

City of Aarhus

# CHANGE!

Social design of public services

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## Summary of the Integrated Action Plan

### Why

Aarhus is facing a number of challenges in the coming years. With regards to CHANGE!, the welfare system is being challenged by demographic changes and financial constraints. Maintaining and developing a system, economic and sustainable welfare society requires all layers of society to rethink the way they collaborate in Aarhus. The municipality must create prosperity in collaboration with citizens.

So, the question is how do we engage citizens in the different spheres of public administration through a new citizenship policy, and how do we work *with* people and not *for* them?

With the aim of defining the vision and foundations for active citizenship, the City Council has adopted the first policy for citizenship for the City of Aarhus. Citizenship concerns everyone - from toddler to mayor. As citizens in Aarhus we are all part of something larger than ourselves. The citizenship policy addresses all citizens in Aarhus and concerns the city's cooperation with the citizens in all municipal administrations.

The citizenship policy for Aarhus aims to:

- Define roles and responsibilities for the cooperation in Aarhus
- Inspire and create time and space for commitment
- Help us proceed from words to action
- Promote compassion and acceptance
- Help create a sense of security and belonging for everyone
- Contribute to a diverse society where people of different age, locality, ethnicity and lifestyle will meet and coexist

This Integrated Action Plan deals with bridging the new citizenship policy with local, community-led initiatives, which will hopefully result in creating an environment where people-powered public

services can flourish. The action plan should reflect learnings through five different projects and become a relevant tool for further improvements toward a more collaborative city.

The City of Aarhus joined the CHANGE! Network because it gives a unique opportunity to gain knowledge and inspiration in a field where we are all testing different methods to find the good practices. Co-creation is a relatively new way of working in the public sector and even though everyone agrees that it's necessary in order to face the coming challenges in modern societies we have yet to find right methods. The CHANGE! Network gives the city of Aarhus the chance to learn from many different methods and talk to people who work with co-creation from a different angle than we do in Aarhus.



### How

The URBACT Local Group in Aarhus was set up as a new group. It was decided that five different projects would be involved in the CHANGE! Network. This was done to shed light on some of the very different areas in which co-creation can happen and to get different views on how the citizenship policy is being implemented. The ULG therefore consists of representatives from the five projects and a member of the citizenship committee. The ULG was coordinated by Torben Glock from the Citizens Services' Innovation and Democracy group. The ULG consists of:

- Torben Glock and Lene Hartig Danielsen, Citizen's Services, Innovation and Democracy' group.
- Tine Holm Mathiasen, Citizenship Coordinator, Mayors Department
- Paul Natorp and Morten Daus-Petersen, Founders of 'Sager der Samler'
- Hans Skou, elected member of the City Council and member of the Citizenship Committee
- Thomas Vovemod Lütken, Founder of the Givism-community
- Anne Marie Frederiksen, Department of Social Affairs and Employment

The ULG meetings were a chance for the representatives from the initiatives to meet others who were working with the same overall topic of co-creation and therefore were facing similar challenges and had similar experiences. This meant that they could support and inspire one another and share methods and experiences.

The study visits (on which several ULG-members went) and the staff exchanges have, according to the ULG, provided inspiration for new ways of doing things, new ways of thinking and new issues to confront. It has given them a sense of belonging to a bigger community or movement of people who want to solve the challenges of tomorrow in a new way – by breaking down the barriers between the public sector and the civil society.

The group behind the Aarhus project *Long Term Unemployed Take the Lead* has, for example, been very inspired by the changes that have been made with the WeEindhoven project, and have brought some of the thoughts behind the projects "back home" to their department. They found it very interesting and inspiring to see and learn how a change in the mindset towards citizens who struggle in life can make people move past struggles and onto a new path in life moving forward. They have specifically learned to be aware of the attitude with which they meet the citizens. Long Term Unemployed Take the Lead has also been chosen as a European "Good

practice" which gives the project a good platform to spread its ideas to other European cities.

CHANGE! also made a direct contribution to one of the projects, as one of the events at the *Rethink Activism Festival* was inspiring talks about "European Stories of CHANGE" made by the partners from other cities around Europe. This made it possible for the message of "people powered public services" to be spread far wider than inside the CHANGE! network. The "Rethink Activism" project has gained knowledge of other everyday activists around Europe and a feeling of being part of a wave of change going through Europe which focuses on constructively renewing democracy with an offset in the lives of ordinary people.

A ULG-member also found inspiration on the London Study Visit in the English concept "Good Gym" and brought the idea of combining running and doing good back to Aarhus where members of senior NGO's and a students association are now making a Danish version of Good Gym.

Method-wise, CHANGE! has introduced us to the collaborative framework model, which has been a very helpful tool in understanding and describing the complicated processes of co-creation. The model has also been translated and used as a template for this integrated action plan.

The *Warm Welcome Society* has experienced CHANGE! as an opportunity to get their message spread further than just nationally and a unique way of exchanging experiences with people from other parts of Europe. Following the staff visit in Aarhus, The city of Eindhoven will now make their own version of the Warm Welcome.

*Digital Neighborhood* has learned a lot about citizenship on an international level. The international focus on the project that has come through CHANGE! Has made it the subject of new research and new international relations. For instance, a dissertation from Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen concludes: "*the Digital Neighborhood project is a good example of how a*

*Smart City project can be part of a bigger plan and be pursued more holistically. By setting up a fixed installation in the neighborhood that, at the same time, is a virtual interface, the Digital Neighborhood combines both digital and non-digital participation formats. This gives both young and old people the chance to participate and lowers the overall barrier to participate". Participating in CHANGE! has also given the project better cooperative relations inside the municipality working cross-silo per default.*

## Now

As five very different projects make up Aarhus' contribution to the network, the actions are of course also very different and aim at different goals.

### *Long Term Unemployed Take the Lead*

The employment project "Long Term Unemployed Take the Lead", which has worked with self-budgeting as a way out of unemployment on a project basis now wants to use what has been learned in the project period to influence the way the city works with unemployed citizens. That means:

- Meeting the citizens with different questions than the usual ones and supporting them in their dreams.
- Getting closer to the citizen.
- Changing the national legislation to make self-budgeting legal.
- Making self-budgeting a permanent part of the services that the job center offers.

Some of these goals might already be in the reach, as the Danish Parliament has just passed legislation that funds self-budgeting for vulnerable citizens with 10 million DKKR thereby making it legal to offer self-budgeting as well as making the procedures regarding such offers more flexible.



### *Rethink Activism*

The project Rethink Activism has displayed everyday activism through events, Facebook, the web and has organized a big people's festival with the aim of highlighting the activism of our time, which defies passivity and replaces confrontation with creativity and empowerment.

In the coming time, the organization behind Rethink Activism – Everyday Activist – wishes to enter a dialogue with the politicians and try to influence the policymaking – without being partisan. Everyday Activist wishes to keep working in what they call the space between the public sector and civil society and insists that the areas of focus as well as the methods are always defined by the people who are part of the organization.

### *The Warm Welcome Society*

The basis of The Warm Welcome Society is a number of welcome meetings that are held regularly throughout the year. The welcome meetings are held within 11 themes and each of the themes represents different interests. Every new student in town is invited to this event when they move to Aarhus. The purpose of the Warm Welcome Society is primarily to give all new young citizens the best possible start to their new life as citizens of Aarhus.



The plan for the Warm Welcome Society is to keep hosting these events but also to widen the concept to include other areas. To reach this vision, the following actions have been planned:

- Presentation of final evaluation in April 2018
- Establishing an association which will keep the concept in operation in cooperation with volunteers.
- Making it possible to keep the concept going outside of its current location.
- Developing a concept that can be used in other areas e.g. deprived neighborhoods.
- Making a package that Danish and international delegations who visit Aarhus, can bring home and which makes them able to copy the relevant parts of the concept.



### Digital Neighborhood

The aims of the Digital Neighborhood project are to

- Test alternative forms of dialogue between citizens and the public sector.

- Develop and strengthen the digital development in Aarhus.
- Achieve knowledge about 'neighborhoods and public spaces' as a frame for Citizens' Services and citizen involvement
- Explore micro involvement as a new approach to citizen involvement.

This is done through installations that are placed in different neighborhoods which makes it possible for citizens to lift the receiver and simply speak their mind into an old telephone booth which records the data and lets the people behind the project use, share and develop the inputs from citizens in a whole new way.



The vision for this project is to have interactive installations permanently placed in all neighborhoods in Aarhus. This would create a permanent entrance for the citizens to interact with the city. The installations should be able to contain several themes at the same time and data from the city's installations must be gathered in relevant visualizations that are accessible to the citizens.

Digital Neighborhoods seeks to make this vision come true through experiments and pilot projects with many different partnerships. In the short run the installations will be used for

- Citizenship in Rundhøj – micro experimenting with citizen involvement. March 2018
- Developing the employment policy. May-august 2018
- Digital citizen involvement- February – august 2018

### *Citizenship in Rundhøj*

Rundhøj is a neighborhood in Aarhus where local citizens have focused on strengthening the local community. An important result of the project is the construction of a temporary space for citizenship where citizens, the city and businesses can meet and discuss anything regarding the development and potentials of the neighborhood. The citizenship project in Rundhøj works with the following milestones:

- Demolition of old buildings – 1st quarter of 2018.
- Building new temporary settings – 2nd quarter of 20218.
- Temporary activities - Ongoing.
- New co-created district plan - Before the end of 2019
- Evaluation, mapping, development of methods and knowledge sharing - Before the end of 2019.



### *Expected outcome*

As this Integrated Action Plan deals with bridging the new citizenship policy with local, community-led initiatives, the expected outcomes of the plan are that the visions in the citizenship policy are realized. The best-case scenario would be that everyone in Aarhus – politician, public employee, business and citizen shares the feeling of responsibility for the city and its future:

The City Council will use unconventional new methods in order to renew and transform their collaboration with each other and with citizens. They will dare to take a chance on the

experimental and the unconventional, and to support managers, employees and citizens who do the same. If this means that they must relax rules and rethink the municipality's objectives, they will be prepared to work on this.

Workplaces and businesses will take responsibility for strengthening the community. Both the special community that is created at the individual company, in the individual workplace and in the community found in our neighborhoods and in Aarhus as a whole.

Citizens of Aarhus will see the municipality, businesses and educational institutions as good potential partners. But they do not always need to involve the municipality directly. Instead, they will carefully consider what they expect from the community and the municipality. They will take personal responsibility for their neighborhoods and for each other. They will participate with the resources they have.

Managers and employees in the municipality will be prepared to rethink how they perform their work. There will be a greater focus on relationships and on the benefit for citizens than on the service provided. Citizens and the municipality will make their mutual expectations clear. Employees will prioritize the resources so that they create the greatest possible benefit for the citizens. Managers and employees cannot do this unless they collaborate with the world around them. But no matter the task or service, it must always be possible to justify and explain bureaucracy and rules. If they cannot be explained and justified, they will be challenged.

The City Council has the overall responsibility for meeting the political objectives set for Aarhus as a whole. But the City Council, municipal managers and employees, and citizens all share the responsibility for defining the core task concretely and reaching a shared understanding of how best to perform it to the benefit of the target group.

### *Policy recommendations*

Based on what has been learned from the different projects the below policy

recommendations are seen as the best way to reach the expected outcomes.

can contribute to giving high returns on the investment.

- Establish a transverse network of employees who work with citizenship in the city and who “open up” the city to potential external collaborations and internally draws on a network in all magistrates.
- Create a political foundation for making platforms where people can engage themselves in causes and communities that can interact with institutions, businesses and associations. Platforms where early initiatives can be tested and where we can learn together
- Make it a political strategy to spend resources in public institutions on finding out what is already happening and participating in and backing the activities
- Build a new Aarhus vocabulary that brakes with the barrier making stereotypes when working with citizenship. Language creates the realities!
- Develop a digital platform that creates influence and transparency in collaboration- and involvement processes in the city.
- Change the city’s logic of expenses into a logic of investment where a central aspect is how high the returns will be for the citizen, employee and society in short, medium and long term.
- The city of Aarhus must view case workers and citizens as resources that