



**Sharing  
Cities  
Sweden**

A NATIONAL PROGRAM FOR  
THE SHARING ECONOMY IN CITIES

# Sharing Communities

FINAL REPORT 2021

**ViableCities™**  
Smart, sustainable and attractive.



Sharing Cities Sweden aims to put Sweden on the map as a country that actively and critically works with the sharing economy in cities. It is a national program with a budget of 12 million euro over 4 years. Sharing Cities Sweden is a part of Viable Cities - a strategic innovation program for smart and sustainable cities.

Sharing Cities Sweden launched strategic projects to investigate the emerging sharing economy in cities in Sweden and support the activities of the test-beds and national node. The strategic projects cover the topics of digital platforms, business models, small towns, behavioural economics, social drivers and future scenarios.

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## Executive summary

Sharing has the potential to go from consumption to the use of shared resources. The Sharing Communities strategic project is focused on developing sustainability solutions for sharing within a housing company located in Stockholm in Sweden. Here, we want to gain a deeper understanding of the social communities around sharing in a relatively small, but representative living area in Stockholm and to develop a model for how housing companies can use the potential for sharing in existing communities to strengthen the connection between existing and new areas.

***The following recommendations have been defined as a result of the project:***

- Consider that empowerment is a process not a project
- Start from community engagement and interests
- Offer support for practical challenges and scaling up
- Look at different scales
- Use a system perspective
- Combine multiple forms to create a culture of sharing
- Use sharing to create social cohesion
- Be aware of possible social rebound effects



## Introduction and background

In previous studies and in the test-beds in Sharing Cities Sweden, we have seen that the social driving forces for sharing are strong both for initiators and for users of sharing initiatives. That sharing is an ongoing relationship to a larger extent than a purchase that is an agreement at one specific moment affects both the driving forces for wanting to share and the conditions for creating sharing opportunities. We have seen that the interest in having access to rather than owning is increasing.

Our understanding is that this trend is a result of several factors such as convenience and less responsibility, lack of storage space or the desire for participation and community. We have also observed how sharing can lead to dissolving boundaries between public, private and commercial areas. We wanted to understand more about how, when and the obstacles and opportunities for sharing. This could mean potential for increased resource sharing and for increased participation and community engagement. Sharing has the potential to go from consumption to the use of shared resources. At the same time, there are several obstacles such as agreements, insurance, laws and practices that are not adapted for sharing but for a change of ownership.

The Sharing Communities strategic project is focused on developing sustainability solutions within a housing company located in Stockholm in Sweden. Here, we want to gain a deeper understanding of the social communities around sharing in a relatively small, but representative living area in Stockholm and to develop a model for how housing companies can use the potential for sharing in existing communities to strengthen the connection between existing and new areas. The project studied the following questions:

- *What opportunities do existing communities (for example neighbourhoods) provide to enhance sharing?*
- *How can housing companies facilitate sharing among tenants and offer tools and space for sharing?*

The findings are useful for housing companies in existing areas as well as new construction, and present suggestions on how housing companies can facilitate sharing via existing groups and channels. Sharing has the potential to facilitate new and old areas to merge, and for different community groups to meet and be a way to strengthen social cohesion in a district. The project also contributes to new models of collaboration between actors in a neighborhood and how sharing initiatives can be designed and developed. As well as getting a better understanding of what role the social drivers play when businesses share with each other and suggestions on how it can be facilitated and done in interaction with the local community.



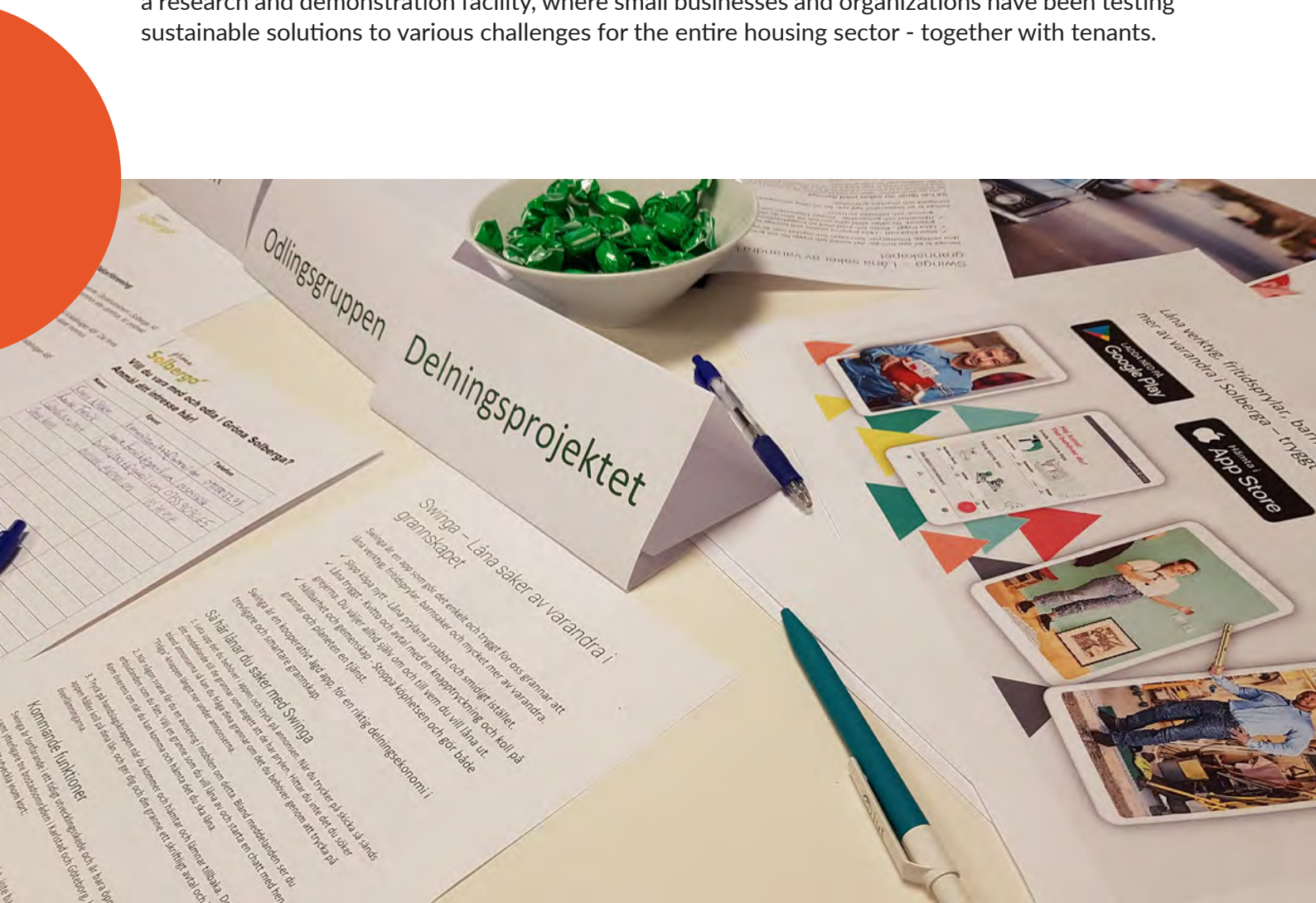
# Approach and outcomes

## The project

This study was carried out from spring 2019 to the end of 2020 by IVL Swedish Environmental Research Institute, in close collaboration with Stockholmshem, a housing company at both operational and managerial levels. Other partners contributing were ÅWL Arkitekter and Lund university. It was situated in 'Gröna Solberga' where several other actors were active to test their value propositions related to environmental sustainability.

## About Solberga

The area is built in the 1950's with 3-storey flats in neighborhood blocks. There are two local squares, with several empty premises and a larger center with service by the commuting train station. Stockholmshem's stock in Solberga are about 1500 households and is close to the average in Stockholm when it comes to demographics. New houses are built as the area is densified and there is an ongoing generational shift. In Solberga in total there are about 12,000 residents which also include villas and complexes from the 1960's million program. The district as a whole is a more exposed area, with lower income, worse health and where crime impact the local community. There is a nature recreation area with a public playground, with organized activities, shared equipment and gardening, an active sports club and an active tenant organisation. Since 2018 there has been a research and demonstration facility, where small businesses and organizations have been testing sustainable solutions to various challenges for the entire housing sector - together with tenants.





## Process

The project was built up around three phases and involved a variety of actors and citizens.

### *Phase 1: Research and prepare*

**An inventory was made of existing sharing initiatives in the neighborhood, and a dialogue was started up with residents and other actors to prioritize the initiatives.**

- Identifying and mapping of what is already being shared, tenants and actors' needs and interest, possible geographical places for sharing initiatives, possible collaborations, earlier experience in the housing company, other sharing pilots, possible digital tools.
- Previous studies were analyzed concerning customer satisfaction, demographics, impact assessments, urban planning. Dialogue with tenants through a survey, open houses, mailing list, prototyping, events in the area and meetings with existing community groups.
- Possible collaboration with local tenant groups, cultivation group, civil society, companies and the city were explored.
- Prioritizing and prototyping of what could be shared and how at a first stage.

### *Phase 2: Do and develop*

**Four sharing areas were explored and developed: share what you have, workshop facility, cultivation and business/organizational space sharing.**

### *Phase 3: Analysis and guidance*

**The sharing options were evaluated and a model for how to drive sharing forward was developed for the housing company.**

- Analyses of sharing experiences.
- Evaluation of the process.
- Development of sharing model for housing company.
- Embedding results in the housing company.

## Examples within the four areas for sharing

In dialogue with the residents and the actors involved, four types of sharing were explored: sharing things you have at home, sharing a workshop facility, sharing cultivation, and sharing spaces.



### **1. Sharing things you have at home**

Facilitate sharing through a platform to share what one has at home.

- For this purpose, a collaboration with Swinga was started, which is a sharing platform, through an app-based service for sharing locally between private people in a closed group based on zip codes.
- Dialogue with residents in the Solberga area was sought at various occasions for gaining interest and sharing knowledge into the sharing platform.
- Over 50 users with about 300 items were registered on the platform during the year 2020.

### **2. Sharing a workshop facility**

Facilitate sharing by offering equipment and knowledge.

- The tenants association had a workshop with tools and accompanying space available for wood, textile and metal work which is now more frequently used by members in the association.
- A digital lock system was deemed necessary for smooth exchanges, which was installed by the tenants organization for diminishing the administration around access to the workshop.
- The workshop is now also used for several course moments into crafting, including knowledge sharing and social events.





### **3. Sharing cultivation**

**Facilitate sharing by starting from interest, commitment and supporting organization.**

- Both farming in separate small growing boxes, open land farming, and initially indoor cultivation, was sought after by the cultivation group and was established in dialogue with the housing company.
- The interest and commitment have grown during the period, restarted along the way and been supported by the housing company with resources such as pallet collars, soil, seeds, sounding board for organization and support for communication and dissemination.
- An educational series was carried out during the spring and summer within the open land group. It was led by residents and supported by the housing company and the park administration with inspiration, knowledge and skills.
- A seed & cuttings exchange installation is offered through a student project which is aimed for the spring and will start with an announcement board traveling around in entrances of the residential buildings.
- Social events, such as a harvest party, contributed to attracting residents broadly and introducing forms of sharing.

### **4. Sharing spaces**

**Facilitate sharing by offering possibilities to share space to organisations whose role is central in the Solberga area.**

- Mapping premises – an inventory was made both of all Stockholmshems premises and also of existing businesses in them to identify who could be interested in shared space or functions. Outdoor spaces and actors present in the area through other property owners of high interest was also identified.



- Prioritised areas/premises/actors were identified through analyzes and a workshop with the project partners.
- Dialogue with potential tenants and civil society where initiated.
- Some collaborations were postponed, investigated for other residential areas or were in the end not realized e.g. collaboration with SVOA (Stockholm water and waste authority) about a local recycling station including a makerspace, co-working area and bicycle pool, collaboration with Mode 3 around laundry tailoring shared furniture's with Möbelbibliotek and shared equipment with Parkleken. The learnings and insights from the discussions were an important step in the process and were included in the guide for tenants.
- An internal project within Stockholmshem was initiated within the premises department to investigate the possibilities for shared premises, forms of contract and possible development paths and benefits in the long term.
- Within the Tenants' Association, a group has actively conducted a dialogue with the city and Stockholmshem about making Kristalltorget a living square. Opportunities have also been investigated here for joint use of premises around the square. The housing company has also had dialogue with two key departments in the municipality around development in the area. During the summer, various pop-up activities were tried out, such as a theater, studios, indoor gardens and a café on the square. The dialogue about the continued development continues.





## Sharing guide for housing companies

Upscaling internally and sharing of insights were sought after at the housing company. In the process of the project and together with the reference group seven steps presented below were identified as well as four levels of collaboration within those: collaboration with people living in the area, with actors (groups, organisations and business in the area), internally in the housing company and with the city district. The guide is open to all housing companies on how to facilitate sharing of things, mobility, space, knowledge and time among tenants, communities, actors in the area and the city to enhance sustainable lifestyles.

The implementation of the guide is an ongoing process with key functions as area managers, departments of premises and communications and the management looking into how sharing can develop in other residential areas.

### *Seven steps for sharing in housing companies*

- 1. Starting an inventory.** Residential areas differ in terms of type of residents, type of lay-out, facilities, collaborations, as well as infrastructures. Investigating what already exists and what is needed in an area is important both for sharing solutions to be used and for residents to feel involved and wanting to pursue these further.
- 2. Setting up sustainability goals.** Identifying which sustainability goals the sharing initiatives should contribute to is a way of driving the project in the right direction and asking the right questions all the way. This can be both about set sustainability goals in the company and the municipality to which sharing can contribute and the areas identified in the inventory.
- 3. Creating dialogue.** Creating conditions for dialogue, for example through attendance on site, questionnaires, open house, meetings, workshops or local events and using both formal and informal communication channels. This can be done by building on existing channels, dialogues and organization.
- 4. Designing for sharing.** Based on the inventory and the dialogue there are good conditions for being able to design initiatives and find forms of sharing that respond to real needs. The housing company can facilitate sharing in a number of ways: a digital arena, to share things you have at home, space and function for things you take care of and use together.
- 5. Supporting engagement and growth.** Pay attention to interest and initiatives from residents and local groups, start from commitment and provide the opportunity to grow and organize dynamically.
- 6. Developing support systems.** Identify which key factors would make sharing work in the specific area and see how systems and organization around sharing can be facilitated for example access to areas, equipment or coordination of gardening.
- 7. Furthering development and independence.** For the sharing initiatives to continue to exist, continued growth and independence are needed so that residents and actors in collaboration manage and feel ownership over them. Initiatives that have initially focused on long-term sustainable organizational and business models have been able to become independent.





## Conclusions and recommendations

### *Consider that empowerment is a process not a project*

In Gröna Solberga, the starting point from the beginning has been to develop methods internally and to build relationships in the area that can be ongoing. In the case of Gröna Solberga delar, there has not been an end date for the activities in the area, but merely for the project's follow-up and conclusions. Earlier initiatives at Stockholmshem, have been project-financed and run by Stockholmshem rather than by residents, which is a reason why it was hard to maintain them over time. In one case, Bagarmossen Smartup, it was also run as a project, but from the beginning with the focus on those who wanted to take it further after the project ended and on developing sustainable business models, which proved more successful.

### *Start from community engagement and interests*

To base the initiatives on local needs and engagement (in inventory and dialogue, forms of sharing, support systems) helps to build on and scale up existing commitment, create ownership of the initiatives and reduce the risk that initiatives do not meet needs, such as demanding too high IT-maturity in an area with a very high average age, or compete with existing local initiatives with centrally organized ones.

It is important to find the balance between bottom-up and top-down initiatives and to embrace the dynamics between a structured and engagement-driven organization. To pay attention to engagement where it arises and support growth and independence has been a success factor. To build community engagement, a local digital platform could be essential, when compared to a solution at city level. Also, from an environmental perspective a local solution for sharing will limit long transports which has a potential large effect. For the housing company it could be an advantage to gather all communication of the housing company and on local sharing in one solution. For residents it might be seen more as a function between the inhabitants in the area, that they feel co-



ownership and responsibility for. An exclusive app for the housing company might also jeopardize collaboration with other housing companies and the gains of strengthening the area.

### ***Offer support for practical challenges and scaling up***

Identify which small efforts can provide a large outcome, such as support with code locks, printouts, distribution of information to residents. Agreement- and contract forms as well as insurance solutions are essential for offering and supporting sharing facilities such as spaces, or to gain trust in digital sharing platforms. To have solutions ready can contribute to clearer understandings of responsibility, ownership and financial commitments and make the step to start sharing easier.

Work proactively with gaining trust, to clarify expectations and possible handling of conflicts. If there is a potential conflict of goals among actors, this is important when facilitating the collaboration. Find ways to support groups with different types of organization and access to resources to support a variety of initiatives. Simplify the possibility of stepping in and out of commitment, without requiring long-term responsibility, without taking over responsibility, for example support to complete a cultivation course during a period, or to organize gardens.

### ***Look at different scales***

There are several potential benefits to planning and designing sharing capabilities based on different scales of the area:

- Property scale, for example where a smaller project can contribute to the large scale in the form of more efficient use of infrastructure.
- Neighborhood scale, for example by the fact that sharing solutions between more houses / actors can lead to new buildings landing faster on the site.
- District scale, for example by sharing collaboration creates greater opportunities to connect to existing local needs and demand, to involve local actors and create greater conditions for initiatives to be run and taken further locally.
- Urban and regional scale, for example by collaborating on urban development as a way to achieve goals for sustainable development.

Working on several scales is particularly relevant if you want to increase the interaction between areas, for example based on safety. It can also be a way to use spaces more efficiently. It is also relevant to review which scale one works with if the residents' sense of area does not match the administrative divisions. When looking for the right scale for what you want to share to be well used, you may need to change the scale to find sufficient critical mass, for example a bike pool.

### ***Use a system perspective***

Have a system perspective when choosing and designing solutions. Can the need be solved in another system? For example with shared mobility, it is easy to immediately look at the solutions for carpools and bicycle pools you want. Where perhaps increased public transport or joint delivery solutions is an important part of the answer.



### ***Combine multiple forms to create a culture of sharing***

Combining forms of sharing, such as sharing things one has at home, sharing common equipment in a makerspace and sharing cultivation, has a greater opportunity to create a habit and culture of sharing, than just one form.

### ***Use sharing to create social cohesion***

Use sharing to create social cohesion between existing and new buildings in a district. Collaboration between property owners, tenant-owner associations and the district on forecasts of what will be needed here in the future and common solutions can strengthen the area. Build on existing collaboration in the district. Address the needs of tenants for the district and include them in the dialogue process.

### ***Be aware of possible social rebound effects***

Sharing is a tool for achieving other sustainability goals, such as, resource efficiency, more sustainable lifestyles, reduced carbon footprint, security, community, participation, increased equality and new business models. However, it is not a given that it is sustainable to share things. Depending on how it is taking place, there is a risk of environmental rebound effects like increased consumption, and increased transports.

In the project possible social rebound effects have also been discussed in connection to design of initiatives namely the risk of increased segregation and inequality, that the experience of community is reduced or absent, and reduced responsibility for and maintenance of the common.

### ***Read more:***

The web guide: [www.stockholmshem.se/gronasolberga](http://www.stockholmshem.se/gronasolberga)

The full report: [www.ivl.se](http://www.ivl.se)



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