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Sharing City Malmö – Connecting the sharing economy to urban planning processes

Juliet Leonette, Olle Bergman and Kes McCormick



Background

A new neighbourhood in Malmö is emerging in Sege Park, an area with a rich history and exciting future. The existing parks and buildings provide the conditions for a good living environment. Sustainability, the sharing economy and urban agriculture are some key words for the building actors who are developing some 800 – 1,000 homes in Sege Park together with the municipality. The innovative aspect of the Malmö test-bed is the integration of principles for the sharing economy into the design of infrastructure and housing in Sege Park. The test-bed has come to be a setting where actors openly discuss and negotiate with each other about how to create a sustainable and sharing city district.

Solution

For the City of Malmö, the test-bed in Sege Park is under development to become an international flagship within the sharing economy. The municipality is cooperating with the builders and other actors who invest in the area to develop new forms of housing and business models.

- *“What characterizes Malmö's test-bed within Sharing Cities Sweden is that the sharing economy is integrated into the physical development of the city”,* says Juliet Leonette, test-bed coordinator for Sharing City Malmö. *“Sharing is an integrated part of both the planning*

and development process for the Sege Park area and we do believe sharing is a key to affordable living.”

How do we facilitate the sharing economy structurally into the properties being built? How do we move certain functions out of private homes - laundry, workshop, meeting areas - and make them public or semi-public to be shared among more people? These are some of the issues that the city planners from Malmö Municipality together with the local builders are exploring together.

- “We also explore whether sharing can be a tool for living within planetary boundaries while keeping within reasonable monetary limits”, says Juliet Leonette. “We are exploring if sharing can be a tool that allows for new construction of high standards from both a quality and natural resource point of view and if it can also be made cost-effective for residents. If people cannot afford to live sustainably, then how can you call it sustainable?”

Juliet Leonette, who works for the Environmental Department and has a background in urban planning, has worked with the development of Sege Park for several years. Before taking on the role as coordinator for Sharing City Malmö she worked as an environmental strategist within the project Malmö Innovation Arena, trying to find new ways of integrating innovation into urban development. And trying out new ways of working within the municipality. We need to work a lot more together. This is also a key feature within the test-bed in Sege Park, working close together with all stakeholders and investing parts, sharing knowledge, risks and investments.

In a city with a population of more than 340,000 inhabitants, where over 135,000 residents have a foreign background and nearly 100,000 were born overseas, it is natural that integration issues are high on the agenda. The sharing economy can help in many ways. One example is that a better range of shared spaces and functions in homes can make living more affordable, mainly because a family can live comfortably in a smaller space and still have access to cars, bikes, toys, books, tools and lots more. Another example is that the sharing economy creates jobs.

- “We have a structural production of waste in society today. Our cars are idle 90 percent of the time. Many people, especially those who live in villas, often have more space at home than they need. Over 30 percent of the food being produced is wasted. All of this creates room for entrepreneurship that can provide job opportunities in the future.”

Together with the builders, we are creating the conditions for the sharing economy. We have manifested the work so far in an exhibition named *Shareful in Sege Park*. We have also hosted an “open house” on site, inviting the public to take part of the thoughts and ideas on sharing in Sege Park and letting us know what they want and can be willing to share. Our job is to consider the possibilities and setting the frames and structures for sharing, but still leaving it flexible enough for the future residents to decide what they will want and need to share.

Lessons

1. Do not assume that everything with the sharing economy is positive

Realize that there can be negative impacts from some sharing economy initiatives (for example, the problems in the wake of the successes of Airbnb and Uber). Rather, observe the precautionary principle and evaluate the results from your efforts.

2. Ask yourself why you are engaging in sharing

What political goals do you want to fulfil? The sharing economy is a tool - it has no intrinsic value.

3. Dare to experiment - but do it together

Ownership of the projects should not lie with one player. It is important to constantly define what the municipality can do in each collaboration.

Resources

For more information on Sharing City Malmö visit:

<https://www.sharingcities.se/malmotestbed>

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