

To reduce social inequality through urban planning: the potential for innovation¹

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Short bio: Hege Hofstad is a research professor in political science at Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research, Oslo Metropolitan University. Her research interest and publications centre on how the public aims of health promotion, social equity, sustainability and climate change are handled in planning and urban development, as well as through leadership and interactive governance.

Abstract

This chapter explores the innovation potential of one of the most challenging and unruly goals of planning. Namely, how planning can support the development of more socially equal communities, and consider innovation needs in terms of the need for development of new ideas, practices and instruments of planning. Over the past twenty years, one has observed a significant increase in the attention, expertise, tools and actual experience of integrating public health into planning. However, while reduction of social inequalities is part of the public health agenda, the awareness and concrete experience with this concern is lacking in today's planning practice. Based on the ideas and experiences of a Delphi Panel, as well as relevant research results, this chapter identifies and discuss promising steps for strengthening the awareness to social inequality as a goal for local development and planning, and specific instruments capable of lifting this concern into the core of planning.

¹ The chapter is based on the research report 'Kommunal planlegging som redskap for å redusere sosiale helseforskjeller- Oppsummering av erfaringer fra tidligere forskning og workshop med nøkkelaktører' by Hofstad (2019).

Introduction

The goal of this chapter is to identify how planning can support the development of more socially equal communities, and consider innovation needs. Of specific interest is land use planning, as this is the part of planning practice that have proved to be most reluctant to address social inequalities (Hofstad 2016, Hofstad 2018). As such, the chapter emphasizes two of Friedman's (1966:194) four aspects of innovative planning, namely *to legitimize new social objectives or effect a major reordering in the priority of existing objectives* by seeking to level up social inequality as a concern for land use planning. Moreover, *to translate general value propositions into new institutional arrangements and concrete action programs*, by exploring the development of new ideas, practices and instruments of planning to support in a stronger emphasis on reduction of social inequalities.

The starting point of this chapter is thus that there is a need for exploring and identifying innovation needs for land use planning to serve as an instrument for reduced social inequalities. This involves delving into an uncertain field by searching for new, untried and creative ideas and actions where no one has the exact answers. Norwegian experiences together with international research results make up the empirical basis of the chapter. Norway is an interesting case, as their public health and planning policies have aimed to integrate public health and social equity as concerns for urban planning since 2008 (MoLGM 2008). Furthermore, since 2011, Norwegian municipalities are expected to develop a knowledge basis showing the municipalities negative and positive health determinants, and this should lay the foundation for urban planning priorities (MoHCS 2011).

The chapter delves into the Norwegian experiences through a Delphi panel consisting of 28 Norwegian experts in the field, both academic and practical. All have interest, knowledge and/or experience with the intersection between social equity and urban planning. The experts all play an active role in either practices or studies of residential, urban and community development and have shown interest and/or have experience with urban planning as a tool for social equality. They represent public authorities at the national, regional and local level; market actors; interest organizations; research professors, and consultants. They participated on a full-day workshop where they discussed the following topics: The existing knowledge base of the field; what opportunities the Norwegian Planning and Building Act provides today; and which planning tools that are lacking or need to be further developed in order to enable a more proactive use of urban planning to reduce social inequalities. Each theme were explored in a session consisting of three prepared presentations, a subsequent panel

discussion, group discussions and a panel discussion. Written minutes of these discussions make up the empirical material. This material were then coded and main topics identified.

Recommendations from the Delphi panel

The following main topics summarize identified by the Delphi panel as areas where knowledge gaps exists and where there are challenges related to current practice and there exist a potential for further development:

- Anchorage of reduced social inequalities as a purpose for planning
- Development of comprehensive and locally based knowledge
- Planning measures for levelling of inequalities

These three topics form the structure of the chapter by figuring as distinct thematic sections. Hence, each section of this chapter starts with a summary of the Delphi panels' conclusions on each topic. The sections then explore and discuss these themes further by consulting topical research and practical examples. The chapter conclude by identifying gaps in current practices and indicating innovation needs. However, we start out with a brief background section introducing core concepts.

Background: Health promotion and social sustainability emphasizing social equity

In the early 2000s, we saw an enhanced interest for planning as a tool for health and well-being (WHO, 2005; 2009). This emanated from a shift from a narrow to a broader understanding of public health. A driving force were World Health Organization (WHO). In particular, WHO's health promotion conferences with resulting charters, statements and declarations (WHO, 2009). The understanding developed from health as an absence of sickness to '... a resource for everyday life' (WHO 1986). Thereby emphasizing not only physical capacities, but also social and personal resources. Hence, public health goes beyond healthy life-styles to well-being (ibid). This shift from a traditional focus on individual and physical health to a broader focus on social capabilities and resources makes health promotion a responsibility not mainly for the health sector, but for the public sector as such. The first health promotion conference in 1986 encourage governments to 'build healthy public policy' that creates awareness to the health consequences of their decisions and for each public sector to accept their responsibility for health (WHO, 1986).

A basic prerequisite for the broader understanding of health is according to WHO, social justice and equity (WHO, 2009). Inequities in health are rooted in inequities in the society as

such. A multitude of social factors across social sectors and arenas may potentially influence health positively or negatively. Consequently, these factors or ‘determinants’ are not equally distributed. One’s upbringing environment, education level, work and working conditions and level of income, affect which conditions that exist in the local community in which you live; in your school, workplace, residential premises and living environment, as well as how the wider economic, social and environmental structures affect you (Dahl et al, 2014; Helgesen et al 2017). Thus, health inequalities has socio-economic-ecological drivers, and their solution lies in systemic and comprehensive measures dependent on political will and attention (CSDH, 2008).

The current understanding of public health has clear linkages to social sustainability. The latter is a dynamic concept highlighting the importance of the following three elements: a) sustaining people’s *basic needs*; b) giving attention to *social equity and social justice* i.e. to the distribution of resources, amenities and opportunities and sharing of negative externalities; and c) the *sustainability of community* putting weight on social coherence and social capital (Dempsey et al, 2009; Vallance et al, 2011; Opp, 2017). Hofstad and Bergsli (2017) argue that public health and sustainable development emerge from a common line of thinking based on the same diagnosis: the economic and social policies that govern global development have negative consequences for people and the environment that results in an uneven distribution of power and resources where some groups and countries lose systematically. The political goals of public health and social sustainability seek to correct these biases and create equal opportunities for human growth and development (ibid). Hence, social inequality and social justice is at the core of both these perspectives. The urban planning discourse is continually more attentive to the distributional effects of spatial priorities (ref). However, the day-to-day practices of planning are lagging behind (Hofstad, 2018).

Without an awareness to socio-economic effects, urban planning can continue and strengthen existing biases in the community, both in the form of the strategies the plan proposes and in concrete physical planning priorities. Gaining an overview of social determinants is a first step in putting social equality and social justice on the planning agenda. However, the complexity, long-term perspective and the internal tension between competing social determinants is considerable; at the same time, it can be difficult to identify clear causal relations (Petticrew et al, 2004). In addition, there is not a one to one relationship between identified knowledge and actual consideration in planning. although social sustainability and public health are integrated as strategic aims, these goals have not trickled down the planning

hierarchy and been translated to concrete planning measures (Hofstad, 2016; 2018). This is especially true for social equity. In the Norwegian Planning and Building Act (MoLGM, 2008), reduction of social inequalities in health is one of the obligatory purposes of planning, but also the concern least addressed in current Norwegian planning practice (Hofstad, 2018). A core question is how to put social inequality aspects on the agenda of urban development.

Anchorage of reduced social inequalities as a purpose for planning

The Delphi panel came up with three very specific recommendations to strengthen the political-administrative competence and the capacity to lift social equity as a target for planning:

- Political and administrative *boldness* - a clear priority of reducing social health inequalities
- Better expertise on *negotiations and collaboration* with developers concerning new densification areas that will provide *predictability* for developers

Exploration of innovation needs

The first bullet point emphasize that what the politicians and administration do themselves, in their own organization, matter. A first place to start is the municipality's own plans and strategies. However, In Norway, most politicians exercise their position in their spare time and have sparse knowledge on these issues. In order to put them up to the task, the association for Norwegian municipalities, KS, runs a training program for elected officials². Lately, the Norwegian branch of WHO's healthy Cities network have developed a specific program on public health. However, none of these programs addresses social inequalities in particular nor the broader public health perspective in general (Hofstad, 2019). The administration plays a key role in creating awareness and spread knowledge about social challenges in the municipality.

The Delphi panel experience, however, that the capacity and competence in the local administrative apparatus generally are an Achilles heel. A municipality is a complex organization expected to develop locally founded policies, implement political decisions, secure compliance with laws and regulations, conduct effective management and ensure learning, improvement and innovation. A municipality is at the same time an authority, a service producer and a community developer. For reduction of social inequalities to climb

² <https://www.ks.no/fagomrader/demokrati-og-styring/folkevalgtprogrammet/>

higher on the local political agenda, the integration of these considerations not only as strategic goal for the municipality's social development, but also as a goal for the general, administrative management system is crucial. The management system is the administrations' "skeleton". In order to stimulate administrative boldness, goals for reduction of social inequalities must enter the municipal budget, management plans, assignment letters, management agreements and contracts that are developed in relation to the short term, yearly administrative cycle, and the longer term four year cycle (Hofstad, 2019). This means, however, that the goals and ambitions related to these concerns needs to be significantly narrowed and specified. This level of detail are not yet developed and will need a broader political will, awareness and understanding of the challenges at hand. The goal – to reduce social inequalities –potentially contain competing goals that have to be politically weighted and decided upon.

The second bullet point gives attention to the political aspect of planning – namely the negotiations and collaboration concerning development of densification areas between local government on the one side, and developers and local communities on the other. Urban development mainly takes place in already built up areas where there often is a multitude of different private landowners (Nordahl et al, 2011). This provides a more complicated planning process involving several landowners negotiating among themselves and with the municipality on technical and infrastructural solutions, and distribution of "burdens" such as green structure, public space, etc. The municipality itself is rarely a landowner. Urban land are often owned by the private actors (professional or unprofessional) or by government agencies operating more or less as private actors (ibid, Mäntysalo et al, 2015). In addition, private actors mostly provide detail planning in Norway. They may outline and suggest detailed plans and have them evaluated and adopted by local government.

A pertinent question is how local government can ensure influence over urban development in a situation where the market has significant definition power and controls central implementation tools (Nordahl et al, 2011, p. 24). Local government understood both as the politically elected representatives and the administration can derive legitimacy for its position in negotiations with landowners and developers from multiple sources. Mäntysalo et al (2015, p. 355) identify four different principles that can support local government when seeking to support arguments, claims and positions in negotiations about urban development:

- *Justice* - rules and procedures for balancing individual interests and the interests of the community
- *Freedom* – to facilitate individual freedom, including business and free use one’s own property.
- *Inclusion* - open and transparent decision-making, collaboration with key actors
- *Accountability*, formal decision-making procedures and anchorage in the representative democracy.

These ideals points to principles one may bring to the table in urban development negotiations. However, they say little about how to act in order to secure these ideals. So, let us take this a step further by examining whether it is possible to identify specific roles local government may rely on in the negotiation about future urban development. If we start with principles of justice and accountability, local government may enact a role where they draw on their democratic authority to ensure fair and responsible decisions for the community as a whole. Here, local government can take on a *value-based, strategic role* founded in general considerations in laws and regulations, the municipality's own strategic plans and formal procedural requirements that ensure fair decisions and equal opportunities. This involves to exercise some form of ‘transformative leadership’ that motivates private stakeholders to look beyond their own interests and contribute to secure common, collective interests (Nye 2008, p. 62).

If we turn to the principle of freedom, local government may take on a *catalyzing role* that helps trigger activity and unleash resources through a form of ‘transactional leadership’ where one appeals to the individual self-interest of citizens and professional developers (ibid, Sørensen and Torfing 2012). This may involve adding incentives in the form of public investments to trigger action in line with strategic plans for the area (Nordahl et al., 2011; Nye 2008, p. 63). In this negotiation process, local government may play an additional *role as convener* by providing an arena for negotiating the distribution of burdens and benefits between relevant landowners (Sørensen and Torfing 2012).

If we finally turn to the principle of inclusion, interests of a more general character prevail. A key goal is to ensure that civil society and individual citizens are heard and are able to influence decisions. Thus, plan solutions needs a wider anchorage, i.e. representation of citizens, organizations in negotiations that will provide a broader knowledge and resource base. To develop measures that includes the ‘silent voices’ those that seldom participate in

planning is particularly important (Young 2002). Local government may take on a *facilitating role* to support and bring forth ideas and solutions that improves the negotiation result levelling strengthening the concern for social equity- either by securing a higher legitimacy in the population or by ensuring that the very solution considers the public good (Sørensen and Torfing, 2012).

In sum, the political-administrative leadership exercised here is a mixture of transformational and transactional measures. On the one hand, local government actors can invite to the creation of a common vision. On the other hand, they can appeal to the participants' self-interest by offering incentives that increase the actors' interest in contributing to find compromises.

Development of comprehensive and locally based knowledge

The following bullet points sum up the main themes addressed by the Delphi Panel:

- Development of contextual knowledge
- Conducting more systematic studies
- Establishment of comprehensive knowledge
- A stronger focus on socio-economic challenges

Exploration of innovation needs

Obtaining contextual, systematic and comprehensive knowledge means understanding and present relevant influencing factors and their distribution in specific local areas. Such factors can vary considerably from place to place. At the same time, the population of an area may have different perceptions of what they deem as the most important positive and negative factors in their local environment (Millstein and Hofstad, 2017). The question of interest here is how knowledge is produced in an urban development or planning process, and to what extent questions of social distribution and equity are included as relevant and important concerns. According to Næss (2008, p. 45), a planner understands a local environment as a spatial entity. Depending on the theme and purpose of planning, a space can be seen as ‘... something that enables, facilitates, complicates or hinders various types of human activity, partly as something that affects behavior through symbolic and aesthetic expressions, partly as something that affects our perceptions of which institutions, groups and individuals that have power and status, partly as something that appeals to aesthetic taste, pleasure and identification of group affiliation, and partly as nature’ (ibid). Regardless of whether one can fully agree with this definition, it shows that planning's approach to understand an area must

be based on a diversity of knowledge traditions and disciplines in order to understand the locality in its entire breadth. The reason why such contextual knowledge is important, is that one assumes that spatial conditions can contribute to, influence and create conditions for human actions: The physical environment creates accessibility and barriers, proximity and distance and allow some activities above others (Næss 2008, p. 47). Just as human activities and decisions influence the physical structures of a given area. Places are therefore multidimensional where many factors are at play at the same time, reinforcing, counteracting and activating each other (Næss 2008, p. 52). Let us take a closer look at various methods to capture this interplay between physical, cultural, social and economic factors in a given area.

Context-sensitive approach. Atthe Illyrian Belegu, who has won both The Aspelin Ramm Prize and Statsbygg's Student Prize for his Master's thesis '03 Assembly Palace', argues for creating urban development "inside and out" (Bergen School of Architecture, 2017a; Arkitektnytt, 2018):

'All places sets its own premises for development. They require diversified approach to develop in the best way and in their own spirit. Unfortunately, far too often the development of a district uses the glasses of an outsider. Often without being aware of or interested in the districts' own qualities and characteristics'.

He thus criticizes today's practice based on outsiders' thoughts on necessary and good measures, and the widespread usage of the same recipe across localities without regard to the character of the place. Belegu argues that one should strive to find the place's own rhythm, history, emotions, experiences and memories in order to let the locality itself find opportunities and answers (Bergen School of Architecture, 2017b). This opens for the complex and dynamic at the same time as emphasizing intangible entities, such as emotions, experiences and memories, which is innovative in architecture and planning. These professions is traditionally most concerned with the physical aspects of an area.

Another input to contextual knowledge is *sociocultural place analyzes* which is an extension of the traditional spatial analyzes where landscapes, buildings and other physical elements to enhance the aesthetic and functional qualities of an area are studied (Ruud et al, 2007).

However, the physical surroundings affect people differently and are considered differently on the basis of interests, experiences, values, etc. The sociocultural place analysis includes such socio-cultural factors by analyzing usage (practice), imageries (performances and representations) and interests (power relations). Government, business, civil society and the

media are involved in the analysis. Recently, Norwegian municipalities have taken this a step further by introducing area-oriented work where ‘... the municipality initiates a coordinated, systematic and broadly applied initiative in a specific geographical area’ (Oslo Municipality, 2016, p. 8). The idea is to lift urban and local communities with complex challenges so that all places in the municipality are perceived as good places to live and grow up in. Living conditions are often a key justification for the effort. In collaboration with the inhabitants of the area it implies area-oriented work to strengthen physical and social qualities and to add new ones. An important measure is to develop social ties and mobilize the population's own capacity (Oslo municipality 2016, p. 10).

Both socio-cultural place analyzes and area-oriented work are thus concerned with lifting people's wants and needs into decision making, and in the latter case to lift the whole area socially and economically. However, these initiatives are criticized for focusing more on beautification of surroundings, construction of new attractions and places people can meet (Oslo municipality 2016, p.16; Ruud et al., 2011). Thus, a key challenge when striving to obtain and let contextual knowledge matter, is to bridge the seemingly deep gap between the physical and the socio-economic-cultural by linking planning and its tools and measures with welfare and broader social measures that directly affect people's living conditions and contribute to social equity. This brings us over to the third and last recommendation from the Delphi Panel, namely to develop planning measures capable of levelling inequalities.

Planning measures for levelling of inequalities

These points sum up the main themes addressed by the Delphi Panel:

- Strategic use of local knowledge in regional and local planning, including in strategic priorities in location issues
- A particular focus on developing high quality services in socio-economically weaker areas
- Prevention of segregation by designing a clear strategy for social mix that guides planning
- Facilitate housing for families with children in densification areas/public transport hubs
- Development of a support scheme for decision-making highlighting the importance of social mix and clarifying topical planning tools to support social mix

- Development of social housing models where the state through the Housing Bank takes an active role
- Create affordable housing by active use of municipal land

Exploration of innovation needs

The points above contain key aspects of policy and planning for the better living conditions - strategic community development, area-specific measures such as service development and stimulation of social mix, as well as development of more general social housing models. The first two points address a core issue when dealing with social inequality in planning, namely that different contexts may have different capabilities and resources that affect their ability and strength to be involved and active in local development processes. Over time, this may have segregating effects where unpopular noisy, polluting or social functions pile up in the socio-economically weaker areas. Hence, there is important to combine context sensitive and socio-cultural approaches with a broader geographical perspective that are sensitive to the distribution of negative and positive determinants across the municipal area. The Delphi panel endorsed this point and highlighted the importance of using local knowledge strategically to prioritize in location issues. Furthermore, they underlined that a good strategy to level the difference between municipal districts were to develop high quality services in the socio-economically weaker areas. In proceeding, we jump lightly over the last two bullet points above, which is addressing very specific housing models outside the scope of this chapter. Rather, we will linger and explore further the concept of *social mixture*, baked into points 3-5 in the Delphi panel's bullet points.

According to Galster and Friedrichs (2015, p. 176) "... 'Social mix' has been considered an urban planning theory, a neighborhood economic – demographic condition, a set of urban transformation strategies, and (ironically) both a neo-liberal and a socialist ideology». The assessment and understanding of social mix thus diverge depending on one's professional and political position. In the introduction to a special issue of social mix, Galster and Friedrichs (2015, p. 176) operates with the following definition: "social mix is implicitly defined as a state of relative neighborhood diversity according to socioeconomic status, in counter position to spatial concentrations of extremely high- or low-status households». Social mixing is thus about trying to create greater socio-economic diversity in areas that are socio-economically homogeneous. Often, such strategies target areas that have an accumulation of socio-economically disadvantaged. The aim may be to increase people's opportunity to realize their potential (ref pub health); to make qualitatively better living areas; to utilize resources more

efficiently as the concentration of social problems make area-specific measures relevant (Manley et al., 2013, p. 5).

What do we know about the linkage between social inequalities and social mixture? Studies show that to live in an area with an accumulation of socio-economic problems adversely affect the financial opportunities of people with low income (Galster and Friedrichs, 2015). The Norwegian Ministry of Finance endorse this point arguing that individual sick leave and disability benefits are affected by changes in the number of social security recipients in their living area (Meld. St. 29 (2016–2017)). However, it is difficult to identify the exact mechanisms that that make social mixture an advantage for socio-economically disadvantaged people. Previous research has not succeeded in identifying interventions that are particularly effective (Galster and Friedrichs 2015). Geographical areas are multifaceted with complex causalities, which makes it difficult to single out concrete neighborhood effects (Manley et al., 2013, p. 4). Thus, programs and measures developed to create social mix must embody this complexity by containing a diversity of interconnected measures (ibid). Not least, it is important to keep an eye on not only the area in itself, but be aware of factors outside the area that influence conditions in the area, cf. the importance of strategic planning as pinpointed by the Delphi Panel earlier. In addition, it is important to combine location-based and personal-based measures. Studies show that measures aiming to affect the local area have lower effects than measures directed towards education, health, employment and household conditions (Manley et al, 2013, p.4). Put another way: Adding qualities at the area level has less impact than working directly to improve socio-economic conditions. An example from current urban development practice reflects this insight. The area-specific program in Groruddalen in Oslo (2017-2026) aims to combine local community initiatives with welfare measures:

'The program will contribute to permanent improvements in services and neighborhood qualities in areas in Groruddalen where the needs are greatest, so that more residents in these areas become economically independent and actively participating in their local community as well as in the society in general' (Norwegian Government and the Municipality of Oslo 2016).

The main goal of the City of Oslo's area policy³ is that all local areas in Oslo are good and safe places to live and grow up in. It combines monitoring of all urban areas in Oslo with

³ For more information: <https://www.oslo.kommune.no/politikk-ogadministrasjon/byutvikling/omradepolitikk/#gref>

implementation of comprehensive and coordinated efforts in particularly exposed local areas as well as steps to counteract negative development in areas showing early signs of vulnerability.

To develop social mix, thus, requires a broad specter of initiatives that are internally coordinated and emphasizing welfare measures while being aware of broader conditions outside a given area. Often, attempts to influence and change the social mix of an area goes hand in hand with measures to alter the area's reputation through physical upgrading and placement of cultural functions. If not combined with welfare measures seeking to strengthen education, health, employment and household conditions, upgrading may have segregating effects.

Innovation needs and identification of key elements of healthy urban planning

For planning to serve as a vehicle for social equity, it not only need a wider toolbox. More importantly, a broader purpose of planning including social and distributive concerns needs to be developed. This involves not only practical measures and methods, but a cultural change from a core focus on economic attractiveness and environmentally/climate sound solutions to socially just and healthy development. How can land use planning practices absorb a wider, social agenda and become what are often deemed 'healthy urban planning' (WHO 2005, WHO 2009, Hofstad 2011). Based on the discussion in this chapter, figure one summarizes suggested elements for creating healthy urban planning.

Figure 1 Creating healthy urban planning

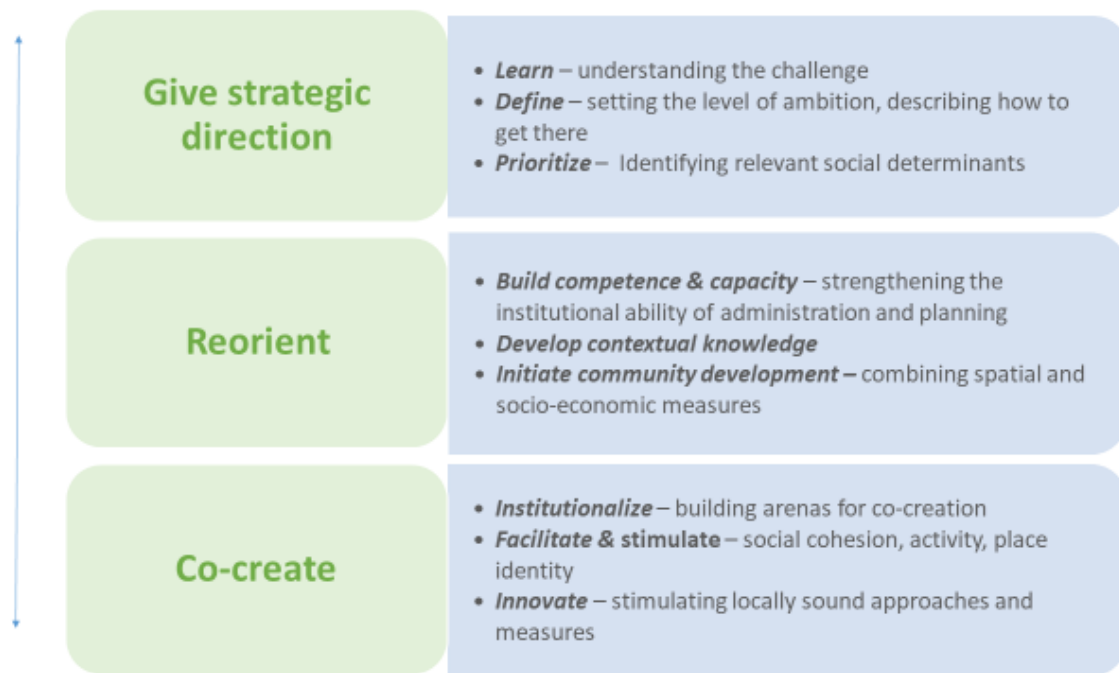


Healthy urban planning requires a more comprehensive, holistic approach contributing to a more socio-economically balanced development, regionally and locally. A prerequisite for achieving social equity through planning is a holistic and place-adapted approach. This involves building a joint understanding of reality through knowledge development serving as a platform for strategic prioritization and the final planning proposal. In order to make this knowledge basis comprehensive enough and inclusive enough, the *planning process* must include methods that enable collection of context, and socio-culturally sensitive information accumulated through involvement of the local community. Thus, this requires collaborative innovation. Using this knowledge basis as a starting point, the next step is to make *strategic prioritization* of the most pressing challenges revealed. This involves making unpopular decisions, namely to prioritize some concerns and some geographical areas above others. This is of utmost importance, as different aims and measures may counteract each other. Thus, clear prioritizations may spur innovation as spatial planners within and outside the public apparatus are required to develop new plans and planning methods to be able to respond to the new requests. Thus, this requires some form of institutional innovation. In the final *planning proposal* the knowledge basis, strategic priority and new methods developed should create a pathway that enable the creation of a linkage between general and place-specific needs as well as between spatial and welfare measures. Thus, this requires innovation understood as a coupling of formerly decoupled activities, i.e. combining institutional elements in new ways.

The Norwegian planning and building act opens for including these three elements in land use planning. However, there is a gap between what the municipality may do with its own resources and its own property and what the municipality can require private actors to do. Hence, a core challenge is that planning only gives the opportunity to interfere indirectly with the social aspects. At a strategic level, planning may highlight knowledge about socio-economic and distributional factors, allowing collective benefits such as public spaces, recreation areas and social meeting places where social interaction and activities can take place. At the same time, in specific detail plans, one can regulate the size and quality of dwellings in vulnerable areas - light, air, energy consumption, etc. This is important general health promotion measures, but these regulations, as underlined above, need to be reinforced by specific, context-sensitive measures. This will require innovation of the planning instrument to become an instrument that not only addresses physical factors but also social factors. This involves a firmer combination of general measures that lay strategic and structural foundation for socially and thriving local communities, and specific measures that manage to have an openness to the unique qualities of an area at the same time as welfare measures create opportunities for people to take out their full potential in education, work, family and leisure. This calls for sector-wide approaches, but also legal adjustments that opens for using the Planning and Building Act as not only a spatial, but also a socio-economic instrument. For example, there is need for instruments that affect the social profile of housing in terms of price level, possibility for development of housing to designated groups, or a wider toolbox when it comes to ownership form -condominiums, rental homes or self-owned units (Nordahl, 2018). Thus while awaiting wider authority to claim a strengthened focus on social equity, the municipality are left with acting as transformative and transactional leaders, i.e. instigating self-governance by vision-making and persuasion and developing carrots to nudge private action towards taking a wider social responsibility in their projects.

Figure two below present a more fine-grained overview over capacities and roles in need of development for planning to function as a measure for reduced social inequalities.

Figure 2 Core conditions for health promotion and social health equality



The first element, *providing strategic direction*, emphasizes the importance of understanding the challenges of social inequalities in general and in different parts of the municipality in particular. This involves awareness to important negative and positive factors in the communities as income, work, living environment, community participation, distribution of positive and negative factors, etc. The strategic element lies in the demonstration of political and administrative boldness by defining the level of ambition and prioritize which determinants are most important in the municipality as a whole, and in different municipal districts. The second element, *to reorient*, involves building political and administrative competence and capacity through clear expectations, ability to exploit the potential of the tools offered by the Planning and Building Act and seek cooperation with the state to change rules and guidelines creating a window of opportunity for setting social equity at the agenda. The third element, *to co-create*, emphasizes that the municipality is completely dependent on the efforts of a wide range of actors to reduce social inequality and create social equity. Thus, by establishing arenas for collaboration, developing place-adapted, contextual knowledge together with relevant actors and facilitating social activity and coherence in the local communities one can achieve healthy communities that planning are incapable of achieving alone.

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