

Multiculturalism, Migration, Mathematics Education and Language

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EDUCATIONAL POLICY TOWARDS MINORITIES IN GREECE

Minority, intercultural and multicultural education have become subjects of educational discourse in Greece in the late 1990s. The terminology referring to the diversity of related interventions taken by the educational policy in some official documents appears as “cross-cultural education” (see Eurydice 2006) while in others these are supplanted with the term “intercultural education” (see IPODE). Most of these interventions target at least four categories of subjects and educational areas: (a) The education of the Muslim minority in Western Thrace, the only officially recognised minority in Greece (b) the education of repatriated Greeks, mostly from former Soviet Union countries and Germany, (c) the education of immigrants and foreigners who entered Greece in the 1990s and 2000s in big numbers and (d) the education of the Roma.

The aim of “Intercultural Education” is to “*organize and enable primary and secondary schools to provide education to people with special educational, social, and cultural characteristics*”. The objective is to “harmoniously integrate intercultural education students into the mainstream educational system. As the number of these students has increased significantly in recent years in our country, it requires specific, additional actions based on intercultural education, to support them in the school context”.

The implementation of policy for “intercultural education” is based on:

- A. Law 2413/1996, which regulates issues of intercultural education and issues of school practices in order to develop appropriate conditions for ensuring equality of opportunity in education for all students.
- B. Law 2790/2000, which regulates the reception and establishment measures for repatriated Greeks.
- C. Law 2910/2001, which lays down the reception and establishment framework for third country nationals.

The legislative framework on the establishment and operation of reception and supplementary tutorial classes for intercultural education purposes is contained in Ministerial Decision No. Φ2/378/Γ1/1124/8.12.94 (Eurydice 2006).

Educational Policy Interventions

- A. Intercultural Schools (Diapolitismika Scholia). They adopt the curriculum of the traditional state schools. These schools’ curriculum is tailored for the particular educational, social and cultural needs of their students. From 1996- 2008, twenty-

six schools have been designated as Intercultural Schools in Greece with specialised curricula (13 primary, 9 lower-secondary and 4 upper-secondary education). For a school to be designated as intercultural it should have the number of students with multicultural and linguistic diversity approaching 45% of the total student population. Furthermore, in the intercultural schools, additional interventional structures are applied such as the Reception Class Scheme and the Supplementary tutorial classes.

- B. The Reception Class Scheme. It is completed in two cycles/levels integrated into the ordinary school curriculum:
- In Reception Class I. Students who are to enter the Greek education system take an intensive course to learn Greek as a second language. Its duration is one academic year.
 - In Reception Class II. Short internal and external linguistic and learning support course, which takes place in ordinary classes, with parallel language teaching support. This type of course lasts up to two academic years, after students finish Reception Class I.
- C. The supplementary tutorial classes. They are attended by students who have not studied in Reception Classes. These classes refer to students who face difficulties in language learning or students who have received these support measures but continue to have difficulties in class. These supplementary tutorial classes usually operate outside ordinary school hours, as there are not enough teachers or classrooms in the existing schools.
- A primary school tutorial teaching includes Greek language and/or mathematics, while at lower secondary school it includes language teaching (ancient and modern Greek), mathematics, physics, chemistry and foreign languages (http://www.fa3.gr/nomo-thesia_2/nomoth_education/4_enisxitiki.htm).
- D. Special Projects of Educational Interventions in the framework of "Integration of children with cultural and linguistic diversities in the educational system". These projects (in Greece they are called programs) have been launched with the co-funding of EU Community Support Framework and implemented by university teams in various regions of the country. Three Main Projects have been running: a) The Program for the Education of Repatriated and Foreign Students, b) The Program for the Education of Muslims in Thrace, c) The Program for the Education of Roma Children. Those programs will have finished until 2013 or 2014.

Roma and Muslim children

The Roma are considered to be among the poorest and most marginalized groups in Greece. Although they are recorded in the census of the general population with the same criteria as the rest of the Greek population, there are no exact numbers of the group's population. The information regarding Roma students come only from the the "Roma Education Project" which has run in areas with a high number of Roma population. According to its latest evaluation report (2008) in the schools of project's

intervention there were 7.043 Roma students(17,6% of these school's total numbers) in all educational levels.

Special actions for Roma students:

- A specific Ministerial Decision (Φ4/155/Γ1/1257/11.9.6) establishes the attendance card for travelling Roma students. Roma children are accepted in any school with this card when they have to move to other regions due to their family working conditions.
- Special preparatory classes for Roma children were set up and the attendance of former students in primary schools has been regulated by Ministry of education circulars (Γ1/694/1.9.99).
- Financial assistance to low income Roma families that enroll their children in compulsory education has been established (A.Π. 2/37645/0020/8.7.2002).
- Certain public schools have been transformed into intercultural schools.

The Muslim minority in Thrace (Northern Greece) is the only officially recognized minority in Greece. In accordance with the Treaty of Lausanne, the Greek state is obliged to provide bilingual education to the children. Muslim students are not obliged to make use of the so-called "minority education" but there are not a lot of Muslim pupils that attend the general primary and secondary schools. Minority schools, primary and secondary, have a bilingual program, divided into two equal parts. Each part of the program has its counterparts, Turkish-speaking and Greek-speaking teachers and their respective books. 222 Minority Schools, 218 primary schools and 6 schools of secondary education (2 lower secondary schools, 2 upper secondary schools) operate in the region of Thrace. Today the number of students that attend secondary education is about 6000 while in the early 90s it barely exceeded 600 students.

Programs for training teachers to teach mathematics in multicultural classes

The Projects of Educational Interventions for different cultural groups, which were mentioned before, went through different implementation phases, with different aims in each phase. However, they have as central actions the production of teaching material and teachers' training in multicultural teaching approaches and the intercultural communication inside or/and outside school.

In particular: The main objectives of the "*Program for the Education of Repatriated and Foreign Students*" included:

- The development and implementation of a coordinated intervention to promote integration of repatriated and immigrant children in the educational system.
- The recognition of the barriers that inhibit students from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds to make the most of their learning potential in order to provide the framework for reviewing these barriers so as to change the learning environment.

- The improvement of the reinforcing structures and networks for integrating pupils from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds in the school and the wider community.
- The development of teaching materials and teaching methods that enable all students to engage in learning with a specific purpose/goal for them.

Teacher training is a central action of the program and adopts a variety of methodological approaches (seminars, labs, school projects), at least in the last phase of the program (2010-13). The training action of the program targets primary but also secondary education. Looking through several project's announcements about teacher training, there is no specific reference regarding training teachers to teach mathematics in multicultural classes. The thematic areas of the training activities refer to organizational matters of dealing with multiculturalism in the school context, as well as intercultural education and the teaching of language in mixed classes or as a second language.

A. The main objectives referred to in the Program "*Education of Children of the Muslim Minority in Thrace*" are:

- To contribute towards a harmonious integration of minority children to the education system and as well as to wider society,
- To upgrade their education; emphasis is put on adequate knowledge of the Greek language that will facilitate in the future issues of professional occupation in better terms,
- To ensure the eligibility of these children by teaching staff and all citizens of Thrace,
- To provide teachers with specialist knowledge, other appropriate educational materials and innovative practices,
- To support families to enhance school performance of their children,
- To strengthen the education of minority children and their harmonious integration into society as equal citizens of Greece and the European Union.

The training of teachers is one of the most important activities of the "Program for the Education of Muslim Children" (PEM) and is directly connected to the production of new school textbooks and other educational items. The goal of this continuous and systematic training is to familiarize the teachers with the principles and teaching methods the new books are based upon, to support the teachers' work, and to make teaching under the special (and difficult) conditions of minority education more effective. More specifically, the training seminars and sessions organized by PEM deal with the following issues:

- How best to use the textbooks and other educational material that were produced in the context of PEM,
- What teaching methods and techniques to employ in the courses for which PEM has produced and published new textbooks,

- How to make corrections and changes on the new textbooks and material, based on the feedback from the teachers who have used them, especially with regard to the teaching process, how significant it is to recognize and respect the special identity of minority pupils.

Training Teachers of Mathematics

PEM has implemented a teacher training program for math teachers. The training of these teachers is directly related to the planning and an earlier pilot run of an educational intervention in the teaching of Mathematics for Minority Pupils. The intervention involved the production of innovative material for Mathematics that is now used in the after-hours (extended hours) school program at some secondary schools with a significant number of minority pupils.

According to the theoretical framework this action was built upon, the dominant components of the “mathematical meaning construction process” in the class are:

- (a) The pupils (their access to mathematical knowledge is determined by the interaction of the “mathematical content” with their “mathematical thought development procedure”), and
- (b) The socio-cultural framework for learning (meanings, thoughts, thought process are all products of social activity, while the learning process takes place in environments determined by social and cultural factors).

The goal of these training sessions has been to familiarize teachers with the educational material entitled “Mathematics in an Environment Shaped for Autonomous Learning” and alternative ways to work with it. The main message to be passed on in these sessions is that it is important to cultivate a positive learning atmosphere in the class, because such an atmosphere encourages pupils to gradually improve their confidence in themselves and their abilities, and thus assume responsibility for their learning. The pupils, can, therefore, work through the mathematics material, especially the activities, with the help of their teacher and their classmates, and in the process develop a clearer, sharper way of thinking. For this purpose, the training sessions with the teachers have been centered on the organization and the management of pupils’ work in class toward the direction described above. More specifically, emphasis has been put on critical reading, planning, production and effective use of mathematical activities in the class.

B. The goals of “*Education of Roma children*” Program are:

- The massive attraction and systematic education of Roma children in compulsory education by facilitating entries, parents support, the facilitation of the school to fulfill its role and overcoming dysfunctions, which are related directly or indirectly to the educational marginalization of Roma children. Thematic cycles include issues such as:
 - The insuring of equal opportunities for learning and social inclusion,
 - The training of teachers and administrative staff,
 - The fight against prejudices against this population,

- The gradual rejection or separation practices of a part of students' population,
- The improvement of students' performance and the support of their progress in secondary school and Technical Vocational Education

The training activities of this Program aim at fostering awareness of teachers at all levels of education on topics of Intercultural education, psychosocial support, the teaching of Greek as a second language and contemporary teaching models and approaches. Specifically, the training sessions listed in the promotion and implementation of teaching materials produced for the teaching of the Greek language and regular covering specific thematic cycles, such as:

- Multicultural society and interculturalism,
- Social and cultural characteristics of the Roma population,
- Good practices for the application of teaching materials produced for teaching Greek as a second language,
- Theoretical and practical aspects of intercultural education,
- Psychosocial support schools attended by Roma students,
- Issues of pedagogy, didactics and methodology.

Resources

http://www.uoi.gr/services/epeaek/metro11/ergo0664.htm_gotovos_1997_arxiko

<http://www.greekembassy.org/Embassy/content/en/Article.aspx?office=3&folder=361&article=22071>

<http://www.minorityrights.org/?lid=326>

<http://www.rieas.gr/research-areas/illegal-immigration/1480-immigration-to-greece-april-2011.html>

<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Greece:Overview>

<http://www.interuv.eu/products/hellenic-ministry-of-education-lifelong-learning-and-religious-affairs-greece/>

<http://www.epasi.eu>

<http://www.keda.gr/roma/index.php/education>

<http://www.servitoros.gr/education/view.php/13/189/>

http://archive.minedu.gov.gr/docs/el_el_090407.pdf

<http://www.epasi.eu/CountryReportGR.pdf>

<http://museduc.gr/en/index.php?page=3&sub=324>

<http://museduc.gr/en/index.php?page=3>

http://www.keda.gr/roma/files/1_2.pdf

<http://edu.klimaka.gr/leitoyrgia-sxoleivn/diapolitismika/778-programma-entaxhs-palinnostuntwn-roma-allodapwn.html>

http://archive.minedu.gov.gr/el_ec_page787.htm

http://www.unicef.gr/pdfs/Children_in_Greece_2012.pdf

<http://repository.edulll.gr/edulll/retrieve/1045/201.pdf>

<http://repository.edulll.gr/edulll/handle/10795/781>

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/education/training/docs/actions-plans/Greece.pdf>

<http://www.azinlikca.net/ellinika-arthra/2010-12-10-18-03-51.html>

<http://www.diapolis.auth.gr/index.php/2013-10-17-09-02-20>

<http://roma.pre.uth.gr/main/>