

**International Conference on "Diversity in Adult Education: Community, Integration, Governance"**

**Athens, 12 & 13 December 2018**

**Press release**

The DAISSy research group of Hellenic Open University (HOU), in collaboration with the National Center for Social Research (EKKE), organized the International Conference on "Diversity in Adult Education: Community, Integration, Governance" on 12 & 13 December 2018 at the Electra Hotel Athena. The conference marked the completion of the transnational European project DIVINA-EDU: Diversity in Adult Education.

The Conference first explored the links between understanding and managing diversity in adult education. At a second, but clearly related level, however, the conference sought to unravel this exploration from a monolithic "educational" orientation. Thus, it demonstrated the more general implications that educational and diversity-centered approaches can have on broader issues such as community building, social inclusion, diversity management, etc.

The Conference was attended by approximately 100 representatives from public administrations and local authorities, as well as trainers and professionals representing a wide range of disciplines and approaches: training institutions, training centers, social workers and researchers who come into contact with migrants and refugees, members of migrant communities, NGOs and voluntary organizations, etc.

Achilles Kameas, Professor of HOU and Nikos Sarris, Researcher of EKKE, as representatives of the organizers, opened the Conference and greeted the participants.

The introductory session addressed the epistemological and political treatment of the concept of otherness in three plenary speeches. G. Tsimouris, Vice-President of HOU and Professor of Social Anthropology at Panteion University, spoke about the genealogy of the term "otherness" and its relation to the epistemological endeavor of multi-culturalism. Nectaria Palaiologou, Associate Professor of Intercultural Education at the University of Western Macedonia and Vice-President of the International Association for Intercultural Education focused on the relationship between equality and diversity in the context of adult education. Nikos Sarris, Researcher at EKKE, completed this important session by introducing the issue of multiple discrimination and presenting in detail the institutional treatment of issues of heterogeneity in its different versions and the investigation of the consequences of this treatment in the Greek context.

The first session focused on the presentation of the activities and results of the DIVINA-EDU project. In addition to the research on which the project's results were based, the content of the training on the management of diversity was presented for the trainers and executives involved in adult education as well as the relevant platform for education and peer learning.

The second and last session for the first day, included the presentation of two very important researches conducted by researchers at EKKE. These included the phenomenon of multiple discrimination in Greece and the professional profiles of unemployed young people in the

Athens region, thus highlighting a very important dimension to the consolidation of the issue of heterogeneity and the inequalities that this causes in the workplace.

The second day of the Conference began with the presentation of an important initiative that is coordinated by the head of DAISSy research group, Professor Achilles Kameas. It is the Greek AMIF cluster, which includes 5 projects funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and coordinated by Greek-based institutions. These projects target different groups of immigrant and refugee populations, adopting different methodologies (e.g. training, joint actions with local populations, art, etc.) as well as groups of the local population (e.g. volunteers), empowering their involvement in the issue of effective integration of the above groups, while being respectful of their heterogeneity. Among the projects presented was WEMIN: Migrant Women Empowerment and Integration, which is being implemented in 8 European countries under the coordination of the DAISSy research group.

The next session focused on the relationship between adult education and heterogeneity at the level of political planning and strategic interventions that are being developed specifically in the context of the immigration and refugee crisis as well as on the gaps that can be identified. Within this framework, were presented the relevant actions of the Center for Coordination for Immigrants and Refugees of the Municipality of Athens, the UNICEF Educational Network and the Municipality of Ioannina in cooperation with the NGOs active in the Region of Epirus.

The field of education, employment and social integration was investigated both at the level of research, with a survey on the needs of asylum seekers presented by ELIAMEP, and at the level of interventions, such as the one implemented by the GSEVEE Branch of Ioannina.

The last session focused on a series of very important NGO initiatives involving communities or inter-communal partnerships that start from the principle of diversity and highlight the prospects for innovation and dynamic social inclusion (Habibi.Works, Orange House, Social Cooperative Archipelagos).

DIVINA-EDU ([www.diversityadulthoodedu.eu](http://www.diversityadulthoodedu.eu)) was a two-year project (2016-2018) funded by the European Erasmus+/KA2/Strategic Partnerships program that aimed at providing specific skills and tools to adult educators and administrators of adult education, in order to be able to effectively manage the phenomenon of their learners' diversity. Project Coordinator is the Centro de Formación Somorrostro (Spain); the consortium includes organizations from 4 EU Member States (Greece, Spain, Italy, Portugal). Greece is represented by the DAISSy research group of HOU.

For the actions of the DAISSy research group of HOU, you can visit the website at <http://daissy.eap.gr/en/>.