The overall goal of ProjectZero is to get the entire Sønderborg-area involved in the vision of creating a CO₂-neutral growth area before 2029, creating and demonstrating new solutions, robust measurable CO₂ reductions, new green jobs and a talented generation of young people. The public-private partnership – ProjectZero – was created to inspire and drive Sønderborg’s transition to a ZERO carbon community by 2029, based on improved energy efficiency, conversion of energy sources into renewables and by creating participation of all stakeholders to reach the ambitious goal: CO₂-neutral growth and sustainable urban development.

Since 2009, about 1,200 home-owners have received free energy advice and more than 900 home-owners have already made contracts with local resources for implementation of building energy upgrading. In total there are about 18,600 home owners in the Sønderborg municipality. Additionally, ProjectZero has attracted significant capital investments from industry and created around 1000 new jobs every year, both in the local area and in Denmark as a whole. The main reason for success is that the projectZero approaches CO₂-reduction holistically ensuring an unbroken chain: building owner, energy expert, local designers, craftsmen, and banks to ease implementation of energy saving measures in homes.

LESSONS LEARNED & RECOMMENDATIONS

The intention with the pilot is to investigate the possible energy reduction in Denmark if the same approach was made for the entire Danish building stock. Deployment of this methodology on national scale will not be straightforward as it requires strong local support. In Sønderborg the local business and clean-tech companies have strongly supported the project. Additionally, one of the driving forces has been the creation of something unique among the local residents and feeling to be able to create local unity. This cannot easily be made nationally.

Never the less, playing with the idea about a nationwide dissemination will demonstrate the possibilities for energy savings and creation of local jobs if a community strives for a common goal. It is the aim of the Danish government that Danish buildings should be free of fossil fuels by 2035. To be able to reach that goal, it is estimated that the energy consumption in the existing building stock should be reduced by a minimum of 50 % and business-as-usual may not be sufficient.

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