



## **IO1: Itinerary of self-employment for immigrants and refugees with literacy problems**

# **National Report: Greece**

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## Short Introduction: general situation of the target group in Greece

Once known for its large-scale emigration, Greece transitioned to a country of destination for Central and Eastern European immigrants after the fall of the Soviet Union and other communist regimes in the region. More recently, the country has become one of entry and transit for hundreds of thousands of undocumented immigrants and refugees from Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. As a result, Greece is now grappling with issues related to its highly porous borders, mounting asylum applications, faltering immigrant detention system, and the effective integration of the country's many foreign-born permanent residents.

At the same time, Greece is struggling under the weight of what is perhaps the country's worst economic recession in recent memory, which has changed entirely the economic, political, and social environment of immigration in Greece.

Employment and income have shrunk for both the native-born and immigrant populations, while competition within and between the two has increased. This has resulted in lower wages, a contracting labor market, and fewer regularized immigrants — drawing attention to immigration as a growing threat to the cohesion of Modern Greek society. In this difficult landscape, Greece is yet to face its internal migration crisis, notably the rampant unemployment among migrant workers who are settled in the country, and their resulting de-legalisation (because of their inability to renew their stay permits). These internal and external migration challenges coupled with the acute economic and political crisis have led to a particularly delicate situation of fast rising xenophobic violence and outright racism and the revival of a defensive nationalism that is both anti-European and anti-immigrant.

However, there is no doubt that the country's recovery is based on economic development. Strengthening entrepreneurship contributes to economic growth and hence the entrepreneurship of immigrants can contribute to the recovery of the country. Previous studies have shown that businesses owned by migrants and ethnic minorities have a significant effect on economic growth in Europe (Fairlie and Robb, 2008). According to Eurostat the immigrant businesses, although mostly small or very small, they play an important role in European society and especially in urban areas (Eurostat, 2008).

The development of enterprises activities is a challenge and a tool for overcoming the recession of the crisis that Greece is facing with the last years.

## Integration policy in Greece

Immigrant integration has become an explicit goal of cardinal importance in the policy agenda of the European Union and its member states since 2000. Integrating immigrants and their children into the complex fabric of society has been recognized as crucial for social cohesion and economic growth in the host countries.

The difference of the Greek Immigration Policies since the sharp increase of migration since the 1990s is that it did not focus on integrating immigrants but primarily focused on controlling migration. The issue of integration of the migrant population in Greek society did not become a concern and an issue in the policy agenda in Greece until well into the 2000s. The only category of immigrants whose social integration was from early on promoted by the government were those who had ethnic Greek descent (homogeneis) and who were always considered to belong to the Greek nation.

The Greek government was unprepared to receive such a large number of immigrants over such a relatively short period of time, and it has struggled with how best to deal with the integration of this population. Though the government has adopted, over the years, limited regularization procedures that would legalize certain unauthorized immigrants — largely in response to pressure from constituents and human-rights organizations — nearly half of the total estimated immigrant population remains unauthorized today. Regarding other forms of immigrant integration, the government has still not crafted a satisfactory institutional framework nor adopted a specific integration policy.

The first regularization program to handle illegal immigration was introduced in 1997 with Presidential Decrees 358/1997 and 359/1997. In 2001, the government passed a new law regarding the entry, residence, and naturalization of immigrants in Greece (Law No. 2910/2001). This act created another opportunity for immigrants to legalize their status, provided they could produce proof of residence for at least a year before the implementation of the law. The implementation of this program, however, was troubled. It ultimately stretched on for several years beyond what was intended due to the weakness of public administration, a lack of infrastructure, confusing bureaucracy, and waning public support.

Law 3386/2005 on the entry, residence, and integration of immigrants was introduced in 2005 and included another regularization program. The law provided that immigrants who had lived in the country through December 31, 2004 could be regularized under the condition they could prove their entry into Greece before that date. It also made the procedure for the issuance of residence permits simpler than

the 2001 program and incorporated the relevant EU directives on family reunification (Council Directive 2003/86/EC) and long-term resident immigrants (Council Directive 2003/109/EC).

The 2005 law also abolished the separation of work and residence permits; differentiated residence permits for work, study, or family reunification; and required knowledge of the Greek language and Greek history and culture as a prerequisite for regularization.

The government decided to submit a new immigration bill to parliament in 2007, signaling that the 2005 law was still having implementation problems. Law 3536/2007 introduced some positive changes: It abolished the regularization fee for children between the age of 14 and 18, it gave immigrants the opportunity to pay for up to 20 percent of the 200 days of social insurance contributions required (two-thirds of which is paid by the employer and one-third by the employee) in order to be eligible for regularization and permit renewal, and it gave an extension for the submission of the required documents.

In 2010, Act 3838/2010 granted immigrants who either held long-term residence permits or were of Greek origin voting rights in local elections. (All EU citizens have voting rights in local elections in Greece and can execute them under the condition they register in special voting catalogues after the announcement of the election date.)

Additionally, the 2010 law reformed citizenship rules by providing birthright citizenship to eligible children born in Greece to immigrant parents.

Repeated regularization programs and the remaining large numbers of unauthorized immigrants in Greece confirm the failure of policy. More than 20 years after the increase of immigration flows to the country, Greece has not managed to design satisfactory and operational policies for both the regularization of unauthorized immigrants already in the country and legal ways of entry for skilled immigrants the country needs to attract.

### **Recent data**

During the last decade, and particularly since 2008, Greece has become a transit and destination country for immigrants and asylum seekers arriving from Southeast Asia, Africa and the Middle East. The number of the total immigrant population in Greece can only be estimated with approximation, rather than near accuracy, by taking into account data from the most recent population census and the issuing of residence permits. During the 2011 census, the resident population of Third Country

Nationals (TCNs) in Greece was 712,879 (7.5% of the total population) of which 385,773 (54%) were male and 327,106 female (46%). Data from the Ministry of the Interior database on valid stay permits, put the number of legally residing TCNs at 501,351 in April 2016. The legally residing population of TCNs in Greece includes mostly individuals with Albanian citizenship (76%). They are followed by individuals coming from the former Republics of the Soviet Union, including Ukrainians, Georgians, Russians and Moldovans, and by people from India, Philippines and Pakistan (see Table 1). Men constitute slightly over half (52.4%) of the total legal immigrant stock, and women make up 47.6% of the legally residing immigrant population (see Figure 1). At the same time, the gender balance in the composition of the various ethnic groups though is very uneven and heterogeneous. Women make up less than 17.6% of immigrants from Pakistan and India while they comprise over 82% of immigrants from Ukraine, 81.3% of those coming from Russia, and 71% and 76% for those from Georgia and Moldova, respectively (Ministry of Interior, 2016, see Table 1).

**Table 1. TCNs by nationality and gender in Greece (19-4-2016)**

	Male	Female	Total
Albania	209,566	171,190	380,756
Ukraine	3,468	15,945	19,413
Georgia	5,234	12,848	18,082
Pakistan	14,946	1,528	16,474
Russia	2,746	11,944	14,690
India	10,397	3,869	14,266
Egypt	8,938	3,031	11,969
Moldova	2,220	6,920	9,140
Philippines	2,811	7,373	10,184
Armenia	2,365	4,013	6,378
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>262,691</b>	<b>238,661</b>	<b>501,351</b>

*Data is based on the number of individuals in possession of a valid residence permit by country of origin by reference date 19.4.2016, from the 10 main countries of origin. [Source: Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction]*

Since 2009 with the onset of the financial crisis and economic recession, the number of residence permits for TCNs issued by the Ministry of Interior declined. Such a decline is possibly linked to the deep economic recession and austerity measures which have especially affected immigrants. At the same time, the decline seemed to last only for some years, as the number of TCNs who are residence permit holders in

Greece picked up again in 2015 and in 2016. Research has demonstrated that the practical difficulty among immigrants to fulfill the requirements necessary to obtain or renew a permit contributes to a continuing or lapsed state of illegality, also due to the largely informal and seasonal character of migrant employment in Greece. Since immigrants wishing to acquire or renew their legal status need, in most cases, to provide evidence of employment or certificates of payment of social security contributions, the decline in the number of stay permits can be attributed to unemployment and the failure to secure the required social security stamps. Migrants now need proof of employment (not just payment of social security dues) to get the social security (IKA) certificate required for residence permit renewal. As a consequence, many immigrants might have fallen into illegality once unemployed, while still trying to make ends meet in Greece.

### **Integration education**

In general, immigrants are integrated into the Greek society with processes that are very close to those for the Greek population. The main difference lies in the complex and in many cases ineffective legalization process, which is the strongest barrier to integration.

Far more important than immigration policy is the fact that Greece is lacking a regulatory framework for immigrant integration. For many years, the only integration method that worked was through the education of pupils. According to a principle shared by many Greeks "Those who participate in our education are Greeks". Fortunately this principle helps integration. According to the existing legislation, a birth and health certificate, a residence permit and certification of school attendance abroad (in case that the student has already started his education abroad) are needed for a child to be enrolled in school. Nevertheless, the Greek Ministry of Education tolerated the enrollment of children of unauthorized immigrants in Greek Schools without having to present all the documents usually needed for such an action (similar is the situation with refugee children now residing in Greece who live in an urban environment, do not attend the afternoon integration classes and wish to attend morning classes). The end result was that there is now a new generation of young people who were not born by Greek parents and are studying in Greek schools and Universities. These children also benefited from various programs aiming to support their attendance in classes of Greek language. The main objective of these programs is to develop a common civic culture based on the values of Greek

civilization, while they encourage interaction between students from different countries and cultures.

Furthermore, in the case of full integration of adult immigrants, (vocational) training is deemed necessary. Possible inclusion without training can generate in the host country social problems. In any case, a job placement is not enough for the integration in the host country, since one can fully cover a job only if they possess the language of the host country and has special abilities and skills. Language and vocational training are a prerequisite for moving from country to country. The less an adult is trained, the more difficult his integration is going to be.

Since 2007, the training of immigrants in Greece has been through the European Fund for the Integration of non-EU immigrants. Various projects have been implemented in the framework of this fund, ranging from Intercultural and civic competences Programmes to Greek Language, Culture and History Training Programmes. The projects aim is enabling third-country nationals of different economic, social, cultural, religious, linguistic and ethnic backgrounds to fulfill the conditions of residence and to facilitate their integration into the Greek society.

## **Entrepreneurial education offer**

There is no official education provision of entrepreneurship courses by the Greek state. Those wanting to learn more about how to become entrepreneurs can address to VET institutes or private organisations that organise such trainings.

## **Best practices**

### **Best Practice 1: Business Coaching Center**

#### **Why it is interesting**

Business Coaching Center (BCC) is a programme of PRAKSIS NGO with the aim to support Entrepreneurship via Training, Business Consulting and Coaching. The programmes was firstly addressed to immigrants residing in Greece who needed help with the set-up of their own enterprise but after the financial crisis it has expanded to include nationals as well. It is suitable to those who have a realistic business idea or those who already own a business which needs support or freelance professionals who look for alternative sources of income. Business Coaching Center functions as a support center for the selected candidates offering training, coaching and consulting in order to help people materialize their



entrepreneurial goals. The programme provides comprehensive practical training and preparation so that the candidate will be able to compose a conclusive business plan, which will ensure in the best possible way the viability of his business.

### Which part we can use in the project

The Self-emp project can use the BCC methodology as a successful example since the programme is running since 2014 and has gotten the approval to run again after the first official ending of funding.

### Tools, materials, methodologies

The BCC methodology incorporates international trends in business models with the reality of the Greek market. More specifically, the BCC supports participants by offering training, development of personal skills (coaching) and advisory (consulting), to help them reach their business goals and create a small business.

BCC has developed a practical operational model and methodology which is based on customized needs of each beneficiary.

## BCC Methodology

### The 4 Stages of Business Development



Below you may find a short description of the basic characteristics of the beneficiaries per stage as well as the most usual deliverables of each stage.

*Participation in any of the 4 BCC stages of business development does not require attendance in immediate preceding phase/stage.*

### Stage 1 – Concept Clarification

Suitable for:

- Those who have in mind a general business idea
- Freelance professionals who look for alternative ways to increase their income
- Those who have a business idea which is difficult to be implemented overall

Deliverables (either one or part of):

- Market Research / Customer Research

- Real estate research
- Legal and Tax issues research
- Profit & Loss (P&L) document (at an initial level)
- Business Operational Model
- Business Financial Model

## **Stage 2 - Business Plan**

Suitable for:

- Those who have successfully concluded Stage 1 – Concept Clarification.
- Those who have a clear business idea or existing business which needs some adjustments or alternative steps to increase its profitability.

Deliverable:

- Detailed, realistic and updated Business Plan

## **Stage 3 - Marketing / Communication / Digital Promotion Plan**

Suitable for:

- Those who have concluded successfully stages 1 & 2 (Concept Clarification / Business Plan)
- Those who want to create / upgrade an e-shop
- Those who want to create/ upgrade an internet site
- Those who want to increase their business' visibility
- Those who want to get promoted thorough social media (facebook, tweeter, etc)
- Those who want to activate their network of clients, partners, and suppliers.
- Those who want to increase their business' selling activity
- Those who want to promote to new markets

Deliverables (either one or part of):

- Internet site / e-shop
- Detailed Marketing plan/Digital Marketing Plan/ Promotional Plan/ Communication plan
- Facebook page
- Newsletter / Infographic
- Communication Content
- Professional Images / Video

## Stage 4 – Sources of Finance

Suitable for:

- Those who have concluded successfully stages 1, 2 & 3 (Concept Clarification / Business Plan/ Marketing Plan).
- Those who already run a business and look for an investor and or credit.
- Those who look for a seed capital to launch their business idea
- Those who already run a business and want to decrease their costs.
- Those who already run a business and want to upload a campaign to a crowdfunding platform.

Deliverables (either one or part of):

- Investor Pitch
- Crowdfunding Campaign
- Business Plan / Financial documents' update
- Training and coaching activities.

The BCC offers entrepreneurial support in cycles lasting 4 months each. More specifically:

- Practical and targeted business seminars and workshops.
- Up to 7 one to one business counseling by business consultants in order for individual ideas to become a reality
- Up to 7 individual and/or team meetings with the coach for personal skills development.
- Up to 5 meetings per two weeks, throughout the duration of the training program.

## **Best Practice 2: Local Developments Plans for Social Inclusion & Employability (LDPs)**

### **Why it is interesting**

"Local Development Plans for Social Inclusion & Employability" (LDPs) are projects designed upon specific local needs and sector growth potential with the aim of empowering Entrepreneurship and Business Start up creation with a special focus on Social Entrepreneurship. DIMITRA has designed and coordinates a great number of LDPs. The projects were addressed to unemployment belonging to socially vulnerable groups including immigrants and refugees residing in Greece who needed help with the set-up of their own enterprise. These are projects designed upon specific local needs & sector growth potentials with the aim to empower Entrepreneurship & Business Start up creation (Social Entrepreneurship included) through a holistic approach towards social inclusion and employability.

### **Which part we can use in the project**

The LDPs methodology can be used by the Self-emp project as many social enterprises that were created through these projects have been awarded national prizes.

### **Tools, materials, methodologies**

The following set of activities was elaborated by DIMITRA to strengthen beneficiaries' capacities (min 80 individuals participating in each LDP):

- Career Guidance and Counselling
- Vocational Education & Training
- Training & Certification in "Sense of Initiative & Entrepreneurship"
- Networking & awareness raising activities
- Coaching & Mentorship
- Groups & individual support and empowerment to reduce business risk and improve business skills, social enterprising expertise, business plan development
- Business start up support.

## Bibliography

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