

## INTERVIEWS IN DANISH ECOVILLAGES

### CHILDRENS DEMOCRACY

#### **HALLINGELILLE**

A group of well intended adults designed a playground for the children in the community. 'It is not wild enough', said some of the kids. So, what do you want, then? That's how the Children's Council in Hallingelille started. From 6 years to 18 years, they take part in the Children's Council, where they manage their own budget, make decisions together and explore their well being as children in the community. They are given their autonomy to do so, without their parents interference. A few adults are their resource persons, most often adults who are not parents themselves. Sometimes the children have issues they want to discuss at the common meetings - then they send a few delegates to present their case. It could be that they wanted to cook for the community on Sundays and decide the menu on their own - or when they wished for more asphalt on the community paths, for them to use their roller skates/skateboards (that one they did not succeed with, though!). Some parents are reluctant to follow the wishes of their children, for instance when they decide to use their budget for pizza parties, cake competitions (with sugar etc.), but have given the children the right to decide, themselves. A tradition has become to take an annual weekend trip, to be away from the community, together. When the children did not have enough budget for a new playground, they arranged a bingo night to raise money. Exchanges with other ecovillage children is also on the agenda. Interestingly, the local school authorities tell, that it is not a coincidence, that the chairperson for the student council is normally a child from Hallingelille - being familiar with taking decisions from an early age.