

# *Papers on*

- **Innovative approaches to promotion, marketing and outreach in adult learning**
- **New trends in widening participation**



***A GRUNDTVIG PROJECT***

**"NEW LEARNING PATHWAYS FOR  
ADULTS"**

**“Innovative Approach to Promotion,  
Marketing and Outreach in Adult Education”**

**CASE STUDY**

**THE NATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR  
SECOND CHANCE SCHOOLS**

One of the aims of the European Commission’s 1995 White Paper **“Teaching and learning: towards the learning society”** is to propose actions which combat social exclusion. In this context, the **“Second Chance Schools”** pilot projects offer education and training to young people who lack the skills and qualifications necessary to find a job or fully benefit from conventional training.

At the heart of this initiative is the setting up of long -term partnerships between all those concerned at local level with the social and economic integration of young people at risk of social exclusion.

Many projects already exist for this target public and the aim of the Commission is not to replace existing structures but rather to add to.

Greece, adopting the proposal of the European Commission, established the Second Chance Schools (SCS) as a “special programme for primary and secondary education” for adults. The programme is funded 75% by the European Social Fund and 25% by national funds. The **Institute for Continuing Adult Education (IDEKE)**, supervised by the **General Secretariat for Adult Education**-responsible for the Lifelong Learning national policy, undertook the realisation of this proposal. Since municipalities in Greece (unlike in other European countries) do not possess formal competencies in the field of Education.

Five (5) Schools operate now in the areas of: 2 in Western Attiki (Peristeri – the very 1<sup>st</sup> one started in September 2000 – and Menidi), 1 in Northern Greece (Thessaloniki), 1 in Peloponnese (Patra), 1 in Southern Greece – Crete (Heraklion). The intention is to have 20 SCS by 2006. (5 are about to start one of which in prison grounds). The areas were selected after a survey showing high rates of

illiteracy and unemployment, and correlation between low education level and lack of employability skills.

The Institute for Continuing Adult Education (IDEKE) acts as a central training provider in collaboration with the local authorities and social services as well as local universities and enterprises. Within IDEKE there is a multi disciplinary committee composed of members of the scientific groups responsible for each Second Chance School. The IDEKE committee acts as the project manager on a national level.

Although central provider is IDEKE, each School defines learning processes according to its particular needs. Students are also encouraged to participate in the designing of the programme

SCS are members of the European Association for Second Chance Schools, which acts as a direct contact between members and the European Commission as well as between members themselves. The Association informs members about methodologies and experiences by means of a regularly published newsletter, the Association’s Intranet and the organisation of various conferences, workshops and exchange programmes.

**Target group:** individuals (male and female) of low basic skills, aged 18 –30 who have failed or dropped out of School – missed their first chance (compulsory schooling 9 years) being in danger of social exclusion.

The total number of learners, in school year 2001- 2002, which was the second year of the project implementation, was 484, the female participation was 62,5%. Total number of teachers 67.

Learners come from low social classes with many learning difficulties, many of them have fragile families and fragile psycho - social personalities and for this reason there is psychological support from professionals in each school.

**They are informed about the School:**

Through press (local – national), presentations on TV – Radio programmes. Also local authorities, local social services combating social and labour exclusion are “recruited” to raise awareness by distributing leaflets, organising awareness meetings.

**SCS aim to:** the learners’ empowerment by enhancing their self-esteem, and developing their basic skills as well as social and professional skills leading to

social and labour integration and to reinforcement of active citizenship. To achieve this goal SCS make an effort to overturn the lack of flexibility of the formal education compulsory system and fulfil the expectation for a prestigious educational innovation. Creation of a culture of educational change based on School.

### **Curriculum**

The duration of the programme is 18 months and it is divided in two 9-month periods-72 weeks, with a schedule of 21 teaching hours per week.

**Aims:** the curriculum aims basically at the development of basic skills (40%), of social skills (20%), of ICT skills (20%), the use of foreign language (10%), and professional skills (10%).

**Content:** the curriculum comprises the following thematic areas: Language, Mathematics, English, Information Technology (knowledge up to ECDL level), Social Education, Cultural - Aesthetic Education, Technology.

The social reality experienced daily by the trainees as well as the places where these people live, are two aspects which are taken into consideration during the designing of the learning scenarios (regional learning). The experiences of the trainees from their social environment constitute a major factor that can be exploited so that they can acquire a stronger role in their local community to the benefit of themselves and of their community. The learning scenarios are produced according to the organic/contextual and situated learning pedagogy.

Within the curriculum there are classes concerning Career Guidance and reinforcement of the groups.

More over Counselling / Advisory Support for the trainers is offered.

**Extra curricular activities** (Management of spare time) Cross - cultural activities, sports etc are encouraged to contribute effectively to the acquisition of several skills (mainly communicative). Most of the activities take place within the School environment. Others take place in contexts of cultural reference (e.g. museums) or in places of environmental interest.

**Teaching – Learning Methods:** Methods are differentiated according to the background of each trainee - individualised. The learner’s personal and cultural asset is been taken under consideration, thus his/her experience and values are connected with what he/she is learning. At the same time the group cohesion is

encouraged through teaching that is followed by all trainees, team work, group projects.

Participative / communicative/ learner-centred /cross –subject approaches are employed, allowing the learner to reach the expected objectives at his/her own pace.

**Teaching materials and aids:**Text books have been produced to serve the aims and objectives of the SCS programme and to meet the needs of the particular students.

Teachers also produce their own teaching materials often through a dialogue with their trainees.

Information Communication Technologies are used as a basic tool of learning. The new technologies along with the fully-equipped classroom of multimedia help the learners with their individual- centred learning. The software that has been produced concerning most of the cognitive items (Maths, Greek language etc.) consists a useful tool in the hands of the trainees and trainers.

Computer, printer, data projector, slide projector, overhead projector, projector screen, TV, Video, radio-cassette player, CD player, photocopier, are available and used.

To be mentioned here that the School arrangements are functional and facilitate learning (classrooms, ICTs room, multiple use room, study room-library).

The accomplishment of the programme is not confined to the School environment but it also takes place in contexts outside School (enterprises, places of cultural references etc.).

**The teacher/trainer:** Teachers’ role is very important. They are expected:

- To have innovative professional attitude and educational practice.
- To act as designers of the curriculum and as researchers (the School itself is a source of research); this helps self-improvement.
- To create their relations with the trainees on the basis of empowerment instead of hierarchy.

**The selection of appropriate teaching staff** is made from a special committee in which university teachers participate. The selection is based on criteria of specific academic qualifications and the teaching experience of the applicant trainers, but

mainly on the criterion of the pedagogic personality and availability, which are sought throughout the procedures of the interviews.

To enable teachers to accomplish their difficult role there are certain provisions:

- Reduced teaching hours
- A lot of support:
  - Through seminars-workshops of educational brainstorming; the scientific committee of this national project considers the curriculum as a process and a praxis instead of a specific content which must be learned. The role of the trainer as a critical researcher needs “powerful friends” of support in pursuit of a specific result.
  - By the “friends of trainers”, namely:
    - ✓ A committee consisting of three members, who supervise the SCSs
    - ✓ The scientific committee
    - ✓ The scientifically responsible person
    - ✓ The consultants of cognitive areas of curriculum

These “friends” are a group of scientists and pedagogues who work on the theoretical-pedagogical support of the trainers.

**Assessment:**

-The learner is assessed on the basis of his/her overall work which is registered in his/her portfolio.

-The assessment of the efforts of the trainers is not only confined to impartial procedures (questionnaires). It is also achieved through methods that activate the person under evaluation, e.g. portfolio and self evaluation.

**Evaluation of the programme:** Tools used:

- Questionnaires- addressed to learners and teachers
- Internal evaluation reports from Schools, implementing self- evaluation techniques. The indicators are concerned with:
  - ✓ Management of resources
  - ✓ Profile of the School
  - ✓ Relationships of the School with the local community and the institutional environment
  - ✓ Educational procedures
  - ✓ Educational results

## **INNOVATIONS**

- Learners are awarded a formal certificate equal to the one acquired in Secondary compulsory education but with alternative curricula, teaching methods and materials.
- Teachers are getting unique experience benefited through the experimentation and continuous training and support they receive.
- Learners participate in the designing of curricula along with teachers and the responsible committees.
- The programmes are based on the Pedagogy of Multiliteracies whose basic concept is that of Design. Design has become central in workplace and school reforms for the contemporary world. Teachers and managers are regarded rather as designers than as bosses dictating what those in their charge should think and do.
- SCS promote not only the professional skills of their students but also their educational status.
- SCS are connected with the local communities and their problems and thus learning is “situated “/ contextual, “distributed” and can be transferred across different settings e.g. family –community- workplace context
- The connection between the topics/ scenarios of learning projects and the local enterprises, which demands not only visits but also a creative research on their part, enforces students’ employability and informs them on the competitive character of the modern labor market. For this reason learners are continuously supported by the psychologists and career counselors and encouraged towards web- based interaction. This is calling for more attention from the policy makers towards a net- based learning SCS community.
- Interactive assessment based on projects and not on exams-relief from pressure
- Teachers/ students ratio very good- individualized relationship

## **EVALUATION**

(Based on answers to questionnaires for learners and teachers and on evaluation reports from Schools)

### **Reasons for participation:**

#### **A. Learners**

- Personal development (improve general knowledge and social skills)
- Certification-equivalent to Greek gymnasium certificate -(enables them continue in secondary education or enter the labor market )
- Flexible education process (teaching and learning methods, materials)
- Way of assessment
- See improvement of knowledge, skills, self-esteem and social life, although it is too soon to say that there is a measurable impact on their involvement in the community

#### **B. Teachers**

- Challenge of an innovative curriculum and new teaching methods
- Learners’ choice to attend SCS is conscious dictated by their desire and need to improve.
- Value the additional support and in service training they receive; expect continuous training
- Value the recognition of their offer; moral satisfaction accompanying their work.
- Find rewarding the fruitful cooperation with their colleagues and the strong bond between learners- teachers.
- Foresee improvement: establishment of teleconferences

### **Constrains for the Learners**

- Family responsibilities (more for women)
- Fear of school- disappointment from previous experience:
  - ✓ Learning difficulties
  - ✓ Problems due to lack of regular attendance
  - ✓ Language problem (English) in using ICTs -special vocabulary should be included in the English course

### **To face these problems, School took the following measures:**

- Classes held in the evening, 3-4hs per day
- Flexible curriculum based on individual approach
- Methodology- group work to encourage co-operation and participation
- Involvement in projects helped overcome fear of conducting conversations, encouraged active participation.

### **Success factors**

- Early to draw conclusions ,only 25 graduates from 1 school
  - ⇒ 19 (70%)continued with further formal education (Lyceum)
  - ⇒ More than half asked for information about other educational activities. Fewer actually applied
- The program responded to the 1<sup>st</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> 5<sup>th</sup> 6<sup>th</sup> LLL Key messages:
  - ⇒ New basic skills for all
  - ⇒ Innovation in teaching and learning
  - ⇒ Valuing learning
  - ⇒ Re-thinking guidance and counseling
  - ⇒ Regional learning
- The increase of 120% in the number of first year participants. High demand for participation is encouraging and calls for commitment from all those involved in SCS

- Certification, improvement of basic skills, self-esteem, strong student-teacher relationships maintain and improve motivation
- Continuous re- thinking, re- designing has led to a curriculum with more practical targets, to the evolution of teaching methods and to individualized approaches, to closer cooperation among teachers and to the exchange of educational materials, to closer cooperation between teachers and the scientific committee
- Concerns for project method removed. Projects were presented during the graduation ceremony (drama, music, human rights, new technologies) improved abilities, cooperation, team- work, critical thinking, taking initiatives, and promoted the LLL idea.
- The problem how to achieve the highest possible connection with the labor market was met by introducing the institution of ”Guidance for Career” which focuses on three functions.
  - ✓ Educational counseling
  - ✓ Professional counseling
  - ✓ Personal counseling

In practice counseling includes:

- ✓ Short and long term individual counseling
- ✓ Short and long term team counseling
- ✓ Promotion of team self- assistance, encouraging learners to form teams to exchange information and experiences

**The Career Guidance Office aims to:**

- ⇒ Support learners with their professional choices
- ⇒ Facilitate their connection with different workplaces by organizing visits and other informative events
- ⇒ Inform learners on the offer, demand and trends of the labor market
- ⇒ Collect material concerning professional prospect after school
- ⇒ Connect learners with enterprises on a local, rational and international level (employers references)
- ⇒ Connect them with the educational organizations for further training and education on a local, national and international level
- ⇒ Help them acquire work experience
- ⇒ Cooperate with organizations dealing with career counseling and promotion to work/ work placement

**According to the evaluation documents, some issues remain open to discussion:**

- ✓ Whether emotional and social skills should play a more important role in the assessment and the award of the certification than performance and achievement in the cognitive sector.
- ✓ How to achieve balance so as not to discourage learners but also ensure the quality of what is learnt.
- ✓ ACS address learners of various educational levels, skills, interests, social backgrounds. The question is if learners should be divided in different classes (setting vs streaming pedagogy)
- ✓ Another problem not met yet by the SCS, is the selection of students: because of the:
  - Various reasons they have missed their first chance
  - Great variation in their abilities, pace of learning, social /personal adjustment, quality of participation
  - Capacity of the SCS to help effectively socially excluded individuals, but not individuals with psychological, learning disorders etc

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