

Folkbildning in Social Movements

An Exploration of Education in the Environmental
Movement in Sweden



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Climate Change Leadership in Practice

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Introduction

Hi! My name is Lovisa. Since 2013, I have involved myself in social movements for equality, human rights and climate. My heart beats for folkbildning.

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Climate Change Leadership in Practice

During the fall of 2020, I practiced Climate Change Leadership through educational methods. You are now reading the report for my work. I worked as a councillor and group leader for my party in the municipal council, Uppsala kommun. I was a trainer in climate discussions for Talk Climate!. I was a delegate in a meeting with Youth Policy Council that met the minister, Amanda Lind. I facilitated workshops for social movements.

My leadership work includes:

- Developing policy
- Campaigns
- Lead training
- Coordination
- Personal meetings
- Representation
- Facilitate conversations

Structure of the Report

This report has the following structure. I start by explaining what I have done and partly discuss it. Following, I present the framework of educational leadership, as well as viewpoints and theory along with personal reflections. After that, I describe my work in more detail, partly discuss my work and write about how this relates to educational leadership. I describe how I used social psychology for parts of my work. Finally, I discuss different areas of my leadership work. I discuss how my educational leadership work has differed in different contexts. I reflect upon the role of learning in the environmental movement. I also share my final thoughts on my work and what I have learned from it.



THE ESSENCE OF MY WORK

*Explore various sorts of educational leadership in the
environmental movement*

The goal of my leadership work was to contribute to societal change. An essential part of that has been to work together with others and to strengthen the environmental movement through various sorts of education. I have explored my role in the environmental movement by trying out new ways of engaging myself for societal change.

One central method that I used was workshops and education. I wanted to create spaces for sharing emotions and experiences from activism and political leadership. I learned about organisational culture and different ways of practicing leadership in different organisations. I adjusted my ways of working during the fall. In this report, my analysis will focus on ways of learning. When we learn from each other, I think social movements get stronger and more socially resilient (Insurge Intelligence 2018). We can do this through education and supporting continuity and collective learning. My long-term goal is to facilitate workshops and lead educations for adults in the informal liberal education system. This is called *folkbildning*.

During my leadership work, I have taken inspiration from other peoples' experiences. One of them is my mentor, Johanna Sandahl. She is herself a leader in the environmental movement and has a lot of insights and experiences. One of her messages was, and I paraphrase:

We shouldn't get *stuck*,
doing only what we believe
to be necessary prerequisites for our
actual **goals**

As an example, my mentor told me about a person who became a lawyer for working with environmental issues. She needed to take jobs that did not have to do with environmental issues. She got stuck on this career path, where she worked with things that were not important to her.

If we only focus on long-term goals, there is a risk that we get lost in the picture of what we think we need to do. There is a risk that we forget our values and forget why we started. If we get stuck like this, my opinion is that we might need to stop following the current path and change direction. This might evoke instability in our lives and work.

Similarly, I read about something similar in Bayo Akomolafes' book *These Wilds Beyond Our Fences*. Especially one sentence stayed with me: "*If you want to find your way, you must get lost*" (Akomolafe 2017).

I have let those words guide my way in my leadership work, or rather, I have let them evoke instability. In practice, it means that I have tried out new things: been a coach for climate discussions, and taken steps towards leading more workshops in new contexts. I hoped that exploration could take me to unexpected places. *Would I find my way home by getting lost?*

Key Perspectives and Theory

Educational Leadership

I used the framework of *educational leadership* (Alvesson et al. 2017) for analysing experiences from my leadership work. Educational leadership has to do with impacting how followers do their job. For doing this, courses is often used, as well as conferences and coaching. The leader practices guiding, explaining, and coordination. (Alvesson et al. 2017)

One aim is to create structure and to **clarify** responsibilities and expectations in connection to the work. The leader should guide, explain and coordinate activities that ensure that followers learn and **understand the meaning** of the job: responsibilities, priorities, and expected results. The clarification might have to do with role mandate, expectations, duties, priorities, and expected results and achievements. Explanation of obligations and requirements is part of educational leadership. It might include facilitating work activities and ensuring that people learn and understand the meaning of the job. Organisational practices must be both **explained** and justified to members. For example, implementing a new, unpopular policy or time-consuming administrative procedure may need to be defended to be understood and accepted. Here, educational leadership actions can be of great importance in giving meaning and convincing people of the relevance of decisions being made. Educational leadership includes **defining the reality** of work and organisation, and to create a more insightful perception of reality. It does not have to do with affecting peoples' cognition, but to **make visible** notions that occupy peoples' way of looking at and relating to things. This visibility is assumed to lead to learning and change. **Coaching**, does not focus on giving inspiring direction but on the development and learning of the followers. Coaches are expected to ask questions and give people challenging tasks to help them grow. (Alvesson et al. 2017)

One benefit of educational leadership is that leaders can **support knowledge sharing** in the workplace by encouraging dialogue between groups and employees who do not normally exchange ideas and experiences. Educational leadership can encourage learning outside the immediate organisational environment, for example by funding and attending external conferences and seminars, and otherwise supporting networking. In addition, coaching can stimulate individuals' thinking, learning, and willingness to take on new responsibilities. (Alvesson et al. 2017)

A potential problem with this educational leadership may be that it is assumed that followers are less knowledgeable. It requires less competent students and followers. Some leaders are not good teachers. Another disadvantage of educational leadership, and especially coaching, is that it is often time-consuming. Influencing peoples' perception of the world is not done in the blink of an eye. The leader might have to spend much time figuring out a problem and how the follower reason, and then carefully engage in coaching or teaching to increase their learning and skills - instead of just dealing with direct problem-solving. (Alvesson et al. 2017)

Förening and Folkrörelse

From my point of view, it seems like no English word properly translates *förening* and *folkrörelse*. I use “membership organisation” in this report for describing the membership-based, non-profit, and idea-driven organisations, where social movements gather around a democratic structure. In Swedish this is called *förening*, which is an organisation that is non-governmental and non-profit, which anyone can constitute. Whilst it is a formal organisation, it is a relatively free form of organisation, and an idea or value is the starting point for the organisation (Elmqvist 2013). English terms that resemble *förening* are civil society-organisation, idea-driven association, or NGO (Elmqvist 2013). The term *non-governmental organisation (NGO)* linguistically solely empathises its distinction from governmental organisations. I think *föreningar*, deserves to be defined by more than what they are not, for example, that they are membership-based.

The term *folkrörelse* is probably best translated as *social movement*, but this term might not reflect that they are rooted in organisations with democratic structure: with formal membership and annual meetings. Despite that, I use the term “*social movement*” in this report, because the alternatives are less accurate. For example, *civil society* is sometimes used as interchangeable with *folkrörelse*. Anna Hallin state “Civil society is all the initiatives where people go together, of free will, and organise for improving their own or other’s lives” (Elmqvist 2013). A drawback of this translation is that “civil society” might include organisations or networks that are not democratically governed and membership-based.

Membership and Democracy

Einarsson and Hvenmark (2012) claim that it is becoming increasingly common that civil society abandons the concept of membership, in favour of relating to individuals and citizens as costumers, supporters, volunteers, or similar. Einarsson and Hvenmark argue for to reasons for the changed role of membership. The first is that individualisation of society is a reason for a changed view of membership: that membership follows the general societal change. Their other viewpoint is that membership organisations are actors that contribute to the development of a more individualised society. This is seen when membership organisations request sporadic commitment or look for people who perform specific assignments, rather than engaging people in long-term commitments. It is seen when membership organisations try to attract volunteers, rather than recruit members. The distinction between being a volunteer or a member is that a member owns her right to raise her voice, vote on annual meetings, and influence the organisation. To not be a member can potentially mean that the opportunity disappears to articulate her voice in the larger society. This is because she can no longer express herself through the democratic structure of a membership organisation. (Einarsson & Hvenmark 2012)

Folkbildning

Folkbildning is a type of education that is voluntary and in the non-formal educational system. The aim is to ensure life-long learning. It is the intersection between equality, knowledge, and meetings. Folkbildning emerged from social movements, where people since the end of the 19th century learned from each other and educated themselves and each other. (Elmqvist 2013).

**Folkbildning will
get more people to
impact society,
and build a
stronger democracy.**

(Elmqvist 2013)

Folkbildning is free and voluntary and characterised by diversity and equal dialogue. Study associations and folk universities organised a major part of folkbildning, with financial support from the state. Today, there are over 150 folk universities and 10 study associations in Sweden. Every year, over one million people participate in the activities of study associations and folk universities. Folkbildning is thus a glue that holds together, strengthens, and develops Swedish society and democracy. (Folkbildningsrådet 2018)

Folkbildning is civil rather than state governed; free and voluntary rather than controlled and directed; creation rather than re-creation; holistic rather than specialised; focused on wisdom rather than teaching. Folkbildning is an activity for adults rather than for children; a collective process rather than a purely individual one; something that happens through the people rather than for the people; a contribution to individual and social change rather than a preservative and community preservation. Folkbildning is (self) education rather than education; and experience-based rather than subject-based. (Andersén, A et al. 2003)

Social Psychology

Per Espen Stoknes (2015) investigates why earlier attempts to stop the climate crisis have not worked, and what strategies we can use instead. Social psychology is the study of how peoples' thoughts, feelings, and behaviours are influenced by others – even when the presence of others is solely imagined. Attitudes comprise three main parts, as captured in what psychologists call the ABC model: An affective or emotional component: What feeling is connected to the thing, person, issue, or event? (I really do love oranges). A behavioural component: What kind of action or readiness for behaviour lies dormant in the attitude? (That daily glass of juice). A cognitive component: What thoughts, knowledge, and beliefs come up from memory when attending to the issue? (Yep, the vitamin C). (Stoknes 2015)

Reflections upon Theory

Below, I discuss how the educational leadership framework differs from and overlaps with folkbildning, and how folkbildning can work as a glue that holds social movements together.

Based on my assessment, the method for educational leadership (Alvesson et al. 2017) mainly has a company's perspective in account. I would say that the techniques that Alvesson et al. (2017) present probably are more effective and easier to implement in a stable organisation with a determined set of roles and transparent hierarchies. I can see this in the language Alvesson et al. (2017) use, with frequently occurring words such as “jobs” and “workplace”.

Einarsson & Hvenmark (2012) argue that individualisation of society influences social movements which appropriate companies' working methods. We can see this when membership organisations request sporadic commitment or look for people who perform specific assignments, rather than engaging people in long-term commitments; when membership organisations try to attract volunteers, rather than recruit members; when referring to members such as costumers. (Einarsson & Hvenmark (2012)

Appropriating those practices might make the movement abandon practices, values, and policies. I think there is a risk this would be at expense of important practices which constitute the peculiarity of social movements. This risk of abandoning practices is the reason I arranged talks called *“Help! My membership organisation has become a company”*.

An example of a practice that is unique to social movements is folkbildning (Elmqvist 2013; Folkbildningsrådet 2018; Andersén, A et al. 2003).

Equal Dialogue

As Alvesson et al. (2017) claim, a potential problem with educational leadership is that it is assumed that the followers are less knowledgeable (Alvesson et al. 2017). My opinion is that the method is based upon the premise that one person learns from another person in a one-way communication. In the practice of equal dialogue (Folkbildningsrådet 2018), I think folkbildning questions the premise that education must be based on an asymmetrical relationship between a teacher and a student. Educational leadership includes the practice of supporting knowledge sharing (Alvesson et al. 2017), which also is central in folkbildning.

Stability, Continuity and Clarity in Roles

I think membership organisation has a better chance than networks to use the educational practices presented above by Alvesson et al. (2017). A network that uses the same practices might have to educate new people more often in proportion to the amount of people involved. It might require more frequent repetition of educational practices such as clarification, justification of the purpose and goal for the network.

Another difference in how I think those educational practices (Alvesson et al. 2017) fit is considering the division of labour. I think hierarchies are more transparent in companies than in membership organisations, in the means of formal roles, and that the division of labour is probably clearer and probably lasts over a longer period.

In my experience, a formal organisation such as a membership organisation preferably has a rather stable set of responsibilities compared to networks. I think formalities support stability in practices such as policies, rituals, and routines that create continuity within the organisation.

If members are active for a rather short period, it might be hard to facilitate the development of the individuals' learning, and in extension the development of the organisation. If members frequently leave organisations, I think the organisations might face a lack of continuity and devolvement of knowledge. I think folkbildning promotes collective learning in social movements, even if people frequently change platforms for their engagement. If an individuals' engagement is fluent, but she stays in the social movement, movements can accomplish long-term collective learning.

I think folkbildning can foster stability and development in both the organisation, movement, and society. In addition, The Swedish National Council of Adult Education means folkbildning is a glue that holds together, strengthens, and develops Swedish society and democracy (Folkbildningsrådet 2018).

Folkbildning for Continuity

The purpose of idea-driven organisations is to ensure life-long learning and to gain knowledge, which will create a stronger democracy and make more people impacting society (Elmqvist 2013). These organisations are governed by ideas, not by profit as purpose. I think folkbildning is an act of solidarity between and within social movements for the greater good. There is no need to compete when diverse parts of the movement have the same vision for society. If people move between different parts of the movement, they might pass educational practices on from organisations to organisation.

An individuals' learning can evolve during a longer period if she is involved in different parts of the movement for a longer period. The clarifying practice (Alvesson et al. 2017), for example, when justified purposes, might not have to be repeated. We can create a culture for life-long learning. If stabilisation would cause the movement seeming to not be relevant and updated, the movement might have to evolve.



METHODS FOR LEARNING

What I have done and outcome

Municipal Council



Front page for the proposal for the municipal budget (Mål och budget). Layout: Ida Nyström.

I am a politician in the municipal council, Uppsala kommunfullmäktige, as a councillor and group leader for my party. I have developed policy, represented the party, and coordinated my party group.

- Produced a proposal for the municipal budget for Uppsala – the most comprehensive proposal each year (Jansson & Johansson 2020). We focused on ensuring that the parts of the municipality which work with people and social issues get enough resources.
- Participated in meetings and decision-making with the municipal council. We debated proposals and other issues.
- Contact with the administration, presidium, and group leaders.
- Sent the group candy to say thank you for their work.
- Have taken time off from my responsibilities for two months.

Clarification and Defining Reality: Educational Leadership as a Group Leader

My party, Feministic Initiative, has two councillors in the municipal council. From my point of view, our influence is quite symmetrical. Our votes have the same value in decisions and we adjust to each other. There are also asymmetrical aspects to the relationship, and we have different responsibilities. I keep in contact with the presidium and other group leaders, and have some more information than the rest of the group which I share with them. Another asymmetrical aspect is that I represent the party in more situations than the other councillor, such as budget debates and school debates.

There is one part of the work as a councillor that is organisational, and the other part is political. Once a month, our group has an internal strategic and organisational meeting, and once a month we have a political meeting for discussing proposals. At the organisational meetings, we have a routine for sharing knowledge. When group members have taken part in a course or had a meeting with another organ in the municipality, they share information with each other. Two times a year, we talk about what we have learned and what makes us feel proud, regarding our work in the municipality. Before the corona pandemic, we used to meet membership organisations to learn about their needs and political interests.

Educational leadership includes *creating a more insightful perception of reality by making visible notions that occupy peoples' way of looking at and relating to things* (Alvesson et al. 2017). Both as councillor, I try to influence other peoples' views on society and politics. I do this when I describe underlying patterns in society, what problems there are in the municipality today, and present solutions. I talk to citizens in campaigning and when meeting membership organisations, as well as in conversations in my daily life and when visiting schools. I let their experiences affect what themes I highlight in the municipal council.

Meeting Minister with Youth Policy Council

I met Amanda Lind – minister for culture and democracy, with responsibility for sports and youth issues. My role was to represent the youth organisation Young Feminists Sweden in the governmental Youth Policy Council. Before the meeting, I communicated with the board for Young Feminists Sweden, about what to say when representing the organisation.



Amanda Lind – minister for culture and democracy, with responsibility for sports and youth issues. Photographer: Kristian Pohl/Regeringskansliet.

Influence by Defining Reality Educational Leadership as a Delegate

The council gathers representatives of various youth organisations and is a forum for dialogue between the government and young civil society. Representatives of authorities and research community also participate in the council. *Youth Policy Council* represents a diversity of organisations such as solidarity organisations, religious organisations, political organisations and organisations for young people with disabilities. (Utbildningsdepartementet 2016)

As a delegate, I tried to frame the discussion, impact the understanding of society and the priorities for governmental politics. I argued for that the meeting should focus on human rights, asylum rights, men's violence against women and climate, while having a system critical approach. I did this by raising my voice at the pre-meeting and main meeting. Meanwhile, other delegates shared perspectives on what the government needed to do. More accurately, I think the meeting functioned as a seminar, for discussing perspectives on societal issues among young people in Sweden today.

Membership and Folkbildning

My experience is that many membership organisations have institutionalised *folkbildning* for members. Course concepts might be passed on from generation to generation, and sometimes the members who took a course become educators themselves. Myself, I used to have responsibility for *folkbildning* in the board of Young Feminists Sweden. Members also learn about democratic practices and representation through annual meetings and other democratic practices.

The meeting was an educational event for sharing information with the government- about the reality of young people today and the interests of the youth movement - whilst the government can take this information into account to strengthen the organisations. When doing this, the state can support the *folkbildning* which is practiced in the organisations.

Workshops and Spaces for Sharing

*I practiced folkbildning, to strengthen social movements.
In my work, I used the methods: facilitate workshops,
create space for discussion, coordination, and personal
meetings.*



Event image for the Facebook event for my workshop for Nature and Youth Sweden, called “Existential talk about injustices and our responsibility”.

- Facilitated a workshop for Nature and Youth Sweden, called “Existential talk about injustices and our responsibility”. I used the cards “With/Out Modernity”, produced by Gesturing Towards Decolonial Futures (Gesturing Towards Decolonial Futures n.d.). Before the workshops, I talked with an employee at Nature and Youth Sweden. In the collaboration, the staff helped with logistics, administration, and making people come to the event, through social media and the website.
- I was part of “The network for organisational developers in the youth movement” that met digitally to talk about organisational development in social movements in a broad sense.
- Arranged two digital meetings on the theme “Help! My membership organisation has become a company”. We talked about how membership organisations have begun to function more and more like companies (Einarsson & Hvenmark 2012). I planned to have just one talk, but many people were interested, so I arranged another one.

- During the entire year, I went to a leadership course at a folk university for young leaders in civil society.
- Johanna Sandahl, the chairperson of the *Swedish Society for Nature Conservation* and *European Environmental Bureau*, was my mentor. We met at digital video meetings and met physically once. We mostly talked about strategic issues regarding leadership.

I have done some preparations for my leadership work:

- Created a plan for the content of the courses and workshops which I would like to lead.
- Created a website for my workshops (Feministisk Workshop n.d.).
- Talked with the staff for Nature and Youth Sweden about the courses I would like to facilitate.
- Participated in education to become a study circle leader at a study association.
- Participated in a class for trainers in climate discussions.

Supporting Knowledge Sharing

Educational Leadership as a Workshop facilitator

I practiced educational leadership through supporting knowledge sharing and encouraging dialogue between groups and employees who would *not normally exchange ideas and experiences*. I was also part of a network for people who work in the civil society, that met digitally once a week. I also created new educational material which I might use later.

Talk Climate!

I am a trainer for climate discussions at Talk Climate! (Klimatprata!). It is training for groups in having constructive climate discussions. It is a project which arises from the organisation Everyday Civil Courage. The concept is based on non-violent philosophy, role plays, dialogue exercises and improvisations.



Picture from a Talk Climate! training.

- Went to a class in facilitating digital climate talk-trainings
- Collaborated with another trainer in planning a training for a course at *CEMUS - The Center for Environmental and Developmental Studies* at Uppsala University/SLU (Swedish University of Agricultural Studies)
- Created a structure for our local group of trainers, including routines and a shared Google Drive
- Participated in meetings with other trainers where we talked about our needs as trainers and learned skills from each other
- Spread the word about *Talk Climate!* and established contacts for future trainings

Method: Climate Psychology in Practice

In the project *Talk Climate!*, I planned a training. The training had the theme “From hopelessness to action” and the educational technique used was role play. In the role-play, the participants are assigned roles with different attitudes towards global warming. One of the participants is assigned the attitude “climate neutrality”. This means that the person does not have a strong opinion about global warming. The role-play is based upon a scenario where a person who is worried about the climate (person A) meets a person who tries to silence the discussion about the climate crisis (person B). A third person tries to transform the hopelessness into action by intervening in the discussion (person C).

The participants got to explore the techniques:

- Validation
- Unburdening
- Invite to collective action
- Create emotional discussions about the climate
- Create an existential discussion
- Role transformation
- Redirect attention

Per Espen Stoknes (2015) argues that the environmental movement has failed to achieve its goals for societal change. Stoknes’ key message is that we must understand how humans work and behave as social beings and adjust the strategies according to that (Stoknes 2015). *Talk Climate!* uses several of the methods which Stoknes presents.

Validation - Stand up for Your Depression

Stoknes explores the need to express sadness in connection to global warming. “There will be times when we will fall into this sadness. What we can control is how we choose to get back up again. And how we find the grace to live with it.” (Stoknes 2015). In the role-play, the intervener (person C) got to practice validating these emotions.

Cognitive Psychology

Stoknes describes that people “[...] tend to downplay risks that are dull, common and familiar, anonymous, somewhat controllable, not much discussed, long-term, gradual, and natural, as well as those that affect others are imposed by a clear bad guy” (Stoknes 2015). We can recognise this in the role play I planned. There, person B is downplaying the risk of climate crisis by trying to move focus from the subject.

Social Psychology – Role Transformation

Stoknes informs about a study at Yale University about different social attitudes towards climate change in America. The attitudes have three components: cognition, affect, and behaviour. One attitude is called the *Alarmed* one. Those people are well-informed about global warming (cognition). They are convinced it is happening, human-caused, and feel it is a serious and urgent threat (affect). The alarmed try to do something in their own lives and support an aggressive national response (behaviour). Here, all three components of the attitude are largely consistent. The *Concerned* one, are also convinced that global warming is a serious problem and are moderately well informed about the issue. They are less likely to take personal action (weaker behaviour component) than the *Alarmed* ones. (Stoknes 2015).

In the role play for *Talk Climate!*, one technique trained was *role transformation*. In the role-play scenario, we meet two people with different attitudes towards global warming. Person B (“the trouble maker”) does not deny that global warming is happening but tries to silence the discussion to avoid conflict. Person A is *concerned* but is not taking action. The challenge for person C is to help person A to move to the attitude *The Alarmed* by strengthening the behavioural component. By aligning the components, the person can go from *hopelessness to action*.

Stoknes suggests we build the new climate strategies on three principles (Stoknes 2015). One of them is to act as citizens, not individuals. We took this into account when planning the training session. Person C (the intervener) invites to collective action.

Coaching:

Educational Leadership as a Trainer

Talk Climate! is rooted in the same philosophy as *Vardagens civilkurage*: the philosophy of non-violence, and that we learn civil courage best by training (Ekerlund et al. 2018). We can compare it to how people learn sports. “*We need training to learn to play soccer or dance. We do not learn choreographies through reading a text*” (Ekerlund et al. 2018). To be a trainer means that I present techniques that the participants will exercise and give feedback to them. This is educational leadership in the means of coaching participants (Alvesson et al. 2017). I give people challenging tasks to help them grow. After each exercise, the group gives feedback to the person who trained on what effects the techniques gave. The philosophy in *Talk Climate!*, on how to give feedback, is that the focus should not be on whether the person who trained performed good or bad. Instead, the feedback will focus on the effects of the technique. *Was the technique effective or ineffective for creating a constructive conversation about the climate?*



ANALYSIS AND FINAL REFLECTIONS

Summary, insights and the continuation

During this fall, I made decisions that changed the course of my leadership work. Many parts of the work I have done were successful and I feel proud of it. I also learned new things which I will examine, use, and develop in my leadership work. I present the outcome above, and below I present insights and learnings.

Summary and Comparison

I discuss educational methods in the section about method. Following, I share a summary of how my educational leadership has varied in various contexts. I compare the methods and pinpoint similarities and differences.

As a *group leader* and *councillor* for my party, my educational leadership was much about clarification and having an overview. This differs from the role as a trainer for *Talk Climate!* where I mainly had coaching role. As a councillor and delegate in the *municipal council* and with *Youth Policy Council*, I tried to influence other's views on society and societal problems.

In workshops and discussions I arranged, I learned much from other people. I offered others a platform for sharing thoughts and was part of "The network for organisational developers in the youth movement".



Image: Joakim Andrén

Changing Path

Some things we have control over, and some things are out of our control. A few weeks after starting my work, things I do not have control over changed the conditions of my leadership work. For example, I had an operation that made me miss a debate in the municipal council. The situation led to some insights. I can use these insights to change things I actually control.

As I mentioned in the beginning of the report, changing direction in our lives might evoke instability (Akomolafe 2017). I took time off from my work as a councillor because of personal reasons such as risk of exhaustion and an operation. There are routines and rules regulating sick leave in workplaces (Försäkringskassan n. d.), but those do not apply to politicians in the municipal council. My party group had to walk on paths that were not known to us. Going on sick leave created space for me to focus on feeling better as well as focusing on other parts of my leadership work.

Of course, the Corona pandemic has affected the external conditions of my work. Several events got postponed, and some projects have changed form. This primarily means that physical events have become digital meetings. I and other trainers for *Talk Climate!* in Uppsala facilitated one physical training, but thought it was irresponsible to continue when the spread of Covid-19 increased.



My Role and Learnings

During the fall, I reflected on figuring out my role in the environmental movement. I evaluated possibilities and made plans for how I can contribute to societal change. One way I prepared myself was by contacting organisations and people to collaborate with later, by educating myself, and by preparing workshops.

Youth Policy Council is an institution for dialogue between young civil society dialogue and the government (Utbildningsdepartementet 2016), and primarily involve delegates from membership organisations. Young people who are not members do not have a voice in this dialogue. As Einarsson and Hvenmark (2012), I think the environmental movement in Sweden partly is abandoning the concept of membership. One example is Fridays For Future - a network where many young people is involved - has no formal membership. (Fridays For Future n.d.).

If people are involved in networks instead of membership organisations, this system for dialogue might not include movements such as Fridays For Future.

The delegates' role in *Youth Policy Council* is to share information about the reality of young people today. It was like being an educator about the interests of young people. This is a tricky position. While I am relatively young, I rather feel that I represented *Young Feminists Sweden* than young people in general.

Insight about Obstacles and My Needs

Creativity, reflection, and curiosity have been tools for making my work feel more meaningful. Writing has been my anchor. It helped me make sense of the variety of things I have done. And there is no way I could carry myself through this without support from friends, my mentor, and the class.

One insight from this work is that I need to work with other people. I need to share my thoughts and feelings and collaborate with others.

The area for my work is not the only thing that is important in my work. The conditions for my work are crucial. When I have opened up to being engaged in new organisations, firstly decided what I wanted to get out from working in or from collaborating with an organisation. After that, I narrowed down the options.

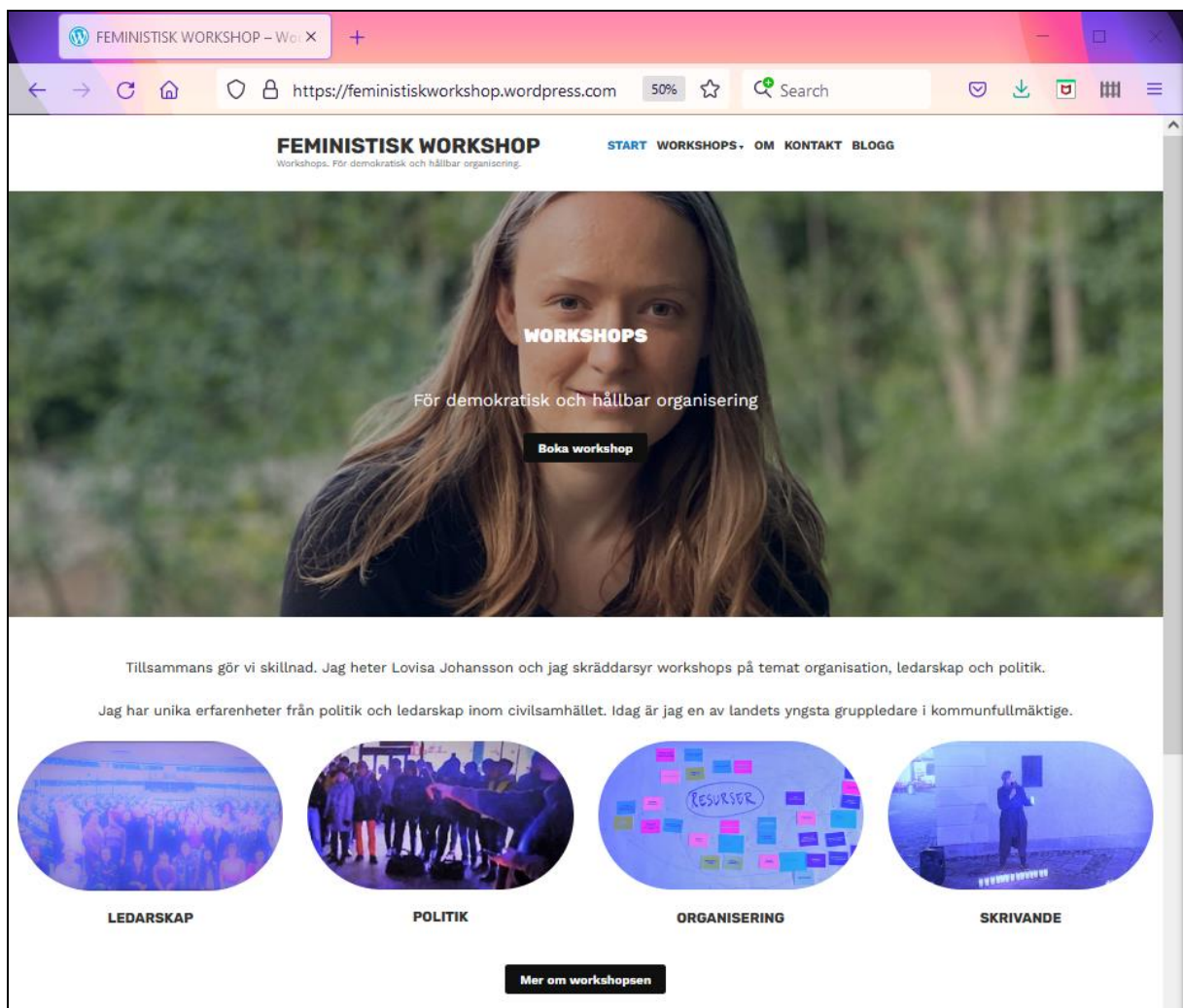
One thing that I learned was to do fewer things at once. The leaderships work that I have done has been diverse. An insight from working in this way is that changing focus from one task to another takes time. Also, many minor tasks required more focus than fewer big tasks.

Continuation of the Story

Insurge Intelligence means that “The concept of resilience is closely related to health, as it describes the ability to recover basic vital functions and bounce back from any kind of temporary breakdown or crisis.” (Insurge Intelligence 2018). I think we can recognise a resilient culture if there is room for people to have crises but still be able to get back. I think social movements should recognise the need to take time off from voluntary work. Folkbildning can make the movement resilient, because if one person with much knowledge is on sick leave, the movement will still be able to work.

My work during this autumn will affect what responsibilities I am ready to take, what organisations I will involve myself in, and what roles I will choose to have.

I want to continue with folkbildning. I created content for workshops that I would like to lead. By creating a website for my workshops (Feministisk Workshop n.d.), it is easier for me to gather information about myself as a workshop facilitator. I would like to continue the collaborations with a study association and *Nature and Youth Sweden*. By attending the class for trainers in climate talks, I learned skills I can use for workshops in various contexts.



My website Feministisk Workshop.

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