

# The Landscape of Adult Education in Cyprus

CHRISTINA HAJISOTERIOU<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

*The value of adult education has been recognised as a cornerstone of personal growth, professional development, and social integration. Thus, adult education in Cyprus may play a pivotal role in empowering individuals to navigate the ever-changing landscape of the modern world. However, adult education remains a relatively neglected area in the country's research agenda, with scholars in the field asserting that Cyprus lacks an adult education culture. This article delves into the significance of adult education in Cyprus, exploring its provision, barriers, opportunities, and the potential it holds to shape a brighter future for the State and its citizens. The conclusion is that it is crucial for Cyprus to develop a more effective adult education system aligned with the European agenda for lifelong learning and continuous professional development, enabling adults to effectively address contemporary socio-political and economic challenges.*

**Keywords:** Adult education; lifelong learning; continuous professional development; quality education

## 1. Introduction

Adult education has been acknowledged as fundamental in promoting individual advancement<sup>2</sup>, professional growth, and societal inclusion.<sup>3</sup> Adult education is the practice of engaging adults in continuous formal or informal learning opportunities to acquire new knowledge, competencies and skills for their personal and professional growth, but also for purposes of social development.<sup>4</sup> At its core, adult education seeks to bridge the gap between learning and living, empowering individuals to

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<sup>1</sup> Associate Professor in Intercultural Education. School of Education, University of Nicosia, Cyprus

<sup>2</sup> Marina Yurteava, Natalia Glukhanyuk, Anna Muzafarova, & Tatiana Rasskazova, 'Adult education as a contributory factor to the integration into modern socio-cultural environment (2018) *15th International Conference on Cognition and Exploratory Learning in Digital Age*. Budapest: International Association for Development of the Information Society 119-126.

<sup>3</sup> UNESCO, *Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education* (2015) available at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002451/245119M.pdf#page=3>

<sup>4</sup> Petros Gougoulakis, 'Popular education movement and social transformation' (2012) *27 Adult Education* 41-58.

acquire knowledge and practical skills that align with their personal ambitions and the demands of an evolving job market.<sup>5</sup> By offering flexible learning pathways and catering to the diverse needs of adult learners, these programmes act as catalysts for personal and professional growth, as well as for fostering social cohesion and cultural understanding.<sup>6</sup>

It has been argued that adult education plays a pivotal role in enabling individuals to navigate the dynamic challenges of the modern era<sup>7</sup>, and therefore it has the potential to shape a socially cohesive society.<sup>8</sup> The pursuit of knowledge and skills beyond one's formative years holds the promise of not only individual enrichment, but also the collective progress of society as a whole. Cabus and Štefánik<sup>9</sup> analysed data from 23 European countries (excluding Cyprus) and found that improved access to adult education for workers with low levels of education contributes to the acceleration of the economic growth of these countries. With populations encompassing diverse backgrounds, experiences, and aspirations (i.e. migrants and refugees, low-skilled, people with disabilities, etc.), the implementation of robust and inclusive adult education programmes emerges as a key imperative.<sup>10</sup>

This article delves into the significance of adult education in the context of Cyprus, exploring its provision, barriers, opportunities, and the potential it holds to shape a brighter future for the State and its citizens. Examining adult education in Cyprus is crucial given the unique socio-cultural, economic, and historical context

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<sup>5</sup> Esther Prins & Brendaly Drayton, 'Adult Education for the empowerment of individuals and communities' in Carol E. Kasworm, Amy D. Rose & Jovita M. Ross-Gordon (eds.) *Handbook of Adult and Continuing Education* (New Jersey: Jossey-Bass, 2010) 209-219.

<sup>6</sup> Pepka Boyadjieva & Petya Ilieva-Trichkova, 'Adult Education as a pathway to empowerment: challenges and possibilities, in John Holford, Pepka Boyadjieva, Sharon Clancy, Günter Hefler & Ivana Studená (eds.) *Lifelong Learning, Young Adults and the Challenges of Disadvantage in Europe*. Palgrave Studies in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023) 169-192.

<sup>7</sup> John Field, Michael Schemmann & Klaus Künzle, 'International comparative adult education research. Reflections on theory, methodology and future developments' (2016) 39(1) *Internationales Jahrbuch der Erwachsenenbildung* 111-133.

<sup>8</sup> Peter Jarvis, 'From adult education to lifelong learning and beyond,' (2014) 50(1) *Comparative Education* 45-57.

<sup>9</sup> Sofie Cabus & Miroslav Štefánik 'Good access to lifelong learning for the low-educated accelerates economic growth: Evidence from 23 European countries,' *HIVA Working Paper Series* (Leuven: KU Leuven, 2019).

<sup>10</sup> Knud Illeris (2016). *Learning, Development and Education: From learning theory to education and practice* (London: Routledge).

of the island.<sup>11</sup> First, Cyprus is a country with a rich history and cultural diversity. Understanding how adult education operates in this setting provides insights into how educational initiatives can be tailored to respect and leverage the Cypriot socio-cultural context. It may inform the development of educational programmes that are socio-culturally sensitive and relevant, fostering a deeper connection between the adult learners and the content as it takes into consideration that adult learning is situated<sup>12</sup> and context-based.<sup>13</sup> In this article, we seek to explore Adult Education in Cyprus via a socio-cultural framework, as the results of such an exploration could be used in further comparative research.

Second, as a country undergoing political challenges due to the unresolved Cyprus political issue (after the 1974 division of the island), as well as evolving societal challenges such as increased migration, adult education becomes instrumental in addressing issues such as unemployment, skills gaps, and social integration.<sup>14</sup> Understanding the specific needs and barriers faced by adult learners in Cyprus can inform the design of targeted educational interventions that contribute to individual empowerment and societal advancement in both in Cyprus, but also in similar settings elsewhere. Moreover, Cyprus is part of the European Union, and examining adult education in this context contributes to the broader understanding of adult education trends and practices within the EU. This is particularly relevant for policymakers and educators seeking to align adult education programmes with European standards and best practices.

Finally, given the globalised nature of the modern world, examining adult education in a specific country provides an opportunity to explore how the nation prepares its adult population to navigate international trends, technological advancements, and the demands of a rapidly changing job market. This understanding is crucial for

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<sup>11</sup> Christina Hajisoteriou 'Adult education in Cyprus: Current affairs, challenges and future prospects,' In: George A. Koulaouzides & Katarina Popovic (eds.) *Adult Education and Lifelong Learning in South-eastern Europe. A Critical View of Policy and Practice* (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2017) 89-100.

<sup>12</sup> Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University.

<sup>13</sup> Banan A. Mukhalalati and Andrea Taylor, 'Adult learning theories in context: a quick guide for healthcare professional educators' (2019) *Journal of Medical Education and Curricular Development*. DOI: 10.1177/2382120519840332

<sup>14</sup> Maria N Gravani, Pavlos Hatzopoulos, and Christina Chinas, 'Adult education and migration in Cyprus: A critical analysis,' (2021) 17(1) *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education* 25–41.

ensuring that adult education programmes are aligned with the skills and competencies needed for global competitiveness.<sup>15</sup>

While Cyprus has made commendable strides in expanding its adult education landscape, challenges persist.<sup>16</sup> For one, this article exhaustively examines the literature that has been published on adult education in Cyprus, indicating both the scarcity of adult education opportunities, but also of research in this field. This showcases the need to nurture a robust culture of adult education in Cyprus so as not only empower Cypriot citizens with the tools they need to thrive but could also pave the way for a dynamic, inclusive, and progressive society. Examining adult education in the specific context of Cyprus is essential to tailor future educational strategies, align with European standards, address local socio-economic challenges, and prepare Cyprus adults for success in a diverse and globalised world.

## **2. The Cyprus Context: The Social and Political Landscape of Adult Education**

This section contains a socio-cultural exploration of the landscape of adult education in Cyprus. Brookfield<sup>17</sup> encourages examining adult education as a socio-cultural product, focusing on its historicity, political context, and philosophical orientation.

Historically, adult education in Cyprus evolved through various formats and approaches, influenced by societal, political, and economic factors.<sup>18</sup> Each historical period left its mark on educational practices. During British colonial rule (1878–1960), education in Cyprus was primarily geared towards the elite and the ruling classes. Adult education was relatively limited and focused on skills necessary for administrative and clerical roles.<sup>19</sup> The limited scope of secondary education further hindered the establishment of adult education.<sup>20</sup> There were few opportunities for the general

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<sup>15</sup> Maria Slowey 'Foundations for new perspectives on comparative adult education and learning: appreciating social and historical contexts,' in M. Slowey (ed.) *Comparative Adult Education and Learning. Authors and Texts* (Florence: Firenze University Press, 2016) 44-77

<sup>16</sup> Hajisoteriou (2017)

<sup>17</sup> Stephen Brookfield, *Training Educators of Adults: The Theory and Practice of Graduate Adult Education* (London: Routledge, 2018).

<sup>18</sup> Hajisoteriou (2017)

<sup>19</sup> Maria N. Gravani & Alexandra Ioannidou, 'Mapping adult and continuing education in Cyprus: Key challenges for the future,' (2016) 23(4) *The International Journal of Adult, Community, and Professional Learning* 33-44.

<sup>20</sup> Panayiotis Persianis, 'The British colonial education 'lending' policy in Cyprus (1878–1960): An intriguing example of an elusive 'adapted education' policy,' (1996) 32(1) *Comparative Education* 45–68.

population to access formal education, and adult learning was often informal and community-based. In 1952—towards the end of the British rule—the official foundations for adult education were first laid. The British authorities introduced a five-year programme of Technical and Vocational Training. Thus, the first adult education training programme in Cyprus was introduced on a voluntary basis by a group of primary school teachers in rural areas of the island. The aim of the teachers was to help fight illiteracy, which was particularly high at that time in rural areas of Cyprus.

In 1960, Cyprus gained its independence. Nevertheless, the educational level of Cypriots was very low. Before gaining independence in 1960, Cyprus had a predominantly rural economy, which resulted in the absence of a qualified labour. Consequently, the State and other institutions did not feel the demand to establish vocational training or liberal adult education policies and programmes<sup>21</sup>. After the independence of Cyprus, the country's economy showed a noteworthy growth resulting in a great need for sufficiently qualified personnel in all sectors of the economy. The number of Technical and Vocational Schools was increased to eleven, including two Commercial and Vocational Schools and one Agricultural School. In 1960 the Pedagogical Academy was also founded by the Cypriot government to replace the Teaching College that operated during colonial rule.

Furthermore, after gaining independence in 1960, Cyprus focused on nation-building and expanding its educational system. Adult education began to receive more attention as the government recognised the importance of providing opportunities for lifelong learning. The creation of new administrative positions in the government necessitated the development of adult education to enable civil servants to meet the required qualifications.<sup>22</sup> Adult Education Centres and evening classes were established, allowing adults to pursue basic education and vocational skills. Simultaneously, many of those who had fought against British rule, who had not attained higher educational qualifications in their youth, assumed positions of authority in the newly formed Republic. According to Persianis, the pursuit of academic qualifications by this group became one of the reasons for establishing adult education in Cyprus. Gravani and Ioannidou<sup>23</sup> further explain that ex-fighters 'were registered to Greek universities to upgrade their skills, exhibiting the "good paradigm" of the adult

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<sup>21</sup> Gravani & Ioannidou (2016).

<sup>22</sup> Persianis (1996).

<sup>23</sup> Gravani & Ioannidou (2016).

student in a society in which this model was unfamiliar' (p. 35). This is particularly important as there were now universities in Cyprus, at the time.

The Turkish invasion and the division of the island in 1974 caused a great number of Greek-Cypriots to be internally displaced, relocating mainly to the south of the island; those that lost their lands could no longer serve the rural economy.<sup>24</sup> Gravani and Ioannidou<sup>25</sup> explain that adult education programmes were established in refugee camps to assist the displaced in acquiring new skills and competencies, facilitating their reintegration into the workforce, and promoting social cohesion. The Ministry of Labour and the United Nations offered various vocational training courses to aid in this process.

In the 1980s and 1990s, Cyprus experienced significant economic growth and development. Adult education became more relevant in the context of the changing job market, with an emphasis on vocational training and skills development to meet the demands of a growing economy. Cyprus' accession to the European Union in 2004 brought about further changes in the education system, including adult education. The EU's focus on lifelong learning emphasised the importance of continuous education for all age groups. This led to the expansion of adult education programmes in Cyprus as the government invested in promoting lifelong learning opportunities for adults.

A crucial milestone was the approval of the National Lifelong Learning Strategy 2007–2013 by the Council of Ministers in November 2007. Balbinot et al.<sup>26</sup> state that:

Within the Cypriot Lifelong Learning Strategy (CyLLS) the main aim of Adult Education is to increase the participation of adults in Lifelong Learning by: (a) upgrading the skills and competences of people at work in order to secure their employability and to meet the needs of the economy, (b) providing opportunities for training in basic skills and entrepreneurship for economically inactive adults, in order to facilitate their entry to the labour market and reduce the risk of social exclusion and (c) extending the scope of programmes offered in order

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<sup>24</sup> Floya Anthias, 'Cyprus,' in Colin Clarke & Tony Payne (eds.) *Politics, Security and Development in Small States* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1987), 184–200.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Valeria Balbinot, Maria Heracleous, George Manolitsis, Christna Papisolomontos, Alexantra Perti-dou, Maria Pitzoli, Spyros Sofocleous, Eufimia Tafa, Giorgio Tamburlini, Athena Michaelidou, Lefkios Neophytou, Stavroula Valiandes., *Literacy in Cyprus. Country Report* (Cologne: European Literacy Policy Network, 2016) 13.

to enhance active citizenship, civic education, as well as to build occupational skills mainly in literacy, foreign languages and computer literacy.

The 2007–2013 Strategy<sup>27</sup> addressed various areas of lifelong learning, including: a) ensuring access to education and training systems for all Cypriot citizens, while also establishing connections to the labour market; b) initiating research to assess the socio-economic impact of lifelong learning activities; c) enhancing infrastructure to support and improve lifelong learning initiatives; and d) establishing efficient governance mechanisms and tools to enhance lifelong learning systems.<sup>28</sup> Cyprus presented its National Reform Programme towards EU2020 in May 2011, with the objective of promoting development, employability, and social integration.<sup>29</sup> The 2014–2020 National Lifelong Learning Strategy<sup>30</sup> followed the 2007–2013 strategy, outlining four priority areas: a) fostering access and participation in lifelong learning for all, while recognising learning outcomes; b) enhancing the quality and efficiency of education and training; c) encouraging research and development to support lifelong learning; and d) promoting employability and facilitating integration or reintegration into the labour market. The current National Lifelong Learning Strategy 2021–2027 draws upon the following pillars: a) digital transformation; b) green transition and sustainability; c) inclusion and equality; d) validation of non-formal and informal learning; e) health and wellbeing; and f) lifelong learning culture.<sup>31</sup>

The landscape of adult education in Cyprus has also been impacted by the diversification of the population, which includes migrants and refugees.<sup>32</sup> Efforts to make

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<sup>27</sup> General Management of European Programmes ]2nd Progress Report of National Lifelong Learning Strategy 2007-2013 for the period 2010-2014 (Nicosia: Republic of Cyprus, 2014) available at [http://www.dgepcd.gov.cy/dgepcd/dgepcd.nsf/page41\\_en/page41\\_en?OpenDocument](http://www.dgepcd.gov.cy/dgepcd/dgepcd.nsf/page41_en/page41_en?OpenDocument)

<sup>28</sup> Ibid

<sup>29</sup> Cyprus Planning Bureau, *Cyprus National Reform Programme 2011 – Europe 2020 Strategy for: Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth* (Nicosia: Republic of Cyprus, 2011), available at [http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/nrp/nrp\\_cyprus\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/nrp/nrp_cyprus_en.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> Cyprus Planning Bureau, *National Strategy for Lifelong Learning 2014-2020* (Nicosia: Republic of Cyprus, 2014) available at [http://www.dgepcd.gov.cy/dgepcd/dgepcd.nsf/page41\\_en/page41\\_en?OpenDocument](http://www.dgepcd.gov.cy/dgepcd/dgepcd.nsf/page41_en/page41_en?OpenDocument)

<sup>31</sup> MoESY – Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth, *Cyprus Lifelong Learning Strategy 2021-2027* (Nicosia: Republic of Cyprus, 2021), available at [https://archeia.moec.gov.cy/mc/933/lifelong\\_learning\\_strategy\\_2021\\_2027.pdf](https://archeia.moec.gov.cy/mc/933/lifelong_learning_strategy_2021_2027.pdf)

<sup>32</sup> Maria Brown, Maria N. Gravani, Bonnie Slade & Larissa Jögi, 'Integrating migrants through adult language programmes: a comparative case study of four European countries,' in S. Przytuła & L. Sulkowski (eds.) *Integration of Migrants into the Labour Market in Europe* (Leeds: Emerald Publishing Limited, 2020) 155-169.

adult education more inclusive have been ongoing, but limited.<sup>33</sup> Gravani et al.<sup>34</sup> heavily criticise the ‘striking absence of any substantial references to adult migrants or to the notions of multiculturalism, intercultural education or the integration of non-native adult learners’.

Digital transformation has been the last, but not least, factor to impact adult education in Cyprus.<sup>35</sup> With e-learning and online education gaining popularity, adult learners now expect more flexibility and accessibility to pursue their educational goals.<sup>36</sup>

Throughout Cyprus’ history, adult education has played a critical role in empowering individuals to adapt to changing social and economic landscapes. In the following sections, the article moves from describing the history and politics of adult education in the Cypriot context to describing the different types of adult education.

### 3. Formal Adult Education

Formal adult education in Cyprus provides adults with the opportunity to attain official qualifications that can enhance their potential and career prospects. It is available at different levels within the education system, including secondary, post-secondary non-tertiary education, and higher education. There are multiple providers of formal adult education in Cyprus, including multiple ministries, but also other public and private entities.

The Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth is responsible for the Evening Gymnasium and the Evening Technical School.<sup>37</sup> These institutions cater to adults who have left school without a qualification<sup>38</sup> and allow them to update their skills and competencies in their current professions, acquire new skills for different careers,

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<sup>33</sup> Maria Brown, Maria N. Gravani, Bonnie Slade & Larissa Jögi, ‘Comparative cartography of Adult Education for migrants in Cyprus, Estonia, Malta and Scotland,’ in: M. N. Gravani & B. Slade (eds.) *Learner-Centred Education for Adult Migrants in Europe: A Critical Comparative Analysis* (Leiden: Brill, 2021) 43-53.

<sup>34</sup> Gravani, Hatzopoulos & Chinas (2021).

<sup>35</sup> Vasilisa Christidou, Maria N. Gravani & Vassilia Hatzinikita, ‘Distance learning material for adult education: the case of the open university of Cyprus, (2012) 4(2) *Ubiquitous Learning: An International Journal* 33-46.

<sup>36</sup> Maria N. Gravani, ‘Adult learning in a distance education context: theoretical and methodological challenges,’ (2015) 34(2) *International Journal of Lifelong Education* 172-193.

<sup>37</sup> MoESY - Ministry of Education, Sports, and Youth, *Annual Report 2020* (Nicosia: Republic of Cyprus, 2020) available at [https://archeia.moec.gov.cy/mc/605/annual\\_report\\_2020\\_en.pdf](https://archeia.moec.gov.cy/mc/605/annual_report_2020_en.pdf)

<sup>38</sup> Balbinot, et al (2016).



and obtain the necessary qualifications to continue their education in other institutes, colleges, or universities. The programmes follow the same teaching methodologies, procedures, and legal standards as their daytime counterparts. Adult students can attend these schools free of charge for a period ranging from one to four years, depending on their educational level. Upon completion of their education, they take final exams and receive a Graduation Diploma.<sup>39</sup>

At the higher education level, both public and private universities and colleges in Cyprus offer post-secondary non-tertiary education programmes which can be a step towards acquiring university degrees. Cyprus universities offer both conventional, in-person courses, but also distance-learning programmes. There are also 40 private Institutions of Higher Education that provide academic and vocational undergraduate and post-graduate programmes of study, even though they do not have the status of a university. Even so, higher education is a form of adult education, it is usually examined separately from other types of adult education, and thus, we will no further expand on the topic in this article.

Some noteworthy public providers of tertiary education in Cyprus include the Mediterranean Institute of Management (offering courses in Business Administration and Public Administration) and the Cyprus Forestry College (a regional training centre in the field of forestry). The Cyprus Police Academy provides education and further training to the members of the Cyprus Police.<sup>40</sup> Finally, there's the School for Tourist Guides, which is run by the Cyprus Tourism Organisation and offers tour guide diplomas.<sup>41</sup> In November 2023, it was announced that the Sommelier School and the School for Tourist Guides will join the Cyprus Academy of Tourism and Hospitality Professions, which is part of the Cyprus University of Technology.

Additionally, the Pedagogical Institute of Cyprus is a key provider of formal adult education catering to pre-primary, primary, and secondary-level teachers. It offers optional, as well as mandatory training courses; an example of the latter is pre-service training for secondary-level teachers.. The Institute also conducts seminars for parents, focusing on topics like environmental education, educational psychology, and the integration of curriculum developments within schools.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> MoESY (2020).

<sup>40</sup> MoESY – Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth *Public Institutions of Tertiary Education* (Nicosia: Republic of Cyprus), available at <https://www.highereducation.ac.cy/index.php/en/idrymata/dimosies-scholes-tritovathmias-ekpaidefsisi#>

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Gravani & Ioannidou (2016).

#### 4. Non-Formal Adult Education

The primary providers of non-formal adult education in Cyprus consist of the Adult Education Centres, the State Institutes of Further Education, and various public, private, and third sector entities.<sup>43</sup> These entities offer courses that usually provide certificates of attendance or participation that, unlike those provided by formal adult education programmes, do not count as official qualifications.

Adult Education Centres were established in 1952 by the Ministry of Education. Initially in rural areas, they expanded over the years in most urban regions of the Republic. Their mission is to promote the social, financial, and cultural development of adult citizens. A key focus is ensuring educational equality for all adults, and particularly disadvantaged groups like school leavers, prisoners, older workers, individuals with low qualifications, women, and the unemployed. These centres provide adult literacy opportunities<sup>44</sup> and offer a diverse range of interdisciplinary courses during the afternoon and evening for individuals aged 15 and above. Subjects include foreign languages, arts and crafts, cultural programmes, and health education.<sup>45</sup> Tuition fees are minimal and waived for pensioners aged 65 and above. Certificates of attendance are granted, although their impact on employment prospects is limited.

The Ministry of Education is also responsible for the State Institutes of Further Education, which can be found across urban and rural areas. They provide various programmes, such as language courses (English, French, Italian, German, Russian, Greek for foreigners, Turkish, etc.), accounting, computer studies, preparatory courses for Greek university entrance exams, and intensive support courses for Gymnasium and Lyceum.<sup>46</sup> These programmes are available to both adults and pupils, with subsidised fees. Groups like unemployed university graduates, blind people, conscripted soldiers (serving their obligatory military service) from low-income families, and political refugees, are exempt from tuition fees.

The Open School serves as an additional provider of non-formal adult education.<sup>47</sup> Initially piloted in 2005 across a few municipalities, this institution expanded

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<sup>43</sup> MoESY (2020).

<sup>44</sup> Balbinot et al. (2016).

<sup>45</sup> Antri Piliri & Maria N. Gravani, 'Older adults' and young educators' experiences and perceptions of Intergenerational Learning (IGL) in non-formal education: A case study from the Adult Education Centres in Cyprus,' (2023a) 18(2) *Ricerche di Pedagogia e Didattica – Journal of Theories and Research in Education* 131-149.

<sup>46</sup> Balbinot et al (2016).

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

four years later to five more municipalities (Larnaca, Limassol, Ayia Napa, Aglantzia, and Lakatamia). There are now plenty more Open Schools, such as those in Engomi, Latsia, Agios Athanasios, Mesa Geitonia. Open Schools operate on public school premises and offer a diverse range of afternoon and evening activities, such as sports, theatre, dance, music, and various cultural pursuits. Additionally, they provide Greek language courses for foreigners.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, Open Schools host exhibitions, such as art exhibitions, and organise lectures on a wide array of topics, including socio-economic, educational, and scientific subjects. They also conduct computer and environmental education courses.

Over the past twenty years, Free Universities have been established in both urban and rural areas of the island. Some examples are: The Zenonion Free University, the Famagusta Free University in Limassol, the Ierokipion Free University, the Salaminion Free University in Famagusta, the Pyrgos Tillirias Free University, the Open University of the Occupied Municipalities of Keryneia, and the Troodos Free University.<sup>49</sup> Operating in collaboration with local authorities and social partners, these Free Universities offer lecture series on various subjects to promote lifelong learning and social and cultural development. Some are funded and operated by the Greek Orthodox church, for example, Salaminion.

A crucial provider of non-formal adult education is the Cyprus Academy of Public Administration (CAPA) that operates under the Ministry of Finance. CAPA conducts workshops and seminars for civil servants. Its mission is to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of public services.<sup>50</sup> CAPA employs participative, experiential, and interactive teaching methodologies such as discussions, brainstorming, group work, case studies, role-playing, films, and training exercises. Attendees receive certificates of participation, which may enhance their career progression.

## 5. Vocational Education and Training

The third form of adult education in Cyprus revolves around vocational education and training (VET). VET aims to enhance the skills of individuals working in tech-

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<sup>48</sup> Gravani & Ioannidou (2016).

<sup>49</sup> University of Cyprus (n.d.). *Free Universities*, available at <https://www.ucy.ac.cy/events/free-universities/>

<sup>50</sup> CAPA, *Cyprus Academy of Public Administration (2023)* available at [https://www.mof.gov.cy/mof/capa/cyacademy.nsf/index\\_en/index\\_en?OpenDocument](https://www.mof.gov.cy/mof/capa/cyacademy.nsf/index_en/index_en?OpenDocument)

nical fields and to provide training to unskilled or semi-skilled workers.<sup>51</sup> This type of education is offered by State and semi-governmental organisations, and private entities. Among the commonly recognised providers of VET in Cyprus are the Cyprus Productivity Centre and Technical Schools offering afternoon and evening classes.<sup>52</sup> Private providers offering VET programmes are subsidised by the Human Resource Development Authority (HRDA), which plays a vital role in the systematic training and development of human resources in the country.<sup>53</sup>

Since 2012, post-secondary non-tertiary education in Cyprus has been provided by Post-Secondary Institutes of Vocational Education and Training that offer a wide range of VET programmes. These institutes aim to equip adult graduates of secondary education with both academic and technical knowledge, enhancing their professional and practical skills.<sup>54</sup> The two-year programmes are offered on a five-day basis and include on-the-job experience. Participants are awarded the qualification of Higher Technician upon completion. Some examples of the courses provided are ‘specialist baker and confectioner’, ‘installation and maintenance of photovoltaic systems and wind turbines’, and ‘organic vegetable production’.

An additional VET provider are private enterprises and semi-governmental organisations that also offer a variety of vocational training courses subsidised by the Human Resource Development Agency (HRDA). These enterprises and organisations operate Centres of Vocational Training (known as KEKs). The HRDA is funded by the Human Resource Development Levy paid by employers and companies in the private and semi-governmental sectors. HRDA operates as a semi-governmental organisation with the mission to create favourable conditions for the development of human resources in Cyprus.<sup>55</sup> Its goal is to support the growth and development of the Cyprus economy through well-planned training initiatives.<sup>56</sup> HRDA also aims to enhance lifelong training of employees in Cyprus, the entrants to the labour market,

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<sup>51</sup> Charalambos Vrasidas & Sotiris Themistokleous, *Adult Education in Cyprus* (2013) available at <http://www.infonet-ae.eu/background-reports-national-affairs-33/1275-adult-education-in-cyprus>

<sup>52</sup> Yianna Korelli, Constantina Kyriacou-Liveri & Aristos Theocharous, *Vocational education and training in Europe – Cyprus. Cedefop ReferNet VET in Europe reports*. (2018) available at <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/country-reports/vocational-education-and-training-europe-cyprus-2018>

<sup>53</sup> Małgorzata Kowalska & Maria Knais, ‘National and European skills competitions – the experience of Cyprus,’ (2021) 113(2) *Edukacja Ustawiczna Dorosłych* 23-34.

<sup>54</sup> Korelli et al (2018).

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Kowalska & Knais (2021).

the unemployed, females out of education or out of the market, and the low skilled and older people.

Established in 1963, the Cyprus Productivity Centre (CPC) was established to operate as a key VET provider in Cyprus.<sup>57</sup> The CPC offers management development programmes and provides vocational training for beginner or experienced technicians.<sup>58</sup> The CPC strives to assist both private and public organisations in optimising their human and capital resources to enhance overall productivity. Kowalska and Knais<sup>59</sup> argue that, nowadays, the CPC has become even more vital as it aims to provide the highest possible level of vocational training. The CPC's responsibilities encompass managing European programmes such as Europass, engaging in international activities through institutes such as the Mediterranean Institute of Management, delivering education and training in management development, and promoting continuous learning and productivity in Cypriot companies and organisations. The CPC also conducts training on health and safety in the workplace for newly recruited individuals. Moreover, it offers advisory services, administrative support, and expertise to the Ministry of Labour, Welfare, and Social Insurance<sup>60</sup>).

Another provider of VET in Cyprus is the Ministry of Education and Culture through its Technical Schools, which offer afternoon and evening classes.<sup>61</sup> Adults attending these classes choose their area of specialisation, and the classes are held twice a week for three academic years. Participants take final exams at the end of each year, and upon completion, they receive a Diploma in their chosen field, which is recognised in the job market. Alternatively, adults have the option to enrol in a one-year training programme that totals 80 hours through weekly evening classes. No examinations are conducted in this programme, and participants receive a certificate of attendance upon completion. Adults, who must be adept in the Greek language, pay tuition fees to participate in these programmes. Attendees encompass early school leavers, secondary education graduates, or higher education graduates.

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<sup>57</sup> Elpida Keravnou-Papailiou *Adult Education in Cyprus*, (2005) Paper presented at the Grundvig 3 Conference 'Quality of training activities', available at [https://www.cut.ac.cy/digitalAssets/108/108056\\_O12-Adult-Education-Cyprus-Keravnou-presentation.ppt](https://www.cut.ac.cy/digitalAssets/108/108056_O12-Adult-Education-Cyprus-Keravnou-presentation.ppt)

<sup>58</sup> Eurydice, *National Education Systems: Cyprus* (Brussels: European Union, 2022) <https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-education-systems/cyprus/>

<sup>59</sup> Kowalska & Knais, 'National and European skills competitions – the experience of Cyprus,' (2021) 113(2), *Edukacja Ustawiczna Doroslych* 23-34.

<sup>60</sup> CPC – Cyprus Productivity Centre, *CPC mission* (2017) available at [http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/kepa/kepa\\_new.nsf/kepa02\\_en/kepa02\\_en?OpenDocument](http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/kepa/kepa_new.nsf/kepa02_en/kepa02_en?OpenDocument)

<sup>61</sup> MoESY (2020).

## 6. Barriers to Adult Education

Papaioannou and Gravani<sup>62</sup> assert that Cyprus lacks an overall adult education culture. They add that adult education has a relatively short history and tradition in Cyprus, which is why it lacks a coherent and up-to-date policy. There's a corresponding scarcity of published studies investigating and evaluating the methodologies, processes, and outcomes of adult education in the country. Gravani and Ioannidou<sup>63</sup> emphasise the dearth of research on the effectiveness of adult education programmes in Cyprus, which would examine factors such as the variety of the offering, participation rates, as well as an assessment of quality, including frameworks, strategies, and evaluation. This section aims to summarise what findings there are on the challenges faced in adult education, including participation rates, opportunities for marginalised groups, funding, and evaluation.

An important challenge facing adult education in Cyprus is the lack of comprehensive statistics regarding adult literacy or skills. Cyprus has yet to participate in international assessments such as the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) or the Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey (ALL), resulting in a scarcity of relevant evaluations and assessments.<sup>64</sup> The absence of such data raises concerns the quality of adult education provided in Cyprus.<sup>65</sup> Moreover, Gravani and Ioannidou<sup>66</sup> report survey data suggesting that most institutions providing adult education do not have adequate evaluation mechanisms in place.

Low rates of participation is another significant concern in adult education. Notably, the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture<sup>67</sup> cautioned that:

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<sup>62</sup> Eleni Papaioannou & Maria N. Gravani, 'Empowering vulnerable adults through second-chance education: a case study from Cyprus,' (2018) 37(4) *International Journal of Lifelong Education* 435-450.

<sup>63</sup> Gravani & Ioannidou (2014).

<sup>64</sup> Vrasidas et al (2013).

<sup>65</sup> Dima Project, *State of the art in Adult Education: Strategies, policies, and tools* (2016) available at [www.dima-project.eu](http://www.dima-project.eu).

<sup>66</sup> Gravani, M. N. & Ioannidou, A. (2016). Mapping adult and continuing education in Cyprus: Key challenges for the future. *The International Journal of Adult, Community, and Professional Learning*, 23(4), 33-44.

<sup>67</sup> Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, Education and Training Monitor. Country Analysis (Brussels: European Union, 2019) 55 available at <https://www.educacionyfp.gob.es/inee/dam/jcr:669f016c-bcb1-439b-a06d-4ab01ad284a4/volume-2-2018-education-and-training-monitor-country-analysis-0.pdf>

At 6.7%, adult participation in learning [in Cyprus] remains below the EU average (11.1%). At 10.9%, it is highest among those with tertiary education (ISCED 5-8), but even for them it is significantly below the EU average of 19%. Upskilling and reskilling opportunities are most crucial for low-skilled adults (ISCED 0-2), who currently take least advantage of adult learning. The proportion of low-qualified adults in employment in Cyprus was 62% in 2018 (EU average: 56.8%) and higher than in 2017. During 2017, only around 50 adults aged 25 or above acquired an upper-secondary qualification, highlighting the need for a more substantial upskilling and reskilling effort.

Arguably, individuals with low education exhibit significantly lower participation levels in non-formal education and training compared to those with upper secondary or higher education qualifications. The 2011 Cyprus Report on the Action Plan on Adult Learning attributed this to the fact that the HRDA primarily subsidises single-company non-formal training for employed adults. Nonetheless, the multi-company training scheme for the long-term unemployed was more recently expanded to all registered unemployed<sup>68</sup>. In addition, in 2017, the Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities of the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance introduced vocational training for persons with disabilities.<sup>69</sup>

Another barrier for learners is that the programmes they would like to pursue do not come with the recognition and accreditation required for career advancement. According to the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture<sup>70</sup> ‘the implementation of the qualification framework [in Cyprus] is still at an early stage’ (p. 55). According to Kowalska and Knais<sup>71</sup>, the HRDA, which develops the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), has only classified qualifications in the following industries: construction, tourism, automobile, retail and wholesale.

Furthermore, Gravani and Ioannidou (2016)<sup>72</sup> highlight that participation in non-formal education and training is negatively affected by the absence of a system for recognising and validating prior learning or work experience in Cyprus. Next, a lack of awareness among the public of both the opportunities for adult education and the benefits it can provide leads to low interest in pursuing further education. Geographical location also affects access to adult education programmes, especially in

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Korelli et al (2018).

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Kowalska & Knais (2021).

<sup>72</sup> Gravani & Ioannidou (2016).

rural areas where educational facilities are limited. Some adults may feel discouraged from pursuing further education due to previous negative experiences of education or a lack of confidence in their abilities. Moreover, the fact that flexible learning options such as part-time courses, evening classes, or online learning, are not always readily available, excludes many adults from pursuing further education. In sum, the adult education offering in Cyprus does not align well with the specific needs and interests of adult learners.

The participation of vulnerable groups is an additional challenge to adult education in Cyprus. Cyprus has yet to develop targeted policies and strategies, nor specific benchmarks, regarding the participation of marginalised groups such as early school leavers, people with disabilities, migrant or minority groups, economically inactive women, the elderly, and the long-term unemployed.<sup>73</sup> The above groups often lack the financial resources or the necessary qualifications to enter programmes of adult education. At the same time, their access to information about opportunities to pursue adult education is limited. Last, what policy exists tends to emphasise a market-oriented approach to adult education, putting employability as the highest priority. As a consequence, adults who—for a variety of reasons—do not participate in the job market, tend to be excluded from adult education policymaking.

This absence of policymaking in the field of adult education, according to Papaioannou and Gravani<sup>74</sup> ‘hinders the development of a suitable educational context for vulnerable adults’ (p. 447). Early school leavers represent one of these vulnerable groups. In Papaioannou and Gravani’s<sup>75</sup> research, early school leavers experienced poverty and reported feelings of inferiority due to the premature discontinuation of their studies. The authors stress that second-chance schools should therefore aim to empower individuals cognitively, socially, and psychologically. However, they also highlight the need for flexibility, as for many such adults, attending second-chance schools may be difficult. They may have work and family commitments, while these schools only offer in-person courses on a full-time basis. At the same time, teachers in these schools are secondary school educators who are not necessarily experienced enough or qualified to teach as adult educators. Further compounding the issue, the curriculum and materials are sourced from secondary education, and thus may not respond to adults’ needs.

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<sup>73</sup> Gravani et al (2021).

<sup>74</sup> Papaioannou & Gravani (2018).

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.



Another vulnerable group, as mentioned, are migrants and refugees. Cyprus has a highly diverse population, and adults with a migration background may face challenges in accessing education due to language barriers.<sup>76</sup> Although the State provides many language courses (especially for foreigners to help them learn Greek and/or English), and some integration programmes, the Cypriot strategy for adult education still falls short of addressing intercultural education and the inclusion of migrants, refugees, and other non-native adult learners in lifelong learning initiatives<sup>77</sup>. Nicolaou et al.'s<sup>78</sup> study examining language education in Limassol found that educational efforts fall short in adequately and effectively addressing the requirements of adult migrant learners. The language programmes focus on teaching the local national language and do not incorporate the principles of bilingual education or plurilingual instruction, indicating a need for more comprehensive and inclusive approaches. As Gravani et al.'s<sup>79</sup> critical analysis on adult education policies for migrants showed, the adult education system in Cyprus:

is essentially monocultural; the growing presence of a non-native adult population has not acted up to now as the driving force for challenging the predominance of ethnocentric educational policies and for opening up a serious policy debate for the adoption of multilingual and intercultural pedagogies (p. 37).

To this end, civil society has been advocating for increased policy engagement with regards to diversity, multiculturalism, and the integration of these populations into adult education programmes. These organisations are often actively involved in providing adult education and support services to migrants in order to fill the gap in services not provided by the State. In addition, EU funding often fills the gap for CSOs and NGOs in this regard.

Inadequate State funding is a significant barrier to increasing participation in and enhancing the quality of adult education in Cyprus compared to other European countries. The DIMA project researchers assert that the State sees vulnerable groups

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<sup>76</sup> Gravani et al (2021).

<sup>77</sup> EAEA - European Association for the Education of Adults, *Overview: Adult Education in Cyprus in 2019*, available at <https://countryreport.eaea.org/search/cyprus-reports-2019/overview-adult-education-cyprus>

<sup>78</sup> Anna Nicolaou, Antigoni Parmaxi, Salomi, Papadima-Sophocleous & Dimitrios Boglou, 'Language education in a multilingual city: The case of Limassol,' (2016) 14(2) *London Review of Education* 174–185.

<sup>79</sup> Gravani et al (2021).

as having a lower potential for creating value in the market, and has therefore under-invested in terms of their further education and training opportunities.<sup>80</sup>

The 2013 economic crisis and the subsequent implementation of austerity measures in Cyprus, as pointed out by Gravani and Ioannidou<sup>81</sup>, has further hindered the provision of quality adult education. Insufficient funding also hampers the improvement of working conditions for adult education educators and trainers, leading to financial insecurity and limited opportunities for career advancement. Many educators and trainers are employed on a temporary or part-time basis, significantly affecting the professionalisation of adult education staff.

## 7. Conclusions and Future Prospects

Since joining the EU in 2004, adult education has risen on the Cyprus national agenda. An education system aligned with the European agenda for lifelong learning and continuous professional development would better equip adults in addressing contemporary socio-political and economic challenges.<sup>82</sup> Vrasidas et al.<sup>83</sup> assert that, with the need for workforce reskilling, adult education is a crucial instrument for EU countries looking to combat economic crises.

Cyprus has relatively limited experience in adult education. Therefore, fostering cooperation with countries more experienced in this field can help in formulating and implementing successful policies and strategies on the national level. Comparative studies can be instrumental in driving increased accessibility and training, raising awareness on the range and availability of adult education programmes, enhancing the professionalism of adult education staff, and maintaining standards.<sup>84</sup> <sup>85</sup> State incentives to encourage research and innovation in adult education are therefore crucial to identify best practices and continuously improve the quality of programmes.

In Cyprus, adult education policies should primarily focus on strengthening efforts to increase accessibility and participation. EU statistics show that although participation in adult education is increasing, it stills remains below the EU average

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<sup>80</sup> Dima Project (2016).

<sup>81</sup> Gravani & Ioannidou (2016).

<sup>82</sup> Nicoletta Ioannou, 'Formation of Adult Education policy: Key messages and main challenges,' (2023) 3(1) *Adult Education: Critical Issues* 7-25.

<sup>83</sup> Vrasidas, C. et al. (2013).

<sup>84</sup> Field et al (2016).

<sup>85</sup> Slowey (2016).

- i.e. 1.4 pp below the EU average for 2022 (11.9%).<sup>86</sup> Nevertheless, there is a lack of national-level research on the barriers to increased accessibility, and thus it is essential to conduct empirical research in this direction to introduce initiatives to overcome these challenges, and actually increase participation.<sup>87</sup> Participation should be especially encouraged for groups at risk of societal and economic marginalisation, such as the long-term unemployed, economically inactive women, migrants, and the elderly.<sup>88</sup> With regards to early school leavers, also a vulnerable group, the provision of a distance-learning curriculum by second-chance evening schools should be considered to facilitate the enrolment of more adults. The State should also provide appropriate and adequate training to teachers appointed in these schools. Moreover, the Ministry of Education and Culture should expand the evening second-chance secondary or technical schools to make them more appealing to diverse learners by tailoring the learning experience to participants' learning styles, interests, and needs, especially in rural regions.

Second, there is a need to ensure that information and guidance services on adult education reach all segments of the population. The 2011 Country Report on the Action Plan on Adult Learning for Cyprus recommended the establishment of Centres of Guidance and Counselling. These would be staffed by qualified counsellors to provide advice to diverse population groups (a proposal that has not yet materialised). A National Forum on Lifelong Guidance can also contribute to this goal. To make adult education more accessible, factors such as affordability, funding incentives, flexibility, and convenience should be taken into account. More funding should be allocated to subsidise fees, particularly for vulnerable adults. Additionally, non-formal and vocational adult education should also be available online. Such programmes should align the principles of distance learning education with those of adult education.<sup>89 90</sup>

Third, enhancing the professionalism of educators and trainers in adult education is essential to improving the overall provision of adult education.<sup>91</sup> The pressing ne-

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<sup>86</sup> European Commission, *Education and Training Monitor – Cyprus* (Brussels: European Union, 2023), available at <https://op.europa.eu/webpub/eac/education-and-training-monitor-2023/en/country-reports/cyprus.html>

<sup>87</sup> Gravani & Ioannidou (2014).

<sup>88</sup> Hajisoteriou (2017)

<sup>89</sup> Christidou et al (2012).

<sup>90</sup> Maria N. Gravani, 'Adult learning in a distance education context: theoretical and methodological challenges,' (2015) 34(2) *International Journal of Lifelong Education* 172-193.

<sup>91</sup> Nicoletta Ioannou, *Professional Development and Professionalization of Adult Education in Cyprus: Views and Perceptions of Adult Educators*, PhD thesis (Nottingham: University of Nottingham, 2018)

cessity to address diversity and plurality in the adult education sector, has mandated the professionalisation of adult educators as a requisite for Member States.<sup>92 93 94</sup> The Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (2019)<sup>95</sup> cautions that, in Cyprus, ‘a distinct professional identity for adult educators has not been articulated, despite a shortage of qualified people in the sector’, and calls for the State to develop policies clearly defining the qualification requirements for adult educators and supporting training programmes adjusted to the needs of adult educators working in diverse fields. The introduction of the ‘Certification of Training Providers and the Certification of Vocational Qualifications’ is a positive step towards reinforcing the professional status of adult educators.<sup>96</sup> However, Gravani and Ioannidou<sup>97</sup> caution against the lack of formal training for adult educators on teaching adults in formal, non-formal, and vocational contexts. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen both the professional status and role, as well as the competences and skills of adult educators and trainers.<sup>98</sup> A national framework should be developed to regulate and accredit qualifications, training, and competencies of adult educators and trainers. Financial incentives should also be provided for supplementary training and higher education, such as postgraduate courses in adult education.<sup>99</sup> Higher education institutions can play a crucial role in providing the subject-matter knowledge, pedagogical skills, and know-how necessary for teaching adults.

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<sup>92</sup> Borut Mikulec, ‘Competences of adult education professionals in the European and Slovene context,’ (2019) 25(1) *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education* 25–44.

<sup>93</sup> Helen Murphy, ‘The professionalization of adult education in Ireland: How a changing national regulatory environment influenced the development of new teacher education qualifications for adult educators,’ M. N. Gravani, G. K. Zarifis & L. Jögi (eds.) *The Role of Higher Education in the Professionalisation of Adult Educators* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2020) 128-144.

<sup>94</sup> Antri Piliri, & Maria N. Gravani, ‘The professional status of adult educators: a case study from Cyprus in the era of pandemic,’ (2023b) 29(2) *Andragoška spoznanja/Studies in Adult Education and Learning* 143-161.

<sup>95</sup> Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (2019).

<sup>96</sup> Ioannis Zenios, ‘The trainer of vocational training as part of the two HRDA certification systems: The certification of training providers and the certification of vocational qualifications,’ (Nicosia: Republic of Cyprus, 2013), available at [www.moec.gov.cy/aethee/omadiki\\_mathisi/dek\\_2013/ioannis\\_zenios\\_human\\_resource\\_development\\_authority\\_cyprus.pdf](http://www.moec.gov.cy/aethee/omadiki_mathisi/dek_2013/ioannis_zenios_human_resource_development_authority_cyprus.pdf)

<sup>97</sup> Gravani & Ioannidou (2014).

<sup>98</sup> Ioannis Zenios & Paraskevi Chatzipanagiotou, ‘Steps towards the professionalization of trainers: Good practice from Cyprus,’ in M. N. Gravani, G. K. Zarifis, & L. Jögi (eds.) *The Role of Higher Education in the Professionalisation of Adult Educators* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2020) 218–232.

<sup>99</sup> Piliri, & Gravani (2023b).

Last, an evaluation framework should be a top priority in national policymaking on adult education. The 2014–2020 Cyprus Lifelong Learning Strategy called for an improvement of quality and efficiency in education and training.<sup>100</sup> The DIMA project<sup>101</sup> similarly advocated for setting accountability as a priority axis in Cypriot policies. This would require an interdepartmental committee, including social partners, responsible for policy monitoring and evaluation, validating informal and non-formal skills, and measuring participation levels. This goal is addressed in a specific work strand within Cyprus’ Lifelong Learning Strategy for 2021-2027, as outlined by the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth in 2022 and adopted in September 2022. The objective is to enhance validation and assessment processes in preparation for establishing quality standards for non-formal learning programs and to create connections between validation systems and credit frameworks.<sup>102</sup>

Furthermore, the proposed Cyprus Quality Assurance and Accreditation organisation, tasked with externally evaluating adult education institutions, is in line with the pursuit of quality standards in adult education.<sup>103</sup> The Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture<sup>104</sup> states that while the National Qualifications Authority, responsible for evaluating and validating qualifications obtained through formal, non-formal, and informal learning, is currently functioning, there is a necessity to broaden and solidify its mandate and institutional role. A key element of sustaining quality should involve the active and meaningful involvement of all key stakeholders, providing opportunities for privileged and marginalised groups to define issues and propose solutions for further education. Future research should aim to explore the perceptions of key stakeholders and actors on successful improvement efforts to promote quality adult education.

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<sup>100</sup> Cyprus Planning Bureau (2014).

<sup>101</sup> Dima Project (2016).

<sup>102</sup> European Commission (2023).

<sup>103</sup> GHK, Research voor Beleid (2011).

<sup>104</sup> Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (2019).

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