



The co-creation of just cities? The case of Umeå, European Capital of Culture 2014

Prof Christine Hudson, Dr Linda Sandberg & Dr Ulrika Schmauch

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Culture and Growth - Magical Companions or Mutually Exclusive
Counterparts?

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Aim...

In this study we look closer at the idea of co-creation and the way in which it is negotiated and practiced. How can cultural policies be used to create inclusive and just cities? Who gets to speak and who is heard?

Which groups get to participate in the co-creation of culture and the formulation and shaping of cultural policies and activities?





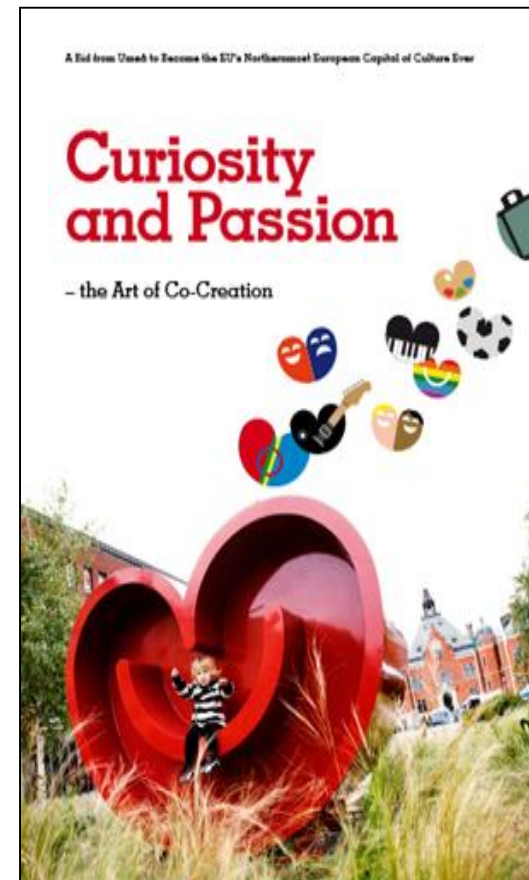
Setting the scene- Umeå, capital of culture and co-creation

“Umeå - open and tolerant; In Umeå there is a clear tolerance and a curiosity about the new”.

Umeå Municipality, webpage.

“‘Co-creation’ is the key word in Umeå2014's capital of culture initiative. Here, the concept means that everyone can participate and contribute to the programme”

<http://umea2014.se/en/abot-umea2014/>



Umeå municipality 2008



As the European Capital of Culture 2014, Umeå will engage all people in our city and region and open wide our wonderful hometown to Europe and the world. We will show the world all that is unique of Umeå and the north of Sweden, including our Sami heritage.

The culture of the Sami, the native Scandinavian population, is a strong presence in the soul of Umeå. It's therefore natural that the program of the Umeå European Capital of Culture 2014 venture is based on the eight seasons of the Sami annual calendar — the seasons of Caring, Awakening, Returning, Growing, Contemplation, Harvesting, Desire, Journey and Caring (which is repeated at the end of the year).



The program for each new season will follow the same cycle, featuring the inauguration, main project, re-occurring projects, festivals and open programs.

"We will show the world all that is unique with Umeå and the north of Sweden"



festival is based on the "open source" concept, opening up the arena to a wide spectrum of contributors and participants. Umeå is a city of music and all forms of music will be an important part of Festival 2014.



Elektra — a brand new Opera

A sensational and innovative new open-air interpretation of Richard Strauss' Elektra is composed and produced by the Norrlandsoperan opera ensemble exclusively for the Umeå European Capital of Culture 2014 event. The magnificent new opera show is created and produced in collaboration with the Spanish art ensemble La Fura dels Baus which became world famous for its collaboration in the opening ceremony of the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona.

Seasonal concerts

Eight different concerts will be staged by Norrlandsoperan during 2014 — one for each of the eight seasons of the Sami calendar.



Left: The MADE scene festival.

Above: Performance at the famed Norrlandsoperan opera.



Promoting co-creation

The Open Source strategy:

“to arouse curiosity and involve people through dialogue and cross-border encounters (....) to further develop practical methods for co-creation.”

<http://www.umea.se/mer/otherlanguages/inenglish/umeaeuropeancapitalofculture2014.4.1255481e123d7d67aaa800010687.html>

“Get involved- We want you to play a part! The capital of culture year provides many opportunities to participate and make your own mark and we would love to hear your suggestions!”

<http://umea2014.se/en/get-involved>

The study



Umeå municipality 2008

http://umea2014.se/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/ansokan_1_eng.pdf

- How co-creation was operationalized by the city in relation to financing the project during 2014 - criteria
- Analysed 103 approved project applications



1. Co-creation as capacity building

- "Co-creation: Six different arrangers carry out six different arrangements. Local bands and the public together help to put up posters, manning entry, provide lodgings for bands, prepare food, clean, sound checks etc. "(Verket/Ny våg 1014)
- "The working group for *Festival Normal - Unlimited!* is comprised of representatives from several local associations and organizations, from both the disability movement and the world of the performing arts, which ensures the specific target group's co-creation in both planning and the project itself" (Festival Normal – unlimited!)



2. Co-creation as the public/ audience

- "the public are co-creators (...) co-creation by the audience is the very basis of improvisation theatre" (Skuggteatern)
- "Poetry Slam is a participatory art form. The public are not passive, they are the ones who decide the whole competition" (Poetry Slam Sweden)
- "Survival Kit/Umeå will work actively with public participation by organizing "pub" dialogues, workshops and seminars during the festival." (Survival Kit/Umeå)



3. Co-creation as cultural process

- “We make the project co-creative by inviting those we photograph to themselves document their “reality” with us professional photographers as mentors. All the pictures are highlighted as equal as art (...)The participants tell their stories themselves parallel with the professional photographers’ pictorial narratives and on the same terms” (Vi och dom andra (VODA) *We and the others*)
- “The aim of the project is that children will be stimulated to participate and have a say in society (...) Children’s own questions and narratives will be highlighted and used.” (Give me five Umeå - book and narration project)

Conclusion

Recognition: recognizes people's right to be part of decision-making

Participation: facilitates their active participation

Transformation: facilitates their engagement in transforming/challenging unequal power relations



Sandberg 2014