COURAGE

Discover and Use Your Skills and Civil Courage

A new way of empowerment for young disadvantaged adults in Europe

Recommendation

June 2020

Summary

INTRODUCTION

The project features

Studies and research have recognised how a lack of values and a weak sense of community are affecting societies with the raise of radical phenomena such as populism, racism, and the abuse of power which all lead to violence, conflicts, negation of rights, etc. These phenomena have a particular impact on disadvantaged groups of people, minorities, young adults suffering from marginalisation in society. The need, which the COURAGE project has identified, is to empower this vulnerable target of society by strengthening their skills, among others, their civil courage skills, which nowadays shall be fully considered as an essential one in life. In order to achieve this enabling, educators shall become fully aware of their role, of the necessity of courage in people's lives, of the need to educate people to strengthen this skill in life. To do so, the COURAGE project aimed at developing tools enabling educators to perform their tasks (on a theoretical and practical base), and - for young adults – to learn the skill of courage so as to make a change in their lives and, as such, in society.

The products of the COURAGE project

Enabling educators to empower people with the skill of courage meant, for the project, to develop practical documents and tools, so as to properly address their educational task with effectiveness and success. COURAGE has developed a self-learning Manual for educators to acquire pedagogic approaches in the frame of this scarcely investigated topic; complementary to this theoretical support the project has created over 50 working tools which can be used as educational exercises (scenarios) so as help learners to develop knowledge and practical abilities related to the courage skill. The showcase which the consortium has developed, a third product of COURAGE, aims at showing the practical implementation of the self-learning manual and the Scenarios and functions as an informative tool for those, stakeholder and professionals, that are faced with young adult and marginalised population education. Finally, the present recommendations function as a further stimulus for the decision makers to make the education on the skill of courage sustainable, widespread, and effective as possible.

To whom this document is aimed

This document aims at reaching out to policy makers and decision makers at all levels, from local to regional, to trans-national level, and to address national and EU authorities in the field of adult and VET education. It also has the scope of addressing VET and other training organisations with its professional staff as well as stakeholders in professional education and adult learning contexts.

Why recommendations?

Without the pretence of wanting to teach, but with the aim of pointing out the importance of this subject, the narrative approach of recommendations addresses a double element which for the COURAGE project is of high relevance. On one hand the mean is a message: recommendations as a communication method conveys the strength of the message to be sent and points out the

importance of its content, though asserting convictions and certainties with respect and decisiveness. On the other hand, recommendations require synthesis, structure, and a clearness of the message - this helps to identify the core elements of what should be enforced and believed as essential.

How this document was created (methodology)

This document with recommendations is the outcome of a synergic work made of discussion and confrontation among project partners, associate partners, and stakeholders, in particular those involved in the pilot activity of the project.

In an initial phase, the discussion among partners and associate partners on how to draft a list of suggestions followed the ongoing exchange of thoughts and knowledge which had already led to the finalisation of IO1 and IO 2. However, for the COURAGE partnership it was important to enlarge the view over guidelines on civil courage education to a wider competent public and this was achieved by involving the network of partners in the discussion over the COURAGE project, through the feedback collected informally by the project partners and the associates. However, in order to extend this view, the consortium wanted to reach also stakeholders and beneficiaries of the COURAGE educational path, thus it took advantage of the piloting activities in which the project used and applied the self-learning manual (IO 1) and the practical tools (IO2) in the shape of scenarios. For this purpose, a light questionnaire[1] was handed out to all those who have attended the pilot activities in the 5 participating countries. The questions which were submitted were stated as follows:

- *How relevant and why do you consider "civil courage" as basic skill for adults?*
- *What are your thoughts or suggestions on how the development of "civil courage" as basic skill shall be integrated in adult learning?*
- *Which suggestions, on a policy level, would you address so as to make the adult education on "civil courage" a relevant aspect of adult education in general?*

Nine questionnaires were collected after the pilot testing phase, some of them were the expression of not just of one respondent, but of a collective plenary assessment session of the pilot activities.

Considering the data analysis of the nine extended answers and matching this feedback with the overall discussion described above, the partners have edited the set of recommendations for civil courage education.

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[1] See annex the proposed questionnaire and the list of answers collected.

1. Civil courage is an important, central future competence for the citizens of the European Union. Its importance is growing in our increasingly individualised societies, in which it is becoming more difficult to develop common interests based on solidarity.

Civil courage of people - and with it the capacity of individuals and groups to speak up for their rights, to denounce threatening situations, to stop the abuse of power, to defend the issues of minorities, to work for equality in adverse conditions - has been recognised as the mean for changing this world and making it a better one.

This aspect shall be acclaimed as objectively relevant and as the necessary path for social justice to be restored. Coherently, civil courage shall be considered as indispensable in our society, and as such, to be respected, promoted, and educated. All relevant decision makers, in politics, in society, in education, shall work for the empowerment of civil courage as a necessary skill to be acquired by all, and thus enable all the necessary actions so that it can be acquired and acted by all in society.

One of the main actions to promote the civil courage skill is education. Given its relevance for people and society, it shall be considered as an essential skill of people to be acquired through education and life experience. Therefore, civil courage should be considered an educational goal to be conveyed in all life stages of the individual and should be educated by means of educational means, respectful of the age and state of the beneficiaries.

Nowadays, where digital society is dominating people's lives and work, civil courage should not be considered as a less important or relevant basic skills, but as complementary. Strong links among these two areas can be found in the vast use of social media, where the exposure of people and the possibility of hatred, racism, sexism, violent language, threats, manipulation, mobbing, and other dangerous digital behaviours require, on the side of internet navigators, the courage to stop, oppose, and report deviant words, images, videos and audios. Therefore, civil courage as an essential skill should be valued at least as equally as the digital one, in the educational and pedagogical contexts.

Though the COURAGE project has developed training material (theoretical framework and scenarios) aiming at the development of civil courage skills in the young adult population, this pedagogical mandate should target all the people in a long, life learning approach.

Civil courage is important to be developed as an essential skill in small children:

- Why? Small children are in a phase where they develop their personality, they are open to any educational messages conveyed around them, are very observant to what adults around them do and how they act. This stage of life is strongly prone to absorbing values and learning skills which will characterise them throughout their lives.
- How? Methodology of sharing the civil courage skill shall be address by playful activities, games, animation videos referring to situations where courage skills are tackled, observation of life moments. Insight questions on behalf of adults and teachers shall support the internalisation of the learning.
- Who? Parents and relatives, i.e. the significant adults in small children's lives, functions as first and most relevant educators in civil courage, by means of their behaviour, shared

thoughts, encouragement of positive behaviour, discouraging laisser-faire behaviour in practical and real live situations. Kindergarten teachers and primary school teachers, other educators (such as sport trainers, etc.) complement this educational intervention of the family of origin by reinforcing positive attitude over civil courageous behaviour.

Civil courage is important to be developed as an essential skill in <u>pre- adolescent and adolescent people:</u>

- Why? Preadolescence and adolescence represent the developmental phase for the final shaping of personal identity and differentiation compared to adults surrounding young teenagers. This is the phase in which values and beliefs will be acquired and internalised, thus shaping the way they view life and the world.
- How? Real life experiences and visual tools play an important role in this life phase. Gaming and role play represent an efficient educational tool if properly followed by mirroring and insight learning, which is done by an adult educator. Peer education also plays a relevant role in shaping values and behaviours in teenagers by means of informal ongoing exposure and formally structured learning activities.
- Who? Peers, significant others, significant adults, parents, educators, trainers, teachers may convey civil courage skills via formal activities or daily relationships.

Civil courage is important to be developed as an essential skill in <u>young adults:</u>

- Why? Young adults represent the present and the immediate future of society in terms of governance. Educating this target group about civil courage is the strongest investment, in the short and medium terms, to create a change in society with regards to this matter. They are both the promising engine of society and the educators of tomorrow.
- How? On an informal level, privilege tools do empower essential skills in this target and are related to formal discussion groups, and digital environments such as blogs and vlogs. Non formal education can rely on educational paths based on interactive activities, the use of scenarios and role playing, vignettes, life experiences which always need to be mirrored for insight learning acquisition by a third party.
- Who? Beyond peers, trainers and professors, educators in sport activities, educators in non-formal initiatives play a relevant role in the education to civil courage as essential skill.

Civil courage is important to be developed as an essential skill in <u>adults:</u>

- Why? Besides representing the largest portion of the population, adults are decision makers in the society. Their behaviour, their essential skills, their values affect the life of citizens as well as the civil order.
- How? Non formal training and education represent the privileged tools to convey civil courage skills to adults. The blend of theoretical knowledge shared to adults and practical scenarios on which to reflect and mirror their own lives shall function and is the most efficacious tool for civil courage education.
- Who? Training and educational entities can educate to civil courage skills. However, politics, policy makers, and decision makers have a strong role and responsibility in enforcing civil courage among the values as well as among the relevant essential skills to be fostered.

To support the education of these target groups, in the most adequate pedagogical form, policy makers and stakeholders shall support the actors of civil courage education according to the different forms, contexts, methodologies, actors and beneficiaries. This recommends to back up parents, educators, trainers, teachers, opinion makers, and all who play an educational role on others, especially younger people, and at the same time to support the institutional contexts in which the educational relationship, developing civil courage, takes place. We refer here to the family environment, schools, sport contexts, working environment, public events, mass media, social media, etc.

This support shall find the form of the development of policies, the approval of legal frames, national and local budget allocation, awareness campaigns, public communication on behalf of leading figures, and in general, supporting services to the educational actors.

2. Civil courage extends the canon of basic educational content by a central competence that protects fundamental human rights. It combines knowledge of interaction and orientation and has a function in securing and expanding democracy.

On an overall level, and from the project's planning stage onwards, the COURAGE partnership has aimed at providing concretely tangible results and materials serving to extend and further develop competences of – in the first place - basic skills providers, educators and facilitators. By making use of the project outputs (Me and My Courage Self-Study Manual, Case Box, Show Cases) in their daily work, teachers, trainers, counsellors, coaches, social workers in the basic skills area can make their learners benefit from a more holistic, multidisciplinary and comprehensive approach in terms of basic skills provision. Newly acquired pedagogic knowledge and materials help – as a consequence - reach (young) adult basic skills learners in a modern, attractive and practically efficient way.

As a general principle, the end users/learners of the COURAGE project (young adults aged 16-25), have been actively included throughout our project activities. By this, they have been attracted and made aware of their own civil courage related skills and competences enforcing and improving their personal life management, self-determination, active democratic participation as responsible and well-rounded citizens, which has become particularly important in the context of current European society changes and challenges (populist movements nurturing trends towards radicalism, new forms of racism and discrimination, inequality, social exclusion).

The specific empowerment approach that the COURAGE project is based upon shall consequently lead to improved social inclusion of the final target group themselves, but also their immediate social surroundings and further members of society. Thus, extending the canon of basic skills education contents – and, correspondingly, making respective policy by supporting related educational and social programmes - is not only in line with the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty, but also enables providers to adequately react to currently striking needs in European society while, at the same time, meeting important principles highlighted in official European basic skills debates and policy reform initiatives throughout the last years.

More concretely, the original and conventional understanding of the basic skills term (reading, writing, maths, i.e. literacy, numeracy skills) has been broadened and become more dynamic, due to acknowledged societal transition processes. Correspondingly, in EU discourse, *basic skills competences* are nowadays defined and listed as follows:

- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Digital competence/literacy
- Health competence/literacy
- Financial competence/literacy
- Social competence/literacy
- ***Civil courage competence***
- Self-management competence

Not only does this show the basic skills concept as being changing and dynamic, it also emphasizes the general principle and understanding that *basic skills* shall enable every individual's successful self-management going hand in hand with every individual's active participation in society, both in private and professional surroundings.

In this connection, one of the stakeholders interviewed by one of the project partners has answered the question as to his/her thoughts or suggestions on how the development of "civil courage" as basic skill shall be integrated in adult learning as follows:

> *"Civil courage" as a basic competence in adult education is very important to me. After finishing regular school, young adults are often left on their own. Group experiences decrease, but their presence in social networks increases."*

Correspondingly, on a policy level, already in 1997 the UNESCO (World Conference on Adult Learning) has pointed out that "basic skills for everyone means that people, regardless of age, have the opportunity to develop their potential as individuals or in the community. It is not only a right, but also a duty and responsibility towards others and society as a whole. It is important that the recognition of the right to lifelong learning is accompanied by policies that create the conditions for exercising this right".

The COURAGE partnership (e.g. in the IO1 Manual of the project) have pointed out the importance of avoiding reverse conclusions from this, i.e. basic skills learners so far not having adequately fulfilled societal duties. On the contrary, it should be emphasized that one of the general ideas and missions of the project is the provision of concrete pedagogic input and material (i.e. most practical *recommendation*) as a substantial basis of respective structural and programmatic implementation established by policy makers.

Further and concrete principles of adult education followed by the COURAGE project shall be described in the following recommendations of this document.

3. Basic education offers for the development of moral courage are prerequisite: They require a consistent implementation of action-guiding principles of adult education: Participant orientation, Competence orientation, Biography orientation.

The feedback of trainers and participants who have been involved in different stages of the COURAGE project process shows us clearly how important it is to indicate civil/moral courage as a basic skill and implement it in basic skills education.

Few things are more important than how we treat each other. At a time when populism is on the rise, civil courage and the ability to intervene on behalf of others are needed more than ever. Personal skills are becoming increasingly important in the workplace, both for executives and employees, and no matter what industry you belong to. Civil courage as a subject has proven to engage our learners to a great extent. This is relevant to everyone. The various tools that have been developed allow us to carry out teaching programs that are not experienced as traditional teaching. At the same time, this topic opens up for interdisciplinary work which makes it even more interesting and gives us opportunities for inviting different guests from the relevant community areas and organizations. This argument must be used towards the stakeholders and anyone who has influence over the content of different curricula for adult education.

Participant orientation

An important argument to highlight for the participants is that the research is very clear on the fact that our social and personal skills are becoming more and more important and sought after. Every year, the World Economic Forum publishes a report looking at the world's human capital. In 2017, the report was clear that along with digital skills, our social skills are becoming more and more sought after in the working world.

Competence orientation

Trainers/Coaches must teach explicitly - they must dedicate time to teach their learners these skills. It is important that civil courage is not only relevant for a limited period of time when it is on the schedule. The classroom is a separate "local community" where they can practice relevant skills if disagreements or conflicts arise. Hopefully, this recurring focus will have transfer value for learners in their further work- and social life. Teachers must listen actively to their learners when they express their opinions. Especially when they actually do stand up for others and/or what they believe in. Modelling good behaviour is, of course, a responsibility that comes with being a trainer.

Biography orientation

When we think about basic skills, we often think about basic school skills or basic job skills. Courage can also be considered a skill. Your ability and willingness to stand up for others should be of great interest to an employer and any community will, of course, benefit from having citizens who intervene courageously in the face of injustice. The willingness to speak honestly and listen to others creates the empathy that is essential to democracy. Empathy prevents the "us vs. them" that is at the root of violence. Showing civil courage is not easy, however, at a time when populism is on the

rise, civil courage and the ability to intervene on behalf of others are needed more than ever. The positive effects of learners and their personal life reflecting and practicing civil courage are obvious. Human dignity and respect for others should be more important than any hard skills for those who make policy at all levels - everywhere.

4. Basic educational offers for the development of civil courage are characterized by specific didactic principles

a. Offers follow the approach of situated learning

In order to successfully empower young disadvantaged learners and in order to actually make them *discover and use their skills and civil courage* (i.e. the longer version title of the COURAGE project), we suggest the principle of respectively contextualizing learning. More concretely, it has proven to be most effective to exploit various educational contexts by actively embedding "real life scenarios" in order to make learners aware of how to understand and – even more important- how to apply civil courage and related skills.

From the planning stages of the project onwards, and particularly during the practical piloting processes conducted in each partner country, this principle has been reflected by the choice of our associated partners, as well as the respective nature and characteristics of their operational field: Project activities of how to apply civil courage skills have been exemplified and *situated* by

- the UK coordinator within the context of local social enterprise work among young learners (in cooperation with a school offering related contents)
- the Austrian partner within the context of public security-sensitised behaviour (in cooperation with an association affiliated to the local police)
- the Romanian partner within the context of actively interacting with vulnerable groups (in cooperation with an organisation fostering equal rights)
- the Norwegian partner within the context of migrant and refugee work (in cooperation with respective local community associations) and
- the German partner within the context of cultural/theatre pedagogic settings (in cooperation with a city theatre)

These and similar/other models of context and cooperation can be exploited by multipliers and beneficiaries of our project, and thus new elements of situated learning and interdisciplinary work (among different actors) shall be put into practice.

b. Offers follow an integrated approach, can and should therefore be integrated into other basic education programmes and offers / be incorporated

It is a commonly shared understanding of the COURAGE partnership that conveying civil courage principles and delivering respective skills within the concept of empowerment, should not be a "stand alone" concept, but much more come along within integrated approaches, i.e. as integral

part of basic skills/basic education programmes and offers. Respective incorporation shall take place within general youth, adult and/or Vocational Education and Training, but also become part of social and/or other community-related fields of work. We consider civil courage as a cross-over element suitable and relevant for different kinds of programmes (and, in fact, different kinds of beneficiaries/target groups of users and learners).

Following such integrated approaches shall, consequently, lead to interdisciplinary characteristics of educational subject offers, which shall be reflected in respective curricula and training programmes of continuing education and competence-orientated learning.

(Basic) Education, though, is not just a matter of curriculum, but the creation of the conditions to encourage these particular civil courage skills, to support and accompany actions related to these, to develop respective community thinking and action.

Some of the topics which civil courage education and work shall include are, for example:

- o Life situations and courage
- o Civil courage and social pressure
- o Civil courage in social media

c. **Methodology/learning design. Methodology and learning design should not reflect any traditional school experience, but new learning contexts (theatre, local communities, etc.), should thus enable new learning experience**

The methodology of civil courage training implies the active participation and involvement of learners and shall, for example, include:

- o Sharing best practices
- o True to life activities
- o Biography based learning
- o Experiential learning
- o Life situation role plays
- o Exercises
- o Insight reflection
- o Mirroring of the exercised experience situations
- o Mutual learning approaches
- o Group rather than individual learning
- o Project-based learning
- o Practical guidance
- o Involvement of role models/visiting people/visiting situation and exchange experiences
- o Learning with all senses

d. We need the cooperation and networking of regional/local relevant actors. Offers can be made interdisciplinary and thus particularly successful in cooperation with such regional actors who are already familiar with the topic professionally or through civil engagement

Civil courage education and training shall not duplicate conventional school experience and can, for example, be carried out within:

- o Cultural/arts (e.g. theatre, literature/writing) contexts
- o (local) Community action
- o Extra-school curricula activities
- o At any association gatherings/activity levels (e.g. within sports clubs, leisure societies)
- o Any non-formal training settings

5. Basic skills/education offers for the development of civil courage need regional networking with key players

In order to achieve sustainable effect and implement civil courage training offers and models of lastingly beneficial effect, (basic skills) educational providers need to leave their usual (school/classroom/training centre etc.) "territory" and establish wider cooperative networks of various kinds on their local and regional level (and even beyond). The COURAGE project has been determined and characterized by this specific conceptual approach, i.e. mainly by our active involvement of local associated partners throughout the processes, who – again by bringing in various further network partners, stakeholders and increased stakeholder interest – have been able to establish improved and enlarged impact.

Networking effects of this particular kind shall be briefly exemplified by the Austrian context as perceived within the project:

Adult/VET education organization (project partner BEST) established a cross-over cooperation with community-related associated partner (Verein Fair und Sensibel Österreich), who is strongly affiliated to the Vienna Police Department and Vienna Municipality, and can thus created strategic and operative "bridges" and cooperative connections to programmes, initiatives and concrete activities within these areas. By this, players, operators and beneficiaries of these –and further related- areas are made aware of civil Courage education and training models developed within our partnership, can adapt and modify these for daily use in various (non-school or even non-educational) contexts, an thus establish a much broader impact. – In the Austrian example, it has been further training and counselling institutes, schools, organisations working on social inclusion and providing service for specific target groups (e.g. handicapped, mentally ill or other disadvantaged groups and individuals) showing particular interest and making use of COURAGE outputs, materials and results.

According to our experience, and also proven throughout our work in all partner countries (and beyond), policy/decision makers and funding authorities tend, among other factors, to be positively influenced and "encouraged" by activities, results and respective "demands" shown by already

established operative networks of key-players (bringing in different expertise and operative levels). This, as currently and actively followed – for example - within the Austrian context, shall lead to newly implemented policies, realized, e.g., by the enrichment of existing (basic skills) programmes (by including civil courage elements/modules) or the establishment of new (funded) programmes and initiatives carried out by different kinds of operators and professionals for the sake and benefit of the final target group of the COURAGE project, i.e. young disadvantaged learners.

6. Basic skills offers for the development of civil courage is a new approach in adult education. Therefore, professionalisation strategies are needed for their long-term implementation. Needed is in future the identification of quality criteria, the possibility for adult educators to reach out for further training and courses of study on this subject.

The development of basic skills to civil courage is a relatively new field of educational provision for adult education in the European countries. In some European countries there are public programmes against racism and more civil courage in schools; there are also initiative groups against racism, groups inciting more respect, and groups against anti-Semitism, etc.

In adult education, however, the COURAGE project is taking an innovative approach by assigning civil courage to the scope of basic skills offers (see Recommendations 1 and 2). In order to initiate a sustainable implementation in adult education, professionalisation strategies must be considered. The product development of the COURAGE project and the location of civil courage in the scope of basic skills is a first step along this path.

Further and now upcoming strategies for professionalisation should be the following:

o Identifying and securing quality criteria for the educational service 'Development of moral courage'. The COURAGE project has highlighted several quality characteristics, such as orientation towards the lifeworld or the use of non-school, creative formats and methods for learning. Through quality criteria, an educational service is precisely described, becomes unmistakable and is also protected in a certain way.

o The development of further education offers for course leaders, trainers and consultants who want to integrate the use of moral courage in their professional everyday life. For this purpose, the self-study manual of the COURAGE project can be a useful part for further education. The tools in the Casebox can also be used as a stimulus. However, it is necessary to develop a didactical concept for continuing education. Further education institutions are needed to provide such continuing education for their course leaders and trainers. In Germany, universities could also play a central role because they have made continuing education a core task in addition to teaching and research within the framework of the 1998 amendment to the Higher Education Act.

o The integration of civil courage as a European basic skill should be integrated into various programs of study in adult education, vocational pedagogy, etc. For this purpose, it is necessary to know and take into account the formal conditions of the respective countries. In Germany, for example, the topic could be integrated into teaching assignments in degree programmes. It

would be far-sighted to adapt the self-study handbook and the case box to the formal regulations of the respective study modules. Another way forward would be to clarify with universities and colleges the extent to which externally offered continuing education courses can be recognised on degree programmes.

The promotion of moral courage as a task of adult education cannot be understood as a closed curriculum, but represents a cross-sectional area that needs to be integrated into courses of study such as vocational pedagogy or adult education and into further training for pedagogically active people. It is an element of political (basic skill) education that must have a place in the context of vocational or general continuing education.

In this way, considerations are taken up that were already formulated in Germany in the 1970s in the discourse on the synthesis of continuing vocational and political education and training (see Pflüger 1975). At that time, it was assumed that adult education can only succeed if it is also understood as political. "*Adult education that is committed to its original and traditional task cannot avoid a critical examination of the social conditions that ultimately reduce the possibilities of being human. It must be critical and political.*" (Dikau 1972, 128)

The topic of moral courage claims to expand the preconditions of the 'possibilities of being human' and therefore forces us to analyse the social conditions that make more moral courage necessary and to take sides. "*...whoever does not take sides in this existing society takes sides for the existing, whoever does not criticise the existing, thus criticises those who criticise the existing, accepting the existing as eternally valid and justified and as good and right as it is.*" (van Oertzen 1977, 167)

The fact that moral courage has become increasingly important for the cohesion of society (see recommendation 1) is a strong indication that what exists is not 'good and right'. Professionalisation on the subject of moral courage is therefore inevitably political, whether it is integrated into continuing vocational training or general continuing training or is modular in various courses of study.

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ANNEXES

Questions to be submitted to pilot testing phase participants

Issue related to the creation of questions so as to collect feedback from trainers/educators which might support the filing of IO 4 document

Premise (quotation from TNM 3 minutes)

"Part of the suggestions shall be collected from stakeholders and target population of the COURAGE project the partnership suggest to create a small template with some questions for the target of this action and start collecting feedback so as to include it into the final policy recommendation document. These questions can be, partially, included into the monitoring tools which CREFOP will design for the evaluation of the tool.

The questions can be referred to the following elements:
• How civil courage can be integrated in adult learning
• How does it affect worked based basic skills
• How this educational approach shall be included in new programs, in call for proposals/tenders, so as to become a policy on local level"

Dear trainer/educator, adult instructor

In order to develop a document on policy recommendation which will address policy makers on local, regional and possibly also national level we'd like your opinion and contribution. According to your professional point of view it is valuable for us to understand how you view "civil courage" in adult education and, in general, in the need to develop it as a basic skill for adult learner.

Please, take few minutes to address, by writing, these few questions. Your words will be considered absolutely confidential and will be only used, anonymously, for the purpose of this project. Thank you so much for your cooperation.

Questions:

• *How relevant and why do you consider "civil courage" as basic skill for adults?*
• *What are your thoughts or suggestions on how the development of "civil courage" as basic skill shall be integrated in adult learning?*
• *Which suggestions, on a policy level, would you address so as to make the adult education on "civil courage" a relevant aspect of adult education in general?*

1. How relevant and why do you consider "civil courage" as basic skill for adults?

BBB 1 *How I stand in the world, what* I know about human rights and how I see injustices in society are for me basic requirements for young people, how they take action as creators of their environment.

Are they reserved and without opinion or do they stand up when a human injustice happens in the world? With competences for "civil courage" young adults have the means to act in order to stand up for themselves and others. With this basic competence, young people feel equal, are opinion leaders in society and are accepted as spokespersons for their peer groups.

They do not give in when problems arise and are courageous when it comes to problem-solving strategies.

As digital natives, they are representatives of honesty and authenticity in social networks and defend themselves against shit storms and hate messages and are perceived as such by their peers.

So they can also set an example for other young adults.

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BBB 2 *The topic is particularly relevant in basic education because there we reach groups of people who experience social exclusion themselves (difficult parental home, bullying, discrimination). They have rarely had the experience of being supported and therefore have a biographically specific approach to the topic of moral courage.*

The topic of moral courage holds the chance that these target groups may experience themselves as an active part of society. They find access to active social behaviour and no longer remain silent or stuck in feelings of powerlessness. It also seems important to us that by addressing the issue of moral courage, they experience normative and value-based confirmation that it is good and right to stand up for others when they are wronged.

With this topic, these target groups can learn not to simply accept experiences of violence, not to look away, but to stand up for values.

Last but not least, they can experience self-efficacy and empowerment in dealing with civil courage.

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BBB 3 *Very relevant! To stand up for something / someone - even if this should result in (personal) disadvantages - is a position of strength which needs and presupposes a personal and socio-political discussion. The feeling and experience of self-efficacy is not*

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only beneficial for the individual - but also for society. Civil courage is the personal prerequisite for civil society.

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BEST 1 *In our open society, people with very different cultural backgrounds, values and attitudes live and work together. Therefore, cultural and social participation has to be fostered in order to reduce social inequality and discrimination also in working life. Civil courage is one important aspect of basic skills for young adults, along with other social competences like gender mainstreaming and diversity management. It allows young adults to stand up for themselves and others. They do not give in when problems arise and are courageous when it comes to problem-solving strategies. Also, they can defend themselves and others against shit storms and hate messages in social networks and get more aware of discrimination and also radicalization. They can also set examples for others.*

Another important aspect in this context is the trend towards radicalisation due to social exclusion. Social psychologist Luisa Mahr, who researches the meaning of group membership at the University of Klagenfurt, puts it in a nutshell: Social exclusion makes people susceptible to radical ideas.

The virtual world (social media) is also tempting more and more people, primarily young people and even school children, to engage in various forms of hatred, discrimination and degradation. On the platform https://love-storm.de/knowledge-base/glossar you will find an incredibly long list of terms (and explanations of terms), which should inform us about the extent, sensitize us, because often there is no awareness at all that these are mechanisms of destruction, exclusion, discrimination, simply criminal offences. Here are a few examples: Cyberbullying, cyber stalking, cyber-grooming, dissent, harassment, hate speech, lookism, victim blaming...

All the more reason to create a countercurrent that allows civil courage to enter people's hearts, thoughts and actions. **The development and implementation of appropriate civil courage education programmes is therefore indispensable and should in future be of increasing political, social and educational interest. Children, adolescents and young adults must also be actively involved***.*

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BEST 2 *In our open society, people with very different cultural backgrounds, values and attitudes live and work together.* **Therefore, cultural and social participation has to be fostered in order to reduce social inequality and discrimination also in working life. Civil courage is one important aspect of basic skills for young adults, along with other social competences like gender mainstreaming and diversity management. It allows young adults to stand up for themselves and others***. They do not give in when problems arise and are courageous when it comes to problem-solving strategies. Also, they can defend*

themselves and others against shit storms and hate messages in social networks and get more aware of discrimination and also radicalization. They can also set examples for others.

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BEST 3 *I think the most important argument is that our learners are very open for this topic and interested in it. They have confirmed at every instance that **civil courage is a very relevant aspect in their daily life, in both private and professional surroundings.** Social behaviour (and related skills) is essential, at work as essential as hard skills. On a more general level, **community thinking and acting, and awareness of it, should be included in all basic skills programme**s.*

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BTF *Civil Courage is an important skill to acquire in an ever-changing world; a world that is becoming more liberal as each day passes; a **world that needs the young people of today to stand up for what is correct, and contribute to social change.** Civil courage is a skill that is closely related to heroism, a way in which a person acts bravely and courageously. In the real world**, civil courage is necessary to pursue world peace and harmony between different cultures and individuals***

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LoPe 1 Few things are more important than how we treat each other. At a time when populism is on the rise, civil courage and the ability to intervene on behalf of others are needed *more than ever. Personal skills are becoming increasingly important in the workplace, both for executives and employees, and no matter what industry you belong to.*

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LoPe 2 *When we think about basic skills we often think about basic school skills or basic job skills. Courage can also be considered a skill. Your ability and willingness to stand up for others should be of great interest to an employer. And any community will, of course, benefit from having citizens who intervene courageously in the face of injustice.*

2. What are your thoughts or suggestions on how the development of "civil courage" as basic skill shall be integrated in adult learning?

BBB 1 Civil courage" as a basic competence in adult education is very important to me. After finishing regular school, young adults are often left on their own. Group experiences decrease, but their presence in social networks increases.

My suggestions are to prepare forum theatre projects, carry out forum theatre projects and evaluate forum theatre projects and improve concepts. Participation projects through the KMK (Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs)

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BBB 2 We think that the target groups must be picked up in their concrete living space and with their life experiences. Civil courage must be experienced as a holistic concept within the framework of adult education courses.

Adult education would do well to anchor this topic of basic political education in curricula. There are many course offerings and curricula that can be used to sensitise people to the basic values of our democratic society and to make them capable of connecting to their own experiences. Civil courage is very suitable as a cross-cutting theme. Course participants should be enabled to establish values together, i.e. as a group.

We see a special significance in adult education in the current field of social media with its dangers. Here a special form of moral courage is required because dealing with Hate Speech or the many half-truths in a digital world is very unfamiliar. How can you deal with this when you come across right-wing populist, strongly offensive statements. How do you protect yourself in these social media when you intervene and how do you prevent an intervention from ultimately provoking the further spread of a message?

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BBB 3 Structural:

Creating, defending, asserting, struggling, creating spaces of experience and working out together what / whom it takes and practicing...encouraging people to look and act

Individually:

...have I ever been in a situation that required moral courage? What was that like? How did I act? How did it feel? How did others react to it? What do I need to act courageously?

Or the other way around - have I ever been in a situation where others stood up for me, protected me?

start biographically and stimulate, challenge, instruct, practice or

Visiting people / situations, exchanging experiences - informing, sensitising and supporting the acquisition of tools - learning with all senses!

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BEST 1 *It is becoming increasingly important that topics such as values, ethics, personal and social attitudes, social courage, feelings and behaviour are included in basic skills education as a part of competence-orientated learning. Diversity management and gender mainstreaming already are part of it, and so should Civil Courage to provide an integrated approach. Mutual development of the topic together with young learners can give a strong educational input as to understand the non-action and to try out how it feels to show civil courage by means of practical examples and exercises. Generally, a practical approach to this training topic is recommended to give a realistic view on the multiple challenges to be considered and support young adults to shift attitudes (and maybe prejudices) related to social and cultural values and backgrounds as well as to own experiences. Curricula to be developed should include innovative activities including daily life experiences, but also practical guidance when facing sensitive situations. A good example for empowering young adults: Workshops in a basic skills course for young unemployed adults, mostly with migration background, among them also many refugees, with different nationalities, from different countries of origin, cultures, life and experiences, were a good example as trainers and learners showed very high interest in the topic. There were guest speakers and representatives of cooperation partners, coming from institutions and organisations of the public and private sector (staff of the Vienna Police - Department of Minority Contacts and the Criminal Police Office), with organisations dedicated to care and sensitisation work for disabled people (Inclusion24, Assistenz24) as well as the association Fair and Sensitive Austria, which aims to bring people from different cultural circles together).*

A further idea are best practice examples, role models, people who have already shown civil courage in everyday situations, intervened, committed themselves, defended themselves, in order to help, defend, protect either themselves or other people in emergency and dangerous situations, in the event of assaults, use of violence, discrimination, exclusion, etc.

In Vienna there are already some great initiatives that have put civil courage on their agendas, for example "but safe! Zivilcourage bei Gewalt gegen Frauen". In addition, the "Volunteers' Fair" and the benefit gala "Against Violence" focus on the topic of civil courage, but also the Wiener Linien campaign "Wunderwaffe Zivilcourage - Sicherheit in den Öffis" (Wonder Weapon Civil Courage - Safety in Public Transport) with tips and information on correct behaviour in emergency situations.

https://www.wien.gv.at/menschen/frauen/stichwort/gewalt/zivilcourage/

https://www.freiwilligenmesse.at/

https://www.freiwilligenmesse.at/timeline-category/zivilcourage-menschenrechte/
https://www.freiwilligenmesse.at/member/die-helfer-wiens/
http://widerdiegewalt.at/

https://www.wienerlinien.at/eportal3/ep/channelView.do/pageTypeId/66526/channelId/-54743

Volunteering continues to have a high status and a long tradition in Austria. Approximately 2.3 million people are currently engaged in voluntary work - for example, in environmental protection issues, child care, youth work, social work, health care, sports, charitable institutions, churches and religious communities, care for the elderly, refugees and migrants, rescue and medical services, the voluntary fire brigade, civil defence and disaster control, community, animal protection, cultural institutions and much more. Voluntary work or volunteer work is therefore a valuable and important platform where people can test their civil courage.

In our educational work with young people and adolescents, we therefore consider it extremely useful to plan and offer our own modules on the topics of civil courage, voluntary work and volunteering, so that the participants can actively deal with these topics, be sensitized to them and, ideally, be won over to them.

http://www.freiwilligenweb.at/de/freiwilliges-engagement

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BEST 2 *It is becoming increasingly important that topics such as values, ethics, personal and social attitudes, social courage, feelings and behaviour are included in basic skills education as a part of competence-orientated learning. Diversity management and gender mainstreaming already are part of it, and so should civil Courage to provide an integrated approach. Mutual development of the topic together with young learners can give a strong educational input as to understand the non-action and to try out how it feels to show civil courage by means of practical examples and exercises. Generally, a practical approach to this training topic is recommended to give a realistic view on the multiple challenges to be considered and support young adults to shift attitudes (and maybe prejudices) related to social and cultural values and backgrounds as well as to own experiences. Curricula to be developed should include innovative activities including daily life experiences, but also practical guidance when facing sensitive situations. A good example for empowering young adults:*
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public and private sector (staff of the Vienna Police - Department of Minority Contacts and the Criminal Police Office), with organisations dedicated to care and sensitisation work for disabled people (Inclusion24, Assistenz24) as well as the association Fair and Sensitive Austria, which aims to bring people from different cultural circles together).

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BEST 3 *I think the most important argument is that our learners are very open for this topic and interested in it. They have confirmed at every instance that civil courage is a very relevant aspect in their daily life, in both private and professional surroundings. Social behaviour (and related skills) is essential, at work as essential as hard skills. On a more general level, community thinking and acting, and awareness of it, should be included in all basic skills programmes.*

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BTF *I think that civil courage is best taught via practical activities, it is not particularly something that can be taught in a classroom from textbooks. The best way of improving one's civil courage is to reflect and experience situations whereby the skill is required. It would be ideal if current activities from normal adult education curriculums could be adapted to include activities that train an individual's civil courage. From the pilot experience, we found that approximately one hour is suitable to provide an individual with an opportunity to partake in activities that train civil courage. It is also very important to ensure time is left for self-reflection.*

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LoPe 2 *We as trainers must teach explicitly - we must dedicate time to teach our learners these skills. It is important that civil courage is not only relevant for a limited period of time when it is on the schedule. The classroom is a separate "local community" where we can practice relevant skills if disagreements or conflicts arise. Hopefully, this recurring focus will have transfer value for learners in their further work- and social life.*
We must listen actively to our learners when they express their opinions. Especially when they actually do stand up for others and/or what they believe in. Modeling good behavior is, of course a responsibility that comes with being a trainer.

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LoPe 2 *Civil courage as a subject has proven to engage our learners to a great extent. This is relevant to everyone. The various tools that have been developed allow us to carry out teaching programs that are not experienced as traditional teaching. At the same time, this topic opens up for interdisciplinary work which makes it even more interesting and gives us opportunities for inviting different guests from relevant community areas and organizations.*

3. Which suggestions, on a policy level, would you address so as to make the adult education on "civil courage" a relevant aspect of adult education in general?

BBB 1 Cooperation with the Federal Agency for Civil Education (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung) , the federal programme "Living Democracy"(Demokratie leben) and the federal network "School without Racism - School for Courage" (Schule ohne Rassismus – Schule für Courage)

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BBB 2 Politics can and should help to ensure that moral courage as a basic education topic is included in the curricula of continuing education, second chance education and also in the relevant pedagogical courses of study. Politics must understand that educational offers for the development of civil courage are more important than ever in the present time!

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BBB 3 What kind of society do we want to live in? The freedom of the individual stops where the dignity / rights of others are violated - how do we want to treat each other so that civil society succeeds?

There are enough topics / occasions that require civil courage and challenge civil society: Racism, discrimination, violence......

Communication - exchange - education, create opportunities to encourage (free) spaces to look and act and to support and accompany the development of action competences.

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BEST 1 Considering the importance of civil courage in today´s society in general as well as in basic skills training of young adults, also to foster sustainable integration in labour market, it will be of interest as part of basic skills education for stakeholders and institutions or organisations of the public and private sector concerned (Austrian Integration Fund, Austrian labour market service, departments of Austrian police authorities, Caritas…) in an overall approach.

In concrete terms, we would, for example, in our context, offer obligatory workshops in every basic vocational training project and course, in every vocational training and further training course financed by AMS or by public funds, in which the participants should learn what is meant by civil courage, why civil courage is an important and valuable component of a respectful social interaction. The participants should get to know and experience civil courage as a natural value of their thoughts and actions and integrate into their lives. However, they should also be able to recognise situations in which violence is threatened or used, in which there is bullying, in which sexual harassment is carried out, in which xenophobia and racism prevail, in which discrimination and exclusion take place, etc., and should be able to practise possible action strategies such as intervening, standing up for

oneself or defending oneself. In these modules or workshops the participants should also learn about best practice examples and the focus should clearly be on a practice-oriented, true-to-life, active civil courage training in which the participants are actively involved.

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BEST 2 *Considering the importance of civil courage in today´s society in general as well as in basic skills training of young adults, also to importance of civil courage in today´s society in general, it will be of interest as part of basic skills education for stakeholders and institutions or organisations of the public and private sector concerned (Austrian Integration Fund, Austrian labour market service, departments of Austrian police authorities, Caritas…) in an overall approach.*

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BEST 3 *One good approach is the one we chose during our IO3 activities at BEST: the combined efforts of pedagogic experts (trainers), coaches and colleagues from social businesses and NGOs, who come in with specific expertise (police, experts working with handicapped, civil associations etc.).*

This interdisciplinary kind of work is most interesting for all participants and provides a very motivational basis for the young learners.

Also, it is important that we do not duplicate conventional school experience, but much more work in interactive, project-based and experimental ways. Otherwise learners will feel being "taught", which is not a good idea in connection with this topic.

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BTF *I would potentially enquire about creating a designated curriculum for the skill, emphasising that the skill helps create a better world for everybody. The curriculum could be extra-curricular, or if gaining enough support, could be embedded into many adult training courses in some form.*

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LoPe 1 *An important argument to highlight is that research is very clear on the fact that our social and personal skills are becoming more and more important and sought after. Every year, the World Economic Forum publishes a report looking at the world's human capital. In 2017, the report was clear that along with digital skills, our social skills are becoming more and more sought after in the working world. This argument must be used towards the stakeholders and anyone who has influence over the content of different curricula for adult education.*

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LoPe 2 The willingness to speak honestly and listen to others creates the empathy that is essential to democracy. Empathy prevents the "us vs. them" that is at the root of violence. Showing civil courage is not easy. However, at a time when populism is on the rise, civil courage and the ability to intervene on behalf of others are needed more than ever.

The positive effects of learners reflecting and practicing civil courage are obvious. Human dignity and respect for others should be more important than any hard skills for those who make policy at all levels - everywhere.