What is Bildung?

Bildung project: Building Inclusive Lifelong learning systems by Developing a European Understanding of Bildung for the Next Generations.

This publication is the first issue of a five-issue series:
1. What is Bildung?
2. Democracy and Bildung
3. Digitalisation and Bildung
4. Sustainability and Bildung
5. Basic Skills and Bildung

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What is Bildung?

And how does it relate to ALE?

An introduction by the Erasmus+ KA2 Bildung Project

Text by Lene Rachel Andersen

Project Partners

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Introduction

Today, our civilization is in a transformation from industrialised nation-states to a digitized globe. This gives us immense opportunities for creating better lives around the planet. Simultaneously, we are facing several wicked problems such as global warming, extinction of species, rampant wealth inequality, and mass migration. A task for politicians, other decision-makers, and societies as a whole is that in this transition, everybody needs to thrive and solve the problems, everybody needs to understand them, relate to them and take their share of responsibility for solving them. For this to happen—and for the transformation to happen peacefully—everybody needs to feel qualified and empowered. We need Adult Learning and Education (ALE) and folk-Bildung for the 21st Century.

The people who can and must provide the necessary empowerment are adult educators. We cannot solve the world's problems without good teachers, and we cannot rely on the education of today's children and wait for them to grow up; the problems are much too urgent. Adults around the globe need to upgrade their understanding of the world to match the current reality. For many, this also means expanding one's understanding of oneself and one's role, responsibilities and opportunities in the world.

This handbook is one of the first steps in an Erasmus+ project that explores why and how ALE and folk-Bildung can do that.

Democracy depends on citizens with Bildung

Democracy always depends on an informed population and Bildung; people, who can make informed decisions, seek adequate information on their own, engage in meaningful conversations, and self-organise in political parties, democratic associations, clubs etc. And this is the case even more so during the massive changes we are facing since these are challenging the majority of adults around the globe in the following ways:

- millions of current jobs are disappearing due to digitisation, which means that millions of adults need to be able to do something else to make a living, and
- what most of us learned in school is not sufficient to grasp the current and evolving reality.

Democracy depends on informed voters but it is also defined by economic power, and if a critical proportion of the voting population loses their economic power along with a revamping job market, democracy is at stake. Political freedom and democracy depend not only on informed citizens but also on citizens who are economically independent of their politicians, i.e. people who can withhold or move their productive activities in the economy if legislation limits their rights and their freedoms. Workers and other employees can go on strike; owners of the means of production can move their companies.

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Bottom line: we need both the ALE that provides lifelong learning for employability and personal hobbies and the folk-Bildung that empowers us as citizens, challenges us existentially and expands our collective and individual cultural meaning-making. Our political freedom and democracy depend on an informed populace who can support themselves and who can thus afford to have the opinions they have and pursue them actively by democratic means as involved citizens. Political freedom and democracy likewise depend on a populace who have the Bildung that allows them to be actively participating in and contributing to democracy. People who can think for themselves and who have the language to express themselves; individuals who have something to say and the voice and vocabulary with which to say it.

The scope and goal of this handbook

This handbook is an introduction to Bildung and folk-Bildung, and it has four purposes:

1. To introduce Bildung and folk-Bildung,
2. To distinguish these from today's mainstream Adult Learning and Education, ALE,
3. To make it tangible and applicable to educators in Adult Learning and education, ALE,
4. To explore what kind of Bildung we need specifically for the 21st Century in Europe,
5. To suggest approaches with regards to developing Bildung content/methods in existing adult education.

The angle is practical and hands-on; this is not a historical or philosophical introduction to Bildung and folk-Bildung, though a short historical introduction is included and the foundation for this book is a philosophy rather than hands-on experiences; hands-on experiences are what this book is supposed to lead to. When those hands-on experiences are in, we can hold them up against this book. The content and the models explored below are based on my two books *The Nordic Secret* (w/Tomas Björkman, Fri Tanke, 2017) and *Bildung: Keep Growing* (Nordic Bildung, 2020).

This handbook was written as the first of six Intellectual Outputs in the Erasmus+ project *Building Inclusive Lifelong learning systems by Developing a European Understanding of Bildung for the Next Generations* (BILDUNG), which means that this is not the final result of the Erasmus+ Project but the initiating work document. It also means that this text, though it will be published online and is thus accessible from around the globe, focuses on Europe only.

Lene Rachel Andersen
Copenhagen, June 2021

1. Bildung

Bildung is a complex and elusive phenomenon and the concept has deep roots in European thinking and education. In the classical era, the Greeks called it *Paideia,* and in the 1600s, protestant Pietists explored it as personal religious, spiritual and moral growth in the image (German: *Bild)* of Christ.

From 1774 to around 1810, thinkers like Johann Gottfried Herder, Friedrich Schiller, and Wilhelm von Humboldt explored Bildung as a secular phenomenon, relating it to emotional, moral, and intellectual development, to enculturation and education, and one's role as a political subject or citizen. They were all in or around the university town Jena in the duchy of Sachsen-Weimar, as were Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. This secular, German understanding of Bildung was produced by the angry young men of the time, members of the bourgeoisie who were fed up with the feudal power structure and thirsting for political freedom. Their Bildung thinking, therefore, was focused indirectly only on themselves and their "middle class" who did not enjoy the privileges of the clergy and the aristocracy; they did not give much thought to peasants or workers.

Among these German thinkers were also the main drivers of German Idealism, which among other things included the idea that there is a *Geist*, a spirit, an *Idea* that runs through everything and of which we as humans take part and to which we contribute. As we interact with the world, we interact as part of that spirit. According to some of Idealists, this spirit is also in nature, and we are a part of that too. Since the spirit materialises itself through language, lore, cultural heritage, and culture, one of the claims of Idealism is that there is a spirit in a people, i.e. whoever shares a language and a collective identity based on shared culture shares the same spirit. Among the outcomes of German Idealism—or parallel movements to it, one could say—were therefore Romanticism and Romantic Nationalism.

It is generally hard to figure out how supernatural this *Geist* / Spirit is supposed to be: Is it an autonomous consciousness of its own that penetrates all living beings including us? Or is the *Geist*/spirit something we produce whenever we use and produce language and culture (is it culture?); and whenever we feel the "spirit" in nature, is that then just our own projection of meaning and spirit onto nature? As one of the latecomers to Jena, Hegel wrote *Phänomenologie des Geistes / Phenomenology of the Spirit* in 1807. This later inspired Karl Marx and became part of the foundation under Marxism.

There are entire academic careers dedicated to finding out what German Idealism is saying about the spirit, and we are not going to go deeper into the phenomenology of Idealism in this handbook.

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Parallel to the German philosophical development around Bildung, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi was working more hands-on with Bildung in Switzerland. His approach was to eliminate poverty through the education of peasants and workers; he was a Bildung and to some extent political activist. He did not spend his time trying to figure out what kind of *Geist* is connecting everything; he wanted economic and social change! He wanted to empower people, particularly the poor, and to produce those changes, he created education for it and started schools of his own. His understanding of Bildung, however, was the same as among the German philosophers mentioned above: a moral and emotional development that allows people to become conscientious citizens and autonomous persons with a moral backbone and agency. Between 1780 and his death in 1825, Pestalozzi wrote both fiction and non-fiction to promote his societal and pedagogical ideas.

1.1. Folk-Bildung

Romanticism, Idealism, and Bildung thinking travelled to Denmark in 1802, when Henrik Steffens, a young man who had recently studied in Jena, held a series of lectures in Copenhagen. In the audience was his 19-year-old cousin, Nicolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig, who was fascinated by the Romantic concept of a "spirit" in a people. However, Grundtvig was a devout Christian, so according to him, there could be only one spirit and that was the Holy Spirit. Grundtvig struggled with these ideas for years and, eventually, he managed to combine the German concept of spirit with the Holy Spirit and figured that all human spirit was the Holy Spirit, but the Danes had their Danish share of it, the Gaelic the Gaelic part, the Greek the Greek, and so forth.

In 1829-1831, Grundtvig visited Cambridge three times and met for the first time the British college tradition where professors and students discussed with one another. Grundtvig struggled intellectually with the facts of societal change due to industrialisation, the revolts across Europe in 1830, and how Denmark could develop politically; he was an anti-democrat, but he also realised that the people needed to be enlightened citizens to avoid revolts.

Throughout the 1830s and 1840s, Grundtvig combined the German concept of Bildung, the British college concept, Pestalozzi's ideas about pedagogy, and a lot of Christianity and Norse mythology, and invented folk-Bildung, i.e. Bildung not for the bourgeoisie, but for the rural youth in Denmark and for empowering them as citizens. Grundtvig envisioned a folk college or folk high school. The first was built in 1844, but was not a huge success; the successful one was established in 1851 by a teacher named Christen Kold.

As a teacher, Kold had realised for years, that when he taught pupils what he was supposed to teach them, they did not pay attention, but when he told them stories, they listened and came alive. Kold read the same German philosophers as Grundtvig and was particularly inspired by Pestalozzi, and then he bought a farmhouse and turned it into a folk high school.

What Kold did at his folk high school was simple, yet revolutionising: He moved in with 15-20 young farmhands, and he read heroic novels to them about Denmark's glorious past. Once he had their attention, he did something radical for 1851: he asked them questions. Usually, nobody asked farmhands anything. He also let them ask him questions, which may have been even more radical. Their time at the school was divided between storytelling, reading, exploring questions, conversations, studying the latest science, and working on the farm implementing the latest agricultural techniques. They also studied the Bible and Norse mythology and sang a lot, particularly many of the new hymns and songs with lyrics by Grundtvig (he wrote 1500). The young farmhands were thus training both their minds, their hearts and their hands-on farming skills and they were stimulated both intellectually, culturally, emotionally, personally, and professionally.

Three major ideas carried Danish folk-Bildung from the beginning:

- **The living word**; Grundvig knew that a living language, the capability of expressing oneself with passion and a rich vocabulary, and—not least—actually having something to say, was essential not only for Bildung but for a meaningful life and freedom and good citizenship.

- **Life Enlightenment**; to be enlightened in a way that allows one to grasp the world in which one lives, to be able to engage with others, contribute and take responsibility, and to live life to the fullest among and in respect of others.

- **Storytelling, questions and conversation**; this was Kold's major pedagogical contribution: getting to understand the students/participants and hearing what is actually on their minds and opening up the conversation with great stories.

Over the next 50 years, this folk-Bildung empowered the Danish rural underclass. From around 1870, up to 10% of the annual cohort went to a folk high school for 3-5 months in their late teens and early 20s learned about the world and developed their character. This contributed to Denmark going through not just a peaceful transformation from a poor, agricultural absolute monarchy to a prosperous, industrialized democracy, but a meaningful one. Even in the villages, people could think for themselves, have enlightened disagreements, and grab the opportunities of a new era. Eduard Lindeman, an American educator, visited Denmark in 1920 in the aftermath of WW1 (in which Denmark did not participate) and wrote a book about it in 1926: *The Meaning of Adult Education*. Lindeman may have been overselling Denmark a bit, but he writes:

> Here I came into contact with a civilization which, by sheer contrast with hate-ridden Europe, seemed like a cultural oasis in the desert of nationalism. (…)

> And then I saw farmers studying in peoples' colleges *(Volkshochschulen)*, studying to make life more interesting; these same farmers were members of comprehensive cooperative enterprises—dairies, creameries, cheese factories, egg-shipping associations, slaughtering plants, banks, stores, insurance societies, et cetera—enterprises which performed so many

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economic functions that the farmers were freed for other activities; and there could be found neither wealth nor poverty in the land. Here it seemed to me, was a culture which included many of the attributes which have been desired since the time of the early Greeks; besides, it was founded upon rigorous science and a degree of economic freedom—both of which were absent in Greek culture.

Beneath the easily recognisable distinctions in Danish life—collective economic organization, interest in literature, art and recreation, absence of imperialism, et cetera—one finds an educational ferment such as motivates no other people in the modern world. Since the days of Grundtvig, which were also the days of Denmark's material and spiritual impotence, Danish adults have striven to close "the yawning abyss between life and enlightenment." "What the enemy has taken from us by force from without, we must regain by education from within," they said and forthwith laid the foundations for a system of education which continues so long as life lasts. Adult education, one begins to learn after prolonged observation, has not merely changed citizens from illiteracy to literacy; it has rebuilt the total structure of life's values.

The Danish folk high schools and their folk-Bildung were copied in Norway (1863), Sweden (1868), and Finland (1889) and played a similar role there.

1.2. What is Bildung?

There are many definitions of Bildung out there, many of them old, and we need one for the 21st Century that carries the heritage and points towards the future. The Global Bildung Manifesto https://europeanBildung.net/manifesto/ defines it like this:

Bildung is the combination of the education and knowledge necessary to thrive in one's society, and the moral and emotional maturity to be both a team player and have personal autonomy.

Bildung is also the 'education' bringing this about; Bildung is the process as well as the result.

Bildung is a dynamic concept, one that can evolve.

Bildung is knowing one's roots and being able to imagine and co-create the future.

Bildung offers wholesomeness. It is a means in itself; it is not instrumental. It allows us to be fully humane and treat the planet and other species with their inherent dignity, thus enabling us to live within planetary boundaries.

Bildung is a promise of an achievable utopia towards which everybody can contribute.

Bildung is a force of peaceful societal transformation.

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In the following, I am going to suggest four aspects of Bildung that are relatively tangible and which, when brought together, may help us grasp the complexity of Bildung and address it in adult education. The four aspects are:

- **Transferable knowledge and understanding;** education about the world and how it is changing – this should be relatively easy to add to existing programmes.

- **Non-transferable knowledge and understanding**; "Who am I and who ought I be?" "Where and how do I belong?" – this requires different content and, in many places, probably a different approach to teaching altogether; we will need:

    o   a call for existing best practices,

    o   to explore the biggest obstacles, and

    o   to identify low-hanging fruits

- **Expansion of the sense of responsibility** – this is relatively uncharted territory from an andragogical/adult teaching & learning perspective; we will need a call for existing experiences and best practices.

- **Civic empowerment –** this probably requires different content and teaching methods in most places, but there is a rich tradition on which to draw and there are also new methods.

1.3. Definitions

Above and in the following, I am going to refer to education, ALE, Bildung and folk-Bildung, and I am going to use them in the following way:

- **Education**: the act of teaching and learning in any formal, non-formal or informal setting; wherever a deliberate transfer of knowledge takes place. This can be 1st graders learning how to read, university lectures, or your cousin showing you how to make fresh pasta.

- **ALE, Adult Learning & Education**: non-formal programmes of education, targeted to adults and today generally focused on upgrading formal skills and/or teaching hobby-related topics (the arts, history, cooking, etc.).

- **Bildung**: what happens in the individual whenever we expand our knowledge and understanding richly and deeply, as described under the definition of Bildung above. Bildung can thus take place during education or when we are moved by a personal experience, say, a life crisis or struggling with new insights. Bildung is something that happens in a relational process, which means it is usually in interaction with others, but it could also be through the solitary reading of a novel with characters that challenge one's worldview. Typically, Bildung

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takes place when we meet pushback and have to revise a previous perception or understanding.

- **Folk-Bildung**: the combination of the three and the cultural and educational institutions providing it to reach people through all strata of society, but particularly the people with the least education to empower them as citizens.

  o Things would be too easy if the German word *VolksBildung* meant the same as folk-Bildung. *VolksBildung* was the indoctrination that the DDR force-fed to the East German population for them NOT to think for themselves and develop independent opinions; the exact opposite of folk-Bildung, so to speak. How we are going to deal with this when talking about folk-Bildung in German will be up to the Germans to figure out. But since we are now introducing *Bildung* into the English language, *vielleicht können wir auch* folk-Bildung *in die deutsche Sprache einführen?*

There can be ALE without Bildung and folk-Bildung, but it is very hard—if not impossible—to have folk-Bildung without ALE. In order for ALE to match the needs of the 21st Century, it has to become folk-Bildung; it must empower us as citizens in a multitude of ways that transform education and make it Bildung.

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2. Transferable knowledge / expanding one's horizon

The first aspect of Bildung regards the ability to understand the world in which one lives and the knowledge we can teach each other to acquire this understanding. Among transferable knowledge is science, math, crafts, language, stories, philosophy, political ideology, religious dogma, history, reading a map, how to fix a bicycle, the traffic rules, how to book a train ticket online, how to cook, what not to post on social media, etc., i.e. not just academic knowledge but also everyday knowledge. (In German: *AllgemeinBildung*.) This knowledge we may get via teachers, books, television, YouTube videos, friends, parents, children, etc. Since we can transfer these types of knowledge from one person to the next through education, and we can always broaden our horizons, we can also refer to this as horizontal knowledge and understanding.

2.1. The Bildung Rose

The Bildung Rose is a model that illustrates society as made up of seven domains: production, technology, aesthetics, (political) power, science, narrative, and ethics. As with all models, it is a simplification that allows us to see a bigger picture or patterns that are otherwise hard to realise and explain.
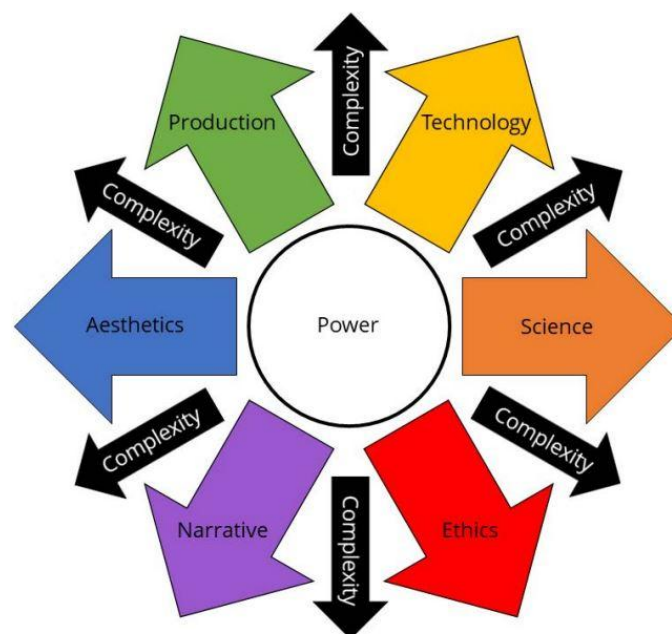

Figure 1: The Bildung Rose
© Lene Rachel Andersen & Nordic Bildung

- **Production** is where food, consumer goods, machinery, tools, infrastructure, housing etc. are produced; production provides for our physical survival.

- **Technology** is where new tools are invented and created, these can be low-tech (the can-opener) or high-tech (Facebook); technology allows us to work, produce and interact in new ways.

- **Aesthetics** puts human thinking and realisation into symbolic form through the arts; aesthetics provides us with language (verbal, visual, tonal, sensual) for things that we could otherwise not express.

- **Power** is political power and the societal institutions representing it: parliament, government, ministries, courts, police, municipalities, military, etc. and the press; societal institutions of power provide us with the rules and framework for everything else.

- **Science** is the process that produces more factual knowledge about the world and it is the people and institutions performing this process; science allows us to make discoveries and know new things about nature, culture, and ourselves.

- **Narrative** is where we embed our moral values; it is the stories that tell us what is good or bad and who we are as a society. Narrative can be religion, political ideology and/or history in the scientific sense; narrative allows us to have a sense of "We the people" and a mutual loyalty towards each other throughout society. It is an expression of the local *Geist*.

- **Ethics** are the principles upon which society and the other six domains are allowed to work and evolve.

The Bildung Rose thus makes a distinction between morals and ethics: morals are the norms that guide us in familiar situations and our collective morals are embedded in our narratives about ourselves; ethics are the principles that guide us in unfamiliar situations. Unfamiliar situations are, say, the dilemmas brought about by new technologies, climate change, and globalisation. As new technologies are disrupting much of the existing societal fabric, our morals and old narratives no longer give us sufficient guidance. We need to consult our ethics, the principles beneath it all to find out what the new morals and narratives will have to be and how to implement these ethics and new morals into technology and production.

In a thriving society, these seven domains are in balance, and society needs all of them to function. The reason it is called the Bildung Rose and not the Society Rose is that for us to thrive, participate fruitfully, and contribute to society as individuals, we need to understand all seven domains to some extent. Our inner world needs to represent the outer world, so to speak. Our mind needs to be able to grasp as much as possible of all seven domains for us to be able to navigate our society safely and make informed decisions. For example, we need to be able to navigate both morally and ethically as production goes global and technologies are disrupting the other domains. From the

inexperienced teen who shares a nude picture on Instagram to the CEO who produces computers in China, we all need to upgrade our morals and ethics to match the new reality if we are to be safe around ourselves.

As societies become larger and more complex, and each domain becomes more complex as well, we need to transfer still more knowledge among us for everybody to be able to understand and thrive in society. We also need to replace or even unlearn outdated knowledge and old assumptions and habits; wasting food or telling sexist jokes are not cool anymore. This means that we will need lifelong education, ALE, that gives access to understanding this development and this education itself will have to evolve and become more complex.

The Bildung Rose shows that to thrive and be able to decode what goes on in one's surroundings, one kind of education is not enough, but it also makes this insight a bit more tangible: we can look at each of the seven domains separately and we can look at them together. Through the Rose, we can see how we need many kinds of transferable knowledge, and that we can always explore knowledge in a certain field in more depth and become a specialist, or broaden our horizon and grasp more context.

For transferable knowledge, we already have many institutions and programmes, from primary, secondary, and tertiary education to ALE, non-formal education and life-long learning of many kinds. There are different teaching / pedagogical methods, but all modern societies know how to do this kind of transfer of knowledge; we just need to prioritise it and make it available to everybody. We also need to understand that all domains and an understanding of all domains are equally important; one domain is not more important than the others are, they serve different roles and purposes in society and our lives. Not everybody needs to be an expert in all domains, of course, but everybody needs to be able to understand and navigate all domains to some extent. Everybody needs to be able to understand a newspaper article about things going on in each domain, and everybody needs to be able to join a dinner conversation about something happening in any one of the domains. At least, one should be able to ask a question or two that do not sound as if one comes from a different planet.

In order for this transferable knowledge to become understanding and Bildung, we need to try out our knowledge in the real world and/or reflect upon it either alone or in conversations with others. This means that the education for this must be more than just knowledge transfer and education; for adults, the obvious place for this is folk-Bildung and the existing ALE.

2.2. We are all consumers, but not necessarily producers

One way of relating to the Bildung Rose is that we all "consume" throughout all seven domains, at least to some extent. We buy products and use technology, most people enjoy music, entertainment and some art, we all benefit from functioning political institutions and science, narratives bind us

together as a society and define shared moral values, and we all benefit from the ethical principles behind our society, even though we may not know exactly what they are. But this is very passive: we just enjoy, use or benefit from what others produce in each domain.

Professionally, we are usually "producers" in only one of the domains. This is often, but not always, the domain upon which one focused one's professional training or education, it is where many upgrade their skills later in their professional life, and much of lifelong learning is dedicated to keeping professional knowledge inside that domain.

As citizens, this leaves us with an imbalance: We generally know only one aspect of one domain in-depth, but we consume and need to be critical and conscientious citizens with regards to all of them.

An example

If we look at, say, the average accountant, she probably has an above-average understanding of what kind of production is taking place in her local region, expert understanding of bookkeeping, finance and legislation related to running a business, and maybe expert knowledge regarding one particular corner of accounting, say, start-ups with imports from non-EU partners. This accountant uses plenty of software technology and complies meticulously with GDPR, but may have no clue about servers and data security, nor whether a digital corona passport is a good idea. She may enjoy classical music and crime novels but avoids "horrible music" and novels with ethical dilemmas and paradoxes (the good guys must win), and she only pursues aesthetics where she knows the "result" in advance. She may also vote at all elections, but may never have written an opinion piece or read the constitution, much less figured out how the EU Parliament and the Commission work and what their relationship is to the national governments. She probably trusts doctors and professors when they are in the news, but she may not be able to tell sound science from political agendas. She may find national identity crucial but be unable to identify three things that are unique to her country. She may also speak warmly about ethics but have no idea where to read any coherent thinking about it.

Most of us are probably like this "average accountant;" we think we know a lot of things about our society, and we do, but as soon as we find ourselves outside our professional domain, our knowledge does not have a lot of depth or detail. We also have no idea what is standard and accepted procedures and knowledge, what is cutting edge, and what is the path towards tomorrow. We more or less rely on the professionals of each domain to take care of it, develop it, and make sure it thrives and does not violate our human rights, freedom, and democracy.

2.3. The seven domains and us

In a perfect world, the formal educational system would equip everybody with a basic understanding of all seven domains, but we cannot even count on that. Most school systems are focused on educating for jobs in production, technology, and—to some extent—science, and do not provide pupils and students with a broad and deep understanding of the other domains. (In many places, barely even a deep understanding of production, technology and science either.)

In a democracy, this is problematic. Nobody will ever know everything about all domains, but we can all become better at understanding all seven domains rather than just leaving them to the experts and professionals and taking the wellbeing of each domain for granted. Our society needs all seven domains to be thriving and solve their jobs well, so as voting citizens we need to educate ourselves well enough to understand some of all of it. At least to the point where we can tell if our politicians know what they are talking about.

One of the best ways of getting to know a field is to start doing it or teaching it to others and thereby discussing it; just studying something by reading about it or hearing about it rarely creates deep knowledge. We have to struggle with the topic or the skill ourselves for it to sink in. This is, where folk-Bildung and ALE come in:

Many people have a hobby that allows them to struggle with knowledge outside their professional realm. They pursue this hobby to relax and they relate deeply to something inside themselves that is uniquely them. It gives pure joy, time flies, and sometimes it may become almost a transcendent experience where one forgets oneself. The philosopher (ethics) or priest (narrative) may enjoin baking or gardening (production), and the nurse (science) may study history (narrative). The engineer (tech) may play the piano (aesthetics), and the dancer (aesthetics) may be a political activist (power).

What is so crucial about the non-formal education, the hobby lessons, the evening classes, the self-organized study circles, i.e. ALE when it is folk-Bildung, is not just that people get to broaden their horizon in one or more domains other than their professional domain, but that other people do it too. At the ceramics class, the banker, the schoolteacher, the unemployed, the nurse, and the bus driver struggle with the same stupid clay, the water, the wheel, and the mess, and they chat while they do so and hear about the life of the others. At the history lecture series at the local college or university, the hairdresser, the engineer, the retired professor, and the florist may not talk to each other during intermission (though they might), but during Q&A, the questions asked by people with different experiences and educational backgrounds add to the complexity of the understanding of the lecture.

People may not be aware of this, it is a meta-cognitive take on adult education, but educators and lecturers could raise awareness about it: everybody in the class or the auditorium represents

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another perspective on what is taught, on the shared society and the collective knowledge present in it. This could be brought into the situation and it could open a different kind of conversation rather than just the ordinary Q&A.

Depending on previous education, we will relate to the Bildung Rose on different terms. That is OK. When we differ in educational level and professional experience, we will also perceive the Rose and the domains in it differently. This should not be seen as a problem but as an invitation to conversation and exploration of the many viewpoints present in the room.

2.4. Where are the environment and the 17 SDGs in the Rose?

One issue that is often raised regarding the Bildung Rose is this: Where do the 17 Sustainable Development Goals fit in? The answer is: They are in all domains but in different ways depending on the domain and the individual development goal:

- **Production** needs to readdress production methods, sustainability, circular economy versus traditional industry etc. and it needs to provide decent jobs paying liveable wages; SDG 8.

- **Technology** needs to be understood as much more than neutral tools; technology can be used to solve the 17 SDGs, but technology also has disruptive effects on societies and contributes to global inequality and many of the problems we are facing.

- **Aesthetics** can contribute to the shift in values from unsustainable living to sustainable living; aesthetics can make sustainable living cool.

- **Power** has to prioritise the SDGs.

- **Science** has to challenge, prioritise, and explore the SDGs and the ways to reach the goals.

- **Narratives** have to change so that the SDGs become meaningful to people.

- The SDGs represent a certain kind of **ethics**, and philosophers need to explore the SDGs and their ethics in a broader and deeper context.

2.5. Particularly narrative holds unused potential

If I were to point out one domain that particularly needs to start working with the SDGs, it is Narrative. We need new stories (and to revitalise old stories) that situate humans in nature as part of nature, and which allow us to relate to nature so that living in sustainable ways becomes meaningful and not just feel like a bunch of limitations.

Two narratives dominate the relationship that most Westerners have to nature today: Genesis and the Enlightenment. The Biblical creation myth puts Adam and Eve, and thereby all humans, somewhere between God and the rest of the creation, nature, and then God hands over the

stewardship of the creation to the humans. God does this as he throws the humans out of the Garden of Eden where they did not have to work for their food; hereafter, getting enough to eat becomes a struggle: *"Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field."* Acquiring food becomes production and successful production is a question of controlling nature (or at least the thorns and thistles). The Enlightenment gave us modern science and a sense that humans actually *can* control nature and its thorns and thistles. As modern science was combined with modern capitalism, modern individualism, and colonialism, we eradicated hunger and a number of diseases in the West, which, of course, is now creating the problems and the mess we are finding ourselves in today. On the other hand, without the modern sciences, we would have had measles, polio, and Covid-19, no clean drinking water coming out of a tap in our homes and no vaccines either.

The narrative about humans being closer to God than the rest of nature, and science being able to control parts of nature (or all of it), have given us a meta-narrative telling us that humans are beyond nature: We are on this planet in different terms than the rest of life. We are indeed, but not necessarily in the way that we tend to think, and only because we have created the narratives telling us that we are. In reality, we are nature. We are nature just as much as the penguins and the thorns and thistles, but we have knowledge, awareness, and consciousness that allow us to know this; the penguins and the thistles don't. Physically, we are biology and part of nature; culturally, we have worked and thought ourselves beyond nature. That is what separates us, and this puts a moral obligation on us that none of the other life forms has.

This unique position will have to become a meaningful narrative to everybody: we are both nature and beyond nature and must take responsibility for it. Otherwise, it will be almost impossible for us to change our self-destructive course as we are ruining the rest of nature. Part of that responsibility is to keep the responsibility and not hand it over to computers and AI. We have to grow up as a species, keep the responsibility and take responsibility.

This goes against neither Genesis nor the Enlightenment; both stories contain the element of stewardship and responsibility. We just need to connect these stories with something even older, namely the prehistoric indigenous wisdom regarding our spiritual connection to nature and that all is interconnected. The latter, connectivity, is also an essential concept in the African concept of Ubuntu and Eastern philosophy. The new and necessary narrative does not have to dismiss the old ones; it is not an either-or, we need both-and.

Our narratives regarding humans as nature, culture as responsibility, and the SDGs have to be improved for people to connect with the SDG agendas; otherwise, nothing is going to happen and ALE needs to play a role in this.

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2.6. Where are teachers and education in the Rose?

Teachers and education, hopefully, are everywhere in the Bildung Rose. Each domain has its transferable knowledge and different pedagogical methods that depend on the content: carpentry, programming, ballet, policing, research, storytelling, and ethics are taught, explored, and learned in very different ways and we need good teachers for all of them.

2.7. Where and how to teach all the domains to adults?

In order to use the Bildung Rose as more than just a frame of reference, i.e. if you would like to teach the Rose itself or use it explicitly in a programme or class as an educational/Bildung tool together with the participants, I suggest two things:

- That you go here and read my paper about it:
  https://nordicBildung.org/papers/the-Bildung-rose/.
- That one or more colleagues of yours do the same and that you study it together and discuss it.

By doing so, you will get a deeper understanding of the many aspects of the Bildung Rose, you will be better able to answer questions regarding the Rose, and if you study it together with others, you will get used to using the vocabulary actively. If your local language is not English, it will also give you an opportunity to talk about the Rose in that language before you introduce it to local students/participants.

For power-point presentations, you can find the Rose here:

https://nordicBildung.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/TheBildungRose_Erasmus_WhatIsBildung_2_slides.pdf

https://nordicBildung.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/TheBildungRose_Erasmus_WhatIsBildung_5_slides.pdf

for handouts, you can find the Bildung Rose in a print-friendly format here:

https://nordicBildung.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/BildungRose_printer-friendly_colour.pdf

https://nordicBildung.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/BildungRose_printer-friendly_bw.pdf

The Bildung Rose may be relatively easy to introduce into existing programmes as a tool for self-reflection and collective conversation, reflection and understanding, it may be harder to make an actual programme around it as long as it is unfamiliar to people. There are many ways to use the Bildung Rose depending on the context; these are just some suggestions:

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Classes with academic content

Here I am thinking of any kind of classroom education, whether it is a language course, bookkeeping, math, law, IT, philosophy, history etc. Since people do not come for the Rose, but for professional reasons or because of a specific interest/hobby, I would suggest that the Rose is not introduced until after at least ¼ of the course; people should get what they came for before this broader conversation is added.

My suggestion is that the Rose is introduced by saying something like: "We are now one quarter into the programme, and we have introduced the basics. Now I am curious about where and how you are looking forward to using this knowledge and if there are angles to this that would be particularly relevant to you. In order to have that conversation, I would like to introduce the Bildung Rose." Then you spend 10-15 minutes introducing the Rose and then hand out the Rose in print. Say something like: "Where do you see yourselves using what you are learning here? And how? Please take 2 minutes in silence to mark on the Rose where you can see yourself using what you are learning." Give them 2 minutes to think about it and then open the conversation. Deepen the conversation by asking whether it is for professional or personal purposes, if it may be useful in other ways in another domain, and whether one could use it to serve a bigger purpose (as a volunteer, for instance). You may then get the participants to discuss what they would like to know more about: "When you look at the Rose, are there aspects of our topic (bookkeeping, math, IT, language etc.) that we have not covered? Are there blind spots that we have missed and which you would like us to address?"

Classes with non-academic, hands-on content

Here I am thinking about cooking, ceramics or gardening classes etc. Most people would probably not have signed up for these classes to have an intellectual discussion, so it may surprise them—positively or negatively—if something like the Bildung Rose and a conversation about it is introduced. It is definitely worth a try.

My suggestion would be to print out the Rose for everybody and that you dedicate the last 15 minutes of a session to introducing it. Rather than just ending the session 15 minutes early and then start talking about the Rose, begin the session by saying that in the last 15 minutes, you are going to do something a little bit different. When you then get to the last 15 minutes, my suggested introduction would be along the lines of: "One of the great things about going to a class like this is that you get to meet all kinds of people with all kinds of different backgrounds. But we rarely bring these different experiences into play or our conversations. Next time, I would like us to do that. I would also like us to do it in a way that everybody can feel comfortable about, so I am going to introduce to you this Rose (and then you hand it out). The Rose shows seven domains of our society

and I bet that you all have your favourite one or two domains and that this also relates to why you joined this class. So now I am going to just briefly introduce the seven domains and the role they play in our society, and then I am going to ask you, until next time, to think about, in which domain you feel yourself most at home and the happiest, and how that relates to why you joined this class. And then next time, we will talk about how that relates to what we are doing here." At the next session, I would keep the conversation very open, but I would also make sure everybody joined the conversation and was heard.

Lecture series

Here people come for the academic and intellectual content and to expand their horizon, so introducing the Rose a bit into the series ought to be rather easy. I see two main ways in which to use the Rose:

- **To broaden the scope of the lecture series**
  Introduce the Rose and ask the participants to think about which domains of the Rose have not yet been covered by the lectures.

- **To draw upon the experiences and knowledge of the participants**
  Introduce the Rose and hand out the Rose in print. Then ask them to think about where they have their professional knowledge and where they have their heart; give them 2 minutes in silence to figure it out for themselves and mark it on the handout. Now ask the participants how their professional knowledge and their personal passion relate to the lecture series, where they have the knowledge to add, and what they would like to know more about.

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2.8. Create programmes around the Bildung Rose

By creating a programme around the Bildung Rose, I am not suggesting the Rose as the topic or object to be studied; I doubt if anybody would sign up for such a thing without knowing the Rose in advance. Having introduced the Rose through some of the above suggestions, it might be possible to create a course around the Bildung Rose later, though.

If one would like to create a programme based on the Rose, I would suggest that the topic be "The Great Transition; how to secure a sustainable future?" or "Where is your job in 5 years?" something in which people would already be interested. And then I would find an expert from each of the seven domains and let people ask questions about anything. As you introduce the experts, relate them to the Rose.

Alternatively, one could create "Rose Pods" where people are brought together based on their knowledge in one or more domains and let them contribute with their different kinds of knowledge to a given topic.

The best way to deliberately create programmes around the Rose would probably be to use the Rose as an analytical tool or planning tool: Does this programme/course cover all the domains or all the questions that the domains raise relating to our programme/course? And then tell the participants either at the beginning or halfway through the course and get their feedback.

2.9. Particular education, Bildung and folk-Bildung needs in the 21st Century

As already mentioned, the 21st Century and the transition in which we are finding ourselves are challenging all of us and we cannot rely on our current knowledge to navigate the changes. All seven domains in the Bildung Rose are in some sort of transition and are becoming more complex, but it is particularly the development in technology that is pushing the development in the other domains. The Bildung Rose may help people see this and address it; it may help "organising" the overwhelming changes going on. The Bildung Rose may thus be a hands-on tool to explore among adult educators and learners where they find their knowledge insufficient and where they would like to know more.

2.10. Unresolved questions

The Bildung Rose has not been used as an education and Bildung tool before in this sense. We, therefore, lack feedback from educators with regards to presenting the Rose and to using it as a conversation starter and/or analytical tool.

As a part of the project, it would therefore be useful to use the Rose in as many ways as possible in existing programmes to get feedback on what works and what does not work.

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3. Non-transferable knowledge / emotional depth and morality

The second aspect of Bildung regards our moral and emotional development. How high are our moral aspirations and our sense of responsibility, and how deep are our emotional relationships to others and our culture?

This is the kind of knowledge that comes from life itself, from meeting disappointments, falling in love, heartbreak, becoming a parent, losing a game, winning a game, connecting with friends, taking responsibility, failing, succeeding, taking care of a sick parent, losing a spouse, accomplishing something remarkable at work, etc. As we go through these many kinds of experiences, we can learn from them and we can learn about ourselves and other people from them, but it is a kind of knowledge that cannot be transferred directly. I can tell others about my heartbreak, but without breaking somebody's heart, it is not a kind of knowledge that I can pass on directly.

The emotional connection to our culture comes from being exposed to it, using it, and engaging with it through life. In all of those situations when life affects us, if we know aesthetic expressions that represent our emotions, we carry that with us as a connection not just to that individual piece of music, poem, song, or piece of art etc., but to other people and the rest of the culture as well. It gives us shared references that go deeper than the immediate meaning of the words. If we have experienced religious rituals and music embedding life-changing moments, a certain song playing when we met our spouse and danced together for the first time, or a poem that captured our despair when we needed consolation the most, then our emotional connection to culture and others deepens. Songs sung over and over again in childhood may remind you of a certain landscape, your grandmother, or the political agenda of your parents. This is Bildung. This is vertical knowledge that builds up over decades and provides in the individual a complex cultural and emotional fabric behind his or her later experiences, thoughts, choices, actions, and words; this is spirit. This spirit or complex cultural fabric is both highly individual and overlapping with the spirit of others in our culture. It also has to evolve as the culture evolves.

3.1. Vertical development

By engaging with other people, living up to their expectations and failing to live up to their expectations, by making mistakes and succeeding, by engaging with culture and all the domains of the Bildung Rose, by repeating what is familiar and by letting ourselves be surprised by the unfamiliar; by meeting all kinds of pushbacks to which we need to adjust, we acquire a different kind of understanding and grow differently than when we expand our horizon. We acquire emotional depth and, hopefully, higher moral aspirations as we realise that we do not want to let others (or ourselves) down. We stretch and strengthen our emotional "muscle" when we meet a

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culture we do not understand, and we massage this "muscle" and deepen our connection to humanity when aesthetics soothe our soul.

Because our emotional connections to others and our roots in the cultural fabric deepen, and our sense of moral responsibility grows, we can thus conceive of this as vertical development or vertical knowledge and understanding.

In the 20th Century, moral and emotional development has been explored in developmental psychology by, among others, Jean Piaget, Lawrence Kohlberg, and Robert Kegan. But they do not connect this to cultural embeddedness the way Bildung philosophy does—and did during Romanticism.

Among the Bildung thinkers who explored Bildung in ways that overlap with modern developmental psychology were Jean-Jacques Rousseau who called it *éducation* in French in *Émile* (1762), Johann Gottfried Herder who explored Bildung in *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit* (1774) and Friedrich Schiller who wrote *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen in einer Reihe von Briefen* (1795).

3.2. Bildung as development according to Schiller

According to Friedrich Schiller, there are three kinds of people, each defined by a phase of Bildung:

- **The physical, emotional person**, who is in the throes of his emotions and cannot transcend them, and therefore he is not free.

  - o According to Schiller, to transcend our emotions, we need calming beauty, and aesthetics that can align our emotions with the norms of society; we can then transform and become:

- **The person of reason**, who has aligned himself with the moral norms of society and has made the norms his own; this person cannot transcend those norms and expectations, however, and therefore he is not free either.

  - o According to Schiller, to transcend the norms, we need invigorating beauty, aesthetics that can shake us up and wake us up, and make us feel our emotions again, which allows us to transcend the expectations of others and become:

- **The free, moral person**, who can feel both his own emotions regarding right and wrong and what is right and wrong according to the shared moral norms; because this person has transcended both his own emotions and the expectations of others, he can now think for himself and is therefore free.

What Schiller suggests, is that we can acquire this vertical knowledge and development through the arts.

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What is perhaps more interesting is that his whole purpose for exploring Bildung as freedom was to explore who can handle political freedom: only the free, moral person. The emotional person and the person of reason are either caught up in their desires or everybody else's expectations and cannot be trusted with political freedom.

3.3. Rephrasing Schiller in simpler terms

Through listening to beautiful music and allowing oneself to be carried away, one can "stretch the emotional muscle," so to speak, and experience emotions one might not otherwise encounter. The same goes for great literature, where the author makes us identify with the characters in ways that make us feel what they go through and thus what they feel. Through art, we can transfer, indirectly, non-transferable knowledge and understanding.

Another way of phrasing Schiller's three phases of Bildung or ways of being in the world is:

- Is my life a pursuit of physical satisfaction?

- Is my life a pursuit of recognition from others and social status?

- Is my life a pursuit of what is right and how to achieve it, even if some of the people closest to me may not like it?

Beyond this, there is a phase, which Schiller does not mention, but which can be described as:

- Am I making others grow?

3.4. Promoting the vertical aspect of Bildung

We can look at the arts through Schiller's lens and see three phases of artistic development:

- The expressive amateur (nothing condescending in the word amateur, it comes from the word *amare*, to love), who spontaneously expresses emotions but has no control over the craft.

- The trained craftsman; the musician, painter, dancer, etc. who can reproduce the standards within his or her art form.

- The artist who masters the techniques, its standards and genres, and has become free to express him- or herself and explore new realms of meaning-making through that art form.

And if we move beyond Schiller:

- The true master artist who can "see" where the limits of understanding and mastery are in others and who can deliberately expand their understanding and mastery and make them grow.

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Through playwrights, actors, directors, musicians, orchestras, dancers, painters etc. and through our cultural institutions such as theatres, libraries, movie theatres, concert halls etc. we do have ways of promoting vertical, non-transferable knowledge, but it is mediated and demands highly skilled artists for it to move an audience by more than happenstance. All modern societies have artists who can turn the non-transferable knowledge and understanding into aesthetics/art; we just need to prioritise it, and for these experiences to become vertical understanding, we need to reflect upon the knowledge, either alone or in conversations with others.

Even the art that does not make any kind of spontaneous sense to us serves us: it challenges us to use our imagination and to go looking for any kind of recognisable meaning-making, a "hook," in the art that we do not spontaneously "get." As we find this hook, we may be able to gradually unfold the piece and find it at least somewhat interesting.

We can enhance the experiences of any kind of art by sharing the experience, talking about it and by having good teachers help us see, hear or sense aspects of the art that were not obvious to us. The good teacher—this can be the artist, it can be an actual teacher, or it can be a friend who is really into a certain kind of art—has a deeper and more complex understanding of the genre and the piece, and can see how it relates to other art, to the tradition, to other works by the same artist, to events in real life, to a philosophy or ideology etc.

This deeper understanding of a certain kind of art or art, in general, is often what we refer to as Bildung, and for good reason. It is not the only aspect of Bildung, but, interestingly, Bildung is also exactly this: to appreciate an aesthetic expression to the point where one can see patterns and intentions, thoughts, emotions, and ideas of an artist and a culture in a piece of art, elements that are hidden to the untrained eye or ear.

Bildung in any of the other six domains of the Rose means the same as well: to be able to see patterns and structures in the domain that are invisible to the newcomer. With Bildung in a certain field, one can "see" beneath the surface.

What is unique about the Aesthetic domain is that it is so intimately connected to our emotions; the whole point of the aesthetics is to touch us emotionally. If a song, a poem, a dance, or a painting does not touch anybody, change the mood just a tiny bit, or move us, then there is no point in it. The value is that we are touched. That another human being has shared his or her emotions and deepest and truest self, and we are allowed in on it.

It does not have to be spectacular, avant-garde art to be good aesthetics. It can be the Eurovision; in that case, what matters is that you have a fun evening, become a glitter and robe expert instantaneously, and eat too much popcorn and candy. If you also get up and dance and start yelling when they go *"Royaume-Uni douze points"* you're good! Schiller would describe it as the person of reason, who has aligned himself with the moral norms of society and has made the norms his own.

3.5. Developmental psychology

Most teachers will probably know Piaget and his exploration of developmental psychology relating to children, i.e. moral and emotional development until around age 15. The moral and emotional development in adults/adult developmental psychology is less well known. Several psychologists have defined developmental phases in adults; I am going to just very briefly introduce two "models:" Lawrence Kohlberg's and Robert Kegan's.

Lawrence Kohlberg

Kohlberg's model begins in childhood and has six stages of moral development:

1. The first moral stage is oriented towards obedience and avoiding punishment: Will I get caught?

2. The second is instrumental and oriented towards self-interest: Does this serve me?

3. The third stage is oriented towards interpersonal relations and conformity: Will they like me and trust me?

4. The fourth is oriented towards authority and maintaining social order: Will this serve societal structures?

5. The fifth stage is oriented towards the social contract in general: Does this serve everybody and the bigger picture?

6. The sixth is towards universal ethical principles: Does this serve a purpose beyond our own time?

The stages are successive, which means that each stage evolves from the previous, and they become increasingly complex. At later stages, one tends to find the previous stages too simplistic and insufficient, if not downright immoral.

Robert Kegan

Kegan's model begins in childhood as well and has five phases of mental complexity:

1. **Early childhood; age 2-6**
   The child learns to control impulses but is in the throes of his/her emotions.

2. **Late childhood; age 6-12**
   The child learns to control emotions and to join and co-create peer groups; the child learns to keep appointments but needs an outer authority to define them and also needs guidance to keep them.

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3. **Socialised mind; teenage years and onwards**
   One becomes socialised and internalises the moral norms of society, one wants to live up to others' expectations and takes one's moral guidance from the surroundings.

4. **Self-authoring mind; adulthood**
   One becomes the moral authority in one's own life and "authors" one's own life based on one's autonomous choices and decisions; other people still matter, of course, but their expectations are no longer defining one's life.

5. **Self-transforming mind; senior**
   One sees the needs of others and how one can promote the situation for everybody involved; social relations are seen from a systems perspective, so to speak.

Between every two orders of mental complexity, there is a phase of transition until the individual has settled into the new mode of being. In this respect, Kegan resembles Schiller, who also had an intermediate phase of transition between his three phases of life. The main difference is that Schiller introduces aesthetics as a life-changing factor and that the purpose of Bildung is to handle political freedom, Kegan never mentions any kind of aesthetics nor does he refer to the individual as a political subject.

Kohlberg, Kegan and Bildung

What is fascinating about Kohlberg's and Kegan's understanding of our moral development and mental complexity is that they come extremely close to Schiller's understanding of Bildung.

What Kegan describes as typical cognitive, emotional and behavioural patterns in **late childhood** matches extremely well what Schiller called **the physical, emotional person**. Schiller was not writing about children, though, he was writing about adults in his own time, which means that the psychological development among a considerable part of his contemporaries may not have been beyond what we would expect from the ordinary 10-12-year-old today. Even today, some people do not develop significantly emotionally and morally beyond childhood.

What Kegan calls **self-governing**, matches what Schiller calls **the person of reason** who has aligned himself with the moral norms of society and has made the norms his own. In the following, I am also going to refer to this person as a team player. Another aspect of this person is that it is somebody who, at least in the beginning when this kind of collective in-group identity is new, has a strong need for a strong in-group, and thus a need for a strong in-group / out-group boundary. Because of this, and particularly when self-governing is new, the person typically holds very black-and-white/either-or worldviews.

Kegan's **self-authoring** person matches **Schiller's free, moral person**.

Kegan's fifth phase, self-transforming, does not have an equivalent in Schiller's philosophy, but there is a hint. Schiller writes about a way of being in the world where one has so much Bildung, so much culture and life experience, that one's sense of self is so well consolidated that one does not get overwhelmed by changes. The world may change around you, but the changes just run through you like sand through a sift (my image); instead of being pushed around by changes in the outer world, one has the capacity to stand unmoved, filter it and change what needs to be changed.

When one reads Schiller, it is fascinating to see how advanced the understanding of our psychological development was more than 200 years ago.

3.6. Similarities and differences between Bildung and developmental psychology

Bildung and developmental psychology overlap, but they are not the same and have crucial differences.

Modern psychology is a great analytical tool, it is based on modern science, it has a much more precise vocabulary than the Bildung thinkers provided, and it has assessment tools that Bildung philosophy and pedagogy do not have. Psychology is also useful for therapy and individual coaching in a way that Bildung, Bildung philosophy, and pedagogy are not.

Bildung, on the other hand, has culture and is always Bildung in a cultural context. Bildung is embedded in a social fabric, it is relational, and the individual is never seen as an atom detached from his/her surroundings. Education, the transfer of horizontal knowledge and understanding, is always an integral part of Bildung; Bildung depends on how much you know about the world and what your enculturation and cultural capital are. Another way of expressing it is that Bildung depends on how much of the collective spirit (culture, lore, heritage, language, aesthetics etc.) you have made your own and how much of it you can give your own voice and use actively among others. Bildung is about empowering you through an increased understanding of your surroundings through education. Psychology generally ignores this aspect of human existence.

Differences at the practical level

There is also a very fundamental difference between the relationship between the teacher and the student/learner and between the psychologist/coach and the client.

The teacher and the student/learner are united around a shared third: there is an object that is an object to both of them (or to the teacher and all of the students in the class). They are all looking at, say, a painting, a story, a concept, a historical event, or some bacteria in a petri dish, and then they explore this together with different levels of knowledge. The teacher generally knows more about the shared third than the students and the good teacher also knows how much each student already understands about the object and can ask the questions that challenge each one of them at

just the right level: not too hard so they cannot give a good answer but suffer a defeat; not too easy so they are bored or do not learn anything. In that respect, the good teacher both transfers knowledge horizontally and, by evoking a thinking process in the student, promotes a vertical development of the emotional connection to the object/topic as well as to the teacher him-/herself.

Bildung is thus relational, the good teacher sees the effort and recognises it, the good teacher connects emotionally with the student and they both grow from the experience. By deepening their mutual understanding through shared interaction, they become a little bit of each other.

Particularly with regard to aesthetics, historical, political and societal questions, narratives, and ethics, this aspect of teaching can be strong, but education in all domains ought to promote moral and ethical considerations and emotional development. For the teacher as well as for the student(s). The discussions around these matters will if the students are asked to think for themselves and to ask questions of their own, inevitably bring about viewpoints that are also new to the teacher. The learning process will go both ways.

There is a risk of indoctrination in this relationship, of course, but the good teacher is characterised by knowing the limitations to interference with the values and opinions of the student(s). The point is not for the teacher to transfer his/her morality, but to guide the student(s) in developing their own. That is Bildung, both regarding the student and the teacher.

The psychologist/coach and the client are united around focusing on the client. The object to both of them is one of them. The learning process is also one-directional in a different way than when teacher and student are united around the shared third, and the relationship is not relational. The psychologist or coach is not supposed to become a part of the client's life or sense of self and if they do, it is considered very unprofessional to say the least.

On the one hand, there are some overlapping features between Bildung and developmental psychology; on the other hand, the pedagogical/andragogical processes of Bildung are radically different from the therapeutic or coaching processes of the therapist, psychologist or coach. The teaching potential regarding Bildung and the analytical possibilities of developmental psychology is also different in kind.

3.7. Reflections on knowing about Bildung versus having/developing Bildung

One thing that Bildung and developmental psychology do have in common is that reading about Bildung and/or developmental psychology and grasping it intellectually is not the same as going through the moral and emotional development they describe.

Reading Schiller and grasping intellectually what he says about being a rational person or studying psychology and grasping intellectually what it means to be self-governing does not mean that one

becomes a team player. Becoming a team player means being not just willing to, but actually enjoying taking one for the team. That is, to do something unselfish for the sake of the team, the team being a sports team, colleagues at work, your country, or, say, a political party. By being self-governing and a team player, one takes great joy and pride in being one of the people whom others trust, and one enjoys walking that extra mile for it.

This team player spirit is not something one can acquire by reading about it. We acquire it the hard way: by joining a team and feeling the pleasure of living up to the expectations of others—and the agony of letting them down. The social reward for being a team player and the social punishment for letting others down teach us how to be likeable people whom others trust, and the latter is such a great feeling that eventually if we have had enough success with it, it becomes our second nature.

Coaching can help, say, juvenile offenders see how counterproductive their anti-team-player behaviour is to themselves, and if they then get to join a team and experience enough times the great feeling of being a team player who does not disappoint the rest of the team, they may eventually internalise the norms of being a team player. But there is a limit to how late in life such an internalisation of norms and expectations can be added to one's personality. Our brains and emotions almost crave becoming a team player in late childhood and our teenage years, whereas the 40-year-old who has never felt it will have a hard time learning to appreciate putting the collective above the short-term individual benefit.

Similarly with regard to becoming Schiller's free, moral person / Kegan's self-authoring person. One can read about having autonomy, and one can think one has it, but that is not the same as actually having the moral courage to disagree with one's boss, hold an unpopular opinion at a dinner party, or decide to make a lifestyle choice radically different from everybody else among one's friends and family.

"Teaching" vertical development is therefore hard since it can be done only indirectly; one cannot transfer emotional development. Letting people read about Bildung or having them study developmental psychology is not necessarily going to make them more emotionally deep or mature, nor more morally responsible. It may give them a vocabulary with which to explore themselves and their development, so it may be helpful, but it depends on their existing development, the circumstances and the teachers, whether that is a useful approach.

One reason it can be problematic to teach developmental psychology is that people may immediately start measuring themselves up against the phases/categories of development. Doing that, there is a risk that 1: They try to convince themselves that they are at least Kegan 4, Self-Authoring, preferably Kegan 5, Self-transforming, even though they may be far from it or 2: They do not grasp the developmental phases they have not yet entered, which means that they cannot grasp them and instead start arguing against them. They simply do not accept that such a way of being in the world exists. A typical example would be the physical/emotional person / the

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late-childhood-adult who votes based only on what might serve him- or herself. But not just that; this person cannot grasp that others vote for the benefit of the entire county, not their personal benefit. It is simply beyond their imagination that voting and political opinion could be about serving the bigger picture and the well-being of all, not just one's own personal interests.

I have not come across any studies exploring how studying developmental psychology affects people who are too immature to grasp it, but it is an interesting fact that the Rabbinical tradition prohibits the study of Kabbalah, Jewish mysticism, for anybody but men above the age of 40, who have studied the Torah and practice Judaism (self-governing) and who have a family and can support it. The fact that they only mention men is of course a historical circumstance, but the age and the ability to function in society and raise a family are interesting prerequisites for diving into the inner workings of the spirit.

3.8. How to promote vertical development

If one cannot teach vertical development, one can at least promote it. As I see it, there are several ways:

- The slow and hard way: life experience.

- The somewhat faster, self-focused, and more expensive way: combine life experience with a good coach or mentor.

- The also somewhat faster, multi-dimensional, and more interesting way, which also makes one a more interesting person with something to talk about: the arts combined with good teachers.

- The cheap and relatively fast, multi-dimensional way, which will also make one a more interesting person with something to talk about: library books and self-organised study circles around great literature, particularly existential philosophy, which is about life choices.

- The cheap, hard, useful, and other-focused way, which will also make one a more interesting person with something to talk about: political activism and volunteer work.

- The fruitful and hard way: learn another language, study the culture and travel there.

- Fast track: get out of your comfort zone. For instance:
  - Get a child and raise a family.
  - Move to another country.
  - Skip your job and change your profession.

- The add-on that always works: engage with somebody who views the world differently from you, listen to them, have deep, respectful conversations and try seeing the world from their perspective. Engage with unlike-minded people.

- Folk-Bildung and ALE that challenge your worldview.

- Any combination of the above.

One challenge educators need to be aware of is, of course, that the participants in ALE and folk-Bildung are in very different phases of life and have different worldviews. Some will be young and new to self-governing, some will be self-governing with an open mind, others will be looking for hope and consolation in the information that confirms their existing worldview and may be hostile to differing opinions, and others yet will have been self-governing for years to the point where they have mentally coagulated into conformity. Some will be self-authoring and be new to it, some will be self-authoring with confidence, some will LOVE having their worldview challenged and curious about everything, and others will speak about tolerance but have a hard time showing it. A few, particularly older participants, and grandparents, will be self-transforming and will be able to negotiate viewpoints and worldviews among the participants.

The proportion of self-governing, self-authoring and self-transforming participants will vary according to the age of the participants and to the programme, whether it is mandatory upgrading of professional skills or an art class for the sake of curiosity.

Depending on people's existing Bildung, they will thus learn and pursue learning in very different ways. Exploring this in further depth would require a book of its own, so I am not going to differentiate between learning styles in the following but will take a more general perspective.

Aesthetics and education for vertical development

The key to vertical development is pushback: Having to deal with the unfamiliar, the complex, that which makes us uncomfortable and challenges us. Being exposed to aesthetics that contradict or challenge what one already assumes is a shortcut to experiences one would have a hard time encountering in real life; aesthetics allows us to experience events and emotions we would otherwise not have encountered. Asking the right questions, tough and challenging questions, and facing challenges and overcoming them are good paths to Bildung.

What is challenging art, literature and aesthetics to the individual depends on what kind of knowledge and experiences with these arts the person has already. It also depends on their life experience and age; what is incomprehensible music or literature to some people would be entertainment to others.

Our "average accountant" likes classical music, particularly the most popular works by Mozart, Beethoven, and Tchaikovsky; 20 years earlier, she could not have cared less and found it awful. She still happens to enjoy the Eurovision together with some friends and their children. Now, "horrible music" is modern classical music from the 20th Century and jazz from the 1960s and onwards. Her colleague, on the other hand, has a record collection of more than 1000 vinyl records with just that kind of jazz and can talk about it for hours. The colleague, in return, finds Mozart and Beethoven incredibly boring (been there, heard that!) and almost has a cognitive meltdown, if one has to listen to 30 seconds of the Eurovision.

Bildung, in both cases, is to stretch one's ears and imagination and try to hear what it is the other is hearing. (At least as long as nobody sings out of tune.)

Exploring the aesthetics for it to contribute to people's Bildung requires an understanding of what people already know, understand and appreciate—and an understanding of the aesthetics so that the teacher can ask the right questions and let the participants raise their questions. The challenge with pushbacks is that they must make people come back for more.

3.9. Activism for vertical development

Committing to a cause inevitably will produce pushback. Start with the motivating feelings: what needs to change? Then go, change it—and enjoy the journey.

3.10. Kohlberg's moral stages may be useful

Contrary to Schiller's and Kegan's phases, Lawrence Kohlberg's six moral stages might be great for group discussions, and the reason is that the development he describes can be phrased as morality and values, not as emotions. Morality is just as much a social norm as it is something happening inside the individual, which means that people can discuss morals as a shared third. If people are to discuss emotions, it very quickly becomes personal and can be both revealing and uncomfortable for individual participants, particularly if it reveals inner, personal development to strangers.

The moral stages described by Kohlberg can also be explored as collective expectations and values rather than something inside individuals, which allows for a discussion about what kinds of consequences each of the six moral stages has for society if everybody had the same moral perspective or values.

Using Kohlberg in aesthetics & narrative

The first way I would suggest using Kohlberg's six stages is when analysing literature or movies: discuss from which moral stage the characters are thinking and acting. Introduce the six stages, and then either let people work together two-and-two discussing one character in each group, or

introduce one character, have everybody consider for 2 minutes which Kohlberg stage they would ascribe to that character, ask them to write down the number, and open a discussion among everybody by just reading out the numbers and then take it from there. When you are done with one character, go to the next. Do this with 4-5 characters and then bring them together: What kinds of conflicts do different moral stages produce among the characters?

Using Kohlberg in politics & power

The second way I would suggest using Kohlberg's stages is with regard to political questions. Take a political issue from the news and discuss how people with six different sets of moral values would react to the issue. Or: From which stage are politicians arguing their case?

Deepening the emotions regarding aesthetics & narrative

The goal is not to get people to think in terms of Bildung phases, phases of mental complexity, or stages of moral values, the goal is for people to become aware of their emotions and how they connect with themselves and the world. The goal is also to deepen this connection.

In any art or literature class, rather than doing the standard academic analysis of a piece (novel, poem, painting, movie etc.), let people reflect upon which emotions a given piece of art or literature evokes in them. Ask them to write down three positive emotions and three negative emotions, and what triggers those emotions, and give them 5-10 minutes to do so. Then ask people to share one emotion each and open the conversation.

3.11. Unresolved questions

How much experience with promoting vertical development is already out there? We need a call for existing best practices with regard to moral and emotional aspects of teaching and learning; we need to map existing experiences with this. We also need a learning opportunity among ALE teachers to explore how to do it, how not to do it, and the biggest obstacles, and we need to identify low-hanging fruits.

Not least we need to raise awareness in the public and among policy and decision-makers that education needs to have emotional depth and be about much more than just the horizontal transfer of knowledge. The arts, the indirect transfer of vertical knowledge and the time and venues for values, ethics, and moral conversations among citizens are crucial.

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If Germany had so many Bildung thinkers, how could so many Germans become Nazis?

Many people wonder how Germany with so much Bildung could be taken over by Nazism and it is a very important issue to raise. So, before we move on, let us see it through the lenses of Schiller, Kohlberg, Kegan, and the Bildung Rose. This chapter is also based on Erich Fromm's *Escape from Freedom* (1941), which explores how first Gutenberg's printing press and later industrialization revamped German societies, and how, in both cases, this lead to a longing for order and authoritarian leadership. What we are going to see also says a lot about the challenges we are facing in our own time.

The German background

Prussian society until WW1 was highly militaristic, authoritarian and paternalistic: the good, moral person was obedient and orderly; honourable behaviour meant following directions from authority figures and not asking questions. One concrete example: in 1871, for fear of revolution, Bismarck more or less shut down the workers' study associations; his rationale was that if the workers knew too much, they would riot. Hereafter, the workers were only allowed to host classes for upgrading work skills and certain harmless lectures about culture, and there could be no questions after the lectures. When the speaker had spoken, people were to get up and go straight home. The workers' movement still tried to provide Bildung, particularly a generation or two later, but Bildung through all societal strata never came to define the German society. There was even a *"Bildungsbürgertum,"* a Bildung Bourgeoisie, who thought of Bildung as something just for themselves, definitely not for workers and peasants.

After the defeat in WW1 and the establishment of the Weimar Republic, authoritarian values prevailed among voters who had never experienced democracy before. Added to that was a sense of injustice after the Treaty of Versailles, the economic crisis in the 1920s, hyperinflation, and even more aggressive industrialisation than before the war. Before WW1, industrialisation fundamentally changed the economic fabric and left many artisans without other opportunities than becoming factory workers; after WW1, a new service economy put new demands on the workforce and left many without the necessary skills for employment—in an economy that had just crashed and created mass-unemployment. Much of the working and middle classes were threatened to their core economically as well as with regards to social and cultural status; they were afraid of falling into the proletariat. On top of that, due to rampant inflation, millions of people lost their savings, their homes, their self-respect, everything. They had nowhere to turn, and they still had the moral values telling them that the good person obeyed their superiors.

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If we look at Schiller's three kinds of people through the eyes of "the good person" and their moral values, people would look like this:

- **The physical, emotional person** is the child who must learn to obey the adults. Punishment and beating were noble ways of teaching children to obey.

- **The person of reason** does not ask questions but follows directions and orders from authorities: children obey their parents, women obey men, men obey their boss, the men and their boss fought in WW1, and everybody earns respect by obeying orders not asking any questions.

- **The free, moral person** seems highly suspicious and is a threat to the social order.

According to the old, Prussian mindset, the person of reason represented Bildung; education and good behaviour. Conformity and obedience were of the highest moral value.

Not all Germans were thinking like that, of course; Berlin, for instance, was a cosmopolitan melting pot of free-thinkers, artists, intellectuals, and a plethora of subcultures, sexual experimentation, drugs, and breaking down of norms and boundaries of all kinds. Some of those people in the Berlin party zone would have been physical, emotional persons who were just in it for their personal, physical pleasure, but others were the free, moral persons, the self-authoring who had personal autonomy and could think for themselves and take responsibility. Either way, the challenging of the norms during a time of economic hardship for the working- and middle-classes, with millions of people losing their foothold economically and existentially, did not sit well with those people who lost everything.

The tragedy was that a critical proportion of the German population was longing for order, economic security, and some glory and greatness as a nation and that an authoritarian megalomaniac started promising them exactly that. In return, people just had to work hard and suffer a lot, but then they would get their Thousand Year Reich. This "promised" golden future had a theoretical foundation in Hegel's phenomenology of the spirit, just like Marx promised the dictatorship of the proletariat before the golden future of communism. The Nazi concept of the people also had its roots in Fichte's Bildung philosophy (he was one of the Jena thinkers), and the Nazi idea of a super-human, das *Übermensch*, was a wild misinterpretation of Nietzsche's philosophy about human development (Nietzsche was 100 years later than the Jena thinkers and his *Übermensch* is closer to Kegan's self-transforming phase of life). The Nazis managed to mess up and misunderstand their German philosophical heritage.

Apart from some (and I doubt that anybody knows how many they were) who were psychopaths, sociopaths, and/or sadists, Hitler and his followers can be coherently understood from a Bildung and psychology perspective as:

- Based on Schiller:

- o Physical, emotional persons: Satisfying personal physical needs by joining the Nazi party and being promoted

    - ▪ Transition to a rational person promoted by aesthetics that can align emotions with the norms of society; people being swept away by the giant rallies, military music and speeches, marching in unison, and heiling. To the fearful, who were losing their work and their life savings, joining those mass events, standing in the crowd heiling in unison and being promised that Germany would be great again must have felt awesome. To the physical, and emotional persons it would have lifted them into the "rational" sphere, and they would have felt included and motivated to become obedient team players.

- o Rational persons: To the already rational person, the mass events would have been a confirmation of their old, authoritarian values: the good person joins this mass, and how could this be anything but wonderful and rewarding? Likewise, with regards to joining Hitler Jugend and the Nazi party and fighting for a grand cause, however, distorted and horrible, it was; this new cause matched their moral value system in that it demanded obedience and toughness.

- Based on Kohlberg:

    - o Stage 2: instrumental morality oriented towards self-interest: Does joining the Nazi party serve me? Yes, it does.

    - o Stage 3: interpersonal relations and conformity: Will they like me and trust me? Yes, they will, and the more I obey orders, the better.

    - o Stage 4: morality oriented towards authority and maintaining social order: Will this serve the "good old German moral values" and societal structures? That is what the Führer promises us.

- Based on Kegan:

    - o Late childhood: Satisfying personal physical needs by joining the Nazi party and being promoted

    - o Self-governing: Following orders and finding comfort in doing like everybody else.

Many of the highest-ranking military and other officials in Nazi Germany had plenty of education and were identified as Bildung Bourgeoisie. Since education is also called *Bildung* in German, having read the classics might lead anybody to think they had Bildung, But if their moral and emotional development had stopped somewhere before or in their teen years, they would just have been immature vessels of horizontal knowledge; if their moral and emotional development had

continued through their teens and into their twenties, they would have loved and longed for conformity and uniformity. They would have thrived when they could see themselves as a cogwheel in a well-oiled machine running smoothly. Among the people who deviated from the uniformity and who were perceived as obstacles to that smoothly running machine were, of course, Jews, Romas, homosexuals, people with a handicap, social democrats, and intellectuals. The self-governing, well-educated, "good" German would have been unable to handle this human diversity. To the extent that they would think in terms of "Does this serve everybody and the bigger picture?" and "Does this serve a purpose beyond our time?" (Kohlberg 5 and 6) the only bigger picture they would have seen would have been Germany and the Germans looking exactly like themselves (Arian and not questioning anything), and any purpose beyond their own time would be the Thousand Year Reich. What would make them feel good would be a strong, homogenous, clear-cut in-group with strong boundaries, and hearing the promise that this in-group would be fighting heroically towards greatness and thriving indefinitely would feel like a soothing balm.

Such people would have been incapable of handling the self-authoring, free, moral people who did not pursue conformity and uniformity, but who were oriented towards the social contract in general and the bigger picture (Kohlberg 5), or towards universal ethical principles (Kohlberg 6), which in the case of self-authoring people did include people who were unlike themselves. In fact, the rational, self-governing, authoritarian people would probably have feared anti-authoritarian, self-authoring people more than anything else, hence the persecution of intellectuals.

So, when Germany had so many Bildung thinkers, how could so many Germans become Nazis? My explanation would be that the actual Bildung, the combination of both horizontal education and vertical development was only promoted in parts of the old bourgeoisie and among certain progressives. In the new middle class, among the workers, and in the proletariat, "Bildung" just meant horizontal education, knowledge transfer, embedded in authoritarian militaristic values, and anyway too limited to allow people to find work. Their adult moral and emotional development had either stopped in the emotional phase before they became self-governing, or they were self-governing, rational people, and the collective moral values told them that good people obey authorities and sacrifice themselves for the Führer. To both groups, joining the mass meetings and heiling in unison would have felt wonderful—and the people to whom it did not feel wonderful would have risked their job and social status had they not joined. Add to this an uneducated and chauvinistic interpretation of Hegel, Fichte, Nietzsche, and several other German thinkers, and there was even a philosophical reason for the Third Reich.

If we look at the situation for the millions of average Germans through each of the seven domains of the Bildung Rose, we see why navigating the Weimar Republic and the 1920s was so hard for people and why Hitler would have given them hope:

- **Production**: people lost their jobs and many artisans who had taken pride in their profession and economic independence became industry workers if they could find work at all. Gearing up for the production of weapons and other war materials created jobs and a sense of security; young men could become soldiers instead of becoming unemployed.

- **Technology**: the conveyor belt replaced humans and caused unemployment. Among the new technologies was also the radio, which Hitler played like an instrument.

- **Aesthetics**: the old-fashioned, Romantic, patriotic arts were challenged by surrealism, Dadaism, and other abstract art forms, which most people could not decode, and which the Nazis named *entartet:* degenerate.

- **Power**: the longing for "a strong man" who would fix things and bring back the old sense of order was immense. The sense of *Der Führer* as a father figure who would justly punish the non-conforming was common, and many Germans, whenever they encountered, say, an incompetent civil servant or corruption, would accompany their frustration with the thought "If only *Der Führer* knew!" i.e. if only "father" knew, then he would punish them.

- **Science**: lost its ethics and moral compass completely and legitimised eugenics, not to mention Joseph Mengele and those of his colleagues who performed sadistic experiments. Scientists may have had longer education, but if they also had the old, authoritarian mindset, were self-governing according to it, and longed for a father figure to "fix things," their education would not have made a moral or ethical difference; they would not have had Bildung.

- **Narrative**: progressives were dismissing the old patriarchal narratives, the Prussian and German, traditional norms, the father figure, and the "must follow orders" values and ideas about what is a good person. The old moral structure was torn apart and there was no education and folk-Bildung available that could prepare people for a new kind of society and the modern mindset of the 20th Century. As a counter-reaction, the Nazis promoted traditional gender roles even stronger. Instead of a modern narrative of progress and liberation, a narrative of honour, hardship, and suffering had more appeal; the good, moral German would not be willing to give up, he would face hardship and not be weak, he would fight and suffer for the Fatherland and the Führer. The morally right thing to do was to recreate former greatness.

- **Ethics**: in the moral clash between the old authoritarian norms and the democratic 20th Century, principles regarding human dignity, decency, care, justice, rule of law, the sanctity of life, and protection of the weak were lost in the emotional turmoil. Facing the unfamiliar situation of the WW1 defeat, the Treaty of Versailles, hyperinflation, and millions of unemployed, ethics went down the toilet.

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We should not underestimate the feelings of anxiety and despair among many Germans in the 1920s and 1930s, and their craving for hope and a path towards some sort of greatness, preferably the way it had been in the past. Hitler promised them that.

Whenever we hear similar promises today, we all have a responsibility to make the present look more promising than the past and to present a future over which people have influence. In order for the present and the future to look like that, people need to be able to see themselves being more empowered today and in the coming week than they were in the past, and there has to be a realistic image of the future that gives people hope.

As we find ourselves in the transition from industrialised nation-states to digitised, globally-connected individuals, communities, and states, facing existential threats to nature and our current ways of life, loosely grasping the development, seeing ourselves losing economic and existential foothold, and, on top of that, being publicly shamed for not being woke enough causes anxiety and anger. This situation requires adult education, folk-Bildung, and a massive transfer of both horizontal and vertical knowledge. People are not dumb; they know it all too well when they are being screwed, particularly by those who benefit upfront during the changes, and Grundtvig & Kold have the answer, not Bismarck and not the authoritarian Führer: more questions, more Bildung, more empowerment, not less.

Particular Bildung needs in the 21st Century

Our time poses its challenges, but some of them resemble what has happened previously. We find ourselves in a time of great technological, economic, social, and global upheaval, and many are losing economic and existential foothold. Rather than a collective value system telling people to follow orders and obey their leaders, we have in Europe value systems telling us to think for ourselves and not just follow orders—which of course creates problems during a global pandemic. But it gives room for hope in Europe because we won't make the same mistakes, though it does not mean that we are immune to mistakes and that there isn't room for improvement. We have an overall much higher level of education and Bildung among many in Europe than at any time previously, but the complexity of the challenges we are facing and the pace with which they are happening create an urgency that is challenging.

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4. Expansion of the sense of responsibility

The third aspect of Bildung regards what kinds of social groups we identify with and for what we are capable of taking responsibility. An easy way to illustrate this is through the model Circles of Belonging:
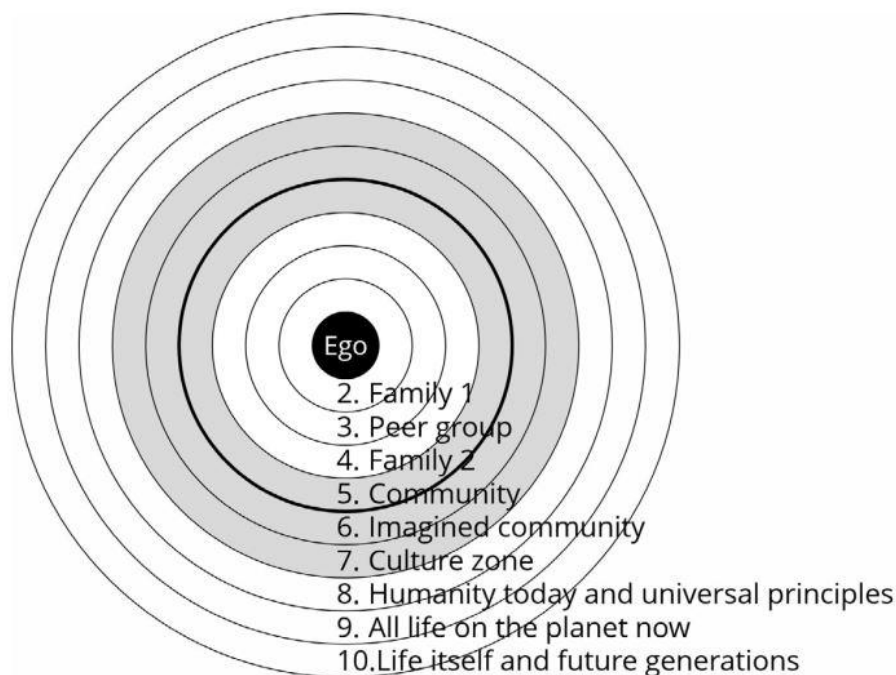
Figure 2: Circles of Belonging
© Lene Rachel Andersen & Nordic Bildung

This model has ten circles and the point is not the number of circles, but that they grow in complexity, outwards.[1]

The first "circle" over which we gain control and can take responsibility is our own body and ourselves, the Ego, and then we expand our world from there. Family 1 is the family into which one is born, peer groups begin to establish around age five, and Family 2 is the family that one establishes in adulthood. Circle 5, Community, may contain several communities such as workplaces, houses of worship, sports clubs, local neighbourhoods, etc.

Circles 2-5 are the communities in which we either know everybody or at least can have eye contact from time to time. They are what historian Benedict Anderson called *real communities*.[2]

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[1] The model was inspired by the Solidarity Circles, a model with six circles conceived by Christian Welzel,
[2] Anderson, Benedict: *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Verso, 1983

Circles 6 to 10 are what Benedict Anderson called *imagined communities.* This makes them radically different from the inner circles and the real communities. That they are imagined communities does not mean that they are not real, but they are held together by a shared understanding or imagination about who we are as a community. Imagined communities may consist of millions of people and we will never meet everybody, we will only ever meet a fraction of them; instead of identifying with others in these Circles 6-10 through meeting them, we identify with each other through narrative and shared aesthetics and ethics. Entities such as the landmass that defines a country, a continent, all humans, or all life on the planet will be there whether we recognise it or not, but the nation, a religious denomination, the continent as an idea, humanity as a principle, and all life as a deep understanding depends on narrative. They only exist in our minds because we have told ourselves that they are out there, and for us to identify with everybody in these huge communities, we need a sense of shared fate and we get that through education and story, through Bildung.

In the 6th Circle, we find the nation-state (modern, secular society) or religion (traditional, religious society) or both. This is where we produce the narratives and ethics in which our real communities are embedded; the moral values that we yearn to internalise when we reach our teen years. In nation-states as well as in religions, millions of people are bound together by a sense of shared fate even though they will never encounter more than a tiny fraction of the other members. In the nation-state, we need to identify with all these strangers to be willing to pay taxes and to care about them and the country as a whole. The imagined community at the state level is particularly crucial if we want a welfare state; the willingness to contribute to millions of strangers' education and health etc. requires very strong narratives and a sense of shared fate.

In most functioning democracies, the nation-state in the 6th Circle is connected through a shared language, a public school system, shared holidays and traditions, a literary tradition, and public service radio and television. In the West, we have spent the past 200 years trying to educate everybody to care about this 6th Circle and become good, loyal citizens, and we have invested heavily in it.

In the 21st century, we still need functioning, democratic nation-states and the 6th Circle, and we need to take responsibility for them as individuals through being active citizens, but we also need to take responsibility for Circles 7-10:

- Circle 7: Our culture zone (i.e. Europe), which we are not yet used to identifying with and where most of us face a language barrier if we try to communicate with each other.

- Circle 8: Humanity around the globe and the universal principles, which it took more than 5,000 years of written civilization to pin down as human rights,

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- Circle 9: The wellbeing of all life and biotopes around the globe without which we will surely die much too early and in horrible ways, and

- Circle 10: The wellbeing of life in the future; our children and grandchildren.

Being aware of, feeling a sense of belonging in, and taking responsibility for Circles 7-10 put new demands on us and education and Bildung. Through national cultural institutions and local and national cultural heritage, we have managed to create a strong sense of national identity, and most educational systems were set up to do this. Creating a sense of identification with the world beyond our own country in most places, first of all, faces a language barrier, secondly, taking the first step outside a cultural comfort zone can be daunting (which is exactly why it produces Bildung). Luckily, technology allows us to see what goes on in the rest of the world in real-time, and we can connect with people around the globe. In all countries, there are immigrants from all over the world. We just have not figured out how to turn this into a Bildung opportunity for everybody and a way of developing a sense of identity and responsibility in all ten Circles of Belonging.

4.1. The Circles and modernity

There is a caveat, though: the ten Circles reflect modern society, which means the West for the past 200 years and to a greater or lesser extent other places around the world as they industrialised, individualised, and democratised.

Circles of belonging in pre-modern societies

In traditional / pre-modern societies, family is very often something one (the oldest son) continues rather than establishes. Most often, the family is more than just one set of parents and their kids; a family is several generations, cousins etc. In many places, there is also a clan or larger social structure around the family, and there may be family or clan ownership over the property, which is then managed by a matriarch or a patriarch.

There are few peer groups among adults, if any, in traditional / pre-modern societies, and local communities beyond family are weak if there at all.

Circle 6 is religion rather than the nation, and the world beyond the 6th Circle is (or at least was) often understood in theological or spiritual terms rather than geographic and scientific terms. Modern media have changed and are changing this.

How the 6th Circle became modern and national

One way of understanding the European wars in the aftermath of Gutenberg's printing press and the Reformation, and until the French Revolution is that this was a fight over the 6th Circle of

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belonging: should the imagined community with which everybody identified and to which they paid taxes be the church or the state? With the Enlightenment and secularisation, the state won; with Romanticism (and the Napoleonic wars and two generations later, Bismarck's wars), it became the nation-state, which was held together by the concept of a people. Production, technology, aesthetics, political power, science, and ethics became issues of the secular society, the nation-state and private initiatives; the church was left with narratives—and had to share them with the nation and secular society. The church also kept existing aesthetics but it has not been the driver of avant-garde symbol creation since.

With immigration from parts of the world where religion has not yet lost this fight, separated itself from politics, and settled in a narrative, Europe has a Bildung task that is different from educating people from modern, secular societies. We must make visible the ethics and moral values that are the foundation of our liberal democracies, our nation-states, and the European Union. If we don't, it looks to immigrants from traditional societies as if we have no moral values at all. What makes "a good person" in the traditional, pre-modern society, i.e. the norms and values that define the moral person (not questioning authority (parents or priests), putting family honour above self-expression, and remaining a self-governing, rational person throughout life), is frowned upon in the modern society. With modern norms, we frown upon traditional norms. This means that to the immigrant with a traditional worldview, Westerners look not just like immoral people, but amoral people. Coming from a traditional society, who would want to integrate into a modern society if one can only see it as amoral?

Since in pre-modern / traditional societies, there is barely any conceptualisation of Circles 7-10 nor differentiation among them, this poses a Bildung task as well, but this time it goes both ways. Immigrants have made a transition from one part of the globe to another, which means that they have left their comfort zone and are—whether they are aware of it or not—in a huge Bildung process; the longer the cultural distance, the bigger the pushbacks, and the bigger the Bildung. Home-grown Westerners who have never migrated between countries, much less between continents or between long cultural distances such as between traditional society and modernity, need similar pushbacks to grasp the globalised world of the 21st Century. There is Bildung potential in bringing these people together and addressing what kinds of pushbacks are needed for them to unite around the wellbeing of Circles 7, 8, 9, and 10.

The differences between a traditional and a modern worldview are thus worth being aware of when working with immigrants from traditional societies that are defined by religious traditions rather than modern, democratic political structures. It is equally important to realise that if one has not migrated, one tends to have a one-dimensional worldview; the migrant tends to gradually develop

two: the worldview of the society they left and the worldview of the one where they settled.[3] This holds huge potential for the transition between Schiller's rational person and the free, moral person / Kegan's self-governing and self-authoring.

4.2. The importance of and challenges from Circle 6: the nation

Nationalism has a bad reputation and it is easy to explain why: national chauvinism is the foundation of fascism and Nazism as we know them; nationalism is among the ideologies that quickly turn toxic, even within democratic boundaries.

Instead of blaming nationalism itself, we should take a closer look at the 6th Circle of belonging, what it contains, and what makes it so powerful. Then we should combine that with what Schiller, Kohlberg and Kegan say about the phase in life when we yearn for group recognition, and we should also bring in two other philosophers in order to understand ourselves with regards to identity, ideology and moral values: K.E. Løgstrup and Erich Fromm.

What is in the 6th Circle of belonging?

The 6th Circle of belonging is held together by narrative, which means the 6th Circle community is only there if there are good, meaningful stories. This again means that in the 6th Circle, there must be great storytellers who can capture our ethics, and artists who can turn our ethics into appealing aesthetics and symbols matching the human challenges of the time. Religions were meaningful and survived as the strongest political force as long as their narratives and aesthetics represented the most advanced, uplifting and inspiring stories and aesthetics. Which is what religion did in traditional, pre-modern society. Then science came along and punctured the foundation of the religious stories: their truth. Religion then lost the monopoly on truth, science did not produce great stories and aesthetics but technology and increased production, and the nation-states became the political producer of narrative and aesthetics that could hold societies together.

Both religions and nation-states have a number of people that can foster creative environments, sublime artists and other creative people who can develop new knowledge and symbols that allow everybody to grasp reality as technologies, production, and science change society. One family or local community would not be able to produce a handful of geniuses like Lessing, Kant, Herder, Goethe, Schiller, and Fichte in just about one generation, but Germany did—nor could a village have generated Grundtvig, Hans Christian Andersen, Søren Kierkegaard, and Christen Kold one or two generations later, but Denmark did. Likewise, other nations produced their modern creative, artistic, scientific, and pedagogical geniuses and their clusters or networks.

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[3] This kind of *double conscsiousness* was first described by W.E.B. Du Bois; The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness, Paul Gilroy (Verso, 1993).

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Nation-states and the language, symbols, traditions, arts, narratives, moral norms, and ethics that they can generate due to their talent base and resources for education allow us modern meaning-making that can grasp the modern world. The stories and symbols with which they provide us allow us to be who we are, to communicate, to tell our loved ones that we love them and our friends that they make us happy. The nation is more than just a landmass, institutions and legislation, to the vast majority of people living in modern democracies, it is also the source of our ability to communicate and to have something meaningful to say. Due to language and symbols, the nation is a huge part of our identity, even if we try to deny it because nationalism in the form of national chauvinism has made the spontaneous love of a country problematic.

If one doubts the importance of citizens sharing language and meaning-making to have a functioning democracy, Belgium and Switzerland are interesting cases. Belgium has a 60% Flemish and 40% French-speaking population and constantly looks as if it is falling apart. Literally. Try driving from the Netherlands into Belgium; as you cross the border, the roads are suddenly worn out, and there are two road signs for everything as if one department puts up new signs and another takes down the old ones, but they were never told that the new signs are up. Some years ago, Belgium went without a government for 535 days. Switzerland has four languages and has self-organised wisely into 26 cantons some of them have three official languages, but one language is the majority language. Part of the Swiss narrative is that they are multilingual, and they invest in education in all of the languages—plus English—and Switzerland, despite the high level of autonomy of the individual cantons never looks as if it is falling apart. It is probably not considered politically correct anymore, but an excellent documentary on the Swiss spirit and its coherence one finds in *Asterix Chez les Helvètes*.

With mass migration and with the need to expand personal as well as national responsibility to both the continent, the globe, all life on the planet, and all future life, we need to figure out how we can handle, contain, and promote national cohesion in the 21st Century.

4.3. Schiller, Kohlberg, and Kegan to the rescue + Løgstrup and Fromm

Nationalism becomes dangerous when it becomes national chauvinism, particularly when it needs an enemy—imagined or real—to self-define, and when this chauvinism takes over the personality. Any ideology becomes dangerous when it takes over the personality and does not leave room for alternatives, be it inside the individual or in society as a whole.

What Schiller describes as the rational person, Kohlberg as conformity (Will they like me and trust me?), and Kegan as self-governing makes up a healthy phase in life, which we all need to go through, and identifying with the nation during this phase is not bad in itself. Loving the nation and holding it as a noble cause worth working for is no worse than holding Liberalism, Conservatism, Socialism, religion, the climate, gender ideology, or feminism as a noble cause. The question is

whether one has only one cause and whether one is a fanatic who *is had* by the cause, ideology, or ideal, or one *has* more than one cause, ideology, and ideal and through this multitude of causes, ideologies, and ideals develops a personality. Further, when having more causes, ideologies and ideals, does one develop the tolerance that allows other people to have other causes, ideologies, and ideals and to disagree?

The Danish philosopher K.E. Løgstrup expressed this well in his 1956 classic *The Ethical Demand*[4] where he explores ideological abuse and absolutism (my translation):

> "The ideologically coagulated view-of-life now becomes, to the individual, the purpose of his life, now in the sense that the ranking is turned upside down: his life exists for the view-of-life, not the other way around. It is not so much his own life that gives his view-of-life its content; rather, it is the view-of-live that gives life its content—the life that is empty without the view-of-life! The "view of life" becomes a cause for which he exists. What counts for his own existence therefore also counts for everybody else's. The ultimate truth, which he now possesses, must also be the ultimate truth for them—otherwise, it would not be ultimate."

In each of their texts, Løgstrup, Kegan, Kohlberg, and Schiller describe the problem but do not say it explicitly: the person who does not have autonomy and thus cannot transcend the expectations of others risks becoming a fanatic who cannot transcend an idea. The idea has him/her; s/he does not have it. The nation may be such an idea, and when you cannot transcend the idea of it, you are defined by it and not free, and nationalism becomes national chauvinism and dangerous.

It is probably no coincidence that political radicals, national chauvinists and religious fanatics—and hooligans—tend to be young men aged 15-35. This is the typical self-governing phase of life when we need strong in-groups to develop an identity that allows us to self-govern according to collective moral norms, and combined with testosterone, it can be quite the cocktail. Older fanatics—including the many adults who fell for Hitler—are typically the ones who see their collective world and security fall apart and their worldview threatened. In order to re-establish order and a feeling of security and direction, they then gather around the strongest and simplest narrative they can find, not to become fanatics but to find hope.

If society and its norms are breaking down, as they were in Germany in the 1920s and as they are now around the globe due to technological development and globalisation, and with mass migration adding to the plurality of moral norms in society, how can you navigate? Particularly if you are self-governing according to those very norms and morality that do not suffice anymore, and which are deconstructed and challenged by the woke? How can you internalise deteriorating norms without being in constant turmoil and struggling to keep yourself together if the outer world has no solid guidelines?

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[4] K.E. Løgstrup: *Den etiske fordring,* Gyldendal (1956)

The bent towards national chauvinism, fascism, authoritarianism, fanaticism, and totalitarianism is not something "out there," it is something we all carry inside us. All of us. It is, in one way, something to be proud of: it is a natural and healthy inclination because it means that we are loyal and caring people, dedicated to our closest circles of belonging; our symbol- and norm-providing circles. It is unlikely that psychopaths or people with no culture would feel much of a problem when the world disintegrates.

In 1941, the German and Jewish philosopher Erich Fromm wrote the book *Escape from Freedom*. In it, he explores what happens when the existing economy and society are in a transition towards a new technological and economic order. As the economic fabric changes, societal and moral structures break down, the culture and its symbols can no longer express what is going on, people can no longer apply their existing knowledge and understanding, and they suffer from what Fromm calls moral aloneness:

> To feel completely alone and isolated leads to mental disintegration just as physical starvation leads to death. (…) This lack of relatedness to values, symbols, and patterns, we may call moral aloneness and state that moral aloneness is as intolerable as physical aloneness, or rather that physical aloneness becomes unbearable only if it implies also moral aloneness. (…)

According to Fromm, to avoid this horrible feeling, people fall for authoritarian leadership and develop an authoritarian character. This authoritarian character finds great comfort in what Løgstrup called the ideologically coagulated view of life: if only the world would return to the way it used to be, then things would be OK. Once people are had by this longing, they will start listening to politicians who claim that they can provide the past, promote the in-group, and keep others out.

4.4. De-radicalisation and tolerance through multitudes of stories and ideas

What makes us autonomous and free is to have more ideas, ideals, and causes than one. By adding ideas to our worldview—view-of-life as Løgstrup calls it—we can choose among several ideas and become a complex personality with our own, unique balancing of views, causes, and ideas.

The horizontal transfer of competing ideas is a part of Bildung because it stretches our thinking. It gives us pushback and massages the vertical emotional muscle when we are confronted with unfamiliar and conflicting worldviews or views of life. This allows us to harbour dilemmas, paradoxes and several ideas that may from time to time contradict each other and compete over our hearts and minds.

The path towards a healthy relationship with all the meaning-making that national culture, language and other symbols provide and the identity that emerges from it is not to try to tone down the national heritage and values but to strengthen the national culture so its many aspects stand

out and it does not seem vulnerable while supplementing it with other narratives, more culture, and more languages. Only then can we become complex individuals with a self-authored personality, because we have then had the chance to choose among different options what is most meaningful and important to us.

4.5. We need narratives for Europe

As Europeans, we are in a political community in Circle 7: the culture zone, but the European imagined community is weak, i.e. we have political structures in common, but not much of a shared and mutually recognised narrative across the continent. Part of Bildung in Europe in the 21st Century must therefore be the exploration of what it means to be culturally European and a European citizen—and with precautions against Euro-centrism, just like the precautions against national chauvinism. The precautions will be to present and enjoy more ideas than just the European ones.

Among the challenges regarding a shared narrative in Europe is that we do not even share a language, and the language that many of us do share, English, is barely anybody's mother tongue on the continent. The rich and deep meaning-making and the narratives that are necessary for an imagined community to thrive depend on an idiomatically rich language that allows us to communicate more than just the necessities when travelling as a tourist. We need to be able to talk politics, literature, movies, history, pushbacks from life, and existential struggles with each other as Europeans if the political union is going to work.

4.6. How to relate to all ten circles simultaneously

Relating equally strong to all the Circles of Belonging is one of the challenges we are facing in the 21st Century. We need to enjoy strong intimate relationships, meaningful larger communities, stable states, and continental and global collaboration simultaneously. Without the smaller Circles, life becomes empty; without the bigger ones, we cannot address the challenges that are so big individual states cannot solve them on their own.

4.7. Suggestions for creating identification and a sense of responsibility regarding all Circles

One place to begin would be if the EU offered all Europeans free English courses so that we can at least talk to each other as citizens. Robert Schuman wrote the Schuman Declaration more than 70 years ago, and European coal and steel have been united since 1952, but not the people. We could have had two generations of bilingual Europeans communicating flawlessly across the continent; we barely have that in the pipeline even today.

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Another place to begin would be for ALE across Europe to collaborate around history courses, both national and European history, and develop exchanges of content, teachers and students. Students in different countries could connect via the internet and develop questions and course material for each other. ALE organizations could find best practices with regards to teaching European history, maybe co-create a crash course in European history.

Personal development, coaching, and mindfulness have a segment of customers of their own. One way to turn this interest in self-improvement into Bildung might be to offer courses along the lines of "Did you build your character—or did your surroundings do it for you?" In this self-development course, the Bildung Rose, as well as the Circles of Belonging, could be conversation starters.

For classes on political science, foreign affairs, world history, etc. Circles of Belonging could be used as a political prism: In which Circles are which decision-makers operating, and which is the biggest Circle for which they seem to be taking responsibility? Which Circles are they ignoring?

One way of using the Circles that has proven very informative is by having this series of four discussions in smaller groups:

1. In which Circle(s) do you feel the strongest sense of belonging and responsibility?

   - The students write down their answers and/or mark them on a printout of the Circles.

2. In the major disruptions and changes that are going on due to technological development, mass migration, and climate change, etc. what are the really big things that we cannot afford to lose?

   - You may make a list from which they can choose, say, the 10 most important things: democracy, human rights, clean water, clean air, biodiversity, freedom from digital surveillance, safe infrastructure, updated digital infrastructure, free healthcare, good schools for all, a stable climate, good reproductive health, non-corrupt courts, well-educated police, etc.

   - The students write down their answers.

   - The class or individual teams in the class agree on a top ten.

3. The things we cannot afford to lose, in which Circle lies the responsibility for protecting each one of them?

   - The students mark, for each thing, in which circle they would place the responsibility.

4. How does this relate to your sense of belonging and responsibility?

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Overall, the Circles of Belonging may be used in various contexts for personal exploration and Bildung through discussion. The COVID-19 pandemic may serve as a positive lesson in this context: suddenly we share a very concrete experience with the entire globe.

4.8. Particular Bildung needs in the 21st Century

The modern nation-state is a product of industrialisation and political developments that were sparked by industrialisation. In the transition from pre-modern, feudal agricultural societies to modern, democratic industrialised nation-states, Europe saw a series of wars and revolutions until we had the political and educational infrastructure to allow everybody to understand and thrive in the new kind of society. One aspect of this Bildung transition was to expand millions of people's sense of belonging and personal responsibility from Circles 1-5 out into the 6th Circle of Belonging: the nation-state.

Today, we need billions of people to feel a sense of belonging, identify with, and feel personal responsibility towards Circles 7-10 as well. Social media and other IT infrastructure are there to allow us the connections; the question is what kind of education and Bildung programmes we need to create for this to happen. The current trend, unfortunately, seems to be that social media are creating even stronger, smaller bubbles of like-minded people who develop coagulated views of life in their echo chambers.

Among the questions to explore in ALE are:

- How can our local communities be strengthened and remain vibrant, coherent, and open to newcomers at the same time?
- How can our nation-state democracies remain vibrant, coherent, rooted in cultural heritage, and open to newcomers at the same time?
- How can we use the digital opportunities for better personal and community connections across Europe?
- What are the parts of Circles 7, 8, 9, and 10 that mean the most to us today?

Digital communities, challenges, and opportunities

Besides the revamping of the economy, the job markets, the political sovereignty of nation-states, and societal challenges at the structural level plus constant surveillance and the erosion of privacy, digital communication holds a number of opportunities, but also several challenges at the individual level.

Among the challenges is screen time in childhood when eye contact and physical play are crucial for emotional and social development, incl. empathy. It is essential that children are not brought up

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in front of screens but interact physically with peers and learn through play to read body language and develop emotionally. Later in life, issues such as cyberbullying and revenge porn can have horrible consequences while demands regarding constant online presence can cause stress and ruin other aspects of life.

The societal challenges relate to fake news, deep fakes, manipulations of the political sphere, online abuse and harassment, which may obstruct the political debate, and various forms of artificial intelligence that may appear like real people. Imagine spending hours debating with a chatbot online for hours thinking it is a real idiot, not just an algorithm...

The opportunities lie in connecting people around the globe and across continents, which will allow us to connect as humans in ways that have never been possible before. It is easier today than it ever was to meet people from Circles 6, 7, and 8: nation, religion, continent, culture zone, and around the globe.

There is a huge challenge for formal education, ALE, and folk-Bildung in educating all of us to behave properly, fruitfully, and with Bildung online. With sufficient Bildung among all, we could create the most amazing future using the digital tools available.

4.9. Unresolved questions

Are there best practices that get people to widen their sense of belonging? Are there programmes in existing ALE that are already getting conversations going regarding this? How do we best use online opportunities for creating a meaningful, peaceful, and sustainable future for all of us?

5. Civic empowerment / folk-Bildung

Civic empowerment means feeling qualified, equipped, and motivated to engage as a citizen; it means having an inner drive and the agency and self-confidence to speak up and get involved. Bildung is the process inside the individual that allows this empowerment; folk-Bildung is the setting or venue dedicated to it. This chapter offers some examples of successful folk-Bildung and considerations regarding folk-Bildung in Europe. The list is not exhaustive.

Folk-Bildung as we know it is different from much of ALE as we know it. Folk-Bildung is education for adults to empower them as active citizens; ALE is mainly about upgrading basic education and professional skills and hobby lessons. ALE is crucial, but it is also conforming, whereas folk-Bildung is developing and expanding both horizontal and vertical knowledge and understanding. Folk-Bildung is about the understanding of self, of the world in which one lives, and oneself in that world engaging with it and with others. Folk-Bildung provides an understanding of context and history, exposes you to multiple ideas, ideologies, theories, and scientific facts, trains your critical thinking, and gives you a language and a voice. By this, I mean both a vocabulary, something coherent to say, and the routine of saying it in conversations as well as in front of an audience. Essential to folk-Bildung is that it does not tell you what the message is and what your message should be, it is not a transfer of theory or ideology; it is an environment of new information and pushbacks that forces you to reconsider your assumptions and thinking. The goal is your personality, and this personality becomes uniquely yours when you have done the necessary intellectual work to figure it out for yourself. So that you can be a conscious, conscientious, and involved citizen.

Folk-Bildung is more than just getting people all excited and ready to go, though; the "folk" in folk-Bildung refers both to "folksy", i.e. the people, more than the elite, but also to being a people and to having a society and caring about it. Folk-Bildung is a force for change, not a call for riot; folk-Bildung is the path to articulating both problems, alternatives, and paths to solutions. The articulation is pivotal: with the educational part of Bildung comes an understanding of the existing structures and how one's society came to be the way it is and what is holding it together. Education allows us to see what needs to change and what is worth keeping, and it provides a language for addressing it. This means that conversations across different strata of society become possible.

5.1. Folk-Bildung historically

Along with industrialisation and the emergence of the modern state, there seems to have been in many places in Europe a movement of education and folk-Bildung of many kinds that went hand in hand with creating national self-awareness as a people and political empowerment for the individual, but not all initiatives survived.

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- Denmark got its first public school legislation in 1814, the state guaranteeing 7 years of a free school for all children; the folk high schools for the 18-25-year-olds were private initiatives. The first folk high school opened in 1844, Kold started his school in 1851, and the folk high school movement caught momentum after 1864 when Bismarck conquered 1/3 of Denmark and the Danes feared that he might come back for the rest as well. The Danish folk high schools succeeded in creating folk-Bildung that motivated generations of young Danes for civic involvement; the schools were copied in Norway in 1863, Sweden in 1868, and Finland in 1889.

- Norway used to be under the Danish crown but was transferred to Sweden in 1814 as a result of the Napoleonic wars (Denmark sided with Napoleon, a bad decision); in the process, Norway got a higher degree of autonomy and Europe's most liberal constitution at the time. A teachers' movement emerged in the 1830s raising awareness about the need for education and Bildung in all strata of society matching the new level of political freedom and responsibility. Around 1850, a movement for establishing Norwegian as an independent written language emerged (the written language had been Danish until then), and in the 1850s, a publication for folk-Bildung was started.

- Finland used to be under the Swedish crown but was taken by Russia in 1809 (which was why Sweden got Norway as compensation), and in the 1830s, the Fennoman movement emerged and started working for cultural self-awareness and political Finnish autonomy. As of the 1860s, there was a very strong connection between the Finnish educators in the movement and the Danish folk high schools.

- Since 1813, Sweden never experienced the threat of foreign invasion, much less foreign rule (their neighbours are small, weak, and much too friendly, and during WW2 Sweden avoided occupation by letting the Nazis use their railways to Norway). This lack of outside threats against Sweden meant that as Sweden democratised and established various kinds of education and folk-Bildung, national self-awareness never played a pivotal role. Patriotism played a role in the establishment of the first Swedish folk high schools, but the fear of losing their language and autonomy as a people just never hit the Swedes. With today's mass immigration, they are now taken by surprise and don't have a frame of reference for what it means to be a people. In 1902, Swedish Oscar Olson invented the self-organised study circle as part of the workers' movement and with the goal of political empowerment, not least in rural communities where resources of all kinds were scarce.

- In 1844, the Rochdale Society was founded in Rochdale, Lancashire in the UK; they invented the cooperative business model that pays a dividend to its members. From the very beginning, education was one of their objectives, and as cooperative grocery stores spread across Europe, education was often part of the project.

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- From around the 1840s, particularly from around 1880, various political study associations emerged under the workers' movements across Europe and their goal was deliberately political: As mentioned earlier, Bismarck put an end to a substantial part of the German workers' folk-Bildung in 1871, but it was revived during the Weimar Republic. Given the Socialist organisers, it is fair to assume, though, that more than folk-Bildung it was class-Bildung; Bildung to raise class awareness rather than national awareness and cohesion, but it would still have meant personal empowerment.

- In 1868, Prosvita was founded in Lviv by Ukrainian intellectuals to provide education for the people and national self-awareness as a counterweight to Russian influence. By 1913, Prosvita had 77 affiliate societies, 2,648 reading rooms, plus theatre clubs, choirs, and orchestras; in 1936, the Soviet communists shut it down.

- In the US, the Chautauqua movement started in 1874, and since 1932, Highlander Folk School in Tennessee, which was inspired by the Danish folk high schools, has played a crucial role in the Civil Rights movement.

- In the Basque part of Spain, the Mondragon Corporation has combined education and cooperative entrepreneurship since the organisation was started in 1956 by José María Arizmendiarrieta and a group of his students at the technical college he founded in 1943. This is not primarily folk-Bildung or Bildung, but the link between education and cooperatives has been there since the invention of the cooperatives.

As one can tell from the examples, folk-Bildung has emerged across Western civilisation for almost 200 years. Personal and political empowerment is at the core of our liberal democracies and welfare states.

Today, folk-Bildung as civic and political empowerment is almost ignored in European adult education and has been so for at least two generations. This is highly problematic, not least because we live at a time when we need folk-Bildung and political empowerment more than ever, not only at the national level but also at the continental and global levels.

In other words, civic and political empowerment must be re-invented as part of adult education and Bildung. Useful methods to make the timid brave and the uninterested interested may vary from person to person, but anger, frustration, a sense of injustice, or personal interest in a specific agenda were initially good starting points for folk-Bildung and ought to be so today as well. Activism, particularly activism carried by a calling for change is a great starting point for education and Bildung.

The question is who among today's ALE and folk-Bildung providers have the moral courage to turn their adult education organisation(s) into political labs and risk becoming unpopular among some of their potential customers? Not to speak of the governments subsidising them...

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5.2. Best practices for getting people involved

We need more best cases, but here are some:

Folk high schools

The Danish folk high schools have already been mentioned; they are still around and there is great diversity among them: some focus on the arts, some on sustainability, some on sports, and some on philosophy. Most have a little bit of everything and they do a great job of scaffolding and giving pushbacks to 18-25-year-olds for them to grow personally. The schools are great at socialising young adults into becoming what has been described above as team players, rational people, and self-governing—if that is not already the case when they arrive at the school. The folk high schools are also great at giving everybody who is already self-governing the scaffolding and pushback they need towards becoming self-authoring. What would be worth addressing, though, is the extent to which Danish folk high schools are using their potential for influencing the societal agenda and for the schools to be a cultural, societal and political voice in the public sphere outside the schools themselves. Headmasters of folk high schools used to be opinionated public voices, great speakers at public events, and often also authors and poets with a pen that moved people; many headmasters today have such a voice at the school, but the folk high schools are more or less absent as a voice in the rest of society. Too many spreadsheets; too little time.

We need more folk high schools across Europe and around the globe, particularly if they choose to become hothouses for societal change facilitating a sustainable future.

Chautauqua in the US

The Chautauqua movement has already been mentioned; Chautauquas are self-organised culture and science festivals where professors lecture and artists perform. They would be a great idea for small towns. They can last a day, a week, or an entire summer; they can be indoors or open air. The main point is to bring together experts from all kinds of fields (for example the seven domains of the Bildung Rose) and let them share their knowledge and thinking, and for everybody else to ask good questions and share their knowledge and thinking too. Much of the Chautauqua is what happens among the participants between the programmed events; the many inspired conversations people would otherwise not have.

Study circles

The Swedish model is very simple: Bring a group of curious people together, buy a book on the topic you wish to study (one book each, or share one copy and circle it among you); meet and discuss

whenever everybody has read a chapter. For each meeting / each chapter, one person may be responsible for finding additional information, or everybody can look up supplementing sources. Discuss.

Fridays for Future

Fridays for Future is a simple concept that has motivated millions of young people to take a stand on the climate, which is both unique and fantastic, and millions of people have learned about the environment through it. The question is how everybody can learn even more, now that the interest has been sparked. It is not enough that teens are angry and fight for everybody's future, decision-making adults need to get it too, and we all need the hands-on what-to-do-right-away low-hanging fruits with regard to lifestyle changes.

Maybe one way to go would be to bring people from different generations together in the same study circles addressing global warming, the science around it as well as the necessary lifestyle changes.

Harvesting the anger

A great initiator of activism and acquiring the knowledge to carry it out is often that people are outraged or angry about something, so a fair question to ask is this: How to get people sufficiently pissed off to rise up and get involved? Maybe "town hall meetings," events with celebrity speakers etc. could, to a larger extent, be organised as collaborative experiences rather than "expert/celebrity/politicians speak, the audience asks questions during Q&A, everybody goes home." Maybe even public events could be organised as writing exercises and group discussions with easy on-boarding activism opportunities on the way out. Or with, say, three different political parties giving a one-minute comment towards the end of the Q&A, where they tell where they stand on the issue and then the party volunteers are ready outside to sign people up for membership / their mailing list. As long as the political spectrum represented is broad, any ALE or folk-Bildung institution ought to be able to invite political parties to "sell" their message.

There is already plenty of anger out there: AfD in Germany, Yellow Vests in France, Men in Black in Denmark, and similar groups and sentiments in other countries. Some of them even dress up in army attire to tell the world how strongly they want to serve their country. Rather than seeing these groups/movements as a problem, how can their frustration and anger be turned into something useful? They care about their country, they fear losing Western civilisation, democracy, and their freedom; are there adequate study opportunities for them where they can study their constitution, the thinking that went into drafting it, and the European history of ideas regarding political freedom, human rights, and democracy? Are there opportunities for them that introduce Plato, Grotius, Locke, Tocqueville, Marx, Rand, etc. places where they can learn how to write opinion

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pieces that get accepted by the mainstream media? New forms of learning are crucial here because many of these people probably had bad experiences in school and have a negative image of education. This is no fault of their own, but the result of a traditional school system that is very efficient at killing the joy of learning.

Starting cooperatives

This is rarely considered a part of ALE, but maybe it should be. We need a new economic model that is sustainable, and cooperatives are locally owned and thus the owners have strong incentives to promote sustainable production. How can ALE and folk-Bildung promote local cooperative start-ups? Can it provide venues for mutual sparring and sharing of know-how?

Prioritising a 2nd and 3rd language for all

Becoming bilingual or, preferably, trilingual ought to be a goal for all Europeans. This does NOT mean that we should lower the focus on and the quality of the traditional first languages in the various European countries and regions; one of the many cultural riches we have in Europe are the many languages and dialects such as Catalan, Basque, Celtic, and many, many others. These come with a unique cultural heritage that we should do our utmost to cherish and strengthen. But we also need to be able to communicate fluently across Europe, which means that, for pragmatic reasons, particularly English should be promoted among all. We cannot have functioning European political institutions if we cannot have a European political debate among ourselves as citizens, and we need at least one common language for that.

Being bilingual is not only about communication, though, it changes the brain and increases neuroplasticity. The more languages one speaks, the more flexible one's thinking becomes, as does the ability to change perspective; learning other languages is a shortcut to Bildung. Growing up bilingual is of course a huge advantage, but learning a foreign language or two in school, using it/them regularly, dedicating time to improving one or both of them in adulthood, and maybe picking up a third language would help all of us. If the Swiss can do it, the rest of Europe ought to be able to do it as well.

Besides making English classes available across Europe, preferably free of charge, existing classes/courses could include English; introduce local native English speakers as lecturers on the topic of the course, and/or devote one or more lessons in existing programmes to learn the keywords and concepts of the topic in English. If people are already studying, say, math, accounting, or history, introduce the words for the mathematical and accounting terms, respectively, and the names of the historical figures and places, etc. in English.

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5.3. Particular Bildung needs in the 21st Century

There are so many new Bildung needs in this century and ALE and folk-Bildung need to address them.

New narratives

Folk-Bildung was invented when the new concept of the nation-state made the sense of peoplehood necessary, and new national narratives were essential in the early folk-Bildung. Now we need new understandings of "continentalhood" and "globalness," and we need new narratives that can supplement the national ones. There are also old narratives that are outdated and need to be replaced entirely, and among the tasks for ALE and folk-Bildung for the 21st Century is the changing of at least four of Western civilization's most central but outdated narratives:

- Outdated narrative 1: **More food and material stuff make us happier**. This old narrative is not that surprising, because lack of food and material things has often been the human condition. But in the West, today, this is no longer the case; instead, we get sick from overeating and ruin the planet with waste and too much consumption.

- Outdated narrative 2: **Humans are above and can control nature**. In the West, we got this narrative from Genesis, and a sense of "we know better than nature" is behind our invention of modern science and technology, but *we are nature*. We are embedded in nature, and nature is embedded in us; we cannot be separated. We need to live in symbiosis with nature as part of nature.

- Outdated narrative 3: **The market works and technology can solve our problems**. Any market is always a social construction defined by moral values, legislation, and rules about who is allowed to trade what how and with whom. But today, the market is treated almost like a divine force that cannot be questioned; instead, supposedly, it can solve all kinds of problems if humans just leave it up to the market. In reality, we need to design a market that works for the planet, all life on it, now and in the future, i.e. Circles 7-10. Technologies are necessary to solve the environmental problems, but they cannot make up for the burning of the Amazonas, increasing meat consumption, increasing air travel, loss of biodiversity etc.

- Outdated narrative 4: **Sustainable living means privation and boring lives**. As if we are not bored now and fill our lives with binging television and comfort foods to make up for meaningless jobs? OK, a lot of people do have great jobs, extremely comfortable lifestyles and can afford to buy out-of-season fresh fruits and animal-based delicacies flown in from around the globe, they can even do it during several vacations abroad per year. These people will, of course, experience a change in lifestyle if we are all going to survive.

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For the vast majority of us, a sustainable future can become a future of *better* food and material stuff, locally produced with creativity, love, and care for the local as well as the global environment. We can all become more involved in the creative and meaningful local production of food and aesthetic design. This can be based on local flora, fauna, cultural heritage, and traditions that evolved from local nature in balance with that nature—and it can be re-invented and spiced up with inspiration from around the globe, of course. Local economies can use technology to cut down on energy consumption and think in terms of local circularity and regenerative production. Enriching our lives with aesthetics, politics, science, narrative, and ethics, we can make life so much more meaningful than it is when the measuring stick is increased production and productivity and new technology to keep competing. If we replaced consumption with Bildung, it would be a future of sports, music, art, play, partying, singing, painting, and much more. ALE and folk-Bildung could show the way and invent programmes that make this fun, inviting, and easy to join.

Changing nature

The challenges from the effects humans have on nature (climate change, loss of biodiversity, pollution etc.) need to be addressed, and adults not only need to understand the problems both academically and emotionally, but they also need "easy onboarding." The first transitional steps need to be easy, meaningful, and rewarding. A simple first trick may be to start talking about nature rather than the environment; everybody loves nature (well, almost everybody), whereas the environment is an academic and often political, abstract term, and it is hard to "love" the environment. Most of us love a walk in the forest, but we don't think of it as "going for a walk in the environment." In that respect, going to the shopping mall is just as much "a walk in the environment" as going for a walk in nature is.

Changing technology

The challenges from human inventions, i.e. modern technology (AI, surveillance, facial recognition, data privacy, and data security etc.) need to be addressed too, and citizens need to understand these problems and the overall transformations as well. In order for us to make wise political decisions, we also need to understand and address the challenges these new technologies are posing to ownership of the means of production (it is rather different to own a factory, which is located somewhere and hard to move, than owning the algorithms running, say, Google or Amazon, which may be transferred to servers in different places). Power structures are being revamped in our societies due to technological development, and we all need to be able to deal with this and have a qualified opinion about how we should handle this as societies. Add to this how new technologies are changing the job market and the prospects for millions of people with regard to supporting themselves and their families in the economy.

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Changing culture

Europe's colonial past, migration, various kinds of privileges and lingering inequalities in social and societal structures are still setting up barriers for many people in many different ways. Our ethics regarding human rights, equality, and equal opportunity for all are fully there, the legislation is also in place in much of Europe, but as individuals and as cultures, we have not turned this into practice, narrative and moral habits yet. We are getting better, things have improved tremendously over the past generation, but there is still plenty of room for improvement.

Wokeism and intersectionality

Woke intersectionality is a kind of ethics that addresses these issues and matches the complexity of the 21st Century, and as such it ought to be a path to pursue. Being woke means taking multiple perspectives, deconstructing power structures, and weighing in several factors in assessing equality and equal opportunity. Intersectionality offers ways of recognising that privileges and oppressive structures come in many layers and directions, and that, depending on the context, the same person can enjoy privilege and simultaneously be defined by the oppression from others. A typical example is a black man who would in some situations suffer from racism because he is black, but in other situations would enjoy privileges because he is male. Intersectionality allows us to explore the intersection between privileges and oppressions, and as such, it is a brilliant invention. Political correctness means adjusting the language so that it takes woke intersectional insights into account.

Unfortunately, rather than creating increased understanding, conversation, and tolerance, wokeness, intersectionality, and political correctness are currently predominantly promoted by identity and cancel culture that does not necessarily practice tolerance. Instead of broadening everybody's understanding and vocabulary, wokeism, intersectionality, and identity politics have managed to create an environment of fear and silencing.

Given the lack of actual tolerance, the black-and-white thinking, the fierceness of the condemnation of the politically incorrect, and the age group predominantly promoting wokeism (college students), it makes sense to see the movement through the lenses of Schiller, Kohlberg, and Kegan.

The actual wokeness and intersectionality, and the ability to change one's language to one of consideration for others, is what Schiller would describe as the free, moral person, Kohlberg would define it as the fifth and sixth phases with moral development towards everybody, the bigger picture, and universal ethical principles, and Kegan's self-authoring and self-transforming.

The intolerant behaviour and cancel culture, however, match Schiller's rational person, Kohlberg's third stage oriented towards interpersonal relations and conformity (Will they like me and trust me?), here meaning the in-group of "woke" politically correct intersectionalists, and Kegan's

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self-governing. Self-govern your words or get cancelled! The behaviour also matches what Løgstrup wrote about having a view-of-life rather than being had by one: does the idea dominate the personality or does it add to the personality?

From a philosophical point of view, it is interesting that a more complex ethical standard (intersectional wokeness) is promoted by a less complex attitude (self-govern or get cancelled!). From a systems perspective that considers any one culture as an integrated whole, it is detrimental to both freedom, democracy, and Bildung that wokeness and intersectionality have been hijacked by intolerance.

Addressing multiple challenges the right way

Overall, ALE and folk-Bildung need to address structural racism, other structures of privileges and oppression, and, of course, overt racism and chauvinism etc. It also needs to address environmental problems and the challenges posed by new technologies. But these problems need to be addressed in ways that do not ostracise millions of people who have the least they can afford to lose and the highest risk of losing it. Political correctness, wokeness, intersectionality, sustainable lifestyles, and lifestyle changes are privileges themselves and they require privileged resources. Any person who is really woke and who truly gets intersectionality would not be offended by the politically incorrect but would accept the politically incorrect statement as a personal truth worth being understood (but not necessarily repeated, accepted nor respected).

Somebody has to break this spell of "woke" intolerance and cancel culture, and ALE and folk-Bildung ought to be the places to do that. Bildung means being woke, understanding intersectionality, and giving room and time for the viewpoints with which one disagrees.

Systems thinking and complexity theory

Among the skills needed now and in the future is the ability to grasp the complexity, self-organisation, and (vulnerable) balances of entire systems such as the economy of a country or the food chains and symbioses in biotopes. The Western mind has been trained to separate things and see them in isolation rather than exploring their interaction. We need to unlearn this Euclidian, Galilean, Newtonian kind of thinking and embrace complexity theory, chaos theory, network theory, and systems perspective. Cognitively, we are better suited for this with age as our minds become more complex; culturally, young people often get it intuitively as they are rounded by the complexities of cyberspace and meat-space in the 21st Century plus the multiple perspectives of postmodernism.

5.4. Unresolved questions

We need to ask ourselves: What ought ALE and folk-Bildung to be about in the 21st century? What should it be like? What is it that everybody needs to have access to with regard to education and Bildung? Not least will we have to make this a public and political agenda across the continent and beyond.

It would also be interesting to find out how many folk-Bildung movements Europe already had during the 1800s and 1900s, what the programmes, institutions, and content were in the different places, and how many cooperatives also provided organised education and Bildung. We may be a continent of forgotten folk-Bildung movements.

The final and really big question is, of course, what are the best practices that provide knowledge and turn knowledge into personal empowerment and action?

6. Bringing the four aspects together

Bildung is the process as well as the result. In order to thrive in and contribute to the most complex societies of the 21st Century, people need very complex Bildung and we can and should develop better Bildung opportunities for everybody and different phases of life. For the individual, the 21st Century and probably all future for humanity into the 22nd century and beyond mean a developmental and learning process that will continue throughout adulthood, throughout life.

This handbook has tried to concretise Bildung by describing it as:

- Horizontal knowledge; expansion of our horizon
- Vertical knowledge; moral and emotional connection to self, others, and culture
- Sense of belonging in still larger circles
- Empowerment to engage as a citizen

The way to look at Bildung regarding each individual is not to focus on the result, though, nor "how much Bildung does this person have." Instead, the question should be whether the individual experiences increased horizontal and vertical understanding, finds life increasingly meaningful with age, feels increasingly empowered to engage as a citizen, and feels curious and motivated to expand one's circles of belonging, rather than withdrawing from the larger circles to feel comfortable and safe. Whenever somebody does not enjoy increased existential depth and meaning over the years, and if the person does not feel understood, respected and trusted among their peers, or if they struggle with burnout or anxiety, it may be worth considering if the problem is insufficient Bildung for their life circumstances and context.

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6.1. Reflections on bringing the four aspects together

What is the ultimate purpose of ALE and folk-Bildung? We need to start this conversation in many places, and depending on the answer: Are they reaching the right people? Are they bringing together the right people? Are they contributing to empowerment and emancipation, or are they servants of the market?

Let's imagine six target groups; how would the above sit with them? What would provoke them and give them pushback, what would sound like great fun, and what would sound like a great opportunity? How do we make it sound like programmes worth joining? This can only be guesswork and an invitation to contradict, questioning and challenging these guesses.

I am supposing some generic European town or city with 50,000+ inhabitants:

Unemployed, 25-year-old academic

Parts of Europe suffer from massive youth unemployment despite a good education, and the pandemic has not improved the situation. Why not hire these young people for a year or two, put them together in groups of 7-10 people according to the Bildung Rose, so that all domains are represented, and ask them to solve a local problem working with the local municipality? They could even get to define the problem themselves.

Successful 35-year-old entrepreneur

This is always a hard age group to reach since they are typically in the process of establishing both a family and a career. Given that entrepreneurs will want to succeed with both their family life and their business, they will be prioritised according to "What's in it for me?" This is not to say that they generally think that way, but they might, and if one cannot come up with a good answer to that question, there is no need for trying to reach them.

One angle that might work would be "Meet the municipality" and then organise an open networking meeting once a month where city planners, leaders of educational institutions, the chief of police, the director of the local theatre etc. present what going on in the municipality, and where you sneak in a professor or two to add some science. The science can be about the local air pollution, a fascinating local species of frogs, a long-dead local composer, etc.; or anything that deepens the connection to the city. Depending on resources, local musicians may be hired to add an aesthetic dimension to the event.

A low-skilled 45-year-old worker in the service sector

This is the group that is perhaps the most vulnerable in the current economic and societal transition; these people used to be unskilled manual labour in the industry, but now they are in the service sector and do not have the social commitment of the unions and the workers' movement to scaffold them. Fundamentally, there seems to be a huge need just to be heard. Why not turn the political meeting around and create a programme that culminates in the participants doing a presentation for an audience consisting of 4-5 members of the city council?

Well-educated 55-year-old surgeon

This is a group that has had success with education and who knows where to find more if they want it. They are usually overloaded with work and conferences relating to their work; nevertheless, they are probably pursuing intellectual stimulation of various kinds already; art, literature, travel, etc. Quality might be the parameter defining whether they would join a programme or not; if the lecturers are professors, or if the teacher of the sourdough baking class has similar credentials, there is a chance they might sign up. Those who have already signed up would be the people to focus on, and this is where the conversation based on the Bildung Rose would come in handy; they would probably find it stimulating to get this extra perspective on themselves and the other people in the class.

Successful 60-year-old business owner / CEO

This is the same kind of person as the 35-year-old entrepreneur, but their children are adults now and they have often reached the phase of life where they want to give something back to society: Kohlberg 5 and 6, and approaching Kegan's self-transforming. They are facing a number of challenges with regard to digitisation and making their organisation sustainable and will need employees who can co-create new solutions and take responsibility for them. This ought to be a selling point. Rather than seeking education for themselves, they could co-create or facilitate events at their organisation, and if they were integrating folk-Bildung in their way of thinking, they could boost both the agenda of folk-Bildung and the transformation that any organisation has to go through these years. Invite them in as potential partners, present the local needs for education and Bildung, ask them about their plans for digitisation and sustainability, and ask them how they would like to contribute to education and Bildung as they are doing what they are already doing anyway.

Retiring 70-year-old professor

As with the 55-year-old surgeon, this is most likely somebody who is already pursuing intellectual stimulation. They might be intrigued, though, by an invitation along the lines of "May we challenge

your thinking and use you as a resource?" At this age, some may not be interested in meeting new people at all, but others will really appreciate a stimulating intellectual environment that can replace their work at the university, and many would also like to continue contributing to society. They could be brought together according to the Bildung Rose and serve as mentors for the groups of unemployed 25-year-olds who are tasked with solving a local problem.

Other target groups

The six target groups above are, of course, guesswork and random examples; there are many others. The main point is that with regards to ALE and folk-Bildung, there is no one-size-fits-all; there may be programmes that can draw very diverse groups of participants, but more so than in formal education, lifestyle choices and life experiences will vary a lot across the adult population that is relevant to reach and involve.

6.2. Particular Bildung needs in the 21st Century

We need to rethink ALE so that it empowers people as citizens and as agents in the global economy. One of the fundamental challenges is to get people to see folk-Bildung and ALE as a path to a sustainable, fun, and meaningful future.

6.3. Unresolved questions

Institutions of ALE and folk-Bildung ought to set a political agenda and raise awareness of the importance of updated and sufficient Bildung for everybody. Equally important is the funding for making it available. It is crucial that citizens do not lose the ability to engage and that they feel empowered to make a difference. If there is a general perception that getting involved will not make a difference, democracy is gone. How do we best reach out and "sell" the message of civic empowerment and engagement?

Does anybody know what kind of education and Bildung people themselves feel a need for? Does such a survey already exist, and if not, would it be worth making one?

7. How this relates to ALE

Adult Learning & Education (ALE) for many years in many places has focused mainly on upgrading people's skills for the job market, which means that it has focused mainly on two domains of the Bildung Rose: Production and Technology. Meanwhile, aesthetics (the arts), political Power (civics), Science (for the sake of science), Narrative (be it religion, history and/or political ideology), and Ethics (say, philosophy) have all fallen under the "nice to have as a hobby" category. Rather than being a venue for personal Bildung and empowerment, rather than being folk-Bildung, ALE has been a servant of the market. As taxpayers, unions, companies, and other payers of ALE, we have invested in each other as labourers, not as citizens.

This skewed focus and investment are problematic not just from a general Bildung perspective for the individual; it also means that collectively, as societies, we are losing the ability to address issues in all domains and the interplay among them through an informed and rich conversation in the public sphere. We discuss GDP and employment as if that is what politics is supposed to be about. (Most Westerners would probably react to that by thinking "But that IS, what politics is about!" which just proves the point.)

The Bildung Rose shows why this limited understanding of what matters is a problem:
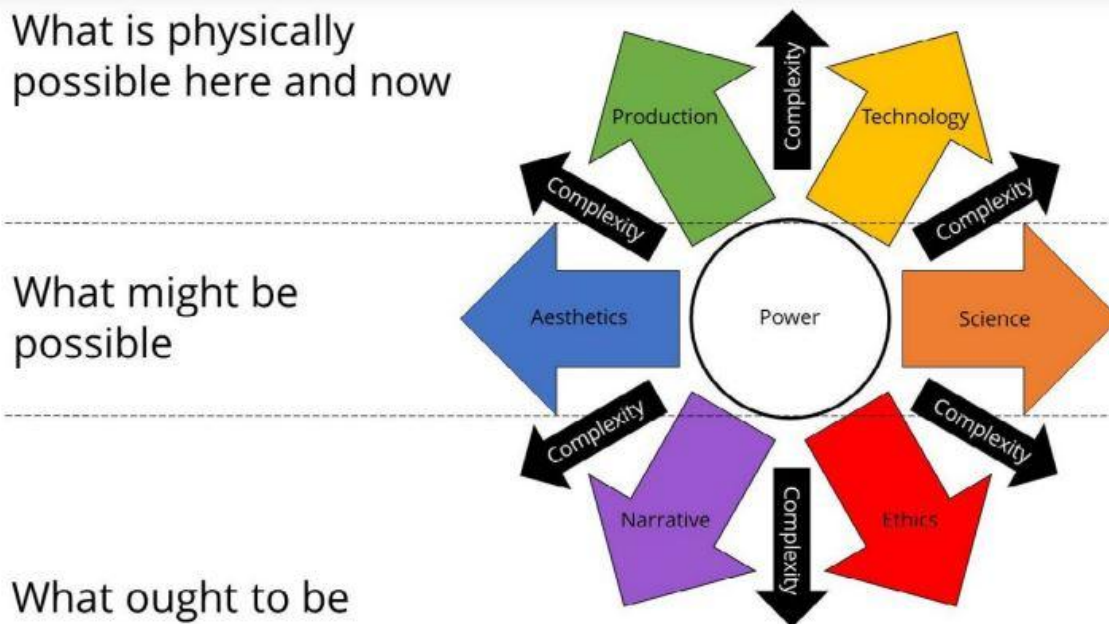

Figure 3: The Bildung Rose and what ought to be
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The two top domains, Production and Technology, represent what is physically possible here and now. The middle represents what might be possible, and the bottom is what ought to be.

By educating ourselves to address only what is physically possible here and now, and making us unaccustomed to exploring and addressing what might be possible and what ought to be, we cannot address in any productive way:

- Democracy, how to be an active citizen, and what kind of policies and new institutions we need to handle, say, the challenges that our nation-states cannot handle individually, including:

- Digitisation and the challenges it poses to democracy and the existing economy.

- Sustainability and solutions to environmental problems, incl. climate change.

- Education for all, incl. migrants from other cultures and people with learning disabilities; who says the only way to contribute to society is through jobs that contribute to GDP growth?

By making Bildung central to ALE and turning ALE into folk-Bildung, ALE can become:

- **To the individual**, a venue for personal empowerment as a citizen and as a whole human being.

- **To communities**, a meeting place for communal bonding and problem-solving; is very likely a factor in improving mental health.

- **To employers,** a source of another kind of self-motivated and creative workforce with a deeper understanding of sustainability, the interplay among the company's stakeholders, and how to take responsibility and ownership for sustainable development, inclusion etc. at the workplace.

- **To society**, the foundation of a qualified democratic conversation about the most crucial and complex issues facing humanity, our future and the only planet we have.

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