

Urban Empowerment: Cultures of Participation and Learning

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This pilot project addressed one of the most critical urban challenges today namely, how can social and economic exclusion as well as socio-spatial segregation be resolved in exposed urban areas. Instead of seeing stigmatized areas as intrinsically problematic, this project explored alternative routes to positive urban change by investigating the potential of increased citizen participation and empowerment in local urban development processes. The overall aim was to develop civic and institutional capacity-building processes directly linked to changes in the study area.

The project has been actively involved in or initiated ten capacity-building processes (see figure) linked to different activities. The primary and concrete result of the project is the support of, and engagement in the capacity-building processes in and of themselves. However, the working of these capacity-building processes has also been analysed, leading to critical reflection and theory development on how such processes best can be implemented and supported. On a broader scale, the society needs to undergo a change we labeled as institutional *transformation* (in Swedish: omgestaltning), which may be considered as the social counterpart to the generally accepted environmental concept *transition* (omställning).

The project's results are available in different formats and include the following deliverables:

- The ten capacity-building processes per se
- Impact of the City of Gothenburg budget 2011
- Concrete artefacts to be built in 2013
- Impact on the employment profile of a new facilitator in the City of Gothenburg
- The web page www.urbanempower.se
- The conference From integration to urban planning
- Scientific paper to be presented at the 4th World Conference on Educational Sciences in Barcelona and then published in Procedia–Social and Behavioural Journal
- Eight applications for future research funding, two of which have been successful at this point in time

