

ETUDES HELLENIQUES

HELLENIC STUDIES

**L' éducation en Grèce et
dans la diaspora
Education in Greece and
in the Diaspora**

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Education in Greece and in the Diaspora

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The title of this issue suggests that Greek education, as an institution and primarily as content, is not limited to the borders of the Greek state.

This is not new. Even with the creation of the Greek state in 1930, and the establishment of the first Greek national education system, two parallel educational systems started to operate: one inside Greek borders and the other outside them, either in the 'unredeemed' homelands or in 'commercial' Communities of Hellenism.

The geographical integration of the Greek state, especially after the Balkan wars and World War I, the gradual decline of 'commercial' communities and especially the effects of the Asia Minor disaster resulted in a decline of Greek Education outside the state borders.

This development continues to go hand in hand with an ideological introspection and a search for identity within Greek Hellenism, as the Hellenism outside the Greek borders, ceased to exist, at least in the version that had existed and functioned until the first two decades of the 20th century. The Greek focus on education within its borders has led to the neglect of education in the diaspora, although educational needs remained in the "historic diaspora" and new needs arose in the emerging 'migration diaspora'.

Especially on the Caucasus and Transcaucasia, large populations of Greek origin continued to live and work. But the repressive policies of Stalin and later of his successors during the Cold War, led not only to the reduction of Greek language education in these areas, but also to the utter neglect of this piece of modern Greek diaspora.

However, the moderate policy of Gorbachev and especially the collapse of socialism brought to the forefront the Black Sea Greeks, whose roots and history come from Byzantium.

Before the re-emergence of this Black Sea historic Greek Diaspora, the emergence of the migration Greek diaspora could be explained using two main

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points: first, the older diaspora was reinforced through the mass immigration of Greeks to the USA, Canada, Australia and Western Europe, from 1950 to 1973; second, the migration diaspora opposed the junta dictatorship (1967-1974) and revealed political forces which played an active role in the fall of the dictatorship and in the first period after the establishment of democracy.

Only more recently, in the mid-seventies, and especially after the end of the Cold War, would Greek-speaking education in the diaspora reappear as the second Greek-language educational network.

The relationship of the two Greek-speaking education networks within their institutional and organizational framework, in their ideological orientations and their content, for their contribution in shaping supra- and transnational networks plus a global contemporary Greek culture, has not yet been adequately studied.

Studies prepared under the Program «Education for Greeks Abroad»¹ represent a first attempt in this direction. The rich empirical material that has been collected throughout the Education for Greeks Abroad project may serve as a basis for comparative-synthesis studies. Indeed, Damanakis' article herein, entitled «Transitions, flow and outflow of students in the Greek Education in the Diaspora» sets the pace.

Despite these efforts, a gap remains in the study of the relationship between the two educational systems. This issue of *Études helléniques/Hellenic Studies* does not aim to fill that gap, but rather seeks to stimulate further discussion and research through the study of selected items from Greece and the diaspora.

Athanasios Gotovos in his article presents a theoretical framework that can provide a basis for analyzing current events facing education in multicultural societies. The concept of multiculturalism is discussed in direct relation to social cohesion and shared values that must be transmitted to new generations (regardless of ethnocultural origin) so as to contribute to education by creating a common code and thus promoting social cohesion.

The articles of Theodosia Michelakaki and Michael Kassotakis-Despina Papageuli-Vouliouri refer to specific aspects of modern Greek primary and secondary schools and seek primarily to inform readers of Hellenic Studies.

Specifically, *Michelakaki's* article presents and discusses the evolution of the structure of the Greek educational system, its features and functions from 1974 until today. The focus of the analysis is the socialization function plus selective operations and functions to provide skills to students. The author also discusses the lack of an evaluation system in the Greek educational system and the subsequent effects.

This concept is linked to the articles of *Kassotakis and Papageuli-Vouliouri*, who treat the issue of evaluation in Greek education. One issue that has plagued the Greek educational system since the mid 1970's until today is the collapse of the authoritarian office of inspector and the corresponding evaluation system. This left a vacuum as yet not fully filled. In this respect, evaluation remains a problem in Greek education, including higher education.

Besides evaluation, another unresolved issue in Greek education is access to higher education for high school graduates. Access was analyzed by *Siphis Bouzakis*, who introduces a historical and sociological approach. Specifically, the author discusses the following four periods:

First Period: From the free entrance (admission) passed in 1837 to the introduction of entrance examinations in 1922.

Second Period: From the entrance examinations (1922) to the "numerous clauses" of the students accepted in institutions of higher learning (1930)

Third Period: From the "numerous clauses" (quotas) of the students accepted in such institutions (1930) to the academic diploma (1964).

Fourth Period: From the General Pan-Hellenic Examinations (1974) to the reform by Gerasimos Arsenis (1997/98).

As the titles and dates indicate, many systems and practices have been tried over time and remain in place today.

The article by *Nikos Andreadakis, Athanasios Gotovos* and *Michael Damanakis* highlights the progress of students in Greek universities. In particular, detailed parameters are analyzed such as success/failure in the examinations of various subjects; performance; delay in obtaining a degree, and interruption of studies. Through these tests the truths and myths of the Greek higher education emerge, e.g., the myth of the 'eternal students'.

Completely new issues in education appeared after 1990, when Greece which had long been a country sending immigrants abroad began to evolve into a country of entry, and in part to a host country for immigrants.

The massive entry and even permanent establishment of immigrants, initially from the Balkan countries and former Soviet Union and then from Asian and African countries led to significant changes in the student population in Greece. The presence of students with immigrant backgrounds places the Greek education before a set of unprecedented educational, teaching and methodological issues and raises new theoretical and ideological requests from the scientific community, policymakers and practitioners on the frontlines.

This exciting new situation is analyzed and examined by *Michael Damanakis*, in

his article "The Education of Students with a Migratory Background in Greece" and by *George Markou* in his own article. These articles may be considered in tandem. *Damanakis*' article focuses on the relationship between the educational policies of the Ministry of Education and the scientific pedagogical discourse and the impact of this relationship to the elaboration of the bill on "intercultural education" (Bill 2413/1996) and on its application. *Markou*'s article focuses instead on a specific approach (the ethnic-minority approach) of the multicultural situation which took shape in Greece and in applying this approach to the Muslim minority in Thrace.

In fact, *Damanakis*' article «Transitions, Flow and Outflow of Students in Greek Education Abroad» is connecting the Greek-speaking diaspora education with the educational policies of the Centre (Greece) for the diaspora. The author achieves this by examining the various forms of Greek language education within the diaspora and the success of their graduates in examinations for admission to Greek universities. He also analyzes briefly the success or failure of expatriate students at Greek universities. In this regard, the article relates well to the article co-written by *Andreadakis*, *Gotovos* and *Damanakis*.

Anastasios Tamis, analyzes the maintenance, shift and general situation of the Greek language in Australia, and the contact and interaction with the English language.

This issue closes with the article of *Stephanos Constantinides*, who presents the situation of the education in Cyprus.

NOTES

1. The Program «Paideia Omogenon» («Education for Greeks Abroad») was funded by the Ministry of Education of Greece and the European Union and implemented between 1997 and 2008 from the Centre of Intercultural and Migration Studies (E.DIA.M.ME.) of the University of Crete, in collaboration with scientists, mostly of Greek origin from abroad. The studies developed under the program are posted on the website www.uoc.gr/diaspora.