



FROM PROBLEM DISTRICT TO ROLE MODEL

GÅRDSTEN COMMUNITY



From problem district to role model – and from particularly vulnerable to particularly appreciated

Gårdsten in Gothenburg shows how innovation, persistence, commitment, cooperation and participation have reversed the trend in a vulnerable urban district. Since Gårdstensbostäder was founded in 1997, crime has halved, people are now queueing for accommodation and 1,500 new homes are being built with various forms of tenure.

The Gårdsten model has become something of a role model when it comes to smart community development, and both Swedish and foreign visitors turn up regularly to study this particular recipe for success. Gårdsten has gone from being particularly vulnerable to being particularly appreciated, and this development has attracted a great deal of attention.

Background and history

Gårdsten, in north-eastern Gothenburg, was constructed between 1969 and 1972. The buildings were three, five and eight storeys high, and accommodated some 2,200 municipal apartments. The district underwent negative change over a number

of years, and was one of Sweden's most run-down, unsafe areas when municipal housing company Gårdstensbostäder was founded in 1997. Crime rates and unemployment were high, and more than 800 of the 2,200 or so apartments were empty.

Gårdstensbostäder was founded with a clear remit from the municipality – to reverse the trend. The owner directive included adopting a long-term approach to sustainability in three dimensions: social, ecological and financial. Social sustainability for the entire district was emphasised, as was the location of the company in Gårdsten. Allowing tenants to have a real influence, increasing safety and measures designed to create jobs. The directive also included working together with other stakeholders such as the business community and voluntary organisations.

Six out of seven regular members of the company's board are tenants.



Mohamed Hama Ali
Chairman



Asha Adnan
Member



Roland Smith
Member



Terzah Kader
Member



Lars Svensson
Member



Marek Hom
Member



Amela Turulja
Member



Lars Just
Deputy

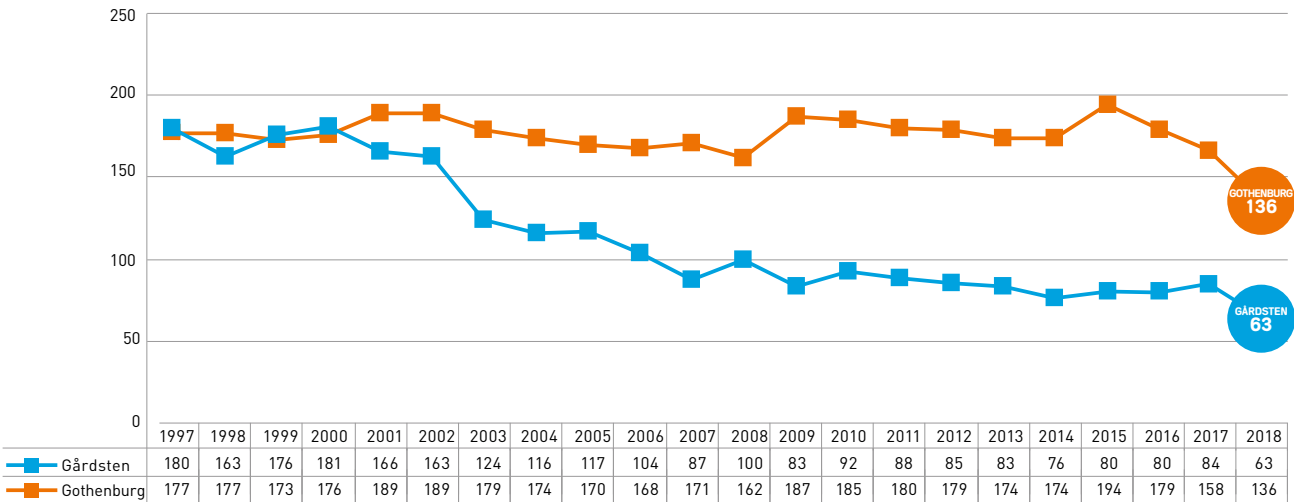
Genuine influence for residents

Participation and discussion for staff and tenants alike have been keyword right from the beginning. Here is an example. Before the first buildings were renovated and fitted with solar collectors (Solhus 1), all the tenants were asked what they wanted. The ones who showed an interest were then invited to take part in focus groups so that they could influence work going forward, and it was possible to meet up to 97% of the requests.

Since then, tenants have continued to be involved in the company and the district – from day-to-day operations to board work. Of the seven regular members of the company's board, six are tenants and have the same responsibilities and authority as all board members for maintenance of the company.



Crimes reported per 1,000 residents



Discussions with residents have been used right since the outset to develop the district, and many tenants have been involved. More than 1,000 tenants took part in various discussions with residents in 2018 alone.

There are also focus groups that work with various partners to run a range of activities such as exercise groups, gatherings for the elderly, a football school, sailing, skiing, etc.

Every success or milestone achieved is celebrated alongside residents. A street party was held at Gårdsten Centrum when Gårdstensbostäder won the Stora Samhällsbyggarpriset Award in 2006 – and a big party was held when Gårdsten was taken off the list of particularly vulnerable districts in 2019. Another example of this approach was highlighted by the 20th anniversary in 2017: “We celebrate you and your neighbours”. This anniversary was celebrated by laying on a few extra festivities for everyone in Gårdsten on Gårdsten Day, which is held every year.

In the heart of Gårdsten

Right from the outset, the company’s management and administration – and not just tenant-related service functions such as property maintenance and suchlike – were required to be based in Gårdsten. Operations began in one of the company’s three-bedroom apartments, with Stina Fransson as the CEO and

current CEO Michael Pirosanto as the administration officer.

The company’s head office is now on Kanelltorget. In the early 2020s, the company is planning to gather all its staff together in an even more central location in a new office at the new Gårdsten Centrum.

Current staff

Gårdsten is a multicultural urban district, with residents from all kinds of backgrounds who speak lots of different languages. That applies to Gårdstensbostäder as a company as well – it’s 32 staff speak 22 different languages.

The job description for all staff includes remaining in close proximity to the tenants. The office is open to tenants every Wednesday evening. On those days, not only the house managers – residents’ closest points of contact – are in attendance, but all other staff as well. So in other words, meeting tenants is not just something the house managers do. The eight house managers are responsible for their own respective areas, each containing 250 to 500 apartments, and they act as points of contact for tenants on most issues relating to their accommodation. These house managers have total responsibility for budgets and results for their own areas.



The safety group of Gårdstensbostäder.

CRIME REDUCED

Crimes per 1,000
residents have fallen
from 180 to 63
since 1997.

SAFETY IS INCREASING

Security index 2018:
79.1%
(2017: 76.2%).

HAPPIER TENANTS

Service index 2018
81%
(2017: 78.5%).

INCREASED VALUE

Property value has
increased from
SEK 150 million to
SEK 1850 million
since 1997.

All staff are offered individual training in accordance with UGL (Utveckling Grupp Ledare – Group Leader Development), which was developed by the Department of Leadership and Management at the Swedish National Defence College. Annual team development days are held in order to keep this training going.

A safe district for life

In 1997, crime in Gårdsten was on a par with the average for Gothenburg. By 2018, the number of crimes reported per thousand residents for Gothenburg as a whole stood at 136, while the figure for Gårdsten was half that (63). Over the last two years alone, crime in Gårdsten has fallen by about 20%, and crimes targeting the police have all but ceased, in combination with the fact that other safety work has resulted in Gårdsten becoming the first district in Sweden to be removed from the list of particularly vulnerable districts, as maintained by the police, in spring 2019. Moreover, this was celebrated with a big party at Gårdsten Centrum for all residents in the district.

The safety team of Gårdstensbostäder has a key part to play in this development. This team comprises six full-time safety hosts who are available 365 days a year. They maintain a visible presence in the district and are greatly trusted by residents. Members of the team are responsible for the properties during evenings and weekends, rent out premises, close the centre, go round chatting to young people, deal with reported faults, etc.

The safety team also carries out annual safety walks together with residents, the police, Park- och Naturförvaltningen, neighbouring associates, etc. They carry out inventories of footpaths, courtyards, lighting and other factors of significance to perceived safety. The team also organises an annual safety fair that is open to everyone in Gårdsten. Their objective is to create a platform for discussion where people can come up with new ideas and initiatives to help make Gårdsten safer. This safety work has attracted a lot of outside attention, winning awards presented by Stiftelsen Tryggare Sverige and insurance company Göta Lejon, among others.

Cautious renovation keeps down rents

One specific ambition – which the owner directive also states – is to keep down rents. Renovations are cautious, and the company has chosen to work with shared contracts in order to keep costs to a minimum and maintain full control over costs. "Complete and clean" is the motto for all renovation work. Tenants are not offered options that would push up prices when renovations are made, for example. Anybody wanting options beyond the

standard range has to organise such things themselves with the permission of Gårdstensbostäder. Quite simply, residents must be able to continue to afford to live in their homes even after renovation work has been carried out.

New jobs, a stronger local business community



There were eight companies in Gårdsten 22 years ago. Now there are around 50, and Gårdsten Centrum is a lively central area with a shopping centre feel. A health centre and other service facilities are also available. A corporate centre has been constructed to accommodate companies of all sizes and make it easier for other companies to set up in the district.

Besides establishing companies, Gårdstensbostäder is actively working to help unemployed Gårdsten residents to find jobs via Gårdstensbyrå, its very own "employment agency". The agency has created more than 3,000 jobs since 1997, including summer jobs and jobs with all the contractors that have worked at Gårdsten – an initiative known nowadays as social procurement. A total of 264 jobs were created in Gårdsten in 2018, 121 of which were summer jobs for local young people. Young people were also offered weekend jobs and holiday jobs, such as emptying bulky waste rooms, working with the outdoor environment and assisting the house managers in various ways. Social procurement means that any contractors bidding for contracts are subject to a mandatory requirement to employ one or more Gårdsten residents for the contract in question.

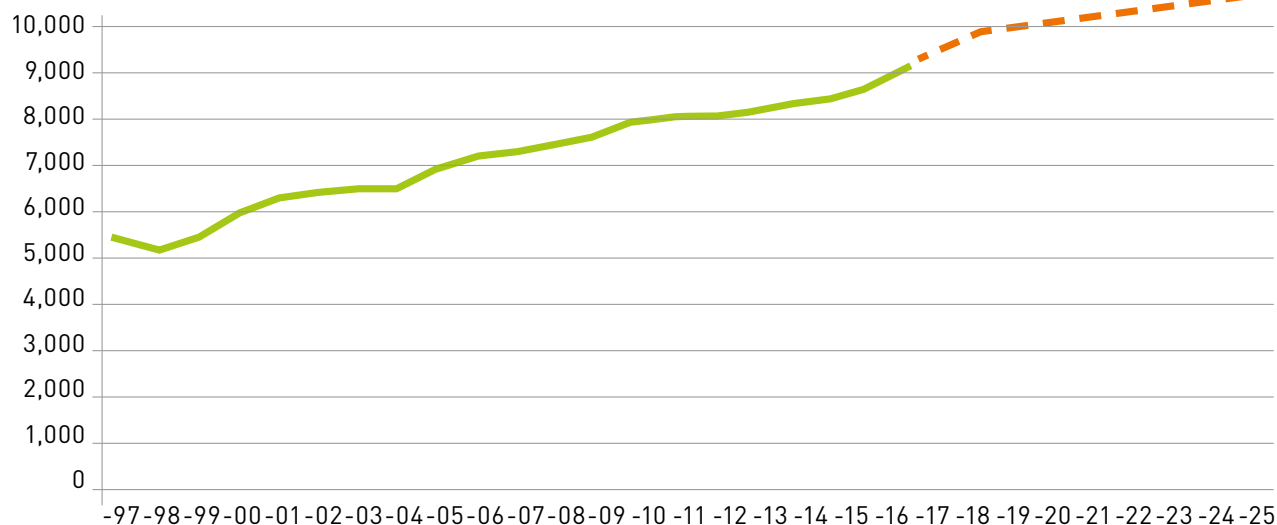
A sustainable community

As part of Framtidenkoncernen, Gårdstensbostäder operates in compliance with the groupwide ambition "Building a sustainable community for the future".

Gårdstensbostäder works with sustainability in three dimensions: ecological, social and financial.



Number of residents in Gårdsten



Ecological sustainability

Gårdstensbostäder is something of a pioneer when it comes to solar and wind energy. Back in 2000, three years after the company came into being, the first solar collectors were installed on what is now known as Solhus 1.

Since then, a number of buildings have been fitted in stages with solar collectors and solar cells for electricity and heating (Solhus 2, 3 and 4). Nowadays, the Solhus buildings have a total of more than 8,000 square metres of solar collectors and solar cells, and some 1,000 homes have power, water and heating generated by the sun. The fifth stage has just begun, which will involve supplying eight out of 17 buildings in Norra Gårdsten with solar cells. This initiative will double capacity from 555 to 1,116 kW.

A wind turbine designed to meet half of the power demands of these apartments has just been constructed in Gårdstensberget in partnership with Göteborg Energi.

All in all, this means that operating expenses for Gårdstensbostäder have been declining steadily. Electricity consumption in 2018 stood at 38 kWh/m², representing a decrease of 41 kWh/m² compared with 2017. District heating fell from 168 kWh/m² in 2017 to 167 kWh/m² in 2018.

Individual metering of electricity, water and heating is helping residents to keep consumption and costs low.

There is a strong green element in Gårdsten. All trees in the district have been added to a database, for example, which stores information on their maintenance and so forth. Apart from these being natural assets, this is also a financially sustainable approach. Maintaining these trees costs considerably less than removing old trees and planting new ones. Nowadays, the 1,100 or so trees in the district are worth around SEK 50 million.

Social sustainability

The long-term social initiatives are perhaps what set the Gårdsten community apart from the rest to the greatest extent. There are no time-limited projects: working models and collaboration models are constantly being developed and fine-tuned. Adopting a practical approach to day-to-day operations and truly getting residents involved is the key to success. Partners, voluntary organisations and companies are involved in social initiatives to a great extent.

REDUCED ENERGY CONSUMPTION

8,000 sq m of solar collectors/solar cells with a total capacity of 555 kW provide electricity, water and heating to around 1,000 homes.

This capacity is now being expanded to 1,116 kW.

Some examples:

A health centre and paediatric health centre have been implemented, reinforcing social services. The company has gathered together health-related activities at Hälsostugan, which is run in partnership with Angered Hospital and the Göteborgsvarvet half marathon. These operations include group workouts and gym sessions and health information and skills.

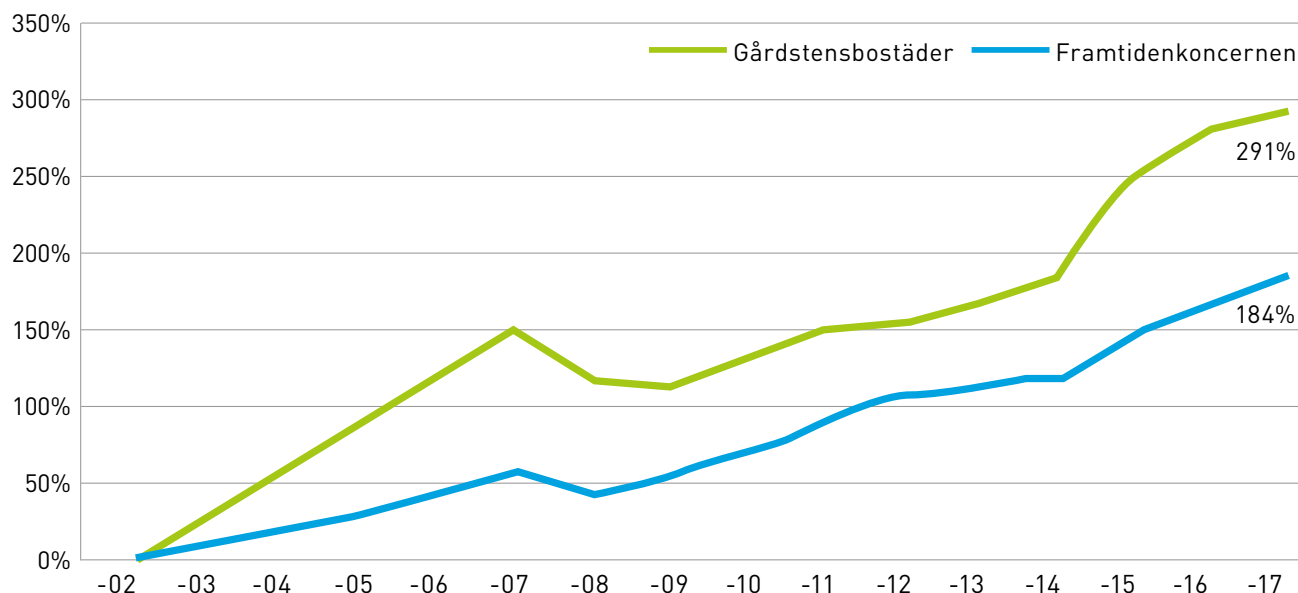
The organisation "Angered is here" encouraged around 30 young people to knock on doors, campaign on social media and chat to people on the streets to persuade them to vote in the latest election. Gårdstensbostäder helped by providing access to all stairwells and allowing premises to be used for early voting. The opportunity to vote early was provided for the first time at Gårdsten Centrum. From having had Sweden's lowest voter turnout in municipal elections, voting increased from 37.4 to 41% in Norra Gårdsten.

- Gårdsten Centrum has been developed and now includes a food hall and social services.
- Stiftelsen Läxhjälpn offers free help with homework for young Gårdsten residents, and Gårdstensbostäder is contributing to this.
- GKSS, Rotary Långedrag and Svenska Kryssarklubben are helping young people to learn how to sail, try sailing small boats and watch the World Match Racing Tour in Marstrand.
- GAIS in Gårdsten runs a football school all year round: indoors in winter, and out in Gårdstensdalen the rest of the time.
- Göteborgsgiro, which offers a pit stop in Gårdsten, offers a cycling school for residents via the open venue in Gårdsten.
- El Sistema organises choral singing and a music school for children and young people.
- Shared greenhouses and allotments for residents



Robert Dicksons Stiftelse has constructed rented accommodation in Gårdsten as part of Vision 2025.

Development of market value



Economic sustainability

The development of Gårdsten has been an economic success as well:

- Property value has increased from SEK 150 million to SEK 1,850 million.
- The cost of empty apartments has been eliminated.
- From 8 to 50 companies.
- Socio-economic profit approx. SEK 400 million.

where where they have a garden of their own, for instance. The new homes are being mixed with the existing buildings to create a safe, attractive mixed city.

Gårdstensbostäder adopted Vision 2025 in 2015, with its aim of constructing 1,500 new homes with different forms of tenure. This vision is already well on the way to turning into reality, and Gårdsten will have around 5,000 homes, with resident numbers increasing from around 9,500 to around 13,000. Vision 2025 also means that rented accommodation will be reduced from the current level of 80% to around 65%.

The mixed city is emerging

Gårdsten has been dominated by rented accommodation for a long time. This is now changing quickly. At present, nine construction companies are investing in production of houses and a number of multiple occupancy buildings offering both rented accommodation and housing cooperatives. As a result, Gårdsten residents no longer need to leave an area where they enjoy living if they want to own their own homes or live some-

MORE FORMS OF TENURE

From 82 approx. 65% municipal rented accommodation.

MORE PEOPLE

1,500 new homes are being built. Resident numbers will increase from around 9,500 to around 13,000 (2025).

STRONGER BUSINESS COMMUNITY

3,000 jobs have been created by Gårdstensbostäder since 1997. The number of companies has increased from eight to 50.



Among other things, Egnahemsbolaget is constructing 34 housing cooperatives on Saffransgatan, part of BoStad 2021.



BoStad 2021 includes Serneke's 15-storey "Utsikten" building at Gårdsten Centrum, with housing cooperatives.



A new car park is being constructed on Saffransgatan, with 42 apartments for the elderly.

The pictures on this page are sketches.



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