

HANS PASSENIER

School as a  
community



Researching leadership in Waldorf schools

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This is an English translation of a book published in Dutch by publishing house Christofoor in 2022. The desire of Christofoor to start producing a series on education was in line with the desire of Hans Passenier to produce several publications reflecting the experience gained from its work as a consultant for Waldorf schools. The growth of schools and the need for Waldorf education invited to publish. The backgrounds and experiences could be thus shared.

Passenier, Hans

Original publication: Ontwikkeling van een schoolorganisatie; De drie doeldomeinen in het onderwijs en hun relatie met de dimensies/ Hans Passenier – Zeist: Christofoor  
ISBN 978 90 6038 957 7

Author: Hans Passenier

Cover design: David Passenier

Illustrations: David Passenier

ISBN: 9789403719344

Translation: Hans Passenier with the help of DeepL

Editor: Hans Passenier with the help of ChatGPT

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## Foreword

In 2022, we initiated a European project exploring leadership in Waldorf schools across eight European countries. Prior to this, 'Ontwikkeling van een schoolorganisatie' had been published. As it resonated with the leadership development challenges in Waldorf schools, this book underwent translation into English.

Since 1983, I have immersed myself in the organisational and leadership aspects of Waldorf schools. I critically reflected on my experiences with the organisation of Waldorf education, particularly focusing on innovation within school communities. In my roles as an interim school leader and later as a consultant, I encountered organisational questions linked to the origins of Waldorf schools. Occasionally, my personal disappointments with the methods of organising and leading became the motivation for my investigations.

At one juncture, I observed significant adaptations in schools aligning with the organisational norms prevailing across all educational institutions in the Netherlands. It was during this period that a rector posed the intriguing question: 'Is the organisation of Waldorf schools suitable for the education we aspire to provide?' This query served as the catalyst for writing this book.

Bernard Lievegoed, a psychiatrist, educator, professor, organisation expert, and anthroposophist, inspired a group of anthroposophists in 1963 to establish the Dutch Pedagogical Institute for Business (NPI). The anthroposophical perspective on organisational development originated there. Adriaan Bekman, who worked at the NPI, subsequently founded the Institute for Human and Organisational Development (Instituut voor Mens-en Organisatie ontwikkeling: IMO) in 2005.

During the twenty-fifth-anniversary commemoration of Bernard Lievegoed's death, I met Klaas Ijkema and Lisanne Bekman, both IMO consultants in the Netherlands at the time. They questioned why Waldorf schools had never sought guidance from IMO in their organisational

development. This prompted us to collaborate, conducting research to understand the dynamics within the schools. We organised several conferences relating the origins and history of Waldorf education to the contemporary situation of Waldorf schools worldwide in the twenty-first century. In October 2022, we initiated an Erasmusplus project focused on Waldorf leadership development.

Waldorf education, practised globally in a limited capacity for over a century, prompted our curiosity about the driving forces behind its initiation and the trajectory for further developing the underlying educational concept over the next hundred years.

While penning this book, my ideas on the development of school organisations crystallised further, encompassing both primary and secondary schools. Despite their differences, the principles of organisation and leadership are applicable to both. Even when establishing Waldorf departments in existing schools with different backgrounds, I have successfully applied the insights in this book.

The overarching question was: How can we contemporarily organise Waldorf education to align with the principles, building blocks, and sources of inspiration of the Waldorf school, and how can we further develop these principles?

Ultimately, this book is intended for all teachers and leaders striving for an appropriate and effective organisation for education within their institutions, whether rooted in anthroposophy or not. If you identify as a leader in an educational process and feel part of a community dedicated to supporting students in their development, you will find guidance in this book.

Given that this book targets school leaders and teachers (male/female) in both primary and secondary education, when I use the term 'teacher,' I am referring to both primary school teachers and secondary school teachers. Readers may interpret the terms as they find suitable. Additionally, for 'child,' one may also read 'young person.'

In Part 1, I describe the impulse from which Waldorf education emerged. In Part 2, I explore the elements that can shape a (future) school organisation to align with the education we aim to provide. In Part 3, the focus shifts to the practical application of those elements. How can we incorporate the building blocks from Part 2 to design the organisation in a way that acts as a field of practice and provides the foundation for the education we want to offer in the future? In Part 4, I describe corresponding exercises that can be deployed for the development of a learning organisation, for the school as a community, and for the personal development of all individuals within that organisation.

## **Part 1 The evolution of Waldorf schools**

This section delves into the driving forces and historical developments that have shaped Waldorf school education thus far. It explores the foundational values that underpin Waldorf education and identifies crucial elements for the ongoing evolution of Waldorf school organisation. What principles and values have contributed to the formation of this educational approach, and what key factors are instrumental in guiding the continued development of Waldorf schools' organisational structures?

# 1 Reason

When I started my career at the Waldorf School in 1983, I was captivated by this unique form of education. The handling, organisation, lived values, and overall experience left me in awe. It became evident that I could take initiative, engage in open conversations, and witness a strong commitment to equality.

Simultaneously, I encountered various instances of inequality. The growing disparity between the ideal and reality became increasingly apparent. I also became conscious of the gap between what was legally permissible and allowed, and the aspirations we were trying to pursue.

Upon applying for a position as a chemistry teacher at the Waldorf School in Zutphen, I spoke with the headmaster. It became clear that the title of headmaster was more symbolic, and the objective was for everyone to take initiative, fostering a collective responsibility for the school. This ethos and culture intrigued me, motivating me to work hard and contribute significantly for many years. However, I also addressed the drawbacks and challenges inherent in an organisation without formal leadership, such as occasional helplessness, social insecurity, conflicts, and unacknowledged inequality. Yet, I struggled to pinpoint the root cause of these negative effects.

Gradually, we adapted our school organisation to align with the legal framework and the prevailing hierarchical structures in the Netherlands and Europe. I played a role in this transformation, responding to objections that were familiar to anyone working in Waldorf education in the Netherlands. However, doubts lingered about whether we were making the right choices. The persistent question in meetings and conversations was whether this organisation aligned with our educational goals and if the education provided matched the principles, building blocks, and sources of inspiration of the Waldorf school.

Waldorf education, in existence for over a century since the founding of the Waldorf School in Stuttgart in 1919, has spread to seventy countries

worldwide. Evidently, a powerful impulse led to the establishment and development of this education. What sustains this impulse over such a long period, and how does it influence the design of education today? To explore these questions, we delve into the historical context.

Waldorf education has existed for more than a hundred years (since the founding of the Waldorf School in Stuttgart in 1919), spread all over the world in seventy countries. Apparently, there was an enormously powerful impulse that had led to the founding and shaping of this education. What made this impulse last so long, and what does it mean for the design of education today? To find out, we start with the historical context.

## **2 The historical context**

Rudolf Steiner was asked at one point to assist in the establishment of a new school for the children of workers at the Waldorf-Astoria cigarette factory. World War I played a significant role in this.

### **2.1 Rudolf Steiner's ideas**

The German philosopher and educator Rudolf Steiner initiated the anthroposophical movement in 1913. Even when he emigrated to Switzerland in 1914 after the outbreak of World War I, he remained connected to Germany in discussions on a new social system.

Steiner had been concerned with social issues for some time; in 1905, he first formulated his 'principal social law'.<sup>1</sup> This principle emphasises a significant value: when working, one should focus on the well-being of others. Social well-being grows when this communal focus extends to several people in the community.

In 1917, Steiner published the book "Von Seelenrätseln," where he took the divine trinity as the starting point for his vision of mankind. In it, he recognised the tripartite nature of what he called man's physical, soul, and spiritual body. His main concern was to develop awareness of how to relate to this reality in human-organised reality and society. In Waldorf pedagogy, for example, this would be expressed as the use of "head, heart, and hands." In his lectures, Steiner often referred to the triad.

This tripartite concept is crucial not only in Waldorf pedagogy but also in biodynamic agriculture, anthroposophical health care, and curative education. Steiner always referred to the whole, which he divided into three parts.

He developed a socio-political view of society in which a division into three parts, a "trinity," guided: the free spiritual life, the life of justice based on solidarity, and the serviceable economic life. These spheres of life should be

autonomous in Steiner's view. If labour is placed in the economic life, it is degraded to a commodity (Lehrs, 1938), an observation that remains relevant today. In our society, labour is intricately linked to income and economic life. Although it's challenging to imagine otherwise, an increasing number of people are questioning whether this is desirable, as seen in the discussion on basic income.

Steiner saw an opportunity for a new social order. His proposal, the 'social or societal triad,' was a middle ground between the ideas of Woodrow Wilson (self-determination for peoples) and those of Lenin (collectivism and the dictatorship of the proletariat). A group of people emerged who united around Steiner's ideas and took initiatives to implement these ideas in the politics of the time.

Emil Molt (1876-1936), the owner of the Waldorf-Astoria cigarette factory in Stuttgart, embraced the idea of the social triad of society. He organised a cooperative of companies (Der Kommende Tag) on this basis. Additionally, he wanted the children of his workers to receive education that would support these principles and help them apply them in practice. Thanks to Emil Molt's entrepreneurship, the idea could become a reality in just a few months - from April to September 1919, when the first Waldorf School opened its doors. This is the origin of Waldorf education: the "social question" (see below) and the desire for a dignified existence for all.

## **2.2 Emil Molt's deeds**

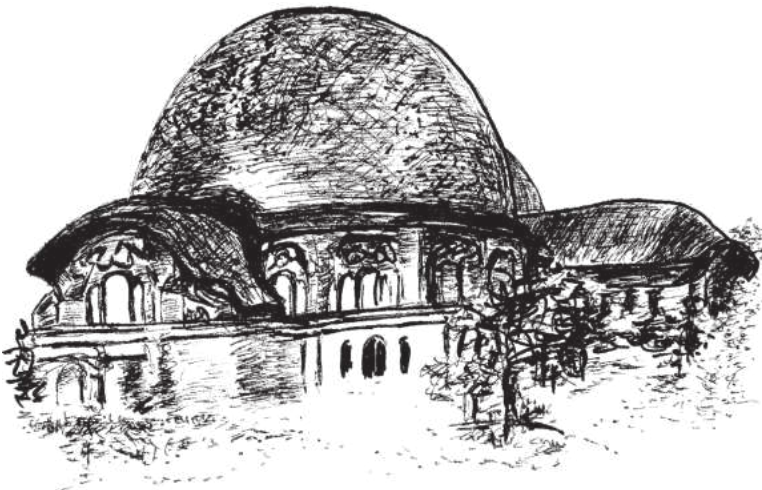
A book by Sophia Murphy (2019), Emil Molt's granddaughter, provides a detailed account of the origins of the first Waldorf school. She emphasizes that World War I and the social problems of the time motivated Emil Molt to establish the Waldorf School.

Emil Molt (1876-1936), the youthful owner of the Waldorf-Astoria cigarette factory, was not only concerned with the quality of the product manufactured there but also with the welfare of the factory's employees. He perceived the war as an expression of a significant social issue, referred to by Rudolf Steiner as "die soziale Frage."

During this period, there was widespread inequality across Europe, and socialism was gaining prominence. Economic considerations were becoming increasingly important, and workers' movements were asserting their independence. In the West, capitalism continued to evolve, while in the East, communism was emerging. Capitalism, socialism, and communism all sought to shape the direction of social reform.

Following the blame placed on Germany for World War I, Rudolf Steiner made concerted efforts to initiate discussions about alternative social solutions. Emil Molt, who played a crucial role in the Anthroposophical Society, supported Steiner and became part of the 'social threefold movement.' Molt also contributed financially and played a role in the realisation of the (first) Goetheanum, a building intended to serve as the international centre for anthroposophy, hosting regular courses and conferences.

As an ambassador of the social threefold movement, Molt aimed to set an example in his own company. He acted as the entrepreneur, the 'capitalist' in the sense of ensuring that capital was available to realise initiatives. Molt, with a background in the production and trade of tobacco, emerges from Murphy's book as a man dedicated to his employees, viewing money not as an end but as a means to support initiatives.



*The first Goetheanum*

In late 1918, a revolutionary atmosphere gripped Stuttgart. Emil Molt offered his services as a government adviser, contributing to the establishment of an industrial credit union to create opportunities for entrepreneurs post-war. Additionally, he facilitated food procurement from Switzerland to address the population's food shortage. Molt organised meetings to introduce the ideas of the social triad into political circles.

The Waldorf-Astoria factory became the first to establish a workers' council, responding to the demands of protesters for greater representation. These councils, a government requirement, aimed to bridge the gap between management and workers, fostering increased cooperation and commitment. This aligns with Emil Molt's belief in the direct involvement of employees in the labour process. He advocated for companies to cooperatively join, shifting ownership away from individual entrepreneurs.

As his employees gradually returned from the war, Molt sought to fulfil his promise to reintegrate them into the labour process. Many returned, albeit wounded and demoralized. Facing an excessive workforce, Molt decided to reduce working hours to half-days to ensure that everyone had employment. To ease the transition back to normal life and recognizing the workers' ample free time, Molt organized an educational program.

In late 1918 or early 1919, the idea of a separate school for workers' children struck Molt. This revelation occurred after a worker shared the challenges his son faced in affording education. Emil Molt understood that pervasive inequality hindered social progress.<sup>2</sup> He discussed the concept of a school for workers' children with his enthusiastic wife but kept it otherwise confidential (Murphy, 2019).

## **2.3 From concept to school in use**

In late 1918, Herbert Hahn was appointed to design the educational program for the workers of the Waldorf-Astoria factory, known as the *Arbeiter Bildungsschule*. He consulted with Rudolf Steiner on educational matters. The program, conducted during working hours to maximize participation, included cultural history and foreign language classes taught

by Hahn. Workers exchanged visits to learn from each other, with Emil Molt teaching about tobacco growing and Steiner providing instruction in general subjects.

Emil Molt also offered recreational opportunities for his employees and published a bimonthly company newspaper, the *Waldorf Nachrichten*. Alongside Steiner, Hermann Hesse, a school friend of Emil Molt, and other anthroposophically inspired writers contributed to the newspaper. Anthroposophists, including Molt, formed a group around the Council for Culture in Stuttgart, leading to social reform plans. This collaboration resulted in a pamphlet, followed by Rudolf Steiner's book, "Die Kernpunkte der sozialen Frage," which gained significant traction, capturing the interest of factory workers.

In April 1919, after Steiner delivered a lecture on the social triad in Stuttgart, Emil Molt requested a similar lecture for his 800 employees. Discussions with the workers' council explored the integration of the triad into the factory. During this meeting, Molt first introduced his idea for a school. Steiner responded positively and assumed supervision of the forthcoming school.

From then until its launch in September 1919, developments progressed rapidly: teachers were recruited (Herbert Hahn became a French teacher), a building was purchased, and a curriculum was developed. Permission from the Minister of Culture was obtained to establish an independent school, without excessive interference from the government or business, giving rise to the term 'free' school in the Netherlands. On 21 August, as the first Goetheanum in Dornach neared completion, Steiner delivered the opening speech for the new school, marking the commencement of what Waldorf teachers now refer to as the "Allgemeine Menschenkunde" course.

Throughout 1919 and into 1920, numerous initiatives were launched, and optimism prevailed regarding the development of both the social triad and the school. However, in January 1921, Adolf Hitler published an article describing the social triad as 'a Jewish method of destroying the normal state of mind of people,' leading to dramatic events in the ensuing years until Steiner's death on 30 March 1925.

After Steiner's death, Emil Molt continued to support the school, considered the seed of the worldwide Waldorf school movement. He passed away in 1936, two years before the Nazis forced the school's closure in 1938. Following World War II, Waldorf schools experienced a resurgence, developing in Germany, the Netherlands, and other countries from 1945 onward.

## **2.4 Principles of the organisation**

What intrigues me is how the initial school was organised and the founders' underlying ideas. Nowhere is a specific structure outlined. Can intentions be gleaned from various sources?

On the evening of 20th August 1919, future teachers and invited guests convened at Landhausstrasse in Stuttgart. The teachers' course was scheduled to commence the following morning. Emil Molt and Karl Stockmeyer maintained notes, later compiled by Erich Gabert. Steiner proposed several suggestions that remain relevant today:

1. As teachers, we must be willing to compromise.
2. We should be acquainted with our ideals and possess the flexibility to adapt to situations that may deviate from our ideals.
3. The school should be organised either democratically or managerially.

Refer to Appendix 1 for a more extensive overview of Steiner's statements on this and subsequent occasions. It's crucial to contextualise these statements within the time they were made. Rawson (2021) provides an insightful overview of the statements and historical context, to which I gladly refer.

Although Steiner himself assumed the role of headmaster of the inaugural Waldorf School, he also expressed opinions advocating for an alternative model of school leadership. In a teachers' meeting in 1920, he discussed his position, distinguishing between an outward and inward perspective (see Appendix 1). The intention was for everyone in the Teachers' College to independently engage with matters and explore possibilities in the

pedagogical realm. Steiner acknowledged that this research was challenging but essential for individual developmental paths.

He emphasised the need to distinguish between elements necessary for an exoteric organisation—what society demands—and those required internally. This separation underscored the distinction between an internally experienced (esoteric) reality and an externally required (exoteric) reality.

Steiner's statements reflect his desired teaching approach. Decisions were made at the behest of others, but he took them, striving to reach decisions in harmony with each person. This leadership style, evident in Waldorf schools today, can at times be perceived as obstructive or conflict-avoidant.

## **2.5 Self-government?**

At a parents' evening at the Waldorf School in 1921, Steiner explained to parents why the school was organised as it was (Rawson, 2021).

He asserted that teachers should be immersed in the spiritual world, free from hindrance by 'someone higher,' and not acting as mere officials. The declaration that the school should be self-governing is noteworthy. Despite being a headmaster himself, making decisions about matters such as staff hiring and firing, this aligns with Steiner's overall philosophy. It mirrors Steiner's internal struggle, initially avoiding leadership in the Anthroposophical Society but later assuming the role in the last phase of his life. Ideally, he preferred initiatives to be driven by individuals.

The crux of the statements made at that parents' evening seems to emphasise that teachers must always draw from the living spiritual source and resist being led by external powers, finding direction from that source.

When the teachers of the first school sought guidance on organising their college, Steiner suggested it should be 'not democratic but republican.' Presumably, Steiner viewed 'democratic' in terms of a parliamentary system where citizens delegate responsibilities to representatives. In contrast,

'republican' likely conveyed the idea that the management of common affairs was a collective responsibility.

These statements were not extensively elaborated upon, consistent with Steiner's approach of supporting and initiating initiatives, emphasising that individuals should shape these initiatives further. This meant that the initial school, in its inception and development, had to discover a suitable organisational form through experimentation and trial-and-error.

Subsequently, there was considerable debate on this matter. Hans Peter van Maanen (1990) discussed the republican way of working as a sub-part of the tripartite relationship between aristocracy and democracy, aiming to foster a free mental life. Despite this debate, it seems the discussion has not produced practical solutions.

Recent years' practices have formed the basis for my search for an appropriate organisation. When I began as a Waldorf School teacher in 1983, the concept of 'teacher self-governance' was frequently discussed. Steiner's intention was clear: to grant teachers as much initiative and responsibility as possible. However, the acknowledgment remains that Steiner himself functioned as a headmaster in an exoteric sense. The distinction between esoteric and exoteric offers a guiding principle: outward leadership should adapt to societal requirements, be willed and accepted from within, and, most importantly, allow space for individual research.

## **2.6 Leadership development**

As its founder, Emil Molt always remained closely involved in the organisation of the school. His only son, later director of Weleda in America, was one of the students. Molt's involvement in the administration was at one point felt to be a nuisance. As early as May 1920, Steiner received a memorandum from the Teachers' College recommending changes in the organisation of the school and in the position of Emil Molt. The bottom line was that the teachers, as representatives of the spiritual domain - which in the trinity should be separate from the social and economic domain - did not want to be seen as employees employed by the

cigarette factory. Moreover, Molt was not a teacher and therefore should not attend the teachers' meeting. After all, he represented the economic domain. We can imagine what a bummer this was for Emil Molt. He was not allowed to attend the meetings for a long time but was accepted back into them after several years.

The sequence of events shows Rudolf Steiner's development in leadership. After the fire at the first Goetheanum in December 1922, the disorder in the anthroposophical movement, the bankruptcy of the publishing house and the failure of the inclusion of the social triad in social development, he took an important initiative in 1923. He himself became president of the Anthroposophical Society. In his book "Besturen in antroposofische organisaties" (2005), Adriaan Bekman gives a personal analysis of the problems. He outlines how Steiner proved unable to realise the capacity to steer in those organisations. Nor did he succeed in gaining a foothold in the scientific world. Actually, says Bekman, at the end of his life, Steiner was looking at creations of his own that had disappeared or been destroyed and showed himself to be a leader at the 1923 Christmas gathering. Didn't that go completely against his belief that people should take responsibility and feel involved themselves? Bekman sees five principles of policy with Steiner:

1. Personal responsibility of leaders for the process,
2. Decentralisation,
3. Governance as a stimulus for initiatives, not as a supervisor,
4. Simple and transparent (financial) systems,
5. Openness.

Furthermore, Steiner seems to have formulated the following core values:

1. Power of initiative,
2. Adaptations with the ideal in mind,
3. Interests in the world.

Emil Molt's contribution to the founding and functioning of the Freie Waldorfschule was in line with his approach in the cigarette factory. His leadership style can be briefly described as idealistic, entrepreneurial with a heart for people and belief in a collective force. He showed servant and coaching leadership and initiative power to realise new realities. With

Steiner, we see an esoteric content that arose from a scientific interest, through which shines the idea that man as a spiritual being is the solution to the great social and societal issues. Can we derive answers from this to the issues of today's schools?

### **3 Educational vision determines organisation**

My starting point is that the education you provide and the human image that underpins it determine the organisational form. After all, this is an abstract image of the community that offers education - a community that does not have a natural origin, like a family, but is an organised association of people who biographically seek each other out to provide education. Education and its impact on children's development should guide the organisation and the way it is led. After all, it is these children who will later shape the new social order in their working lives.

#### **3.1 Education free from economic influence**

Martha Nussbaum (2011) argues that we are amid a silent crisis of enormous proportions with dire consequences. She is not referring to the 2008 financial crisis but to the latent crisis in education, citing the loss of classes in the arts, non-exact subjects, and humanities. Nussbaum emphasizes the significance of Socratic dialogues, music, the fine arts, theatre, and dance. These art forms were applied in the teaching experiment of Rabindranath Tagore, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913 and a leading educational innovator in India. He articulated the crisis of his time thus:

"We seem to forget what it means when thoughts blossom from the soul and connect person and world in a rich and subtle and complicated way; what it means to approach another as a being with a soul rather than as a useful tool or a hindrance in achieving our plans; what it means to speak as one who possesses a soul to someone else whom we consider to be as deep and complex as ourselves."

This danger is currently substantiated by, for example, the elimination of the study of Dutch at some universities in the Netherlands. Apparently, secondary school students are no longer prepared for the importance of the subject of Dutch as a contribution to the development of the souls of people who shape life in our society. The importance of a school subject is expressed in an exam. Dutch is a compulsory subject, but that does not

recognise its true importance. On the contrary: as argued in my book "Waarden in het onderwijs" (2020), such an exam is a danger if it is one-sidedly about grades and assessments and not about appreciating the true purpose of the subject or the learning process. Nussbaum argues that education today is focused on economic growth.

In 1917, Rudolf Steiner also saw the danger of the domination of economics. He argued for the economic, social, and spiritual domains to be clearly distinguished, and not to make the mistake of allowing economics to gain too much influence over the spiritual domain. This also includes education. If we make a corporeal comparison, it is as if the metabolism is working too much in the nervous-sensory system, giving you headaches and making you sick: the areas pervade each other too much and are out of balance. Too much influence of the economy on education then leads to education that produces passive, uncritical citizens, resulting in a sick society.

In 2011, Nussbaum advocated valuing the humanities as an important part of a true democracy. A century after Steiner, she too warns against this economic influence. Waldorf education is characterised by the values of 'freedom, equality and fraternity', which we hold dear.

Art plays a major role in this. The arts tap into an ability to think outside the box, which is a prerequisite for critical thinking. Artistic education, even in science subjects and not just art subjects, is education that asks pupils to use their imagination and dare to think outside the box. For economic life, this is a danger, because it is geared towards production, obedience, and efficiency to maximize returns. Nussbaum shows that from economic thinking, there is a tendency not to value the arts and even see them as enemies. The value systems that have to do with a holistic view, with freedom and creativity, with sharing and equality, are essential for education. So those values are also important in organisation and leadership.

## **3.2 Gardening, not carpentry**

In an article in *The Correspondent* (Berger and Caselli, 2020), Alison Gopnik says that the prevailing parenting ideal in our time is shaped by the notion that through upbringing, one can mold children. 'This parenting ideal is detrimental for both parents and children, but it is not irrational from an economic standpoint,' argues Gopnik. She advocates for a different approach to parenting and teaching, asserting that young children become frustrated because they are restricted from engaging their brains in the way that benefits them most: exploring the world in a wandering, varied, and inquisitive manner that is ultimately useful.

This aligns with the educational philosophy of Waldorf schools, where it is referred to not as parenting but as the art of education. Human development does not involve adhering to a pattern, a pre-designed plan, or educational methods and logical curricula. Instead, education should focus on embracing the diversity of children's abilities.

Gopnik highlights the importance of 'shared incubation,' where children develop through encounters with various people. Another characteristic is that the educator should be seen as a gardener rather than a carpenter. The role is not about making pupils, but about nurturing and being attentive to the growth and development observed. Gert Biesta, an educator and professor of 'Public Education,' expresses this more pointedly in *'De terugkeer van het lesgeven'* (2018): the central task of teaching and education is to awaken a desire in another human being to maturely engage with the world, that is, to become a subject.

The values in Waldorf education have multiple sources dating back some 100 years. Similar values are also found in contemporary educational innovations, such as those proposed by Gopnik, Biesta, and Rob Martens, former scientific director of the NIVOZ foundation and professor of Educational Sciences. In *'We moeten spelen'*, Martens discusses play elements in education and turns his focus to art, stating, 'It is certain that all forms of art adhere to the defining rules of play.'

With this educational perspective, we aim to establish an organisational framework that embodies the qualities of gardeners and play facilitators—individuals who awaken in children the desire to maturely navigate the

world. These individuals leverage their unique qualities, sometimes grappling with uncertainty, and translating intuitive ideas into actionable plans.

## **4 Growth and quality of education**

The initial school where I worked comprised two temporary buildings housing around 250 students. It was affectionately dubbed 'The crazy little school' - an institution for free-spirited students. Upon my arrival, one of the makeshift buildings had recently succumbed to fire. The chemistry classroom, along with its cabinet and all the teaching materials for chemistry, was also lost to the flames. I pondered whether this scenario would define my career: starting anew amidst the ashes of the school, having to construct something entirely on my own.

As it turned out, the situation was not as daunting as anticipated. While I did embark on a journey of exploration, I received significant assistance. Despite the abrupt and uncertain start, I became familiar with the people, the students, and the school. In this initial phase of my professional life, I grappled with the essence of Waldorf education, delving into its content, backgrounds, materials, people, and structures.

### **4.1 A shared view of growth**

I pondered the small size of the school. If you offer high-quality education as a means of enabling young people to shape the world, wouldn't growth be a logical consequence? It seemed crucial to extend this educational opportunity to more students. Indeed, in the subsequent years, the school experienced continuous growth, expanding from 250 to around 850 pupils.

Ideal and reality sometimes diverged, adding complexity to our pursuit of the best education and school. This challenge fostered significant dedication among my colleagues and me. Our commitment extended not only to the students but also to the underlying principles.

There was a firm belief that art should be an integral part of education. Consequently, I incorporated play and artistry into my chemistry classes. I grappled with the interplay between art and science, and organised conferences in the 1990s on this intriguing dynamic. Crafting an artistic

lesson, I discovered, necessitates thorough preparation coupled with the ability to improvise in the moment, associating freely and responding to the unfolding situation.

Pride was undoubtedly part of the experience. We were confident, perhaps overly so, in believing that we provided the best education in the world. While this had some negative repercussions, it also nurtured a generation of teachers who found joy in their work. As for the impact on the students, they are better positioned to evaluate it.

At a certain juncture, we sought to quantify the recognition of our work and make it evident as a 'percentage market share' – essentially the number of pupils. In late 2009, when I had recently assumed the role of director at BVS-schooladvies (the Guidance Service Foundation for Waldorf Schools in the Netherlands), I convened discussions with various administrators and directors to explore pupil growth. Given BVS-schooladvies' objectives, fostering growth in the 'market' was crucial, and I was keen to gauge reactions to the idea of doubling pupil numbers. At that time, just under one percent of all pupils in the Netherlands attended Waldorf education. What if we aimed for two percent?

While growth had already commenced, with only 2,471 pupils in secondary education at Waldorf schools across the Netherlands in 1984, a total of 14,165 pupils (if we include pupils in the 13<sup>th</sup> grade <sup>3</sup>) were enrolled in primary and secondary education combined. By 2020, the number had surged to 30,000 learners. However, in 2009, we noticed a slowdown in growth. The pressing questions were how to achieve a doubling and what implications it would have for schools, the quality of education, the number of teachers, the facilities, and the overall possibilities. These questions presented formidable challenges.

year	primary education	secondary education	total
1984	11.536	2.629	14.165
1991	14.325	4.206	18.531
1995	14.813	4.659	19.472
2000	13.310	5.401	18.711
2005	13.894	6.641	20.535
2009	13.256	7.173	20.419
2015	14.500	8.200	22.700
2020	20.000	10.000	30.000
2025	25.000	15.000	40.000

*Development of the number of pupils in Waldorf education, with forecasts for the period after 2009. Source: BVS schooladvies.*

I harboured an inner ambition to address the implications of this growth. However, I also have the sense that it unfolded organically, happening to us rather than through a predetermined plan. Our aim was simply a dot on the horizon: achieving a growth to two percent. Most likely, individuals, or small communities within various schools, worked independently on this growth and the associated challenges. Reflecting on it now, it feels like an organic expansion, not propelled from a single point. Nevertheless, I believe that a shared vision of growth influenced the community's activities and decisions. I also presume that the growth is an ongoing process. In 2009, we projected growth to 40,000 pupils by 2025. Until 2020, the forecast seems reasonably accurate. But even the figure of 40,000, is it merely a directional estimate?

## **4.2 Prefer to stay small?**

In 2009, we foresaw that growth could significantly impact the quality of Waldorf education. The surge in demand for teachers and training, coupled with the need for a more extensive organisation and additional accommodations, presented formidable challenges. Coming from a tradition of small schools, resistance to growth was prevalent among some individuals in Waldorf school education. Their belief stemmed from the notion that the small size allowed for a more influential presence, akin to a potentised (diluted) medicine affecting society. While I appreciated the concept, I found it odd to deter or even reject parents and students who deliberately chose this teaching method. This contradicted my firm support for the idea that Waldorf education should be accessible to all students.

Accessibility is also influenced by the visibility of Waldorf education. Strangely enough, for a long time, Waldorf education remained marginalised, treated as an anomaly in educational textbooks at secondary schools and colleges. Little attention was given to it. The question arose: How could parents, students, and teachers discover it?

Over time, marketing and public relations gradually found their place in Waldorf schools. Initially, marketing carried a somewhat negative connotation – it seemed associated with placing something on the market. However, our aim was to attract individuals who consciously chose our education. Parents are often drawn to the education, atmosphere, and attention to pupils up to the sixth grade in a Waldorf school. If, after primary school, there is no Waldorf school for continued education (upper secondary) available in a town, parents may develop the ambition to establish a school. This has been a recurring pattern in the Netherlands.

## **4.3 Diversity**

While in Stuttgart, the impetus came from the director of a cigarette factory, the first Waldorf school in the Netherlands was established by

anthroposophical parents. In Stuttgart, the focus was on uniting children from diverse backgrounds and social strata to address class disparities from the grassroots level. Among the initial 256 pupils in the first eight classes in Stuttgart, 191 were children of workers and co-workers from the cigarette factory, and 65 were offspring of anthroposophically inclined parents from Stuttgart and its vicinity.

In the epilogue of the *Sociale Toekomst* collection (1992), Edithe Boeke recounts the inception of the first Waldorf school in the Netherlands. Unlike in Germany, the initial students in The Hague were primarily children of anthroposophical parents and parents interested in educational innovation. Over time, a few working-class children also enrolled. All parents in this founding school in The Hague inhabited the space between social idealism and religious reformism, playing a pivotal role in the evolution of an anthroposophical subculture.

Today, parent groups seeking to establish a Waldorf school have a more diverse background. Their distinctive feature is a conscious preference for an alternative school system that prioritizes child-centric education over performance. However, the question lingers: why does Waldorf education fail to attract parents and pupils from even more diverse backgrounds?

Recent discourse has brought to light manifestations of racism and white supremacy experienced by many individuals in the Western world. This prompts an inquiry into whether there are unconscious elements in our education system that create distinctions, hindering Waldorf education from being genuinely open and receptive to people with diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds, despite the professed principles of openness and contribution to diversity.

Instances of racism experienced by students with different cultural backgrounds in Waldorf schools are documented. More (self-)investigation is warranted. Since 1996, there have been several unsuccessful attempts to establish a Waldorf school in the Netherlands that accommodates people from various non-Christian backgrounds and ethnicities. However, since 2018, two new initiatives in Amsterdam and Rotterdam have engaged the local community, and the annual rhythm is detached from Christian traditions.

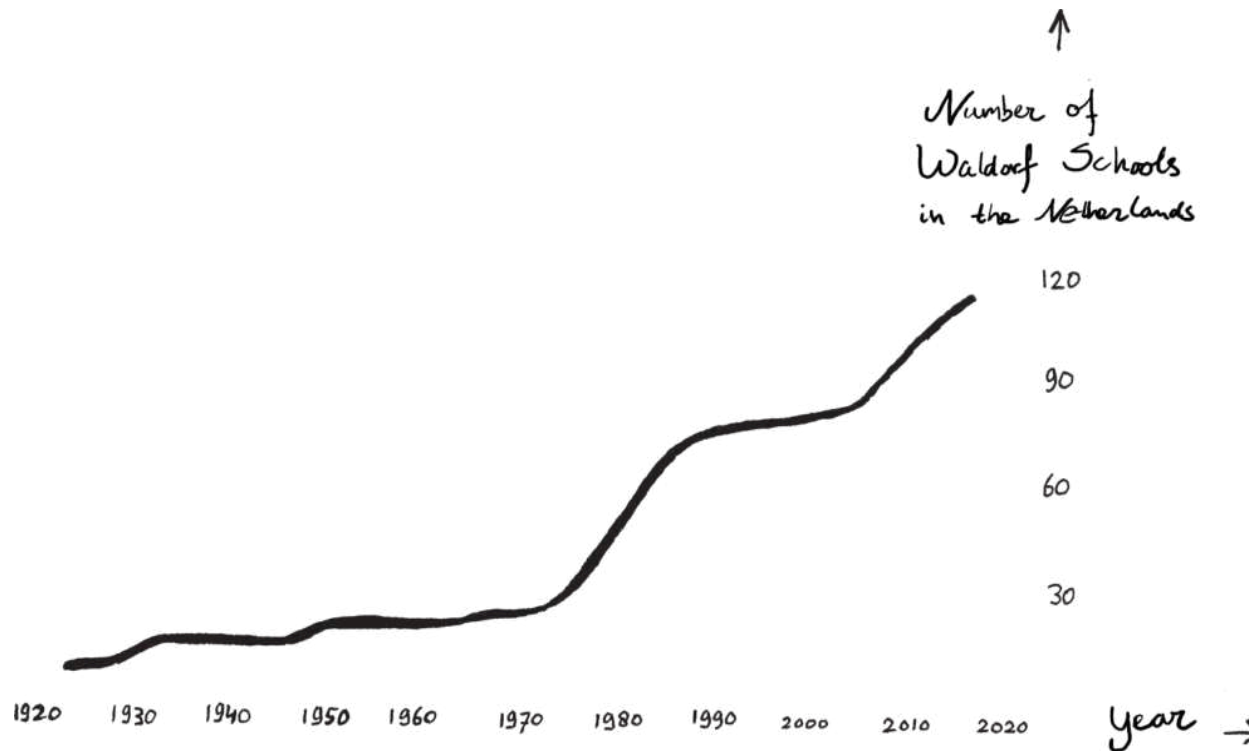
On an international scale, Waldorf education is accessible and open to different cultures, as evidenced by initiatives worldwide led by individuals from diverse backgrounds—Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, and Jewish. In Israel, a thriving Waldorf school movement is rooted in Jewish and Islamic traditions rather than Christian ones. Notably, China has witnessed significant growth in Waldorf schools. Currently, there are approximately 1,250 Waldorf schools in 70 countries globally, with over 789 located in Europe. This marks substantial growth since 1992 when there were about 500 worldwide. Despite this global expansion, the question persists: why do other countries manage to tailor Waldorf education to their cultural context, while in the Netherlands, there is a challenge in reflecting the diversity of the population in these schools?

## **4.4 Barriers and remedies**

The number of Waldorf schools in the Netherlands has experienced significant growth, particularly during the 1970s and 1980s, with the continuous establishment of new independent schools. Although the expansion included variations such as special education, these faced challenges as national policy increasingly emphasized regional affiliations, while these schools operated within a national Waldorf context.

Establishing a public school is a viable option in the Netherlands, with a few existing initiatives, but overall, the potential for further growth appeared limited. Dutch law supports the establishment and maintenance of Waldorf schools.

In the 1990s, growth slowed down due to legal constraints on establishing new schools. However, alternative models emerged in Breda and Maastricht that collaborated with regular schools. This trend persisted in the early decades of the twenty-first century, with mainstream schools recognising the opportunity to integrate a department with a Waldorf ethos, often to counteract declining pupil numbers resulting from population shrinkage. Notably, after 2013, these initiatives proliferated rapidly. As of 2022, there were 11 Waldorf schools affiliated with regular schools, collectively educating around 2,000 pupils.



*The number of Waldorf schools in the Netherlands. Source: association of Waldorf schools.*

I had the opportunity to witness and oversee this dynamic closely, particularly during the establishment of a Waldorf department within a regular school. Differences in culture became evident, sparking various questions, though these details extend beyond the scope of this book. Crucial is that the impetus of founding Waldorf Schools over a century ago permeated Dutch society through various channels. An organic growth occurred, navigating around legislative obstacles, and finding its place in cultural life. My concern lies in assessing whether this growth has a solid foundation and whether it can endure sustainably.

## **5 Trinity as origin**

The roots of Waldorf education, it is consistently asserted, are tightly interwoven with the social movement at the conclusion of the First World War and Rudolf Steiner's commitment to renewal across various domains, known as the 'social triad movement.' Let's delve deeper into this connection. What were the unfolding events that provided the impetus for the establishment of the new school?

In 1917, four years after Rudolf Steiner had departed from the Theosophical Society (of which he served as president in 1913) and initiated the anthroposophical movement, the concept of the social triad movement began to take form. Steiner drew inspiration for this from the ideas put forth by Goethe, Schiller, Fichte, and Hegel. To comprehend the genesis of the 'trinity' he delineated in "Von Seelenrätseln," I retraced his interest in the works of Goethe and Schiller.

### **5.1 Goethe and Schiller**

Steiner established intensive engagement with the works of the author and researcher Johann Wolfgang Goethe (1749-1832) in 1889. During that year, he assumed the role of editor for the publication of the natural scientific components of Goethe's work, incorporating philosophical introductions and elucidating explanations.

Through Goethe's oeuvre, Steiner encountered ideas concerning polarity and metamorphosis. Goethe perceived two forces in nature: polarity and intensification (*Steigerung*). According to him, polarities were ubiquitously present in nature, constantly in operation, and capable of causing metamorphosis through intensification. His color theory provides an illustration.

Polarity and intensification serve as the foundation for the trinity concept: an effect emerges at the intersection between two poles. In the context of

light and darkness, this results in the manifestation of colours. One can explore other opposites and observe the interactions occurring at their midpoint, at the interface. Through this exploration, the impact of intensifying the poles on the intermediate region becomes apparent.



*Colour, according to Goethe, arises at the interface of darkness and light.*

#### **GOETHE'S COLOUR THEORY**

Goethe considers dark and light as a polarity. Sky blue (cyan) emerges when we perceive dark through light - the sky appears blue because we observe it through the light in the atmosphere. Conversely, yellow arises when we perceive light through darkness - consider the white sunlight that, during sunrise, we perceive as yellow through the relatively dark atmosphere. The intensification of dark during sunset produces the colour red (magenta), while the intensification of light during sunrise can also generate red within the blue spectrum. <sup>4</sup>

For instance, Rudolf Steiner explained the emergence of feeling through the interaction of representation, or thinking, and the will (Steiner, 1991). Representation is linked to the past, as memories and past experiences contribute to building up a representation. The will is connected to the future, as actions lay a seed for what is to come. Intensifying thinking (waking representations) gives rise to conscious feelings, while intensifying wanting creates strong unconscious desires.

Past and future can be viewed as a polarity, similar to the light and dark from which colours emerge. Reality, as the action of these two poles, arises at the interface in the present. The influence of the past and the future strongly shapes reality in the present moment.



*Goethe*



*Schiller*

Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805), a philosopher, poet, and playwright who was friends with Goethe until his death, developed his thoughts on the enlightenment of mankind in his *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man*. This must be understood in the context of the French Revolution. Schiller asserted, 'Political problems can only be solved if they are approached through the question of aesthetics, because only through beauty can freedom be attained.' In his conclusions on beauty, Schiller identified two fundamental instincts (Triebe) of the human psyche:

1. Stofftrieb: the urge to experience the world and feel one's own existence; the sensory and physical aspect of human nature;
2. Formtrieb: the urge arising from our rational and moral nature, seeking the unchanging and timeless.

According to Schiller, the aesthetic Spieltrieb, the aesthetic play drive, which brings together and keeps in tension the sensory and rational aspects, forms the middle ground between these two instincts, commonly known as the sense drive and reason drive.

#### **BETWEEN AHRIMAN AND LUCIFER**

What we encounter in Schiller's concept of Triebe finds reflection in the dynamics of the spiritual polarity illustrated by Rudolf Steiner in his 'human representative,' a 9.5m-high wooden sculpture showcased at the Goetheanum in Dornach. This sculpture portrays the image of humanity existing in the tension between Ahriman and Lucifer, harmonizing them and achieving trinity by positioning oneself in the middle.

Ahrimanic forces represent the spiritual energies that tightly bind us to material reality. Luciferic forces, on the other hand, are the spiritual energies that strongly connect us with the spiritual realm. One could posit that the interaction of these two polar spiritual forces

creates the intermediary. The intensification of Ahrimanic forces results in a stronger attachment to material reality, while the intensification of Luciferic forces, conversely, leads to a more profound spiritual experience.



*Rudolf Steiner's humanity representative at the Goetheanum in Dornach*

We observe the same interplay of opposites that gives rise to a third phenomenon, much like in Goethe's concept. Through the interaction of the Stofftrieb on the Formtrieb and vice versa, the Spieltrieb emerges in the middle. The intensification of the Stofftrieb can lead to something different than the intensification of the Formtrieb.

## **5.2 Trinity as a vision of mankind with Steiner**

This principle governing the operation of a polarity, giving rise to a reality in the middle at the interface, is at the heart of the human and world view in Waldorf education. A student constantly exists within a polarity, such as mind and body or thinking and willing, and what we observe is its manifestation in tangible reality. It is our responsibility to discern the polarities through which this reality is currently shaped. This implies that behind the observable reality, we can uncover a non- or less observable reality of polarities.

In "Von Seelenrätseln," Steiner expounds on anthroposophy as a science that considers phenomena in the soul as independent workings, distinct from anthropology, where the soul is tied to sensory processes. Steiner provides a philosophical justification for anthroposophy, delves into its cognitive limits, and outlines the abstract nature of its concepts, which he deems a significant characteristic of the mind. He then explores the basis of intentional relationships and describes the different senses.<sup>5</sup>

In the sixth paragraph, Steiner describes the physical and mental dependencies of man, which can be interpreted as a depiction of the polarity of body and mind and the relationship of the soul (the middle) to that polarity. Here, Steiner establishes the structure of the soul in terms of imagining, feeling, and willing. He connects imagining to the nervous system with offshoots to the senses on one hand and the bodily internal organisation on the other. Feeling is physically related to the rhythm of life, manifested in respiratory activity. The soul experiences feeling by leaning on the respiratory rhythm, just as nerve processes are employed in imagining, and willing is similarly based on metabolic processes.

The three domains of the human body are then identified as the nerve-sensory system, the heart-lung system, and the metabolic-limb system—a view of man later summarised as 'head, heart, and hands.' In conclusion, Steiner draws parallels between the tripartite nature of soul life (imagining, feeling, and willing), the tripartite nature of physical life (nervous activity, rhythmic events, and metabolic processes), and the tripartite nature of spiritual life (imaginings, inspirations, and intuitions). Steiner emphasises the interconnectedness of these areas, rejecting a simplistic division of three areas that operate independently. Instead, he underscores that the whole-body functions in a way that different areas have their own tasks but are strongly interconnected.

The awareness that the physical, the soulful, and the spiritual are closely connected forms the foundation of Waldorf pedagogy. Actions on the inner person through education also impact the physical, and influences on the corporeal realm extend to the pupils' soulful and spiritual aspects. I interpret this awareness of the connection of body, soul, and spirit as the core of the triad articulated by Rudolf Steiner in the book "Von Seelenrätseln," following his studies of Goethe, Schiller, and his own research.

## 5.3 Trinity in society

In the years following 1917, these ideas also demonstrated their significance in the social sphere. Although Von Seelenrätseln makes no mention of the external war, biographies of Rudolf Steiner indicate that during the period 1914-1918, he halted his prefaces on esoteric subjects and focused on social issues.

Steiner's concept of social triads was rooted in his observation that there are three domains in social life: cultural, social, and economic. Here, cultural, and economic life can be perceived as the polarity from which social life emerges as the middle ground. In my view, Steiner did not aim to construct a new society from this framework. His concern was to identify disturbances and essential qualities within each domain. He perceived society as an organism, akin to the way he recognised a triad in human beings. During the tumultuous times of the First World War, he likely thought that the triad provided a thinking framework that could contribute to shaping a healthy social development.

The major social issue at the time was rooted in the strong class inequalities, despite the rational approach brought by the Enlightenment and the optimistic belief in progress through natural sciences. The conflict between the worlds of the nobility and big industrialists versus the movements of workers, youth, women, and artists intensified. Bourgeois culture was under strain, and the First World War revealed the naivety of the liberal and materialistic path towards progress. This led to a quest for new political and social forms, with the tension between liberal capitalist society and the socialists' and Marxists' pursuit of proletarian domination.

This socio-political landscape also revealed a polarity between the West and the East, with the West embracing Social Darwinism and the East seeking support and mutual aid. It was the polarity of individual focus versus collective focus. For Central Europe, Steiner envisioned a unique role: situated midway between the two poles, it could define its own role.

Steiner's vision of society was partly shaped by the need for recognition and meaning among workers. He grappled with questions on how human beings

can experience the world and themselves as meaningful, achieve a just world, and wield power. These questions could be approached from the perspective of cultural life, where one freely seeks expressions of reflection on reality, or from political or legal life, where rights are established democratically, or from economic life, where connections between people's needs and production and trade are examined. The chosen angle influences the solutions derived.

Even in our contemporary era, these issues remain pertinent. The COVID-19 crisis has once again highlighted polarisations in social life. Contradictions between rich and poor, people from different backgrounds, health and illness, and economy and culture necessitate a fresh approach. The crisis has seemingly driven people apart, leading to divisions between supporters of authorities' approaches and opponents fighting for democratic values and freedom. There is a risk of shifting from one pole to the other. Here, too, the observation of a tripartite society may offer answers and a vision for development where human beings are at the centre of the polarity, fostering balance.

## **5.4 Trinity and the organisation of Waldorf schools**

In the period 1918-1919, Steiner was deeply engaged with these issues. Emil Molt, too, was involved in shaping a society based on the tripartite idea. He worked on establishing a credit union for entrepreneurs amid the ruins of World War I, incorporating co-determination and strong worker involvement in the enterprise. From this struggle emerged the idea of creating a school for the workers' children, conceived 'in a flash.'

Steiner perceived in Molt's request an opportunity to extend his ideas on social triadism to pedagogy, much as he would later do in other domains such as medicine and agriculture, intending to reform society through these avenues. Education in the new school aimed to provide pupils with a heightened perception of the world around them. They were expected to recognise freedom, equality, and fraternity as core values, ultimately

becoming independently judgmental individuals capable of shaping social developments in the light of these principles.

One might argue that while these principles were successfully integrated into pedagogy, medicine, and agriculture, they did not firmly establish themselves in the social domain. There are only a few instances where these principles have been realized in organisational contexts, such as schools organising themselves in a cooperative framework or the Triodos Bank seeking to shape the bank based on these principles. However, nowhere have these ideas taken root to the extent of serving as a comprehensive example.

And perhaps that is the essence of it. The triad is not a ready-made solution for social issues, a societal model, or a blueprint for organising schools or education. Instead, it is a principle with vast potential that has influenced various areas as an observational tool. In the final seven years of his life, Rudolf Steiner spurred the development of these areas through the triad, as people embraced the ideas and sought to connect with them (Taylor, 2010, p. 155).

In the context of Dutch Waldorf schools, it appears that these principles did not find a solid foundation for organisational structure. However, there is a recognised need to give education a different organisation than the conventional vertical model seen in Dutch schools, a hierarchical structure determined by the government. The development of Dutch Waldorf schools began with a desire for self-governance but, due to growing complexity with school growth, they reverted to a hierarchical model. Even this shift seems to introduce a polarity within schools: hierarchy versus self-management. The question then arises whether this mode of governance adequately serves education and if there is a functioning middle ground that can bring balance.

The goal is not to impose a triad on organisational life but to acknowledge that a trinity is already observable in many areas. For instance, in education, Gert Biesta (2018) identifies the trinity of 'subjectification, socialisation, and qualification.' The trinity of the pupil in 'head, heart, and hands' is widely accepted throughout the field of education. Our inner life, as

mentioned earlier, can be seen as 'imagine, feel, and want.' Similarly, the economy can be understood as 'production, circulation, and consumption,' a dialogue as the alternation between 'consciousness, needs, and message,' and the body as 'head, torso, and limbs,' and so forth. In each case, deduction plays a role: from a whole—such as education or the learner—we look for the extremes (head and limbs) in conjunction with the middle (torso). The starting point is recognising a whole comprised of interconnected parts. To comprehend consciousness, it seems necessary to first discover these parts and then understand how they interact, each with its own set of laws.

This holistic view stands in contrast to the reductionist approach of natural science (seeking fundamental entities in complex structures). Through this holistic perspective, I aim to explore the challenges surrounding school organisation and leadership, with the hope of uncovering new insights.

## **Part 2 Elements of organisation**

In this section, I delve into the elements that can be employed to craft a school organisation that aligns with the education we aim to deliver.

## **6 Leadership, responsibility, and power**

Anyone contemplating the concept of a threefold society or organisation inevitably encounters considerations related to leadership, responsibility, and power. In Waldorf schools, leadership is not inherently embraced based on the foundational ideals. However, a certain form of leadership is deemed necessary to streamline decision-making processes at various levels. Furthermore, having individuals accountable for specific aspects is not only practical but also justifiable. Nevertheless, the association of leadership with power raises a crucial question: is such a connection imperative?

### **6.1 Leadership**

Rudolf Steiner said and wrote little about leadership, advocating instead for individual responsibility. His vision was that each person would assume their unique responsibilities.

In contemporary times, many schools aspire to have all teachers and staff take ownership and responsibility for their roles in the organisation. The term 'ownership' is now commonly used, indicating a connection to and responsibility for a particular subject, fostering engagement with both the issue and the individuals involved. Ownership implies a commitment to achieving something meaningful based on responsibility for the subject.

Horizontal leadership emphasises the collaborative development of a community and brings about necessary changes. It operates on the principle of equality, rejecting a vertical hierarchy based on authority. Effective leadership in this context involves establishing sound processes, both at the school or organisational level and in the daily practices of teachers facilitating learning processes for students. The ultimate goal of the school community is to support and guide student development, with the personal development of staff members being secondary but still important in the service of promoting pupil development.

A crucial aspect of this approach is assessing whether the personal journey of each employee aligns with the organisation's mission. Paying attention to

the organisation's mission is considered a leadership responsibility.

While it's not mandatory for a school to have a leader directing all processes, it is generally accepted as a principle that there should be an overview, and coherence must be sought. This is the responsibility of the school leader, who also connects with the social environment and speaks on behalf of the organisation when needed.

In smaller schools, where everyone knows each other, the school leader may have various roles. In larger schools, responsibilities are distributed across different individuals, functions, and tasks. The size and complexity of processes in larger schools necessitate differentiation, collaboration, and a division of tasks.

Designing all processes within the organisation to allow attention and control is crucial. Striking a balance between trust and control is essential. Regular attention to the progress of processes, without attempting to dictate content, helps build trust in the process owner and the people involved, fostering their self-confidence. Genuine dialogue is key, and when judgment is perceived in the leader's questions or attention, the balance shifts towards control and distrust.

## **6.2 Responsibility**

Leadership is often conceptualised within a pyramidal <sup>6</sup> structure, with many individuals forming the base, a smaller group managing them, and a leader at the top holding final responsibility. However, what does this hierarchy truly entail?

The notion of (ultimate) responsibility is associated with the need to hold someone accountable and assign blame in case of errors. This perspective is rooted in distrust. While designating one person as ultimately responsible might seem convenient, it doesn't imply that this person should take over all other responsibilities within the organisation. The ultimate responsible person's role is to maintain an overview and often serves as the spokesperson, liaising with the surrounding area.

Contemporary school governance frequently places the director as responsible for the quality of education, even when they have limited influence. This top-down approach can jeopardize ownership and result in situations where leaders are held responsible for issues beyond their control, akin to a minister being held accountable for the mistakes of their officials.

From the perspective of horizontal leadership, responsibility for various processes rests with different individuals empowered to assume responsibility for a self-selected or assigned process with consent. This aligns with Steiner's idea that each individual must bear full responsibility, implying full liability in that specific area. Shared responsibility is a misnomer, each individual bears responsibility individually.

In an ideal organisation, everyone is responsible for their part, forming a collective of responsibilities. However, the entire responsibility cannot be collectively owned. This creates a paradoxical condition. While each sub-process can have individual steering, there is a need for overview and direction. Final responsibility and accountability can be distributed among one or more individuals overseeing the shared leadership.

The role of a spokesperson directing shared leadership and disseminating developments is one solution, but it's not essential for steering to come from one person. The concept rejects a dictatorial system in favour of a collective responsibility that mirrors the interdependence within an organism. Using the analogy of bodily organs, each part is responsible for specific sub-processes, and the interaction and interdependence ensure the proper functioning of the whole, guided, often unconsciously, by individuality.

## **6.3 Power**

Leadership and power are typically closely intertwined. When someone wields power, they dictate events and strip others of their individual responsibility. In horizontal leadership, our emphasis is on equality. It is imperative to critically examine power to address the question: how does power evolve into authority? From the start, I have been intrigued by the reluctance to acknowledge power dynamics within Waldorf schools.

## **EXAMPLE**

In 1983, when I applied for a position as a chemistry teacher in a Waldorf secondary school, it became evident that the headmaster, despite holding the title, performed various associated tasks and shouldered responsibilities for the school's external dealings. However, it was explicitly stated that he was not to be referred simultaneous affirmation and denial of the headmaster's role generated an unhealthy tension.

In the social context, this individual was treated as a director. By disavowing the directorial position, we constructed a façade of equality. Meanwhile, informal leadership emerged. Certain individuals dictated actions based on their experience or length of association with the school. Others perceived them as the patriarch or matriarch of the organisation, a role they embraced—albeit without assuming full responsibility for their unofficial status.

In case of mishaps, they disclaimed responsibility, leading to an unstable community. Many individuals became reliant on these informal leaders, hesitating to take initiatives. Consequently, responsibility lingered in a void, fostering gossip, backbiting, and a culture of assigning blame. Fear permeated the collective environment.

The denial of the directorial position also meant rejecting the inherent power that accompanies such a role. Was this a strategy to resist the negative repercussions of power? Power, particularly when equality is overlooked, can have adverse effects. Paradoxically, by disowning the position, informal power was unleashed in this instance.

Clearly defined formal responsibilities are crucial as they make everyone's responsibility explicit, allowing for mutual accountability. Accountability essentially acts as a counter-power, absent in informal power structures. Participants then rely on the strength of individual personalities to serve as a counterbalance. The innate inclination for dominance, seen as a lordly instinct, exists in various animals, including humans. Additionally, the desire to align oneself with power can lead to the emergence of informal power.

Acknowledging each person's role and task, along with the inherent inequality among roles, has facilitated steering in recent times at Waldorf schools. The principle of equality, when taken to the extreme, led to interference in everything, resulting in slow decision-making and unclear processes. The introduction of formal school leaders, maintaining equality in personal interactions, brought clarity to process steering and decision-making.

Formal power is foundational in our social system, structured in a pyramid where a higher position grants power. This formal power structure can have negative consequences, as genuine dialogue may be lacking.

In a specific example, the convergence of two aspirations, with little concern for each other's perspectives, led to the transformation. The formal power of the secretary of state facilitated the change, a transformation that wouldn't have occurred from the schools themselves. A more collaborative approach, originating from the schools, could have potentially yielded a different outcome.

In government, the destructive potential of power is evident in cases like the surcharge affair, where government power, detached from individual officials' intentions, adversely affected many individuals. The system, once molded into a coercive force, became divorced from human judgment.

#### **EXAMPLE**

In the 1990s, I participated in negotiations regarding the status of Waldorf schools within Dutch secondary education. During this time, I observed how power associated with a role was accompanied by elaborate rituals. State Secretary Netelenbos was ceremoniously received during our visits, following a specific protocol. According to the protocol, it was prescribed that she would sit down first upon entering the room. Our delegation, displaying adaptability, adhered to these rituals. Once we all sat down, the dynamics of the meeting were established.

The focus on power dynamics imparted a distinct character to the conversation. Although there was an exchange of views and interests, genuine dialogue was absent. Our upper school had a vmbo status (three principal statuses in the Netherlands: vmbo, havo, and vwo), while our schools enrolled students across all levels, from mavo to vwo. We sought recognition for vmbo, havo, and vwo education. Simultaneously, we possessed a form of power, as the government aimed to eliminate the nine years of primary education. Their proposal was to limit it to grade 8, while Waldorf primary schools extended up to a seventh class (grade 9). Eventually, Waldorf schools were granted the opportunity to establish comprehensive schools offering vmbo-t, havo schools with vmbo-t, havo, and vwo, subject to the condition that large regional associations were formed as per legal provisions.

#### *Positional Power*

A formal position or role bestows power upon the individual occupying that position. In some cases, symbolic attributes further accentuate this authority. For instance, mayors often wear a chain of office, while bishops don a mitre. In various fairy tales and stories, power is depicted through attire, such as a crown, staff, or cloak—a symbolic garb of authority that one adorns.

## **EXAMPLE**

When, after ten years, I transitioned from my role as the director of BVS-schooladvies to a consultant position, I felt a sense of relief, realising that I was no longer accountable for all the families associated with the consultancy. This was an unexpected revelation. Concurrently, I observed a shift in how people treated me personally. It was disconcerting and bewildering to find that suggestions which were once readily accepted could now be scrutinized. It appears, by changing my position, I had not only shed a job title but also discarded a cloak of authority.

Only in hindsight did I come to realise that the director's role had influenced the way people interacted with me. The authority vested in my position had led to a distinct change in how my words and actions were perceived. While serving as a director, I aimed for equitable dialogues with employees, yet individuals posed questions on matters where, in my opinion, they could have exercised their own judgment. It wasn't until I stepped down from my position that I fully grasped the impact the director's role had on the dynamics of our relationships.

I found that holding a position inherently creates a hierarchy: being a director bestowed upon me positional power. In this context, the inequality was not simply acknowledged but essentially exaggerated. Transitioning to another role, which was perceived as 'lower' in the responsibility hierarchy, equated to shedding another layer of the power robe.

Removing the power robe can have unforeseen consequences. The moment I divested myself of this symbolic power was crucial, as it allowed me to consciously recognise how power has the potential to corrupt. One becomes oblivious to their authentic self, driven by external expectations and reactions from those conferring power.

It becomes ingrained in one's identity. Upon bidding farewell to the directorship, I had to disentangle myself from that identity. My ego remained strongly tethered to the position, yearning not for its burdens but for the gratifying, unquestioned acceptance from others. It became an internal struggle: defining who I am and discerning which power or influence pertains to my individuality, and what was solely tied to the position.

### *Power and Counterpower*

It is understandable that the behaviour of the environment influences the person in the position of power. In a podcast (Bouzerda, 2020), Joris Luyendijk discussed the impossibility for dictators in Arab countries to resign because they would be killed. This points to a psychological

mechanism within the collective that hinders the relinquishing of the robe of power and repentance towards fellow leaders. Thus, the collective bears a certain responsibility in sustaining power in a position. Here, we observe the dynamic between people's need to follow a leader and the innate tendency to rule.

The power of the collective versus the power of the individual: we can observe this contradiction in the development of communism versus that of capitalism. In communism, the focus was on vesting power in the proletariat. In capitalism, on the contrary, the individual is elevated, emphasizing individual responsibility and performance. Both proved to make paradoxical sense – communism gave rise to dictatorships where a few held absolute power, and in the capitalist world, democracy emerged as the representation of the collective.

As individual responsibility increasingly extends to everyone within the state or organisation, the need for control and influence of all individuals becomes ever more significant. This reinforces the sense of powerlessness when power is concentrated in one person or a single function. There is a growing societal desire for more influence and responsibility among the people themselves.

If we aspire to have everyone take responsibility – as Rudolf Steiner envisaged (see 2.6 'Leadership in development' and Annex 1) – then power must be distributed. This requires delegating leadership responsibilities to everyone and recognition of these capabilities in each person. Such a shift demands efforts from everyone, considering the inherent differences in capacities and character. Empowered parents in schools also seek to exert influence. They represent a counterforce, and it is imperative to appreciate and acknowledge the value of this counterforce.

### *Recognised inequality*

When someone assumes a particular role or position, taking on responsibility is a crucial aspect. Could we also reverse the perspective? By taking responsibility, you inhabit a position or role and automatically wield power (or authority). And does the moment you assume that responsibility

not immediately create a distinction between you and others? Isn't there an immediate sense of inequality?

Alex van Emst discusses 'recognised inequality' in Professional Culture in Educational Organisations (2012), highlighting the role of power in this inequality. Power is a phenomenon that I believe is unavoidable and needs acknowledgment.

### **EXAMPLE**

In the 1990s, serving as a member of the day-to-day management, I held responsibility for the finances and operations of the Waldorf school for secondary education in Zutphen. My journey began as a teacher, encompassing various roles, eventually leading to the assumption of this responsibility. I found joy in it as it provided the opportunity to oversee a significant new building project.

Being a member of the day-to-day management wasn't a distinct role; I was initially appointed as a teacher. This alignment with my ideals seemed suitable for the flat organisation we envisioned. However, my contentment was disrupted when I discovered that a colleague with fewer responsibilities was earning more than me! It wasn't the monetary aspect that bothered me but rather the hypocritical semblance of equality. Considering my greater responsibilities, it would be fairer if I earned at least as much as my colleague. While I didn't request a pay raise, and the situation didn't hinder my enjoyment of work, it prompted me to acknowledge these differences. I became aware of the inherent disparity, challenging the equality we were striving to achieve.

We must accept and articulate that unequal responsibility and power relations exist, acknowledging both the positive and negative aspects of power. Perhaps the pursuit of equality and the denial of power pose the real danger. Even ideals can wield power, potentially leading to destructive outcomes.

#### *From power to authority*

From a pedagogical perspective, Gert Biesta's approach (2018) is intriguing. He discusses the value of encountering resistance. In subjectification, experiencing resistance in the initiatives one takes is necessary. This involves either pushing through one's initiative against resistance or yielding to the resistance. In the former case, Biesta refers to it as world destruction, and in the latter, self-destruction. I discuss a third possibility later.

Pushing through a plan or initiative against resistance is essentially an (authoritarian) exercise of power. Biesta even indicates that pedagogical intervention is, by definition, an exercise of power. However, a

transformation of power into authority is possible—a phenomenon typically observed in retrospect: when our work focuses on the subjectification of learners, we hope that, at some point, students recognise that what initially presented itself as an unwanted interruption—a moment of exerting power—has contributed to their attempts to mature in and with the world. When this happens, power has transformed into authority. Biesta defines authority as dialogic, in contrast to power, which operates unilaterally. Authority is the power granted to someone, contingent on being consistently brought back into dialogue to remain acknowledged.

### *Self-realisation and self-education*

My position is that power is inevitable, and it is crucial to acknowledge this. Yet we can strive for a balance of power by organising within ourselves both power and counterpower. With this balance, we aim for the middle ground between world destruction and self-destruction. I envision this as a triad: emerging simultaneously in the mid-between the poles of world destruction and self-destruction are world-building and self-realisation.

Opening ourselves up to feedback, in my view, is part of the pursuit of distributed power and self-realisation. It requires inner development to make ourselves vulnerable. The encounter and dealing with power then become an exercise of the soul, learning to open and close. We open internally in our pursuit of freedom, with attention and unreserved love for what we encounter. Closing ourselves off enables us to turn more inward, overcome fears, form our own perspective, and confront the reality we encounter.

In addition to opening ourselves up to feedback, a second requirement is showing respect for everything on earth. This is possible only if we do not position ourselves as superior or inferior to others (Bekman 2018b). Acknowledged inequality can coexist with equality.

Power is a phenomenon from the vertical dimension (see Chapter 7). In achieving things, power is necessary, especially in decision-making. It is gratifying when regular decisions are made in processes! However, it feels unpleasant when those decisions are unilaterally imposed – experienced as world destruction. It might be faster but less sustainable. Therefore, dealing

with power necessitates engaging with the horizontal dimension. How satisfying it is when we manage to reach a decision together! In doing so, we find the middle ground, enabling world-building and self-realisation.

This is why self-education - involving dealing with resistance and reflecting on our own inner reactions - should be an essential part of the school culture. The organisation becomes the practice field where this self-education can unfold. The search for ourselves involves clarifying the expectations we have of ourselves and others. When we become aware of our instinctive craving for power, our lordliness, we can manage it. Instead of unconsciously satisfying it and taking pleasure in dominating others, through (self) reflection, we can adjust our behavior. Then, power can be used where needed and is supportive of humanity's development (Glöckler, 1999)<sup>7</sup>.

#### **EXAMPLE**

Since 2013, Waldorf schools have been integrated into various existing (secondary) schools. I observed a significant enthusiasm to implement Waldorf education within traditional educational institutions that had often been in existence for over a century. This integration repeatedly proved to be a practical arena accompanied by considerable tensions due to the clash of different cultures.

Frequently, the pre-existing institution was deeply entrenched in hierarchical structures. In one instance, this hierarchical nature was so ingrained in the school's DNA that, despite a desire for a different approach, everything operated in a top-down (vertical) manner. The atmosphere was dominated by monologue rather than dialogue. Shared responsibility was scarce, and power struggles involving the participation council and management fostered a stifling culture, inhibiting the ability to take initiative.

However, the success of Waldorf education hinges on providing space for teachers' responsibility and initiative. Educators should have the autonomy to design their lessons and engage responsibly with students, free from imposed power dynamics. This autonomy allows students to perceive the teacher's power as authority, fostering the development of the teacher's authority through reflective practices.

The clash in guiding principles generates a distinctive culture within the Waldorf school, distinct from the formal culture of the 'mother school.' This dichotomy creates polarity and tension within the community. Addressing these calls for a new form of horizontal leadership in the mother school – leadership willing to engage in dialogue, considering all perspectives. If successful, these amalgamated schools can evolve into new arenas where all stakeholders can experiment with self-responsibility.

In my opinion, power is essential to accomplish tasks. This necessitates the distribution of power because the intellectual capacity to update an idea resides within each of us. Collectively, we can achieve more than as individuals, as each of us assumes diverse responsibilities and

acknowledges them, thus dispersing the power. Realising an idea or dream requires dialogue among individuals. Decisiveness then becomes a quality or competence not only of an individual but of the entire group. In the third part of this book, I discuss how we can implement this in educational organisations – how we can bring it to fruition – and how we can establish a training ground for the ideal of recognised inequality, distributed power, and collective decisiveness.

## **7 Relationships**

To address the issues of recognised inequality, distributed power, and collective decisiveness, we must not only examine the relationship between the inner and outer worlds of the people in the organisation but also consider the organisational dimensions in which we shape a school.

In horizontal organising, we are concerned with how the inner world of individuals and the reality organised by individuals in the outer world relate to each other. The goal is the healthy development of people and organisations.

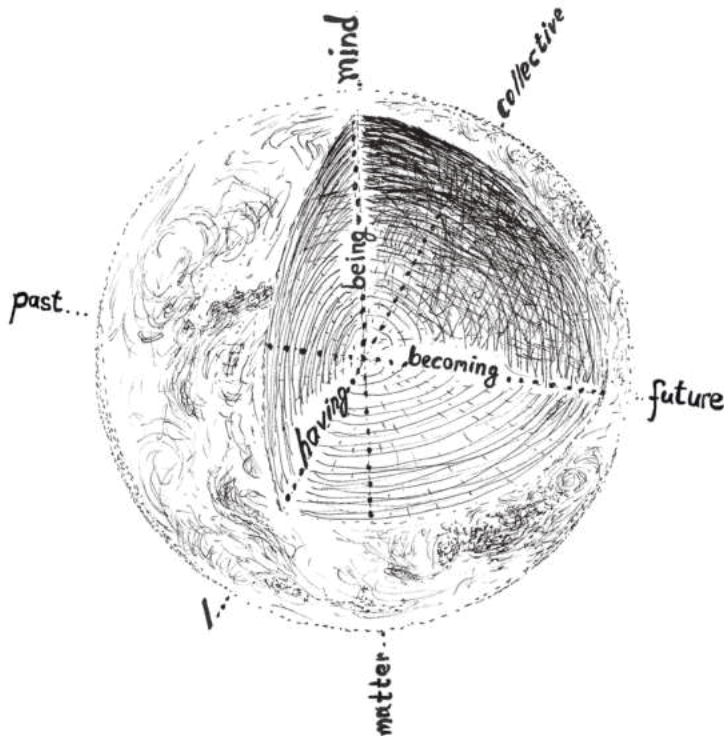
For centuries, the vertical hierarchical orientation has sustained and secured our organisations, but it has also suppressed and constrained them. Now is the time to grant the individual their ownership and the responsibility for the community they wish to form (Bekman, 2018a).

What does the tripartite nature of society and education mean for the way individuals within an organisation relate to each other? What roles do they perform, and what function do those roles have in the organisation?

### **7.1 Organisational dimensions**

The terms 'horizontal' and 'vertical' have already been used several times before in connection with leadership and methods of organising. In this chapter, I aim to provide a more detailed explanation of these dimensions. It is not necessary for the reader to fully grasp this theory, but it can aid in a better understanding of the processes and relationships within school organisations.

The world is a whole, and within it are interconnected parts or elements that can be differentiated: man, the community, and the nature in which man lives. In addition to the related parts, we can identify three dimensions expressed in the verbs: being, becoming, and having.



*The three dimensions we can distinguish in the world.*

*Verticality: being*

We can consider the dimension of being as the vertical dimension. This extends between the poles of mind and matter or between idea and reality. Traditionally, verticality is the dimension in which people looked up to a cosmic reality. They recognised the divine (cosmic) reality in the outer events in their lives. Today, in our secular society, we no longer connect this dimension to a spiritual reality or existing gods. Instead, we refer to the world of ideas and creativity, the realm of fantasy and dreams.

The vertical dimension represents the primal polarity of human corporeal existence, similar to the primal polarity between light and darkness in Goethe's colour theory. Just as, according to Goethe, yellow and blue emerge at the interface between darkness and light, we can posit that between the poles of idea and reality (vertically), at the interface, two horizontal dimensions arise: becoming and having.

*Horizontality: becoming and having*

Becoming is the horizontal dimension in which we navigate between the past and the future. From the tension between the two, the present emerges. This is the moment when being and having can materialise. It is the point at which feelings find expression, the moment of exchange.

When we reflect on past events, we are reflecting on the past. We can recall what happened. Through that memory and the concepts stored from our past experiences, we can envision something that is yet to happen. To move towards the future, we need to be active in our representation. By actively engaging in the present, we move towards that future. Through an initiative in the present, we progress towards a future.

Analogous to Goethe's colour theory, this model of dimensions allows for a metamorphosis to occur by intensifying one of the poles. Through an intensification of the world of ideas, great imaginative representations will be formed in the process of becoming. By intensifying matter, something very concrete will arise in becoming.

The third dimension, the dimension of having, concerns the polarity between inside and outside. The creative tension between outer reality and the reality experienced inside motivates us to take action to bring these two realities closer together.

This dimension involves the tension between the individual and the collective, between our own interests and the interests of the community. On one hand, there is the individual need that seeks ownership, while on the other hand, the collective interest emphasizes the desire to share. The tension between me and us, or between us and them, moves us between inclusiveness and exclusion.

Having is pre-eminently the dimension on which our social life is based. We yearn for something, and to achieve it, we engage in interactions. From this tension, a flow emerges in a metamorphosis. This is the moment when individual interests and collective interests coincide; then, we do things for others because our own needs are satisfied by the efforts of others.<sup>8</sup>

*The three dimensions in organisations*

In the literature on management and organisation, these three dimensions are also evident. For instance, Stephen Covey provides insight into the interconnectedness of the dimensions of becoming and being in "The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People" (1989). The first trait, which Covey formulates as a habit or something one can cultivate, is: "Be proactive." Here, he delineates various reactions to a stimulus and highlights the difference between reacting and acting proactively. This is an example of actively approaching the future—the dimension of becoming. Proactivity goes beyond mere initiative-taking. Covey suggests that it becomes possible when elements of self-awareness, imagination, conscience, and independent will are deployed—the dimension of being. These elements determine freedom of choice, which also encompasses taking responsibility. Here, we can observe the influence of the vertical dimension of being on the horizontal dimension of becoming.

In Covey's second trait, "Begin with the end in mind," we once again recognise the horizontal dimension of becoming. Additionally, we discern another principle: everything is first thought out (ideation: the dimension of being) and only then implemented (the dimension of becoming). Actively envisioning the end brings the future towards us. This is a crucial aspect of leadership: developing a vision. The same holds true when contemplating the ideal community (vision) that the school organisation aspires to be.

For our conceptualization of an ideal organisation or community, both horizontal dimensions are crucial—the evolution over time and the relationship between the individual and the collective or between the inner and outer world. However, let us not lose sight of the significance of the vertical dimension in its realisation. In earlier times, people believed that in pursuing their dreams and ideas, they were subject to the whims of the gods (the workings of the spiritual world). Nowadays, we perceive it differently: humans can autonomously and freely develop ideas and bring them to fruition. With this, everyone also assumes significant responsibility. The intriguing question is whether everyone is willing and able to shoulder that responsibility. Sometimes, this responsibility can be intimidating. When attempting to shape or transform an organisation, numerous opinions and resistances emerge. Will we ever manage to assume full responsibility as

humanity? I believe so. To achieve this, we must embrace the horizontal dimension. That's why horizontal leadership and organisation are so vital.

A community, such as a school, is ideally suited for practicing this approach. In this field of practice, we not only learn to navigate power dynamics but also to give and take responsibility. We practice demonstrating leadership, realising initiatives, and, in doing so, finding the balance between our individual and collective interests. We seek and find equilibrium in becoming, having, and being—taking our time, paying attention to encounters, and adhering to the rhythm in which we achieve progress.

## **7.2 Target domains**

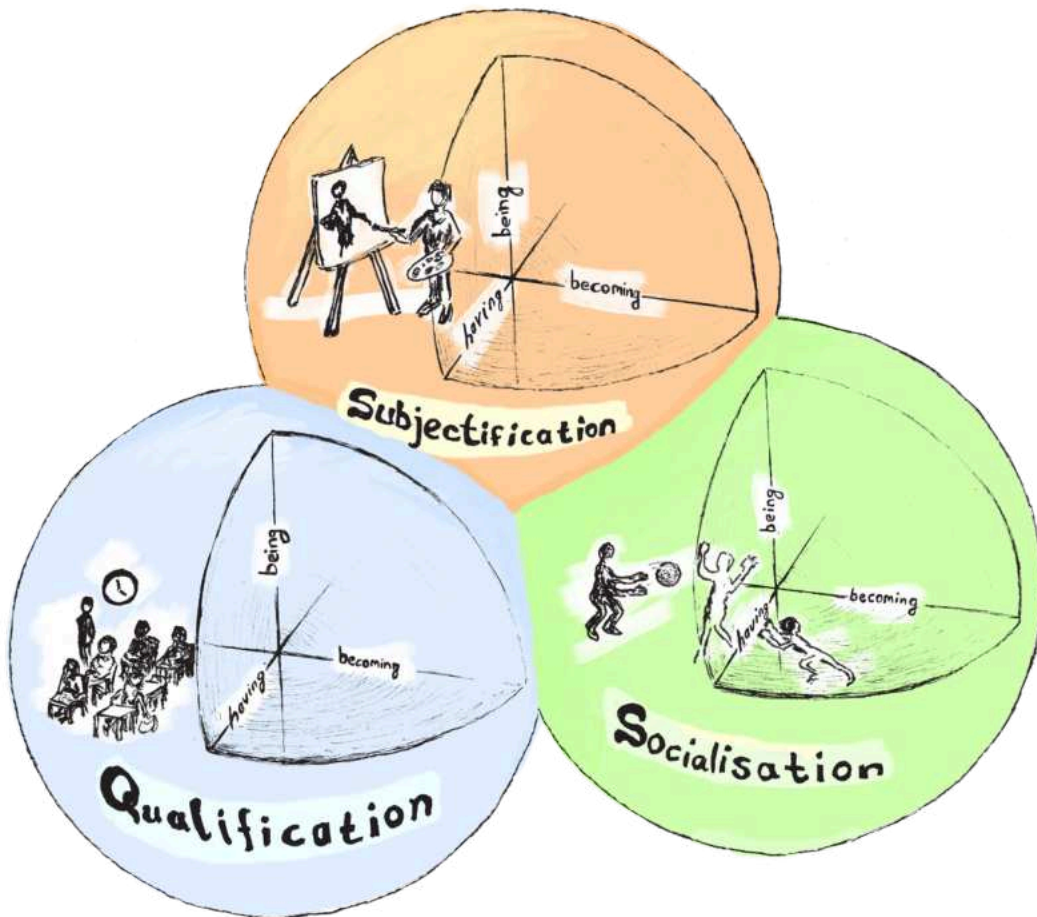
Examining a specific field—such as education, an organisation, or society as a whole—from the tripartite philosophy, we can consistently identify three goal domains. These represent distinct sub-areas within the field, each possessing its own unique quality.

In the social realm, the target domains are cultural life, social, political, or legal life, and economic life (refer to section 5.3, "Trinity in society"). Within the organisational sphere, the target domains include biography (both of the organisation and of the individuals within it), the ongoing dialogue, and the processes within the organisation. In the field of education, we recognise the target domains of subjectification, socialisation, and qualification—terminology now widely employed in education policy.

Within the goal domains, the dimensions described earlier, along with their corresponding poles, are present. However, each goal domain is not confined to only one dimension. In each domain, all three dimensions are represented, with one dimension prevailing at any given time.

Tensions invariably arise between the different domains precisely because they are connected to distinct dimensions. Cultural life (within social life), biography (within an organisation), and subjecthood (in education)

primarily relate to the dimension of being, encompassing the poles of idea and reality or mind and matter.



*The three goal domains in education and their relationship with the dimensions*

In economic life (society), processes (organisation), and qualification (education), the dimension of becoming prevails, reflecting the tension between the past and future. Social life (society), dialogue (organisation), and socialisation (education) are predominantly influenced by the dimension of having, with the poles inside and outside.

To illustrate the target domains within the dimension of having: this involves establishing a connection between the self and the other. In social life, the polarity between the individual and the collective is evident, with efforts to regulate and strike a balance between individual and collective

interests. Within organisational dialogue, there is typically a reflective process, navigating between individual and collective interests. In education, socialisation ensures that individual learners can adapt to the norms of the group, society, and community in which they reside.

Simultaneously, in these target domains where the dimension of having is recognised, the dimensions of becoming and being also come into play. For instance, in dialogue, it is crucial that the individual contributes (the dimension of being). As the conversation unfolds, judgments are formed, involving the dimension of becoming. Alternatively, one can start from a goal domain and situate it within the three dimensions. Consider socialisation within education. In the dimension of having, socialisation addresses how the pupil relates to societal norms; in the dimension of being, it concerns the learner's ability to behave autonomously; and in the dimension of becoming, it focuses on how the learner develops social skills.

The significance of distinguishing target domains and examining their relation to the dimensions lies in the ability to thoroughly analyse a change process. What is the aim of changes in our teaching or school organisation? When cultivating a subject, are we concerned with being (how the learner appears as a subject), having (how the learner relates to others and the environment), or becoming (the individual process the learner undergoes)? In qualification, are we delving into the dimension of being (the results and skills), having (how the learner receives and processes feedback), or becoming (the developmental picture the results provide)? Such reflection can guide our pedagogical actions effectively.

## **7.3 Roles**

Within an organisation, individuals perform diverse roles, each contributing a distinct quality to the community. It is common for an individual to fulfil multiple roles. In the field of education, adopting a role-based perspective in recent decades has assisted teachers in their professional development.

This approach aligns with Gert Biesta's view (2018) that education encompasses not only learning but also being subjects in interaction. In the fundamental process between teacher and learner, intricate interactions take place, shaping the subjecthood of both the teacher and the learner. In each interaction, both parties assume slightly different roles.

Whether within a school or another setting, multiple roles are essential for the functioning of an organisation. Similar to the distinct functions of organs in our body, each role in the organisation has its specific task, with kidneys and liver, for example, having unique functions that cannot be interchangeable. Role awareness facilitates the organisation and seamless execution of processes.

### *Seven qualities*

Seven qualities are often distinguished, linked with the (visible) planets. All seven planetary qualities are usually needed in a process. For optimal functioning, it is important that these qualities are all present, whether in the same person.

### **PLANETARY QUALITIES**

In cosmology, the planets were described in spheres around the earth. From the earth, one took the moon, Mercury, Venus, the sun, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. Rudolf Steiner linked their qualities to forces in man's astral body. In the planetary qualities we can see the characteristics of the celestial bodies as well as also the characteristics we know from various god(s) from Greek and Roman antiquity:

- Moon: imitation, reproduction
- Mercury: quick reaction, connecting
- Venus: nurturing
- Sun: neutral centre, mediation, balance
- Mars: decisiveness and enthusiasm
- Jupiter: overview, structure
- Saturn: to comprehend

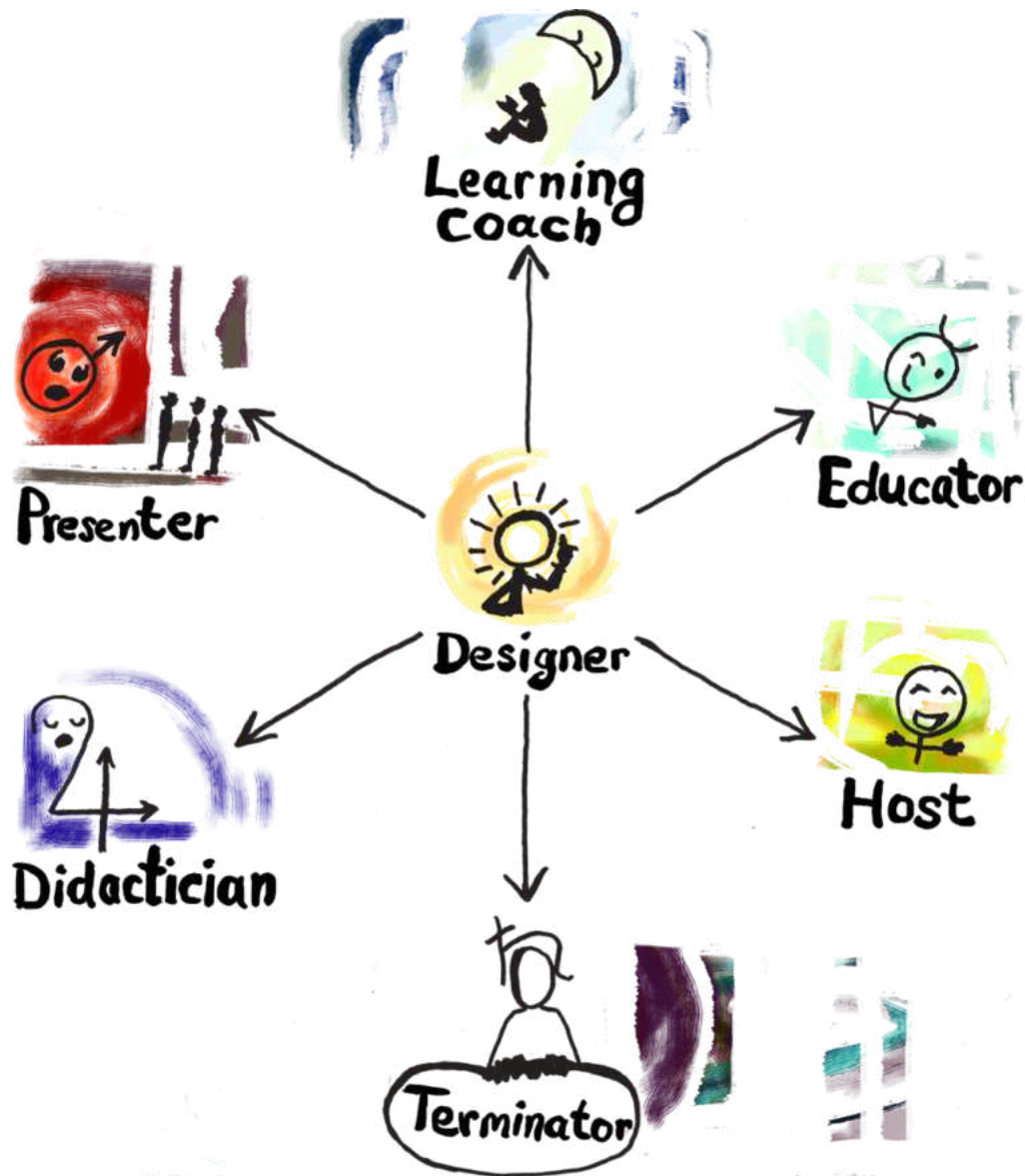
With the sun at the centre, we can always recognise opposite qualities in the planets and other objects around the sun: the moon versus Saturn, Mercury versus Jupiter, and Mars versus Venus. For a better understanding of these qualities, I recommend:

B.C.J. Lievegoed, *Mens op de drempel* (1983).

All seven of these qualities are important for a process to function optimally process to function optimally. In schoolwork, they are visible in the different roles a teacher has. (In the description below the teacher is female, and the student is male. Of course, 'he' may be read where it says she, and vice versa).

The teacher in her lunar quality is learning coach for the learner. She reflects and asks questions that make the pupil aware of his way of working, of his thinking and learning strategies and of elements such as planning and organising. In personalised education there is a lot of emphasis on this role.

She is the pedagogue (Mercury) who responds to the behaviour of the pupil and corrects behaviour with a witticism. The teacher also knows how to help through resistances and can assess what is appropriate at this stage of his development is appropriate.



In the classroom, the teacher adopts various roles, akin to planetary archetypes. Acting as a hostess (Venus), she establishes connections, creating an atmosphere that encourages students to engage in the learning process. Initiating the lesson with intrigue, she captivates students' curiosity and readiness to receive the day's content. Transitioning to the role of presenter (Mars), she enthusiastically introduces and guides the topic, setting the stage for progress.

In her capacity as a didactician (Jupiter), the teacher designs diverse teaching methods that promote cooperation, processing, and feedback.

Assuming the concluding role (Saturn), she offers reflections on the lesson or imparts profound insights encouraging pupils to contemplate overnight. These roles converge in the overarching role of the designer (Sun), where the teacher acts as the selfless architect of education. This role harmonizes and links all the roles, aligning the learner's developmental process with goals, targets, objectives, and lesson outcomes.

As a leader, it is crucial to acknowledge and respect the multitude and complexity of roles that a teacher fulfils. Recognizing these qualities can be instrumental in providing effective feedback and coaching. Another scenario, such as a meeting, involves seven distinct roles, each usually assumed by different individuals: note-taker, jester, attendant, listener, speaker, chairperson, and historian (Hulst, 2011). Taking a moment, one can discern the planetary quality expressed in each role.

### *Role confusion and role blurring*

In addition to the diverse roles teachers play within their profession, the role of 'teacher' is also a distinct position within the structured community of the school. Within this social context, each member assumes a specific role. In a school setting, interactions occur among parents, teachers, and school management, each contributing to their respective roles. If a child is compelled to take on a parental or adult role, it is termed role confusion.

When a parent assumes the teacher's role or a teacher takes on the role of a school leader, it results in role confusion and, in cases where the boundaries between roles become indistinct, role blurring. For instance, if a school leader excessively intervenes in classroom practices, if a teacher feels responsible for the school leader's development processes, or if members of the supervisory board engage in vision formation, role blurring occurs.

Role confusion and role blurring may lead to integrity issues and socially challenging processes. In pursuit of a flat organisational structure, I observed a teacher becoming a board member under a school leader who previously supervised them as a teacher. From a board integrity standpoint, such a situation is highly undesirable (role-confusing). The same holds true for a parent serving on the school board, necessitating a clear separation of roles as a parent and a board member. This distinction begins with parents

who contribute financially, expecting to influence education, rather than viewing it as a donation to support the school's resources.

**EXAMPLE**

A mother of two is a member of the participation council (PC). Her daughter is in fourth grade and has difficulty with reading. This mother is convinced that the teacher is not handling this properly. In the PC, she brings up the teacher's performance. Other PC members agree with her. From their position as parents, they all as parents question the functioning of the teacher. The director becomes silent and sits there uncomfortably.

To prevent role confusion and blurring, refrain from discussing personal interests while serving as a member of the Participation Council. Instead, focus on school policies. When acting as a parent, it's natural to have personal interests concerning your child. However, the guideline is to address such matters with the relevant person, typically the teacher in this example. Repeating the same issue becomes a concern on the second occasion and forms a pattern by the third time. As a parent<sup>9</sup>, you signal to the teacher that the matter needs escalation. Ideally, both parent and teacher then collaborate with the school leader, as this role is suited for handling such escalations. The school leader employs various skills, including neutrality, building connections, maintaining an overview, and coaching, to arrive at a satisfactory resolution.

## **8 Processes**

As mentioned earlier, the roles within a school are analogous to the organs in an organism. The functioning of a community is a complex interplay of various processes, each initiated and maintained from different roles. Although these roles interact, each has its distinct significance and boundaries in the organisation's operation.

In a school, the primary focus is on education. The central element of the educational process is the interaction between teachers and pupils. This interaction goes beyond mere learning, as the core process of education involves several aspects related to the subjectification, socialisation, and qualification of learners. Similar to how the core processes of life in a living organism are supported by functions like nutrition, breathing, and movement, we can identify supporting processes that uphold education as a core process. These processes continually generate initiatives that drive change and development.

In your capacity as a teacher, team leader, or school leader, how can you guide these processes, and how do you influence decision-making within them?

### **8.1 Steering**

As outlined in Chapter 6, horizontal leadership operates on the principle of equality, steering away from a vertical structure rooted in authority. However, the question arises: who takes on the role of steering in a horizontal organisation? In situations involving informal leadership and unacknowledged unequal power dynamics (refer to 'Informal Power' in 6.3 'Power'), I encountered tension in this realm. Individuals either failed to assume responsibility or misunderstood their role in doing so. When steering was not organised or the guidance role was left unassigned, a course deviation occurred, resulting in ramifications for group job satisfaction, the organisation's perception by parents, the quality of pupils' education, and consequently, overall pupil development.

### *Leadership as a steering process*

I often hear criticism that Waldorf schools are poorly organised and loosely regulated. In my view, this perception reveals the presence of many limiting beliefs surrounding leadership and power. In section 6.3, I delved into the topic of power, concluding that power stems from the vertical dimension and is essential for accomplishing goals. Even pedagogical intervention involves a power dynamic.

But what about leadership? In which dimension (refer to 7.1 'Organisational Dimensions') should we place it? After all, leadership is a delicate steering process, dynamic and influenced by various factors. Leadership is a skill that each person develops in their respective areas. Individuals provide direction, beginning with their personal lives and extending to different parts of the organisation in their professional lives.

A student guides their own development, and parents and the school assist in that journey. This support undergoes various phases. Initially, there is complete care, with parents determining and controlling aspects such as nutrition, movement, and the child's daily rhythm. As the child matures, increasing levels of freedom emerge, and parents and supervisors gradually expand the boundaries. Eventually, parents and teachers release their grip entirely, allowing adults to influence each other through dialogue. This transition allows the individual to take increasing control over their body, inner life, and life's purpose.

We observe a shift from vertical organizing to horizontal leadership. The growing child's dependence influences the actions or inaction of the parent and school overseeing their development. This context prompts adults to organise and arrange (vertical dimension) until the child can engage in a full adult dialogue and assume responsibility. It is at this point that horizontal leadership can emerge.

### *Steering space*

Those who provide guidance determine a particular direction. You, whether as an individual, an organisation, or a community, have a destination in mind

and choose the path to reach it. The route is determined based on the abilities, mood of the participants, and the time taken for the journey.

The person providing direction establishes frameworks and allows individuals the freedom to navigate their own path within these frameworks and the goals of the organisation or community. Excessive use of power in this role can have a detrimental impact on the environment, while avoiding confrontations can be destructive for the leader. Effective steering involves finding the right balance, contributing to world-building, and promoting self-realisation (see "Self-realisation and self-education" in 6.3 "Power").

In addition to creating frameworks, it is crucial to assign the right responsibility to the right individuals. Those taking responsibility channel their power of initiative toward the cause they are accountable for. They require adequate autonomy to take initiative and receive support from the environment in shaping that initiative. During evaluations, the stakeholders can assess whether power has transformed into authority.

It is not uncommon for situations to arise where teachers and team leaders approach a situation or process from their individual perspectives, asking open questions and expressing their priorities. This might be perceived by school leaders as headstrong or obstinate, leading to conflicts when a leadership style demands compliance. To foster individual leadership development and make the organisation a training ground for it, it's essential to resist imposing docility and provide space for the full responsibility and initiative-taking of employees, teachers, or team leaders.

A similar dynamic is observed in Waldorf pupils who often exhibit individuality and creative problem-solving. Although not always easy, this approach contributes to a society characterized by acknowledged inequality, distributed power, and collective decision-making.

### *Core qualities of leadership*

What does that delicate steering process entail? Bekman (2012) outlines four crucial core qualities of leadership: steering of processes, coaching a learning process, inspiring with a vision, and intervening and confronting.

Steering processes commence with establishing environments in which others can work and develop, forming the foundation of leadership in schools. Leadership involves clarifying issues and determining the next steps, with principles guiding the process. It is beneficial to distinguish three types of processes: change processes, nurturing processes, and solution-oriented processes (see 8.2, 'Education as a core process'). Each process inherently incorporates a learning aspect, with participants gaining new insights and abilities. The manager assumes a coaching role, identifying where employees encounter resistance and facilitating insights and new steps.

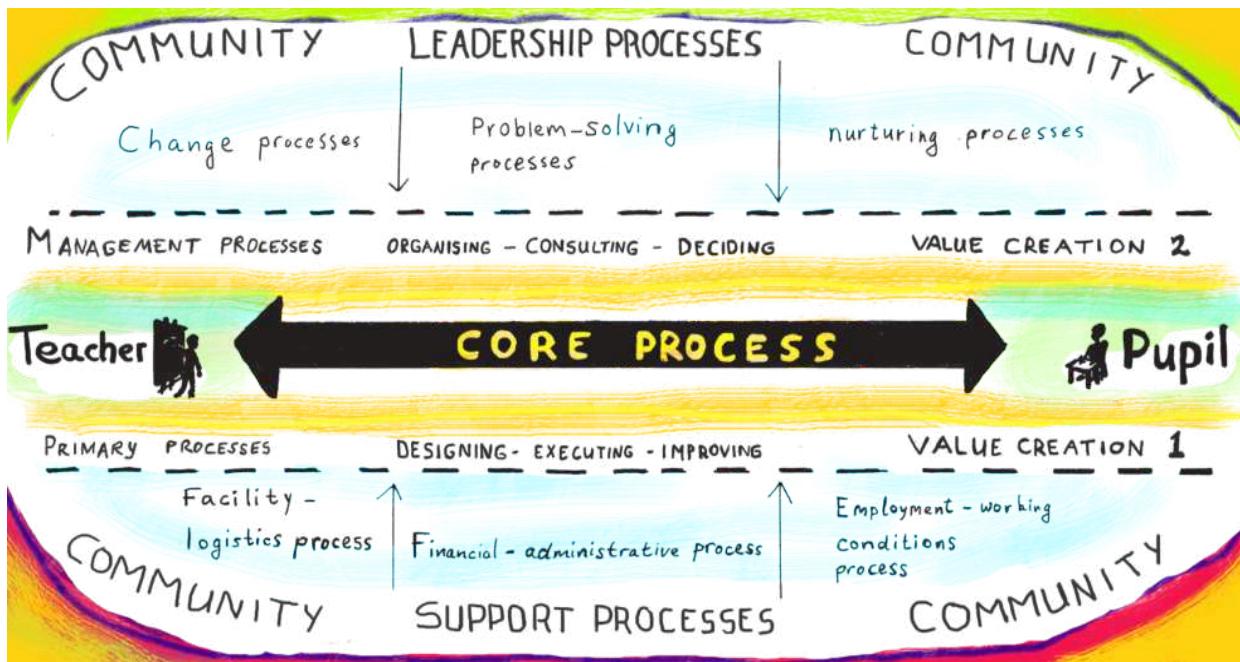
Leadership, therefore, demands coaching skills. In steering processes forward, the inspiring vision dictates the direction. This vision is dynamic and subject to development. It is essential for a leader to foster dialogue among all participants with their unique visions, strengthening the shared vision through meetings and exchanges. A leader must inspire with a vision, engage in conversations, and adapt the vision as needed.

Throughout the process, various resistances and challenges arise, necessitating intervention and confrontation for momentum. These resistances may exist within individuals or within structures and circumstances. Intervention and confrontation involve making choices, concluding, or initiating projects, candidly addressing issues with staff, and establishing criteria and boundaries. Confrontation operates within the horizontal dimension, where the leader reflects facts and perceptions (without interpretation) for discussion. This is distinct from confrontation in the vertical dimension, which involves imposing judgment. However, vertical interventions may be necessary at times to overcome a stalled process.

Every teacher embodies a leader, guiding learners in their learning process. The teacher must design lesson series (directing processes), instil a vision of learning, inspire pupils, and, simultaneously, address, limit, and set criteria or frameworks without hesitation.

## **8.2 Education as a core process**

The core process of an educational organisation, a school, is to provide education. Within this context, three primary processes and three management processes can be identified. To organise and guide the educational processes, additional processes surrounding the core process are required. In "Vensters op Organisaties" (2012), Adriaan Bekman distinguishes three leadership processes and three supportive processes in addition to the six processes of the core process. The illustration below depicts all of them.



### *The four processes around the core process*

#### *The core process*

Firstly, there is the school's core process: the educational process. This is a process that occurs 'in the moment'. It comprises the interaction between the teacher and pupil, as well as the interactions among pupils themselves, facilitated by the teacher-designed learning activities. The teacher and the pupil(s) bear sole responsibility for this magical educational process. All other processes aim to support this core process.

Within the core process, three primary processes can be discerned: the design of lessons or lesson series and learning activities, the implementation of lessons and learning activities, and the evaluation and improvement of

lessons and learning activities. These are the central processes around which teaching revolves; the teacher is responsible for and directs them. They are the processes that generate value and meaning for the learner, the parent, the teacher herself, and the school.

These primary processes of the core process must be supported by three management processes: organising, deliberating, and deciding. Organising involves coordinating learning resources, materials, planning, and progress. Necessary consultations are held to coordinate aspects like the learning line, as well as the use of classrooms and materials. Through collaboration, teachers collectively engage in activities to gain a clear understanding of pupils' development. Lastly, numerous decisions need to be made, determining who does what, when, with what resources, and in which rooms.

#### **EXAMPLE**

In 2015, as a consultant, I was involved in the development of personalised Waldorf education in a school for further continued education. In an innovative process, the team of teachers had to start focusing on a different way of teaching. The familiar lesson structure would take too much time. How could contact hours alternate with more independent work?

In a team discussion, this question came up and one of the one of the teachers that there was an overlap in subjects between history and English. The two teachers agreed to discuss this with each other. They could complement each other, where allowing the students to look at the subject from two perspectives. The initial discussion was organised by me as advisor, but the teachers themselves came up with the idea of building a bridge between their subjects and consulted to come to decisions on how to make the new form of lessons on how the new teaching format could be organised (value creation 2 in the illustration). This enabled them to design the learning activities to be designed and implemented in collaboration (value creation 1).

When the primary processes are aligned by the teachers, a second layer of meaning. The teacher who not only delivers his or her own lesson, but also organises and consults well with other teachers, creates not only value or meaning for the students but also for the parents and colleagues. Therefore, both primary and management processes create value.

This is a plea for teachers to focus not only on the primary process, but also on the management processes as well as the leadership processes. Every role has a relationship with all processes. It is important to be clear about where you are steering or following the processes in your role.

### *The leadership processes*

The leadership processes are meant to provide direction for the core process. This direction is given by the school leader. He does this in cooperation with all those involved by setting up three types of processes: change, problem-solving and nurturing processes. The school leader is leader in the process with the teachers, parents, and pupils. Is the school leader (ultimately) responsible for the core process, the lesson the pupil receives? No, that responsibility lies with the teacher.

Change processes have to do with changes in the organisation. When you work cyclically from a vision that gives direction, you come across all sorts of things that call for change. It is the art of making choices and setting up a process in which jointly examine which changes have the highest or lower priority.

Problem-solving processes are always there, because every day there are issues that require an approach or solution, in addition to the issues at the level of overarching or strategic policy. It requires leadership to oversee these processes and organise them in such a way that they stimulate and give direction to the primary educational process without gaining momentum of their own. Problem solving should always be related to the primary processes.

In the nurturing processes, you monitor changes in all areas and regularly determine where the focus should be. The dealing with each other, staff development and team development can be the subject of grooming processes.

#### **EXAMPLE**

At one school, there was a desire to make changes in four areas, which had been put on the annual agenda:

- activating didactics - so that pupils themselves would be more active in their learning process;
- working with metacognition - to promote pupils' independent learning;
- language policy - to increase the pupils' language skills;
- feedback and formative practice - to make learning more visible.

The rector decided to set up each of these changes separately as a process. As process client, he asked four process owners each to find a few people they wanted to work with.

The core assignment to each group was: how can we shape the desired improvements at school level? The change processes differed in the pace of their development. While the process on metacognition and the process around feedback and formative action were still in the orientation phase - the group members started by finding out what the background was to the questions around these themes - other processes were already in the implementation - or even securing - phase (see 'Phasing' in

8.3, 'Setting up processes'): the language policy was introduced and with activating didactics some teachers had already been a few years already.

For the rector, managing the process owners was a matter of nurturing and maintaining. He held regular short talks with the four process owners and gave attention to the issues they came up with. In this way, he shaped nurturing as is done in many quality care processes.

At one point, the process owner in giving feedback and formative care fell out due to circumstances and she could not continue to guide the process. A clear problem that called for a solution. The rector spoke to the members of her process group. In that conversation, one of them offered to take on the role of process owner.

### *The support processes*

To support the core and leadership processes in a school, there are the support processes. These make it enable the school as a community of people, as an organisation can function and develop. Here, too, we distinguish three processes. First, the facility-logistical processes, which must deal with the place, resources, infrastructure, and planning that support the core process.

Second are the financial-administrative processes, which include all things to do with money that need to be recorded to safeguard the quality of the whole community. These are processes that have a large system compulsion, because systems make these processes easier and more manageable. At the same time, they should be supportive and not overpowering. By asking each time the question of how they support the core process (How do they improve the process between pupil and teacher?), it is possible to keep these systems simple and transparent. And third, we have the processes around working conditions. There, equality should be guiding, and the rules and procedures should be supportive of both the leadership processes as well as the core process.

### **EXAMPLE**

In the establishment of Waldorf upper schools (the tenth, eleventh and twelfth grades) in some regular secondary schools that already had a Waldorf substructure, I clearly experienced how important support processes are.

In the year before the school year in which teaching in the tenth class was to start, a design of teaching had been made. This called for a space larger than a classroom: the learning square. Resources were needed - methods and reference books, laptops, and digital resources. Communicating required a digital learning environment that was not used in the lower school, so that students and teachers could work independently in space and time. Setting up the space and systems required a clear structure, while leaving a lot of developmental space had to remain for the teachers: the systems should not

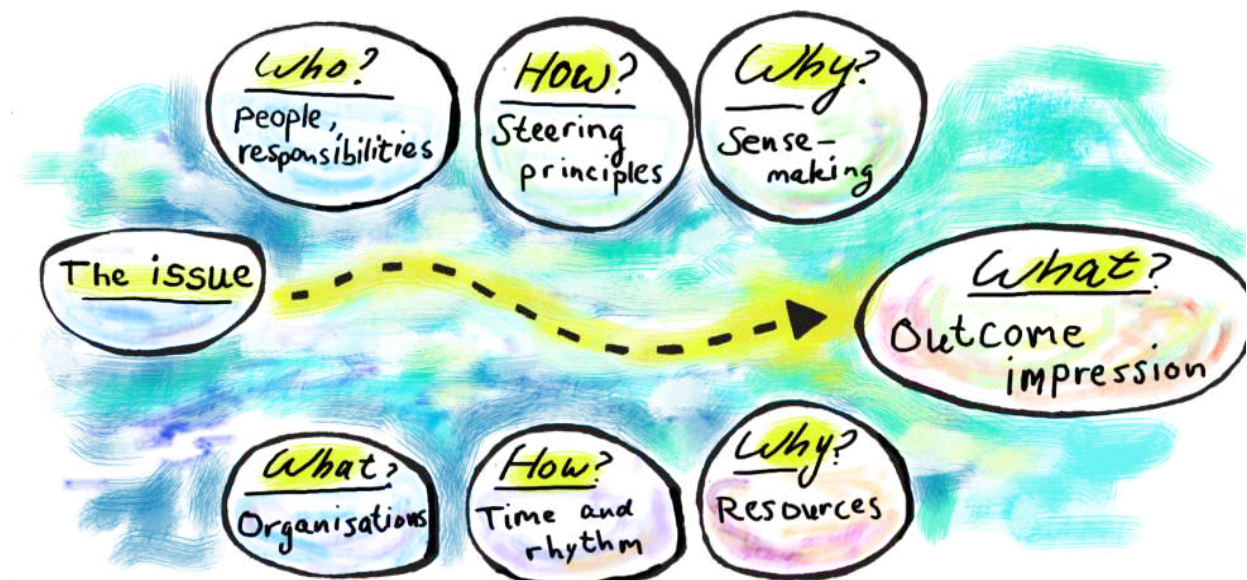
pinch them. And most importantly: a team was needed to start with. The new form of education we wanted to develop required the targeted hiring of teachers who could and wanted to take on the challenge with enthusiasm. The design of the learning square we have enriched it by appointing a learning centre coordinator at the school. Thanks to this coordinator, at the start of the new school year, there was immediately a pleasant and structured working atmosphere for the pupils.

## 8.3 Setting up processes

All the processes described require a certain set-up. At shaping a process, we can use beacons so that nothing is overlooked. In the development of the process over time a certain phasing is also always recognisable. The phasing works towards the intended result.

### *Seven beacons*

When setting up a process, you can use seven beacons (Bekman, 2012). They should be regularly reviewed when guiding the process. We always start with the question.



*The question and the seven beacons for process design*

*The question definition*

You start a process by asking: What is the reason for the process? What is the prior history and what questions are related to it? By questioning the question, as a process group you get to the core of the issue. And regularly considering the question leads back to updating and deepening it.

### *Beacon 1: The result presentation*

At the first beacon, you collectively imagine the intended result. Important to formulate the desired outcome and not the desired goals! Based on the question, you talk freely about the possible results you envisage for the target group you have in mind. What are the concrete results you can achieve?

### *Beacon 2: The people involved*

Next, it's about the people who could and want to be involved. It is important that people start working on the process because they are enthusiastic about the question and the possible results. Also appoint who the process owner is and who the process commissioner is. The process owner feels responsible for the progress of the process. The process owner is usually the person who from an overarching interest (the school leader, the director) manages to convert a signal from the organisation into a process assignment. Based on the content of that assignment, we look at which people involved in the process and which qualities or roles are needed. This is followed by five beacons that you can go through in any order. They help to ensure the completeness of the design of the process.

### *Beacon 3: The organisation*

Once you know who is going to shape the process, consider what should happen next. What is the first step, and what steps do you envisage after that? What tasks are there? Who is going to do what? Do you choose not to do certain things? Are there any preconditions? These questions help to gain insight into the organisation of the process.

### *Beacon 4: The steering principles*

For the process to really take place in the horizontal dimension, it is important to establish several steering principles together. These are frameworks or criteria that determine the autonomy of the process participants. They give direction, so that the client can trust the process

group that will design and execute the process. An example of such a steering principle is the principle that everyone must have a say, or that there must be 75 per cent support present. The idea that the voice of the minority must have a place can also be a guiding principle.

#### *Beacon 5: The rhythm*

Processes proceed in a certain rhythm. When setting up and designing of a process, it is important to look at the right course in time. A good rhythm can propel the process forward. You can think of the frequency and duration of meetings, but also of the sequence of guidance moments and evaluations.

#### *Beacon 6: Sense making*

It is useful to regularly look back at why you are doing this process again. What inspired me? What motivated me? These are questions that can be helpful in putting the multitude of trivial issues that arise into a proper perspective.

#### *Beacon 7: The means*

It also helps to ask yourself: What resources do we want to devote to this process? What is it worth to us, what amount do we want to make available? What is needed to do the administration, what systems support our consultation? All questions needed to carry the process forward.

#### *Phasing*

When guiding a process, the process owner together with the other stakeholders, use the beacons as a tool to ensure that nothing is forgotten. In addition, it is helpful to distinguish explicitly which phase the process is in. We know the following phases:

##### *1. The research phase*

We start a process - e.g., for a new working method - from a question, as explained in the beacons. In the research phase, we distinguish four steps. First, from the question and the result presentation on the research field. Then we investigate by consulting literature and other sources and/or in interviews. We experiment with what we have learned by applying it in practice. This gives rise to successful and unsuccessful actions, which

enables us to propose new ways of working that are more effective and more efficient at school level. It is important that the new working method is shared and discussed, after which a progress decision is taken by all involved.

### *2. The implementation phase*

In the implementation phase, the new way of working is implemented by all desired actors. This is a process that requires guidance. Do the people implementing the innovation appropriate the new working method to be appropriated? If something goes wrong, where can we then adjust? Is it necessary to support someone, is training needed? Sometimes it turns out that the practice needs to be reorganised to fully implement the new way of working.

### *3. The assurance phase*

Once the new way of working has taken root, it is important to anchor the new thing. This can only be done by focusing on it cyclically (i.e., regularly at specific moments in the year). Is it still being done?

Is everyone aware of the working method? How are new people informed and trained about it? These questions should be asked periodically. In this way, a new development can also be permanently secured after is implemented can also be permanently secured.

## **8.4 Decision-making**

Decision-making is an important element in the dynamics of the steering of processes. Leadership is often judged based on the quality of decisions. Deciding, leads to that a step is taken, that an initiative is realised. At the individual level, you come to an action because you innately decide to take a step. You move from idea to reality. This is thus a vertical-oriented process.

### *Decision formation in time*

It is important that decision-making takes place. The question is when. In a process, a decision can fall too quickly, resulting in too little support for it, for example, or the quality of the decision is debatable. There are then too many objections, making the decision insufficiently well-founded. Decision-

making can also be too slow. Everyone feels which direction it is going in, but determining the decision is delayed. This evokes frustration and a feeling of powerlessness.

Decision-making is an important stage in a process (whether it is a change process, a problem-solving process or even a nurturing process). Swieringa and Wierdsma (2011) see change as a cyclical process of doing, reflecting, thinking, deciding, and doing again. When deciding, there is always a decision that allows the cycle to continue. If there is no decision, the process remains stuck in thinking and no action follows. Decisions are therefore important to take the next step in the process.

What phases do we go through in decision-making? Most familiar are the phases image-forming, judgement-making, and decision-making (IJD), but there are also forms of decision-making in which these three steps are less prominent. There are decision-making processes that are based on continuous goal-oriented and result-oriented steps in the right direction: Agile, Scrum and Lean processes, for example. The emphasis is then more on experimentation and 'learning by doing'. So, you don't work out in detail what needs to be done before you get started.

Accountability is a core element of decision-making. If a participant does not feel responsible in a process, defensive strategies arise. Arend Ardon (2015) describes a dozen defensive strategies that people often (unconsciously) deploy to avoid talking about ineffective behaviour (of themselves or others) to avoid an uncomfortable situation. He also mentions how managers often make change processes stagnate through their own behaviour. In doing so, especially when they feel under pressure, they show different behaviour than they think and speak. A characteristic of the situations in which this happens is that responsibility has not been taken. An apparent commitment arises, leading to delay and unclear decision-making.

#### *A complex process, individual and collective*

Decision-making takes place between observations, feelings, experiences or memories and conclusions. Decision-making is thus not a rational process, but a composite process in which the inner conclusions individuals draw determine the final choice, decision, or judgement.

Central to the IJD formulation of the decision-making process (image formation-judgement formation-decision making) is judgment. It is crucial

to the quality of the decision. The decision, the judgment itself, can be made in a split second. Judgement formation - the process that leads to the judgement - on the other hand requires time, consideration, and dialogue.

In collaborative decision-making, it is up to each stakeholder to direct his or her own inner considerations and outer actions. Swieringa and Wierdsma, in *Lerend organiseren en veranderen*, talk about 'the place of effort' when there is a situation in which tension arises due to contradictions in judgements and, at the same time, there is a need to give meaning to something together. Careful decision-making requires the disruption of routines. After all, routines tend to promote comfort. In this kind of process, finding the place of effort is something that requires awareness.

To enhance the quality of the decision, we need to do something counter natural. Namely, we have the natural ability to judge and decide at lightning speed. In unsafe situations, this is a blessing. It allows us to interpret a threatening situation so quickly that we immediately make a choice to flee, for example. We also notice this when, in a job interview, we pass judgment on the candidate within seconds.



*A judgement is made quickly.*

Or in a situation where we immediately have an opinion about a tweet. For a good decision, it is important to reconsider those interpretations. We can re-

observe and question the situation.

A decision or conclusion tends to 'lock in'. Experiments have been done in which research participants observed something that could be interpreted in various ways. If an interpretation was given to the observation by the participant ('It's a cow,') the person could not see it differently afterwards. For this reason, it is important to try not to draw a conclusion yet. This means that we must keep trying to step out of our comfort zone. After all, it is nice to have a conclusion: it gives certainty and a foothold.

Individually, judgment is already a complex inner activity, but it can be well practised. Collectively, it is even more complex. All those present have already drawn individual conclusions, which they must let go to reach a collective decision. The tendency to pursue the certainty of choice makes all kinds of social processes come into play that have to do with unconscious influence, socially desirable behaviour, and peer pressure.

In Deep Democracy (see e.g., Kramer, 2018), it is added that it is advisable to make use of the unconscious potential of the minority in collective decision-making. If a group is quick to make a majority decision, the wisdom of the minority has probably not been used enough. Deep Democracy uses the Lewis method: it involves five steps you can go through to reach a joint decision as a group. Here, the leader is given a neutral role as facilitator.

The Institute for (Hu)Man and Organisational Development (IMO), which was founded in 2005 by Adriaan Bekman and of which I am a consultant, has developed its own methodology on horizontal organising, in which a decision is regarded as the result of the inner step of stepping out of your comfort zone. In doing so, you consciously enter uncertainty, putting yourself in a situation where you learn. In doing so, you step out of your self-satisfaction and seek out doubt, where fear and uncertainty reign. This is how you gain experiences in a self-conscious state, leading to new knowledge and experience through which you grow internally and become self-efficacious.

When a community walks this path collectively, it produces growth, not only of the individual, but also of the community, enabling everyone to act more effectively. Everyone steps out of their own comfort zone on an individual level, and that takes courage. In experiencing fear and uncertainty, members practice perseverance. Reflecting on past experiences requires inner

attention. Finally, all group members note in which areas they have grown and accept where they still have something to develop. Doing this collectively creates a deeper connection. A manager who guides the decision-making process thus also establishes an inner path of development.

### *Capturing a decision*

At some point, the stage comes when the decision is taken and thus recorded. Although it often feels uncomfortable, it is important to vote by a show of hands. Everyone then expresses themselves physically and visibly. As a result, there is more clarity and more commitment to the decision. This prevents the dissenting vote from remaining invisible and unspoken and therefore allowed to live in the group unconscious.

At some point, the group discussed and explored different choices or scenarios with each other. The various options, risks and consequences were discussed. The school leader or process owner would now like to know how the collective feels about a particular proposal.

Before voting, it is advisable to determine when there is a majority decision: if it is already more than half at one, there is little support. From the idea of professional culture (Van Emst, 2012), 75 per cent is clear support. From Deep Democracy, it is then still advisable to hear what objections the minority has and what can still be added to the decision (i.e., not changed) to implement the majority decision satisfactorily.

It would be fatal for the progress of processes if everyone had to give assent to everything. Therefore, a community can set criteria that determine which decisions require majority consent, where it is not necessary, but people should be asked for advice, and where it is not necessary either. If community members know what each person's role is and who is responsible for a process, this provides clarity, and the criteria can determine who has a say in what.

The leader keeps an eye on the criteria and support. Of course, it is up to all participants to indicate where they do not feel heard or where they feel something is being skipped or overlooked in the process. If the taking and recording of the decision is done carefully, again: through joint decision-making, the community goes down a collective inner practice path.

## **9 The community**

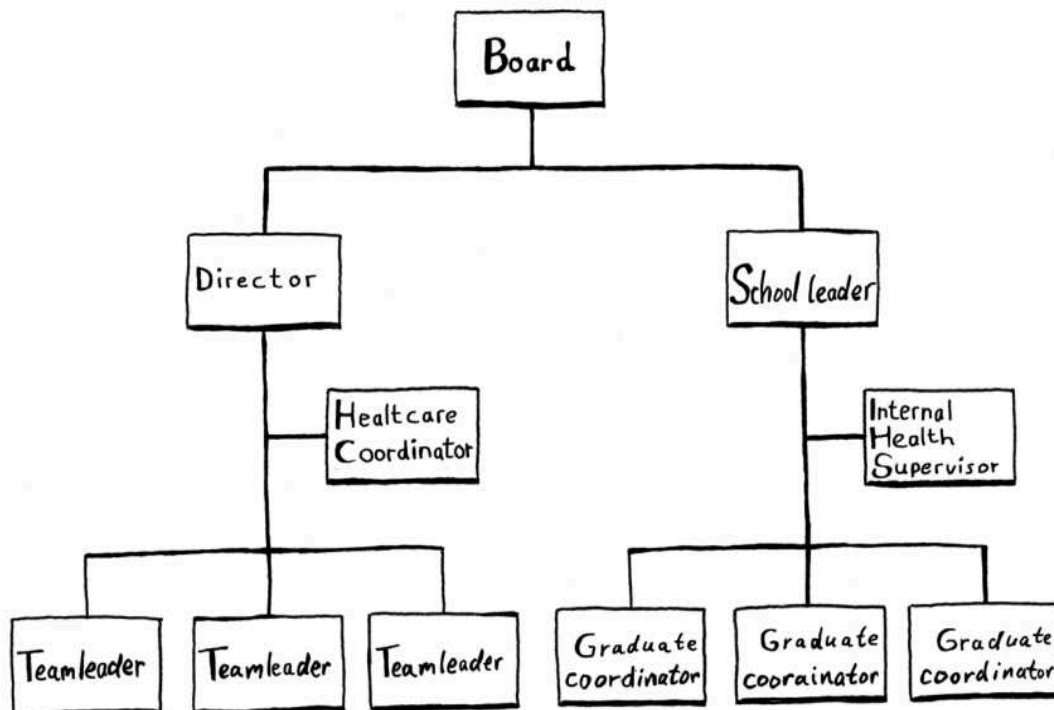
We have now looked at responsibility, leadership and power, relationships, and processes. They all occur within a larger whole. The community is the whole within which these elements relate to each other. Together, they create vitality, joy in being together and a smooth or, on the contrary, mannered interaction. A lot can go wrong in the interaction between community members, but tension can be followed by relaxation. Both are part of it.

A school community has a common aspiration. To achieve that aspiration, mutual interactions, encounters, and communication is necessary. All those involved are part of a coherent whole and contribute something to that whole through their individual efforts.

### **9.1 The vital community**

We can think of an organisation as a coherent set of people working together. Those people all form an important part of the more abstract idea of 'organisation'. According to Joop Swieringa and André Wierdsma (2011), an organisation consists of people, resources, and processes.

From a reductionist perspective, one could consider an organisation simply as a legal entity that achieves desired results independently of individual people through systems and orders. Often, the organisation is then also regarded as something static, which can be shown in a rake-organigram. The (assumption of) pyramidal vertical steering can be read from such an organisation chart. In this form of thinking, vitality refers to the proper arrangement and fluid or integrated way in which systems work.



*A rake organisation chart depicts the organisation as static and vertically organised.*

Holistically, on the other hand, an organisation is a living entity, which can develop as a community through the activity of living entities. Think of a community of bees or wolves: it too can be understood as an organisation. All members have their own role and through the mutual relationships and division of tasks, the community functions as a one.

### *The community as an organism*

Going one step further, we can think of the community as an organism. This way of looking at things appeals to me; moreover, it corresponds to my experiences in various organisations.

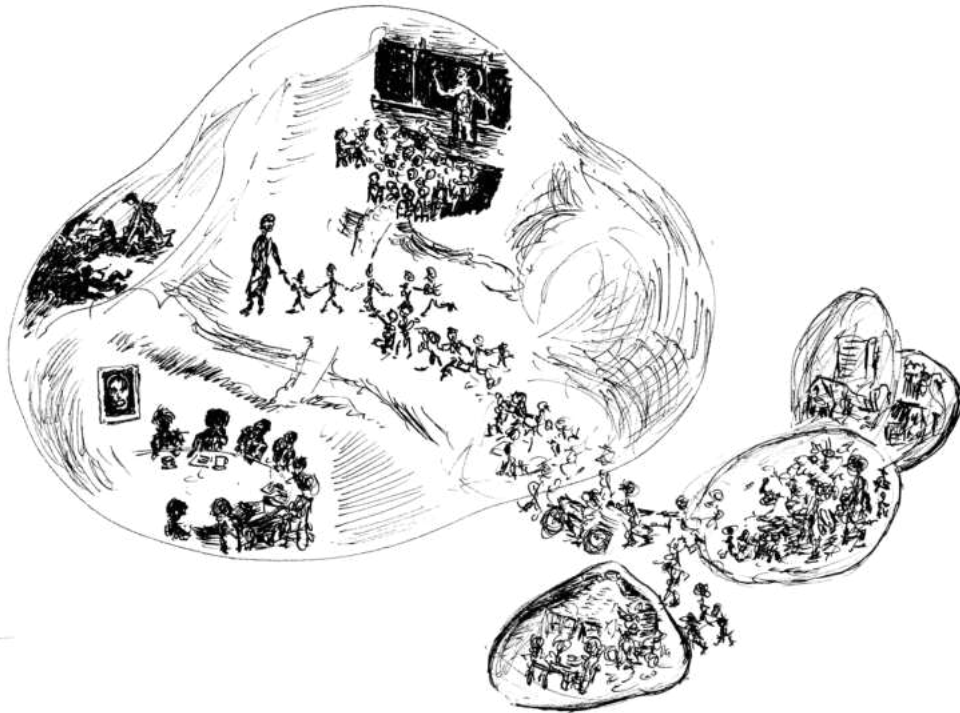
### **EXAMPLE**

Early in my career as a chemistry teacher, I was very focused on myself, the lessons I taught, my relationship with colleagues and students. Gradually, it dawned on me that my work depended on

others. That I was playing a certain role in the school and thereby contributing something to the bigger picture. I began to realise that the contribution of others sometimes carried more weight for my own work than I had seen in the beginning. For example, I could build on experiences students had had with a colleague. Or a mentor's work created togetherness in a group, giving my lesson a foundation. That community, which I felt increasingly connected with, did something to me and I did something to that community. Like I was part of a larger organism.

The concept of the organisation as an organism encourages individuals to perceive themselves as integral parts of that organism, each with their own indispensable role in the overall functioning. Additionally, an organism is a living entity, inherently dynamic. Vitality, in this context, denotes lively collaboration among the various components and achieving the appropriate equilibrium.

The analogy of a larger entity to an organism, and of communities within that larger entity to physical systems, has frequently been drawn within anthroposophical thought. From a tripartite perspective, social life is divided into spiritual or cultural life, social life, and economic life. Economic life is likened to the metabolism in a human body, legal life can be compared to the heart-lung system, and spiritual-cultural life corresponds to the nerve-sensory system.



*A school can be thought of as an organic whole, with different parts each doing their part.*

### **ORGANIC SYSTEMS IN SOCIETY**

Drawing a parallel between society and a human body can offer insights into the diverse systems that constitute it. For instance, cultural life can be likened to the mind of man, which freely engages in reflection and exploration, generates ideas, establishes connections, and fosters awareness. This occurs through interaction with the environment, involving observation and interpretation of those observations.

Economic life can be identified as the metabolism, as it involves the production, consumption, and excretion of products driven by specific needs. There is a reciprocal aspect, as individuals engage in economic activities for each other, interacting with other living beings.

A critical reflection prompts us to question whether we can still observe this reciprocity in today's economy. The conclusion might suggest the need to reconsider the metabolism. Economic life has become so frenetic that it impacts all facets of the organism (society). Essentially, overconsumption stifles us, creating a disorder in the heart-lung system (social life and legal life). We must learn to temper our self-indulgence to restore a sense of unity. This necessitates a different mode of relating and communicating, fostering a harmonious balance between freedom in cultural life and reciprocity in economic life, thereby fostering a healthy social life at the core.

*The healthy balance in school*

Essentially, in an organisation like a school, the same triad is recognisable. This perspective is not intended as a blueprint for organising, but rather as a way of examining the components of the community.

The cultural and spiritual life of a school (nervous system and senses) is evident in the education provided and the initiatives that develop within that education. It is seen in the freedom each teacher exercises to do what is right for students based on the present moment. Additionally, professionalism among community members, where everyone takes responsibility and contributes to the community, embodies this aspect. The social life and legal life (heart and lungs) manifest in the agreements at the school level, providing clarity and fostering healthy interactions. Rhythms and patterns established within the community also reflect this, indicating the state of the community's heartland – whether there is peace and order or chaos, clear boundaries, or a sense of boundlessness, and whether there is proactive planning or reactive response. These are all indicators of the condition of the heartland within the community.

Finally, economic life (the metabolism) involves the exchange of goods and services that nourish and sustain the community, providing it with energy. Questions arise: Is there a balanced exchange, or is there always a shortage? Are individuals overwhelmed by excessive demands, perceiving their work as a drain, or is there reciprocity?

From the triadic perspective and the concept of the community as an organism, various observations can be made in a school. The state of autonomy in education, the equilibrium between available resources and their utilization, and the presence of deficits affecting teachers' initiative can be assessed. Does this lead to social inequality? All these factors impact the creativity and freedom of teachers, influencing the vitality of the community. While these are valuable observations, this viewpoint does not offer a template to guide the shaping of the community. So, how can you construct and nurture a school as an organism?

## **9.2 The school as a working community**

We can distinguish between natural communities, organised communities, and personal communities (Bekman, 2016). In a natural community, such as a family, members share their biological background with each other. In an organised community, such as a company or another work-related organisation, members are outward-looking and focused on a common endeavour. A personal community involves people stepping out from their individual choice to meet others. In these encounters, there is usually no natural connection, no common goal, but the encounter itself gives meaning to the per-personal connection.

The staff of a school, the group of schools under a foundation, or several cooperating schools thus form an organized community: a working community. To be more precise, they SHOULD be able to form a working community. What is needed for this?

A common aspiration and ideal

So, a working community has a common goal. Is this the case in a school or an association of schools? At least the aim is to offer education to pupils. Probably also to provide quality education that does individual pupils justice. Nowadays, moreover, the aim is education that supports pupils' development in the three target domains of subject formation, socialization, and qualification. The common focus on that aspiration or ideal can create deep trust between colleagues and a perception of shared learning. But this is far from always the case, or only at times.

The trick is to find the commonality, which does not come naturally, with each other. The prerequisite for this is that individuals can meet each other. We can assume that the community wants to create value and give meaning. If this succeeds, not only do the pupils experience this meaning, but also the parents, the school leader(s), the teachers, and all staff members connected to the school.

In Waldorf schools, colleagues usually have a common image of the human being. This is linked to an ideal, and this can lead to people finding each other on this plane. The way members of the community work towards pupils' development based on their ideal, as a common endeavour, can have an enthusiastic effect on cooperation.

*Interdependence*

Meaningful cooperation takes place not only within the whole community, but also in groups and teams within that community. In a school community, we can recognise horizontally formed groups of pupils, of parents and of teachers, as well as working groups (in which pupils and parents as well as teachers participate) and teams (of teachers). In addition, there are vertically organised functions (team leader, care coordinator and so on).

In a large school community, groups can sometimes operate relatively independently of each other. It is like in a city, where you know some neighbours, and some do not. In a small school, involvement is greater because the number of people is smaller. Interdependence is greater in a working group or a team than, say, in a year group. In a team, interdependence is greatest because the team has a goal that members can only achieve together. (See also 12.2, 'Team development or community development?')

A school community consists of pupils, parents, teaching staff, support staff and school management. The core of this community is the physical location of the school. This in turn is connected to the surrounding area or neighbourhood, which also forms a community. The school is also horizontally connected to other schools - in a foundation, through cooperation or through the city or region. As a school community, it is important to pay attention to this connection with all actors. They form the specific context of this community.

The above-mentioned shared ideal within Waldorf schools entails a danger: it can lead to cooperation becoming inward-looking, making the organised community resemble a natural community. Such a community tends to cling to the familiar and seek less connection with the outside world. This can lead to members feeling obliged to uphold the ideal and maintain the known, making them less able to be authentic.

If the battle is made to function more outwardly as an organisation, the result is a community that knows what is going on in its environment, responds to it and can participate in innovations. We then see schools cooperating with other schools, going through new educational developments together and enjoying the resulting initiatives. It is also possible to go too far in this: then too many initiatives arise, and the external focus becomes too one-sided. Again, it is a matter of finding the right balance.

*Striving for development*

Teaching occurs within a functional context, which aids in appropriately managing processes, roles, and target domains (refer to Chapters 7 and 8). However, there is a potential risk that functional collaboration might result in community members being perceived merely as functionaries, diminishing their recognition as unique individuals. In such instances, the vertical dimension dominates, leaving little room for the inner person (having and becoming). For individuals to manifest in their actions, it is essential for all community members to have the opportunity to take initiative and responsibility.

The role of the school leader involves overseeing the significance of the community and steering its developments. This may include clearly defining the community, groups, and teams. It is crucial to observe whether the vertical and horizontal dimensions are in balance (see 7.1, 'Organisational dimensions'). Are employees overly relegated to a functional role? If so, how can the individual be brought to the forefront once again?

#### **EXAMPLE**

In Waldorf schools, teachers in an LD position (LD is a salary ranking) are tasked with overseeing specific processes. In one school, the headmaster had assigned some LD teachers to act as process owners to facilitate certain change processes. However, the request did not elicit enthusiasm; instead, it seemed to dampen initiative.

Throughout the supervised process, we encountered resistance among the teachers. In discussions with them, I emphasized that they should not perceive the process as a mandated task. Instead, the idea was for them to shape the development of the processes based on their own enthusiasm and daily experiences. The timing and steps to be taken were left to their discretion. This approach provided some breathing space, and eventually, the LD teachers began to guide the processes not merely from their position but from their personal interest.

It is through working within a community that individuals can become aware of the collective and recognise their own contributions. By engaging with others, meeting challenges, and experiencing growth, individuals build a sense of belonging to the community, fostering the development of their individual strengths.<sup>10</sup>

My experiences in various schools and organisations have highlighted the importance of clear roles and a shared commitment to students and parents. During times of tension within the collective, there was a natural inclination

to withdraw, while moments of excitement prompted a desire to share and celebrate.

Tensions are inevitable in any community, and the quest for harmony coexists with the reality of occasional conflicts. Viewing tension and struggle as inherent aspects, like how they accompany play, offers a different perspective. It shifts the focus from seeking harmony to striving for development, recognising that struggles can contribute to growth.

Communication plays a central role in all processes, including addressing tension and struggle. Effective communication not only supports the development of the team or community but also serves as a pathway for the inner development of its members.

### **9.3 Communication**

Effective communication is the lubricant in collaborative efforts within a community. Our ability to express thoughts, listen to others, and direct processes through communication is vital. In a school, communication holds paramount importance not only in the learning process but also in supporting learning and fostering community cohesion and development.

Upon scrutinizing an organisation, one of the initial observations pertains to the nature and effectiveness of communication. There is often a belief that improved communication could resolve issues. However, in my experience, communication is typically not the solution itself; rather, it serves as the means to establish connections among participants. The participants' communication acts as the oil in all processes, smoothing out any disruptions and ensuring that everything runs seamlessly.

#### *Listening to yourself and the other*

For several years, I have conducted training courses on Connecting Communication (or non-violent communication) for teams. This communication approach emphasizes fostering connections, even when someone expresses objections or opposing opinions. Instead of attempting to prove one's own rightness, the goal is to create win-win situations, addressing the needs of both oneself and the other person without judgment or reproach.

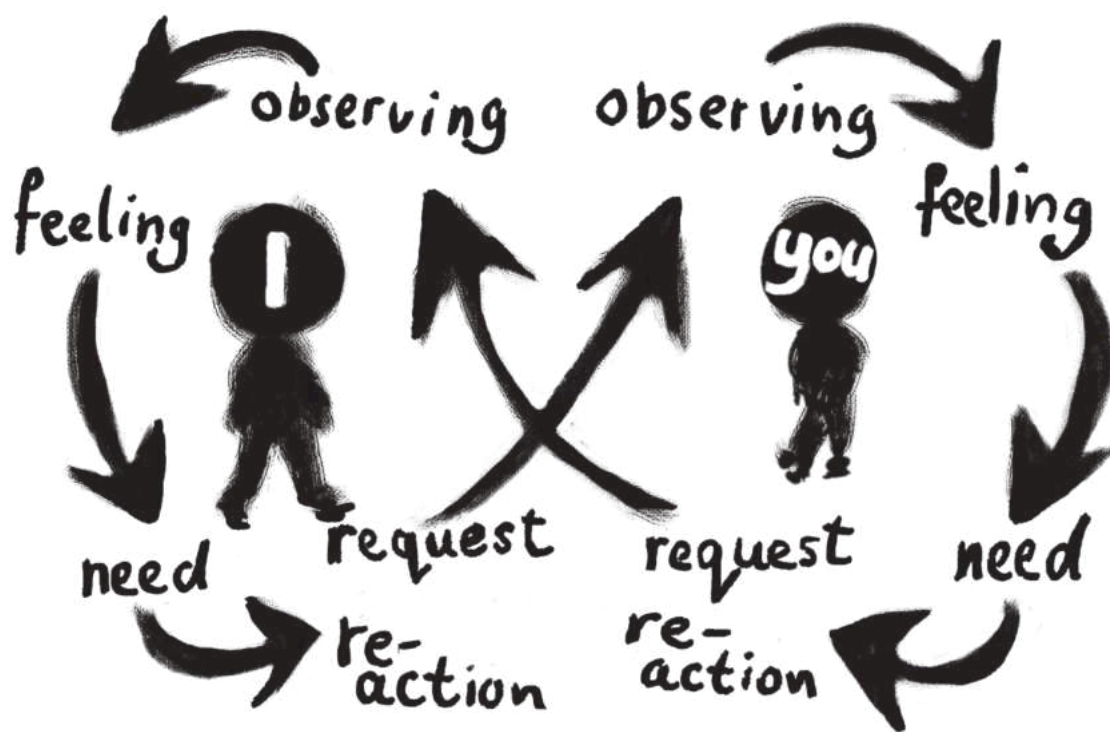
Over the years, I've come to realize that communication is not merely a tool for problem-solving; rather, it serves to support the inner development of teams or communities. Fundamentally, communication revolves around interconnectedness and how to cultivate it. The quote by Dag Hammarskjöld, "The more carefully you listen to the voice inside yourself, the better you hear what is happening outside you," has taken on significance for me in this context.

It's remarkable how many pitfalls exist in communication, leading to misunderstandings, a lack of connection, or even heated conflicts. Without awareness, confusion can prevail. Simply comprehending the other person's words is insufficient; we must also experience the impact of the encounter on ourselves and recognise and acknowledge each other's needs. This necessitates maintaining a certain distance from us while cultivating curiosity about and compassion for the other person.

#### **EXAMPLE**

A parent approaches me rapidly with great enthusiasm. It catches me off guard. Reflecting on this, I recognise in myself the need for calmness, as well as for clarity and certainty. By articulating this, saying, "I noticed you approaching quickly. It startled me. I'd like to listen to you calmly and attentively," I can also link it to a request: "Could you share with me what's on your mind? I'd appreciate it if you could communicate calmly so I can truly understand your message." This initiates a dialogue, enabling the parent and me to connect and genuinely engage.

The path through which we connect with each other leads from outside to inside to begin with - from observation through feeling to need. The observations of behaviour, statements, and events outside us evoke a feeling within us. By recognising (and naming) that feeling with awareness, we can then look for the need underneath. Once we get to the centre of our inner self, the tendency arises to reconnect with the outside world through a request or targeted action. By listening you take information inside, by speaking out you bring out what is going on inside you. In that lemniscate, the connection is created.



*The four steps of Nonviolent or Connecting Communication, which both partners go through in the dialogue.*

On this connecting path, the faculties of thinking (imagination), feeling, and willing are sequentially addressed. This imparts a reflective effect to the dialogue and can engender an inner flow, fostering mutual understanding. By posing highly specific questions regarding will, thinking, and feeling, you can assist the person you are conversing with in examining the subject from different perspectives. This method of questioning is elucidated by Fred Korthagen and Bram Lagerwerf in "Leren van binnenuit" (2011).

In my perspective, having a vision of the inner development of students and ourselves is essential for future-proofing education. Addressing thinking, feeling, and willing as abilities of the learner is not sufficient; it is equally important to cultivate these capacities within ourselves. For a leader, attention to one's own communication and language, as well as the language and communication used in the community, is imperative.

*Disconnections*

There are all sorts of causes that can cause breakdowns in connecting communication between people.

### *Non-helpful statements*

Often, people refrain from expressing themselves due to feelings of guilt, fear, or shame. Guilt arises when the conscience speaks up; it can be constructive, prompting self-reflection, but it often becomes overpowering, driving a wedge between individuals. Thus, inducing guilt in someone tends to have a repellent effect, hindering the inward connection. Fear serves a purpose as it alerts us to potential dangers, yet it is the most fundamental emotion that turns our focus inward, urging us to move away from a perceived threat. Consequently, instigating fear disrupts the connection and hinders the path toward mutual understanding. Shame functions to make us aware of societal norms, prompting self-reflection for learning. Therefore, provoking shame is counterproductive when aiming to connect with someone.

Numerous statements have the potential to evoke fear, guilt, or shame in others. Recognizing these is essential to develop alternative responses that foster connection. While the advice often includes using 'I messages,' simply starting a sentence with 'I' is insufficient. Expressing an observation that is an unacknowledged interpretation (e.g., 'I see that you are lying') can evoke hindering feelings. Similarly, articulating a feeling that pertains to the other person and doesn't reflect on oneself (e.g., 'I'm disappointed in you') can elicit anxiety, guilt, or shame. The same applies if a statement about one's feelings is used to express a need for the other person to fulfill (e.g., 'I feel unsafe'). Making a demand disguised as a request (e.g., 'Clean that up now') also hampers the connection with the other person.

### *Anger*

In recent years, I have noticed a considerable amount of anger—parents expressing frustration towards the school, teachers feeling resentment towards school management, and various societal groups directing their anger at the government. When confronted with this prevalent anger, I sense a feeling of powerlessness. Anger, as an emotion, lacks direction, doesn't aid in seeking connection, and isolates everyone.

Anger serves as a powerful indicator of unmet needs, suggesting that there are underlying feelings and needs that are not being expressed. Furthermore, when people are angry, they often lose touch with the other aspects of their inner lives. Many individuals, including numerous school leaders, struggle with confrontation, opting to avoid conflict rather than face it. The values upheld in Waldorf schools, such as sharing, harmony, autonomy, and creativity, can contribute to a culture that avoids conflict. However, it is crucial to view anger as a signal, prompting an exploration of the underlying feelings and needs—a process that may feel confrontational but is advisable for understanding and resolution.

#### **EXAMPLE**

A school leader notices a lack of communication between two kindergarten teachers. She believes it is essential for them to collaborate and communicate effectively. Despite her apprehension about potential conflict and the colleagues' potential anger, she insists on having a conversation.

During the meeting, the school leader poses questions to facilitate an open discussion about their concerns. She also acknowledges her own internal thoughts and emotions, fostering a transparent atmosphere. It emerges that the kindergarten teachers hold differing opinions on a toddler's development. One believes the child should remain in kindergarten for another year, while the other supports the parents' view that the child is ready for the next step, moving on to the first grade (Group 3 in the Netherlands).

Although the preschool teachers were aware of their conflicting views, they hadn't explicitly communicated them. In recent months, both had indirectly expressed their beliefs, unintentionally causing offense. Through the conversation, they articulate their perspectives, realizing that they both play an advisory role, with the ultimate decision resting with parents and management. Expressing their concerns leads to a better understanding of each other's positions. Reflecting on the discussion, the school leader is content with the outcome, considering it a valuable experience that encourages her to address conflicts in the future.

#### *Exercise in communication*

In teams, individuals often refrain from expressing themselves openly. Engaging in meaningful dialogue requires verbal expression skills. When both parties can articulate their inner thoughts, true discussion becomes possible, enabling them to address issues directly.

However, not everyone entering the workforce possesses these communication skills. Nevertheless, the community can serve as a training ground for their development. Interaction with others prompts self-

reflection, fostering responsibility for one's thoughts, emotions, and needs. This soul development is crucial for assuming and bearing responsibility.

In an organisation where individuals are willing to undergo this process, the exploration of feelings and needs facilitates not only interpersonal connection but also enhances awareness of internal dynamics. This self-awareness contributes to the personal and communal development, making the school community an ideal training ground for these essential skills.

### **Part 3 The community as a training ground**

In this section, we will utilize the concepts discussed in Part 2 to establish the school organisation as a practice field, intending it to evolve into the foundation for the education we aspire to deliver.

The objective of this book is not to provide definitive answers or prescribe a universal organisational structure or leadership approach applicable to all schools. Instead, I pose guiding questions, allowing everyone to develop their own suitable (horizontal) organisation and leadership style using the exercises in Part 4. As will be clarified towards the end of this section, the focus is on initiating a process that empowers everyone to assume full responsibility. This practice is achievable, and the organisation can serve as the arena where all community members could do so.

## **10 Future-oriented leadership**

What leadership is required to build a community, establish processes, and guide them? How can we foster education in a (Waldorf) school where students learn to take initiative and responsibility, enabling them to contribute to the creation of a sustainable future world? We seek leadership that encourages students to develop into individuals with initiative and a sense of ownership.

Regardless of whether a school is large or small, or whether the emphasis is on processes or roles and relationships, I contend that it is essential for the school leader to keep in mind the shared goals and view each person involved as a leader in their respective roles.

### **10.1 Principles for connecting leadership**

In the past, there was a taboo on the vertical dimension in Waldorf schools – as if verticality was not allowed to be acknowledged. This led to endless meetings where much was discussed but no decisions were made. Various topics were placed in the middle of the group, ultimately resulting in unhealthy quarrels and conflicts detrimental to individual participants.

Therefore, I emphasise verticality alongside horizontality. Verticality is indispensable, representing the relationship between the spiritual and material worlds. However, verticality must always be connected to the horizontal. Additionally, after a dialogue, it is crucial to make and document decisions (see 8.4, 'Decision-making'). Frameworks and criteria are needed to guide and direct the unbridled power of initiative that may arise. The task for everyone in the school community is to be autonomous, think independently, and take responsibility. This can only happen alongside adapting to and getting to know oneself through others, considering that each person's needs are met through the efforts of others.

Thus, we arrive at the following principles:

1 Horizontality and verticality are both necessary.

- 2 Steering of processes is only possible if dialogue is followed by a decision.
- 3 Accountability needs frameworks.
- 4 Dialogue should always be sought, but not everything requires dialogue.
- 5 Force of initiative should be stimulated but channelled with frameworks or criteria.
- 6 Only from an overview can coherence emerge.
- 7 Reflection on the performed is necessary.

In the rest of this chapter, I first offer ways to reflect on one's own leadership. Then I discuss some models with which an analysis of the organisation can be made, so that a school leader can work together with others in a future-oriented way.

## **10.2 Leadership qualities**

The role of school leader requires the person fulfilling this role to maintain an overview of the organisational processes in the school: the educational, personnel and financial-business processes. This is the external orientation of leadership, which can be qualified as 'management' - arranging and organising. Here we see the vertical dimension, which is very important to give the school organisation a pleasant bedding.

At the same time, leadership also requires something else. To gain insight into this, an internal orientation is needed. In 8.1, 'Steering', under 'Core qualities of leadership', I discussed the qualities Adriaan Bekman considers necessary for horizontal leadership: steering processes, coaching a learning process, inspiring with a vision, and intervening and confronting.

To explore your own leadership qualities or to bring your leadership into conversation, you can:

- 1 Complete the questionnaire IMO for 360-degree feedback. See appendix 2.
- 2 Complete the Leadership Practices Inventory by James Kouzes and Barry Posner (see [www.leadershipchallenge.com/try-lpi.aspx](http://www.leadershipchallenge.com/try-lpi.aspx) - a sample report can be seen under 'Sample reports'). This questionnaire contains 30

statements about concrete leadership behaviour to be answered both by the manager and by several people from the team.

3 Do another survey on personal leadership. There are many. With Profile Dynamics, for example, you analyse the value systems and drives that drive your leadership.

Through such a survey, you as a leader get a picture of your leadership qualities. They are often divided into different categories of qualities or behaviours. The IMO list involves four qualities; Kouzes and Posner make a subdivision in terms of five different behaviours. They see these as necessary for effective and successful leadership:

- 1 Being an example yourself and planning small successes.
- 2 Imagining the future and getting support from others.
- 3 Seeing opportunities and trying things out.
- 4 Promote cooperation and empower others.
- 5 Recognising contributions and celebrating achievements.

If some employees also complete the survey, you will also get their perception of you as a leader. You can then see whether your self-image differs much or little from how others perceive your leadership. Based on the results, you can choose an area for yourself where you want to develop more.

It is very valuable to meet with employees to discuss what each of you sees in the outcome of the leadership survey. Such a conversation provides mutual understanding and the opportunity to 'grow on each other'. See exercise 1, 'Leadership qualities'.

## **10.3 Analytical models**

There are different ways and angles to examine the current state of the school. How is the community doing? What is the state of leadership? What relationships do we recognise? Do we have all the processes in view?

A model can help clarify the different areas. That way, as a community, group, or team, you can focus on specific aspects and examine together how things are going. Such an analysis helps to formulate points of attention the school can work on. In fact, the models are tools you use to set the course.

It is important that everyone is aware that the school is a community. Within that community, there are those directly involved and those who are a bit further away from the subject under discussion.

Below, I describe a few models that can be used to analyse the state of school affairs.

They are intended as tools to initiate dialogue between the various stakeholders in the community. The resulting picture of the state of the community and the organisation can give rise to an initiative for change.

### *The four-field model*

One way of considering the current state of the school organisation is the four-field model. This relates to the four being-deities: self, astral body, ether body and physical body. They are also called spirit body, soul body, life body and substance body in anthroposophical medicine.

To start with the latter, it is obvious to compare the physical body to the physical building of the school. We can extend this to all the material things that belong to the school.

The ether or life body is formed by the activities of all teachers, parents, and staff in the school. In certain patterns and rhythms, they maintain the physical environment. Initially, members of the community are busy looking after and maintaining the building and growing the school. Once the growth has calmed down a bit, the energy can go more towards the processes that make the school a mature organisation. Through those growth activities, a memory, pattern of working that is characteristic of the school emerges in the community; thus, the foundation is laid for further development.

The astral or soul body can be compared to the interaction between the community and the outside world. This creates various roles and makes working more differentiated. What interactions take place, and in what way does the community respond to stimuli from the environment? This is the area in which we as humans communicate and understand each other. It is also the area in which we share feelings and needs with each other. This provides the characteristic way in which the community functions.

The fourth field can be compared to the self: that which creates physical warmth in the organisation, effervescent energy, which gives direction and direction to all underlying processes.

<p><b>PHYSICAL</b>          What is the physical environment of the school like?          Are there sufficient resources?          Are the resources and environment orderly and clean?          Does the building provide a good environment?          How would you characterise this environment?</p>	<p><b>PATTERNS</b>          What does the daily and weekly rhythm look like?          What are important habits in school?          Which annual festivals are important?          What resources are used for the fixed patterns?          What fuels this school?          Is there cyclical working?</p>
<p><b>INTERACTION</b>          Are agreements kept?          Is everyone coached?          Does everyone experience equality?          Is there an approach culture?          Are roles clear?          Is there intervention and limitation?          Is there much or little laughter?</p>	<p><b>DIRECTION AND STRATEGY</b>          Is there an inspiring vision?          Is there a clear direction, and in which areas?          Is process governance in place?          Is there ownership?          Is there courage to change?          How is the decision-making process going?</p>

*The four-field model*

This is the designer, the architect, the director - the function that from an overview in relation to past and future determines the becoming of the school, its course and strategy. Here it is about the people who take charge and give direction to the processes in the organisation. As everyone shows more and more personal leadership and comes to a common course in good alignment with each other, the functioning of the 'I' in the organisation is more and more visible.

In the four-field model, we distinguish the physical field, the field of patterns and habits, the field of interaction and the field of direction and strategy. The table below lists a few questions as examples. It is not necessary to use exactly these questions in the analysis. The questions and conversation (see exercise 2, 'Analysing the organisation with the four-field model') should lead to a picture of the community, leadership, and processes. That analysis can help in choosing which areas to work on and thinking about what concrete steps the organisation could take.

*The heart model*

Ronen Hahn, IMO consultant in Israel, helped develop the heart model in his work with the Waldorf schools there. It stems from a statement by Rudolf Steiner that the assembly of the teachers' college in the school

functions like the heart in the human organism. Based on that statement, the comparison with the heart was further developed.



Four steps can be distinguished in the functioning of the heart:

- 1 Oxygen-poor blood enters the heart from the entire body (bottom left).
- 2 The oxygen-poor blood undergoes a process in the heart and is propelled to the lungs (top left).
- 3 The lungs enrich the blood with oxygen from outside the body. The oxygen-rich blood is propelled to the heart (top right).
- 4 The oxygen-rich blood reaches the heart and undergoes a process in it, before going out to the whole organism. (bottom right)

And now comes the interpretation given to it by Ronen Hahn and the schools.

The first step is to feel what is going on in the organism or organisation. This is an interplay of perceiving, naming, expressing, and interpreting, through which what lives internally in everyone can become conscious, through which the community can become aware of what is felt in the organisation. The heart connects the centre with what is alive in the periphery. The team discusses what is being experienced in the organisation - as broadly and deeply as possible. Doing this regularly allows you to

focus mainly on the changes that have taken place recently. This is not obvious, because we have not yet developed a language to express the inner workings of the organisation.

The second step goes from our centre outwards - to the lungs as the gateway to the outside world. This relates to the mission and vision we collectively want to project. Here it is about the course and strategy that we use to connect with our surroundings and the future.

The third step concerns the contact we make with the outside world - external parties, such as other schools, the Ministry of Education, the Education Inspectorate, and cooperation partners. (Not the pupils' parents, as they are part of the community.) This may also include a study someone is taking, or a new book someone is reading. In this important step, we also bring in new nourishment (oxygen) for our work. The school enters dialogue with society and keeps in touch with current affairs.

The fourth step is a logical continuation of this: the rich oxygen is used for internal processes. Employees bring the nourishment into the organisation so that the organism can live on rhythmically. Thus, what is brought in from outside in training provides nourishment for the whole organisation. Similarly, that which has been brought inside in contact with the government or, for example, residents, provides nourishment for the work in school.

To work with this model, see Exercise 3: 'Analysing the organisation with the heart model'.

### *Culture analysis*

In addition to the organisation of the school, it can also be helpful to analyse the school culture. Culture includes both behaviours and underlying attitudes and beliefs through which interaction is determined.

Much has been written about culture in schools and organisations. For example, Alex van Emst writes in *Professional Culture in Educational Organisations* (2012) about the differences between professional and civil service culture. Robert Quinn and Kim Cameron use Quinn's 'model of competing values' in *Investigating and Changing Organisational Culture* (2011), and Henk Galenkamp and Jeanette Schut build on Van Emst's

professional culture in Handbook of Professional School Culture (2018). All these perspectives help the school community to look coherently at the culture of the organisation.

As a leader, it is not advisable to consider the culture or the team as an object of change. By doing so, you place yourself as an analyst outside the culture, whereas as a team member, you are part of it. It helps to consider the organisational culture as the behaviours and interactions between all those involved, including the school leader. With that in mind, what is the point of a culture analysis? Such an analysis gives insight into the behaviours and underlying values, and thus the challenges you can face as a team.

It is important to ensure that, as a first step, exchanges take place within the community - whether they are pleasant or touch on vulnerabilities. The aim is to clarify what each one is experiencing, thinking, and feeling. In the interactions within a team, drives, underlying beliefs and limiting convictions always play a role. Because these live under the surface and are not consciously shared, confusion can arise in the organisation.

#### **EXAMPLE**

I came to a primary school as an interim school leader. I soon noticed that the staff had developed a culture of judging each other and people communicating with each other in hurtful non-verbal ways.

When I started working with the team on the culture as an issue for change, I noticed that it felt like we were just 'rubbing the stain'. Everyone became hugely aware of what was not going well. The focus was on the negative in everyone's behaviour, and not on the positive. It was as if employees were constantly being told 'No', which evoked contrarian reactions in some and a mood of failure and failure in others.

I decided to take a day to do a culture analysis with all of us, in a safe atmosphere, in a neutral environment. This led to relief as unspoken issues were discussed. A group consciousness emerged as soulful feelings were shared. Many staff found it surprising to notice how others looked at the situation at school. We also played a game exploring cooperation. Reflecting on this once again revealed in a more light-hearted way what had already emerged in the analysis: people found it difficult to address each other. They had difficulty in withholding their judgment of the other person, but there was also the habit of saying nothing. We managed to conclude together that a more constructive way of exchange was possible. Because this was a joint discovery, the commitment to change was also widely supported within the team.

A culture analysis provides awareness of the interaction between them, including the underlying beliefs and strivings. Group members gain insight

into aspects that are largely unconsciously developed. What about boundaries? With influencing? Is there intimacy and openness, and is the team inspired? Do team members feel they have something to contribute? A next step is to translate the outcomes into one's own behaviour and alertness of response. Everyone, i.e., both the school leader and the staff, asks themselves: What is my part in this culture? What culture are we collectively striving for? What can I contribute to a more professional, innovative, or familial culture?

The culture analysis does not provide a blueprint indicating how people should act. However, participants do become aware of what is not yet in place. It is valuable to explore with each other how, for example, openness could be promoted, how the team wants to deal with vulnerability, or with agreements, how complaining could turn into contributing, how victimhood could be transformed into responsibility, how it would be possible to give each other fruitful feedback, and what learning together means.

In exercise 4 'Culture analysis', the starting point is a culture analysis. This can be carried out using one of the above analysis models or another method. The aim is for the school leader and the staff to get a picture of, for example, the professional culture or the innovative culture in school, or at least for those involved to briefly "look through the glasses" of the culture targeted by the chosen analysis model and work with it.

# 11 Practising with processes

In Chapter 8, I discussed processes in the organisation in detail. This chapter focuses on time as an important element during processes. Timing is of great importance when taking initiatives and setting up processes.

## 11.1 The rhythm of processes

In schools, we operate within daily, weekly, monthly, and seasonal or annual rhythms. School processes are typically structured around an annual rhythm, sometimes extending to a multi-year rhythm.

Within the school year's rhythm, there is a cycle of emergence and decay, where we oscillate between enthusiasm and concern over weeks. On another level, there is an alternation between conscious and unconscious action. In the daily rhythm, we experience events that we may soon forget; at night, we process these memories. The following day, we move forward, recalling what needs to be done. We employ various memory aids to retain our intentions. If initiatives are not pursued, our **behaviour** becomes more associative, lacking direction.

The rhythm of processes significantly impacts the well-being of the **organisation** and its individuals. Overloading ourselves within a day can lead to stress, sleep disturbances, and diminished retention. Realism requires reflection on the feasibility of our initiatives. Steering ourselves occurs within the framework of time, involving choices and planning.

In Section 8.1, 'Steering,' I discussed the diverse processes within a school **organisation**. These processes unfold in time, having distinct beginnings and ends. Section 8.3, 'Setting up processes,' explored the establishment of processes using beacons and phases. Since processes move in time, akin to a film rather than a static image, their characteristics evolve during the journey. Accepting the uncertainty of where a process is heading and trusting its rhythm becomes crucial.

Daniëlle Braun, in her book "Patronen" (2021), highlights the value of recognizing patterns and rhythms in ourselves and organisations. Rhythms, deeply embedded in the soul, create connection and an awareness of interconnectedness. Trusting the rhythm facilitates a flow in joint processes, emphasising the need for participants to align their rhythms for harmony. A disruption in rhythms, such as a crisis or a timetable change, can disturb the normal flow.

Rhythms involve alternations, like between loud and quiet or light and dark, representing movements between opposing poles, such as active and passive or conscious and unconscious. Multiple rhythms exist, such as the daily alternation between morning, afternoon, evening, and night. In school processes, we observe cycles between doing and reflecting, consulting and individual work, **preparation**, and execution, or designing and making.

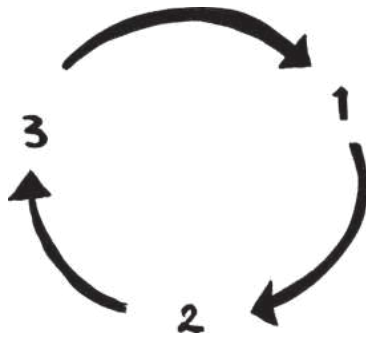
Recognising the cyclical nature of rhythms is essential, as we continually return to points, we have experienced before, forming a cycle. Appreciating the significance of cycles is crucial for restoring the Earth, fostering a natural relationship with the world, and promoting sustainable living in our work **organisations**.

## 11.2 Initiatives and cyclical working

From an analysis as discussed in chapter 10, actions emerge that members of the school community can take up together. In a vital organisation where everyone takes responsibility, there is a risk of a forest of initiatives that are not well aligned. Events in a school year are often so driving that intentions are easily forgotten. To ensure that initiatives are taken and that they lead to something, we can design the processes in such a way that the initiative comes to fruition.

Cyclical working could be seen as an alternation of ownership (1), alignment (2) and a next step (3). A co-worker wants to take an initiative (1), announces it to the group of people for or with whom he/she wants to undertake it (2) and discusses the intention with them (3). Thus, this person takes ownership of the process. Now the process is set up (1). The process

owner consults with other implementers (2) and over time, when several steps have been taken (3), they review together what has emerged. The process owner or school leader takes the initiative (1) to evaluate (2) and set out new actions (3). This creates a short cyclical movement within a long cyclical process.



*The trade-off between ownership, alignment, and the next step in a cycle*

If you succeed in setting up a good cycle within the organisation, a rhythmic pattern of work emerges. This provides a foothold and helps to implement intentions. It also gives peace, confidence, and certainty. It is then no problem if a crisis breaks out now and then. A crisis is a violation of the rhythm, but the rhythm is so strong that the pattern still gives a foothold.

**EXAMPLE**

That a strong rhythm can give hold in a crisis, I saw in 2021 when the Meuse and many small rivers in the South Limburg Hill Country overflowed from their beds. The lives of residents were in turmoil for a while: patterns were broken. A school had to remove all furniture from the ground floor and place it on the first floor in anticipation of a possible flood. After a few days, calm returned, the furniture could be returned and most people in the area resumed the pattern of their lives. The daily rhythm of school days also resumed.

The government had been working on the 'Room for Rivers' process for several years. It was not ready yet, but the widening of the rivers that had already been done had managed the excess water.

When the water subsided, it was time for reflection: had the right things been done? Was there a need to adjust standards? So, another process was set up with a rhythm all its own. Cyclical, because we know for sure that there will be flooding again - we just don't know when.

In part 4, you will find exercise 5, 'Initiatives and cyclical working'.

## 11.3 Process-oriented working

What is the difference between result-oriented and process-oriented working? In result-oriented working, the result is often predetermined and determines the path towards it. People often think of that path as a series of logical steps. In process-oriented working, the result is important as a guiding element, but it is not fixed. The result representation can change during the process. In process-oriented working, time (rhythm) is a determining factor for the success of the process.

The idea behind process-oriented working is that the quality of the process determines the quality of the result. Time is an important factor when setting up the process, because of the involvement and availability of the participants. There is also often dependence on other processes running at the same time. The healthy rhythm should be leading sometimes you need to give a little extra gas or slow down a little.

In 8.3, 'Setting up processes', I described how you can use beacons to set up and steer a process. One of the beacons was the result presentation. The description above shows how mobile the demand and the result representation can be in a process. The question can shift, and so can the idea of the result. It is important to accept this mobility.

As the process progresses, there is a constant alternation (rhythm) between action and evaluation. The process is constantly tested against the beacons - the steering principles, the responsibilities, the rhythm, the means and so on - and the representation of the result may be adjusted along the way, until a result is achieved that satisfies everyone.

Annex 3 contains a format of questions that can be used when setting up and reflecting on a process. In exercise 6, participants apply this format for process design.

### EXAMPLE

At a secondary school, students experience the timetable as fragmented and stress-inducing. A working group, consisting of a process owner and two other teachers, is formed to work on the issue. The team's outcome proposition is that the class timetable should become less fragmented, which will reduce the students' stress.

The working group is setting up a process where the goal is known: a reduction in student stress due to the fragmented timetable. The means to this end is yet to be invented. If the

predetermined outcome were decisive, they would push for a solution to fragmentation. ('How do we make a different timetable that is less fragmented?') But during their examination of the question ('Why does this timetable lead to the experience of fragmentation and stress?'), it turns out that the problem is regular timetable changes.

The outcome presentation now becomes something else! The goal is still that students experience less stress, but no longer that the timetable becomes less fragmented. Instead, they explore how to reduce the number of changes during the year.

## **11.4 Roles in the process**

In horizontal organising and leadership, rethinking from functions to roles is an important step. Thinking in terms of functions belongs to a vertical organisation, in which decisions from above drive realisation. This involves functional dynamics, in which the positions of people and power relations between them determine the interaction. In the horizontal dimension of the organisation, on the contrary, roles are important, as each person's role determines the dialogue and interaction between them.

It is important to recognise and acknowledge the roles of individuals within the organisation. It has already been discussed in 7.3, 'Roles', that the function of teacher includes many different roles. Similarly, the position of school leader has many different roles. Think of the role of spokesperson, visionary, decision-maker, coach, organisational conscience, and networker. The planetary qualities can help you name the qualities called upon in the different roles.

For the horizontal dimension in the organisation, it is important to have clarity about the role(s) each person occupies in each process. Often people take on a certain role of- self-evidently and unconsciously, depending on their talents - whether they are teachers, school leaders or administrators. It can help to look very consciously at what roles are needed in a process and compare that with the talents each has or assigns to themselves. This provides more awareness of the roles and of everyone's participation in the process. It may also reveal that certain roles are needed in the process but not yet fulfilled. In exercise 7, 'Roles in a process', we will explore this.

## **12 Community building**

As an individual, you always have a stake in the community you are part of. Within an organisation or school, people work together: they bring their individual talents and abilities to support the community in which they work in the task at hand. When you are busy performing your own tasks, it is often not easy to keep seeing the bigger picture. Yet it is helpful to look for that wider perspective every now and then.

Just as the country we live in has as characteristics a common language (or languages), its own history and culture, geographical location and common laws and rules, written and unwritten, the same is true of a working community. The school is a community of teachers, support staff, pupils, and parents. Within the school community, a very distinct language and culture may have developed. There are its own customs and written and unwritten rules. A start-up school is usually small in size; the whole team then often works together. As the school grows, the community becomes more cluttered, and the need arises to form multiple teams.

In this chapter, I discuss different ways to work on community building and team development. This creates greater awareness at the social level, improving cooperation and ultimately enabling everyone to take responsibility within the organisation.

### **12.1 Stages of development**

Firstly, collaboration is not always a prerequisite. In a community, there are individuals who engage in extensive cooperation, while others may have limited interaction. Nonetheless, collaboration becomes essential for specific tasks as an organisation evolves, and the capacity to cooperate, along with the quality of cooperation, progresses.

Numerous models illustrate the developmental stages of teams or organisations. Bruce Tuckman's (1965) well-known description includes forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning. Les McKeown (2010) presents a dramatic life cycle for businesses, involving Early Struggle, Fun, Whitewater, Predictable Success, Treadmill, The Big Rut,

and Death Rattle. Bernard Lievegoed (1993) delineates the pioneer phase, differentiation phase, and integration phase.

Considering the organisation as an organism in the context of Section 9.1, 'The Vital Community,' one could conceptualise phases as a baby phase, toddler phase, child phase, adolescent phase, and adult phase. However, unlike human life, organisational phases are often less distinct and might blend into one another, with potential regressions due to significant organisational changes.

Patrick Lencioni's (2004) model is notable, focusing on the developmental stages in team cooperation through five major frustrations: lack of trust, conflict avoidance, lack of commitment, avoidance of accountability, and lack of focus on results (attributed to status and ego concerns). These frustrations act as impediments and overcoming them leads to team development. Lencioni's phases are more about addressing inner obstacles within groups of people rather than an organisation's linear growth.

While the phases in various models may not neatly fit every organisation at any given time, adopting a phased approach helps discern coherence within the organisation and provides a direction to strive for. Identifying the development stage of a community aids in formulating steering actions that guide changed cooperation in the next stage.

Utilizing such a model for analysing the development of the community's soul can be enlightening. Questions about the current phase, recognised frustrations, collaborative interventions, and strategies for re-establishing a harmonious flow can be explored through exercises, as outlined in Exercise 8.

## **12.2 Team development or community development?**

Reflections on leadership often talk about team development. That is fine if - from the leadership core quality of 'coaching in a learning process' - you

want to strengthen the leadership of team members and help them in their learning and developing attitude. But the process or school leader is himself part of the team and thus also works on himself. I think the starting point should be that, as a leader, you are part of the community.

The word team comes from the Old English word for a span of horses, which is like our word 'toom' (in Dutch). When two or more horses pull a cart together, they depend on each other for that task. Mutual kinship has been found to lead to better cart-pulling performance in horses. Martijn Vroemen (2009) firstly distinguishes between a collection of people and a group, the difference being that group members influence each other. Moreover, a team has a common goal, interdependence to achieve that goal and cooperation, allowing team members to step in for each other.

A team is strongly focused on achieving a result. There is a common goal, and everything is geared towards achieving that goal. A sports team wants to win. A project team, for instance, wants to deliver a method and action plan to implement activating didactics in the school.

Of course, a community can also be focused on an outcome (performance). For instance, a city may want to be emission-free by 2030, where the outcome performance may change over time: the goal may be achieved with more green energy, but also, for instance, with electric transport. Opposing interests in the community play an important role in the processes. The outcome depends on many choices made along the way. Constant action and reaction determine progress and direction. The quality of the process largely determines the quality of the outcome. So, we can say that a team works more determinately towards the goal, while a community works directionally with a result proposition.

When designing processes and giving direction to a school organisation, we can think in terms of teams, but also in terms of a community with different working groups. This choice will influence the way of steering and guiding, because the starting point ensures that other aspects are highlighted.

A team (within a larger organisation or community) is itself a community. But it is a special community. The team is put together with a view to a task or assignment, and in putting it together, the qualities of its members in relation to the task were considered. A team is usually expected to be self-organising. The optimal size of a team is five people; above 20, it already becomes difficult (Johnson and Johnson, 2015). If we aim for all seven

qualities (see 7.3, 'Roles') to be represented, this will help determine the size; often there are individuals who bring multiple qualities with them. In practice, schools usually focus on forming teams, but the conditions are far from always met. Often a team is larger than 20 people, the members do not always depend on each other, and sometimes members work in several teams at the same time.

In the school community, there is a common aspiration: everyone is focused on the development of pupils. If all goes well, everyone is thereby also focused on the development of the community. The goal is not very specific, nor is there necessarily an interdependence. Within the overarching outcome proposition of the growing up learner, each often has a different task. Seen from the community's perspective, the guiding motive is, for example, 'to make pupils grow up to be free-thinking people who live life with vigour and consideration'. This is why I advocate distinguishing between community development and team development.

The leadership of a school is not comparable to the leadership of a sports team: the two are fundamentally different. In 9.2, 'The school as a working community', I described both the interdependence of staff and the commitment to development. We like to speak of 'teamwork', but by this we refer to a special form of working together. Striving for an 'achievement' of the working community, working group or process group is also not a bad thing at all, as it motivates and gives an experience of working pleasure. The participants get into a flow, and everything adds up - it is the fruit of collaboration we are looking for.

Within a school organisation, it is advisable to assign the various tasks and processes to manageable working groups or teams. Here, especially in a large school, the question of what issue a team, work or process group is grouped around is important. Is a section a team or working group? Or is a section simply a part - a group with specific interests - of the community?

In Chapter 11, and especially in 11.3, 'Process-oriented working' and the related exercise 6 in Part 4, I described how you arrive at the formulation of an issue in process design. The composition of the group of people is also very important (see appendix 3, step 3). Within a school, for example, there might be an issue concerning student independence. Who would want to rally around that issue, formulate an outcome proposition together and set up a process to achieve that outcome? It is obvious that not everyone in the

school community will consider this one issue. However, it is common for those in the community to want to be informed. Those who feel involved in the issue and want to take the initiative on it may come from very different teams within the school. They will hopefully quickly become aligned and be able to work well together.

### **12.3 Regular exercise in the working community**

As evident from the above, collaboration plays a pivotal role in the development of a school community. Hence, it is imperative for community building that the person in the leadership role provides guidance to the social process.

I posit that every individual member of the community is a participant in the social process and carries a certain degree of responsibility for it. The social process thrives with guidance not only from a designated leader but from each participant acting as a leader. Like any organism, the organisation undergoes constant changes as its members (the organs) exert influence on each other and respond to external stimuli.

Effective stewardship relies on awareness. Adriaan Bekman (2011) outlines a series of exercises that enhance individual steering capabilities, thereby influencing the direction and guidance of the organisation. These exercises, featured in Bekman's 'methodology of evidence,' have been adapted for use within a school or school community in the 'Recurring exercises for a school organisation' (Exercise 9).

It is advisable to perform these exercises regularly. While there is no fixed order, some may require preparation through preceding exercises. Conducting group exercises within an organisation demands both practice and perseverance – these social exercises and meetings resemble rehearsals for a choir piece. Although practice often brings joy, the real sense of cohesion emerges during the

performance when everything aligns, and the group enters a state of flow.

## 13 Encouraging communication

Every process in which people interact depends on mutual communication, on the quality of dialogue. Communication is how we shape our personal development: with language as well as with our non-verbal expressions, we express what we experience inside. 'Everything we create is wrapped in language,' writes Klaas Ijkema in *The Soul of Language* (2021). He adds that language seems to begin with questions that arise.

### 13.1 Supporting collaboration with Connecting Communication

Communication supports collaboration in an organisation on many levels. By communicating, we can overcome resistance by creating awareness of views, emotions and opinions unconsciously held in a group.

Communicating is more than just informing. Even if a manager informs so carefully and includes everyone in the steps he or she wants to take, employees often cry out that communication is not good. This sounds like a reproach, but we can also hear it as an awkwardly expressed need: 'I need to connect, participate or experience involvement and I don't get the opportunity to do so.' (Where it remains to be seen whether the opportunity is not there, or whether the person is not taking it) In essence, we can see this as a call from the individual to take an inner step. Finally, the (work) organisation is also a training ground for soul development.

Too often in daily communication, and certainly in work situations, it happens that something is said that almost forces the other person to drop out. In 9.3, 'Communication', I wrote about Connecting Communication, and my view that communication is not so much a means to solve problems and issues, but rather a way to support the inner development of a person as well as a team or community.

#### EXAMPLE

It was by chance that I was drawn to a course in Nonviolent Communication. I had not attended a course for some time and felt a huge need for tools to get a grip on the problems I was experiencing in my work as an interim school leader. I realised that almost all these problems could be traced back to communication. Gradually I realised that, thanks to experience and

practice with the methodology of Nonviolent Communication, I gained insight into when I was or was not connecting with others.

I was surprised every time it turned out that I had seen something and had an impression or interpretation of it, while another person had experienced it very differently. It turned out to be quite difficult to give words to the feelings that came to me, for instance about a piece of music or a film. I realised that spoken language, alongside physical expression, was the means to express my feelings. This required a larger vocabulary. Through the course, I discovered that needs are often even less conscious than feelings. When you explore your feelings with awareness and give words to them, you can then also express your needs.

For example, when I notice that a remark of mine is hurtful in company, the reactions move me. I experience sadness and signal my need for connection. Once I recognise this need in my consciousness, I can think of an action that is congruent with it. For example, I name what I see ('I saw that you looked disapprovingly at me when I made that remark,') and what that does to me ('I was shocked by that and realise that I expressed myself unhappily, because I actually want to look for opportunities together.').

I learned to express my feelings and needs in such a way that the other person can empathise with my inner self, creating mutual understanding and the possibility of having a real dialogue rather than a discussion, argument, or debate.

The methodology of Nonviolent or Connecting Communication uses the inward path to better understand each other and stay connected. Even when we have critical feedback, we can articulate it in such a way that the other person can take the feedback and 'touch' and process it. In this way, we awaken awareness in the inner world of ourselves and the other person.

Such an approach is never perfect. It remains practice, but it is noticeable that such exercise with communication works, that it deepens dialogue and reduces interaction problems.

In terms of the triad in Waldorf education, through observation we activate the imagination (thinking), the feeling (sensing) and the will (needing). Imagination is very conscious; feeling is unconscious, and need is subconscious. Seeking the need is a consciousness-raising activity. We have full attention for the other person when we know how to articulate their need. The other feels seen and recognised, and we feel a strong connection with the other person's inner activity.

Unfortunately, it is not as easy as I describe it here. There are pitfalls that cause confusion in communication. It is crucial that communication does not evoke guilt, fear or shame (see 'Non-helpful statements' in 9.3, 'Communication').

Considering community building, it is wise to practise this form of communication individually and also give it attention in group settings. Connecting Communication supports processes, leadership, and organisational development. Each person who engages in Connecting Communication and tries to apply what he or she has learned is individually engaging in development, where we need the other person to experience whether we are making strides in doing so. It is possible to practice it with the whole school, or with a group of people within school who want to develop this skill. If we learn to speak the same language at organisational level, the organism will be able to tune in better, find direction and start developing.

In Part 4, at 10, 'Promoting Communication', I give some exercises that are a first step in learning Connecting Communication.

## **13.2 Conflicts**

In my role as a consultant to schools, I have come across many conflicts, expressed and unspoken. An important value system in many school communities, especially Waldorf schools, is focused on harmony and social group feeling, on sharing and cooperation. (See my book 'Waarden in het onderwijs', pp. 24, 30ff and 48.) In many cases, these values turn out to lead to unspoken conflicts. Colleagues do not want to disrupt harmony and therefore hold back. Teachers quite often tend to withdraw into the classroom and gossip with others about the pain or conflict. Such a situation obviously does not promote group consciousness. If outside outsider, I soon noticed when people did not speak up - the familiar elephant in the room.

I also saw the opposite: a single person in the community who did not mince his words and rebuked the others with a lot of judgment. The effect was that cohesion and cooperation disappeared. Groups arose that no longer communicated with each other or were constantly fighting with each other. And then it became a problem for the school leader, who had to solve the problem.

### **EXAMPLE**

A school community has experienced several incidents and far-reaching events with some individual teachers in a short period of time. For example, a teacher was forced to leave, which

was not discussed frankly, while emotionally having a great impact on all members of the community. This has created a situation in which staff are increasingly withdrawing into themselves. Meanwhile, there is hardly any cooperation. There is a clear vision that has been jointly formulated, it is clear which way the organisation should go and what the tasks are, but the job satisfaction is gone and there are always small conflicts.

I get the image of a traumatised group soul. To make steering possible again, group awareness of what lives inside is needed. Then the wisdom of the group can speak. But currently there is no interaction at the inner level. There are interactions between individuals, but there is also an unspoken collective secret.

For the development of the working community, it is important that the elephants in the room disappear. Usually, it is necessary to choose to really address conflicts. It requires awareness to enter them, because instinctively there is often resistance to it, but conflicts can be very constructive. Lencioni (2004) describes the frustration involved: lack of trust. Group members feel vulnerable and need security. Yet they need to exchange what is going on inside them. Paradoxically, the trust problem can only be solved by participants making themselves vulnerable and working on intimacy. When guiding a community on conflict, a good first step is to acknowledge conflict avoidance. There are seven well-known avoidance tactics (Johnson and Johnson, 2015) that are depicted as an animal:

Ostrich	denies conflict;
Turtle	withdraws from topics that may lead to conflict and those with whom he/she disagrees;
Lemming	admits and accepts the other person's opinion;
Weasel	reasons away the conflict; claims that the subject is not important, that he/she has no contrary opinion or no experience in the field, and so on;
Gorilla	outflanks the other participants by forcing them to adopt his/her ideas;
Owl	reasons about the subject in an intellectual way, hiding his/her feelings;
Sheep	adapts to and supports group norms; does not allow ideas to be expressed that do not fit group norms.

Recognising conflict avoidance tactics among themselves can help people become aware that they are avoiding conflict. This can give an impulse to engage in conflicts. In exercise 11, participants will work on this.

## 13.3 Voicing issues

When people in a group withdraw into themselves because of tension or conflict, a blockage arises in the flow. Group members are then internally very active, in a meeting for example, but find it difficult to express it.

### EXAMPLE

(Continuing the example from 13.2)

In the school where things were not spoken out from the previous example, I observed all kinds of non-constructive interactions. There was gossiping in the corridors, dramatization, a lack of trust, mutual recriminations, and polarisation between colleagues. Negativity was not corrected or redirected and there was no openness during meetings.

A need to move away from feeling, towards more rationality, sounded from the group. From my notes: For many, there is a lack of matter-of-factness, correct and objective communication, attention to clear facts, rationality, fidelity to moral codes beyond smooth dealing. Insufficient commitment to order, straightforwardness, clear procedures, and objectivity. In this, I recognised the fear of sharing feelings and a need for security.

After explaining the workings of group unconsciousness and the accumulation of negative judgements, I gave an assignment (see exercise 12) in which small groups engaged in a conversation about unspoken issues. A wave of relief swept through the room, and things were shared with each other with caution.

From the need for security, people often seek refuge in rationality. An understandable movement if a traumatic or drastic event has taken place in the social process of the community. Nevertheless, to find the wisdom to work together again in the group unconscious, we must look inwards and look not only for the thoughts, but also for the feelings and needs, and even deeper: for the motives of individuals.

For this, step one is for group members to speak up. Pain points must also be named. It is in fact a rehabilitation of something that people may have done habitually in the past, but which the group has forgotten over time and because of the drastic event. See exercise 12, 'Speaking out what is unsaid'. Only when this openness and trust are in place group members can begin to discuss difficult issues with each other.

## **13.4 Coming closer together**

When there is enough trust in a group to bring up sensitive issues, there is a basis for getting even closer together. We do this in two steps. The first step is an exercise using a question box, a set of self-imposed questions (see Annex 4). In exercise 13, 'Getting to know each other better with the question box', participants use these questions to ask each other how the other sees them. The result is lively conversations, which always feel safe and are great fun for the participants. They discover how others look at them, which often produces a new image.

Exercise 14, 'Positive and critical feedback', is a bit more exciting because it requires a critical eye. For this, group members must be able and dare to give and receive criticism.

## **13.5 Biography conversations**

In the community, a closer bond develops when members have knowledge of each other's biography. Telling or writing down one's own biography is pre-eminently a way of communication that is much appreciated.

I often have teams do an exercise in which group members discuss their biography. This provides an opening for greater understanding, recognition, and respect. Group members practice speaking out and work together to build trust. Listeners discover differences and similarities with their own biography. It can also be enriching for the persons narrating their biography: they discover for themselves the common threads in their own life stories through this kind of reflection. It is not compulsory to discuss vulnerable issues.

It can help to use as a capstone several periods to be discussed in the biography:

- In the first phase of our lives, we are embedded in the circumstance in which we are born - in our family, with our parents, in our country and culture. This is where we grow up and develop the willpower to go our own way.

- In the second phase of our lives, we go our own way. We get involved in situations with friends, during our education, at work and with family in

which we develop our own way of acting and reaction. Progress and crisis characterise this period.

- At yet a later stage, these experiences can lead to insight and wisdom, which we can share with others.

Besides one's own biography, it is also possible to deal with the biography of the school organisation. Often participants' awareness of the connection between their own biography and the organisational biography arises.

In section 15 of the exercises, 'Biography conversations', I first provide an exercise in which the participants consciously reflect on their periods at school and their own development during those periods. In doing so, they can also make a connection with the students they are working with. In the second exercise, the group members go deeper into their own biography and explore its meaning for, and impact on, their current actions. In the final exercise, participants deeply explore the relationship between their own biography and the biography of the school.

## **14 In conclusion: development within the school community**

When seeking connection, cooperation, and development within an organisation, the fundamental issue for me is the recognition of one's own needs and the ability to perceive the needs of others. In a thriving learning school community, we navigate this process at three levels.

The first level revolves around pupils, the primary focus of our efforts. As educators and school leaders, we cultivate the ability to observe without judgment. Establishing a relationship with the pupil, we craft a pedagogical-didactical-artistic approach geared towards supporting their development. Conversations about the pupil's progress, involving teachers and parents, centre on understanding the needs of the pupil, parent, and teacher. Recognising the need for autonomy, relationship, and competence in learners, parents, and teachers, we can design and guide education effectively.

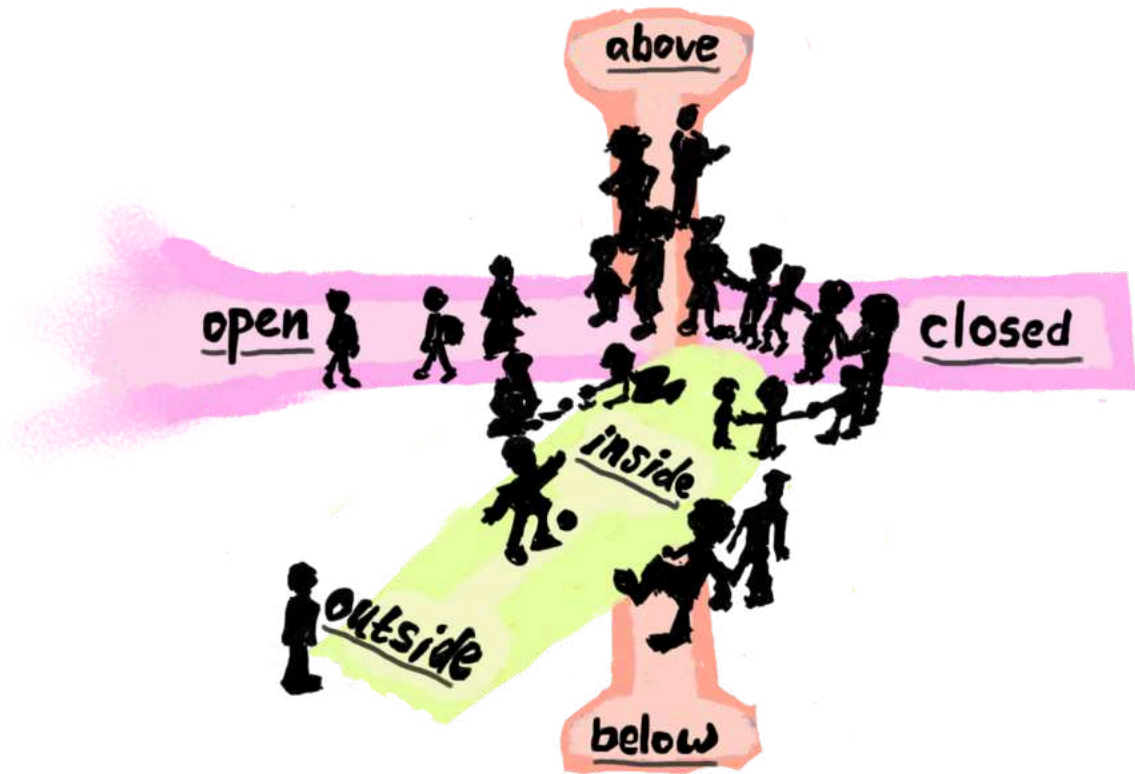
The second level involves the community. Within the school, collaboration is grounded in a common idea or ideal. Dialogues are essential for working together to create a harmonious flow in the organisation. By dedicating time and space to separate ourselves on this level and gaining clarity on challenges faced in cooperation, we contribute to the school community's overall soul development and group awareness.

The third level is about personal development. Interactions with pupils, parents, and colleagues serve as encounters with learning opportunities. Situations and events trigger internal reflections, giving meaning to these experiences. Engaging in dialogue aids in developing self-awareness, allowing us to navigate our unique paths of development with the support of pupils, colleagues, and parents. The heart of this process lies in the questions we have or the issues we grapple with.

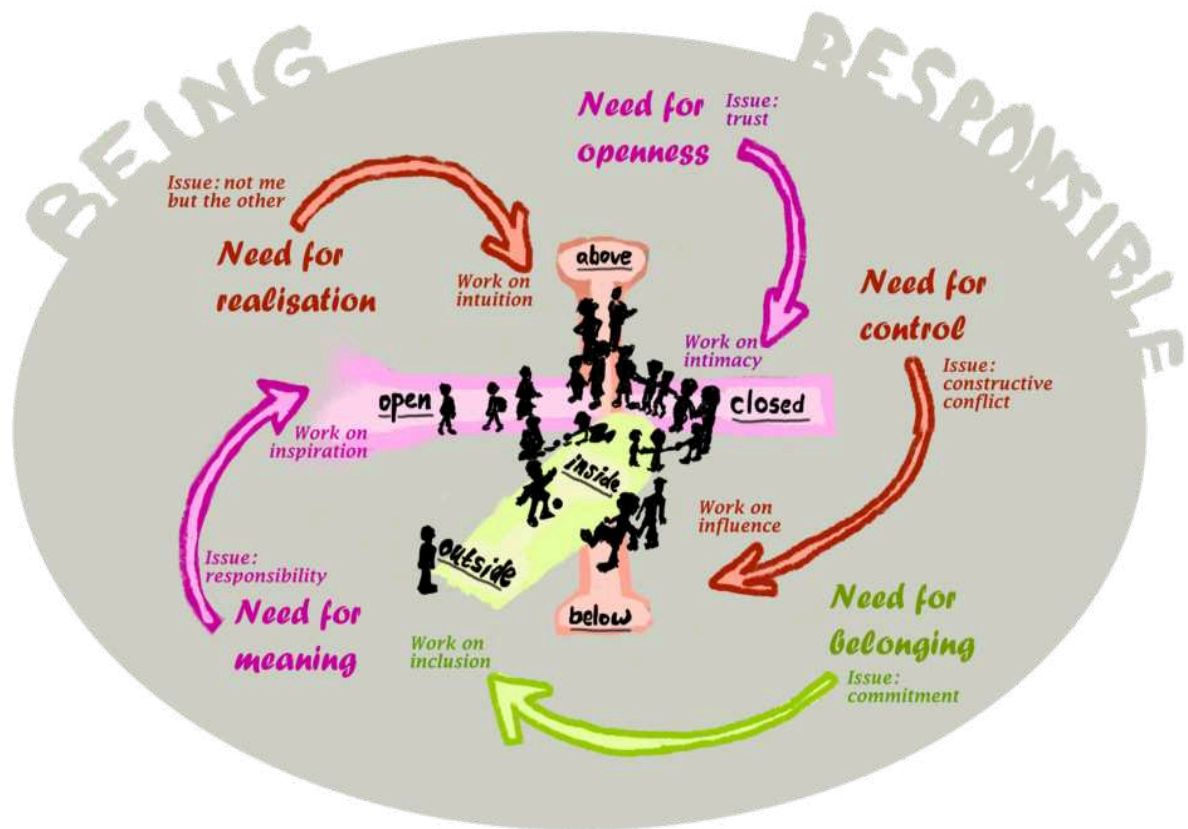
Identifying these questions or discovering the underlying issues is not straightforward. As we constantly seek new connections in our lives, recognising the imbalances we experience can help articulate the questions.

The questions in our personal development, the development of the community, and the development of the learner are interconnected. Avoiding discomfort might lead us to deny or fear the questions, or even develop a distaste for them. Rapid attempts to answer may provide a temporary sense of resolution but risk suppressing the underlying issues. True development involves learning to live with the questions and exploring the associated feelings. Accepting the questions allows us to bring them into conversation with others, inviting their perspectives on the issues.

While writing this book, I uncovered a connection between various models and analysis methods that can assist future school communities in addressing the initial proposition: everyone must be individually fully responsible. The discovery can be best explained as follows: by addressing the needs of the community, we gain insights into directing cooperative efforts and identifying areas for improvement. While this approach may not provide instant answers, it offers starting points for dialogue and collective action. The illustration below combines ideas from different authors, incorporating Lencioni's (2004) path to result-oriented cooperation and Vroemen's (2009) identification of four interpersonal needs based on the work of William Schutz. These needs include inside and outside above and below, and open and closed dimensions.



The themes, where you can work on, are intimacy, influence, inclusion, and inspiration, to which I add a fifth theme: intuition. The need for openness needs trust, so you need to work on intimacy. Recognising the needs, you acknowledge the issues, which allows you to work on the themes and enable a path to responsibility.



So, in the illustration, I depict a process with responsibility with an eye for the other as the result. To reach full individual responsibility, we follow a path that starts with the need for openness. This creates trust and allows us to open and close in a healthy way. In doing so, we work towards the intimacy needed for community members to function well: openness and warmth emerge in the community, but also a healthy demarcation of ourselves. Once that foundation is in place, we explore the need for control. Can community members have a say and influence outcomes? Is there steering? Where is autonomy desirable? Within the organisation, the group members practice constructive conflict management. They become aware of how they avoid conflicts and gather courage to engage in conflicts. Here the vertical dimension is important, a hierarchy of roles needed for the realisation of an intended improvement or innovation. The challenge is to ensure that everyone stays involved and does not become a mere spectator. A few will tend to dominate; others drop out. We are working on the theme of influence here. Does influence fit the role? If everyone wants to have a say in

everything, no one really has focused influence and therefore no individual responsibility can arise.

When employees within the organisation can engage in constructive conflicts with each other and they want to keep everyone involved, the need for belonging becomes manifest. Then we can work towards inclusion. Everyone is allowed to be who they are and contribute to the development of the community from their own authentic actions. Questions here are: Does everyone dare to be themselves? Does everyone get recognition for what they do? What do we do when someone joins or leaves? But also: How do we avoid peer pressure that forces everyone to join, provoking socially desirable behaviour and causing people to experience suffocation?

Having gone through all these steps, the opportunity arises to fulfil the need for meaning. Everyone wants to contribute something and/or be able to learn from others. In that atmosphere, the opportunity arises for everyone to take individual responsibility. We can support this by working on meaning and inspiration. It's about people being able to work with inspiration. Not directly to improve the world and storm the skies, but because they can contribute something.

To secure individual responsibility, we can lastly address the need for realisation (self-realisation, but also the realisation of the organisation). We do this by examining the issue of "Me or the other?" - the question of ego and status orientation. This ties in with the principal social law (see note 1), which indicates that everyone's own needs are met by the work of others. Here we work on intuition. By scrutinising our own judgement, by developing our natural capacity for compassion and by taking our spontaneous intuitions seriously. This is how we work towards a shared outcome.

That call by Rudolf Steiner from 1919 (see Appendix 1) at the beginning of the Waldorf school movement, 'Each one must be individually fully responsible', must be understood in such a way that it gives direction to the development we strive for together as a community. He describes not so much a state of being as a process that is always subject to change and influence - a process that requires steering from everyone. As far as I am concerned, this is the guiding principle for the future of education.



## Part 4 Exercises

In this part, you will find all the exercises. The corresponding background information can be found in Part 3. Many exercises use the A - B - C (- D) working method.

The A - B - C (- D) work method

This is a working method for exercises in groups of 3 or 4 persons. The letters A, B, C and possibly D indicate the number of participants. The roles are usually:

- introducer,
- questioner,
- observer,
- summariser.

The last two roles can also be taken together, so that person C is both observer and summariser.

- A The introducer introduces the issue and explains what it is about.
- B The questioner asks clarifying questions. **The aim of this is not necessarily that this person understands it better himself, but mainly that the other person explains it even better.** Here, participants strive to tell the story as concretely as possible. The aim is not to seek an immediate solution.
- C The observer ensures that the conversation proceeds according to the agreed rules. This person makes process observations: he or she pays attention to how people speak, whether feelings and needs are named, what positions are taken.
- C also keeps an eye on time.
- D (or C) The summariser takes notes for himself or herself. In this role, you write down what you notice, what seems interesting, what raises questions. After the input, you summarise what the introducer has contributed.

# 1 Leadership qualities

For background information: see 10.2, 'Leadership qualities'.

A - B - C

Duration: 30 minutes plus preparation

## **Preparation**

Use one of the questionnaires or methods listed to conduct an analysis of the leadership of the person in the leadership role. All three participants take time to review the results of the analysis(s).

### **Step 1 (5 minutes)**

Discuss with each other for 5 minutes how you interpret the results. Refer to situations you have experienced to illustrate your interpretation of the results.

### **Step 2 (10 minutes)**

Now A talks about what is distinctive about his/her leadership. How does it affect others? B and C listen attentively.

### **Step 3 (10 minutes)**

A turns away from B and C: it is important not to have eye contact. B and C reflect on what A has said. They too try to characterise A's leadership style and interpret its effect on others.

### **Step 4 (5 minutes)**

Now A turns towards B and C again. Finally, A tells what this reflection has brought him/her.

## **2 Analysis of the organisation with the four-field model**

Participants engage in groups of three or four people to discuss the topics in the four fields of the four-field model. For background information, see 'The four-field model' in chapter 10.

A - B - C (- D), with several groups at the same time  
Duration: 50 minutes

### **Step 1 (15 minutes)**

Discuss the topics in the four fields by answering the questions in each of the fields. It is not necessary to answer all the questions in the example, and the model can be extended with questions of your own. All members of the group bring in answers. Mention concrete examples. Question each other and ask further questions.

Someone writes down the essence of what is said on a large sheet of paper on which the format with the four fields is drawn. It is also possible to use a separate sheet of paper for each field. At the end, C gives the process observations.

### **Step 2 (15 minutes)**

Discuss with each other what picture emerges from the answers. List important points of attention. Note which field needs the most attention and note which field needs the most urgent attention. (This may vary).

### **Step 3 (10 minutes)**

Stand back and be still. Let an image come up and paint it or describe it.

### **Step 4 (10 minutes)**

Discuss these images with each other. Then decide together what to work on in the coming period.

Finally, the findings of all the groups can be discussed in plenary.

### **3 Analysis of the organisation with the heart model**

This exercise is suitable for regular application, but you can also use it for a one-off analysis. Do the exercise in a group of up to 6 people. It can also be carried out simultaneously by several groups, sharing the results in writing or verbally afterwards.

For background information, see 'The heart model' in chapter 10. It is important to understand this model prior to the exercise.

Group exercise

Duration: 50 minutes

#### **Step 1: internal observation (10 minutes)**

Participants discuss with each other what the internal situation is. What has changed recently? What are the events, what is the atmosphere? This is discussed descriptively, without judgement or conclusions. After the observation round, group members pause with each other to consider the feeling this evokes.

#### **Step 2: from inside to outside (10 minutes)**

Participants spend some time reflecting on the school's mission and vision: who are we, why do we do what we do? In a short time, a specific topic is discussed in relation to the mission and vision. What does it mean when we think from our mission and vision? Who do we need for this? What qualities are we looking for? Are we the organisation made for this? What makes us distinctive?

#### **Step 3: from outside to inside (15 minutes)**

Now the group focuses on the outside world: what has happened outside the organisation? What makes us want to do something with it, or not? Participants report on important relevant meetings with cooperation partners, training they have received, new regulations, startling discoveries. The other participants let this sink in. They have no judgment.

**Step 4: feeding the organisation (15 minutes)**

The participants use what has been collected as food to feed into the organisation. They discuss what actions might result from it. They collect the actions, prioritise them and choose what to do and what not to do, or what further actions or inputs are needed. Then they decide who will do what.

## 4 Cultural analysis

The possibilities for and the usefulness of doing a culture analysis were discussed in the last section of Chapter 10. In this exercise, the results of the culture analysis are discussed in groups of 3 people.

A - B - C, possibly with several groups at the same time

Duration: 30 minutes

### **Preparation**

One or more culture analyses have been done. The results have been shared with the participants. Everyone takes time to take note of these.

### **Step 1 (7 minutes)**

The participants discuss with each other the culture analysis(s) that have been carried out. First, A discusses the analysis from his or her perspective for 7 minutes. A discusses the benefits of a particular culture and its pitfalls. He or she discusses the desired situation and the current situation. It is important to always explain the interpretation with events and descriptions of one's own actions - so not the actions of others! B and C listen and ask deeper questions.

### **Step 2 (7 minutes)**

B takes over A's role and gives his/her interpretation of the results of the culture analysis.

### **Step 3 (7 minutes)**

C takes over the role of B.

### **Step 4 (9 minutes)**

A, B and C discuss together which steps they want to take to bring about a change.

### **Explanation**

Giving all participants ample time for their own interpretation and not drawing immediate conclusions allows for equal input and allows everyone's contribution to influence awareness of the situation. There can

be a strong tendency to want to change others, but it is important to contain it - after all, you cannot change others! Therefore, it is important to always look at one's own actions and consider what each person himself wants to do to initiate a change.

## **5 Initiatives and cyclical working**

For background information: see 11.2, 'Initiatives and cyclical work'.

Group exercise for 3 to 6 people

Duration: 5 minutes preparation plus 20 minutes per person who contributes

### **Preparation (5 minutes)**

Each person prepares individually with the questions:

- What initiatives have I taken that have led to nothing?
- What initiatives have I taken that did lead to something?
- What was distinctive about these last initiatives?

### **Step 1 (10 minutes)**

A tells from the questions and discusses what things were important in the initiatives that led to a result. The others ask clarifying questions. What were the milestones? Did A keep a sharp eye on progress?

### **Step 2 (8 minutes)**

A sits down so that he or she does not look at the others. The group members reflect on what was told. The focus is on what was cyclical in the process from initiative to outcome. A listens and avoids eye contact.

### **Step 3 (2 minutes)**

A indicates what he or she learned from the reflection and speaking out.

Now the next person takes over A's role and steps 1, 2 and 3 are repeated.

## **6 Designing a process**

For background information: see 11.3, 'Process-oriented working'. This working method can be carried out by a group of 3 to 6 people. It is also possible to do this with several groups at a time, depending on the process in which it is being used. Participants will set up a process according to the format in Appendix 3 of this book. Or if the process is already underway, they will reflect on the state and progress of the process.

Group exercise for 3 to 6 people

Duration: 45 minutes, possibly longer if more time is needed for discussion

### **Preparation**

A process group has been formed. A task and an objective have been formulated.

### **Step 1 (5 minutes)**

Members of the group are all given a copy of the format in Annex 3, or someone draws it on a flipchart or whiteboard. The participants decide who will be the moderator (A) and the note-taker (D). A will usually be the process owner.

### **Step 2 (10 minutes)**

To begin with, A formulates the assignment. Based on this, the participants examine the question. Use the questions in section 1 of the format. After 10 minutes, D summarises the final question. D notes that this wording of the question is leading for the time being.

### **Step 3 (10 minutes)**

Based on the question, D discusses what outcome proposition each has (part 2 of the format). After the discussion, D summarises the joint result presentation.

### **Step 4 (15 minutes or longer)**

Now participants walk through the other beacons. Who are active in the process? Which steering principles are being used? Has everyone been addressed? Has everyone been given a role? Is it clear what the first (or

next) step will be? What resources are needed? Finally, in what rhythm do we place the process? At what interval will the group reconvene, and what steps can everyone take individually in the meantime?

**Step 5 (5 minutes)**

The participants briefly look back on this consultation. The next steps are formulated, and the next consultation date is set.

## 7 Roles in a process

For background information: see 11.4, 'Roles in the process'. The exercise is described here for 4 people but is suitable for 3 to 6 people. In a 3-person group, one participant takes care of both C and D tasks.

It is especially fruitful to do this exercise as part of the process design, after the steps of exercise 6. The participants are then really looking for the required roles and the people who are suitable (and willing) to fulfil these roles. A will usually be the process owner and the other participants members of the process team.

A - B - C - D, possibly with several groups simultaneously

Duration: 50 minutes the first time; after several weeks/months 20 minutes

### **Step 1 (5 minutes)**

Participants choose together a work process in which roles will be explored. For example, student tracking, the care process, curriculum development or reporting.

### **Step 2 (10 minutes)**

A describes the work process and the roles he/she thinks are necessary in it.

B asks A questions, such as:

- 'What qualities belong to the role you mentioned?'
- 'Which persons have which role in this process now?'
- 'What role has not yet been taken?'

C notes on a large sheet (e.g., on a flipchart) what A says.

D observes the conversation and adjusts if necessary. For example, by asking:

- 'Can we return to the question for a moment?'
- 'Make it concrete?'
- 'What step are you talking about now?'

### **Step 3 (15 minutes)**

D gives a summary of what A has told. Then B, C and D give their reflection on what they have seen, heard and experienced.

**Step 4 (5 minutes)**

A summarises which roles are necessary in the process, which people will fill one of those roles and which roles are yet to be filled.

**Step 5 (15 minutes)**

A, B, C and D discuss with each other who will take up which role or will be asked to take up a role.

They also agree after which period of working from the defined roles (several weeks or months) they will evaluate the process and roles with each other and adjust them if necessary.

## **8 Stages of development**

In this exercise, participants will discuss the phases of organisational development with each other. For background information: see 12.1, 'Phases of development'.

Group exercise for 3 to 6 people, possibly with several groups simultaneously

Duration: 35 minutes per chosen model

### **Preparation**

Choose a model of organisation development phases to look at school development. At least one participant should study the chosen model beforehand. You can also choose that some participants each take their own model to look at the school from that perspective. Suitable models are:

- Forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning (Tuckman).
- Early struggle, Fun, Whitewater, Predictable success, Treadmill, The big rut and Death rattle (McKeown).
- Baby phase, toddler phase, toddler phase, child phase, adolescent phase, adolescent phase and adult phase.
- Pioneer phase, differentiation phase and integration phase (Lievegoed).

### **Step 1 (10 minutes)**

The first person narrates the development of the school organisation from the perspective of the chosen model. He/she names the phase he/she thinks the organisation is in and substantiates it with concrete examples. The others ask in-depth questions and monitor time. Topics may include:

- 1 Housing. Has the school always been in this location?
- 2 The dynamics in the team or teams. How is it now, and was it different in the past?
- 3 Events that have meant a turnaround for the organisation.

### **Step 2 (5 minutes)**

The others reflect on what has been told. The participants formulate a joint conclusion about the phase the organisation is in, seen from this perspective.

**Step 3 (15 minutes)**

If the participants agree on the phase the organisation is in now, a discussion follows about the phase they would like to aim for. What is needed to achieve this, and what steps might be possible?

**Step 4 (5 minutes)**

The phase, the target direction and the necessary steps are collected on a large sheet of paper (e.g. on a flipchart). This can be shared with the other groups.

If several perspectives have been chosen, the steps are now repeated with another model. The person who has studied this model takes over the role of narrator in steps 1 and 2.

## 9 Recurring exercises for a school organisation

For background information on this set of exercises, see: 12.3, 'Regular exercise in the working community'. The exercises are intended to be done regularly within the school but can also be used incidentally when the need arises. They are based on Adriaan Bekman's methodology of evidencing, as described in Inspired Change.

### *1 Consideration of the pupil-teacher-parent triangle*

In education, the vision we have of child development is decisive (see also 9.2, 'The school as a working community', 'A common aspiration and ideal'). It is therefore very important to picture the pupil's development, together with the pupil's process, the teacher's situation, the teacher's process, and the situation of the people working with the teacher (such as other teachers and parents).

Unlike an ordinary pupil discussion, in this exercise the aim is not to uncover the pupil's developmental question. The aim is: to examine the process for interrelationships and mismatches, making explicit a need for change and revealing issues. Awareness of social dynamics and underlying humanities can help formulate the core of issues and identify actions based on them. Issues change over the course of the development process.

During this exercise, participants discuss one learner per group in small groups. By regularly reviewing the triangular relationship (teachers-pupil-parents), you can update the issues and determine your own behaviour and actions.

A - B - C (- D), possibly with several groups at the same time Duration: 35 minutes

#### **Step 1 (15 minutes)**

A, e.g., the pupil's mentor, talks about the interactions between himself/herself, a pupil and the pupil's parents or carers. A describes quite a few situations without giving a background interpretation or explaining the observations. This creates a research field for the others.

#### **Step 2 (10 minutes)**

The others characterise what they have heard, and perhaps what they themselves have seen. Based on this, they articulate A's issue and the steps they think are necessary. A listens but does not respond during this reflection.

### **Step 3 (10 minutes)**

Based on the feedback, A formulates the need to change and formulates the possible steps he or she can take. The others listens attentively.

### **Explanation**

It is important to focus on the relationships between the roles in the pupil-parent-teacher triangle. This may reveal any imbalances. Because A does not go into explanations and backstories, the observations become sharper, allowing the core of the issue to illuminate. As the others articulate the issue for A, A can gain insight into his/her steering issue. Thus, the entrance can be found for A to start acting.

### *2 Intervisio*

A teacher's issue (A in the previous exercise) can lead to the need to consider the steering issue even deeper. In this intervisio exercise, A (as a leader of his or her own development process) opens up to feedback. The aim is to arrive at a next step in the process. The participants in the exercise question the issue and then the process is designed and monitored so that the essence found makes it possible to take the next step. The issue is highlighted from all sides and thus set in motion.

A - B - C (- D)

Duration: 35 minutes

### **Step 1 (15 minutes)**

A briefly writes down the (steering) issue for himself and then reads it aloud. B asks clarifying questions for 5 minutes. A narrates based on B's questions; B asks questions based on what A says. It is important to keep an eye on time here, C guards the time. D writes down points of interest.

After 5 and after 10 minutes, C stops the dialogue. D then gives a summary. C asks A to reformulate the issue. A reformulates the issue out loud. This

also happens again at the end of the 15 minutes. A then writes down the new formulation for himself.

### **Step 2 (10 minutes)**

After A has written down the new formulation of the issue, D, at his own discretion, gives a summary that brings out the essence of what A has told. Then B and C can add something - they do not engage with D and A but add to what may have been forgotten. A listens and indicates what touches him or her most.

### **Step 3 (10 minutes)**

The participants help A formulate a next step. A writes down the essence and the next step.

### **Explanation**

It is important for B to question A in such a way that he or she narrates better. So, the aim is not to satisfy curiosity or to bring in B's own insights.

### *3 Sharing views on a specific topic*

For everyone in the organised community to be able to take responsibility and show leadership, it is important that all members share their visions with each other. It is part of the heart process to test the community's vision against the outside world. (See 'The heart model' in 10.3, 'Analytical models'. In step 2, oxygen-depleted blood is propelled to the lungs and in step 3, it returns to the heart enriched).

In this simple exercise, everyone can give his or her views on a particular topic, for example on involving students in an educational change the school wants to initiate. Thanks to the different visions, a better picture emerges of the direction in which the organisation can move.

A - B - C (- D), with several groups simultaneously

Duration: 5 minutes introduction, 15 minutes per group participant, plus 1 to 2 minutes per group in the plenary session

### **Step 1 (5 minutes)**

The exercise is introduced in plenary, e.g., by the school leader. He or she explains the purpose and briefly mentions the topic. Then the participants divide into groups A-B-C(-D). They divide the tasks among themselves.

**Step 1 (5 minutes)**

A talks about his or her views on the topic without being disturbed for a maximum of 5 minutes. B listens to the content; C listens to the sentiment; D listens to the will (the aspiration, the need).

**Step 2 (10 minutes)**

B, C and D tell what struck them in the area that was assigned to them. A listens to B, C and D's reflections and writes down a short summary.

Then the participants rotate: B takes over A's role, C from B, and so on.

**Step 3 (10 minutes)**

When everyone has had their turn, participants make a summary of the different visions. They do not have to come up with one vision together. They discuss the similarities and differences with each other. They also prepare a presentation for the plenary session: in a 1-minute 'pitch' they will tell what came out of the exercise.

**Step 4 (1 or a few minutes per group)**

The groups' visions are shared with the whole community.

**Explanation**

When someone puts his or her views on a topic into words, it triggers others. The reflection makes both person A and the others aware of the content, felt value and will of A's vision. Sharing the different views creates a sharper picture of the topic. This exercise makes part of what is unconsciously alive visible.

*4 Work process improvement*

The work processes in the community are very decisive, both for the workload and for the sense of purpose that people involved in the work processes experience. When something is not running, they experience frustration.

It can be very enlightening to observe each other's behaviour and come to an understanding of each other's actions. Work process improvement is about letting go of old behaviour and trying out new behaviour. Because all participants take that in hand in this exercise, not only do the work processes become more meaningful and effective, but they also work with

each other on their own responsibility and start participating instead of watching.

A - B - C (- D), possibly with several groups of 3-6 people simultaneously  
Duration: 40 minutes

### **Step 1 (20 minutes)**

A describes a work process in steps. This could be, for example, the process of following the students.

B asks questions of A. Important questions are:

- 1 What possible steps are taken in the work process?
- 2 Who work together in these steps?
- 3 Who is responsible? Who makes the decision?
- 4 What is guiding this process?
- 5 What criteria apply?

C writes down on a large sheet of paper (on a flipchart) what A says. A schematic representation of the process emerges.

D observes the process and adjusts if necessary. (Go back to the question? Make it concrete? Name that steps now).

### **Step 2 (5 minutes)**

A notes on the sheet (in red) some points where the process is not working well.

### **Step 3 (15 minutes)**

Together, A, B, C and D develop several improvement ideas. They agree on who owns which improvement idea.

### **Explanation**

Because the participants look at the work process together, awareness of the work process and everyone's part in it is created. Critical points are identified, and it is possible to give feedback on everyone's functioning in this process.

Crucial in work process improvement is the change of behaviour. Here, it is important that the person himself embraces the idea and wants to act. This exercise can improve the flow of the work process by making participants

more aware of their own responsibility. The exercise can also lead to better working relationships between the participants and clearer decision-making.

### *5 Making steering views explicit*

If openness and trust prevail in the organisational culture, it also becomes possible to examine what guiding opinions members have in certain situations. Views are personal beliefs based on which we act in practical situations. They stem from underlying values, can be useful in certain situations, but obstructive in others.

Our beliefs guide our thoughts, statements, and actions. They often work unconsciously, and we are very attached to them. They often work well, but after a while they can also become counterproductive. Only when we become aware of them can we assess whether they are productive. If not, we replace them with new beliefs. These new views, which we already have somewhere inside us, can be discovered by reflecting with others and by others observing our actions.

A - B - C (- D)

Duration: 35 minutes

#### **Step 1 (10 minutes)**

A describes a situation in which he or she has experienced a mismatch. A does this very concretely by describing who was or were involved and what exactly happened. The intention is that the others can see it as a picture before them. B listens to the description from the content, C to the emotional value and D (or C) to the direction of will (the aspiration, the need).

#### **Step 2 (5 minutes)**

After A's description, the others give a characterisation of the situation discussed. Then they each think of what they think are the clearest guiding beliefs of A in the situation discussed. They write this down in one sentence.

#### **Step 3 (15 minutes)**

Now B, C and D each read out their sentence. A examines aloud whether he/she recognises these guiding beliefs, and whether they work adequately in the situation discussed and in similar situations. Then, with the help of the other participants, A formulates possible new views that could be more productive and fruitful for acting in such cases.

#### **Step 4 (5 minutes)**

Finally, all participants explore together how the situation described might turn out differently if A acted in it with a new, different view.

#### **Explanation**

The trick is to identify the obstructive views and to give new views - which are often already present internally - the chance to guide the actions. By practising this with each other, you work on a culture with openness and understanding for each other's actions, which gives everyone the opportunity to make themselves vulnerable.

#### **EXAMPLE**

For example, a view might be: 'I want to hear everyone.' The underlying value is that the person wants to cooperate and share insights. In a meeting, if she lets everyone have their say, the meeting may run out of steam, and everyone is dissatisfied. The view then acts as a hindrance. Now she formulates the view: 'I want everyone to be able to speak up.' She chooses a working form in which views are exchanged in small groups, with brief feedback to the whole group. It turns out that the new view works well in new situations: the participants are satisfied.

### *6 Setting up the inner team*

For this exercise, it is important that the members of the team or community are so familiar with each other that they want to share their inner voices with each other.

In our inner selves, we are busy. We perceive situations and people, we have values and perceptions, there are thoughts, feelings, and needs. We could name these as inner voices making themselves heard. Often, we are not yet aware of these voices, but we can learn to listen to them. One way to do this is to discuss them with each other.

It is possible in a developing organisation to foster a culture where members discuss these kinds of issues with each other. As participants become aware of their inner voices, they can take a clearer direction on the different

sounds. By promoting the role of their own self as director, they are no longer stuck in the patterns and habits that these voices often represent. Their self directs a different course.

Exercise in pairs A - B

Duration: 70 minutes

### **Step 1 (10 minutes)**

A takes a situation in mind about which he or she has a question and reflects aloud on the inner voices in relation to dealing with this situation. A listens to the inner noise and names the different voices (such as 'the fearful one' or 'the tough one'), starting with the familiar voices that keep appearing. A writes the names on separate pieces of paper and takes time to line them up relative to each other as a team. Who looks at each other and who, on the contrary, looks away? Who stands close to each other and who stands far away? Who says what and what is not said? Here, both the soft and hard voices get attention, the happy and the sad, the compelling, sympathetic, condoning, and victimising voices.

### **Step 2 (5 minutes)**

A discusses his/her team's line-up with B. B listens to A.

### **Step 3 (10 minutes)**

After a brief reflection, B positions the team differently, without saying anything. A observes B's intervention.

### **Step 4 (5 minutes)**

After a moment of reflection, A tells what the intervention did internally to him/her.

After this, the participants swap roles.

### **Explanation**

By acting out the inner voices as a team, we become aware of what is going on inside us. Because B then sets up the voices differently, the system is changed, which triggers an emotional reaction in A. Dominant voices can fade into the background a bit more and sad voices can get a bit more attention, for example. This may enable A to act differently and act more appropriately in future situations.

## *7 Designing future scenarios*

In the culture of the organisation, we all live with our own biography. At the same time, we shape the organisation's biography with our actions. Looking back, we see choices made along the way.

In the previous exercises, participants scrutinised their own actions with each other and looked at their guiding beliefs and obstacles. The conversation always focused on participating and taking responsibility in the organisation. By looking to the future, an inner decision can mature, and participants can become aware of it. Letting different images of the future emerge is a way to surface a choice of direction. By sharing these images of the future with each other, participants become more acutely aware of their choices.

A - B - C (- D), possible with several groups of 3-6 people at a time

Duration: 30 minutes per participant

### **Step 1 (15 minutes)**

All participants take 15 minutes to individually write down three scenarios. In 10 to 20 lines, they describe a day in their lives within the organisation in three years' time. Everyone individually designs the three scenarios in relation to an issue in the organisation now. What, who, where, how and why should be addressed in the description.

1 In the first scenario, everything continues as it is. On the outside, things change, but the organisation remains as it is now.

2 In the second scenario, the participant's big dream has been fulfilled, and the organisation's environment has moved with it.

3 In the third scenario, a revolution has taken place; the employees and their environment have fundamentally changed.

### **EXAMPLE**

A school struggles with low parental involvement. Criticism is rife, but parents of students contribute little to the school organisation. A staff member brainstorms about possibilities in the future.

A staff member writes a scenario 1 in which this remains the case and a day at school does not look very different from today. In scenario 2, there is a changed parent population and the atmosphere at school has become warm and involved. As a result, teachers enjoy doing their

work more. They also experience less workload because parents come to help in class and come up with inspiring ideas. In scenario 3, teachers behave as professionals who skilfully manage to deal with parents' strong emotions and bring them into constructive dialogue.

### **Step 2 (5 minutes)**

After the scenarios have been written down, all participants first reflect on them themselves. They ask themselves: what is the choice I must make now to move forward with my issue?

### **Step 3 (5 minutes)**

A talks about the three scenarios and describes which choice to make. In doing so, A does not have to choose one of the three scenarios. The others listen and give A feedback.

### **Step 4 (5 minutes)**

A listens to the feedback and indicates the decision he or she comes to. After this, the participants rotate.

### **Explanation**

By 'bringing the future to us' in appealing images, in which light can shine on underlying desires and needs, we obtain a realistic effect in the here and now. That which was previously dismissed as impossible is now an option again, although it may be difficult to realise. This is not about realising the impossible, but about expressing an inner aspiration or desire. In the space where participants are with each other, this aspiration can guide flow and joint development.

## 10 Encouraging communication

For an explanation of these three exercises, see: 13.1, 'Supporting collaboration with Connecting Communication'.

### *1 Connecting Communication: observing*

A - B

Duration: 15 minutes

#### **Step 1 (4 minutes)**

A and B take a painting (a picture in a book or on a screen is also allowed) and look at it carefully.

#### **Step 2 (2 minutes)**

A names his/her observations without giving any interpretation or judgement.

#### **Step 3 (2 minutes)**

B reflects on this and indicates whether he/she thinks there was an interpretation or judgement in there somewhere.

#### **Step 4 (1.5 minutes)**

A responds by indicating whether he/she recognises that.

Now the participants switch roles and steps 2 to 4 are repeated.

### *2 Connecting Communication: feelings*

A - B

Duration: 15 minutes

#### **Step 1 (5 minutes)**

A describes a challenging situation and names as many feelings as possible in it. B makes a list of all the feelings he or she hears.

#### **Step 2 (2.5 minutes)**

B reflects by indicating whether he or she recognises the words A used as feelings.

After this, participants switch roles and steps 1 and 2 are repeated.

### *3 Connecting Communication: needs*

A - B

Duration: 20 minutes

#### **Step 1 (3 minutes)**

A discusses a situation in which he or she was reproached, or in which A thought he or she heard a reproach. B asks clarifying questions.

#### **Step 2 (5 minutes)**

A and B explore together what needs may have lain beneath the person's reproach. B lists some possible needs and A indicates whether he/she recognises them.

#### **Step 3 (2 minutes)**

A formulates a response to the reproach by saying what need he/she thinks he/she hears from the (not present in the exercise) person and expresses his/her own need.

After this, the participants switch roles.

#### **Notes on the three exercises**

It takes a lot of practice to become aware of our feelings and needs. These exercises are a start for that. Comprehensive training in Nonviolent or Connecting Communication is recommended.

# 11 Exploring conflict avoidance tactics

This exercise uses with the list of animal types in conflict avoidance in 13.2, 'Conflicts'.

Group exercise

Duration: approx. 40 minutes

## **Step 1 (3 minutes)**

All participants read through the list of conflict avoidance tactics. They write down for themselves which of the seven tactics they use most often in conflict avoidance, with a before picture. They keep this note with them.

## **Step 2 (2 minutes)**

Now all participants get a blank sheet of paper. They write their name at the top and all group members put their sheets of paper together on a table.

## **Step 3 (2 minutes)**

Then all group members take a sheet of paper from the table with someone else's name on it. They write down which of the seven tactics they think this person uses most often to avoid conflict, including a concrete example. There should be space left for others to write on the sheet.

## **Step 4 (2 minutes)**

Everyone puts the sheet of paper back, takes a new sheet with a different name and repeats step 3.

Step 4 is repeated until everyone has had everyone else. In a very large group, stop when everyone has written on at least 7 sheets.

## **Step 5 (2 minutes)**

Then everyone picks up the sheet with his/her name on it and takes a short time to read it. Now the group breaks up into groups of 3 or 4 people.

*Continue in groups of 3-4 people*

## **Step 6 (10 minutes)**

All members of the group tell how they see their own avoidance behaviour and how the others see it according to the sheet described.

**Step 7 (5 minutes)**

Three or four participants discuss the differences and similarities between them.

**Explanation**

I will not deny that it is difficult to engage in conflict. Many people have developed patterns by which they avoid conflict. There are also people who seek out conflict and even seem to gain energy from it.

For most people in school communities, there is a need to engage in conflict despite the resistance they experience. After all, if something is resolved, cooperation can start flowing again. That is why we discuss this.

In addition, groups can discuss the ways of entering conflict. The following questions can be an entry point:

- What do you need to take the step of saying something bothers you?
- What can you do if you find it difficult to say something to someone?

## 12 Speaking out what is unsaid

For background information: see 13.3, 'Speaking out issues'.

Group exercise with several groups A - B - C (- D) at the same time

Duration: approx. 75 minutes

### Step 1 (10 minutes)

The exercise starts with an introduction for the whole group, explaining the idea of group consciousness (as in Deep Democracy) and the importance of speaking up. Some working rules are also agreed:

- 1 Confidentiality: everything discussed here stays here.
- 2 Passing is allowed: if you don't want to share for a while, you can pass your turn.
- 3 All participants are responsible for their own learning process.
- 4 Disturbances take precedence: if there is something on a feeling level that keeps the attention away, 5 interrupt the conversation and speak up.

Some tips are also given:

- 1 Don't speak in accusations, but name what you need.
- 2 Engage your natural capacity for compassion to hear each other well.
- 3 If a comment makes you feel negative, name that feeling and express what need you have.
- 4 If you think you understand what the other person is saying, ask an in-depth question to check if what you think is correct.

Now the group divides into groups of 3 or 4 people. They are given the task: discuss what you think is left unsaid.

A – B – C (- D)

### Step 2 (5 minutes)

A starts by naming unspeakable topics. B, C and D ask clarifying questions.

### Step 3 (2 minutes)

D summarises what A thinks is undiscussed.

Now the roles shift (A becomes B, B becomes C and so on) and steps 2 and 3 are repeated. This is done until all participants have been A.

**Step 4 (5 minutes)**

The last D summarises what has been named in the steps by all participants and highlights the essence of what is left unsaid in the group.

**Step 5 (5 minutes)**

The last C prepares feedback to the whole group of undiscussed themes that this small group considers important. The others give feedback and reflect.

**Step 6 (maximum 3 minutes per group)**

The group reconvenes. There are short presentations from all groups.

**Step 7 (10 minutes)**

At the end, participants briefly reflect what this exercise has done to them, what has touched them. Everyone is invited to utter a single word.

**Explanation**

When community members learn to speak out, they can also discuss topics with each other again.

## **13 Getting to know each other better with the question box**

For background information: see 13.4, 'Getting closer together'. Examples of questions that can be used in this exercise are in Appendix 4.

The original version of this exercise uses a bin in which the questions are on loose (laminated) strips of paper. The participants draw a question from the bin each time. It is also possible to give participants a sheet of paper with all the questions on it.

This exercise can also be done in an inner and an outer circle. The pairs sit opposite each other. In step 4, for example, the outer circle always moves one chair to the right. In that case it is more convenient to work with sheets of paper containing all the questions.

Group exercise in pairs A – B

Duration: 5 minutes per question, up to 30 minutes in total

### **Step 1**

Make pairs. If you are not working with a real question box, give each participant a sheet of paper with the questions on it.

### **Step 2**

A asks a question from the question box to B. B responds.

### **Step 3**

B asks a question from the question box to A. A responds.

### **Step 4**

The participants find another member of the group and repeat steps 2 and 3. After this, the pairs exchange a few more times.

## **14 Positive and critical feedback**

For background information: see 13.4, 'Getting closer together'. The discussion leader ensures that there is an even number in all groups, by participating or not participating himself.

Group exercise for 6 to 10 people, possibly with several groups of 6-10 people at a time

Duration: approx. 70 minutes with 10 participants per group

### **Step 1 (maximum 15 minutes)**

All participants write down about their group members what each colleague's main contribution is to the team or community. They also note what this colleague could do differently to contribute even more.

### **Step 2 (3 minutes)**

The participants form pairs A-B. A tells what he/she has written down about B. After A has told this quietly, B can respond by indicating whether he/she recognises it. B can also ask further questions, to understand even better what A has said.

### **Step 3 (3 minutes)**

In each pair, B now tells what he/she has written down about A. A responds as in step 2.

### **Step 4**

Now the pairs rotate. All participants find another member of the group and repeat steps 2 and 3. This is repeated until all group members have had their turn.

This exercise can also be done in an inner and an outer circle. The pairs sit opposite each other. In step 1, the participants in the inner circle write down something about all the persons in the outer circle, and vice versa. In step 4, the outer circle always moves one chair to the right.

### **Explanation**

It is exciting to give critical feedback. If it is about the behaviour and not the person, this feedback turns out to be well received. Practical experience shows that everyone performs the exercise very carefully and in confidence. Usually, after the silence of writing, a huge energy emerges in the conversations. Discharges of laughter indicate that something has been touched and is coming to relaxation.

## 15 Biography interviews

For background information: see 13.5, 'Biography conversations'.

### *1 One's own teaching biography*

A – B – C (- D)

Duration: 10 minutes per participant plus 5 minutes

#### **Step 1 (5 minutes)**

A tells about himself or herself and discusses his or her educational history.

Possible questions to answer are:

- 1 Where did you go to school (primary and secondary)?
- 2 How do you characterise these schools?
- 3 How do you characterise yourself as a primary school student?
- 4 How do you characterise yourself as a secondary school pupil?

The others ask in-depth questions (B) and monitor time (C/D).

#### **Step 2 (5 minutes)**

D (or C) summarises what A has told, and B and C (and D) reflect on what they have heard.

Now participants rotate (A becomes B, and so on) and steps 1 and 2 are performed again, until everyone has had their turn.

#### **Step 3 (5 minutes)**

The group discusses together the differences and similarities between their educational biographies.

### *2 Biographical contexts and encounters*

A – B – C (- D)

Duration: approx. 30 minutes (per participant)

#### **Preparation**

Each person individually prepares their own biography – this can be done in 10 minutes immediately before the exercise, or at another time – using the

following questions:

- What behaviours and traits have I inherited?
- In what environments have I shaped myself?
- What is the common thread in my biography?
- Which encounters were important to me, and why?
- Which choices were successful, and which did I feel failed?
- Is there a pattern of resistances that I recognise?

### **Step 1 (17 minutes)**

A tells his or her story. The others listen attentively and note striking things in A's use of language, in the choices, and what does not seem to be named.

### **Step 2 (10 minutes)**

A sits with his or her back to the others. This is not compulsory, but it helps if A avoids eye contact. B and C (and D) reflect on A's story. A listens and notes what is important to him/her.

### **Step 3 (3 minutes)**

A tells briefly what was important for him/her to hear in the reflection.

If desired, the other participants come up next. It is also a good choice to discuss only one person's biography at a time.

### *3 Biographical steps*

A - B - C (- D)

Duration: approx. 20 minutes per participant

### **Preparation**

Participants prepare to talk about steps in their own biography and in the biography of the school. They can do this in advance at a time that suits them, or in 10 minutes before the exercise. They answer the following questions for themselves:

- 1 How did you come into the world?
- 2 What were decisive steps that changed your life in the years that followed?
- 3 How did you integrate what you learnt from these experiences into your life?

4 What was a decisive step/crisis/development in your biography that strongly shaped the school?

**Step 1 (10 minutes)**

A tells the story. The others listen attentively.

**Step 2 (8 minutes)**

B and C (and D) reflect on what A has told. They try to name the key element in A's biography. A listens attentively and takes notes if necessary.

**Step 3 (2 minutes)**

A tries to formulate an answer to the questions:

- What is the most important value for me?
- How does this fit with the biography of the school?

Then the participants rotate: A becomes B, and so on. Steps 1 to 3 are performed again, until everyone has had their turn.

## Word of gratitude

I owe many thanks to my colleagues at BVS-schooladvies who have always supported me in my search for organisational and leadership development. Of course, also to the colleagues at the schools I was allowed to advise or research. IMO and in particular Klaas Ijkema and Adriaan Bekman, I am indebted to them for allowing me to join the joint work in IMO on horizontal leadership and organisation and for reading along and providing me with constructive feedback. Conversely, I was also allowed to do the same with their publications.

I learnt a lot from Henny Molenaar and Juul Velvis, trainers at NSO-CNA, with whom I was allowed to design the training for school leaders from 2019 and to test much of the content of this book. Later together with Elard Pijnaken who was important to me in the process of research and encouraged me to formulate the themes around leadership.

I am very grateful to the publisher for supporting my initiative a second time and for shaping the work in this book. She also allowed me the choice to translate the book. In the Dutch edition, Anne Colenbrander's editing was indispensable. She enriched my writing. And for the English translation, I thank Deepl for allowing me to translate this book in an easy way and thus make it available to an international audience.

Very precious were the moments I shared with my son David when we talked about the themes of this book. He from an anthropological background and I from my experience in Waldorf education and anthroposophy. This led to him wanting to illustrate the book for which I am incredibly grateful.

It was the enthusiasm of Jeanneke Brosky, my partner in life and my sons and daughters-in-law that helped me cross the threshold to go for it.

Hans Passenier

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We have chosen to adopt the Dutch sources in this publication as such. When writing, I used these and no English sources.

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# Annex 1 Principles of organising the first Waldorf School

On 20 August 1919, on the eve of the 'General Humanities' course, a two-week course for the new teachers of the first Waldorf School, Rudolf Steiner said:

*But we will have to make compromises. Compromises are necessary, because we are not yet at the stage of performing a truly free act. The state prescribes us bad learning goals, bad final goals [...]. Politics will manifest itself in such a way that it will treat human beings according to templates.*

R. Steiner, *Algemene menskunde als basis voor de pedagogie*, 1991 (translated)

*Two contradictory forces must be brought into harmony in the process. On the one hand, we must know what our ideals are, and yet we must also have the flexibility to adapt to something that is very far from our ideals. Therefore, we will not organise the school according to government standards, but according to administrative standards: republican [...].*

R. Steiner, *Ter verdieping van de vrijeschoolpedagogie*, 2006 (translated)

For a deeper understanding of what Steiner is saying here, I give of the remainder of this statement not only the translation but also the original German rendering. This was not recorded by himself, but by third parties.

*Deshalb werden wir die Schule nicht regierungsgemäß, sondern verwaltungsgemäß einrichten und sie republikanisch verwalten. In einer wirklichen Lehrer-Republik werden wir nicht hinter uns haben Ruhekissen, Verordnungen, die vom Rektorat kommen, sondern wir müssen (hineintragen) dasjenige, was uns die Möglichkeit gibt, was jedem von uns die volle Verantwortung gibt für das, was wir zu tun haben. Jeder muss selbst voll verantwortlich sein.*

*Zur Vertiefung der Waldorfpädagogik*, 1985

*That is why we will not organise the school in a governmental way, but rather in a managerial and republican way. In a true teacher republic, we will not have backbones in the form of school management rules but must*

*ourselves (bring in and have in us) what gives us the ability, what gives each of us full responsibility for that which we must do. **Each one must be individually fully responsible.***

R. Steiner, *Ter verdieping van de vrijeschoolpedagogie*, 2006 (translated)

We now read the word Verwaltung in verwaltungsgemäß as 'administrative', but according to Martyn Rawson it originally meant having control or power over something, directing something, but also: being responsible for it on behalf of a higher authority (e.g., an estate manager). (Rawson, 2021)

On school leadership, Steiner said on the same evening:

*To replace a school leadership, this preparatory course will take place, in which each person will work on taking on that which makes the school a unit.*

R. Steiner, *Algemene menskunde als basis voor de pedagogie*, 1991 (translated)

At a meeting of teachers at the Waldorf School in 1920, he said: 'To begin with, I do not want to discuss my position to the outside world now, but only what is going on internally here.' He then made it clear that he was facing the teachers as an esoteric to friends. 'But when someone addresses his fellows about such (esoteric) research, he never pretends to be an authority in the ordinary sense of the word.' On making decisions at the request of others, Steiner said there:

*[...] that my position in the Teachers' College is one which is not willed by me or by this or that one against the will of any member of the Teachers' College, but which is wholeheartedly accepted and wanted by the whole Teachers' College. [...] You must feel how with everything I try and will try to come to decisions in harmony with everyone, where I must come to a decision, on the understanding that someone asks me about it, because he asks me about it from his understanding.*

R. Steiner, *Konferenzen mit den Lehrern der Freien Waldorfschule 1919 bis 1924*, 1975 (translated)

At a parents' evening in 1921, Rudolf Steiner said to the parents of students at the Waldorf School:

*All teaching must be permeated by a specific pedagogical principle, which can be achieved only if the teachers themselves are fully involved in spiritual activity. It is not possible for them to do this if they are not aware of their responsibility for the spiritual life. [...] If we proceed simply, according to what is prescribed for one school year, we feel freed from the need to examine from week to week what we should pick up in school regarding individual subjects and how we should present them. It should be characteristic of our teachers that they constantly draw from the living spiritual source [...].*

*The school must be self-governing; teachers cannot be civil servants. They must be fully their own master, for they know a higher master than any external circumstance, the spiritual life itself, with which they are in a direct connection that is not mediated by school officials, headmasters, inspectors, school boards and so on.*

– R. Steiner, *Rudolf Steiner in der Waldorfschule*, 1980 (translated)

## Annex 2 Core horizontal leadership qualities questionnaire

This questionnaire is used at IMO (the Institute for (hu)Man and Organisational Development) to give people '360-degree feedback' on their leadership. A digital version can be found at [tinyurl.com/8affmjan](http://tinyurl.com/8affmjan). This questionnaire is also used in IMO's 'Horizontal leadership' masterclass, offered in collaboration with BVS school consultancy. It is a way of examining the four core qualities of horizontal leadership in yourself. The source here- for this is Horizontal leadership, edited by Adriaan Bekman (2009).

The four core qualities are:

- 1 Managing processes.
- 2 Coaching a learning process.
- 3 Inspiring with a vision.
- 4 Intervene and confront.

For each of the questions below, give yourself a score on a scale of 1 to 5.

*1 = Not .....5 = Definitely*

1 I make choices for my organisation that make a difference.	1 2 3 4 5
2 I learn from my colleagues.	1 2 3 4 5
3 I can create images of the future and go all the way to realise them together with my people.	1 2 3 4 5
4 I immediately stop the process if things don't work.	1 2 3 4 5
5 I support my employees by taking a clear stance on sensitive issues.	1 2 3 4 5
6 Listening is an art I really master.	1 2 3 4 5
7 I can inspire others to pursue a challenging goal.	1 2 3 4 5

8 I am not afraid to confront the other person about something.	1 2 3 4 5
9 I create the optimal framework conditions within which my employees can work.	1 2 3 4 5
10 I am always looking for the next development step for my organisation.	1 2 3 4 5
11 I enjoy dialogue with others on the ideas that matter to my organisation (unit).	1 2 3 4 5
12 I like to set boundaries.	1 2 3 4 5
13 I create processes that make things work.	1 2 3 4 5
14 I encourage others to take a learning step.	1 2 3 4 5
15 I am able to encourage others to dream about the future.	1 2 3 4 5
16 I am not afraid to stop projects.	1 2 3 4 5

### **Evaluation of results**

Managing processes: add up the answer scores of questions 1, 5, 9 and 13 and divide by 4.

Coaching a learning process: add up answer scores of questions 2, 6, 10 and 14 and divide by 4. Inspiring with a vision: add answer scores from question 3, 7, 11 and 15 and divide by 4.

Intervene and confront: add the answer scores of questions 4, 8, 12 and 16 and divide by 4.

# **Annex 3 Format to support process design**

*Process steps*

*Elaboration*

## **The question**

- 1 What was the trigger for the question?
- 2 What are concrete examples of situations related to the question/initiation?
- 3 What is the previous history?

## **1 Presentation of results**

- 1 What do we imagine as a concrete result?
- 2 Who is the target group?
- 3 What are success criteria for the result?
- 4 What do we not want?

## **2 Who? People and responsibilities**

- 1 Who has what role?
- 2 Who is final decisionmaker and process owner?
- 3 Who is a supporter or expert or has another role?

## **3 What? Organisation**

- 1 What is the first step?
- 2 What steps do you envisage after that?
- 3 What are the tasks?
- 4 Who is going to do what?

## **4 How? Steering principles**

- 1 With what principles do we steer the process?
- 2 Which criteria define the frameworks?

## **5 How? Processes**

- 1 When does the process start and when does it end?
- 2 What are the phases, the duration, the rhythm?
- 3 What is the first step?
- 4 What do we want to have achieved by when (in between)?

## **6 Resources**

- 1 What resources (materials, software, time and money) do we need?
- 2 Why should these be used for this purpose?
- 3 Why is this question worth the effort and resources?

**7 Why? Meaning, guiding image and motto**

- 1 What basic values, attitudes and statements are important as a framework?
- 2 What is the meaning of the project? Why is it relevant?

## **Annex 4 The question bank**

These are examples of questions that can be used in the question box in Exercise 13.

- 1 Which character trait of mine do you like best?
- 2 Choose an object (from this room or outside) that says something about me and explain your choice.
- 3 Suppose it were possible to buy talents from each other. Which talent of mine would you buy?
- 4 Suppose you start your own company and ask me as a business partner. What role or added value do you see for me in your venture?
- 5 It's my birthday and I've asked for books and DVDs. Which book or DVD would you give me?
- 6 Think of another profession for me and explain your answer.
- 7 I am helping the school organise the study day. What tasks would I do best, or what do you see me doing there?
- 8 To earn some extra money, I am looking for work in the catering industry. What would suit me best? Choose from: standing behind the bar, making snacks for a catering company, working as a bouncer in a nightclub, serving on a terrace, being a team leader in a fast-food restaurant.
- 9 I am going to travel around the world. Which country do I feel so at home in that I will want to stay there?

## Notes

- 1 Rudolf Steiner formulated his main social law in 1905: 'The well-being of the whole of cooperating people is all the greater the less the individual claims the proceeds of his work. That is, the more of these proceeds he cedes to his collaborator and the more of his own needs are satisfied not by his own work but by the work of others.'
- 2 In Emil Molt's words, 'I experienced the whole tragedy of the working class: to be cut off, for lack of money, from the education that more wealthy people can offer their children. I had a kind of premonition of what it might mean for social progress if many entrepreneurs came to such an understanding.' (Molt, 1972)
- 3 Many schools arranged for pupils to take havo or vwo exams in a so-called 13th grade, which was housed in an ROC. Waldorf secondary schools up to grade 12 were funded as mavo and concluded with an ivo-mavo diploma.
- 4 In Goethe's own words: 'Rot [magenta] nehmen wir so vorerst als keine eigene Farbe an, sondern kennen es als eine Eigenschaft, welche den Gelben und Blauen zukommen kann. Rot steht weder dem Blauen als dem Gelben entgegen; es entsteht vielmehr aus ihnen; es ist ein Zustand, in den sie versetzt werden können, und zwar wie wir hier vorläufig sehen, durch Verdichtung und durch Aufeinanderdrängung der Teile.' (Goethe, Farbenlehr)  
*Translation:* 'We do not know red as an independent colour, but as a property that the yellow and the blue can acquire. Red is opposite neither blue nor yellow; rather, it arises from them. It is a state in which they can be changed, and that is, as we see here for the time being, by compaction and by accumulation of the parts.'
- 5 In Von Seelenrätseln, Steiner describes the following senses: I perception; thought perception; hearing of words; hearing; sense of warmth; vision; sense of taste; sense of smell; sense of balance (the perceptual experience of being in a certain state of equilibrium with the external world); sense of movement (the perceptual experience of rest and movement of one's limbs on the one hand, or rest or movement in relation to the external world on the other); sense of life

(experiencing the constitution in the organism; sense of being subjective); sense of touch.

6 With their pyramids, the Egyptians depicted a hierarchical vertical structure, with the point pointing to the divine world that was necessary for the broad base, the world of men, while the broad foundation could support the entire hierarchy. The divine world exerted influence on people 'from above', and organised reality was derived from it.

7 Michaela Glöckler, in *Power/Powerlessness* (1999), names the destructiveness that ideals can have. She distinguishes between the situation in which the ideal should be or the situation in which it can become ideal. She refers to the words of Rudolf Steiner in *The Philosophy of Freedom* (2019): 'We must be able to confront the idea with feeling and consciousness; otherwise, we will be enslaved by it.' The point, then, is that ideals can become (the horizontal dimension, see Chapter 7) but cannot be forced (the vertical dimension). The idea of Waldorf school is something that is still becoming. Where the idea is Waldorf or has been thought of from the idea and is no longer becoming, the idea can be destructive.

8 Also consider Steiner's social principal law here (see note 1).

9 In transactional analysis, the roles of parent, child and adult provide the perspective for interpreting the dialogue and influence between them. Do you shoot into the parent role, in which power and authority are important? Or do you shoot into the child role, in which manipulation and victimhood lurk? Or do you manage to take the adult role and really engage in dialogue?

10 As Rudolf Steiner put it (Source: Antrovista Proverbs and meditations, <https://spreuken.antrovista.com/heilsam-ist-nur.html>):

Heilsam ist nur, wenn  
im Spiegel der Menschenseele  
sich bildet die ganze Gemeinschaft  
und in der Gemeinschaft  
lebet der Einzelseele Kraft.

*In translation:*

This alone heals,  
when in the mirror of the human soul,  
the whole community forms itself  
and in the community  
lives the power of the single soul.'