
*National Learning Methods, Actions
and Opportunities specifically
addressed to Vulnerable Groups*





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A. Introduction

Lifelong Learning is one of the pillars of the Lisbon Strategy, a key component of the European Employment Strategy and the Bologna Process from Prague (2001) onwards and one of the main priorities of the European Education Policy (European Commission, 2005).

Although adult education was always among national priorities in Greece with several relevant adult literacy programmes, the focus on this field really began in 1981, when the country became a member of the EEC. The most important developments and changes in adult education took place until 1993. With financing from Structural Funds, especially from the European Social Fund (ESF), Greece managed to extend the activities related to this field.

ESF financing was mostly channeled to Popular Education. The Popular Education public network consisted of more than 300 centres operating throughout Greece. Unfortunately, the absence of a coordinating body to plan and supervise related activities, the allocation of a number of programmes to organizations without the necessary infrastructure and know-how and the implementation of training programmes without adequate planning about the type and volume of activities provided, led to inefficient output and waste of resources. According to the European Commission, in 2000 Greece was placed in the last ranking position among all Member States. Specifically, the proportion of people aged 25-65 years old who participated in lifelong learning, reached only 1%, when the average of the 15 member States was 8,5% (European Commission, 2005e).

From 2001 onwards, the situation in Greece has started to improve. The introduction of some landmark policies and initiatives, which supported further development in adult education, played a key role.

Until 2010 all lifelong learning activities were covered by Law 3369/2005 on "Systematization of Lifelong learning and Other Regulations". The purpose of this Law was the establishment of an integrated legal framework for more efficient coordination and systemization of lifelong learning actions and related bodies. In September 2010 Law 3879 was adopted for the development of Lifelong Learning activities through the recognition of alternative educational paths, the networking of Lifelong Learning bodies, and the assurance

of the transparency and the quality, so as to achieve the interconnection between Lifelong Learning and employment, and the wider social and economic development.

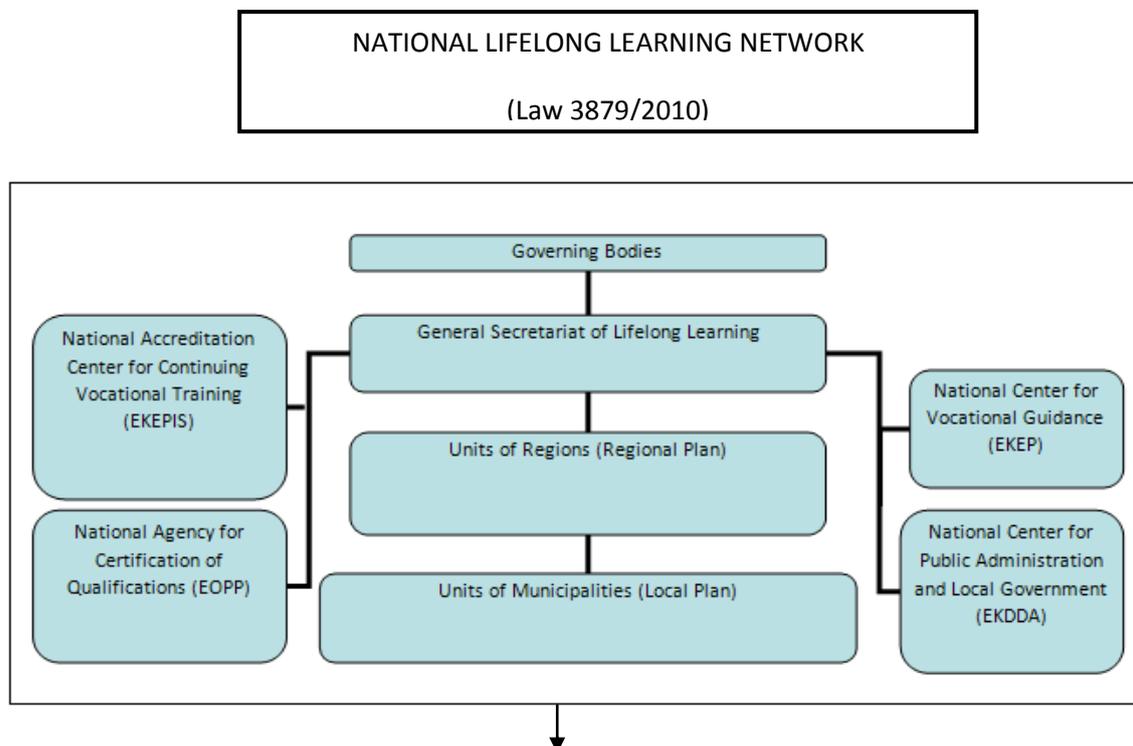
Today, Greece is closely monitoring developments in the field of Lifelong Learning that take place at a European level, while taking into account all relevant policies and recommendations of the EU. A comprehensive system of Lifelong Learning has been developed, from early childhood to old age, including both formal learning sessions offered in schools and other training and educational institutions, and non-formal learning activities.

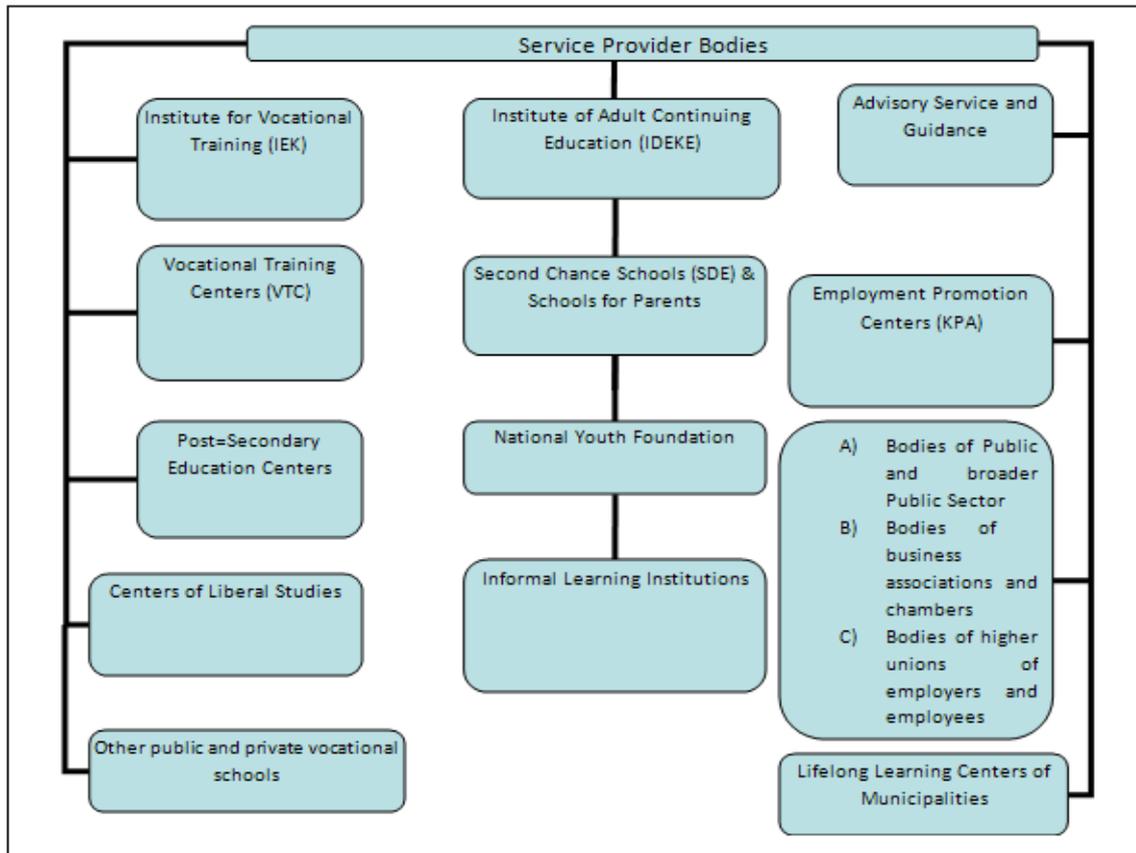
Beyond the educational and professional needs of the general population, the national policy on Lifelong Learning aims and strongly emphasizes on ensuring the access of people, and particularly of socially disadvantaged and vulnerable groups in all the training actions and general adult education.

Lifelong Learning Network

The bodies of the National Network of Lifelong Learning can be divided into governing bodies and service providers of lifelong learning, which should assist both in the formulation of proposals and implementation of projects, as well as interactive communication.

The governing bodies and the service provider bodies of Lifelong Learning are presented in the chart below:





B. General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning

Policy Promoters

1. Institute for Continuing and Adult Education (IDEKE)



The Institute for Continuing and Adult Education is a legal person that operates under private law governed by the General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning. Its main objective is the Technological and Scientific Support of the programs of the General Secretariat for LL and the implementation of activities related to Lifelong Learning.

IDEKE is managed by the Board and the CEO.

After the award of the general Secretariat of the Lifelong

Learning of the Ministry of Lifelong Learning, the Institute for Continuing and Adult Education supports the operation of the following structures and the autonomous educational programs:

- Second Chance Schools;
- Adult Education Centres;
- Parents' Schools;
- Center of Distance Adult Education.

Autonomous Programmes:

- Learning Greek as a second language for immigrants;
- Adult education in acquiring basic skills in new technologies (HERON);
- Training farmers to take action in the secondary and tertiary sector of the economy;
- Health Education – Sexually Transmitted Diseases – AIDS;
- Research and Pilot Programmes.

1.1. Second Chance Schools



The Second Chance School (SCS) is an innovative school of Adult Education. The training program differs from the equivalent of formal education in content, teaching methodology and the assessment of the trainees. The total duration of the program is two years. Afterwards the successful graduation, a degree equivalent to High School is provided.

The educational services of the SCS are offered for free to the citizens.

The SCS were established by Law 2525/97 in which prescribe the proclaimed principles of the European Union.

Objectives

The Second Chance Schools fight social inclusion through education. The objectives of the SCS are reconnection with formal education, forming of a positive attitude towards learning, acquiring basic knowledge and skills and access in the labor market.

Target – Group

Citizens over 18 years old, who have not completed the lower level of compulsory education.

Additional Information

The total duration of the project is 18 months – specifically, two educational years. The weekly program is 25 hours and the classes are on afternoon hours, from Monday to Friday. The SCS which are in penitentiary institutions are on morning hours.

The Consulting Services, Career Advisor and Consultant Psychologist are one of the innovations of these schools.

The educational content addresses the current social and economic priorities and the needs of the labor market. The content of the program includes:

- Basic Skills (reading, writing, math calculation);
- Social Skills (teamwork, communication);
- Social and cultural education;
- Preparation for professional life.

The timetable of the Second Chance Schools combines the following educational activities, which are mandatory for all the instructors:

- Teaching in the classroom;
- Interdisciplinary Teaching;
- Laboratories (remedial teaching, where appropriate, and area of free choice, where the trainers are organizing laboratories in various cognitive sectors in accordance with the interests of the trainees);
- Teaching with the method “project”;
- Focus is on acquiring basic skills and developing personal skills. The acquisition of general knowledge, the use of new technologies, learning of a foreign language and counseling on vocational orientation significantly improve the opportunities for access in the labor market.

1.2. Adult Education Centres(AEC)



The Adult Education Centres are a new institutional framework in the field of adult education and lifelong learning. The educational programs, offered by CAE, contribute to the development of active citizenship, creating a positive attitude towards learning and promoting equal access to education. They strengthen the capacity to adapt to the cognitive demands of an ever-changing socio-economic area of action of adult society and they are the link to reconnect with the educational process. Furthermore, they contribute to the development, participation in the “society of knowledge and information” and access to new industrial, economic, social and cultural opportunities. They promote the creative use of leisure time in the field of culture, upgrading the conditions of education, employment and social situation of vulnerable groups and support of prisoners for a smooth reintegration.

Today 58 CAE are operating in the 13 regions of the country.

Objectives

The Adult Education aim at updating and upgrading the existing key skills at the acquisition of new basic skills for creating better conditions for personal development and equal opportunities in education, employment, management of leisure time regardless of age, sex, religion, origin, etc.

Target-Group (beneficiaries)

The educational programs of CAE are about all adult citizens (over 18 years old). Special educational programs are targeting vulnerable groups (roma, prisoners, the Muslim minority, immigrants, refugees, repatriates).

Financing –Cost of Implementation

The project is funded by the EU and national resources through the Operational Programme for Education and Lifelong Learning by the Ministry of Life Long Learning – NSRF.

Additional Information

Given the radial action of CAEs, departments may be operated in areas away from CAE head office, in its wider area of responsibility in the Provinces.

The training programs are conducted in two training periods:

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1st period: September to January

2nd period: February to June

Every learning department in the city-seat of CAE conducts at least two training sessions per week for at least two hours each.

12 to 20 students can join each learning department. For the departments of socially vulnerable groups (Roma, prisoners, the Muslim minority, immigrants, refugees, repatriates), these can start with at least 10 students.

1.3. Parents' Schools



The purpose of the Parents' Schools initiative is to support parents in corresponding successfully to their complicated and difficult role as it is formed under the contemporary socio-economic conditions. This project will provide parents and their family and school environment the knowledge and opportunities they need for reflection.

In particular the initiative aims at:

- Improving communication within the family;
- Improving parents' knowledge about their children's psychological, social, spiritual and other needs in every stage of their development;
- Developing skills for the early diagnosis and treatment of their children's problematic behavior;
- Improving parents' communication at school;
- Encouraging parents' participation in school activities and their cooperation with the teaching staff so that it can provide more effective assistance to their children;
- Parents acquiring specific skills so that they can correspond to the demands of nursery school, primary school, junior high school and high school;
- Supporting the cooperation between teaching staff and parents;

- Providing consultancy and health education to Gypsies', Muslims', repatriates' and immigrants' families;
- Informing parents about health issues concerning themselves and their children;
- Informing parents about appropriate ways of sexual education for their children according to their age;
- Understanding the position of the elderly in the society and in the family;
- Informing parents about the ways of protecting their children from the use of Information Communication Technology and suggesting ways for using it pedagogically and sensibly;
- Improving family space management;
- Providing consultancy and health education to families belonging to socially vulnerable groups;
- Informing and providing psychological support to parents of disabled children;

In the concept of the Schools for Parents, it has been developed 7 educational programs.

The main themes developed in the classes of the 7 educational programs are:

1. The family in the contemporary era;
2. Health and family;
3. Cross-gender relations;
4. Development in the Old Age;
5. Children and New Technologies;
6. Housekeeping in the contemporary Greek family;
7. Teaching staff-family cooperation;
8. Providing consultancy and health education to families belonging to socially vulnerable groups, 25-hour duration;
9. Consultancy to parents of disabled children; and,
10. Stereotypes and discrimination within the family

Target-Group

The program aims at parents of children of all ages, of every national origin, age and education, to prospective parents, disabled parents, teachers, adults, elderly, vulnerable social groups.

Financing

This project is part of the Operational Programme for Education and Lifelong Learning of the Ministry of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religion and it is financed by the ESF and the Greek Government.

1.4. Centre of Distance Adult Education and Training(KEEENAP)



The Internet and the World Wide Web are increasingly used as a technology infrastructure in e-learning systems, as they allow the construction of open learning systems. The development of such learning systems, focus on making online learning resource materials and services, supporting the learning process and its resources. The resources look like a mosaic composed of pebbles such as: interactive multimedia, hardware notes of a course, study guides, self-assessment exercises, dump files asynchronous communication, etc.

The General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning under the government's strategy, which aims at the establishment and operation of a public, quality and effective education and adult education, is in the process of full updating of the Centre of Distance Adult Education and Training (KEEENAP).

Objective

KEEENAP aims at providing online distance learning (e-learning) to interested citizens.

Financing

The project is part of the Operational Programme for Education and Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013 and is co-funded by EU and national funds.

Additional Information

The project helps to promote development, employment, and social cohesion in our country.

1.5. Vocational Training Center



The Vocational Training Center of the General Secretariat of Lifelong Learning was certified by the No. 6023/10-10-2001 decision of the Board of the National Accreditation Center (EKEPIS), and renewed its certification with the No. 226/8-1/2007 decision of the Board of the same institution.

The VTC of the GSLL is one of the implementing bodies of the national policy against unemployment and provides quality educational services in the field of continuing vocational training and the development of mechanisms so as to promote employment. The purpose of the VTC of the GSLL is to improve and strengthen the professional status of the employees and the integration of the unemployed to the labour market.

Thematic Areas:

The VTC of GSLL has the ability to implement programs under the following themes:

- Environment professions;
- Health care and Welfare;
- Culture and Sports professions;
- Pedagogic professions;
- Finance and Administration Professions;
- IT professions;
- Tourism and Service Providing professions;
- Agricultural professions;
- Technical and Transportation Professions.

Target Group

The programs of VTC of GSLL are addressed to:

- Unemployed;
- Employed;
- Social Vulnerable Groups (refugees, repatriates, immigrants, ROMA, prisoners, ex-prisoners, youth at risk, former users of substances, etc.).

2. Prefectural Committees of Popular Education (NELE)



The Prefectural Committees of Popular Education, promoters of training programmes of General Secretariat for LL, are independent public services of the Prefecture.

In each County the PCAE established by decision of the prefect, from representatives proposed by the participating local institutions (Administrative Unit, Labour Center, Association of Rural and Agricultural Cooperatives, Labour Employment Office, etc).

Its responsibilities are consisted in the coordination of the educational work at county level (training programmes approval, hiring trainers, etc.), according to local needs and the guidelines from the General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning. For the implementation of the programmes a PCAE office operates in each county, which is staffed by permanent and seconded employees (secretary and Staff).

Since 2005, training programmes are offered in the following topics:

- a. Culture – Arts;
- b. Social Economy – Entrepreneurship;
- c. Social Studies and Civics;
- d. Programmes for Disabled People.

The learning classes are functioning as small groups with qualified trainers and appropriate educational material, while the participants receive a “Training Certificate”.

Brief History of Activities

The People's Education occurs in Greece as an activity by Law 4397/29, focusing on the problem of adult illiteracy. They follow several legislative interventions, without however historical continuity, and in 1981 the Institution of Adult Education is activated as the centerpiece for the learning policy. In the next few years, the operation of PCAE is strengthened and become a nationwide network covering the most remote areas. The content of education concerns literacy issues and completing basic education, social and cultural affairs, vocational pre-training and training and it is addressed to the general population and to vulnerable groups. After a series of legislative measures for both the general Secretariat for LL and the PCAE, in 1994, with the establishment of the prefectural government (Law 2218/94), the PCAE are transported together with some other public services in the Prefectural Administration.

The Collaboration between General Secretariat and PCAE

The General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning in the frame of growth of its activities, it collaborates with the Prefectural Committees of Popular Education (NELE). The collaboration between the GSLL and the PCAE covers a wide spectrum of activities that concerns the factors of education, training and professional training and it is regulated by the existing institutional frame. Recently a great effort is overwhelmed to better coordinate the actions of the two bodies. The development of cooperation based on separation of themes and the breakdown between the bodies in order to avoid duplications and achieving greater efficiency.

3. General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning - Autonomous Programmes:

3.1. Adult Education in Acquisition of Basic Skills in New Technologies “Heron”



The Heron 2 programme was designed by the General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning and the Institute of Adult Continuing Education. It is included in the Operational Programme “Education and Lifelong Learning” and is co-funded by the European Social Fund (NSRF 2007-13) and the Greek Government.

Objective

The continued developments in the field of science, the ongoing development and penetration of new technologies in modern economic and social environment in conjunction with the general trends in employment, create a new group of vulnerable citizens, the “digitally illiterate”. A large part of the population does not possess basic skills on new technologies and they are unable to participate actively in social, economic, political and cultural events. In our country, this part of the population is larger than of our partners in the European Union. This digital gap is trying to bridge the “Heron 2” Programme.

Target-Group

This project is targeting every adult, beginner in computing, who wish to train and acquire skills in new technologies. The only requirement for participation is that students are over 18 years old.

This project aims to train 76,800 people by 4960 departments operating nationwide over three training periods (2008-2009, 2009-2010 and 2010-2011).

Content of the Programme

Initially, the basic knowledge material is taught which is required for all learners (OS Windows). The remaining modules (word processing, spreadsheets, internet use and presentation programmes) are taught to a lesser or a greater extent depending on the interests and the needs of the trainees and in agreement with the trainer’s department.

Content:

- Basic Concept of IT;
- OS Windows;
- Word;
- Excel;
- PowerPoint;
- Internet;
- E-mail;
- Search Engines;
- The services offered on the internet to serve the citizens;
- Relevant issues in using the internet (security, computer viruses, etc).

Duration – Certificate – Application forms

The training lasts 50 hours and is completed within 10 weeks (5 hours per week). By the end of the course, those who pass the final exam receive a certificate of training.

Candidates can apply to local secretariats of the programme. The courses are mainly in computer labs in Schools of the Greek territory, evening hours, free of charge.

3.2. Education of immigrants in the Greek language, Greek history and Greek culture “Odysseus”



The General Secretariat of Lifelong Learning organized and operates the Training Programme for Education of Immigrants in the Greek Language, Greek History and Greek Culture “Odysseus”. The project has been entrusted to the Institute of Adult Continuing Education under the GSSL of the Ministry of Education.

The project is part of the Operational Programme for Education and Lifelong Learning of the Ministry of Education and funded by the European Union and the Greek government.

“Odysseus” is addressed to citizens of the European Union and third country nationals regardless of their origin, from the age of 16 years old and above, who live legally in our country.

The completion of the planned courses gives the trainees the opportunity to participate in the Certification Examination Attainment Level 2 of GSLL, which are considered essential for the acquisition of third country status for a long time resident, according to the Greek legislation on the certification system.

The Training Programme

The training programme is divided into two levels. A1 and A2, lasting 125 and 175 hours respectively.

Candidates are ranked in levels A1 and A2 after evaluation of their level in Greek language, using the appropriate “language skills screening tool”. Both levels of learning, and provided that is realized the successful completion of a level, the student receives a Certificate of Lifelong Learning.

Classes are held in all provinces of the country and are free of charge. Each trainee receives educational and complementary material – in printed and electronic form- in order to enhance skills and abilities.

In each class, the average participants are estimated at fifteen (15) students. The classes are held in morning and afternoon hours, depending on the wishes of the learner, and after completing the necessary number of candidates. The courses last three hours and are held from 2 to 3 days per week. However, placing the programme in the field of “Lifelong Learning” involves flexibility in the daily and weekly timetable.

Each student is required to systematically monitor the training programme that he/she has chosen. The limit of absences is set at 20% of the total hours. If the limit of absences is exceeded, the student is deleted from this particular class, and if he/she wishes, he/she can rejoin and repeat the same level.

3.3. Vocational Training Center of Agioi Anargyroi.

The Vocational Training Center of Agioi Anargyroi is operated under a programmatic agreement, signed on 12/07/1994 (article 11 of Law 1416/84 “amending and supplementing the provisions of Municipal and Community Law for greater decentralization and strengthening of Local Government”), from the following contracting entities:

- Ministry of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religion;
- Municipality of Agioi Anargyroi;
- PCAE of Athens;

- Municipal Corporation of Agioi Anargyroi.

The above contract is part of the overall planning of the general Secretariat of Lifelong Learning in order to create VTC in the region of Attica, in accordance with Regulation 815/1984 of the European Union.

In the VTC of Agioi Anargyroi is implemented an annual training programme titled: “Developmental Systems of Renewable Energy”.

The following classes are running under this programme:

- Installation of wind turbines and photovoltaic (270 teaching hours);
- Saving Energy – Buildings Energy Performance (270 teaching hours);
- Solar heating Systems – Cooling (200 teaching hours);
- Domestic Gas Services (170 teaching hours).

Objectives

- The development of new forms of productive activities and relationships that will help reduce unemployment and underemployment;
- The offering of alternative employment opportunities with additional training, particularly for those who are at risk of unemployment due to the changing labour market conditions;
- The awareness of the local community in environmental protection and use of renewable energy sources (RES);
- The development of critical thinking, exercise the capacity for participation in socio-economic processes and all-round personality development of the trainees.

Target-Group

The programme is addressed to adults, graduates of Secondary Technical Education, as well as graduates of higher education (colleges, universities) of relevant specialties, regardless of their gender or ethnicity.

Financing

The cost of implementing the training programme of VTC of Agioi Anargyroi under the programmatic agreement is covered by appropriations from the General Secretariat of Lifelong Learning and from funds of the Municipality of Agioi Anargyroi with percentages 75% and 25% respectively over the budget, which is established annually and is approved by those operators.

Additional Information

Classes are taking place one or two days a week, depending on the subject. All classes require PC knowledge.

Attendance is free and compulsory.

At the end of the academic year, students receive a certificate if they attended regularly and have been assessed in grade 40 on a scale of 100, in which are listed the title of the department, the teaching hours, and the degree of evaluation. Regular attendance is considered when the student has attended at least 85% of the total teaching hours.

3.4. Design and Implementation of Programmes of Distance Education of Trainers and Managers of Lifelong Learning

The main purpose of the programme “Design and Implementation of Programmes of Distance Education of Trainers and Administrators of Lifelong Learning” is the continuous updating of knowledge, aptitudes and skills of trainers and Managers of lifelong learning in the design, development and implementation of distance education programmes for adult educators and members of the General Secretariat of Lifelong Learning and the Institute of Adult Continuing Education.

The main objectives of this Programme are:

- Providing quality initial and continuing education to the trainers;
- Innovative training methodologies in the field of adult education;
- Flexibility to participate in the educational process;
- Unification of procedures for training instructors, trainers and managers of adult education of GSSL and ICAE;
- Continuous upgrading of quality of the provided educational programmes.

The partial objectives of this Programme are:

- Enhancing employability and improving the job position of the trainers;
- Adoption and diffusion of educational methodology, based on the model of distance education;
- Contact of adult educators with the modern learning environments and new educational practices and perspectives of lifelong learning.

- Implementing distance education programs in subject areas, such as:
 - Methodology and teaching adults;
 - Production of standard teaching materials;
 - Design modules;
 - Investigate the educational needs of adults;
 - Understanding the process and evolution of the educational team;
 - Education and support of vulnerable social groups;
 - Processing in pedagogical issues, particularly related to teaching adult trainees, especially in philosophy and implementation of the studies programme of the SCS, in teaching methodology and in studying educational techniques applied in adult education;
 - Adult education using new technologies;
 - Development of a counseling intervention methodology to individuals and groups;
 - Cooperation between consultant and trainer of adults;
 - Understanding of the principles, goals, organization, coordination, implementation and monitoring procedures for assessing trainees and training programmes.
- Enhancing of human resources in the context of the organization and management of educational facilities, according to the principles of coordination, organization, designing, management and implementation of educational programmes in human resource management in connection with the local community in the implementation of educational policies in the EU;
- Continuous updating of the personnel engaged in adult education in a flexible manner toward the evolution of
 - The trends;
 - Methods;
 - Strategies, and;
 - The priorities for Lifelong Learning.

C. Labor Employment Office



The Labor Employment Office encourages and promotes the integration of disabled people in educational programs of Apprenticeship and Continuing Training, which the Office implements for the entire workforce of the country. This is a policy designed to promote the smooth integration of the disabled people into society. For this reason there is a provision in order that the 10% of the trainees which are integrated every year in the Faculties of the Labor Employment Office to be covered by disabled people.

For those who cannot be integrated in the programs, which are being addressed to the general population, Special Faculties for the disabled people exist, with programs adapted in the developments and the needs of the Labor Market, as well as in the special characteristics of the trainees.

The Labor Employment Office trains annually about 260 disabled people in specialized Vocational Training Centers.

Specialties of the Vocational Training Center for Disabled People in Athens:

- Office Employees with the use of a PC;
- Office Employees with the use of a PC from a distance;
- Woodcarving, woodworking;
- Ceramics; and,
- Leatherwork.

Specialties of the Vocational Training Center for Disabled People in Larissa:

- Office Employees with the use of a PC; and,
- Cutting-Sewing.

Specialties of the Vocational Training Center for Mentally Disabled People in Thessaloniki:

- Wood working;
- Geotechnics;
- Weaving – carpet making; and,
- Cutting – sewing.

D. Conclusion

In early 2000, the conclusions of the Lisbon council set strategic targets for all member states of the European Union and changed the balance and the interrelations of European educational systems. Now, education policy is not in the hands of national governments and all Member States are responsible to the EU, being also compared with each other. From 2000 onwards, Lifelong Learning was preceded by the EU as a top educational priority, so all Member States initiated efforts to align their educational systems with the new requirements.

Greece was not possible to remain uninvolved in this process. Despite the difficulties encountered, particularly with the current economic crisis, Greece is trying to develop and apply a comprehensive lifelong learning policy. At least, as we saw previously (legislative framework, certification structures), this effort is made on a solid basis and with successful results.

Moreover, this effort should not be left in the middle, and in order to consider lifelong learning as an investment for the future, relevant activities should continue and expand as much as possible.

E. PARTNERS



KMOP is a Greek non-profit, social NGO with humanitarian values, believing in every individual's potential to enrich society. KMOP focuses on issues pertaining to social welfare and health, employability and employment generation, active citizenship, social inclusion, youth and education, gender equality – equal opportunities, scientific research and the development of know-how in social policy issues. www.kmop.gr



EUROtraining was founded in 2000 and was certified in July 2001 as a Nationwide Vocational Training Center. It is active in the field of lifelong vocational training in order to provide an integrated package of multidimensional training services, employment promotion and development of entrepreneurship for private enterprises and public organizations as well as a wide range of population groups, thus meeting specific needs in the area of lifelong learning. www.eurotraining.gr