Malmö University DESIS LAB
Malmö City-Area programs
Sweden
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MIL
Makers culture and socio-physical urban renewal
Promoter(s).
City of Malmö-Environmental department
City of Malmö- Lindängen Area Program
MEDEA and Malmö University
Lindägen library
Allaktivetshuset
Students of the Master program in Interaction Design

Funder(s).
European Integration Found

Context.
The MIL project focused on the physical and social regeneration of the so-called "million program" areas in Malmö. Such areas have been build during the seventies when Sweden main cities were suffering of a severe lack of accomodations, leading to the construction in few years of one million appartments. Today these areas coincide with the peripheries of these cities. They are often presenting severe social issues and physical buildings are often in need of being restored.
The project.
The MIL project was a pre-study exploring how the physical restoration of these areas may be paired with the tackling of social issues. The Malmö University DESIS Lab in collaboration with local stakeholders has been exploring how makers culture could be used to revitalize these areas, by creating new social connections and value skills of people living in these areas.
The design process.
In collaboration with the Lindängen Area program, some local actors and the master students in Interaction Design a number of makers activities have been tried out in the area involving local citizens and local organizations. The result has been a number of recommendations about the possibility to set up a makerspace in the Lindängen area.
This project has been developed as a part of a more long-term process related to how makers culture could boost the milion area programs in Malmö. Particularly it has been used as a first step to both try out activities but also get to know the area (inhabitants and local initiatives). It has allowed to establish relationships both with grass-root initiatives as well as with “institutions” such as the library and the civil servants involved in the area program. The involvement of these institutional organizations has been fundamental for ensuring a long-term perspective to the initiatives. The library has decided to include in their development plan a makerspace, the civil servants of the area program are particularly positive about the potential of makers culture not only in the Lindängen area but in all million program neighborhoods in Malmö.
In setting up and carry out the activities of the project we have been looking for opportunities to hook up with existing initiatives in the area and reflect on what kind of “making” would make sense in Lindängen. Also in the discussions with the library and the civil servants, the aim has been to provide a wide and quite elastic understanding of the notion of makers culture in order to facilitate appropriation and adaption of the concept to the local conditions.
The activities have showed the potential of makers culture in fostering new connections within the area. For example the textile workshops organized together with the library, Folkuniversitetet and The RedCross have brought together members of the NGOs with women living in the area.
The MIL project has allowed to anchor the notion of makers culture within some civil servants, together with them we have resonate on how it could make sense within the “Million program areas”. Closely collaborating with civil servants has also provide the opportunity to reflect together about how designerly approaches may have sense in their practice.
Makers culture and makers practices open up several opportunities when it comes to the transition towards a more social and environmental sustainable production system. Beside introducing opportunities related to local and distributed production and circular economy, makers culture with its collaborative nature and focus on learning processes opens up for a broader understanding of value production, with use value being paired with skills acquisition and the creation of social relationships. Thus it allows to discuss the notion of value and useful production and, in the MIL case, how production may be at play, for example, in supporting the creation of social bonds within a neighborhood.
Skill Training and Design Education

Involving students in research projects
Tune complexity for students
From delivering concepts to co-create knowledge

Beside the opportunity to discuss with civil servants how design approaches could make sense in their practice, students have been closely involved in the MIL project. Particularly second year master students have been involved in designing and carrying out interventions in Lindängen in collaboration with the local stakeholders. The students found the complexity of the project and the context very challenging and demanding. At the same time they appreciated the opportunity to work with a real case and have the opportunity to collaborate with external stakeholders.
http://medea.mah.se/2013/01/project-mil-in-malmo/

http://malmo.se/Bo-bygga-miljo/Miljoarbetet-i-Malmo-stad/Hallbarstadsutveckling/Pagaende-projekt/MiL.html (swedish)

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