

# 1. Overview

Tahdon2013 was created by a group of friends. Without a big organization, or budget, a small group of young Finnish adults created a campaign that touched all Finns.

Tahdon2013 (in English IDo2013) is a citizen's initiative campaign for equal marriage law. Current marriage laws in Finland promote inequality by defining marriage exclusively as a union between a man and a woman. A Registered Partnership – the current institution for same sex couples in Finland – mandates all the same obligations as marriage, but does not guarantee access to all the same rights as marriage. The equal marriage law will ensure everyone the right to marriage regardless of gender or sexual orientation. This will make all partners equal in the eyes of the law. A more equal position in society will improve the respect of gender and sexual minorities, quality of life, and happiness, as well as prevent discrimination, harassment, and mental health problems. By altering the laws related to marriage, society will recognize same-sex partners as equal to opposite-sex partners.

The initial aim of our campaign was to collect 50 000 signatures in six months. According to the law, citizen's initiatives are to be addressed in the parliament if they have been signed by at least 50 000 people. We collected 50 000 signatures in 14,5 hours. During the first full day of our campaign, we collected 105 000 signatures. We could have stopped there but we wanted to use the whole 6 months to collect as many signatures as possible but more importantly, spread awareness of the issue and raise public interest in our campaign.

At the end of six months we had collected 165 000 signatures. On Facebook we have over 75 000 followers, and the weekly coverage of Tahdon2013-page varies from 100 000 to 300 000 people.

The outline of our campaign can be divided in to two focal points. The first part of the campaign focused on the six-month period of collecting as many signatures as possible. The second part, that begun after the closing of the six-month window, aims to target and affect the members of the parliament and ensure that the law will be passed -- which is the penultimate goal.

To achieve our goal, it has also been vitally important to spread knowledge and change the public atmosphere into a more equal and tolerant one. In our society, we already have multiple different types of families; people live in all different forms of relationships. The fundamental issue is that not all are equal in front of the law.

## 2. Stakeholder analysis

Our target audience was over eighteen year old Finnish citizens who are entitled to vote.

Our primary audience was the group of people who had not yet formed an opinion on an equal marriage law. The other audience was divided into two groups: the people who had already decided they support the initiative, and the ones who had already decided they do not support it. These people had already formulated their opinion on equal marriage law, either pro or against. These audiences were to be informed about the initiative, but they were not the primary targets of our resources.

In order to reach the people who had not yet formed definitive opinions on the initiative, we needed to take into account that this audience was not yet familiar with the individuals of sexual minorities. Also the juridical policies and the differences between marriage and registered partnership were not clear to all. The terms used needed to be clear and descriptive. As the change in the marriage law has traditionally been the goal of only some political parties, we needed to carefully assess how to communicate to people and where, so that they would understand our initiative was not tied to party politics, but an issue that concerns the whole of Finland and all its citizens.

Our campaign has two phases. It can also be understood that we have two sets of audiences. First audience is the people that will sign the initiative. The second audience is the parliament members. In order

for the law to change, the members of the parliament must vote for it. Members of the parliament will vote to appraise their constituency. We understood that the more signatures we gathered, the more it would influence the outcome of how the members of the parliament voted.

### 3. Goals + Objectives

Our goal was to incorporate as vast a public as possible, because the gender-neutral marriage law encompasses all people, irrespective of sexual orientation, preference or gender. Our campaign did not, and does not, seek to pass a marriage law for sexual minorities; rather our objective was to influence legislation to benefit all citizens. We wish to abolish a hierarchical system of two forms of marriage, which only create a division between citizens based on sexual orientation or gender. We want all citizens to have equal access to one institution: marriage.

From the preliminary stages of the campaign, it has been important to us that we do not solely strive to change the law, but to create, and facilitate, a more open and accepting atmosphere. Through this campaign, we sought to raise awareness, strengthen democracy, enhance citizen participation, and also strengthen the institution of the Citizens Initiative -- as the law and practices of the Citizen's Initiative are relatively new. One of our most distinct objectives was to bring the citizens and the members of the parliament closer to each other.

More than a campaign, we aspired to create an all-inclusive movement.

### 4. Planning

In order to achieve our goals we wanted to create discussion among citizens, among members of the parliament, but also discussion in the media. We wanted to keep the discussion positive and constructive.

The planning started from the idea that we need to communicate and market our campaign with barely any budget. We made calculations of the population and created profiles of different types of people. We decided to try to affect the "maybe"-people, people that have not yet decided what their opinion on equal marriage law is.

We started with branding ourselves: who are we, what do we look like, what is the message we aim to deliver. Every single little detail was carefully considered. We decided to shed all the traditional rainbow-symbols. The terms we wanted to use were more generic and relatable to the general public.

We carefully chose our partners and used their communication channels to broadcast that we were launching our campaign. We sent press releases to the media before launching the campaign. We used pre-marketing as a tool to create positive and anticipating atmosphere among the people who would already support the initiative. We wanted to communicate to the individuals who had not yet formulated their opinions, but also to the people who might not support us to create an open and fair platform for everybody to contribute.

We created a brand, a graphical outlook, printed posters, contacted people to work as volunteers in our campaign. We carefully wrote a law proposal.

### 5. Execution

We carefully thought all the possible ways to get the media's attention, but also the attention of the public. As we had minimal funds, we could only print a few hundred posters and nothing else. We sought out famous Finnish people, such as media personalities, artists, authors, actors etc., to help spread our message. Every month we launched new Tahdon-ambassadors and published their opinions about

equal marriage law through our own platforms. An up-and-coming rap-artist wrote an anthem for the campaign.

After a month of campaigning, we organized a big fundraising concert, naturally to raise funds but also to spread awareness for our cause. We got top Finnish artists to perform in our concert. The tickets were reserved in 10 minutes and the concert was sold out. The idea was to have very surprising people to support us in public, to attract people that otherwise would have not been interested in our campaign or our cause.

Facebook was the biggest channel of our marketing. Twitter and Instagram were also important channels. Our partners e-mail lists and every other e-mail list we could ever think of we used for more proper and informative messages. On Facebook we were a bit more playful and easier to approach. During the first days of our campaign our web-page [www.tahdon2013.fi](http://www.tahdon2013.fi) had so much traffic, and so many visitors, that it crashed.

We received a lot of attention in the traditional media because of the Tahdon-ambassadors and our fundraising concert, but also because we systematically sent press releases with a new angle to the issue. Our media manager, Saija Viitala, sent personalized messages to journalist and reporters, and promoted the campaign but also promote the president of the campaign. She did a lot of work to convince broadcasters why they should invite us to TV-shows, or interview us to the radio. When one medium began to talk about us, suddenly all the media were interested.

Posters were a minimal part of the marketing, but we used them to advertise in places like libraries, to get the attention of the elders and people, who generally don't follow social media.

An important way to gain visibility and publicity for our campaign was face-to-face-activity. We were on the street corners, squares and parks, collected signatures, met people and spoke with them. Different events were also a way to get attention, meet people, and spread the word. In Helsinki, we co-operated with four restaurants that offered special "IDo2013"- drinks or desserts. We had a "Make your own ice cream" day with Magnum Pop up Store. We organized a kissing flash mob with "Image"-magazine. "Image"-magazine's 200th number was dedicated to our cause and equal marriage law, and they created a kissing application on Facebook to show their support for us. We organized parties and picnics during the summer months, and partnered with the likes of Rainbow Families happening Celebrating Tom -art exhibition and Helsinki Rugby Club's pin up-calendar. Through our own happenings and co-operations, we offered something for everybody: children, young people, old people, families, people that live in the countryside, urban people, working people and students. We sought out everyone we possibly could.

## 6. Results

The most important result is that obtained 50 000 signatures in 14,5 hours. As a comparison there have only been two other initiatives that have reached the 50 k signatures in Finland. Both of the initiatives required the whole six months to reach the required amount. All together we obtained 165 000 signatures in six months. Our total budget increased from 4000 € to 30 000 €.

We have been awarded "VUODEN VIESTINTÄTEKO 2013" -award by ProCom. (Rough translation: "The Media and Communications Feat of The Year 2013" -award) We were nominated in Some (Social Media) Awards 2013. We have been recognized by the marketing and media professionals in publications such as Markkinointi & Mainonta (M&M, 21.3.2013), Dingle and SoMeCo.