Training Adults' Trainers in Greece: "Efforts for Innovation"

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Abstract: In the last few years a systemic approach to lifelong learning has been developing in Greece. It involves legislative acts, buildings, technological infrastructure, administrative structures of lifelong education and training, financing sources, cooperation among stakeholders, quality provision, professionalization of the field. This article focuses on presenting the national lifelong learning strategy regarding the trainers and staff, as they are depicted in relevant reforms and educational programmes and researches and reflects on further steps for the developments on the field. It particularly presents innovative, for Greece, training programmes of trainers which were designed in 2009 and are expected to be completed by 2013, by presenting those programmes' content, objectives, implementation and scientific support.

Keywords: Lifelong Learning, Adult Education, Lifelong Learning, Training of Adults' Trainers, Quality Provision, Initial and Continuous Professional Development, Blended Learning, Financing

Introduction

ACCORDING TO SCIENTIFIC theory and empirical studies, Lifelong Learning (LLL) contributes to the process of production and diffusion of human and social capital. It diffuses knowledge, skills, abilities, competences, while contributing to economic development, employment and social cohesion (Schreiber-Barsch 2009, Cruikshank 2008, COM 2007, Field 2005, OECD 2005, COM 2005, De La Fuente and Ciccone 2002). The economic changes, globalisation with its sharing of resources as well as competition, the scientific and technological developments make it clear that knowledge can only be understood as a continuing, on going process. Knowledge becomes the "raw" material, which can lead to economic growth and social cohesion. Better educational services combined with technological infrastructure are important tools to promote knowledge to a great number of people helping them to share ideas, apply knowledge and be competitive. Education, training and enhancing skills become closely related to employment and social inclusion (Halimi, 2005, Baumann, 2000).

In Greece, LLL is in a process of considerable development and change as far as legislative frames, institutions, venues, technological infrastructure, and administrative structures are concerned. It is obvious, however, that if LLL in Greece is to be successful, the role of trainer has to be taken under serious consideration, given the fact that s/he undertakes a wide variety of roles (Panitsidou and Papastamatis 2009, Jarvis, 2004).

The present study aims at presenting Greek strategies and policies on continuous qualitative development of trainers who work in LLL in Greece. The paper is divided into seven parts:

COMMON GROUND

Following the introduction, section 2 describes the progress made in the EU and Greece in the field of LLL Section 3 presents the system developed for trainers' training in Greece. Section 4 describes an innovative programme concerning trainers' training. Section 5 refers to the scientific and educational implementation of the programme modules. Section 6 presents strategic choices for financing and, finally, the main concluding remarks are shown in section 7.

Lifelong Learning in the European Union and Greece

Knowledge economy and Lifelong Learning are two terms which are intertwined. The dynamic modern economies are based mostly on knowledge, science and technology. The access to information determines the access to knowledge, acceleration of economic growth and strengthening of social development. The demands of labour market change according to the advances and applications of knowledge. Workers need to upgrade or renew their skills in order to adapt to new environments. Traditional educational systems, which prepared people for work do not further correspond to the needs either of the working settings or the workers. People need to learn throughout their lives and learn while living and working. That entails a shift from the teacher centered methodology to the active, self directed and situated learning. On going educational opportunities are promoted as a strategy for the soft transition between education and work and the development of human capital.

The European Council recognizes LLL as one of the basic pillars on the Lisbon goal (European Council 2000) to make Europe by 2010 "the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion". To achieve this goal, the European Council has set objectives and benchmarks in education and training to make learning systems more flexible, helping learners follow individual learning pathways, (Ertl 2006, European Council 2003, COM 2002, COM 2001). The 2005 revised Lisbon strategy "places strong emphasis on knowledge, innovation and optimisation of human capital" (COM 2007a: 11) and monitoring the progress towards achieving these objectives. One of these benchmarks to be achieved by 2010 is that 12,5% of the adult population participates in lifelong learning. Although progress has been made, in 2005 the percentage of adults participating in education and training activities was 9,7%, while in 2006 the percentage dropped to 9,6%, showing that participating in adult training procedures remains a challenging area. Participation seems to be higher among women, people with high prior educational attainment and people aged 25-34 years (COM 2007a).

The role of an efficient adult learning system in developing human capital, widening access to employment, social integration and promoting active ageing is stressed in the 2006 Communication of the Commission "It is never too late to learn" (COM 2006, Rogers 2006). The implementation of those key messages is aimed through the 2007 Communication "It is always a good time to learn. Action Plan" (COM 2007b), where emphasis is given, among others, at the quality, efficiency, monitoring and investment of the adult education sector. Specifically, it recognises that "quality of provision is affected by policy, resources, accommodation and a host of other factors, but the key factor is the quality of staff involved in the delivery... The quality of staff is crucial in motivating adult learners to participate" (COM 2007b:8). Developing standards for adult learning professionals was a priority theme for

improving the quality and efficiency of provision both for the Commission and the Member States (Eurotrainer 2008, COM 2007c, COM 2007d).

Greece has to tackle issues, such as low participation rates, fragmented provision of services and lack of coordination among agencies by developing a LLL strategy. Over the last few years, a sequence of vigorous steps in terms of adult education and, more recently, in terms of training of trainers has been made, taking full advantage of international experience as far as LLL is concerned (COM, 2008). Those steps can be categorised in the regulations and provision.

Regulations. The legislative reforms, which establish an overarching national Lifelong Learning strategy, constitute a major recent breakthrough. There is an ongoing effort to build a framework, which does not only create institutions regarding lifelong learning, but also develops synergies between existing institutions, which are active on the LLL field. This framework is at the process of defining this field, enhancing the "key players", distinguishing their roles and building links and cooperation, so that a national policy regarding LLL can be promoted. The first serious attempt for systemizing the field was made in 2005 through the Educational Act 3369 "For the systematization of lifelong learning" (G.G.G. 2005). This Act clarifies the roles, responsibilities and target groups of existing institutions active in education and training and sets LLL as the umbrella, under which their objectives coincide. According to this Act "lifelong education is an activity across people's life-span aiming at both the acquisition or the improvement of general and scientific knowledge, skills and competencies as well as personal development and employability and focuses on developing a comprehensive and viable national LLL strategy". Institutions, which are responsible for providing lifelong learning education services are the G.S.LLL. and the Higher Education Institutes. A new role Higher Education emerges through this Act, as they can establish LLL Institutes and Universities with the responsibility to design and implement these programmes, evaluate the programmes and the trainees, transfer credits, finance these Institutes.

On the other hand, lifelong training is considered in a dual basis, the initial and the continuing vocational training. "Initial training provides basic professional knowledge and skills in fields and specialisations, so that human resources enter and reenter the job market, are mobile and develop". As far as continuing vocational training is concerned "it completes, updates knowledge and skills acquired through other systems of vocational education and training or through professional experience, so that human resources enter and reenter the job market, secure a job, promotion and personal development". Initial vocational training is provided through O.E.E.K. of the Hellenic Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, while continuing vocational training through EKEPIS of the Ministry of Employment. Although the distinction between education and training is clear, there are two institutions which provide both educational and training services are the National Centre of Public Administration and the workers' unions. The synergies between institutions develop through the establishment of the National Committee of Lifelong Learning, which aims to ascertain the needs of lifelong education and training, to evaluate the overall quality of delivery, coordinate the institutions of lifelong education and training and to link them with the National System of Vocational Training and Employment (ESSEEKA). According to a more recent Act 3699/2008 the National Committee is interministerial, as there are representatives of three ministries. The broad spectrum of the Committee and the multiple sectors involved is depicted through its synthesis: The Secretary General of the General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning presides it and the rest of the synthesis is consisted of the Secretary General for

Community Funds of the Ministry of Employment, the Secretary General of the National Centre for Public Administration of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Secretary Special of the Unified Administrative Sector of Higher Education, the Secretary Special for the Unified Administrative Sector of the European Union Issues and Community Framework, the President of the Organisation for Initial Vocational Training (O.E.E.K.), the Director of the Organisation for Employment of the Working Force (O.A.E.D.), the President of the National Centre for the Accreditation of Vocational Training (E.KE.PIS.), the President of the ESSEEKA, a representative of the Union of the Prefectures, a representative of the Union of Municipalities, three representatives of the Workers' Union, a representative of the Public Servants' Union, two representatives of the Higher Education and the Technological Higher Education, a representative of the Confederation of Persons with Disabilities. This Committee includes agencies which are profoundly involved in Lifelong Learning, but there are still many other parts of the public sector, which are not represented in this Committee and which provide lifelong education and training.

Provision. The Hellenic Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, through G.S.LLL., in order to sufficiently manage adult student trainers, has created an Integrated Register of Adult Education Trainers, in the frame of Lifelong Education and Training as described by Law 2075 (G.G.G. 2008). Until now, there is a lack of data for the competences of the trainers or their training in the adult learning field. It is expected that the Register will act as a platform with concrete information about the profile of the trainer, his/her qualifications, experience and professional development. This register sets the entry requirements for the trainers and a quality control policy for their registration and certification. In the long run, the Organization of Initial Vocational Training (O.E.E.K.) and other public agencies of the Hellenic Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs are expected to use trainers exclusively from this Register. The Register of Trainers is consisted of two sub-registers where trainers are enlisted according to their qualifications and experience. The Register comprises public sector's educators and is co-financed by EU and Greek Ministry of Finance, while its articles provide detailed information about trainers' qualifications, advancement procedures, striking-off procedures and payment conditions.

Although infrastructures and programmes are essential for determining the conditions and the process of adult leaning, the trainers of adults is considered to be the cornerstone of every effort in the field of LLL. They are to play a double role as users of multiple information resources and on the other hand as groups of knowledge production (Kalantzis, Cope, 2005). Vergidis (2003) sees the trainer in Second Chance Schools (SCS) as a link between education and local society, a group facilitator, working in collaboration with other trainers and counselors in SCS, responsible for needs analysis, course design and evaluation of the educational process and his own practices and work. Further roles of the trainer is to guide, manage administrative issues, manage knowledge and crises, coordinate social environments and networks (Bagnall 2009, Karalis and Vergidis, 2004, Victor and Sarbo 2004, Rogers 2002, Kember, Kwan and Ledesma 2001). Consequently, the trainer is expected to develop autonomy, cooperation, communication, networking ability, interaction, knowledge management, negotiation ability, risk taking, transformative ability, intercultural awareness, flexibility (Katsarou and Tsafos 2008, Preston 2006, Harlen 2006, Leadbetter 2004). Therefore, training of trainers should be examined in two directions:

the field of knowledge the trainer should develop deep understanding of themes such as structures and functions of education, technological and non technological interactive systems,

intercultural education, course design, adult education methodology, group dynamics, crisis management;

the field of skills the trainer should, among others, detect learning needs, match the learning needs with the aims of the course, set the learning contract, select and organize the learners, select the content of a course and the pedagogical methods, develop evaluation tools, apply social inclusion practices, use e-learning methods.

Training of Trainers

The training of trainers (ToT) is a major factor of the provision of educational services. To understand ToT we need to see the framework within the trainer works. The main institution for designing adult education programmes in Greece is G.S.LLL. and its Institute, the Institute of Continuing Education for Adults (I.D.E.K.E.) supports their implementation. The programmes cover a wide array of topics concerning literacy, general education, parent education, digital literacy, management of crises, active citizenship, intercultural education. Trainers for adult education offer their services in structures, such as Adult Education Centres, Second Chance Schools (SCS), Parents' Schools, the Prefectural Committees for Adult Education (NELE), HERON for basic ICT skills, Teaching Greek to Migrants, Volunteerism, Health Education, most of which are cofinanced by european and national funds. Such a big variety on courses, makes it obvious that there is a considerable differentiation among the qualifications, specialties, experience, in service training of these trainers (Papastamatis and Panitsidou 2009, Stenfors-Hayes, Griffiths and Ogunleye 2008, Zembylas 2008, Mattheoudakis 2005).

While we place more emphasis on trainers, it is important not to forget that trainers are a part of the adult education personnel. Managerial staff, education plan staff and, in most cases, technical support staff are full time employees, while trainers and counsellors are part time employees. Qualifications are differentiated along with the position of the personnel. To better understand the features of staff that the provider (G.S.LLL./I.D.EK.E.) considers as important, we analyzed the specifications that the provider sets during the period 2004 and 2009 in tender calls for employment of trainers and other personnel. Steadily, during this period, the only prerequisite for trainers is to be graduates of a Higher Education Institution, while in specialties regarding art, the degree is not necessary and practitioners can also become trainers. On the contrary, a series of qualifications are required for the rest of the positions: a Higher Education degree, experience in adult education, computer driving and a foreign language.

We also examined the criteria for the assessment of those qualifications during these years. Until 2005 the criteria were vaguely described, while in the next years the statement of those criteria became clear. A difference among the criteria as stated during the years was the field of further training, as until 2005 it was considered as part of the formal education to be assessed along the Higher Education degrees. From 2006 and onwards, there is a shift in recognizing that formal education and further education are two different fields, which should be assessed separately. This differentiation means that more emphasis was placed in training, seminars and conferences attended by the candidates. In 2009 the provider puts more emphasis on the importance of the acquisition of higher level degrees (Ph.D.) and to the training experience in formal education. Paradoxically, less importance is given to teaching experience in the adult education sector.

Issues regarding further training for trainers shed some light in their needs and attitudes. Particular emphasis is given to Second Chance Schools (SCS) and the interaction of their staff (trainers and counsellors) as a means for further training. Specifically, counsellors in SCS can provide further training to the trainers of SCS regarding needs analysis, social and communication skills, self development, learning difficulties (Vachlioti, 2007). Similarly, in another study among trainers in SCS workshops run by counsellors in SCS contribute to the professional development of trainers by upgrading their skills on communication, counseling and empathy (Marmarinos, Sakellari, Tzoumaka, 2008).

Other studies focus on the methodology of further training. In a study with 113 trainers in SCS (Metis, Kavadias, 2008) it is found that they consider as challenging issues the evaluation (34%), teaching methods (23%) and cross-thematic teaching (17%). They consider further training as necessary (69,03%) and 64% of trainers prefer in service training by colleagues. An evaluation of a seminar for 200 trainers of Parents' Schools (Giotsa, 2008) shows that 91% of the participants considered that topics of the seminar as relevant to their needs, while 89% found that workshops contribute to the transfer of knowledge. Recently, however, a study for the job profile of the vocational trainer that was conducted in Greece by EKEPIS (2008) showed that the level of knowledge and the quality of teaching services provided by vocational trainers varied while trainers reported that they lacked pedagogical knowledge and, in some cases, concrete subject knowledge. According to the skills of the trainer as presented in the above mentioned study the training provided by EKEPIS will be further revised when repeated.

Studies on European level examine the profile of trainers. Aiming at supporting this priority, the Adult Learning Professions in Europe (ALPINE) study was conducted in 32 countries by the Research Voor Beleid and PLATO University of Leiden (2008) and it focused on several issues of the non vocational adult learning professions (NVAL). The professions which were taken into consideration included teaching, management, counselling, programme planning, support and media use. The study acknowledged the trends and developments across Europe regarding the context into which the adult learning staff worked and their activities, the pathways leading to these professions, the recruitment and employment situation, the quality assurance management and the attractiveness of the sector. It emphasised that adult learning professions had to acknowledge the diversity of their audiences, as well as their learning needs and develop relevant learning methodologies. According to this study "there is a need for an equally flexible system of teacher education allowing people to move in and out, and to make choices regarding content, modes of provision and schedules. There usually is a big gap between initial training and the moment non vocational adult learning (NVAL) staff enters the profession. Therefore, while initial training should remain important, the highest priority in terms of investment should be given to in-service training" (Research voor Beleid and Plato 2008:12).

In the vocational learning sector the Eurotrainer study (2008) analyzed the structures of vocational initial and further training and the situation of trainers in 25 countries. Comparing the structures, similarities and differences between initial vocational education and training (IVET) and continuous vocational education and training (CVET) in those countries, it stressed that "the area of trainers is largely under-researched and not statistically documented" (Eurotrainer 2008:4).

Further training targeted in adult education theory was delivered in 2007 by G.S.LLL./I.D.EK.E. The course was primarily based on distance learning principles, means

and techniques in order to support and gradually substitute the training procedures above mentioned and help trainers better understand their role as adult educators. About 2.000 trainers and staff attended this 100 hours course, which consisted of four modules: principles of Adult Education, group dynamics, adult teaching methodology and, finally, design and evaluation of a course. All participants ought to write assignments on all four modules.

After its completion, this course was evaluated by the participating trainers, so that data collected and conclusions drawn could be utilized for the development and implementation of similar programmes (as those described in the following section) in the area of ToT in adult education in Greece. Seventy participating trainers were asked to provide information firstly through a detailed written evaluation report and secondly through a corresponding number of electronically accessed questionnaires consisted of 29 close-ended questions. These questions referred to the effectiveness of multimedia material, its accessibility and digitalized presentation, to the activities and written essays proposed, the usefulness of co-ordinating training meetings, the quality of programme's electronic system management, the technological support of the programme et cetera. The majority of the participants (70%) evaluated the above mentioned parts of the programme as "very good" to "excellent". Through the written reports a great number of significant remarks has been collected referring primarily to the reformation of instruction material, the frequency and the duration of co-ordinating meetings, the redefinition of evaluation criteria, the improvement of the electronic platform, the reduction of trainees' number per classroom and, finally, clarification of the accreditation procedures et cetera.

A similar course for vocational training educators was organized by the National Accred-itation Centre for Continuing Vocational Training - EKEPIS (Kokkos 2005). In this pro-gramme 9.050 trainers participated and 8.100 of them were accredited through EKEPIS by the end of 2008. The programme focused on the socioeconomic and cultural dimensions of adult education, learning theories, characteristics of adult trainees, educational techniques and media, design and evaluation of a course, group dynamics (EKEPIS 2006). The training of trainers was undertaken by 243 trainers, who attended a specialized course. The procedure of accreditation was primarily based, among others, on microteaching and project processes evaluated by a committee. The accredited trainers are enrolled in a Register of Adult Education Trainers compiled by the Ministry of Employment and Social Protection, a prerequisite for someone to teach in vocational training centres (Kanellopoulou 2008).

Description of an Innovative Programme for Trainers' Training in Greece

The different approaches on training of trainers, the vague difference between adult education trainer and vocational education trainer, the role of a trainer, the value of qualifications gained through a seminar or a course in training are issues, which contribute to a confusion both to services and to trainers. In 2008 a Training Centre for Trainers, co-financed by EU and the Greek State, is being established by G.S.LLL. to provide services for all trainers, who are active in the adult education and the initial vocational education sector. Besides the headquarters, it operates in thirteen regional offices across the country and because of the geographical peculiarities of Greece, fourteen supplementary offices have been established in islands and frontier areas, to ensure that barriers of space are overcome. Technical support is given by the Centre for Distance Lifelong Learning and Education, also supervised by G.S.LLL.

This Centre becomes the mechanism for delivering a comprehensive and holistic system of professional development of trainers and staff. This system takes into consideration the nature of the educational programmes offered by the Ministry of Education through its providers of adult education (G.S.LLL.) and initial vocational training (O.E.E.K.), their target groups, as well as the characteristics of the trainers' educators who teach in these programmes.

It is comprehensive as it attempts to unify all procedures of training that, for the time being, are performed separately by different structures of education. And it is holistic as it undertakes not only the professional development of trainers and staff, but also the promotion of research on LLL issues and the development of a national library for LLL it does not follow a tailor made model delivering a course consisting of several modules, but develops a series of courses among which trainers can select the ones that better address their interests and needs. It does not assume that all trainers should follow a linear process of attending courses, but allows them to decide on their educational pathway, the courses which are of most interest to them. So, it provides extensive, detailed and updated information about trends in adult education and strategies, policies and priorities related to lifelong learning. The innovative features of this programme, comparing to the previous mentioned programmes, lie in the multi-thematic modules, the educational material, the flexible learning system. It focuses on methods for teaching adults, design of varied educational material, assessment of trainees and educational programmes, detection of trainees' learning needs, understanding of group dynamics, education and support of vulnerable social groups, support of special education, European adult education policies and developments, innovative technologies, implementation and development of crisis management techniques.

This Centre offers a programme, entitled "Designing and developing distance learning programmes for L.L.L. trainers and administrative staff", which consists of 13 courses. This system of professional development starts with the induction training, recognizing that the majority of the trainers have work experience in secondary education but not in adult education. It also consists of continuous training courses taking into consideration the experience of the trainers. With the exception of the induction courses, which last 100 hours, the rest of the courses are short termed. So, the trainers select the courses, which they would like to attend and get the opportunity to upgrade their skills at their own pace. According to their theoretical background of adult education trainers can select among a course with introductory knowledge on group work principles and methods, computer science and distance communication and, on a variety of topics concerning adults' cognitive development or a longer and more advanced course on thorough examination of adult student education issues. Other courses include training in ICT developments and applications in the educational field or training in crisis management regarding educational strategies used to address complicated demands in the educational settings. Then, for trainers with more specific focus on training socially vulnerable groups (repatriates, Roma, members of Muslim minority and prisoners) or for trainers in special education there are courses which upskill them in intercultural education individualized teaching techniques. A specialized course addresses trainers, who work in Second Chance training them about experiential learning, alternative teaching strategies and evaluation techniques. All trainers can undertake the continuing professional training for updating their knowledge and competences to contemporary adult education developments.

There are also special courses for other professionals who are involved in adult education. Counsellors are trained on theory and practice of counselling and intervention in adult

learners, group and individual counselling, family counselling. Evaluators are trained to efficiently evaluate adult student learning process, their own professional performance, the quality of educational material, the school unit function. Managers are trained on issues concerning the legislation about adult education and management of training units for adults and their connection with local social settings. Administrative staff can also be trained on developments in LLL at a European level, such as policy and. professional accreditation procedures in Europe (EQF, credit transfer, Europass), relevant EU programmes, european legislation about adult education and lifelong learning legislation.

Last but not least trainers of trainers will also be trained to get familiar with distance learning methodology and principles, given that all training procedures are based on blended learning.

It adopts distance learning methodology with the implementation of computer supported collaborative learning, where new technologies will offer to trainers and stuff specialized on adult education opportunities for innovative distance interactive communication, training and professional development (Donavant 2009, Della 2004, Varlejs 2003, Picciano 2001). The model of blended learning is implemented, where 75 per cent of all procedures taking place in every module will be performed through distance learning, while only 25 per cent of the procedures will be performed during formal meetings and live sessions, where an overall assessment of all procedures will be made by the participating trainers and summative conclusions and improvement suggestions will be put forward, regarding procedures of distance learning performed to that time. Blended learning is a time saving method as well as a tool for promoting media use in adult education (Siassiakos, Theodosopoulou and Tsamadias 2008, Kirschner, Sweller and Clark 2006, Graham 2005).

Scientific and Educational Implementation of the Programme Modules

A committee of scientists specialized on distance and adult education supervises the running of the programme; it provides the guidelines for the production of educational material required for each module and confirms the completeness and scientific validity of the material produced. This material is, then, electronically digitalized and presented in a specifically designed multimedia platform in the form of interactive learning scenarios that have been constructed for each specific module according to its objectives and thematic scope. The form and content of the electronic platform as well as the learning scenarios themselves are continually updated to incorporate new learning activities, teaching paradigms, bibliography and electronic sources of information, and detailed guidance for project carrying out (Kanes 2004, Boaz et al., 1999). In addition, synchronous teleconference is scheduled to be utilized so that teachers attend online training seminars and exchange experience and knowledge with scientists specialized on issues related to programme topics (Guldberg 2008, Guldberg and Pilkington 2007, Chalmers and Keown 2006). The continuous exchange of trainers' views on their personal training experiences, the recording and forwarding of their remarks and suggestions, the strengthening of professionalism, professional effectiveness and self-confidence and, above all, the development of communicative skills through creative inter-action are the main outcomes of all distance education programmes and modules performed by G.S.LLL. and based on the principles of adult education and training of trainers (Donavat 2009, Boyer, Maher and Kirkman 2006, Caffarella 2002).

Peer learning is not only suggested as a learning method in all the courses, but it is also the main method that the course "continuing professional development is delivered. Recognizing the knowledge and experience of the trainers and the influence they have on their colleagues it presents good practices and gives an opportunity for action research and networking (Lapointe and Gunawardena 2004).

Financing

In knowledge societies, investment in education and LLL is considered to be an important priority. Over the last few years in Greece, the financing of the LLL has been realized through national resources in a percentage of about 30% but mainly through European Union resources in a percentage of about 70%. Despite, however, efforts to maximize those resources' effectiveness and adequacy, a rational use of funding resources has not been accomplished yet. Moreover, it is obvious that, despite current fiscal constraints, new or extra resources of funding should be secured if lifelong education of all citizens in general and adult students' trainers in particular is to be encouraged, supported and strengthened. Central, regional and local services of administration, social partnerships as well as the trainers themselves should contribute to LLL funding in the future, while taxation policies to support sustainable and adequate funding for LLL should be also put under serious consideration.

Despite obvious high cost, a reliable system for securing the quality of LLL progress in Greece has already been developed, while the promotion of continuing evaluation of internal and external efficiency of the sector and of the effectiveness of financial resources still remains a wager that Greece wants to win.

Conclusions

In knowledge-based economies and societies the human capital is the main determinant of process. Acquiring and continuously updating and upgrading a high level of knowledge, skills and competencies is a prerequisite to keep human capital at a high level.

In Greece the development of an efficient LLL system goes hand in hand with the development of an efficient training system for LLL trainers. The ongoing engagement with pedagogy, the collaborative learning methods, the subject knowledge and innovation are important factors for developing the professional competences of the LLL trainers. Trainers should see themselves as lifelong learners and try to keep at pace with the developments and needs of the knowledge society. At the same time, providers of LLL are key agents for implementing the lifelong learning strategy and should further develop their capacity as learning organizations for their trainers. Specifically, they could constantly raise awareness of the available learning opportunities, facilitate access to learning, motivate trainers to participate in those learning opportunities, nurture the potential of the trainers, develop trainers' reflective skills and continue to improve the quality of their services. In Greece the professionalization of adult education trainers is still at the beginning. Serious steps have been taken as far as their training is concerned. However, training programmes developed by different organizations can be confusing for trainers, since they are often overlapping, setting different prerequisites and different procedures. This becomes even more important, since many trainers work both at non vocational and vocational programmes. Moreover, a lack of research work regarding trainers training is noticed in Greece. The absence of a study and research centre

has as a result isolated and discontinued research, while there is not a concrete body of studies on issues, such as needs analysis or good practices.

A national policy should be developed, encompassing both non vocational and vocational trainers, setting the procedures and standards for training. A reliable accreditation system is also urgently needed, so that qualifications acquired through the training can be recognized in European Qualifications Framework and National Qualifications Framework.

In order to improve adult education services' effectiveness, the unification of both Registers, that of the Minister of Education and Religious Affairs and that of the Minister of Employment, is necessary. A unified, comprehensive register for all trainers, qualified by private or public sector services, can ensure that delivery of educational services to adults will not be fragmented and systematic training will be given to all trainers.

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