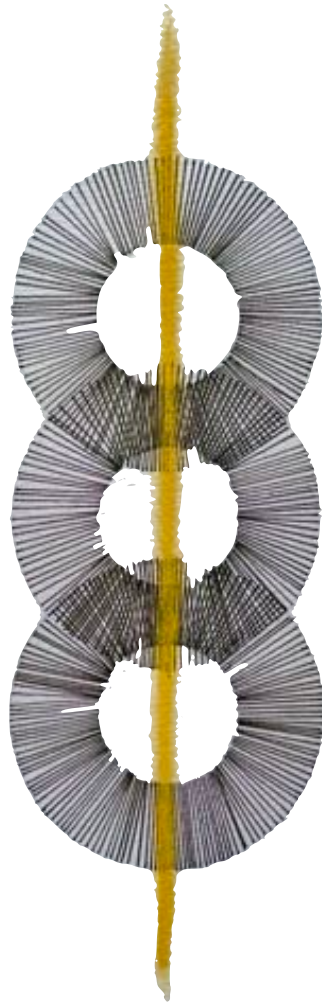# RESILIENCE IN BECOMING

Learning from meaningful conversations:
a qualitative research on the educational experience of fourteen young adults

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> The human being is a bridge,
> Between the past and future existence;
> The present is momentary;
> The moment as bridge.
>
> - Rudolf Steiner-

Abstract

Young people of today grow up in a time of great challenges. The capacity to re-imagine a future very different from a mere reflection of the past, is an urgent task for humanity and calls on the participation of our youth. Strengthening the capacity of resilience in young people seems to be an urgent matter and an important task for our modern education. In order to support the growth of resilience in young people, this study intended to surface qualities and best practices for education, out of the experience of fourteen young people who attended The International Youth Initiative Program (YIP) in 2019-2020. Prior to their participation in YIP these individuals were asked to imagine their 'horizon', describing the world five years into the future. Now, five years later, with futures having become presents, they have looked around in the landscape of their lives right now, to see what ideals and values are alive in the world and how they in their practice of becoming, engage with the world through their life-activities. Special attention was given to what was learned in their educational experience of YIP and what of this learning has remained and supports them in facing adversity and challenges in the world and their personal lives. The learning from these fourteen individuals resulted in suggestions for educational spaces that intend to be of service to the development of resilience in young people of today.

1. Introduction

This research was a project for the Anthroposophical Foundation Studies at the Goetheanum, executed between January - June 2024. Fourteen individuals - who the reader will get to know better in the following pages - are the centre piece of this research. Their experience, reflections and willingness to step into a space of open and honest sharing, are the very fundament of an attempt to learn about ways in which educational spaces can support the growth of resilience in young people of today. Through surfacing best practices and qualities of one particular educational program, the hope is to serve the general field of adult education.

1.1. Context and relevance

The context and relevance of the current research derives from several themes: the realities of today's world-condition, the development of young adults, and the relation between these two - the individual becoming and the becoming of the world. Lastly a personal observation is included in addition to the context and relevance of this research.

1.1.1. World Realities

Young people of today grow up in a time of great challenges. Humanity faces a severe climate crisis, causing heightened temperatures, rising sea levels, droughts, storms, floods and a decrease of biodiversity all over the planet. An increase of international conflicts in the past year(s), causing millions and millions of people to be displaced by war and violence, leads to humanitarian crises worldwide. The social life wrestles with a disruptive system of injustice, marginalisation and exclusion as a reality for many of its societal members. In our modern time, we see an ever-increasing influence of digital technology - tempting a disconnection from a physical and spiritual connection to life. Health organisations report a growing suffering of mental health issues, mostly among the generation of young people[1][2].

The contemporary world is continuously changing and the human being of the 21st century finds themself in a landscape of collapsing systems with the abyss very close under the feet. High

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[1] UNICEF (2021). *Impact of COVID-19 on poor mental health in children and young people 'tip of the iceberg'*
[2] Rockville (2022). *2022 National Healthcare Quality and Disparities Report*

buildings, a dominant growth of the attention economy parallel to a demanding capitalist system and smartphone addiction, blur the view of a horizon - a future world - that here and now is in desperate need for the development of courage, hope, and will of humankind and in specific of our youth. With an expected continuation of rapid developments, there is an ever-growing need for a strengthening of our human capacity to imagine a future very different from a mere reflection of the past. This leads to one of the bigger tasks of our time: how to co-create a generative, more just and compassionate future.

1.1.2. The fourth septennial: Quest(ions) of I

The fourth septennial of human development is one of significant importance in which a central question seems to arrive to a crescendo on the stage of the young person's inner world: who am I?[3]

The quality of this question doesn't allow for a singular answer, but is rather a starting point of a long-life quest that asks to be explored, created and lived by the very I itself, awakening the young adult to new self-responsibility. This life-question often gives birth to other questions, like: what am I doing here? What do I want with my life? What is my place in the world? Questions that can become a longing to start shaping one's own life story, transforming into a motive for searching, taking initiative and making discoveries alone, with others and in the world.

1.1.3. Becoming of Self and World Becoming

The world doesn't start when we enter it: certain realities, forms and structures are given. Yet, the world is in continuous becoming and in life one is asked to engage with this development, growing an individual autonomy within given contexts and conditions. The young adult steps into a personal responsibility of finding their own relation to the social reality of the culture and the time they live in.[4]

Through engaging and relating to the world, a sense of self grows; self-knowledge develops through world-knowledge[5]. In working with resistance, obstacles and challenges lies the opportunity for the awakening, maturing and strengthening in the becoming of the individual.

1.1.4. Personal observation

From 2019-2023, I have been involved with The International Youth Initiative Program (see 2.1.3.), first as participant, later as program organiser. Throughout these years, I witnessed many young people who have a great awareness about the challenges that humanity is facing in today's world. These people were born in a time in which the relation between climate change and human civilisation and industries was scientifically acknowledged and 'common sense'. They grew up with digital technology, social media and smartphones. Many of them know the facts and have lived experiences.

Throughout these years, I also witnessed a development in young people that I believe is reason for concern. The knowledge and experience that young people carry within themselves, seem to lead many towards the conclusion that 'the planet would be better off without the human being', and if extended, 'without me'.

Young adults living with the intimate and fundamental questions about I and the world, starting to shape their own life story, with a believe that ultimately the world would be better off without the human being, is a heart-breaking tragedy and reason for concern. Concern with regards to the becoming of the individual human beings as well as to the future of the world.

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[3] Lievegoed, B. (1998). *Phases: The spiritual rhythms in adults life.* Rudolf Steiner Press. p. 52
[4] Idem.
[5] Steiner, R. (1908). *What is self-knowledge?* (GA108). Rudolf Steiner Archive.

1.2. Research question

The realities of today's world, the call of a future that needs the commitment of our youth and observing a concerning development out of the educational context, have been the base for this research project in the past six months. It culminated into a question that has been at the centre of this study, being: How can educational spaces support young people growing their resilience in engaging with world- and life challenges?

2.Theoretical framework

Out of the context of this research project, the following objectives are in focus: the educational space, the young adult in the fourth septennial, and resilience.

2.1. The International Youth Initiative Program

In regards to the educational space is, this study, looked at The International Youth Initiative Program (from now on referred to as 'YIP'). YIP is a 10-month residential education in Societal Entrepreneurship for young people ranging between 18-28 years old from all around the world. The program is based on the Anthroposophical campus 'Kulturcentrum i Ytterjärna', in Sweden.

YIP started as an idea of an international group of young people who were connected to the Youth Section at the Goetheanum. In 2008 the first YIP year started and since then between 20-40 participants have attended the program each year, forming a network of over 500 YIP-alumni in the past 16 years. YIP is anthroposophically inspired, but not an education in the anthroposophical worldview, attracting people who are familiar and unfamiliar with Anthroposophy.

The term Societal Entrepreneurship as defined by YIP, is "someone who bases their actions in service of society and understands the world as one interconnected living organism"[6]. YIP aims to support young people strengthening their capacity to take personal and collective initiative in the face of global challenges. Creating conditions in which young adults can unfold their authentic self-expression and assume responsibility for their own unique purpose in life by practicing the potential of their freedom, whilst at the same time unfolding their service for the collective they are a part of, belongs to the educational task that YIP aims to fulfil.

For ten months, YIP participants live together in one household on campus. The daily rhythms and practicalities that come with running a household together are a shared responsibility. Throughout the year they follow a curriculum that through week-long courses move from 'outer world' to 'inner world', from 'collaboration' to a 'personal initiative'.

2.2. The young adult in the fourth septennial

The concept of viewing the human being's development in phases or stages, is explored since ancient Greece[7], and has since found resonance in different theories, with well-known works from the 19th/20th-century by psychotherapist Sigmund Freud, psychologist Jean Piaget and psychoanalyst Erik Erikson.

In *The Education of the Child in the Light of Spiritual Science[8],* Rudolf Steiner introduced a study of humankind according to seven-years periods, deriving from the view that the individual develops according to a gradual incarnation into the different 'bodies' of the human's fourfold constitution (psychical, etheric, astral, I). Where the physical, etheric and astral bodies come into development mainly in the first +/- 18-21 years of life, the incarnation of the I is typically placed around

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[6] YIP: https://yip.se/

[7] Kosior, W. (2016). *The stages of human life distinguished in non-legal Roman sources.* University of Rseszow

[8] Steiner, R. (1907). *The Education of the Child in the Light of Spiritual Science* (GA34). Rudolf Steiner Verla

the 21st year and marks the start of the fourth septennial of human development, spanning until +/- the 28th year. Caution in regards to this study of developmental is in order: one should not attain a systemic approach to the phases given by Steiner. The development of the individual can (and will very likely) diverge from this 'typical development', and the seven-years life phases therefore should be seen as a backdrop in which the individual experience can be placed.

The fourth septennial is characterised by the development of becoming an adult[9]. In this phase, the individual forms their life as an independent person, often with a wide range of experiences. Leaving the family home, meeting new people, meeting ideas and ideals that are different from the family-context, are some of the qualities that are often present in this life phase.

The soul life of the young adult is nourished and informed by sensations from the environment around and the thinking capacity from the private world within. This mirroring process, or dialogue between the outer and the inner space, is a significant developmental quality in the fourth septennial: »The human being forms thoughts about their sensations and thus enlightens themselves regarding the outside world[10]«. In their inner space, the emotional life is still somewhat unstable and the individual's self worth still has a dependency on how actions are received by others. With entering a phase in which the sense of self and individuality deepens, the young adult asks themselves: who am I? What is my place in the world?

2.3. Resilience

Resilience in the human being has been focus of scientific research in the social and medical disciplines since the 1970's[11]. Whether resilience should be treated as a trait - believing it to be a set of personal characteristics that enable the individual to positively adapt in the face of hardship - or as a process - focusing on the interaction between the individual and the circumstance of hardship, emphasising dynamic change and positive adaptation over time - has been topic of debate in human resilience studies[12]. In addition, this field of research also shows studies of resilience according to the 'outcome hypotheses', stating that resilience is the result of experiencing hardship[13]. These rather different approaches share two common factors: hardship and positive adaptation[14]. Throughout the past decennia research has refuted the static approach of resilience being a fixed character trait, leading to the current definition held by the American Psychological Association (APA): »Resilience is the process and outcome of successfully adapting to difficult or challenging life experiences, especially through mental, emotional, and behavioural flexibility and adjustment to external and internal demands.«[15]

In a qualitative research study into resilience in young people[16], a group of over sixty individuals was interviewed about their experience of resilience when facing adversity. The study showed that »resilience in youth is a complex characteristic that is dependent on a multitude of factors, associated with the individual, their relationships, social networks and various contextual realities«. Researchers identify several components that act as protective factors when young people face adversity, amongst others being: individual characteristics and the particularised response to challenging situations; peers

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[9] https://www.biographicalcounsellors.org.uk/archetypal-phases#:~:text=21 - 28 Stepping in to,Leaving the family home
[10] Steiner, R. (1904). *Theosophy*. Rudolf Steiner Verlag.
[11] Masten., A.S., (2001). *Ordinary magic: Resilience processes in development.* American Psychologist, *56*(3), 227-238
[12] Liu, H., Zhang, C., Ji, Y., & Yang, L., (2018). *Biological and Psychological Perspectives of Resilience.* Frontiers in Human Neuroscience (12:326)
[13] Idem 9.
[14] Idem 10.
[15] American Psychological Association (APA): https://www.apa.org/topics/resilience
[16] Staines, J., et al.,. *A research study into resilience in young people.* University of Bristol. (2017).

support and community; direct and indirect environment, as well as education in support to feeling confident towards the future.

In 2022, the Pedagogical Section at the Goetheanum started a research project on 'Pedagogy and Resilience', focussing on the question how Waldorf Education can contribute to the promotion of resilience among their students[17]. In 'Education for an unpredictable future - building resilience in schools', published in 2022[18], it is outlined how the Anthroposophical description of the presence and activity of the human 'I', approaches the current scientific view on resilience, as it being an individual process of development.

In human development - as formulated in this article - the I is seen as »the agent of what a human being is able to achieve, a strengthening of the centre of their being.« Through the I and the power that comes from the individual's core principle, the human being can »search for suitable paths for their development, even in demanding situations«[19]. This brings a picture of a human being in becoming, with the I actively moving in between a dynamic of potential and actualisation in the face of adversity.

3. Methodology

The central question of this research project is: How can educational spaces support young people growing their resilience in engaging with world- and life challenges? This question was studied through the experience and reflection of young people who have shared a common educational space five years ago.

3.1 Participants

Fourteen individuals were at the centre of this research project. All of them participated in the 12th cohort, also known as YIP12 (2019-2020) of The International Youth Initiative Program. In total 23 participants graduated from YIP12 in June 2020. The individuals participating in this research, range in age from 23-33 years old. In total they hold thirteen different nationalities and they are currently based in the following (eight) countries: Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, Spain, Australia, New Zealand, Zimbabwe, Taiwan.

3.2. Qualitative approach

Researching the human being belongs (amongst others) to the realm of the humanities. In this realm, different from the natural sciences, »the human consciousness deals with the human mind itself: the mind grasps the mind.«[20] The reality of the human being has in itself the ideal and therefore the human being is self-determined. Its essential being would be autonomously present without scientific efforts: »in itself, human reality finds lawfulness«[21].

Through reflecting on their own becoming in past, present and future, the individuals participating in this research, shared their particular life-experiences and life-events occurring from their unfolding biographies. In an attempt to grasp the particular and multifaceted character of their individual realities in a nuanced way, qualitative research was conducted. The methodology of qualitative research is known for its attempt to understand and interpret in-depth, detailed and

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[17] Resilience and Schools - Pedagogical Section at the Goetheanum: https://www.goetheanum-paedagogik.ch/en/thematic-areas/translate-to-en-gesundheit-und-schule

[18] Viscrianu, I. (2022). *Education for an unpredictable future - building resilience in schools.* Pedagogical Section at the Goetheanum

[19] Idem.

[20] Steiner, R. (1886). Goethe's Theory of Knowledge (GA2). p. 8

[21] Idem.

nuanced information of the perspectives and meanings of the individual in regards to events and experiences in life[22].

3.3. Interviews

One-to-one in-depth interviews were held between the 21st of April - 17th of May 2024. Each interview was between 1-2 hours in duration. Thirteen interviews were held online via zoom.us, one interview was held on-site in Dornach. Interviews were recorded, transcribed and anonymised after.

Before the scheduled interview date, the participant received a document with preparation material, introducing them to the research-context and the questions that would be the ground for the interview. The purpose of the preparation material was to help them orient themselves in the content of the interview and to encourage them to inwardly enter into a level of personal reflection. Participants were asked to read through the questions, as well as their 'Horizon', a self-written piece that was part of their application for YIP five years ago.

3.3.1. 'The Horizon'

The 'Horizon' is a self-written piece and therefore unique to the individual. However, each individual was asked to work with two common questions:

1) What do you hope to have achieved five years into the future?
2) How do you see YIP contributing to this?

3.3.2. Interview questions

The questions in the preparation document were categorised into three parts:

1) 'Horizons becoming landscapes' - focusing on their five years younger self, with hopes and expectations they had for their own- and world development five years into the future.
2) 'Becoming one's authentic self' - focusing on the 4th septennial life phase, asking to reflect on their own becoming as well as to what themes or challenges they work with in the present.
3) 'Resilience' - focusing on how they work with overcoming challenges/obstacles in life and how they relate to freedom, responsibility and intuition.

In all of these parts, participants were asked to review if and how their participation in YIP has contributed to their own development, working with challenges and their engagement with the world.

3.4. Thematic analysis

In order to study the collection of individualised meanings and experiences gathered through the interviews, the method of thematic analysis was used in identifying patterns of meaning across the transcript data. Thematic analysis is a way to systematically organise and gain insight in both the communalities that appear through what individuals share, as well as to examine particular aspects in depth[23].

4. Results

How can educational spaces support young people growing their resilience in engaging with world- and life challenges? In order to approach this question, two sub-questions were formulated: 1) What do individuals report as learnings from their participation in YIP?; 2) How do individuals experience this learning in the context of time?

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[22] Evers, J. (2013). Kwalitatief interviewen: kunst én kunde. Boom Lemma uitgevers.
[23] Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2012). Thematic analysis. p. 57-58

4.1. Initial context - time and space

As described in Methodology (see 2.2.), the interview questions were categorised in three parts. Some of these questions invited reflections on the individual development taking place within or connected to the context of a particular space. Other questions invited reflections on the individual development within the context of time.

Time is defined by a marked moment in the past (their application for YIP in 2019), and the present moment of their lives in 2024. Five years ago, they were asked to preview time, to sense into their future. Five years later, for this present research, they were asked to review time, to reflect on what evolved within the given borders of the past years.

Space is defined as the educational program YIP, of which the individuals share a common experience. This space has encompassed only ten months of these past five years, and therefore will need to be perceived within the context of life-events and life conditions that have occurred since then.

The first sub-question, focusing on reported learnings from participating in YIP, is related to space - the experience in the context of this particular educational program (see 3.3). The second sub-question (see 3.4), focusing on how this learning is placed in the general development throughout the past years - is related to time.

4.2. Occurring themes

The fourteen interviews led to an extensive data set covering a multitude of themes and topics. Through a thematic analysis of the interview transcripts - clustering different items together into themes - the attempt was made to gain insight in this diverse and nuanced information. Out of analysis common themes appeared for both sub-questions.

4.3. Context of space - What do individuals report as learnings from their participation in YIP?

The reported learnings cover a diverse area of knowledge, practices, skills and mindsets. However, there is a common pattern to be identified: learnings related to World, Other, and Self.
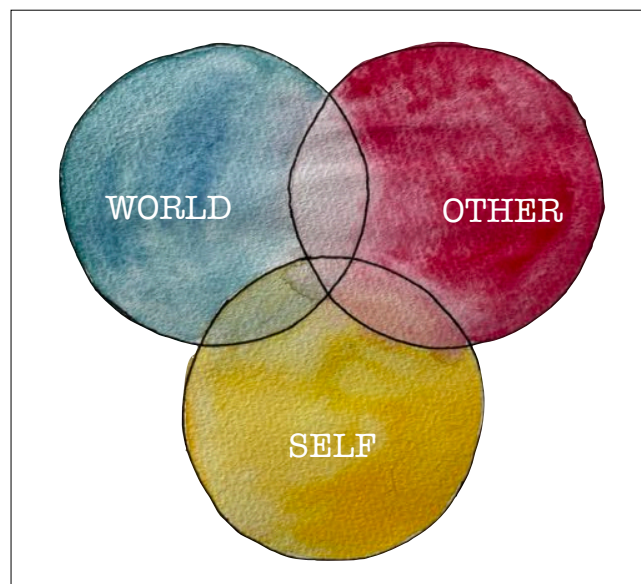

Diagram in support of subquestion 1

4.3.1 Learnings related to World

The world and its current state was for the majority of the individuals an important reason to apply for YIP five years ago. The wish to "know more about the world", and the hope to learn "how to have a

positive impact on our planet and all that lives on it", were personal intentions. There was a hope that through YIP they would "learn about different ways of the world working, different ways of approaching problems." As someone shares:

> "I had hope for a different world but felt powerless about how to change it into a way that I would like it to be. I felt that YIP was addressing this need of mine. (…) addressing the issues, the world is on fire and we have to do something about it."

With participants coming from all around the world, a diversity of world-realities entered the learning environment of YIP. Some people had been living "quite a sheltered lifestyle", in which the challenges of the world were (seemingly) far away. Others grew up in conditions where they were directly exposed to the effects of world realities and therefore carried within them lived experience of the consequences.

The reported learnings related to World are specified in 1) The world in its interconnected complexity, 2) Power, privilege and oppression, as an example that many individuals reflect on as instrumental for this aspect of their learning in YIP.
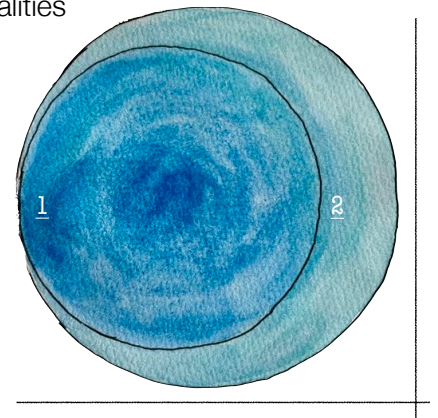
4.3.1.1 The world in its interconnected complexity
Individuals mention how their experience in YIP has been one of the influences in their learnings and more profound understanding of the world and its complexities. Seeing how societal systems separately function and how they intersect, comes to the forefront as a common learning of the world gained in YIP. As well as how these interacting systems relate to the individual:

> "YIP allowed me to zoom out a lot, for example with the Global Realities[24]. To see that it's not just you and what is around you, but to connect on a much more meaningful level with what's going on around me. Rather than knowing it, but not feeling connected to it and therefore not acting on it. Feeling connected to it, makes me able to act on it more."

> "For me I saw YIP breaking that perception that I had before. (…) I was fighting the capitalist and European system, where I thought that the whole group of European people feel the same towards the African people. It was really different. (…) It is the system that is bad, not the people. I learned the difference between the system and the individuals."

Someone relates their experience of the Internship[25] to a growing understanding of the complexities in the world:

> "In terms of seeing everything more on a grey-scale, I think the internship was very influential (…). There was poverty and the beauty, violence and community. And then this idea that we have with this Western idealism of what everything should look like and that

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[24] The 'Global Realities' was one of the six modules in the YIP curriculum, focussing on some of the global challenges in today's world.
[25] The Internship is part of the YIP curriculum in which participants intern with a societal entrepreneurial organisation for the duration of 4-6 weeks.

this is the benchmark, but that actually the areas that are like that, are devoid of soul a little bit."

4.3.1.2. Power, privilege and oppression

In terms of seeing the interconnected complexity of world realities, one of the specific learnings that regularly came to the forefront was the course Power, Privilege and Oppression[26] (abb. PPO). Individuals report that this course grew in them an awareness of how the complexity of systemic oppression and racism in the global community is interconnected with their own community in the YIP context and therefore strongly connected with themselves.

For many, seeing this complexity then led to a conscious intention to become aware of personal biases and a practice of sensitivity and respect in communication and approaching others. 'Intention versus impact' - the awareness and responsibility for how something that was intended a certain way can have an unintended impact on the other - is one of the learnings that was surfaced. As well as the following reflections:

"I learned a lot more about White Privilege and White Supremacy. That was a topic that was quite foreign to me before YIP. (…) I knew what racism was, but not what my own role in it is and what my biases are."

"The week about Power, Privilege and Oppression, specifically looking at Micro-aggressions, made a big impression on me. I thought: 'this also lives in me'. I felt that I had to change this in myself and that I have to be careful with what I say or do."

"I think I mostly learned, for example during the PPO-week, that as a white-person I can't just ask everything to a person of colour. I learned that I could think about answers myself and can do my own research."

"In YIP we focussed strongly on what motivation lies behind the questions you ask - what is the background of your question? I've thought about this a lot afterwards and it has changed me: I approach people differently now. I'm more sensitive to what I say to people when I first meet them."

Out of these reflections, it becomes perceivable that the reality of the World interconnects with learning related to Other and Self. These are the two remaining clusters which results will be subsequently expanded on below.

4.3.2. Learnings related to Other

Individuals reflect that another important reason for them to apply for YIP was to learn what it means to be part of a community. Many of the intentions and hopes from their five years younger self were directed towards living and learning together with others.

It is therefore not a surprise that after analysis, it became conspicuously clear that a lot of the learning took place in relation to the other people with whom these individuals shared their YIP experience. The Other seems to appear as an important teacher in both an

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[26] Power, Privilege and Oppression is one of the week-long courses in the YIP curriculum. Course objectives are 1) a deeper understanding of concepts of systemic oppression in the global community, 2) learning about and working with topics as privilege, micro-aggressions, unconscious biases, intersectionality - both in the global community as well as in the YIP community.

understanding of the complexity of the world, human beings in general, as well as in deepening an understanding of the individual Self (see 3.3.3).

Four specific clusters of learnings related to Other have been identified: 1) Building a community with others, 2) Working together with the other, 3) Seeing the complexity of the other, and 4) Being seen by the Other.
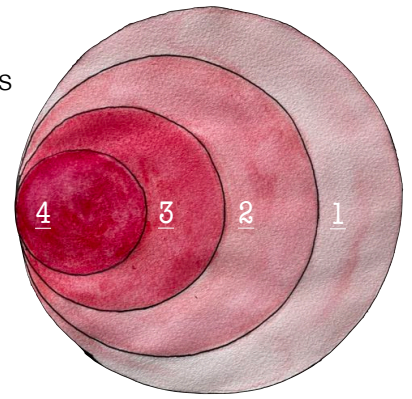
4.3.2.1 Building a community with the other

Many individuals mention the community as one of the biggest aspects of their YIP experience. Building a community comes, according to their reflections, with obstacles, conflicts, challenges and agreements. Remembering the discomfort and uneasiness of building a community ("I was very shocked about how bad we seemed to do it, even though we obviously got better"), the vast majority also reflects back on it as a rich experience where they still bear fruits from:

> "(…) living together and how to make this as lovely for each other as possible. This is the mindset of 'how do I pull my own weight here?' (…) 'how do I contribute to this community?' (…) It has really shaped the responsibility I feel towards communities."

> "In our YIP community (…) we experimented a lot with what works and what doesn't. It's special that you can put all your attention towards a living community, because in normal life you have a life along the side."

> "The culture was a developing, living, young thing, because we created it in one year and in the end of the year we had a culture."

Living and learning together within a community that is actively co-created, has for various individuals brought insights in how different the ways of working and approaches to life and the world can be. Someone reflects on this:

> "(…) to see people really working with their own specific goals in mind and seeing what they come up with. To see that there are so many different ways of thinking about the world and all of these people with their different ways of thinking about the world have come together to learn how to better think about the world and how to better engage with it."

4.3.2.2 Working together with the other

And so, many individuals report the impact of working together, both in small activities like cooking or cleaning as well as in bigger projects, like organising a multiple day conference. This was reflected on as "a big broadening and a big learning of collaboration, communication and group dynamics". Inviting individual perspectives, ideas and talents into the collective and holding a responsibility for the whole, whilst enjoying a maximum freedom for creativity, are key learnings that individuals reflect on.

> "(…) to let the freedom to others to do it in another way. I think that when actively wanting this freedom of the individual in a group process, you can achieve much more and see the potential of everyone in the whole. It is important to let those differences exist."

"Afterwards I learned a lot more and I continued educating myself, but YIP helped me so much in understanding how groups work and how individuals within a group work, and how you can make decisions or create a process in a group, which is incredibly valuable to me."

Working together with other people comes with taking decisions. Repeatedly, individuals reflect on the impact group decisions have made on them, both through positive experiences and through experiences of conflict, leading to or coming out of a decision-making process.

"The decision-making process (…) was a big learning in the diversity of how people make decisions. It was very powerful to realise that, even though not necessary for me, it was the right thing to take that much time for the decision-making process, so that everyone could come on the same page. This is something that I feel is missing a lot in our society: taking time for these kinds of processes."

Individuals regularly referred to 'The Art of Hosting Conversations that Matter'[27], as a course that helped them learn how to work together in a group. The 'Community Meetings'[28], as well as the 'House Meetings'[29], were often referred to as spaces where individuals felt facilitated and coached in their capacity to be a collective. One person reflects on their experience as follows:

"(…) the Community Meeting and how the atmosphere in the space changes and how you can feel, how being together afterwards has a different quality, because you've been in this quiet, held space together."

4.3.2.3 The complexity of the Other
Through forming a community, collaborating and consciously going through group processes together, many individuals report that they look back on this with a grown understanding of the complexity of being human. Understanding that every person has their own background and story, rises a feeling of "letting go of this paradigm of 'right' or 'wrong'", as well as a growing feeling of gentleness and compassion towards the other. As two individuals share:

"Also, the learning to work together with people who are very different from me (…) and to form a relation to people with whom I didn't expect to have a click. Now, I don't decide in advance so quickly how someone else is. I'm better able to let people come to me as they are, to see if it is possible to form a relation with them."

"I see that in YIP I've learned this understanding of people being complex. There's always such a rich story behind people that I cannot make assumptions about."

One course in particular - 'Biography Work[30]' - was mentioned as extra supportive in this learning.

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[27] The Art of Hosting and Harvesting Conversations that Matter (abb. AoH) is a method of participatory leadership for facilitating group processes.
[28] The Community Meeting is a weekly 2-hours meeting with the participant group and the Organising Team present to discuss community practicalities and collectively hold an 'Open Space' for reflective and personal sharing.
[29] The House Meeting is a bi-weekly meeting accompanied by 1-2 Organising Team members to discuss practicalities around the running of the shared household.
[30] 'Biography Work' is a week-long course introducing participants into the laws and rhythms of biographical development and learning how to participate and co-host biography groups.

"The biography course has instigated and stimulated my appreciation for others. I was in a group of people that I wasn't so aligned with, but after this week I understood better how these people thought and where they came from. I developed much more compassion for these people and I could really experience this myself, instead of someone explaining this to me."

Growing the ability to listen to the story of the other was surfaced by various individuals as important for their understanding of the other.

"YIP has helped me to listen to people and to know how and when I can ask supportive questions. A more conscious listening to the other and more consciousness about my own input in conversation with the other."

4.3.2.4. Being seen by the Other

Finally, it becomes clear that for many of the individuals having been part of a collective, having been seen and known by their community, installed in them a growing confidence and understanding about who they are themselves.

"I remember (…) meeting eyes with people and realising: they're all not forcing me, but they all see that potential in me (…)."

"When I look back on what I have learned in YIP, I don't quite remember what contributor taught us what. I think the biggest thing that YIP influenced in me is my inner growth and confidence which comes from the other Yippies[31]. Because, I was not so confident about myself before and then when I was in YIP, I met all of these people and I just felt so loved. I think that was the first time that I could be just myself and be so comfortable with others. This helped me gain a lot of confidence in myself."

In the diversity of individual experiences, there are also reflections that show the importance of being seen by the other - by peers as well as by the organising team of YIP, through having experienced a lack of this in the time in YIP. Feeling "overlooked" or not "seen enough", has led to feeling insecure, hurt and alone.

The area 'Being seen by the Other', emphasises the importance of the other in regards to growing the feeling of Self. 'Learnings related to Self' is the final cluster discussed in the first part of the Results.

4.3.3. Learnings related to Self

Growing a consciousness about Self comes to the forefront as the final cluster in the learnings that individuals report. Five specific areas were identified that seem to have had an impact on the growing consciousness of their individuality: 1) Change, 2) The growth and challenge of being a social Self, 3) Self-guidance and confidence, 4) Exploring qualities of self, 5) Opening up and awakening to Self.

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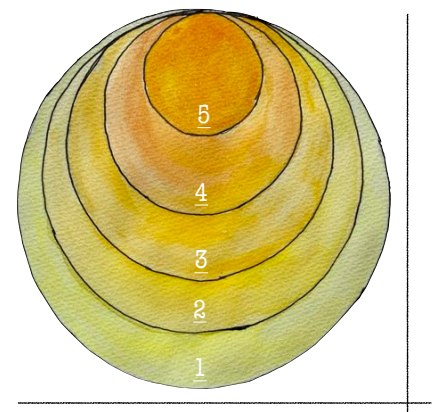
[31] Used to address YIP participants

4.3.3.1. Change

The number of changes and the size of changes that individuals have experienced within themselves during the program in relatively short time, came to the forefront as a significant reflection.

> "I think I was used to the changes that happened in my daily life, but YIP was a big change to my routine, to my life (…). YIP really shakes things up. (…) instead of having all these changes over a few years, they're like 'bam-bam-bam'."

As well as the capacity to reflect on changes that occur, and to actively work with them, were named as important learnings:

> "Also, my capacity to reflect and learn is something that really came from YIP. How do I look back and take something? Or look forward and try to work with something?"

Individuals reflect on the feeling of a certain level of unavoidability of changes that they experienced within themselves. They associate this with the social context and the residential character of the program.

> "Whether you want it or not, you're mirrored 24/7 by the group and individuals around you and you cannot really run away from what they mirror to you. Or… I guess you could, but then you would bump into something that would show you something else about yourself."

Lastly, a reflection of change in self-becoming and possible life-trajectory as a conscious choice is brought to the forefront:

> "(…) by choosing to do YIP, you're choosing to become something that you would never have become from not doing it. I think that's what we all hoped for."

4.3.3.2. The growth and challenge of being a Social Self

Having been part of a collective, was mentioned to be an important aspect in growing a capacity of Self as a social and communal being. In being within a program and community that consciously holds space for awareness and reflection about what it means to be a collective, the qualities of vulnerability and openness were surfaced as learnings for Self.

> "It doesn't lie in my personality to talk about my own things really, but it has become easier. Now I try to implement this in working together within my studies, to take the time to see how everybody is feeling and what people need. Without YIP, I would have done that less."

> "If I would have known what the community aspect of YIP was about in advance, then I would not have applied back then, but looking back now, it was the best decision that I could have made. This was the biggest benefit for me, to actively co-exist with people that I don't necessarily want to be with, or choose to be with on my own. It made me more of a communal being, a being that wants to be with other people. It definitely made me want to be more engaging. That's the biggest change that I see in myself and that I can pinpoint back to my experience in YIP."

4.3.3.3. Self-guidance and confidence

Being an individual whilst being part of a group, brings up many challenges and discomforts. In regards to the relation between self and the collective, many report insecurities, moments of self-doubt, self-criticism or frustration. A capacity that was surfaced as a related learning was self-guidance:

> "Looking back, seeing myself and how I felt in the group (…) I can see several phases. The first phase is waking up to something in yourself - [e.g.] 'ah, I notice something I'm not able to do' - causing all sorts of feelings. This is waking up, becoming conscious. Then, you'll have to accept that it is this way, to then steadily try to bring change within yourself. You fall back, you stumble and you have to stand up again and try again. These phases are phases of growing 'through' something. (…) I can recognise this process in myself now, and I know what to do to guide myself in coping with this."

Individuals report a growing sense of self-confidence throughout the past years, addressing their experience in YIP, as a communal learning environment, having contributed to this.

> "I have seen how different people can be and that it is okay to be like that. (…) It was a difference to open up to people more with the hope that they would see that they could come to me and that I could do something with them, rather than my own thing, but without asking for this myself. That was maybe still a bit too difficult. I think that now it helps to tell people better that they can ask me something. I still don't like to bother people, but that has decreased throughout the years and I think that YIP has helped with that."

4.3.3.4. Exploring qualities of Self

Individuals mention the space for- and attitude of "trying things out" as a container for an exploration of personal interests, qualities and capacities. Individuals mention that by having tried out different activities, roles, practices and mindsets, supported by others, or by seeing other people trying something out and supporting them, they grew an awareness about what belongs to self and what doesn't.

> "The space that's created to step in and step up to do things. There's something about having a community around you who are very likely to say YES. (…) this creates a container to try things out. Maybe this is also a learning in how I can sense into a need in the group or in the world?"

Individuals share that they have gotten a better understanding in what areas they feel they can contribute with their interests, qualities and skills, and in what areas they feel they struggle and meet their limitations. The understanding that not one person can hold all qualities within themself, leads to a realisation that the individual self needs the other "to bring something into motion". One person captures this as follows:

> "I would never try to do something alone. I would never have the presumption that I would have all the answers alone. (…) That's my natural way of working and I probably liked that before, but I never really had that as a rule for myself before YIP. This is definitely one of how I want to be with others. The attitude of collaboration to meet challenges."

4.3.3.5. Opening up and awakening to Self

Some individuals reflect back on the moment of their lives when they participated in YIP and now ask themselves whether they were maybe "too young" in order for them to take hold of the learning. This reflection derives from how they look back on their five years younger self and review what the focus of their self-development was back then.

> "I feel like I probably went to YIP too early (…), I feel like I was still in that kind of ignorant stage, not actually knowing enough for it to take deep root."

> "That was one of the things in YIP that was very painful for me to realise: I don't think I was very good at thinking of anything but myself. Not with mal-intent, but out of an inexperience of being able to think of anything else. I had never been in a situation where I needed to think about anything else than myself."

Parallel to this reflection these individuals mentioned that in their self-development certain "seeds" were planted that have continued to grow in the years after YIP. These seeds being the capacity to open up for thinking about realities beyond the personal realm:

> "So I feel like for me, rather than having already known all these things and looking for an answer and finding possible solutions or mindsets to go forth with them, YIP let me open up to thinking about these things and in thinking, be more exposed to these challenges."

As well as having had an inclination of self-becoming:

> "Like the classic above the temple in Delphi: Know Thyself. Some of the true richness of life comes from that statement. Really understanding and having a sensation, an idea, having your mind taste the consciousness of feeling your person. So, then what you do, you start to be in reference to that, you start to think 'What can I bring?'"

> "YIP really did set me on a read thread to get me where I am now. This doesn't say that the answers are there, but I do feel myself on some path and the things I do are building on that."

4.4. Context of time - How do individuals experience this learning in the context of time?

In these last reflections on opening up and awakening to Self, the context of 'time' appears on the stage. As stated before, the educational experience of these individuals - held within the context of a particular space - encompassed only ten months of the past five years. Learnings became a part of their personal development and have grown together with further activities and encounters in the continuation of their lives. Findings on sub-question 1 will therefore also have to be placed within the context of time - the individual reflections about the years that followed their participation in YIP.

During the interview, the individuals have reflected on their lives in three moments in time: 1) before YIP[32]; 2) during YIP[33], and 3) after YIP[34]. Through this, data about their continuing development was collected, deriving from retrospective personal reflections in the present moment.

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[32] The moment in life when they wrote their application and specifically their 'Horizon' five years ago
[33] See Results 3.3.3
[34] The four years that have passed since their participation in YIP

Learnings from their experience in YIP were previously outlined. The question that guides this second part of the Results is: *How do individuals experience this learning in the context of time?*
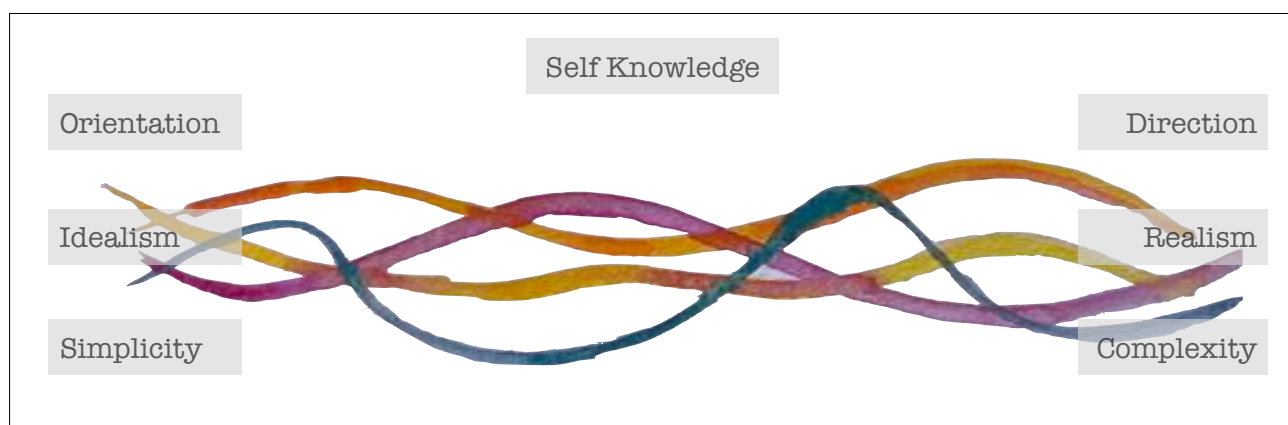

Self Knowledge

Orientation   Direction

Idealism   Realism

Simplicity   Complexity

4.4.1 Development in time

Five years ago, in 2019, the individuals taking part in this research were between 18 - 28 years old. They lived in ten different countries. Some of them had just finished high school, some were studying or had stopped studying, some finished their degree and some were (professionally) working. Some lived with their family, some lived by themselves or with other people. Now, five years later, these individuals are between 23 - 33 years old. They live in eight different countries, surrounded by the culture they grew up in or within new cultures, languages and traditions. They study and/or work. Some welcomed new life and became a parent.

Out of the interviews, many different reflections on themes, questions, strivings and struggles in the past years of their lives came to the forefront. Some specifically related to their age, some specifically related to locality, some specifically related to their individuality or particularity. These differences show a great variety amongst a group of young adults and therefore bringing this diversity together in common aspects of development in time, is only a slight part of the truth. Even though the following aspects are shared within this group of individuals, they are not an exhaustive representation of the experiences each of them has had.

When looking back at their five years younger self, reading what they had written about the future back then and remembering what (their) life looked like, brought a clear common theme to the forefront, being: **orientation**. Individuals reflect on the observation of a younger self "being on a crossroad", carrying the wish to find their "own place in the world" or "looking for this read thread", with a general "longing for a direction in life". Some more than others out of a "craving for something to change", "try something out of the comfort zone" and a "wish and feeling of responsibility (…) to do something for the world", but "not knowing what". Individuals reflect that they were "thirsty for knowledge" and wanted to "understand and see more of the world". Four individuals share:

> "At that time I was dreaming big. I wanted the world. I wanted to see it all. I wanted to try it all and I wanted to break free (…). I had a hope for a different world, but I felt powerless how to change it."

> "I mainly hoped to find a way in how to contribute to the development of the world (…) a future that's worth living in. To find a way, my way, of doing this."

"I envisioned a world where people can be more kind, can be more sensitive to other people's feelings, where we can be more conscious about our actions towards the climate and the environment around us."

"I was disturbed by greed and capitalism. I felt repulsed and furious. Corruption was a big thing for me as well. I hated it and I wanted to squeeze it out like a spot. But I don't think I had ever put effort in thinking 'how would I do anything about that?'.

Looking at their lives now, individuals share how they found a **direction** and/or are still trying to find their place in society. Their engagement with the world is practiced in the realms of primary and secondary education, non-profit work, environmental and social sciences, activism and grassroots organising on local and (inter)national scale, design and crafts, arts and music, social justice work, process facilitation, celebrant work, and agriculture. Some express that they feel to be "on a red thread" and feel themselves "on some path" with the things they do building on that. Others find themselves on a new crossroad, wondering if they ever get to a point where they are not in between, sharing: "It's actually what life is, you don't get to a spot where you're like '*I did it. This was it*.'" Some try to balance their professional engagement in the world with family responsibilities. And some have had to - and are still dealing with challenging conditions of their local context, forcing to work with things that they "don't want", but "because this is a means for survival."

Many express the observation of a rather **idealistic** younger self five years ago, developing into a more **realistic** self in the now. This development from idealism to realism is often specifically directed towards understanding and approaching the world. Five years ago, some of them dreamed of bringing about big global changes solely by themselves, preferably "changing the whole world". As these two individuals share in a similar, yet different way:

"I was very filled with idealism in the best way: the pure ideals is where I was. I was not in any way into the physical possibility, it was all ideals."

"I was a lot more naive about the world than I am now. This was good. It made me do things. I didn't think or worry too much about it. I just did."

In the present, many reflect that they feel more realistic in regards to world realities, being "more humbled", with "a better idea of what it takes to do something", expressing that with looking into the future now, being "able to think more about what the world is looking like". In terms of their own role in the context of bringing about change, some people share that they don't think anymore that they can change the world at large, but rather that they feel they can change their direct environments. As two individuals share:

"There are some aspects that as a person I can practice, especially those characteristics that I would like people to have more; kindness and sensitivity. It's not idealistic, it's just that people need to be treated well and I try to be as kind, generous and supportive as I can to the people around me. In that way, I think I'm managing to live the way I imagined."

"I don't think I can change the world, but I can change the world of these small people [children in school class] and I think that's the way I want to be influencing my life (…)"

> "I don't need to be the warrior in the foreground anymore. I can do something that sustains the earth."

Related to the development from idealistic to more realistic worldviews, comes with growing a more critical understanding of **complexity**. Individuals share how they notice that in their past writing about the future, they see the reflection of a younger self that was "more black and white" and "more definitive in the conclusions about people and the world". The observed capacity to encounter and understand complexity is reflected on in regards to the world:

> "(…) I have a more complicated and deeper understanding of how interconnected systems are and how they function."

> "I'm a lot more critical of information I receive, or things that people assume. (…) I'm a lot more aware of assumptions and norms that are in so many everyday things."

As well as in regards to others:

> "I spoke about others being a 'certain way'. I wouldn't do that now, because it is my perception of the other. I had more hard boundaries of how I understood people to be. (…) there are less hard boundaries now, it's more flowing."

And, parallel to these developmental observations, individuals share that they concurrently worry about and grapple with the complexity of the world, addressing its current stage as "even less stable than five years ago".

> "I am definitely more worried about the world now. The topic of children is front in my head, whether it's right to have kids? What is the world going to be like in the future?"

> "Because now I live my life and I feel so confused. I just feel that there's a lot of information and I don't know if it is real or not. (…) I want to find truth myself, but this is hard."

> "A difference of before and now is that in my early twenties I was much more like 'it's me and the world' and now getting older I think that I become smaller and the world becomes bigger. In this I feel a bit less powerful with what I can influence. Sometimes I feel very much narrowed by my resources. (…) I feel more caught by the world and the reality of it."

With all of the above, a common reflection amongst these individuals is the feeling that they have gotten to **know themselves better** throughout the past five years. Some reflect to feel "more secure" and "much steadier" in themselves, being "less at war" or "embarrassed" with themselves, but instead feeling "more a foundation in my own sense of self, my own self-worth, independent of a group or the outside world". As someone shares: "It feels like my core has formed and solidified more in the past years."

When asked what personal themes or challenges they are working with at this moment in their lives, individuals report amongst others: "feeling free and living what I find important in life"; "staying autonomous and independent in social relations"; "remaining optimistic and resilient in the face of bad news in terms of the environment"; "changing routines in life through stepping into action"; "self-acceptance"; "making community"; "becoming financially stable or independent through work that is

aligned with personal and ethical values"; "moving from small scale change to larger scale systemic change in society"; "being patient with finding stability in growing professional activity"; "finding one's own truth in a stream of (dis)information".

4.4.2. Transitioning out of YIP - overcoming obstacles in world realities
After ten months of their participation in YIP all individuals stepped into the continuing stream of their lives. Out of the interviews it becomes clear that for many people this has been a significant and also challenging moment in the past five years. Their year in YIP finished in June 2020. The world had drastically changed: a global pandemic had the world in its grip and would continue to have a big impact for at least another two years. In regards to these extraordinary conditions related to COVID-19, but also in general, individuals reflect back on how they personally felt, leaving YIP, and how drastically different the realities of their new environments were compared to the context that they had been in for ten months.

Various individuals share that they felt empowered by feeling part of "a network", "having learned that there are many people in the world who do good things" and gaining a sense of personal "hope, structure and direction" through this. Some share how they left with "a heart so full (…), genuinely in love with so many people at the same time and feeling connected to these people." Others share that they experienced "a kind of mindset of that you can make the best of everything that comes to you, even though it's not always very easy". Someone relates this mindset specifically to the global condition of 2020: "the world was in this closed and fearful space, but coming out of YIP and being just like 'you know what, life's amazing!".

And then, there is also the experience of challenge. How to continue working with the learnings learned in YIP by yourself? How to continue feeling connected to the people who shared this experience with you but are now spread across the globe? How to act and do in an environment that is different from the one you felt you could practice in?

> "I think part of the reason I can overcome obstacles is because I did it before, but the challenge of overcoming the obstacles is knowing that I did it before in a much safer environment. That's how you learn (…) it's like practicing the backflip with a mat and then eventually the backflip works. I think for me as a person I found it hard. It's hard to take away the buffer and that you're suddenly not with the people anymore."

Continuing to be part of a collective, is not an easy effort for everyone. Even though the wish of self to be part of a collective is ever present, some experienced a struggle to find the confidence to do so.

> "I miss the aspect of community and learning and bouncing off ideas whilst being close together. (…) Because that was such a big pivotal point of what I wanted in YIP and it felt hard to leave it. (…) it wasn't easy to make community and make that all happen, so the prospect of putting all that effort in scares me. (…) I feel the confidence I built in YIP has faded and gotten rusty. (…) It's something I wanted to work on five years ago and I still need to remind myself to work on it. (…) I think YIP sort of lulls you into thinking that you're good at it, or at least it lulled me into thinking I was good at this, but actually it was just me becoming familiar with specific people and their specific histories and perspectives, and that takes time. And that's okay. But I think time is something people don't have to give so much in real life when you're not living together. It's also scary to ask for people's time, it's a big deal to ask for. (…) I thought it would be easier, but you really have to work for it. This

doesn't just happen. And it's possible to happen, because it has happened in ten months in YIP."

Staying close to personal values grown in YIP, such as kindness, is brought up as a challenge when being faced by adversity. Someone shares:

> "The economy has failed, the system is so corrupt and the people are not as kind as I wish them to be. With this reality (…) I think I'm kind of finding it hard to live in the world when you need to be as rude as you can in order to survive. (…) I'm living in a world where I'm constantly aware and try to navigate how I cannot be too soft whilst being kind at the same time. I don't want to be seen as someone who is too soft in the world that I'm living in here and at the same time I want to live the life that I want."

4.4.3. The Horizon

And, life will continue, presents will transition into futures, horizons will become landscapes. Reflecting on the question what the world and their own life will look like five years into the future, individuals express curiosity towards important, forming or even "decisive" years, for the world - "longevity as opposed to short-term gain", "making decisions for a bigger Us and not just Me", significant changes in terms of "sustainability" together with "embracing diversity", hopefully leading to "a solid base for peace in the world", as well as for themselves - "to continue moving with life", "engaging in work that's meaningful", an intention for "growth or movement in meeting challenges that come". Or, as someone views their horizon of self and world together:

> "I hope to continuously be in places that stimulate me and allow the complexity of what it means to be human in the world around us."

5. Discussion

Fourteen young adults have been at the centre of this research project. With their experiences, reflections and openness in the sharing of their narratives, an image of fourteen perspectives on development has presented itself. The question that guided the navigation through the diverse colour scheme of this image was: How can educational spaces support young people growing their resilience in engaging with world- and life challenges? The aim of this research was to surface individual learnings gained through attending The International Youth Initiative Program, placed in the context of the reflections on the developmental phase of these individuals. This with the hope that the deriving information would lead to a perception of best educational practices, serving the further development of adult education.

In working with the gathered data, the perspective of time and space were considered. These perspectives have been an attempt to bring nuance in the developmental character of resilience and observe how that what originates in the experience of YIP (space) finds a place in the bigger development of the past five years (time). With this it also becomes clear that an ultimate distinction between one and the other ultimately should not be made; the human being weaves their development between space and time, and shows that it is the interplay of the two that create meaning in a unique biography.

It is through this biography, that, unlike other living entities on our planet, the human being finds itself in the unique position of being a genus in itself[35]. Even though the physical similarities between human beings is apparent to the eye, the development of each unique personality, Self, or I, shows that we are not merely members of our species[36]. The human being as a self-determined entity finds in their own reality a lawfulness[37][38], and therefore a generalisation of resilience cannot be made. It is a delicate practice to draw fixed conclusions from wisdom that presents itself out of individual realities. Hereby, current research results in several conclusions based on an accumulation of commonalities from individual experiences. What is concluded however, will not be the full reality for each of these individuals or individuals in general.

5.1. In becoming

Looking at the general image of the developmental phase of these young adults, we see that their lives have been and, to a certain extent, are still coloured by being in a period of orientation. Standing on a crossroad and longing for a direction in life, eyes are directed outwardly into the world. Seeing the greatness of all that should be changed, to create a more just and healthy future and wondering what their own way of contribution can be. Stepping into becoming an adult means finding a way as an independent individual, relating to the world around[39].

Out of the reflections from the interviews, we see a developmental movement from pure idealism to a feeling of realism occurring in this life phase. The understanding of the world becomes more informed by moving through it and actively engaging with it. Seeing and experiencing more of the world, stimulates a growing understanding of complexity, rather than a thinking in simplicity. This, then informs the sphere of influence that the young adult steps into. From an infinite sphere of wanting to change the whole world without knowing where to begin, to the intimate sphere of the direct environment, with the believe that this causes change on the bigger scale - which is felt as a continuously and even increased necessity.

Growing an understanding of the world's complexities, is not solely directed to societal systems, realities and information. In the world that the young adult moves through, they meet other people. Or, we could also say, through meeting other people, they move through the world. It is striking how for these fourteen individuals, the impact and influence of other human beings is connected to the development of their understanding of the world. In the individual's life the other comes to the forefront as being a window to unknown views of world- and human-realities, teaching the individual that when honouring these realities, there is no such thing as 'black and white'.

In all of this the young adult gets to know themselves and starts to increasingly feel a sense of self and self-worth, being less dependent on the outside world for an acknowledgement of this. However, it becomes clear that this experience is in fluctuation and a rocky road, because self-contempt, self-doubt and insecurity are ever present. In this area of personal growth, again, the young adult meets the other - this time as a mirror, showing parts of themselves that they can appreciate as well as improve.

Challenges present themselves in the lives of the adult in becoming: the wrestle of attaining truth, wanting to live and work autonomously and out of personal and ethical values, increasing their sphere of influence and remaining optimistic in the face of an insecure future.

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35 Steiner, R., (1904). *Theosophy.* Rudolf Steiner Verlag, p. 75-76

36 Idem.

37 Goethe's Theory of Knowledge

38 Steiner, R., (1894). *Philosophy of Freedom.* Rudolf Steiner Verlag, p. 201

39 Professional Association of Biographical Counsellors (PABC), Biography chart; Archetypical Phases: https://www.biographicalcounsellors.org.uk/archetypal-phases#:~:text=21 - 28 Stepping in to,Leaving the family home
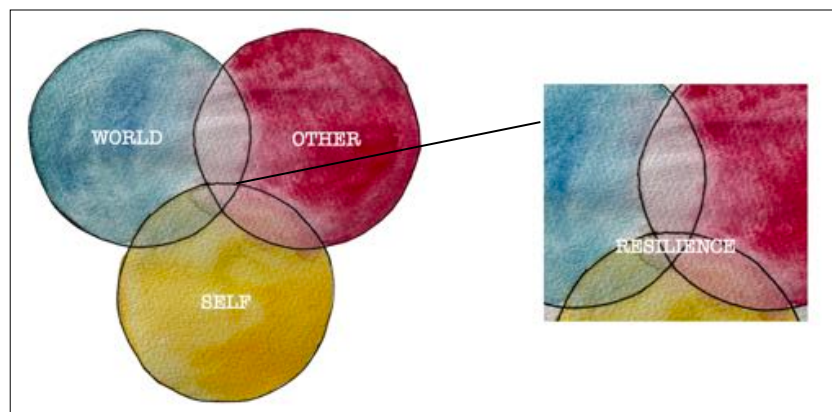
5.2. Resilience

It becomes clear that the different learnings gained in YIP are spread over the areas: the outer world; the other (being the fellow human being); and the very own self. Many of the learnings are interwoven, showing nuanced and different aspects in more than one area at the time.

Looking for example at learnings about systemic oppression and racism, we see that this societal reality in the world becomes visible through learning about the complexity of the other. In this, but in many other learnings, the other acts as a mediator between systemic understanding as well as intimate introspection of the very self, leading to the intention for self-driven change.

Gaining a more profound understanding of the world and world-complexities in an educational space, by seeing how societal systems function separately as well as intersect, grows the young adult's capacity to assess and differentiate the world in a more nuanced way. The content that the education offers is naturally important in this: experts who share their knowledge about world-realities and show how they take initiative, work creatively and are committed in making a positive change. Seeing this transforms abstract and overwhelming information about world-realities, into a more integrated and concrete understanding of the world. Through this, education expands the horizon of knowledge about world-content for the young adult.

Even more so, an educational space can support a feeling of personal connection to the world and its complexities, by encouraging the individual to see how they themselves are related to it. Deepening and navigating the relation between the individual self and the world, calls on »the presence and activity of the human 'I'«[40]. Becoming aware of your own becoming amidst the becoming of the world, calls for a feeling of belonging and brings about a growing sense of responsibility. Experiencing belongingness and experiencing that belonging is purposeful, supports the individual to become a transforming and participating being in the becoming of the world: it encourages the young adult to be able and willing to act. They become someone who knows, and with that, step into doing: they become a knowing do'er.

Areas of learning contributing to resilience.

5.2.2. Belonging to the community

Being part of an active and consciously co-created community as an integrated aspect of education, creates the opportunity for the individual to inhabit meaningful roles within the collective. Being supported in creating a healthy social life - in which the actualisation of the whole is carried by its individual members, and in the whole a place for each individual is created - is a practice in freedom

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[40] Viscrianu, I., (2022). *Education for an unpredictable future - building resilience in schools.* Pedagogical Section at the Goetheanum

and responsibility; inclusive and sensitive decision making; and in gifting and receiving support when faced by challenges - individually as well as collectively.

Belonging to a collective and being a co-creator of a community, enhances the collective self, or the experience of being a social being. It also acts as supportive in growing self-confidence and is a practice in self-guidance. This experience - which out of the shared experiences was mostly *felt* in the soul-life - can become a living *thought* when the individual is supported to consciously reflect on what it means to be part of a collective. In this way an educational space can be a place for the individual, to grow a founded trust that when meeting adversity, the social-emotional resources are accessible in the social surrounding.

In this sense an educational space shows that the community could be viewed as a micro-society - or as a micro-society of what a macro-society could be like. Being a part of this as a young adult, creates a fertile ground to grow the feeling of belonging, as well as an embodied understanding of collective support.

5.2.3. The Other as window, mirror and eyes

In a three-fold way, the role of the other becomes clear in terms of growing resilience. In one way, the other appears as a window, allowing the individual to meet realities in life that were unknown to them before. Being increasingly aware and sensitive in seeing the diversity in which human beings can manifest themselves, and how realities of other people's life and biography can be vastly different from one's own, grows compassion, humility and respect for the complexity and difference of being human. Being actively facilitated and mentored in the practice of listening to the other and working with and beyond 'the otherness of the other', allows the individual to experience how all of this ultimately influences their own becoming. Sometimes, something of the other that seemed to be extremely different, can become an inspiration to try a new approach when facing adversity.

In another way, the other appears as a mirror, showing a reflection of self, allowing the individual the opportunity to become conscious of themselves. Through seeing the pleasant and the unpleasant - the wanted and the unwanted, in the mirror of the other, the practice of changeability, adaptability and self-guidance is created. Supporting reflection on self-becoming by individually and collectively observing how change within oneself can be created, is of importance within an educational space.

Lastly, it is not through being a window or a mirror, but rather through their capacity of seeing, that the other is vital in the development of self-knowledge and self-confidence of the individual. The opposite is also true - feeling unseen by others, causes insecurity - and shows an identical importance of the eyes and acknowledgement of the other. Being seen by the other, therefore leaves an imprint on the development of resilience in the individual. It is the task of an educational space to create a safe and inclusive learning environment in which this capacity of seeing and being seen is made possible and practiced.

5.2.4. The Self - growing into life

All of the above contributes to the development of the young adult, resulting in the growth of self »as the agent of what a human being is able to achieve«[41]. Viewing the human being in their paradox of being and becoming - in a unique completeness and in a process of continuous becoming at the same time - is an appropriate lens for an educational space that aims to support the growing capacity of resilience in young adults. In the human I moving in between a dynamic of potential and

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actualisation, holding both an integral total of what I can become and an actualisation of what I has realised, resilience will show itself, both as a process as well as a result of growing into life.

When an educational space can carry this image of the human being, and finds ways to support the individual in growing an understanding and a sense of belonging to the total they are a part of, whilst creating the environment for them to intentionally meet the other, consequently this will result into a growing consciousness of the individual's own self-development. Then, an educational space will create a fertile ground for young adults to become resilient in engaging with world and life challenges.

6. Conclusion: Resilience in Becoming - propositions for the educational space

Finally, some concrete suggestions were formulated for educational spaces that strive to support young people to grow their resilience in engaging with world- and life challenges. The suggestions are abstracted out of the writing before and are therefore expected in nature.

1) Consciously building community. Conscious practices of building a (learning-)community as an integrated part of the education can be practiced through being in action (doing), and reflecting / contemplating individually and collectively (feeling and thinking). When an integrated element of the education, it is necessary that these spaces are actively created. In the beginning of the educational program they will be carried by the coordinating/organising team, but throughout time the role of holding this space can be shared with the student-cohort, who can actively step into a shared responsibility. Examples of focus can be: starting the day together with singing/poem/ contribution, sharing a collective space of reflection together on set moments that belong to the rhythm of the education, creating community agreements together in support to a safe-space for everyone, practical work in service to the community and the circle(s) beyond, as well as to the land on which the education takes place. It is through the experience of doing, paired with the space for contemplation and collective reflection, that an embodied learning of what it means to be part of a collective can take place.

2) The self and the other. For example through biography work, in which elements of one's own becoming as well as holding the space for others to share parts of their life story, can come together in an embodied understanding of individuality and diversity.

3) The world. Creating forms and practices within the education that support the understanding of the world in its complexity as well as concreteness, as a counterbalance of the rather abstract knowledge of world-realities that young people have access to these days. For example through gardening/farming in support of growing an awareness of the natural rhythms and cycles; exploring different areas of world-content and practicing critical perspectives on the sources of information; or by organising an event for other communities in the locality, as a practice of social work and learning to take initiative.

4) Transition. Even though the education is merely responsible for what happens within the context of the education, it could pay attention to the phase of transition between the time of the education and the time that comes after. This would be of support to individuals preparing themselves inwardly for a different time, in which they will bring themselves and their own learning into a different context. In this transition, individuals could for example be supported by hearing experiences from Alumni.
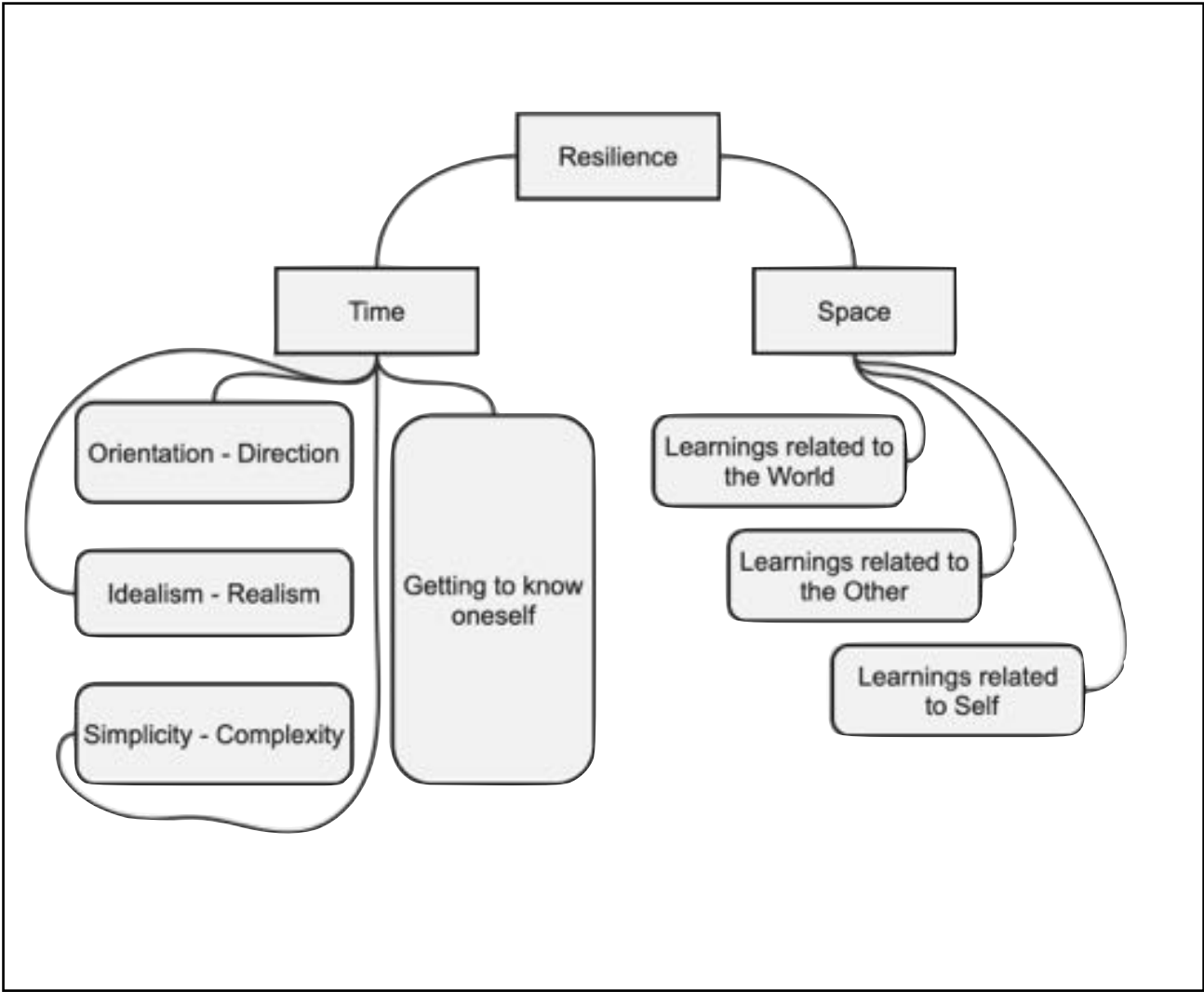
Visual image of Resilience in time and space

Diagram in support of results, showing Resilience in time and space.

7. Between the individual and the phenomena - a personal after image

In this research project, I found myself to be in a special position. In 2019 I participated in YIP myself, which means that as a participant, I shared this moment in time with the fourteen individuals taking part in this research, as well as eight other people who belonged to YIP12 but are not part of this research. How life led these individuals - growing up in different world-contexts, living a unique biography, carrying personal questions about the future - to travel to a place where an encounter happens and a shared story starts, has always been a riddle to me. Why these people? Why this time? Questions that remain a mystery and to a certain extend will stay unanswered. However, questions that also have become a lived reality: an encounter happened, a time was shared, and with that a forever lasting imprint on individual biographies was left.

After walking the same path for ten months, life continued and led everyone into different directions. With some the contact stayed, with others it became a loving relation from afar. The willingness to participate in this little research study and with that to step in a space of reflection, by sharing a personal story, has filled me with gratitude.

To witness the individual human being in a mysterious doubled nature - being in completeness and being in continuous becoming at the same time, and to understand how each individual's completeness and becoming colours the reflections and meaning of this shared experience, brought up several questions in myself. How can I draw conclusions from the meaning that individuals give to their experience? How can I justify transforming the particular into the general? How does one attain knowledge from a human being's individual reality? How to honour the individual, when trying to learn about the phenomena?

It made me realise that there is a delicate space in between the general and the particular, in between the phenomena and the individual. It made me realise that to really be of service to the becoming of the human being, one has to be highly attentive to that what Rudolf Steiner continuously articulates throughout his work, which also referred to in this writing before: each human is a genus in itself. Therefore, studying the human being asks to take hold of the idea of *personal existence*, rather than law or type. Researching the personal experience of humans, perceiving individual realities within a scientific scope, asks for a careful observation of the particular, rather than the general. Within the realm of human individuality, the general arises from the particular. This will continue to be a personal and ever lasting learning.

Stepping into a space in-between, I decided to express the work of this research project in a two-fold way - scientifically and artistically, carried by the motive that what appears in science as the *idea*, in art is the *image*[42]. Current writing aimed to carefully navigate from the particular to the sphere of the general idea, knowing that in this realm, the individual realities in their completeness and becoming, are not able to maintain their grandiosity *as such*. The artistic approach - a one day installation in which the visitor can walk through the personal expressions of the fourteen individuals of this research - serves as an image to deepen the exploration of the question: what does it mean to move in between the phenomena and the individual?

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[42] Steiner, R., (1886). *Goethe's Theory of Knowledge: An outline of the epistemology of his worldview,* p. 97

Whenever I fly I
Cannot see the forces that keep the plane aloft:

     air,
     speed,
     physics.

What would I have seen had
I looked at us?

      Circles, objects, people.

        Words, songs, laughter.

          Dance and drum.

But if I gazed on us forever,
Studied us in
fine detail we would still
remain in mystery.

        We worked in invisible realms,

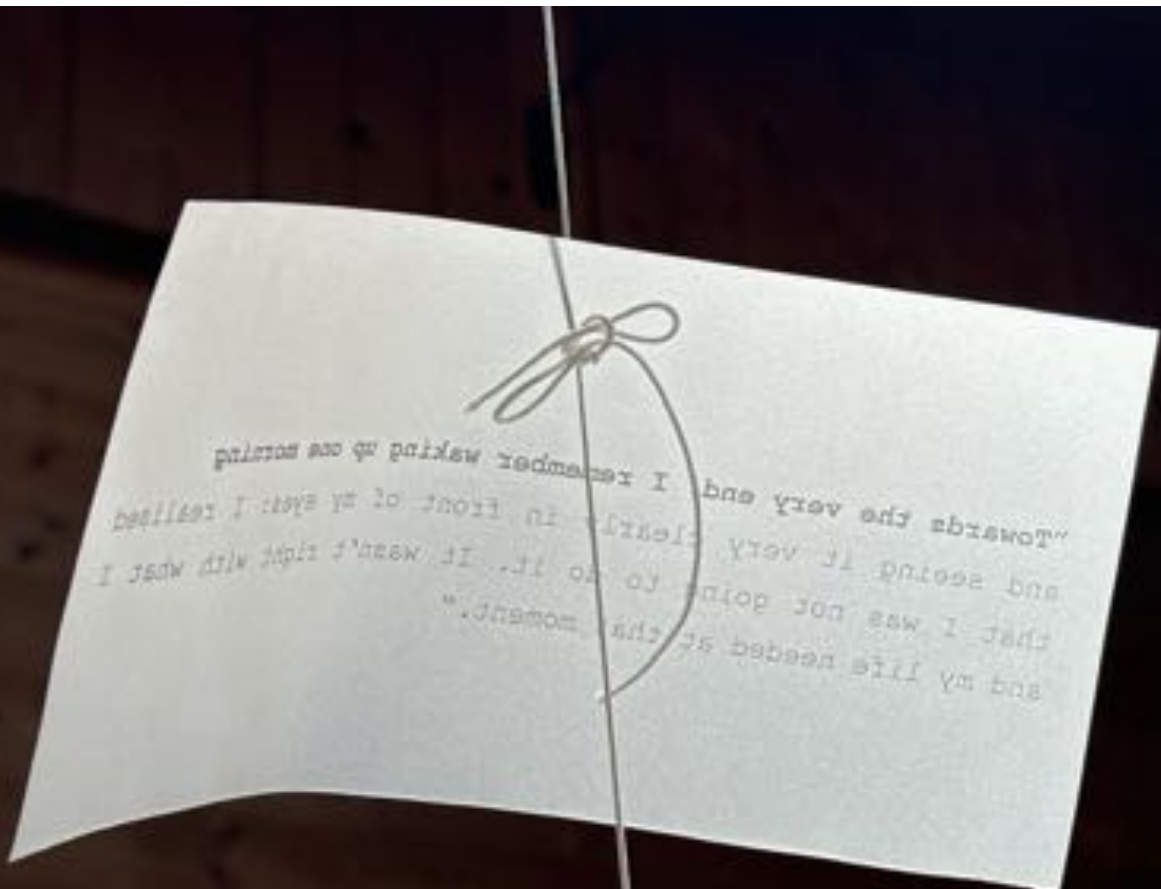   Danced to silent rhythms.

Saw what human eye cannot reveal.

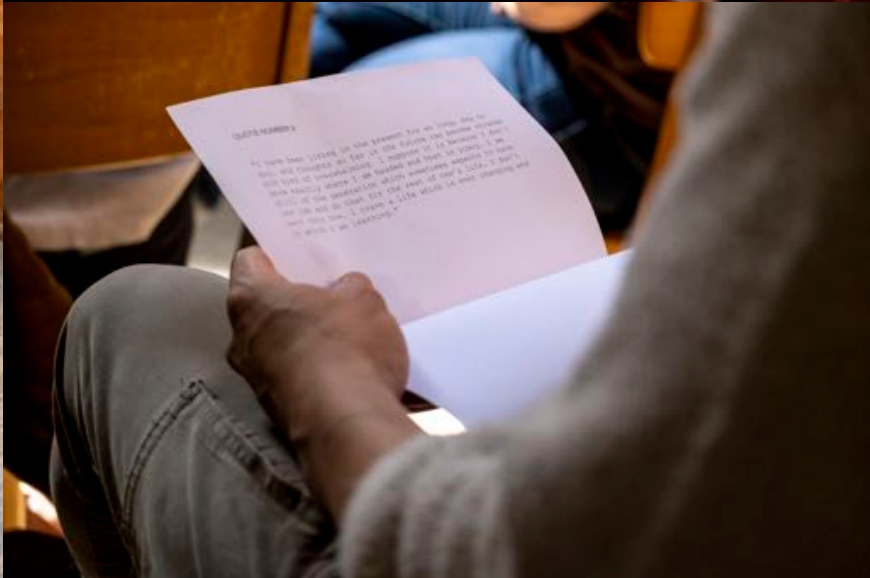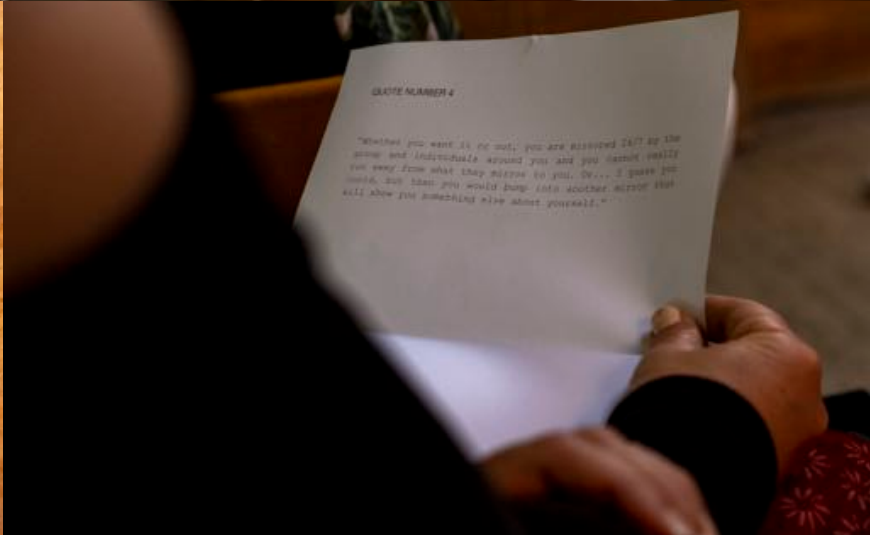Whenever we fly we
Cannot see the forces that keep us aloft:

Love.   Risk.   Joy.

INSTALLATION 'IN BETWEEN THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE PHENOMENA'

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Thursday 13th of June 2024;
Plastizierraum Schreinerei, Goetheanum in Dornach.

Photos by Nicole Asis and Barbara Schnetzler.

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