

# ADQUISICIÓN DE LAS COMPETENCIAS CLAVE A TRAVÉS DE LA MEJORA EN LA DIGITALIZACIÓN EN LA EDUCACIÓN DE PERSONAS ADULTAS.

## ADQUISITION OF KEY COMPETENCIES THROUGH IMPROVING DIGITALIZATION IN ADULTS EDUCATION.

**Josefa Hernández González**

Inspectora de educación. Murcia.

[josefa.hernandez30@carm.es](mailto:josefa.hernandez30@carm.es)

### Resumen

Desde junio de 2024, USIE lidera un proyecto europeo en el marco del programa Erasmus + KA 2024-1-ES01-KA122-ADU-000239717 titulado "**Adquisición de las competencias clave a través de la mejora en la digitalización en la educación de personas adultas**", que finalizó en noviembre de 2025. El objetivo principal es identificar y analizar, a nivel europeo, buenas prácticas en la adquisición de competencias clave en un segmento de población con características particulares (obligaciones laborales, escaso tiempo libre, cuidado de personas dependientes, etc.), para quienes las herramientas digitales representan un recurso clave que facilita el aprendizaje. Dentro de este proyecto se ha realizado un job shadowing a dos centros educativos de la localidad de Nafpaktos en Grecia.

**Palabras clave:** *Educación de adultos, competencias clave, digitalización, aprendizaje por observación.*

**Abstract.**

Since June 2024, USIE is leading a European project in the framework of the Erasmus + programme KA 2024-1-ES01-KA122-ADU-000239717 entitled '**Acquisition of key competences through improved digitisation in adult education**', which is scheduled to end in November 2025. The main objective is to identify and analyse, at European level, good practices in the acquisition of key competences in a segment of the population with particular characteristics (work obligations, little free time, care of dependents, etc.), for whom digital tools represent a key resource that facilitates learning. Within this project, job shadowing has been carried out at two educational centers in the town of Nafaktos in Greece.

**Keywords:** *Adults education, key competencies, ICT, Job shadowing*

## 1. INITIAL HYPOTHESIS. DIGITALISATION IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE MEANS OF ACQUIRING KEY SKILLS IN ADULT EDUCATION.

During the course of the previous Erasmus+ project "STOPPING EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING AS A MEANS TO PROMOTE SOCIAL AND WORK INCLUSION" STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP PROJECT 2019-1-ES01-KA201-065931. (Prevention of early school leaving), which even led to the publication of a book entitled 'Guide to Good Practice in the Prevention of Early School Leaving' 'Early on', we realised that there was still a long way to go – and not just in school education. European society cannot accept that even a single one of its citizens should drop out of the education system or reach adulthood without possessing key competences.

This situation led us to promote digitalisation in order to facilitate the acquisition of key competences in adult education.

## 2. OBJECTIVES :

- To identify, analyse, adapt and implement best practices relating to improving the acquisition of key competences through digitalisation.
- To implement new teaching and learning methodologies and approaches.
- To encourage the participation of learners in rural areas.
- To promote the inclusion of learners with special educational needs.

## 3. CONTEXT AND JUSTIFICATION

During a mobility programme in Turkey in January 2020, we observed the value placed there on adult education, in a country with historically lower enrolment rates than those in Europe. Its flexible, hybrid education system (face-to-face/distance learning, synchronous/asynchronous), with quarterly face-to-face assessments, offered an inspiring model for improving formal adult education in Spain, with a focus

on skills-based education and digital transformation.

The 2020 pandemic further highlighted the potential of digitalisation as an educational tool. Since then, the situation has continued to evolve. Added to this is the war in Ukraine, which has led to the migration of millions of adults with immediate training needs, whilst the effects of climate change have increased the influx of non-EU migrants.

In this project, we aim to take things a step further, based on the hypothesis that digitalisation is the key that will open the door to the acquisition of key skills among adults.

#### 4. DIGITALISATION AND ADULT EDUCATION

USIE has identified weaknesses in the acquisition of key competences within Adult Education Centres. One of the main challenges is to promote digitalisation in these centres in order to optimise training time and reduce the environmental footprint caused by travel, particularly in certain regions of Spain which are very spread out and where there are no alternatives to private cars.

This Erasmus+ project enables USIE to identify good practices in other European organisations and adapt them to the Spanish education system. Specifically, the project aims to:

- Explore the use of artificial intelligence programmes in adult education.
- Compare systems for assessing key competences.
- Analyse the methodological flexibility of adult education centres.
- Study the impact of the arrival of migrants during the school year, particularly when they do not speak the language.

#### 5. ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT:

Between 3 and 6 April 2025, the project coordinators visited the town of Nafpaktos, where they signed an agreement under which, between 26 and 30 May 2025, four USIE inspectors from different autonomous communities (Ms María Inmaculada Vaquero García, Education Inspector at the Valencia Regional Education Directorate of the Valencian Community; Ms Eva María Fernández González, Central Inspector at the Ministry of Education, Vocational Training and Sport ; Ms Laura Morillas Molina, Education Inspector at the Provincial Department of Education, Culture and Sport in Toledo, and Ms Josefa Hernández González, Education Inspector at the Education Inspectorate of the Regional Ministry of Education and Vocational Training of the Region of Murcia, undertook an observation-based learning activity at the EPAL (Vocational Education Institute) in Nafpaktos and at the Second Chance School in the same town, both located in the region of Aetolia-Acarnania (Western Greece).

The visit provided an opportunity to learn about the courses offered at the newly established Second Chance Education (SDE) centre for the 2024/25 academic year, located on the premises of the SECOND LYCEY NAFPAKTOS Sports Centre, where classes are held in the evenings. In addition, they visited the EPAL in Nafpaktos, an educational centre offering vocational training, where they were able to learn about, in particular, the third-level courses – equivalent to intermediate-level vocational training in Spain – in the following sectors and departments :

- Agriculture, Food and Environment Sector : Level 3 : Food and Beverage Technology Technician. Level 3 Food and Beverage Technology Technician.

- The Department of Electrical, Electronic and Automation Engineering offers the following courses :

- o Level 3: Students will attend 23 hours of specialist classes and 12 hours of general education classes per week.

- o Upon completion of their exams, students will be awarded the Bachiller qualification, which is equivalent to the General Baccalaureate and a

Diploma in Electricity or Electronics, respectively.

▣ Technical Diploma in Electronic and IT Systems, Installations, Networks and Telecommunications.

– Department of Mechanical Engineering :

○ Level 3 :

- Technician in Heating and Plumbing and Oil and Natural Gas Technology.
- Technician in Refrigeration, Ventilation and Air Conditioning.
- Automotive Technician.

Health and Wellbeing Sector:

– Year 3: Technician in Cosmetic Therapy.

EPALS (Vocational High Schools) offer technical and vocational secondary education, preparing students for practical careers and for further study at university or technical colleges. They form an important part of the Greek education system, with a focus on technical and professional skills, often in collaboration with businesses. The equivalent in the Spanish education system would be Level 2 within Grade D, according to the new training structure established by the new Organic Law 3/2022 of 31 March on the Organisation and Integration of Vocational Training, implemented by Royal Decree 659/2023 of 18 July, which sets out the organisation of the Vocational Training System, and which is delivered both in secondary schools and in Integrated Vocational Training Centres (CIFP).

Second Chance Schools (S.D.E.) are general formal education schools for adults that fall under the General Secretariat for Vocational Education, Training and Lifelong Learning (GGEECK & D.V.M.) – Directorate of Lifelong Learning (Y.PAI.THA) – and offer adults aged 18 or over who have not completed nine years of

compulsory education the opportunity to continue their studies and obtain a qualification equivalent to a secondary school diploma (Law 4763/2020).

The duration of these courses is eighteen months (two academic years), with a teaching timetable of 25 hours per week, with classes held in the evenings from Monday to Friday.

There are currently 82 SDEs operating in Greece, of which 12 are in prisons and a further 34 in external departments across the country.

The purpose of the SDEs is:

- a. To enable people over the age of eighteen who have not completed their secondary education to complete their compulsory education.
- b. To reconnect students with the education and training systems,
- c. To enable them to acquire modern knowledge, skills and competences that will assist their social and economic integration and development,
- d. To improve students' self-esteem, and
- e. To contribute to their integration into the labour market or to improve their position in the workplace.

Its curriculum is open and flexible, with its core structure aligned with the Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on key competences for lifelong learning (2018/C 189/01), which includes digital competence – the focus of this Erasmus+ project – and comprises the following subjects :

1. Greek,
2. Mathematics,
3. Computer Science,

4. English,
5. Social Studies, 6. Environmental Education,
7. Natural Sciences and
8. Aesthetic and Cultural Education.

Furthermore, each Second Chance School provides career guidance services through a careers adviser and a counselling psychologist.

To be eligible for these schools, applicants must be 18 years of age by 31 December of the year of enrolment or have turned 18, and must not have completed the nine-year compulsory education programme, whilst also holding a primary school certificate.

In summary, Second Chance Schools in Greece are a key tool for the social and educational inclusion of adults, in line with European trends towards offering second chances for training and employment to the most vulnerable,

as established by the European Commission since 1997. They combine general education with technical training and the world of work, enabling students to obtain a qualification equivalent to the ESO (Compulsory Secondary Education) Certificate.

## 6. A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ADULT EDUCATION IN GREECE AND SPAIN.

### A. STRUCTURE OF EDUCATION SYSTEMS :

Firstly, we shall provide an overview of the current Greek education system, from early years education through to adult education. The current education law focuses on free and compulsory education from the age of 4 (pre-school) to 15 (end of lower secondary education), overseen by the Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Sport (YPAITHA), and guarantees access for all children, although challenges remain for refugees. Furthermore, it seeks to modernise the system

through recent legislation that reintroduces behavioural assessment and opens up debates on higher education, whilst maintaining private universities are prohibited under Article 16 of the Constitution, although the status of foreign branches is a matter of debate.

The current Greek education system is structured into the following stages and levels of education:

- Pre-school education (Προσχολική Εκπαίδευση) : ages 4 to 6. This is provided in Nipiagogeio (state nursery schools) and in kindergartens.
- Primary education (Δημοτική Εκπαίδευση): ages 6 to 12. This is provided at Dimotiko Scholeio, and its aim is to enable pupils to acquire basic skills (Greek language, mathematics, science, art and physical education).
- Lower secondary education (Γυμνάσιο – Gymnasio) : ages 12 to 15.

This is attended at Gymnasio schools. It provides a general education. It marks the end of compulsory education.

- Upper secondary education (Λύκειο – Lykeio) : ages 15 to 18. Non-compulsory education :
  - General Lyceum (Γενικό Λύκειο – GEL) : Academic guidance ; preparation for university studies ; entry to university via national examinations (Panhellenic examinations).
  - Vocational Lyceum (Επαγγελματικό Λύκειο – EPAL) : vocational orientation ; combines general and technical education and provides access to the labour market, higher vocational training, and university via specific entrance examinations.
- Non-university post-secondary education; this is provided at Vocational Training Institutes (IEK – ΙΕΚ), is voluntary in nature and lasts two years plus a work placement phase. Its aim is to achieve a specific vocational qualification and is equivalent to Higher-Level Vocational Training in Spain.
- Higher education (Ανώτατη Εκπαίδευση): Admission is via the national

examinations (Panhellenic Examinations). It is provided at universities and polytechnics. It is structured into the following levels :

- Bachelor's degree (4 years, 5–6 years for engineering degrees).
- Master's degree.
- Doctorate.
- Adult education : aimed at obtaining basic qualifications, reskilling and lifelong learning.

The Spanish education system establishes a similar structure, as set out in Article 3(2) of Organic Law 2/2006 of 3 May on Education (hereinafter LOE), as amended by Organic Law 3/2020 of 29 December, offering the following courses (Table 1) :



Table 1. Source: Ministry of Education, Vocational Training and Sport

- Early Years Education:
  - a) First cycle: from 0 to 3 years old. Voluntary. It is provided in nursery schools, which may be either local authority or private. It is also provided in state schools and state-subsidised private schools.
  - b) Second cycle: from 3 to 6 years old. Voluntary and free of charge. It is provided in state nursery and primary schools, as well as in state-subsidised private and private schools.
- Primary Education: From 6 to 12 years of age; free and compulsory.

- Compulsory Secondary Education (ESO): From 12 to 16 years of age; compulsory and free. It leads to the ESO Certificate through two pathways:
  - a) General stream: four academic years with a training programmes.
  - b) Basic-Level Vocational Training: lasting two academic years, generally starting in the 3rd year of ESO, leading to a Vocational Qualification, in addition to the ESO Leaving Certificate, at Level 1 of the National Catalogue of Competence Standards (CNECP).
- Post-compulsory secondary education:
  - Bachillerato: two academic years, on a voluntary basis, with a choice of four streams.
  - Intermediate-level (Level 2 of the CNECP) and Advanced-level (Level 3 of the CNECP) vocational training programmes.
- Specialised Education:
  - Language courses: basic, intermediate and advanced levels. These are taught at specific state-run language centres.
  - Artistic Education:
    - Elementary and vocational courses in music and dance.
    - Vocational courses in fine arts and design.
    - Higher Education in Music and Dance, Drama, Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage, and Higher Studies in Fine Arts and Design.
- University Education: Admission is possible with a Baccalaureate qualification and by passing the University Entrance Examinations (PAU), or after completing Higher-Level Vocational Training (FP). It is offered at public and private universities and is structured into the following levels:
  - Bachelor's Degree (minimum duration 4 academic years,

maximum 6 academic years).

- o Master's degree.
- o Doctorate.

– Adult education: its aim is to offer everyone aged 18 and over the opportunity to acquire, update, supplement or expand their knowledge and skills for their personal and professional development. It provides a range of programmes, from non-formal education through to compulsory education (ESO) and post-compulsory education (Bachillerato), as well as preparatory courses for academic qualifications and entrance examinations for formal study programmes.

Focusing on adult education, it should be noted that this type of education forms part of lifelong learning, and its aim is to enhance citizens' knowledge, skills and abilities throughout their lives – a principle that is consistent with our education system, as set out in Article 5(2) of the LOE, which states that "The basic principle of the education system is to promote lifelong learning. To this end, it shall prepare pupils to learn independently and facilitate adults' access to various forms of education, helping them to balance learning with other responsibilities and activities', setting out the following objectives in Article 66(3) of the LOE :

- a) *"To acquire basic education, to continually expand and update their knowledge, abilities and skills, and to facilitate access to the various levels of education within the education system.*
- b) *To improve their professional qualifications or to acquire the necessary training to practise other professions.*
- c) *To develop their personal abilities in the areas of self-expression, communication, interpersonal relationships and knowledge-building.*
- d) *To develop their ability to participate in social, cultural, political and economic life and to exercise their right to democratic citizenship.*
- e) *To develop programmes that address the risks of social exclusion, particularly amongst the most disadvantaged groups.*
- f) *To respond appropriately to the challenges posed by the progressive*

*ageing of the population, ensuring that older people have the opportunity to develop and update their skills.*

*g) To anticipate and resolve personal, family and social conflicts peacefully. To promote effective equality of rights and opportunities*

*between men and women, and to analyse and critically assess inequalities between them.*

*h) To acquire, expand and update the knowledge, abilities and skills necessary for setting up businesses and for undertaking entrepreneurial activities and initiatives, in the care economy, in social collaboration and in civic engagement.*

*i) To develop attitudes and acquire knowledge relating to sustainable development and the effects of climate change and environmental, health or economic crises, and to promote health and healthy eating habits, whilst reducing sedentary lifestyles."*

## B. – ORGANISATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS PROVIDING ADULT EDUCATION :

In Greece, adult education is provided at a variety of centres, both public and private, covering a wide range of subjects.

### 1. Public organisations:

a. Lifelong Learning Centres (CAP): These operate in local authorities under the supervision of the Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Sport (through INEDIVIM – the Foundation for Youth and Learning) and offer free programmes in general education, digital skills, languages, the environment, entrepreneurship, etc.

b. Second Chance Schools (SDP) aimed at adults who have not completed their A-levels, providing a qualification equivalent to A-levels after two years of study. These centres fall under the Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Sport and are supervised by the General Secretariat for

Vocational Education, Training, Lifelong Learning and Youth.

- c. Public Vocational Training Institutes (DIEK): These offer post-secondary vocational training to graduates of upper secondary school or Compulsory Secondary Education (SDE). These programmes lead to a Level 5 diploma under the National Qualifications Framework.
- d. Adult Education Centres run by the OAED (now DYPA), which reports

to the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Protection, focusing on vocational training and the development of skills among unemployed people.

2. Private organisations: The private institutions KDVM, KEK, IEK and schools offer vocational training, specialisation and skills certification programmes. These institutions are accredited by EOPPEP (National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Career Guidance).

In Spain, as in Greece, these courses are delivered at various types of centres run by different public authorities, which offer training tailored to their specific needs and educational pathways: educational, vocational or local.

1. Education Authorities:

The educational provision offered by the education authorities takes place primarily in the following settings:

- Specialised adult education centres (CEPA or CEA) which operate on a full-time basis and, although used exclusively for adult education, also play a role in revitalising the local community, being available for socio-cultural activities.
- Adult education classrooms integrated into duly authorised mainstream schools. These operate on a part-time basis and generally in the evenings. They are usually integrated into primary schools or secondary schools (IES), although they may also be run by local councils

or local authorities.

In order to facilitate access to the EPA, there is currently a wide range of distance learning provision for adults available through the various regional education authorities.

At national level, the Ministry of Education, Vocational Training and Sport (MEFP), through the Centre for Innovation and Development in Distance

Learning (CIDEAD), coordinates and organises the various elements and processes of distance learning for adults.

CIDEAD offers distance learning secondary education for adults (ESPAD) and the baccalaureate to people aged 18 and over who find themselves in the following circumstances:

- Residents in Spain who, for valid reasons, are unable to attend a distance learning centre in their autonomous community (due to frequently changing their place of residence as members of itinerant families, or because they are engaged in specialised activities such as dance, music or sport) ;
- Members of the Armed Forces.
- Residents abroad who hold Spanish nationality or who have previously commenced formal Spanish studies.
- Residents in Spain who wish to study a stream of the Bachillerato not offered in their autonomous community.

## 2. Labour authorities :

The educational institutions offering this training depend on the type of organisation responsible for organising it.

Vocational training programmes aimed at employment may be provided by the following institutions :

- Public authorities with responsibility for this area, either through their own centres or via agreements with public bodies or companies.
- Business organisations and trade unions, and other bodies benefiting from training schemes primarily aimed at employed workers.
- Companies that provide training for their employees or for unemployed people with a commitment to recruitment ;
- Training centres or organisations that provide training not aimed at obtaining professional certificates.
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### 3. Local authorities:

Adult education is also present at local level, including in rural areas where adult education is provided in public centres, such as :

- Specialised adult education centres (CEPA).
- People's universities.
- Social initiative centres.
- Trade unions.
- Neighbourhood associations.
- Local authorities.
- Universities for older people.

These centres are also often available for other socio-cultural activities. Of particular note are the programmes offered by the 'Universidades populares' operating at local council level.

### C. – EDUCATIONAL PROVISION:

With regard to the types of adult education currently being provided in

Greece, we shall refer to the following:

- 1) General adult education: aimed at developing personal, social and cultural skills, such as languages, culture, the environment and social inclusion.
- 2) Vocational training (VT) : to improve or update professional skills, such as the OAED, DIEK and NSRF programmes.
- 3) Non-formal and informal learning: this includes seminars, workshops, training and experiential learning, which can be certified through EOPPEP.

As in Spain, the Greek education system has a qualifications accreditation body, the EOPPEP (National Organisation for the Accreditation of Qualifications), equivalent to INCUAL (National Institute of Qualifications) in our country, which is responsible for the certification of adult educators, training programmes and institutions, as well as the recognition and registration of learning outcomes within the National Qualifications Framework (MNC), equivalent to the CNECP (National Catalogue of Professional Competence Standards) in Spain.

The following table (Table 2) provides a summary of the different types of adult education offered in Greece, categorised by type of education and the organisation delivering it :

| Types of education      | Type of centre/institution                                       | Features                                                                                   | Qualification or certificate             |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| General Adult Education | Centre for Lifelong Learning (CAP) – Local Authorities, INEDIVIM | Free courses on general knowledge, languages, culture, the environment and digital skills. | Certificate of attendance                |
| Second-chance education | Second Chance Schools (SDE) – Ministry of Education              | For adults without a secondary school certificate, 2 years of study                        | Secondary school equivalence certificate |

|                                           |                                                          |                                                                |                                                  |
|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Education and Vocational Training (VT)    | State-run IEK (DIEK), private IEK, KEK, private KDVM     | Specialised vocational training programmes                     | Vocational Qualification (Level 5 QF)            |
| Training for the unemployed and employees | DYPA (formerly OAED), KEK, KDVM, Chambers                | NSRF programmes and vouchers for development of skills         | Certification or certificate of skills           |
| Non-formal and informal learning          | EOPPEP (certification), public and private organisations | Training through seminars, courses or experience               | Training through seminars, courses or experience |
| Adult education tutors                    | EOPPEP, Universities, KDVM                               | Certification of teaching skills and skills in adult education | Certification of adult educators                 |

Table 2. Adult education in Greece. Source: Compiled by the author.

In Spain, the range of training courses on offer is very broad and varied, depending on the public administration providing this type of training, and on the needs and profile of the target audience.

Within the various public education authorities, the following options are available:

- Training aimed at improving attainment in basic skills:
  - Basic education for adults: introductory courses and secondary education for adults (ESPA), as well as examinations to obtain the Compulsory Secondary Education Certificate directly.
  - Vocational secondary education for adults: Basic Level vocational training (Level 1).
- Training aimed at obtaining an official qualification as an adult:
  - Post-compulsory education : sixth form and intermediate and

advanced vocational training (FP).

- Examinations leading to qualifications: Sixth Form Certificate, Technical Certificate and Advanced Technical Certificate.

- Entrance examinations for courses leading to a qualification: entry to intermediate and advanced vocational training programmes, entry to higher arts education and entry to university education.

- Examinations to obtain a language certificate without having completed the relevant language courses.

- Preparation courses for the examinations mentioned above.

- Language teaching: for the acquisition of language proficiency levels and the attainment of certificates corresponding to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

- Vocational training under the Vocational Training System, which corresponds to the following sequential levels:

- Level A: partial accreditation of competence (levels 1, 2 or 3).

- Level B : certificate of competence (levels 1, 2 or 3).

- Level C : vocational certificate (levels 1, 2 or 3).

- Level D : Basic, Intermediate or Advanced vocational training programmes (levels 1, 2 or 3 respectively).

- Level E : Specialisation course at Intermediate or Advanced level (levels 2 or 3 respectively).

Furthermore, the labour authorities organise a wide range of training programmes aimed at contributing to the personal and professional development of workers (both employed and unemployed), improving their employability and career progression; these programmes are aimed at both employed and unemployed workers. Priority is also given to those who face the greatest difficulties in entering or remaining in employment, such as the long-term unemployed, low-

skilled women or victims of gender-based violence, people aged over 45, low-skilled workers, migrants and people with disabilities, amongst others.

There are four types of vocational training initiatives for employment in the workplace, designed to provide an immediate response to the various needs of individuals and the productive system:

- Training organised by companies for their employees, which must be delivered with the necessary flexibility in terms of content and timing to meet the company's own training needs in a responsive manner and to align their staff's skills with the requirements changing circumstances. Companies can organise this training themselves, and can deliver it using their own resources or by engaging external providers.
- A programme for employed workers designed to provide training that meets companies' requirements for productivity and competitiveness, addresses the need to adapt to changes in the production system, and supports workers' career progression and personal development, thereby equipping them to perform their various roles to a high standard and enhancing their employability. This provision is delivered through the following programmes:
  - Sector-specific training programmes.
  - Cross-sectoral training programmes.
  - Programmes for professional qualifications and recognition.
- Other vocational training initiatives aimed at employment, ranging from individual training leave, work-based learning, to training initiatives for public sector staff.

## 7. ACQUISITION DIGITAL SKILLS IN ADULT EDUCATION IN GREECE.

In line with the guidelines set out in the European Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on key competences for lifelong learning and with the European

DigComp framework, digital competence has been conceived not only as an instrumental skill, but also as a necessary condition for social inclusion, access to digital public services and employability, particularly amongst low-skilled or unemployed adults.

We will now go on to outline the various public and private bodies responsible for developing this competence, as well as the main programmes currently being implemented in Greece.

#### 1. Responsible public bodies:

1.1. The Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Sport, as the governing body for educational policy on adult education and digital skills, acts through its subordinate bodies to establish curriculum guidelines, national digital training programmes and the coordination of European funds.

1.2. INEDIBIM (Foundation for Youth and Lifelong Learning): This is the key body responsible for the operational implementation of adult education. It oversees the Lifelong Learning Centres (CAP) and ensures that programmes are consistent with national digitalisation policies.

1.3. DYPA (Public Employment Service – formerly OAED), which reports to the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Protection, plays a key role in employment-related digital training, particularly for the unemployed and workers undergoing retraining.

#### 2. Organisations and institutions that promote digital literacy.

2.1. Lifelong Learning Centres (CAP) : These are municipally-run centres, under state supervision, and one of the main public mechanisms for adults to acquire basic digital skills. They are characterised by offering free training, both face-to-face and via distance learning, delivering basic digital literacy programmes (use of the computers, internet browsing, email), use of government digital services (gov.gr ;

taxisnet; online banking), digital security (use of social media, protection of personal data). These programmes are aimed at adults with no prior digital skills, with a clear focus on inclusivity.

2.2. Public Vocational Training Schools (DIEK): DIEKs offer more specialised and vocationally-oriented digital training, aimed at adults with secondary education who are seeking to improve or reorient their professional profile towards digital sectors.

2.3. DYPA training programmes (OAED): DYPA runs specific digital training programmes, generally funded by the EU, offering training vouchers for general digital skills (cloud computing, cybersecurity and digital marketing), with the training being predominantly delivered remotely and directly linked to employability; it leads to associated certifications such as ACTA, ECDL and Vellum, amongst others, which are officially recognised and valid in the labour market.

### 3. Private bodies and NGOs.

The Greek system structurally incorporates private bodies and non-governmental organisations, provided they are officially accredited. These include private lifelong learning centres, academies and ICT training centres, as well as NGOs running digital inclusion programmes, which offer a range of courses, from fast-track training in digital skills to face-to-face and online seminars, as well as preparation for international certifications such as the ECDL, Microsoft Office Specialist and other recognised ICT qualifications.

### 4. Distance learning and open online courses (MOOCs).

Digital training is supported by a wide range of open and flexible learning opportunities, particularly suited to adults with time constraints, via platforms such as the eLearning portal of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens; the eLearning portal of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki; and international platforms such as Coursera, edX and Udemy. These programmes encourage self-directed learning and the continuous updating of digital skills.

5. National and European support programmes: Digital competence is promoted through:

- The National Strategic Reference Framework (MENR).
- National programmes for the digital transformation of education.
- European funding aimed at reducing the digital divide, enhancing employability, and consolidating the DigComp framework.

6. Certification of digital competence: Greece has a well-established certification system, recognised by the ASEP (Supreme Council for Personnel Selection), which allows for the official accreditation of acquired digital competences, such as ECDL, ACTA, Vellum, KeyCert and UNIMATH, which are widely used in both the public and private sectors.

In short, the Greek model for developing digital skills in adults is characterised by:

- Coordination between education, employment and digitalisation policies.
- A clear distinction between basic digital literacy and advanced digital training.
- The importance placed on official certification of skills.
- The extensive use of European funds as a catalyst for transformation.

Overall, it is a coherent, structured system that is aligned with European

policies and which identifies digital skills as a key factor in the social inclusion and employability of adults.

## CONCLUSIONS

A comparative analysis of the two education systems reveals that both countries share a common vision of adult education as a driving force for inclusion, social cohesion and economic development, with a clear commitment to the

acquisition of key skills and digitalisation. In both countries, this type of education constitutes an essential pillar of lifelong learning, aimed both at the acquisition of basic skills and at professional reskilling, social inclusion and improved employability, clearly aligning with the European Recommendations (Council Recommendation of 22 May 2028 on key competences for lifelong learning, the 2030 Agenda and lifelong learning policies), although they implement this mandate through different organisational structures and approaches, as we have demonstrated.

The experience of both countries enables us to identify the following aspects as common features of their models, emphasising, first and foremost, the concept of adult education as a right and a tool for inclusion that will facilitate the social and labour market integration of vulnerable groups, as well as their active participation in the social, cultural and economic life of their communities, thanks to the integration of these programmes within a lifelong learning strategy, offering flexible pathways that enable people to resume basic studies, obtain official qualifications and update or validate professional skills. In both countries, recognises digital competence as key to adult learning, utilising face-to-face, blended and distance learning modalities through specific programmes for the acquisition of digital skills and the certification of digital competences aligned with European frameworks (DigComp). Finally, common features include the existence of accreditation systems for professional competences that enable the certification of qualifications and learning outcomes, as well as the recognition of formal, non-formal and informal learning, ensuring consistency with national and European

qualifications frameworks and facilitating mobility across Europe.

However, we found differences in aspects such as the structure and organisation of the system, with Greece having a more centralised system, featuring a clear distinction between basic education, vocational training and second-chance programmes, which are largely under the remit of the Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Sport, and specific state bodies, compared to Spain's more decentralised

structure, in which the Autonomous Communities, together with educational, employment and local authorities, provide a more diversified range of provision. It is also important to mention the structural significance of Second Chance Schools in Greece, which have a specific curriculum, a standardised duration and a qualification equivalent to the end of Compulsory Education, whilst in Spain, although such programmes do exist, the catch-up of basic studies is organised in a more fragmented manner (ESPA, open examinations, regional or municipal programmes), but without a single model equivalent to the Greek Second Chance Schools.

We also found other differences in the focus of the curriculum. Whilst the Greek model stands out for being an open and clearly competence-based curriculum, in Spain, although the competence-based approach is At present, there remains a stronger link to traditional academic curricula geared towards obtaining official qualifications.

With regard to the relationship with the labour market, we can conclude that in Greece the link between adult education and employment is established very directly through bodies such as the DYPA (formerly the OAED) and programmes funded by the European Union. However, in Spain, this relationship does exist, taking into account the changes introduced by the new Organic Law 3/2022, which unifies the education system with the vocational training and employment system, but with greater administrative complexity, although the range of provision is much broader.

In short, Greece and Spain share a common vision of adult education as a driving force for inclusion, social cohesion and economic development, with a clear commitment to the acquisition of key skills and digitalisation. However, Greece stands out for the clarity and consistency of its second-chance education structures, whilst Spain excels in the breadth, diversity and flexibility of its provision, which is tailored to different profiles and regions.

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