

# Programme Session Descriptions

IFFE 2025

## 1. Welcome Ceremony & Introduction Activities

- A warm, engaging start to the gathering where participants will be introduced to the event's vision and objectives. Icebreaker activities will follow to foster immediate connection and community among attendees.

## 2. Opening & Closing Plenary Sessions

- *Opening Plenary:* This session will kick off the gathering and set the tone for the discussions ahead. It will focus on the global importance of folk education in the context of today's challenges.
- *Closing Plenary:* A reflective session to wrap up the event, synthesizing key takeaways, and envisioning future actions for the global folk high school community.

## 3. Morning Fellowship

- These sessions are designed to promote deep, authentic conversations rather than formal presentations. Rather than PowerPoints, the focus is on storytelling, dialogue, and shared experiences from the field. Each session explores personal stories, key challenges, and impactful moments in folk education that comprise what the founder of the Folk High School idea, N.F.S. Grundtvig referred to as "The Living Word". For Grundtvig, the "Living Word" emphasizes the sharing of personal journeys, struggles, and successes of individuals and communities that makes the knowledge alive and relational rather than simply "dead words" on a page. In our case, it refers to the lived experience, wisdom, and stories of our gathering participants whether within folk education or life more generally.

## 4. Shared Knowledge Sessions

- A selection of 3-4 session options offered during each time slot, addressing different topics and themes of interest.
- *Session Format:* For each session, participants can choose from 3-4 topics or themes of common interest. These sessions will be facilitated collaboratively by a "lead facilitator" and 2-3 co-facilitators, all of whom will meet online prior to the event to plan their session together. This format fosters a spirit of collaborative co-teaching, where facilitators co-create the content and structure of their session.
- *Expected Sessions:* The number of sessions will depend on the number of participants and their areas of interest. In total, the current format allows for at least 16 sessions, with up to 72 participants actively involved in the facilitation process, ensuring a rich diversity of sessions.

## 5. Practical Workshops

- *Interactive and Hands-On Learning:* These sessions will offer participants practical tools, techniques, and resources that they can apply within their own educational contexts. Topics have yet to be finalized but may range from pedagogical strategies to more practical matters like funding, community engagement, or digital tools for education.
- *Format:* Ideally, 3-4 workshops will be offered in parallel, repeated on Wednesday and Thursday afternoons to accommodate different schedules and preferences.

## 6. Open Space Sessions

- *Participant-Driven Discussions:* Open Space sessions are informal, self-organized meetings where participants decide the topics of discussion. This format empowers attendees to create the agenda on the fly and choose which conversations they'd like to participate in.
- These sessions could include anything from a focused conversation with someone you've been meaning to speak with, to a broader, open-ended discussion on a topic of shared interest.
- *Logistics:* We'll have at least 5 rooms available for Open Space sessions, which can be booked in advance or by signing up on the day. These spaces will allow for spontaneous collaboration and networking.'
- Key characteristics of an Open Space Session include:
  - *Self-organization:* Attendees create the agenda themselves by suggesting topics they want to discuss. These topics are posted on a board, and participants choose which discussions to join.
  - *Fluidity and flexibility:* There's no fixed structure; people can move between discussions and follow what interests them.
  - *Focused on collaboration:* The goal is to generate ideas, solve problems, or share knowledge in a collective, egalitarian environment.
  - *"The Law of Two Feet":* This principle means that if someone feels like they are not contributing to or benefiting from a session, they are free to move to another one.