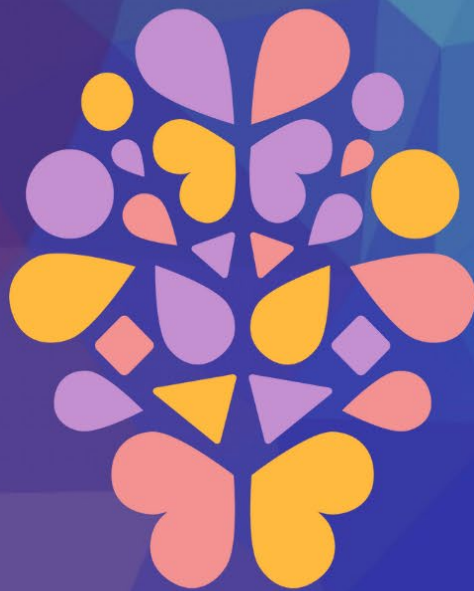


# Sustainability and Bildung





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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. Bildung and Democracy
3. Bildung and Digitalisation
4. Bildung and Sustainability
5. Bildung and Basic Skills

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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 we 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 rethinking 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



## 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/>



# 1 Introduction of the concepts

## 1.1. Sustainable Development

There is hardly any term, which is more widely used in various contexts than “sustainable development”. Its origin goes back to the 1987 Brundland-report (United Nations 1987), where it is defined as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” Sustainable development is described here in four dimensions: society, environment, culture, and economy. These four dimensions are seen as closely interrelated, so that all four should be addressed to ensure sustainable development.

In 1992, at the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro (“Earth Summit”), the United Nations adopted Agenda 21, which sets out guidelines for sustainable development in the 21st century.

After Rio, sustainability was high on the global agenda, and the awareness that challenges like climate change, preservation of biodiversity and other issues can be tackled only by working together globally was raised. In 2015, the United Nations adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs, Agenda 2030), adopting sustainable development as the guideline for the future.

The concept of sustainable development clearly demands an educational dimension: Individuals are required to develop a broad understanding of responsibility for the future of our planet and society and the interlinkages of global ecological and economical systems. Education for Sustainability (ESD) was designed to respond to these new challenges.

## 1.2. Education for Sustainable Development

*“We are increasingly asking if what people learn is truly relevant to their lives and if what they learn helps to ensure the survival of our planet. Education for Sustainable Development can provide the knowledge, awareness and action that empower people to transform themselves and transform societies.”* Stefania Giannini, Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO (UNESCO 2020)

For the years 2005 to 2014, the UN – Decade of Education for Sustainable Development advocated and supported national governments to introduce the approach of sustainability into their respective education systems and strategies. As more support was needed, the UNESCO Global Action Program (GAP) on "Education for Sustainable Development" was launched to further drive the change of education systems towards more sustainability and to bring ESD even more from theory to practice. Five priority fields of action have been defined to strengthen sustainable thinking and action in all areas of education. In short, these fields cover:

- increased political support to improve the frameworks for ESD,
- the holistic transformation of teaching and learning environments,
- competence development among teachers and multipliers,
- the empowerment and mobilization of youth,
- and the promotion of sustainable development at the local level.



Picture 1: Priority Action Area of the GAP



Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is, as well, a central element of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the UNESCO Education Agenda 2030 (SDG 4), which covers the period 2015-2030. ESD can be located in SDG sub-goal 4.7:



Picture 2: SDG 4.7

Unfortunately, governments and many international bodies paid low attention to this target so far, and the monitoring process is weak.

ESD for adults aims to sensitize learners to act on their responsibility and to question critically in the sense of transformative education. People are enabled to better understand the connections and effects of their current lifestyle on climate and environment and to draw conclusions for their future (political) actions and consumption. Recently, the Marrakech Framework for Action (MFA), adopted by the world conference for ALE CONFINTEA VII in June, stressed the importance of ALE for ESD. In paragraph 17 the connection between both concepts is outlined very clearly:

*“Unlocking the potential of adult learning and education for climate action: Climate change represents a huge threat to humanity as well as to other species. It prompts us to question current production and consumption patterns, invent new industries and accept moral responsibility for future generations, recognizing that caring for the planet must become a global imperative. Hence, climate education must be mainstreamed in lifelong learning systems. ALE must be part of this green transformation. It gives youth and adults an understanding of the issue, raises their awareness and equips them with the knowledge and agency needed to adapt to and counter climate change and develop resilience and agency for transformation. ALE*



*can play an important role in empowering adult and older citizens so that they become role models for children and change agents at local, national and global levels. Community learning and citizenship education are key factors for sustainable development, including rural development, and raising awareness of the impact of climate change. Furthermore, ALE institutions themselves can act as models for green transition in society by greening their curricula, facilities and management.” (UNESCO 2022)*

ESD focuses on a holistic and global view of our complex world with its interdependent ecological, economic, social and political dimensions, while valuing the importance of interventions at the local level. Every individual has a different idea of sustainable development and is guided by his or her own life and experience. Therefore, a social process of understanding and negotiation is needed on what the path to a sustainable society can look like. ESD learning processes should motivate people to look at a topic from a variety of perspectives. These can be different ways of thinking, technical approaches and narratives, reference areas, temporal perspectives and interests. ESD does not aim to dictate values, but rather to engage in a learner-centred discourse on values that makes visible the diversity of knowledge, views, ideas, and beliefs that exist simultaneously. In the teaching and learning context, this also means not overwhelming learners morally, and making transparent and reflecting one's point of view and experiences as a teacher.

### **1.3. European policies and concepts**

*“There is a need to enable a profound change in people’s behaviour and skills, starting in the education systems and institutions as catalysts. Actions should be geared towards changing behaviour, boosting skills for the green economy, fostering new sustainable education and training infrastructure and renovating existing buildings, thereby creating conducive environments for this change” (EAEA 2021)*

Until recently, sustainability was understood by European politics mainly as economic and social sustainability. Only in 2020, with the “European Green Deal”, seeking Europe to become the first climate-neutral continent by 2050, the Commission launched for the first time ambitious goals for combating climate change and related ecological crisis, adding a third, ecological dimension to the



understanding of sustainability. While education was initially treated as a more or less “accompanying measure” to prepare European citizens for taking part in the new, “green” economy, the role of education is now more and more highlighted in key documents of the European Union. This is valid for the Policy Papers on the “European Skills Agenda for Sustainable Competitiveness, Social Fairness and Resilience” (European Commission, Brussels 2020), published in 2020 and the “EU biodiversity strategy for 2030”, published in the same year. The 2020 “European Framework for Personal, Social and Learning to Learn Key Competence” identifies among others self-regulation, empathy, collaboration and critical thinking as core competences, European citizens should obtain. (European Commission, Luxembourg 2020)

In 2022, the European Union published “GreenComp – The European sustainability competence framework” (Bianchi et. AL, 2020), representing the attempt to influence national education systems by providing a framework of twelve key competence to foster a sustainability mindset. The competences are clustered in four areas (embodying sustainability values, embracing complexity in sustainability, envisioning sustainable futures and acting for sustainability).

However, as it is not preliminary in the competence of the European Commission, it is mainly left to the member states, how to include the development of these competencies into the national teaching/learning system.

#### **1.4. Wearing the Bildung Lens**

*Bildung is the combination of the education and knowledge necessary to thrive in your society, and the moral and emotional maturity to both be a team player and have personal autonomy. Bildung is also knowing your roots and being able to imagine the future (Andersen 2021)*

The objective of this report is to use the concepts developed mainly by Lene Rachel Andersen in her reflection on Bildung and Folkbildning to enrich the debate and practice in ESD. By choosing this approach, it has to be stressed that the concept used here is just one among others, which are important to use as well.

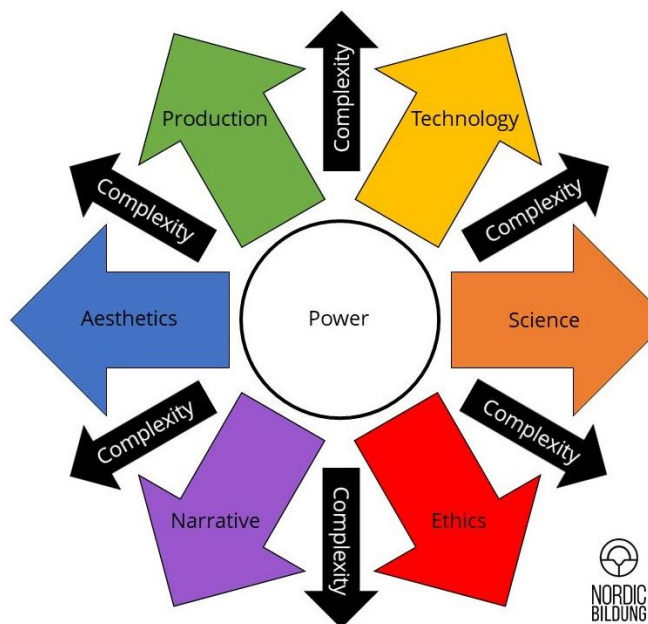
ESD claims that a transformation of policies, systems, and contents of education is needed. While focusing on these aspects, ESD acknowledges as well that the development of new cultures of learning and teaching is essential. This is the place,



where Bildung comes in. In her paper for this project, Lene Rachel Andersen describes Bildung in four aspects. The following is an attempt to relate these four aspects to the ESD concept:

### 1.5. Transferable knowledge/expanding one's horizon

At the heart of this aspect is the idea of the Bildung Rose, claiming that societies are made up of seven domains: production, technology, aesthetics, (political) power, science, narrative, and ethics. To thrive and act we have to develop all these seven domains, and Bildung should ensure that all seven are more or less equally presented. Additionally, the growing complexity of our world demands us to learn more in all seven domains or to be able to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and competencies lifelong. At the same time, our existing education seems to prioritize some domains (production, technology; to some extent science) over others (e.g. narrative, ethics, aesthetics). As individuals need all domains to navigate and take decisions, this is dangerous for our further development.



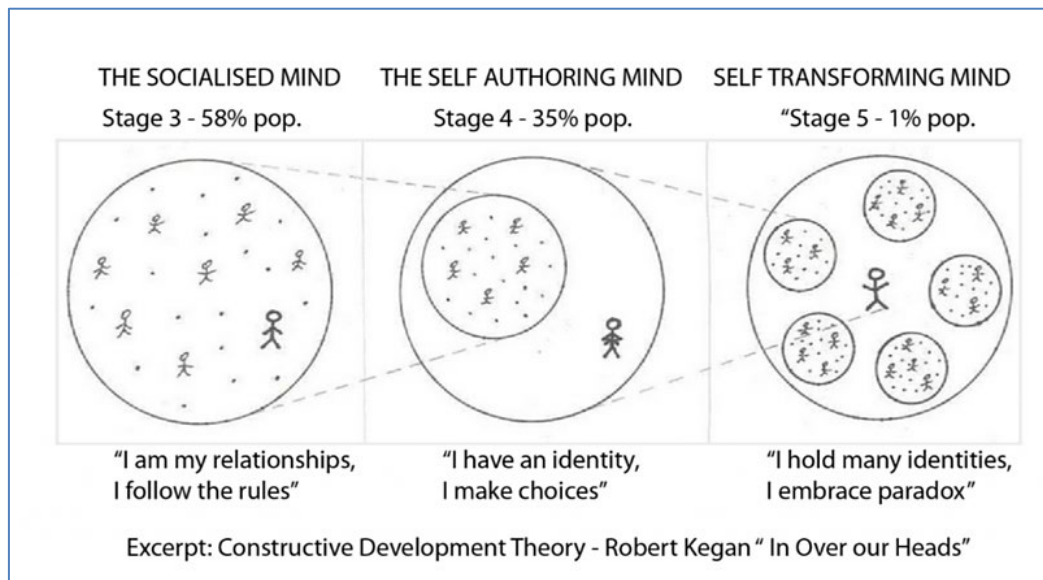
Picture 3: The Bildung Rose



The idea of the seven domains can enrich the ESD concept, as it is so not very explicit in including the neglected domains into the education (Bildung) process, but rather focuses on knowledge and skills related to the domains, which are already dominant in our society and the traditional education system, just with a lens on sustainability. This seems too shortsighted, as narratives and fundamental ethical beliefs are crucial for guiding individuals and communities in their thinking, beliefs and activities. Aesthetics clearly should play a prominent role in ESD to ensure the transferred knowledge is linked to these dimensions. This could provide an opportunity to tackle the gap we witness between the knowledge we (potentially) have on necessary steps towards sustainability and the lacking implementation in individual life and society.

### **1.6. Non-transferable knowledge / emotional depth and morality**

This dimension deals with the aspects of personal growth through experience and social interaction with other people, with dealing with success and disappointments. It links to concepts of developmental psychology with the works of Jean Piaget, Lawrence Kohlberg, and Robert Kegan as the key references. They state that emotional learning is based on individual experiences of pushbacks, losses, successes etc., which happen in our lives and enable us to grow emotionally and morally. Kegan states that this development happens in five stages, leading from being an “Impulsive mind” in early childhood to becoming a “self-transforming mind”, a stage, which is reached by just a few people. The Bildung concept links these theories with Friedrich Schiller’s idea that individuals (should) grow from being physical, emotional persons to become “persons of reason”, able to understand and accept moral norms. He defines the final stage as being a “free, moral person”, who can think for himself and question norms.



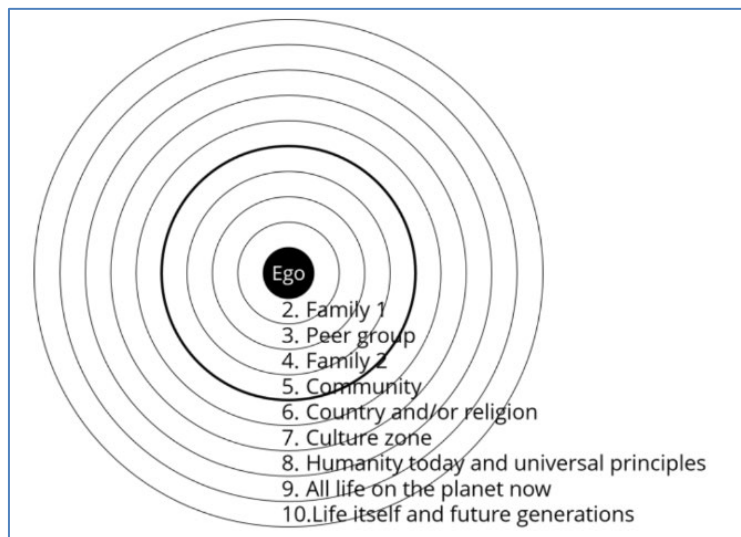
Picture 4: Kegan Stages 3-5, related to adulthood

This aspect, a cornerstone of the Bildung concept, is weakly reflected in the ESD concept, which seems to be limited mainly within the boundaries of the classical understanding of "education", focusing its efforts on the transferable knowledge, skills and competencies. It remains doubtful if the necessary engagement for sustainable development is possible without nurturing the moral and emotional basis within the individuals. It might be worse to consider that substantial progress towards sustainable lifestyles, economies and societies is only possible if individuals will be able to pursue what is right and how to achieve it, even if some of the people closest to them may not like it. A certain attempt to respond to these needs is the concept of a global green hand- and footprint, which enables measuring and/or reflecting on individual responsibility (<https://www.cscp.org/our-work/handprint/>).

## 1.7. Expansion of the sense of responsibility

The link between ESD and the Bildung concept is very obvious in this dimension. The idea of sustainable development is by its nature global: we cannot reach sustainable lifestyles, economies and societies on a personal, local or national level, but we have to develop this sense towards what Lene Rachel Andersen describes as circles of

belonging 8 – 10: Humanity today and universal principles, all life on the planet now, life itself and future generations. In other words: we have to expand our sense of belonging. At the same time, this expansion is rooted in individual and local contexts, just like the Bildung concept suggests. All in all, the aspect of expanding the sense of belonging is probably the one, where ESD and the Bildung concept have the most in common. However, there are some things, which can be offered by the Bildung concept: First, it is the critical reflection of the raise, the potential and the risks of the nation as an entity, for people to feel they belong. This feeling was nurtured not least by educators in the past two centuries, and it might be useful to study their approaches for raising this sense of responsibility as well towards European and global levels. The creation and dissemination of narratives seem to be one important cornerstone here.



*Picture 3: The Circles of Belonging*

The task to develop a sense of belonging towards the “global level” is present and not present in ESD. On the one hand, there is a very strong reference to the global level by referring not only to the SDGs but as well to the global nature of the problems ESD wants to tackle. However, the “recipes” to develop this sense are not very prominent: teaching languages, exposing people to a situation outside their cultural





and social comfort zone and creating a sense of belonging beyond national or even local borders, not limited to ratio. In this sense, Bildung might be more closely related to the concept of Global Citizenship Education (GCE) than ESD.

### **1.8. Civic empowerment**

ESD explicitly claims that it is not only about knowledge and skills but about enabling and motivating transformation and action. Especially youth is addressed as “agents of change”. The Bildung concept refers to the experiences of the Nordic Folkbildning and related movements in the UK and the US. They provide experiences and methods of how to equip “ordinary” people with the tools to become active in society, to speak up and defend their views. But this alone seems not enough: The success of Folkbildning, as the Bildung concepts, understands it, was to make the people enthusiastic and “ready to go for change”, as skills and competencies for civic engagement are not enough, it needs the spirit. This seems to be in a way lost in modern ALE provision, which is more part of the system, than a transformative force. One option to explore this better could be to link Bildung and ESD to concepts of transformative education and the participatory approach based on the idea of Paolo Freire: “The pedagogical attitude underlying the participatory education approach consists in the principle of learning that activates the abilities and potentials of learners with the aim that they move from a passive to an active perception and participation in the learning process.” (DVV International 2021)

For this, we might need to strengthen adult education organisations in their capacity to inspire citizens, initiate dialogue and support transformative action. In some cases, this is at the “risk of becoming unpopular among some of their potential customers”, not “to speak of the government's subsidizing” (Andersen 2021).





## 2 Good practices

### 2.1. Climate Conversation Workshops

*ClimateConversations* or *KlimaatGesprekken* offer accessible (online) workshops, training courses and masterclasses that help to reduce the individual climate footprint and instead, increase our handprint (for more information on the concept see e.g.: <https://germanwatch.org/sites/default/files/publication/13638.pdf>) by having a good climate conversation with others about energy saving, food, consumption, transport and holidays. The foundation wants to make climate-friendly choices a matter of course. It applies insights from climate psychology to offer people hope, humour and perspective for action.

Does the topic of the 'climate' ever come up in your work, indirectly or directly? If so, you will probably notice that this conversation is not always easy. The subject evokes many strong opinions and emotions. Maybe you want to be more confident and respond pleasantly, without pointing fingers, and react more personally and practically. In the *Climate Conversation Workshops*, you learn how to do this effectively. In six two-hour group meetings, you explore what you can do to make your life more climate-friendly, in a way that suits your personality, situation and goals.

In 2016, the workshops were introduced in the Netherlands. These workshops were already very successful in England as *Carbon Conversations*. The materials and working methods were adapted to the Dutch context and are varied and playful. The interest in the workshops is steadily growing in the Netherlands. There are two main groups of participants: the frontrunners or pioneers who are already involved with climate issues for years and who like to meet others to exchange experiences, and also a group of people who want to orient themselves on a more climate-friendly lifestyle. They get acquainted with the *Climate Conversation Workshops* through the website, social media and, above all, through word-of-mouth from former participants. The participants are aged between 25 and 65 years old.

*ClimateConversations* aim that the workshops will give the participants ideas to reduce their footprint and increase their handprint. The 'footprint' involves living in a more climate-friendly way yourself. The 'handprint' means involving others in your



actions. The participants receive information about climate change and the impact of lifestyle choices, and a workbook with exercises and checklists, to inspire them to take personal steps. The aim is to make climate-friendly choices in the new normal. The workshops provide tools for a positive meaningful climate conversation. *Climate Conversation Workshops* are not depressive conversations with lists of prohibitions and commandments. The courses are run in small groups with a maximum of eight participants. They put the participants on the right track to carpool, eat more plant-based food or buy solar panels. Afterwards, the participants are more confident and can discuss climate topics with respect for other people.



For participants who want to take further steps after the workshops, the foundation offers various follow-up activities, thus creating a growing network of climate-conscious/active citizens. E.g., you can become a voluntary *Climate Coach* by following a three-day training course. This training clarifies how behavioural change is promoted or hindered (climate psychology). The participants learn how to work with the materials and how to guide a group. After the training, they can run the workshops themselves in their neighbourhood, school, company or library. There are



now climate coaches in more than seventy municipalities in the Netherlands. What a wonderful multiplication effect! It is also possible to organise workshops on behalf of municipalities or other organisations. For this purpose, *ClimateConversations* support the coaches with additional training.

For the last two years, the activities have been obstructed by Covid 19. The usual workshops and training courses were mostly cancelled, but *ClimateConversations* soon offered several activities online, such as free e-workshops, online inspiration sessions and lectures. In post-pandemic times, these online activities are partly here to stay, because by working online it turns out to be possible to reach a more varied group of interested parties.

### **Connectivity to the Bildung concept**

The remarks below refer mainly to the significance of the workshops for the participants and their surroundings. In the Climate Coach training, the relation to Bildung is also very profound.

### ***Transferable knowledge / expanding one's horizon***

The participants receive technological and scientific information via presentations, videos, games plus a read-and-workbook. Besides this input, participants are stimulated to reflect on other key aspects through group discussion and relate this with their own experiences. During every workshop session, key questions are addressed, such as: how did we 'organise life' in the past and how do we envision a good future (narrative)? What kind of world do I want to leave behind for future generations (ethics)? What can we do about the relationship between climate problems and social inequality (ethics)? What values and beauty do I consider important, now and in the future (aesthetics)? Which political/economic interests and structures obstruct effective climate measures (power)?

### ***Non-transferable knowledge / emotional depth and morality***

The knowledge and experiences that the participants themselves already have gained regarding climate issues are the starting point of the learning experience. Their emotions, values, talents and visions are an essential part of the learning environment. The participants are very diverse and aged between 18 and 65 years old, which makes the learning process even more intense. The workshops are interactive



and have a high 'learning together' component. ClimateConversations trigger participants to explore their personal and collective role in climate matters from different perspectives such as morality, feelings and facts. The group dynamics and the exchange of experiences give a strong impulse to the moral and emotional development of the participants, the workshops contribute to deepening one's vision, processing one's own experiences and to a greater insight into how you want to live yourself and you want to contribute to improving the climate.

### ***Expansion of the sense of responsibility***

The method stimulates the participants to go beyond their first circles of belonging and to become an actor in their community. The workshops link practical daily life issues with a vision of humanity as a whole and the drive to act to save the planet. Participants move from circles 1-5 towards circle 6 and further.

### ***Civic empowerment / folk-Bildung***

The workshops increase consciousness about the urgency of climate action. On the one hand, they promote personal climate actions and stress the value of every small step: every action does count. At the same time, the workshops also promote collectiveness and cooperation with like-minded persons as well as persons with other visions to reach a more ambitious climate policy. Workshop participants become self-confident to act as active citizens and inspire their community.

Nowadays, with several severe crises and growing polarization, it is extremely important to know how to live together and how to dialogue respectfully. At the same time, citizens must be more aware of the urgency of climate action, learn how to act in their daily life and how challenge others, including politicians, to make the right choices. ClimateConversations contribute to this.

### ***Cross-border transferability***

The transferability of these workshops has already been proven, as the workshops were originally given in England as Carbon Conversations. It is relatively easy to transfer this project to other countries, once you can count on a dedicated team in the new country and with the necessary financing. Without a doubt, the method and the materials have to be studied carefully and possibly need to be adapted to the own situation with the current ways of communicating, discussing and relationships.



Cultural differences cannot be underestimated and therefore test-pilot projects might be useful.

The method and (parts of) materials can be translated, of course taking into account intellectual property and copyrights. For this purpose, KlimaatGesprekken should be contacted.

### **Contacts and links for further reading**

Contact person: Manu Busschots, [manu@klimaatgesprekken.nl](mailto:manu@klimaatgesprekken.nl)

<https://www.klimaatgesprekken.nl> (on the homepage you find a short video in English)

## **2.2. Revival of history - Inclusion of the Duruitoarea Veche Cave into the European Tourist Circle**

The "Rebirth of history - inclusion of the *Duruitoarea Veche* cave in the European tourist circle" project was proposed to involve community members in safeguarding, conserving, protecting and including cultural heritage from Duruitoarea Veche village in the northern part of Moldova into international cultural tourism. These objectives also aimed at increasing the well-being of the locals. As the name of the place may sound challenging to pronounce for foreigners, maybe the meaning of "cascade" could help make it more familiar. Apart from the old topographic idiom, the adjective "veche" (Engl: old) emphasizes the long-established natural history of the picturesque place.

In this remote community of Moldova archaeological research was conducted in 1962, then again in 1994 and 2004. Although important artefacts were discovered, it was only after 2016 that community-revival development started. After years of interaction with community members and local authorities via various projects, civic activist Nicolae Moscalu from Balti town (the informal "capital of northern Moldova") moved to Duruitoarea Veche and initiated civic actions. He spotted a place for a future touristic resort. But before starting any construction, he conducted many consultations with villagers – what is missing, what could develop the infrastructure,



what can bring people to the place? In 2016-2017 extensive research and assessment activities took place: non-invasive archaeological exploration under the guidance of palaeontologists, summer schools and workshops for teachers and interested NGOs, a number of sanitation initiatives, installation of signs and informative panels for visitors. Nicolae and his team started the construction of an ecological resort, built on eco-friendly installations. In the meantime, due to the proactiveness of the community activists, it was also possible to bring international development support and in 2019 the aqueduct and sewerage system was installed in the community, which used to experience severe difficulties with potable water.

### ***Expansion of the sense of responsibility***

Led by Nicolae Moscalu, the project had a fulminant kick-off: a large number of community members have been (self)-mobilized, together with the associative sector in the region and academia from the country. Community development materialised, based on existing local resources. Local members were involved at all stages of development – analysis, organization, coordination, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, which generated a large awareness among people and large groups of community actors. In the process, participants deduced, defined and implemented their understanding of sustainable development. Changes included attitude towards one's self, interaction with neighbours, relatives and the community as a whole. Evolutions happened naturally, by direct involvement in specific actions of civic participation. On daily basis, solving current issues, citizens learned to make the best use of their skills and interests, developing over time. Getting vivid outputs, people became aware of the long-term personal and community benefits. Local people, neighbours and visiting tourists are fostering together common values: respect for the past and the national values and traditions, caring for the common good, keeping the village clean, cooperation and good neighbourliness between locals, family consolidation, etc.

### **Connectivity to the four aspects of BILDUNG**

The project fully reflects the Bildung concept in action in the area of education for sustainable development. This local initiative demonstrates how the *Duruitoarea* Veche community acquires in a learning-by-doing way education and knowledge, able to thrive in emotional maturity in the society and urge development.



### ***Transferable knowledge / expanding one's horizon***

Nicolae Moscalu managed to use all his transferable knowledge and skills to empower his neighbours in the village. He and his team manage to determine whether residents become proactive, assume responsibilities and take the lead in certain areas.

### ***Non-transferable knowledge / emotional depth and morality***

Villagers have disclosed themselves both as team members and a consolidated community, able to continuously develop their autonomy. It is a relatively rare example in the Republic of Moldova, but it is worthy of being replicated on a national scale. The initiative is intuitively based on the paradigm of the Bildung Rose, which proves that locals, to prosper and be able to understand what is happening in the milieu, carry a variety of transferable knowledge and skills, but also have areas for proximate improvement: in-depth competences of local development areas, as well as best praxis in tourism, national cuisine, water sports, etc. Becoming expert specialists and practitioners in certain areas expands our horizons, and helps us integrate into local and global contexts. And above all, the experience stirs passion and motivation.





Foto credit: Nicolae Moscalu

### **Civic empowerment / folk-Bildung**

Community changes have bettered the life of the small place. Out of less than 400 inhabitants, about 20 local households are continuing to re-arranging the living space to offer accommodation to visitors; several housewives are engaged in cooking local dishes within a diversified menu approach. Several people have started private businesses such as holy art scriptures painting on glass, wood carving, fishing, growing agricultural goods or working in acquiring products, while a Moldovan-American family works on launching a nautical club. Some people aim at developing transportation services, tourist guiding and maid services. Within the local museum, with support from the district children's House of creation, a glass painting class is being organized for youth. The local museum contains artefacts, giving insights into other eras and lifestyles.

Some PR activities in the media, draw attention to the place and encouraged internal migration, back "into nature" - urban families from among country residents, as well as a couple of people from abroad (USA and Canada), have purchased formerly





abandoned houses and are working on their refurbishing. Other people have built new villas and boarding houses. As a result, in the last 6 years, the price of land has increased by 3.5-4 times. During the summertime, the tourist area is visited by about 10-12 thousand tourists. These impressive developments have taken place in a tiny village with about 380 people. The project brought together civic society actors, led by NGO "Moștenitorii" (from Balti city), and built cooperation with LA (District Center), as well as a recognized scientific body - the Paleontology Section of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Moldova.

As the year 2018 was declared the European Year of Cultural Heritage, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research published a brochure on the most vivid initiatives from across the country that aim at recovering and reviving cultural heritage. The project from Duruitoarea Veche and its leading unit - NGO "Mostenitorii" is described among other sound initiatives.

### **Cross-border transferability**

The project was also part of an international initiative within the "CHOICE" program - Cultural Heritage: Opportunity to increase civic engagement" initiated by the Public Association National Committee ICOM Moldova in partnership with organizations from France, Lithuania, Ukraine, Armenia and Belarus. Activists from Duruitoarea Veche proved that with a keen eye on local potential, even small communities in remote areas can initiate the revival of the place via non-formal get-togethers and mutual learning-by-doing, aiming at capitalizing on its tourist potential. Even if people do not know much about transformation, local leaders can contribute to sharing and developing transferable knowledge, advance and support willingness for change, sustain partnerships among generations, foster values (including Christian morality) and stir entrepreneurship and community spirit.

### **Contacts and links for further reading**

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[https://issuu.com/urbanlabassociation/docs/patrimoniul\\_suntem\\_noi\\_web](https://issuu.com/urbanlabassociation/docs/patrimoniul_suntem_noi_web)  
<https://www.facebook.com/hanul.cu.noroc.2020>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QpLO1ES3MCU>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r9Xxk473LXA>

### **2.3. Deendayal Antayodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM)**

The project was launched in 1999 as a flagship programme of the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), Government of India (GoI) with a focus on societal transformation by organising self-managed self-help groups (SHGs). The concept of SHGs originated in Bangladesh. India has adopted Bangladesh's model in a modified form. SHGs are also, active in countries in South Asia, Southeast Asia and Africa.

The Mission is co-financed by the World Bank and aims at creating efficient and effective institutional platforms for rural poor underprivileged women thereby enabling them to increase household income through sustainable livelihood enhancements and improved access to financial services. In addition, the poor are facilitated to achieve increased access to rights, entitlements and public services, diversified risk and better social indicators of empowerment.

The basic functions of an SHG are i) savings and thrift, ii) internal lending, and iii) discussing problems. SHG comprises 10-20 members of similar socio-economic backgrounds. Each member undergoes the common steps- Identification of the member, SHG formation, Capacity building (reskilling, upskilling and updating through training), Fund provision (for members to raise their work), Connecting members with livelihood activities and Ensuring them a (social and economically) safe and secure system is built. Special emphasis is particularly on vulnerable communities such as manual scavengers, victims of human trafficking, Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) and bonded labour. Members regularly organize meetings and maintain documentation of their activities. They monitor, motivate and guide each other. Time-to-time, various

training programs & discussions are organized to provide information for the production and marketing strategies for the products prepared by them. Thus, promoting traditional work and improvising it to meet modern demands. We also have SHGs of 13+ teenagers running very well.



By 18 Apr 2022, the program had mobilized nearly 82.5 million women through 7.57 million SHGs. Allowing women to do as they want is not the point; the entire point is setting a woman free to make her own choices, even if those choices go against anyone's perception of right and wrong. A pure housewife named *Mamta* (changed name) realised the role of education and sent her children to school. For additional earnings, took training and is doing leather work at home. Krishi Aajivika Sakhi (Agriculture Livelihood Friend) Kiran (changed name) learnt eco-friendly agricultural skills to prepare and maintain a kitchen garden. She treats the seeds against diseases before sowing and prepares organic fertilizers, insecticides and pesticides. Thus, taking care of the environment and also set examples for others to join. Through Poshan-Vatika (nutrition small garden), one learns i) *to work sustainably with the environment*, ii) *zero budget farming*, iii) *organic farming*.

Presently, SHG is addressing nine SDGs:

- No Poverty
- Zero hunger
- Good health and well-being



- Quality education, Gender equality
- Clean water and sanitation
- Affordable and clean sustainable energy
- Decent work and economic growth
- and Reduced inequalities.

### **Connectivity to the Bildung concept**

DAY-NRLM believes in harnessing innate capabilities and complements them with capacities (information, knowledge, skills, tools, finance and collectivization) to participate in the growing economy of the country, leading towards community self-reliance and self-dependence. People grow as a team, becoming responsible and accountable for their actions. The empowered members are regularly monitored and assisted, even after leaving the group. They in turn train and sensitize others, so a chain goes on. To some extent, it has a cross-generational approach, as most self-help groups have members of similar age-group, but there is no restriction. So, we have instances of members with age differences of up to 20 to 40 years; even senior citizens can be a member. Intergenerational learning happens by sharing experiences and learning together. The work of SHG is so structured and documented that the learning/ knowledge acquired is transferable. When a new SHG unit is constituted, then the trained and experienced members of existing SHGs interact and answer the queries and fears of new members by assisting in carrying out the various activities of SHG. The aftermath of SHGs reflects civic empowerment by passing on transferable and non-transferable knowledge to new members thereby contributing to their expansion of a sense of responsibility.

Regarding cross-border transferability, being a micro-finance institution the concept of SHG could be easily adopted. SHGs are formed for a variety of reasons, yet their primary purpose has been to economically empower women and communities through saving/lending activities and bank-linkage programs to access larger pools of capital. The basic working will remain the same; differing in the purpose of constituting SHG and the participants joining. Thus, with economic empowerment, it has ample scope and the flexibility to address local as well as national issues. Nowadays, like DAY-NRLM addresses rural people, we can also find SHGs constituted by urban and suburban people.



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### **Links for further reading**

Official website

<https://aajeevika.gov.in/en/content/welcome-deendayal-antyodaya-yojana-nrlm>

<https://nrlm.gov.in/outerReportAction.do?methodName=showIndex#gsc.tab=0>



Historical background

<http://ncwapps.nic.in/pdfReports/SHG-Maharashtra.pdf>

A Study on Quality and Sustainability

<http://www.apmas.org/pdf/self-help-groups-in-india-a-study-on-quality-and-sustainability.pdf>

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0305750X2100190X>

A Report on the Success and Failure of SHGs in India

[https://niti.gov.in/planningcommission.gov.in/docs/reports/sereport/ser/ser\\_shg3006.pdf](https://niti.gov.in/planningcommission.gov.in/docs/reports/sereport/ser/ser_shg3006.pdf)

Success stories

<https://sewainternational.org/women-empowerment-through-shgs/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1XNKPf7ZDi0>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BYs7zlyT\\_C8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BYs7zlyT_C8)

[http://glpc.co.in/downloads/success\\_story\\_lakshmi\\_mahila\\_dhumli\\_n.pdf](http://glpc.co.in/downloads/success_story_lakshmi_mahila_dhumli_n.pdf)

<https://www.thesangaiexpress.com/Encyc/2020/6/27/Women-script-success-stories-with-SHGs.html>

## **2.4. International ESD Alliances: A cross-border project for sustainable adult learning and education (ALE) institutions**

The cross-border project “ESD Alliances” under the management of DVV International promotes the implementation of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in adult education institutions using the Whole Institution Approach (WIA). The project will run until Spring 2024 at twelve selected adult learning and education institutions in seven countries around the world. Partnering countries are Austria, Japan, Germany, the Philippines, Slovenia, South Africa and Switzerland. In Germany, six Volkshochschulen out of 44 applicants (Community-based ALE centres) were selected as partnering institutions. Representatives from civil society and other experts, including the German Adult Education Association (DVV), EAEA and UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning (UIL), have been recruited as an advisory body (Resource Network).

According to the concept of the Whole Institution Approach (WIA), ALE institutions themselves constitute organisational role models and should therefore align their



actions with sustainability criteria. As such, they are authentic promoters of sustainability values. The WIA integrates sustainability in every aspect of the institution and is not limited to educational programmes. It also includes designing the teaching and learning environment, the management of the organisation as well as the range of impact in networks.

### ***DVV International / Whole Institution Approach, ESD Alliances***

The project started with the selection of experts working in various fields of sustainable development and having a connection to ALE, a profound understanding of the WIA and excellent facilitation skills. They come from different countries in the field of adult education, universities or advisory work (e.g. agencies in the field of certification of ESD). The experts support the partnering ALE institutions in initiating a sustainable organizational development process and in evaluating this process at the end of the project. The ALE institutions are being accompanied by experts selectively, whereas the team of DVV International accompanies the institutions continuously until the end of the project.



The first project workshop was held in November 2021, due to Covid-19 in a hybrid format. In it, the partners developed the foundations of the organizational development process, following the Agenda 2030 and the UNESCO Roadmap “ESDfor2030”. A rewarding aspect was the gathering of international perspectives on ESD (Education for Sustainable Development), as well as the exchange of methods of facilitation and process support. One of the results was a common model (roadmap)



of the sustainable organizational development process. Another outcome was a model for a holistic implementation of sustainability with 4 “priority areas” (educational program – organization/management – learning/working environment – network).

At an international kick-off workshop in December 2021, the adult education institutions received in-depth training on the topics of ESD and WIA. Due to the great need for international exchange, which became apparent during the project, DVV International introduced a new meeting sequence of three months, which ensures the communication flow, enables collegial advice and strengthens the partners’ commitment as part of the ESD Alliance. The ALE institutions then began their activities, including the formation of an internal, institutional ESD team involving their staff. In spring 2022 the first partner organizations held “positioning workshops” at their institutions with a core team of relevant employees or network stakeholders. The workshops aimed at creating a common vision and understanding of how ESD and the WIA can be implemented at the respective institutions and concluded with a first set of goals and milestones to work towards, e.g. workshops on ESD for staff, creating a new mission statement, including sustainability aspects into procurement structures.



Foto credit: DVV International / Carmen Lange





The DVV International project team developed an information package on ESD and WIA to support the individual organizational development process and activities. For instance, one Volkshochschule defined the goal of strengthening ESD as a cross-sectional area in all program areas, with the specific goal to implement at least 20 per cent in each program area by the end of 2024. Another goal of one of the partner institutions in this project is to improve the visibility of ESD by extending their network and cooperation partners and including the subject of sustainability constantly in their social media and public relations. Another partner organisation has set their goal on enhancing diversity within their staff and among the participants, e.g. by using easy language systems or recruiting new educators among their participants

The project sees itself as an action-research project in which the institutions involved are testing ways and methods to design a sustainable organizational development process. A Study Trip to Sweden deepened the exchange and widened the perspectives of all participating organizations. At the end of the project, handouts, guidelines and recommendations will be developed and openly published and can subsequently be used by further ALE institutions to follow the path of sustainable development. The results will be presented at a final, digital conference in April 2024.



Further information: <https://www.dvv-international.de/en/esd-alliances>

### **Connectivity to *BILDUNG***

Bildung is an individual maturing process connecting education, upbringing, knowledge, culture, and personal responsibilities towards humans and our globe. Sustainability as well impacts multiple dimensions. It not only encompasses ecological responsibility, environmental protection and climate change. It also specifically involves the promotion of sustainable social, economic and political



development and individual action-taking of people. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) aims to impart skills that enable people to make critical and responsible decisions for a more just and sustainable society today and tomorrow, which is a direct connection to the term Bildung in the sense of the Erasmus Project “Bildung”.

### ***Expansion of the sense of responsibility***

Adult education institutions are particularly important for Bildung and Sustainability. Their educational programmes enable broad segments of society to develop skills to act sustainably now and in the future. ALE institutions constitute organisational role models and should therefore align their actions with sustainability criteria. As such, they are authentic promoters of sustainability values and illustrate how sustainability can be put into practice. This kind of holistic organisational approach is summarised in the ESD Project in the concept “Whole Institution Approach” (WIA). WIA integrates sustainability in every aspect of the institution and is not limited to educational programmes. It also includes designing the teaching and learning environment, the management of the organisation as well as the range of impact in networks.

### ***Civic empowerment***

ESD addresses issues related to current challenges of the world community and relates them to local, national and global contexts and individual actions. Through ESD in ALE institutions, citizens are encouraged to promote sustainability in their personal lives as well as to challenge politicians and business leaders to align their activities with sustainability standards.

### ***Transferable knowledge, expanding one’s horizon***

Drawing on the experiences of the project actions, methods and exchange, the alliance partners collaboratively develop results that serve as the basis for publishing products, such as handouts with concepts for the implementation of WIA and Good Practice examples. These in turn support further ALE institutions in their implementation of ESD following the Whole Institution Approach.

### ***Non-transferable knowledge, emotional depth***

The concept of Bildung defines that by engaging with other people, we acquire a different kind of understanding and grow differently than when we expand



our horizons. The ESD project promotes a cross-country and cross-culture exchange of perspectives and people. This is conducted in an intercultural, personal and expert exchange between individuals. Virtual exchanges, face-to-face meetings and study visits open up personal experiences and emotional levels and make the participants reflect on themselves and learn from others.

### **Cross-border transferability**

The transferability to other countries is particularly given within this project. The concept of ESD-Alliances promotes cooperation between ALE partners from different countries. The project can be replicated in other countries and contexts. The prerequisites for success are a basic structure and experience in ALE, ESD and WIA of networking ALE institutions. The participating partners should be willing to implement ESD activities at their institutions. This includes the educational program as well as other areas of the organization, for example in the field of procurement or qualification of teachers and staff.

### **Contact**

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## 3 Recommendations

### 3.1. Recommendations to ALE providers and practitioners

Invest in Train the Trainers: Educational professionals (in all stages of Lifelong Learning) must be trained permanently so that they become familiar and confident with sustainability, green skills and circular skills and can act as ambassadors for sustainability. Involve all aspects of the Bildung Rose in the training: not only knowledge but also ethical, emotional aspects, etc.

Address the urgency of sustainability, green and circular skills to the management of the institutions. Convince them!

We need a better framing of sustainability: make it attractive, positive and “sexy”. Focus on the benefits of another lifestyle.

Use the ideas of the Bildung concept to think and implement ALE holistically, combining the various dimensions, e.g. cognitive with emotional learning, science with aesthetics. Teach life lessons of humanity, love and peace and a cultured way of life in natural surroundings.

Sustainability must be both a cross-overall issue in the curriculums and also be offered as modules. Make these interventions visible and measurable. Invest in the quality of the training.

Avoid in your work and communication the strict distinction between vocational and non-vocational ALE. It doesn't reflect reality and – according to the Bildung concept – human nature. ALE has to be multidisciplinary.

Sustainability demands a sense of responsibility for people and nature beyond national borders. Include as much as possible learning on international solidarity and global belonging in all activities. In an interconnected world, make use of the Global Citizenship Education concept.

Include concrete action, if possible with a group of people from different backgrounds, in your learning offers.

Offer labs for diverse groups of citizens aiming at developing options for the future and counterbalancing the current feeling that the future is full of risks and terrifying.



Take up ongoing community projects targeting implementing SDGs. Use this approach to link theory and practice and promote action-based learning.

By engaging people of all ages, intergenerational dialogue establishes a culture of sustainability.

### **3.2. Recommendation to national decision-makers**

ALE institutions must be part of sustainable Networks with all stakeholders involved. Provide opportunities for mutual exchange of materials and practices, and develop courses, and materials in cooperation with other network partners.

Include a module on Bildung with all the relations addressed in the project given in the university courses of initial and continuing education in the field of ALE.

Extend good Bildung practices nationally, including through project-based funding

Stop preferring purely vocational-oriented ALE and create favorable conditions for holistic ALE activities

Support ALE activities aiming at bringing together people from various backgrounds (social, national, gender)

Build bridges between ALE and concrete action on the local level by opening up more spaces for citizens to engage

### **3.3. Recommendations to European-level decision-makers**

Extend good Bildung practices nationally and internationally, including through project-based fundraising

Respect the diversity in Europe and design ESD opportunities open for many providers and participants

Tear down the walls between vocational and non-vocational ALE and replace them with a holistic understanding, which should be reflected as well in the organizational structures and funding schemes

Design an ALE policy, which aims at creating a “European sense of belonging”, including better and more options for European citizens to meet, discuss and act together.



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