

FROM CRISIS TO POSSIBILITY

What can total collapse teach us
about innovating a "golden age"?

Two hundred years ago Denmark faced total collapse. On the losing side of major war, the country in tatters, it's economy in ruin. Having lost land, resources and the talents of all who died in the struggle, the country was bankrupt on every level. **Except one.**

Out of this crisis, a new way of viewing society arose, fundamentally changing the structures of power, privilege and connection. Over the next span of years Denmark as we now know it was created and a golden age was born. Danes like Søren Kierkegaard, Hans Christian Andersen, Grundtvig and HC Ørsted brought their gifts to the world.

Interestingly enough, this founding story is very little known by the Danes themselves, but it holds keys to how we might all face this time of uncertainty and challenge.

Join us in a grand experiment of hosted conversation and harvesting of this powerful story to uncover what it might offer Denmark and the world. This is an invitation to co-create a new paradigm for future growth, based on collective historic memory.

Vallekilde Folk High School, October 16 & 17, 2012

"We may have gone bankrupt financially – but without knowledge, we are doomed."

King Frederik the VI (Translated into contemporary language) He introduced the Primary Education Act and invested in post-school education programs. To him, education was the way to re-create Denmark. The High School we are meeting in Vallekilde, is a direct result of this Act.



What is the focus?

Over the days of October 16 and 17, we will gather at Vallekilde Folk High School, west of Copenhagen, to inquire deeply into a story that will soon be 200 years old. Contained within this story are the threads of power, economics, social movements, education, citizenship, science, art, philosophy and enlightenment. The key to it all was a small group of people who initiated conversations that mattered and held them *long enough* to shift an entire national paradigm.

We will walk in their footsteps by engaging with the story through targeted listening and conversation. Our focus is finding out what doorways to new and wiser possibilities this slice of history can offer us, both nationally within Denmark, and internationally in other situations of challenge and change. We will look at both the historical period, and see how the threads of the story are alive today.

Then we will work as a community to identify the opportunities the story offers us and see how it can give us a new perspective and some more wisdom on life and work in 2012 and beyond. How can this story empower wiser action? What can we learn from each other? How can we support a strengthening of community engagement? What can Denmark share with the world?

How will we work together?

We will be using a method called "Collective Story Harvesting", which has been pioneered by the Art of Hosting network around the world over the past two years. It has been used to engage with systemic stories of projects, initiatives, organizations and communities, but until now we have never tried to work with a systemic story this large and important. The nature of this particular story and the eve of its 200th "birthday" were an encouragement to us. We feel the world is waiting for what we will find out and we feel that this story has a much longer lifespan than just this one event.

That is why we are calling this a "grand experiment". We are inviting you into something that has not been done before and we're inviting you as a contributor and fellow explorer. We are seeking to create a learning community who want to delve into this story, see what possibilities it offers and create the next stage of our work with it. It is our intention to continue to work with this story during the coming year, when it will be 200 years old, and perhaps beyond.

We have invited people who represent the key threads of the story (power, economics, education, social movements, enlightenment) to be our storytellers, and we will work with them to offer what they know in story form. Some of them are holding the historical aspects of the story and some are representatives of where history meets present day. We will be focusing on storytelling and story listening, so there will be no presentations, Powerpoints or lectures. Each of us listening will also be asked to take an active role and it is not necessary to know anything about this period of history, only to bring your curiosity and an interest in working collaboratively.

We will be working in English because of the potential this story has for the world and the international field we have invited to be present. Already we have participants coming from Greece, Japan, Israel/Palestine and many other places, keen to hear this story and share their own. Our intention is to create an international Learning Village. We are inviting anyone who is

- interested in creating systemic shift
- working with collapse, breakdown and conflict
- exploring how to foster creativity in challenging times
- wondering how to engage diverse groups
- working to engage people in wise action and citizenship
- interested in the power of story and especially founding stories

What will our time together look like?

Those who can, will gather for dinner at Vallekilde on Monday October 15. The event will formally begin at 9:30 on Tuesday October 16 and end at 16:30 on Wednesday October 17. Here is a flow of our time together:

Tuesday October 16

- **Welcome + introduction** to the event and the group
- **Hearing from history:** A Collective Story Harvest of Denmark's 1813 story
- **Sharing the harvest:** What did we hear in the stories our tellers shared?
- **History meets present day:** What happened with the themes present in 1813? Where are we today?
- **Bringing it all together:** What can we learn from history and from today? What are the doorways in this story to wider possibilities for us all? What did we learn together?

Optional evening: *Sharing our stories – for example from Greece, Israel/Palestine, Japan and around the world – about conflict, challenge & breakthrough.*

Wednesday October 17

- **How can this story serve?** Working together in community to discover the themes and opportunities inherent in the story. Looking at how this story might work inside Denmark and beyond from this point forward. Who else might be involved? How can we share what we've discovered here?
- **Applying what we've learned to our own lives and work:** What can be directly applied? How can we support each other? What new ideas might we work on? Who will step forward to continue working with this story?
- **Checking out:** Looking over the whole experience, what learning can we take away with us?

Event details

The event will take place in the traditional Vallekilde Folk High School in Odsherred, northern Zealand (Hølskolevej 9, 4534 Hørve) on October 16 and 17, with the option to also stay the night on the 15th. The School is a one hour drive from Copenhagen and 90 minutes by public transport. More details can be found here: <http://vallekilde.dk/english/>

We will be residential, staying overnight at the school and eating our meals there. Vallekilde offers a delicious range of organic food. If you have special food needs, please let us know.

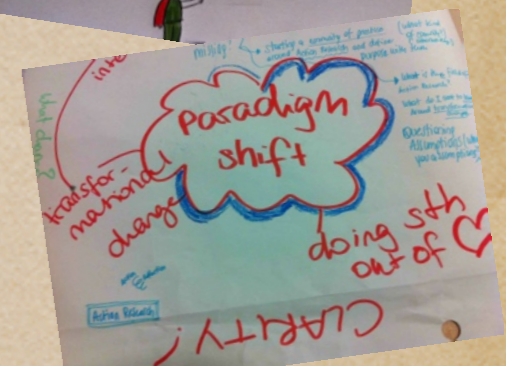
The cost for participation, including accommodation and meals is 190 € or 1.400 kr per person. Accommodation is based on two people sharing. There are a very limited number of single rooms, with a charge of 242 € or 1.800 kr per person for the event. Registrations must be made before 8 October. If you also wish to join us Monday night, there will be an additional room charge.

Participants are responsible for their own travel. Have a look at our website for program and travel arrangements: <http://www.denmark1813.wordpress.com> We will be supporting shared travel and a great level of event details here.

For more information and to book, contact Anne Madsen on anne@toolsforschools.dk or mobile phone +45 50595634.



“Chaos is creativity in search of form.”



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Hosting Team



Toke Paludan Møller (Denmark)

Toke Paludan Moeller is co-founder and CEO of Interchange Aps <<http://www.interchange.dk/>>, a for more than profit company based in Denmark, has been pioneering in the fields of sustainable entrepreneurship, participatory leadership, hosting and harvesting strategic conversations, educational renewal, chaordic leadership and social innovation since the early 1970s. He has been practicing, teaching and working across collaborative and hierarchical cultures in ministries, health care systems in the UK, Canada, the US and many other communities of practice around the world - including in The European Commission over the last 7 years - as well as training thousands of leaders and practitioners around the world in participatory leadership practices.

Mary Alice Arthur (New Zealand)

Mary Alice is a Story Activist, specializing in using story in service of positive systemic shift and to access and create collective intelligence on critical issues. Her art is creating and hosting spaces for wise action, and narrative practice forms a key part of her work, focusing both on Storytelling and StoryWork and the emergent space in-between. She has major projects to her credit demonstrating the power of narrative and facilitation to set the scene, establish the foundation and continue the integration of positive change. Her powerful results from a telecommunications merger project were written up in the 2006 book *Wake Me Up When the Data is Over: How Organizations Use Stories to Drive Results* (ed: Lori Silverman). <<http://www.getsoaring.com>>



Peter Engberg (Denmark)

Award-winning film director Peter Engberg has interviewed world leaders such as Dalai Lama and Mikhail Gorbachov and many other pioneers of change. His films have won international awards, and have been shown on national and international TV and cinema. He has studied psychology in Denmark, holistic medicine in USA, Zen practice in Japan, and worked with films and photography as transformative tools since 1970. His work is an invitation to see our lives as journeys of discovery, which through conscious practice can bring deep individual and collective change. To experience that everything actually is interconnected. <http://clubofbudapest.org/p-amb-engberg.php>



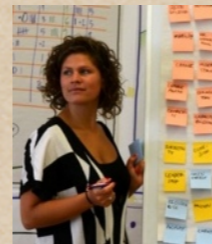
Helle Solvang (Denmark)

Helle Solvang has 15 years experience as a radio and television host at the Danish National Radio Corporation (DR) in the fields of arts and culture. She has a background as a conductor of musical processes and trained conductor of The Musicology Institute in Copenhagen and has studied cross-aesthetics of Modern Culture. Since 2006 she has through hundreds of interviews with artists, entrepreneurs, politicians and other change makers explored the potential for transformation of our society - collectively and individually. Is the host of the program Language Laboratory at the culture radio channel P1 and 'Practitioner in the Art of Hosting Conversations that Matter'.



Svend-Erik Engh (Denmark)

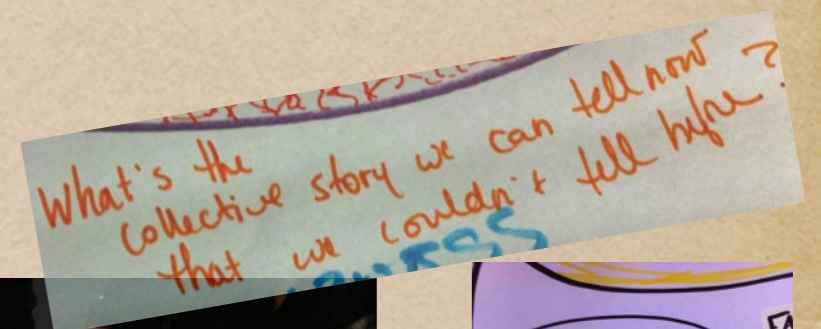
Svend-Erik Engh has 15 years of continuous experience in the teaching of storytelling. Since 2000, Svend-Erik Engh has worked with Organizational Storytelling and has been involved in many tasks in Danish companies and organizations including Copenhagen Business School, Novozymes, Novo Nordisk, CSC, Commercial College in Aarhus, Region Aalborg, Microsoft Denmark and Maersk Container Industry. He started his career at Borups Højskole, one of the schools inspired by Grundtvig.



Anne Madsen (Denmark)

Anne's education is from the Kaospilots at Aarhus University, an innovative school of project, process and life management. Life management is Annes main occupation in the sense that leading/hosting her life in a way that allows for inner and outer change to happen in a chaordic and meaningful way has become a core practice. Her focus in terms of outer change is within the public educational system, where she is passionately working and hosting conversations in a sector that is calling for transformation to happen. Besides that she is running her company "DrawMore" doing graphic recording and facilitation.

This inquiry has been stimulated by the book "Verdens bedste uddannelsesystem?" ("The Worlds best Educational System?" in English), by Niels Christian Nielsen & Maj Cecelie Nielsen



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