





7. Vesterbro (Copenhagen - DK)

<p>Project description</p>	<p>Vesterbro (Western Bridge) area was built between 1850 and 1920 and is located immediately near the city centre. The housing standard was very low: lack of central heating and warm water (64%), lack of toilets (11%) and of bathrooms (71%).</p> <p>The district had a high concentration of socio-culturally 'vulnerable' people. Most of the residents disposed of a low income and the unemployment rate was around 20%.</p> <p>In 1990 Copenhagen municipality decides to refurbish Vesterbro by taking into account environmental aspects. This is a major urban renewal programme (6-10 years). The district is mainly a residential area, comprising 23 five-six storey buildings (4 000 apartments) for 6 500 inhabitants as well as open spaces, offices, bars and enterprises.</p>	<p>View on Vesterbro & central Copenhagen</p> 
<p>Objectives</p>	<p>The project aims and objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban renewal to be carried out as sustainable renewal • Housing units to be upgraded to fully modern standards • Installations and fittings in the buildings shall minimise the use of resources (i.e. water consumption should be reduced to 110l/person/year by 2010; use of rainwater; reduce waste production by 60%; • A well-balanced composition of the inhabitants of Vesterbro • Involve residents in the urban renewal process • To establish a large demonstration project in Copenhagen to provide an example of environmentally sound urban renewal 	
<p>Driving factors</p>	<p>Neighbourhood Revitalisation</p> <p>In 1997 the Danish Government's Urban Committee entered into an agreement with the city of Copenhagen and other organisations to carry out a new form of urban renewal designated as 'Neighbourhood Revitalisation' - in Danish known as 'Kvarterloeft'.</p> <p>Guidelines for sustainable urban renewal and public supported development for housing</p> <p>These guidelines were drafted by the municipal construction department in collaboration with the office of environmental control. They apply to all urban construction and refurbishment projects, including building insulation, sustainable building materials, etc.</p> <p>Legislation</p> <p>Since 1986 the Danish law on refurbishment enforces participation of inhabitants to urban renewal projects. In 1997, the new building legislation states that each Danish house must dispose of an 'energy label'. "Energie 2000" – the action plan of the Danish energy policy – promotes district heating and cogeneration.</p> <p>Growing population</p> <p>Copenhagen is growing rapidly and needs more housing, more businesses, more leisure spaces and better infrastructure. As stated in the 'City development strategy', the municipality aims to manage this growth smartly and in a sustainable way. 'Copenhagen remains a city for everyone'; thus affordable and sustainable housing must be provided.</p>	
<p>Financing structure</p>	<p>The refurbishment costs are rather high, reaching approximately 17 000 DKK/m² (2280 euros/m²).</p> <p>The project is financed by the national government in co-operation with the municipality. In 2000, 40% of the national urban renewal budget was allocated to the city of Copenhagen (approx. 72 million euros).</p> <p>The Danish Ministry of Housing, the Municipality of Copenhagen and the Urban Renewal Centre covered the costs of urban renewal: re-housing of inhabitants during the renewal process, building costs, architects' and engineers' fees, etc.</p> <p>The National Government financed the ecological projects: solar panels, separate waste collection system, etc.</p> <p>The various experiments concerning optimal use of energy were financed by Thermie, a European programme.</p> <p>The investment in this ecological neighbourhood is only 30% higher than in a traditional district. Return on investment will be assured from the savings made and higher rents.</p>	

<p>Partners & Roles</p>	<p>The main stakeholders are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copenhagen Municipality • Urban Renewal Company (SBS Byfornyelse) – responsible for urban renewal planning and elaboration of proposals for the urban renewal action plan. • Urban Renewal Centre - established in 1990 and financed by Copenhagen municipality, the centre is a meeting place among project management, municipal departments, tenants, trade associations etc. The centre has also a library and a cafe used as places for information and social work. • Other stakeholders are: the Danish Government, Copenhagen environmental protection agency, district associations, inhabitants, owners, consultants. <p>The Danish legislation supports stakeholder cooperation and citizen involvement, thus in Vesterbro the action plan has to go through this procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inventory: The urban renewal companies collect all data on housing standards, social structure etc. • Statement: The municipality publishes an urban renewal statement which contains guidelines and different proposals for each block. • Public hearing: Discussion sessions for a period of eight weeks. • Provisional Urban Renewal Decision: The municipality publishes a second statement which takes into account new arguments from the discussion forums. • Public hearing: Second round of discussions for eight weeks. • Final Urban Renewal Decision: The plan of action is passed by the local authorities. 	
<p>Results/Achievements</p>	<p>After the first phase of the renewal project CO₂ emissions in Vesterbro were reduced by 14% (2,500 tonnes) per year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy: RES due to integration of solar panels, high quality ventilation system and insulation; efficient energy consumption in buildings; 20% savings in terms of heating. Individual energy consumption monitoring screens are visible at the entrance of each apartment. • Water & sewage: 14% savings in terms of hot water despite additional bathrooms and toilets installed in the buildings. Sanitation facilities were all equipped with water saving fittings and rainwater is used for toilets (12 m³ from a 170 m² surface). • Waste: separate waste collection system. • Transport: cycling paths, many bicycle parking places. Most of the time Vesterbro inhabitants cycle or walk to work, supermarkets, schools etc • Economic: creation of new employment opportunities offering unemployed people the chance to get on-the-job training and instruction. Unskilled labourers were employed on demolition and similar work in Vesterbro. These workers have been given a “head-start” in terms of seeking future employment in the construction sector by learning environmentally-friendly building, renovation and maintenance techniques. • Social: use of common space in the buildings and of common gardens, various public and commercial establishments. <p>Due to the city's ongoing urban-renewal and clean-up efforts, the decayed Vesterbro is attracting chic restaurants, shops, clubs and customers. In the centre of it all, a new café square, Halmtorvet, has been constructed. An area where you might not normally go has become a must-go spot to see the latest trends.</p> <p>Residents involvement in the planning and refurbishment projects was key in the Vesterbro urban renewal programme. The Urban Renewal Centre is publishing a quarterly magazine on urban refurbishment and supports debates among inhabitants. The magazine is distributed to all residents free of charge.</p>	

Difficulties faced and solutions found	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although both central and local governments have invested huge sums in this district, urban renewal has been met with resentment and opposition in the beginning. One of the principal objections has been that the efforts to counter the complex problems of a district have been tackled by purely physical methods of urban renewal. As a solution, greater emphasis was set on the direct participation of inhabitants. • There has also been great concern that the social problems in a district were being solved merely by exporting the problems to other parts of the city. • In certain parts of Vesterbro the rent doubled over 5 years time; thus residents with lower incomes were obliged to move out of the neighbourhood. • The long time period required to complete urban renewal work caused residents to lose their interest to move back in their apartments. As a solution, it has been established that refurbishment work should not take longer than 3 years.
Friendly advice to those who want to build new eco-districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban development projects offer great potential to reduce environmental destruction in cities. In particular, fixing environmental standards in renewal and restoration projects is an important step; in Europe more than 70% of national investment in the building sector is focussed on renovation of existing parts of the cities. • On the political and administrative level cross-sectoral co-operation is recognised as an important precondition to identify ecological potentials. In Copenhagen the support from different departments has been highly relevant for all stages of the renewal project. • It has to be taken into account that ecological achievements are not solely a matter of installation of technical infrastructure but also a question of residents commitment; thus inhabitants should be involved from an early stage. 
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