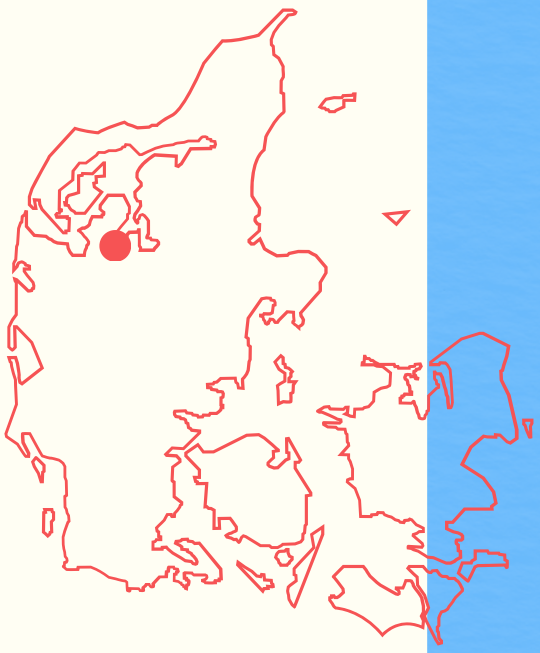
Climate Villages

Skive Municipality



DENMARK

INTRODUCTION

Climate Villages is a **participatory local development initiative**, carried out in **2024–2025** to support local communities in **taking collective action for the green transition, through citizen-driven, place-based solutions**.

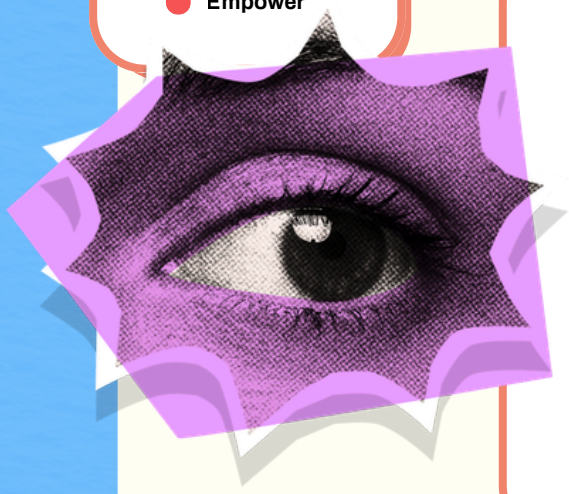
The initiative tackles a specific challenge: **how can climate action feel meaningful and locally rooted, especially in rural communities?** Its goals reflect that ambition: reducing the local climate footprint, strengthening community cohesion, promoting biodiversity, encouraging more sustainable everyday habits, and making these areas more attractive to current and future residents.

At the same time, Climate Villages doubles as a testing ground, **exploring new ways to engage citizens** and **new ways for the municipality to support them**.

Two localities were selected through an application process: **Sydvestsalling** (Lem, Vejby, Ramsing and Håsum) and **Rødding/Lihme**. Each developed its **own programme and priorities** within a shared municipal framework.

ENGAGEMENT LEVEL

- ○ Inform
- ○ Consult
- ○ Involve
- ● **Collaborate**
- ● **Empower**



MANDATE

Climate Villages was **initiated by Skive Municipality** and is strategically rooted in the municipality's **Climate Action Plan 'Skive 2050'**, as well as in the **broader strategic framework 'PURE LIFE'**.

Climate Villages is **politically anchored in the Climate Committee**, which played an active role in shaping the process, and in reviewing and selecting the applications for Climate Villages.

Applications went through several steps: a working group first assessed them, then the Committee for Technical and Environmental Affairs, the Finance Committee, and finally the City Council gave their approval. This gave the process a **clear formal mandate** and **strong political backing**, so participants could expect their ideas to be genuinely heard, and linked to real funding and municipal follow-up.

RECRUITMENT

Participation relied mainly on **local mobilisation** and **voluntary engagement**. To apply, citizens had to form a **broad coordination group** and **develop project ideas** rooted in local needs and ambitions. **Potential applicants were supported along the way** through information meetings, workshops, and feedback sessions. Applications then went through the **formal approval process** described above, before the two localities were selected.

Once selected, citizen involvement continued through **local coordination groups, open working groups, and the Future Shop method**. The Future Shop worked as a pop-up space where citizens of all ages could contribute with words, drawings, maps, and ideas, in an informal, accessible setting. In Sydvestsalling, it stayed open for a week with flexible hours, hosted by municipal staff and local volunteers. In both areas, the method helped refine ideas, bring in more citizens, and recruit people into the working groups.

The process was **inclusive in spirit**. But like many voluntary, rural processes, it also **depended on the local capacity and engagement** that was already there.





PROCESS DESIGN

Climate Villages was designed as an **ongoing participatory process** rather than a one-off consultation. Within a shared municipal framework, each community was given considerable freedom to identify the issues that mattered locally and to develop its own priorities and activities.

This resulted in **two quite different local programmes**. In **Sydvestsalling**, climate action became closely connected to community life, shared green spaces, reuse and repair, sustainable mobility, and learning activities. In **Rødding/Lihme**, the process led to work on local energy solutions, housing, sustainable tourism, biodiversity, entrepreneurship, and active communities. This diversity became an important part of the experience: **climate engagement proved most relevant when the climate agenda was connected to wider local priorities and ambitions**.

The process **combined diverse methods**, such as application development, citizen dialogue, Future Shop activities, coordination group meetings, open working groups, local events, and ongoing municipal support. Ideas that emerged through these activities were gradually developed into **local projects and initiatives**.

Beyond these local results, the initiative also generated **broader organisational learning**: annual calendars, local programmes, working groups, and clearer local visions for the green transition, laying the groundwork for how future participation processes could be organised.

It was coordinated by the **Department of Technical, Environmental & Development Services**, working closely with **citizens and local coordination groups**. **Knowledge partners** were involved too, including VIA University College, which is conducting follow-up research as part of Speak Up.

Altogether, this design **struck a balance**: enough municipal structure and accountability to stay accountable, with enough room for local ownership and experimentation to make it real.

RESCOURCES

Each Climate Village received a **budget of DKK 1,000,000**, funded through a **combination of municipal and state money**: DKK 400,000 from Skive Municipality and DKK 600,000 from the state, in both localities. These resources were **spread across planning, execution, and specific local themes**.

Money wasn't the only investment. **Substantial staff time from the municipal administration** went into coordination, facilitation, planning, legal oversight, and implementation. **Local volunteers, associations, and community actors** carried much of the weight too, playing an important role in keeping the initiative going.

FOLLOW-UP

Results are shared through **local meetings**, **communication materials**, and the **Climate Village programmes**, feeding into a broader municipal learning process about citizen engagement.

The process resulted in both **concrete local initiatives** and **stronger structures for continued local action**. These include green meeting places, repair and reuse activities, work on local energy communities, biodiversity and tourism initiatives, as well as local programmes, annual activity calendars and working groups.

Follow-up is organised jointly by the local coordination groups and the municipality, while the experiences are also feeding into broader municipal learning about citizen participation and place-based climate action.

IMPACT

It is still too early to assess the long-term climate impact of the individual initiatives. However, Climate Villages has already demonstrated **the value of linking climate action with broader local development** and has created **new local structures, partnerships and experience with citizen-driven action**.





STRENGHTS

- **Strong local anchoring** through coordination groups and working groups.
- **Real funding** made participation feel credible and action-oriented.
- **Flexible design** let each locality build on its own strengths and context.
- Combined **concrete climate action** with **community building** and **municipal learning**.

CHALLENGES

- **Broad, diverse participation** takes time and continuous facilitation.
- **Voluntary participation** depends heavily on local capacity and existing engagement.
- Turning ambitious ideas into **long-term implementation** requires persistence and support.
- **Municipal staff** had to work across roles, as facilitators, coordinators, and partners, not just administrators.
- **Finding the right balance between municipal support and local ownership** was an ongoing task. Too little support can leave volunteers struggling with complex projects, while too much municipal involvement can weaken local ownership.

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Link the climate agenda to broader local priorities and development challenges** to make participation relevant and tangible.
- **Start with local ambitions, not municipal solutions.** Give communities a clear framework, but enough freedom to define what the green transition means in their own place.
- **Invest in facilitation.** Communities need guidance, coordination and support to turn ideas into realistic action.
- **Create different ways to participate.** Use informal activities, open events, working groups and concrete projects to involve different people at different stages.
- **Let the municipality change roles.** Be ready to lead, facilitate, connect, remove barriers or step back, depending on what the local process needs.
- **Build for the long term.** Strengthen local capacity and clarify ownership, responsibility and support beyond the project period.

