

"I like the boat docks but
there is no place to sit
there."

"I want a beach!
The water is so hard
to reach!"

B(R)YGGA

(=in swedish: a dock/to build/to bridge)

BENGTSFORS MUNICIPALITY

A method to strengthen the
connections to the water in
Bengtsfors municipality
through participatory design

THANK YOU!

students and teachers at Strömkullegymnasiet and the children and
pedagogues at the
preschool Vitsippan and the after-school center Kristallen in Skåpafors.
Without you this project would not have been possible!



B(R)YGGA

(=in swedish: a dock/to build/to bridge)

A method to strengthen the connections to the water in
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2021-01-08

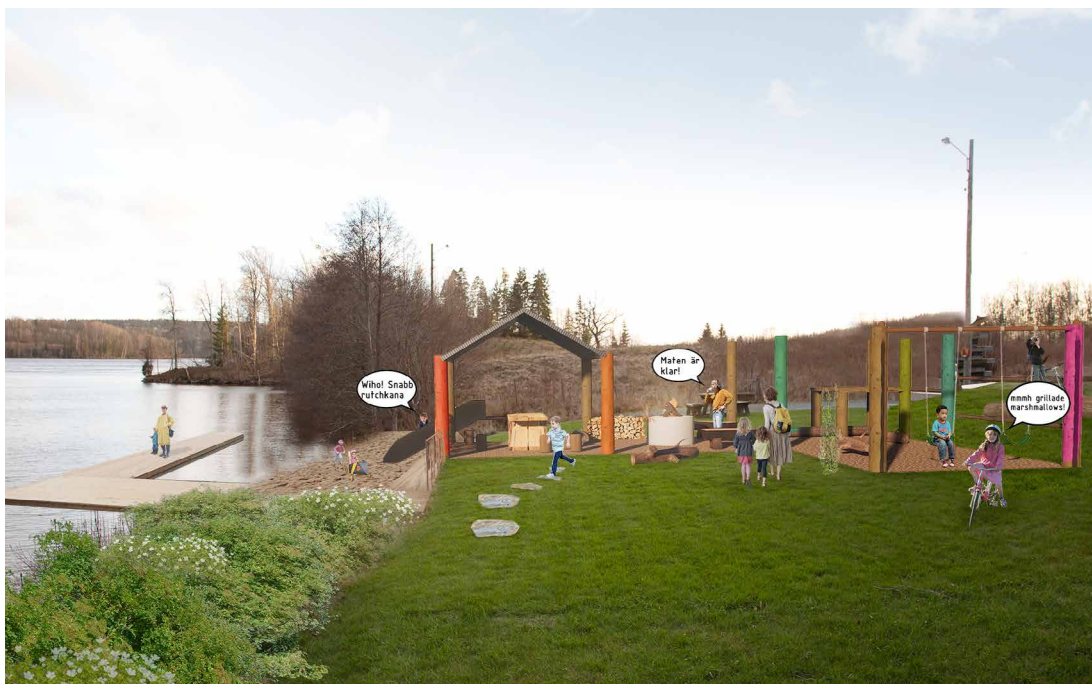
ARK174 Planning and design for
sustainable development in a local context

Hilda Alfredsson
Oleg Sokolovskyi
Albin Haggren
Christine Wikman





A part of the final proposal of the work with Strömkullegymnasiet in Bengtsfors.



A part of the final proposal of the work with the preschool Vitsippan and the after-school center Kristallen in Skåpafors.

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

See the water as a strength

Bengtsfors, a municipality in the north-eastern parts of Västra Götaland region, is a rural area with a lot of potential in its beautiful nature, the canal and not the least its 399 lakes. But even though the water is really close in many parts of the municipality, it is often very hard to reach. Therefore, our goal is to make use of the potentials of the water by making it more accessible and attractive for the people.

Other possibilities in planning processes

Since many architecture processes today are realized through a list of already established goals, our vision is to do the process differently. The goal is to include the children and youth in the planning process, because they are the future users of places but often are not being taken in the consideration.

Focus: creating a method

The goal of the project is to strengthen the connection to the water through participatory design. Our focus is to create a design method for participatory design, apply the method to two focus groups (children and youth of the municipality) and to visualize the outcome. The sites we chose are owned by the municipality and we propose projects that can be realized in the future. We will also reflect on how the projects can continue and be built together with the participants. By letting people into the decision-making process, we hope to reach a result that the locals can feel proud of and that can be used both by the inhabitants and tourists.

A project representative for today

We want to show that participatory design is possible without a single physical meeting.

Develop local participation



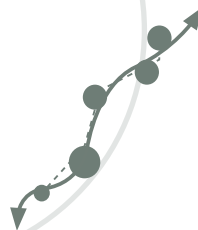
Make nature available



Make use of existing physical resources



Strengthen the identity



SWOT ANALYSIS

The SWOT analysis was created with the whole studio to get a better understanding of Bengtsfors municipality strengths, weaknesses opportunities and threats. It was an important impact in the choice of focus groups and focus area. Below we have gathered the ones that have been most important in the work of this project.

S_trength

Nature and recreation

To regard scenery and outdoors as a natural resource, of recreation, quality of life for its inhabitants and of course also a tourist attraction.

Communal engagement

Smaller settlements and communities can create a feeling of familiarity and sense of belonging.

Local business engagement

Driving the innovation process and being actors for events and fundraising.

W_eaknesses

Lack of activities

There needs to be things to engage in beyond work and basic responsibilities.

Few possibilities for social interaction

There are few possibilities for social interactions such as meeting places and activities.

Uncertain future

The rapid change of society that has happened over the last decades is making work and development perspectives in the region uncertain. It is difficult for people to picture their future.

O_pportunities

Sustainability awareness

Growing interest and awareness of our impact on climate change, creating a shift towards green solutions and lifestyles, utilizing the local resources.

Existing Structures

Potential in already existing structures such as buildings and infrastructure.

Collaboration

Collaboration between municipalities and organisations to use the resources and competences in an efficient way.

T_hreats

Inequality

There is a risk of discrimination against vulnerable people (immigrants, elderly and young people).

Economic uncertainty

There is a economic uncertainty for further development and future income.

Urbanization

People move to bigger towns and cities. Social and mental urbanization regarding media, topics for debate, and societal discourse.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Background and introduction.....	4
Why involve children and youth	6-7
Framework and delimitations.....	8
Method	9
Choice of focus groups and sites.....	10-11
Site analysis and preparation for the first dialogue	12-18
The first dialogue	19-25
Concept creation phase	26-28
The second dialogue	29-30
Concept creation phase and the final results	31-41
Next steps for the projects	42-44
Evaluation from students at Strömkullegymnasiet	45
Reflections on the work	46-47
SWOT analysis	48
Local sustainable directions	49
Sources	50

WHY INVOLVE CHILDREN AND YOUTH?

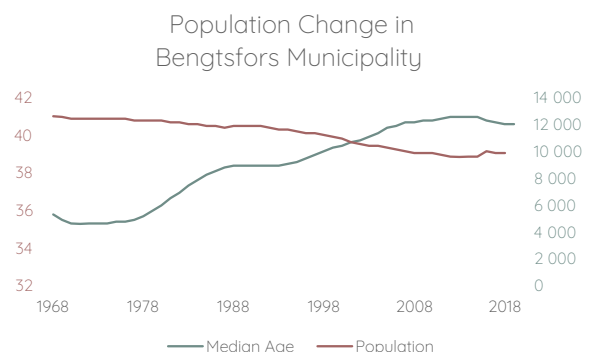
Why involve children and youth in participation processes?

Convention on the Rights of the Child is an international agreement that recognizes children's rights regardless of their race, religion or abilities (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989). The convention was adopted by the United Nations in 1989 and in 2020 it became law in Sweden (Sveriges Riksdag 2018). It is supposed to help children's rights to gain more acceptance in practice. This is of course important on many different levels, but as this project is a part of a planning and architecture programme, it should be described the convention's relevance to planning.

The article 12 of the convention is especially of relevance for the planning processes as it states the importance of child's possibilities to express their views freely in all matters affecting the child. This can be translated to making it possible for children to have the right to influence design of their living environments. The planning processes of today often do not include children's perspective, which is a gap that this project is hoping to reduce. Swedish Youth Council is naming a few reasons why children do not take an active part in planning processes: lack of

knowledge of how one can take part, lack of experience in participation and lack of economic resources (Sveriges Kommuner och Landsting 2012). By inviting children and youth in designing public places we hope to contribute to solving some of these issues. We think that inviting children in participatory processes will increase their knowledge of these processes and how they can influence planning in future. One aim of this project is to develop a method in participatory design, and we hope that Bengtsfors municipality can use the method as an inspiration in their future work.

Another reason why involving children in planning processes is important for Bengtsfors municipality is the current demographic trend that shows decreasing population and an increasing median age (SCB 2020). Also, one of the weaknesses recognized in the SWOT-analysis described the residents' uncertainty in the future. We hope that including children in decision-making will encourage them to take more part in local development and strengthen the local community.

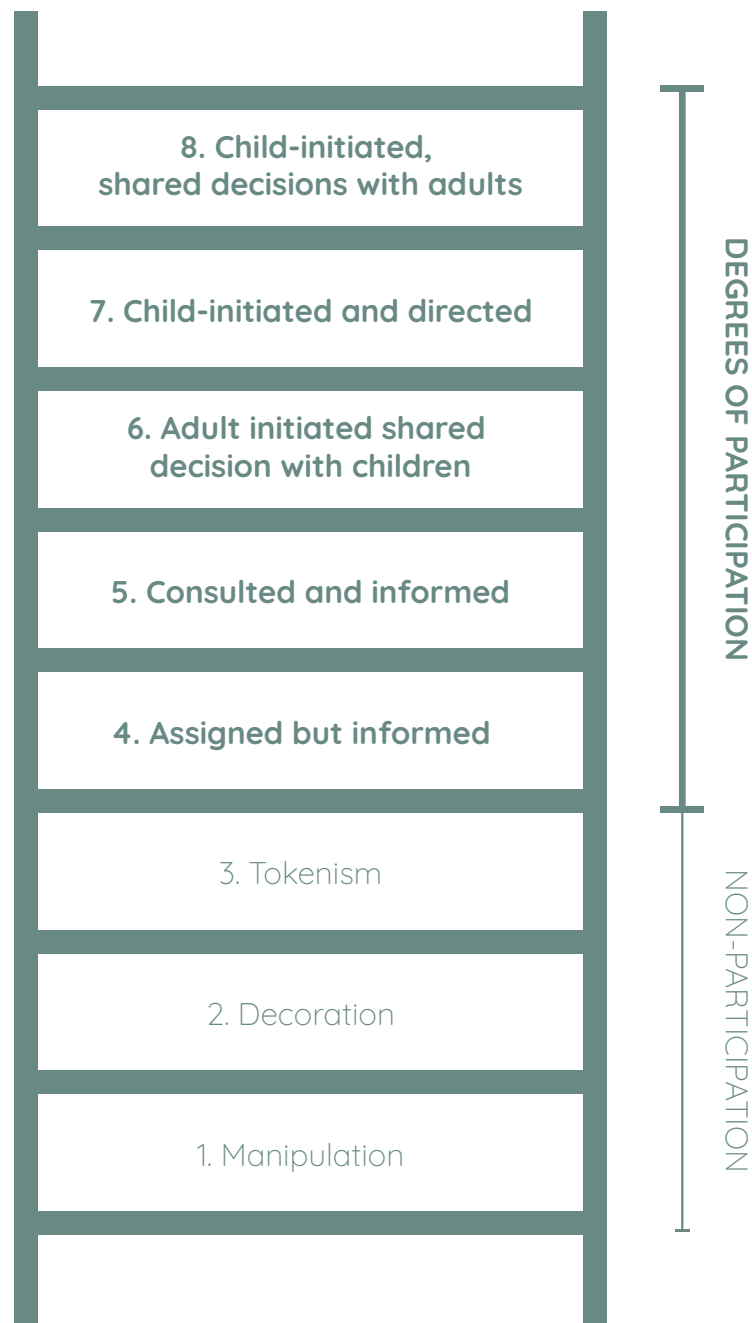


The ladder of participation

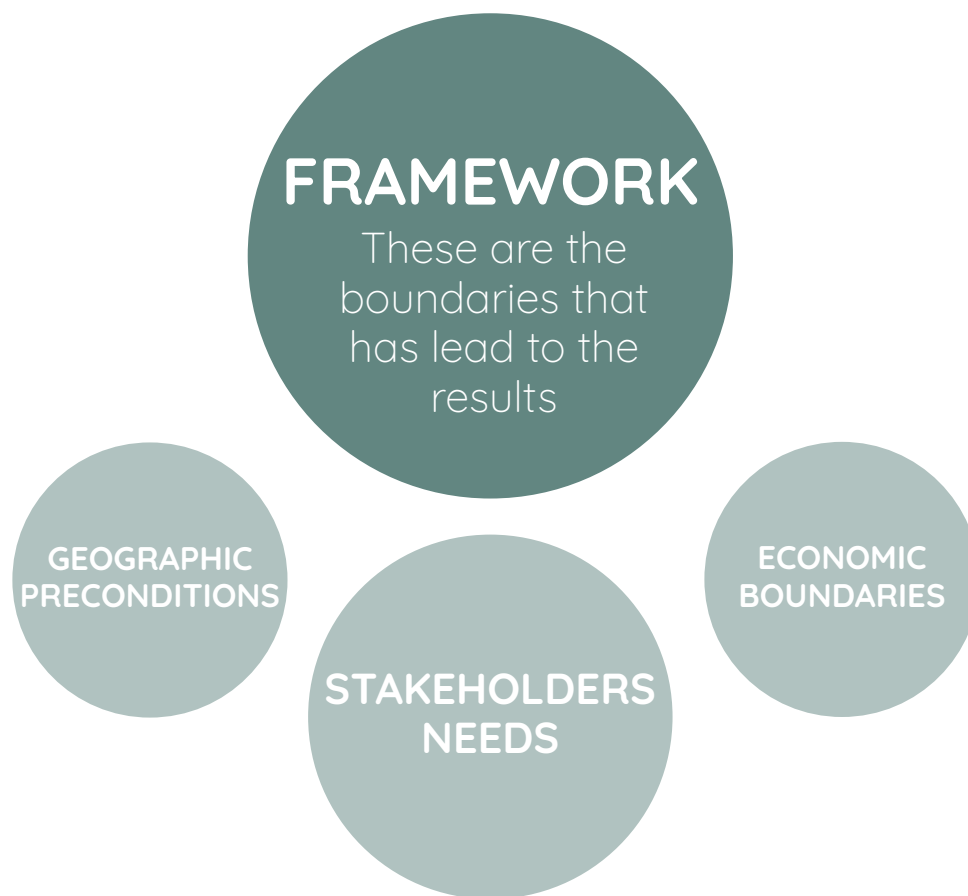
To analyse the carried-out work with children and youth in this project, a ladder of children's participation was used. It is a model designed by Roger Hart that describes different levels of children's participation and non-participation in decision making processes (Hart 1992). The model itself is a reworked model for citizen participation developed by Sherry Arnstein in 1969.

Hart suggests that the ladder should not be used for measuring the quality of the programme but rather for figuring out the design of children's participation. The programme should be designed after children's different abilities, where the child's age is very important. Therefore, in this project three different dialogue models were designed for three different age groups.

THE LADDER OF PARTICIPATION



FRAMEWORK AND DELIMITATIONS



Framework

The geographic preconditions of the spots we work with, the economic boundaries of a small municipality and the stakeholders needs set the framework for this project.

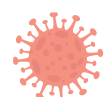
Delimitations

As a starting point, we have limited ourselves to work with two sites and two focus groups, children from the preschool and after-school center in Skåpafors and youth from the arts and craft program at Strömkulle upper-secondary school. These two groups do not represent all children and youth in Bengtsfors. We have also chosen to limit ourselves to two sessions of dialogue with each of the focus groups. We also limited ourselves to work with two specific locations that we knew were owned by the municipality and these were chosen before the first dialogue.

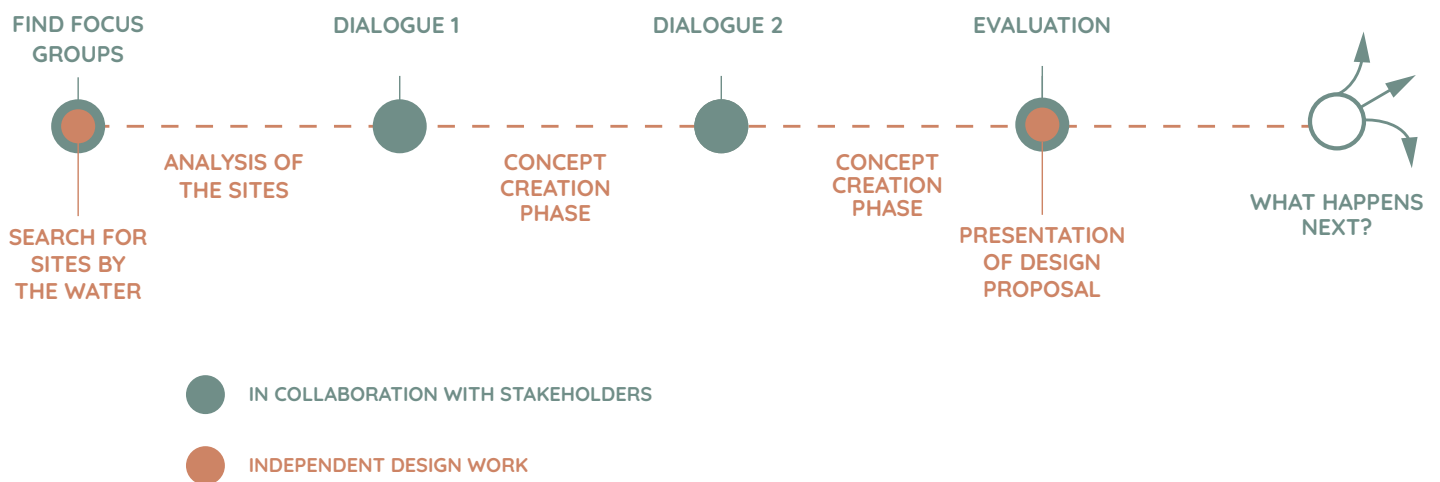
To manage the project in time we are focusing on the overall concept. To show how the different things can come to reality we have different strategies for different focus points, at some we show the architectural qualities that could be created and at other we focus on giving a strategy on how to move forward.

Limitation

Due to Covid-19 we had to limit all oral dialogues to online meetings on Google Meet combined with written and drawn communication on the online platform Miro.



METHOD



About the method

We have looked at, compared and discussed different design methods from Communityplanning.net when creating our own method of the project. We have also looked at Jämställda offentliga miljöer – lärdomar från 24 projekt (Boverket) and <https://dialogguiden.se/>. Some projects and architecture firms that have inspired us when creating the method are the project Jämställt Övre in Trelleborg and the architecture firms Dis/Order and Codesign. In this project all the results are based on dialogues with children and youth.

The method was built up on two dialogues with a concept creation phase between. This loop can continue for as many times that is needed and is time for. For each iteration new questions comes up. In this project the first dialogue came rather early in the time span we had and the second dialogue came quite late. Apart from the dialogues with the children and youth there

has also been a lot of communication with the municipality, to understand their visions of the areas. Each step in the process of the method will be represented further on in the booklet.

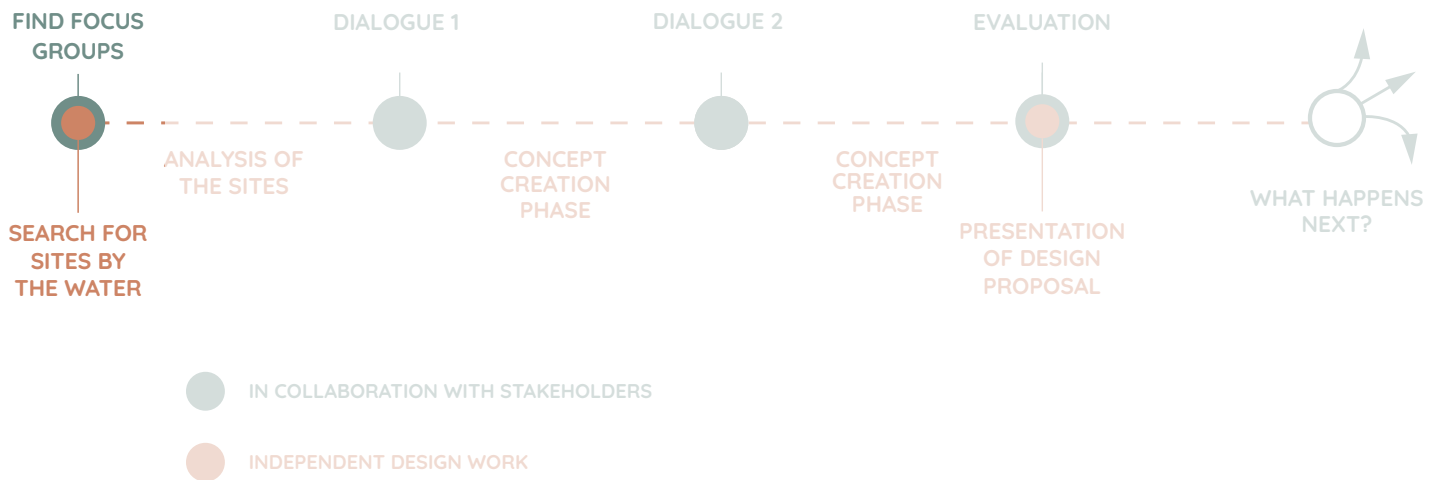
The timeline

The timeline on the illustration above will be used in the whole booklet to represent each step of the method.

Colour coding

To be able to distinguish the focus groups and their project areas one colour for each focus group is used and follows throughout the booklet. On page 11 each of the focus groups and areas are represented with the colours. The pages that contain information about both of the focus groups will have a light blue colour.

CHOICE OF FOCUS GROUPS AND SITES



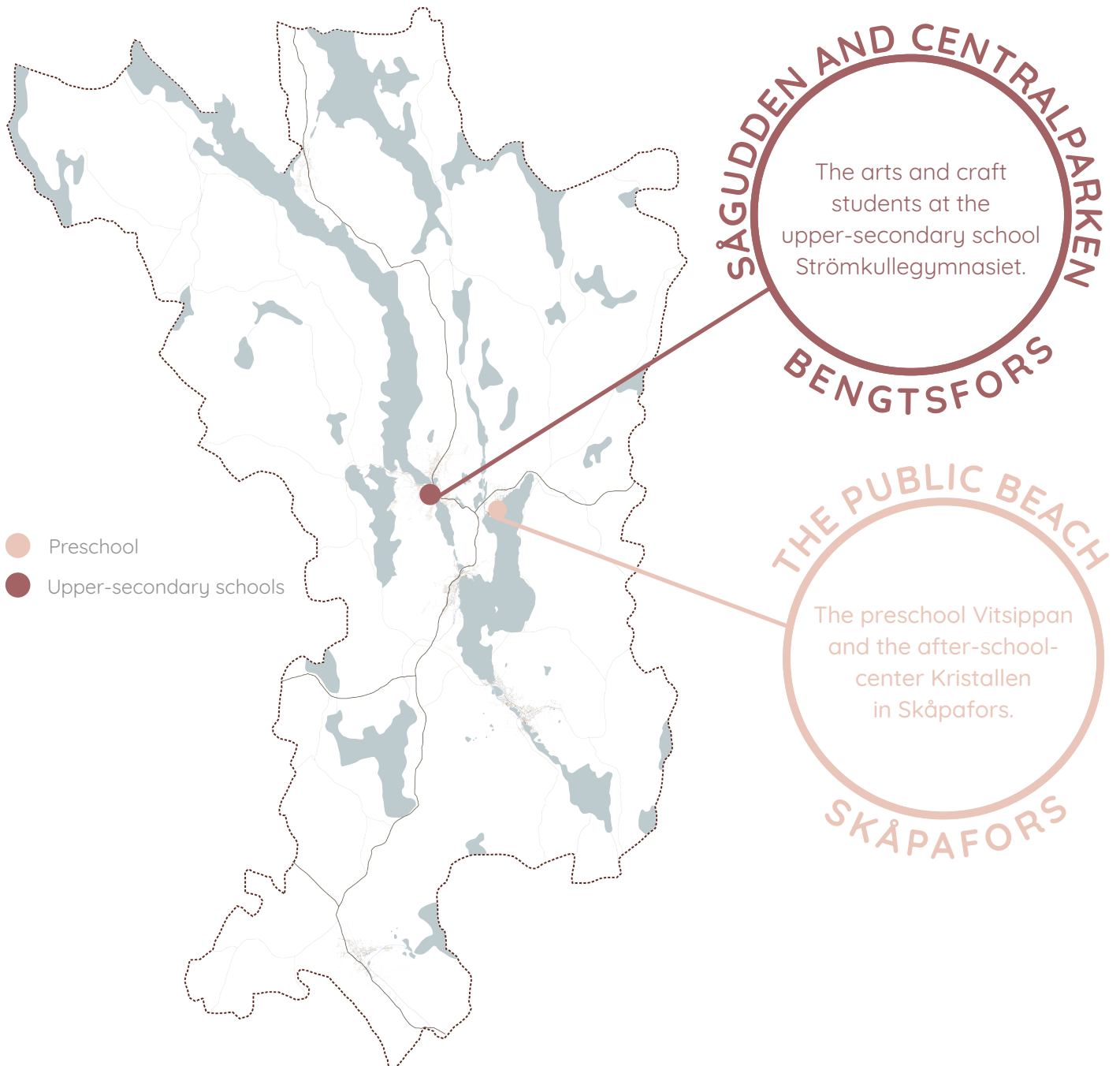
Choice of sites

The first thing we did was to see what sites we could find by the water that were owned by the municipality. Together with the municipality we found 5 sites that all were by the water and had the potential to be improved. After some mapping of where the different schools in the municipality are situated we decided to choose to work with two sites: Sågudden and Centralparken in Bengtsfors and the public beach in Skåpafors.

Choice of focus groups

We wanted to find two focus groups of different ages that had their school near either of the sites that we had found. We chose to get in contact with three focus groups, Strömkullegymnasiet in Bengtsfors, situated near Sågudden and Centralparken and the preschool and the after-school center in Skåpafors, situated near the public beach in Skåpafors.

TWO LOCATIONS AND TWO FOCUS GROUPS



Color coding for the booklet:

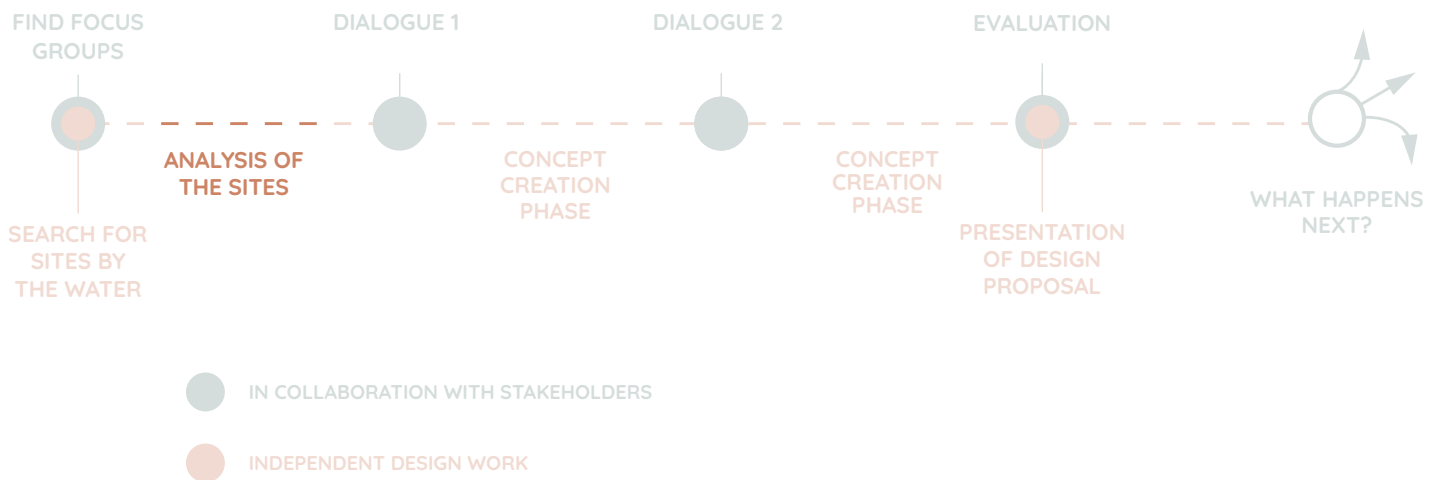


Sågudden & Centralparken
Upper-secondary school
Strömkullegymnasiet



The public beach in Skåpafors
Preschool Vitsippan and
after-school center Kristallen

SITE ANALYSIS AND PREPARATION FOR THE FIRST DIALOGUE



Analysis of the chosen sites

Before the first dialogues began, an analysis of the two areas was made to get an understanding of the geographic boundaries and the possibilities we could see with the areas. We analysed them by looking at maps, photographs, drawings, site plans etc. This helped us see the architectural qualities and potential deficiencies of the areas.

However we did not make any strategies or concepts for the areas before the first meeting since we wanted to create the strategies based on what the children and youth said.

Preparing for the first dialogue

This research was a way to get prepared for the first dialogues. It is important to have a basic understanding of the area to get trust from the youth and children.

Before each of the dialogues we also planned a framework for the sessions that contained presentations of the project, questions to the stakeholders etc. A more detailed description of the different dialogues can be read further down in this chapter under the title "Dialogue".

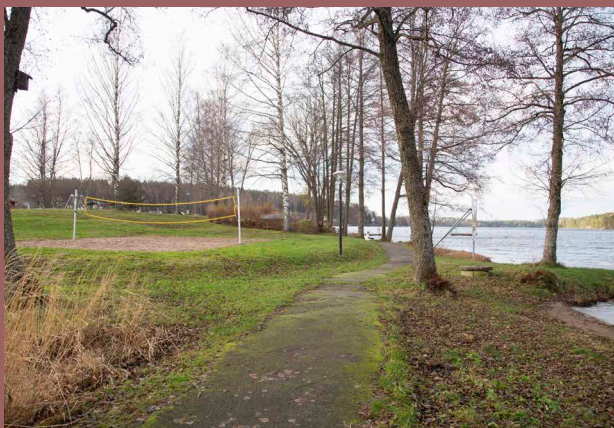
SITE ANALYSIS OF SÅGUDDEN AND CENTRALPARKEN



Floraleden, to the left in the image, is a barrier between Centralparken and the town center.



The height difference and the fence between the waterfront and Centralparken creates a barrier.



This is the current condition of the walking path at Sågudden. To the left (not seen in the image) is the basket field and the skate area.



A more private area at Sågudden. If you follow the path you reach the fireplace to the left and the beach to the right.

Centralparken

The central park in Bengtsfors lies by the water in close proximity to the town centre. There is a small playground, a lawn and some trees. Due to direct connection with water and the boat docks, the place feels very pleasant, especially during warm weather. But the place is also exposed for wind due to its location.

Sågudden

Sågudden is an area close to the town centre but at the time feels disconnected. This is because of Floraleden, a heavily trafficked road with lack of safe passages. There is a gas station and a tourist centre there. In 2018 the municipality built an activity park in Sågudden which is often used by younger children. There is also a public beach, due to it's central location being very popular during the summer.

(CA 1:10 000)



In direction to
Gustavsfors
and further on
to Årjäng.

Sågudden

Norway one
hour away

Centralparken

Bus station

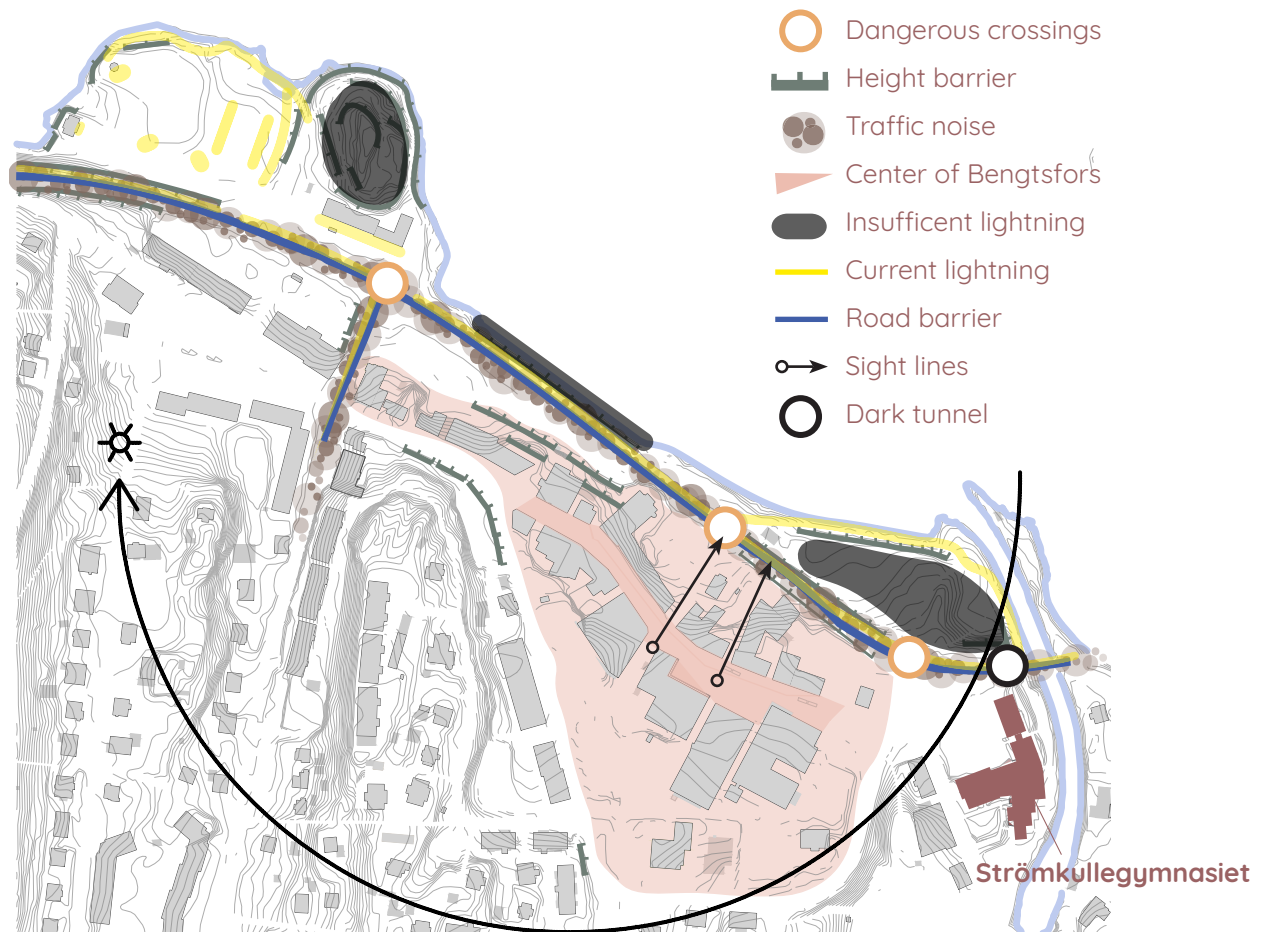
Kickis café

Strömkullegymnasiet

Majberget

EKAparken

Bengtsfors IF



Spatial analysis of the area around Sägudden and Centralparken (1:800)



Moveability around Sägudden and Centralparken (1:800)

SITE ANALYSIS OF THE PUBLIC BEACH IN SKÅPAFORS



The public beach consists of a few benches, a fireplace, a seating under roof and a changing cubicle.



There is an unpaved road to walk or bike from the parking lot to the water. An electric light trail past the beach continues on the field.



The field south of the beach, seen in the background of the image is privately owned. If it continues to be an open field the sun can reach the beach.



Today the beach is very steep and filled with rocks. On the image you can also see where the dock starts in the summer.

Skåpafors

Skåpafors is situated by the lake Laxsjön. The village is a calm place in close proximity to Bengtsfors which makes it attractive for families with children. Skåpafors IF is an association that takes care of a hockey rink and a public beach on a voluntary basis.

The beach

The beach is situated on the outskirts of the village, but due to the size of the village it only takes about 10 minutes from Skåpafors busstop by foot. The municipality owns the land around the beach but many plots in Skåpafors are privately owned.



Skåpafors IF

road café

"Folkets hus"

bus stop

Skåpafors preeschool

paper factories

municipality-owned land

football field

the beach

(1:8 000)

N



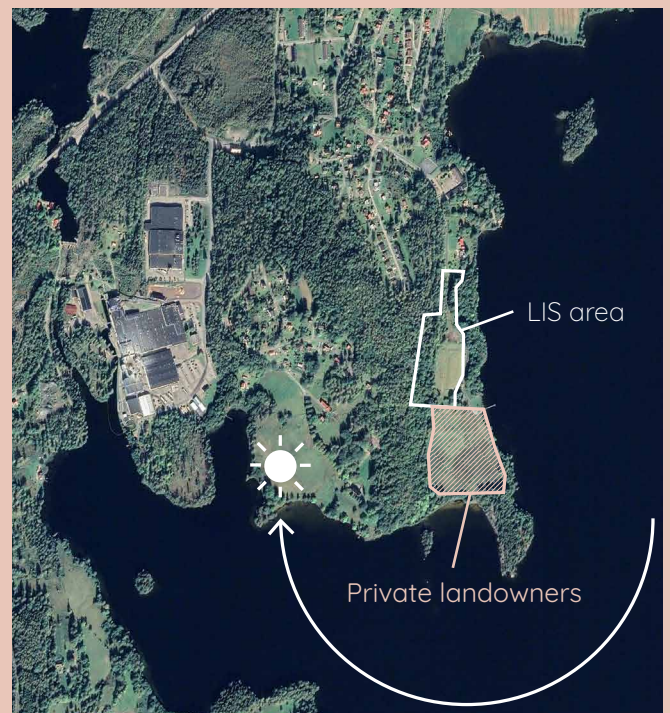
1. a few benches, barbecue spot, dressing cubicle, a dock
2. toilet and accessible parking
3. parking
4. forest owned by municipality, material possible to use



Existing paths

The yellow dotted line shows an existing but overgrown lighted running track that can be restored. More activity in the area would also benefit the public beach. The old existing path from the nearby housing area to the west can also create connections to the public beach.

- lighten track
- walking path
- road



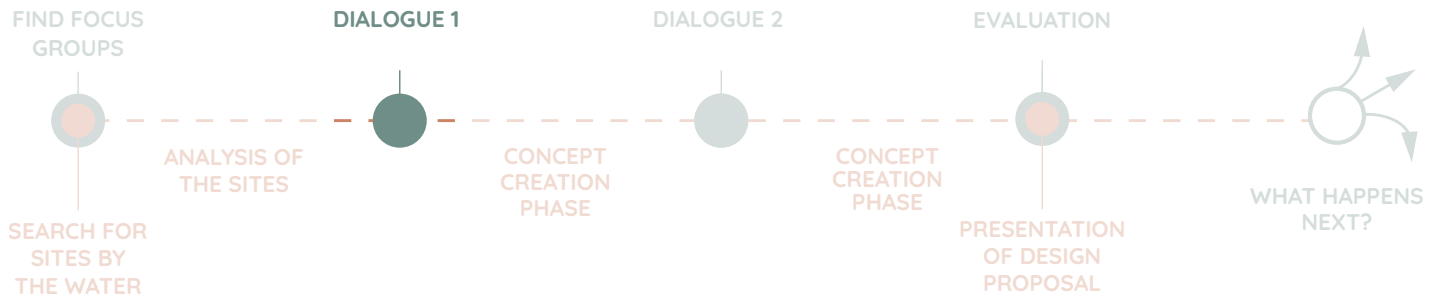
Landowners

The open field south of the plot, hatched in pink, is privately owned. We see a risk of getting the area shaded if the field is not kept, at least partly, open as it is now.

A new LIS area (LIS = House development close to water)

The white outline shows an area planned for future housing, which would bring possibilities for the public beach to be developed. But we suggest reconsidering that specific spot to keep the football field since it is a resource that could be restored and used for other activities.

THE FIRST DIALOGUE



About the first dialogues

The dialogue process with the upper-secondary school Strömkullegymnasiet was divided in two parts: an analysis phase and a design phase. The process was inspired by a research-based collective DIS/ORDER and their work with developing Folkets Park in Malmö, together with local youth. Another inspiration for the process we found in the project Equal

Övre in Trelleborg, where a consulting company Tyréns and Trelleborg municipality developed a meeting place together with children from a secondary school. (Disorder 2020, Boverket 2020)

A more detailed descriptions of the dialogues with each of the focus groups will be presented in the upcoming pages.

DIALOGUE 1 WITH STUDENTS AT STRÖMKULLEGYMNASIET

Dialogue nr 1: Strömkullegymnasiet

The first phase began with us making a contact with the school's principal who referenced us to an arts and crafts teacher. The teacher agreed to us having an online workshop with two of her classes, one consisting of two students, another one of eight. The first workshop that took place on Google Meet was divided in two parts. During the first part we held a presentation where we introduced us to the class, described the aim of the project and why their participation is important. During the second part we first introduced the online platform Miro and then worked together with the class on the analysis of the sites: Centralparken and Sågudden. The workshop was led by us, but the teacher was present and active. The questions we asked the class were formulated to be answered as freely as possible: "What places do you like or don't like in Bengtsfors?". On the Miro board we created Post-its to give the opportunity to leave comments about different places in Bengtsfors. To get as much context about the chosen sites as possible, we first let the class to describe Bengtsfors town, Centralparken and Sågudden. During the break

we would try to find what was positive and negative opinions of the sites. After the break the second phase of the process began – design dialogue. The phase started with a presentation of two projects to inspire the class: Equal Övre and Jubileumsparken. Afterwards we introduced the design dialogue and how it would be carried out. Prior to meeting the class, we compiled pictures showing different urban design projects. The idea was that the class would use the images to get inspired. The class was encouraged to make collages, move the images to the map, or make their own sketches. The work was carried out on the same Miro board and the teacher was present and active.

The analysis phase was realized during two occasions, as we first met one class and then in a few days the other. One organization of two workshops was similar, except that when meeting a class of eight people we divided them in two groups. This would allow them to have more time each and to talk more freely.

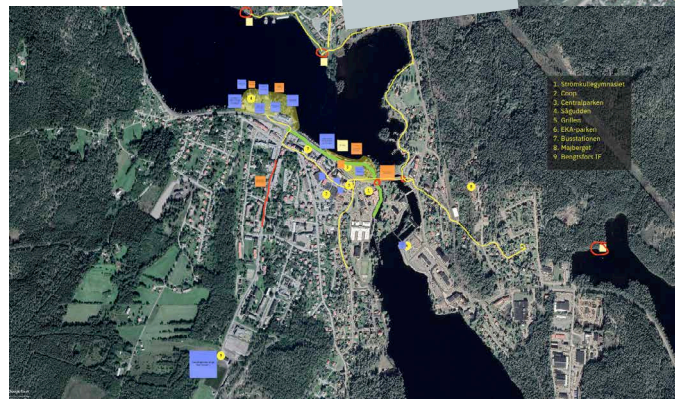
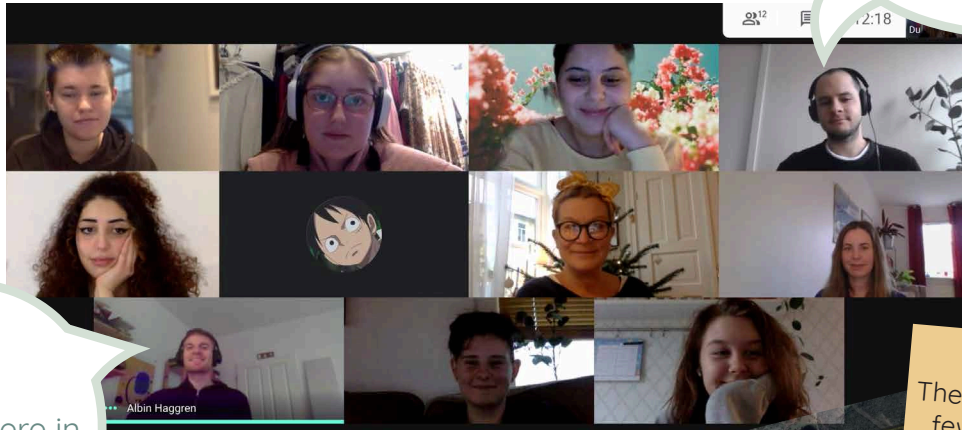
Dialogue and work in Miro with the students

What is your favourite spot in Bengtsfors?

Is there anywhere in Centralparken you don't like?

There are too few places to sit.

I like the boat docks, I often sit there



RESULTS FROM DIALOGUE 1

After the dialogue we compiled all the input from the students in the Miro board. Then we organized the data in different categories and divided it into positive and negative reactions.



ENVIRONMENT

- Big lawns, flexible space
- Cosy barbeque area
- Beautiful nature

WATER

- Walk and sit on the docks
- Location of bathing place
- Calmness by the water

OTHER

- Central location
- Many different things to do
- Meeting place for different groups and ages



ENVIRONMENT

- Road creates noise and dangerous to cross
- Height barriers
- Not enough seats

FEELINGS

- Unsafe for girls at Sågudden
- Difficulties to share spaces
- No places for youths to hang out

OTHER

- People drink at some spots
- Nothing attracts you up on the hill
- Dark tunnel

SOLUTIONS & IDEAS

ENVIRONMENT

- Strengthen the walk path along the water
- More lightning
- More seats

CENTRALPARKEN

- Showcases for art exhibitions
- Café
- Flowers and plants

SÅGUDDEN

- Seats on the slope
- Changing cubicle
- Safe lockers
- Outdoor gym
- Lookout tower

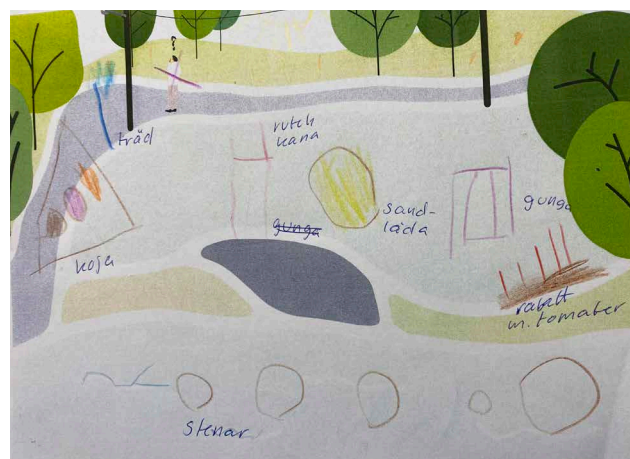
Reflections

- How to integrate different groups?
- Is it positive or problematic that Sågudden and Centralparken attract different groups?
- Connections and environment?
- How to make young girls feel more safe?

Possible improvements of the dialogue

- Prepare more leading questions
- Show how to add a picture into Miro
- Should we divide them into two smaller group next time?
- Fine line between raising question that can inspire the participants or lead them too much.

Drawings by two of the children at Skåpafors preschool Vitsippan



Drawings by two of the children at Skåpafors after-school center Kristallen



RESULTS FROM DIALOGUE 1

After the dialogue we compiled all the input from the children in the Miro board. Then we organized the data in different categories and divided it into positive and negative reactions.



ENVIRONMENT

- Big lawn to play on
- Almost no traffic

LOCATION

- Nearby but still private
- Private feeling: not many visitors
- Historic context: soccer field, mansion, electric light trails

OTHER

- Only public place to bath in Skåpafors
- Toilet and dressing cubicle



ENVIRONMENT

- Hard to reach the water
- Sharp rock on the beach
- Sloping lawn
- Height difference

LOCATION

- Things to climb on and hide behind
- Slide (to the water)
- Sandbox

OTHER

- Other places to swim nearby
- Nothing to do or play with
- No smaller "rooms"

SOLUTIONS & IDEAS

ENVIRONMENT

- Create a less steep beach
- Separate road from beach
- Use plants to create "rooms"

DESIGN

- Change shape of the dock
- Fix the toilet
- Add more places to sit

OTHER

- L-shaped dock
- Fruit trees and berry bushes
- Hut
- Ice cream stand

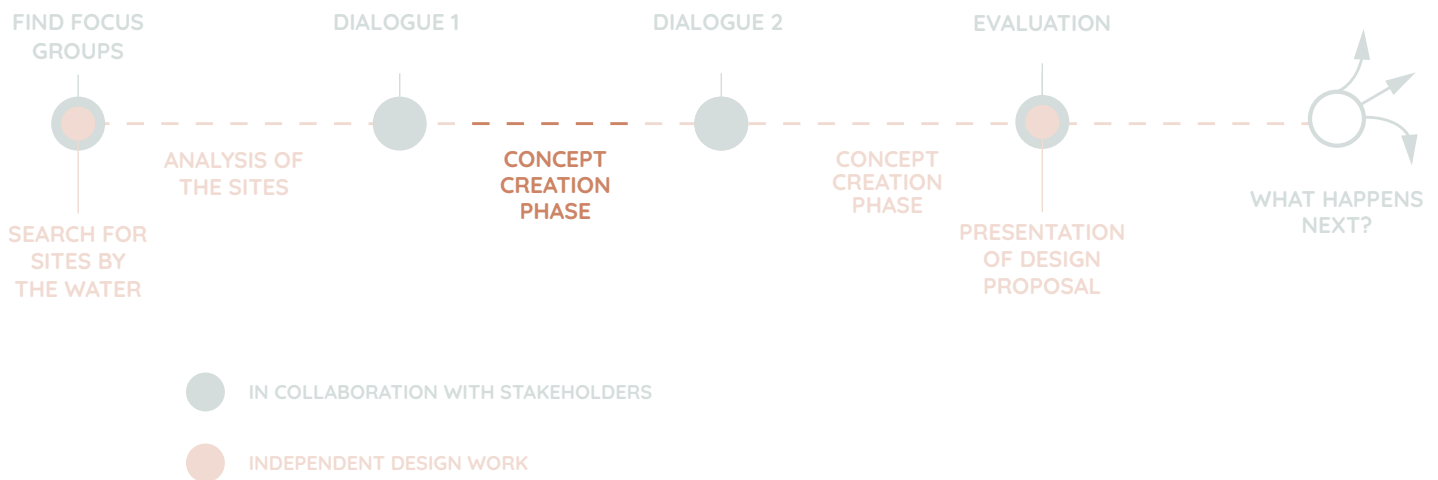
Reflections

- Who will maintain the bath place?
- How can you create a sandy beach at this steep place?
- How do you design a safe bath place for children?
- Which plants and playgrounds requires least maintainance?

Possible improvements of the dialogue

- Prepare more guiding questions
- Show how to add a picture in Miro
- Should we divide them in two smaller group next time?
- Fine line between raising question that can inspire the participants and lead them too much

CONCEPT CREATION PHASE



Gathering information

After gathering and structuring all the material from the focus groups we combined the ideas and analysis from the groups with our own analysis to bring the ideas into architectural solutions. We reflected upon the material and the knowledge we got during the workshops and started sketching.

The first sketches

Based on the workshops we started by doing short “top of mind” exercises to get a lot of different ideas on paper. Together we chose some areas and issues to continue working with, based on what we saw best answered the needs of the target groups.

Context and concept

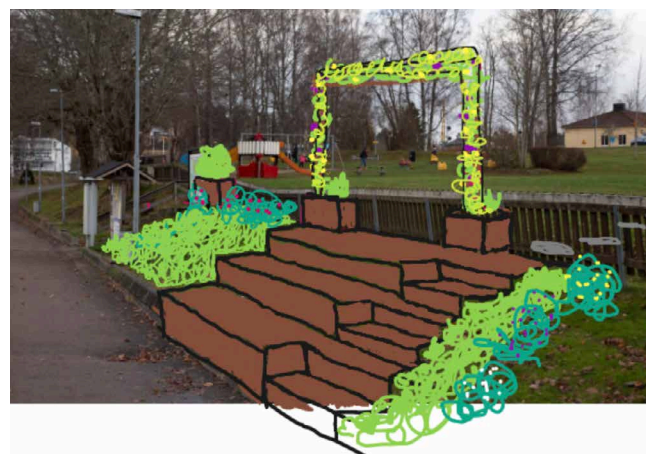
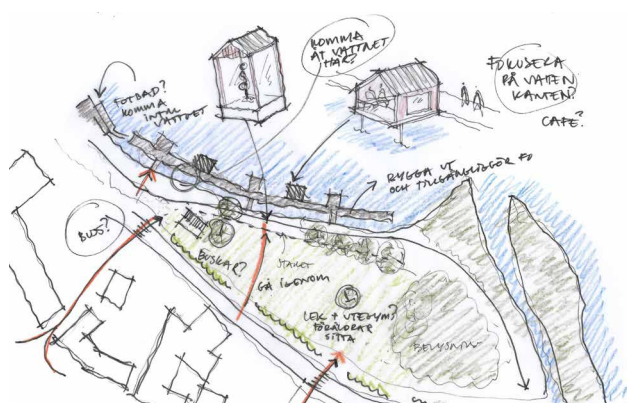
By looking at the large scale at the two areas we got an overview and tried to find what factors in the surroundings that affect our areas, to put the places in their contexts. This gave us a base to create concepts for our two areas. To get an good and easily presented material and to be able to answer on wide range of problematics we chose to divide our areas into focus points, based on the analysis.

Sketches into visualization

To represent the ideas and our concept we took our first sketches to a round of a group discussion, compared them with the analysis and the workshop material, and then made them into collages so they easily could be understood by our focus groups.

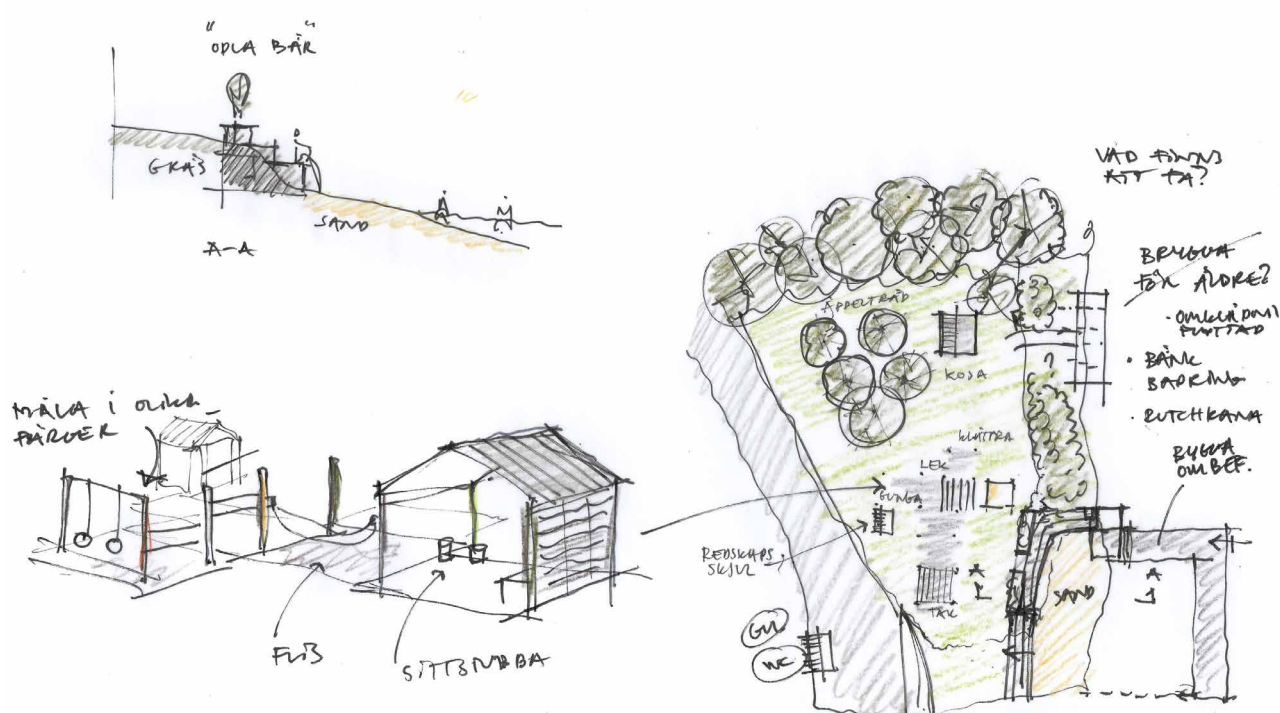
CONCEPT CREATION PHASE

SÅGUDDEN AND CENTRALPARKEN

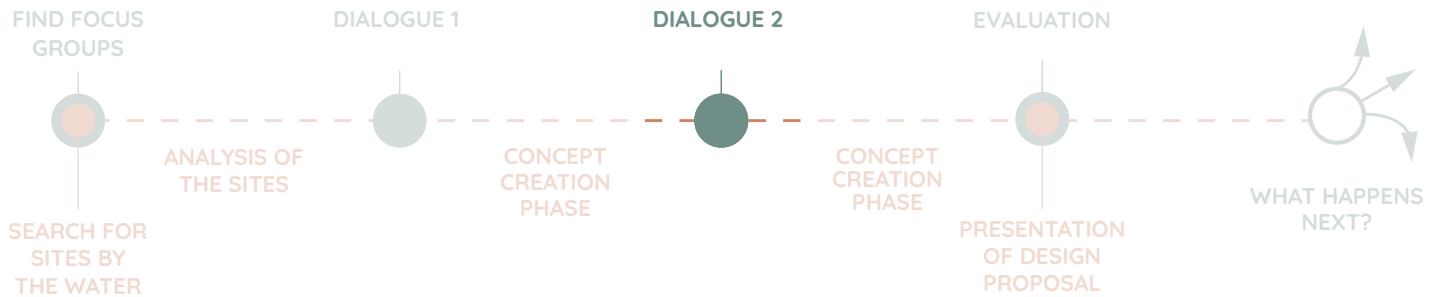


CONCEPT CREATION PHASE

THE PUBLIC BEACH IN SKÅPAFORS



THE SECOND DIALOGUE



About the second dialogues

The aim of the second dialogue was to show the focus groups how we interpreted their ideas and suggestions. The perfect outcome of the dialogue would be that the children and the students come up with critique of our proposals. The main idea

behind organizing the second dialogue was to give the focus groups possibility to comment on our proposals and therefore to feel included in the design process. It was also important for us to understand if we interpreted them correctly.

DIALOGUE 2 STUDENTS AT WITH STRÖMKULLEGYMNASIET



Printscreen of the Miro board during second dialogue.

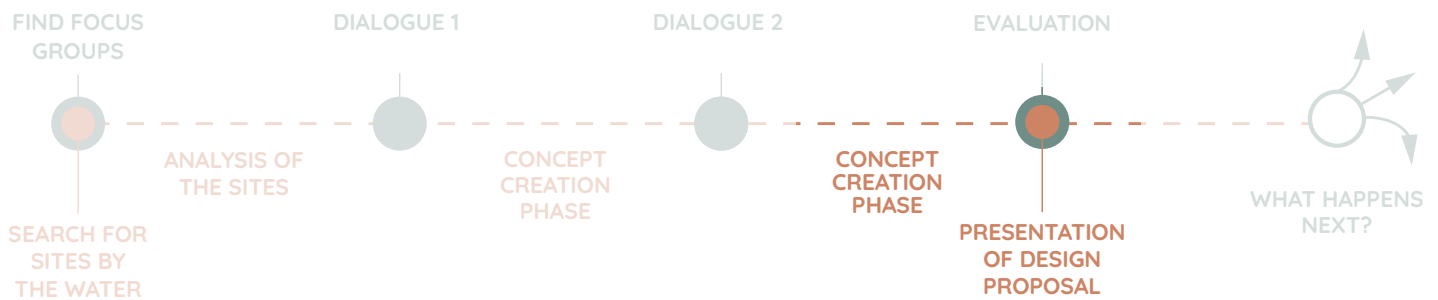
Dialogue nr 2: Strömkullegymnasiet

The second meeting with Strömkullegymnasiet was a follow-up meeting where we showed the sketches of their ideas and received feedback. The dialogue took place on Google Meet and was shorter than the first one – one hour instead of two. Prior to the meeting we had compiled our concept and ideas together with the students' analysis of the site as well as our interpretation of their suggestions. We started the meeting with showing our main concept – "Stråket" and the sketches. After the presentation we left the meeting for 15 minutes to give the students time

to think and discuss without us. When we came back, we discussed together about what they thought of the concept and ideas that we presented. We brought up the questions of what they liked or disliked, what we agreed or disagreed on. During the meeting with the class of eight, we divided the discussion in two groups, to give everyone the possibility to talk.

During the second dialogue the teacher was present and somewhat active in the discussion.

CONCEPT CREATION PHASE AND THE FINAL RESULTS



Developing and changing the design

During the second dialogue we got some good feedback from the focus groups with both positive and negative comments on our ideas. With this feedback we could develop or change our design suggestions. Due to the short time span we decided to choose some ideas and develop them. If we had more time we could have continued with the other areas as well.

A project possible to continue

Since this project is about presenting a method, therefore the results from the work with the focus groups should not be seen as finished. We see a lot of potential for it to continue even though we will not be able to follow it. In the following pages we will present the project at the stage it is in now and what possibilities we see forward.

Inspire inhabitants to take action

Our dream scenario is to start a process where the inhabitants get inspired to take more action in shaping the community. However, while some steps would be possible for anyone to start up, others require work from the municipality to implement. Therefore, we have color-coded dots, where the green represents things we encourage the municipality to improve while the red ones can be driven by the people (though an approval from the municipality might also be necessary to carry them through).

THE NEW BEACH WALK IN CENTRAL BENGTSFORS



A view of the updated dock. The space between the walking path and the bridge is used for sheds with seatings. The design of the sheds is inspired by the boat houses on the other side of the water.

The concept

Our concept is to strengthen the current beach walk by adding a number of focus points along the walk and by creating a stronger connection between Sågudden and Centralparken. More boat docks for private boats are added between the current boat docks and by the tanking dock. With a bridge all the way here, it is easier to create a more welcoming entrance to Sågudden. The beach walk continues all the way to “the beach hill” at Sågudden, just like the current walking path does. Functions and activities that could be

found along the beach walk are, in addition to the already existing activities, a statue in the water, an outdoor gym, wind and rain protected seatings and an extended and lightened walk path on the dock.

Most of the added activities and functions on the beach walk are to be used all year around, so that the beach walk feels alive also during autumn and winter.



The new beach walk starting south of "the art tunnel" and finishing at "the beach hill". (1:500)

Collaborative projects

A further description of these projects is presented in upcoming pages.

- 1 An art tunnel
- 2 Connecting stairs
- 3 The updated dock
- 4 An art shallow
- 5 The view point
- 6 The activity corner
- 7 The beach hill

Municipality-driven projects

These are the projects that we think the municipality should consider doing to create the best possible preconditions for the beach walk.

- A Improved pedestrian crossing
By paving the road at the pedestrian crossings the cars will probably slower their speed to the new limit.
- B A new café
There is a need of improved lightning at the walking path, particularly at the dock connecting SÅGUDDEN and Centralparken
- C Improved lightning
There is a need of improved lightning at the walking path, particularly at the dock connecting the parks and the hill at SÅGUDDEN.
- D Better connections to the center
By making Floragatan a walking path a stronger connection to the center can be created.
- E Improved bus station
Some small things would improve the bus station a lot, such as a sign to find it from Storgatan and some greenery. Many of the students also need a place to charge a phone.

SOME STOPS ALONG THE BEACH WALK



1. An art tunnel

By letting students at Strömkullegymnasiet paint and make a graffiti/art wall in the gloomy tunnel it can become a less scary passage. Since the tunnel is situated just along the canal, a brighter tunnel will be an art work for tourists on boats.



4. An art shallow

An artwork placed on the shallow at the tip of Sågudden could work both as a navigation mark for boats and as something to rest your eyes on from a bench on Sågudden.



5. A view point

By creating a better walking path, adding light and benches and cutting down some trees at the top of the hill at Sågudden, this place could become a beautiful spot to enjoy the view.



6. An activity corner

An outdoor gym will be placed in close connection to the basket court, the volleyball court and the skate area to have all the sport activities at one place.



2. The transition

A new, wider stair which you also can sit on, connects Centralparken with the walking path along the water. It is placed in proximity to a future café in the park. A pergola with lightning creates spatiality and frames the view from Centralparken towards the water. Flowers and bushes are planted on the slopes. An open barbeque place is built in Centralparken so families and other visitors can enjoy some warmth and hot food.



3. The updated dock

The extended dock forms a walking path along the water between Centralparken and Sågudden. In addition, it creates more mooring places. Wind protected seats with moveable walls and a small fireplace increase the probability to be here all year around. One can even charge his or hers phone or work on computer here thanks to power outlets. Moveable furniture creates flexibility. Exhibition stands shows exciting art and crafts, done by the locals, to the inhabitants and visiting tourists.



7. The beach hill

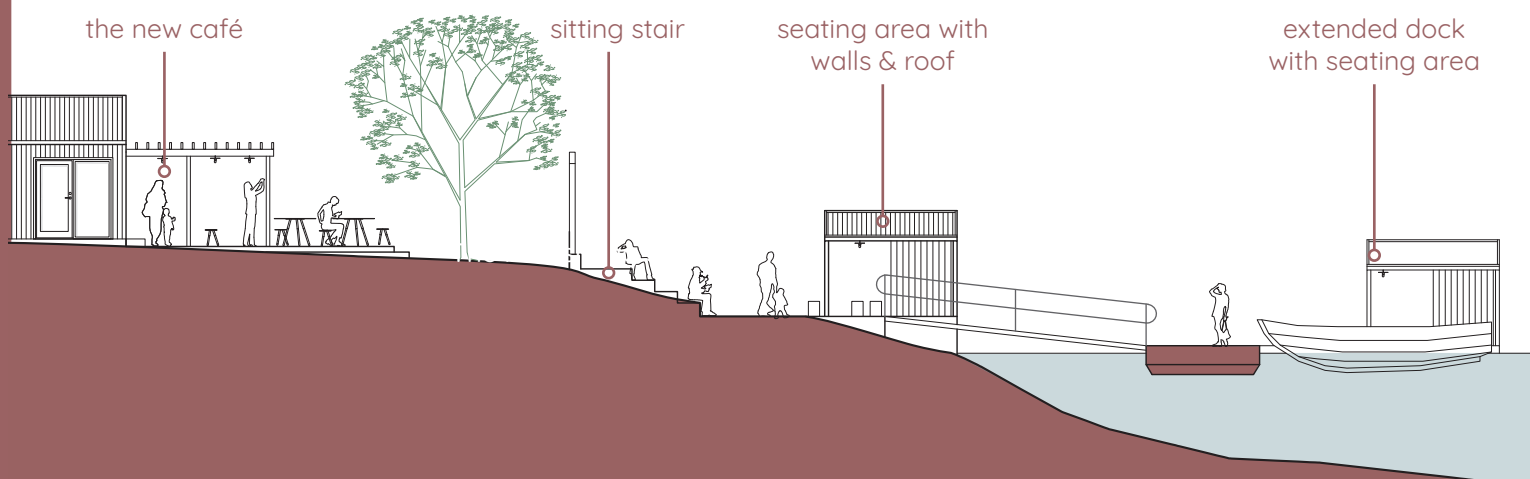
The beach hill gets divided into three zones, one for barbeques, one for play and hang out, and one for sunbathing and swimming. To increase the number of seats and enlarge the beach sun benches are placed on the slope, benches that could have built-in lockers for private belongings. A new weather-protected barbeque pavilion is placed directed towards the evening sun. A dressing cubicle also functions as shielding between the beach and the barbeque place.

THE UPDATED DOCK AND THE TRANSITION



The new stair connecting Centralparken and the new beach walk.

Section showing one part of the beach walk. (1:200)

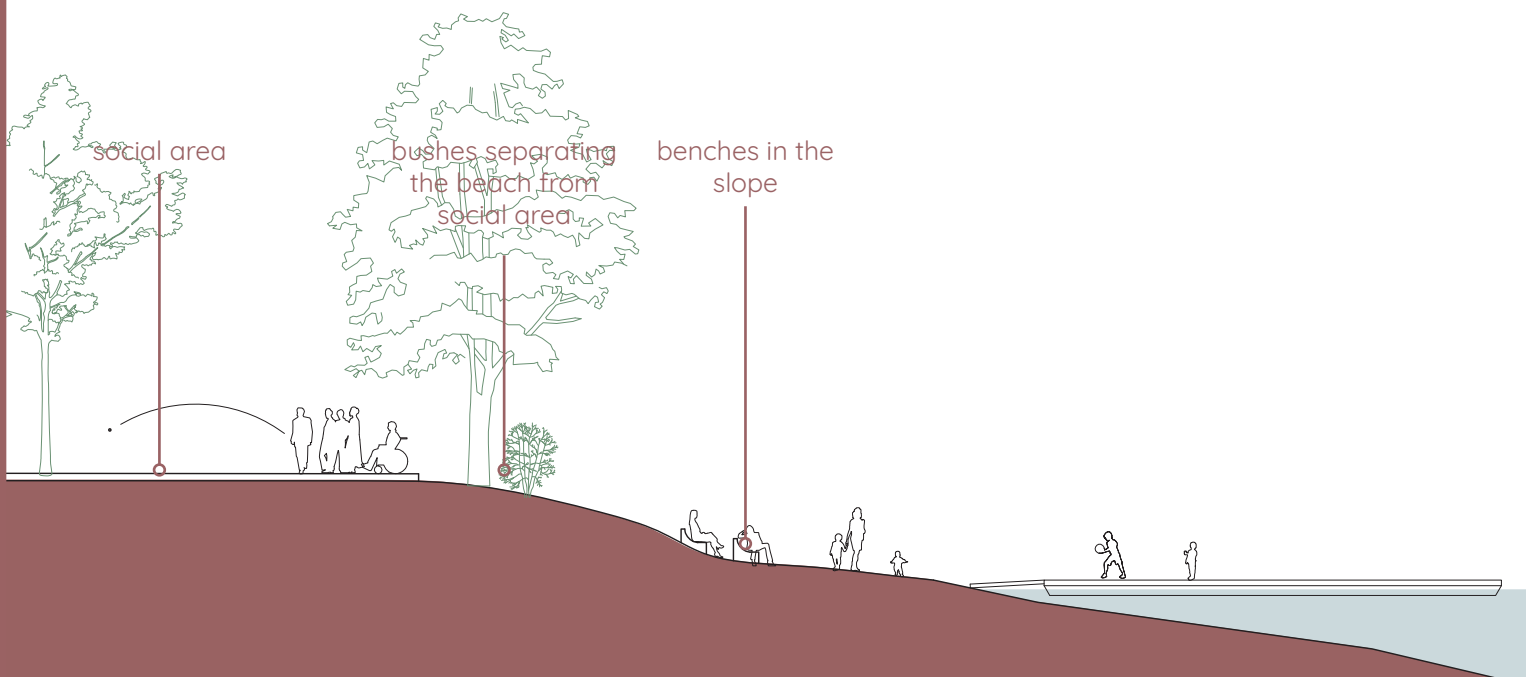


THE BATHING SLOPE



The new benches at the beach hill make use of the grass slope.

Section showing the beach hill. (1:200)



THE NEW BEACH AND PLAYGROUND IN SKÅPAFORS



The new beach is a place to both play and have a swim

The new beach and playground

The biggest problem with the existing bathing place is reaching the water and a beach full of sharp rocks. Our main goal is to address this problem and create a pleasant, sandy beach with an L-shaped dock. It will become a safe place for small children to play in the water. We want to keep the big lawn but

add plants that will create spatial rooms and something good to eat – if you have forgotten your lunchbox. With stones and painted logs you can update and design the playground as you wish. Weather protection and a barbecue attracts families all year around.



Plan of the new public beach in Skåpafors. 1:700

- 1 Berries and hide and seek
- 2 Food and activity
- 3 The beach

- 1 Keep the field south of the beach
The municipality needs to have a dialogue with the land owner about the future plans. For example, if the land owner plants new trees they will directly affect how much sun that reaches the bathing place in the future.

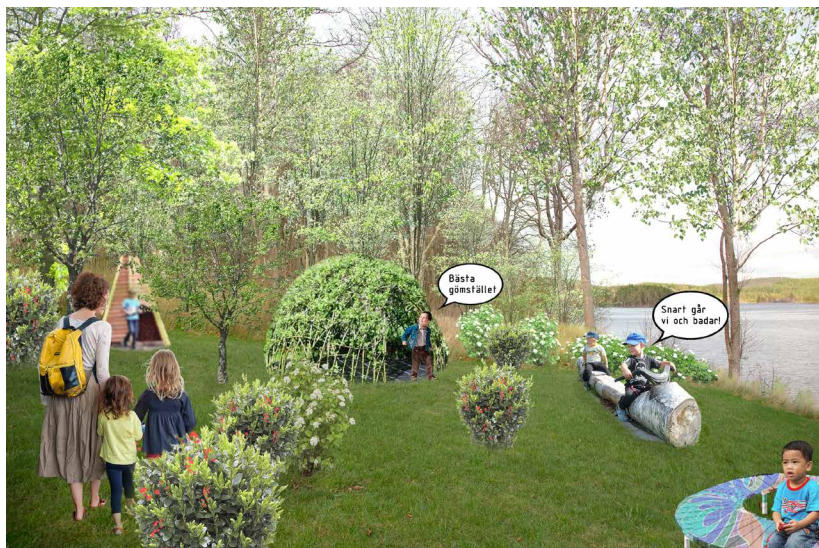
- 2 Open the light running track
More people will be attracted to the area and want to lead an active outdoor lifestyle.

- 3 Keep the football field
Re-think the plans of building new houses on the football field. Buildings are possible to construct in slopes, but the football field requires flat land and will be hard to replace in this hilly area.

Section A-A of the new public beach in Skåpafors (1:200)

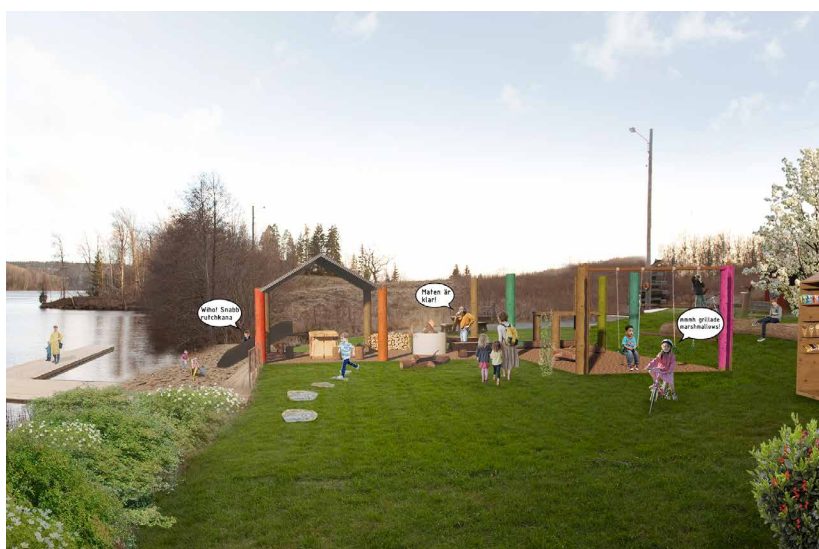


This section shows how the ground level is excavated and a concrete or stone stair is added to keep the material steady. The dashed line in the background shows the old ground level.



1. Berries & hide and seek

A generous space is still left open to run and play and sunbathe on. Closer to the forest new fruit trees, apple and plum, and currant bushes are planted. They are arranged in a way so they create spaces and tunnels to run and play in. In the right down corner one can see a bench, colored as a swimming ring, a place to rest the legs on after a long hide and seek game.



2. Food and activity

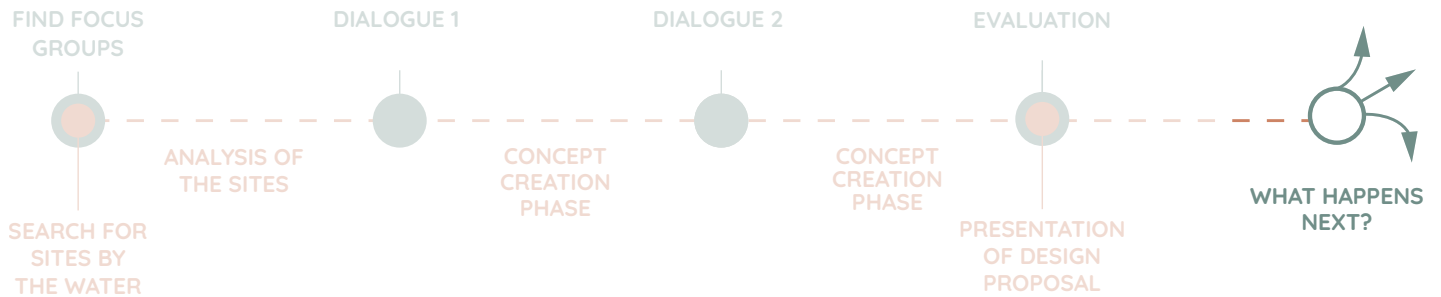
Wood logs are used to create a structure that includes activities such as swings, climbing, a barbecue area, and space under a roof as protection for rain or sun. The location just next to the beach gives a good view down on the beach which gives a possibility for parents to have an eye on the children. A small shelter becomes a DIY-café that the inhabitants can run themselves in the summer.



3. The beach

A new beach is created with plenty of space to build sand castles. A slide is the fastest way down to the beach, but the stairs work as well. The seating-stairs give the parents a good view of the swimming kids and are a perfect place for lunch or just for eating some of the self-picked berries.

THE NEXT STEP FOR THE PROJECTS



Still a “work in progress”

At the beginning of this project we had ambitions to try to realize the design proposals in the physical form – to actually propose how to build the places together with stakeholders. We realised early though that we would not be able to do it because of the time limitation. So we want to note that this project is not finished, and we leave it in its “work in progress” form. We hope that this project can show decision-makers that it is possible to involve groups in the planning process, groups that often are excluded. Not least during these times, when it’s hard to arrange physical meetings, with help of digital tools, it is possible to involve people in participatory design processes.

First steps taken

Our proposals for the sites are produced together with children and youth from the area and they have also shown interest in participating in the place-building. We think that the municipality can be the initiator of this process as we have laid out the first steps that should be taken.

Another thing that is important to keep in mind is the risk that the children will grow up before the proposals will be realized as the process often takes many years. This can be prevented by realizing some parts of the project as soon as possible.

THE NEXT STEP FOR SÅGUDDEN AND CENTRALPARKEN

Surroundings

We suggest the municipality to work to create a stronger connection between Bengtsfors town centre and the waterfront. One important change would be to create a pedestrian path along Floragatan down to the water.

Lightning

If the municipality arranged more lightning in the places people consider to be dark (the hill at Sågudden, the playground and the grove in Centralparken and the dock between the two parks) the feeling of safety would improve.

Floraleden

To make the pedestrians feel even safer we suggest that the municipality re-build the road crossings to an elevated pedestrian crossings, preferably with traffic lights, to prevent cars from driving too fast. This would also decrease the traffic noise problem.

Centralparken

Ask Strömkullegymnasiet if they would be interested in designing the stair on the slope. The building process could be implemented through summer jobs for the youth, who could also plant the flowers and bushes.

The outdoor gym

An outdoor gym like the one Lyfta Skog makes in Dals Långed would be a perfect fit to Sågudden as an outdoor activity centre and improve the health of the inhabitants.

The beach hill

We suggest the municipality set up a bicycle rack close to the beach. Ask Strömkullegymnasiet if they would be interested in designing new seats on the slope. They could also design the dressing cubicle. The building process could be implemented as summer jobs for the youth. Since there are many local businesses working with wood industry you could ask them to sponsor with building material.

Exhibition stands

Ask The 72 hour cabins if they could sponsor with a smaller version of their glass cabins to help the locals to show their arts and crafts to the public. This would mean that Strömkullegymnasiet, Halmens hus and Stenebyskolan along others could have a spot in Centralparken to show their work to locals and visiting tourists!

Art on the shallow

There are great creators and designers in the municipality. Maybe Stenebyskolan or Strömkullegymnasiet could build a statue on the shallow by Sågudden. You will see it both from land and water and it will strengthen the identity of Bengtsfors!

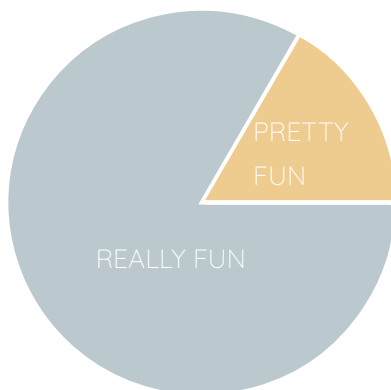
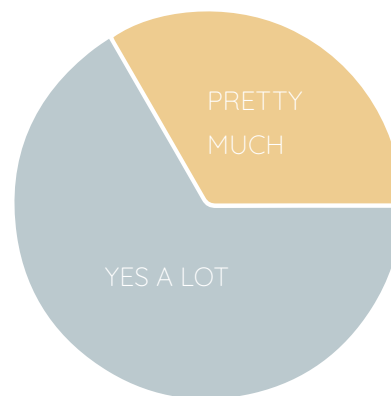
The tunnel

We have talked with Strömkullegymnasiet and they are very interested in painting the tunnel. If the municipality gives their approval we think it has a great chance to get realized. One idea is to ask the local colour store if they would be interested to sponsor this project with colors for the paint job.

EVALUATION FROM STUDENTS AT STRÖMKULLEGYMNASIET

Did you feel included in the design process?
Did you get to decide things?

- YES, A LOT
- PRETTY MUCH
- I FELT LIKE I DID NOT HAVE MUCH TO SAY
- NO, THEY DECIDED EVERYTHING



Did you enjoy participating in the workshop?

- REALLY FUN
- PRETTY FUN
- IT WAS OK
- IT WAS POINTLESS

REFLECTIONS ON THE WORK

Relation to the ladder of participation

Describing the levels of children's and youth participation in this project can be done using Hart's ladder of participation (Hart 1992). The three lowest rungs of the ladder are called manipulation, decoration and tokenism. **Manipulation** happens when children have no understanding of the issues and hence do not understand their actions. It also happens when children are consulted but are not given feedback. In this project we presented the project to the children and described the aim and the issues we work with. After we received the children's ideas the changes were done by us and then showed for the feedback. The next level up the ladder is **decoration**, when children are being used by adults to support their cause without any idea of the said cause. In our dialogue we tried to clarify as good as possible what the project's main idea is. This was done with help from the schoolteachers presenting materials given by us, as we were unable to visit the schools due to the current situation with Covid-19. **Tokenism** describes the situations where children are given a voice but not the opportunity to form their own opinions. Our dialogue model was designed to allow as much freedom for expression for children as possible and we tried to give them enough time to form their ideas. The only limitation we presented to the children was the choice of site.

The earlier mentioned rungs of the ladder describe the non-participatory models of dialogue. The next ones describe models of genuine participation, where children play real roles in decision-making processes. **Assigned but informed** means that adults decide what the project is, and children volunteer on it. The children understand the project and why they are being

involved. Our group was an initiator of this project and we chose to involve children in it. We explained the project's main idea and why we wanted the children to participate. This was done using a presentation for the older children and a playful story for the younger ones. The next rung up the ladder is **consulted and informed** – when children are consulted in the process that is run by adults. During this project the dialogues were used as opportunities to consult with children about what functions they want to see in the living environment. This is because they have better knowledge of it as residents and users. The next level of the ladder is **adult initiated, shared decisions with children**. Hurt argues that this level describes true participation because decision-making is shared with children. Their views are considered, and they are constantly involved in the process. During our dialogues with young people, we let them take an active part in the discussion about the project's sites. We also initiated design dialogues by asking the children what they want to see there (on the site). This is a part where children's role transforms from consulting to decision-making. After our work with their ideas, we had a follow-up meeting where they were asked to come with more input about our work. Instead of letting the children choose one of several ready-made design proposals we asked them to share their own ideas and thoughts.

The last two steps of the Hart's ladder are **child-initiated and directed** and **child-initiated, shared decisions with adults**. As our project was not initiated by the children, we do not reach these steps.

Reflection on the method

With this project we have shown that participatory design is possible without hphysical meetings. In normal cases these workshops would have been carried through during meetings with the participants, however, due to the Covid-19 situation we had to replan and execute it from distance. This required new ways of thinking and use of digital tool to communicate. This approach worked with the youth, but to work with children from distance might not be the best way to perform workshops like these. In the way the workshops were executed we were dependent on adults setting it up, and they were also a part of the communication chain. This affected the response in both positive and negative ways. One positive aspect is that the teachers, who know the children and youth, already know their interests and likings and what to say to make them talk about it. One negative situation is when the teacher impact what the child/youth want to say, for example by questioning or negative comments.

We only had a small number of participants and all these youths were arts and crafts students from Strömkullegymnasiet, and this group is not representative for the youth of Bengtsfors in general. Some of the participants were not from Bengtsfors which made their analysis of the site harder. The number of participants were few in Skåpafors as well. Even though the preschool and after-school centre sometimes visits the bathing place, not

many of the children had actually bathed or swimmmed at the location.

The second dialogue with the children in Skåpafors became hard to arrange, since the participating children in preschool were home the day we were supposed to meet them. We did re-schedule but not many could attend. In the after-school-centre we could only meet one of the participants. So unfortunately we could not receive much feedback on our ideas from the children in Skåpafors. However, to get more responses we asked the teachers to add material on their communication channels, so the parents can ask their children and then send us their answers.

Our aim was to create and try out a method of participatory design. We finish this project in the middle of the process, but we hope our project will inspire to more participatory design processes where people come together to shape their community. By giving suggestions of the next steps we hope someone will continue with working with these ideas. People who are committed to continue the work are required, but if the municipality gives their approval we think some of these ideas has the potential to be implemented. Especially during our workshops and conversations with the teacher and students at Strömkullegymnasiet, we feel like they only wait for a green light from the municipality for the project to enter the next phase.

LOCAL SUSTAINABLE DIRECTIONS

The sustainable directions were developed with the whole studio to understand what directions for transition to a sustainable transition the municipality should take. Below we have gathered the ones that have been most important in the work of this project.

Develop local participation:

“Through dialogues with local inhabitants we have seen that there is an interest in local engagement within the municipality. We believe that this project helped the inhabitants to understand that themselves.”

Make nature available:

“One of the main ideas with the project was to create stronger connections to the water in Bengtsfors municipality. Both the improvements of the public beach in Skåpafors and the parks Centralparken and Sågudden in Bengtsfors would make nature more accessible and attractive among locals.”

Make use of existing physical resources:

“We wanted to do small changes in the physical environment that could do a big change for the people. Therefore, all the design changes made in this project are small changes that make use of the physical resources that are available in the municipality.”

Strengthen the identity:

“By inviting the inhabitants in the design process and by suggesting that they can continue to be a part of the project if it would be realized was a way to give the inhabitants something they can be proud of.”

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