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Pilot projects

TT-PLUS PROJECT
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First country report
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1. INTRODUCTION: AN OVERVIEW OF TRAINERS' SITUATION IN GREECE

The TTPlus project deals with trainers in firms and their professional development. Whereas the subject of our research is very clear defined, we consider as crucial for the better understanding of our analysis to present in brief the broader socioeconomic context in which training is taking place and trainers are working in Greece. We will report about important factors of Greece's VET and occupational system and will point out the role and parameters that are playing a role in the formation of trainers' identity.

As we will see in the following, our specific research subject, the trainers of employed people (of the working population that is trained 'in service') are in numerical terms less important than the other two groups of specialists in training and teaching VET matters, that are: [1.] the trainers of unemployed people, of people who are willing to enhance their employability (also) by training, and [2.] the teachers of pupils in vocational schools.

Trainers in first are very important in their role to enhance and secure the quality of labor force. This is the reason why they experience better working and rewarding conditions in comparison to the other group of trainers for unemployed labor force. We probably should point at the beginning of this study the fact that in Greece, as in very many other European countries, the majority of re- or further trained jobless remain unemployed after having taking part in the special training measures for unemployed people.

1.1. *Characteristics of Greek occupational System*

Greece has never been an industrial socioeconomic formation. The Greek economy has never reached to employ in manufacturing more than 22% of the active population. Employment in the industrial sector is now going through a drastic restructuring ('deindustrialization', 'outsourcing') and further shrinking, driving numerous industrial workers to unemployment. Today only about 1/7 of the labor force is employed in the secondary sector.

The service sector, with an emphasis on tourism, trade, and all kind of public services employed about 70% of the Greek workforce. Still, it is going through severe restructuring, since the small units, which mainly characterize its development and function cannot compete with powerful newcomers or multinational firms. A huge wave of capital centralization is taking place. (Ioakimoglou, Patiniotis 2004: 141 following; Drucker 1993).

The private business, on the other hand, consists predominantly of small-size, family-owned enterprises. The small sized businesses decision rely heavily on emotional criteria, taken mainly based on intuition and instinct, instead of

management models for decision-making. (Patiniotis and Stavroulakis, 1997) Most of entrepreneurs are reluctant to proceed to business expansion, at least without the state support, and they largely see their business as a temporary occupation to make high profit in the shortest possible time scale. At the same time, there is no development of a communal conscience and the substantial accumulated profits are due to their favorable treatment by legal devices, and the squeeze of employees' salaries, which tend to increase at a markedly lower rate compared to EU countries.

Important role in the economical landscape, as described above, plays the Greek family, which constitutes the nucleus of the Greek society; its importance becomes apparent in the absence of the voluntary citizens' welfare associations in acting as intermediate protective layers between family and state (Maratou-Alipranti 1995). Hence, the family absorbs all vibrations caused by the state bureaucracy or the working environment. As Tsoukalas (1986) points out, Greek households are characterized by an *educational fetishism*, which is admittedly unjustifiable considering the low level of economic development. (Cellorio-Martínez X.; Farran M.; Patiniotis N. 1997) As a consequent, there has been an enormous increase of the annual higher-education intake, which has almost tripled in the last 30 years. It is a fact that Greece shows the highest rate (64,5%) among EU countries of students aged 18-24 currently in tertiary education (TEI – AEI). The university certificate is widely accepted as the secure path to a successful career, mostly associated to professions with high socioeconomic status, such as doctors, engineers, and lawyers. It is important to note here, the conviction that the higher education degree moderates extreme class differences, giving equal opportunities to all higher-education incomers for a career.

A last remark worth-mentioning, is the inconsistency between the developments in higher education and the economic sphere, evident in the high number of university graduates and their limited absorbance by the labour market in positions equivalent to their qualifications; it appears that Greek businesses prefer or need unskilled or low-skilled cheap labour, and work experience over academic knowledge –however, they are eager to employ qualified individuals for these positions and with wages of unskilled labour. (Patiniotis 2007) The phenomenon points to the call for restructuring the education system in order to meet the labour market demands in skills. Even though this phenomenon becomes ever more apparent by the high percentage of graduate unemployment, still the family attitudes towards Vocational Education have been negative, always been considered a bad alternative to the failure in pursuing university education.

Three more traits characterize the occupational patterns in Greece: hetero-employment, unstratified employment, and multi-employment. (Patiniotis 2007)

- 'Hetero-employment' refers to the widespread tendency of following a vocational path away from the qualifications and specialization one has acquired. This phenomenon became even more acute in the latest years, due to the high unemployment and insecurity of vocational settlement. This situation obliges

individuals to apply for any vacant position, regardless of their specialization. It should be noted here that due to the high unemployment university graduates face and the tough competition for the limited good positions, the young unemployed are forced to stick with inferior vocations (e.g. sales people, waiters) until they find a position according to their qualifications. This waiting time used to be a few months and lately can even extend to years.

- ‘Unstratified employment’ refers to the phenomenon, where two individuals coming from a stratified educational level practice the same occupation (e.g. accounts having graduate from post-secondary and third level education). This situation signalizes the high status seniority and experience enjoy in the Greek labour market, and results to older people occupying more senior positions and supervise younger, but more qualified personnel. This happens due to the fact that in the Greek context most tasks, even those requiring formal advanced qualifications, are carried out by empirical methods, and requires competences gained in a brief period of on the job training. This also points to the preference businesses have to recruit already experienced and less qualified people, minimizing like that training and socializing costs, whereas on the other hand, it pushes young individuals to hide those parts of their formal qualifications that could intimidate prospective employers.
- ‘Multi-employment’ concerns the situation where an individual occupies more than one jobs, which are not only unrelated between them, but also characterize different social strata (e.g. a school teacher delivers private tuition in the evenings, and at the same time he runs an agricultural property and lets rooms to tourists in the summer). The causes of the phenomenon are attributed to the unstable conditions of the labour market, the low wages, and the uncertainty about future employment, which make individuals seek stability and certainty in unrelated economic spheres (Patiniotis et al. 1997)

1.2. VET System

Due to certain historical and economical characteristics of Greece; i.e. the industry has not been developed to the extent which has in other countries, which indicates a small demand for technical jobs; Vocational Education has traditionally been considered a second best choice for the youngsters; on the other hand, the Greek education system has focused on providing general knowledge, leaving little alternatives for those who preferred a technical career through higher education. VET has been criticized for not achieving to make the link between vocational training and labour market, since the training programs and provided skills do not meet the actual requirements of the economy. A public authority representative commented during our investigation: *‘Vocational Education and Training does not contribute to the economy, as it could and should do –I don’t think it plays a substantial role, because it is not provided as it should be, the philosophy and culture is not supportive; and this is not only school to blame, but the whole system, the employers, the school, the*

Greek family and the dominant mentality regarding education –the issue is much deeper than it seems; whereas Vocational Education and Training in other countries is a key-force, in Greece it is perceived as the path for the children of a lesser god to have a chance in the labour market’.

1.2.1. Formal VET system

The formal VET system provides education at second, post-second and third (higher) level and is regulated and supervised by the Ministry of Education, with the exception of certain Vocational Schools (e.g. Apprenticeship Schools, Military Schools, Master-mariner Schools, etc) which fall under the jurisdiction of the equivalent Ministry.

VET at the secondary level consist [a.] in Technical Vocational Lycea (EPAL); EPAL require 3 years of studies and [b.] in the Technical Vocational Schools (EPAS) that are lasting 2 years. These institutions provide vocational education after the compulsory education (at the 9+ level).

At the post-secondary level VET is provided in the Institutes of Vocational Training (IEK), which can be either public or private. IEK provide cheap, specialized labour and would have been welcomed by the employers, had not the latter the option to employ tertiary level graduates for the same jobs and with the same minimum wages. In order to enrol the student has to be lyceum graduate, and there is also applied a point-system of selection. The studies last from one to four semesters, plus a six month work experience placement. The Ministry of Education is responsible for developing and approving training programmes, assuring shared content among training agents. However, the system has been criticized for the dominant ‘school mentality’—mostly due on the one hand, to the secondary school teachers who staff VET institutions and do not allow space for new pedagogical methods, and on the other hand to the mostly out-dated content of training courses; thus, IEKs role have been reduced from vocational training institutions to a low-quality post-school experience.

The responsible body for accreditation of certificates and qualifications from TEE and IEK is *OEEK (Organization for Vocational Education and Training)*, which falls under the umbrella of the Ministry of Education. OEEK also determines the vocational rights of graduates from VET of all levels, in collaboration with the respective ministers and social partners. The accredited certificate is a formal qualification for employment in the public sector.

Tertiary level education is provided by universities and by Technical Education Institutes (TEI). The students are accepted after pan Hellenic entrance exams, and the studies last 8 semesters for the former, and 6 plus one given over internship for the latter. One of the major issues facing the third-level education institutes is the decreasing of training quality, due to the insufficient funding, and the large number of students, in proportion to the infrastructure and the teaching personnel. The degrees and certificates from third level education institutes also qualify the

graduates for employment in the public sector. The graduates can also register with their respective professional chamber or vocational association, and acquire the right to exercise the vocation.

It is worth mentioning here that the public sector is the major employer of graduates from the formal VET system, probably legitimizing and giving value this way to the same system that has constructed. The businesses, on the other hand use different criteria for recruitment, beyond the formal qualifications and certifications, such as the trust in the candidate's personal references, and the latter's acceptance of the offered work package and conditions, signaling this way the depreciation of formal VET and the qualifications provided.

1.2.2. Non-formal VET

Non-formal vocational education in Greece is regulated and supervised by the Ministry of Labor, and has been conducted in various forms and by numerous foundations often with overlapping responsibilities; the main weakness of the structure is that it remains highly uncoordinated, despite the need for regulating the funds coming from the EU. The formal rhetoric proclaims the benefits of the structure, as being more flexible than the formal VET in responding to new demands and changes of the labour market, as well as providing easier access to gain some vocational qualifications to unskilled individuals (especially aiming at disadvantaged groups and communities with high level of unemployment). Beyond the formal rhetoric, non-formal VET was a response to European mandates and the ample funds which became available for its support, while it provides a legitimate way for decreasing unemployment rates, since participants in the programs are temporarily removed from the lists of unemployed population.

Unfortunately, with the exception of some public utilities, the majority of businesses remained indifferent to the opportunities offered in planning training programs. An increase in interest indicated lately is attributed to the financial compensation of the participants (offered to both the trainees and the businesses, which offer them short apprenticeships), whereas the main disadvantages are still the poor co-ordination of activities, the poor information regarding the available training programs and participation criteria, and the lack of provision of a formal qualification title. Especially, the subsidized character of the training programs and the lack of a structure for accrediting certification for acquired qualifications [together with the lack of knowing-how to do so] are obstructions in engaging the target groups in participating. The 2003 Report of National Certification Centre (EKEPIS) underscores these limitations, addressing strongly the need for more applied research and development of tools, which would enable the quality assurance of VET structures and programs, and eventually lead to providing participants with formal qualification certificates.

1.2.3. Public organizations providing Non Formal Learning

The main organization in non-formal VET is the *General Secretariat for Adult Education (G.S.A.E)*, responsible for designing, co-ordinating and supporting activities in the area of lifelong learning and training. To this purpose and under its authority lie 300 Training Centers, which fall under 54 Prefecture Councils for People Training (NELE). A second agent of G.S.A.E is the Centres for Adult Education (KEE), which provides immigrants with training in basic skills, social skills, and learning of Greek as second language. G.S.A.E targets mainly disaffected groups, such as unemployed, illiterate, women, minority groups, ex-convicts, ex-drug addicts, etc.

- *The Greek Manpower Employment Organization (OAED)* is the main body for materializing the governmental policies on employment; it co-ordinates programmes for continuous education, which take place around Greece at the Centres for Vocational Training of OAED. The programs are addressed mainly to unemployed individuals, either unskilled or semi-skilled, by providing further training and specialization courses, which potentially will increase the participants' opportunities for a career. OAED, in an effort to link vocational training programmes with the economy, created two affiliated organizations: Vocational Training S.A, and Employment Observatory Research and Informatics S.A (PAEP). PAEP conducts research on current and actual employment issues, and provides Vocational Training S.A. the results of their work, in order to embed them in further actions. Vocational Training S.A is responsible for Lifelong Learning and Continuous Vocational Training, and in theory materializes into actions PAEP research results and suggestions. Finally, Centres for Promoting Employment are part of OAED structure and responsible for recording unemployed people and provide counselling services on how to find a job. This service involves an individualized interview with the unemployed person, through which the consultant tries to build the interviewee profile, and match their competences and interests with jobs and available training seminars, where they are directed. In reality though, more often than not the service works as a self-service: the unemployed fills in the relevant documents on their own, and decide 'on their own free-will' how they can further their career.
- *Various Ministries, through their Directorates of Education*, are also active in planning and materializing training programs addressed so much to unemployed individuals as much as to their own personnel in various departments, in areas relevant to their respective objects of activity.
- *Other training programs* are organized and run by the big public utilities (DEH, OTE, ELTA, OSE, etc) as well as by businesses in the private sector (e.g. banks), and organizations such as Chambers, Professional Associations, Trade Unions, etc, which, through their education departments or appropriate training structures, provide the employed with the knowledge and skills required in specific jobs.

- Recently, main agents for non-formal VET have been proved the private-owned *Foundations of Vocational Training (KEK)*, which are evaluated, certified and supervised by the National Accreditation Centre (EKEPIS). KEKs absorb funds from the government and the EU for the operation of their programs, and provide training both for unemployed and for business staff. KEKs are largely involved in developing and conducting training programmes, which target socially disadvantaged group, responding to the relevant calls announced by the Ministry of Employment each time. The training programme proposals can be submitted in collaboration with the business, universities, or research institutes. EKEPIS regulates the quality of the offered infrastructures (e.g. facilities, technologies) and the trainers' formal qualifications. However, the content and quality of the offered course relies on each organization.
- Finally, in Greece also they operate "*Laboratories for Studies*"; these are private institutions providing post-secondary education. Some of these work in some form of collaboration with universities from foreign countries, and provide a degree from the respective institution. These degrees provide a valid proof of vocational qualification in the labour market, however, it is still not formally acknowledged by the State as equivalent to the Greek certificates of third level education.

It is important to note here that the certificates provided by non-formal VET agents have no formal (i.e. by the State) recognition as proof of qualifications, hence based on this only, no place in the public sector can be pursued –with the exception of training programs run by some organizations, e.g. ministries, banks, etc, which are acknowledged within the same organization. Nevertheless, the businesses accept these certificates as sufficient proof of qualifications in the recruiting process.

1.3. Trainers

Admittedly, the instructors' level of qualifications has increased recently; the phenomenon is related to high unemployment, which affects the young university graduates and leads individuals to seek employment in education system. However, the same effect is the main cause for the deterioration of instructors' economic and social status, since it created a major surplus of labour in the education sector. Job insecurity, low wages, and poorly equipped classrooms, as result of the cost-cutting policy applied in the education, has lead many instructors to view their vocation as something temporary, until they settle in a more secure job. The recent turn towards supporting Vocational Training and the numerous training centers (IEK and KEK, public and private) has opened up opportunities for the instructors to add some extra money in their income, by teaching part-time at these institutions.

Formal VET institutions require by their instructors at least a university degree or a third level technical education certificate. Especially for IEK, since many of the modules they teach do not necessitate strong theoretical basis (e.g. gardening,

plumbing) instructor may be anyone who has a proven expertise in the area. Currently, half of the trainers are professional educators/teachers, and the other half is practitioners. For the majority of these people (around 80%) being a trainer is their second part-time job.

Informal VET trainers have to fulfill the requirements regarding academic qualifications and teaching experience as set down by EKEPIS and be a member of the EKEPIS register (OAED Vocational Training S.A keeps a separate register for their own instructors). There are about 15.000 qualified instructors registered with EKEPIS and it has now started their training in teaching adults. EKEPIS intends to assure this way the quality of staff teaching in informal vocational education without submit them in a rigid system of continuous evaluation –a practice which is mistrusted and generally avoided after the suspension of the former evaluation system in formal education system, since the early '80s, for its extensive discrimination on the basis of political beliefs and gender, instructors.

1.4. Trainees

It would be a mistake to consider trainees a solid group of people, who participate for the benefit of acquiring knowledge and skills. 'Trainees' tend to be very diversified, with different motives for and expectations from participating in VET structures; besides, the VET itself, as described above, is very heterogeneous.

In formal VET structures, participants at large expect, apart of the obvious benefit of learning vocational skills and competences, the benefits from acquiring a formal certificate of qualifications or a degree in the case of university. The degree is allegedly associated with occupations of higher status, whereas both degrees and certificates are associated with secure jobs, better salaries, and bonuses according to the occupation, at least in the public sector. However, as discussed above, the private sector is reluctant to recruit qualified employees, preferring those with practical experience. Consequently, high unemployment leads many individuals from this group to seek further training in one of the informal VET structures.

Informal VET structures have been developed to address different needs for further training. Their various programs are addressed to employed, unemployed and people from disadvantaged groups, and receive affluent funding from E.U.

Already employed individuals prefer to participate in in-house training programs: according to EKEPIS report (2003) a 79% believe that through these programs they acquire skills and competences that are valuable for the company, whereas a great percentage believe that these skills improves their employability in the labour market. A 54% believes that, by participating in these programs, they improve their job security and opportunities for development. There has also been an increase in the number of employed individuals, who participate in other informal VET programs, mainly seeking to acquire or update their vocational knowledge and skills, or pursuing a change in their vocational career.

Nevertheless, the large number of informal VET programs are addressed to unemployed individuals and allegedly aim at providing vocational skills relevant to the needs of the business, and improve their employability; this group includes individuals with formal qualifications, who are currently unemployed, and individuals from disadvantaged groups (i.e. women, disabled, ex-drug addicts, ex-convicts, cultural minorities, expatriates, school leavers, etc), in other words, those individuals who suffer the marginalization from the labour market, and also from society.

EU has put these people at the focus of VET plans and policies; however in Greece the numbers show a negative picture. A study conducted in KEKs run by OAED (EKEPIS, 2003) reports 39% of those who participated in a vocational program were employed 6 months after the end of the program [note here that businesses receive subsidies for offering apprenticeships to participants for a short time, however the report does not elaborate on this factor], and only 40% in an area relevant to the training they had receive. The programs have not been very effective in substantially improving employability, and indeed they do not enjoy a high status among businesses either, which report that the training provided is not flexible enough to meet the robust technological changes and business needs in technical skills –an argument, which indeed surprises, since in Greece most businesses are small-sized and use low level technologies. It emerges then, that the key motive for participation in these programs is the received subsidies, especially for those participants who do not receive unemployment benefits, whereas expectations for improving employability and finding a job come second. An experienced instructor has pointed out during our interview: *“I have numerous cases of individuals who I keep on meeting in different training programs; obviously, they don’t come because they have an interest in the subject, but for the subsidies”*.

1.5. The Identity and Role of Trainers

We consider crucial for the purpose of the project to look closer at the CVT teachers’ and trainers’ identity; CVT teachers and trainers are a crucial dimension of quality in education, however little work has been conducted in this area in Greece, which would identify this vocational group. (Brown A. et al. 2007)

Admittedly, the instructors’ level of qualifications have increased recently; the phenomenon is related to high unemployment, which affects the young university graduates –as explained above- and leads individuals to seek employment in the education system. However, the same effect has been the main cause for the deterioration of instructors’ economic and social status, since it created a major surplus of labour in the education sector. Job insecurity, low wages, and poorly equipped classrooms, as result of the cost-cutting policy applied in the education, has

lead many instructors to view their vocation as something temporary, until they settle in a more secure job with a steadily paid salary.

The recent turn towards supporting Vocational Training and the numerous training centres (IEK and KEK, public and private) have opened up opportunities for the instructors to add some extra money in their income, by teaching part-time at these institutions –money, which make a substantial contribution to their income, once they are paid. Hence, many chose to teach in vocational programmes, keeping the role of trainer as their second job, or in a few cases (about 10%) make vocational teaching their primary source of income. The question that rises is whether this vocational group has achieved to develop a professional identity, hence, consider themselves teachers and trainers, and commit to the cause of education, or they only see it as an occasional occupation –with no further commitments. We argue here that if the trainers had developed a professional identity, then they would probably be more interested in further improving their teaching via self-evaluation tools and practices. The answer to this question bears significant implications for the quality in education system and the subsequent tools to develop for its support.

Formal VET institutions require by their instructors at least a university degree or a third level technical education certificate. Especially for IEK, since many of the modules they teach do not necessitate strong theoretical basis (e.g. gardening, plumbing) instructor may be anyone who has a proven expertise in the area. It is a striking finding that the majority of the trainers at formal VET institutions are secondary school teachers. For most of them (around 80%) being a trainer is their second part-time job, the rest of the trainers come from the professional word (especially from big public utilities firms e.g. DEH, OTE, etc) and a small percentage chose to teach in VET as their main and only occupation. However it emerges that very few of the trainers see teaching as a temporary job (until they find something else), whereas some 70% stay on vocational training permanently.

The trainers sign employment contracts for a semester (as long as the training programme lasts), and the average trainer teaches 4-5 hours per week. It is worth mentioning here that the payment may be delayed even up to 2 years after the completion of the programme, hence this may be a cause that make people reluctant to see it as their main or only occupation.

As we said above, the great majority of IEKs trainers are full-time teachers at secondary schools, and choose to teach in IEKs in the evenings, as a way to add in their annual income. It is reported that these people have no experience in teaching adults, neither in teaching vocational courses, since their main occupation is teaching youngsters in secondary schools. It is also striking that these trainers undergo no preparation training programme in these issues – something that EKEPIS has started now doing for the trainers in non-formal VET. Consequently, the pedagogical methods they adopt and the mentality they carry are not suitable for vocational training, since they lack empirical insights into the business world, and equally

importantly, they lack the training in teaching adults; furthermore, it is reported that they resist in adapting to the demands of the transforming VET system. Moreover, even though OEEK acknowledges the contribution of IEK trainer register would have upon improving the quality of training programmes, the current structure does not anticipate this innovation; hence the selection of trainers by IEK directors relies on personal acquaintance and mutual trust which develops through years of collaboration.

The quality system suggests the evaluation of trainers by the directors of each vocational foundation in the classroom, however, there is no motive which would break steady collaborations and would establish a culture of on-going evaluation – a practice which is mistrusted and generally avoided after the suspension of the former evaluation system in formal education system, that came the fall of the dictatorship in 1974, for its extensive discrimination of instructors on the basis of political beliefs.

Informal VET trainers have many similarities with formal VET trainers, as far as their background and employment conditions are concerned. Contracts are again short-term, dependent on the length of the training programme they participate, and trainers are paid by the hour for the amount of hours anticipated by the programme. The nature of insurance is flexible, as the institution provides the national insurance one prefers (IKA, TEVE, etc). It is noted though, that some training programmes do not anticipate national insurance for the trainers. As with IEK, payments are delayed and can reach up to 2 years after the completion of the training programme.

Trainers have to fulfil the requirements regarding academic qualifications and teaching experience as set by EKEPIS and be a member of the EKEPIS register (OAED Vocational Training S.A keeps a separate register for their own instructors). The requirements to register and be certified expects from trainers to have completed 150 hours of teaching per year for 3 years. The register was an EKEPIS initiative in order to control the quality of the instructors employed at the training programmes, since the collaborations so far were based on personal acquaintance and trust, and as mentioned above, there was a strong culture of avoiding any sort of on-going evaluation. EKEPIS, thus, via the register, attempted to break to some extent cases of collaboration which were not fulfilling the minimum standards.

There are about 15.000 qualified instructors registered with EKEPIS; however, similar problems encountered at IEK appear in KEK training. An experienced trainer comments: *“...the register EKEPIS has developed is not appropriate either to assure quality in training, as far as trainers are concerned. Imagine, out of 10000 registered trainers, some 6000 come from secondary education and furthermore, the majority are teachers of Informatics. Now, that you teach informatics at school does not mean that you know what a business needs and expects from the employee”*.

Hence, the effort to create a register that would provide Vocational Training Institutions with qualified trainers who can teach a) adults and b) vocational issues,

fails, since the registered members are the same teachers who teach in the secondary education, and bring their mentality and attitude with it. An attempt to break this mentality is the EKEPIS compulsory programme for training the instructors in training adults, which is about to start, however, it is questionable whether the short training that are about to receive can break deep-rooted attitudes that are reinforced daily by their primary work as secondary school teachers.

The on-going evaluation of trainers at KEK relies again on each organization director. The system anticipates the evaluation of trainers' at an intermediary and the final stage of the training programme. Furthermore, even though trainers are supposed to go through the same selection process, as trainees do (CV, interview, etc) this stage is often 'forgotten', since recruitment relies either on personal acquaintance and favours to friends, or steady partnerships and trainer's reputation. Even though at least in the last case there are obvious reasons for omitting the process, still it is against the rationale of quality, which claims that no previous experience reassures that next time all will perform as usual. It can safely be assumed, then, that there is no culture for evaluating the trainers. A quality assurance consultant succinctly sums up the general view: *"I believe that if the trainers' selection and evaluation were conducted properly, then, things would be different –lots of trash would vanish; first of all the trainers themselves would be more competitive, and would try slightly harder to their jobs"*.

Under these circumstances, which are not favourable for the trainers, i.e. short-term contracts, delays in payment, job insecurity (the demand of specializations depends on the current training programmes each time), it is not surprising the development of a strong informal network of collaboration which provides the job security which is not reassured by the system. As expected, this informal network collides with the principles of quality management, and the culture of evaluation.

In sum, it emerges that this professional group does not exist as such, since it has no opportunity to develop a shared and steady identity. (Patiniotis N. + Prodromitis 2007) It is largely perceived as a secondary occupation, which some people enjoy to do, or for others it provides some extra money –in the long run. Our research findings point that a professional identity has been developed only by a very small percentage of people (a 10% of the population) whose vocational training is their main occupation, and like to distinguish themselves from the rest of the population. However, some concerns have been expressed in regards to this group as well, as to whether they are really committed to the cause: *"some trainers perceive themselves as trainers, however, only for marketing purposes – actually, they are businessmen; they have not realize that education is not business, and that they are supposed to be doing something different"*.

2. ORGANIZATION OF FIELD RESEARCH

In the framework of the TT Plus project we focus on trainers who instruct the working population. In the central European states this kind of training is the most important, since they are defined as ‘knowledge based economies’, where training is an important factor of their economic prosperity. In Greece, which is a purely ‘service economy’, the ‘in organization/ in service training’ is important only in the few big, profitable companies or the multinational organizations. These organizations employ less than 30% of the total working population.

Since the focus of the ‘TT Plus’ project is on this group of trainers (in company training and not the trainers of the unemployed), we decided to choose three important branches of the economy and make our investigation in three companies. We have chosen the following branches

- Information technologies (New, expanding branch of the secondary and tertiary sectors)
- Shipping (very important branch of the tertiary sector, since Greek companies own 16% - 18% of the world commercial fleet)
- Inspection – training provision (important for quality, newly developed branch)

In each of the three branches we contacted one firm to make the case study. Two of the three firms are family owned (not the third one), according to the economic press they seem to be very profitable; but there is no possibility to obtain an exact insight in their economic situation. They employ between 70 and 1.200 people.

The three branches make very different use of technological innovation. In accordance, they have very different policies for training; this diversity was one of the components to choose the specific branches.

BRANCH	TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION	TRAINING PROVISION/ USE
Informatics	Very high	High
Shipping	Low	Low
Inspection of quality – Training provision	High	Very High

One of the important preliminary findings is that in the case of branches where prosperity and profit is secured by technological innovation firms have extended training provision (mainly, but not only, for the technicians, who are often retrained – further trained even in foreign countries by the producers of information equipment). These firms could be defined as “knowledge based organizations”. If profit is secured by other factors, then training is less important for firms’ prosperity and training provision is less extended.

Another very crucial finding is that in the vast majority of the cases there are no specific professional trainers employed full time by the firms. That case exists even

if firms have a specific training department. Firms tend to train their employees exclusively by people of their own staff (mostly by managers), people whom their regular day to day job is a different than training. Only for specific subjects (it was often mentioned ‘Effective Press Relations and Media Interview Training’, ‘Crisis Management’ and ‘Management of Change’) firms either send their staff to training firms or they pay special organizations to train their staff in the environment of the company.

This reality that in Greece exist a small number of full time trainers has many implications for the TTPlus project that should be taken into consideration while analyzing the Greek situation, an economy that we have defined as “Quasi Knowledge based Economy”, in comparison with the training situation in classical (pure) “Knowledge based Economies”.

TRAINERS IN THE GREEK PARADIGM – SELECTION OF SAMPLE

We have seen from previous empirical surveys and research projects we conducted in our institute that in Greece exist a complete dichotomy in the group of the training personnel.

From one side we have the trainers who are educating (or re-educating or further educating) unemployed labor force, or people having just finished school. This kind of VET procedures are very often co-financed by the EU (by 50% - 75% of the total cost). Special institutions (IEK, KEK) were created in the two last decades for this kind of VET procedures. Trainers of these institutions are part time employees, in the majority of the cases. About 60% of IEK trainers are regular school teachers. Many others are professionals in fields different from education. They work as trainers in the evening, e.g. they are ‘Second job trainers’. In the last period of time we may notice a slightly growing number of full-time trainers. This is also manifested in the creation of the Association of Trainers in Greece, which happened some weeks ago.

There is also the other group of people who train the working population. In the central European states this kind of training is the most important, since they are defined as ‘knowledge based economies’, where training is an important factor of their economic prosperity. In Greece, which is a purely ‘service economy’, the ‘in organization/ in service training’ (the subject of TTPLUS project) is important only in the few big, profitable companies or the multinational organizations. These organizations employ not more than 30% of the total working population.

Organization of Greek field research

Since the focus of the ‘TT Plus’ project is on this second group of trainers (in company training), we decided to choose three important branches of the economy and make our investigation in three companies. We have chosen the following branches

- Information technologies (New, expanding branch of the secondary and tertiary sectors)
- Shipping (very important branch of the tertiary sector, since Greek companies own 16% - 18% of the world commercial fleet)
- Food industry (important traditional branch of the secondary sector)

In each of the three branches we contacted one firm to make the case study. During the investigation period we decided to contact another (fourth) firm, since we discovered that this firm was very important for training in the framework of the shipping sector. This fourth firm was the only one (of the four) that could serve as muster for the logic of the TT Plus project.

Size – Economic situation: The three firms are family owned (not the fourth one), according to the press they seem to be very profitable; but there is no possibility to obtain an exact insight in their economic situation. They employ between 700 and 1.200 people.

Technological innovation – Importance of training

The three branches make very different use of technological innovation. In accordance, they have very different policies for training; this was one of the components to choose the specific branches.

BRANCH	TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION	TRAINING PROVISION/ USE
Informatics	Very high	High
Shipping	Low	Low
Food industry	Medium	Medium

One of the important preliminary findings is that in the case of branches where prosperity and profit is secured by technological innovation firms have extended training provision (mainly, but not only, for the technicians, who are often retrained – further trained even in foreign countries by the producers of information equipment). These firms could be defined as “knowledge based organizations”. If profit is secured by other factors, then training is less important for firm’ prosperity, and training provision is less extended.

Another very crucial finding is that in the vast majority of the cases there are no specific professional trainers employed full time by the firms. That case exists even if firms have a specific training department. Firms tend to train their employees exclusively by people of their own staff (mostly by managers), people whom their regular day to day job is a different than training. Only for specific subjects (it was often mentioned ‘Effective Press Relations and Media Interview Training’, ‘Crisis Management’ and ‘Management of Change’) firms either send their staff to training

firms or they pay special organizations to train the staff in the environment of the company.

This reality that in Greece exist a small number of full time trainers has many implications for the TTPlus project that should be taken into consideration while analyzing the Greek situation, an economy that I have defined as “Quasi Knowledge based Economy”, in comparison with the training situation in classical (pure) “Knowledge based Economies”.

3. Case Studies in Greek

3. 1. Company in Informatics' sector

Number of interviews + function and gender of the interviewees

Six interviews with four people [1. general manager and marketing manager (female), 2. HRM manager + occasionally Trainer (male) 3. Educational manager + occasionally Trainer (male) 4. Trainee (female)]. Interviews lasted between 1 and 1,5 hours.

The company

It is in Greece one of the biggest companies of informatics. A national company of first generation founded in the 70'ties. Is head of a group of companies which are dealing with:

- Importation of parts, construction and assemblage of PC's.
- Importation, service of notebooks.
- Informatics solutions: Studying, proposing and installing of organized solutions for information systems of big organizations (private and public ones).
- Private courier company (one of the biggest to its field in Greece)
- Telecommunications (transfer of signal to satellite)

Until today the company sells only to dealers; they are also active in e-commerce. The firm plans to become dealers' themselves and create shops all over the country. The company's staff in all the different branches is about 1200 employees, ca 500 of them work for the courier company. The main location is in Athens.

Company's philosophy about knowledge use

Here we had a clear declaration of our interviewees: "*We support the knowledgeable worker. [It is interesting to notice that our interviewee used this expression/ term in English]. Learning must be a continuous process in the technological field but in general subjects as well. If you do not offer continuous learning then your company will stay behind*". Knowledge is a basic element in the firm's process. "*To the informatics' solutions we sell knowledge. So the continuous updating of knowledge and skills is a basic component for our company*".

Education/ Training within the company

The technicians of the company take necessary training, sometimes many times throughout a year. That is happening because of the necessary certification which is essential for the “after sales support”. The suppliers, big companies that produce informatics’ equipment, are responsible for the way of this certification and often for prescribe the training approach. This is one of the conditions for a company to be chosen as “exclusive representative” of the specific informatics’ companies. There are different kinds of certifications and in different levels. A successful exam is a necessity in order technical employee to obtain the certification.

For the development of personal skills and competencies the company trains the administrative and the economic staff; but also the staff of all the departments of the company has the possibility to be trained in all subjects. The training periods are every year two (inter-company training) May and September/October. The subjects of these seminars “*come from the analysis of our peoples’ needs*”.

The employers who take part in the training are assigned by:

1. either the manager of the employer, from someone in superior position to the employee,
2. or the free will of the employees. “*We believe to the importance of knowledge and learning, we respond to the needs of our employees no matter if the seminar’s theme they wish to attend is one of their close working objects*”. Everyone who wants can participate since “*we do not exclude employees from training but we organize training procedures in a way that everyone can participate. Perhaps by creating two or three different groups of learners, so the cognitional level of the participants will be similar*”.
3. The approach for training is the following: Announcements are made every year of the subjects which will be taught. Employees make an application in order to take part to these seminars. All applicants get a positive answer.

Because the hiring policy of the company is to employ young scientists after they take their degree these employees have extended training needs in order to understand the organization and functioning of the company and take “*a piece of our company’s culture*”. Furthermore it is necessary all the employees to “*understand the dynamic of the company, which today is informatics, communications, courier service, tomorrow perhaps will be something else*”. So, one stock keeper can participate in a training course, which will help him in the future to have the possibility to be transferred to another department of the company.

The education in the framework of the specific company is divided into:

- First training of adaptation to the company. Into the first employment stage of a new employee “*we place a mentor next to our new employee. This mentor is the person who will actually adapt him in the department he will work*”. The

mentor is responsible for a long period for the new employee and he “*tries to instruct all the subjects of values, concepts and culture of the company and the tools the employee will need in order to complete his job tasks successfully*”. In this case the in service training takes the form of ‘on the job training’.

- Technicians’ training (for the technical department of the company) According to the training need for technicians that arise from their specialization the seminars are continuous and are taking place either:
 1. In the company (internal training).
 2. In another Greek training institution (external training).
 3. Even outside the country (external training – in places suggested by the international production firms).
- Training for skills’ development for every employee despite his specialization in matters such as leadership, HRM, negotiations skills, successful showings, creativity, and office (word/ excel etc).
- Scholarships for university studies in the master’s level. Every year 2 scholarships are given to 2 employees of the company to study at the master level in a Greek University.

Company’s Trainers

There are two categories of trainers:

1. Internal (inner-company) trainers. The vast majority of trainers belong to this category. They are very often managers of the different branches, who occasionally, or as a part of their work, have training duties.
2. External trainers. They are coming from specialized training organizations that send their trainers for specific seminars to take place inside the company. If only one or two employees are going to participate to specific training modules then the employees go to external organizations of the company in order to be trained in these specific seminars. If a class can be formed, because of the sufficient number of participants, then training is happening inside the firm “*and so transfer is avoided*”

To the above training scheme the company turned out by having the experience that the external trainers are not as successful as the internal ones. “*Trainers are not academic specialists, but people with experience and knowledge into their filed, who hold seminars in order to share their experience*”. That’s why in the company they thought: “*why not leave our experienced stuff to do the training?*” So, they tried to use their own staff as trainers, the staff who know company’s culture much better than the external trainers.

Also the *trainers' evaluation* from people who participated in the training seminars, which is done after the completion of every training procedure, showed that training is more successful when the trainers come from the firm's staff. External trainers do not know the company, so they often use case studies from other branches which do not evolve the company to all the situations. "*We prefer to use in our seminars trainers from our stuff*". Important finding is that company was never disappointed by an internal trainer.

External trainers are chosen by the company at first by their CV. In case of repetition of the same seminars they are chosen based on the evaluation they got from the participants.

Teaching Preparation for the internal trainers

Some of the internal trainers have successfully participated to seminars for 'training the trainer'. Some others have such high teaching experience from the past that they do not need to take part to that seminar in order to be internal trainers. It seems that the company has concluded that the experience of verbal release one gains in his/ her daily work create the possibility the person to work with success internally as a trainer.

External factors which affect the training seminars

External factors, such as EU funding, the Manpower Agency's (OAED) policy, or the policy of the different chambers do not affect in any way the training procedure of this company's. However important changes in the company's or country's socioeconomic environment can lead to the need for new training seminars. This was the case when by EU Commission's followed by governments' decision companies were obliged to use new logistic models.

Existence of constant subjects of training seminars

This is not necessary the case. "*We teach not the same subjects each time. The subjects are appointed by the needs of the employees*". Some training subjects were quite often being offered, e.g. 'support of the customer', 'negotiations', and 'sales'.

Training certifications

The company gives to trainees their own certificates after ending a training procedure; without any exams. This certification is taken into consideration by the hierarchical decision of changing departments or approves promotions requests etc. That some employee has been to a lot of seminars and been good at them "*does not*

necessarily mean that he can actually implement to his actual job tasks what the participant learned.”

E-learning

It is not used by the company for its training. Some attempts of the past were not successful. *“We found out that more successful way of learning is the one inside the class”.*

Modules

Modular training is used for technical training into subjects as the informatic systems e.g. HR, FINANCE. For other (more general) subjects modules are not used, since the length of the seminars is most of the times between 16-20 hours.

Evaluation of trainers

External Trainers. The first evaluation is coming from the management according to their CV. The participants do it with specific sheets of evaluation

Internal Trainers. The participants do it with the sheets of evaluation. But obviously the administration knows them *“we attend to specific persons in order to be the trainers to specific subjects, we know from our long collaboration which employees could be successful trainers; so we chose them and we never failed”.*

Characteristics of a good trainer

Our interviewees named the following parameters that should characterize a ‘good’ trainer:

- Good communication skills
- Make his audience to show interest for the seminars and not to feel boredom.
- Use of many examples from real work situations.
- Not to read by a book, no matter how good it is.
- Interactive relationship with the audience.
- To overcome the fatigue of the participants since the seminars take place by the end of the regular working day, after 16.00 until 19.00 or even later.
- Good preparation of the teaching material.
- Preparation of the teaching process in a way that specific interests of the participants are taken into account by the trainers. The need by the trainers to know (discover) these specific interest of their participants.
- To take into consideration the ‘high quality’ of the participants since many of them have masters experiences of good education and a lot of them a very high IQ.

Bad' trainer is someone who is:

- Very theoretical
- Does not use the role play
- Does not keep their trainees interested
- Teaches the subject without knowing the actual needs of the audience.
- A trainer is never for ever good or bad. Is up to the culture of each company and his own experience and involvement that will show if he is good.

Future ways of improvement

The following future actions could improve the quality of the training activities of the company, according to the view of our interviewees:

- All the employees from all the different specialties and departments should take specific training seminars, "*as it is happening with the technical staff*"
- Hold 'Block Seminars' in order to gain a lot of knowledge in a few days, but also to obtain more close relationships between the employees, to understand the company's culture, and for the better incorporation to the working groups.
- Use of new teaching methods (should again be investigated the possibility to use e-learning with acceptable training results).

Evaluation of learners

Assessment or evaluation of learners it is not happening during the seminar or after that. No exams are taking place after the training seminar. In the majority of the cases their superiors are those who "*evaluate the improvement of the employee and evaluate his job*" after the training period. The technicians take their accreditations through exams based on their technical knowledge and competences.

General statement of the employees: Education

Generally people ask for education and training. This can be seen in the written annual statements of the employees', in which they express also their wishes about the future of their work. In these statements they place in first place the importance of 'education and training' to them, then follow parameters like: work environment, meritocracy, payments-bonuses, communication, and personal development.

The employees ask for more education despite the fact that in the specific company training is a very important factor as we have seen previously.

Reasons for that are:

- Anxiety of the technicians not to be sufficient good in their job tasks, if their knowledge and skills are not up to date.

- Hope for better personal development.
- Training is seen as a possible way of securing a promotion.
- Training is seen as a parameter of securing the current job position and avoiding unemployment.
- To complete academic knowledge that already exists. “*Because there is not any university that can ‘produce’ a good salesman this should happen through training seminars*”. Another example for completion of knowledge’ subjects that was mentioned is about the technicians of PC who do not know anything from their initial training about ‘product marketing’ or at least they do not know the product marketing in the way that is happening in the specific company.

The second and third cases are from the shipping field (in a broad sense). To this field we approached two companies, one purely shipping, which business is in tankers; the other company offers specialized training for matters which interest the shipping field.

3.2 Company in Shipping sector

THE SHIPPING BRANCH

The shipping field is not an advanced technology one. “*No need for steady training*”, was reported to us. The conditions of continuous education in the shipping branch are changing for the company’s staff only when environmental or safety matters come to the surface. There are about 700 shipping companies in Greece. From those around 100 are the big ones and own all the tankers. Only these big firms have clear policies of staff’s development offering different kinds of training programs. The rest 600 are small companies with 2-3 ships mainly in the commercial business. The small companies are doing in training only the absolute necessary actions in order to fulfill the overall regulations that exist internationally in the shipping branch.

The profitability of the shipping market depends from the worldwide shipping market (from needs of goods’ transfer) and much less from the amelioration of the competition between the companies. That is the reason of the existence of very small

firms (with 2 or 3 ships) which survive economically and make some profit. In the last decade the shipping branch was internationally very prosperous; many new 'players' joined, while old ones fall in insignificance.

The Greek shipping is the most important in the world with almost 16% to 18% of the total worldwide tonnage. Norway - Japan and then Germany and the USA are the following in the list. To the Greek shipping branch the owners' family plays a great role. Many of the Greek shipping companies are still family owned today.

Factors of this field's prosperity

The prosperity of this field is based much lesser on brilliant firms' organization or excellent quality of stuff and much more on the tactic and strategic business decisions; for example when to buy or sell a ship, what kind of transport contracts are booked etc. The way of doing the business decisions are learned 'on the job' from the younger people of the family who are trained in the work of the company by their parents, by the old generation. To the prosperity great part is playing the knowledge about the actual global socioeconomic matters and the way of taking critical decisions based on that information. As a consequence from the above great importance have the ability of critical thinking, fast way of deciding and the process of receiving the proper information.

THE SHIPPING PROFESSION

The shipping profession in Greece does not hold the status that used to have in the past. Not many young men are going to become flag officers (or sailors) in merchant ships. For that reason the grades which are needed for access in the university departments for marine officers are quite low. But even the good students after some years of traveling they seek for a job in land to some shipping company as chief captains or chief engineers etc. The job of officers is much better in the sea than in the land. But in the ships officers are working in the average 6-7 months per year and they are paid only for those months. The rest of the time they do not get a salary since they are in the land waiting to be called again for a long lasting journey. Because of that the annual incomes in the land for 12 months of work (in the offices of the shipping firms) and in the sea for 6-7 months are almost the same. The ship officer's profession is for young man. Even the foreigners, e.g. the Indians, are siege in order to become officers in their 30's, work for a while and then find a job in the land. The sailors of the merchant ships are foreigners in their great majority.

THE COMPANY

The company is a pure shipping one. It was founded in 1992 and owns about 25 ships, mostly tankers. It has about 700 employees; from those 70 – 80 are in the administration offices in Greece. The sailors are mostly foreigners. There are 2 distinguished parts in the company: 1) The administration 2) the personnel of the ships. *“Someone can think of us as a factory. To the administration we have 70 people, to the production which are the 25 ships about 600 people who are moving all around the world”*. The clients of the company are usually big marine companies, who have the potentiality to demand for specific conditions for the qualifications - training of the marines, mostly in matters concerning environmental protection.

OUR INTERVIEWEES

In this company we interviewed three members of the staff: [1.] The general manager (second man in hierarchy under the owner), [2.] The HRM manager (male), [3.] The financial manager (male).

HIRING OF THE PERSONNEL.

Although according to the firms' statute employment should be given to the most worthy people, in reality *“in the offices mostly people from our social networks and friendships are hired. This is normal in times of high unemployment. In the majority of the cases we hire people recommended by our managers”*. We guess that this could be done, because of the overall very high percentage of university graduates we face in Greece.

To the ships: Sailors and, if needed also officers, are hired from local agents. The marine personnel consist mostly of foreigners. In 1996 the firm founded its own employment office in Manila (with a Greek floor manager) in 2002 they founded another one in India, with an Indian floor manager.

ADJUSTMENT OF STAFF'S CONTINUOUS TRAINING

There is a big difference between the staff working in the administration and the staff working in the ships in matters of training. For those who work in the administration there does not exist specific adjustments for training.

Training for the working population of the head offices takes place only if [a.] something has to be taught, if training pressure comes from outside demands, e.g. changes in the logistic models according to EU regulations, or [b.] if a consultant company comes and advertises successfully for the positive impact of training the staff in specific subjects.

For the staff working in the ships there is a clear international regime which appoints many things like:

- Specific knowledge depending on specialization of employee.
- Certificates of training that the marines should have from the countries of their origin.
- Abilities of using technology (anti-pollution actions, first aid, use of salvage means etc.)

The above constitute the ‘mandatory’ courses.

There is also the so called ‘value added training’ that is not mandatory. The marines are doing the training either by themselves (with their expenses and initiative), or the company’s or both, with a specific regulation. Those training seminars are not decided to happen in the ship but in the central administration of the overall company.

However, most companies are doing the absolute mandatory courses for their staff.

EDUCATIONAL BEHAVIOR OF THE COMPANY

The interviewees declare that the company invests in its crew quality, “*up to an adequate knowledge level, so to a good education*”. Considering that from 1993 on mostly foreign labor force is hired, there arises the need for training for the company’s specific working and organizational culture.

The training of the crew is taking place in the ship during the traveling and working from one port to another. Training is going on in English. Trainers are very often foreigners.

Minimum training is offered for the administration’s staff. In the company’s culture there isn’t any regulation of rotating the staff to the different departments of the head offices. “*If someone is doing well to a department then he stays there for ever and he becomes a dinosaur*”. The hiring procedure is organized according to the typical qualifications (diplomas etc.). The masters’ degrees do not offer an advantage for a prospect employee in the hiring process. On the job training takes place for the new hired employees. The head (manager) of each department has produced a “handbook of the department’s good employee”. Although this handbook is unofficial, it is used as a basis for new employees to entering the work.

The company “*is behind comparing with other shipping companies in the ‘refresher training’ which is very modern nowadays*” However one of the interviewees (chief manager) declares that “*although we do not have such training, very high is the profitability of the company. That is happening perhaps because in our field no big technological steps are made, so the employees’ knowledge and skills do not need*

necessarily to be refreshed". Some activities of staff's training are taking part, especially for the managers. But that happens only when there is an incentive from the outside socioeconomic environment, e.g. consultant companies, or ships' quality evaluating firms. The described situation could be understood if one recalls that, at least, the Greek shipping companies are family based, so the owners think "*I know my firm very well. No expert can tell me how to run my own shop*". The two interviewees (managers) found that they would have some benefit from an advanced training effort, concerning the leadership and the administration.

COST OF PERSONNEL'S TRAINING

The cost for the staff working in the head offices is minimal in comparison to the summative turnover of the company. The marine staff's salaries are around 1/3 of the functional cost of a ship. In the current period of high prosperity there is great profitability on the international level. A tanker 'produces' daily costs around 7.000 \$ while the daily turnover is between 70.000 \$ and 80.000 \$. Therefore minimal are the training costs of the personnel.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD TRAINER

The trainers who the company uses for the obligatory training seminars are teaching international textbooks, which are standardized for every technical specific field. The characteristics of a 'good' trainer which were told to us are the following:

- The trainer to keep the interest of the participants alive. "*Important is not only what to say but how to say it*".
- The presentation should be on point and brief. The time of training is very important. "*We never attend to long lasting seminars*".
- The trainer with excellent knowledge of his subject.
- Clarity of the presentation.
- Creation of workshops for consolidation of knowledge.
- Humor is necessary for every trainer.
- Gender or age of the trainer does not play any role.
- Steady interaction, so the interest to be kept alive.
- Homogeneity of the audience.
- The number of participants to be reciprocated to the critical mass, participants should not be too many and not few, so avoiding the class to become a lecture.

SOLUTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT TO THE TRAINING POLITICS OF THE FIRM

To the matter of the marines' training "*a lot has been made from the firm itself*". More should happen for the training of the land's staff.

- ‘Refresher Training’ not to be left behind.
- The training to be made by elaborated program, not segmental, as it happens now.
- The training not to happen only for the more modern subjects, e.g. ‘risk management’.
- An elaborated feedback report should be produced from those who took part to the training seminars. Those reports should not be short and typical, but analytical, so the rest employees who did not took part to the training can be helped by the experience of the others.
- For the development of the personnel the factor “knowledge” to be taken into account.

3. 2 Company which offers training (to the shipping industry)

Interviewees

We conducted four interviews with: [a.] general manager (male); [b.] general training manager and trainer (male); [c.] trainer (male); [d.] assistant to the administration of training (woman). There was an exclusion of recording the interviews from the general manager. With [b.] and [c.] we had a repetitive interview.

The company

It is a multinational company with activities in inspections of quality or functioning to any good, such as, ships, buildings, industrial products; it also assign ISO certificates. It is also doing inspections for safety functioning or implications to:

- Personnel (health)
- Environment (consequences)
- Quality of products (in relation with the existing standards)
- Information Systems (implications to production, to processes, to personnel)

In Greece the company started functioning in 1960. After 1990 it handled education and training activities. The need for personnel training was derived from the inspections and evaluations of the company. The problems which they found through

the inspections made the company alert and they decided to start the staff's training in the subjects that they were offered to do so. So, the training is seen as a supportive means of quality's improvement after the evaluation procedures.

Credo of the company: Only a good professional is becoming a good trainer. Ways of hiring trainers.

The capitalization of many years experiences brought the company to the above credo. They have found that in Greece, but also in foreign countries where the multinational company is active, good trainers are becoming only those who have achieved to be good professionals. The company understood that only the good professionals teach adequately their subject. The contrary is not valid. Not every person who is good in didactics can be a successful trainer.

For that reason as a trainer the company is hiring only successful professionals. This is a first pre-condition for their employment.

Process of choosing new trainers.

The trainers who will be employed on the following procedure:

- Firstly, they attend from the back seats of the training room two (2) week – seminars.
- Then, they participate energetically to the teaching introducing some chapters of a third seminar with the help of the 2 regular trainers of that seminar. Those trainers are evaluating his teaching, subjects' knowledge and general offerings; they support or correct him/ her when that is necessary.
- Those who do well to this procedures they are hired (full or part time depending on the actual training needs).

The company employs 9 full time trainers for this year (last year were 5 trainers employed) and they also engage some part time trainers. The full time trainers have also administrative and organizational responsibilities and duties.

Number of trainers /number of trainees. 1 trainer works in a group (class) up to 10 participants, 2 trainers in a group with more than 10 participants.

Trainers' evaluation

The company gives a lot of attention to the quality of the training which they offer. As a consequence it gives a lot of attention to the quality of the trainers. The company has developed a much elaborated system of trainer's evaluation. The two trainers of one seminar evaluate each other. The evaluations are discussed openly to the group of the company' trainers and ways of amelioration are trying to come to the surface.

They have developed a textbook of evaluation (we attach it to the end of this case) which supports their efforts.

Result of these evaluative actions between the trainers of the same group: A homogenous group of trainers. It is a well functioning group without any disbelieves in their relationships. They are all quite similar personalities and all of them open-minded people.

Quality of the training process.

Quality of the training process depends from the trainer as a major factor.

“The quality of a seminar is based on

- *80% on knowledge and experience of the trainer*
- *15% on exercise of consolidation/challenge of the interest*
- *5% on Powerpoint”*

Bad trainer

Bad trainer is *“the person who did not become good”*. It is sure that all the bad professionals’ can not become good trainers, but all are ought trying to become good ones.

However bad trainer is someone who:

1. Has limit of self- understanding- is tightened up
 - does not express himself
 - has stress
2. Without focused way of thinking (for example, *“everybody who is not able to overcome that in a 5 days seminar on the 4th day there is a fall, a gap in thinking”*).
3. Without examples
4. Gets angry
5. Is not neat, without humour
6. Vociferates
7. Sometimes is going out of line of joke and offend someone
8. Loses the control of the participants, who are bored and talk to each other
9. Without ‘soul’ = makes you sleep
10. He/ she speaks in the same tone and becomes boring
11. Big (possible) problem: the **contestation of the trainer**. If this situation is not completely kept under control, then the contestation becomes contagious.

At least our interviewees underlined that **“The good trainer likes always to learn”**

TRAINEES (PARTICIPANTS)

The participants (trainees) of firm's seminars are employees in private organisations. Some times young scientists who just got their degree asks to be trained in applied subjects. Unemployed people never take part to these training seminars.

The training seminars are organised because of:

1. The reputation of the company which lead the other companies (clients) to ask for training procedures for their staff, when they find out that they need to.
2. To the continuous of the inspections; ideas for training might come up after firm's or product's etc. inspections and evaluations, which ideas are accepted by the firms who were inspected.

Certificates- affirmation of participation.

The company is giving certificates of participation in the training seminars to all the participants. There are not any exams, so no failure or graduation. The certificates are interesting for the organisation to which each participant is working- but some other organisation might be interest as well. *"Some time ago, a trainee got a new job with criterion the certification of the participation of one of our 5 days seminars"*.

Accreditation-Certification

Division for the seminars is happening by the organisation to:

1. Accredited
2. Certified

Accredited seminars mean that they have been developed from the Greek company according to the needs that have come to the surface from their Greek clients. The design organisation and conduction have been "accredited" from IRCA (International Register of Certificated Auditors)

Certified seminars are those whose organisation and conduction in Greece is exactly the same as they are in the other countries. Those are "accredited" from IRCA(International Register of Certificated Auditors) .

It is a characteristic for Greece that almost all the seminars are in the category of accredited. That is what companies-clients prefer.

Influences of external factors to the company's training.

There are no influences from external factors to the company's training, not even from:

1. The European Commission, and its training programmes

2. The Greek Manpower Agency
3. The different Greek Chambers

Proposals for company's behaviour for the future

1. The trainers to achieve an even better level of understanding the participants' needs.
2. To be hired more full time trainers, so to increase the group of trainers and to become better in its interaction.
3. More time to be available for the interaction between the trainers, with goals: homogeneity/improvement of teaching quality.

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