

# Digitalisation 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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Other partners of the Bildung project:





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## The Bildung project

The Bildung project contributes to the innovation of the European adult education 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 have to rethink the role and concepts of Adult Learning and Education (ALE). 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 this concept for the ALE sector in the fields of digitalisation, sustainability, democracy 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

## Partnership

The Bildung project is a collaboration of 11 european organisation dedicated to support 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 \(SVEB\)](#)



# 1. Conceptual framework: Definition and short analysis of the topic

## 1.1. Definition of terms

The terms "digitisation", "digitalisation", and "digital transformation" are often used interchangeably, but this is incorrect and also misleading. For this reason, the terms must first be clearly defined. Having defined these terms more clearly, the next step is to relate digital transformation to the concept of Bildung.

**Digitisation** is the process of converting information from a physical format to a digital one. It means converting something non-digital into a digital representation to be used by computer systems and automating processes or workflows.<sup>1</sup>

**Digitalisation** means making digitised information work for you. This term refers to the use of digital technologies and data to simplify processes, handle large quantities of information and be able to act faster based on information that is available due to digital means. These improved process operations create revenue and improve institutional procedures. It converts processes to be more efficient, productive, and profitable. Digitalisation is an ongoing transitional process consisting of the widespread implementation of digital technologies in all areas of society.<sup>2</sup>

**Digital Transformation** is not only a technical process but also an economic and social one. It involves both digitalisation and the networking of products, processes and services. Transformation is not only the improvement but also the redesign of products, processes and services.<sup>3</sup>

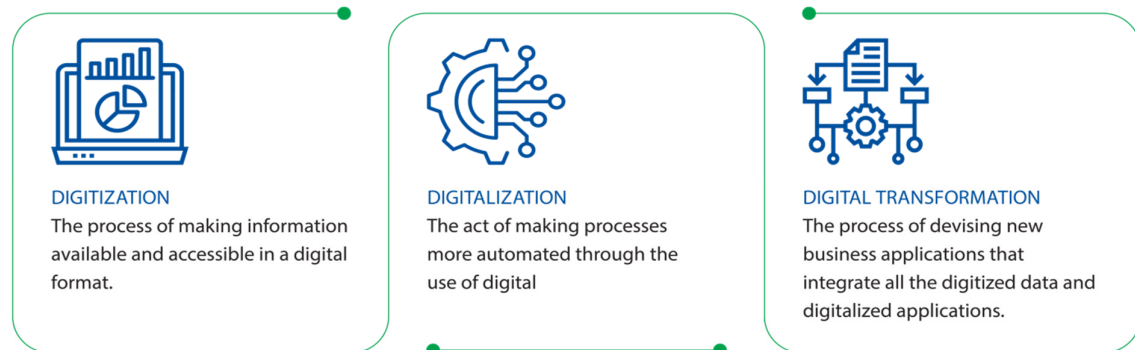


Chart: <https://www.yokogawa.com/library/resources/white-papers/the-differences-between-digitization-digitalization-and-digital-transformation-in-manufacturing/>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.digar.ee/arhiiv/et/periodika?id=3421>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.opiq.ee/Search/Kits>

<sup>3</sup> (Peter<sup>[1]</sup>, 2017, p. 13)







#### 1.1.1. Digital transformation

Digital transformation is developing at an incredible pace and will influence, if not transform all areas of life in modern societies.

**"The digital transformation also encompasses all areas of organisational activity. In this process, communication, teaching and learning culture, programme and offer planning and much more are changing. Due to the increasing amount of data and easier access to data, the expectation for individualised offers will increase. For providers, this can be a challenge both in marketing and communication, but also at the system level; doing business with data can lead to stronger monopolies (like XING or LinkedIn). This may require intensive networking, cooperation and collaboration among the small providers and, at best, create pressure for specialisation. Digital transformation calls for strategic organisational development toward agile learning institutions. A conscious redesign is also fundamental in continuing education".<sup>4</sup>**

Digital transformation is shaping more and more areas of life in our modern society, resulting in both opportunities and challenges. Digital transformation opens up unprecedented possibilities and influences our everyday behaviour in very concrete ways. In addition to the individual level, this continues at the group or community level and affects our working world as well as society as a whole. In addition to significant new possibilities, there are also completely novel and threatening challenges that we have to deal with.

The aim of the Bildung project is to examine digitalisation and digital transformation in education in more detail. It aims to use the potential of digitalisation to create more holistic view on ed whilst also critically reflecting on the digital transformation and its effects on all areas of life in modern societies. In the coming sections, the concept of Bildung, will be introduced and put into context of digitalisation and digital transformation. Based on this contextualisation, the paper will finally provide policy recommendations on how to better make the Bildung concept in a digital frame.

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<sup>4</sup> (Schmidt-Hertha et al. [\[2\]](#), 2020, pp. 133-134)

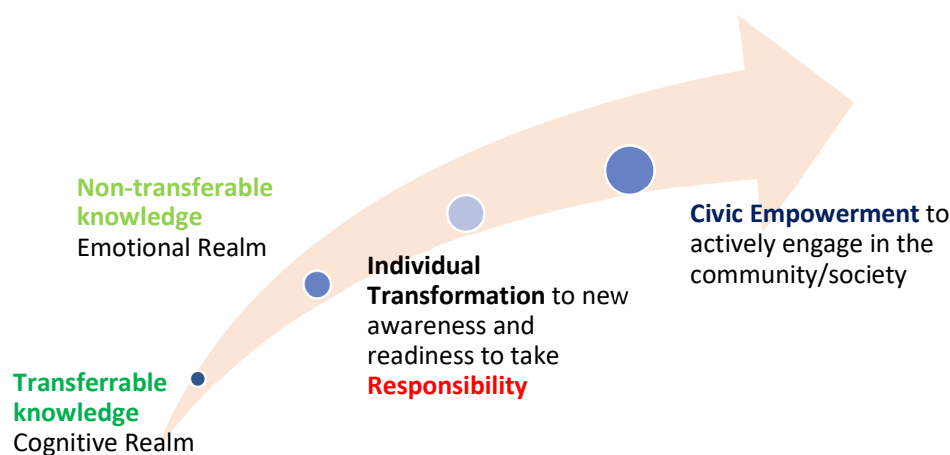


### 1.1.2. The concept of Bildung

The concept of Bildung is based on the cornerstones of transferable and non-transferable knowledge.

Transferable knowledge is the usual form of knowledge transfer: the teacher transfers the knowledge, and the learner expands his/her comprehension. Non-transferable knowledge involves the realm of emotions, which is of fundamental importance to a holistic concept of education and significantly enhances the learning experience. The successful application of transferable and non-transferable knowledge leads to the third pillar in the Bildung concept, namely the recognition of societal challenges. Not only the recognition of these challenges but also completing the transformation towards the willingness to take responsibility in the context of these challenges.

To achieve the transformational aim of Bildung, the comprehension of societal challenges and the readiness to take responsibility lead to the fourth pillar, namely civic empowerment. This means that the learner feels equipped and motivated to engage as a citizen, with the overall aim of contributing to the improvement of social living conditions.



A much more detailed view and discussion of the concept of Bildung can be found in our first publication, “What is Bildung”, which can be accessed on the project website<sup>5</sup>.

### 1.1.3. Digital transformation as means or topic

Digitalisation is transforming all facets of society, and in terms of educational contexts, this transformation is occurring with or without strategic initiatives that ensure the ongoing quality of teaching and learning environments. The transformative potential of digitalisation in education presents many opportunities and challenges, given new trends and developments.

Digital transformation is about applying technology to existing learning environments and providing both opportunities and challenges.

One of the goals of the Bildung project is to link the potential, as well as the challenges and risks, of digitalisation and digital transformation with the concept of Bildung.

Digitalisation and digital transformation can be one of two following things:

<sup>5</sup> <https://eaea.org/project/Bildung/?pid=15007>



1. **A means of knowledge transfer** – How can digitalisation be used as a medium to realise the transformational approach of Bildung towards civil engagement?
2. **A subject of Bildung** –What potential does digitalisation harbour, but also what dangers and risks are there? Here, civil engagement could lead to concrete activities in the digital world.

The following section will focus on applying digitalisation and digital transformation, both as a means of communication and as a subject in its own right, to the concept of Bildung.



## 2. Applying Bildung to Digitalisation / Digital Transformation

This section aims to embed the broad, and not easily grasped, the topic of digital transformation with all its processes of social change into the concept of Bildung. It also aims to illustrate this linkage with good examples to subsequently give recommendations for broad implementation.

### 2.1. Transferable knowledge in digitalisation

The first pillar of the Bildung concept is based on the concept of **transferable knowledge**. What knowledge can we acquire and impart to others, and how? Digitalisation significantly increases the availability and accessibility of transferable knowledge when we consider that we can share learning videos, online learning games, or discussion groups with digital means almost worldwide with people in completely different time zones and living environments. The concept of Bildung refers to the fact that society consists of different areas such as technology, science or the economic world, and that these areas should not be understood in isolation from each other. Rather, they intertwine and encompass aspects such as ethics and values, aesthetics, morality, or even higher-level narratives.

The transfer of knowledge is, therefore on the one hand, about being aware of the new possibilities that arise through digitalisation and being able to use them. But it is also about viewing them in the larger social context, depending on the target group. When transferring knowledge through digital media, or when reflecting on digital transformation itself, interdisciplinary connections must be considered in addition to the pure knowledge content, as well as the forms of communication and the implicit effects on the respective target group. Moreover, it has to be borne in mind that digital transformation implies a highly discriminating potential in terms of excluding groups that have neither the means nor the technical environment nor the skills to keep track of the rapidly evolving digital innovations. Bringing with it the danger of excluding disadvantaged groups.

### 2.2. Non-transferable knowledge in digitalisation

Transferable knowledge is consciously or also unconsciously supplemented by **non-transferable** aspects or, in other words, aspects that also appeal to the emotions. When we communicate - and this is especially true for digital media once again - it is not only the cognitive level of pure knowledge and pure factual content that has to be taken into account, but emotions must also be considered. In terms of the educational concept, it is even desirable to specifically include artistic elements in the imparting of knowledge in order to link knowledge with a (positive) emotional feeling and thus make the learning experience more holistic and sustainable. The art of good knowledge transfer, especially in the digital world, is to successfully address the emotional side that is not directly touched by the transfer and thus support a transformative process by taking this holistic approach to education. In the physical world around us, art, in particular, offers many opportunities to engage our emotions and thus sets certain personal development processes in motion. Digital media seem to be subject to greater limitations here at first glance, but they also offer other new possibilities, which can and should address various domains of society in a positive sense.

However, in spite of the potential advantages, the challenges of digital transformation must not be ignored. For example, there is the danger that digital media replace social connections and promote addictions such as computer games; the digital space creates a kind of substitute reality that virtually



removes us from the real world. It should also be mentioned that the digital space allows for a high degree of anonymity, which can lead to inappropriate or insulting forms of communication with corresponding consequences for the victims; here, in addition to the technical level of how individuals can be protected and perpetrators held accountable, the question of morality in the sense of the holistic Bildung approach must be considered.

### 2.3. Take over responsibility in digitalisation

The transfer of knowledge through transferable as well as non-transferable components ideally sets in motion a process of **critical reflection** toward personal development and **responsibility** for others. In the narrowest sense, we are initially only responsible for our own actions and must take this into account in our way of life. In addition to our own person, we mostly feel responsible for the people in our immediate environment. First of all, there is the family and the individual family members for whom we feel responsible. But in most cases, the radius of responsibility extends even further because we also feel responsible for others in our environment, be it for members of groups to which we belong (friends, colleagues) or the larger environment of people living in our neighbourhood.

But responsibility can also go beyond our own limited context and refer to a region or a country to which we feel committed and for which we are willing to take responsibility, all the way to the society in which we live and even a sense of responsibility for humanity as a whole. The level of abstraction is ever-increasing and yet can be very direct and concrete for our own sense of responsibility towards our world. Digitalisation and digital transformation can concretely contribute to this development of a sense of responsibility and morality for other people and abstract issues that exist beyond our immediate environment. Digital transformation in connection with Bildung thus has the potential to work towards the development of a sense of responsibility in the wider social environment. Or, if digital transformation is to be understood as a separate topic to be critically reflected upon, the sense of responsibility for appropriate manners in the digital world or safety of digital media can also be developed here in other people and thus to assume a form of responsibility for them. In this context, digital transformation has particular potential to encourage people to take responsibility for others in an unprecedented manner.

In addition, digital media can reduce and partially replace real mobility. There is agreement that not all interaction between people can be shifted to the digital world, but digital communication can complement real communication and at the same time develop a wider reach. Thus, in terms of reduced mobility, one can speak of a sustainability benefit. However, it must also be taken into account that the large computers and server systems distributed around the world devour huge amounts of energy, which reduces the sustainability bonus. But taken together, a small "sustainability return" can probably be assumed for digital media.

### 2.4. Civic Empowerment in digitalisation

According to the Bildung approach, expanded awareness and a willingness for more responsibility in society can lead to greater **civic engagement**. This is because, with this transformed awareness, we engage with other members or groups of our society where we can make a positive contribution. In this context, the Bildung concept must always take into account that as many, if not all, social aspects are seen in connection with each other so as not to remain confined and trapped in individual social sectors (interdisciplinary approaches as well as aesthetics and values). Digitalisation also offers new opportunities



for exchange, for communicating across space, for learning with and from each other, for sharing and understanding the challenges of our societies (including the challenges of digitalisation itself), for taking responsibility and for developing digital activism itself and civic engagement together. Last but not least, digitalisation can expand outreach to new learning groups, especially to disadvantaged adult learners.

## 2.5. Social Areas to apply the Bildung concept

Bildung, in combination with digital transformation, thus has enormous potential to contribute to the transformation of individuals, but also to bring communities closer together or to support new communities to face the challenges together. However, the Bildung approach should not be limited to individuals or groups but can also be applied to other important areas of society, such as the world of work, where many people spend a significant amount of time. Digitalisation is already contributing to new forms of work, as we can see with the rise of so-called "digital nomads". The location-based nature of work can be removed to a certain extent, and many fields of work as we know them today will experience a profound transformation to the point that many areas of work will become superfluous as digital solutions such as artificial intelligence perform better and more efficient than humans can, while at the same time the boundaries between work and private life are becoming increasingly fluid. Bildung can and must accompany this transformational process in a critical and enlightening way. These changes cannot be prevented, but it is up to the professionals themselves to recognise, accompany and perhaps also - as far as possible - shape this process so that the focus is not exclusively on economic gain but also on other important aspects of living together, such as care and responsibility for each other.

After all, the digital transformation is already 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 losing some parts of non-transferable knowledge. It is critical to note that individual private companies have a great deal of market power and thus have an enormous influence on trends, 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 and even the economy, linked with questions of aesthetics and morality, thereby drawing a holistic picture of these changes.



### 3. Relationship to other European concepts in the sector

The importance of digitalisation in various areas of society has changed rapidly in recent years, acquiring an increasing role in our lives. The link between digitalisation and education is significant, as reflected in various projects and educational policy documents, including adult education. The learning landscape changed during the pandemic, making the digitalisation of education an irreversible process.

#### 3.1. Global level

UNESCO gives the theme a broader geographical perspective, recognising a very holistic concept of education in their newly published (2021) "New social contract of education"<sup>6</sup>. UNESCO calls for the expansion of enjoyable and enriching educational opportunities throughout life and in different cultural and social spaces. Digitalisation and digital learning worlds are given special attention in the document: "While we defend schools as a unique space-time for education, we must also extend our vision to all spaces and times of life."<sup>7</sup>

The task will be finding long-term solutions to problems like 'fake news' and the crisis of faith in science and in public institutions. This requires informed, collective engagement with truth, expertise and the democratisation of knowledge curation. As UNESCO phrased it- "The continued development of digital technologies in education in directions guided by sustainability, justice, and inclusion will require action from governments, support from civil society, and a broad public commitment to treating education not as an arena for profiteering but as a space for public investment in sustainable, just, and peaceful futures."<sup>8</sup>

UNESCO also responds to challenges such as human rights violations, inequality and poverty, which still threaten peace and sustainability in the world, with the **Global Citizenship Education (GCED)**<sup>9</sup> programme. It works by empowering learners of all ages to understand that these are global, not local, issues and to become active promoters of more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable societies. GCED is a strategic area of UNESCO's Education Sector programme and 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.

#### 3.2. European level

Digital competence was among eight key competencies defined in the **European Reference Framework of Key Competences for Lifelong Learning in 2006**<sup>10</sup>. The document stressed the importance of digital skills. Such skills were deemed essential to basic needs for work and the personal lives of all adults.

<sup>6</sup> <https://uil.unesco.org/lifelong-learning/new-social-contract-education>

<sup>7</sup> <https://uil.unesco.org/lifelong-learning/new-social-contract-education> (p 107)

<sup>8</sup> UNESCO, 2021. Reimagining our futures together – A new social contract for education, S.107-115 (p. 114/115)

<sup>9</sup> <https://en.unesco.org/themes/gced>

<sup>10</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32006H0962>

In 2018 European Commission published the Proposal for Council Recommendation on Key Competencies for Lifelong Learning,<sup>11</sup> where the Member States recommended increasing and improving the level of digital competencies at all stages of education and training across all segments of the population.

The policy documents are supported by the **Digital Competence Framework for Citizens**<sup>12</sup> (**DigComp**), which provides a common understanding of what digital competence is. It also provides a basis for framing digital skills policy. The DigComp, offers a tool to improve citizens' digital competency. Today, being digitally competent means that people need to have competences in all areas of DigComp. The DigComp was updated, and the new version was published in 2022<sup>13</sup>. The authors of the publication emphasise the importance of digital competence: "Digital skills for work and for life are at the top of the European Policy Agenda. The EU digital skills strategy and related policy initiatives have the objective of enhancing digital skills and competencies for digital transformation."<sup>14</sup>

### 3.3. European project level

Many European projects support digital skills development, both for trainers and learners. Without mastering certain key digital skills, digitalisation in education is not possible. The projects address digital skills and digitalisation from different perspectives.

The **FutureLab Project**<sup>15</sup> project addressed the alarmingly high number of people in Europe who lack basic skills, especially digital skills, leaving parts of the population unable to benefit from the digital transformation. Adult education has a role to play in supporting societies and individuals to face this challenge.

To empower learners and society to engage in and shape the changes brought about by digitalisation, the FutureLabAE partners identified specific requirements that should be in place:

- Citizens should be able to access the digital space: policymakers at all levels should work to reduce the digital gap by providing digital infrastructure and broadband connectivity for all but especially for disadvantaged groups.
- Potential learners and adult educators should be aware of the digital transformation of society: policymakers should organise information campaigns, increase the available opportunities to acquire digital competences, and provide more in-service training on the topic for ALE trainers and staff.
- Adult education organisations should be involved in the policymaking, implementation, and monitoring processes on the topic.

The aim of the project named **Digital Adult Educators: Preparing Adult Educators for a Digital World**<sup>16</sup> is to prepare adult educators to become digitally literate, build their capacity to use and teach with the use

<sup>11</sup> [https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/lifecomp\\_en](https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/lifecomp_en)

<sup>12</sup> DigComp [https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/digcomp\\_en](https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/digcomp_en)

<sup>13</sup> European Commission, Joint Research Centre, Vuorikari, R., Kluzer, S., Punie, Y., *DigComp 2.2, The Digital Competence framework for citizens: with new examples of knowledge, skills and attitudes*, 2022, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2760/490274>

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> [European Association for the Education of Adults » FutureLabAE \(eaea.org\)](https://eaea.org/)

<sup>16</sup> <https://eaea.org/our-work/projects3/archive-professionalisation/digitalad/>





of innovative digital tools and resources, and to integrate digital tools in their teaching practices for employability.

Within **Digital Competences Development System (DCDS)**<sup>17</sup> established a framework that provides the low-skilled adult European population with the basic digital and transversal competences needed for employment, personal development, social inclusion and active citizenship. The project developed an open, innovative multilingual DCDS and it is used it to provide non-formal training to low-skilled adults in different European countries. DCDS is completely aligned with DigComp and thus promotes its adoption in Europe.

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<sup>17</sup> <http://www.dcds-project.eu/>



## 4. Three best practice examples

In the following section, three concrete examples are presented that clearly illustrate this intersection of digitalisation and digital transformation with the Bildung concept. The examples look at:

- How transferable and non-transferable knowledge in a broad and holistic sense (outside one's own "silos") can be conveyed via digital media
- How a sense of responsibility can be developed from this, both for the individual himself/herself but also for other social groups, up to and including a superordinate social effect
- How this then gives rise to motivation for social engagement. It is about engagement and impact in different social areas such as direct peer groups but also engagement in the world of work, including the inclusion of broader social groups.

Not all aspects can be wholly proven in all examples, but tendential developments are recognisable in all of them.

### 4.1. Example 1: Digital Village – Austria

#### 4.1.1. Project Summary

This project, *Digital Village*, increases the digital competences of individuals in a community-based approach. The project aims to give the residents of municipal buildings a low-threshold opportunity to ask questions in connection with digitalisation and to solve digital problems that arise in their daily lives.

The speed of digital innovations and the increasingly widespread use of digital tools in everyday life require great flexibility, curiosity and adaptive skills. The pandemic accelerated the process of digital transformation and the need to use digital tools, which posed challenges, especially to those people who were unfamiliar with the use of digital media.

*Digital Village* is a best practice project because it approaches (potential) learners in a low-threshold way and responds directly and very precisely to people's learning needs.



Photo: Die Wiener Volkshochschulen 1

In the courtyards of large municipal residential buildings, two digital Experts from the Volkshochschulen (VHS, Adult Education Centres) provide materials and equipment (Laptops, tablets, smartphones and free Wi-Fi) and offer "digital consultancy services" ("Digi-Info-Stand") for 2-3 hours, where residents can ask questions and obtain solutions for digital problems on site.

All concerns are being dealt with, e.g. the use of smartphone apps, the creation of secure passwords for online shopping, the use of cell phone signatures etc. The digital experts also set small learning impulses to make residents curious and to show what is possible with digital devices.

No curriculum describes what the participants should learn; instead, the residents of the housing buildings come with questions and challenges, seeking easy-to-understand "on-the-spot" solutions.

The target group of "Digital Village" are people from Vienna living in or around municipal residential buildings. The project especially addresses people with low levels of basic digital literacy and people who currently do not take advantage of formal or non-formal educational opportunities. The experts are usually trainers who work on basic education programmes.

This outreach project is carried out by the Vienna Adult Education Centres ([www.vhs.at](http://www.vhs.at)) in cooperation with Wohnpartner Wien (<https://wohnpartner-wien.at/>). It is fully funded by the Vienna Chamber of Labour from the Digitalisation Fund (<https://wien.arbeiterkammer.at/digifonds>).

The Wiener Volkshochschulen GmbH is the largest non-profit adult education institution in the German-speaking region of Europe. The Adult Education Centres run more than 14,000 courses at 33 locations, so they are spread over the entire area of Vienna, making it possible to benefit from a course in any residential area without having to travel far. Supported by the City of Vienna, the Vienna Adult Education Centres also run numerous projects to give people educational opportunities and perspectives on digital topics.

Wohnpartner is part of Wohnservice Wien, which is responsible for the administration and arrangement of housing in the municipal buildings. There are 1,800 municipal buildings in the city, in which about 500,000 people live. Wohnpartner works with the framework of community work, conflict work and



networking in the municipal buildings in to strengthen the neighbourhood in Vienna's municipal buildings, also with the aim of running bundle initiatives, and strengthening self-organisation.

The project started in July 2021 for one year and afterwards was extended indeterminately and is still running. From July to September 2021, these “Digi-InfoTage” (“Digi-Info Days”) took place outdoors, in the large courtyards of Vienna's municipal residential buildings; since October 2021, they have also been held indoors in the premises, where residents can meet to cook or chat together.

#### 4.1.2. Link to the Bildung-concept

This project is treating digitalisation itself as a topic (rather than applying digitalisation to another subject, like using digital tools in language learning for example). The project deals directly with the digital transformation of society and the fact that many people cannot keep up with these rapid processes.

So, the transferable knowledge of digitalisation is the main content of this project. By learning and expanding their knowledge and their own competences in dealing with digital technologies, the participants' horizons broaden. This would create an individual transformation for those who are currently excluded.



Photo: Die Wiener Volkshochschulen

Through open learning opportunities in community building, barriers can be reduced. People can participate in a familiar environment. This community learning approach also considers non-transferable knowledge. The participants feel comfortable and are encouraged by practical experiences of success, which can be related to positive emotions. The participants also start to explain things to each other and pass on their knowledge and thus reconfigure it. This behaviour of caring for each other shows the growing readiness to take responsibility for people in the immediate neighbourhood, and in this regard are empowered to provide support in their neighbourhood.

The project's overarching goal is to increase people's chances of participation by expanding their digital skills. This project is not primarily located in the field of civic engagement but can certainly foster it, as shown above.

#### 4.1.3. Cross-border transferability

This educational outreach project is certainly transferable to different contexts. What is special about this situation in Vienna, is the cooperation of the partners, all of whom have a particularly close relationship with the City of Vienna. However, a similar project could also be run in other places with different conditions. It would also be conceivable to offer this service in popular public places such as parks, cafés, etc. Cooperation with the community can be helpful for visibility and promotion. The implementation of the Digi Info Days (“Digi-Info Tage”) on the side-lines of events in summer (e.g. courtyard festival with Digi Info Day) can also be transferred as well, as evaluations showed the positive impact they had. In general,





transferability across borders should be straightforward without major adjustments because it is an understandable and uncomplicated project.

Name	Organisation	Place and Time
Digital Village (Vienna, Austria)	This project is carried out by the Vienna Adult Education Centres ( <a href="http://www.vhs.at">www.vhs.at</a> ) in cooperation with Wohnpartner Wien ( <a href="https://wohnpartner-wien.at/">https://wohnpartner-wien.at/</a> )	Ongoing.
More Information	Contact Information	Other Projects of Interest
<a href="http://www.vhs.at/digiinfotag">www.vhs.at/digiinfotag</a>	<a href="mailto:angelika.hrubesch@vhs.a">angelika.hrubesch@vhs.a</a>	Digital Toolbox for Citizen Education: <a href="https://www.dtttools.eu/">https://www.dtttools.eu/</a> VHS Digital Academy: <a href="https://www.vhs-bonn.de/programm/politik-wissenschaft-und-internationales/digitale-akademie.html">https://www.vhs-bonn.de/programm/politik-wissenschaft-und-internationales/digitale-akademie.html</a>

## 4.2. Example 2: My Blossom Channel – Ireland

### 4.2.1 Project Summary

The Blossom Personal Empowerment Programme (PEP) provides skills-based training and support for young people with intellectual disabilities (ID) between the ages of 15 and 20. The programme was initially developed in 2017 based on the information gained from focus groups with young people and their families and is implemented by Blossom Ireland, an Irish non-governmental organisation.

In November 2020, Blossom Ireland launched the PEP assertiveness course through a new accessible blended learning model called My Blossom Channel. This innovative course aims to teach young people with ID to speak up, give opinions, clearly state preferences, and learn about their strengths and how to communicate them to others. Over the course of six weeks, the young people engage weekly with a Blossom Facilitator and complete specific activities through the learning platform.



Blossom worked with a multidisciplinary team including; Young people with ID, speech and language therapists, learning consultants, psychologists and teaching staff to ensure the course was fully accessible for young people who are not reading or writing. It is a highly visual course with a significant amount of video content. Assessments are video-based, and by the end of the six weeks, learners have video footage showcasing the new skills they have learned.

Blossom Ireland consulted with the young people and the families they support throughout the

development and running of the course. One person on the core team with an intellectual disability has been reviewing and giving feedback on the course and its accessibility from the early stages and on an ongoing basis.

Blossom uses highly visual, accessible materials to help the learners give feedback at set periods throughout the year. The personal empowerment programme is being evaluated independently by Dublin City University (DCU) School of Education, and as part of this, the young people complete accessible and supported focus groups. As part of the blended learning assertiveness course within PEP, participants learn how their voice has the power to create change. This is taught through visual support, video content and concrete examples.

Blossom has three-step visual support that supports this learning depicting: 'How I feel about something' - 'using my voice to speak up about it' - 'bringing about change.' The hope is that the learners' ability to give feedback on this programme transfers to other settings.

To measure the impact of PEP, Blossom uses quantitative metrics for skills development, qualitative feedback from young people with ID and their families, case studies and periodic service reviews. The project's staff members do follow up with the young people and their families, particularly in relation to transition into employment and work experience opportunities.

Blossom collects individualised data for all participants, so progress is tracked in a clear and consistent way. For example, on average, students in PEP (2019) increased their score on the skills covered in social skills for life by 43.14%. For Community life skills, their scores increased by an average of 32.5%. For preparing for life after school, their scores increased by an average of 51.88%.

Currently, the initiative is in the process of getting the modules from PEP including the assertiveness course accredited by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). This will be of great significance to the learners as the majority of them have not taken any formal exams.

#### 4.2.2. Link to the Bildung-concept

As outlined in this report, Bildung is a holistic educational approach that aims to help members of a society thrive. It develops the moral and emotional maturity to both be a team player and have personal autonomy. Bildung is also about understanding your roots and being able to imagine the future.

The vision of My Blossom Channel is that all young people with intellectual disabilities are appropriately supported during all key transitions in life. Pioneering, impactful and person-centred are the core values





of Blossom Ireland, thus, its programmes align well with Bildung principles as they are holistic and aim to instil a sense of social responsibility.

Learning happens cognitively, emotionally and creatively. The young people who participate in the programmes learn about their own values, strengths and skills and learn how to talk about these in an open and non-judgemental way with peers and course facilitators. For the first time, many young people learn to talk about their disability in a non-stigmatising and positive way.

**Personal Development/Non-transferable learning:** Entwined throughout the courses are opportunities to learn new skills around self-regulation and expression of emotion and opinions. Opportunity for peer-to-peer feedback is given on a weekly basis while courses are running. Each young person will take something different and unique for themselves from the programmes, and the students learn to give their opinions in an assertive and respectful way.



Photo source: <https://blossomireland.ie/> 1

**Societal responsibility:** The young people learn that their opinions are powerful and their opinions have the power to cause changes that can change the world. Learning is flexible and students have the option to choose to take part in different courses with different groups across the year. Young people are given the opportunity during the course to learn and develop new skill sets that are vital for work and further education in the broader world. They learn, from their peers, not only to be accepting and embrace difference but also about the physical environment and how it can be changed to make the world a more inclusive space for all.

The four pillars of My Blossom Channel aim to prepare the participants to thrive in their communities and in society.

The first pillar - as the first pillar, social skills for life – supports people with disabilities to improve their autonomy build young participants' confidence in interacting, and provides them with coping skills to help navigate stressful situations and times of anxiety. This allows them to spend time with their peers like any other teenager and provides them with an understanding of self-autonomy and choice.

The second pillar - community skills for life - teaches skills in a practical and meaningful way, making use of video modelling. This allows the young person to watch the steps and practice their skills at home and in the community in natural contexts.



The third pillar - preparing for life after school - gives young people the opportunity to explore the options and areas of interest for both work and further education.

Lastly, the fourth pillar - empowering Families - leads successful transitions during key stages in life for their young people by providing them with practical training and support tools. Blossom Ireland also works to build a community where families feel empowered and supported to ensure their children get to live a life like any other.

#### 4.2.3. Cross-border transferability

The project can be easily transferred and rolled out across different communities, countries and contexts as the used tools, pillars, models and evaluation methods can be transferred to any kind of setting and community. However, the skills-based training and support should be adapted to specific needs within the country it is transferred to, as one of the success factors of the project is the "learner voice" approach which places the voice and experience of the adult learner at the heart of their work. This should be taken into consideration during the transfer.

Name	Organisation	Place and Time
My Blossom Channel Dublin, Ireland	Blossom Ireland	Ongoing (2022)
More Information	Contact Information	Other Projects of Interest
Project Website: <a href="https://blossomireland.ie/my-blossom-channel/">https://blossomireland.ie/my-blossom-channel/</a>	Imelda Fitzpatrick: <a href="mailto:imelda@blossomireland.ie">imelda@blossomireland.ie</a>	<a href="https://blossomireland.ie/fundraising/employer-training/">https://blossomireland.ie/fundraising/employer-training/</a>  <a href="https://blossomireland.ie/our-programme/">https://blossomireland.ie/our-programme/</a>

### 4.3. Example 3: Media Literacy in Palestine (Pale) – Finland and Palestine

#### 4.3.1. Project Summary

The media literacy programme in Palestine started in 2015 and still is ongoing at the time of this paper's publication. The purpose of the programme is to support media literacy development in Palestine (West Bank and Gaza). This media literacy programme supports the building of Palestinian civil society by strengthening media literacy and its training by producing teaching materials. In addition, the program aims to promote the right of the people in the region to information and strengthen the conditions for civil society and democracy.

The first project in the area offered media education workshops for media students and professionals, and the second extended media literacy education to citizens living in vulnerable areas and refugee camps. In the third ongoing project, the target group are NGO workers. The courses organised in PALE





have focused, for example, on the use of social media, fact-checking, the ethics of journalism, the grounds for a system of self-regulation, and online safety and security.

Finnish media professionals and students have worked as volunteer trainers. In addition, they have trained local trainers, who worked alongside the Finnish trainers during the projects. As a result, 7 Palestinians and 18 Finns have taken part in the Training of Trainers. In 2021 the programme was focusing on educating NGO workers. Previously journalists, NGO workers, civil servants and citizens have been trained within PALE. In 2015-2016, 272 media professionals and communicators working in organisations and public administration participated in 15 training modules; between 2019 and 2020, 80 active citizens were trained.



Photo: <https://unsplash.com/@anniespratt> 1

The learning objectives of this programme are:

- How to use media and digital tools safely and efficiently.
- How to foster the right to information.
- How to participate in society with the help of media and advocate for change.

The project's coordinator is [The Finnish Lifelong Learning Foundation](#), Kvs, established in 1874. The Kvs Foundation is an independent think tank on lifelong learning with core expertise in the fields of learning, innovation, and communication. Kvs networks in Finland and internationally cooperate and challenge and provide opportunities for dialogue. Organisations' primary operations consist of future-oriented projects, open-access publications, and educational services.

The main partners of PALE are [the Media Development Center](#) at Birzeit University, [the Institute for Community Partnership](#) at Bethlehem University and the American University of Yemen. In addition, the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs has funded the programme.



#### 4.3.2. Link to the Bildung-concept

PALE supports the building of the Palestinian civil society by providing media literacy training and increasing the understanding of media in the area. In addition, it is intensely transformative by promoting the right to information and fostering participation and democracy.

The programme is not only focused on training citizens on media literacy but also training the trainers (transferable knowledge) in Palestine so that the impact is much more significant than can be achieved during the programme duration.

PALE also fosters change from the ground up by training local trainers, involving the Palestinian civil society and using local media cases in the training, and broadening learners' knowledge about media, its possibilities and dangers. The used training methods are dialogical and participatory, exchanging the practices between the two countries involved in the project, and this adds to the learning emotional development link (non-transferable knowledge).

In its current phase, PALE applies three crosscutting principles in all the training (by volunteer trainers and programme staff): Critical reading of the media, critical media production and constant reflection of the pedagogy used by all the trainers raise the sense of responsibility of the participants in the programme. Media literacy courses seek to strengthen active citizenship by providing participants with practical digital skills and critical awareness of the way media content is created and how it affects us all. The holistic, dialogical approach allows reflection on many levels. Throughout the training, the content of the training is adjusted based on the participants' needs and topics raised. The learning is a two-way multicultural approach: Finnish and Palestinian trainers work together and learn from the context, each other's media, and pedagogical practices.

There is no media literacy training in the curriculum of the Palestinian formal educational institutions, and we have no knowledge of other training providers in the field, so the programme is a unique addition to the education sector in the area.

PALE broadens the horizon of its participants and drives towards civic empowerment. The media knowledge touches all circles of responsibility, from own ego to life in the future.



Photo: <https://unsplash.com/@johnschno> 1





#### 4.3.3. Cross-border transferability

The described best practice, by its very nature, a cross border programme and, due to this, easily transferable. As with any project, it must be adapted to specific circumstances and the needs of the participating organisations and/or countries.

Name	Organisation	Place and Time
<b>Media Literacy in Palestine (Pale)</b>	<b>Coordinator:</b> <a href="#">The Finnish Lifelong Learning Foundation</a>  <b>Partners:</b> <a href="#">the Media Development Center at Birzeit University</a> and <a href="#">the Institute for Community Partnership at Bethlehem University</a>	<b>Palestine, ongoing</b>
More Information	Contact Information	Other Projects of Interest
Project information: <a href="https://kansanvalistusseura.fi/en/projects/medialiteracypalestine/">https://kansanvalistusseura.fi/en/projects/medialiteracypalestine/</a> Media guide: <a href="https://mediaguide.fi/mediaguide/home/">https://mediaguide.fi/mediaguide/home/</a> Media literacy course curriculum: <a href="#">Media-Literacy-Course-Implementation-Guide-2020.pdf (mediaguide.fi)</a>		
	Anne Tastula, <a href="mailto:anne.tastula@kvs.fi">anne.tastula@kvs.fi</a>	

## 5. Recommendations

### 5.1. Macro-level: Recommendations for policymakers and stakeholders setting the frame for adult education

Recommendations at the macro level aim at strengthening the conditions for the integration of the Bildung concept and the use of digital media in adult learning and education.

- Companies design their algorithms to maximise profit by focussing on bad news at the expense of ethical behaviour, appropriate forms of communication, and facts. Companies should be forced to disclose how these algorithms operate.
- Decision-makers should be appropriately introduced to the mechanisms of digital applications to demystify the digital world and understand the challenges.
- Funding mechanisms for the improvement of digital skills and digital information literacy should be put in place.



- Do not leave anyone behind – the proper use of digital media should be treated as a basic right for all members of society.
- Transparent fact-checking on news information should be a general requirement.

## 5.2. Meso-level: Recommendations for educational institutions

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.

- Reorganise your organisation's workflow by considering how and why digital tools are used at your organisation.
- The aim should be to make your work easier and more effective with the use of digital tools. Offer training and/or create peer-to-peer learning opportunities for staff. This will help to build a work culture where digital competences are developed and valued.
- Add digitalisation, its values and critiques as the topic to your curriculums, all the while using the Bildung approach.
- Support your teachers to obtain appropriate competences to make full use of digital applications for their learning and education.
- Reorganise your teaching/learning methodology. Support your learners to be able to access and benefit from digital learning and education.
- Avoid exacerbating the digital divide amongst your learners. Offer extra courses, counselling, and peer learning.
- The digital world is dominated by algorithms designed by big tech companies, which promotes bad news as this catches the attention of the audience. Regulation of large companies is challenging; however, teaching how to retrain algorithms and engage actively in new topics (linked to the Bildung concept) to create new algorithms is possible.

## 5.3. Micro-Level: Recommendation for practitioners (For trainers, trainers of trainers, and learners)

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

- Digitalisation and digital transformation should respond to learners' needs. A variety of digital tools should be used in the design and implementation of courses and training.
- Learners need to get familiarised with digital tools and how to use them. This might require time, so a step-by-step approach should be used on courses. Enough time should be allocated on courses to be inclusive for a variety of forms of learning.



- Trial and error: Technology changes rapidly. A new digital tool may replace an older one quite quickly. That is why smaller trials should be made first to allow for errors with low stakes, instead of undertaking major transformations.
- Learner discussions: Spaces should be created for learners to discuss digital concepts and fears, dislikes, and likes using a needs-based approach. This approach will give learners a voice in their learning environments, and practitioners will act upon the feedback to create favourable outcomes.
- Digital safety should be a topic in all courses.
- Thinking outside the box: Prejudice towards digitalisation and digital transformation among practitioners should be addressed in the organisation. Some practitioners may have a traditional mindset or method which may not work sufficiently anymore. Awareness-raising activities should be carried out in such circumstances.
- First the goal, then the tool: Digitalisation should follow pedagogical concepts and not used just for its own sakes.
- Cultural differences should be taken into consideration when designing a course or training. Digital transformation may work very well in one place, but it may not in another. Geographical and community-based mapping is crucial.
- Organisational vision/mission/principles should include digitalisation components.

