

PARTNERUP

PARTNER UP Analysis Reports National level

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Executive Summary

The following national reports represent the outcome of the initial desk analysis carried out by the project partners in Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Romania with the aim to deepen the actual state of the art in the implementation of the Upskilling Pathways initiative (UP) in each project Country and at EU level.

The desk analysis allowed the partners to investigate and share knowledge about several aspects related to the UP initiative: legislative context and measures, key measures in place, wide target groups addressed, main challenges in reaching out the target groups, main challenges in skills assessment, provision of tailored learning and validation and recognition of skills acquired, actors delivering Upskilling Pathways, cooperation mechanisms in place.

It was based on stakeholders' contributions, on recent literature review, and on the consultation of National/EU documents on both Adult Learning and Education policies and Upskilling Pathways, published by European Commission or elaborated by European networks/associations.

The outcomes of the Analysis put the basis for the policy and practice work of the project.



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1 Introduction

The following national reports represent the outcome of the initial Analysis carried out by the project partners in Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Romania with the aim to deepen the actual state of art in the implementation of the Upskilling Pathways initiative (UP) in each project Country and at EU level.

Specifically, the Analysis was meant at collecting quantitative and qualitative data and information about:

- existing and missing stakeholders,
- existing cooperation mechanisms and structures,
- gaps in cooperation,
- good practices with reference to the Upskilling Pathways implementation in the Partner UP Countries and at EU level,

in order to **provide the basis for the policy and practice work of the project.**



The Analysis process allowed the partners to investigate and share knowledge about several aspects related to the UP initiative, by:

- analysing the main challenges in the UP implementation, in view of defining strengths and weaknesses in cooperation, identifying existing coordination structures, missing stakeholders and how this has impacted on a regular process of implementation;
- mapping and analysing a list of possible/useful stakeholders to engage, so as to make clear their added value and expected contribution;
- defining how they can further enable the implementation of UP.

In order to collect highly qualitative data, the Analysis is carried out according to two different methodologies, both aimed at defining gaps in cooperation and identifying opportunities for reinforcing positive/meaningful relationships already in place and involving and engaging missing and/or new stakeholders: **Desk Analysis** and **Stakeholder Mapping**.



The **Desk analysis** was mainly intended at deepening the actual state of art in the implementation of the UP initiative in each project Country and at EU level, by investigating:

- legislative context and measures;
- key measures in place;
- wide target groups addressed;
- main challenges in reaching out the target groups;
- main challenges in skills assessment, provision of tailored learning and validation and recognition of skills acquired;
- actors delivering Upskilling Pathways;
- cooperation mechanism in place.

It was based on recent literature review and on the consultation of National/EU documents on both Adult Learning and Education policies and Upskilling Pathways, published by European Commission or elaborated by European networks/associations.

The mapping of Stakeholders was developed at country level through different activities:

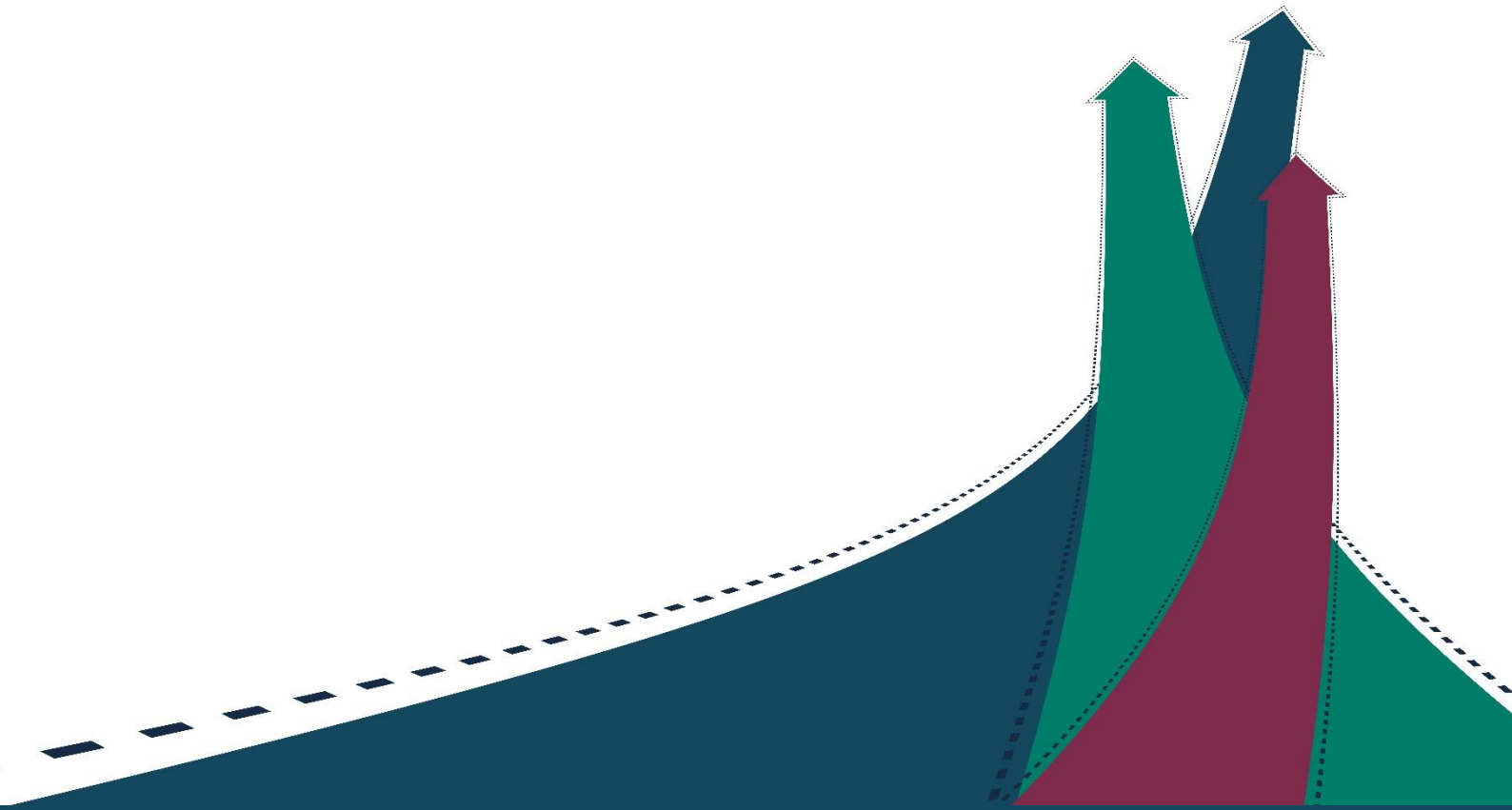
- **internal reflection** in partner organisation and/or in national project team, developed by collectively brainstorming about specific key questions, so as to share a common view of the main needs and objectives for the development of cooperation with/among stakeholders;
- **focus groups / interviews** with national stakeholders according common Guidelines, with the main aim to guide them in self-assessing their role in Upskilling Pathways, their relevance and their main contribution.

As results of the methodologies applied, the partners/national team produced an **Analysis Country Report** and a **Stakeholder Mapping Table**, as follows.



2 Analysis reports

Report of the analyses that have taken place at the respective national level



Country Analysis
GREECE

Country Analysis - Greece

Country	GREECE
Responsible organisation/s	HELLENIC ADULT EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Upskilling Pathways in each country: state of art in the implementation, main target groups, challenges

1. Identification of the target groups

The issue of identifying target groups is complex. Within the process of focus groups, three views have been identified.

The first view adopts the criteria of the staff working document of the European Commission (2019):

a. Adults with lower secondary education (ISCED levels 0-2). At the end of the 2010s, 3/10 of the adult population belonged to this category.

b. Adults with low basic qualifications. According to the PIAAC study¹, 2/10 of Greek adults scored at/or below the lowest level in both literacy and numeracy (25th position in 32 OECD member countries), while Greece held the 26th position regarding adults who failed ICT core or had no computer experience.

However, the question arises as to whether people with low basic qualifications should include those who lack new basic qualifications. According to CEDEFOP (2014), ICT skills, foreign languages, social, organizational, communication, and entrepreneurship skills are new basic qualifications which, together with basic skills, are needed to develop in the contemporary knowledge society.

According to the second view, adopted by the Labour Market Needs Assessment Mechanism, the adults with low qualifications are identified according to the criteria used by the International Labour Organization (ISCO system), where people with low qualifications are considered unskilled workers. In Greece, this target group amounts to 14% of private sector workers and is composed mainly of women and older people.

According to the third view, adults with low qualifications should also include a) workers who do not have the skills required by their jobs (a survey by the Hellenic Federation of Enterprises/SEV showed that this percentage is around 20%), b) workers at risk of losing their jobs due to technological development, c) the portion of upper-secondary general education graduates who do not continue their studies and lack professional qualifications, d) immigrants and refugees.

In any case, the group of adults with low qualifications tends to decrease over time. As an example, in 2022, only 9% of new jobs in the private sector were for people considered to be with low qualifications according to the ISCO system.

¹ OECD, 2019

In conclusion, **the category of *with low qualifications* is not sufficiently defined, which makes it difficult both to explore upskilling pathways and to discuss the formulation of an upskilling strategy.** In the following sections, we will follow the criteria for identifying the first aforementioned view, which is shared by the majority of participants in the focus groups.

2. Upskilling pathways

In Greece there are 4 upskilling pathways for low-skilled adults:

- a. CVET
- b. General adult education
- c. Skills assessment and validation
- d. Professional Guidance

2a. The CVET system

Overview

The CVET system is the basic pathway through which adult upskilling can take place. 8/10 of education and training programmes for adults are vocational in nature. However, within the CVET system, the share of CVET programmes for adults with low qualifications

is limited. According to CEDEFOP data (2020), Greece was in the bottom three positions in the European Union with a CVET participation rate for low-skilled 25-64-year-olds, of 0.8% compared to 4.3% of the EU average. More recently, the RegALE survey on Greece (2023) showed that 91.3% of the participant experts stated that there are no investments to adequately meet the learning needs of disadvantaged groups. This situation is due to a number of reasons:

- a) Until 2021, there was no national strategy for the upskilling of adults with low qualifications. In 2021, the Strategic Plan for Vocational Education, Training, Lifelong Learning and Youth of the General Secretariat of the same name was announced, which includes a specific chapter on access to ALE for people with low qualifications. Important provisions are mentioned concerning Initial Vocational Education and Training (IVET), as well as Continuing Vocational Education and Training (CVET) and General Adult Education programmes, which are aimed at people with disabilities, prisoners, migrants and refugees, as well as students attending Second Chance Schools. However, there is no explicit provision for the other target groups of low-skilled.
- b) Programmes for adults with low qualifications are very demanding (requiring extensive practical training and specific adaptation to the educational needs of the participants), and therefore costly.
- c) The adults with low qualifications themselves avoid participating in relevant programmes because of internal and external barriers (see section 2a.6).
- d) There is a widespread perception in government agencies that in a few years the group of adults with low qualifications will have radically shrunk.

Regarding the overall quality of the CVET programmes, recent studies found it to be low (CEDEFOP, 2019; European Commission, 2022). Specifically, regarding CVET's contribution to skills development, Greece's score across indicators was 10 out of 100 in 2018, with an average EU level of 34 (CEDEFOP, 2019). Below are presented the parameters of the CVET state of the art with specific references, where data are available, to the points concerning adults with low qualifications.

Governance

The lack of coherent and collaborative planning of CVET actions, as well as the overlapping responsibilities of the Ministries of Education and Labour are long-standing features of the field².

Providers

The main CVET providers are the 250 Centres of Life Long Learning (KDVMs). In the period 2012-2019, the only requirement for the licensing of KDVMs was that they had the necessary building infrastructure. From 2020, KDVMs are required to have at least three staff members with experience in lifelong learning and distance learning. However, in the previous period, their expertise suffered a serious setback as they functioned without the obligation to operate by adult education standards. From 2022, for KDVMs to be eligible to implement CVET programmes co-financed by EU funds, they are additionally required to have ISO certifications (e.g., 9001/2015, 27001/2013, 27701/2019, 21001/2018, 29993/2017, 29990/2010, etc.). However, these certifications concern organisational and administrative functions and not educational ones, except for 29990/2010, which is not required for small-sized KDVMs, which constitute the majority, while for medium and large-sized KDVMs it is optional.

Other providers are the 18 Centres for Training and Lifelong Learning (KEDIVIMs) that are linked to Higher Education Institutions, as well as the in-house training units of enterprises. Both of these types of providers are doubtful whether they have the necessary CVET know-how because they are often not properly staffed. Also, their activities are limited. As an example, according to a survey by SEV (2019), only 44.3% of enterprises with less than 50 employees (99% of enterprises) provide training to employees. Moreover, in a recent CVET programme targeting 150,000 unemployed, KDVMs trained 95% of the beneficiaries while KEDIVIMs only trained the remaining 5%.

Trainers

In the period 2007-2009, adult trainers attended an extensive training programme offered by the state, much of which concerned the training of vulnerable social groups. In 2009 this action was abolished, however, according to the mentioned Strategic Plan for Vocational Education, Training, Lifelong Learning and Youth, it is to be reactivated.

Relation of CVET to labour market needs

This relationship has been underdeveloped in Greece over time. Recently, some progress has been made, although difficulties remain (see next section on cooperation mechanisms).

Disposition and incentives for trainees to participate

² CEDEFOP, 2018; RegALE, 2023

In most cases, adults with low qualifications do not express an inclination to participate in CVET programmes because of the following complementary reasons: a) The programmes often do not correspond to their educational needs (they have an increased theoretical character and little practical part, apprenticeship is absent, and they are also not related to professional rights; see 2c. b) They face external barriers to participation (lack of available time, difficulties in travelling, difficulty in paying the fees for programmes that are not offered free of charge through co-financing by the EU and/or the Greek state). c) They have internal barriers, because they often have traumatic experiences of involvement in the education system, lack of familiarity with the learning process, and doubt that they will be able to meet the requirements of the programmes. d) They have insufficient information about the programmes offered. e) The problematic quality of the CVET field discourages participation.

It is also noted that the training allowance provided for participation in the co-funded programmes could distort the trainees' incentive to learn.

2b. The general adult education system

General adult education is mainly provided by the Second Chance Schools (SDE), which operate in all Departments, as well as by several NGOs, Cultural Centers, etc. SDEs lead to a diploma of lower secondary education and offer multiple opportunities for creative learning and skills development. However, the diploma does not lead to professional rights, which is an increasingly persistent demand of students.

2c. Validation and recognition of skills acquired

All the CVET trainees must participate in a certification process³. This process can open up an upskilling possibility and can lead the participants to an awareness of their strengths and weaknesses regarding their skills. However, often the certification process is limited to oral and/or written examinations and lacks a laboratory part. Also, almost all candidates are certified, which reduces the credibility of the process. Additionally, the certification is not linked to professional rights. The latter, which only concern the legally regulated professions, are awarded after special exams by the Regional Directorates of the Ministries and the Chambers of Commerce. Finally, there is no formalized system for assessment and validation of prior learning.

2d. Professional Guidance

This service is offered mainly through the Employment Promotion Centres (KPA), run by the Public Employment Service (DYPA) and, in addition, by the Community Centres of the municipalities. In the last three years, efforts have been made to strengthen professional guidance: a) The National Organization for the Certification of Qualifications and Professional Guidance (EOPPEP) is designing a certification system for career guidance advisors and manages an online system of professional guidance. b) A pilot system of Individual Learning Accounts (ALDs) is established by DYPA. The ALDs record the CVET programmes received by each holder and the available subsidized CVET and guidance rights. c) A Digital Skills Portal has been created.

³ Joint Ministerial Decision 82759/2022, article 5

Nevertheless, there is still a shortage of guidance advisors (1 for 3.300 unemployed), and a number of them do not hold the necessary qualifications⁴.

Stakeholder cooperation in UP: Successful cooperation mechanisms, missing stakeholders and gaps in cooperation

Overview

As mentioned, a structural historical characteristic of the CVET system and the adult education field in Greece is the lack of a coordinated strategy, governed by cooperation mechanisms and synergies. In the survey of the research organization *diaNEOsis Adult Education and Training* (2021), the 33 experts who participated expressed the opinion that the lack of strategy is the second problem of the field after the lack of quality. In the RegALE survey (2023) 87% of the Greek respondents shared the view that the field is constituted by a set of misaligned systems and a lack of synergies among relevant stakeholders (much higher than the European average: 72%).

Another key feature of the Greek system is its centralised structure. Most of the responsibilities are held and decisions are made by the Ministries and the implementing central agencies, while the role of Regions and Municipalities, as well as of social partners, is limited. Regarding the providers of the field, they do not participate in any planning and decision-making bodies. On the other hand, however, synergies between other stakeholders are not frequent either, although there are positive examples.

The following paragraphs deal with two key issues where the dysfunctions of the governance of the field are explicitly manifested including, as is understandable, the dysfunctions of its sub-sector, which is the processes of upskilling of the low-qualified. The first issue concerns the diagnosis of skills needs, and the second is the process of designing and implementing training programmes. The relevant good practices that have been identified will be presented in the last section of this Annex.

Skills needs analysis

Several central agencies have been created during the last three years and are tasked with skills diagnosis and its alignment with labour market needs: a) DYPA; b) Employment, Social Security, Welfare and Social Affairs Expert Unit (MEKY) that is specialized in skills diagnosis and formulates related policy proposals; c) Central Council for Vocational Education and Training (KSEEK) that is supervised by the Ministry of Education, is charged with planning and evaluating VET actions, policies and programmes, and submits to the Minister every three years a *Strategic Plan for VET, Lifelong Learning and Youth*; d) Production-Labour Market Liaison Councils, that are regional bodies which promote the involvement of employers in the development and update of VET programmes; e) National Council of Human Resources Skills (NCHRS) that is supervised by the Ministry of Labour and formulates the *Strategy of Human Resources* which is

⁴ Glaroudi, 2018

submitted to the Minister every year. Moreover, the social partners also investigate the labour market needs through their own research institutes. All these bodies, whose responsibilities seemingly overlap, form a mechanism which it is provided that is coordinated by the Government Skills Committee, chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister, while, at the same time, DYPA's governor is named National Coordinator for Skills.

As a result of the complexity and overlaps of the above structure, it is difficult to formulate a single and comprehensive body of data on skills needs. This difficulty is reflected in Joint Ministerial Decision 82759/2022⁵, which states that accepted diagnosis for CVET programmes may be anyone coming from any of the mentioned bodies.

However, in practice, MEKY is the most adequately equipped body with expertise, specialists and infrastructure. MEKY has already established a valid and broad database of skills needs with a four-year horizon and has an open channel of cooperation with social partners. However, several problems arise: The data of MEKY are not sufficiently exploited by central authorities, Regions and providers because they either overlook them or lack relevant information. Therefore, a crucial challenge is to make these data available to all relevant actors, and for the central administration to simplify the skills diagnostic system by explicitly putting the NICU at the centre.

Process of designing and implementing CVET programmes

The problems of lack of synergies that emerge in this process are as follows.

- a. The design of programmes is carried out exclusively by the central administration without the involvement of the social partners, employers and providers. In this context, the programmes, including the apprenticeships that take place within them, are not sufficiently linked to the needs of the labour market and the trainees.
- b. Municipalities and Regions do not have the expected financial and technical support from the central government to develop upskilling programmes. For example, the Municipal Lifelong Learning Centres, which offered general adult education programmes mainly to low-skilled citizens, have ceased to operate.
- c. In the evaluation of CVET programmes, as regulated by Law 4921/2022⁶, there is no provision for an internal evaluation with the opinion of the key actors, which are the staff who designed and organized the programmes, as well as the trainers.

For further information, see **Stakeholder mapping table** [here](#)

⁵ Article 3.1.1

⁶ Article 38

Other relevant experiences of stakeholders' activation/cooperation

The development of partnerships between stakeholders is not a structural characteristic of Greek society for reasons that are due to the historical formation of its culture which is competitive rather than cooperative⁷. Indicatively, the RegALE survey (2023) showed that 95% of Greek adult learning professionals share the view that there is weak alignment between central and local policies.

Nevertheless, some positive experiences can be recorded, stemming from individual initiatives of cooperation between state agencies, municipalities, social partners, adult education providers, and universities. Some of these initiatives are, indicatively, the following.

1. A methodology for developing CVET programmes was recently developed through the collaboration of all stakeholders, EOPPEP and DYPA.

2. The Labour Institute of the Greek General Confederation of Labour (INE/GSEE) coordinated the action *Access to the Labour Market: Gaining Work Experience*, which targeted 7,000 young people (up to 29 years old), graduates of secondary and post-secondary vocational education. The action was carried out through a consortium of training institutions of all social partners. The aim was to develop vocational and social skills to support participants in entering or remaining in the labour market.

3. Nine Greek Municipalities have joined UNESCO's network *Learning Cities*. The Learning Cities encourage the cooperation of institutions and active citizens to diffuse learning in the city, with a focus on supporting vulnerable social groups. The example of Larissa-Learning City, which has been awarded by UNESCO and the European Association for the Education of Adults/EAEA, is considered particularly positive. In Larissa, 102 educational, professional, cultural and social actors cooperate to run the Citizens' University and several educational and cultural activities, mainly targeting the unemployed, young people, parents, people with disabilities, elderly people, refugees, migrants and Roma. The outstanding success of the Larissa project is due, firstly, to the strong political will of the municipal authorities who prioritized synergies for learning, secondly, to a group of citizens with experience in adult education who embraced the project and actively participated in it, and thirdly, to the fact that Larissa drew on the expertise of UNESCO and Greek organizations specialised in adult education.

4. A consortium, consisting of the Youth and Lifelong Learning Foundation/INEDIVIM (a governmental body), the Hellenic Society for Local Development and Self-Government/EETAA, the General Secretariat of Professional Education, Training, Lifelong Learning & Youth, the National Council of Youth, and the Hellenic Open University implemented a project to support the Lifelong Learning Centres of the 300 Municipalities of the country. The project included (a) the training of 4,000 adult educators, and (b) the development of 67 manuals of teaching materials in the thematic areas of environment, new technologies, entrepreneurship, social skills, foreign languages and arts. These materials were the reference for adult education in the municipalities in the decade 2013-2023, until the abolition of the Municipal Lifelong Learning Centres.

⁷ Fleming, Kokkos, & Deliyannis, 2022

5. The Institute of Industrial and Business Education and Training/IVEPE, in cooperation with the cultural organization NEON and the Hellenic Adult Education Association/HAEA, conducted a training programme for 1,200 teachers and adult educators from all over the country on the topic of linking the use of artworks to the curriculum of various courses.
6. A number of Second Chance Schools/SDEs are working with municipalities aiming to integrate graduates into the labour market, on the one hand, and providing care for sick students, on the other. Also, SDEs cooperate with NGOs to integrate refugees and migrants into the curricula.
7. Some Banks, such as the National Bank of Greece, and some other companies cooperate with Higher Education Institutions to train their staff and organize student apprenticeships within their framework.
8. In the last three years, HAEA has collaborated with 12 Universities in the country to organize two conferences entitled *Skills Development* and *Education and Change*.
9. Several KDVMs are collaborating with enterprises to organize staff training programmes, as well as to organize apprenticeships for unemployed trainees within their framework.
10. Cooperates with social partners to diagnose skills needs.

Qualitative information about the analysis process

Stakeholders' participation, commitment and contribution

The stakeholders showed particular interest in participating in the focus groups. This can be attributed, firstly, to their commitment to the field of adult education, secondly, to the fact that they rarely have the opportunity to meet and exchange views, thirdly, to their desire to have their voice heard in order to contribute to the improvement of the problematic situation in the field, and fourthly, to the prestige of the specific European project, the coordinating organization and the Greek partner organization, which created the guarantees of a valid scientific approach.

Almost all the invited stakeholder representatives participated in the focus groups (which lasted 2.5 hours) despite their very busy agenda.

The stakeholders' contribution can be considered very important because, due to their great experience, they provided views and information not found or partially reported in the literature. Also, their coexistence around the same round table allowed them to enrich their views through the perspectives of the other participants and to interact with each other. The result was that the final, overall statement of views was synthetic and very rich. Therefore, the methodological choice of gathering views through focus groups can be considered apt.

How the analysis impacted the relationships among stakeholders

Participants had the opportunity to get to know and appreciate the views of other stakeholders, which they were not aware of or had not been informed of all their dimensions. This process added additional depth and validity to their considerations. At the same time, relationships and plans for networking, partnerships and collaborations were developed among the participants. Also, the need for regular meetings and exchanges of views between stakeholders, something

that is lacking in the Greek adult education field, was perceived. Typical relevant references expressed:

I have never seen us talking in depth very much together about our issues. It would be good if we could get together more often. We shouldn't be discussing in fragments, but we need serious discussion from all the relevant actors who can bring about changes in our field.

I suggest that a more permanent forum like this be created to generate recommendations to policymakers. I would be very interested in participating.

How the analysis impacted our organization and relationships with stakeholders

One of the main tasks of our organization is to promote dialogue and networking among the stakeholders of adult education. So far, our activities have been conferences, conferences, workshops, as well as webinars with the participation of 2-to 3 guests. In these formats, the dialogue is conducted either among many persons or among very few. However, the round table's format, which has analogies with the focus group, has the additional specific advantages mentioned above. We will therefore include this form of dialogue in our future activities. During the focus groups, the HAEA committed to the participants to take the initiative and invite them to a subsequent round table' or similar webinar. The proposal was well received by all.

What went well

See how the process impacted the participants.

What went wrong

The participation of 8-9 people in the FGs limited, to a certain extent, due to time constraints, the full expression of the opinion of some participants. From now on, it seems preferable to have 6-7 participants in relevant FGs.

Lessons learned

-See the last paragraph.

-Some interesting suggestions emerged from the focus groups: a) To provide specific and adequate counselling services to low-skilled adults. b) To follow up on the progress of low-skilled people after their participation in adult education programmes, which is not done so far. c) An institutional framework should be created to provide for the participation of stakeholders of adult learning and education/ALE in the design of the relevant programmes. d) The resources allocated to various private bodies to organize certification procedures not linked to professional rights should be given to enterprises. The aim would be for enterprises to organize structured apprenticeships, aimed in particular at job-seekers in the sector with low qualifications, with the obligation to recruit a number of them. e) A think tank should be set up to study the European experience on training, counselling, certification and vocational integration of people with low skills. This experience could be adapted to the Greek reality, put to consultation and formulate proposals to the relevant bodies.

Good practices

N.B. 'Good practices' are defined, in this context, as strategies, approaches and/or activities that have been shown through research and/or evaluation to be effective, efficient, sustainable and/or transferable, and to reliably lead to a desired result in supporting identification, engagement, commitment of stakeholders as well as cooperation among them, with specific reference to the UP initiative. The Good practices can be local, regional, national or international ones.

The project EaSI/BASIC Building Alternative Skills' Innovative Schemes

Within the framework of the European Council Recommendation *Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults*, DYPA submitted a proposal to participate in the European-funded project EaSI and then participated, in 2018-2020, in the project BASIC. DYPA undertook to carry out the Greek part of the project in collaboration with the General Secretariat of Professional Education and Training, Life Long Learning & Youth, the Centre for Educational Policy Development of the Greek General Confederation of Labour (KANEP/GSEE), and the Small Business Institute of the Hellenic Confederation of Professionals, Craftsmen and Merchants (IME/GSEVEE).

The project aimed to formulate a comprehensive set of methodologies and tools regarding upskilling pathways for low-skilled adults to assist them in being included in Level 3 of the National Qualifications Framework/NQF. The main components of the project were as follows:

- Identification of target groups and relevant upskilling pathways.
- Review of theories and methodologies regarding adults with low qualifications upskilling pathways and the assessment of skills acquired.
- Development of manuals for trainers and trainees on the development of basic skills (numeracy, literacy, ICT skills).
- Creation of a digital tool for the online upskilling process based on Moodle technology.

The project was piloted, based on the principles of adult education, with target groups a group of long-term and a group of short-term unemployed. The duration was 435 hours (260 hours of face-to-face learning and 175 hours of online learning). An evaluation and dissemination of the results followed. However, to date, there has been no generalised implementation of the project.

Certification of security guards

EOPPEP, in collaboration with the Centre for Studies and Security/KEMEA, organizes every two months a professional certification process that is addressed to security guards. The participants must be graduates of secondary education or, alternatively, have relevant professional experience or have successfully completed a relevant KEMEA's CVET programme. The certification exams include a theoretical and a practical part, which use questions randomly drawn from a question bank. Candidates that complete the certification exams successfully are awarded by EOPPEP a Certificate of Professional Competence that corresponds to Level 3 of the NQF, and acquire professional licenses through procedures organized by the individual Regions. EOPPEP plans to extend the application of the certification of adults with low qualifications to other professions. Procedures are already in place for hairdressers and nail care technicians.

Training of machine operators

INE/GSEE collaborated with PYP A and MEKY to develop a training programme aimed at adults with low qualifications who are small-scale machine operators. This occupational sector is not regulated by law, so it is questionable whether workers have the necessary skills. A specific occupational profile was created through an extensive study of the needs of the labour market and the target population, which was carried out with the broad participation of professional organisations, employers, and the workers themselves. In this way, the training programme carried out was highly targeted, effective, and secured the consensus of all stakeholders.

Brewer's training programme

The Hellenic Brewery Atalantis/EZA SA organized a 3-year two-way training program (theoretical training and in-house apprenticeship), which was addressed to unemployed graduates of secondary general education. The program was implemented in cooperation with the Hellenic Federation of Enterprises/SEV, the Association of Small Independent Brewers of Greece, and the Hellenic-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The benefits of the program were: a) Development of the skills and culture of continuous improvement of the participants. b) Professional integration of all graduates in the brewing business. c) Increased productivity and level of in-service training of EZA, as well as strengthening the social responsibility of the company.

Agricultural training program

The Hellenic Open University/EAP collaborated with the American Agricultural School of Thessaloniki for the training of adults with low qualifications on organic farming, as well as the production and management of cabbage products. The theoretical training was conducted through the EAP platform and the practical training took place at the farm of the Agricultural School.

Synergies in the context of certification procedures

Within the framework of the professional certification examinations that are held in each Region, the examination committees are composed of a representative of the competent Directorate of the Region, a representative of EOPPEP, and a representative of the relevant Federation. The practical part of the examinations consists of practical assessments that are carried out through synergies of the Region with the employers and the training providers of the area which offer their facilities for this purpose.

Priorities for Development Groups

The issues of upskilling pathways for adults with low qualifications are interconnected and at the same time are interwoven with the broader issues of the ALE field. The key interconnected

issues that are proposed to be discussed within the Greek ALE framework, as well as in subsequent Development Groups of stakeholders are as follows:

1. Development of a culture of collaborative and ALE culture among the stakeholders of the field.
2. Decentralization of the ALE system with greater involvement of the Municipalities and Regions, while strengthening their ALE know-how.
3. Improvement of the field's governance in terms of overlapping responsibilities between governmental agencies, as well as the development of an integrated and coherent strategy.
4. Formulation of an institutional framework that promotes synergies between stakeholders, with an emphasis on the upskilling of adults with low qualifications.
5. Identification of the adults with low qualifications and the relevant sub-groups.
6. Examination of adults with low qualifications training needs, their attitude towards training and apprenticeship, as well as the incentives and pathways that regard their involvement in upskilling procedures.
7. Improvement of the skills diagnosis mechanism with particular emphasis on the labour market needs regarding the basic and new basic skills.
8. Informing stakeholders about the role and database of the Employment, Social Security, Welfare and Social Affairs Expert Unit (MEKY).
9. Reinforcement of the link between the content of ALE programmes and labour market skill needs.
10. Training of staff of CVET providers and development of their know-how, with an emphasis on the processes of low-skilled upskilling.
11. Training and continuous professional development of ALE trainers with an emphasis on skills development.
12. Participation of ALE providers' staff and trainers in the evaluation of ALE programmes.
13. Incentives for enterprises to become more involved in the provision of apprenticeship opportunities, especially for the low-skilled.
14. Link of CVET and general adult education with professional rights.
15. Improvement of the skills assessment and validation processes.
16. Recognition and validation of prior non-formal and informal learning.
17. Qualitative and quantitative reinforcement of professional guidance services, in particular of those addressed to low-qualified adults.
18. Creative use of the Digital Portal and the Individual Learning Accounts.
19. Dissemination of good practices of upskilling pathways that have taken place, as well as of the lessons learned.
20. Creation of a forum for dialogue between stakeholders on crucial ALE issues, with an emphasis on upskilling processes of adults with low qualifications.

21. Exploitation of European experience regarding the above issues.
22. Incentives and provision of know-how to the municipalities to become Learning Cities according to the Larissa model.
23. Exploitation of European experience regarding the above issues.
24. Incentives and provision of know-how to the municipalities to become Learning Cities according to the Larissa model.

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