

# New ways of involving citizens and NGOs in decision-making process

## Danish experiences

*Coordinator Jens William Grav  
CC and Danish Focal Point*



# Why is it necessary to find new ways?

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- Today few citizens are members of the political parties
- The need of acceptance (legitimisation) of political and administrative decisions by the citizens
- Find the optimal solutions by use of limited economical resources

## Two examples

- Urban renewal and urban development
- Local council



# Urban renewal and urban development

## Background

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- Governments urban development strategy. Urban development is an important instrument in the social housing effort
- Urban development is meant to start developing and transforming the worst urban areas into attractive places to live and make private investment
- Urban development is meant to improve housing standards in the worst part of the housing stock and thus ensure up-to-date housing of a good standard
- Urban development is based on voluntarism and springs from private initiatives and private co-financing



# Urban renewal and urban development Background

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- Sixty-three area renewal projects started throughout Denmark between 2004 and 2008.
- Subsidies are conditional on the inclusion of local stakeholders in the planning and implementation of the initiative. Including private competencies and funds early on in the process gives citizens, companies and organisations involved responsibility thus ensuring continued development in the area – even after the public investments stop.
- A maximum of DKK 10 million can be allocated to any one project for area renewal if local authorities contribute with at least double this amount.



# Urban renewal and urban development Organization

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- Establishment of local steering group with representatives of citizens, NGOs, business life and administration (no politicians)
- A local secretariat



# Urban renewal and urban development

## Example of a steering group

- 6 citizens from different forms of housing
- 2 from cultural NGOs
- 1 from sports NGO
- 2 from commerce and business life
- 1 from social institutions
- 1 from library
- 1 from Agendacenter
- 1 from schools
- 1 from elder council
- 1 from local council



# Urban renewal and urban development Planning Process

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1. Plan for the future of the area,

2. Traffic Plan

- Implementation process, of the different proposals
- Green connection (organization, fundraising, lobbying)
- Children culture house (organization, fundraising, lobbying)
- Music square (organization, fundraising, lobbying)



# Urban renewal and urban development Experiences

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General experience with citizens involving

- Broad involving of citizens
- Working groups
- Dialogue with special groups
- Public meetings/events
- NGOs



# Urban renewal and urban development Experiences

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## Relation between steering group, secretariat, and city administration

- Need of detailed plan of implementation – who is doing what?
- Need of clear competences between steering group and secretariat
- No connection between political priorities and implementation through local administration
- Secretariat – change of persons



# Local councils in Copenhagen

Copenhagen is divided into 10 parts. East part of the city has a local council.

- Organization. 23 members (7 from each of the political parties in the city council and 16 elected amongst NGOs active in the local area)
- Task of Local council. The main task of the local council is to make sure the citizens are involved in the decision-making process before decisions are taken by the city council.
- Hearings.  
Plans for the part of the city.  
Administration of funds for supporting local activities



# Local councils in Copenhagen Experiences

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## General experiences with local councils

- Differences between members in the council
- Election of the NGO members
- **General interests vs. special interests**
- **Differences in involving within the different sectors**
- Time limits of hearings don't allow for involvement of ordinary citizens
- Administration of funds

