



Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet

Fakulteten för landskapsplanering, trädgårds- och jordbruksvetenskap

Område: Arbetsvetenskap, ekonomi och miljöpsykologi

Children in their local everyday environment - *child-led expeditions in Hammarby Sjöstad*

Katrín Karlsdóttir



Självständigt arbete vid LTJ-fakulteten, SLU ▪ 15 hp

Natur, hälsa och trädgård ▪ Magisterprogram

Alnarp 2012

Children in their local everyday environment

- *child-led expeditions in Hammarby Sjöstad*

Barn i sin närmiljö

- *gåturer med barn i Hammarby Sjöstad*

Katrín Karlsdóttir

Handledare: Sarah Andersson, Sveriges Lantbruksuniversitet
Fakulteten för landskapsplanering, trädgårds- och jordbruksvetenskap
Område: Arbetsvetenskap, ekonomi och miljöpsykologi

Biträdande handledare: Maria Nordström, Stockholms Universitet
Fakultet: Samhällsvetenskapliga fakulteten
Institution: Kulturgeografiska institutionen

Examinator: Gunilla Lindholm, Sveriges Lantbruksuniversitet
Fakulteten för landskapsplanering, trädgårds- och jordbruksvetenskap
Område: Landskapsarkitektur

Omfattning: 15 hp

Nivå och fördjupning: A1E

Kurstitel: Landskapsarkitekturens miljöpsykologi – självständigt arbete

Kurskod: EX0602

Program/utbildning: Natur, hälsa och trädgård. Magisterprogram

Ämne: Landskapsplanering

Utgivningsort: Alnarp

Utgivningsmånad och -år: Maj 2012

Bild på framsidan: Katrín Karlsdóttir

Serienamn: Självständigt arbete vid LTJ-fakulteten, SLU

Elektronisk publicering: <http://stud.epsilon.slu.se>

Nyckelord: children's perspective, Hammarby Sjöstad, child-led expeditions, play, motion, activities, planning.

SLU, Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet
Fakulteten för Landskapsplanering, trädgårds- och jordbruksvetenskap
Område Arbetsvetenskap, Ekonomi och Miljöpsykologi

Abstract

Children are the group of our society that spends most time in the local environment. Their local environment is therefore an important influencing factor on how they spend their outdoor leisure time. Researches have showed that the physical structure of environment can challenge children and support their rights and needs to develop both physically and mentally. For that reason it is important that children's local everyday environment is designed and planned to support children in their daily activities.

The aim of this project is to study how a newly developed city district is seen from a children's perspective and to gain an understanding of preferred places within that area. Further, the findings are discussed in relation to how we can learn from children's use and experience of their local environment and communicate that to planning practice.

Hammarby Sjöstad in Stockholm City is used here as a case for the study at hand. To carry out the study, child-led expeditions were performed with children living in Hammarby Sjöstad. The study was aimed at children between nine and twelve years old.

The main results indicate that children use their local everyday environment through activities and chose places that encourage their activities. Children find their own places within the district, even though it is not designed with them in mind. The preferred places challenge the children and influence their activities through physical structure.

Keywords: children's perspective, Hammarby Sjöstad, child-led expeditions, play, motion, activities, planning.

Sammanfattning

Barn tillhör den grupp i vårt samhälle som tillbringar mest tid i den lokala miljön. Deras närmiljö är därför en viktig påverkande faktor för hur de använder sin tid utomhus. Resultat från olika forskningar har visat att närmiljöns fysiska struktur kan utmana barn och stödja deras rättigheter och behov av både fysisk och mental utveckling. Det är därför viktigt att barns närmiljö är utformat och planerat på det sättet att det stödjer barn i sina dagliga aktiviteter.

Syftet med detta projekt är att studera hur ett nytt bostadsområde kan ses från ett barnperspektiv och öka förståelsen om platserna som barn föredrar inom området. Ytterligare diskussion följer, relaterad till hur vi kan lära oss av barns användning och erfarenhet av närmiljön och kommunicera det till ett planerings sammanhang.

Hammarby Sjöstad är ett nytt bostadsområde inom Stockholm stad och används här som ett fall för studien. För att utföra studien gick jag gåturer med barn bosatta i Hammarby Sjöstad där dem visade mig sitt område. Barnen är mellan nio och tolv år gamla.

Resultaten från studien pekar på att barn använder sin närmiljö först och främst genom aktiviteter och väljer platser som uppmuntrar deras aktiviteter. Barn hittar sina egna platser inom området även om det inte är utförmat med dem i åtanke. De föredragna platserna utmanar barnen och påverkar deras aktiviteter med sin fysiska struktur.

Nyckelord: barnperspektiv, Hammarby Sjöstad, gåturer med barn, lek, rörelse, aktiviteter, planering.

Preface

When my little one, now a four year old girl, began to inspect her local environment I automatically started a comparison with the environment which I grew up in. It was a small municipality in the outskirts of Reykjavík, Garðabær. The part of Garðabær where I lived in was integrated with lava and had a good access to nature. The lava, with its mysterious caves, the green moss, a small forest and a lake were all elements that influenced me and the way I spent my outdoor leisure time. We, the children living in the area, spent hours and hours playing outside and thought that these elements were attractive and appreciated this close contact with nature.

My daughter is now growing up in the central parts of Stockholm. The difference between central Stockholm and Garðabær is big, a small municipality in Iceland versus the capital of Sweden. I became curious about the differences and how they can influence children living in these diverse areas. What are the outdoor living conditions for children in urban areas today? How do they spend their time outside? How different will the play be? How do they use their environment and what elements are influencing their play? I consider these kinds of questions very important when acknowledging children as a big user group of urban environment. When developing urban areas and densifying cities there is a risk that environments, like the lava in Garðabær for example, will be demolished. I find it therefore very relevant to highlight the discussion about children and their environment in new development projects.

With these thoughts in mind the topic of this thesis was decided. The study will be focused on children who are living in a newly developed residential area in Stockholm and how they perceive their local environment. The thesis is written within the field of environmental psychology in the masters-program Nature, health and gardens (Natur, hälsa och trädgård) at Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU), Alnarp. With this thesis I combine my interests in planning with respect for children, my studies in urban planning at KTH and the studies in environmental psychology at SLU.

I would like to thank my supervisors, Sarah Andersson and Maria Nordström for all the good advices and guidance and for helping me reach the finish line. Thanks to my classmates from KTH for their support through the project work and thanks to my classmates and the teachers from SLU for very interesting study periods. I would also like to thank the children that participated in my study for their contribution. Last but not least, thanks to Steinar and Júlía for endless love and patience.

Table of Contents

Background.....	6
<i>Hammarby Sjöstad</i>	6
Theoretical background.....	8
<i>Play and motion</i>	8
<i>Local environment and contact with nature</i>	10
<i>Methods to study children's perspective</i>	11
Aim and research questions.....	12
Method.....	13
<i>Child-led expeditions</i>	13
<i>Age group</i>	13
<i>Preparation</i>	13
<i>Limitations</i>	14
<i>Concepts</i>	15
<i>Method discussion</i>	15
Results	17
<i>Child-led expedition nr. 1</i>	17
<i>Child-led expedition nr. 2</i>	25
Discussion.....	30
<i>Preferred places - places for children's activities</i>	30
<i>Constrains in the environment</i>	34
<i>Children's perspective vs. child-centered perspective</i>	34
Conclusion.....	37
References.....	38
<i>Electronic references</i>	40
<i>Lectures</i>	40
<i>Figures</i>	41
Appendix I-II	42
<i>I: A letter to parents, sent to three schools in Hammarby Sjöstad.</i>	42
<i>II: A question guide with open questions for the child-led expeditions.</i>	43

Background

In the year 1898 the British planner, Ebenezer Howard, published the book *To-morrow: a Peaceful Path to Real Reform*. The book got the title *Garden cities of tomorrow* in its second edition the year 1902. In his book, Howard integrated the fundamentals of a modern society and created an ideal city, the Garden city that was supposed to be beneficial for all inhabitants. Howard built his vision of this ideal city mainly on ‘sustainability’ and ‘sustainable development’, terms that were not defined until almost 100 years later. In addition to describe a society grounded on sustainable development, Howard put health and nature in focus through the planning process of his city. The nature had an important role and was supposed to be easily accessed by everybody, something that was considered to have a great influence on people’s well-being.

Today, there is much more knowledge gathered with researches that confirms the positive relationship between spending time in nature and well-being. When it comes to children particularly, Grahn (2007) summarizes several researches with the conclusion that nature is good for the society, contributing to better health for children. Children are also considered to be an important group of Howard’s ideal city. His whole idea was based on the qualities of the city, providing the best for the residents and their health, not least for the children “...and is not the welfare of our children the primary consideration with any well ordered community?” (Howard, 1965, p. 74). These kinds of thoughts, that have been ‘out in the open’ for more than a century, lead to the concerns about how these considerations are dealt with in relation to current planning practices.

Hammarby Sjöstad

The city district Hammarby Sjöstad in Stockholm is well-known within the planning sector and is recognized worldwide as a spearhead project of sustainable planning. Hammarby Sjöstad is used in this project as a representative case for a newly developed residential area in the city.

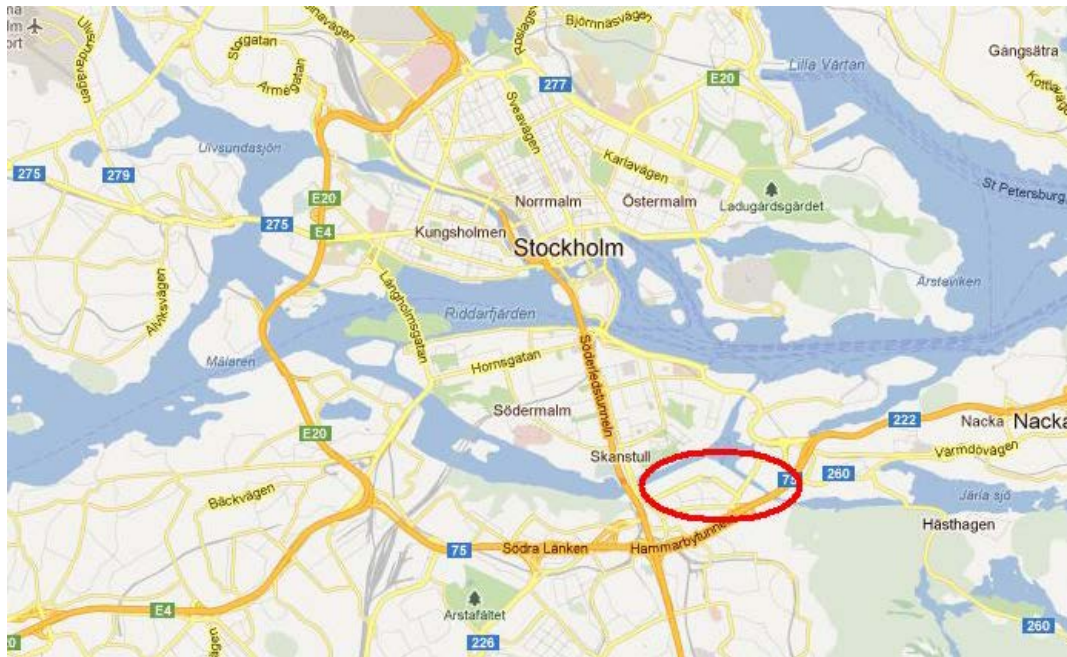


Fig. 1 – Map of Stockholm, Hammarby Sjöstad within the red circle.

Hammarby Sjöstad, with its 20 thousand inhabitants, is located in the southeast part of the center of Stockholm with borders to the extensive Nacka nature reserve in the south. The area of Hammarby Sjöstad was occupied with industry from the First World War until building of housing started in the late 1990's. Hammarby Sjöstad is now dominated with dwellings and service (Freudenthal, 2011).

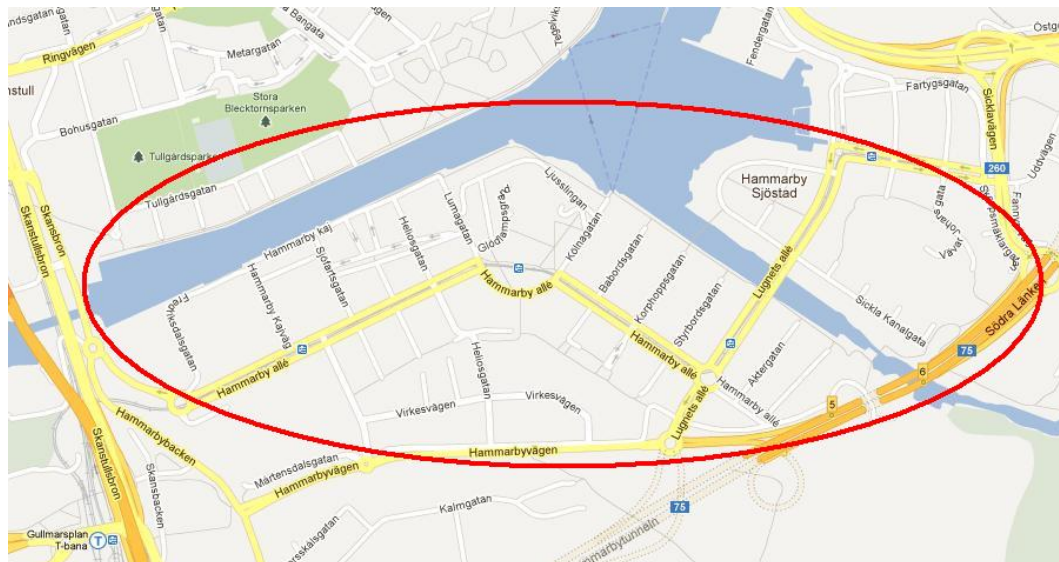


Fig. 2 – Close up of Hammarby Sjöstad.

The area's design and planning was built upon marketing surveys, carried out to identify a group of customers with the best ability to pay for the housing. This identified customer group even required green inclusion which was met with "...stora balkonger, generösa privata uteplatser för marklägenheter och allt som oftast rejäla takterrasser / ...big balconies, generous private patios for ground apartments and substantial roofterrasses" [my translation] (Egelius, 2002, p. 74). Hence, the green inclusion was mainly within private properties and the greenery in public places did not get the same attention in the planning. The same can be said about the different groups in the society. Groups that are not considered to be paying customers in that sense did not get the same attention through the planning process. Children can be said to be 'a non-paying' group compared with the identified customer group from the marketing surveys. However, the surveys and the forecasts that were made for Hammarby Sjöstad did not hold and a totally different group showed interest for the district. Instead of the identified customer group, consisting of people over 50 years old with grown up kids, there were mainly young families with children that moved to the new district (Stockholm stad, 2009).

Children live their everyday life in their own district and are the group of users who spend the most time in the local environment (Nordström, 2010). On the other hand, the group that pays for the environment is the parents and grown-ups that more often travel outside the district to their jobs every day and do not spend as much time in the local environment as the children (Berglund and Jergeby, 1998). The following questions addresses points which are therefore worth further investigation; what do children meet in their local everyday environment? Does the environment support children's needs if it is not planned with them in mind?

Theoretical background

In the following sections the activities of play, movement and contact with nature will be discussed in accordance with the physical structure of children's local environment. Furthermore, an outline is given on methods that can be used to get knowledge from children about their local environment and on tools for communicating that knowledge into planning practice.

Play and motion

The play is very important for the development of children. It was acknowledged by the United Nations in year 1989 as every child's right; "States Parties recognize the right of

the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts. “ (UN, 1989, article 31).

Through the play, children’s cognitive capability is developed and they learn interactive communication and additionally create a complex mental and emotional relationship with their surrounding world. The play gives children opportunity for thoughts and reflections, process information and feelings and extend it to creativity and imagination. Play that promotes fantasy supports the development of creativity and children learn in a natural way through own experience to adapt and communicate with others. Play and the experience of learning are therefore often inseparable as play accelerates the process of learning and development among children (Hannaford, 1997; Björklid, 2005; Grahn, 2007).

Children have similar daily schedules besides organized activities (Åquist, 2001). These daily schedules consist more and more of indoor activities that are mainly sedentary, such as playing computer games and watching television. This sedentary lifestyle dominates and the time for free outdoor play and movement decreases proportionally (Hannaford, 1997; (Davis, 1999; Rosenfeld, 2001) in Taylor and Kuo, 2006). The outdoor activities, on the other hand, mainly consist of movement and more active play (Jergerby, 1998). Researchers have also pointed out the importance of time when it comes to children’s play. They indicate that children need time to play without disturbance so the substantial processes, that children are going through, is given time to develop. It takes time for children to reach the condition of forgetting themselves in the play and to reach a rhythm and concentration in their fantasy (Grahn, 2007; Björklid, 2005; Hart, 2002).

Provided with time and encouraged to create, children entertain themselves in a natural way without the need for a grown up to monitor or involve in any way. However, nowadays it seems to be fewer opportunities for children to meet others and just play. The play more often occurs on the grown ups’ terms, organized by the grown-ups and limited in time. The organized activities are also structured in a way where the grown-ups takes the responsibility and the children just follow the grown ups’ schedule. The organized activities are mainly sports and athletics where the emphasis is on competition and there is limited room for free play (Hannaford, 1997). The time spent in front of the television has also inhibitory effect on the play and interactive communication. Hannaford (1997) noticed a lack in development of fantasy with children who spent more time in front of the television. To develop fantasy, training is needed both in motion and emotion, something

that cannot be trained with sedentary lifestyle. Nevertheless, it is not only time that children need for their play and motion; they also need a place to play. As children spend most of their time in their local environment, it can be assumed that it is in their local environment where the outdoor play is mainly performed.

Local environment and contact with nature

The coverage of the activities play and motion, as described in the section above, points to the same direction, namely a place where these activities can be carried out in. Children need places which offer the possibility to imaginative play, where they can interact and meet other children. Great creativity can emerge when children are able to play at a place where the play can occur spontaneously. In fact, children seek places where other children are and green areas are often the preferred places (Berglund and Jergeby, 1998; Jergeby, 1996). They need places where the structure of social relationships can be formed and active communication can take place, places that have “...möjligheter till utforskande och upptäckande, till iakttagelser och deltagande i kamrat-och vuxenvärlden. Det är utifrån sådana förutsättningar barnen kan finna sina utvecklingsrum. / ...the potential for exploration and discovery, for observations and participation in the peer- and the grown up world. It is from that kind of conditions the children can find their own places to develop.” [my translation] (Skantze, 1997, p. 100).

When referring to green areas, studies have shown a strong connection between children’s development and contact with nature as the contact with nature supports healthy social-, cognitive- and emotional development. Nature provides environment with the opportunity to play varied games where strength, concentration and physical movement can be trained and challenged (Taylor and Kuo, 2006; Mårtenson 2004; Grahn 2007). On the other hand, environment that is characterized by monotonous and sterile features is likely to constrain the exploration and the learning processes that children need to be able to understand themselves and their environment. The decreased access to nature within urbanized areas is therefore a matter of concern. Children have less nature to access and the access to the remaining nature may be increasingly erratic (Taylor and Kuo, 2006).

For the group of children around ten to twelve years old the learning processes and the exploration do less often occur within enclosed environments like playgrounds where both the space and the opportunities for physical movement within that space are limited (Skantze, 1997). A lack of variety and ability to meet and support children in their exploration are the reasons for that playgrounds and other environments that are thought for children, are not seen as attractive places (Cosco, 2007).

The outdoor environment can offer space and variety where children's play can promote movement that involves contact with the surrounding physical environment. Children get support from the physical environment and learn about it through physically interacting with it. This physical interaction helps children to push their limits and strengthen them through climbing, balancing, catching, crawling, hanging, jumping, running etc (Cosco, 2007; Mårtensson, 2004). Children can interact with the physical environment in a way that their surrounding environment becomes an actor in their play and through its structure it affects how the play can develop. The dynamic interplay between children and their environment becomes evident and this intimate relationship can serve the purpose of a certain stage of well-being (Mårtensson, 2004). The importance of diversity and the physical structure of outdoor environment are therefore emphasized.

Methods to study children's perspective

There are several different methods that can be used to obtain children's knowledge about their environment and then communicate their perspective to planning practice. This section will not contain a comparison between methods or elaborate further on the methodology, only mention different methods and tools that exist.

Cele (2006) uses four different methods in her research to get children to communicate their experience of places. These methods are interviews, drawings, walks and photography, whereas she chooses walks and photography to understand how "...interaction with place affects our ability to think, relate and communicate place." (ibid, p. 62).

The walks have been used by researchers with a few different terms and slightly different approaches; walks, routes, the guided commented trip and child-led expeditions to name a few (Cele, 2006). Kylin (2004) also uses walks and interviews with children to get their perspective of places and uses the den [in Swedish: koja] as a communication tool to communicate the differences between the children's experience of place and the planners perception. The physical structure of the den, as better understood by planners, reflects the children's use and experience of the place.

Another type of communication tool is geographical information system for children (Barn-GIS) that Berglund and Nordin (2007a) have developed to find out routes and places used by children. The system contains maps and surveys where children can mark on the map routes and places, both preferred ones and places they find scary, and answer related questions. The information gained can then be presented in forms of maps, where the maps are seen as a communication tool between the children and local planning

authorities. Berglund and Nordin (2007b) also mention few methods that can be used to complement the GIS maps to gain even deeper understanding about children's places, methods including walks, photography and discussions in focus groups. One of these methods, walks in the form of child-led expeditions, will be used in this project to carry out the study at hand.

Aim and research questions

The aim of this study is to find out how the urban environment in Hammarby Sjöstad is seen from a children's perspective, to gain a better understanding of preferred places where to spend outdoor leisure time. Further, the aim is also to discuss the findings of the study in relation to how we can learn from children's use and experience of their local environment and communicate that to planning practice. To be able to carry out the study, the following questions are addressed:

Question 1: *How do children living in Hammarby Sjöstad use their local environment?*

Question 2: *Which places do the children prefer and what places do they not prefer?*

Question 3: *What elements give the places their attraction?*

Method

Child-led expeditions

This study was performed as a case study in Hammarby Sjöstad in Stockholm, conducted with child-led expeditions. The method contains walks in Hammarby Sjöstad where the children lead the walk and showed what places they preferred in the local environment and how they use the place. They also got the opportunity to represent their places, both with verbal communication and through interacting with the place.

The choice of method was based on the topic of the study, indicating that children living in Hammarby Sjöstad are the ones who can give children's perspective on their local environment. I got to know this method during my studies within the master program Natur, Hälsa och Trädgård at Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences and found it very interesting and informative. The method gives the opportunity to dialog and communication between the participants and to gain information about a place at the same time as being located at the referred place (Cele, 2006).

Age group

The age group that this study was aimed at was the group of children between nine and twelve years old. Children have extensive and specific knowledge about their local environment and can be seen as some kind of experts in their own neighborhood. The age group of nine to twelve years old is often mentioned in this context because of their skills to describe their environment in details (Rissotto and Giuliani, 2006; Olsson, 1998). Children from nine years old are getting more freedom from their parents and are more mobile in their daily activities, whereas younger children still need the security and supervision from grown-ups within the range of the home (Johansson, 2006).

Preparation

The process started by getting contact with children living in Hammarby Sjöstad. To begin with, a network of acquaintances was informed with information about this project, with the purpose to get in contact with families in Hammarby Sjöstad. That resulted in a contact with one family with three boys and they joined for the first expedition. The next step was to send out an information letter to elementary schools in Hammarby Sjöstad in order to get contact with parents, see appendix I. The letter was sent to three schools that have classes for nine to twelve years old children, Vittra i Sjöstaden, Kulturama and Sjöstadsskolan. The parents who were willing to let their children participate in this research contacted me and that resulted in the second expedition. In the beginning of the

walk the children were given a camera to photograph their places and objects that they found interesting. The expeditions were to take around one to two hours and were carried out in Swedish as all the children have Swedish as their mother language. However, citations from the expeditions are translated directly and are written in English in this project. I prepared a question guide to use during the expeditions. Because of the informal structure of the expeditions I did not follow the question guide precisely but used it as a support in the discussions, see appendix II. I have been in Hammarby Sjöstad on many different occasions on informal visits, both to get to know the place by myself and photograph in different kinds of weathers. However, the results of this study are only based on the expeditions that were performed together with the children.

Limitations

An acknowledgment is made in this project regarding limitations that can occur. The case is contextualized in time and place, Hammarby Sjöstad in year 2011-2012 and dependent on the children participating in the research with their situational understanding at that time. The weather was also a factor that limited the duration of the second expedition as it got cold and started snowing during the trip. My interpretation is reflecting what happened during the expeditions, on the places that the children chose to show me.

It became clear in the beginning of the process that it would be difficult to get in contact with children in Hammarby Sjöstad. When I started the process in summer of 2011 the schools had summer vacation so it was not possible to get in contact with children through the school. It took a bit of time to get in contact with the first group of children, not only because the school was closed but also because it is a delicate subject to contact children that you do now know and get time to walk with them without their parents. The contact and communications went through the parents and time and date had to suit the schedule for everybody involved. This preparation part of the method was time consuming and partly affected the number of expeditions that I was able to carry out. As the time factor influenced the number of expeditions the results may be affected by these limitations.

The language was partly a limiting factor as the expeditions were carried out in Swedish which is not my mother language. I found it sometimes hard not to be able to express myself as spontaneously as I would have liked and it took longer time for me to write down the conversations in Swedish.

Concepts

The concepts *nature* and *local everyday environment* can be defined in many different ways depending on the context. In the following chapters these concepts are adopted from the children's own understanding of these concepts and how they interpret them without me giving further theoretical explanation.

Method discussion

It is impossible, I would say, to exclude children from being involved when wanting to gain children's perspective on their local everyday environment. There are number of methods that can be used in this context, including walks, drawings and interviews for example, as elaborated in the theoretical chapter above (Cele, 2006; Kylin, 2004). Here, the method of child-led expeditions was chosen where the children had the opportunity to guide me through their local everyday environment and show me places where they prefer to spend their outdoor leisure time.

I found the child-led expeditions a suitable and relevant method to determine how children see their environment because the literature had already indicated that children carry extensive knowledge about their environment. That was confirmed in my walks with the children as they could give a deep insight to their world and thereby provide answers to my research questions. When they got over the shyness and started talking and showing me what they found interesting, they appeared to me as some kind of bottomless source of information that fascinated me. The information was not only communicated in verbal form but the observation of how they used their places gave also similarly amount of information. That is in my opinion, one of the biggest advantages with this method, to be able to observe the children in their local everyday environment and at the same time listen to them tell stories about the places. The body language says more than many words which is beneficial for this method, considering the possibility that the children maybe do not have fully developed verbal skills. The information gained with interpretation of body language and how children communicate with places without words can hardly be replaced with other methods.

The method both gave me a ground for answering my research questions and a pleasant walk through Hammarby Sjöstad. However, the walks did not only benefit me, the children did also reflect positively on the expeditions afterwards. They talked about how interesting it had been and were glad that they could show me around. During the walks, the children showed excitement and as they were in control of the walk they were engaged

with their role as guides through their local environment.

The main drawback of this method is that it is difficult to take notes during the walks. It was at times hard to follow the children's stories while writing down and at the same time observe them during their play. They were very mobile and got excited when showing fun places and that made it harder to take notes. I tried to record the conversations on my mobile phone but the sound qualities were very bad. Directly after each expedition I sat down, went through my notes and got a clearer picture of what had happened during the walks. When reflecting on that practical part of the walks, I would have liked to record the conversations with better equipment to be able to listen to it afterwards.

The method in itself gave the children opportunity to tell about and show their places. Nevertheless, because of the difficulties of taking notes I would have liked to have some kind of interviews or workshops with the children after the expeditions to get them to tell me more about the places we visited. If I would do this project over again I would perform a few more child-led expeditions and use complementary methods, such as interviews with the children to get even deeper understanding of their places.

Results

This chapter contains descriptions of the child-led expeditions that were carried out in this project. The aim with these descriptions is to give answers to the three research questions addressed where the answers are integrated in the representation:

How do children living in Hammarby Sjöstad use their local environment?

Which places do the children prefer and what places do they not prefer?

What elements give the places their attraction?

Further elaborations on the findings of the child-led expeditions are recapped in the discussion chapter that follows the results.

Child-led expedition nr. 1

The first child-led expedition was carried out on the 22nd of June 2011. The children I met were 3 brothers, eight, nine and eleven years old. The weather was really good, the sun was shining and warm outside. We started the walk at ten o'clock am.

The family has lived in Hammarby Sjöstad for eight years in two different apartments. The boys are all interested in football and they bring a football to the trip. I hand them my camera so they can take pictures of preferable places and objects on the way, but they are afraid that they will drop it and it will be ruined. So I carry the camera and hand it to them when they want to take pictures. They start playing just outside the house at the inner courtyard. The two younger boys are used to play football and 'water war' at the courtyard where they are within a reach of their parents, surrounded by houses and away from traffic. They are very familiar with every detail at the courtyard and they point out where they hide and crawl behind bushes and trees during their 'water war'. Their play and behavior at the courtyard indicates security and they totally forget themselves, running around and kicking their football before we start our expedition. The oldest boy is a little bit shy and asks his mother to join the expedition. She follows us for the first half an hour but tries to hold back as the boys get more comfortable walking around with me, who is a stranger to them.



Fig. 3 – The courtyard from the sidewalk.



Fig. 4 – The inner courtyard.

They lead the way and walk me through their usual route to school, a route that they normally go by themselves. The boys have to cross the tram tracks to get to school. Their parents are a bit worried about the crossing and are in general not satisfied with the tram track dividing up the district as it does. However, the boys talk about how they are used to cross the tracks and do not find it scary at all. They have the same thing to say about the traffic.

“No, the tram is not scary at all, you just wait! And the cars are not that dangerous either if you just wait!” (a boy, 9 years old)



Fig. 5 – Tram with the red schoolbuilding behind.



Fig. 6 – Street crossing on the way to school.

We walk to the schoolyard which is very small and not highly valued by the boys. They tell me that the schoolyard is boring and add that the yard at Sjöstad School, which is located on the other side of Hammarby Sjöstad is much more fun to play at.

The Sjöstad schoolyard is facilitated with more and new appliances and a football field which is very much appreciated by the boys. They say that it is too far away to go there

every day to play football, it is not a part of their local environment. They tell me that there is a great lack of football fields in Hammarby Sjöstad and that there is also hard to play on the few grass lawns that can be found in between building because the ball always slides away. That can be explained with the slope that the grass laws have¹.

Instantaneously they run over to the oak wood, located next to the schoolyard which is named Sickla Park (see Fig. 7). The youngest one had many trips to the wood when he was at kindergarten and he really loves the wood. He was though satisfied with the playing facilities at the kindergarten but he mentions that:

”You get tired after 5 year in kindergarten. Then you want to see something more.”
(a boy, 8 years old)

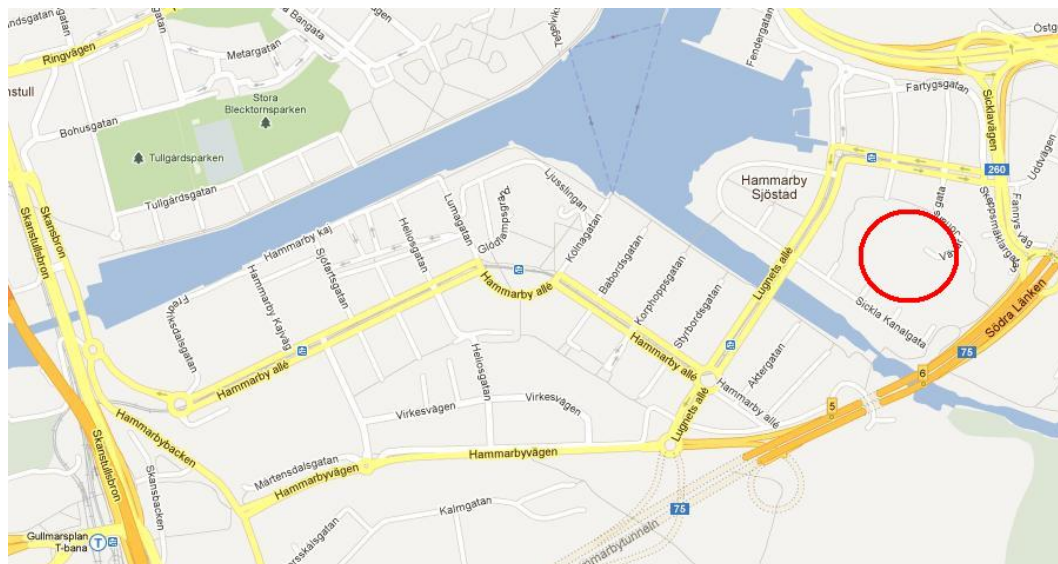


Fig. 7 – Map of Hammarby Sjöstad, Sickla Park is marked with red circle.

Considering the small schoolyard, the children from the school use Sickla Park a lot during breaks, playing different kind of games and climbing trees. The boys have very good attachment with the wood, they know their way around it and can point at trees which are easier to climb than others. They mention a popular game ‘The pirate game’ and the secret house in the hole as their favorite things in the wood. They start to run around, climb trees and throw their ball around. They play like they can’t control themselves. It is certainly interesting to observe them in the wood and see how their mobility becomes even more unrestricted, it is my impression that they feel relaxed and free from worries.

1 The slope is a result of the daily water treatment where rain water and other water from streets and lawns is collected in canals that run through Hammarby Sjöstad. The water runs from sloped areas and end up in the canals or directly in Hammarby Lake (Freudenthal, 2011).

"It's SO COOL to play in the wood!" (a boy, 8 years old)

In their first apartment in Hammarby Sjöstad they lived very close to Sickla Park, almost had it in their backyard. They grew up with the wood as a playground, I infer that their relationship with it is intimate and the feeling of safety in their play is inevitable as they are running around. As we continue our walk through the wood the boys show me a small bridge that belongs to the houses next to the wood. They remember the bridge from the time they used to live in that area and start to run back and forth on the bridge. Their faces light up as soon as they can show me how they were used to play around the bridge.

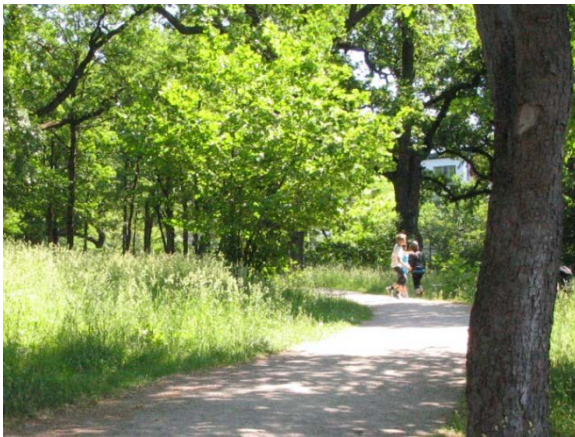


Fig. 8 – Playing in the wood.



Fig. 9 - The bridge close to the wood.

They crawl under it and run over it with as much noise as they can make. The fence on the bridge serves the role of bar where the boys hang on their hands and dangle their feet above the ground. The boys could play here all day. It becomes hard to get their attention again for further walking.

Our next stop is at Sickla canal where Hammarby Lake meets Sickla Lake with a small water gate, Sickla sluss. The boys have found a very interesting use of this place as it is very popular for riding in circles on bikes. They have also arranged biking competitions with friends around the water gate, where they compete to get first to the goal. The boys start to run around in circles to show me the route they usually bike around the water gate. They like the closeness to the water and are not afraid to fall in because they are careful and know that they are not allowed to climb on the fences around.



Fig. 10 – The bike route marked with a triangle, the bowl marked with a circle.

Next to the bike route there is a slope where they are used to ride sleighs during winter time. The slope is located behind a residential building and seems to belong to that property. There is no fence around the property so it's easily accessed from the walking lane. The boys call the slope 'the bowl' because of its bowl-shaped form. They have many good memories from 'the bowl' and revisit the times where they slid down the snow covered hill at full speed.



Fig. 11 and 12 – View to the skiing resort, Hammarby Backen.

From the bowl we can see Hammarby backen, a skiing resort in the central parts of Stockholm where they occasionally go skiing during wintertime. They connect Hammarby backen with enjoyable meetings with old friends from kindergarten, especially when skiing and at Valborgmässan every spring. They tell me that they can meet other children there which they don't meet at school every day.

Another place which they connect to through friends and entertainment is a fountain located behind the information center in Hammarby Sjöstad and is our next stop in the expedition. The water flow in the fountain is irregular, which makes it a perfect place for playing on warm summer days. The boys calm down a bit when we reach the fountain and then take a good look at the water flow. It is my impression that they are somehow hypnotized by it. They tell me that every child in Hammarby Sjöstad is used to play at the fountain during summer time. The irregular flow of the water creates a time gap where the water is not flowing. Then the children run through the fountain and try not to get wet, everybody has to run before the water starts flow again. This is a calm place and the disturbance from the traffic is negligible. This is also a popular place to just sit and watch the water, often with friends eating ice-cream. They tell me that they are very fond of the water and connect that place to activities, meeting friends and relaxation.



Fig. 13 and 14 – The water fountain.

As the time goes by, we are heading further away from their home and their everyday environment. The oldest brother who was a bit shy at the beginning, now starts to tell more about the area where we now find ourselves. He has a friend who lives in this part of the district and has spent some time here. He is not as active as his younger brothers but on the other hand, he is more mobile in the local environment. There are not many places he hasn't visited in Hammarby Sjöstad and he tells me that he gets permission to go outside Hammarby Sjöstad, to Sickla beach (see Fig. 14) for example and to Sickla mall with his friends. However, he prefers though to stay inside and play with his computer and sometimes thinks that his younger brothers are a bit childish. I ask them if there is some place which they avoid or not spend time at for some reason. The two younger boys are still not old enough to have had the opportunity to explore wider area than their everyday environment, they mostly use areas there are close to their home and they are comfortable

with. The oldest boy is more independent and has explored more extended areas than his brothers. He is not comfortable with the south-west part of Hammarby Sjöstad where the industrial area is located and near the Fryshuset². According to him, there are only teenagers there who like to hang around Fryshuset and that can be a bit scary. Fryshuset is a place that they avoid.

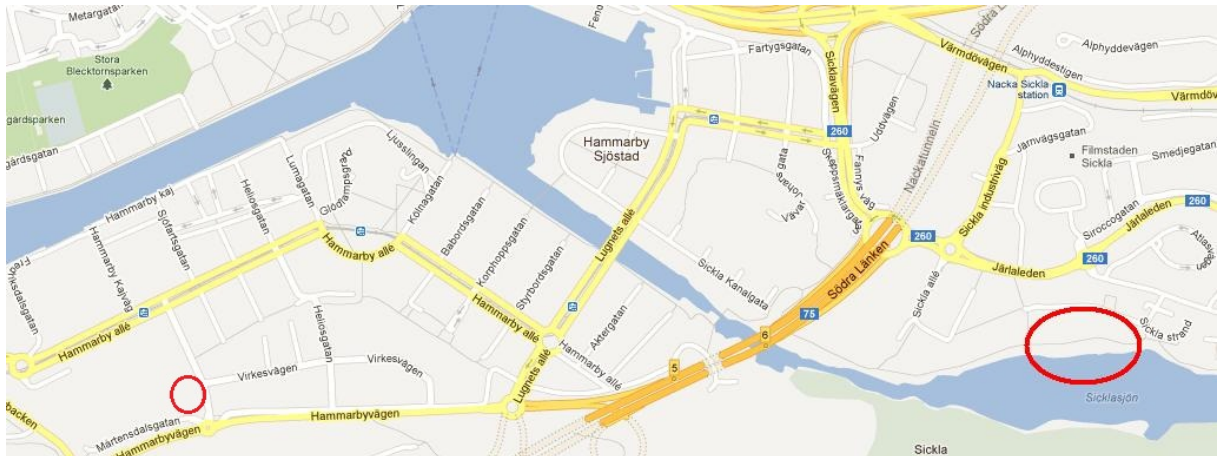


Fig. 15 –Fryshuset marked with red on the left, Sickla Strand marked with red circle on the right.

We continue our trip and walk along Sickla canal and again they stop to watch the water, now water sculpture ‘Vattentrappan’ where the rainwater flows in an open canal to Sickla canal. They are not afraid of Hammarby Lake or the open rainwater canals even though there is no fence along the edges. They have become used to the open water and are always very cautious around it. They have seen people throw trash in the water, they think that the water is very dirty and do certainly not want to bathe in there.

2 “Fryshuset is often referred to as the largest youth center in the world - but it is actually much more than that. Above all it is a vision based on the conviction that encouragement, confidence, responsibility and understanding are necessary in order to enable young people to develop their innate abilities and find their way into society. This is exactly what Fryshuset is trying to do and the place is therefore packed with all kinds of creative and constructive activities. Young people mix with grown-ups in order to participate, contribute and learn. Fryshuset is a meeting place where people share and develop passionate interests, social commitments, sports, entertainment, culture and innovative educational programs.” (Fryshuset, 2012)



Fig. 16 – Vattentrappan



Fig. 17 – View of Hammarby Lake

Along the Sickla canal the boys point to another place which brings up negative feelings, that is under the bridge where the cars and the tram goes. They state that it's always dark under the bridge despite the sun is shining and this is the place where teenagers gather to smoke. They also tell me that during the winter two years ago there was a body found frozen in the ice under the bridge. That misfortune had significant impact on the boys and they get very sad while they explain this to me and point out where the actual location of the body was supposed to be. Here, it seems to be the structure of the place, past events happening here and the fact that it is currently used by smoking teenagers that gives the place its negative characteristics.



Fig. 18 and 19 – Under the bridge.

Now, when almost two hours have gone by, the boys start to get tired and hungry. We walk over the pedestrian bridge and along the water towards their home. On the way, the nine year old boy reflects over his local environment and tells me in his word that he felt like he gained another perspective on Hammarby Sjöstad during the expedition.

“It’s unbelievable how it all connects. This water connects with the kindergarten, the pier connects with the water. There is water all over the place and it all connects somehow!” (a boy, 9 years old)

When we approach their home they start running and playing again at the inner courtyard, the same way as in the beginning of the expedition. I thank them for participating in my study and they run upstairs, happy to finally get home to eat lunch.

Child-led expedition nr. 2

The second child-led expedition was carried out the 2nd of April 2012. The children I met this time were siblings, a 10 year old girl and a 12 year old boy. The spring had not yet honored us with its presence, the sun was shining but it was cold and during our trip it snowed a little bit between the sun rays. We started the walk at 3:30 pm.

The children have lived in Hammarby Sjöstad, in the same apartment for seven years and are very familiar with their neighborhood. The trip starts by their elementary school where I meet the boy as he is finishing lectures that day. We walk from the school to their home, which is located very close by, only 150 meters. The boy has his backpack with a basketball and one pair of basketball shoes. He tells me that he trains basketball and never leaves his home without this backpack as he always wants to be ready to play basketball whenever he wants to. When we arrive to their home we meet his sister who joins us to the expedition. The siblings both play basketball and I can see by their way of walking and acting that they love the game. I ask them if we can start the walk by going to their favorite place in Hammarby Sjöstad. They both shout out “Fryshuset”² and we start to walk towards Fryshuset. Fryshuset is also located close to their home and we walk on a bicycle lane through a residential area until we have to cross one street. They automatically turn direction and walk towards the street crossing, very self-secure and hardly noticing the traffic as they are familiar with the route they are walking. The street doesn’t seem to be a barrier for the children as they have walked this route for hundreds of times and I can see that their body language shows confidence. They talk about basketball and skateboard the whole way and are very enthusiastic about these activities. We reach our destination, Fryshuset, and the children start to tell stories of their play at the first basketball court that we see. At the basketball court there is also a skateboard ramp that is convenient for beginners.



Fig. 20 – Skateboard ramp



Fig. 21 – Basketball court

They show with movements how the ramp can be used and jump up to the basket as if they were playing ball. The basketball court is a popular place during the summer time, an outdoor court where it is sunny and sheltered from wind. During the winter it is too cold to play outside but the picture of the place with the warm weather and the sun is clear in the children's mind as they tell their stories. This is also a popular place to meet friends and gather for a team play.

They take me inside Fryshuset and show me around. They know every detail and corner of the inside area. Fryshuset is a place where they meet their friends and often stay up to 2-3 hours each time. It seems to me that the social connections they are experiencing in Fryshuset, are more valuable to them than the place itself. The group of children and teenagers gathered share the same interests and seems to get along very well. The children don't think that the place is scary even though there are so many that are older than them. We walk past three training halls and go outside again. Behind Fryshuset lies a small court where there they play basketball as well. They also connect this basketball court to summertime and point to a certain place on a bench where they are used to sit and listen to music while watching others play and playing by themselves.



Fig. 22 – Small court behind Fryshuset



Fig. 23 – Graffiti on the Skateboard hall.

Our next stop is the skateboard hall which is located behind Fryshuset. The entrance is hard to find for people who don't know their way around the place. The skateboard hall is crowded with children and teenagers who are practicing. The children know a few of them and exchange greetings. It becomes clear that the children are totally committed to their sports, basketball and skateboarding. They know almost every stairs in the neighborhood because there they can skateboard and get practice on the board. When we get outside again they point out graffiti on the wall of the skateboard hall and explain that some teenagers have tagged the wall with graffiti. That graffiti gives the place a negative appearance in the children's opinion, however that does not affect their feeling about the place.

"Sometimes after dinner some teenagers are screaming and when it's dark outside it can be uncomfortable." (a girl, 10 years old)

It is not the physical structure of the place that gives the negative experience, on the contrary, the circumstances are the ones that affect the children's experience. They are somehow angry at those who tag the walls and make a grumpy face to show they dislike the disrespect.

Our next stop is their schoolyard. We walk a bit fast to warm up because the temperature outside is below 5 degrees and it is getting cold. Despite the temperature they are very eager to talk on the way back to school and have a lot to tell.

The children admit that they prefer to stay inside, especially during the winter time because of the weather. They are not used to ski, ice skate or doing other kinds of winter sports. However, they are very mobile and most often they get permission to go outside

Hammarby Sjöstad if they ask their parents and are for example allowed to bike to Sickla strand (see Fig. 15 on page 24). They use their bicycles during the summertime but most often they travel by foot. They also like to travel with the tram. They say that the view at street level enables them to be a part of the street life while going through the neighborhood. The tram is a popular way of traveling but they see it as a barrier that limits their mobility because they do not cross the tram tracks, even though on the other side lays the lake and playgrounds with grass, trees and other plants. The girl mentions Luma Park, which is on the other side of the tracks, as a place where she sometimes has discussions and workshops with her class from school but otherwise it is a playground they never use on daily basis.



Fig. 24 – Luma Park marked with red circle.

They point out Hammaby Lake as a non-attractive element, they tell me that they do not like the water so much and that the boats are not fun. Their parents are also concerned since the lake is open and without any preventions of falling in the water.

When we arrive to their schoolyard the children indicate that the football field (artificial turf) and the basketball field were their favorite places at the yard. They spend most of their time playing basketball or football but also other ball games such as ‘King’ where they can use the wall of the school building to throw the ball at and then jump around. The only thing at the schoolyard that they mention specifically and was not connected with balls is a small hill made of green synthetic grass. They like it because it had green color and with the possibilities to run up and down without hurting themselves. That is the only

part of the schoolyard that is not flat as a football field.



Fig. 25 – Football field at the school.



Fig. 26 – Small green hill.

The nature seems to be difficult to access within their everyday environment. When asked about their perception of nature their faces glow. The boy tells about the years he attended the school Vittra Sjöstad on the other side of Hammarby Sjöstad, where the schoolyard is located next to the oak wood, Sickla Park. He really cares about the wood and liked playing there with his friends. The wood is too far away from their home to be a part of their everyday environment and they tell me that there are two stops to there with the tram which, which according to them is very far away. Here, the division between school districts within Hammarby Sjöstad becomes clear. The boy makes a comparison between his former schoolyard and his current schoolyard. He doesn't like his current schoolyard because it is gray and boring. When he describes his former schoolyard he becomes livelier in his description and the oak wood is the first thing he mentions as the biggest difference between the yards.

“I don't like my schoolyard that much. It was much more fun to have the wood.” (a boy, 12 years old)

The oak wood was a place where he could play 'hide and seek' with his friends and climb trees. He tells a story about something he and his friends used to do when they didn't like the food at school. They used to go outside after lunch and pick berries from the kindergarten next to the school. The children at the kindergarten grew raspberries and the boys ate them because they were hungry.

When the children start to talk about trees and playing in the nature they soon link their experience of nature with the summer cottage belonging to the family. They usually spend

time at the cottage during the summer time where they have the possibility to climb trees, build huts and enjoy the nature. They start to talk really fast and both at the same time. It becomes a bit hard to follow and understand the conversation because of their enthusiasm. Their body language becomes more lively and open when they tell stories from the summer cottage, they have a lot of stories to tell. The contact with nature out in the countryside is very important to them and they mention that they don't have that connection possible where they live now.

Almost an hour and a half have passed now and the children are willing to go inside and get something warm to drink. We meet their mother at the schoolyard and I thank them for participating in my research and say good bye.

Discussion

The results from these two child-led expeditions indicated strongly that the possibilities that places provide for physical activities are the influencing factors when it comes to the children's choice of places. The children use their local everyday environment mainly through activities and chose places that support their activities.

Preferred places - places for children's activities

During the child-led expeditions in Hammarby Sjöstad, the children showed me places that meant something for them, places that they value and enjoy. The places felt like milestones on our way where the children could stop and pause, play, forget themselves in activities and become integrated with the environment in a way that only children can do.

It started already at the courtyard in the first expedition where the boys started playing as soon as they got outside. At the courtyard they played within the safe zone of their home. I got the impression that this security had its impact on their play and they could act more freely even though the courtyard was rather plain in physical structure and did, in my opinion, not support fantasy and free play in extensive way. The boys could however use height differences, edges, walls and benches to challenge themselves and did indeed know every detail of the yard. The courtyard can be seen as a starting point as they seek out of the yard to meet their peers and have the possibility to explore more than just this little yard.

The wood, Sickla Park, is an example of environment that the children perceive as nature. It provides the opportunity to play different kinds of games and at the same time train strength, concentration and physical movement that can challenge their capability as

indicated by Taylor and Kuo (2006), Mårtenson (2004) and Grahn (2007). By pointing out certain trees and mention different kind of games the children show that they have good attachments to the wood and really appreciate it as an environment for play. The children have left behind traces of their play and use of the place, which can be seen by torn tree barks and paths that have not been planned through the wood.



Fig. 27 – Rearranged old boles.



Fig. 28 – Unplanned paths.

The wood is an environment that the children appreciate to a great extent and has the ability to support their needs. It is through such areas that the children get the opportunity to develop and challenge themselves. This is a place which they prefer to spend their time at without worrying about traffic, open water or other things that can limit and constrain their play. Halldén (2009) discusses the role of social researches on children's lives today where the phenomena of media and urbanization are often the topics of research. To highlight the role of nature and its effects on children's lives can be seen as a strange angle in these researches where contact with nature is often related to the nostalgic image of rural lifestyle which is not the reality for children in cities today. Nevertheless, other researches which indicate that nature is good for children cannot be neglected and should be taken into consideration in planning. When I saw and understood how much the wood meant to the children I became even more aware of the importance of preserving these kinds of areas in exploitation and land use planning. It is important that areas that can support children in their exploration are not ignored or eliminated from planned urban areas.

The children are receptive for details in the environment and have the enthusiasm that should be able to be activated by the physical structure of the environment. The bridge in the wood and the small green hill at the Sjöstads schoolyard are examples of details in the environment that stimulates the play and the activities. It can be used in various ways to

challenge the physical strength of the body and is one of a kind in the environment. These kinds of details are appreciated by the children as they give a meaning to relatively monotonous environment. It can also be relatively easy and cheap to implement them.

The bike route and the bowl are examples of places where the children find their own use for the place. The bike route consists of walking lanes that crosses and creates a triangle where ‘competitions’ are carried out. This triangle is defined by the boys as a track for competition where they imagine start and finish line. Same can be said about the bowl. It is a slope which the boys have made to their own, where they ride sledges when it is covered with snow. These places are not designed with these activities in mind but the children define the places through their own usage. That corresponds to what Skantze (1997) states, that children have the tendency to choose places for their play which are not necessarily designed especially for them, places that offer something more than the self-explanatory objects found at the playgrounds.

Places that are though designed with children in mind, like the schoolyards, are natural meeting places for the children. In Sjöstad's School the children can play football and basketball in proper courts which are rarely found in other places in Hammarby Sjöstad. They know the schoolyards very well because of the time spent there during school hours.

Fryshuset is located in an old industrial area, where the surroundings are not designed with children in mind but it contains facilities for activities, such as basketball and skateboarding. Fryshuset is important meeting place and the social connections that are created there mean a lot for the children from the second expedition, especially when all of their friends share the same interest in the activities that are carried out there. The boys from the first expedition, however, avoided Fryshuset. I assume that the location of Fryshuset (far away from their home), the boy's young age and the fact that they have no interest in basketball or skateboarding have impact on their conception of the place.



Fig. 29 – Behind Fryshuset



Fig. 30 – Stairs and ramps close to Fryshuset.

Another example of diverse feelings about places and elements between the two groups of children is the water. Water is a dominant element in Hammarby Sjöstad and can be found in open canals through the district, in different kinds of water sculptures and of course at Hammarby Lake. The boys from the first expedition liked the water very much and had learned to interact with it with respect for the risks that follows playing around the water. The water can be an important element that gives the feeling of nature and creates life, sound and motion in the area that is appreciated by the children. The children from the second expedition were, on the contrary, not so impressed by the water. They were not drawn by its attraction and they told me that their parents are not so keen on letting them play around that water. Therefore, they have not had any further interaction with the water through activities. The parents concern is, in my interpretation, a concern that can affect the children's perception of the water. Instead of learning how to interact with the water they avoid it.



Fig. 31 – Hammarby Lake



Fig. 32 – Piece of art at Hammarby Lake.

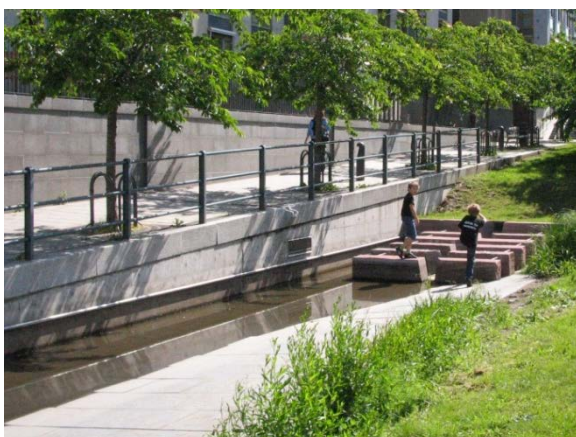


Fig. 33 – Open rain water treatment.



Fig. 34 – Children playing at the water fountain.

The dynamic interplay between the children and their preferred places was evident through the expeditions. It was not easy to identify the elements that give places their attraction. I expected to be able to give detailed description of elements that gave the places their attraction after the expeditions but that was not the case. The children choose places that appeals to them in a way and use the places on their own terms. The places are used regarded what they can offer through physical structure and characteristics of their elements. It is important to respect the children's need for play and motion and take into account the impact that places can have on children's development when urban areas are planned and designed.

Constrains in the environment

The tram tracks and the traffic that is led through the middle of Hammarby Sjöstad can be seen as barriers that constrains the movement flow of pedestrians and therefore the children between different parts of the district. All crossings are at the same level as the traffic, there are no bridges or tunnels that cross the main traffic road. I can easily understand the parents' concerns about their children when crossing this main road. I get the impression that these barriers are influencing and limiting the everyday environment that the children can access.

The children talk about lack of football fields or places where they can play with balls. However, in both expeditions the children carried a ball with them and did not seem to have problems playing with the ball wherever they were located. It might be that they experience a lack but still find their way to use the environment as it suits them, even though it is not the most convenient environment for playing ball. I would say that this is still another example of how children find their use of the places even though the places are not designed with children in mind.

Children's perspective vs. child-centered perspective

With the establishment of the Convention on the rights of the child by United Nations, there has been a rising awareness for the past few years about the children's right to influence their everyday situations. We have seen examples of projects where children contribute though different kinds of methods which give them voices and promote their views. It is though a sensitive and complicated issue to handle and can be discussed from different angles with different approaches. The main discussion here will be focused on the gap and the bridge between children's perspective and planner's perspective.

In her dissertation, Kylin (2004) discusses the differences in children's descriptions and planners' descriptions of environments, where the children can describe 'their'

environment in more details and with the expert knowledge, referred to above. The planners have more general ideas about which places are 'the children's places', often thinking of places specially designed for children such as schoolyards and playgrounds. Hence, the children's perspective and the planners' perspective can be difficult to combine (ibid).

A research made by Björklid and Nordström (2012), on the other hand, gave different results. The results indicate that there are similarities between the children's perspective and child-centered perspective. The professionals, chosen to participate in the study, had a child-centered perspective that might explain the results. However, the important point here is that there are planners and other professionals working with planning that have child-centered perspective. In that way, the children have the opportunity to use their right to influence, get their voices heard and needs acknowledged which are then communicated into planning through the planners. The planners can be seen as a bridge between the children's perspective and the planning processes. Nevertheless, it is the planner who takes the final decisions based on his/her experience and knowledge relevant to the case in matter. It is always the planner that takes full responsibility for those decisions. Children should be recognized as an important group of the society, they have the right to influence with their expert knowledge on their own local environment. However, Björklid and Nordström (2012) highlight that the children "...also need to have the right to be protected by society so that they are allowed to be children – that is, to play in and explore their local environment and their town or city in conditions that are safe and promote their development." (ibid). To promote the children's interests in Sweden the Advocate for Children (Barnombudsmannen) introduced a child impact assessment in a report from year 2006. There, it is suggested that this assessment is made in the early stages of project processes and that the children's views must be acknowledged (Barnombudsmannen, 2006). The assessment should be made in few steps with the aim to reach conditions that serve the best interest for children.

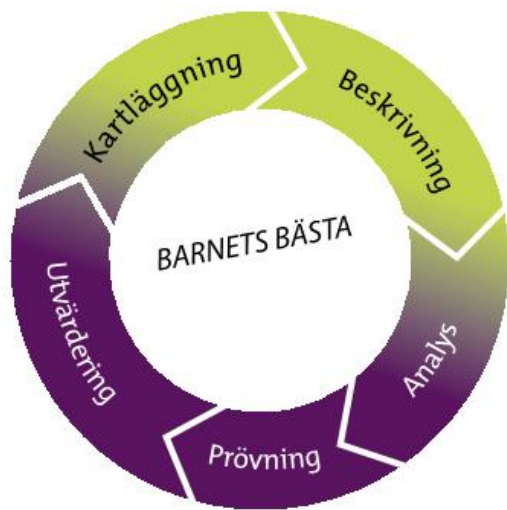


Fig. 35 – The steps in child impact assessment: mapping, description, analysis, testing, evaluation.

As already mentioned in the background chapter, Hammarby Sjöstad was not planned with children in mind. The children impact assessments were performed in Hammarby Sjöstad after the planning processes had been carried through, leaving hardly any room or possibilities for changes in favor of the children. I consider this assessment as a good tool for giving children the right to influence planning processes as the assessment is made by professionals with child-centered perspective which can serve the role of mediators between children and the professional world.

With convenient methods, relevant communication tools and professionals with child-centered perspective the children's voice could be more easily heard and their rights could be more easily taken into consideration in planning. If these matters will be properly established, it is my hope that it will result in better environment for children, planned with them in mind.

Conclusion

The main results of this project points to that children use places through their play and activities. The results may not be surprising but are in line with other results from researches that study children in their environment. All children play and carry the play with them wherever they are. The play can evolve in different ways and is affected by the places where the play is performed. The places that the children prefer have an attraction that affects their play in a positive way. They connect to the places through the activities that are carried out there. Children find 'their places' even though the environment is not designed with them in mind, like Hammarby Sjöstad. However, it can always be better. It should be emphasized that children's perspective in planning processes is important due to the children's expert knowledge about their environments and due to their rights to influence. Planners can learn a lot from children with different kinds of methods and through different kinds of communication tools. The planners, however, take the final decisions and are responsible for the results of the planning process. That will hopefully result in environment that is safer, more challenging, more attractive and over all better for our children. Environment that is good for children is good for everybody.

References

- Berglund, U, and Jergeby, U. 1998. *Stadsrum -människorum, att planera för livet mellan husen*. Stockholm: Byggforskningsrådet.
- Berglund, U, and Nordin, K. 2007a. Using GIS to Make Young People's Voices Heard in Urban Planning. *Built Environment* 33(4). Pp. 469-481.
- Berglund, U, and Nordin, K. 2007b. Barnkartor i GIS – ett verktyg för barns inflytande i planeringen. *Gröna Fakta* 4:2007.
- Björklid, P. 2005. Lärande och fysisk miljö - en kunskapsöversikt om samspelet mellan lärande och fysisk miljö i förskola och skola. Stockholm: Myndigheten för skolutveckling.
- Cele, S. 2006. *Communicating place. Methods for Understanding Children's Experience of Place*. Ph.D. Stockholm University.
- Cosco, N.G. 2007. Developing evidence-based design - Environmental interventions for healthy development of young children in the outdoors. In W.A. Thompson and P. Travlou (Eds.). *Open Space People Space*. London: Taylor & Francis. Pp. 126-135.
- Egelius, M. 2002. Bostadsbyggandets villkor. In Boden, Å (Ed.). *Boken om Hammarby Sjöstad – BoStad02*. Stockholms Stad. Gatu- och fastighetskontoret. Pp. 73-76.
- Grahn, P. 2007. Barnet och Naturen. In L.O. Dahlgren, S. Sjölander, P.J. Strid and A. Szczepanski (Eds.). *Utomhuspedagogik som kunskapskälla*. Lund: Studentlitterature. Pp. 55-104.
- Halldén, G. ed. 2009. *Naturen som symbol för den goda barndomen*. Stockholm: Carlsson.
- Hannaford, C. 1997. *Lär med hela kroppen inläring sker inte bara i huvudet*. Jönköping: Brain Books.
- Hart, R. 2002. Containing children: some lessons on planning for play from New York City. *Environment and Urbanization* 14. Pp. 135-148.

- Howard, E. 1965. *Garden cities of tomorrow*. (With introductory essay by Lewis Mumford). Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Jergeby, U. 1996. *Offentlig miljö som arena och kuliss - att se, bli sedd och mötas på stadens offentliga och bostadsnära platser*. Ph.D. Uppsala University.
- Jergeby, U. 1998. In Olsson, T. (Ed.) *Människans natur: det grönas betydelse för vårt välbefinnande*. Stockholm: Byggforskningsrådet.
- Johansson, M. 2006. Environmental and parental factors as determinants of mode for children's leisure travel. *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 26. Pp. 156-169.
- Kylin, M. 2004. Från koja till plan. Om barnperspektiv på utemiljön i planeringssammanhang. Ph.D. Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences.
- Mårtensson, F. 2004. *Landskapet i leken. En studie av utomhuslek på förskolegården*. Ph.D. Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences.
- Norström, M. 2010. Children's Views on Child-Friendly Environments in Different Geographical, Cultural and Social Neighbourhoods. *Urban Studies* 47(3). Pp. 514-528.
- Olsson, T. 1998. *Människans natur: det grönas betydelse för vårt välbefinnande*. Stockholm: Byggforskningsrådet.
- Rissotto, A and Giuliani, M.V. 2006. Learning neighbourhood environments: the loss of experience in a modern world. In Spencer, C, and Blades, M. (Eds.) *Children and their environments. Learning, Using and Designing Spaces*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Skantze, A. 1997. *Tillhörighet och främlingskap. - En förorts arkitektur i de boendes meningssammanhang*. Stockholm: Pedagogiska institutionen, Stockholms universitet.
- Taylor, A.F, and Kuo, F.E. 2006. Is contact with nature important for healthy child development? State of the evidence. In Spencer, C, and Blades, M. (Eds.) *Children and*

their environments. Learning, Using and Designing Spaces. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Åquist, A. 2001. Vardagslivsperspektiv som planeringsredskap. In Elander, I (Ed.). *Den motsägelsefulla staden. Vardagsliv och urbana regimer.* Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Electronic references

Barnombudsmannen. 2006. *Röster som räknas – Barns och ungas rätt till delaktighet och inflytande.* Årsrapport. Stockholm: Barnombudsmannen. [Online] Available at: http://www.barnombudsmannen.se/Global/Publikationer/Rostersomraknas06_tillganglig.pdf [Accessed 2012-05-01].

Björklid, P. and Norström, M. (in press 2012). Child-friendly cities – sustainable cities. *Early Childhood Matters* 118. [Online] Will be available at: http://bernardvanleer.org/English/Home/Our-publications/Browse_by_series.html?ps_page=1&getSeries=4 [Accessed from authors 2012]

Fryshuset, 2012. http://www.fryshuset.se/fryshuset/in_english.aspx [Accessed 2012-04-03].

Stockholm stad. 2009. Hej Stockholmare! Attachment to Dagens Nyheter 2009-01-18. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.mypaper.se/show/text.asp?pid=345116440736589&page=5> [Accessed 2012-04-03].

UN, United Nations. 1989. Article 31 in *Convention on the rights of the child.* [Online]. Available at: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/crc.htm#art31> [Accessed 2012-03-24]

Lectures

Freudenthal, E. 2011. Lecture: *Hammarby Sjöstad – unique environmental project in Stockholm.* Glashus Ett. Hammarby Sjöstad. 13th of September.

Figures

Maps of Stockholm from www.maps.google.com

Figure nr. 35 is taken from Barnombudsmannen. 2006. *Röster som räknas – Barns och ungas rätt till delaktighet och inflytande*. Årsrapport. Stockholm: Barnombudsmannen.

[Online] Available at:

http://www.barnombudsmannen.se/Global/Publikationer/Rostersomraknas06_tillganglig.pdf [Accessed 2012-05-01]

Other figures are taken by the author and the children participating in the study.

Appendix I-II

I: A letter to parents, sent to three schools in Hammarby Sjöstad.

Till föräldrar i Hammarby Sjöstad Februari 2012

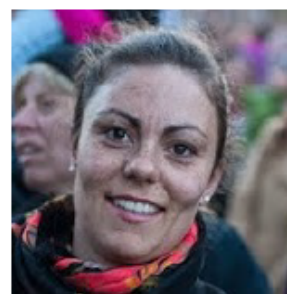
Jag heter Katrin Karlsdottir, jag kommer från Island men har studerat miljöpsykologi på SLU i Alnarp sedan 2009. Mitt examensarbete som jag nu skriver under vårterminen 2012 handlar om Hammarby Sjöstad där jag tänker studera området ur barns perspektiv.

Det jag är intresserad av i studien är hur barn använder sitt bostadsområde för vardagliga aktiviteter. Vilka är deras favoritplatser inom området och varför? Metoden som används i detta syfte är något som kallas "gåturen med barn", där barnen visar upp "sina" platser i området och berättar om platserna om dem vill. Gåturen kan ta upp till 1-2 timmar. Barnen får också fotografera platser/saker som är viktiga/intressanta för dem och jag antecknar under gåturen. Barnen bör vara i åldern 9-12 år (åk 3-5).

Jag vill gärna bilda 3 grupper med 2-3 barn och genomföra gåturena på en tid som passar barnen bäst under perioden februari-mars 2012. Det är en fördel om barnen känner varandra inom gruppen.

Inga namn eller andra personliga uppgifter kommer att synas i avhandlingen eller i andra resultat från denna undersökning, förutom barnens ålder. Den som kommer att ha tillgång till materialet förutom mig själv, är min handledare, Sarah Andersson doktorand på SLU (sarah.andersson@slu.se).

Om ni kan tänka er att delta i min undersökning får ni gärna kontakta mig och vi hittar en lämplig tid tillsammans.



Tack på förhand,

Katrin Karlsdottir
mobil: 0736158768
e-mail: kaka0026@stud.slu.se

II: A question guide with open questions for the child-led expeditions.

Gåtur med barn – fråge guide

Hur länge har ni bott i HS?

Hur ofta och hur länge är ni utomhus? Vad tycker ni om att göra utomhus?

Vilka vägar väljer ni till skolan?

Vilka platser väljer ni att leka på?

Hur är användningen av platserna?

Behöver de eller vill de vara på platserna/vägarna?

Vilka lekar leker ni här?

Hur ser det ut? Snyggt, fult, mysigt, lummigt...

Hur mycket värderar ni platsen?

Vart kan ni inte gå?

Vilka platser vill ni inte gå till?

Är det några platser ni får inte lov att gå till? Varför?

Hur långt från hemmet?

Vad tycker ni om sjön? Är det otäckt med öppen sjö?

Berättelse – koppling – sammanhang

Hur beskriver barnen platsen?

Användning av naturen? Vädret? Vart går ni när det regnar? Dåligt väder? Sol?

Vad är det som sätter gränsen?

Cyklar/ rullskidskor

Hur mycket av området känner verkligen barnet? Var är gränsen till område de inte känner?

Hur långt från hemmet går dem – får lov att gå?

Vad är det som är spännande här?

Är det många som brukar leka här?

Var träffar ni kompisarna?

Vad kan man göra i området där ni bor?

Finns det naturområden där ni bor?

Vad är bra/dåligt med området?

Har ni någon favoritplats?

Bygger ni eller har ni byggt kojor här någonstans?

När ni inte är i skolan vad gör ni då? Vad gör ni helst? Vardagar, helger, lov?

Fritids? Ser ni på TV? Har alla dator hemma? Vad använder ni den till?

Idrottar ni? Varför? Ute eller inne?

Blir ni skjutsade? Vad tycker ni om bilen? Vad ni gjort om ni haft bil/inte haft bil?

Vad tycker ni om att göra inomhus? Vad tycker ni om att göra utomhus? Om ni får välja, vad

är ni helst inne eller ute? Vad kan man göra ute som man inte kan göra inomhus och tvärtom?

Tycker era föräldrar att det är bäst om ni är ute eller inne? Varför tror ni det?

Är nu ofta i naturen där ni bor? Har det något namn? Vad gör ni naturen? Har ni långt dit?

Bor ni nära naturen? Vilka är ni tillsammans med? Familj, vänner, själv, skolan?

Hur är det på skolgården? Har ni varit i naturen någon annanstans? Landet, sommarstugan, förening, utomlands, skola, fritids? Har ni trädgård?

Vad tycker ni om att vara i naturen? Vad är det bästa med att vara i naturen? Vad är det dåliga? Finns det något ni är rädd för? Djur, människor? Vinter, sommar, höst, vår. Mörker och kyla? Hur påverkar det er? Kojor eller några egna platser?