



EUROCITIES Social Innovation Lab

26-27 March 2019, Glasgow

Co-creation workshops - Wednesday, 27 March 9.30 - 12.00

Venue: Grand Central Hotel, 99 Gordon Street, Glasgow



Workshop D: Gothenburg city challenge - How can we deliver equal school quality for all children across the city neighbourhoods while at the same time satisfying particular local needs?

The co-creation workshops organised at the Social Innovation Lab in Glasgow give city representatives the opportunity to work together to co-design possible new and more effective responses to a common complex social challenge presented by one city.

Objectives

- Learn about co-creating innovations to city social challenges
- Formulate more effective and efficient responses to a critical challenge of a city, in a collaborative learning process with inputs from different cities

Format

Participants will work together in a workshop to co-design possible solutions to real cases of complex social challenges in cities. The case study of city challenge will be presented, discussed and explored through situation-based group work. The workshop will result in a set of ideas for actionable solutions that the representatives from the city concerned by the given challenge could take back home and consider acting upon. The logic is to generate out-of-the-box ideas and a fresh perspective to help a city that is looking for innovative ways to tackle a pressing challenge it faces at the moment.

Structure of the workshop

9.30 - 9.50	Introduction to the workshop
9.50 - 10.20	Presentation of the city challenge
10.20 - 10.35	Brainstorming in pairs for ideas of possible solutions to the challenge
10.35 - 11.10	Collaborative brainstorming and shortlist of possible solutions
11.10 - 11.30	Pitching - presenting solutions to the city concerned by the challenge
11.30 - 12.00	Group work to turn ideas into actionable solutions
12.00	Closing of workshop
12.00 - 12.30	Plenary presentation of actionable solutions co-created in workshops

Expected outcomes

- One **challenge brief** - real case scenario of complex social challenge in a city
- List of **possible ideas for solutions** brainstormed by fellow city experts in the workshop
- One or two **actionable solutions** that the city concerned by the challenge can take back

Questions for reflection

1. Have you had a similar challenge in your city? If yes, how have you tackled it?
2. Are there common elements /factors of the city challenge that you can recognise in your city? Do they manifest in a different way?
3. What ideas can you contribute to tackling the city challenge?
 - Adding a new element or taking something away
 - Integrating a new idea
 - Turning the practice upside down, assigning new roles to the actors involved
 - Segmenting the solution, exchanging one-size-fits-all for more personalised approaches
 - Bringing elements or practices associated with another field
 - Adapting responses from my city addressing this challenge
 - Learning from interventions from other cities, any other public body, social organisation, private sector or hybrid solution that could contribute to solve the challenge
 - Activating untapped (community or other) resources
 - Who can be part of this solution? (change-makers)

CHALLENGE BRIEF

City: Gothenburg

Challenge: How can we deliver equal school quality for children across the city neighbourhoods while at the same time satisfying particular local needs?

Topics: Education, equivalence and equality, organization and quality in delivery, wellbeing

The challenge

The City of Gothenburg has ten city districts and for many years the schools and preschools has been organized within the city districts. It has been identified that this kind of organization in some ways have been negative, looking in the school results and that the schools has become unequal over the city. Quality and organization have varied across the city and in the different districts resulting in that there is no equivalent school in Gothenburg as a whole.

From the 1st of July 2018 the city has centralized the organization and administration based on a political decision and assignment. The objective is to create this central organization/administration that has the prerequisites and working methods to assure an equal school for all students in primary school in Gothenburg. There are 58,590 students (6-16 years old) 130,000 legal guardians, 146 schools and 8,000 co-workers in this new organisation.

The challenge for the new organization/administration is to assure an equivalent distribution of resources, assure quality in the education and at the same time consider the local prerequisites at the schools with staff, parents and students.

The new organization/administration is also facing a risk of losing/dropping co-operation with public service still administrated by the ten districts like social service, culture and leisure. This co-operation is crucial to provide a holistic and safe public support for the students in the primary schools of Gothenburg.

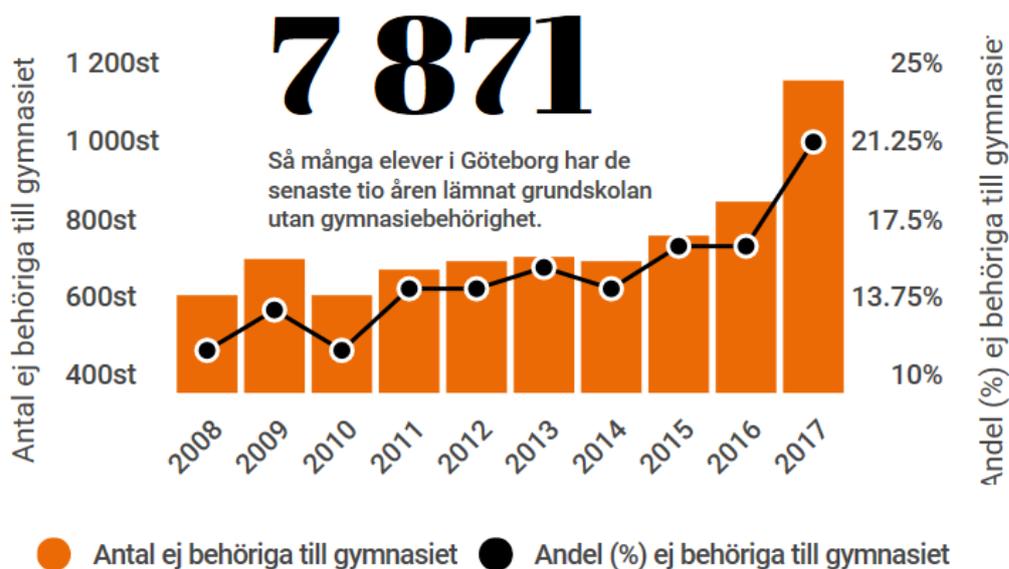
Some of the political goals with the reform and centralization:

- Gothenburg should become a city of equality.
- All structural gender discrimination must be prevented.
- All pupils should reach passing grades.
- The Humans Rights perspective should permeate all the activities of the city administration.

Problem tree

The primary-school in Gothenburg has not been equivalent for all students. It has not been a school that enough has been able to meet different socio-economical prerequisites for example. The distribution of public resources has not been distributed based on the actual local need - no overall structure for distribution. The challenge is to guarantee that our administration provides equal education to all districts in the city.

The causes of the challenge are the fact that we have different levels of socio-economic standards where some district areas have the need of a broad pallet of social support where the local schools have a central role to play, preventing gaps in child development and ensuring equal opportunities for schooling and work later in life. If we don't deliver good education and social support for families, we will continue widen the gaps in our city and that will deliver new and more serious problems to tackle over time.



The graph shows the increased number of pupils leaving primary/compulsory school without grades for entering the secondary school. Since 2008 until 2017 787 pupils left the primary schools in Gothenburg without secondary competence.

The context

The primary school in Gothenburg has been administrated by geographical districts since 1987 until the 1 July 2018. The challenge and problem with equivalence has been present since 1987. The political assignment is based on this.

Close studies of the organization of education have been done in two other big cities in Sweden, Stockholm and Malmö before launching the new organization/administration in Gothenburg. All three cities have centralized their primary school administrations. We work closely together and in April we will have a joint meeting for all three cities for exchange of experience and best practice.

Testimonials

Lisa Sipari, planning officer external relations, prev. coordinator Plug-in, regional work with drop-outs:

Inequalities in Gothenburg schools have been apparent for a number of years. The number of students leaving primary school with grades that qualify them for further studies have decreased over the past ten years, even if last year's results were slightly better than 2016/2017 which was a low point with 22% of all Gothenburg's students not qualified. Adding to the problems of low results on the whole, is the fact that the difference between results for schools in different areas of the city is remarkable. In the areas that are pinpointed by the police as high-risk areas when it comes to crime, social exclusion and risk of parallel societal structure the results are at many schools as low as 30% of the students are qualified for further education. In the high rank areas of the city a turnout close to 100% qualified for further education is not unusual. When examined closer, it's clearly indicated that parents' level of education is an indicator for students' likeliness to experience school success. It's therefore clear that the compensatory effect that schools in Sweden are supposed to deliver is not functioning as well as it should.

Police reports, reports from social authorities, schools and organizations in civic society all indicate the same: young people in socially challenged parts of Gothenburg are at a high risk of future criminality, drug use and other types of risk behavior which affect the individuals themselves, their families and the local areas. Research shows that school success indicated by a complete high school degree is a powerful indicator for future happiness in life; for having a job, experiencing social inclusion, etc. Considering this, addressing this social challenge is crucial for the development of Gothenburg city.

Isabelle Asadian Falahieh, Planning officer Coordination and Special Support:

To build a centralized, large organization is a challenge, but in our case we also have to consider that there previously were ten different organizations, customs and opinions concerning how we should organize our schools. The people working in these ten districts are still here, but now we have to find one, ultimate way to go. In our goal to have an equal education; which areas and challenges should we prioritize? What experiences do other cities have of this kind of changes? And finally, do we have to do this all alone, or how can we cooperate with others?

Without knowing all the facts, my impression is that we are temporarily getting more inequalities, since we're in an unsecure phase in the organization changes. If we handle the centralization right, I'm certain it will lead to more equality in our schools.

Gothenburg is a city with many good qualities, but we have a big challenge concerning segregation, socio-economic differences and differences in school results. We're trying to approach this by centralizing our school organization, but we have to do it right and learn from other cities' experiences. We're responsible for almost 60 000 children's education, and we have to handle it with good care.

Felicia Yeh Nortoft, process leader Equal Gothenburg:

I agree on the formulation of the problem. How centralization and coordination on one hand contributes to more equivalence based on distribution. But based on local needs, an equivalent distribution / central administration can mean unequal results for the individual school / pupil.

With the system of "free choice of school", some schools are not chosen, usually schools with big challenges related to staff turnover and socio-economically vulnerable target groups/families in the area. This leads to increased inequality. The families who do not*

make active choices are then placed in a school chosen by the administration. The students will then face the risk of getting less quality of teaching, poorer relationships with important adults in the school which can lead to poorer pre-conditions in life. I do not know how the trends appear between schools and school results, but the differences in the living conditions in the city are found to be unequal and it does not seem to decrease.

A Swedish system that gives each student and each family the opportunity to choose the preferred school that can be in private or public.

If all children don't receive an equivalent education and school environment, it will lead to poorer pre-conditions in life, lower incomes and more health problems for some students. This effect the cohesion in the city and leads to increased economic costs as well as individual suffering.

Anne Erefalk, headmaster, Gothenburg:

I'm a head master of a school where approximate 60% of the students have a different mother tongue than Swedish. There are about 40 different languages spoken at the school and about 20% are newly arrived migrants.

Most of the students come from socially vulnerable homes and many of them from homes where the parents have low- or zero school-education. We also have challenges when several of our students have a low school attendance. The cultural differences that exist between the students further complicate the situation and 47% of the students in the 6ht grade have not complete grades. Today all pupils with special needs are also enrolled in the regular school.

Our main challenges are children with different NPD (neuro psychological disorders) diagnoses, those students have difficulties being in a regular class. These students take a lot of time and effort from the teachers so that they find it difficult to focus on those students who need extra support in the form of, for example, extra Swedish tuition.

Another challenge is the newly arrived pupils with no school background that start in our school at the age of ten or even older. In addition to the language, they also lack the basic knowledge to cope with the school environment. How should we catch these students in the best way so that they do not end up outside the community?

A third challenge is that we at the school have so many students who speak Arabic that they have formed their own groups at the school, which means that they do not learn Swedish as quickly as would be desirable.

A fourth challenge is the increased number of students with low school attendance. Many caretakers fail in their parental responsibility to ensure the participation of the pupils to the school.

With all this said, being a principal in my school is at the same time extremely fun. The cultural mix of students gives a special energy and working with families that have no educational background also means that they have a huge respect for the school.

The new primary school administration has redistributed the resources which will enable me as principal to hire the very best teachers and educators. The vision that the new primary school administration allocate that the focus should be on increased quality in education and an increased equivalence. This means that I feel great confidence in the new school organization and am proud to be part of this progressive change. In the long term, I

hope that this will mean that goal achievement will be raised at my school and that all students will leave the school with full grades.

The segregation in Gothenburg has increased. The difference in the reach of objectives between different schools has increased dramatically in recent years. There are several factors that play a role. I believe that different political decisions have aggravated the situation. For example, the free choice of school means that committed and informed caretakers choose the "right" schools for their children. The "free-school" (private school) reform is another political decision that has led to an increase in inequality. In our city district, a private school, which is only one kilometer from our school, has very few newly arrived migrant students. Although the regulations say that they are not allowed to choose students, we know that the student group is considerably more homogeneous in this free school despite. The fact that Sweden have so many newly arrived students in such a short time has also mean that inequality has increased.

Income gaps has increased a lot in Sweden recently. While many in the middle class today can travel abroad several times a year, several of my students have barely seen the sea, even though they live only a few kilometers from the nearest beach. I once asked my daughter what she would do if she won the jackpot in the lottery. She replied that she was going to New York and then to Bali. When I asked my students the same, they replied that they would go to the local shopping mall (10 min from school) and shop for clothes! My challenge is to get my students to broaden their perspectives and dare to dream bigger.

I am convinced that we all, immediately, must do everything we can to change the segregation in our society and enable all students to leave school with full grades. Having complete grades is a necessity for the students to be a part of the society and the labor market. Unfortunately, today we have a situation where 12-year-old pupils have given up hope of school and society and are found on the nearest shopping mole/square with drugs in their pockets. It is partly about socially vulnerable students with caretakers who lack in their parenting, and partly about newly arrived pupils without school background who for various reasons never can catch up and get into the Swedish school system. There are no proper social structures that take care of these children. What kind of society will we get if we don't manage to change this path? When I grew up in the 1980s, the lowest level in the Swedish school was manageable for almost everybody. Everyone could get a job and become a part of society. Today it isn't at all that easy. I often try to explain to my friends and my family that if there is no change then all of us will lose. Will we have gated communities? Will we get a subclass in Sweden that has lost faith in society and only sees criminality as their future? Most recently, I read an essay by a student in the 5ht grade who wanted to become a "hitman" when he grew up. That "dream profession" should not an 11-year old have and not even know what it means. Therefore, I hope and believe a lot in the new primary school administration in Gothenburg. They really want to change and make a difference for our students. It will take time and many courageous decisions are required.

Previous experience

Whilst organising and building the new central administration in a newly constructed house holding both the Central administration for the Compulsory Primary school and the Central Administration for Preschools, the board and the administration identified some points crucial for success in the work with the new and central administration.

- Increased quality in teaching/educating/facilitating learning to increase children's and pupils' learning outcomes and grades.
- Clearer responsibility, governance and management to increase children's and pupils' knowledge results

- Increased equivalence between schools for all children and pupils to gain access to high quality teaching/educating/facilitating learning and to compensate for their different conditions regardless of social, economic or personal prerequisites.

The next phase in the launching of this new organization and administration is called School investigation 2.0 and will, among other things, focus on the principals' prerequisites for being pedagogical leaders. The equivalence - how the school units should be organized and functioning to create an equal education for all students.

The University of Gothenburg are connected to organization as evaluators and re-searchers and will report both to the board of politicians and the board of administration.

The launching of the new administration started (July 1th 2018) and it is important to focus on new ways of working to assure equivalence and quality. Through on-going evaluation and reflection assure that the new organization/administration has the right prerequisites to increase the equivalence and quality. Without reflection and evaluation, we are facing a risk of constructing a new organization not reaching the goal of an equivalent school. If we want something to change, we also must have the courage to change!

The Municipal Council in Gothenburg have been testing both centralization and decentralization of the municipal service over the years. The two systems include both positive and negative effects by experience. As mentioned above the decentralized organization creates more opportunities for inclusion and communication of local needs but with the effect of inequality for the city. The centralization creates more possibility for equality and administration/allocations. The core problem we present might have the effect of missing specific local needs in a social and economic diverse city like Gothenburg.

In addition, our long-term mobilization for Equal Gothenburg includes special initiatives towards preschools and schools. These include strengthening the preschool's strategic role, opening school arena and working to increase school attendance.

Key actors involved

The Administration of Compulsory/primary school has the assignment to organize and administrate the education from the board of politics. Above this the field of Education is also governed by national document like the Swedish curriculum. Other actors are the Administration for Preschools and the Administration of Secondary and VET-education. These three administrations have together the shared responsibility for the education for the students In Gothenburg (age 0-19 years old).

Close co-operation is currently taking place as a part of the assignment to assure the contact with other municipal services like social service, culture and leisure (still administrated by the ten geographical districts).

In launching the new central administration for Pre- and primary education in Gothenburg other actors like local enterprises, universities and NGOs will be more easily included into the work in creating and securing a good learning environment for the students of Gothenburg.

Obstacles

Like with all big changes and re-organisations comes a feeling and a fear of losing power on different levels. Some of the obstacles below needs to be tackled with dialogue, transparency and above all courage.

- Lack of experience and competence of working in a central organization and administration.

- Distrust against the “big” organization/administration.
- Fear of losing power on local level.
- Lack of competence and skills in managing both on a central and local level and colliding expectations, both internal and from other stakeholders and actors.
- A larger administration and in some ways more hierarchy, demanding more administration and bureaucracy before action can be made.
- Economic challenges in the ten districts, making it harder for them to prioritize cooperation with others.

Opportunities

- The new organization must focus on strengthened conditions for teacher-management of learning and for the head-masters competence/awareness of leadership.
- The organization must also be characterized by systematic dialogue and peer-learning amongst co-worker with a focus on national governing documents, systematic follow-up, results and support.
- To work together with previous and new cooperation partners, such as the public service administration in the ten districts and other kinds of organizations.
- To focus on long-term / endurance in goals and efforts, efforts that are based on a scientific analysis and reports.
- To be inspired by international and national successful education- systems.

We have a unique and fantastic possibility to get a coordinated and complete structure of distributing resources in an equal way and the possibility to measure and to follow-up on equivalence and quality for our students. To assure that our students get a high-quality education based on their needs. We have also created an arena for education and peer-learning, both internal and for external actors. Furthermore, we have an opportunity to initiate cooperation with other actors on a much higher level than before.

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Additional information

[Equal Gothenburg](#)

[Equal Gothenburg in The Guardian](#)



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