

SCHOOL FOR LIFE



GUIDE TO THE CONTEMPORARY FOLK HIGH SCHOOLS

group work edited by Tomasz Maliszewski

WIEŻYCA – GRZYBÓW 2016

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Introduction to the Guidelines

We are handing the present *Guide to the contemporary folk high schools "School for life"* to the Readers; its title and content refer to the traditions of folk high schools (FU) that go back to the middle of the 19th century and are significantly connected with the spiritual heritage of Nicolai Frederik Grundtvig (1783-1872), eminent Danish theologian, preacher, historian, writer and social activist.

It was in mid-19th century that under the influence of Grundtvig's philosophical ideas and social slogans the first attempts at the modernisation of Danish education system at various levels were undertaken, and experimental schools were organised in accordance with the concept of *Skolen for Livet* (*schools for life*).

The foundation stones for schools comprehended in this way were: freedom, dialogue, individual experience and also group experience of culture and history that strengthen the sense of belonging to a community. In effect, the schools aim to build in *the Students* the sense of own worth, courage to undertake decisions and the understanding of the responsibility those decisions imply; these qualities are immanently connected with the knowledge of own roots, openness and respect for others.

The educational formula proposed by Grundtvig (1838) quickly became the landmark for other Danish (and other Scandinavian) educational reform seekers – teachers, educators and local community leaders. In a concise form, it can be stated that the great Dane's idea of *school for life* in the dozens of succeeding years assumed developments in three directions, and these can be defined as follows:

1. Looking for new models of schools for children and youth in terms of the programme/syllabus and organisational formulae;
2. Establishing educational institutions for youth and adults in rural communities;
3. Working out effective methodology in educational work to counteract social marginalisation/exclusion in big cities.

In our "Guide..." we shall not be dealing with the first point, i.e. free schools for children and youth, or with point three, for which the best and most famous exemplification is *Kofoeds Skole*. We shall concentrate on the second direction, or the practical implementation of the assumptions of Grundtvig's pedagogy: how *schools for life* function as folk high schools (Danish: *folkehøjskoler*) or general education institutions for persons above 18 years of age that lay stress on emancipation, patriotism and citizenship-awareness. For clarity's sake, let us recall that the first of the three was laid down as early as 1844 in Rødding thanks to Christian Flor, and in 1851 in Ryslinge, at the initiative of Christen Kold.

The purpose of the present "Guide..." is to demonstrate to all interested how diversified are the attitudes to *schools for life* and folk high schools in contemporary thinking. It is also to show how institutions modelled on Grundtvig's work function in a number of countries. In the editorial work on the present "Guide", for obvious reasons, we reached for contemporary Scandinavian experience, mainly Danish, and also Swedish. We wanted to acquaint our Readers with the present condition of folk high schools in societies which have the longest tradition of their operation. In the scope which was of interest to us, we looked into selected solutions in Germany and in Poland, that is in countries where inspiring Scandinavian ideas and practical

solutions were adopted and adapted for own needs very quickly. The fact is that in each of the countries the developments of folk high schools have gone different ways. The picture becomes more complete with the information about the functioning of selected cultural and educational communities akin to folk high schools and *schools for life* in Bulgaria, Switzerland and Ukraine.

Another aim the authors and editor had in mind when compiling the present work was to provide the Reader with data so that he/she is able to make own judgements about the social usefulness of folk high schools or colleges in contemporary times and in the forthcoming future. For this purpose we made use of the concept of key competences. Starting from particular descriptions of practical activities, we attempted to provide illustrations how competences are shaped in different institutions. This is also reflected in the sub-title.

In the light of the above comments it is apparent that our *Guide...* is a multi-author monograph attempting to answer two basic questions:

- What is the contemporary picture of folk high schools and other similar or related institutions deriving from Grundtvig's *school for life*, on the basis of observations and analyses conducted in seven European countries;
- Are present-day folk high schools effective as tools/instruments for shaping various competences of contemporary Europeans? Will they be so in the future?

Our book is a multinational attempt at finding solutions to the two problems (research questions) indicated above. It has the form of a study which should be of assistance to anyone interested in the subject of folk high schools and the place of Grundtvig's pedagogy on European grounds.

If we wanted to compare the present *Guide...* with other (foreign) papers of similar subject, it is possible to point to the publication of Jindra Kulich about the educational ideas of Grundtvig in Central and Eastern Europe and the Baltic states, dated 2002 (Kulich 2002) or guides published in Cyprus or Lithuania more than one decade ago (Symeonides K. et al. /ed./ 2003; Krivickienė /ed./ 2004). If we wanted to call upon publications closest in character (to the present Guide) that appeared in Poland, undoubtedly we should be obliged to quote the collective work entitled "Folk high school – school for life" published in 2003 by the Kaszubski Uniwersytet Ludowy (Kashubian Folk high school) in Wieżyca that I had the pleasure to edit in cooperation with Ewa Przybylska and Marek Byczkowski (especially Chapter III, edited by M. Byczkowski entitled "From the work of the project *Folk high school – school for life*", p. 281-385) and the book: *Siejąc ziarna przyszłości. Wiejskie ośrodki edukacji ku zrównoważonej przyszłości* (*Sowing the seeds of the future. Rural educational centres towards a sustainable future*) published three years later at the initiative of Stowarzyszenie Ekologiczno-Kulturalne "Ziarno" from Grzybów, edited by Ewa Smuk-Stratenwerth. It is a good turn of events that after a decade the two environments decided to return to the subject in a modified formula.

The Guide... consists of four parts preceded by the present "Introduction."

In part one, entitled "In search of a modern *school for life*" the Reader will find two general sketches introducing the challenges *school for life* encountered in its early days, followed by a number of essays written down by practice people (folk high school teachers

from different countries) about the place and role of Grundtvig's ideas in their professional work and personal lives.

Part II "Key competences – new/old challenges" refers to the contemporary investigation of the role of competences in the preparation for competent activity and functioning in various spheres of life. The title itself suggests that perhaps the new challenges depicted in the European Union documents concerning building key competences in Europeans of today in the most part are not new at all. This can be seen from a survey of the entire time-span of folk high school's functioning and activities.

Examples of good practices comprise part III ("Contemporary *school for life* – examples of good practices"). Some illustrate various directions of activities undertaken at contemporary folk high schools in Denmark, Germany, Poland and Sweden, while others refer to the functioning of other (non-university) forms of *schools for life*. It is noteworthy that there is no single pattern for or model of folk high school or *school for life*, which only proves how vital and flexible this educational formula is.

The last, fourth part, entitled "Epilogue" is to be treated as a summary of all considerations of *The Guide*... It includes a description of the Ten Commandments for folk high school teachers prepared by Erik Lindsø (Denmark), many-years' teacher and director of a number of Danish folk high schools.

Upon the end of the introduction, I encourage all readers to become familiar with the present publication, hoping that it will bring you interesting information on the present condition of European folk high schools and inspiring materials for personal reflections about the possible directions of their development in the future.

Tomasz Maliszewski – editor of „The Guide”

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PART I

In search of a modern “School for life”

Introductory notes to Part I

The challenges posed by the development of civilization – catalogued, described, analysed and generalised in many different ways by many different researchers, seem to be today a relatively well recognized and “domesticated” issue, also in educational circles. The awareness that we need a change today in the approach to education and upbringing is undoubtedly becoming very widespread. Whatever we think about the propositions put forward by different theorists or actions taken by practitioners in this field, one thing has already been certain for some time. The mankind has forever finished with the traditional division of human life into two periods clearly different in terms of “relationship with education”: the first one – let us call it – period of childhood and adolescence, in which the relations with institutional forms of education, mainly schools of different levels, are very tight, and adulthood, in which “cashing” of the education achieved in the first period occurs. Therefore, the proverbial wisdom of our parents and grandparents – “What youth is used to, age remembers” or “Diligent youth makes easy age” – irretrievably lost their original meaning and social impact, becoming more and more like a mere illustration of the (un)justly passed times.

Lifelong learning, lifelong education, learning throughout life – these are the leading slogans of the new life philosophy, the new ideology and new educational practice of the contemporary (and future) world. So the next generations will have to set out for their own educational battle under new, already different banners... Changes in the approach to education can already be seen clearly in many places around the world...

On the European ground, these processes are sometimes backed by various documents adopted by different important international bodies (such as the recommendations of the European Parliament and the Council of Europe in the matters of: key competencies – 2006, the European Qualifications Framework – 2008 or on the validation of non-formal and informal learning – 2012), which in turn has a clear reflection in the regulations and programmes adopted by national governments (such as the Polish *Lifelong learning perspective* [Annex to resolution No. 160/2013 of the Council of Ministers, Warsaw, September 10, 2013]).

Searching for new educational solutions adequate to the challenges is also accompanied by questions about the future of the institution that have already existed for a long time in the social space and for decades were regarded as effective:

- ❑ Will “they bear” the burden of these new tasks put before them by the present and the future?
- ❑ Will they “cope” with the new order (not just educational) of the world or will they fall into oblivion?
- ❑ What will happen with work methods developed, in some cases, throughout generations – methodological concepts, programs, educational microsystems?

The concern about the future arises in the representatives of all educational circles. These (and other) questions arise both in the institutions of formal education at different levels as well as in environments leading and animating various ways of informal learning – and thus, for example, educational associations, self-education circles, academies or folk high schools, which are our main area of interest in this *Guide to the contemporary folk high schools “School for life”*.

It seems that it is the folk high schools that have every chance to become one of the leading educational institutions in different countries, allowing the citizens of those countries to prepare for empowered functioning in social, economic, private and/or political life. After all, they are one of the few truly educational entities which succeeded many times in the past to respond quickly and flexibly to new challenges – each time effectively for more than a hundred years!

This is undoubtedly thanks to the original idea which lay at the origin of these institutions, that is the original project of *the school of life* formulated by Nicholas Grundtvig in the first half of the nineteenth century, but also to all those who for decades have tried to turn more of his ideas into specific educational actions – starting from Christian Flora and Christen Kold in the nineteenth century Denmark, ending with a countless mass of teachers, educators and animators in different countries around the world, referring to the Grundtvigian legacy in modern times.

In the first part of our *Guide...* the reader will find several illustrations of such contemporary references to the idea of the great Dane made by the representatives of several countries.

This part opens with two slightly fuller sketches of a more general nature. Both – similar in their expression yet written from different perspectives – show different ways of analysing

the ways of contemporary approaches to Grundtvig's ideas, also possible in the future, and on the practical implementation of his *school for life*. The next article constitutes a cognitively interesting and thought-provoking interpretation of the work of Grundtvigian free schools in Denmark from the perspective of the possibility of applying at least some of these solutions in the more and more modern Bulgarian society. The whole part 1 is complemented with the thoughts of ten different authors about their work at folk high schools and their personal references to Grundtvigian ideas.

You could say that Part 1 of the book is an authentic g u i d e to the various possible ways of understanding Nicholas Grundtvig's pedagogy in modern times.

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Folk high school as the *school for life*. In the search of the future.



I. Discussions on the future of folk high schools

Folk high schools occupy a special place among various contemporarily known forms of non-formal adult education. Although they grew out of the philosophical and socio-political traditions of the Nordic countries, they now constitute more or less significant elements of the educational solutions in dozens of different countries of the world. The analysis of the history of this educational concept leads to the conclusion that it is undoubtedly one of the most important achievements in the history of the world of adult education. In this area we could consider as representative e.g. the opinions of the Polish educator, Richard Wroczyński or the American sociologist, Steven M. Borish. The first one stressed that “the great movement within the field of extracurricular rural education [...] had a profound impact on the development of European education” (Wroczyński 1980, p. 165), and the second one pointed out that the idea of folk high schools [*further in the text also as FHS*] is not only an original but, above all, authentic and meaningful contribution of Scandinavia to the global solutions in the field of education and upbringing (Borish 1991, pp. 7–9). So the past successes and achievements of folk high schools are unquestionable and, let us add, recognised by authors from different countries in the textbooks of pedagogy, sociology, history and cultural anthropology.

Today, however, questions arise about the future of the idea, about the fate of the concept:

- Do the references to the Grundtvigian idea of *the school for life* make any sense nowadays?
- Is a form of adult education referred to as *folk high school* still needed in the current (and future) reality?
- Has its classic formula of a folk high school as a boarding facility maintained its validity?

Although the answers to the indicated questions seem evident, especially if we read the opinions of the authors of our “Guide...” In all the three cases it should be – YES!

But one cannot fail to see the ongoing discussion on folk high schools in different places of the globe. And with the conclusions and proposals not always so obvious and also not always so optimistic for the future of these institutions.

The growing competition in the efforts to win over students among the different actors of adult education circles is mentioned, among others, by the Dutch educator, Jelle Zwart, who sees a particular threat to the future of folk high schools in the ruthless “battle for the client,” undertaken by various centres of formation or training and consulting companies that “in their quest to survive are too heavily focused on the frantic financial struggle and ready to hastily conclude dubious political compromises” (Zwart 2000, p. 174). Meanwhile a Swede, Johan Norbeck, looks for the source of the problems of folk high schools in their very conception, which almost by definition makes them, in a way, independent from, not to say – opposed to anything official: the educational system, the ruling political class, etc. This certainly provokes distrust among the decision-makers which clearly influences different aspects of the daily practice (Norbeck 1991). The transformations of the modern world also cause understandable concern. It is good if teachers and/or animators of activities in individual institutions remain calm and perceive the transformations – like the authors of our “Guide...” – as a reason for hope, not fear and anxiety.

Different bodies constantly initiate debates on the future movement of folk high schools as a whole and in each of its national editions. Their participants try to demonstrate in many ways “the current importance of folk high schools and their possible roles in education systems” (Szczepański 1999, p. 161–165). These discussions have especially intensified in the last quarter and touched almost all the places in the world where the FHS movement is known (see e.g. Sapel 1993, Kulich 2002, Byczkowski, Maliszewski, Przybylska /ed./ 2003)... Therefore, there must be something to it... Something that makes the relatively numerous circles that care about adult education want to refer to the formula of folk high schools.

It seems that in order to meet the new challenges, folk high schools need, among others, a new interpretation of the tradition, a new analysis – conducted at a slightly different angle – of their history from both a global and national perspective. This might make it possible to show the educational activities of this form of adult education in a new light as well as identify those areas and work methods of the past which were previously overlooked or marginalized in the historical, educational or sociological publications on FHSs. Such an intellectual effort which

aims to “remind the forgotten” would make it possible to e.g. (re)define the roles folk high schools will play in education in the near and more distant future.

On the one hand, it would be necessary for the idea of folk high schools itself. Because this educational institution important for decades seems now to stand at a crossroads, as evidenced by the search for a further path for them carried out in different countries – also Scandinavian which constitute the cradle of FHSs. This is also visible in Poland, where folk high schools still work as institutions “suspended” somewhere between “the indifference of society” and “the disregard by authorities”, actually constituting “a passion for a few” – paraphrasing the title of one of the articles I wrote on this topic nearly two decades ago (cf.: Maliszewski 1998). This seems to be confirmed by the alarming signals about the reduction of activities or the closing of some folk high schools, coming from time to time from different corners of the globe.

On the other hand, showing to wide circles of society what an effective “tool” folk high schools can constitute in the development of the new educational niches and as a response to the upcoming social challenges. It can make it easier for the local, regional, national or international bodies (e.g. within the European Union) to make decisions regarding the implementation of specific socially important tasks/activities in the field of culture and education with the help of these institutions.

Perhaps it will turn out (and I personally am deeply convinced that this is what will happen) that it is not necessarily worth wasting time and money on the search for new concepts of educational work when a new social challenge appears because we have a proven and effective institution at hand. We probably will not avoid some necessary modifications or adjustments here – especially in terms of the programme, however, the ideological, conceptual, organizational and methodological framework is ready...

II. Interpretative risks and hopes

In this part I would like to recall the ideas of Grundtvig who, as it is well known, is considered to be the author of the idea of *the school for life* and the godfather of the concept of adult education which has been afterwards creatively developed into the great worldwide movement of folk high schools. Reading the words of the enlightened Dane that I am about to quote, we should bear in mind that years ago in the literature – not only on the Polish ground – a schematic and (too often) uncritically reproduced “the only correct” interpretation of Grundtvigian views became popular and then consolidated in the common consciousness. It states that it is necessary to establish a new type of educational institution and looks something like this:

As early as in the first half of the nineteenth century, the great Danish philosopher Nikolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig established the concept of *the school of life* as an opposition to traditional educational institutions, the activity of which was completely negated by him, as reflected, e.g. in the name he gave them – *schools of death* (*schools for death* – in other translations). Therefore, folk high schools – as new *schools for life*, had to be in (extreme) opposition to all the other educational institutions existing then – that is to the *schools of death*.

An interpretation repeated so many times by almost everyone. And below the original idea of Grundtvig himself, which is a faithful translation of the Danish text of his authorship written in 1838:

“Now I will try to clarify what I mean by *the school for life* [...].

Firstly – because no *school* is able to create a new life inside us, it must not destroy the old one or waste time on creating rules that could govern the other [second] life, if we had it. The beginning of such a process would have to be decomposition, and therefore – death [...] and I negate [it] completely.

Secondly – the school has to accept life as it is – just trying to explain it and make it more beneficial. And so I believe that if an *educational institution* is to provide benefit to life, it cannot above all set either education or itself as an end but must strive to explain [this] life” (Grundtvig 1838, in: *Folk high schools...*, 2002, p. 2).

And what does this quote mean? Well, only so much that these are also the views of the same Grundtvig – although not subject to such an unambiguous interpretation as those from “the only correct” vision. At the same time, I do not think that recognising this and other non-canonical expressions in his writings makes the issue of the past, present and future of folk high schools more complicated. Absolutely not... This and other “similarly forgotten” opinions open up new possibilities of analysis of not only the very beginnings or the later history of these institutions – they can also provide a number of “genuinely Grundtvigian” guidelines regarding the search for directions for folk high schools in the future. Of course – if we agree to include in the canon of “Grundtvig’s texts” the carefully omitted passages “problematizing” the former intricately woven image.

Please note how many different interpretative colours appear only in this one non-canonical quotation of the Master: continuation, development, explanation of the current and future life, acceptance of life as it is as the basis for planning a change, etc. And so the official version of the FHS narrative “sanctified by tradition”, which says that folk high schools grew out

of *denial* and have to – before creating *something new* in a man – “burn out *the old* with fire”, is only one of many possible interpretations of the Grundtvigian pedagogy and – we should probably admit – a quite extreme one.

What else? Let us remember another message that comes from the quoted “forgotten” Grundtvigian thought (and may this also be a warning for the folk high schools themselves)

No educational institution is and can “be an end in itself” or, in other words, (and in FHS language): a folk high school cannot be created and/or maintained just in order “to exist”. And this is a feeling one can get sometimes when reading fragments of studies on folk high schools written by different people related to them either through conducted research or some “sentimental relations”. Folk high school appears in them as an enlightened (heavenly, idealized) institution which should be approached with “due respect”, not to say – “on the knees...”

In other words – a bronze statue!

Additionally, such approach does not facilitate a proper understanding of the essence of folk high schools by a wider public. It can make it significantly more difficult for the employees and enthusiasts to lead modernization works, which, after all, are necessary in all institutions characterized by long duration, and can limit the ability of analysing subjects adequate to the realistic expectations and not to the imagined cultural and educational needs of their social environment. In such case, disappointments may appear, a sense of misunderstanding and more or less veiled grievances and complaints “towards almost the entire world”, such as:

Folk high school is beautiful, good and worthy of respect and support but *you* do not understand it! And this *YOU* – depending on the circumstances – takes on different shapes; of politicians at various levels, local government officials, educational policy makers, officials, would-be donors, etc., and, of course, the society – uninformed or wrongly informed by the media and the so-called authorities, unfriendly to folk high schools or disregarding them...

So – concluding this topic – let us go back to the roots and reach for Grundtvig, rediscover his old thoughts. At the same time, let us go beyond the traditional paths of interpretation. Maybe this will help us to think in a new, more open way about the role and tasks of folk high schools (of the future) going beyond the schemes, as well as to protect us against the dangers of the lack of critical thinking or the feeling of FHS superiority over other educational institutions.

III. The “School for Life” of the future

When leading today’s exploration of the space for folk high schools and Grundtvigian pedagogy in the world and having judged that they are needed – because this is, after all, the general sense of our “Guide...” (which, of course, we do not hide from the readers) – it is worth asking some further questions.

Especially two of them seem to have a crucial meaning for the future of the FHS case:

1. How to create educational phenomena effectively and in socially desirable directions now and in the future, drawing inspiration from the achievements of folk high schools and the tradition of independent education related to them?
2. How to disseminate the modern formula of folk high school (*school for life*) in the society and get allies from among politicians, teachers and local community leaders?

Finding answers will not be easy but it is worth discussing these issues and working on them constantly. The first one refers to the essence of a modern folk high school, while the other – to its socio-political and cultural environment. So only a proper co-operation of both can guarantee a stable foundation and an opportunity to develop folk high schools as Grundtvigian *schools for life* in a given country.

Among more specific tasks that we should impose on the current and future *schools for life* – that is folk high schools and twin educational institutions drawing inspiration from Nicholas Grundtvig’s pedagogy, I would like to list at least a few.

1. Promoting mature patriotism and respect for the historical achievements of one’s homeland while respecting the difference of others;
2. Promoting civic education and building civil society, developing local democracy and the idea of social partnership;
3. Taking inclusive actions in favour of the socially excluded/disadvantaged groups/communities and individuals ;
4. Implementing tasks of cultural nature – including the protection of cultural heritage and multifaceted regional education;
5. Supporting the development of self-education movement, and amateur artistic and cultural creativity in small local communities;
6. Developing key competencies allowing a person to function in social, political, professional and personal life;
7. Conducting vocational education in selected directions using a holistic approach to individuals and their needs;

8. Promoting ideas and practical solutions concerning sustainable socioeconomic development of the local community, region and country;
9. Conducting classes of free time developing individualized needs of the community in which a given institution operates;
10. Preparing for the understanding and acceptance of civilization changes occurring in the contemporary world.

Of course, this decalogue does not exhaust the list of possible actions and educational initiatives to be taken by folk high schools and it outlines only the most important – probably not only from the Polish perspective – areas of educational and cultural activity.

In general, as I stressed repeatedly in my publications on the tasks of folk high schools, it is advisable for each of the FHSs to constantly “listen to” the signals from their social environment in order to optimally determine the educational tasks that the community considers *important* and/or *necessary*.

In addition to “listening”, folk high schools also need determination in the area of animation activities. It is folk high schools – along with other independent educational institutions and organizations – that should set certain patterns of educational behaviours and make the communities, in which they carry out their educational activities, realize the educational needs, the existence of which they have not realized before.

The fact of recognising the potential role of these institutions – postulated for many years by the author on various occasions – could cause this not only beautiful but very effective education formula to flourish (*see e.g. Danish, German or even Polish experience from the 1930s*). Folk high schools were able, in fact, to effectively raise throughout the last century thousands of enlightened citizens active in creating democracy in different places of the globe. They will certainly be able to do so in the future:

- rebuilding their previously occupied position in the national structures of adult education where they lost it,
- maintaining (and expanding) the area of activity where they are still considered to be an important link in the educational system,
- conquering new areas (countries, regions) by showing flexibility and effectiveness of the concept of *the school for life* where they have been little known so far.

The revitalization of the concept of folk high schools in the world will urgently – and in the near future – need among others:

- stronger links with local (regional) communities in which individual institutions operate,

- effective lobbying for FHSs at all levels of decision-making and opinion-forming,
- an even more active search for educational niches and social needs possible to be managed in accordance with the ideological assumptions of *the school for life*,
- broad, multifaceted exchange of experiences and cooperation between all the educational actors that draw inspiration from the pedagogy of Grundtvig.

* * *

To conclude the deliberations on the search for the future of the folk high school as *the school for life*, allow me to express my hope *pro domo sua*: I hope that in Poland we will soon be able to – following the example of the Scandinavian countries, Austria, the Netherlands, Germany and Hungary – enjoy a more permanent foundations for the development of indigenous folk high schools, self-education societies and independent educational associations.

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Essay on grundtvigian school for life ideas

(as adapted to modern reality and conditions by the Association of Folk High Schools in Denmark)



I. Introduction

Throughout their history since 1844 Danish Folk High Schools have been carriers of and deeply indebted to the original ideas and thinking of N.F.S Grundtvig (1783 - 1872) and his disciple Chr. Kold (1815 – 1870) as the main source of inspiration and guideline for their educational program an ambition. - And a listing of such well known expressions about and points of view on educational issues like “School for Life” - “Enlightenment on Life” - “Enlivening/Encouraging before Enlightening” . “The living Interaction” - “The living Word”- “Lust for Learning” - The Whole Human Being”- “Teacher as a Mid-Wife”- “History and Poetry as Key Subjects”. – still call forth a resonance as an expression of fundamental ideas from the old days having a relevance also today.

However, in spite if this fact, FHS-people of yesterday and today have also experienced the necessity of rethinking and revising their views and interpretation of programs, methods and practical realization of fundamental ideas in order to be able to meet new needs and challenges – caused by historical changes of Society and its cultural habits and preconditions.

One such recent effort to combine fidelity towards original fundamental ideas with adaptation to modern conditions has been carried through by The Association of FHS s in Denmark (*Folkehøjskolernes Forening i Danmark*), by means of an internal discussion among personnel of the members of the Association, ending up in a declaration and publication of a set of ideas, intentions, examples and recommendations as a source of possible ways to meet challenges of present problems, conditions and needs of Folk High School education.

The following description of these is supposed to be relevant as a starting point for initial discussion about the frames of a modern folk high school in different European countries.

II. The declaration of The Association of Folk High Schools in Denmark

The title of the mentioned declaration is “The future of Folk High Schools,” and its

subtitle is “Existence, Practical Matter-of-Fact-Knowledge and Politics”. In short, this subtitle may be interpreted as an announcement of three core

questions or fields of problems, which for FHS s as educational institutions as well as for the individual student are considered of fundamental importance.

Folk high schools should combine or allow a fundamental humanistic approach to go hand in hand with practical matter-of-fact-learning and engagement in matters concerning social and cultural affairs.

III. Core values of Folk high schools

As remedies for such a combination are considered:

1. The personal meeting.

Teachers and students of FHS should be meeting each other as persons of equal importance and dignity, - enabling an open pedagogical process, in which student and teacher may be equally engaged as to contents, methods and direction of learning, and in which the questions and answers may be posed and given by either part, containing the possibility of informal guidance based on human experience as well as on professional expertise.

Living together as boarding colleagues may be an important framework or fertilizer for this meeting, - but to become fruitful or successful there is a requirement for both students and teachers to be willing to engage in dialogue and unfold personal attitude in both matter-of-fact and general humanistic questions.

Specially the tradition of teachers' personal sociability is important to be continually focused upon.

2. Freedom

It is a core value of FHS s, - not in the sense of liberation or disengagement from duties and responsibility, - but rather the opposite, namely by means of enlivening and enlightening to contribute to the development of the individual to become a responsible and self-determined and self-governing master of his/her own life, with the ability of taking an independent position to essential questions of Human life.

With the understanding of close connection between freedom and responsibility as a background FHS s deals with matters of essence and existential meaning and sense in life, - beyond practical narrow personal and social competence.

3. Community.

FHS s have from their origin had the understanding of Humans as social beings, - from the birth being part of and strengthened by Human fellowship and community.

A main message of Danish FHS s is the insoluble coherence of freedom and

responsibility in a civilized society. As nobody can live by/for him-/herself alone, we are each other*s necessary companions, and the consequence of this is the fact that freedom of the individual has its value only when unfolded in community with other Humans. Community/fellowship contains or expresses the ideal of equal possibilities for all, - or with a quotation from Grundtvig: "a society, in which only few have too much, and still fewer too little".

4. Holistic view

Most people in modern society perceive the multitude of aspects of existence as phenomena without connection or coherence, which for the individual may be difficult to unify and understand. - FHS s should be offering a possibility for a holistic experience, in which body and soul, rationality and irrationality, poetical and practical aspects of life go together, - where critical analysis and aesthetic experience are considered supplementary, creating an environment with ability to open new perspectives and give new energy.

IV. Decisive aspects of FHS's work

1. The existential aspect

The fundamental conditions of Human life, - the world view and the identity of the individual as well as the personal and ethical dilemmas of each and everybody are obligatory elements of FHS education. This aspect of interpretation of existence in FHS educational activity is still - or maybe even more - needed in our age of social complexity and apparently unlimited possibilities of choice of the individual in his/her life development.

The approach to such aspects and questions of life can be reached through subjects e.g. as Religion, History, Psychology, Literature, Art.

2. The Matter-of-fact aspect

FHS s have since their beginning offered education and training of subjects of immediate utility value according to the practical needs of students.

Modern life has new and different challenges, - and meeting the needs for practical matter-of-fact knowledge of today is a must for FHS s. What is unique concerning the teaching of such matters at FHS s is the possibility of students' self-defining an informal course of study with no pre-existing requirements for passing an exam, - so that the study plan thereby can become fully adapted to the need for qualification and acquirement of skills of the individual student as defined by him-/herself. The role of the teacher in this kind of individual study of course requires both

professional insight and consciousness of and ability to perform a delicately balanced activity of intuitive observation and leadership.

Experience shows that absorption in the matter-of-fact subject may open up for dialogue between teacher and student on more personal and existential questions.

3. The political aspect

Danish FHS s consider people's participation in making decisions on community and social matters to be of decisive importance. Personal freedom can only be defended by participation in public debate on priorities and goals of Society.

Such participation requires insight into the mechanisms of Society, knowledge of History as well as visions about the future of Society. FHS s offer impulses and incentives to become active citizens with knowledge of and wish for influencing development of Society as well as of those parts of the world with which we have international agreements.

4. The Historical – Poetical dimension.

Throughout the efforts and activities of Danish FHS s it has always been considered of the greatest importance to deal with and understand History, and with the special kind of insight incorporated in Poetry and Literature. The stories told by History and Poetry are discussing the relations between common/universal and private/individual, and their interpretation of reality may enlighten and explain possibilities and dilemmas of Human life in a deep and inspiring way.

V. Future society

Future Society contains or implies both considerable risks and enormous possibilities. Knowledge and creativity will be considered important power of production. Companies and organizations will be functioning as networks, which may by using modern technology of communication multiply their capacity to utilize and generate new knowledge. The Economy has become global and international competition has become intensified.

Individualism is characterizing social and cultural behaviour of the individual: One must navigate/choose between many cultural opportunities, meeting still rising requirement of professional and personal qualifications. The individual has become the central agent in the development of his/her own identity or personality, - and safety of traditional transition rituals easing transition from one stage of life to another do not exist any more. In this hyper complex Society the creation or development of sense and coherence in the life of the individual is a very central concern. A witness of this fact is a rising interest in biographical stories, as well as for philosophy and religion.

FHS s have good preconditions for contributing to the process of personal spiritual development of modern young people, - as well as for business people seeking sense and coherence in life and in quickly changing economic and cultural conditions. As seen from the angle of social mutual connection and fellow citizenry, more consciousness and focus will therefore be necessary, if FHS education is going to contribute to creating social and democratic attitudes of their students.

VI. Competences and life long learning

In the actual political and cultural debate on Education, two key notions – namely: *competence* and *life long learning* have attracted much attention.

1. Competences

According to general agreement there can be distinguished between at least three different competences:

- 1) competence as to matter-of-fact knowledge,
- 2) competence as to meeting and handling change,
- 3) social competence.

The important essence of this fact is the FHS effort to understand and in its daily work realize the vision of Competence to comprise or include all three mentioned components in mutual interaction, - offering not only matter-of-fact knowledge, but also stimulating or inspire and encourage deeper reflection, ability to learn from experience, capacity of interpretation and judgment as to phenomena of life. In other words: Competence is not only about matter-of-fact knowledge, but also has to do with development of independent opinion and attitude heightening self-esteem and confidence in own possibilities of students.

2. Life long learning

Danish FHS s fully agree with the EU recommendation of certain elements of adult education mentioned in the “Guidelines on building key competences through Grundtvigian Pedagogy” and they take active part in efforts to realize the target fields stated by the EU. Some examples of how Danish FHS s take part in this work:

- 2.1. By offering courses meant to meet the need for basic qualification for all citizens – under the title of UBAK (= education of broad and general character) in which treatment of a field of practical matter-of-fact knowledge is combined with teachers' explaining and adding of general perspective, followed by dialogue and evaluation of students' benefit from lessons of the course.
- 2.2. By offering courses for business people as part of LLL and adaptation to or updating of needed qualifications in business life, - with contents and targets determined by means of dialogue and cooperation with organizations of trades

men and industrial owners and employees etc.

- 2.3. By offering courses on active citizenry and people's insight into political philosophy. The rising complexity of the Society and the political process of legislation and administration makes it difficult to look through and understand what happens diminishes the possibility of carrying out active citizenship and political participation, and requires greater knowledge and interest of the individual.
- 2.4 By arranging travels for students to foreign countries with the aim of studying and understanding social and cultural habits and differences, and thereby developing a basis for positive connections between different nations.
- 2.5. By establishing a list of new general subjects of FHS education, and proposal for contents of e.g. the following subjects:
 - Basic IT and methods of self governed learning
 - Intercultural competence, cultural differences
 - Communication, background and significance
 - Communication and cooperation, personal social competences
 - Personal health, consciousness and responsibility for own health
 - Project work, function and conditions for modern associations
 - Europe, knowledge of and attitude to political & democratic Union
 - Sustainability, ecology, environmental policies, strategy for change
 - Global society, new economy, technology, networks, Internet. Politics

VII. Conclusion – future role of FHS s

The role or “mission” of Danish FHS s in future society may be focused on three main tasks:

1. Non formal learning in the “knowledge society”.
2. FHS s as centres of meeting of people from different cultural backgrounds
3. FHS s as participant in public debate on educational and social issues.

1. *NON formal learning/education*

In the future most people will meet new demands of constant development of competences of various fields of life. Formal exams are supposed to have diminished importance, - but for the individual in return documentation and relevance of acquired skill and competence will be important. The ability and motivation for learning will be a vital personal quality. The need for personal general education will probably become increased concurrently with Society's complexity and the trend of individualism.

Today and in the future , “work” is not only a necessary activity for earning a livelihood, but for the individual person it also has become an important source or space for learning about Democracy, Identity and quality of life. FHS s should be conscious of general conditions of work-

life, and as regards their offer of informal education take into consideration the aim of supplementing formal education with possibility of acquiring such competences which may be useful in professional work life.

2. FHS s as centers of cultural meeting

Refugees and migrants from many nations recently have become more numerous in the country, and integration of these people continues to be insufficient. Ethnical minorities have difficulties in finding their way into the labour market, often due to cultural differences or poor command of Danish language. FHS s should take up the challenge of bringing Danes closer to the foreigners and the foreigners closer to the Danes. In a globalized world we shouldn't forget that we all belong to cultural minorities, and we have to learn living together and respecting each other's culture.

As a consequence, the international dimension of FHS education should be strengthened and developed, with the aim of giving youngsters from the mentioned minorities the chance of a positive meeting with Danish youngsters as well as with Danish history, culture and mentality, as a help to cope with the challenges of formal education opening the gate to proper labor market participation.

3. FHS s as a participant in public debate.

From the beginning of the existence of FHS s, they have been known as critical opponents to many parts of the established political/social/cultural agenda. FHS s also today feel an obligation to engage in taking part in public debate on the future of Democracy and the social and cultural development, representing and insisting on the view on such issues, that each of us carries a portion of responsibility for local and national community as well as for practical solidarity at our workplace and the institutions we are affiliated with. Further, the FHS movement insists on values and ethics to be integrated part of the dialogue on Society's decisions on political, economic, social and cultural issues.

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Teaching democracy and Personal Empowerment in the Danish Free Schools - a Bulgarian perspective



I am the chairperson of the National Parents Network in Bulgaria– an NGO, promoting parental civil rights and responsibilities in taking care of their children according to their convictions. One of our missions in connection with upholding parental responsibility is being active in bringing about educational change in Bulgaria. We believe the main problem of our education system is that it hasn't been reformed yet to be able to leave its totalitarian past and become a genuine democratic system.

I. The Bulgarian context: the need to educate for democracy and personal empowerment

The totalitarian character of school institutions in Bulgaria is a major factor for their failure to prepare students for life in a democratic society – a society where:

- blind trust in institutional authority figures (school, governmental, media) should be replaced by independent critical thinking;
- passive-aggressive compliance should be replaced by active decision making and taking responsibility;
- the atomization of society, whereby each individual looks for ways to ensure their own survival at the expense of a hostile totalitarian system/society (zero-sum game approach to life), should be replaced by healthy individualism where the individual is aware of his own uniqueness and value while taking care of him/herself without feeling the need to be hostile to society (a win-win approach to life);
- forced collective conformity should be replaced by genuine team work;
- search for the only truth should be replaced by the awareness of multiple approaches to truth;

- the quest for the *dominant* truth, person, skill or curriculum subject, should be replaced by the quest for ways in which differences can complement each other and *combine* in new creative ways;
- dependency on authority figure/institution to guarantee security should be replaced by taking the responsibility to face insecurity and learning various ways to cope with it

One of our objectives as an organization is to actively look for examples of democratic educational legislations and pedagogical approaches to schooling and education in order to learn and critically implement the ones relevant to the Bulgarian context.

II. Denmark Visit: educating for democracy and personal empowerment the Danish way

In June 2015, I was kindly invited by Ole Pedersen, the principal of the Academy for Free Schools Teachers in Ollerup, to visit the Academy and several free schools. I experienced school days in several free schools, and also attended lectures at the Academy. I was deeply touched by the warm welcome everywhere, virtual lack of power distance, humane attitude to the kids, high level of self-organization of parents and high level of regulatory freedom in education. In fact Denmark turned out to be a country, where all our organization's claims for democratic educational reform have been a reality since 1855, when the first Free School Act was adopted. This is an enormous encouragement and would be of great help in our work here, in Bulgaria. What we struggle for, the Danish have had functioning for hundreds of years, namely:

1. Pluralism (freedom) in both educational approaches and testing/certifying systems;
2. Registration regime for new schools instead of licensing regime (i.e. the principle of parental responsibility for the education of the children);
3. Non-discriminative financing of all schools, irrespective of their ideology or ownership.

The Danish enjoy a remarkably democratic supervision system for the free schools - the parents who establish the school either self-evaluate (posting their results and procedures publicly on their website), or choose an external supervisor - a person they trust and respect, who doesn't have to be a government official.

The democratic educational system in Denmark owes a lot to the Danish pastor, author, poet, philosopher, historian, teacher and politician N. F. S. Grundtvig. In the XIX century he managed to win society over to the very same ideas we are trying to win people in Bulgaria today – that learning cannot be a forced thing, that one cannot educate the mind, while at the same time suppressing the emotions and the will, that one cannot effectively learn anything that

is disconnected from his/her experience, that there are diverse ways of learning and enlightenment, that the state can't teach the children contrary to their parents' will, because the state "should neither be church, nor be a school", that education's final goal is neither „assured livelihood", nor good citizenship, but the "perfection of the human being" - and only after this goal is adhered to can the other two follow in a genuine way; that the school should serve to bond people in a society without resorting to violence e.t.c.

III. The Danish free schools: real-life examples of educational approaches

3.1 Team work

There have been a lot of talk and policies lately, aimed at promoting team work in education. While in the Academy, I witnessed how effective, satisfying and of high educational value can the entrepreneurial team work be. In English Teaching Class students were freely forming teams and producing educational materials and activities, connected to the particular frame of study. Then they were sharing it with other teams. They were freely engaging in the work, contributing as they deemed fit and complementing each other so that everyone served the others with their specific skills. The overall atmosphere was of fun, educational progress and satisfying human interaction.

Team work was a practice I also witnessed with pupils as young as first grade. In the math lesson in the Green Free School in Copenhagen the first graders were all working together to solve the problems they chose from a variety of problems the teacher had offered. They were not allocated a separate desk each and were not asked to work by themselves and never consult their friends (the common practice in Bulgaria). On the contrary, many of them were discussing the problems and whenever one of the kids managed to solve it, all others benefitted from his/her achievement as well. The little kids could take the initiative for their learning (choose between problems) and choose to cooperate with others or work silently by themselves – cooperation was not forced on them, but was freely chosen by some. For them these problems' solutions were a real cooperative achievement.

Thanks to these experiences and since I was coming from a different background, I became aware that the concept of teamwork in a post-totalitarian society needs to be clearly defined as to make a distinction between the socialist collective and the entrepreneurial team.

- *The socialist collective* is a group of people, who are expected to obey the collective's appointed leader and dutifully perform the tasks he sets for each one of them. The typical atmosphere in a collective is one of conformity and discipline (defined as obedience) – according to the famous Bulgarian maxim, still applied largely in schools today: "whatever the conditions, activities and

requirements for everyone else, the same should apply to you". Any attempt at dissent with those universal conditions, any desire for diversity is labeled as an attempt to be anti-social and as a potential threat to the unity of the collective.

- *The entrepreneurial team* is a group of people with shared values and work ethic, who define, after some discussion, a common goal and agree on achieving it. No one distributes some set of preliminary tasks among the members of the team; the members themselves determine the tasks that should be performed according to the strengths and declared skills and abilities of each person. The prevailing atmosphere is one of creative energy and the final outcome often has some surprising characteristics, that unexpectedly came about in the process of work.

Whereas the collective type of teamwork is more suitable to an army-like setting, *the entrepreneurial team is the one that is more adequate to the contemporary knowledge economy*. It is also better in that each member of the team gets to contribute with their best and they all "pull together", whereas in the collective the driving force is solely the collective's leader and the members "wait for him/her" to be told what to do and how to do it, while covertly resisting them and often sabotaging work.

3.2 Personalized evaluation

While in the Academy I visited the English Teaching Graduation Course, prepared and led by 4 graduating students in English Teaching. This course served as a means for personalized evaluation of these students' work and study in the Academy, as opposed to the standard testing procedure. The graduating students in the Academy choose colleagues to form a team with and put together a unique course in the chosen field of knowledge. Then they announce it together with the other students' graduation courses and invite first year students, teachers and public figures in the respective field to participate in the course. In the end they get feedback from the participants. Thus, upon graduation, they don't possess a list of uniform grades and subjects, but a unique portfolio of their overall work, initiatives and unique strengths, skills and knowledge. This makes each individual stand out with what they can offer to pupils other than everyone else can. This also makes it possible for every student to contribute to society the best they can, not being excluded for an incomplete conformation to a single standard. This personalized approach to evaluation struck me as a real sign for an *inclusive approach to education* and social life.

3.3 Democratic practices

There has been a lot of talk lately about teaching school kids democracy. Unfortunately in Bulgaria, this call for democratization has been interpreted as a call to the introduction of yet another curriculum subject with the label of democracy on it. Democracy, however, is not a mere

set of data about democratic political institutions; democracy is a set of attitudes and skills that can be acquired only by experience and practice. Democratic education can be compared to a bicycle-riding education – you can't learn to ride a bike out of a textbook and lecturing. You need to get hold of the actual bike and after some instructions be left alone to play with it. That's exactly what I witnessed in my free schools visit.

I witnessed the example of the 8 grade students in Vester Skerninge Free School, who decided to do some business. They decided that the school should not hire personnel to do the cleaning and cooking at school; they did all this work themselves, instead. The plan was to use the money to buy out in advance the traveling circus show; later sell the tickets and make a profit. *(Unfortunately I had to leave before the end of this entrepreneurial project, so I didn't get to witness the final result.)*

The democratic principles of participation and responsibility are at work in the Academy for Free School Teachers in Ollerup as well. The Academy is organized as a democracy, whose functioning is publicly described on the Academy's site:

"The students exert a relatively strong influence on their curriculum, on the daily running of the school and on financial decisions, and on cultural, social, sporting events in the school community. One day a week is made over to a multitude of committees and meetings, where students and teachers work on equal conditions. All committees are appointed under the school's Stormøde or Parliament, and everyone has the right of representation at all levels. There the entire school meets in plenum every fortnight or so and there are daily updates after the communal meal. The work carried out here in the Parliament aims to improve and develop life in the school community in the areas of didactics, active democracy, community activities and teaching practice. However, any fundamental change is subject to the approval of the foundation governors, who ensure that the values and principles underlying the school's activities are in line with the ideals of Grundtvig and Kold."

3.4 Life-long learning

Life-long learning is a concept of learning going on beyond school attendance time. In Denmark it was developed by Grundtvig as early as the XIX century. It led to the creation of the first Folk High Schools and is being adhered to in many Danish schools today. However, it often seems that most contemporary policy makers fail to realize that for learning to become a life-long practice it has to be a positive experience from an early age. In Bulgaria, education has unfortunately come to be perceived not as a life-long process, but as a piece of paper, a diploma, that once obtained, exempts the person from the need of any educational endeavor. One of the

reasons for this development is the fact that learning in Bulgarian schools has become a highly tiresome and boring process, which one has to just manage to “get through”. Education has been considered as a duty (much like a military duty) instead of rather than a joy and privileges. One of the major changes we need to witness in Bulgaria is to restore education to, as Richard Feynman put it “The pleasure of finding things out”.

Throughout my free school visits in Denmark I couldn’t help realizing the great extent to which joy, pleasure and fun were part of the learning process. The activities and interactions in the free schools I visited were designed in a way that gave children opportunities to exercise their vitality, ingenuity and choice. We could witness this in one of Vester Skerninge’s outdoor lessons, where children learned about marine life by diving in the sea and personally collecting various specimens. They learned about herbs and edible plants by personally collecting and cooking them on the fire. They were given lots of time to freely play and interact in the process.

In the Academy for Free School Teachers I could be part of John Mason’s (the English Teaching professor) “English House” lesson. All students put on clothes from the II World War and impersonated different characters – soldiers, nurses, sophisticated Englishmen, cooks, German aviator. Then the nearby free school teenage pupils were ushered in the Academy hall, not knowing what would befall them. All they knew was they were going to have an English lesson. So they were approached by the professor with the information, that they have been taken away from London to a country English House, in order to be protected from the bombings. They were told the rules and how to escape to the bombshelter (the student’s underground cafe) in case of sirens; were given food coupons and were informed that a German aviator had been spotted around so if the English soldiers heard somebody speaking a German-like language (i.e. Danish), they would be considered suspects and subjected to discipline (push-ups in the Academy yard). The whole “English House” (one of the Academy’s classrooms) was decorated with items from the II World War – posters, weaponry, maps, letters of soldiers to their families, war-time puzzles and games e.t.c. The children got to hear the sirens (thanks to the carefully installed loudspeakers in the Academy yard), hid in the basement and spoke in English with all characters (students) who had carefully prepared their II World War stories to tell.

IV. Instead of conclusion. Personal development

Nowadays academic achievement has generally become the major goal and measurement criteria for education success. Many however, uphold the view, that education should aim at much more than mere accumulation of facts – in Grundtvig’s words the “apex of human education is truly to understand oneself”; and “the school must strive to develop man to

perfection.” In his words if the school only focuses on memorizing information, disconnected from real life experiences, it is a “school of death”, disconnecting children from real life and preventing their achieving maturity: “the more one strives to develop a boy’s brain, the more one produces and encourages a self-conceit and misunderstanding of real life, of which in his limited experience he is ignorant.” He wrote that “The school of death confesses... that grammatical infallibility and lexical perfection are the ideal goal that the school endeavors to achieve at the expense and sacrifice of life!” He wrote against “pseudo-learning and bookwormery” as opposed to gaining maturity and growing self-awareness “since all living understanding or understanding of life is nothing more than a feeling within us that moves into the light and becomes aware of itself.” Grundtvig labored to usher in his country a new school – the “school of life” which wouldn’t suppress the multi-faceted expressions of the vitality of the human being and will serve not only the child’s brain, but also his/her personal development.

My impression is that this tradition is well and alive today in many Gruntvigian free schools. This is especially true for the efterskoler and folk high schools, where young people can continue their development after graduating from high school or even take a year or more off school after the 9th grade to dedicate time to their personal interests or issues. In the Faaborgegnens Efterskole I spoke to several young people in the 10th grade, one of which shared her story and the reason she chose to come to the school. She told me that before she came to this school, she had a severe difficulty in talking to people – to the extent that she burst into tears into such situations. However, she had managed to overcome the problem for the year she spent in the efterskole. I was so surprised to hear that, because it was this very girl that out of her own will had spent the most time with us, the Bulgarian guests, sharing freely and in length things about their activities, friends and teachers at school!

Ewa Smuk – Stratenwerth

(Ecological and Cultural Association
„Ziarno”, PL director)

Grundtvig's ideas in a Mazovian village



I. My experience with Grundtvig's pedagogy

I came across Grundtvig's ideas in his homeland, in the Danish Town of Silkeborg, central Jutland, in 1992. Taking part in Silkeborg Folkehøjskole classes, I experienced what the Danes call „oplysning”, a kind of inner enlightenment, one of the most important elements in learning at folk universities.

In Scandinavia it seems that the enlivening power of Grundtvig's learning concept is still in force. Many of my Danish friends think that thanks to the folk university tradition they came to love democracy or team work. Their will to develop in many different directions also derives from that source. Dorthe Taxbøl, a friend of mine, midwife by vocation, a revolutionary as concerns practices accompanying childbirth in Denmark, was at the same time an active artist – sculptor, painter, and creator of vast artistic projects at times.

It came to me as a surprise at the Folkehøjskole, when a seemingly trivial issue was tackled, a discussion group quickly gathered together to work out the best solutions.

At Danish folk universities I found fascination for many things, so different from what I was used to in Polish socialist reality where I had been educated. “Learning by doing” – the supremacy of practice over theory, combining diversified themes in a single course to stimulate various facets of the student's personality: from handicraft to modern technology and philosophy classes. I admired the morning meetings, filled with singing and free discussions on various subjects. It was so natural and obvious that the inability of our Polish group to sing any song seemed embarrassing.

My „oplysning” was all the more important because in the year to follow I was to move from the capital to a Mazovian village in the Płock County, and I needed a leading theme to help me actively adapt to totally different circumstances. Practically from the beginning, as I was undertaking and implementing various educational initiatives, I made a point of remembering what I had learnt at the Danish folkehøjskole. It was only in 2001 that I started use the name (derived from folkehøjskole), at first in a modest way as folk school courses, organized primarily for village women.

All in all, in the years 2001-2010, we have successfully conducted 40 courses (each minimum 20-days-long) in 34 small village communities, in 6 European countries: Poland, Slovakia, Denmark, Ireland, Hungary and Lithuania, for more than 1000 adult village-dwellers, most of whom were women.

We have tried to maintain all the most important elements of Grundtvig's teaching, such as: the use of the living word, attempting to attain "Enlightenment" (oplysning), that is opening and broadening horizons, awakening creativity and motivation for further development; partnership student – teacher relations, developing team work and creating ties between participants and holistic, total attitude to education. In practice it meant that during a 20-day course there were unevenly distributed classes in four theme blocks:

1. Health and ecology
2. Handicraft and art
3. Personal and social development
4. Computer studies

In 2015 thanks to the Danish Velux Foundation we have built in our training centre in Grzybów the Ecological Folk University, with the surface area of 400 m sq., with 4 workshops and a small hostel for about 20 persons. We also started off with a two-year course with the leading subject: ecological farming.

The courses encompass lessons on the spot in Grzybów: 4 long, 3-week sessions, 8 studio visits to ecological farms in Poland and 14 months' practices. More information on web-page: www.eul.grzybow.pl.

II. Grundtvig's ideas in contemporary Poland

Summing up my so far experience and my reflections on folk universities, taking advantage of the literature available in Poland (the Kashubian Folk University paper dated 2003: "*Folk University – School for Life*" is of special interest in this respect), I would like to present those elements of Grundtvig's thinking which seem most significant and relevant in contemporary Poland.

III. The individual good and the common good

Karl Kristian Ægidius, writing about the historical background of Grundtvig's ideas, mentions a significant 19th century school of thinking, in which individual development is as important as the effort to combine *the Individual Good* with the *Common Good*: "An individual is responsible for the Common Good and - what follows – for maintaining and operation of democratic society" (Byczkowski, 2003, p. 36). Ethical values of every person are of basic importance for the coherence and proper functioning of democratic society. These are not hereditary or inborn values or features, therefore young people should be educated in the art of cooperation and work for the common good.

In Poland the ability to work together and the spirit of team work are apparently lacking, while exaggerated individualism holds strong. The lone romantic hero figure is still much celebrated, to the disadvantage of organic team work for the common good. In some circles the selfish model of individual success, even at the cost of the community, is not uncommon.

This is why those forms of learning which show the joy and value of cooperation and building a community are so important at present. At folk universities all begins with singing together, from the experience of voices coming together to form a shared song. This sentiment is captured in the lyrics of a song written to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Ollerup school training folk university teachers:

"Sing the song of life and discover that although there is no-one else like You,

What you are, what you share with others, as long as you are true,

When Your voice in a choir combines in harmony into „we“, then you are free"

IV. Folk and the awareness of national identity

Grundtvig lived at the turn of the Enlightenment and Romanticism. He understood and appreciated the importance of education, learning, "the light of the mind" and its significance in breaking the darkness of superstition and ignorance. At the same time he paid attention to national traditions and folk culture, which was an important feature in romanticism. This sphere was then developed by Kant's student: J.G. Herder (1744-1803), and Grundtvig was very much under his influence. It was Herder who introduced the concept of folk-lore to romantic philosophy, because he was fascinated by its natural and primary beauty. His work entitled "People's voices in songs" was very popular among the romantics, and it sparked off the trend to collect folk songs.

Karl Kristian Ægidius describes Herder's concept, also taken up by Grundtvig, as follows: „Folk¹ is a living organism, whose particular members have grown to possess the inner consciousness of society, language, history and cultural heritage: art, literature, song and poetry, tradition, habits and mentality. It is said that folk is held together with a supra-individual spirit of the people/nation" (Volkgeist) (Byczkowski, 2003, p. 39).

Here emerges the question of national identity, which in Grundtvig's time was of great importance, in the face of threats from the great German neighbour. In contemporary times, in the globalization era, the concept of identity assumes a new meaning, or - to put it more straightforwardly - becomes diluted, uniform and relative. At the same time - on the other extreme - we witness developing nationalist movements which construct a so-called binding social capital based on strong internal ties and reluctance to foreigners.

In this reality, what I call "the philosophy of a tree" is important in education. On the one hand, discovering and nourishing one's own cultural and historical roots, and on the other hand - opening up with "branches" to the other inhabitants of the globe, their traditions, habits and culture. I feel it is the only cure to relativism on the one end and extreme nationalism on the other. Building the skill to discover one's own cultural roots and at the same time pursue the art of dialogue, with respect for others' views, other cultures and traditions. These are important elements of Grundtvig's pedagogy.

¹ The German Word *volk* (Danish: *folk*) means both: nation and folk

V. The concept of a human being

Grundtvig defined man as the “divine experiment of Dust and Spirit”. He thought man to be a unique and wonderful creature of divine skills, the power to create himself and contribute to the development of humanity in the direction of its final target – perfection of the divine potential of human kind.

What seems especially interesting and worthy in Grundtvig’s ideas is the original concept of human nature in a broader cultural context. I have in mind the fact that although he remained faithful to Christianity till the end of his days, he had been discovering the Nordic mythology and made sure that young Danes become familiar with it. This attitude helps to understand and discover a certain continuity in the development of a nation (or of a person as a member of that nation) from the period of childhood or adolescence, which pagan myths express, to the period of maturity, which finds expression in Christianity or the cult of reason characteristic for the Enlightenment. It is an integrating attitude, which does not create black & white dichotomies, but rather displays the richness of diverse traditions which build a Man.

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Marek Byczkowski

(Kashubian Folk High School, PL)

A few thoughts about what Kashubian Folk High School has taken from Nicholas Grundtvig



Now, when I have more than three decades of experience working at a folk high school, I ask myself more and more often what I, personally, and my Kashubian Folk High School (KUL) have taken from Grundtvig's philosophy, namely from the attempt to implement in practice the social and educational slogans – especially the invigorating and constantly fresh idea of “the school for life”? It may seem that formulating an answer by a person who dedicated almost their entire adult life to folk high schools and adult education in rural areas, would be relatively simple. But it is not as easy as it seems, I have a series of doubts: if without the inspiration drawn from Grundtvig we could do as much as we have?, if we would need to reach across the sea and a hundred years back to find guidelines for activities that we have been undertaking for many years at the Kashubian Folk High School in rural communities and small towns of Kashubia and Pomerania?, and finally – how much of Grundtvig and his pedagogy is really present in what we “always” do and how to “measure” it?

As an educator “immersed” for many years in the activities of a particular educational environment, I do not usually notice all these aspects in our educational work that could pass as Grundtvigian. It would probably be easier for someone from the outside to judge the “grundtvigianness” of our activities – for example, a Dane who having learned about the values and principles of the free Grundtvigian school at the source, that is in Grundtvig's homeland, would stay for a shorter or longer period at the Kashubian FHS in Wieżyca (*we have subjected ourselves to such an “external audit” several times in the past and we will be happy to do it again! If someone from among the readers was willing – they are invited to do so!*).

As Karsten Thorborg – the former rector of the friend of Kashubian FHS, Bornholm Folk High School – says: “Describing one's own world is not easy because it is like the air we breathe – invisible yet obvious. So only during a meeting with otherness, our world begins to appear to us more visibly and clearly.” This thought expressed by Karsten made me search in my memory for

an event that could be considered as the first encounter on the ground of my educational activities with a different way of thinking – the first conscious contact with Grundtvig's pedagogy.

I remember it like this: in June 1984 we were visited by Lars Thorkild Bjørn – a teacher from Grundtvigs Højskole Frederiksborg in Hillerød, Denmark, who was travelling around Europe to celebrate the bicentenary of the birth of Nicholas Frederic Severin Grundtvig (b. 1783, Udby). At the same time, a group of about thirty students stayed on a course in our folk high school, composed primarily of women who normally worked in rural clubs and community centers. We were all to meet the Dane who was to tell us a few words about the person and the views of Grundtvig and talk about Danish folk high schools. The listeners and the staff were excited and perhaps even a bit nervous. Dozens of issues: how to receive the visitor?, what to offer him?, how to set up tables and chairs in the room for this special occasion?, what to ask?, what not to forget?, when to give him the chronicle asking for an entry?, etc. Meanwhile, Lars began his meeting by saying that he was very pleased that Wieżycza was on the route of his journey. Why? Well, he said that just after crossing the threshold of our facility... he felt at home, like at the Danish Folk High School: home, almost family, atmosphere, smiling faces, singing of the students in the hall – interrupted by discussions, discussions in classrooms – interrupted by singing, enthusiasm and involvement of everyone in what they do, shared meals of the whole FHS community... in other words, a true Scandinavian folk high school! Only after such an introduction the guest went on to give a lecture diversified by numerous slides showing the history of Danish FHSs and facilities operating at the time, in the background beautiful and well-maintained traditional Danish villages and a tape with Grundtvig psalm music played from a cassette player.

Another event I remember very well is the visit of Danish students of the Independent Academy for Free School Teaching in Ollerup (Den Frie Lærerskole Ollerup) in the autumn of 1984 and our subsequent visit in Denmark in the spring of the next year. Not only I but all Polish participants of those meetings remembered them as a great lesson of knowledge about “eternal Grundtvigian truths and principles” that – let me add – have never lost their validity. Even today, after more than thirty years, I can recall them because in large part they have designated the way of thinking of whole environment of the Kashubian Folk High School about its social, cultural and educational mission.

Many opportunities for constructive confrontation of the activities undertaken by our facility with the Danish patterns appeared also in later years. I tried to remember something important from each one of them, something meaningful, worth implementing at the Kashubian

FHS in order for it to become more real, i.e. a folk high school of a more clearly Grundtvigian spirit. Such meetings were important not only in the initial period of the functioning of our facility but also in the subsequent stages of its existence. And, of course, they have remained important today because our work on building our own identity and gathering the rules that are to be applied in our KUL house constantly continue. Given our constant search for the most appropriate way – including the manner and the scope of implementation of Grundtvigian values and principles – we are used to talk about our Kashubian Folk High School as about a folk high school “in process.”

On the basis of the past meetings and gradual gaining of experience, we are constantly working on our own way of conceiving folk high school, its tasks and applicable rules. Below I will show a few of those which we seek to follow:

- students come to folk high school voluntarily based on their own beliefs and choice, therefore they should not be forced or obliged to do anything, they should only be helped in finding inspiration, encouraged, given suggestions or shown different variants of possible ways of achieving a goal;
- for the participants, folk high school is not only a place of education or another school but a second home, on the functioning of which they have an impact and for which they bear responsibility, hence, the crucial role of the democratically elected student government, having the power to formulate opinions on the curriculum as well as organizational, social and living issues;
- folk high school is a democratic community of teachers and students with truly partner relations and where everyone has not only the right but the duty to express their own opinion since the exchange of diverse views and opinions, equal right to vote for all, regardless of the status interlocutor, and reaching consensus are the essence of each FHS debate and “the salt of democracy”;
- folk high school maintains neutrality towards political views, value systems and religious beliefs of its students (and teachers) and does not attempt to interfere in their worldview or political sympathies, respecting any differences in this field and the diversity of students in this field, seeing the value and not a threat;
- folk high school integrates its community by creating a space, giving its participants an opportunity to meet, learn, exchange ideas, experience emotions, relax, pursue their passions and, therefore, is characterized by a friendly and stimulating environment in which there is room for openness, creativity, critical reflection but also showing emotions – joy, sadness, longing, etc.

It is common knowledge that a community built over a longer period of time achieves more profits from the common life. Therefore, I am aware that not all of the principles that we have created over the years at the Kashubian Folk High School can be applied during each of the implemented educational tasks, however, I would like to emphasize that we bear all of them in mind. The scope of their implementation is each time dependent on the specific group of students – especially on how much time we spend with them at the Kashubian FHS or on the duration of the course – but there are essential elements, let's call them principles, we never give up on. They could be symbolically described with such words as partnership, cooperation, responsibility, loyalty, respect, and trust in another human being...

Finally, I would like to sum up my thoughts on “the advantages of Grundtvig” as follows:

I do not wake up every morning thinking about orders drawn from “the Grundtvigian teachings” or with a ready quote from his writings that could become the motto of the next day. I also do not use “Grundtvigian guidelines” as a kind of perfect model for each of the activities undertaken in my facility. No... And yet I feel that the “spirit of Grundtvig” has been accompanying me for more than three decades of my work, hovering over all our initiatives, watching over everything we have been doing at the Kashubian Folk High School for years!

Elsebeth Bak

(Livsstilshøjskolen Gudum, DK, teacher)

A few remarks about the search of our own path to Grundtvig pedagogy



Remark 1 : What do I want to bring to my students as a folk high school teacher?

I want to make them viable – not matter financial means, intellectual capacities or vocational training. I want them to exercise their possibilities. I want the student to realize that his/her prior (challenging) experiences do not prevent a positive development of life.

Remark 2 : In which situations do I feel the biggest joy of my work?

I really enjoy when students come to grips with the concept of viability – when they take full responsibility of their own life. Referring to a phrase from Søren Kierkegaard: It is about "attending to one's own life". I likewise enjoy when students are putting some seriousness into the investigation of their own life situation. Then it will sometimes show that students can lift up each other - this is when the community takes over the role of the egos.

Remark 3: What pedagogical methods do I mainly use in my classes?

I often use to do lectures. In order to get attention I am very focused on my acting skills. It is all about keeping the motivation among students to stay tuned on the subject. That connection is much easier to uphold when the subject is close to my own heart, i.e. I have a passionate interest in the subject myself. When being in front of students I pay very much attention on the different pedagogical tools such as body language and voice. When engaging students in participative learning I often use the walk-and-talk method.

Remark 4: *In what other way does the thoughts of Grundtvig influence my work as a folk high school teacher?*

During singing classes and morning assemblies, I put into perspective the essence of Grundtvig's songs. They are a vital part of the folk high school history and can act as a mental ballast. At the same time, the songs (and other parts of Grundtvig's work) can counteract lack of history knowledge and thus prevent a tendency that students are closing in on themselves and their own situations.

Remark 5: *What are the main sources of inspiration for my work in classes?*

Apart from Grundtvig, which is obvious, I would like to mention 3 other Danes:

- *Peter Bastian* (born 1943) Danish musician and author. In his book *Mesterlære* (eng. Apprenticeship) he advocates for an educational approach he calls "vertical learning" – a method close to former times' craft's apprenticeship. In your life, you need to make a continuous effort to master something to the fullest.

- *Søren Kierkegaard* (1813-55), Danish philosopher and author - considered founding father of existentialism. One of his main thoughts is about man's ability and obligation to take actual shape, i.e. make an effort to develop one's potential.

- *Eske Willerslev* (born 1971), Danish scientist and professor at Copenhagen University. Has gained international reputation for his scientific work on developing techniques to get DNA data from samples found in ice cores. At the same time his scientific career has had an unusual progress and shows for others that you can obtain recognition even if you have taken a non-mainstream road.

Remark 6: *How to describe my role as a folk high school person together with the students?*

There is a huge difference between the teaching situation where I want to "move" them and the time when I am "hosting". When hosting it is more about being a mentor, having a focus on the social aspects of students' lives. I might become a lever for a student who are struggling with a personal issue but I am very much aware of not becoming close friends with my students. In addition, it is important for me not to express ambitions on behalf of students concerning their personal life challenges.

Karsten Thorborg

(Bornholm Højskole, DK, ex director)



The Essence of the Danish Folk High School

The Danish Folk High School is a school for inspiration and a new beginning in life. As a school form it was created in the Romantic era with its liberating view of humanity. As such an anachronistic kind of school in today's thoroughly streamlined society, it seems.

One of the founding fathers, Christen Kold, was once asked by a peasant lad what he wanted from him? He pointed to his pocket watch and answered: "That's what I want. I will pull you up, but so that you never get stuck". Is this a hopelessly outdated or an eternally valid school purpose?

At Bornholms High School we have had many students from Poland and other Eastern European countries. One of them wrote in his final evaluation of his stay at the school:

"I think it's good not to give marks and having exams in this school form. Maybe it would not work for 5 years, but it's great to be here in five months and learn and enjoy learning without having to think of grades and exams. Maybe everything I learn here will not be directly useful for an examination, but it is very important to me as a person and I'm sure I have not wasted my time here. I do not care about grades and exams because I have got something here that I cannot lose, and that is important to me. I have gained experience, not marks. I know from my Polish school, I can get good marks without getting wiser, so marks means nothing."

This guy had fully understood the essence of what the Folk High School means. It's for people of all kinds and ages. They stay together day and night for a short period of time in order to get new friends and inspiration for coming life. Perhaps they doubt what to do next or they want to prepare themselves for a study. Under all circumstances, they become more socially experienced and democratic trained.

There are more than 70 high schools spread all over Denmark, and each of them has their own individual profile. At Bornholms High School we have a long winter school for mostly

young people and short summer courses with different topics for elder people. At the winter school we place particular emphasis on the arts: painting, ceramics, glass and jewelry.

Most important for both kinds of people is to experience the atmosphere of the college life itself. There is freedom and responsibility, caring and debate as well as a diversity of life issues to deal with in word and deed.

Peter Mogensen

(Brenderup Folk High School, DK, teacher)

Examples of Grundtvig pedagogy in my working place



A few lines from the Grundtvig song: „Nu skal det åbenbares”:

- og han har aldrig levet,	- and he has never lived
som klog på det er blevet,	who made it out wisely
han først ej havde kær	about what he did not love

These few lines are for me very essential in the way I manage my job as a teacher. In the following I'll explain how the essence of this is transferred into the different aspects of being a folk high school teacher.

The subjects I teach must be centred around issues I find interesting and life expanding for myself. In that way I'll be able to transfer the curiosity for the subject on to the students – the situation in the classroom turns into a common investigation. It minimizes the authority gap between students and teacher which benefits the learning process. When I am really interested in a certain subject it often also is like a love relationship. I develop my knowledge, passion and competences in that field which are factors for engaged classes during a course.

An important part of being a folk high school teacher is the close interaction with students. You become a kind of parent for them during their stay at your school. In this position as role model it's necessary to show love for life. To show students that you first of all are a human being and secondly a teacher. Life is a wonder and we are all a part of it. We all want to get the most out of it and therefore we need to love it although we sometimes also will experience difficulties in life. Both the wonder and the hardships can be shared together and in community teacher and students can build up life competences.

Being a part of a family, a history and a country are vital parts of identification. Young people often spend much energy on how to be a part of something that is bigger than oneself. In this process a folk high school course has good opportunities to "settle" the confusion through well-known frames. As a teacher I feel the importance of carrying on the history of the folk high school and show to the students that there is a value in honouring the predecessors – be it in family or history or country.

In another Grundtvig song he emphasizes the light as a metaphor for the enlightenment of students. For my job as a teacher I understand this as my commitment to shine the light on life's wonders and thus show the students that they in relationships, in Nature, in their future life will have endless opportunities to learn. This process of enlightenment will not stop after their course at the folk high school but will go on for the rest of their life if they choose to keep on looking for the light.

From my point of view I don't see my job as being able to juggle with all sorts of theories and academic knowledge but rather to bring my dearest interests into play with the students. In this cooperation there is chance to get a unique mix of additional knowledge, realisation of oneself and a longing for meeting even more of life's wonders.

Stefan Bietkowski

(S:ta Maria folkhögskola, Se)

The Essence of Grundtvig pedagogy in my "working space"



Swedish Free adult liberal education (*Folkbildning*) has its roots in Grundtvig's pedagogy but has developed its own characteristic traditions and methods. Swedish Study associations, their Study circles and the Folk High Schools have their roots in strong public movements as workers movement, feminist movement, sobriety movement, free church movement and sport movement. In later years there was a strong influence from Paulo Freire ("Education for oppressed"), emphasizing *Conscientization*.

Their basic pillars on which Swedish Folk High Schools stand are:

- Democracy
- Civic culture/education
- Gender equality
- Freedom of religion
- Multiplicity
- Emphasis on "bildning" instead of "utbildning" i.e. kształcenie zamiast wykształcenie – very important.
- Lifelong learning

Important is also to stress that Swedish Folk High Schools are:

free

- Examination free

- Curriculum

-- Grade free

- To a high

extent are not subject to state control as is the public school system.

I hope that what I describe above can explain why Folk High Schools have been so extremely successful in helping (mostly) young people to grow and develop as individuals and turn into conscious, critical, democratic and contributing citizens.

I have dedicated 25 years working as a Folk High School teacher and principal and what my participants over the years have pointed out as being the most important factors that has made them feel at ease and at home and also made them develop their personality and skills, could briefly be summarised as follows:

- Informal relation teacher – participants. Mentors rather than teachers.
- A climate of mutual respect and empathy.
- A holistic approach, where every participant is regarded and seen as an individual and given the possibility to develop and grow based on his/hers needs and desires.
- The important is not results on tests and performance, but to develop abilities and capacities to grow as individuals.
- Education based on “Helicopter perspective” rather than on fragmentary knowledge, thus enabling the participants to require an overall understanding of the world and the tools for change.
- Every participant is given the possibility to study in his/hers own pace, based on his/hers groundings, capacity and goals.

Ingrid Rasch

(Summer Academy Ljungskile Folk High School,
the Centre for European Studies Lund University,
SE)

What Grundtvig meant to me as a teacher



I belong to the student generation, which started their academic education in the sixties in an elitist university for the privileged few and finished it when new reforms were on their way to change it into a mass university. I was in tune with the ideas that a democracy needs more educated people and I decided to leave university after a B.A. in literature and philosophy instead of habilitating in literature as was my original plan.

I started to work as a teacher in a folk high school in a remote part of Sweden with no experience of adult education not even any knowledge about the concepts behind folk high schools. I hadn't heard about Grundtvig's pedagogic ideas. I only knew that he was Danish and had written religious hymns. And in the folk high school where I taught nobody ever referred to him either. Afterwards I have understood that Grundtvig by the founders of the Swedish folk high schools in the end of the 19th century was looked upon as strange. They were farmers who wanted civic and practical education for their sons to participate in local and national politics. Unlike Grundtvig they were not primarily interested in history, poetry and national ideas. I think this lack of interest from the beginning formed the later Swedish attitude to Grundtvig and so his pedagogic ideas were forgotten.

I got interested in Grundtvig at the same time as I got interested in the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire in the seventies. I started to read him and about him and found that his ideas about *dialogue* as one of the most important "tools" in the teaching/learning process was something I spontaneously had practiced and experienced as important. Not least because as a spin-off effect it supported the capacity both to listen and to talk which is fundamental in a democracy.

I also found his emphasis on „*livsoplysning*” very interesting and translated it in my own didactic practice *to conversations on existential issues and shared values*. These conversations are what I from thirty years practice as educator in adult education really remember. They inspired me and - I dare to believe that they also meant a lot to the students.

Hanne Lange Houlberg

(Kunsthøjskolen i Holbæk, DK)

Sharing your knowledge experience



I find it essential to my teaching, that the students learn to and want to share their experience of knowledge. From then on during the course I encourage the students to come up with their own ideas of what to do , using me as a technical help and artistic advisor .

The lack of concern for practical matters is as relevant now as in the time of Grundtvig, I believe. That's why practical skills as well as poetry (the living word) forms an essential part of my teaching. My ambition as a teacher of the media , Screen Printing , and the media Analog Photography is to communicate a historical perspective of society through a dialogue between analog and digital processes. It gives the students a hand to hand experience with processes of working from another time , a time more focused on skill, and from that, an understanding of the developing digital society of today. Together with my students we go visiting a local commercial company, to experience how you have to work today to make a living of e.g. screenprinting. We visit the Art Academy to experience how a lot of skills survey as possibilities within the art world.

I look at my teaching in analog photography as a Photographic Philosophicum. Studying the concept of LIGHT and the concept of TIME through photography the students develop a sense of curiosity, a sense of magic and wonder of life which make them ask lots of existential questions to discuss

Bernhard Bitterwolf

(Schwäbische Bauernschule

Bad Waldsee, DE)



The living folk culture

The Schwäbische Bauernschule is a folk high school that offers a range of contemporary seminars for professional and personal development. Since the beginning of our work as a folk high school, the whole person stands in the centre of our educational work. During lifetime multiply changes take place in many spheres of life. These often lead to uncertainty or confusion and require a conscious and responsible lifestyle. It is our prime educational task to inform, strengthen and support the individual and provide him with guidance that help him finding solutions for the decisions he has to take in his professional, personal, social and religious life. We are aiming to achieve this by integrating teaching and learning contents that closely refer to true-to-life situations.

Born in 1958 in the region of Upper Swabia in Baden-Wuerttemberg, I work as a teacher at the Schwäbische Bauernschule since 1985. There I teach everything from communication skills, history and politics to singing and dancing to traditional folk music. I love and live everything that has to do with upper swabian culture, especially popular culture, its history and tradition. For me the preservation of regional cultural assets and our rural heritage is something fundamental important. So I see myself as a communicator of a lively folk culture. To teach the participants at our Bauernschule the common regional traditions and rites of Upper Swabia and their historical and social background is something I feel very much addicted to. At the same time I think that this is very essential for Grundtvig pedagogy, especially when the participants do not only learn with their heads but with all their senses. Therefore we actively sing the songs, dance the dances and try to play historic instruments.

“To make a fool of oneself once a day” is a motto for my life. You think that is strange? No, only the one who makes a fool of oneself knows that he or she tried something new. To be active is what counts, even if it goes wrong.

To be an active personality, to be open for new friendships and good acquaintances and to preserve and live your cultural heritage is the essence of Grundtvig pedagogy in my professional life.

Barbara Leufgen

(Katholische Landvolkshochschule „Anton Heinen“ Hardehausen, D, nauczyciel)

Grundtvig pedagogy in my professional life



Grundtvig's idea of living and learning under one roof for a certain period of time still plays an essential role at our folk high school. This applies particularly to our Basic Course for young farmers. It is my objective to reach these young people in their specific life situation and to accompany them on their path of life for six weeks. Through learning and living under one roof together a special relationship develops between the students and towards us teachers – a special kinds of network. Some students take advantage of this possibility and build up a life-long network of relationships.

It is not only about the teaching of content or the establishment of settings for the creation of learning environments, but also the informal sector is of high importance: The common meals, talks and activities in the evening, small talk during coffee break or the common excursions are crucial parts of the course. During the lessons ideas and thoughts are inspired that often are picked up and resumed in the informal sector.

The idea of living and learning together under one roof offers the possibility for an educational work that does not depend on a planned time schedule but is fulfilled outside a fixed framework.

To lead and mentor the basic Course therefore is a matter truly dear to my heart, because it offers me the possibility to live and learn jointly with the students. I am especially fascinated by the idea of companionship. The trust and openness, which develop between students and teachers during the course, is something really special, that doesn't occur in shorter courses to the same extent, but we try to create those informal sectors wherever we can.

PART II

KEY COMPETENCES – new / old challenges

Introductory notes to Part II

In the light of the considerations present on the subsequent pages of Part 1 of our “Guide to the contemporary *school for life*”, we can already see that modern folk high schools seem to have at least a few essential features that allow us to think about their cultural, social and educational potential with great hope and that can be recognized for their great capital possible to use in the future. Undoubtedly, these include such components as: the basics and the modern ideological and intellectual background, dedicated enthusiasts understanding the old/new tasks who are present in different educational groups and in the social environment of individual establishments or folk high school environments, as well as mature and – what is very important – repeatedly verified in past decades organizational and methodological concepts that we symbolically describe, as a kind of simplification of which we are aware, as Grundtvigian pedagogy.

All cultural, social, political, and economic challenges appearing in the modern world – in both international and internal country-specific versions – are pretty well diagnosed and monitored on a regular basis by specialists from different fields (though it would probably be worth identifying more accurately the specific challenges appearing in a particular environment of a given institution). In the middle of the second decade of this century it is very common to feel that the modern man has the right to feel lost – for example in building both the individual as well as the community-enhancing value system, and uncertain as to his own choices – for example related to the directions of his or her social activity or profession.

It is becoming obvious that individual societies and their governments must find such policies and instruments within the framework of programmes strengthening socially desirable cultural patterns, inclusive social policy and educational solutions that are being prepared, that can effectively mitigate the negative effects of that sense of being lost of individuals (and entire social groups) in the contemporary reality, and that can also take pre-emptive actions in anticipation of all the challenges that can occur “in a moment”. Therefore, there is a need for a

series of compensative, diagnostic and preventive, as well as innovative and developmental projects – a need for *school that prepares for life!*

One of the “suggestions” as to the choice of directions of activities in different countries can be the categories of key competencies developed a decade ago by the member states of the European Union, which – as indicated by the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 *on key competences for lifelong learning* (published under number 2006/962/EC in the "Official Journal of the European Union" of 30 December 2006) – “all individuals need for personal fulfilment and development, active citizenship, social inclusion and employment.” (Recommendation..., p. 13).

Although it is not the only proposition of research that can be pointed to today, it is undoubtedly an extremely important one. On the one hand, it structures the European debate on the educational tasks related to new challenges and to promotion of the European and national strategies of lifelong learning, but on the other – as a part of the law applicable in the member states of the EU – it kind of “forces” on them the appropriate steps aimed at implementation of the relevant legal and organizational regulations and creation of an appropriate social climate in this area.

In the context of the above remarks, a question arises about the possibility of using the concepts and educational institutions already existing in different societies to building the key competencies indicated by the EU. This question is extremely important also for the educational entities that have arisen from the traditions of Grundtvigian pedagogical way of thinking – folk high schools and other projects having their roots and drawing inspiration from Grundtvig’s pedagogy, especially in countries where they are not yet as well established as in e.g. Scandinavia or Germany.

It is obvious that it is possible to demonstrate without any difficulties that the modern *school for life* effectively builds and strengthens in its participants all of the types of competencies mentioned in the European documents (namely: communication in the mother tongue and in foreign languages, mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology, digital competence, learning to learn, social and civic competences, sense of initiative and entrepreneurship and cultural awareness and expression). What is more – the shaping and developing of the vast majority of them could be even considered genetically related to the pedagogical ideas of Nicholas Grundtvig as well as to the folk high schools and other twin concepts of educational work developed on the basis of those ideas.

The readers of the “Guide...” may learn about this by reviewing the following two sketches presented in this part. The first one is more general and refers to a more universal perspective of the modern view on the category of *competencies* and its links with the ability to take actions. The second text refers more directly to the understanding of key competencies by the decision-making bodies of the European Union and to a clear indication of their relationship with the ideas, concepts and educational practice of folk high schools.

Tomasz Maliszewski

Sulińska Borowska



(Kaszubian Folk
High School, PL)

Monika Rolbiecka



Competence Key. Questions about the ability to act competently

Contemporary man lives in the rhythm of perpetual changes and transformations. Civilisation processes have a direct impact on the style, pace and quality of our lives. Subsequent generations live longer and longer, more and more intensively, and therefore education should follow pace and be continually adjusted to the people's needs. More and more often there arise questions about the usefulness of knowledge and skills conveyed by various educational institutions. It seems that one of the main problems of the many educational forms applied today is their incompatibility with the surrounding world; they are "far away" from contemporary life. It is evident that in too many cases there is only a vague correlation between syllabuses implemented in educational institutions and everyday reality.

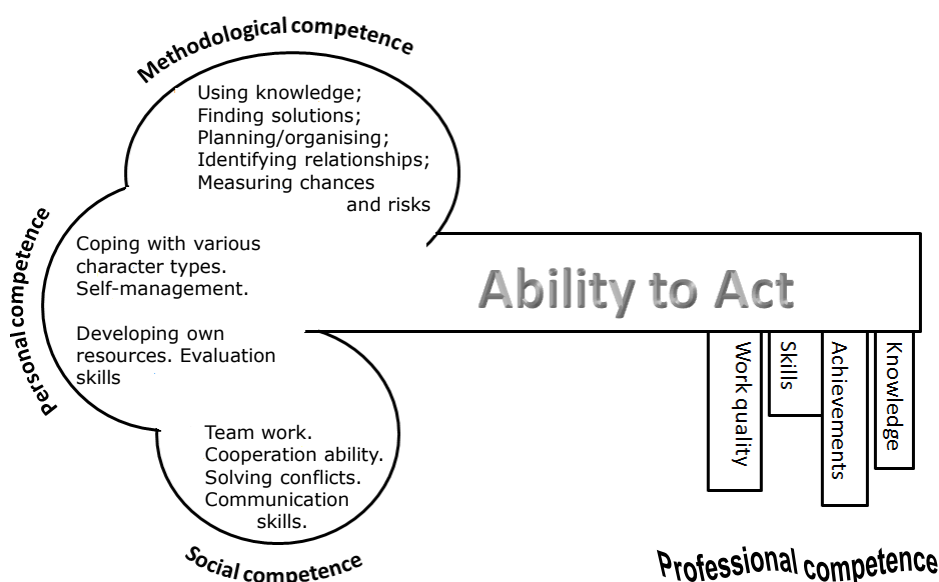
In the European debate on the state of education it is possible to observe a trend to set apart diverse competences that a contemporary European should possess in order to function successfully in private, professional and social lives. These are sometimes termed key competences and one should obtain them primarily from subsequent educational institutions attended in successive stages of one's life. The competences acquired in the process of life-long learning are combinations of knowledge, skills and situation-related attitudes taken. The competences contain a broad spectrum of qualifications which are to a large extent on the outskirts of traditionally comprehended professional qualifications. These qualifications correlate with a person's ability to act in various situations, intact with oneself and one's individual skills. They make competent activity possible.

Another feature of every competence seems to be the fact that in connection with various other skills it may give diversified effects. A person's ability to acquire and then use own competences is a very individual feature, as stressed by many authors. A person's individualised activity in this scope results from a number of diversified qualities of the environment, personality, praxeological and methodological aspects of one's functioning.

The significance of particular competences in a person's life is connected with the person's individual needs and pursuits.

The key presented in diagram 1 shows the four areas of competence (personal, social, methodological and professional) and demonstrates the connections between them.

Diagram 1: Competence key



Source: *own presentation of the authors* (on the basis of: M. Siegrist, R. Wunderlin, Dübendorf 1995).

At the start of any comments to the above diagram it needs to be stressed that every person possesses unique competences in all the spheres displayed. In the course of life (including the time of attending consecutive educational institutions) a person develops one's own talents, attains diversified knowledge and acquires successive skills. Given favourable conditions, these may, or may not, develop into specific competences. Therefore the development of competences is very individual and peculiar for a given person; it is related to specific needs a person has and strives to fulfil.

Let us develop some issues concerning particular competences displayed in the key of diagram 1.

Personal competences are connected with a personal way of implementing particular tasks by an individual. The level of these competences affects the general quality of the tasks performed by the given person – it determines the speed of action, personal involvement and overall efficiency of the activity. Personal competences play an especially important role in one's personal development, because:

- They determine the way of perceiving one's personality – including the ability to assess one's features of character and develop the ones considered valuable/worthy;
- They determine the awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses and the resulting opportunities and limitations.
- They determine the involvement in the implementation of one's own targets, the skill of self-management in time, and self-assessment ability

Social competences include many specific, not necessarily strictly interrelated skills which determine emotional and organizational effectiveness of an individual's functioning in relations with others. They also encompass one's strategies of coping with social interrelations of various kinds. For illustration, we shall show a few selected competences from this sphere:

- Appropriate social perception, or appropriate perception of others (their feelings or intentions) as well as comprehending and correctly assessing social situations;
- Social sensibility and empathy;
- Comprehension of social norms implying appropriate behaviour in specific social situations;
- Ability to solve real-life interpersonal problems and manage social situations;
- Coping in situations of conflict in which assertiveness is required;
- Communication skills, including those concerning team work and cooperating with others.

It is apparent that social competences affect the way relations with others are constructed, the quality of these relations, and the way of carrying out tasks connected with such contacts. The level of these competences directly affects the effectiveness of the person's cooperation with others, the way of communicating with the surrounding and the possibility of influencing others. Therefore these are important competences which allow for competent and efficient cooperation with colleagues, clients, supervisors and business partners and appropriate functioning in personal life.

Methodological competences (presented in the competence key above) take up an important part in life. They are significant because they determine the way in which theoretical knowledge and skills acquired are used in practical actions. They include the following:

- Ability to acquire and classify new information and apply the possessed knowledge in practice, taking into consideration the consequences of this application;
- Ability to apply diversified, standard solutions for particular situations, processes, or events;
- Creative ability to develop non-standard solutions, based on realistic opportunities;
- Ability to perceive matters, phenomena and processes in various contexts and identify relationships between them;

- Ability to evaluate opportunities and risks of practical activities undertaken individually or as a team.

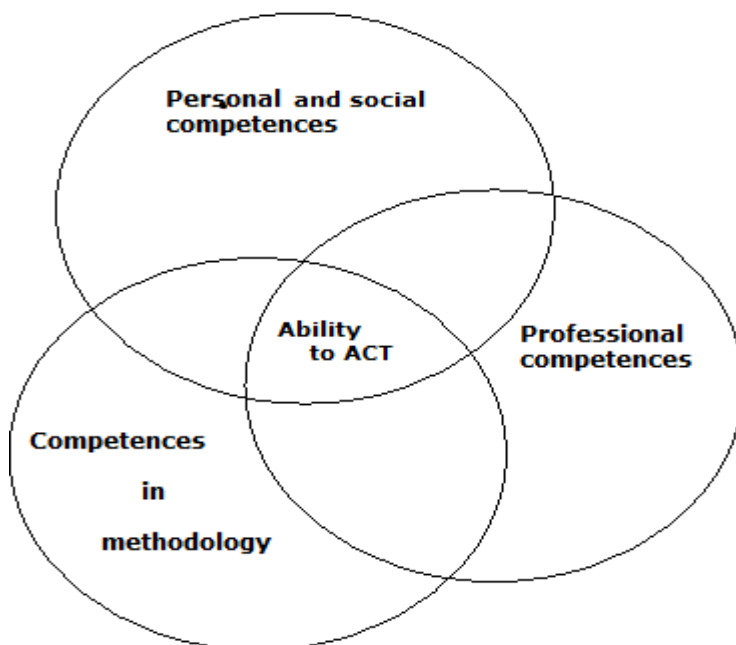
The fourth and last group shown in the competence key are *professional competences*. Those are directly related to specialist properties of a professional group and the activities it performs. To a large extent those competences refer to the knowledge appropriate for a definite professional group (e.g. legal or medical knowledge) and skills specific for particular professions (e.g. operating specific IT systems or driving a public transport vehicle). The level of those competences possessed affects the effectiveness and quality of tasks performed, connected with specific features of a profession, position held or function performed.

Generally speaking, professional competences are:

- Specific knowledge useful in professional work, obtained at school, in another educational institution, or learnt through self-education;
- Definite skills possessed by an individual, enabling him or her to work in a given profession (or making the work easier);
- The way of performing particular tasks and professional operations (precision, diligence, quality, etc.);
- Formal and informal achievements allowing for an assessment of professional work of an employee.

The common (joint) area on which all four competence groups discussed above overlap marks a person's ability to undertake action (see: diagram 2).

Diagram No. 2: *Competences and the ability to act*



Source: *Authors' own project*

At the end let us stress that we live in times when high level of various key competences (Diagram 1) is more and more important and guarantees their bearers better efficiency and flexibility in adapting to the changes which are taking place in the world. The ability to act is also a derivative of the key competences (Diagram no. 2), which the authors have tried to demonstrate in the present survey.

It is therefore evident that the skill of acting in a competent way – being an effect of a number of different competences coinciding – shall be a very individual matter. In truth it can be said that it shall constitute one of the unique qualities every person possesses. Therefore, every person must individually come to terms with the need/desire/obligation to develop one's own competences in all scopes: personal, social, methodological and professional and in effect – with the task of undertaking responsibility for broadening and improving the skill to act in a competent way. It is worthwhile remembering that an individual may be assisted in this strife with institutional forms of adult education, some of which have been verified in the implementation of similar activities. Folk universities or educational associations using Grundtvig's "school for life" as the pivot may serve this purpose well.

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Key competences and teaching/learning at folk universities.

Key is a word with many meanings and many symbolic associations. The diversity of its meanings ranges from the mechanical instrument that opens a door or a gate, or makes it possible to unscrew bolts or cap-nuts, to the classification keys enabling us to distinguish the species of plants, birds, insects, etc. There are also the metaphorical keys to success, happiness, paradise, the heart or career.

The word competence derives from the Latin *competentia*, meaning responsibility, accordance and ability to act. The word started to function in the teaching vocabulary in relatively recent times, when it became apparent that in education the content itself is simply not enough². The practical application of knowledge acquired is more and more important, so the skills which help in professional, social or cultural environment really matter.

What are the key competences that the EU has been intensively promoting for almost 10 years?

According to the EU documents (European Parliament and European Council Recommendation, 2006): “In the process of life-long learning key competences are a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to the context. Key competences are those which all individuals need for personal fulfilment and development, social integration, active citizenship and employment.” The document stresses that key competences are of special importance in a knowledge-based society, where science and intellectual capital play an important role. Key competences make it possible to contribute to the labour market in a rapidly changing world and constitute an important factor in innovation, productivity and competitiveness. They affect motivation, employee’s satisfaction and work quality. Naturally, the acquisition of competences refers to young people who are completing their education, but also to adults (who are the target group in the quoted paper). The document also stresses the necessity of adhering to the principles of equality and accessibility to all, so as to reach the persons and groups who are at a disadvantage and who require support to achieve their potential. Contrary to appearances, there

² According to Jost Reischmann, Competency Based Education emerged in the USA at the beginning of the 70s (Przybylska 2002, p.129)

are many groups of this kind. For example, there is alarming data on increasing illiteracy among adults, with relevant figures reaching 75 million adult Europeans².

The eight key competences listed in the above mentioned document of the European Parliament are as follows:

1. *Communication in the mother tongue*, namely the ability to express and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions, in speech and in writing (listening, talking, reading and writing) and to interact linguistically in an appropriate and creative form, in the full range of social and cultural contexts,
2. *Communication in foreign languages*, which also includes – besides the main scope of skills to communicate in a foreign language – the awareness and understanding of cultural differences.
3. *Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology*, meaning the ability to develop and apply mathematical thinking in order to solve a range of problems arising from daily situations, with an emphasis on process, activity and knowledge. These also involve possessing and applying knowledge and methodology to explain the world of nature, understanding changes brought about by human activity and responsibility as an individual citizen.
4. *Digital competence* involves skilful and critical application of Information Society Technology, these are basic skills in the scope of IT and communication,
5. *Learning to learn* is connected with the ability to pursue and persist in learning, organising one's own learning process, both individually and in groups, according to one's own needs, and identifying available opportunities with the awareness and ability to choose the methods,
6. *Social and civic competences*. Social competences are personal, interpersonal and intercultural. They cover all forms of behaviour which enable a person to participate in social and professional life in an effective and constructive manner. These are connected with personal and social well-being. Civic competences, especially the knowledge of social and political concepts and structures (democracy, justice, equality and civic rights) prepare for active and democratic participation,
7. *A sense of initiative and entrepreneurship* is an ability to turn ideas into action. It signifies creativity, inventiveness and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage ventures to achieve goals. One is aware of the context of one's work and is capable of seizing opportunities. This is the basis for acquiring the more specific skills and knowledge necessary for those establishing or contributing to social or economic

activity. It should also include the awareness of ethical values and promote good management,

8. **Cultural awareness and expression**, meaning appreciation for the importance of creative expression of ideas, experiences and emotions through a range of media (music, performing arts, literature and the visual arts).

Our international Project which brought about the present publication is entitled: “Building key competences in teaching and learning at folk universities in 21st century Europe”. What have key competences to do with the teaching and learning at folk universities?

The answer is: a lot! First of all, we use technical language to talk about well-known matters which have been important since the times of Nicolas Friedrich Severin Grundtvig, the father of folk universities (*folkehøjskole* in Danish) who, in 19th century Denmark, developed his innovative adult education methodology. The folk universities have been teaching basic key competences since then (except digital competences, for obvious reasons), only no-one ever used this exact term!

I shall list a few elements which add up to the Grundtvig education concept, which at the same time contain what we now call key competences:

- The use of the living word (creative communication in the mother tongue)
- “Enlightenment”, or opening and broadening horizons, stimulating creativity and motivation for further learning and improvement, building the conviction that something may be changed in one’s life (sense of initiative, entrepreneurship, life-time learning ability),
- Partnership in student-teacher relations: teacher as the guide and example of one who who is always learning, including from one’s own students (social competence),
- Holistic attitude to education nowadays, referred to as the involvement of various intelligence types, not only the classical scholarly ones: mathematical-logical and linguistic, but also emotional, mobile, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and spatial and relating to natural science. In practice it means that alongside “professional” or vocational classes, we have classes of handicraft and art. In the syllabus we pay special attention to the practical learning processes (cultural awareness and expression, mathematical and technical science competences),
- Building ties, the sense of solidarity and cooperation between participants, through team work, singing together, playing together (social and civic competence).

Grundtvig wanted to give the adult inhabitants of the 19th-century Danish village who had been deprived of any chance for development the key to a life of value and fulfilment. He

understood that “competence” was key to this ambition, serving to undertake and improve the work that would secure the family’s living, or simply ease the poverty predominant in peasants’ homes.

He also understood that technical skills themselves would not be sufficient; the farmer would have to consciously grasp the opportunities with his own hands, with the sense of his own worth and dignity, and with the sense of belonging to the community. Grundtvig stressed that a free folkehøjskole must “raise, enliven and brighten human life.” (Dam P., Gaertner H, 2008). The spiritual dimension of ordinary human toil was very important to the Danish poet, philosopher and historian. In his work he combined the practicality of the enlightenment with romantic sensibility, which brings to mind the words of a Polish 19th century romantic poet Cyprian Kamil Norwid: “*beauty is there for enchantment – for work – work for resurrection.*”³

In contemporary times – says Polish philosopher Tadeusz Gadacz ⁴– education has taken a technological form. It has become reduced to the acquisition of measurable competences, qualifications and skills. Naturally, these are needed in the technological civilisation of today, but one must not forget about the spiritual and existential dimension of education, and Grundtvig understood that perfectly.

Teaching at folk universities includes developing key competences which are mentioned in EU documents. At the same time, it also contains something more. It is the education towards human wisdom and the understanding of what is really important for human life. Erik Lindsø in his “*Commandments to the Folk University teachers*” wrote “Let us not be afraid to use big words. After all, Grundtvig intended the folk universities to become “schools for life”. They are to assist in posing important questions about the meaning of life, the future of the world and our responsibilities in these regards. Students are to arrive at the answers on their own. Let us not be afraid to develop key competences and through education help the learners find the key to wisdom.

In 21st century Europe it is important to return to the thoughts of the greatest teachers of our civilisation, starting from Socrates, who is said to have been the wisest of men.

³ C. Norwid, *Promethidion*, Ossolineum, 1995

⁴ <http://www.iuwm.pl/o-madroski/articles/wyklad-prof-gadacz.html>, 17.08.2015

I would like to finish my considerations with the thought of professor Gadacz, from the lecture quoted above: *The word “wisdom” has disappeared from our vocabulary; it evaporated like many other words, such as spirit, honour or virtue. It is a shameful thing to talk about wisdom these days. (...) Wisdom is the sum of knowledge and virtue. Education is the way to wisdom thus understood. If we want to think about wisdom, we have to return to the olden idea of education. This kind of education relates to the level of humanity.*

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PART III

Contemporary „School for Life” – examples of good practice

Introductory notes to Part III

The idea of “A Guide to the Contemporary *School for Life*” assumed that after the discussion in Part 1, in which – let us remind – we sought to show to the reader various possible contemporary references to the social and educational ideas of Nicholas Grundtvig which go almost two centuries back, and after part 2, in which we focused on the presentation of contemporary approaches to the category of competencies together with an attempt to draw up a draft of comments related to what does and can result from it for the present and the future of folk high schools and educational entities related to them, at the end, the time will come to combine both these issues into a whole in the next section.

We anticipated that such a connection will be possible by presenting a series of examples of practical educational activities undertaken in various countries and referring in some way in their character – whether through ideas they promote, through the adopted organizational forms or, finally, through their foundations related to programme and methodology – to Grundtvigian pedagogy and the resulting concept of *the school for life*, and highlighting in their descriptions those elements which would make the reader see the vast range of competencies shaped by a given institution or other form of cultural and/or educational institutions.

And so, the time has come to present in Part 3 of our “Guide to the *school for life*” several illustrations of good practice – carried out in different environments, in different countries within the scope of issues that are of interest to us in this book.

However, before that happens let us, at least briefly, define what we understand by good practice. This is important for two reasons. Firstly, as some specialists are warning, “the definitions of ‘good practice’ adopted in different countries may vary depending on local law, different economic and political situation, differences in culture and experience” (<http://www.dobrepraktyki.org.pl>). When we analyse studies on this subject conducted by representatives of seven different countries, we can see clearly in the light of the just cited opinion that “significant” difficulties may appear. Secondly – it is worth pointing out to the

reader how the authors of this “Guide...” themselves (and the editor making it a whole) understand the semantic category of good practice.

So let us recall the definition of the term *good practice* for the purpose of this volume. As such we consider:

creative and innovative institutional and non-institutional activities carried out successfully in different environments and countries, an integral part of which is the development of communities in which they carry them out and the building of personal, social, methodological and professional competencies of the people participating in such activities.

The adoption of this definition had an undoubtedly ordering effect on the selection of the content for this part of the “Guide ...” and was influential when it comes to which of the characteristics of activities we decided to include on the following pages and which ones we decided to dismiss because they did not fulfil one or more of the abovementioned criteria.

Because of the dual nature of ‘our’ good practices, we also decided to isolate two separate chapters in part 3.

In the first one, the reader will find examples of good practice in activities undertaken in the environments of active folk high schools. Therefore, a dual voice can be heard: Danish, German and Polish, and an example, slightly different from the others in content, related to Sweden.

The second chapter will present four examples of good practice in Bulgaria, Switzerland, Sweden and Ukraine, which do not relate directly to the activities of folk high schools but in which it is possible to see the development of competencies similar to those shaped by FHSs and many of the ideological, organizational, methodological and programme elements extremely similar to the assumptions of Nicholas Grundtvig’s pedagogy and derived from the concept of *the school for life*.

The analysis of all eleven examples of good practices paints an encouraging picture of socially useful, multi-threaded and multi-faceted activity, from which the reader will surely be able to independently extract guidelines for their own ideas for building competence through folk high schools and other related entities, and through creative adaptation of Grundtvigian pedagogical ideas to the contemporary (and future) times.

Tomasz Maliszewski

3.1 Folk High Schools

Karsten Thorborg

(Bornholms Højskole, DK; retired schoolmaster)

Bornholms Folk High School – school values and teaching environment

Our folk high school is placed 5 km from the town Åkirkeby on Bornholm island, close to the forest Almindingen, in the middle of the countryside.



I. School Values *(by Karsten Thorborg and Ivar Lærkesen)*

Bornholm's Folk High School is a free Grundtvigian college. That is to say, that it without certain political, religious or organizational constraints, and that we recognize our Grundtvigian high school tradition, which is based on popular education and life knowledge. Professionalism, community and a homely atmosphere are the hallmarks of school life.

By philosophy of life, we understand that we are dealing with universal and existential questions. By popular information, we mean information that deals with the individual's interaction with the public.

It is a core value for us that the individual - through a safe and inspiring school environment - can deepen his/her receptivity, unleash imagination and creativity, sharpen a

critical and realistic judgment and experience the responsibility for the community.

The school is a place where adults for a period can meet and in all their diversity can experience, learn and exchange ideas. The idea is to promote the development of social and professional skills and thereby strengthen the desire and the courage to take an active part in society.

II. Teaching Environmental Assessment

Bornholm's High School has two forms: In wintertime, we are an art college with workshop classes in painting, ceramics, glass and jewelry. Moreover, we have a number of general subjects some of which support the arts curriculum, while others have issues like ethics, literature, outdoor life and music. In summertime, we have short courses with mostly elder people. The school is located 5 km from the town Aakirkeby at the island of Bornholm in a rural setting close to a forest named Almindingen.

We usually have about 40-45 winter students, and most of them come from afar – some of them from other countries, so we speak both Danish and English. The isolation and the small number of students' mean that the school environment is manageable and close. Distractions from the outside world are few, so we have to entertain ourselves and to solve disagreements with each other. For some students, it may be a bit of an ordeal to come from a big city with its many impressions, anonymity, freedom and stimulants to a relatively closed school community where everyone knows everybody and where you are referred to one another around the clock for a period of 6 months. You cannot cheat from a kitchen gig or stay away from classes without all knowing it and commenting it. However, it is a healthy challenge provided the school is able to assert itself by quality of teaching and fellowship. It is fortunate that the island of Bornholm has many highly qualified artists who appreciate to work at the school in wintertime and have the freedom to practice their art in summertime. We therefore find it easy to keep a high professional level of teaching in the schools artistic subjects.

A staff of teachers come back every winter combining their independent artistic experience with competence as educators. Most of them live, however, out on the island and there is of course need for teachers who live at the school and take care the more general teaching issues. In this regard, the school has besides the schoolmaster and his wife two experienced and skilled full-time teachers, and a large part of the general school life rests on this group of tradition-bearing college people. This applies as much for the summer school with the many short courses that fill the 6 summer months and have about 80 Danish participants each. It is one two weeks courses starting with gym and a morning gathering and ending in the evening

with some kind of social entertainment. The topics of the summer courses are varied, but all have as a part Bornholm in words and with daily excursions on the program. As teachers, we have in addition to the permanent employed personnel a number of courses with specialized guest teachers. Many of them are old friends who come year after year for 14 days or a month.

At the end of each school course, we ask respectively winter students and summer participants about their experience and assessment of the schooling in which they have participated. We have folders full of such evaluations and I am pleased to say that the praise is quite overwhelming. Of course, over the years there have also been raised various criticisms and we also have had many more or less good advices. – And naturally, we have listened to them and have adjusted the schedule and routines where it was possible and desirable. Without such responsiveness, the school would not have existed for more than a 100 years.

Summary

Through its long existence, the school has adapted to the special conditions of Bornholm. The many summer participants give a healthy economy and enables enlargements and intensive workshop teaching with teams of 10-15 students on the smaller winter school. As I see it, the good and close college life and learning environment at the school is one of its crucial advantages. - Or as I heard a Copenhagen student say to a gathering of Bornholm's social workers who met at the school:

"I chose Bornholm's High School because it was so far away, and I figured that there would not be so much nonsense with drinking and the kind - and it's damn even true!"

Hanne Lange Houlberg

(Kunsthøjskolen in Holbæk, DK)

Art Folk High School in Holbæk

Only willing hands make light work (Grundtvig)

For the last 25 years I have been a teacher at three different Folk High Schools in Denmark. The last 20 years I have lived and taught at Kunsthøjskolen in Holbaek (www.kunsthøjskolen.dk)



I. Characteristic of the school

For more than 50 years, the Art Folk High School in Holbæk, which is the first of its sort in Denmark, has been the setting for creativity and social life, which is built on responsibility, tolerance and community. A lot of different people with different backgrounds come here to test themselves in a lively artistic environment. The expression of art is an eternal dialog. Just as the human is under a constant change or development, so is art. Therefore we invite different teachers to the courses to keep up the dynamics and the diversity in class. This has always been the quality mark of this school through the years.

The Art Folk High School is situated in an old manor called *Holbæk Slot Ladegaard*. It's an 8800 m² big setting which contains workshops, studios and accommodation for students and teachers. The workshops are designed for the individual subjects' technical needs and the need of space. For the time being we have the following workshops: photo, graphics, ceramics, jewelry, textile, serigraphy, digital video, theater and movie hall, practice room and a music

room with computer facilities. Besides that, there are theory rooms, a library, plus a room with computers for the students to use and also Wi-Fi connection everywhere on the school. The workshops for other subject areas will be designed to suit the workshop when needed .

A stay at a Danish Folk High School such as the Art Folk High School in Holbæk contains much more than just the professional teaching. The social life here for instance is an important part of the everyday life at the school. A good social climate is important for a good teaching environment. We are able to have about 72 students on our 17/18 week courses. So to make a foreseeable social unit to the many students, you will be divided into 4 or 5 living areas, which we call "families" right from the beginning of your stay. This division also makes it easier to plan the common chores you have to participate in during your stay. It will only be 2 hours per week per student so it is requested that you show responsibility and understanding for this. The social life on the school is growing in all directions. With all the artistic processes as a starting point, there are lots of opportunities to make projects across courses. And off course, also when you're not in class.

II. Teaching in the spirit of Grundtvig in *Kunsthøjskolen* in Holbæk

The ambition, as I see it, with a folk high school focused on Art is to form, as Grundtvig put it, A SCHOOL OF PASSION and A SCHOOL OF LIFE within the same school. All paedagogical efforts is to promote a spirit of freedom, poetry and disciplined creativity in individuals as well as in the civil society as a whole, through values such as wisdom, compassion, identification and equality.

Grundtvig talked about the authority of the living word. The living word understood as poetry, enlightenment about life, mostly from the single person's own life. Part of my teaching is communicating my own experiences in personal life between me and my students, to evoke an active response between me and my students, a sharing of attitude to life and stories from life lived.

Before starting a course I use time preparing the facilities / the room in a way that has an inviting atmosphere. I want the students to like the room so much, that they want to go and work there outside the time of teaching. Before teaching I always use time together with the students presenting myself and relevant stories of my life, and invite the students to do the same, so that we know each other a bit. Since I teach in subject, which are dependend of a minimum of work of skill, I use some time on communicating discipline in working processes and collaboration in the workshop. Artistic the course normally starts by me giving the students a task ? the same task for everybody to learn the tecnics and to experience that although the starting point and the conditions witin the workshop are the same to everybody, what they end up presenting is different to every person, but add to a common experience.

Monika Wolańska

(Artistic Handicrafts Folk High School in Wola Sękowa)

Artistic handicrafts – passion and concept for living/way of life



The Artistic Handicrafts Folk High School in Wola Sękowa continues the work of Folk High School in Wzdów, active since 1959. In 2006 it was moved from Wzdów to Wola Sękowa where it continues its activities.



The concept of education centres of this type derives from XIX century Scandinavian “School for life” of Nicolai Grundtvig, and it was brought into Poland by such social activists as Ignacy Solarz. From the outset these schools laid stress on the protection of cultural heritage as well as personal and social development.

Our Folk High School gathers together people of passion, artists and art lovers, masters of handicraft and folk artists. It acts as a non-public school, implementing an individual (authorial)

programme that is strictly connected with the protection of cultural heritage. Its name, organisational form and priorities of activity refer to the Scandinavian tradition of boarding folk high schools for adult learners. The forms of Folk High School activities include workshops of various kinds, exhibitions, social and cultural projects, art campaigns, etc.

A two-year Artistic Handicrafts Course can boast of many-years' tradition and the most developed curriculum; it is implemented in 674 didactic hours during a sequence of 4-day meetings. The programme aims to provide practical know-how for different branches of artistic handicrafts, such as weaving, embroidery, lace, ceramics, wood carving, wicker, stained glass, and a number of other craft techniques. Course participants get acquainted with each of the above subjects before they choose two areas in which they specialise and finally perform their dissertation work in the last (IV) semester. Aside from the practical workshops, the syllabus also includes academic art history, ethnography and socio-cultural animation (approximately 1/5th of the entire course in terms of the didactic hours). Completion of the two-year Artistic Handicrafts Course allows you to acquire the formal certificates and the licence of the journeyman and master in the scope of perishing professions.

A comprehensive curriculum that includes many different handicraft techniques gives the learner the chance to try his or her skills in various crafts and make informed choice selecting the ones in which he or she feels best. It often happens that after completion of the course, the participant decides on pursuing activities other than the ones he declared primarily important at the beginning.



Weekend ceramics workshop

The folk high school is an open formula for anyone wishing to discover and develop one's passions connected with artistic handicrafts. Handicraft lovers in their search for an alternative educational form that would develop their sensitivity and practical skills come to Wola Sękowa from all over the country. Among them are teachers, painters, culture animators, chemists, philosophers, ethnologists, various technicians and also those who are still searching for their own ways... Often they are sophisticated individuals with professional experience, coming here to discover new inspirations and work skills, improve qualifications, find new ways for a living, or – after years of devotion to work or family – bring their own artistic passions into life.

It was originally assumed that folk universities would serve village youths, yet the Folk University of Artistic Handicrafts has a more than local character, it is nationwide. The learners generally come from big cities or small towns. For many years we have been observing among our graduates the trend to settle down to live and be active in village settlements. It is probably connected with the increasing popularity of pro-ecological movements, slow life, looking for the ways of living which are close to nature, as an alternative to a more and more dehumanised form of life in big agglomerations. Some people already during their stay with us start looking for a place for themselves to stay and be “closer to the school” in some sub-Carpathian village.

The location of the centre at the village end, among pastures and mountains and with the outdoor sculpture gallery at hand, favours creative work and finding/rediscovers one's ways. It is here that masters of arts and handicrafts introduce the learners into the rich world of techniques based on the work of human hands. Not only handicraft techniques are taught here; the University encourages social and cultural activities for the benefit of the local community. We undertake efforts to make our graduates not just craftsmen, but also animators in their local communities. This is why in the two years of learning our students have the chance to actively participate in events and ventures organised by our University. The most important ones are the Christmas Eve meeting and the outdoor scenic performance “Wierzbina”. Both are brought about with a significant participation of our students and both integrate the society gathered in and around the University with the local community.

Getting to know handicraft traditions of various regions also encourages research and diagnoses of own community in this scope. It may give rise to questions as: what was the characteristic handicraft in my area? Which of its elements prevailed? How can we enliven the folk crafts which are still practiced, or how can they be used in cultural and educational activities?

The place and its atmosphere favour positive relations and the emergence of strong ties between the listeners. During the four-day meetings that take place in monthly intervals the

students' task is to organise themselves together in such a way as to assure the quality of their stay at the University (e.g. cleaning, free time). Prosaic functions such as sweeping or cleaning the floor, or waste segregation effectively integrate the group, strengthening bonds and the sense of community.

The fact of finding oneself in a group of people with similar interests and passions is compellingly motivating and reduces the sense of otherness or seclusion. Exchange of experiences, skills and ideas between the participants of the Two Year Course is an added value. Friendships and contacts remain for long years and often bring about joint projects, for example: The Living Workshop in Cracow (conducting family workshops of handicrafts, regional workshops for children and adults, living architecture and social gardens in urban space) or Serfent Association from Cieszyn, implementing research on basketry in Poland; its idea emerged from students and instructors of the Folk University of Artistic Handicrafts. Today Serfenta is a leading institution in the scope of basketry research and obtained a diploma of high recognition from the Polish UNESCO committee and the title of "Folk Oscar" for the best 2011 research project, named "On the basketry trail in Poland".

It is also important for the listeners to have influence on the curriculum; we are listening to their opinions and we are attempting to respond to their needs. The Programme of the Folk University of Artistic Handicrafts is continually evolving. Even the so-called small workshop forms (short workshops that do not require tedious technique learning and sometimes provide interesting diversion and additional tool of work) are subject to modifications.

Thanks to the fact that we are working in groups that meet systematically for a time-span of two years, we have the chance to get to know one another very well. Particular groups become integrated very quickly, and they have the real sense of common goals and joint responsibility.

It can be proven by the fact that our graduates are strongly involved in the functioning of our Folk University, even many years after completion of the course they attempt to promote and support it in various ways.

Sulińska Borowska

(Kashubian Folk High School, PL)

The Roving Folk High School for Seniors as an example activity of the Kashubian Folk High School

At the beginning let us remind you that the Kashubian Folk High School was created in 1982 and from the very beginning in its didactic and educational activities it has been referring to the idea of “school for life” of the Danish priest, philosopher and writer M.F.S. Grundtvig. It also continues the traditions of Polish and Scandinavian folk universities.



Kashubian Folk High School buildings in Starbienino and Wieżyca

Web page:	www.kul.org.pl
Location:	Wieżyca (Kartuzy County) and Starbienino (Wejherowo County), Pomerania, Poland
Form of activity:	Foundation
Established:	1982
Target group:	mainly adult inhabitants of rural and small town areas in Pomerania
Facilities:	main seat in Wieżyca has 2 didactic rooms, hostel for 25 persons (single, double and triple rooms) and administrative- office premises. Subsidiary training centre in Starbienino has 6 didactic rooms, hostel for 65 persons (single and double rooms) and administrative-office premises.

Among the many activities the Kashubian Folk High School has been undertaking for many years, the ones listed below are of primary importance:

- Civic education and prevention of social exclusion,
- Animation of artistic and cultural activities and protection of Kashubian and Pomeranian cultural heritage,
- Regional and intercultural education,
- Ecological education and projects for the balanced development of the region.

International cooperation with partners from Scandinavia and other European countries is and always has been an important aspect of the Folk High School's work and activity.

On a different occasion it would be worthwhile to present these activities, because on the basis of Grundtvig's "School for Life" and Folk High School traditions, the Wieżyca High school in over thirty years of its work has developed its own, unique methodology of didactic and educational work. Thanks to that it can successfully reach diverse communities of the region and provide for their educational, cultural, and sometimes social needs. In the section below we shall concentrate on presenting one of our projects that had been implemented in the last years.

I. Introduction

Today in Wick is a party yuli luli yuli ya

It'll be fun, it'll be swell yuli luli yuli ya

All the groups'll come yuli luli yuli ya

And have a jolly time yuli luli yuli ya

Such singing performed by a choir of over 120 (!) senior course participants accompanied the meeting that summarised "The Roving Folk High School for Seniors" project. We were working on it in 2013, with the financial support of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.

Within the framework of the project, our course participants met once a week to satisfy their curiosity about the world and the need to meet other people.

The Roving Folk High School was addressed to persons aged 60 or more from 9 Kashubian villages located in Kartuszy and Lębork counties. In selecting participants we gave the priority to those persons who had hardly ever participated in any organised forms of education and/or social activation. With good background research into the particular local communities

of the region, we chose for our project only those villages in which educational and cultural offers for seniors were lacking.

II. Defining the seniors' needs and the aim of the project

Our earlier experiences of working with seniors had shown that the needs of this age group are to a large extent neglected by the local authorities and institutions, by their families and the closest community and by themselves. The last often results from the lack of awareness that cultural and educational activity in III age is often needed and important. In defining educational needs, two courses of action were undertaken. On the one hand, a survey of seniors' expectations was made. On the other hand, a Kashubian Folk High School team worked out its concept of desirable course of activities in work with seniors. In effect of the two lines of research, a common catalogue of needs was created. Our project attempted to meet the following needs:

1. The need of being needed.
2. The need to augment (self-) awareness of own potential.
3. The need of individual development.
4. The need to learn more about Kashebian culture
5. The need to learn more about preventive health care
6. The need to improve fitness
7. The need to be in touch with persons of similar age

The Roving Folk High School for Seniors was to become an attempt at answering the above mentioned seniors' needs. Its main aim was specified as follows: to increase the activity of the elderly inhabitants of Kashebian villages in social life, with special attention drawn to motivating the seniors for active participation in various forms of educational and cultural activities and social involvement.

III. The Programme

On the basis of the catalogue of needs presented above, a general framework for our *Roving Folk High School for Seniors* was developed.

Seniors' "peregrinations" were to lead around six theme blocks, and it needs to be added that the detailed subjects to be tackled had been consulted with the course participants. The programme of the course (modules I-V) had been implemented from July until December 2013 in the form of 4-hour meetings held once or twice a week. A short description of the course is as follows:

Module I: “Personal development, fashion and beauty” (20 hours)

Within its framework:

- Effective communication workshop – taking into consideration improvement of cross-generation relations;
- Assertiveness training, developing self-expression skills in relation with other people and manifesting respect for others;
- Self-presentation workshops;
- Visage lessons concerning the secrets of the art of creating and caring for one’s own image.

Module II: “Health” (15 hours)

Within its framework:

- Meetings with a doctor devoted to the subjects: elderly people’s preventive health care, maintaining physical and mental fitness, typical ailments and illnesses connected with old age, prevention methods and easing symptoms;
- Lessons with dietician about the specific nutritional needs of the elderly, including strengthening diets and nutrition principles during illnesses, therapy or in preparation for medical surgery;
- Memory training to improve the functioning of memory and perceptiveness.

Module III: “Active forms of recreation” (15 hours)

Within its framework:

- Workshops propagating active life-style
- “sitting” aerobics workshops;
- “*Nordic walking*” type marches;
- Relaxation training;
- Group outing to a swimming pool and bowling (the purpose being not only activation, but also integration of participants from various groups).

Module IV: “Artistic handicrafts” (15 hours)

Within its framework each group of seniors decided about the selection of particular handicraft discipline and technique for the class prepared for them. Seniors had the following workshops to choose from:

- Traditional Kashebian painting on glass;

- Painting on porcelain;
- Paper-maché;
- Decoupage;
- Creating jewellery.

Module V: “Music and theatre classes (15 hours)

Within its framework each group, with the supervision of a drama animator, prepared its own drama performance, developing creative abilities, learning to work in a team and discovering various means of expressing emotions.

Module VI: “Participation in culture” (1 day)

As a supplement to the entire course, a joint trip to Gdańsk for all senior groups was organised. With the assistance of a guide we visited the Old and Main Towns and we went to the Gdańsk theatre Wybrzeże to see the play of the participants’ choice “(G)dzie-ci faceci” by Adam Orzechowski.

Summary

A gala summary of the whole project took place at a meeting of all senior groups. Then musical drama mini-performances prepared within the framework of Module V were presented. Each performance had a unique character, because it referred to the characters of the seniors themselves and to the villages the given groups came from. It also gave a chance to show how lively seniors’ sense of humour can be.

Within the framework of *The Roving Folk High School for Seniors* each group of seniors attended a sequence of meetings, 80 hours in total, and took part in an outing to

Gdańsk and a summing up session.



IV. The methodology of the *Roving Folk High School for Seniors*

The classes for seniors were conducted with the use of FHS/S4L (Folk High School/School for Life) method, which in our methodological practice included:

- a) “the living word” and interaction – approach where the word and discussion have the priority, debates are arranged, and a platform for the exchange of thoughts and opinions is created;
- b) partnership relations – assuming that the teacher and the listener are partners who respect one another, and the lecturer who conducts the meeting is not only a formally well prepared individual, but also a warm-hearted and emphatic person;
- c) togetherness in a community – we are putting a large emphasis on building a community of learners, with mutual trust, undertaking responsibility in the face of the community for activities undertaken, openness for any otherness, etc.;
- d) “learning through activity” - all classes, irrespectively of their organisational form, are to be conducted in an inclusive way, that is involving all participants in activities and making use of the learners’ life experience;
- e) homely atmosphere – caring for good, family atmosphere of the rooms (place where course is taking place), to conquer shyness and encourage persons who have not been in touch with any educational institution for a long time.

The traditional FHS singing together is one of the elements that make for the homely atmosphere, and that is why for the needs of *The Roving Folk High School* special song books had been prepared. At every meeting some slight refreshments turned up in the form of coffee, tea, fruits and cookies (prepared by the listeners from products assured by the organiser) thanks to which a nice, family-like atmosphere came about and the participants were incorporated into the organisational aspect of the meetings, so that the sense of responsibility for joint activities emerged.

IV. Results and what happened at the end of the project

It is difficult to evaluate how particular participants of the above-described courses benefitted personally from taking part in them. It is apparent however that the groups of seniors from six Kashubian villages who took part in our project, having returned to their local communities, significantly activated those communities. It is undoubtable that listeners in each group got to know each other well and became well integrated. They came to the awareness that going out is necessary and brings many benefits. Perhaps this is our most important achievement in this project. Every now and then we receive signals about various initiatives

undertaken by our “graduates” of *The Roving Folk High School for Seniors*. Here are some examples:

- Most groups presented the drama performances prepared in the course of the project later at various local celebrations/festivities (Day of the Senior, New Years’ Celebrations, tournaments of Rural Housewives’ Clubs, etc.);
- One of the groups keeps on travelling to ... a swimming pool, and nourishes the post-project friendships at regular meetings at the pool;
- On the basis of one of the senior project groups, an informal drama club was created and it prepares successive performances, thereby enlivening the cultural life of their own local community;
- Senior Clubs were created in three villages, and their members are not just the project participants, but also their neighbours, who decided to follow the example of “our” seniors.

It is therefore apparent that at least in a few of the small Kashebian villages it was possible to awaken the dormant potential in the seniors.

If more general assessments are to be made at the end, it needs to be highlighted that on the basis of our experience, after the implementation of the project the results show that FSH/SFL method once again turned out to be an effective formula of educational and cultural work. Its social value is especially manifested in such aspects as:

- Strengthening the sense of own worth and improving self-assessment in persons threatened by exclusion (through age and/or place of living) in relations with family and social environments,
- Building and reconstructing faith in own strength, potential, talents and opportunities;
- Encouraging to learn new things and develop various skills and also to take an active part in the life of the local community. All of the above allows us to hope that the activities undertaken by the Kashebian Folk High School within the framework of *The Roving Folk High School* addressed to seniors made sense. This in turn gives us – the pedagogical project team – faith in what we are doing, and the energy to undertake similar actions in the future.

Bernhard Bitterwolf

(Schwabische Bauernschule Bad Waldsee, DE)

Learn and meet others at the Schwäbische Bauernschule Bad Waldsee

Around 8.500 people take part in a course each year in about 350 events. More than half of the courses are related to farming or living on a farm.



Website:	www.schwaebische-bauernschule.de
Location:	Bad Waldsee, Badenia-Wirtemberg, Germany
Owner:	Landesbauernverband Baden-Württemberg e.V. (farmers associatio)
Founded::	1949
Target group:	The Schwabische Bauernschule is aiming at participants from rural Sz areas, no matter what age or vocation these people have.
Facilities:	The folk high school provides accommodation for up to 79 guests, who can choose between 35 single rooms and 22 double rooms.

I. Emphasis on Culture and Music

Cultural education enriches our everyday life. It shapes and supports those parts and abilities of a human being that belong to a fulfilled life: creativity, phantasy, capacity for experience and openness. Activities in the field of fine arts are an expression of joy of life as well as an inspiration for sense of community and tolerance. Knowing this, it is only natural that musical, artistic and cultural activities are of high significance for the range of educational courses at our folk high school.

Grundtvig's principle of lifelong learning that addresses the whole person can be transformed into practice excellent in courses with musical or artistic education. In their cultural everyday life people nowadays become more and more passive consumers. They learn about culture while visiting concerts and museums or they refer to offers in the internet. Only on very few occasions people actually have the possibility to experience themselves as creators of music and arts.

A low-threshold offering in the sector of painting, singing, acting and dancing is met with genuine interest but also a lot of scepticism („... I can't *sing*"). After first experiences are made those early concerns are overcome by contagious enthusiasm. Even in very cognitive oriented seminars, activities like common singing could loosen the atmosphere, provoke a sense of community and - last but not least – are a lot of fun.

II. Singing delivers content

A lot of our courses we begin with a daily impulse. All voices are raised together based on a literary text, which is adapted for this specific day of the course. While singing everyone „can get a word in edgeways“ and experience him- or herself as part of a harmonic community.

You gain a lot of information about the life of our ancestors, while you interpret the lyrics of traditional folksongs. The lyrics of folksongs are historical documents and thus applicable for a side step into history. The participants' curiosity arouses about context and background of such songs and about actions that took place during their time of origin.

Let me give you a current example: During a course for Countrywomen in June 2015 we sang European folksongs. That led to a discussion on „Grexit“, EU bureaucracy and the advantages of a strong Europe. Reflecting the predominantly male messages of the lyrics of some of the songs was followed by a debate on gender tendencies in our society and the efforts to express oneself gender neutral. The motivation for this discussion of social and economic issues was rooted in our common singing. That was adult education in its purest form!

When the participants have left the Schwäbische Bauernschule those parts of the course are better memorized, that come out of the „Singing hours“ that they were actively involved in. Sustainable or long-lasting learning occurs, when form or content is able to touch a chord inside of a learner. Making music together (vocal or instrumental) is ideally suited to touch those chords.

III. Education for young adults from agriculture and domestic science

Young people expect openness. This openness to questions related to professional as well as personal or private life is offered by the teachers or course instructors at Schwäbische Bauernschule. Talks and discussions here are often more fruitful and sustained than in regular schools or in courses of profit orientated providers, because participation is on a voluntary basis.

Our range of courses for young adults from rural areas offers them the possibility to get a clearer picture of themselves and their personal environment. To live, learn and work together under one roof enables the individual to make important social experiences he or she would not be able to make at home.

Within the protective atmosphere of the Schwäbische Bauernschule the young people are able to develop those personal and social key competences that are crucial for professional life as well as in a relationship: communication skills, decisiveness, ability to handle conflicts, team spirit, (self-) confidence and tolerance.

These soft skills form an integral part of the courses for young adults at the Schwäbische Bauernschule since its early days in 1949.

IV. Conclusion

Everyone has to shape his future on his own. Success in life is not a matter of chance! To work more effectively with yourself, your farm or other enterprise, to be above things, to assert yourself, to develop creativity – all this could be learned, all this could be trained.

The more insight one gets into the procedures and rules of politics, administration, economics and society, the more own competence is growing. At the same time it provokes their motivation to engage themselves voluntarily in areas such as local parliaments, church councils, clubs and professional organisations (for example farmers' associations). The necessary tools and self-confidence they are able to obtain through courses at Schwäbische Bauernschule.

Barbara Leufgen

(Katholische Landvolkshochschule „Anton Heinen“ Hardehausen DE, teacher)

Hardehausen Basic Course for future farmers, gardeners and housekeeping managers

The Catholic Rural Folk High School “Anton Heinen” was founded in a building formerly used as a monastery in Hardenhausen in Northern Westphalia in late 40'ies of the past century. In 2014 around 7250 people took part in about 388 courses or other events.



Website:	www.lvh-hardehausen.de
Location:	Hardehausen (Warburg), Nordrhein- Westfalen, Germany
Owner:	The Archdiocese of Paderborn
Founded:	1949
Target group:	The educational offers target people from agriculture and other social groups with an interest in rural areas.
Facilities:	The folk high school provides accommodation in 45 single rooms and 10 double rooms. The seminar rooms have a range from 10 up to 100 persons.

I. Concept and role of Grundtvig in KLVS activities

The fundamental concept of this course offer follows the ideas of Grundtvig, that were established in the 19th century: a holistic approach to education that refers to the everyday life of the participants.

The overall prime objective of the course is the empowerment of a self-determined representation of interests. Secondary objectives then might be continuing education (both general and specific), better verbal skills and critical abilities, strengthened self-confidence and enhanced social behaviour. The core of the course is formed by dealing intensely with the social, economic and political environment as well as with one's situation and person.

The teaching and learning content is based on the everyday life of the participants. To make them see things in a wider context, to discuss actual developments, as well as their historic roots and conditions are important aspects of the content-related work. By living and learning together under one roof the mutual treatment and respect itself becomes a learning content the students can't get away from. Thus the course community becomes a training ground for social learning. The programme is supplemented by activities in music, art, craft and sports. These may serve as a physical balance, to contemplate traditional-rural versus modern-urban cultural life and to encourage the creative abilities of the students. Through on-site visits and study trips they gain an insight into different living environments.

For the participants the duration of the course also opens the possibility to engage themselves in shaping and modifying learning goals and steps of the learning process.

II. Programme and curriculum

The Catholic Rural Folk High School Hardehausen offers this Basic Course since 1949. The participants are usually farmers between 19 and 28 years old. Most of them live within a 150 km radius of the folk high school. Additionally one agricultural science student from eastern Europe takes part. The young adults have already finished their agricultural apprenticeship, agricultural college (Fachschule) or graduated university. The vast majority of them are successors on their family owned farm, which they manage together with their parents. A lot more male students than female take part.

During the last decade the number of participants varied between 14 and 22 persons. The course starts each year in January and lasts six weeks. A course week starts Monday at 10.00 and ends Friday at 15.00. The 1st and the 4th weekend are organised and spent together, well as on the other weekends the students have the possibility to stay at home. During the week the students also spent evenings together, organising a programme by themselves or together with their course instructor. Sport activities and an on-site visit at a place of interest break up the weekly routine.

The programme is divided into six blocks. Getting to know each other and the topic "personal development" are the contents for the first week. The students examine their personal

roots, strengths and weaknesses and life planning. During the second week emphasis is placed on a rhetoric programme lasting several days. The students analyse the principles of communication and exercise free speech in front of the group. The third week focuses on ethical questions about religion and own beliefs, whereas the fourth week deals with the professional future of the students. The latter implying farm management and legal issues.

The fifth week provides a study trip to another folk high school somewhere in Germany. There the students have the chance to profit from the roots that these folk high schools have into their rural and agricultural surroundings. With their help they get a good insight into farming and rural development issues in other parts of Germany. The programme finishes in the sixth week analysing agricultural issues. At the end of each course week stands an intense evaluation of the previous days.

Each week the participants elect two so called „presidents“ of their own. These presidents take on tasks like presentation, moderation and representation of the course in front of external speakers/teachers and other groups. At the same time they act as contact persons to the course instructors in terms of course organization.

Together with their course instructor the students establish rules for the course and are responsible for complying with them. At the end of the course an official event takes place together with the students families and friends.

III. Methods

The range of methods is comprehensive and follows the needs of the students. It contains single-, partner- and group work. As a didactic approach for the Basic Course the concept of empowerment didactics has been chosen.

The students are not seen merely as a class of pupils, but as adult individuals. These adults might be quite different from each other, and therefore the learning activities are based on the adults' personal needs, interests and talents. The participants should always be involved in the planning of the activities, so that they take responsibility for their activities, because that is a sort of empowerment training, to be involved in the very organisation of the activities. The adults will train their ability to find ways of solving problems or getting answers to important questions, guided and inspired by the trainer who is a mentor at the same time. The trainer is not supposed to know all the answers, but is supposed to guide, help, council and support the participants.

IV. Final words

Through taking part in the intense six-week Basic Course will always be linked among each other and with the Catholic Rural Folk High School Hardehausen. This network can play an important role in their life, if it is maintained and expanded. As a Folk high school we try to maintain and strengthen the network of each year's Basic Course by implementing regular follow-up meetings and further course offers. Furthermore many alumni volunteer for political, religious or regional posts, thus supporting the development of their living environment.

Tomasz Maliszewski

(Pomeranian Academy in Słupsk)

Higher education at... a folk high school. The case of Sweden

The relations of folk high schools (*folkhögskolor*) with higher education have a long tradition in Sweden. The first attempt to place there the cycles of education at the level corresponding to today's higher vocational studies took place already in the second half of the 1970s⁵.

I. The origins of high at folk high schools

The most important example of this kind of solutions were the recreation management studies (*fritidsledarutbildning*). Placing them in 1977, not at a classical university but at a folk high school gained social acceptance over the years and we can continuously, year after year, observe a great interest among students in this formula of education. It is all the greater thanks to the legal solutions adopted simultaneously guaranteeing scholarships and **other material support** on identical basis as at all state universities. And so, in the academic year 1994/1995, when they were the most numerous, students of leisure time management appeared in as many as 36 folk high schools. Two decades later, in the academic year 2014/2015, studies of this type were offered at almost 15% of Swedish folk high schools (22 from 150 existing facilities).

A typical cycle of *fritidsledarutbildning* covers 80 weeks of study and its duration has been divided into two years. Apart from the theoretical subjects in the programmes there are also many examples of practical training. Diversification of the profiles of these institutions has become an additional advantage of placing this form of higher education at folk high schools. As a result, the candidates have a wider choice because the offer of individual *folkhögskolor* differs – often very significantly.

Studies for the recreation instructors are not, let us add, the only major possible to take at folk high schools in Sweden. There have appeared in recent years a number of other areas of specialization in the field of art, social work and support for people with special needs (e.g. seniors).

⁵ This characterization was prepared on the basis of the article: *Realizacja koncepcji uczenia się przez całe życie w szwedzkim szkolnictwie wyższym. Wybrane aspekty, „Edukacja w Dyskursie” 2014, No. 2, p.21–33. Further literature indicated there.*

II. Current situation

In the 2006/2007 academic year – 65, and in 2010/2011 – 67 from 147 folk high schools existing then offered courses equivalent to higher education studies, and today almost all of Swedish institutions try to deal with this challenge. This is a clear signal that the rapprochement between the two communities – academic and *folkhögskolor* – is progressing.

Until 2012/2013 academic year the courses having the status of higher education were reported by individual folk high schools as educational cycles qualified as *egy* (from: *efer gymnasial*) and today the variety of competences is listed that a participant should acquire during the course.

Presented below are examples of major organizational and methodological possibilities concerning the use of studying with the use of a folk high school.

– *Academic competencies courses preparing for studies*

One-year courses of academic competencies taking place at folk high schools have become in recent years an interesting form of education at the meeting point of informal adult education and academic education. Their task is to generally prepare participants for the studies at one of the universities *högskola/universitet*). As part of a two-semester course (the so-called *Collegeår*) the candidates for students learn studying techniques, they are prepared for gaining scientific knowledge independently, conducting research projects, etc. An important component of the program of a *Collegeår* are sometimes also the classes in building self-confidence using elements of group and individual counselling (also with elements of therapy), if necessary.

– *Studying on the basis of the “zebra model”*

At Swedish folk high schools there are also two-semester university introductory courses in the field of general knowledge. They give their graduates a better start in the battle for the indexes, because they yield, depending on the folk high school and selected profile, from 5 to 20 academic points (while one year at a “classic” university is currently about 40 *poäng*) – therefore setting them in a much better position during the recruitment procedure than their potential competition. In fact, such education is of academic nature, as the education obtained at a folk high school is evaluated according to academic formulas.

A characteristic feature of this type of education is the course of study itself. It looks as follows: all the learning takes place primarily in the headquarters of the folk high school, while two or three times a month, a group of students commute to university for lectures (approx. 4–5

hours), consultations with university tutors and “reception” of the subsequent tasks and reading, which will then be the subject of joint activities and their own work at the folk high school.

There is even an appropriate name defining this kind of knowledge acquisition – *sebra modell* (*zebra model*) – inspired by the analogy obvious to the reader. An example of this type of activities can be, for example, *Humanistisk-samhällsvetenskaplig* profile (“Scientific humanities and social studies course”) – implemented by Geijerskolan in Ransäter in collaboration with the University of Karlstad or the *Marinlinje* in Grebbestads folkhögskola, where environmentalists and sea biologists from the University of Gothenburg are responsible for the level of education. Cycles of combined education are also a variation of this type of cooperation, when students begin to learn outside the walls of the university, and later transfer to the academic level after a semester of classes. An example of such a course is the two-semester cycle of *Filosofi och världsbild* (“Philosophy and vision of the world”) realized in the above mentioned Geijerskolan, where the winter semester takes place at the folk high school and the summer semester already at *Karlstads Universitet*.

– Studying with “safety nets”

Another form of cooperation between universities and external partners are courses that could be described as “affiliated” with one or another academic institute. In the middle of the first decade of the twenty-first century, a new wave of baby boomers reached educational institutions – nineteen, twenty-year-olds with full secondary education. Unfortunately, the central government did not increase the level of funding for university education, which resulted in the enrolment limits for individual majors remaining unchanged in the following years.

Joint ventures with other educational entities turned out to be the way out of this situation because they formally do not charge the budget of a university. Sometimes they are implemented under the patronage of one or another academic institute and, therefore, could be considered informal branches of a given academic centre. This way of studying is sometimes referred to as a *studier med skyddsnät* (studying with safety nets). During each year of education the participants of the “branch” receive a part of credit points which they would have scored as “normal” students – usually 20 *poäng* /år that is a half.

Again, various organizations of adult education and particularly folk high schools wonderfully took advantage of thus created opportunity of cooperation. Some really good “branches” of academic centres found their place there, like the one at the folk high school in Tomelilla (*Österlens folkhögskola*), specializing for many years in international subjects, where a series of popular cycles of education has been prepared at the university level in cooperation

with the University of Lund and Malmö College. For more than a decade such annual academic cycles have been carried out in the dimension 20 credits each, such as: “African studies” (*Afrikakunskap*), “India and the knowledge of South Asia” (*Indien & Sydasienkunskap*) – together with the Institute of Sociology of the University of Lund, “Eastern Europe and Central Asia Studies” – in collaboration with sociologists, political scientists and Slavists from the University of Lund and the University of Malmö, as well as “Primitive peoples – social norms and culture” with the participation of specialists in social anthropology from Lund.

III. Conclusion

The issue presented above shows another possible direction of work of folk high schools in different countries in the future. Thanks to their work methodology and organizational formula, these institutions can successfully co-operate with various other educational, cultural and scientific entities operating in a given social space. The Swedish example of relations between folk high schools and local higher education constitutes a distinct illustration of it and, as unique in the world, is worth further observation by theorists and practitioners of adult education from other countries.

3.2 Other forms of „School for life”

Reto Ingold

(Fachausbildung für biologisch-dynamische Landwirtschaft, Nidau, CH)

Biodynamic Training in Switzerland - a way forward for future farmers



Website: www.ausbildung-biodyn.ch

Location: Fachausbildung für biologisch-dynamische Landwirtschaft, Switzerland'

Owner: Verein für biologisch-dynamische Landwirtschaft

Target group: young people (over 18) that want to become professional in Biodynamic agriculture

Facilities: accomodation for 80 students



Fachausbildung für biologisch-dynamische Landwirtschaft

Wegleitung für Praxis und Unterricht



I. A competent Response to the Wish to drop out

The first 4-year training for biodynamic farmers started in Switzerland and in the early eighties. Fritz Baumgartner, one of the pioneers of the biodynamic farming, once described the starting position for this impulse as follows:

“ In the eighties young people came to our farms in search of their roots and a meaningful, true-to-life activity and wanted to actively participate in the development of biodynamic agriculture and to have further training. They were not satisfied with the prospect of a social alternative, as the 1968 generation had been seeking one. This wish to drop out of society had to be filled with real knowhow about farming in order to be able to develop into husbandry, ‘stewardship’ of the land. This need required attention and we, as pioneer farmers, endeavoured to meet it as well as we could. However, we soon realised that it required more; for suitable seminars and courses were necessary to quench this thirst and to strengthen the movement. Soon we came to the realisation that out of this impulse the people to run our biodynamic farms in the future would have to come; they would go completely new ways and would further develop the idea of biodynamic agriculture without the support of tradition”.

II. Walking it alone

However, when the biodynamic farmers made contact with the established agricultural training centres and faculties with this purpose in mind, it was such a sobering experience that they had no choice but to take the risk of going it alone. The cold shoulder from the educational establishment was so massive and hurtful that collaboration with the state was out of the question for a long time and to some extent still is today. However, in hindsight this brave step really turned out to be the vitally essential birth for biodynamic agriculture as a whole.

As a matter of fact, agricultural training courses nowadays find themselves in an awkward dilemma. They are training and educating farm managers for a sector which is shrinking economically and losing more and more prestige in society; indeed it is often branded as a violator of the environment and devourer of subsidies; meanwhile they must place increasingly complex demands on the agricultural students and apprentices (managerially, technically and socially). Many a tried and trusty farmer will, in fact, most likely recommend his daughter or son to choose a profession which is more recognised and respected by society than farming. Thus, the attraction of farming goes on waning and the agricultural training courses are turned more and more into a small clique, to which only those are drawn who are taking on a large competitive farm from their parents. All the freethinking power of innovation which should actually be synonymous with training is thus unpleasantly weakened in the conventional

training institutes. Then organic agriculture is frequently seen in the conventional courses as a retreat into an unspoilt world, which no longer exists.

III. The biodynamic Training Impulse: The farm is at the heart of the training

In the field of Biodynamics everything has been simply invented anew: the role of the farmer, the relationship to the soil and to the landscape, the way of dealing with plants, livestock and other people. Right through to the market and the relationship with the customers everything has been taken hold of in a fresh way, which ensured a completely new approach.



The farm with the farmers running it takes centre place in the learning process, and not the college course. The training course means deepening, reflection, discussion, coaching and study planning as a complement to life on the farm (in Switzerland this dual form of training and education on the farm and in college is widespread). The curriculum is orientated once more towards the realms

of nature, the earth, the plant, the animal and the human being and it creates a real connection to nature, on which the farmers to come can build their vocational work for a long time. Schooling the faculty of observation and the perception of natural phenomena becomes a central task, as, otherwise, the individuality of the farm cannot be truly developed. Only thus can the farmer, whether man or woman, become aware of the resources of their location, their habitat, in all its facets (geology, soil, climate and cosmos) and make it fertile.

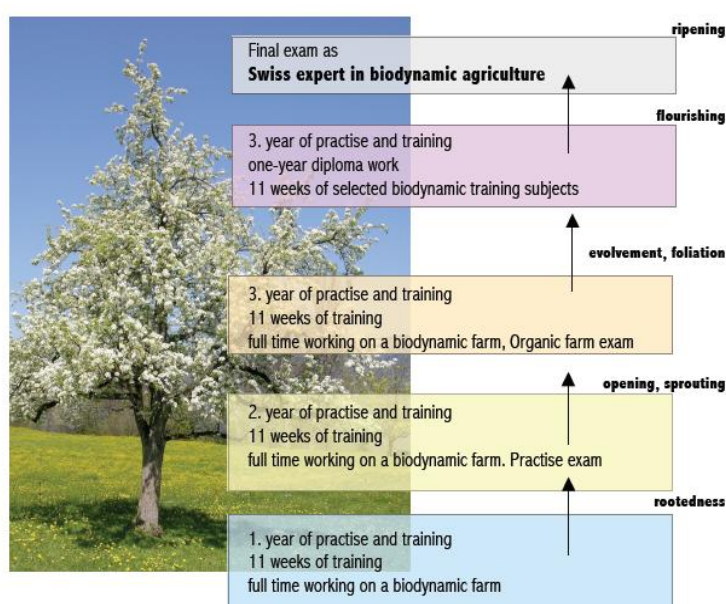
The work on the farm calls for harmony between head, hand and heart. It is not a matter of one-sided blind trust in science, which walks all over the personal well-being of the people working on the farm, doing wrong to the soil, plants and livestock out of a concealed urge for profit and rationalising human beings out of farming. With a holistic approach art becomes the forerunner: eurythmy, painting, modelling are forms, ways, in which people can reflect themselves in nature without being intellectual.

In the meantime the work of the biodynamic training courses has produced numerous socially competent farming individuals, who, as forerunners today, make new forms of marketing and unusual forms of farming possible. For example, they contribute to the

conservation of rare species in nature, grow new varieties of cultivated plants and further develop the techniques of cultivating them. Frequently, these farms are able to combine educational or therapeutic work or publicity with farming and thus contribute to the common good. Urban developments are increasingly reliant upon these unique farms to ensure a connection to nature for people and to guarantee fresh, living food.

IV. How does the biodynamic Training Course in Switzerland work?

Applicants must be at least 18 years old and in possession of any professional degree to start in the biodynamic course of the Swiss Association of biodynamic farming.



The responsible trainers help the students to find a training place on a biodynamic farm where they will live and work full time during at least one year (better two years). After a farm practise contract has been signed the student is invited to the monthly block courses that cover 23 different subjects of the biodynamic curriculum in modules. In parallel the students can pass

after the third year the Swiss state exam for organic farming. The students can be accepted for the final exam if four years of biodynamic practise can be proofed and the necessary certificates of the modules have been collected.

The Swiss training course with its new offer on the biodynamic farm, Gut Rheinau, will undertake a further step. As the first private agricultural college in Switzerland it will take on the whole responsibility for training and education at the secondary and tertiary levels in collaboration with the Zurich Canton. Thus, for the first time the biodynamic course will become completely equivalent to the state training courses. Behind the scenes the battle is still rumbling for free access to it for students from all cantons or from abroad. But the forward march of biodynamic training can no longer be checked.

V. Biodynamic training courses in the world

Biodynamic agriculture as an approach has taken a long time to find its way into agricultural training. In some countries private training courses could be established from the 1980s; some of these now lead to fully accredited qualifications. Integration into the landscape of official training and education in agriculture is not easy. There is a mass of regulations for the middle school and vocational training, which leaves little scope for private initiatives; this makes it hard to introduce something new. However, from the viewpoint of the trainee or apprentice farmers integration is absolutely necessary, for only in this way will a considerable number of people from different backgrounds discover these valuable initiatives.

Several biodynamic training courses have, therefore, taken up the challenge and have driven integration forward. Worth mentioning are beside the Swiss, the Dutch, the English and French training courses. In Germany there are various training courses, some of which enable people to get full state accreditation (the Lake Constance and Dottenfelderhof course), others, however, function independently (North Germany, Hessen and East Germany). Further initiatives could be established in Belgium, Sweden, Brazil and Egypt. Altogether at least 17 regular, structured training courses for biodynamic agriculture and horticulture take place world-wide. In Holland and France also successful collaboration with the state has been built up, which broadens the access to courses offered by biodynamic organisations.

VI. How shall the farmers of the future be prepared?

The training impulse of biodynamic agriculture has been hampered for many years by the lobbying of the existing agricultural establishment. It has frequently been more the forces of educational reform that have enabled its breakthrough; much more respect is brought from that quarter to the bottom-up and holistic approach of Biodynamics. The fact that the gaining of practical abilities is connected with personal development as a whole, with respect for nature and social processes and the fact that getting to grips with farming is connected with philosophical questions and art arouses great interest among such people and makes biodynamic training courses into laboratories for the future. New alliances will definitely become possible here, a possibility, which needs to be recognised in order to change the stick-in-the-mud nature of agricultural training.

Currently the practical work is evidently being reassessed in educational bodies. Until now Swiss agricultural training has been structured in an academically undemanding way. However, from the experience of biodynamic courses, being close to the farm, the farmer's family and the practical work seems to be the key to the success of holistic training courses, as it

makes it possible to give the learning process meaning, grounding, space and focus on the most varied levels for the person in training. The aim is not mere 'intellectualising' or one-sided 'cramming', but rather working in a balanced way. Here the biodynamic training impulse will hopefully help to relieve the apprentices, who have had enough of sitting in school or college, of grey theories and to help the farm to gain a new standing as a place of learning.

More and more tutors and lecturers in agriculture training are searching for further reaching concepts and are opening up to Biodynamics. They can find answers from the biodynamic method to questions about the significance of agriculture for the modern world, about the production of food that is fresh and full of life and about treating nature respectfully.



The biodynamic training impulse can cross the narrow boundaries of an agriculture of labels to form a contribution to overcoming the exploitation of nature in keeping with the times. Biodynamics can hold its own as a platform for reflecting innovative, spiritual, social and ecological developments in farming practice. Therefore the Swiss biodynamic farming school is proud to be part of the folk high school initiative in Ziarno - Poland created within the Erasmus+ initiative. We have to strengthen all together those running the farms so that they dare to venture on new paths for their farms, so that they trust in their practical experiences, will take themselves seriously as teachers of agriculture in future and make themselves still fitter for imparting knowledge to the next generation.

Ingrid Rasch

(Summer Academy at Ljungskile Folk High School, Centre for European Studies at Lund University, SE)

From *Agora Bar* till the Third Space in Malmö

I. The beginning of Agora Bar

In the summer of 2001 I was manager of a project called Agora Bar, which was realised in the framework of a European housing exhibition, Bo01, in Malmö in Sweden. I was charged with creating a public space where the *City of Tomorrow* could be discussed from diverse aspects with invited experts as guests, not only from Sweden but also other European countries. The result was 84 very different conversations, although the form always was the same: a lecture followed by a conversation between the expert/guest and the audience. The conversation were moderated by me and were usually characterized by a concentrated and at the same time relaxed atmosphere. Little by little an open-minded and deliberative tune developed. Some participants advanced to "regulars", others came more casually. Every evening at least some newcomers participated, something that gave the discussions an interesting unpredictability.

But Agora Bar, although successful, was a project limited in time. What would happen after the the exhibition was closed? Could it be transformed into a permanent venue? And - yes, it could! Most important were the comments expressed by many of the "regulars". Directly to me and also in Agora Bar's "guest book". One person described Agora Bar as a vitalizing "waterhole". Another wrote, that civic dialogues like these in Agora Bar were strengthening the democratic spirit. I found that very encouraging. Nevertheless it could easily have been the end of an interesting experiment, had the project not been noticed by the Cultural Department of Malmö City. Late 2001 they decided to financially support a continuation of the project and so made it possible for me to develop the concept at a new location. Some weeks later four adult educational associations on different ideological platforms decided to give their financial and administrative support. This plural support was the best start I could wish for.

II. The Third Space

The terrorist attack at World Trade Center in New York City September 11th 2001 was the beginning of the new global era of polarization and fear, which we still live in. Some days after the attack I read an interview with Homi K. Bhabha, the Director of the Humanities Center at Harvard University and one of the most important figures in contemporary post-colonial studies. He talked about the future role of intellectuals all over the world and stressed the

importance of *bringing people with different opinions together* to listen and talk to each other about common basic issues. These places, mustn't be physical but could also be a created imaginary space, defined by Homi K. Bhabha as "a *third space* beyond polarization and antagonism". He meant that we must fight ideas like Samuel P. Huntington' theory about *the clash of civilizations*.

I was impressed by his words and decided to translate them into my environment and create a "Third Space" in Malmö using my experience from Agora Bar. My aim was to build up *a protected zone for reflection and rethinking* , where stereotyped thought could be counterbalanced, to bring about a *modest alternative to polemics in media*

III. Constructing the Third Space

I take great care in finding a comprehensive theme which can be deconstructed in many different ways. The starting-point for my choices always are *pre-political and basic values* because the Third Space is not about political debate but reflection and curiosity. I then compose a series of eight lectures (the programme is always running eight consecutive Tuesdays in the spring or fall) and invite a mixture of academics, writers, journalists and other professionals with the aim of offering the audience a wide spectrum of ideas and experiences. In the The Third Space my task is then to invite the audience into the conversation and help people overcome shyness or anxiety. This is a delicate task and I must be modest and avoid exposing my own views but let the audience develop the subject at hand. At the same time I must be ready to intervene should the conversation lose its focus or become aggressive. In The Third Space strangers meet and respecting disagreement is necessary.

The conversations are very important, because that is where the concept is fully realised. The Third Space in Malmö takes place in the very centre of the city where many cultures converge. The first ten years the physical place was a club-like part of a popular restaurant, where you also could have a glass of beer or wine. Since two years The Third Space is in an old theatre which can house more people. It's a nice place where people can bring their own food and drink. The subject of the meetings can be very diverse. Sample topics of recent years were, as follows: *Which values are important to defend? Is democracy in danger? What is liberating formation? What is Europe? Whose reality? About the media and the citizens. What do we remember together? About collective memory in Scandinavia.*

The Third Space started in 2002 and thousands of people have participated. Every time at least fifty persons come but lately often a hundred or more. Malmö is a cosmopolitan city and different values are represented and confronted. That is the enriching point. That is the very essence of The Third Space. "Finally democracy is based on the understanding of the civilizing importance of disagreement." as the Danish educationalist and philosopher Ove Korsgaard expressed it.

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Community Culture Centers, Bulgarian specific form of folk high school

I. Introduction

There are not typical Folkhighschools in Bulgaria, as such exist in Central and North-East Europe. The closest institutions similar in structure, ideas and functions to Folkhighschools in Bulgaria are Community Culture Centers. "Chitalishte" is specific Bulgarian word for these centers.

The Community Culture Center is typical Bulgarian public institution with educational, enlightened, craft and amateur artactivities. Usually, such centeris consisting of a library and hobby clubs where peoples develop various activities - schools of music, dance, sports, languages or theater. Sometimes events like readings for new books by young authors or well-known writers in Bulgaria are organized. Thematic holidays related to folk traditions are organized in order to protect the cultural heritage of the country. The first Community Culture Centers were opened in the 1856 in the towns -Svishtov, Lom and Shumen.

II. Community Cultural Centre in Yavrovo

In the following lines we will tell you about one of the many Community Culture Centers in Bulgaria. It is located in mountain village Yavrovo, Southern Bulgaria.

Village Yavrovo is located about 30 kilometers from the town of Plovdiv. Itsaltitude is 1050 meters. This is the only place where there is view to the 88 different villages and towns in the vicinity.

The name of the Community culture center is "Probuda-1923". It is located in the old school building (Picture 1). Local people respect the holidays and traditions. They participate in many activities and amateur groups of interests to the Community Culture Center. The daily work of Angelina Milencheva (chairwomen) and TodorkaDamyanova (secretary) of the Center is related to the dissemination and saving of knowledge about the customs and traditions of the village.





Picture 1. Old school building of Yavrovo village

There is a library, a cultural hall and ethnographic collections at the Yavrovo Community Cultural Center. The Center is famous with female choir for authentic folklore. It was created in 1960. Active work of the choir is realized with the participation of local people, including many young ones. The choir has received recognition across Bulgaria by diplomas and medals awarded from regional and national festivals.



Part of participants in the choir for authentic folklore

There are a variety of books in the library for local people interested in reading. The readers of the library are increased especially during the summer months when people from bigger towns came back to their homeland. They find out knowledge and self-improvement through books.

Every summer, the village “comes to life”. The Community Center becomes a "summer school" - a meeting place for children. The secretary of the Community Culture Center carried out daily activities with them (Picture 3). All the children in the village called her "Aunt Dori".



Summer school in Community Cultural Center of Yavrovo villiage

III. An outline of the programme of Community Cultural Centre in Yavrovo during the past year

The activities of the Center start in March and finish in September. Cultural Center's program for 2015 included variety of activities:

March – Workshop for knitting of “Martenici” (25 participants) – specific Bulgarian tradition. "Martenica" is typical Bulgarian talisman or amulet, which is a symbol of the coming spring and beginning of new life cycle after winter. They are made of red and white string twisted together to form a thin length. On the first of March Bulgarians give martenici for health, joy, happiness and success.



April – Handiwork course (10 participants) – needlework for Bulgarian embroidered, lacework, handmade covers, gloves and knitted socks.

May

- Course in painting and exhibition (15 participants).
- Literature course for learning of the stories of famous Bulgarian writers (20 participants).
- Organizing a meeting of vocal groups from the region (50 participants).

June

- Participation in the cherry festival (15 participants).
- Cooking classes and competition for the preparation of typical Bulgarian dishes (10 participants).
- Childrens' summer school. There are classes for reading, writing, computer literacy, painting, football in summer school (25 – 30 participants).

July and August - Childrens' summer school – continued (25 – 30 participants).

September - Feast of folk tales - 15 participants.

IV. Conclusion

In different events during the year 2015 more than 150 people were involved. For active work with children the library received an honorary diploma for its contribution to the expansion of young people's access to culture for 2015.

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Levko Dovgan

(Study Programs Coordinator, West-Ukrainian Resource Center, Lvov, UA)

Ukrainian echoes of Grundtvig: The West-Ukrainian Resource Center**I. Introduction**

The West-Ukrainian Resource Center (WURC) is not formally a Folk High School, however it uses the philosophy of “school for life” initiated by Grundtvig in his time. Thus, all the projects implemented by WURC are aimed at providing support to local initiatives in rural areas in Ukraine and always include a study component. We conduct the study courses for active people in countryside – entrepreneurs, students, teachers, village councils’ deputies – on topics that could be useful to them in implementation of local development projects. In addition, for last 10 years, the WURC has been actively promoting the concept of lifelong learning.

II. Presentation of our organization

The Center was founded in 1994 as an NGO umbrella organization at the initiative of 15 non-profit organizations in Lviv. Currently we have 20 years of experience in the provision of consulting and local educational services to NGOs and communities in Ukraine on the issues of NGO administration, territorial management and community development. Our technical skills include the development of periodicals, books, and all types of leaflets. We work with an experienced team of trainers and experts who provide high-quality educational, consulting and institutional development services to our beneficiaries.

Our mission:

to promote the development of civil society through the support of community initiatives.

Our goals:

- To develop and strengthen local communities through supporting local results-oriented community initiatives.
- To develop productive cooperation between the state, business, and civil society organizations.
- To develop local and regional NGOs' potential through the delivery of quality educational, consulting and informational services for these groups.

Our main strategic directions are:

1. Community development: educational, consulting, and practical support for the development of local communities and activity groups in the Western region of Ukraine: educational support of several pilot communities in Ukraine: complex support of social and economic development of communities since 2004.
2. Social and political processes (educational programs in social development, public opinion polls).
3. Network projects (cooperation of regional resource centres in Ukraine, Informational Community Network, cooperation with Byelorussian and Polish resource centres for NGOs).
4. Education and culture (educational seminars for NGOs, international exchange Programs).
5. Economics and economic cooperation (cooperation with the World Bank and Ministry of Economics of Ukraine).
6. Migrant advice, prevention of irregular migration, returnee assistance, xenophobia and tolerance issues.

III. WURC's Activities

The main activities of The West-Ukrainian Resource Center include:

- Organizational development and applied skills training for local communities and self-governance. Our experts work at national level.
- Field consulting and support to local communities and self-governance, including: development of local teams and activity groups, development of local action plans, support in fundraising and grant-making, support in the development of project documents, supply of literature, technical support.

- Grant proposal analysis and small grant support to local communities and self-governance, small project support and follow-up at local level.
- Training and consulting on migration safety, including legal migration/visa procedures, basics of study/work abroad, and basics of trafficking /child labour abuse prevention.
- Distribution of information materials through our partnership network of NGOs, local government and self-governance and local initiative groups. Management of information campaigns at regional level.
- Social and economic research, including: all types of polls, focus groups, expert discussions, development of questionnaires and supporting documents, primary data processing (Excel, SPSS), analytic processing of research data. We have a network of interviewers in all regions (oblasts) with the emphasis on the western part of Ukraine. We have 2 supervisors and 3 research development/analysis experts.
- Organization and management of business training/consulting on: effective negotiations, organizational development, fundamentals of marketing, teambuilding and some related applied areas.
- Conference service. Organization and management of events, including conferences, press conferences, round table discussions, trainer workshops, open space discussions and some related forms of events.
- Organization and management of cultural exchange trips for student and professional groups to Germany, Poland and other countries together with international partners.

IV. Conclusion

From 2006 to 2016, we have successfully implemented a number of projects on adult education promotion jointly with S:t Maria Folk High School (Malmö, Sweden), and Kashubian Folk School University (Wieżyca, Poland). The trilateral project “Traveling Folk High School for Rural Communities in Ukraine” has been especially significant.

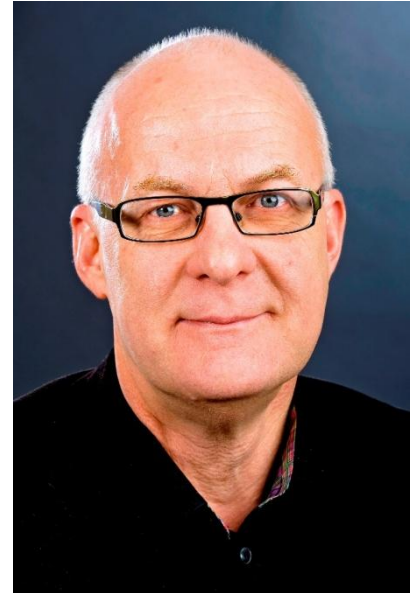
In the very near future the WURC intends to re-publish a book “About Rural Folk High Schools in Denmark” by Ege Meyer Benediktsen, issued in 1906, Chernivtsi, in which he promoted the model of the folk high school, developed and introduced by Nicolai Frederic Severin Grundtvig.

PART IV

Epilogue

Erik Lindsø

("Folkeakademiet", DK, founder and chairman)



A folk high school teacher's 10 commandments

1) You must know 25 stories by heart

In 2004 I was employed by the National Danish Radio as host in a weekly programme about culture. I asked my boss Hans Peter Larsen at the DR 1 channel : Why do you want exactly me"? He answered: "You're going to make folk high school through the radio"! I wanted to know what he meant and he answered that he had heard me tell good stories including a mix of art, culture and daily life – "and we need that in radio programmes". He pointed that the programmes at DR 1 were too academic and 'un-folkish'. I then was in charge of the programme "Lindsø" for 4 years and I never doubted that the storytelling structure of the programme was an explanation for fairly good ratings in terms of listeners. It is not enough to know facts and have an academical degree if you cannot supplement with good stories which can lift our hearts and tell us that life is bigger than we assume.

Frederik Christensen taught me that. He was teacher and principal for more folk high schools during his life and he is a true mentor for every folk high school teacher when he says: "If the folk high school becomes to joyless it's because it's not serious enough. We think we can manage with some meagre society theories. We're worried but we show no sorrow. We're excited but we show no happiness. We're critical but we don't cry. If a young teacher came to me and asked: 'What can I do'? I would answer: 'Find 25 good stories, accounts of life, learn them – by heart – and tell the stories. After that your students will revolutionize the world'! If a teacher can tell such stories he can act in a folk high School"

This is exactly what a folk high school teacher must be able to do – tell stories from her heart – no matter the subject she is teaching. When I was principal at Rønshoved Folk High School we introduced a procedure during job interviews: After the applicant has told about all her/his skills we always asked: “what are your second best skills”? If the applicant weren’t able to answer or thought the question was stupid, she/he would not be given the job.

You cannot be a folk high school teacher if you haven’t got multiple skills. Often it has shown that the best folk high school teachers are smatterers who teach subjects in which they hold no degree - but they have a passion for it. Such a folk high school teacher rarely burns out.

2) Don’t let the superficial run too deep!

It’s a folk high school teacher’s most noble task to make sure that the superficial don’t runs too deep. By doing so you as a folk high school teacher handles the tradition in which you are employed. And the folk high school run deeper than we assume. I’ll illustrate by yet another story from National Danish Radio: I was in a working group that was supposed to create a new programme about cultural issues – named “P2 Plus”. We were at finalizing stage of the work and we should agree on the general aims for the programme. One of my former folk high school students – Susanne Sommer - was leader of the project and because we both were with folk high school background we suggested a sentence which also is a part of the Danish Law for folk high schools. It says that “the folk high school must give an interpretation of existence and the meaning of life”. Proud we brought forward the suggestion to our colleagues that “P2 Plus” must give an interpretation of existence and and the meaning of life. A roaring silence occurred in the room and it took a while before a well-known colleague who has several awards for making excellent radio programmes bursted out: “That’s just too fucking big”

In the folk high school we’re not afraid of using big words and such a phrase we would use with the greatest of ease. In a cultural institution like Danish National Radio they were shocked by it!! Finally the general aims for P2 Plus were: “The aims for P2 Plus are to get closer to the Danes”. This phrasing says practically nothing, it’s superficial and not dangerous. The phrasing from the text in the law is binding and dangerous because it will change the person who commits to it.

And that’s what is requested from a folk high teacher. She must be able to use her professional skills, her commitment and her life story to give her personal opinion on how she sees the good life. The purely professional teacher can tell how Søren Kierkegaard interprets the meaning of life. The folk high school teacher must also be able to answer the question: “What is your own opinion”?

3) You must constantly debate life's big questions

For 21 years I have been a teacher on 3 different folk high schools. I was as a folk high school teacher – from my first and nervous job - brought up to intensely debate the big life questions each day which meant that at least a couple of times per week I found myself discussing vigorously. I was 25 when I in 1980 was employed at Haslev Højskole. My colleagues were so old that they could be my parents and one of them later becomes my mother-in-law through my first marriage!!!

The worst colleague turned out to be my best colleague!!!. At that time I was wiith long hair, I was a leftist, I wore clogs and smoked the corn pipe. Quite conveniently I shared the opinions of the students. My colleague Heuser arrived each day dressed in pin-striped lounge suit, white shirt with wing collar, a bow tie and shining shoes. He taught social science and at the beginning of each class he wrote at the blackboard: "Rather dead than red". Heuser was at all means political incorrect for a leftist like me – and for the students. His classes often turned into chaotic scenes where everybody was shouting – Heuser danced his opinions on the tables and sometimes students left the class room totally upset. Heuser was ultra-Conservative and really old fashioned but he was a brilliant teacher – and a talented actor who wrote lyrics and played scetches where he mimicked students and colleagues bringing the crowd on their knees in laughter.

When I discussed with Heuser I could be so mad at him that I nearly exploded. But a couple of weeks later after such a verbal fight on opinions I found myself citing him in my philosophy classes and even defending his points of view. I realised that he did the same in his classes. It was Heuser who taught me that a folk high school teacher must be driven by giving freedom to differencies and constantly contribute to fruitful disagreements as something valuable for a folk high schools' drive.

4) You must break norms

For 10 years I was teacher at Danebod Højskole when Mogens Hemmingsen was the principal. At the coffee break in the teachers' office he often threw a topic on the table if the conversation was a bit dull. I remember 3 issues:

- Why should prisoners on parole not attend a folk high school?
- The union cannot give long-time unemployed back their spirits but could it be a task for folk high schools?
- Can we admit students who have cancer?

I remember these 3 topics because all were realised at Danebod. Students I remember very well were bankrobberers from Vridsløselille (prison near Copenhagen, ed.), obese long-time unemployed women from Northern Als and the cooperation with the Cancer Association about enriching cancer patients and their relatives with a folk high school stay. A folk high school teacher must take it as her role to break the patterns we perceive as normal. We must not give ourselves up to mainly want the good, socialized and easy going students.

A folk high school course must like a group of folk high school teachers not be too homogeneous. The group of folk high school students must represent who we are in society – immigrants, disabled, criminals, the vulnerable, the wild and the twisted brains, the orderlies and the nice ones. If a folk high school finds itself admitting only just-out-highschool students the folk high school teacher will end up being an extension of an ordinary high school teacher. In that case the folk high school loses momentum because the folk high school teacher just duplicates the rest of the society.

5) You must be the preacher of the stick-in-the-muds

When I became principal at Rønshoved Højskole and suddenly observed the folk high school teacher through the perspective of a principal's eye it struck me that the best folk high school teacher for me was the teacher who kept up ideals and didn't adjust to the students' actual commitment. A folk high school can be a joyful place but sometimes students are making it into a party place. A spontaneous party is a well-known evil at folk high schools where students sometimes are going off the limits just because Frederik bought a new tooth brush. I can't find a better example than Anne-Marie Donslund who were employed at Danebod and later came to Vallekilde Højskole. Today she's an author and a cultural counselor in the municipality of Odsherred. She creates folk high school where she is. Many of us would bend over when arriving prepared for a morning assembly and then noticing students clinging to their chairs fighting massive hangovers. Why preach the word to the heathen? Why not lower the bar and be on level with today's stick-in-the-muds?? But not Ms. Donslund. She stood one morning on the rostrum at Danebod Højskole and looked at 70 sleepy party monkeys. She shouted: "Do you want to hear the story about the day I said no to engage the crown prince and become Queen of Denmark? If 50 of you are able to raise your hands I'll tell the story." We woke up, we laughed and moved closer together while understanding that this story also told us about the moment, about the coincidences and the choices in life. The skilled folk high school teacher can burn out on days when students are burned out – she doesn't lower the bar but as a preacher she confronts the stick-in-the-muds. A folk high school teacher must not only lead the horse to the well but also constantly

insist that the hack drinks from the elixir of life which you as a teacher is pulling from the depths.

6) You must commit yourself outside the folk high school

At Danebod Højskole I learned that the folk high school isn't a dome of a cheese-dish, but it's a society obligation that a folk high school teacher must demonstrate in practice. All the teachers at Danebod were engaged outside the school. Mogens and Rita were frontrunners in establishing Midtals Free School (a private independent children's school, ed.), Hanne was chairperson of the same Free School, Kaj was a member of the municipality council – and engaged in conservation issues, Else Marie initiated South Jutland Girls' Choir, Niels managed to start a movie theater in the nearby village. And I could go on. The fantastic thing was that all our extraactivities became an integrated part of the folk high school and not only did it benefit the students but it also showed them examples of what it meant to be a citizen.

A folk high school teacher must be a creative committed human being. When we are creative we often are happy and enthusiastic. We forget ourselves. Or rather: We can be ourselves and let others be themselves. A folk high school teacher who doesn't engage herself outside the school easily ends up being the petty and scrupulous colleague who thinks we need to count our working hours, who thinks we work too hard and who forgets that the folk high school is a form of life which requires the same obligations as you will meet in a love relationship.

7) You must take care of a tradition

We don't say that we **create** folk high school but we say that we **keep** folk high school. It means that we: keep on doing things, keep in with students and colleagues, keep up high standards, keep to the track. That goes for the folk high school movement and for the individual folk high school as a place of employment. A folk high school teacher cannot only look upon her work as a part of her personal career plan. In that case she should never be given the job.

As a folk high school teacher you are a new link in that chain which got its first link at the foundation of the school. A folk high school chain is stronger than its weakest teacher's link. At Danebod Højskole I met old Gunner Rasmussen who were teacher and principal at the school since 1952. For each new group of students he told the history of the school and incorporated it into the history of Southern Jutland. As a new teacher I listened to the story a couple of years and suddenly I was the one taking over the story and telling it to the new group of students. Here I found that by passing it on I felt love for the school. Suddenly the history of the school also became my history because I was about to be a part of it.

8) You must acknowledge your school – not wishing to be recognized by it

At Rønshoved Højskole I experienced a tiredness coming to me when teachers all the time wanted more recognition for their work. Time calls for recognition. But recognition depends on a power relationship. I receive recognition from the one above me and the recognition from the management I can use to assert myself compared to others. Introducing this widespread culture of recognition in a folk high school easily creates inequalities that doesn't fit into a type of school where we are supposed to be equal about the tasks of keeping school. A folk high school teacher therefore must understand that acknowledgement is more important than recognition. When we acknowledge each other then we are in a fellowship. In the acknowledgement we are not opposing each other, we are not under or above each other but we know ourselves by each other. It doesn't depend so much on who we are as teachers. The most important point is that we are together about something – the school.

9) You must love life and want to change the world

The most important thing about the tradition we as folk high school teachers are in – which we also need to stick to – is Grundtvig. His pedagogical genius is in the indirect method: "First you must learn to love life then you can change the world". Almost all other pedagogical theories works the opposite way around: first you change the world then you can love life. A folk high school teacher must be able to enliven, fill her students with enthusiasm and stir them into action. This is only possible when we have discovered that life is bigger than we thought and when we are able to tell the students about our discovery.

Frode was fighting in the resistance movement during the Nazi occupation – he got arrested and tortured in the prison. By luck he escaped on the road to execution. He was an elite gymnast and travelled the world doing gymnastic shows with the Flensted Jensen Group. He was my colleague at Haslev Højskole where he was the teacher in sports. He was the age of my grandfather. During the presentation of the teachers for each new group of students he walked through the assembly room on this hands – greeted by big applause. He was an entertainer. Once for each group of students he told about his experiences during WW II and in the audience the silence was complete. We sang "Altid frejdig, når du går" ('Always joyfull on your way', ed.) which was the song freedom fighters sang before execution. It also has the lines 'fight for everything dear for you – die if it matters'. Frode's story about his own life always turned into a story of him loving life in Denmark and all what is worth fighting for.- and also how much we therefore need to change.

The difference in Frode's story and a theoretical society analysis about the same topic was that in Frode's case it was so obvious that love shone its light through everything. And he

showed that for love you might risk your life. The good folk high school teacher must show what in life is worth walking on your hands for.

10) You must create citizens

As folk high school teachers we must know that the work is connected with a democratic obligation. We have as folk high school teachers a unique opportunity to shape our students and thus influence the future of the country. It's a possibility and assignment we must commit to. We must not only raise our students to become nice and sweet persons but we must make them into citizens. For the society it is not enough to have human beings – it needs citizens. We therefore are obliged to teach the students to use heart, brain and voices so they are able to stand forward and without being ambiguous express their points of view opposite of acting like ignorant voters. A folk high school teacher must keep up with times without going with the tide.

Most important a folk high school teacher must be able to create dreams. A folk high school at its best is a dreamer's paradise. When it is remembered like this by students even decades later it is because they learned how to dream. A folk high school teacher must remember Grundtvig's words saying that: "... we in our adult life won't reach further than we are allowed to dream in our youth." It is in our youth years we must propose our big targets. Otherwise we will not later be able leave marks significant enough to show that we were here. Therefore a folk high school teacher must be able to create a refuge where students are allowed to do deviations and discover as told by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry in 'The Little Prince': "It is the time you have wasted for your rose that makes your rose so important." Are you succeeding in this task it means that a folk high school teacher in today's society is nothing less than a revolutionary – in an intellectual/spiritual revolution which is needed.

Instead of an ending

As you can see from Erika Lindsø's text, as well as from other materials in different places of the guide, one cannot just learn how to become a teacher at a folk university. As indicated by our friends, only those who meet a number of conditions can perform this work. A university degree and specific professional skills may be to some advantage, however, in order to become a full-fledged teacher at a school for life, you need something more.

I hope that the reader will, similarly to us, feel that a folk high school teacher is not an ordinary school beak, and a folk high school is not an ordinary school – but a different one, putting stress on different parts of the programme, formulating its educational objectives differently and differently building the educational microsystem in its interior.

Is it socially useful? Is it effective? Is it still needed? – these are questions that each reader will have to answer alone... We as authors only tried to provide you with material for your own conclusions on these issues... Although, we are not hiding the fact that our mind has been made up for a long time...

What is the unique value of this initiative? A special recipe. At the end, I would like to recall – along with a brief commentary – this recipe, which we “found” together with a Friend several years ago during one of our trips to FHS roots. Perhaps one of the readers will want to use it:

Recipe for a School for Life:

Remember! In order to prepare a successful school for life, you must use the highest quality products. We must therefore carefully look for such ingredients which, when mixed in appropriate proportions and skilfully treated, will give results expected by the “cooks” themselves as well as by “educational” consumers – both those who want to merely satisfy their hunger as well as those who are true gourmets.

Do you care about the success of your “educational nourishment”? In such case, it is worth making sure that the created dish is suitable for preparation and serving in a variety of conditions. On the one hand, it would be a sin not to use the opportunities offered in this regard by the local environment of cooks and consumers; on the other hand – to disregard regional habits or tastes would also not augur success. So keep that in mind as well!

From an old FHS “cookbook” found in Geijerskolan in Ransäter during our Scandinavian trip to the “roots” in the summer of 2002. (S. Byczkowska, T. Maliszewski, 2005, p. 135)

The recipe for *a school for life*, as you can see, seems quite sensible and simple enough so as to deceive an unexperienced amateur with an illusion of easy success. Meanwhile, “the devil is in the detail.” Because what is it supposed to mean: “use the highest quality products?” What measures should be used to be able to say, with all the responsibility, that we are dealing with such high quality? What ingredients...? In what proportions...? It seems we will have as many different *schools for life*, as many attempts of responding to the indicated questions there will be. Everything depends on who wants to make the above recipe and what goals they have.

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