



Background description

**Project: Preliminary study, Innovation Forum | Malmö, Sweden
May 2011 – Nov 2011**

Area Programmes

On the 3rd March 2010 the city executive board in Malmö made a decision to develop the city's social sustainability through the "Area Programmes for a Socially Sustainable Malmö" with the aim that all Malmö citizens should be included and integrated and have access to welfare. The decision was made in light of the facts that health and welfare are unequally distributed among different groups of the population, and around different areas in the city.

The programmes describe how the municipal organisation should accept the challenge to develop the social sustainability perspective which includes Malmö as a whole. Areas that are especially prioritised for this work are Seved, Holma-Kroksbäck, Lindängen and Herrgården. The goal is to strengthen the city's social sustainability as a whole by changing the development in these areas.

A supporting idea of the Area programmes is that the city's total resources should be mobilised for the development of these areas. In all of these programmes, citizen dialogue, co-creation, youth focus, entrepreneurship, innovation and partnership are important catchwords; catchwords which should imbue the city's work with the Area programmes.

The Area programmes should link together 'hard' and 'soft' investments. By building the Area programmes around a 'skeleton' of investments in physical surroundings and infrastructure a solid and visible framework of change is created in each area. These physical, and in some cases high profiled, investments are supported and developed by investing in people's knowledge and capabilities.

Background Innovation forum

The Area programmes also point to the establishment of Innovation forum as a method to generate new ideas, through inclusive and well- rooted processes, to solutions for serious social problems. The Area programmes are tools to reach concrete goals in each area, as well as a tool which the city can use to try new approaches. The City of Malmö is used to doing the same thing in many different places. The Area programmes should instead signal a working method where the City does many different things in the same place. By concentrating on four clearly-defined areas it is easier to use the location's dynamics, and easier to find natural collaboration partners who can gather around concrete assignments. By those means, the Area programmes become a platform. Doing many different things at the same location also encourages an explorative working method. It becomes easier

to start small scale and to test one's ground regarding methods that may turn out to be useful.

The goal with this way of working is to create an environment where social innovations ("new ideas to reach social goals") can be tested. The goals of the Area programmes are designed so that the function as a platform for social innovation can be followed up and evaluated. The Innovation forums are a tool in this work.

Innovation forum

The aim is to establish a number of Innovation forums; forums where people of different qualifications gather to tackle social problems from many different perspectives. The forum should be proactive in order to find the right qualifications, with for instance a local, national or international background, practical and theoretical knowledge, and with representatives from residents in the area and local enthusiasts, as well as the public sector, third sector etc. A fixed meeting place should be established in each area to make the Area programmes as attractive and relevant as they can be. In many of these areas there already are meeting places of this kind. The Innovation forum could also locate its work here. The preliminary study will also gather national and international experiences from how such Innovation forums can be built to work. A central issue is to create these processes with an emphasis on those who are mostly affected by the activities. This will be one of the main aims of the preliminary study.

The goal of the preliminary study

The goal is to design a winning concept for working and well functioning Innovation forums. The goal, in the long run, is also that the preliminary study should result in an implementation project where the practical work of the different parts of the Innovation forum are realised.

Possible functions of an Innovation forum

- To collect potential ideas that could lead to social change and innovation.
- To support the development of ideas that could lead to practical solutions that in turn could contribute to social change/ innovation.
- Not only to start out from problems but rather acknowledge peoples' personal needs, goal-settings and their capacity to act for change.
- An Innovation forum should also be a platform for experimenting with novel economic solutions that support sustainable development.
- A clear change in regard to past projects should be accomplished through openness for new collaborations and alliances and the abolishment of old barriers and limitations.
- These new collaboration processes should as well aim at combining the advantages of both bottom-up and top-down approaches, leading the way for new working methods in municipal innovation processes.

Problem formulations

- How can we establish a structure for the Innovation forum that ensures longevity and sustainability regarding social innovation and knowledge/input through cross-sector collaboration and involvement of a variety of actors?
- To what extent should an Innovation forum include different roles such as coaches, facilitators, intermediaries and what examples/role-models from outside could be useful for us especially with regard to innovation processes in the public/municipal sector?
- What kind of toolbox, methods and processes could be relevant for our preliminary study and future-prospects of an Innovation forum?
- How can we build truly involving co-creational processes?
- How can participative projects build a better environment for learning processes that include students, families, networks, associations and all parts of the surrounding society?
- How can we identify driving forces behind innovation efforts as well as successful processes for cross-sector collaborations?
- How can we avoid to get stuck in traditional patterns and structures of communal public sector work and instead develop a truly innovational spirit and culture in the organization of Innovation forums?