

Harvest of the Youth Education Days

The YED-journey began on the island of Iona. The Iona Foundation visited the island to connect to her roots and origin. During this visit, the foundation re-connected strongly with the youth. She had been very active organizing support for youth for years, but new challenges asked for new ideas. Once back in the Netherlands several similar questions came to the Iona Foundation. Questions relating to the ideals and programs of youth initiatives, their students and their organization. Because of the similarity in all these questions and challenges the Iona Foundation decided to bring all the institutions and individuals involved with youth programs together. At the same time the Bildung Academie came with a similar question to the Iona Foundation. The Bildung Academie would become the first partner to organize the YED. And then in conversation with Nathaniel Williams it became clear that several youth groups were pioneering and setting up youth programs. Wouldn't it be fruitful to combine the experienced institutions with the young idealists? We felt it would be good to combine, and so the second partner of the YED was found: the Goetheanum Youth Section.

We wanted to facilitate as much space for the questions of the institutions. Ideally the YED would be all about coming together, sharing knowledge and strengthening. A questionnaire was sent out to collect input from the micro colleges. The results helped identify three crucial themes for the days: 'worldviews and visions' on day one, 'connecting offerings to needs' on day two, and 'organizational challenges' on day three.

From May 23rd-25th, we were delighted to welcome 60 international participants from 15 different countries to the Warmonderhof for the YED. These participants included both young pioneers and representatives of more established organizations. Over these three days, we connected, deepened our understanding, and strengthened each other's initiatives. As one participant remarked at the end: 'We were pulled off our islands and were put in our common stream.' An image for a new network which has been built throughout this gathering. We hope that this network will be fruitful in the coming years.

This document aims to share the most important insights of the YED. But first and foremost, thank you all for traveling such a long way! Your contributions made the YED a great success and a valuable network!



Recap of day 1: Worldviews and visions

Worldviews and visions focused on how we perceive the human being. How do we conceive the human being? How can we work with this image of the human being? What consequences does it have for our programs?

In the morning, representatives from the Nature Institute (Ryan Shea), the Goetheanum (Andrea de la Cruz), and YIP (Reinoud Meijer) exchanged ideas on this topic. They discussed the Goetheanic approach to understanding the human being, emphasizing the connection between nature and humanity. They illustrated this concept with the analogy of a guitar: without a soundboard, the strings wouldn't produce sound.

The discussion then shifted to anthroposophy and its view on the human being, highlighting that this understanding can only be fully grasped through practice and application. The conversation balanced ideas and reality, stressing the importance of wholeness and acknowledging pain. It was noted that different worldviews can coexist without challenging each other; for instance, anthroposophy can be held as a worldview without excluding others.

In the afternoon, several work sessions took place. The Bildung Akademie hosted a practical, action-based session. Through sharing examples from the organization, doing a value-based exercise and using the Strategic Pyramid, the participants of this session successfully sharpened the mission & vision of their youth initiative. Saar Frieling and Andrea de la Cruz led a session on 'Steiner's Course for The Younger Generation'. Thieu Besselink conducted a session on 'Regenerative Education'. Additionally, in a session titled "Educational Innovation, Micro-Colleges, and the Common Good," Ginie Servant-Miklos, Rutger Engels, Ryan Shea, and Nathaniel Williams facilitated a conversation exploring the complications of innovating as educators while working toward widespread accessibility. The task of navigating the challenges related to innovation and largescale funding in different countries and regions became plain in the conversation. The afternoon demonstrated that individuals with very different pedagogical commitments, who are however all dedicated to diversity of approach and accessibility in education, have something to work on together.

Reflections & insights on 'Worldviews and visions'

The results from Mentimeter reflected your thoughts on how worldviews and visions influence educational approaches. Many reflections emphasized the power of unity amidst differing perspectives, highlighting that collaboration can resolve various challenges despite varying worldviews. The metaphor "Your worldview is a house with multiple windows" encapsulated the importance of openness to diverse viewpoints, suggesting that embracing differences enriches educational experiences. Participants expressed concerns about making anthroposophy relevant to new generations while scaling initiatives and preserving core values, underscoring a commitment to inclusivity and continuity.

A recurring theme was the bridging of different worldviews, stressing the value of deep connections across diverse perspectives. Facilitating encounters and dialogues was seen as crucial for personal and educational development, fostering understanding and mutual respect. Additionally, participants recognized the role of both art and science in uncovering profound truths and bridging gaps between viewpoints, illustrating a holistic approach to education that integrates diverse disciplines.

Lastly, there was acknowledgment of a shared global vision in education, where people worldwide work towards similar ideals, promoting mutual learning and global connections. This recognition underscores a commitment to creating inclusive and adaptable educational environments while staying true to foundational values. Overall, these insights reveal a dedication to understanding and integrating different worldviews, aiming to cultivate educational spaces that are flexible, inclusive, and globally connected.

What to Remember When Waking

- David Whyte

*In that first hardly noticed moment in which you wake,
coming back to this life from the other
more secret, moveable and frighteningly honest world
where everything began,
there is a small opening into the new day
which closes the moment you begin your plans.*

*What you can plan is too small for you to live.
What you can live wholeheartedly will make plans enough
for the vitality hidden in your sleep.*

*To be human is to become visible
while carrying what is hidden as a gift to others.
To remember the other world in this world
is to live in your true inheritance.*

*You are not a troubled guest on this earth,
you are not an accident amidst other accidents
you were invited from another and greater night
than the one from which you have just emerged.*

*Now, looking through the slanting light of the morning window
toward the mountain presence of everything that can be
what urgency calls you to your one love?
What shape waits in the seed of you
to grow and spread its branches
against a future sky?*

*Is it waiting in the fertile sea?
In the trees beyond the house?
In the life you can imagine for yourself?
In the open and lovely white page on the writing desk?*





Recap of day 2: Connecting offerings to needs

On the second day, we focused on the theme 'connecting offerings to needs'. Questions related to this topic included: What kind of needs do the youth of today bring with them? What questions are most urgent? How do youth programs address these questions? Do we need to alter our programs?

Representatives of the Minor Mens in de Wereld (Saar Frieling and Dagmar Janssen), Ruskin Mill (Matt Briggs) and the Freies Jugendseminar Stuttgart (Lukas Schaaf) shared their approaches to meeting the needs of the youth. Ruskin Mill tackled these questions through hands-on work and the twelve senses, emphasizing the special significance of place in their program. The Minor emphasized the importance of art and being an artist to cope with today's challenges. Dagmar's poem resonated with this theme, highlighting the ability to cope with the 'not knowing.' The Freies Jugendseminar shared their approach to social formation, noting that living together and sharing biographies help individuals understand who they are and how their habits and traditions shape them.

In the afternoon, several work sessions were hosted. The Bildung Academie hosted a practical, action-based session. Through sharing examples from the organization, using student profiles and working with the Bildung Curricular Web, the participants developed educational interventions in order to align their existing offerings to students' needs in a more comprehensive way. Saar Frieling and Andrea de la Cruz had a second session on 'Steiner's Course for The Younger Generation'. Thieu Besselink started with 'Regenerative Education'. In two afternoon sessions called "The meaning of Delicate Empiricism in Higher Education" Matt Briggs and Ryan Shea facilitated a conversation and exercises on the importance of delicate empiricism (a particular school of phenomenology) in higher education today. One afternoon was dedicated to explorations of plants, with a particular focus on the place of verbal articulation in the process of learning, and the other on the potential of craft and an expanded view of the human being. These sessions, which mostly consisted in exercises, were followed by conversations of the challenges and opportunities of growing up in the digital age.

Reflections & insights on 'Connecting offerings to needs'

The results from Mentimeter showed your reflections on day 2. A significant theme that came up was the challenge and importance of bridging different 'bubbles' or perspectives. One participant coined the term "Collaboration Bubbleology", emphasizing the transformative power of dialogue in shifting viewpoints and fostering mutual understanding.

The insights highlighted the time and effort required to connect with these diverse bubbles, underscoring the value of partnerships and collaborative efforts in overcoming barriers and introducing new ideas effectively. Practical examples, such as communal meals and campfires, were mentioned as crucial for building community and promoting shared goals.

Additionally, some of the insights underscored the profound impact of language on perception and the necessity of precise communication to effectively meet participants' varied needs. Participants emphasized strategies such as adapting educational materials to resonate with diverse cultural backgrounds and ensuring clarity in communication to enhance understanding and engagement across different age groups.



A longing heart

- Dagmar Janssen

*One day I was flooded,
With problems and worries
Within and without me.*

*Too much weight
Pressed me flat
Breathless
On the bottom of the ocean.*

I did not know yet, how to breathe

*In the space in-between
That cannot be seen
But is waiting
in the dark,
vulnerable and warm depth
of the heart.*

The in-between space.

*No running.
Just a quiet place.*

*On day I woke
To the glance of other eyes
To the interval of days
To the essence of the night.
Being together
makes the overwhelming weight light.*

*Within us the fear is coming.
The anger rages.
The heart is silenced.*

I wish, I wish, but I stand still.

*Only if we could learn
To hold onto this space
Of not knowing how
The falling, falling, falling....
Into the heart.*

I wish, I wish, and when the heart is longing, I will!

*In trust,
This uncertainty
The not knowing when
Or how
Can be my greatest strength.*

*It is the space in-between
That allows to drown
To feel the ground
To wander around.
To light the fire
Within our hearts
That only bring us closer
And never apart.*

Recap of day 3: Organizational challenges

On the third day, we focused on organizational challenges. How can you build a financially healthy organization? How do you relate to foundations and donations? How do you organize your structure? The purpose of this theme was to inspire other organizations facing financial and structural challenges.

Free Columbia and Thoreau College shared their insights on these questions. Free Columbia is a radically different micro college without paywalls, aiming to offer free education. To achieve this, they cultivate great awareness among students and donors of the true cost and value of education. The zero-barrier entry model has inspired others, and over the years, Free Columbia has become more experienced in crowdfunding and developed various methods to motivate financial contributions to their programs. Thoreau College builds upon the pillars of academics, arts, labor, nature, and community (property). The initiative, started in 2016, draws inspiration from Steiner, Thoreau, and L.L. Nunn, the founder of Deep Springs College. One of their main challenges is attracting students from outside the Waldorf network.

During the fishbowl discussion, the relationship between micro colleges and foundations was explored. It was noted that foundations have a long-term role in providing support, and repetitive donations are not detrimental; without them, these micro colleges risk becoming too exclusive. However, a mix of financial resources is important.

In the afternoon, several work sessions were hosted. The Bildung Akademie hosted a practical, action-based session. Through sharing examples from the organization and using a Design Thinking process, the participants found underlying challenges to surface-level challenges and created innovative and actionable ways to tackle them. Another session, 'The role of the educator in superficial times', was hosted by l'Aubier and Matt Briggs. Ryan Shea and Nathaniel Williams hosted a session on 'The Meaning of Delicate Empiricism in Higher Education'. Matt wrote about the session: "We encountered our relationship to self, world and others through our senses via craft. Foregrounding the prescient need for higher education to take more account of the multiple modalities that we forge relationships, make meaning and embody into the world. The aim is to enhance our capacities to listen to self, world and others needs and respond with appropriate synergetic actions that may develop both the self and world."

Network Microcolleges

While most microcollege institutions have their own newsletters, email lists, or alum lists, there lacks a container for students from a diversity of institutions to think and connect in and around the movement at large. We hope that his platform might begin to remedy this situation:

www.hylo.com/groups/microcollege-network

