From best to next practice

We need both best and next practice if we are to transform into a sustainable society, and that's why we can't only focus on the hardware.

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Best practices should be shared and spread so we can learn from each other, but best practice is also always a solution developed with yesterday's hardware and software.

There's no doubt that Samsoe and the Energy Academy have shown the world that it is possible to shift to renewable energy, and many communities and countries all over the world still have to do this by picking the lowest hanging fruits. Next practice is about reaching for the highest hanging fruits, and on Samsoe this is, among other things, about becoming independent of fossil fuels by 2030.

Moving from best to next practice is inevitably a challenging move. What does it take and what is needed – not only in the technological realm, but also in the economic, political, social and cultural worlds. How can societies and communities really move forward? As Arne Remmen, professor

in planning, Aalborg University stated in his speech, we have the knowledge and the techno-logy, that is the hardware, but we still lack the software.

Exchanging knowledge about and developing the software part is a main activity at Samsoe Energy Academy. The Next Practice symposium is about networking, about sharing initial findings about next practices, about choice awareness, personal and organizational roles and responsibilities, about communicating stories and positive thinking, and not least learning about local development in a holistic way.

The best and next agendas

A way of looking at the two kinds of practices is to divide them into the "fundamental" and the "winning" agendas. They are agendas that share a goal or a vision of the world but are based on different kinds of mindsets and actions. The fundamental agenda can be described as an agenda concerned mostly with increasing the

resilience of society while the winning agenda is primarily about a perhaps utopian vision of a sustainable society. However, it's not that simple.

These agendas are never static, and what is on the winning agenda today may be on the fundamental agenda in the future. They complement each other because we always need to change things for the better. If you're only operating on the fundamental agenda and focusing on best practice you will lose in the long run. If you only focus on the winning agenda, you will lose, too.

The work done by actors operating on one or both agendas is equally important, and the two approaches need to be joined. To achieve this, we need a lot more cooperation between the natural and social sciences, between science and people, etc. We need more interdisciplinarity.

The time is now!

We need to focus on the winning agenda for a while and lead from the future that emerges, as Otto Scharmer, Senior Lecturer at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), and founding chair of the Presencing Institute, writes about in his new book "Leading from the Emerging Future". The winning agenda – or the software part of sustainable development – is what we need to take the next steps.

The concepts of the fundamental and the winning agendas are developed by futurists Steen Svendsen and Gitte Larsen, House of Futures, adapted to best and next practices here to develop further, with inspiration from a workshop held during the project "In 100 Years – starting now". **www.in100y.dk**

THE BEST AND NEXT AGENDAS

The Best Practice agenda is about:
- Green economy ("reduce bad")
- One bottom line (profit)
- Competition
- Probably and possible futures (resilience)
- Being reactive (past and present oriented)
- The short run, and end-based results
- Top down and outer perspectives
- Quantitative measurement, e.g. behavioural change
- Mechanisms
- Statistical "communities" (categories like gender, age, education, nationality etc.)
- Hardware (knowledge, technologies etc.)

The Next Practice agenda is about:
- New infrastructure ("do good")
- Many bottom lines (higher purposes)
- Cooperation
- Preferred futures (sustainable)
- Being creative (present and future)
- The long run, and process-based results
- Bottom up and inner perspectives
- Qualitative measurement, e.g. changing belief, mind shifting
- Organisms
- Natural communities (real people and real places, a common)
- Software (socio-economic and cultural factors etc.)