

The fish that take root

Background for our project

Our project is anchored in the library's newly developed concept (summer 2020) prepared in connection with studying the relocation of the library to street level in Lierbyen center. The concept builds on Lier municipality's vision Green Lier - for all residents. Furthermore, we draw inspiration from the community part of the municipal plan, which states that Lier municipality is a future-oriented municipality that will implement the green shift by investing in green value creation. The plan points out five specific societal goals, relevant to our project are belonging to the village, life skills for all and climate-neutral community. The UN's sustainability goals are central to the work, and the greenhouse project provides us with a good starting point for disseminating knowledge about this.

Our library concept is as follows:

The green Library – for children and everyone else

Lier library

Lier municipality is located between two cities southeast of the capital Oslo. The municipality has several settlements, and the municipal center is in Lierbyen, where the main library also is located. The municipality has approx. 26,000 inhabitants.

The library installed a greenhouse in 2016, and this has been a place for activities and dissemination. However, after visiting the art exhibition of the Tigerworm Aquaponics Project and Society, we were inspired to do something completely different with the greenhouse. By collaborating with artists whose philosophy is participatory, the library has gained valuable ideas and inspiration to expand the library's services.

In the summer of 2021, the National Library granted project support and we were able to plan specific activities related to further developing the aquaponics. The activities were to involve children and young people, and the goal was for the children to learn more about sustainability goals. More specifically, we say the principles of circular ecology, which aquaponics represents, but also socially as an inclusive meeting place, where new relationships and friendships can be built.

Activities so far

Due to the corona situation, it was uncertain to what extent we could carry out planned activities with the children. In the autumn of 2021 during the school holidays, we invited to the first workshop in the library's greenhouse. During a week of work, the aquaponics was completed. The children drew designs for what it should look like, and voted for the solution they liked best. We

found an old dresser on the second-hand market. The aquarium is on top of the dresser, which was painted in new colors, and the growth area itself is in the drawer below.



The group of children that participated in build the aquaponics joined workshops after school on Mondays. The group, which goes by the name Monday Club, took responsibility for maintaining the system, cleaning the aquarium walls and feeding the fish. The commitment to the Monday club was strong, and artist Anne-Britt Rage, let them run their own projects based on their ideas for expressing themselves through video, music and dance.

Achievements

Halfway into the project, it is still too early to conclude on goal achievement. A summary of various areas we see effect on, however, are:

- Attention: many people notice the aquaponics entering the library, and especially children want to come in and watch the fish closely. The youngest are most excited and it can be a goal to involve adults. A film was presented to the municipality's political committee for culture.
- Social meeting place, there is a creative and vibrant community in the Monday club, which contributes to a sense of community. Also worth noting is the low-threshold for joining in the activity. There is no high demands for results or achievements.
- Innovation: the installation and collaboration with the artist group challenges ideas of what public library should contain. For example, there was skepticism about the amount of water in the aquariums, considering the consequences of leaks. The library's doxa as a place for literature, control and order meets a circular system as an expression of a living ecological system in mini format. It creates a thought-provoking contrast.

Going forward

The project will continue until the summer with a focus on digital tools. We want to convey the experiences from the project even more strongly on the website, and to use the theme of aquaponics further in code club and game design involving young people. We see that aquaponics have elements that fit well with game design, and although the budget does not allow for the development of a finished game or app, it is possible to work with the process of creating a game design, a prototype.

References

Film presentation

https://youtu.be/Sfj5_wX9D-g

Web site for project (soon to be available in English)

<https://lierbib.no/akvaponi-fiskene-som-slar-rotter>