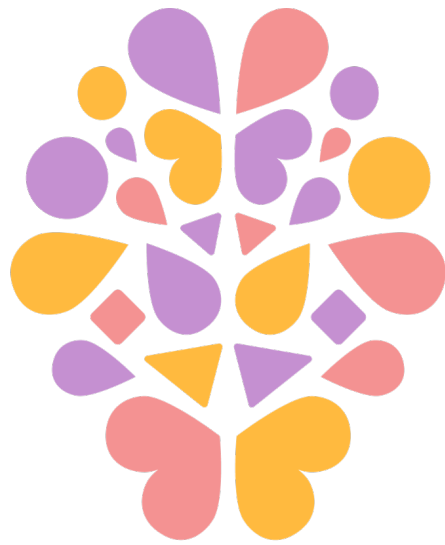


Digitalisation and Bildung

Digitalisation and Bildung – a Concept



BILDUNG



1. Applying Bildung to Digital Transformation

The ever-expanding digital transformation is shaping more and more areas of life in our modern society. We must learn to cope with these growing opportunities and challenges. In this paper digitalisation and digital transformation are embedded in the concept of Bildung with a critical thinking perspective, which consists of four key pillars, namely transferable knowledge, non-transferable knowledge, sense of responsibility, and civic engagement.

- **Transferable knowledge:** Digitalisation and digital transformation significantly increase the availability and accessibility of transferable knowledge, reaching new target groups. However, the application of digital tools and spaces comes with the danger of excluding disadvantaged groups, who may lack digitally competences.
- **Non-transferable knowledge:** By first sight, digital media seem to have great limitations to convey non-transferable knowledge because digital means do not allow the same direct interaction like in person communication, lacking some emotional connection. However, digital transformation also provides opportunities to use new and innovative approaches to address the emotional side of the target group, which may reach the audience in unprecedented ways, potentially dealing with many aspects of society.
- **Sense of Responsibility:** The third pillar of the Bildung concept poses the challenge to move from knowledge, to a deeper comprehension of societal shortcomings, resulting in the readiness to take responsibility to contribute to the betterment of society. Digitalisation and digital transformation have the inherent potential to appeal to the responsibility of people and to generate the readiness to become active.
- **Civic Empowerment:** This takes us to the last pillar of the Bildung concept, as the growing sense of responsibility combined with the new possibilities of digital transformation have the potential to lead to new ways of civic empowerment, namely communicating across space, learning with and from each other, sharing and understanding the challenges of our societies and taking responsibility by developing digital activism itself and civic engagement together.

After all, the current digital transformation is in the process of changing our entire society, including the emergence of digital worlds in which people can meet virtually. This is accompanied by very concrete challenges for adult education such as the digital divide, accessibility to specific tools or the internet, and new ways of manipulating the individual and public opinion. It is critical to note that individual private companies use algorithms to examine the behaviours of digital users and feed them with information corresponding to their previous digital behaviour; this means that companies can take influence in trends, societal developments, consumer behaviour and world views.

The Bildung concept invites us to look at these far-reaching social developments not only from the perspective of individual "silos", but to bring together the various social areas such as political power, science or economy, linked with questions of aesthetics and morality, and thus take a critical and holistic perspective on these changes.





2. Best practice examples

Three best practice examples illustrate the linking of digitalisation and digital transformation with approaches of the Bildung concept.

Digital Village (Austria): The project gives residents of municipal buildings low-threshold opportunities to learn about digital tools and pose very practical questions about the use of smartphone apps, the creation of secure passwords for online shopping etc. The project focusses on transferable knowledge through gaining a better knowledge to deal with digital technology. But this community learning approach also considers non-transferable knowledge as the participants are approached in their community and gain the positive feeling of broadening their horizons. The overarching goal of the project is to increase people's chances of participation through expanding their digital skills; civic engagement may be fostered but is not the primary purpose of this project.

My Blossom Channel(Ireland): This Personal Empowerment Programme provides skills-based training and support for young people with intellectual disabilities (ID) between the ages of 15 and 20. Blossom Ireland's programmes align well with the Bildung principles as they are holistic and aim to instil a sense of social responsibility. Throughout the courses there are opportunities to learn new skills around self-regulation and expression of emotion and opinions. The young people learn that their opinions are powerful and that they can make a change – to their immediate environment and also to the world.

Media Literacy in Palestine (Finland and Palestine): This media literacy programme strengthens Palestinian civil society organisations through developing critical media literacy and producing teaching materials to enlighten other people. In addition, the programme promotes the right of the people in the region to information. The programme broadens one's awareness and makes people understand the challenges of digital media. Finally, the programme intends to encourage the participants of the programme to engage actively in society and make a change to a broader public in terms of understanding and using digital media.

3. Recommendations

The concept paper also includes **recommendations** for policymakers and stakeholders setting the frame for adult education institutions and for practitioners.

3.1. Macro-level

Recommendations at the **macro level** (policymakers, politicians, decision-makers etc.) aim at strengthening the conditions for the integration of the Bildung concept and the use of digital media in adult learning and education.

- Companies should be forced to disclose how their algorithms operate to secure safety; demystification of the digital world; appropriate financing options must be available; digital media should be a basic right for all members of society; transparent fact-checking on news information should be a general requirement.



3.2. Meso-level

The aim of recommendations at the **meso level** is to strengthen adult education institutions and to formulate recommendations which support the integration of digital approaches and the Bildung concept into the practical work of adult learning and education.

- The organisation's everyday work should include digital means and methods; training and/or peer learning opportunities for staff should be part of the organisation's culture; using the Bildung approach to digitalisation, its values and critiques should be added to curricula; learners should have access to and benefit from digital learning and education; exacerbating the digital divide amongst the learners should be avoided.

3.3. Micro-level

Recommendations at the **micro level** aim at practitioners, such as trainers, trainers of trainers, and learners.

- Focus on learners' needs; technology changes rapidly, changes must be done step by step; spaces should be created for learners to give them a voice in their learning environments; practitioners will act upon the feedback to create favourable outcomes; awarenessraising activities should be carried out; digitalisation should follow pedagogical concepts.

