



HERE — a guide for local pioneer communities

11 cards to ease the work for other
like-minded pioneers out there.



INTRO

HERE — THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PLACE

**A strong,
sustainable
and robust
community
must share
locality, activity
and mentality!**



Intro — Getting started with transformation and change can be difficult, even if there is no shortage of good ideas and good will. But local communities have the potential to become pioneer communities and open the way for change.

INTRO

HERE — THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PLACE

HERE is a place. Here as in Samsø. Where and what is your HERE? How collective is your HERE, who do you share it with? HERE is a place, a cause, and an engagement.

In our experience, to create radical local change certain conditions must be present. It demands a belonging to a place, it demands a clear objective, it demands a community of people and a strong leader. If those factors are present, a local pioneer community might come into existence.

Samsø is the first island in the world to set a goal of becoming 100% fossil-free by 2030. But an island cannot set goals. People can. This is why community – people sharing a commons that they must administer together – and personal leadership play central roles.

How do I get started?

— The place

Common ground must be found. In the double sense of place and reason/ground for joining the project.

— The objective

A clear objective must be formulated. The clearer, the better. "Samsø must become fossil-free by 2030" is a good example.

— The community

A community must be established which can make common decisions and work together to realize the clear objective.

— Leaders

Strong leaders are needed who know the community and can find common ground.

— Build on

It is intelligent to build on elements which are already present. Meet people where they are already gathering. Participate in meetings which are already organized. Offer something new within pre-established structures.

— Understand your local community

A local community always has a number of unique parameters. Map the unique structure and history of the place and use that knowledge to create something new.

"My wish to create a Samsø self-sufficient with renewable energy and fossil-free by 2030 has demanded and continues to demand consistent efforts. Not just mine, but the efforts of a large group of people. Together we assume the responsibility for creating a common and better future".

Søren Hermansen

CEO, Samsø Energy Academy

Søren Kierkegaard wrote a short story called 'The Lily'. The story is about the power of survival of nature and about the role of the lily. The lily will always be a lily, even if it grows in a dunghill. The metaphor is clear: you cannot run from your task. The lily flowers and remains a lily, even under trying circumstances. You can say the same thing about Samsø, about my task and the terms of the project. Despite a lack of financial resources Samsø defied its circumstances and flourished. The place is secondary and yet decisive.

**Power
without love
is coarse and
ruthless.
Love without
power is
sentimental.**



Reflection — Strong leadership is a vital component in any successful pioneer project. The paradox is that change is the work of love, but the driving force in the realisation is love walking hand in hand with power.

The local pioneer community needs strong leaders who know how to lead a project in the cross field between love and power. At Samsø Energy Academy we work with personal leadership targetted the two fundamental and opposed forces, power and love.

According to Adam Kahane, author of the book "Power and Love: A theory and practice of social change", the combination of these two forces is essential to our ability to meet challenges at all levels: individual, group, society. Kahane does not define power as repressive and love as romantic.

Power, on the contrary, is defined as a strong drive toward the goal and a desire to develop, while love is a drive toward the creation of new connections - toward uniting units which have become, or have always been, fragmented.

In this understanding of love and power the concepts become complementary; they are each other's necessary counterpart. Will without love becomes manipulation and cannot create holistic results, and love without a built-in drive toward development becomes tame and meaningless. But if we combine the two leadership practices, we can go far.

This leadership philosophy is especially suitable for pioneering work.

About pioneers

- Pioneers are practical people, but they are also powerful people.
- Pioneering work stretches over a lifetime.
- Pioneers are ready to roll up their sleeves and make an effort.
- Pioneers need to see tangible results of their efforts.

About personal leadership in a pioneer community

Samsø Energy Academy has worked with transforming Samsø's systems of energy production and ownership models since 1997. In the full life span of the project one leader has stood behind it in the firm belief that this was a responsibility that had been handed to him. Despite countless challenges, our leader never gave up and never lost faith in the project. Without his ability to lead the project in the field between love and power the project would long since have come to a stop.

A story from Samsø

At Samsø Energy Academy we have been privileged to have Søren Hermansen as the head of our organization. Søren's patient, stable and courageous movement has taken shape, step by step, in the interplay between love and power.

Søren leads not least by virtue of his powerful storytelling skills. His love for the people and for the place has made it possible for him, together with many others, to gather all of Samsø around the project. Søren has dared to believe in 'love' as his right leg and 'power' as his left leg leading him toward the many shared decisions and a status as Denmark's Renewable Energy Island, and even to a Samsø free of fossil fuels by 2030.

**When we
create a
common sense
of ownership,
the road is
open for
development.**



Dialogue — In order to realize a pioneer project the project participants must assume ownership of the project's main purpose. By creating ownership people accept a common vision for the future. Without ownership no united approach, and without a united approach no change can be created.

It is up to us to decide how comprehensive the inclusive learning communities in our villages and local communities become. We are the ones – citizens, politicians, businessmen – who do the work of realising and adjusting the plans for our communities, and we also carry the responsibility.

Every single day we have the opportunity to change our ways if we experience that the positive development has stopped or that power positions have become entrenched.

At Samsø Energy Academy we have learned that the best conditions for ownership arise if the goals and processes are clear. This is how you make a vision for the future a shared one. One aspect which always creates ownership of a project is if a clear picture is drawn of the significance of the project to the individual. As human beings we orient ourselves according to a fundamental 'what's in it for me?' logic.

Create a navigation system and a practice which other people can easily take part in

Having some fundamental practices helps everyone trust the process and learn how to be a part of and, maybe at some point, take over the process. It is the experience of Samsø Energy Academy that it is a valuable investment to spend some time developing systems for this. You can do this by asking yourself and your project the following questions:

- When and how can you invite people to co-host the project with you?
- Which stories, materials and reports are needed?
- What is the 'What's in it for me?' aspect of the project? Define the primary interests.
- Who are the partners? Make sure to invite broadly and across different sectors.

The before-phase – ownership, development and the plan

There is no unambiguous answer to how you plan a development process fit for creating involvement and ownership, but different methods have been developed to help communities and citizens get the decisive pioneers and firesouls involved.

A story from Samsø

It is important to understand the significance of different ownership forms. A person might be bothered by a neighbour's windmill which the person has no part in but nevertheless has to live with. But if you own a share in the windmill it looks nicer and sounds better. Co-ownership is the key to solving some of the conflicts native to private ownership.

Society consists of owners and renters. If citizens are to create a stable and sustainable community, shared ownership is a necessary condition. In society, different citizens with different prerequisites live together in a community which ought to benefit everyone.

We had a masterplan for Samsø's route toward becoming a renewable energy island. It was complicated to understand and believe in the entire plan. When we understood that we could handle one project at a time while still referring to the overarching project, people were allowed to join the projects which caught their interest and assume ownership and responsibility. One step at a time, the citizens took responsibility for the entire project.

Our positioning of the chairs determines the functioning of society.



Method — Meeting forms are not trivial, and they are particularly important when working with pioneer projects. The circle as a meeting form demands of the participants that they are willing to shift from informal chatter or discussion saturated with meaning to a receiving attitude of talking and listening.

The circle is an ancient meeting form which has brought people together in equal and respectful conversations for thousands of years. The circle – or the council – has served as the foundation for many cultures and local communities. As a process tool the circle can be adjusted to accommodate any number of groups, themes and time frames, and it is a good method for reaching common decisions.

Physically, the circle is an arrangement of chairs in a circle with one or more symbols in the center. The center is like the hub of a wheel: this is where all energies intersect, and the hub holds the circle together. To help the participants remember the significance of the center to the group, the symbols placed in the center will often be artifacts of special importance to the purpose of the group. Any symbol which matches the purpose or adds to the beauty of the circle is well suited, e.g. flowers, a basket, a bowl, a candle.

Processually, the circle is a meeting form which undergoes the following phases:

- Purpose
- Welcome by the host
- Check-in and welcome – centering
(e.g. a round where each participant tells the group about his or her expectations, intentions and/or presents him or herself)
- Agreements
- The timekeeper of the process
- Check-out and goodbye
(e.g. a round of reflections, new insights or similar)

The three principles of the circle:

- In the circle leadership is shared
- In the circle we listen without judgement
- In the circle focus is on the whole, not the parts

The three practices of the circle:

- Talking with a purpose
- Listening to the multitude of agendas
- What is said in the circle stays in the circle



“At Samsø Energy Academy we use the circle as a meeting form. The circle creates a field of confidentiality at the individual as well as the group level.

I especially remember one circle: the participants were two CEOs of a Jutlandic bank, a delegation of diplomats from Hungary and the Hungarian chamber of commerce, and 20 students from all parts of the US. With normal meeting forms the conversation would quickly have become unequal, because the backgrounds of the participants were so different. But the circle form caused the hierarchies to dissolve and especially activated the students. They had never experienced anything like it before, and they left the experience with a new understanding of how power and love can walk hand in hand across cultures, languages and professions.

In short, the circle is a learning tool which creates the experience of shared leadership.”

Malene Lundén
Project manager,
Samsø Energy Academy

**If you want
to develop
and change it
is important
to meet
people where
they are.**



Dialogue — The most sensitive phase in all projects is the start-up. How is support secured? How to organize? How to secure the necessary participation of the local community? For pioneer projects in local communities a solution can be to build on the foundations already in place and for instance establish an association.

At Samsø Energy Academy we are practitioners working on creating sustainable development. It has been fun and giving, but at times also incredibly challenging. We often tell ourselves that if we had just known then what we know now, it would have been so much easier. Here we present our best advice so you can get your project off to a good start.

— **Build on**

The world is full of change agents with good ideas that end up stranded because the change agent wants to do it all by him- or herself. But how do you offer a taste of something new within already established structures and cultures? Look into which organisations and initiatives already exist before starting a new project, product or service, and seek out collaborations.

— **Be focused**

Be stable in your personal leadership. Walk the talk.

— **Be clear**

New initiatives and processes must be communicated clearly and as early as possible, so that everyone can follow the process.

— **Co-creation**

Offer other people the opportunity to practice with you. Deciding to practice and inviting other people to join you is a good way of preparing the process of change.

— **Direction, not solution**

The process is the direction, not the solution. Processes work the best when you are conscious of the direction but open to the solutions. Stay open and work with, not against, new ideas.

— **Formal and informal**

Combine the formal and informal elements in a way that works for you: you can for instance mix circle meetings with more traditional meeting forms. What is the best mix of the two?

— **Improvise**

Learn to listen to your process. Make out when people need time to speak together and when action and consolidation are necessary.



A story from Samsø

Erik Andersen owned an old rubbish dump. There was gas in the old rubbish, and Erik was struck by the idea of making use of the gas. But Erik wanted to involve other people in the project, so he would not have to do it all by himself. In such cases it makes sense to form an association, so Erik took the initiative and called a first general meeting in the association "Samsø Waste Gas Guild". Statutes were written. The association owns the idea, and it is possible to buy shares. The project was realised for the benefit of the enthusiastic shareholders.

Many projects in Denmark start with an idea which is not commercial but driven by general interest or the desire to try out something new. Founding an association solves the legal aspects of owning and developing a project. This is why it is very common to see projects driven by associations.

Process architecture is the plan according to which the process plays.



Method — There are two approaches to designing a development process. You either slavishly follow a step by step recipe, or you define a clear end objective and feel your way.

In pioneer processes, which per definition venture into unknown territory, a clear objective is alpha and omega.

All development work becomes easier if it follows a clearly designed process architecture. The process architecture is the sheet music of the process – it is the plan according to which the process plays; it is the strategy according to which the battle is fought. When you have a clear process architecture, a space for improvisation opens – it is exactly like jazz.

The design is a common plan: everyone must give their thumbs up to the process architecture. It is the role of the process architecture to design the course of the project from practicalities to content to execution.

When the process architecture is in place you are ready to start. You now know which roles are needed for you to play together as an orchestra, and the facilitator knows how to improvise together with the participants.

A solid process architecture guarantees that all stakeholders know what will happen. The more time spent on the preparation of the process architecture, the more value the process will generate for the organisation.

The process architecture must answer three questions

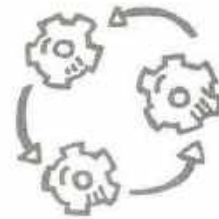
- What is the organisation especially good at?
- What does the organisation want to know more about?
- Where will the organisation be in five years?

The process architecture creates trust in the long term of the process, while process managers steer the process in the present

- The purpose and intention have been defined
- There is room for physical activity
- The contact between participants, managers and stakeholders is crucial
- The participants have space to contribute

Process architecture promotes socio-economic growth

- Good process architecture lowers the pace of the process
- Good process architecture advances learning by 50%
- Good process architecture strengthens democracy and well-being
- Good process architecture develops personal leadership



A story from Samsø

"In 1994 I moved to Samsø from Copenhagen. I was young and wanted to contribute and be an active citizen. But before I could contribute I had to learn, and the first thing I learned was to put my finger in the ground. In short, it was about listening, seeing and learning to pose constructive questions to the Samsø community.

When the slaughterhouse in Ballen closed in 1999, 100 islanders lost their jobs. Together with the unions, the employment office and the island's interest organisations I took the initiative to bring the 100 previous slaughterhouse employees together for 'Café Good Idea', where we all met to look at the future with positive eyes. By embracing a new meeting form and gathering the island's many stakeholders to discuss how we, as a community, could create added value, we succeeded in finding or creating jobs for many of the fired employees. The process architecture made the whole difference."

Malene Lundén

Project manager,
Samsø Energy Academy

**An experiment
does not have
to be perfect
– experiments
can open the way
for something
radically new.**



Reflection — The ability to master the social innovation and the ability to create radically new solutions lies with the organization that knows how to handle the social experiment.

What is an experiment? According to the Danish Dictionary an experiment is "a scientific test supposed to demonstrate, confirm or disprove a specific assumption or lead to a discovery". A social experiment is an experiment among people in society. A good social experiment can lead to innovation in the sense of new ideas spanning from changing an already established solution to developing radically new solutions.

At Samsø Energy Academy we carry out social experiments from a practical starting point. One of our basic methods is developing new ways of meeting. We only use methods which we can practice and understand ourselves. We clearly communicate to the community that what we are doing is a social experiment. We are very clear about our purpose and transparent about why we invite people to participate in a social experiment.

Three definitions of a good social experiment

- A good social experiment is a well-designed and systematic test of a new solution to a social challenge.
- A good social experiment educates us in whether and how a new solution works.
- A good social experiment creates practice-oriented knowledge, embodies ethical considerations regarding the participants of the experiment and strikes a balance between risk minimisation and innovation.

Six thoughts about the value of social experiments:

1. Social experiments help organisations become smarter when it comes to their own problems and processes.
2. Social experiments must be designed and carefully planned across professional competencies.
3. Social experiments must exist in the space between radical creative innovation and and scepticism and measurements.
4. Social experiments must take into account the risks associated with them.
5. Social experiments must communicate in such a way as to make the participants feel involved, met and think of themselves as participants and co-owners of the project.
6. Social experiments are exactly that – experiments. If the participants are aware that they are participating in an experiment, they will be more open.



A story from Samsø

At Samsø Energy Academy we developed a conference that was to run bi-annually over six years. The purpose of the conference was to make sure that our daily work with sustainable development is headed in the right direction.

We designed the conference as a social experiment: we wanted to collect and listen to the diverse recommendations of our network. We chose the best recommendations and built them into our projects over the next six years. We continuously shared our experiences so that our network could follow how their recommendations were realised. Our network has experimented with bringing their competencies in play, and they have seen the Energy Academy bring their recommendations to life. For instance, following a recommendation from our network we developed an open source database collecting and making available our knowledge – this was the first step toward what we know today as the Energy Institute.

Over the six years, more than 30 recommendations were formulated together with three different constellations of our network.

Collaboration between sectors is a necessary condition for a successful sustainable transition.



Dialogue — At Samsø Energy Academy we mobilise the community and facilitate the ability of the community to carry out complex tasks in collaboration between the citizen, the administration and the private sector. Four examples of our work.

Samsø Energy Academy has worked on countless projects related to the local green transition. Here, we take a closer look at four concrete cases that can serve as inspiration for other communities dreaming of transitioning to a more sustainable model. It holds for all four cases that in order to be successful it is a precondition that the sectors of society work together across their own areas of interest.

1. The golf course

Samsø Golf Course in collaboration with Samsø Municipality, Samsø Energy Academy and Grundfos has taken the initiative to launch a number of energy-saving measures which have made the golf club the greenest in Denmark. The club employs the newest pump technology from Grundfos to pump water for watering the greens, and solar panels and windmills produce electricity for the pumps and to cover the club's additional electricity consumption.

2. Carbon

We emit too much CO₂. But what if we could increase the capacity of the topsoil to store carbon? It would solve part of our CO₂ problem and improve the quality of the topsoil for the farmers. Samsø Energy Academy is working with Samsø farmers on this idea. We are not there yet, but we have a positive understanding of how to solve the issue, which gives us hope and provides the foundation for our collaboration.

3. Mobility

Samsø's municipal politicians have chosen to create a municipal ferry company, and they have built a ferry that sails on gas, which Samsø can produce locally. At the moment, the ferry sails on natural gas, but in the future it will be fuelled by upgraded methane from the island's biomass products, such as household waste, slurry and leftovers from the island's agricultural production.

4. Wind turbines

Samsø has invested 246 million in wind turbines! We could not have made the same investment in other technologies. With a fixed-price contract the investment is so safe that everyone can take part, and the profit thus stays on the island. This gives us the opportunity to invest in other technologies as well as to improve our houses, saving even more energy. All the work is conducted by local workers.

"We shouldn't forget the whole branding part. Samsø Energy Academy and all of Samsø are internationally known as the place where 100% renewable energy is actually taking place."

Gregers Johansen

Group Vice President Corporate Service, Grundfos

"Samsø has been a good and practical case, easy to communicate to decision-makers and regular citizens without any technical expertise."

Bent Hansen

President of the Danish Regions and chairman of the regional council, Region Midtjylland

**New
communication
arises when
you allow
yourself to be
stupid, lazy
and yourself.**



Method — Many organizations and corporations think of communication as an output you can focus on after the project or product has been completed. At Samsø Energy Academy we consider communication an integral part of the project.

At Samsø Energy Academy we had to learn the hard way how to communicate. That is, by doing it over and over again. By getting up on the beer crate in the village hall and talking about our ambitions. By calling the local press and politicians and telling them about our ideas. If you keep at it long enough, the tide will eventually turn and people will start asking you if you want to come by the village hall or the municipality and tell them about an idea. The national politicians will call, as well as the royal family and the New York Times.

Some recommendations regarding communication:

Make a plan

Clarify what needs to be communicated by whom to whom.

Integrate communication

Think of communication as an integral part of the project and not as an add-on at the end of the project.

Involve the local community

Good communication can be defined by its ability to involve the surrounding society. In the case of Samsø we managed to get the local community to support the island's sustainable development.

Communication creates new models

Communication often focuses on communicating what already exists, but at Samsø Energy Academy we use communication to create new models giving back power to the individuals.

Think cross-disciplinary communication

At Samsø Energy Academy we have made communication, education and development part of the same division of the organisation. In this way, communication becomes integrated in our many projects from the very beginning. In to our experience, this is the way in which communication can make the biggest difference.

Clear speech

At Samsø Energy Academy we work with complex wholes. Communicating complexity is always a challenge. The danger is that communication spreads too widely and easily falls into holes. To avoid this we have learned to communicate clearly, to simplify our messages and limit ourselves to one good story at a time. This type of communication is easier to understand for the people and media at the other end.

"The most important place to start when you communicate your project is to consider how you pose questions. I am a proponent of a very down-to-earth approach. What are you going to do if you don't understand what is said or written? Do you ignore it or do you pause? At Samsø Energy Academy we believe that there are no wrong or right questions. You will be invited in and we will listen to you, even if we cannot follow what disturbs you and understand where the question hides. It is important to make room for these things. At Samsø Energy Academy we make room for the individual to examine the robustness of her frustration.

We believe that you must always have an answer ready when people ask you, 'How do I know if you're mistaken?' My answer is that this will be formulated as part of the process, depending on how big or decisive the mistake might be. Big and small mistakes arise, and it is important to be able to communicate your mistakes in such a way as to maintain the trust in the team and the task.

Malene Lundén
Project manager,
Samsø Energy Academy

Radical societal development calls for top-down and bottom-up to walk hand in hand.



Dialogue — The ambition of creating radical societal development, such as green transitions, requires national political frameworks and objectives which can facilitate a solid bottom-up integration process ultimately strengthening the local community.

Samsø's successful green transition was not least due to a long haul in Danish energy policy. A political framework was set up centrally which was not a recipe to be followed in every particular but exactly a framework which made local initiatives possible.

In 1997 Samsø won a competition issued by Svend Auken's Ministry of Energy and the Environment. Samsø's overall project was to turn Samsø into Denmark's Renewable Energy Island by following a ten-year energy plan. The Ministry did not outline how the project should be completed. Instead, the competition secured the political framework of the project and put forward three criteria for the completion of the project:

1. The project must utilize tested and approved energy technology
2. The project must build on existing legislation
3. The project must be anchored in a broad base of public support

This political framework was developed with an eye to supporting the local community. Many different support programs were directed at supporting renewable energy solutions in rural areas, both at the level of the local community and the individual household. National support for local energy and environment offices and local energy companies secured the critical development support, allowing a project like Samsø's to be integrated in the local community.

The master plan behind the Samsø project played a decisive role as an intermediary between the national, regional and local levels. The plan helped translate national goals and guidelines into concrete local action, and it became a common guiding vision for the project on Samsø. The fact that the plan was at once externally controlled and internally accepted contributed to its trustworthiness as a communication tool between the levels. The plan had a good balance between firmness and flexibility, which allowed the project developers to adjust it to the local conditions on Samsø.

A learning for decision-makers – apart from the fact that 'the right' structural factors must be in place – could be that in community-based energy projects it is especially important that you focus on the interests of the local community, whether or not these are directly related to renewable energy. The Samsø project underlines the importance of creating time and space for aligning the interests of the local community with ambitions and policies regarding renewable energy. This connection can be strengthened by supporting dedicated local individuals or groups who know how to identify and negotiate between local and external interests.

"In my more than 40-year-long professional life I have worked with top-down solutions to the challenges facing us regarding air pollution in the cities, acidification, the destruction of the ozone layer, climate change, etc. And I have unblinking faith in the overarching, often international initiatives without which we have no chance of making the necessary changes. This is true not least when it comes to climate change.

However, that does not mean that we can do without the local initiatives. They are decisive in two regards: they can create the political pressure needed to push the major initiatives through. And they can expose the opponents of these initiatives when they make the claim that ambitious policies are unrealistic."

Jørgen Heningsen

MEng. with 20 years' experience from the European Climate Commission

The Pioneer Game helps firesouls and pioneers move from the good idea to concrete action.



Reflection — As practitioners at Samsø Energy Academy we have been successful in realising our goals of creating sustainable development on Samsø. With the Pioneer Game we wish to make our knowledge and experience accessible to other firesouls and pioneers working with local sustainable transitions.

The Pioneer Game is a tool to sharpen reflection, dialogue and development among firesouls and pioneers. The tool has the shape of a game that can be played by project groups under the guidance of a 'game master' from the Energy Academy.

The insight

At Samsø Energy Academy we discovered that on the one hand we are in possession of a great deal of experience and insights which we draw upon in our work. On the other hand, it dawned on us that we have a tendency to get lost in our own history - you might say that we become hypnotized by our own success.

This is how the idea of separating the processes from the history arose. Distilling the process by focusing on 'best practices', bringing the process into view so that it can serve as inspiration for other projects facing challenges similar to the ones we have had to handle.

The result

The Pioneer Game helps the players gain a deeper understanding of their own projects and processes. It should be underlined that the Pioneer Game is not a solution - it is a guiding tool which helps you focus on personal leadership.

The target group

We imagine that especially pioneers and firesouls working on sustainable development will benefit from the Pioneer Game. But in principle all volunteers working with complex problematics and change processes can benefit from the game.

The content

The Pioneer Game consists of the following:

- The Pioneer Game is a board game.
- The participants reflect on one or two projects from their own work which need to be developed or adjusted.
- The game revolves around three models:
1 Future - 2 Present - 3 Past.
- The game is supervised by a 'game master' from the Energy Academy.

Contact

If you are interested in knowing more about the game, contact Malene Lundén, phone: +45 2096 4458, email: ml@energiakademiet.dk



"The models should help us as people and experts to focus on a project's purpose and agenda. The project and its promoters will gain knowledge about the process they are facing and about the weak links of this process. The ambition is for the Pioneer Game to increase the innovative power and the contribution of the project. It will make the project more focused, optimized and adjusted."

Malene Lundén

Project manager,
Samsø Energy Academy

Project manager at Samsø Energy Academy Malene Lundén is behind the initiative and development of the Pioneer Game. The game is developed on the backdrop of Samsø Energy Academy's own experiences as a pioneer project working with sustainable development in a local area. The game has been developed in collaboration with Spark, an optimistic change agent passionate about developing strategies and initiatives for organisations courageous and serious about change. As with all good projects, the journey toward the completion of the Pioneer Game has not been ruler-straight, but it has been all the more rewarding for it.

**We need
aldermen and
wise women,
and they can
be found
everywhere.**



Method — When you work with radical societal change, such as green transitions, you come into contact with a vast number of sectors and expertises. At Samsø Energy Academy we embrace difference and insist on the importance of reflection and conversation.

At Samsø Energy Academy and on Samsø in general, we encounter wisdom by the yard. Some wisdom is intellectual and reflective. Other types of wisdom rely on experience and tradition from our agricultural island culture. Local communities contain much wisdom.

In some philosophical circles wisdom is called sober-mindedness, and the virtue to go with it is patience. At Samsø Energy Academy we consistently draw on wisdom in our work with professional project development in the field of sustainable development.

The development of the guide HERE, which you are holding, is a case in point. It was a strategic move to make the inclusion of our network of competences across professional standards and starting points part of the project design. A wisdom council was appointed: we invited personalities into the process of developing the guide HERE. The purpose was for them to contribute with their own perspectives, professional competencies and insights.

We appointed a wisdom council of about 15 people. We invited people from our network and from different sectors, such as a film producer, a radio host, a university professor, an anthropologist, a PhD student, a facilitator, a bureaucrat from Samsø Municipality, a professor in pedagogy and a farmer. Everyone accepted our invitation to be part of the project and witness the realisation of the guide HERE.

It is due to the involvement of the wisdom council that the guide HERE has not become a mainstream product. Together with the project manager the wisdom council has created a completely unique content and product. The wisdom council has guaranteed reflection, learning and embeddedness.

Recommendations regarding the transfer of external knowledge to projects:

Samsø Energy Academy is a non-profit organisation with limited resources based in a small local community. We often have to seek help and contributions of knowledge and guidance that we do not find on the island, but we do not have a lot of money to play around with, so we cannot e.g. buy consultancy services. Our solution is to engage our network and invite professionals to join sessions where knowledge sharing and development of ideas are on the agenda, as we did with the establishment of the wisdom council. In this way we achieve a large effect for limited means. Most professionals and firesouls are willing to participate without any payment if the overarching purpose of the project is consistent with their convictions and the setting creates space for discussion and exchange of ideas. This requires that the purpose is clearly defined, that the setting is good and flexible, and that the participants are interested in discussing and developing new solutions together.



"We participants in the wisdom council came to Samsø from far and wide with all sorts of professional competencies under our belts. But in my experience we quickly peeled off the layers of acquired knowledge and approached the project in a playful, listening and exalted way. The meetings in the wisdom council have taught me that if we can create more of this type of voluntary publics building on transdisciplinarity, we can contribute with a collective wisdom, which no individuals or consultants can muster, but which is greatly needed in our times.

We need gatherings that allow space for thinking in wholes. We were activated in ways we are not used to in the universities, the media, the public institutions and other places, where in the name of efficiency we have allowed ourselves to focus too narrowly. My participation in the wisdom council has reinforced my longing for transdisciplinary perspectives in all corners of society."

Helle Solvang

Organizer and radio host,
Denmark's Radio

OUTRO

COLLABORATION — YOU AND THE GUIDE HERE

**Sustainable
development
is a long
haul. But
together we
can do it.**



Outro — At Samsø Energy Academy we want to share our experiences. This is why we have created the guide [HERE](#). If you as an individual, a community, an organization or a corporation need further help or guidance we offer a number of services all aimed at providing a breeding ground for change.