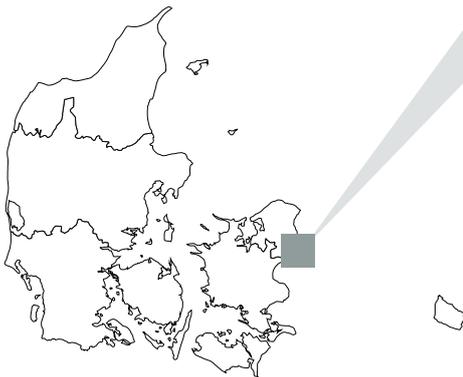# CULTURE
for Cities and Regions

Kunstgreb
Artists immersed in businesses for innovation

- Innovation
- Skills
- Education
- Employment
- Cross-sectorial collaboration
- New business models

Context

Copenhagen is the capital of Denmark with around half a million inhabitants. Thirty-four municipalities of the capital region and the region of Zealand constitute the Copenhagen Metropolitan region also known as Greater Copenhagen. The economy of Greater Copenhagen is related mostly to IT, biotechnology, manufacturing industries and pharmaceuticals (with beneficial tax schemes for foreign researchers), making it one of the major economic centres in Europe.

The cultural and creative sectors have flourished through the years in the area with a rich mix of creative talents, successful institutions and academies (museums, concerts halls, and opera house). Copenhagen Fashion Week and Copenhagen Jazz Festival have become two highly recognised events in Europe.

Back in the late 1990s the region of Copenhagen launched a request via the regional employment bureau for a solution to face unemployment in the artistic sector. High unemployment among artists at the time triggered thinking about ways of using artists' skills and competences in non-artistic contexts.

Kunstgreb: artistic intervention in businesses

The Danish Artist Union (counting 1,500 members) was challenged by the regional employment office to devise a plan to counter unemployment. Along with Wischmann Innovation (a specialised consultancy), the Union presented Kunstgreb as an answer to this challenge.

Kunstgreb (or Artifice) is a project focusing on artists' contribution to innovation. It provides artists with a training programme to enable their creative skills to reach the business sector and stimulate innovative solutions. Kunstgreb has developed tools and online methods where companies can manage their own development case through the process, with a few online webinars or on-site consultancy from the facilitator to jumpstart the project. All processes have a creative, playful approach which gives the participants a lot of motivation and surprising experiences. All participants are given access to creative tools and methods that makes them capable

of reaching their goals. The projects started with a training session for artists over a period of 32 weeks. Artists were given an insight of the business world and had to decide, together with a selected company, the innovation project they were going to carry out. The educational module notably covered management, communication, and process and project management.

Kunstgreb was presented with the support of the regional office for employment to the Danish Ministry of Industry as a plan to expand the market for artists and enlarge employment opportunities, and to test new forms of innovation for businesses of public entities.

Kunstgreb carried out 63 projects for 53 firms focused on product, process, marketing and organisational innovation.

links between the brand and its users. The results were then shared, discussed and compiled in an idea catalogue of 50 innovations, which helped the company to strengthen its market position and create loyal users of its products.

Budget and origin of funds

The total budget amounted to €2.5 million. Of these, 50% was self-financing and the EU supported the other half via the European Social Fund (managed by the Danish Ministry of Industry) at the end of 2008 for a three-year period.

Key challenges

The main objective was to tackle high levels of unemployment in the artistic sector. Another objective was to develop an innovation model that was suitable for product, process and cultural innovation. In

Each project required around 18 hours of work per week and four or five people to manage the project for about three months. The services were offered free of charge to the companies, which included both public (Danish Railway or the ATP in charge of pensions) and private ones (Nokia and the health care company Coloplast).

Kunstgreb received 250 applications from artists from all fields and selected 120. They contributed to unlocking their potential for expression and disrupting traditional ways of thinking through their creative skills, artistic intuition and lateral thinking. For example, at Coloplast, artists (Lotte Munk and Iben Claces) interacted with employees to define new ideas and processes for user-driven innovation. First, artists were immersed in Coloplast's working ecosystem and methods, then they trained selected employees on creative skills (creative writing in this case). The artists then used the TOTE (Test-Operate-Test-Exit) method and serious games techniques, to challenge existing preconceptions of the values and goals of the company. Then the employees and artists all wrote poems during a seven minute semi-automatic writing phase to find out about the most direct

addition, there was an intention to develop methods on how creative professionals can help public and private enterprises to create growth. What was also a challenge is the lack of knowledge of how art can intervene in other sectors.

Impacts

According to the impact assessment conducted by the Copenhagen Business School, the artists and creative talents trained under Kunstgreb have increased their income by 50% and almost half of them have found a job in the relevant creative market. In addition to that there has been an increase of art sales as well as initiatives on the creation of new artistic works and projects. Sales earnings have increased by about €1 million after the project and nearly half of this revenue comes from actual innovation work with businesses.

Furthermore, 53 public and private companies participated not only as customers but also in partnerships: 63 innovation projects were implemented each with duration of three months. Additionally, 120 artists from all artistic directions took part including musicians, painters, graphic artists, dancers, choreographers, filmmakers and actors.

Kunstgreb has won the Nordic Prize 2010 as the best learning and innovation project in Scandinavia.

Transferability

The success of this project required persistence and teamwork to break down silos mentalities and convince companies that were not used to this new approach to change their mindset. A lot of time was thus devoted to reaching a mutual understanding between artists and employees in businesses. The solutions developed were designed to be easily integrated in the participating companies after the end of the process.

At the same time, low level of awareness of the potential of artistic creation for innovation makes it difficult to implement such projects with non-creative businesses and promote them at policy-making level.

Sustainability

Kunstgreb was a project which finished in 2012. However, the regional ministry of employment considers the project a great success and believes that it should continue as a commercial project. Large firms in Denmark have shown a lot of interest and see artists' involvement as a good way to trigger innovation. However, it is felt that progress is needed at the policy level.

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Policy-makers are not sufficiently aware of artists' potential as drivers of new forms of innovation. So far, this has prevented Kunstgreb from being streamlined in a sustainable fashion in public policies.

Management /partners

Kunstgreb involved three project partners:

- Wischmann Innovation as initiator and project management.

- Danish Artist Association -steering committee.

- CBS - Copenhagen Business School – steering committee.

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