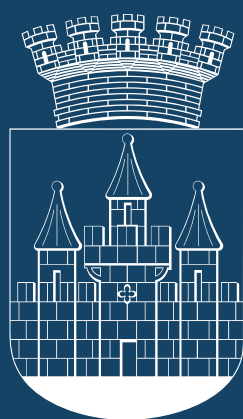# Creative culture grants and structuring networks

LUNDS KOMMUN

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Swedish Agency for
Youth and Civil Society

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Foreword

All Swedish municipalities currently work with civil society issues and attempt to strengthen the foundations of civil society organisations in various ways. This is achieved through cooperation, dialogue, advice and support, grants, support in terms of knowledge and more. This publication is part of the work to promote cooperation between public actors and civil society and is intended to serve as inspiration and knowledge support. It describes how the Lund Municipality, has worked with civil society and how they have worked with others locally.

The aim of the publication is to enable civil society organisations to expand their knowledge of how municipalities support and cooperate with civil society. At the same time, the story can inspire other public actors to strengthen their cooperation with civil society.

Multi-level cooperation is needed to meet society's challenges, and best practice and lessons learned are presented here to inspire more people to view cooperation with civil society organisations as an opportunity to come up with creative solutions to future challenges. Civil society organisations also need support to help them carry out and develop their core activities. For example, this may involve reducing the administrative burden; simplifying the conditions for funding; simplifying and clarifying opportunities for support and information; or access to premises.

The Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (MUCF) is responsible for promoting the achievement of the objectives of civil society policy by developing, collecting and disseminating knowledge. Furthermore, we are tasked with promoting cooperation between public actors and civil society and developing knowledge support for civil society.

The publication was produced by Development Manager Omar Nur of the Knowledge Support Department.

Lena Nyberg, Director General
The Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society

Introduction

This publication is part of a series of publications and has been produced to illustrate different examples of relationships between municipalities and civil society organisations. Six municipalities in Sweden have been asked to describe how they have worked with civil society issues and how they have supported and cooperated with civil society. Sweden has a civil society policy. Through this policy, the government wishes to highlight the major importance of civil society, develop and clarify the relationship between the state and civil society, and take a comprehensive approach to general issues concerning civil society and its conditions. The aim of civil society policy is to make it easier for civil society to continue playing a key role in democracy – involving people and contributing to the development of society and to welfare. This is to take place in dialogue with civil society organisations.

Civil society consists of a formalised part and a non-formalised part. Within the formalised part of civil society, there are a number of different organisational forms, the most common being non-profit associations, registered faith communities, foundations, economic associations, limited liability companies with a special limitation on dividends, and community and joint ownership associations.

Municipalities emphasise the importance of cooperating with civil society organisations to meet current societal challenges and those they envisage in the future. Improving the conditions of civil society requires a better understanding of its needs and conditions. The publications include several examples that aim to meet civil society's need for knowledge in different ways. It should be possible to use them as inspiration for development and cooperation – both within civil society and between civil society and other sectors of society.

There seems to be a great deal of variation between municipalities on issues of supporting and cooperating with civil society. Although differences may exist between municipalities, there is a clear interest in working more on these issues. There are many different initiatives taken by municipalities that seek to work with civil society to better deliver social benefits. This publication focuses on the Lund Municipality, but you can also read more about the work of the other municipalities in our series.

Borås
An agreement led to deeper partnership

Ekerö
From global disaster to local cooperation model

Linköping
Gender equality in sport leads to successful development

Lund
Creative culture grants and structuring networks

Helsingborg
One grant system for all associations

Jönköping
The benefits of a well-organised civil society

Lund: Creative cultural support and structuring networks

Stenkrossen – cultural support for creative processes

Stenkrossen in Lund is a municipal activity that offers cultural support in the form of space and context for creative processes in various formats. The support model consists of three parts (mini, midi, maxi) and it offers space for new ideas and concrete projects as well as established activities.

The support is time-limited and ranges from 3 months (mini) to 1 year (midi) and 3 years (maxi). Anyone can apply for support, whether they are an individual, association, organisation or company. Applicants do not need to be resident in Lund Municipality.

Stenkrossen is also the base for the annual Sommarlund, Vinterlund, Kulturnatten and Litteralund festivals, and the premises are also rented out with stages, workshops and meeting rooms for public events.

An interest-based, organic support model

The conditions for Stenkrossen's cultural support took shape when the Stenkrossen industrial site in Lund was annexed by the Culture and Leisure Department as a base for the now annual Sommarlund cultural festival. This was part of Lund Municipality's ambition to become the European Capital of Culture in 2014, which was not fulfilled. However, the initiative to organise a summer festival opened up the possibility of using the building, and the props and technology originally purchased for Sommarlund, to trial different partnerships between the municipality and the local cultural scene, using Stenkrossen as a platform.

In 2014, the Innocarnival initiative was tested in Lund, with Stenkrossen as its base. The initiative was funded with money earmarked for culture under the Capital of Culture project. The concept originated in Hong Kong and revolved around supporting children's and young people's creativity and ability to run their own start-ups, for example. While Innocarnival filled the building with projects and events, a leisure activity, parts of the cultural academy and two independent theatre associations, Lilla teatern and Riksteatern Lund, moved into the Stenkrossen premises.

Trust-based, interest-focused support

From 2015–2017, the first version of the Stenkrossen support models was developed, offering space for projects in art, culture and innovation. The projects were given access to premises under threat of demolition without long-term guarantees, which of course involved a certain amount of insecurity for both staff and projects. At the same time, it represented a privileged starting point in that Stenkrossen became a kind of municipal exception that could grow freely with minimum financial resources and maximum involvement. In this specific climate, a trust-based, interest-focused culture emerged, which Stenkrossen has tried to preserve. Back in 2015, a legal agreement was drawn up that enabled the various projects that had been granted space in the building to have their own key/tag for the relevant premises at Stenkrossen, which entailed responsibility to, for example, stay open for the project's own public activities. This created a culture of ownership that did not include the municipal employees; when the staff members went home for the day, the building was filled with bicycle repair workshop volunteers, circus trainers, amateur theatre actors, no lights no lycra dancers, makers, urban gardeners and others, all of whom considered Stenkrossen to be 'their' place.

This feeling of ownership is one of the strongest hallmarks of a culture of trust. The municipal staff members employed at Stenkrossen during the day could go on an inspection visit in the evening and see a hundred people involved in various types of activity, all self-motivated and without anyone knowing or caring that the person who just walked through the door happened to be the operations manager or technical coordinator of Stenkrossen.

"What do you contribute?"

At this early stage, the support model was based on the question "What do you contribute?" If you were part of a project at Stenkrossen and thus had access to the premises, you needed to contribute to the building in some way, usually through public activities that together made up Stenkrossen's public programme.

Both the application procedure for a space and the answer to the question of what the accepted projects contributed were defined through continuous dialogue between projects and the Stenkrossen working group, often very ad hoc. From one day to the next, a project could be added. There were no deadlines for applications, and the call to potential stakeholders was basically "come by and we'll have a coffee and see what we can do". The Stenkrossen working group also ensured that projects with similar interests could meet, and preferably work together.

From age-based to interest-based

In 2015, the focus of the Stenkrossen support model shifted from being age-based to interest-based. Instead of focusing resources on reaching young people and young adults, Stenkrossen's spaces were opened to all age groups. The pro-

jects that were granted a space in the building were encouraged (during the ad hoc dialogue with the Stenkrossen working group) to hold activities that would include as many age groups as possible, so that Stenkrossen could continue to welcome the original target group of children, young people and young adults, while enriching the activities with more perspectives.

The interest-based nature of the Stenkrossen support model also means a mix of professional levels (amateurs, students, volunteers, professionals, semi-professionals, experts, nerds and pensioners), which is an important and welcoming facet of Stenkrossen. Anyone with an interest in art, culture or innovation who has an idea, project or activity in these three focus areas can apply for a space.

The different professional levels also bring different added value to the activities at Stenkrossen. For example, volunteers and exchange students often create a feeling of belonging and involvement in a large group, while professionals provide inspiration through their art and by sharing their methods and working processes.

In summary, the Stenkrossen support models have emerged in an exceptional municipal climate in which trust, involvement, ownership, a focus on interests and a mixed target group have been important factors.

Transition from organic to structured support

In 2017, the decision to demolish the building was reversed and the detailed development plan for the area around Stenkrossen was adapted so that the activities could be established in the long term. Work began to make up for years of neglected maintenance of the buildings and the demolition contract was transformed into a lease with more rights, but also with a much higher rental cost. The quality of the premises was improved and Stenkrossen was given an external and internal facelift, while the budget required more external rentals of the premises, which meant slightly less utilisation time for internal projects.

Important to maintain the positive values

It was now clear that the ad hoc version of the space provision model needed to be replaced by a more structured model that did not depend on individuals. The great challenge was to retain all the positive values of the old, organically evolved model and adjust it to make it sustainable and justified in terms of cultural policy.

The actors who benefited from a space in 2018 were involved in a workshop on what should be retained and what should be developed in a new support model. Ownership and freedom were high on the retention list, while one area for development was that internet connectivity could be better.

In the autumn of 2018, Stenkrossen's new mini, midi and maxi places were launched. All the projects and actors in the building had to apply for their space for 2019, without any guarantee of acceptance. This was a blow for some; the

trust-based ownership culture had meant that some projects did not understand that Stenkrossen was in fact a municipal activity and that the municipality had the right to make demands or change the conditions for support. This transition phase in 2018–2019 became rather like working through trauma, and the staff at Stenkrossen had to spend a lot of time on it.

Mini, midi, maxi – the current support model

The current support model is based on three levels – mini, midi and maxi:

- *Mini* is a space for up to three months for exploratory ideas.
- *Midi* is a space for one year for specific projects.
- *Maxi* is a space for three years for established activities that wish to develop in line with Stenkrossen.

Applications for mini are made throughout the year, while applications for midi and maxi are made once a year. Admissions are decided by a council made up of staff members from the Culture Department. Responsibility has thus been shifted from the very local level (the Stenkrossen working group, ad hoc) to a more traditional municipal level (the Culture Department), while the decisions do not need to be made by a committee.

Ad hoc flexibility is preserved to some extent by focusing the application procedure on the target group and by redesigning the support in close cooperation with its beneficiaries. For example, the reporting procedure and dialogue structure were changed in the 2020 version following an evaluation of the first version in 2019.

Building on relational and site-specific elements

The mini, midi, maxi model is based on relational and site-specific elements: What conditions do we have to work with here in particular? The support scheme treats everyone according to their specific circumstances, but with a common framework as a stable foundation.

Stenkrossen is keen to be responsive to those who receive the support in order to constantly understand what constitutes good public support. To be able to listen to all the actors involved, municipal staff members have to work in part in the evening, i.e. when associations, volunteers and students are active.

The actors who are granted mini, midi or maxi places at Stenkrossen are given rooms according to their needs and do not have to pay rent. The requirement is that the actor must work in the field of art, culture or innovation and meet its target group or audience during the support period.

This may be a completely open and inclusive target group, but in some cases it may only make sense to invite members of the public with cutting-edge skills. Each actor decides what is most fruitful and compatible with the core of the project. One open activity must be carried out each quarter, and the activity must be of value to the actor. For example, it could be a workshop on a topic that adds value to the project or a rehearsal with a test audience. In some cases, the open activity and the project are inseparable, such as in the case of Cycle Culture Lund, which involves holding open bicycle workshops and a bicycle school twice a week, Lund's Open Workshop, which keeps the workshops at Stenkrossen open four days a week, or Circus Open Training, which organises open circus training sessions.

For some projects it is important to reach a certain target group that does not naturally find its way to Stenkrossen. The open activity can then be moved to other locations in Lund or take place online, depending on the target group to be reached. The only common requirement for the public activities is that there may be no cost to the participants.

Within the maxi support, special requirements are set for collaborations and collaboration with other actors in the house around the open activities, to promote that those who receive maxi-support and are long-term partners at Stenkrossen get an increased awareness about which actors are in the house and thus a wider horizon of opportunity. Each new partnership usually leads to another, like a pleasant chain reaction. The ambition for the future is that the Stenkrossen support model will continue to provide responsive, inclusive process support with clear added value in the form of context and partnerships for the internal actors and free, open cultural activities for the people of Lund.

The network-weaving model

The question of how to work together to reach out to residents at a greater distance from involvement, participation and networks has long been relevant in Lund in various ways, not least at the Culture and Leisure Department. In 2015, the question was raised in connection with Lund's reception of many new arrivals, which increased the demands on the municipality to support the inclusion of these people. The years since then have brought many new challenges and issues for both the municipality and its residents, and civil society has made invaluable contributions. In several areas in Lund, 'together networks' were formed, and Lund Municipality established the position of inclusion coordinator. Since autumn 2019, Lund Municipality's Culture and Leisure Department has been working to implement the network weaving model to systematically incorporate conditions for inclusion of citizens in existing municipal and non-profit activities at local level. The focus has been on eight areas in Lund, based on the local district libraries and youth centres.

A structure for cooperation throughout Lund

Lund Municipality consists of both urban and rural areas, and the different districts in the city of Lund and the urban areas in the eastern parts of the municipality have different conditions and different challenges.

Youth centres, district libraries and other bodies have been working with local community associations, non-profit organisations, businesses and others for many years to create added value and synergies between different initiatives and for different target groups. In particular, the issue of cooperation for increased inclusion was raised when Lund, like the rest of Sweden, began to receive many new arrivals from 2015, which increased demands on the municipality to work with the local communities to support the inclusion of these people. For example, individual volunteers started and developed more local 'together networks', joining forces to welcome newcomers to the local area, including by starting language cafés, collecting clothes and furniture, organising guided walks and matching local families with families of new arrivals. An inclusion coordinator was appointed by the municipality as a link between the target group, civil society and the municipality, with a focus on social inclusion during leisure time. This included leisure activities, the opportunity to meet people on a voluntary basis and, ultimately, a feeling of belonging in social contexts and local areas. The primary target group of the service was and continues to be new arrivals, but other potentially excluded groups are also included in the mandate.

The Culture and Leisure Department consists of four branches: leisure, sport, libraries and culture. The starting point for the network weaving model was the areas of leisure (i.e. youth centres and drop-in youth activities) and libraries (public libraries), as their activities are often in closest proximity to the residents.

In seven areas of the municipality, four in the eastern districts and three districts in the city of Lund, there is both a youth centre and a district library. In an eighth area there is no youth centre, but there is a mobile youth leader group and a library.

In Lund, we work on the basis of the generalisation that there are four main areas in which a newcomer should be included: housing, education, work and leisure. The focus here is on the fourth. Focusing on the group consisting of new arrivals was the starting point, but active work on inclusion involves many more people, and the aim of structuring and strengthening local cooperation has always been to increase the inclusion of local residents, regardless of their background or circumstances. The focus of the network weaving work so far has been on the municipality's activities and primarily the development of internal cooperation, with the awareness that similar work has, of course, been carried out for many years and is still being carried out in civil society.

The inclusion coordinator, initially with the operations manager of Fritid Genarp youth centre, has coordinated the work, while the operating managers of youth centres and district libraries, above all, have acted as local network weavers in their respective areas.

A tool for weaving networks

The network weaving model can actually be used in one or more different areas, for example to review flows and transactions but also to understand relationships and develop them. Lund has used the model based on the latter linked to social inclusion during leisure time. The model is a tool that does exactly what its name suggests – weaving networks. Creating links and hubs establishes stability and relationships between actors. You start by creating a network map (a kind of current status snapshot) of the area's established relationships and networks. This provides you with a good overview of what is available and where links are missing but could be built.

To then create the networks, a network weaver is needed to support and weave links, but with the aim of making itself redundant. The network weaver starts out as a weaver and then moves on to be a facilitator, supporting the actors to weave new network links themselves.
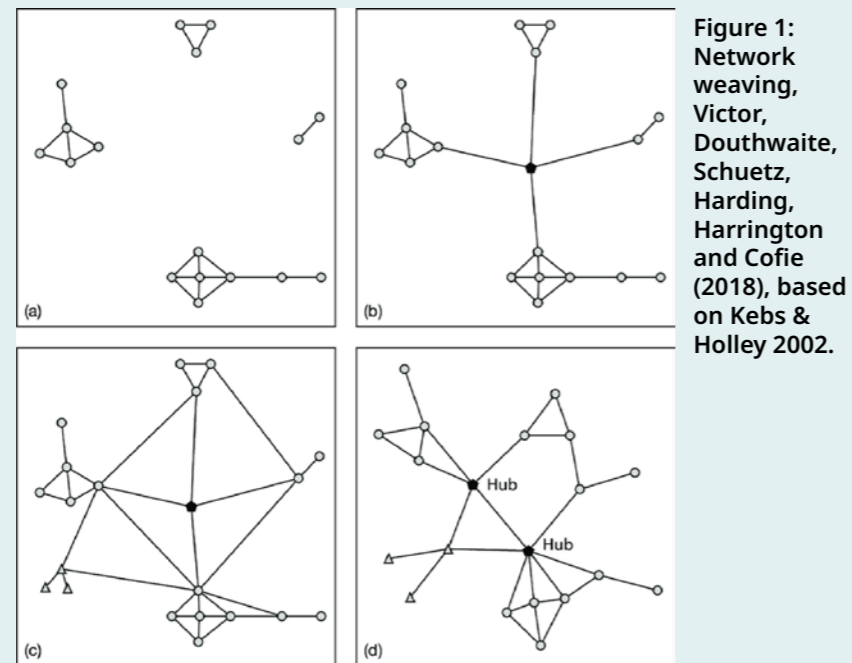
Figure 1: Network weaving, Victor, Douthwaite, Schuetz, Harding, Harrington and Cofie (2018), based on Kebs & Holley 2002.

Figure 1 shows what the 4 steps of the network weaving model might look like.

a) There are dispersed clusters of actors who do not know of or interact with each other. Some are in contact with each other, but no one has the whole picture.

b) A network weaver is included whose task is to create an overall picture and then encourage more links to be created and dialogues to be initiated.

c) The network weaver has identified common characteristics and goals of active actors and has facilitated the creation of contacts between more people in the area. Direct links are created between actors, in addition to the link to the network weaver.

d) The network weaver tries to remove itself, because several other strong links have been established between actors.

It is important to remember that the goal is not to create equally strong links between everyone. The number, length and strength of the links between actors may vary, but all have some kind of knowledge of each other and see the benefits of cooperation to move in the same direction. The network weaver may be a central function, but in Lund we have worked on the basis that the inclusion coordinator has a coordinating function and that there are local network weavers in the areas in which there are library and youth centre activities.

Network weaving improves structure of local cooperation

In Lund, it was clear that there were actors and clusters in all areas but with more or less cooperation between them, similar to the first step of the model. Several areas had come a long way and had an established structure of cooperation with, for example, 'together networks', associations, meeting places, business owners and others, while others initially lacked direct links between libraries and youth centres. However, there may not always have been an overarching purpose of the cooperation, and the cooperation was also linked to a specific person and/or place in some cases.

Regardless of how much an area had previously worked in cooperation with other actors, staff from the district library and youth centre in each area therefore had to jointly start developing their own network maps and answering questions such as: "Who are we already cooperating with?", "Who should we cooperate with?" and "What challenges do we see in our local area and how do we meet them?"

Below are some examples of ways in which to start working with the network weaving model by mapping cooperation actors and identifying common themes and target groups and methods for cooperating on a joint activity.

Another example is in Södra Sandby, where the youth centre and the district library identified culture as an important theme for many young people who felt that there was not enough on offer. The youth centre in particular has since started several partnerships with cultural actors in the local area and also initiated talks with study associations about jointly increasing the range of cultural activities, with the ambition of cooperating on premises, staff, target groups and marketing.

An example focusing on a specific target group is the girls' swimming session held in Genarp in summer 2020. On three occasions, 65–80 girls and women, the majority with a migration background, from Genarp and also from all over Lund and the rest of Skåne came together to swim, socialise and eat at Genarp open-air swimming pool after regular closing time. The activity was completely free of charge. Thanks to the cooperation between several actors, multilingual guides, youth leaders, field assistants and association representatives were present. The involvement of several actors allowed information about the event to be disseminated widely in several languages and transport to be coordinated, resulting in a high level of participation from a relatively hard-to-reach target group.

The last example concerns cooperation to reach more people to attend language cafés. The need for childcare was a barrier to participation for many. In language cafés, libraries and civil society actors therefore worked together to supplement language activities with children's activities, homework help and coffee breaks. The language café is a good example of how existing activities can be developed in cooperation to enable more people to attend.

Conclusion

By decentralising the inclusion work from the centre of Lund and one person, and instead co-owning the issue with local municipal organisations, cooperation can be strengthened. For example, more use can be made of premises, and if more actors are present, opening hours can be extended and more activities can take place. Experience can be shared, creating both added value and synergies. Cooperation can also become less dependent on specific individuals and thus more long-term. For actors, it is a way of knowing what is happening and what issues and challenges are important at local level to quickly find solutions based on local needs and conditions. For participants, cooperation can forge relationships between more people and information about activities can reach more people, which can lead to increased participation in the long run.

It is difficult to take a model and implement it straight out of the box. We have had to adjust and adapt it based on local conditions. In addition, on account of the COVID-19 pandemic, the start-up and implementation of the network-weaving model had to be adapted and occasionally paused. The work to gain acceptance was affected because the joint activities could not take place and their purpose was sometimes perceived to be unclear. But above all, this is an approach that takes time to become sustainable and, despite the pandemic, the work has produced positive effects that we can scale up when the situation can start to go back to normal to a larger extent.

The work in Lund has been based on municipal activities with the aim of improving the structure of local cooperation with other actors, but the tools and way of thinking could also be used in civil society. We often highlight the importance of cooperation, and the network-weaving model allows cooperation to have clearer goals and thus a better chance of becoming long-term.

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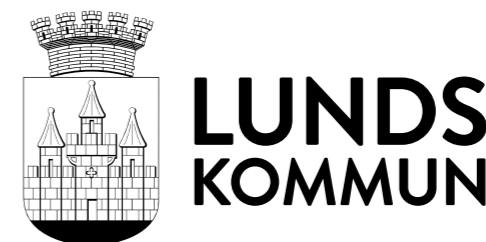
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At the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society, the focus is
on the conditions of young people and civil society. This is where
knowledge grows that decision-makers use when deciding which
initiatives for young people and civil society to prioritise. We pass
on this knowledge in our encounters with people at national
and European levels. We also distribute government grants that
enable organisations large and small to carry out their activities.
This also gives young people the opportunity to volunteer,
study or do an internship in another European country.

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