5. Ubuntu and bildung in Oslo and Zanzibar : communities of learning lives

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Introduction

One consequence of the performance-based dominant discourses about global education during the last two decades has been a lack of research and understanding about the dynamic processes of learning as part of people's lives. However, against the general trend of international actors like the OECD, international aid programs on 'education for development',[1] and national policy makers' emphasis on institutional forms of education (Hogan, Sellar & Lingard 2016), there are a number of initiatives focusing more on the role of non-formal and informal ways of learning among young people (Sefton-Green 2013; Ito et al. 2013; Rogoff et al. 2016). These can be seen as alternative perspectives on the role of education and learning in our societies and they can inform us about different approaches to the life pathways of young people—not as individualized performances, but as broader collective and community oriented participation.

What is at stake for educational models in contemporary societies is highlighted by debates about the role of school. One example is Robert Putnam's (2015) critique of the way that the American education system has changed from providing equal opportunities through education to increasing the opportunity gap between young people from "have" and "have-not" backgrounds. He shows this through statistical

data, but more importantly through telling cases from his own high school class compared with cases from the same community today. Something fundamental has changed at the community level in the way that children from rich and poor backgrounds now never meet across geographical or social boundaries. Putnam's main point is how educational opportunities and trajectories have fundamentally changed and depend on which neighbourhood you are born in, and where community college might be the only option for a young person from a poor family without many prospects for employment. From a different perspective, several educational philosophers—for example, Jan Masschelein and Maarten Simons (2013) and Gert Biesta (2006)—have raised issues about public schooling and the broader aspects of *bildung*[2] in our societies today. Their work focuses on the social engagement and democratic participation of young people, beyond the narrow definition of learning in educational policies today. Biesta (2006), for example, is critical of the way learning as a concept is used in educational policy, especially in the phrase " learning outcomes", and argues that we need to focus on how human beings act in the world through a responsible understanding of difference and otherness in democratic education. A further debate concerning the role of schools and education focuses on 21st century learning, and how changes in competence development, methods of inquiry and deep learning are needed due to technological developments and changes in labour markets around the world. 21st century learning describes is the skills and competences individuals need in order to enter the future labour market and to act as citizens in changing societies.

By contrast, the argument in this chapter is that we need to attend more to the role of communities and a range of people outside schools in young people's trajectories as

learners. As such, a key vision for global education could build on the concept of community-based learning, with inspiration from John Dewey who emphasized authentic experiences that connect everyday life and school activities (Dewey 1916/1997). For many students schools do not seem relevant or engaging as sites for learning; this is often in contrast with other activities outside of schools such as computer games (Gee, 2003) and social media (Ito et al. 2013). My argument in this chapter is that we need to orientate educational research towards a deeper understanding of young people's participation and engagement within specific communities and consider the implications this might have for conceptions of learning and the value of knowledge beyond the individualized epistemology of school. My focus is on the tension between the personal and the collective (McIntyre-Mills et al. 2018) in relation to what some African educationalists define as the *ubuntu* paradigm: 'a philosophy of being that locates identity and meaning-making within a collective approach as opposed to an individualistic one." (Oviawe 2016, p. 3).

This chapter draws on results from two projects—one in Zanzibar (Tanzania) and one in Oslo (Norway)—which both have a community perspective on young people and educational trajectories. The aim is to explore and critically define ways that education can play a role for young people and communities by including learning beyond school, and through the lifecourse (Biesta et al. 2011).

Towards communities of interest

Schools in many post-industrial nations increasingly require standardization of product and outcome, determined by quantifiable measures of performance on

standardized tests. Thus, as explored in the first two chapters of this volume, the agency of individuals undertaking learning outside of expected roles and structures is often re-contextualized (see also Nocon & Cole 2006). Formal education's sorting, marking, and submergence of individual agency, diversity, and critical thinking has caused theorists and practitioners to both explore and support the value of informal education (Lave & Wenger 1991; Sefton Green 2013; Rogoff et al. 2016).

In *Democracy and education* (Dewey 1916/ 1997), and in the book he co-wrote with his daughter, *Schools of tomorrow* (J Dewey & E Dewey 1915), John Dewey offers a focus on the learner beyond the school context. One of Dewey's main arguments was the need to question and critically evaluate school systems in contemporary societies in order to develop education systems fit to tackle contemporary and future challenges. Thus, Dewey was not only concerned with ways of organizing content within subject domains, but with ways to make knowledge accessible for all students. Throughout the last century this approach became a key tenet of sociocultural learning philosophy with a conception of learning as part of cultural and historic processes, as defined in 'cultural psychology' (Cole 1996), 'funds of knowledge' (Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti 2005), 'everyday cognition' (Rogoff & Lave 1984) and 'communities of practice' (Lave & Wenger 1991). A key point is the interrelationship between the person, the community and culture as expressed in what James Wertsch (1998) calls 'mediated action': interaction between people always involves cultural tools like language and different forms of technologies. As new forms of technology are implemented in social practices, this interaction also changes in form and content. 'Identity' and 'agency' are seen as part of 'cultural worlds' (Holland et al. 1998), and operate in different contexts and developmental processes.

In their book *Local literacies* (1998), David Barton and Mary Hamilton discuss the term community. In the research literature 'community' is often a concept that is difficult to specify and it overlaps with family, home and neighbourhood. It also raises some issues about boundaries between communities and how these are drawn and for which purposes. Barton and Hamilton argue for using the term community and in their research they focus on many different kinds of what they call 'communities of interest' (Barton & Hamilton 1998, p. 15). In reference to adult literacy practices they write that:

> The notion of community is an amorphous one, but people nevertheless identified with particular communities of interest, such as allotment associations or as parents of children attending particular schools; literacy often has a significant specialised place within these communities. (1998, p. 251)

This implies that communities are constructed by participation, however defined, and draws attention to people's different interest orientations. This conception of community is apparent in the two communities described below.

Learning in this sense is understood much more as activities that are embedded in people's lives, and where people have different cultural resources and 'funds of knowledge' (Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti 2005) available to them. This is in contrast to the individualistic and performance-based approach outlined in my introduction above. As Jay Lemke (2002) has argued, 'it takes a village to raise a child'. Lemke describes how a community approach to learning and development helps us to understand how the practices people are involved in have implications for their lives. 'As we learn', Lemke (2002) explains, 'we gradually become our villages: we internalize the diversity of viewpoints that collectively make sense of all that goes on in the

community' (p. 34). And, referring to his concept of 'timescales' (Lemke 2000), he adds:

> It takes a long lifetime to 'become a village'. Some routines can be learned in minutes, performed in seconds, but they only make sense when integrated into activities that may last for hours and are in turn small links in chains of interdependent projects that keep the village running and changing over the course of our lives and the community's history. … In this view of human development, schooling today would seem to be paying too much attention to what we study and not enough to who we become; priding itself on what it brings into the classroom but blinding itself to all it shuts out; teaching isolated literacies but not how to make them work together; and creating many meanings for an hour but few for a day and none for a lifetime. (p. 35)

By combining 'knowing' and 'becoming'—as in, what we learn affects how we live— we open up a more dynamic understanding of learning. As Lemke asks: 'How do we successfully learn through participation in social activities to become members of a culture whose long history is not yet over?' His answer is that we have to look 'beyond schooling' (Lemke 2002, p. 43).

However, what is referred to as informal learning is unclear in the literature as it is often identifies ways of learning that are *not* 'formal' (Rogoff et al. 2016, p. 357). The main challenge of trying to define informal learning derives from the fact that it is often taken for granted, and people do not seem to have to work hard to learn in informal learning settings—as when children learn their first language (see Chapter 3). As Rogoff et al. (2016) write:

> We believe that *how* learning is organised and supported is more important than *where* learning occurs. After all, schools themselves can be organized in informal ways, and many settings outside of schools employ the factory model of instruction that is often found in school. (p.358).

In their discussion of different ways of organising learning outside of schools they define some shared features across diverse settings. Informal learning is:

> non didactic; is embedded in meaningful activity; builds on the learner's initiative, interest, or choice (rather than resulting from external demands or requirements); and does not involve assessment external to the activity (p. 356),

Other features of the organization of informal learning are:

> … guidance for learners, orienting them through social interaction and/or the structure of activities (to which the newcomers also contribute), and all include innovation of new knowledge and skills as well as learning of current knowledge and skills. (p.358)

These are all important points for the discussion in this chapter dealing with communities and young people's participation, engagement and trajectories of learning within and beyond these communities as ways of building their 'learning lives' (Erstad et al. 2016). We then have to look towards local and diverse cultural and community framings.

How such culturally sensitive framings can be defined, and how they support or disrupt development of lives and communities over time, is key here. Some European projects in Africa have shown how sustainability of educational innovations can be designed to build on indigenous cultural values and practices while promoting progressive social change and thereby better support development. For example, Serpell and Adamson-Holley (2015), studied the challenges of providing sustainable change within education and how this is linked to social change within Zambia. However, they also made an interesting comparison between certain practices in Africa and what are now termed 21st century skills. They write that:

> The African traditional practice of assigning social responsibility to young people from an early age is highly compatible with contemporary goals of education in Africa and elsewhere. At best, it can serve as a context for learning about health and nutrition, as well as fostering the values of cooperation and nurturing support of others, contributing to peaceful coexistence in society. Participation by children in family work is construed in many African societies as priming for social responsibility, an important dimension of intelligence. Work and play are better understood as

> complementary dimensions of activity than as discrete alternatives. Cooperation with peers can be mobilized as a resource for co-constructive learning. Strategic opportunities for countering systemic bias in educational systems include generative curriculum development, teacher sensitization to psychosocial dimensions of learners' development, and legitimizing local community impact as a criterion of educational success. (Serpell & Adamson-Holley 2015, p. 2)

The core issue then is to reflect on how such traditional practices should be defined as much more central to educational development than what has been provided by formal education. This could be defined as an asset for many African communities compared to western societies. It could also be an important way to counteract the large problem of dropouts in formal education. By emphasizing traditional practices, it might be easier for students to engage themselves in educational trajectories over time and make learning more relevant.

Ubuntu: the personal in the collective

Modern interpretations of the German term *bildung* emphasise the need to look beyond school in order to address how education can affect people's lives and work, especially in relation to the developments of digital culture. The Norwegian educational philosopher Lars Løvlie has used the term 'interface' to highlight how the interrelationship between the self and culture, between the I and the we, is changing over time (Løvlie 2003). For Humboldt (1767–1835), bildung requires interchange between individuals. Bildung starts with the individual embedded in a world that is, at the same time, that of the differentiated other (Løvlie & Standish 2002, p. 380). The term bildung is then used strategically as smore than learning (Biesta 2006; Straume 2016). It is also changes the purely individual connotation of the term (derived from the Humboltian tradition)to become more collectively oriented in that people are understood to co-exist and develop within diverse cultural settings (Straume 2016).

More recent discussions about bildung, but framed within an African context, can be found in a re-consideration of ubuntu (Brock-Utne 2016):

> Ubuntu is envisioned as a framework that is part of the humanist traditions of broader African belief systems, although this specific term originates in Southern Africa. Ubuntu is a philosophy of being that locates identity and meaning-making within a collective approach as opposed to an individualistic one. As a result, the individual is not independent of the collective; rather, the relationship between a person and her/his community is reciprocal, interdependent and mutually beneficial. (Oviawe 2016, p. 3)

The way this approach is used today represents an interesting approach to education suggesting a less positivistic, Eurocentric and individualistic outlook. In the African context the argument is not to eliminate the western educational model as such, but rather to suggest how:

> a combination of valuable attributes of the positivistic and the non-linear organic systems of knowledge might create the ideal framework to foster an ethos of a holistic, transformative and emancipatory educational experience for all. (Oviawe 2016, p. 2)

However, there are also elements of a fundamental critique of education as standardized and individualistic, especially in the way education has been linked to development. As Piper (2016) explains:

> Communities believe that education is the route to stable employment, that education structures are designed to provide access to languages of power, and that education levels the playing field for the poor. Results, however, are contrary to that promise: Pupils who have been in school for years have limited learning outcomes, results are inequitable across background categories, and illiteracy awaits many graduates. It is astonishing that faith in education remains robust in the face of facts and data, and research has shown that the returns for the individual are sometimes less than families had expected. An ubuntu education would emphasise the shared contributions of all actors. (p. 105)

Piper then goes on to argue for local engagement around people and activities. A term like ubuntu makes us reflect on the role of the local community in how learners are engaged in activities that have impact on their own lives and those of others.

Development is then interpreted more from the bottom-up; education and learning engage people in what matters for them and their communities.

Engaging people's learning lives: Zanzibar and Oslo

In this section I use two cases as way of understanding how communities have implications for young people's educational pathways beyond formal education[3]. The focus is on community settings outside of schools and how they relate to the 'learning lives' (Erstad et al. 2016) of young people. My intention is not to compare, since the cultural settings are very different, but rather to discuss how two different community centres engage young people in learning trajectories with a focus on collective (ubuntu) and personal (bildung) orientations of development and growth.

Dropouts repositioned: Zanzibar, Tanzania

This case relates to an ongoing collaboration (2015-19) between the University of Dar-es-Salaam, the University of Zanzibar and the University of Oslo focusing on the social implications of dropouts from school in Tanzania. This is especially important for girls who drop out from school at around the age of 13-14 (Makame, Lubega & Ramadhan 2010). Within this project the main objectives are to create more awareness about dropouts as a social issue, to build up masters and PhD programs at the university, and to collect research data. One core challenge is that within the national policy in Tanzania and Zanzibar, as implemented in curricula, English is the language of instruction in most subjects rather than Kizwahili, the language spoken at home. One consequence is that teachers struggle to teach and students do not understand content, leading to alienation from school. Another cause of dropout identified by local researchers is the lack of contact between formal schools and the

community and homes in supporting young people's educational trajectories (Makame, Lubega & Ramadhan 2010).

During a visit to Zanzibar in February 2017 I was invited to a community centre just outside Stone Town that worked towards engaging local youth in developmental pathways to build confidence as learners, but also to offer training in specific skills in areas of interest. This visit, and follow-up correspondence, raised some issues about the role of such centres within this local frame, both about their possibilities but also, critically, for the youth involved. It triggered some interest in trying to understand what relevance such community-based centres—even those with clear educational aims—could have for young people.

The community centre is part of a network of similar centres in Tanzania called Tanzania Youth Icons (TAYI). A non-governmental organization (NGO), it is set up to: 'help youth empowerment and to improve the lives of young people by expanding learning opportunities available to them, pointing to a future full of hope and creating that future together'[4]. To what extent the activities at the centre actually supported young participants' learning trajectories over time was an open question, and something I did not find addressed in any documentation. During my short stay there was no possibility for me to research this in any substantial way, but I met some of the regular participants.

The centre is situated in a community with very poor housing. However, the centre itself is a square stone building with an open inner yard surrounded by rooms for different activities. It is open for young people to come and visit, and it also has an

office for family consultancy with an adult to help families. As such the centre very much exemplifies the idea of ubuntu and collective responsibility for every child and family. It also defines learning in a holistic way, emphasising different aspects of young people's engagement. The centre thus strategically positions itself as different from formal schools in the way it offers learning opportunities and in its ways of collaborating with young people.

The main activities at the centre are defined by specific projects, for example: linked to the environment, such as planting trees to prevent de-forestation; youth empowerment against HIV/AIDS and drugs/substance abuse; computer literacy skills; library and reading campaigns among youth; cooking; and sports. All these projects are aimed at impacting knowledge and skills.

Pathways through a community centre

My visit to the centre consisted of a tour around the facilities and a conversation with a group of boys and girls who were involved in different activities. The tour showed that the centre tried to offer resources to provide learning opportunities for youngsters. The centre had received several donations of books from the global North, but most of them were old and worn out, and they were just piled up in one room as shown in Figure 5.1. Looking more closely at the books it was clear that most of them were in English and not accessible to youngsters in this community.

Insert fig 5.1 around here

This raises some critical questions as to what the role and function of such a community centre can be with respect to supporting the learning trajectories of young people. Since this centre was only recently set up, it obviously needs to communicate with participants that this is a place where learning takes place; in this context books represent cultural capital. The pile of books shown in Figure 5.1 is located in the first room people enter from the street when they come to the centre. Similarly, in the computer room all the computers and servers were a donation from international NGOs to equip the centre with modern tools for learning (see Figure 5.2). My impression from employees and young participants was that the other activities mentioned above were far more popular than these more school-like activities of reading books or developing computer literacy. And in contrast to reading and computer use, most of these other activities took place outside in the open yard.

Insert Fig 5.2 around here

Indeed, discussion (with about 15 youngsters and 6 adults, sitting in a circle in the outside yard, and with an interpreter), revealed how these youngsters used the centre. Many of them were dropouts from school. Of importance in this setting was that they could speak Kizwahili, as opposed to the English language that they had to speak in school.

What was striking when listening to the youngsters was the way they talked about the community, the centre and activities as a collective orientation. They were not speaking about themselves specifically, but rather how all activities were done as a group. The activities they talked most about were linked to the community or their

families. Several of the youngsters emphasized the activity of planting trees not far from where they lived. Preventing de-forestation was of great importance for the whole island and something the youngsters felt strongly about. In my field notes I wrote that two of the boys (16-17 years of age) explained this in more detail. The boys told me that during this activity they met others from different communities on the island and they worked together, transporting the small trees, and digging and planting them in different areas. This activity also meant they interacted with foreign experts (an NGO from Finland) on de-forestation. The two boys explained how their interaction with one of the Finnish experts meant they could practice their English, and also that they learned a lot about de-forestation from the expert—about the specific challenges for Zanzibar as an island, how foreign companies had cut down trees for their own profit, and how it was necessary to raise consciousness among the population in Zanzibar and address the local government about the importance of planting and protecting trees for the future of the island. The two boys also thought about working in forestry as a future occupation for themselves, which spurred them to think about completing their education and what they would need to be able to enter this occupation.

A similar activity was cooking—courses were held in the outdoor space at the centre and seemed to attract several of the girls. They learned about traditional recipes and ways of cooking that had links to their families and homes. During a personal chat with some of the students, one girl (about 15 years old) explained how she learned about different methods of cooking, what kinds of ingredients to use, and what to consider in practical terms. While cooking, she learned these things from older women in the community who came to the centre on voluntary basis to teach the girls.

The girl talked about this in an engaged way with the interpreter and me, also explaining that as a consequence of this new-found competence, she now had more independent responsibilities at home. It was also important to her that she could socialise with friends and different mentors in this way. However, unlike the boys, she did not talk about this as a pathway to re-entering school in order to complete her education. Rather, she talked about her future in terms of a more domestic trajectory, staying in the community and with her family - even though, in addition to the cooking itself this activity did seem to strengthen her self-confidence in the way she talked about her participation at the centre.

This centre, with its different activities and links to the wider community and society, seems to build on the idea of ubuntu. The participants were involved in collective activities and, even though they talked about themselves, this was part of talking about more collective engagements. And this reoriented attitudes toward education: the two boys, seriously considered returning to school , but this was not the case for the girls. The centre did not pressure the participants to re-enter school in any way, but defined themselves in terms of providing broader educational opportunity that might prevent the dropout rate from schools within this community.

Building learning trajectories: Groruddalen, Oslo, Norway

A similar kind of community centre to be found in many European cities are youth clubs. At such clubs, often originating from the 1970s, young people engage in making music, films and other topical courses, or just hang around meeting friends, dancing or playing games. For many young people these centres provide opportunities for learning that are quite different from school.

Such youth clubs are related to the concept of bildung in the sense that young people are engaged in wider social activities even if they are attracted to them on a personal level. In this sense such an approach is more directed towards personal engagement than the collective trajectories in the case of ubuntu. In this section I will describe the trajectory of one boy engaged in one community centre in Oslo.

As part of the 'learning lives' project in the community of Groruddalen (in the Grorud valley in Oslo) we explored community centres. These were situated in local neighbourhoods and often located close to schools. As documented in that project, such community centres played a significant role in the lives of the young people we studied (Erstad, et al. 2016).

There were a number of different community centres that played a key role in the lives of these young people. Due to living conditions in this valley, with more families living in apartment buildings, and with a larger number of family members living together than in other parts of the city, young people often met in different public spaces such as public libraries and these became important both for doing homework and as places to hang out.

Sport clubs and training centres were important places where young people could engage their interests and socialise with friends. However, we also found that there were community centres that were special for this valley. These were the cultural centres targeting specific ethnic groups—Turkish, Polish, Tamil, Vietnamese and Somali—who had been growing in numbers since the beginning of the 2000s. When

visiting several of these centres, we were struck with the ways that in addition to their cultural activity—where children and youth learned about dancing, singing, cooking, and families used the social space to meet—the centres also had specific school related functions. There were specific 'classrooms' for teaching school subjects, and indeed the teachers there were former youth from the same centre who were now enrolled in prestigious courses at the university, but also spending every weekend from 9 to 12 at the centre as volunteer teachers in Science and Maths. However, the atmosphere was very different than regular school since there were fewer students, and the fact that the teachers were young and of same ethnic origin as the students.

Pathways through a youth club

Youth clubs, as a type of community centre, had existed in the valley since the 1970s and they were among the first in Norway. The clubs worked more or less the same way as each other in offering different activities for youth such as creating music using their own recording studio and making films, as well as just being able to come to the centres to play pool, chess, or to dance. In one of these youth clubs I interviewed the leader who had been involved in the youth club movement in Oslo since the 1970s and had strong opinions that this was an alternative community space in direct comparison with school. He emphasised that the activities at the centre were very much defined, developed and run by the youngsters themselves. In talking to some of the youngsters (16-18 years old), it was clear that they spent a lot of time at the club. In their opinion the club had two key functions in their lives. First, it was a place to meet friends instead of just hanging out at a local street corner. And second, it was a space to pursue one's interests and get support to develop this further in a

different way from school, both because they could follow interests in depth and at their own pace, as well as because it was self-initiated.

One boy (Mathias, 18 years old), for example, had an interest in rap that had started when he was twelve years old. One specific youth club close to where he lived was important to his identity as a rapper and as a young person growing up in this valley. After a couple of years he performed at different youth clubs in Groruddalen and became quite well known. He was attracted to the clubs because of the music making, but also because he was joined a community of interest (rap) developing a collective orientation (performing rap). There he met regularly with other rappers and shared ideas for texts, beats and performance experiences.

He wrote the rap texts himself as well as developing his beats. When he was 14-15 years of age he became part of a larger network of rappers in the area and appropriated an identity as a rapper. The youth club played a major role in this. In one of the interviews he explained:

> I was probably not the smartest at school, but what I did with music that was what I could do, and there was no one that could do that better than me at that time. I felt like, this is my thing. I feel like I manage school, and in addition I have trained a lot. Feel that I still am good in music, but I know many musicians that are very good, but it is not enough to be good. Everything has to connect. (Interview, 2012)

Obviously, for Mathias rapping meant a way to be a person, to create an identity based on the confidence that he was good at something.

Insert Figs 5.3 and 5.4 around here

During a visit, he brought me to the studio where he recorded his music (see Figures 5.3 and 5.4) He told me how he often hung out at the youth club after school, and especially in the studio where he could experiment at the mixing-table and in the small recording room. He showed me the stage at the youth club where he started his performances (see Figure 5.4). He proudly remembered how several hundred young people had cheered him while he was performing. All this seemed to strengthen certain 'funds of identity' (Esteban-Guitart & Moll 2014), building not just personal self-confidence but an awareness of his role in acting in the social world of his peers:

> It is fun. It is probably the strongest and coolest experiences I have had, when you are on stage and there is strong pressure ["trøkk"] from the audience and stuff. There is not a lot that is stronger than that. But it is not that that really drives me, it is just the feeling of when you have a text that just sits with the beat, and you get goosebumps, and you just get this magical thing of making a song. That is what drives me. It is not being on stage, even though I like it. But it is like … I am very nervous before I get on stage, and when you are on stage everything is gone. I like it and enjoy it. But I would not characterize me as a typical sort of stage guy. I like best to be in the studio and the artistic part of that. (Interview, 2012)

He expressed the importance of these experiences for his own future in this way:

> The dream is to be able to do music, but that is the dream. But I do not dare to go after it. And it is very troublesome really, because I wish I could, but I don't dare. Then I need to choose something that is much more safe. But what I think is that when I am finished with my education, hopefully not too far off, three years, and then make money and things, and then be able to take it up again, a bit, and try. Maybe not work as an artist, but maybe as a songwriter or work in a studio. But a songwriter is maybe what I really most want to work as. Write songs for people. It is the writing I like best. (Interview, 2012)

Here he talks about the importance, on a personal level, that working with music has for him. He was not motivated at school, nor academically high-achieving, but he was self-confident about performing.

Youth clubs are based on collective processes of young people coming together around common interests and just hanging out with friends. However, it is also very

much about personal trajectories where special interests like music or film making are guided by more experienced adults or youngsters at the club. For Mathias, this neighbourhood youth club became very important for his personal growth.

Communities of learning lives

The two cases mentioned above are both similar and different in several ways. They are similar in the way they show how young people get involved in activities outside of formal education. These activities can have links to formal education: young people gain knowledge about content of relevance to schooling such as planting trees, cooking or writing rap. However, both of the examples presented above show how these activities are framed very differently in youth centres and clubs than at school. The youngsters themselves recount how they are more involved in deciding and developing activities, even if they are not all completely self-initiated. There are adults present both in the community centre in Zanzibar and in the youth club in Oslo, but these adults play a very different role than adults in schools. The type of knowledge the youngsters gain is also interesting since it is linked more closely to their everyday lives.

There are also differences between the two examples. One difference is, of course, the cultural differences between Zanzibar and Oslo. The cultural resources available to young people in Groruddalen are fundamentally different from the ones available for young people in Zanzibar. There are a variety of different spaces in the community of Groruddalen where young people can participate in order to follow their interests and be with family and friends, such as libraries, ethnic cultural centres, youth clubs, sport facilities, and so forth. In Zanzibar, such spaces are almost non-existent. Secondly,

young people in both Zanzibar and in Oslo expressed the comparison between the collective and the personal quite differently. Reflecting ubuntu, the young people I met at the community centre in Zanzibar talked more about the collective implications of their activities than the young people I met in the Grorud valley in Oslo. The youngsters in Oslo talked more about their personal trajectories and interests and also how these trajectories intersected with educational prospects. For youngsters in Zanzibar there was a clear division between school education and activities they were involved in at the centre and in their community. The centre in Oslo described in the narrative of Mathias has a specific focus on youth per se, and provides resources for individual young people to pursue their interests. The centre in Zanzibar is defined more as a community centre with close links to families.

A core issue in this chapter has been the ubuntu approach to education, knowledge and learning. Both the Oslo and Zanzibar settings exemplify such an approach even if they represent different aspects to it. The example from Zanzibar shows the ways young people get engaged in collective activities of importance for themselves and their community. It shows how the centre, the people involved and the different activities all are linked to the community and are not experienced as something outside this collective orientation towards learning and development.

In contrast, the narrative of Mathias can be interpreted as an individualized trajectory of one boy and his interests. Nonetheless, this narrative also shows that he is intertwined in different networks, past and present, which indicates a strong collective aspect to his learning life. The youth club represents a community of participation in which he can follow his interests in collaboration with others, and he talked about the

importance this community has on his learning. He got support from others at the club to become better at what he was interested in. And, in becoming a rapper, he has become part of a broader community of rappers through performance. His learning life was embedded in this collective orientation of learning and development, and his self (the I) is at the same time part of a collective (the we). And in both examples these spaces outside of school support very different means of engagement and participation important for learning than do their school experiences because they provide young people with more agency over their learning trajectory, as exemplified by the two boys in Zanzibar and Mathias in Oslo.

Invasion of after-school or potential educational spaces?

As already mentioned above and in Chapters 1 ands 2, scholars today argue that the model for formal learning in schools we have had for the last century stems from specific societal needs of mass education. They argue that new models of learning and knowledge creation are needed to prepare young people for their future work and citizenship (Claxton 2008; Rogoff et al. 2016). Forms of learning beyond school have often been defined in comparison with school learning, and less often considered on their own terms. As attention towards informal learning is increasing across many societies in the world, we also need to adopt a critical perspective about the ways such learning provides possibilities as well as restrictions for people and their communities.

Traditional perspectives, such as the Norwegian initiative in Tanzania, are mainly looking at how education can be used as a prospect for global social progress, economic growth and ways to tackle challenges like technological developments, immigration and humanitarian emergencies on a global scale. I have suggested,

however that we need to take a critical approach to such global initiatives in respect of educational trajectories of young people in contemporary societies.

In this chapter I have drawn on one approach defined as ubuntu. By emphasising the collective rather than the individualized, several African educationalists have addressed the community orientation of people's lives and learning. In order to study this community orientation, we have to look beyond school and into informal learning settings. I have highlighted young people's learning in specific community centres and the implications these centres have for people and communities.

One critical question is of course not to just celebrate the potential of communities, but at the same time to see them as potentially important learning spaces for 21st century learning. My argument in this chapter is not against formal education per se, and I follow some educationalists who argue 'in defence of school' (Masschelein & Simons 2013) by pointing out the role of formal education in our societies. However, as chapters 1 and 2 to this book have explored, there are a variety of different activities beyond school that need more attention in discussions about learning in the 21st century. Some of these take the form of private instruction in after school hours, or as home schooling with parents or as instructors or in cultural centres as described in Groruddalen where young volunteers come to teach young people during weekends in core school subjects. Such initiatives represent a pedagogicization of young people's everyday lives as formal education takes up more and more of their time in what has been described as an 'invasion of after-school' (Nocon & Cole 2002).

Still, as I have emphasised in this chapter, there are other understandings of education, knowledge and learning that are important in ways of grasping how young people are engaged in different activities of importance for their own learning and growth as well for their communities. As a philosophy, Ubuntu includes activities outside of schools because formal learning today is focusing on individualized and performance-based approaches and this view is part of how community centres provide alternative models of potential educational spaces.

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[1] http://www.osloeducationsummit.no/

[2] Bildung refers to the German tradition of self-cultivation. In English it is similar to the concepts of education or self- formation. The term is often used to refer to a model of higher education based on the work of Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835). Historically, definitions have changed. Today, "bildung" is a broad concept, encompassing knowledge, judgement, a broad cultural and political orientation, an understanding of science and technology, and a cultivation of the fine arts. See: https://www.uv.uio.no/english/research/subjects/bildung/

[3] I have been involved in both of these cases; one funded by the Norwegian Developmental Aid Agency taking place in Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, and one funded by the Norwegian Research Council taking place in a multi-ethnic community in Oslo, Norway.

[4] https://envaya.org/tanzaniayouthicon