

Education for Everyone. Worldwide.  
Lifelong.

### By Lene Rachel Andersen

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### What are the main functions of ALE institutions in the crisis?

There are at least two main functions, the first one is to educate in the classical sense: teach necessary knowledge; the second is to open and facilitate a societal conversation about what to do next: how to re-open society and protect everybody.

The teaching could be through videos, written material online and webinars, and it should be about:

- **The virus**, basic scientific knowledge presented by teachers, science journalists and/or researchers (or celebrities?) who can explain things simply, so that they make sense; short videos with easy-to-understand graphics.
  - part of it should be what biologists know about viruses, how they behave and how we react to them
  - part of it should be how one protects oneself and one's surroundings against it
- **The institutions fighting the virus**: what is the WHO, how is it organized, and how does it work?
- **Societal impact**, basic macro- and micro-economics information, and an explanation of what politicians, other decision makers and scientists can know and cannot know; what are reasonable expectations to our politicians and other authorities?
- **Best practices** from around Europe and other democratic countries that do not violate human rights.
- **Where people can get help** and financial relief / new education / help of various sorts. This will differ from country to country, of course.

The information about the virus and the societal impact should be in three levels:

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- **Simple;** the knowledge that everybody must have. Celebrities could make these videos, in order to get people's attention.
- **General;** what one needs to know to grasp the bigger picture and not perceive the simple information as fragmented; this should be the information that make the protective measures make sense at a deeper level. If our schools had resources to teach science properly, this would not have been necessary.
- **High-school level;** for the curious citizen who wants a deeper understanding of viruses, how our immune system works, global trade, etc. Accessible master classes, so to speak. These would also be the videos you can share with your mansplaining uncle, when his personal hypotheses become too weird.

Regarding the conversations about re-opening and what our societies should be like on the other side of the pandemic, the best approach is to let people ask questions and then provide the webinars that give answers to them; get the best experts and teachers onboard and broadcast Q&A sessions online. But make it festive and have some celebrities host it.

#### **Which shortcomings did the crisis highlight in the ALE sector?**

Lack of vision and political courage. It would have been great if the organizations of adult education had been defining the agenda regarding information to the public; if they had represented civil society in demanding coherent information and guidelines/regulations from authorities. It would have been even better, if the sector had produced the information and teaching that governments failed to produce.

#### **How will the COVID-19 crisis transform ALE and ALE providers?**

This is a great opportunity to focus on *bildung* and community building rather than on qualifications for the job market. We need strong local communities and personal responsibility throughout our societies.

#### **What will be the main challenges for our societies after the crisis? And how can ALE contribute to manage them in an inclusive manner?**

The main challenges will be the same as before, just worse. The first ingredients to contributing will be imagination, courage and a little bit of madness...