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Gothenburg's smart map

Smart map makes it easy for residents to share rather than own

Gothenburg has been inspired by the global collaborative movement and local grassroots initiatives to encourage residents to live in a more sustainable way. Its smart mapping tool, which shows where residents can find things to hire, borrow, share and swap, is helping to change behaviour, reduce emissions and inspire new services.

To help achieve its greenhouse gas targets, Gothenburg chose to set challenging goals for reducing consumption-based emissions. Recognising citizens needed to have alternative choices to buying and owning if it was to achieve these goals, the city enshrined enabling the sharing economy into its budget. It also determined to make the most of the civil society initiatives popping up around the city that were proving the efficacy and popularity of collaborative services based on circular principles and trust.

The Collaborative Economy Gothenburg (KEG), a voluntary group that was galvanising and coordinating citizen action, shared the city's ambitions. Together, they created a simple Google map showing all the options for collaborating and sharing available in Gothenburg. When a survey showed residents were positive about sharing in principle but lacked knowledge about how to do it in practice, the importance of the map grew. It was agreed that financial and IT help would make it more attractive and user friendly.



Like all European cities we have a goal to cut greenhouse gas emissions in general, but what is unique to Gothenburg is wanting to impact consumption-based emissions by influencing and inspiring citizens to think about how they consume and live their lives.



**Tove Lund, Planning Manager -
City of Gothenburg**

Strong partnership

The arrangement between KEG and the city was formalised in 2016 with the signing of a joint equal partnership, a Swedish model for cooperation between local government and a civil society organisation to rise to a common challenge. This enabled the consumer and citizens service to seek €10,000 of public funding for what became

cities in action

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where: Gothenburg, Sweden
what: Participation
when: 2016 - ongoing

known as the 'smart map' project. 'MapJam' events, a concept conceived by the Sharing Cities network, encouraged citizens, who were invited via social media, to contribute to building the content of the map.

The website and digital map were launched later the same year, showing and promoting more than 100 small scale initiatives, community resources and cooperatives. To be selected, each had to fulfil at least five of seven criteria ranging from being free of charge and enabling access prior to ownership, to promoting renting, sharing, swapping, making, lending or giving. The smart map is operated and run by KEG, which meets once a month to add new initiatives proposed by residents and make sure it stays up to date.



The smart map has really inspired me and is a great facilitator by visualising venues, creating communities and spreading accessibility rather than ownership.



Amanda Borneke, Gothenburg resident

Best practice

The map's search functionality is very flexible, allowing users to search for initiatives by name, sector or activity. Visitors to the site can also simply browse and be inspired by ideas such as growing vegetables in a neighbour's garden, hiring electrical and sports equipment from the public library, taking electronic gadgets to a repair café, swapping clothes or renting the latest fashions, learning how to mend things with 3D printing and sharing skills, leftover food, spare rooms, workspaces or cars.

The smart map features the city's two bike kitchens, a best practice example of resource efficiency and social value that adds up to much more than its primary focus: providing do-it-yourself workshops for anyone who wants to service or fix a bike. As well as offering assistance from knowledgeable volunteers, bike kitchens provide courses on bike mechanics and a social meeting place for people of all ages interested in cycling. They also act as a recycling centre for discarded and abandoned bikes which are then given to people in need.



High impact

The smart map doesn't only feature sustainable consumption initiatives; the collaborative movement is also about sharing companionship, meals and experiences. 'Meet the locals' is one of the most popular schemes of this kind. Run by the west Swedish tourist board, it enables visitors to meet residents and experience Swedish lifestyle and culture from a local perspective. For travellers, this can mean anything from sharing their hosts' family dinners to their favourite hiking trails or special places off the tourist track around the city.

Within six months, a survey showed that 10,000 inhabitants had visited the smart map, many expressing surprise that there were so many things happening to help them live more sustainably. Stakeholders of the 100 featured initiatives evaluated the map to be a crucial asset and contributor to their activities. Two factors behind this success are the involvement of KEG, which gave the initiative credibility among local activists, and engaged citizens who shared social media posts about the map by KEG and the local government.

By raising the visibility of the city's community resources, the smart map has already led to more collaborations between existing sharing projects as gaps have been identified and new ideas dreamed up to fill them. Next on the agenda is making the map open source, to allow other cities to replicate its framework, and supporting a proposal prompted by the smart map and the initiatives it features to make Gothenburg an official Sharing City.

