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Table of Contents

Introductory

Editorial Note 5

Katerina Kedraka, Thanassis Karalis

Articles

Is there any place for Adult Education in the era of Lifelong Learning? 8

Thanassis Karalis

The contribution of apprenticeship to the transition from education to employment – the position of the Labour Institute of the General Confederation of Greek Workers 24

Christos Goulas, Iakovos Karatrasoglou, Ira Papageorgiou

Motivational Drivers and Curriculum Relevance Perceptions among EPAL Post-Secondary Apprentices: A Quantitative Study in Achaia, Greece 36

Evaggelos Anagnou, Iosif Fragkoulis, Eleni Arachovitou

From critical reflection to transformative praxis: Intersecting Freire, Mezirow, and Brookfield 51

Labrina Gioti, Toka Aikaterini

Adult Learning in the Milieu of a Local Environmental Movement 66

Eleni Giannakopoulou

The path to reintegration and second chance in France: learning from the example of the Écoles de la Deuxième Chance 78

Athanasios Kletsas

Bibliometric Mapping of Second Chance Education (2015–2025) 98

Georgia Karakitsiou, Anna Tsiakiri

Rosa Parks, A life in a day 117

Thanassis Karalis

Book Review

Παρουσίαση του βιβλίου «Ανοσία στην Αλλαγή» 119

Κατερίνα Κεδράκα

Editorial Note

In a period of rapid transformations in work, education, technology and policies, Adult Education is reemerging not as a "subsystem" but as a critical component of a broader ecosystem of lifelong learning. This issue brings together seven studies that, from different starting points, fruitfully "discuss" with each other and map a common orientation: the need to connect learning with social justice, the qualitative transition to work, and the cultivation of critical thinking and action.

Karalis, in his article "Is there any place for Adult Education in the era of Lifelong Learning?", convincingly documents that "lifelong learning" is not just a policy term, but the slow emergence of a new paradigm with the central concept of the continuum—the continuity of both educational institutions (formal, non-formal, informal education) and learning pathways. The historical "massification" of education, the shift from certification to micro-accreditation, the emergence of new types of inequalities in access to resources (especially in the digital sphere) and the Matthew effect in adult participation, constitute a demanding scenario where Adult Education is called upon to play a dual role: (a) compensatory/complementary towards inequalities and (b) democratic, with a focus on the cultivation of critical thinking and critical reflection as a transversal theme. Learning is increasingly described through notions of flexibility, employability, and continuous adaptation. A fundamental question therefore emerges: when learning is framed as a lifelong requirement, where does responsibility truly lie—with the individual or with society? Karalis invites us to understand lifelong learning not simply as a policy orientation but as a deeper paradigmatic transformation. Within this context, Adult Education is called to safeguard its social role, so that it does not dissolve into a narrow logic of constant upskilling and individual accountability. The article offers a framework of understanding that "unlocks" practical synergies between universities, non-formal education institutions and informal learning spaces. Thanassis Karalis argues that in recent years, lifelong learning has expanded and reshaped almost every educational discussion.

These concerns become particularly visible in work-based learning and apprenticeship, note in their article **Goulas, Karatrasoglou and Papageorgiou** highlighting apprenticeship as a structured form of workplace learning with a clear regulatory, pedagogical and social dimension. Such pathways can offer meaningful routes from education to employment, especially for young people navigating unstable labour conditions. Yet these routes remain reliable only when quality is ensured: through clear frameworks, social partnership, pedagogical guidance, and fair working conditions. Without these elements, apprenticeship risks losing its educational character. The analysis of the European approach (EFQEA, EQAVET) and the Greek schemes (EPAS DYPA, Post-Secondary Year–Apprenticeship Class of EPAL, SAEK) highlights achievements but also persistent challenges: quality of programmes, supervision/guidance in the workplace, transparency, relevance to market needs. INE/GSEE proposes a coherent package of measures—a register of companies that meet minimum requirements, training of company mentors, apprenticeship contracts with clear learning outcomes and rights, fair remuneration/insurance protection, systematic monitoring/evaluation—so that apprenticeships function as a real bridge from education to decent work, and not as a job substitution or low-paid employment. As Goulas, Karatrasoglou and Papageorgiou underline, transition is not a single step but a prolonged process shaped by institutions, support mechanisms, and lived labour realities. This understanding is equally relevant for second chance contexts, where learners often move between education, unemployment, short-term work, and return.

Anagnou, Fragkoulis and Arachovitou illustrate how adult learners, within the Greek context and during the EPAL Post-Secondary Apprenticeship Year, frequently approach programmes with concrete expectations—certification, access to employment, economic security—while

at the same time recognising the value of meaningful practice and curriculum relevance. Such findings do not diminish the educational process; rather, they illuminate the social conditions within which learning choices are made. When everyday life is marked by uncertainty, education becomes a means of stabilisation as much as a space for knowledge. This reality challenges educators to reflect on how learning can retain depth and purpose within systems that primarily reward formal outcomes.

For this reason, the critical tradition of Adult Education remains indispensable, as **Gioti and Toka** describe in their article. Critical reflection should not be treated as an abstract academic exercise but as a way of protecting education from being reduced to adaptation alone. Freire, Mezirow, and Brookfield—each from a different perspective—remind us that adult learning can support individuals in questioning assumptions, recognising power relations, and linking personal change with collective responsibility. Critical reflection is not single-dimensional: it connects individual transformations of meaning with collective democratic action and the deconstruction of assumptions. The result is an integrative framework where education as praxis unites meaning-making, ideological critique, and social participation—exactly what is needed in environments challenged by inequalities, authoritarian tendencies, and the commodification of learning. Therefor, when learning is framed exclusively through employability, reflection risks becoming instrumental but when it remains connected to democratic values, it becomes a practice of awareness and ethical engagement.

Learning also unfolds beyond formal programmes, as **Giannakopoulou** argues. In her article, adult learning is approached as a social-relational process that unfolds in the practices of collective action. Through activist narratives, horizontal flows of knowledge, experiential problem solving, identity transformations and the development of lived ecological consciousness are highlighted. The study also documents systemic obstacles (burnout, institutional indifference, limited recognition of informal knowledge) and proposes to recognize social movements as living learning ecosystems. In local environmental initiatives, adults learn through participation, shared effort, disagreement, and care for common spaces. Such learning is embodied and relational; it shapes civic identities and produces knowledge that often remains invisible to formal systems. The message is clear: Adult Education is not limited to the classroom; it happens where citizens act, collaborate and reflect on their shared reality. This perspective invites a broader understanding of second chance education—not as a mere return to school, but as an opening toward agency, belonging, and meaningful participation grounded in lived experience.

At the institutional level, second chance structures require careful design and sustained support. **Kletsas** shows how the French Écoles de la Deuxième Chance demonstrate entry procedures, personalised learning plans, quality assurance, and systematic monitoring to support processes of reintegration, which at the same time, reveal the demands placed on both learners and institutions. A second chance is not a simple opportunity granted once; it is a guided educational journey that requires continuity, patience, and care.

Particularly valuable in the current period is the effort to systematically map the field itself. The bibliometric mapping of Second Chance Education (2015–2025) by **Karakitsou and Tsiakiri** documents very strongly the growing research interest and highlights two central directions: one focusing on learners' experiences, motivation, and psychosocial development, and another addressing social, institutional, and policy dimensions, with emphasis on skills, employability, and inclusion. This mapping does more than record growth; it reveals how the field conceptualises its priorities and where its attention is drawn. More importantly, it reminds us that these two perspectives must remain connected. In second chance education, personal biographies and structural conditions meet on a daily basis.

In conclusion

The seven articles hosted in this issue of AECI engage in a dialogue around the same question: how adult learning becomes a lever for personal and collective change. The converging answer is that learning is most powerful when it is connected to real practices, is institutionally recognized without losing its social character, and is holistically supported. As we can see, Second Chance Education occupies a delicate place within adult learning. It addresses people whose educational paths have been interrupted, often accompanied by experiences of exclusion and a lasting sense of failure. In this space, education is not merely a formal provision. It becomes a social commitment: the possibility that learning can return, that dignity can be restored, and that participation can be reimagined. An editorial reflection can therefore only conclude with a careful reminder. Second Chance Education cannot be evaluated solely through certificates, indicators, or labour-market outcomes. These elements are important, but they are not sufficient. The deeper question concerns whether education enables people to regain confidence, voice, and a sense of belonging—and whether society is prepared to recognise learning as a right rather than a corrective measure for earlier exclusion. If second chance education is to remain faithful to its name, it must avoid reproducing old inequalities in new forms. It must create conditions in which adults are not merely trained to adapt, but supported to stand—equipped with knowledge, with skills, and with dignity. We hope that this contribution will serve as a bridge between policy, practice, and research—and as an invitation for collaborative interventions that will make second chances first choices for a learning society.

Beyond all the articles we have presented and the book review, with this issue we are launching a new column titled *Revisiting the Past*. This column will feature short articles written by the editorial team as well as by other colleagues, highlighting significant events in the history of our field, often inspired by relevant anniversaries. The first of these articles focuses on civil rights activist Rosa Parks, who attended workshops at the Highlander Folk School and who, seventy years ago, on December 1st, 1955, refused to give up her seat to a white passenger, as was then required by law—an act that became a catalyst for the abolition of racial segregation.

For this new column, but more importantly for research and theoretical approaches in the field of Adult Education, we welcome your contributions as we enter the sixth year of our journal.

Is there any place for Adult Education in the era of Lifelong Learning?

Thanassis Karalis

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Abstract

Since several years, we are in an era where the lifelong learning approach has colonized almost all areas of education. Indeed, we are moving from a view of education characterized by isolated units of organized learning to a different view of learning and education that is mainly defined in terms of the continuum of both the learning phenomena and the educational institutions. In this paper, we argue that this is a paradigm shift from an old paradigm to acquire a new form and content. and in many cases old elements are replaced by new elements. After attempting to substantiate the above-mentioned paradigm shift, we would examine these new elements. The methodological approach will be that of diachronic analysis of policy papers and data concerning key issues of adult education and lifelong learning. The following questions will be addressed: What do these transitions mean for societies and the learning citizen? Is education, including Adult Education, still considered an obligation of the state or is the citizen now obliged to attend programs for reskilling and upskilling? To what extent is the citizen held responsible for the possible mismatches between his or her qualifications and the content of labor demand?

Keywords: Lifelong Learning, Adult Education, Paradigm, Continuum

1. Introduction

The perception that the concept of lifelong learning represents a paradigm shift rather than merely a policy issue is relatively underexplored in the literature of educational policy and adult education. Even when this perspective is adopted, the dimensions of this paradigm and the causes of the paradigm shift are rarely explored. Although such viewpoints occasionally appear (see, for example, Wain, 2002; Ohidy, 2008; Karalis, 2008, 2022; Elfert, 2020), the concept of lifelong learning is generally examined through three main approaches: The first approach equates lifelong learning with adult education, precisely because children's education is considered a given. Consequently, any reference to the continuity of learning naturally pertains to adult learning and education. The second, reduces lifelong learning to a tautology, reaffirming the self-evident idea that human beings learn throughout their lives. The third perspective, more prevalent in some strands of European literature, views lifelong learning as either a battering ram or a Trojan horse - as an overt or covert tool for imposing a neoliberal approach to education.

In previous works (Karalis 2008; 2022), we have explored lifelong learning and lifelong education as the emergence of a new paradigm for education, with continuity being the key element that set it apart from the existing paradigm; the notion of *continuum*. In seeking to define lifelong learning and lifelong education, we noted that they represent:

> "…a different approach and perspective for perceiving, understanding, and designing everything related to learning, education, educational institutions, and the learner-citizen—with continuity as the defining feature. Lifelong learning encompasses all learning and educational activities, regardless of type, content, or level, taking place in formal, non-formal, and informal educational contexts. These activities involve citizens of all ages and educational backgrounds at any stage of their biological and social life cycle. This represents a fundamentally different conception of learning and education, grounded in the assumption of *continuum* in both the learning process and educational institutions. It rejects the idea of fixed starting points, endpoints, final destinations, predetermined pathways, or finalities in the learning journey." (Karalis, 2008, p.131)

This definition underscores that learning episodes and participation in educational activities are not isolated instances but rather integral parts of a continuous, uninterrupted journey. One can argue that this is self-evident, but a closer examination of the existing education paradigm suggests otherwise. Until about half a century ago, educational levels and types of education were strictly separated, each serving a distinct and clear purpose. In this paper, we will attempt to examine the emergence and characteristics of this new paradigm, initially seeking to identify what Thomas Kuhn (1970) referred to as "anomalies" in the established paradigm—elements that, from a certain perspective, appear as "violations" of the normal paradigm, aspects that seem inexplicable when examined from a particular point of view. Following this analysis, we will explore the role of Adult Education in this new landscape.

2. **Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Education: What Is and What Is Not**

2.1 The Evolution of a Concept

The idea that humans learn throughout their lives has been recognized for thousands of years and is deeply rooted in major philosophical traditions that have shaped the world. In Ancient Greece, the Oracle of Delphi conveyed this idea through the Delphic Maxim "μανθάνων μη κάμνε" ("Never grow weary of learning"). Similarly, Solon of Athens famously stated, "γηράσκω δ' αεί διδασκόμενος" ("I grow old always learning"), reinforcing the notion that learning is a lifelong endeavor. Likewise, Plato's Allegory of the Cave, in Book VII of The Republic, along with the pursuit of Virtue - seen as a lifelong process from the Homeric period to Aristotle - clearly illustrates the idea of learning that extends beyond the early stages of life (Karalis, 2022, p. 10). Henschke (2014, p. 37) cites similar references in Judaism and Christianity, such as in the Psalms, Deuteronomy, and Paul's Second Epistle to Timothy. More generally, *theosis* (deification)—meaning likeness to and union with the divine—is seen as a lifelong learning journey in Christian theology. In Confucian teachings, we encounter the concepts of the "sage" and the "wise person" (sheng and sheng-ren), which represent the ideal human state achieved through continuous learning. Additionally, the concept of the noble person (Jun Zi) is characterized by the constant acquisition of knowledge throughout life (Basharat, Iqbal, & Bibi, 2011; Sun, 2008). In Islamic tradition, education is divided into two periods: one from birth to adulthood and another from adulthood to the end of life. One of the Prophet's sayings (Hadith) states: "Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave" (Hasan, 2017, p. 263). This is the very expression that later appears predominantly in English literature as "from the cradle to the grave". In Buddhism, similar concepts emerge, particularly regarding the role of experience in learning, through which individuals accept change and recognize that learning is independent of age (MacPherson, 1996; Johnson, 2002).

In her seminal work, Elena Ignatovich (2020) examined the presence of lifelong learning terminology in the Google Books repository from 1839 to 1959. She identified mentions in 161 sources, all from the United States and the United Kingdom. Notably, the term "lifelong learning" also appears in the 1919 Report of the Committee on Adult Education (Ministry of Reconstruction, 1919, p. 5). However, in most cases, it is used as a synonym for adult education, just as it is in Yaxlee's 1929 book *Lifelong Education: A Sketch of the Range and Significance of the Adult Education Movement*. This book marks the first historical instance where the term *lifelong education* appears in a book title. However, even here, the term is still used as a synonym for adult education rather than as a broader concept.

The idea that education lasts a lifetime, though not the exact term "lifelong learning" itself, is explicitly stated by John Dewey in his classic work *Democracy and Education*: "…the inclination to learn form life itself and to make the conditions of life such that all will learn in the process of living is the finest product of schooling." (Dewey, 1964, p. 51). The continuity of learning, which we emphasized in our Introduction, is also discussed explicitly by Dewey when he examines the two fundamental principles of education: continuity and interaction. He states:

> "Different situations succeed one another. But because of the principle of continuity, something is carried over from the earlier to the later ones. As an individual passes from one situation to another, his world, his environment, expands or contracts... This process goes on as long as life and learning continue."(Dewey, 1938, p. 44)

A few years earlier, Edward Lindeman (1926)—one of the founding figures of Adult Education—also extensively mentions the concept of lifelong learning in his book *The Meaning of Adult Education*.

2.2 The Spread of a Term

Tsafou & Karalis (2025) conducted a bibliographic study on the use and dissemination of terms related to lifelong learning and adult education. Their research was based on an analysis of academic publications in the Google Scholar database, focusing on articles in which these terms appear in the title. The following two diagrams illustrate the frequency of four key terms (lifelong learning, lifelong education, adult education, adult learning) and how their usage evolved over a period of approximately half a century (1970–2022).

As observed, the patterns for lifelong learning and lifelong education confirm what was previously described: before 1970, mentions of both terms were nearly nonexistent. Specifically, between 1955 and 1970, there were only 19 mentions of lifelong learning and 11 mentions of lifelong education (a total of 30 mentions for both terms). However, from 1970 onwards, these terms gained notable momentum in scholarly articles. By 2022, the total number of mentions was 22,127 for lifelong learning and 3,831 for lifelong education (25,958 in total).

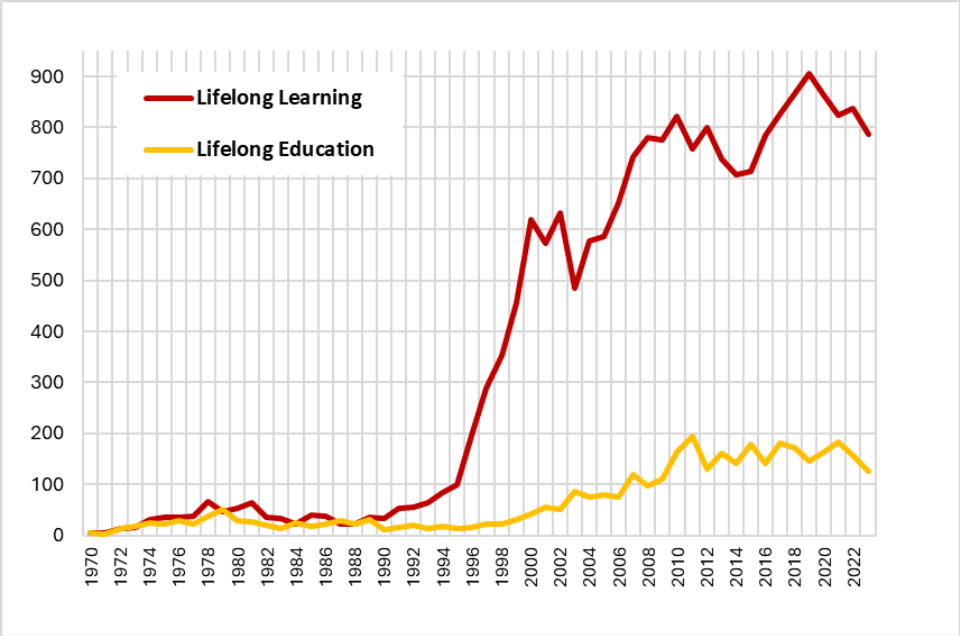

Diagram 1: *Frequencies of reference for lifelong learning and lifelong education (Google Scholar, article title). Source: Tsafou & Karalis, 2025.*

In contrast, the terms adult education and adult learning exhibit an opposite pattern in both their usage before 1970 and their relationship to each other. Until 1970, adult education was mentioned 2,529 times, while adult learning appeared only 98 times—a total of 2,627 mentions, nearly a thousand times more than the combined occurrences of the other two terms. However, between 1970 and 2022, adult education was mentioned 32,744 times and adult learning 11,825 times, bringing the total to 44,569 mentions. As Tsafou and Karalis point out, lifelong learning and lifelong education are not mere substitutes for adult learning and adult education. It is therefore reasonable to infer that they are introduced primarily to articulate a new stream of thought.

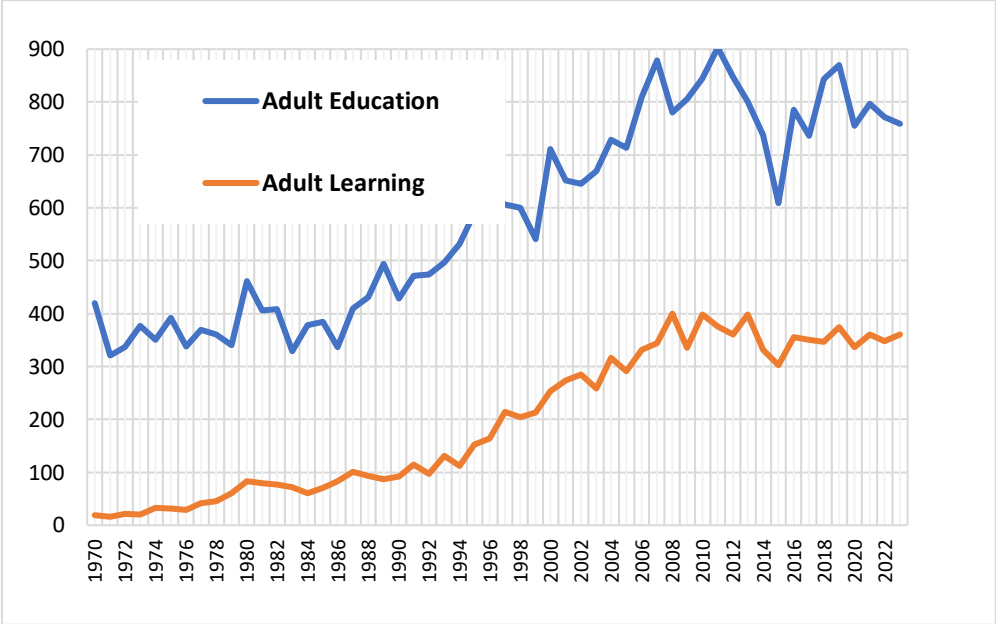

Diagram 2: *Frequencies of reference for adult learning and adult education (Google Scholar, article title). Source: Tsafou & Karalis, 2025.*

2.3 Faure Report: A Prophetic Text for a New Paradigm?

The Faure Report is widely recognized in literature as the UNESCO Report on the Future of Education, published in 1972 under the title *Learning to Be: The World of Education Today and Tomorrow*. Named after Edgar Faure, the chairperson of the seven-member expert committee that compiled it, the report analyzes the state of education worldwide and advocates for lifelong education as the foundational concept for reorganizing educational systems. The core concept of lifelong education is grounded in the continuity of various educational institutions (formal, non-formal, and informal education) and suggests that they should be viewed as an integrated whole. This introduces the notion of a *continuum*, which we mentioned earlier in the Introduction. The report outlines sixteen specific recommendations (referred to as principles) on how lifelong education should be implemented. Additionally, it establishes the concept of the "learning society," a term that had appeared sporadically before but gained widespread recognition through this report. The Faure Report sparked extensive discussions and is rightly considered one of the most influential texts on education. Notably, in 2013, forty years after its initial publication, UNESCO reissued the report. Together with the Delors Report (1996), these documents provide a visionary framework for education or as Elfert (2020, p. 24) explicitly states: "These reports open up a space in which it becomes possible to imagine alternatives to the prevailing instrumental view of education promoted by the current dominant economic and political order. In that respect, the Faure Report and the Delors Report exemplify both the limitations and the possibilities of a utopian vision of education."

At the same time, we argue that the Faure Report functioned as a prophetic text, a forerunner of a paradigm shift, precisely because it identified the “anomalies” of conventional thinking about learning while simultaneously proposing a radically different way forward -one based on a completely new understanding of education based on the concept of a continuum. A small segment of the literature interprets the Faure Report as a precursor to the shift towards lifelong learning, viewing it as a tool to address the structural crises in the Western development model during the Cold War era. However, this superficial critique overlooked an important fact: The seven members of the Faure Committee did not represent only Western societies but all regions of the world, including Chile, Syria, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Iran, the United States, France, and the Soviet Union (USSR). Interestingly, Ignatovich & Walker (2022) argue that the Soviet Union had developed a comprehensive lifelong education system, elements of which were incorporated into the final text of the Faure Report at the suggestion of Professor Arthur Petrovsky, a member of the USSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences and a member of Faure committee too. Additionally, another superficial critique of the Faure Report—that it primarily focuses on aligning education with the needs of the economic sector—is contradicted by the fact that many of its principles extend beyond the economic sphere. What this critique fails to recognize is that the concept of a continuum in the Faure Report applies not only to education but also to the citizen as a whole. The report does not view individuals as fragmented between their roles as workers and citizens; rather it perceives them as holistic beings, encompassing both dimensions within a unified framework.

2.4 Shooting at the Term

As illustrated in Diagram 1, the term *lifelong learning* has become predominant in scholarly article titles since 1990, surpassing *lifelong education*. Although the Faure Report (1972)

introduced the term *lifelong education*, the term *lifelong learning* gradually replaced it in academic discourse. For over two decades (1970–1990), both terms were used relatively equally. However, from the early 1990s onward, we observe a clear detachment of lifelong learning from lifelong education. This trend carries a significant risk for public policies. As many researchers have pointed out, it marks a shift from education- which implies and is associated with structured institutions and state responsibility—to learning, which places the onus on individuals to seek and utilize learning opportunities independently. However, the term "opportunity", when used in public policy contexts—especially in the context of educational opportunities—is clearly inspired by neoliberal ideology, as it emphasizes the existence of opportunities over citizens' capacity to access them. This concern was raised as early as 1973 by Ravindra Dave, one of the most influential lifelong learning thinkers and later Director of the UNESCO Institute for Education: "There are three prerequisites for lifelong learning: opportunity, motivation, and educability." (Dave, 1973, p. 23)As mentioned in the Introduction, many scholars viewed lifelong learning as a battering ram or Trojan horse, facilitating the gradual withering of state intervention in education, whether overtly or covertly. This critique gradually led to a deconstruction of the term itself, primarily, if not exclusively in European literature, as if the term were deemed responsible for any neoliberal attacks on educational institutions.

To address this trend of delegitimizing the term, we highlight the following points: First, learning is a broader concept than education. A learner can certainly learn outside structured interventions and environments. In fact, the amount of informal learning may sometimes be more significant than formal or even formal and non-formal learning combined. This applies even to learning in the workplace. As Billett (2018, p. 6) notes: "...it is essential for lifelong learning to be understood as a process that goes beyond what arises through lifelong education. It is enacted as adults engage in everyday working life… and it is largely mediated by individuals themselves…". Second, as Jarvis points out, this critique underestimated that even in the European policy papers, “the aims of lifelong learning had become: personal fulfillment, active citizenship, social inclusion and employability/adaptability” (Jarvis, 2014, p. 53). Third, critiques of policymakers' distorted use of a term should not lead to a distorted conceptualization of that nor result in self-censorship regarding the full scope the term encompasses. This applies even more strongly in the case of a term like lifelong learning, which is associated with self-actualization and giving meaning to life. While it is crucial to continuously remind governments of their responsibility to provide the means for citizens’ education, it is equally misguided to portray citizens as lay figures who merely accept the educational choices available to them, rather than as active subjects who make choices—provided those choices exist. The risk of “throwing the baby out with the bathwater” is highly evident in this case, as has been noted in the literature. Some terms—such as democracy, freedom, and inclusion—are foundational to humanistic traditions. Lifelong learning belongs to this category, and its value should not be questioned.

As mentioned earlier, this critique primarily concerns European literature and is largely confined to *lifelong learning*. For instance, a similar critique is absent from discussions of *e-learning* and *e-education*. The predominant use of "e-learning" in scholarly discourse does not imply that theorists in this field ignore the risks we have outlined. Instead, they continue using the most scientifically valid term while simultaneously developing their critical perspectives. Furthermore, in the United States, during the same period that witnessed both the increased use of "lifelong learning" and the rise of neoliberalism, this critical trend did not emerge—neither in educational policy nor in academic critiques. In the U.S., the term lifelong learning has primarily been used in the first sense outlined in the Introduction, namely as synonymous with adult education. For instance, the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE) published the scholarly journal *Lifelong Learning:*

An Omnibus of Practice and Research from 1986 to 1989. However, its content focused exclusively on Adult Education.

3. **Towards a New Paradigm?**

In this section, we will attempt to substantiate the argument that the term lifelong learning encompasses the slow emergence of a new paradigm for learning and education, which has been observable for the past fifty years. This trend is evident not only in capitalist markets and economies but also in other societies, progressively replacing the conventional approach to learning and education. First, we will examine the reasons why this shift became necessary, and then we will explore the dimensions of this new approach.

3.1 The Golden Century of Education

There is little doubt—regardless of the data used to examine this issue—that the previous century was the Golden Century of Education. Among the many achievements of humankind in the 20th century, one of the most remarkable was the expansion of access to education—both in scope than before and on an unprecedented scale. Despite persistent and alarming inequalities in access to education at all levels, the massification of education in the last century occurred at an extraordinary pace. A detailed analysis of these changes goes beyond the scope of this article, but according to data compiled from multiple sources and presented in Our World in Data (Roser, 2021)): Global illiteracy fell from 87.95% in 1820 to 12.64% in 2023. The percentage of people without formal education declined from 82.8% in 1820 to 13.1% in 2020. Despite the discouraging reality that 8% of children today still lack access to primary education (rising to 19% in Sub-Saharan Africa), the expansion of access to primary education over the last century is remarkable. For example, in the United Kingdom, the percentage of the population with access to primary education was 14.4% in 1820, increasing to 99.9% today. The two most populous countries in the world have also experienced significant progress: In India the proportion rose from less than 0.1% in 1820 to 98.5% in 2023 while in China it increased from near-zero in 1820 to 93% by 1997 (Our World in Data, 2015).

A particularly important indicator is global access to tertiary education. As Baker refers (2014, p.25) “At the turn of nineteenth century less than 1 percent of university-aged youth across the world attended; now 20 percent, or approximately, one million, attend some kind of higher education setting”. By 2022, it had increased to 39.1% for men and 44.8% for women. We highlight this specific data point because we believe it is directly linked to the evolution of educational institutions, a topic we will explore further in the following sections.

3.2 Why a Paradigm Shift?

As stated in the Introduction, the lifelong learning approach differs significantly from the conventional one—not only in terms of the traditional division of education into levels but, more importantly, in the role that educational institutions are expected to fulfill across different historical phases. As extensively discussed, (Karalis, 2022), the educational institutions of the industrial era, shaped by modernity, are no longer able to fulfill their role. This is not due to an internal, vague "crisis" but rather because this crisis is structural and relates to their ability to meet their goal, primarily due to the massification of education, as outlined in the previous section. According to Collins (1979), formal education credentials serve as exclusionary mechanisms, restricting access to higher-status jobs to those who possess them. This function of the educational system was sustainable only as long as the number of credential holders remained below the number of available high-level jobs. A similar argument was made by Bowles and Gintis (1976, p. 4) “For a half of a century or more, the educational system provided an admirable safety valve for the economic pressure cooker… But by the late 1950s, the educational system was pressing its limits”. In other

words, the expansion of access to education—particularly higher education—has gradually undermined the longstanding function of the educational system, which traditionally played a key role in the social division of labor. Moreover, it has significantly reduced its effectiveness as a mechanism for vertical social mobility. This is perhaps the most critical "anomaly" of the old paradigm—one that pushes the paradigm to its limits and necessitates the development of new, perhaps radically different approaches. Within this context, we include the debate on the crisis of education, which becomes particularly prominent after the mid-1960s, i.e. some years after the expansion of higher education.

One aspect of this discourse clearly concerns the content of education, the internal characteristics of the educational system, and its organizational parameters, all within the broader climate of social unrest and contestation in the 1960s. The discourse on the crisis of education within the old paradigm triggered significant efforts to restore educational institutions to their original form. However, these efforts do not seem to be effective as the root causes of the crisis do not originate within the institutions themselves but rather stem from external factors. For instance, interventions in curricula or teaching methodologies, while undoubtedly significant, have often been cyclical and repetitive, functioning as "factory resets", whereas the current context necessitates a fundamentally different kind of change. The expiration of an old paradigm is typically marked by its inability to explain emerging phenomena using its existing tools or to be more precise, by the fact that previously effective tools become increasingly marginal in their impact and produce merely localized effects.

The period also witnessed arguments for a broader critique of the educational system, exemplified by Illich's call (1971) for deschooling society. Yet, such views did not take hold, and education, as a fundamental societal institution—especially in its public form—continued to be deemed indispensable, albeit in need of significant change. A crucial contribution to this debate is P. H. Coombs' book, *The World Educational Crisis: A Systems Analysis* (1968), which we see as a precursor to the Faure Report that emerged four years later. In this work, Coombs lays the groundwork for a typology of educational activities, distinguishing between formal, non-formal, and informal education. We consider the most significant aspect of this typology to be the attribution of an educational dimension—not merely a learning one—to informal education. This refers to the knowledge, skills, and values acquired through various activities and interactions with learning sources and resources. This perspective lays the foundation for viewing lifelong learning as a concept that integrates formal, non-formal, and informal education into a continuum across the lifespan.

Beyond the massification of education, the notion of a paradigmatic shift is also grounded in other factors, such as globalization, the rise of computing - particularly the internet- and the rapid transformations in professional fields, which in turn lead to evolving demands for qualifications, knowledge and skills. These changes do not pertain solely to the economic sphere but also to citizens' ability to cope with the ever-increasing complexity of life and, often, the necessity of shaping their own biography and defining their place in the world without relying on tradition, as was frequently the case until quite recently. A new social contract, renewing the Faure Report promise now seems more necessary than ever (UNESCO, 2021; Toukan & Tawil (2024); Nóvoa (2024).

3.3 Delineating the New Paradigm

The concept of a new perspective of learning and education is essential to address the anomalies we discussed earlier. As noted, this represents the emergence of a paradigm that places a much stronger emphasis on learning and is grounded in the idea of a continuum rather than distinct educational stages and settings. The structured, sequential acquisition of learning through the prescribed levels of formal and, to some extent, non-formal education, as well as the predictable trajectories toward obtaining qualifications, are increasingly seen

as elements of a framework that can no longer adequately interpret contemporary developments. The attempt to caprture these transformations is a key concern in literature, aiming to delineate the underlying components of this evolving perspective. As previously stated in the Introduction, the notion of a continuum applies not only to learning itself but also to educational institutions and the learner themselves. Some of the components of this paradigm shift are analyzed further below (Karalis, 2008; 2022): (a) citizens are regarded as lifelong learners rather than segmented entities - students, employees, unemployed individuals, or retirees, (b) the institutions where learning occurs are no longer distinct and specific but comprise a variety of learning resources, (c) the clear distinctions between starting points and endpoints in education, which are characteristic of conventional views, are no longer applicable, (d) educational achievements are not necessarily equated with the completion of participation in organized educational activities.

These elements have direct implications for the traditional structure and function of educational institutions while also raising important policy questions that need to be urgently addressed. The most critical aspect is the public nature and provision of education, as these are no longer confined to established educational institutions but extend to a wide range of educational and learning resources, access to which is evidently not evenly distributed. New types of inequalities, beyond those long identified in the literature, have almost certainly emerged and will continue to emerge increasingly. For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, inequalities in access to computers and the internet became highly evident, not only in specific regions of the world but also within Western societies, as a significant portion of students and learners were unable to benefit from emergency remote teaching.

Another issue is the opening of communication channels between formal, non-formal, and informal educational activities. Policies such as second chance institutions have been successfully implemented, yet further connections need to be established, particularly between formal and non-formal education as well as informal learning. Systems for the accreditation of prior learning, which were marginal until fifty years ago, have evolved and are expected to further expand, precisely because we have transitioned to a new conceptual framework for learning and education.

Relevant to the above issue is the loss of the accreditation power of formal education. Gradually, this power is shifting increasingly towards non-formal education systems, while policies such as microcredentials seek to address the challenges posed by the massification of education and the oversupply of traditional credentials. Given that the educational system faces challenges like those outlined in the previous section and is unable to effectively regulate the social division of labor, we argue that we are in a transitional phase where new mechanisms are emerging to serve this purpose. We can already witness a shift from the oversupply of hard skills towards soft skills – an attempt to address the very issue we have just mentioned. At the same time, we notice experimentations with new methods, such as microcredentials, through which the formation of new selection mechanisms and the restoration of the equilibrium between supply and demand of labor markets are attempted. However, such mechanisms, which remain tied to conventional conceptions of education are expected to create even more challenges, since the proliferation of credentials will lead to an ambiguity in the signaling function of diplomas making it increasingly difficult for demand-side actors to assess the actual content of the supply.

Crucial issue also is the future of education as a public good and its implications within the ongoing paradigm shift. With a significant portion of education now delivered through non-formal and informal education mechanisms, how can we ensure that these mechanisms remain accessible to every interested citizen? To approach this differently, since both educational resources in general and formal education are essential for the education of

citizens, the challenge for the future is to ensure that these resources are open and available to all, not just to those who have the means to access them. Production, ownership, processing, and redistribution of information are more critical than ever.

A careful analysis of the data on the expansion of formal education (see: Barro & Lee, 2015; Baker, 2014), suggests that this process unfolds in three waves, each corresponding to a level of formal education. The first wave concerning the expansion of primary education occurred around the mid-19th century, the second concerning secondary education around 1930, and the third pertaining to higher education appeared approximately a decade after the Second World War, becoming particularly prominent in the 1960s and beyond. Following the publication of the Faure Report, other scholars systematically examined this new proposal for reorganizing the educational system. They emphasized both the importance of formal education for achieving the continuum of lifelong education and exploring the scientific fields from which this new field is irrigated, as well as the areas it affects. For example, Ravindra Dave, one of the most significant scholars in lifelong education, identifies approximately one hundred issues related to this new approach across seven different disciplines, namely philosophy, history, sociology, psychology, anthropology, ecology, and economics (Dave, 1976). A crucial element in the writings of theorists from this initial period is their emphasis on the vital role of formal education within this new paradigm, specifically to prevent lifelong education from being perceived as "competing" with schools, and to ensure that the proposed approach does not undermine formal education institutions, and much more importantly, formal education as a public good (Dave, 1973).

4. **Adult Education: Which way forward?**

As the title of this section suggests, adult education both as an institution and as a social practice has undergone a significant evolution over the past 150 years. The question we seek to address here is to what extent, and more importantly in what ways, adult education can remain meaningful within the context of the new paradigm of the lifelong learning continuum. To phrase the question differently: Is the current form of Adult Education sufficient to fulfill its mission? As indicated by the preceding discussion, adult education is not synonymous with lifelong learning and education; it clearly constitutes a distinct domain within the continuum. This means that, on the one hand, it represents a distinct academic field with its own theoretical tradition, and on the other hand, a domain of educational activities characterized by specific design methods and educational approaches. Despite the osmosis with other types, levels, and forms of education within the framework of the lifelong learning continuum, adult education remains significant as it represents the area of the educational continuum that validates the effectiveness and success of lifelong learning policies. If access to preschool education is considered the most reliable predictive index for lifelong learning policies (Karalis, 2009), then access to adult education is undoubtedly a performative index, an index for implementation. We note that in the following sections, we will attempt to explore some of the key issues concerning the role and importance of adult education within the lifelong learning continuum, rather than the potential forms and modalities through which it will be delivered (face-to-face, e-learning, synchronous and asynchronous modes, etc.).

4.1 A Continuum for Adult Education too?

Traditionally, adult education was considered to consist of two distinct areas: continuing vocational training and general adult education (sometimes manifesting as liberal adult education). More generally, it was thought to have two pillars—one connected to the

economy and profession, and a second associated with the personal sphere. Even though such a division is not epistemologically valid, it has served as an analytical tool for policy analysis in several cases. Today, within the framework of the lifelong learning continuum, the boundaries between these two pillars have become less distinct. For example, when examining the shift towards soft skills, it becomes evident that both the acquisition and application of most of these skills (such as communication, teamwork, digital or green skills) transcend the traditional division between the professional and personal spheres, creating an integrated framework – a continuum for these activities. Similarly, many of the core themes of one pillar now overlap with the other and vice versa, creating a continuum for educational programs of adult education. This trend has been evident since the 1970s, but its interpretation necessitates a different conceptual framework than the traditional one. The osmosis of adult education with other forms and types of education has resulted, among other things, in the exchange of practices with other forms and types of education. Practices such as accreditation and evaluation, traditionally linked to formal education, have become more pronounced in adult education programs compared to the pre-1970 period, while participatory teaching approaches are moving from adult education into formal education.

Another point for examination is the simultaneous participation in various educational settings, which is now much more common than in the past. An adult learner can simultaneously attend a graduate program at a university (formal education), a continuing education program (non-formal education), and acquire new knowledge on a subject from an online source (informal education). This simultaneous engagement requires different learning attitudes and behaviors, something that was not very typical in the recent past. The frequent changes in job content have resulted in work time and space also becoming, to some extent, educational spaces and times. As Jarvis stated, “lifelong learning became associated with workplace learning” (2014, p. 53). Therefore, the concept of the continuum extends to all three types of educational activities within Coombs' typology.

4.2 Participation – in what and how?

As Crowther (2000, p. 479) stated years ago, “perhaps the most ploughed furrow in adult education research is that of participation.” The exploration of both the rates of adults engaging in educational activities and the reasons and barriers to participation has been a systematic focus of study for over eighty years. As Mezirow (1971) noted in his overview of research on participation by Brunner, Wilder, Kirchner, and Newberry (1959), there were already over 600 research papers in the United States by the late 1950s addressing the characteristics, interests, and motivations of adults in educational activities. The long-standing effort to develop a model that accurately captures or predicts adult participation has proven fruitless, to the extent that we might characterize this issue as the "Holy Grail" of adult education research—nobody knows if it exists, and up to now, no one has been able to predict its form if it were to be found. Merriam and Caffarella, after a comprehensive review of participation models, emphasize that “The value of these models in explaining and predicting participation has yet to be determined through research and testing” (1999, p. 71).

For this reason, research has primarily focused on documenting participation rates and investigating the reasons that encourage participation as well as the barriers that impede it. This focus has gained momentum especially after the seminal works of Houle (1961) and Boshier (1971), which established a new foundation for measuring participation. Historically, studies on participation have emphasized the reasons for participation, where nearly all research indicates a strong connection to professional development. While job-related reasons may not always be the primary factor, they are undoubtedly among the strongest motivations (see indicatively, Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007; Karalis, 2017);

however, other types of motivations also rank highly (such as those associated with the intrinsic value of learning, the formation of social networks, and active citizenship).

Perhaps the most critical finding across all these studies, regardless of context, is that participation in adult education is not evenly distributed; rather, it is characterized by pronounced inequalities. Specifically, the most privileged learners and those with educational qualifications corresponding to higher levels of formal education participate at significantly higher rates in adult education. Thus, while the stated goal of lifelong learning and adult education policies in the EU is to reduce inequalities through participation, the actual outcomes often contradict this aim, as the more educated individuals tend to participate more, leading adult education to function as an amplifier of existing socio-economic inequalities. This phenomenon, is referred to by Singh (2024, p. 3) as the Matthew Effect in adult learning: "The Matthew effect implies when the socially observable phenomenon of an increasing gap among the advantaged and the disadvantaged in society results from initial advantages and disadvantages." In the case of education, "the effect is widely visible when high-skilled, high-paid learners from advantageous socio-economic backgrounds manage to avail opportunities and advantages in learning when the low-skilled, low-paid, unemployed learners coming from disadvantaged (poor, rural, e.t.c.) backgrounds are unable to avail opportunities and advantages in learning". This situation essentially creates a vicious circle for citizens from the poorest socio-economic backgrounds, which neutral adult learning policies cannot effectively address, thereby perpetuating a lifelong widening of educational inequalities.

Interesting conclusions have also emerged from a research program measuring participation in Greece (2011–2019) during the period of economic crisis, conducted by the research institutes of the Trade Union Confederation and the Confederation of Professional, Craftsmen, and Merchants of Greece. This research revealed that participation rates reflect the evolution and intensity of the crisis (Karalis, 2017). In support of Singh's argument regarding the Matthew Effect in relation to educational and socio-economic inequalities, the participation measurements in this study show that job insecurity is another factor affecting participation. Those employed in more stable and safe work environments are more likely to participate in adult education programs. In this way, yet another vicious circle emerges between insiders and outsiders in the labor market, as the unemployed have fewer opportunities to participate in reskilling and upskilling programs, further exacerbating their already precarious position in the labor market. To address all the inequality trends mentioned, the only solution lies in implementing compensatory policies, that is, affirmative action policies in the provision of adult education programs, aimed at mitigating the impact of entrenched inequalities throughout the life course.

Beyond the issues highlighted by the "traditional" approach to participation—namely, the enrollment of adults in programs of non-formal and sometimes formal education—it appears that participation, both as a concept and as a measurable entity, is entering a fuzzier and more fluid dimension. The emergence of numerous new educational environments of informal learning reshapes the concept of participation. For instance, can attending a MOOC program or experiencing a cultural activity via virtual reality in a museum be considered participation in adult education? In such cases, are the motives, reasons, and barriers the same as in the traditional approach to participation, or do they take on a different form? What factors may influence not only attendance and engagement in such informal educational activities but also dropout rates? Within the paradigm shift we have analyzed, another area of investigation concerns what is considered and measured as participation, as well as the internal structure of this concept. In fact, we may be witnessing a retrospective vindication of Coombs, who, as early as 1968, attributed educational characteristics to

informal learning, naming education—and not merely learning—as the third type of his typology.

4.3 New responsibilities in a changing landscape

The rapid changes in technology and the economy have clearly made lifelong learning essential for economically active citizens. As we saw in the previous section, employment-related reasons and motives for participation rank among the top priorities for learners. This, of course, justifies the emphasis on funding such programs through European policies but does not justify the underfunding of general/liberal adult education programs. At this point, it is important to acknowledge that the massification of education—explored earlier—and the fact that we now have the most educated population in human history have led to rapid technological progress but not to a corresponding advancement in the moral and political spheres. In this regard, for several decades, we have witnessed growing disillusionment with the expectation that broader access to education would lead to better societies. The rapid and ever-intensifying rise of populism in many parts of the world suggests the presence of an elephant in the room, which could be assumed to be the failure of education—both formal and non-formal—to cultivate citizens who participate more actively and engage in rational, argument-based discourse; in other words, citizens with critical thinking skills. One might further ask why we are witnessing a continuous rise in populist parties, some of which even participate in governments, and why a significant portion of the population is drawn to anti-scientific and even conspiracy-driven interpretations of social phenomena. The discussions in earlier sections regarding a paradigm shift may help explain this phenomenon. If we view learning and education as a continuum, then the problem may lie in an axiomatically optimistic perception of the potential of formal education, accompanied by an underestimation of the impact of informal forms of education—particularly that provided by the internet.

However, the issue here likely lies in the absence of critical approaches in education, as well as in the failure to account for the role of informal education in shaping active citizens. When examining the impact of informal education, and more specifically that of the internet and social media, we find ourselves in what could be described as a perfect storm for critical thinking, shaped by three conditions. The first is the equivalence of opinions, meaning that scientific and anti-scientific perspectives enjoy the same level of acceptance and dissemination. The second is the way social media algorithms function, directing individuals toward content that aligns with their existing preferences, ultimately creating echo chambers that reinforce a single perspective. The third, and most recent, factor is the advancement of artificial intelligence, which while facilitating information retrieval, also has the potential to shape and internalize opinions as if they were one's own.

Within this context, adult education assumes a crucial role in the framework of lifelong learning—that of fostering critical thinking and critical reflection. This role undoubtedly functions in a remedial capacity, addressing potential shortcomings of formal education and mitigating the influence of informal education, particularly from social media. Critical reflection can be cultivated through well-designed educational interventions that emphasize the learning process rather than merely focusing on learning outcomes. Such interventions should aim to develop what Mezirow (1997, p. 5) describes in transformative learning theory as a "more inclusive, discriminating, self-reflective, and integrative of experience" frame of reference—that is, a set of habits of mind and points of view that enable individuals to engage in a more mature and critical analysis of reality, making them more resilient to the influences previously discussed and better equipped for civic participation. The cultivation of critical thinking skills could serve as a longitudinal theme, aligning with the foundational mission and

core mandate of adult education— which is none other than the continuous education of citizens so they can first understand and then shape the world.

5. **Concluding Remarks**

In this article, we have argued that the major and rapid changes in education over the past few decades can no longer be adequately interpreted using traditional tools. Drawing on key texts, such as the Faure Report, alongside other theoretical analyses and empirical data, we arrived at the conclusion that these changes are not merely part of a new understanding of learning and education— but rather constitute a paradigm shift. To interpret these developments, both within education itself and in its relationship with society, it is essential to account for the osmosis between formal education and institutions of non-formal and, most notably, informal education, which now play an increasingly significant role in shaping citizens' education. From this perspective, longstanding demands, such as ensuring education for all and recognizing education as a public good, now take on a broader and more inclusive form. Beyond formal education, this imperative extends to the entirety of educational resources and citizens' access to them.

Within this new landscape, adult education is entrusted with new responsibilities. Although it has always played a remedial role in addressing educational deficits among citizens, this function has now become more pronounced and even more critical than in the past. While the necessity of updating skills in relation to employment and professional development is undeniable, it cannot, if pursued in isolation, foster resilient and inclusive societies. Instead, adult education must focus on empowering citizens, cultivating critical thinking skills, and promoting the continuous dissemination of human intellectual achievements through critical literacies across various fields. These do not represent a new institutionalization of adult education, but rather a return to its roots.

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The contribution of apprenticeship to the transition from education to employment – the position of the Labour Institute of the General Confederation of Greek Workers

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Abstract

This paper examines the contribution of apprenticeship to the transition from education and training into employment, with a particular focus on the perspectives and policy proposals of the Labour Institute of the General Confederation of Greek Workers. In contemporary labour markets marked by technological change, demographic shifts, and evolving skill demands, young people face increasing difficulties securing stable and high-quality employment. Apprenticeship, as a structured form of work-based learning that combines classroom instruction with workplace experience, has emerged as a key mechanism for supporting smoother and more equitable school-to-work transitions. The study provides a historical overview of apprenticeship as a foundational mode of vocational learning and traces its evolution into modern systems integrated within national vocational education and training (VET) frameworks. It discusses the growing emphasis placed by European and international organisations on the development of high-quality apprenticeship systems and highlights the essential features of such systems, including strong labour-market relevance, clear regulatory frameworks, social dialogue, and meaningful pedagogical support. Quality assurance is presented as a continuous cycle requiring coordination, monitoring, and feedback to ensure that apprenticeship programmes meet learners' needs and labour-market expectations. Focusing on Greece, the paper analyses the main apprenticeship schemes currently implemented in the country, outlining their structure, target groups, learning arrangements, and certification pathways. Despite significant progress and institutional improvements, challenges persist regarding programme quality, workplace conditions, supervision, and alignment with labour-market needs. In response, the Labour Institute proposes a comprehensive set of policy measures aimed at strengthening the governance, quality, and attractiveness of apprenticeship. These include establishing a registry of eligible companies, training workplace supervisors, enhancing social partner involvement, improving curriculum relevance, ensuring adequate compensation, and implementing robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. The paper concludes that high-quality apprenticeship is not only a tool for easing the transition to employment but also an essential component of a broader strategy for skills development, decent work, and inclusive economic growth.

Keywords: Apprenticeship; Work-based learning; School-to-work transition; Vocational education and training (VET); Skills formation

1. The Transition from Education and Training into the Contemporary Labour Market

The major economic and social transformations of recent years have affected the overall stability of workers in the labour market; however, their impact has been much more pronounced on the employment of young people, whose position in the labour market has become increasingly vulnerable and their integration into it has grown more difficult and problematic. The process of fully integrating young people into adult society and the workforce is no longer automatic, nor is it clearly defined (INE GSEE, 2025). It now appears to be part of a long journey, which begins after young people graduate from the education system and certainly does not end with their initial entry into employment. Continuous upgrading of their skills is now required, aligned with the demands of the economy, society, and the local labour market.

The economic crisis resulted in a sharp rise in unemployment, especially among young people in Europe. This reignited the social and scientific debate on how to make the transition to employment more effective by developing systems aimed at upgrading the skills of the workforce. At the same time, the health crisis brought about significant changes to the digital and other skills required of the workforce. Technological developments (digitalisation, automation, artificial intelligence), climate change, ongoing globalisation, ageing population, refugee and migratory flows, all shape emerging trends that affect the organisation of work and the skills required of human resources, with consequences for the transition from education and training to employment (ILO, 2024).

At the institutional level, the skills required of the workforce are developed through initial and continuing education as well as through vocational training. The process of moving from initial education and training to employment, i.e. the initial transition, is only one of many that individuals may need to make during their working lives. The Eurofound study (2021) does not limit itself to the school-to-work transition, but includes multiple transition scenarios, which depend on each young person's background and circumstances. These include transitions from unemployment or inactivity to employment, and from temporary to permanent employment.

All forms of transition into employment are therefore recognised, covering the entire spectrum between leaving education and achieving stable labour market integration. The transition can be defined as the set of institutions, structures, procedures and policy tools linked to this process, such as education policy, education and training systems, career guidance and counselling mechanisms and the organisation of the apprenticeship systems (Smyth et al., 2001).

In the past, the transition mechanism represented the traditional pathway from graduation into the labour market, predominantly into permanent job positions. The skills acquired in the educational environment were generally sufficient for subsequent employment. Today, the transition mechanism offers a variety of pathways and alternative routes that facilitate movement into employment in a more flexible manner, responding to evolving skill requirements. We refer specifically to periods during which young people move from an educational environment to a work environment. According to OECD (1998), the transition period begins in the first year when less than 75% of a given age cohort remains in education and ends in the first year when 50% of the cohort is employed rather than enrolled in education. In practice, the transition process starts while individuals are still attending Vocational Education and Training (VET) and may extend up to the age of 30.

It has been widely documented that the transition is facilitated when students are more closely linked to workplaces through VET programmes and/or work-based learning

(apprenticeship, internship/placement, or school-based work simulations). In fact, it has been observed that in countries where work-based learning constitutes a strong component of their education policy, their capacity to respond to skill needs and to address rising unemployment is stronger. The economic crisis highlighted this issue (Cedefop/OECD, 2021), prompting renewed global attention to work-based learning as a policy instrument for upgrading skills and facilitating the labour market integration of young people (Axmann & Hoffmann, 2013).

For this reason, in recent years, governments and international organisations (EU, ILO, OECD, UNESCO, etc.) have formulated policies and invested significant resources in improving the provision of work-based learning programmes, with the aim of making these forms of programmes a conscious choice of educational and professional orientation for more learners—both young and increasingly adult. Particular emphasis has been placed on dual-system apprenticeship programmes, featuring alternating learning between school-based and workplace environments (Cedefop, 2024). Given the substantial and ongoing efforts by international organisations to define, promote, and fund apprenticeship programmes in diverse contexts, many scholars support the existence of a "global apprenticeship agenda," despite varying priorities and approaches (Vanderhoven, 2023).

However, following the initial years of implementing the relevant institutional frameworks and making financial investments to expand apprenticeship programmes, social partners and experts have raised concerns regarding issues such as:

- programmes that did not meet expected standards,
- poorly structured programmes, programmes that were inadequate in relation to identified labour market needs,
- limited access for some apprentices to employment rights and social protection (Cedefop, 2018).

At the same time, it has frequently been observed that work-based learning is sometimes used as a pretext for providing low-paid labour or even for substituting permanent job positions. Added to this are the evolving working conditions, which have become a focal point of debate concerning the future of work and the ways in which it is shaped by technological advancements, the twin transition (digital and green), and the corresponding skill requirements (Cedefop, 2023).

2. A Historical Overview of Workplace Education

Before the Industrial Revolution, the primary mechanism through which skills were passed on across generations was apprenticeship—a relationship linking a skilled adult craftsman with a young person who was taught the trade. Apprentices spent most of their day in the workplace, learning the craft. Working alongside the master craftsman and more experienced apprentices, they gradually acquired practical skills, often through imitation and guided learning. In fact, where apprenticeship was regulated and institutionalised, it played a significant role in the Industrial Revolution, as properly trained craftsmen boosted the productive potential of their countries. A notable example is the Statute of Artisans of England (1562), which set out the parameters of apprenticeship and contributed to the production of highly skilled craftsmen fuelling industrial growth (Wallis, 2008).

During the 19th century, with the emergence of the mass compulsory education systems, a significant part of vocational skills shifted from workplace learning to school-based learning. This trend solidified in the 20th century, when specialised skills became key to economic

development, leading to more structured education and training environments and less reliance on informal workplace learning (Lintzeris, 2020). Within this context, in parallel with the development of VET, the labour market evolved into an arena in which workers could offer their labour—and therefore their skills and qualifications—in exchange for remuneration.

However, this trend is shifting once again, with work-based learning, particularly through the provision of apprenticeships, attracting the interest of most EU member states. In Greece, the apprenticeship system has been operating as a distinct form of VET since the 1950s, primarily through the programmes of the Vocational Schools (EPAS) of the former OAED, now the Public Employment Service (DYPA)**.** In recent years this provision has expanded. Although the interest in Greece in apprenticeship can be dated back to the 1950s, it was in the mid-2010s that renewed interest, both from the state as well as from social partners, can be identified. At that time, social partners developed initiatives and acquired expertise in the field, shaping a common approach towards apprenticeship (Karoulas, et al., 2025).

3. Towards a Common European Approach to Apprenticeship

According to the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop, 2024), apprenticeship is defined as *"systematic, long-term training alternating periods at the workplace and in an education or training institution."* Compared to other forms of work-based learning, apprenticeships require a balanced distribution of responsibilities between workplace and educational environments, ensuring strong and effective connections. Companies are expected to take on educational responsibilities and to implement their share of the investment in apprenticeships (Cedefop, 2015).

Seeking to contribute to the promotion of a common European understanding, in 2018, the Council of the European Union issued a Recommendation on a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships (EFQEA), which clarifies what constitutes an apprenticeship within formal VET programmes. Such programmes must:

- combine learning in educational/training institutions with substantial work-based learning in companies or other workplaces;
- lead to nationally recognised vocational qualifications;
- be based on an agreement outlining the rights and obligations of the apprentice, the employer, and, where relevant, the VET institution;
- ensure remuneration or other compensation for the apprentice for the work-based component.

The above points do not simply summarise technical requirements, but outline the essential characteristics of genuine apprenticeship systems. Accordingly, Cedefop (2019) published the Analytical Framework for Apprenticeships, in which it examines the position of apprenticeship programmes within national VET systems compared to other forms of work-based learning. It concludes that the positioning of apprenticeship within the broader VET system largely determines participants' expectations of what an apprenticeship programme can -and should- achieve. While a common European approach provides orientation point, stakeholders within each

national system need to agree within their context on what apprenticeship is and what it is designed to do.

4. A Critical Perspective on Quality in Apprenticeship

Providing high-quality apprenticeship programmes is essential for achieving the goal of facilitating young people's transition from the education system to the labour market. In particular, the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2017) has promoted the concept of a *quality apprenticeship system* to emphasise both the quality and the labour-market relevance of training. More specifically, quality apprenticeship is a distinct form of VET that combines workplace-based and off-the-job learning, enabling learners from all social backgrounds to acquire the knowledge, skills, and competences required for practising a specific occupation.

Quality apprenticeship is regulated and financed through laws, collective agreements and policy decisions resulting from social dialogue. It requires a written contract that defines the roles and responsibilities of both the apprentice and the employer, while ensuring for the apprentice remuneration and social protection. Within this framework, and following a clearly defined and structured period of training and the successful completion of a formal assessment, apprentices obtain a recognised qualification.

Although there are many ways in which young people can participate in a combination of workplace and non-workplace learning, the ILO's approach to quality apprenticeship systems is based on six core building blocks:

- meaningful social dialogue
- a stable regulatory framework
- clear roles and responsibilities
- fair funding arrangements
- strong labour-market relevance
- inclusion

In this way, quality apprenticeship contributes to promoting the ILO's "Decent Work Agenda" (2017, 2024), offering a mechanism for increasing young people's access to social protection, strengthening quality employment, and improving workers' bargaining power and agency in the labour market (Vanderhoven, 2023).

Apprenticeship can only operate effectively when its quality is ensured throughout all stages. Quality assurance is not a static procedure but a continuous circle of improvement. The European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for VET (EQAVET), established by the European Parliament and Council (2009), introduces a dynamic quality cycle consisting of four stages: planning, implementation, evaluation, and review**.** This model enhances feedback mechanisms and the adaptation of apprenticeship programmes to evolving labour-market needs and learners' expectations, thus reinforcing their effectiveness.

EQAVET provides a toolkit with quality criteria and indicative descriptors at both VET system and provider levels, which each member state may adapt to its needs. The objective is to support, monitor and improve quality based on shared European references. In Greece, within the activities of the National Organisation for Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) as the National Reference Point for EQAVET, a model has been developed for assuring the quality of work-based learning certification (EOPPEP, 2017).

According to the UNESCO-UNEVOC global network (2020), for the EQAVET quality cycle to function meaningfully, it must be guided by specific principles. These include ensuring regulated learning and working conditions co-designed with social partners, relevance of apprenticeship to labour-market needs and professions, combining real work with training in an educational institution, provision of nationally recognised certification for apprentices, systematic monitoring of programmes, promotion of accessibility and non-discrimination, continuous adaptation to labour-market shifts, and, as a result of the above, attractiveness of apprenticeship programmes to both learners and employers.

Aligned with these conceptual guidelines, the European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships (EFQEA) defines 14 quality criteria that can be used for compliance checks, self-assessment, and programme improvement. These criteria primarily concern learning and working conditions, such as a written apprentice-employer contract, the existence of clearly defined learning outcomes, pedagogical support by adequately trained mentors, learning in the workplace, adequate remuneration, social protection and health and safety provisions for apprentices.

Additionally, EFQEA includes criteria concerning the broader context, such as a regulatory framework resulting from social dialogue, support mechanisms for participating enterprises, flexible pathways and mobility for apprentices, career-guidance services, transparency in the availability of apprenticeship placements, reliable assessment of learning outcomes and tracking of graduates' progression paths. These criteria provide a basis for shaping apprenticeship policies across the EU (European Commission, 2018). In an era where labour markets are being reshaped by the green and digital transitions, as well as the need for recovery supported by quality jobs, these criteria gain even greater importance (Mella & Werna, 2023).

In Greece, the concept of quality in apprenticeship has acquired particular significance following the introduction of the "Post-Secondary Year – Apprenticeship Class" in Vocational Upper Secondary Schools (EPAL), established by Joint Ministerial Decision 26385/2017 (FEK 491/B/20-02-2017). The relevant quality framework defines the obligations of all involved stakeholders, the terms and conditions for implementing apprenticeship, as well as the mechanisms for supervision and evaluation. EOPPEP has been assigned responsibility for developing monitoring and certification systems, ensuring that learning outcomes are recognised and aligned with European standards.

However, beyond the institutional framework, the actual quality of apprenticeships depends on how programmes are implemented in practice. In this regard, analyses by the Labour Institute of the GSEE (INE GSEE) provide valuable documentation and critical insights. INE GSEE (2021, 2024) highlights that, although apprenticeship contributes to young people's transition to the labour market and despite the positive steps taken at the governance level, there are still significant challenges regarding the quality of the programmes provided, the supervision of participating enterprises and the protection of apprentices.

The Greek experience shows that quality apprenticeship cannot be guaranteed though institutional regulations alone. A culture of cooperation and trust among schools, enterprises and social partners is essential. Developing mechanisms for monitoring, transparency and evaluation, combined with empowering teachers and workplace mentors, can create a stable and equitable learning environment. Only under these conditions can apprenticeship function as a real pathway to quality education and integration into the labour market, rather than as a temporary employment measure.

5. Apprenticeship Schemes in Greece

Greece currently implements the following apprenticeship schemes:

5.1 Apprenticeship in Vocational Schools (EPAS)

Apprenticeships within the EPAS of DYPA are implemented as a pathway to obtaining a Level 3 specialty certificate under the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). Practical training takes place alongside study and it is aimed at junior secondary school graduates aged 15–23. A key feature is the dual system, which combines theoretical and practical education in the classroom with learning in the workplace. The employment contract is signed by the apprentice, the employer, and the DYPA (represented by the school principal). It provides full employment and insurance rights (since 1983, under Law 1346/1983). Apprentices work 6 hours/day, earning 75% of the minimum daily wage of an unskilled worker. Therefore, there is a full correlation between salary and working hours. Work may take place 4, 5 or 6 days per week. Annual participation in this apprenticeship scheme averages 7.500-8.000 apprentices.

5.2 Apprenticeship Class of Vocational Upper Secondary Schools (EPAL)

The Post-Secondary Apprenticeship Class of EPAL targets EPAL graduates aged 18 and above. It is implemented after obtaining the Level 4 specialty certificate of NQF. The apprenticeship period runs from 1 September to 31 August, covering a minimum of 156 working days. Apprentices attend classes at the School Laboratory Centre once a week for 7 hours, while the remaining 4 days of the week are spent in apprenticeship placements in public or private-sector companies. Upon completion of the programme and following successful certification exams, apprentices upgrade their qualification to Level 5 of the NQF. Apprentices receive renumeration that corresponds to 95% of the daily wage of the unskilled worker. This apprenticeship scheme was launched in the 2016–2017 school year, with participation rates increasing yearly. According to data from the Ministry of Education, 3.500 students enrolled in 2017-2018, while 6.945 students enrolled in 2024–2025, showing a steady increase over time.

5.3 Apprenticeship and Practical Training in Schools of Advanced Vocational Training (SAEK, former IEK)

SAEK courses consist of four semesters of theoretical instruction and laboratory training in the educational institution, plus a period of practical training or an apprenticeship programme, which is a prerequisite for the successful completion of the programme and for obtaining the Vocational Training Certificate. After acquiring the certificate, trainees undergo further certification by EOPPEP to obtain a Level 5 NQF specialty certificate. Although SAEK originally planned apprenticeship to cover at least 50% of total training duration, this was not ultimately implemented. Instead, practical training/internship scheme was chosen due to its simpler administrative organisation, easier in-company implementation and reduced bureaucratic oversight in comparison to the apprenticeship scheme.

Currently, practical training lasts 960 hours, either consecutively or in segments. A contract is signed between the trainee and employer, and it is validated by the SAEK principal. The contract specifies the terms of implementation of the workplace learning programme and its duration. Trainees receive compensation equal to 80% of the daily wage of an unskilled worker (Law 3938/B/2021).

6. A Visionary Approach to Apprenticeship: Policy Proposals by the Labour Institute of the General Confederation of Greek Workers for Developing Apprenticeships as a System for Enhancing Human Resource Skills

In addition to international organisations and governments, trade unions have also taken a clear position on the issue of quality apprenticeship. The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC, 2015) is committed to the vision of high-quality apprenticeship as a core element of skills development for both today's and tomorrow's workforce, and as a crucial pillar for building economies that are more inclusive, fair, sustainable, and prosperous. Recognizing the differences in institutional frameworks across national skills development systems, trade unions have endorsed learning and training based on specific principles that must be met to ensure that the vision of high-quality apprenticeship benefits apprentices, the companies that employ them, and society as a whole.

Similarly, the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC, 2016) advocates for the establishment of a European Quality Framework for Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning, aimed at enhancing the quality, attractiveness, and effectiveness of apprenticeship programmes across Europe. The ETUC observes that despite significant political interest in apprenticeship programmes, practical implementation often falls short, with emphasis placed more on the number of positions rather than on the quality of training. Consequently, it urges the EU and its member states to adopt a European quality framework with clear standards and criteria, to strengthen the use of European quality assurance tools, and to implement an ambitious mobility programme. This approach aims to ensure that apprenticeships in Europe provide high-quality education, protection, and future opportunities.

A key requirement in the transition from education to the labour market is the formulation of policy objectives for apprenticeship. These objectives determine whether apprentices are treated as a short-term resource, human capital for immediate employment requiring training tailored only to a specific company's needs, or as long-term capital, that is future employees equipped with strong and versatile professional qualifications and skills, capable of contributing across multiple companies or sectors. To enhance the value of apprenticeship, reinforce the relationship between employers and apprentices, and preserve the robustness and competitiveness of national development strategies, adequate resources must be directed toward governance, legislation, and the standards that applied policy should adopt.

Following bilateral dialogue between Greek and German trade unions (as part of a joint action carried out through the Future4VET programme, in which the Labour Institute of the General Confederation of Greek Workers participated), quality apprenticeship has been identified as a key strategic tool for ensuring a successful transition from education to employment. Quality apprenticeship has the potential to generate substantial multiplier effects for both trainees and companies, thereby creating added value for the labour market and the real economy as a whole.

In the effort to enhance the quality of apprenticeship in Greece and address the challenges associated with its implementation, the Labour Institute puts forward the following measures (IFTP et al., 2024):

1. Creation of a Registry of Companies eligible to host apprentices. These companies must ensure that they possess the minimum level of equipment and infrastructure required to meet the conditions of the apprenticeship contract. The aim is not to introduce a formal certification or bureaucratic process, but to ensure an assessment of the company's readiness for apprenticeship, for example through a visit

by a qualified official. For very small enterprises with a limited range of activities, the possibility of forming a network could be explored, enabling a trainee to complete their apprenticeship across multiple companies and to acquire expertise in different aspects of their field from each one.

2. Training of the company-based "Trainer/Supervisor" who will be responsible for guiding and monitoring the trainee's apprenticeship. The person designated to implement the provisions of the apprenticeship contract should, through a brief training programme, be appropriately informed about the education system, the apprenticeship framework, the obligations of the company and the apprentices, and other issues relevant to ensuring effective quality assurance and evaluation.

3. The drafting of the Apprenticeship Contract should be subject to consultation and agreement with the social partners. The contract should clearly define the obligations and commitments of all parties, with respect both to the quality and to the implementation of the apprenticeship, including explicit educational objectives and responsibilities. It should ensure educational quality by guaranteeing compatibility between the training content and the position offered within the company. Furthermore, it should safeguard the rights of apprentices as well as those of existing employees in companies that undertake to serve as apprenticeship providers. The apprenticeship contract must be explicitly integrated into the regulatory framework for apprenticeships.

4. The presence of a trade union observer/representative, where available. The substitution of existing permanent positions with apprentices, or the use of apprentices as a low-cost workforce without full employment rights, constitutes a dysfunction that arises in companies which regard apprenticeship primarily as a cost-saving mechanism rather than as a productive and developmental process from which they ultimately benefit. The involvement of a trade union observer—implemented on the basis of a specific protocol—can help prevent such practices and ensure compliance with the apprenticeship contract, guaranteeing that apprentices undertake tasks relevant to their training rather than unrelated auxiliary duties. Such monitoring also increases the likelihood that apprentices will be retained in the role for which they have been trained, rather than being replaced by new apprentices.

5. The curricula of apprenticeship programmes should be developed on the basis of labour market needs, identified through a systematic needs' assessment. Where an occupational profile exists for the relevant specialisation, it is essential that the curriculum be aligned with that profile.

6. A holistic approach to the apprenticeship system—including accompanying and support services—should be adopted by all institutions that offer work-based learning as part of the educational process. Educational institutions should also enable trainees to reorient towards other fields of study, if they so wish, on the basis of the professional guidance provided.

7. There is a need to enhance the attractiveness of apprenticeship and to foster a shift in attitudes toward it at both the family and company levels. Families should not perceive apprenticeship as an inferior educational or professional pathway suitable only for "less capable" students. A change in family perceptions can, in turn,

encourage companies to regard apprenticeship as a genuine educational process rather than a source of labour substitution. To this end, awareness-raising campaigns could promote apprenticeship as an educational route equal to other pathways, thereby supporting its quality implementation and raising expectations among both apprentices and companies.

8. A key element in ensuring the quality of apprenticeship is the implementation of systematic monitoring and evaluation. Quality assurance requires the consistent tracking and assessment of learning within apprenticeship schemes, using clearly defined methodologies and tools. It is recommended that these methodologies assess learning from multiple perspectives, incorporating the views of both the school-based instructor or supervisor and the company-based trainer or supervisor.

9. It is essential to ensure—and, where applicable, to continue ensuring—that apprentices receive fair compensation across all providers implementing work-based learning as part of the educational process.

10. Effective networking and governance among all stakeholders (DYPA, the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Education, and other bodies that provide education or training in the form of apprenticeship) is necessary to establish a unified understanding and approach to apprenticeship-related issues. Moreover, such coordination can facilitate the dissemination of good practices already implemented by other stakeholders, particularly in professional sectors with distinct employment characteristics, such as healthcare, tourism, and shipping.

7. Conclusions

The benefits of implementing the above proposals are far-reaching, contributing to the reduction of unemployment, the enhancement of labour mobility, the protection of professional rights, the regulation of labour relations, and the strengthening of national economic competitiveness. Apprentices will gain access to the knowledge, skills, and competences necessary to respond effectively to an ever-changing productive environment, thereby reinforcing their professional identity and maturity, as well as their position in the labour market. At the same time, companies will gain access to a sufficiently skilled and capable workforce, enhancing both their productivity and adaptability.

Consequently, the effective implementation of quality apprenticeship programmes constitutes a key strategic instrument for facilitating the transition from education and training to employment, as well as for achieving a positive alignment between the supply and demand for skills in the labour market. However, beyond its role as a strategic tool for labour market transition, UNESCO's (2021) report on the new social contract in education underscores that the right to quality education throughout life is fundamental. This right applies equally and explicitly to the level of apprenticeship.

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Motivational Drivers and Curriculum Relevance Perceptions among EPAL Post-Secondary Apprentices: A Quantitative Study in Achaia, Greece

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Abstract

This study examines learners' perceptions of the EPAL Post-Secondary Apprenticeship Year in Greece, focusing on their motivations for participation and the perceived relevance of the programme's curriculum to their interests and local labor-market needs. Using a quantitative research design, data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed electronically to apprentices in the prefecture of Achaia. Convenience sampling was employed, resulting in a sample of 96 participants from four EPAL schools selected for their representativeness in terms of apprenticeship class offerings. The questionnaire included closed-ended items aligned with the research questions, and its reliability was supported through pilot test–retest procedures. The findings indicate that learners' motivations are predominantly credential-oriented, with the acquisition of the Level 5 Diploma emerging as the primary reason for participation. Additional ranking points for public-sector employment and financial incentives also constitute significant motivators, whereas employment-related and intrinsic learning motives appear less central. Regarding curriculum alignment, apprentices report high levels of correspondence between their personal interests and the programme's theoretical, practical, and subject-specific components. Practical training, in particular, shows the strongest alignment, and the curriculum is widely perceived as responsive to local labor-market needs. Overall, the results suggest that the Apprenticeship Year effectively supports learners' vocational goals and labor-market integration, while highlighting the importance of continued curriculum refinement, enhanced employer collaboration, and strengthened career guidance services.

Keywords: Apprenticeship, Vocational Education, Learner Motivation, Work-Based Learning

1. Introduction

A persistent gap between education and the labor market continues to raise concerns about how young people transition into employment in knowledge-based societies (Hanusheket al., 2011). In the 21st century, individuals are expected to be adaptable, creative, and capable of critical thinking, collaboration, and intercultural communication. Apprenticeships have emerged as an effective policy tool for addressing these demands (Ryan, 2003).

Apprenticeship programmes offer learners real-world experience, opportunities for teamwork, entrepreneurial skills, and a deeper understanding of workplace requirements (Cedefop, 2015; Kuczera, 2017). They facilitate a smoother transition into professional life

(Galvani, 2017) and contribute to personal development and social maturity (Vickerstaff, 2007). Central to their success are teachers and workplace supervisors, who deliver instruction, mentor apprentices, and ensure the relevance and quality of learning experiences (Wilson & Pretorius, 2017; Vassiliou & Andor, 2013).

International evidence consistently highlights apprenticeships as a highly effective mechanism for supporting young people's entry into the labor market (Vosniakou, 2017). They respond to the widening gap between employer skill requirements and student competencies, at a time when youth unemployment is increasing and economic competitiveness is declining (Fragkoulis & Anagnou, 2018).

Within formal education systems, apprenticeships integrate institutional learning with structured, workplace-based training. Work-based learning encompasses pedagogical and assessment practices that bring together theoretical instruction and practical experience (Bruindiers et al., 2010). Through this synergy, apprenticeships promote skills acquisition, reduce youth unemployment, support innovation and entrepreneurship, and foster social inclusion.

The effectiveness of apprenticeship programmes depends largely on the pedagogical, professional, and supervisory competence of teachers and workplace mentors. High-quality supervision is considered a core quality-assurance requirement in vocational education (Wombleet al., 1995). Nevertheless, research on the roles, qualifications, employment conditions, and professional development of educators involved in apprenticeships remains fragmented (European Commission, 2017; Greenan et al., 1998).

Historically, apprenticeships date back to medieval European guilds, which regulated professional training and labor competition (Ogilvie, 2004). Contemporary systems—most notably the German model—have institutionalised dual vocational structures supported by governments, employers, and labor unions (ILO, 2012; Vosniakou, 2017).

2. Apprenticeship Models Across Europe

Apprenticeship-type programmes are well-established across European countries. In several states—including the Czech Republic, Poland, and Spain—apprenticeships coexist with school-based vocational training schemes, where learners are required to spend a number of hours or days in real workplaces when school facilities cannot adequately support the development of specific skills (Farmakis, 2019).

Six countries (Denmark, Estonia, Greece, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia) operate dual apprenticeship systems that combine institutional learning with sustained workplace training. Furthermore, thirteen European countries have introduced apprenticeship pathways at tertiary level, demonstrating the expansion of apprenticeship as a recognized route for advanced professional education. In many cases, these systems are relatively recent or have undergone reform in order to increase flexibility and better align vocational education and training with the needs of modern production systems. Such reforms have taken place in countries including Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia (European Commission, 2013; European Union, 2012).

Germany represents one of the most established apprenticeship traditions, where the labor market is closely integrated with vocational training. The dual system provides broad foundational training and develops the specialized skills required for specific

occupations. Apprentices generally train within companies for three to four days per week and attend vocational school for up to two days, under a formal training contract. Programmes typically last three years, and the suitability of enterprises and in-company trainers is monitored by competent authorities.

Denmark's dual apprenticeship system is regarded as highly effective in facilitating the transition from education to employment. Apprentices often secure employment even before completing their training, frequently outperforming university graduates without practical experience. The system's success is attributed to strong engagement from social partners, close cooperation between schools and industry, and rigorous certification procedures leading to nationally recognized qualifications.

In Austria, apprenticeship aims to equip young people with professional qualifications and prepare them for employment by integrating them into real work processes. Programmes last between 24 and 48 months, with approximately 80% of learning taking place in the workplace and 20% in school settings. Notably, 76% of apprenticeship graduates find employment within three months of completion.

In Finland, apprenticeship forms part of upper-secondary vocational education and supports the acquisition of qualifications in both initial and continuing vocational training. Programmes typically last one to three years.

France has a long tradition of apprenticeship, dating back to the 1920s, with its modern framework established in 1971. Apprenticeship aims to deliver officially recognised professional qualifications and typically lasts between 12 and 36 months depending on the occupation and qualification level (or up to 48 months for apprentices with disabilities). Approximately 61% of apprentices enter employment immediately after completing their programme, and more than half secure permanent positions (European Commission, 2013; European Union, 2012).

3. Apprenticeship in Greece

3.1. Legislative Framework

Apprenticeship has been recently integrated into the Greek vocational education system, formalizing the dual model that alternates learning between the workplace and an educational structure. Law 4386/2016 and subsequent regulations define apprenticeship as a system in which apprentices enter into a formal Apprenticeship Contract, receive remuneration, and are covered by social insurance.

Ministerial Decision FB7/108652/K3/2021 specifies that apprentices participate in structured learning activities both in the workplace and at school, and that employers are required to provide training aligned with the official curriculum. Apprenticeship programmes are designed to lead to certification of professional knowledge, competencies, and skills, ensuring alignment with national qualifications and labor-market demands.

3.2. Structure of the Post-Secondary Apprenticeship Year (EPAL)

The Post-Secondary Apprenticeship Year for graduates of Vocational Upper Secondary Schools (EPAL) operates for one academic year as a dual learning system. Itincludes:

- 28 hours per week of workplace-based training over a minimum of four days
- 7 hours per week of school-based laboratory instruction
- 70 hours of preparatory courses for certification examinations

Apprentices receive 75% of the statutory minimum wage and full labor and insurance rights. Employers must appoint a certified workplace trainer who has completed specialized pedagogical training adapted to the apprenticeship context.

Assessment takes place both continuously at the workplace—documented weekly in the learning log—and through a final examination, which may include written tests, practical demonstrations of skills, or project presentations.

Workplace learning programmes are developed based on approved occupational standards for each specialty. Ministerial Decision 26412/2017 establishes the Quality Framework for VET curricula, emphasizing adult-learning principles, active learning, critical thinking, experiential learning, and learner-centred approaches, recognizing that apprentices typically bring prior educational and professional experiences to the learning process.

3.3. Programme Implementation and Governance

Participation in the Apprenticeship Year is optional and open to EPAL graduates who are not simultaneously engaged in other education, training, or employment. Management of the programme is carried out by the General Secretariat for Vocational Education, Training, Lifelong Learning and Youth, in cooperation with regional education directorates, EPAL schools, and School Laboratory Centres (EK).

Placement of apprentices in workplaces is organized by EPAL schools and Laboratory Centres in collaboration with the local Employment Promotion Centres (KPA) of OAED. Employers enter a formal agreement with apprentices and must comply with employment regulations.

The programme combines four days of workplace training with one day of specialized school-based instruction, thereby fulfilling both a professional role—facilitating graduates' labor-market integration—and a social role, supporting their transition to adulthood and active participation in economic and social life.

3.4. Regional Example: Achaia

Achaia hosts 13 EPAL schools (nine daytime, four evening). Participation has grown steadily, with:

- 240 apprentices
- 16 specialties
- 23 apprenticeship classes
- 160 cooperating employers
- 45 teachers involved

Completion rates exceed 92%, dropout remains below 8%, and certification success reaches 94–95%, demonstrating strong programme performance and labor-market relevance (Arachovitou, 2023).

4. Method

4.1.Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to investigate learners' perceptions of the EPAL Apprenticeship Program, focusing on their motivations for participation and the relevance of the program's curricular content to their interests and the needs of the local labor market. The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the learners' perceptions regarding their reasons for participating in the Apprenticeship Program?

2. What are the learners' perceptions regarding the alignment between the apprenticeship curriculum, their personal interests, and labor-market needs?

4.2.Research Methodology

A quantitative research design was adopted, implemented through a structured questionnaire. Quantitative survey methodology is widely used for capturing perceptions, trends, and attitudes in educational research (Cohen et al., 2018). The design allowed for systematic data collection across a relatively large group of learners and facilitated statistical comparison of their responses. Convenience sampling was selected due to the accessibility of the target population, a choice that is common and acceptable in educational field studies when researcher access is naturally constrained (Creswell, 2014).

4.3.Research Sample

The sample was selected using convenience sampling (Creswell, 2014). From the six (6) EPAL schools in the Prefecture of Achaia participating in the Post-Secondary Apprenticeship Year, four (4) were chosen as the most representative, as they offered the largest number of apprenticeship classes in the current (7th) implementation phase.

A total of 96 learners participated in the study. Of these, 60.4% were maleand39.6% were female**.** The majority **(**66.7%**)** belonged to the age group 18–22 years old**.** Learners represented eleven (11) different specializations out of the sixteen (16) available in Achaia, ensuring substantial vocational diversity within the sample.

4.4.Research Data Collection Tool

Data were collected through a structured questionnaire**,** developed via Google Forms to facilitate distribution, accessibility, and automated data management. The questionnaire included closed-ended items directly aligned with the research objectives and questions.

To enhance reliability, a pilot test was conducted before final distribution. Each participant in the pilot study completed the questionnaire twice within a one-week interval. Consistent with recommendations for stability testing in educational research (Robson & McCartan, 2016), the correlation of responses across the two administrations was examined to assess test–retest reliability.

4.5.Data Collection Process

The questionnaire was distributed electronically to learners enrolled in the apprenticeship classes of the selected EPAL schools. Participation was voluntary, anonymous, and conducted within a predefined time frame to ensure consistency in administration. Responses were automatically recorded, exported, and subsequently analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques.

4.6.Limitations

Several limitations must be acknowledged.

- The use of convenience sampling restricts the generalizabilityof the findings beyond the specific region studied (Cohen et al., 2018).
- The sample is limited to apprenticeship learners from a single prefecture (Achaia), which may not fully capture the diversity of apprenticeship experiences across Greece.

Nevertheless, such limitations are typical in localized educational research, where contextual insights can still offer valuable contributions to understanding broader institutional practices (Robson & McCartan, 2016).

4.7.Reliability and Validity

Reliability was supported through the pilot testing process, which examined the temporal stability of responses, a widely recommended procedure in quantitative educational research (Robson & McCartan, 2016).

Validity was strengthened by ensuring that questionnaire items were explicitly aligned with the research questions and constructed according to established principles for content and construct validity (Creswell, 2014). The use of closed-ended questions also promoted consistency and clarity in participant responses, enhancing internal validity.

5.Results

5.1. Motives for participation in the EPAL Apprenticeship Program

The prioritization of motives for participation in the EPAL Apprenticeship Program reveals a rich and multilayered motivational structure that reflects both the socio-economic environment of vocational education in Greece and broader theoretical perspectives on learner motivation. The ranking data illustrate how learners navigate between credential-related ambitions, labor market expectations, andpersonal development goals, forming a complex motivational profile that is both pragmatic and aspirational.

Table 1. Ranking of Motives for Participation in the EPAL Apprenticeship Program

Motive for Participation	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	Total
Acquisition of Level 5 Diploma	43 (44.8%)	9 (9.4%)	6 (6.3%)	3 (3.1%)	4 (4.2%)	5 (5.2%)	26 (27.1%)	96 (100%)
Financial incentives	12 (12.5%)	33 (34.4%)	8 (8.3%)	7 (7.3%)	6 (6.3%)	22 (22.9%)	8 (8.3%)	96 (100%)
Entry into the labor market	5 (5.2%)	13 (13.5%)	26 (27.1%)	13 (13.5%)	19 (19.8%)	14 (14.6%)	6 (6.3%)	96 (100%)
Acquisition of professional experience	1 (1.0%)	7 (7.3%)	19 (19.8%)	39 (40.6%)	7 (7.3%)	16 (16.7%)	7 (7.3%)	96 (100%)
Acquisition of knowledge and skills	3 (3.1%)	6 (6.3%)	19 (19.8%)	22 (22.9%)	36 (37.5%)	6 (6.3%)	4 (4.2%)	96 (100%)

Motive for Participation	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	Total
Obtaining an extended license to practice the profession	3 (3.1%)	22 (22.9%)	10 (10.4%)	8 (8.3%)	18 (18.8%)	28 (29.2%)	7 (7.3%)	96 (100%)
Additional ranking points for public sector employment	29 (30.2%)	6 (6.3%)	8 (8.3%)	4 (4.2%)	6 (6.3%)	5 (5.2%)	38 (39.6%)	96 (100%)

5.1.1. Dominance of Credential-Oriented Motives

There is an overwhelming emphasis placed on securing the Level 5 Diploma**,** which nearly half of the participants (44.8%) identified as their primary motive. This suggests that learners primarily perceive apprenticeship not as an isolated educational experience but as a pathway to formal recognition and upward mobility within the vocational education framework. In the context of the Greek education system—where formal qualifications carry significant weight for professional licensing and structured career advancement—the diploma serves as a clear symbol of educational progression. The diploma functions as a tangible, institutionally validated outcome that enhances employability, social standing, and eligibility for regulated professions. The strong focus on certification supports the argument that vocational learners actively seek credentials that can differentiate them in a competitive labor market, particularly in sectors where regulated qualifications are prerequisites.

5.1.2. Public Sector Aspirations and the Appeal of Institutional Security

The second major finding relates to the substantial percentage (30.2%) of learners who view additional ranking points for public sector employment as their top priority. This highlights the enduring attractiveness of the public sector as a provider of job security, stable income, and predictable career progression. In economies characterized by labor market volatility, such institutional stability can be particularly appealing.

However, the simultaneous observation that 39.6% of participants ranked this motive last suggests a bifurcation in career aspirations**.** Some learners pursue the program strategically to gain advantage in public-sector recruitment, while others appear to reject public-sector pathways in favor of private-sector employment or entrepreneurial ambitions. This polarization reflects a broader divergence in how vocational learners conceptualize their professional futures.

5.1.3. Financial Incentives as Conditional Motivators

Financial incentives emerge prominently as the second priority for more than one-third of respondents (34.4%). This indicates that although financial support is not typically the decisive motivator prompting learners to initially enroll, it plays a significant reinforcing role, enabling participation and persistence. Apprenticeship programs often attract learners from socioeconomically diverse backgrounds, for whom financial compensation can mitigate opportunity costs associated with training.

This pattern resonates with the notion of instrumental motivation**,** where learners balance educational benefits against material considerations. The prominence of financial incentives

as mid-level motives suggests that while monetary support is appreciated, it is not perceived as the core value of the apprenticeship experience.

5.1.4. Employment-Oriented Motives: Practical and Expected, Yet Not Primary

Motives related to entry into the labor marketand the acquisition of professional experience demonstrate consistent importance, though not typically in the highest-ranked positions. For instance, “entry into the labor market” appears strongly as a third priority (27.1%), while “acquiring professional experience” is most often ranked fourth (40.6%).

These tendencies suggest that learners do view the apprenticeship as an effective bridge to employment, but they weigh employment-related benefits after institutional rewards such as the diploma or ranking points. This indicates a nuanced perspective: learners expect the apprenticeship to enhance employability, yet they acknowledge that formal credentials and institutional recognition may carry more immediate or strategic value.

From a theoretical perspective, these motives reflect integrated regulation, a form of motivation wherein learners internalize the value of work-based experience as part of their broader career trajectory.

5.1.5. Knowledge and Skills Acquisition: Important but Not Central

Although intrinsic motives related to learning—such as acquiring new knowledge and developing skills—are rarely prioritized in the top ranks, they are consistently present across the middle of the distribution. A large proportion (37.5%) identified this as their fifth priority. This suggests that learners recognize the educational value of the program but do not view skill development as the primary purpose of their participation.

This finding is consistent with observations from vocational education research, which often reports that learners prioritize employability and certification over purely pedagogical motivations. It also raises questions about how effectively the program communicates its learning-based benefits relative to its credential-related outcomes.

5.1.6. Professional Licensing as a Regulatory Incentive

The motive “obtaining an extended license to practice the profession” also follows a characteristic distribution, frequently appearing in the middle ranks. This pattern highlights the regulatory environment surrounding vocational professions in Greece, where additional licensing can significantly influence employment opportunities. Learners appear to recognize this advantage, though they position it below more immediately compelling motives such as the diploma or ranking points.

5.1.7. A Hybrid Motivational Profile

Taken together, the findings point to a hybrid motivational structure. Learners are neither exclusively extrinsically motivated nor wholly intrinsically driven. Instead, they balance:

- Credential-driven motivations (diploma, ranking points)
- Economic considerations (financial incentives)
- Career-oriented motivations (labor market entry, licensing)
- Learning-based motivations (skills and knowledge)

This blend reflects a pragmatic approach to vocational education, where personal development is acknowledged, but strategically subordinate to institutional and labor-market benefits.

5.2.Alignment of the apprenticeship curriculum, trainees' interests, and labor-market needs

5.2.1. Alignment of training subjects with trainees' interests

The results provide a clear picture of how learners perceive the alignment between the subjects taught in the apprenticeship program and their personal interests. The distribution is markedly skewed toward the higher end of the scale, indicating strong relevance and resonance of the curriculum with learners' preferences.

Table 2. Alignment of training subjects with trainees' interests

Degree of Alignment	Frequency	Percentage %
Not at all	2	2.1%
Very little	2	2.1%
Quite	15	15.6%
Much	20	20.8%
Very much	57	59.4%
Total	**96**	**100%**

The most notable finding is that 59.4% of participants report that the training subjects correspond *"very much"* to their interests. When combined with those who responded *"much"* (20.8%), the cumulative percentage reaches 80.2%**,** meaning that four out of five learnersexperience a high degree of personal relevance in the educational content. This level of alignment suggests that the program succeeds in tailoring its curriculum to learners' vocational aspirations and preferences.

A smaller but meaningful proportion (15.6%) rated the alignment as *"quite"*. While this is a moderate level, it still indicates positive association and does not reflect dissatisfaction. In contrast, only 4.2%of respondents (those selecting *"not at all"* or *"very little"*) perceive minimal alignment between their interests and the subjects taught.

This strong predominance of positive responses indicates that the apprenticeship curriculum is perceived as highly relevant and meaningful, serving as an important motivational factor for learner engagement, persistence, and satisfaction. These outcomes are consistent with theoretical perspectives emphasizing the importance of interest-driven learning**,** where relevance of content significantly enhances intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, and vocational identity formation.

The high alignment also serves as indirect validation of the apprenticeship model's responsiveness to labor market needs. Since learners in vocational pathways often choose fields based on clear occupational intentions, the strong correspondence between subject matter and interests suggests that the program provides training that aligns well with professional expectations and individual career goals.

5.2.2. Alignment of theoretical instruction with trainees' interests

The findings illustrate a strong positive relationship between the theoretical component of the apprenticeship program and the interests of the learners. As with the practical training subjects, the theoretical curriculum appears to resonate highly with participants, demonstrating a high degree of perceived relevance.

Table 3. Alignment of theoretical instruction with trainees' interests

Degree of Alignment	Frequency	Percentage %
Not at all	3	3.2%
Very little	2	2.1%
Quite	17	17.9%
Much	25	26.3%
Very much	48	50.5%
Total	**95**	**100%**

The most prominent data point is that 50.5% of respondents report that the theoretical instruction corresponds *"very much"* to their interests. This represents more than half of the sample and signals that the theoretical framework of the program effectively supports learners' vocational pathways. When combined with those reporting *"much"* (26.3%), a total of 76.8% perceive a high level of alignment.

In addition, 17.9% rated the alignment as *"quite"*. Although this reflects a moderate level of correspondence, it still indicates generally positive perceptions of the theoretical content. In total, 94.7% of learners rate the alignment at moderate to very high levels, revealing that only a small minority experience low relevance in the theoretical component.

The lower categories—*"not at all"* (3.2%) and *"very little"* (2.1%)—represent just 5.3% of respondents. This extremely small proportion suggests that dissatisfaction with theoretical instruction is rare. Theoretical misalignment likely occurs either due to mismatches between expectations and subject matter or because a small subset of learners may be more practically oriented and therefore less engaged with theoretical components.

These trends demonstrate that the theoretical elements of the apprenticeship curriculum are successfully integrated into the broader learning experience and are generally perceived as meaningful, relevant, and well-aligned with vocational interests. This is important because theoretical instruction forms the backbone of conceptual, regulatory, and professional knowledge that underpins workplace learning.

The strong alignment with learner interests is consistent with educational theory emphasizing the role of curricular relevance and learner-centered instruction in promoting motivation, satisfaction, and learning persistence. High alignment also serves as an indicator of the curriculum's responsiveness to contemporary labor market demands, ensuring that theoretical knowledge remains applicable, coherent, and directly related to workplace realities.

5.2.3. Alignment of practical training with trainees' interests

The data reveal an overwhelmingly positive perception of the alignment between the practical training component and learners' individual interests.

Table 4. Alignment of practical training with trainees' Interests

Degree of Alignment	Frequency	Percentage %
Not at all	1	1.0%
Very little	6	6.3%
Quite	9	9.4%

Degree of Alignment	Frequency	Percentage %
Much	24	25.0%
Very much	56	58.3%
Total	**96**	**100%**

The data reveal an overwhelmingly positive perception of the alignment between the practical training component and learners' individual interests. Practical training appears to resonate even more strongly than theoretical instruction, with 58.3% of participants rating the alignment as *"very much"*, the highest level on the scale. Combined with those who selected *"much"* (25.0%), 83.3% of learners perceive a strong correspondence between practical activities and their vocational interests.

This high degree of relevance is characteristic of effective apprenticeship models, where practical training is expected to be closely connected to learners' chosen specialties. The fact that more than four out of five learners report high alignment underscores the success of the program in offering practical experiences that are meaningful, engaging, and closely tied to occupational goals.

A moderate proportion (9.4%) selected *"quite"*, indicating that for some learners, practical tasks meet their interests reasonably well, though perhaps not fully. Meanwhile, *"very little"* (6.3%) and *"not at all"* (1.0%) jointly account for 7.3%**,** a relatively small share of participants. These responses may reflect cases where learners perform tasks unrelated to their preferred specialization, or where workplace conditions limit the relevance or variety of practical activities.

Compared to similar tables on theoretical and subject-specific alignment, the practical component shows the highest level of interest alignment among the three instructional dimensions. This is consistent with the nature of apprenticeship learning: practical training often offers immediate, hands-on, contextualized experiences that learners find intrinsically motivating and professionally valuable.

The findings reflect core principles of experiential learning theory**,** highlighting how direct engagement in real tasks enhances motivation, deepens understanding, and fosters strong vocational identity development.

5.2.4. Alignment of training content with local market needs

The data indicate that learners perceive a strong alignment between the training curriculum and the needs of the local labor market**.**

Table 5. Alignment of training content with local market needs

Extent of Consideration	Frequency	Percentage %
Not at all	1	1.0%
Very little	4	4.2%
Quite	19	19.8%
Much	31	32.3%
Very much	41	42.7%
Total	**96**	**100%**

The data indicate that learners perceive a strong alignment between the training curriculum and the needs of the local labor market**.** A combined 75% of respondents believe that labor market needs are taken into account *"much"* (32.3%) or *"very much"* (42.7%) during the design of training subjects. This suggests that, from the learners' perspective, curriculum design is responsive to local employment conditions and industry demands.

Additionally, 19.8% of learners responded *"quite"*, indicating a moderate perception of alignment. This medium-level group acknowledges the consideration of market needs but perhaps views it as less systematic or less consistently implemented.

At the lower end, only 5.2% of respondents (1.0% "not at all" and 4.2% "very little") believe that labor market needs are minimally or not at all incorporated into curriculum planning. This very small percentage may reflect learners in specializations where the link between training content and local employment is less visible or less direct, or cases where individual learning placements do not reflect broader market trends.

Overall, the distribution of responses demonstrates that learners generally perceive a high degree of responsiveness in how training subjects are designed relative to local labor market conditions. This is a critical indicator of program relevance, especially in vocational and apprenticeship systems where employability and workplace integration are central goals.

6. Discussion

6.1. Motives for participation in the EPAL Apprenticeship Program

The findings indicate that external, institutional motives dominate, with the acquisition of the Level 5 Diploma as the primary driver, functioning as a strong indicator of professional recognition and mobility. Additional ranking points for public-sector employment also play a significant role, reflecting learners' socioeconomic priorities, although responses are polarized between those who find this crucial and those who find it irrelevant. Financial incentives act as secondary yet important motivators, helping to reduce participation barriers. Employment-oriented motives (entering the labor market, gaining experience) hold a mid-level position, while intrinsic motives (knowledge, skills) are present but not predominant. Overall, a mixed motivational profile emerges, with learners using the program both as an educational pathway and as a strategic professional choice.

6.2.Alignment of training subjects with trainees' interests

Learners perceive the training subjects as strongly aligned with their personal interests, suggesting that the apprenticeship curriculum is meaningful and relevant to their vocational aspirations. This alignment appears to enhance learners' engagement and motivation, as content that resonates with individual interests is more likely to sustain attention and commitment. More moderate perceptions may reflect variations in expectations or differences across training specialties, while the limited negative views point to specific areas where curriculum refinement may be needed. Overall, the findings indicate that the program effectively addresses learners' interests, supporting satisfaction and persistence within the apprenticeship pathway.

6.3.Alignment of theoretical instruction with trainees' interests

Most learners consider the theoretical instruction highly aligned with their interests, with more than half selecting "very much." The theoretical component is perceived as meaningful and relevant to their profession, avoiding the common disconnect from practical training. Low dissatisfaction rates show that the program meets the needs of diverse learner profiles. The relevance of theoretical content enhances motivation, vocational identity, and deeper learning, highlighting the importance of continuous updates to maintain its connection to real professional contexts.

6.4.Alignment of practical training with trainees' interests

The practical component shows even higher alignment with learners' interests, with more than 83% reporting strong or very strong correspondence. Practical training acts as a key motivational element, offering direct experience, application of knowledge, and professional confidence. Small groups of learners expressing moderate or low alignment point to the need for improved placement matching and stronger collaboration with employers. Overall, practical training is a major strength of the program.

6.5.Alignment of training content with local market needs

Learners perceive the curriculum as highly aligned with local labor market needs, indicating effective cooperation with employers and informed curriculum planning. Moderate responses suggest occasional content gaps or differences across specialties, while the small proportion of negative views can guide targeted improvements. Overall, the program is seen as well connected to labor market demands, an essential factor for enhancing graduates' employability.

7. Conclusions

The study demonstrates that the EPAL Apprenticeship Program functions as a multifaceted mechanism supporting both professional advancement and educational development. Learner motivation is dominated by credential-oriented and institutional incentives, reflecting the significance of formal qualifications and public-sector opportunities within the Greek labor market. While financial and employment-related motives contribute meaningfully, intrinsic learning motives are less prominent, suggesting that participants view the apprenticeship primarily as a strategic step toward formal recognition and career progression.

Both the theoretical and practical components of the program exhibit strong alignment with learners' interests, reinforcing its pedagogical effectiveness. Practical training emerges as the most influential factor in sustaining engagement, validating the central role of experiential learning in vocational pathways. Moreover, learners perceive the curriculum as well aligned with local labor-market needs, underscoring the program's relevance and its potential to enhance employability and smooth transitions into the workforce.

8. Recommendations

Drawing on the results of this study, the following recommendations can be outlined to improve learner engagement, curriculum relevance, and overall program effectiveness of the EPAL Post-Secondary Apprenticeship Year:

1. *Strengthen the Role and Recognition of the Level 5 Diploma***.** Policymakers should ensure that the diploma maintains high labor-market value, with clear pathways to regulated professions and employment opportunities.

2. *Enhance Career Guidance Services***.** The polarization regarding public-sector ranking points suggests the need for individualized career counseling that supports both public- and private-sector trajectories.
3. *Increase Visibility of Learning and Skill Development Benefits***.** Since intrinsic motives rank lower, communication strategies and instructional design should emphasize the program's educational and competence-building strengths.
4. *Maintain and Expand Financial Support Mechanisms***.** Given the role of financial incentives in enabling participation, economic support should remain stable and potentially be expanded for learners facing socioeconomic barriers.
5. *Strengthen Employer Partnerships and Placement Quality***.** Ensuring high-quality practical placements and improving employer engagement will enhance training relevance and learner satisfaction.
6. *Continuously Update Curriculum Based on Labor-Market Intelligence***.** Systematic monitoring of regional labor-market trends is essential for sustaining curriculum relevance and supporting long-term program credibility.

Adopting these recommendations will support the sustained relevance, qualityand accessibility of the EPAL Post-Secondary Apprenticeship Year, ultimately enhancing learner outcomes, employability and alignment with evolving educational and occupational needs and standards.

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From critical reflection to transformative praxis: Intersecting Freire, Mezirow, and Brookfield

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Abstract

This paper adapts a comparative critical theoretical analysis and synthesis of the theories of Paulo Freire, Jack Mezirow, and Stephen Brookfield, three seminal scholars whose work has shaped the concept of critical reflection in adult education. Although all three regard education as a site of human growth and democratic development, they articulate different pathways toward transformation. Freire advances a radically political pedagogy of critical consciousness (conscientização), situating reflection within collective struggle and action against oppression. Mezirow frames transformation as a primarily cognitive and individual process, through which adults reassess meaning perspectives via rational–critical discourse. Brookfield occupies an integrative position: drawing on critical theory, he emphasises ideology critique and the pervasiveness of power, arguing that critical reflection is inherently political and must expose hegemonic assumptions embedded in practice. By juxtaposing these perspectives, the paper shows that critical reflection is not a uniform construct, but a multifaceted practice shaped by distinct ontological, epistemological and ethical commitments. Synthesizing their insights points toward an integrative framework in which education as praxis unites meaning-making, ideological critique and collective action. In the face of growing inequality, authoritarian tendencies and the marketisation of adult learning, adult educators must cultivate spaces of dissent, reflection and solidarity where individuals and communities can imagine and enact more just worlds.

Keywords: adult education; critical reflection; critical pedagogy; transformative learning; emancipation

1.Introduction

Historically, adult education emerged at the intersection of social movements and struggles for emancipation. From the late 19th century up to the mid-1980s, it was linked with labour, feminist and community movements within a critical, radical paradigm (Gioti, 2019; Heaney, 1992; Kokkos, 2006). In this context, criticality was not an optional but a constitutive element of adult education: its aims were empowerment, transformation and emancipation through reflection on oppression, illumination of power relations and inequalities, and collective action towards a more just and democratic world (Apple & Au, 2009; Brookfield, 2000a, 2005, 2017; Freire, 1977, 2006; Zarifis, 2009).

While adult education still addresses issues such as adult literacy, youth unemployment, feminist struggles, migration and citizenship since 2000 it has increasingly been tied to economic and employability agendas (Gioti, 2019). Adult learning is reconfigured as a market-oriented, credential-granting service that adapts to labour-market demands, privileges skill

acquisition and targets already credentialed adults seeking mobility (Briton & Plumb, 1993; Fejes & Salling Olesen, 2016; Finnegan, 2008). Vocationalism has become a dominant policy driver and a common European trend (Fejes et al., 2016; Keogh, 2009).

In this landscape, critical reflection becomes a crucial site of struggle over what adult education is for and whom it ultimately serves. If adult education is reduced to employability, upskilling and individual career advancement, reflection risks becoming an adaptive tool rather than a means of questioning structures. Conversely, within a critical perspective, reflection interrogates how dominant ideologies, social inequalities, and power relations shape educational aims, curricula and pedagogy. It is precisely at this point that the theories of Freire, Mezirow and Brookfield diverge: while all three centre reflection in adult learning, they differ in how deeply they connect reflection to power, collective action, and social transformation. And they also differ in the way they directly link one's self-empowerment and emancipation to action for a radical democratic transformation of society.

Against this shifting landscape - from emancipatory roots to market-driven orientations - the theoretical traditions of critical reflection acquire renewed urgency. Mezirow, Brookfield and Freire offer distinct yet intersecting frameworks for understanding how adults interrogate assumptions, power relations, and social structures.

In our study, we adopt a comparative critical theoretical analysis, a methodological approach that allows for the systematic investigation, comparison, and evaluation of the theoretical contributions of Freire, Mezirow, and Brookfield in the field of adult education. The analysis focuses on comparing central concepts such as critical consciousness, transformative learning, and critical reflection, and their relationship to educational practice and collective action. Specifically, we examine how each theorist understands the potential of learning to challenge and subvert oppressive power relations and social structures. At the same time, a critical assessment of the theoretical assumptions underlying their different approaches is attempted: from Freire's liberatory pedagogy, which directly connects learning with collective action and social emancipation, to Mezirow's transformative learning, which focuses on individual's will for the scope and extent (individual, cultural, sociopolitical) change of frames of reference, and Brookfield's critical pedagogy, which bridges personal and social transformation through the analysis of power relations. The methodology is completed with a theoretical synthesis that exploits the points of convergence and creative tensions between the three approaches, thereby forming a coherent conceptual framework for understanding how transformative learning can function as a lever for both personal and social transformation.

2. Mezirow: Critical Reflection and Meaning Transformation

Mezirow's transformative theory is grounded in a wide range of concepts and fields, including constructivism, developmental and cognitive psychology, psychotherapy, sociology, social theory and critical social theory and draws on thinkers such as Dewey, Freire, Habermas and Kuhn (Cranton & Taylor, 2012; Dolioti & Zarifis, 2009; Fleming, 2018; Kitchenham, 2008; Kokkos, 2022; Zarifis, 2009). Mezirow explicitly acknowledges the influence of constructivism, arguing that an individual's meaning system is constructed through socialisation (Mezirow, 1991) and shaped by cultural context (Kokkos, 2005). Within this framework, transformative learning explains how adult learners make sense of their experiences, how social structures influence that interpretation, and how meanings undergo change when assumptions are recognised as dysfunctional (Mezirow, 1991).

At the core of Mezirow's theory lies the process of meaning making. New experiences are interpreted through one's existing meaning schemes (Mezirow, 1990), which reflect psycho-

cultural assumptions developed through past learning and socialisation. Learning is thus understood not as the accumulation of knowledge, but as the reconstruction of these interpretive schemes into more functional ones that can orient future action (Mezirow, 1996; 2000). Critical reflection plays a central role in this process, as it enables adults to examine and revise both their meaning schemes and, more profoundly, their meaning perspectives. Transformation occurs when individuals reassess and reinterpret experience in ways that allow them to act more effectively and autonomously in light of new insights (Dolioti & Zarifis, 2009; Gioti, 2024b; Mezirow, 1981, 1990, 1996, 1991, as cited in Taylor & Cranton, 2013, pp. 34, 35, 40). Such transformation of established frames of reference is central to transformative learning, as it enables learners to identify dysfunctional assumptions and reorient their action on the basis of more inclusive, better justified and more autonomous interpretations.

Types of Reflection

Mezirow (1991, 1993) distinguishes three types of reflection (Cranton, 1994 as cited in Zarifis, 2008, p. 73; Kitchenham, 2008):

1. Content reflection – examining the content of an experience.
2. Process reflection – questioning the reasons and influencing factors for one's actions.
3. Premise reflection – interrogating the broader assumptions that frame one's value system; this is what Mezirow identifies as critical reflection.

Premise reflection draws on critical theory and Habermas (Mezirow, 1981, 2003), as it involves re-evaluating deeply embedded assumptions to transform one's meaning perspectives. While content or process reflection may cause changes in beliefs or opinions, premise reflection leads to transformations in one's frame of reference.

According to Mezirow (1990), critical reflection enables individuals to assess and reinterpret an experience, question the validity of the assumptions underlying prior knowledge, and examine the justification of the conditions under which problems are defined. It may be implicit, when internalized values guide behaviour without conscious scrutiny, or explicit, when individuals deliberately question and evaluate the grounds for their choices.

When the object of reflection is assumptions, Mezirow differentiates between:

- Critical reflection of assumptions (objective reframing) – examining others' assumptions (Mezirow, 2000, 1998).
- Critical self-reflection on assumptions (subjective reframing) – interrogating one's own assumptions for deeper perspective transformation.

Both constitute "the emancipatory dimensions of adult learning, the function of thought and language that frees the learner from frames of reference, paradigms or cultural canon that limit or distort communication and understanding" (Mezirow, 1998, pp.191-192).

Forms of Critical Reflection

Critical reflection of assumptions includes:

- Narrative critical reflection, which examines the validity of ideas, feelings, and actions communicated through speech, writing, or art.
- Action critical reflection, which interrogates the assumptions implicit in how one defines a problem, aiming at more effective action.

This type of reflection is closely linked to instrumental learning and problem-solving (Mezirow, 1998). He describes perspective transformation as a process that evolves and is completed in ten sequential and interconnected stages (Gioti, 2024b).

Critical self-reflection on assumptions (CSRA) concerns the psychological or cultural assumptions that constrain individuals' lives. It examines the fundamental conditions shaping experience and aims at significant perspective transformation (Mezirow, 1998). Mezirow differentiates CSRA into several subcategories (ibid):

- *Narrative critical self-reflection*, critically examining one's ideas and actions by narrating their lived experience.
- *Systemic critical self-reflection*, concerning assumptions about economic, political, educational, religious, linguistic or other cultural systems, often leads to collaborative or collective action.
- *Organizational critical self-reflection*, addressing assumptions embedded in workplace culture and history.
- *Moral–ethical critical self-reflection*, examining the principles guiding moral decision-making.
- *Therapeutic critical self-reflection,* revealing assumptions underlying feelings, moods, and emotional responses; central in psychotherapy.
- *Epistemic critical self-reflection*, examining one's frame of reference, its origins, and its consequences in shaping learning goals and orientations.

Mezirow's contribution to the conceptualization of critical reflection is decisive: he places critical (especially self-) reflection at the heart of transformative learning, as the mechanism through which adults reassess and reconstruct their meaning perspectives. For Mezirow, emancipatory learning is primarily achieved at the individual level through the critical examination of personal assumptions. However, it is up to each individual's will whether, after becoming aware of the sociocultural imposition on the formation of their assumptions, they will take action to change and transform this context (Gioti, 2019, 2024a, 2024b).

In adult education, however, critical reflection extends beyond the individual to collective, social and political dimensions. This is the direction in which Brookfield moves - foregrounding the critique of hegemony and dominant ideologies, and linking critical reflection to collective action, pedagogy, and the transformation of power relations both within and beyond educational practice.

3.Brookfield: Critical Reflection, Ideology and Power

Brookfield is a prominent British scholar in adult education, whose work focuses on critical thinking, dialogue, critical reflection, leadership, and, particularly, on analysing the dynamics of power - especially in relation to racial identity and white supremacy.

According to Brookfield (1985, p. 46) *"adult education is that activity concerned to assist adults in their quest for a sense of control in their own lives, within their interpersonal relationships, and with regard to the social forms and structures within which they live."* Adult educators, he suggests, support one another in identifying and challenging both the external sources and the internalized assumptions shaping their behaviour. Adults thus recognize that the systems of ideas and values guiding their behaviour are culturally constructed rather than natural or divinely ordained.

From this definition, six principles of critical adult education emerge (Brookfield, 1985):

1. voluntary participation;
2. respect for self-worth;
3. adult education is collaborative;
4. praxis at the heart of education - *praxis*: a continuous cycle of action and reflection as understood by Freire;
5. Adult education fosters a spirit of critical reflection; and
6. the aim is nurturing autonomous, empowered adults who initiate change in their personal, professional and social worlds rather than passively adapting to external forces.

Brookfield acknowledges that his approach to critical reflection draws on multiple traditions: pragmatic constructivism, analytic philosophy and logic, psychoanalysis and psychotherapy, and, most centrally, the critical theory of the Frankfurt School - particularly Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse and Fromm - as well as Freire and, to some extent, Foucault (Brookfield, 2000b, 2005, 2009, 2010, 2016).

Pragmatic constructivism highlights how individuals construct and deconstruct meanings through analysing experience and seeking new understandings. Analytic philosophy focuses on detecting logical fallacies and making sound judgments, viewing criticality as the capacity to analyse arguments. Psychoanalysis/psychotherapy direct attention to childhood inhibitions and traumas that shape adult behaviour (Brookfield, 2005, 2016).

Freire's influence is clear: Both scholars situate adult education within a radical, emancipatory perspective linking reflection with collective action. Freire's insights - on the role of the educator's experience and the importance of understanding how learners interpret teachers' actions (Freire, 1998) - anticipate Brookfield's "lens of personal experience" and "lens of learners' eyes." Both place action at the heart of adult education, which Brookfield approaches from Freire's perspective as a participatory action research which he describes as an uninterrupted cyclical process of action followed by reflection on the action, collaborative analysis of the action, transition to new action, reflection again and starting again from the beginning (Gioti, 2024a, p. 27). Finally, both treat students' emotions as essential and catalytic in the critical thinking process (Darder, 2020; Freire, 1997, 2022; Gioti, 2024a).

However, it is critical theory that most profoundly shapes Brookfield's thinking (Brookfield, 2005). From this perspective, reflection aims at uncovering the workings of power: how hegemony and dominant ideologies permeate everyday practices. Drawing on Adorno, Horkheimer and Marcuse (Brookfield, 2005), criticality enables individuals to distance themselves from implicit assumptions and exercise greater conscious control over their lives. This oppositional distancing and re-engagement with culture constitutes, for the Frankfurt School, the central learning task of adulthood (Brookfield, 2005).

Extending this tradition into the field of adult education, Brookfield articulates a dual mission for critical reflection (Brookfield, 2000a, 2010, 2016, 2017, 2023):

1. Illuminating power

   Adults must analyse assumptions rooted in dominant ideologies - capitalism, positivism, democracy, militarism, patriarchy and white supremacy. Giroux (1983, as cited in Brookfield, 2009, p. 299) similarly argues that critique involves revealing the historically embedded values shaping knowledge, social relations and material practices.

2. Uncovering hegemony

> Drawing on Gramsci (Brookfield, 2010, 2016, 2017, 2018; Gioti, 2024a; Leonard, 2002) and on the later elaboration of the concept of hegemony from Raymond Williams and Cornel West (Gioti, 2024a), Brookfield emphasizes that hegemony is learned rather than imposed, as a set of assumptions and practices that appear to work in our favor, but in reality end up working against our interests (Gioti, ibid). He conceives hegemony rather as a form of self-surveillance that mirrors Foucault's disciplinary power (Fraser, 1981; Kioupkiolis, 2015; Widder, 2004). In the same vein, he stresses the role of the educator as an intellectual who can highlight an alternative or counter-hegemony (Gioti, 2024a).

Brookfield therefore argues that all interactions in adult education are structured by power relations, echoing Freire's claim that no educational action is neutral and Foucault's extension of power into everyday domains (Keramás, 2014). From this standpoint, critical pedagogy becomes both the analytical lens and the practical framework through which educators and learners can question assumptions, reveal ideology, and expose hegemony—turning knowledge into a tool for social transformation toward a more just world (Gioti, 2024a; Toka & Gioti, 2023). To enact this mission, Brookfield proposes four lenses for developing critically reflective teaching:

1. learners' eyes;
2. colleagues' perceptions;
3. theory;
4. personal experience (Brookfield, 1998, 2002, 2017).

These lenses offer complementary perspectives for interrogating assumptions and power relations in teaching.

For Brookfield, critical reflection must be collaborative and collective, to avoid the risks of isolation, cultural suicide or political marginalization (Brookfield, 1994, 2017). Its outcome is collective transformative action, aimed at dismantling unequal power relations and achieving radical social change (Brookfield, 2000a, 2016). Even personal reflection, Brookfield argues, is socially conditioned, shaped by broader political, economic, historical and cultural contexts (Brookfield, 2000a). Ultimately, transformation means adopting fundamentally different ways of viewing reality - framed explicitly through an analysis of power, ideology and hegemony, thereby connecting individual insight with the broader critical-theoretical project of social transformation.

4.Freire: Critical Consciousness and Emancipatory Praxis

Paulo Freire (1921–1997) was a Brazilian radical educator, philosopher and leading figure of critical pedagogy. Having experienced hunger and poverty from an early age, he became acutely aware of the relationship between social class and knowledge (Gadotti, 1994, as cited in Karalis, 2021, p. 17). Exiled from Brazil by the military junta (1964–1980) because of his efforts to empower and emancipate the oppressed, he moved to Chile, where he participated in adult literacy programmes. In his thought he brought together seemingly opposing perspectives, such as Marxism and Christianity, and was influenced by Marx, Gramsci, Jean-Paul Sartre, Mounier, Fromm, Althusser, Ortega y Gasset, Mao, Martin Luther King, Che Guevara, Unamuno, Marcuse, Buber and others (Gioti, 2020; Shaull, 2000).

Freire is described as radical because he sought the transformation of society as a whole at social, economic and political levels, and as a humanist because the human being and their reflective capacity are central to this transformation (Kioupeloglou & Zarifis, 2009). A core

principle for Freire (2000; 1998) is that there is no neutral education and therefore no neutral educational practice that is indifferent to the reproduction or the contestation of dominant ideology. Every educational act either reinforces the dominant ideology or challenges and resists it. "Washing our hands" of the struggle between the powerful and the powerless, he argues, means siding with the powerful, not remaining neutral. Education is therefore a political act, and democratic education cannot become reality unless it is an education for citizenship (Freire, 2018).

On this basis, Freire places education at the centre of a critical framework of action in which critical consciousness (conscientização) is linked to social change, emancipation and liberation from oppression (Kioupeloglou & Zarifis, 2009). His literacy programmes sought: to empower Brazilian peasants to escape the "culture of silence", gain both the capacity and the language to understand and critically reflect on themselves, their lives, and the political decisions taken in their absence but affecting their everyday existence; to realize that their daily life is shaped by a dominant ideology whose aim is to maintain the status quo by keeping them oppressed and silent; and to transform themselves from objects passively placed within reality and history into acting subjects who understand their situation and seek to free themselves from what oppresses them (ibid; Gioti, 2020).

A defining feature of critical consciousness is its collective character: it is an endeavour that should be undertaken socially rather than individually. Within this endeavour, education must present people's situation as a problem. Problem-posing education therefore does not separate the activity of teacher and learner but encourages the emergence of a new relationship: that of teacher-students and student-teachers (Freire, 2000).

The basic components of critical consciousness - critical dialogue, critical reflection and praxis - are inextricably linked. Freire's approach to critical reflection remains highly influential in contemporary adult education literature. Problem-posing learning and critical reflection refer to the process by which people critically examine the way they exist in the world. For the critically reflective subject, reality is a dynamic, evolving process, which may be shaped through learning but is not predetermined (ibid). Therefore, individuals should not passively adapt to reality; rather, by critically evaluating it, they should intervene to transform it. This is the essence of Freirean (educational) praxis: intervention in the world, the unity of action and critical reflection, theory and practice. Only when these elements coexist is collective action and the transformation of oppressive reality possible. Without critical reflection, theory degenerates into empty rhetoric and practice into mere activism (Freire, 1998, 2000).

For Freire (1998), developing critical reflection requires moving from naive curiosity to epistemological curiosity, a more rigorous mode of inquiry enacted through critical teaching - a dynamic, dialectical movement between action and reflection on action (Freire, 1998, 2000). Knowledge emerging from this interplay must be created by learners in community with the educator. Knowledge, Freire argues, is a social process that engages the whole conscious self - memory, senses and emotions - and necessarily entails critical thinking (Freire, 2018).

Critical dialogue, inseparable from reflection, constitutes the second core dimension of critical consciousness. Dialogue is a reality-mediated encounter through which people discover and name the world, and it must be carried out *with* the oppressed, whose conscious involvement in emancipatory action is essential if they are not to be reduced to objects (Freire, 2000; Gioti, 2020; Leonard & McLaren, 2002). Dialogue is not genuine if it lacks reflection, which presupposes action; and action becomes authentic only when its results are subjected to critical reflection (ibid). Dialogue that demands reflection can also generate it, becoming an instrument of liberation, since it is through people's dialogue and action that the world is transformed (ibid). This dialectical relationship/communication is fundamental to Freire. It permeates multiple encounters: between consciousness and world, student and teacher,

writer and reader. Education becomes an act of freedom only when mediated by dialogue and communication, whose acceptance Freire regards as an act of radicalism (Freire, 1998, 2000; Gioti, 2019, 2020; Leonard & McLaren, 2002).

Praxis, in turn, is indispensable to critical consciousness. By praxis Freire (2000) means action grounded in critical reflection. People do not automatically become subjects simply by reflecting on their oppressive reality and understanding their situation. Without subsequent action to transform that reality, they remain "subjects-in-expectancy" (ibid). Moreover, critical reflection should not be confined to educational structures, since any changes limited to those structures constrain the transformative potential of critical reflection and the extent of social transformation it can produce.

The process of critical consciousness, centred on dialogue, reflection and praxis, unfolds in three stages (Freire, 2000, 2005; Gioti, 2020; Kioupeloglou & Zarifis, 2009):

1. Investigation of the values encoded in dominant ideologies.
2. Codification, which presents an existing situation that learners experience but do not yet fully understand. Codification is achieved through selecting specific words that give meaning to the situation and render it more comprehensible to learners.
3. Decoding, which enables deeper penetration into reality and its understanding through critical reflection. It requires movement from the abstract to the concrete. It begins with identifying and describing the key elements embedded in the codified situation, followed by examining how these elements relate to learners' consciousness and lived experience. As understanding deepens, the situation is revisited as a constructed whole whose components are interdependent and mutually shaping. Finally, through heightened critical awareness, learners analyse the situation in transformative ways that allow them to reinterpret reality and recognise possibilities for action.

For Freire (2000, 2018), human emancipation through education is a demanding, often painful process, because freedom entails risk, accountability and decisions with consequences. People, therefore, frequently prefer to delegate decisions to others to avoid assuming responsibility. Another difficulty is that the oppressed internalize the oppressor; they are simultaneously oppressed and oppressors and must first recognize this condition and then struggle to transform it and free themselves (Freire, 2000, 2018).

All of this must occur in an environment of discipline, not laxity or lawlessness born from fear of authoritarianism. Democracy and freedom are possible only when discipline is present; and since education for citizenship presupposes freedom, we must embrace healthy discipline not only in educational settings but in all domains of life - home, school, traffic, everyday interactions (Freire, 2018). Lack of discipline, Freire (2018) argues, is not the opposite of authoritarianism, nor is a certain use of authority synonymous with it; rather, lack of discipline supports authoritarianism and undermines freedom. However, he cautions that there is a difference between being an authority and being authoritarian (Gioti, 2020, 2024a). Only through discipline, critical thinking, critical dialogue, praxis and the rejection of dogmatism can we consolidate democracy and emancipate ourselves from the oppression and inequalities of dominant ideologies. For Freire, this is a collective, difficult, unfinished and ongoing struggle.

In sum, Freire's account of critical reflection within the broader process of critical consciousness treats educational practice as a political act. Critical reflection, as a dimension of critical consciousness, aims to help learners realize that their culture and values have been imposed by the dominant class and dominant ideologies serving the preservation of the status quo. Through critical reflection, people come to understand their situation and are led to

praxis—action grounded in reflection—seeking to transform themselves from objects that passively receive history into acting subjects who participate in shaping it.

In the next section, the positions of Freire, Mezirow and Brookfield will be juxtaposed, highlighting their convergences and divergences.

5.Three Paths in Dialogue: Freire, Mezirow and Brookfield

Freire stands as a foundational figure in critical pedagogy and one of the most influential thinkers in adult education. Historically, he precedes Brookfield and Mezirow, both of whom draw from aspects of his work, albeit in different ways. At a first level of comparison, the strongest affinities lie between Freire and Brookfield. Both adopt politically oriented perspectives linking educational practice to its wider economic, political and social context. For both thinkers, critical reflection fosters awareness of inequalities produced by dominant ideologies and initiates collective action to transform oppressive social realities. Action is not optional, but integral.

Although Brookfield and Mezirow share several theoretical influences (Pragmatism, Psychology/Psychoanalysis/Psychotherapy, Critical Theory, Liberatory Pedagogy), they diverge significantly in how they approach critical reflection, transformation and the role of ideology. Brookfield (2000a) maintains that *critical reflection on assumptions* is the only meaningful form of reflection, insisting that it is a conscious, explicit and political practice. Mezirow, by contrast, views critical reflection as potentially implicit and subdivides it into multiple categories (Mezirow, 1998). According to Brookfield (2000a), this fragmentation risks diluting the concept's radical potential by dividing an inherently unified process. Of Mezirow's categories, *systemic critical self-reflection on assumptions* (Mezirow, 1998) most closely resembles Brookfield's understanding, as it interrogates the ideological and socio-cultural structures shaping meaning perspectives. Yet, while Mezirow emphasises *individual* cognitive transformation, Brookfield foregrounds the *collective*, socio-political and emancipatory dimensions of reflection. For him, all of Mezirow's categories involve elements of ideological critique, albeit less explicitly or consistently (Brookfield, 2000a).

A central differentiation lies in their treatment of power. Brookfield - drawing on Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse, Fromm, Raymond, Cornel and Foucault - treats power analysis, ideology critique and the uncovering of hegemony as *intrinsic* to critical reflection (Gioti, 2024a). Brookfield, as he himself has stated (ibid), was influenced by Freire's work, and similarly like him, he regards education as a political project and the educator as a political agent committed to human emancipation. He argues that dominant ideologies - capitalism, patriarchy, positivism, white supremacy - permeate societal institutions, and therefore education, as well as the everyday life (Brookfield, 2017).

Mezirow, though also influenced by critical theory (notably Habermas), prioritizes the *communicative* and dialogical dimensions of reflection. He proposes that education should serve learning rather than politics (Mezirow, 1991). His aim is to create conditions for distortion-free communication, encouraging participation and mutual understanding. However, this view downplays how educational systems function as mechanisms for class reproduction (Carnoy & Levin, 1985, as cited in Collins, 2009, p. 36), perpetuate social inequalities (Batruch et al., 2019q Vesely, 2012), and absorb neoliberal ideology (Macris, 2011).

The three theorists also differ in the orientation of critical reflection. For Freire and Brookfield, it is explicitly emancipatory and political: critical reflection must interrogate power, destabilize hegemonic norms, and culminate in collective action. Mezirow's approach remains largely individualistic; transformation concerns reconstructing one's frame of reference, with power

viewed mainly as a distortion of personal development (Inglis, 1997). Inglis's distinction between *empowerment* (the acquisition of skills that enable adaptation to existing structures) and *emancipation* (the critique and transformation of those structures) underscores this divergence (ibid; Gioti, 2019).

From this perspective, Mezirow's emphasis on self-improvement risks shifting critical reflection toward individual adaptation rather than collective action, echoing Foucault's disciplinary power and Bourdieu's concept of accumulating capital to better "fit" within existing hierarchies (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, as cited in Inglis, 1997, p. 11; Gioti, 2024a). Brookfield (2003) similarly warns that terms such as *empowerment* and *transformation* are often used so broadly that they lose their critical force.

Accordingly, Brookfield and Freire articulate critical/radical approaches to adult education, whereas Mezirow's framework is better described as progressive and individual-centred (Gioti, 2019). Yet, even within this shared critical orientation, Freire articulates most explicitly and emphatically the view of education as resistance to oppression and as a project of transforming the world. In many respects, Brookfield can be seen as extending and adapting elements of Freirean liberatory pedagogy within Western adult and higher education, drawing on critical theory, Gramsci, Williams, West, Foucault and other intellectuals and activists to render Freire's emancipatory horizon intelligible within contemporary institutional and cultural settings (Gioti, 2024a). Although Mezirow acknowledges a social dimension in transformative learning - envisioning more open and democratic societies (Gioti, 2019; Toka & Gioti, 2021) - the revolutionary horizon present in Freire and Brookfield is largely absent. Like Foucault, Mezirow focuses primarily on the micro-level and does not fully connect personal change with broader structures, whereas Brookfield argues that emancipation requires collective action and systemic transformation. Furthermore, Freire and Brookfield inextricably link the process of critical reflection and the transformation of dominant sociopolitical and cultural influences, as well as the mediation of power relations in shaping our assumptions, with the undertaking of collective action for their radical transformation. On the other hand, Mezirow believes that the connection of transformation with the undertaking of collective action is a matter of subjective position and choice (Gioti, 2019, 2024a, pp.44-45).

Dialogue, central to all three approaches, is also conceptualized differently. While Brookfield and Mezirow draw on Freire, only Freire and Brookfield anchor dialogue in collective action and political struggle. For Mezirow, mutual understanding through dialogue is sufficient; For Freire and Brookfield, dialogue must lead to praxis - action grounded in critical reflection. Freire's emphasis on humility, curiosity and mutuality between teacher and learner is echoed in Brookfield's lenses of personal experience and learners' eyes, which stress the relational and democratic nature of critical teaching.

The process of transformative critical reflection is considered by Freire and Brookfield as a continuous participatory cyclical process and they further recognize the important role that emotions play in it, while Mezirow treats it as a more linear and logical process (Gioti, 2024a).

In short, while all three highlight the importance of questioning assumptions, they differ significantly in the scope and purpose of critical reflection. Freire and Brookfield situate this questioning within broader struggles for democracy, justice and social change, framing reflection as a collective, emancipatory and political endeavour. Mezirow, by contrast, locates transformation primarily within the individual's meaning structures and communicative processes, without explicitly embedding it in a broader political project or connecting it systematically to structural critique and collective action.

6. Conclusion

Taken together, the perspectives of Freire, Mezirow and Brookfield illuminate the richness, depth and complexity of critical reflection in adult education. Each offers indispensable insights: Mezirow clarifies the cognitive and interpretive processes through which adults revise their assumptions; Brookfield exposes the ideological, hegemonic and power-laden dimensions of those assumptions and reclaims democracy as a learning practice; and Freire situates reflection within collective struggle, critical dialogue and the broader fight for emancipation. Their differences - concerning the locus of transformation (individual or collective), the role of ideology, and the relationship between reflection and action - are significant, yet they need not be seen as mutually exclusive. Rather, they represent complementary layers of a fuller conception of transformative adult learning.

Synthesizing their contributions allows us to envision an integrative framework in which education as *praxis* unites meaning-making, ideological critique and collective action. Such a framework affirms that personal transformation is inseparable from social transformation, that dialogue is inseparable from action, and that adult education must cultivate both critical awareness and collective agency. In the face of growing inequality, authoritarian tendencies, and commodified knowledge, the task of adult educators is to cultivate spaces of dissent, reflection, and solidarity - spaces where individuals and communities can imagine and enact more just worlds.

7.From Theory to Practice: Implications for Adult Education

This comparative critical theoretical analysis highlights that fostering critical reflection in adult education requires moving beyond purely individual, cognitive interpretations toward approaches that integrate ideology critique, collective inquiry, and emancipatory action. For practitioners, this means designing learning environments where dialogue is not only exploratory but also action-oriented, where assumptions are interrogated through multiple lenses, and where learners situate personal transformation within broader social, cultural, political, and economic realities. Ultimately, the convergence of Freire, Mezirow and Brookfield challenges educators to reclaim adult education as a democratic, critical and socially responsive practice.

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Adult Learning in the Milieu of a Local Environmental Movement

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Abstract

This study investigates the processes of informal adult learning within a grassroots environmental movement in Greece. Focusing on a community collective dedicated to protecting a local creek in a northern Athens suburb, the research is grounded in the theoretical frameworks of transformative learning, communities of practice, and critical ecopedagogy. Employing a qualitative case study methodology, the analysis draws on narratives from six activists gathered through semi-structured interviews. The findings indicate that engagement in environmental activism fosters multifaceted learning, manifested through: peer knowledge exchange and experiential problem-solving; identity transformation and civic empowerment; the development of embodied and affective ecological awareness; and the emergence of grassroots pedagogies for mentoring and public engagement. Conversely, participants also cited significant challenges, including activist burnout, institutional neglect, and a lack of formal recognition for their knowledge. In conclusion, this study demonstrates that environmental movements serve as dynamic learning ecosystems where adults cultivate critical, relational, and embodied knowledge.

Keywords: Adult learning, Environmental activism, Transformative learning, Ecopedagogy

1. Introduction

This study investigates the adult learning dimensions that arise from participation in an environmental initiative situated in Athenian suburb of Chalandri. The research centers on the Association for the Protection of the Environment and Creek of Penteli–Chalandri, a community movement founded in 1990 to safeguard a local creek that traverses both municipalities. The association's enduring activism aims to preserve the creek's ecological integrity, resisting urban development pressures that threaten its function as a natural refuge within the metropolitan landscape. As a long-standing environmental collective with a documented history of persistence, this case offers valuable insights into the intersection of local advocacy, informal adult learning, and socio-ecological resistance (SOS Rematia Blog).

By examining the everyday pedagogical processes embedded in environmental activism, this study contributes to scholarly discourse on informal learning within social movements. It demonstrates how adult education unfolds through grassroots, extra-institutional practices and informs critical debates on ecological citizenship, sustainable development, and the socio-material production of knowledge through collective action.

Grounded in foundational theories of adult learning, this investigation addresses the following research question: How does informal learning manifest among adult participants in grassroots environmental movements in northern Athens? The study adopts a qualitative case study methodology, employing in-depth participant narratives and thematic analysis to illuminate these experiential learning processes.

2. Theoretical Framework

This research is grounded in three complementary conceptual frameworks, each of which illuminates distinct dimensions of learning. First, Mezirow's (1991) transformative learning theory provides a foundational understanding of how adult learners experience cognitive shifts through critical reflection on disorienting dilemmas encountered in activist contexts. Second, Lave and Wenger's (1991) community of practice framework elucidates the sociocultural processes through which knowledge is co-constructed via participation in collective environmental actions. Third, building on Kahn's (2010) critical ecopedagogy, the study examines how environmental learning functions as both a pedagogical practice and a political act, foregrounding issues of ecological justice and planetary sustainability. By integrating these complementary theoretical frameworks, this study advances a multidimensional conceptualization of activist learning that encompasses cognitive, emotional, social, and embodied processes. This framework supports an exploration of how environmental activists construct meaning, cultivate knowledge, and transform both themselves and their communities through direct action.

3. Environmental Movements: A Concise Literature Review

Environmental movements have long been recognized as fertile grounds for learning outside traditional educational institutions. Scholars such as Hall and Clover (2005) and Kilgore (1999) argue that social movements function as informal educational spaces, where individuals gain knowledge through participation, storytelling, conflict, and collective reflection. These settings enable forms of "learning from below," characterized by active engagement, shared values, and lived experience. As exemplified by Crowther et al. (2005, p. 9):

> Learning from below refers to those forms of knowledge production and circulation that emerge organically from oppressed communities' struggles, constituting a counter-hegemonic challenge to institutionalized education systems. It is characterized by its roots in lived experience, collective ownership of learning processes, and explicit orientation toward social transformation.

The activities of the Protection of the Environment and Creek of Penteli–Chalandri movement exemplify this notion of "learning from below" through their integration of local ecological knowledge with activist praxis—a process that, as Crowther et al. (2005) argue, generates more radical sustainability paradigms than those typically offered by institutional environmental education. As they note (p. 41), *"*When communities fuse their vernacular ecological knowledge with activist resistance—what we might call 'militant localism'—they produce sustainability paradigms that are both more radical and more contextually grounded than those offered by institutional environmental education.*"*

Environmental movements provide unique spaces for learning (Foley, 1999). As Hall and Clover (2005, p. 586) assert, environmental movements function as "living laboratories" for adult learning, a claim empirically validated in Walter's (2005) study of rainforest activism. Activities such as campaigning or protesting foster knowledge about sustainability, systems thinking, and collective responsibility (Crowther et al., 2005; Hall & Clover, 2005). These learning processes are not merely cognitive but also embodied and affective, involving close relationships with place, nature, and community (Kahn, 2010). The evolution of environmental movements in Greece has been marked by a multifaceted trajectory, shaped by socio-political, economic, and cultural dynamics. Although environmental awareness remained peripheral in Greece for much of the 20th century, the post-1970s era witnessed a progressive rise in ecological activism. This surge was spurred by both global environmental discourse and domestic challenges, including rapid urbanization, environmental degradation,

and unsustainable resource exploitation. Characterized by their grassroots nature and localized focus, Greek environmental movements frequently intersect with broader socio-political concerns such as equity, public welfare, and democratic engagement (Sotiropoulos, 2004). Operating at the intersection of formal political structures and informal civic initiatives, these movements provide valuable insights into citizen mobilization around ecological issues within a context of institutional uncertainty and economic instability. Although robust academic literature on this topic remains limited, evidence drawn from newspaper and magazine articles, pamphlets published by social collectives, and public debates suggests that environmental movements in Greece have played a pivotal role in fostering ecological awareness and shaping policy responses, demonstrating both local and transnational influences (e.g., Tsekos & Mathopoulos, 2008). From grassroots activism against destructive development projects to broader campaigns for biodiversity preservation and climate justice, these movements highlight the intersection of environmental, social, and political struggles. While challenges such as state repression, economic constraints, and fragmented mobilization persist, Greek environmental movements continue to evolve, adapting to new ecological crises and leveraging digital activism. Ultimately, the Greek case underscores the importance of community-driven resistance and the enduring tension between unsustainable growth models and the pursuit of environmental sustainability. Future research could further explore the movements' transnational linkages and their potential to influence green policymaking in an era of escalating ecological uncertainty.

4. Methodology

Six personal narratives of activists are explored in this research (pseudonyms: Petros, Eleni, Marina, Makis, Rania, and Voula). Participants were recruited using purposive sampling to ensure the inclusion of activists representing a spectrum of involvement, ranging from recent entrants to experienced, long-term organizers (Patton, 2015). This sampling strategy was deliberately designed to capture a heterogeneous group thereby facilitating a comprehensive exploration of varying perspectives within the movement (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The selection criteria were informed by the study's aim to understand how differing levels of engagement and demographic factors might influence participants' experiences and learning processes (Maxwell, 2013).

The participants' narratives were collected through semi-structured, in-depth interviews lasting 60–90 minutes, conducted between March 1 and June 30, 2025. These narratives were elicited through questions regarding participants' involvement in the movement, the activities they engaged in, and their learning processes—both self-directed and socially mediated—as well as the emotions experienced during these learning encounters. Additional questions addressed issues that emerged during the course of the interviews. Semi-structured interviews were selected because they are recognized in the literature for their immediacy, ability to facilitate communication, encouragement of emotional expression, and capacity to yield a comprehensive understanding of participants' perspectives, perceptions, and intentions (Cohen et al., 2007). Interviews were conducted in a welcoming and supportive environment designed to put participants at ease and foster open, honest dialogue, thereby encouraging them to share their experiences and viewpoints freely.

The participants, all actively engaged in the Protection of the Environment and Creek of Penteli–Chalandri movement, shared narratives that encompass both discrete moments and broader trajectories over time. More generally, these accounts reflect themes of activism, interpersonal relationships, emotional engagement, and learning. Each narrative provides insight into a participant's interpretation of social practice while also illuminating the broader

network of social relations in which they are embedded, as narratives are inherently shaped by cultural context (Pamphilon, 1999). As articulated by Ganz (2009, p. 12):

> The narrative practices of 'story of self,' 'story of us,' and 'story of now' provide movements with a framework to: (1) root collective identity in personal experience, (2) articulate shared values, and (3) motivate urgent action. This tripartite storytelling cultivates the agency and solidarity that sustain long-term organizing efforts.

Ultimately, this study contends that storytelling serves not merely a communicative role but operates as a transformative mechanism through which individuals interpret their lived experiences, construct identities within broader sociopolitical contexts, and mobilize toward collective action (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Storytelling in social movements has been shown to foster critical reflection, shape collective memory, and support the emergence of political agency (Choudry, 2013; Ganz, 2011). Through a structured yet flexible narrative inquiry process, the study not only illuminates participants' lived experiences but also foregrounds the interplay of individual agency and broader socio-cultural forces in shaping meaning-making.

Finally, it should be noted that informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection, ensuring they were fully aware of the study's purpose and procedures. Confidentiality was rigorously maintained through the use of pseudonyms and secure data storage practices to protect participants' identities and personal information. The researcher upheld the principles of respect, beneficence, and non-malfeasance throughout the study.

Additionally, reflexivity was practiced continuously, with the researcher critically reflecting on her dual positionality as both observer and participant in certain movement activities to mitigate potential biases.

5. Findings

The results of our analysis revealed the following recurring themes in the narratives of our research participants.

5.1 Informal Learning Spaces and Peer Exchange

The findings highlight the importance of non-formal and informal learning spaces**,** such as public assemblies, planning meetings, casual discussions during Creek walks, online chats, and movement events. These findings echo Illeris's (2007, pp. 83–97) emphasis on the social context of learning and reinforce the value of horizontal knowledge exchange, as seen through participant collaboration, storytelling, and mutual mentoring. The emotional and affective dimensions of learning also emerged clearly, resonating with theories of embodied learning (Merriam, 2008), particularly during moments of public engagement or confrontation. The following interview excerpts are illustrative.

"We didn't sit around waiting for someone to train us or give us a manual—we just dove right in. They always say, 'You need experience first,' but we didn't have time for that. The Creek's under threat and no one's coming to save it but us, the locals. So we got to work—organizing awareness events, putting up posters, chatting with neighbors, reaching out to the municipality. I can't even count how many mistakes I made, but honestly, each one taught me something. Real stuff. The kind of learning no classroom could've ever given me." (Petros)

It may seem incredible to you as you hear it, but I have learned a lot through our activities. The most important thing is not what I have learned, but how I have learned it. Talking to others, listening to others and then working it out on my own, in my mind ... you understand ... and if

I still have questions I try again ... many times I search the internet, books and ask again. I wonder why teachers in schools don't do the same ... why they insist only on lectures and books ... in a few words, in the movement I learned to learn (Eleni)

"Nobody handed us a manual on how to lobby the municipality—we learned by doing. At first, we didn't even know who to talk to. We showed up at the wrong office, filled out forms we didn't understand, and got blank stares when we demanded action. The first time we presented our case in the regional council, we brought messy handwritten notes and no data. The council members barely looked up. The second time, we came with photos, petitions from citizens, even a decision draft. …You make mistakes, of course. You trust the wrong civil servants, miss a deadline, or forget to bring some credential. But every mistake becomes a lesson the next time. Now, when new neighbors join our group, I tell them: 'Don't wait until you know everything. Start where you are. Fail forward.' Because the real education isn't in a book—it's in the trying, the stumbling, and the refusing to quit. (Marina)

"When you're up against big money and political power trying to exploit our Creek, it's easy to feel outmatched. We don't have fancy lawyers or scientific experts on payroll. No one's handing us research studies or policy briefs. But what we do have is each other - and we've learned to turn that into our strength. Through our neighborhood networks, we piece together knowledge like knitwear. The neighbor next door, who studies environmental science, helps us understand many things for the preservation of the creek...and at our assemblies, someone always brings a new piece of information - maybe a news article about similar fights elsewhere… The real education happens in our actions. When we're collecting signatures door-to-door, every conversation teaches us something new - about people's concerns, about hidden connections, about who in city hall might actually listen. During protests, we learn from veteran activists how to get media attention, how to keep people energized. (Rania)

"When we first started fighting to protect the Creek, I couldn't tell a zoning law from a fishing license! But when you see would-be trespassers of the land and local politicians making shady deals, you learn fast. I began by pestering every knowledgeable person that I knew – a lady lawyer, the biology teacher of my son, even the librarian who helped me find the right books. At first, the legal documents might as well have been in another language. But we formed a study group, broke it down paragraph by paragraph. We discovered loopholes they didn't think we would find - like how the bylaw prohibiting building on the banks of the Creek could stop their construction plans in cold blood. ..What's powerful is that this knowledge doesn't just protect our Creek - it arms our whole community. Now when I hear about threats to other green spaces… "(Voula).

Ultimately, the environmental protection movement examined in this study functions as a learning ecosystem—a dynamic, adaptive context where adults learn through interwoven personal, social, and political experiences. This finding underscores the need to reconsider how learning is conceptualized in adult education and highlights social movements as critical, yet often undervalued sites of lifelong learning.

Moreover, the findings emphasize the centrality of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984) within social movement engagement. Rather than acquiring knowledge through formal education, participants described how learning emerged through active involvement—such as organizing advocacy campaigns, participating in protest actions, and engaging with local governance structures. Viewed through a complementary lens, these processes align with the concept of situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991), in which knowledge is collaboratively constructed through participatory social practice.

5.2 Identity Transformation through Activism

A prominent theme emerging from all participants' narratives was the transformation of personal identity resulting from their involvement in community-based environmental activism. Participants described a shift from viewing themselves in narrowly defined professional roles to embracing a broader civic identity. This transformation often involved a heightened sense of agency, empowerment, and connectedness to broader societal issues.

For example, several participants reflected:

"Before becoming involved in the community action group, I primarily identified as a teacher—someone focused on the classroom and formal education. My role felt limited to curriculum and pupils. However, through my engagement with this movement, I began to see the broader societal implications of my work and my capacity to influence change beyond the school setting. Participating in collective initiatives, organizing meetings, and engaging with local campaigns transformed my sense of agency. I no longer see myself only as an educator, but as an active citizen—someone with the voice, tools, and community support to advocate for justice and challenge the status quo." (Petros)

"Before I got involved, I honestly thought activism was something extreme—something for radicals or people on the fringes. It felt distant from my everyday life. I never imagined myself in that role. But through participating in campaigns, attending meetings, and working with others in my community for protection of the Creek, I've come to see activism in a completely new light. It's not about being loud or disruptive—it's about caring enough to take action, to speak up for what matters. I've learned that being an engaged citizen means stepping beyond the passive role of observer and becoming actively involved in shaping our shared spaces and policies. It's empowering, and now I feel a deeper sense of responsibility and connection to my neighborhood and the environment. This experience didn't just change how I act—it changed how I see myself as part of a community" (Eleni)

"Back before I got involved with the group for the protection of the Creek, I'd panic at the idea of speaking in front of people. I never thought I had anything special to say. But once I started helping out at events and campaigns I ended up in situations where I had no choice but to speak up. Like explaining things to people or chatting with kids during their visits to the Creek. Slowly, I got used to it. I even spoke once at a meeting of a school's parents' association about the necessity of protecting the Creek! I was shaking, but I did it. And each time, I felt a bit braver. Now, when I talk about things I care about, it feels natural. I've changed a lot. I feel stronger, more involved. Honestly, this whole thing taught me that you don't learn just by reading—you learn by jumping in, messing up, and keeping at it because you care. (Marina)

The above narratives illustrate a redefinition of self—not merely as a professional confined to institutional settings, but as an empowered civic actor capable of influencing structural change. Such identity shifts align with transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 1991), which emphasizes perspective transformation through critical reflection and social engagement. The participants' experiences suggest that learning through action enabled them to reconstruct their identities in relation to the political and social dimensions of their environment.

5.3 Embodied Experience – Sensory and Emotional Learning in Field Events

Participants consistently described their learning as an embodied, sensory experience rooted in collective activities aimed at protecting the Penteli–Chalandri Creek. Rather than abstract or theoretical, this learning emerged through tactile engagement, emotional resonance, and heightened environmental awareness. The protection of the green area surrounding the

Creek—through various public events and actions—created multisensory learning moments that participants claimed left a lasting impression beyond what conventional education could offer. This experiential learning aligns with theories of embodied cognition (Varela et al., 2017) and sensory pedagogy (Ellsworth, 2005), where understanding is constructed through bodily engagement with the world. These embodied encounters were described as transformative. Participants reported that physical efforts and sensorial immersion deepened their ecological consciousness and created emotional connections to the environment that sustained their continued involvement. These findings suggest that environmental movements provide unique learning spaces where sensory experience and bodily participation are central pedagogical forces.

The following interview excerpts support the idea of sensory and emotional learning.

"Sometimes I think my body understood before my mind did. Like, when we walked through the Creek and saw trash everywhere … it wasn't just something I saw, I felt it. My chest tightened, I felt angry … I remember to shed tears once after a local kid came and said, 'Thank you for making the Creek nice and clean.' That moment stuck with me. It's not just learning facts about the environment of the Creek … it's learning through your skin, your breath, your heart. That's how I know I've changed my mind" (Rania)

"Oh, it's all in the senses—learning out here isn't about reading reports. It's the smell of the wet soil when we dig, the sound of birds coming back after we cleared a space, the feel of the sun on your back when you've been out planting all morning. I remember touching the bark of an old tree we saved, and thinking, this matter. I could actually feel how alive the place was. Those little things stay with you. You begin to notice changes—like how the air smells fresher after a cleanup. That kind of learning sticks with you because your whole body is involved, not just your head." (Makis).

5.4 Pedagogies of Activism: Teaching Others

Activists often took on teaching roles, mentoring newcomers or leading community workshops. This suggests that social movements are not only sites of learning but also spaces of peer pedagogy and grassroots education, where knowledge circulates across different levels of experience. This supports Crowther's (2013) argument that informal adult education embedded within social movements plays a critical role in fostering collective capacity-building, as it enables participants to develop shared knowledge, critical awareness, and the collaborative skills necessary for sustained activism.

"When I first joined the group, I was just trying to understand how everything worked—what we were doing, how meetings went, what my role could be. I didn't feel like I had much to offer at that point. But as I got more involved, I started to see that new people had the same questions I used to have. Slowly, I began helping them out—explaining how things work, introducing them to others, just making sure they didn't feel lost like I did in the beginning. Without really noticing, I became the person who supports the newcomers. And you know what? It feels really good. It's like I'm giving something back, keeping the circle going. I've realized that being part of something isn't just about what you do …it's about helping others find their place too"(Petros)

"One of the things we always try to do is bring new people into the movement. It's not just about having more hands to help—it's also about sharing what we've learned and helping others understand why this matters. A big part of what we do is explaining things: what the threats to the Creek are, why local action makes a difference, how each person can contribute. We don't sit people down in a classroom … it just happens almost naturally. We talk during

meetings, over coffee after meetings, or while setting up events. That kind of informal education is really part of our actions. It's how people get informed, inspired, and start seeing themselves as part of something bigger" (Marina)

In conclusion, the pedagogies of activism extend beyond the boundaries of formal education, emerging organically through action, dialogue, and collective engagement. Activists do not merely participate—they also teach by mentoring newcomers, sharing lived knowledge, and modeling practices of resistance and care. These forms of grassroots teaching are deeply relational and often reciprocal, highlighting the collective nature of learning within social movements. Ultimately, activism becomes both a site and a method of education, where knowledge is transmitted not through authority, but through experience, solidarity, and shared purpose.

5.5 Structural Barriers and Learning Constraints

Despite the positive learning outcomes, several barriers were identified, including time constraints, burnout, lack of institutional support, and limited access to expert knowledge. These challenges reflect underlying structural inequalities and underscore the need for greater recognition of learning that occurs outside formal educational institutions (Hall & Clover, 2005). Addressing these barriers may enhance the sustainability of both learning processes and activist engagement.

The following excerpts from interviews highlight the structural obstacles and constraints encountered by the activists.

"Look, we all care about the creek … this is why we are engaged in. But the fact remains that we are all volunteers, with most of us balancing full-time jobs or studies. I remember experiencing total burnout just a few months after starting...before I even figured out how things are supposed to work. You try to get answers from the regional authorities, and no one replies. You ask for help, and everyone's stretched thin. After a while, it feels like you're carrying the weight of the world with no map and no rest. And the worst part is, it's not because we don't care, it's because the system isn't built to support ordinary people trying to make change.". (Petros)

"Sometimes it feels like we're reinventing the wheel — no structure, no support. When I first joined the group, I assumed there would be some kind of guide or training, maybe even just someone to walk us through how things are supposed to work. But no — we were figuring things out from scratch. One week we were trying to organize a public debate, the next we were dealing with municipal bureaucracy without any clear plan. It can get frustrating. You want to help, but without a system in place, everything takes twice as long. " (Voula)

"We usually chat about how things went after events or actions. It doesn't have to be as our official meeting; sometimes we just hang out with coffee, talking things through. Being honest and saying what you really think is key. I've realized that just doing an action isn't the whole picture; you also need time to rethink it. There were moments when I felt totally overwhelmed or stressed, and then someone else would say they felt the exact same way. Such moments are priceless. When you actually stop and listen to how others were feeling or what was going through their heads, it makes you way more understanding. It brings you closer to the group and to each other in a deeper way." (Makis)

Activists engaged in social movements often face a range of interconnected barriers that hinder their ability to participate, learn, and sustain action over time. One of the most pervasive challenges is burnout and emotional fatigue, as prolonged involvement—particularly in causes marked by moral urgency or systemic injustice—can lead to

psychological exhaustion and disillusionment (Gorski & Chen, 2015). This emotional strain is frequently compounded by a lack of financial and material resources, as many grassroots initiatives depend on unpaid labor and struggle to secure stable funding or institutional backing (Hall et al., 2012). Consequently, movements often operate under precarious conditions that restrict their capacity to organize effectively or develop lasting educational structures (Foley, 1999).

Another significant obstacle arises from the informality and instability of movement structures. While decentralized, non-hierarchical organizing can foster participation and democratic engagement, it may also lead to confusion, uneven workloads, and internal conflict due to the lack of clearly defined roles, responsibilities, or strategic direction (Maeckelbergh, 2009). This structural ambiguity can impede the learning process, particularly for newcomers who may struggle to access mentorship or institutional memory (Crowther et al., 2005).

Additionally, activists frequently face a lack of public recognition for their knowledge practices, as the informal and experiential learning within movements is seldom acknowledged by formal education systems or policy frameworks (Clover & Hall, 2010). This lack of validation can diminish both their external influence and internal confidence. In some cases, the situation is further exacerbated by external repression—including policing, surveillance, or legal threats—which not only deters participation but also undermines trust and solidarity within the group (Della Porta, 2013).

Structural inequalities based on gender, race, class, or disability can further restrict who feels welcomed or empowered within activist spaces, leading to the marginalization of certain voices and the reproduction of dominant power dynamics—even within progressive movements (Kilgore, 1999). At the same time, everyday constraints such as work obligations, caregiving responsibilities, and time limitations present significant challenges for adult learners striving to balance activism with other aspects of life (Finger & Asún, 2001).

Finally, internal tensions and disagreements—whether ideological or interpersonal—can fragment movements or impede collective learning. Without intentional practices for dialogue, reflection, and conflict resolution, such challenges may result in disengagement or splintering (Brookfield & Holst, 2011). Together, these barriers illustrate that while social movements offer rich opportunities for adult learning and transformation, they are also shaped by complex limitations that must be actively addressed to sustain meaningful participation and growth.

6. Discussion

This study explored how participants in a local environmental movement engage in informal and non-formal learning. Through thematic analysis of narrative data, several interconnected themes emerged that align with—and expand upon—established adult learning theories.

Participants described learning as occurring within specific social, ecological, and political contexts. This affirms Lave and Wenger's (1991) notion of situated learning, where knowledge is embedded in the practices of activist collectives. Rather than being acquired through formal instruction, knowledge developed through shared action, reflection, and problem-solving within a real-world ecological struggle. Many also reported, in varying forms and intensities, experiencing disorienting dilemmas—such as direct encounters with environmental degradation or institutional neglect—that prompted critical reflection and shifts in worldview. These accounts resonate with Mezirow's (1991) theory of transformative learning, suggesting that activism often catalyzes profound personal and cognitive development.

Beyond individual transformation, participants highlighted their roles in educating others through storytelling, public engagement, and advocacy. In this way, they functioned as both learners and educators, engaging in what Gergen (2009) calls a dialogical process of co-constructing knowledge: "*Knowledge is not a mirror of the world, but a by product of coordinated action. It is not a reflection of an objective reality but is constructed in relationships through language and dialogue*" (p. 71). In short, participants framed learning not only as personal growth but also as a political act aimed at mobilizing the local community.

Nevertheless, participants identified significant challenges, including emotional fatigue and frustration in the context of collective action. These constraints underscore the uneven dynamics inherent in movement-based learning, highlighting the need for emotional resilience and critical reflexivity to sustain long-term activist engagement (Hall et al., 2012).

These findings reinforce the understanding of environmental movements as dynamic learning environments. They invite adult educators and policymakers to recognize the educational significance of activism and to value informal learning spaces as vital arenas for ecological and

7. Conclusion

The study reported in this paper examined adult learning within the milieu of environmental activism, focusing on participants involved in the grassroots movement for the Protection of the Environment and Creek of Penteli–Chalandri in northern Athens. Framed through the lens of social movement learning (Hall et al., 2012; Crowther et al., 2005), the research employed narrative inquiry and thematic analysis to trace how learning unfolded through collective action. Findings revealed that participants developed experiential and embodied knowledge (Kolb, 1984), engaged in critical reflection (Mezirow, 1991), experienced shifts in personal and civic identity (Brookfield, 2005), and participated in informal peer education (Foley, 1999). These forms of learning were not imposed but emerged relationally and organically through participation in the movement's practices and struggles, affirming social movements as generative spaces for adult learning and civic transformation (Choudry & Kapoor, 2010). Future research could build on these insights by examining learning across different types of movements, exploring intergenerational learning within activism, or assessing the long-term impacts of such learning on individuals and communities.

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Ο δρόμος της επανένταξης και της δεύτερης ευκαιρίας στη Γαλλία: μαθαίνοντας από το παράδειγμα των Écoles de la Deuxième Chance

The path to reintegration and second chance in France: learning from the example of the Écoles de la Deuxième Chance

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Περίληψη

Το συγκεκριμένο άρθρο αποτελεί ιδιαίτερα συντομευμένο (και διαμορφωμένο στις απαιτήσεις και το μέγεθος ενός επιστημονικού άρθρου) μέρος συγκριτικής μελέτης των Σχολείων Δεύτερης Ευκαιρίας Ελλάδας και Γαλλίας, στο πλαίσιο διδακτορικής διατριβής που μελετά συγκριτικά τα ΣΔΕ της Νότιας Ευρώπης. Συγκεκριμένα, καταγράφει βασικές παραμέτρους, σχετικά με τα Σχολεία Δεύτερης Ευκαιρίας της Γαλλίας, σε σύγκριση με αυτά της Ελλάδας. Αρχικά, γίνεται αναφορά στην είσοδό των νέων στο γαλλικό πρόγραμμα (η οποία δεν είναι εύκολη υπόθεση, αλλά περιλαμβάνει πολλές και διαφορετικές διαδικασίες) και στην έξοδο απ' αυτό. Επίσης, αναλύονται οι λόγοι για τους οποίους οι υποψήφιοι ασκούμενοι εγκαταλείπουν τα γαλλικά ΣΔΕ κατά τη φάση της ένταξής τους στο πρόγραμμα. Ακόμα, αναφέρονται οι τύποι εξόδου των εκπαιδευόμενων από τα γαλλικά ΣΔΕ και η σχέση αυτής της εξόδου με την πρακτική άσκηση, ενώ γίνεται και αναφορά στη σχέση των αποφοίτων με το σχολείο και στη διάρκεια αυτής της σχέσης. Καταγράφονται, στη συνέχεια, οι παράγοντες που αποτελούν τα εχέγγυα επιτυχημένης εξόδου από τα E2C. Ακολουθεί η σύγκριση με τα ελληνικά ΣΔΕ και αναφέρονται τα σημεία υπεροχής και των δύο προγραμμάτων. Η μεθοδολογική τεκμηρίωση βασίζεται τόσο σε πρωτογενή (συλλογή δεδομένων και πληροφοριών απευθείας από γαλλικό E2C) όσο και δευτερογενή ανάλυση.

Λέξεις – κλειδιά: Σχολείο Δεύτερης Ευκαιρίας, Εκπαίδευση Ενηλίκων, E2C, ένταξη, είσοδος, έξοδος, κατάρτιση.

Abstract

This article is a particularly abbreviated (and structured to the requirements and size of a scientific article) part of a comparative study of Second Chance Schools in Greece and France, within the framework of a Ph.D. Thesis that comparatively studies the Second Chance Schools of Southern Europe. Specifically, it records basic parameters regarding the Second Chance Schools of France, compared to those of Greece. Initially, reference is made to the entry of young people into the French program (which is not an easy task, but includes many and different procedures) and to the exit from it. It also analyzes the reasons why prospective trainees abandon French Second Chance Schools during their phase of joining the program. Furthermore, the types of exit of

trainees from French Second Chance Schools and the relationship of this exit with the internship are mentioned, while reference is also made to the relationship of graduates with the school and the duration of this relationship. The factors that constitute the guarantees of successful exit from the E2C are then recorded. The comparison with the Greek SDEs follows and the points of excellence of both programs are mentioned. The methodological documentation is based on both primary (collection of data and information directly from French E2C) and secondary analysis.

Keywords: Second Chance School, Adult Education, E2C, integration, entry, exit, training.

1. Εισαγωγή

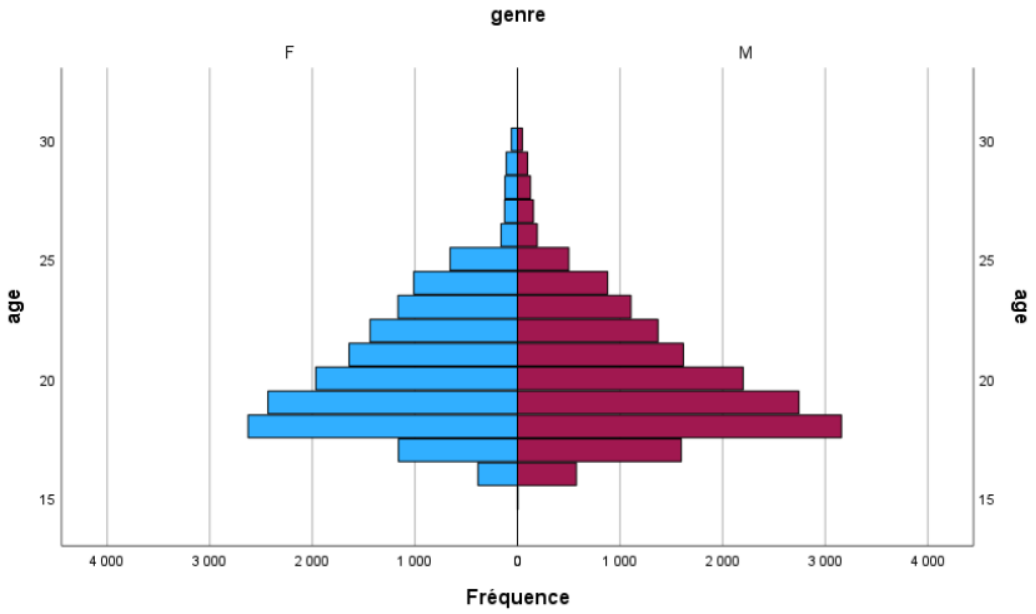
Τα γαλλικά Σχολεία Δεύτερης Ευκαιρίας είναι οργανισμοί κατάρτισης υπό το καθεστώς των Ενώσεων (Association) βάσει του γαλλικού νόμου 1901. Ένα σχολείο στη Γαλλία, για να αποκτήσει το σήμα των ΣΔΕ (E2C), πρέπει να είναι διαπιστευμένο από την «Ένωση», η οποία εγγυάται την ποιότητα της παρεχόμενης υπηρεσίας ενός ΣΔΕ, εφόσον αυτό αποκτήσει τη διαπίστευση. Κάθε ΣΔΕ που εγγράφεται στο Δίκτυο (Reseau) της Ένωσης αυτοδίκαια σέβεται τα ποιοτικά εκπαιδευτικά πρότυπα του πιστοποιητικού εκπαίδευσης/κατάρτισης QUALIOPI[1]. Το QUALIOPI -εφαρμοσμένο από τον Ιανουάριο του 2022- είναι το γαλλικό πιστοποιητικό ποιότητας, το οποίο είναι απαραίτητο για όσους είναι πάροχοι εκπαίδευσης και επιδιώκουν τη δραστηριοποίησή τους στον τομέα της επαγγελματικής κατάρτισης στη Γαλλία και την πρόσβαση στη δημόσια χρηματοδότηση (ή χρηματοδότηση από συγκεντρωτικές πηγές). Λειτουργεί, πλέον, ως ένας ενιαίος και αξιόπιστος δείκτης ποιότητας, με τον οποίο οι οργανισμοί αποδεικνύουν την τήρηση συγκεκριμένων προτύπων ποιότητας σε ό,τι αφορά την παροχή εκπαίδευσης.Αυτά τα πρότυπα διαμορφώνουν μια ομοιογένεια πρακτικών σε ένα ετερόκλητο περιβάλλον επαγγελμάτων που σχετίζονται με την κοινωνική ένταξη. Δημιουργείται μέσω της ομοιογένειας αυτής μια «τυποποιημένη υπηρεσία» όσον αφορά την ποιότητα των υπηρεσιών που τα σχολεία αυτά προσφέρουν. Τα ΣΔΕ είναι υποχρεωμένα, εφόσον συμμετέχουν στην «Ένωση», να ακολουθούν απαρέγκλιτα αυτά τα πρότυπα, να τηρούν ημερολόγιο και να αναφέρουν στην εφαρμογή APC τις πρακτικές τους -εν είδει ελέγχου- κάθε δεκαοκτάμηνο. Στις ελεγχόμενες παραμέτρους συμπεριλαμβάνονται η χρήση της εξατομικευμένης παιδαγωγικής, η συμμόρφωση του ΣΔΕ όσον αφορά την ενδεδειγμένη τοποθεσία και τον εξοπλισμό του σχολείου και το monitoring των εκπαιδευόμενων μέσω βάσης δεδομένων.

Για τον έλεγχο των κριτηρίων ποιότητας του πιστοποιητικού QUALIOPI ο φορέας αξιολόγησης ANFOR (Γαλλική Ένωση για την Τυποποίηση) διενεργεί επιθεώρηση κάθε τρία χρόνια. Όταν τελειώσει η επιθεώρηση, δίνεται στο αξιολογούμενο Σχολείο Δεύτερης Ευκαιρίας το χρονικό περιθώριο των τριών μηνών, για να ανταποκριθεί στις συστάσεις που του έχουν γίνει και έτσι να ανανεωθεί ή όχι η διαπίστευση.

[1] Βασίζεται σε ένα αυστηρό εθνικό πλαίσιο ποιότητας, αποτελούμενο από εφτά (7) βασικά κριτήρια και τριάντα δύο (32) συγκεκριμένους δείκτες, που ισχύουν για τους παρόχους εκπαίδευσης. Σύμφωνα με το νομοθετικό πλαίσιο αφορά παρόχους: 1) Μαθήματων κατάρτισης (L.6313-1 – 1°), 2) Εκπαίδευσης μέσω μαθητείας (L.6313-1 – 4°) και 3) Εκπαίδευσης για την επικύρωση της αποκτηθείσας εμπειρίας (L.6313-1 – 3°).

2. Ηλικία Εκπαιδευόμενων στα E2C

Για να εισαχθεί κάποιος σε ένα γαλλικό Σχολείο Δεύτερης Ευκαιρίας, πρέπει να πληροί αρχικά μια ηλικιακή «προϋπόθεση»: να είναι μεταξύ 16 και 25 ετών, αν και υπάρχουν σπάνιες περιπτώσεις νέων μέχρι τα 30, κυρίως για τους δικαιούχους του επιδόματος κοινωνικής αλληλεγγύης (RSA). Η ακόλουθη ηλικιακή πυραμίδα δείχνει τα ποσοστάτων εκπαιδευομένων στις ηλικίες 18 με 25 (κύριος ηλικιακός στόχος των γαλλικών ΣΔΕ). Οι κάτω των 18 και άνω των 25 εντάσσονται στο E2C σε μικρότεροι κλίμακα λόγω άλλων προγραμμάτων, από τα οποία είναι ωφελούμενοι. Είναι ενδεικτικό το στατιστικό δεδομένο ότι μετά τα 18 διευρύνεται το σχήμα της πυραμίδας. Αυτό αποτυπώνει την κοινωνική απαίτηση της γαλλικής κοινωνίας για ανάληψη ευθύνης από μέρους όσων ενηλικιώνονται, η οποία μεταφράζεται κυρίως με ένταξη στην εργασία. (Perez et al., 2024). Η συντριπτική πλειοψηφία των εισερχόμενων εκπαιδευόμενων στα γαλλικά ΣΔΕ είναι άτομα μεταξύ 18 (έτος ενηλικίωσης) και 23 ετών (μέση ηλικία αποχωρισμού των παιδιών από τους γονείς) (Van de Velde, 2008).



Γράφημα 1. *Πυραμίδα ηλικίας*

Πηγή: Βάση δεδομένων των εκπαιδευόμενων στα γαλλικά ΣΔΕ κατά την περίοδο 2016-2020, που παρέχεται από το Δίκτυο των γαλλικών Σχολείων Δεύτερης Ευκαιρίας, στο «Le dispositif des écoles de la deuxième chance: évaluation et analyses d'actions pédagogiques novatrices en faveur des jeunes sans qualification» (Pérez et al., 2024, p. 16)

3. Διαδικασία Επιλογής Ασκούμενων στα Γαλλικά E2C

Όταν άρχισε να εφαρμόζεται στη Γαλλία το πρόγραμμα των Σχολείων Δεύτερης Ευκαιρίας (E2C), η εγγραφή σε αυτά ήταν θέμα της «τοπικής αποστολής» (mission locale) και των κέντρων απασχόλησης. Μόνο αυτοί οι δύο φορείς είχαν το δικαίωμα

να στείλουν τις αιτήσεις των επίδοξων ασκούμενων στα E2C. Από το 2013 που ξεκίνησε να εφαρμόζεται η ανταγωνιστική προς τα E2C «Εγγύηση Νεολαίας»[2], τα γαλλικά Σχολεία Δεύτερης Ευκαιρίας έκαναν δεκτές αιτήσεις και από άλλους φορείς και μάλιστα εκτός του καθορισμένου χρονικού πλαισίου, οι λεγόμενες «ανεπιθύμητες αιτήσεις». Το παρακάτω γράφημα δείχνει σε ποσοστά την προέλευση των αιτήσεων. Η πλειοψηφία (2 στους 3, 64,5%) των αιτήσεων είναι από τις «τοπικές αποστολές», ενώ το 22,2% είναι από τις «ανεπιθύμητες αιτήσεις» (candidaturesspontanées). Και οι δυο πληθυσμιακές ομάδες έχουν ίδιο ηλικιακό προφίλ, καθώς είναι από 18 μέχρι 22 ετών (Perez et al., 2024).

Όμως, η υποβολή αίτησης δε συνεπάγεται αυτόματη εγγραφή. Προκειμένου να ενταχθούν οι ασκούμενοι σε ένα γαλλικό ΣΔΕ, υποβάλλονται -μετά την υποβολή αίτησης- σε μια προκαταρκτική διαδικασία επιλογής. Καλούνται να ολοκληρώσουν μια ακολουθία «βημάτων». Το πρώτο από αυτά είναι η αίτηση. Στη συνέχεια, λαμβάνει χώρα μια αρχική συλλογική συγκέντρωση ενημέρωσης και ακολουθεί η κοινωνική διαγνωστική συνέντευξη. Στη διάρκειά της το προσωπικό του σχολείου διενεργεί έναν κρίσιμο έλεγχο, ειδικά σε ευαίσθητες καταστάσεις ορισμένων εκπαιδευόμενων, προκειμένου να εντοπιστούν κοινωνικά εμπόδια και να βρεθούν λύσεις. Η άρση αυτών των εμποδίων θεωρείται καθοριστική, καθώς θα επιτρέψει στους ασκούμενους να βελτιώσουν τις συνθήκες τους και «να επικεντρωθούν στον επαγγελματικό τους προσανατολισμό». Οι δείκτες που ελέγχονται δίνουν τη δυνατότητα στον Σύμβουλο Κοινωνικής Ζωής του σχολείου να εκτιμήσει σε ένα πρώτο στάδιο τη γενική κατάσταση του ασκούμενου (Έκθεση E2C N. στο Perez et al., 2024).

Αυτός ο έλεγχος μέσω της διαγνωστικής συνέντευξης εστιάζει επίσης: 1) στο αν επαληθεύονται τα κριτήρια που έχουν θεσπιστεί για την είσοδο των εκπαιδευόμενων στα γαλλικά ΣΔΕ και 2) στα κίνητρα που οι επίδοξοι εκπαιδευόμενοι έχουν και την αξιολόγηση του επιπέδου των κινήτρων αυτών. Ακολούθως, η αίτηση μετά τον έλεγχο μπορεί να απορριφθεί, να τεθεί σε αναμονή μέχρις ότου να τακτοποιηθούν τα απαιτούμενα έγγραφα και αρθούν τα κοινωνικά εμπόδια που τυχόν αντιμετωπίζει ο εκπαιδευόμενος (όπως υγεία, περίθαλψη, φροντίδα παιδιών, κ. α.) ή να γίνει αποδεκτή. Εφόσον γίνει αποδεκτή, αρχίζει η ένταξη στο πρόγραμμα με τη λεγόμενη «περίοδο ένταξης» που διαρκεί από 5 έως 7 εβδομάδες. Το επόμενο στάδιο είναι η «περίοδος τοποθέτησης» κατά την οποία αρχίζει παράλληλα και η έναρξη της αρχικής πρακτικής άσκησης σε εταιρεία. Η λέξη «τοποθέτηση» έχει την έννοια του προσδιορισμού της θέσης ενός αντικειμένου ή ενός ατόμου (εν προκειμένω) σε μια ευρύτερη μηχανή/ομάδα. Αυτός ο ορισμός συνεπάγεται και αξιολόγηση τριών δεδομένων: της σκοπιμότητας του εκπαιδευόμενου/»σταθερότητας» του αιτήματός του, της ικανότητάς του να διατηρεί τον ρυθμό εργασίας σε διαφορετικούς τομείς και του βαθμού δέσμευσής του στις απαιτήσεις ενός τέτοιου συστήματος, όπως είναι τα γαλλικά ΣΔΕ (Perez et al., 2024). Στο στάδιο της «τοποθέτησης» λαμβάνει χώρα η αξιολόγηση των ασκούμενων σε διάφορους τομείς. Παράλληλα, οι ασκούμενοι αξιολογούν τόσο την προσωπικότητά τους (προσωπική αξιολόγηση) όσο και την επαγγελματική τους πορεία ως εκείνη τη στιγμή. Η «προσωπική αξιολόγηση» περιλαμβάνει μια αρχική αξιολόγηση αναφορικά με τα κίνητρά τους, τις φιλοδοξίες

[2] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EL/legal-content/summary/youth-guarantee.html?fromSummary=15.

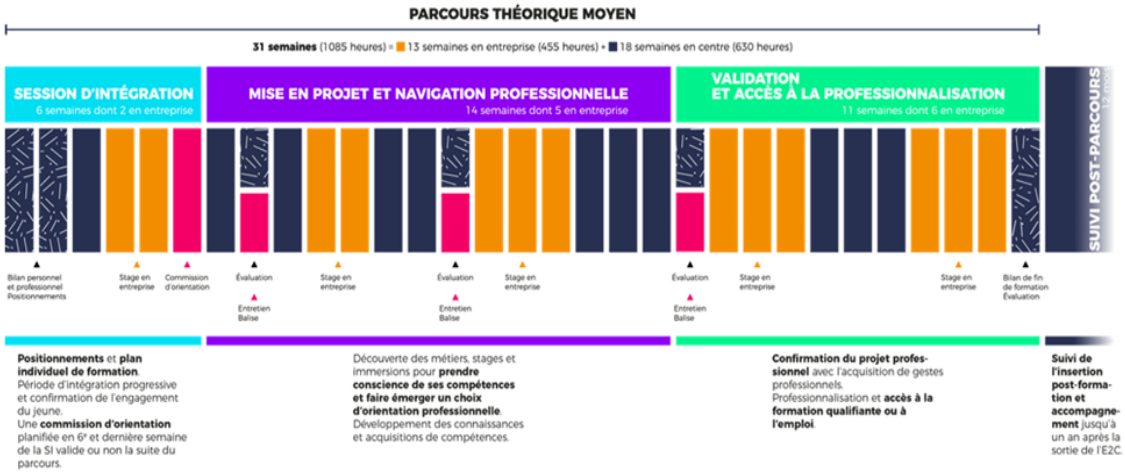
τους και τα ενδιαφέροντά του, προκειμένου οι εκπαιδευτές να σκιαγραφήσουν τον επιθυμητό από τους εκπαιδευόμενους επαγγελματικό προσανατολισμό. Τέλος, οι ομαδικές του δραστηριότητες επιτρέπουν στους εκπαιδευτές να αξιολογήσουν την ικανότητα ένταξης στην ομάδα (ο.π.).

Το πρώτο αυτό στάδιο τελειώνει με την απόφαση της Επιτροπής Καθοδήγησης» (εκπαιδευτές και CME), η οποία επικυρώνει ή απορρίπτει τη συμμετοχή/δέσμευση του εκπαιδευόμενου. Η επικύρωση οδηγεί στην ανάπτυξη του «Ατομικού Σχεδίου Κατάρτισης» (2ο στάδιο) και την υπογραφή σύμβασης με το γαλλικό ΣΔΕ και αποκτά την ιδιότητα του ασκούμενου επαγγελματικής κατάρτισης με διάρκεια εφτά (7) έως εννέα (9) μήνες (ανάλογα το ΣΔΕ). Ταυτόχρονα, καθίσταται δικαιούχος του μηνιαίου επιδόματος και υποχρεούται σε κατάρτιση/εργασία 35 ωρών ανά εβδομάδα. Από τη στιγμή που ο ασκούμενος υπογράψει τη σύμβαση, εισέρχεται στην περίοδο κατάρτισης και εκπαίδευσης, η οποία αποτελείται από το στάδιο «Ανάπτυξης Έργου» και το στάδιο «Πλοήγησης Σταδιοδρομίας». Και τα δύο αυτά στάδια έχουν ως επίκεντρο την δοκιμασία των επαγγελματικών φιλοδοξιών κάθε ασκούμενου, προκειμένου σε ένα μεσοπρόθεσμο βάθος χρόνου να επιτευχθεί βαθμιαία η πιο ρεαλιστική και η πιο εφικτή επαγγελματική επιλογή. Η διαδικασία αυτή (ενδιάμεση αξιολόγηση) περιλαμβάνει θεωρητικό και πρακτικό επίπεδο: έρευνες σταδιοδρομίας και παράλληλα πρακτικές ασκήσεις σε διάφορα ιδρύματα, προκειμένου να επιβεβαιώσουν την επιλογή που έκαναν αρχικά ή ακόμα και να την απορρίψουν, για το ξεκίνημα μιας νέας. Στη διαδικασία περιλαμβάνονται και διαθεματικές προσεγγίσεις και ενότητες για επαγγελματικό προσανατολισμό (για το πώς να αναζητούν εργασία). Κάθε ασκούμενος με τη βοήθεια του μέντορα από το ΣΔΕ και του διαχειριστή έργου από την εταιρεία εξετάζει την επαγγελματική του διαδρομή. Έτσι, θα είναι σε θέση να επιλέξουν το μελλοντικό επαγγελματικό τους έργο και αυτή η επιλογή λαμβάνει χώρα στο τέλος του πενταμήνου (20 εβδομάδες).

Μετά το πέρας των είκοσι (20) εβδομάδων, οι ασκούμενοι εισέρχονται στο 3ο στάδιο της εκπαίδευσής τους, το οποίο έχει τίτλο «φάση επικύρωσης και πρόσβασης στην επαγγελματοποίηση». Στο στάδιο αυτό οι εμπλεκόμενοι εδραιώνουν την επαγγελματική τους επιλογή. Ταυτόχρονα, ενισχύουν τις δεξιότητές τους σε θεωρητικούς τομείς, όπως γαλλική γλώσσα, Μαθηματικά, Πληροφορική, δεξιότητες που θα τους βοηθήσουν μετά την έξοδό τους από το πρόγραμμα.

Όταν ολοκληρώσουν το πρόγραμμα των E2C οι ασκούμενοι, δεν αποδεσμεύονται αυτόματα από αυτό. Αντίθετα, εισέρχονται στο 4ο στάδιο , κατά τη διάρκεια του οποίου κάθε γαλλικό ΣΔΕ παρακολουθεί την πορεία τους συλλέγοντας πληροφορίες. Η συλλογή πληροφοριών αφορά την επαγγελματική τους ένταξη και γίνεται ανά τρίμηνο μέχρι τη συμπλήρωση ενός έτους από την αποχώρηση από το πρόγραμμα. Παράλληλα, το E2C παρέχει συμβουλευτική βοήθεια σε όποιον πρώην ασκούμενο το επιθυμεί, σχετικά με προσφορές εργασίας, επαφή με κοινωνικούς εταίρους, εκπαίδευση κ. α.), ενώ η συνεργασία τους συνεχίζεται σε βάθος χρόνου (ο.π.).

Τα στάδια που προαναφέρθηκαν είναι κοινά για όλα τα γαλλικά ΣΔΕ και η διάρθρωσή τους είναι εμφανής στο παρακάτω διάγραμμα.



Διάγραμμα 1. *Τα τέσσερα στάδια της πορείας των εκπαιδευόμενων στα γαλλικά ΣΔΕ*

Πηγή: «Le dispositif des écoles de la deuxième chance: évaluation et analyses d'actions pédagogiques novatrices en faveur des jeunes sans qualification» (Pérez et al., 2024, p. 23)

4. Εγκατάλειψη κατά την Περίοδο Ένταξης

Η εγκατάλειψη κατά την περίοδο ένταξης βρίσκεται σε υψηλά επίπεδα. Σχεδόν ένας στους τέσσερεις αδυνατούν να ανταποκριθούν στην απαιτήσεις των υποχρεώσεων που συνεπάγεται η συμμετοχή στο πρόγραμμα των E2C. Πολλοί από τους υποψήφιους ασκούμενους δεν είναι σε θέση να αντεπεξέλθουν στις ακαδημαϊκές απαιτήσεις ενός σχολικού περιβάλλοντος E2C.

Σύμφωνα με την έρευνα των Zaffran και Vollet (2018), κατά την πρώτη περίοδο ένταξης οι υποψήφιοι εγκαταλείπουν το πρόγραμμα σε ποσοστό 27,6%. Οι κύριοι λόγοι εγκατάλειψης σε αυτή τη φάση είναι:

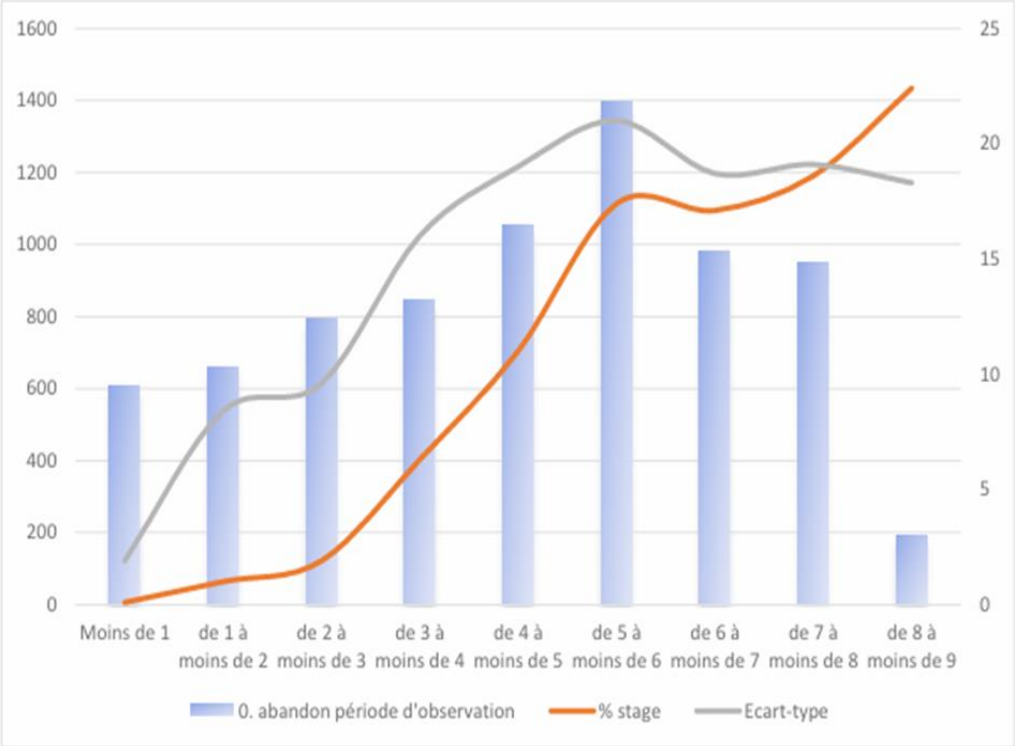
α) οι υποψήφιοι συνειδητοποιούν το ότι δεν έχουν τη δύναμη/ικανότητα να συμμορφωθούν με ένα σταθερό πρόγραμμα εργασίας, παρόμοιο με αυτό ενός εργαζόμενου (μπορούν να απουσιάζουν και να αμείβονται μόνο με βεβαίωση γιατρού),

β) η προτροπή για «αυτοαφήγηση» και «αυτο-αναφορικότητα» (να μοιραστούν την προσωπική τους ιστορία), προκειμένου να επιτευχθεί η πιο πετυχημένη «τοποθέτηση»,

γ) διαρκείς αξιολογήσεις ή αξιολογικές κρίσεις στη φάση αυτή.

Άλλος λόγος εγκατάλειψης του προγράμματος είναι το γεγονός ότι η μορφή του προγράμματος οδηγεί σε «λεκτική έκφραση δεξιοτήτων». Έτσι, η αδυναμία τους να εκφραστούν λεκτικά λειτουργεί αποτρεπτικά και απομακρύνει ορισμένους που δε μπορούν «να αναστοχαστούν την πρακτική τους». Επιπλέον, πολλοί δεν έχουν οικονομική υποστήριξη από την Περιφέρεια ή υποστήριξη από την οικογένειά τους ή έχουν δική τους οικογένεια με μικρά παιδιά. Τέλος, η μακρινή απόσταση του τόπου διαμονής τους από το E2C μπορεί να οδηγήσει σε πρόωρη εγκατάλειψη του προγράμματος (κατά την πρώτη περίοδο ένταξης).

Τα παραπάνω αποτυπώνονται στο γράφημα 2:



Γράφημα 2. *Αριθμός ατόμων που εγκατέλειψαν το πρόγραμμα κατά την περίοδο ένταξης (πρώτες 9 εβδομάδες) και χρόνος που αφιερώθηκε στην πρακτική άσκηση (% και τυπική απόκλιση)*

Πηγή: «Le dispositif des écoles de la deuxième chance: évaluation et analyses d'actions pédagogiques novatrices en faveur des jeunes sans qualification» (Pérez et al., 2024, p. 28)

Πεδίο εφαρμογής: Όλα τα άτομα που εντάχθηκαν μεταξύ 2016 και 2019 και τα οποία αποχώρησαν από το πρόγραμμα (ολοκλήρωσαν το πρόγραμμά τους κατά τη στιγμή της εξαγωγής από τη βάση δεδομένων από το δίκτυο e2C). Σημείωση: Ο αριθμός των ατόμων που αποχώρησαν από το πρόγραμμα την πρώτη εβδομάδα πριν από την υπογραφή της σύμβασης εργασίας είναι 600. Υπάρχουν 1.400 κατά τη διάρκεια της πέμπτης εβδομάδας. Ο χρόνος που αφιερώνεται στην πρακτική άσκηση την πέμπτη εβδομάδα, ανεξάρτητα από το αν αποχωρούν από το πρόγραμμα ή όχι, είναι 17,4%.

Μεγάλο είναι και το ποσοστό όσων εγκαταλείπουν τα γαλλικά E2C ανάμεσα στην τρίτη και έκτη εβδομάδα. Από τον συνολικό αριθμό όσων δε συνεχίζουν, το 44% είναι από αυτό το χρονικό πλαίσιο. Οι λόγοι είναι αρκετοί και πολλές φορές σε συνδυασμό:

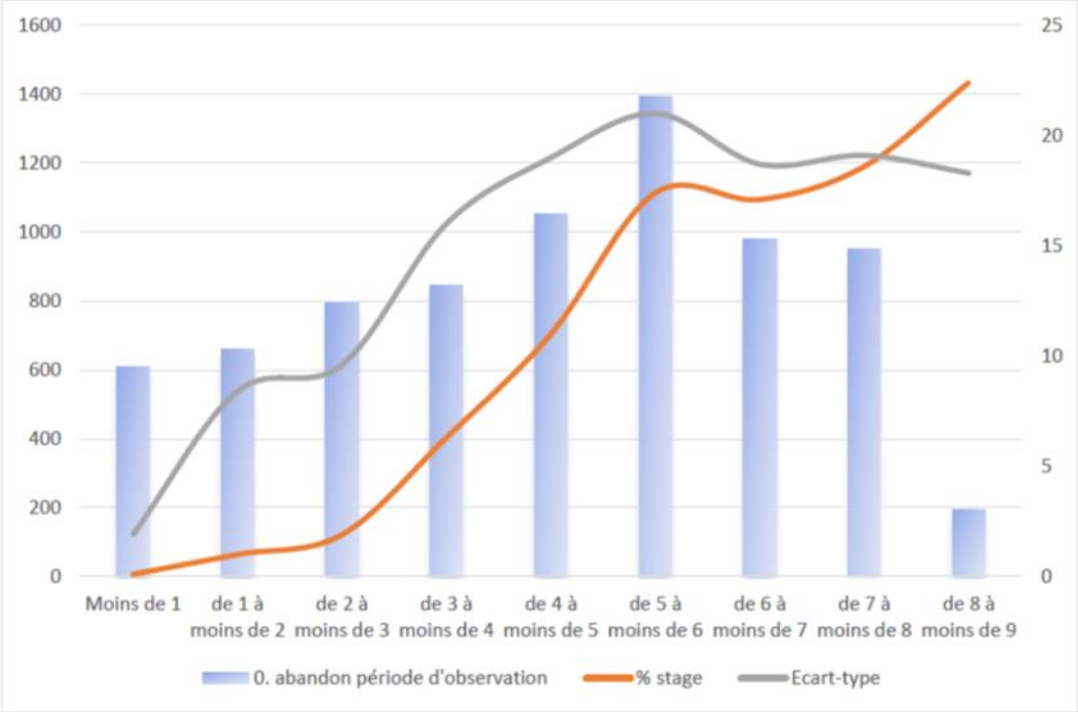
-Αρνητική υποδοχή από την εταιρεία.

-Δυσκολία ή και αδυναμία εύρεσης εταιρείας.

-Ο ρυθμός εργασίας στην εταιρεία, τον οποίο δεν μπορούν να ακολουθήσουν.

Ανάμεσα στην 6η και την 7η εβδομάδα το ποσοστό εγκατάλειψης μειώνεται, ενώ στο αμέσως επόμενο στάδιο η κατάσταση σταθεροποιείται. Κι αυτό γιατί έχουν

απομείνει όσοι ανταποκρίθηκαν στις απαιτήσεις της πρακτικής άσκησης και θεωρητικά έχουν την ικανότητα να ανταποκριθούν στα εκπαιδευτικά (E2C) και επαγγελματικά (εταιρεία συνεργαζόμενη με E2C) πρότυπα που έχει θέσει το πρόγραμμα. Στο τρίτο στάδιο της περιόδου ένταξης, το ποσοστό που εγκαταλείπει τα E2C είναι 25,8%. Οι λόγοι εγκατάλειψης σε αυτή τη φάση δε σχετίζονται ούτε με την ακαδημαϊκή φύση του προγράμματος στο κέντρο ούτε με τις απαιτήσεις της πρακτικής άσκησης που προσομοιάζει σε κανονικές συνθήκες εργασίες. Είναι πιο σοβαροί λόγοι και προκύπτουν από παράγοντες εκτός προγράμματος (Perez et al., 2024). Στο παρακάτω γράφημα φαίνεται η εγκατάλειψη ανά μήνα κατά την περίοδο ένταξης:



Γράφημα 3. *Αριθμός ατόμων που εγκατέλειψαν το πρόγραμμα κατά την περίοδο ένταξης (πρώτες 9 εβδομάδες) και χρόνος που αφιερώθηκε στην πρακτική άσκηση (% και τυπική απόκλιση)*

Πηγή: «Le dispositif des écoles de la deuxième chance: évaluation et analyses d'actions pédagogiques novatrices en faveur des jeunes sans qualification» (Pérez et al., 2024, p. 28)

Πεδίο εφαρμογής: Όλα τα άτομα που εντάχθηκαν μεταξύ 2016 και 2019 και τα οποία αποχώρησαν από το πρόγραμμα (ολοκλήρωσαν το πρόγραμμά τους κατά τη στιγμή της εξαγωγής από τη βάση δεδομένων από το δίκτυο E2C). Σημείωση: Ο αριθμός των ατόμων που αποχώρησαν την πρώτη εβδομάδα πριν από την υπογραφή της σύμβασης εργασίας είναι 600. Υπάρχουν 1.400 κατά τη διάρκεια της πέμπτης εβδομάδας. Ο χρόνος που αφιερώθηκε στην πρακτική άσκηση την πέμπτη εβδομάδα, ανεξάρτητα από το αν αποχώρησαν από το πρόγραμμα ή όχι, είναι 17,4%.

Η περίοδος ένταξης έχει σχεδιαστεί ειδικά για να προσαρμοστούν οι προσδοκίες των εμπλεκομένων στο πρόγραμμα (εκπαιδευτών, εκπαιδευόμενων, CME εταιρείας).

Αποτελεί δοκιμαστική περίοδο για τον τρόπο εργασίας στο γαλλικό ΣΔΕ (περίοδος προσομοίωσης). Μέσα από τις δραστηριότητες της περιόδου αυτής θα είναι σε θέση οι εκπαιδευτές να αξιολογήσουν τη δυνατότητα του εκπαιδευόμενου να:

- ανταποκριθεί στις παιδαγωγικές απαιτήσεις του προγράμματος (αξιολόγηση δέσμευσης στην ακαδημαϊκή μορφή του E2C),

- είναι αποτελεσματικός και αποδοτικός σε μελλοντικά περιβάλλοντα εργασίας (αξιολόγηση αποτελεσματικότητας και αποδοτικότητας).

Στο τέλος, εφόσον διαπιστωθεί η δέσμευση του υποψήφιου στα πρότυπα του προγράμματος, υπογράφεται η σύμβαση, με την οποία ο ασκούμενος επικυρώνει τη δέσμευσή του και τον σεβασμό του στο πρόγραμμα των γαλλικών ΣΔΕ. Οι Pérez et al. (2024) στο «Le dispositif des écoles de la deuxième chance: évaluation et analyses d'actions pédagogiques novatrices en faveur des jeunessans qualification» δίνουν ένα διαφωτιστικό παράδειγμα για τους λόγους που ένα E2C απορρίπτει έναν υποψήφιο ασκούμενο και η βασική προϋπόθεση για την αποδοχή ή την απόρριψη είναι ο σεβασμός των προτύπων που θέτει το πρόγραμμα. Στην «Απολογιστική Έκθεση» ενός γαλλικού Σχολείου Δεύτερης Ευκαιρίας (E2C) σχετικά με μια απόρριψη, ο συντάκτης αναφέρεται ξεκάθαρα στην αρνητική συνήθεια του υποψήφιου ασκούμενου να αργεί συστηματικά. Και αυτή δεν ήταν η μόνη αιτία. Η σημαντικότερη αιτία θεωρείται από τους υπεύθυνους του προγράμματος η άρνηση του να αναλάβει έναν υπεύθυνο ρόλο και να αναγνωρίσει τον εαυτό του μέσα σε αυτόν, απορρίπτοντας την προηγούμενη αρνητική συμπεριφορά του. Μάλιστα, ακόμα και τη μέρα που θα του ανακοίνωναν την απόφαση της Επιτροπής και τον λόγο, ο υποψήφιος άργησε πάλι και όταν του το επισήμαναν, αυτός απλά είπε ότι δεν ξύπνησε. Η Επιτροπή διέκρινε την ανικανότητά του να προσαρμοστεί στις συνθήκες εργασίες και να επιδείξει την πειθαρχία που αυτές απαιτούν. Δε θεώρησε τον συγκεκριμένο υποψήφιο ανοικτό σε βελτίωση συμπεριφοράς ούτε υπεύθυνο εταίρο για σύναψη συμφωνίας και εργασιακής σχέσης με τους επαγγελματίες του προγράμματος. Επίσης, δε διέκρινε την ικανότητα να ακούει, με την έννοια της αποδοχής μιας κριτικής που του ασκείται, αποδοχή η οποία δυνητικά αποτελεί εγγύηση αλλαγής, καθώς οδηγεί σε αλλαγή προς το καλύτερο μιας αρνητικής συμπεριφοράς.

Με άλλα λόγια η περίοδος ένταξης προετοιμάζει και οδηγεί τους υποψήφιους σε υπαγωγή στους παιδαγωγικούς και εργασιακούς κανόνες. Επιπλέον, εξαλείφει τις παρεκκλίσεις από αυτούς τους κανόνες. Δίνεται μία δίκαιη και ξεκάθαρη ευκαιρία επιλογής σε κάθε υποψήφιο να τους αποδεχθεί (και να υπογράψει τη σύμβαση) ή να τους απορρίψει (χωρίς να ερωτηθεί για τους λόγους) και να αποχωρήσει. Είναι αξιοσημείωτο το γεγονός ότι η Περιφέρεια και όλοι οι χρηματοδότες επιβάλλουν – προκειμένου να συνεχιστεί η χρηματοδότηση- ορισμένα λογιστικά και στατιστικά πρότυπα. Αυτό δυνητικά θα προσανατόλιζε τους επαγγελματίες του σχολείου σε ένα κοινό – στόχο που θα εξασφάλιζε τις απαιτούμενες θετικές εξόδους και ως εκ τούτου τη συνέχιση της χρηματοδότησης. Οι επιλογές, όμως, που γίνονται κατά την περίοδο ένταξης, δεν πραγματοποιούνται, για να επιτευχθούν οι ποσοστιαίοι στόχοι (μετρήσιμοι δείκτες θετικής εξόδου). Αυτό στο οποίο δίνεται προτεραιότητα είναι η απόδοση ευκαιριών σε όποιον είναι ανοικτός να σεβαστεί τα πρότυπα (εκπαιδευτικά και εργασιακά) που θέτει το πρόγραμμα. Αυτό φυσικά δε σημαίνει ότι αγνοούν τις

αναμενόμενες θετικές εξόδους. Σέβονται τα λογιστικά και στατιστικά standards, αλλά κρατούν τη δέουσα ηθική απόσταση από αυτά (ο.π.).

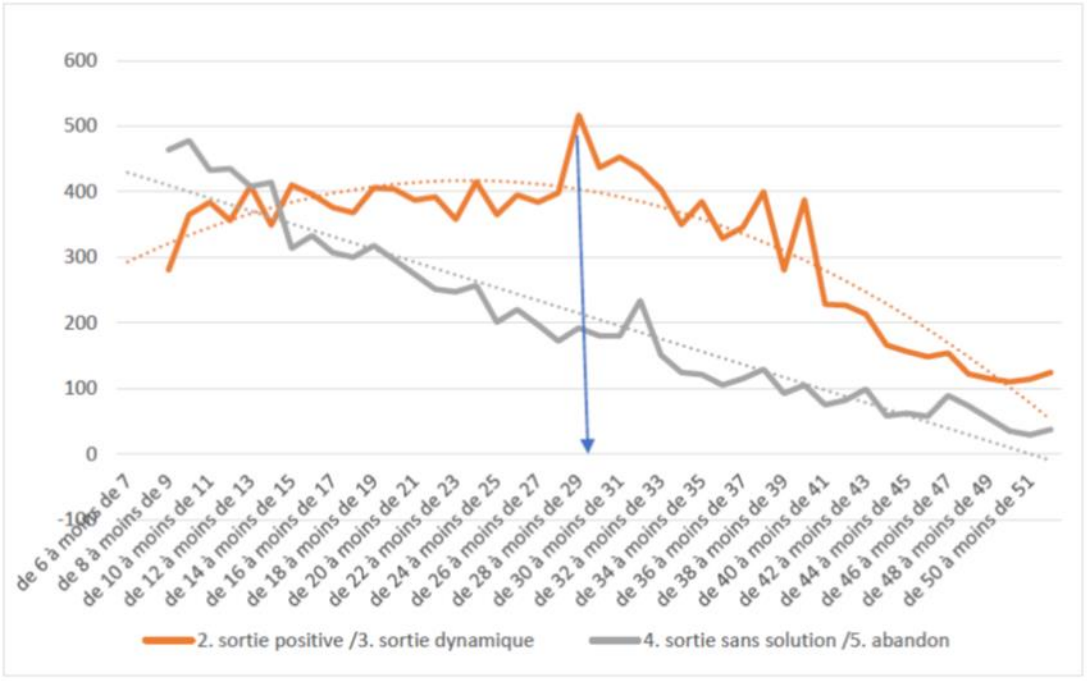
5. Τύποι Εξόδου από το Πρόγραμμα των E2C

Η έξοδος από το πρόγραμμα των E2C περιλαμβάνει τρεις διαφορετικές μορφές: 1) θετικές, 2) δυναμικές, 3) έξοδοι χωρίς λύση (αρνητικές).

- **Θετικές** θεωρούνται όσες οδηγούν σε απόκτηση προσόντων ή διπλώματος, σε συμβάσεις εργασίας-μελέτης, σε σύμβαση εργασίας (μόνιμη ή ορισμένου χρόνου-από δύο μήνες και πάνω), σε startups και σε επιδοτούμενες συμβάσεις εργασίας. Οι θετικές έξοδοι αυξάνονται στατιστικά όσο αυξάνονται οι βδομάδες παραμονής στο πρόγραμμα.

- **Δυναμικές** θεωρούνται οι έξοδοι που οδηγούν σε συμβάσεις ορισμένου χρόνου κάτω των δύο (2) μηνών, σε «αναπροσανατολισμό σε συγκεκριμένες δομές ένταξης», σε κοινωφελή εργασία και σε πρόσβαση σε προ-επιμορφωτική εκπαίδευση. Κι αυτές οι έξοδοι αυξάνονται στατιστικά όσο αυξάνονται οι εβδομάδες παραμονής στο πρόγραμμα.

- **Έξοδοι χωρίς λύσεις**, οι οποίες αναφέρονται σε περιπτώσεις αποχώρησης χωρίς ένταξη σε περιβάλλον εργασίας ή υπογραφή οποιουδήποτε είδους σύμβασης. Επίσης, αφορούν όσους εγκαταλείπουν το πρόγραμμα κατά τη διάρκειά του ή αποκλείονται από αυτό κατά τη διάρκειά του. Οι έξοδοι αυτές είναι αντιστρόφως ανάλογες με τους μήνες παραμονής στο πρόγραμμα (μειώνονται σε σταθερή βάση όσο αυξάνονται οι μήνες παραμονής. Υπάρχει ένα υψηλό ποσοστό εγκαταλείψεων ανάμεσα στον 2ο και 7ο μήνα, στο τέλος του 7ου μέχρι το τέλος του 9ου κορυφώνεται και στη συνέχεια μειώνεται δραματικά.



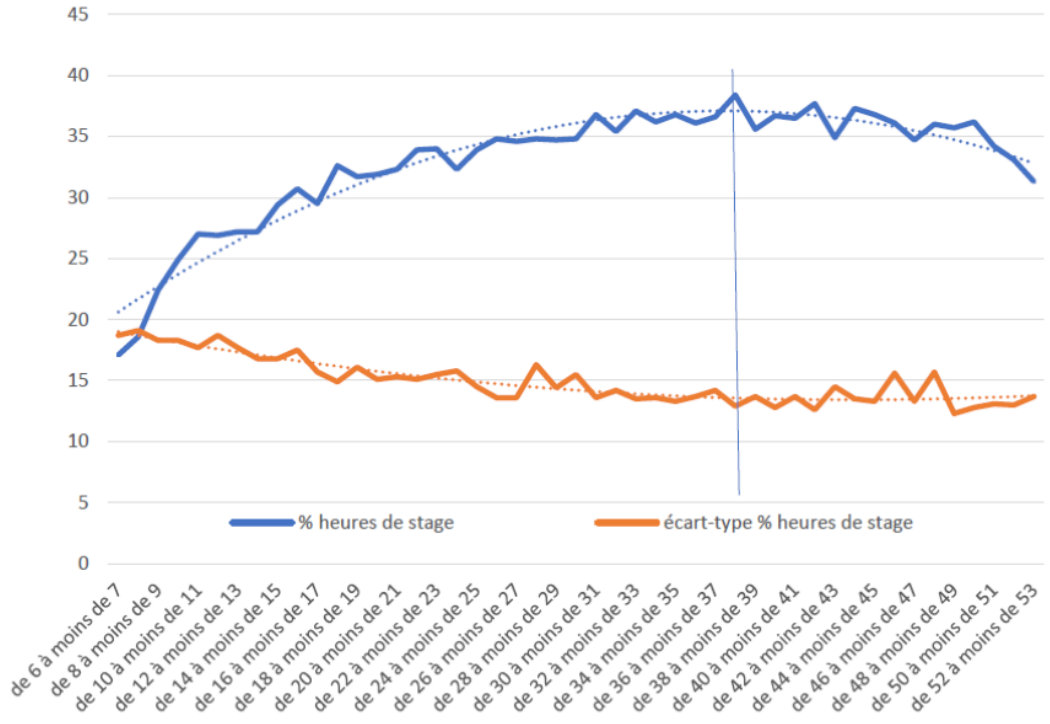
Γράφημα 4. *Αριθμός εξόδων ανά τύπο και ανά εβδομάδα εξόδου από το πρόγραμμα*

Πληθυσμός: Εκπαιδευόμενοι γαλλικών Σχολείων Δεύτερης Ευκαιρίας. Ομάδες από το 2016 έως το 2018 που έχουν ολοκληρώσει το πρόγραμμα (εξαιρείται ο πληθυσμός 2019-2020)

Πηγή: «Le dispositif des écoles de la deuxième chance: évaluation et analyses d'actions pédagogiques novatrices en faveur des jeunes sans qualification» (Pérez et al., 2024, p. 31)

6. Εύρος Πρακτικής Άσκησης

Οι ασκούμενοι παρακολουθούν το πρόγραμμα των E2C για ένα χρονικό διάστημα πέντε (5) μηνών κατά μέσο όρο. Πολλοί από αυτούς καλούνται να υπερβούν τον μέσο αυτό χρόνο του πενταμήνου και να παρακολουθήσουν το πρόγραμμα «ώθησης». Στη φάση αυτή δεν έχουν πια δραστηριότητες στο σχολείο (κέντρο). Με δεδομένο ότι η μέγιστη διάρκεια του προγράμματος είναι από εφτά (7) έως εννιά (9) μήνες, όσο οι ασκούμενοι προχωρούν προς τον 8ο μήνα, οι ώρες της πρακτικής άσκησης αυξάνονται. Τα πρότυπα που τους προετοιμάζουν για την έξοδο γίνονται πιο έντονα κι ομοιόμορφα. Η δέσμευσή τους για τήρηση προθεσμιών είναι υψηλή και οι διαφορές όσον αφορά την πρόσβαση στην πρακτική άσκηση είναι κατά το δυνατόν μετριασμένες. Μετά τον 8ο μήνα οι ώρες αυτές μειώνονται, ενώ η εργασία εξατομικεύεται. Ο λόγος είναι προφανής: ο πληθυσμός που παραμένει στο πρόγραμμα βιώνει περίπλοκες καταστάσεις και αντιμετωπίζει δύσκολα ζητήματα και κατ' αυτόν τον τρόπο η πρόσβαση στην πρακτική άσκηση καθίσταται δύσκολη (ο.π.) Στο παρακάτω γράφημα καταγράφεται η ανοδική τάση (και η καθοδική μετά τον 8ο μήνα) του χρόνου που αφιερώνεται στην πρακτική άσκηση ανά εβδομάδα (σε ποσοστό επί τοις % και τυπική απόκλιση).

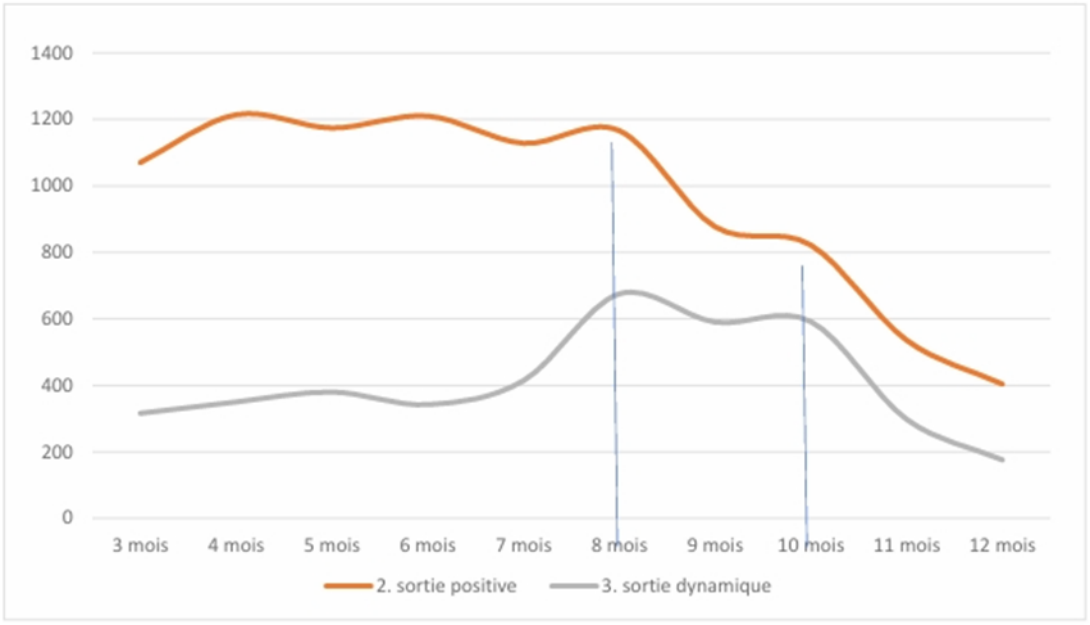


Γράφημα 5. *Χρόνος που αφιερώνεται στην πρακτική άσκηση (% και τυπική απόκλιση)*

Πληθυσμός: Ασκούμενοι σε πρακτική άσκηση στα E2C. Ομάδες από το 2016 έως το 2018 που ολοκλήρωσαν το πρόγραμμά τους (εξαιρείται ο πληθυσμός 2019-2020). Σημείωση: Τα άτομα που αποχώρησαν την 38η εβδομάδα (9,5 μήνες) πέρασαν το 38,4% του προγράμματός τους σε πρακτική άσκηση

Πηγή: «Le dispositif des écoles de la deuxième chance: évaluation et analyses d'actions pédagogiques novatrices en faveur des jeunes sans qualification» (Pérez el al., 2024, p. 33)

Όσο οι ασκούμενοι πλησιάζουν προς την έξοδο, ένα μέρος αυτών αντιμετωπίζει περισσότερες δυσκολίες ως προς την κατάρτιση ή την εύρεση εργασίας. Γι' αυτό και οι επαγγελματίες του προγράμματος καλούνται να προσαρμόσουν την υποστήριξή τους, προκειμένου να τους κρατήσουν όσο γίνεται περισσότερο. Και με τη σύμπραξη του CME (υπεύθυνου εταιρικών σχέσεων) οι ασκούμενοι αφιερώνονται απερίσπαστοι στην αναζήτηση και την εύρεση πρακτικής άσκησης συναφούς με τα ενδιαφέροντά τους, προκειμένου να επιτύχουν την ένταξή τους στην αγορά εργασίας. Σύμφωνα με έρευνες, στο πρόγραμμα «ώθησης» ή «ενίσχυσης» (parcours «boost») ενυπάρχουν δύο κατηγορίες ασκουμένων: α) οι ασκούμενοι που έχουν αποφασίσει την επαγγελματική σταδιοδρομία που επιθυμούν, η οποία έχει «επικυρωθεί» από το σχολείο με ανάλογες διδασκαλίες και β) οι ασκούμενοι, για του οποίους υπάρχει φόβος απώλειας κινήτρου. Σε αυτήν την περίπτωση, η αιτίες είναι είτε η «υπερβολική κόπωση» λόγω της επαναλαμβανόμενης παρακολούθησης των ίδιων εργαστηρίων (Perez et al., 2024) ή η δυσαρέσκειά τους για την έλλειψη ελέγχου του προσωπικού χρόνου που αφιερώνουν στην κοινωνικοποίηση . Σε αυτήν την κατηγορία (φόβος για απώλεια κινήτρου) άλλοι ασκούμενοι είναι πιο ενεργητικοί (οι ίδιοι οι εκπαιδευτές τούς αποκαλούν «δυναμικούς» ή «προωθητικούς») και άλλοι λιγότερο έως ελάχιστα ενεργητικοί (αυτοί αποκαλούνται «αργοί»). Οι υπεύθυνοι τόσο του E2C όσο και των εταιρικών σχέσεων (CME) φροντίζουν να αναμιγνύουν τους «προωθητικούς» με τους «αργούς», καθώς ελπίζουν ότι οι πρώτοι θα αποτελέσουν πηγή έμπνευσης για τους δεύτερους. Στο παρακάτω γράφημα καταδεικνύεται η σχέση «θετικών»/«δυναμικών» εξόδων και διάρκειας προγράμματος.



Γράφημα 6. *Αριθμός «θετικών» και «δυναμικών» εξόδων, ανάλογα με τη διάρκεια του προγράμματος*

Πληθυσμός: Εκπαιδευόμενοι E2C. Ομάδες 2016 έως 2018 που έχουν ολοκληρώσει το μάθημά τους (εξαιρείται ο πληθυσμός 2019-2020)

Πηγή: «Le dispositif des écoles de la deuxième chance: évaluation et analyses d'actions pédagogiques novatrices en faveur des jeunes sans qualification» (Perez et al., 2024, p. 35)

7. Η Σχέση E2C και Ασκούμενων μετά την Έξοδο από το Πρόγραμμα

Όταν ολοκληρώνεται το πρόγραμμα των ασκούμενων, το E2C δεν αποκόπτει τους δεσμούς του με αυτούς. Αντίθετα, επιδιώκει επαφή για ένα έτος μετά το πέρας του προγράμματος. Ανά τρίμηνο ένας υπάλληλος από το προσωπικό υποστήριξης του E2C είναι σε επικοινωνία με κάθε ασκούμενο, προκειμένου να ενημερωθεί για την πρόοδό του και να του παράσχει επαγγελματικές συμβουλές -αν κριθεί χρήσιμο. Γενικά, όσοι παρέμειναν στο πρόγραμμα πέρα από τους τέσσερις (4) μήνες, πολύ σπάνια διέκοψαν κάθε επαφή με το σχολείο. Κατά κανόνα, επιθυμούν τη διατήρηση δεσμών με το σχολείο, καθώς έχουν διαμορφώσει σχέσεις μέσω της συνεργασίας με εκπαιδευτές και CME. Και όσο μεγαλύτερος είναι ο χρόνος παραμονής στο πρόγραμμα, τόσο μεγαλύτερη είναι η σύνδεσή τους με το σχολείο. Αυτή η σύνδεση -πέρα από ψυχολογικούς μηχανισμούς- εδράζεται και στην πεποίθησή ότι το σχολείο αυτό αποτελεί τον ενδιάμεσο κρίκο ή το εφαλτήριο για την εύρεση εργασίας μέσω της πρακτικής άσκησης.

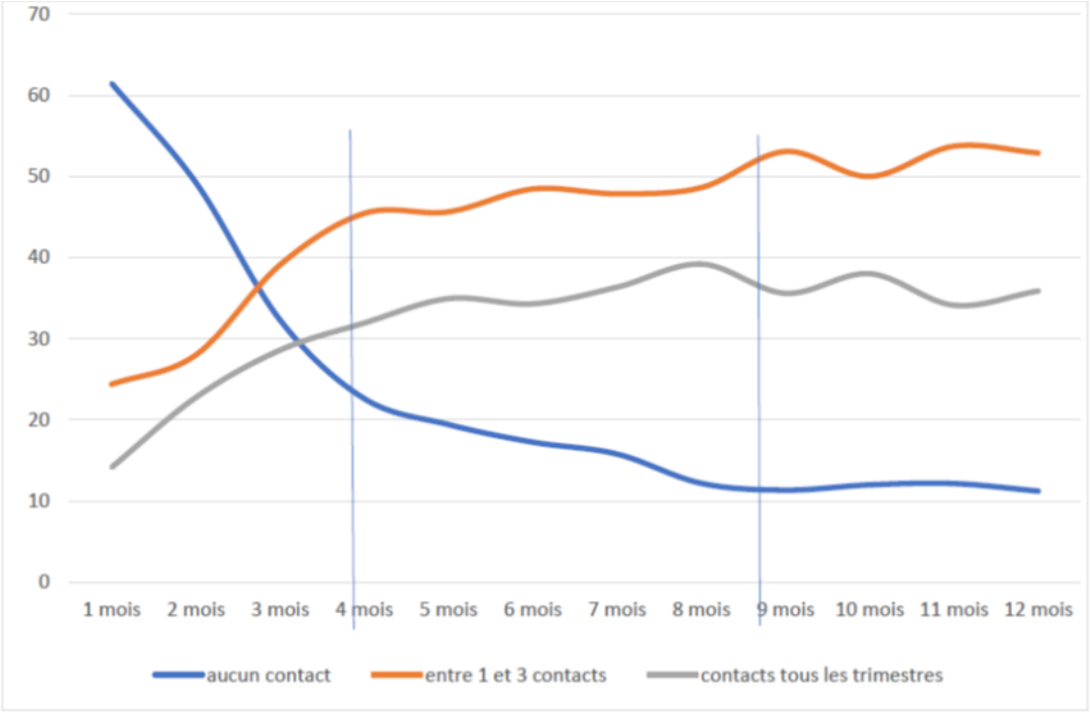
Όσον αφορά τον βαθμό αφοσίωσης στο σχολείο, διακρίνουμε τρεις τύπους ασκούμενων:

-Τους ασκούμενους που έχουν εγκαταλείψει το πρόγραμμα κατά την περίοδο ένταξής τους και η πρόωρη έξοδός τους από το πρόγραμμα είναι χωρίς λύσεις. Σχεδόν ένας στους τέσσερις από αυτούς δε διατηρεί επαφές με το σχολείο (22,6%).

-Τους ασκούμενους που έχουν δυναμική έξοδο, από τους οποίους μόνο το 12,2% δε διατηρεί επαφή με το E2C.

-Τους ασκούμενους που είχαν θετική έξοδο, από τους οποίους μόνο το 8,9% δε δέχεται να παράσχει πληροφορίες για την κατάστασή του μετά την αποχώρησή του.

Τα παραπάνω αποτυπώνονται στο γράφημα 7: ο βαθμός αφομοίωσης αλλάζει ανάλογα με τον τύπο εξόδου και αυξάνεται όσο αυξάνεται η διάρκεια της παραμονής στο πρόγραμμα (Perez et al., 2024).



Γράφημα 7. *Βαθμός αφοσίωσης ανάλογα με τη διάρκεια του προγράμματος*

Πληθυσμός: εκπαιδευόμενοι των E2C. Ομάδες από το 2016 έως το 2018 που έχουν ολοκληρώσει το πρόγραμμά τους (εξαιρείται ο πληθυσμός 2019-2020)

Πηγή: «Le dispositif des écoles de la deuxième chance: évaluation et analyses d'actions pédagogiques novatrices en faveur des jeunes sans qualification» (Perez et al., 2024, p. 38)

8. Γενικά Χαρακτηριστικά των Γαλλικών ΣΔΕ που συμβάλλουν στη Θετική Έξοδο όσων Έχουν Ανάγκη μια Δεύτερη Ευκαιρία

Τα γαλλικά ΣΔΕ (E2C) εναρμονίζονται με τις εξαγγελίες των εμπνευστών του προγράμματος των Σχολείων Δεύτερης Ευκαιρίας (αυτό συμβαίνει με ηλικιακό όριο νέων τα 25 έτη), γιατί διακρίνονται για τα εξής χαρακτηριστικά:

- προσφέρουν διά βίου μάθηση και δεύτερη ευκαιρία με μια εναλλακτική μορφή εκπαίδευσης σε νέους που χρειάζονται μια δεύτερη ευκαιρία, επειδή εγκατέλειψαν πρόωρα το εκπαιδευτικό σύστημα (Meo & Tarabini, 2020).
- Παρέχουν πρόσβαση για κοινωνικά ευάλωτες ομάδες και νέους χωρίς προσόντα και χωρίς απολυτήριο ή πιστοποιήσεις, κυρίως άνεργους ή ευάλωτους κοινωνικά.
- Αναπτύσσουν βασικές και ψηφιακές δεξιότητες (γλώσσα, μαθηματικά, υπολογιστές) μαζί με κατάρτιση, που στοχεύει στην απασχόληση, δίνοντας έμφαση και στη μαθητεία/πρακτική, καλύπτοντας την ανάγκη των νέων για ευρύ φάσμα δεξιοτήτων.
- Διαθέτουν ευελιξία στην εκπαίδευση & προσαρμοσμένα στις ανάγκες των νέων μονοπάτια μάθησης. Κάθε εκπαιδευόμενος έχει εξατομικευμένο πρόγραμμα, με ευέλικτη δομή (όχι τυποποιημένο).
- Συνδέουν την εκπαίδευση/κατάρτιση με την αγορά εργασίας (μαθητεία, stages, επαγγελματική ένταξη) και ενσωματώνουν πρακτική άσκηση, επαφή με εργοδότες είτε μέσω της πρακτικής είτε μετά το πέρας τους προγράμματος.
- Χρησιμοποιούν καινοτόμες και μη παραδοσιακές μεθόδους διδασκαλίας και καινοτόμες εκπαιδευτικές προσεγγίσεις.

Επίσης, η λειτουργία τους βασίζεται σε θεωρητικές προσεγγίσεις κορυφαίων θεωρητικών της εκπαίδευσης ενηλίκων. Με βάση όσα παρατήρησα in situ σε μάθημα στο ΣΔΕ Μασσαλίας και όσα συζήτησα με εκπαιδευτές σε όλη τη διάρκεια των επισκέψεών μου (τα οποία επιβεβαιώνονται από τη βιβλιογραφία):

- ο ορθολογικός διάλογος δεν είναι απλά μια ενεργητική εκπαιδευτική τεχνική για τον εκπαιδευτή των E2C, αλλά θεωρείται βασική παραδοχή του έργου του. Για αυτό και συνειδητή πρόθεσή του είναι να διαμορφώσει τις κατάλληλες προϋποθέσεις για τη διεξαγωγή του, αυτές που ο Mezirow χαρακτήρισε «ιδανικές συνθήκες διαλόγου» (Mezirow, 2007): ύπαρξη συναισθηματικής ταύτισης, ανοικτό πνεύμα, επιδεξιότητα στη διαχείριση σχέσεων (κοινωνικών και διαπροσωπικών), ενσυναίσθηση, αναζήτηση σημείων συμφωνίας. Ταυτόχρονα, ο ρόλος του είναι υποστηρικτικός, καθώς δεν προσπαθούν να επιβάλλουν τις απόψεις τους. Ο κριτικός στοχασμός[3] ήταν επίσης εμφανής στις βασικές δεξιότητες. Σε κάποιο μάθημα που παρακολούθησα (Μαθηματικά), κλήθηκαν να σκεφτούν και να κρίνουν πώς θα κλείσουν το πιο συμφέρον οικονομικά εισιτήριο για μια πόλη του εξωτερικού (τιμής ένεκεν, ήταν η Αθήνα). Ακολούθως, περιέγραψαν τα βήματα που ακολούθησαν, για να αντεπεξέλθουν σε ένα ταξίδι χαμηλού μπάτζετ, υπολογίζοντας με ακρίβεια κάθε κόστος μέσω χρήσης ίντερνετ (σύνδεση με αεροπορικές εταιρείες και με ξενοδοχεία). Όμως, δεν ήταν ιδιαίτερα εμφανής στα μαθήματα κατάρτισης.
- Υπάρχει ενεργητική συμμετοχή στην εκπαιδευτική διαδικασία, η οποία οδηγεί μεσοπρόθεσμα στην χειραφέτηση και την αυτονομία (autonomy) των εκπαιδευομένων, βασικά ζητούμενα στα γαλλικά E2C. Η χειραφέτηση των

[3] Ο κριτικός στοχασμός και ο ορθολογικός διάλογος αποτελούν τις «συνεργαζόμενες συνιστώσες» της Μετασχηματίζουσας Μάθησης του Mezirow.

εκπαιδευομένων αποτελούσε κυρίαρχο ζήτημα τριών κορυφαίων θεωρητικών της εκπαίδευσης ενηλίκων του Mezirow, του Freire και του Jarvis (Κόκκος, 2005).

- Επίσης, στα γαλλικά E2C είναι ευδιάκριτες οι «τρεις διαστάσεις της μάθησης»[4] του Illeris: το περιεχόμενο, η «υποκίνηση» και το περιβάλλον (Illeris 2016). Το περιεχόμενο αφορά το αντικείμενο της μάθησης, όλες, δηλαδή, τις γνώσεις, τις δεξιότητες και τις στάσεις/αξίες που αποκτώνται μέσω της μαθησιακής διεργασίας. Η «υποκίνηση» αφορά το ενδιαφέρον, το κίνητρο και την εμπλοκή των εκπαιδευομένων (κυρίως συναισθηματική, η οποία συνεπάγεται και τη δέσμευσή του). Το περιβάλλον αναφέρεται στον εκπαιδευτικό οργανισμό και το ευρύτερο κοινωνικό πλαίσιο, με το οποίο υπάρχει διάδραση μέσω της εξωστρέφειας του E2Cκαι της συνεργασίας με τον τοπικό επιχειρηματικό κλάδο.

Με βάση τα παραπάνω, τα E2C σε πολύ μεγάλο βαθμό ανταποκρίνονται στις θεωρητικές προσεγγίσεις των πρωτεργατών της εκπαίδευσης ενηλίκων και πραγματώνουν το όραμα και τα ιδεώδη που διατυπώθηκαν στη Λευκή Βίβλο για εκπαίδευση και κατάρτιση στην Ευρώπη. Και όσο υποστηρίζονται σωστά (είναι σχετικά μεγάλη η εξάρτησή τους από ιδιωτικούς φορείς), κάνουν πραγματικότητα το «όνειρο» της κοινωνίας της μάθησης και της δεύτερης ευκαιρίας για τους νέους.

9. Αναφορά στην Ελληνική Πραγματικότητα

Σε γενικές γραμμές, τα Σχολεία Δεύτερης Ευκαιρίας στην Ελλάδα έχουν προσαρμόσει το Πρόγραμμα Σπουδών τους στις αρχές εκπαίδευσης ενηλίκων. Αυτό είναι εμφανές από το περιεχόμενο του συγκεντρωτικού τόμου «Πρόγραμμα Σπουδών για τα Σχολεία Δεύτερης Ευκαιρίας». Τόσο στην πρώτη όσο και στην δεύτερη έκδοση τίθενται οι στέρεες βάσεις του οικοδομήματος των σχολείων αυτών μέσα από τη θεώρηση των κορυφαίων θεωρητικών πάνω στην εκπαίδευση ενηλίκων και τη Διά Βίου Μάθηση. Οι αναφορές του προηγούμενου κεφαλαίου του παρόντος άρθρου (κεφ. 8) σχετικά με την εναρμόνιση των γαλλικών ΣΔΕ με τις θεωρίες της εκπαίδευσης ενηλίκων ισχύουν σε μεγάλο βαθμό και στα ΣΔΕ της χώρας. Η συμμετοχή στις διεργασίες της ΠΕΔΙΣΔΕ[5] δίνει την ευκαιρία -ειδικά στους διευθυντές των ΣΔΕ- να διαπιστώσουμε ιδίοις όμμασι τον βαθμό εναρμόνισης των σχολείων μας με τις αρχές και τις θεωρίες εκπαίδευσης ενηλίκων.

Ειδικότερα, σε σύγκριση με τη Γαλλία, τα ελληνικά ΣΔΕ κινούνται σε ένα σχετικά διαφορετικό μοτίβο εισαγωγής στο πρόγραμμα: η αίτηση ενός υποψήφιου ακολουθείται από μία συνέντευξη και αφού προσκομιστούν τα απαιτούμενα δικαιολογητικά (πλέον ζητείται μόνο το Απολυτήριο Δημοτικού και το ταυτοποιητικό έγγραφο, μαζί με την άδεια διαμονής για τους αλλοδαπούς), ο υποψήφιος θεωρείται εκπαιδευόμενος του ΣΔΕ (στα ελληνικά ΣΔΕ δεν υπάρχει ηλικιακός περιορισμός προς τα πάνω, ενώ το κατώτατο όριο είναι τα 18 έτη -17 και 9μήνες τον Σεπτέμβριο της

[4] Βλ. περισσότερα «τρεις διαστάσεις της μάθησης στο εισαγωγικό σημείωμα του Αλ. Κόκκου στο βιβλίο του Knud Illeris "Ο τρόπος που μαθαίνουμε: Οι πολλαπλές διαστάσεις της μάθησης στην τυπική και άτυπη εκπαίδευση".

[5] Πανελλήνια Ένωση Διευθυντών Σχολείων Δεύτερης Ευκαιρίας.

χρονιάς εγγραφής). Δεν είναι, λοιπόν, απαραίτητη η τόσο αυστηρή τακτική στην επιλογή, ειδικά στον εντοπισμό κινήτρων, καθώς το κίνητρο των εκπαιδευόμενων στα ελληνικά ΣΔΕ είναι πολύ μεγαλύτερο: απολυτήριος τίτλος ισότιμος του Γυμνασίου (Νόμος 2525/1997). Σε αντίθεση με τα γαλλικά ΣΔΕ, που παρέχουν μια βεβαίωση (ούτε καν πιστοποιητικό) και λειτουργούν συνήθως ως το εφαλτήριο για το επόμενο βήμα: παρακολούθηση πιο εξειδικευμένης κατάρτισης σε άλλον οργανισμό ή -ιδανικά- εύρεση εργασίας.

Όσον αφορά την έξοδο από το πρόγραμμα, ισχύουν και στην Ελλάδα οι περιορισμοί και οι δυσκολίες της ενήλικης ζωής των εκπαιδευόμενων. Αρκετοί δεν τα καταφέρνουν, κυρίως για λόγους προσωπικούς, οικογενειακούς και εργασιακούς. Αλλά ακόμα και μετά την επιτυχή έξοδο από το ελληνικό πρόγραμμα δεν ακολουθείται κάποια τακτική monitoring, αναφορικά με την εύρεση εργασίας από όσους έλαβαν απολυτήριο τίτλο. Η όποια επαφή εναπόκειται στη θέληση του εκπαιδευόμενου να περάσει από το σχολείο, για να δει σε κοινωνικό επίπεδο τους παλιούς εκπαιδευτές του.

Διαφορές εντοπίζονται και στους επαγγελματίες των ΣΔΕ (επιμόρφωση, επάρκεια, ρόλος). Ο Σύμβουλος Σταδιοδρομίας των ελληνικών ΣΔΕ είναι θέση σχετικά ανάλογη του CME (υπεύθυνου εργασιακών σχέσεων) των E2C, αλλά έχει με πιο χαλαρό ρόλο: βοηθά τον κάθε εκπαιδευόμενο στη συμπλήρωση βιογραφικού, ενημερώνει -αν γνωρίζει- για κάποιες θέσεις εργασίας, αλλά συνήθως δεν κανονίζει επισκέψεις με εκπαιδευόμενους, προκειμένου να δουν από κοντά επιχειρήσεις και τον τρόπο λειτουργίας τους. Δεν έχει οργανωμένο περιφερειακό δίκτυο διασύνδεσης και συνεργασίας με τον τοπικό επιχειρηματικό κλάδο, η δουλειά του στο σχολείο είναι απογευματινή (κατά κανόνα, η κύρια δουλειά του είναι πρωινή και εντελώς ξένη προς το αντικείμενο ενός Συμβούλου Σταδιοδρομίας) και για μία με τρεις μέρες τη βδομάδα (ανάλογα με τον αριθμό των τμημάτων του σχολείο, οπότε σε ένα «μικρό» ΣΔΕ έρχεται μόνο μια φορά την εβδομάδα). Έτσι, το σχολείο στερείται τη στενότερη επαφή με τον επιχειρηματικό κόσμο και τη σύνδεση με τους τοπικούς εργοδότες, γεγονός που μειώνει τις ευκαιρίες στην αγορά εργασίας.

Όσον αφορά τους εκπαιδευτές, πολλοί τοποθετούνται ως ωρομίσθιοι, χωρίς να έχουν την παραμικρή επιμόρφωση στις Αρχές Εκπαίδευσης Ενηλίκων και την Ανδραγωγική ούτε έχουν πιστοποίηση από τον ΕΟΠΠΕΠ. Έτσι, και με δεδομένη την προσέγγιση μόνο προς τις βασικές και ψηφιακές δεξιότητες (και όχι την κατάρτιση), σε αρκετές περιπτώσεις το μάθημα καταντά δασκαλοκεντρικό και μη ενεργητικό. Καταντά μια εκπαιδευτική διαδικασία, όπως αυτή που τους δυσκόλεψε και τους απέρριψε κάποια χρόνια πριν. Αυτές οι επιλογές είναι των ιθυνόντων στο Υπουργείο Παιδείας και με βάση αυτές καθορίζεται και η προσέγγιση που έχουν τα ελληνικά ΣΔΕ (βελτίωση βασικών και ψηφιακών δεξιοτήτων και όχι προσφορά κατάρτισης).

Σε ένα γενικότερο πλαίσιο, η προσέγγιση των ελληνικών ΣΔΕ εναρμονίζεται σε μεγάλο βαθμό με τα ευρωπαϊκά πρότυπα και τη Λευκή Βίβλο, αλλά όχι σε όλους τους άξονες ή τις αρχές της Λευκής Βίβλου. Παρέχουν Διά Βίου Μάθηση για όλους (δεύτερη ευκαιρία στους άνω των 18) και πρόσβαση σε άτομα ευάλωτων κοινωνικών ομάδων. Επίσης, αναπτύσσουν τις βασικές, τις ψηφιακές και τις κοινωνικές δεξιότητες των εκπαιδευομένων, ενώ διαθέτουν ευελιξία στη μάθηση (απουσία εξετάσεων, ατομική συμβουλευτική, project-based διδασκαλία). Επιπρόσθετα,

εφαρμόζονται καινοτόμες μέθοδοι διδασκαλίας (βιωματική μάθηση, ομαδοσυνεργατική, εξατομικευμένη κατά το δυνατόν υποστήριξη, κτλ). Οι νέες τεχνολογίες και οι ΤΠΕ αξιοποιούνται, όμως οι υπολογιστές (ειδικά των συστεγαζόμενων σχολείων) είναι αρκετά παλιοί. Επίσης, όπως προαναφέρθηκε, η σύνδεση με την αγορά εργασίας είναι χαλαρή και περιορισμένη. Όσο για την ποιοτική εκπαίδευση, τα τελευταία χρόνια δεν υπάρχουν ελλείψεις σε προσωπικό, πόρους και εγκαταστάσεις (αν και το προσωπικό συνήθως δεν είναι εξειδικευμένο). Επιπλέον, όσον αφορά την ενίσχυση της κινητικότητας και της συνεργασίας, πολλά ΣΔΕ συμμετέχουν σε προγράμματα Erasmus+, όμως οι συμμετοχές αφορούν κυρίως το εκπαιδευτικό προσωπικό και πολύ σπάνια τους εκπαιδευόμενους, καθώς οι τελευταίοι συνήθως δεν μπορούν ή δε θέλουν λόγω υποχρεώσεων (κυρίως όσοι έχουν οικογένεια ή/και δουλειά) και προκαταλήψεων (π.χ. οι Ρομά) να λάβουν μέρος στα ταξίδια προς το εξωτερικό. Ακόμα και όταν συμμετέχουν είναι λίγοι σε αριθμό.

10. Συμπεράσματα

Το référentiel των γαλλικών ΣΔΕ έχει οργανώσει τις δεξιότητες σε κατηγορίες, περιλαμβάνοντας τόσο τις βασικές και τις ψηφιακές όσο και τις soft skills, τις τεχνικές και τις μεταγνωστικές. Ταυτόχρονα, προσφέρονται φορητά portfolios, που συμβάλλουν στην αναγνώριση των δεξιοτήτων, όταν ο νέος θα στραφεί στην αγορά εργασίας (κάτι που δεν υπάρχει στην Ελλάδα). Αυτό καταδεικνύει στροφή των E2C κυρίως προς την προσφορά κατάρτισης και δευτερευόντως προς τις βασικές/ψηφιακές δεξιότητες (η στροφή αυτή επιβεβαιώνεται από τους υπευθύνους του «Δικτύου των E2C»).

Όσον αφορά τα ελληνικά ΣΔΕ, αυτά συμβάλλουν σημαντικά στην επιτυχή έξοδο από το πρόγραμμα. Υπάρχουν, όμως, πολλά περιθώρια βελτίωσης. Σε ένα πρώτο επίπεδο, είναι επιβεβλημένη η εκ των προτέρων επιμόρφωση όσων δηλώνουν για τη θέση ωρομίσθιου και μόνιμου αποσπασμένου εκπαιδευτή στα ΣΔΕ. Επιμόρφωση στις Αρχές Εκπαίδευσης Ενηλίκων και την Ανδραγωγική μέσω ΕΟΠΠΕΠ. Η επιμόρφωση αυτή θα πρέπει να είναι προαπαιτούμενο και όχι μοριοδοτούμενο προσόν. Επίσης, η μεταφορά στοιχείων του γαλλικού μοντέλου θα επιφέρει υψηλό όφελος. Βασικές βελτιωτικές παραμέτρους θα αποτελέσουν η δημιουργία περιφερειακών δικτύων συνεργασίας με επιχειρήσεις της τοπικής κοινωνίας και η ενδυνάμωση του ρόλου του Συμβούλου Σταδιοδρομίας. Έτσι, ο ρόλος του δε θα εξαντλείται στη σύνταξη βιογραφικών και την παρακολούθηση αγγελιών για δουλειές και εκδηλώσεις, αλλά μέσω της δικτύωσής του με τοπικές επιχειρήσεις θα μπορούσε να φέρει τους εκπαιδευόμενους πιο κοντά στην αγοράς εργασίας. Επιπρόσθετα, θα μπορούσε να αναλάβει και τη διαδικασία του monitoring, την παρακολούθηση, δηλαδή, του κάθε εκπαιδευόμενου για ένα έτος μετά το πέρας της φοίτησής του, σχετικά με την εύρεση εργασίας. Αυτή η διαδικασία μπορεί να προβλέπεται στα καθήκοντα του Συμβούλου Σταδιοδρομίας, αλλά δεν τηρείται ή τηρείται πολύ χαλαρά λόγω έλλειψης ελεγκτικού μηχανισμού και συχνής αλλαγής προσώπων στη θέση αυτή.

Σε ένα βαθύτερο επίπεδο αλλαγών, η προσέγγιση των ΣΔΕ θα μπορούσε να περιλάβει και την κατάρτιση. Έτσι, θα ήταν εναρμονισμένη με τα ευρωπαϊκά ΣΔΕ, των οποίων η βασική προσέγγισή τους είναι η προσφορά κατάρτισης. Αυτό σε ένα πρώτο στάδιο ίσως θα ήταν ανέφικτο για τα ελληνικά ΣΔΕ λόγω υλικοτεχνικών υποδομών και

υψηλού κόστους των επαγγελματιών που θα παρείχαν την κατάρτιση. Θα ήταν εφικτό, όμως, να συνεργαστεί το κάθε ΣΔΕ με τα δημόσια ΣΑΕΚ (πρώην Ι.Ε.Κ.) της πόλης του και να καθιερώσει «ημέρες πρακτικής» (π.χ. κάθε Πέμπτη ή όποια άλλη μέρα της εβδομάδας). Ή ακόμα και να υπάρχει κάθε μήνα «εβδομάδα κατάρτισης», διαφορετική για κάθε Κύκλο, δηλαδή άλλη εβδομάδα για τον Α' Κύκλο (Α' Τάξη) και άλλη για τον Β' Κύκλο (Β' Τάξη), κάτι που θα συνεπαγόταν πολύ μικρή μείωση των ωρών στους τρίωρους Γραμματισμούς. Στην περίπτωση που αποφασιζόταν η προσφορά κατάρτισης, θα μπορούσε να υπάρχει και ηλεκτρονικό portfolio (e-portfolio), στο οποίο θα ενυπήρχαν οι δεξιότητες και τα προσόντα που απέκτησε ο εκπαιδευόμενος μετά την κατάρτιση που παρακολούθησε.

Βέβαια, σε ένα γενικότερο πλαίσιο, η στροφή των ελληνικών ΣΔΕ προς την παροχή κατάρτισης είναι θέμα ιθυνόντων του ΥΠΑΙΘΑ και πολιτικής γενικά επιλογής. Η χορήγηση Απολυτηρίου ισότιμου με αυτό του Γυμνασίου λειτουργεί αντισταθμιστικά, με την έννοια ότι εφοδιάζει τους εκπαιδευόμενους των ελληνικών ΣΔΕ με ένα προσόν απαραίτητο πλέον στην ελληνική αγορά εργασίας. Τα γαλλικά ΣΔΕ (E2C) δεν προσφέρουν τέτοιον απολυτήριο τίτλο ούτε καν πιστοποίηση προσόντων, παρά μόνο μια βεβαίωση. Το E2C είναι απλά το εφαλτήριο για εν επόμενο επίπεδο επιμόρφωσης ή -ιδανικά- για εύρεση εργασίας. Σε ό,τι αφορά πάντως την χορήγηση απολυτηρίου τίτλου, τα ελληνικά ΣΔΕ υπερέχουν. Και ένα δεύτερο σημείο υπεροχής μπορεί να θεωρηθεί το ότι δεν υπάρχει ανώτερο ηλικιακό όριο. Αυτό προσφέρει πραγματική δεύτερη ευκαιρία στους άνω των 25 στην Ελλάδα, η οποία δε δίνεται από τα E2C στη Γαλλία. Εκεί το ανώτερο ηλικιακό όριο είναι τα 25 έτη -σε εξαιρετικά σπάνιες περιπτώσεις τα 30 για τους δικαιούχους του επιδόματος κοινωνικής αλληλεγγύης (RSA). Τρίτο σημείο υπεροχής των ελληνικών ΣΔΕ είναι η απρόσκοπτη χρηματοδότηση: 75% από ευρωπαϊκά κονδύλια (τα οποία φτάνουν στα ΣΔΕ μέσω του ΥΠΑΙΘΑ) και 25% από το ελληνικό ταμείο. Τα γαλλικά E2C εξαρτώνται σε αρκετά μεγάλο βαθμό και από ιδιωτικά κεφάλαια, ενώ η δημόσια χρηματοδότηση είναι κατακερματισμένη (σε δήμο, νομό, περιφέρεια, κράτος) με ό,τι αυτό συνεπάγεται γραφειοκρατικά.

Οι παραπάνω μεταρρυθμιστικές προτάσεις θα μπορούσαν να δοκιμαστούν σε ένα πενταετές πιλοτικό πρόγραμμα (δηλαδή, για δύο συνεχόμενες «φουρνιές» εκπαιδευομένων, -με δεδομένο ότι η φοίτηση στα ΣΔΕ ολοκληρώνεται μετά από 2 έτη- συν ένα έτος monitoring και ανάλυσης των αποτελεσμάτων, όσον αφορά την εύρεση εργασίας. Σε αυτό το χρονικό πλαίσιο θα γινόταν η αξιολόγηση του προγράμματος και των τεσσάρων ετών με μικτές μεθόδους, δηλαδή μέτρηση και ανάλυση ποσοτικών δεικτών (δείκτες συμμετοχής, ολοκλήρωσης και επαγγελματικής ένταξης) και ποιοτικών (μέσω συνεντεύξεων και focus groups). Επιπλέον, σε ένα πλάνο δεκαετίας θα μπορούσαν να μελετηθούν τα μακροπρόθεσμα αποτελέσματα των παρεμβάσεων-μεταρρυθμίσεων μέσω της ποιοτικής ανάλυσης των tracer studies.

Με βάση τα παραπάνω, θα μπορούσε να πει κανείς ότι το ελληνικό μοντέλο των ΣΔΕ -παρά την αναμφισβήτητη υπεροχή του στα σημεία που προαναφέρθηκαν- μπορεί να ωφεληθεί από το αντίστοιχο γαλλικό. Ειδικά, η ισχυρότερη διασύνδεση των ΣΔΕ με τον τοπικό επιχειρηματικό κόσμο, θα αποφέρει υψηλό αναλογικό όφελος και σε συνδυασμό με την παροχή απολυτηρίου ισότιμου με αυτό του Γυμνασίου, θα

μετατρέψει τα ελληνικά ΣΔΕ σε παρόχους πραγματικών δεύτερων ευκαιριών και θα δικαιώσει τους εμπνευστές τους.

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Βιβλιομετρική Χαρτογράφηση της Εκπαίδευσης Δεύτερης Ευκαιρίας (2015–2025)

Bibliometric Mapping of Second Chance Education (2015–2025)

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Περίληψη

Η εκπαίδευση ενηλίκων και ειδικότερα η εκπαίδευση δεύτερης ευκαιρίας αποτελούν κρίσιμους πυλώνες της διά βίου μάθησης, οι οποίοι συνδέονται με την κοινωνική ενδυνάμωση, την άρση εκπαιδευτικών ανισοτήτων και τη βελτίωση των επαγγελματικών προοπτικών. Παρά τη διαρκώς αυξανόμενη διεθνή ερευνητική δραστηριότητα στα πεδία αυτά, δεν υπάρχει συστηματική χαρτογράφηση της βιβλιογραφικής παραγωγής της τελευταίας δεκαετίας. Σκοπός της παρούσας μελέτης είναι η διερεύνηση των κυρίαρχων θεματικών τάσεων, των δομικών χαρακτηριστικών και της δυναμικής του ερευνητικού πεδίου της εκπαίδευσης ενηλίκων, της εκπαίδευσης δεύτερης ευκαιρίας και της διά βίου μάθησης για την περίοδο 2015–2025 μέσω βιβλιομετρικής ανάλυσης. Το υλικό της μελέτης αποτελείται από 223 άρθρα που ανακτήθηκαν από τη βάση Scopus με συγκεκριμένα κριτήρια αναζήτησης. Η ανάλυση πραγματοποιήθηκε μέσω βιβλιομετρικών τεχνικών απόδοσης και χαρτογράφησης της επιστήμης, αξιοποιώντας το λογισμικό VOSviewer. Εφαρμόστηκαν αναλύσεις συνεμφάνισης συγγραφέων και λέξεων-κλειδιών, βιβλιογραφικής σύζευξης και συν-αναφορών, με στόχο την ανάδειξη της θεματικής δομής και των ερευνητικών συστάδων. Τα αποτελέσματα δείχνουν σημαντική αύξηση της ερευνητικής παραγωγής την τελευταία δεκαετία και εντοπίζουν δύο κυρίαρχους θεματικούς άξονες: (α) τη μαθησιακή εμπειρία και την ψυχοκοινωνική ανάπτυξη των ενηλίκων εκπαιδευομένων και (β) τις κοινωνικές, θεσμικές και πολιτικές διαστάσεις της εκπαίδευσης, με έμφαση στη δεξιότητα, την απασχολησιμότητα και την κοινωνική ένταξη. Επιπλέον, η ανάλυση αναδεικνύει τις χώρες, τους οργανισμούς και τους συγγραφείς με τη μεγαλύτερη επιστημονική επιρροή. Η μελέτη συμβάλλει στην κατανόηση της εξέλιξης και της δομής του πεδίου, προσφέροντας ένα χρήσιμο πλαίσιο για μελλοντικές ερευνητικές και πολιτικές παρεμβάσεις.

Λέξεις-κλειδιά: Εκπαίδευση ενηλίκων με χαμηλά τυπικά προσόντα, Διά Βίου Μάθηση, Βιβλιομετρική Ανάλυση, Κοινωνική Ένταξη

Abstract

Adult education, and particularly second chance education, constitute critical pillars of lifelong learning, closely linked to social empowerment, the reduction of educational inequalities, and the improvement of employment prospects. Despite the steadily increasing international

research activity in these fields, there is a lack of systematic mapping of the bibliographic output of the last decade. The aim of the present study is to explore the dominant thematic trends, structural characteristics, and dynamics of the research field of adult education, second chance education, and lifelong learning for the period 2015–2025 through bibliometric analysis. The study material consists of 223 articles retrieved from the Scopus database using specific search criteria. The analysis was conducted using bibliometric performance and science mapping techniques, employing the VOSviewer software. Analyses of co-authorship and keyword co-occurrence, bibliographic coupling, and co-citation were applied in order to identify the thematic structure and research clusters of the field. The results indicate a significant increase in research output over the last decade and identify two dominant thematic axes: (a) the learning experience and psychosocial development of adult learners, and (b) the social, institutional, and policy dimensions of education, with an emphasis on skills, employability, and social inclusion. In addition, the analysis highlights the countries, organizations, and authors with the greatest scientific impact. The study contributes to understanding the evolution and structure of the field, offering a useful framework for future research and policy interventions.

Keywords: Adult education for low-qualified adults, Lifelong Learning, Bibliometric Analysis, Social Inclusion

1. Εισαγωγή

Η εκπαίδευση δεύτερης ευκαιρίας αποτελεί έναν βασικό πυλώνα της διά βίου μάθησης στην Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση, καθώς δημιουργήθηκε για να αντιμετωπίσει τον αναλφαβητισμό, τη σχολική διαρροή και τον κοινωνικό αποκλεισμό ενηλίκων (Iliopoulou, 2019). Τα Σχολεία Δεύτερης Ευκαιρίας στην Ελλάδα επιβεβαιώνουν αυτόν τον ρόλο, καθώς οι εκπαιδευόμενοι αναγνωρίζουν τη σημασία της διά βίου μάθησης και τη συμβολή της στη βελτίωση της ζωής τους, παρά τα εμπόδια συμμετοχής που συχνά αντιμετωπίζουν (Digaletou & Moustakas, 2019). Παράλληλα, η αποτελεσματικότητα των ΣΔΕ συνδέεται με παιδαγωγικές πρακτικές προσαρμοσμένες στις ανάγκες των ενηλίκων, οι οποίες ενισχύουν τη συμμετοχή και τη μετασχηματιστική μάθηση (Κόκκος, 2011· Koutlas & Papakitsos, 2025).

Η πολυπλοκότητα του πεδίου αποτυπώνεται σε έρευνες που εξετάζουν το θεσμικό πλαίσιο, τη λειτουργία και την κουλτούρα των Σχολείων Δεύτερης Ευκαιρίας και τον τρόπο με τον οποίο οι θεσμικές αλλαγές επηρεάζουν την αποτελεσματικότητά τους (Βεργίδου κ.ά, 2018).Τονίζεται ότι παράγοντες όπως το αναλυτικό πρόγραμμα, η οργανωτική υποστήριξη και οι δυνατότητες κοινωνικής ενσωμάτωσης διαδραματίζουν καθοριστικό ρόλο στην ποιότητα των προγραμμάτων δεύτερης ευκαιρίας. Επιπλέον, οι εκπαιδευτικοί αναγνωρίζουν τη σημασία ενός προσεγμένου εκπαιδευτικού σχεδιασμού και ενός υποστηρικτικού μαθησιακού περιβάλλοντος, το οποίο επιτρέπει στους ενήλικες να αποκτήσουν αυτοπεποίθηση και να επαναδιαμορφώσουν τη σχέση τους με τη μάθηση (Bitsakos, 2021).

Παράλληλα, η διεθνής συζήτηση εστιάζει στο κατά πόσο οι δομές δεύτερης ευκαιρίας επιτυγχάνουν τον αρχικό κοινωνικό τους σκοπό. Η μελέτη των Blank and Bar-Haim (2025) αναδεικνύει ότι οι μηχανισμοί αυτοί δεν αξιοποιούνται πάντα από τα άτομα που έχουν μεγαλύτερη ανάγκη. Αντίθετα, ορισμένες φορές προσελκύουν άτομα που ήδη διαθέτουν κοινωνικά προνόμια, γεγονός που θέτει ζητήματα σχετικά με τον τρόπο εφαρμογής και στόχευσης τέτοιων προγραμμάτων. Η προβληματική αυτή αναδεικνύει ότι η δεύτερη ευκαιρία δεν αποτελεί αυτόματα εγγύηση κοινωνικής δικαιοσύνης· προϋποθέτει κατάλληλο σχεδιασμό, δομική υποστήριξη και συνεχή αξιολόγηση.

Σε πιο ανθρωποκεντρικές προσεγγίσεις, ερευνητικά έργα αναδεικνύουν τη δεύτερη ευκαιρία ως χώρο μετασχηματισμού. Τα ευρήματα δείχνουν ότι οι ενήλικες εκπαιδευόμενοι συχνά

αντιμετωπίζουν δυσκολίες που σχετίζονται με την καθημερινότητά τους, τα κοινωνικά τους δίκτυα και τα προσωπικά τους βιώματα, ωστόσο μέσα από τη συμμετοχή τους στα προγράμματα καταφέρνουν να αναπτύξουν αυτοπεποίθηση, να ενισχύσουν τις μαθησιακές τους ταυτότητες και να αναδιαμορφώσουν τις επαγγελματικές ή προσωπικές τους προοπτικές (Gonzalez, 2020; Karakitsiou et al., 2024). Οι εμπειρίες αυτές καταδεικνύουν ότι η δεύτερη ευκαιρία λειτουργεί όχι μόνο ως μηχανισμός εκπαίδευσης, αλλά και ως πεδίο ενδυνάμωσης.

Η συζήτηση γύρω από την ενδυνάμωση συγκεκριμένων κοινωνικών ομάδων εμπλουτίζεται και από μελέτες όπως αυτή των Igwe et al. (2020) οι οποίοι εξετάζουν πώς η συμμετοχή σε προγράμματα δεύτερης ευκαιρίας μπορεί να ενισχύσει δεξιότητες και κοινωνική ένταξη γυναικών με περιορισμένες προηγούμενες εκπαιδευτικές ευκαιρίες. Παράλληλα, η έρευνα των Keita and Lee (2022) επιβεβαιώνει ότι οι ενήλικες που συμμετέχουν σε τέτοια προγράμματα αναφέρουν αισθητές βελτιώσεις στη γνώση, την αυτοπεποίθηση και τις διαπροσωπικές τους σχέσεις, παρά τα σημαντικά εμπόδια που συχνά συναντούν.

Τέλος, άλλες ερευνητικές προσεγγίσεις αναδεικνύουν ότι η απουσία ολοκληρωμένων και συνεκτικών εκπαιδευτικών πολιτικών μπορεί να περιορίσει σημαντικά την πρόσβαση ενηλίκων σε προγράμματα επανεκπαίδευσης και να εντείνει εκπαιδευτικές και κοινωνικές ανισότητες. Ακόμη, η έλλειψη δομών που ανταποκρίνονται στις ανάγκες των ενηλίκων εκπαιδευομένων τονίζει ακόμη περισσότερο την αξία των συστηματικών ερευνών που χαρτογραφούν το πεδίο και αναδεικνύουν τα πεδία στα οποία απαιτείται θεσμική ενίσχυση (Lukáč & Lukáčová, 2024).

Στο πλαίσιο αυτό, η παρούσα μελέτη επιδιώκει να αποτυπώσει συστηματικά τη διεθνή επιστημονική παραγωγή γύρω από την εκπαίδευση ενηλίκων, την εκπαίδευση δεύτερης ευκαιρίας και τη διά βίου μάθηση κατά την τελευταία δεκαετία. Δεδομένου ότι δεν έχει εντοπιστεί προηγούμενη βιβλιομετρική ανάλυση που να εξετάζει ολοκληρωμένα το συγκεκριμένο πεδίο, η έρευνα φιλοδοξεί να καλύψει αυτό το κενό, χαρτογραφώντας τις κυρίαρχες θεματικές τάσεις, τους βασικούς άξονες ερευνητικού ενδιαφέροντος και τη δομή του επιστημονικού τοπίου. Παράλληλα, διερευνά τις σχέσεις και τις εννοιολογικές διασυνδέσεις μεταξύ των θεμελιωδών εννοιών που συγκροτούν τον χώρο, συμβάλλοντας στη διαμόρφωση ενός συνεκτικού πλαισίου κατανόησης ικανού να υποστηρίξει μελλοντικές ερευνητικές, παιδαγωγικές και πολιτικές παρεμβάσεις.

2. Υλικό και Μέθοδος

Τα έγγραφα που χρησιμοποιήθηκαν στην παρούσα μελέτη ανακτήθηκαν από τη βάση δεδομένων Scopus στις 15 Νοεμβρίου 2025, χρησιμοποιώντας την εξής BOOLEAN έκφραση:

Second Chance Schools AND Adult Education AND Lifelong Learning AND PUBYEAR > 2014 AND PUBYEAR < 2026 AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE,"ar") AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE,"English") AND (LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA,"SOCI") OR LIMIT-TO (UBJAREA,"PSYC").

Η αναζήτηση πραγματοποιήθηκε στον τίτλο των άρθρων, στις περιλήψεις και στις λέξεις-κλειδιά. Η αρχική αναζήτηση εντόπισε 278 έγγραφα και, μετά την εξέταση των τίτλων και των περιλήψεων, αποκλείστηκαν 55 έγγραφα επειδή δεν ήταν συναφή με το θέμα, οπότε στην τελικά βάση δεδομένων παρέμειναν 223 άρθρα. Αποκλείστηκαν επίσης άρθρα όπως επιστολές, περιλήψεις συνεδρίων, κεφάλαια βιβλίων, σημειώσεις και πρωτόκολλα. Επιπλέον, αποκλείστηκαν άρθρα που δεν ήταν γραμμένα στα αγγλικά ή που δεν συμπεριλάμβαναν ανθρώπινους συμμετέχοντες στην έρευνα. Διατηρήθηκαν όλα τα υπόλοιπα άρθρα, εφόσον το αντικείμενό τους σχετιζόταν άμεσα ή έμμεσα με την εκπαίδευση ενηλίκων, την εκπαίδευση δεύτερης ευκαιρίας και την δια βίου μάθηση.

Για την πραγματοποίηση της βιβλιομετρικής ανάλυσης χρησιμοποιήθηκαν τεχνικές ανάλυσης απόδοσης και χαρτογράφησης της επιστήμης. Η ανάλυση απόδοσης περιλάμβανε τον υπολογισμό του ετήσιου αριθμού δημοσιεύσεων και τον εντοπισμό των πιο συχνά αναφερόμενων συγγραφέων και πηγών. Οι τεχνικές χαρτογράφησης της επιστήμης περιλάμβαναν την ανάλυση συνεμφάνισης συγγραφέων, η οποία διερεύνησε συνεργασίες μέσω συνυπογεγραμμένων δημοσιεύσεων με μονάδα ανάλυσης τις χώρες. Η βιβλιογραφική σύζευξη μέτρησε τον βαθμό στον οποίο πολλαπλές πηγές παραπέμπουν στα ίδια έγγραφα, με μονάδα ανάλυσης τις πηγές, αντανακλώντας κοινά ερευνητικά ενδιαφέροντα ή θεματική εγγύτητα. Επιπλέον, η ανάλυση συν-παραπομπών, χρησιμοποιώντας ως μονάδα ανάλυσης τις παρατιθέμενες αναφορές, εξέτασε πόσο συχνά δύο ή περισσότερες πηγές παρατίθενται μαζί σε άλλα έγγραφα, υποδεικνύοντας την εννοιολογική τους συνάφεια ή την επιρροή τους στη σχετική βιβλιογραφία. Πραγματοποιήθηκε ανάλυση παραπομπών με μονάδα ανάλυσης τους συγγραφείς, συνοδευόμενη από απεικόνιση πυκνότητας για την ανάδειξη των πιο επιδραστικών ερευνητικών συνεισφορών. Τέλος, η ανάλυση συν-εμφάνισης διερεύνησε τη συχνότητα με την οποία δύο ή περισσότερες λέξεις-κλειδιά εμφανίζονται μαζί στα ίδια έγγραφα, χρησιμοποιώντας ως μονάδα ανάλυσης τις λέξεις-κλειδιά των συγγραφέων, συμβάλλοντας στην ανάδειξη των κύριων θεμάτων και της θεματικής δομής του υπό εξέταση ερευνητικού πεδίου.

Το αρχείο CSV που ανακτήθηκε από το Scopus εισήχθη στο VOSviewer για την πραγματοποίηση της βιβλιομετρικής ανάλυσης. Το VOSviewer, που αναπτύχθηκε από τους Nees Jan van Eck και Ludo Waltman στο Πανεπιστήμιο του Leiden (Van Eck & Waltman, 2010), είναι ένα εργαλείο ειδικά σχεδιασμένο για την κατασκευή και εξερεύνηση χαρτών βάσει δεδομένων δικτύων. Εξετάζει διάφορους τύπους σχέσεων, όπως συνεμφάνιση συγγραφέων, συν-εμφάνιση λέξεων-κλειδιών, παραπομπές, βιβλιογραφική σύζευξη και συγ-παραπομπές (Arruda et al., 2022). Επιπλέον, τα δεδομένα οπτικοποιήθηκαν μέσω γραφήματος που δημιουργήθηκε εντός του προγράμματος Microsoft Word για Mac.

3. Αποτελέσματα

3.1. Βιβλιομετρική ανάλυση

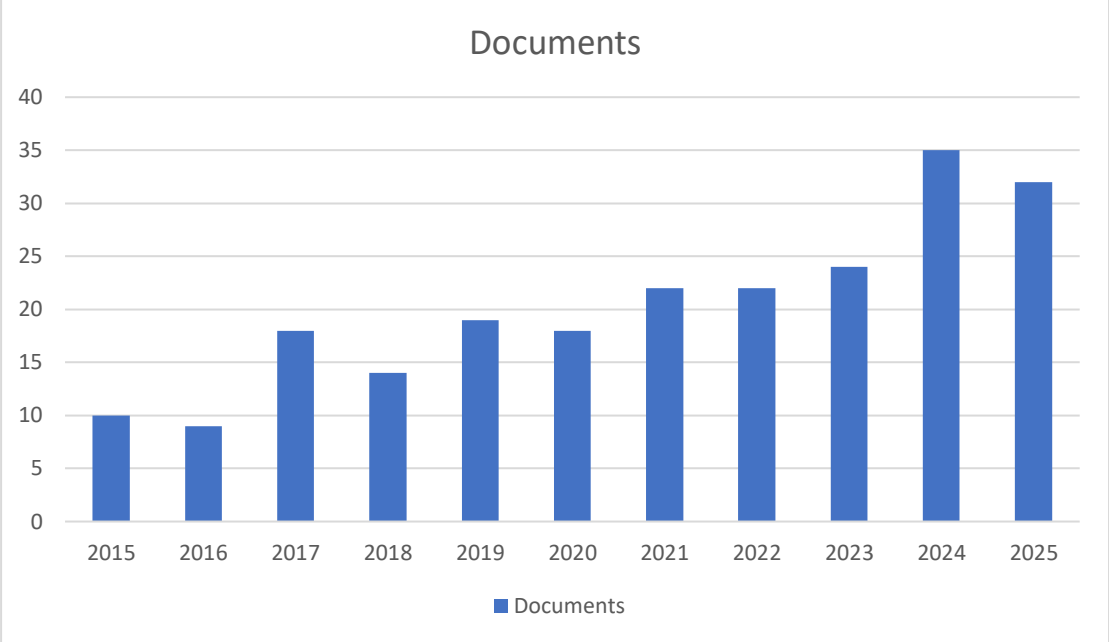
3.1.1. Ανάλυση απόδοσης

Ο συνολικός αριθμός των δημοσιεύσεων σχετικά με την εκπαίδευση ενηλίκων, την εκπαίδευση δεύτερης ευκαιρίας και την δια βίου μάθηση ήταν 223. Το Σχήμα 1 παρουσιάζει τον ετήσιο αριθμό δημοσιεύσεων που σχετίζονται με τη δια βίου μάθηση, την εκπαίδευση δεύτερης ευκαιρίας και την εκπαίδευση ενηλίκων για την περίοδο 2015–2025. Από τα δεδομένα προκύπτει μια σαφής ανοδική τάση στη σχετική ερευνητική δραστηριότητα, υποδηλώνοντας την αυξανόμενη σημασία και επιστημονική ενασχόληση με αυτά τα πεδία.

Κατά την αρχική περίοδο (2015–2016), ο αριθμός των δημοσιεύσεων κυμαίνεται σε σχετικά χαμηλά επίπεδα, μεταξύ 8 και 10 άρθρων. Ωστόσο, από το 2017 και έπειτα παρατηρείται μια σταδιακή ενίσχυση της ερευνητικής παραγωγής, με αξιοσημείωτες αυξήσεις σε ορισμένα έτη, όπως το 2017 και το 2019. Η σταθερή αυτή άνοδος αντικατοπτρίζει την αυξανόμενη αναγνώριση της σημασίας της δια βίου μάθησης και της εκπαίδευσης ενηλίκων, ιδιαίτερα σε ένα κοινωνικό και εργασιακό περιβάλλον που μεταβάλλεται με ταχείς ρυθμούς.

Από το 2020 έως το 2023, η παραγωγή δημοσιεύσεων εμφανίζει μια σχετικά σταθερή αλλά ανοδική πορεία, γεγονός που μπορεί να σχετίζεται με την εντατικοποίηση των εκπαιδευτικών μεταρρυθμίσεων και τη διεύρυνση των πολιτικών διά βίου μάθησης. Το 2024 καταγράφεται η μεγαλύτερη άνοδος, με τον αριθμό των δημοσιεύσεων να φτάνει τις 35, υποδηλώνοντας κορύφωση του ερευνητικού ενδιαφέροντος. Το 2025 παρουσιάζει μια μικρή μείωση, χωρίς όμως να αναιρεί τη συνολική ανοδική τάση της δεκαετίας.

Συνολικά, το διάγραμμα αποτυπώνει μια έντονη και σταθερή αύξηση του επιστημονικού ενδιαφέροντος για τη δια βίου μάθηση, την εκπαίδευση δεύτερης ευκαιρίας και την εκπαίδευση ενηλίκων, επιβεβαιώνοντας ότι το πεδίο αποκτά ολοένα και πιο κεντρικό ρόλο στη σύγχρονη εκπαιδευτική πολιτική και έρευνα.



Σχήμα 1*. Ετήσια κατανομή των δημοσιεύσεων σχετικά με τη δια βίου μάθηση, την εκπαίδευση δεύτερης ευκαιρίας και την εκπαίδευση ενηλίκων για την περίοδο 2015–2025*

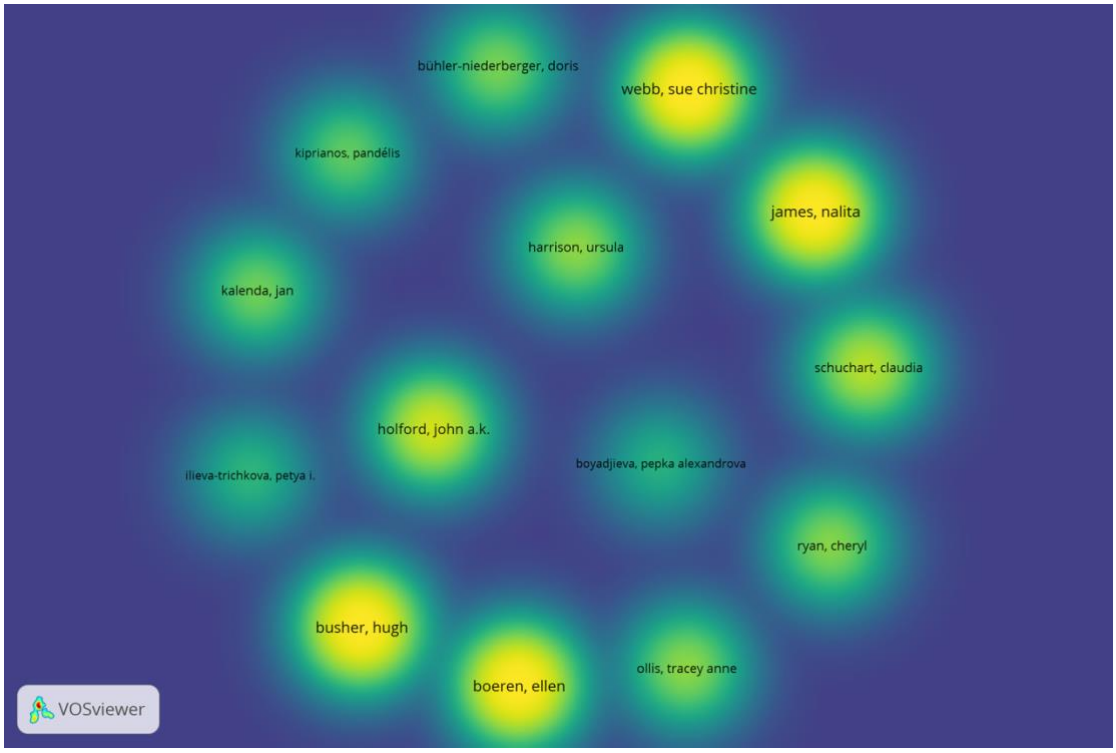
Ο Πίνακας 1 παρουσιάζει τους 14 συγγραφείς που έχουν τουλάχιστον τρεις σχετικές δημοσιεύσεις, ταξινομημένους με βάση τον αριθμό των παραπομπών που έχουν λάβει. Στην κορυφή της λίστας βρίσκεται η Webb, Sue Christine, η οποία έχει συγγράψει τρεις δημοσιεύσεις και συγκεντρώνει 60 παραπομπές. Ακολουθούν οι Boeren, Ellen, Busher, Hugh και James, Nalita, οι οποίοι, παρά τις περισσότερες δημοσιεύσεις (4–5 έκαστος), καταγράφουν 58 παραπομπές ο καθένας.

Στη συνέχεια, ο Holford, John A.K. καταγράφει 35 παραπομπές, ενώ η Schuchart, Claudia ακολουθεί με 29 παραπομπές σε πέντε δημοσιεύσεις. Επίσης, οι Harrison, Ursula και Ollis, Tracey Anne παρουσιάζουν από 22 παραπομπές. Η Ryan, Cheryl συγκεντρώνει 21 παραπομπές, ενώ η Bühler-Niederberger, Doris καταγράφει 19. Οι επόμενοι συγγραφείς παρουσιάζουν χαμηλότερες τιμές παραπομπών: ο Kalenda, Jan με 18, ο Kiprianos, Pandélis με 16 και η Ilieva-Trichkova, Petya I. με 10 παραπομπές. Τέλος, η Boyadjieva, Pepka Alexandrova καταγράφει 9 παραπομπές, ολοκληρώνοντας τη λίστα των συγγραφέων με τουλάχιστον δύο συναφείς δημοσιεύσεις.

Τα ευρήματα αυτά επιβεβαιώνονται και από την απεικόνιση πυκνότητας (Figure 2) που δημιουργήθηκε με το VOSviewer, η οποία αναδεικνύει την προεξάρχουσα θέση των συγκεκριμένων συγγραφέων εντός του ερευνητικού δικτύου, με τις φωτεινότερες περιοχές να υποδηλώνουν υψηλότερο επίπεδο επιστημονικής επιρροής.

Πίνακας 1. Συγγραφείς με τουλάχιστον δύο σχετικές δημοσιεύσεις και ο αριθμός των παραπομπών τους, ταξινομημένοι κατά φθίνουσα σειρά citations

Author	Documents	Citations
Webb, Sue Christine	3	60
Boeren, Ellen	4	58
Busher, Hugh	5	58
James, Nalita	5	58
Holford, John A.K.	3	35
Schuchart, Claudia	5	29
Harrison, Ursula	4	22
Ollis, Tracey Anne	4	22
Ryan, Cheryl	3	21
Bühler-Niederberger, Doris	4	19
Kalenda, Jan	3	18
Kiprianos, Pandélis	3	16
Ilieva-Trichkova, Petya I.	3	10
Boyadjieva, Pepka Alexandrova	3	9



Σχήμα 2. *Απεικόνιση πυκνότητας των συγγραφέων, όπως προέκυψε από το VOSviewer, αναδεικνύοντας την ένταση της ερευνητικής δραστηριότητας και τον βαθμό επιρροής τους στο επιστημονικό δίκτυο*

Ο Πίνακας 2 παρουσιάζει τους οκτώ οργανισμούς που έχουν δημοσιεύσει τουλάχιστον τρία σχετικά έγγραφα, ταξινομημένους με βάση τον αριθμό των ετεροαναφορών. Πρώτο εμφανίζεται το Department of Behavioural Sciences and Learning, Linköpings Universitet (4 δημοσιεύσεις, 52 ετεροαναφορές), ακολουθούμενο από το University of Patras (4 δημοσιεύσεις, 40 ετεροαναφορές), το οποίο αποτελεί τον ισχυρότερο εκπρόσωπο της ελληνικής ακαδημαϊκής κοινότητας και παρουσιάζει αξιοσημείωτη διεθνή απήχηση.

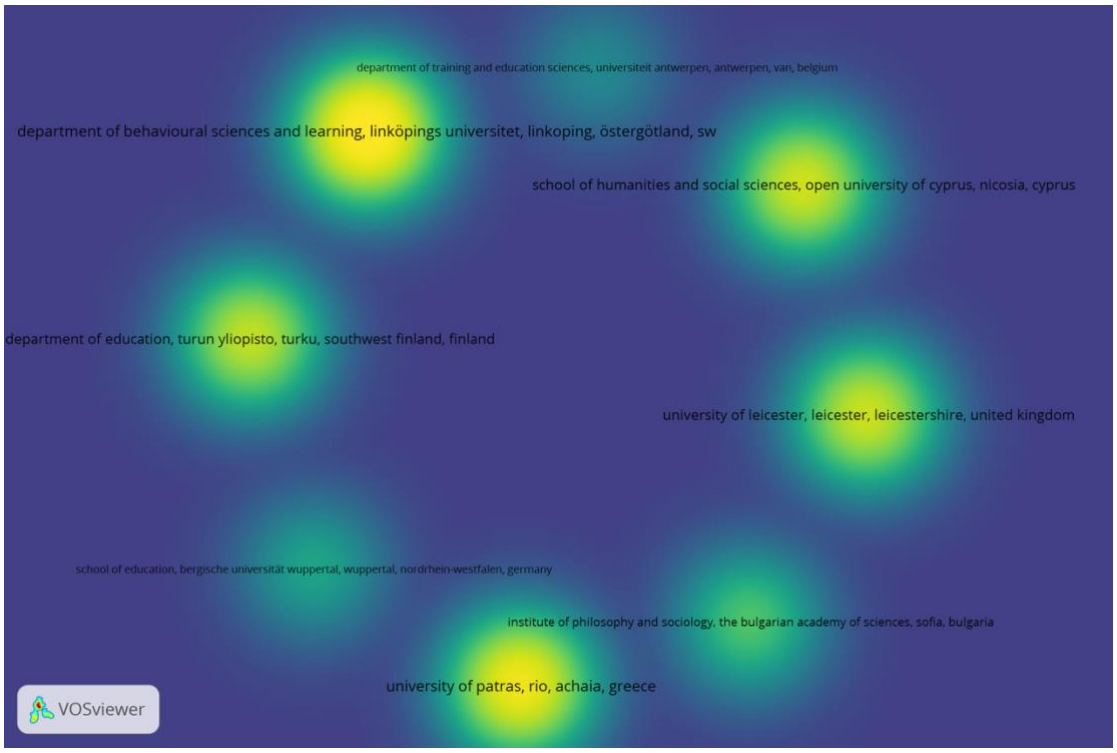
Ιδιαίτερα σημαντική είναι και η παρουσία της Κύπρου μέσω του School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Open University of Cyprus (3 δημοσιεύσεις, 30 ετεροαναφορές), το οποίο αναδεικνύεται ως ένας από τους πλέον δραστήριους φορείς της περιοχής, με σημαντική συμβολή στο ερευνητικό πεδίο και έντονη αναγνωρισιμότητα. Στο ίδιο επίπεδο καταγράφονται και διεθνείς οργανισμοί όπως το University of Leicester (3 δημοσιεύσεις, 29 ετεροαναφορές) και το Department of Education, Turun Yliopisto (3 δημοσιεύσεις, 27 ετεροαναφορές), οι οποίοι συμβάλλουν ουσιαστικά στη διαμόρφωση της βιβλιογραφίας.

Οι υπόλοιποι οργανισμοί, όπως το Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (4 δημοσιεύσεις, 12 ετεροαναφορές), το School of Education, Bergische Universität Wuppertal (3 δημοσιεύσεις, 6 ετεροαναφορές) και το Department of Training and Education Sciences, Universiteit Antwerpen (3 δημοσιεύσεις, 3 ετεροαναφορές), εμφανίζουν χαμηλότερους δείκτες ετεροαναφορών αλλά εξακολουθούν να αποτελούν μέρος του συνολικού ερευνητικού δικτύου.

Η κατανομή του ερευνητικού αντίκτυπου αυτών των οργανισμών αποτυπώνεται και στο Σχήμα 3, μέσω της απεικόνισης πυκνότητας που παρήχθη με το VOSviewer, αναδεικνύοντας τα κέντρα υψηλής επιστημονικής επιρροής και υπογραμμίζοντας τόσο τον καθοριστικό ρόλο του Πανεπιστημίου Πατρών όσο και τη δυναμική παρουσία του Ανοικτού Πανεπιστημίου Κύπρου στο διεθνές ερευνητικό τοπίο.

Πίνακας 2: Οι οργανισμοί με τουλάχιστον τρεις δημοσιεύσεις στο υπό εξέταση θεματικό πεδίο, ταξινομημένοι με βάση τον αριθμό των ετεροαναφορών

Organization	Documents	Citations
Department of Behavioural Sciences and Learning, Linköpings Universitet, Linkoping, Ostergötland, Sweden	4	52
University of Patras, Rio, Achaia, Greece	4	40
School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Open University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus	3	30
University of Leicester, Leicester, Leicestershire, United Kingdom	3	29
Department of Education, Turun Yliopisto, Turku, Southwest Finland, Finland	3	27
Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, Bulgaria	4	12
School of Education, Bergische Universität Wuppertal, Wuppertal, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany	3	6
Department of Training and Education Sciences, Universiteit Antwerpen, Antwerpen, van, Belgium	3	3



Σχήμα 3. *Απεικόνιση πυκνότητας των οργανισμών, όπως προέκυψε από το VOSviewer, αναδεικνύοντας τη συγκέντρωση του ερευνητικού αντίκτυπου και τον βαθμό επιρροής τους στο επιστημονικό δίκτυο*

3.1.2. Χαρτογράφηση της επιστήμης

Το Σχήμα 4 παρουσιάζει ένα δίκτυο συνεμφάνισης συγγραφέων σε επίπεδο χωρών, στο οποίο συμπεριλαμβάνονται όλα τα κράτη που εμφανίζουν τουλάχιστον τρεις δημοσιεύσεις. Το μέγεθος των κόμβων αντανακλά τον όγκο των δημοσιεύσεων, ενώ οι συνδέσεις μεταξύ τους υποδηλώνουν συνεγγραφικές σχέσεις. Για την ερμηνεία του δικτύου αξιοποιήθηκαν επιπλέον τα δεδομένα των αναφορών, προκειμένου να εντοπιστούν οι χώρες με τη μεγαλύτερη επιστημονική απήχηση.

Με βάση τον συνολικό αριθμό αναφορών, το Ηνωμένο Βασίλειο καταλαμβάνει την πρώτη θέση (590 αναφορές), αποτελώντας τον πλέον επιδραστικό κόμβο του δικτύου. Ακολουθούν οι Ηνωμένες Πολιτείες (441 αναφορές), η Αυστραλία (299 αναφορές), η Σουηδία (243 αναφορές), η Γερμανία (217 αναφορές), η Ολλανδία (203 αναφορές) και η Ισπανία (166 αναφορές), χώρες που παρουσιάζουν ιδιαίτερα υψηλή ερευνητική απήχηση και συνεισφέρουν σημαντικά στη διεθνή παραγωγή γνώσης.

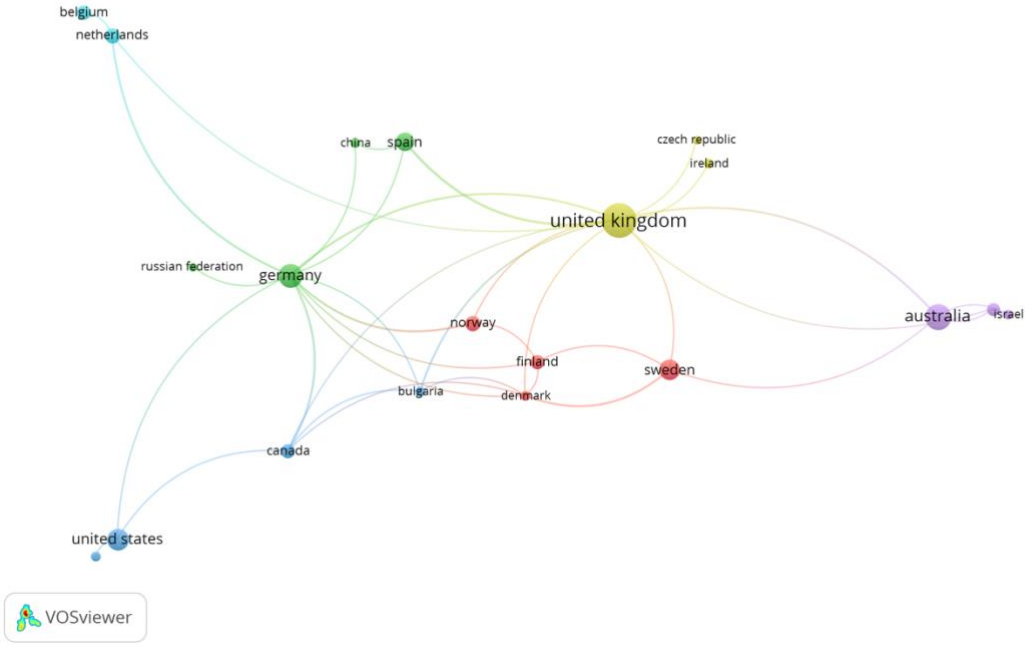
Σε ενδιάμεσο επίπεδο αναφορών εντοπίζονται χώρες όπως η Κίνα (123 αναφορές), η Νορβηγία (86 αναφορές), η Φινλανδία (77 αναφορές), η Ελλάδα (70 αναφορές), η Δανία (56 αναφορές), ο Καναδάς (45 αναφορές) και η Νότια Αφρική (41 αναφορές). Οι χώρες αυτές διαθέτουν αξιοσημείωτη ερευνητική δραστηριότητα και εμφανίζουν σταθερούς συνεγγραφικούς δεσμούς με άλλα κράτη, ενισχύοντας τη διεθνή συνεργασία.

Στην κατηγορία των χωρών με χαμηλότερο αριθμό αναφορών βρίσκονται η Ιρλανδία (34 αναφορές), η Κύπρος (31 αναφορές), η Τουρκία (29 αναφορές), το Ισραήλ (29 αναφορές), η

Ρωσική Ομοσπονδία (21 αναφορές), η Τσεχία (18 αναφορές), η Βουλγαρία (12 αναφορές) και το Βέλγιο (6 αναφορές). Παρότι οι χώρες αυτές εμφανίζουν μικρότερη απήχηση, εξακολουθούν να διαδραματίζουν ρόλο στη συνολική διασύνδεση του δικτύου, συμβάλλοντας στη διεύρυνση των διεθνών συνεργασιών.

Τέλος, η Πορτογαλία, με 2 αναφορές, εμφανίζει τη χαμηλότερη επιστημονική απήχηση στο δείγμα, ωστόσο εξακολουθεί να αποτελεί μέρος του δικτύου, υποδηλώνοντας ότι ακόμη και χώρες με περιορισμένη αναγνωρισιμότητα συμβάλλουν στη διαμόρφωση του ερευνητικού τοπίου.

Συνολικά, η ανάλυση καταδεικνύει ότι η διεθνής ερευνητική δραστηριότητα καθοδηγείται κυρίως από χώρες με υψηλές αναφορές και σημαντική ιστορική παρουσία στην παραγωγή γνώσης, με το Ηνωμένο Βασίλειο, τις Ηνωμένες Πολιτείες, την Αυστραλία και τη Σουηδία να αποτελούν τους πιο επιδραστικούς κόμβους του δικτύου.



Σχήμα 4*. Δίκτυο συνεμφάνισης συγγραφέων σε επίπεδο χωρών, με ελάχιστο όριο τις τρεις δημοσιεύσεις ανά χώρα*

Το Σχήμα 5 παρουσιάζει την ανάλυση bibliographic coupling χρησιμοποιώντας ως μονάδα ανάλυσης τις πηγές δημοσίευσης. Το ελάχιστο όριο για την ένταξη μίας πηγής στο δίκτυο ήταν η ύπαρξη τουλάχιστον δύο εγγράφων, ενώ συμπεριλήφθηκαν αποκλειστικά οι πηγές που εμφάνιζαν μεταξύ τους βιβλιογραφικές συνδέσεις. Η οπτικοποίηση καταδεικνύει μία δομή τριών διακριτών συστάδων, οι οποίες διαμορφώνονται με βάση τη θεματική εγγύτητα και τα κοινά πρότυπα παραπομπών μεταξύ των περιοδικών. Κάθε κόμβος αντιπροσωπεύει μια πηγή, με το μέγεθός του να αντικατοπτρίζει τη σχετική συμβολή της στο σύνολο του δικτύου.

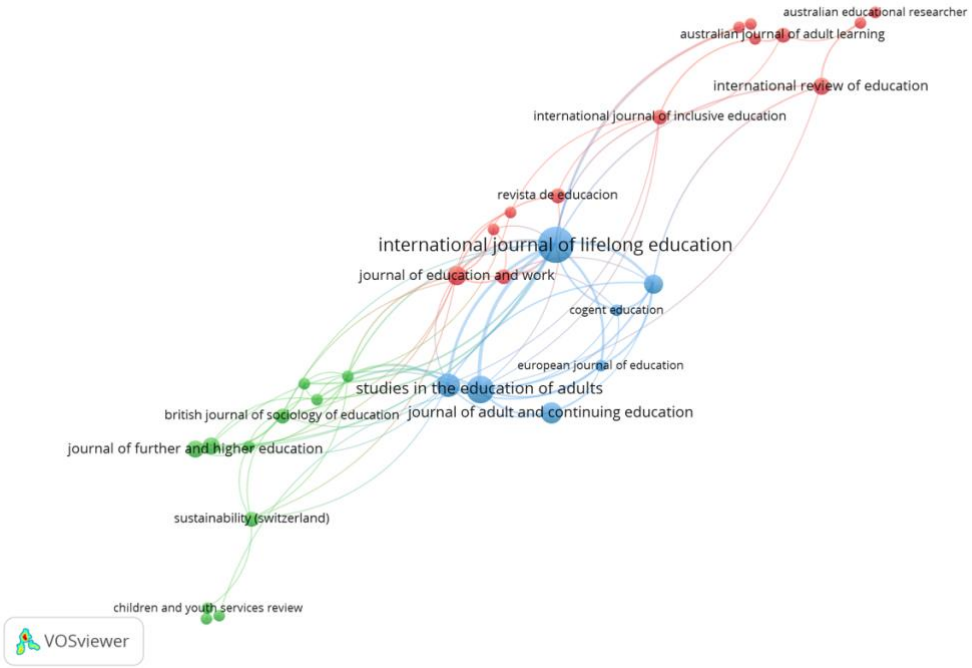
Η μπλε συστάδα αποτελεί τον κεντρικό και πιο πυκνό πυρήνα του δικτύου. Περιλαμβάνει περιοδικά που επικεντρώνονται στη διά βίου μάθηση, την εκπαίδευση ενηλίκων και τις εκπαιδευτικές πολιτικές που σχετίζονται με τη συνεχιζόμενη εκπαίδευση. Το International Journal of Lifelong Education αναδεικνύεται ως ο μεγαλύτερος και πιο συνδεδεμένος κόμβος,

λειτουργώντας ως κεντρικός άξονας γύρω από τον οποίο οργανώνονται πηγές όπως Studies in the Education of Adults, Journal of Adult and Continuing Education, Cogent Education και European Journal of Education. Η συστάδα αυτή συνιστά ένα ισχυρό θεματικό σύμπλεγμα το οποίο αντανακλά τον κεντρικό χαρακτήρα του πεδίου των σπουδών διά βίου μάθησης.

Η κόκκινη συστάδα περιλαμβάνει περιοδικά που εστιάζουν σε ζητήματα εκπαιδευτικής πολιτικής, συμπεριληπτικής εκπαίδευσης και διεθνών προσεγγίσεων στην εκπαιδευτική έρευνα. Ανάμεσα στα βασικά περιοδικά της ομάδας αυτής συγκαταλέγονται τα International Review of Education, International Journal of Inclusive Education, Journal of Education and Work, Australian Journal of Adult Learning και Australian Educational Researcher. Η συγκεκριμένη συστάδα φαίνεται να εκπροσωπεί ένα σύνολο πηγών με ισχυρό προσανατολισμό σε πολιτικές και συγκριτικές διαστάσεις της εκπαίδευσης, διαμορφώνοντας μία διακριτή αλλά άμεσα συνδεδεμένη υποκοινότητα στο συνολικό δίκτυο.

Η πράσινη συστάδα συγκεντρώνει περιοδικά που συνδέονται θεματικά με την κοινωνιολογία της εκπαίδευσης, την ανώτερη εκπαίδευση, την εκπαιδευτική αξιολόγηση και ζητήματα νεότητας και κοινωνικής πολιτικής. Σε αυτήν περιλαμβάνονται περιοδικά όπως British Journal of Sociology of Education, Journal of Further and Higher Education, Sustainability (Switzerland), Children and Youth Services Review. Η συστάδα αυτή εμφανίζει μεγαλύτερη θεματική διασπορά, ωστόσο συγκλίνει σε πεδία που εξετάζουν εκπαίδευση, κοινωνικά συμφραζόμενα και θεσμικές δομές.

Συνολικά, η κατανομή των πηγών στο δίκτυο αναδεικνύει μια τριμερή διάρθρωση που αντανακλά τρεις βασικές ερευνητικές κατευθύνσεις: (α) τη διά βίου μάθηση και την εκπαίδευση ενηλίκων (μπλε), (β) την εκπαιδευτική πολιτική και την ένταξη (κόκκινη), και (γ) την κοινωνιολογική και θεσμική ανάλυση της εκπαίδευσης (πράσινη). Η μπλε συστάδα διαμορφώνει τον κεντρικό πυρήνα της επιστημονικής αλληλεπίδρασης, ενώ οι κόκκινες και πράσινες συστάδες λειτουργούν ως συμπληρωματικά δίκτυα που επεκτείνουν το ερευνητικό πεδίο μέσω θεματικών διαφοροποιήσεων. Η δομή αυτή υποδηλώνει ένα συνεκτικό αλλά πολυεπίπεδο σύστημα πηγών, στο οποίο η συνδεσιμότητα και η θεματική εγγύτητα διαμορφώνουν σαφείς ερευνητικές κοινότητες.



Σχήμα 5. *Bibliographic coupling με τις πηγές ως μονάδα ανάλυσης*

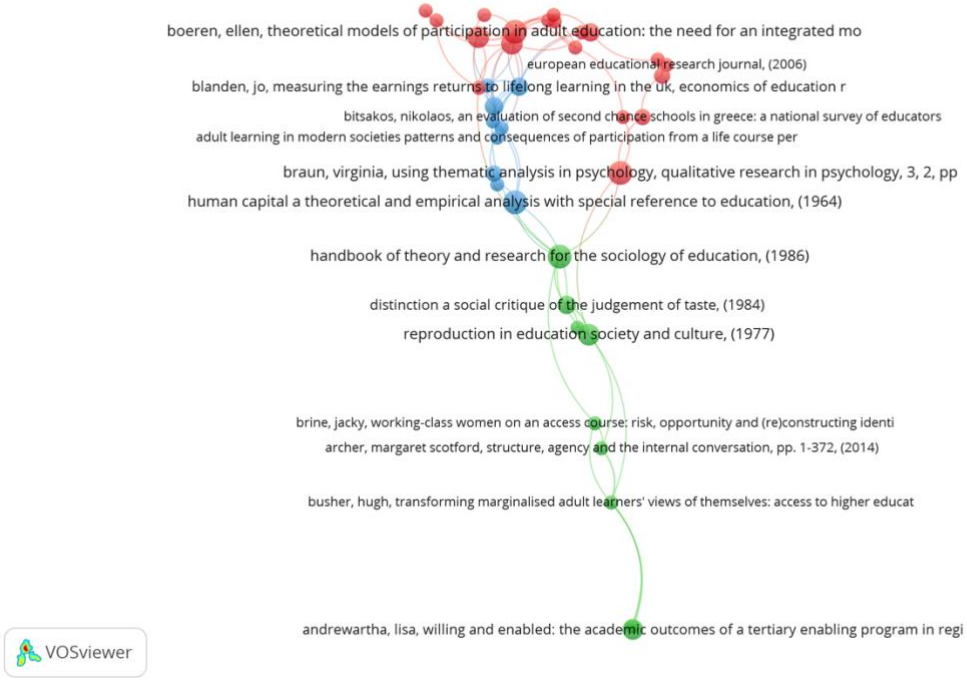
Η ανάλυση συν-αναφορών που παρουσιάζεται στο σχήμα αποτυπώνει το δίκτυο των πηγών που αναφέρονται συχνότερα από κοινού στο πεδίο της εκπαίδευσης ενηλίκων, της εκπαίδευσης δεύτερης ευκαιρίας και της διά βίου μάθησης. Η ανάλυση βασίστηκε στις αναφορές που περιλαμβάνονται στις δημοσιεύσεις του δείγματος, θέτοντας ως ελάχιστο όριο τις τρεις εμφανίσεις, και συμπεριέλαβε μόνο τις πηγές που παρουσιάζουν μεταξύ τους συνδέσεις. Κάθε κόμβος του σχήματος αντιστοιχεί σε μια αναφερόμενη πηγή, με το μέγεθός του να αντανακλά τη συχνότητα αναφοράς της, ενώ οι γραμμές μεταξύ των κόμβων υποδηλώνουν το πόσο συχνά δύο έργα συν-αναφέρονται στο ίδιο επιστημονικό κείμενο.

Από την οπτική αποτύπωση προκύπτουν τρεις συστάδες, οι οποίες συγκροτούνται με βάση τις σχέσεις συνάφειας των αναφερόμενων έργων. Η πρώτη συστάδα, αποτυπωμένη με κόκκινο χρώμα, περιλαμβάνει πηγές που, με βάση τους τίτλους και τη θεματική τους στόχευση, φαίνεται να συνδέονται με ζητήματα συμμετοχής ενηλίκων στη μάθηση, με θεωρητικά και εμπειρικά μοντέλα συμμετοχής, με τις αποδόσεις και τα οφέλη της διά βίου μάθησης, καθώς και με τις πολιτικές διαστάσεις της εκπαίδευσης δεύτερης ευκαιρίας. Τα έργα αυτά, τα οποία συχνά εξετάζουν κοινωνικοοικονομικούς παράγοντες και θεσμικά πλαίσια, αποτελούν έναν κεντρικό άξονα της διεθνούς βιβλιογραφίας γύρω από τη συμμετοχή και τις ευκαιρίες των ενηλίκων στην εκπαίδευση.

Η δεύτερη συστάδα, που εμφανίζεται με πράσινο χρώμα, συγκεντρώνει θεμελιώδη θεωρητικά έργα της κοινωνιολογίας της εκπαίδευσης. Η παρουσία βιβλιογραφίας που αναφέρεται σε θεωρίες κοινωνικής αναπαραγωγής, σε έννοιες όπως το πολιτισμικό και κοινωνικό κεφάλαιο και στις εκπαιδευτικές ανισότητες υποδηλώνει ότι αυτή η συστάδα συνδέεται με μακρο-θεωρητικές προσεγγίσεις. Η θεματολογία των έργων αυτών, όπως αποτυπώνεται από τους τίτλους που εμφανίζονται στο γράφημα, αναδεικνύει τον ισχυρό θεωρητικό πυρήνα που υποστηρίζει την ερμηνεία των εκπαιδευτικών διαδρομών ενηλίκων και την κατανόηση των διαρθρωτικών παραγόντων που επηρεάζουν την πρόσβαση και συμμετοχή στη διά βίου μάθηση.

Η τρίτη συστάδα, που εντοπίζεται στην κάτω περιοχή του σχήματος, περιλαμβάνει πηγές που φαίνεται να εστιάζουν στις εκπαιδευτικές εμπειρίες κοινωνικά ευάλωτων ομάδων, στις διαδικασίες διαμόρφωσης ταυτότητας ενηλίκων εκπαιδευομένων και στις διαδρομές πρόσβασης στην εκπαίδευση δεύτερης ευκαιρίας και σε προγράμματα τριτοβάθμιας πρόσβασης ενηλίκων. Οι τίτλοι των έργων αυτών παραπέμπουν σε εμπειρικές προσεγγίσεις που εξετάζουν πώς οι ενήλικες αναδιαμορφώνουν τις εκπαιδευτικές και προσωπικές τους προοπτικές μέσα από συμμετοχικές, συχνά μετασχηματιστικές, μαθησιακές διαδικασίες.

Συνολικά, το δίκτυο των συν-αναφορών αναδεικνύει μια πολυεπίπεδη δομή, όπου συνυπάρχουν θεωρητικά έργα με μεγάλη επίδραση, εμπειρικές μελέτες για τη συμμετοχή ενηλίκων στη μάθηση και αναλύσεις που αφορούν τις κοινωνικές, θεσμικές και υποκειμενικές διαστάσεις της εκπαιδευτικής διαδικασίας. Αν και η ερμηνεία των συστάδων βασίζεται κυρίως στην οπτική ομαδοποίηση και στους τίτλους των πηγών, τα πρότυπα που σχηματίζονται αντανακλούν συνεπείς και αναγνωρίσιμες θεματικές κατευθύνσεις στο πεδίο της εκπαίδευσης ενηλίκων, της εκπαίδευσης δεύτερης ευκαιρίας και της διά βίου μάθησης, υποδεικνύοντας τη συνύπαρξη θεωρητικού βάθους, κοινωνιολογικής διάστασης και εμπειρικής ερευνητικής ποικιλομορφίας.



Σχήμα 6*. Ανάλυση συν-αναφορών με τις πηγές ως μονάδα ανάλυσης*

Η χαρτογράφηση που παρουσιάζεται στο σχήμα προέκυψε από ανάλυση συν-εμφάνισης, χρησιμοποιώντας ως μονάδα ανάλυσης τις λέξεις-κλειδιά των συγγραφέων, ενώ το ελάχιστο όριο εμφάνισης των λέξεων ορίστηκε στη μονάδα 3. Για την απεικόνιση χρησιμοποιήθηκαν μόνο οι λέξεις-κλειδιά που συνδέονταν μεταξύ τους στο δίκτυο, ώστε να διαμορφωθεί μια καθαρή θεματική ομαδοποίηση. Ο πίνακας που συνοδεύει το σχήμα παρουσιάζει τις λέξεις-κλειδιά που εντάσσονται σε καθεμία από τις δύο συστάδες που προέκυψαν από την ανάλυση. Η διαδικασία ανέδειξε δύο κύρια θεματικά πεδία, τα οποία αντανακλούν διακριτούς αλλά αλληλοσυμπληρούμενους ερευνητικούς τομείς.

Η πρώτη συστάδα, η οποία στο σχήμα αποδίδεται με πράσινο χρώμα, περιλαμβάνει όρους που σχετίζονται με τη μαθησιακή διαδικασία, τις εκπαιδευτικές επιδόσεις και τις ψυχοκοινωνικές ή αναπτυξιακές διαστάσεις της εκπαίδευσης. Ενδεικτικά, στη συστάδα εμφανίζονται όροι που αφορούν τους μαθητές και τους εκπαιδευτικούς, ζητήματα γνωστικής και συναισθηματικής ανάπτυξης, αλλά και παράγοντες που επηρεάζουν την εκπαιδευτική πορεία, όπως το φύλο, η ψυχική υγεία, η εκπαιδευτική επίδοση και οι μορφές σχολικής συμμετοχής. Το σύμπλεγμα αυτό αντανακλά μια ερευνητική περιοχή που εστιάζει στη μάθηση ως πολυδιάστατη διαδικασία, ενσωματώνοντας παιδαγωγικές, ψυχολογικές και κοινωνικοδημογραφικές μεταβλητές. Με βάση τα παραπάνω, η συστάδα ονομάστηκε «Μάθηση και Ανάπτυξη στο Πλαίσιο της Εκπαίδευσης Ενηλίκων».

Η δεύτερη συστάδα, αποτυπωμένη με κόκκινο χρώμα, περιλαμβάνει όρους που συνδέονται με την εκπαίδευση ενηλίκων, τις βασικές και επαγγελματικές δεξιότητες και τη σχέση της εκπαίδευσης με την απασχόληση και την κοινωνική ένταξη. Στη συστάδα συναντώνται έννοιες που αφορούν τη διά βίου μάθηση, την επαγγελματική κατάρτιση, τις δομές δεύτερης ευκαιρίας, αλλά και τη μετάβαση στην αγορά εργασίας, την απασχολησιμότητα και τα χαρακτηριστικά του εργατικού δυναμικού. Παράλληλα, εμφανίζονται όροι που σχετίζονται με κοινωνικές ανισότητες, συμμετοχή στην εκπαίδευση και ένταξη πληθυσμιακών ομάδων. Το σύμπλεγμα αυτό αντιστοιχεί σε έναν ερευνητικό άξονα που εξετάζει τον ρόλο της

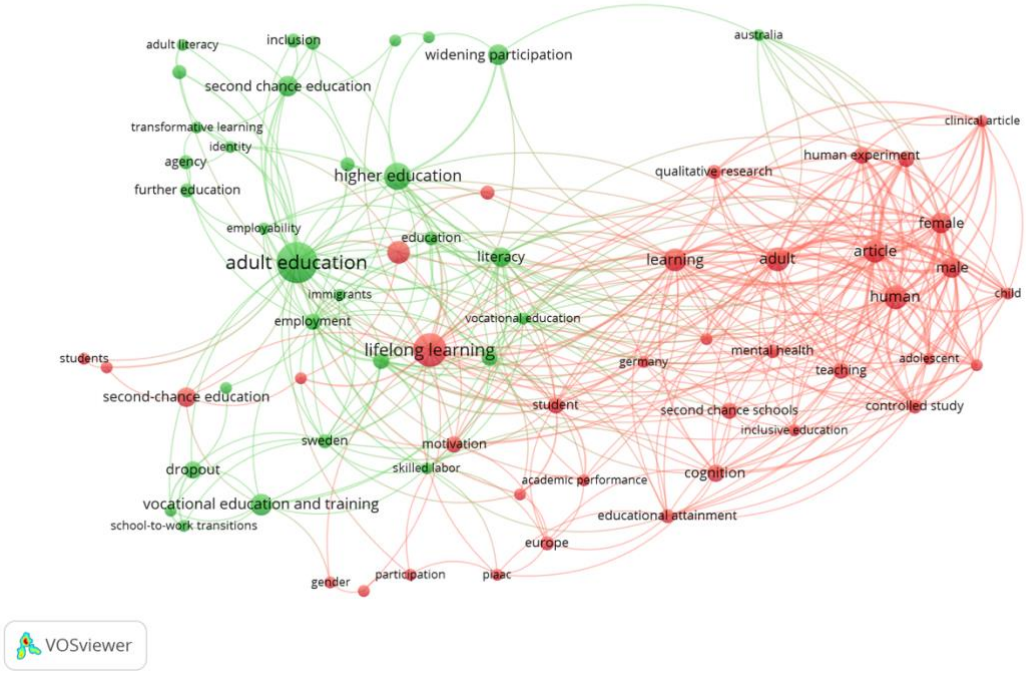
εκπαίδευσης στην αναβάθμιση δεξιοτήτων, την επαγγελματική κινητικότητα και τις διαδικασίες κοινωνικής ενσωμάτωσης. Για τον λόγο αυτό, η συστάδα ονομάστηκε «Εκπαίδευση Ενηλίκων, Δεξιότητες και Κοινωνική Ένταξη».

Οι δύο συστάδες που αναδείχθηκαν συνθέτουν ένα συνεκτικό θεματικό τοπίο, μέσα από το οποίο διαφαίνεται αφενός η παιδαγωγική και αναπτυξιακή διάσταση της μάθησης και αφετέρου η σημασία της εκπαίδευσης ενηλίκων, της κατάρτισης και των διαδικασιών κοινωνικής και επαγγελματικής ένταξης. Οι θεματικές αυτές ευθυγραμμίζονται με τα ζητήματα που αναλύονται στη συνέχεια της μελέτης, προσφέροντας μια καθαρή εικόνα του τρόπου με τον οποίο η σχετική βιβλιογραφία οργανώνεται γύρω από δύο βασικούς, αλληλοσυμπληρούμενους άξονες.

Πίνακας 3. Οι λέξεις-κλειδιά που συγκροτούν τις δύο συστάδες της ανάλυσης συν-εμφάνισης, με ελάχιστο όριο τρεις εμφανίσεις

CLUSTER 1- Μάθηση και Ανάπτυξη στο Πλαίσιο της Εκπαίδευσης Ενηλίκων	**CLUSTER 2- Εκπαίδευση Ενηλίκων, Δεξιότητες και Κοινωνική Ένταξη**
academic performance	adult education
adolescent	adult literacy
adult	agency
adult learning	australia
article	cultural capital
child	dropout
clinical article	education
cognition	employability
controlled study	employment
distance education	further education
education policy	higher education
educational attainment	hong kong
europe	identity
female	immigrants
gender	inclusion
germany	labor market
high school	literacy
human	neoliberalism
human experiment	numeracy
humans	school dropout
inclusive education	school-to-work transitions
inequality	second chance education

learning	skilled labor
lifelong learning	sweden
male	transformative learning
mental health	transition
motivation	vocational education
participation	vocational education and training
perception	widening participation
piaac	young adults
qualitative research	young population
second chance schools	
second-chance education	
self-determination theory	
student	
students	
teachers	
teaching	



Σχήμα 7. *Ανάλυση συν-εμφάνισης με τις λέξεις-κλειδιά των συγγραφέων ως μονάδα ανάλυσης και ομαδοποίηση σε δύο θεματικές συστάδες*

4. Συζήτηση

Η συζήτηση των ευρημάτων αναδεικνύει ότι η βιβλιομετρική ανάλυση συν-εμφάνισης λέξεων-κλειδιών διαμορφώνει δύο κεντρικούς θεματικούς άξονες, οι οποίοι αντανακλούν τη συγκρότηση του πεδίου της εκπαίδευσης ενηλίκων σε μικρο- και μακρο-επίπεδο. Ο πρώτος άξονας αφορά τη μαθησιακή εμπειρία του ενήλικα και περιλαμβάνει έννοιες που σχετίζονται με τα κίνητρα, την αυτοαντίληψη, τη συναισθηματική ενδυνάμωση και τη δυναμική του εκπαιδευτικού περιβάλλοντος. Ο δεύτερος άξονας εστιάζει σε θεσμικές και κοινωνικοπολιτικές παραμέτρους, όπως η επαγγελματική κατάρτιση, η αγορά εργασίας, η κοινωνική ένταξη και οι πολιτικές δεξιοτήτων. Η συνύπαρξη αυτών των δύο συστάδων δεν υποδηλώνει δύο απομονωμένα ερευνητικά πεδία· αντίθετα, καταδεικνύει ότι η εκπαίδευση ενηλίκων προσεγγίζεται ταυτόχρονα ως προσωπική διαδικασία μετασχηματισμού και ως εργαλείο κοινωνικής και επαγγελματικής κινητικότητας. Έτσι, τα βιβλιομετρικά μοτίβα αποκαλύπτουν μια ερευνητική περιοχή στην οποία η υποκειμενική εμπειρία των εκπαιδευομένων και οι δομικές συνθήκες που πλαισιώνουν τη μάθηση αλληλοτροφοδοτούνται, συγκροτώντας ένα ενιαίο αλλά πολυδιάστατο πεδίο ανάλυσης.

Ο πρώτος θεματικός άξονας εστιάζει στη μαθησιακή διαδικασία και την ατομική εξέλιξη των ενηλίκων εκπαιδευομένων, προσεγγίζοντας τη μάθηση ως εμπειρία που συνδέεται στενά με τις βιογραφικές και κοινωνικές τους διαδρομές. Η μελέτη των Busher et al. (2015) δείχνει ότι οι ώριμοι μαθητές αξιολογούν τη μάθηση μέσα από το κοινωνικοοικονομικό τους υπόβαθρο, τις προηγούμενες εκπαιδευτικές τους εμπειρίες και κυρίως τη σχέση τους με τους εκπαιδευτές, οι οποίοι οφείλουν να δημιουργούν κλίμα σεβασμού, σαφήνειας και ενδυνάμωσης. Οι Konopasky and Reybold (2015) υπογραμμίζουν ότι η διαπραγμάτευση πολλαπλών επαγγελματικών ταυτοτήτων από τους εκπαιδευτές ενηλίκων επηρεάζει ουσιαστικά τον τρόπο που νοηματοδοτείται η μάθηση και διαμορφώνονται οι σχέσεις στην τάξη. Παράλληλα, η συμμετοχή των ενηλίκων αποδεικνύεται πολυδιάστατη. Οι Tukundane et al. (2015) αναδεικνύουν την ανάγκη ολιστικών παρεμβάσεων για άτομα με χαμηλή αυτοεκτίμηση ή ιστορικό σχολικού αποκλεισμού. Επιπρόσθετα, οι Christodoulou et al. (2018) συμπληρώνουν ότι οι μαθητές των Σχολείων Δεύτερης Ευκαιρίας διαμορφώνουν νέα κίνητρα μάθησης που σχετίζονται με άρση στίγματος, προσωπική ανασυγκρότηση και επαγγελματική βελτίωση.

Η αυτοπεποίθηση και η ενίσχυση της αυτοαντίληψης προκύπτουν ως κεντρικά στοιχεία του πρώτου άξονα. Η μελέτη των Tønder and Aspøy (2017) δείχνει ότι η απόκτηση επαγγελματικών προσόντων μέσω ευέλικτων διαδρομών μάθησης λειτουργεί ως μια ουσιαστική «δεύτερη ευκαιρία» που ανανεώνει την εικόνα των ενηλίκων για τις ικανότητές τους. Παράλληλα, οι Kiprianos and Mpourgos (2022) επισημαίνουν ότι η επάνοδος στα Σχολεία Δεύτερης Ευκαιρίας ενεργοποιεί εσωτερικά κίνητρα και συμβάλλει στη σταδιακή αναδόμηση της σχέσης με τη μάθηση. Συμπληρωματικά, οι Kollas and Halkia (2020) δείχνουν πως η προσαρμογή των αναλυτικών προγραμμάτων στις ανάγκες των ενηλίκων ενισχύει την εμπλοκή τους και υποστηρίζει την προσωπική τους ενδυνάμωση.

Κεντρικό στοιχείο του πρώτου άξονα αποτελεί το υποστηρικτικό μαθησιακό περιβάλλον και η ικανότητά του να ανταποκρίνεται στις ιδιαίτερες ανάγκες των ενηλίκων. Η έρευνα των Kontogianni and Tatsis (2019) δείχνει ότι οι ενήλικες μαθητές μπορούν να αναπτύξουν απαιτητικές γνωστικές δεξιότητες όταν συμμετέχουν σε κατάλληλα σχεδιασμένες δραστηριότητες, παρότι δυσκολεύονται σε σύνθετες μορφές σκέψης. Ακόμη, οι Kiprianos and Mpourgos (2025) επισημαίνουν ότι η εμπειρία της σχολικής αποτυχίας αφήνει βαθιά σημάδια στη μαθησιακή ταυτότητα, γεγονός που καθιστά απαραίτητη τη δημιουργία ενός πλαισίου ασφάλειας και αποδοχής στα προγράμματα δεύτερης ευκαιρίας. Σε αντίστοιχο πνεύμα, διαπιστώνεται ότι στοχευμένες παρεμβάσεις, όπως τα προγράμματα ενισχυτικής

μάθησης, μπορούν να ενισχύσουν σημαντικά τόσο τις γνωστικές όσο και τις κοινωνικοσυναισθηματικές δεξιότητες μαθητών και ενηλίκων, ιδιαίτερα σε μειονεκτικά περιβάλλοντα (Grigoroiu et al., 2024). Επιπλέον, από άλλη έρευνα αναδεικνύεται ότι οι νέοι ενήλικες διαμορφώνουν τα κίνητρα συμμετοχής τους μέσα από τις προσδοκίες αλλαγής στη ζωή τους και μέσα από την ποιότητα της εκπαιδευτικής εμπειρίας που βιώνουν (Papadimitriou, 2024). Τέλος, οι Mbatha and Khohliso (2025) δείχνουν ότι για τα άτομα που έχουν βιώσει αποκλεισμό, η εκπαιδευτική διαδικασία μπορεί να λειτουργήσει αποτελεσματικά μόνο όταν υπερκεράζονται θεσμικά εμπόδια και διαμορφώνονται υποστηρικτικές στάσεις από το εκπαιδευτικό περιβάλλον.

Ο δεύτερος θεματικός άξονας εξετάζει την εκπαίδευση ενηλίκων από κοινωνιολογική και θεσμική σκοπιά, με έμφαση στη σχέση της με την κοινωνική ένταξη, την απασχολησιμότητα και τις δημόσιες πολιτικές. Η συστηματική ανασκόπηση των Abad et al. (2025) καταδεικνύει ότι τα προγράμματα δεύτερης ευκαιρίας λειτουργούν ως πολυδιάστατοι μηχανισμοί κοινωνικής επανένταξης, προωθώντας δεξιότητες, αυτογνωσία και πρόσβαση στην αγορά εργασίας για άτομα από ευάλωτα περιβάλλοντα. Παράλληλα, αναδεικνύεται πως τα προγράμματα εκπαίδευσης ενηλίκων μπορούν να ενισχύσουν ουσιαστικά τις κοινωνικές, οικονομικές και τεχνολογικές δυνατότητες των συμμετεχόντων, αν και η αποτελεσματικότητά τους εξαρτάται από τη θεσμική υποστήριξη, τον σχεδιασμό και τους διαθέσιμους πόρους (Ambaw et al., 2025).

Από κοινωνική άποψη, η εκπαίδευση ενηλίκων συμβάλλει σημαντικά στη μείωση αποκλεισμών. Ο Bäckman (2017) δείχνει ότι η επιστροφή στην εκπαίδευση μετά από μαθητική διαρροή μειώνει τον κίνδυνο μελλοντικής παραβατικότητας, επιβεβαιώνοντας τον ρόλο της μάθησης ως μοχλού κοινωνικής σταθερότητας. Σε παρόμοιο πλαίσιο, τεκμηριώνεται ότι η δεύτερη ευκαιρία ενδυναμώνει ευάλωτους ενήλικες μέσα από την αναδόμηση των εμπειριών τους, την ενίσχυση του κοινωνικού κεφαλαίου και την ανάπτυξη δεξιοτήτων γραμματισμού (Papaioannou & Gravani, 2018). Οι Ramsdal and Wynn (2021) προσθέτουν ότι η επανένταξη στην εκπαίδευση οδηγεί βαθμιαία σε ενίσχυση της εσωτερικής κινητοποίησης και αναπλαισίωση των επαγγελματικών στόχων.

Η διά βίου μάθηση συνδέεται επίσης με δομικούς παράγοντες κοινωνικής ένταξης. Σε έρευνα επισημαίνεται ότι ο ψηφιακός αποκλεισμός συνιστά ζήτημα κοινωνικών δικαιωμάτων, με άμεσες επιπτώσεις στην πρόσβαση σε εκπαίδευση και εργασία (Sanders & Scanlon, 2021). Ακόμη, φαίνεται ότι η συμμετοχή ενηλίκων μεταναστών στην εκπαίδευση εξαρτάται από θεσμικές ευκαιρίες, νομικούς περιορισμούς και τις διαδρομές ζωής πριν και μετά τη μετανάστευση (Söhn, 2016). Τέλος, καταγράφεται ότι η ανάγκη για δεύτερη ευκαιρία διαμορφώνεται τόσο από προσωπικά κίνητρα όσο και από κοινωνικές συνθήκες, αναδεικνύοντας τον ρόλο της εκπαίδευσης ως μέσου αποκατάστασης και κοινωνικής επανένταξης (Taka, 2023).

Ένα από τα βασικά πλεονεκτήματα της συγκεκριμένης μελέτης είναι η αξιοποίηση πολλαπλών βιβλιομετρικών εργαλείων και τεχνικών, τα οποία επιτρέπουν την αποτύπωση θεματικών προτύπων που δύσκολα αναδεικνύονται μέσω συμβατικών ανασκοπήσεων. Η χρήση της ανάλυσης συν-εμφάνισης λέξεων-κλειδιών παρέχει πρόσβαση στη λογική με την οποία η διεθνής βιβλιογραφία οργανώνει τις έννοιες και τις προτεραιότητές της, ενώ η χαρτογράφηση που έγινε επέτρεψε την αναγνώριση των κυρίαρχων ερευνητικών κατευθύνσεων στο πεδίο της εκπαίδευσης δεύτερης ευκαιρίας. Ωστόσο, δεν λείπουν οι περιορισμοί. Η χρήση μίας μόνο βάσης δεδομένων (Scopus), καθώς και η αποκλειστική εστίαση στην αγγλόφωνη βιβλιογραφία, ενδέχεται να έχουν περιορίσει την αντιπροσωπευτικότητα των ευρημάτων. Παρά το γεγονός ότι η ονομασία και η ερμηνεία των συστάδων ενέχει αναπόφευκτα έναν βαθμό υποκειμενικότητας, καθώς βασίζεται στη θεωρητική κρίση και στις ερμηνευτικές επιλογές των ερευνητών, η μεθοδολογική

προσέγγιση εξακολουθεί να αποτελεί αξιόπιστο εργαλείο για την ανάδειξη μακροσκοπικών θεματικών τάσεων.

5. Συμπεράσματα

Συμπερασματικά, τα αποτελέσματα της βιβλιομετρικής ανάλυσης δείχνουν ότι η έρευνα για την εκπαίδευση δεύτερης ευκαιρίας συγκροτείται γύρω από δύο συμπληρωματικούς θεματικούς άξονες: την ατομική μαθησιακή εμπειρία και τις κοινωνικές και θεσμικές διαστάσεις της εκπαίδευσης. Η συνεξέταση αυτών των δύο οπτικών αναδεικνύει τη βαθιά πολυπλοκότητα του πεδίου, όπου η προσωπική ανάπτυξη του ενήλικα εκπαιδευομένου συνδέεται άμεσα με τις πολιτικές δεξιοτήτων, τις ευκαιρίες επαγγελματικής εξέλιξης και τους μηχανισμούς κοινωνικής ένταξης. Η χαρτογράφηση των συστάδων καθιστά σαφές ότι η εκπαίδευση ενηλίκων δεν μπορεί να νοηθεί μονοδιάστατα: αποτελεί ταυτόχρονα χώρο μετασχηματισμού και εργαλείο άρσης ανισοτήτων. Η μελέτη, επομένως, συμβάλλει στην κατανόηση των κυρίαρχων ερευνητικών κατευθύνσεων της τελευταίας δεκαετίας και προσφέρει ένα συνεκτικό πλαίσιο αναφοράς για μελλοντικές έρευνες που επιδιώκουν να γεφυρώσουν τις μικρο-εμπειρίες της μάθησης με τις μακρο-κοινωνικές δομές που τη διαμορφώνουν.

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REVISITING THE PAST

Rosa Parks: A life in a day

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It was 70 years ago, on December 1st, 1955, when a seamstress returning home from work, decided to change the world. Rosa Parks – or Rosa Louise McCauley Parks, as was her full name, an African American seamstress, refused to give up her seat on a bus to a white man, as was then required by law in Montgomery, Alabama. This act marked the beginning of a major mobilization within the Black community of the area against the policy of racial segregation.

Once the bus taking her home from work filled up – with black passengers seated and white passengers left standing – Parks was expected to comply with the driver's instruction and give up her seat to a white person, in accordance with segregation laws. Rosa Parks refused. The driver subsequently called the police, who arrested her. A few days later she was sentenced to pay a fine, which she never did. This event led to the founding of the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA) on December 5th, 1955, by Black ministers and community members, with Martin Luther King Jr. as its leader – who would later become the symbol of the civil rights movement. The MIA decided to organize a bus boycott – a campaign that lasted nearly a year, until the Supreme Court ruled segregation laws unconstitutional. On December 20th, 1956, by court order, bus seating was integrated.

Rosa Parks' contribution is considered profoundly significant, and today she stands as a symbol of the civil rights movement. Bus no. 2857 is preserved at the Henry Ford Museum, with the fifth seat on the left side permanently commemorating that pivotal moment in the struggle for equality for Black citizens in the U.S. The rest, as they say, is history – but a history that ties the civil rights movement to adult education. As she later stated: "People always say that I didn't give up my seat because I was tired, but that isn't true. I was not tired physically... No, the only tired I was, was tired of giving in."

The connection to adult education comes through the Highlander Folk School. As later became known, Rosa Parks – following the encouragement of civil rights advocate Virginia Durr – had attended, just a few months earlier, in August 1955, a two-week workshop on civil and labor rights at the Highlander Folk School. Highlander is part of a broader legacy on both sides of the Atlantic – through which adult education theorists and activists have sought to promote civic learning and contribute to people's empowerment. This wider movement can be traced back to the late nineteenth century, when universities began to open themselves to society primarily through extension courses and extramural activities. A little later, activists – often with a theological background – such as Albert Mansbridge (co-founder in 1903 of the Workers' Educational Association - WEA), Basil Yeaxlee, and other key figures of the *Great Tradition* in the UK, alongside Eduard Lindeman and Myles Horton in the U.S., carved out pathways linking theology to labor and social rights. In subsequent decades, political movements would ground their action on civic education – particularly for those who had not had the opportunity to be educated at the socially prescribed age. Adult education became the channel for citizen empowerment. Education, in this sense, is the understanding of society and its structures – the development of critical consciousness about the forces that have shaped people to settle for less than what human dignity demands – and, ultimately, the empowerment that leads to informed and reflective action. This is exactly what a seamstress in Montgomery did when she claimed her rights.

The Highlander Folk School was founded in 1932 by activist Myles Horton, educator Don West, and Methodist minister James Dombrowski. Myles Horton is considered one of the most iconic figures in adult education. He is widely known for his dialogical book with Paulo Freire,

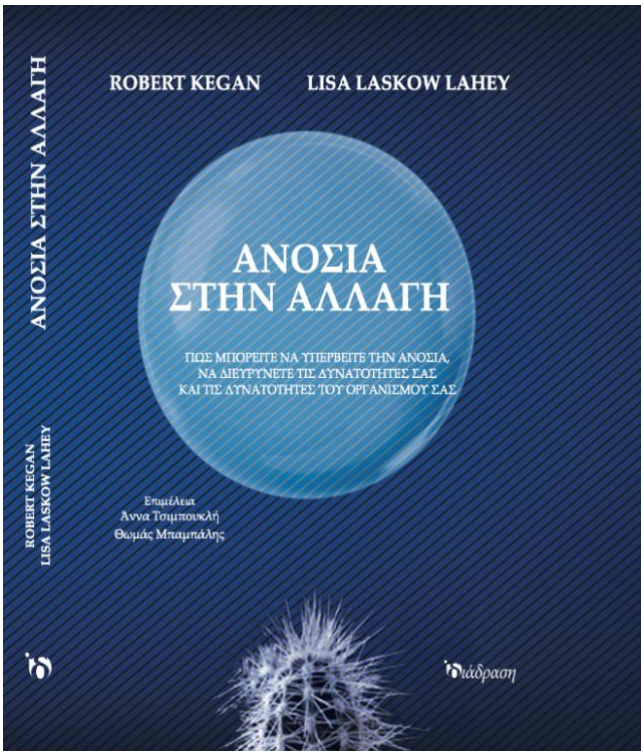
We Make the Road by Walking: Conversations on Education and Social Change, as well as his autobiographical book with Judith and Herbert Kohl, *The Long Haul: An Autobiography*. It's worth noting that Horton was deeply influenced by his studies at the Union Theological Seminary in New York and by the Scandinavian tradition of adult education, following his visit to Denmark with Don West to study the Folk High Schools model.

It is also worth noting that, in 1961, the Highlander Folk School was shut down by the State of Tennessee due to its strong involvement in the Civil Rights Movement. It was immediately re-established and continues to operate today as the Highlander Research and Education Center. To this day, it is regarded as one of the most emblematic adult education institutions globally – an institution that has brought to life the words often attributed to Paulo Freire: "Education does not change the world. Education changes people. People change the world."

And when people choose to take responsibility for transforming their own lives – and the lives of those around them – perhaps the troubled and turbulent times we are living through may, in time, be left behind.

ΒΙΒΛΙΟΠΑΡΟΥΣΙΑΣΗ: «ΑΝΟΣΙΑ ΣΤΗΝ ΑΛΛΑΓΗ»

Κατερίνα Κεδράκα, Καθηγήτρια ΔΠΘ και Μέλος ΣΕΠ στο ΕΑΠ



Robert Kegan & Lisa Laskow (2025). *Ανοσία στην Αλλαγή* (Επιμέλεια: Άννα Τσιμπουκλή, Θωμάς Μπαμπάλης). Εκδόσεις: Διάδραση.

Το βιβλίο «Ανοσία στην Αλλαγή» των Robert Kegan και Lisa Laskow Lahey που επιμελήθηκαν για την Ελληνική έκδοση, οι Άννα Τσιμπουκλή και Θωμάς Μπαμπάλης, από το ΠΤΔΕ του ΕΚΠΑ, έρχεται να καλύψει ένα κενό στο πεδίο της Εκπαίδευσης Ενηλίκων στην Ελλάδα από την οπτική της ψυχολογίας των ενήλικων ατόμων. Οι συγγραφείς, Εκπαιδευτές Ενηλίκων και Ψυχολόγοι, στο Πανεπιστήμιο του Harvard, επιβεβαιώνουν με τη θεωρία τους μία βασική θέση της θεωρίας μετασχηματισμών του Jack Mezirow. Ο άνθρωπος έχει την ικανότητα να αλλάζει σε όλη τη διάρκεια της ζωής του. Η ανάπτυξη δεν σταματά στην εφηβεία.

Οι συγγραφείς εισάγουν για πρώτη φορά την έννοια «ανοσία στην αλλαγή» για να αναδείξουν ότι η ανάγκη για αλλαγή συναντά εσωτερικά εμπόδια. Οι ρίζες των εμποδίων μπορούν να αναζητηθούν σε παραδοχές του παρελθόντος, αλλά η αναγνώριση και μόνο των στρεβλών αυτών παραδοχών δεν αρκεί. Χρειάζεται ένα επιπλέον βήμα αναγνώρισης των συχνά αντικρουόμενων επιθυμιών και συναισθημάτων που θέτουν εμπόδια στην αλλαγή. Η διάγνωση, η μέθοδος αντιμετώπισης και τα επιτυχημένα παραδείγματα αλλαγής παρουσιάζονται στο

βιβλίο σε τρία μέρη και έντεκα κεφάλαια. Στο πρώτο μέρος του βιβλίου, οι συγγραφείς εστιάζουν στη δυνατότητα που έχουν οι άνθρωποι να μαθαίνουν και να εξελίσσονται δια βίου υποστηρίζοντας ως πρώτο στάδιο την ανάγκη κατανόησης των γνωστικών και συναισθηματικών διεργασιών που θέτουν εμπόδια αλλαγής. Στο δεύτερο μέρος, παρουσιάζονται μελέτες περιπτώσεις και απτά παραδείγματα, από την εφαρμογή μίας δομημένης μεθόδου τεσσάρων σταδίων μετασχηματισμού των παραδοχών, σε διάφορα οργανωσιακά πλαίσια τα οποία περιλαμβάνουν από φαρμακευτικές εταιρείες και νοσοκομεία έως ακαδημαϊκά ιδρύματα και δημόσιους φορείς. Στο τρίτο μέρος του βιβλίου, μέσα από συγκεκριμένες δραστηριότητες και παραδείγματα που αξιοποιούνται στο πεδίο της Εκπαίδευσης Ενηλίκων προτρέπουν σε δοκιμή στην πράξη με αφετηρία παραδοχές, συναισθήματα και την επιθυμία για αλλαγή που κάθε άτομο φέρει.

Το βιβλίο των Kegan και Lahey προσφέρει, συνεπώς, μια νέα «μέθοδο μάθησης» που υποστηρίζει ότι η αλλαγή μπορεί να συμβεί μέσα από την παράλληλη επεξεργασία των νοητικών σχημάτων και των συναισθημάτων που προκαλούν τόσο στο ατομικό όσο και στο ομαδικό και οργανωσιακό επίπεδο. Στη διάρκεια αυτής της επεξεργασίας, είτε πρόκειται για άτομα, είτε για ομάδες και οργανισμούς, το ασυνείδητο γίνεται συνειδητό, οι δυσλειτουργικές παραδοχές αναδύονται ως μοχλοί μετασχηματισμού και σημαντικές αλλαγές μπορούν να συμβούν σε διάφορους τομείς της ζωής. Οι Kegan και Lahey υποστηρίζουν ότι υπάρχει μια εσωτερική δυναμική που κρατάει τους ανθρώπους καθηλωμένους. Παράλληλα, όμως, οι άνθρωποι μπορούν να ανακαλύψουν τα ασυνείδητα κίνητρα και τις βαθύτερες πεποιθήσεις που τους εμποδίζουν να κάνουν τις επιθυμητές αλλαγές. Ωστόσο, για τους περισσότερους ανθρώπους, η συνειδητοποίηση της ανάγκης για αλλαγή από μόνη της δεν είναι αρκετή για να επιφέρει μόνιμες αλλαγές. Χρειάζονται υποστήριξη για να ανακαλύψουν ένα νέο σύστημα νοηματοδότησης της ζωής τους αλλά και να υπερβούν τα «εμπόδια μετασχηματισμού». Στην πορεία αυτής της μετάβασης προς την αλλαγή, οι συγγραφείς, ως έμπειροι Εκπαιδευτές Ενηλίκων, αναγνωρίζουν ότι μαθαίνουν και οι ίδιοι από τους εκπαιδευόμενους τους και την εκπαιδευτική διαδικασία. Εξάλλου, ο Robert Kegan και η Lisa Laskow Lahey δεν έχουν σταματήσει ποτέ τη δουλειά τους στο πεδίο της Εκπαίδευσης Ενηλίκων και της Ανάπτυξης Ανθρώπινου Δυναμικού. Ο Robert Kegan, Ψυχολόγος, Καθηγητής Εκπαίδευσης Ενηλίκων και Επαγγελματικής Ανάπτυξης στο Πανεπιστήμιο του Harvard και η Lisa Laskow Lahey, Αναπτυξιακή Ψυχολόγος, Παιδαγωγός και Λέκτορας στην Παιδαγωγική Σχολή του Πανεπιστημίου του Harvard, συνεργάζονται περισσότερα από 30 χρόνια στην ανάπτυξη ατόμων, ομάδων και οργανισμών με στόχο την επίτευξη της αλλαγής και το βιβλίο τους «Ανοσία στην Αλλαγή» είναι αποτέλεσμα αυτής της συνεχούς αλληλεπίδρασης με άτομα, ομάδες και

οργανισμούς από όλο τον κόσμο. Η έκδοση του βιβλίου στα Ελληνικά ελπίζουμε ότι θα ανοίξει ένα νέο κύκλο συζήτησης όπου η οπτική της Εκπαίδευσης Ενηλίκων θα προσεγγιστεί και από την οπτική της ψυχολογίας των ατόμων, των ομάδων και των οργανισμών.