

Work Shop by Inger Marie Lid:

## **User involvement in architectural practices: Developing a body of knowledge for Universal Design**

In order to include universal design in practices it is necessary to take a multidisciplinary approach and also include different perspectives and bodies of knowledge. As Universal Design principles are included in legislation and political strategies, there is a need for systematic evaluation of practice, and to generate knowledge in user centered non-discriminatory architectural design. How can such knowledge be generated? Who are the stakeholders in the field, and how can different kinds of scholarly knowledge, user knowledge and practical knowledge joint in interplay towards better practice and substantial knowledge base? What role do different stakeholders take in such processes, what kind of knowledge is needed? What are the professional's role and responsibility in these processes?

What is quite clear is that architects need knowledge in Universal Design issues in order to include this in their work. But what kind of knowledge is needed and what methods can prove useful in this work? User involvement in planning- and building processes is one strategy used in many planning processes motivated in the planning and building act through the term *medvirkning*. Disability simulation, which is trying to use wheel chair or blindfolding the students, is also a method often practiced. Another method, not so often used, is accessibility audits. How effect full is these approaches and what kind of approaches will prove to have effect? In this work shop we will discuss experiences with different learning methods, and discuss different concepts such as *embodied* knowledge, *user* knowledge and *expert* knowledge. We will also try to develop a scheme for how to audit architectural design from a user perspective involving a variety in individual (dis)abilities.