach, change at individual-level).

- Scalability can also be promoted **by developing and documenting** Puistokatu 4's operating models (e.g., creating value-based communities, fostering individual-level change) for other organisations to adopt or adapt.

- The most promising and natural route for scaling is **developing an alumni activities and network.** Ideally alumni can act as ambassadors spreading Puistokatu 4's ideas and practices across organisations.

Recommendations 1/2

Recommendation 1. Ensure operational continuity and development. Puistokatu 4 has only operated since 2023 but has rapidly built a unique and effective concept. Securing its continuity and allowing for future refinement is important.

Recommendation 2. Clarify the added value and unique features of Puistokatu 4. The impact and value proposition of Puistokatu 4 should be communicated more clearly externally. The results of the impact assessment provides a starting point, but these activities should be continued internally and in collaboration with the funding foundations.

Recommendation 3. Leverage alumni activities for impact dissemination. The most promising and natural path to scale the Puistokatu 4 operations is the development of alumni activities and networks. An alumni network which is systematically built and programmatically engaged supports sustained impact as well as lifecycle of community.

Recommendation 4. Engage broader and more diverse audiences. To enhance impact, events and communications should reach a wider and more varied group of actors — for instance, young people and students emerged as a potential group.

Recommendations 2/2

Recommendation 5. Document and share key concepts and practices. There are several distinctive features that create added value for Puistokatu 4 participants. By documenting and developing these distinctive features and operating models (e.g. researcher lunches, gentle encounter culture, performance coaching), concepts and practices can be disseminated to other organisations.

Recommendation 6. Experiment and develop concepts for deeper, more concrete collaboration. Puistokatu 4 enables well informal interactions, but concrete results of these interactions can be further strengthened by providing support for further refining the ideas and connections through various low-threshold practices, (e.g. gathering ideas, matchmaking).

Recommendation 7. Develop more systematic impact monitoring and documentation. One of the strengths of Puistokatu 4 is its independence from rigid frameworks and indicators. However, establishing a few clear, measurable goals and indicators combining quantitative (e.g., number and profile of participants) and qualitative (e.g., member surveys, change stories, alumni follow-ups) tracking would better demonstrate the impact of the operation to funders and external audiences.