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LARGE URBAN DISTRESSED AREAS (LUDA) – MALMÖ CASE STUDY

A large urban distressed area (LUDA) is a large part of a city suffering of multiple deprivations characterised by a quality of life below the average standard within its urban boundary but constituting a strategic factor in the functioning of a city (preliminary definition of LUDA area, report D.1, 2003). The main common factors of LUDA areas are their large dimensions within the urban context, complexity of problems and uncertain future. Multiple deprivation is predominantly consisting from degraded housing, improper facilities (transport, infrastructure), presence of derelict industrial sites, environmental risks and problems, unattractive and disconnected urban structures and subsequent high unemployment or weak social cohesion. Ugly image of such areas is obvious.

Typical LUDA area is larger than a neighbourhood but smaller than a city. It might be situated in the city centre as well as in the fringe. The derived problems usually overlap administrative boundaries, though some aspect of distress might be active inside the area only. There is a strong radiation of negative impacts toward the whole city. LUDA area often makes a spatial or functional barrier within the cityscape or is a vigorous barrier for city development. Large dimension of the distressed area does not enable to adopt solely local solutions. On the other hand, there is often lack of attention paid by the actors not directly touched. The perception of the problems within the area might vary widely, depending on the point of view.

Moreover, lack of social cohesion makes an involvement of the public and stakeholder quite challenging task, due to lack of visions and scenarios for the future of the area as well as the lack of strategies, plans and projects. In many cases, there is also an absence of appropriate data for prognosis,

FA STU was actively participating on this research project of key action 4 "City tommorrow and cultural heritage" of EESD. There had been selected and evaluated 8 reference cities, recording previous experiences of urban rehabilitation and regeneration of the LUDA areas. Malmö and its neighbourhood Augustenborg were selected as primary example of this process. The City of Malmö is the centre of the Scania province in south-western Sweden, indicating population of 265 481 inhabitants (according to Facts about Malmö, City of Malmö 2003). The city is spread on the area of 154 km^2. Since 2000 a bridge called the Oresund Bridge on the southcoast of Sweden, near Malmö, crosses the Öresund to Copenhagen. There has been made a lot of effort regarding the promotion of the Oresund region and its brand. Oresund region became a one of the success stories regarding the fostering of competitivness bipolar metropolitan regions in Europe, maintaining strong regional identity and high quality of life (more in Tangkjaer, Linde-Laursen 2004 and Holmgren, Plackett 2001). The city is on the way of transition from being industrial city to a city of knowledge.

LUDA Augustenborg

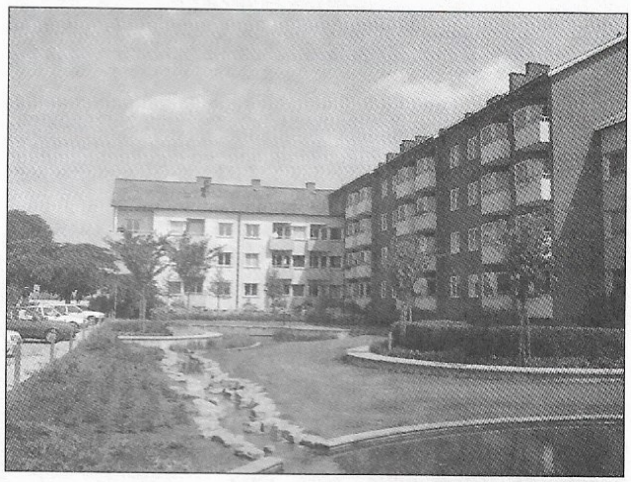

Fig. 1: Agustenborg LUDA area is located outside of the City Centre, in the Southeastern direction from the City Centre.

However, this transition period revealed several problems of city development in full scale. In some traditional areas (Western Harbor) the visible signs of urban decay became heavily present. One of the most decaying area of the town of Malmo, built after WWI for social housing purposes is the Augustenborg neighbourhood..

Augustenborg was designed in 1948 by Riksbyggens architect bureau in Stockholm for the newly started Malmö City Housing Company Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary company of the City of Malmö. In many aspects, this estate was typical for the post-war building trends in Sweden. Main target groups were young families starting their new existence. Till the end of 60-ties, Augustenborg was considered rather successful example of common effort of state, municipal and commercial subjects. However, the serious problems appeared in the early 70ties. Two bedroomed flats of Augustenborg – once considered spacious and comfortable – were no more attractive for Swedish families and the influx of immigration slowly aggravated. The immigrants prevailed in late 70-ties and this trend brought significant distress to area. Augustenborg became a forgotten corner of the city

nursing a bruised history and a socially strained presence (see more in Fossum, Nilsson 2001).

Fig. 2: Urban decay began in the 70-ties, due the economic recession. The area had to fight for long years with ugly image in the public.

New immigration waves in the '80s and '90s increased the number of the Augustenborg population and brought cultural diversity. On the other hand, increasing density of population, urban decay of physical structures, high unemployment and other side-effects of immigration aggravated present troubles. Urban decay was also facilitated by economic recession (unemployment, decreased work opportunities in the shipyard industry) in Malmö.

The situation in the early 90-ties escalated and Augustenborg became a glaring symbol for an urban distressed area in Sweden. Ugly image of the area had impacts for the city as a whole. Augustenborg was constantly facing its low status, split social cohesion, low income level, insufficient transport infrastructure and flooding of cellars. In 1991, the unemployment rate was skyrocketing to 48%.

Regeneration

Social and physical regeneration of the area started in 1990, under the leadership of the MKB Housing Company and the Municipality of Malmö. The EU's URBAN programme has supported improvements in the area and further urban regeneration initiatives took place.

Ekostaden Augustenborg – the Augustenborg Eco Neighbourhood – is one of the farthest reaching programmes of ecological development in an existing neighbourhood in Europe. The programme was developed through an initial partnership between the MKB Housing Company and the City of Malmö who owns the industrial area in Augustenborg. Local residents, businesses and other organisations have been involved in the development and implementation of the project. Ekostaden started in 1998 and the first phase of the programme was completed in 2002. Ekostaden Augustenborg strived also to re-build the image of the area and to overcome mental barriers between the area and the rest of the city. This district is now considered as one of the leading examples of sensible and environmentally justified urban regeneration.

The project has been partially financed through Malmö´s Local Investment Programme for 1998-2002. Ekostaden Augustenborg is one of the Sweden´s largest urban sustainability projects, covering the residential area, the school and an industrial area. The main aim was to create a higher degree of residents partcipation and to make the area a model for similar revitalisation projects in Sweden.

Regarding the physical regeneration, there have been built 13 houses with sound materials and green roofs, new demountable ecological pavilon with solar pannels, communal house for the elderly built with green roof and network of pedestrian and cycling routes. Large green roofs project covering more than 9000m2 helped to improve rain-water management. Applying the green roofs minimises run-off of the rain water and prevent the risk of cellar floods. The rainwater is led into the open channels collecting the run-off from the hard surfaces, taking it into holding and floodingn ponds before the water leaves the area. These green roofs contributed to biodiversity within the area and became one of the visual symbols of Augustenborg. The courtyards and park of Augustenborg have been redeveloped together with the residents and more than 80% of the waste from Augustenborg area will be collected and recycled or reused. Ecological management plan contains waste handling, composting of garden waste and a fossil-fuel free machine park for mainenance of the common green areas. (according to Ekostaden's project management (2001): Report - Echoes of Tomorrow). Comprehensible orientation system has been introduced in order to make the area of Augustenborg more user friendly.

Fig. 3: Utilisation of the roof tops for the plants.

Succes factors:

When discussing the principal success factors, the following issues are frequently mentioned:

- comittment and local co-operation among individuals, organisations and companies
- combination of local ideas and wishes with knowledge and experiences from different professional fields.
- long term and methodical work in terms of revitalisation

The work towards sustainable development has been carried out together by large number participants in Augustenborg. Social participation has been one of the most prominent characteristics of the entire revitalisation process. Residents got involved through meetings, brainstorming sessions, public hearings and seminars. Community participation has woken up too, inhabitants have begun to realise that the living environment plays a key role in the quality of their lives.

Fig. 4: Greenery as the key element of revitalisation process of LUDA area.

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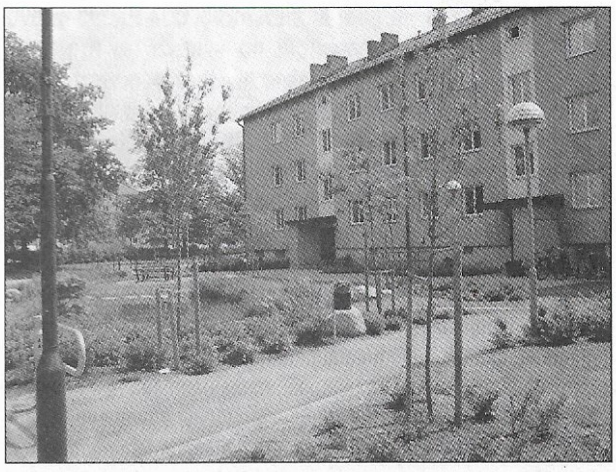

Fig. 5: The district has now become a leading example of environmentally adapted urban regeneration.