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Abstract for the 4th Living Knowledge conference, Belfast August 2009

Local climate activities in co-operation between municipality, civil society and science shop

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The Science Shop at DTU co-operates with the local municipal administration and the local branch of an environmental NGO about climate change. The co-operation was initiated by a proposal to the Science Shop from the municipal administration. Since the Science Shop requests civil society involvement in projects it was proposed to involve the local branch of the environmental NGO. The starting point was topics developed by the administration and the NGO together and announced to students as part of the Science Shop project supply.

The focus is climate impact of local activities and strategies for reduction of the impact. Most projects have focused on municipal activities, but also private activities within the municipality as geographic area are included. Focus on the activities causing the climate impact makes the projects relevant for all parts of the technical university. The activities are initiated and co-ordinated by a group with members from municipal administration, the local NGO and the Science Shop. All projects have involved student projects, but most projects have also contributed to ongoing research activities. The projects up till now have focused on the municipal food supply in canteens and to elderly citizens, municipal employees' transportation habits, a municipal energy saving campaign, local businesses' climate impact, and energy refurbishment of private houses. The knowledge production has in some projects mainly been academic, but joint knowledge production with civil society has taken place in some projects. Results have been published locally and some nationally. Especially the food projects have got national interest. Co-operation about environmental impacts of municipal investments may be an up-coming activity.

Michael Sjøgaard Jørgensen is associate professor and science shop co-ordinator and has a background within chemical engineering and technology assessment. His research focuses on strategies for sustainable innovations and sustainable transition, including the roles of civil society organizations and of science shops.