

**CO-OP**

Co-creative cooperation with culture  
volunteers and managers



## COOP

### Good practice examples, MOF-DK

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*1. Are there cases in your municipality/country when citizens are involved in the design of solutions in local cultural life, not only in implementation of local cultural strategies and goals? Who were the organizers of these co-creation practices?*

Below are examples from two municipalities: Thisted Municipality in northern Denmark and Guldborgsund Municipality in the south.

Thisted: In many municipalities in Denmark there are - in addition to the usual cultural institutions - many cultural civil society associations. In order to unite the influence of the associations, local cultural councils has been established as an umbrella of the associations in order to make it easier to make joint events and not least, have a voice in the municipality's cultural policy. In many municipalities the local cultural council is recognized as an equal partner in the organisation of the local cultural policy and when the city council is renewed every 4 years, the local cultural council participates on equal terms with the cultural politicians and the cultural institutions in the decision on which cultural policy should be pursued.

In Thisted the municipality has set up a system for co-creation processes in connection with the renewal of cultural policy every four years. It contains procedures and principles for the co-creation leading to this policy.

Guldborgsund: The many waterways at the island of Falster, where you find the Municipality of Guldborgsund, have led to many cultural historical sites. Falster has Marrebæk Pump Station - a museum with an old pump - a model of what will happen at watercourse, a model of the Gedesby ship (from the 13th century), the ship Agnete (the Gedesby ship in small version) and another model is in the middle of the medieval centre just outside Nykøbing, the largest city of the island. In the woods near the west coast there are a lot of ancient burials from the Stone Age. The island, just north of Gedesby has never been completely dry, but a few years ago thoughts have been advancing to clean it. Just outside of the southernmost town, Gedser lays a rampage and the remains of a castle. There is a ferry port and there has been a ferry to Germany since 1886. The southern tip of the island is surrounded by water on 3 sides, but has previously been covered by forest and been used by the nobility for hunting and grazing. The forest is destined for the

construction of especially warships - especially because of many wars against the Swedes. Unfortunately, all of the listed cultural historical sites are in default and in a project supported by the Nordic Council of Ministers the idea was that volunteers will be restoring the area, so buildings (and nature around them) would be attractive both for residents and for tourists. The project was initiated by the National Association of Cultural Councils and the Municipality of Guldborgsund and as the municipality at that time just had started to implement co-creative ways of making projects this became one of the first projects done in that way. Therefore it was also very much a learning-procedure for all partners.



*The two municipalities, Thisted and Guldborgsund*

*2. Could you describe the methods or procedures used for these co-creative practices? What goals in which manner are achieved? Are there some innovative methods used (e.g. special games, different design thinking methods etc.)?*

In Thisted the municipality has set up a system for co-creation processes in connection with the renewal of cultural policy every four years. It contains the following procedures with the principles:

- Wholeness and coordination
- Political framework management / Trust in management
- Cross-cutting solutions
- Co-responsible and co-creative citizens
- True dialogue and participation
- Citizen Involvement
- Confidence

- Individualization - fits the individual
- Co-creation
- Comparison
- Citizens = Resourceful active people

In Guldborgsund they have the following principles:

- Lead through processes rather than leading the process.
- Be facilitating rather than controlling - drop the control
- Expand the problem understanding - start understanding the problem again!
- Submit the right of initiative and instead fertilize the earth for others to do so.
- Be responsive to the needs of the outside world go to discovery in the unknown.
- Supported arenas for co-creation and participation
- Think big and start small with connecting to the existing one

*3. Could you describe in which way the active participation of citizens is organized? Is it open and inviting for everybody/different representatives of the society? What groups of citizens usually take part or have taken part in these co-creative practices?*

Thisted has divided the cultural groups in the municipality into different groups, all of which participate in the process. They are:

- Institutional and cultural groups
- Professional networks
- Cultural schools
- School service and The Cultural Backpack
- Coherent talent development programs from preschool to adult within the artistic genres
- Working group on Hanstholm Lighthouse
- Mapping the physical resources
- Open institutions, transport, digitization and dissemination (Accessibility)

All groups – as equal partners - discuss for 4 weekends - areas of action also called the 6 main roads in cultural policy. It is:

- Increased focus on the localized potentials
- Cooperation and holistic thinking
- Children and young people's access to culture and talent development
- Knowledge environments and professionalism
- Strengthening and rethinking the physical framework
- Cultural diversity and accessibility in everyday life

Guldborgsund: In the Municipality of Guldborgsund, the co-creation is carried out with various types of councils from the civil society, grouped according to which "professional" profiles they have. These are:

- The Cultural Council
- The Sports Council
- The Adult Education Committee
- The Citizen Council
- The Green Council
- The Senior Council

4. *What factors in your opinion contributed in order this practice would be successful? What attitudes/tasks this practice requires from public employees?*

In the municipality of Guldborgsund they have a mind-set for the public employees saying:

- "We want to be closer to the citizens to create a close community and involve them in relevant decisions. We do so because we believe that all citizens are an important resource that has a shared responsibility and a role to play in our municipality.
- "We make it concrete by being more facilitating and being in early dialogue with citizens, associations and other actors. It's about creating small local communities and cross-community communities in the big community?"

As for the municipality of Thisted all the participants in the process have made a statement:

**Co-creation isn't a reproduction of something that already exists.**

- The innovative aspect of co-creation can take place at many levels.
- The key is that the parties experience added value

**Co-creation is a mutual dependence**

- Co-creation is that everyone has a central role to play and no one can be dispensed with.
- Requires a clear expectation match.

**Co-creation is a dialog-based process**

- *One defines together problem and action.*
- *A common reflexive room.*
- *A continuous renegotiation.*

**Co-creation spreads the right to take the initiative**

- *No one owns the initiative or process.*
- *A shared responsibility where everyone who wants can participate*

### Co-creation requires risk of liability

- *Dare to let go*
- *No one has the decision-making power alone*



*5. What has been the result of this practice? Has it been continued with follow-up? Is it regular and sustainable practice?*

Both in Guldborgsund and in Thisted you now have a co-creation consultant. Guldborgsund has also created a knowledge centre for co-creation. In Thisted they still use the co-creative way of deciding their local cultural politics.

*6. Would you have some recommendations for future use of the described co-creation practice? Do you see some important factors where attention should be paid in order this practice could be used regularly with good results?*

I will recommend some of the principles from the two municipalities:

- Wholeness and coordination
- Cross-cutting solutions
- Be co-responsible and co-creative
- Have a true dialogue and participation
- Confidence is crucial to creating space for co - creative processes
- Lead through processes rather than leading the process.
- Be facilitating rather than controlling - drop the control
- Expand the problem understanding - start understanding the problem again!
- Submit the right of initiative and instead fertilize the earth for others to do so.
- Be responsive to the needs of the outside world go to discovery in the unknown.
- Supported arenas for co-creation and participation
- Think big and start small with connecting to the existing one
- It's not all things that can be co-creation. Many good well-run collaborations should not be replaced by co-creation