A CITY FOR YOUTHS

an urban strategy to encourage and enhance existing activity and activate social space

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1.1 Definitions

Youth
The period between childhood and adult age\(^1\)
Referred in this report as age 13-19

Young adult
A person in their teens or early twenties\(^2\)
Referred in this report as age 20-26

1.2 Point of departure & aim

Previous semester I looked into how depopulating areas fit within a growing economy and if there are examples of how architecture has been a valuable tool to support these places. Depopulating areas were studied on both a national and global scale and one of the conclusions I made was that the issues centered around decline are mainly political on a national scale, but still there is potential for architecture to support areas to become more attractive. Research by Lotta Svensson about moving patterns among youths was important when understanding the role architecture possibly could have. Her research shows that the youth who are more likely to return to their home municipality are the one who have felt part of the municipal development and have a positive view of the area. These ideas could be an used as an opportunity through which municipalities could reach out to and include youths in programs for developing the area. Architectural interventions could be set up to form platforms through which influence and participation would be centered around direct actions instead of traditional citizen dialogs.\(^3\) This thesis looks into what the platform programmatically could be and how it connects back to the youths, their leisure time and the city while also aiming to strengthen the general perception of an area. The area the

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\(^3\) Appendix A
Image 1 - Railway in Lycksele

photo Julia Abbevik
1.3 Moving patterns - the importance of youths
Declining population numbers is a widespread problem in Västerbotten, a majority of the inland municipalities are losing more inhabitants than what they are gaining. The municipalities that are experiencing an increase are urban areas such as Skellefteå and Umeå and their surrounding municipalities. Among the inland municipalities, most have experienced a decrease over the past decades. In the context of Västerbotten, the municipality Lycksele has a significant role in relation to its surrounding municipalities as its central location has made it into an important center for society services, healthcare and education. Over the past 25 years, the population number has decreased by 14%.

One of the greatest tasks areas such as Lycksele have is to become and stay attractive. For an area to be able to survive and maintain society services, it is important that people of all ages want to live there. When the population number in an area is decreasing, it is rarely evenly spread among different age groups. A common idea is that people are most likely to move at two times in their lives, around their 20’s and again when they are settling down to start a family.

A study that revolves around municipal moving patterns has shown that the one time in life people are most likely to move is in their 20’s and that the amount which returns are few. There are three general times in life when people are more likely to move. The first one is when the youth is moving to a university city to study. The second time is between the ages 24-28 when most people move to big cities after finished studies. There is a general assumption that a lot of people move again when they are settling down to start a family. The assumption is correct, but instead of moving back to where they are originally from, most of these moves are

4 Appendix A
5 Appendix A
6 Josefina Syssner, Mindre Många : Om Anpassning Och Utveckling I Krympande Kommuner (1st edn, Dokument press 2018), p.28
Figure 1 - Lycksele municipality and Sweden
Moving patterns are similar in Lycksele as they are in the rest of Sweden, the youth is the main group who leave, but also the most important to keep as they are important to secure society services in the future. A continuous pattern of youths leaving and not returning could affect the services provided in Lycksele in a long term perspective. The age distribution of the population in Lycksele indicates that the main group who are leaving are the youths.8,9,10,11

1.4 Thesis questions
- What could an architectural strategy that aims to support youths in their leisure time and also strengthen their connection to the area look like?
- What programmatic aspects are important to consider in such a strategy?

1.5 Methodology
The research is a combination of primary and desk based research. The aims are to investigate the key elements young people find important in their future context and how these reflect the existing context in Lycksele. Arguments and theories are researched through literature studies to find support for the primary research.

1.5.1 Literature studies
To continue the research relating to how architecture can be used as a tool to support declining areas, the literature reviewed in this report has been centered around the significance of place in relation to identity and research in the fields of depopulation, moving patterns and creativity. For case studies related to specific events, websites from news papers and the actual event have been considered as trustworthy sources. Key words

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8 Josefina Syssner, Mindre Många : Om Anpassning Och Utveckling I Krympande Kommuner (1st edn, Dokument press 2018), p.28
that have been used to search for literature and reports in this topic are place, attachment, youths, municipal strategies, incubator and creativity.

1.5.2 Action based research

Action based research has been a significant part in the process of the report. In order to get a greater understanding of the current situation in Lycksele relating to motives behind moving away there is an importance in getting a nuanced understanding of the situation, the action based research has therefore been aimed to target different groups that in some way are affected by a decrease of youths. The identified groups have been youths, Lycksele municipality, adults who are working with strengthening the area and young adults who are living in Lycksele or/and have lived there as a youth. The actions have been centered on interviews and workshops. The raw data from interviews can be found in Appendix B and the raw data from the workshop is available in Appendix C. All actions have been taking place in Swedish and therefore the raw data found in the appendixes are written in Swedish as well. During the project, I have had a continuous dialog with a representative from Lycksele municipality. The representative has helped me arrange meetings and been answering questions and giving feedback throughout the project. At the end of March, I was invited to present my ideas for the growth advisory committee at the municipality. The purpose of the presentation was to initiate a discussion around the topic and present new ideas of how the area can be developed further. Actions are summarized and common themes are analyzed in chapter 3.
2.1 Choosing where to live

In order for municipalities to keep their population they need to be better at creating environments for people in the ages 18-35. Instead of only providing an opportunity of work, a complete lifestyle needs to be offered.\textsuperscript{12}

A theory of how people choose where to live has been presented by the economic geographer Maria Wikhall. According to her research, the choice of home region should be considered as a part of a process and not as an isolated decision.\textsuperscript{13} Wikhall explains how culture could be used as a tool to make a place more attractive both on a local and regional scale. By investing in culture, new meeting places could emerge which can provide a socially more valuable life quality and also strengthen the view of the area. By investing in culture, she means that less youths will be willing to move from their home municipality and more companies are willing to establish in the region.\textsuperscript{14}

Another important aspect related to how willing young adults are to return to their home municipality is related to how much they as youths have felt a part of the development of the area which is related to how they perceive it. The more influence the youth have had in the development, the more likely they are to return after moving away.\textsuperscript{15}

The situation with youths leaving Lycksele is something Malin Ackermann, rural activist, sees as problematic for the development of Lycksele as few are returning. The pattern of youths leaving is something unavoidable, it has become a rooted norm and is not so much of a question relating to if as much to as when.\textsuperscript{16}

\begin{footnotesize}
12 Marit Israelsson, SVT, Interview with Charlotta Mellander, ‘Utmaning Att Få Folket Att Flytta Till Jobben I Skellefteå’ (2020).
14 Ibid. p. 15-18
15 Appendix A
16 Appendix B - interview 5
\end{footnotesize}
Image 2 - Parkinglot at the trainstation in Lycksele

photo Julia Abbevik
2.2 Place as a part of our identity

There are different aspects that influence how we perceive a space, it is connected to personal experiences, but the built environment also plays an important part as it can help to create the conditions which makes a space into a place. Architects should consider how emotional and functional qualities affect spaces, designs should not only respond to facilitating everyday activities. In order to attract more people to a place, designs should also respond to the affective and symbolic qualities as it can help establish an emotional connection to a place.17

In a TEDxTalk from 2017 an American architect, Louis Smith, discussed the possibilities of architecture as a tool to revive identity, community and purpose in an area. Smith talks about the importance the built environment has for our identity and why community involvement is important for a building to be successful. He claims that identity is directly linked to architecture and sustainability. A building which is not responding to community needs can not be considered as sustainable as it is not programmed to its full potential.18 A space becomes a place as we get more attached to it through lived experience and the values we apply to it.19 The importance of a place is not just related to one’s own experiences but also to social interaction and functionality which means valuable leisure time, work opportunities and housing.20 How well a place meets our needs is an important factor for how we perceive it.21 For some, the place where you grow up can be an important part of your identity, this is because we start to identify ourselves with the place especially if we

20 Gunnar Malmberg, Linda Sandberg and Kerstin Westin, Den Goda Platsen (Kulturgeografiska Inst 2005). p. 6-7
have lived in the same place for a long time.  

When the attachment we feel to a place and our ability to make places authentic is lost, a population decline is caused. To strengthen these places and remake them attractive, the attachment we feel needs to be redeveloped. Conditions to strengthen the feelings people associate with a place could be supported through designs. In order for people to be able to feel attached to the place, designs need to respond to local structures and site specific conditions. When a design is considered by the particular activities of a place and local situations, groups and individuals are more likely to make the space into their own place and give it a new authenticity and significance. An example of this can be studied in a commercial, Every other week, by IKEA from 2016. The commercial portraits a child whose parents are separated and he lives every other week with his mom and every other week with his dad. The viewer gets to follow the child as he moves between his parents and how the different rooms at both his parents are decorated in a similar way, see Image 4 and 5 on page 13. The commercial shows how similar materiality and objects provide a safe space for the child. The commercial was a part of a campaign where products from IKEA were presented as part of the solutions to everyday problems that can occur. In this case, the notion of home is used by IKEA as a commodity, but even though there probably are underlying motives relating to profit, the commercial itself emphasizes how recognizable factors can enhance how a space is perceived and the feelings we associate with it.

The emotional relationship between people and places is what defines the meaning of sense of place. Physical attributes and activities are two factors which are important when it comes to what feelings that are associated with the place. The experiences and memories we possess in combination with our personality, motives, age and beliefs influences how we perceive a place. The more connected we feel to a place, the more likely we are to contribute to social activities taking place.

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23 Edward Relph, Place And Placelessness (Pion 1976). p. 145-147
24 Martin Werner, Every Other Week (Holst Åkestam 2016)
This photograph of home 1 has been removed in this publication due to copyright reasons.

Image 3 - Home 1

This photograph of home 2 has been removed in this publication due to copyright reasons.

Image 4 - Home 1
The places that have a strong sense of place, encourage people to live and
dwell there as opportunities for social interactions are easier to find, both
temporary and permanent events.\textsuperscript{26}

Identity and the built environment are aspects which are closely
related, the role of the architect is to consider the place and the
elements which gives it value for a wider crowd. In order for
architecture to be successful, as mentioned by Louis Smith earli-
er in this paragraph, it’s a necessity for it to respond to local needs.
Even though place attachment is related to personal experience,
it’s still important to design places which allow for it. In the context of
Lycksele, this needs to be done from the perspective of the youths with the
aim to give new light on how youths can be involved in shaping the built
environment.\textsuperscript{27}

\section*{2.3 Values in designing for youths}

To offer possibilities of a certain lifestyle, important aspects municipalities
need to consider in order to stay or become attractive is closely related
to place attachment. The link between inhabitants and municipal
development is important in contexts centered around growth. Even in
municipalities with ongoing decrease, growth is commonly strived for in mu-
nicipal development. Municipalities in Sweden have adapted to the new
conditions to some extent, but the adaptations vary between different
regions.\textsuperscript{28} Areas that have or are experiencing a decrease of population
have different pre-conditions, what’s in common for the areas are that
they are seen as less attractive in relation to other areas. How attractive
an area is can be related to different factors such as geographical
location, presence of society services, leisure time activities and job
opportunities.\textsuperscript{29,30} An important group which needs to find the area
attractive are the youths as they are the ones who possibly will live and

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Mina Najafi and Mustafa Kamal Bin Mohd Shariff, 'The Concept Of Place And Sense Of Place In Architec-
tural Studies' [2011] International Journal of Social, Behavioral, Educational, Economic, Business and Indus-
\item Appendix B - interview 5
\item Josefina Syssner, Mindre Många : Om Anpassning Och Utveckling I Krympande Kommuner (1st edn, Dokument
press 2018). p.61-62
\item Josefina Syssner, Nya Visioner För Landsbygden (Linnefors förlag 2018). p.68-69
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
dwell in the area in the future. The public spaces play an important role in youths’ social and emotional well being. Even though public spaces are a main meeting space for youths, they rarely have a possibility to influence the development of it. Built environment in relation to spatial mobility has shown to be strongly related to youths’ health. The built environment is an impediment to support social activity among youths and therefore it is of significance to consider and involve them in the shaping areas.\textsuperscript{31}

3.1 The city from the perspective of youths

To understand what kind of lifestyle the youth wants to have and what different combined factors that are important in a place for them, I held a workshop at Tannbergskaolan in Lycksele where 22 students participated, the students were informed that their participation would be treated anonymously. The aim with the workshop was to identify future needs, ambitions and current meeting spaces in Lycksele which was discussed in groups of four to six students. The raw data from the workshop can be found in Appendix B.

The groups were given a map each where they were asked to mark out what places they use in the city and write what activities there are that relate to the different places. To start the discussions, the students were asked to reflect on the concept of a city and what the combined factors that make a city are. Two central questions the students discussed revolved around where they want to live in the future and the importance of space in relation to their leisure time. The discussions around these topics varied between the groups, but two answers which everyone had in common was how the possibility of work and a valuable leisure time are important aspects for them in a place and also that the built environment is crucial and sometimes also an impediment for the activities they can do. All students had different ideas of where they want to live in the future, still, four common themes were identified, these were closeness to nature, possibility of work, valuable leisure time and sense of home.

Closeness to nature was mentioned as an important aspect in three of the four groups. Some students argued that it was more important for them to live close to nature than living in the heart of a city. Some advantages that were mentioned were the calming aspects nature brings, living outside of the city opens up for a less stressful life. Some other students found advantages in living close to nature related to leisure time activities such as skiing and driving snowmobiles.

The possibility of work opportunities were also mentioned as an
important factor when it comes to deciding where they want to live in the future. Some students discussed that they find the job opportunities in the area limited to only a few categories of work and in order to get a job within their specific fields of interests, they need to move.

Another aspect the students discussed was a valuable leisure time, one student started to reflect on current meeting places and found that there aren’t really any places for young adults to meet, that in combination with limited work opportunities are two reasons why the student doesn’t want to stay in the area after graduation. Another student expressed the importance of a valuable leisure time and found that within certain fields of interests, the general availability in Lycksele is good, but these respond to limited fields of interests and are often related to sports. If you’re not into sports, you are less likely to find a certain place in the city which meets your interests. Another student expressed how there isn’t really any place for them to hang out, especially not when there is a wish to meet as a group. The school has become an important place for these interactions, and in the summer the soccer field connected to the school becomes a popular place as it is accessible, but as the winters are long there is, in the students opinion, not really anywhere for them to hang out unconditionally.

The fourth theme that came up during the discussions was sense of home. As a part of the discussion, the students started to reflect on whether or not Lycksele is a city. By comparing it with other cities in Sweden they found that there are aspects in Lycksele that are lacking which they find as important in a city, for instance public transport and a shopping center. All students in the groups didn’t see themselves in Lycksele in the future, they were discussing dreams about moving abroad or to a city by the coast as the availability of services are more there compared to Lycksele, the main important aspect mentioned was that the place needs to feel like a home.

The places the students marked out on the maps they were given were later compiled into one map which can be seen in Figure 2 on page 19. In the compiled map, spaces are divided and categorised into three different categories relating to the
Figure 2 - Identified spaces by youth
activities taking place there. The three categories are physical activity, social activity and vehicle related activity. All spaces are presented as meeting spaces and could all be in the social activity category. In this case, social activity is related to the activities the youths presented in the city center such as cafés, cinema and bowling. The physical activity category is responding to sports, recreational walks and swimming. Vehicle related activity is responding to activities where mopeds and EPAs are a central part of the gathering.

3.2 Return to Lycksele

To gain a greater understanding of the motives behind moving back to Lycksele, the high school teacher that helped arrange the workshop with the youths volunteered for an interview. He, who is a young adult who recently moved back to Lycksele, expressed the importance of a valuable leisure time in the question of how a place can be strengthened. The problematic part is to find a strategy which can be applied on people with different backgrounds and interests. When thinking about Lycksele and how valuable young adults usually find their leisure time, he sees two different sides. One is his own perspective as a young adult who studied in Lycksele between the ages 16-19, during this time he managed to get a social context which is partly still there at age 25. The other side is related to how people who have moved to Lycksele without having any previous context have a greater risk of finding their leisure time as less valuable than the ones who have a previous context in the area.32 These ideas were confirmed by a 26 year old woman who recently moved to Lycksele without originally coming from there. She finds that there aren’t enough meeting spaces in the city that could help to establish a social cohesion, especially for young adults without children of their own. In her case, her work has become an important meeting place where she has been able to build a social cohesion of her own.33

Another person who has volunteered for an interview is a 21 year old woman who moved from Lycksele three years ago. In her

32 Appendix B - interview 3
33 Appendix B - interview 4
case, the main reason why she left was related to education as there today are no possibilities of studying within her certain field in Lycksele. She appreciates the city more now since she has left, but it is nothing that makes her want to move back again. For her, it is important to live close to nature with good accessibility to a city with a greater supply of shops and cafés. When reflecting on existing meeting places for youths, she finds that there are not enough, there are many youths who don’t have any place to be, some are inhabiting spaces without any purpose. When reflecting on what a new meeting place for youths and young adults in Lycksele could be, she expresses an existing lack of meeting spaces for cultural activities and how it could be a place for more people to evolve their creative expression.34

3.3 Common themes
A conclusion that can be drawn from the themes lifted in the interviews, in combination with the points discussed during the workshop, is that there is a lack of meeting spaces for youths and young adults in the city. If one has a social context in the area from before, the need for meeting spaces is not as great as it is for a person without any previous connection to the area. When the students discussed the future and what kind of place they want to live in then, a common theme was the importance of work and the options they mentioned for work in Lycksele they found limiting and not within their particular field of interest. Opportunities of work played an important role for the youths, but also the possibility of having somewhere to be in their leisure time, being close to nature and that the place has a sense of home.

34 Appendix B – interview 1
4.1 Tried strategies

At Lycksele municipality, the question of becoming a more attractive place to live in is actively worked with. In order to become more attractive, key aspects that need to be considered are attractive housing, a platform for recruitment and leisure activities. Even though some of the participants in the workshop held at the school claimed that there was little to know about the variety of existing job opportunities in Lycksele, there is in fact a business plan which deals with aspects of creating an attractive climate for new businesses in the area. The report states the importance of an early dialog between youths and companies as it helps the youth to define their future career path and opens up for companies to find relevant workforce at a later stage. A way to create jobs could be to set up a space for dialog between the job market and the youth to promote the available possibilities and inspire them to start their own business.

A common strategy municipalities work with in order to attract more inhabitants is a strategy centered around housing which is an important aspect to consider, but in order for a strategy to be successful it needs to consider a holistic approach. There are examples of how municipalities on both a local and global scale have tried different strategies of how to attract new inhabitants. Following are some of these strategies explained.

In Västerbotten there are examples of municipalities that have tried different strategies to attract inhabitants, one has been to give away a plot or sell it for a symbolic price. The municipality Nordmaling decided in 2012 to give away 100 plots with the hope to attract more people to move to the area and build new houses. Even though the project was seen as something positive for Nordmaling, the response didn’t meet the

35 Appendix B - interview 6
37 Ibid., p.7
expectations and no one responded to the offer. It was first when the action was mentioned in the media people started to show interest in the plots. Similar strategies are applied in both Robertsfors and Vindeln where the municipalities are aiming to attract inhabitants by giving away plots for 1kr, the condition in Vindeln is that the house has to be built within 2 years. The reason why these strategies have not been successful could be related to a failed communication and absence of a holistic approach.

In addition to strategies tackling the housing situation, another strategy which has been applied in the municipality Traena in Norway is an example of how culture has been used to create an identity around an area. A part of the strategy involves a program called Airtraena which invites artists to live and dwell on the islands of Traena in northern Norway for a period of time. Besides inviting artists to the islands, the municipality in Traena is actively working with integrating the entire community in the development of the area which has led to creative and innovative solutions among the 460 inhabitants in the area. Every year, a festival takes place on the islands which has been listed as one of the worlds best music festivals by the guardian. Due to a common will and interest from the people living on the island in combination with successful programs and festivals, the identity of the islands has come to strongly be related to creativity and innovation.

Though these examples are somewhat tangential it is however still important to look at and understand them because there are elements in these strategies which can provide some useful ideas for developing actual proposing plans to put into place in Lycksele. It is necessary to have

42 PRISLISTA FÖR KOMMUNAL TOMTMARK AVSEDD FÖR SMÅHUS (Vindeln se 2020) <https://www.vindeln.se/Sve/Files/kommunfakta%20och%20organisation/k-2019-516%20Antagen%20prislista%20f%C3%B6r%20kommunal%20industrimark%20f%C3%B6r%20sm%C3%A5husbebyggelse...pdf> accessed 28 February 2020.
creative solutions as a viable option plan in addition to offer housing. As housing is a commonly used strategy, and there are examples of how it has been used, the aspects of platform for recruitment and leisure time activities are relevant to investigate further.

4.2 Creativity as a platform

In addition to the notion of feeling at home and being close to nature, two other important aspects for the youths are future possibilities of work and a valuable leisure time. Creativity is a theme which has been mentioned both in interviews and literature as a possible tool to work around in order to create a new meeting place in Lycksele. To understand what a viable platform for both recruitment and leisure activities could be, it’s crucial to understand the possibilities of creative platforms and what opportunities that can emerge from them.

Examples of platforms which revolve around creativity are maker spaces as a part of the makers movement. The makers movement is a community where creators use and combine digital tools and 3D-printers and other workshop spaces to solve problems or develop ideas.46 Maker spaces function as public workshops where tools and knowledge are shared by both amateurs and professionals. The activity in the spaces are rarely only centered around fabrication, instead, the maker spaces also have potential to act as a social hub in the community where people come together to work, learn and socialise.47 The makers movement has made it possible for makers to work locally on a global scale. The accessibility of new techniques has made it possible for anyone to realise intentions and design ideas. This has opened up for entrepreneurs and inventors to not be dependent on large companies to fulfill their visions.48

Opportunities of work are something which can be combined with a maker space. There are examples of spaces that function both as a maker space and an employment incubator. One of these is eXpression

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Figure 3 - geographical location of employment incubators in Sweden
in Umeå which is an employment incubator specialised within creative businesses. The incubator is situated in the same building as Curiosum which is a university owned maker space which is also open for public use. The activities of the maker space and employment incubator are combined and is a place where startups specialised within creativity and culture can evolve their business.49

The geographical distribution of employment incubators in Sweden in 2018 were mostly concentrated around the south and the east coast which can be seen in Figure 3 on page 26. In the inland of the northern parts of the country, the physical presence of an incubator is not existent with exception from one in Östersund. In Västerbotten there are in total six, four which are located in Umeå and two located in Skellefteå.50

Another incubator in Umeå is BIC Factory which I was able to visit in February 2020, the raw data from the study visit can be found in Appendix C. BIC Factory is partly financed by Region Västerbotten, and aims to be a start up hub for young entrepreneurs in the entire region.51 During the visit we discussed what strategies that were put in place to reach out to possible entrepreneurs in the entire region. Today the incubator is working with digital tools for seminars and programs to reach out to a wider crowd. One point raised during the discussion was related to how valuable it is for these programs to be present at site as there today is a difficulty to promote the services of the program on a greater scale.52

Today there are six companies situated at the hub where they are taking a part of a two year program in entrepreneurship with the help from experts within different fields. The companies that are a part of the program today are mainly focused on IT-solutions, and the spaces are designed for small scale productions. If an entrepreneur has a company in the more creative areas, the incubator eXpression is a preferred alternative as it also houses workshop areas.53

Looking outside of Sweden there is a report called Co-Making:

52 Appendix B - study visit 1
53 Appendix C - study visit 1
Research Into London’s Open Access Makerspaces and Shared Workshops which analyses the spatial and programmatic qualities of co-making spaces in London. In the report, two main types of workshops were identified, workshops with open access and workshops that are shared co-making spaces. There is a general unfamiliarity among the public when it comes to workshop environments, therefore it might be difficult to encourage public access into the spaces. There are examples of maker spaces that have become an important hub in their communities, one of these is the North Street Potters ceramic workshop in London. To get transparency and also invite the community, the spatial arrangement at North Street Potters has been organised with a shop connecting to the street. Parts of the workshop are visible from the shop to create a link between the makers and visitors.54 Another co-making space analysed in the report is Blackhorse Workshop which is an open access community workshop that provides access to tools, workspace and technical expertise for an affordable price. The project was developed by the architecture practice Assemble in collaboration with local artists, business and community organisations. The building consists of two floors, where the ground floor houses the open access activities and on the second floor there are studios for renting. By having the initial research and design part of the project in close collaboration with local actors, the general public unfamiliarity with workshop spaces has been addressed as the community has been able to contribute to their environment.55

Lessons to be learned from mentioned case studies and strategies are that creative platforms have the potential to work as a point of gathering and at the same time meet other needs of the community. For a creative platform to work as a common space for the community it sits in, it is important to consider how the spaces within responds to the surroundings in order to keep it as open and transparent as possible and how the community can be a part of as many stages as possible in the planning of the platform.

55 Ibid., p. 52-55, 74
To deal with the presented facts about place attachment and the matter of belonging in the context of Lycksele, I propose an urban strategy which aims to strengthen the connection between youths, young adults and local actors in Lycksele and add more value to youths leisure time.

The proposal is three buildings located within the three different categorised areas that were identified after the workshop at Tannbergsskolan in chapter 3.1 on page 16-20. The buildings aim to strengthen the already existing leisure time activities and create a platform for creativity and entrepreneurship where existing companies in Lycksele, the municipality, youths and young adults can meet. The three proposed buildings, as a part of the urban strategy, are a combined maker space and employment incubator, a sauna and an equipment storage as can be seen in Figure 4 on page 32.

The proposed program aims to respond to the four different themes that came up during the discussions at the workshop with the youths held at Tannbergsskolan. The themes were, as presented on pages 16-18, closeness to nature, possibility of work, valuable leisure time and sense of home.

In order to strengthen the notion of a valuable leisure time, it is important to encourage the youth in their existing leisure time activities. To do so I made an analysis of the activities in spaces the youth uses today and categorized these into three different categories as presented on pages 18-20, physical activity, social activity and vehicle related activity.

The program deals with three main aspects, the first is to activate social space. From the conducted interviews it was clear that the youths and young adults do not feel they have a given space for them in the city. The built environment has shown to be important for the physical wellbeing among youths, and therefore activating social space aims to set up spaces where the youth feel welcome. The combined maker space and
This photograph of Lycksele city center has been removed in this publication due to copyright reasons.
employment incubator aims to address this aspect as a creative platform which is something mentioned throughout the essay as something that could give more value to youths’ leisure time in Lycksele. The employment incubator, which is also the main structure, is located in direct connection to the main square in Lycksele city which is in the social zone. As there are examples of maker spaces that are strengthening communities, I see potential for one in Lycksele to work both as a platform for entrepreneurship and also a public living room. The second aspect deals with the existing activities that take place in more informal meeting places. To encourage the activities taking place in these locations, the aim is to add more value and establish an appreciation for and among youths. The response to this aspect is an equipment storage. It will be located in the vehicle related area and the aim is to encourage youths into respectfully inhabit spaces they are using today. The third aspect has similarities with the second, it deals with enhancing existing activity by intervening through adding a built intervention to the place. This part of the proposal is a sauna located in the physical activity zone. This is an area where a lot of spontaneous activity is taking place, the aim with this intervention is to enhance the experience of these activities.
Figure 4 - urban strategy and interventions
An urban strategy to strengthen the connection youths feel to an area and at the same time support their leisure time, needs to consider a few aspects. Housing, work and valuable leisure time are important aspects which both reviewed literature and interviews have concluded. Charlotta Mellander suggests that a city that has ambitions to retain youths needs to offer a complete lifestyle. Lotta Svenssons ideas concerning the feelings we associate with a place in combination with Mellanders thought could be a way for municipalities to think when working with the question of how to make a place attractive. From meeting with the youths, it is evident that there is not one solution that could fit everyone, as everyone has different dreams and ambitions with their lives. Therefore suggesting what this lifestyle could be is difficult but as many strategies tried within different municipalities are centered around housing, the proposed strategy aims to be a complement to tried housing strategies and by that identify common interests and ambitions which could be a part of strengthening the notion of a lifestyle.

My proposal should be seen as a possible answer to how both leisure time and work opportunities in Lycksele could be strengthened. The proposed urban strategy does not aim to force youths to live in an area. Individual behaviors will take place, and as can be concluded from the workshop held with the students at Tannbergskolan, there is not one common will among the youth to move to a bigger city even if statistics shows that a lot of people do. The youths who wanted to move away from Lycksele proposed places that they express some connection to, or places that can provide them with a certain lifestyle. One lesson to be learned from them is that in order for Lycksele to become considered as more attractive, the area needs to be able to offer a strengthened connection to the area. The connection humans feel to an area is closely related to how well the area meets our needs and interests. The public rooms play an important part in youths’ leisure time, the way it is shaped and the rooms it provides shapes the activities youths perform.
Except from considering how youths are affected by the built environment it is also of value to consider who and what the strategy aims to address and set up a strategy based on their perspective. By establishing a dialog with both representatives from the municipality, youths and young adults, three key aspects of what the urban strategy needs to address have been identified. These are encouraging activity, enhancing existing activity and activating social space. The two most valuable aspects one needs to consider when designing for youths, is to design spaces that allow for them to make them into their own places and also to listen to their needs as place attachment is nothing that can be felt by no one else than one self.
Image 8 - Winter view of the river Lycksele

photo Julia Abbevik
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Publications


Websites


Images

Image 1
Julia Abbevik

Image 2
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Image 3 (caption from video)

Image 4 (caption from video)
week

Image 5
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Figures

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