

## Brief History of Nordic Folkecenter

Before a piece of lands around Kammergaardsvej no. 16 becomes the location of Nordic Folkecenter for Renewable Energy today, it was just a farm.

In 1970, Preben Maegaard purchased this piece of land from a farmer. He changed this land to be the *International Craft Training Center*, similar in structure to the folk high school. Later, in 1973, it turned itself to be a part of the *Nordenfjord World University* (Verdensuniversitetet) consisting of 20 local training centers.

However, the global oil price crisis in 1974 came to several European nations. As the main impact from this crisis, the oil price in European countries was hiking nearly to 100 US Dollar per barrel in 1979. This phenomenon caused an increase in the production cost of electricity across communes in Denmark. By that time, Denmark suffered from the oil crisis more than other countries, as almost 100% of total energy supply of the country was imported oil.

Preben Maegaard made a decision to transform his training center to “a center of development and implementation of renewable energy”, in order to create the new model of energy supply and consumption without any use of fossil fuel. The center in his mind was named “Nordic Folkecenter for Renewable Energy”, where “Folke” means a general access to the know-how and expertise coming from the research and development (R&D) at the center.

The date of 1<sup>st</sup> July 1983 was the first working day of “Nordic Folkecenter for Renewable Energy”. But, people often call it “Nordic Folkecenter”, as its short name.

At this place, it began the new chapter of Danish energy history and brought a change to the whole world. Since its establishment in 1983, Nordic Folkecenter had been working hard to design and test various types of wind turbines from 1 kW upto 525 kW, as well as a variety of biomass, solar and hydrogen technologies.

Nordic Folkecenter started its first mission by working on wind energy and the testing of wind turbines. Later, as the time passed by, Nordic Folkecenter provided several solutions for the installation of solar cells, the testing of the wave energy power plant, and the design of green buildings.

Today, every year, 10,000 visitors from Denmark and other countries come to have a study tour about renewable energy at Nordic Folkecenter. Meanwhile, around 14-20 people from every corner of the world become trainees or volunteers at Nordic Folkecenter.

The trainees or volunteers come to Nordic Folkecenter with different dreams and reasons. Some of them come here to fulfill their needs for education or future careers, while some of them come here to find solutions of 100% renewable energy communities. Some of them come here to bring an eco-friendly access of electricity to their home country, because, in 2012, over 1.4 billion people around the world still live without electricity.

“In the past, no one thought about the CO<sub>2</sub> emission, or climate change, or global warming. But, today, many people say that the use of renewable energy is the only solution to reduce the CO<sub>2</sub> emission and to fight against the climate change.” said Preben Maegaard

Today, several models of energy saving, combined heating and electricity from renewable energy are waiting for the new visitors and the new trainees at “Nordic Folkecenter for Renewable Energy”.

At this time, the wind of change is not just a song to sing, but it is the wind, which blew the energy crisis out of Denmark. Later, the wind changed Denmark. At present, 25% of all electricity, in Denmark, in 2012, came from wind power. In the region of Thy with its 50,000 inhabitants, where the Folkecenter is located, renewable energy covers 100% of the demand for the electricity and almost all the need for heating is especially high in a temperate climate with long and cold wind.

Meanwhile, Nordic Folkecenter was serving the needs for electricity from wind power for the Danish society; the Folkecenter never ignored the needs for sustainable energy development in the rest of the world, especially, in the developing countries.

Dating back 1998, after Nordic Folkecenter acquired great achievements in introducing the wind energy to Denmark, Nordic Folkecenter made a decision to transfer its knowledge and technology to the developing nations. Mali, a republic located in the West Africa, was the first representative of the Nordic Folkecenter in Africa, along with the support of Malian government. Dr. Ibrahim Togola, the former trainee at the Folkecenter in Denmark, became the leader of Mali Folkecenter.

Later, in 2005, JEEP (Joint Energy and Environment Project), a non-profit famine relief center in Uganda, and Nordic Folkecenter jointly opened JEEP Folkecenter, the second representative of Nordic Folkecenter in Africa.

Soon, in 2013, Nordic Folkecenter sent a Canadian trainee named Daron Miller to cooperate with the Association Kologh Naba, in order to install PV Panels for 20 schools in Bukina Faso. In the coming future, the Folkecenter in Denmark and the Association Kologh Naba will jointly open the third Folkecenter in Bukina Faso.

The dream for the future energy resources is not far from the two hands of human beings, but it is the commitment for all human beings to achieve the goal of saving the world and the environment.

The historical photo gallery will lead the website visitors to see how the people at Nordic Folkecenter have been working to find out a solution for the renewable energy and sustainable energy development since 1970s. We wish you to have a great journey through our history.

### Photo Gallery: Nordic Folkecenter in the Past



**Picture 1:** The photo shows south side of the main office of the Nordic Folkecenter. (Estimated date: c. 1973)



**Picture 2:** The photo shows south side of the main office of the Nordic Folkecenter. (17<sup>th</sup> August 2012)



**Picture 3:** The workshop was located in the second floor at the south side of the main office of the Nordic Folkecenter. (Estimated date: c. 1973)



**Picture 4:** The workshop in the PICTURE 3 became the conference room in the south side of the main office of the Nordic Folkecenter. (17<sup>th</sup> January 2013)



**Picture 5:** The corridor in the first floor at the west wing of the main office of the Nordic Folkecenter. (Estimated date: c. 1973)



**Picture 6:** Today, the corridor were decorated to be the reception point for welcoming the visitors coming from the west wing of the main building (17<sup>th</sup> January 2013)



**Picture 7:** The portrait photograph of Preben Maegaard (Estimated date: c. 1973)



**Picture 8:** The advertisement about the Festival (Byfest), on 26-28 July, organized by *Nordenfjord World University* (Verdensuniversitetet) (Estimated date: c. 1970)





**Picture 9:** Preben Maegaard (Left) took a photo with Dr. Ibrahim Togola (Right). Dr. Ibrahim Togola used to be a former trainee in Nordic Folkecenter in Denmark, but now he became a leader of Mali Folkecenter. (2004)