

HOW CAN ... BE A DRIVER TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY?

ON THE SECOND DAY OF THE SEMINAR ABOUT PEOPLE AND MINDSETS A SMALLER GROUP OF PARTICIPANTS WERE DIVIDED INTO FIVE WORKING SESSIONS ABOUT VISIONS FOR PREFERRED FUTURES IN THE LONG RUN: BUSINESS, POLITICS, LIVING, MINDSHIFT AND MINDSET.

BUSINESS. Business has been driven into a crisis which is largely due to the disconnection between user and producer. The chain has become very long. Products are rarely manufactured locally and in recent years the propellant for development has increasingly become cash flow. This has put the function of businesses as community builders under pressure. There is rarely a direct link to the user-driven CSR.

Instead, it has become business policy to adopt local mentality, and company policy can change easily when its life is under threat. Capital markets have developed their own logic which has triggered the global financial crisis. Politicians have intervened by pouring new financial fuel into the system, but this will not solve the problem in the long term. It is necessary to restore the link between people, resources and business. The future of business will be to create this connection and the driving force will come from a growing awareness of resources triggered by the lack of resources.

The development will emerge from below through local and cooperative business models, where terms of trade may not be money but benefits and resources. Increasingly, social networking is spreading ideas and the crucial thing is when and how big business follows developments; because big business is here to stay and will adapt itself from the assumption that the business of business is sustainable business.

Participants: Hardin Tibbs, Steen Hildebrandt, Karen Blincoe, Rikke Dalsgaard, Tao Thomsen, and Flemming Wisler (moderator).

POLITICS. There is a lot that can and should be done politically in order to promote the transformation to sustainability. This goes for governments as well as supranational institutions like the EU and global fora like the UN. Many policy instruments would be highly effective at steering us on to a better course, especially if they were applied by global agreement. Despite some setbacks on the sustainability agenda, notably the global warming agenda, there are positive developments on some levels that bring new voices to bear, one being the Arab spring, another the Occupy movement. But as far as democracy as a framework for politics is concerned, Winston Churchill's dictum applies: It is the worst system of government except for all the others.

The challenge is at least twofold: One, powerful interests are defending the status quo. And two, the challenges are long-term and any effect of present policies have costs

now, whereas election cycles are short-term and costs are unpopular. What can be done? Awareness needs to be raised, the issue must be promoted, and movements must be created. And not necessarily one big organized effort. If many independent organizations, voices and popular opinions pull in the same general direction, the entire political agenda can and will move. "We need to create a parade that is so broad and numerous that politicians will want to jump in front of it as leaders", said Bill Becker. In the U.S. this task at present seems very hard. Prospects might be better in Europe and even in China. But ultimately and long-term there must be a place for optimism.

Participants: Søren Winther Lundby, Bill Becker, Thomas Færgeman, and Søren Steen Olsen (moderator).

LIVING. Movements are rising which give power back to the people. Arab Spring has toppled unwanted systems. Occupy continues to challenge the blind belief that industrialism, materialism, capitalism, individualism are the only options. The potential of such movements is not only the potential to change how we can live but the potential to change how we think we can live. When we begin to imagine something else, then what does our new age look like? Do we want a new Renaissance where we shed what we each buy for what we each feel, sense, express and share? Can we go beyond an economy which boxes the arts, culture, tourism and spirituality as mere commodities? When we travel can we do so in order to change a situation instead of merely escaping our own situation? Perhaps we travel less often but for longer, burning less collective carbon whilst engaging the community, generating economy and nurturing ecology in the place we are at. Perhaps we should give more validity to so-called alternative communities popping up all around the world. In eco-village and freedom-village people live the solutions in order to test what works and what doesn't. In alternative communities on and offline, we can live our dreams. We can fuel transformation, not by forcing blueprints for living from one onto the next, but by linking these different initiatives and communicating their impacts. Create, show, listen and learn. Perhaps globalization is a barrier in disguise. Are we using the hope of global consensus as an excuse not to get going on lots of small ways to do new, do better, do different?

Participants: Niels Johan Juhl-Nielsen, Malene Annikki Lundén, Ditlev Jensen, and Dominic Balmforth (moderator).



The workshop sessions at Carlsberg Academy, from the top left: The business group, the politics group, the living group, the mindshift group and the mindset group.

MINDSET. There is a widespread tendency in the public and political debate on sustainable to focus on limitations and how we have to change the way we live. At the same time, there is very little debate that explicitly raise the question about the relationship and perception of the relationship between human and nature.

The general and mainstream perception of nature seems to be defined by duality and dichotomy. Human and nature are separate entities, and nature is there for our purpose. This view was challenged unanimously by the workshop participants for a perception of nature as the whole. Humans are nature and nature is everything. Nature will always be no matter what. As it was said by one participant: "Nature is what is, before any beginning and after any end, before any creation and after any the destruction." Another participant described nature as "the liberating strange, that we as humans haven't made."

At the same time we must recognize nature and our responsibility towards it, and as far as possible take account of nature. But are people losing interest in nature as one participant asked the group to which another participant replied: "If people lose interest in nature, they lose interest in themselves."

Participants: Gry Hallberg Worre, Martin Fluri, Camilla Bjerre, Helene Bjerre Jordans, Ole Jensen, Hans Fink, and Steen Svendsen (moderator).

MINDSHIFT. Everybody seems to believe that a mindshift is a necessary part of a transition to a sustainable society. But what is a mindshift, and what is the potential quality of a mindshift? At the end of the workshop we decided that we couldn't really conclude as mindshifting

is a very complex phenomenon. Anyway, the dialogue between the participants was good, and many interesting thoughts were shared and questions asked. Three things all participants agreed upon was that awareness – not least at a personal level – is very important in a mind shift. Also that a mind shift is a gradual movement, and that our language plays an important role. From this follows that we are not necessarily conscious about being in the middle of a mind shift.

"A 'mindset-shift' has to do with our fundamental values. We can't have new ones, so it is about the Good, the True, the Beautiful and the Just. Today our society is very focused on the last, while I'm more in to the first – to do the good for the sake of the Good", said Ole Fogh Kirkeby, who also pointed to that Indo-Europeans did not differentiate between 'hand' and 'consciousness'. To them the human hand was the 'outer mind' – so a mind shift also lies in our hands.

What is a mind, and what is a shift?, asked Sascha Amarasinha. "Our intelligence is not only situated in our mental mind, and when we accept that, this is also a mind shift. I love the saying 'It will not happen on my shift', because it includes a responsibility. On my shift I need to be awoken and aware. A mind shift is also about forgiveness", she said. To Thomas Hesselund a mind shift is about "being open in love" instead of fearful, while it to Bo Normander is about a shift from an ego-driven mentality – what's in it for me – to something else that we do not yet know exactly what is. "We need to go from a material consumer-oriented society to a non-material sustainable society", said Bo.

Participants: Thomas Hesselund, Sascha Amarasinha, Bo Normander, Ole Fogh Kirkeby, and Gitte Larsen (moderator).