

STATE OF THE PLAY REPORT – NATIONAL REPORT OVERVIEW

Quality TWG – AUTH

Aims of the report

- To contextualise the case studies.
- To serve as a basis and contextualisation for analysing constraints and barriers as required under WP 4 (e.g. to understand why it could be easier to transfer research results outside university; to apply research results e.g. on other LLL education fields.
- To contextualise the recommendations.

Structure

1. Methodology

Explain how this report has been done: perception of one or few persons ...

This report was compiled based on Lifelong Learning legal and policy documents from the late 1990s until today as well as the experience of academic staff in AUTH and literature relevant to quality assurance in higher education in Greece.

2. Facts and Figures on LLL and ULLL

Definition of ULLL in your country (Formal, Informal, CPD...)

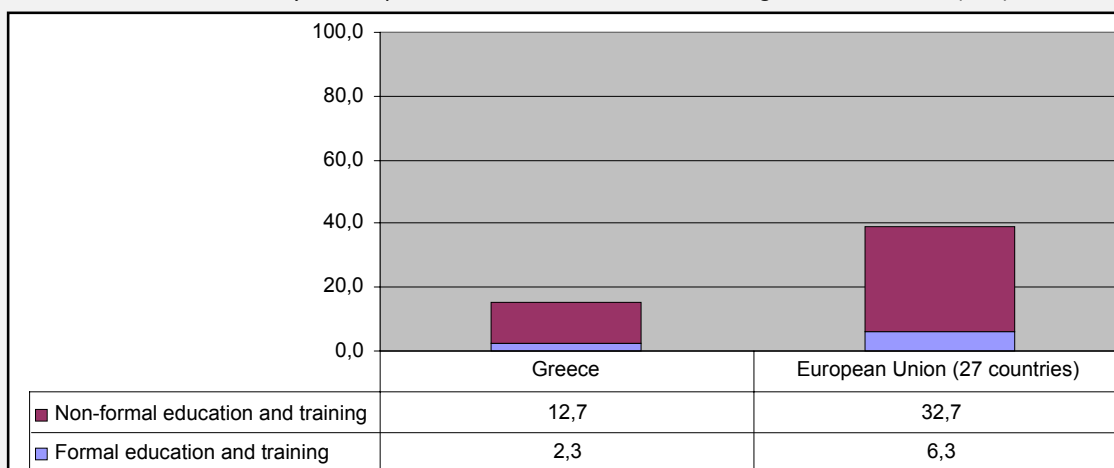
Definition of the theme in your country

Eurostat figures or other authoritative statistical data

Debates about LLL in Greece began in 1996 with 'the European year for LLL'. The year for LLL was a significant landmark for promoting its concept and practice in Greece by raising awareness and initiating a dialogue amongst social partners, including the universities. By then, considerable attention had been given to education and training, but there was almost nothing concerning the core aspects and complexities of LLL. The basic message was to stress the need for LLL, not simply as a new form or a new method of education, but as an inevitable consequence and tool for the survival of individuals, groups and even States in the information society. The main point of most literature was that learning in the 21st century should be understood as a lifelong process. The problem however was how to invent mechanisms by which that process could be achieved for all. The various conferences, seminars and other activities for the year of LLL were organised primarily by the General Secretariat of Further Education of the Ministry of Education and dealt with topics such as providing incentives for young people aged 14 to 19 who had abandoned their studies; providing new forms of education and training for the long term unemployed or those threatened by unemployment; raising parents' awareness of the importance of LLL for their children; urging social partners and firms to participate in LLL programmes; providing incentives for the participation of working adults in programmes of continuing or recurrent education.

Under the first seminal Law 3369/2005 (Official Journal 171/ Issue A'/06.07.2005) on 'Systematisation of Lifelong Learning and Other Regulations', the operation of the already operating bodies-providers of adult education and training as well as of the newly-founded bodies (such as the Lifelong Learning Institutes that never operated) is systematised and integrated into the rubric of a coherent institutional framework for LLL¹. This law also defines the lifelong education as an activity across people's life-span aiming at both the acquisition and the improvement of general and scientific knowledge, skills and competencies as well as personal development and employability. Little progress however has been done since 2005.

Adult Education Survey: Participation rate in education and training, Source Eurostat (AES) 2007.



LLL is a newcomer to Greek higher education, but there is now a movement in its favour in the universities. This is the result of a top-down government policy within a general framework for wider educational reform, but it is not clear yet how far it has been taken on board by the universities as a matter of strategy². The policy in its present form has only been in operation for the last year or so (since September 2010 with the Law 3879/2010). It is financed primarily by the EU and has both positive and negative implications. On the positive side, the revenues from the EU act as an incentive for many university departments and academics to become involved³. On the negative side, those who see no benefit in engaging in such courses are reluctant to participate and many question their value and survival. But it seems that LLL is here to stay. Indeed, everything indicates that it will gain momentum in the immediate future. The traditionalists and those who oppose reform have no convincing arguments or alternative proposals and they have no answer as to what must be done in the face of rapid socio-economic change. LLL as a concept and as an educational policy remains fuzzy and continues to mean different things to different people. Certainly, its deeper educational philosophical and social implications have not been clarified or even discussed in the literature. Hence, many opponents see the new programmes as a policy imposed by international organisations

and governments to serve the needs of the free market. This is perhaps more evident today with the economic crisis. Related to this is the criticism that LLL is simply a training tool, which is not really what university education is about. Hence, they see its introduction as an erosion of university autonomy and a threat to its standards.

INSTITUTIONAL AUTONOMY OF GREEK HEIs					
INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE	STAFF	STUDENTS	FINANCE	EDUCATION	RESEARCH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Legal Status - Own infra-structure - Commercialization of activities - Parameters for internal decision – making including freedom to set up internal governance structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Selection appointment and dismissal of academic staff - Academic career structure - Career advancement - Working conditions (e.g. salaries) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Selection of students - Number of students enrolling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Set and differentiate tuition fees - Borrow funds on capital markets - Allocate funds as the institution sees fit. - Income generating activities - Right to build up a portfolio of assets and to accumulate financial capital 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supply of Programmes, including their accreditation - Design curriculum - Contents of courses - Modes of instruction and delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Design research - Decide the priorities of research

Others who follow the lead emanating from the rhetoric of the literature of international organisations and governments talk of LLL as a panacea for all social, economic and even political problems. This leads to the conclusion that extensive research on its various aspects and ramifications which will allow for in-depth discussion and understanding of the problems and the possibilities involved is now urgently needed. A general conclusion is that the introduction and the operation of LLL available in Greek universities is bound to be affected by the fact that the educational system at large is highly centralised and state controlled at all levels. Due to historical political developments in modern Greece, education, and higher education in particular, have been subject to political influence, if not control. This is still true and includes the universities which, despite their constitutional autonomy, cannot really initiate independent reform. They are aware of the need for reform in view of the cosmogonic changes which are taking place in contemporary society. Official educational provision, however, must be provided within a strict legal framework and be approved by the government. All courses must be approved by the Ministry of Education, as must the appointment of the regular members of staff working in the official system. Any educational reform follows a top-down process with the government as the initiator. In this context, the government has tried to introduce LLL in higher education within its general programme of reform of higher education. The legislation introduced in the last five years (first with the Law 3369/2005 and then with

the Law 3879/2010 and more recently with the Law 4009/2011 that stipulates the operational structure for all HE institutions), and the last two in particular, points clearly to favourable conditions for LLL provision. It must be emphasised, however, that the reforms and LLL as a form of education provision are a response to the demand for mass education and immediate socio-economic problems rather than a well thought out, long term strategy based on sound educational considerations.

A major development in the functioning of LLL at university level was the creation of the Hellenic Open University (EAP)⁴. It is gathering momentum and shows good prospects for LLL. Details of its organisational and administrative structure are developed by Lykourgiotis (1998, pp. 125±155).

In general terms and although there is still lack of a cohesive ULLL strategy the current policy trends in ULLL in Greece address the following issues as these appear in the newly established Law 4009/2011: Internationalization; Flexibility in curricula design; Strategic Planning; Self-Diversity; Market opportunities; Diversification of Institutions.

3. The legal context for the thematic practice (on Quality)

- a. Current
- b. New one if any
- c. Comparison

The selection and accreditation of adult trainers and executive personnel in adult education in Greece (as is the focus of the case-study) is an open process according to certain criteria. Expressions of interest for all positions are made public via IDEKE's web page and are published in the Press. The Register of adult trainers was to be finalized in the educational period 2008-2009 but it was suspended. At the moment an hourly remuneration rate is given to the trainers according to Ministerial Decision. Trainers' remuneration differs depending on the level of study and experience. In terms of their training the General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning (GSLL) has approved the establishment of the Centre of Lifelong Learning of Adult Trainers - "PLATO" as of 2007. The aim of this Centre is to detect the needs, to plan and develop educational and training activities at national and regional level. The Centre is expected to improve the adult education staff professional development in three levels: The Centre will:

- Provide Quality Initial and Continuing Education to trainers according to the "Common European Framework of Qualifications and Competencies of Teachers and Instructors", and via the determination of concrete measurable objectives;
- Develop a system of collaborative learning amongst trainers;
- Improve the efficiency at the level of administration and management.

This program will be combined with other relevant actions such as the creation of a common Register of Adult Instructors for their continuous evaluation, according to the National System of Quality Assurance and Evaluation. Those courses will be attended both by trainers and staff of the GSLL as well as by trainers of the Organization of Initial Vocational Training (OEEK).

Finally, the National Accreditation Centre for Continuing Vocational Training (EKEPIS) had developed and applied a System of Certification of Adult Instructors certifying more than 6.000 instructors up to the end of 2007. This System was enacted in 2001 with a Ministerial Decision (Ministry of Labour and Social Security). EKEPIS is currently working on the specifications of qualifications in 65 professions, as well as in the process of knowledge certification. These job descriptions will include the title, the definition and the analysis of profession or expertise, namely the necessary knowledge, skills and competencies in order to correspond worker's skills with the specifications of a particular profession or expertise. Emphasis is given on the ways, processes and means, so that the required vocational specifications can be achieved. In the list of vocational outlines the new profile of adult trainer is also included.

4. The current implementation of this legal framework

The National Framework focuses on both programme evaluation and the accreditation of learning outcomes. Its aim is to improve and monitor quality of educational practice across all Adult Learning and Education Providers in Greece (more than 470 ALE units including the Universities' CVET centres). According to the Greek framework each Adult Learning and Education Provider (ALEP) designs and implements self-evaluation procedures for its programs following national program evaluation standards and procedures. In addition, audit procedures are carried out by external evaluators in all 13 regions of the country to ensure accountability and quality improvement. The main mechanisms, which are used to monitor and evaluate Adult Learning Education (ALE) programs in order to ensure quality, are:

- The evaluation procedures of ALE operation (administrational procedures, management and leadership, resources and outcomes/educational pathways);
- The quality of the educational process (teaching methods, training packages and contents, learner assessment model, teacher evaluation procedures and training, etc.);
- The assessment of learning outcomes.

More specifically the GSLL is now developing a National Competency Framework (NCF) to assess learner achievements and performance (mainly in the Second Chance Schools and the Centres for Adult Education). Overall six key competencies (i.e. organizational, technical, cultural, personal, civic, communicative) have been developed to capture the Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes adult learners acquire after their training in each individual program. Finally, the NCF assess and recognizes prior learning.

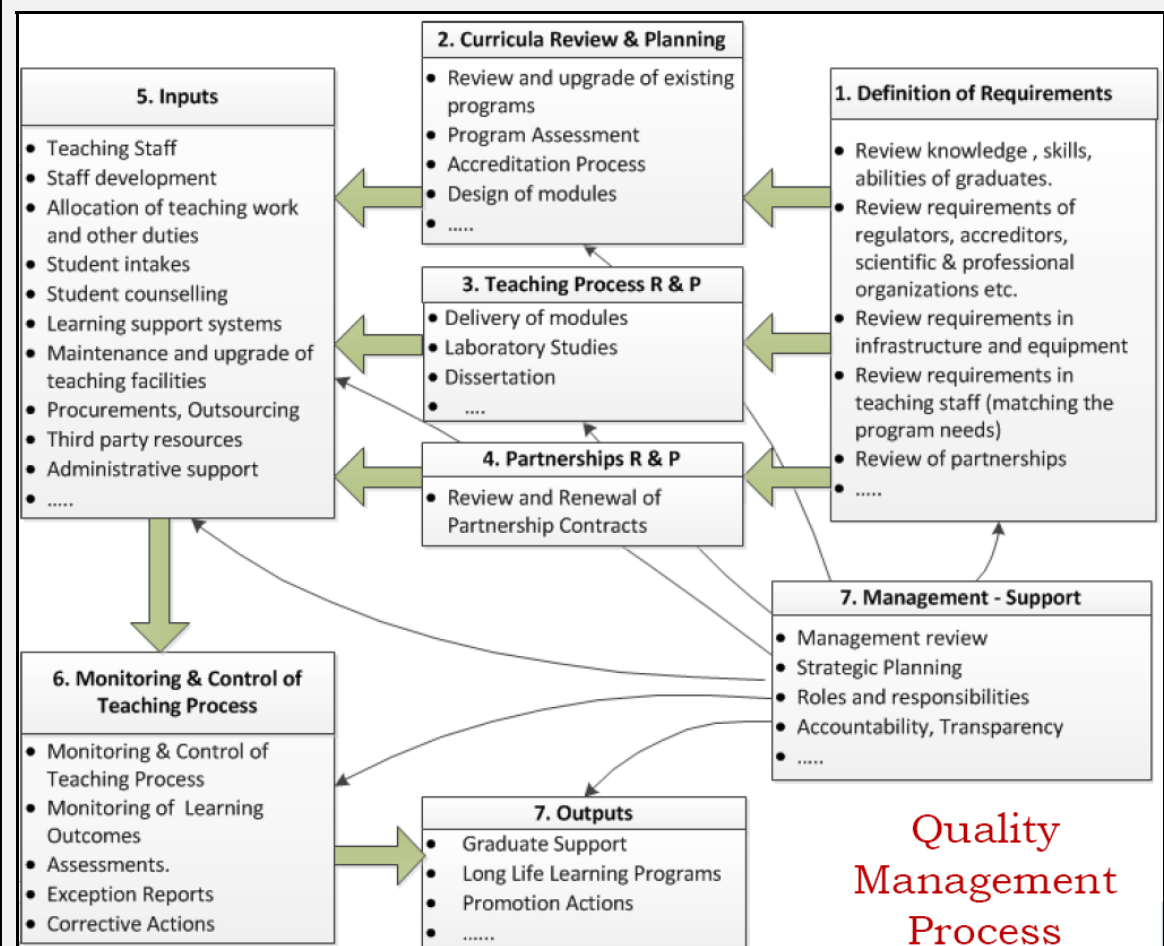
5. The legal framework for the thematic research (on Quality)

There is only the Law 3374/2005 on 'Quality assurance in HE and development of a credit transfer system that defines the framework for the thematic research on quality in HE.

6. The current implementation of this legal framework

2006: Quality Assurance is made mandatory for all HEIs (in agreement with the Bologna Process)

- The Hellenic Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (HQAA) is established (www.hqaa.gr).
- HEIs establish Quality Assurance Units within each institution.
- Oversee and co-ordinate the QA process and perform assessments at an institutional level.
- Departments form 'Self-Assessment Workgroups'.
- A self-assessment study is issued every four years, followed by an external peer review
- Aims: Accountability (department, institution, government), Transparency, Quality improvements.
- Current progress: 50% of HEI departments have established QA process.



7. Practical links between Research and Practice on the thematic

How is it applied?

In responding to the European Commission's Memorandum on Higher Education in the European Community (1991), the Committee of the Rectors of Greek Universities (1992) seemed ambivalent on the matter at that stage. They were in favour of the idea 'that education is open to all as a right as a means of cultivating the development of personality and securing a satisfactory level of life and employment.' But they commented that 'Securing this right is possible only if the existing economic and social obstacles are abolished and if education becomes accessible to all on equal terms.' They believed that socio-economic and technological change and the consequent growing demand for continuing education would, sooner rather than later, generate political initiatives at national or EU level which may lead: a) to a unification of post-compulsory education in a wide and multifaceted sector of vocational and non-vocational training and b) to the creation of mechanisms and procedures of access to the various forms of educational provision and a gradually unified sector with 'jumping' from one form and from one grade of education to another. The pressures for mutual recognition, the credit transfer system, distance learning and the Open University are part of this development, which, the rectors realise, the universities cannot eschew. The demand for continuing education poses an urgent need for the universities to re-examine and redefine their role in post-compulsory education. Hence, the problem for the universities is how to participate and at the same time retain their specificity and their historical role. This implies the re-examination of disciplines and curricula and the methods of delivering them at both undergraduate and post-graduate level and the relationship between teaching and research. It necessitates new partnerships with other providers of post-compulsory education so that university level education can be offered to ever-widening sectors of the population without this being at the expense of scientific standards. Although the rectors and the academic community have not dealt seriously with the issue of LLL as such, they do recognise that the universities are in the midst of a crisis.

Relevant sources

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Endnotes

¹ Other basic legislation regulating education affairs that has affected or is affecting adult education is as follows:

- Law 2983/92, Article 27 'Hellenic Open University – HOU'.
- Law 2327/1995 stipulates the establishment of the Institute for Permanent Education of Adults (ΙΔΕΚΕ/ΙΔΕΚΕ).
- Law 2525/1997 establishes Second Chance Schools (SDE) attended by adults who have not completed compulsory education and who are granted a qualification equivalent to the one obtained after successful completion of Lower secondary (or primary) Education.
- Law 3191/2003 stipulates the establishment of the National System for Linking Vocational Education and Training with Employment (ΕΣΣΕΕΚΑ/ΕΣΣΕΕΚΑ).
- The Law 3577/2007 defines the decision-making bodies with regards to technical and developmental works implemented in the area of LLL.
- The Law 3879/2010 stipulates the development of an overall Lifelong Learning strategy (including HE).
- The Law 4009/2011 which stipulates the operational structure and quality assurance of Higher Education Institutions was (and still is) a very controversial law that has come in effect only very recently, but the results of its application are still under question for Universities refuse to apply it in practice as it disputes certain academic freedoms.

² LLL was introduced in Greek universities to respond to the urgent problem of the very high demand for access to higher education (PSE). The aim of PSE was to contribute to the flexibility of the universities and the Higher Technological Institutions (TEI) and offer places, within 3 to 5 years, to some 160,000 pupils who sought access to higher education (Magoula, 1998). In September 1998 seven universities launched PSE courses in the human sciences, four in the natural sciences, two in economics and management, two in technological subjects and three in environment sciences. Some, however, did not operate according to plan, mainly because of opposition by staff and students. According to a list of PSE provided by the Ministry of Education, ten programmes (1,868 students) in five universities and 15 programmes (2,878 students) in eight TEI were in operation in the academic year 1999±2000. So there are 4,746 students out of 6,750 candidates attending these programmes. Following Law 2752/1999, the government seems determined to promote these programmes, both in TEI and in the universities. This will entail substantial change in the higher education system, as many of these programmes involve more than one department and in many cases more than one institution. Tensions grew concerning the relationship between conventional and LLL degrees and the status of TEI and universities. Higher education institutions were also invited by the Ministry of Education to submit proposals of distance learning courses to ΕΠΕΑΕΚ (1997) in order to select those which could be used as models for further planning and policy making in this area. Priority was given to: informatics, communications and other technological areas, with the use of information technology, environment studies, economics, business administration and public administration, regional development, European and international studies, pedagogic science, nursing, pharmacology, human and social sciences, social care and security, Greek language and foreign languages, and tourist development.

³ In the last ten years twelve universities out of eighteen have established Centres of Vocational Training (ΚΕΚ). These are: The Metsovio National Technological University, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences, University of Patras, University of the Aegean, University of Thessaly, University of Makedonia, University of Ioannina, Economic University of Athens, Economic University of Piraeus, Agricultural University of Athens, and Technological University of Crete. Six are accredited to provide education and training that aim to combat social exclusion in the context of the Community Support Framework (KPS) programme. The universities' ΚΕΚs are defined as regional centres which are free to choose the content of their courses. They mainly offer short courses and provide training in the primary and the secondary sector in management, informatics and multimedia, culture, sports, communication, environment, tourism, etc. Their purpose is to provide 'non formal, continuing vocational training of every form of LLL, with specific learning targets, addressed to trainees who belong to the workforce (employed or unemployed) in order to supplement knowledge and skills which have been acquired during general education and professional training including initial training or in the context of previous employment' (Ministerial Decision 111232/12/12/1997, article 1). University ΚΕΚs are free to offer training in any subject of their competence, unlike the ΚΕΚ of other agents which must offer training in areas that are specified by the Ministry of Work and Social Security. Moreover, the Ministry decides the terms and conditions of infrastructure; of teaching and administrative staff; and of quality assurance and control. It is too early to assess the function of university ΚΕΚs, but they are intended to be a substantial part of the infrastructure of university LLL.

⁴ The EAP has started producing its own books and by the end of the year 2000 it will have published over 450. There are already post-graduate courses on distance learning and specialisation courses for teachers of English. In the year 2000, it is launching a major programme of continuing education, a major undergraduate and a major postgraduate programme in the natural sciences, the social sciences, the humanities and technology. Demand, however, by far exceeds supply, since for 4,830 places there were 23,913



applications. So, although admission is, in principle, open to all, at present priority is given to those who do not possess a first degree and are between 23 and 45 years of age. Other criteria include election by lot when all others have been exhausted. But this great demand augurs well for EAP as a major higher education institution specialising in LLL provision.