

# When They Come Back...

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Yesterday, on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September, Nordic Folkecenter received a visit from Sjouke Ritsema (the Netherlands, 28), who was a trainee in the center in 2011.

Sjouke came to Folkecenter for making an internship during his education as Industrial Product Designer, which took place in the Netherlands. As long as he arrived to the center, he realized that the place was something different from what he could have found somewhere else: the atmosphere was very friendly and there was a lot of attention in “hands on experience”. After some weeks of acclimatization, he was put into a group with another trainee from Germany, with whom he focused on wind energy.

The first project the two students were involved into was related to the technology transfer programme that Folkecenter has since many years, which has delivered windmills in several parts of the world. The project in question consisted in analyzing all the drawings of a 150 kW 1980s turbine, updating them with modern components and digitalizing the entire material, so that 3D models could be drawn on the computer. Therefore, the students had to get in contact with several component suppliers, aspect which was facilitated by the large network that Folkecenter has.

The second project was even more “hands on experience”: the students had to design a 5.5 kW turbine in a way so that it could be used as a model for companies who wanted to get in the wind turbines business.

“During my 7 months at Folkecenter I have learned a lot, not only from the technical side, but also for what concerns the social aspects related to the installation of wind turbines on the local area” said Sjouke. He is very satisfied of the experience, and he will use this knowledge for his future: in fact, after working for some years in Triple Solar, a company producing solar collectors and PVs, he founded his own company, together with three friends. The company, which produces small windmills, has already provided some satisfaction to the owners and looks very promising. Being a start-up, it is always important to know which technology developments are available, and that was exactly the reason for his trip in the Folkecenter's surroundings.

Sjouke is only one of the cases of Folkecenter's trainees who built their career around renewable energy topics: other former trainees are now experts in a particular renewable technology, professors in universities and, as Sjouke, entrepreneurs in the renewable energy field.

