



FIRST LABORATORY OF DIALOGUE – LARISSA, GREECE

NET not NEET Project

Larissa, 23rd May 2015

Location: [Pappa's Flour Mill](#)

Facilitators:

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Olga Kafetzopoulou	European Projects Promoter - R. D. E. Thessaly
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Margaritis Ntoumos	Director of the Second Chance School of Larissa
Vicky Lentza	Psychologist
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Vassia Nima	Psychologist
Kalliopi Serleti	Technician of the Second Chance School of Larissa

Participants

The 1st laboratory of Dialogue took place in Larissa on the 23rd of May 2015. In order to find participants that fulfill the 'NEET' criteria we used the databases of organizations that target such people. Particularly, we came in contact with Larissa Second Chance School, Larissa Manpower Employment Organization and Larissa Vocational Training Center. All participants were informed about the project and its aims and that their participation was voluntary.

A total of twenty two (22) unemployed people participated, sixteen women and six men. The majority of the participants aged 25-29 years, as shown in Table 1.

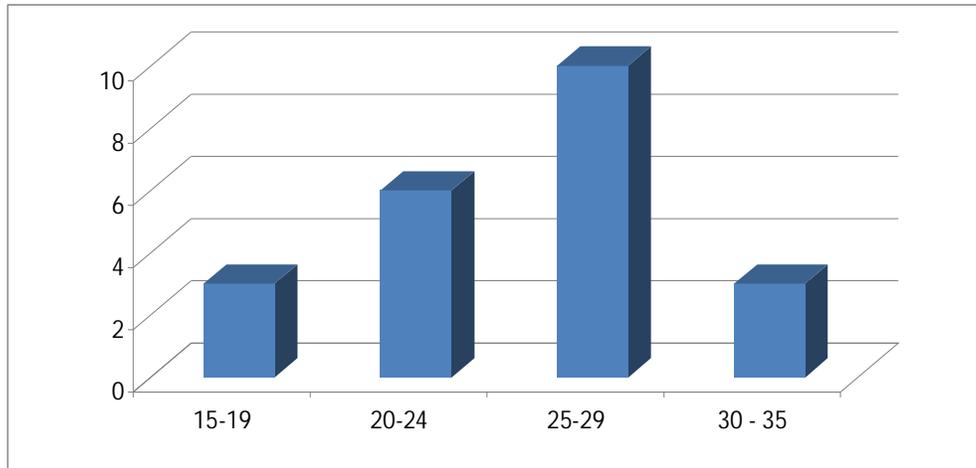


Table 1: Age distribution

As far as their educational level is concerned, most of the participants are Second Chance School Students (see Table 2).

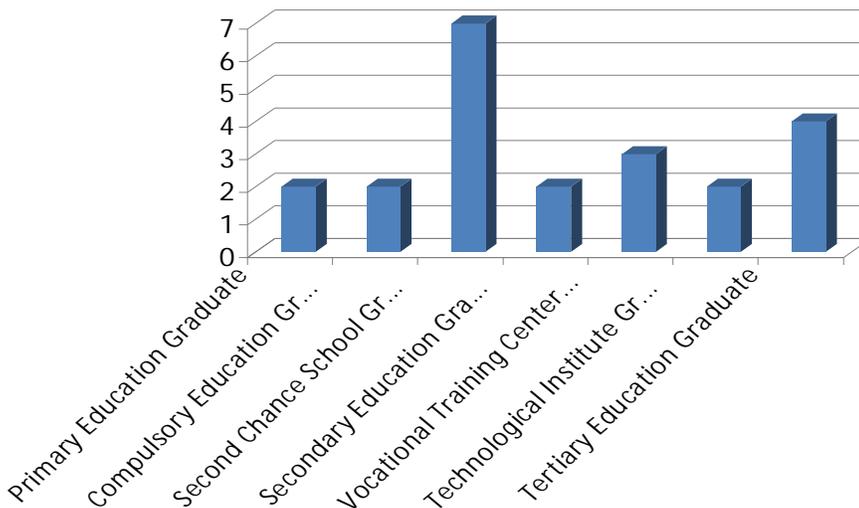


Table 2: Educational level distribution.

Methodology

The aim of the 1st Laboratory of Dialogue was twofold: Firstly, to give the participants the opportunity to get to know each other. Secondly, to investigate their experiences from the Greek educational system. Therefore, the 1st Laboratory of Dialogue was composed of three parts:

1. The aim of the first part was the ice-breaking of the group. All the participants, including the facilitators, were divided in dyads and discussed for a few minutes about themselves. Then, each person introduced his/her partner to the group.

The project was introduced to the participants, as well as the laboratory agenda. At the end all the participants shared their expectations from the project.



Picture 1: Net-not-Neet participants' plenary

2. In the beginning of the second part of the Laboratory, all participants completed a questionnaire, which was provided by the NNN project and aimed to get information on demographic data of the participants and their views about the relationship between education and employment. Participants' demographic data have been included in the previous section (Participants).

After that all participants worked in five subgroups. Each subgroup had 20 minutes to share and discuss their experiences from the Greek educational system as well as their suggestions for overcoming any possible obstacles. The facilitators proposed the following discussion topics to the subgroups:

- Describe a positive and a negative moment from your experience in education and training.
- Which obstacles were you faced with during your education/ training?
- Based on your experiences, which are the weaknesses of the Greek educational system. What would you change in the Greek educational system?
- Do you think that education/ training can help in finding a job?

Members of each subgroup wrote down their thoughts, experiences and suggestions related to the topics discussed and all the produced material was presented to the other groups.



Picture 2: sub-group_1 working



Picture 3: sub-group_2 working



Picture 4: sub-group_3 presenting results



Picture 5: sub-group_4 working



Picture 6: sub-group_2 working



Picture 7: sub-group_1 presenting results

3. The third part of laboratory was focused on taking a feedback from the participants. Each participant was asked to describe his/her experience from the laboratory by producing a word or a phrase. Participants were also informed about the next laboratory of Dialogue in which their experiences from the labour market will be the main focus.

Results

A main issue discussed in the group was the lack of vocational guidance during school years. Even though vocational guidance is a part of compulsory education in Greece, it seems that it is delivered ineffectively. As a result, students lack the opportunity to recognize and promote their talents and capacities. Furthermore, there is no connection between the educational system and the labour market.

Another main issue discussed in the group had to do with the school staff. According to the participants there are two weaknesses: on one hand, there is lack of experts such as psychologists in Greek schools. Therefore, school leavers have no psychological support in order to continue their studies. On the other hand, there are significant problems as far as the existing teaching staff, at least a part of it, is concerned. According to the experiences of the participants, their teachers were distant and unwilling to develop a close relationship with the students. They also experienced different kinds of discrimination during their school years. For instance, some teachers preferred working with the strong students and showed no effort in strengthening weak students' engagement. Some NEETs mentioned that their teachers' pedagogical practices such as punishment were a significant reason for leaving school. Their education was based mainly on learning theory and there was no connection between teaching theories and practice.

One last issue addressed by the NEETs had to do with the lack of a supportive family environment. In most cases, school leavers come from families with low socioeconomic status that can't support them financially or even psychologically.

Based on the above negative experiences, participants made the following suggestions:

- Ongoing teachers training: School staff should be trained in a regular basis in order to be kept up-to-date.
- Change of pedagogical methodology: They suggest the implementation of effective pedagogical practices and use the example of second chance

schools as a good practice. They highlight the importance of cooperative learning and suggest that it should be implemented in all educational levels.

- Change of learning material.
- Psychological support to all students by experts.
- Relationship between teaching theory and practice: Schools must find the right balance between theory and practice.
- Vocational guidance: Vocational guidance must be delivered more effectively by experts, vocational counselors.

Shortly before the completion of the Laboratory participants were completed the Questionnaire of Evaluation. They returned 22 questionnaires of evaluation supplied in which about the 75% of them has been very satisfied and 25% just satisfied from the Laboratory. Among the most positive points were the open and friendly communication and dialogue, the opportunity to discuss their concerns among young people and experts and the new things they learned about themselves and the labour market. Some of them express their doubts on the practical results of the projects, as far as it concerns the possibility to get help to find a job.

Conclusion

During the 1st Laboratory of Dialogue, participants had the chance to get to know each other and to share their experiences related to their education/ training. The main weaknesses of the Greek educational system were discussed and suggestion for overcoming these weaknesses were made. The feedback given by the participants was very positive and helped us to make the transition for the next laboratory of dialogue that will be focused on their experiences from the labour market.



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