What you are about to read is an introduction to what some call folk high schools, while others call it folk schools, people's colleges, residential schooling, or people's high schools. Despite the variety of names, they all refer to the special type of non-formal adult education that has its origin in Denmark in the mid-1800s with the educational ideas of folk high school pioneer N.F.S. Grundtvig.

Today there are about 70 independent folk high schools located all over Denmark, all with the same purpose: to provide life enlightenment, public enlightenment and democratic education. Or in other words, the folk high schools aim at an education that enables the individual not just to make a living, but to live a life.

Folk high schools are residential schools for everybody who is 17½ years or older – there is no upper age limit. You don't need specific qualifications to attend a folk high school. There is no fixed curriculum, no exams and no grades. Students can freely choose from a wide variety of different subjects and classes. In this way, they can broadly challenge themselves in a supportive environment thus clarifying important personal questions such as: What am I good at? What makes me happy? What could be my future path in life? The teaching is based on positive motivation, dialogue and the equal and friendly relations between students and teachers.

Over the past years an average of 40,000 people have attended a folk high school in courses of different lengths every year in Denmark.

In this brochure we will be talking mainly about the folk high school tradition in Denmark, and about modern-day Danish folk high schools. But we also hope to introduce the reader to folk high schools in other countries around the world that have adopted the Danish model and the educational ideas that made the folk high school movement in Denmark and the educational reform that prompted the growth and development of folk high schools in Denmark.

Chapter 1 introduces the folk high school today and the pedagogical ideas that make the folk high school a unique educational environment.

Chapter 2 sketches out the educational roots and ideas of the founding father N.F.S. Grundtvig and the historical context that prompted the folk high school movement in the first place.

Chapter 3 outlines the legal and organizational framework of folk high schools in Denmark.

Chapter 4 addresses the justification of folk high schools as non-formal adult education, and the impact they have.

Chapter 5 offers an insight into the global footprints of the folk high school idea all around the globe.

Happy reading.
THE DENISH FOLK HIGH SCHOOL

Praxis and pedagogy

Chapter 1

\[ \text{EXAMPLE: WEEKLY SCHEDULE} \]

A TYPICAL WEEK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAY</th>
<th>Example Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MONDAY</td>
<td>Cooking class, dance class, yoga class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TUESDAY</td>
<td>Discussion on current events, evening meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEDNESDAY</td>
<td>Class on European politics, cultural event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THURSDAY</td>
<td>Class on democracy, political café</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRIDAY</td>
<td>Bicycle tour, social event, dinner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SATURDAY</td>
<td>Cleaning day, common assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUNDAY</td>
<td>Cleaning day, morning meeting, common assembly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The folk high schools are homes for a pedagogical practice where teaching, togetherness, and everyday life all thrive. A common educational life, where teaching, togetherness, and everyday life all thrive, is the purpose of the folk high school.

The teachers teach what they want, and according to the law, they can freely choose how to do it. The folk high schools are based on the human environment. The student makes a deliberate choice picking a subject or a good mark, but out of pure interest and joy. There is no such thing as a typical day or week, as each school is unique. There is no fixed curriculum, grades, or exams. The folk high schools are free to design their educational practice according to the law. It is also stated in the parliament election law that, in order to pursue the main aim, there is no such thing as a typical day or week.

The folk high schools are based on the human environment. Even though these activities do not count as formal teaching degree, but most are academics or practitioners who are passionate about and engaged students creates a unique educational environment.

The folk high schools are free to design their educational practice according to the law. It is also stated in the parliament election law that, in order to pursue the main aim, there is no such thing as a typical day or week. Therefore, a very distinctive feature of folk high schools is their freedom. There are no fixed curricula, and to plan the content of courses and activities is to make the subject relevant for the students, or a good mark, but out of pure interest and joy. There is no such thing as a typical day or week, as each school is unique.

The folk high schools are based on the human environment. Even though these activities do not count as formal teaching degree, but most are academics or practitioners who are passionate about and engaged students creates a unique educational environment.
THE DANISH FOLK HIGH SCHOOL

LIVING AND LEARNING TOGETHER

A pivotal part of the folk high school idea is the term “fellowship” or “togetherness”. By law the folk high school must provide both teaching and fellowship – the two are equated. As folk high schools are boarding schools, the students live together, attend classes together, dine together, clean together, create events and projects together, and are roommates. They experience friendships, romances and break-ups, parties and midnight discussions. Spending time at a folk high school challenges not only the mind, but also social and emotional skills of the students.

Also, teachers and students spend time together outside of classes doing anything from cooking to drinking tea to playing ping-pong. En route they talk about anything and everything, all benefiting from this reciprocal and equal relationship and learning from each other as equals. Some of the teachers live on school grounds, making use of the tied accommodations provided by the school. Generally, students and teachers develop a close relationship during a folk high school semester. In that way teaching and togetherness are intertwined.

Still inspired by Grundtvig’s ideas, teaching at folk high schools is based on the living word and the living interaction. The educational practice, the pedagogically planned togetherness outside of class, the equal, informal relationship between teachers and students and the boarding school environment all helps to generate the atmosphere and the educational life so distinctive of the folk high school.

"Personally, I have learned the most from my teacher in Journalism. Not because I have taken notes on everything he said, or because I listened extra carefully. I learned a lot from his teaching, but just as much from the personal conversations we shared outside of class. He paid attention to me, my opinion mattered, he wanted to discuss things with me. That has been really cool, and I have learned a great deal from that. One of the places where it occurred most often was around the ping-pong table. At least a few times a week we had intense duels that produced sweat, yelling and discussions. And there was something particularly special about the discussions. We talked about the most important news of the week, discussed ethical press rules, assessed the specific situations that he, or I, had been in, and talked about linguistic tools. If I expressed myself inaccurately, or if I said something decidedly wrong, he caught me out immediately. I always had to be sharp – at the table, as well as verbally. It was a brilliant exercise of the power of concentration and one of the most fun and rewarding learning situations I have ever experienced."

Thomas, folk high school student
This alienation.

discovered his independence, his freedom – and

swept Europe in the 18th and 19th century. Man

and state schools function as complementary

ners, not competitors. To this day, free schools

education came to be regarded as equal part

This emphasis on understanding and acceptance

underlying basis. Furthermore, if democracy

trials and tribulations of earthly existence, but on the

view on Christianity and human existence. It ought to be lifelong.

er and to understand and accept other ways of

is to work, Grundtvig argued, people had to

and to deploy their financial resources as

The 1848-50 war between Denmark and

Danish legislation prescribes compulsory edu-

reduction of 40 % of Denmark's area – and

In the days of the first Danish constitution also

Danish folk high school originates from and is

The core idea and original purpose of the

democracy and developing the Danish educational system as a constitution (in 1849), and by establishing a

This means that any parent has the right of

Danish folk high school being among the most signifi-

canada, educational and cultural development.

The core idea and original purpose of the

At the same time, if all people should take part

embrace life on earth to its fullest. This change

their superiors. Everybody belonged to a family

The free schools in Denmark include:

Before Denmark adopted a democratic consti-

Danish national consciousness. He headed

Although the fairytale writer H.C. Andersen

Danish schools still today.

Danish legislation prescribes compulsory edu-

Danish folk high school pioneer N.S.F. Grundtvig lays a foundation

One of the major turning points for Grundtvig

Throughout his life, Grundtvig changed his

embrace life on earth to its fullest. This change

Christianity to be to release people from the trials

entirely. He no longer saw the task of Chris-

The 1850s was Denmark's densest period and

Danish folk high school (17,5 ->)

The educational practice at most Danish folk

The core idea and original purpose of the

The independent A

moral function and comprehensive

and the students, which was very unlike his

opinion, those schools taught children primar-

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The Danish Folk High School

Central Educational Concepts

Even though Grundtvig never practiced his own ideas, he was the ideological father of the folk high school. His educational ideas have been practiced through time and evolved by a number of educationists, e.g. Christen Kold (1816-1870).

The following concepts reflect essential aspects of Grundtvig's educational ideas:

Teaching must be life enlightening

The whole intention of teaching is to make the students aware of what the meaning of their lives is. Through enlightenment of the individual, the mystery of human life will slowly be solved, Grundtvig said. School is both enlightening and enlivening; learning is also learning to live and to love.

Teaching must be people's enlightenment.

The educational aim of the folk high school is not solely for the individual benefit, but also learning to be part of something bigger – to be part of society. As Grundtvig framed it: education of the people, by the people and for the people.

Teaching must aim at educating the whole human

In Grundtvig's time, classes were characterized by rote learning. Students had to learn things by heart and repeat them word by word in front of the teacher. This method, along with the curriculum- and exam-focused teaching, only took the intellect into account. Grundtvig wanted to create a school that would attach as much importance to imagination and emotions as to the intellect. One that would attach importance both to the body and the spirit.

The school has to enlighten and enliven

The school must, of course, provide knowledge and skills, but this must be done in a way so that students are enlivened. To Grundtvig this meant that the students had to enjoy their lives in the present and in that way find the courage to change what has to be changed. Grundtvig also said: in order to learn anything about something, one has to first love it. By relating the education to the student's own life, the student would naturally develop interest and passion for the matter.

Teaching at a folk high school must attach importance to the living word

This literally means that dialogue must be given the highest priority. In the time of Grundtvig, and still today, books were the main tools in class. Grundtvig wanted to replace books with the spoken word and experience. Only the experienced can gain true knowledge. "Life comes before enlightenment," Grundtvig said.

The school's teaching must be historical-poetical

In short, this means that through teaching we become aware of the history we share as a people with others (the historical) and through the poetical (from poesis=to create) we animate to discover the dreams and hopes we harbor for our future lives.

Teaching must be people's unfolding

People are the people for the people and for the people. To Grundtvig, a school was a meeting place where people with other (historical) and thought-provoking experiences would gather. This school was an equal place where teachers and students would learn from each other. Teacher and student must learn from each other. They are called human.

Teaching must aim at educating the whole

The school's teaching must also be a form of culture education. Culture education can be defined as a form of education that goes beyond the standard educational system and is focused on the integration of the individual into society. It is a form of education that aims to educate the whole person, including their intellectual, emotional, and physical development. This type of education is important in today's world, where there is a growing emphasis on the importance of holistic development and the need for well-rounded individuals.
Danish Folk High School

14

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E DANISH FOLK HIGH SCHOOL

TH

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a duration of 12 weeks or more.

weeks. At least one of the courses must have

approved courses annually and the longer

course are Danish citizens. It is thus an entire

treatment, and the daily life at the school.

One school is

ly international school.

Schools must offer at least 32 w

– those schools offer short-term courses only.

A few senior folk high schools are exempted

and other public authorities.

The state requires:

A new folk high school in Denmark must live

Chapter 3

institutions, they have a close relationship to the state.

Legal and organizational

The FOLK High School

The Act on Folk High Schools

S

Regarding provisions of the special school setting through

have an average number

institutions, they have a close relationship to the state.

Student

Equal opportunity to establish a

or Japanese

The Folk High School

The Act on Folk High Schools

G

as the

Following the course

In order to gain protection of the special school setting through

itself.

For the purpose of fulfilling the Act on Folk High Schools, the

and counseling.

The schools are

students up to a certain age group.

The teaching shall be of a comprehensive

The state provides:

organic responsibility. Together with the

must be at least 17 ½ years old at the

price for the students for long

The subsidies from the state in relation to

The subsidies for the students for long

The course is

The state provides:

The budget (taxes, building maintenance, heating,

The Folk High School

The state

Danish State

The Act on Folk High Schools

Financial incentives in order to support young

Some schools are exempted from some of these

The schools receive the same amount in

The school must be open to all interested,

The Folk High School

FOLK High School

The Act on Folk High Schools

Financial incentives in order to support young

Some schools are exempted from some of these

The school must be open to all interested,

The school must be

The state provides:

The subsidies from the state in relation to

The subsidies for the students for long

The state provides:

Financial incentives in order to support young

Some schools are exempted from some of these

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The state provides:

Financial incentives in order to support young

Some schools are exempted from some of these

The school must be open to all interested,

The school must be
The Danish folk high schools are organized by an association known as "FFD", seated in Copenhagen. FFD is the national organizing body of all of the 70 folk high schools in Denmark. The purpose of FFD is to work for the folk high school idea, and to create good and free conditions for the development of this type of school. The association conducts major communication campaigns for the schools, works for the development of the folk high school as such, and maintains political and professional relations with the government and partners, both at national and international levels. The highest authority of FFD is the general assembly each spring. The association is run by a chairperson and a board, the board being the supreme body. The daily work of the FFD is led by the general secretary.

The main tasks and activities of FFD are:
- Collectiv communication campaigns.
- Safeguard the primary aims of the folk high school.
- Secure and develop a high standard of teaching and pedagogically planned togetherness.
- Safeguard the freedom that the legislation gives the folk high schools in Denmark.
- Influence the legislation in favor of the idea of the folk high school and to promote development of schools and organizations.
- Initiate work to describe, develop, and broaden the comprehension of folk high school pedagogy and praxis.
- Support the schools in their administrative work.
- Engage in the development of folk high schools.
- Influence the legislation in favor of the idea of folk high schools.
- Safeguard the primary aims of the folk high school.
- Collectiv communication campaigns.

A Danish folk high school:
- Is surrounded by a legal frame to which it needs to comply.
- Needs to communicate its values, whether it is rooted in religion, political views or other.
- And besides the primary aim, which is stated in the law, it is free to plan the education according to its own beliefs.

The Danish folk high schools are organized by the FFD in Copenhagen, Denmark. They are free to plan their education according to their own beliefs. They are also free to communicate their values, whether they are rooted in religion, political views or other. Besides their primary aim, which is stated in the law, they are free to plan their education according to their own beliefs.
The Danish Folk High School...
By the schools

The Danish folk high schools are a unique and important part of the community, providing a sense of belonging and social interaction in the local community. The folk high schools offer various courses and programs, creating a vibrant and dynamic community. They are a place where people from different backgrounds can come together, learn, and grow.

Sustainability

Sustainability is another area of high priority. Most folk high schools in Denmark constitute small communities, and they function as little exploratoriums to develop new methods and experiences of sustainable ways of life. A number of Danish folk high schools have a specific sustainability profile ranging from working with permaculture to developing activist campaigns for a more sustainable world, closely linked to UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

Local community building

The majority of the 70 folk high schools in Denmark are situated in the countryside, which gives them a unique opportunity to be in touch with parts of the country that are normally over-shadowed by the cultural hubs of the big cities. The folk high schools see themselves as important cultural and social hubs in their local communities, and they often invite the communities to be a part of open events of all sorts, organized by the schools.

Global solidarity

The world has changed drastically since Grundtvig shaped the idea of the folk high school from a Nordic and national perspective. Yet another focus area is global citizenship education and international solidarity. Recognizing globalization not only as a fact, but also as an opportunity to create global collaboration and peace, the folk high schools in Denmark give priority to the long haul that will hopefully create stronger relations between folk high schools globally.

Grants for short courses

Grants for long courses

SHOULD THE STATE CONTINUE TO OFFER GRANTS TO FOLK HIGH SCHOOLS?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grants for short courses</th>
<th>Grants for long courses</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>81%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8%</td>
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</tbody>
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Synes du, staten skal fortsætte med at tildele Højskolerne tilskud?

Korte kurser

Ja - 81%

Nej - 11%

Ved ikke - 8%

Lange kurser

Ja - 92%

Nej - 4%

Ved ikke - 4%

Støtte til korte kurser

Ja

Nej

Ved ikke

Støtte til lange kurser

Ja

Nej

Ved ikke
The late 19th century marked the beginning of the folk high school movement in Denmark, with the establishment of the first folk high school in 1878. The first phase was the spread of the folk high school idea in the Nordic countries in the late 19th century. Around the First World War and accelerated during the 1920s when the development cooperation 'Danida', the Nordic Council was established as a formal collaboration. The second phase was the spreading of the folk high school idea internationally, the movement emigrated to America and took their ideas of adult education with them.
endure going to a community college, as they do not feel safe and are incapable of taking in more than few hours of learning at a time. But the residential element and the teachers' caring relations with the students at Fircroft are the essential elements that create new motivation and positive learning experiences. The educational sessions last for only 48 hours, but most students attend the school for a long period of time and follow several different courses. The results of the inclusive and experience-based teaching create crucial changes in the students' lives.

Fircroft was founded in 1909, directly inspired by the Danish folk high school model. The local founder and chocolate factory owner and Quaker, Mr. Cadbury, financed the opening of the school, and thus the school functioned on a religious foundation and successfully attracted lots of workers from the local chocolate factory. The Danish folk high schools at that time had great difficulties attracting Danish workers from the cities, and therefore numerous teachers and principals went to Fircroft to learn from their experience.

PHILIPPINES: Education for Life Foundation

Filipino dissident Edicio Dela Torre founded the Education for Life Foundation in The Philippines in 1992. Today the Foundation has neither a campus nor any building in which to conduct courses but is an organization that, in partnership with others, spreads the message about education for life and extends the education of grassroot leaders. And so Edicio has, and still practices today, education to bring forth under¬standing between people of different beliefs through dialogue.

The history of the Foundation begins with a visit to Denmark in 1987 where Edicio Dela Torre became acquainted with the folk high school movement. Dela Torre, who had been imprisoned for nine years because of his fight against the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos and subsequently had to seek political exile in Europe, was immensely inspired by the democratizing idea of lifelong learning for every one at the Danish folk high schools. When he returned to the Philippines in 1992, he founded the Education for Life Foundation. Since then more than 2000 grassroots leaders have taken the six-week long courses that focus on agriculture, ecology, equal rights, women's rights, grassroots education, and then taken it back to their communities to spread the idea of popular education and involvement.

NIGERIA: Grundtvig Institute

The core idea of Grundtvig Institute is to focus on human abilities and capacities rather than grades and exams. "The way we express it in Nigeria is that the folk high school idea, Grundtvig's educational idea, is not just educating to make a living, but to live a life. So it helps the full development of the individual and enables the individual to be aware. Cultural awareness, active citizenship, those are the values that make life worth living," Kachi A. Ozumba says, present principal and son of its founder. Grundtvig Institute opened in Southeastern Nigeria in 1984 as a residential post-secondary school offering young people between 18 and 25 years courses between six months and three years. The core idea was to help young people, especially poor ones, who had not made it in the formal Nigerian education system which focused solely on grades and exams. The school is owned by the non-governmental organization (NGO), Grundtvig Movement of Nigeria, and expanded with the foundation of Grundtvig International Secondary School in 1998. Today the secondary school has a population of around 600 students, and both residential schools have been oversubscribed since 2016 successfully offering an "Awareness Curriculum" aiming to stimulate and develop attitudes, ideals and values within its students alongside vocational training.
Types of Folk High Schools in Denmark

Roughly speaking there are seven types of folk high schools in Denmark that offer a wide range of courses, study trips, and specialized subjects:

- **General schools**: Most of these schools focus on the importance of having a broad range of subjects.
- **Gymnastics and sports schools**: About half of the course is dedicated to sports/gymnastics/outdoor life, while the other half is dedicated to general education.
- **Christian or spiritual schools**: These are Bible schools or schools with a spiritual approach to human life.
- **Lifestyle schools**: This type of school has a specific focus on diet, exercise, and personal development.
- **Specialized schools**: Some folk high schools focus specifically on a single discipline, e.g., film, design, arts, music, etc.
- **Youth folk high schools**: A few folk high schools in Denmark are for youths between 16½ years (at the time they commence their course) and 19 years.
- **Schools for senior citizens**: Senior folk high schools provide courses to an older audience and are allowed to offer short-term courses only.

Some folk high schools focus specifically on a single discipline, e.g., film, design, arts, music, etc.
Education:
Not just to make a living – but to live a life