

## Example of good practise

The old library in Ejby

Associations and citizen groups save the old library and establish a culture and citizen house

Denmark 2023



Association meeting in the citizen house

Social Inclusion - Social Cohesion - Active Citizenship

## SUMMARY

<b>Name</b>	Transforming the old library to a lively citizen house.
<b>Summary description of idea and activities</b>	The idea is to engage civil society associations and citizen groups to save an old library and transform it to a cultural meeting and gathering place that offers cultural and educative activities.
<b>Country observed</b>	Denmark
<b>Year observed</b>	2023
<b>Programme area (Social inclusion/Active Citizenship/Environmental sustainability)</b>	Social inclusion Social cohesion Active citizenship
<b>Specific topic</b>	Develop a citizen house by the power volunteering and co-creative cooperation with the municipality.
<b>Beneficiaries of the activities</b>	All citizen in the local community and potential newcomers that are attracted by the extra cultural, educational and leisure time activities in a small village.
<b>Can these activities be applied to other beneficiaries: yes/no</b>	Yes, all communities, whether rural or a suburb of a big cities, need lively and committed community places
<b>What type of beneficiaries: ALL, or specific ones?</b>	All citizens in the area
<b>If specific ones, which?</b>	No specific

### The old library in Ejby

The interviewee is chairman of the Cultural Council in the municipality of Køge. The chairman of the Cultural Council of the Municipality of Køge lives in a small village with 3,200 inhabitants 9 km outside the town of Køge - a city of 37,000 inhabitants. Køge is situated 45 km from Copenhagen.

It has for many years been possible for the residents of the minor city Ejby to make activities within art and culture, since Denmark has a law according to which groups all over the country who starts an association with a democratically elected board can get local support and have designated rooms for their activities.

#### *The old library case*

But in March 2013, there was a big improvement for residents in Ejby, as the president of the local cultural council succeeded in acquiring the disused library and created a community centre in cooperation with residents of the city. It became a cultural meeting and gathering place that offers cultural and educative activities in order to strengthen the community in the small town and to make residents remain in the city and perhaps even attract new residents.



### Ejby Citizen House

The municipality was interested in the idea and agreed to cover the cost of improvements to the building, cost of idle operation and maintenance of the alarm system. In addition, the municipality would be responsible for all exterior maintenance. The library agreed to let most furniture and books stand to continue to be able to borrow books. The collection of books was also supplemented with books from a disused library nearby.

#### *Type of activity*

The citizens of Ejby are welcome in the house. You draw a - cheap - membership and receive a key to the house. This means that you can use the house during business hours, but also during evenings, where the last person to leave the house is responsible for closure. By thus giving all responsibility for the house, the residents themselves also feel as members of a trusting community.



#### Association meeting in the citizen house

As a member you can engage in various activities that are mostly initiated and controlled by the members themselves, and they consist for the most part of artistic and cultural activities, such as the following:

- Changing art exhibitions, theatre performances, concerts, and lectures on a variety of topics throughout the year. Theatre performances and concerts are often for the whole family so the children get used to visiting the house.
- Courses in genealogy and IT.
- Throughout the summer workshops with theatre and music for children.

- Throughout the year you as a member can borrow all the books you want. There is no control of the loans. It is up to the members themselves to arrange for the return. This part of the function is based on mutual trust that makes everybody feel it's their house. It may also be this confidence that many leave their own books on the library shelves, so others can benefit from them.
- In addition to the things mentioned there are meeting rooms, reading rooms and kitchenette available to members and all associations in the city can free book a place in a meeting room.

*Added community values*

By giving all responsibility for the house means that arts and cultural activities in the city have grown and that the community has strengthened people's identity as Ejby citizens, as individuals with moral upright and as democrats.

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