

INTEGRATED ACTION PLAN FOR WEST END IN VEJLE

INTRODUCTION

Climate change, urbanization and globalization causes greater divides and social polarization in the municipality of Vejle and increasingly influence the services, which the municipality provides, as well as the daily lives of the citizens in Vejle. Therefore, building resilience is crucial to address the policy challenges Vejle is facing.

100 Resilient Cities defines urban resilience as *“the capacity of individuals, communities, institutions, businesses, and systems within a city to survive, adapt, and grow no matter what kinds of chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience.”* In other words, being resilient is the ability to absorb shocks and stresses and learn from crises. For the Chief Executive of Vejle, the municipality as a system is resilient; when citizens thrive on their own - to such a degree that, the municipality administration becomes almost obsolete.

We are living in an increasingly complex world, where society in itself is complex, the challenges we face are complex and the solutions to these challenges are complex as well. The stresses we face in Vejle are deeply interconnected and we cannot deal with one without considering the other. At the same time we suffer from imperfect knowledge due to this complexity. Urban resilience is an integrative concept and transformative concept that offers a frame of reference, which provides us with the opportunity to combine new ways of thinking into holistic solutions, while the experimental approach of transition management provides us with the opportunity to mobilize resources and people in a community-led, bottom-up approach to policy challenges at the local level. Viewing the policy challenges through the resilience lens thus builds our capacity to work in different ways, think out of the box and break down the silos, which prevent us from solving complex challenges.

West End is an area of Vejle with approximately 8500 residents. It is a former working class neighborhood with a strong identity and a proud history. It is also an area of Vejle with lower household incomes; in fact, the percentage of people living below OECDs poverty line in West End is 6.9%, whereas the rate is 3.9% for the rest of the municipality. More vulnerable groups, as well as a higher number of people with a different ethnicity than Danish, also populate the West End. So compared to other districts in Vejle, West End is a challenged neighborhood and therefore it seems an appropriate choice for an urban living lab in the transition towards resilience. On the other hand, West End is also an area with distinct qualities that will be an asset in building resilience, and it will be a focal point of this integrated action plan to leverage these strengths. These assets

include: the Spinning Mill - an old factory turned hub for local startups and artists - strong housing associations, strong communities, such as Dyrk Vejle – an urban garden community – a strong history and culture, as well as a creative underground.

1. SHOCKS & STRESSES

In Vejle, the stresses we face on a daily basis are more significant than the risks we face from major shocks. This is also the case for the West End. In our resilience strategy, we have identified climate change and flooding as our major acute threats. This is underlined by the fact that the Danish government has identified Vejle as one of the ten most exposed cities to flooding in Denmark. The West End is one of the lower lying areas of the city and is thus more prone to flooding than the neighborhoods situated on top of the hills, which surround the entire city. Cloudbursts and extreme rainfall are therefore major threats to the West End, as it causes a lot of stress to the infrastructure, as well as to the health and wealth of the local community.

The West End also faces a number of stresses at the social level. The West End is the area in Southern Jutland with the most crime, leading to high levels of insecurity in the community. Additionally, increasing unemployment, cuts in social benefits from the national government, a growing number of young people with mental health issues, more groups that are vulnerable and increasing social disparity are also factors that contribute to higher levels of vulnerability and insecurity in the West End.

Besides stress from flooding, the West End is also under pressure due to traffic congestion. This lessens the quality of life for the citizens, reduces safety of “soft” road users and affects the local businesses in the area negatively, as parking spaces are limited.

2. WORKING FOR URBAN RESILIENCE IN URBAN LIVING LABS

Objective

The stresses and shocks of the 21st century is threatening to Vejle’s economy, society and environment. The well-being of citizens in Vejle, and particularly West End, is dependent on the ability of citizens, institutions and businesses to tackle these challenges. Furthermore, the challenges are many, resources are limited and we already know that taking a reactive approach is costly and ineffective. What Vejle needs is a forward-looking and integrative approach to city management and urban resilience offers a way for the city to turn its challenges into opportunities. A major part of our resilience strategy for the entire city of Vejle is co-creation and social resilience, and we want to utilize the West End as an urban living lab for the creation of solutions that can set an example for ways to address policy challenges in all of Vejle.

Essentially, we have worked with urban resilience since 2013, because we want to:

- Mitigate and preempt the impact of climate change
- Promote social cohesion and avoid polarization
- Ensure well-being for current and future generations
- Co-create innovative and multi-functional solutions with added value
- Reinvent the provincial city as a creative and agile front runner

Process



Figure 1: Vejle's transition process

During the development phase of Vejle's resilience strategy from 2014 to 2016, we had several stakeholder workshops to identify perceptions in and about the city, as well as the areas to focus on when building resilience. We also developed an actions inventory of all the actions and initiatives in Vejle. We therefore had a very thorough system and context analysis of Vejle and the West End, when entering into this project.

As part of the orienting phase of our transition towards resilience, we held two stakeholder workshops (ULG meetings one and two) in the community. The workshops were held at The Spinning Mill in the West End, an old factory location from back when Vejle had a cotton industry and a proud symbol for many West Enders of the working class culture that persists in the West End.

The workshops brought together community actors holding different sets of knowledge in order to set the foundation of co-production (or co-creation), which is a prerequisite from a transition management point of view. This focus on making co-production happen in the West End has resulted in a pathway dedicated to building this capacity within the community.

Workshop participants included business owners from the Spinning Mill, representatives and members from the housing associations, community groups, residents and more. The workshops set the foundation for the transition and informed the envisioning and pathway creation processes. At the first ULG meeting, the ULG defined the problems and the second ULG involved an envisioning process. The envisioning meant imagining the settings of a future resilient West End to create understanding and framing of the needed directions, while keeping a sense of place in the local context of the West End.

Facilitators and participants noted down workshop discussions on flip charts, post-its and large answer “sheets” at each table. Facilitators then met after the workshops to consolidate notes and analyze the findings. This work fed into the development of the vision and the integrated plan. ULG meeting three and four were both part of the agenda-setting phase, and the aim of the meetings was to set strategic objectives and creating pathways. The meetings additionally followed up on the two workshops and mapped current initiatives in order to have the right foundation for setting pathways. ULG meetings five, six and were part of the process of planning and preparing experiments, while the final two ULG meetings were actual experiments and part of the activating phase.

A local community council for the West End was established during ULG meeting five and since then, the original ULG has dissolved. However, most people from the original ULG are part of the council and therefore the work initiated in the transition process has continued, but with a community-led approach, rather than community-supported. In our perspectives, it displays the empowering capacities of urban resilience and the experimental approach that the ULG has become so self-organized that it continues to follow the pathways without the need for much intervention from the municipality’s side.

THE VISION OF URBAN RESILIENCE

We have big ambitions for the West End and the core parameters for our work in the West End is to promote social cohesion, avoid polarization, focus on youth culture and to empower the citizens of the West End. We recognize that our municipality is a complex system and know that social resilience is influenced by variables such as local infrastructure, job opportunities, national policies and much more. Therefore, our vision encompasses many different aspects, but all with the purpose to build social resilience in the West End.

VISION

The West End is a buzzing city area with opportunities for every citizen. Local businesses thrive and new types of economies and ownership models emerge, creating livelihoods and supporting the local economy of the West End. The infrastructure of the West End is protective, supports the local economy, enhances social cohesion and promotes healthy living.

West End is a safe area to live in, work in and visit and the trust among West Enders is great. No one feels lonely for extended periods and clubs, organizations and citizen groups play a big role in creating and preserving an inclusive, diverse and supportive local community for West End citizens.

The social cohesion of the West End makes it a unique area in Vejle, where great change happen quickly, as every citizen and actor in the community feel they make a difference to others in West End. Furthermore, citizens are empowered and take ownership and pride in the development of West End and its community.

PATHWAYS

As earlier mentioned, West End’s journey begins by building social resilience in the community and we believe that the three pathways below contribute to this. Each pathway is described in more detail below the figure.



PATHWAY 1: BUILDING A CO-CREATING COMMUNITY

“The social cohesion of the West End makes it a unique area in Vejle, where great change happen quickly, as every citizen and actor in the community feel they make a difference to others in West End. Furthermore, citizens are empowered and take ownership and pride in the development of West End and its community.”

Guiding principle: Change and the transition to resilience is happening because multiple actors come together to create the best solutions that are tailored to the needs of the West End community. People are aware of their own role in ensuring a better West End for themselves and the generations to come.

Strategic objectives:

- Increase multi-stakeholder collaboration

- Increase citizen engagement
- Improve conditions for creativity and innovation

Actors: Municipality of Vejle and its departments, local businesses, residents, local clubs and organizations, churches, Spinning Mill and West End local council.

PATHWAY 2: DEVELOPING A SELF-SUFFICIENT & ECONOMICALLY ROBUST COMMUNITY

“West End is a buzzing city area with opportunities for every citizen. Local businesses thrive and new types of economies and ownership models emerge, creating livelihoods and supporting the local economy of the West End. The infrastructure of the West End is protective, supports the local economy, enhances social cohesion and promotes healthy living.”

Guiding principle: West End is a flourishing society, where local businesses are supported and thriving, and all residents - no matter their gender, age, abilities or ethnicity - without difficulty are able to provide for themselves and their families.

- Reduce household expenses
- Increase employment
- Encourage prosumer communities

Actors: residents, the Spinning Mill and its development team and businesses, Dyrk Vejle (Grow Vejle), Department for Welfare, Job center Vejle, Venligboerne (The Friendly Residents) and The BID collaboration.

PATHWAY 3: DEVELOPING A SOCIALLY COHESIVE COMMUNITY

“West End is a safe area to live in, work in and visit and the trust among West Enders is great. No one feels lonely for extended periods and clubs, organizations and citizen groups play a big role in creating and preserving an inclusive, diverse and supportive local community for West End citizens.

Guiding principle: Every citizen feels safe and at home in the West End. The community is connected and residents help each other out.

- Promote The Spinning Mill as a modern community center and expand its reach to the entire West End community
- Reduce polarization

- Reduce social vulnerability

Actors: Department of Welfare, residents, SIND, Dyrk Vejle (Grow Vejle), Madsamling Vejle (Food Collection Vejle), The Spinning Mill, homeless shelters, Rosborg Gymnasium & HF (high school), local churches, local council of West End, Spor 18 (Track 18), Ventilen (The Valve), housing associations and Vejle Expat Network.

MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT

In 2016, Vejle was one of the pilot cities for evaluating its resilience profile with the City Resilience Index, developed by Arup and 100 Resilient Cities. This means that Vejle has some data available to set baselines for monitoring certain experiments. This includes a community survey with the aim to estimate the level of social cohesion at a district level. As expected, people in the West End felt less safe and did not know their neighbors as well as residents in other parts of Vejle. Once experiments and activities related to the formulated pathways have been carried out, it would be ideal to distribute another community survey and examine whether the situation has changed since 2016. Here it would be worth examining whether residents, who have participated in community events initiated under the “Developing a socially cohesive community”- pathway, report feeling safer.

In addition to the assessment methods mentioned under each experiment in the experiment’s section later, we will use the results framework to assess the overall process in relation to the pathways (see the table below).

RESULTS FRAMEWORK

Please note that some specific objectives fall under more than one pathway.

Pathway	Strategic objective	Specific Objective	Result Indicator	Output Indicator
1: Building a co-creating community	Increase multi-stakeholder collaboration	Increase collaboration and knowledge sharing between third sector actors	No. of projects created through collaboration between clubs and organisations	No. of networks and platforms for collaboration
		Increase the number of public-private-people partnerships	No. of PPPPs	No. of projects with more than three partners
		Increase citizen engagement with municipality owned projects	No. of citizens who have engaged with municipality owned projects	No. of projects where citizens were involved in vision/design process
	Improve conditions for creativity and innovation	Promote Spinning Mill as a hub for creativity and innovation	% of survey respondents who associate the Spinning mill with creativity and innovation	No. of creative events in the Spinning Mill No. of startups in the Spinning Mill No. of FabLab users No. of exhibitions No. of visitors
2: Developing a self-sufficient and economically robust community	Increase employment	Reduce youth unemployment	Youth unemployment rate	No. of young people accessing training No. of young people accessing career advice from UU % of young people who receive unemployment benefits No. of young people in work placements
		Encourage social enterprises	Number of jobs created by social enterprises	No. of new social enterprises No. of network members No. of initiatives/events focused on social enterprise
	Reduce household expenses	Promote reuse, recycling and swapping	DKK saved per household	No. of initiatives aimed at reuse and recycling No. of people who
		Promote the Spinning Mill as a center for sharing economies	No. of people who use sharing services from the Spinning Mill	No. of sharing services No. of awareness campaigns No. of sharing events
	Encourage prosumer communities and local cooperatives	Increase participation in prosumer communities and cooperatives	No. of members of Grow Vejle and Food Cooperative Vejle	No. of urban gardens No. of cooperatives
3: Developing a socially cohesive community	Promote the Spinning Mill as a modern community center	Increase value of the Spinning Mill to the community	No. of people who identify the Spinning Mill as a common meeting place in the community	No. of people who visit the Spinning Mill at least once a month No. of public events at the Spinning Mill

	Reduce polarization	Increase inter-cultural interaction	% of survey respondents of non-Danish origin, who say they feel welcome in and part of the community	No. of awareness campaigns established No. of inter-cultural events held No. of inter-cultural community groups established
	Reduce social vulnerability	Increase awareness around mental illnesses, depression and loneliness	Rate of engagement with awareness campaigns	No. of awareness campaigns established
		Promote community dinners and other social gatherings	% of residents who have participated in a community dinner/community gathering	No. of community dinners held No. of community gatherings held No. of attendants to community events
		Promote buddy programs	No. of participants in buddy programs	No. of buddy programs No. of time

EXPERIMENTING FOR URBAN RESILIENCE

Experiments, which have taken place already

EXPERIMENT 1: “UNGE SPISER SAMMEN” – YOUNG PEOPLE EAT TOGETHER



This experiment is a collaboration between the municipality development team in The Spinning Mill, Track 18 (council center for young lonely residents) Ventilen (a meeting place for “quiet and lonely 15-25 year olds”) and the Youth Pastor Ministry. The collaboration focuses on reducing loneliness among young people and highlighting the opportunities available to young people in Vejle.

The team hosts free dinners, where young people can come together, eat, play board games and create new friendships. Local businesses present at the dinners to let the young people know about the opportunities in the area. The team has created a Facebook group, where the participants can keep in touch. The experiment has brought about two dinners, which are expected to continue two to four times a year. The experiment is regularly evaluated internally among the collaboration partners.

Pathways: Developing a self-sufficient and economically robust community, developing a co-creating community and building a socially cohesive community.

Role: The dinners are coordinated and hosted by the municipality development team at the Spinning Mill along with the other three collaboration partners mentioned earlier

Participation: The dinners have been well attended, because they are free and are a much-needed meeting place for young people. The first event had 70 participants, while the second dinner had 135 participants. The dinners are posted in the facebook group and on the facebook pages of each collaboration partner. The Youth Pastor has a good connection with the youth in Vejle municipality, and is very determined to create safe spaces

where young people can talk about their issues, and we believe the participation at the dinners reflects the pastor's connection with the youth.

Lessons learned: A simple set-up, such as dinner and board games, is necessary for young people, who feel lonely, to see themselves as participants in an event. If the event is too complicated or grandiose, it will require too much of the individual to overcome the loneliness and attend. Therefore, it is also important that the dinners are free; otherwise, the cost can act as yet another barrier to participation.

EXPERIMENT 2: CROSSOVER WEB DOCUMENTARY FESTIVAL – YOUTH TALENT CAMP



An artist with an office in The Spinning Mill took the initiative to create Crossover Web Documentary Festival (CWDF). The team created a talent camp for young high school students, who created a short documentary to create awareness about loneliness among young people. In the movie, a young girl from Track 18 told her story about being lonely. The documentary was shown at a big screen at an event called, "Spot on Loneliness" during Vejle's Resilience Week in May 2017. CWDF is planning to participate with a similar contribution during the resilience festival in 2018.

Pathways: Developing a socially cohesive community & building a co-creating community

Role: The experiment was facilitated by the artist and people behind CWDF. The municipality of Vejle simply invited the participants to share their documentary and experience during the resilience week.

Participation: Spot on Loneliness attracted 150 people during the resilience week. The short documentary has been viewed online more than 6300 times. Spot on Loneliness ran their own Facebook campaign and was part of the official program for the resilience week, so participation also came through the general advertising of the resilience week.

Lessons learned: The experiment both created awareness around loneliness and provided the young people at the talent camp with an opportunity to boost confidence and contribute with something meaningful.

EXPERIMENT 3: VESTBYENS FÆLLED – WEST END COMMON



West End Common is an initiative sparked by a group of residents, who were present at the two ULG workshops and who decided to create their own group with the objective of creating a green area for the residents of the West End. They wanted a green common area with a natural playground, petanque courts, where residents could grow apples, walk their dogs and enjoy nature. In May, the local council of West End received a piece of unused land, where the work group could realize their dreams. The place was initiated with a summer barbeque on June 1st. Volunteers at Grow Vejle has since developed the garden and volunteers from the work group set up a fence around the dog-walking park. The West End Common is still being developed and once it is fully developed a community focus group will explore the value it has created in the community.

Pathways: Building a co-creating community & developing a socially cohesive community

Role: The municipality has contributed with land and soil, while the group for West End Common and West End's local council has initiated and facilitated the development of the area. .

Participation: 40 people attended the initiation barbeque, while the work group consists of 20 people. Participation in the project came naturally, as West End citizens had a strong desire for a green space and were allowed to design it for themselves.

Lessons learned: Co-creating initiatives to build resilience, does not have to be expensive or time consuming. People are willing to volunteer their time or money to support projects they are passionate about, so if you can tap into people's passions, your project will have no trouble finding support. As a municipality, we saved many resources by providing passionate locals with the means to carry out development initiatives in their neighborhood. The change we have witnessed in the West End Common could not have happened as fast (or cheap), if it had to go through the bureaucratic processes required of the municipality. Because they will experience the positive change first hand, locals are eager to be part of the process of development projects in their neighborhoods and participation will thus be naturally high.

EXPERIMENT 4: VEJLES RESILIENCE WEEK 2017



In May 2017, Vejle hosted a Resilience Week at the city hall square. The aim of the week was to try out a new model for co-creation and create awareness around resilience and Vejle’s efforts to become resilient. Events during the week ranged from bus trips to recently renovated areas over Rumanian folk dance to debates about welfare technology. Events were diverse and took many different forms. The experiment was evaluated internally in the project group and at a workshop with all the stage owners. The feedback has fed into the planning of this year’s event. In 2018, Vejle’s Resilience Week changes name to “Vejle’s Community Fair” and topics will fall in the categories of community, resilience and local democracy.

Pathways: Building a co-creating city & developing a socially cohesive community

Role: Vejle Municipality initiated the event and paid for the set-up. However, 45 different actors counting NGOs, local councils, students, and politicians created the individual events under the umbrella of the resilience week.

Participation: Over the course of three days, more than 2000 citizens participated in the different events. We held the event at the city hall square, as many people pass by this area every day. We also asked stage owners to invite participants to their own events, in order to not only rely on passers-by. To ensure participation from the stage owners, we reached out to those (internally and externally), who we knew had something to say and invited them to take the stage with whatever topic was dear to them.

Lessons learned: Co-creation depends on the willingness of city management to give up control as early as the design process. This can be hard, as municipalities have to be efficient, effective, and able to document their processes, so often control is an embedded part of their culture. Initiators should therefore be willing to take a few hits when you experiment with co-creation, because not everyone will support your project. In addition, some groups needs a bit of support (e.g. youth) to ensure full delivery, so in our case, co-creation depended on the ability of the project owners to recognize how much each actor stakeholder was capable of doing. Lastly, clear role definitions will prevent confusion around key elements, such as communication or delivery.

Experiments we would like to happen

EXPERIMENT 5: THE SPINNING MILL AS A GROWTH ZONE FOR SHARING ECONOMIES

The Spinning Mill will act as a sort of library, where residents can come and borrow bikes, tools and appliances, when needed. This saves the residents money as they avoid having to purchase expensive goods, which they are only going to use a few times. It also benefits the environment, as the initiative encourages sharing over buying. Residents, local businesses and organizations can donate items to the library and the municipality invests in a number of high quality items as well as the startup costs. The library can also provide jobs for a number of vulnerable residents.

Pathway: Developing a self-sufficient and economically robust community & developing a socially cohesive community

EXPERIMENT 6: SWAP ZONES

Swap zones where residents can swap books, clothes or other items will be set up in the community, so neighbors can share items with each other. The swap zones will be built from recycled materials or placed in spaces that are currently not being used. The swap zones will be set up in collaboration with volunteers from the community and will be run on a self-service basis.

Pathway: Developing a self-sufficient and economically robust community & developing a socially cohesive community



Figur 2: Book cabinet in a local community in Copenhagen

CURRENT ACTIVITIES IN THE WEST END

Besides the experiments that have already happened, many other activities are taking place, which are related to the pathways mentioned earlier.

- In November, a workshop called “We create West End together” was held. The workshop sparked two work groups, one with a focus on creating community dinners followed by discussions on specific topics and one with a focus on storytelling about the West End.
 - **Pathways:** Building a co-creating community & developing a socially cohesive community
- As a result of the workshop above, the local council of West End is hosting a community dinner on February 23rd at the Spinning Mill, where they have invited the municipality’s waste department to explain how one can save money by recycling household waste.
 - **Pathways:** Developing a self-sufficient and economically robust community & developing a socially cohesive community

- The Spinning Mill have set up a network called “Focus on West End// Social Economic Network”, which is a network with the purpose of exploring how West End can develop into an inclusive district with job creation and sustainable growth.
 - **Pathways:** Developing a self-sufficient and economically robust community & developing a socially cohesive community
- Vejle Expat Network and Vejle Municipality are planning two dialogue dinners at the Spinning Mill, where the dialogues will center on the SDGs. Both internationals and Danes will attend the dinners.
 - **Pathways:** Developing a socially cohesive community
- The Spinning Mill has started “Long Tuesdays”, where the premises, including the café, are open until 11 pm, so people in the community can meet up, have dinner and spend time together.
 - **Pathways:** Developing a socially cohesive community
- A group of residents supported by the local council of the West End is raising funds for a café, where the food served is made from left over food from the local supermarkets. The café is a non-profit initiative, which can create jobs in the local community, provide affordable meals for residents and act as a meeting place for the community. The group already has an agreement in place with one of the supermarkets, and has applied for funds with Realdania; a Danish investment fund.
 - **Pathways:** Developing a self-sufficient and economically robust community & developing a socially cohesive community

CONCLUSION

The Urban Resilience IAP for Vejle’s West End is very well aligned with our overall resilience strategy – in fact, building social resilience in the West End is a lighthouse project in the strategy. In a 100RC context, urban resilience is also about taking your starting point in what already exists, building upon this and developing integrated solutions, which strengthens a city’s capacity to absorb stresses and shocks. Therefore, besides taking its starting point in the pathways and vision formulated in the transition process, the IAP additionally builds upon the strategies and plans developed by stakeholders in the community (the local council, the municipality, The Spinning Mill and so forth). Local plans for water management, climate adaptation, and development of and business are aligned with and support the vision for the West End. Municipality planners have mapped all the current initiatives in the West End and formulated an opportunity map, which displays this integration, and enables further integrative planning and co-production. The IAP thereby gather many different sources of knowledge and sets a common direction for building resilience in the West End.

This creates a strong foundation in terms of accessing funds, and just as the resilience strategy for Vejle is a mobilization strategy, the IAP for West End can be utilized to mobilize the people and resources needed to build

resilience further in the West End – and already has done so. Urban resilience and the transition process has empowered passionate community actors in the West End to create change in their neighborhood. As highlighted above, initiatives are popping up all over the West End, and this would not have happened without the West End being an urban living lab for the transition towards resilience. The workshops during the orienting phase was in many ways the starting signal for the many passionate people, who live in the West End, and the most important task forward will be to keep the momentum going and empower those, who want to build a better West End.

Seeing that our IAP is very much focused on building social resilience and social cohesion and empowering the community, there are several opportunities when it comes to accessing funding. Social investments are taking off in Denmark and many large private pension funds and investments funds have defined youth employment and training, public health and social vulnerability as their focus areas. Furthermore, social cohesion is a focal topic within the municipality and the social committees are looking to invest smarter. We are therefore looking forward to working to realize the last two experiments and walk further along the pathways towards a more resilient West End.