

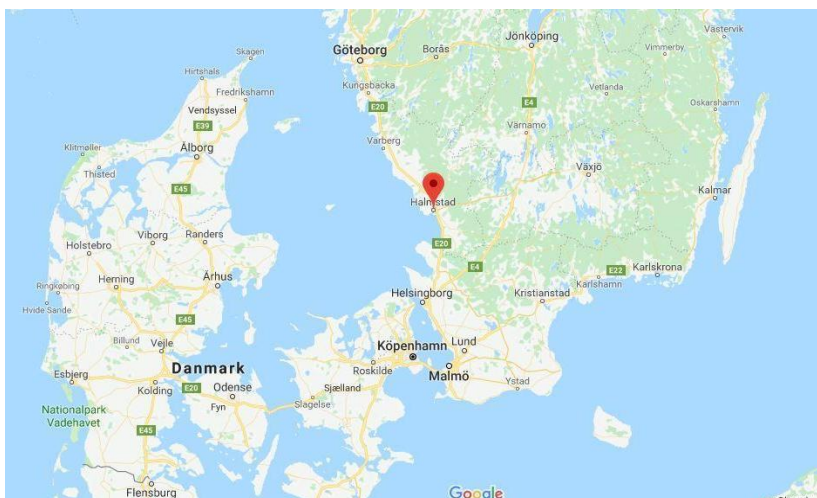


ON BOARD

Halmstad Transfer Story

The start of a journey

Since 2014 Viladecans and Halmstad municipality have been working together. First with a project involving pre-commercial procurement in creating an individual Personnel Learning Environment for students (www.imaile.eu). In 2018, Viladecans contacted us about joining another project about knowledge transfers between European cities in the URBACT programme, a project called ON BOARD. Since the cooperation and communication between the two cities have always been excellent, Halmstad immediately signed up. Soon enough, though, we came to discover just how different a project on supply and demand for procurement was going to be from a project involving multidisciplinary, multi-sector stakeholders in the creation of an Education Innovation Network. We have carried out a lot of transnational projects and other knowledge exchange and transfer initiatives between cities before. But never have we been tasked to really link the work so closely, so differently, with the community and different stakeholders in Halmstad. So much of what we signed on to achieve and contribute in ON BOARD was in some ways going to be new to our municipality.



Halmstad is a fast-growing municipality on the Swedish west coast with about 100,000 inhabitants.

Where is our journey going?

To start with, Halmstad has different development history from that of Viladecans. Growing rapidly in recent years, Halmstad has over 100 000 inhabitants, but is now coming to grips with problems normally associated with much larger cities. Viladecans is located a few miles south of Barcelona and has about 66,000 inhabitants. The city has developed as a classic suburb with rising unemployment and declining growth vis-à-vis Barcelona. To reverse this trend, the city politicians decided that education would be the central and guide all local political decisions. The objective was to make Viladecans more attractive, modern and better suited to the labour market needs. Viladecans' education mission aims at becoming a city of opportunities that encourages the growth of everyone's talents.

This points to another difference between Viladecans and Halmstad: how the municipality and especially education is organised. Sweden has a weak tradition in involving parents in education, this is one thing we hope to improve by adopting the Educational Innovation Network. This is also by far the biggest challenge and it is probably caused by lack of time by parents. The explanation for this can be found in the tradition of involvement by parents in sports club instead of education.

Viladecans, on the other hand, decided that education – not sports - should be given top priority in local decisions. This focus on education led to the creation of its Educational Innovation Network (EIN) or the Good Practise, which involves not only parents, but a host of other stakeholders, as we will show you.

What Viladecans has done – and continues to do - is involve the entire community in educating children and young people. In Viladecans, there is now an approach where everyone can contribute in different ways to students' education. This has been done through active cooperation with local companies, organizations and especially parents, something not usual in Halmstad. Indeed, we were impressed by how Viladecans interacts and involves the parents in the education for all its students. We saw one fine example of this when we visited Viladecans for the ON BOARD kick-off: two parents led an impressive informative session on the afternoon activities offered to students, while showing us the amenities of the school gymnasium.



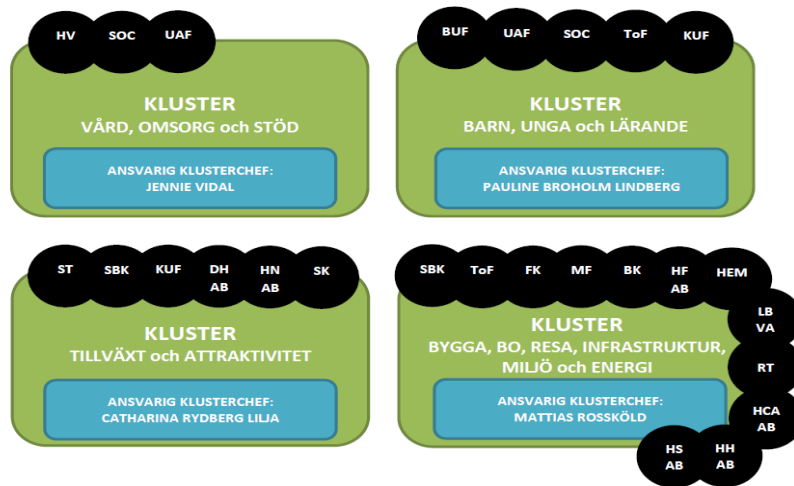
Kick-off meeting Viladecans February 2019.

Another difference is found in the education structure and governance system. Spanish system, as it is the case in many European countries, vertically centralised and the municipal level does not enjoy leeway in its capacity to introduce changes in its schools, Sweden has a long tradition with small ministries and big agencies with strong independent municipalities. This is particularly the case in education, where the responsibility to run the schools lays with the municipality, although there is common set of rules for the entire nation. The result of this organisation is often strong departments within our municipalities with their own financial perspective and responsibility. This, then, presented another big challenge for us to adapt the ON BOARD EIN. How could we increase cooperation *within* the municipality?

One significant cooperation initiative has been taken by Halmstad's city council, which can be expected to enhance the work and results of ON BOARD: to work with four different cluster consisting of different departments (in black) with the same interests.

The four different clusters are:

1. Care and Support
2. Education and Learning
3. Growth and Attractiveness
4. Infrastructure.



Regards this new kind of city cooperation: *“A little more cooperation between colleagues can have a positive effect!”*, says Mattias Rossköld, municipal director of Halmstad.

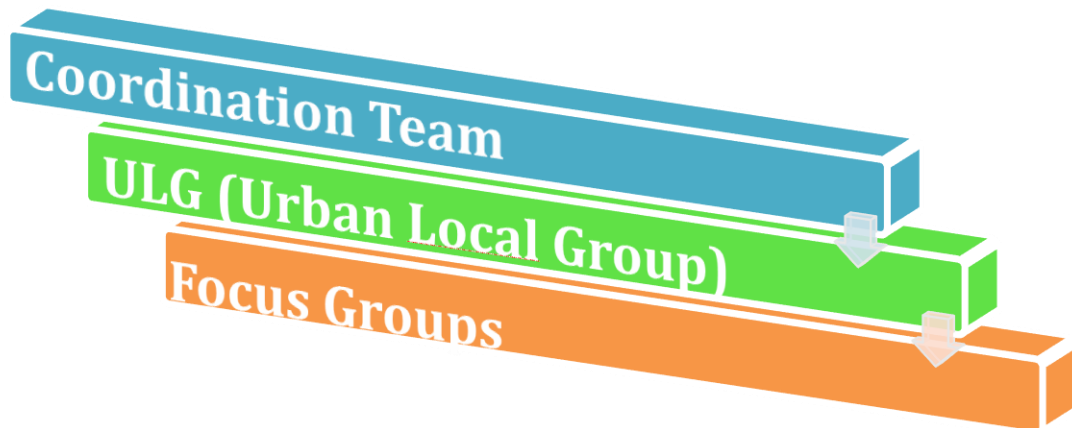
Where is our journey leading us?

Viladecans’ Educational Innovation Network (EIN) Good Practice sets the bases to the ON BOARD transfer network composed by a total of 6 European cities, besides Viladecans, lead Partner, and Halmstad, we have Nantes, Albergaria, Tallinn, and Poznan. The EIN is a network of co-responsible local education agents who interact and exchange know-how and experience within a cooperative structure to generate new knowledge and projects that can advance educational innovation and achieve education success in the city.

But this is not the only goal. In collaboration and exchanges with the other ON BOARD cities, each city presents different -at least two- Pilot projects (Pilot EduProjects) to the group, and then from this collective marketplace, each city selects a number of them for its own use and adaptation on behalf of education innovation.

When we first started the work with adopting the EIN, we soon realized that we needed to use our existing structures and groups of local stakeholders. So, one of the first things we did was taking an inventory of our local stakeholders – to know more about their capacities, needs and interests.

Halmstad decided to start to adopt the EIN in School Area North of the city, which is one of five different areas in the city's educational map. For this, we created the following organisation:



Five different Focus Groups have been started, all of them based on the theme of 10 Good Habits, the core Halmstad EduProject shared with ON BOARD partners that focuses on how students' healthy habits can increase their brain capacity and overall wellbeing¹.

The Focus Groups:

- Meaningful spare time: in cooperation with the library, allow students to test out the 10 Good Habits.
- Young people influence in local society: collaboration between the municipality and the Oskarström neighbourhood community to get students to be more active and politically mobilised
- Increased Learning: collaboration between training schools, teacher training students, Halmstad University, and the school librarian to increase learning and promoting good reading habits.
- Happy Braincells: local entity working with the school, leisure centre, parents, and health educators to develop materials for working on the 10 Good Habits.
- Positive Mindset/Emotions: combines the Pilot EduProject learnt from Viladecans with Halmstad 10 Good Habits/Brain Smart project.

Each Focus Group collaborates with a different kind of stakeholder group, as described below. All our Focus Groups are based on The10 Good Habits.

¹ The 10 Good Habits project is being developed by Hjarnberikad AB (<https://hjarnberikad.se>), which cooperates with the network Neuroforum. (<https://www.neuroforum.se>).

FOCUS GROUPS

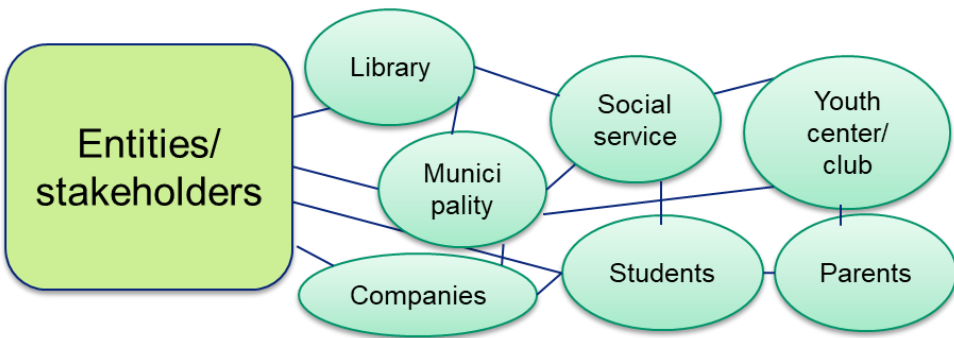
10 Good Habits

- Meaningful spare time
- Young people influence in local society
- Increased Learning
- Happy Braincells
- Positive Mindset Emotions



Focus Group meeting Mindset/Emotions The 10 Good Habits

The rich diversity of local stakeholders involved in these Focus Groups is shown below.



The innovative set of ON BOARD Pilot EduProject from the city partners seen on during our ON BOARD transnational meetings were very inspiring for the above work. For example, Tallinn's work with encouraging pupil's participation in local youth events, and Albergaria's project marketplace to showcase educational initiatives from different local agents gave Halmstad many ideas to feed into our local Focus Groups.

Unfortunately, over the last few weeks, progress with our groups has slowed down a bit due to the outbreak of COVID-19. Contrary to other European countries, our primary schools are still open but face-to-face meetings with other groups have been, for the most part, organized over the Internet. Some work, previously planned for face-to-face interactions in our Focus Groups this Spring and early Summer, will now have to start later, next semester, due to the outbreak.



Transnational meeting in Halmstad May 2019.

Signposts helping us know our way

As a result of the ON BOARD transnational work, we have been able to create a clear set of project progress “signposts” that identify the complications and challenges we have been dealing with during the project. Importantly, these will allow us to better anticipate our post-project directions. The main signposts include:

- Challenges to dedicate enough time as possible to the project
- Internal communications between different groups and members
- External communication problems via the designated department
- Spreading information about the project among the different departments in the Municipality
- Additional funding needs beyond the existing project budget.

Key ingredients for solving these challenges point to information and communications, and we recognized that we really need to improve the way we communicate within our municipality and between our departments and school units. Looking at Viladecans excellent example of how the city has structured the Educational Innovation Network Comms, Halmstad is now

transferring it for bringing people closer together and keeping them better informed of our goals and activities. Appointing an URBACT Local Group (ULG) coordinator at the municipal level to coordinate with the school area of North coordinator, Caroline Zackariasson, the same way that Viladecans has done, will be most efficient to address the School Area work.

Now, though, as mentioned above, Halmstad faces another challenge, the COVID 19. For some weeks now, our High schools and Universities has been in a digital “mode”. The transition has gone better than the teachers could possibly have expected. Nevertheless, we still have some issues that digital solutions do not address so well, such as non-theoretical education and workplace-based tutoring. If there is one positive aspect about the current situation it is that we have all improved our digital skills for organizing and teaching over the Internet.

We have not been alone

URBACT leadership from Viladecans and from Lead Expert support by Mireia Sanabria have been instrumental in Halmstad’s successful transfer of the EIN to the School Area North of Oskarström Halmstad.

We would also like to recognise our partner cities, Poznan, Nantes, Tallinn and Albergaria, for their excellent cooperation and invaluable inputs - all of them ON BOARD to implement URBACT’s mission to enable cities to work together and develop integrated solutions to common urban challenges, by networking and learning from one another’s experiences, drawing on lessons learned and identifying good practices to improve education policies.

Inspired by the Good Practice and our transnational exchanges, we will continue to work for transforming the municipality’s different departmental boundaries to enhance education innovation in collaboration with community stakeholders.

Halmstad has also received a lot of help from our URBACT’s office in Sweden and through our close collaboration with Sara Palo and Niels Boye. In School Area North, Linda Bellvik and Caroline Zackariasson have made a huge difference in making all the work carried out successful.

Articles and interviews produced by URBACT Sweden on their local webpage have also been an encouraging and supportive feature throughout the project. A new article will be presented on their webpage shortly.

What have been the highlights?

At the start of ON BOARD, the Good Practice Transfer Plan helped to set forth the metrics to measure to what extent the outcomes and implementation of the project would help us reach our goals:

- The Educational Innovation Network will be implemented in Oskarström and Åled.

- Communication between the schools and the local stakeholders will be significantly improved.
- The environment in the classroom detected to be much calmer than at the start of the project.
- Plans for expanding the Good Practise to other parts of the city will be developed.

Still with work ahead to be done, we can state that we will have a successful ON BOARD project despite COVID-19. To continue and expand the work the City Council has a key role in organizing and delegating for the future. Indeed, the big eye-opener for us has been the way so many different stakeholders in the Viladecans municipality can work together on behalf of education innovation: it is now up to us to make this happen in Halmstad.



"I hope both the community outside the school and the school itself are open to going forward arm in arm"

Jenny Axelsson, Deputy Mayor Halmstad Municipality is speaking in the City Hall, during the meeting in Halmstad.

