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Volume 2

Deepening the approach on fostering democracy in Europe

Florian Wenzel, Katrin Kuhla, Christian Boeser, Klaus-Peter Hufer

Erasmus+ Programme – KA2 Cooperation partnerships in youth,
Call for Proposals 2023
Project Agreement: 2023-2-DE04-KA220-YOU-000175190

AKADEMIE KLAUSENHOF regional national international
UNA Universität Augsburg University
Socialna akademija
doga KOLEJİ
KATOLIKUS Ifjúsági ALAPÍTVÁNY
InEuropa

Imprint

Authors: Florian Wenzel, Katrin Kuhla, Dr. Christian Boeser, Prof. Dr. Klaus-Peter Hufer

Contributors:

- Ari Inovasyon ve Bilim Egitim Hizmetleri Anoim Sirgeti – Consortium of private Doga-schools, Istanbul, Türkiye
  Dr. Zuhal Yılmaz Doğan, Umur Bakkal, Danny Arati
- Katolikus Ifjúsági Alapítvány – Catholic Youth Foundation, Szeged, Hungary
  Zsuzika Farkas, Áron Ternovácz, Barnabás Gergely
- Socialna akademija – Social Academy Ljubljana, Slovenija
  Eva Gajšek, Matej Cepin
- InEuropa, Modena, Italy
  Barbara Grazzini, Elisa Lai, Maria Rosaria Gagliardi, Daniela Ottolini
- Universität Augsburg / Netzwerk Politische Bildung Bayern am Lehrstuhl für Pädagogik mit Schwerpunkt Erwachsenen- und Weiterbildung
  University of Augsburg / Network Civic Education Bavaria at the Chair of Adult and Continuing Education, Germany
  Katrin Kuhla, Florian Wenzel, Dr. Christian Boeser
- Akademie Klausenhof – Academy Klausenhof, Hamminkeln, Germany
  Dr. Michael Sommer, Pia Ziyout, Julia Bödeker

Proofreading & Layout: InEuropa, Italy

Munich 2025

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Introduction: Deepening the approach

Welcome to Volume 2 *Dealing adequately with anti-democratic slogans.* In this publication you will find a lot of reading that supplements the more practical *Training Manual (Volume 1)* of this project.

It will be of added value for all those who want to be informed about the current socio-political developments and conceptual responses by Prof. Dr. Klaus-Peter Hufer and European partners which are at the foundation of the project. It also invites those, who want to train others in the approach, to dive deeper into the didactical and philosophical foundations of our attitude towards learning, target groups and the role of trainers and participants in a learning setting. Finally, it offers several ideas on what evaluation, more specifically a value-based democratic evaluation could be in this context.

*Part A p*resents backgrounds on threats to European democracy by populism and extremism; it shows why anti-democratic slogans, fake news and conspiracy theories are so attractive for many people across Europe. It presents insights into the different situations and topics threatening democracy from partner countries of the project.

Part B details our concept on confronting anti-democratic slogans; one key is a focus on the diversity of values instead of working on arguments only; it shows similarities and differences concerning these values amongst the European partners of the project. Finally, it sketches the biographical pathway of the 'father' of the approach, Prof. Dr. Klaus-Peter Hufer, via an interview.

Part C deepens didactical reflection, focusing on our aim to not only have democracy and values as a topic in trainings, but also 'do' these trainings in a democratic and value-based way. For this, questions of teaching and learning, of process and result, of philosophical views of the human being are being treated. The question of addressing target groups or human beings as such, of group dynamics and fallacies of communication play a vital role for becoming more professional trainer in this respect. Finally, a section concerning online trainings gives hints for transferring this general attitude into virtual learning settings.

Part D shows options for going further: what is needed to build up a network of trainers? How can we guarantee quality when passing on the training approach to others? Which additional pieces of reflection and mutual coaching should be used? This part is expanding the application of the training from individual use to a next level having a sustainable European network of trainers.

Part E dives into evaluation. Often evaluation is seen as an avoidable add-on which only wants to show us our failures. Here we present an approach of a participatory, appreciative and democratic evaluation which can be integrated into a long-term project. Its aim is to be of added use for the learning process of all those involved.

The *Annex* presents a glossary of 23 important terms which are used in this publication and the training manual and it contains a bibliography of all sources cited – lots of options fur further reading!

We wish good insights and positive irritations in deepening the training approach!

Florian Wenzel, Katrin Kuhla, Christian Boeser, Klaus-Peter Hufer - Munich, July 2025

A Socio-political background: European Democracy at stake

1. Democracy – what are we talking about?

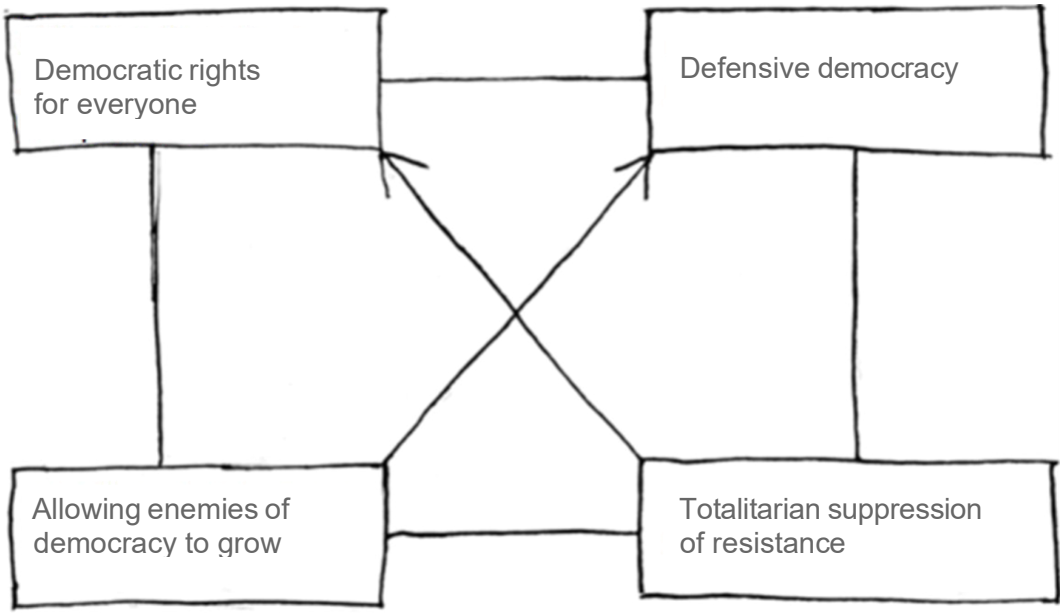
Between fight and flight

We currently have two problems in our societies: firstly, the tendency to avoid open debate, becoming passive and no longer being an active part of public debate or action; secondly, a tendency to be hostile towards those who think differently, especially when the differences relate to conflict-laden topics such as integration, climate protection or gender and also the extent of intervention measures by the state in times of crisis, for example during the Corona pandemic. Both tendencies – a flight from conflict or a fight in conflicts – are a threat to democracy: the one leads to undermining democracy by not being part of it, like an inner emigration; the other by accelerating conflict in such a hostile way that only authoritarian alternatives seem possible.

Democracy as being understood here is about dealing with the diversity of values existing in plural societies with a conscience of contingency. These values might be represented by individuals, cultural, religious, economic and other groups. Democracy means that no single value will be taken as an absolute guideline to be followed, excluding and eliminating other values. This also means that no individual or societal group can claim to represent an absolute value that should be installed for all (extremists or fundamentalists do therefore not play the democratic game but want to abolish this order of things). In this sense (given a good frame of institutionalized democracy) we have to say goodbye to the idea that there is right and wrong in democracy (as in science). The focus on right and wrong means there is no sphere of negotiation; right and wrong (and often as we hear “there is no alternative”) are technocratic answers to political challenges; they do not solve these challenges but abolish the room for democracy.

Democrats accept that being human means being limited; they accept the future is an open and ever new challenge; they take over responsibility for their actions while knowing others would take other decisions in each situation. Democrats try to get into a conflictual arguing about what is most helpful in each situation and what is less helpful. Helpful or not helpful is the democratic answer to the thinking of right and wrong. Therefore, democracy is not a recipe to be followed. It involves tensions and dilemmas which do not go away with more knowledge or greater participation. As a conceptual approach, what we call “duality of democracy” might be helpful to show the balancing of and also tension between competing (opposing) values of democracy. The concept also shows how an exaggeration of one value leads to problems and negative consequences which threaten democracy itself. The “value and development square” (Schulz von Thun 2008 and 2023) is a scheme that shows the “duality of democracy” involved there. The example demonstrates this approach for democracy:

The general dilemma of democracy



Democracy and especially liberal democracy has an essential dilemma which is shown above. In recent years with its various crises the discussion how to protect democracy has become stronger again. The value of openness to all sorts of different opinions, the democratic rights for everyone, have led to numerous problems: algorithms in 'social' media lead to an increasing focus on extreme positions excluding others. Platforms did not sufficiently ban hate speech and named this 'freedom of speech'. Foreign powers actively spread fake news and 'alternative narratives' in order to destabilize European democracies.

All of this allowed enemies of democracy to grow and undermine the coherence of society. That's why recently the European Union tries amongst others to work with big companies on the *EU Code of conduct on countering illegal hate speech online* (EU Commission 2016). This means that the value of a defensive democracy has been strengthened. Democracy has to guard its borders and set red flags. At the same time this is a narrow path to travel on: as many demonstrators and extremist parties claim, the state would just want to suppress their ideas and not allow for any resistance towards 'ruling elites'. At the same time authoritarian states or 'illiberal democracies' use the value of defensive democracy to indeed suppress opposition; the claim of foreign influence fostering terrorism is the standard answer for autocrats to exclude plurality in the media and on the streets.

In problematic situations we often tend to exaggerate one of the positive values; we then realize that it does not work and do an extreme jumping back and forth between the two extremes. Authoritarianism is being abolished, soon chaos rules. Later the call for a strong leader might lead to new authoritarian behaviors of those ruling. This shows that democracy is a difficult path of high quality, trying to balance different values which all have their own right.

2. Technocracy, populism, fake news and conspiracy theories

Individualization and Modernity

The success of anti-democratic slogans can be explained by several factors. These include modernization, disconnection from established political parties, the rise of internet media, the decline of public discourse, neoliberal ideas, social divisions, and fears among the middle class about losing status. Additionally, two major trends—individualization and globalization—are reshaping society, contributing to feelings of alienation and loss of identity.

Individualization involves breaking away from traditional social ties, leading to a demand for mobility and flexibility, particularly in industrialized nations. While this can liberate those with resources from rigid social structures, it also brings challenges, such as a “loss of certainty in knowledge, beliefs, and guiding norms”, as noted by Ulrich Beck (Beck 1986, 206).

As people become more individualized, they often rely more on their inner selves for stability rather than on the outside world. "For the individual, self-awareness becomes more real than his experience of the objective social world. He therefore seeks his 'foothold' in reality more within himself than outside himself" (Berger et al. 1987, 71). This can lead to a "permanent identity crisis,"(ibid.) where life feels nomadic and constantly changing. The reason: "The pluralistic structures of modern society have made the lives of more and more people nomadic, monadic, constantly changing, mobile" (ibid.,159). In this context, feelings of homelessness reflect the modern social experience “homelessness has become an expression of modern social life” (ibid., 159, 184). This observation, relevant since the mid-1980s, remains true today, especially in many European countries that have experienced rapid modernization (Central and Eastern Europe).

The transformation of society currently has even more far-reaching consequences. In his much-praised book *The Society of Singularities*, Andreas Reckwitz states that it is now about more than "independence and self-optimization", namely a "complicated striving for uniqueness and exceptionality" (Reckwitz 2018, 9). This results in "a structural change in society that consists of the social logic of the general losing its dominance to the social logic of the particular" (ibid., 11). The result is a cultivating of the self, which also subjectivizes the view of the world and politics.

This finding raises the question of how and by whom in such a society the "generally binding", the consensus that unites all members, the "common good" can still be strived for or even realized. Reckwitz interprets the development he describes as a "crisis of the general [...] into which a society that is radically oriented towards the particular is entering" (ibid., 435). For a democracy to exist, it is essential that its members show empathy, mutual recognition, mutual solidarity and interest in public affairs. However, these are concepts that contradict a completely individualized or singularized society and the pursuit of self-realization or the staging of uniqueness. Globalization means that borders, both natural and national, become insignificant. Distances dwindle, the distant becomes close, events that affect our own lives often have a distant cause. Conversely, the near also determines the far. The decisive driving forces of globalization are economic entanglements and interests. What counts most is the economic usability, standardization and measurability of all actions. The world is becoming more and more similar; two examples that everyone knows: McDonald's is everywhere, but the traditional restaurant is disappearing and Amazon is replacing the local bookseller. The internet and 'social' platforms are used to circulate countless interpretations

and explanations of the world and life that are backed by interests that are no longer recognizable. Everyone's life is determined by this. As a result, our own political options for action no longer seem relevant, and the consequence is fatalism. This is expressed in the assertion often heard at regulars' tables that "nothing can be changed anyway". This seems contradictory to the simultaneous process of individualization, but is a consistent result of it. New ideas and decisions must always be made, and it is often no longer possible to assess the circumstances and consequences. Instead, the entire system is highly networked and interdependent. At the same time, the pace of change is accelerating. People meet who would never have met 50 or 60 years ago. This raises eminent questions and challenges for politics, society and culture: how civilizing and mutually appreciative are encounters between 'established' and new arrivals and newcomers? What role do fears and prejudices play, how do they affect politics and everyday life? How can international and global agreements and interdependencies be made transparent? Which values and rules are indispensable and non-negotiable in an individualized society and globalized world? Which generally recognized institutions or organizations can effectively demand them? How can we deal with the feeling of individual powerlessness in this global process? What responsibility, indeed guilt, do those who live well in the rich countries of the North have towards the people in the southern regions of the world whose livelihoods they are depriving with their lifestyle? Is this responsibility even recognized and accepted? How do we accept ambiguity and uncertainty as the condition of life – in fact the pre-condition for democracy as described above as a radically diverse and open concept?

Problematic Consequences

Let's look at three problematic consequences of this current situation which is not only a crisis of democracy, but of the Western concept of modernity itself.

Consequence 1: Technocracy

The still enormous success of technological innovation boostered by capital accumulation suggests to many that we could control current challenges by listening more to the 'experts'- Politics as a conflict based business is seen as anachronistic. Governments are rather seen like companies that should start to be profitable for their citizens. 'Don't argue, start working as we do!' is a slogan that could often be heard on European streets. This goes hand in hand with the belief that 'we have no alternative'. In the European financial crisis starting 2007 this was often heard and lead to state-driven expenditures to save banks and other private companies. In general, the application of liberal market-mechanisms to all social spheres is seen as a remedy. As could be witnessed, this often led to a control of markets and stabilization of European countries, but very often at the cost of many citizens of the lower classes and also at the cost of a further de-solidarization and egoism of many people. This can also be observed with technological attempts to adapt to or control climate change: climate change is not seen as a radical question of our way of living or domination of the planet, but another technological challenge to be controlled by market mechanisms.

Consequence 2: Populism

Political scientist Jan-Werner Müller (Müller 2016) says populism has two main features. First, it

criticizes the ruling elites, portraying them as corrupt and power-hungry. Second, it idealizes the people, seeing them as good and capable. These ideas are appealing in political debates because they offer simple explanations for complex issues. Criticizing elites is attractive because it gives people someone to blame for societal problems, shifting responsibility away from themselves. Claiming to speak for the people is appealing because it means one's own views don't need to be questioned. Sometimes, instead of speaking for the people, populists claim to represent common sense or the only correct decision based on facts. Humans tend to simplify things to cope with the overwhelming amount of information they encounter. This tendency makes it hard to change familiar beliefs and prejudices. People cling to their worldview, especially when it is important for their well-being. Populism simplifies life and provides a sense of security by making the political world less complicated and offering clear answers about who is to blame for problems. However, populism becomes problematic when it targets weaker groups or those who support them, and when it shows disdain for politics and democracy, advocating for authoritarian alternatives.

Consequence 3: Fake News and Conspiracy theories

The social discussions surrounding the political handling of the coronavirus pandemic and questions about the consequences of the war in Ukraine have triggered further polarizing debates. In the current crisis situation, this applies in particular to the handling of fake news and conspiracy theories, which are popular in a wide variety of milieus. The problem here is not necessarily the deliberate dissemination of false information per se; especially in times of crisis, which are characterized by uncertainty, people tend to seek meaningful narratives as orientation in order to reduce complexity - this is understandable in order to organize their own thoughts and actions. Facts and arguments therefore only have a very limited effect when it comes to stories that provide support in a situation fraught with fears and anxieties. As they often draw on emotional exaggeration, they are also rewarded by the algorithms of Social Media which push scandalisation in order to remain attractive. But if this happens massively and on purpose also by bots, the entire social discourse is threatened to become a room of confusion; ‘fact checkers’ have no chance in a situation in which there are so many counter-narratives that truth has no longer any chance to show its difference.

Conspiracy theories are trying to build a consistent narrative in this chaotic situation. They fulfill a function that must be taken seriously; they are fed not least by the success of the natural sciences, which have firmly established the belief in the feasibility and controllability of the world. A world in which limitations, chaos and chance are always dominant seems inconceivable and deeply unsettling. The uncertainty - and this is far more problematic - is reinterpreted as the deliberate actions of a few: it is usually argued that the chaos is caused by negative powers (elites or, far more problematic in consequence, stigmatized minorities). These intentionally wanted to harm the population in order to expand their own power. Conspiracy theories often re-activate very old nationalist, culturalist, anti-semitic and rascist patterns in a very emotional way. While they claim to make ‘higher powers’ responsible for the illnesses of the world, in the last consequence they lead to a discrimination and exclusion of mostly the weaker ones in our societies (concerning conspiracy theories as an internal problem in the educational system see Siegel et al. 2025).

Trigger business

Steffen Mau (Mau et al. 2023) has done empirical research concerning the often discussed division of society. His observation is that there are indeed certain 'trigger points' that serve as emotional stirs and let people opt for a clear position they do not easily want to leave. Yet, in society in general, empirically there still is a consensus about many things and many shades of grey beyond black and white positions. The challenge, as he sees it, is rather that there are certain associations and parties which function as 'division entrepreneurs' who emotionally scandalize trigger points and make them big and extreme in public discourse. They can be found in populist parties and movements fundamentally opposing the existing democratic system and division of powers. They use the trigger to establish strong opposition between 'us' and 'them' and often build on conspiracy theories. They actively undermine a diversity of opinion and, as discussed above, they often in consequence exclude those from public discourse who already have a weaker position. Their aim is the establishment of an autocratic order in which control and power provide orientation. Democracy is thus seen as something 'weak' producing confusion and uncertainty. 'Take back control' is the slogan that was originally used by the 'vote leave' campaign leading to the Brexit. In its many variations since then it represents this wish and autocratic vision of securing power, often in a nationalist vision in which migrants are deemed to be part of the problem as they are regarded as confusing this imagined control.

The following topics are very often triggers that are actively used to 'take back control' – they vary across Europe – depending on the political system, history and societal discourses in present.

- The institution of politics

  Politicians are an elite which wants to deprive the people of their rights and install a controlling dictatorship by not allowing divergent opinions. Examples: Corona as an invention to control the people, letting the energy system collapse on purpose after the start of the Ukraine war to deindustrialize European countries.

- The media

  Media are controlled by the state and have developed a closed system with politicians in order to control opinions of the people and secretly pursue their own hidden agenda about which no-one should know.

- Integration

  The state is planning the 'big exchange' of the people with migrants. The destruction of the original population makes it easier to control the territory by elites.

- Gender

  'Gender craziness' wants to dissolve the categories of man, woman and family; the abolishment of everything 'male' produces societal chaos.

- Climate

  Panic concerning climate change serves to install chaos and establishes the ruling elites as saviors providing a clear direction.

The basic idea behind many of these positions: there is something 'natural' or 'normal' (in its everyday version often termed 'commonsense') in the world that is being threatened by an elite of conspiracists. It is 'our' task as a people to defend this natural order of things: traditional gender relations and hierarchies, protecting our ethnicity and neo-liberal capitalist way of living without questioning existing privileges that mostly go at the cost of the weaker ones in society (and the environment to be used limitedlessly and unquestionably).

More recently we can also observe counter-movements to these problematic trends which are trying to strongly uphold the value of *solidarity*. Mainly civil society groups are also developing clear slogans and hashtags, but not with anti-democratic intentions, rather in an attempt to unite and strengthen those which want to uphold a free and equal society. They are trying to raise the voices of those that are affected and questioned in their identity by the developments described above. #blacklivesmatter and #metoo are examples for picking up triggers (integration and gender) in a positive way and construct a counter-narrative.

This is an important contribution to not let anti-democrats dominate the discourse; at the same time, also pro-democratic slogans share the dilemma that each tendency towards populism has: they are fixing one category (woman, black) in order to unite; aspects of diversity, deconstruction of gender, class and race are becoming more difficult when doing this. Concerning race, Mai-Anh Boger calls this the 'trilemma of racism' (Boger 2016): if I want to empower black people, I have to fix their identity at the price of not recognizing diversity; if I focus on diversity of experience as a black person, I will not be able to empower groups that are structurally excluded in society. The third component is given in both options: focussing on diversity or identity concerning race (or other categories) will not be a contribution to a 'normalization' of society in which it plays not role how we meet, which is the vision of a "post-migrant society" (Foroutan 2019) that is inclusive in the sense that we are all equal as human beings beyond our categories.

This shows once more why anti-democratic slogans work much easier as they divide the world in us an them and do not bother about tensions and dilemmas we face in democracy.

3. Psychological backgrounds: mental health and stressed societies

Anti-democratic slogans are not individual outbursts of anger, by no means just personal hate comments or merely an outlet to get rid of one's own frustration. Although this would put them into perspective and make it easier to deal with them, the solution would then be merely to calm the other person's agitation, perhaps even to attempt personal therapy. This may also make sense, but the problem would not be solved. Anti-democratic slogans are not isolated incidents, they are uttered far too often. There is more to them than that: they reveal the seething underbelly of our society. They demonstrate how people react to the social, political, economic and cultural situation of the society in which they live. The slogans and sayings express what is felt and thought in large sections of society. They are a reflection of existing and changing conditions. They are also a warning sign of how shaky the foundations of civil society democracy are.

Authoritarian, exclusionary, anti-democratic, racist and sexist statements are no longer a fringe phenomenon, a 'problem' of extremism on the margins of society; they come from the center of society. Seymor Martin Lipset was one of the first ones to coin the term 'extremism of the center'. Their findings show that the center of society - i.e. the large majority that has not occupied or had to occupy the "upper" or "lower" places in social terms - is no guarantor of democratic stability. Scholars who research the spread of these attitudes agree on this. The titles of recent studies prove this over many years. The attributes ascribed to the social center are clear and unmistakable: according to the empirical findings, it is in many areas "fragile", "disinhibited", "divided", "lost", "hostile" and "authoritarian". This has consequences for political culture: researchers are observing an increasing distance to democracy as such (Zick et al. 2023). Socialization researcher Wilhelm Heitmeyer (Heitmeyer 2024) and other academics have studied the fears and attitudes of Western European societies over many years. Their findings led to the term of 'rough bourgeoisie' (Rohe Bürgerlichkeit) which means that in middle classes at the center of society, there is a seemingly bourgeoise facade which hides rough ideologies of inequality which come out when triggered by real or imagined fears of loss of identity.

All of this shows even more that we have to look at societal structures as a whole instead of combating extremism at the fringes of society; we have to understand structural traumas and their psychological consequences when wanting to strengthen European values in the center of our societies. In order to understand structural traumas and their psychological consequences we have to take into account psychological concepts and theories, more concretely the concepts of mental health.

Mental Health, stressed societies, and democracy

The WHO defines 'Mental Health' as follows: "Mental health is an essential part of an individual's ability to think, feel, interact with others, earn a living and enjoy life. Consequently, the concept of mental health emphasizes the fundamental human values of independent thought and action, happiness and friendship. Mental health is jeopardized by a wide range of individual, social and environmental factors, including poverty and deprivation, debt and unemployment, as well as violence and conflict" (WHO 2022). This makes mental health a fundamental element of an individual's general well-being. In line with the definition of physical health, we understand mental

health to be more than the absence of mental illness. Rather, mental health refers to a person's state of emotional, psychological and social well-being. It concerns the ability to take care of oneself, to cope with challenging situations, to deal with stress, to shape relationships and to enjoy life. In other words, we are mentally healthy when our basic needs have been met.

Klaus Grawe has a well-validated theory (Grawe 2004) of the basic needs necessary for mental health. He defines four basic needs:

- need for attachment
- need for orientation and control
- need for self-esteem enhancement and self-esteem protection
- need for pleasure and avoidance of displeasure

Whereas the three last point of Grawe's four basic needs are fairly self-explanatory, the point attachment needs a bit more focus: there is a lot of research on attachment, for example the 'attachment theory' (Grossmann / Grossmann 2023), which empirically proves that attachment behavior influences our mental and physical health - negatively and positively. The attachment theory was founded in the 1960 and has become a dominant approach to understanding early social development. The major finding is that the interactions of babies with caregivers form patterns of attachment, which in turn create internal working models that influence future relationships. These patterns of attachment can be distinguished in four patterns, here a short overview:

Summary of Attachment Patterns

Attachment Style	**View of Self**	**View of Others**	**Comfort with Intimacy**	**Trust in Relationships**
Secure	Positive	Positive	High	High
Anxious (Preoccupied)	Negative	Positive	High (but overly reliant)	Low
Avoidant (Dismissive)	Positive	Negative	Low	Low
Disorganized	Negative	Negative	Low (fearful yet craving)	Low

The attachment theory includes a very comprehensive research over decades and the focus will be here on its relevance for social coherence in the light of anti-democratic slogans. Attachment is a

spectrum – most people exhibit a mix of attachment traits, with one style being more dominant. The attachment styles can change: life experiences, self-awareness, and therapy can help individuals shift toward secure attachment.

Persons with secure attachment are likely to be more courageous, open for new experiences, show more tolerance of ambiguity, show more endurance in conflicts – these are all competences needed to maintain and strengthen European democracy. Confronted with stressful situations, the secure attachment model offers patterns to reduce stress by searching and asking comfort and support from the attachment persons. One major pattern of the non- secure attachment models is that they are less able to reduce their stress level.

If these needs are not met in environments, worksplaces, relationships, etc., in which people live, people get into stress. Stress is then one the factors to put mental health in risk, to endanger mental illness. When human beings get into stress they tend to turn into a “survival mode”. In this mode the brainstem might take over control: action to survive, thus fight and flight are prioritized: thinking in general, for which the Neocortex would be necessary and complex thinking in detail, is not available in the brainstem. Thus, to think realistically and productively about the complex obstacles of our modern world, we need to get in a rather relaxed state in order for our basic need to be covered.

The current crises (wars, climate change, migration, social inequality, radicalization etc.) are reflected in stressed societies. The fact that stress raised is for example shown in the increase of mental illnesses in all European countries. The individual rise of stress and the increase of mental health issues have profound implications for the health and functioning of democratic systems.

When stress becomes pervasive, it can erode trust in institutions and democracy itself, polarize and fragmentize society, and make democracies vulnerable to authoritarian tendencies.

A vicious circle between societal crises, increased stressed levels, the unavailability of relaxing situations and the increasing of a feeling of individual crises has started. Anti-democratic slogans are in this way also a symptom of a society confronted with mental illness.

Fostering democracy in Europe means integrating the ideas of the broad definition of health by the WHO into the topic. From a mental health perspective, we have to look for spaces in which relaxing comfort and attachment can be experienced and human beings have the feeling that their basic needs are covered before going into rational argumentation and change of perspective in a complex world: “The act of sharing and the creation of a coherent, meaningful story (narrative) is essential...In the relational space, in contact with others, the ruptures in the personal history as well as in the social fabric can be restored” (Mehr Demokratie e.V. 2022, p.14).

B Conceptual background: Fostering Democracy in Europe

1. Our approach beyond arguments: values, dilemmas, competence

Values - Looking for positive core of slogans

Extreme anger, bad feelings and demand-driven slogans lead to a persistence in one's own position and "truth". This subjective truth is often based on self-righteous exclusions of others as inferior and led by strong emotions. Therefore, it is hardly possible to simple counter them by better arguments or facts on a rational level.

Our approach rather tries to get at the positive functions that anti-democratic slogans fulfil. This does in no way mean that they are to be justified concerning their topic; yet, quite often there might be positive values behind them that seem to be violated. These positive values can often be boiled down to two dimensions: freedom and equality. Each human being needs some sense of autonomy and being able to act independently of rules and regulations by others; Liberal democracy indeed has strong historical ties to the Enlightenment era and capitalism; as Marx and Engels analyzed, this can have devastating effects: “All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind.” (Marx / Engels 1848). In other words: individual freedom can lead to the atomization of society in which all collective links are destroyed. At the same time, there is the critique that not all human beings have equal chances and equal access to live their dreams. Strong, privileged (male, white, healthy, rich) ones unfold their freedom at the cost of weaker ones.

This is why human beings also have a strong sense for the need of commonality: the value of equality means that as human beings we are not born with fundamental differences and this should be respected – by providing rules and regulations that are the same for all. Equality points to the fact that we all have the equal right to live our lives decently. It is a collective value that sets boundaries and links us to each other. Origins of this value are in the trade unions trying to collectively confront the owners of capital and property to achieve better life conditions. In modern society there are several measures trying to foster the value of equality: insurances, an incremental tax system, security belts, wearing Corona masks and compulsory education are examples that try to make human beings equal and avoid that privileged ones live their freedom at the cost of others. It is mostly privileged people that see the value of equality as a restriction of their individual life; for others, equality is the only chance to have a decent life and unfold their personal freedom. One example from gender is shelter houses for women in anonymous places. Men are excluded from these places – only in this way these women can have security as a basis for their freedom.

These examples show that anti-democratic slogans are not (only) individual statements to be countered. An anti-democratic slogan is rather a symptom of a structural problem of missing balance and the ability to have a feeling of self-efficacy. We should not cure the symptom but look at the core of what is happening and deal with it structurally.

Dilemmas – tensions between values

Now it is not always easy to balance these two fundamental values concerning concrete topics and political decisions. In democracy, it needs the preparedness and responsibility of all citizens to contribute to this balancing; as discussed above, democracy in its radical form means that there are no strict guidelines, but conflictual dialogue is needed to find good regulations for all. There is no 'right' or 'wrong', but fundamental value-dilemmas we must deal with.

It should be noted that it was often only after a long discursive struggle that the fundamental norms in force today were formulated as human rights and legal constitutional articles in order to be able to derive legal claims from them. These norms are a binding guideline and the basis of a common social understanding of the basic democratic framework; they protect modern democracy from being overburdened and undermined internally. At the same time, this basic framework must be reflected in an attitude of "democracy as a way of life", must be constantly renewed by us.

This requires a discourse on values, which often assign different priorities to the applicable standards and legal claims from different perspectives. This makes it clear that the applicable democratic norms must be updated by ourselves on a daily basis in concrete disputes; we cannot blindly follow the basic democratic framework in the sense of technical instructions. In our own individual and collective responsibility, we constantly decide anew how to deal with irresolvable areas of tension in the here and now- for example, between freedom and security, between rule- based and flexibility, between the demands of majorities and minorities.

This is where democratic dilemmas become apparent, which constitute an essential core of the political: the ever new "dispute" about the weighting and evaluation of the applicable norms. Democracy is not exhausted by abstract adherence to rules - conflict and thus also responsibility for one's own point of view is the core that constitutes the creative potential of democracy for shaping the future. Insecurity is the 'price' for the fact that no king, church leader, historical event or moral code will tell us how we should live together, what right and what is wrong. Insecurity also means that gender, ethnicity and social class can no longer be used as a reference for treating people differently.

Anti-democratic slogans are in this sense phenomena of crises in which the balance of freedom and equality is out of joint and where insecurity becomes so big that it is impossible to accept it as a sign of democracy (and human life as such); the reaction is then not to find a new balance but to go into the extreme opposite – the positive call for equality when wanting to be on an equal level then leads to wanting to exclude others that seem to threaten that equality; the positive call for freedom leads to exclusionary egoism wanting to destroy all rules and regulations. Democracy is in danger when these fundamental value conflicts cannot be settled anymore. In many current disputes and also political debates, it can be observed that the ability to engage in democratic conflict is being abandoned in favor of 'extremized' values and demands.

Representatives of other positions are harshly condemned and denied legitimacy. One's own values are often morally exaggerated and understood as non-negotiable laws that must be adhered to and communicated to others in the sense of (leading cultural) discipline. Following the intensified discussions about immigration from onwards, this pattern is currently evident again in the crisis situation of the corona pandemic. Here too, representatives of the other side are being asked to give

up their supposedly false or anti-democratic values. This prevents a contentious dialogue of values, a critical examination of one's own and other people's values and an intrinsic assumption of responsibility for value decisions. The challenges outlined above are examples of how to deal with diversity within our society. The challenge in Europe is to question what our own values mean in concrete terms, how they are not only defined in differentiation from others, but how they can be lived in our own European diversity.

The basic thesis is: instead of a vociferous battle for discourse sovereignty with the basic distinctions of right/wrong and good/bad, there needs to be a value-based debate about what is helpful or less helpful in shaping the future together. Conducting value dialogues means first of all reflecting on unquestioned self-understandings of different values and attitudes and dealing with which values are in conflict with each other in very specific cases.

It is also important to consider how the respective values themselves are actually lived. What do we mean when we talk about the value of freedom? The individual free development of my imagination? Or the facilitation of freedom to act for People who cannot do this on their own? And what does the value of equality mean in concrete terms: equal rights as equal opportunities for all? Or enabling equal access to resources?

These questions make it clear that dealing with anti-democratic slogans is about becoming aware of one's own attitude in the debate with others and not just arguing cognitively about the best argument, but also emotionally enduring a diversity of values in personal encounters and developing one's own attitude. This is something that works best in personal encounters and cannot simply be substituted by virtual online communication.

Competence – taking responsibility in groups

What is the key to not reacting with 'better' and instructive knowledge and counter-arguments to extreme misinformation, but to concentrate on better integrating the very different social groups? How can democracy learning work to strengthen democratic coexistence and responsibility for democracy? What is important here is the shift in focus from 'knowledge' to 'competence'. In April 2008, the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union adopted a proposal from the European Commission for a 'European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning' (EQF) (Commission of the European Communities 2006). This aims to be nothing less than a universal translation instrument for national qualifications systems and would like to record knowledge, skills and competences. The EQF thus claims to capture and describe formal, non-formal and informal dimensions of learning. The crucial point is that this instrument rejects former ideas of a 'canon of knowledge', which should be binding for everyone as a guiding input. This means that knowledge and facts become less important in favor of shared responsibility to act together.

Instead of input, what is far more relevant is the 'outcome' of a learning process, i.e. what a person is able to do – this is closer to the call to action that is hidden in many anti-democratic slogans. With the focus on learning outcomes, learning is seen much more as an active achievement of the learner themselves. It is based on a constructivist understanding of learning, which implies that the meaning of content is a constructive achievement of the learner and that similar inputs can therefore lead to very different learning outcomes. This strengthens the importance of non- formalized learning paths

in particular, because learning as an active performance can also take place in any non-institutionalized context, quasi 'en passant'. This places the ability to act and, in terms of competence orientation, the independent assumption of responsibility at the center of learning processes.

Learning of this kind is also less of an individualized achievement as in classical knowledge transfer, but takes place in an exchange within groups and should therefore be understood as a social action. This understanding of learning is compatible with democracy learning, which brings different people together and makes their biographical experiences the starting point for learning processes. Etienne Wenger describes the change in the culture of learning with his concept of the'community of practice' (Wenger et al. 2002) and emphasizes the connection between collective learning processes and the further development of the embedding social community; a representation that Dewey already introduced from a pedagogical perspective when he linked the 'self-realization' of the individual to the connection to a community, which is what makes democracy possible (Dewey 1916). This means that countering anti-democratic slogans becomes a social activity which by itself should be a democratic process of embedment and participation of all.

The focus on learning outcomes therefore strengthens active learning and thus the relevance of what is learned for the individual and society as a whole: "If learning outcomes are given a prominent position, then this is closely linked to the change of perspective to active learning, whereby the distinction between theoretical and practical learning is gradually eliminated." (CEDEFOP 2008). This concept of active learning ensures that learning outcomes in the sense of the emancipatory orientation of democracy learning always keep the freedom of the learner and the community in mind.

Which concrete outcomes or learning outcomes, which competencies and which skills are needed to strengthen democracy and – not counter but – deal productively, appreciatively and participatory with anti-democratic slogans? Regarding democratic societies, the OECD (Organization for Economic Co- operation and Development) has attempted to concretize this in an international and interdisciplinary process with its 38 member states. Since 1997, it has been working on the DeSeCo (Definition and Selection of Competencies – see https://www.deseco.ch/) project to select key, core and basic competencies for education in democratic societies. "What individual competencies does a modern, democratically constituted society that is challenged by diverse processes of change need? What does it need to promote as a result? The approach therefore has a socio-analytical and socio-political background" (OECD 2005, p.6).

DeSeCo defines competence as follows: "A competence is more than just knowledge and cognitive skills. It is about the ability to cope with complex challenges by drawing on and using psychosocial resources (including cognitive skills, attitudes and behaviors) in a specific context." (ibid.) Reflexivity is described as the core of competence: "Reflexivity does not only include the ability to deal with a specific situation routinely following a formula or method, but also dealing with change, learning from experience and thinking and acting critically" (ibid., p.7). In this way, focusing on competence in combination with positive values is an approach that helps strengthening personal responsibility and dealing with (democratic) insecurity.

DeSeCo identifies three competence categories that intersect like circles and are required to different degrees in different situations:

Competence category 1: Interactive use of media and tools (using tools interactively)

1a: Ability to use language, symbols, text interactively

1b: Ability to use knowledge and information interactively

1c: Ability to use technologies interactively

Competence category 2: Interacting in heterogeneous groups (functioning in socially heterogeneous groups)

2a: Ability to maintain good and sustainable relationships with other people

2b: Ability to cooperate

2c: Ability to manage and resolve conflicts

Competence category 3: Acting autonomously

3a: Ability to act in a wider context

3b: Ability to design and realize life plans and personal projects

3c: Ability to perceive rights, interests, boundaries and needs

Competence categories 2 and 3 are particularly important in the context of workshops dealing with anti-democratic slogans. Interaction in heterogeneous groups (competence category 2) reinforces the need to respond to division and hostility and to place this at the center of the education system as a whole. With regard to the ability to deal with conflict, which is central to democratic negotiation processes, it is stated that learners should be able to "recognize the problems and interests at stake (e.g. power, recognition, division of labor, equal treatment), the origins of the conflict and the arguments of all sides, recognizing several possible points of view / identify areas of agreement and disagreement / reframe the problem / prioritize among needs and goals and decide what one is willing to give up and under what circumstances" (ibid., p. 15)

Competence category 3 (autonomous action) follows on from the discussion of responsibility, autonomy and freedom as key learning outcomes of democratic learning. It is about "assessing the direct and indirect consequences of their actions / choosing between different courses of action, taking into account possible consequences and with regard to individual and common norms and goals" (ibid., p. 17).

With this analysis in mind it becomes clear that we have to abandon a logic of simply excluding anti-democratic slogans. Instead, we have to try to integrate the human beings uttering those in a constructive way as far as possible. And – this is crucial – we should not individualize anti-democratic slogans but understand them as structural crisis-phenomena of late capitalist modernity.

Appreciation, authenticity and empathy

What do people need to learn and develop personally? As early as the 1950s, the psychologist Carl Rogers provided a surprisingly simple answer that is still valid today: people need relationships characterized by appreciation, authenticity and empathy (Rogers 1977). Whether children, young

people or adults – when people learn, it is the teacher who plays a decisive role in determining learning success.

And here, in turn, the attitude of the teacher and the relationship he or she builds with the students are of central importance. We can also observe this well in ourselves: when we feel accepted as a person, when we feel understood and when we believe that our counterpart is meeting us authentically and not manipulatively, we are well able to also allow new thoughts or even criticism of ourselves. If, on the other hand, we encounter someone who rejects us, who obviously does not understand us or wants to understand us and who seems artificial to us, then we will be reluctant to take on new impulses from him.

Adopting an attitude towards one's fellow human beings that is characterized by authenticity, appreciation and empathy is immensely challenging and probably remains a lifelong developmental task for anyone who tries it. When considering the right attitude, it is important to reflect on which attitude for interpersonal interaction not only promotes our own development, but also that of the other person. And here, the interactions between authenticity, appreciation and empathy are of great importance. Our willingness to engage emphatically with the other person depends on how much we value them. And our appreciation in turn depends on how much we can understand the other person, i.e. how emphatically we have engaged with them. Our willingness to be authentic also depends on our appreciation of the other person. And our appreciation of the other person is influenced by their authenticity, which in turn depends on the authenticity with which we engage with them. The appreciation we feel for the other person is therefore of particular importance. And the path to more appreciation for the other must ultimately include engagement with the other. And that brings us back to the purpose of this attitude in dealing with populism: it is about the other person being able to open up to our position and our argumentation at all, so that he, like us, can learn something new. And that will not succeed if the other person feels challenged by us.

2. Insights from European partners

The partner countries share a commitment to European values, but their interpretations and applications vary based on historical, political, and cultural factors. All are committed to democratic principles, but the implementation varies. Germany's post-war constitution firmly establishes democratic values, while Hungary's recent "illiberal democracy" approach has raised concerns. Italy's constitution emphasizes equality, but populist movements have challenged this. Slovenia's democratic institutions have faced tests from political polarization, and Türkiye's democracy has been strained by instability and the 2016 coup attempt. The following analysis demonstrates the positive core of values to be built upon when dealing with anti-democratic slogans in trainings and public debate. They are anchors for constructive discussions about how we want to live together in Europe.

Sharing of values

Democracy and Equality

Germany's post-war constitution firmly establishes democratic values, with slogans like "Grundgesetz ist die beste Verfassung" (The Basic Law is the best constitution) reflecting pride in these principles. However, challenges include rising right-wing populism and xenophobia, as seen in slogans like "Ausländer raus" (Foreigners out). Italy's constitution emphasizes equality, with slogans like "Libertà è partecipazione" (Liberty is participation), but populist movements have challenged this. Slovenia's democratic institutions have faced tests from political polarization, despite slogans like "Naša dežela, klicana Slovenija" (Our land, called Slovenia) expressing national identity. Türkiye's democracy has been strained by instability and the 2016 coup attempt, even as slogans like "Ne mutlu Türküm diyene" (How happy is the one who calls themself a Turk) reflect patriotism.

Inclusion and Diversity

The partner countries have diverse populations and policies promoting inclusion. All countries have laws protecting human rights, but challenges persist. Germany grapples with rising xenophobia despite its "Willkommenskultur" (welcoming culture) during the refugee crisis, as reflected in slogans like "Kein Mensch ist illegal" (No one is illegal). Italy's human rights record is generally positive, with slogans like "La solidarietà non è un reato" (Solidarity is not a crime), but discrimination against immigrants and minorities remains a concern. Slovenia has made progress in LGBTQ+ rights and efforts to include its small minority populations, with slogans like "Spoštovanje do drugačnosti" (Respect for diversity), but Roma communities still face marginalization. Türkiye's diversity is rooted in its history, but tensions between majority and minority groups persist.

Across the countries, European integration is seen as essential for peace and prosperity. Slogans like "Einigkeit macht stark" (Unity makes strength) in Germany reflect this sentiment. Regarding tolerance, all countries have laws against discrimination and hate speech. Slogans like "Kein Mensch ist illegal" (No one is illegal) in Germany and "Spoštovanje do drugačnosti" (Respect for diversity) in

Slovenia promote inclusion. However, anti-immigrant sentiment persists in all countries to varying degrees.

Rule of Law

All countries have independent judiciaries and laws against corruption, but challenges exist. Germany's rule of law is robust, but high-profile cases like the Wirecard scandal have raised questions. Hungary's judicial reforms have been criticized for potential political interference. Italy has made progress in fighting organized crime, but corruption remains a concern. Slovenia's rule of law is generally strong, but some high-level corruption cases have tested institutions. Türkiye's rule of law has been strained by political pressures and the aftermath of the coup attempt, with slogans like "Adalet yoksa demokrasi de yok" (No justice, no democracy) reflecting these concerns.

Solidarity

The partner countries demonstrate solidarity through welfare systems, civil society, and EU cooperation. Germany's social market economy balances competition and welfare. Italy's solidarity is reflected in its regional redistribution and strong family networks. Slovenia's small size has fostered a sense of national solidarity, and Türkiye's solidarity is rooted in its Islamic and nationalist values. However, economic crises and the refugee influx have strained social cohesion in all countries, with slogans like "Prima gli italiani" (Italians first) in Italy and "Brüssel diktál" (Brussels dictates) in Hungary reflecting Euroscepticism.

Comparing these experiences reveals common challenges, such as balancing diversity and inclusion, safeguarding the rule of law, and maintaining solidarity in the face of crises. However, it also highlights the resilience of democratic institutions and the ongoing efforts to uphold human rights and equality. By learning from each other and engaging in dialogue through initiatives like Stand Up for Europe, the countries can strengthen their commitment to these values and address vulnerabilities. Ultimately, the goal is to create a more inclusive, just, and united Europe that lives up to its founding principles.

Challenges in promoting values

The gaps and limitations in promoting key European values through educational initiatives and programs targeting youth, educators, and school teachers within the national contexts reveals several common obstacles, such as conflicting cultural and social norms, lack of practical instruction for teachers, and the need for further research in specific areas. However, each country also faces unique challenges based on their specific educational systems and socio-political contexts.

One common challenge across the partner countries is the presence of conflicting cultural and social norms that can hinder the effective transmission of European values. In Germany, the abundance and diversity of political education programs make it difficult to determine the most effective approaches, while the criticism from right-wing populist parties adds another layer of complexity. Similarly, Türkiye's traditional and conservative social structure in some regions can make it more challenging for young people to adopt European values, especially in comparison to those living in large metropolises.

Another shared limitation is the lack of practical instruction for teachers to implement values education effectively. In Italy, teachers often struggle to find the time to access the available information and courses, and the training they receive can be too theoretical. UNESCO's survey also revealed that teachers in Italy feel less confident in teaching behavioral learning and socio- emotional perspectives. Similarly, in Türkiye, there is a need for more interdisciplinary studies and practice-based resources to support teachers in developing argumentation skills and integrating them into their teaching processes.

The research in Slovenia highlights the rigidity of the school system as a significant obstacle, noting that it adapts slowly to changes and changing trends. This can limit the inclusion of non- curriculum topics, such as European values. Additionally, the over-saturated market of programs concerning European values can make it challenging to compete for participants and reach a wider audience, especially when some programs are based on competition or only target "good" students.

In Türkiye, the limited studies on argumentation techniques in social sciences, history, and philosophy, as well as the lack of qualitative research on in-class interactions and individual effects of argumentation, present gaps in understanding how to effectively promote European values through education. Moreover, the country's long-standing candidacy for EU membership and increasing social and political polarization can create distrust or negative perceptions of European values, making it more difficult for educators to defend these values.

The comparative analysis of the gaps and limitations in promoting European values through education in Germany, Italy, Slovenia, and Türkiye reveals several common challenges, such as conflicting cultural norms, lack of practical training for teachers, and the need for more targeted research. However, each country also faces unique obstacles shaped by their specific educational systems and socio-political contexts. To address these gaps and enhance the effectiveness of values education, the partner countries must develop tailored strategies that consider their specific needs and challenges. This can include providing more practical and accessible resources for teachers, conducting targeted research to better understand the individual effects of argumentation training, and fostering a more inclusive approach to values education that reaches a wider range of students. By learning from each other's experiences and collaborating through initiatives like Stand Up for Europe, the partner countries can work towards overcoming these obstacles and promoting a deeper understanding and appreciation of European values among their youth.

Approaches in the different countries

The national reports from Germany, Italy, Slovenia, and Türkiye provide valuable insights into the current state of argumentation training and the promotion of European values in each country. While there are similarities in the presence of populist and discriminatory slogans and the recognized need for argumentation training, the countries also differ in their legal frameworks, the prevalence of populist views, and the availability of educational programs.

All four countries report the presence of populist and discriminatory slogans targeting various groups, such as migrants, minorities, and activists. The need for argumentation training to counter these slogans and promote European values is acknowledged in all the national reports.

Civil society plays a crucial role in promoting and defending European values across all four countries, even when governments may act in contrast to these values. The reports also emphasize

the importance of involving young people and youth workers in the development and implementation of argumentation training programs.

In Germany, the well-established "Argumentation training against regulars' table slogans" method has been widely used for 25 years, whereas in Slovenia and Türkiye, specific argumentation training is not as prevalent, although related areas such as hate speech prevention and debating are covered. Italy and Türkiye have strong legal frameworks protecting EU values, but Slovenia faces challenges in the consistent enforcement of these laws. The proportion of populist views varies among the countries, with Germany reporting around a third of the population holding such values, while in Italy and other European countries, the proportion is often significantly higher.

3. Klaus-Peter Hufer's pathway – an interview

Prof. Dr. Klaus-Peter Hufer, born in 1949, studied political science, philosophy and geography at the Technical University of Darmstadt, Germany. From 1976 to 2014, he was head of the humanities and social sciences department at the Volkshochschule (Adult Education Center) Viersen in North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany. 1984 doctorate in political science at the Technical University of Darmstadt, 2001 habilitation in educational science at the University of Essen. He teaches as an adjunct professor at the University of Duisburg-Essen. He has written numerous publications on political education and adult education (including "Argumentationstraining gegen Stammtischparolen"), teaching assignments and lectures at different universities and educational institutions. He is practically active in numerous trainings on the topics of populism, right-wing-extremism and conspiracy theories.

He is the inspiration behind launching a European project on argumentation trainings, expanding it to the European level and enriching it with current conceptual insights and experiences by the partners from Hungary, Italy, Slovenia, Turkiye and Germany. In his interview (led by Max Barnewitz from the Bavarian Network for Civic Education) he gives personal and professional insights into his motivation, inspiration and hopes for democracy.

Network for Civic Education in Bavaria (Netzwerk Politische Bildung Bayern - NPBB): What was your original motivation for developing your concept?

Prof. Dr. Klaus-Peter Hufer: It's a long story. For many years, I organized and taught political adult education at a community college and repeatedly tried to find events that would motivate people to participate voluntarily. It was a very hard, difficult undertaking. The response to more traditional events on politics and society was limited. That was really frustrating. It occurred to me that we should do something that could be put to practical use: self-confidence, rhetoric skills... And then I had the idea of combining it with political education. Besides that, there is also my own history: I was drawn to opposing right-wing extremism very early on. This idea developed from that and at some point, like a bolt from the blue, the thought came: "Stammtischparole" (Slogan at the regulars' table). That was the signal term that then presented itself as an anchor for all further developments and proved to be very successful.

NPBB: Was there a specific occasion, a specific situation in which you made this decision?

Hufer: No, it grew. It was always the opposition to the return of Nazism, neo-Nazism, right-wing extremism, the spreading of the general right-wing populist mood. So there was no acute, current reason. Of course, there were always sensational incidents, but actually the primary reason was to

make political education attractive.

NPBB: Was there a client where you could try out this idea?

Hufer: First of all, I tried it out in my own adult education center in the district of Viersen. I had the privilege of being able to do that and then realized: it worked. As a result, colleagues from other adult education centers were also happy to include this seminar in their programs. And finally, the breakthrough came when I decided to put it all in writing. In 2000, the first writing was created, this first little book: “Argumentation training against Stammtischparolen”. That caused a sensation very quickly. It was named an official model project against right-wing extremism in North Rhine-Westphalia, at a press conference, officially with a minister.

And at the same time, it also met with a corresponding response in other federal states. Then the project was actually popular, which means that the publicity led to many, many interviews and requests. So there were a number of newspaper, radio and television interviews, etc., and that's how it spread. There were no clients or financial backers yet.

NPBB: How did you develop your concept? Who was involved in developing the concept?

Hufer: Nobody. Just me.

NPBB: What was relevant for you in the development? Did you have certain philosophies in mind, people, concepts, situations?

Hufer: My interest was (and is) to enable those who are confronted with such slogans to be able to act and react, to find appropriate articulations and also to have civil and social courage to contradict and present a counter-opinion. That was the primary goal. And the second goal, but I never separate it from the first, was a professional one: to anchor political education in the real world.

NPBB: What do you think the concept can achieve?

Hufer: I have held hundreds of events. What can you achieve with that? What I find very encouraging is that, beyond traditional educational institutions, a great many actors, organizations, initiatives and NGOs from across society want to respond to this and offer the training. This shows that political education can have a wide reach. And secondly, it can achieve – as confirmed by participants who have taken part – that they have been encouraged to contradict and reflect on what is going on in our society and how endangered democracy is. These are the points that can be achieved and have been achieved. So a diversity of demand, so that the offer is duplicated in the social sectors and at the same time there is a response from participants who have been there and said: “It worked and it was good.”

NPBB: Speaking of possibilities: To what extent did you encounter limits in the concept?

Hufer: That's an important question. Firstly, limits are revealed in the fact that you can only reach those who are already motivated to get involved – which is logical, but that's not a problem, but it is a limit nonetheless. And the other limit is that it requires a certain ability to articulate in order to participate. That means you have to have a certain potential for reflection and articulation. And the third limit has recently become increasingly visible: how can you convince anyone with arguments when no one believes anyone anymore. Post-factual. This is a difficult point that is playing an increasingly important role, and we need to think about it fundamentally. In recent years, the almost ubiquitous spread of “social” media has come about. What is quickly posted there, followed by

immediate, reflexive reactions, which in turn lead to quick answers, prevents joint reflection and discursive understanding. This has a polarizing rather than a unifying effect. We still have to find appropriate answers to this with argumentation training.

NPBB: Is there a way to get a grip on structural problems of political education (or extracurricular education)?

Hufer: What often happens is that schools ask for argumentation training. However, these are mostly school conferences, teachers' conferences. There is a limit to requests for training with a class. Because the school class is largely homogeneous and the social patterns there are already conditioned. It's hard to come up with something surprising, the conflicts are well-rehearsed. There is another limit, which is reflected in the ability to articulate and in the willingness to endure ambiguities – that is, contradictions. At most, this is possible in the upper school. Then there is the fact that schools are always clocked in the lesson mode... So, does it work there? Yes and no.

NPBB: How did you perceive the participants in your events? What were their reactions?

Hufer: Interested. Committed. Concerned. Worried. Sometimes angry. Attentive. And yes, they enjoyed participating in the role plays.

NPBB: Was there a particular highlight for you at the events? Some kind of guiding light experience you can report on?

Hufer: It's nice when someone comes up afterwards and says, “It worked, thank you very much.” That happened often. Or a nice statement was: “In the seminar, I experienced and learned with the others that I'm not the only one who seems so helpless, but that it's in the structure. And I'm not responsible for that. That gave me relief and courage.” So to recognize that the speechlessness when suddenly confronted with a racist slogan, for example, is not a personal deficit or a personal inability, but simply a structural problem, that gives relief and that is communicated. I am pleased about that, because it also gives courage to go beyond one's own frame of mind.

NPBB: Has it also happened to you that events were explicitly disrupted?

Hufer: Yes, lectures. But never seminars. In seminars, the same people always come. But in seminars, it has happened that, let's say, people very close to the AfD (a new right-wing political party Alternative für Deutschland / Alternative for Germany, in the federal parliament since 2017, officially observed by the office for the protection of the constitution) were there, but they then behaved relatively well after the majority of the others objected. At individual events, there have often been disruptions, sometimes even aggressive behavior. This is also due to a certain degree of fame surrounding my person. Sometimes a lecture had to take place under police protection. Recently, I was at an adult education center where a whole group of AfD members had appeared. But they only asked questions, you have to accept that, it's legitimate if, as in this case, they are not right-wing extremist positions. They were introduced and then discussed. And as always, the effect can be observed very quickly: the vast majority of those who came quickly take a position and argue against it. As the event leader, as the facilitator, you don't have to do much. But there are also massive attacks.

NPBB: How has your work with argumentation training so far broadened your own perspective?

Hufer: First of all, satisfaction that it was possible to create such a thoroughly successful project.

Now it has even gained a Europe-wide reach. And secondly, my perspective is increasingly optimistic because over the years I have met thousands of people who want to work for a pluralistic democracy, an open society and against racism and right-wing extremism, against the brutality in everyday interactions with other groups of people. That is a very nice and positive experience and it is growing stronger and stronger despite all the pessimistic information and sometimes oppressive developments that one has to perceive at present.

NPBB: You already touched on it during the disruptions: How can an appropriate attitude be conveyed concerning "Stammtischparolen" and to people who express these"Stammtischparolen"? In other words, those who cannot be reached by classical, extracurricular education?

Hufer: That is a question that is easy to answer because you can't reach them. You can only reach them when they are there. You can't go around the city trying to address someone, but only when someone is there. You reach the active or those who have already decided to be active.

NPBB: Is there a need for supplementation at this point or is it a problem that cannot be approached for systemic reasons?

Hufer: You can't supplement anything there. That's been a problem ever since adult education has existed. In political education, the question is repeatedly raised: How do you reach those who cannot be reached? And do we hold a confirmation event for those who have already been confirmed? That is indeed the case. But that's not a problem, you don't have to despair about it. Those who come are important multipliers who then go out into their everyday lives and share what they have experienced with their families, at social gatherings, in organizations and initiatives at their workplaces. The discussion continues there.

NPBB: You chose the title "Argumentation Training against Stammtischparolen" because it already says a lot. So first of all, it is a training for arguments, it denotes a "against" and "Stammtischparole" is also a term that is characterized by a broad understanding of the term. What do you associate with this title?

Hufer: Well, what the name says.

NPBB: A bit more specific: What are slogans at the regulars' table for you?

Hufer: Slogans at the regulars' table are clearly defined as rigid, ultimate positions that are full of prejudices, black-and-white paintings that allow no ifs and buts, come across as self-righteous and, in their rigidity, also accept no contradictions.

NPBB: The difficulty associated with the term "Stammtischparole" is that it discredits the attitude that is labeled as a "Stammtischparole." To what extent is the term therefore suitable for political education programs?

Hufer: You've said it! There is a certain arrogance behind the dismissal of other positions as "Stammtischparole". I'm concerned about that too, but I couldn't think of anything better. Sometimes I say "against slogans and populism" instead. But that's not as catchy because – and this is the surprising thing – in German-speaking countries the term "Stammtischparole" is clearly associated with what we are talking about. Clearly. I give seminars all over Germany, from Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania to Bavaria, and also in Austria, Switzerland and Luxembourg: the term is clear. But you're right: there is a certain contempt in it. But on the other hand, you can save yourself:

namely, the contempt is relativized because a lot of contempt comes out in these “Stammtischparolen”.

NPBB: Do you offer the concept with cooperation and alliance partners?

Hufer: I didn't have a homepage for a long time, I don't advertise it and I don't offer the training, but I do it after requests and invitations. I'm not an agency, I'm in the privileged situation of not being dependent on freelancing. Of course, freelancers have to see how they acquire work, that's clear. The range of those who request my services includes traditional educational institutions, political parties, church-related organizations, trade unions, social organizations, school conferences, adult education centers, and traditional educational institutions. There are NGOs, but also administrative bodies. I have done a lot of work with Attac and Amnesty International. I have also been approached by Rotarians and public libraries. So there is a wide range of cooperation partners.

NPBB: What have been particularly interesting target groups in recent times?

Hufer: For example, there was a very active group of black Africans who are directly affected by racism. I learned a lot from their experiences in the training. Recently, since 2015, many refugee helpers have come who have to justify themselves to their families and friends for their involvement and are sometimes attacked for it. This shows how the rift in this society goes through the private spheres. Private groups also called, for example, one from a village in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania where neo-Nazis are present. The group wanted to defend themselves against it. Once gay and lesbian couples got in touch with me. That's how I learned about this facet of discrimination. It was nice when an entire church community in the Rhineland called. The interactive lecture took place in a very beautiful church. 150 people were sitting there and something incredibly good developed. I had seminars with artists and they asked “alliances against the right and for democracy and diversity”. Members of four factions in a city council also got in touch to discuss with me how they should deal with the AfD's motions and actions in their committees.

NPBB: To what extent do you draw boundaries with regard to cooperation or alliance partners? Suppose the AfD were to request argumentation training...

Hufer: They're not asking. If the AfD were to ask me, I would say: Why? What for? How come? The AfD and the far-right environment are annoyed by argumentation training. There is a book called “Mit Linken leben” (Living with the Left), in which the two authors deal with argumentation training and with me personally over almost 40 pages. This is a right-wing polemic published by the publishing house Antaios. This shows that we have hit the nail on the head by taking away their “Stammtischhoheit” (sovereignety over the regulars’ table).

NPBB: It rather means the question of drawing a line...

Hufer: Drawing the line is important. I also draw the line in the other direction when actionist fighting terms come into play – as is the case, for example, with a “Stammtischkämpfer*innenausbildung” (a training for regulars table fighters). Then I draw a line, even though the initiators and actors may even want the same thing as me. But I always see my training as a contribution to political education, to self-reflection and to dealing with the question: Where are my options for action? I can't do anything with this term “Stammtischkämpfer*innenausbildung”. Struggle as a political category exists among the right- wingers, among their mastermind Carl Schmitt, for example. So there is a limit for me, I don't want any cooperation there. But the other question that you probably want to initiate doesn't arise, namely right-wing groups have never come forward before. On the contrary.

NPBB: It's also an absurd thought. In this respect, it is only exciting to explore what our own moral imperative is.

Hufer: That is indeed an interesting question for ourselves and our attitude. It takes up again what you already asked: How can we, on the one hand, have a clear idea of the goal with these argumentation training courses, and at the same time not take anyone by surprise or overwhelm them? How can we manage the tension between taking a clear stand against anti-democratic, sexist, racist and discriminatory positions while at the same time fully recognizing the people who participate in our training as adult, responsible human beings? This shows that it is always about ourselves and our attitude and moral standards. No actionism. Reflection instead of actionism. No overwhelming. No agitation. Still normative. And that's not easy.

NPBB: You just mentioned that you have been dealing with “Stammtischparolen” for over 25 years. Since when have you been offering argumentation training specifically?

Hufer: 2001, 2002. Yes, exactly.

NPBB: Can you roughly estimate how many training sessions you give or have given per month?

Hufer: Seminars and lectures? Well, let's just say events. During the week, excluding vacations, I do two, sometimes three. It's hard for me to quantify that now, it depends on the “economic situation”, which has been very strong for several years. I forward many requests to colleagues who also conduct the training and with whom I am in close contact...

NPBB: What time formats do you usually offer? For example, the lectures: How long do they last?

Hufer: That depends on how long it takes. Lectures, mine are always interactive, about two hours. Three hours are short seminars, short workshops. I've also done four days before. So that's variable. I reach many with lectures, there are lectures where 200 or more people are present. The maximum number of participants for small seminars is about 20.

NPBB: What event titles do you use? Do you stick closely to the classic “Argumentation Training against slogans at the regulars’ table” or to what extent do the titles vary?

Hufer: Well, it usually stays with this topic. If it is a lecture, it is just “Arguments against Stammtischparolen”. If it is a seminar, it is “Argumentation training against...”. And sometimes Stammtischparolen is replaced by “Slogans and populism – how to counter them?”

NPBB: To what extent did the local press or other media support the events themselves?

Hufer: Very often, almost always. As a rule, well-placed advance notices appear in the local section, and there have been many interviews before and after the events: the press support is very, very strong.

NPBB: There is now an extremely broad market for argumentation training, with many different content focuses, be it from the field of political education or from the field of rhetoric or psychology. How do you see these fields interacting?

Hufer: They interact in an integrated way, the subject references, directions and perspectives must be linked. For me, the seminar is primarily a contribution to political education, and specifically to self-enlightenment. Not to education that is patronizing, but to self-enlightenment. That's why seminars are designed to be interactive; they must not be didactic seminars. Then they miss their

purpose. Rhetorical elements are important, but it's not about rhetorical techniques, but about the targeted application of rhetoric and linguistic sensitivity. And of course you need psychological explanations: Why do people tend to be prejudiced? How rigid are prejudices? Where can they possibly be challenged? You also need communication theories and knowledge of communication science. So it's all connected. But nothing should be absolutized: education requires reflection and the ability to endure contradictions, not clear solutions, but also to recognize the complexity of a problem. And because it is complex, many facets and subject-specific aspects have to be taken into account.

NPBB: Does political science play a similar role in this triad?

Hufer: Political science plays an important role in our context, although it is no longer a normative science. It used to be that way. It saw itself as a science of democracy, now it is a science of consulting. But it plays a role in that it takes up the central categories at issue: it's about power, it's about interests, it's about conflicts, it's about the attempt to influence a political public.

NPBB: Good, then we come to the interesting question of how the whole thing spread further. How were multipliers trained for their concept? And when did you reach the point where you said it would be useful to disseminate this concept further?

Hufer: As I said, I didn't initiate it myself, but I trained multipliers for state centers for political education, for the German Adult Education Association, for the Austrian Society for Political Education in Switzerland, for Amnesty International. I did this for various other institutions, always at their request. And I think it makes sense to train more multipliers, because the idea or this willingness to get involved in social problem areas, areas of conflict, should take place independently of me in as many places in this society as possible. In this respect, I am happy to do the multiplier training. I want the training to spread and the many people who have taken part in it to see themselves as advocates of democracy.

NPBB: What professional or academic background should multipliers have?

Hufer: They must at least have social skills, that's very important. That means being willing to engage with people and understand people who may be in disagreement with them. They must have a sensitivity for group processes. They must be able to take an authentic position against populist, right-wing extremist or right-wing conservative developments, so they must be normatively oriented. And professionally, they must be able to constructively develop a conversation in a training session in order to arrive at a result. They must be aware of social developments and upheavals. They must also be able to apply the more recent relevant studies on political culture, especially on right-wing extremism, to their work. They need to have a basic knowledge of social psychology and communication theory. That's quite a lot, but it doesn't necessarily require highly specialized expert knowledge. It's knowledge that can be gained by dealing with the group and through one's own further training. And if you get into the subject or want to get into it, then it's possible.

NPBB: What are the methodological skills behind this?

Hufer: The methodological skills are: being able to listen, to take a step back and still be able to structure the process. The most important skill is probably to observe a group process with great concentration throughout the day, to make sure that it does not get out of hand and that the goal is always kept in mind and that the group is always working towards this goal. Then to intervene when

necessary. To provide impulses when needed. It is important to change methods, not just group games, but also to include suitable information units in between, to create a variety of interactions. So you have to master the whole set of methodological repertoire.

NPBB: If you had to characterize the ideal multiplier for your concept with three characteristics, what would they be?

Hufer: Authentic, steadfast, taking pleasure in people and no intention of instructing people in the training sessions. In the spirit of Socrates, he or she should have a masterful skill in the art of "midwifing" the intellect.

NPBB: You have already touched on it: What are the reasons, in addition to those you have already mentioned, that prompted you to develop and implement your concept?

Hufer: I already mentioned that at the beginning. A professional one arises from the didactic categories of political adult education: participant orientation, life-world orientation and action orientation. They are all in this seminar. Because it is controlled by the participants. It starts from their life-world, they bring their experiences with them. And at the same time, it is supposed to incite action, intervention, reaction.

NPBB: What do you think argumentation training stands for? If you oppose populist slogans, what is the proactive element in this?

Hufer: The willingness to support and defend democratic culture and civil society.

NPBB: How is this democratic culture shaped then? At what point are there still limits or possibilities to enter into discourse after all? Besides, tolerance is also a very elastic term...

Hufer: Tolerance is indeed a flexible concept. It is also a difficult concept because the Latin word "tolerare" means to endure or suffer. Some things you don't have to endure and suffer, but a democratic culture also includes disputatiousness and a willingness to engage in conflict. And also sensitivity to precisely those developments and attitudes that call into question everything that makes up a democratic culture. Democratic culture is not arbitrary: "I'll put up with anything, everyone is equal, everyone is great" – that is not democracy.

NPBB: So could it be summarized that a disputatious, democratic culture would be a goal?

Hufer: Yes, you could say that.

NPBB: Finally, I would like to ask you to complete the following sentence: A successful "argumentation training against slogans at the regulars' table"...

Hufer: ... is when everyone goes home satisfied and tells the course instructor: I liked that.

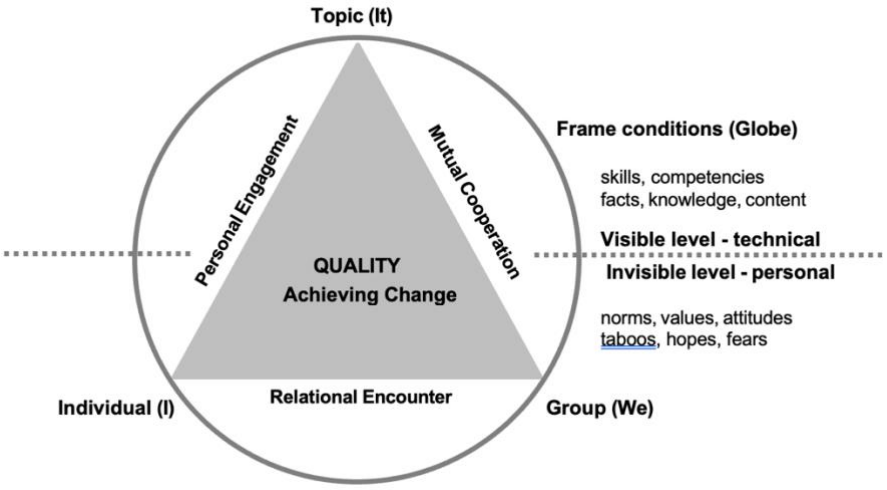
NPBB: Thank you very much for your comprehensive, thoughtful and inspiring insights!

C Didactical background: Participatory and Democratic trainings

1. Coherence in topic and training approach

Fostering democracy in Europe aim at dealing with changing social challenges in a self- determined, self-responsible and self-reflective way. In order to learn this, democracy must be experienced not only as a form of government and society, but also as a way of life, as Himmelmann states: “It is not about ‘teaching’, but about enabling the collection of concrete ' experiences' with democracy in the most diverse forms and it is about the 'growth of this experience'... What is meant here is the 'face-to-face' level of democracy” (Himmelmann 2006, p.77). This approach of focusing on individual experience as a meaningful part of learning democracy goes back to John Dewey (Dewey 196), who, from an educational perspective, linked education as a whole to democracy and is therefore also increasingly being : “For Dewey, democracy is above all an open and free lifestyle, a particularly rich way of relating, a way of life, an attitude to life and an order or form of life” (Himmelmann 2006, p. 116). For Dewey, it is nothing less than a “way of life” that encompasses cognition, emotion, reflexivity and action. Thus, Dewey also places a much greater emphasis on experiential learning: “A gram of experience is better than a ton of theory, simply because every theory has only in experience a living and verifiable meaning.” (Dewey 1916, p.193). The new and more intense reception of Dewey in this context illustrates the comprehensive claim of democracy learning in the educational landscape in democratic societies as a whole.

Content, individual and group dynamics in balance: Theme-centered interaction
In this section, the “spirit” of running a training dealing with anti-democratic slogans will be presented. In order to achieve holistic, deep, and sustainable change beyond the mere transportation of knowledge around civic education, the way in which workshops or change processes are being run and reflected are crucial. The general approach of Theme Centered Interaction (TCI) (Schneider-Landolf et al. 2017) is appropriate as it centers around transformation on a value basis and tries to lift up hidden and invisible dimensions of learning which are often neglected in existing activist manuals on civic education. The approach is briefly being introduced in an adapted version focusing on the transitional
context.



When doing a workshop or change process dealing with anti-democratic slogans, there is of course an official topic (named “It” in the scheme). This topic is the value of democracy in the broad sense and populism, fake news, conspiracy theories and slogans specifically. These topics are on top, they are in a way the “visible” level of the workshop. In more traditional learning environments like school or university, but also in many interactive trainings working with role play or simulations, this level is the single focus. In order to transport the facts, skills, competencies concerning the topic different methodological ways are being chosen but the result of what should be understood, learned and be done is always being derived from the “top”.

Our approach suggest a more comprehensive and in a way more radical way of also and equally integrating the “hidden” levels of how learning and change can happen. Specifically in the situation of (often remote communities – in the sense of physical but also psychological distance to the center or capital of a country) transition after a long period of stability, oppression and official “truth”, there are a lot of unreflected personal values, which guide one's life, attitudes towards who is friend and who is enemy, personal hopes and fears that cannot be expressed directly, and also taboos that cannot be addressed at all. The situation of transformation is one of individual and social upheaval with no training or clear-cut direction simply to be followed.

All of this can be understood as the invisible level of a workshop. This level has to be respected and in a way be appreciated as the underlying and rooting reality of the participants and the communities to be worked with. Often its dimension and force is much bigger than that of the official topic. Comparing the model with an iceberg, only a small part of the reality and the topics of the community are visible while most of it is hidden under water.

The main task of the training is therefore to provide individual and collective links between the topic and the participants. On an individual basis the connection between “It” and “I” can lead to personal engagement concerning the topic. Especially here, it is crucial to start with the foundational value system of each participant, trying to make it explicit, before “imposing” abstract ideas of European values and democracy. If people are being personally irritated by the presentation of something new, they will disconnect from transformation processes and be no longer personally engaged. An atmosphere of openness, participation, and appreciation at the beginning of the workshop is an important tool for opening up on personal values, norms, but also prejudices and fears. The role of the trainer is to provide activities which personally involve the participants via biographical reflection and building upon the social and economic reality within the community.

In later stages of the workshop the mutual support of the participants helps to transform the personal engagement with the topics into collective action. The line between the “It” and the “We” makes it possible to realize mutual cooperation that shows how the group of participants itself can bring about change without imposing it from the top. Projects are being developed independently and responsibly by participants in groups. In cooperating, dealing with difference and conflict, prejudices, building consensus and democratically taking decisions will be experienced. Within the group of participants important skills of community leaders can be thus tried out. The role of the trainers is to methodologically guide this process without directing it. Additionally, they provide for reflection units concerning the process and interaction of developing something together.

A third line of interaction runs between the “I” and the “We”. As the individual participants are working and living together during the time of the workshop, a lot of relational encounter will take place. Different from other approaches, this dimension is not to be regarded as informal or leisure time. By

comprehending the training workshop as a model for the community in a nutshell, the interaction within the group apart from the official topic, should explicitly be focused upon and become visible. Here group dynamics are taking place that cannot be "controlled" like knowledge or skills. The group is often "acting" autonomously on this level when conflicts arise. As a learning field it can show participants what might happen when transformational projects are being installed in a community and take unforeseen courses of action. The role of the trainers is to provide regular space for mutual feedback and reflection on the process and the quality of interaction within the workshop.

Finally, the workshop as a whole is being framed by a "Globe", conditions that are enabling and at the same time limiting what can be achieved in a pedagogical setting. Factors like time, place, temperature, outside political events, pressure by authorities are influencing how large the circle might be. These factors should be reflected by trainers in order to realistically estimate the possible dimension of change. Outside deficits like the functioning of the juridical system or the executive will not be directly influenced by a pedagogical approach – they are supporting or hindering factors. It is important to decide where and how societal change can take place via civic engagement by activists and where other approaches (laws, anti-corruption measures, security etc.) are being needed.

This general approach is a comprehensive model for localizing the possibility of achieving change with a training. At the same time, by doing trainings in this way, important aspects of democratic values and democracy as a form of life are already becoming "real" and practical. This should not be understood in the sense of pedagogically imposing a value system, as resistance and opposition concerning this approach will often also be part of the discussions within the workshop. Nevertheless this approach is one that opens up extensive possibilities for these discussions and as a consequence taking personal and collective responsibility for bringing about change in a way suitable for the context and reality of each community.

Advice for trainers I – using Theme Centered Interaction for morning rounds

You might start using the TCI scheme by introducing it to participants and use it every morning as a means of ongoing feedback for your workshop or also team meeting. Start a 'Morning Circle' each day in which you ask 3-5 participants to share how supportive the workshop was in terms of the topics, the individual learning process, the group and the frame conditions. Let other participants add important insights in a second round. Finally take up the issues mentioned and share with the participants how the workshop could be further developed to achieve a good balance.

As a variation you can stress more strongly the responsibility of each participant in the following way: let participants write down the four categories of I, group, globe and content and let them rate for each category how much they have contributed so far to this category in terms of the learning process from 0-10. Then ask them to write down points how they personally could increase the number in one or two fields. Let everybody share this and make sure they share only things which have to do with their own ability and responsibility to contribute.

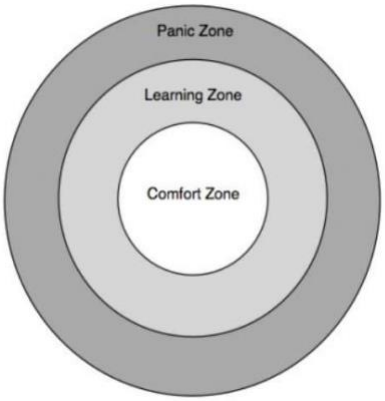
Advice for trainers II – comfort and learning zone

When doing activities, always be aware of the target group you are working with. Some target groups are very familiar with using personal and biographical examples and working in a very open and

creative way. For other target groups this might be an inadequate transgression into their private affairs and appear as unprofessional and relativistic while expecting clear advice and orientation.

It is your responsibility as a trainer to decide in each activity how you find a good balance between a “technical factual” (visible) and an “personal open” (invisible) approach – always having in mind the dimensions of wholesome change. It is up to you to adapt activities in a way which connects to the expectations of the target group while at the same time challenging them to change attitudes. In this sense it is always important to adjust the “horizontal line” of the scheme in accordance of how “deep” you want to dive into the invisible dimensions for achieving change.

You have to balance between finding a way for participants to leave their “comfort” zone (of what they know, do and like on a daily basis) and be irritated in a positive way – so learning will happen. If you exaggerate this, you will reach the “panic zone” and participants will close up, run away or feel massively threatened. Reflect for yourself where you find your own comfort zone and when you had important instances of learning something new and when you got into panic by being over- whelmed. This reflection can be a good basis for dealing with your participants. The following scheme (Senninger 2000) shows the comfort zone model.



Empowerment in practice: ideas for training settings

Empowerment refers to the process of equipping individuals with the knowledge, skills, values, and confidence needed to actively participate in democratic processes, engage in their communities, and advocate for their rights and the rights of others. In the following some ideas for empowering training settings.

Trustful Relationships as a foundation

Relationships of trust are characterized by recognition, appreciation, respect, affection, joy and humor. For many people, these are taken for granted as prerequisites for working together, and may not be given much attention. However, maybe this is the most important basis for empowering training settings. The idea of trustful relationships is linked a lot on the concept of secure attachment as has been discussed above. The result of this concept is, that we first have to invest in trustful relationships and only then we can tackle emotional, maybe controversial subjects. Only with the prerequisite of trustful relationships we can find respect for the point of view of others, we can maybe overcome fragmentations and tackle ideologies.

Once trustful relationships are built, the following principles can help to create empowering training settings.

Participatory approach

In participatory processes people are invited to contribute. Arnstein (1969) described the levels of involvement in their concept of the participation ladder: it is a conceptual model used to illustrate the varying levels of involvement individuals or groups can have in decision-making processes.

1. Manipulation

- People are involved in a way that serves the agenda of others, without genuine input or understanding.
- Example: Being included in a committee but having no real say in decisions.

2. Decoration

- People are visible in the process but only symbolically, without meaningful contribution.
- Example: Attending events to show support but not being involved in planning or action.

3. Tokenism

- People are consulted or informed, but their input has little to no impact on the final decisions.
- Example: Being asked for feedback but the feedback is ignored.

4. Consultation

- People are asked for their opinions and feedback, which are considered in decision-making.
- Example: Surveys, focus groups, or town hall meetings where input influences outcomes.

5. Involvement

- People collaborate with decision-makers, actively contributing to shaping plans and actions.
- Example: Joining a committee where members share equal responsibility for outcomes.

6. Partnership

- People share power and decision-making responsibilities equally with other stakeholders.
- Example: Co-designing community projects or policies with local authorities.

7. Delegated Power

- People are given significant control over decisions and resources, often with support from governing bodies.
- Example: A youth council managing its own initiatives within a community.

8. Citizen Control

- Full empowerment where people independently control decision-making processes and resource allocation.
- Example: Community-run organizations or initiatives with complete autonomy.

To create an empowering learning space as much participation should be involved as possible. Here are some ideas:

- Maybe participants can be invited (partly) to decide which topics we work on?
- Maybe pre-arranged schedules can be installed in which participants are invited to decide on topics? Maybe before or during the training?
- Maybe extra time should be planned for unexpected new topics, contributions of the participants?
- Maybe the pre-arranged schedule should be 'half-empty' to allow for real participation and responsibility which lead to identification with the training?

This participatory approach removes resistance to the learning journey - or, if there is resistance, it can be resolved more easily. This approach enhances energy and motivation of participants for the learning process. Participatory work deepens the ownership of people for processes and outcomes and also their feeling of belonging to the other participants.

Resource-oriented approaches

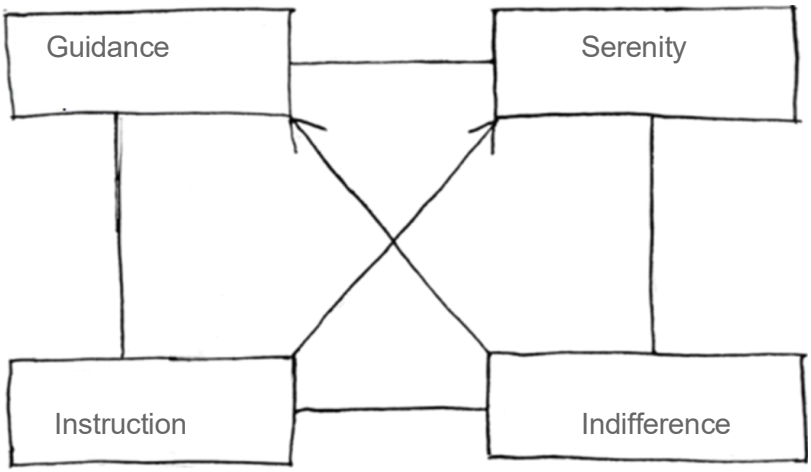
In resource- oriented approaches people are made aware of their strength and are invited to use them more. Resource–oriented approaches are described since many years in social theories and social work. These research show, that people learn easier and faster, and the effect lasts longer, when you work with their strengths instead of their deficits. People often are more aware of their weaknesses than their strengths. By focusing on strengths, confidence can be increased, which then makes it possible to work on difficult issues (e.g., exclusion, discrimination etc.). Here are some ideas for the training context:

- How can skills, experiences of the participants be detected and where is the place in the trainings where participants are invited to show it?
- How can we change our attitude as trainer to encourage participants to see their strength instead of their deficits?
- How can we as trainers invite participants to take on the role of trainer and pass on their knowledge to others?

The resource-oriented approach increases motivation and enthusiasm for the entire learning journey. Maybe the participants are even empowered to use their competences to improve their everyday life.

2. My role as a trainer

As we have seen, such a kind of training goes far beyond instruction and passing on knowledge. As indicated, the role and involvement of the trainer is not easy in process-oriented and interactive trainings concerning conflictual topics. That's why we take a closer look at a basic tension of what it means to be a 'democratic' trainer.



There is a tension with regard to the attitude and role as a trainer: guidance is needed in two ways: firstly, in the sense of a learning offer that is committed to democratic tradition and, secondly, in the sense of social guidance of a group of learners. However, this value of leadership must be held in tension with serenity, which can always 'let be' what is currently happening in the process of the training within the group. The awareness of freedom is anchored in this counter-value to leadership, as a basic prerequisite for learning to 'happen' in a self-responsible and self-organized way. *Fostering democracy in Europe* is therefore not only a claim in terms of content, but is also evident in the way a corresponding workshop is conducted.

The terms at the bottom of the diagram show exaggerations of the respective positive value. For example, too much guidance in teaching can slide into classical instruction, which becomes paternalism and aims to convey prefabricated content, thus contradicting the basic assumption of democratic interaction on a didactic level. On the other hand, serenity can turn into indifference, which allows everything to be treated equally and allows a workshop to slide into relativism, releasing the participants into disorientation and in the end having no means to counter discrimination happening in the training itself.

As a development square, the scheme contains a normative component: where there is too much indifference, guidance must be taken, where there is too much instruction, serenity should be exercised. The lines of development thus run to the contrary positive values in order to achieve a counterbalance. The crucial thing is not to jump between the unproductive forms of exaggeration, but to balance the productive tension again and again in practice and also to decide in the training when it is time to show a clear profile and when questioning listening is more helpful. In view of the current political situation in Europe, it is absolutely necessary to show your profile as a trainer – on

the one hand not to prescribe normative positions, but on the other hand to offer clear orientation with regard to current attempts to fundamentally question the liberal-democratic order. Therefore, as a trainer, it is important to also mark red lines in the name of democracy also within in the training context.

To sum up, basic attitudes can be derived from the values and development square that are helpful for the preparation and self-reflection of the methodological units:

- *Respect and mindfulness* are crucial for the systemic view. The own reality of systems should be respected and the participants should not be treated as objects above whom the trainer stands and can directly impart his knowledge to them. This means that mindfulness is also important, especially towards the processes and the current social reality of a group.

- *Devotion* is related to this. The idea of feasibility should be abandoned and calmness and composure developed in order to be able to observe what is happening. The trainer is more of a listener than an actor here.

- *Modesty* in the face of the complexity of social reality and its interactions is crucial. Here, the fundamental lack of transparency of social systems must also be recognized, which means that no ready-made solutions in the form of (only) techniques or behaviors should be offered.

- *Trust* is the positive correlate of modesty. Groups and systems often develop "by themselves", group dynamics take their course in different ways and the moderator should allow this kind of self-organization as much as possible and, in the best case, enable the group to become capable of working itself and to reflect in a differentiated way.

- *Spontaneity* is always necessary where processes are to be appreciated in their uniqueness. Spontaneity is not a technique, but a willingness to pay attention to the here and now and to deal with it productively. In the sense of the strong concept of freedom, this means that defiance, stubbornness, wit, intolerance and irony can also contribute to successful self-guidance of democratic processes in certain situations.

- *Conflicts* and misunderstandings are not to be avoided at all costs, but can be used as learning opportunities in the real situation of the group, often occurring between or beyond the exercises.

- *Reflection* and self-reflection on different interpretations and blind spots should be an ongoing process. Instead of guaranteed results, thoughtfulness and key experiences should be in the foreground.

3. Target groups: dealing with diversity

Dealing with "the other" - Diversity

Dealing with different target groups means basically dealing with diversity. The classical concept of specifically *targeting* certain groups in society is misleading in the context of a training trying to strengthen cohesion and understanding; focusing on target groups as such might lead to an instrumentalization and objectifying of who they are. Some of their traits are taken to be something we should 'treat'. Very often this goes hand in hand with marking target groups explicitly or implicitly with 'deficits': "They have not yet…"; "They need especially.."; "If we want to reach the non-academic ones…"; "The challenge with migrants is…"

Instead we should look at target groups from the angle of diversity. As the core of our approach is to bring together people from very different perspectives, biographical backgrounds and experiences, 'the other' is always present. This is the reason why we focus here on concepts regarding diversity, intercultural competence and anti-discrimination (for more background see Hackstein et al. 2022)

Diversity

By diversity, we mean the similarities and differences that become apparent in different ways of life or identity characteristics: "This understanding is used to address the entire spectrum of diversity and at the same time, mutual interrelationships in the sense of intersectionality are taken into account: people always belong to several groups at the same time and differ within the same group" (Schröer / Szukitsch 2016, w/o pages). Based on the US-American tradition, the dimensions of diversity 'gender', 'class' and 'race' were the origin and thus of central importance. Meanwhile, age, worldview and religion, gender and gender identity, mental and physical abilities, ethnic self-identification, as well as sexual orientation and identity are considered the most important 'core dimensions'. The dimension of social origin or socio-economic status is also increasingly being taken into account.

In most cases, the term diversity is also used to strive for social justice, i.e. diversity among people should not be associated with a disadvantage for one group or another, but should be seen as a beneficial resource overall. The ethical self-designation is directly or indirectly concerned with the concept of culture. But what exactly is meant by culture?

Culture

The concepts of Auernheimer works with an expanded, open concept of culture, emphasizes the process-oriented character of culture and always thinks of culture in the context of power imbalances, exclusion mechanisms, racism and discrimination: "Culture is a system of concepts, beliefs, attitudes and values that social groups use to respond to structurally determined requirements. It is a system of orientation that is subject to change and defines the perception, values, thinking and actions of people in social, political and economic contexts" (Auernheimer et al. 2012). The term "social groups" used in this quote is also a central element in the culture pyramid (see below). According to this, all people would have the same basic biological needs. Culture would

then be the deciding factor in how these needs are expressed, such as fear, love or sadness (collective interpretation). Based on other factors such as character, experiences or genetics, the individual expresses their own personal interpretations.

"Every person is in a certain aspect like ALL, SOME, and NO other "

3 levels of being human programming (Hofstede 1993)

Cultural dimensions

The concept of cultural dimensions is a result of intercultural research (amongst others Hofstede 1991) and describes patterns of thought and behavior of people. Different ways of life are described with their logical justification, without judging them. Cultural dimensions provide a tool to understand behaviors that seem incomprehensible and to comprehend their inner logic. Most people do not belong to just one side of a dimension; for example, they do not behave only individualistically. Statements can be made about which dimension certain behaviors or values that people show in certain situations, e.g., conflict situations, can be assigned to. There are many cultural dimensions in intercultural research. In this short overview, we want to take a closer look at the two cultural dimensions individualism/collectivism, indirect/direct.

Motivation	Individualist	Collectivist
Superordinate goal	Individual goal	Sharing goal
Identity	Self-identity	Group identity
Trust	Cognition based	Affect based
Accountability	Individual based	Group based
Communication	Partial channel	Full channel
Reward distribution	Equity based	Equality based
Relationship	Competition	Harmony
Rules	few rules	many rules

Direct and Indirect Communication Styles

Lionel Laroche, PhD, 2007

Direct Communicators	Indirect Communicators
First focuses on task accomplishment	First focuses on relationship
Message is few words	Message is in the context of the word usage, vocal variety, nonverbal clues, relationships, etc.
Explicit (clear, obvious) meaning	Implicit (implied, hidden) meaning
Communication tends to be Impersonal	Communication tends to be personal
"To the point," open	"Read between the lines," subtle language
Deal with conflict directly, head on	Deal with conflict indirectly," Save face"
Go face to face with person to resolve conflict	Use a trusted third party to assist

Individualism vs. Collectivism refers to how cultures prioritize individual goals versus group goals. In Individualism people focuses on personal independence, achievements, and self-expression, whereas in Collectivism people prioritizes group harmony, loyalty, and shared goals.

This cultural standard has effects in communication: direct and indirect communication: Direct communication is explicit, clear, and straightforward and common in individualistic cultures, where clarity and efficiency are valued. Indirect communication is subtle, context-dependent, and focused on preserving harmony and common in collectivist cultures, where relationships and avoiding conflict are prioritized.

Intercultural competence

Based on the various ways of describing culture, there are a great many different definitions of intercultural competence, here one definition: "*Intercultural competence is the ability to create normality, enable inclusion and produce culture in situations of lacking collective affiliation (Rathje 2010).* This short and concise definition addresses the important points from our point of view and emphasizes the self-efficacy of individuals. Intercultural competence can also be seen as a competence model. In this context, it is initially helpful to build cultural knowledge. Coupled with the ability to observe, reflect and change perspectives, skills such as communication or ambiguity tolerance can be developed. In this context, we see culture and intercultural competence in a

structural context that is also characterized by discrimination and exclusion.

To sum up: this discussion shows that dealing with diverse target groups is core of what this approach wants to achieve. The way of addressing participants, the spaces in which they interact, the way the training is designed, and the topics arising are interweaved. This chapter gave hints not to produce contradictions between these different dimensions but instead use them to enforce one another.

4. Phases of group dynamics

Process- oriented approaches help to ensure that the training is relevant to the professional or private life of the participants and can be transferred to their lives after the training. It is focusing on the process of education and not only on the result of it. The basic assumption, that 'disruptions have priority!' is followed constantly, prioritizing participants' impulses over the seminar agenda. Sometimes this approach reduces the number of topics and issues that can be covered in a more structured and goal-oriented approach. However, the topics that really concern the participants and in which they are interested are better captured and covered. Thus, this content is often more relevant to the participants everyday life. Here some ideas for further reflection for trainings:

- How can I as trainer plan my training as flexible as possible to be able to follow the process? What is my A, B and C plan?
- What can I do to be calm "When disruptions have priority"? What can I do to welcome disruptions and to gratefully say to participants who express them: "Thank you for the impulse!"

The process- oriented approach can help to create the feeling in a group, that we all are the same, have the same needs and problems and try to overcome them together. It can create the feeling of belonging to a greater group of like-minded people – this can be a very strong feeling, helping to overcome confronting issues.

At the same time this is a risky way for trainers as group dynamics might become so strong that they take over. That's why we have to be aware of a logic of groups dynamics in order to use it productively to let the process take its own time, but still integrate it with the topics to be covered.

There are classical ways of dividing group processes into phases (Stahl 2017), which are especially relevant for trainings that last longer than one day.

A Forming

In this stage, most members are positive and polite. Some are anxious, as they haven't fully understood what the training is about. Others are simply excited about the task ahead.

As a facilitator, you play a dominant role at this stage, because members' roles and responsibilities aren't clear. You have to take responsibility and provide orientation. Do not use irony or jokes in this phase, but be clear about goals and actions to be done. You will be the model of orientation in the way you behave and act. You are implicitly and explicitly setting the rules for the participants. Provide enough opportunities for members to get to know each other and make direct contact with all other members. This stage can last for some time, as people start to work together, and as they make an effort to get to know their fellow members.

B Storming

Next, the group moves into the storming phase, where people start to push against the boundaries established in the forming stage. This is the stage where many groups fail – yet it is essential if high quality of working together should be achieved. Storming often starts where there is a conflict

between members' natural working styles. People may work in different ways for all sorts of reasons, but if differing working styles cause unforeseen problems, they may become frustrated.

Storming can also happen in other situations. For example, members may challenge your authority, or jockey for position as their roles are clarified. Or, if you haven't defined clearly how the training will be run (open process and participation), people may feel overwhelmed by what they should do, or they could be uncomfortable with the approach you're using. Some may question the worth of the goals, and they may resist taking on the process.

Members who stick with the initial tasks at hand may experience stress, particularly as they don't have the support of established processes, or strong relationships with their fellow members.

As a facilitator, you have to support this phase by focusing more explicitly on the relations within the group. You could lead an explicit discourse on group dynamics for addressing and clarifying hidden and open conflicts and provide possibility for taking responsibility as a group. In this phase you have the chance to bring the topic of democracy and anti-democratic slogans directly to the issues of the group, be it conflicts like working styles, formal and informal times or being offended by individual members and their previously covered value system – all of this shows that the group is a small 'laboratory of democracy' that matches tendencies in societies at large. You yourself as a facilitator might be involved a conflict for your working style, rejection of clear answers etc. Therefore it is always good to have a leading team which can be supportive in this phase. Ask members what they need, provide room for discussing the next steps with the group – in the end it boils down to the initial question of volume one of our approach: "How do we want to live together in Europe?"

C Norming

Gradually, the group moves into the norming stage. This is when people start to resolve their differences, appreciate fellow members' strengths, and respect your authority as a facilitator. Now that your members know one-another better, they may socialize together, and they are able to ask each other for help and provide constructive feedback. People develop a stronger commitment to the common goals, and you start to see good progress towards it. Rules are becoming clear and are accepted for being important regulations of living together. There is often a prolonged overlap between storming and norming, because, as new tasks come up, the group may lapse back into behavior from the storming stage.

The role of the facilitator is to step back gradually, but support the group by providing a good frame for learning and developing in groups, individually and by meeting informally. The facilitator supports the norms established by one in a while shifting to the "meta-level", addressing the kind of being and working together and providing options for feedback on processes and results. Slowly he/she is handing over responsibility to the participants.

D Performing

The group reaches the performing stage when the training seems to run by itself. The structures and processes that you have set up support this well. It feels easy to be part of the group at this stage, and people who join or leave won't disrupt performance. Difference is no longer threat, but a resource for being creative. So, one could call this the phase in which democracy and European values come to life. This also shows that democracy is not (only) an abstract model or a result but has to be

achieved anew with each group. And it shows it is a long way to work and live together in a way which by itself is a model for a diverse society.

The role of the facilitator is now to become more and more a part of the group. He or she should be in the background as much as possible and thus provide the chance for the group to autonomously achieve their own projects. There will be a lot of mutual learning on an equal level.

E Adjourning

Many groups will reach this stage eventually. Participants who have developed close working relationships with other people, may find this stage difficult, particularly if their future now looks uncertain. Normal daily life is coming into focus again, the often quite intense time of the training is about to end. It is important to actively design this phase not too late and to provide enough room for activities as a group and develop perspectives for after this phase.

In this phase the facilitator will be responsible for times of reflection and looking back to the time past. Working with symbols or stories is a good way for anchoring and securing what has been learned and achieved in terms of processes and results.

5. Human interaction: communication and feedback

Dealing with anti-democratic slogans turns out to be far more than a technique, a strategy or a method. In terms of wanting to deal with this phenomenon, we have to look at fruitful ways of communicating with one another as human beings. This also implies that we have to look at our own blind spots, at possible 'little populists' within us which are self-righteous and think they have a morally higher status than others. When dealing with anti-democratic slogans in a structural sense, we also have to deal with ourselves and our embeddedness in a democracy in crisis.

The construction of messages

When we think about communication, we might think about sending information from sender to receiver. We are putting together a package that should arrive at the receiver in the way we intended:

Many communication models aim at improving our verbal or non-verbal communication to let the message arrive in a better way. Much effort is put into training our 'communication performance' – how to tell better the other what I want (and why my arguments might be better). This might be one important aspect to communication. Nevertheless, the receiver of a message has the freedom to hear and imply what he or she wants.

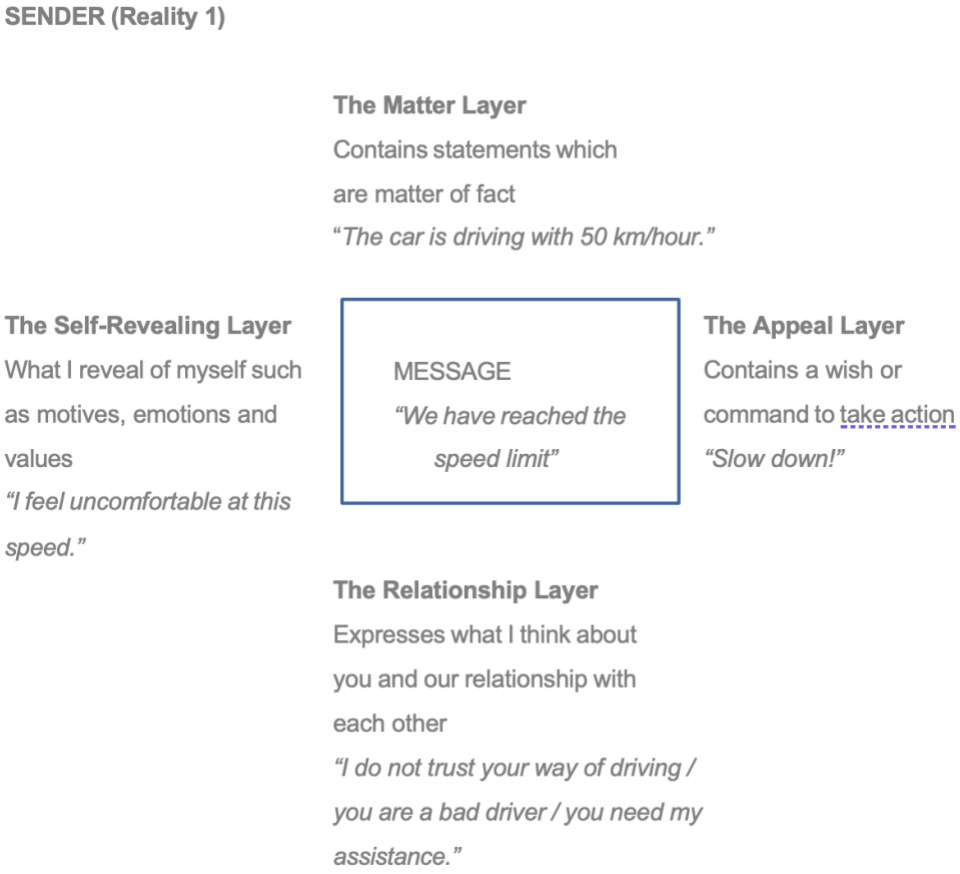
In this way every message is a 'construction of reality' and the receiver can re-construct what he or she hears according to his or her own reality. From this perspective, it seems surprising that we can understand each other after all: the way we send and the way we hear things always depend on our perspective, our value system and our biographical inner experiences, the crises and questions we carry within us. The same words can mean very different things to different people. A message travels from one reality to another or from one construction of reality to another construction of reality. More important than the message 'as such' (does it exist independently from us?) is the way we deal with communication as senders and receivers.

Four layers of communication

Friedemann Schulz von Thun (Schulz von Thun 2008 - for his basic works see Schulz von Thun 2023) has developed a model of communication which highlights the different layers of communication both when we speak and when we listen. It helps to better understand what happens when we communicate with each other and shows different options which allow us to decide for ourselves which aspects of communication we want to focus on.

Especially those sentences that are supposedly “neutral” and “factual” and which are very common in relationships between colleagues have a number of hidden messages, such as appeals and messages concerning the relationship. Because these are hidden it makes it very easy for the speaker to deny the underlying message (“Why? I only said that ...!”). This manipulative game results in irritations between the people concerned. Reminding them to focus on the facts will not resolve the actual conflict. Misunderstandings and, following these, conflicts are often the result of unclear communication or so-called “large ears”.

Generally speaking it is helpful to send a large proportion of self-revealing aspects and clear appeals. The following example represents a model. It is useful, from time to time, to analyze what you hear and to become more clear about what you actually want to say by choosing with which ear you want to listen with and on what channel you want to send your answers. This way you can decide to openly address the underlying problem or consciously ignore it.



Especially in discussions about anti-democratic slogans between two people, what we often hear (and send!) regarding the relationship, can be brought to a short sentence:

"I am right – you are wrong"

This implies a power relationship between superiority and inferiority. First of all this relationship has to be made explicit, accepted or corrected to come to an eye level.

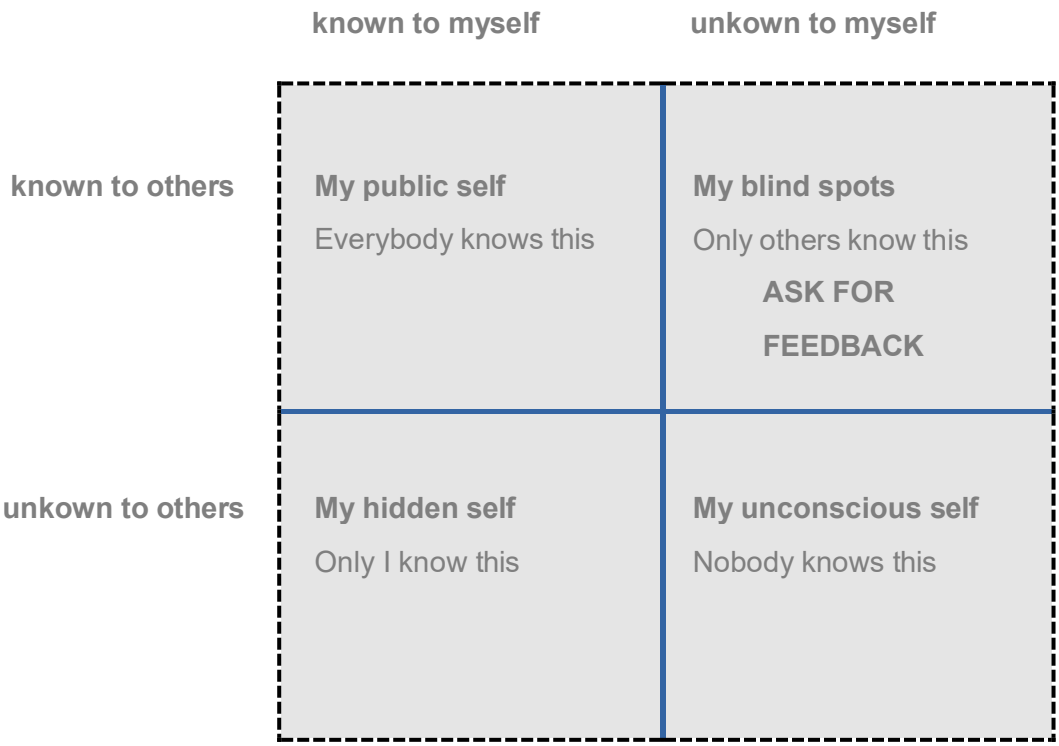
Only then will it be possible to talk about facts, arguments etc.

So a rational discourse does not really help in establishing good communication. The idea that facts and arguments (and better education) will help to become a better society, is false. Very often the feeling of not being accepted, being left behind, not really counting as who you are, is at the roots of many problems of living together democratically and peacefully. This has to be addressed and of course needs opening up (self-revelation), taking responsibility (giving clear appeals) and focusing on emotion (relationship)

Feedback

Feedback is a way of consciously improving communication processes. Feedback is important for us and others since we are not fully transparent to ourselves.

The *Johari Window* (named for its creators, Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham) - is a useful concept for understanding how feedback can help us become more transparent with the help of others. It shows different portions of the “ego”, indicating where development steps are possible and how feedback and disclosure help becoming more authentic to others and to ourselves.



Feedback makes it possible to understand my impact on other people. In this way, I can become more self-conscious and realize a supportive and tolerant way of communication in situations in conflict. Quite often feedback is being instrumentalized as a way of articulating critique in a subtle way. Here factual information (the Matter layer) is being linked with relationship. The sender articulates something on the Matter layer, but really he / or she wants to criticize another person on the relationship layer.

That is not feedback. Matter (factual information) is in the background since it is often only a substitute for really daring to look at our relations as human beings. Change can only happen within myself and within others by their own motivation. The goal of feedback is an offer for realizing blind spots and understanding the impact of my actions. Feedback is therefore not (only) a technique: on a voluntary basis, a group or an organization can develop an open and authentic feedback culture

for being able to deal better with difficult situations and find more options for action in situations of conflict.

Ground rules

- Feedback is being offered or asked for. In both cases feedback can only be working on a voluntary basis
- Giving feedback starts by sharing my individual perception (NOT: “others noted that you...”, “everybody noticed that...”)
- I am sharing most important information first. Nevertheless, I decide what I want to share and what I want to keep to myself (repect for tabu and intimacy)
- Receiving feedback, I should not defend myself in any way. I am just listening
- I am deciding whether and which consequences I will be taking from what I heard

Feedback steps

Feedback can be asked for, it can be given in a group mutually between people; it can be done in a private or a public setting. It needs a trustful and somewhat intimate atmosphere – at the same time it strengthens inner trust in a team when wanting to become active in a community. Feedback can contain critique and be very deep – at the same time, its main attitude is that of an appreciation of human life in its limitedness and beauty.

When using feedback, the following steps should always be followed separately

1. **Self-revelation**

„That is what I am noticing with respect to you. That is something that specifically perceive concerning your person.“

2. **Relationship**

„These emotions are stirred up within me by these perceptions, that's how I feel about it“

3. **Appeal**

„Here is a wish I have for you, something you might take on your further way of life“

4. Give the other person the **chance for reaction**.

In the context of anti-democratic slogans, this sequence provides the chance to let the other feel that appreciation, empathy and authenticity (Rogers 1977) are an offer to exchange with one another at equal eye’s level. Even more, instead of trying to change the other, first of all I am opening up and offering some insight into my system of values and perception of the world. Feedback also demonstrates that for human-centered fruitful communication, we do not necessarily need any ‘facts’ or arguments. It’s mostly about relating to one another in respect for sharing a common world.

As a summary, this analysis shows the limits of interacting with virtual, anonymous or machine-driven slogans on social media. A relation of trust can hardly be build up and individual attempts to counter-narrative will have very little effect.

6. Our view of the human being

On a fundamental level we have to reflect again and again what it means to be an active citizen wanting to change society. On which basis are we doing that? Which implicit idea of human beings guides our activism? Very often we do have an idea of a model of what is the essence of a human being. They should be made explicit and be discussed. In the following section four different basic models of what it means to be a human being are presented; each of them can be practiced by a little activity in a team of trainers in order to get closer to a common understanding of the underlying assumptions of social activism and change in human beings.

Method

Present the following overview on a flipchart and expand on them by the following text and use the small activities to put it into practice.

1. Character model

Different people have different character which are quite stable by 'nature'

We can analyze this together and help different people finding their individual and productive contribution to society.

2. Action model

Human beings are like an empty USB-stick.

We can train them and 'write' different things on them. And we can delete bad things from them. We have to decide what is 'good' and train many people on that.

3. Constructionist model

We have an inner map of biographical experience that tells us which paths to follow.

People should encounter their different inner maps and discuss how they can expand the possibilities of traveling society's path together in a peaceful way.

4. Systems model.

Human beings only exist as elements of structures around them.

We can reflect power and group dynamics together and try to form a 'community of practice' beyond individual aspirations.

Philosophical models of what it means to be a human being

On a very fundamental level it is important to reflect which idea or theory we have about learning. How do human beings and society as a whole change, what is their own contribution, what is the contribution of external influences? The following models are of course never 'pure' but separated for analytical reasons. They show basic varieties but one also might think of further models like 'spiritual' (Transcendence as the essence) or 'ecological' (Link to future generations as the essence).

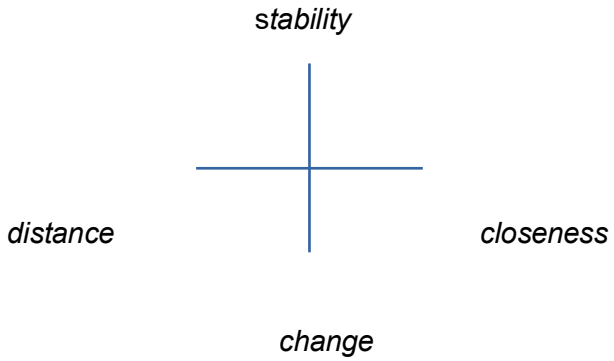
First participants collect sayings about learning from the different cultures and the childhood of participants are being collected. These 'wisdoms of proverbs' were collected in small groups and grouped together according to their very different ideas about learning. At the very end of the presentation they can be linked to the four basic models.

1. Character model

According to this model we all have a more or less stable character which is the essence of us; this idea goes back to the Greeks when they thought every human being to have a mixture of different liquids – so they distinguished personalities like the phlegmatic, the cynic, the depressed or hysteric. It is interesting to see that most often the characteristics a 'negative' and describe pathological traits (for a modern version still used in psychology compare Riemann 1961). Nevertheless we find this deeply rooted, e.g. when applying for a job and being analyzed whether we 'fit' into a team; doing psychological tests, trying to find the right place privately and professionally according to our personality. Also in training there are descriptions of participants like 'animal characters' (the giraffe above all things, the turtle disappearing when conflicts arise, the rabbit that can never be caught…). This model provides us trainers with orientation, it lets participants analyze and reflect who they are, but is problematic as it might be static and individually restrict the freedom of human beings to radically change or develop.

Activity 1

To apply this model, the 'Riemann/Thomann square' (Thomann et al. 1988) can be used, as it describes positive general tendencies we all share and opens up possibilities to productively work with this model. A horizontal line is drawn on flipchart, one end representing 'distance', the other one 'closeness'. Participants also draw this and spontaneously locate themselves on the line according to whether in life they generally prefer distance or closeness. Another vertical line is put over the first one to form a cross. The ends of this line represent 'stability' and 'change'. Again each participant locates him/herself on this line. The combination of both lines results in one position for each participant. Together all are getting up and standing in the room where the lines are also marked. In this way there is an 'analysis of the group' and its different characters are being shown. It can further be critically reflected if this is good for the group or if certain characters are missing – or if this is irrelevant anyway. In this model it is important to note that there is a flexibility built in: very often, our inner dream or unfulfilled wish is the opposite of what we are in 'real life'. So participants can reflect whether they find voices in themselves that actually would want to be different if they could.



2. Action model

This model is the 'opposite' of the character model; it says that the essence of human beings is like an empty computer storage with no content; only outer impulses can 'write' on it and also erase previous impulses. The way human beings react depends on what has been 'written' on them. So there is no good or bad characters; when we witness hate, intolerance etc., we as trainers have to erase these old 'programs' and intensely train new impulses and so we can build a more tolerant society. This model has its roots in the increasing success of natural sciences and their control over the world. 'Behaviorism' (Skinner 1976) tried to design different variations of 'utopias' in which people could peacefully live together. It is even rooted in political science when Hobbes presented his Leviathan (Hobbes 1668/2010) – he saw individuals in society like balls following physical laws in their movements – in order not to have chaos, it is necessary to smartly bring them into balance with each other, this is done by the 'Leviathan' how represents the 'enlightened dictator' making sure society functions. This already points to the problems of this approach: over-control and no personal freedom because external impulses of 'experts' are to be followed. Yet we find it in training programs strongly believing in changing behavior over changing inner attitude. And of course to work with new models and activities it certainly needs a certain amount of training.

Activity 2

The group stands in a circle. One person starts counting, then the next and it goes around. Whenever there is a number that contains '3' (like 3, 13, 23, 30…) or it can be divided by 3 (6, 9, 12, 15…) the person does not say the number but 'blubb'. It will take a while of training until the group quickly can count to 30. It is then reflected how relevant training can be but critically be questioned whether this is the essence of civic activism to follow rules by others and train these.

3. Constructionist model

This model is more recent and might be seen as a combination of the previous two; yet it is a radical shift as it claims human beings do not have an 'essence' as such but they way we see the world is basically used to 'survive'. This has been confirmed by biological findings on animals which also perceive their outer world in such a way that it helps them most as a species. So it's not about good and bad, but about what is helpful to survive and what not. On our paths through life, we have developed 'inner maps' that give us orientation but also warn us about dangerous roads or areas. This can be very different for different people, e.g. for some people conflict is a great road to move forward and develop, for others its a dangerous river not to be entered as it can sweep you away. This maps are biographically acquired, they cannot simply be erased but maybe enriched by new options. Concerning training this model means giving up external expert knowledge or believing in 'the truth'. Rather, participants are invited to confront themselves with their different inner maps and become productively irritated about the different worlds they encounter. The quality of this process becomes more important than the result. Over time they can explore together what is the respective 'logic' of the other and develop new and fruitful ways together. This model is closely linked to the idea of 'radical democracy', having no fixed foundations or essence but being exposed to conflict and discussion (Mouffe 1992).

One critique concerning this model is that it might be 'relativistic', providing no orientation: who tells us what is the right way to take? Also it might be blind to existing structural power relations and discrimination which are not seen in this individualistic model (like also in the previous ones). Nevertheless it fit with our approach of Civic Activism and the 'democracy to come' (surprises guaranteed), which can only be realized in freedom and self-responsibility always keeping in mind the reality of the 'other' and not only myself.

Activity 3

Participants are all asked to individually draw a small dog and not show it to their neighbor. Then they fold and put away their paper. In pairs participants then hold a pen and together are asked to draw a dog without speaking. Pictures are shown in plenary. In the reflection it becomes clear that different constructions of what a dog looks like met. Sometimes the dominating partner realized his construction, sometimes new and crazy or creative paintings came to the paper. This reflects that with this model new and unforeseen things can happen – at the same time chaos can be the result, with a loss of orientation because of too much irritation. The group can reflect when there were other situations in the training when different constructions met in a productive or problematic way.

4. System model

This model which is also of rather new origin, realizes the interdependence of things on earth; human beings are not individuals that can be added up. Families, institutions, societies, political parties, even technically complex systems develop a reality of their own over time. This reality cannot be analyzed in a linear way as a set of causes of the individuals representing the system. One classical example is development work, when system effects produce disasters, although all actors had the best intentions: solar ovens lamps for a village in Africa to let women be able to cook at night further isolated women in this village – they did not go together anymore to collect wood and exchange news, building up strong social ties.

Converting this to training means taking into consideration that there are no individuals, but representatives of systems in the room and that the group will form its own system with group dynamics over time (Stahl 2017); radically speaking this means that erg. if many participants come to late or someone behaves in an annoying way, it is not linked to the respective individuals but tells us something about the symptoms of the system.

Here is also the place to realize and reflect power dynamics. Beyond being an individual, we all belong to power groups. If a topic is put to the discussion, it is important to watch this, erg. freedom of choice between family life and work is different for men and women in our societies: men can easily combine both whereas strong expectations on women concerning family responsibility make it difficult for them to live this freedom, although it is individually granted to all. This means with respect to training, that a group can only become tolerant if these issues have been sorted out over time – conflicts about power structures and implicit norms are an essential part of the learning; tolerance and democracy cannot be 'taught' directly or individualistically but are part of the productive process of a system.

This model can be criticized for abolishing individual responsibility and handing it over to the logic of the system. If the system only follows its own logic, it is difficult for a trainer to intervene or set impulses which 'guarantee' a progress of all. Nevertheless it can make us humble in a positive way with respect to our beliefs of 'changing the world'.

Activity 4

The group stands in two rows facing each other; all put one finger of each hand forward to form a sort of long 'platform'. A long stick is placed on the fingers. The task is that all strictly keep their finger on the stick and together should put it on the floor. What happens most of the time is that the stick goes up a lot – even more so as the trainer again and again stresses that all fingers have to stay connected to the stick. The system is producing the opposite effect of that which is intended; yet nobody could be individually 'blamed' for this failure. The group can think of other situations in the training when such effects took place.

Reflection

As a summary of the models it should be stated that all have their relevance but we clearly favor the last two ones as they place learning from the other in focus, stress ever new processes and are open for looking at power dynamics. Overall, these two approaches make sure that we realize that Civic Activism like life itself is not something to be controlled, but an attempt to find ever new and creative ways to peacefully live together in difference. Training is often needed to achieve that and different characters might show up when getting to know each other more closely – but change on a personal and systemic level should always be kept open.

7. Lively Online trainings

Chances and requirements

Ever since the Covid pandemic, online trainings have become a standard option for many educational contexts. Participation from other parts of the world, as well as spontaneous networking meetings, new possibilities for visualization, documentation and personal networking have shown us that online trainings are becoming an integral part of the educational landscape.

A new familiarity and closeness has emerged, especially in the case of trainings lasting several days and consisting of several parts: although we do not see and feel each other in person, we do not meet in a neutral public 'third place' either, but connect in an often private environment, which can become an active part of our shared experience and work.

The ideal number of participants in a training has been found to be between 10 and 12 – then it is still possible to assign reactions even during spontaneous and perhaps heated discussions. With larger groups, a lot of work should be done in small groups to prepare and relieve the discussions in plenary. The duration of the training can range from 3 hours to 3 days – formats of e.g. 9.30 – 16.00 allow for a short lunch break, on longer days it makes sense to give 2 hours lunch break, since for most participants everyday life continues. Also multi-part formats such as 5 weeks always in the morning or evening are conceivable depending on the target group. For longer training series, it makes sense to arrange at least one or two individual meetings per participant with the moderator.

There are numerous different technical video conference systems and supporting tools which can be used for online trainings. Here we will not go into detail but just list some general requirements for lively online trainings. Some of them can also elegantly be integrated in offline trainings as they allow for quick collaboration via the use of smartphones.

Video

A video conferencing system which has a good sound quality – this has proven to be much more important than perfect pictures. There should be easy options for working groups, chat and basic drawing and documentation functions. In international context, automated written translation can be helpful to close access barriers. Open the conference room at least 30 minutes before the official start of the training and actively invite people to come and join you for informal exchanges. You can also open small group rooms here, where those arriving can exchange ideas more privately. (Good example: zoom.us).

New ways of interaction

There are now numerous new technical solutions that dissolve the 'rigidity of the tiles' of video conferencing and thus enable a much more flexible and intuitive movement in the room. In the system, you move in a circle with your own image view against a background that can be set up as you like. When you approach other people, you can hear them louder and can talk to them directly in self-determined groups. This makes it very easy to integrate

informal side conversations and exchanges beyond the official training room as an additional level of interaction. (Good examples: spatial.chat and gather.town).

Networking and documentation

As participants do not have informal time entering the room or chat in breaks, use a tool in which participants can introduce themselves by picture, video and some written statements before the training. Send a link to a platform with prepared space for each one.

Here you can also have a parking lot for flyer, project links and images to make the training most attractive in terms of look-and-feel. Results od the training can be documented and supplemented by all with password protection (Good example: padlet.com).

Creative Activities

When doing experience-based interactions, let participants change the platform in subgroups. Offer them a tool which is a sort of playground where you can move figures, draw and interact visually. They should be able to collaborate and document their results. Good tools allow for flexibility in process and handling of results (Good examples: flinga.fi, and miro.com).

Assessment of needs

Especially in Online trainings there is reduced capacity of being sensitive to changing moods and levels of participation. With appropriate tools participants can anonymously share their needs or wishes, open questions and topics they want to address. They can be clustered and also be used for documenting what has been achieved. (Good examples: mentimeter.com, conceptboard.com)

Live feedback

When giving feedback in a written form, online tools allow for an immediate visualization of what everyone writes; interaction and comments are possible. The tool can be prepared and structured with guided questions beforehand and also provides a transparent way of monitoring and documentation (Good example: etherpad.org).

Strengthening interaction and emotion

Online trainings that are committed to democratic cooperation with participation, personal responsibility and process orientation should consider the following tips; these are not to be implemented instrumentally, but reflect a basic attitude of appreciation for the independence of the participants. This leads to a shared learning path that will enrich and inspire everyone equally.

1. Present yourself as a trainer!

Virtual trainings are, on the one hand, distant, but on the other hand, they allow insights into often private environments. Take the initiative and share something about your environment with the participants at the beginning of a training so that you can be recognized as a person beyond a role. Avoid labeled or 'beautiful' technical backgrounds in the conference system. Use something tangible to locate yourself, be it a cup of coffee, a candle, a picture on the desk or something similar. Use a second camera for this purpose!

Take the participants on a (visual) journey of the actual training location, the garden, leisure area, your own surroundings, in order to create a wide space beyond the camera view and to enable a good sense of location.

2. Always start with small(est) groups!

Send various signals right at the beginning of a virtual training that the focus is on interaction and exchange. Avoid classic rounds of introduction, which are even more tiring online than in a circle of chairs. Instead, invite participants in 3-5 alternating pairs or threesomes with short impulses to introduce themselves and share a personal thought on the topic of the training, an event from everyday life or a wish for the event in 2-3 minutes. Even if this immediate 'confrontation' with others is sometimes still a bit stiff, it still sets numerous personal 'anchors' within the training group.

After this round of exchanges, instead of a round of introductions, it makes sense to write central thoughts on topics and people in the chat at the same time.

3. Chat creatively!

“Please ask questions in the chat.” Avoid this basic attitude, which creates a separation between the moderator and the participants. Instead, use the chat for quick and creative introductions, e.g. ‘Introduce yourself in the chat using three numbers between 1 and 20’ (‘I have 4 children, live in a village with 1 artist and have moved 7 times’).

Use the chat to collect associations or proverbs on a topic, e.g. “What proverbs come to mind when you think of learning?” or “What adjectives come to mind when you think of security?”

Also allow private chats between participants – this is where personal, 'secret' and side conversations develop that would otherwise take place in informal rooms during the training – and you won't be aware of them there either, but this also signals trust and the chance for independence in the online training.

4. Create something together!

Use virtual possibilities of symbolic or graphic design to create a sense of community within the training group. If everyone draws a birthday bouquet for a birthday child, the most beautiful corona mask or a place of longing for the next vacation together within 5 minutes, then spontaneous, crazy and also emotional pictures quickly emerge that will be remembered. It is important to find something that touches and connects everyone equally personally and not an abstract task as in other 'exercises' (“Design a picture of democracy”).

Such images offer the opportunity for a symbolic re-entry at a new online appointment, can create emotional anchors in documentation, or be printed out and sent to participants on various materials.

5. Use the analog world!

Virtual trainings take place in the real world. Whenever possible, use this tangibility together with the participants. A round of introductions or feedback using an object from one's own environment conveys personal information and makes the different people 'tangible'. You can collect terms or moods from the training on call and have everyone leave an object for each one, or have them create an object from a piece of paper in one minute.

Instead of presenting a lot on slides, it is pleasant to write on a flipchart behind you, so that you can also get up and leave the static of the video conference. You can also have work results written and symbolized on paper and cards and invite participants to hold them up to the camera. Or you can sort results on the floor and visualize them using a second camera.

Another simple option is to ask pairs to take a walk together, talking while they do so, with the phone at their ear – this creates a real sense of being on the move and then physically returning to the group.

6. Sound on! Picture on! Self view off!

With most systems, it is no longer necessary to mute all microphones in smaller groups of up to 20. This had and still has the effect of feeling like a conference in which you actively signal a 'report contribution' – possibly even with a technical hand signal. Avoid this basic attitude and invite everyone to keep their microphones activated and encourage everyone to speak spontaneously and get involved. If there is confusion, a solution can always be found – but the central challenge is always to get into a lively discussion in the first place and not to wait for the moderator to call on people to speak.

It should be a matter of course to have the camera activated during the training. It is common practice to deactivate the camera during breaks – but why? Invite everyone to keep the cameras running during breaks: this signals that we are all still 'there' during breaks, in a basic context, and that there is no need to 'switch on and off' in a merely formalized conference room. It also makes it possible for informal conversations to arise when someone notices that others are back.

Some systems allow you to deactivate the 'self-view', i.e. the ability to see your own video image. Encourage participants to try this out so that they don't constantly feel like they're sitting in front of a 'mirror', as in a real training, but rather perceive the others better without self-fixation.

7. Take a back seat!

Mute the sound and/or turn off the image – this can sometimes be helpful for you as a moderator to strengthen interaction within the group and to avoid fixating on the facilitation. When you open up a field of interaction in the plenary, you can consciously formulate that you are symbolically stepping out of the circle of chairs, listening, but not present with sound and/or image. This means that the group must also take greater personal responsibility for managing their concerns.

The same applies to reflection processes in plenary after working in small groups. Especially in virtual space, people wait until the trainer 'calls'. Declare a period of 5-15 minutes as open reflection time for the group, turn off sound and/or image or move out of the picture just at the edge, listen and sort out which discussion threads you want to take over afterwards. Again and again, give the responsibility to the participants to pay attention to each other and to give each other the floor, in order to avoid having to keep the classic list of speakers.

This also applies to the return from small groups – instead of a strict technical timing, you can grant the freedom to return to the plenary on your own, as far as this is possible within the framework of the training. Other possibilities for creating 'soft transitions' in which you as the moderator do not dominate include allowing members of the small group to visit each other, having the moderator visit the small groups, or sending someone from a small group that has already returned to a small group that is still working.

8. Visualize diversity of perspectives and emotions!

Even less than in direct encounters, different opinions, points of view and emotions can be directly grasped in virtual space. That is why interventions are always needed to make this visible in the plenary session, beyond exercises.

In larger groups, survey tools are useful for anonymously raising controversial issues on exciting questions and topics, which can then be used for productive further work. In smaller groups, renaming one's own name is a very simple and clear possibility with a suitable system: for a question such as “how satisfied are you with...” all participants write a number from 0-10 behind their own name – large deviations, dissatisfaction and emotions beyond exercises can be directly visualized and also discussed and worked on.

Questions such as “What color are you today? - What value is central to your life? - Where would you like to be now?” can be quickly visualized behind or instead of the name. When group exercises are carried out, it always makes sense to ask everyone to write the number or name of their respective working group behind their name when they return to the plenary session in order to keep track of the diversity.

9. The icing on the cake – send a surprise in advance!

In face-to-face trainings, there are always physical moments of togetherness: a box of chocolates goes around, people have a coffee together, training documents or brochures are distributed, give-aways with logos are handed out as a farewell gift...

If you have the option, send a 'surprise package' to the participants in advance with the note 'Please

keep closed until the online training!' It can contain materials, sweets, something related to the topic of the training – the same for everyone or, even more sophisticated, different things. However, work documents and thematic assignments are not really suitable for this, so you should use the presence of the online training for that.

During the online training, you and everyone else can unwrap the packages together, show them to each other and maybe even eat a snack together or be in the next unit with your coffee in the new cup in front of the screen.

D Multiplication background: Training trainers

Being a trainer is more than just reading activities and applying them according to descriptions and with the help of worksheets; being a trainer is also more than passing on activities and workshops concepts you have experienced yourself. Being a trainer means first of all having done a lot of reflection about your own biographical becoming, your attitude towards human beings, education (teaching and learning) and working with groups in specific educational spaces. All of this means being ready for an open process of looking inside, getting feedback and constructive critique from colleagues and becoming versatile in doing the best in each given educational moment with a target group. In other words: letting loose of pre-fabricated concepts plans and activities in the name of those who are present, is just as important as having a wide range of educational 'tools'.

Therefore we recommend that a full-fledged training of trainers should at involve the following four parts; as always, in reality there will be good reasons to adapt and selsct.

A comprehensive concept for training trainers

A **Getting to know the program, its concept and activities**

As a future trainer, you should become familiar and experience as a participant a full range of the training program. Depending on the amount, this can be one weekend or a full week to also enter the group dynamics and personal interaction process with others.

B **Trying out activities and deepening self-reflection**

In a second part, you should try out the facilitation of especially process-oriented activities in the protected space of a group. Alternatively you can accompany experienced trainers in practice and try out some small parts. The more important aspect here is the self-reflection: what is quality for me? How can I design appreciative spaces of empowerment and participation? How can I learn from my colleagues. The following section specifically focus on these aspects and provide hand-on activities for that. Depending on the level of theoretical deepening, also the sections on socio-political and didactic backgrounds in this document can be used.

C **Regular networking an coaching**

After having done some practical experiences, we recommend regular (Online-)Meetings with a group of trainers for mutual coaching and consulting. Challenging situations as well as moving highlights can be shared and stabilize the quality of the trainings for all. For this, we provide a scheme on 'coaching by colleagues' in seven steps.

D **Democratic evaluation**

When a stable network of trainers has formed, after a year or so it might be time to relfect and monitor quality as a whole more closely. Yet, evaluation in a comprehensive sense

should not only be an avoidable add-on, but become part of the learning experience together. This is why we developed an approach of democratic evaluation which can help to focus on ‘use’ instead of an abstract scientific ‘truth’.

1. Quality criteria for professional trainers

The previously mentioned international conference had assembled representatives of different approaches and projects of argumentation trainings. In a participatory process quality criteria for trainers were discussed (Boeser / Wenzel 2019). Four quality standards were formulated in a compact form to guide the way in which trainers should become professionals; these were supported by quotes from the expert interviews.

1. Facilitators/trainers critically engage with social and political developments. They possess methodological, leadership and social skills, as well as authenticity, humor and composure.

2. They stand by pluralistic democracy and human rights. They always remain self-critical (with regard to their own work as trainers) and are willing to continuously develop and educate themselves further.

3. They represent the “open source” principle and are therefore willing to share materials and enable sitting in on lessons.

4. A multiplier training is recommended.

Aspect of the content-related further training of trainers

We recommend expanding the skills of the trainers by working on and/or further training them on the topics of:

- non-violent communication
- group-focused enmity
- racism in language
- impact of social prejudices and power relations
- authoritarian structures

Expectations of the trainers / methodology

No dogma, but awareness of..

- one's own political attitude, which should not be conveyed in the training
- one's own privileges (e.g. white majority perspective)
- inextricable dilemmas of democracy

Every participating group needs a special mix of methods and empathic interaction depending on their prior knowledge (e.g. prejudices, political participation), level of education, courage, political disaffection, or fatigue, shyness or willingness to engage in conflict.

It is often more understandable and conducive to discussion to admit one's own insecurities (e.g. one's own mistakes, prejudices and gaps in knowledge).

2. Designing spaces of empowerment

The following quiz can be used as a practical sensibilization for trainers in order to comprehensively integrate empowering elements in trainings on dealing with anti-democratic slogans (for more information as how to take empowerment into civic education in times of structural trauma and threats to mental health see VIA Bayern 2024 and compare parts A3 and C3 in this volume.

Method

1. You are a workshop facilitator and you are preparing a training on anti-democratic slogans with a co-facilitator. One of the partners is currently facing challenges that are severely restricting him (experiences of violence, natural disasters, illness, social upheaval etc.). He reports that he and his team do not really have the capacity for the seminar. How do you proceed?

- You ask the partner what he needs right now and change your seminar to meet his needs. It is precisely in situations like this that empowerment can be truly experienced. This experience will not only be important for the partner, but also as an example of empowerment in action for all participants.
- You have your agenda and you are accountable to a donor. Unfortunately, you will have to do without the partner and hold the seminar without him.
- You try to persuade the partner to participate anyway. If he still doesn't want to, you use your power and put pressure on him.

Reflection

It depends on the circumstances. It can actually happen that as a workshop facilitator you are pressed into circumstances that allow little flexibility. The first answer is, of course, the one that most clearly empowers everyone involved and that works in a process-oriented and participatory way. We advise, if you have the opportunity, to discuss possible freedoms again with those in charge – often more is possible than you think. The third solution is wrong in terms of empowerment. Power that you have should be used consciously, justifiably and for the benefit of all in the context of empowerment, and not without reason, as in the answer.

2. You are the workshop facilitator are developing the structure of a workshop. As you are unsure about certain topics, you want to involve expertise. Who do you plan to involve as a speaker?

- You yourself are an expert and prepare a PowerPoint presentation with professional images and texts.
- You invite a keynote speaker on anti-democratic slogans.
- You prepare the event together with the participants. You offer participants the opportunity to present their experiences and skills, encouraging and supporting them in doing so.

Reflection

The most empowering option is, of course, the third one. Here, the speakers experience empowerment and thus make it tangible for other participants. This option is the most participatory, but also the most time-consuming. There must be enough time for this, as well as money to compensate the speakers. Lectures in the first and second case repeat the rather unempowering structures of “an expert says what is right and we listen”. In contexts in which there is little time to prepare workshops or in which it is actually mainly about imparting cognitive knowledge, it is of course justified. We would like to point out that empowerment never works only on a cognitive level and invite you to also incorporate emotional and action-oriented elements into lectures.

3. You are planning the schedule for a training on anti-democratic slogans. How do you proceed?

- You plan the individual training parts very precisely and make sure that the times are adhered to during the process.
- You plan buffers everywhere in order to be able to respond to current processes.
- You plan very precisely but are always open to impulses from the participants.

Reflection

Process orientation requires flexibility. Of course, a workshop must be planned precisely. In our view, it is very important to remain flexible when facilitating open-process trainings concerning democracy as a topic, to plan in buffers, to have variants A, B and C in the process planning, to respond to impulses, needs and contributions of the participants and to plan time for this. This also requires good fine-tuning with co-facilitators, who must be able to work with a similar degree of flexibility.

4. You are leading a trainng lasting several days. During the lunch break on the first day, a young participant tells you that he is a hip hop dancer, has been working as a teacher for many years and that hip hop has greatly empowered him. This participant has no experience as a trainer in civic education.

- You have an intensive conversation with the participant and tell him that his story has touched you very much.
- At the end of the day, you briefly introduce the participant and invite other participants to learn about hip hop from him in the evening.
- You encourage the participant to give a short hip hop course in your course.

Reflection

Again, you have to see what is possible. All variants are appreciative. The most empowering, resource-oriented and participatory variant is, of course, variant 3. In this variant, the participant's skills are taken so seriously that he can almost work at eye level. The power of the seminar facilitator is briefly handed over in a participatory way. In our experience, participants are very surprised when they are offered comparable opportunities and also need some support to take over the facilitation

for a short time. It can make sense to offer to discuss their part in detail briefly. We have often facilitated similar processes and can report that amazing, wondrous and very empowering processes and results can often arise. Connections to creatively dealing with anti- democratic slogans can follow and give hands-on inpiration and motivation.

5. You are looking for a co-facilitator for your training. What criteria do you use to shape your search?

- The facilitator must be knowledgeable about the training approach and its contents in theory and practice.
- I take my best friend with me, I feel safe with her.
- I must have a good relationship with the co-facilitator: appreciative, sensitive and empowering.

Reflection

All of the above criteria are important, of course. It is important to feel safe. Whether your best friend is competent in the task at hand must be checked. Of course, the co-facilitator must be knowledgeable about issues concerning anti-democratic slogans. From our point of view, it is very important to have a good relationship/bond with the co-facilitators. Firstly, this can serve as a model for a secure bond. Secondly, it is very important to remember that “the fish always rots from the head”, i.e. if the facilitators treat each other with respect, sensitivity and empowerment, they will create a framework for the participants to do the same. The relationships of the facilitators in a seminar are therefore essential for the relationships for all persons in the training. If there are conflicts with or among the participants, the facilitators should critically examine whether this may also have to do with conflicts in the facilitator team. We invest a lot in good relationships among service providers and we would not do seminars if conflicts in the facilitator team become too great to protect participants here.

6. After a training, you are accused of not having led the seminar well, of obviously not being prepared, because sometimes participants just took over and it was all just kid stuff, fun and games but with little content. What happened and how do you proceed?

- The empowerment approach obviously doesn't work. I won't use it again.
- The participants didn't understand what happened in the training. I have to explain it better.
- The participant is a killjoy and didn't get it. You don't have to take every criticism seriously.

Reflection

From our point of view, empowerment seminars should be fun, entertaining and leave the participants with a light, maybe even happy feeling. Are we used to experiencing seminars like this? Shouldn't a seminar that is to be taken seriously also “hurt” with a lot of sitting, complicated content and PowerPoint presentations? We are convinced that learning works even better with fun and enthusiasm, especially when you also learn with feelings and at the action level. From our

experience, however, the participants have to be taken along and the concept explained from the very beginning. We often explain after each exercise what the learning step was here. This gives the participants a kind of permission to enjoy learning and to receive feedback on what they have learned. When this is successful, the feedback is often: “Oh, the day is already over, what a shame!” or “I didn't realize how much I could learn in one day and how much fun it could be!”

3. Coaching and consulting

Instead of trying to eliminate existing problems, trainers in two activities learn how to redefine problems in the practice of trainings as personal challenges. These are presented and the resources of a group of colleagues are used to comprehensively analyze the personal challenge and develop a number of possible perspectives for the future. These perspectives on the basis of one case study often help others to also get forward with their workshops

Method

1. Introduce to trainers the difference between problems and personal challenges and visualize this on a flipchart.

Very often we define difficult situations in the context of our work as a problem to be solved. Talking about problems implies an external perspective. Something 'out there' has to be solved. The world view connected with this is often deficit based and has the assumption of being able to technically solve the problem in a linear way

The first step is to redefine problems we see in our trainings as 'personal challenges'. Personal challenges are

- open questions
- contain the word "I..."
- are formulated with a positive potential for the future
- are able to be (partially) tackled by the person having the personal challenge
- deal with values and personal attitude

Example: Someone might formulate this problem: "The problem is that our participants do not care and do not come on time." This sounds not very hopeful and points in the direction of control and sanctions.

A re-formulation as a personal challenge might be: "I want to improve my ways of motivating and inspiring our participants to also take responsibility for the workshop." In this way it sounds more creative and pointing towards a new future with new ideas.

2. Form pairs to collect personal challenges from the participants which will be the starting point for a coaching by colleagues.

Ask each pair to think about personal challenges they want to bring to the group. In each pair the partners help each other to individually formulate personal challenges (they should not formulate one together).

These could be

- A concrete difficult situations in the training
- Something about one's own role or decisions to be taken
- General, also theoretical questions of doing trainings on anti-democratic slogans

Variation

To more intensely prepare for the finding of personal challenges, all participants are asked to draw a picture or symbol of a difficulty they face. By looking at the picture together, they develop the formulation of each personal challenge together.

3. Ask participants to find a pointed 'newspaper headline' or 'film title' for their personal challenge and let them individually elaborate their personal challenge in a way that is formulated according to the criteria shown above.

4. Cluster the challenges on a board and try to find headlines for different groups of challenges. Decide with the group of participants with which challenge you want to start. It is important to start with a concrete personal challenge of one person and not with general ones. Once you have gone through one concrete case, very often other participants already find new perspectives for their own similar cases.

5. Show to participants the following 7 steps of a coaching by colleagues (Rabenstein et al. 2001) on a flipchart and leave this visible for the following steps. Explain to participants that this method uses the resources and experiences of colleagues instead of relying on external expertise. It is especially useful in situations of NGOs when there is no professional or institutionalized offer from outside.

Then invite the case giver to sit next to you with a 'coaching group' of about 4-5 participants in a separate circle around and facilitate these 7 steps.

Reflection

Reflect the method with participants and make them share where they could apply the coaching by colleagues for case studies within their projects in the future.

Coaching by colleagues – The seven Steps

The following seven steps should be explained before facilitating the method. *The explanations in italics should not be visualized but give hints to the facilitator when explaining the method.*

1. Presentation of personal challenge with a specific situation by case giver

Speaking to the facilitator / trainer, the coaching group is just listening.

2. Associations by the coaching group: "This reminds me of...when I hear this, I think, I feel like..."

Shows the case giver that he/she is not alone, the problem is expanded to a larger group of people giving a feeling of sharing. There should be no discussion among the coaching group, just sharing similar experiences.

3. Asking clarification questions by the coaching group

No discussion with the case giver, but making the case more clear.

4. Mirroring by the coaching group a: "I as *'case giver'* in this situation feel, think…"

Mirroring by the coaching group b: "I as a person also involved in the situation (team member, director, friend, other conflict party…) feel, think..."

Changing perspective, allowing the case giver to hear his/her own voice and the 'other voices' from those affected by the case.

5. Feedback by case giver: "This is correct, this is new and interesting to me, this is different from my situation..."

Case giver shares his/her reactions and thus appreciates the contributions of the coaching group, shares how they function as a resource.

6. Collections of creative future ideas and solutions by the coaching group.

Facilitator writes down each idea without censorship. Everybody can contribute ideas, also the facilitator and those observing the case beyond the coaching group.

7. Feedback on the ideas by case giver: "This is useful, this I tried already, this is not something I will do..."

Facilitator marks with green those ideas which are useful and in this ways highlights new ways to go about with the personal challenge in the future.

E Quality background: Democratic Evaluation

1. Quality – standards and dilemmas

There are many different understandings and also misunderstandings as to what a training to argue with and against anti-democratic slogans could be. An international conference had assembled representatives of different approaches and projects in this context. In a participatory process the question of 'standardization' in general and quality criteria in particular was discussed (Boeser / Wenzel 2019). Additionally practice authors, scholars and institutions from the field of civic education were interviewed and added their insights to professionalizing civic education in this field. The main results are presented here – they are guidelines for our training approach.

The term "quality standards" was the starting point for dealing with the diverse developments in argumentation training. This immediately gives rise to a fundamental debate that goes hand in hand with any professionalization, especially in the field of education: To what extent does standardization lead to *standardization* that no longer does justice to the necessity of process and subject orientation in political education? Do narrow standards not actually exclude what political education stands for: the ever-changing approach to target groups, situations and changing social demands? This was also formulated in the interviews with developers, clients and authors:

On the other hand, however, might the diversity of different offers, approaches and methodological elements lead to *arbitrariness*, watering down the core of "argumentation training against pub talk"? Might the offers be used in such an arbitrary way that they lose the claim of political education itself? Isn't there a need for a certain "security of expectation" to ensure a similar core for clients and participants, especially with regard to the title of the training?

So what is the right way to go about professionalizing?

Perhaps asking what the 'right way' is is a mistake in itself. Klaus-Peter Hufer states: "A democratic culture also includes disputatiousness and a willingness to engage in conflict". If this is also to apply to the professionalization of argumentation training, it is less about the right path and more about exploring areas of tension and narrowing down the field in a way that allows for diversity on the one hand, but can formulate common standards on the other. Becoming aware of these areas of tension and reflecting on them can lead to a professional attitude that is aware of the dilemma of one's own position while at the same time being open to new impulses.

Thus it becomes clear that the quality discussion, on the one hand, runs the risk of absolutizing individual values such as diversity and standardization and arguing about them, but on the other hand, it offers the opportunity to reflect on productive areas of tension and to recognize the dilemma. And that is also a contribution to a democratic discourse culture.

There are also indissoluble areas of tension for the argumentation training itself: on the one hand, we represent a normative claim 'against' a form of discourse that is becoming absolute; on the other hand, we must not ourselves appear with the same moral arrogance and know-it-all attitude that we accuse those who express anti-democratic slogans. This also appeared again and again in the

research and in the interviews. This concerns a core element of democracy itself: how is freedom granted to those who express opinions that we do not like, without democracy itself being eroded? Therefore also the training process itself must reflect this tension and productively deal with it. It is not training 'about' anti-democratic slogans, but experiencing a collective process in a protected space in which new ways of living together can be explored.

2. Indicators of success

The general attitude of the training approach dealing with anti-democratic slogans boils down to three aspects which were put together as a core and are supported by citations from the interviews in the field:

1. Recognition of diversity

It is recognized that allowing diversity – even unpleasant diversity – is part of the essence of democracy and one of its protective measures.

2. Necessity of critical self-reflection

The challenge of dealing with diversity arises for everyone and is always critically reflected upon. This applies in particular to trainers, who responsibility to repeatedly question their own positions and values in order to maintain an equal footing in training.

3. Protection of democratic standards

The existing fundamental rights and the foundation of human rights are to be respected and defended in the sense of radical democracy.

From the international discussion process and against the backdrop of existing programs in partner countries the following seven objectives seem fitting for to support these indicators in trainings.

1. "Fostering democracy in Europe" creates spaces for encounters and understanding that enable criticism of statements on the one hand and appreciation of people on the other.
2. Approaching each other with understanding is a prerequisite for a productive engagement with problematic statements. Raising awareness of the background of such statements and their 'why' is crucial in order to engage in a debate that takes people seriously but does not leave positions unquestioned.
3. The training raises awareness of political attitudes, beliefs, people and world views of oneself and others in order to be able to take a reasoned position.
4. The trainings thus enable a discussion about how we want to live together in a democracy

now and in the future. Appreciative debate as a form of joint learning makes it possible to find common answers and common solutions.

5. The workshops offer the opportunity to strengthen one's own political judgment and ability to act, as well as that of one's counterpart. The discussions and role-playing games in the training offer an appreciative dialogue that sensitizes participants to discrimination, hatred, exclusion, simplistic thinking and generalizations, and provides them with options for action.
6. The trainings irritate those 'convinced of the good' are repeatedly and productively with regard to their own blind spots and prejudices and encouraged to engage in self-reflection
7. Civil courage is promoted by reflecting communication strategies and techniques. These strategies and techniques, as well as an explicit promotion of awareness of the inherent dilemmas of democracy, facilitate recognition of and dialogue about the complexity of different values and attitudes.

Human rights and democracy are the basis of the workshops. This foundation of values strengthens the participants in their political involvement. Raising awareness of structural discrimination is just as important as actively involving and including those affected by discrimination in the seminar settings. In addition to the importance of safe spaces for practicing civil courage, there are also formats that deliberately enable discourse between dissenters in a setting of political education. Impulses for change are set in the sense of emancipatory educational work, which enables people to raise their own voices against restriction and devaluation. This also offers the chance to free oneself from one's own limiting ways of thinking and prejudices.

At the same time it is important to keep in mind the limits of a training concerning anti-democratic slogans: as the analyses of part A and B of this volume have shown, deep historical, structural and also institutional discrimination is at the core of anti-democratic slogans. A training can be an eye-opener and encourage discourse in this context. But is will not be able to address these structural phenomena itself.

3. Evaluation as a democratic impulse

"Now evaluation too - as if we didn't have enough work already!"

Many people are familiar with this impression of an additional burden and the associated feeling of having to justify themselves in front of an externally determined yardstick. Control over one's own work seems to be in danger, an external 'judge' to scrutinize and question one's own actions, which are complex and often contradictory, especially in the intercultural field, and to point out deficits without knowing the efforts of everyday life.

At the same time, evaluation as self-evaluation is known from smaller surveys, surveys on the satisfaction of target groups and individual interviews - the starting point here is familiar methods. This is often an attempt to meet a supposedly classic claim of 'scientificity', which is associated with neutrality and objectivity - and at the same time there is an uneasy feeling as to whether the data collected is comprehensive enough, whether one's own conclusions are appropriate and whether

the statements are not (beautifully) colored by a pleasant atmosphere.

Evaluation is experienced as a field of tension between everyday pragmatism and threat. How can evaluation a motivating component of one's own projects and processes? How can evaluation make a constructive contribution to one's own practical actions in the context of interculturality, migration and discrimination structures? How can evaluation see itself as a democratic negotiation process? What would a 'democratic evaluation' be and what is its basic attitude beyond concrete methods? Kenneth Howe states it like that: "Educational research methodology cannot be evaluated apart from its relationship to democratic aims." (Howe 2003, p.11)

The basis for this are the **four basic principles of democratic evaluation**

1. Appreciation - Democratic evaluation focuses on the resources and potential of one's own work. The past-oriented basic question "What has gone wrong so far?" becomes a future-oriented basic question: "What helps and benefits us in shaping the future?" It is also important to create an appreciative framework for surveys and data collection.

2. Participation - A participatory evaluation departs from a supposedly 'neutral' external perspective and opens up to the perspectives of those target groups that were previously excluded from such processes.

They are transformed from 'data providers' into equal participants in the entire evaluation process. The assessment of the results of an evaluation thus also becomes an intercultural negotiation process.

3. Closeness to everyday life - evaluation processes are designed to be more target group-oriented. An interactive workshop character and illustrative, narrative and symbolizing elements can enable a new understanding of 'data collection'. This also means that an evaluation process always includes elements of joint reflection on evaluation itself.

4. Structural change - In the context of discrimination structures, democratic evaluation means a clear political positioning which, as a conscious intervention, also strengthens the voices and positions of those who have previously been excluded from discourse at a societal level. Perspectives of the majority society that define themselves as 'normal' are more likely to be questioned in the evaluation process than those that were previously invisible per se.

Overall, a long-term and broad establishment of a *culture of democratic evaluation* is required in order to anchor the principles described above as a basic organizational attitude. Sometimes, however, smaller steps that go hand in hand with the basic attitude described are initially helpful and sensible.

4. Seven steps of democratic evaluation

In the following, a process-oriented methodological approach to democratic evaluation is outlined in seven steps.

The procedure is based on the three-step approach of 'inclusion, dialogue and negotiation' (House et al. 2000) on the one hand and the organizational development model of 'appreciative inquiry' (Cooperrider et al. 2008) on the other. It becomes clear that democratic evaluation is fed by interdisciplinary approaches to evaluation research and action-oriented approaches to change.

The focus is here on 'formative evaluation', i.e. the ongoing reflection of one's own actions in order to improve them in a future-oriented way. It is not about a recipe book of the best methods, but about embedding them in an overall understanding of evaluation that is helpful and motivating for all those involved - then even well-known and proven methods will bring more results.

First of all, an overview of such an evaluation process presents key questions that can help an evaluation team to gain an orientation about the project at the beginning. In the sense of a In a 'culture of evaluation', it is important start with smaller initial steps from the overall process and then gradually build on positive experiences of this kind to develop a more comprehensive evaluation.

Inclusion: Clarification of goals

1. Initial context and initial question

Who brought evaluation into play?

What are the possible intentions behind this? Who has to deal with it?

2. Involvement of stakeholders. Definition of the evaluation topic

Who should support and implement the democratic evaluation process?

Who is included, who is (deliberately) excluded? What specifically is to be investigated?

Which associations and symbols do we associate with evaluation?

Which goals and success criteria have we already formulated?

3. Stakeholder workshop:

Evaluation design from different perspectives

What do we actually mean by success?

What is our common evaluation question?

What criteria, indicators and methods do we want to use?

Dialog - Joint surveys

4. Survey of existing strengths, resources and visions

What is already working within our project? What motivates us to act professionally?

What are the key factors for our success?

How can we imagine a comprehensive realization of success in our project?

What is the vision of an optimal future for our professional work?

How can we present the results to different stakeholders?

5. Systematization of the surveys

How can be systematize the data in a way all stakeholders see an added value?

What alternatives to written presentation can we offer?

Negotiating - Shaping the future together

6. Stakeholder workshop: Evaluation of the results

What the different perspectives on the results? Which success factors of our actions are recognizable?

What 'provocative statements about the future' can be derived from this? What benefits do we have for our professional work?

What specific actions do we intend to take?

7. Preparation of an evaluation report

What added value do we recognize in the interactive evaluation process?

What have we learned from the evaluation process?

What is the greatest benefit of the investigation for our future?

How can we present this to others?

1. Initial context and initial question/assignment

Evaluation rarely begins as a matter of course, such as an annual retreat or a recurring team meeting. On the positive side, evaluation is demanded and initiated in order to make quality visible and initiate change.

On the negative side, evaluation is instrumentalized in order to legitimize and scientifically substantiate changes that have already been established. All of this needs to be made explicit and it needs to be clarified to what extent the evaluation impetus should be taken up and for whom it is relevant. Is it about legitimizing the work externally, which intrinsically does not really interest those involved in the organization? Is it about securing jobs?

Is it about proving deficits? Is it about the open motivation to learn new things about oneself and

one's own work? Do the participants want to engage in a democratic process of reflection?

The very beginning of an evaluation determines acceptance of or resistance to such a project and requires precise planning. In this step, those who wish to examine their professional actions are brought together. This can a coordination team or a college, a specialist department, a pool of trainers and, above all, people who are affected by the evaluation.

At this point, it should also be considered whether, in the context of (power) hierarchies, it makes sense and possible to design and moderate the process oneself in the sense of a self-evaluation, or whether external moderation in the sense of an external evaluation seems more helpful.

2. Involvement of stakeholders

At this point, consideration should be given to who the 'stakeholders' - i.e. those affected by or involved in the evaluation - are. All these people have a right to be involved in the process. The beginning is very sensitive, especially in the intercultural field. Care must be taken from the outset to proactively those who not in high hierarchical positions in the organization, or even those from the migration context who have no secure organizational connection. Their initial impressions of the evaluation project, their concerns and recommendations are decisive for subsequent acceptance in the wider context. Especially those who have experienced discrimination, who are systemically excluded from a project and/or those who actively criticize a project should be personally invited to contribute their perspective. Once an appropriate representative stakeholder team has been identified, it should jointly consider which other stakeholders there are - but also who needs to be excluded from the further evaluation process for resource or strategic reasons. These decisions should be presented transparently in a subsequent evaluation report.

In preparation, the topic of the evaluation is also defined, the wording of which must be of particular relevance to the group in question. Often at the beginning of an evaluation, for example, from the perspective of the donors the topic of 'efficiency' is leading. In the stakeholder group, it can become clear that this is not a priority for many others.

The topic is highly relevant and the is to find a common thread for the evaluation that is significant for all or most people. In addition, evaluations often tend to topics that very general, comprehensive and, in their associated high demands, can hardly be realized with existing resources. A clearly defined and concrete topic that can be easily integrated into the organization's own work and managed with the available resources is a basic prerequisite for the further process. The choice of evaluation topic in a democratic evaluation should also avoid 'one-way thinking', which assumes that one side (target group) provides data to another side (provider).

3. Stakeholder workshop

As a methodical approach, 'stakeholder workshops' are recommended, in which a group of 5-10 important participants use interactive methods to deal with the implementation of the evaluation. They deal with the images in their heads and tacit assumptions regarding evaluation and reflect on these together in order to develop a motivating start. Symbols, constellations and scenes can be used here. The question of the success of one's own actions is addressed from the different perspectives and the evaluation question is specified together.

This step focuses on differences in the assessment of success within the stakeholders and can already be a very intensive clarification process, but it is a fundamental prerequisite for enabling assessments of collected data that are supported by everyone and for drawing action-relevant consequences later on. The stakeholder group is responsible for the further evaluation process and meets at key turning points to clarify the next steps. In an interactive workshop setting, it jointly defines key criteria that are important with regard to the evaluation question, defines success indicators in each case and only then considers which known or new evaluation methods would be useful for implementation. It is agreed which stakeholder groups are to be surveyed and to what extent

4. Survey of existing strengths, resources and visions

In this first step, we work out when the stakeholder groups to be surveyed felt lively and engaged in their work context, when they were motivated in their professional actions and felt a lot of energy. Value-oriented and personal 'appreciative interviews' have proven their worth as a methodological element, which allow an everyday-oriented and narrative exchange with regard to the evaluation question. Ideally, this type of data collection also takes place in a face-to-face workshop with a diverse group of participants in order to enable the highest possible level of person-centeredness and interaction. The interviews are developed together with the stakeholder group based on the evaluation topic. The special focus during these interviews is placed on the perception of the positive. The questions contain appreciative, affirmative and encouraging elements.

Personal successes and strengths are discussed, and situations and events in the work context are seen in a different light. The best stories, metaphors and concrete experiences are then presented in small groups and jointly condensed into values and success factors that show how the work within the relevant project can be based on consensus. Any differences and conflicts that arise should be named and explicitly recorded - they become relevant when interpreting and evaluating data. In this step, stories, experiences and emotions are collected and condensed, which are visualized or expressed and documented together.

By integrating the data with regard to different values, a common basis is created that is viable for everyone. This is a process in which the initial focus is not on objectifiable facts or given data, but on the people interviewed and their concrete experiences and abilities that guide their actions. These are the driving force behind the evaluation, providing motivation and forming a basis for further implementation of the results.

On the foundation of the past, which is reflected in the stories heard, visions of the future are created, which in their formulation are defined as the present. These visions are based on the values of the present and thus remain rooted in reality. They are quasi extensions of the success factors. The visions that are formulated as the present can refer to immediate changes or to the next five to 25 years. Visioning is a creative and aesthetic process in which various methods such as painting, collages, theater, newspaper articles or letters are used.

While in the conventional approach visions are often suppressed by the problem orientation or get lost in the utopian, here the focus is very consciously on creative and aesthetic elements that promote imagination and can therefore also show new and sometimes unusual paths that may be feasible. At this point, democratic evaluation becomes a direct driver of change in the present by

creating anchors for the future, even during data collection.

This is experienced as a very motivating process, as the dialogical principle of implementing the evaluation represents an immediate added value.

The survey procedure presented here attempts to remain consistently participatory, appreciative and close to everyday life. Of course, classic elements of a questionnaire or individual interviews can always be chosen - the decisive factor is that these methods are embedded in the process described here and anchored in such a way that they are helpful for the participants and are not experienced as impenetrable objects.

5. Systematization of the surveys

The main persons responsible for the evaluation bring the visualized results of the surveys into a systematic context. Care should be taken to ensure that this condensation is helpful for the various people involved in the evaluation. Beyond written summaries, creative or artistic elements can also be useful, depending on the field of work, to draw a lively and differentiated qualitative picture of what is being surveyed. It becomes clear here that democratic evaluation has a fundamentally different understanding of 'data' than a quantifying, fact-based approach. It is less about the 'truth' of what has been collected and more about presenting the benefits for the project as a whole. It is important to systematize data in such a way that it has a benefit for the various stakeholders: those involved in the project, those affected by it and also critics of the project. In concrete terms, benefit means: The data speaks to me because I myself was involved in the development of the issues - always with points of friction, differences and conflicting challenges from the different perspectives, of course.

6. Stakeholder workshop: Evaluation of the results

The stakeholder group that met at the beginning of the process comes together again for a workshop and reviews the results together. Evaluation results never speak for themselves, especially from a democratic perspective; here, the different perspectives on the same results show the different assessments, weightings of individual results and ambiguities that exist. First of all, 'success factors', i.e. the potential of one's own work with regard to the evaluation question, are jointly developed from the results. They form guidelines that jointly condense the motivating aspects of one's own work. From these, 'provocative statements about the future' are derived that are useful for the participants' own work.

As in the survey itself, the aim is to translate a motivating idea for the future and its design into concrete ideas for action. The stakeholder group consistently focuses on what the democratic evaluation reveals as added value for its own everyday actions and agrees on implementation measures.

7. Preparation of an evaluation report

The entire evaluation process should documented in as much detail as possible. Finally, an evaluation report is prepared in written form by a core team of those involved and affected. The main aim of an evaluation report is to promote the use, benefits and thus the implementation of the

evaluation results. A report is not an objective representation of a scientific truth, but the product of the networking of different perspectives on one's own professional actions and the presentation of possibilities for optimization. It therefore also contains a presentation of the interactive evaluation process and its added value, ideally working with visual elements and quotations that create a vivid impression of what happened during the evaluation as a process. The contents of the evaluation report should be reflected back to all those involved in the evaluation in the sense of a joint transparent procedure. Here, too, care should be taken in the intercultural field to do this in a form that is oriented towards the needs of those involved.

Conclusion: Democratic evaluation as an event

Quality can be measured through a joint process of democratic evaluation. However, its implementation is not limited to the technical application or adherence to certain rules. Quality manifests itself in the process of concrete design. It is therefore not available as a recipe - it is an event in the interaction of concrete contexts with institutions, programs and individuals. It therefore requires a long-term and broad establishment of a *culture of democratic evaluation* that constantly finds new points of contact, supports each other in individual projects and is thus anchored in the consciousness of society. Quality is not a thing or a stamp that can be awarded after an evaluation has been carried out, but rather a joint and constantly new democratic effort in dealing with a variety of perspectives.

Annex

Glossary of terms

Advocacy

Advocacy is a form of trying to influence political, economic or social decisions. Often groups are formed to advocate for a common cause to get public awareness, influence public opinion and also change legislation. The cause is often linked to improving the situation of weaker groups in society such as children, women, migrants or illegal workers because these groups often have difficulties in raising their voice, advocacy is an important means of many NGOs in civil society to speak on their behalf. In this way, advocacy is connected to the responsibility of speaking up against discrimination and aiming at an inclusive society. It is different from lobbying which often is connected to personal interests and has the aim to enhance privileges.

Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative Inquiry is an approach of organisational change and learning from the United States. Since the 1980s, it is used globally in companies, administrations, schools and social institutions. It is based on two basic assumptions: a. Each human being, each team and each organisation has great potential. This potential may be visible or may need to be unlocked. Either way, the potential is utilised to strengthen positive change. b. Individuals and collectives develop in the direction of their focus: If they analyse deficits and mistakes, frustration and mistrust may result. If they shift their focus onto motivation and talents, then inspiration and creative new visions may follow. Appreciative Inquiry is not only a methodology, but also an attitude. This is a very important element for Civic Education: The aim democracy can only be reached if trainers and participants believe in what they have already achieved, what motivates them and what gives them the energy to contribute to a constructive future together.

Attitude

In the field of training, a lot of different methods, activities and materials are being used. Often,they are referred to as ‘tool-boxes’ which can improve facilitating and learning. Tools can be used in different ways: carefully or destructively, sharing them or keeping them alone, using them only when necessary or applying them in each moment. This shows that tools are connected to something else: The attitude of the role of what it means to be a trainer, of how a trainer connects to participants as human beings is taking centre stage. This attitude is reflected in a number of values that guide the intersubjective process of teaching and learning. A good attitude as a trainer requires experience, ongoing reflection of one’s personality and the ability to connect one’s professional role with the values of one’s own daily life.

Capitalism

As an economic system, capitalism is based on private ownership of property and capital; inherently

it seeks to maximize profit and therefore need ongoing economic growth. This structure leads to a situation of competition between companies, states and individuals. This competition can be regulated in order to guarantee that social equality is guaranteed, or it can be left to the free market to regulate itself. Capitalism has deep structural effects on how we live together. Its predominance leads to an economization of fields like culture, religion, care and individual relationships. As it focuses on competition and profit, it is one of the sources of individualization and exclusionary tendencies towards those who are deemed to be weaker and cannot fully participate in economic competition.

Competence

Competence has become the recent substitute for 'knowledge' in many educational contexts. In 2005, the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development) defined key competencies for democratic societies in the 21st century, such as interaction, cooperation, managing conflicts and the ability to form life plans. Since 2006, the European Union has focused on competence as formal and non-formal learning: Competence is not input-dependent, but rather tells us how individuals can act 'autonomously and with responsibility' after a learning process. Thus it puts a lot of trust into the individual and collective freedom of action.

Conflict and Dilemma

In a diverse society, conflicts are the norm. They arise when different traditions, norms and values clash in situations in which decisions have to be made. Very often, different parties feel in conflicts that they are 'right' and the others are 'wrong'. Conflicts can escalate up to a level of mutual destruction. At the same time, conflicts can be good moments for learning in Civic Education: Mutual acknowledgment of different perspectives on life and of different biographical experiences can lead to acceptance of the other.

If this is achieved, conflicts are often seen as dilemmas that will not go away by arguments or fighting. Dilemmas in a diverse society show that decisions have to be balanced between different equally acceptable options. This makes participation necessary and at the same time shows why taking (political) decisions is a very difficult task.

Culture

Culture can be understood in two fundamentally different ways. First, it may be perceived as a static and descriptive concept that understands a person's cultural imprint as fixed, and such imprint determines their actions. In this way, ethnic and national cultures are often described – especially when they defend themselves against external influences or even destruction. This contrasts with an understanding that sees culture as a complex, socially created ('constructed') and dynamic phenomenon. Cultural imprints can originate from various sources, including belonging to an organisational culture (e.g. profit/non-profit/state, small/large company), a professional culture (e.g. technology, IT, social pedagogy) or ethnic cultures. This concept of culture accepts diversity and mixing of cultures as essential for a modern society.

Democracy

Democracy is a big and multi-facetted term. For most people, it is a form of government with shared powers and a human rights-based constitution. In addition, democracy is the acknowledgment that democracy is a continuous process that is never finished and has to always respond to new challenges. Democracy is the acknowledgment that elections can be lost and that opposition is an important and integral part of democracy. This also means that government decisions can be generally revised when opposition comes to power. To be able to 'live' democracy in the political sphere, it needs a strong frame of unconditional human rights, thus preventing the destruction of democracy by those who consider democracy as a threat.

This is why any healthy democracy needs solid structures on inclusive governance structures so that all ethnic and religious communities feel recognised and acknowledged, and can participate in any process of interaction and decision-taking.

Diversity

Diversity refers to differences between individuals and groups in a society. These can be based on different features like ethnic origin, age, gender, religion, physical abilities, mental health or socioeconomic background. Many of these differences are not 'neutral' in the sense of different options; instead, they connect with experiences of privilege or discrimination in a society. Accepting diversity connects to an open and dynamic understanding of culture and also advocacy for those who are weaker. Opposed to this, representatives of cultural assimilation want to reduce diversity in the name of a fixed and static understanding of culture.

Discrimination

Discrimination is the unjust or prejudicial treatment of individuals or groups based on certain characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or socio-economic status. It involves actions, policies, or behaviors that create disadvantages for some while favoring others, often leading to inequality and exclusion. Discrimination can occur at individual, institutional, or systemic levels. Discrimination often interconnectedto power inequality – it arises from and perpetuates imbalances in power. Discrimination often reflects and enforces existing power structures, privileging dominant groups while marginalizing others.

Emotion vs. Feeling

Emotions are universal human sensations. Emotions like anger, loneliness, fear and love can be shared universally and are therefore important in the context of learning: They build bridges between people and can anchor learning content far better than analytical knowledge. Interactive and experience-based learning fosters encounters among students who perceive each other as human beings with their different emotions, and this, in turn, will lead to mutual empathy. Reflecting on one's emotions is an important part of a learning process in order to distinguish them from feelings. which are more subjective and can be biased.

Feelings are an individual framing and rating of emotions. In other words, they are more subjective and possibly biased, compared to emotions. One example: The emotion of fear when migrants enter a society may be framed by feelings of distrust and disrespect. For learning processes, it is important to reflect on personal feelings – especially those that go against others – to come to the underlying emotions and make those the basis for mutual understanding.

Governance

Governance is the summary of institutions, laws and processes of a group, an institution or a country. Smaller groups often use informal facilitatorship structures for their governance, while larger bodies need formalised routines in order to guarantee that interactions, relationships and power dynamics are stabilised in reliable ways. The government of a country is mostly responsible for 'good governance' that pays respect to routines. At the same time, the government needs to be open for improvement when imbalances, discrimination or informal 'norms' like corruption become visible. Governance reminds us that democracy is not only a formal or technical process but needs to be filled with trust – trust in the functioning of institutions and the responsibility for the common good.

Human Rights

"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights." Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1949 was born of the devastating experience of the Second World War. This declaration is a human-made framework of orientation for dealing with a diversity of values and providing a frame based on human dignity. Over time, more UN documents on socio- economic and cultural rights, the rights of children and the rights of migrant workers have been drafted to supplement the original declaration and to patch its deficits.

In the Islamic world, there has been criticism that this declaration is based on a Western concept of individualism, separating human beings from a collective and also transcendental order. As a result, the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam (CDHRI), a declaration of the member states of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, was adopted in Cairo in 1990. In addition, the Arab Charter on Human Rights was adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States in 2004, and ratified by Iraq in 2013. These Arab conventions have in turn been criticised for making one specific religion as the source of human rights, and for not fully respecting the equality of men and women.

Integration / Inclusion

Inclusion is a recent term being used intensely since the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2006. The UN definition of 'disability' goes far beyond a classical understanding of the term: "Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices, and independence of persons." This is a clear shift in responsibility – away from the individual, towards the need for a framework of institutions, facilities and processes which are designed in such a way that each human being can participate equally at the same level.

In the context of democracy, integration means bringing people of diverse ethnic, religious and social backgrounds together, to form a common identity. Often, this identity is pre-defined by those who historically hold a quantitative or qualitative majority. This imbalance may convert integration into an

assimilation of minorities, causing protest and conflicts.

Irritation

Irritation is an unsettling experience, and this is why it might be rejected. In a different way of looking at it, irritation is connected to a learning process that leads to autonomy and responsibility. The so-called 'irritation pedagogy' considers learning as leaving one's comfort zone and exploring new perspectives and options for action. In the field of Civic Education, irritation is important, as it allows us to connect our own perspective empathetically to that of other members of society – especially those with less privileges or experience of discrimination.

Irritation is also a means to prevent students from dividing the world into 'right' and 'wrong' or 'good' and 'bad'. Irritation leads to the experience that in society there are many value dilemmas which will not be solved by 'better arguments'; instead, dilemmas will be solved by responsible citizens who are willing to face them and who are willing to come to decisions which are helpful for all.

Knowledge

Knowledge is based on facts, on what is seen as right or wrong. Ratings of which knowledge is good and which is bad also depends on collective decisions and changes over time. Therefore knowledge may be perceived differently over time. Knowledge is often used as a source of external input in schools or universities that provides orientation and stability for teachers and learners. Its downside is that it prevents critical and creative thinking – for this we need competence, i.e. a shift of focus onto the outcome of the process of learning itself.

Migration

The movement of people from one location to another, either within a country (internal migration) or across borders (international migration), often for reasons such as economic opportunities, conflict, education, or environmental changes. In civic education, migration is studied to understand its causes, impacts, and the rights and responsibilities of migrants, promoting empathy, inclusion, and discussions about global justice and human rights. Capitalism both drives and shapes migration through its demand for labor, its creation of economic disparities, and its influence on migration policies, while migrants play a crucial role in sustaining capitalist economies.

Othering

Othering is a process in which the identity of an individual or a group is strengthened by labelling others as inferior, criminal or corrupt. This labelling may be done among ethnic backgrounds and thus have racist connotations; it may be based on gender, excluding women as important contributors to society; it may be based on wealth, health or political opinion. This means, othering does not only mean the acknowledgment of difference, it rather is the negation of others having an equal voice as subjects with the same right to participation. The 'other' is often objectified as an enemy that needs to be fought against.

Populists and authoritarian regimes use the concept of othering in combination with stirring negative feelings against ethnically other groups, foreign influence on the nation and also 'corrupt elites' which need to be substituted. Othering prevents a society from seeing diversity as a resource for living together and creatively developing a country. Othering is based on a logic of 'we versus them', a duality without further options.

Participation

Participation has different levels. Participation starts with being informed and being heard on certain issues. Stronger forms of participation allow for electing different options or even cooperating in decisions. Full-scale participation allows for an involvement already into planning processes and taking shared ownership of social processes and decisions. Participation is important when wanting to achieve acceptance of and identification with democracy. In each case it should be decided which level makes sense, balancing long processes with pragmatic need for quicker action. Important questions are to be discussed in the context of democracy:

- Who should be excluded from participation (non-citizens, people in prison, mentally ill, people under x years, etc.)?
- Which barriers are existing for certain groups that wish to participate, who is politically excluded?
- How can hindering frame conditions such as security concerns and corruption be overcome to guarantee participation for those who want it?
- How many people can actively refuse participation without endangering the entire concept od democracy?

Power

Often power is seen as a negative concept, but power is not necessarily repressive, prohibitive, or exclusionary (although it can be all of these things): Power can also be positive. The French philosopher Michel Foucault states: "We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it 'excludes', it 'represses', it 'censors', it 'abstracts', it 'masks', it 'conceals'. In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production" (Foucault 1997, p. 194). So power can be used in a more positive sense, referring to the power to bring about a desired change in personal life or in the structures surrounding us.

Privilege

Privileges refer to unearned advantages, rights, or benefits granted to individuals or groups based on certain characteristics, such as race, gender, class, nationality, sexual orientation, or ability. These advantages are often systemic, deeply embedded in societal structures, and are not universally accessible to everyone. Civic education encourages the recognition and critical examination of privileges to foster empathy, equity, and social justice. By understanding privilege, individuals can work toward dismantling systemic barriers and promoting inclusive policies.

Skills

Skills are often linked to techniques and tools. They make action possible (e.g. the techniques of being able to paint a house, to repair a car or to tailor a pair of trousers by using tools like brush, screwdriver and sewing machine. They may be located between knowledge and competence. In the context of Civic Education, the term 'civic skills' is used. Training on civic skills like communication, presentation, team leadership and project management is offered in order to help citizens put their ideas for democracy into practice. Skills have to be trained regularly and interactively applied to become effective. If applied in a technical or instrumental sense, skills stifle genuine responsibility and autonomy. This may be effectively counterbalanced by focusing on competence.

Values

Values give meaning and sense to human life. They are an inner compass for orientation and are often biographically rooted. At a very existential and universal level, the values of individual self-determination and social embeddedness are two poles which want to be balanced well. In the current understanding of Civic Education, educational institutions shift their focus away from positions, arguments and facts, to values. By taking each learner equally serious and discussing tensions and conflicts on par, values are made explicit and tangible. Working with different values at the same time means accepting that they may oppose each other and thus cause tension and dilemmas – as this is a natural part of life in a diverse society. It also means continuous work on personal attitudes and on reflecting biographical patterns.

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