

## “Second Chance” Schools – an investment for the present and the future

In Greece today there are 43 Second Chance schools throughout the whole country – especially spread in rural areas. The most of them are funded by the European Social Fund (75%) and by the Greek public (25%). The main target of the Second Chance Schools is the promotion of occupation and the avoidance of social exclusion of young unskilled people who did not complete the compulsory education and do not have the necessary skills in order to insert the labor market.

There are 3 basic principals that characterize the identity of them:

- 1) The flexibility of the educational tools in order to support every trainee in his/her effort.
- 2) The support to the trainees in every need that may have, in every sector like health, family, work environment, social surrounding etc.
- 3) The high validity of the professors and the scientific staff in order to meet their duties complexity.

As far as it concerns the characteristics of the program, its duration is for 18 months (divided in two 9months periods) and 21 hours per week. After the successful completion of the program the students take a certification, which is co-equal with the certificate of high school. But the courses program is quite different from the typical education’s one with regard to the content, the teaching methodology and the evaluation system. The provided courses are: Greek language, mathematics, IT, English, social education, environmental education, technological and physical science data, etc.

More specifically, an example of a Secondary Chance School is analyzed further down. Is one in Giannitsa, a town in northern Greece. This school is working now for a third year. The students are from different ages, different social backgrounds and of both sexes. All are residents of the ‘Pellas’ prefecture where Giannitsa belongs and have a common characteristic as students; they consciously decided to attend these courses with the aim to learn what they could not or did not want to learn in an earlier age. The right of registration has all the adults above 18 who have finished only the primary school. For now this school have 93 students, 13 professors and 3 administrative employees. Furthermore, many graduates after the completion of the program decided to continue their education to Technical Vocation Schools (TEE) or to Vocational Training Institutes (IEK).

In conclusion, as a professor of Second Chance School in Giannitsa is writing, the investment in knowledge is an investment for the future but as far as it concerns the Second Chance Schools is an investment not only for the future but also for the present. It is true that the education, which is provided in this kind of schools acts directly to the local and the wider society while the students are already active members of it.