



Sonderborg residents are actively supporting the city's green transition

The residents of one of the SmartEnCity involved housing association SAB met in October 2020 to learn more about how they can support Sonderborg's climate transition through joint efforts. They will support and act as Green Ambassadors supporting the housing association's green transition.



Director of ProjectZero, Peter Rathje (middle) In dialogue with Jan Andersen (left) and Andreas Bargmeyer (right)

Housing associations are important climate transition partners

The first Green Ambassador training session took place at the EUC Syd – vocational school in Sonderborg, where the local residents were informed about the new program and how they can become local green ambassadors. All housing associations in Sonderborg Municipality have committed to become active participants in the initiative. The tenants must help support the association's green transition. The six housing associations are retrofitting 3,300 apartments for a total of DKK 114 million in the coming years.

Director Peter Rathje, ProjectZero, gave a presentation on the city council's vision to become CO₂-neutral by 2029 and mentioned that it is about "efficient use of a renewable energy supply based on the area's own, green resources". The housing associations are an important partner in achieving the goal. All together, they need to reduce their CO₂ emissions by 9,000 tonnes which is highlighted in the Roadmap2025. Copies of the Roadmap2025 were available for all participants.

Community is their DNA

Peter Rathje has no doubt that the housing associations can handle this task. "The program is based on community and the housing associations have strong strongest community commitment. Your efforts are spreading", he said. He described the community as the "DNA" of the association. And the chairman Vivian Engelbredt from SAB's main board, agreed 100%.



Director, Peter Rathje handed out a "sparometer". With this device, participants can measure the energy consumption of their electronics, appliances, lamps etc.

The responsibility of society

The chairman spoke about the housing associations' "energy and sustainability strategy 2020". SAB's strategy includes 7 out of 17 UN World Goals, because "the world must also be there for our children and grandchildren". That is her and SAB's driving force. It does not have to be the big chrome-plated solutions. Biodiversity is also in focus. For example, she has planted 2 m² of her small garden with meadow flowers, a magnificent sight and a habitat for insects.

She said that SAB will take social responsibility and so will the green ambassadors.

Very active participants

Then Tanja Thuesen from EUC Syd and Malene Wellendorf from "Danish Energy Management" took over, both partners in the EU project "HAPPI". They organized a course that required the future green ambassadors themselves to be active. For example, there was a card game with questions about their behavior and relationship with the housing association.

They also had to present themselves. Their backgrounds are vastly different. And it provides various competencies that can be used in their efforts as green ambassadors. Also, their motivation to be advocates for climate and environment reflected their wide-ranging commitment. Some will cherish nature, others will work for the good community, make a difference and "360 degree things that call for attention".



In small groups, participants could air their ideas. (from left): Finn Lauridsen, Andreas Greve, Elisabeth Serpina and Brian Skyborg-Møller.

The purpose of the project "green ambassador initiative"

What is the purpose of the Green Ambassador Initiative? The ambassadors work for social sustainability, a better environment, lower energy consumption, less CO2 emissions. They should like to share ideas/initiatives with others, become a rolemodel, make their work visible and disseminate their knowledge.

It was clear that the ambassadors were embracing the goals. They are ready to go to work for the good neighborhood and realize their ideas they came up with in small groups. There were many ideas, from sharing economy and thriving green common areas, common events like garden party, common "green", involving children, to drying clothes outside instead of using dryer and competitions as a catalyst for the community.

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