

Neapolis-Sykeon

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Picture 1. Learners playing I live in Greece (Level B1 – Independent User).

1. Programme Key Information

Programme Title	Greek Language School of the Municipality of Neapolis-Sykeon
Implementing Organization	Municipality of Neapolis-Sykeon
Language of Instruction	Modern Greek
Programme Partner	Faculty of Education, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
Funding	Government of Greece
Annual Programme Costs	€30,000
Annual Cost per Learner	€3,000
Date of Inception	October 2009

2. Country Context and Background

Since the 1990s, Greece has become one of the most popular destination countries for migrants, either as a final place in which to settle or as a transit stop on the way to another European Union country. According to the United Nations (International Organization for Migration, 2019), by 2015, 11.3 per cent of Greece's population was immigrant, the majority of whom were refugees and repatriates. Even though, in 2018, Greece reached a high literacy rate of 97.99 per cent for people aged 15 years and over (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2020), the country faces new challenges arising from the recent influx of migrants from unstable states. For instance, 60 to 65 per cent of immigrants in Greece are from Albania (Pratsinakis, 2005) and researchers have found that, when surveyed, Albanian immigrants in Greece gave lower scores for quality of life and life satisfaction than native Greeks (Prapas and Mavreas, 2019). As Oudenhovem, Ward and Masgoret (2006) stated, acculturation plays a critical role in helping an immigrant community integrate into a new society. Yet, in Greece, a lack of adequate Greek language skills has hindered the immigrant communities' access to further education and employment opportunities. Thus, programmes that address their unique needs, in this case Greek language, are in demand in order to build a socially inclusive Greek culture.

In 1929, Greece began to implement a series of policies and strategies that address lifelong learning issues (Education for All, EFA, 2015). These efforts included the formulation of the National Lifelong Learning Programme, which provides vocational training and general adult education, and the establishment of the National Network for Lifelong Learning (EFA, 2015). As part of this strategy, the Municipality of Neapolis-Sykeon operates a network of social services which responds to the needs of its population and prevents social exclusion of vulnerable groups. These groups include immigrants, repatriated individuals, refugees, prisoners, youths, heads of single-parent families, former drug users, and people with disabilities. The network includes institutions such as public health centres, counselling centres, pharmacies, non-profit organizations and social groceries (centres that provide food, clothing, toys, books and household goods for those in need) (Interreg-IPA CBC, 2019).

Neapolis-Sykeon is in the north of the metropolitan area of Thessaloniki, a port city and the second-largest city in Greece. One of its suburban areas, Sykies, was mostly built following the arrival of refugees from Asia Minor in 1922; of the 95,000 residents in the region, seven per cent are immigrants of whom 90 per cent are from Albania (Municipality of Neapolis-Sykeon, 2013). In 2012, following an assessment of needs, expectations and services, local authorities found that 288 adults required

social and psychological support, plus employment assistance. However, in the same year, an average of 110 migrants participated in Greek language courses (Municipality of Neapolis-Sykeon, 2013). The Greek Language School of the Municipality of Neapolis-Sykeon aims to address the immigrant community's language learning and cultural adaptation needs.

3. Programme Overview

The Greek Language School of the Municipality of Neapolis-Sykeon was established in 2009, with the aim of promoting literacy development, personal and social empowerment, and lifelong learning among immigrant communities. Since then, it has been the first and sole municipal-level school in the northern part of the metropolitan area of Thessaloniki to provide a Modern Greek language curriculum for adult immigrants.

The school offers a nine-month modern Greek language course, plus associated subjects and extracurricular activities. The Modern Greek language course includes language instruction across all levels as defined by the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR): A1 & A2 – Basic User; B1 & B2 – Independent User; and C1 & C2 – Proficient User (Council of Europe, 2011). It also offers related courses including Greek history and culture, spelling and writing, and preparation for the Certificate of Attainment in Greek and Greek Citizenship exams. The first two of these related courses are designed by educators according to the national curriculum, while the third follows government material to prepare and guide adults for the exams. Extracurricular activities include thematic walks, visits to museums and historical sites, outings to theatres, and participation in dance lessons and the city's festivals. Additionally, the school has established a theatre group for adult learners (aged 15 to 65) as an extracurricular interest. Picture 2, below, depicts a class in action.



Picture 2. A lesson on Carnival Time: learners wear and exchange masks and accessories, and discuss identity shifts and playing others' roles. (Level B2 – Independent User).

4. Aim and Objectives

The programme aims to promote literacy development, personal and social empowerment, and lifelong learning. Thus, by offering language and related courses as well as other extracurricular activities, the specific objectives are:

- Increase learners' proficiency levels in the listening, reading, writing and speaking of Modern Greek.
- Familiarize learners with Greek history and culture for more effective acculturation to Greek society.
- Reinforce social integration in the municipality in which the students live and in Greek society in general.
- Promote learners' self-reliance and self-confidence.
- Cultivate/support critical literacy.
- Promote multiliteracies and multimodality via audio-visual media and new technologies (ICT).
- Apply the values of intercultural education and promote interaction among people from different ethnic and cultural groups.
- Combine literacy with other non-formal extracurricular activities.

5. Target Population

The programme targets adult learners (15 to 65 years old) from minority groups, such as immigrants, refugees, the repatriated, and other foreigners. It is open to anyone who has low or no command of the Greek language living in the municipality. Participants come from a wide range of countries including Albania and the Balkans (Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia and parts of Turkey), from countries of the former Soviet Union (Russian Federation, Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia, and Armenia), from Middle Eastern and Central Asian countries (Syria, Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq), from Africa (Nigeria, Senegal), and from other countries of southern, central and northern Europe (Italy, Portugal, France, Germany, and the United Kingdom).

Although the Greek Language School of the Municipality of Neapolis-Sykeon mostly enrolls adults, the children of immigrants are also welcome and are supported in their efforts to learn Greek and adjust to their regular schooling (usually at a secondary school).

6. Programme Implementation

The programme is implemented under the Directorate for Social Policy of the Municipality of Neapolis-Sykeon. With its financial support, the Greek Language School of the Municipality of Neapolis-Sykeon started beginner-level and advanced-level Modern Greek classes for a total number of 25 adult learners in 2009.

In 2015, the theatre group was founded for learners who were interested in the performing arts. Nowadays, the language class has expanded to cover all six levels for adult learners (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2), reaching an average number of 100 learners per year and having already supported more than 800 adult learners in their pursuit of future education and employment opportunities as well as integration into Greek society. Picture 3 shows a theatre group performance.

The Greek Language School has two teaching locations: the town hall in Neapoli and the Second Primary School in Sykies. Classes are offered twice a week, and each class comprises two 45-minute sessions, with a maximum number of 12 learners per group. All lessons take place in the afternoon and evening, with three ability-based groups in Sykies and two at the town hall.

Courses last nine months, starting in October and finishing in June. However, the programme's total duration depends on many factors, such as the entry-level ability of the participants and their personal learning goals. Students who participate in all six language levels may stay in the programme for seven to eight years.



Picture 3. The theatre group performing Molière's *The Imaginary Invalid* (Macedonia, 2019).

7. Teaching/Learning Approaches and Methodologies

The programme applies a holistic and learner-centred approach using communicative techniques and collaborative tasks. The learner-centred approach positions the learner at the centre of the learning experience (Weimer, 2002). This approach is applied at the school from the moment of enrolment, when participants choose which classes to attend based on their ability and learning goals, until the end of the programme. The school offers a wide range of classes to meet their individual learning needs.

All levels of language classes are designed with an emphasis on practical daily use, for example, by relating learning tasks to activities such as dealing with public services or making a friend. The school limits class sizes to a maximum of 12 learners, to ensure a small and supportive group learning environment that can be more easily tailored to individual needs. Furthermore, facilitators implement a series of instructional strategies during class time, and learners are encouraged to practise their Modern Greek in real-life situations to strengthen their communicative techniques and mastery of their new language learning. The programme adjusts the teaching to everyday dialogue (e.g. shopping, going to the doctor) and texts (e.g. a school report, an email to an electricity provider), rather than teaching a text that is not related to participants' life experiences, as captured by Picture 4.



Picture 4. A role-playing exercise on going to a restaurant (Level A1 – Basic User).

During the sessions, facilitators take learners' progress and feedback into account and modify lesson plans accordingly. Moreover, they focus on form, instruction processing and textual enhancement for guiding their vocabulary and grammar instruction. Activities such as role-playing, miming and story-telling help learners relax, and facilitate interaction with teachers. Discussion and debate boost learners' engagement and promote critical reflection in the class. For example, the narration of folk tales from learners' home countries promotes the recognition of similarities between cultures. Role-playing that deals with gender-based relationships can also empower women who lack self-confidence, and raise awareness of power dynamics in social interactions.

The school also approaches literacy from a critical perspective. According to Luke (2012), critical literacy, which emerged from Freirean ideas, looks at texts, discourses, and information in relation to the ideologies and hegemonic aspects of meaning and power relations. Pedagogically speaking, critical literacy describes the process of creating readers, speakers and writers who perceive that texts result from certain social practices, and treat language forms as sources of communication and meaning in the context of certain social environments – not simply as grammatical phenomena. The school implements this approach by asking learners questions such as, 'Who wrote the text?' or 'What was the author's aim?', or by finding the ideological basis behind the text, whether written or spoken.

8. Programme Content and Teaching Materials

Designed by the facilitators, the course follows CEFR parameters, and the general language curriculum covers all six Modern Greek language levels from A1 – Basic User to C2 – Proficient User. Each level focuses on particular aspects of vocabulary and grammar, and facilitators ensure that the language learning experience is relevant to learners' everyday life. The content covers a total of 12 themes: daily life, social relationships, work, education, shopping, hobbies, art, travel and holidays, food and nutrition, health, public services, and global issues. Additionally, facilitators develop lesson plans covering topic, level, primary aim, objectives, materials, activities, skills, and duration for each class. Table 1 shows an example of a lesson plan for each of the language courses.

For citizenship and spelling classes, the curriculum is closely tailored to the end purpose. For example, the content of the former includes the knowledge required to pass the exam, whereas, for spelling classes, the curriculum follows the spelling peculiarities of the Greek language. In theatre group, learners choose a play together and prepare the performance. The group's facilitator is a licensed drama teacher with extensive experience working with adults' and children's drama groups. In 2018 they performed Molière's comedy *The Imaginary Invalid* and, in 2017, *Lysistrata* by Aristophanes.

Level	Topic	Objectives	Activities (minutes)	Materials
A1 – Basic User	Going to a restaurant	<p>By the end of the lesson, learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> understand and use vocabulary related to food, menus, and restaurants feel comfortable ordering in a restaurant talk about their favourite/traditional foods 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Exploring learners' knowledge about Greek cuisine (5) Reading and understanding text through processing instruction (10) Learning vocabulary related to Greek food and practising ordering a meal (20) Exercises or vocabulary learning tasks that may include a) matching pictures with words related to food, Greek cuisine and tableware, or b) Cloze-test exercises – filling the gaps in a dialogue about a restaurant/cafe order (10) Listening tasks (15) Role-playing (20) Sharing the traditional cuisine of learners' countries of origins (10) 	Whiteboard, markers, photocopies, pictures/photos, menu and CD player

A2 – Basic User	Travelling	<p>By the end of the lesson, learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • speak about trips and holidays • use the future tense (I will be doing) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Matching pictures showing holiday activities and sightseeing with suitable words (10) 2. Listening to the song Cruise (Vangelis Germanos) (5) 3. Reading the song lyrics and answering questions in a reading comprehension exercise (10) 4. Vocabulary exercises about holidays, sightseeing and means of transport: a) matching words of the text with pictures, b) Cloze-text exercises (15) 5. Learning the future tense: Finding and understanding verbs in the future tense (I will be doing) within a text (5) 6. Grammar instruction: creating and using the future tense (θα+Ενεστώτας = will + simple present) (15) 7. Conversation in pairs: using cards with questions and answers on future plans (10) 8. Conversation in pairs: talking about our own holiday plans (15) 9. Singing the song together (5) 	CD player, photocopies, whiteboard, cards
B1 – Independent User	Health	<p>By the end of the lesson, learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand vocabulary related to health, health problems, and accidents • explain and talk about a personal/family problem • think critically about taking medications 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conversation: health as one of the most important values in life (5) 2. Writing down vocabulary related to health and looking at photos (15) 3. Extra vocabulary (10) 4. Working in pairs – role-playing interviews about health problems (10) 5. Reading and comprehension on taking medications (20) 6. Conversation in pairs: expressing an opinion (10) 7. Discussing student errors made during a conversation (10) 8. Debate: pros and cons of taking medication (10) 	Whiteboard, markers, photocopies, pictures/photos and video projector
B2 – Independent User	'If I were somebody else' – Carnival Time	<p>By the end of the lesson, learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • express feelings, wishes, thoughts and dreams • experience Carnival Time by changing roles and identities using masks and carnival accessories • distinguish between future and conditional tenses • form the conditional tense using future + past continuous 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Domino game for checking vocabulary related to the carnival (10) 2. Wearing and exchanging masks; having a conversation about somebody else's identity (10) 3. Exchanging papers with other learners using the prompts: 'If I were..., I would...' (10) 4. Grammar instruction on conditionals (20) 5. Grammar exercise (20) 6. Writing task: 'If I lived in 2200, I would...' (20) 	Self-made domino game, masks and accessories, papers, printed handouts, whiteboard and photocopies
C1 – Proficient User	Nature, ecology and spring	<p>By the end of the lesson, learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • express feelings and thoughts about nature and related issues • match pictures of paintings with vocabulary from poetry • be familiar with selected Greek poetry 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Working in three groups on vocabulary (10) 2. Reading text on the subjects of garbage and pollution (15) 3. Watching a documentary on environmental issues (10) 4. Conversation (15) 5. Listening to Vivaldi's Four Seasons: Spring and asking learners to write down five to eight words it brings to mind (25) 6. Writing task: writing their own poem about spring (15) 	Coloured photocopies of paintings, video projector, CD player and whiteboard
C2 – Proficient User	Challenges for young people	<p>By the end of the lesson, learners will be able to express their own opinions and thoughts about the challenges and problems young people face today</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Working in groups: what are the basic problems that young people face nowadays? (10) 2. Groups interview students from Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (10) 3. Group presentations (10) 4. Reading exercise (15) 5. Grammar exercise (25) 6. Listening exercise (20) 	Photocopies, printed handouts, whiteboard and CD player

Table 1. Examples of lesson plans for each Modern Greek level.

To ensure an effective teaching-learning approach, the language school uses a wide range of teaching materials to support learners. Facilitators compile relevant materials for each class, including books, photocopies, newspapers, maps, flyers, and board games. Information and communication devices, such as computers and projectors, are also utilized during class time.

Moreover, different instructional formats, such as printed texts, visual aids and videos, are used in combination to facilitate students' learning. Pictures 5, 6, and 7 are excerpts of teaching materials for three of the Modern Greek levels.

Modern Greek A2:

A) Πριν την ανάγνωση (Before reading)

Παραγωγή προφορικού λόγου: Συζητήστε σε ζευγάρια τα παρακάτω θέματα.

Oral speech production: Discuss in pairs the questions below

1. Πόσο σημαντικό είναι το παιχνίδι και ο ελεύθερος χρόνος στη ζωή ενός παιδιού;
How important is playing games and free time in a child's life?
2. Πώς περνούσαν στο παρελθόν τον ελεύθερο χρόνο τους τα παιδιά και με τι ασχολούνται στη σημερινή εποχή;
How did children spend their free time in the past and what do they do nowadays?

B) Ανάγνωση (Reading)

Το καλοκαίρι ήταν κάποτε ευκαιρία για να παίζουν τα παιδιά έξω, στις πλατείες και στη θάλασσα. Στις μέρες μας όμως, είναι ευκαιρία να παίζουν μπροστά στην οθόνη του ηλεκτρονικού υπολογιστή ή της τηλεόρασής τους. Σύμφωνα με έρευνες του Πανεπιστημίου Ταφτς στη Βοστώνη, τα πιο πολλά παιδιά μέχρι να πάνε στο νηπιαγωγείο περνούν 5.000 ώρες μπροστά στην τηλεόραση, αρκετές για ένα πτυχίο! Το παιχνίδι στην εξοχή όμως προσφέρει καλά που δεν υπάρχουν στο σπίτι : τα παιδιά γυμνάζονται για ώρες χωρίς να το καταλαβαίνουν, ο κίνδυνος να βάλουν κιλά μειώνεται, η μακρινή όραση βελτιώνεται και επειδή παίζουν με άλλα παιδιά παίρνουν πολύ σημαντικά μαθήματα κοινωνικής συμπεριφοράς (να μοιράζονται, να επικοινωνούν). Άρα, βγάλτε τα παιδιά από το σπίτι αυτό το καλοκαίρι!

(TA NEA, 10/06/2010)

Picture 5.Excerpt from teaching material for Modern Greek Level A2.

Modern Greek B2:

Η Ελλάδα σήμερα

Greece today

Άσκηση : Αντιστοιχίζω τις λέξεις με τις φωτογραφίες

Homework: Match the words with the photos

η παραλία (the beach), το κρύο (cold), η παγωνιά (freezing/icy), το νησί (the island), η παραδοσιακή κουζίνα (the traditional cuisine), η ζέστη (heat/hot weather),

ο καύσωνας (heat wave), ο μουσακάς (moussaka), οι φυσικές ομορφιές (natural beauties), το κλίμα (the climate), ο τάφος– οι τάφοι (the grave- the graves),

η θάλασσα (the sea) – οι θάλασσες (the seas), το πέλαγος – τα πελάγη (the open sea- the open seas), το σουβλάκι – τα σουβλάκια (sounvlaki/ kebab-sounvlakia/ kebabs),

το αρχαίο θέατρο (the ancient theater), η Επίδαυρος (Epidaurus), το αρχαίο θέατρο της Επιδαύρου (the ancient theater of Epidaurus), τα αγάλματα (the statues),

το άγαλμα της Αφροδίτης της Μήλου (the statue of "Aphroditi tis Milou"/Venus de Milo), το νεκροταφείο (the cemetery), το αρχαίο μνημείο (the ancient monument).



η ζέστη heat	η θάλασσα the sea η παραλία the beach	η Επίδαυρος Epidaurus	της Αφροδίτης Aphroditi's/Venus	η παραδοσιακή traditional	τα πελάγη the open seas

Picture 6. Excerpt of teaching material for Modern Greek Level B2.

Modern Greek C1:

Πριν την ανάγνωση (Before reading)

1. Τι σημαίνει η λέξη ξενοφοβία;
What does the word “xenophobia” mean?
2. Ποιες άλλες λέξεις σάς έρχονται στο μυαλό, όταν την ακούτε;
What other words come to your mind, when you hear it?
3. Πριν διαβάσετε το κείμενο, μελετήστε τις παρακάτω λέξεις. Τις γνωρίζετε;
Before reading the text, consider the words below. Do you know them?

το σήμα κατατεθέν mark	διαπιστώνω ascertain	καταβροχθίζω devour	το αχούρι mess
ο προϊστάμενος supervisor	ξεμπερδεύω untangle	ολημερίς all day long	το αποχωρητήριο restroom
η σφαγή carnage	διαδίδω disseminate	ολονυχτίς all night long	το ζωνάρι belt
το αλβανικό μέτωπο	τρέφομαι eat	τα φαγιά food	η μπόχα stink

Μετά την ανάγνωση (After reading)

Άσκηση κατανόησης (Comprehension homework): Να σημειώσετε ένα + κάτω από τη στήλη Σ/Λ (Σωστό/Λάθος) ανάλογα με το περιεχόμενο του κειμένου.

Fill in a + under the column T/F (True/False) according to the content of the text.

	Σ	Λ
1. Ο πατέρας του αφηγητή είχε στο παλτό του ένα σήμα με σχέδιο ένα μουστάκι.		
2. Τη δεκαετία του '50 υπήρχαν ελάχιστοι ξένοι με μουστάκι στη Γερμανία.		
3. Ο πατέρας του είχε σφαχτεί στη Σμύρνη το 1922.		
4. Τελικά ο ήρωας άφησε ξανά το μουστάκι.		
5. Ο μπακάλης ήταν Γερμανός.		
6. Οι Έλληνες αγόραζαν μικρές ποσότητες τροφίμων.		
7. Στην Αφρική οι άνθρωποι τρώνε άλλους ανθρώπους.		
8. Οι Έλληνες που ζούσαν στη Γερμανία φιλοξενούσαν συγγενείς τους στη διάρκεια των γιορτών.		
9. Στην πολυκατοικία ζούσαν μία γερμανική οικογένεια, μία ιταλική και δύο ελληνικές.		

Picture 7. Excerpt of teaching material for Modern Greek Level C1.

9. Recruitment and Training of Facilitators

The minimum employment requirement for facilitators at the Greek Language School of the Municipality of Neapolis-Sykeon is a bachelor's degree in Greek Language and Literature or Pedagogy.

The positions are advertised publicly and the applicants assessed before an appointment is made by an associate director from the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity, in line with standard public sector procedures. Two facilitators are currently employed on a full-time basis, one for each centre. Both undertook further training in teaching Modern Greek as a foreign language, adult education and intercultural education. Additionally, both facilitators attend professional development sessions on teaching, curriculum development, and class management, organized by the state or private institutions. Facilitators receive a salary of €800-€900 monthly. Table 2 illustrates some of the training sessions in which facilitators have participated during the past nine years.

Year	Time	Professional Development Session
2010	25 hours	Seminar: Lifelong Learning (the principles of teaching adults, lesson planning, teaching techniques, grading), Thessaloniki, organised by the Labour Institute of the Greek General Confederation of Labour
2011	20 hours	Service training: The Fundamental Principles of teaching Greek as a Second Language (Levels A1-B2), School of Modern Greek Language at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
2012	30 hours	Seminar: Teaching Greek as a Second Language, Open Cultural Center, Barcelona
2013	200 hours	Web seminar: Field Trips for Teaching Greek as a Foreign Language, Open Cultural Center
2013	30 hours	Participation at language cafe and cyber cafe events on Informal Language Learning for Immigrants, European Plan (
2014	16 hours	Workshop: Teaching Modern Greek to Adults, Hellenic Culture Centre
2018	200 hours	Web seminar: Teaching Greek as a Second/Foreign Language, Training Centre in Lifelong Learning
2019	6 hours	Seminar: The Challenges of Interculturality in Education: An Experimental Approach, Local Alliance for Integration

Table 2. List of in-service training sessions for facilitators.

10. Enrolment of Learners

The only eligibility requirement for participation in the programme is to be a resident of the municipality when registering for a course. Posters are displayed on noticeboards and in the windows of public buildings, and leaflets are distributed in every public building. The school also hosts a stand at the Balkan Square Festival in Neapolis-Sykeon. Additionally, the school has found that learners spread the word among their acquaintances once they start to attend lessons. In order to register, learners fill in a form, giving their name, address, telephone number, date of birth and email address.

Participants arrive at the school with varying literacy levels. Some of them have lived in Greece for a long time before deciding to attend classes. Consequently, their speaking and understanding of the language might allow them to start an advanced course, such as B2.

To identify their language level, learners participate in an interview conducted by both facilitators, in which they answer questions about themselves (oral speech evaluation). They also sit a standardized test to assess their writing skills. The test is organized into consecutive levels of difficulty that start with personal questions ('What is your name?', 'What do you do at the weekend?') followed by reading comprehensions and questions on grammatical rules, such as indirect speech and the active and passive voices.

The learners' needs and learning goals are also identified at the interview and often stated by them explicitly. For example, some students may wish to attend spelling classes because, even though they speak Greek well, they have never had the opportunity to improve their writing skills. Some want to apply for citizenship and need to prepare for the exams.

11. Assessment of learning outcomes

Learners who attend 80 per cent of their lessons during the annual course receive a certificate from the school. However, the school does not administer summative tests. Despite this, learning outcomes for those preparing for the Certificate of Attainment in Greek are reflected in the results of exams administered by the Centre for the Greek Language, which learners can take privately for a fee of between €65 and €73, depending on the language level to be evaluated. The centre is based in Thessaloniki and supports people learning Greek as a foreign language.

Facilitators conduct formative assessments in order to obtain constructive feedback for more effective instruction. For instance, they might design assessment activities in which learners have to interact using the vocabulary or grammatical structures already taught; depending on the results of these assessments, educators can either move to the next lesson or repeat topics according to learners' needs.

12. Monitoring and Evaluation of the Programme

The school's operation is supervised by a professor from the faculty of Education at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Mrs Soula Mitakidou. The facilitators meet regularly with Professor Mitakidou to discuss issues that arise during their sessions. There is also a meeting at the beginning of each academic year in which facilitators share their plans, and new ideas and strategies are discussed and revised if necessary. Professor Mitakidou also participates in many of the school's special events, such as the graduation ceremony at the end of the year, theatrical performances, celebrations of special days and Christmas parties.

There are many in-class observations. Trainee educators taking the university's Teaching Greek as a Second Language course attend some of the classes at the school and provide a report based on the classroom environment (physical environment, class size and make-up, social interactions), the teacher (methods, materials, interactions with students, student motivation, differentiation of material based on students' interests), and the students (initiative taking, motivation, class participation, student-student and student-teacher interactions).

Trainee educators from the university have invariably reported this as one of their best observational experiences, describing the learning sessions as having a stimulating and challenging learning atmosphere, rich in teacher-student interactions. They have also commented on the teachers' use of multimodal learning material, their in-depth knowledge of Greek as a Second Language teaching strategies, their deep respect for students' cultures, and the appropriate learning pace and style. Trainee educators are often inspired to attend the classes' extracurricular events, such as theatrical performances, festivals and exhibitions.

As well as the private exams taken at the Centre for the Greek Language, mentioned above, The Greek Language School's outcomes are measured by the success rate of adult learners who take exams for the State Certificate of Language Proficiency in Greek. Another indicator is the pass rate for the exams for Greek Citizenship, which assess candidates' levels of integration into Greek culture. A further monitoring strategy occurs through informal evaluation, in which learners answer a self-assessment questionnaire at the end of each school year. The questionnaire consists of multiple-choice answers and open-ended questions related to the curriculum, teaching methods, and teacher-student interactions. Table 3 presents an excerpt from the questionnaire.

Self-assessment questionnaire
1. In which ways do you prefer grammar/vocabulary to be taught?
2. I believe that I learn new words more easily when...
3. When learning games are used in class, I feel/think...
4. When role-play is used in class, I feel/think...
5. My feelings about my classmates are...
6. What do you do when you do not understand something during class?
7. Do you want/need homework assignments?
8. Do you think that you are given enough time to express your ideas during class?
9. I think the preparation class for the Certificate of Attainment in Greek is...
10. I keep attending the Greek Language School because...

Table 3. Excerpt from the self-assessment questionnaire.

13. Programme Impact and Challenges

13.1 Impact and achievements

Since it first opened, the Greek Language School of the Municipality of Neapolis-Sykeon has served 800 students. With their newly acquired Greek language skills, these learners can secure further education and employment opportunities once they have passed the State Certificate of Language Proficiency in Greek. To date, 90 per cent of students from the school who have taken these exams have passed, reaching the necessary level (B2) to enable them to access higher education and places on professional training courses. For example, one of the school's learners had worked as a nurse in her home country, but could not find a job in her field until she learned to speak, read and write in Greek. Another joined a cookery school and was employed as a professional chef after taking the languages classes.

Students attending the writing and spelling course can develop and improve their writing skills in about two months. Classes are also beneficial for learners' self-confidence. Former learners say they are no longer ashamed of writing and speaking in public and that improving their proficiency in Modern Greek has allowed them to become more independent, for example when completing an application form or other official document. Moreover, those with children at primary school can assist their kids with schoolwork, which promotes meaningful engagement and facilitates intergenerational learning.



Picture 8. A role-play exercise for ordering food

Learners also report that attending the programme has increased their levels of social participation. For instance, some learners have started to attend parent-teacher conferences at their children's schools, while others have become active participants on the local immigrants' council. In other words, attending the programme has improved their sense of belonging to Greek society by fostering their acculturation to the Greek cultural environment, as described by the testimony of Olesia Budika in the next section.

At a community level, the diverse backgrounds of students at the school have cultivated a vibrant learning community. The school offers learners the opportunity to make friends and become a part of a class, team or group. There are students, especially women, for whom Greek courses offer the only opportunity to leave the house. Hence, lessons are a way of socialising in the Greek language. Learners are also invited to present aspects of their culture in secondary schools.

13.2 Testimonies and Impact Stories

The following stories also bear testimony to the programme's success:

'Through the language, we are able to better understand the facts, the decisions and the behaviour of the Greek people.' - Olga Kocherga, country of origin: Russia.

'The Greek language classes help us speak Greek with confidence. Greek lessons are a source of knowledge that I use in my everyday life; that's why I attend the classes... The drama class contributes in language learning. Reading the text of the play and acting help us remember the vocabulary and expressions because the text of the play has colours that help me remember... I consider the time I invest in the classes valuable for me and very pleasant.' - Athina Charitidi, country of origin: Russia

'Although my Greek language knowledge was good enough, I decided to attend the classes to improve more. I would be glad to add to my CV, "Excellent knowledge of Greek language"'. - Paulina Stojanova,

'I appreciate the classes because I have the feeling of learning every time something new, interesting, useful in a pleasant way, in a friendly atmosphere.' - Andra Yuganaru, country of origin: Romania

'I attend the classes in order to learn better spelling and reading. I learn many things and communicate with the people.' - Violeta Huto, country of origin: Albania.

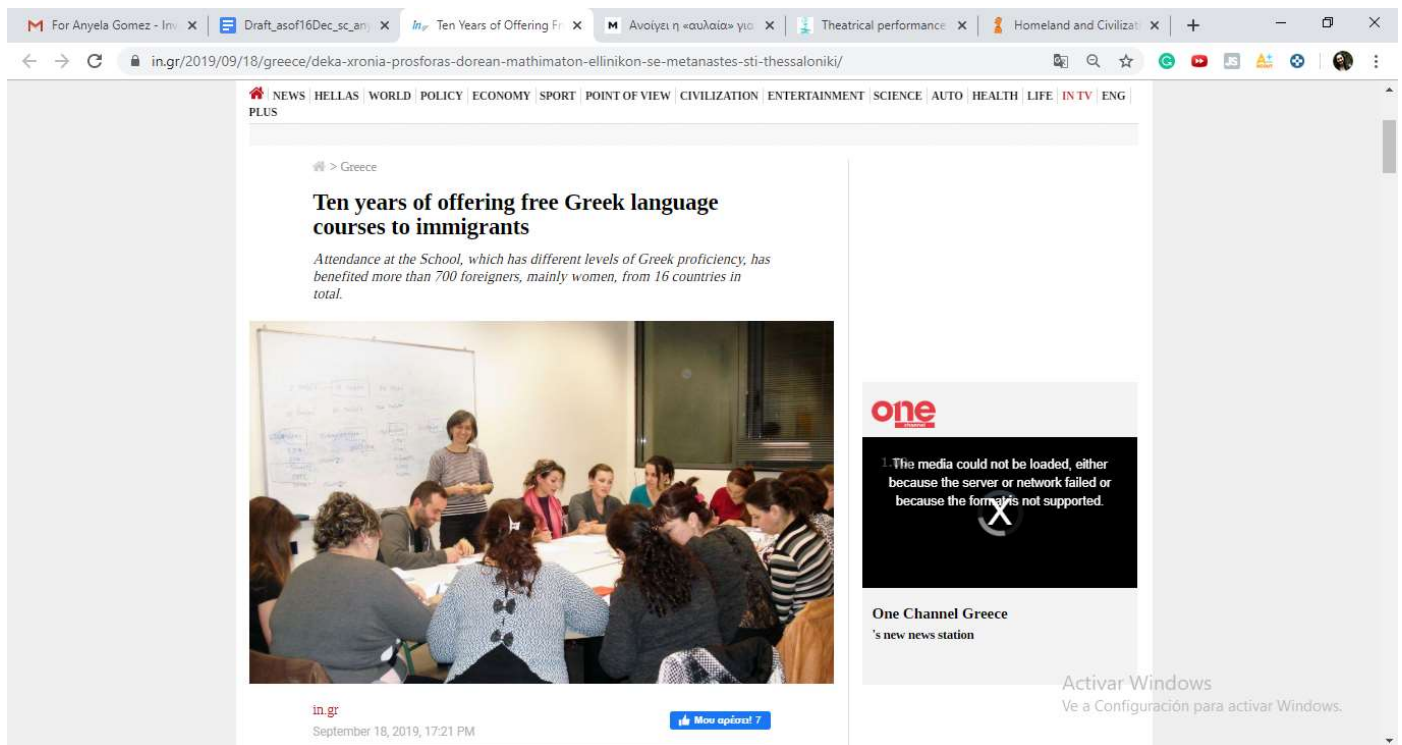
'The classes are for me an opportunity to learn things about Greece, its history, the peculiarities of the language, to improve my language knowledge in order to be able to seek a better job. In addition, good language knowledge makes me able to help my children in doing their homework, read about my rights and assert them, and, after passing the language exams, to study at the university.' - Olesia Budika, country of origin: Russia.

'The classes are a great help, especially during the economic crisis time since the attendance is free of charge... Using the language correctly makes us more accepted in the society and we can seek better jobs. I keep attending the classes because I want to improve the spelling, express myself better, enrich my vocabulary and not feel anxiety every time I have to write something in Greek.' - Olga Kronzala, country of origin: Poland.

'The classes are a second chance for us, the people from different countries who live in Greece.' - Verginia Tanuseva, country of origin: Bulgaria.

14. Recognition of the programme

The impact of the Greek Language School has been acknowledged in the local print and electronic media. For instance, it is possible to track commemorative news on different portals celebrating the fifth (Newsroom iPaideia, 2014), seventh (Municipality of Sykies, 2015), ninth (Thesstoday.gr, 2018) and tenth (in.gr, 2019) anniversary of the programme (see picture 9 below), as well as school events such as theatrical performances (Macedonia, 2019; Thessnews.gr, 2019) and the Homeland and Civilizations Celebration (Theologos of the Sun, 2017), an event designed to tackle racism.



Picture 9. A news report on the anniversary of the Greek Language School of the Municipality of Neapolis-Sykeon (in.gr, 2019).

Representatives from the school have also been invited to speak about the school's work on local radio and television and at academic events. In 2011, facilitator Martha Galatopoulou presented the conference topic Greek Language Courses at Neapolis-Sykeon Municipality, at the First International Congress's Language and Civilizations' Crossroads: Learning out of School event in Thessaloniki, 2011. In 2019, she gave a speech on the topic Greek Language Courses at Neapolis-Sykeon Municipality: An Example that Should Be Followed, at the seventh Festival of Multilingualism, Thessaloniki, 2019.

15. Challenges

One challenge the Greek Language School of the Municipality of Neapolis-Sykeon encounters is the low enrolment of male learners. The percentage of participating male learners has always been below 20 per cent, except for 2010 when it was 29 per cent. Another challenge that has surfaced are the limitations on launching certain classes. Some learners have requested history classes and morning classes, however, due to the low number of such requests the staff resources are not available. Additionally, some learners who have finished their courses at the school do not wish to leave the programme, because of the social aspect it brings to their lives. This challenge has been resolved by offering extracurricular activities, such as the theatre group that meets once a week.

16. Lessons learned

Administrators and facilitators at the Greek Language School have found that building up learners' self-confidence is critical for ensuring their ongoing participation in classes. Facilitators give positive feedback to learners frequently during class instruction and provide them with opportunities to present the culture of their countries of origin to the rest of the group. Additionally, the importance of acculturation is highly valued at the school; classes on Greek culture and society are offered, and learners are encouraged to participate in the city's events and activities.



Picture 10. Role-play exercise At the Restaurant.

17. Sustainability

The Greek Language School of the Municipality of Neapolis-Sykeon has been operated and entirely funded by the municipality government since it opened. The impact and achievements of the programme are presented to the municipality council on an annual basis, to demonstrate that the school is covering migrants' and any other learners' needs. Additionally, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki provides ongoing support to the facilitators in professional development to ensure the programme's instructional quality.

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