

Extracts from the book:

#1.

From the first example titled “Tropical Dreams”: It was extremely hot, and it was humid, almost moist. The pages of my book stuck together and practically seemed to be dissolving. Matavai Resort lay on the edge of the atoll, right on the Pacific Ocean. Huge waves rolled onto the rocks creating a sound that was a constant, thundering reminder of the power of the sea.

We were on Niue, an exotic tropical island in the Pacific. A so-called high atoll out there on its own in the middle of the vastness. The island is actually the peak of a mountain, and so it is not surrounded by a shallow lagoon but by deep water: extremely deep water, where the great whales pass every year as they wander in search of food.

Later that day, Thomas Lynge Jensen and I were due to visit the spot where the wind turbines were to be erected. It wasn't far from the hotel but Speedo Hetutu insisted on giving us a lift.

Thomas and I had met Speedo a year earlier. Thomas was working for an NGO and in September 1999 we attended the *Global Conference on Renewable Energy Islands* on the Danish island of Ærø. It covered the myriad independent island states. The United Nations Development Programme was represented, and the opening address was delivered by Denmark's energy minister at the time. The conference should have been held on the island of Samsø, which had been declared a renewable energy island, but unfortunately the island wasn't large enough to host the conference crowd.

The 45 independent island states went to Ærø instead. They were met in Copenhagen and taken by bus to Svendborg. From there, they were taken by old Danish schooners to the port of Marstal. After all, proper Islanders travel by boat!

The representatives had arrived in Copenhagen from all over the world in the space of a couple of days: from islands in the Caribbean, the Indian Ocean, the Pacific, the Mediterranean and the Atlantic. The sight of all these exotically clad people disembarking from their coaches before clambering aboard the vessels waiting in Svendborg harbour was like something out of Robinson Crusoe. Setting out into Svendborg Sound under all that white canvas and with people

from so many nations on board was a real sight to see. Thomas was responsible for the voyage and the conference, and he had made all the contacts on the island. I knew Thomas via the Forum for Energy and Development.

The conference was magic and we were full of dreams of sandy silver beaches and Hawaiian girls in their raffia skirts. Our determination to create energy islands remained strong! We were determined to save the last remaining coral reefs out in the oceans where the coastal populations were threatened by rising sea levels and climate change. It would be in the nick of time!

[...]

#2.

From the book "Commonities": The communal way is growing all over the world. From Fukushima, Japan, where centralized thinking was subjected to a blow of Asiatic proportions when the earthquake and tsunami knocked out multiple earthquake-proof nuclear reactors, to Brooklyn, New York, where gardens are growing on the rooftops and refuse no longer needs to be transported long distances. In Denmark we can look to Esbjerg, where people are laying their own pavements because the government and the local authorities have given up trying to build a community, or Odense, where rainwater can find its way into the groundwater more easily thanks to green areas created by the local people. Communities release the resources that have become too complex, too cohesive and too mutually dependent for state regulation or commercial business plans to cope with. The world is facing a dramatic readjustment from one basis for production to another; from one commercial logic to another, and from one dream of society to another. It is high time we realized that the opportunities are enormous, the challenges huge, and the time has come.

It sounds romantic but it's not. Not because it's cool having *commonities* grow wherever headquarters fails to keep watch, but because it makes better business sense. It's a better way of creating society; a better way of creating a life that's good and true. *Commonities* are lucrative in themselves. If they weren't, why bother to do things as a community unless it gives you a better life?"

[...]

#3.

From the second example titled "Wind Turbines hang in there": We are there

together because we have a project in common and because we feel we ought to take part in the AGM. Not because we want any changes, but to show the committee and chairman that we appreciate the work they're doing. During the meeting the association chairman, Einar Mortensen, announces that the summer will see the association's silver jubilee. People express their amazement. Did we really start so long ago? Yes indeed; the first small turbines were installed in 1986. "But that means you also became chairman 25 years ago, Einar!" says one of the other shareholders who was also there at the start. "We must celebrate. How about publishing a Festschrift for the occasion?"

The meeting takes an amusing turn. Following a tale of turnover in the millions and the distribution of substantial dividends to the shareholders, everyone starts talking about a party. We want to do more together, to take pleasure in our project and not just look at the bottom line, but to celebrate Einar's durability. Einar is made of stern stuff, and he represents the old school when it comes to associations and the local community. He is poles apart from the EU bureaucrat who presumably also works for the community. But can you even begin to compare the two?

Refreshments at the AGM consisted of traditional Danish rolled sausage or strong cheese on white bread with rings of red pepper on. This is the fare you will find in village halls anywhere in the country. The beer we enjoyed before making our way home tasted especially good. It was great to be home again.

[...]

Read the rest of the story in the e-book "Commonities" by Soeren Hermansen and Tor Noerretranders. Buy it on Amazon or Saxo and support Samsoe's next steps.