



MP4 WP4.1

Retroactive evaluation of on-the-ground benefits

Evaluation report:
Gamlestaden
in Gothenborg,
Sweden

UNIVERSITY OF
COPENHAGEN



Academics
University of Copenhagen
Copenhagen, Denmark



Practitioner
City of Gothenburg
Gothenburg, Sweden

Bostads AB Poseidon



Göteborgs Stad
Park och natur

Fastighetsägare i
Gamlestaden

The Interreg IVB
North Sea Region
Programme

*Investing in the future by working together
for a sustainable and competitive region*



GAMLESTADEN

TRANSNATIONAL LEARNING IN THE MP4: ADOPTING EMMEN REVISITED PRACTICES FOR LOCAL PILOTING IN GOTHENBURG, SWEDEN

May 2012

Andrej Christian Lindholst, University of Copenhagen

Resume

Transnational learning, search for added value and spin-off activities are an integrated aim of the MP4 project. Based on ideas generated in a MP4 staff exchange taking place in 2010 in Emmen, Netherlands Staff from Parks and Nature Department, City of Gothenburg, Sweden adopted a new approach to place-making and place-keeping together with Bostads AB Poseidon – a public housing company – and Fastighetsägare i Gamlestaden – a non-profit association of property owners and housing cooperatives working for renewal of open spaces in the residential area of Gamlestaden, Gothenburg, Sweden.

The local pilot involved a co-financed SEK 2.2 million investment scheme in open spaces owned by City of Gothenburg and Poseidon bound up with a 10-years transfer agreement of daily place-keeping and financial responsibilities to the housing company. The lessons learnt from the local pilot have become a good practice model for future innovation of integrated place-making and place-keeping processes in Gothenburg. The local pilot also holds valuable lessons as an innovative method within the context of MP4.

The Department for Parks and Nature Maintenance in the City of Gothenburg used inspiration based on the Emmen Revisited model for improving the place-making and place-keeping approach in a local neighbourhood park in the city district of Gamlestaden, Gothenburg. The approach transformed the normal council-led approach into a deliberative and innovative partnership based solution. The process was initiated and carried out in order to improve design, functions, use and long term maintenance in a small open space surrounded by housing blocks owned by the large public housing company Poseidon. The process included engagement and involvement of a broad range of representatives for all major groups in the local neighbourhood. The process identified and prioritized a range of improvement works and new open space functions in the housing areas together with local residents. The final setup for 'place-keeping' in Gamlestaden included an agreement that transferred responsibilities for management, maintenance and finance from City of Gothenburg to Poseidon. Ownership of the public areas, however, was retained by City of Gothenburg.

Challenges in the neighbourhood

Until 2010, the facilities and vegetation in the open space in Gamlestaden were generally in a derelict state, partly unused and in urgent need of new investments and renewal. The open space did not provide the standard functions and facilities for the local residents as envisioned in the policy for open space in Gothenburg – the strategic park programme.

For residents in the neighbourhood it is not obvious that the open spaces were managed by two different authorities as the spaces manifest themselves as one integrated and public

accessible area. However, in the area some parts are owned by Poseidon and some parts by the City of Gothenburg. The two administrations used different maintenance standards and maintenance problems such as litter or graffiti were handled by the two administrations separately within a small physical area. This created coordination problems and ineffective management. For example, previously Poseidon recurrently received complains for areas owned by and maintained by City of Gothenburg. This fact is demonstrating that residents and users of open spaces often don't realise (and don't care about) property borders.

New approach for place-making

The place-making process included engagement and involvement of a diverse group of local residents for improving the area and a process where an innovative place-keeping agreement was made. A total of four meetings with local residents were held within a relatively short time-span. Public tendering and oversight of improvement works was carried out by the City of Gothenburg. Subsequently, a new place-keeping approach was set up by transferring management, maintenance and financial responsibilities for space owned by the City of Gothenburg to Poseidon. While City of Gothenburg had expertise on open space use, design and planning processes, Poseidon and the local process leader for Fastighetsägare i Gamlestaden had expertise regarding the local neighbourhood and setting up contacts and relations in the neighbourhood. As a result the project was realised in close cooperation between Poseidon, Fastighetsägare i Gamlestaden and the City of Gothenburg.

The financial side of the project was negotiated between City of Gothenburg and Poseidon. It was agreed that the City of Gothenburg and Poseidon shared the cost evenly for the physical improvements of the local areas, while City of Gothenburg transferred the management, maintenance and financial responsibility for maintenance for a 10 year period to Poseidon. The total budget for improvements was agreed to a total of 2.2 million SEK. The co-financed investments were agreed to be distributed according to the preferences of the local residents and not the ownership of the areas.

The place-making process was organized in the following steps:

1. In March 2010, City of Gothenburg and Poseidon together with Fastighetsägare i Gamlestaden initiated dialogue about the need for renewal of the open space in the housing areas. The presence of a local project worker with experience and detailed knowledge about the local neighbourhood and the residents was critical in setting up and supporting the process and engaging and managing relations with local residents.
2. MP4 partner meeting and joint planning workshops in Emmen, Netherlands, May 2011. Staff from City of Gothenburg was presented for the place-making approach used by Emmen Revisited and was inspired to adopt a new place-making approach for Gamlestaden.
3. Draft improvement proposal. An initial proposal for physical improvements of local space was drafted by landscape architects from an external consultancy. The external consultancy was paid for by Poseidon.
4. In June 2011 and four months onward a series of public meeting and work meetings took place. The draft proposal was presented and discussed at the first public meeting. The first meeting was well attended, with more than 60 participants (mainly tenants). As a part of the meeting, the participants were asked to give feedback on positive, neutral and negative aspects of the draft improvement proposal.

5. Working group meetings. At the first public meeting, representatives from different local residents groups were persuaded to participate in a work group. The work group had representatives from immigrants, elderly, youth, families, single parents and students. The work group elaborated a range of additional for improvement to the draft proposal. The consultancy revised the proposal in between each meeting. 10 persons were appointed to be part of the workgroup. The appointment was based on the wish to have a diversity of local resident groups represented in the planning phase. The local process leader for Fastighetsägare i Gamlestaden helped to facilitate the group and reaching consensus on investment proposals.
6. Setting up a final draft proposal. Based on former meetings the work group selected final suggestions for improvements and renewal works through a vote on the most important works.
7. Public feedback. The final draft was displayed publicly in the local neighbourhood and on the website of Fastighetsägare i Gamlestaden. Local residents were urged to give voice and feedback.
8. Final plan. The final plan was elaborated by park and nature department.
9. Public tender. Renewal works in the improvement plan were priced through public tendering in January 2011. However, the market price for the renewal works added up to more than SEK 5 million. The total available budget for renewal works agreed upon by Poseidon and City of Gothenburg was limited to be no more than 2.2 million SEK. The public tender was cancelled and renewal works was subsequently carried out by the Park and Nature Department.
10. Prioritization. Due to the budget restrains the local residents were asked to prioritize and agree on improvements within the budget. The final renewal plan included an apple orchard, a playground, a trampoline, clearing of vegetation and trees and a new open space for spontaneous play and activities.
11. The investment works was carried out between October 2011 to April 2012 by the Park and Nature Department in City of Gothenburg.

New approach for place-keeping

The place-keeping agreement that was negotiated as part of the place-making phase involved a ten-year transfer of responsibilities for management, maintenance and finance for public owned land to Poseidon. This model establishes a unified responsibility for place-keeping of open spaces on both private and public land. The model for the formulation of the agreement was found in existing model agreements used to voluntarily transfer maintenance responsibilities for smaller areas from City of Gothenburg to community groups and private persons. These agreements are typically formulated as a short two or three pages document and contain sections about: 1) identification of parts to the agreement, 2) background for the agreement, 3) description of maintenance tasks, 4) legal responsibilities, 5) length of agreement, 6) payments, 7) information duties, and 8) signatures.

For 2012, an urban farming project is scheduled to be implemented as an additional initiative. The urban farming project will establish public gardens on publicly owned spaces in Gamlestaden. The local residents will take care of the gardens and be responsible for the place-keeping in these areas. Establishing urban gardens on publicly owned land, but managed by local residents (private persons), will be a new challenge as the private parts cannot exclude others from using the gardens. However, the project is hoped for to create and support a new sense of ownerships and inclusive engagement in the local open spaces in Gamlestaden.

Outcomes

There are several notable outcomes of the new place-making approach and the resulting place-keeping agreement between Poseidon and City of Gothenburg.

- Local residents have gained an attractive open space with qualities of high use value.
- The local residents' uses of the areas was improved through investments that were rooted in the engagement, involvement, ideas and needs of local user groups.
- Areas owned by Poseidon and City of Gothenburg were now envisioned as an integrated space where the location of the co-financed investments would be distributed according to the preferences of the local residents – and not limited to ownership of areas.
- Areas were improved in a coherent way through the cross-cutting investments with co-finance both from Poseidon and City of Gothenburg.
- For Poseidon, the open space has become easier to manage and maintain, due to a unified responsibility across property borders. It is also a benefit for Poseidon that the housing are has become more attractive for old and new residents.
- For City of Gothenburg it has been a benefit to use financial resources for investment together with the subsequent transfer of responsibilities for management, maintenance and finance in the 10 year agreement.

Innovation and transnational learning

The innovative practice that took place in Gamlestaden in Gotheburg provides a good and illustrative example of the results of transnational learning based on sharing experiences thorough the MP4 network and local adjustment for implementation.

The Department of Parks and Nature has an on-going practice for transferring maintenance responsibilities to third parties in place in special cases (See MP4 model agreement report for Gothenburg). This approach to place-keeping has mainly involved smaller areas and not been preceded by investments and larger deliberative place-making processes. In the standard planning procedure, City of Gothenburg would mainly have engaged with the public housing company about preferences for investments and not involved the range of local stakeholders or negotiated a transfer of maintenance responsibilities and the scale of public investments.

The inspiration for the adoption of a new approach in Gothenburg came from a MP4 staff exchange event held in Emmen, Netherlands, in June 2010. Staff from Gothenburg was inspired by the approach that Emmen Revisited is using for engagement with residents in local neighbourhood targeted for district development (See MP4 model agreement, Emmen Revisited). The local piloting in Gothenburg also added to the model for place-keeping in Emmen, Netherlands. Parks and Landscape in Gothenburg especially embarked on engagement of a broader and more diverse range of stakeholders than the approach in Emmen Revisited, e.g. migrants, different ages etc.

The success of the project in Gamlestaden also depended on the relatively small number of major stakeholders involved. The realization was critical upon the willingness of the Park and Nature Department, The public housing company, Poseidon and the local neighbourhood to engage in the process. Other neighbourhoods in Gothenburg typically have a more complex setup of major stakeholders that can halt innovative processes due to incongruent interests or aims.

Glossary

‘Place-making’: creating high quality places that people want to visit, experience and enjoy. It implies a people-centred approach which emphasises designing spaces that promote health, wellbeing and happiness. Such spaces engender a sense of belonging and connection for those who use them.

‘Place-keeping’: relates to maintaining the qualities and benefits – social, environmental and economic – of places through long-term management. The management required to maintain these qualities and benefits, the approach adopted and the timescale will depend on the ‘place-making’ aims, the available resources and the life span of the ‘place’.

Partnership: is defined as agreed shared responsibility between public, private and community sectors. It is a relationship which, in this context, is normally formed between governmental and non-governmental sectors – i.e. it is a manifestation of governance relationships.

Engagement: is a cross-cutting issue which describes successful models of working with communities and encouraging appropriate use. Engagement is an aspect of governance particularly relevant in forms of participatory governance and is intrinsic to the concept of ‘governance’ as defined below.

Governance: relates to the relationship between and within government and non-governmental forces. The term implies wider participation in decision-making than representative democracy or other forms of government, recognising a wider range of actors other than the state, and allowing for varying governance contexts and processes.

Finance: describes financial models for efficient long-term management.

Policy: is discussed within the context of embedding best practice into spatial planning and other policy.

Valuation: describes the economic impacts of improvements to open spaces, but also relates to wider socio-economic and environmental benefits.

Notes on this report

This report forms part of the output from MP4 Making Place Profitable – Public and Private Open Spaces, a project funded by the EU through its Interreg IVB North Sea Region programme 2007-2013.

This report is based on methods, interviews, evaluation visit, critical reports, model agreement assessment, etc.