Tool library De Deelkelder

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Why did we select this case?

By offering access to tools and facilitating offline social interactions tool libraries complement online sharing platforms. De Deelkelder reaches people outside the digital community, these people might benefit the most from (cheap) access to tools and social interactions. The offline, neighbourhood-based aspect enables De Deelkelder to reach new target groups such as elderly or people with restricted internet connection. The fact that tool libraries also involve these people makes this case particularly relevant for city authorities. As the low membership fees or prices for lending make it challenging for these libraries to sustain themselves, city governments can play an important role in providing space, granting subsidies or other help for tool libraries.

About the case

What?
DeDeelkelder is founded in 2015. It is a social franchise with the aim to shift away from a culture where consumer's own tools (from lawn mowers to beamers), toward a culture where consumers share access to tools. To boost the circular- and collaborative economy De Deelkelder provides a physical space where people can share tools within the neighbourhood. The tool library offers a wide range of tools, including power generators, equipment for construction as well as renovations. In addition, they also organize workshops and events to enable people to learn from- and collaborate with each other. Thus, De Deelkelder not merely aspires to enhance sustainable practices but also foster social cohesion in the neighbourhood.

How?
Tools are gathered by the founders of the library through donations and investments. To borrow tools from the tool library people have to become a member of the community. Members pay a small yearly membership fee (10,- euro) and additional cost to gain temporary access to specific tools in the library. People with a premium membership (130,- euro) can borrow 5 items each year without additional costs and get a discount to attend workshops. De Deelkelder is meant for everyone who wants access to tools and/or additional services such as do-it-yourself workshops.

Why?
A few of the fastest growing societal problem are the uneven distribution of wealth,

consumerism, inefficient use of resources and environmental degradation. When the founders of De Deelkelder moved in together, they experienced these problems themselves. That was the moment they realized how insufficient our society is organized at the moment. “Take a drill, for example, research shows that it is used on average for only 13 minutes.” Their mission is to give people access to things they only need occasionally, such as a barbecue, tools, projectors, speakers and camping gear, so they can save money and avoid having to store items.

According to the founders of De Deelkelder tool libraries have a threefold impact: economically, socially and environmentally. Tool libraries reduce the cost of- and enable cheaper access to tools. Sharing of goods strongly enhances the sense of community among library users, volunteers and staff and regular social interactions create social cohesion. Tool libraries help to reduce environmental waste and decrease the collective environmental footprint. Their plan is to build an ecosystem of “Libraries of Things”.

Impact

A short study from Zero Waste Scotland, reveals the environmental benefits of sharing and tool libraries. The study explains how tool libraries maximize the capacity of one single unit, which in turn reduces the overall consumer demand for products and materials. The decreased demand in turn results in reduced greenhouse gas emissions from resource extraction, manufacturing, transportation and ultimately disposal. However, the study also emphasizes that tool libraries can facilitate additional consumption of materials, which can result in more carbon emissions.

Want to know more?

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