CREATING A SECOND HAND STORE CONCEPT FOR THE NEW GENERATION
- In cooperation with Red Cross Sweden

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Abstract

Title: Creating a second hand store concept for the new generation – In cooperation with Red Cross Sweden

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Keywords: Visual merchandising, retail design, second hand, Red Cross

Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to develop a new retail strategy in terms of visual merchandising and retail design of Red Cross second hand stores that appeals to a younger group of second hand shoppers, at the same time as keeping the existing customer base, to increase sales in stores.

Frame of Reference: The thesis is based on retail design and visual merchandising theory and practical implications.

Research Question: How can the Red Cross retailers use visual merchandising and retail design to attract younger customers as well as the existing ones?

Method: The thesis is based on an action research approach with collection of qualitative data.

Empirics: The primary data consists of interviews at Red Cross headquarters in Stockholm and in Vänersborg, participant observations in the organization in Vänersborg and observations in second hand stores in Copenhagen, Stockholm, Gothenburg and London. The second hand data consists of reports published by Red Cross Sweden.

Conclusions: The Red Cross retailers can use visual merchandising and retail design to create an atmosphere in the store that attracts a younger group of customers. There is a lot to learn from other actors on the market, more successful in retail design and attracting a younger crowd that can be adapted in the Red Cross stores.
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1. Introduction

In this chapter the reader will be given a brief background to the area chosen to study. This will be followed by a presentation of the problem area and research motives as well as the purpose of the study and research questions that will be examined. The delimitations made will also be presented and motivated.

1.1 Background

The background to the research presented in this thesis is the development of second hand shopping in recent years. A new group of customers have started to shop for vintage garments and the new customer demand is different from the already existing. The competition is growing stronger and actors on the market therefore have to adapt to the change in demand.

1.1.1 Second hand

The last 10 years there has been a shift in the second hand store business. “It’s not embarrassing to go into a charity shop any more,” says Anna-Marie Crowhurst in an article written for the Guardian. When studying the second hand shops in United Kingdom she has found a change the recent years, where the stores have refurbished the interior with new floors and has taken the “visual merchandising” concept seriously. There is also a trend in opening up small boutique stores as a compliment to the bigger second hand stores to attract specific customers in specific areas. The business manager for Red Cross in United Kingdom mentions that it is important to learn from the mainstream retailers but still keep it personal. This, in combination with the growing trend of eco-consciousness, is contributing to the growth of second hand stores today. Many of the second hand stores in the UK today look like any retail store, and a lot of them have their own websites and joined the e-commerce selling products on e-bay. The head of retail for Oxfam (UK second hand charity shop with a focus on new store design for certain boutiques) says that the success of their new store is thanks to an “increased number and diversity (age- and gender-wise) of their volunteers, as well as the spoils of a consumer boom”. (Crowhurst, 2012)

Second hand shopping is growing in today’s society and more and more people show interest for the business. (Crowhurst, 2012) From the beginning the actors on the Swedish second hand market were mostly non-profit organizations such as Red Cross, Salvation Myrorña and Erikshjälpen. Today commercial actors have entered the market as well, such as Beyond Retro and Prickig Katt in Gothenburg. The market is therefore growing and so is the demand. The interest for second hand is growing at the same time as people are looking for uniqueness. To shop for second hand clothes, furniture or smaller details has become a popular way to add personality to ones personal style. At the same time as it goes hand in hand with the recycling trend of today, since the clothes bought second hand was something that someone else owned but did not use anymore (redcross.se, 2012).
There are two types of non-profit second hand organizations today in Sweden. There are the ones collecting clothes to send directly to areas in the world that need them and there are organizations as the Red Cross that have second hand shops where the clothes are sold and the remainder of the income (after rent and other costs are paid) is then used in social help projects and sent to disaster affected areas in the world to be used for help. (Redcross.se³, 2012) The second hand stores are also different in the way they are organized, some use paid personnel while others are run more or less solely on voluntary workers. Red Cross Sweden is based on the latter. (Redcross.se², 2012) The profits created from sales in the second hand stores today are not included in the value added tax system so money gained from sales can go directly to the help projects. It is discussed though in the Swedish parliament whether or not this tax should be added because of EU-directives saying so. (Widegren, 2011)

1.1.2 The Red Cross
The Red Cross is a worldwide organization with 187 organizations in as many countries. It is the world’s biggest humanitarian network and the goal is to prevent human suffering no matter what the circumstances are. The organization is politically and religiously neutral and the Muslim Red Crescent is included in the same organization as the Red Cross. (Redcross.se³, 2012) The Red Cross Sweden was founded in 1865 and today the organization is the biggest humanitarian organization in Sweden and includes over 30 000 voluntary workers in 1 100 local organizations around the country. The organization is democratically organized. (Redcross.se⁴, 2012)

The second hand stores of the Red Cross can be found in 270 cities in Sweden (Redcross.se², 2012) as well as on the internet where Red Cross is connected to Tradera.com (the Swedish E-bay site) where they auction out objects that are then sent to customers around the country (Tradera.com, 2012).

In today's society interest is growing for second hand shopping and more and more small and hip second hand stores are popping up as well as second hand shopping on the Internet. This also means that the competition is growing on the market. As in many other businesses today the problem is to be able to reach through the buzz. Therefore aspects such as the profile, atmosphere and visual expression of a store can be crucial to be able to attract customers. For Red Cross to attract a younger crowd of customers to its second hand shops in today's society the concepts of visual merchandising and retail design need to be taken into consideration. The customers attracted by the design of the stores today are ageing and to be able to attract a younger customer group a change is needed. A store that is interested in changing is the store in Vänersborg that will be the focus for this thesis.

1.1.3 Visual merchandising and retail design
From the beginning visual merchandising was more a concept of showing the potential customers that you existed in form of a large exhibit of the store name or showing product in the window or outside to show that you were open for business. Today this concept has broadened. Today it is not only about showing
the products anymore. The concept of visual merchandising has become an art and a business of its own. Advanced effects are used in the windows and it is more about an art display than about the actual products in many cases. The most extreme today are the department stores. (Morgan, 2008)

The subject does not only covers visual merchandising in form of in-store and window displays but also about the store as a whole and how garments and products are displayed to create a pleasing shopping environment for the customer. Today’s retailers try to create an atmosphere in the store that appeals to customers’ desires and needs. This is not only done by the visual expression but also through other sensorial measures to create that total consumer experience. Companies are competing today on having the most extraordinary window layout to be able to stick out from the crowd and be noticed by customers. Customers are overloaded by impressions when walking down a street today, and the most important thing for a retailer is to be different to be able to stand out from the competition. Windows are important but the fact that the shop lives up to the mood created by the window is equally important. (Din, 2000)

The visual merchandising is important to all kind of stores. Only because you are selling discounted goods does not mean that you do not have to care about the visual merchandising. Customers are looking for more than cheap products, they want value for money, and the help of visual merchandising can create that value. (Pegler, 2012)

1.2 Problem Area and Research Motives
The organization of Red Cross in Sweden includes a lot of different activities and a lot of different members. One of the activities is the Second hand stores all around the country. Today the second hand stores can be found in around 270 Swedish cities. The purpose of the stores is to collect money from sales of objects such as clothes, furniture, jewelry and much more, which is donated by the public. The money collected will later be used to support the work of the Red Cross on a national and international level. (Redcross.se, 2012) One of the problems that the organization is facing today is an ageing work force as well as an ageing customer group in the stores. The organization is as well drowning in all the donations from the public and cannot sell everything that they receive in the stores. These two problems are what Red Cross wanted help with and that is the reason for this thesis to be written.

Since the problem with the ageing customer in Red Cross stores also extend to the workers measures has to be taken to attract a younger crowd, which are today highly interested in this kind of shopping. Today local projects are already run in some specific cities by Red Cross to attract a younger crowd. One of them is a Re-Design project involving younger people to sew and Re-make clothes received in the shops that are not wearable as they are. These clothes will then be sold in the stores, and to find buyers for them the right customer will have to enter the store and find the store interesting. This kind of customer do not visit Red Cross today to the extent that is needed.
By gathering information from the organization on the current situation and what ideas there are, and combining these with actual theories on retail design and visual merchandising as well as looking at other similar stores that are more successful in attracting a younger crowd will create a useful input to a solution to the problem. Inspiration will be taken mostly from other second hand stores.

1.3 Purpose and Research Questions
The purpose of this paper is to develop a new retail strategy in terms of visual merchandising and retail design of Red Cross second hand stores that appeals to a younger group* of second hand shoppers, at the same time as keeping the existing customer base, to increase sales in stores. This may bring a younger crowd into the stores, which is necessary to continue the ongoing transformation to a younger organization. The organization will be studied with an action research based approach in one specific store as well as the organization as a whole.

The overall purpose presented above is further concretized in a research question, which is as follows:

*How can the Red Cross retailers use visual merchandising and retail design to attract younger customers as well as the existing ones?*

1.4 Delimitations
The focus of this paper is on visual merchandising and retail store design in the fashion business. The theories studied cover the psychological effect on customers of visual merchandising and retail design as well as practical implications. The information gathered is sorted according to what can be applied to an organization such as Red Cross therefore the more costly applications are left out. The theories studied cover the area of fashion, because clothing is the biggest product group in terms of sales quantity in Red Cross second hand stores, the theories will be applied to other products sold in the stores as well.

* A younger customer group refers to people that are under 50 years old.
1.5 Outline of the Thesis
The structure of this Thesis is divided into 6 different chapters as follows:

Chapter 1: The first chapter provides an introduction to the subject including the background to the theoretical aspects used in the study. This is followed by a discussion on the problem area studied, and the purpose and research question is presented and explained. The delimitations are also presented.

Chapter 2: The second chapter presents a deeper knowledge in the area of visual merchandising and retail design. The different aspects of the two are presented as well as practical applications used today. The chapter explains the psychological effects achieved by using it. It also presents applications for interior and exterior usage of the concept.

Chapter 3: The third chapter explains the method used to conduct the study. The research approach as well as the research process is explained and the quality of the research is discussed.

Chapter 4: The forth chapter presents the result from the empirical study. It is divided in three different areas study, which are: Red Cross Sweden, Red Cross Vänersborg and Second hand stores. The observations and interviews are summaries and presented for each part.

Chapter 5: The fifth chapter presents the analysis of the empirical results in connection to Red Cross Sweden and Red Cross Vänersborg that was presented in chapter 4.

Chapter 6: The sixth chapter presents the discussion focused on the future store in Vänersborg with background in the old store analyzed in chapter 5.

Chapter 7: The seventh chapter consists of the conclusions drawn from the analysis and discussion. To finish of it presents suggestions for further research in the area.
2. Theoretical framework

The area of visual merchandising and retail design covers a wide area today, used by all retailers in some form. The following chapter describes the concept and the psychological effect that it has on customers. It will also present the area divided in exterior and interior usage of store design.

2.1 The concept of retail design and visual merchandising

The concept of visual merchandising and retail design is closely related to the branding of a company. The branding consists of factors such as; name, symbol, packaging and advertising, and added to this is also store image. The factors affecting the store image are the merchandise sold in the store, the design of the store, service provided as well as promotional activities in the store. Most important is the physicality of the store that is determined by the retail design and visual merchandising. (Davies, 2005)

2.1.1 Importance of retail design

When planning a store and a store environment one has to first keep in mind, who are the customers? Different styles of store design attract different kinds of customers. The traditional shopper is not too impressed by a futuristic design while a traditional design will most often not be attractive to the high-end fashion customer. (Morgan, 2008) The style and design of the store have to fit the customers’ needs and preferences and these therefore need to be clearly defined before planning a retail environment. The perception of the store by the customer should fit with the expectations on the store, brought by the customers. If expectations are higher it will create a feeling of dissatisfaction by the customer, if it matches expectations the customer will be content, and if it exceeds expectations the customer will be highly satisfied and delighted. (Hines, 2007)

The store is the point of sale for the company and the place where the execution of business takes place. This is the place where it is most important to get things right. 70-80% of all purchasing decisions are made while the customer is inside the store. It is all about having the right product in the right place at the right time. But, a store is much more than its products. It sends a message about a way of being and a way of doing things. It can represent a social standpoint or background of a company, and communicate values, income, age and aspirations. (Curtis, 2004) The store with its window displays is the only major marketing tool that does not have to be paid for continuously. After set up cost has been paid, the advertising resource is there to be used. (Morgan, 2008)

2.1.2 Psychological effects on customers

The concept of visual merchandising and retail design is related to store atmosphere creation. Physical in-store variables as well as social factors effects the atmosphere created in the store. (Law, 2009) The atmosphere created in a store will have to reflect an understanding of the products sold to be coherent in its message. (Din, 2000) A pleasant store atmosphere will increase customer satisfaction. If the store environment and atmosphere is pleasant it is proven that the customer will stay longer in the store and it will also affect the spending
behavior of the customer. (Law, 2009) It also has an effect on customer loyalty and may affect it positively. Apart from the products sold in the store there are some stores that are visited by customer mostly because of the attractive atmosphere. (Hines, 2007)

Emotions are a core factor in creation of the store atmosphere. The creation of a mood and emotional connection to the store can be manipulated by the use of visual merchandising and retail design. Purchases are influenced by the mood we are in and therefore the creation of a positive mood and positive emotions is important. Even if emotional impact is important when influencing the shopping behavior of customers, there is a difference between emotional pleasure and arousal. The former stimulates the customer and makes the customer shop more and the latter makes the customer feel uncomfortable and causes the customer to leave. The latter also has a dramatic effect on the brand image. Therefore the concept of emotional impact needs to be managed carefully. (Law, 2009) In studies on store atmosphere there is a three-category framework developed by Baker in 1986 that describes the store environment. It consists of the store ambient factor, the store design factor and the store social factor.

![Figure 1: Bakers three-category framework describing the store environment.](image)

- Store ambient factor is the one referring to the background features of the store that has a subconscious effect on the customer. It includes factors such as temperature, lightning, music and scent. The rule for the ambient factors is that they all influence our 5 senses. These factors are most noticeable in extreme conditions i.e. if the music in a store is extremely high in contrast to soft and soothing to the store image, or if the light in a store is irritating for the eye in contrast to soft and relaxing.
- Store design factor refers to the environmental elements in the store. These can be both aesthetic and/or functional. The aesthetic factors are; architecture, materials used, color and merchandise display. The functional factors are; layout of the store, comfort and privacy experienced by customers.
- Store social factor refers to people that are in the store, including both customers and sales personnel, and how they behave. Each customer evaluates the service provided by sales personnel in accordance to expectations they have on the service. It can cause both satisfaction and dissatisfaction among customers. Research has shown that helpful personnel is one of the top three reasons for repeat purchases in a store, providing the customer with a positive, enjoyable and efficient shopping experience is therefor important to enhance the service experience.

(Hines 2007)
2.2 Retail design and visual merchandising in practice
There are various design principles that are the same no matter what retail business is considered, these are: Visibility, circulation, access, service and presentation. A successful design of a store could in short term show increased sales from that specific period, but also on long term by an increased brand awareness and a development of a new market and market segments. Window displays is the first image of a shop inviting the customers in, if these are not welcoming, the customer will not even look into the interior of the store. Well inside the store there are much more than the obvious visual experience to play with. The creation of a mood in the store is important, and addressing more than one sense can do this. Sensorial retailing is the concept addressing the creation of a total consumer experience. (Din, 2000)

There has been a shift the last years from interiors highly focused on security, to more open areas encouraging people to walk around the store and explore. There is also a higher degree of comfort in the stores today with resting areas and places to sit, and personal contact by sales personnel is increasing. (Din, 2000)

When planning a store, there are a lot of factors to consider. They are usually grouped in external and internal and those will now be explained in more depth.

2.3 Exterior
The exterior of a store includes the shop-front with its facade, entrance and window displays. The shop-front is the first communication with the customer. On todays shopping streets the most important is to be different and to stand out from the other shops to make the potential customer see you. The shop-front sends a message to the customer about what this store stand for and it creates a reason for the customer to enter the store to find out more. The message in the store will have to be coherent with the message delivered on the exterior, not to disappoint the customer. (Din, 2000) The exterior of a store does not only send a message to the customer telling he or she to enter the store but does also communicate the brand values of the store. Location tells the market level and most often also the price of goods sold. The materials used for the façade and front also reflect the products. A façade with expensive materials reflects high-quality products sold. The exterior thereby sends a message about what the interior will deliver. (Din, 2000)

2.3.1 Shop front and window displays
A shop can have different types of fronts, closed or open front. The open front enables the customer to see into the store and gives a glance of what is in there, and the most used material in this kind of shop front is glass. A closed front does not reveal what is in the store. The closed front is suitable for certain types of stores. It creates a feeling of something private and special and a certain belonging to a special group. This fits expensive luxury stores very well. What is applicable on both types of shop-fronts is that the entrance (either if the store is with a closed or an open front) should be easy to find and be welcoming to customers. (Pegler, 2012)
The most important exterior communication tool is the window display of the shop. Window displays can have different focus. They can be based on price with a clear emphasis on the price and value for money, they can be seductive and exiting and they can be based on creating emotions at the customer. (Din, 2000) No matter what type of window one is working with it has to be planned to attract customers as well as enhance the brand image of the company. The factors to consider are; what type of window are we working with? What would be the best way to group products in this specific window? Should we work with a theme or a scheme for the display? What props, lighting, graphic and signage is appropriate for this window? Each window is different and has its own features. There are open-back windows that enable the customer to look into the store and see what is in there. There are closed windows that are more like a theatre scene and create endless possibilities to build up a new world in the window. There are also shops that do not have showcase windows and therefore have to work with showcases inside the shop or by the entrance of the shop. The type of window sets the rules, different types of windows require different things and create different opportunities. (Morgan, 2008)
2.3.2 Display patterns
There are also different types of display patterns to use when building up a window display. The purpose of the display is to present and promote an idea or a product. Depending on what the specific purpose is, there are different types of display to be used. The one item display is most often used in more luxurious stores for showing expensive designer items for example. Line of goods display shows a line of the same type of goods, can be anything from dresses, shoes to pottery or vegetables. Related merchandise display shows different products that go together and in some way reinforce each other. The last type of display is the variety of assortment display, which is a potpourri of all kinds of products that are shown together without any obvious connection but it shows the broad range of products sold in the store. (Pegler, 2012)

![Image of display patterns](image.png)

Figure 4: One item display, line of goods display and related merchandise display (lvma.in, 2011, ccvismerch.files.wordpress.com, 2011, 2.bp.blogspot.com, 2008)

2.3.3 Theme and Scheme
When creating the display, one can decide on working with a theme or a scheme. A theme in a window is the topic of the presentation and the overall idea while the scheme is used in bigger stores that can use a different theme in each window that is connected in a creation of a scheme for the whole display. The theme and scheme can also be replicated or extended for in-store use. (Morgan, 2008)

To create the theme in the window props are used to support the products that are shown. The most common prop in fashion displays is the mannequin that is dressed in the products that one wants to show. The mannequins today come in all different shapes and designs. These can be relatively expensive and are therefore most often used more than once. Instead of mannequins different types of hangers can be used to create the shape of the human body. This is a cheaper alternative but it has to be managed carefully to look good, not to look flat in the window. (Pegler, 2012) Other object can also be used as props and in todays window displays this include all kinds of objects. The main objective of
the props is to visually support the items that are for sale and show them in a good way. The props can also be items that are for sale, but that in the display act as supporters for others. For example in a store selling both furniture and clothing, the furniture can be used for showing the clothing. Props do not have to be expensive and in many cases the best can be the cheapest. A small and cheap item can be used “en masse” to create a feeling in the window. It can be a simple item such as a tin can and does not have to be complicated. The props used in a window can be used more than ones. A chair used can be painted and used in a totally different setting the next time. (Morgan, 2008) Apart from props signage is a popular attribute to use in windows. It should be short and simple and not to complicated to be able to send the message to the viewer. It can be used as a statement to support the theme shown in the window or as a prop tying the different parts of the window display together. It should be thoughtfully considered before using it to make sure that it adds something to the display and is not only an unnecessary add-on. Signage can also be used in the purpose of showing the pricing in a window, it is then either dominant if there is a focus on price, or more discrete if the price is only extra information for the customer. It can be done in many different ways. (Morgan, 2008)

![Figure 5: Christmas theme window and props used en masse (4.bp.blogspot.com, 2010, Morgan, 2010)](image)

### 2.3.4 Color

One of the main parts of a window display is the color to use. Specific color create a certain mood and atmosphere in the display. Color is therefor a simple and inexpensive tool to use to change a window, and it can be used in many different ways. Before choosing color for the window it is important to consider the color association of the product being displayed. For example a butcher should never use red in its window because that will not show the products and the whole picture of the window would be macabre. A better color to use instead is white that will enhance the features of the meat more and the display will also appear as hygienic. (Morgan, 2008) A color can say a lot about the brand and the store. A specific color in a sign can say more that the specific words written. Different colors have different associations, these vary among people but there are some general guidelines to follow. One can never satisfy everyone with the color chosen, but should strive for satisfying the majority. (Pegler, 2012)
Colors can help enhance the window in certain ways; white will make it look bigger while black will make it look smaller, stripes in different directions will make it look wider or taller. (Morgan, 2008) There are some colors that have stronger associations than other one example is red. Red is in general perceived as exciting, loving and sexy but can also be perceived as demanding, cheap, warm and passionate. Because of its association to cheap it is used in displays for price promotions and sales and it is a very popular color to use in window displays. White is another popular color in display settings mostly because of its supporting function to others colors and its ability to make the window look bigger. White stands for innocence, hope, sterile, antiseptic and harsh among other things. (Pegler, 2012)

2.3.5 Lighting
To make all display work made in the windows show lighting is used. There is general lighting, which is most often relatively soft. It can be perceived as boring if flat and left alone, and irritating if to bright. Therefore accent lighting is used, this light creates shadows and highlights certain products or parts of the display and make it more delightful for the viewer and more intriguing. It makes certain products stand out form the rest and enhances product features and colors. (Pegler, 2012)

What is important to remember in connection to window displays is that creativity does not have to be expensive and a lot of creative things can be done with cheap and simple materials. Many of the most creative displays come from economical ideas but are yet very effective. The visual merchandising is important for the brand and store image and should therefore be carefully considered, and the importance should not be overlooked. (Morgan, 2008)

2.4 Interior
The purpose of the interior design of a store is to lead the customer through the store in a logical order to make sure that the customer will see the most of the products sold in the store. By design it is possible to lead the customer to certain areas and make them stop at certain places. When asking customers to describe their favorite stores the most common descriptions are, easy to shop in, easy to find the products and clear and informative signs. To build up this kind of environment for the customers one should start with defining what products
that should be shown and try to group these products into product adjacencies to determine which products should be shown together. This will also reveal which products are most important and should thereby be placed in prime locations. It should be easy for the customer to find these products and to make it easy there should be obvious walkways and a flow through the store. (Morgan, 2008)

Interior store design is as important for the high-end luxury store as for the lower end retail store. Only selling merchandise that is at discount is not enough for today’s customers. Shoppers shop for value and not cheap, so even if the products are cheap they want it to look as it is worth more. Today’s outlets look like malls and even though cheaper materials are used and they might be less elegant, a lot of focus has been directed towards the design of the shopping environment and the obvious difference in comparison with the bigger malls is now only the price. (Pegler, 2012)

2.4.1 Planning the store area
When starting to plan a store environment the first thing to do is a rough plan. Then it is time to try to visualize how the customer will move in the store and how the customer will experience it. It is common to divide the store floor in 4 different areas. These are often named by colors of platinum, gold, silver and bronze. Platinum is the most attractive space and most often the place close to the entrance that all customers will see. The bronze area is in the back of the shop and is most often used for staple products or desirable products to make people walk all the way through the store and to create a flow of people through the store. The name of the areas can be different but the division is common in companies. (Morgan, 2008)

![Diagram of store area](image)

**Figure 7: Division of store area (Morgan, 2008)**
Visibility is number one when planning the store area; important features such as lifts and stairs have to be visible if the store is more than one floor, so that all customers are allowed access to all floors and parts of the store. (Din, 2000) Visibility is also important in terms of merchandise shown. There should be a clear direction for the customer to follow when entering the store. Walls can be built and used to create sightlines as well as other floor fixtures. If the store consists of a big area one should vary the display and fixtures used, not to bore the customer. (Morgan, 2008)

There are some rules of circulation to consider. As presented by Din in the book “New retail”, those are:

- Visibility means access, customers want to know where they have been and where they are going.
- Good signage is reassuring the customer
- Landmarks in terms of, for example in-store displays create a point of reference.
- In larger stores circulation need to be clear and easy to access.
- Walkways help bringing customers to the lower end of bigger stores.
- Walkways should not bore the customer by continuing in a straight line for too long.
- Departments should not be far away from the walkways, as that will tempt customers to leave the walkway.
- Dead ends should be avoided.
- Product areas should be attractive and lure the customer, not be too large and overwhelming to make customers feel trapped.
- Bottlenecks should be avoided.
- There should be areas to relax in the store. (Din, 2000)

Depending on the store-type these walkways can be squared, curved or provide a free flow. How the customers move in the store should be continuously studied to be able to be evaluated and improved. Before making a detailed plan of the store area the above mentioned factors should be taken into account as well as an understanding for the following:

- The features of the building; age, type and construction.
- The brand values, image and brand identity.
- The customer profile
- The stores owners objectives and philosophy.
- Products to be sold in the store and how they interact.
- Legislation and rules for safety issues (Din, 2000)

When planning the store, the area visible for the customers, as well as the area used by the staff need to be considered. The store area includes the circulation flow and thereby placing of fixtures as well as the placing of service areas and
display of products. Service areas are an important part of the store, these are the areas containing cash desks, fitting rooms, service counters as well as the back end areas of staff rooms and offices as well as stockrooms. The cash desk is an important part of the store and there are a lot to take into consideration when placing it. There has to be sufficient areas for packaging and for the electronic equipment needed, the cash desks should not be too close to the entrance to create a negative psychological effect and not too far back in the store for security reasons. Fitting rooms are something that often leaves impressions on customers. They shall be placed deep inside the store to make customers move through the store when going to the fitting room as well as to create a sense of privacy for customers when trying on a garment. (Din, 2000)

2.4.2 Fixtures
There are different types of fixtures used in store design and for promoting and showing products. There are wall fixtures and mid-floor fixtures. Wall fixtures consist of either slat walls and grid systems or fixed rails and shelves. The systems are changeable and can be varied a lot by adding different features to a fastened base. It can carry shelves and rails and all kinds of fixtures on it. The fixed rails and shelves are on the other hand fixed so they are not as flexible but can carry a higher weight of goods on it. The latter is also most often more aesthetic than the previous mentioned. (Morgan, 2008) The back walls in the store are the fixture furthest into the store and thereby the one most difficult to make visible from the entrance. To increase the visibility in the store the fixtures used in the front of the store are often lowest, the middle level of the floor a little bit higher, while the display on the back wall is often very high up to make everything visible from the front of the store. They are most often also enhanced by light to make them more visible. (Pegler, 2012)

![Image of hanging gondola and tables as mid-floor fixtures](Manuelli, 2006, Roseknowdigital.com, 2012)

The mid-floor fixtures consist of many different forms of fixture. There are, among others, gondolas, tables, hanging rails, furniture and found objects used as fixtures. The features that they share is that they are free-standing, they carry merchandise, they direct customers through the store, they can be shopped from all angles and they are not too high so they do not obscure the shopping...
area. Gondolas come in many sizes and are most often rectangular with access from all sides, they can be moved around and are a great selling tool for themes. Tables are good for showing garments and home ware. They are familiar to customers and customers therefore feel comfortable shopping from them. They can be purchased or bespoke according to specific needs. (Morgan, 2008) Hanging rails come in capacity rails or single bar rails. The capacity rails are used for carrying a large amount of stock while single rail are used for more varying merchandise. The capacity rails can be for example T-stands or circular rails. (Din, 2000) Furniture is most often used to create a kind of setting in the store. Most used furniture for fixtures are cupboards and cabinets. These are well suited for showing both clothes (mostly in the cupboards) and home ware (mostly in the cabinets). The only problem with these is to get sufficient lighting inside so that the merchandise will be visible to the customer. Last is found objects used as fixtures, which could be antique furniture mixed with contemporary products as an example. These are very cost efficient as well as recyclable and does not have to have a clear connection to the store. They are a fun and alternate feature in the store. (Morgan, 2008)

When selecting what fixtures to use in a store one should consider if the fixture is coherent with the brand image and the concept of the store, and the rest of the architecture. Most importantly if it is suitable for the products that one wants to show and if it will hold for it. Variation is as well important. Finish of the fixture is also something that needs to be coherent with the image. (Pegler, 2012) There are trends in fixtures used in store. For many years a lot of chrome and clear plastic was used and now it has change to becoming more natural materials and wood is therefore popular today as well as furniture, which are most often made out of some kind of wood. (Din, 2000)

2.4.3 Product handling
When making use of the different fixtures there are different ways of showing the merchandise. One can choose to let color; coordination, brand, size, price or end-use decide the way the display should be organized. (Pegler, 2012) There are some different techniques to choose from:

- Color blocking is when gathering the products in the same colors. This is the simplest way of arranging products. It is easy to master and can be used on both walls and mid-floor fixtures.
- Horizontal merchandising should be used only on walls. Products are organized in horizontal rows with one product on each row. Easy to replenish.
- Vertical merchandising is only applicable on walls and organizes the merchandise from top down. It is functional and easy to replenish.
- Symmetrical merchandising creates a mirrored effect of the merchandise. The product are duplicated and shown twice with an invisible line in the middle. Only used on walls.
- Chequered merchandise is only used on walls and uses the color of the products to create a chequered pattern.
• Anatomical merchandising is only used for fashion products and shows the way they should be worn by hanging them on top of each other.
• Coordinated merchandising groups products to create a total look for the customer.
• Product collection displays is when gathering a wide range of the same product to show the wide range of colors or styles.

(Morgan, 2008)

2.4.4 In-store displays
In-store displays is also a tool often used to create a mood in the store, and to get the attention of people walking by, to make them enter the store. It works like an extension of the window display. These are most often showing products that are for sale but might also be art exhibitions catching the attention of people. They are often placed close to the entrance or at the end of an escalator or walkway to catch the attention of people without being obstructed. (Din, 2000)

2.4.5 Pricing tickets
Pricing tickets is something necessary in a store, they can be used in different ways. In a store with a lot of promotional products it can be used as big signs above the products on sale to make it stick out and show. On normal products it is usually shown with a price ticket attached to the product. This should be placed on the same place on all similar products. On more exclusive products the price tag is often hidden while on cheaper or medium priced products it is easier to find. (Morgan, 2008)
2.4.6 Ambient factors
What have been presented so far is the most used features to create a mood in the store and to help customers to find and to enjoy a nice experience in the store. There are though more features that can be added to create a nice atmosphere in the store. This can be music, scent and plants among others. Music will always add atmosphere to a store (Morgan, 2008), but it does not come without cost. To be able to play music in a store in Sweden the storeowner will have to pay a fee to STIM and SAMI, which are two organizations of music owners and artist in Sweden. The fee is related to the size of the store and the opening hours. (Stim.se, 2012) It should be considered carefully when deciding on what music should be played as all music does not fit all customer groups. The music should therefore be chosen according to customer group targeted and what merchandise is sold. This is also applicable to scent since it is highly personal what scents one likes, this is even harder then music. Scent does not have a proven effect on the customer. Another feature is plants that are always a great way of creating atmosphere but need to be taken care of continuously to stay fresh. (Morgan, 2008)
3. Method
The following chapter will provide an introduction to the research method used when addressing the research problem as well as an explanation on why the respective method was chosen for this specific study. It will also present an overview of how the work was done and in what chronological order and the research quality will be discussed.

3.1 Research Approach
The research approach was not evident in the beginning of the research process. The problem that the author was assigned by Red Cross was further developed during the project and as time went on it became obvious that the author would be taking active part in the project in Vänersborg and the appropriate approach of the research would therefore be action based. This means that the author has been conducting a research that, where the results are influenced by the author herself when taking active part in the project studied.

3.1.1 Action approach/research
The general and most important purpose of action research is not to produce information and data in text but to improve practice. That is what sets the rules for this relatively practical research approach. The purpose is also to answer the question of “How should I improve what is happening here?” The action research approach is a relatively local form of research. The results are thereby not generalizable on the same terms as other approaches. The research can be conducted on different levels in society. It can be on a subject level, staff level, group development level, institutional development level, social or community development level or a wider institutional community development level. (researchandwriting.com) The action research conducted in this paper is on a subject and an institutional level since its focus is on a division as well as specific store in the Red Cross organization.

According to O’Brien 1998 “Put simply, action research is “learning by doing” – a group of people identify a problem, do something to resolve it, see how successful their efforts were, and if not satisfied, try again.” In the same paper he states that people learn best when they are involved and do it themselves, rather then being subjects and being told what to do. Action research is used in real life situations and conducted by the practitioners in a setting. It is most often though executed by academics who have been invited to an organization to help with something that the decision-makers in the organization does not have enough knowledge to deal with on their own. (O’Brien, 1998) The process of action research is cyclical. It contains exploration, knowledge construction and action at different times throughout the research, followed by evaluation. The process is continuously changing and the participating researcher, as well as the other participants, is effecting the situation continuously. The topic that is studied shall also be raised by the organization of participants. Based on their desires, the actions will be taken and improvements will be made. (McIntyre, 2008) In the case of this study the problem came from the organization of Red Cross in discussion with the author. The research question was formed in cooperation and later revised in cooperation with the specific store and the
organization at place as well as continuous contact with other actors in the Red Cross organization in Sweden. The process started with gathering information on the subject studied as well as the organization. The final result is a proposal for improvement that will hopefully be taken to action after finishing this project.

3.2 Qualitative Research
The methods used to gather information and data in the action-based research are affected by the context based research question. The information can therefore be both quantitative and qualitative in nature and gathered via different channels. (McIntyre, 2008) The empirical data gathered for the research of this study is gathered by using qualitative research methods. The qualitative methods used were interviews as well as observations. The qualitative information was gathered from key players in the organization of the second hand stores of Red Cross Sweden. The author also actively took part in the project of planning a new store in the city of Vänersborg, Sweden. The reason for choosing the qualitative approach in favor of the quantitative approach was that the information needed to create a relevant result and conclusion of the study was of a more qualitative nature. A quantitative method would not have provided the same depth as the qualitative information gathered in this research process.

3.3 Research process
After getting in contact with Elisabeth Dahlin from the Red Cross in Gothenburg on a company day at the Swedish school of textiles in January 2012 the idea for the project was born. In further discussion with her and Amanda Ericsson (a PHD student at the Swedish School of Textiles in Borås, earlier involved in research in cooperation with Red Cross) the final project was organized. The task given by Red Cross Sweden to investigate and help the organization with was a relatively wide task. In this study the focus is an organization and an institution in the organization. The institution chosen would have to be an organization open for change and a will to include new ideas in the further development of its retail activities. The decision to work with the organization of Red Cross in Vänersborg was due to a reorganization of their second hand shop and the development of a new store in the near future. At the moment of writing the organization is planning to move the second hand store to new premises, and when having the possibility to reorganize the whole shopping area they needed help. There was also a possibility to join a project in Stockholm, which was left out due to time constraints but is also mentioned in the thesis as an example of how it could be done. The criteria of a possibility to directly influence the work and an organization open for change was fulfilled and therefore the specific store in Vänersborg was the chosen project to be involved in and where the research would take place.
3.4 Data collection
The data used in the following study is mostly first hand data collected from personal contact with people involved in the work that was investigated. This, both in terms of people working with the specific project in Vänersborg as well as people active in similar projects in Sweden and people with relevant related knowledge in the organization of Red Cross. Second hand data was also gathered in terms of already written reports and handbooks on similar projects inside of the organization to be able to broaden the knowledge. Other smaller cases where also studied as examples and inspirational input to the research, those with the help of second hand data from websites and articles as well as visits to stores. These were used for inspirational purposes.

The openness and the willing to change of the Red Cross organization created an environment favorable for qualitative studies and in the gathering of the first hand data both observation and interviews were used.

3.4.1 Participant Observation
The author took part in the planning project of a new Red Cross second hand store in Vänersborg, Sweden. This enabled the author to participate in the real improvement work of the organization of the store and the result of the study will contribute to the work of this specific group. The method used along the way was a participant observation.

The most important form of qualitative research in terms of observation is to see and listen to what is really going on and not what is mounted only because of the researcher being present (Ely, 1993). Participant observation is when the researcher takes part actively or passively in an organization, process or event that the researcher wants to study. By doing so a deeper understanding of the work is achieved and information that would otherwise be lost, when only reading reports or talking to people describing the work, is now gained. There are though also disadvantages with the method. The researcher as a participant can be involved in the work and therefore lose the objective stand and present a more subjective picture of the situation; the author can also influence the work. Because of the possible disadvantages another method should also be used in research to support the result. (Ejvægård, 2009) In action research this critique is not a problem since the author is meant to take active part in the development of the project.

There are 4 different ways of conducting participant observation and they differ on to what extent the observer is active in the situation observed. Either the observer is very active and involved in the process and do not reveal her role as observer, or the observer is involved but at the same time an observer in the sense that the group knows about the observation but that is not the participants main objective, or the observer is mostly an observer and the role as participant in the work is inferior to the role as observer, or the observer is solely an observer (sometimes invisible or anonymous in the situation). (Merriam, 1994) The role taken by the author, in the project participation in Vänersborg, for this thesis is as an observer whose main task is to observe but who also
participates in the work. The group knows about the task of the study but is also interested in the knowledge and contribution to the work by the author. By acting as an outsider in the organization the author can see the situation from another point of view. By the help of the people working in the organization this can create a bigger picture and enable the author to interpret the situation by the help of her own skills without the interpretation of someone else (Merriam, 1994).

Non-participatory observations were as well made in stores in Gothenburg, Stockholm, Copenhagen and London. The interior and exterior of the stores was studied and documented with pictures to be used as inspirational input to the outcome of the study.

3.4.2 Interviews
To gather more specific information from the contacts at the Red Cross the author decided on using both informal and formal interviews. Informal interview are typically conducted while the observation takes place and are more spontaneous and improvised while the formal interviews are more planned and are most often conducted at another place than where the actual work studied is being done to be able to talk in a relaxed and more calm environment to discuss the subject more deep (Ely 1993). The informal interviews were conducted when the participant observation was done and in the interaction with the people active in the project. The formal interview was made with a girl at the Red Cross head quarter in Stockholm to be able to get deeper and more background information from the organization.

3.5 Research quality
The study is based on a lot of observation as well as a few interviews. The fact that the largest base of the research is observations and in this case participant observations where the author has been active in the project studied and affected the results and information gathered creates a relatively subjective result. An observation can never be purely objective since the observer chooses what information to filter out and what to record. In this case the author has as well taken an active part and influenced the process along the way.

The result is as well subjective in the sense that an action-based approach has been used and the study is conducted mainly on one local organization in the Red Cross. The result is applicable on this specific organization but cannot be directly transferred and used for another local organization in Sweden because of the uniqueness of each organization. Although the result from the study can be useful for inspirational purposes for the whole organization and parts of it can be directly applied to other local Red Cross second hand stores around Sweden.
4. Results of Empirical Study

In the following chapter the results from the participant observations and interviews will be presented, as well as the observations in store for inspirational purposes. The results are divided into three areas; Red Cross Sweden, Red Cross Vänersborg and Second hand stores.

4.1 Red Cross Sweden – The organization of the Second hand stores

Martina Bozic is working at the headquarters of Red Cross Sweden in Stockholm. Her responsibilities are focused on activity development of all activities held at Mötésplats Kupan around Sweden. She is also since a couple of months back responsible for the opening of the new concept store at Hornsgatan 56 in Stockholm. This is one of two stores that are opening now and that are centrally owned by the Red Cross organization. The other one is an Outlet store in Skärholmen, Stockholm. I met with her in Stockholm for a talk on the general second hand store concept of Mötésplats Kupan as well as the two new stores in Stockholm.

4.1.1 Mötésplats Kupan

Mötésplats Kupan is much more than a second hand store. It is in many cases as well a social gathering spot and has different meanings for different people, which have made it to a blurry concept. In many Mötésplats Kupan one can find many different activities. In addition to the second hand store there are language cafes, soup kitchen, homework support for children, café and much more. Therefore the meaning is diverse of the concept Kupan. If only mentioning Kupan and not “Mötésplats” though one is most often referring to the second hand stores.

The second hand stores of Red Cross are not centrally owned. Instead all local organizations around the country are each and every one of them their own economic and legal entity and make their own decisions on what to do in that specific region of theirs. This is considered an advantage in many cases but regarding the second hand stores it makes it hard to implement a uniform concept for the stores. Each store develops their own concept in terms of bags used, fixtures in the stores and much more. Martina Bozic is now working on a uniform concept for each organization to voluntarily join if they want to. The focus is now also on the stores in Stockholm, which are centrally owned, where concepts can be tested before implemented elsewhere. There is today a second hand store handbook that all stores have access to with guidelines to follow. The aspects included in the handbook are everything from the basic visual expressions to security issues and accessibility of the store. It will be explained in the following chapter.

4.1.2 Second hand store handbook

The basic aspects to first consider when opening a new second hand store for Red Cross is the location for the store, are there other second hand stores in the neighborhood that already attracts that kind of customer? These stores should not be seen as competitors but rather as complements. Stores that people visit often, such as grocery stores are also good to have nearby since those create a
steady flow of people in the area. It is very important that the store is accessible for everyone and that everyone have access to the most important parts of the stores including toilets no matter what functional limitations. It is also important that there are parking lots close by so that customers can park and do not have to walk a long way to enter the store, or when transporting goods to and from the store.

The first impression that meets the customer is the entrance and the exterior of the store. This should be kept clean and tidy and up-to-date information should be shown here and other activities that lure customers into the store. If there are window displays the same apply to them and they shall always show a clear message to the customer and should be changed often. Prices should be easy to find and the display should be emphasized with lighting. There are certain rules for the exterior of the store. The communication of the Red Cross organization need to be evident and the store should be recognizable for the customer, the graphical guidelines and models developed by the organization also needs to be followed. There are certain requirements for information being showed about the work and the value of the organization and these can be shown in printed form or via TV screens (in the case of TV, TV-license need to be paid for) inside the store. Since the stores are dependent on donated goods it should also be clearly communicated what goods are accepted and what not, and how one can donate it.

Regarding the interior of the store there are some suggestions. Color blocking should preferably be used to organize products in the store. This creates a more uniform and calm feeling in the store, which is the biggest challenge for a second hand store. The easiest way to show the goods is also to organize it vertically and not too high so that everyone can reach it. The assortment should be changed often so that the customer experiences a news value when entering the store. Products not sold that have been in the store for a while should be remove and put on sale. If there are remade products by members of the organization these can be sold in a special section of the store marked with the word “Förädling” to clarify that these products has been remade. If music is to be played in the store fees have to be paid to the organizations STIM and SAMI according to legislation. The fee is set in relation to store area and opening days per year. Apart from the normal store one can also in certain occasions use a Pop-up store somewhere else to create a news value and a broadened knowledge about the store and the brand. The use of Internet as a sales channel should not be overseen. If the store collect some valuable products and do not believe that the right customer is in the neighborhood it can instead be sold on Tradera in the Red Cross store.

The personnel working in the store are also important for the image and the atmosphere. They should always put the customer in first hand and always say hello when a customer walks in. All customers should be treated the same and the sales personnel should always be on hand if anyone needs help. The counter is the last impression of the store, cues should be kept short and the impression when leaving the store should be a good one.
In an organization such as Red Cross it is not only the actual value of the product that customers pay for but everything surrounding the products as well that add value to it. In an organization as Red Cross it is also the environmental and social/health aspects of the products, the cultural benefit and the relief effort created thanks to the products sold. These should be emphasized and clear to the customer.

4.1.3 Volunteers
Volunteers run more or less all second hand stores in the Red Cross organizations around the country. In the two new stores in Stockholm there are two people hired as store managers to be able to get the store going and to create stability in the beginning. Apart from that, everyone working in the stores is a volunteer. Anyone can sign up for as much time as they feel that they can offer, there is a minimum of 3 hours each time the volunteer is in the store but it is individual if those 3 hours are once every week, once a month or more often depending on how much time each person has. For the store at Hornsgatan the volunteers are in very mixed ages which is unusual for a Red Cross second hand store that are usually run by a majority of older people, mostly retired people. Martina Bozic believes that it is important to attract a younger group of volunteers, and believes that the second hand concept can do that today. She also emphasizes the importance of the older people that create stability in the organization since they can offer more time and work spent in the store. The fact that volunteers run all the stores makes Red Cross different from other actors on the market, for example Myrorna. Martina Bozic explains why Myrorna has come further in the development of the concept in their stores, she mentions that, “they are centrally owned and the workers in the stores are paid”.

4.1.4 Hornsgatan
The concept of the store on Hornsgatan is very different from the other Red Cross second hand stores. The store is situated on one of the best addresses regarding second hand sales in Stockholm. Several other second hand stores are situated on Hornsgatan and people travel to Mariatorget (which is right next to the store) to shop for second hand goods. Martina Bozic chooses to see the other actors that are situated close by as complementary shops rather than competitors. She believes that since there is no way that they can sell the same goods and it is therefore only a positive synergy effect of attracting more customers to the street and the stores. Goods sold in the store on Hornsgatan will be primarily women and men’s clothing including everything that can be used to create an outfit, and occasionally children. The decision not to sell furniture and other things was made due to the lack of space in the store. Goods sold in the store will be clothes that are “modern” and that are worth more than 50 SEK. This is the guideline to work from and the concept will be further developed during time. The goods that are not sellable for that price will be sent to the store in Skärholmen and Skärholmen will send the goods that is worth more to Hornsgatan. This is possible because the two stores are both centrally owned.
The store on Hornsgatan will open the 8th of June. The store is 160 m² and will not be used as a normal Möttesplats Kupan so there is in the beginning no space for social activities more than a planned sewing room at the back of the store. Although it will as all other Second hand stores by the Red Cross show information about the organization and what good the money do. It will be shown by for example a TV screen with pictures from different projects running. The interior of the store has been designed by students from the design school Beckmans, in Stockholm, in cooperation with other professional visual merchandisers working in conventional stores today. The inspiration for the interior design is collected from a container harbor and different details from this will be seen in the store, sais Martina Bozic. When I visited the store it was only in its starting phase so none of the interior décor was in place. Martina Bozic is hoping that the visual merchandising of the store can be done in the future in cooperation with bloggers and other famous people that can as well market the store through their communication channels. Today there is a girls named Viktoria Möller that is hirered by Red Cross to handle the visual merchandising in the store and that also is working on the Blogg LOOK that is driven in cooperation with Sundsvalls Tidning, where she blogs about eco friendly fashion and her everyday life.

When discussing the subject of whether or not to play music in the store Martina explains that music is in general not played in stores around the country. This is a question of cost. Martina Bozic though believes that music in the store would add a lot to the atmosphere and if the sales are good enough it might be used in the store on Hornsgatan as a start.
4.1.5 Skärholmen
The store in Skärholmen has a different purpose and focus than the one at Hornsgatan. It is an outlet store and this is a new concept for Red Cross Sweden. The business idea is that the customer pays 50 SEK for a paper bag to fill with as much clothes as possible. This is an opening offer and the price might be raised later. The store opened week 16 2012 and is so far working out good. The assortment sold in the store is everything used to create an outfit for women, men and children. Which means accessories, clothes, and shoes. This has solved the problem in the Stockholm region on what to do with the products that wont sell in the normal store. A while ago a decision was made for the Red Cross not to send clothes abroad as support but instead sell everything where it is collected and send the money abroad. This decision was made on environmental grounds as well as a will of instead making the local market benefit from the products, and then the money will help internationally. The immediate effect of this decision was a mountain of clothes, by the organization called a “clothes tsunami”. Inspired by the fact that people in New York, London and Paris are buying second hand per kilo the outlet concept with the bag was introduced. The store has so far been successful but the challenge for the future is to increase the knowledge of the store among potential customers. A disadvantage for Red Cross compared to another actor on the market, for example Myrorna where they have a big central sorting facility, is that all the receiving and sorting of donations is handled locally which does not give the same opportunity of sorting and sending different products to different stores. All stores therefore have all things and there are until today no niche boutiques in the organization before the outlet in Skärholmen started and the concept store on Hornsgatan.

In the beginning the organizations in the Stockholm area can then send the products that cannot be sold to the outlet and in the future this is a concept that will hopefully be used in other parts of the country as well. Either in regions with many second hand stores or if bigger second hand stores work with the concept alone, maybe once a month or similar. If the outlet and concept store are successful there are plans on opening more similar centrally owned stores in the bigger cities in Sweden and the most interesting at first is Malmö.

4.1.6 New activities at Mötesplats Kupan
Elisabeth Dahlin is another actor working centrally in the organization with responsibility for the textile activities in the second hand stores and at Mötesplats Kupan. Elisabeth Dahlin has been working for the Red Cross for one year now and her focus is on new ways to handle all the textile material that the organization receive, how to turn that into money that can help people around the world and to reduce the waste. The first and obvious way is to sell the garments and other textiles in the second hand stores as they are. There is though a problem with what to do with everything that cannot be sold as it is. There is a huge mountain of textile material that has until now only been treated as waste and that is what Elisabeth Dahlin is trying to change. There are a lot of projects running and Elisabeth told me about how broken knitted sweaters are being demolished into yarn again and new things are made out of that yarn and old inflatable bathing rings that are broken are turned into rain hats. There are
many ideas and Elisabeth Dahlin is trying to implement these in the sewing groups around the country. The rest of the material that cannot be used for something else is today shipped to Holland where there is a recycling company that is turning textile material into other products and gives it new life.

Elisabeth Dahlin also discusses the problem with getting younger people activated in the organization and she believes that this has to be a mix of interest from the younger and a will by the older to let the younger generation in. There is a youth organization in the Red Cross of Sweden but this organization is totally separated from the rest of Red Cross and is therefore hard to involve in the work in the Second hand stores. There are some good examples of young girls active in the organization, both of them in the textile field, which has been very successful. Elisabeth Dahlin believes that this younger group has to be attracted as well by the activities in the organization and that is something that has to be developed. The sewing activity is one way according to Elisabeth, and these can be organized in different ways. Elisabeth also mentions an exciting project that is now run in cooperation with an architectural agency in Stockholm where different knitting groups around the country are together knitting curtains that are going to be used in a new restaurant in Stockholm, called Motvall. The restaurant has a theme with reused materials and sustainable thinking with goes hand in hand with the Red Cross. This is also a way for the Red Cross to be seen in new arenas at the same time as collecting money. Another project is run by two students called “Made in jail” Where they are activating prisoners with weaving carpets that will be sold under the brand “Made in jail”.

Figure 12: Re-designed products, dress made of old curtain, hats and gloves made of old sweater & pillow made of old kettle-holders (Rednet.redcross.se)
4.2 Participant observations at Red Cross Vänersborg

During the work with the organization in Vänersborg my primary contact person has been Marianne Barrljung who is the chairman of the organization. In the workgroup responsible for the new premises there are another 5 members, some of them from the board and some not. The organization has been looking for new premises for a while and on the 9th of May the decision was made to move to Industrigatan 8 in Vänersborg in May next year. The new premises is an old industrial building that is situated close to the train station in Vänersborg and right next to the present store of Erikshjälpen second hand, which is run by Pingstkyrkan. This store is very popular and the sales in the store are very high.

4.2.1 The existing store

The awareness of the Red Cross store in Vänersborg is today experienced as quite low. The present store is centrally located a couple of streets away from the shopping street in Vänersborg. The store area is separated by a lot of walls, which creates smaller rooms that are each used for one specific type of products. This creates a cozy feeling but is as well a hinder in developing the store. The service areas are spread around the store with one fitting room next to the entrance and one in the middle of the store in one of the small rooms. The cash desk is placed in the middle of the first room. The store is not accessible to everyone today as to enter the store there is a staircase and inside the store are also stairs that need to be passed to get in to different rooms.

Today the store has a wide display area with windows that covers the building on one side so there are lots of opportunities to show the products for the outside, mannequins are mainly used to display products in the windows. The fixtures used for showing products are only floor fixtures in terms of tables, bookshelves and cupboards and no wall fixtures are used. There is one room, furthest in that has a setting of a library with chairs to sit in and walls covered by bookshelves.

The goods donated is handed in inside the store today. This can be done during the opening hours of the store. Today the store is filled and there are also a lot of things stacked away. Some that are out of season and some that simply do not fit in the store. When the donations are received in the store a woman responsible for this checks them. She looks it through to see if it is dirty or broken and if so, the dirty things are washed and the broken are thrown away. The rest of the clothes are ironed if needed and then marked with price tags and put in the store. All clothes are not marked with tags since a unit price system is used in the store. There are small papers put on the walls at different places that display the price for example trousers 50 SEK, tops 20 SEK etcetera. Goods that are not in season are stacked away, to be sold later. The problem today is that the area used for preparing and working with the goods before entering the store is very small and it is hard to keep order with all things stacked away.

The products inside the store are sorted after their use. Clothes are shown separated from books, kitchenware and furniture that are shown separately. The clothes are then divided in children, women and men and combined with the
accessories to each group. There is no evident organizing in the separate departments, color blocking is used in some cases for the kitchenware.

Figure 13: The existing store in Vänersborg

According to one of the ladies working in the store and always responsible for the cash desk there is a mixed customer group. There are a lot of immigrants as well as older people but also a younger group of customers. The products sold are mostly clothes and kitchenware, such as porcelain and glass products as well as other kitchen equipment.

Everyone in the organization, and in the store, are volunteers and I got the feeling that they are all more or less like a little family. There are three of them that are over 80 years old and the rest is between 65 and 80 years old with a few exceptions. The store is a social spot to meet up and there is a little café with self-service for the visitors to use. There are home baked cookies, baked by volunteers.

4.2.2 The new store
The new store area in Vänersborg will be used both for second hand sales and as a social gathering area, therefore both these two aspects need to be taken into consideration and the needs for the two different uses. In a document from the meeting about what the needs and wishes on the new store are there has been stated that when it comes to the size of the new store it needs to be at least 700 m² to fill all needs. Apart from the actual store there is a need for 150-200 m² of space used for the receiving of products and preparing of products (washing, cleaning, price tagging, storing of out of season products) before entering the store as well as space for an office, kitchen, toilets and café that can be separated from the store area. The store where the operations take place today is a total of 545 m² with 325 m² of store, café, toilet and kitchen and 220 m² of space used for the rest of the activities.

The important factors of the store for both volunteers and customers/visitors has as well been clarified, and the most important factors for the volunteers is that the area need to be practical, that there is daylight in the store and the ability to work rationally. For the customers/visitors the most important factors
are that there is a parking space, that the store is easy to find and that there is sufficient signage outside to show the way, service minded staff in the store, easy to find the products, good value products and good activities and arrangements at the meeting place organized by the Red Cross alone or in cooperation with other actors. By adding this factors together the organization wants the store to communicate well-being, comfort, safety and accessibility for everyone. For all this to happen there is a need for the turnover to double, new volunteers to join the work and more products donated to the store.

Figure 14: Sketch of the new store, first floor and second floor.

The new premises that has been decided upon is around 750 m² and as mentioned before the address is Industrigatan 8, Vänstersborg. This is an industrial area that is developing into more of a shopping area. There are 3 other second hand stores in the area as well as some other specialty stores. Until now the premises has been an area used for industrial production that is now cleared. The premises is big with a lot of potential according to the property owner Jonas Sundelius who has a lot of ideas about how to remodel the area and make it suitable for activities held by Red Cross.

Figure 15: The new store

The new store will imply a higher cost for the organization as well as a need for more volunteers to work in the store. There are 10-15 loyal volunteers active in the store today and there will be a need for at least 20 in the new store, more
volunteers needs to be gathered to be able to provide a sufficient service for the visitors. The economical point of view is also important since the store will have to double the sales to be able to afford the new store and still create a surplus. The cost for remodeling the premises will be paid by the property owner but the costs for decorating it will have to be paid by Red Cross Vänersborg. To attract a younger group of customers a younger group of volunteers is needed. The decision was made to investigate the interest of students from “Högskolan i väst” which is a college situated close to Vänersborg. The college students are considered more responsible than high school students and the cooperation is believed to be easier than that already experienced with high school students. This can be a good source for new volunteers to be complemented by the older retired volunteers that have more time to give and can therefore be active more than the younger can. New volunteers will also be searched for in already existing members as well as contacts held by the already existing active Red Cross members.

The new store will give the ability for donators to more easily leave their donations. Today donations are handed in in the store and it is a small space to store the donations, therefore a smaller amount of furniture and bigger pieces are received and clothes dominate the donations. The more accessible entrance for leaving donations is believed to increase the donations in general. An organization to pick up donations at the home of donators is also discussed.

The new premises is situated in an area where there are today one existing antique shop, another second hand store as well as the biggest second hand store in Vänersborg, which is run by Erikshjälp. The fact that they are all situated in the same area will most likely create synergy effects that can be taken advantage of by Red Cross. Customers will be drawn to this area for second hand shopping and will most likely visit more than one store if going there. Today the location of the Second hand store of Red Cross in Vänersborg is unknown to many and by moving there it will most likely increase the knowledge about the store.

To be able to stick out from these other second hand retailers and to survive it is believed that it will be important to create a niche to the store that makes it different from the others and one idea is to niche and target a younger customer group. Added value to the products will also be created by a focus on the comfort and atmosphere in the store, the store is not only about selling but also a social meeting spot for many people and need to have an atmosphere corresponding to that.
4.3 Second hand stores
During the study inspirational visits to second hand stores were made in Copenhagen, Stockholm, London and Gothenburg. In this chapter a selection of them will be presented and a list with the rest can be found in the appendix.

4.3.1 Copenhagen
The 13th of April the author visited Copenhagen for a day to discover the second hand stores of the city. A wide range of stores was visited with different attributes and some of them will be described below.

Melange de Luxe, Ravnsborggade 6
This store can be found in the area called Nørrebro in Copenhagen, which is an area filled with second hand stores. The focus of the store is on second hand garments, accessories and shoes for women from high-end fashion brands at a relatively high price. This is the store you visit to find that unique garment for a special occasion, and not for shopping cheap second hand products. The assortment is mainly second hand but also newly produced make up and accessories are sold. It is a relatively small store but with a warm welcoming. The sales personnel says hello to you as soon as you enter and the decoration in the store is inspiring and coherent with the products sold. The changing room and the old crystal chandelier adds a lot to the atmosphere.

Wasteland, Studiestræde 5
The store is situated in the center of Copenhagen in an area called the “Latino neighborhood” which is also an area crowded by second hand stores. Wasteland is a young and hip second hand store and a relatively young customer group visits the store. The assortment is wide and focused on clothes, shoes, accessories and bags for men and women, all second hand. It is also complemented by a growing number of redesigned garments, mostly dresses to a slightly higher price. The pricing overall in the store is not among the cheapest but in line with conventional stores such as H&M and Vero Moda. The décor of the store is simple and a little rough. The products are well organized and sorted which makes it easy for the customer to find what he or she is looking for.
København K, Studiestræde 32B
This is a store selling both second hand products in terms of clothing, shoes and accessories for men and women as well as newly produced products. In the store there is around 70% second hand products and it is situated inside a yard. The store has an industrial feeling to it and is all in hard stone painted in white. The image is a little rough and the goods sold are normal priced but not cheap. The store has a cooler image than the others and has managed to position itself as one of the more known second hand stores in Copenhagen. The store has a very nice and simple display of mannequins on one wall, which is clearly showing some of the products sold. There was as well a calm and uniform feeling in the store, a lot due to the part of the assortment that was not second hand.

Time’s up Vintage, Krystalgade 4
The store is focused on designer clothing and has a small selection of goods on display in the store. It is situated in the city center and has a very nice window display that attracts customer from the street. It can be hard to find due to its location in a basement. The assortment covers everything used for an outfit, mostly for women but also a collection of limited garments for men. The use of table fixtures in the store is optimized and the tables are used from all sides in a very smart way. They are used to show all kinds of products such as shoes, accessories and clothing. The accessories sold are also well organized despite the wide variety of products.
Røde Kors Fremtiden, Elmegade 40
The store is situated on Nørrebro, it is a corner store with visibility into the store from both sides. The store is one of two Red Cross second hand stores in Copenhagen focused on a younger group of customers. It is only young girls working in the store and the goods sold are women’s clothes, accessories and shoes for women with a trendy touch. The décor and environment is also trendy, with strange wooden hangers and details around the store. 60-ties music is played from a big old Walkman and there is a nice atmosphere in the store. The store only allows young volunteers to join and the store next door, which is a normal Red Cross second hand store, allows the older volunteers to work there.

4.3.2 Stockholm
When going to Stockholm 29th of April to visit the Red Cross headquarter the author also was on a second hand inspirational tour in Stockholm. A lot of stores were visited and two of them will be presented below.

Stockholms stadsmisson, Hornsgatan 58
The store of Stadsmissionen is located right next to Mariatorget in Stockholm, which is the most visited second hand shopping area in the city. The assortment in the store is wide and it is a relatively large store for its central location. Products sold are cheap and it has a traditional second hand feeling to it. The store is organized with the help of color blocking and it creates a uniform feeling despite the wide range of product categories and products sold. There are also small posters at the top of shelves in the store with messages about what good the money collected in the store can do.
Röda Korset Outlet, Skärholmsgången 26
This is the outlet concept store of Red Cross in Stockholm. It is a small store located outside the city center selling clothes, shoes and accessories for women, men and children. The customers pay a fixed price for a paper bag that they fill with products. The fixtures in the store consist of big wooden boxes that are inspired by compost boxes. They are meant to create a feeling of recycling but instead of organic waste it is clothes in the boxes that are being recycled. The products are very cheap and the store is used as an outlet for products that has not been sold in the other Red Cross second hand stores.

4.3.3 Gothenburg
The stores in Gothenburg were visited the 9th of May. The stores visited are all run by non-profit organizations and they differed a lot from each other. Below is a presentation of two of them.

Myrorna, Järntogsgatan 10
This is one of the biggest second hand stores in central Gothenburg. It consists of four floors selling everything from kitchenware and furniture to clothes and accessories. The store has a retro touch to it and the top floor is only used for showing retro style clothes and accessories shown on retro furniture used as fixtures and props. The products are grouped by color and style and every part of the top floor has a theme creating a setting. The other floors are more like typical second hand stores, each floor with its product categories.
**Stadsmissionen, Vallgatan 1**
The store is situated in the center of Gothenburg and it has a wide range of product spread out over one floor with smaller rooms as well as one room upstairs. There is kitchenware, clothes, shoes and accessories as well as some furniture and books. In the store one can find a corner with retro products decorated with textiles from the same era. The price range is relatively low and furniture is used to a wide extent to show the products.

**4.3.4 London**
The author visited London on a trip the 5th to the 8th of May. Second hand stores were visited during the trip as well as one conventional store with a second hand feeling on the design. The conventional store, All saints, as well as the second hand store Blitz, is presented below.

**All saints, 290 Westbourne Grove**
This is not a second hand store but a store that is to a wide extent influenced by reuse in its décor. The entrance of the store is decorated with a lot of old singer sewing machines and the fixtures used inside the store are old textile machines such as a weaving machine acting as a prop for accessories. The wall fixtures are as well reused pipes in different combinations and mixes creating different heights and different patterns for each wall.

**Blitz, 55-59 Hanbury Street**
Blitz is London’s first second hand department store. It is a big second hand store organized as a department store. What makes it different from many other second hand stores is that it offers several pieces of the same product often in different sizes. And if it is not the exact same products there are similar ones to find next to it. There are also a lot of redesigned clothes to find. The store has a small café that is decorated in a retro style and adds an extra atmosphere.
5. Analysis

In the following chapter the results from the empirical research will be compared and placed in relation to the theories studied to be able to answer the research question presented in chapter 1. The chapter has been divided in two parts, a general analysis of the retail design concept and a more specific analysis of the retail design in the existing store in Vänersborg.

5.1 Retail design concept of Red Cross Sweden

The brand of Red Cross is known all over the world and there are many different associations connected to it. The second hand stores is one of them. According to Martina Bozic the concept of Mötesplats Kupan, has become a blurry concept. This due to the fact that the stores are not only stores but as well social gathering spots in many different ways. The Red Cross symbol is the same as it has always been and the philosophy in the organization is the same. The advertising and store image differs though due to the locally run organizations. A large diversity of store design and advertising has emerged. The store image is one supporting factor to the brand, the store image consist of merchandise, design, service and promotional activities, where the physicality of the store is the most important according to Davies and is depending on the retail design and the visual merchandising in the store. All these factors are different in every Red Cross second hand store around the country. Due to the locally run organizations a uniform concept is hard to implement, although the second hand handbook is a step in that direction.

The two projects in Stockholm with two totally different concepts is one move towards creating more uniform concepts around the country. Due to the fact that these stores are centrally owned it is possible to implement the concepts in a new way and there is no local organization offsetting the idea.

The competition on the market of Red Cross second hand consists of both conventional stores and second hand stores. The focus in this paper has been on the other second hand stores that attract a younger customer group. The customers are the starting point for the store design and have to be considered when designing a store. Different customers have different expectations on the store. The young second hand customer is not necessarily a traditional shopper and not a high-end fashion customer but something in between and by looking at the competition conclusions can be drawn on what works and what not.

Both non-profit and private stores were visited during the empirical study and many stores differ from each other but there were some similarities. Many of the stores use color blocking when sorting the products in the store, which makes the store look more uniform although the many different products sold. In general the retail design was more advanced in the private owned stores matching with its more expensive and rare products sold. The customer then expects a higher price and therefore more of the design as well. The non-profit organizations were in general simpler in the design and the products cheaper. There were though two exceptions, Myrorna in Gothenburg and Fremtiden in
Copenhagen that are both driven by non-profit organizations selling rather cheap products but with a modern and trendier design. The customer expectations on such a cheap store are then exceeded which results in highly satisfied customers in most cases. These two stores are both attracting a lot of young customers. In the case of Myrorna in Gothenburg a lot of effort is put in organizing and creating the window displays that are on display for a while before being sold at a certain point, the window displays look like well built window displays in a conventional store and does as well create a value for the brand and the products. The fact that in the stores Fremtiden and Myrorna there is a majority of young workers does as well influence the social factor and the store atmosphere experienced by the customer.

5.1.1 Store environment in Vänersborg
The atmosphere in the store is related to both physical variables and social variables, the three-category framework by Baker describes it well and will in the following be applied to Red Cross second hand store in Vänersborg:

- The store ambient factor in the store in Vänersborg does not seem though through and planned, rather used as it was from the beginning. The organization members mention that what they want is to create a cozy environment that people like to be in. The scent in the store resembles an old ladies home due to all the old products. There is no music in the store and since there are most often not that many customers so that the store is crowded, it is perceived as relatively quiet. Due to the many windows in the store today there is a lot of light coming in but no specific extra lighting is used.
- The store design factor in the store in Vänersborg does not seem thought through. The store is divided into small rooms, which makes it hard to organize and manage. There is though a welcoming feeling to it as it feels like a home. The aesthetics in terms of architecture and materials used has an old feeling to it and the colors used in the store follows the guidelines by the organization with the Red Cross red color but otherwise does not create any uniformity. The merchandise display is divided according to product groups but the display is not perceived as uniform. The stairs between the rooms as well as the fact that the store is divided in small rooms limits the functionality of the store, in terms of layout, comfort and privacy.
- The store social factor in Vänersborg creates a cozy feeling in the store. The fact that there are only older people working in the store also creates a majority of older people as shoppers. According to Martina Bozic this is the case in many of the Red Cross stores. The strive is to greet every customer entering the store and to be on hand as soon as the customer needs assistance as well as a nice experience in the cash desks to send the customer of with an overall good impression. Due to the fact that the store is divided in many rooms this did seem hard and not really fulfilled during the observations.
5.2 Retail design in Vänersborg

The following chapter will look into the different parts of exterior and interior retail design and how well those are implemented in the existing store in Vänersborg.

5.2.1 Exterior

The exterior of the existing store in Vänersborg does not resemble a typical store. The store is placed in an old wooden building and the windows to the street are normal but big windows from ceiling to floor and the door to enter the store through is a normal door. As mentioned by Din, the exterior is supposed to send a message of what the interior will deliver and when looking at the store in Vänersborg the expectations does not get that high by judging from the outside.

The shop front is open and customers can easily look into the store and see what is in there. Due to the fact that the windows are not built to be display windows these are not optimal for displays. They are used mostly to show one or two mannequins faced out to the road with an open back so that there is free visibility into the store. The kind of display pattern used is mostly the related merchandise display since the products shown on the mannequins are matched in the way that they reinforce each other and create an outfit. There is no specific theme or scheme in the window more than that they show products that are in season right now. Regarding colors there is not any specific color used in the windows.

The store is today rather light since a lot of daylight is coming in through the many windows, there is no extra light in the windows used for emphasizing the displays or special products.

5.2.2 Interior

As mentioned before the store in Vänersborg is divided in a number of small rooms. Each room showing one kind of product or products category. The most sold product in the store is clothing this products should be placed at the prime location in the store (the platinum area) but is today placed further into the store. The men’s clothing is all the way down the store in one of the last rooms (the bronze area). In the first room the customer find mainly kitchenware, which is the second biggest product group in terms of sales.

The visibility when entering the store in Vänersborg is limited, customers can see the first room but the other four rooms are not to be seen. The fact that there are stairs in between many of the room as well as to enter the store also limits the accessibility of the store. There is no evident circulation pattern in the store, there are dead ends in several of the rooms and the there are not any evident walkways that help bringing the customer all the way into the end of the store. The fitting rooms are placed at two places, one next to the exit door and one in the third room when walking through the store. The cash desk is placed in the middle of the first room, not too close to the entrance but in a position where the visibility is good for security reasons.
Fixtures used in the store are only mid-floor fixtures in terms of tables, bookshelves, cupboards and so on. The walls are not used or placing any fixtures on, only placing fixtures in front. This means that the fixtures are more or less in the same height and the walls are not used as much as they could be. Furniture is mostly used as fixtures and there is no real uniformity in the color or materials used. They are coherent with the brand image in the sense that the fixtures are second hand as well. No new furniture has been bought to be used as fixtures.

Some products in the store are displayed according to color but most are not. The color blocking is mostly used for the kitchenware. Apart from that, products are placed in product groups and subcategories in the groups such as pants and skirts shown separately but not more than that. The pricing is also done according to product groups and shown on the walls, except for some products that are individually priced due to a higher value.

No in-store displays are used and neither is the creation of settings in the store as the author did observe in many other second hand stores.
6. Discussion

With the background in the analysis of the store concept and the previous store in Värnersborg, the discussion that follows focuses on the future and the new store in Värnersborg. A detailed plan is presented with the features that need to be taken into consideration to attract a younger customer group.

6.1 The new store at Industrigatan 8, Värnersborg

When looking at the organization in Värnersborg one can see a group of devoted volunteers with the chairman Marianne Barlungen in the lead. Many of them are open for a change and see the new store as a good step towards a change in the organization. They have all passed the age of 65 and are therefore confused with what to do to attract the younger generation today but most of them are willing to implement a change. By the use of the new store and the possibilities with a totally new design of the store the change can start.

The new premises that has been decided upon for the new store is industrial with a high distance to the ceiling, a hard stone floor and walls out of metal. At first glance it is not a cozy social area, as the existing store. The ambient factors in the store will be very different from the other in terms of temperature, lighting and scent. The Temperature will be harder to keep at a pleasant level because of the high ceiling, and the light will be totally different due to the lack of windows. This premises is more closed and the only window letting light in will be by the entrance where there is planned to be a high and wide area of the wall made out of glass where the doors are to enter the store, that will be the major daylight source in the store. Apart from that, the lighting has to be considered in another way than in the present store to create that cozy mood and to emphasize products and show in-store displays etcetera. The scent of the store will most likely also be different, and as well will the general impression of it, a lot due to the industrial feeling there is to it today. By refurbishing and rebuilding, the store will look a lot different but these factors need to be taken into consideration to achieve the goal with a nice social gathering spot as well as a profitable store.

Regarding the exterior of the new store there is a lot work to be done. The premises is situated in an industrial area so there is no challenge here to reach through the buzz, the problem is rather to create an awareness of the store, since there has not been a store there before, and making people come to the area and see it. There are today some other second hand and antique stores in the area but there will also have to be a reason for the potential customer to visit Red Cross and not the others, although this will bring customers to the area in the first place. To attract a younger customer group there is a need to be different than the others, to stand out in that way is what the organization in Värnersborg want to achieve. The exterior as well as interior design of the store can add a lot in order to change the brand image. There will be a large section with glass to show the entrance of the new store. This can be used to communicate the brand values and preferably to show pictures from projects where the money has been used for example, to create a buying incentive. Since
there will be no real window displays on the exterior the entrance can be used as a display area as well. It is more or less decided, that the cash desks will be placed by the entrance, but if some space is left in front of them there could be space for a small window display or an in-store display by the entrance. Due to the lack of window display more focus need to be directed to the in-store display.

The interior of the new store has a lot of possibilities there is a lot of work needed to succeed in creating the same degree of coziness that is present in the existing store today. It is important to take the ambient factors into consideration in addition to the physicality of the store to succeed in creating that mood.

Due to the openness of the store area there are endless possibilities regarding how to organize it and how to lead customers through the store. The circulation patterns presented by Pegler with the four different zones in the store that should be used for products with different importance should be considered in the store. For example the products sold the most are clothes, therefore these should be shown in the front of the store. The store shall be easy to shop in and will in the new premises be accessible by everyone. There is no hinder to get into the store which is on the first floor, and the café that will be on the second floor will be serviced by a simple elevator so that customers do not need to walk the stairs to get up. The big store area can be overwhelming if not divided into smaller areas by either built in walls or by furniture and textiles dividing it. The fixtures used should as well preferably be more uniform than they are today and the products organized according to color blocking. When looking at the visited stores the color blocking display is what creates the most uniformity when there are so many different products on display. The walls should be used for showing products in the new store. There are for example a lot of textiles for sale in the store today, these could be shown hanging on the walls so that customers can more easily see them.

The placing of the service areas should be carefully considered and be put far inside the store to create that privacy that one want to feel in such a room as well as be warm and inviting so that it is a nice experience trying on clothes. That will also help creating a good circulation and make customers move all the way into the store.

Since the window display in the new store will be very limited this can be carried inside the store as well to put more emphasis on the in-store displays. The in-store displays can help creating different settings inside the store. At Myrorna for example this is something that is widely used for their retro department where furniture are used as props for showing clothes and shoes and accessories in a more interesting way, placed in a setting. This can also be done with the mannequins in combination with for example furniture, which is very popular today. The inspiration can also be found from conventional stores who are working with the same in the window themes and schemes. Props and fixtures
can be collected from the donations or bought from other second hand dealers to stick to the ethical philosophy and reusing. Furniture and found objects add extra personality to the store.

An area with retro style products can be added, as this seems to be popular in many of the stores visited. The area can be a mix of all product groups but with a focus on the retro style. Following is a proposition on how the first floor with the store area can be organized with the product groups placed according to importance and the service features placed where appropriate. The second floor will be used for social activities.

![Store plan for Industrigatan 8, first floor.](image)

The store social factors are not something that necessarily has to do with the premises but moving to a new store and starting fresh could give the opportunity to change. Since a niche towards a younger customer group is discussed there is also a need to engage younger people as volunteers in the store to make younger people feel more comfortable and also to spread the word of the store in those groups. The new store will also create a new way of working in the store. There will most likely be a cash desk right by the entrance to the store that needs to be equipped with at least one volunteer all the time. This person can say hello to everyone entering the store and by that make all customers feel welcome. There will be a need for more personnel inside the store as well as for the café that will be placed on the second floor, and to be able to service everyone on the big space that the new store will cover. The donations will be handed in in the back of the store and therefore someone will have to be in the support area all the time. The move to the new premises will give an opportunity to attract a new and younger group of customers and volunteers as well as improving what needs to be improved. It is always easier to change something when moving the store and get a fresh start than if staying and trying to change the existing one.
7. Conclusion and further research

In the following chapter the conclusions and recommendations to future research in the area will be presented. The purpose of the conclusion is to answer the research questions presented in chapter 1 and to link the empirical data and analysis to these as well as the aim of the thesis.

7.1 Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to develop a new retail strategy in terms of visual merchandising and retail design of Red Cross second hand stores that appeals to a younger group of second hand shoppers, at the same time as keeping the existing customer base, to increase sales in stores. The study was focused on one specific store in the organization.

The overall purpose presented above was further concretized in a research question:

*How can the Red Cross retailers use visual merchandising and retail design to attract younger customers as well as the existing ones?*

The authors conclusions are as follows:

- The Red Cross retailers can use visual merchandising and retail design to create an atmosphere in the store that attracts a younger group of customers. The change has to be made in the environment on the ambient, design and social level to create the right atmosphere.
- There is a lot to learn from other actors on the market, more successful in retail design and attracting a younger crowd that can be adapted in the Red Cross store to attract a younger customer group.

7.2 Further research

The study presented in this paper is limited to one store in the Red Cross organization in Sweden. Due to the fact that all stores are locally run and different it cannot be directly applied to another Red Cross store in Sweden. This is further only a suggestion on how the new store should be organized and what can be learned from the existing problems. Because the suggestion has not yet been tested there are no guarantees that this will work. Therefore an implementation of the idea is needed followed by an evaluation of the result as a further research in this specific area. That is the final parts of the action research cycle.
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Appendix 1 - Interview with Martina Bozic

Questions for Martina Bozic, Stockholm 27/4-2012:

1. Who are you, and what is your background in the Red Cross?
2. What is your role in this project in Stockholm?
3. How did the idea about a concept store come up?
4. What is different form other Red Cross stores?
5. Are there plans for opening more concept stores in Sweden? Where?
6. Are there any guidelines that all Red Cross stores need to follow?
7. How did the project with the new store proceed?
8. What is the visual merchandising concept for the new store?
9. Can you explain the ambient, design and social factors in the new store?
10. Is there something that you would like to add or something that I can use for developing the new store in Vänersborg?

Frågor till Martina Bozic, Stockholm 27/4-2012:

1. Vem är du och vad har du för bakgrund inom Röda Korset?
2. Vad har du för roll i det nuvarande projektet i Stockholm?
3. Hur kom idén om en koncept butik fram?
4. Vad är skillnaden mot de andra butikerna inom Röda Korset?
5. Finns det planer på fler liknande butiker i Sverige? I så fall vart?
6. Finns det riktlinjer som alla Röda Korset butiker måste följa?
7. Hur har projektet med koncept butiken gått till?
8. Vad finns det för visuellt koncept för den nya butiken?
9. Kan du beskriva den eftersträvade atmosfären i butiken, den visuella designen och det sociala konceptet för butiken?
10. Har du något du vill tillägga som jag borde veta eller kan ta hjälp av planeringen av Vänersborgsbutiken?
Appendix 2 - Stores visited (added to those presented in chapter 4.3)

Copenhagen
Røde Kors, Nørrebrogade 40
Ingerslev antic, Ravnsbørggade 22
O-S-V, Peder Hvitfeldts stræde 4
Røde Kors, Vestergade 2B
Fantasio, Larsbjørnstræde 11
Kongens Klær, Rosenborggade 10
Atelier Décor, Rømersgade 9
Genbrug, Vesterbrogade 79
Røde Kors, Gammel Kongevej 135

Stockholm
Judits second hand, Hornsgatan 75
Herr Judit, Hornsgatan 65
Myrona, Hornsgatan 96
Emmaus Second hand, Peter Myndes Backe 8
Emmaus vintage, Peter Myndes Backe 8
Beyond Retro, Åsögatan 144

Gothenburg
Röda korset, Första Långgatan 28C
Emmaus, Linnégatan 9

London
Rokit, 101, 107 Brick Lane
Absolute Vintage, 15 Hanbury Street