



OSLO LIKE EVERY CITY MAINTAINS AND CLEANS ITS PUBLIC GREEN SPACES AS PART OF ITS GREENING ACTIVITIES. AT THE SAME TIME THE CITY IS PROVIDING VULNERABLE PEOPLE WITH INCLUSIVE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH TWO PROGRAMMES. ONE AIMS TO BOOST THE EMPLOYABILITY OF PEOPLE FAR FROM THE LABOUR MARKET AND THE OTHER ALLOWS PEOPLE WHO CANNOT WORK FULL TIME TO COMPLEMENT THEIR SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS AND ENHANCE THEIR QUALITY OF LIFE. THE PRACTICE IS BASED ON A COST SHARING MODEL AND EXTENSIVE COLLABORATION WITH BOTH PUBLIC AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL PARTNERS.



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COST SHARING AND MULTI LEVEL COLLABORATION FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION

CONTEXT

Rapid growth of Oslo's population has led to urban densification and an increased use of the city's outdoor spaces. It has also led to growing quantities of waste in green spaces and parks especially in the east Oslo area, which includes the city centre and the Groruddalen area in the northeast of Oslo. These districts are characterised by a significantly lower average income, a lower standard of living and a higher number of unemployed people compared to the western districts.

SOLUTION

Rusken is a city led community action project to clean up streets, rivers, beaches and parks in Oslo. It involves kindergartens, schools, housing cooperatives, voluntary organisations, sports clubs, the business community and general public. It emphasises joint community action, shared responsibility and the breaking down of social divisions. Rusken runs two employment initiatives for vulnerable groups:



- **Street Rusken:** gives people with drug addiction assignments to keep the sidewalks in the city centre free of cigarette butts and rubbish. People work for a few hours a week and are paid an hourly wage. Street Rusken is mainly for severely vulnerable people with low prospects of reintegrating into the labour market. It aims to include them in society through these activities therefore decreasing isolation and crime. Due to the high demand these jobs are awarded randomly by lottery. The project is delivered by an NGO.
- **District Rusken:** employs people who receive social security benefits to work in green maintenance and waste disposal. They prune shrubs and trees, mow lawns, and clean metro stations and sidewalks. The programme admits people with poor language skills, no qualifications, health problems, drug related problems, mental illness, long term unemployed and young people with no work experience.

Both programmes are 'low threshold' initiatives - meaning there are few entry requirements making it easier to access for vulnerable people.

The Rusken secretariat, which is part of the municipality of Oslo, plans, manages, and coordinates all the programmes and campaigns, including practical arrangements, strategic work and funding. The secretariat has a mandate from the municipality to operate outside the established system to a certain extent. This means that the secretariat is able to collaborate and reach informal agreements with other city and state departments and external partners, such as the police, local businesses, and NGOs, without having to go through the usual procedures used in the administration. This facilitates faster decision making and creates innovative partnerships.

CHALLENGES

District Rusken in Grunerløkka in Oslo east and in the four districts of Groruddalen was established as a result of a larger urban regeneration programme called the 'Area and Livelihoods Initiative'. Therefore many partners were included in the project: the Ministry of the Environment, the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV), representatives of the districts, the Rusken secretariat, Oslo's trade unions and the Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise Department. Joint working groups were set up in each district to establish a dialogue between all the parties involved.

It was also important to gain insight into each district's environmental challenges to ensure good targeting of Rusken activities. A consultation process involving the local community was also carried out, which fed into the work of the joint working groups.



IMPACT

Rusken provides more flexible solutions for maintenance of green areas, waste management, and cleaning the city, adding to the municipality's operations and creating a cleaner and healthier city for everyone.

District Rusken and Street Rusken are effective tools for social inclusion and poverty reduction:

- **Street Rusken:** gives people a chance to supplement their social security benefits with additional earnings, which decreases poverty and prevents begging. Since the project provides an opportunity for them to contribute to and participate in society, it has been found to decrease drug use among the participants. This also reduces minor injuries and other problems related to intoxication, which in turn reduces the use of various public and health services.
- **District Rusken:** operates in eight city districts, with 10-30 employees in each one. The employees gain work experience and test their ability to function in a work environment. For many this constitutes the first step to finding paid employment, usually in similar jobs, while others proceed to training programmes.

The District Rusken initiative in Groruddalen led to the launch of carpentry workshops for repairing and redecorating old furniture. This provides jobs for both young people in the summer and permanent jobs for people previously excluded from the labour market. In Grunerløkka a repair and recycling workshop was opened.

Thanks to the collaboration between partners, when the area regeneration programme ended in Grunerløkka, the municipality, the district administration, and the NAV contributed financially to keeping District Rusken going.

It is hoped that both Street Rusken and District Rusken will expand into more districts, using the same operational model but adapt to each districts' need for supplementing green maintenance, waste management and social jobs.



FUNDING

District Rusken in Groruddalen is based on the equal cost sharing model between the Ministry of Climate and Environment and the municipality of Oslo, contributing 2.4 million NOK each (approx. €280,000). In other districts the costs are shared between the individual districts and Oslo municipality.

Street Rusken is funded with 1.2 million NOK (approx.€140,000) from the city of Oslo. Other financial contributions come from the Church City Mission, Salvation Army and the local business community.