



An Urban Knowledge Arena





Co-production of Knowledge between Researchers and Actors:

- Experience from setting-up the Urban
Laboratory Gothenburg**

Roundtable Introduction at
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Concern 1 – Urban Change

”Why is so little changing when we know so much?”

”Why is progress so slow?”

”Why do so many decisions go against better knowledge?”



Capacity for Urban Change

Politicians, policy-makers, professionals and citizens need to be

- Aware
- Informed
- Understand
- Creative
- Innovative
- Commitment
- Empowered



Concern 2: Divides

Divides between different spheres of society:

- academia, professional work, politics, policy-making, every-day life

Divides between different fields of expertise

Divides between different types of knowledge and capacity building activities (research, education, training, development, demonstration/pilot work, action)

ULG Concept

An independent platform for innovative co-operation between policy-making, civil society, academia and professional practice





Features

- Joint venture city – academia
- Non-for-profit , non-political
- Lean organisation: small facilitating core
- Network operation
- Co-operation agreement, no legal entity
- Pilot 2005, operation 2006-2009
- Basic funding \approx € 200k/year
- Contract funding for projects



Who's involved?

- 2 Universities + City + Region + Business + NGOs

- Researchers, PhD students, Master students
- City officials
- Professionals
- Activists
- Politicians?



Activities 2005-2007

▪ Local Action

- Dialogue Southern Riverbank
- Urban safety Workshop
- Culture and urban governance Workshop

▪ University output

- Master level courses
- PhD course
- Trainee programme
- R&D Project

▪ International co-operation

- WUF3
- COST C20
- EU projects



Experiences (1): Concept still abstract

- Populating the "missing middle"
- Bottom-up or top-down?
- Network operation
- Facilitating agent



Experiences (2): Critical Mass Important

- Attract and mobilise human resources
- Gear up financial resources
- Exponentially increasing workload



Experiences (3): Local Anchorage...

- to build local networks
- to access "reality"
- to be relevant

...but also Scientific excellence

- to be accurate
- to access international networks



Experiences (4): Balancing the Role

- Borderlines to research?
- Borderlines to consultancy?
- Borderlines to politics?
- Pricing of services?
- Personal commitment – institutional capacity?



Experiences (5): Different Cultures and Traditions

- Professional communities
- Professional cultures
- Objectives of work
- Time frames for operations