

## The Greek Education in the Diaspora

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The history of Greek-language education in the diaspora is an integral part of the Diaspora itself. In that sense, the studies in the present volume may be regarded as being a contribution to research into the modern Greek diaspora, which extends from the mid-15th century to the present day.

In particular, the involuntary and often forced removal of Greek populations from the dominions of the Ottoman Empire, mainly to countries bordering the Black Sea and in the trans-Caucasus, led to the creation of Greek communities in those areas. These communities are examined in the present volume by A. Chatzipanayiotidis.

In contrast, the emigration of workers from Greece to third countries over the period from the late 19th century to the 1970s led to the emergence of the migrant communities existing today in host countries such as the USA, Canada, Australia, Great Britain, Germany, Argentina, Egypt, South Africa and other African countries. These are examined in the present volume by N. Nikolidakis, S. Constantinides, A. Tamis, M. Louca-Gramm, A. Krystallidou and M. Damanakis / M. Kanavakis.

To this day, the accumulated historical experience of Greeks as regards their social, political and economic organization outside their particular “maternal centre” continues to influence their organization and relationship with the centre, Greece. For all the observed differences, community organizations such as Civil Communities, Church Communities, Local Origin Associations (Brotherhoods) and Parents' Associations are present to a greater or lesser extent in all communities.

As far as Greek-language education is concerned, a decisive role is played by Civil and Church Communities, Parents' Associations, the Greek State and the host countries. Significant differences are observable from country to country with regard both to the institutions involved and to the forms Greek-language education takes.

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As can be seen in the summary table below, in addition to state-run services operated by the country of origin and the host country (columns D and E), the Church, Civil Communities, community organizations and even individuals may act as institutions for Greek-language education.

Particularly in the USA, the Greek Orthodox Church of America is the main institution. By contrast, state-run services are as a rule the main institution in Europe. In the former Soviet Republics, most initiatives for the founding of schools (Greek language classes) are taken by community institutions (associations, Greek club federations, societies). That being said, there are also state-run schools (in Armenia, Georgia, Russia and the Ukraine), at which Greek language classes have been officially included in the timetable.

Greek-Language Education: Institutions and Forms					
Types of Education and Recipients	Typology of Institutions				
	Private Individuals	Legal entities (e.g. Associations)	The Church	State-run services in country of origin residence	
	A	B	C	D	E
1. Pre-school education					
1.1 Greek-only pre-primary schools	+	+	+	+	
1.2 Mixed pre-primary schools		+	+	+	+
2. Primary and Secondary Education					
2.1 Greek-only (private) schools		+		+	
2.2 Daily (bilingual) schools for Greek-language and / or other-language pupils		+	+		+
2.3 Greek language classes for Greek-language pupils (in school timetable, afternoon, Saturday schools etc.)	+	+	+	+	+
2.4 Ordinary classes in host country for Greek-language or other-language pupils					+
2.5 Ordinary classes in host country only for other-language pupils					+
3. European schools				+	+

The foundation of Greek-language schools by private individuals is a rare phenomenon, mainly encountered in Australia, Canada and former Soviet Union countries.

Precisely who or what acts as an institution for Greek-language education and which form is the most common in each country depends on the particular circumstances applying in each host country, educational policy vis-à-vis ethnic groups within its territory and, of course, the historical course of the Greek presence in each country, as well as on the educational policy adopted by the Greek state at any given time.

For example, day or bilingual schools are encountered in major urban centres with a large Greek presence, such as New York, Chicago, Montreal, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Johannesburg, Berlin, provided that they are permitted by the legislation in the state, country or province of residence.

In general terms, institutions for Greek-language education can be divided into three categories:

- a) education services provided by the host country / country of residence;*
- b) education services provided by the country of origin;*
- c) community institutions.*

However, the institutions that hold the fate of Greek-language education in their hands and guarantee the continued presence of the language in the diaspora are the community organizations and the Church.

The types of Greek-language education included in the table are in actual fact groups of different forms of education. For example, the third type (2.3.), primary and secondary education, consists of:

- a) classes incorporated into the normal timetable in host country schools (the exception);
- b) classes incorporated into the normal timetable but taking place in the afternoon (a common form);
- c) classes taking place in the afternoon, outside the education system in the country of residence, usually under the aegis of community institutions (the most common form);
- d) classes taking place in the afternoon, supported both by host country education authorities and institutions and by community institutions;
- e) Saturday schools.

It should be stressed that the most common form of Greek-language education in the diaspora is that provided by afternoon or Saturday schools, and that community organizations themselves are the institution usually responsible for them.

A further common form of Greek-language education is provided by the so-called *day schools*. There are schools which operate either in the morning or all day on weekdays, and cater fully to their pupils' compulsory education; whereas, Greek language classes operate on a supplementary basis and do not normally award academic qualifications.

Day schools are most commonly encountered in the USA, Canada and Australia. Similar schools do also exist elsewhere, e.g., Brussels, London, in major cities in Germany, and in the Sudan, Ethiopia and South Africa, but go by different names.

By and large, these day schools offer a bilingual curriculum, and could be referred to as *bilingual day schools*. The exact curriculum and timetable at such schools depends on the institutional and socio-economic circumstances applying in each case. For example, day schools in Montreal are trilingual, the three languages of instruction being French (60-65% of the time), Greek (20-25%) and English (10-15%). The same is true of the SAHETI in Johannesburg, at which English, Afrikaans and Greek are languages of instruction, in addition to which the Zulu language is also taught (*see Constantinides and Krystallidou in the present volume*).

The Greek-only schools in Germany and their counterparts in Brussels and London form a category of their own. These schools are funded and supervised by the Greek State and teach the Greek curriculum. Their continued operation three decades after foundation is mainly due to the fact that leavers can gain entry to Greek universities by sitting special easy examinations (*see Damanakis / Kanavakis in the present volume*).

European schools operate in countries and cities in the European Union where EU institutions are established, and admit children of EU employees. In a number of these (Brussels, Luxemburg, Munich and even in Heraklion, Crete), there are Greek-language forms (classes).

Reviewing the forms of Greek-language education in the diaspora on the basis of 1) *legal status*; 2) *attendance obligations*; 3) *curriculum*, we see that:

- a) apart from the Greek-only schools, which are subject to Greek law, all other forms of education are subject to legislation in the country of residence;
- b) pupils fulfil their obligations with regard to compulsory education if they attend a Greek-only or day School, whereas attendance at all other forms of Greek-language education is both optional and supplementary;
- c) with the exception of the day Schools and in part the Greek-only schools, at which the curriculum is bilingual, in all other forms of education the curriculum is Greek-language and supplementary.

On the basis of their mission and orientation, the above forms of education could be differentiated between as follows:

Firstly, those which aim to prepare pupils for integration into the Greek educational, political and socio-cultural system (e.g. the Greek-only schools), and secondly, those which foster the Greek language within a multicultural - multilingual framework in the country of residence.

It is immediately obvious that we are dealing with two different rationales, the first of which is linked to “*return migration*”, while the second is bound up with *integration into host societies*. Given that emigration from Greece to the countries which traditionally hosted Greek migrants is no longer operative, the future probably lies in the second rationale.

On the basis of a fifth criterion, *integration or non-integration* into the education system of the host country, forms of Greek-language education can be separated into two major categories:

- a) those within the curriculum, i.e. those incorporated into the education system of the host country;
- b) extra-curricular forms.

Most forms of Greek-language education belong in the second category.

The forms and *status quo* of Greek-language education depend on or are at least influenced by: a) the history of each diaspora; b) the *status quo* of Greeks in the various countries of residence, and the resultant relationship between them and the host country, on the one hand, and with Greece, on the other.

Turning to the stance taken by Greece towards the various diasporas, and the home country's relationship with them, we note differences as regards the legislative measures enacted by Greece, and above all in the implementation of those measures.

For example, Law 2790/2000 (*On the Restitution of Return Migrants from the former Soviet Union*) was purely concessionary in nature, applying solely to Greek migrants from the former Soviet Union.

Greek communities in the former Soviet Union comprise what is termed the “historical Diaspora”; they differ from the remaining communities around the world, which were the result of migration from the late 19th century up until 1973, and which make up what is known as the “migrant Diaspora” (*see Damanakis in the present volume*).

Nevertheless, differences are not restricted to those between the historical and the migrant diasporas. They also exist within each type, particularly in the case of the latter. We highlight the differences by taking Germany and Canada as an example.

Although migration to Canada preceded that to Germany by approximately seven years, it is comparable as regards the circumstances prevailing in Greece in the 1950s and 1960s, and the reasons that led Greeks to emigrate.

Nevertheless, there was one crucial difference in the *status quo* of Greeks in the two countries. Canada received them with the prospect of permanent settlement, and thus soon offered them the opportunity to take up citizenship and acquire Canadian citizens' rights.

In contrast, Germany initially acted on the basis of the “rotation principle” (*Rotationsprinzip*). In simple terms, this meant that every five years the “guest workers” (*Gastarbeiter*) would return home, their places being taken by new workers.

Of course, this principle soon proved unworkable. Migrant policy thus shifted from the “rotation principle” to the “double strategy” (*Doppelstrategie*), meaning integration (*read assimilation*) and increased support for return migration for those wishing to go back to their country of origin.

In practice the double strategy was to prove equally unsuccessful, and so in the 1980s German governments went in search of new policies. Yet these need not concern us further, given the fact that *status quo* of Greeks in Germany changed after 1981, following Greece's accession to the European Union.

In addition to the status quo of Greeks in both countries (Canada and Germany) we should also bear in mind the Greeks' future plans and Greece's policy as the country of origin. In the initial stages, the intention to migrate on a temporary basis and the desire to return home were common to both groups. Yet in combination with geographical distance, migrant policies in the two countries acted as a check in the case of Greeks in Canada, while strengthening the will to return among those in Germany.

Together with a number of other factors analysed by Damanakis / Kanavakis and Constantinides herein, future prospects (return migration or more permanent residence) led to differing forms of education in the two countries. Although trilingual day Schools in Québec, Canada, admit Orthodox pupils of Greek descent, they are an integral part of the Québec education system and are funded by the provincial Ministry of Education. In contrast, Greek-only schools in Germany are funded by Greece, implement Greek curricula just as in Greece, operate outside the German education system and are isolated from their natural socio-cultural milieu.

In closing this introduction, we should stress that Greek-language education constitutes a highly significant link between the country of origin and the diaspora. Proof of this may be seen in the Education for Greeks Abroad program, which also serves as a meeting place and forum for cooperation among the authors of this volume.

Together with the above authors, other academics of Greek and non-Greek descent as well as Greek language teachers go to make up one of the many networks now linking Greece with diasporas around the world.

To some extent, the knowledge and experience accumulated by the members of that network are put on record in the present volume, which is now made available for use by education scientists, policymakers, diplomatic officials in Greece and the countries of residence and, of course, all teachers of Greek.