

A photograph of three young women with long hair, looking down at something on the ground. The woman on the left is wearing a dark blue floral patterned top. The woman in the middle is wearing a red top. The woman on the right is wearing a light blue top. The background is a blurred outdoor setting.

# Folk high schools and democracy

What is the positive formulation of our project?

**DEL  
TAGER  
DANMARK**  
VI FORMER  
FREMTIDENS  
FÆLLESSKABER

A photograph of two people from behind, wearing climbing helmets and gear, holding hands and looking out over a landscape at sunset. The sky is filled with soft, golden light and scattered clouds. The person on the left has a white helmet with the number '7' on it. The person on the right is wearing a blue jacket. The overall mood is one of partnership and shared experience.

**DEL  
TAGER**

VI FORMER  
FREMTIDENS  
FÆLLESSKABER

**DANMARK**

**Who am I?**

## Content

1. Why: What is our motivation for working with democratic education? And what are our challenges? (Including presentation by Monk Owen)
2. Presentation: Transformative citizenship and discourses on citizenship and responsibility
3. Short presentation by Ash-Lee Woodard Henderson
4. Work in groups: What could be a positive formulation of the vision of the free schools?

# 1. Why

# First: A story

Monk Owen, principal at Mahasala Parahita

**What is your motivation for  
working with education for  
democracy?**

Pair up - and share your **stories**

**What are the challenges you are facing in this work?**

Pair up - and share your **stories**



## **2. Presentation: Transformative citizenship and discourses on citizenship and democracy**

# **Challenge: Does the free schools have more than a negative formulation of its identity?**

There are many things that we are not. But what are we then - and for what are we?

## Transformative citizenship

Cultivating the **will** and the **ability** not just to be a part of society - maintaining democracy - but to transform and improve the society

## The danish context - crisis in a rich country

- The youth are in crisis but the reasons are difficult - too much pressure or too much freedom?
- The youth know a lot about politics (etc), but they have low *democratic self-confidence*
- Could there be a connection?

**The political debate leaves the youth two bad options**



**Do as the  
government  
tells you!**

A photograph of a concert crowd at night. The scene is filled with vibrant stage lights in shades of green, yellow, and red, creating a dynamic and energetic atmosphere. In the foreground, the silhouettes of several people are visible, with their arms raised in the air, some holding up smartphones to capture photos or videos of the performance. The background shows a stage area with various lighting fixtures and structures, though they are somewhat obscured by the bright beams of light and the overall haze of the event.

**Do what you want!**

# Neither are good options

Not formulating a third will put us line with the “Do what you want” position



	<b>Do what is responsible</b>	<b>Do what is necessary</b>	<b>Do what you want</b>
<b>Who defines the need?</b>	The administrative elite	The individual and the community together	The individual
<b>Aim</b>	To maintain prosperity and the status quo	To achieve the common good – a common response to common problems	Individual happiness
<b>Relation to usefulness</b>	People need to be managed to do what is useful	Usefulness as a call – created through inspiration	Rejection of the notion of usefulness
<b>Imperatives</b>	Force	Calling	Desire

**Re-connecting freedom and  
community**

**Rights**

**Duties**

**Freedom**

**Community**





**Freedom - for  
the common  
good**



**So what is the task for us as  
educators?**

<b>From</b>	<b>Pedagogy</b>	<b>To</b>
Abrogation of responsibility	Enlivenment; A love for the good	The call
Meaning is something we create individually	National citizenship with global responsibility: connections and roots	The common good
Resignation	Putting action at the centre: Make society the classroom	Hope and democratic self-confidence

# 1. Help foster a “love for the good”

(Inspired by professor Marshall Ganz: Leadership and Social Change)



## **2. Help foster connections and creating roots (national and global)**

(Inspired by Simone Weil: The need for roots)

**3. Make society the class room -  
create an arena for action**

# 3. Presentation on Highlander

Ash-Lee Woodard Henderson

## **4. Group discussion**

## Questions for the groups

1. Does the presented way of looking at the three positions / discourses make sense in your context?
2. From your perspective, what is a positive formulation of the vision of the free schools?
3. What do you believe to be the main tasks of the schools and educators in terms of democratic education?