



★ NETWORKING EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

European Conference

**Closing the empowerment gap through citizenship education
How to address educationally disadvantaged groups**

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Abstract

Learning Method – a playful Access to Citizenship Education (Outdoor Workshop)

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***Civil courage* under communism and after communism – how can we learn from Solidarność experience?**

The so-called “second circulation” of leaflets, books and periodicals in the second half of the 1970s was a fundament for Solidarność movement. The texts were published and disseminated beyond the reach of communist censorship and state distribution enterprises. First steps were made in Lublin and Warszawa by young collaborators of oppositional Workers’ Defence Committee in autumn 1976. “Samizdat” was a tool in mobilization of support for arrested workers. However, in a very short time, long before the “Carnival of Solidarity” 1980-81, network of underground publishing in Poland and its “technological” sophistication grow up far beyond the size of traditional (e.g. Russian) *Samizdat* limited to small circle of dissidents. Underground publishing in Poland between 1976 and 1989 was a phenomenon on a scale unmatched in other communist countries. Particularly after introduction of martial law (13.12.1981) the publishing and dissemination networks were key arteries of the opposition. Print runs of several thousands, wide circle of readers reaching far beyond dissidents, large number of publishing outlets, distribution networks, printing facilities – all this provokes questions as to the motivation of the actors, values, norms, routines and habits present in these activities.

We argue that participants of this movement, one way or another, practiced *civil courage*. Using this phrase we mean an attitude or behaviour that relies on an individual decision motivated and legitimated by some fundamental values for whose protection the courageous individual behaves in a nonconformist manner and takes a personal risk. However, some important questions come. What, more precisely, are these fundamental values? What are conditions under which people “practice civil courage” in an undemocratic setting? What is the relationship between civil courage and resistance, non-conformism or civil disobedience? And finally: how can we learn from this particular historical experience and apply it to our democratic society, educational system, and everyday life? Our point of departure is example of one of the underground networks active in 1980s in Warsaw.