



**ACTWORK -
ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP AND DECENT WORK**
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RESEARCH ON THE STATE OF THE ART

**An analysis of the current situation, gaps
and needs for young people with fewer
opportunities to access the job market and
social life – GREECE**



ΔΗΜΗΤΡΑ
εκπαιδευτική συμβουλευτική

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INTRODUCTION

The main aim of ACT.Work project is to develop active learning methodologies, pedagogical approaches and training materials especially designed to improve social and civic competencies and the sense of initiative and entrepreneurship of young adults with fewer opportunities. ACT.Work aims to promote the equal opportunities of young adults and to improve their opportunities to get a decent job and promote social entrepreneurship.

The project aims to develop a toolkit (IO1) to support a training program especially created to develop key competences 6 and 7, using an innovative approach to adapt the training method to the special needs of young adults with fewer opportunities.

For the toolkit development, each partner will conduct a desk research on the state of the art with regards to youth unemployment and Key Competences No 6 - Social and Civic competences and 7 - Sense of Initiative and Entrepreneurship.

The aim of the desk research is at first stage, to present the current situation of youth unemployment in each partner-country, and at a second level, to identify and present the methodological documentation and training materials available to teach key competences 6 & 7 and examples of good practices of training programs.

Once the partners' desk reports finalised, they will be used as basic information and starting point to the development of the project's Intellectual Output: Toolkit (IO1).



SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY

General Conditions

Generally speaking, the last six years have been particularly hard for Greeks, as the economy is suffering from a serious and protracted recession. Employment rates have been steadily declining, while unemployment has been continuously rising. A significant and growing proportion of youth, even among those who would have found jobs in good times, are at risk of prolonged unemployment or inactivity, with potentially long-term negative consequences for their careers (Dr. D. Karantinos, National Centre for Social Research (EKKE)).

Greece is in a deep and protracted economic recession. The 2008-2009 global crisis exposed the country's vulnerabilities. Over the past several years, Greece gradually but persistently lost international cost competitiveness. In effect, when the crisis came, Greece was significantly more exposed than others (European Parliament, 2013).

Youth Unemployment

Youth unemployment is becoming increasingly important in political debates across Europe. The importance of youth unemployment can be expressed in terms of three things: (i) the aging of Europe, with constantly decreasing numbers of young people; (ii) the need for increased labour productivity in response to gradually slowing economic growth and the current financial crisis, which requires higher skills and thus longer periods spent in the education system, thus decreasing youth labour force participation; and (iii) the paradoxical fact that youth unemployment is out-growing adult unemployment alongside the decreasing supply of young workers on European labour markets (Tubadji A., 2012).

Greece is particularly affected by youth unemployment and young people were among the hardest hit by the recession. Youth labour force participation in Greece has traditionally been one of the lowest in Europe. According to Eurostat, Youth unemployment rates are generally much higher, even double or more than double, than unemployment rates for all ages. This happens in the context of an old-fashioned education system which struggles to carry on a successful dialogue with the business world and meet its needs (Tubadji A., 2012).

Youth unemployment rate in Greece during the last 4 years is very high (Eurostat):

- **2012:**55,3% (EU-28: 23,3%)
- **2013:**58,3% (EU-28: 23,7%)
- **2014:**52,4% (EU-28: 22,2%)
- **March 2015:** 49,7%

The youth unemployment rate as far as age is concerned is as follows for 2015 (Eurostat):

- **15-19 years old:** 65% unemployed
- **20-24 years old:** 50% unemployed
- **25-29 years old:** 33% unemployed

This reflects the fact that the majority of young aged 15-19 are still engaged full time in education. The unemployment rate¹ in Greece remains stuck at close to its highest level since the onset of the economic crisis (24.4% as of Jan 2016) (National Statistical Service of Greece). In February 2016, the seasonally adjusted youth unemployment rate in Greece was at 48.9 percent. (<http://www.statista.com>). Young people (aged 15-29) remain the hardest hit by the crisis and its aftermath. Rising unemployment rates have also been feeding long-term unemployment (European Parliament, 2013).

During the pre-crisis decade, the involvement of young people in education and training increased by 30 per cent and, as a consequence, more than two-thirds of the youth population were inactive. Therefore, youth unemployment in Greece today is not a product of Greek employment policy alone, but also the result of increasing participation rates in education and training.

The current state of youth unemployment ultimately means that Greek young people – many of whom were previously in education:

- are potential immigrants,
- severe competition for fewer jobs,
- does not vary by education, so both skilled and low skilled people are out of employment
- the longer the absence of the labour market, the more severe is the demotivation in regards to the importance of training and lifelong learning.
- can move from unemployment into inactivity, meaning that they give up looking for a job.

Despite the difficult situation Greece currently faces, especially in terms of youth unemployment, Greek governance is trying to set a number of measures against youth unemployment (targeted specifically at young people in two age categories: 15–24 and 25–35 years of age).

More specifically (Tubadji A., 2012):

- Creation of targeted job opportunities in accordance with young people’s formal qualifications.
- Enhancement of vocational education and training and apprenticeship training with the emphasis on the acquisition of work experience.

¹ In Greece, the unemployment rate measures the number of people actively looking for a job as a percentage of the labour

- Adoption of school-to-work programmes in order to support transition, combined with personal guidance and counseling.
- Vocational and entrepreneurship guidance specifically targeted at young job seekers.
- Support for youth entrepreneurship focusing on new products, services and sectors.

TRAINING OFFER IN KEY COMPETENCE 6: SOCIAL AND CIVIC COMPETENCES

Social Competences:

Social skills include personal, interpersonal and intercultural competence and cover all forms of behaviour that equip individuals to participate in an effective and constructive way in social and working life, and particularly in increasingly diverse societies, and to resolve conflict where necessary (European Reference Framework). Social skills are the skills we use to communicate and interact with each other, both verbally and non-verbally, through gestures, body language and our personal appearance

No matter the importance for an individual developing social skills, currently there is an inadequate level of curricula as far as the development of non-technical skills, (social skills) such as analytical thought, adaptability, decision-making, capability in cooperating, communicating, negotiating etc.

Although social competences are known about and understood by young adults, businesses and representatives of general public, government and most educational institutions appear to be unaware of the competences and ignore them. Social skills are an attractive factor for young people while choosing the industry; however, the educational institutions aren't offering many of such courses.

On the other hand, because of the greater supply of individuals with higher qualifications in the labour market, employers are increasingly relying on the possession of social skills (e.g. communication skills, team-working, problem-solving, interpersonal skills) by young job applicants as a filter for recruitment.

Civic Competences:

A competitive society is characterised by young adults able to engage effectively with others in the public domain, and to display solidarity and interest in solving problems affecting the local and wider community. This means that young adults should have critical and creative reflection and constructive participation in community as well as decision-making at all levels, from local to national and European level, in particular through voting. Furthermore, are having a sense of responsibility, as well as showing understanding of and respect for the shared values that are necessary to ensure community cohesion, such as respect for democratic principles.

No matter the economic crisis, Greek society pays special attention to support the development of more active generations of young adults. Socially active young adults are tackling challenges that

are affecting the local and wider community. This happens due to a variety of training and initiatives Greek society offers.

There are many formal and informal types of youth participation in Greece. It is important to note the variety of bodies for youth representation, supported mainly by the **General Secretariat of Youth** (GSY- <http://www.neagenia.gr>) such as the national and local youth councils, student/university associations, political youth organisations, student councils and youth parliaments (Council of Europe, 2015). The General Secretariat of Youth (GSY), in collaboration with several Municipalities and Prefectures, finances and supports the Network of Youth Information Centres to provide information and services to young people belonging to vulnerable groups of population. Moreover, by financing youth organisations, the GSY enhances youth workers to take actions concerning social inclusion.

The **Hellenic National Youth Council** (ESYN-<http://www.esyn.gr>) represents an independent non-governmental federation of youth organisations. It associates with the Greek government concerning domestic matters and is the official representative of young Greeks in Greece and abroad.

Furthermore, there are **local youth councils** (the first founded in 1997) which are responsible for detecting, highlighting and monitoring youth needs and problems at local level, undertaking initiatives and activities in co-operation with local administrations, as well as advocating measures to ensure the active and effective participation of young people (Council of Europe, 2015). Specifically, they empower the voice of young men and women between 15 and 28 invite them to get active, be heard and have a say over local things. Participation in a Local Youth Council offers young adults the opportunity for a wide range of activities and initiatives-youth and cultural issues, governments and politics.

Last but not least, various youth-oriented European programmes have been implemented in Greece in recent years, including the **Mediterranean Office for Youth, Youth in Action, the European Youth card** etc. No matter the various youth-oriented initiatives and programmes, in Greece, the level of youth awareness, information and participation in EU programmes is relatively low and needs further attention (Council of Europe, 2015).



MATERIALS AVAILABLE

Training offer on Key Competence No 6: Social and Civic Competences (*seminars, initiatives, materials etc.*):

SOCIAL COMPETENCES

- a. **Communication Skills Training Program** – 2 months (<http://www.seminaria.gr>)
 - *Topics:* Basic communication skills, effective communication, Active listening, body language, Emotional Intelligence, negotiation skills, Sympathy & Empathy, Confidence.
- b. **Emotional Intelligence – The secret of efficiency training workshop** – 16 hours (www.g-training.gr)
 - *Aim:* To develop and/or empower the emotional intelligence of the participants
- c. **Basic Principles of assertive behaviour and effective communication** –5 hours (+ workshop)
 - *Aim:* To develop knowledge of the participants in different behaviours and to learn basic skills of creative communication and cooperation with others. It emphasises on self-confidence and conflict management.
- d. **Communication techniques and body language** – 2,5 hours (www.prepare.gr/s/1480-techniques-epikoinwnias-glwssa-toy-swmatos)
 - *Aim:* To help participants to understand the context and dynamics of communication in the workplace and to understand the importance of body language.

CIVIC COMPETENCES

Youth-oriented European programmes (“Youth Policy in Greece” – Council of Europe, 2015):

- a. **Mediterranean Office for Youth**
- b. **Youth in Action**
- c. **The European Youth card**

Volunteer-related initiatives and programmes:

- a. **European Year of Volunteering (EYV)**
- b. **Initiative Supporting Programme for Youth (ISPY)**
- c. **Support Programme for Initiatives for Students - “Student in Action” and “Vacations and Volunteering Programme**



TRAINING OFFER IN KEY COMPETENCE 7: SENSE OF INITIATIVE AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

According to European Reference Framework (ERF), Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship refers to an individual's ability to turn ideas into action. It includes creativity, innovation and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives.

In Greece the discussion about entrepreneurship education is at a very initial stage. Although at the policy level specific actions of the Ministry of Education are promoting the introduction of entrepreneurship education in Higher-Education Institutions, these actions still remain in the context of adopting best practices stemming from the experience of other European countries. The most important however is to relate entrepreneurial education with Greek particularities and investigate whether promoting entrepreneurial education in higher education can result to specific positive effects for the research and productive system (DIME - LIEE/NTUA Athens Conference, 2010).

Entrepreneurship in Greece is as widespread as in other EU countries, but at present Greek young people who are not yet entrepreneurially active, express much less interest in such activities. Thus, a range of measures including tax incentives and entrepreneurship-related bank loans should be considered.

However, Greek young entrepreneurs are young people, passionate about their ventures, creative and innovative minds, which pursue their dream, irrespective of the obstacles. They are a new breed of entrepreneur, who have brought a fresh change to the way of doing business in Greece and they represent the new age of entrepreneurs, a fresh change to the way of doing business. Greece needs a new generation of business-minded graduates, who know how to create their own jobs and build businesses that employ others.

According to this year's GEM Report on Entrepreneurship, published by the Foundation for Economic and Industrial Research (IOBE):

- There is an impressive increase in young Greek entrepreneurs in the 25-34 age that are deciding to start a business. Over 160,000 young people became entrepreneurs in Greece in 2012.
- Greek start-up entrepreneurs are more export-oriented, or want to become export-oriented. One in five entrepreneurs who started a business in 2012 says that over 25 percent of their clientele is going to be outside Greece.

- There has been a year-on-year increase of over 11 percent in Greek start-ups using new technologies/procedures in their business.

Apart from statistics, a number of developments reflect a change in the Greek entrepreneurial scene:

In 2013, there was a fast build-up of a start-up ecosystem in Greece, with more than 10 start-up incubators launched in the market and over 50 award competitions for innovative start-ups taking place in Athens and other cities.

Economic and social shifts – a consequence of Greece’s financial crisis – have generated a momentum for Greek start-ups. Now, these young companies, using different practices, with new and more relevant principles and values, could create opportunities for the development of an innovation-based and thus more promising economy.

Start-ups shake up the economy because they carry new principles and values. For example, as young entrepreneurs grow and develop their ideas in co-working spaces and accelerator centres, they constantly share their experiences and ideas by collaborating with each other. Collaboration is a fundamental concept in the start-up culture broadly but particularly in Greece. Moreover, young entrepreneurs do not perceive failure as failure. It is simply a learning process for them, which shows their commitment to continuous improvement.

Last but not least, young companies provide the best evidence. That Greek start-ups are making a mark on the Greek market. Although they may not have an impact on the big numbers of the country’s economy in the short term, but they are affecting the spirit of entrepreneurship in Greece for the long term. (<http://one-europe.info/entrepreneurship-in-greece> , 2016).

MATERIALS AVAILABLE

Training offer on Key Competence No 7: Sense of Initiative and Entrepreneurship (*seminars, initiatives, materials etc.*):

a. **Youth and Social Entrepreneurship**

The specific training course aims at promoting social entrepreneurial attitude by creating transnational youth initiatives and strategic partnerships in the framework of Erasmus+: Youth in Action Programme. The main aim is to support Structure Dialogue with young people and encourage their active participation in social entrepreneurship. Moreover, we intend to foster synergies between youth organisations to adopt concrete practices.

a. **Decision Making Strategy: Principles & limitations, Challenges & Methodology** – 9 hours
(www.acg.edu)

The seminar focuses on the analysis of the concept of decision making and in the description and analysis of various contemporary models and stages of decision making in business and elsewhere. Emphasis is given on the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative factors involved in decision making and the principles, limitations and potential challenges associated with it and ways to overcome them.

Detailed contents: 1. Operational decisions: peculiarities and characteristics, Basic decision making procedures in management: description, characteristics, advantages, challenges, Basic models of decision making: advantages, disadvantages, Strategic decisions, Key challenges/Myth and Reality: limitations, prejudices, false assumptions, subjectivity, experience, instinct, value systems, psychology, personality, successful paths, Special cases: scenarios, negotiations, Evaluation of decision: key parameters, Practical advices and guidance

b. **Innovation and Entrepreneurship** – 1 Month

(<http://dasta.uom.gr/Moke/default.aspx>)

This seminar, aims to provide practical advice for the development and implementation of innovative ideas. Special emphasis is given on the contribution of innovation in profitable and youth entrepreneurship.

Detailed contents: Innovation and Entrepreneurship during economic crisis, youth innovation and entrepreneurship, funding opportunities)

BEST PRACTICE, EXAMPLES

A. Training voucher for young people 18 - 29 years of age

(<http://voucher.gov.gr/project/view/id/6>)

Year of development: 2013-2014

Author or founder: Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity

Aim: The «TRAINING VOUCHER» program aims to achieve a structured path for the entry of unemployed in the labor market, which will potentially lead to a placing in the private sector of the economy

Target group: 35,000 unemployed young people aged 18 to 29, 15,000 of which are university graduates (2.700€) and 20,000 (2.400€) secondary and post-secondary education graduates

Description: The objective of the action was to provide continuing vocational training services to 35,000 unemployed young people aged 18-29 years that include:

- 80 hours of theoretical training in both horizontal and specialized skills (400€)
- placement of beneficiaries in private sector firms (500 working hours duration, 2.300€ for those who are above 25 years old and 2.000€ for those below 25 years old.)
- Counselling and guidance services provided to the beneficiaries by the training provider before and during the internship and involve:
 - the diagnosis and appropriate coupling of educational needs / skills of trainees with business needs,
 - the internship placement, monitoring and supervision of the beneficiary by the training provider
 - additional services for the conversion of the trainee internship in contract and placement at the firm.
- Funding of the company which will recruit the beneficiary immediately after the end of the internship (2.000€).

The “Training Voucher” practice is still being implemented in Greece. To date, 14 calls have been implemented, with a total of 571.481 participation applications. The data center serves over 2.500 concurrent users in fairly long time periods. Overall, 974 training providers and 44.843 businesses have offered theoretical and practical training respectively, to 102.121 beneficiaries.

The Greek Manpower organisation is the governmental body charged with the responsibility of promoting employment in Greece and implementing policies and vocational training activities with organisations of social partners, local governments and the tertiary sector economy, both at central and regional level.

B. Work experience programme for new labour market entrants aged 16-24

years.(http://www.oaed.gr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=54:16-24&catid=20:2011-11-16-11-16-48&Itemid=132&lang=el)

The program aims to strengthen the skills and work experience of unemployed aged 16-24 years, new entrants to the labour market through employment in companies of the private sector for a 12-month period.

The beneficiaries are private businesses and in general private employers. The unemployed that will be recruited by the companies should:

- Be 16-24 years of age.
- Have the status of unemployed and issued an unemployment card
- Be Greek citizens or citizens of another EU Member State or are expatriates who have right of residence and employment in our country.
- Have completed the form of personalized approach and have agreed on an individual action plan.

The businesses that want to hire a new employee electronically submit a request for the Service and in the period of a month receive an approval decision. Following the approval decision, the availability of unemployed youth will be controlled directly by the official "manager", under the conditions laid down for the position requested by the company. The "manager" matches the unemployed youth with the openings at the company, after getting a reference from the employment counselors of the Service. At the end of the first stage, companies could turn the work experience contract to a permanent contract, and can be subsidized for an additional twelve (12) months with the obligation to keep the young employee for an additional six (6) months (after the 12 months) without subsidy for that period. Businesses are required to maintain all employees (new and old ones) throughout the duration of the second phase of the program, which amounts to a total of eighteen (18) months (twelve months and six-months commitment).



OAED also promotes the following activities for young people:

- financial support for starting a business
- activities of specialist counseling (writing a business plan, sustainability principles, etc.) for those who receive financial aid;
- specialist activities to support youth entrepreneurship in the sectors of tourism, culture and environment, according to the particular needs of the local economy
- grants for youth co-operatives and social enterprises

IDENTIFIED GAPS

Based on the desk research we came up with a number of gaps identified. Specifically:

- Limited information on European Reference Framework (ERF) concept, KC6 and KC7 within young adults.
- Lack of awareness of training opportunities, especially for social skills.
- Skills gaps in:
 - ✓ Oral & Written communication skills
 - ✓ Confidence, Self-esteem
 - ✓ Conflict Management
 - ✓ Decision making
 - ✓ Team-working and participation
 - ✓ Civic competences or civic awareness
- Lack of knowledge about the nature of entrepreneurship among young adults.
- There is an absence of appropriate teaching and activities about entrepreneurship and social skills in higher education to exploit this potential.
- There is a lack of appropriate teaching and activities about fundamental civic skills such as expressing opinions and working collectively to achieve common interests as part of their design.

WHAT TO DO

Based on the desk research findings, in Greece there is an extra need for training in entrepreneurship since it can alleviate the problem of unemployment in Greece, especially among young adults, whereas there is an overall gap in social and civic training in youth adults.

For that reason, we came up with the following recommendations:

- Promote an **entrepreneurial spirit** through education.
- Encourage young people to consider the option of **setting up their own business** through effective training.
- KCs 6 & 7 are seen as useful and positive for young adults but there is not enough available training. There is a need to develop:
 - ✓ **Social skills**
 - ✓ **Active Participation**
 - ✓ **Entrepreneurship & Social entrepreneurship skills**
 - ✓ Provide opportunities that empower youth to develop civic competence is an important component for developing the skills and attitudes needed for **civic leadership**.
- The training curriculum should be accompanied by a set of methodologies and exercises for active participation.
- Involve the business sector (entrepreneurs, local companies) in the design and running of entrepreneurship courses and activities.
- Promote the use of programmes based on 'learning by doing' so participants through internships enhance their entrepreneurial, social skills and civic awareness.
- Sense of Initiative and Entrepreneurship is being considered that important that should be introduced into the national curriculum from primary school to university.
- Increase emphasis on company start-up in business-related curricula.

SUMMARY

Unemployed Greek young people are not only growing in numbers and largely demotivated with regard to entrepreneurship and self-employment opportunities, but are also increasingly dissatisfied with the ability of domestic institutions – with regard to educational and vocational training – to provide them with sufficient support in the current crisis (Tubadji A. 2012).

The crucial problem facing Greek youth are the result of the current crisis with the most serious threat to the austerity measures. Greece is losing the most talented young people, the source of a fresh inflow of human capital, and deactivating young people remaining in Greece by facing high internal competition.

Greece should take immediate measures for empowering the Greek youth unemployed in age category 25–29 years of age (Tubadji A. 2012). This generation is the one which could and should be the main resource for economic recovery through entrepreneurship and creativity, against the background of the world economic crisis and demographic aging across Europe (Tubadji A. 2012).



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Web links

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- Hellenic National Youth Council: <http://www.esyn.gr>
- Hellenic Statistical Authority: www.statistics.gr
- Manpower Employment Organization: <http://www.oaed.gr>
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