



## Territorial Social Innovation in the Nordic Countries and Scotland



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### **Innovation Work in Bærum Municipality**

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Bærum Municipality, Norway, has been systematically working toward mainstreaming innovation in the public sector. Among the measures implemented is a smart grocery shopping service in home care services.

## Preconditions, Inspiration, Nurture

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There is a new paradigm shift in the public sector today, which is characterized by governance through increased networking and partnership with the private and tertiary sector. The citizen is an integral part of the partnership as a co-producer of services.

Increased work on innovation and development has been a focus in Bærum Municipality for over five years. In 2014, the municipality adopted an innovation strategy 'Towards tomorrow's solutions,' which was revised in 2016. The main objective of the strategy is to create an innovative organizational culture in the municipality. The focus has been on discussing *how* to work with the existing challenges in the municipality in new ways instead of selecting the specific themes to be addressed. The strategy has six goals, which include increasing competencies in the field of innovation in the public sector; increasing end users' and citizens' involvement in the innovation work in the municipality; and increasing the use of innovative tools in the development of services.

The municipality launched a Facebook platform "Innovasjon i Bærum kommune" and a blog at [www.tanketanken.no](http://www.tanketanken.no), where weekly updates are published on the innovation work in the municipality and beyond.

Since 2015, Bærum Municipality has been running its own leadership program for the municipal management teams (Ledelsesutviklingsprogrammet for innovasjon (LUP)). The program includes both theoretical and practical training on innovation and change management.

Bærum Municipality has also taken part in the National Innovation School<sup>1</sup> driven by Liljehammer University College. The target group of the innovation school is municipalities in Norway willing to implement innovation projects as the outcome of the study.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.hil.no/innovasjonsskolen](http://www.hil.no/innovasjonsskolen)

## Implementation

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Among the concrete initiatives implemented in the municipality linked to the innovation strategy is a project on food e-commerce in home care services. The municipal employees working in home care services in Bærum came up with an innovative solution to improve the efficiency and save costs associated with grocery shopping for users living at home.

An online shopping solution was introduced through cooperation between the Bærum home care services and the Kolonial.no food chain. Since 2015, grocery shopping is done online using iPads when the home care personnel visit the users. The drivers distribute the groceries to the users daily at fixed times.

Previously, the home care staff would make a shopping list manually during the first visit, and come back with the purchased goods during the second visit. The new solution makes it possible to reduce the number of visits and simplify the procedure.

### Resources

The online grocery shopping solution is a mix between the public home care services and commercial grocery distribution channels. The project is implemented using municipal funding.

The agreement with the Kolonial.no food chain is the result of an innovative public procurement initiative carried out in cooperation with the national program for supplier development in Norway. Bærum Municipality was among the first municipalities in Norway to implement this scheme.

### The Network / Cooperation

The public sector has been the key driving force behind the innovation work in the municipality. The involvement of citizens and end users in the partnership has been at the forefront of the innovation process. The municipality is planning to develop a 'Roadmap for citizen dialogue and participation' that is intended to foster collaboration between politicians, municipal employees and citizens in the development of the municipal services. The municipal authorities are also looking into the possibilities of increasing cooperation with external partners, including research institutions and the tertiary sector.

## **Enablers and Barriers**

Among the enabling factors in innovation work in the municipality has been the presence of committed municipal employees who have been central to getting things off the ground. The innovation strategy has had a particular focus on strengthening the human capital and on creating the enabling conditions for the change-makers to spark innovation and creativity. In this regard, the leadership program has played an important role.

Daring to take the risk and carry out pilot activities on a full scale has been mentioned as a key challenge when it comes to innovation work in the municipality.

Innovative management and the application of innovative methods and tools require building up relevant competencies and skills. Providing formal and informal learning opportunities in the framework of the leadership program has been important for strengthening these competencies.

## Social Innovation Effects

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### **Outcomes, Impact and 'Scaling'**

The solution is a more cost-efficient and user-friendly way of service delivery for the municipality. The new solution is more appreciated by the end users, as they have a more real-life experience of doing shopping in comparison to compiling a shopping list. There are already 600 users of the home care services in Bærum making use of the online shopping solution. The innovation has already been applied in other municipalities in Norway, so that there is a high interest in upscaling the solution. The solution also contributes to solving the challenge associated with the lack of social care staff in the municipality, as it is less labour-intensive.

The municipality received an Innovation Award in 2016 awarded by the Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation for its long-term and systematic work with innovation.

## Lessons Learned

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The case of the online grocery shopping service in Bærum shows that there are good opportunities to match the existing resources and technologies in a different context to serve social purposes.

Developing an innovation-oriented culture requires experimentation, creativity and new ways of thinking. The political and administrative leaders in the municipality should be aware that creativity and innovation cannot be fully steered and should dare to take a risk and implement new ideas in practice. The importance of involving users in the innovation process and encouraging systematic work with innovation, including the development of clear goals and visions, are among other lessons that can be drawn from the experience of working with innovation in Bærum Municipality.

## References

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