



**From the first Circle Dialogue:
About a positive vision, the local, fear, and skills**

Soeren Hermansen, who facilitated the day, got the energy for the first circle dialogue going by summing up: Tetso, you said that nuclear power is declining, renewable energy is growing, and that we have to take community power, get on with it and work for it. Gunnar, you said that the EU is good and here to stay (and pay), there are network opportunities that we should use. And we should create and participate in the right networks. You also said that community ideas are in competition with other and more centralized ideas. Arne, you said that we shall qualify the local, and you asked whether society is ready to use all the local opportunities. The things we need are in place, but we still need to organize it, not least in practice – we have the technology, but we need to organize it.

Now we open for plenum discussions. Please put something on the floor we can use. And don't argue – this is not the place for argument but for dialogue. We don't meet out of greed but out of need.

25 statements from the first dialogue:

#1: We should be thinking more holistically. It's not only about green growth but also about cultural, social and economic perspectives, we need to include it all.

#2: How do societies change? What we are lacking is the positive vision. The sustainability discourse is about what we shouldn't do. We need positive futures on a global scale. Where do we, where do people, get inspired?

#3: Our stories are about best practices and about communicating in real time. We can't just do it on Facebook, we need ambassadors for these communities, real time interactions. I will take this back to Pennsylvania. What's happening in Tokyo is being communicated in a personal and a physical way here, not just through a social technology. I like that.

#4: I'm working with children and students, and we talk about best and next practice. I tell them the bad story, that the world might get six degrees warmer, and then I tell them the good story about Samsoe. Which story is the most inspiring? The next generation is worried about the climate, an issue we need to take care of is fear. They choose the bad story as the most powerful. This is a challenge for me. It is hard work to change their mindsets, but they are the next generation and should be frontrunners.

#5: It is a challenge that "sustainability" is one word but so many things. What is it actually we are discussing? It's hard to take action if we don't agree about the economy, the social sphere, business, civil society, politics etc. It is so easy to get lost. How can we ensure a systematic approach?

#6: I live on an island, and I think there is a geographical point here: we can make local and delimited solutions. We should focus on and keep it local, skip some of the larger problems, and keep our awareness on what we can do locally.

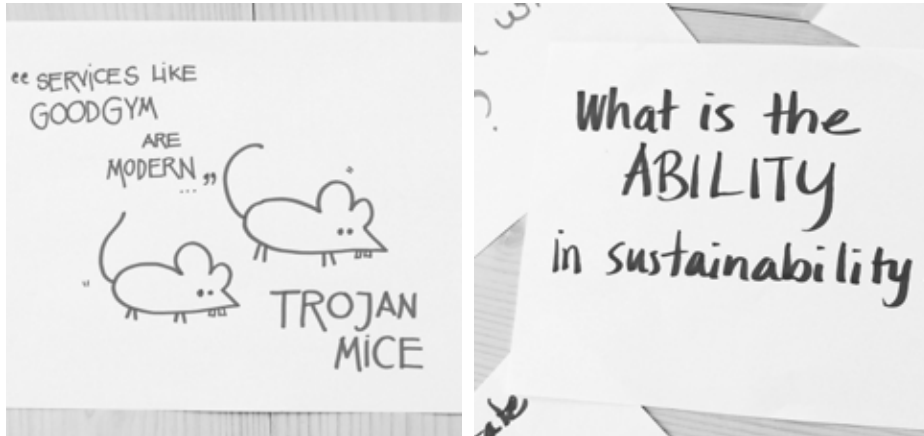
#7: I read Tim Jackson's book "Prosperity Without Growth" and I was scared shitless, but there is a way, and it goes through responsibility and creativity. Nothing happens out of fear, it drags us in the wrong direction. We all share this responsibility – each one of us is responsible – and we need the capability to create an attractive tomorrow.

#8: During the oil crisis we started to react out of fear, and I think fear can be important if it's a constructive fear. Positive visions of the problems combined with good ideas. Lots of people have joined in positive visions but it still hasn't created the big transition. Maybe we need to combine the positive approach with fear?

#9: Perhaps there are only local perspectives? We should stop worrying so much about whether solutions and problems are global, national, EU-level, or whatever. Even in the UN, the EU etc. individuals are talking together, and these conversations and the decisions made are inherently local. So let's focus and act locally.

#10: We are driven by problems, visions and solutions, and the thing is to get all on board. Where are we, where do we want to go and how do we get there? The last thing motivates me, and we must redefine the journey as we go, it's not fixed, and we must enjoy the journey.

#11: Smart communities takes smart people, and I am wondering about the concrete experience with re-skilling people. I'm thinking of education and capacity building. If you are to be a smart citizen, do you need different skills from the ones we value and possess today?



#12: The younger generation can't fix simple things in the household, like use a hammer or saw etc. We used to learn that in school but we have lost these skills over the past twenty years. Today we just throw things away.

#13: Skills and competences are important, and so is global versus local. As human beings we must consider our own roles and instead of passively using stuff we must take responsibility. We must take leadership in our own life and acknowledge that we are the designers.

#14: I've been part of telling the story about the Danish state bankruptcy in 1813. Back then they said: we might be poor but we don't have to be stupid. What I got out of this story were the foundational values, which is that citizens need to be educated. Right now there is a movement around the planet asking for citizenship to come back. It is an essential value in society, and how can we bring it back? How do we find the shoes to walk? I think it's about being equal in our own brilliance.

#15: We are not so proud of that period. Niels Christian Nielsen challenged the Danish school system and created an army of Trojan horses that started a process of change, and after that we had a prosperous period.

#16: The teachers were the Trojan horses. Who are they now?

#17: Too many young people go to high school where they don't learn any practical skills. In the past, the idea, e.g. with the folk high schools, was to educate manually working people. Now this idea is turned upside down. Maybe here on Samsøe you can teach the educated people manual skills?

#18: Niels Hausgaard (Danish musician, comedian and former member of the Danish Parliament, ed.) said when he lived on Samsøe that if you live in the rural areas, you have to have craft skills, otherwise you should move to the city.

#19: Commonness and individuality. As a culture we have forgotten the calling of the individual and the calling of the personal. We need to be more personal, but not egoistic – it is a new discourse.

#20: What kind of future do we want? This should also be about what the next generation wants and not only what we think they need.

#21: What about getting some exercise for the common good? If someone, maybe someone old and weak, wants to rebuild his or her house or dig up the garden, other people could help. Like the concept GoodGym where you sign up to do weekly chores while getting fit. You get the exercise and people get things done.

#22: I have a question: why are we trying to save the world in our spare time? Why not do it every single day in our fields of expertise, where we live etc. We must do it where we are and when we are fresh in the morning, when we are at our best. Who is keeping us?

#23: (Halfdan): Every day I read the newsletter the Daily Climate's chapter on solutions. I skip straight to the solutions, I don't want to read about the problems. Germany jumped into saying NO to nuclear power, and now the nuclear energy companies don't make money in Germany anymore. The question is whether Germany will succeed in becoming a hundred percent renewable? We could all make small Samsøes, but it is easier if society makes the solutions on a higher level like in Germany, for instance when it comes to renewable energy.

#24: (Soeren): Germany is a big industrial leader, but where do we start? I did a talk in Boston at MIT and I was wondering where they get their own energy from. The ventilation in their buildings is from the last century, and they are teaching the brightest engineers in the world. They should be a best case example. They should be showing the students that they are part of the solution. We need to do what we teach, to walk the walk.

#25: If all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail. It is important to discuss what we have in the toolbox to solve our different problems. Maybe we can go into business communities and talk about open innovation as a kind of new commons.