Distance Learning Methodology Guide

Project: Motivus – Resilience and Motivation in Times of Crisis. E-Learning for Volunteers Working with Children.

Index

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INFORMATION ABOUT FINANCING

The Guide you are starting to read was created as part of the Project "Motivus - Resilience and Motivation in the Times of Crisis. E-learning for Volunteers Working with Children."

The Project "Motivus - Resilience and Motivation in the Times of Crisis. E-learning for Volunteers Working with Children." benefits from funding of EUR 50,005.50 received from Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway under the EEA funds. The aim of the Project is to create an e-learning course dedicated to volunteers working with children in difficult situations.

You can read more about the Project on the main page of the motivus.eu portal.

ABOUT THE GUIDE – CONTENT AND AUDIENCE

This Guide is a supplement to the E-Course for Volunteers Working with Children created as part of the project Motivus - Resilience and Motivation in Times of Crisis, available at https://motivus.eu/kursy.

The Distance Learning Methodology Guide helps to operate the above-mentioned e-learning and offers its users information on the possibility of utilising the e-course also in combination with other forms of education thus it enables innovative combination of various methods, helping trainers/educators to formulate optimal training/development paths.

The Guide **basically consists of three substantive parts**.

The first part beginning with the title "Methodology of Distance Learning" is **introductory on the topic of distance education, in particular using ICT[1] tools**. It is addressed primarily to people who have no or little experience with e-education or want to systematise their knowledge in this area. It organises key knowledge in this area and allows one to better understand how the e-course "Motivus - Resilience and Motivation in Times of Crisis" fits into modern trends and educational opportunities.

The second part, beginning with the title "E-Course Motivus - Resilience and Motivation in Times of Crisis", **presents the e-course from the user's point of view**. It discusses issues related to the use of the Moodle platform - its specifics and nuances. It is primarily aimed at volunteers and volunteers' coordinators who want to start and complete the e-course. It enables one to get off to a smooth start to the course by discussing the structure and the navigation of it.

The third part, beginning with the title "**The E-Course and Other Forms of Education**", presents **the possibilities of combining the e-course with other forms of education** based on the volunteer's personal circumstances, needs, type of work she/he performs and capabilities of the organisation. This part of the Guide is primarily aimed at people working

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[1] Information and communications technologies

with volunteers in NGOs, and helps them to formulate individual training/development paths, including but not limited to the e-course. In this way, people working with volunteers in various organisations gain tips for better preparation of volunteers working with children in terms of psychological readiness, motivation and goals.

The e-course is addressed primarily to volunteers in crisis periods working with children in difficult situations, but it has a great potential for scalability, i.e. it can also be used by organisations not working strictly with children, but with other groups that due to their situation, may require support. Although the examples presented in the e-course relate directly to working with children, the substantive content is so universal that it can be used in the work of organisations supporting other disadvantaged groups, with the appropriate supplementation of the content of the e-course with other forms of education, especially in the field of examples relating to specific groups of people at risk of social exclusion.

METHODOLOGY OF DISTANCE LEARNING

Introductory Remarks

Undoubtedly, the development of modern technologies is a challenge for the education system, both in the area of formal and informal education. Changes in ICT technologies usually progress faster than is the capacity of educational institutions to implement them effectively.

Currently, the development of distance learning systems, primarily via the Internet, is perceived by almost everyone as a natural and inevitable process. Today, it is hard to imagine education based solely on the traditional "classroom" model of education, and the expectation of a large training and educational offer in the form of e-education is part of the trends of our times.

The generation of the so-called digital natives, i.e. people who were born in the times of widespread use of the Internet, computers and other devices in everyday and professional life, treat the Internet and e-education via Internet as an ordinary element of the surrounding world.

On the other side are the so-called digital immigrants, i.e. people who started using digital technology, computers, the Internet, etc. in their adult life, so they did not grow up with them. This group is very diverse and also includes IT professionals and highly advanced users whose competences in this area are masterful. In this group, however, there are also people for whom the environment of new technologies has never become and will not become a natural environment, and people who, simply put, cannot keep up with the changes. The education system still offers these people many options, but the lack of competence of this group in the area of modern technologies means that the training offer available to these people is more modest.

Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on E-Education

Undoubtedly, the period of the Covid-19 pandemic has done more in this area than many years of unhurried attempts to develop e-education.

The snowball effect is unstoppable and there seems to be quite a lot of consensus on this among all stakeholders. And although the so-called cyber-fatigue after the period of forced remote learning, including at schools, took its toll on many people, e-education has arrived for good not only at home, but also in the collective consciousness.

E-education is an interdisciplinary field, drawing at the same time from such disciplines as computer science, telecommunications, pedagogy, and cognitive science. The common problem of the pandemic period was the lack of methodological preparation for conducting education via the Internet and insufficient knowledge in the above-mentioned fields by people who have been forced by the situation to actively use e-education. The main

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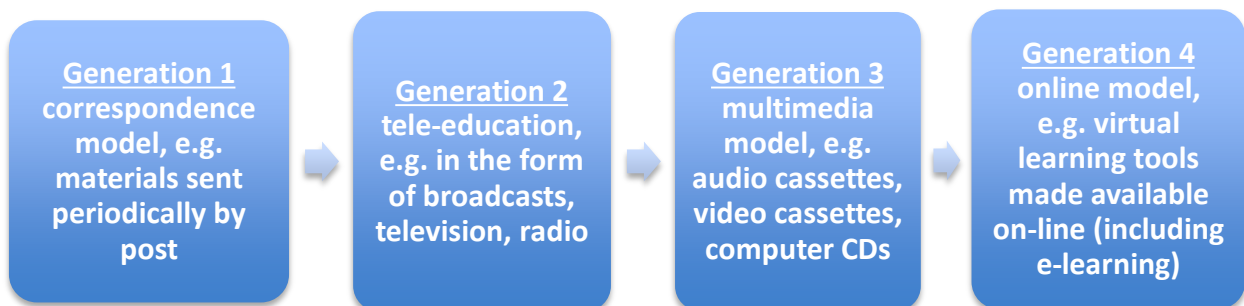**Working together for a green, competitive and inclusive Europe**

challenge was finding the answer to the question how to educate in the most effective way in specific conditions. For more than 2 years of the pandemic, this gap has somewhat been filled-in, but due to the scale of this phenomenon, there is still a lot of room for further education on that for many people.

Currently, it is clearly visible that remote learning via Internet has become a permanent form of education as the main or supplementary form of education.

Distance Learning Methods

Distance Learning is a much broader concept than e-learning itself. Distance learning includes an element of liberation from the limitations related to the place and time of learning. Thus, distance learning understood in this way is not a new phenomenon, it even dates back to the second decade of the 18th century, when a shorthand teacher, Caleb Phillips, placed an advertisement in The Boston Gazette about the possibility of taking a correspondence course, which he was to make available to interested individuals via lessons cyclically sent by mail. This form of correspondence learning was still very popular at the end of the last century, in Poland for example, it was implemented by the company ESKK (European School of Correspondence Education) established in 1991, which used to send by mail textbooks for a given course to its students, and later significantly expanded its original activity by materials available on-line, without physical form.

Generations of Distance Learning

Generation 1 correspondence model, e.g. materials sent periodically by post	Generation 2 tele-education, e.g. in the form of broadcasts, television, radio	Generation 3 multimedia model, e.g. audio cassettes, video cassettes, computer CDs	Generation 4 online model, e.g. virtual learning tools made available on-line (including e-learning)

The current generation of distance education (fourth generation) is a virtual model in which the Internet is used for sharing training content, for teacher-student communication as well as for communication between students. This model is based on Computer Mediated Education (CME). As a side note, it should be mentioned that the fifth and sixth generation of remote learning are being talked about more and more often. Some see in the possibility of learning through blogs, social networking sites, application sharing etc., i.e. in the Web 2.0 tools, such significant changes that they claim they should be qualified as new generations of distance learning.

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From the point of view of the teaching process in terms of time, one of the most popular divisions of teaching methods is presented in the figure below:

Figure 1.

Traditional education (Instructor-led training, ILT)

Blended learning

Synchronous learning (SL)
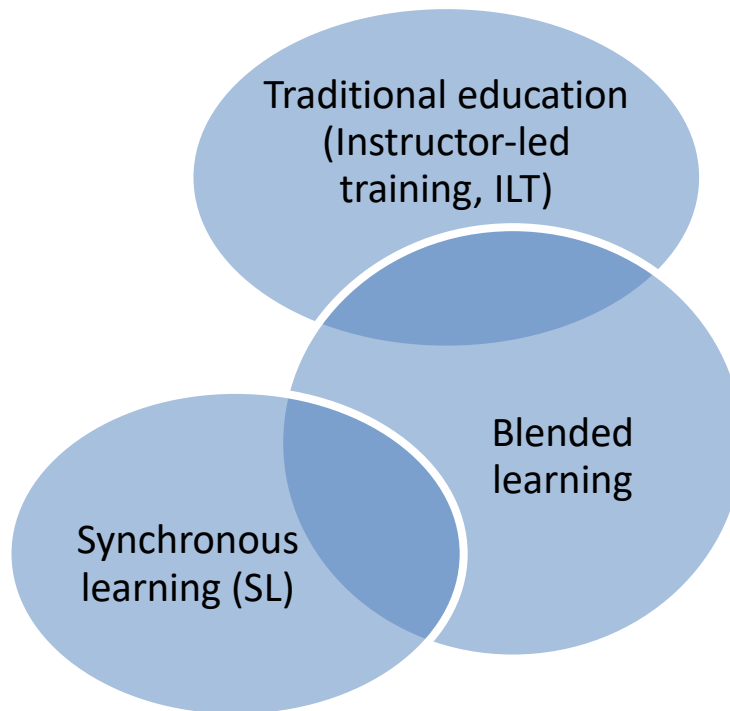
Traditional education is a didactic process in which a teacher conducts classes with a group of pupils/students, usually at school/university.

Synchronous learning is real-time learning, delivered via the Internet. Students and teachers are logged into one system, the so-called virtual learning space.

Blended education is hybrid education. It combines the traditional education with remote learning. Currently, it is probably the most popular form of education at universities.

Educational Platforms

An educational platform is an IT system dedicated to managing the education process and having functionalities enabling this education.

The platform serves as a knowledge base, most often it also enables communication between the participants of the educational process. Most educational platforms have a modular structure, e.g. content (lessons) presentation module, communication module, administration module, etc.

Educational platforms can basically be divided into:

- open source platforms (their source code is known and can be freely modified), available free of charge;

- commercial platforms, payable;

- platforms created individually, based on individual order (unique).

Undoubtedly, it was the availability of open source software that had a big impact on the development of e-education, as it allowed to create and share educational content without involving significant financial resources. The most popular open source platforms are Moodle, Ilias and Claroline. The e-course for volunteers working with children under the Motivus project was prepared on the Moodle e-learning platform.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Distance Learning

It seems that the advantages of distance learning, especially via the Internet, are obvious. These include primarily:

- independence from time,

- independence from location,

- no travel costs,

- scalability (e.g. no limits on the number of participants)

- accessibility (e.g. for people with physical disabilities).

Despite the undoubted advantages of e-Education, the Covid-19 pandemic also strongly revealed the disadvantages and limitations of this way of teaching, due to the following:

- weakened relations between the participants of the educational process, e.g. lack of eye contact - this is very often indicated by the lecturers, e.g. during webinars, as a significant limitation, not allowing the lecturer to assess whether the content he/ she conveys is attractive and understandable to the listeners,

- it is difficult or even impossible for the teacher to notice the individual needs of the student,

- difficulties in conducting exams via the Internet, so as to prevent the use of external help,

- the need for frequent updating of teaching materials due to newer software versions,

- works less well in areas where face-to-face contact with the teacher is important (e.g. learning to play an instrument),

- difficulty in conducting classes using specialised equipment (e.g. rehabilitation equipment),
- the need to have a stable and sufficiently fast Internet connection.

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E-Course Methodology

The e-Course uses a simple linear didactic structure. This means that the e-course is linear and it is advisable to go through it from beginning to end, in the given order.

The content of the e-course is based on the PERMA-V model - the core of Dr. Martin Seligman's welfare theory. It is an acronym for six factors that contribute to human well-being and happiness:

P – positive emotions

E – engagement

R – relations

M – meaning

A – achievement

V – vitality

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As already mentioned, the e-course was prepared on the Moodle (Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment) e-learning platform, the most popular Learning Management System (LMS), version 3.11.6. Moodle is distributed for free as open source software under the GNU GPL (Free and Open Source Software License).

E-Course Structure

Reflecting the adopted methodology, the e-Course contains 6 thematic modules (blocks):

> **Do You Know the Sources of your Power?**

> **Mental Resilience - Growth Despite Obstacles**

> **Motivation in Times of Crisis**

> **Working with Positive Emotions**

> **Valuable Relationships in a Crisis**

> **Flexible Adaptation to Changes and Challenges**

Way of Working with the E-Course and Navigation

Please go to https://motivus.eu/kursy and in the top right corner click on the icon 🌐 to choose English version. After the user has created an account at www.motivus.eu/kursy using the "New account" button (as shown in the figure on the next page)

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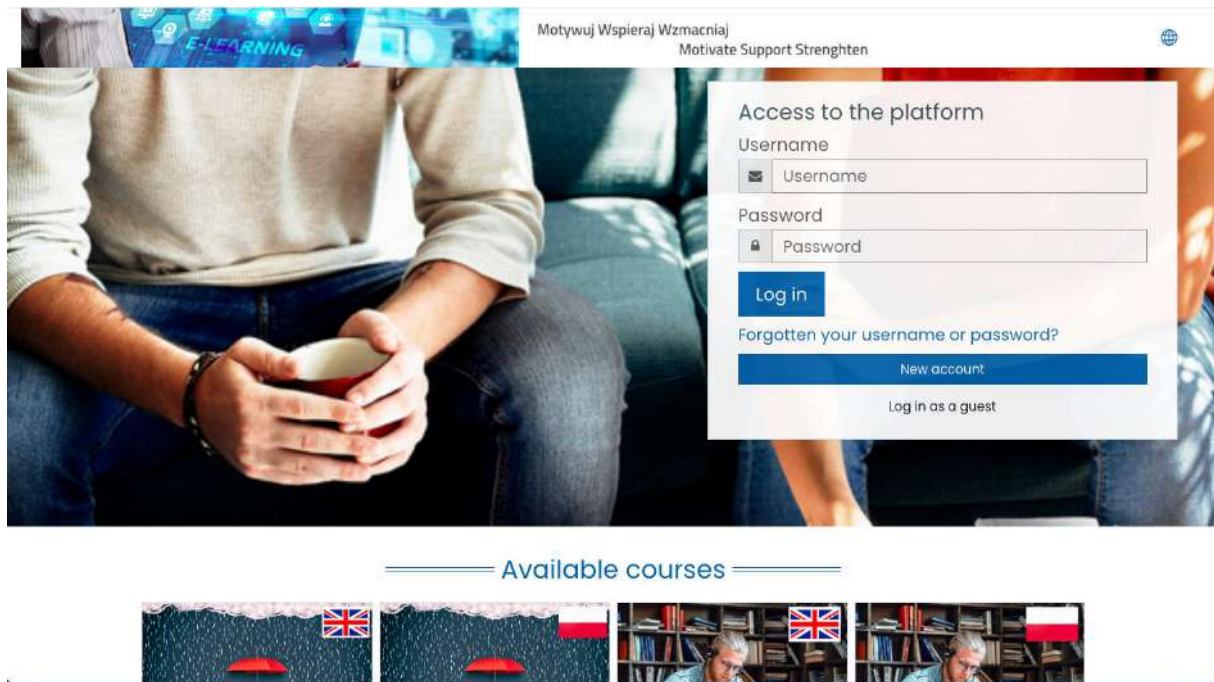
the user receives an e-mail to the address provided during registration. It contains simple instructions on how to complete the registration - confirm the address by clicking on the indicated link. **The e-mail also contains the access key to the course**. The access key must be kept in order to use the course.

After confirming the new user's e-mail address, the system automatically logs him/ her into the Moodle platform with available courses (view as below).
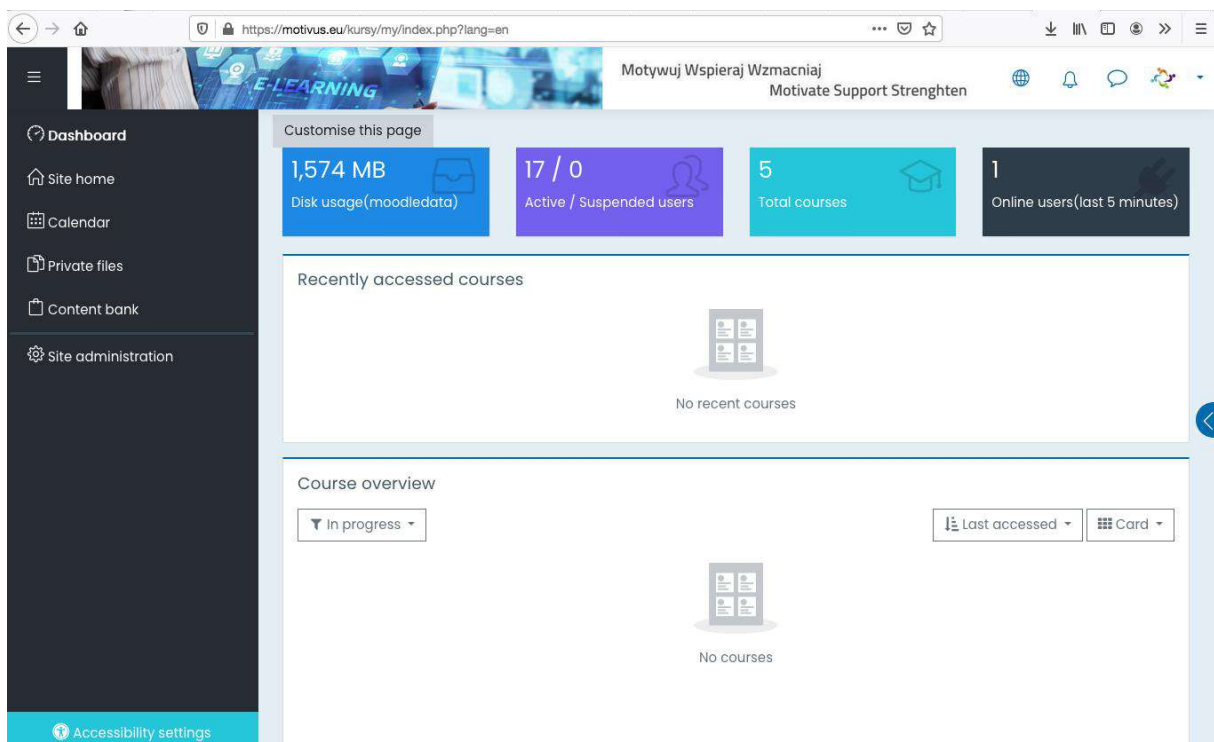
Then click "Site home" in the left column (dark bar). The system then shows all courses available for a given user (view as below).
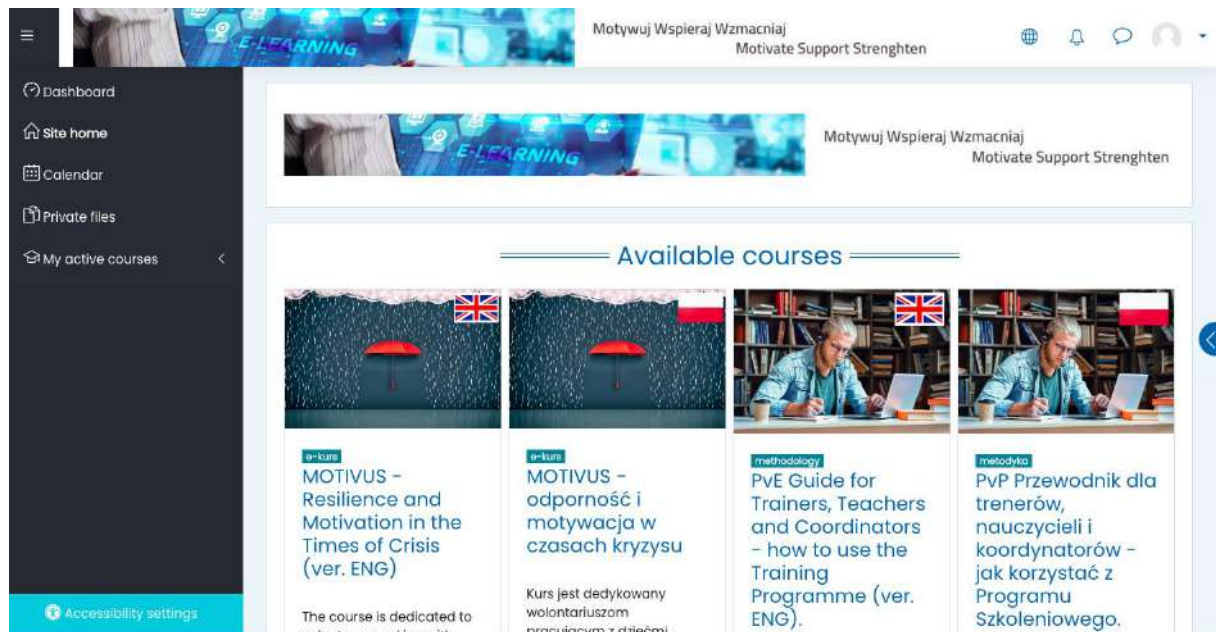
Then, the user selects the course she/he is interested in i.e. MOTIVUS - Resilience and Motivation in the Times of Crisis and in the "Self-enrolment (Student)" section, he/she enters the enrolment key received by e-mail (view as below).
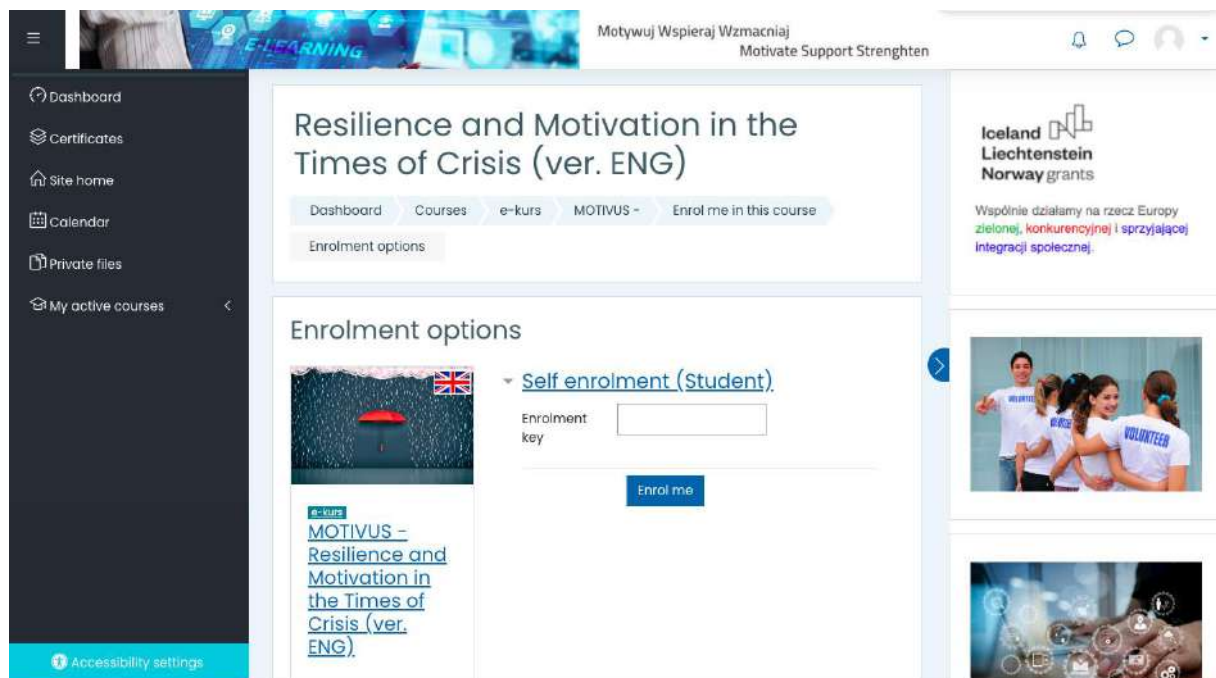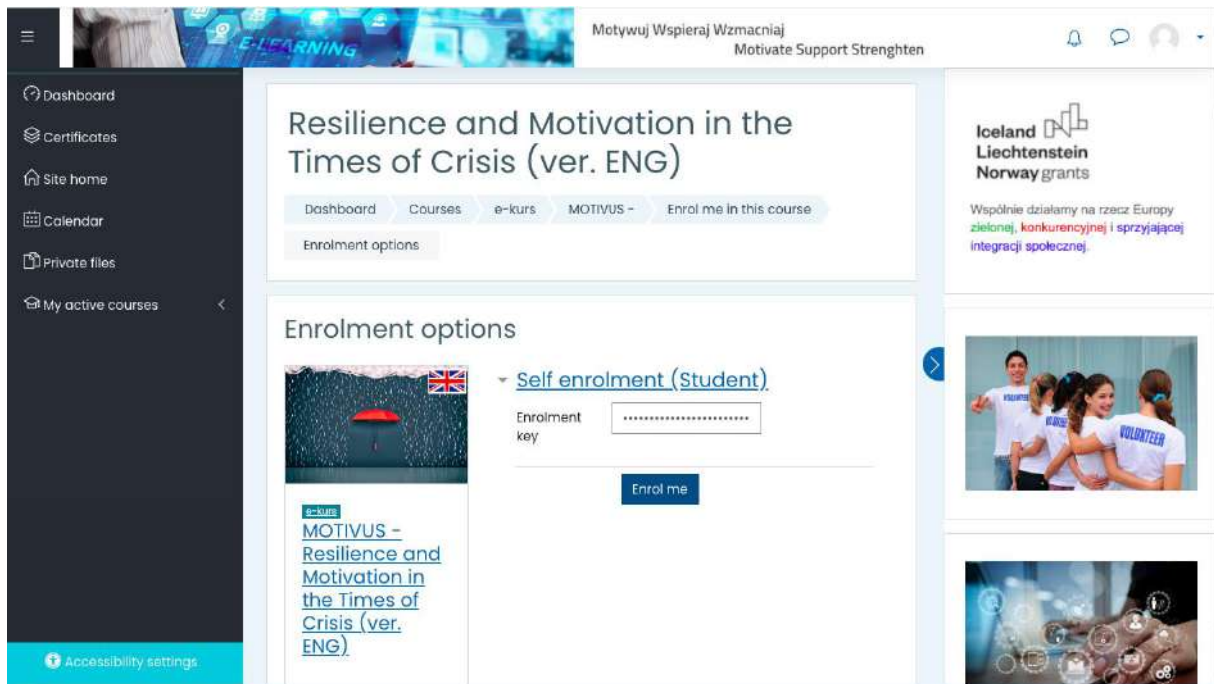
The user is now on the course page (see below), ready to start the course.
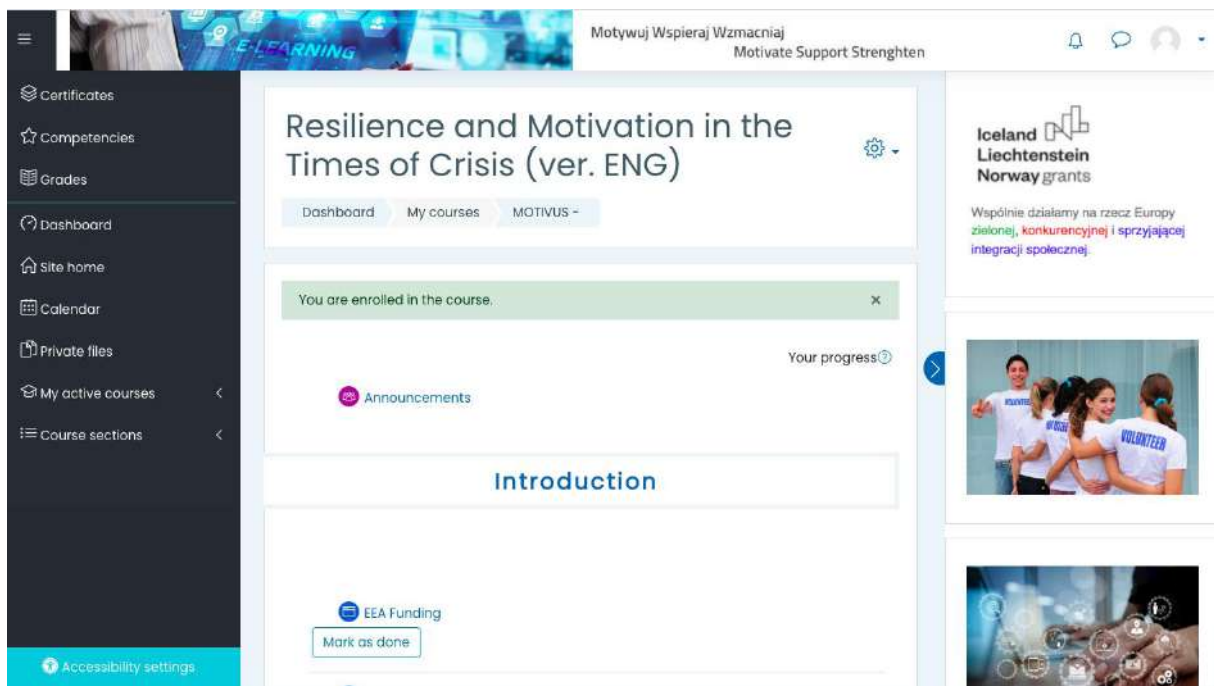
Let's look at the structure of the course. The titles of individual parts (lessons) - there are 8 of them in total - are marked in blue and displayed centrally (view as on the next page).
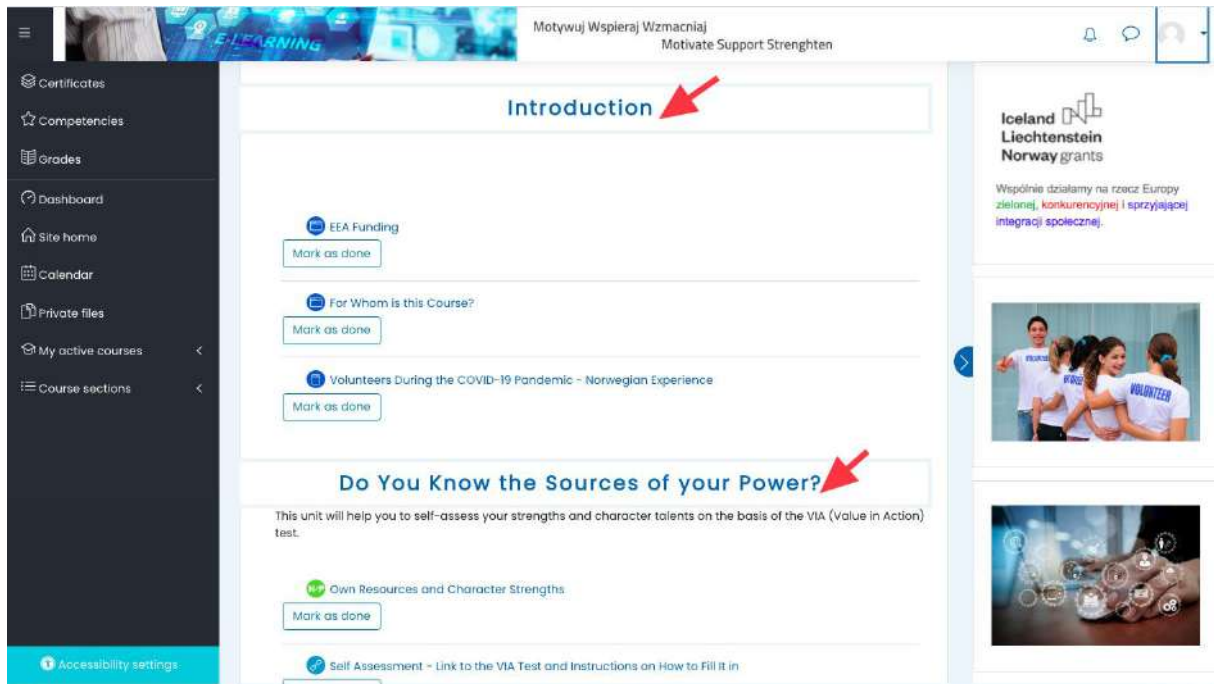
In each part there are separate units that make up a given part/lesson (view as below).
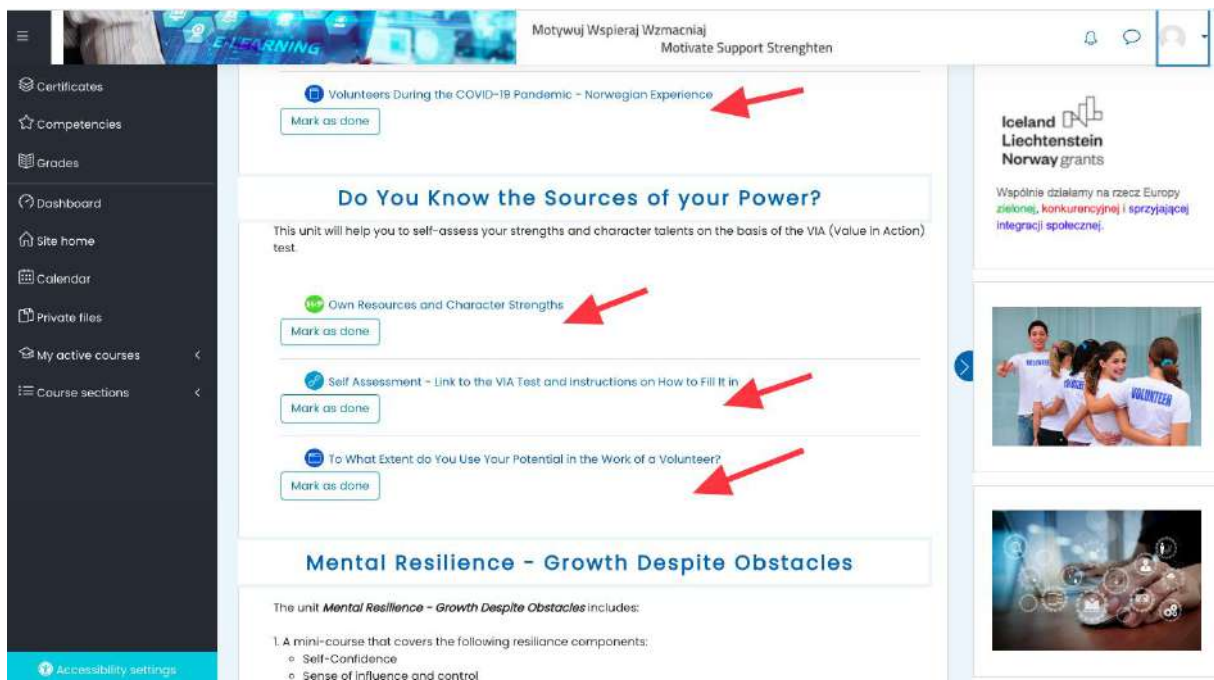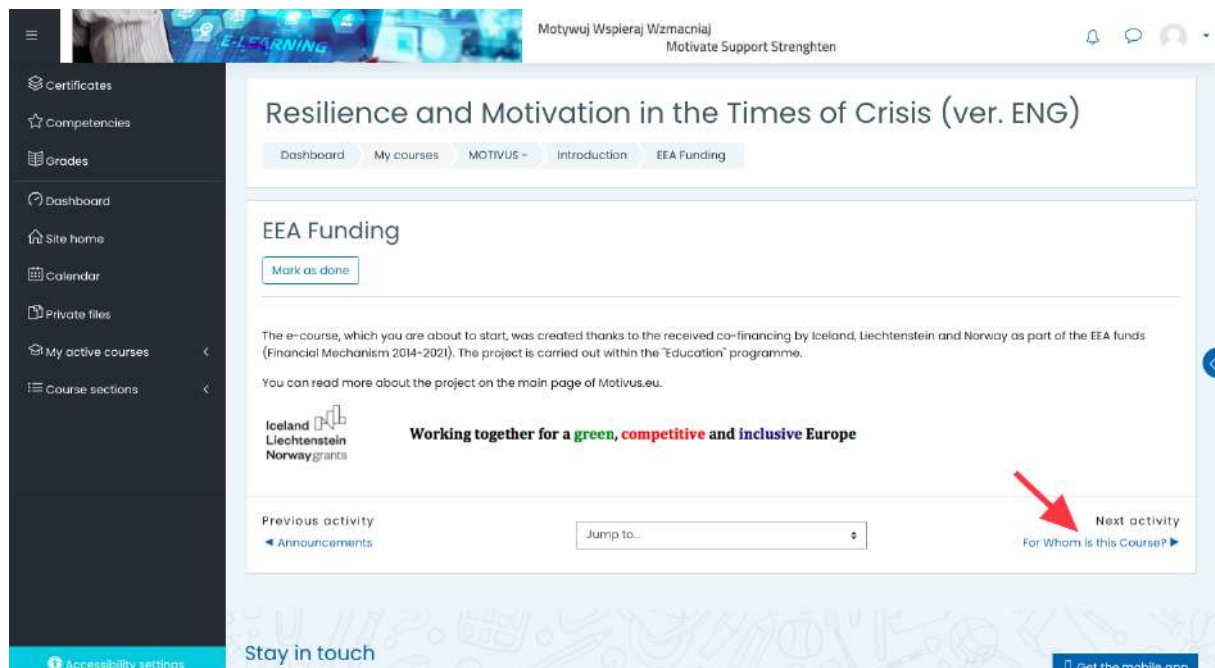
Start the course by clicking on the first section "Introduction". The system automatically guides you through the course.

ATTENTION! You can also go back to the course start page at any time and manually select the part you want to start or return to. To return to the course structure view, click "Motivus" in the navigation path bar, as shown in the figure below.

You can go to the next unit that makes up a given part/lesson by clicking in the lower right corner the active field under the heading "next activity" (view as below).

Some of the lessons are built in a multi-level manner in different layouts. It is important to move between the boards within the lesson, and not by clicking on the active field under the heading "next activity". The sequence of moving to next boards within a lesson unit is presented on the next pages. Red arrows with numbers (1, 2, 3 ....) indicate the order of moving around the course - you should start the sequence from 1, after completing it, go to 2, etc.

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Example 1

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Positive Thinking Training

Positive Thinking Training

▸ About positive and ...   ○
Techniques of positi...   ○
▾ Examples of develo ...   ○
○ Positive thinking training
A tool for positive th...   ○
▸ Summary quiz   ○

▣ summary & submit

AFFIRMATIONS are short sentences or phrases that mean something to you. When you are under stress or pressure, or face a challenge, an affirmation helps you adopt a more positive attitude. Affirmative statements are a way to convince yourself: "I can do it!"

Affirmations that work best:

1. are formulated in the **present tense** (e.g. "I am" instead of "I will be")

2. are **personal** (in the first person) and contain an emotional reward ("I like", "I love", "I can" ...)

3. they have the **form of a statement**, not a denial (our mind tends to ignore the word "no" in statements)

▣ · Affirmations   1 / 6 ▸

↑ **Examples of developing positive thinking**   3 / 6   ‹ ›

Previous activity
◂ Motivation in Times of Crisis

Jump to...   ⇕

Next activity
Managing Emotions ▸

Positive Thinking Training

≡ **Examples of developing positive thinking**   3 / 6   ‹ › ✕

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▸ About positive and ...   ○
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▣ · Affirmations   1 / 6 ▸

↑ **Examples of developing positive thinking**   3 / 6   ‹ ›

Previous activity
◂ Motivation in Times of Crisis

Jump to...   ⇕

Next activity
Managing Emotions ▸

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Example 2

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Own Resources and Character Strengths

2

≡ Character strengths

Own Resources and Char...

Do you know what re... ●

Character strengths ●

Brief overview of the ... ○

In almost every spiritual, religious or philosophical tradition, a certain common set of features and attitudes is present, which are perceived as desirable virtues, worth developing and following:

- wisdom and knowledge,
- courage,
- love/ humanitarianism,
- justice,
- moderation,
- transcendence.

"Virtue" may seem to you a rather archaic term and in a way problematic - because how to translate these rather abstract concepts into specific things? Can virtues even be measured? The creators of the *VIA (Value in Action) Classification of Character Strengths and Virtues* - Martin Seligman and Cristopher Peterson - have assigned each virtue a set of defining features that are manifested in thinking, action and behavior. Unlike talents, which are largely innate, character strengths are susceptible to being shaped and developed.

Please see the list of 6 Virtues and 24 Character Strengths on the next page.

↑ **Character strengths** 2 / 3 ‹ ›

HELP

2

Previous activity
◄ Volunteers During the COVID-19 Pandemic - Norwegian Experience

Jump to... ⇕

Self Assessment - Link to the VIA Test and Instructions on How to Fill It in ►

Own Resources and Character Strengths

≡ Character strengths

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↑ **Character strengths** 2 / 3 ‹ ›

HELP

3

Previous activity
◄ Volunteers During the COVID-19 Pandemic - Norwegian Experience

Jump to... ⇕

Self Assessment - Link to the VIA Test and Instructions on How to Fill It in ►

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Example 3

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Facilitation for People with Special Needs

The www.motivus.eu website has options (upper left corner) to change the contrast and size of the displayed font (as shown below).

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Screen reader - reading content aloud is available in the lower right corner - as shown below.
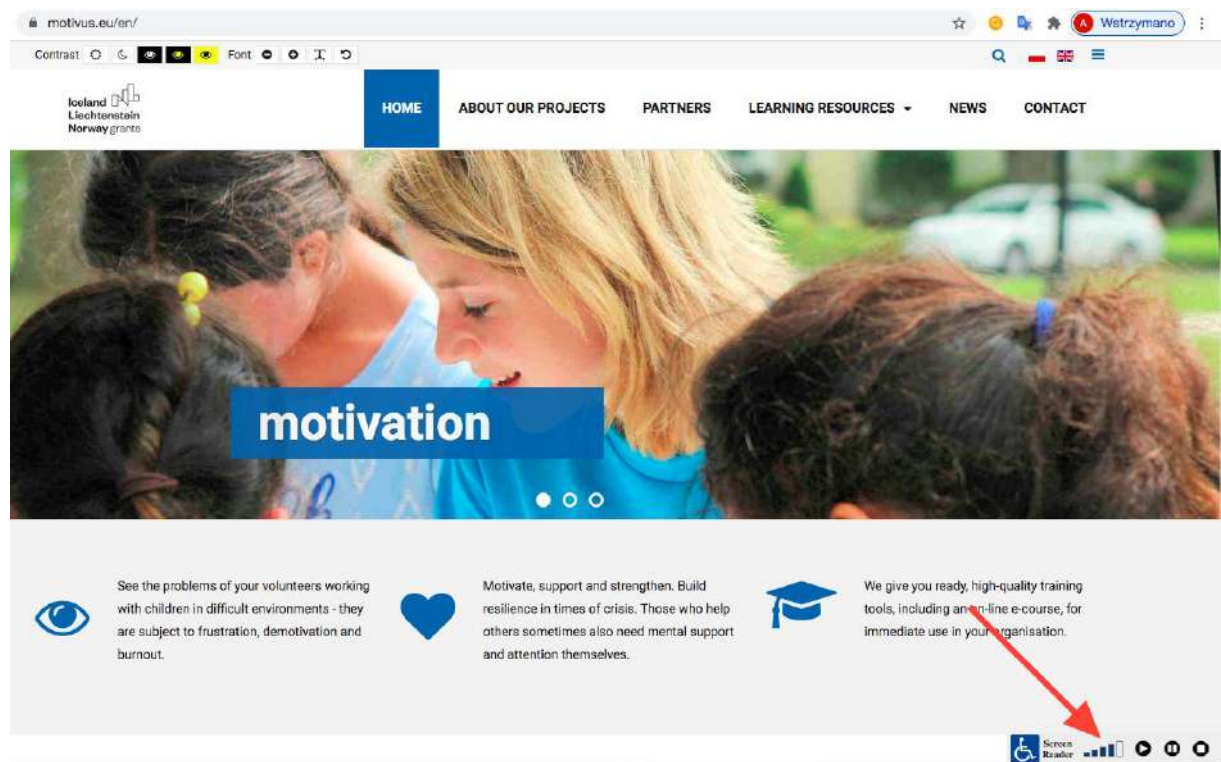
In the course, the welcome video contains a transcript of the text to be read by deaf/hard of hearing people (see below).
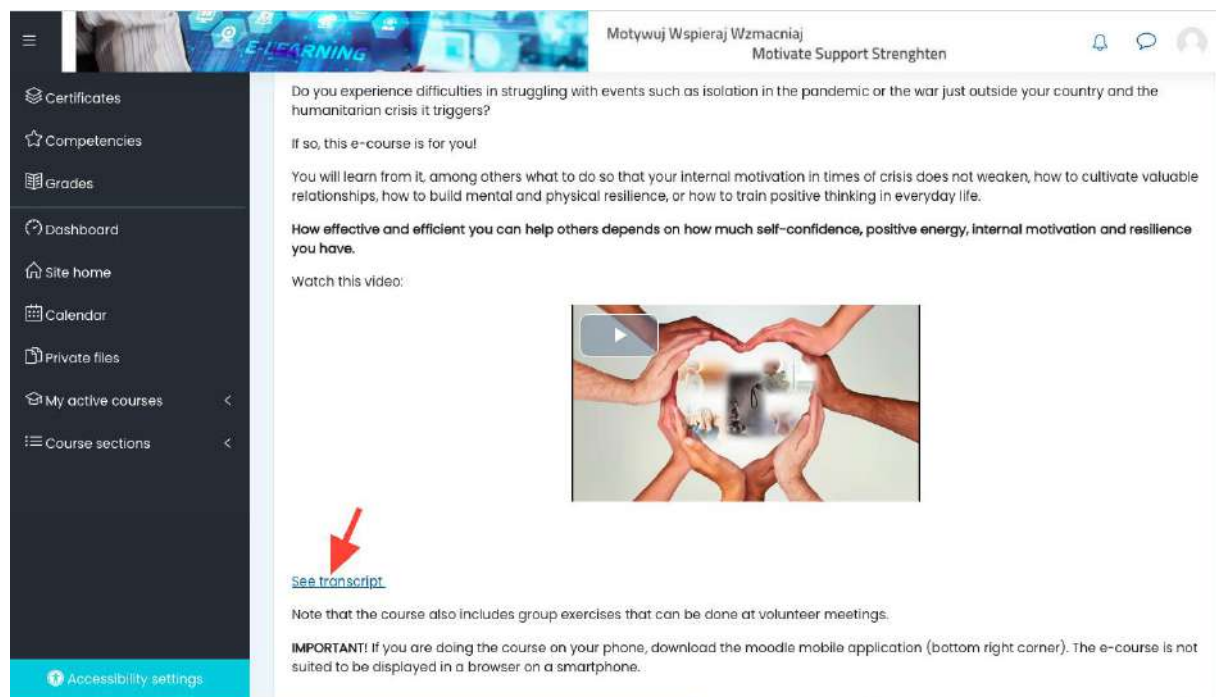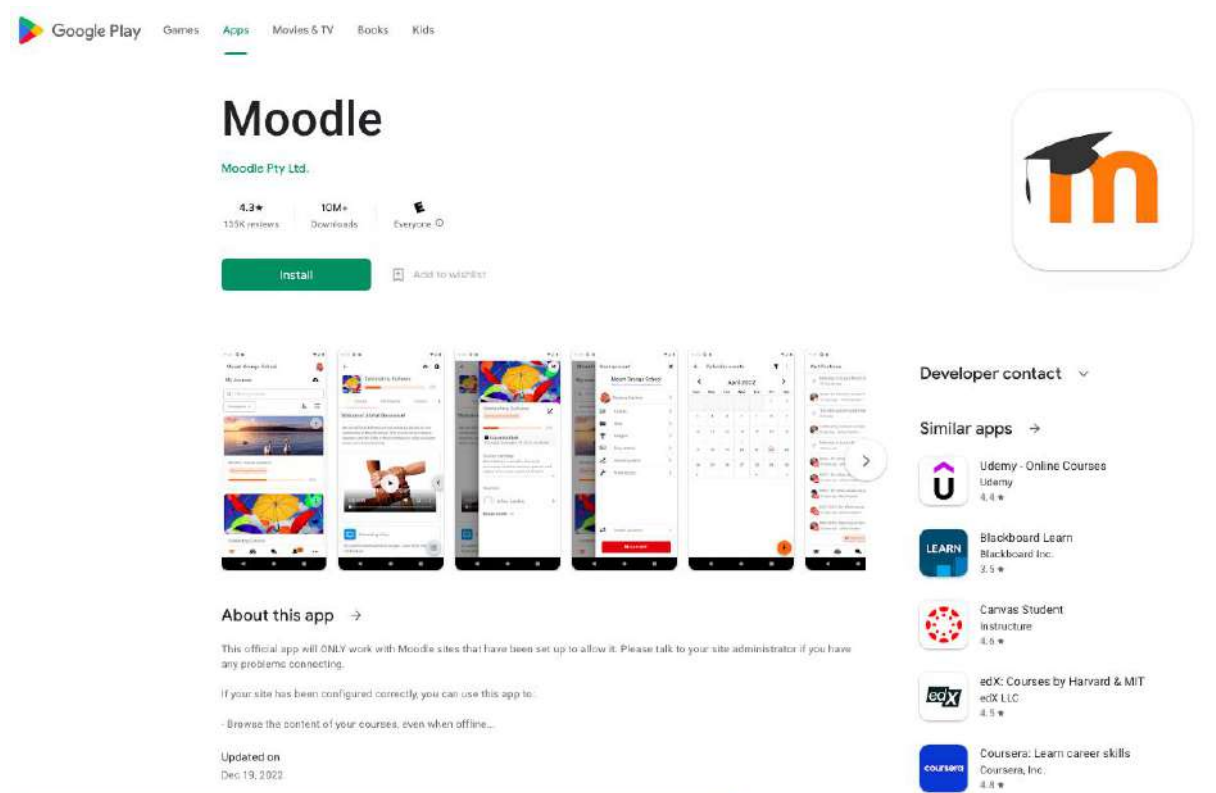
Mobile Version of the E-Course

The version of the course available at https://motivus.eu/kursy/ is designed to be viewed on a computer and not on a smartphone/tablet.

If you plan to use the e-course on a mobile device, we recommend installing the Moodle mobile app on your smartphone/tablet.

The application can be downloaded for free from the Google and Apple stores:

https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.moodle.moodlemobile&hl=pl&gl=US

https://apps.apple.com/es/app/moodle/id633359593

as shown on the next page.

The application can also be downloaded by clicking the "Get the mobile app" button in the lower right corner of the page (as shown below).

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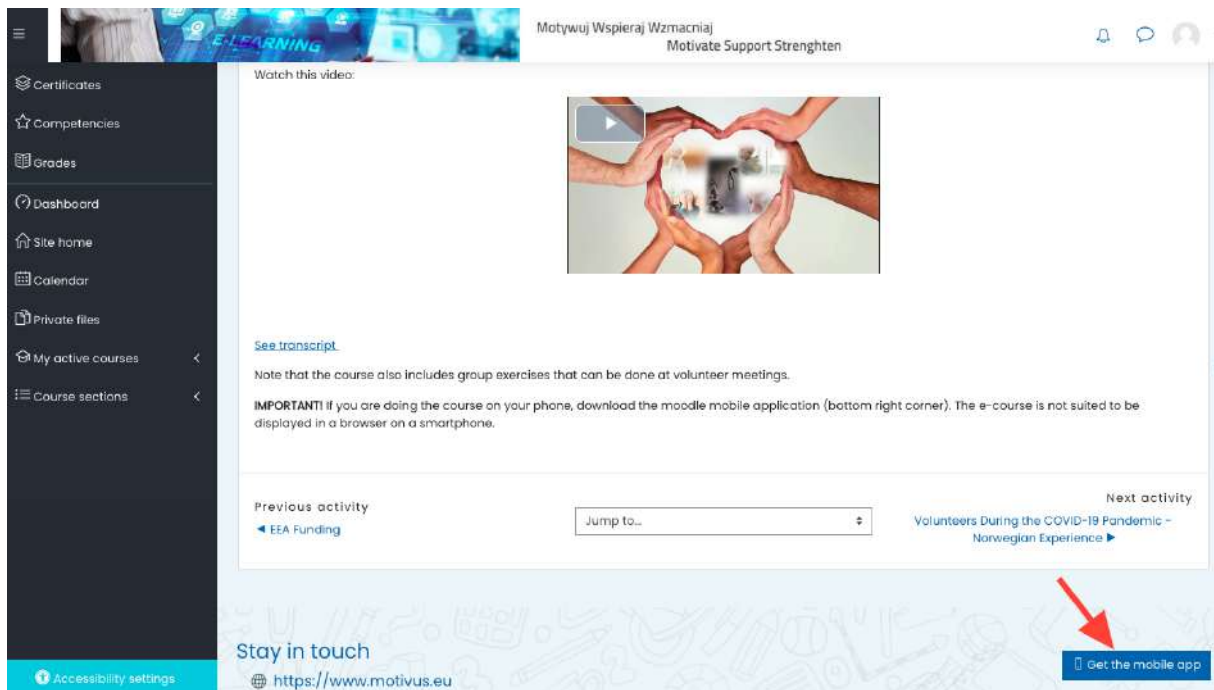
Completion of the Course and Certificate

Each participant who has completed the course and has received a positive assessment in all training modules can generate a certificate of completion.

The condition for obtaining the certificate is to get in each module and in the entire course a total of min. 70% of correct answers. Without meeting the above conditions, the certificate will not be generated and the "Certificate of Completion " part in the last module of the course will remain inactive. You can solve the test tasks more than once.

ATTENTION! The certificate generation module in Moodle does not work with some older versions of browsers. As a consequence, certificates may not be displayed correctly (white page) or can be only partially displayed (without all information). It is recommended to use the latest version of Google Chrome or Firefox. The full look of the certificate is shown below.
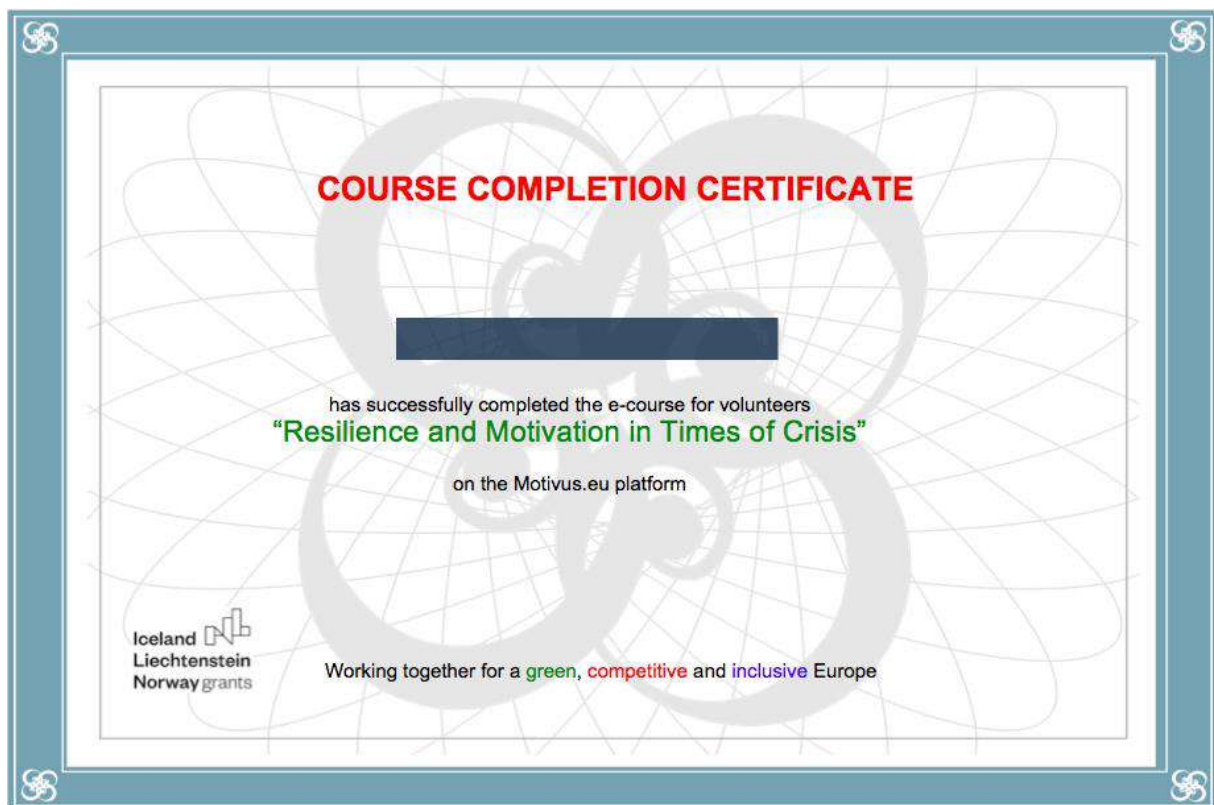
ATTENTION! In case of problems with generating the certificate of completion, please contact us at kontakt@motivus.eu.

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E-COURSE AND OTHER FORMS OF EDUCATION

Preliminary Remarks

The e-course "Motivus - Resilience and Motivation in Times of Crisis" can be a stand-alone support for volunteers and organisations in times of crisis, but it can also be combined with other forms of education.

On the motivus.eu platform, the Modular Training Programme is available - a comprehensive educational programme designed for people supporting volunteers working with children, of a universal nature, from which each trainer/teacher can individually select the most appropriate tools for a given volunteer/group of volunteers. The programme is available at:

https://motivus.eu/en/learning-resources/module-training-programme

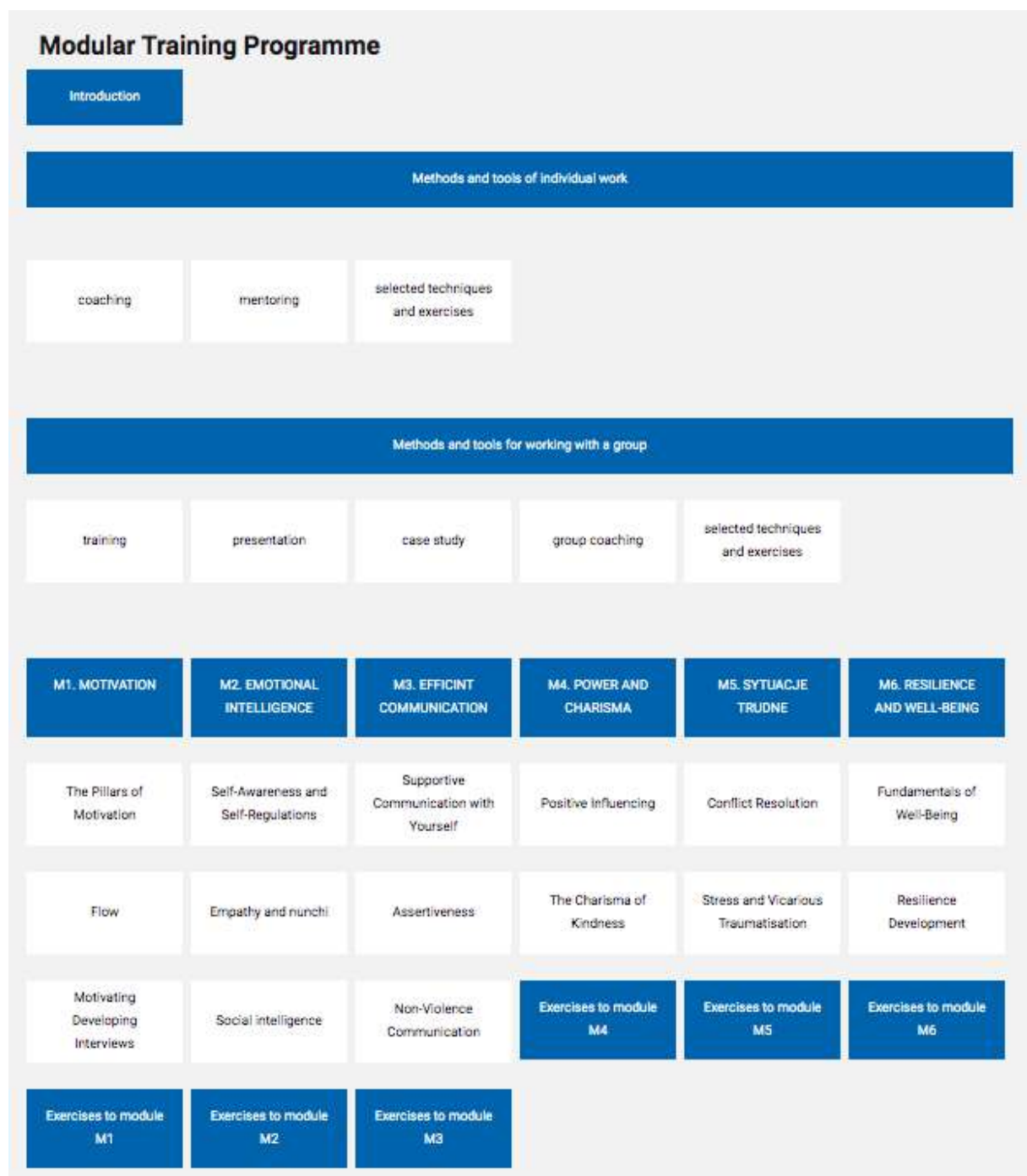The E-Course is a natural and compatible supplement for those organisations that have decided to take advantage of the above-mentioned Programme.

It can also supplement organisations' own development programmes for volunteers used by NGOs and be used especially in periods when face-to-face meetings are not possible.

Training Programme from the Project "Motivate. Support. Strengthen. Educational Programme for Volunteers Working with Children"

The modular educational programme is aimed at non-governmental organisations working through volunteers with children in difficult life situations, but it can also be used in other contexts of assistance, after appropriate adaptation. It is to prevent professional burnout of volunteers and maintain their motivation to continue volunteering. The programme provides Polish NGOs with ready-made tools to strengthen their own volunteers.

Modular Training Programme

Introduction

Methods and tools of individual work

coaching	mentoring	selected techniques and exercises

Methods and tools for working with a group

training	presentation	case study	group coaching	selected techniques and exercises

M1. MOTIVATION	M2. EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE	M3. EFFICINT COMMUNICATION	M4. POWER AND CHARISMA	M5. SYTUACJE TRUDNE	M6. RESILIENCE AND WELL-BEING
The Pillars of Motivation	Self-Awareness and Self-Regulations	Supportive Communication with Yourself	Positive Influencing	Conflict Resolution	Fundamentals of Well-Being
Flow	Empathy and nunchi	Assertiveness	The Charisma of Kindness	Stress and Vicarious Traumatisation	Resilience Development
Motivating Developing Interviews	Social intelligence	Non-Violence Communication	Exercises to module M4	Exercises to module M5	Exercises to module M6
Exercises to module M1	Exercises to module M2	Exercises to module M3			

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The Programme is complemented by the Guide for Trainers/Teachers/Coordinators, available at:

https://motivus.eu/en/learning-resources/guide-for-trainers-teachers-co-ordinators

The Guide describes comprehensively how to work with the Programme, including the options for using the Programme by various profiles of organisations.

The Programme has been prepared in such a way that people with very little or even no experience in conducting training will be able to select appropriate content, also taking into account their specific conditions and competences, as far as possible. The largest part of the information in the Guide is devoted to the diagnosis of development needs and the selection of tools for working with volunteers, as these issues are the most difficult for people without trainer preparation.

This guide is also available as e-learning:

https://motivus.eu/kursy/my/ (picture on the right).

methodology

PvE Guide for Trainers, Teachers and Coordinators – how to use the Training Programme (ver. ENG).

Guide to the optimal selection of content and training paths from the Training Programme to a specific case, which includes, among others information on how to identify problems and risks on the part of a volunteer, examine their needs and choose the optimal form and content of the training based on the personal conditions of the volunteer, their needs and the type of work they perform.

Access

The trainer or the person responsible for volunteers in the organisation may use the Programme and the e-course together, in a complementary way, or, for example, use the e-course only during crisis periods.

People without methodological preparation responsible for volunteers, who do not feel confident in creating training paths for this group or do not have enough time, can focus primarily on using the e-course, which is a ready resource from A to Z for immediate use.

With time, they may also want to take advantage of the Programme.

Combining with Organisation's Own Training Programmes

Organisations which have their own training programmes for volunteers most often use the help of professional trainers - employed in the organisation or cooperating with it. Basically, a qualified trainer should have no problems with incorporating the e-course into a permanent or periodic training base for volunteers. Since the training paths in different organisations and the preferences and working style of internal/external trainers can vary greatly, it is not possible to define a single model in this respect. Each time, this requires an analysis of the training material and optimal inclusion of the volunteer's own remote work in the organisation's permanent/periodic development plan. Nevertheless, even in the case of a professional trainer, the methodological guidelines contained in the Guide may prove helpful.

In this place, it is worth mentioning that, apart from individual work for volunteers, which is the subject of most of the course, it also includes some group exercises that can be performed at volunteers' meetings or included in the standard plan of work with volunteers.

The most important factors to consider when combining the e-course with other forms of education:

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