

Editorial Note

The third issue of the journal ADULT EDUCATION *Critical Issues*, this new attempt of the Hellenic Adult Education Association, is the first without the heavy shadow of the pandemic. The gradual and slow return to a new reality, to the fixed but differentiated daily habits is now visible after a long time. Humanity is tracing and exploring the conditions of the post-pandemic period, which in many cases depend directly on the experience of the pandemic. For example, in the field of Education, and even more in Adult Education, the reflection on the transition to a new era of increased hybridity, but also to an era of new orientations and conditions, is now visible. This reflection, however, like the exploration of new challenges, needs constants, continuous efforts and needs critical approaches. For this reason, as necessary as the transition to new perspectives is, it is equally necessary to return to the roots, to the major theorists and to critical analytical tools.

This issue of AEI, the fourth one, keeps up the ongoing exploration on the philosophy and practice of Adult Education in terms of policies, challenges, instructional processes and the needs of the adult as learners. The seven articles included, focus on fundamental issues within the field of critical adult learning, linked to transformation at a social and educational level, since Adult Education plays a crucial role in promoting changes. Particularly interesting is the attention given to topics concerning less privileged learners, as well as less promoted procedures in adult education. European traditions of Adult Education.

Indeed, diversity and complexity of social, cultural and educational settings could be understood as a strength to shaping the field, affecting not only theoretical assumptions, but also instructional practices and approaches, for policymakers, educators and learners, leading to a reflective, critical and transformative learning theory in Adult Education.

The article entitled: "Formation of Adult Education Policy: Key messages and main challenges" by **Nicoletta Ioannou** analyses the main influences and factors that affected Adult Education's policy formation in the European Union (EU) and the key messages as well as leading directions and related key concepts identified in the European policy documents that are presented. A review of official EU policy documents on adult education over the last twenty years shows that Adult Education gained a prominent position in EU policy as a vital component of lifelong learning; however, the emphasis has mostly been on realizing its economic goals, by focusing on labour market trends and needs, such as employability and competitiveness. The article critically proposes that adult education policies should promote the personal and social development and the wellbeing of adults and creatively contribute to the formation of more cohesive and just societies.

Maria Papathanasiou focuses on teachers as adult learners and their need to transform. She argues that the rapidly changing social environment and lately the Pandemic, has further elevated the role of education by introducing, if not "mandating", lifelong learning for the overwhelmed teachers. Considering the importance and criticality of the school's mission, the importance of the teacher's duties and the challenge in the implementation of their work can easily be seen, the author explores three of the most basic theories of adult education and significant aspects of constructivism, whose tenets also undergird, teachers' continuous and imperative need of adults' lifelong learning. The theories discussed are the Andragogy of Knowles, Freire's educational Social Change, and Mezirow's Transformation Theory, as a resource for deepening our understanding of the critical matters affecting the need for new ways for teachers to approach their learning and teaching.

In their article **Eirini Tzovla and Katerina Kedraka** study the Follow-Up, as a neglected experiential process within a transformational learning community for teachers as adult learners. It refers to an effort to transform the views and attitudes of a group of teachers, who participated in a distance professional development program during the pandemic period, about the use of digital educational content in the teaching practice. In terms of methodology, Mezirow's 10 steps of transformation were followed. The writers argue that a transformation of the perceptions and attitudes of the participants regarding the utilization of digital educational content in educational practice is achieved.

Maria Christou investigated the implementation and evaluation of the method “Transformative Learning through Aesthetic Experience” in Primary Education. She implemented the method “Transformative Learning through Aesthetic Experience”, in a group of permanent teaching staff of Primary Education working in public schools in Athens and Piraeus, after completing their training in this method. The current article is partly based on the doctoral dissertation of the writer: "Evaluation of the implementation of the method ‘Transformative Learning through Aesthetic Experience’ in Primary Education», held in the Hellenic Open University. The article begins with a theoretical framework presenting five key areas: Transformation Theory and the Constructive - Developmental Approach to Transformative Learning, the training of Primary Education teachers, the way Transformative Learning could be utilized in Primary Education, the possibility of utilizing Art as a means of developing transformative learning and the method “Transformative Learning through Aesthetic Experience” itself. A presentation of the research method, the research results, a discussion and proposals follow.

Anna Tzampazi and Fanny Seroglou focus on Science Education in Second Chance Schools in Greece. In their paper a methodological approach for science teaching in a Second Chance School is presented. The resulting model is called 2CHANCE and has been developed to facilitate pre- and in-service adult educators in their science educational work that creates the framework for adult learners’ scientific literacy and the conditions for transformative learning aiming learners' participation in socio-political becoming and cultivation of critical thinking and awareness. In addition, they present a case study upon a ‘dilemma’ in prison education as an example of using the model.

Paraskevi Dakou and Eleni Prokou survey the participation of immigrants in the same type of adult schools, the Second Chance Schools (SCS) in the Region of Central Macedonia -Greece. In their study, through 18 in-depth semi-structured interviews, the writers examine immigrants’ incentives to participate, the possible barriers they encountered before enrolling, and those they probably face in terms of attendance and/or in the learning process, as well as their perceptions of the learning environment of SCS. The findings indicate that the participants were motivated to enroll in the SCS by both intrinsic and extrinsic incentives, while multiple barriers, mainly situational and/or dispositional, hindered their enrollment. Similar barriers affected their attendance and learning process, along with those that have arisen due to the forced remote operation of SCS during the pandemic. However, they have developed a positive attitude towards the learning environment of SCS, emphasizing their satisfaction and praising the support of trainers.

Achilleas Papadimitriou in his article “Factor analysis of adult participation in education: the case of Evening General Lyceums of island Greece” focuses on the phenomenon of adult participation in education. In Greece, Evening Lyceums belong to secondary education even though they are mostly adults, who work during the day. The purpose of the survey was to investigate the factors of adult participation in the Evening General Lyceums which are located on the Greek islands. The research was conducted in 2022 and 268 adult students of Evening Lyceums took part. The factor analysis of data with the Principal Component Analysis method was applied and the factors influencing the decision to participate in this type of schools were obtained. From the range of the factors identified, four are very important (self-assessment, attitudes towards education, educational perspective and expectations), while there are others that seem to be quite influential for these adult students.

Bringing this issue to the International and Greek Adult Education community, we hope to provide another step in the dialogue on the upcoming changes and transformations that societies need to cope with the multiple challenges they face today. We look forward to an even greater contribution from active researchers of our field in order to publish papers with a critical view on those issues.

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