Democracy and Bildung

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

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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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The Bildung project

The Bildung project contributes to the innovation of the European adult learning and education (ALE) sector by adopting the holistic concept of 'Bildung' and exploring its political and practical potential for adult learning and education.

The multiple challenges and rapid changes in our societies in Europe demand us to rethink the role of education. While Lifelong Learning is widely accepted as the main concept, we must rethink the role and concepts of adult learning and education. This is essential if we want to equip citizens with the skills to make informed decisions and take transformative action in the world shaped by e.g. climate change, digitalisation and the social divide.

The Bildung project contributes to this re-thinking by making use of the concept of "Bildung" for conceptualising ALE. The concept, rooted in the tradition of the enlightenment and the Nordic Folkbildning envisages an education, targeting all aspects of the development of individuals, communities and societies, including e.g. ethical, emotional and scientific dimensions in a holistic manner.

Eleven partners from all over Europe will explore the use of this concept for the ALE sector in the fields of democracy, digitalisation, sustainability, and basic skills education.

Aim and objectives

Bildung project will offer decision-makers and ALE providers on the European and national levels with:

- A conceptual framework and recommendation on how to widen ALE services and structures using the Bildung lens
- Good practices of projects from various regions in Europe already using the Bildung/folkbildning approach
- Real and virtual spaces for exchange and peer learning

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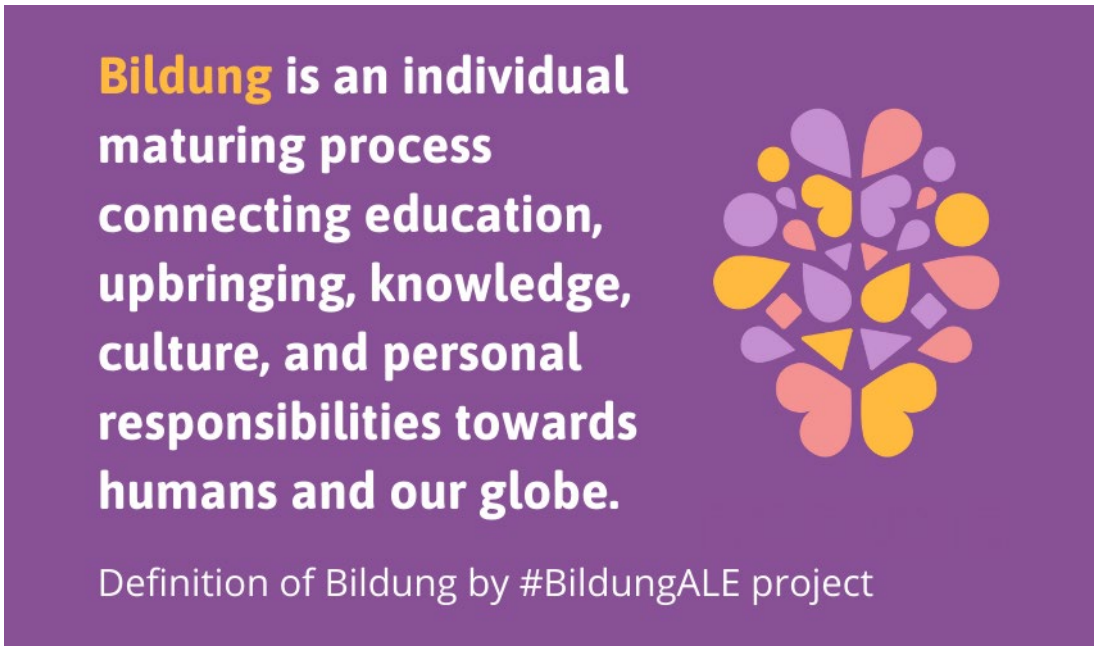


Partnership

The Bildung project is a collaboration of 11 European organisations dedicated to supporting adult education and learning.

Coordinator

- DVV International

Partners

- The European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA)
- The Association of Austrian Adult Education Centres (Verband Österreichischer Volkshochschulen, VÖV)
- Association of Estonian Folk High Schools
- AONTAS - National Adult Learning Organisation in Ireland
- Dafni KEK- Adult Education and Research Center
- The Danish Adult Education Association (DAEA)

- The Finnish Lifelong Learning Foundation (Kvs)
- The Catalan Association for Education, Training and Research (ACEFIR)
- PRO DIDACTICA Education Center
- The Swiss Federation for Adult Learning (SVEB)

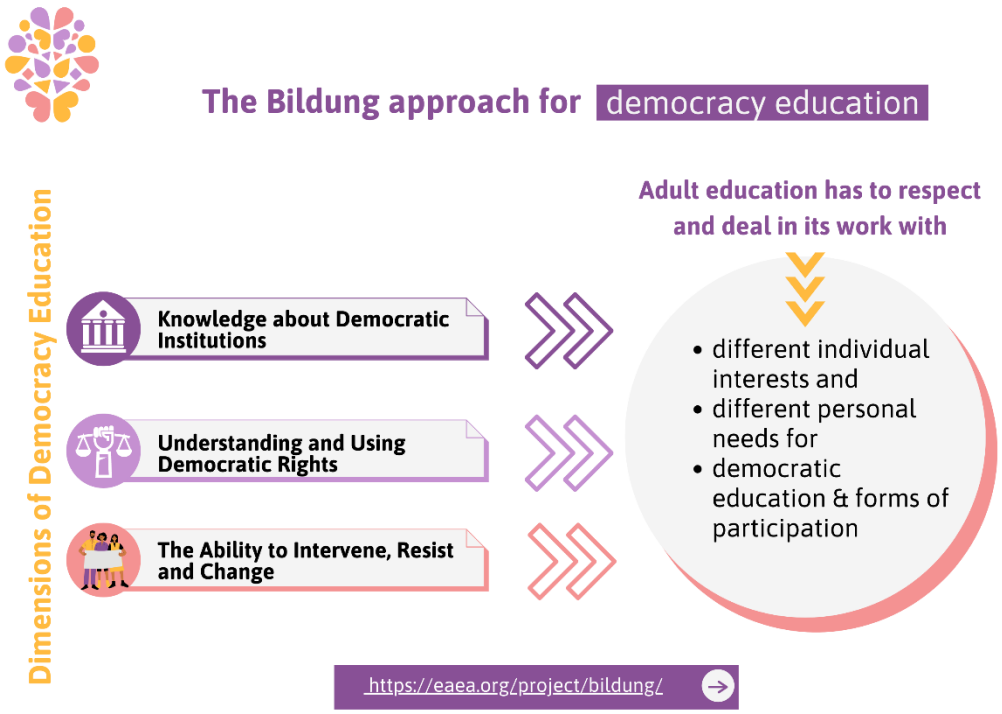
Social media: #BildungALE

Website: https://eaea.org/project/bildung/

BILDUNG
INCLUSIVE LIFELONG
LEARNING SYSTEMS

Introduction: Democracy and Bildung

In this paper and in the context of the Bildung project, we aim at a reconceptualization of adult learning and education through the lens of democratic participation and the existing interrelation with ALE.



As a concept, Bildung and Democracy for this paper is thoroughly linked with the how and the what behind educational and learning processes and encompasses all aspects of the development of individuals, the development of communities and the development of societies, through its ethical aspects and emotional and scientific dimensions. The goal of this paper is to elaborate a sense of adult education through Bildung, providing us with a new notion of learning through reclaiming the history of the "Bildung" term into a term that can fit everyone and can make claims for the future of Europe.

The Bildung approach for democratic education creates links between democratic institutions, understanding and using democratic rights and the ability of the individual and the society to intervene, resits and change, by highlighting how adult education has to respect and deal in its work with the individual needs of the localities, protect the diversity

of the European identity and include democratic processes in all levels of activation and influence.

For the aforementioned reasons and through the aforementioned concepts we will be including in this paper a brief overview of the historical evolution of our context, how Bildung interacts and shapes our reality through a political lens, good practices of democratic and participatory education and concrete recommendations for the holistic development of democratic adult education in a Macro, Meso and Micro Level.

This paper has been produced by Association of Austrian Adult Education Centres (Verband Österreichischer Volkshochschulen, VÖV) and DAFNI KEK Adult Education and Research Centre, and it's the second output of the Bildung Erasmus+ project. The first output, "What is Bildung?" provides a background for this paper.

1. Definition and short analysis

1.1. A brief history of the concept and understanding of democracy

Democracy education is based on the historical development of the concept and understanding of democracy in its three different dimensions: (1) the development of democratic institutions, (2) the development of basic democratic and social rights and human rights, and (3) the development of the potential for democratic intervention and change. All three historical dimensions have their place in the current practice of democracy education and will therefore be briefly explained.

The development of democratic institutions began with the emergence of the concept of democracy in the Greek *polis*. Here we refer positively to aspects such as participation in public affairs, the expertise of all adult citizens, the role of education and public space, and the goal of democracy, the "creation of human beings living with beauty, living with wisdom, and loving the common good"[1]. The Roman Republic added that political order must be based on institutions such as justice, law, and the common good. The Enlightenment and revolutionary developments in Europe and the founding of the United States, established a parliament, the rule of law, equality before the law, and the separation of powers as the cornerstones of the modern understanding of democratic institutions. Institutional approaches within the framework of international law eventually elevated these ideas to the international level. Knowledge of these institutional processes, as well as historical and current debates about exclusionary mechanisms (e.g. in electoral and citizenship law), are a central part of democracy education.

Today, fundamental and human rights are institutionalised as a source of law through numerous treaties – most notably the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the European Convention on Human Rights (1950) - even if they are not universally ratified. Behind this commitment is a historical development which extended the concept of universal, equal, inalienable and indivisible human rights to the fields of politics and economics, as well as cultural and social affairs. In contrast to these historical developments are the colonial wars in the name of 'human rights' of the 19th century, but also the reality of ongoing human rights violations, up to the genocides of the 20th and 21st centuries. The fragile reality of fundamental and human rights highlights how they are, and always were, subject to a process of appropriation, perception and thus also education.

The historical development of democracy includes attention to the real possibilities of participation, change and - if necessary - resistance. The progress of democratic institutions, just like the perception and implementation of fundamental and human rights, is linked to the development of democratic, social, emancipatory and social movements. This is especially underlined by the history of the 'short 20th century', but also by current developments that challenge democratic institutions and rights. As a result of historical developments, many European countries have, in addition to the right to freedom of speech, press, assembly and association, also enshrined the right of resistance when these rights are endangered. Democracy education must always be oriented toward the upholding and implementation of these rights. This has proven most effective when it has taken this practical approach, demonstrated historical and current scope for action, and thus promoted intervention and change.

1.2. Democracy as a key concept of adult learning and education

'A democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience.' (John Dewey 1916, p. 86)

Adult education has historically been a vehicle for experimentation and implementing concepts of an egalitarian and liberating education. Furthermore, adult education has been a place of inclusion, a place where findings are discussed and evaluated and open communities are fostered (cf. Freire 1972).

Education for democracy focuses on democratic processes, but also on personal behaviour and individual and collective options for action. Knowledge of the rule of law, as well as human and fundamental rights, is just as essential as strengthening one's own ability to act or represent the interests of social groups. Political participation in existing institutions is only one field of action. Other forms - from civic engagement to protest and civil disobedience - are not fundamentally subordinate here. Successful democratic education (work) in this context should support people in finding their own role as "citizens". Here, too, there is no "hierarchy": the reflected spectator is just as much in focus here as the citizen who is fundamentally capable of intervention or the activist who is permanently politically engaged.

Peter Singer – OFI/Budapest[2] asks how education might approach equipping people with the various tools that would enable them to become more active citizens: "How the interest of young people can be directed towards more diverse thinking and taking active citizenship

roles? [...] Can we succeed in developing basic social competencies, like debating skills, respecting and accepting others' views, formulating and articulating diverse opinions, sensitivity to social problems, managing public, political and moral issues, dilemmas, recognizing the distorting effects of mass media, understanding the system of connections and conflicts."

In 21st century education, the learner takes the guiding role, exchanging ideas to interpret the world around them. The *Homo Universalis* of the 21st century must have knowledge, skills, as well as critical thinking and be open-minded, immersed and alert. They interpret the world around them by asking questions, interpreting and studying sources and formulating an evidence-based opinion.

1.3. Democracy and adult learning and education (ALE) in the concepts of supranational organisations and European NGOs for democracy

The discourse on adult education, its key concepts, tasks and functions are essentially shaped by supranational organisations. With regard to the relationship between adult learning and democracy or democratic developments, UNESCO, the Council of Europe, the European Union and the OECD stand out in this context. Their understanding of adult learning and democracy is briefly described here. In addition, two European NGOs are described.

The main task of **UNESCO**, based on its founding idea, is to secure peace through education. The education programmes are shaped by this mission to fight poverty and ensure sustainable development for all people. For UNESCO, education is a human right and it is the only United Nations organisation dedicated to this global goal. These goals encompass all areas of education. Key themes include global citizenship, sustainability (environment and people), human rights, gender equity and health education, in addition to technical and vocational education: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000245656. UNESCO is the thematic leader in Education for All and the International Conferences on Adult Education (CONFINTEA) which addresses the global issue of how ALE can support peace and international understanding

The **Council of Europe**[3] is a forum for debate on general European issues. The results of this forum are binding agreements ('conventions') under international law, which are intended to promote democratic security and economic and social progress. The basis of the

understanding of education is the values in the Council of Europe's mission statement: human rights, democracy, the rule of law and achievements since the end of the Second World War. The safeguarding of these achievements is the key aspect of the Council's understanding of education. Education for Democracy is at the heart of these education initiatives: better education for better democracies.

The history of the **European Union** shows that a common understanding of education was not the main area of focus in comparison to the Council of Europe. A change took place within the framework of the Lisbon Strategy. With the Millenium turn 1999/2000, the global challenges described by the term 'knowledge society' came into focus; education policy became an important instrument for promoting the European economy (Europe 2020) and central to the concept of lifelong learning after 2020. The values of the understanding of education are laid down in Article 2 of the Lisbon Treaty, including human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, principles of law and the rule of law, and the recognition of human rights. Inclusive education, as the highest quality standard, aims to develop a common European basis for teaching and learning, with particular attention to cultural heritage and diversity. The actions to develop and promote a European understanding of education go hand-in-hand with the 20 fundamental principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights. The European Democracy Action Plan intends the empowerment of citizens and the building of more resilient democracies, the most important elements being: (1) free and fair elections, (2) media freedom and pluralism, and (3) counter disinformation.

The guiding principle of the **OECD** is to enable better policies for a better life: 'Our goal is to shape policies that foster prosperity, equality, opportunity and well-being for all'.[4] This is to be made possible for the member states by a set of international standards. The OECD's educational policy speaks of economic and wider benefits for the individual in the member states and social interaction. The education systems of the member states are mapped and evaluated utilizing statistical procedures; the achievement of 'equal opportunities in the education system' is a *leitmotif* of these quantitative and qualitative procedures.

The Democracy and Human Rights Education Network (**DARE**), is a Europe-wide network of NGOs, academics, research and other organisations focusing on the twin fields of human rights education and education for democratic citizenship. It is committed to promoting a deeper understanding of human rights and democracy within Europe through education and raising the profile of such education, both generally and as a core component of the formal and informal education systems throughout Europe.

NECE (Networking European Citizenship Education) is an open, transnational and diverse (non-institutionalised) association of experts and practitioners in formal, non-formal and informal civic education from Europe and other regions with partner networks. NECE advocates for a new prioritisation of high-quality citizenship education for all in Europe, with local, national and transnational dimensions.

2. Analysing Bildung to the topic

People should be able to lead a self-determined life and make their contribution to solidarity and living together. Bildung thus refers to the individual but also society; it is to be interpreted as a relationship to oneself but also to 'the world'. It includes both a present orientation and a future orientation as well as a "change-producing participation in culture" (Gudjons 2008[5], p. 200). Educated people are learning people and basically, people learn throughout their lives.

Democracy is not a given and depends on people wanting it. It is something that has to be learned over and over again.

Some people feel powerless and not in a position to affect change and the perception of a person's ability to act is strongly dependent on their level of education: people with low educational qualifications are five times more likely to agree with the statement 'People like me do not influence on what the government does anyway' than university graduates.[6] The OECD's PIAAC[7] study also shows that low educational attainment goes hand-in-hand with low trust in institutions and feelings of powerlessness in the face of uncertain futures, but also with a high level of mistrust towards fellow citizens (cf. Kastner, Schlögl 2014[8]). The level-one study in Germany shows that people with low literacy participate less in elections than the population as a whole. They also talk less often about politics with people close to them.[9]

Recent processes of 'globalisation' and 'European integration' have also been accompanied by the rise of authoritarian currents - usually nationalist religious or radical right-wing. The 'new authoritarianism' counteracts assumptions that developing awareness of democratic values and institutions would be a self-evident, linear process, especially after 1989. The common features of authoritarian currents include, above all, a populist anti-establishment discourse 'from above', which is directed, among other things, against 'dictates of opinion', 'political correctness', 'gender mania', but also against certain groups (migrants, LGBTQ+, ...). Through confrontation, breaking so-called taboos, and even the use of violence, an extremely heterogeneous group of people who see themselves as losers of global or European processes is addressed. Given the complexity of the causes of the phenomenon of "new authoritarianism," but also of the dangers it poses, citizenship education work in particular - and its key area, the topic of 'democracy' - faces a special challenge.

As early as 2010, a comparative study on the subject of authoritarianism in Central Europe found that education, specifically, for example, knowledge of or confrontation with the past,

is important for the consolidation of a democratic self-conception. However, a feeling of political powerlessness increases how susceptible a person might be too authoritarian tendencies, such as the readiness to stigmatise minorities. To be effective, political education work must deal with the aforementioned "hot" historical and current issues and also aim to strengthen the individual's ability to act politically and utilise the appropriate tools.[10]

Koen Wessels[11] in his TEDx Talk 'Bildung: An Integral Approach to Education' believes that education should have more purpose than the transfer of knowledge. He argues for an integral approach and combines functional approaches with intersubjective ones.

The labour market of today, flexible and with diffuse responsibilities, asks not only for specialised knowledge and skills but also for self-knowledge, empathy and a well-developed moral compass. Education influences the consciousness and life choices of students. The question is whether education can be a good influence? The development of a human being goes hand-in-hand with intrinsic values for the individual who is invited to fully develop themselves and of intrinsic value for the world in which this person can flourish.

We need to develop our awareness more, as living with global problems, refugee crises, economic crises, and ecological crises ask us to develop our moral sensibility and our empathic abilities to a global skill to be able to think and feel and decide from a global perspective. Wessels structures thought in these directions: the direction of content (what); the direction of method (how); the direction of thought that deserves more attention and the direction of context (where and for whom).

Citizenship education for active participation

Although a need for "new kinds of citizens" has emerged - a citizen that actively participates in their community and owns their actions - in reality, the existing, traditional citizenship models found in education cannot support or facilitate this leap forward. Those models focus on keeping civic education restricted to school textbook knowledge about 'ideal' systems while detaching education from the social lives of the learners, thus making everything about the pursuit of - solely - academic knowledge. Education and social life are conveyed as two separate entities, so much so that the focus on the first one can make the learners indifferent to the latter.

To come closer to the idea of democratic citizenship, a process by which 'the members of a polity are enabled to cultivate their democratic potential with the view to engaging themselves, actively and determinately, in all matters that affect the quality of their

collective symbiosis', not only theoretical but also practical changes need to happen. A place to start is the reform of the teaching experience by changing our perception of learning to something that is realized through 'experience, participation, research and sharing'.[12]

Bildung is an untranslateable German word whose semantic range cannot be fully grasped if one is not a German speaker. One interesting aspect that was highlighted in the paper is the comparison with the word *Erziehung*. Both can mean 'education', but only in German can a terminological distinction be made. As Jürgen Oelkers stated: 'It is quite easy to talk about *"Bildungschancen"* (educational opportunities), but difficult to imagine what *"Erziehungschancen"* might be'.[13]

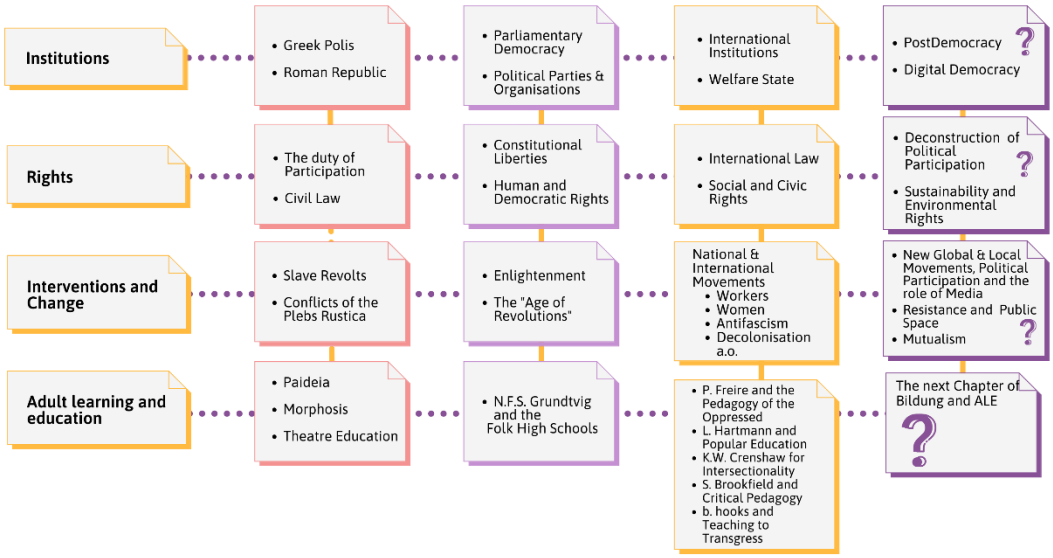
The fact that educational opportunities can only be connected with the notion of Bildung is intriguing. In addition to that, and based on the origins of the word, Bildung encompasses the notions of research, imitation and self-cultivation, for example in the word for teacher education (LehrerInnenbildung). Bildung[14] means the confrontation of a person with themselves and their environment with the aim of competent and responsible action, rather than the mere transmission and acquisition of knowledge, skills and qualifications. In the broadest sense, Bildung is self-enlightenment and emancipation. Societal values and individual convictions shape Bildung; the concept is thus normative or political. It can be seen as a process, but it can just as well be the result of a process.

A comprehensive concept of Bildung goes beyond imparting knowledge and traditional teaching. According to Freinet[15], to educate oneself, it is not enough for a child to consume all the material presented to them, instead, they must act themselves, and be creative, in an appropriate environment. Bildung entails the development of a person's whole personality and active participation in society. Bildung also means preparation for future phases of life and includes the use of knowledge as well as the possibility of further learning. The four pillars in Delors White Paper[16] (learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together) have now been expanded to include a fifth pillar: learning to change, learning to transform, and so characterise the concept of Bildung in an impressive way.

Bildung could be of great aid in levelling out social differences and improving access to future opportunities while enabling people to ask themselves how they want to live in the future and act accordingly.

Democracy and Bildung an overview

We propose this overview as a matrix because we believe that the interrelation between Democracy and Bildung does not follow a linear process of succession as it evolves through the complexity of society.



A short reflection on the concept of Bildung

Especially through the lens of the relationship between Bildung and democracy, we can make the correlation between what ought to be possible and what might be. In the first case 'ought to be possible' is reflected in our investigation that democratic education becomes a means of power distribution between citizens and power structures as possible due to ethics (justice, equality, human rights) that results in co-shaping the narrative as a continuation of the legacy of values.

In the second case, 'the might-be-possible', is explored as the need to strengthen aesthetics and science as pillars of active intervention in power and its co-formation through democratic education as seen so far. As we can see in the schematic overview below democracy and concepts of holistic Bildung are historically linked in their reference to multiple contexts of everyday life.

Finally, on the expansion of the sense of responsibility, it is interesting to include the views from Lene Rachel Andersen's paper 'What is Bildung? And how does it relate to ALE', which is the first output of the Bildung Erasmus+ project.

'In the 21st century, we still need a functioning, democratic nation-states and we need to take responsibility for them as individuals through being active citizens, but we also need to take responsibility for our culture zone (i.e. Europe), humanity around the globe, the wellbeing of all life and biotopes around the globe, and the wellbeing of life in the future. Being aware of, feeling a sense of belonging in, and taking responsibility for circles 7-10[17] put new demands on us'.

3. Relationship to other European concepts

To analyse the international significance of the concept of Bildung developed largely in the German-speaking world today, we look in this section at how education and democracy relate to other European concepts.

3.1. European frameworks

The basic principles of redeveloping adult education can be found in the wording of European Union guidelines and international bodies such as UNESCO on the right to education. The conscious approach of the citizen towards the journey of knowledge ultimately concerns teachable processes. The tools to engage in these processes are provided by education in a democratic environment. It is important to note that the democratic environment as an ideal condition for the flourishing of the new type of person is not guaranteed. On the contrary, it is a product of negotiations but also struggles for the target that knowledge becomes good for all. Exactly this is the meaning we have given to this relationship between Bildung and democracy.

There are many parallel texts of directions at the level of European political thought for education. Specifically, the LifeComp Framework states that “The journey to becoming self-regulated, empathetic, and flexible citizens is always characterized by a social dimension; this is a key element in the European perspective and distinguishes [our] framework from others. Becoming critical thinkers, and having a sense of well-being, both on an individual and collective level, are competencies which can be taught in schools. This means that citizens can become active agents in determining their learning and professional paths, provided that measures are put in place which encourage the teaching of these kinds of competencies within the European educational curricula.”[18]

Having a sense of agency enables individuals to feel in control of their lives, steer thoughts and behaviour, and handle a wide range of tasks or situations. It leads people to frame a guiding purpose and identify actions to achieve a goal and relies on self-awareness (OECD, 2019d). It empowers individuals to cope with uncertainty, complexity, and change - and exercise active citizenship (OECD, 2018b).

Even more specifically, LifeComp proposes, among others, the development of the skill for Quality of Life (P3 Wellbeing) which is defined through a variety of selected descriptors. We need the creation of relationships with others in an atmosphere of trust, respect and

sustainable relationships. These, among other things, are the aim of educational systems and media, in formal, informal and non-formal learning.

The Life Skills for Europe (LSE) project consortium, including the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA), is also in line with the recognition of the development of the individual and their abilities:

- Understanding how democracy works in practice
- How to participate in democratic processes and be engaged in communities
- Understanding and respecting religious and cultural differences.

In this LSE Framework, the consortium provides practical benchmarks so that the modern citizen can assess whether and to what extent they are fulfilling their potential and responsibility to be active and participate in public life. Here the depiction of the democratic conscience is described using the term active citizenship and participation. It points out "…. how learners may be supported to develop their capability at different levels (...) and at the same time, develop these skills for different purposes and in different contexts - concerning their personal empowerment; in their relationships with others, including family, friends and their local community; and through wider engagement as an active citizen."[19]

With the objectives of an Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and the Global Citizenship Education (GCED), we see a strategic area of UNESCO's education sector programme that builds on the work of peace and human rights education. It aims to instil in learners the values, attitudes and behaviours that support responsible global citizenship: creativity, innovation, and commitment to peace, human rights and sustainable development. By 2030 the GCED aims to ensure "… all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of cultures contribution to sustainable development." (Goal 4.7)

3.2. Democratic education

Democracy requires the self-confidence of citizens and trust in their ability to shape the world, which can neither be guided by (systemic) automatisms of any kind nor by the "rational" self-interested (consumer) decision if it is to remain democratic. It needs equality and recognition, criticality or knowledge about possibilities of contradiction and alternatives, or possibilities of participation and institutional ways. Awareness of the fact that not all

people have the same needs and demands, the capacity to discuss these, and knowledge that the ability to compromise must be tested and learned again and again. Democracy requires comprehensive competencies and skills of citizens.

To develop democracy, adult education is needed that not only understands education as knowledge to be absorbed (or taught), for example, aimed at solving the problems of (youth) employment or improving eating habits in a prescriptive manner. Education is needed as part of the path and practice of searching for solutions that are not a foregone conclusion and that are characterised by opposing opinions. It needs the production of knowledge that strives to be in the interest of all and towards prosperous and sustainable social development.

Democratic education is not to be understood as merely memorising abstract knowledge and predefined norms but must have close contact with the everyday life of those participating. They should be encouraged to engage in lifelong learning and independent thinking from their own everyday experience and by solving problems together (cf. Dewey 2008). Freire formulates this as follows: "In problem-solving education, people develop the power to critically understand the way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves. They learn to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation." (cf. Freire 1971, 88) Democracy presupposes a critical consciousness, namely the possibility to understand one's world and the self-confidence to be able to change it. Knowledge about democracy, its history, and the struggle for participation is important (cf. DeMOOC), yet knowledge about democratic institutions alone is not necessarily democratic education. As it is, education in institutions that are not democratic themselves does not meet the requirements of democratic education and the requirement to test democracy in democratic action. To do so, democracy requires democratic experiences, as democratic learning is social learning, learning for society and oneself. Democratic learning is voluntary learning, learning out of curiosity, and learning conflict skills and critical consciousness.

Democratic education presupposes free access to knowledge and means turning away from expertocracy and knowledge monopolies while promoting trust in society without enforcing it through enforcing critical citizenship and enabling opinion and participation. Democratic education is based on the notion of a world and future that can be shaped by the people, as

this world and this future ought to be multifaceted and extend beyond educational institutions and into the workplace, administration, and everyday life.

The Future of Europe

In addition to the freedom of speech, press, assembly and association, the right of resistance of these rights being endangered will be established.

Democracy education will be fully oriented toward the upholding and implementation of these rights.

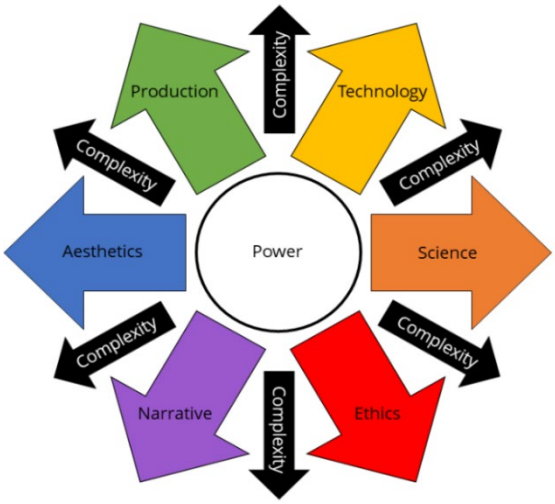
4. Good Practices

In the context of this paper as well as the needs of our Bildung project consortium, we recognize the importance of identifying and sharing existing good practices that promote the very notion of Bildung for Democracy.

To represent the multiple connotations of what Democratic Bildung may include, the Bildung consortium collected over 20 good practices from the partner countries. From these 20 good practices we found three main topics of interest concerning adult education in the concept of Democratic Bildung, namely 1) Improvement of democratic participation, 2) train the trainer databases and material banks, 3) adult learning and education provision and courses.

From the aforementioned categorisation, we agreed to showcase one example that would more evidently highlight the concept of Democratic Bildung, while the chosen three good practices would also represent the spectrum of geographic references of how diverse European Democratic Bildung can be.

To visualize how each of the good practices relates to the concept of Bildung, as we expand on in the first intellectual output of our project "What is Bildung?", we have chosen to include the represented aspects of the Bildung Rose that are met by each of the good practices.



The Bildung Rose, created by Lene Rachel Andersen, 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.

4.1. Improvement of democratic participation | Good practice: Participatory budgets – Catalonia

The participatory budgets allow the direct participation of citizens in the preparation of public budgets, involving them in two different areas. On the one hand, in the reflection of needs, identification of demands and prioritization of budgets, and on the other, in the monitoring of the execution of the budget and therefore in the continued accountability by government teams. The Municipal Budget provides for an item for the neighbourhoods and it was agreed that it would be subject to citizen participation. For this reason, a mixed commission made up of city entities and representatives of municipal political groups, drafted the Regulation of participatory budgets of the neighbourhoods which was finally approved by the Plenary on July 8, 2013, and published in the BOP number 142 of July 24, 2013.

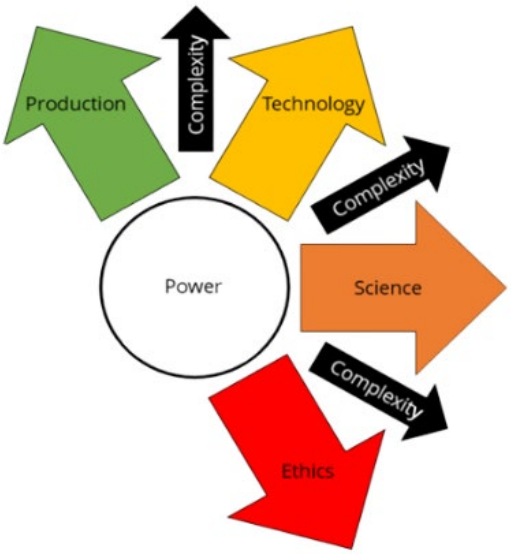
The key role is played by neighbourhood assemblies, which are convened each year by the City Council. The task of the neighbourhood assemblies is to make proposals for the implementation of measures in each neighbourhood and then prioritize five of them according to the amount allocated to each of the 30 neighbourhoods. The neighbourhood meetings are attended by various public agencies, the neighbourhood council, neighbourhood associations and other neighbourhood organizations. The role of the neighbourhood meetings is to present proposals for implementation in each neighbourhood and then prioritize five of them according to the amount allocated to each of the 30 neighbourhoods. These proposals concern matters within the competence of the City Council, they must not exceed the amount allocated to each neighbourhood, and they must be technically executed. It is the responsibility of the Technical and Economic Evaluation Team to review these requirements.

Why is this a good example of the Bildung approach?

Participatory budgeting (PB) is a democratic process in which community members decide how to spend part of a public budget. It gives people real power over real money. PB started in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in 1989, as an anti-poverty measure that helped reduce child mortality by nearly 20%. Since then PB has spread to over 7,000 cities around the world and has been used to decide budgets for states, counties, cities, housing authorities, schools, and other institutions. The New York Times calls PB “revolutionary civics in action” it

deepens democracy, builds stronger communities, and creates a more equitable distribution of public resources.

As we pointed out Education for democracy focuses on democratic processes but also on personal behaviour and individual and collective options for action and change. Education for democracy empowers people to respond to a changing environment, to be able to communicate effectively and to be an agent of development for their benefit as well as for the benefit of the whole. Education for democracy supports people in finding their role as "citizens". Knowledge, skills, communication, reflection and critical thinking are important elements. The individual has to be seen as a part of a collective and also as an element in the process of becoming. Democracy needs the acceptance of the people and is a danger when people feel powerless.



Participatory budgeting supports democratic education in different ways: Learning processes like understanding how democracy works in practice, participation, and respecting differences (…) improve Democracy in our society itself. Likewise, greater involvement of the affected population in decision-making means different perspectives and leads to greater acceptance of political action.

Another aspect concerns the possibility of transferring this model to different levels. On the one hand, there is the fundamental question of how political decisions can be made more participatory at the national, European and global levels and how they can be expanded in this sense. On the other hand, models are worth considering that also address and involve people for whom the current forms of PB are too high-threshold. Here, educational organizations or educational measures that have smaller budgets for the participants in their course areas could take on a pioneering role. Participants could be actively involved in this sense - for example in the decision about excursions, and procurement of teaching material. Conversely, "PB" in this sense could also be a criterion for tenders and project calls.

Name	Organisation	Place and Time
Participatory budgets (Girona)	Associació Catalana Per A L'Educacio la Formació I la Recerca. ACEFIR, Catalan Association for Education, Training and Research,	Ongoing, based in Girona.
More Information	**Contact Information**	**Other Projects of Interest**
http://acefir.cat	Anna Delort bildung@acefir.cat	Village Discourse (DE), Citizen Participation (NL), Athens Housing Collective (GR)

4.2. Train the trainer databases and material banks | Good practice: Epic Light – Finland

Epic Light publishes media content (podcasts, video & radio productions, magazines, and social media) created by young adults facing different challenges in their lives. All the activities are done in peer groups. Epic Light aims to motivate and empower both the creators and the audience. Each person can usually be active for about one to two years. The time limitation allows the opportunity for as many people as possible to participate.

The People of Epic Light, as mentioned in their annual report of actions, are "experts by experience" that advocate for sexual, mental health, neurological, gender and other scopes of diversity. The people of epic light are acting upon their interest to make media through the learning by doing methodology. A key concept in creating the Epic Light community is peer support and enforcing a reality where everyone is heard and accepted by their peers. This is ensured by the mentality that the group encourages everyone to try new things, together, eliminating stigma.

In 2020, Epic Light published:

- Three Valoa! -magazines. The third one was released as a supplement to Voima-magazine (70 000 copies nationwide).
- World Village Festival radio: We did a festival radio with the organizer, Fingo, despite the in-person festival having been cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Video productions: Artist interviews, promotional videos with/for partner organizations.
- Live stream productions: Several seminars/panels, "Morning TV" for an event held by the Finnish Association of Mental Health
- Podcasts: Over 30 radio programmes, interviews and "experts by experience" stories.

Products are available at: mieletontavaloa.fi/mediaa/

The aforementioned publications are organized through the "Team Work" model design of Epic Light which is standing as follows:

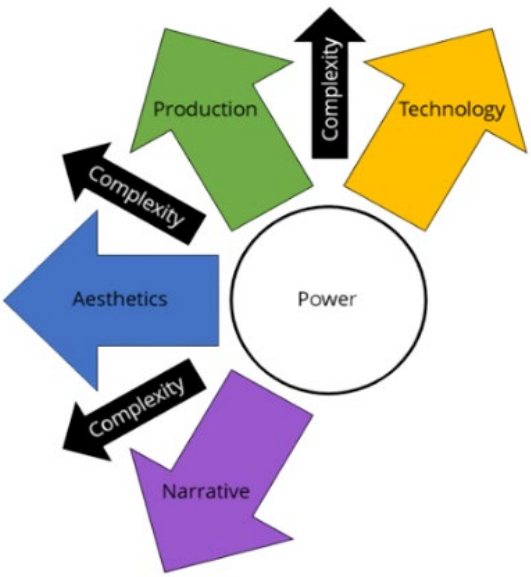
- The work is organized into three teams: Radio, Video, Magazine

- All teams meet weekly
- The teams have a flexible team structure
- The teams focus on production, not on personal challenges

Why is this a good example of the Bildung approach

Epic Light reflects the Bildung approach by empowering the participants. Each person receives the kind of support he or she needs to get their voice heard. Learning new skills and finding ways to participate in discussions empowers participants.

The topics covered are decided and produced by the participants with the support of professional media producers. The project personnel provides the channel, tools and support skills that are needed to get the message through. The participants learn by doing and producing content that is relevant and important to them. This is empowering for the participants in several ways: gaining new skills and knowledge, working with others, and addressing important societal topics. Everybody is included in doing: on one hand no diagnosis is needed, on the other hand, a diagnosis does not limit your participation.



The topics covered handle issues like social exclusion, the difficulties people face when trying to seek therapy, a particular challenge in Finland, and participation in voluntary work.

What is particularly interesting, especially when roaming through the yearly reports of the Epic Light initiative is the fact that there is a “gadfly” concept around most of the results made public. The small scale projects run by the people and groups involved tackle issues of struggle and systemic neglect, including mental health, sexuality, neurodiversity, recovery and others through inquiry that is publicly shared.

The Epic Light initiative manages to get the word out and remain strongly influential in the public sphere, empowering and including the voice and engagement of the community by not only sharing

publicly the media produced but also through meeting with “all kinds of people” as mentioned in their statements, including:

- Influencers - politicians, media personas, artists
- Professionals - abrupt issues, NGO workers
- Peer experts- recovery, ability, health (system) experiences
- Marginalised artists - mainly musicians (they also raise their music to the Epic Light radio playlists etc)
- Peers – experts by experience

Name	Organisation	Place and Time
Epic Light	Sosped Foundation. Sosped Foundation is a non-governmental welfare organization operating in the social and health sector in Finland.	Ongoing, based in Helsinki.
More Information	**Contact Information**	**Other Projects of Interest**
https://xn--mieletntvaloa-ifb1y.fi/english/	Jouni Tamminen jouni.tamminen@sosped.fi Saija Salonen saija.salonen@sosped.fi	Democracy MOOC (AT), Making of Citizens (GR), Green Agents of Change (DK)

4.3. ALE education provision and courses | Good practice A: Village University – Estonia Children with Lower Level of Education (EST)

The aim of "Kodukant"[1] ('Home Place') is to encourage broad-based, legally constituted village organisations, which can stimulate and co-ordinate activities in their locality. Kodukant engages in mobilising local communities, encouraging them to become more organised. About 400 villages have so far taken up the challenge of establishing their own registered village association, though there are many more informal associations. Kodukant has promoted a bottom-up approach to the creation and work of these village associations or societies. Their view is that village societies are set up by the free will of each village; related to the area that they choose; and owned and managed by the village people.

The two-year project aimed to increase the awareness and information of the villagers of Järva County, support their coping in critical and unusual situations, and promote cooperation, mutual communication, and networking. Middle-aged people living in rural areas were seen as the most important target group, as in addition to issues related to themselves, they are also seriously affected by issues that arise with children and parents. Be it daily family budget and sustainable management, raising children, dealing with children with special needs, communicating with relatives and traditional issues, arranging care for an elderly parent, or tidying up your home and village, making it beautiful. How to find the right information or help when an unusual situation has arrived, when there is a desire to improve the environment for oneself and loved ones?

The project was tailor-made. All themes came up from the discussions with potential participants. The main themes were: Culture, legislation, economy, social life. Sub-topics cover these central themes.

The principle was to bring learning as close as possible to learners, therefore organising the courses all over the county, in different village houses.

A learning day took place which was divided into two parts, theory and practice. For example, what social services the municipality offer and how the people can apply the service (write application etc.). The "hidden" curriculum was to bring village people together, and during learning activities they discussed local challenges and how to make life better. The chosen place was also meaningful as the village house is the place where people can come and meet other people outside the learning activities.

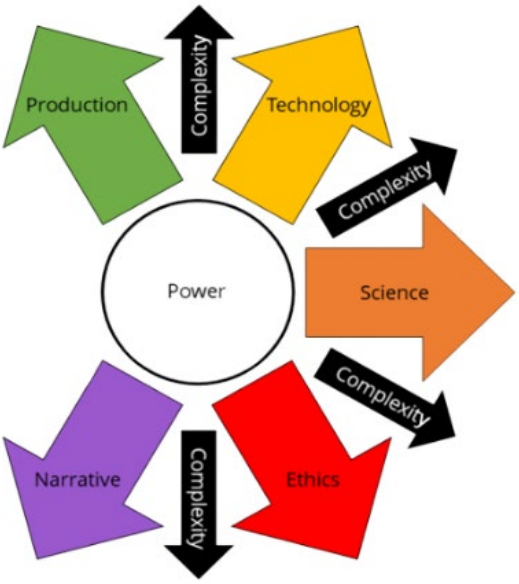
[1] https://kodukant.ee/en/

At the end of the project, all participants (85 people from different villages) took a study trip to another county to see the networking activities. This trip was called “JJourney of ideas“.

Why is this a good example of the Bildung approach

This project is simply set up and very effective in terms of villagers' involvement and empowerment.

Bildung is based on the acquisition of knowledge. Therefore, in our understanding of BILDUNG, it is also essential that access to knowledge must be made possible for all interested parties. Especially in rural areas, it is sometimes not easy to get the necessary access to knowledge. Therefore, it is important that Bildung is brought to the people so that they can also engage in educational processes. Because the topics come from the people themselves in a bottom-up approach, there is also a guarantee that they will be highly motivated to acquire knowledge. The project undoubtedly



People shape the development in their villages and they also take responsibility for it. Access is provided through topics that are relevant to the people in the village, and practical and theoretical information is provided on these topics. In educational settings such as courses and study circles, people also discuss the challenges and how they can make life better for themselves and everyone else.

The possibility of transferring such a project is interesting. Since the starting point with information and knowledge acquisition is a relatively easy one, such a project can in principle be implemented in other villages in Europe and beyond. The decisive factor will be the acceptance of the facilitators who moderate the processes.

In any case, this approach corresponds to an understanding of Bildung that is not designed for the people but with the people and at the same time supports not only the acquisition of knowledge but also its implementation in concrete actions.

Name	Organisation	Place and Time
Villages University	Village Movement "Kodukant" in Järva County and local NGO Eureka.	
More Information	**Contact Information**	**Other Projects of Interest**
https://kodukant.ee/en/	Kodukant kodukant@kodukant.ee	Citizens University (GR), Cohesion in Society Suppert (DE), Active and Democratic Citizenship (ADEKA) (FIN), Training for Parents of Young Children with Lower Level of Education (EST)

4.4. Adult education provision and courses | good practice B: Autonome Schule Zurich (ASZ)- Switzerland

The ASZ is a self-organised school. The school provides education for everyone and is mainly frequented by asylum seekers and sans-paper. In the open building, German courses, mathematics, informatics and many other courses are offered by volunteers. There's also a café where people meet and get to know each other.

Autonomous means independent and also self-organized. The ASZ is collective and independent of the government. Everyone involved in the ASZ comes voluntarily. Important decisions are made once a month in a plenary meeting. Whether volunteer teacher or participant, everyone is valued equally in decision-making. There are working groups for various duties and tasks. Everyone is responsible for creating the school in a collective, positive way.

The ASZ fills a gap in the education system by ensuring access to education for all. The approach of self-organization can empower people (even outside of school) to become part of the community. It contributes to democratization by including people who are otherwise excluded from society and empowering them to be part of the Online Community.

In the ASZ everyone is welcome as the school is open to everyone and thus addresses in particular people who are otherwise excluded from the Swiss education system. The ASZ collects donations from private persons and organizations. The ASZ has decided to accept the Charter of Lampedusa as its political program.

The Charter of Lampedusa was written between 31st January and 2nd February 2014 during a meeting that gathered various organisations, NGOs, groups and individuals.

The Charter is not intended as a draft law, legislative proposal or as a petition to governments. All the groups and individuals who undersign the Charter of Lampedusa commit to putting it into practice and to defending its principles through their endeavours, in the ways, languages and actions that each of them considers relevant, whether or not the Charter obtains recognition by current state and/or supra-state institutions. These are basic rights that must prevail all over the world.

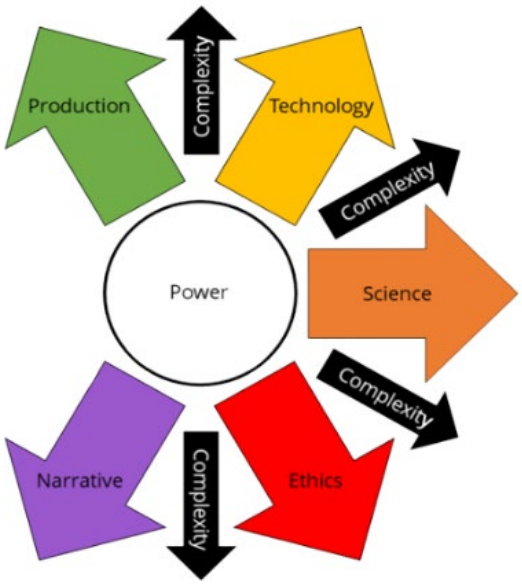
The Charter of Lampedusa requires a radical economic, political, legal and cultural rethinking. Such a U-turn begins with the construction of an alternative vision: freedom and the right to self-determination for all regardless of one's nationality or place of birth/residence.

Why is this a good example of the Bildung approach

Autonomous and grassroots initiatives with a clear political view of adult education are essential and dynamic expressions of the needs of our society, and it is of uttermost importance to realise their important work concerning access for all and reclaiming public spaces.

In this sense, the good practice has been identified due to its being exceptionally holistic and change-oriented (following a transformative approach) as the school is unapologetically a project against racism and injustice. It is a meeting place where everyone can get to know other people and have access to knowledge.

In the courses, the ASZ ensures education for all, fighting against inequality. In the project, the ASZ strengthens democracy by enabling all (regardless of their status) to be part of this project, have a voice and take decisions. The visitors are empowered to take over responsibility. The ASZ is a school that organizes itself and manages itself collectively. It is independent of the state and receives school materials and donations from private individuals and organizations. It accepts money from public institutions as long as its autonomy is respected.



All the people who study and work there are an important part of the school. All students are also teachers, all teachers are also students. There is no hierarchy and everyone's voice is heard.

The work at the ASZ is voluntary and without pay but there is a secretarial position for the organization, to create a notion of accountability and organising.

Important decisions are made together once a month at a general meeting. There are different working groups (AG's) that do different tasks in the school but everyone is responsible for making the school a commonplace.

Finally, at the ASZ you can realize your ideas. We are very happy if you actively participate in a working group (AG), in projects or with your ideas at the ASZ.

Name	Organisation	Place and Time
Autonomous School Zurich (ASZ)	The ASZ is a project of the Swiss assoziation “Bildung für alle” (education for all).	Ongoing, based in Zurich.
More Information	**Contact Information**	**Other Projects of Interest**
https://www.bildung-fuer-alle.ch	Sabin Müller sabin.mueller@alice.ch	El flâneur a la finestra (ES), No labels, no wall (FIN), Study Circle „How to decide wisely“ (EST), ACEFIR Study Circles (ES);

5. Recommendations

5.1. Discussing the future of adult learning and education in the context of Bildung and Democracy | A webinar of the Bildung project

On the 22nd of February 2022, we organised a webinar linked with the topic of "Bildung and Democracy" to discuss the concepts and execution of the second intellectual output of the Bildung project, making comments and providing recommendations. The webinar was coordinated by The Association of Austrian Adult Education Centres (Verband Österreichischer Volkshochschulen, VÖV) and DAFNI KEK Adult Education and Research Center. The participants were introduced to the multifaceted concepts of what our consortium aims to reimagine as the future of Bildung and adult education. They received the short version of the first Intellectual Output of our project "What is Bildung", alongside the first three chapters of second Intellectual Output of our project "Democracy and Bildung" adapting Bildung to the topic of political participation, historically, theoretically and practically.

To cover the multiple levels of activation around re-establishing Bildung and its relation to democratic values the participants of the webinar included policymakers, academics and practitioners that were willing to foster a dialogue around the importance of 'Bildung' for transformative action and civic engagement and what recommendations can be derived from this for policy and educational organisations.

The invited webinar participants were:

- Dirk Lange, Professor for the Didactics of Civic Education at the University of Vienna, Scientific Director of the Democracy Centre Vienna
- Günther Sidl, Member of the European Parliament (S&D), Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, Delegation for Parliamentary Cooperation Committees EU and Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikisztan; Former Member of the parliament of a small commune in Austria and of a Regional Parliament.
- Pia Lichtblau, Programme Manager and trainer at the Training Association of the Austrian Trade Unions

- Alexis Georgoulis: Member of the European Parliament (Syriza), Member of the Culture Committee of the European Parliament, Co-founder of the Friendship Group of Cultural Creators of the EP and
- Anastasia Pentagioti: Communication and Policy Officer of the MEP Alexis Georgoulis | Special Advisor for Sustainable Development Issues of the EP
- Dr Apostolia (Lia) Galani: Associate Professor in Didactics of Geography | National & Kapodistrian University of Athens, Department of Pedagogy and Primary Education
- Vasiliki Kaisa: Adult Educator and Life & Work Counsellor, NGO Anadisis

Due to some urgent commitments, Mr Günther Sidl (MEP) could not synchronously attend the webinar but provided thorough and targeted feedback on the received material, while Dr Dirk Lange had to be absent, but his valuable academic insight was replaced by his prepositioned colleague and peer, Dr Werner Beuter, Professor for the Didactics of Civic Education at the University of Hanover.

The webinar was moderated by Gerhard Bisovsky (VOEV) and Angeliki Giannakopoulou (DAFNI KEK).

At the start of the meeting, VOEV and DAFNI KEK presented the project and their organisations through the lens of their local and international relationships with Bildung, highlighting the difference between reimagining Bildung in a speaking country where Bildung is linked with multiple existing connotations, meanings and histories, versus a Greek-speaking country where Bildung could be perceived as an opportunity to conceptualise education and learning contexts from the beginning.

The participants' input started with the comments of Alexis Georgoulis (MEP) and his associate Anastasia Pentagioti with a focus on the relationship between an inclusive and democratic Bildung that pays attention to and promotes Art and Culture, Sustainability and Environment as key pillars of active citizenship.

"The recognition of pluralism and diversity, the promotion of creativity as an opportunity for progress and development, the knowledge we acquire as citizens through aesthetics, ethics and science are culture, our culture and the foundation of a democratic society."

-Alexis Georgoulis

"…we'll take your work – your exceptional work – as a promise that civil society and policymakers, we will all continue to work together for the best of our societies, having a common vision, quality education as a tool to sustainable development that leaves no one behind…"

-Anastasia Pentagioti

Their statements were followed by that of the two academic participants Dr Werner Beuter and Dr Apostolia (Lia) Galani. Dr Lange raised the issue of how there is a chance through the Project outputs to reclaim the word of Bildung and include people that have been demotivated by providing open access to all levels of participation in adult and democratic education. Dr Galani additionally recognized a great chance to more openly consider science orientation as part of Democratic Bildung as it may open a new horizon on how we and our communities understand the world around us equally informed and how that builds on the concept of the importance of multiple literacies for engaged citizens.

"Emancipation, co-creation and possibly also the aesthetic artistic experience are the points which there must be actions and experiences for the adult learner"

-Dr. Werner Beuter

"From definition both literacy and Bildung are strongly connected to democratic processes and the potential of democratic intervention and change, as both stress the idea to empower people through how not only the knowledge but also the confrontation is crucial for the consolidation of democratic self-conception."

-Dr. Apostolia (Lia) Galani

The participants' statements were finalized by the contributions of the adult education practitioners Pia Lichtblau and Vasiliki Kaisa. Pia Lichtblau saw great premise in how the concept of Bildung can encapsulate multiple initiatives that adult education practitioners already follow, and how theories such as the Concept of Bildung can multiply the valuable results that participatory educational methods have in a democratic society. Finally, Vasiliki Kaisa made a case on the impact of perceiving adult education and Bildung as a concept that extends from knowledge to employability, to empowerment to actual political participation and power to the less represented and recognized parts of the society.

" I think to foster democracy it is necessary to enable people to collaborate and cooperate with others. And it's also crucial to foster this ability of reflection and self-reflection and critical thinking [...] and also the ability to step in someone else's shoes."

-Pia Lichtblau

"Successful democratic Bildung should support people to find their own role as citizens."

-Vasiliki Kaisa

5.2. Our list of recommendations

To reimagine and reestablish a society that encompasses all concepts included in the context of Bildung and Democracy, change and activation are essential on multiple levels. For this reason, below we construct our input and recommendations towards the macro, meso and micro levels of influence towards ALE.

5.3. Macro-level: Policy level, civil society, community

Structures, Financing, European level, Society

The "macro-level" - which deals with the policy level, civil society etc. – can concern settings that impart knowledge about the basic structures of politics and society. Understanding democratic rights and especially the ability to apply them and to intervene, resist and change means a special high demand at this level. This must be embedded in an appropriate context within the framework of "democracy education", which leaves room for visions, but also a realistic assessment of power issues and inequalities.

Democracy has to be learnt. ALE represents the longest phase of education in a person's lifespan and thus ALE is a major pillar to empower Democratic Participation. Political structures should not overlook the said role and should at all times support and finance ALE initiatives.

Bildung is a right for all. Every person independent of gender, class, race and socioeconomic context should have access to Bildung over the whole lifespan of their lives. Frameworks and Rights that facilitate this notion should be of maximum priority.

Transnational cooperation is essential for a unified Europe. European projects are an important contribution to a peaceful and democratic Europe and consist of a concrete international praxis that enhances solidarity in action, and as such should be further

promoted and the results of transnational cooperations (e.g Erasmus+ Programme) should be heard and seen.

5.4. Meso-level: Educational institutions

Community-level, community education

The "meso level" - community-level - means the approach to democracy education dealing and interacting with one's local environment. For adult education organizations, this is at the same time often their very own field of activity, in which diverse opportunities arise for their relevant positioning in terms of democracy policy. This could include projects and examples as providers of democracy education, supporters of engagement, moderators of networks, but also as service providers towards politics or civil society associations.

The power of the community is immeasurable. ALE is based on a community approach and creates links between culture, education and democratic participation. As such it is important to build strong communities that are sustainable and strong.

Adult education must aid in defining our roles as citizens. The development of initiatives at a local and European level that promote learner-centred and participatory approaches, and that enhance the role of adult learners in decision making and retain adults' motivation to participate in democratic processes, must be understood.

How democratic are the adult education organisations? We must have organisations and we have structures that are developed not only looking at the content and the method but also more on the direction of thought and the context, where and for whom.

5.5. Micro-level: Course level, train-the-trainers, learners

The micro-level focuses on the course itself, the content and methods taught and applied by the trainers and the needs of the learners. Of particular importance here is a participatory understanding and activating methods and especially an approach to the topic that connects to the reality of the life of the participants. This includes in particular the acceptance of different individual interests and different personal needs for democratic education and also the different willingness of participants to get involved in political processes.

Democratic Education should consider individual interests and needs. The educators alongside the learners should make sure to co-decide on the kind of the premise of the classroom, to fit their needs and interests.

Focus on Democratic Education with people that are excluded from systemic democratic processes is essential to claim the right for the participation of all.

Practice Democracy in the classroom. Highlight the importance of creating a social contract in the learning setting and realize the interdisciplinary nature of Democratic Education.

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