

SIMPACT SOCIAL INNOVATION BUSINESS CASE STUDY

Case Study **2016** No **1**

Urban Mediaspace Aarhus – Dokk1 Participatory Design of the Library of the Future

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SIMPACT Social Innovation Business Case Study

Covers research on the «Economic Foundation of Social Innovation» related to the components, objectives and principles of the social innovation process and measurement of social innovations at micro-level to inform policymakers, investors and other interested stakeholders.

SIMPACT

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URBAN MEDIA SPACE AARHUS



1

OVERVIEW

City, Country	Aarhus, Denmark
Addressed theme(s)	Social engagement, Public social innovation
Target Group	Civil society
Development Stage	Implemented
Established in	2005
Type of Organisation	City Council
Size of Organisation	Large (>=250)

Municipalities are struggling to give new functions to the public libraries systems in a context where the access to online resources is more and more diffused and physical space loses its original function. Dokk1 is the Aarhus City Council's new building project where the main library and the citizens' services will be located by the end of 2015. The project is part of a wider urban renewal intervention called Urban Media Space that is promoted by the City Council jointly with a private association in Denmark that supports philanthropic projects, Realdania. It aims at transforming Aarhus Inner Harbour from an industrial harbour to a lively urban space and to transform the central library into a multi-purpose place that combines citizen services and cultural and recreational activities. The innovation of the case lies in the participatory method adopted to develop the project that involves citizens, employees, the services' main users and local stakeholders over the years, applying a new form of governance in public services and spaces by social engagement.

2

PROBLEM TO BE ADDRESSED AND IDEA

In recent years, the public library has been a strategic element in urban development. Both internationally and in Denmark, new public library buildings form part of the city's endeavors to improve visibility, image and identity. The ambition is that the iconic library will contribute to reinforcing the city's brand as an attractive future- and experience-oriented city. Whereas classical city libraries were often placed in city centres, where people already go to for other reasons, many new public libraries are instead located strategically in run-down urban districts, old industrial areas and similar locations with a view to create vibrant new urban and meeting spaces. Libraries hence are following the trend of reorienting their activities in order to attract a new public and become lively places where people stay and use resources and services. With the recent process of digitalization of knowledge resources, the libraries' spaces have in fact become progressively less popular and have had to reinvent their role in the urban fabric.

Aarhus is the second largest city in Denmark with 310,000 inhabitants. Aarhus Public Libraries consists of a main library and 18 branch libraries working not only as libraries but as community centers with different focalizations on the local context. Aarhus branch libraries aimed at providing community services and have a number of innovation projects addressing the organization, the staff, external collaboration, new ways of working and the use of technology with the driving idea to meet the districts citizens' needs with suited services and spaces.

The Aarhus Public Libraries' fund received in 2004 from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Access to Learning Award was for example an opportunity to reach out to immigrant and refugee communities with library services based on the latest in information technology (IT). The

project, called Community Centre Gellerup (CCG), under Aarhus Public Libraries, was initiated in 2005 by a local library branch in the disadvantaged neighbourhood of Gellerup with the aim of developing a new type of institution: a community centre uniting library services, health promotion, counseling services for ethnic minorities and voluntary social work. Almost 12 percent of Aarhus residents are refugees or immigrants, a greater percentage than Denmark's national average. The city's libraries have responded by creating a diverse array of outreach programs and electronic and print resources in the immigrants' native languages. From this experience, the Aarhus libraries have pursued an innovative agenda to reduce the growing gap between skilled information users and individuals who have no access to information. Denmark's Aarhus Public Libraries exemplify the pivotal role that public libraries can play in integrating citizens from all walks of life into today's complex, knowledge-based society (Jackson, 2005).

In this context, the City Council started to implement the new Urban Mediaspace Project, including the central public library, in the city waterfront area. The project is based on an innovative participatory approach that was used by the local institution to include a wide range of local actors, from users to staff, in order to create shared value in a process of engagement in the creation of a public space. With Mediaspace, the City of Aarhus wants to ensure and enhance citizens' opportunities for knowledge and personal development through a user-centered approach in order to ensure that citizens' encounters with knowledge and culture become enjoyable, appealing and fascinating experiences.

3

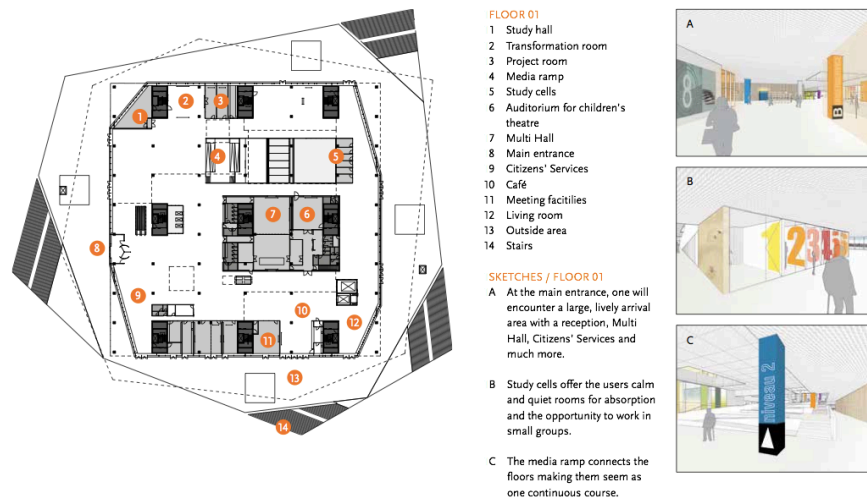
CORE SOLUTION AND MOTIVATIONS

Urban Mediaspace Aarhus is the largest construction project in the history of the city of Aarhus and it is part of the transformation of Aarhus' inner harbour from an industrial harbour to an urban space. The project includes Dokk1, a big multi-purposed building hosting the future main Library and citizen services, an innovative automatic car park with 1,000 parking spaces, three new waterfront spaces, restructuring the area's infrastructure, preparations for the light rail, opening up the last part of Aarhus river and climate protection of the city centre. The area will become a brand new urban space that will strongly influence the city plan.

The municipal reform of 1st January 2006 exemplifies the direction taken by the Municipality as it merged Citizen Services and the Public Libraries under a single administration. This directly affected the project development orienting the Mediaspace towards being both a cultural and service centre for Aarhus citizens, hosting a service point for Citizen Services and offering manifold facilities for social and associative activities, as well as networking by means of project rooms, study cells, media, café, classrooms, halls, activity and transformation spaces and informal open spaces. Its vision is to become an open and accessible learning environment supporting democracy and community.

The project is mainly financed by the City Council with the contribution of Realdania and Realdania Byg. The architectural project is led by Schmidt Hammer Lassen Architects, who is the coordinating contractor for the project, and is affiliated with Arkitekt Kristine Jensens Tegnestue and Alectia a/s as sub-consultants. Dokk1 and the car park are scheduled for 2015, while the waterfront spaces and the rest of the project will be completed in 2016.

Figure 1. Dokk1 - Project for the 1st floor of the building



Urban Mediaspace Aarhus and Dokk1 have been developed through a participatory process that uses the Aarhus Model for Citizen Involvement as a starting point. The model was adopted for the first time in April 2004 and used by the Municipality to make policies, strategies, plans and projects that could be of interest to many people or groups of citizens. This may involve initiatives including the entire municipality, part of the municipality or a single locality. The model builds on the many lessons learned with the citizen participation in previous years and should be seen as a development of methods and principles already in use. Aarhus model does not argue for more civic participation, but with due diligence on a qualified basis. This approach implies that citizen involvement will help to safeguard their ability to influence municipal policies, plans and projects and that public knowledge may be useful when the municipality takes decisions.

The idea of the project was to make the citizens' use of services, ideas and wishes visible throughout the development process and to include them in the final outcomes. Citizens, local associations, employees, cooperating partners and other stakeholders were involved in project development through a series of co-envisioning and co-design activities and workshops when there was an actual opportunity to influence the project.

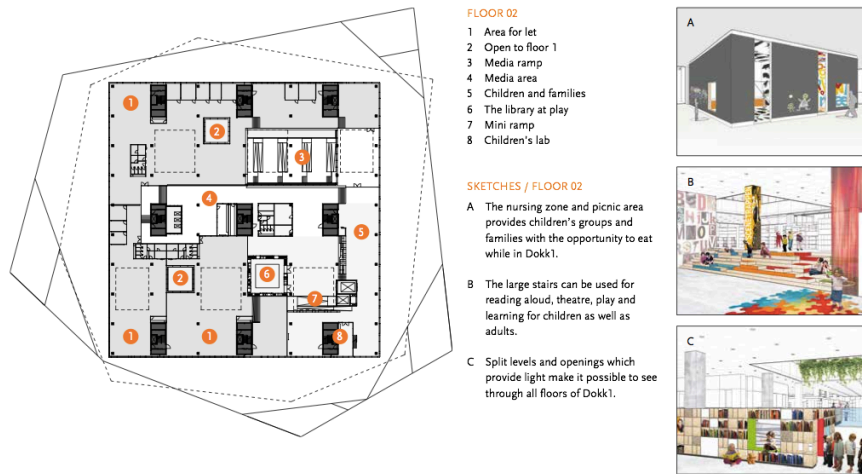


Figure 2. Dokk1 - Project for the 2nd floor of the building

The case is an example of social innovation in the public sector both for the new participatory method adopted, already used in other contexts but radically innovative for public administrations, and for the services aimed at social inclusion hosted in the building. Thus the case is a social innovation both in its means and objectives.

The project core values, created in the first phase of the participatory process, are:

- Citizens as key factors;
- Lifelong learning and community;
- Diversity, cooperation and network;
- Culture and experiences;
- Bridging citizens, technology and knowledge;
- Flexible and professional organization;
- Sustainable icon for Aarhus.

These formed the overall vision of the Urban Mediaspace Aarhus and guided the engagement process.

4

DEVELOPMENT PROCESS AND VALUE CHAIN

In 2001, Aarhus City Council made a decision to build a mediaspace which among other things had to encompass the new main library. In 2003 the Unified Plan for the Waterfront was passed and later that year the City Council set aside financing from the construction of the project. Following the city council's resolutions to realize the project in 2003-2004, the project was initiated in 2005.

The final location of the building was decided by the City Council in 2006 together with the design of tenders and core values. The project competition took place in 2008 and by then, the project had grown to include a new Citizens' Service centre, restructuring the infrastructure in the area and opening the remaining part of Aarhus River (Aarhus Municipality, 2008). In 2009 the winning consortium to construct the building and environing sites was selected.

The project was developed over the years following a series of activities. In 2005 and 2006, the first ideas for the area were developed jointly with the planning process and the core values and the framework for competition and tender were established. From 2005 to 2007, citizens were initially involved in the creation of the vision and values of the project. The competition program was drawn and the network and cooperation with local stakeholders were developed. In 2008, the competition was launched and in 2009/10, the winner of the project competition, Schmidt Hammer Lassen Architects, was selected for the Urban Media Space project and, after the negotiation and the enterprise tender, the firm became the coordinating contractor of the project (<http://www.urbanmediaspace.dk/en/project/facts/timetable-project>).

From then on the services and activities in the Mediaspace were further developed with a broad participation of users, employees, children, and

other possible users of the building in co-design workshops and activities (Figure 3 and 4).



Figure 3. Citizens involvement in the participatory process activities

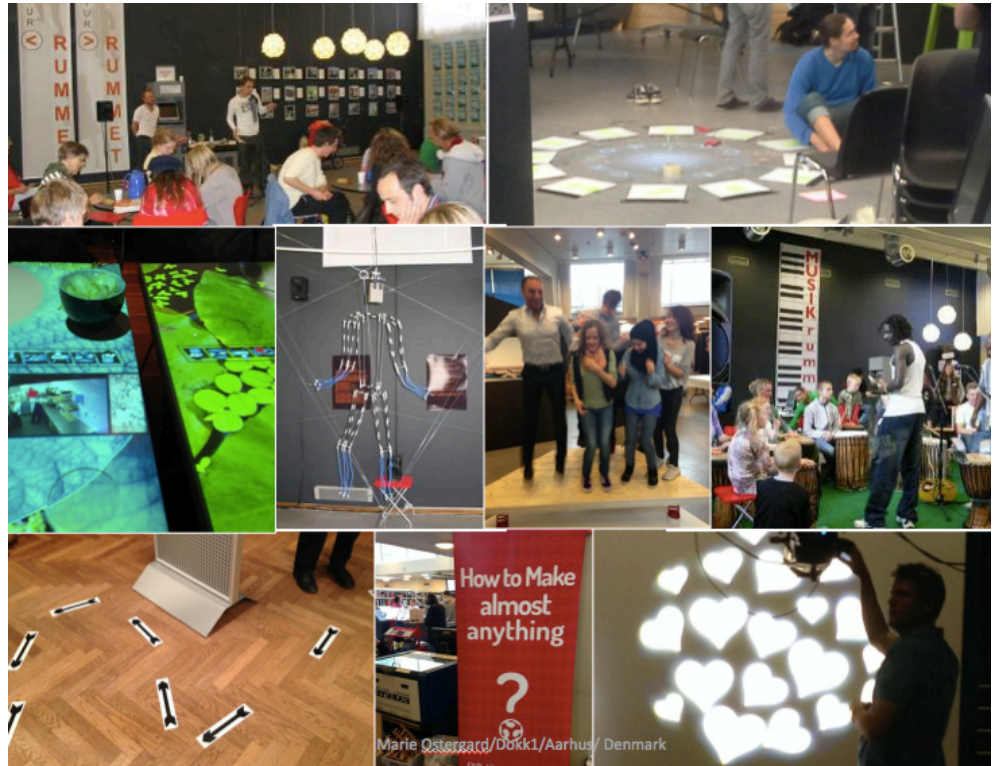
Between 2011 and 2015, the main project was designed and the implementation started while the involvement process proceeded on selected activities (Table 1). The Dokk1 project is foreseen to be completed in 2015, while the rest of the area, including the waterfront spaces and opening of the river, will be ready in 2016 (Ibid).

Year	Activity	Involvement	External	Internal
2005	Development of vision	broad	X	X
2006	Development of values	broad	X	X
2007	Competition programme	broad	(X)	X
2008	Competition phase	narrow	X	X
2009-10	Building programme	broad	X	X
2011	Project proposal	medium	(X)	X
2012	Final project	narrow		X
2013-14	Interior decoration and furnishing	broad	X	X
2015	Furniture and IT	broad	X	X

Table 1. Synthesis of the co-operative design proces. (Source: Ostergard, 2014)

Citizen participation in the development of the public project is the core of the case study. This process was carried on through the years with several forms of co-design activities using face-to-face meetings, paper-based and digital tools such as: the creation of the Fliker tag «Mediaspace» to upload images for inspiring the process towards the Mediaspace; the Dialogue Meetings in 2009 that involved approximately 250 citizens and regarded the construction of the new Mediaspace and urban waterfront spaces; the open process to define the new name of the building; the Video Vox Pop interviews where citizens were asked what they think was important to consider when building the library of the future; briefing sessions to inform the neighbours on the project in 2009; a public event in 2008 carried out at the City Hall involving 200 citizens: Exploratorium, a creative workshop about the library of the future, which was open for children from the ages 9 to 13 in 2007. Employees as well were involved in the process starting from 2007 with several meetings and a field trip to Birmingham in 2012 as professional input for the future development of the organisation Citizen Services and Libraries (<http://www.urbanmediaspace.dk/en/involvement>).

Figure 4. Citizens involvement in the participatory process activities.



The project's formal organization includes: the municipality of Aarhus as the principal developer; the Project Board made up of the mayor of

Aarhus, City Council members, and representatives of Realdania, a private association in Denmark which supports philanthropic projects in the realms of architecture and planning and sponsors part of the project; a general steering committee appointed by the board in charge of the entire project including the transformation of the areas surrounding the building; and a sub-committee responsible for the building itself. The Mediaspace project management refers to these committees and is responsible for the planning, development and coordination of the project.

Furthermore, a strategy group involving representatives from numerous local institutions and organizations contribute to the ongoing planning and development process at a strategic level, and another group provides input regarding technology, architecture, civic communication and library development (Dalsgaard, 2010). COWI consulting group headed construction management on Dokk1, in charge of quality control and cost control of the entire building site.

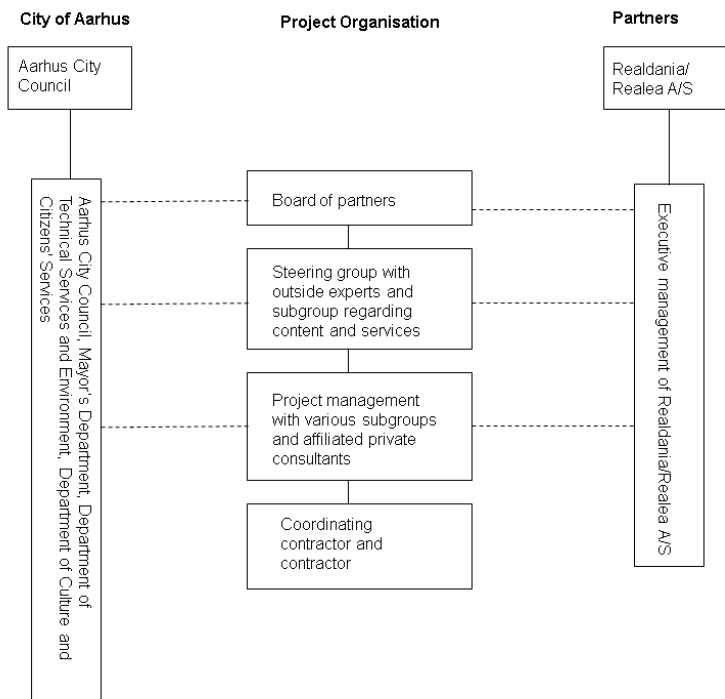


Figure 5. Organizational chart for the construction project, Urban Mediaspace Aarhus (source: <http://www.urbanmediaspace.dk/en/project/facts/whos-building/project-organisation>).

Aarhus City Council is the main financier of the waterfront area requalification intervention, supporting the Mediaspace project, traffic alteration, cleaning of Aarhus Stream and the New Central Urban

Waterfront. The project is also financed by the proceeds coming from the sale of the previous main library and profits from renting out parts of the Mediaspace. Furthermore Realdania and its subsidiary company Realdania Byg have engaged in the project with a financial contribution of 700 million DKK (2008-price level). This contribution was allocated partly to the construction of a parking area, with room for 1,000 cars and partly to the construction of the waterfront. The budget for the entire project is 1.7 billion DKK (2008-price level) (Aarhus Municipality, 2008).

The project creates value for civil society in general who can access and use the renewed area and the services offered. The value is created both with the project and the process itself. Users and local stakeholder participation in the definition of the vision, physical spaces and services offered in the Mediaspace is an innovative approach that affects society when it is applied, as it can improve, on the one hand, the relation between citizens and institutions, and on the other hand, the services offered thanks to the contribution and experience brought by their direct users and staff.

Economic and social value is created for the City Council, the owner of the building and the main service provider. The institution plays a major role as a promoter, financier and owner of the buildings, coordinating at the same time the activities and public service offered and widening its public by integrating cultural, recreational and library activities in the same place.

Realdania pursues its social goal by supporting a large-scale urban intervention aimed at changing the shape of Aarhus city, thus acting as a catalyst for change, addressing the structural challenges facing the built-in environment and society. Over the last 5 years, Realdania has also collaborated with the Danish Agency for Culture to develop the Model Programme for Public Libraries that offers a web-based inspiration catalogue and tools to communicate new knowledge, best practices and inspiration for brand new space/function interplay for library developers. Model program was completed as an inspiration catalog and tool in its first version in September 2013. In 2014, Aarhus Public Libraries collaborated with the international design firm IDEO and Chicago Public Libraries developed a toolkit for libraries to create services and interior design to suit user needs. The innovation model is developed based on human-centered design and was released in late 2014 as a digital book (<http://modelprogrammer.kulturstyrelsen.dk/en/>).

This project proposes a participatory approach in the definition of the new libraries spaces following the Danish and Aarhus policy direction, reinforcing and validating the participatory intervention model adopted to develop the Mediaspace as a new community centre.



Figure 6. Image taken from a webcam at the construction site (19.05.2015)

5

EVIDENCE FROM THE CASES

5.1 Problem to be Addressed and Idea

Public libraries have to find a new way forward in their service offering. With the recent process of digitalization of knowledge resources, the libraries' spaces has become progressively less popular and have had to reinvent their role and functions in the urban context. The problem addressed is internationally diffused and has raised the attention of public institutions. In some countries, the issue is taken into serious consideration as in Denmark where libraries are already considered as community centres that have to respond to the localized needs of the citizens.

The case is located in the Scandinavian context where legislative and socio-cultural conventions related to participatory concerns are an important pre-condition for its implementation. The case highlights the importance of social engagement in defining new library spaces and functions in order to create lively urban hubs that answer the citizens' real needs and wishes. The insights and ideas coming from people participation merge into a shared vision, nurturing the public institution.

5.2 Core Solution and Motivations

The solution adopted an extended plan for citizens, employees and stakeholder involvement that started with the design of the vision for the new urban area, going through the identity and branding process defining the name of the main building, and finally defining the building spaces, functions and forms of interaction.

The Aarhus City Council showed a great commitment to the approach, to the extent that the **Aarhus Model for Citizen Involvement**, including principles for how citizen involvement should take place in the City of Aarhus, has been a part of its operative model since 2004 and has been applied to different local projects. The attention and motivation of the institution is also highlighted by the creation in 2013 of the **Model Programme for Public Libraries** by the Danish Agency for Culture and Realdania. This offers a web-based inspiration catalogue and tools to communicate new knowledge, best practices and inspiration for brand new space/function interplay for library developers and proposes a participatory approach in the definition of the new libraries spaces. The Dokk1 case is in line with this direction, where the **institutions become the main driver of innovation adopting a social mean with a social goal.**

Development Process and Value Chain

5.3

The Mediaspace participatory project started in 2005 has gone on for the last 10 years. In this period, the participation process was widened and narrowed iteratively as the development phases changed, pursuing the idea to **engage users and citizens in general in well-defined activities** with valuable results addressing the project vision, the physical space and service design. Thus, the objective of the participatory process was not just to disseminate results or inform stakeholders but also to engage a wider public, **making participation a relevant activity, capable of creating value for the society as a whole** through a collective project.

In the Aarhus central library project the public body looks for innovation in society but innovates itself at the same time by applying a participatory approach. In this case study, the method adopted is innovation that aims at the same time at incorporating social innovation in the project outcomes.

The social value created for the City Council is generated by the higher participation of the citizens in public decision making, which enhances their sense of belonging to the place and improves the public services offered. While the economic value can be measured in the real estate investment as the building is owned by the Municipality as the old central library was. The latter is going to be sold and the money will be invested in the new Dokk1 building. **The new public space project is top-down and almost entirely financed by the City Council but looks for a bottom-up approach to define its vision and contents.**

6

DISCUSSION OF EVIDENCES IN SIMPACT'S THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

6.1 Social Innovation Components

6.1.1 Actors

The case sees the interplay of different actors coming from civil society and the economic and political fields, such as: citizens, library users, library employees, architects, contractors, sponsors, project managers, associations and foundations, the City Council and institutions in general. **The innovation in the participatory method used in the Aarhus library project is done by the Danish public body.** They are particularly conscious about the growing importance of including citizens as much as possible in developing the services that they will be using in the future in order to improve their performance and to avoid the risk of future criticism. Despite that, the management of this process in a large-scale public intervention is not easy as it entangles a wide range of activities such as information activities but also activities addressed to potential users that are not already library users. In the project this implied a great effort in creating settings for experimentation able to engage different targets. This issue influenced at the same time the physical configuration of the Mediaspace, that includes multifunctional areas that can be configured for changing needs and purposes (Dalsgaard, 2010).

As the project uses public funds the interest of the participants to the project is both based on personal motivations, as potential users of the

new urban area but also as stakeholders and indirect funders of the public intervention.

Resources

6.1.2

Aarhus City Council is the main financier of the waterfront area requalification intervention, supporting the Mediaspace project, traffic alteration, cleaning of Aarhus Stream and the New Central Urban Waterfront. The budget for the entire project is 1.7 billion DKK, of which about 700 million were funded by Realdania association and its subsidiary company Realdania Byg. The project is also financed by the proceeds coming from the sale of the previous main library and profits from renting out parts of the Mediaspace.

The City Council is the promoter and main supported of the entire process and the public services management ensures the project economic sustainability.

Institutions

6.1.3

As highlighted in previous studies on the relation between social innovation and the public sector: «(...) it is also important, although difficult given the fuzziness of the concept, to distinguish between public innovation on the one hand and social innovation in the public sector on the other hand.» (Bekkers et al., 2013, p. 35)

What we would note in examining the case of the new Aarhus Urban Mediaspace is that drawing a line between what is public innovation and what is social innovation in the public sector may be not only difficult, but also misleading, since there are forms of interaction between the two levels that make them interdependent. The new ways in which the public is carrying out very traditional tasks (in this case: conceiving and constructing an important public building) are deeply influenced by new processes and practices already in use in the field of social innovation. These practices actually made a long way before entering the field of social innovation, since they were conceived in the frame of the long-term evolution of User Centred Design (UCD) from the concept of «designing for» to that of «designing with», primarily as ways of making solutions for commercial products (and later of for services and interfaces) closer to the needs of end-users or consumers. At the same time - even if we recognise that participatory design practices have been primarily constructed in the sphere of the private enterprises - we have

to acknowledge that the meaning that participation assumes in the development of public goods or services is somehow deeper and more rich, due to the social ends of the same goods and services. The diffusion of these practices in the public sphere is thus symptomatic of a growing demand of participation, and at the same time one of the drivers of its growth, together with other «enabling» conditions, such as new digital technologies and platforms that have completely revolutionized the very meaning of participation.

This new frame is making the public initiative more and more social not only in its ends, but also in the ways in which it may be conducted. For sure the ways in which relevant public initiatives are constantly monitored and commented throughout their development are already «social», to a much larger extent than they used to be in the past. New forms of participated public initiatives try to build on this. Not only is this a way of obtaining better results through the application of UCD principles, but also – if we look at the question in the perspective of the public – to prevent the negative consequences of old practices by creating a new frame where citizens can criticize and build barriers in a much easier and direct way.

In the Aarhus case the institutions are the main driver of social innovation but at the same time are changed through the iterative participatory process being a result of the social innovation.

6.2 Social Innovation Objectives

Participation becomes a tool for the City Council to build consensus «in the making», but its management is much more complex than that of older practices. It requires the capacity of aligning and creating shared visions in situations where many actors with contrasting motivations and objectives play in. At the same time, these new practices call for the continuous management of trade-offs between the horizontal nature of participation and the vertical nature of the specialised skills required to perform specific tasks within knowledge silos. Citizens want to determine the vision that will lead to the creation of the new public building, defining its functions and its relations with the City, but only specialists will be able to give concrete shape to it and make it real, managing the many vertical tasks that are necessary to do so.

Taking decisions and managing productive processes within a participatory frame, where there is the need of governing the interactions of a relevant number of subjects with different interests, is the challenge that new projects such as that of the Aarhus Urban Mediaspace are experimenting with.

Social Innovation Principles

6.3

Modes of Efficiency

6.3.1

The public entity's objective of building a new, public, lively and urban space including the main library and Citizen Services foresaw a double allocation of resources: on one hand, the main investment was directed to the concrete development of the project and the building construction, on the other, a small part of the budget addressed the implementation of the participatory process. This budget allocation was the precondition to pursuing both economic and social goals with a long-term perspective. People participation aimed in fact at assuring the improvement of the public services offered and to design a public space taking into account their needs and desires.

Modes of Governance

6.3.2

The complex system of actors involved generates a form of governance through community engagement. The City Council remains the main promoter of the initiative but includes local stakeholders and potential users of the place through a process that is more than a consultation. Participation implies in fact the delegation of part of the power in decision-making, transforming the governance into a real engagement process where decisions are taken by the public entity but are directly influenced by the participatory process outcomes.

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