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The Project “Greek Education Abroad”

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RESUMÉ

Cet article décrit le processus de mise en œuvre et d'évaluation du programme de recherche “Education en Diaspora” comme une tentative par le Ministère grec de l'éducation d'initier une politique de l'enseignement de la langue et de la civilisation grecques dans la diaspora, conformément à la loi n° 2413/1996. Le réseau de partenaires de cette action, la planification et la mise en œuvre de la politique, les difficultés et les problèmes qui sont apparus en route et les résultats de chaque action du programme, décrits et interprétés montrent la logique d'intervention de l'État grec dans la diaspora.

Le texte se meut dans la logique de l'évaluation d'un effort historique d'assistance de 15 ans pour l'enseignement de la langue grecque, à travers le regard des acteurs clés, en particulier du responsable scientifique, des collaborateurs issus de la diaspora et des administrateurs du programme.

ABSTRACT

This article describes the implementation process and the evaluation of the research program “Greek Education Abroad” in an attempt by the Greek Ministry of Education to implement education policy for Greek language in the diaspora, as envisaged in the Law 2413/1996. The partner network development, planning and implementation, the difficulties and problems that emerged and the results of each action of the program, as described and interpreted indicate the outlines of the logic of intervention of the Greek State towards the diaspora. The text moves within the logic of the historical evaluation of a 15-year assistance effort in Greek language education, from the perspective of key players, particularly the scientific responsables and program managers.

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Introduction

The Greek Government's interest and initiatives for Greek language education in the Diaspora increased after the great migration (1952-1973) and especially after the restoration of democracy in Greece in 1974.

On the other hand, the complete integration of Greece into the European Union (EU - then EEC) in 1981 facilitated its education initiatives financially, because part of the funds given by the EU Commission to the country could be allocated to educational innovations in the Diaspora as well.

As early as the mid-1980s the first programs began to be funded with national and European Union resources.

In particular, during the period from 1986/87 to 1992/1993 a project for Greek language education in Germany, on the initiative of the Greek Ministry of Education, was funded by the EU. The aim of the program - which was implemented by the Department of Education, University of Ioannina and coordinated by M. Damanakis, A. Gotovos and C. Dimou - was the production of teaching material for the "*Teaching of Greek to Greek Children in the F.R. of Germany in the Mother Tongue Courses*" (Damanakis, 1991).

Around the same time, a corresponding program (*Learning Greek*), for Greek language education in the US was carried out by the "Pedagogical Institute" with funding from the Ministry of Education and the Archdiocese of America and coordinated by E. Vassilakis.

This followed the implementation of a program by the Athens and Ioannina Universities, headed by professors G. Markou and A. Gotovos. The purpose of this program, funded by UNESCO and the Ministry of Education, was the integration of repatriated Greek pupils into the education system (Gotovos & Markou, 1984).

These three projects were the forerunners for the four *Intercultural Education Programs* that followed in 1997, after the enactment of Law 2413 "*Greek education abroad, intercultural education and other provisions*" (Official Gazette 124, vol. I, June 17, 1996). Of the four projects three were for the interior (a) *integration of repatriate and foreign students*, b) *integration of Roma*, c) *training of Muslim children* and the fourth was "**Greek Education Abroad**" (in Greek, Παιδεία Ομογενών).

The immediate aim of this text is, as far as possible, to give a “critical” and “objective” review of the progress of the project and the presentation of the most important results. This is because the authors of the text had the main scientific, organizational, administrative and management responsibility for the implementation of the project: M. Damanakis as scientific facilitator and coordinator of the overall project, D. Kontogianni (1999-2005) and T. Michelakaki (2005-2014) as those responsible for its management.

Our hope and expectation, however, is the experience and knowledge that emerge, by reading between the lines and which are analytically recorded in scientific publications of the project (see. Bibliography) to serve as a basis for research and for similar intervention programs in the Diaspora. This is the indirect but most important aim of the text.

1. The History and the First Steps of the Project

In March 1996 the *Special Secretariat of Diaspora and Intercultural Education* was founded and in June of that year Law 2413, “*Greek education abroad, intercultural education and other provisions*” was passed. Along with the setting up of instruction on the law, four Intercultural Education Programs were designed, under the leadership of the then Special Secretary (Dimitri Chalkiotis) and the activation of many of his colleagues, with responsibility for the Program “Greek Education Abroad” held by a fellow Greek from Australia (Chrisoula Arkoudi).

The four *Intercultural Education Programs* had already been included in the *Second Community Support Framework* (CSF, 1994-1999) in 1995. The wait however for the voting of Law 2413, which would serve as a legal framework for their implementation led to a commencement delay. This time delay resulted in the four projects not being proclaimed, but entrusted to specific research teams at Greek universities. However, the projects that followed, which were financed under the CSF III (2000-2006) and *the National Strategic Reference Framework* (NSRF 2007-2013), were proclaimed as were the other competing projects.

The implementation of interior programs began with the start of the 1996/97 school year whereas the project “Greek Education Abroad” remained “unclaimed” until the spring of 1997, when the Ministry of Education proposed that professor M. Damanakis be assigned the work on the grounds that his many years of

experience on issues of Greek-language education and his collaboration with scientists in the Diaspora could be the basis for the successful implementation of a project which claimed to be able to intervene and support Greek language education worldwide.

The specificity of the Technical Project Report, the completion-extension of the existing networks of scientists, the establishment of new networks where they did not exist, work allocation, schedules, etc. were discussed in detail in the 1st Workshop at the University of Crete in Rethymno from 27 June until 2 July 1997 (Damanakis, Michelakakis & Lidakis, 1997). In the first Workshop Meeting, the participants included, other than members of the Education and Foreign Ministries, *The Special Education Secretary of the Diaspora and Intercultural Education* (Ministry of Education) and *The Secretary General for Greeks Abroad* (Foreign Ministry). Scientists from Greek universities and universities abroad, who formed the core of networks and shouldered the implementation of the project were also involved, and, as their action has shown, survived both the duration and adversity and brought the project to completion.

2. Educational-Political Context, Organization and Partner Networks

The project “Greek Education Abroad” was a program that was institutionalized and conducted in the context of a broader partnership between the Greeks in Greece and abroad. This relationship, since the foundation of the Greek state - and earlier – has taken different forms depending on the economic, social, and political conditions in various time and historical periods. For example, in 19th century and until the Asia Minor disaster, the Greek educational system was supported economically by the Greek Diaspora (Tsoukalas, 1979). After the regime change in 1974, in Article 108 of the 1975 Constitution, it was foreseen that “*the state concern itself with the life of emigrant Greeks*” (see Kriari - Katrani, 2008). Under this welfare policy a series of welfare measures were institutionalized, while on a practical level the responsibility of the Centre for the Diaspora was expressed through the posting of Greek educators and the sending of educational material. Quickly though, it was realized that the Greek-centric care by Greece of the Diaspora did not meet the needs of Greek-language education and so in the mid-1990s the search for a new relationship between the Centre and the Diaspora began.

In this context, Law 2413 “*Greek education abroad, intercultural education and other provisions*” was established in 1996 and to the revision of the 2001 Constitution, Article 108, a second paragraph was added which was the philosophy of the new relationship between the Centre and the Diaspora. In particular, the World Council of Hellenes Abroad (SAE) which, according to the second paragraph, was “*dedicated to the expression of all forces of Hellenism worldwide*” was founded. This new relationship promised to be “*two-way*” without, however, nullifying the “*preferential arrangement*” of the first paragraph.

In the meantime, on a political level, a relationship between the Centre and the Diaspora developed, in which Greeks everywhere, both inside and outside the Greek territory would have the opportunity to interact on an equal and reciprocal basis. As far as the project “Greek Education Abroad” is concerned the development of a dynamic encounter and mutual enrichment between the Centre and the various Diaspora populations was the main target on a theoretical, pedagogical and implementational level.

The organization of the program was based on two pillars, one of which was in Greece and the other abroad. As shown in the project organizational chart (see. Figure 1 in the annex), the overall monitoring of the performance of the work on an educational policy and economic management level was conducted by the Greek Ministry of Education and its services (Special Secretariat of Diaspora and Intercultural Education, The Institute of Diaspora and Intercultural Education), as the program was the official, authorized intervention of the Greek state in Greek language education in the Diaspora (Kontogianni, 2005). The project was implemented by the University of Crete which collaborated with the Education Offices in the local Greek Consulates or Embassies and several scientists serving Greek language education either on an academic level (Greek studies in foreign universities) or on the Greek language instruction level in primary and secondary education in several countries.

In particular, the University of Crete had direct responsibility for the financial management of the project through the *Foundation’s Research Committee*, the scientific responsibility and the overall coordination and implementation of the program through the *Centre of Intercultural and Migration Studies* (EDIAMME), its Director and members of the board. Meanwhile, faculty members of the University of Crete and other universities of Greece made up the *Central Scientific Program Committee* and in cooperation with the *Regional*

Scientific Committees in each country took decisions on the course of the project, scientifically observed the project and coordinated joint Working Groups (with teachers and other specialists) from Greece and abroad for studies, the production of teaching materials and teacher training.

The overall organization of the project “Greek Education Abroad” was based on the equitable cooperation between the Centre and the Diaspora, creating, for each program action and sub-action, cooperation networks, i.e. individual *Working Groups* with specialist members who came from both Greece and countries where there was Greek Diaspora and sharing their knowledge and experience of the three main socio-cultural program activity areas: country of origin, country of residence and the community. The establishment of joint *Working Groups* from Greece and abroad, is one dimension envisaged in the law for Greek language education in the Diaspora (Law 2413 Article 4, paragraph. 1), evidence that shows that in an institutional framework the relationship between the Centre and Diaspora had entered new equal ground.

What, however, was crucial to the effective cooperation between the Centre and the Diaspora as well as the smooth and efficient operation of the project were the *Annual Scientific Workshops* which took place at the University of Crete and were attended by all the members of the *Scientific Committees* from Greece and abroad as well as members of the *Working Groups*. At these meetings there was an annual report on the progress made in implementing the project actions and sub-actions and new individual areas of work were defined for the following year, on an equitable reciprocal basis between all partners of the Centre and the Diaspora.

3. Theoretical Starting Point, Structure and Goals of the Project

In the 1st Workshop Meeting in the summer of 1997 the main theoretical axes were determined and the pedagogical principles for the construction of the subject and its targeting were already identified. This data is summarized in the following points:

As for the students who were enrolled in the various forms of Greek language education:

- The bicultural and bilingual socialization conditions of Greek children of the Diaspora were recognized. “*The respect, acceptance, utilization and promotion of the bicultural - bilingual capital*” of students were the starting point and goal of the program actions (Damanakis, Michelakakis & Lidakis, 1997: 17).
- The consequence of this principle was that the concepts of *identity* and *diversity* had to be equal tools for analysis since the ethno-cultural identity of Greeks everywhere is composed of common elements that result from the common Greek origin and of different elements derived from their different socialization processes in various communities of residence (Damanakis, 2007: 186).
- It was recognized that students attending various forms of Greek language education are divided into two broad categories: those who are bearers of Greek sociocultural characteristics and whose acquisition or cultivation of the Greek language is a component of their identity, and those who are neither bearers of Greek characteristics nor emotionally connected to the Greek language. This marks the different method of the acquisition of Greek by the students themselves. On the basis, then, of ethnic and linguistic criteria, namely the possession or non-possession of the Greek language, the students in the various forms of Greek-speaking education in the Diaspora were classified (for the needs of the program) into three main target groups, which have different educational needs and therefore require different educational materials. These target-groups are:
 - a) *Greek-speaking pupils of Greek origin*
 - b) *Pupils of Greek origin with no knowledge of Greek*
 - c) *Foreigners with another mother tongue.*
- The different learning conditions of students involve the need for differentiated curricula for the teaching of Greek as a second and foreign language both on a methodological and target and content level (OEDB, 2006: 60-65).
- Finally, the need for the cultivation of cultural knowledge and experiences through the active participation of students in educational programs that bring them into direct, vivid contact with modern Hellenic reality, i.e. the vernacular language and everyday culture, was recognized.

As for teachers who served in various forms of Greek language education:

- A difference in the degree of knowledge of the Greek language, the degree of pedagogical and didactic training, but also the degree of information on the socialization conditions in the Diaspora were recorded.
- Based on these findings the training needs of teachers were determined and respective training programs were organized.

As for the communication and interaction between all the collaborators in Greek Education:

- The need for the recording, evaluation and communication of educational material used in the various forms of education and different countries by the beginning of the project was recognized.
- The realization of the need for the dissemination of good practices and successful educational models in the Greek Diaspora.
- The need for the systematic charting of the forms of education, teachers and students of Greek language education in the Diaspora was recognized.
- Emphasis on the need to create communication networks and the use of new technologies and e-learning services in both the teaching of the Greek language and its culture to the students and in teacher training.

All these observations and findings were the theoretical principles of the project “Greek Education Abroad” which is aimed at *maintaining, cultivating and promoting the Greek language and culture abroad and especially in the Greek Diaspora, through the improvement of primary and secondary Greek-language education, while contributing to the smooth integration of children into the educational and socio-cultural system of the country of residence and their community.*

With this objective in mind we sought: *a) the development of educational materials in print and electronic form, b) training of seconded and immigrant teachers, c) the organization of educational and artistic programs for pupils living abroad and d) the creation of databases, networks and e-learning services.*

In particular, the subject of the project was constructed in three actions or parts, each of which was given, for communication purposes, a name. Specifically, the

first action was given the name ATHENE, the second PROMETHEUS and the third HERMES. Finally, there were three Horizontal Sub-actions supporting the overall project (see. Table 3.1.).

Table 3.1.: Summary Table of Actions (Parts) of the Project

<i>a/a</i>	Action Title
<i>I</i>	ATHENE (A): Curricula and Teaching Material
<i>II</i>	PROMETHEUS (P): In-service training of teachers and student exchange programs
<i>III</i>	HERMES (H): Databases and Communication Networks
<i>IV</i>	HORIZONTAL SUB-ACTIONS (HS)

Specifically, the *first action (ATHENE)* had as its objectives, the preparation and establishment of curricula and their subsequent monitoring and the production of teaching materials -in print and electronic form- for teaching:

- a) Greek as a second language in primary and secondary education (GSL)*
- b) Greek as a Second Language (GSL) in Accelerated Courses in secondary education*
- c) Greek as a Foreign Language(GFL) in primary and secondary education*
- c) History and Culture in primary and secondary education.*

The *second action (PROMETHEUS)* referred to the continuous and systematic in-service training of seconded and immigrant teachers and the organization and implementation of educational and artistic programs for students of Greek origin, in order for them to have contact with modern Greek culture in Greece.

The third action (HERMES) had, as its objective, the establishment of databases, communications networks and e-learning services.

Finally, the Horizontal Sub-actions such as meetings, seminars, symposia, conferences, exhibitions and project promotion/publicity, penetrated the three actions and supported the smooth development and implementation of the overall project.

4. Funding Flow and Implementation of the Subject

Since the inception of the program in June 1997 until the end of the implementation of the subject there was a lack of continuity, because it was dependent on funding by the Ministry of Education. However, the implementation seemed to be continuous for the recipients (students and teachers) of the program materials because EDIAMME continuously supported Greek language education in the Diaspora.

Table 4.1. reflects the period of implementation and the final budget of each individual project.

Table 4.1.: Funding Flow of the Project “Greek Education Abroad”

Project title	Duration of Implementation	Final Budget in Euro
<i>Greek Education Abroad I</i>	3/7/1997 - 31/12/1999	4.784.150,15
<i>Transition bridge to project Greek Education Abroad II</i>	1/1/2000 - 31/10/2001	914.671,49
		5.698.821,64
<i>Greek Education Abroad II</i>	15/3/2002 - 31/12/2004	3.599.912,31
<i>Greek Education Abroad III</i>	12/1/2006 - 31/8/2008	4.318.128,36
TOTAL BUDGET “Greek Education Abroad”		13.616.862,31
<i>Intercultural Greek Language Education in the Diaspora*</i>	4/2/2011-31/12/2014	3.037.4223,84

** Although the project “Intercultural Greek Language Education in the Diaspora” is the continuation of the project “Greek Education Abroad” (See. Ch. 5) we will not refer to it further because we consider an evaluation to be premature.*

As has already been mentioned, the implementation of the subject of the program was carried out by joint working groups from Greece and abroad. At the start of the program an essential prerequisite was the charting of the student and teacher numbers involved in Greek-language schools abroad and the documentation of the forms and operating conditions of Greek language

education. In the first year of the implementation of the program specific studies for each country were prepared which reflected the reality of Greek language education in the Diaspora (see. www.uoc.gr/diaspora, Meletes).

Then the writing of the teaching materials (action ATHENE) began. Teachers of the *Working Groups* in Greece and abroad undertook the obligation of collecting original material and contributing to the writing and testing of modules of such teaching materials. At the same time, teachers from different countries and forms of Greek Education undertook the implementation of pilot textbooks in their classrooms and sent comments on the experiment in order for any changes to be incorporated in the final version of the books. A limited number of copies of the teaching materials were printed, sent to schools abroad for piloting, and simultaneously submitted to the Pedagogical Institute of Greece and then the Ministry of Education for approval, in order to print thousands of copies to meet the needs of students abroad.

At this point it should be emphasized that while the other three *Intercultural Education Programs* (Roma, Muslim and Immigrant Students) were developing supplementary teaching materials based on the existing curricula, “Greek Education Abroad” was obliged to draw up Curricula and develop appropriate basic educational material from the beginning (In relation to the approval and printing of Curricula see Gazette 807/04 July 2006).

For the realization of in-service teacher training (PROMETHEUS action) the contribution of Education Coordinators and scientists who have contributed both to the selection of teachers who would be involved in training sessions and the organization of training seminars was crucial.

In addition, the project partners and teachers who participated in the program informed other Greek-language education collaborators about student exchange programs in Greece. The same happened with the theater groups that participated in the annual Student Theatre Festival.

Furthermore, for the realization of Databases, Networks and e-Learning services (HERMES action) skilled scientists and teachers worked to gather empirical data, to record the number of teachers and students and create the databases. The HERMES actions were the precursor to the development of the e-Learning Environment.

5. From Conventional to E-Learning

The issue of the transition from conventional to electronic learning was discussed in June 2007. On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the launch of the project *Greek Education Abroad* an international conference entitled “*Globalization and the Greek Diaspora*” was organized from 29 June to 01 July at the University of Crete in Rethymno. (See, www.ediamme.edc.uoc.gr/diaspora,Studies).

The evaluation report for the decade 1997-2007 concluded:

“As an educator I have always supported, that digital technology is the medium and the vehicle but not the content. For the vehicle to be meaningful it requires content that makes sense and can be digitized and placed in the vehicle.

Today we have the content and the vehicle. Let us then place the content in the digital vehicle and let the vehicle travel through the Internet and satellite television to every part of the world where there are people of Greek and non-Greek origin who wish to learn Greek and become partakers of the Greek civilization.

And let us not forget that the Internet, and in general digital technology, cannot substitute, in the same place and time, interpersonal communication.

The lively meeting of students in the various forms of Greek language education (day/evening schools, Saturday classes etc.) operates as a form of socialization and is not confined to the acquisition of some language skills. This means that the use of digital technology in the context of Greek-language education should be complementary and enriching” (Damanakis 2007a).

The transition to electronic learning as a complementary and enriching tool was discussed at the conference. The then Special Secretary, Professor I. Kriari, who actively participated in the conference, accepted this concept and included it in the future plans of *the Special Secretariat of Diaspora and Intercultural Education*. Of course, the proposal was to be translated into education policy in the 2009/10 school year by another Special Secretary, Professor T. Dragona.

For the record, it should be noted that between the tenure of Professor I. Kriari and Professor T. Dragona, two Special Secretaries intervened and that, during the second’s tenure for the first time, the program was seriously threatened

because there was an attempt to abolish it, as an autonomous project, and include it, as one action, in the *Repatriate and Foreign Students Integration Program*.

The mobilization of Diaspora institutions, starting with the World Council of Hellenes Abroad USA, in conjunction with the change of government, led to the inclusion of the program in the NSRF, as an autonomous project and its relaunching, the main innovation of which was *e-learning* and namely the development of an *e-learning Environment* for teaching/learning the objects: “*Greek Language*” and “*Elements of Greek History and Culture*”. Indeed, to mark the “new era” for Greek language education in the Diaspora, the program was renamed from the project “*Greek Education Abroad*” to “*Greek Language Intercultural Education in the Diaspora*.”

Based on the proclamation text and the specifications of the NSRF the Project Specification Document was drafted, the (competitive) University of Crete proposal was submitted to the Managing Authority of the Ministry of Education, approved, and implementation began, informally from December 2010 and officially from 04 February 2011, with Professor M. Damanakis as Coordinator.

Based on the targeting and specification in the proclamation of the project «*Greek Language Intercultural Education in the Diaspora*”, but also the scientific knowledge of the members of the Project Team, objectives were formulated and targeting was specialized towards the development of an *e-Learning Environment* as follows:

“The purpose of an e-Learning Environment is the improvement of the existing, conventional Hellenic Education in the Diaspora through its enrichment, using forms of Distance Education.

This general objective can be broken down into three-part targeting:

- 1. Additional use of an e-Learning Environment in conventional face to face teaching-learning in organized forms of Hellenic Education (Schools, Mother Tongue Courses).*
- 2. Use, by the teacher, of contemporary and non-contemporary Distance Education for students in remote areas.*
- 3. Use by the students within the Learning Communities framework.”* (Damanakis, 2014: 278).

Following an extension, the project was completed in December 2014, with Coordinator associate professor Aspasia Hatzidakis, who took over the management of EDIAMME in September 2011 and the overall coordination of the new program in July 2012 after the retirement of M. Damanakis.

The results and the general course of “*Greek Language Intercultural Education in the Diaspora*” is not covered in this text. Two characteristics however, should be noted.

The first is that the debate on e-Learning in the Diaspora has just begun, with the said program. The road on both the technological and pedagogical-didactic side seems long.

The second, and perhaps more important, is that particularly in Greece conditions have changed. The Centre cannot (and probably will not be able to for the foreseeable future) afford to continue its previous policy for Greek language education in the Diaspora. The temptation, therefore, to focus on and limit its interventions in Distance Education is great. Such a development would weaken the socialization role of Greek language education, and only benefit distance language skills.

6. Results of the Project

Based on the layout lines of the program, the overall results may be summarized as follows:

Teaching Material in Printed and Digital Form:

- **75** generally, two-volume textbooks for the teaching of Greek as a second and foreign language as well as the corresponding instructions for the teacher.
- **25** CD roms and listening CDs and
- **4** DVDs.

Studies, Conference Proceedings

- **27** specialized studies and conference proceedings, symposiums, colloquium.

The **teachers**, trainees attending various seminars in Greece and abroad, or remotely via videoconferencing totaled **7,894**.

Table 6.1 presents the number of teachers by program and type of course.

Table 6.1.: Trainee Teachers by Program and Type of Seminar

Project title	Seminars in Greece	Seminars abroad	Seminars for seconded teachers seminars	Video conferencing/ distance
<i>Greek Education Abroad I</i>	222	2917	696	
<i>Greek Education Abroad II</i>	235	240	474	
<i>Greek Education Abroad III</i>	387	811	1709	203

The **students** who participated in exchange programs in Greece and the Student Theatre Festival totaled **1,578**. The tens of thousands of students who use the program teaching material should be added to these.

Table 6.2: Number of students participating in the Exchange and Student Theatre Festival programs

Project title Festival	Exchange Programs	Student Theatre
<i>Greek Education Abroad I</i>	266	341
<i>Greek Education Abroad II</i>	288	172
<i>Greek Education Abroad III</i>	228	283

In the context of the implementation of the above programs 15 conferences, seminars, colloquiums, symposia and 14 Workshops were held, at which scientific issues and issues related to the organization and implementation of the program were discussed. All of the above data, studies and educational materials in print and electronic form, are freely accessible on the Project website: www.uoc.gr/diaspora or www.ediamme.edc.uoc.gr/diaspora

7. Endogenous and Exogenous Difficulties in Implementation

The project “*Teaching of Greek to Greek Children in the F.R. of Germany in the Mother Tongue Courses*” (1986-1992) is the first teaching material production project outside the *Pedagogical Institute* (P.I.) of Greece. The resulting material had, of course, to be approved by the P.I but the production was implemented by an independent research-writing team. This was an unfamiliar process in the institutional framework and mentality of the P.I, which had a direct negative impact on the communication between the research-writing team and those responsible in the P.I. (president, division chairmen, assessors, researchers).

A source of additional difficulties was an intense “Greek-centrism” in the majority of P.I. members. In keeping with this view, it was thought that what was proven and acclaimed in Greece was also good for Greek children abroad. On the other hand, the “ethnocentrism” of several members of the P.I. did not leave much room for the development of bicultural and bilingual oriented teaching material (in relation to the internal and external difficulties of this program, see Damanakis,1997).

Fifteen years later, the above-mentioned difficulties and attitudes no longer existed, or at least not to a great extent. The experiences and above all the transformation of Greece from a country of emigration to a country of immigration as well as the massive presence of children with a migrant background in Greek schools contributed as a catalyst to a change in attitude. Interculturality was no longer an “exotic” approach, but was becoming “an interior need”.

But what remained unchanged was the bureaucracy and particularly the relegation of the publication of material by the authorized services of the Ministry of Education to the P.I. and to the School Book Publishing Organization (OEDB) and vice versa - and then the abolition of the P.I. and the OEDB and the production of the material was relegated to the “*Institute of Educational Policy*” and to “*Diophantus*”.

The external difficulties of the new project “*Greek Education Abroad*” include, apart from the bureaucracy, the staffing of the *Education Offices* in consulates and embassies and the attitude of the Hellenic Education Institutions in the various countries of residence. In the first case, the attitude of each

Educational Coordinator and the degree of responsiveness to the needs of the program played an important role in the implementation of the educational material in the different forms of Greek Education. On the other hand, the non-staffing of the Office of Educational Coordinators in the first eighteen months of implementation hampered its beginning, especially since, in the same period, some reactions by certain organizations and education institutions manifested themselves. In particular, some institutions, particularly in the US and Germany, maintained and demanded that the leadership of the Ministry of Education allocate the project funds per country and provide teaching materials according to the needs of each country. But the response by the political leadership of the Ministry of Education was against the fragmentation of the program. The objections these institutions expressed were retracted, when the implementation of training programs for teachers of Greek started and especially with the implementation of the initial educational material. Thus teachers and parents began to be convinced of its appropriateness. Meanwhile, the project networks per country had also been established, which contributed to the acceptance and the consolidation of the project.

Other external factors that affected the smooth continuation of the project were the funding gaps (see. Chap. 4), changes to the rules for the allocation of funds and the overall management of the program. Under the second CSF, for example, the organization of training seminars abroad was allowed, while in the following funding periods this was no longer the case. This change particularly affected the experimental application of educational material in the different forms of Greek Education.

The internal program difficulties can be categorized as follows: a) the formation of teams, especially abroad, b) the development of a common code of communication between scientists of different disciplines from different countries, c) the pre-existing experience and knowledge of the teaching of Greek as a second and foreign language abroad and d) the dynamics of each group.

In the first case, the difficulties mainly consist of the selection of suitable partners among many stakeholders. The de facto exclusion of some led, in some cases, to discontent, protests and tension. The second category of internal difficulties constituted an epistemological and academic challenge for the team members and was creatively overcome through scientific conferences / workshops / colloquium, annual Workshop Meetings and through endless

discussions in smaller groups. The third category is related to the second, but is broader and directly linked to the preparation of curricula and the production methodology of the teaching material. The above-mentioned program for Greek language education in Germany and similar programs which were implemented in the Greeks' countries of residence (see. Damanakis, 1994) were to some extent based on, but did not respond to the teaching and methodological questions of the new program, which came with the claim that it would create material that would meet the needs of students not only in one country, but in all. So, Curricula had to be developed from the beginning as well as a new teaching-methodological approach. In contrast to the usual chronological order - first the development of Curricula and based on this, the development of the material-, in the project "*Greek Education Abroad*" these processes were conducted in parallel, so that, in combination with the experimental application of the material they fed one another (OEDB, 2006).

Tensions, mainly in the material writing groups occasionally led to malfunctions, but were never a threat to the project. What was unpleasant, but not ultimately detrimental to the program, was the behavior of a few collaborators (usually professors) who used or exploited rather than served the project and through it the Greek language education in the Diaspora.

Despite internal and external difficulties, the implementation of the project was achieved, based on the relevant planning and programming. And this is due both to endogenous and exogenous factors. The most important endogenous stabilizing factor was the consistent Project Team, whose members (in Greece and in the Diaspora) were inspired by the same vision and passion for the Diaspora, by related scientific approaches and by the same fighting spirit.

Of the external factors, what distinguishes itself is the political support for the project, which is outlined in the next section.

8. Political Aspects and Partnerships

As outlined in Damanakis' article in this volume (Chap.4), the project "*Greek Education Abroad*" was implemented during the "*period of visions and great expectations from 1996 to 2009*".

The interest in the Greek Diaspora permeated all the parties in the Greek parliament and was mainly expressed through the *Special Permanent Committee*

on Greeks Abroad. The long-standing president of the Committee, and later Deputy Foreign Minister, Gregory Niotis, decisively contributed to creating consensus and unity among the members of the Committee, which his successors continued. Also, among the members of the Committee and members of the Project Team there was ongoing communication, which was expressed mainly through the participation of the Committee representatives and also the political parties, in conferences or other Project events and through the regular, official Committee briefing on the progress of the program by the Coordinator. This created a tradition that ensured the continuation of the program independently of changes in education ministers and governments.

The support by the Ministry of Education, through the respective *Special Education Secretary for the Diaspora and Intercultural Education* was immediate and effective. Tension existed only with those Secretaries who had neither knowledge of the issues of Greek-language education in the Diaspora, nor general education.

In addition, the support for the Program (project) by major institutions in the Diaspora, by the SAE and the educational services of the countries of residence was important. From the beginning, the Program Policy was to keep both the major Hellenic Education Institutions and the appropriate educational services in the country of residence informed. The first was guaranteed through the systematic involvement of the Institutions' schools in the Program. The second was accomplished mainly through the involvement of persons of Greek origin who held important posts in Education Ministries (e.g. Ms Vicki Marineli of The Victorian Ministry of Education in Australia) or other important educational services (e.g. Ms Maria Xenikaki of The Board of Education, Toronto) or through university-teachers of Greek origin who were collaborators in the Program.

The direct or indirect involvement of politicians and institutions, educational services, teachers and scientists in the Program contributed greatly to the creation of positive conditions for its implementation and the maintenance of a climate of optimism for over a decade. This climate, of course, depended on and was fueled directly by the general positive political climate of the period of “*visions and great expectations*”, which ended on an institutional note with the enactment of Law 4027/2011. This law marked the end of an era and the beginning of a new one, whose main features are: “*cost reduction*” and “*suppression of areas of action by the Greek State*” in the Diaspora.

9. Overall Assessment and Prospects

The project “*Greek Education Abroad*” came into being in 1997 (along with the other three intercultural education programs) to transform the education policy of Law 2413/1996 into educational practice. The law itself was adopted at a time when the Greek Diaspora was in the spotlight in the Greek state, as shown by the following enactments:

- 1995 (13/06) *Presidential Decree 196/95, Establishment and operation of Council of Hellenes Abroad (SAE),*
- 1996 (18/03) *Special Secretariat for Diaspora and Intercultural Education.*
- 1996 (17/06), *Law 2413, Greek education abroad, intercultural education and other provisions,*
- 1996 (17/06) *Institute for the Diaspora and Intercultural Education (IPODE),*
- 1996 (08/07) *Special Permanent Committee on Greeks Abroad in the Hellenic Parliament.*

The members of the *Project Team* and the broader networks of collaborators around the world were aware of the historical situation and of the responsibility that they had to bear, and made every effort to make the project bear fruit. And indeed - apart from the educational programs for students of Greek origin, through which informal “transnational youth networks” were created, and in addition to in-service training programs for immigrant and seconded teachers, which also led to the creation of educational networks within countries and between countries - the project has left behind rich educational material in printed and electronic form (CD Rom, DVD), which covers the educational needs of different target groups in primary and secondary schools and is freely accessible to all interested parties (see. www.uoc.gr/diaspora, Teaching Materials).

The value of this “*educational material bank*” emerged, in particular, during the period 2010-2014 in which the Greek Ministry of Education, mainly for economic reasons, no longer neither printed nor provided such material in the Diaspora. During this period the Hellenic Education Institutions abroad and individual teachers resorted to the “*educational material bank*”, took the educational materials needed, made copies and gave them to their students.

The existence of such educational material appears to have had a positive impact on the educational policies of the countries of residence. In the new (national) *Curriculum of Australia*, for example, one of the conditions to be fulfilled by a language that is part of the Curriculum is the existence of teaching materials (learning resources) (ACARA, 2011: 5). Greek is one of the few languages that meet this requirement thanks to the project “*Greek Education Abroad*”.

The positive effects of the project so far do not however allow for complacency, for two main reasons. The first relates to the very nature of the educational material. It is common educational knowledge (place) that any educational material has a lifespan of ten to fifteen years at the most. Much of the program material is already fifteen years old and therefore should be renewed. Here lies the second reason; has the Greek State the resources and therefore the willingness - after the enactment of Law 4027 / 2011- to incorporate Greek language education in the Diaspora into its education policy priorities and continue to fund projects for the renewal and enrichment of the *bank of educational material*?

The conditions of the 1996-2008 period, but also the momentum of the program itself, are difficult to repeat. So, unilateral initiatives by the Centre can no longer be expected but solutions through systematic and pragmatic cooperation between the Centre and the Diaspora must be sought. The Program Networks could play a very important role in such an effort.

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A second source is the EDIAMME Archive. Recourse to Law 2413/1996 and the Constitution of Greece (1975 and 2001) are also important.

See also: Reports of our Diaspora Research Associates (2014)

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Argentine: S. Rousallis,

Australie: A. Tamis et M. Tsianikas,

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ANNEX

GREECE

- Ministry of Education: Special Secretariat of Diaspora and Intercultural Education / Institute for the Diaspora and Intercultural Education /Department of Diaspora and Intercultural Education / Special Management Service for Operational Program for Education and Initial Vocational Training (O.P. “Education”)/ Community Support Framework / ESPA
- University of Crete: Central Scientific Committee / Coordination - Project management */ Working Groups *
- Political Institutions: Special Permanent Committee on Greeks Abroad (Hellenic Parliament)

Diagram 1: Organization Chart for the project “Greek Education Abroad”

DIASPORA

- Education Offices - Education Coordinators *
- Regional Scientific Committees * - Diaspora Scientific Associates *
- Working Groups *

* Let us emphasize that the number of persons who cooperated in the implementation of the Greek Education Abroad program runs into hundreds. If the Education Coordinators and teachers who implemented pilot training materials or helped to collect data and conduct research are included, the number runs into the thousands. Therefore, it is not possible to mention all the names in this text. These appear in the particular studies or specific teaching materials.