



Universal design contributes to an age-friendly society

Good examples from Norwegian
municipalities and county councils





KOMMUNESEKTORENS ORGANISASJON

The Norwegian Association of Local and
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The booklet is inspired by the
members of the KS' municipal
network for universal design,
which was established in 2013.
The goal is to contribute to an
inclusive society, by sharing
experiences and removing
obstacles.

In 2016, the Government
launched "More years - more
opportunities. The Norwegian
Government's strategy for an
age-friendly society"

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Local communities for everyone

Universal design is all about creating good inclusive communities where everyone can participate. "Age-friendly local communities" is a priority initiative from KS, where networks will be starting up in 2019.

Our starting point is that everyone needs universal design. But the "Age-friendly local communities" initiative has a broader approach that includes a wider part of society, and will be carried out in collaboration with various stakeholders.

This leaflet presents some of the many exciting and innovative initiatives carried out by regional and local Norwegian authorities, where the purpose is to give everyone better access to outdoor spaces, meeting places and buildings. In our initiative, we also want to create opportunities for everybody to learn from one another, so that we can move our work forward to create good, inclusive communities for everyone.

I'm pleased to see that the universal design network for regional and local authorities, chaired by KS for the last four years, will be continued in 2019. The topic is universal design and how to take advantage of "the low-hanging fruits" achieved by others. The national executive committee of KS has adopted a long-term plan for the period 2016 - 2019:

These are our overall goals:

- Inclusive government and democracy
- A healthy local authority economy
- Attractive employers
- Sustainable health and welfare services
- Inclusive childhood
- Viable regions, cities and districts

Working in a local or regional authority, either as an employee or as elected representative, primarily means working for a society that includes everyone.

Let's create good local communities together!



Gunn Marit Helgesen
President of KS



Nourishing network

Whether a population is 300 or three million people makes no difference. Everyone may benefit from joining a global network of age-friendly communities.

WE ARE GETTING OLDER. In only 15 years time, there will, for the first time, be more elderly people (65+) than younger people (0-19) in Norway. By 2040, it is estimated that every third inhabitant in the county councils will be above 70 years old. As of today, 17 % of the Norwegian population is above 65 years old. However, this figure is estimated to rise to 22 % by 2040.

This development poses several challenges, shared by many member countries of the World Health Organisation (WHO). WHO has therefore established a Global Network for Age-Friendly Cities and Communities. Exchanging experiences, cooperation and collaboration are core principles in the network. Through these processes, network members can benefit from the experience and knowledge of others, rather than reinventing the wheel themselves.

THREE NORWEGIAN CITIES

The network consists of 705 cities in 40 countries. It reaches 210 million people, and is WHO's largest global network. Three participating cities are Oslo, Trondheim and Levanger. Dr Diane Wu at WHO is hoping that many more will join the network.

– Our goal is to inspire, collaborate and support. We wish to inspire change, to connect cities and communities, to share experiences and challenges and help find smart solutions, she explains at the KS' Dialogue Conference on Age-Friendly Communities.

She emphasizes that it is not size that matters.

– We have a town of 300 inhabitants in the network, and one city with 12 million people, she says.

An example of mobility



AROUND THE WORLD: A worldwide network focusing on age-friendly cities and communities is what the World Health Organisation (WHO) offers. Three Norwegian cities are already part of the network. - We want more, says dr. Diane Wu at WHO. (Photo: Fredrik Naumann/Felix Features).



CONFERENCE: KS's president Gunn Marit Helgesen and Dr Diane Wu from The World Health Organisation (WHO) at KS' dialogue conference on age-friendly communities. (Photo: Fredrik Naumann/Felix Features)

WHO's first comprehensive report on aging was launched in 2015.

– It was an important piece of work, highlighting the differences around the world, Wu says.

The WHO report defines Healthy Aging as “the process of developing and maintaining the functional ability that enables wellbeing in older age. Functional ability is about having the capabilities that enable all people to be and do what they have reason to value.”

The same year, the United Nations defined 17 goals for global sustainable development.

– The goals are extremely ambitious, Dr Diane Wu says:

- No poverty: End poverty in all its forms everywhere.
- Zero hunger: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.
- Good health and wellbeing: Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages.
- Quality education: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
- Gender equality: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
- Clean water and sanitation: Ensure access to and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.
- Affordable and clean energy: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.
- Decent work and economic growth: Promote sustained,

inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

- Industry, innovation and infrastructure: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation.
- Reduce inequalities: Reduce inequalities within and among countries.
- Sustainable cities and communities: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.
- Responsible production and consumption: Ensure sustainable production and consumption patterns.
- Climate action: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts by regulating emissions and promoting developments in renewable energy.
- Life below water: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.
- Life on land: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.
- Peace, justice and strong institutions: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access for justice for all, and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.
- Partnerships for the goals: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnerships for sustainable development.

“Healthy aging involves getting ones basic needs covered”

– The goals are far-reaching and concern great many aspects of society. The question of aging is relevant in 15 of the 17 goals, Dr Wu points out, particularly highlighting goal 11:

– Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

FLEXIBLE THOUGHT PROCESS

Dr Diane Wu emphasises that healthy aging means that one has all fundamental needs fulfilled, one is given the opportunity to learn and develop, to make decisions, be mobile, establish and maintain friendships, and one is given the opportunity to contribute to society.

She points out that, according to WHO, creating age-friendly societies entails having the understanding that senior members of the community possess a wide range of resources. Communities must be flexible towards old people's needs and preferences, respect their choice and way of life,

reduce inequalities, protect the most vulnerable and promote inclusion.

SEEING THE BIGGER PICTURE

Dr Wu encourages lifting one's gaze to get an overview. There are so many contexts to be aware of:

– Let's say that Ingrid is trying to get from her home to the shop. We would need to map out the following: Is her home adapted to her needs? Does she need a bus? Taxi? In that case, is she capable of making use of existing services? Is her neighbourhood safe? If she is on foot, are there zebra crossings, pedestrian areas? Benches to rest on? Public toilets? And are the employees in the shop friendly and helpful? Experience-based mapping of contextual conditions may lead to changes which could optimise the potential of each individual.

MAKING IT EASIER

These exercises are easier to complete using mapping tools available through the WHO network. They also offer other types of assistance:

– We have a database with concrete examples of best practices, several guides and toolkits for age-friendly measures, strategies and evaluation tools. We also run webinars and have a mentorship programme.

According to Dr Diane Wu, with the support of the network it is much easier to convince politicians to join the project. In order to reach the goal of creating age-friendly societies “free of physical and social barriers”, it is crucial that this is endorsed and supported by politicians and decision makers.



FULL HOUSE: Many were interested in Dr Diane Wu's presentation. (Photo: Fredrik Naumann/Felix Features).



Happy in the city centre

Helga Knoff (85), a retired midwife, has lived in the centre of Trondheim since 1976.

Benches, lighting and improved access along cobblestone streets make the city a good place to live.

IT WAS THE LOVELY curved windows that Thomas Knoff first fell for. And when the little, yellow apartment building in Brattøyveita suddenly came up for sale, there was no doubt in their minds. This was where Thomas and his wife Helga were going to live. The doctor and the midwife had married two years earlier, now they moved straight into what used to be a hospice situated in one of Trondheim's oldest streets. After years of suffering from Parkinson's disease Thomas died in 2016, 85 years old. Now Helga lives alone, and this is where she intends to live for as long as possible. In the middle of the city.

EASY IN THE CENTRE

– It was easy when Thomas was alive. He didn't use a wheelchair much, he preferred his walking frame. It was so easy; we could simply walk straight outside and be in town. When we went to a concert in the St. Olav's Hall, it was a five

minute walk away. The shop was straight across the road. If we wanted to go to our farm in Gudbrandsdalen, we could get the train close by, Helga says.

She explains that when Thomas could no longer manage the stairs, they had a stairlift installed. The courtyard next to their entrance had a ramp. And thanks to the persistent strength in Thomas' arms, there was no problem for him to cross over the cobblestone street just outside their flat.

However, other alleys were much harder to walk down. For several years, Trondheim Municipality has worked to improve accessibility in the old, narrow alleys called *veiter*, established as early as in the Middle Ages. The alleys are cobbled with slightly curved stones and some of the gaps between the stones are spacious. It can pose problems for people using wheelchairs, walking frames or who are otherwise struggling to walk.

– If you drag your feet for example, there is a great danger

HISTORICAL: The old alleys, called "*veiter*" in Trondheim, are much older than the houses. The challenge is to find a smart solution that safeguards preservation and meets the needs for accessibility. For the enjoyment of Helga Knoff and others. (Foto: Fredrik Naumann/Felix Features)

of falling over, Solveig Dale says, advisor for Universal Design in Trondheim Municipality.

Trondheim is an age-friendly city in accordance with the World Health Organisation's (WHO) standards.

– I think more people would use the old alleys if they were more accessible, Dale says.

Helga Knoff agrees:

– Yes, if you are walking with a walking frame and haven't got strong arms like Thomas had, I think you would struggle.

LINES IN THE STONES

In 2014 the alley called Taraldsgårdveita was finished.

– Over there, the cobblestones were sawn off at the top and on all sides, explained Roy Åge Håpnæs, Historian and Art and Cultural Heritage Officer at Trondheim Municipality Planning Authorities.

On either side of the alley, up against the walls of the buildings, the old stones are preserved the way they have always been, a little skewed. Now there are new stones marking the transition between this area and the more accessible area, giving natural directional lines to follow and adjustment zones close to the walls.

The alley is flat and good, flaming and pricking make sure

LIGHT UP: Good lighting is important, it provides both security and well-being. The old, venerable Trolle luminaires get a new led inlay that provides better light. (Photo: Fredrik Naumann / Felix Features).

that the cobblestones have good friction.

In Håpnæs' eyes, however, the result is not perfect from a visual point view.

– The colours don't match the warm palette of the rest of the city. The result appears rather flat and sterile. We have therefore decided to give the cobblestones a different colour by only cutting them at the top. This will give the stones a more varied play of colours, a solution which would probably meet everyone's needs, Håpnæs says.

UNITING PROTECTION AND ACCESSIBILITY

He stresses the importance of finding solutions which merge the need for accessibility with safeguarding the heritage in one of Norway's oldest cities.

– This is an exercise in compromising, both in terms of Universal Design and in preserving the cultural heritage, Solveig Dale adds.

– It needs to be good enough.

When improving more of the medieval alleys, the stones will be left in their original colour and treated differently. Further, the sealants between stones must work better to avoid unwanted cracks. There are around 40 of these preserved "*veiter*" in Trondheim.



PROJECT: The alley or veite project creates streets which are good for everybody to use, says Roy Åge Håpnes, historian and Art and Cultural Heritage Officer in Trondheim. (Foto: Fredrik Naumann/Felix Features)

NEW ENTRANCE: A Universally Designed entrance in an old building. (Foto: Fredrik Naumann/Felix Features)



identity of this city. They are working well with new interior fittings and can live for another hundred years, says Cultural Heritage Officer Håpnes.

IMPORTANT BENCHES

On a street corner there is a stately bench, placed right up against the wall. It blends into the old surroundings. A total of 26 such benches have been bought and placed in the alleys.

- They are the right height and are easy to sit down and get up from. The armrests give good support, says Solveig Dale. The aim is to have benches placed 200 meters apart, enabling those who need to sit down to predict how far to go until their next rest.

- Benches create informal meeting places, and the fact that they are so close to each other, makes them age-friendly. In just over a year, the age-friendly strategy has shown results.

- Estimations show that there are now 60% more people using the alleys, Solveig Dale says.

USING THE CITY

Helga Knoff reminisces with joy about her Saturday strolls with Thomas.

- Every Saturday we would walk up to the Cathedral for the 1.30 pm concert. Thomas would say: Imagine that there is a free concert in the best house in the city. He was talking about the church organ music, of course. Afterwards we often went for a coffee.

Helga still likes using the city. She walks down Nordre, the main pedestrian street and sits in a cafe.

- There is so much to look at, and people come over for a chat. I simply like sitting there watching people, Helga says, who has lost count of how many newborns she has delivered. At twenty something she went out into the world, and got a commission to work as a midwife in Iran through a European aid organisation.

- I suddenly got an urge to travel and see the world from

another perspective. We were four Norwegians who went, and we worked in a hospital by the Caspian Sea. They didn't have many facilities and we arrived in the middle of a cholera epidemic. It was not easy. But it was a good time too. Later she spent a year in the bush in Nigeria for Norwegian Church Aid.

Now she doesn't travel much, but she will happily take a stroll to the stately and publicly owned Hornemannsgården, a large wooden building from the 18th century, by the main square. It is now hosting the Senior House, a travel agency, a café, hairdressers and other services for seniors. Several

“This is an exercise in compromising, both in terms of Universal Design and in preserving the cultural heritage”

Solveig Dale, advisor for Universal Design in Trondheim Municipality.

years ago the building was upgraded with better accessibility for wheelchairs and walking frames.

- It is an old listed building with tall door steps. The cultural heritage must be preserved, but it also needs to be accessible, says Solveig Dale.

SMART MOVES

A single strategic step made a big difference: The main stairs by the entrance had handrails which didn't follow the steps all the way down, but a blacksmith extended them. Out at the back, facing the lovely garden, an alternative and Universally Designed entrance was created, with automatic opening of the heavy doors. Inside, the lighting was upgraded and handrails were installed along the stairs. They also serve as an organic directional guide.

The doorsteps, some as tall as 10 cm, have been given elegant oak ramps, and are well signposted. The lift is still the same.

- That could be swapped for a new one eventually, says Solveig Dale.

At home, in her yellow old townhouse, Helga Knoff has many rooms and sets of stairs. Downstairs to the 16th century vault cellar, and upstairs to the bathroom and bedroom.

- I can easily renovate so that all rooms are on one level, but as long as I can cope with the stairs, I will keep them. I believe the movement is good for me.

- Replacing the cobblestones is a long term endeavour. Most importantly, we have found solutions that can be used again when needed. It is of course also a question of cost. We aim to find solutions that can be fulfilled within a responsible economic framework, Dale and Håpnes point out. They both emphasise the importance of involving the user organisations in the process.

NEW LIGHTS IN AN OLD FRAME

- Constructive input from the users of the alleys is a pot of gold. The alleys are lit by traditional lamps, made on Trolle Brug, a mechanical workshop from the 1850s specialising in casting furnaces and machine parts.

Many of the lamps are shedding a stronger light now than before, after the light bulbs were swapped for LED lights. In these streets, Helga and Thomas used to walk their dog, and Helga still likes to take an evening stroll. Both Brattørveita and two other “veiter” have had the lighting improved, while keeping the traditional street lamps intact.

- There are about 1100 Trolle-lamps in Trondheim and all of them need new interior fittings. That is an undertaking, but good lighting is important and the lamps are a part of the



AT HOME: Helga Knoff intends to live at home for as long a possible. (Foto: Fredrik Naumann/Felix Features)



DECORATION: Light decoration designed by Olsson & Linder and Saupstad/Kolstad Youth Council, contributes to the sense of security in the Firblad Forest.



“When more people feel safer outside in the dark, it will have a positive effect on public health in general.”

Solveig Dale
Trondheim kommune

WELLBEING: With new and universally designed lighting, the footpath alongside the river Nidelva is better for everybody. (Foto: Fredrik Naumann/Felix Features.)



MARKING: The underpass in the Firblad Forest is marked with red lights, like an arch. Both the side walls and close by vegetation is illuminated. For many people, it has contributed to a greater feeling of security when taking the shortcut through the forest. (Foto: Fredrik Naumann/Felix Features.)



SAFER: Going under bridges at night can be scary, but the right lighting under the Elgseter bridge that stretches over the river Nidelva, has made the path under the bridge both visually interesting and inviting to walk. (Foto: Fredrik Naumann/Felix Features.)

Lighting for a safer city

Good outdoor lighting creates a sense of security when being outside in the dark. In Trondheim, lighting is an integral part of the work to create a more inclusive community.

– We ought to put greater emphasis on outdoor lighting. When more people feel safer outside in the dark, it will have a positive effect on public health in general. In particular during the winter months, when it’s dark for many hours of the day throughout most of the country, says Solveig Dale, advisor for Universal Design in Trondheim Municipality.

In the district of Saupstad-Kolstad, national, regional and local government have established a collaboration until 2020. They aim to improve quality of life and health, and create a more environmentally sustainable and attractive district to live in. Improved outdoor lighting is an important aspect of an extensive plan to rejuvenate the area.

INITIATED BY YOUNG PEOPLE

One of those bringing the topic of outdoor lighting to the table was Maria Postholm Mogstad (19). Whilst attending

Huseby Secondary School, her walk to school went through the Firblad Forest, which connects the residential areas in the district of Saupstad-Kolstad to Romolslia.

– For most of the year, it was dark when we walked to and from school. Even in places where there were some lights, and we walked three girls together, we didn’t feel safe. We were uncomfortable walking there, says Postholm Mogstad. She was at the time part of the Saupstad/Kolstad Youth Council, which brought the case forward to the redevelopment committee. Their input on better lighting was well received.

CAME ALONG TO TEST

However the teenagers’ work did not end there. They were invited to take part in the planning of the lighting project.

– We took them into the Firblad Forest, together with light

designers from the Swedish company Olsson & Linder. They got to play with light and seeing the effects of different lighting, says Magnhild Lunde.

She is a landscape architect in Trondheim Municipality and the project manager for upgrading the shortcut through the Firblad Forest.

One of the keys to designing lighting for safety purposes, according to Magnhild Lunde, is to shift focus beyond the actual paths and underpasses. In the Firblad Forest, the terrain alongside the path is also illuminated, as well as the brick walls and vegetation at the entrance to the underpass. The curve of the underpass is even lit up in red, like an arched portal.

– When you can see the underpass long before you get there, and the area around it is also illuminated, it becomes less scary, Lunde says and adds that clearing vegetation

along the path was equally important.

A LIGHT PLAN

Trondheim Municipality has worked on a lighting plan for the entire district of Saupstad-Kolstad. A hierarchy of light separates side paths from main roads and helps citizens to identify different spaces. The lighting alongside two stretches of the river Nidelva had already been upgraded, based on a similar comprehensive lighting plan.

– Nidelva runs through Trondheim and is a central part of the city’s identity. The new lighting enhances the experience of Trondheim being a good city to live in for everybody. The lighting makes the city easier to navigate, and shapes the urban space in the dark. Alongside the river, it creates a sense of security for more people, even during the dark season, Solveig Dale says.

Good old age

In Oslo Municipality, where more people have to take care of themselves for longer, the creation of more sheltered retirement housing has become an important piece of the senior puzzle.



OWN LIBRARY: - I can't put the books in the bottoms shelves, because no one can reach those, smiles Alfhild Viul (99). She used to work in a bookshop and has taken the initiative to create a communal library. (Photo: Fredrik Naumann/ Felix Features).



EASY: In the apartment there are wide sliding doors that stop before they disappear into the wall so they are easy to open for Alfhild Viul. (Photo: Fredrik Naumann / Felix Features).

- The minute I saw the view, I thought "this will be good" says Alfhild Viul (99), as she invites us into her one bedroom flat in Ljabrubakken Omsorg+ in Oslo.
- From the flat, which was rebuilt into a sheltered retirement flat in 2016, she can catch a glimpse of the Oslo fjord below.
- It was the loneliness which I found the hardest, Viul explains as to why she swapped a villa for a retirement flat.
- I have a supportive family around me, but they are busy with work and children and the days felt long. So being here, where I am safe and can have some social interaction, means everything for my quality of life.

THOUGHT-OUT SOLUTIONS

- Safety is really what it's about, says Jan Tore Lindskog, project manager and advisor on universal design for Oslo Omsorgsbygg KF, a governmental entity constructing and managing public buildings in Oslo Municipality.
- I feel very passionate about this, he says, showing us

"I hope more of these kinds of flats will be built. They are needed. We are all getting older"

Alfhild Viul (99)



RIGHT HEIGHT: The plug sockets are mounted high up on the wall for easy reach. (Photo: Fredrik Naumann/Felix Features).

around Viul's flat, once an old nursing home.

– The way the flat is planned is not arbitrary. When you get up in the morning, you look straight at the bathroom. It reminds people suffering from dementia that this is where their morning routine starts. The toilet and the sink are surrounded by contrasting tiles so that the sight impaired can find their way. The tiles are matt, to reduce bothersome reflections. The flooring is slide proof and more hygienic than tiles, Lindskog explains.

Everything is carefully thought-out through to the smallest detail, from the directional lighting over the kitchen zone, to the plug socket above sofa level - for easy charging of Ipad without having to bend down. Every new resident receives an Ipad and lessons in how to use it, so that they may be informed about different activities offered to residents and the café menu. Or to skype their family.

SOCIAL

– Facilitating social meeting places inside and around the building is important. This plays an important part in the principles of universal design, Lindskog says.

The block is divided into groups of flats that share a communal living room. In one of them Alfhild Viul, who used to work in a bookshop, has made a library. The gym is well used, the same goes for the hairdressers and the pedicure salon. In addition to a balcony for each flat, there is a communal terrace and a petanque court.

– I hope more of these kinds of flats will be built. They are needed. We are all getting older, Viul says.

“Everything is thought out to the smallest detail”



CHECK OUT THIS MOVIE:
www.youtube.com/user/KSKommunesektoren

CUSTOMIZED AND COZY: Much is creaky and skewed in old buildings. The different levels in the hallways are marked with contrasting colours and safety handrails. (Photo: Fredrik Naumann/Felix Features).





A garden of memories

Peonies, roses and lilies are more than just beautiful and fragrant. A Garden of Senses can help people suffering from dementia to access memories.

IN 2008 THE BOTANICAL GARDENS of Oslo opened “Great Grandma’s Garden”. It is a part of the Natural History Museum and available for everyone.

– Research shows that coming out into nature has a de-stressing, unwinding effect. A Garden of Senses gives a wealth of impressions. There is a lot to look at, listen to, touch, smell and taste. It can, in turn, promote access to memories, which is fundamental in helping people with dementia, says specialist nurse Solfrid Rosenvold Lyngroth. She is a coordinator for dementia at the Centre for Development of Institutional and Home Care Services in Oslo.

FRAGRANT COOPERATION

The desire to create a Garden of Senses had been simmering for a long time before the unusual collaboration came together.

– When we contacted the Botanical Garden and the Natural History Museum, they were in the middle of planning a garden to exhibit historical plants. We became part of a very

interesting and inspiring process, where we facilitated the design of a garden to stimulate the senses for people with dementia, Rosenvold Lyngroth says.

Oslo Municipality allocated 150.000 kroner (approx. 15.000 euro) for the construction of the garden, and the research centre provided advice on how to design it in order to benefit people with dementia. The Garden of Senses is an outside environment constructed in such a way that vulnerable people can visit and enjoy it unaccompanied.

SAFE PLACE

– What is so lovely is that starting off with persons with special needs in mind, we have created a place for everyone. You can safely walk around enjoying a wealth of experiences. People with dementia often struggle with disorientation. It was therefore important to design and plant a garden where you don’t get lost easily. Visitors in the garden are gently directed through a path which takes you back to the starting point. The garden is encircled by a hedge and a fence as a natural

A GREAT BONUS: A beautiful blossoming garden has a great effect on human beings. (Photo: Naturhistorisk Museum/Karsten Sund)



border, so that the visitors to the garden feel safe and don’t get lost, the specialist nurse says.

The surface of the path is suitable for walking frames and wheelchairs, and the garden is full of plants common to the Oslo and Eastern parts of Norway around the 1920s. There is also a grove of fragrant lilacs, a glassed garden room and a hydrant.

– The idea is that you will be stimulated to move further down the path. Years ago when shop-bought plants were less common, one used to divide plants in the garden and get seedlings from one’s neighbour. Information placards tell the stories of the plants, and this, together with stimulating the senses, can help bring back memories.

GREEN COURSES

Centre for Development of Institutional and Home Care Services in Oslo has for many years been leading a network of care homes wishing to create gardens to stimulate the senses. For many years the Botanical Gardens have been cultivating plants to be given to various Gardens of Senses in Oslo.

The Development Centre runs courses for employees in the care sector, teaching specialists how to use green outside spaces with vulnerable people. A tour of Great Grandma’s Garden in the Botanical Gardens is a part of the curriculum.

Rosenvold Lyngroth is very excited about the garden, and what a collaboration between different areas of expertise can create. The Great Grandma’s Garden is the first public Garden of Senses in Norway and celebrates its 10 year anniversary this year.

MULTI-USE GARDEN IN THE MAKING

Care homes that don’t have a Garden of Senses, or are simply looking for an excursion, often come to the Garden of Senses in the Botanical Gardens of Oslo. A new garden, Alma’s Garden, is currently under construction near Aker Hospital, where the National Centre for Development of Institutional and Home Care Services are situated.

Alma’s Garden will be a multi-use garden with qualities from the Garden of Senses, an outdoor gym, and possibly outdoor musical instruments.

– It will also be a place for people who just want to come and sit quietly. The Botanical Garden has helped us with the design, choice of flowers, trees and bushes. They have even given us plants that they have cultivated. The garden is designed by Kari Pape, a garden enthusiast with years of experience planning Gardens of Senses for care homes, says Solfrid Rosenvold Lyngroth.



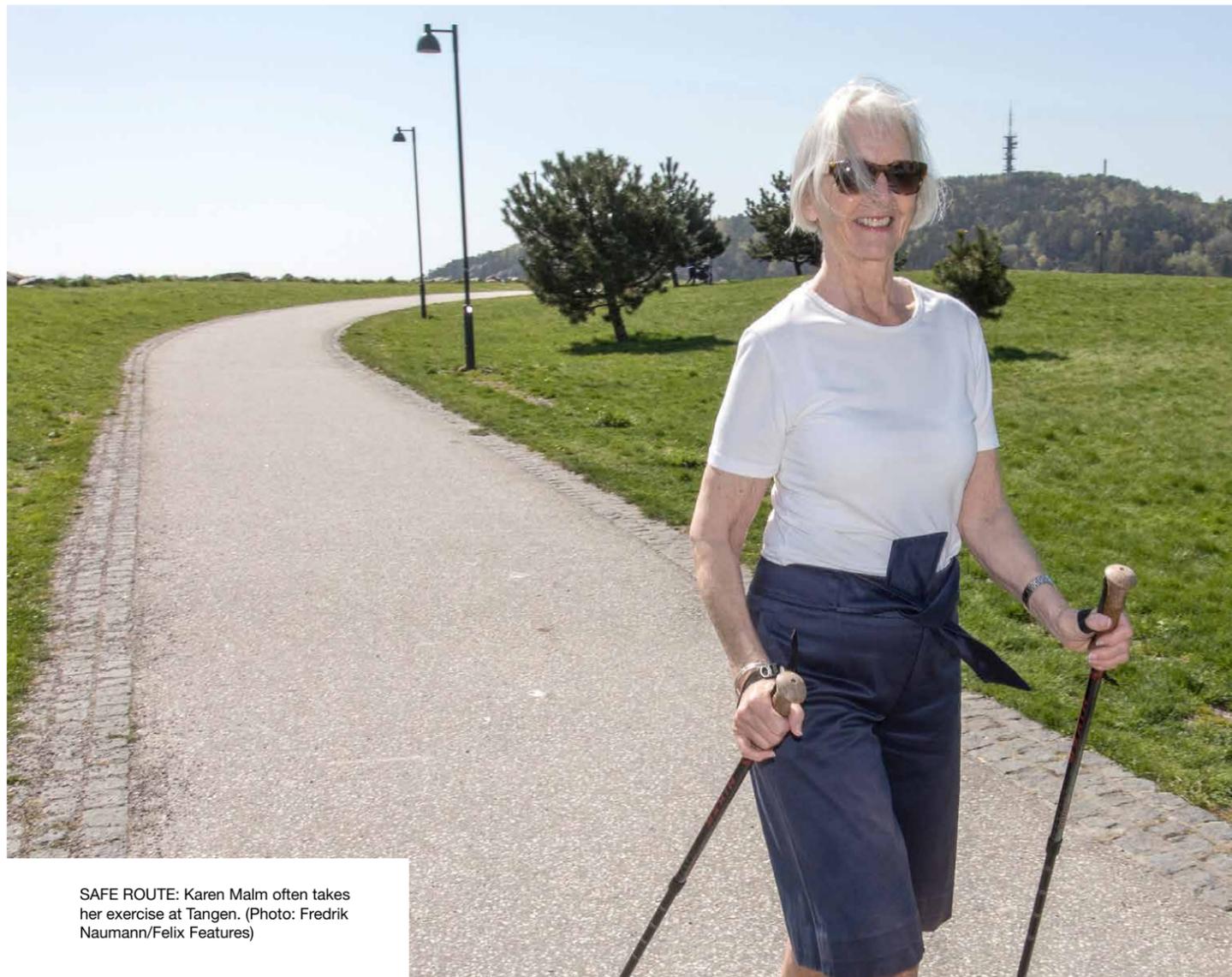
MEMORIES: A garden room, benches and a lilac grove can bring back memories. (Photo: Naturhistorisk Museum/Karsten Sund)

SAFE: Great Grandma’s Garden is framed by a fence and a hedgerow, so that visitors can feel safe and not get lost. The closed circuit of the path through the garden adds to the sense of security. (Photo: Naturhistorisk Museum/Karsten Sund)



Universally designed district

The popular beach in Kristiansand, Bystranda, and its surrounding area Tangen, have been developed to facilitate everyone's enjoyment of south coast life.



SAFE ROUTE: Karen Malm often takes her exercise at Tangen. (Photo: Fredrik Naumann/Felix Features)

ACCESSIBLE: Charlotte Wesenberg and Astrid Tvedten at the city beach of Kristiansand. (Photo: Fredrik Naumann/Felix Features)

HAPPY SWIMMERS, FISHING and fitness enthusiasts, and all kinds of lovers of the outdoors; the water's edge in Kristiansand city centre lends itself to everyone, regardless of ability. Whether you're the type that likes to "dip your toes in the seaweed", as they say on the south coast, or prefer to keep them dry on land, Bystranda and Tangen is the place for you.

– We like being active and outside, says Charlotte Wesenberg, chair of the Council for People with Disabilities. She holds her walking stick as she swings onto Elvepromenaden, the promenade along the river Otra, leading down to Tangen. She knows the area like the back of her hand. Next to her is Astrid Tvedten driving her wheelchair. She is also a member of the Council for People with Disabilities.

This day, the two active women take the hiking trail from Elvepromenaden out to Tangen, via Bystranda beach and onwards along the promenade, Strandpromenaden.

Universal Design has been a governing principle for the development of the area, which has grown to become a new district in the city of Kristiansand.

– The Municipality has done very well in the provision of facilities for all groups of people, and the users, like ourselves, have been part of the process from the start, says Charlotte Wesenberg.

She has no problems walking through and navigating the area, even though she is blind. Neither has Astrid Tvedten.

– I can easily move around with the wheelchair, there are no obstacles en route.

TIGHT LINES

They stop by what looks like a fenced patio over the river.

– A fishing veranda, Astrid Tvedten explains, pointing at similar fishing spots along the river.

There is salmon in the Otra river and people are fly-fishing off these purpose-built verandas.

– The verandas are built overhanging the river, so that us wheelchair users can safely go up to the fence and throw the line far into the river, says Astrid Tvedten.

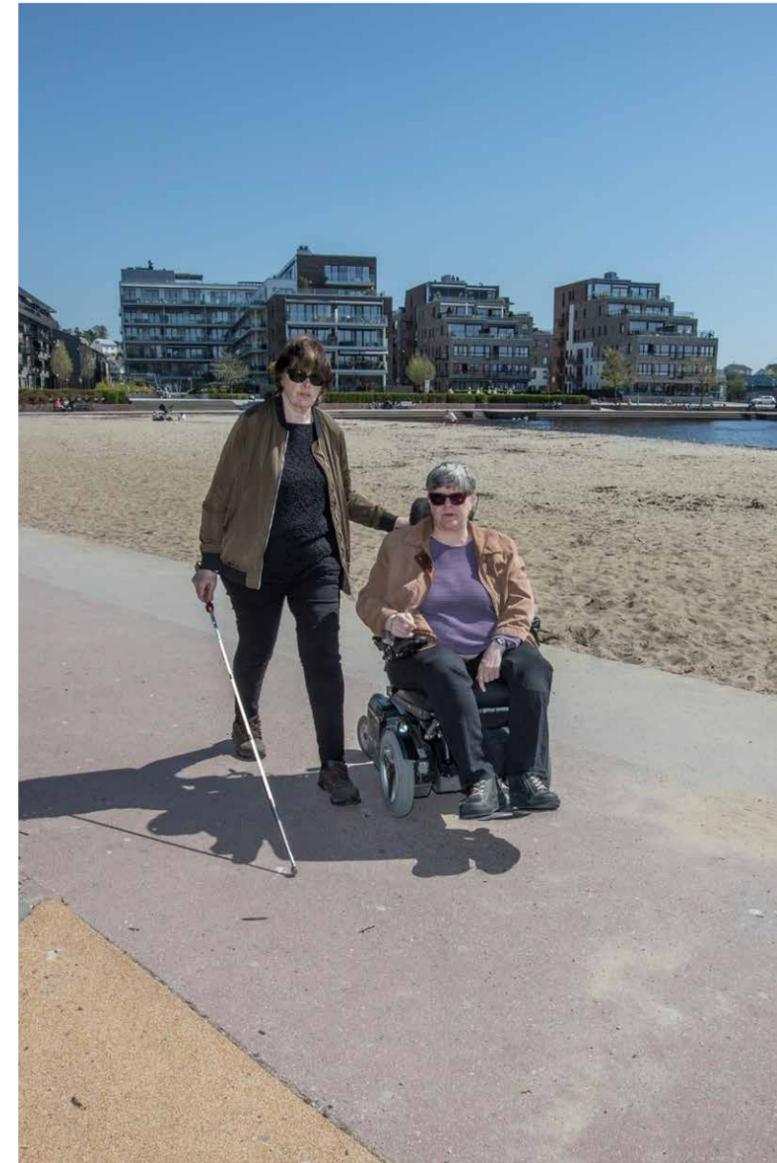
– Remember your fishing licence, Charlotte Wesenberg laughs.

She likes the way the verandas invite communal activities.

– It feels good to be able to do activities with my family and friends without special facilitation for me.

SAFE ROUTE

In the park at Tangen, there are universally designed tables



and chairs. By simply moving the table legs far enough in under the table, wheelchair users can sit right up to the table's edge with their legs under the table.

– These sort of measures cost almost nothing, it is only a question of remembering them, Charlotte Wesenberg says.

A smiling lady walks past using Nordic walking sticks. She's got a good marching pace. Karen Malm has got prostheses in her hips and knees and exercises several times a week.

– I am often scared to fall in other places, but here the walking path is so good that I am not worried about taking a wrong step, she says and marches on.

PALM TREES

The areas around Tangen and the beach promenade are



EASY FISHING: Charlotte Wesenberg and Astrid Tvedten on one of the many “fishing verandas” in Kristiansand. (Photo: Fredrik Naumann/Felix Features)



FREE WHEELING: Wheels of all kinds, including tourists on Segways, can easily spin down the beach promenade.

“We wheelchair users got to sit on the first row, so we didn't have to look into the backs of people. It was like getting VIP seats”



COOPERATION: Elin Aabel Bergland from Kristiansand municipality works closely with Astrid Tvedten and Charlotte Wesenberg in the Council for the Disabled. (Photo: Fredrik Naumann / Felix Features)

popular all year round, but during the summer months they explode with teeming life. This is when the palm trees come out by the beach; the official sign that summer has arrived in Kristiansand.

Last year, Astrid Tvedten was there when Elton John visited Kristiansand.

– Wheelchair users were given front row seats, so that we didn't have to look into people's backs. It was like having VIP tickets, she says and laughs.

Even though she is not the keenest of swimmers, she knows many who appreciate that the beach has got slip proof ramps, and handrails at two heights, so that everyone can safely get in and out of the sea.

– The ramps are very popular among those with bad hips and knees.

CHALLENGING EVERYDAY LIFE

Astrid Tvedten has been in a wheelchair since 2010, due to problems with her legs after having polio. Charlotte Wesenberg became blind after an unsuccessful eye operation in 2016. She has had to learn to navigate the city in a new way.

– I always have to concentrate, find something to follow and be careful of obstacles. In the city centre I have to know where there is ongoing maintenance work and avoid these areas. I need to know which streets have tactile paving, and which don't.

In her head she visualises a map of the city centre, and she knows by heart the order of every street.

– When I walk, I count streets, streetlights and zebra crossings in order to keep track of where I am.

Her friend, Astrid Tvedten, states:

– She knows the streets much better than I do.

After passing the city beach and getting onto a stretch with fewer people, they speed up. Alongside the path towards the marina, there is a separate zone for benches, bike racks, sign posts, bins and trees. In this way, the path remains unobstructed.

– This is a particularly well-working Universal Design, says Charlotte Wesenberg.

GOOD COLLABORATION

Kristiansand Municipality are pioneers in their facilitation of Universal Design. When the developers Tangen Utvikling AS started planning the development of Tangen and Bystranda together with the Municipality in 2005, an overarching goal was to make sure that all public areas adopted the concept of Universal Design. Their motto has been that universally designed solutions improve the use of areas for everyone.

Planning manager at the Agency for Plan, Building and Survey in Kristiansand, Elin Aabel Bergland refers to the fact that accessibility requirements and Universal Design is upheld in municipal norms for building roads and housing.

– We focus on Universal Design in all levels of the organisation, and the Council for People with Disabilities advises us on tangible and practical solutions, she says.

The outdoor areas around Tangen and Bystranda were finished in 2012. They serve an important function in this new district of Kristiansand with housing projects, business parks, public offices, a swimming pool and an upper secondary school. The latest housing project at the end of Tangen was started in 2018.

UNIVERSAL DESIGN IN KRISTIANSAND

- Form and choice of materials are integral parts of the design, rather than custom-made solutions
- Safe and logical junctures
- The gradient is never steeper than 1:20
- Stairless transitions wherever possible
- Smooth and straight surfaces, which are easy to move on
- Terrain with little fall, both longitudinal and transverse
- Good, even and non-blinding lighting
- Contrasting materials that serve as a guide for visually impaired people
- Tactile materials that serve as a guide for blind people
- Walking paths without loose items
- Separate zones next to paths for placing benches, bike racks, sign posts, bins and trees
- Sloped access to and submerged curbs next to all pedestrian areas
- A two centimeter tall edge by all submerged curbs
- Fewer junctions between pavements and roads with car traffic
- Non allergenic plants
- Extra large parking spaces reserved and adapted for people with disabilities
- Sound conditions: shielding against noise
- Designed with easy maintenance in mind

(Source: Tangen Design Guide)

Under the same roof

An active and friendly meeting place for all ages. That is the goal with the new Citizen Square in Asker. In May this year Borgen Citizen Square opened.



ACTIVITIES: Many different activities are running in the Citizen Square. (Photo: Hedvig Andersson.)



WELL RECEIVED: Valeria Nicholson is CEO of Borgen Citizen Square and says that it has been very well received by the community. (Photo: Hedvig Andersson.)



MEETING PLACE: The Citizen Square gathers the local community in Borgen. (Photo: Hedvig Andersson.)

HARRY RUNS THE BOULES, Trine offers free exercise classes for new mothers, SeniorNet gives digital courses, there are free theater classes run by the Culture School, hip hop classes set up by Arena Borgen, and a language café run by the community centre. These are only some of the different activities and services offered at Borgen Citizen Square in Asker.

Approximately 5600 people live in this county outside Oslo, and in one week, the Citizen Square had close to a thousand visitors. It was during the creation of a plan for developing the community in Borgen, that the need for such a meeting place arose.

– The need for meeting places was raised in several community meetings, and through the work with rejuvenating the Borgen area, we got useful information about these needs, Valeria Nicholson says.

She is the CEO of the Citizen Square in Borgen. The goal is that the soon-to-be super county of Asker, Røyken and Hurum joined as one, will have eight citizen squares. Cooperation between counties, citizens, local business and non-governmental organisations is key.

– The Citizen Squares are meeting places across generations and cultures. The municipality facilitates, then the community fills it with their local needs and desires, Nicholson explains.

– It means, for example, that if Harry (82) wants to organise boules every week, I will help with the practical aspects and

the marketing of this event, the CEO explains.

The majority of the activities and events are run by volunteers and organisations.

The Norwegian Trekking Association (DNT) organise walks starting from the Citizen Square, and the walkers eat their packed lunches there on their return. There is also a café in the Citizen Square, run by the organisation KIME.

– The café is an opportunity for local women from minority backgrounds to gain work experience.

Each Citizen Square will be made up from different components, tailored to the need of each community. The only uniform element is that every Citizen Square will accommodate a senior centre. All activities and services for seniors will remain, but their exclusivity to the premises will change.

– Our existing senior centre was situated only 500 meters down the lane and had twelve visitors a week. It has been great to gather many activities under the same roof, but there is still a need to spread the word, so that people understand what this is.

The model is developed with inspiration from Denmark, aiming to get people across generations and cultures to take part in activities.

– We see that different age groups come in at different times of the day, and so far there are not too many activities where the age groups mix, but Harry has started with boules for the youth, Valeria Nicholson says.



FOR EVERYONE: Now, everyone who depends on wheels can enter the church through the main entrance. (Photo: Fredrik Naumann).



“The result is a prime example of what happens when we change the mindset from “availability” to “Universal Design””

Inclusive participation in grief and happiness

Time Church was available for everybody, but not everyone was able to participate equally. Gentle restoration of the listed building opened the church hall for the entire congregation, regardless of disabilities and phase of life.

– I will never forget when you told me that you had to sit right at the back when your daughter had her confirmation. It made an impression on me. You were rejected in a way, says Dean Kjell Børge Tjemsland.

Yes, the church was available, but not universally designed, Sissel Løchen says. She sits in a wheelchair.

– The happy occasions like weddings and confirmations is one thing, but imagine having to sit separated from your family during a funeral, when you are grieving, Løchen continues.

– We had a lot of feedback about similar undignified situations, says Anne Reidun Garpestad in Time County. She was the project manager when Time County became a national pilot for Universal Design from 2003 to 2013. She is still part of the work to create a more inclusive county.

INCLUSIVE CHURCH HALL

When the church was about to do a large renovation before it's 150th anniversary in 2009, both the county and the congregation rolled up their sleeves. How could they find good solutions that would create an inclusive church hall, without compromising on the qualities of a listed building? The Senior and User Council in Time County, which Sissel Løchen heads, was also invited.

– It was crucial in order to reach real inclusive solutions, says Garpestad and points out that the result is a prime example of what happens when we change our mindset from “availability” to “universal design”.

– A lot of it is about making sure that there is an understanding of why Universal Design is important, Løchen says.

– We had to challenge the Norwegian Directorate for Cultural Heritage, but through cooperation and dialogue we succeeded, she says throwing her arms wide open in a church hall which looks exactly the same as before, but is hiding a number of clever solutions.

WELL PRESERVED

The main goal was to include all of the church core functions: services, weddings, christenings and funerals. Most importantly, it meant making sure that anyone dependent on using wheels could sit in several places - also on the first row - and get from the parking lot to the altar unaided and in community with others.

Outside the church, the ramp was moved from the side entrance to the main entrance, so that everyone can enter the church through the main door. The floor was raised so that wheels could move unimpeded to pews in three places; to the altar, the font and the choir stalls.

– We solved it by having a “floating floor” which does not harm the original wooden floor below, says Tjemsland. A large floor carpet was swapped for one long runner down the aisle creating an organic, tactile and directional line.

One of the demands from the Norwegian Directorate for Cultural Heritage was not to interfere with the wooden panels and doors alongside the pews. By removing a row of pews and merging a door and a side panel into a wide door, they gave room for an electrical wheelchair. From the outside, the wooden panels look like they always have.



TELECOM LOOP: With a telecom loop, the hearing impaired can hear the sermony in Time Church. (Photo: Fredrik Naumann)

SOUND AND LIGHT

They also tested a new lighting system which gave enough light for everyone to read the programs and the hymns, whilst preserving the special mood in the old church hall. In fact, the original copper lamps were returned. A new speaker system and a telecom loop for hearing aids were installed.

– There is very little point in coming to church if you can't follow anything of what is going on, says Mildrid Espeland, chair of a local Jæren group of the The Norwegian Association for the Hard of Hearing. She says funerals are particularly challenging in churches and chapels without a telecom loop. Regardless of the type of disability, it feels undignified to not be able to take part in the same way as others.

“No matter what disability you have, it is unworthy not to be able to participate in the same way as other people”



CHECK OUT THIS MOVIE
www.youtube.com/user/KSKommunesektoren



FLOATING: Dean Kjell Borge Tjemsland is showing off the floating floor, which facilitates wheeling all the way to the altar. (Photo: Fredrik Naumann)

WIDE ENOUGH: The door was merged with the side panel. That way the opening fits Sissel Løchen - without interfering with the visual expression. (Photo: Fredrik Naumann)



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