

# From Best to Next Practice symposium

The following pages document the symposium held at Samsøe 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> September 2013



## Watch the movies from the symposium

About the **symposium**

Interview with the **speakers**

FROM BEST TO NEXT PRACTICE SYMPOSIUM 18-20 SEPTEMBER 2013

## Local reduce & the commons



### How we think and act locally

Local development demands a sense of community, loyalty and empathy between the thinkers and doers. Reworking local democracy and decision making, and strengthening the engagement in and ownership of future solutions in the local community is inevitably one of the most important parts of moving forward. This is not easy, and we need to be patient and co-creative. We therefore invite you to spend two days with like-minded people and organizations and contribute your knowledge, insights, barriers and experience regarding local development. Do join us for this symposium at Samsøe to discuss how we can go from best to next practice on a local level to create a better future for our planet and communities now and in the long run.

### The Next Practice symposium is a platform for:

- Learning about local development in a holistic way
- Sharing new models for organization and innovation plus initial findings of next practice
- Choice awareness, personal and organizational roles and responsibilities
- Communicating concrete stories and positive thinking

### Program

18 September, 20:00-22:00: Welcome Drinks & Snacks.

19 September, 9:00-17:00: The day will be a mixture of short Lectures & Talks at Speakers' Corner and Exercises & Discussions, followed by a "hand made" Party Dinner.

20 September, 9:00-13:00: Søren Hermansen & Malene Lundén on the next steps for the Energy Academy, Futures Walk & Talk, Wrap up & Lunch.

### Speakers' Corner

A number of invited contributors to the energy agenda around the world will be announced in the program, and the Speakers' Corner will be open for everyone present to speak their mind and heart.

### The Next Practice document

The Energy Academy will document and publish knowledge and dialogues from the 2013 symposium online. The 2011 symposium was documented in the paper "Next Practice".

### REGISTRATION

**Date:** 18-20 September 2013 / **Venue:** The Energy Academy, Strandengen 1, DK - 8350 Samsøe / **Registration:** Register at <http://energiakademiet.dk/tilmelding/> or by sending an e-mail to Malene Lundén at [ml@energiakademiet.dk](mailto:ml@energiakademiet.dk), including name, organization and address no later than 1 July 2013. Max 40 participants / **Price:** The participation fee is DKK 1000 ex VAT, and it covers material, party dinner, 2 lunches, fruit, coffee/tea and cake. Other meals and beverages must be paid for separately / **Info:** For more information contact the Energy Academy, +45 20964458, [ml@energiakademiet.dk](mailto:ml@energiakademiet.dk), [www.energiakademiet.dk](http://www.energiakademiet.dk)

## Next Practice Symposium 2011: Insights

The symposium "From Best to Next Practice" was held for the first time in Spring 2011 and it will be a returning event. The Energy Academy will continuously take part in blueprinting a sustainable future, amongst others through the Next Practice Symposium. The Next Practice symposium is documented in order to facilitate the sharing of knowledge, insight, inspiration, experiences, and connections with our global and local networks.

### Selected reflections from the participants in 2011:

- Envisioning our roles and responsibilities
- We are in a position where we know enough to start acting
- Local ownership, including the administration of the commons
- Choice awareness, values and mindset
- The power of art and artist
- Generate initial findings around next practice, give next practice strength and foundation, and support and supply a roadmap for the next step(s)
- What drives and inspires us to keep adding to the energy/sustainability agenda around the world
- Understanding the change process – it affects and effects the world we live in
- Getting new experiences from different countries
- Create a platform for learning/education – a campfire around a common idea and the commons
- An arena for new ways to cooperate, innovate and share knowledge
- How to engage my fellow citizens, including ownership models
- New models for organization (energy democracy)
- Planning for renewable energy
- Find ways to communicate constructive stories/positive thinking, and we need a new language for where we have to go
- Decisions are often taken on the basis of known existing solutions and technologies, and the investors interest
- Doing the right thing
- Samsøe should focus on the local movement. This place should be a hot spot in the world, where the world can be invited to watch implementation and ways of developing projects. Also be a place to try out ideas from all over the world.

The invitation to this year's From Best to Next Practice symposium. The next will be held in 2015.

Read the whole newspaper that documents the first "From Best to Next Practice" symposium [here](#)

AMOS LEE, "FLOWERS":

**MY HEART IS A FLOWER  
THAT BLOOMS EVERY HOUR,  
I BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF LOVE**

LISTEN!

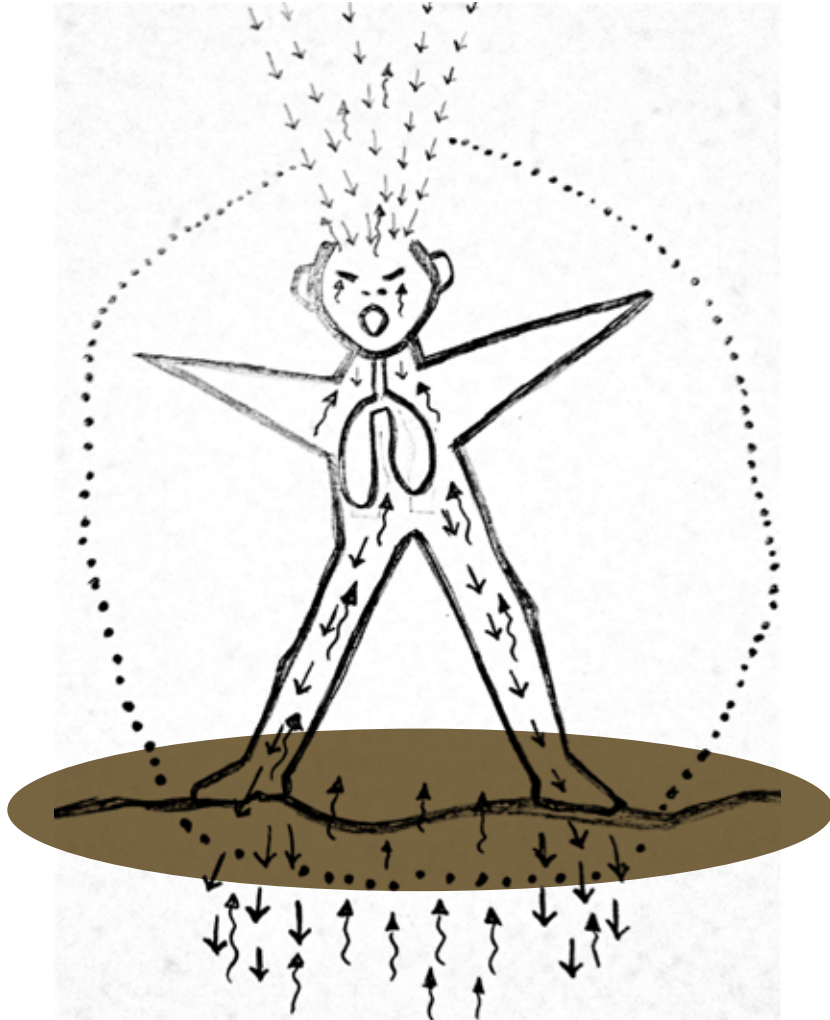


ILLUSTRATION OF ENERGY BUBBLE: MALENE ANNIKKI LUNDÉN

## EXCHANGING ENERGIES

As an intro to the symposium the participants were asked to practice "ayni" (reciprocity, ed.) through an energy exchange with the Earth – as a guided tour.

You may want to try this Andean tradition out yourself:

1. Stand on the ground and feel the soil beneath your feet
2. Breathe
3. Imagine a bubble around you – this is your private space
4. Open up in the top and let energy from above into the bubble
5. Let the energy flow through your body – all the way down and into the center of the Earth. Let go of all heavy energy which you don't need.
6. The Earth likes it – it is food!
7. Now that you have been giving energy, you may also receive energy
8. Feel the Earth under your feet and let the light energy from the Earth come up through your body
9. Imagine that it springs above your head and falls down again as if it comes from a huge shower.
10. Enjoy the energy!

# A perfect group

**The “From Best to Next Practice” symposium was held for the second time at the Energy Academy the 18th to 20th of September 2013. Forty people participated this year, and it was a perfect group!**

BY GITTE LARSEN,  
EDITOR, HOUSE OF FUTURES

Malene Lundén from the Energy Academy welcomed everyone by asking us to present ourselves in a different way from what we're used to in a conference setting. She wanted us to “feel the rhythm” and briefly tell about ourselves, not one by one clockwise, but when we felt like it. It was an exercise in changing behaviour and making new structures for a meeting like this. The participants got better and better through the exercise. But it is difficult to change behaviour and most of the symposium was about changing beliefs, as Malene writes in her article “Start with belief”.

The people at the Energy Academy invite their global network to the “Next Practice” symposia regularly, and this year many of the Academy's national collaborators were present as well as partners from Japan and the US.

The “Next Practice” symposium is a platform for sharing and learning. Experiences and knowledge cross borders and new connections are made. We could compare this platform to a marketplace full of opportunities. You can explore local, democratic processes and contribute to the task of reinventing the commons. Face-to-face meetings are different and indeed necessary if we truly want to be open to other perspectives and to living the future as it emerges. Face-to-face meetings as joyful as the “Next practice” meetings are rare. Read on p. 100 what people said in the circle while checking out.

## **Exchanging ideas**

The exchange of ideas at the symposium happens in a cross-disciplinary environment. You can meet public and private sector organisations, NGOs, practitioners, researchers, scientists and facilitators.

continued on p. 48

**Malaika Thomsen, psychologist, Artful Punch, about the atmosphere at the symposium:**

Our collective journey was framed with a beginning and an end. Along the way our assembly learnt a lesson about empathetic listening.

First, all the participants were invited to participate in an “energy exercise” by Gitte Larsen. The energy exercise facilitated each participant's awareness of themselves which led to grounding and room for everyone's individuality and spirituality. The exercise finished by making a huge collective imaginary energy bubble. This created a trusting atmosphere with room for being foolish, and curious, and open enough to become flexible.

After listening to the first three presenters we were gathered in plenum. Søren Hermansen invited us to explore new possibilities. There was an intense “on-the-move” atmosphere. Many Alice wanted to join the conversation, there wasn't room enough, and some participants had difficulty listening with their full presence. Mary Alice Arthur read the situation well and understood the need for materializing all the burning questions. She fetched a box of papers and pens. Then she invited everyone to participate in a parallel process while the dialogue continued in a new, airy atmosphere: the burning questions were written and placed in the center of the circle. This created space for empathetic listening and dialogue. This lesson learnt was used in different aspects through the entire symposium.

The closing circle showed that the initial energy exercise and lesson learnt about empathic listening had facilitated individual movement and development whilst also creating many new connecting links that made the collective stronger than the sum of each participant.

atmosphere



The symposium was facilitated by Søren Hermansen, director of the Energy Academy, and Malene Lundén, project manager in the areas of education and communication. Forty people participated, among them a Japanese collaborator, Iida Tetsunari, director of the Institute for Sustainable Energy Policies in Japan. “Tetsu can learn many things from us, and we are interested in how we can help him even more. Not least, he can actually translate and apply the processual, democratic and social software needed to create community power back in Japan. It’s very important that he is here, and perhaps this is even why we are here,” said Søren Hermansen to welcome Tetsunari. Read the executive summary of his and the rest of the speeches on p. 56.

The “Next Practice” symposium is an event to be held regularly. The first was held in the Spring of 2011 (see box on p. 41), and the next (in 2015) will among other issues be about education for sustainable development. Who needs to be educated? By whom? How? And why?

#### **The local place – a common**

“A common is not a stable thing”, as Søren Hermansen puts it. Today, lots of our communities are virtual. We do not need to share a local place

in order to take part in them. This is important and challenging when talking about reinventing the commons, which do not only include societal aspects and concrete local areas but also that we have access to clean water and air in specific places. Our starting point, then, is not virtual. How can we all, in our local communities, contribute to a sustainable development by starting where we are and using what we have?

Samsøe has come a long way, innovating their way through how to do this in an island community of 3700 citizens. Togetherness, leadership and ownership have been vital parts of the process. This takes shared activities and a shared mentality – a vision and a plan of how to become an international example of a renewable energy community. Agreeing about what to do in a local community and how and why to do it – these are the software parts of sustainable development. It’s a matter of making the paths by walking them. Another important aspect of the success behind the island transition is the pragmatic, non-idealistic approach that the Energy Academy together with the population of Samsøe have put forward. “What’s in it for me” has and will be a central aspect when taking the next steps forward.



#### **Else Marie Kaasboel, cand.mag., Lysbrocenteret, about the spiritual dimension of the symposium:**

“The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.” – John 3:8

We met on the island in the middle, in a space inspired by the knowledge and shapes of the past, filled with inspiration from the present and the future. Inspiration for our surroundings, for our conditions and meanings of life, and for human beings in movement - in transformation and creation. We met because we all - each in his or her own way - feel that something is happening, that something is possible and important and fantastic to take part in. Perhaps a vision, a hope or a dream? Or a prayer for help... We met in confidence, openness and expectation about this ‘something’ that can happen. For a few hours we became one, a one made up manifold of people.

We are being carried by the wind or the spirit, and we listen to its sound while the light flows in and around us in the open aspiration, which might or might not be perfect, but which is so wonderfully spiritual. A sensation which was so precisely expressed when Malene ended the symposium with the Leonard Cohen song, “Anthem” (see quote on p. 10).

spirit



## Lessons learnt

What did the Energy Academy learn from this second "Next Practice" symposium? "My sensing is that although many of the participants didn't know of our principles before this meeting, they were able to put themselves and their own principles into play and contribute. New connections were made, and I believe that everybody learned something during our days together", says Malene Lundén.

She explains that the Academy's principles are a compass of purposes and intentions. They work as a foundation for the process facilitation and they make it possible to combine all relevant parts, including the unforeseen. When things are moving there are always many unknown factors at play. That goes for the symposium as well as for the local development at Samsøe.

An important parameter when organizing such meeting places as the symposium is that people are invited as individuals. You'll never know how they function as a group and which culture they will create, practically and psychologically. What are their intentions and are they willing to leave their comfort zones. These are questions you as an organizer can't know the answers to in advance. "We are not sure about the group as a common", Malene explains. She continues: "This group was able to do a lot, and many new things were learned that naturally transform into our work life."

"One thing we planned was the checkout." This session (read what people said on p. 100) was aligned to the principles of the meeting place, which are:

- Symmetry through sympathy or empathy
- Beauty
- Mind the Gap, The Inbetween
- Whatever we pay attention to will grow

## The campfire

"I think many of us participate in many conferences during a year. How many did you go to in 2013? I've been to five very different ones in Europe and in Denmark this past year,"

Malene says, and she states that at least two factors are relevant when choosing which ones to go to:

- (1) The network and the keynote speakers. Is it relevant for what you're doing right now?
- (2) Do you have personal relations there? Half of the participants here also participated two years ago when we started out while half of them were new.

The symposium headline was "local reduce and the commons". Local reduce was Gunnar Bøje Olesen's contribution because of his years of working with the EU. The EU is an opportunity for the island's future energy reduction projects, and the Academy is already participating in various EU projects. When writing this, new projects and collaborations have already come out of the symposium. The symposium became a common in its own right. A marketplace, and a lightening campfire.



PHOTO: OLE HANSEN

magic

**Ole Hansen, human ecologist, Lysbrocenteret, about the magic of the symposium:**

The magic came into existence in the force field between the serious transmission of the grave messages about the world around us and the permanent sparkling humour which was constantly bubbling underneath. The magic was also to be found in the energy which made the 'meeting of meanings and opinions' unpredictable, opening and open.

And then - that magical moment in the early morning light when a three-master from a bygone era floating on the dead calm sea turned Ballen into a time warp - a quiet momentum in a runaway world.



# Speakers' Corner

From the Next Practice Symposium September 19 2013 follows an executive summary of the speeches held by the six keynote speakers and a sneak peak into the two Circle Dialogues which followed the speeches.

You can also watch the interviews with the speakers by following the links under each of them.

[All the interviews](#)



IIDA Tetsunari page 56



Arne Remmen page 60



Gunnar Boye Olesen page 58



Halfdan Muurholm page 66

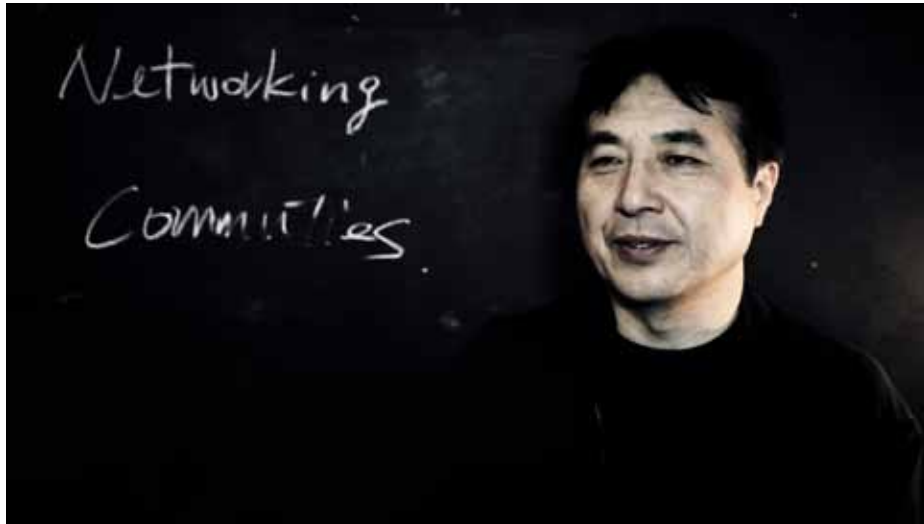


Karen Blincoe page 68



Erik Algreen-Petersen page 74





IIDA Tetsunari is Executive Director of the Institute for Sustainable Energy Policies in Japan and author of the famous book "Energy Democracy". Tetso is cooperating with the Energy Academy on "software", e.g. process models and facilitation of community power.

Watch the interview with Tetso

See slides

### IIDA Tetsunari (Tetso): Community power in Japan

IIDA Tetsunari described the new reality in Japan: Renewable energy is on the rise while nuclear energy is being phased out. Add to this the fact that large-scale power is becoming more distributed and decentralized. A man said in an interview at this year's MIT Energy Conference in Cambridge, Massachusetts: "Consumers are realizing they don't need the power industry at all." (Source: Bloomberg, 2013). New things are happening all over the world.

Local networks are the drivers of this development, and ownership has also started to change in Japan. We import "community wind", that is community power processes from Denmark, and it works. The three most important factors when involving stakeholders from the community in the wind power, solar energy and biomass solutions are: Local ownership, local decision-making and local profit sharing.

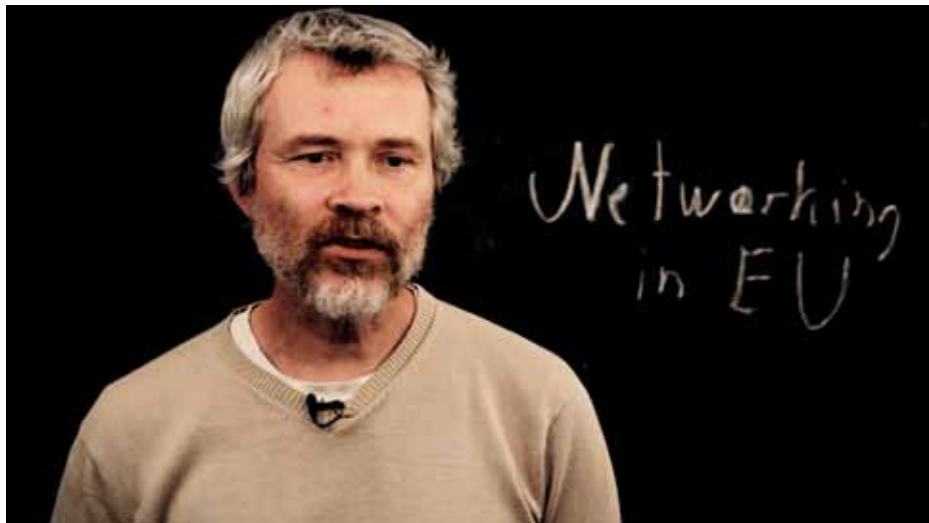
After Fukushima, community power has been on the rise in many areas of Japanese society. At first, the disaster ruined the market for tourism and local food production, but now the local stores are booming again and connecting to international networks. We are at a crossroads between the old and the new paradigm.



AT A CROSSROAD	
Old Paradigm	New Paradigm
Centralized	Distributed
Supply push	Demand (Social) pull
Hierarchy	Network
Fossil & nuke	Renewable energy & Energy efficiency
Economic growth	Fairness, justice

See slides

At the Institute for Sustainable Energy Policies in Japan a meeting will be held in January 2014 in which Soeren Hermansen will also participate.



Gunnar Boye Olesen is the coordinator at INFORSE Europe. The Energy Academy collaborates with INFORSE on public participation, conferences and workshops.

Watch the interview with Gunnar

### **Gunnar Boye Olesen: EU partnerships on climate improvements – do they work?**

Soeren Hermansen jokingly introduces Gunnar Boye Olesen as an old hippie and says that Gunnar has been the spokesman of many of the Danish environmental grassroots organisations and that he is capable of embracing and including people in the policy development. Today, Gunnar talks about EU partnerships, which he believes are good if you use them right but they are not the only road to change. EU is not a dragon with one head but with many heads.

The EU's peacebuilding project is about bringing people together so we can learn from each other. This is ideally what the EU is supporting, and there are a lot of programs behind that. Soft power is important in the EU system, and it means that for instance small islands can inspire the system.

How does the EU support local development, rising community power, energy reductions etc.? There are lots of good intentions, but a lot of time is spent on bureaucracy when working with EU projects. Being heard is often difficult for small organisations which are not part of the EU system. Still, we have to be in the forefront and always know what the EU is looking for.



Regarding the future, the EU is at a crossroads: Should the EU go for community power or a more centralized type of business power? People like us should push for community power and local solutions, both for our own sake and to change the minds of the bureaucrats.



Arne Remmen is a Professor at the Department of Development and Planning, Aalborg University. The Energy Academy has a contract on cooperation with Aalborg University.

[Watch the interview with Arne and see slides](#)

[Read the The Aalborg Commitments](#)

### Arne Remmen: Smart Sustainable Samsø 2.0

Arne Remmen talked about the silo building culture and mentality which hinders collaboration and makes it difficult to find common ground. Basically, we have the technology and the right ideas in the scientific literature, but we still miss the practice.

Arne introduces the three S's: "Smart, Sustainable, Samsø" and the four C's: Clean, Clever/Creative, Co-operative, Commons. The fundamental components of smart cities are the human, the institutional and the technological factors. Smart communities is about system integration, and we already have a decentralized energy system in Denmark. We will have energy producing buildings in the future, but everything is going in the wrong direction when it comes to transportation and mobility. Smart communities is also about connecting people and creating local participation, and here Samsøe has demonstrated to the world that it is possible. There are new ways of collaborating, also between local NGOs and the universities. Arne lists the challenges as: Smart & Sustainable, Circular Economy & Resource Efficiency, and Partnerships & the new Commons. More explicitly, the "Aalborg Commitments" target ten focus areas:

1. Sustainable governance
2. Local management towards sustainability
3. Natural common goods
4. Responsible consumption and lifestyle choices
5. Planning and design
6. Better mobility, less traffic
7. Local action for health
8. Vibrant and sustainable local economy
9. Social equity and justice
10. Local to global

Today, there is more competition than collaboration in local communities and one doesn't know what the other is doing. The challenge is to find ways towards a more integrated planning approach in all levels of our systems. We need to set up goals and doing that we have to look at the overall system and not view the single parts separately.

In the circular economy it's all about taking, making and disposing. Among others Ellen McArthur has made some very nice overviews, which is not just about recycling but also about how to maintain, repair and reuse things. All this is very much connected to local reduce, local production etc.







**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.

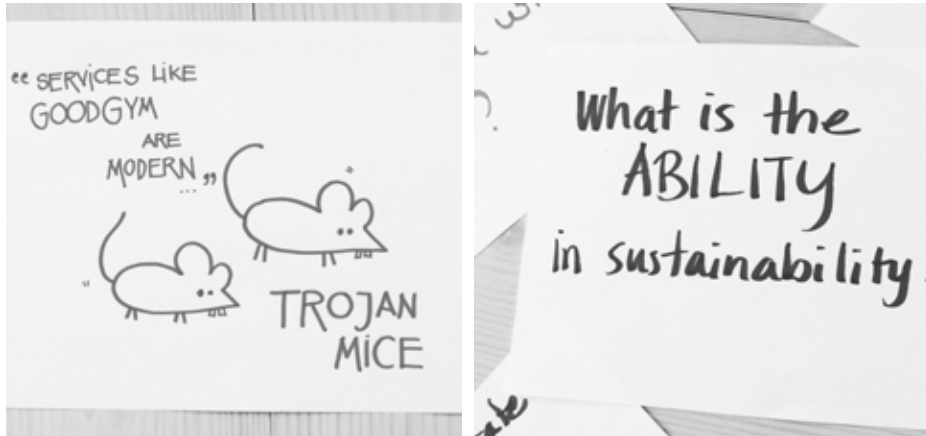
**#8:** During the oil crisis we started to react out of fear, and I think fear can be important if it's a constructive fear. Positive visions of the problems combined with good ideas. Lots of people have joined in positive visions but it still hasn't created the big transition. Maybe we need to combine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



Halfdan Muurholm is a journalist at the Danish Radio and among other things, he produces documentary films related to climate change.

Watch the interview with Halfdan and see slides

### Halfdan Muurholm: Global media landscape – a reality check

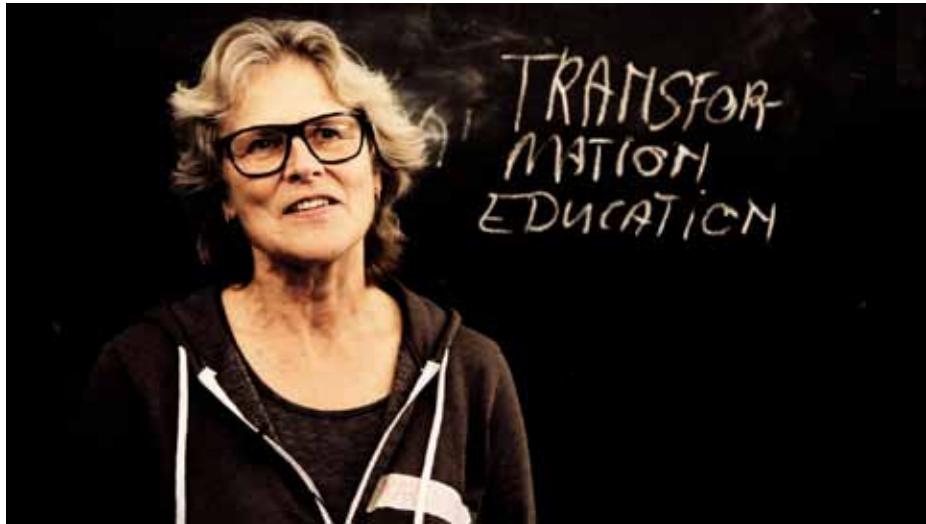
The Energy Academy is a major inspiration to me, and I've always been interested in sustainability and renewable energy. I have made TV programs about sustainability with varied success, but I think the DR (Denmark's Radio, the public service channel, ed.) where I work has a responsibility to communicate what the scientists have found out. Unfortunately, a lot of my colleagues do not share my point of view. Solar panels simply are not sexy seen from the TV producer's perspective. Climate stuff doesn't attract a lot of viewers, that is the challenge.

Another problem is what I call "the Lomborg Syndrome": journalists learn that they have to show two sides to every story, so when you have an article or a news item about climate change you always invite someone with Bjørn Lomborg's climate sceptical point of view to "balance" the story. Maybe for that reason there are still people who are very skeptical and don't "believe" – as 97 percent of all scientists do – that climate change is manmade. At COP15 there were a lot of news stories everywhere in the world, but recent US studies have shown that since then hardly anything about the climate has been on BBC, CNN etc. Al-Jazeera covers it a lot, Obama used Hurricane Sandy as part of his election campaign, but when it comes to a flooded Germany we don't even hear

about it. These things are not news anymore, and it's not an agenda that is dominating the world the way it should be in my opinion. Perhaps people share the same feeling I do: I used to be very emotionally engaged, but I'm not anymore – I'm still engaged, though.

I made a program with Soeren Hermansen that didn't attract a lot of viewers in Denmark but was sold to China. I also followed Soeren to Japan, but I couldn't sell the story when I returned. The next documentary I'm going to make is in five parts and it will be about extreme weather. I'll put some climate stuff in there as well. It's all about framing and about the content lurking behind the content. We shouldn't focus on what we really want to tell but instead wrap it up. The "real" stories are found in fiction now, that's where they can deal with it. Think of the Danish television series "The Killing" where they actually made real news headlines about pig farms. I don't make fiction, but I try to learn from fiction and practice the "content behind the content".





Karen Blincoe is the founder and director of ICIS and former director of Schumacher College in the UK.

[Watch the interview with Karen](#)

**Karen Blincoe: A lighthouse in the sustainability wilderness**

Schumacher College has been at the forefront of the sustainability agenda and has spread the message since 1991. Karen talked about the unique recipe that has made the college a success as well as the ripple effects this small place in the South of England has managed to create.

Sustainability is a complex issue, and the Schumacher College was one of the first lighthouses (established in 1991) in the southern part of England and is placed together with Dartington Trust Hall and the first transition town Totness. Schumacher College was inspired by an Indian philosopher, Rabindranath Tagore, who said: "The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life be in harmony with all existence." The college is also inspired by N. F. S. Grundtvig, the founder of the Danish folk high school movement, who said: "People who are learning to live have a different urgency than those who live to learn." Schumacher College was built on a philosophy of promoting a spirit of freedom, poetry and disciplined creativity, cooperation and discovery in individuals, in science, and in the civil society as a whole. Teachers gave pupils personal guidance in emotional, intellectual and spiritual matters. As the director I felt at home because education in the Schumacher

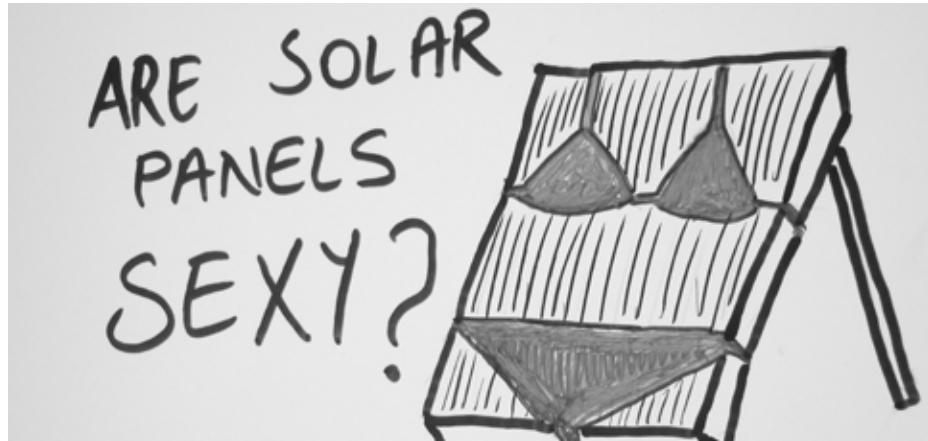
sense has to do with all aspects of society, and I knew about this way of teaching.

Transformative learning for sustainable living became Schumacher's payoff, and people would come for short or longer courses from all over the world. The college became an experiment where great people with great minds come to share stuff. It is a magical place, it's small and there is no luxury, only simple living. You cook together, eat together, walk together, work in the garden together and so on. It is a holistic experience that transforms people who come there, including me. The college staff and the students are said to be radical, transformative, elitist, unique, special, spiritual, activist, introverted, self-opinionated, universal and pioneering. Facilitators are really important – an intense place needs someone to facilitate.

To sum up the lessons learned: You have to have the right place, an anchor, good teachers, and a content that inspires people if you want to be a lighthouse in the sustainability wilderness. Don't get too arrogant and think that only you have found the holy grail. Don't be an island on an island!







**From the second Circle Dialogue:  
About tv programs, the dragon, having fun, and education**

After the speakers Halfdan Muurholm and Karen Blincoe the participants again had the opportunity to engage in a Circle Dialogue:

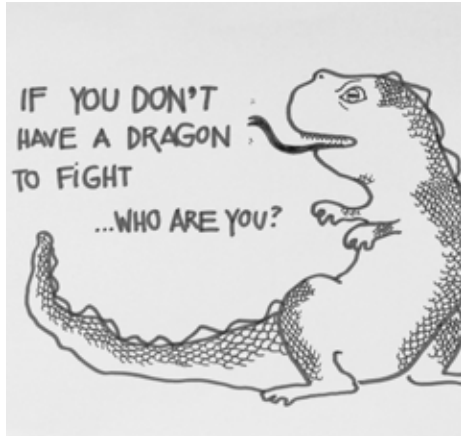
**21 statements from the second dialogue:**

- #1: We might have a problem selling the word "climate", but "green" is much easier. Halfdan, can you sell the same programs under the name of "green"?
- #2: (Halfdan): I've tried to sell green projects as well. There is one program now, "Bonderøven" (The Farmer, ed.) that everybody loves, but it's not really about sustainability, it's more about him and his old-fashioned way of living. We have huge problems with selling solar panels and other green climate stuff to the viewers.
- #3: You said it's not about money but about character – character-driven storytelling is a powerful tool. I can relate to a character, not to a solar panel.
- #4: (Halfdan): There's not a big urge to really put this on the agenda, and people are not afraid of climate change. I don't see cultural or educated people caring about the climate either.
- #5: Do we have a global issue here? Perhaps we should forget Denmark and make a difference in China instead?
- #6: (Halfdan): In my next programs we will start out in Denmark – we have to start at home, go out and then return home.



- #7: Could we approach this in another way: when people have seen the programs, they should think "this is smart!"
- #8: (Tetso): COP15 was a turning point in going from "climate" to "green", and we have the "Lomborg Syndrome". It was a top-down meeting, and it was depressing for the industry. We are talking about the green revolution while we are still occupied with growth, but we need a win-win economy and a lot more bottom-up thinking and acting. Communities have to accept that they are local entities. Amazing things are happening in society, developments which are more than energy.
- #9: (Soeren): I wrote this book about the commons together with Tor Noerretranders, who was more radical when he was younger. He was against nuclear power in Denmark, and when Denmark said no, I would have expected them to be celebrating, but they were depressed. When they didn't have the dragon to fight, the air went out of the balloon. So how can we move on from here? We've had "climate sickness" but we still have to face what's up and what's down.
- #10: We should make it sexy and we should make it easy to check at home whether something is true or not. We could turn the perspective upside down and make new starting points for discussions.
- #11: What's the prevailing story and what makes the paradigm shift? When the book "The Inconvenient Truth" came out, Al Gore had been around for many years, climate change, too. What is the pressure point where something shifts? The challenge in going up against the machine is that you become part of it. How could we have more fun?





**#12:** I observed my grandchild and he's got two words for truth. He says: Grandmother, is it true or real true? I remember the stories about right and wrong from my childhood, and everybody loves them, so we shouldn't be afraid of the yes or the no, the right or the wrong, let's be open about that.

**#13:** Let's not only focus on solutions and what you can change if you have five minutes. Let's raise the bar and talk about social experiments in human evolution, there are many exciting experiments on this planet. There are many wonderful things you could make TV about.

**#14:** Why don't we keep on working in the direction we like? Grundtvig talked about the good meeting which should be 50 percent science and 50 percent storytelling. Is this a necessity of educational places?

**#15:** (Karen): We spent a lot of time trying to understand what the unique thing about Schumacher College was. You come in and you go out changed. No luxury, everybody had the same conditions. You were there together, and everybody was interested in the same thing from different perspectives: how do we make this world a more sustainable place to live? People came in soaking up what everybody has to say, and no matter if you were doing the dishes, the discussions were relevant to the people there. We had amazing conversations. The morning sessions were also really important and we had meditation, breakfast, poem reading and exercise, and you were allowed to share your innermost feelings.

**#16:** So people were aiming for exploration and not for specific results.

**#17:** Sounds like the program at the Danish folk high schools, and perhaps it

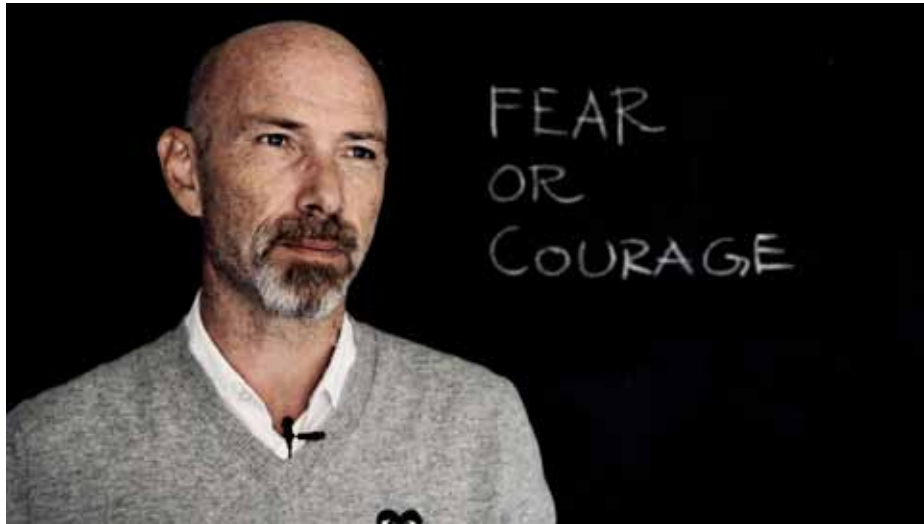
is a bit outdated today, so how can we refresh the concept and do it in a different manner?

**#18:** Form new social contexts. We must have an idea of the drivers because there's no interaction without drivers, and I think this is a dilemma.

**#19:** We must be transforming all things, mental and social processes, and we must also look to the physical world. The challenge is that today's built environment is not sustainable, and we need new buildings and new environments.

**#20:** What would Google do? How can we scale it up? Not just one school or two schools. If this is to have any impact at all we need a lot of schools, and we have to create a movement that could be so strong.

**#21:** Who are the students? It's us! We must also educate the business people and create a new place of education not only for the youngsters but also for the business people.



Erik Algreen-Petersen is the director in Artful Punch

[Watch the interview with Erik](#)

### **Erik Algreen-Petersen: The Artful Punch Method**

Artful Punch is about finding the courage to break the barriers and make the choices needed, paving the way for a fulfilled work life. It is about supporting each other in the release of all our competences and resources, so that “the whole can become greater than the sum of its parts.”

My perspective is about our work life, about creating the fully satisfied work life that is available to all of us. Let me tell you a story from the poet Khalil Gibran: a prophet comes to a village and is asked to talk about work. He says: “And what is it to work with love? It is to weave the cloth with threads drawn from your heart, as if your beloved were to wear that cloth”. If you cannot go to work like that, you can sit outside and take handouts, your work is worth nothing. This fulfillment is available to all of us, but a lot of the time we don’t have the courage to do it, and that is what the artful punch is about: it’s about fear and courage. Many of our decisions are fear-based, we make decisions in order to stabilize things, nothing more. But we all want something better – otherwise we wouldn’t be here.

In 2001, I was the CEO of a film company, and it was a rollercoaster ride. I started out believing that I’d be better as a creative director, but I became the CEO, because they said that I would be really good. I bought into that, and all was great, but I didn’t know how to be a CEO. I looked

to others, but it didn’t work. After four and a half years the chairman asked me to have lunch with him, and he told me that they didn’t need my services anymore. I got furious: it was my business card, my family, my life. My son asked me: dad, can they give you the sack more than one time? I realized that I was free, and I went to work the next day and pulled out all the projects that I’ve been really passionate about – projects that I hadn’t had the courage to make, it was ten to twelve projects. I chose four of them and spent all my time on them during the next four months I had left as a CEO. I succeeded with all of them. And if I can do this, we all can.

When something is very important for us and we don’t do it, what is it that is holding us back? The fear of failure is bigger when it’s something that we really want. And now it’s your turn to think about a project that you really want to do!



# Salons

A few statements from the one and a half hour salons held at the end of the symposium's first day.

From the salon about "Education"

## Ideas for a new education on Samsø:

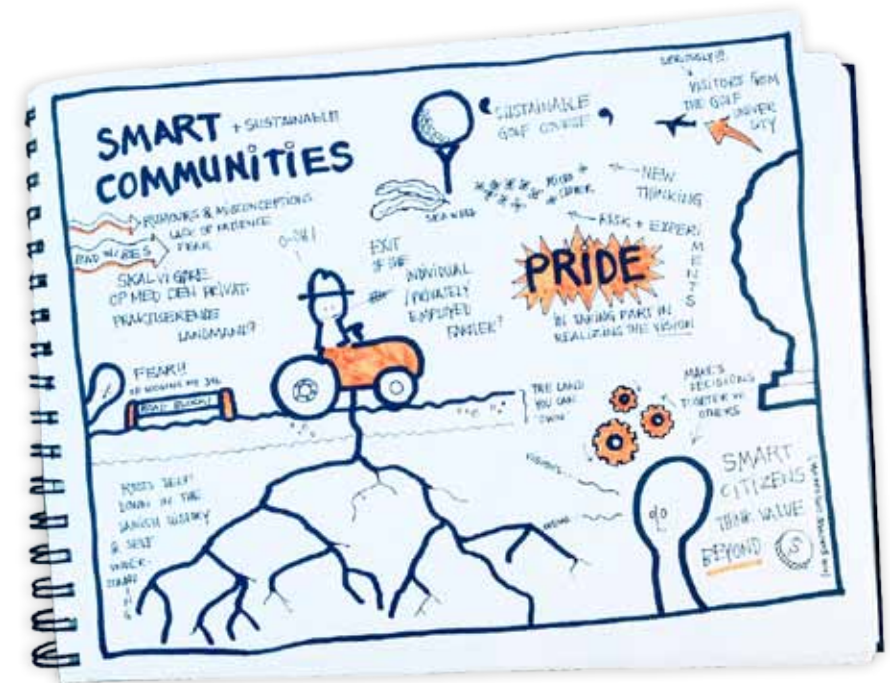
- Education that is not found elsewhere
- Samsøe as a lighthouse
- Moving things
- Problem-solving approach
- Open platforms (trust and transparency)
- Research dimension, theoretical superstructure
- Development of general theories, not only best practices
- Shall it appeal to all? (creative gymnasium)
- Webinars

## Not only education but also formation

- Representing the whole
- Citizen to citizen
- A meeting place for academia, business and civil society

## Which 25 PhD dissertations will have been produced in 25 years?

- Rainwater and community
- Resilient energy landscapes
- Etc.



Above from the salon "Smart and sustainable communities".  
Sketched by Mie Nørgaard, assistant professor, Aarhus School of Architecture.

From the salon that made their own headline for the dialogue in the smaller circle: "Group around courage and fear"

**"It should be manageable, funny and easy. If it is hard and tough, it will never happen."**

**"I don't know how to do it! That's the most important sentence."**

**"Contact people who you prefer to talk to."**

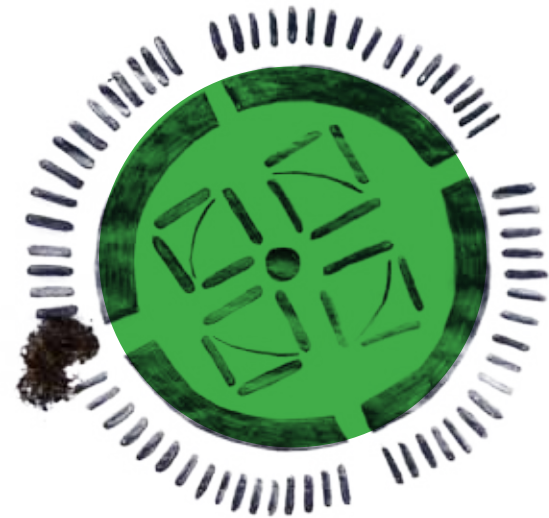
**"The fear of not succeeding is huge."**

# A new campus

THOMAS DYBDAHL, "IF WE WANT IT, ITS RIGHT", QUOTING ARNE NÆSS:

**"HOW CAN MY, WHAT WE CALL QUALITY OF LIFE, BE MAINTAINED OR GROW? AND QUALITY OF LIFE HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH WHAT YOU HAVE, BUT WHAT YOU FEEL LIKE YOU HAVE AND HOW THAT FEELS; WHAT IS IT THAT MAKES US HAPPY?"**

LISTEN!







# Samsborg

**Samsborg will be a unique campus that will host educational processes about sustainable development.**

BY MICHAEL LARSEN,  
MANAGER, SAMSOE ENERGY ACADEMY

Samsøe has a vision to create a unique shared space and meeting place for sustainable transition and community improvement on Samsøe and in the world. The concept of sustainability will be further unfolded and explored in the years to come on Samsøe as we will focus on a great number of initiatives which will further the island's green transition. The new meeting place will be pivotal both to the Energy Academy and to the comprehensive strategy for Samsøe's development as a sustainable local community.

The Energy Academy's strategy for the development of the island is about green education and training, satellite islands and cities, fossil free island and local and international partnerships. We wish to build on the many activities we are already offering all the year round. First and foremost the 5000 yearly visitors from Denmark and abroad who pay a visit to the Energy Academy, some of which are energy tourists, others schoolchildren and students and yet others are our collaborators from educational institutions, organisations and businesses

from all over the world.

It takes new thinking to create a unique building, and we have an ambition to move frontiers through world-class architecture and to employ a new energy standard in the construction of the building, what we call '2025 passive plus'.

The meeting place "Samsborg" will be placed by the Energy Academy, where the new physical possibilities will strengthen the Academy's development strategy since new and extended activities will demand new facilities in the shape of overnight accommodation and learning spaces. At the same time, the new meeting place will markedly set itself apart from the existing possibilities on Samsøe and will thus contribute to the general development of the island.

The Energy Academy and the corporation Samsøe Energy Hotel, which consists of a number of local businesses and organisations, have in collaboration with LAG Læsø, Samsø and Ærø and the Municipality of Samsøe started the preparation of the concept development and the prospectus material as the foundation for the realisation of "Samsborg".



## **Statements from the stakeholders**

Below we offer a glimpse into the intentions with the new meeting place as seen from the perspective of the Municipality of Samsøe and the involved firm of contractors NCC.

Mette Løkke, director of business and tourism, Samsøe Municipality, says: "Samsøe is known and loved as a holiday island, as Denmark's renewable energy island, and as Denmark's vegetable garden. All important brands for Samsøe. The

greater part of the island's jobs are in tourism and food production. The Municipality of Samsøe wishes to create growth and development through new thinking and innovation as well as to create synergy between the three areas. It is crucial that we build the concept of sustainability into the future business development strategy. The municipality's intention with 'Samsborg' is to create a lighthouse that will make the island's development possibilities visible. In our work

with the development of 'Samsborg' we have the ambition that 'Samsborg' will come to physically comprise both nature, farming, sustainability and renewable energy.

With 'Samsborg' Samsøe Municipality wishes to create a whole new type of sustainable tourism as well as a new form of overnight accommodation and meeting place. Furthermore, it will be a space where the meal, and thus the produce of the island, is in focus. A place that gives you the feeling of home at the same time as you are out experiencing. Physically, 'Samsborg' will become a unique building which will express the essence of the special Samsøe spirit with roots deep into the history of Samsøe. Meanwhile, 'Samsborg' will display the newest technology and lead the way in the building activities of the future. In a global society we need meaningful involvement and presence. 'Samsborg' will become a modern example of how you create the possibilities for meaningful meetings between people in a sustainable context. A completely unique building which will in itself be reason enough to visit Samsøe."

Martin Manthorpe, Senior Vice President for strategy and business development, NCC Denmark: "The intention with our involvement in the new campus is to build a striking piece of architecture with a deep meaning. We wish the project to be a part of the development of our field through its example of courage and at the same time bring into focus the debate about city versus country and the exchange between the two. Another reason why we are preoc-

cupied with this collaboration is that we are working intensely with developing future forms of working, of living and of being at home, in which context we wish to bring the so-called 'third room' up for debate. The third room is the idea of the covered house, where the outer façade is separated from the inner and creates a space between inside and outside – as in a greenhouse.

This might become one of the solutions to the requirements of still more energy intensive buildings, where the walls will become thicker and thicker if we keep thinking traditionally. Lastly, our intention is to continue to work with the experiences we collected through our project 'Dome of Visions', which is a way of working with places for bonfires in the context of the debate about the transformation from the industrial society to the sustainable society of the future. This meeting place for businesses, political institutions and culture was tested with 'Dome of Visions' in Copenhagen and Aarhus all through 2013.

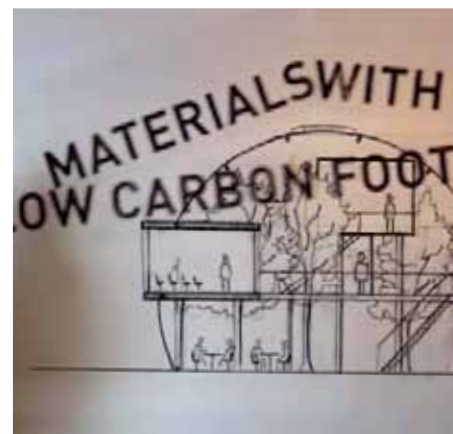
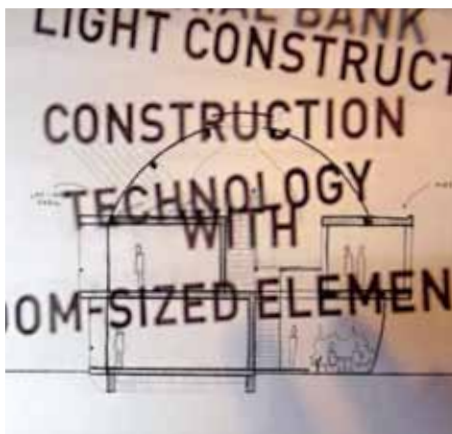
**'Samsborg' will become a modern example of how you create the possibilities for meaningful meetings between people in a sustainable context. A completely unique building which will in itself be reason enough to visit Samsøe."**

– Mette Løkke, director of business and tourism, Samsøe Municipality

**"The intention with our involvement in the new campus is to build a striking piece of architecture with a deep meaning. We wish the project to be a part of the development of our field through its example of courage"**

– Martin Manthorpe, Senior Vice President for strategy and business development, NCC Denmark





Pictures above are from the present movie about Samsborg. Watch [here](#). Contact Michael Larsen, manager, at mil@energiakademiet.dk for more info.

### Workshop steps

**Be in silence for 2 min.**

**Round 1:**  
Images, metaphors, feelings

**Round 2:**  
Gestures from each of you

**Round 3:**  
Your gestures become a sculpture when put together, hold this shape, and when the feeling comes, move into a new sculpture. From this shape tell the group what it felt like to move into the new shape

**Discuss:**  
A round of generative dialogue ...  
What did we discover together?



### Embodied data

Discoveries from a workshop on the second day of the Next Practice symposium led by Art of Hosting facilitator Mary-Alice Arthur on the ideas for the new campus. After a brief presentation from Martin Manthorpe, NCC, participants were asked to do as described to the right, and it created data to further the development process – not only from the mind, but also from the heart/emotions/body.

#### Discoveries

Halfdan Murrholm and IIDA Tetsunari illustrate an opening up of energy and moving together in their gesture (see picture). Below are some of the comments and questions on the new campus idea from the symposium's participants:

- How can it attract people?
- Design it in a way so you're part of the eco-system
- Where is the center? You just go around and around ...
- The circle is too closed
- I can't get inside of it, it doesn't seem open
- I miss the sound of the wind
- In the center we need a small dome where we can have the fireplace
- Is there a place where you can be alone and not be watched?
- I like Cph. Airport where you can check in and out from the long isles with lots of lights
- The shape/structure is not right



# Gifts from friends



**Pala Cunejt** is a friend of the Academy and came by to facilitate the Next Practice symposium graphically. June, as he is called, has previously worked at the Energy Academy, first as a part of his “world internship” as a chaos pilot. Check them out at [kaospiloterne.dk](http://kaospiloterne.dk). After that he taught at our Energy Camps for school children and high school classes. It was really nice to see you again!

**Mary-Alice Arthur** is a new friend of the house and this was her first time visiting Samsø and the Energy Academy. Thanks a lot for joining in!



**Booklet.** Mary-Alice Arthur, Art of Hosting and SOAR, participated in the Next Practice Symposium 2013. Read her harvest from the symposium in the **graphic booklet**

# Post cards from friends

**[POST CARD]** FROM MARY-ALICE ARTHUR, INFLIGHT FROM MINNEAPOLIS TO CHICAGO, 13 NOVEMBER 2011 (NEW ZEALAND)

I will keep the fire in my heart  
With the bright face of the moon as my witness  
Friends, I promise you  
That I will keep the fire in my heart.  
I will lean into that fire  
Even if it melts the soles of my shoes  
Even if it singes my hair and blackens my fingers  
I will not stop  
For our humanity is at stake.  
There, in the centre of the fire, there where we have always met  
Are the embers the wise ones have sheltered on our behalf.  
What we have always known, long in the forgetting  
Is rising through the flames again.  
It takes those of us who are the firekeepers,  
Who are the rocksitters, who have the circle in our blood and bone  
To make the shape that calls the others home.  
We have hidden the patterns in our stories, our poems, our songs  
In the deepest parts of our being.  
And we will speak, we will sing, we will dance our way  
Back.  
Even now the plazas beckon. Even now the squares call out  
For life lived in its fullest expression.  
You who have been solitary, you who have been alone  
Remember this word:  
Together.

**[POST CARD]** FROM HELLE SOLVANG, JOURNALIST, DR/P1 (DK)

My next practice is about simplicity and listening to the vibration of voices and earth. Honoring what can be seen and what can not be seen in harmony. Feet against soil, sung through the atmosphere.

We need space, time and listening abilities to move on to next practice – and funnily enough that is all something we have. It is available like the air and the soil. We just need to practice through song, dance and love. I will meet you there.

**[POST CARD]** FROM MARIANNE KNUT, KUFUNDA LEARNING VILLAGE,  
WWW.KUFUNDA.ORG (AFRICA)

**Fellowship is the Next Practice.** It is time to begin to gather in Fellowships to deepen our practices of new ways, for new worlds. We can no longer walk or work alone. We need each other. We need to reach out to those others who wish to play, experiment, and engage in ways that can serve life, this moment and the future. Our strength lies in the interconnectedness of our roots. We are a forest – can we breathe like one?

Did you know that we are connected across the oceans – a place in Denmark called the Energy Academy with a place in Zimbabwe called Kufunda Learning Village. And there are many many more in this web of new life spinning and stretching across the world, seeking solutions, practices and ways of life that can truly serve.

Next Practice is Fellowship, Community, Collaboration – so that we may be strengthened in our practices for life, for sustainability, for the next generation.

**[POST CARD]** FROM MARTIN LIDEGAARD, DANISH MINISTER FOR  
CLIMATE, ENERGY AND BUILDING (DK)

“In 1997 the project Samsø RE-island was kicked off, and the same year Samsø was named “Denmark’s renewable energy island” by the then government and the Danish Energy Agency. Today Samsø is 100% self-sufficient in electricity from renewable energy. This certainly helps en route to the island’s goal to be fossil free. Samsø’s ambitions are a showcase of Danish knowledge, and it shows how energy efficient solutions can be integrated into the Danish society.

With the Energy Agreement of 22 March 2012 it was decided to support the continued work to transform Samsø into a fossil independent island. The aid is included in the national government budget and there will be allocated 9.5 million Danish kroner in the years 2012-2015. The funds are targeted at energy projects that demonstrate solutions which can help to achieve Samsø’s goal of becoming an island without fossil fuels.”

**[POST CARD]** FROM AMORY B. LOWINS, COFOUNDER AND CHIEF  
SCIENTIST, ROCKY MOUNTAIN INSTITUTE (US)

The early bioneer Bill McLarney was stirring a vat of algae in his Costa Rica research center when a brassy North American lady strode in. What, she demanded, was he doing stirring a vat of green goo when what the world really needs is love? “There’s theoretical love,” Bill replied, “and then there’s applied love” —and kept on stirring.

“Hope is a stance, not an assessment.”

—Frances Moore Lappé

When I give a talk, sometimes a questioner details the many bad things happening in the world, all the suffering in the universe, and asks how dare I propose solutions: isn’t resistance futile? The only response I’ve found is to ask, as gently as I can, ‘I can see why you feel that way. Does it make you more effective? In a recent college class, one young woman bemoaned so many global problems that she said she’d lost all hope and couldn’t imagine bringing a child into such a world. But discussion quickly revealed to us both that she hadn’t lost hope at all; she knew exactly where she’d left it.

“To be truly radical is to make hope possible, not despair convincing.”

—Raymond Williams

This mission is challenging. It requires you to combine sizzle in your brain, fire in your belly, perseverance rooted like a redwood, and soul as light as a butterfly. According to the Internet, one Michael C. Muhammad said: “Everything works out right in the end. If things are not working right, it isn’t the end yet. Don’t let it bother you—relax and keep on going.”

“Infinite gratitude toward all things past;

infinite service to all things present;

infinite responsibility to all things future.”

—Gōtō-roshi

# ONE

## **Not all energy can be measured, and all of nature cannot be weighed.**

Pan, god of the forest, is half man, half buck. He is the merry tease of the forest, and he is known for his flute made of rush, the syrinx flute. He often moves on the edge of the forest close to the open fields. When the cattle stampede in the field, Pan is the one who is making them 'panic'. When night spreads out its wing, he calms down, and you can hear his flute playing out his sorrowful, unrequited love for the nymph Syrinx. It is said about him that he is both demonic, enigmatic, and life-affirming – like nature itself. The Greek philosopher and historian Plutarch tells the following story about Pan 100 years AD, here reproduced after "Naturen lys" by Axel Haaning [Reitzels Forlag 1998]:

On the Mediterranean Sea a ship was sailing on its way to Rome. The wind fell, and the ship lay almost still with its sails slack on the bright and dead calm sea. On board, peace and calm reigned, but suddenly a loud voice was heard calling for the mate of the ship, an Egyptian named Thamus. Nothing could be seen, and those on board felt ill at ease. The voice sounded again, and neither Thamus nor anyone else on board dared to answer. When the voice called out for the third time, Thamus ventured to the gunwale and answered. The voice, which might as well be coming from the land as from the water, shouted back: "When you reach Palodes, you are to announce that The Great Pan is dead."

With Pan the demonism and poetry disappeared from nature, and Plutarch's account is both melancholy and very telling of the way Greek, Roman, and later the Nordic mythology with Thor and Odin

slowly disappeared as Christianity pushed itself forward. One after the other the old gods disappear into the enchanting world of mythology. Thor is the last to end his journey on a black sky with lightning crackling.

At the same time, this story also tells of the new conditions regarding man's relation with nature which Christianity brought with it. Focus shifted from nature – which in the antique world was populated by gods with divine powers and energies – to the inner spiritual world and salvation of the human being. Broadly speaking, it can be said about the natural philosophy of the Middle Ages that the Christian philosophy was preoccupied with turning the gaze of the converted from the physical to the spiritual world. In this process the wise church and faith builders considered nature to be dangerous because it had been the object of worship of the heathens.

It became a crucial feature of the Christian dogmatics to separate God from Nature. As the early philosophers of the Middle Ages repeat time and time again: God is spirit, not matter. God is the creator of matter, and it must be the creator, not the created, which is worshipped. For this reason the scientific disciplines which had the physical world as their subject became uninteresting. The physical nature, human nature included, was seen as obstructing the spiritual life and man's relation to God.

A few wise philosophers tried to maintain the unity between man, nature, and God, but were silenced in different ways and roughly handled. By the end of the Middle Ages this separation was a reality, and man was banned from nature. At the transition to our cultural era, in the seventeenth century, a renewed but failed attempt at maintaining a connection and relation between human being and nature saw the light of day. The limits of the universe disappeared with the Copernican worldview, and the efforts to secure the limits of the universe's infinity were shipwrecked. We can even name the date when this took place. The Italian monk and philosopher Giordano Bruno was burnt as a heretic on Campo dei Fiori in Rome February 16th year 1600.

Fourteen years prior to this he wrote the following in Bruno's fifth book from 1586 (ibid.): "The universe is a whole, infinite and immovable. One is the absolute possibility, one act, one form or soul,



one matter or body, one thing, one being; one is the highest and the best. It is not capable of being encompassed and is therefore unending and boundless, and because it is unending and boundless, it is immovable. It does not move locally, for there is no place outside of it whereto it can be moved, it itself is all there is. It does not create, for there is no other being which it could want or regard, since it contains all being. It does not change, because there is nothing it could be changed into – it is everything. It cannot diminish or grow since it is infinite; nothing can be added and nothing taken out of it, because infinity does not have measurable parts.”

The spirit of nature disappeared with Bruno and was replaced by man’s rational logic. In its place we got mechanical natural laws created by philosophers and natural scientists such as Descartes, Galilei, and Kepler. The universe became infinitely big, but not unending or indivisible like in Bruno’s universe. What were left was the inspired man and the objectified and atomised energy resource NATURE, which the natural sciences could disassemble, examine, and consume ad libitum.

This is what in 1843 made Søren Kierkegaard exclaim in irritation: “There is no need to have dealings with the natural sciences. You stand there defenceless, you cannot control. The scientist immediately starts to divert himself with his particulars, now you are going to Australia, now to the moon, now you are going into an underground cave, now up your ass to look for an intestinal worm. First you use the telescope, then the microscope. Only Satan knows who can stand it... All corruption will come from the natural sciences.”

Today on the threshold of the new millennium we have to acknowledge that the road forward is characterised by two opposing movements, continuity and discontinuity. We and our actions are determined by the behavioural patterns and posterior attitudes of the past centuries. This happens on a continuum from the clean-up after the local car painter over our resource and energy consumption to the removal of nuclear danger potentials. At the same time the road forward happens on a discontinuum, because we need to break with the thinking and behaviour that created us and our relation to nature.

For this reason we have to learn to make detours, and in this connection the words of the painter Friedensreich Hundertwasser about the straight line are meaningful:

“In 1953 I realised that the straight line takes humanity to its doom. Nevertheless, the straight line has created an absolute tyranny. This straight line is cowardly drawn with a ruler, without thought or feeling. It is exactly this line which does not exist in nature. And this line constitutes the rotten foundation of our doomed Civilization.”

We have to realize that humanity cannot follow the shortest distance between two points. We need to get used to find new ways as well as detours and wrong turns in our relationship with nature, energy, and ecology in the new millennium. We need to rethink our values and our actions, and we have to think within an ecological frame of understanding. Other and new values become important, and for this reason we must develop new patterns of action in order to handle the dualism of connection and lack thereof which the industrial and consumer society has left for us. The natural sciences have to be matched with the social sciences if we are to move forward under the conditions of this dualism.

We are balancing on a knife edge and facing the danger that the qualities which ecology offers – such as a high degree of diversity, integration, mutually developing states of dependence, flexibility, and a holistic understanding – might turn against us as rules, restrictions, and regulations. And innovation is always a precarious business.

Perhaps the Danish philosopher Poul Martin Møller’s words from 1837 can serve as consolation. He says about turbulent times when ideals and ideologies break down and are reshaped that “in those times when the old God turns away his face and the new God still has not shown his, it is only natural that twilight will prevail.”

Ole Hansen, human ecologist  
and co-founder of Lysbrocenteret



# Checking out

**Lene, Energy Academy:** I made good connections, and I talked to almost all of you.

**Peter, Energy Academy:** We must not forget best practice, the story of Samsoe is that, and that's what people can learn from.

**Mie, Aarhus School of Architecture:** I got hit by the island atmosphere, and besides inspiration for my professional work, I've been personally inspired to go back to my local community, a small town, and do stuff.

**Karen, ICIS:** Thank you for inviting me, it's been a wonderful experience with information and connectedness, a lot of love and care for each other and for the planet. It's been touching, emotional, spiritual, physical, mental, emotional.

**Peter, Aarhus School of Architecture:** At conferences we usually like to impress each other, not here. It has been enlightening to get in contact with both the rational and the emotional.

**Søren, Global Citizen:** Being chaotic and systematic. It's also important to have chaos as a friend and a driver for a sustainable world.

**Mary-Alice, SOAR:** Space for stories and energy, and we need it to exchange our stories, because important stuff comes from not going all the time. Those spaces are really important. Thank you for the space.

**Inge-Dorthe:** Compared to how I spend a lot of my time, it is wonderful to be in a place where you can openly be in doubt. It's very important as we're not quite sure yet what we want to do next.

**Malaika, Artful Punch:** It has been grounding for me, and this is the major reason why I will take a lot with me: now I feel like a whole person. Saying goodbye is a good opportunity as it means that we can soon say hello again.

**Ole, Lysbrocenteret:** Thanks for all the open doors to the ideas, and I hope to be part of some of them.

**Erik, Artful Punch:** I would love to be part of this family. People have put so much effort into this. All the generosity that is here, all the levels of abstraction that allows everyone to meet, it is a really good skill and quality, thank you all.

WHAT SOME OF THE PARTICIPANTS SAID ABOUT BEING PART OF THE NEXT PRACTICE SYMPOSIUM BEFORE LEAVING. YOU CAN ALSO HEAR WHAT SOME OF THEM SAID TO THE CAMERA ABOUT WHAT THEY HOPED TO TAKE HOME FROM THE SYMPOSIUM [HERE](#)

**Martin, NCC:** Thank you all, and sorry I was late ... I'm here because I need new energy and new insights to change the business world. We're trying to build a new world and yet we are still anchored and trying to produce results in the old one. Let's continue the journey!

**Else Marie, Lysbrocenteret:** I'm so touched by being in a room with so much inspiration and willingness to share. Out there we usually don't cope very well with our living conditions, and that's urgent. Next practice, Malene, you're right on – and there's a lot of possibility here to deal with that.

**Kasper, Alectia A/S:** We're working with sustainable buildings, but I'm not sure that we are doing it right. I want to talk more with people and involve them, and maybe in 2-3 years we will know more.

**Irina, p.hd. student:** I've experienced what sustainable development is actually about, and what holistic thinking is about. It's not so much about the academic, but more about the projects I am doing and want to do in my life. It's been very giving to be here.

**Jesper, Energy Academy:** There's no doubt for me that Samsoe is the test market here and that you are as saints for us. Let's go global now!

**Michael, Energy Academy:** I moved over here a little over a year ago, and it's about practice, the best and the next. We dream and we succeed with the implementation, it's nice.

**Søren, Energy Academy:** I'm very pleased that you all came. We're in a remote place – we're stuck here together and also connected here together. It's also exciting to see how we can blend our competences and approaches, and the Energy Academy is not just a house: We're a blender, a transformer. The light is so beautiful outside right now, and in here we're trying to light up things too, to put focus and attention to the new commons. Thank you for being here.



**ACTIVITY.** We must act in common. Community power is about shared activities: developing community dreams, democratic decision-making and local ownership.





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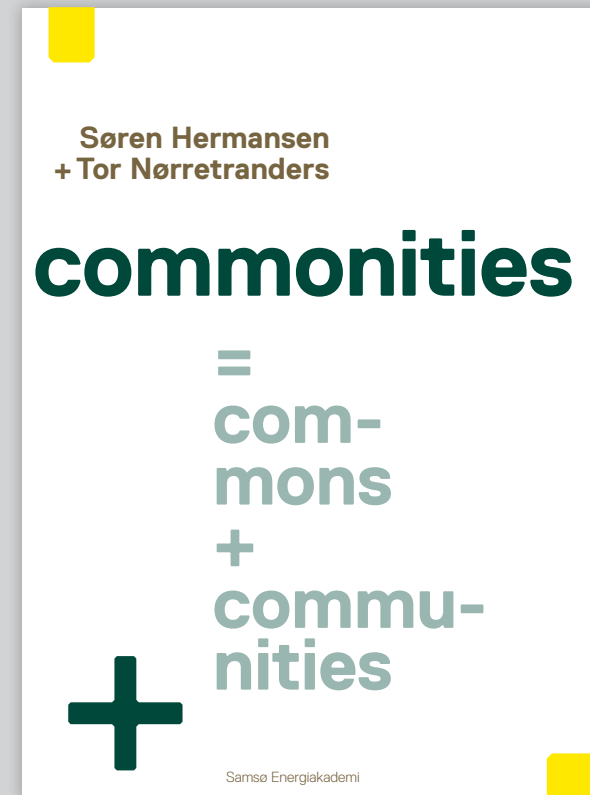
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