

Rethink Activism

CHANGE! Good practice factsheet

Image/photo of good practice/initiative



Description of the good practice /initiative: history, activities, number of involved people, territorial scope, current scale, future plans, impact and benefits (**Max. 400 words**)

Rethink Activism tells the story of a movement of everyday activists who are renewing society from the bottom and up and are creating a new democratic culture. People with a dream start shaping their environment and create their own version of a world rethought. They break with passivity and replace confrontation with creativity, and vigour. With its diversity and many initiatives the movement is a necessary part of the transition towards a more collaborative society.

This project will:

- 1) Develop a network of everyday activists in the region
- 2) Tell the stories of everyday activists, their visions, and rethought worlds through a catalogue/book, portrait videos, podcasts and feature articles.
- 3) Organize a people's festival in Aarhus with 10,000 participants: Everyday activists from Aarhus, the region Midtjylland (mid-part of Jutland), the rest of Denmark and the world present 100 examples of a rethought world. They help us imagine our world in new ways and remind us of our ability to create change. Nordic City Network brings together politicians, city planners and activists from all Nordic countries under the headline "The city we want". The people's festival has its base in Sydhavnen in Aarhus and satellites in the environments of everyday activists around the city.

Current status:

In 2016 a team of 14 people with different background (Architect, Anthropologists, Artists and project managers) are finding and portraying everyday activist in Aarhus and region (Midtjylland). Small narratives are published every week on Facebook, Instagram and on the project website.

Brief description of how the specific local public service has been challenged (with figures, if possible)

Rethink Activism creates and supports living examples of what people are already doing, and makes the examples visible. Active citizens are responsible and creative - they take initiatives we can all learn from, if we support the people behind the initiatives.

Local public service is challenged, when the initiatives meet rules, regulations, plans and different spaces of professionalism or expert knowledge. "Can we as a municipality support this - it might have an impact in a broader sense?", "Can I as a professional support this, it might change the game and my role in the future?"

Rethink Activism is also a space for a debate of the power balance between people, companies, institutions and municipality. It will be a discussion around "Who has the right (or the power) to initiate?", "What can we do differently if we distribute power in different ways?" "What happens if citizens organise in powerful communities?"

Role of the municipality within the process (e.g. how the municipality facilitates or coordinates the process to systematise/upscale a civic initiative)

This project is not facilitated or coordinated by the municipality – the core in Rethink Activism is anchored in the civil society and has its own power and legitimacy in civil society.

This is much more about creating and supporting a movement, which can scale and systematise in itself if it gets the space and support.

The Aarhus Mayor Jakob Bundsgaard is planning to use Rethink Activism as a platform for a discussion around the local policy of citizenship.

Key attributes (success factors) enabling (municipal) staff to implement the project successfully

The project will show the power of everyday activists and tell their stories. In itself there is no need for enabling municipal staff to help making the project a success.

The Rethink Activism platform is open for the municipality. They can join the debate and get response to thoughts about democracy and how to co-operate and co-initiate with the civil society.

The city of Aarhus and the region (Midtjylland) will benefit from the movement and the network among everyday activists, as a resourceful source in collaboration towards development of city and society.

Links to website for further information on the good practice/initiative and recommendation to a specific partner

<http://sagerdersamler.dk/tag/rethink-activism/>
<http://rethinkactivism.org/>
<https://www.facebook.com/rethinkactivism/?fref=ts>
<https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/rethinkactivism/>