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EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR  
THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS

# Can we transform the future? ALE and democracy

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# Transformation? Future?

- ENCOMPASSES AN APPROACH, PHILOSOPHY, AND SET OF TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS THAT SEEK TO CREATE INDIVIDUAL AND/OR SOCIAL CHANGE. LEARNERS CAN ALSO MOVE BEYOND INDIVIDUAL TRANSFORMATION TO A COLLECTIVE EMPOWERMENT BASED ON CRITICAL AWARENESS, NEW WAYS OF THINKING, AND ACTIVE PARTICIPATION.
- THIS MODEL FACILITATES A PROCESS OF CONSCIOUS REALIZATION FOR LEARNERS AS THEY WORK TOGETHER TAKING ACTION, INCLUDING POTENTIAL ACTS OF RESISTANCE, TOWARDS A MORE DEMOCRATIC, EQUAL, AND ETHICAL WORLD.
- Definition of change-oriented ALE by the FutureLab project: <https://eaea.org/project/future-lab/>

# Why?

The aim is to develop “better individuals” and/or make communities, organizations, society or world a different and – hopefully – a better place.

Change can take place at different levels: **Individual** (attitudes, perceptions...), **community** (structures, social cohesion...), **organization** (activity system, culture...), **society** (equality, policy...), and **world** (climate, global challenges...)

- Need to organize change-oriented AE can be based on...
  - –experienced or observed social problems
  - –political systems which are undemocratic or open to dangers of populism
  - –poverty, austerity policies, economic and gender inequalities
  - –destructive ways of behaving and thinking
  - –or on political objectives; not necessary “good” or supported by majority of people

A fundamental question is, how and by whom the need for change (peaceful or radical) is defined

# Democracy

We need both the ALE that provides lifelong learning for employability and personal hobbies and the folkbildung that empowers us as citizens, challenges us existentially and expands our collective and individual cultural meaning-making. Our political freedom and democracy depend on an informed populace who can support themselves and who can thus afford to have the opinions they have and pursue them actively by democratic means as involved citizens. Political freedom and democracy likewise depend on a populace who have the bildung that allows them to be actively participating in and contributing to democracy. People who can think for themselves and who have the language to express themselves; individuals who have something to say and the voice and vocabulary with which to say it. (Lene Rachel Andersen, <https://eaea.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/What-is-bildung.pdf>)

I cannot be in the  
world  
decontextualized,  
simply observing life

Washing one's hands of the conflict  
between the powerful and the  
powerless, means to side with the  
powerful, not to be neutral

***Paulo Freire (a Brazilian educator and philosopher  
who was a leading advocate of critical pedagogy)***

Education never was and  
never will be neutral



# The teachers' role:

“Our keyword or key approach in terms of methodology is doing with and not doing for” (Carlos Ribeiro)

Learners Voice

# FutureLAB - Principles

- Dialogue based
- Learners as co-authors of learning
  - Ways of deciding
  - Aims formulated by the learners / actors
  - collaborative decision making process of learners/actors and teachers; decide on the what, when and where of the program
- Learning and activities based on what learners need to improve a situation of social injustice and discrimination
- Teachers support learners
- Institutions support teachers
- Emphasis on critical reflexion

# Digitalisation and Democracy – EAEA context paper

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS ON DIGITALISATION *and Democracy*

Recognise and support formal and non-formal adult learning and education as a key strategy for more democracy in digitalisation and in creating a human-first digital society.

Promote confident and critical use of digital technology to support well-being, active citizenship, inclusion, and employability.

Enforce data transparency, access and security, and thus pursue engagement, representativeness and openness. Then we can build a digital public space that is critical towards the interests of exogenic capitals.

Extend digital competence further towards Education for Democratic Citizenship/Human Rights Education, as all education should give rights-related approaches more emphasis.

Support ALE not only to provide necessary adaptive life skills for now but to anticipate and shape future developments.

Create synergies between literacy, digital skills and critical media learning and education, providing inclusive and meaningful integrated technologies.

Ensure all adults have access to education and training for digital skills, not just as users, clients or consumers in the digital world but with critical thinking, including Vulnerable and marginalised adults.

Promote digital education by better fund cooperation in education in communities and intergenerational learning in Europe and beyond.

*The full Context Paper can be found* [HERE](#)



# Grundtvig Award Winner – Digit-AL (dttools.eu)

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## Free and open materials

Our series "Smart City - Smart Teaching" explores digital transformation as a topic in education in all ages and under a lifelong learning perspective. Our focus is set on learning for democratic citizenship and the necessary digital transformation competencies. They are published under a Creative Commons License CC BY SA 4.0.



Easy introductions  
into selected  
aspects of  
digitalisation



For educators or  
teachers in  
different contexts  
of education



You might use and  
share the texts.  
They are free Open  
Source.



Online and App:  
Integrated in:  
Digital Toolbox  
Competendo



# What is Bildung?

- The Global Bildung Manifesto <https://europeanbildung.net/manifesto/> defines it like this: Bildung is the combination of the education and knowledge necessary to thrive in one's society, and the moral and emotional maturity to be both a team player and have personal autonomy. Bildung is also the 'education' bringing this about; Bildung is the process as well as the result. Bildung is a dynamic concept, one that can evolve. Bildung is knowing one's roots and being able to imagine and co-create the future. Bildung offers wholesomeness. It is a means in itself; it is not instrumental. It allows us to be fully humane and treat the planet and other species with their inherent dignity, thus enabling us to live within planetary boundaries. Bildung is a promise of an achievable utopia towards which everybody can contribute. Bildung is a force of peaceful societal transformation.

# Bildung and ALE

- Transferable knowledge and understanding; education about the world and how it is changing – this should be relatively easy to add to existing programmes.
- Non-transferable knowledge and understanding; “Who am I and who ought I be?” “Where and how do I belong?” – this requires different content and, in many places, probably a different approach to
  - teaching altogether; we will need:
  - a call for existing best practices,
  - to explore the biggest obstacles, and
  - to identify low-hanging fruits 16
- Expansion of the sense of responsibility – this is relatively uncharted territory from an andragogical/adult teaching & learning perspective; we will need a call for existing experiences and best practices.
- Civic empowerment – this probably requires different content and teaching methods in most places, but there is a rich tradition on which to draw and there are also new methods.



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# Thank you!