

# 2022

## ANNUAL REPORT



REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS



MINISTRY  
OF EDUCATION  
SPORT  
AND YOUTH



Annual Report

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2022

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Ministry of Education,  
Sport and Youth

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2022

PART A:  
Education



# 1.

## ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SPORT AND YOUTH

### 1.1 DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY EDUCATION

Primary Education is the first stage of education, laying the foundations for children's cognitive, emotional and psychomotor development. For this reason, the Administration of the Department of Primary Education persists in the continuous improvement and advancement of Primary Education. Furthermore, it aims at updating teaching methods and approaches, designing and implementing contemporary developmental programmes, improving the support programmes applied in Special Needs Education and expanding, improving and constructing new school buildings. Overall, it aims at creating the infrastructure that will ensure high quality education.

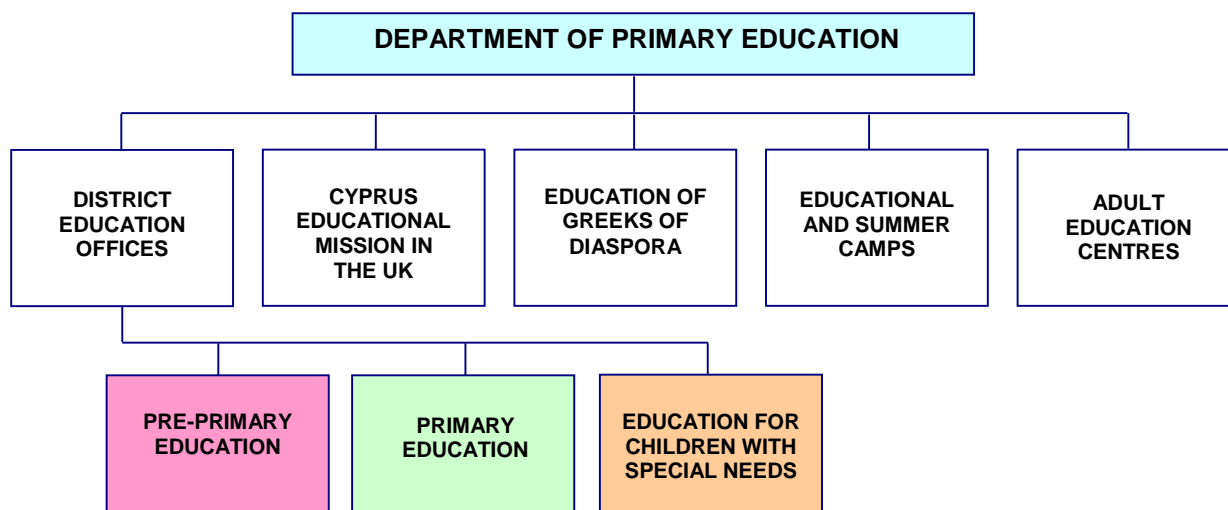
Primary Education works towards the continuous improvement and quality upgrading of education through systematic and responsible planning, with the cooperation of all stakeholders. During the school year 2021 - 2022, the provision of in-service training to teachers and the development of new teaching materials continued. Furthermore, the following actions were also pursued:

- Provision of intensive and differentiated programmes for Greek as a second language targeted towards foreign or repatriated children so as to enable their smooth integration in the public educational system.
- All-Day Compulsory Schools, in 14 different Primary Schools and All-Day Optional Schools in 130 Primary Schools, in seven Special Schools as well as in 64 Pre-primary Schools.

During the 2021 - 2022 school year, despite the fact that the operation of the school units continued to be determined by the COVID-19 Coronavirus pandemic, the schools managed to remain open. This had a positive impact on both teachers and children and their parents/guardians in all areas: emotional, social, cognitive. At the same time, throughout the school year, distance education continued to be offered to the pupils who had to stay at home either because they were positive cases or because they were contacts of positive cases, a fact which allowed the continuation of the learning process of each child from home.

The various sectors of the Department of Primary Education include the:

- District Education Offices, which are responsible for the administration of Public, Community and Private Pre-primary Schools (Pre-primary Education), Public and Private Primary Schools (Primary Education) and Special Schools as well as the provision of assistance to children with special needs who are attending Special Units in Pre-Primary and Primary Schools (Education for Children with Special Needs),
- Cyprus Educational Mission in the U.K.,
- Education of the Greeks of Diaspora,
- Educational and Summer Camps, and
- Adult Education Centres.



### 1.1.1 PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION

Pre-primary Education includes the education of children aged three to six years old attending public, community and private Pre-primary schools. Pre-primary Education complements the family's role, provides ample support for the development of the children, fulfils their basic needs and creates supportive and constructive learning experiences. Consequently, this enables children to become aware of their capabilities and overall potential and enhances their self-image.

The Pre-primary Schools' educational programme encourages creative activities through child-centred approaches in an environment which promotes cooperative learning, experimentation and group work. Emphasis is also placed on offering love, support, trust, acceptance, safety and respect of individuality.

### 1.1.2 PRIMARY EDUCATION

Primary Education, which lasts for six years, is responsible for the education of children attending public and private primary schools. After the Decision of the Council of Ministers (No. 84.078/ 09.01.2018) and the amendment of the Law on Compulsory Education, from the school year 2021 - 2022 onwards, children attend primary schools at the age of 6 years old (before September 1<sup>st</sup> of the school year they will attend school) instead of 5 <sup>8</sup>/<sub>12</sub> years that was in force before.

The fundamental principle defining the objectives of Primary Education has always been the balanced development of the children's personality. The Primary Education Curriculum is, therefore, based on three central pillars that function together to achieve this goal. In particular, the first pillar refers to the comprehensive set of knowledge and competences that pupils are expected to master in each school subject. The second pillar focuses on the values, attitudes and behaviours that pupils should develop as democratic citizens, while the third pillar is related to the development of qualities, skills and key competences required *by* and *for* the 21<sup>st</sup> century society, so that children can become able to take on responsibilities and be active in the contemporary, sociocultural context.

### 1.1.3 SCHOOLS IN THE OCCUPIED AREA OF CYPRUS

During the school year 2021 - 2022, seven children attended the Rizokarpaso Pre-primary School and sixteen children attended the Rizokarpaso Primary School, the only Greek-Cypriot School that has been in continuous operation since the Turkish Occupation in 1974. Three Primary Education teachers and two Pre-primary Education teachers worked at the respective Rizokarpaso schools during 2021 - 2022.



Since 2003, the Rizokarpaso Primary School is also operating as an “All-day Optional School” and the attendance of children is extended until 15:05 or until 16:00, according to the timetable selected by their parents. In January 2006, the Rizokarpaso Pre-primary School was also included in the above institution. Since 2018, the Rizokarpaso Pre-primary School operates as a distinctive “All-day Optional School”. In addition to the morning school teachers, services are purchased from two Primary Education teachers.

A number of difficulties were faced during the school year 2021 - 2022 due to the interference of the occupying regime in the regular operation of the Greek Cypriot schools, such as censorship, refusal to accept certain teachers as legitimate teaching staff and attempts to obstruct the educational work carried out at the schools.

Despite these difficulties, the education provided by the Rizokarpaso schools, is considered satisfactory. The Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth ensures that all necessary teaching materials and textbooks are sent to these schools, while the Educational Service Commission provides the educational staff required for the operation of the schools.

#### **1.1.4 CYPRUS EDUCATIONAL MISSION IN THE UK**

In order to improve the level of education offered by the Greek schools in the U.K., a Special Committee was tasked with evaluating the current Curriculum and submitting a proposal for a revised Curriculum. The revised version was submitted to the Minister of Education, Sport and Youth, and approved in July 2019. The Ministry, based on a four-year plan, promotes the gradual implementation of the new Curriculum and takes actions that will support the schools of the Cyprus Educational Mission for its implementation. Due to issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the full implementation of the new Curriculum is currently estimated to be completed in 2024. During the school year 2021 - 2022, both hourly-paid and full-time teachers were trained in various aspects regarding the philosophy of the revised curriculum, as well as other areas of education. Educational material was also prepared for the implementation of the Curriculum in Pre-primary school and the 1<sup>st</sup> Grade of Primary School.

#### **1.1.5 EDUCATIONAL AND SUMMER CAMPS**

The aim of the Educational and Summer Camps Programme is to offer children, of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades of Primary Schools in Cyprus and other countries, the opportunity to get to know and love the natural environment of the countryside, develop positive attitudes and behaviours towards the environment, make friends with children of their own age, learn about the culture and history of Cyprus and about the island, in general. Children from abroad, who participate in educational camps in Cyprus, have the opportunity to learn the Greek language and visit some of the most interesting attractions in Cyprus.

The Educational Programme and overall organisation of the camps largely serves the Primary Education Curriculum, since aspects of various school subjects are implemented in the Camps’ Programme.

During the school year 2021 - 2022, it was not possible to implement all the programmes of the Educational and Summer Camps due to the pandemic caused by the new coronavirus COVID-19. The Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth was forced to suspend the following camping programmes for the school year 2021 - 2022:

- The Autumn and Spring Educational Camps.
- The Children’s Ship Abroad Programme.
- The Host Programme for other school children from abroad.

During the period June - August 2022, it was possible to operate the Summer Camp. A total of 555 children from 104 primary schools in Cyprus participated in them in seven seven-day series. In addition

to the above, 48 children with four companions from Ukraine were accommodated in the camp for nine days.

### 1.1.6 ADULT EDUCATION CENTRES

The Adult Education Centres is a significant programme which offers general adult education in Cyprus within the framework of providing lifelong learning opportunities. The main objective of the Adult Education Centres is the general development of each adult's personality as well as the social, financial and cultural development of citizens and society, in general. The objectives of this programme express the State's developmental policy and the wider aims of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth regarding the provision of "Lifelong Learning" opportunities for all the citizens of the Republic of Cyprus and the combating of educational inequalities so that citizens may be successfully integrated and enabled to act effectively within the European community.

The Adult Education Centres are recognised by the citizens of the Republic of Cyprus as the most important programme of general adult education providing a variety of quality courses. The success of the institution is proven through the massive participation of citizens who every year exceed 20.000. During the school year 2021 - 2022, the Adult Education Centres, within the framework of taking additional measures to limit the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, operated with fewer training centres, trainers and members. Specifically, 1200 teams operated in 254 training centers with 357 trainers and 10125 members participated.

### 1.1.7 SCHOOLS - TEACHERS - PUPILS

The statistics below provide information concerning all sectors of the Department of Primary Education, for the last three years.

SCHOOLS	2019 - 2020	2020 - 2021	2021 - 2022
<b>PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOLS</b>			
<i>Public Pre-primary Schools:</i>			
a) Number of Schools (*)	273	273	271
b) Number of Pupils (*)	11883	12146	12804
c) Number of Teachers (*)	801	814	839
<i>Community Pre-primary Schools:</i>			
a) Number of Schools	74	78	77
b) Number of Pupils	1969	2077	2082
c) Number of Teachers	108	114	116
<b>PRIMARY SCHOOLS</b>			
a) Number of Schools (*)	331	331	329
b) Number of Pupils (*)	52768	51541	49951
c) Number of Teachers (*)	4339	4367	4409
<b>PRE-PRIMARY &amp; PRIMARY SCHOOLS</b>			
Number of Special Teachers	664	703	748
<b>SPECIAL SCHOOLS</b>			
a) Number of Schools	9	9	9
b) Number of Pupils (3 -21 years old)	465	498	521
c) Number of Teachers (Special Teachers)	232	258	258

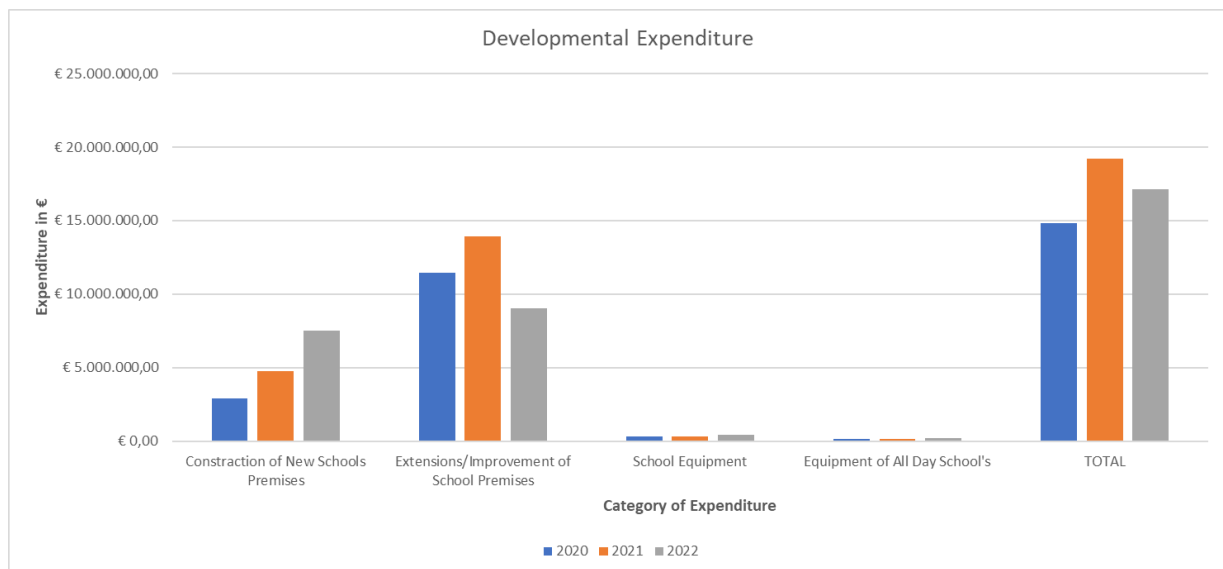
SCHOOLS	2019 - 2020	2020 - 2021	2021 - 2022
<b>GREEK COMMUNITY SCHOOLS AT THE UK</b>			
a) Number of Schools	66	62	64
b) Number of Pupils	5995	5020	5258
c) Number of Teachers: permanent	25	25	23
part time	126	119	125
<b>ADULT EDUCATION CENTRES</b>		The Adult Education Centres courses suspended due to pandemic COVID-19.	
a) Number of Centres	393		254
b) Number of Members	21342		10125
c) Number of Instructors	643		357

\* The schools in the areas occupied by the Turkish troops are also included. These are:

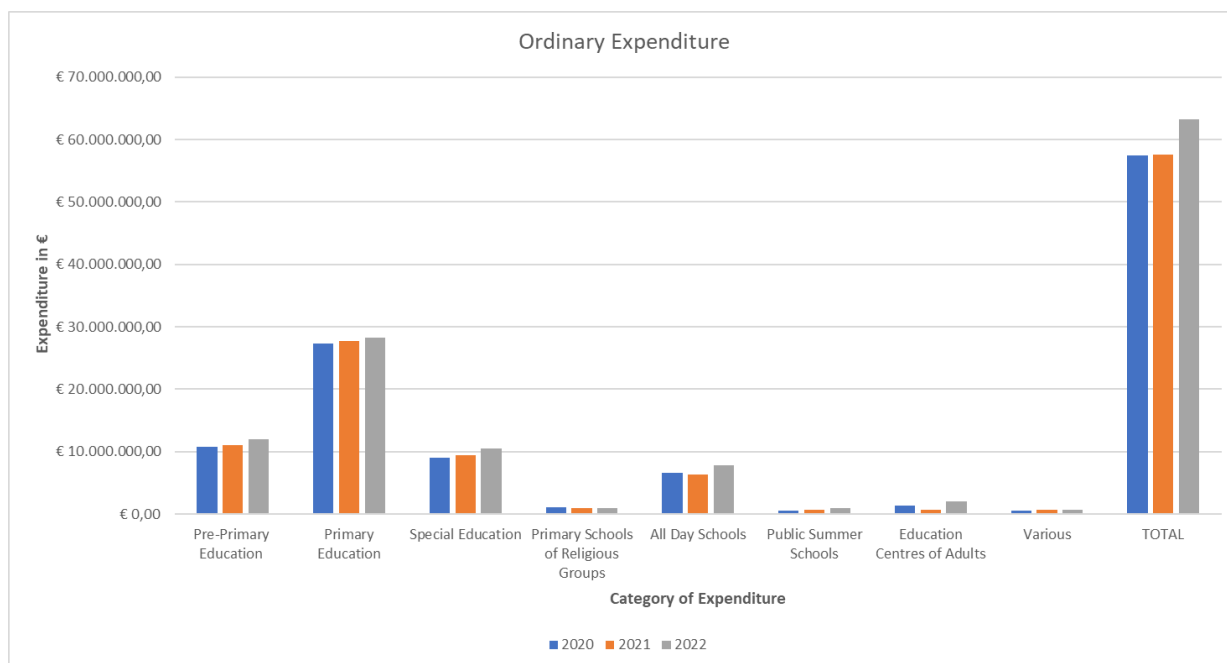
SCHOOLS IN OCCUPIED AREAS	2019 - 2020	2020 - 2021	2021 - 2022
<b>PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOLS</b>			
a) Number of Schools	1	1	1
b) Number of Pupils	14	13	7
c) Number of Teachers	1	2	2
<b>PRIMARY SCHOOLS</b>			
a) Number of Schools	1	1	1
b) Number of Pupils	14	16	16
c) Number of Teachers	3	3	3

### 1.1.8 FINANCIAL STATUS

The developmental expenditure for the financial years 2020, 2021 and 2022 in Primary Education is shown in the graph below:



The ordinary expenditure for the financial years 2020, 2021 and 2022 in Primary Education is shown in the graph below:



### 1.1.9 SCHOOL PREMISES

The current school building programme aims at meeting the most urgent needs throughout Cyprus. Within this framework, construction of schools, extension and improvement works are carried out in several Pre-primary and Primary School premises.

## 1.2 DEPARTMENT OF SECONDARY GENERAL EDUCATION

Secondary General Education, Public and Private, covers a huge sector of the Cyprus Educational System. Based on the socioeconomic, cultural, and national needs of Cyprus, Public Secondary General Education offers equal opportunities for education and aims at promoting knowledge focusing on general education and gradual specialization. Thus, it prepares pupils for their academic and professional pursuits. It also aims at the promotion and development of healthy, spiritual, and moral personalities, as well as the creation of competent, democratic, and law-abiding citizens. Furthermore, it pursues the strengthening of national identity, cultural values and universal ideals for freedom, justice, peace and the fostering of love and respect among people with a view to promoting mutual understanding and cooperation among people. All of these, within the framework of the new multicultural conditions existing both in Cyprus and worldwide during the 21st century.

Public Secondary General Education is offered to pupils between the ages of 12 - 18, through two three-year cycles of study - the Gymnasium and the Lyceum. The curriculum includes common core subjects, such as Modern Greek, Mathematics and Optional Subjects. Some subjects are interdisciplinary such as Health Education and Environmental Studies. Moreover, there are various extracurricular activities, such as clubs, excursions, and field trips, in order to attain a more comprehensive and balanced development of the pupils' personality. Education is compulsory up to the age of 15 and free of charge for both cycles.

The Directorate of Secondary General Education (DSGE) has a wide range of responsibilities in areas such as the supervision and evaluation of public schools, supervision of private schools and institutes, the State Institutes for Further Education, and the Counseling and Career Guidance Services. Furthermore, the DSGE is responsible for monitoring the implementation of school regulations, the inspection of teaching staff, educational planning, and school staffing, offering further education to pupils and adults and providing information to the public.

### 1.2.1 THE GYMNASIUM

The Gymnasium is a three-year cycle of lower secondary general education. It is compulsory for all pupils and complements the general education offered in Primary Education. Furthermore, it prepares pupils to enter the upper secondary General Education Cycle, the Lyceum, or the Technical/Vocational Education path.

The “Activities of School and Social Inclusion” (DRA.S.E.) programme is offered aiming at preventing school failure and functional illiteracy by creating positive attitudes towards school and improving learning outcomes. Furthermore, the Literacy Programme is implemented in all Gymnasia in an effort to address functional illiteracy and prevent school and social exclusion. Measures are also taken for the education and training of pupils with special needs by offering special assistance that enables their school development in all areas, and especially in the psychological, social, and educational domain.





### 1.2.2 THE LYCEUM

The implementation of the curriculum at the Lyceum aims at strengthening the validity of the School Leaving Certificate (Apolysterion) of the public school and ensuring a more reliable system of access to Public Higher Education Institutions in both Cyprus and abroad.

Class A' Lyceum mainly comprises of core subjects, taught for 31 periods per week and four periods of deepening in two courses which belong to one of the four Orientation Group (OG) Courses, as shown below:

- o 1st OG: Ancient Greek / Classical Studies - History
- o 2nd OG: Mathematics - Physics
- o 3<sup>rd</sup> OG: Mathematics - Economics
- o 4<sup>th</sup> OG: Economics – English

These choices help pupils to follow one of the six respective Directions of study in Class B' and C' of the Lyceum as shown below:

<b>1<sup>n</sup> OG</b> Ancient Greek / Classical Studies - History		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classical and Humanities Studies</li> <li>• Foreign Languages and European Studies</li> <li>• Fine Arts</li> </ul>
<b>2<sup>n</sup> OG</b> Mathematics and Physics		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sciences / Life Sciences / Computer Science / Design and Technology</li> <li>• Fine Arts</li> </ul>
<b>3<sup>n</sup> OG</b> Mathematics and Economics		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economics</li> <li>• Fine Arts</li> </ul>
<b>4<sup>n</sup> OG</b> Economics and English		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commerce and Services</li> <li>• Fine Arts</li> </ul>

In 2021 - 2022 pupils in all grades of upper secondary education (Lyceum) took evaluating exams at the end of every semester, that is in January for the 1st semester and May for the 2nd one. The grade for the written assessment (semester exams), for the four advanced level subjects and the subject of Greek language and literature, at the end of each semester, accounted for 40% of the subject's grade for each semester. The rest 60% was derived through other forms of assessment such as class or lab participation and contribution, quizzes, short tests and projects during the semester. The grades of each semester account for 50% of the final grade for each school year.

### **1.2.3 EVENING SCHOOLS**

Evening Schools are second chance schools, and they are open to people who have completed the age of 18. Five Evening Schools operate in the provinces of Lefkosia, Larnaka, Ammochostos, Lemesos and Pafos.

The new Evening School model combines physical presence teaching, distance learning and blended learning. Pupils can obtain Secondary Education Apolyterion, which is equivalent to the one awarded by the General Secondary Schools operating in the morning, and, if they wish, they can apply for a place at a university.

In September 2022, kindergarten teachers were hired to look after the pupils' children in three Evening Schools in Larnaka, Lemesos and Pafos.

### **1.2.4 THE EUROPEAN DIMENSION IN SECONDARY GENERAL EDUCATION**

Throughout the years, one of the main goals of the Educational System of Cyprus has been, the cultivation and promotion of the European Dimension in Education, as it is considered an integral part of the education of the European Citizens. More specifically, the European Dimension is promoted interdisciplinary, through the curricula of various courses, as well as through a variety of other school activities, which aim, both at providing information, cultivating and fostering the "European identity" while simultaneously reinforcing and promoting positive attitudes towards the European community. In their quest to respond and promote the goal of the European Dimension, the Gymnasia and Lycea of Cyprus, have developed comprehensive initiatives and overall activities, such as, and not limited to, the celebration of the 'Europe Day' and the European Day of Languages, the provision of European Clubs within the school community, the implementation of European related school projects, the active involvement and participation in the EU programmes, such as the Erasmus+ Programme and so on, that promote and enhance the exchange of good practices and ideas, the organization of learning mobility activities for pupils and staff and the overall participation in school partnerships cooperation with other EU institutions. Furthermore, the European Dimension is also reinforced through the participation of Lyceum and Technical School pupils in the European Competition, where key issues of the European policy are raised for reflection and discussion.

However, knowledge and experience, are a lifelong process that do not end at graduation. Following the European context, the Department of the Secondary General Education seeks to redefine itself in order to successfully meet the emerging challenges of a changing world and further ensure that all pupils will have the opportunity to successfully evolve and meet the complex challenges of tomorrow.

The Directorate of Secondary General Education operates the Sector of European Programmes and Research. The purpose of this Sector is to cultivate and strengthen a research culture, as well as to improve the quality of teaching and learning in school education through the planning and implementation of mobility activities of the Directorate's (educational) staff. The Sector's responsibilities



include, among others: (a) organizing seminars and professional development activities, (b) establishing procedures and providing support regarding the preparation and monitoring of proposals, and (c) writing proposals for competitive European and international programmes. A significant number of funds related to competitive European programmes have already been secured with the participation of the supervisory staff of the Directorate, as well as the administrative staff of Secondary Education schools.

## **1.2.5 PRIVATE EDUCATION**

### **1.2.5.1 General Information**

The Private Education Department (P.E.D.) of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth is responsible for the recognition and assurance of the quality of the educational services provided by Private Schools (P.S.) of Primary and Secondary Education as well as Private Institutes / Private Educational Centers (P.I. / P.E.C.). Private Pre-primary, Primary (Kindergartens and Primary Schools) and Secondary schools are established and operate in accordance with the provisions of the "Private Schools Law of 2019 and the amendment of 2020" while Private Institutes / Private Educational Centers are established and operate in accordance with the provisions of the "On the establishment and operation of Private Institutes and other Related Matters Law of 2018".

Approximately 20% of the pupil population of our country attends recognized private Primary and Secondary Schools which are classified into three types as follows:

- Schools of the same type: Private Schools of the same type are those schools which strictly follow the existing curricula of Public Schools.
- Schools of similar type: Private Schools of a similar type are those schools in which apart from other subjects, 2/3 of the major subjects offered in Public schools are taught in relation to time and subject content.
- Schools of a different type: Private Schools of a different type are those schools which do not belong to any of the above two categories.

### **1.2.5.2 Private Primary Education**

The Department of Primary Education handles all matters related to the establishment and operation of Private Primary Education Schools. Among its objectives are the support of the private initiative to establish Private Schools, the assurance of the orderly operation of existing Private Schools and the control of compliance with the relevant legislation.

#### Private Primary Schools:

- 35 approved Private Primary Schools
- 183 approved Private Kindergartens
- 900 (approx.) teaching staff members

### **1.2.5.3 The Private Secondary Education Department**

The Private Secondary Education Department handles all matters related to the establishment and operation of Private Schools and Private Institutes / Private Educational Centers. The aim of the Department is to strengthen and improve the quality monitoring mechanisms, as well as the procedures applied by the P.S. and P.I. / P.E.C.

#### Private Secondary Schools:

- 40 approved
- 2500 (approx.) teaching staff members

#### Private Institutes /Private Educational Centers (P.I. / P.E.C.):

- 200 pending applications
- 585 approved
- 4500 teaching staff members.

### **1.2.6 STATE INSTITUTES FOR FURTHER EDUCATION**

The State Institutes for Further Education (SIFE) function under the auspices of the DSGE. Through their courses, they offer equal opportunities for education to pupils and adults. 46 SIFE operate in Cyprus, both in urban and rural areas. In this way, the SIFE promote lifelong learning according to the educational aims of the European Union.

In addition, the SIFE actively promote social justice, through the offering of allowances and scholarships, approved by the Council of Ministers, based on socioeconomic and academic achievement.

During 2021 - 2022, the SIFE offered their services to 7749 adult and pupils and employed 488 teachers.

### **1.2.7 THE CAREER COUNSELLING AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES (CCES)**

The Career Counselling and Educational Services (CCES), operate under the administration of the Secondary General Education of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth providing support and information to pupils to better understand and utilize their inclinations, abilities, and interests in order to adapt to the school environment and take informed personal, educational and professional decisions.

#### **Vision - Mission**

The Career Counselling and Educational Services' (CCES) main objective is the personal, social, educational and professional development of pupils and other individuals. Under the basic principle of the uniqueness of each person, the possibilities and the freedom of their will, School Counsellors' main goals focus on helping pupils and other young people to:

- a) gain self-acceptance and form healthy life attitudes,
- b) develop a positive self-image and acquire the appropriate resources to manage life's personal, family and / or social challenges,
- c) adapt to the school environment aiming at educational and social progress and development,
- d) recognize their individual potentials, interests, skills and values, to get to know the nature and requirements of various professions, as well as modern socio-economic and cultural developments, so as to be led to appropriate educational choices, and
- e) develop the necessary skills that will allow them to make rational and generally appropriate decisions, whether they concern educational, professional or personal matters.

During the 2021 - 2022 school year, the Career Counselling and Educational Services, in order to achieve the above goals, carried out the following activities:

- Counseling on matters of Personal and Professional Education in Schools, in the Central and District Offices of CCES through Established Procedures and Interdepartmental Protocols.
- Administration of Psychometric Tools.
- Review of Publications.
- Organization of informative seminars, lectures, educational trainings and conferences for School Counsellors.
- Information meetings for parents / guardians mainly on Professional, Educational and other issues.
- Implementation of school programmes.

### **1.2.8 NUMBER OF EDUCATORS**

The number of educators in Secondary Education during the school year 2021 - 2022 was 6414.

	HEAD MASTERS	DEPUTY HEADS A'	DEPUTY HEADS	PERMANENT	ON CONTRACT	TOTAL NUMBER OF EDUCATORS	INSPEC	C.E.O.
<b>THEOLOGIANS</b>	11	6	33	183	25	258	2	
<b>PHILOLOGISTS</b>	37	60	259	1285	136	1777	10	4
<b>MATHEMATICIANS</b>	10	30	115	552	111	818	4	3
<b>PHYSICISTS</b>	9	15	54	273	45	396	2	
<b>BIOLOGISTS</b>	5	6	33	158	24	226	1	1
<b>CHEMISTS</b>	3	6	25	133	16	183	1	
<b>GEOGRAPHERS</b>	0	0	4	25	5	34		
<b>ENGLISH</b>	3	11	44	272	93	423	3	
<b>FRENCH</b>	5	8	25	110	36	184	1	
<b>ITALIANS</b>	0	0	0	22	0	22		
<b>SPANISH</b>	0	0	0	10	5	15		
<b>GERMAN</b>	0	0	0	3	0	3		
<b>RUSSIAN</b>	0	0	0	15	9	24		
<b>TURKISH</b>	0	0	0	7	0	7		
<b>ECONOMICS</b>	0	8	22	110	59	199	1	
<b>PHYSICAL EDUCATION</b>	1	12	46	293	44	396	2	
<b>MUSIC</b>	7	6	25	146	24	208	1	
<b>ART</b>	6	6	20	120	19	171	1	
<b>PHOTOGRAPHERS</b>	0	0	0	5	0	5		
<b>HOME ECONOMICS</b>	0	4	18	135	24	181	1	
<b>INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY</b>	7	15	59	332	53	466	3	1
<b>TECHNOLOGY</b>	5	6	27	164	27	229	1	1
<b>COUNCELORS</b>	1	6	23	123	16	169	1	
<b>THEATRE</b>	0	0	0	11	9	20		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>832</b>	<b>4487</b>	<b>780</b>	<b>6414</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>10</b>

### 1.2.9 SCHOOLS IN OPERATION

During the school year 2021 - 2022 the following schools operated:

<b>Gymnasia</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Lycea</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Gymnasia and Lycea joined</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Evening Schools</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>113</b>

### 1.2.10 EXPENDITURE IN SECONDARY GENERAL EDUCATION

Expenditure in Secondary General Education constitutes the greatest percentage of the public expenditure for education and aims at promoting activities, measures and projects which reinforce the effort for qualitative upgrading of Secondary Education.

Developmental expenditure in Secondary education for the year 2021 – 2022, among other things, aimed at:

- reinforcing technological subjects,
- equipping labs, and
- training the personnel.

During the year 2021 - 2022, regular expenditure, in Secondary Education, apart from the educators' salaries, aimed at covering functional expenses as follows:

- Operating Expenses
- School athletics
- State Institutes for Further Education
- Maintenance and Repairs
- Consultancy Services
- Publications and Publicity
- Social Transfers

### **1.2.11 ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW SECONDARY EDUCATION SCHOOLS**

The MoESY considers the qualitative upgrading of the infrastructure of Gymnasia and Lycea as of great importance.

#### **Expansions and improvements of Gymnasia and Lycea**

In the annual budget for the year 2022, expansions and improvements of school buildings were included in order to be able to deal with problems of buildings in several schools.

## **1.3 DEPARTMENT OF SECONDARY TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

### **1.3.1 STRUCTURE AND PROSPECTS OF SECONDARY TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

Over the last decades, technical and vocational education and training in Cyprus has gone through several stages and has been called upon to assume various roles, depending on the socio-economic situation and the trends prevailing in industry and the labour market. In this multifaceted, continually changing environment, technical and vocational education should not be viewed as a simple, static process of amassing knowledge and skills. Rather, it should be regarded as a continuous economic and social necessity, capable of providing equal opportunities to all, and thus, operating as a mechanism that combats social exclusion and promotes social cohesion.

The Department of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education and Training offers a wide range of technical and vocational education, initial training and lifelong training programmes to eligible gymnasium leavers and adults. It is responsible for the design, supervision and coordination of all the educational and administrative issues related to public initial and continuing Vocational Education and Training (VET) programmes in Cyprus.

The Department offers the following VET pathways to eligible gymnasium leavers and adults:

- Upper Secondary Technical and Vocational Education (morning classes)
- Evening Schools of Technical and Vocational Education (second chance schools)

- Lifelong Learning Programmes of Vocational Education and Training (Afternoon and Evening Classes)
- Apprenticeship System of Vocational Education and Training
- Post-Secondary Institutes of Vocational Education and Training (Public School of Higher VET).

#### **1.3.1.1 Upper Secondary Technical and Vocational Education (STVE)**

Upper Secondary Technical and Vocational Education programmes are offered at Technical and Vocational Schools of Education and Training free of charge. They are offered in two directions, the theoretical and the practical direction. The duration of studies is three years for each direction.

The programmes are offered at thirteen public Technical and Vocational Schools of Education and Training. There are three Schools in Lefkosia, three in Lemesos, two in Larnaka, two in the free area of Ammochostos district, and three in Pafos. There is also a Hotel and Catering Department operating at Apeitio Gymnasium in Agros, and a Viticulture – Oenology Department operating at Omodos School.

Upon completion of upper Secondary Technical and Vocational Education, graduates receive a school-leaving certificate (apolyterion), which is equivalent to that awarded by Lycea (Secondary General Education Schools), providing access to the world of work or to Institutions of Higher Education in Cyprus or abroad.

#### **1.3.1.2 Evening Schools of Technical and Vocational Education**

The Department of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education and Training also offers formal secondary education programmes through the five Evening Schools of Technical and Vocational Education operating in Lefkosia, Lemesos, Larnaka, Pafos and free area of Ammochostos district. The objective of the Evening Schools of Technical and Vocational Education is to further promote participation in Secondary Technical and Vocational Education and support the integration of school dropouts in the workplace and society, in general.

The programmes offered at the Evening Schools of Technical and Vocational Education are equivalent to the upper secondary technical and vocational education programmes that are offered in the morning. The material taught in each field of study and specialization is the same as the material taught in the respective field of study / specialization offered in the morning, adapted, however, to the particular characteristics and needs of the pupils who attend the evening classes. The duration of studies varies from one to three years, depending on the educational level of those interested in attending the Evening Schools of Technical and Vocational Education.

Attendance at the Evening Schools of Technical and Vocational Education is free of charge and leads to the acquisition of a school leaving certificate (apolyterion), which is equivalent to that awarded to graduates of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education and Secondary General Education. This means that the school leaving certificate awarded by the Evening Schools of Technical and Vocational Education entitles graduates either to pursue further studies at Institutions of Higher Education in Cyprus or abroad, provided that they meet the entry requirements, or access directly the labour market as skilled workers.

#### **1.3.1.3 Lifelong Learning Programmes of Vocational Education and Training (afternoon and evening classes)**

Lifelong Learning Vocational Education and Training one-year and three-year programmes, as well as preparatory classes for various examinations, are offered by the Department of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education and Training during the afternoon and evening on the premises of Technical and Vocational Schools of Education and Training in all major towns. Individuals attending Lifelong Learning Programmes of Vocational Education and Training pay limited fees approved by the Council of Ministers.

- **Lifelong Learning Vocational Education and Training: One-Year and Three-Year Programmes**

The objective of these programmes is to offer continuing vocational education and training to adults working in industry, in order to be able to respond more efficiently to the contemporary demands of the labour market, as well as training aiming at the re-integration of unemployed individuals into the labour market, in areas where there is shortage of skilled workers.

Successful completion of the three-year programmes leads to the acquisition of a school leaving certificate equivalent to that awarded to graduates of upper secondary technical and vocational education, as far as the technical component is concerned. This means that individuals who already hold an upper secondary education school leaving certificate are given the opportunity to obtain a second school-leaving certificate in their chosen vocational education and training field of study / specialization.

- **Afternoon and Evening Preparatory Classes**

Preparatory classes for various examinations are offered to pupils of secondary technical and vocational education, as well as to adults. They cover a range of subjects and aim at:

- Preparing pupils or graduates of secondary technical and vocational education for the entrance examinations to Institutions of Tertiary Education in Cyprus and abroad.
- Preparing pupils and adults for various examinations required by governmental and semi-governmental organizations, for the recognition of vocational qualifications or for the issue of a professional licence.

#### **1.3.1.4 The Apprenticeship System of Vocational Education and Training**

The Apprenticeship System of Vocational Education and Training provides an alternative pathway of education, training and development for young people who drop out from the formal education system and is geared towards meeting the needs of the labour market. It embraces young people between 14 and 18 years of age at two apprenticeship levels (preparatory and core). Participation is not compulsory and is free of charge.

The Apprenticeship System of Vocational Education and Training is designed to target two distinct groups of pupils who have:

- (a) not completed compulsory education (third year of Gymnasium) and can enroll at the preparatory apprenticeship level;
- (b) successfully completed either compulsory education or preparatory apprenticeship and can enroll at the core apprenticeship level. Pupils who complete preparatory apprenticeship may proceed to the core apprenticeship level or, if they wish, and provided they succeed in a special set of exams, they may re-enter the formal education system.

Preparatory apprenticeship does not involve employment but constitutes an alternative form of education and training for pupils between the ages of 14 - 16, who have the opportunity, through this one-year programme, to develop their numeracy, literacy and digital skills, and explore their talents and abilities through creative arts.

Core apprenticeship is of three-year duration course and involves both training at school and practical training in enterprises. Apprentices follow practical training in enterprises for three days per week where they are remunerated for their work, and receive theoretical education and workshop training for two days a week at Technical and Vocational Schools of Education and Training.

Apprentices are trained to become car mechanics, electricians, carpenters, cooks, hairdressers, graphic designers and so on.

The Apprenticeship Certificate allows access to several regulated occupations, provided that all other requirements of the relevant legislation are observed.



The operation of the Apprenticeship System is co-funded by the European Union and the Government of Cyprus.

#### **1.3.1.5 Post-Secondary Institutes of Vocational Education and Training (MIEEK)**

In April 2017, the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education accredited the Post-Secondary Institutes of Vocational Education and Training (MIEEK in the Greek language) as a Public School of Higher Vocational Education and Training and classified their programmes at Level 5 of EQF and ISCED. Successful completion of the programmes leads to the acquisition of a Diploma of Higher Vocational Education and Training.

The objective of the Institutes is to offer higher vocational education and training and provide students with the necessary qualifications by imparting academic and technical knowledge, as well as professional and practical skills. Additionally, they offer students the possibility to develop those skills that will enable them to adapt to the changing needs of industry.

The programmes have been especially designed to be relevant to labour market needs. During the academic year 2021 - 2022, the following **accredited** two-year programmes were offered:

- Pastry - Bakery
- Computer and Communication Networks
- Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Installations
- Organic Horticultural Crops
- Supply Chain Management and Maritime Studies
- Design and CNC Technology – Woodworking Industry
- Dairy Technology – Cheese Making
- Electrical Installations and Automation Systems
- Culinary Arts
- Catering Services
- Automotive Technician.

#### **1.3.2 TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN OPERATION**

There are 13 mainstream Technical and Vocational Schools of Education and Training. There are three Technical and Vocational Schools of Education and Training in Lefkosia, three in Lemesos, two in Larnaka, two in the free area of Ammochostos district, and three in Pafos. In addition, there is a Hotel and Catering Department operating at Apeitio Gymnasium of Agros, and a Viticulture – Oenology Department operating at Omodos School.

Furthermore, there are five Evening Schools of Technical and Vocational Education operating in Lefkosia, Lemesos, Larnaka, Pafos and free area of Ammochostos district.

About 5216 pupils attended Secondary Technical and Vocational Education (including Evening Schools of Technical and Vocational Education) during the school year 2021 - 2022, distributed as shown in the Table below:

<b>School</b>	<b>Number of Pupils</b>
A' Technical and Vocational School of Education and Training in Lefkosia	435
B' Technical and Vocational School of Education and Training in Lefkosia	147
Technical and Vocational School of Education and Training Makarios C' in Lefkosia	693
Evening School of Technical and Vocational Education in Lefkosia	130
A' Technical and Vocational School of Education and Training in Lemesos	420
B' Technical and Vocational School of Education and Training in Lemesos	356
C' Technical and Vocational School of Education and Training in Lemesos	396
Evening School of Technical and Vocational Education in Lemesos	162
Hotel and Catering Department of Apeitio Gymnasium in Agros	21
Viticulture – Winery Department in Omodos School	14
Technical and Vocational School of Education and Training in Larnaka	510
Technical and Vocational School of Education and Training Ayios Lazaros in Larnaka	231
Evening School of Technical and Vocational Education in Larnaka	113
Technical and Vocational School of Education and Training in Paralimni	217
Peripheral Agricultural, Technical and Vocational School of Education and Training in Ammochostos / Avgorou	372
Evening School of Technical and Vocational Education in Ammochostos	78
Technical and Vocational School of Education and Training in Pafos	628
Technical and Vocational School of Education and Training in Polis Chrysochou	101
Technical and Vocational School of Education and Training in Empa	113
Evening School of Technical and Vocational Education in Pafos	79
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF PUPILS</b>	<b>5216</b>

### 1.3.3 TEACHING PERSONNEL

The number of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education Teachers (including Head Teachers and Deputy Head Teachers) employed at Technical and Vocational Schools of Education and Training for the school year 2021 - 2022 was 660.

### 1.3.4 NUMBER OF PUPILS/STUDENTS / APPRENTICES

During the school year 2021 - 2022, the number of pupils / students / apprentices studying in the various pathways offered by the Department of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education and Training was as follows:

<b>Programme</b>	<b>NUMBER OF PUPILS</b>
Upper Secondary Technical and Vocational Education	4654
Evening Schools of Technical and Vocational Education	562
Apprenticeship System (core apprenticeship)	160
Lifelong Learning Programmes of Vocational Education and Training (Afternoon and Evening Classes)	488
Post-Secondary Institutes of VET (MIEEK)	508
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6372</b>

### 1.3.5 EXPENDITURE

During the fiscal year of 2022, the foreseen development expenditure for Secondary Technical and Vocational Education and Training was €412.300, while the foreseen current expenditure was €3.516.950.

## 1.4 DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The Department of Higher Education (DHE) of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth (MoESY) is responsible for the management of policy issues related to Higher Education in Cyprus, the promotion of issues related to the development and modernization of Higher Education in Cyprus and the creation of the right conditions, so as to provide equal opportunities of access to Higher Education to all citizens.

Over the last fifteen years, Higher Education in Cyprus has developed at an extremely fast pace. What used to be a vision for Cyprus to become an international regional centre of university education has become a reality in recent years, since both foreign and Cypriot investors have chosen to invest in Cyprus' Higher Education. It is noteworthy that the number of Universities in the Register of Private Universities operating in the Republic of Cyprus has increased since the establishment of the first University, namely the University of Cyprus, to twelve, of which three are Public and nine Private, while applications have been submitted for the establishment of new Universities. At the same time, there are more than 45 Schools of Tertiary Education (Public and Private). Private Schools of Tertiary Education are subjected to the supervision of the DHE for matters of their registration in the Register of the Ministry of Education and inspection issues. According to the most recent data of the Mapping of the Field of Higher Education of Cyprus, conducted by the DHE, the total number of female students in Cyprus, during the academic year 2021 - 2022, was more than 60,000. Of all the students studying in Cyprus, about 35% come from other countries of the European Union and 18% from third countries.

Higher education plays an important role in realizing the Europe 2030 vision for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. It is precisely in this context, of preparing citizens with multifaceted and innovative education, who will be able to contribute towards the social, cultural and economic development of our country, that the strategic planning of the DHE for Higher Education in Cyprus is based.

One of the main priorities of the DHE is the interconnection of Higher Education with the labour market. To this end, for the first time, an attempt is made to scientifically substantiate the interconnection of the offered Programmes of Study of Higher Education Institutions in Cyprus with the labor market. Specifically, the DHE has received funding of €1.5 million for the proposed project entitled "Development of a National Graduate Tracking Mechanism and Design and Implementation of an Employer's Skills

Survey" in the context of the broader project "Addressing skills mismatch between Education and the labour market", which is part of the proposal of the Republic of Cyprus in the Recovery and Resilience Plan. This project aims at creating a National Mechanism for the Monitoring of Higher Education Graduates and at the same time at designing and conducting a National Employers' Skill Survey in relation to the needs of the labor market in knowledge, skills and qualifications. At the same time, Cyprus' participation in the European Graduate Tracking Survey, "Eurograduate", is funded. These surveys will provide data on a longitudinal basis on the needs of the labour market in knowledge, skills and qualifications, as well as on the professional and social progress of graduates of Higher Education Institutions in Cyprus. The results of these surveys will form the basis for decision-making and policy design in relation to the improvement and / or revision of existing Curricula and the development of new Curricula in Higher Education Institutions. At the same time, they will be used to design new flexible programmes (e.g. micro-credentials) for reskilling and upskilling to meet the needs of the labour market. Furthermore, these results will be used by the Departments of Secondary Education for the revision of their Curricula and the Career Counselling and Educational Services of the MoESY for more effective counseling and guidance of Secondary Education pupils. The results of the surveys will be disseminated to other relevant Ministries / Services / Bodies, in order to upgrade and / or develop new Training / Retraining and Lifelong Learning Programmes.

Another main objective of the DHE is the Internationalization of Higher Education in Cyprus. To this end, the DHE organizes information days in target countries and participates in International Educational Exhibitions to promote Cyprus as an ideal destination for studies. In addition, there is cooperation with the embassies of the Republic of Cyprus abroad for meetings between government officials, stakeholders, and / or representatives of Higher Education Institutions, in Cyprus or abroad, aiming at signing Memoranda of Understanding in the field of Higher Education and / or Mutual Recognition Agreements with other countries.

In addition, the DHE attaches particular importance to the promotion of the European University Alliances, which are the future of European Universities. For this purpose, the Government, following a relevant proposal by the DHE, financially supports the Institutions of Higher Education in Cyprus, Public and Private, which participate as full Members in the European University Alliances. Synergies, exchanges of professors, researchers, students and the joint development of university programmes in a European framework are processes that will enhance university education in Cyprus and the contribution of universities to the development of knowledge, research and innovation.

A key priority of the DHE is also to ensure and improve the quality of Higher Education in Cyprus. The establishment and operation of the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (CYQAA) is very important because now both Public and Private Universities, as well as Institutions of Higher Education, submit all their programmes of study for evaluation and certification of their quality. Evaluation of study programmes is undertaken by International Committees of experts of recognized prestige on the basis of quality criteria that are in line with the criteria of International Organizations for the Accreditation of Quality in Higher Education. In addition to the CYQAA, the DHE promotes the adoption of policies, based on European and international standards, in order to ensure the quality of Higher Education in Cyprus.

Another important priority of the DHE is the modernization of the legal framework governing Higher Education in our country, so that Institutions of Higher Education in Cyprus operate on the basis of simple, flexible and decentralized procedures and at the same time, the quality of Higher Education is ensured and promoted.

In addition, the DHE promotes digital reforms through the: a) digitization of its work, b) promotion of digital education in Higher Education Institutions of Cyprus, c) enhancement of students' digital skills, d) adoption of digital tools in teaching and learning. In 2022, the DHE has gone further with the development of an electronic database for the collection of data from the Higher Education Institutions

in Cyprus on the student population, academic and teaching staff, curricula, and the operation of research centres of excellence, networks, UNESCO chairs and memoranda of cooperation. The data of this electronic database will significantly help in the correct provision of information and research results on various aspects of Higher Education in Cyprus and consequently in facilitating the making of relevant decisions e.g. social dimension, fairer access to Higher Education, promotion of Higher Education in Cyprus at regional and international level. It will also provide valid information on the various national and European references which the DHE is invited to inform at regular intervals e.g. Statistical Service of Cyprus, Eurydice, BFUG, ASEM.

### Mapping of the Educational field for Higher Education in Cyprus for the academic year 2021-2022

The Department of Higher Education (DAE) of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth (MoESY) has proceeded with the Mapping of the educational field for Higher Education in Cyprus for the academic year 2021 - 2022. The collection of data has been done through standardized Excel files which were completed by all Higher Education Institutions (HEI) of Cyprus in which students were enrolled for the academic year 2021 - 2022. Specifically, data were collected from a total of ten Universities, three Public and seven Private and 50 Tertiary Education Schools, seven Public and 43 Private. In the framework of the mapping of the academic year 2021 - 2022, the data collected were related to: a) students (personal variables) like sex, country of origin, and disability and b) in relation to their attendance at HEI (educational variables) like the category of the HEI they attend (University or Tertiary Education Institution, Public or Private), the field of study that their programme of study belongs to according to International Standards Classification of Education ISCED 2013, the level of study according to the National Qualifications Framework of Cyprus (CyQF), the type of attendance (full time or part time), study mode (face-to-face / in person, distance / online learning or blended / hybrid learning) and the year of studies. The presentation of results of the mapping is based on four thematic areas: a) Demographic characteristics of students attending Cyprus HEI, b) Variables in relation to the attendance at the HEI, c) Access to Higher Education by under-represented students and d) Newcomer students in programmes of study in Higher Education.

According to the results of the mapping, the total number of students attending HEI in Cyprus, in the academic year 2021 - 2022, was 52 544, out of which 43 217 (82%) attended Universities and 9 327 (18%) attended Institutions of Tertiary Education. Chart 1 presents the total number of students attending HEI of Cyprus in the last nine academic years, specifically from 2013 - 2014 up to 2021 - 2022. It is evident that there is a general upward trend in the total number of students until the academic year 2020 - 2021. In the academic year 2021 - 2022 there was a decrease (3%) in the total number of students compared to the previous academic year (2020 - 2021).

Chart 1: Total number of students at Higher Education Institutions of Cyprus from the academic year 2013 - 2014 up to the academic year 2021 – 2022.

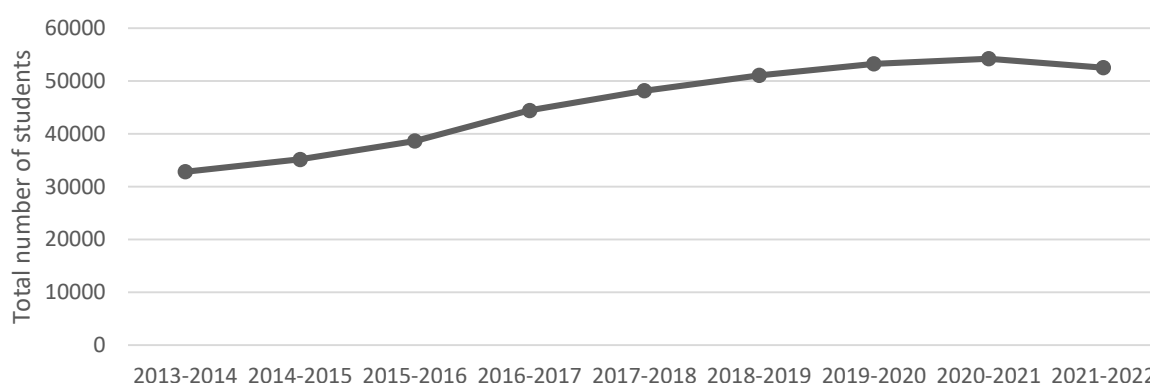
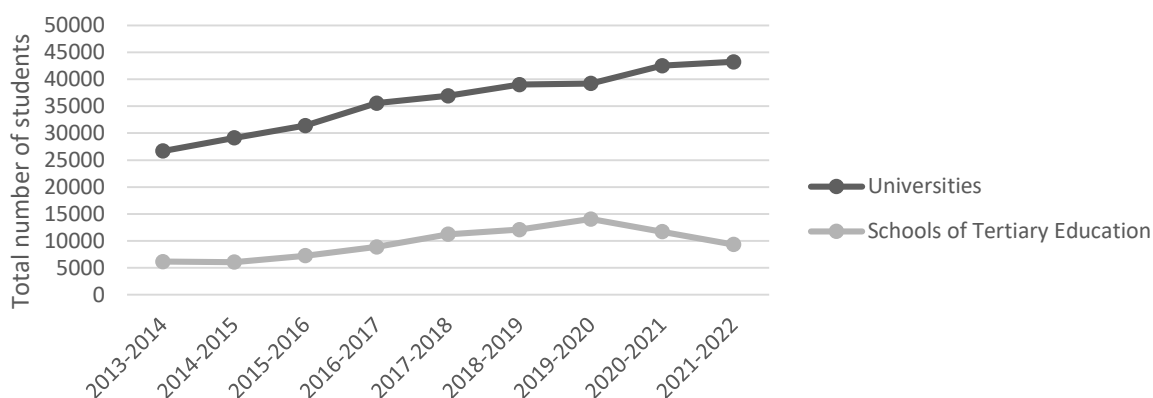


Chart 2 presents the results from the academic year 2013 - 2014 up to the academic year 2021 - 2022, in relation to the total number of students attending Universities and Institutions of Tertiary Education. Chart 2 indicates the total number of students at universities, showing an increasing trend over the last nine academic years. The same pattern does not apply for Institutions of Tertiary Education as from the academic year 2020 - 2021 there was a decrease (17%) in the total number of students. The decrease continued in the academic year 2021 - 2022 and corresponds to 20%.

Chart 2: Total number of students at Universities of Cyprus and Institutions of Tertiary Education from the academic year 2013 - 2014 up to the academic year 2021 - 2022.



In relation to the first thematic area concerning the demographic characteristics of students studying at the HEI, it is noted that 42% were men and 58% were women. The countries from which the students came from were divided into three categories: Cyprus, European Union (EU) countries and third countries. Based on the data collected for the academic year 2020 - 2021, 45% were Cypriot citizens, 41% were citizens of the European Union countries and 14% were citizens of third countries.

Regarding the second thematic area, of the Attendance at the HEI in Cyprus, most students studied at Private Universities and Private Institutions of Tertiary Education (71% and 92% respectively). The majority (49%) attended programmes of study corresponding to level six (University degrees) of the National Qualification Framework. A significant percentage (41%) attended programmes of study corresponding to level seven (postgraduate) of the NQF. Students studying at Universities attended programmes of study corresponding to level six (48%) and level seven (47%) of the NQF, while the majority of students in Institutions of Tertiary Education attended programmes of study corresponding to level six (51%) and level five (31%) of the NQF. The majority of University students attended programmes of study related to the academic fields of Business Administration and Law (28%), Education (24%) and Health Sciences (13%), while the majority of students in Institutions of Tertiary Education attended programmes of study related to the academic fields of Business Administration and Law (49%), Services (17%) and Social Sciences, Journalism and Information (7%). Most students at Universities, as well as Institutions of Higher Education were enrolled on a full-time basis (>80%). 76% of students in Public Universities attended face-to-face programmes of study, while the percentage of students who attended face-to-face programmes of study in Private Universities was 50% and 50% of students attended distance learning programmes of study. The majority of students attended face-to-face programmes of study (75% and 83% respectively).

As far as access to Higher Education of students with disabilities, it is noted that for the academic year 2021 - 2022, 879 students (2%) studied at Higher Education Institutions of Cyprus. In relation to their demographic characteristics, 47% were men and 53% women. Most students with disabilities came from Cyprus (69%) and a large percentage from the EU countries (29%). In relation to educational variables, the majority of students with disabilities studied at Universities (81%), with full-time status (70%) at the level six of the NQF (71%). 84% attended face-to-face programmes of study in Public and Private



Institutions of Higher Education. Students with disabilities followed the academic fields of Business Administration and Law (20%), Education (14.2%) and Arts and Humanities (13%), while the lowest percentages of students with disabilities were recorded in the academic fields of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Veterinary (1.4%) and Information and Communication Technologies (3.3%).

It is emphasized that 15 830 students (30%) started their studies during the academic year 2021 - 2022 and 45% of them were men while 55% were women. Most of these students (48%) were Cypriots and a large proportion (39%) were Europeans. 82% started their studies at the Universities, on a full-time basis (71%), face-to-face programmes of study (59%). 51% of new students chose programmes of study at level seven of the NQF, while a big percentage (40%) selected programmes of study at level six. Their choices were concentrated on the fields of Business Administration and Law (40%), Education (14%) and Health Sciences (9%).

#### **1.4.1 PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES**

Public Universities are established by law and they are financed mostly by the government. They are autonomous and self-governing Universities. At present, Cyprus has three Public Universities, which are mentioned below. The University of Cyprus and the Cyprus University of Technology are conventional Universities, whereas the Open University of Cyprus is a distance learning University which aims at including adult learners in further education and promoting lifelong learning.

##### **Admissions**

The majority of undergraduate students are admitted to Public Universities on the basis of their results in the Pancyprrian Examinations, the competitive entrance examinations organised centrally by the Examination Service, which is under the Department of Higher Education. Postgraduate students are admitted to Public Universities on the basis of other criteria set by the Universities.

##### **1.4.1.1 University of Cyprus**

Concerning its reputation and worldwide rank, the University of Cyprus is the only Cyprus University that is listed in the Academic Ranking of the World Universities (ARWU), known as the Shanghai Ranking list and in particular, amongst the top 501 - 601 academic institutions. It is also listed among the top 401-500 universities according to the Times Higher Education World University Rankings for 2023 and among the best 368 universities worldwide, according to the QS ranking for 2024. It is noteworthy that the University of Cyprus is among the top 201 - 250 universities worldwide in the scientific field of "clinical and health", according to the classification by category of Times Higher Education, despite the young age of its Medical School.

Notable successes of the period also include the certification of the Faculty of Economics and Management by the international organization AACSB. The AACSB accreditation recognizes institutions that focus on excellence in all areas, including teaching, research, curriculum development, and learning outcomes. Founded in 1916, AACSB International is the oldest international business school accrediting organization, but also the largest business education network connecting students, academics and businesses around the world. The University of Cyprus is the first institution in Cyprus and Greece to secure this accreditation.

With over 7,000 students, 172 teaching research laboratories and approximately 820 academic and administrative staff members, the University of Cyprus is a young academic institution committed to knowledge, community engagement, impactful research and innovation. It is worth mentioning that the alumni of the institution have gained the trust of employers, while the UCY remains a major employer in Cyprus for young researchers. The UCY currently employs almost 730 young scientists in research projects with external funding.

With eight Faculties and 22 Departments, the University of Cyprus offers 40 bachelor degrees, 59 postgraduate programmes, of which 25 are offered in English, and 43 doctorates (14 in English).

Aiming at excellence and at producing high impact research, the UCY community actively participates in the European Research Area. In 2021, our researchers participated in 370 research projects and secured funding of €30.9 million for research purposes (212 European, 158 from the Research & Innovation Foundation and the rest from other international and local institutions).

With a total of 27 grants from the European Research Council, with the Centres of Excellence funded by the European Commission, the State and other sources "contributing to the upgrading of vital sectors of the economy, society and the environment", the University's contribution to Cyprus since its foundation is of great importance.

A recognition of the research that is carried out at the University of Cyprus is, among other things, the distinction of academic staff members in the Research and Innovation Awards for 2022. Specifically, the "Cyprus Research Award - Young Researcher 2022" in the Natural Sciences & Engineering thematic section was awarded to Dr. Lenos Hatzidimitriou, Research Lecturer at the KIOS Research and Innovation Centre of Excellence and Head of the Centre's research infrastructure in intelligent electric power systems while, Dr. Ioanna Hatzigianni, Assistant Professor at the Department of Law, was honoured with the "Cyprus Research Award - New Researcher 2022" in the Social Sciences and Humanities theme.

Moreover, Despo Fatta-Kasinos, Professor in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering and Director of the International Water Research Centre Nireas-IWRC, is included for the fifth consecutive time in the annual list of Highly Cited Researchers™ 2022 by Clarivate, which recognizes the pioneers of the last ten years in their scientific fields. Dr. Fatta-Kassinou has been honoured in the past for her scientific activity with various awards, including the Research Award from the Cyprus Research and Innovation Foundation as well as the SETAC Europe-Noack Laboratorien Outstanding Science Career Award.

Having internationalisation as a strategic priority, the University of Cyprus invests in international collaboration and synergies. Its participation as a main partner in the Alliance of 10 Young European Universities for the Future of Europe (YUFE) paves the way for international outreach with the objective of creating a truly European University. The University of Cyprus has also become the first and only university in Cyprus that undergraduate and postgraduate degrees have been recognised by the relevant authority in Saudi Arabia. This development provides the opportunity to attract students from this specific geographic area and proves once again the power and value of academic diplomacy.

Realising the importance of infrastructure (building, information technology and communication) to benefit the community and the society at large, the University signed a contract of assignment for the construction of the new building facilities of the Medical School and Health Sciences "Nikos K. Siakolas". Undoubtedly, the UCY's building development plan will further assist the community to achieve its multiple purposes.

During 2022, the University of Cyprus continued promoting culture and organising activities with social impact. These were achieved through open lectures, conferences and events (in person / online). Through challenging times, the UCY's academic and administrative staff worked tirelessly to ensure the a) quality of education, b) unhindered conduct of research and the timely completion of its research obligations as well as c) coherence of the academic community.

The University of Cyprus remains dedicated to its creative mission.

More information: [www.ucy.ac.cy](http://www.ucy.ac.cy)

-  /UniversityOfCyprus
-  /UCYOfficial
-  /UniversityOfCyprus
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### 1.4.1.2 Open University of Cyprus

#### Mission and Objectives

A pioneer in distance education in Cyprus, with significant expertise in the effective use of new technologies in educational processes, the Open University of Cyprus (OUC), the only university in the country that offers studies exclusively online, provides everyone the flexibility to study online and obtain a recognized degree, from their personal space, at their own time and pace of learning. Established in 2002, the OUC welcomed its first students back in 2006. It has since grown in academic stature and has achieved recognition in the Higher Education Area. The University's near-exponential growth is demonstrated by its c.8.500 graduates / alumni and c.3.000 students from over 50+ countries, as well as by the increasing recognition of the research work of its renowned academics. The OUC effectively supports the "opening of education" by offering all people the opportunity to access Higher Education regardless of age, social profile, professional status, place of residence and / or other circumstances. In this context, the OUC attracts students from all over the world, with particular demographic characteristics compared to students of conventional universities: working people, often in turning points of their careers, parents, people with disabilities, and people from 18 up to 70+ years of age.

The OUC offers interdisciplinary, career-oriented and accredited Bachelor, Master's and PhD degree programmes in both 'classical' and 'cutting edge' scientific areas, organized across three faculties: [Humanities & Social Sciences](#), [Pure & Applied Sciences](#), [Economics & Management](#). Being a research-oriented institution, the OUC hosts a number of research labs that operate with national & European funding, participates in several nationally and internationally funded research and development projects, and is a member of several renowned university networks. With the aim of promoting lifelong learning, the OUC provides the opportunity to those interested in specialization and training in specific subjects to register and attend Thematic Units (Modules) at undergraduate and postgraduate level, which are offered as independent, without the need to enrol in a full Study Programme. In the 2022 - 2023 academic year, the OUC has approximately 3.000 enrolled students and offers four Undergraduate and 22 Postgraduate Programmes.

In the evolving landscape of Higher Education, the OUC is already present in the new digital age and continues to offer valuable education and training opportunities to all population groups. The OUC moves on the one hand towards excellence and continuous improvement of its operation and on the other hand towards development, extroversion and internationalization, in order to evolve into the Entrepreneurial University that the 21st century needs.

#### 1. Twenty years of the Open University in Cyprus

The year 2022 was a milestone year for the Open University of Cyprus, which celebrated 20 years since its establishment. As part of the anniversary events for the OUC 20 years of contribution to the scientific, social and cultural development, the University organized theatrical performances, music concerts, as well as lectures by renowned professors, such as Professor Marvin Carlson.

#### 2. New research projects

The OUC aims at maximizing opportunities to support high-quality research (six Research Labs: Chemical Engineering and Engineering Sustainability Lab, Computational Cognition Lab, Cybersecurity and Telecommunications Research Lab, Cyprus Center for Algorithmic Transparency (CyCAT),

Educational Technology Lab, Terrestrial Ecosystems Management Lab) with an emphasis on European and International collaboration. Despite the small number of Teaching Research Staff, the OUC is implementing in 2022, 25 research projects with external funding (mainly securing funds by the Research and Innovation Foundation, the Erasmus+ Programme and the Horizon 2020 Programme), of which the following ten started within 2022:

- Enhancement of the Knowledge of Pollinators in the Sovereign Base Area of Akrotiri (Cyprus) and the Implementation of Citizen Science Schemes and the Conservation of Pollinators (Darwin Fund – UK).
- Pact4Skills: Tackling the Challenges of European Education Area by Building Resilient, Inclusive and Forward-looking Training to Upskill HED Students Face the Transformations in Digital Culture with New e-skills, Intercultural and Entrepreneurial Competences (Erasmus+ Programme).
- Culturally Responsive Schooling (Australian Government Research Council).
- ARE-PRED: Developing a Web-Based Learning Environment for Supporting Students' Argumentation Skills and Reducing Prejudice (Research and Innovation Foundation).
- Take Off: VET activities for supporting nature conservation and climate change mitigation in the Mediterranean agricultural areas (Erasmus+ Programme).
- Multisense: Multi domain wireless threat detection sensors for Security Operation Centres (Research and Innovation Foundation).
- EUIRis: Jean Monnet Chair - EU Institutions, Rights and Judicial Integration (Erasmus+ Programme).
- Agroassis: Regenerative approaches for building climate change resilience into the EU agricultural regions prone to desertification (Life+ Programme).
- SMILES: Enhancing Small-Medium Islands resilience by securing the sustainability of Ecosystem Services (COST Programme).
- Con Citizen (Erasmus+ Programme).

### **3. Internationalization and new inter-institutional collaborations**

In 2022, the OUC expanded its collaboration network at the local level, seeking a more active presence in academic, research and social development. Specifically, cooperation with the following Institutions was initiated:

- Maria Grzegorzewska University, Poland.
- Hellenic Open University (update of an existing agreement).
- Cyprus Workers Confederation.
- Lemesos Municipality.
- Sewerage Board of Lemesos-Amathus (SBLA).

In terms of internationalization activities, the OUC participates in 15 university networks and international organizations. Through these networks, but also through bilateral cooperation agreements with universities, research centers and institutions in Cyprus and abroad, the OUC participates in joint research and educational projects (the OUC offers for example three Joint Study Programmes, one of which is an Erasmus Mundus International Master's Programme), attracts foreign students and participates in activities to exchange good practices and expertise in the scientific subjects it cultivates, but also in open and distance education.

### **4. New academic and research chairs**

In June 2022, the OUC UNESCO Chair with the object "Visual Anticipation and Future Literacy towards Visual Literacy" was established. The aim of the Chair, whose Director is the Associate Professor Vicky Karaiskou, is to strengthen critical visual thinking and action, thus supporting intercultural empathy and communication, as well as social solidarity. The establishment of this Chair at the OUC is a special honour for Cyprus, since the assignment was made through a highly competitive process. Moreover, it

is the only UNESCO Chair in this field in the international area, which gives international recognition to the OUC's activities and the Director of the Chair, especially in the field of visual literacy.

For three years (2022 - 2025), the OUC will host the internationally renowned and prestigious Jean Monnet Chair, which has been awarded by the European Commission to the Associate Professor of the EU Administrative Law, Alexandros Tsadiras, with the subject "European Union Institutions, Rights and Judicial Completion". The Jean Monnet Chairs are teaching and research positions aimed at university professors specializing in European studies.

## 5. Distinctions and Awards

In 2022, the OUC and its academic community members received the following distinctions and recognition for academic and research achievements:

- Silver Award in the "Best Learning Experience" category of the Cyprus Education Leaders Awards 2022.
- Four of the OUC academics among the top highly cited scientists in the world in their respective scientific fields.
- The OUC and two Professors are high in the rankings of Research.com.
- Professor Yannis Manolopoulos was elected Full Member of Academia Europaea.

## 6. Quality Assurance

In the context of the University Strategic Plan aiming to excel in education and offer high quality programmes to prospective students, the OUC secured in 2022 accreditation by the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (CYQAA) for three existing Undergraduate and Postgraduate programmes of study. The OUC also designs new Study Programmes, two of which were submitted to the CYQAA within 2022, such as a new Undergraduate Programme in Law and a new Postgraduate Programme in Criminal Justice.

## 7. Scientific events and cultural contribution

The digitization of the cultural heritage of Cyprus and the work of its important people is an essential step in saving, promoting and preserving them for future generations. The OUC, supporting actively open access and the promotion of the intellectual work of important creators, accepted with great appreciation the honorary donation of works by Kypros Chrysanthis from his family to have them digitised and available online. The completion of the first phase of the digitization of this important archive was marked on 28 November 2022 with a modest ceremony, during which it was announced that a respectable volume of the works of the renowned Cypriot poet and educator was made available for open access through the OUC Institutional Repository KIPSELI. In total, the donation of printed documents exceeds 1.500 titles.

Throughout the year, the OUC organized numerous scientific and cultural events, all of which are open to the public, free-of-charge, and the majority of them are broadcasted live through the OUC's eLearning Platform (eClass). Among other important events, the OUC (co)organized in 2022 the following international conferences: International conference "Social Responsibility and Health" on the occasion of World Bioethics Day (10/2022), and #Retreat2022: "Media professionals meet academic journalism".

During the year, a **series of free counselling and psychological support seminars** were delivered to the general public, **series of lectures were organised by the OUC Programmes of Study** ("Monday Theater at the OUC", "When our world became Christian", "Language, Literature, Literacies", "Women and Environmental Sciences"), and a large **number of scientific and cultural events** were delivered in subject areas covered by the OUC Programmes.

More Information: [www.ouc.ac.cy](http://www.ouc.ac.cy)

### **1.4.1.3 Cyprus University of Technology**

The Cyprus University of Technology (CUT) is a Public University. It was established by law in 2003 and welcomed its first students in September 2007. The University's Faculties are located in the city center of Lemesos. The CUT is an innovative university with international recognition, promoting excellence in education and research in key sectors with a view to science, technology, culture, society and economy. Its contribution in innovation and progress have been acknowledged and rewarded through a series of awards which endorse its prestige and credibility.

#### **Mission**

With its orientation towards applied research, the University aspires to establish its role in supporting the state and society in their efforts to confront problems, which cover all areas of science and technology. The development of all departments aims at offering education to students of a high scientific, technological and professional level. Moreover, the CUT aims at conducting high quality research that will transcend the traditional boundaries between basic and applied research, so that solutions may be offered to major problems of society and economy.

#### **Main Actions in 2022**

The University has become an integral part of the society and through its strategic plan, it has become an important partner in the developmental policy of the Republic of Cyprus projecting Cyprus as an important international player in research, education and economic development. The most important actions in 2020 are listed below by sector:

#### **1. Student Housing Hostels**

##### **A. Student Housing Hostels "Apollonia"**

Around 200 students of the University, are currently accommodated in a modern housing hostel providing high quality services, at subsidized prices. This cooperation between the Holy Archbishopric of Cyprus and the Cyprus University of Technology, secures that the allocation of the available dorms to students is based on the socioeconomic criteria policy that the University applies, reassuring that all vulnerable students continue their studies.

##### **B. Development of owned housing hostels at the Berengaria area, Lemesos**

The development of housing hostels in Lemesos by the University, specifically at the Berengaria area, is under process. This project is the biggest construction project that the University has been committed to carry out until now, and it is certain that it will contribute to cover the ever growing housing needs of students. At the same time, with the addition of 485 student dorms as well as other common and athletic infrastructure that will be developed within this project, it will certainly contribute towards the improvement of the quality of student experience and life, in general.

#### **2. Foundation of new Faculties and Departments**

The Cyprus Government agreed that the Cyprus University of Technology will proceed with the foundation of the new Faculty of Tourism Management, Hospitality and Entrepreneurship, which will include the Department of Tourism Management and Hospitality, a new Department of Management, Entrepreneurship and Digital Business and an Institute that will be able to offer job training for hotel and tourism management and other relevant professions. This Faculty will be based in Pafos and will start its operation next September. It is also agreed, that the Cyprus University of Technology will proceed with the foundation of a new Department of Shipping, which will be under the Faculty of Management and Economics.

#### **3. New Programmes of Studies**

The procedures to offer the following two undergraduate programmes are in progress: i) BA in Product Design of the Department of Multimedia and Graphic Arts and ii) BSc in Occupational Therapy of the Department of Rehabilitation Sciences. Additionally, a proposal was submitted by the University to EU+ to develop a BSc degree in Sustainable Development. The matter is receiving a positive response by

the partners and is currently under discussion. Moreover, the offer of new English-speaking postgraduate programmes has been launched: MA Branding and Experience Design (Department of Multimedia and Graphic Arts), MA Design for Social Innovation (Department of Multimedia and Graphic Arts) distance learning in collaboration with the University of Cyprus and MSc in Science in Experiential Digital Marketing Communications (Department of Public Education).

#### **4. Learning Development Network**

The Learning Development Network was founded to provide support to the academic staff, the students and the research personnel and detect the optimal educational practices which will promote active learning. Final aim of the Network is the creation of a Teaching and Evaluation Centre. The current activities of the Learning Development Network include the enhancement of the students' research experience as well as the promotion of innovative teaching and learning methods. In parallel, efforts of the Network are geared towards the alignment with the 17 Objectives of Sustainable Development of the United Nations.

#### **5. Action Plan based on the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals**

The Strategic Plan 2020 - 2024 of the University has set as a priority the design of an action plan, giving an emphasis on the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The 17 Goals refer to the most crucial challenges of our times, clearly indicating the world that we aspire to be. These Goals deal with the fields of finance, society, environment, and other aspects that relate to the Governance. Towards that direction, a team from the University has been formed with members from the academic community, the administrative community and students, members who will take initiatives for the improvement of the quality of life in the University and in society, in general.

#### **6. Institutionalization of a Student Award based on Ethics and Social Offer**

This institution operates for the third consecutive year and aims firstly at identifying and rewarding students who are active members of the society. Applications are submitted and are evaluated by an independent committee of three members.

#### **7. Research reinforcement via the enhancement of Internal Programme Funding**

The announcement of new internal programme funding (Pump Priming, Post-Doctoral and Interdisciplinary Programmes) aims at reinforcing the research activity of the academic staff, supporting new academic members who are at the beginning of their careers, attracting in that way the best new researchers and enhancing interdisciplinarity.

#### **8. Participation in the establishment of the European University of Technology (EUT)**

The Cyprus University of Technology (CUT) participates in a consortium with seven other Universities as part of an EU project under Erasmus+ that could lead to a new truly European model for Higher Education. The consortium managed to secure five million euros funding from "European Universities Initiative" call for proposals with a pledge to create and develop the European University of Technology (EUT+) that will drive European education and research into the future.

The European University of Technology (EUT+) is a platform for exchange of knowledge and good practices in research and innovation between the eight Universities participating in the alliance. This consortium offers the opportunity to partners to develop partnerships and skills, while contributing towards the promotion of mobility, internationalization, cultural exchange and enhancement of the competitiveness of the European Union Higher Education.

The EUT+ creates the opportunities for the development of collaborations, fruitful interaction and mobility at an institutional level, all necessary components, to strengthen the educational competitiveness of both Cyprus and Europe. At the same time, it promotes further interconnection of the universities involved in industry and businesses, aiming to benefit society at large. The CUT's involvement in the EUT+ launches significant changes towards internationalization.

## **9. Digital transformation and e-Government**

Digital transformation of its services and the promotion of e-government are at the heart of the reforms being promoted by the University. The electronic signature is fully implemented in all its internal procedures, being the first public organization in Cyprus to proceed with such a large-scale implementation.

At the same time, with a number of other initiatives that have been implemented, the main procedures have been computerized, such as the payment management process, which is fully automated and 100% electronic, since it has integrated the electronic signature for approvals required at various stages.

## **10. Quality Assurance**

The continuous improvement of the quality of the educational and research work of the CUT as well as the effective operation and efficiency of its processes and services are important strategic goals. All these will enable the University to offer high quality education, learning and research.

Within the framework of achieving the above objectives, and in line with the instructions of the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education (CYQAA) and international practices, the University in the year 2022 proceeded with the implementation of the main activities regarding the development and implementation of mechanisms, policies and procedures that promote and assist the upgrading of the total quality of the organization.

## **11. Internal Quality System - Quality Manual and KPI's**

In the context of the development of an internal quality system, the University is in the process of designing an internal quality manual. The main objective of this handbook is to be aligned with European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), and the requirements and instructions of the CYQAA Body.

In addition, it aims at upgrading the quality of education provided and achieving uniformity between the Departments in terms of how they operate in relation to policies, procedures and important quality assurance mechanisms. At the same time, on the basis of defining key performance indicators, the University proceeded to revise the existing course evaluation questionnaire which is an important performance indicator.

The purpose of the course / teaching evaluation is the evaluation of the quality and the effective execution of the teaching work by the academic teachers. At the same time, course evaluations are an important mechanism in order to receive feedback from students regarding the learning experience and the degree of achievement of the desired learning outcomes so that the courses are constantly improved. This feedback is also useful and necessary in the context of continuous improvement of the learning process.

## **12. Outstanding Academic Teaching Award**

In the context of promoting the excellence and quality of academic teaching, the University introduced in 2021 the Outstanding Academic Teaching Award. The purpose of this award is to recognize and reward academic faculty members who promote quality teaching with special dedication and ability in a way that inspires and guides the students. At the same time, it aims at encouraging the development of original, quality and effective teaching methods and upgrading the quality of teaching in the wider university community.

## **13. Framework for the operation and offer of Master's Degree Programmes**

The University proceeded with the preparation of a framework that sets guidelines for the operation and offer of postgraduate master's degree programmes. Under this framework, postgraduate programmes must be distinguished for their interdisciplinary nature, combining theoretical and applied knowledge and



considering socioeconomic developments, labour market requirements and student needs. They must also be characterized by continuous quality upgrade, ensuring their viability.

#### **14. Scholarships of Academic Excellence to newly admitted PhD Students**

In an effort to create opportunities for further engagement and deepening in student / three-level doctoral research, the University has introduced a policy for academic excellence scholarships aiming to attract high level doctoral students. Under the policy, the University grants a number of scholarships of academic excellence to newly admitted students in full-time doctoral programmes, providing the necessary financial support.

In addition to the development and implementation of the above internal mechanisms, policies and procedures that promote and assist in upgrading the quality of the University (Internal Quality Assurance), important actions have also been implemented in the context of external evaluations by CYQAA (External Quality Assurance).

#### **15. External Evaluations - Institutional, Departmental and Planning**

In 2022, the University proceeded with the submission of a General Evaluation Report – Quality Report for the Years 2018 - 2021 of the Cyprus University of Technology as required by the legislation of CYQAA. At the same time, it submitted applications for evaluation and accreditation of new programmes of study as well as for re-evaluation of programmes whose accreditation had expired. Within the year 2022, CYQAA certified the following study programmes and Departments:

- Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering (4 years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor)
- Energy Systems (Three semesters, 90 ECTS, MSc)
- Mechanical Engineering (Three years, 240 ECTS, PhD)
- Mechanical Engineering (Three semesters, 90 ECTS, MSc)
- Computer and Informatics Engineering (Four academic years, 248 ECTS, Degree (BSc))
- Biomedical Engineering (Two academic years, 90 ECTS, Masters)
- Midwifery (18 months, 90 ECTS, MSc) – recertification
- Department of Communication and Internet Studies
- BSc in Communication and Internet Studies (Four years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor)
- PhD in Communication and Internet Studies (Three years, 180 ECTS, Doctorate)
- Interaction Design (Two academic years, Master (MSc), Interuniversity Study Programme with the University of Tallinn)
- Geoinformatics & Earth Observation (14 months / 90 ECTS, MSc) – recertification
- Department of Electrical Engineering, Computer Engineering and Informatics and its study programmes (bachelor's, master's, doctorate)
- Department of Nursing and its curricula.

All University Departments and existing programmes of study have been accredited by CYQAA.

#### **1.4.2 PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES OPERATING IN CYPRUS IN 2021 - 2022**

- Frederick University ([www.frederick.ac.cy](http://www.frederick.ac.cy))
- European University Cyprus (EUC) ([www.euc.ac.cy](http://www.euc.ac.cy))
- University of Nicosia ([www.unic.ac.cy](http://www.unic.ac.cy))
- Neapolis University – Pafos ([www.nup.ac.cy](http://www.nup.ac.cy))
- University of Central Lancashire - Cyprus (UCLan-Cyprus) ([www.uclancyprus.ac.cy](http://www.uclancyprus.ac.cy))
- Philips University (<https://philipsuni.ac.cy/>)
- American University of Cyprus (AUCY) (<https://aucy.ac.cy/>)

Both, Public and Private Universities undergo Institutional, Departmental and Programme evaluation and accreditation by the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (CYQAA), which is the competent Authority to ensure the quality of Higher Education in Cyprus.

## Admissions

Each Private University in Cyprus has its own admission criteria, which can be found on their websites.

### 1.4.3 PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF TERTIARY EDUCATION OPERATING IN CYPRUS IN 2021 - 2022

The Public Institutions of Tertiary Education, which currently operate in Cyprus, are the following:

1. The Cyprus Police Academy  
([https://www.police.gov.cy/police/police.nsf/policeacademy\\_en/policeacademy\\_en?opendocument](https://www.police.gov.cy/police/police.nsf/policeacademy_en/policeacademy_en?opendocument))
2. The Mediterranean Institute of Management ([www.mlsi.gov.cy/kepa](http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/kepa))
3. The Post-Secondary Institute of Vocational Education and Training (Lefkosia)  
([www.mieek.ac.cy/index.php/el/](http://www.mieek.ac.cy/index.php/el/))
4. The Post-Secondary Institute of Vocational Education and Training (Larnaka)  
([www.mieek.ac.cy/index.php/el/](http://www.mieek.ac.cy/index.php/el/))
5. The Post-Secondary Institute of Vocational Education and Training Lemesos  
([www.mieek.ac.cy/index.php/el/](http://www.mieek.ac.cy/index.php/el/))
6. The Post-Secondary Institute of Vocational Education and Training (Pafos)  
([www.mieek.ac.cy/index.php/el/](http://www.mieek.ac.cy/index.php/el/))
7. The Higher Hotel Institute of Cyprus (has been transferred to the Cyprus Technological University since July 2022)
8. The School for Tourist Guides (has not accepted students in 2022)

### 1.4.4 PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS OF TERTIARY EDUCATION

The Private Institutions of Tertiary Education (PITE) were established during the last three decades. They are offering a wide range of academic and professional programmes of study and various levels of degrees as listed below:

- Certificate (One Year)
- Diploma (Two Years)
- Higher Diploma (Three Years)
- Bachelor's Degree (Four Years)
- Master's Degree (One to Two Years)
- PhD Degree (Three to Eight Years) – offered only by two Institutions of Tertiary Education which focus mainly on research.

The language of instruction at the PITE for most of the programmes of study offered is English. The establishment and operation of the PITE are regulated by the relevant law, according to which all such Institutions should be registered in the Register of Private Institutions of Tertiary Education of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth.

The programmes of study offered by the Institutions of Tertiary Education are evaluated and accredited by the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (CYQAA), with the same criteria as the Universities are evaluated depending on the level of the programme(s) offered.

Below is a list of the 44 Private Institutions of Higher Education which operated in Cyprus during the academic year 2021 - 2022.

1. AIGAIA SCHOOL OF ART AND DESIGN (Lefkosia) ([www.aigaia.com.cy](http://www.aigaia.com.cy))
2. A.C. AMERICAN COLLEGE (Lefkosia) ([www.ac.ac.cy](http://www.ac.ac.cy))
3. ACC AKADEMIA COLLEGE (Deryneia- Ammochostos) ([www.akc.ac.cy](http://www.akc.ac.cy))
4. ALEXANDER COLLEGE (Larnaka) ([www.alexander.ac.cy](http://www.alexander.ac.cy))
5. ALEXANDER COLLEGE (Pafos) ([www.alexander.ac.cy](http://www.alexander.ac.cy))
6. ATLANTIS COLLEGE (Liopetri-Ammochostos) ([www.atlanticollege.com](http://www.atlanticollege.com))
7. CASA COLLEGE (Lefkosia) ([www.casacollege.com](http://www.casacollege.com))

8. CBS - COLLEGE OF BUSINESS STUDIES (Lefkosia) ([www.cbscopy.ac.cy](http://www.cbscopy.ac.cy))
9. C.D.A. COLLEGE (Lefkosia) ([www.cdacollege.ac.cy](http://www.cdacollege.ac.cy))
10. C.D.A. COLLEGE (Larnaka) ([www.cdacollege.ac.cy](http://www.cdacollege.ac.cy))
11. C.D.A. COLLEGE (Lemesos) ([www.cdacollege.ac.cy](http://www.cdacollege.ac.cy))
12. C.D.A. COLLEGE (Pafos) ([www.cdacollege.ac.cy](http://www.cdacollege.ac.cy))
13. CITY UNITY COLLEGE NICOSIA (Lefkosia) ([www.cityu.ac.cy](http://www.cityu.ac.cy))
14. COLLEGE OF TOURISM AND HOTEL MANAGEMENT(Lefkosia) ([www.cothm.ac.cy](http://www.cothm.ac.cy))
15. C.T.L. EUROCOLLEGE (Lemesos) ([www.ctleuro.ac.cy](http://www.ctleuro.ac.cy))
16. CYPRUS COLLEGE (Lefkosia) ([www.cycollege.ac.cy](http://www.cycollege.ac.cy))
17. CYPRUS COLLEGE (Lemesos) ([www.cycollege.ac.cy](http://www.cycollege.ac.cy))
18. CYPRUS INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT (Lefkosia) ([www.ciim.ac.cy](http://www.ciim.ac.cy))
19. CYPRUS INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT (Lemesos) ([www.ciim.ac.cy](http://www.ciim.ac.cy))
20. VLADIMIRO KAFKARIDES SCHOOL OF DRAMA (Lefkosia) ([www.satiriko.com](http://www.satiriko.com))
21. FREDERICK INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (Lefkosia) ([www.fit.ac.cy](http://www.fit.ac.cy))
22. FREDERICK INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (Lemesos) ([www.fit.ac.cy](http://www.fit.ac.cy))
23. FRESHART COLLEGE (Pafos) ([www.freshart.ac.cy](http://www.freshart.ac.cy))
24. GLOBAL COLLEGE (Lefkosia) ([www.globalcollege.com.cy](http://www.globalcollege.com.cy))
25. THE CYPRUS INSTITUTE OF NEUROLOGY AND GENETICS (Lefkosia) ([www.cing.ac.cy](http://www.cing.ac.cy))
26. INSTITUTE OF PROFESSIONAL STUDIES AT UCLAN CYPRUS (Pyla) ([www.uclancyprus.ac.cy](http://www.uclancyprus.ac.cy))
27. INTERCOLLEGE (Lefkosia) ([www.intercollege.ac.cy](http://www.intercollege.ac.cy))
28. INTERNAPA COLLEGE (Sotira-Ammochostos) ([www.internapa.ac.cy](http://www.internapa.ac.cy))
29. KES COLLEGE (Lefkosia) ([www.kes.ac.cy](http://www.kes.ac.cy))
30. LARNACA COLLEGE (Larnaka) ([www.larnacacollege.com](http://www.larnacacollege.com))
31. LEDRA COLLEGE (Lefkosia) ([www.ledra.ac.cy](http://www.ledra.ac.cy))
32. MESOYIOS COLLEGE (Lemesos) ([www.mesoyios.ac.cy](http://www.mesoyios.ac.cy))
33. MUSIC ACADEMY ARTE (Lefkosia) ([www.artemusic.org](http://www.artemusic.org))
34. NEAPOLIS COLLEGE (Pafos) ([www.nup.ac.cy](http://www.nup.ac.cy))
35. P.A. COLLEGE (Larnaka) ([www.pacollege.ac.cy](http://www.pacollege.ac.cy))
36. SUSINI COLLEGE (Lemesos) ([www.susini.ac.cy](http://www.susini.ac.cy))
37. SUSINI COLLEGE (Lefkosia) ([www.susini.ac.cy](http://www.susini.ac.cy))
38. THE CYPRUS ACADEMY OF ART ([www.caa.ac.cy](http://www.caa.ac.cy))
39. THE CYPRUS INSTITUTE (Lefkosia) ([www.cyi.ac.cy](http://www.cyi.ac.cy))
40. THE CYPRUS INSTITUTE OF MARKETING (Lefkosia) ([www.cima.com.cy](http://www.cima.com.cy))
41. THE CYPRUS INSTITUTE OF MARKETING (Lemesos) ([www.cima.com.cy](http://www.cima.com.cy))
42. THE LIMASSOL COLLEGE-T.L.C. (Lemesos) ([www.reacollege.ac.cy](http://www.reacollege.ac.cy))
43. THE PHILIPS COLLEGE (Lefkosia) ([www.philips.ac.cy](http://www.philips.ac.cy))
44. THE THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL OF THE CHURCH OF CYPRUS (Lefkosia) ([www.theo.ac.cy](http://www.theo.ac.cy))

#### **1.4.5 STATE STUDENTS' WELFARE SERVICE**

The Student Welfare Service is the service which is responsible for offering grants and allowances to eligible students based on the provisions of the State Student Welfare Law of 2015 to 2020(N. 203(I)/2015).

##### **1. Student Grant**

According to the provisions of the State Student Welfare Law of 2015 to 2020, the student grant is offered to families which are permanent residents in areas controlled by the Republic of Cyprus and have a child who is a graduate or postgraduate student, studying either in Cyprus or abroad, provided

that the family meets all socioeconomic and other criteria set by the related law. The beneficiary of the student grant could be the students themselves, provided they have created their own family, or are widowers / widows, or divorced or orphans or abandoned. During the year 2022, the Student Welfare Service granted student grants of €34,852,093,33 to 16,564 families.

## 2. Student Allowances

Based on the provisions of the article 5 of the State Student Welfare Law of 2015 to 2020, student allowances are granted to subsidize specific needs, after taking into account socioeconomic and other criteria. The beneficiaries of the student allowances, result after the evaluation of all applications, which are based on a points system that takes into account socioeconomic criteria, up to the amount of available funds of each academic year. In addition, the Council of Ministers, at the suggestion of the Minister of Education, Sport and Youth, decides on the allowances to be granted, the social criteria to be considered, the system of allocating points to the applicants, the total amount to be allocated for each academic year as well as the amount of each allowance.

During 2022, the Student Welfare Service provided student grants to 8.378 students amounting to €8.631.833,29. The table below shows all the beneficiaries who benefited from the allowances and the amount of money allocated per category. It is noted that some students have benefited from more than one allowance.

ALLOWANCES	APPROVED BENEFICIARIES	TOTAL EXPENDITURE 2022 (€)
LIVING ALLOWANCE	6749	3.890.983,72
FOOD ALLOWANCE	5.270	2.722.946,49
ALLOWANCE TO SUPPORT FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS	1.823	1.236.206,41
ALLOWANCE FOR FLIGHT TICKETS	2.034	781.696,67
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>8.631.833,29</b>

## 3. Student allowances to families of Greek students and to repatriated families of Cypriot students.

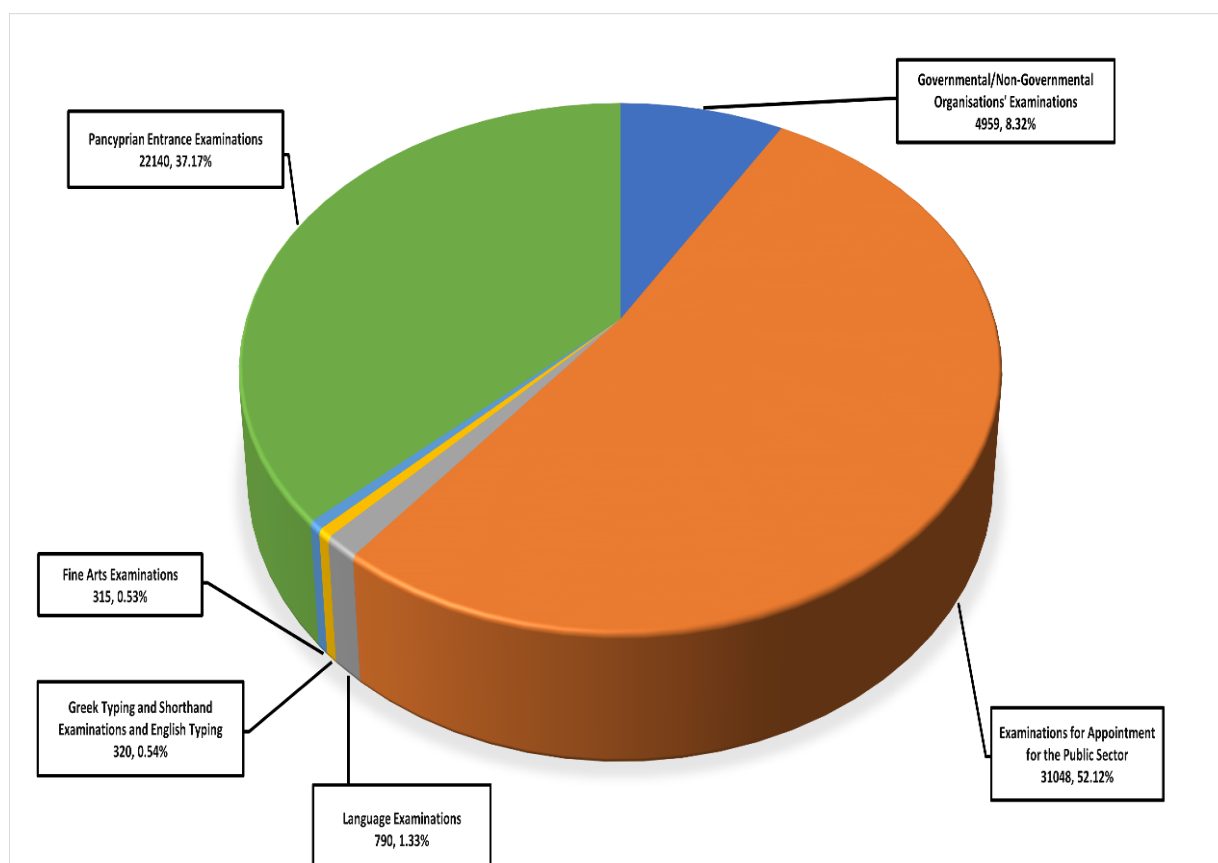
Following a decision taken by the Council of Ministers, a certain amount was allocated as student allowances to families of Greek students who are studying in academic institutions of Higher Education in the Republic of Cyprus and repatriated families of Cypriot students who are studying in academic institutions in the Republic of Cyprus or abroad. The table below shows in detail the total number of beneficiaries and the amount allocated per category. It is noted that some students have benefited from more than one allowance.

ALLOWANCES	APPROVED BENEFICIARIES	TOTAL EXPENDITURE 2022 (€)
LIVING ALLOWANCE	239	415.373,34
FOOD ALLOWANCE	421	443.515,80
ALLOWANCE TO SUPPORT FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS	148	72.944,44
ALLOWANCE FOR FLIGHT TICKETS	573	111.274,46
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1.043.108,04</b>

#### 1.4.6 THE EXAMINATIONS SERVICE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION OF THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SPORT AND YOUTH

The Examinations Service has as its mission the organization of various examinations, with the main goal of ensuring the validity, transparency and reliability of the examinations conducted. For the period of January – December 2022, the Examinations Service organized a significant number of examinations and processed a total of **59,572** examination papers, as presented in the following graph:

**Number of papers processed by the Examinations Service during January – December 2022**



#### 1.4.7 THE CYPRUS COUNCIL FOR THE RECOGNITION OF HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS (KY.S.A.T.S.)

In accordance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention (1997) all member states of the European Union have established National Councils for the recognition of higher education qualifications. The need to form such Councils arose out of the idea of a united education policy aiming to support member states in developing control mechanisms regarding criteria for quality and duration of studies for professional and scientific purposes. It was under this context that, the Cyprus Council for the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications (KY.S.A.T.S.) was established in 2000.

KY.S.A.T.S. provides information on the Cyprus system of Higher Education, as well as about the system of Higher Education of other countries, including the titles of studies offered.

During the period January - December 2022, KY.S.A.T.S. received 1350 applications for recognition of qualifications and 2000 written inquiries. During the same period, the Council held nine meetings.

KY.S.A.T.S. has been a member of the European National Information Centres - National Academic Recognition Information Centres (ENIC – NARIC) and MERIC (Mediterranean Recognition Information Centres).

#### **1.4.8 FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO DEPARTMENTS OF GREEK AND CYPRIOT STUDIES AT UNIVERSITIES ABROAD**

The Department of Higher Education has the responsibility for the financial support of the Departments of Greek and Cypriot Studies at different Universities abroad, based on predefined criteria. An Advisory Committee, headed by the Director of the Department of Higher Education, evaluates all applications submitted annually and decides on the amount of the grant that will be offered, taking into consideration the approved amount of the state budget. In 2022, the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth subsidized with €125.000 twelve Departments of Greek and Cypriot Studies in eight countries.

### **1.5 CYPRUS PEDAGOGICAL INSTITUTE**

The vision of the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute is to offer continuous professional development to educators, at all levels of education. Moreover, to substantially contribute to the planning and implementation of the educational policy, taking into consideration literature, research and the priorities set by the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth, in order to improve the quality of the educational system.

The mission of the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute is the design and implementation of continuous professional development of educators at all levels of education, the setting of a framework for the educators' competences and the promotion of horizontal issues of educational priority. Thus, it improves the content and effectiveness of the education provided in accordance with the wider international, European and local context.

The Cyprus Pedagogical Institute comprises the Department of Training, the Department of Educational Documentation, the Department of Educational Technology, the Centre of Educational Research and Evaluation and the Curriculum Development Unit. Within the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute also operates the Unit of Education for Environment and Sustainable Development.

#### **1.5.1 DEPARTMENT OF TRAINING**

The Cyprus Pedagogical Institute is the Directorate of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth, which officially runs teachers' professional development, through the Department of Training. A variety of training programmes are offered every year, in compliance with education law and service plans, alongside programmes that are developed with reference to current needs, priorities and school context. Among the many training activities organised by the Department of Training are the annual Training Days for Teachers, the Optional Series of Training Seminars, the School-Based Seminars and the Seminars for Parents.

#### **1.5.2 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL DOCUMENTATION**

The Department of Educational Documentation has as main goal the promotion of teachers' professional development, by providing continuous information on new trends in the field of education, by publishing books to serve the objectives set in the Curriculum and by creating supportive educational material. The Library of the Pedagogical Institute, that operates within the Department of Educational Documentation, is constantly enriched with new books and scientific journals, as well as supportive educational material in electronic form.

### **1.5.3 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY**

The Department of Educational Technology promotes the use of digital technologies for teaching, learning and assessment, in line with national and EU digital strategies. Specifically, the Department implements Continuous Professional Learning Programmes, advances digital skills in education, explores and recommends new implementations through European, research and intervention programmes, maintains online and onsite learning environments, produces audio-visual and other material for the needs of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth, and provides training and technical support to the staff of the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute. The Department of Educational Technology also contributes to national and European policy papers and guidelines on behalf of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth, and implements projects that support the work of the Ministry's Information and Communication Technology Unit.

### **1.5.4 CENTRE OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND EVALUATION**

The Centre of Educational Research and Evaluation undertakes and coordinates a range of activities in three directions: a) implementation of international and national research studies on pedagogical and educational issues, b) evaluation studies on educational innovations, interventions and programmes of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth, implemented in Cyprus schools, and c) the development of a research-oriented culture within the educational system of Cyprus.

### **1.5.5 CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT UNIT**

The Curriculum Development Unit is responsible for the provision of all teaching textbooks used in public schools in Cyprus and for the design and production of supportive educational material or other publications, for teachers and pupils, at all levels of education. The Curriculum Development Unit is also coordinating procedures for the issuance and revision of national Curricula.

### **1.5.6 UNIT OF EDUCATION FOR ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

The Unit of Education for Environment and Sustainable Development is responsible for planning, implementing, monitoring and upgrading the National Strategy for Environmental Education (EE)/Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in formal, non-formal and in-formal education in Cyprus.

## **1.6 CYPRUS RESEARCH CENTRE**

### **1.6.1 OBJECTIVES AND MEANS TO REALISE THEM**

The Cyprus Research Centre (C.R.C.) was founded in 1964 with the aim of enabling Cypriot and overseas scholars to research the history and civilisation of Cyprus and have the conclusions of the relevant research published on a systematic basis. Research programmes relevant to the fundamental disciplines of the culture of Cyprus, namely its history, folklore, language, literature, ethnography, and social sciences are initiated and implemented by the C.R.C. as well as those concerning related disciplines, according to the country's requirements at any given time and within a broader regional context.

In order to realise the above aims the C.R.C. employs permanent research staff as well as outside collaborators on a contractual basis, both within Cyprus and abroad. It promotes co-operation in the field of scholarship with universities, research centres and other academic institutions both within and outside Cyprus, and members of its permanent research staff take part in academic conferences related to their

field of specialisation and undertake research missions overseas. The C.R.C. also organises conferences in Cyprus and abroad in co-operation with other academic institutions.

### 1.6.2 LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES

The C.R.C. has a specialised library for the furtherance of its various research programmes, containing over 20,000 volumes, chiefly specialised encyclopaedias, academic journals, monographs, publications of archival material and other reference works, covering the history and civilisation not only of Cyprus but also that of Greece, Europe, and the Middle East, in general. The classification on computer of the volumes in this library is presently nearing completion. The C.R.C. also houses important archival collections of primary source material, consisting of manuscripts, photocopies, and photographic copies (offsets) of historical source material and documents, microfilms, and cassettes. These have been placed in various archives, such as the Historical Archive, the War Veterans' Archive, the Folklore Archive, and the Oral Tradition Archive. The updating of materials in the last three archival collections was undertaken by the Cyprus Research Centre in co-operation with the Library of the University of Cyprus. The transcription of the oral testimonies of the cassettes to digital CDs for the Folklore Archive, the Oral Tradition Archive and the Folklore Archive was accomplished with the long-term aim of creating a Unitary Data Base for Oral History. In 2021 a programme began for the transfer of the digital archives of the CRC from the obsolescent ABEKT Programme to a more up to date programme, following the signing of a contract between the University of Western Attica and the CRC. In June 2022 the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth decided to establish an Archive of the History of Greek Education in Cyprus. This archive, constituted in digital form, is progressing rapidly and much material has been collected from various educational establishments in Cyprus.

### 1.6.3 PUBLICATIONS

Since 1965 until present the C.R.C. has published important works covering a broad range of academic subjects, including scholarly monographs, editions of documents and historical source materials, translations of historical sources, reprints, conference proceedings and an annual academic journal. At present these publications number nearly 200 scholarly works, including 39 Annual Reviews, eight Conference Proceedings, four Collected Studies volumes and a digital CD containing traditional Cypriot music. The above publications consist of works undertaken by the permanent research staff and the outside collaborators of the C.R.C. in Greek and in the major European languages (English, French, German, Italian and Spanish). These works are placed in the following series:

- i) Texts and Studies in the History of Cyprus
- ii) Publications of the C.R.C.
- iii) *Epeteris* (Annual Journal) of the C.R.C.
- iv) Conference Proceedings of the C.R.C.
- v) Publications of the Social Research Centre
- vi) Digital Disks (CDs)
- vii) Collected studies

These publications are available for sale at the C.R.C. offices as well as from booksellers in Cyprus and overseas.

### 1.6.4 ACTIVITIES FOR 2022

In the year 2022, the Cyprus Research Centre published the following nine books:

1. Kyprianos D. Louis, *Entrepreneurship and Economic Strategy in Cyprus in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century: The Case of Georgakis Markantonides*
2. Georgios Deligiannakis, *A Cultural History of Late Roman Cyprus*
3. Aikaterini Aristeidou, *Η Δημοκρατία της Ραγούσας (Ντουμπρόβνικ) και η Ανατολή στον 18<sup>ο</sup> αιώνα (1700 - 1808)*
4. Maria Matthaïou and Argyro Xenophontos eds., *Τα Παραμύθια της Κύπρου από το Λαογραφικό Αρχείο του Κέντρου Επιστημονικών Ερευνών*



5. Maria Matthaiou and Argyro Xenophonotos eds., *Η φωτισμένη τζαι η αρκόντισσα: Τα Παραμύθια της Κύπρου από το Λαογραφικό Αρχείο του Κέντρου Επιστημονικών Ερευνών*
6. 'The Sweet Land of Cyprus' Papers given at the Twenty-Fifth Jubilee Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Birmingham, March 1991, eds. A. A.M. Bryer & G. S. Georgallides, Nicosia 1993 (reprint)
7. *Η Κύπρος και οι Σταυροφορίες / Cyprus and the Crusades*, eds. N. Coureas & J. Riley Smith, Nicosia 1995 (reprint)
8. *Livre des remembrances du royaume du Chypre 1468 - 1469*, ed. J. Richard with the collaboration of Th. Papadopoulos, Lefkosia, 1983 (reprint)
9. Kalliope Protopapa, *Έθιμα της Γέννησης στην Παραδοσιακή Κοινωνία της Κύπρου*, Nicosia 2009 (reprint)

In addition, within the context of upgrading the facilities of the Cyprus Research Centre, major maintenance and repair works were continued in 2021 on the central buildings and main warehouse of the Cyprus Research Centre and major new purchases of electronic equipment and stationery were inaugurated.

For additional information on the Cyprus Research Centre please visit the C.R.C. website.: [www.moec.gov.cy/kee](http://www.moec.gov.cy/kee)

## 1.7 TECHNICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

The Technical Services Department of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth, is located in Lefkosia. Three district offices are also based in Lemesos, Larnaka and Pafos. The activities of the department are related to school building developments, supporting all the different levels of education, taking into consideration the children's educational and technical requirements.

The projects undertaken are:

- Architectural, structural, electrical and mechanical studies.
- Implementation and supervision of construction projects and material control.
- Upgrading of School building structures.
- Contract management.
- Local authority support on Private School Projects.
- Technical and economic support to School Boards Committees and Parents Associations.
- Surveys.
- Sports facility studies.
- Cultural projects.

The annual budget contains:

- a. New construction projects of School units.
- b. Upgrading of existing buildings & sport facilities.
- c. Extensions of existing School units.

All construction projects include:

- Structural upgrading.
- Functional redesigning according to approved building standards.
- Additional teaching classrooms and laboratories / workshops.
- Construction of multifunctional halls.
- Additional classrooms / ramps / lifts for children with special needs.
- Additional rooms for secondary uses (canteens, nurseries, toilets).
- Redesigning and upgrading of electrical and mechanical services.

## 1.8 EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE

### 1.8.1 OVERVIEW AND STRUCTURE

The Educational Psychology Service (EPS) is an interdepartmental service of the Cyprus Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth, answerable to the permanent secretary of the Ministry. Its mission is to protect and promote mental health and facilitate learning and development by empowering all pupils within the educational system, from preschool to the end of secondary education.

The Educational Psychology Service has three district offices in the towns of Larnaka, Lemesos and Lefkosia. Additionally, two sub-offices are operating in Ammochostos and Pafos to fulfil the needs of the local area.

During the school year, 2021 - 2022 the structure of the Service was as follows:

- One (1) Principal Educational Psychologist
- Three (3) Senior Educational Psychologists
- 44 Educational Psychologists

All Psychologists working within the EPS hold a first degree in Psychology and a Masters' Degree in Clinical or Educational or School Psychology. Additionally, some hold Doctorate degrees.

### 1.8.2 MAIN AREAS OF WORK

The work of the EPS is organized around five main areas:

- (1) Individual Casework
- (2) Prevention Programmes, Interventions, Psychoeducation, Training of pupils, educators and parents
- (3) Crisis Intervention in Schools
- (4) Participation in a number of permanent and ad-hoc interdisciplinary committees for designing, implementing and monitoring policies and programmes
- (5) Supervision of Educational Psychologists in Training at the University of Cyprus during their placement at the Service.

### 1.8.3 INDIVIDUAL CASEWORK

Children are referred to the Educational Psychology Service (EPS) by their school, families and sometimes themselves when they face difficulties in their school setting, such as learning, social and emotional difficulties, behavioural difficulties, sensory problems, syndromes and disorders, and so on. Referrals are accepted by the Service provided that the school has already put in place strategies to deal with these difficulties but did not achieve the expected outcome.

Educational psychologists will use a number of psychological assessment tools that include cognitive abilities testing, assessment of educational attainment, developmental history, clinical interviews with parents, teachers, children and other professionals, questionnaires, clinical observations, theories and procedures to support the wellbeing and learning of young people. They also provide consultation to schools and families and recommend, develop and administer in collaboration with schools and families appropriate therapies and strategies.

Educational Psychologists also respond to referrals from the District Committees on Special Education and Training (according to Law 113(I)/1999 concerning the Education and Training of Children with Special Needs), for psychological evaluation and recommendations. During the school year 2021 - 2022, the EPS worked with 8840 children, an increased number since the year 2020 - 2021.

### **Prevention programmes, Interventions, Psychoeducation, Training of pupils, educators and parents**

During the school year 2021 - 2022, a number of support programmes, interventions and psychoeducation trainings were developed and delivered to prevent school failure of learners and deal with psychological health issues. Examples include transition to primary school or Gymnasium, management of difficult behaviour, developing resilience, dealing with trauma. A Senior Educational Psychologist was involved in the training of a big number of Educators in preventing, dealing and reporting sexual abuse.

### **Crisis Intervention**

Educational Psychologists are trained to respond to crisis within the school and community by the International School Psychology Association (ISPA). Educational Psychologists had to deal with several crises including severe violence in school settings, death and bereavement, suicide attempts and so on.

### **1.8.4 PARTICIPATION IN COMMITTEES FOR DESIGNING, IMPLEMENTING AND MONITORING POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES**

The EPS has participated in the District Committees of Special Education (E.E.E.A.E.). In addition, it has expanded its involvement, with Educational Psychologists, in several important Standing and Ad Hoc Committees, with the main objective of strengthening the planning, implementation and coordination of policies and programmes. Finally, they participate in various inter-ministerial and interdepartmental committees.

### **Supervision of Educational Psychologists in Training**

As part of initial professional training, educational psychologists, in training at the University of Cyprus, undertake substantial periods of practice, within which the role of supervision by the Educational Psychologist within the Service is instrumental in their professional learning and effectiveness. The placement aims at providing Educational Psychologists the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the educational system and receive training on dealing with individual casework as well as prevention and intervention programmes.

### **Conclusion**

The role of the service is of an utmost importance as it provides support and guidance to schools (educators, parents, pupils) and also has the expertise to actively be involved in the decision-making process for educational policies. The Educational Psychologist works within the school system to facilitate learning and promote mental health for all in a safe school environment.

# 2.

## HORIZONTAL THEMATIC AND POLICY

### 2.1 PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE AT SCHOOL

#### 2.1.1 THE CYPRUS OBSERVATORY ON SCHOOL VIOLENCE (COSV)

The Cyprus Observatory on School Violence (COSV) is part of the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute. The main purpose of the COSV is the implementation of a safe and friendly school environment for all members of the school community.

The goals of the COSV are:

- Conducting scientific research to measure the phenomenon of violence in school and the parameters associated with it.
- Developing specific recommendations to define a policy for the prevention and management of violence as a result of scientific research.
- Informing teachers and social partners about the phenomenon of bullying in Cyprus and internationally.
- Empowering parents, pupils, teachers and other professionals involved.
- Promoting the active involvement of children in the prevention and treatment of violence in school.

In order to achieve its goals, in 2022, the COSV has been active in many areas of prevention and response to school violence. More specifically, the COSV:

- Implemented actions that arise from The National Strategy for the Prevention and Treatment of Violence in School, 2018 - 2022. The National Strategy that was approved by the Council of Ministers on 17/01/2018, employs legal, administrative, social and educational measures at all levels of prevention (primary, secondary and tertiary education).
- Provided support to school units for the implementation of actions and programmes aimed at improving the school climate, with the ultimate goal of reducing violence in schools. These programmes, which are school-based and have a two-year duration, are the “Conflict Resolution - School Mediation” and the “Recognition and Management of School Bullying”. The COSV supports schools in the implementation of anti-bullying programmes, which deal with recognizing, preventing and combating bullying. With the “Conflict Resolution - School Mediation” schools are encouraged to find effective ways of resolving pupil conflicts as well as alternative ways of managing conflict situations in school. Moreover, the COSV launched a school network and conducted seminars and workshops to support teachers, parents and pupils in order to be able to prevent and respond to school violence. In 2022, 108 schools were supported and 4224 teachers and 300 parents were trained by the COSV.
- Monitored a national-level research that investigates the phenomenon of violence in schools. The research aimed at collecting data about violence in education, from all schools of all levels in Cyprus, for three consecutive years, with the participation of teachers, parents and pupils (10years+).
- Organized, in collaboration with the Council for the Prevention and Response to Crime of the Ministry of Justice and Public Order and the Office of the Commissioner for the Citizen and other

Non-Governmental Organizations, a competition, for schools of all levels, that implemented good practices against school violence and promoted active citizenship.

- Cooperated with all stakeholders involved in preventing and responding to school violence.
- Developed synergy with the European Anti-bullying Network (EAN) and cooperated with other European partners in the implementation of European projects under Erasmus+ funding.
- Mapped, through an electronic platform, the existing programmes that are implemented or can be implemented in the schools, related to the Prevention and Management of Violence in School.
- Renewed its Website in order to enrich it with material and useful links, but also to provide information on issues related to School Violence and Delinquency.
- Requested from schools to record bullying incidents online in a specific platform that has been created for this purpose.

### **2.1.2 COMMITTEE FOR THE PREVENTION AND COMBATING OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION**

The “Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation” has taken on the responsibility for the coordination of the Ministry’s Policy on issues related to the protection of children from sexual abuse and exploitation.

Through the Committee's coordinative action, the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth provided a significant and impactful contribution, working collaboratively with other related Ministries (such as the Ministries of Justice, Health and Labour) and the legal expert Ms Anastasia Papadopoulou. This collaboration led to the State's decision to formulate a National Strategy and Action Plan for the Protection of Children from Sexual Abuse, Sexual Exploitation and Child Pornography. For the past years, this committee has been taking systematic and multilevel actions to strengthen the National Strategy and implement the Action Plan. Within this framework, a concrete policy at all levels of education is strongly promoted, which focuses firstly, on the prevention of sexual abuse and exploitation of children, by raising awareness and empowering teachers in identifying and managing incidents and secondly by promoting sexual education in pupils.

The Ministry’s main actions for the policy’s promotion focuses on systematically informing / training teachers to broaden their knowledge and skills in recognising the phenomenon of child sexual abuse and adopting appropriate decisions in its management. A series of training activities for teachers at all educational levels (Pre-Primary, Primary, Secondary General, Secondary Technical and Vocational Education), has taken place over the last four years.

The National Strategy recognises sexual education of children themselves as the most important measure and tool of primary prevention of child sexual abuse.

During the last few years, the Ministry has made significant efforts in the area of sexual education for children. Through the context of the Health Education Curriculum (2011) and by finalising its content based on guidelines provided by the World Health Organisation, a holistic sexual education for children through a clear and scientific framework is promoted. The frameworks are taught in an organised way and not fragmented, based on the age and degree of maturity of pupils throughout the general school syllabus.

The aim of educational activities, that have been formulated by the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute, on an optional or mandatory basis, has been to support teachers for the very important task of implementing the Health Education Curriculum and sexual education of children and adolescents.

In regards to the implementation of sex education programmes for children with learning disabilities, the Ministry has partially implemented the “Keep me Safe” educational programme during the school year

2017 - 2018. The full implementation of the programme began in all Special Schools in Cyprus and was completed during the school year 2020 - 2021. The Ministry is partnering with the Cyprus Family Planning Association (CSDP) to implement the programme. During the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years, emphasis was placed on prevention in pre-school and young ages of elementary school, by promoting awareness and self-protection in a developmentally age appropriate manner.

One of the most important actions taken by the Ministry is the publication of the “Teacher Manual for the Recognition and Management of Child Sexual Abuse Incidents” (2017). This handbook covers a wide range of knowledge – legal, pedagogical, psychosocial – about the very serious phenomenon of sexual abuse and exploitation of children, and its publication aims to further educate and empower teachers to prevent and combat the phenomenon. During the school year 2021-2022, the fourth chapter was revised due to procedure changes in other corresponding ministries.

The Ministry by developing a Cooperation Protocol with the international, humanitarian and independent NGO organisation “Hope For Children” CRC Policy Center, since June 2018, has been cooperating in relation to the management of child sexual abuse incidents in the context of the operation of the “Children’s House”. This cooperation takes place in a common action framework, focusing on supporting children and ensuring their best interests. Representatives from Educational Psychology Services participate in the multidisciplinary meetings that take place once a week, in order to handle child sexual abuse cases.

Furthermore, the Ministry participates, through a representative, in the “FONI” National Strategy Implementation Council, which is responsible for coordinating all actions to prevent and combat child abuse, child exploitation and child pornography. Through this involvement, it clearly demonstrates its willingness and determination to contribute to the State’s commitment to protect children and safeguard their rights to health and well-being.

### **2.1.3 THE COMMITTEE OF HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

The Committee of Health Education and Citizenship whose constitution and operation was institutionalized through the first National Strategy for Drugs 2004 – 2008 of the Cyprus National Addictions Authority, coordinates the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth policy related to Health Education and Citizenship, both at the level of the Ministry and at the level of school units at all levels.

The Committee of Health Education and Citizenship:

- is the connecting link between the Ministry of Health and other bodies (Ministries, Non-Governmental Organizations, Police, Cyprus Addiction Treatment Authority and so on), which deal with actions that fall under Health Education and Citizenship issues,
- implements the Policy and Actions included in the National Addiction Strategy 2021 – 2028, and
- puts Health Education into practice in schools through the development of policies, actions and programmes that promote the physical, mental and social well-being of pupils.

#### **Actions - Programmes supported by the Committee of Health Education and Citizenship (CHEC):**

##### **1. Grant of non-school-related actions to support pupils and pupils belonging to vulnerable population groups**

The Programme has been operating since 2012 and is part of the commitments of the Ministry of the Interior regarding the National Strategy for Addressing Addictions (2021 - 2028). The CHEC identifies and supports pupils who belong to vulnerable population groups (i.e. delinquent behavior, use of alcohol or illegal substances, smoking, families with extremely difficult economic conditions or with severe dysfunction - violence in the family, serious health problems of another member or of the child himself, residence in the Children’s Home, a family member in prison, unemployment, alcoholism and so on.), to

be engaged in creative employment activities that they choose themselves in the community, in non-school settings every year.

The actions aim at contributing to the essential support (learning, emotional, self- and social self-empowerment, highlighting and cultivating talent, developing a safe life and so on.) of pupils who belong to vulnerable population groups. A possible risk faced by the action is the social exclusion and marginalization of pupils of the specific categories due to their possible inability to participate in activities utilizing their free time and highlighting their special abilities / talents.

During the 2021 - 2022 school year, 560 actions, outside school time, were offered, which related to the support of pupils belonging to vulnerable population groups.

## **2. «European Network of Schools for the Promotion of Health» (ENHPS)**

Cyprus has been a member of the European Network of Schools for the Promotion of Health (ENHPS) since 1995. This Network operates under the auspices of three International Organizations: the World Health Organization, the European Union and the Council of Europe. According to these organizations, the development of Health Education programmes, not only in the school environment, but also within the community, in general, is the innovative and effective method for the prevention and improvement of health, not only for people, but also for the environment.

The European Network of Schools for the Promotion of Health is the result of a collaboration between the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth and the Ministry of Health. The purpose of the programme is to improve and promote the physical, mental, and social health of pupils, teachers, other members of the school staff and consequently the wider community by integrating health promotion programmes in all schools. To achieve the most effective goals of the programme, the programme coordination team in each school consists of teachers, members of the School Services, pupils and parents, as well as members of the community.

Each cycle of the Programme lasts two years, which enables the coordinating team of each school to set long-term goals, implement the programme with various and creative activities and at the same time evaluate its implementation and effectiveness. The policy of the programme is the selection of a common topic, for the whole country, which each school studies through its own point of view. The individual topic that will be developed by each school, is selected after an initial investigation of the main issues identified by the school unit and are related to health (physical, mental, emotional, social). Once the individual topic has been identified, its possible causes should be recognised and an action plan must be drawn up to address them. At the beginning of each school year, each school participating in the programme prepares the action plan, which includes the objectives related to the selected topic, as well as the activities that will be implemented.

The study of a common theme by all schools is an advantage in case of conducting a nationwide survey. The main study topic of the EDSPY programme for the two years 2022 - 2024 is: "Internet Addiction among Cypriot Adolescents". The ENHPS programme, in collaboration with other organisations, such as the Department of Psychology of the University of Cyprus, the Nursing Services of the Ministry of Health, the Cyprus Youth Organization and others, aims to:

- allow our young people to realize if they are suffering from Internet addiction, either themselves or others close to them,
- enable our young people to help themselves or help each other to overcome their Internet addiction, and
- create awareness among our young people for the existence of support structures and programmes that operate in Cyprus and provide support and assistance to young people with internet addiction.

The programme, in the Secondary Education of Cyprus, is supervised by the Inspectorate of Biology and is allocated to 13 Gymnasia and 10 Lycea.

### **3. "Preventive Nursing of the School System Mental Health"**

The programme was piloted for the third time this year. It is the result of cooperation between the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth and specifically the Committee on Health and Citizenship Education (EAYP), the Directorate of Nursing Services and the Cyprus National Addiction Authority (NAAC). Ten pilot secondary schools will participate in the programme this year, two in each province.

The "School System Mental Health Preventive Nursing" programme is provided by registered Mental Health Nurses, specialized and experienced in the subject, who are certified Prevention or Addiction Counsellors. The purpose of the programme is to prevent or stop the use of substances and other harmful behaviours.

Upon completion of the programme pupils should:

- be able to identify psychoactive and risk factors for substance use,
- recognize and express emotions,
- develop and use communication and self-affirming skills,
- understand myths and truths about substances, and
- be aware of the sources for help in the community.

### **4. «EY ZHN», "Well Being", Health Education Programme**

The "EY ZHN" Health Education programme - translated "Well-Being", is part of the corresponding Cyprus - Greece Health Education programmes, based on a Protocol signed between the Cyprus Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth and the corresponding Ministry of Greece in 1998.

In the two years "EY ZHN" programme, 13 Gymnasias were given the opportunity to explore and specifically target issues and challenges related to the health and well-being of their own pupil population. This action involved the pupils themselves and was implemented by a smaller coordinating team in cooperation with a nominated teacher - coordinator, and together they constituted the Coordinating Team. This team identified the specific needs of the school population in the field of health education in line with the School Committee for Health Education and Prevention of Delinquency. It was mandatory that the teacher coordinator participated actively in the aforementioned committee.

Based on these needs, the Coordinating Team prepared, implemented and monitored an Action Plan for a two-year period. The actions planned might target specific groups of pupils, or the whole pupil population. They were targeted towards the aims and objectives stated in the Action Plan and materialized in the two-year planning scope, in order to have the best possible results.

The planned actions aimed at improving the quality of life and health of pupils in the school and responding to the prioritized issues – challenges faced by the school unit. These might include smoking, alcohol, or drug abuse, nutrition, delinquency, emotional and social education. The "EY ZHN" Action Plan was included both in the School's Health Education Action Plan and in the School Improvement Action Plan. By the end of each school year, a report was drawn up and communicated to the schools through the website of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth, with the aim of updating and exchanging good practices. The programme was supervised by the Biology Inspectorate.

### **5. «Health Education Pupil Seminars for Drug Use Prevention»**

Since 1995 the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth in collaboration with:

- The Ministry of Health (Mental Health Services)
- The Ministry of Justice and Public Order (Drug Enforcement Unit)

has been organizing «Health Education Pupil Seminars for drug use prevention». Four hundred and twenty pupils from Secondary General Education and 30 teachers participated in these seminars. Two-day experiential seminars were also organized for 70 Deputy Heads who are the leaders of the «Health Education and Youth Violence Prevention Committee» in their corresponding schools. Within two



consecutive years, all the Gymnasia of Cyprus have been represented by pupils and Deputy Heads in the «Health Education Pupil Seminars for Drug Use Prevention».

The purpose of these seminars was to provide pupil and teacher experiential opportunities to learn and develop skills in order to consolidate the National drug prevention policy in the education system.

The three main objectives were:

- (a) Development of actions aimed at effective school mechanisms of deterrence.
- (b) Support vulnerable pupils and channelling policy responses.
- (c) Implement the legislation in order to completely ban smoking in schools.

The experiential seminars offered an intense personal learning opportunity for teachers and teens thus promoting and supporting a pupil working group which collaborated with the «Health Education and Youth Violence Prevention Committee». The schools organize lectures and experiential workshops for the community (parents). The programme was supervised by the inspectorate of Biology.

For the school year 2020 - 2021 due to the unexpected circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the government measures, the series of Health Education Pupil Seminars were not able to be organized in their typical format. For the above reason, the seminars were reformatted and rescheduled to avoid the overnight stay of the pupils in a hotel. It was proposed that each pupil group could participate in a full day programme carried out at a hotel. The above proposal was approved by the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth. Thus, seven one-day Health Education Pupil Seminars were successfully held at the SUN HALL Hotel in Larnaka, in the 2022 - 2023 school year.

#### **6. "Web" programme (providing afternoon support services to vulnerable pupils, in Gymnasia and Lycea), in the framework of the cooperation of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth and the AAEK**

The Programme aims at providing individualized multi-level support to pupils who face serious difficulties in their personal, family or school life and which may be related to the use of addictive substances. The provision of support is offered in particular through healthy afternoon activities, psycho-education, learning support or other services depending on the needs assessment of each case, with the ultimate goal to strengthen their personality, highlight their skills, change their behaviour and prevent the use of addictive substances or other harmful behaviours by creating a deterrent environment. The support is provided by social workers to pupils who are referred by the school administration, through healthy afternoon activities. The implementation of the Programme is the responsibility of the Cyprus National Addictions Authority, which after an open tender procedure assigned the Programme to the University of Nicosia. The programme is fully funded by the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth.

#### **7. «Hesperides» Preventive Programme**

The Programme concerns the provision of psychological, social and educational support to pupils attending Evening Schools and Evening Technical Schools. The target groups are twenty pupils of the Evening Gymnasium, Lyceum and Technical and Vocational Education School, members of the families of the pupils, as well as the teachers of the schools. The implementation of the Programme is the responsibility of the Cyprus National Addictions Authority, which after an open tender procedure assigned the Programme to the Association for the Prevention and Combating of Domestic Violence (SPAVO). The programme is fully funded by the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth.

#### **8. Preventive Preparatory Apprenticeship (PA) Intervention Programme in the Districts of Lefkosia, Larnaka, Lemesos and Pafos**

The programme is an action dealing with early school dropouts and the marginalization of the 14 - 16 years old pupils. The main objective of the programme is to provide a safe reintegration of Preparatory Apprentice teenagers into the school environment through the framing and support of themselves and their families with the ultimate goal of detaching them from illegal substances, social risks, social stigmatization and marginalization.

The PA provides a safe and supportive framework to upgrade the basic learning and soft skills of the learners, strengthen the goal-setting mechanism, and support them to believe in themselves and their skills, as well as improve their self-esteem by choosing and implementing correct and healthy choices in their life. PA's target groups are:

- a) Pupils of the Preparatory Apprenticeship
- b) Family members of the pupils
- c) Teachers of the Preparatory Apprenticeship
- d) Special social scientists of the Preparatory Apprenticeship.

The programme provides training of instructors and specialists, organization of afternoon / summer activities for the learners, organization of creativity workshops, sports and educational activities for the learners as well as psychosocial support and coverage of basic material needs of the learners and their families. Responsible for the implementation of the Programme is the "National Addictions Authority Cyprus", which after an open tender process assigned the Programme to the "Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family" (SPAVO). The project was implemented between the years 2022 - 2023 and is currently in the process of completion and renewal. The programme is entirely financed by the Cyprus Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth.

### **9. Supply of sports equipment to pupils belonging to vulnerable groups**

The Action is included in the Memorandum of Cooperation between the Cyprus Addiction Treatment Authority and the Cyprus Sports Organization, through the "Tackling Addiction to Legal and Illegal Substances" Plan. For the 2022 - 2023 school year, thirty athletes were supported who belong to: (a) vulnerable population groups and (b) sport clubs, which take part in the World Championships of the Cypriot Sports Federation, recognized by the CMO.

## **2.2 EDUCATIONAL INTEGRATION OF PUPILS WITH MIGRANT BACKGROUND**

The Ministry of Education implements the policy for the educational integration of children with migrant background in Cyprus, through the operation of an Interdepartmental Committee, which consists of representatives of all the Directorates of the Ministry of Education and which is coordinated by the CPI. The main actions implemented during the school year 2021 - 2022 are:

### **2.2.1 MIGRANT PUPIL POPULATION MAPPING**

#### **Primary Education**

The number of pupils who attended the programmes for teaching Greek as a second language, in the school year 2021 - 2022, is shown in Table 1 below:

**Table 1: Number of pupils who attended programmes for teaching Greek as a second language, in the school year 2021 - 2022**

<b>District</b>	<b>No of migrant pupils – 1<sup>st</sup> year</b>	<b>No of migrant pupils – 2<sup>nd</sup> year</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Lefkosia</b>	538	388	<b>926</b>
<b>Lemesos</b>	584	449	<b>1033</b>
<b>Larnaka Ammochostos</b>	503	367	<b>870</b>
<b>Pafos</b>	473	416	<b>889</b>
<i>Total</i>	<b>2098</b>	<b>1620</b>	<b>3718</b>

## **Secondary Education**

During the school year 2021 - 2022, four different programmes for learning Greek as a second language operated in 42 schools, as shown in Table 2. In total, 606 pupils with migrant biography attended the Greek as a second language programme. The programme of “transitional classes” operates in 18 schools all over Cyprus and 470 pupils with immigrant biography (70% of the total) joined it. In addition, 58 pupils attended the short-term programme and 81 pupils attended the programme for unaccompanied minors in Gymnasias, Lycea and Technical Schools. For the school year 2021 - 2022, programmes for Unaccompanied Minor Asylum Seekers operated in Lycea and Technical and Vocational Schools.

**Table 2: Number of pupils who attended the programme of learning Greek as a second language, in the school year 2021 - 2022**

Districts	No of migrant pupils Transitory A1	No of migrant pupils Transitory A2	No of migrant pupils Short-term A1+A2	No of migrant pupils Unaccompanied	No of migrant pupils Transitory Lyceum A1+A2	TOTAL
Lefkosia	29	49	29	23	15	145
Lemesos	50	56	-	30	19	155
Larnaka - Ammochostos	52	44	24	28	12	160
Pafos	76	57	5	-	8	146
<b>Total</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>606</b>

**Reception and integration of newly arrived pupils.** Schools were expected to use available tools for the reception of newly arrived pupils (e.g. Guide for school cooperation with parents - mediators, Guide with practical applications for managing sociocultural diversity, Ready-made communication cards for the first days of reception at school, Reception and integration Guides for Preschool / Primary and Secondary Education and brochures for school - family communication translated into many languages. Translations into French, Ukrainian and Chinese were added in the 2021 - 2022 school year. All tools are posted on the website of the Cyprus [Pedagogical Institute](#) and on the website of Intercultural Education of the Directorate of Primary Education.

**Teaching Greek as a second language:** During the school year 2021 - 2022, the actions focused on the development of programmes for learning Greek as a second language, providing extra hours and various courses for the enhancement of attainment in Greek. The Decision of the Council of Ministers (no. 91.354 dated 9.6.2021) contributed towards this, according to which increased teaching time was granted to schools participating in the DRA.S.E. + programme, as well as in other schools. Schools participating in the DRA.S.E.+ programme were given 10 or 15 periods per week for each group of six to 15 students (first grade group, first year support group, 2<sup>nd</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> form and second year pupils). The time provided to other primary schools also increased, compared to the previous school year 2020 - 2021.

Furthermore, the Curriculum for Greek as a second language (Pre-primary, Primary, Secondary General, Secondary Technical and Vocational Education and Training) was fully implemented (Mitsiaki, 2020). At the same time, the textbook "Greek for children, easy and simple!" was revised. (Issue A + B) for level A1 in primary school and work for a new manual for level A2 has started. The monitoring of the children's learning progress and the decision making for the allocation of hours are promoted through the use of formative assessment tools and with the implementation of the "Programme of Attainment in Greek Language" by the Centre of Educational Research and Evaluation. In the final evaluation of the Attainment in the Greek Language Programme (2021 - 2022), 1696 pupils completed Issue B of the test. Based on the results (Table 1), 36.8% of pupils who completed the language programme achieved B1

level of attainment in Greek. However, the majority of pupils (63.2%) were found to have a level of attainment in Greek lower than B1. Specifically, 37.1% of pupils were found to complete the programme with A2 level and 26.1% with A1 level, as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: Final evaluation results (2021 - 2022) on the CERE scale**

		N	%	% valid answers
<b>Language Level</b>	<b>A1</b>	442	22,2	26,1
	<b>A2</b>	629	31,6	37,1
	<b>B1</b>	625	31,3	36,8
	<b>Total</b>	1696	85,1	100,0
	<b>absentees</b>	297	14,9	
<b>Total</b>		<b>1993</b>	<b>100,0</b>	

**Teacher training:** A variety of teacher professional learning activities was offered by the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute (School basis Seminars, Optional and Specialized Seminars, Participation of schools in the Professional Learning Support Programme) and issues of intercultural and antiracist education were covered. Particular emphasis was placed on the operation of networks of teachers who teach Greek as a second language, in the context of which online - synchronous and asynchronous - seminars and meetings were organized. The online learning environment Moodle of the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute was used for this purpose. A total of 419 primary and secondary school teachers participated.

Regarding the support of teachers, online trainings were conducted for DRASE+ teachers and trainers, who taught children with Migrant Background. Good practices and basic principles of teaching methodology were presented, as well as classroom management issues with SMEs. Additionally, trainings were carried out for the Coordinators of Assistant Directors on how the programmes operate. In November 2021, the First Pancyprrian Competition XENIOS ZEUS against racism and xenophobia was addressed to schools.

**Intercultural dimension - Code against racism:** The implementation of the antiracist policy of the Ministry is promoted through specific indicators in the Curricula of various disciplines and through the implementation of the "Code of Conduct against Racism & Guide for the Management and Recording of Racist Incidents".

## 2.3 DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

### 2.3.1 INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES UNIT (ICT UNIT)

The Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth (MoESY) has set high priority on the integration and exploitation of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to enhance teaching and learning and facilitate school administration and school communication with the MoESY. The ICT Unit aims at better managing and coordinating ICT-related projects and modernizing the administrative structures, procedures and services of the MoESY. It is also responsible for equipping public schools with the technology infrastructure and tools needed to support teaching and learning and school administration.

The ICT Unit is coordinated by a Head and is divided into 4 sectors:

1. Web Services and Communication.
2. Automation and Administrative Procedures' Management.

3. Technology Infrastructure and Equipment.
4. Contracts, Tenders and Financial Management.

### **2.3.1.1 SECTOR OF WEB SERVICES AND COMMUNICATION**

The Sector of Web Services and Communication is responsible for the organisation and presentation on the web of all information related to the directorates, services, units, departments and programmes of the MoESY, as well as of all the educational material for Primary and Secondary General Education. Specifically, it maintains and updates on a daily basis the 80 websites of the Ministry ([www.moec.gov.cy](http://www.moec.gov.cy)), the websites of educational material ([www.schools.ac.cy](http://www.schools.ac.cy), 46 websites of educational material) and the websites of independent services (i.e. [www.dipae.ac.cy](http://www.dipae.ac.cy), [www.kysats.ac.cy](http://www.kysats.ac.cy), [www.geonoma.gov.cy](http://www.geonoma.gov.cy), [www.libraries.gov.cy](http://www.libraries.gov.cy), [www.cypruslibrary.gov.cy](http://www.cypruslibrary.gov.cy), [vepoiisis.schools.ac.cy](http://vepoiisis.schools.ac.cy), [mikrasia.moec.gov.cy](http://mikrasia.moec.gov.cy), and so on.). The total website views, according to Google Analytics, reached 80.000.000 in 2022.

Additionally, the Sector is responsible for the administration and dissemination of information on the MoESY's social media accounts:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ypourgeiopaideias> (35.000 followers)

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/cymoec> (1.026.000 views)

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/cymoec> (6.300 followers)

Moreover, the Sector provides web hosting for all public school websites and supports public schools with web services. Specifically, it provides customized ready-to-use website templates for use by public schools and offers training to educators (i.e. on a one-to-one basis, group training, video tutorials and electronic guides and manuals). Furthermore, the Service provides ongoing technical support to teachers of all public schools. The Sector is also responsible for the management of all email accounts under the domain [www.schools.ac.cy](http://www.schools.ac.cy) (4.000 accounts).

During the year 2022 the following projects were completed:

- Design and development of eight new responsive template websites (accessible on mobile devices) using the Get Simple (CMS), to be used as public schools' websites.
- Technical support to schools and teachers regarding the design, development and management of school websites (Content Management Systems: Joomla, Get Simple).
- Design, development and update of new websites (i.e. Cyprus 1821: [www.kypros1821.gov.cy](http://www.kypros1821.gov.cy)).
- Design, development and management of Educational TV: Organization and presentation of audiovisual material (800 videos) to support Distance Learning during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Web platform, applications and forms:
  - Update, maintenance and support for the web application to upload and distribute circulars of the MoESY:
    - Back end system for management.
    - Front end system for presentation.
  - Upgrade, maintenance and support of the web application for the presentation of announcements and circulars of the MoESY (mobile responsive).
  - Design, development, maintenance and support of the web platform for the creation of management of Ofiice365 accounts of all public school pupils.
  - Support of the web application to upload and distribute Internal Circulars (General Archive) of the MoESY.
  - Upgrade, maintenance and support of the web application to recruit examiners and assessors for the Pancyprian Exams.
  - Upgrade, maintenance and support of the web application for data management and presentation of examination marks and results for the Pancyprian Exams (mobile responsive).

- Upgrade, maintenance and support of the web platform for data management of applications, payments through JCC, candidate participation reports and presentation of reports for the Exams for Public Sector Recruitment.
- Upgrade, maintenance and support of the web application to recruit examiners and assessors for the Exams for Public Sector Recruitment.
- Upgrade, maintenance and support of the web application for the management of applications to recruit the Exams Centres for the Exams for Public Sector Recruitment.
- Upgrade, maintenance and support of the web platform for data management of applications, payments through JCC, candidate participation reports and presentation of reports for the Exams of Prospective Candidate Teachers.
- Upgrade, maintenance and support of the web application to recruit examiners and assessors for the Exams of Prospective Candidate Teachers.
- Upgrade, maintenance and support of the web application for the management of applications to recruit the Exams Centres for the Exams of Prospective Candidate Teachers.
- Upgrade, maintenance and support for the web application for seconded posts, subject counsellors and liaison officers at the MoESY (teachers).
- Redesign, development, maintenance and support of the web form for data management and the submission of online applications for participation in the Adult Education Centres and integration of online payment through JCC Smart.
- Analysis, design and development of two web platforms:
  - Platform for teaching applications for the programme of Buying Services.
  - Platform for the evaluation and management of applications for the programme of Buying Services.
- Update, maintenance and support of the web application for submission of online applications to study at the Post-Secondary Institutes of Vocational Education and Training.
- Upgrade, maintenance and support of the web application for the management of music files (Primary and Secondary Education).
- Upgrade, maintenance and support of the web application for submitting online applications for participation in the ECDL exams.
- Upgrade, maintenance and support of the web application for staffing summer camps of the MoESY at Prodromos.
- Analysis, design and development of the web platform to collect data from Higher Education Institutes.
- Upgrade, maintenance and support of the web application used by the Sector for the purposes of organization and management of the MoESY files.
- Upgrade, maintenance and support of a web application for viewing and downloading the Curricula, Scheme of Work, Scheme of Curricula for Secondary Technical and Vocational Education.
- Upgrade, maintenance and support of a web platform for safe sending of files to specified recipients.
- Design, development and upgrade of a web application for access to a world atlas for teacher use.
- Design, development and upgrade of a web application to send files to specified recipients.
- Design and development of a web application to view regulations, circulars and guidelines concerning the operation of primary schools.

### **2.3.1.2 SECTOR OF AUTOMATION AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES MANAGEMENT**

#### **Educational Management System (SEP)**

The Educational Management System (SEP) is an information system that has been developed in the context of automating the administrative procedures of school units and the Ministry. The system includes a number of functions, such as the submission and management of teacher leaves (sick leaves and absence leaves), the submission of various applications by the teachers and the management of these applications by the respective District Offices, Directorates, Units and Services of the Ministry. It is used by all teachers and school units of all levels of public education and by ministry officers.

The SEP development team is responsible for the design and implementation of new functionalities based on the Ministry's needs, for upgrading existing functions to meet current user requirements and for ensuring the smooth operation, development and management of the system.

During the 2021 - 2022 school year, the functions of the system were upgraded and expanded to meet the needs of the Ministry.

### **2.3.1.3 THE SECTOR OF TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE AND EQUIPMENT**

During the school year 2021 - 2022, in the framework of digital transformation, the ICT Unit through the Framework Agreement of the Treasury of the Republic of Cyprus, purchased 2370 Normal Desktops with MS Windows 11 Home with their monitors (23.8"), which have been delivered to public schools of all educational levels in 2022. The ICT Unit was responsible for the management of orders, the receipt and delivery of equipment to schools, including the preparation of the computers before the delivery.

### **2.3.1.4 CONTRACTS AND TENDERS SECTOR**

#### Current Contracts:

- Purchase of IT equipment to support the Web Infrastructure of the MoESY (servers, licences for Firewall, and so on.).
- Purchase of internet access services to meet the needs of the MoESY and its buildings in Latsia (the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute and Data Center) and digital wildcards certificate services of their servers for all domains and subdomains managed by the MoESY.

#### Software:

- Purchase of Software Licences for Microsoft Software for all PCs in Public Education and Microsoft products (Office365) for pupils and teachers.
- Purchase of Software licences for Adobe Creative Cloud software for PCs for Secondary and Secondary Technical and Vocational Schools.
- Purchase of Software Licences (Oracle Database) και services for the support and upgrade of the MoESY database and migration to upgraded servers.

## **2.4 EDUCATION FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

### **2.4.1 UNIT OF EDUCATION FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

The Unit of Education for the Environment and Sustainable Development (EESD) is the responsible body of the Cyprus Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth (MoESY) for planning, implementing, monitoring and upgrading the National Strategy for Environmental Education (EE) / Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) not only in formal education, but also in non-formal and informal education. For this reason, as a horizontal structure it is in close cooperation with the Departments of Education and with other Ministries and governmental bodies, as well as with other interested parties in

EE and ESD (NGOs, Universities, Research Centers, Commissioners of Environment, Voluntarism, National Youth Council and so on). The actions of the Unit of EESD are multifaceted and developed in many levels. Indicatively the Unit is responsible for the: a) operation of the Governmental Network of Environmental Education Centers, which offers more than 150 environmental education programmes, b) implementation of the ESD curricula in pre-primary and primary education, c) planning and integration of the environmental education programmes, d) authoring of various educational tools for the environment and the sustainable development, e) conduct of research in the field, f) teachers' professional development on ESD, g) networking, collaboration and regional collaboration on ESD.

Additionally, the Unit is the national focal point for EE / ESD and is representing Cyprus in various regional and international fora for EE / ESD. Through the Unit Cyprus is chairing the UNECE ESD Steering Committee as well as the Mediterranean Strategy for integrating Med ESD Action Plan in the Med Region. Moreover, the Unit is participating in various international expert Groups and Organizations on ESD such as UNESCO, MIO-Medies and so on.

The Unit for EESD is participating in various European projects which are funded by various European funding mechanisms. At the moment it is participating as a partner in the project SUSEDI, PEDIA, LIFE FOOD PRINT and provides expertise in various international and national committees for ESD.

It is preparing national and international reports about ESD and is participating in various National Committees and policies for the Environment and Sustainable Development, such as the National Strategy for Biodiversity, Climate Change, Blue Growth, Youth Strategy and so on.

Details for all activities and actions of the Unit of EESD can be found on the website of the UNIT: <https://mepaa.moec.gov.cy/index.php/el/>

## 2.5 SPECIAL EDUCATION

According to the Special Education Legislation, the District Committees for Special Education decide on provisions and / or any other accommodations in order to assist children with special needs who attend public schools. During the school year 2021 - 2022, 7414 children with special needs attended public pre-primary and primary schools. 678 children studied in 119 Special Units. Additionally, 521 children attended nine Special Schools that operate throughout Cyprus. 5533 pupils with special needs studied in classes of Secondary General Education. 4336 pupils studied in Secondary General Education and 1197 in Secondary Technical and Vocational Education and Training.

During the school year 2021 - 2022, pupils with special needs in Secondary Education were supported by a total of 9034 extra teaching periods. In Primary Education a total of 1006 teachers were employed to support all children with special needs who studied in classes of pre-primary and primary schools, Special Units and Special Schools. Additionally, 83 teachers from Secondary Education were employed to support children who attended Special Schools.

### 2.5.1 SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

The following special education programmes operate in Primary and Secondary Education:

#### **A. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES FOR CHILDREN WITH LEARNING, EMOTIONAL AND / OR ANY OTHER DIFFICULTIES**

Children with special needs, who attend mainstream class in public schools, attend supportive teaching classes based on the curriculum. The curriculum is adjusted to their individual learning needs.



In public pre-primary and primary schools, special education and / or speech therapy are provided by Special Education Teachers for learning, intellectual, functional and adjustment problems, or Special Education Teachers for the Deaf and / or Speech Therapy. In Secondary Education, support is provided by teachers of the mainstream class. Additionally, pupils with special needs receive modifications, such as extra completion time, exemption from spelling mistakes, and so on.

## **B. SPECIAL UNITS**

Children who attend Special Units are enrolled on the school's registry. Pupils who attend Special Units in Primary and Secondary Education, participate in activities and lessons of the mainstream class, based on their capabilities and individual needs. Pupils who attend the Lycea Special Units, have a three-day class programme in their school unit and a two-day pre-vocational training programme at selected workplaces. A special programme on Hotel and Catering runs in Secondary Technical and Vocational Education and Training. In Secondary Education, pupils who attend Special Units receive a "Certificate of Attendance".

## **C. SPECIAL SCHOOLS**

Children with severe difficulties are educated in the nine Special Schools, which are staffed with qualified personnel (teachers for learning, intellectual, functional and adjustment difficulties, speech therapists, nurses, physiotherapists and other specialists, auxiliary staff, as well as teachers from Secondary Education), in order to provide high quality therapy, education and support. The educational and other needs of children in Special Schools are met through individualised programmes of Special Education. The educational policy of the Special Schools includes a programme of continuous contact with the neighbouring mainstream schools and the organisation of common activities.

## **D. INTEGRATION PROGRAMME FOR CHILDREN OF SPECIAL SCHOOLS OR SPECIAL UNITS IN NEIGHBOURING SECONDARY EDUCATION SCHOOLS**

During the school year 2021 - 2022, two integration programmes were in operation for children in Special Schools with neighbouring Secondary Education schools. Children in Special Schools joined the class of Home Economics in Secondary General Education. Children also joined the classes of Hotel and Catering, Applied Arts and Hairdressing in Secondary Technical and Vocational Education and Training.

## **E. PROGRAMME FOR CHILDREN WITH HEARING DISABILITY**

The following inclusive programmes aimed at children with hearing disability and operated in 67 Secondary Education School units:

- Study in the mainstream class without any extra support.
- Study in the mainstream class with supportive teaching classes.

Sign Language Educational Interpreters are provided where needed.

## **F. PROGRAMME FOR CHILDREN WITH VISUAL DISABILITY**

The following inclusive programmes for children with visual disability operated in 55 Secondary Education School units:

- Study in the mainstream class without any extra support.
- Study in the mainstream class with supportive teaching classes.

## **G. EDUCATION OUTSIDE SCHOOLS' PREMISES (EDUCATION AT HOME)**

Under the provisions of the Law, children with special needs in primary and secondary education, who due to health reasons cannot attend the regular school programme for an extended period of time, can attend lessons outside the school premises. This kind of provision is considered as part of the regular educational programme. During 2021 - 2022 school year, 60 children from Primary Education, 225 children from Secondary General Education and 19 children from Secondary Technical and Vocational Education and Training attended the Education at Home programme, following an official decision by the District Committee for Special Education. Education outside the school premises in Secondary

Education is provided by teachers with the purchase of services. The total cost for this programme during 2021 - 2022 was €600.000.

### **2.5.2 ASSESSMENT – REASSESSMENT OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

In the school year 2021 - 2022, groups for the assessment-reassessment of children with special needs in Primary Education operated in each district. These groups consisted of a Special Education Teacher for learning, intellectual, functional and adjustment problems and a Speech-Language Pathologist, who are members of the multidisciplinary assessment-reassessment team, as defined by the Education and Training of Children with Special Needs Laws of 1999 to 2020. For this purpose, a total of 15 Special Education Teachers and Speech-Language Pathologists were employed full-time or part-time. The operation of these groups aims at fixed criteria and methodology for the assessment and reassessment of the needs of children referred to the District Committees for Special Education in order to ensure uniformity and minimize subjectivity in decision-making.

### **2.5.3 TEACHERS' TRAINING**

The Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth aims at reinforcing the awareness and sensitivity of School Inspectors, head teachers, class teachers and teachers of special education to the provisions of the Law and their obligations towards children with special needs attending their schools. This objective is achieved through in-service training seminars. During 2021 - 2022 school year, training seminars were held for care assistants, teachers, as well as head teachers. At the same time, in Secondary Education, a special training programme for care assistants and teachers who teach pupils with autism spectrum disorder was implemented in two schools.

### **2.5.4 BUDGET**

The budget of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth for the year 2022 provides for the employment of teaching, therapeutic and ancillary personnel, training and professional development of staff, the provision of specialised equipment for classrooms and individual children, the modification of buildings to provide accessibility, the transportation of children with special needs to and from school and to out-of-school activities as well as the running expenses of Special Schools and the economic support of the Parents Associations of Special Schools.

## **2.6 LIFELONG LEARNING**

### **Elaboration, Monitoring and Evaluation of the Cyprus Lifelong Learning Strategy 2021 - 2027**

The main responsibility of the European and International Affairs, Lifelong Learning and Adult Education Bureau (EIALLAEB) is the monitoring and implementation of the Cyprus Lifelong Learning Strategy (CyLLLS) for the years 2021 - 2027, in cooperation with other ministries and competent authorities. The CyLLLS was approved by the Council of Ministers on 30 September 2022 (*Decision no.: 93.682*).

In order to achieve the vision of the CyLLLS 2021 - 2027, the following four strategic priorities have been set as key objectives to be achieved by 2027:

- Establishment of the governance, monitoring and evaluation framework comprising policy arrangements and action plans with clear stakeholder roles and sound financial management.
- Reducing youth unemployment and upskilling / reskilling young people and the workforce by providing learning opportunities that reflect labour market needs and take into account the digital and green transitions.

- Increasing adult participation in lifelong learning by improving the quality of the adult learning sector, motivating individuals and businesses, removing barriers, as well as raising the profile and strengthening of information and communication.
- Improving the professional practice of adult educators and supporting trainers at all levels of education in developing lifelong learning skills.

These priorities are necessary to provide the long-term strategic framework for lifelong learning towards the development of a knowledge-based and inclusive society and guide future actions. These priorities have taken into account the current national needs, together with European priorities and objectives deriving from relevant programmes, initiatives and mechanisms (e.g. Erasmus+, European Pillar of Social Rights, Digital Education Action Plan 2021 - 2027, European Education Area, European Skills Agenda, European Green Deal, Recovery and Resilience Facility).

For the carrying out, monitoring and evaluation of the CyLLLS, for the years 2021 - 2027, collaborations were developed with directorates / services / departments of the Ministry, as well as with the members of the National and Technical Committees for Lifelong Learning. The members of the two committees were approved by Decision of the Council of Ministers in May 2020 (*Decision no.: 89.482, 27/5/2020*). It is noted that the preparation and monitoring of the CyLLLS 2021-2027 received support from the Directorate General for Structural Reform Support of the European Commission (DG REFORM).

# 3.

## INNOVATIONS, REFORMS AND STRUCTURAL CHANGES IN EDUCATION

### 3.1 PRIMARY EDUCATION

#### 3.1.1 IMPLEMENTING THE REVISED CURRICULUM AND SCHOOL TIMETABLES IN PRIMARY AND PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION

During the school year 2021 - 2022 emphasis continued to be placed on implementing the revised and restructured Curricula with a focus on implementing Adequacy and Attainment Targets as tools for the planning of the teaching process, its implementation and the evaluation of teaching and learning outcomes. Attainment Targets refer to the learning outcomes which pupils are expected to achieve by the end of each grade or each level / stage, whereas Adequacy Targets describe what needs to be taught in order for the outcomes to be achieved. Teachers can choose which Adequacy Targets to focus on so that they can help pupils achieve the Attainment Targets.

By a relevant Decision of the Council of Ministers (No. 91.049 / 31.03.2021), the Timetable for the Reinforced School with three teachers (three classes) was differentiated from 100 to 105 teaching periods, so that each complex (Grades 1 - 2, 3 - 4, 5 - 6) has 35 teaching periods. The new Timetable was implemented from the school year 2021 - 2022 in three-teacher schools, but also in all schools with one or more two-grade complexes. With the new Timetable, the teaching time of Greek in Grades 1 - 4 and Mathematics in Grade 6 was increased by one teaching period.

##### 3.1.1.1 Modern Greek Language Teaching

The teaching of the Greek language in Primary Education aims at developing citizens able to respond successfully to the demands of a modern literate society. To that end, instruction is based on a broad and scientifically substantiated view of what language is, approached and implemented by combining various language-learning approaches and synthesizing elements, drawn from various linguistic theories and practices, both “traditional” and “modern”, in a collaborative and balanced way. Language is considered, firstly, as a system of elements governed by rules and normalities (language as structure), and as a dynamic means of communication and social action, operating within a specific communication framework and fulfilling a specific objective (language as function). Additionally, language is considered as a mean of constructing social reality (language as a system of ideas and values).

Within this context, the Attainment and Adequacy Targets for Greek Language work supportively towards the planning, implementation and evaluation of Language Teaching as well as, towards the organization of various training initiatives for teachers’ professional development (taking place both centrally or on a school-by-school basis). Therefore, teachers’ training has focused on promoting strategies for independent reading comprehension, in an attempt to further enhance children’s ability to respond effectively and individually to the demands of an ever-evolving society.

In detail, during the school year 2021 - 2022, the members of the Greek Language Working Group took over and realized a number of training sessions online and / or in person, to teachers, head teachers and school inspectors on the following themes / topics:

- Good practices in Greek Language Instruction.
- Strategic, independent reading comprehension in relation to the International Literacy Study (PIRLS 2021).
- Support scheme for scaffolding pupils with added risk of operational illiteracy.
- Differentiation in Greek Language Instruction.
- Integration of digital and online technologies in Greek Language Instruction.

Based on the above, along with the multilayered work of the Literacy Advisors, at the micro level of each school individually, but also at the macro level of their wider duties, and with the contribution of all members of the Greek Language Working Group:

- Supportive material (“Texts and Activities - September 2021”) was developed, based on the needs that emerged in education, because of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Assessment instruments were developed for diagnosing and supporting pupils with added risk of functional illiteracy in Greek Language in Grades 2 - 6.
- An instrument was designed and developed as a final assessment tool in Greek Language for all 1<sup>st</sup> Grade pupils.
- Supportive teaching material was developed as an aid to all teachers and children who participated in the Programme of Supportive Teaching for Operational Literacy.
- Supportive material was developed, with indicative ideas and practices, for the 1<sup>st</sup> Grade teachers who teach Reading and Writing, in the context of facilitating their smoother transition from Pre-Primary to Primary school.
- In line with the above, educational and teaching material was developed for Greek teaching and Learning, in the context of facilitating pupils’ transition from Primary to Secondary School.
- Digital and online teaching material was developed, for the purposes of teaching Greek at all primary school grades (i.e., activities in the form of Microsoft Sway and Microsoft Forms).
- A number of on-line teacher training conferences for different groups of schools took place, on a variety of subjects related to Greek teaching-learning.
- Supportive material has been selected and organized for supporting the 6th Grade teachers and pupils, towards their participation in the “Children’s Essay Competition of the Greek Embassy”.
- A lesson on Greek Language Instruction in the 3rd Grade was designed and video recorded for teacher training purposes.

### **3.1.1.2 Mathematics**

The main focus of the Mathematics Curriculum is to prepare pupils to acquire essential mathematical knowledge and competencies, in ways that meet the needs of an individual’s life as a constructive, concerned and reflective citizen. Moreover, the Mathematics Curriculum focuses on the development of pupils’ mathematical reasoning, conceptual understanding, problem solving skills, procedural knowledge and positive attitudes towards Mathematics. The Mathematics Curriculum involves five areas: Numbers and operations, Algebra, Geometry, Measurement, and Statistics. These areas, are described for each grade by: (a) Attainment Targets, and (b) Adequacy Targets which include Activity Levels (Prerequisite knowledge, new concepts and corresponding examples) and examples of Mathematical Practices. The organization of the Curriculum on the basis of the above two axes ensure the coherence and connection among the different mathematical concepts within each grade and between the grades.

During the school year 2021 - 2022:

- The revision of the instructional material for Grade 6 was completed.
- During October - November 2021, twelve training seminars were offered to teachers, who taught Mathematics in Grade 6.
- The Mathematics Advisors visited schools and offered consultancy, focusing to teachers who were teaching Mathematics in Grade 6 and teachers who were teaching Mathematics for the first time, at a specific grade level.
- The Academics Advisors of the Mathematics Group (University of Cyprus) and the members of the writing team offered training sessions to the teachers of two private schools in Greece (Athens - Greece) that buy and use the Cypriot Mathematics Textbooks.
- In collaboration with the Inspector team for Mathematics of the Secondary General Education Department, a test was prepared for all pupils of Gymnasium – Class A', with the aim to diagnose pupils that were at risk to become mathematically illiterate.
- Following the preparation of tests for the pupils of Grades 2 to 6, with the aim to diagnose pupils that were at risk to become mathematically illiterate, ten more tests were prepared for the intermediate and final evaluation of these pupils, during January 2022 and May 2022 respectively. An additional test, for the final evaluation of pupils in Grade 1, was prepared.
- A training seminar was offered to the teachers who taught the pupils that were diagnosed as being at risk for becoming mathematically illiterate, during December 2021.
- The writing team, in collaboration with the Mathematics Advisors, prepared additional material for Grade 4, based on the results of TIMSS 2019, highlighting concepts and procedures in which pupils could be improved.

### **3.1.1.3 English**

As of 2011 - 2012, English is taught in Primary School from Grade 1 (first year of primary school). In 2015 - 2016, after the recommendations of a Special Scientific Committee, a revised school timetable was implemented in Primary Education which increased the teaching time for English in the early years of Primary Education.

The newly revised school timetable provides for English to be taught twice a week (two 40-minute teaching periods) in all Primary School grades. This move, to increase the teaching periods for English, was extended to the All-Day Compulsory Schools, which implement an intensive English programme. They, therefore, teach English three periods a week in all Grades (1 - 6).

During the school year 2021

- 2022, two online training meetings were held, for all districts, for teachers who teach English. The subject of the meetings was “Effective Practices in Teaching English” and they aimed at providing in-service training to the teachers on the methodology, materials and effective techniques of teaching English in Primary Schools. In addition, an online training meeting was held for teachers who teach English in the All-Day Compulsory Schools. Moreover, school-based meetings were organized by the advisors of the subject, providing guidance and support to teachers.

Regarding the teaching of English in Pre-primary Education, this continues to expand and is strengthened through the implementation of the new Curriculum for Pre-primary Education which adopts the approach of CLIL to introduce English in Pre-primary Education. The implementation of CLIL is supported and monitored by the Cyprus CLIL Coordinating Centre.

#### **3.1.1.4 Health Education**

During the 2021 - 2022 school year, a guiding booklet titled "Say NO!" has been published. The booklet aims at guiding Pre-primary and 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Primary School teachers to teach "The Underwear Rule" through specific teaching material, mainly, through storytelling. The booklet contributes towards the empowerment and protection of children from sexual abuse and exploitation. Within the context of the work of the Working Group of the Curriculum of Health Education and its consultative work, support was provided throughout Cyprus.

#### **3.1.1.5 Geography**

During the school year 2021 - 2022, the revised / reconstructed Curriculum of Geography was implemented all over public primary schools. Teachers had available teaching material that was based on modern learning approaches and Adequate and Attainment Targets for Grades 1 - 3 and for part of Grade 4 and Grade 5. In order to support teachers' implementation of the Geography Adequacy and Attainment Targets, relevant training programmes and activities took place.

Additionally, in collaboration between the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth and the Deputy Ministry of Tourism, an annual competition about tourism in Cyprus was designed and announced for the second year. The competition titled "Kopiaste stin Koinotita mas", (Welcome to our community) which will be annually announced among the pupils of Grades 3 and 4, aims at knowing Cyprus and promoting sustainable touristic consciousness. On behalf of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth, the competition is supported and coordinated by the Primary Geography Curriculum team.

Geographic Education in primary schools, ultimately aims at improving people's quality of life in their living environment (natural and man-made). Therefore, it seeks to:

- a) equip pupils with a sufficient body of knowledge that:
  - includes useful knowledge necessary for critically evaluating the real world in order to form the basis for pupils, as future citizens, to live in quality and happiness and successfully participate in the new globalised political-social and economic environment,
  - is a prerequisite for creative and efficient design of their living space so that as future citizens live in harmony with it,
- b) help pupils develop the appropriate spatial analysis skills in combination with geographic tools and sufficient knowledge, so as future citizens will be able to think and make well informed and rational decisions at a personal level and through active community participation at a collective level,
- c) form citizens that exhibit attitudes and behaviours which show acceptance and respect for human and environmental diversity and rational management of resources and space on local, regional and global scales.

#### **3.1.1.6 Religious Education**

Pupils' religious literacy is a goal of the Religious Education. The pupils in our schools learn about both the Christian Orthodox Tradition and the universal phenomenon of Religion. Pupils are expected to develop / acquire knowledge, values, attitudes, behaviour and skills necessary for our modern society.

In 2021 - 2022, the Religious Education Team continued the revision of the curriculum and the production of new educational materials / books, especially for the 5<sup>th</sup> Grade. The Religious Education Team also provided in-service training for primary school teachers through seminars, meetings, and conferences. Finally, assistance was provided for the production of new educational material based on the Maronite Christian Tradition for the St. Maronas Primary School.

### **3.1.1.7 History**

According to the History Curriculum for Primary Education, the main purpose of the subject is the development of historical thinking and historical consciousness in order to contribute to the education of critically thinking and active democratic citizens. This is pursued through the development of historical literacy, the parallel development of substantive knowledge and disciplinary understanding in history. In this context, emphasis is given to both the development of factual knowledge of the past and the process of cultivating conceptual understanding and abilities related to historical inquiry (disciplinary understanding).

Teachers are supported in their efforts to implement the above through the introduction of a constructivist inquiry-based approach to the teaching of History. This support takes place both in terms of in-service training and the development of teaching materials.

During the 2021 - 2022 school year, the Primary History Group continued with the development of teaching material for the teaching of Cyprus History topics (for Grades 5 and 6) and offered in-service training seminars at school level. During the year, teachers and schools were also supported when this was asked.

During the Teachers' Training Days, the Primary History Group offered a seminar titled "Orientation in time: constructing coherent knowledge of the past through the development of synoptic historical frameworks". The purpose of the seminar was to suggest approaches which deal with problems related to the development of substantive knowledge in history and contribute to the coherence of such knowledge. More specifically, the seminar suggested strategies on how to use overviews and in-depth studies so as the pupils to develop historical frameworks in which substantive knowledge within and between historical periods is organised and becomes meaningful.

Finally, the Primary History Group participated in the assessment of educational programmes, submitted by different organizations, and curricula, submitted by private schools, in order to be approved by the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth.

### **3.1.1.8 Music Education**

During the school year 2021 - 2022, Music Education in Primary Education continued to aim at a wide-ranging musical development for all pupils. Through playing musical instruments, singing, listening, improvising and composing music pupils learn to make, appreciate, and understand music.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic added challenges for Music Education, because of the health and safety protocols, the Music Inspector and her team of Music Advisors continued offering systematic support and training for teachers and schools in the form of counselling, production of teaching material according to health and safety protocols. New ideas and methods were implemented to help teachers overcome the restrictions and give pupils meaningful musical experiences, such as the introduction of musical technologies in music education. This was the main subject of the introductory training seminar at the beginning of the school year.

During the school year 2021 - 2022, music educational material for the 4<sup>th</sup> Grade continued to be created and posted for teachers to implement it. The new units include guidelines for teachers, PowerPoint presentations with listening activities and music material.

During the school year 2021 - 2022, the programme concerning the teaching of string, wind and percussion instruments that was offered in 2018 - 2019 continued in the All-Day Compulsory Schools so as to encourage pupils to develop their musical skills. Lessons concerning string music instruments (violin) were also offered by the Open School of Strovolos Municipality in collaboration with the Primary and Secondary Music Education departments. Programmes of mandolin teaching, were held in four schools in Lemesos and the outcomes were very good. Around 200 pupils participated in the procedure.



### **3.1.1.9 Environmental Education - Education for Sustainable Development (E.E. - E.S.D.)**

Environmental Education (E.E.) and Education for Sustainable Development (E.S.D.) is an important innovation in the Cyprus Primary Education because on the one hand it was introduced officially in school practice through the newly established curriculum for E.E. - E.S.D. and on the other hand it required each school to plan and implement its Sustainable Environmental Education Policy, so that each school, gradually and on a long-term basis becomes sustainable.

The creation of a sustainable school through the Curriculum of E.E. - E.S.D. was pursued more intensively the year 2021 – 2022, aiming at a school that will operate as a model of organization which promotes sustainability and adopts it in school life through its three levels of functioning. The:

- pedagogical (learning and teaching process),
- social / organizational (cultural, social, environmental and educational policy), and
- technical / financial (infrastructures, equipment, administrative practices).

During the school year 2021 - 2022, with specific health protocols due to the pandemic, experiential learning programmes were implemented in schools, as well as training seminars for teachers of pre-primary and primary education. The programmes and the seminars were organized by the Unit of Education for the Environment and Sustainable Development in cooperation with the Department of Primary Education.

### **3.1.1.10 Design and Technology - Digital Technologies**

Through the teaching of Design and Technology - Digital Technologies, the pupils develop technological literacy and specifically have opportunities to:

- solve problems (manage and control risks), by being engaged in an encouraging and practical subject, where they use creativity and imagination in order to design and build products that solve real problems in a variety of contexts and understand the design process.
- acquire a wide range of new knowledge and skills and apply knowledge gained from other subjects (e.g., Mathematics, Science, I.T., Art).
- develop attitudes and values in order to become critical users of technology and conscious citizens.
- work safely with a variety of tools and materials to become resourceful, innovative and entrepreneurial.
- interact in groups and through cooperative learning acquire both cognitive and social-emotional skills.

In 2021 - 2022, two revised pupil manuals were published, one for the 5<sup>th</sup> Grade and one for the 6<sup>th</sup> Grade. The books are based on the problem-solving process and include various activities for algorithmic thinking, coding and robot programming, which aim at harmonizing education with new communication and information technologies. In addition, new floor robots were sent to all primary schools. Finally, the Design and Technology Education official website was restructured and enriched (teachers' guides, presentations, short films, photos, software and applications).

The Design and Technology - Digital Technologies course is a living part of children's education and is constantly evolving to ensure continuity not only with secondary and higher education, but also with the modern technological world.

### **3.1.1.11 Art Education (Visual Arts)**

Visual Arts contribute to the overall human development, with an emphasis on the social, cognitive and emotional areas. At the same time, they foster respect and understanding among human beings, as well as the development of positive attitudes towards the environment, society and culture. In this context,

learning and teaching in the Visual Arts is experiential, and the design and delivery of visual arts activities focuses on viewing - observing and making - creating.

The school year 2021 - 2022 was unusual due to the pandemic. In order to promote and support the implementation of the Visual Arts Curriculum during the difficult conditions created in the pandemic, the Inspectors and Art Advisors focused on the following areas of action:

- Organization and implementation of an art educator seminar within the framework of the Two-Day Educational seminar for teachers entitled “Interaction with works of modern art”.
- Development and implementation of visual art units based on the Health Protocol for the operation of Public Schools.
- Development and implementation of distance learning visual arts units appropriate for the MS Teams platform.
- European award of the Erasmus Key Action 1 programme «EnViARTS - Enhancing Visual Arts Education in Primary Schools in Cyprus: Children, Cultural Heritage and Digital Technologies» coordinated by the Department of Primary Education. Award of the European Innovative Teaching Award - EITA 2022 for Primary Education in Cyprus.
- Guidance and support of teachers through e-mail and telephone communication throughout the school year.
- Development of supporting materials regarding various aspects of the Visual Arts Curriculum.
- Re-publication of the exercise book “Visual Diary” for pupils, for distribution to all primary schools in September 2022.
- Transfer of the Primary Education Children’s Art Archive from the Agios Antonios Primary School in Lefkosia to the 3rd Primary School in Lemesos.
- Enriching the libraries of all schools with a visual book for pupils so that the teachers can use it properly in the lesson.

#### **3.1.1.12 Science**

During the school year 2021 - 2022, the working teams continued their effort to produce supporting materials with special emphasis on the development of a bank of assessment tasks, which correspond to the Attainment Targets of the units included in the curriculum of the subjects “Science and Technology” (Grades 1 - 4) and “Science” (Grades 5 - 6). In addition, the production of teaching materials for distance learning in science (synchronous and asynchronous) was continued.

At the end of March 2022, massive online training sessions for science teachers of Grade 3 were organized in the different districts. As far as school-level training is concerned, Science Advisors visited schools in order to provide them with support about science teaching.

#### **3.1.1.13 Physical Education**

Special emphasis during the school year 2021 - 2022 was given on the thematic area of Lifetime Activities (Drastiriotites Zois) regarding all levels of primary school. The beginning was the initial daily online in-service training of teachers, September 2021, with two different seminars. The initial in-service training dealt with the content of the thematic area of Lifetime Activities, its attainment and adequacy targets as well as with good teaching practices. Various tools such as short videos, photographs, diagrams and other electronic tools were used to help the teachers understand the importance of exercise in health and implement quality lessons that will enhance all children to develop knowledge of health-related exercises, positive attitudes towards lifetime exercise and promote mental health. Particular emphasis was given on a Regular Exercise Diary as an important tool to be developed in a

way that children will find out how to manage their free time and which exercise to choose (type, duration, frequency).

Due to restrictions of pandemic COVID-19, two different training sessions were run online, followed by the initial in-service training. The first training session's focus was on Teaching Physical Education issues such as Planning, Methodology, Organization and Classroom Management. The second training session was about the effective management of Physical Education materials order through the online platform. Inspectors and advisors of Physical Education provided support to teachers, in school and in distance, on the thematic areas of the Physical Education curriculum.

Cooperation with the Cyprus CLIL Coordinating Centre continued this school year. An in-service training programme was planned and implemented by the Physical Education advisor who specialized in CLIL in Physical Education. A group of five teachers first attended three distance learning seminars on CLIL in Physical Education. After, they planned lessons together, they were implemented and evaluated. At the same time, school-based support was given by a Physical Education advisor during Physical Education lessons, implementing co-teaching.

Under the auspices of the Cyprus Olympic Committee, the Pier De Coubertin Student Conference titled "Olympic Games: Peace -Truce" was held at the end of the school year. Five primary schools (four from Lemesos and one from Larnaka district) presented their work and exchanged their knowledge and ideas with their teammates in a creative way (play, dance, music, presentations).

Guidelines for the teaching of Physical Education in accordance with the COVID-19 health protocol were given to teachers.

#### **3.1.1.14 Pre-primary Education**

In September 2021 suggestions for practical organization of the learning process in Pre-primary Education during the 2021 - 2022 school year were sent to schools. The suggestions concerned class and classroom organization according to the Curriculum guidelines.

In October 2021 provincial networks were held and dealt with administrative issues, management issues arising from the pandemic as well as the exchange of good practices implemented during the 2020 - 2021 school year, in the context of observing health protocols due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

From November 2021 until May 2022 an online training programme was offered for Pre-primary teachers concerning the application of the Curriculum. In November 2021:

- classroom teachers and teachers of the DRA.S.E. programme were offered online training concerning methods of reinforcing teaching during Free and / or Guided Play, as well as on teaching issues of Greek as a second language,
- online training for school heads and classroom Pre-primary and 1<sup>st</sup> Grade teachers aiming at informing on sex education for young children.

In May 2022 online training networks for Pre-primary Education Heads, in the subject of Natural Sciences were made. The training consisted of informing participants about the theoretical background of Natural Sciences as well as suggestions for classroom implementation.

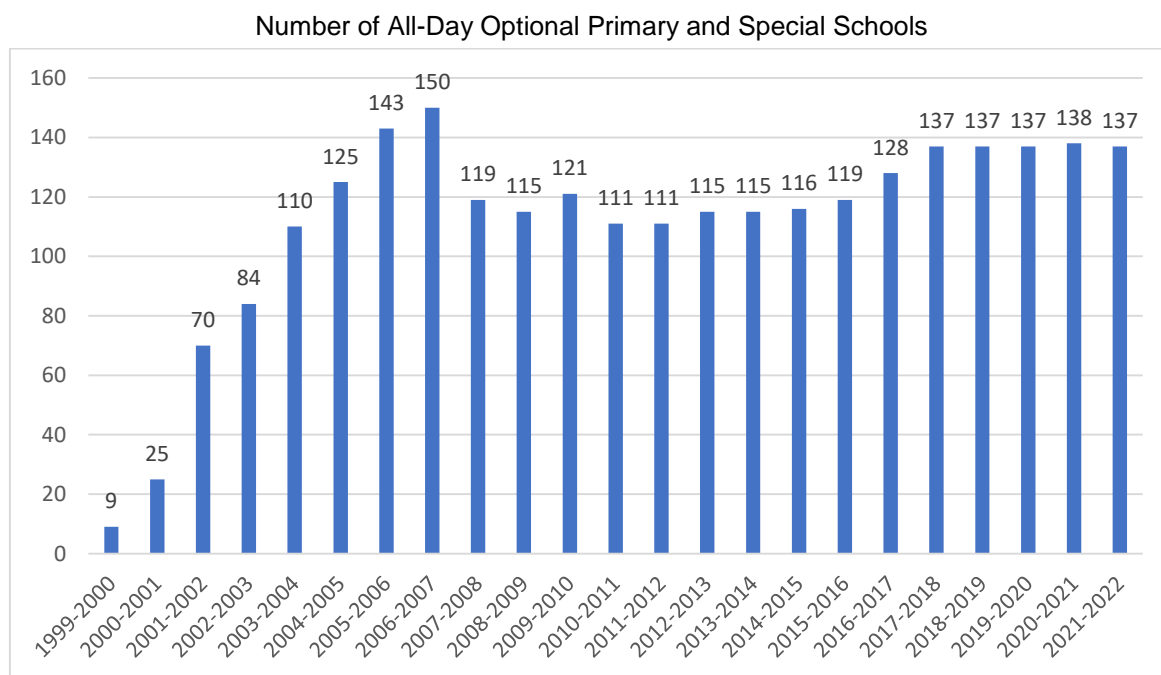
During the school year 2021 - 2022 the Ministry's Pre-primary Education website was enriched with supporting material for teachers. Suggestions of good practices were posted for the subject of

Mathematics as well as for the Developmental Area of Mental Empowerment. Moreover, the sex education guide for Pre-primary and 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Primary School teachers was also posted - the guide is titled "Say NO!".

### 3.1.2 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ALL-DAY SCHOOL

#### 3.1.2.1 All-Day Optional Primary Schools and All-Day Optional Special Schools

Since the school year 1999 – 2000 and upon the request of many schools the institution of All-Day Optional Primary and Special Schools has been extended and implemented as follows:



The All-Day Optional Primary School and Special Schools function from October to May, five days a week – based on two types of time schedules – until 3:05 p.m. or until 4:00 p.m. That is, they have three or four additional afternoon teaching periods. The five-day school week was adopted from the school year 2016 - 2017 onwards.

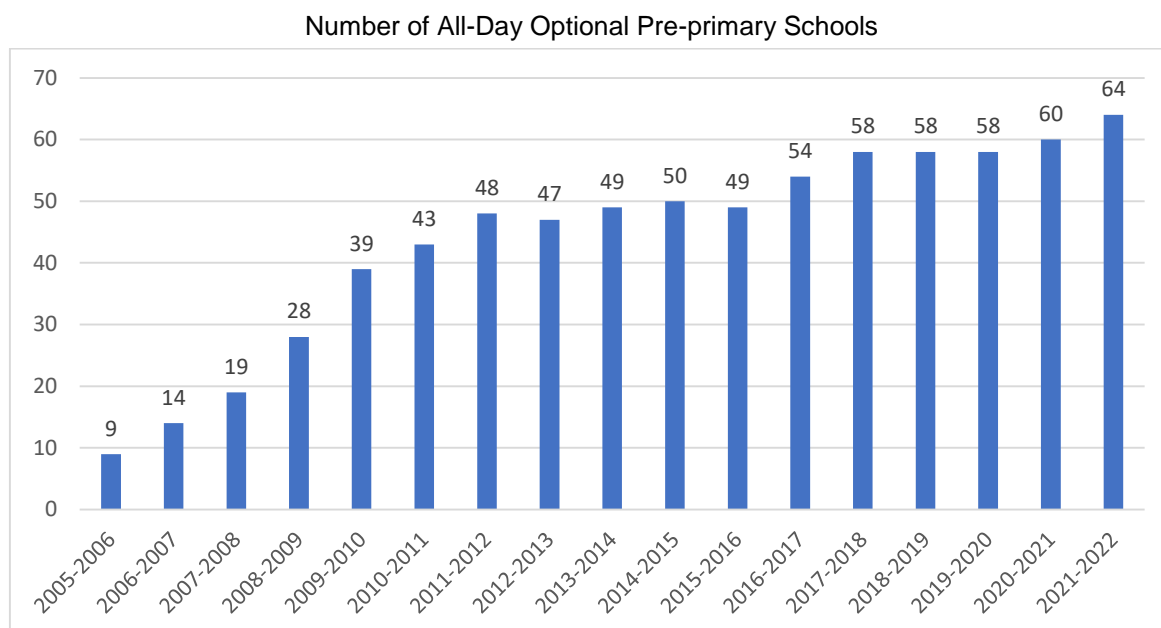
The number of pupils per class ranges from 8 to 25, according to the needs of each school unit. During the school years 2020 - 2021 and 2021 - 2022, due to the pandemic COVID-19 measures, the maximum number of pupils per class was 20 instead of 25. The formation of classes and groups is done according to the pupils' interests. The Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth provides all schools which function as All-Day Schools with the necessary equipment.

Pupils have lunch under the supervision of teachers. Catering expenses are borne by the children's parents. The necessary arrangements for the provision / preparation of meals are undertaken by the relevant Parents' Associations. The type of food and the specific menu is agreed and arranged by the parents in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth. The Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth finances part of the cost by funding the meals for a number of pupils in need.

#### 3.1.2.2 All-Day Optional Pre-primary Schools

The All-Day School in Pre-primary Education was experimentally implemented during the school year 2005 - 2006 in ten classes of nine rural Pre-primary Schools.

Since then, upon the request of many schools, the institution of All-Day Optional Pre-primary Schools was extended and implemented as follows:



These Pre-primary Schools operate as All-Day Schools on an optional basis. They function from October to May, five days a week – based on two types of time schedules – until 3:05 p.m. or until 4:00 p.m. That is, they have three or four additional afternoon periods. The five-day school week was adopted from the school year 2016 - 2017 onwards.

The afternoon programme includes lunch at school, five teaching periods per week for resting and relaxing and ten teaching periods for creative activities on the following subjects: Language, Maths, Information Technology, Drama, Music, Dance, Art, Physical Education and Group Games. The maximum number of pupils per class is 25. During the school years 2020 - 2021 and 2021 - 2022, due to the pandemic COVID-19 measures, the maximum number of pupils per class was 20 instead of 25.

The Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth provided all schools already operating as All-Day Schools with the necessary equipment.

Pupils have lunch under the supervision of teachers. Catering expenses are borne by the children's parents. The necessary arrangements for the provision / preparation of meals are undertaken by the relevant Parents' Associations. The type of food and the specific menu is agreed and arranged by the parents in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth. The Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth finances part of the cost by funding the meals for a number of pupils in need.

### **3.1.2.3 All-Day Compulsory Schools in Primary Education**

Rapid societal changes create the need to reform the Cyprus Educational System in terms of improved conditions for school life, modern ways of learning, new school subjects, upgraded infrastructure and a revised Curriculum and School Timetable. Therefore, in 2006 - 2007, the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth introduced the All-Day Compulsory School in Primary Education on a pilot basis in nine Primary Schools throughout Cyprus.

At the end of the school year 2009 - 2010, the four-year pilot programme was completed. The final framework of the All-Day Compulsory Schools was implemented during the school year 2010 - 2011. As of that year the institution of All-Day Compulsory Schools continues to operate in 14 Primary Schools.

After the completion of the pilot programme and the formal establishment of the All-Day Compulsory Schools that was approved by the Council of Ministers on 16<sup>th</sup> of February, 2011, the All-Day Compulsory School is officially considered to be a type of Public School.

The All-Day Compulsory Schools' educational programme and mode of operation is very different from the All-Day Optional Schools. The All-Day Compulsory Schools operate with a unified Curriculum, unified school management and staff and also with an upgraded educational programme.

The All-Day Compulsory Schools operate four days a week (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday) from 7:45 am to 3:05 pm or 4:00 pm and one day a week (Wednesday) from 7:45 am to 1:05 pm. They have a total of 43 teaching periods (for schools functioning until 3:05 pm) or 47 teaching periods (for schools functioning until 4:00 pm) that is, eight or 12 teaching periods more than the mainstream (non-All-Day) Primary Schools. These eight or 12 additional teaching periods are used for the teaching of English and Information Technology, and for the introduction of elective subjects which the pupils choose based on their interests (e.g., dancing, swimming, ballet, drama, and so on). For the teaching of English and the elective subjects there is a special arrangement for hiring specialised teaching staff (i.e. dance teachers, drama teachers, and so on.).

When the schools operate in the afternoon, lunch is provided to pupils. The school menu is designed by nutritionists and the food is prepared and supplied by catering services, except in the cases where the school unit has decided otherwise.

On March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021, by Decision of the Council of Ministers (No. 91.064), the Primary School of Agios Antonios (Lefkosia) became an All-Day Compulsory School. In addition, by another Decision, on July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021 (No. 91.442), the Council of Ministers approved the termination of the operation of the Primary School of Apsiou (Lemesos) as All-Day Compulsory School thus maintaining the number of All-Day Compulsory Schools in 14 schools.

### **3.1.3 SUMMER SCHOOLS**

The introduction of Public Summer Schools by the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth was based on a social need and public demand which was evidenced in the last few years. The Summer Schools were first introduced in the summer of 2015 to 22 primary schools. During the summer of 2022, the programme was implemented in 36 Primary Schools and 18 Pre-primary Schools. The Summer School's programme offers creative activities and caters especially for children of disadvantaged socioeconomic origin.

The value of the Summer School programme is widely accepted and embraced, since, among other things, it:

- helps to reduce the gap between opportunities provided to children of affluent families and those of poor families in terms of creative experiences during summer holidays,
- promotes the general development of children through various creative activities,
- reduces working parents' problems regarding children's supervision during the summer period when schools are closed,
- prevents and diminishes juvenile delinquency,

- lessens excessive time devoted to watching television,
- provides a healthy breakfast,
- maximises the use of school buildings and equipment, and
- offers unemployed educators the chance to work.

All 54 Summer Schools (36 Primary Schools and 18 Pre-primary), which functioned during the summer of 2022, worked for five weeks, from June 20<sup>th</sup> to July 22<sup>nd</sup> 2022. Both experienced and novice or unemployed teachers were employed to work at the Summer Schools. During 2022, Summer Schools extended their schedule from 1:05 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. according to the needs of their pupils (optional schedule extension for some classes).

Each Summer School follows a well-designed and flexible programme of creative activities, suitable for the children's needs, abilities and interests. The programme usually includes Artistic Expression, Design and Technology, Music, Theatre, Dancing, Computers, Home Economics, Indoor and Outdoor Group Games, Storytelling activities, Puppet Theatre and so on.

#### **3.1.4 SCHOOL UNIT IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

The Department of Primary Education sets as a perennial pursuit the maximization of learning outcomes through quality teaching and learning. Within the framework of the policy of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth each school is called to operate more autonomously, responsibly and democratically in order to achieve the maximization of learning outcomes. Each school unit is called upon to define its own emphasized goals, which will be adapted to the particular needs and requirements of pupils, teachers and the school, in general.

Each school develops a School Unit Improvement Plan (S.U.I.P.), focused on the real needs and particularities of the school's pupils and teachers. At the same time, it chooses a topic of focus, based on the needs of its teachers for professional development and the specific situation (specific setting of the school, pupils' population, parents, and so on).

A key part of the S.U.I.P. is the Action Plan for the Teachers' Professional Development, through which the school unit organizes all the professional learning actions that are planned. It is recommended that the Action Plan for Professional Development has common goals with the wider S.U.I.P., of which it is a constituent part. The schools participating in the intensive Professional Development Support Programme receive support from officers of the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute, while the rest of the schools rely on their own resources for the planning and implementation of the programme.

#### **3.1.5 CLASS TUTOR**

The Class Tutor facilitates the inclusion of all the pupils in the classroom. At the same time, he / she seeks to develop and consolidate a positive relationship between the teacher and the pupil, creating the necessary condition for the learning process. The Class Tutor acts as an adult model, who with his / her behaviour and the positive relationship he / she develops with the pupils, can guide them, influence and differentiate their negative attitudes and dysfunctional behaviours.

As Class Tutors, in Primary School may be designated the teachers who undertake the most teaching periods which include the teaching periods of Greek or Mathematics. For the first time, in 2021 - 2022 school year, the duties and responsibilities of the Class Tutor in Pre-primary and in Special Units have been determined. In addition, the duties and responsibilities of the Class Tutor for Primary Schools have been updated. Class Tutors collaborate with the teachers who teach other subjects in their class, as well

as the head teacher, undertake and carry out administrative responsibilities related to his/her department and inform parents about the progress and behaviour of their children.

### **3.1.6 “SCHOOL COUNSELLOR” IN PRIMARY EDUCATION**

In the 2021 - 2022 school year, the Department of Primary Education has introduced school counselling, as part of a “National Strategy for the Prevention and Management of School Violence 2018 - 2022”. For that purpose, an action plan was developed and the pilot implementation was initiated.

The role of the School Counsellor is to provide counselling support to primary education pupils, identify and support children who face serious personal, family and social difficulties, always in collaboration with their parents / guardians and other related services. The main goal is to strengthen children in the development of a positive self-image, attitudes and skills, improve their well-being and, consequently, achieve better learning outcomes, in a safe, humane and pleasant school environment.

School counselling was implemented in two Primary schools, one in the Lefkosia and one in the Lemesos. Two permanent teachers with guidance / counselling qualifications were selected and placed as school counsellors. As members of the teaching staff, each one devoted part of their teaching time in individual or group counselling and through different intervention activities and appropriate approaches they guided, supported, and monitored pupils in dealing with the various problems they might face. At the same time, they collaborated with pupils’ parents and guardians as well as with their colleagues and together they worked on issues related to personal, social and communication skills, effective management of emotions, promotion of self-esteem and, in general, the improvement of the psychosocial climate at school.

At the end of the 2021 - 2022 school year, the results of the evaluation of the introduction of school counselling, by the Centre for Educational Research and Evaluation were very positive. Specifically, through the responses of the school members of the two participating schools, it became evident that, school counselling has contributed satisfactorily to the improvement of the well-being of the pupils, the prevention of violence and delinquency problems and the development of a better school climate.

### **3.1.7 INCREASE OF THE PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOL AND PRIMARY SCHOOL STARTING AGE**

The Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth reviewed the Pre-primary School and Primary School starting age as part of its continuing efforts for quality improvement and upgrading of the Cyprus Educational System. After researching the issue of school starting age, the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth prepared a relevant Policy Document. As a result of this effort, and after taking into consideration the views expressed by stakeholders, the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth put forward a proposal to the Council of Ministers. On the 9<sup>th</sup> of January, 2018, the Council of Ministers decided (Decision No. 84.078) to maintain the age of compulsory school attendance for children in Pre-primary School at the age of four years and eight months, as the case is currently. At the same time, it was decided to gradually increase the school starting age for:

- (a) Pre-primary class from the age of four years and eight months to the age of five.
- (b) Primary School from the age of five years and eight months to the age of six.

Consequently, all children should complete the specific ages, before September 1<sup>st</sup> of the year during which they will attend school. For the Pre-primary class, the increase was gradually applied from the school year 2019 - 2020 and concluded the school year 2020 - 2021, while for the 1<sup>st</sup> Grade of Primary School the increase was gradually applied from the school year 2020 - 2021 and concluded the school year 2021 - 2022.



A series of research findings from both international and local research, as well as the experience of teachers and parents, suggest that at the age of five and eight months, the current age of admission to primary school, some children, mostly boys, are still not mature enough to be able to follow the primary school programme. At the same time, the learning readiness of children of this age, as well as their physical and cognitive development, vary considerably. This change, which only takes into account the children's own interests, is expected to bring about many benefits in the future. The increase of the starting age has been promoted for educational reasons only, since it will enable children to study both in Pre-primary as well as in Primary School, with greater learning and emotional readiness and maturity. This change is also one of the preventive measures that can be adopted so that the percentages of pupils at risk of remaining linguistically and mathematically illiterate are reduced and school success is promoted for as many pupils as possible.

The change was gradually implemented so as to give all stakeholders the chance to prepare for the transition to take place as smoothly as possible. This provided adequate preparation time for all parents.

The Curriculum of Pre-primary Education has been redesigned and enriched in order to provide children new learning experiences, according to their age.

### **3.1.8 ASSESSMENT OF PUPILS IN PRE-PRIMARY AND PRIMARY EDUCATION**

Pupil assessment is one of the main policies which are systematically promoted by the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth. Towards this aim, a Special Committee was formed and a proposal for a Unified Pupil Assessment System was submitted. The underlying philosophy of the proposal follows the modern pedagogical approaches in the area of assessment and aims at offering regular feedback and support to pupils with the ultimate goal being the improvement of the learning outcomes.

During 2019 - 2020, teachers in Pre-primary and Primary Education were informed and attended seminars so that they could proceed with the implementation of the new policy. The new system emphasizes formative assessment and introduces the Pupil Assessment Records, where each teacher records and monitors pupils' progress, so that he / she can offer suitable feedback and better plan his / her teaching based on the needs of his / her pupils.

Another principle of the new system is the School Progress Report. This report indicates the pupils' level of achievement as regards the expected learning outcomes. It is completed for all Pre-primary and Primary School pupils, twice a year (in January and in June). The report is kept at the schools and forms the base of teacher-parent meetings which take place twice a year, after the reports are completed, and focus on the pupils' progress.

The new pupil assessment system was implemented during 2020 - 2021 and 2021 - 2022 school years, even though there were many difficulties at schools, due to the pandemic. Nevertheless, the implementation of the new policy regarding monitoring pupil's progress has received positive feedback in both Pre-primary and Primary Education. Thus, the Department of Primary Education is moving towards the continuation of this initiative, which undoubtedly, contributes to the effectiveness of the teaching learning process and the improvement of the learning outcomes.

### **3.1.9 EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES AND ACTIONS IN PRIMARY EDUCATION**

#### **3.1.9.1 School and Social Inclusion Actions + (DRA.S.E.+)**

The Programme DRA.S.E.+ is co-funded by the European Union Social Fund and the Republic of Cyprus (€60 million for 2021 - 2027). It is considered the flagship project for the Cyprus 2021 - 2022

planning. It aims at promoting social inclusion, mitigating the negative impact of the economic crisis on education, and eliminating discrimination in education. During the school year 2021 - 2022, it was implemented in all levels of education (52 Pre-primary Schools, 92 Primary Schools, 16 Gymnasias, eight Lycea and two Technical and Vocational Education and Training schools). It effectively educates and supports pupils with immigrant background and covered the 25,5% of the pupil population for the school year 2021 - 2022. School selection was based on objectively measurable social and economic criteria.

At the beginning of the school year 2021 - 2022, Operation Guides for the DRA.S.E.+ Programme for both Primary and Secondary Education were sent to schools. These Guides clearly stated the benefits of the Programme as well as the duties of all involved (Head teachers, Central Coordinators, Local Coordinators, DRA.S.E.+ Teachers). Since the year 2021 - 2022, time has been given to the Primary Head teachers for Local Coordination.

Objectives:

- Direct support for pupils (and their families) who are at risk of discrimination or have been particularly affected by the consequences of the financial crisis.
- Promote equality in opportunities.
- Secure social welfare and social integration of pupils at risk of exclusion (immigrants & of low or no income population).
- Psychological support to vulnerable pupils and their families.
- Decrease early school leaving.
- Improve learning outcomes.
- Reduce school failure and delinquency.
- Enhance social cohesion, by preventing social marginalization and social exclusion of vulnerable groups of pupils.
- Improve employment prospects.
- Strengthen the possibility of pupils participating in alternative forms of education.

Programme Actions:

- Provision of morning and afternoon programmes to reinforce learning and creativity of pupils and their families.
- Greek language courses for immigrant pupils and families.
- Providing Additional Psychosocial support for pupils and their families (personal support, wellbeing workshops and so on).
- Psychosocial support for pupils and their families through the establishment of "Information and Social-Emotional Support Centers".
- Supply technological school equipment and educational tools / material.
- Funding pupils' activities through the programme "EAYP" that aims at promoting the physical, mental and social wellbeing of pupils, enhancing their social skills and critical thinking, upgrading their social and natural environment.
- Seminars and training for teachers.

Expected Outcomes:

- Improvement of Learning Outcomes.
- Support for vulnerable groups of the pupil population who are particularly affected by the effects of the economic crisis.
- Enhancing counseling and career guidance for pupils.

- Psychological support of pupils in their transition to different school environments.
- Support pupils on issues of self-determination, autonomy, individuality, moral principles, moral dilemmas, social justice, equality and social acceptance.
- Support of pupils who face the danger to remain functionally illiterate or graduate from school without the essential competencies for living and life-long learning.
- Prevention and treatment of delinquency issues, school failure and early abandonment.
- Enhancement of consulting services and vocational guidance.
- Support of pupils with low social competencies in order to ensure their inclusion in the wider society.
- Support of migrant families in learning Greek and improving their social skills.
- 950 new employment positions for young professionals.
- The project will help to make use of the available Community funds due to its high degree of maturity.

### **3.1.9.2 Feeding pupils in need**

The Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth continued to provide breakfast during the school year 2021-2022 to public school pupils in need from all levels of education.

The aim of the Programme is to secure that children from disadvantaged families are offered a nutritious breakfast so as to minimize the possibility of detrimental consequences from possible malnutrition which can affect not only the pupils' school performance but also their overall physical and mental health and can potentially lead to social exclusion and increase the risk of early school leaving.

The children eligible to participate in the programme were selected based on financial and social criteria, such as the following:

- Families who receive the Guaranteed Minimum Income.
- Unemployed parents.
- Orphans.
- Single parent families.
- Multi-child families (families over 3 children).
- Families with an especially inadequate income due to other reasons.

The number of the beneficiary pupils in Pre-primary and Primary Education amounted to an average of about 7500 (approximately 12% of the pupil population). The programme which was co-funded by European and National Social Funds was implemented from the very first school day of the 2021 - 2022 school year.

Despite the special conditions that prevailed during the school year 2021 - 2022 due to COVID-19, the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth, in partnership with the canteen administrators, the schools' principals and staff, implemented the above programme successfully, so that pupils in need would receive their daily breakfast with the highest possible level of discretion, confidentiality and respect to their dignity.

### **3.1.9.3 Support to primary schools with a large number / percentage of children with increased risk for functional illiteracy**

The prevention of functional illiteracy, the early detection and support of children with increased risk for language and mathematical illiteracy are priorities for the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth, at all three levels of education. Supporting pupils with increased risk for functional illiteracy, especially in primary school, is of particularly importance.

Each year, all the pupils of Grade 3 are assessed on their basic knowledge and skills in Greek and Mathematics through tests developed by the Educational Research and Evaluation Centre. Once the tests are marked by the Educational Research and Evaluation Centre, the results are sent to each school informing them of pupils who show increased risk of functional illiteracy. At the same time, parents of these children are informed by the school head teacher about the results as well as about the support practices that teachers implement during their lessons.

The Department of Primary Education, through relevant circulars, guides the schools for the actions they must take to prevent and confront functional illiteracy. Specifically, classroom teachers support the children with increased chances of functional illiteracy in Greek and Mathematics, through differentiated teaching.

In addition to the above, the Department of Primary Education has proceeded with the pilot implementation of a support programme, in a specific number of schools that have over time, a large number / percentage of children with increased chances of linguistic and mathematical illiteracy, based on the results of the Educational Research and Evaluation Centre. Thus, in the 2021 - 2022 school year, a Literacy Committee was re-established by the Department of Primary Education aiming at developing an educational policy to prevent and deal with the risk of functional illiteracy and provide support and early intervention.

This programme was implemented in 38 primary schools, all over Cyprus, in 2021 - 2022 and depending on the numbers of children at risk of illiteracy, time was allocated (15, 20 or 24 periods per week) for remedial teaching in the lessons of Greek, Mathematics or both. For this purpose, the “Functional Illiteracy Remedial Teaching Programme Implementation Guide” has been prepared, which includes instructions and recommendations that facilitate the implementation of the programme at the school level. Each school then, proceeded to allocate the available remedial teaching periods to three teachers, who teach Greek and Mathematics in the general class. These remedial teachers support children of 1<sup>st</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> Grade that have been identified at risk of illiteracy on certain periods through the week, based on an withdrawal programme that they develop. At the same time, they adapt educational tools, programmes and methodological approaches and other practices, thus creating a supporting school learning environment where remedial teaching, as a pedagogical and intervention action, is an important priority.

#### **3.1.9.4 Promotion of Reading for Pleasure**

The promotion of reading for pleasure among children is an important aim of the Department of Primary Education. All schools should act as places for cultivating a reading culture and as readers’ communities and should create people who see reading books as a basic need.

In March 2022, aiming to further support schools, the Committee for the Promotion of Reading for Pleasure in Schools and Society published a circular explaining the importance of developing the love of reading in children and listing activities, which can be chosen and / or be adapted according to the level of education, the context and the needs of each school, regarding the following topics:

- A. Developing a culture of reading for pleasure.
- B. Configuring the school space and classrooms in ways that promote reading for pleasure.
- C. School Libraries.
- D. Lending Library.
- E. Creative Activities in relation to reading books.
- F. Reading Clubs.
- G. Visits to schools of authors / illustrators
- H. Visits to libraries and bookstores.
- I. Reading for pleasure activities with the participation of parents.
- J. Cooperation of the school with the community where it is located, to promote reading for pleasure.

On the Committee's website (<http://filanagnosia.schools.ac.cy/index.php/el/>), schools can find good practices and actions to achieve the goal of cultivating reading for pleasure in children, as well as other relevant material. Many schools submitted descriptions of their activities, with accompanying photographs, which were posted on the website.

During the school year 2021 - 2022, due to the measures to deal with the pandemic and the implementation of the Health Protocol, limited actions were taken, which mainly concerned the professional development of teachers. In particular:

- Teacher training about ways to promote reading for pleasure at school and teaching methodologies for Literature, in collaboration with the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute and online workshops about the writing of pupil's and youth literature, in collaboration with Frederick University.
- A series of online workshops offered to teachers by authors of children's literature about the creative use of their books in the classroom, familiarizing them with the design of relevant activities.

Additionally, the publication of the 'Schools' Book "Fairy Tales in the Time Machine", with stories written by children, was completed, a reading for pleasure activity, in twelve primary schools throughout Cyprus.

In order to implement the goal to foster reading, schools developed activities, taking into account the Health Protocol, such as the following:

- Lending library and its continuous renewal of books.
- An online book exhibition, in cooperation with the Parents' Association.
- Online meetings with writers and book illustrators.
- Conferences on relevant themes.
- Book presentations by pupils.
- Creative activities with books.
- Creative reading of a whole book.
- Ten-minute independent reading, daily.
- Creation of magazines and newspapers to promote love for reading.
- Carrying out relevant research.
- Organization and / or participation in relevant competitions.

### **3.1.9.5 Programme for the smooth transition of pupils from Primary Education to Secondary Education**

The Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth has set as an important priority, the smooth transition of pupils from Primary to Secondary Education. This is because the transition from Primary to Secondary Education constitutes an important change in the learning path of children, in the context of which they are called, not only to adapt to a new school environment, but also manage a series of emotional, social and educational issues that arise. The Ministry, during the previous years, has made significant efforts to help children during this difficult phase of their life and has also provided support to parents / guardians who are anxious about this significant change in their children's life.

In this context the Ministry, proceeded to establish an Interdepartmental Committee for the Smooth Transition of pupils from Primary to Secondary Education, thus aiming at revising the policy for the smooth transition from Primary to Secondary Education and the coordination of actions. The Interdepartmental Committee has developed a detailed Action Plan, which began to be implemented from the school year 2020 - 2021.

Various actions were undertaken to promote the smooth transition policy. The "Guide to Smooth Transition from Primary to Secondary School" has been revised and is available for use from the school year 2021 - 2022 in all Primary and Secondary Schools, both in electronic and printed form. The revised Guide promotes more effectively the fostering of the necessary skills, both in the social / emotional as

well as in the learning / cognitive field and responds to the needs of distance education. As part of the ongoing support to schools to implement the smooth transition policy, a website has also been created, which contains important information that can support the planning and implementation of a smooth transition programme for children. In this context, every year, targeted training is offered to the teachers of the 6<sup>th</sup> Grade of Primary and the 1<sup>st</sup> Grade of Secondary School, for the head teachers and the inspectors of Primary and Secondary General Education.

### 3.1.9.6 Art Education Programmes

The Department of Primary Education, continued the implementation of Art Education Programmes in art galleries and museums in Lefkosia, Lemesos and Pafos addressed to Primary Education pupils.

These education programmes offer teachers the opportunity to develop creative and educational activities through structured theme units and rich supporting materials, which are published online at the web portal of the MoESY:

<http://eikad.schools.ac.cy/index.php/el/programmemata/ekpaideftika-programmemata-mouseia-pinakothikes>

During the 2021 - 2022 school year, three educational programmes operated, as follows:

- Art Education Programme “The childlike world of Gallery” at the National Gallery of Contemporary Cypriot Art, Lefkosia.
- Art Education Programme “Our Island through the artists’ pallet” at the Municipal Art Gallery, Lemesos.
- Art Education Programme “Searching for animals in the gallery” at the Pafos Municipal Art Gallery.

### 3.1.9.7 Museum Education Programmes

The Museum Education Programmes which are implemented under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth, have been running since 1996 in the museums of the non-occupied areas of Cyprus and address all Primary Education pupils.

During the 2021 - 2022 school year, nine educational programmes operated, as follows:

City	Title of Educational Programme	Grade	Museum
LEFKOSIA	“Deus Ex machina”	4 <sup>th</sup>	Cyprus Museum
	“Life within the walls”	5 <sup>th</sup> - 6 <sup>th</sup>	Venetian Walls of Lefkosia
LEMESOS	“Kyprida Aphrodite”	4 <sup>th</sup>	Lemesos Archaeological Museum
VASA KOILANIOU	“Grandparent’s school”	1 <sup>st</sup> - 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Museum of Education - POED
	“Palaska’s secrets”	3 <sup>rd</sup> - 4 <sup>th</sup>	
	“Discovering the school of yesterday”	5 <sup>th</sup> - 6 <sup>th</sup>	
LARNAKA	“Pebble by pebble... creating a treasure”	5 <sup>th</sup> - 6 <sup>th</sup>	Holy church of the Virgin of Aggeloktisti in the village of Kiti.
AMMOCHOSTOS	“To the sea-kissed Ayia Napa, open your sails, Ship of Kyrenia!”	4 <sup>th</sup>	THALASSA Municipal Museum in Agia Napa
PAFOS	“In the footsteps of Goddess Aphrodite”	4 <sup>th</sup> - 5 <sup>th</sup>	Local Archaeological Museum of PalePafos and the PalePafos Archaeological Site in Kouklia village

### **3.1.9.8 Environmental Programmes**

The following Environmental Education Programmes were implemented, during the school year 2021-2022, through the Curriculum for E.E.- E.S.D., on an optional basis:

- “Eco Schools Programme”.
- “Learning about Forests”.
- “Tiganokinisi” (management of oil waste).
- “Young Reporters for the Environment”.

### **3.1.9.9 Physical Education Programmes**

The only programme that ran during the school year 2021 - 2022, was:

- “Olympic Programme - Water Sports Days” held at the end of the school year when there were limited restrictions for COVID-19. The Department of Primary Education in cooperation with the Cyprus Sport Organization, the Cyprus Olympic Committee and the Sport Federations organized the water sport days. The aim of this programme was the participation of children in as many water sports as possible aiming at promoting positive attitudes towards physical activity and developing lifelong exercise habits.

None of the rest of the Physical Education programmes of the Ministry ran during the school year 2021 – 2022, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **3.1.9.10 STEM Programme in Primary Education**

During the school year 2021 - 2022, the implementation of STEM Programme continued on a pilot basis in eight primary schools in all the districts of Cyprus, after the suspension of the previous school year due to the pandemic.

The term STEM (acronym of the words Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) describes the educational policy and direction, which promotes an integrated interdisciplinary teaching process involving pupils in activities that provide them with opportunities to exploit knowledge, processes and practices from the four constituent fields in order to encounter real world problems and situations.

STEM activities took place in two continuous (forty minutes teaching periods) per week, after the end of the morning lessons (1:05 pm), and were attended by pupils of Grade 6 that opted to participate in the programme.

The teaching staff, consisted of teachers with advanced knowledge and skills in Science, Technology, Engineering και Mathematics, attended an online training session before the beginning of the programme.

### **3.1.9.11 Cyprus CLIL Coordinating Centre - Content and Language Integrated Learning**

The Cyprus CLIL Coordinating Centre was established in 2015 with the main goal of promoting and implementing the CLIL approach in Pre-primary and Primary Education. CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) is a dual focus approach, where the teaching of a school subject is implemented through a foreign language (in the case of Cyprus, English). It has been included in the New Curricula as an alternative teaching approach since 2011.

During the school year 2021 - 2022, 72 Primary Schools (103 teachers / 3853 Primary School pupils) and 123 Pre-primary Schools (226 Pre-primary School teachers / 4520 Pre-primary School pupils) applied the CLIL approach.

The CLIL Coordinating Centre carried out the following activities during 2021 - 2022:

- Supporting teachers who implement the CLIL approach.
- Training for teachers who implement the CLIL approach.
- Developing educational materials in collaboration with teachers who implement the approach and subject advisors.
- Informing teachers, parents and the general public.
- Promoting and expanding the CLIL approach in Pre-primary and Primary Education.
- Organising European projects.
- Cooperating with similar Centres and Institutions abroad.

## 3.2 SECONDARY GENERAL EDUCATION

### 3.2.1 NEW PROGRAMMES IN SECONDARY GENERAL EDUCATION

During the 2021 - 2022 school year, the implementation of the following programmes began in Secondary General Education schools:

- Pilot implementation of the policy for the teaching of two foreign languages in one Secondary Education School per province in accordance with the EU guidelines. In particular, the compulsory teaching of the French language was introduced in all Gymnasia classes, starting with the second grade of the Gymnasium during the 2021 - 2022 school year, with the aim of extending this policy to all classes.
- Operation of the Pancyprion Secondary Education School as a six-grade school of Secondary General Education, which includes a Full-Day School of Interdisciplinary Learning with an emphasis on Greek Language and Culture and on Positive Sciences - STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics). The aim of the institution of the All-Day School of Interdisciplinary Learning, which is expected to be extended to other schools of Secondary General Education, is the cultivation and development of the skills of the 21st century.
- Creation of a Center for Classical Studies and Greek Letters in the Severio Library of the Pancyprion Secondary Education School, which utilizes the rich scientific material of the Pancyprion School Archive and the historical relics of its Museums.

### 3.2.2 HOME ECONOMICS IN THE GYMNASIUM AND LYCEUM

The content of the subject is based on the Health Education Curriculum (HEC) (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2010), which aims at “protecting and promoting the mental and physical health of pupils, as well as their social well-being, both by developing their social skills and critical thinking, and by upgrading their social and natural environment” (HEC, 2010). The HEC promotes a process that is based on scientific principles and employs planned learning opportunities that enable learners, whether acting as individuals or as a whole, to make informed decisions and take conscious action to address issues affecting their health.

The teachers of Home Economics provide a variety of interrelated educational activities based on the pupils' pre-existing knowledge and skills, thus adapting and adjusting the content of their teaching according to the diversity and differentiated needs of the pupils.



The general objectives of the Home Economics subject are analysed on the basis of the grouping of classes into three levels in order to achieve unification from primary education up to the third class of the Lyceum. The education provided in Secondary General Education aims at promoting the all-round development of pupils based on their potential at this age and the demands they have to face in life. In particular, through the subject of Home Economics, pupils are given the opportunity to broaden their value system, complement and combine the acquisition of knowledge with the relevant social issues and challenges, adopt healthy behaviours and habits in their daily lives and better understand their potential, aptitudes, skills and interests.

The main teaching approaches applied in Home Economics are: Action-oriented research work, Investigation, Problem solving, Case study of real or imaginary cases, Review through interviews or questionnaires, Educational visits, Discussion - Debate, Discussion circle, Educational games, Role playing, Simulation, Improvisation, Utilisation of Home Economics workshop (development of active learning skills), Use of audio-visual multimedia. The ultimate goal of the Home Economics is to develop and improve healthy lifestyle changes.

Within the framework of the Home Economics, several actions are implemented. Some of them are the following:

- Use of recyclable materials.
- Participation in pupil competitions.
- Organisation of experiential workshops on nutrition education.
- Organisation of experiential workshops on sex education.
- Bullying-prevention and intervention classroom activities.
- Implementation of traffic education and road safety programmes.
- Cooperation between the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth, and in particular the Home Economics subject and Lidl in promoting healthy cooking and improving healthy eating habits.
- Participation in a digital project implemented through the Erasmus+ European programme on the topic of healthy eating - physical activity - leisure.
- Participation in the European Programme "Youth Mission Initiative".
- Additionally, the Home Economics Inspector's office, coordinates, participates and implements the following actions / committees:
  - School feeding programme.
  - Implementation of the Strategy for the Sexual and Reproductive Health of Young People in Cyprus.
  - Vaccination and Breastfeeding.
  - School Canteens.
  - Health Education and Citizenship Committee (HECC).
  - Prevention and Treatment of Child Sexual Abuse.
  - Traffic Education Programme..
  - Karaiskakio Foundation.

#### NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN THE FRAMEWORK OF HOME ECONOMICS

The topic of nutrition aims at instilling pupils' healthy nutrition habits, so that they adopt a healthy, adequate and well-balanced nutrition habit through their lifestyle.

#### TRAFFIC EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN THE FRAMEWORK OF HOME ECONOMICS

The Programme aims at developing positive attitudes and skills and raising road safety awareness, while fostering the desirable behaviour on the part of pupils, that is necessary for safe traffic participation as a pedestrian, a bicyclist, a motorcyclist and a driver.

#### SEX EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN THE FRAMEWORK OF HOME ECONOMICS

The topics of Family Planning, Sexual and Reproductive Health, taught in the Gymnasium (compulsory) and in the second and third class of the Lyceum (orientation subject) in Home Economics / Health

Education, approach comprehensive sex education, and achieve a balance between the acquisition of the following: Attitudes, Skills, Knowledge.

In Home Economics / Health Education, the topic of sex education is not limited to the physical consequences of certain behaviours, but sexuality is addressed through its physical, biological, psycho-emotional and social dimensions, taking into account culture, social gender, as well as the rights of the individual related to his/her sexual and reproductive health.

### **3.2.3 COMPUTER SCIENCE COURSES IN SECONDARY EDUCATION**

During the past few years, the syllabi of all Information Technology (IT) courses taught in Secondary Education have been updated in order to meet European standards and current trends. Teaching of these courses at the Gymnasium and Lyceum aims at engaging pupils in meaningful learning using the computer as a problem-solving tool.

In all Lycea, depending on the curriculum needs, there are 130 IT labs for the teaching of all computer science courses. Each lab contains 18 computers and a printer. In all Gymnasia, depending on the curriculum needs, there are 181 IT labs with 13 computers and a printer per lab. Furthermore, a video projector is installed in all IT labs. The video projector is connected to the instructor's computer. All computers in each IT lab are interconnected to form a local network and are connected to the Internet via an ADSL line.

In all Gymnasia, the course of Informatics is compulsory and is taught two periods per week in each of the three classes. Part of the curriculum covers four basic modules of the international standard European Computer Driving License (ECDL). At the same time, from the school year 2016 - 2017 and based on a decision of the Council of Ministers, pupils are offered the opportunity to take, on a voluntary basis, the respective exams and obtain the international standard certification of IT skills.

The following actions were held in cooperation with various organizations such as the University of Cyprus (UCY), the Cyprus Computer Society, the Society of Computer Science Teachers in Secondary Education, the Cyprus Telecommunication Authority, and so on:

- Cyprus Olympiad in Informatics. At the end of this process, pupils were selected to represent Cyprus at the International Olympiad in Informatics competition, and the Balkan Olympiad in Informatics.
- One-day seminar about Informatics.
- Computing and algorithmic thinking competition (BEBRAS).
- Cyprus Cyber Security Challenge (CCSC).

### **3.2.4 MUSIC EDUCATION**

#### **A. MUSIC SCHOOLS**

The Cyprus Music Schools were first established in 2009 and in 2016 they were expanded to cover both Gymnasium and Lyceum level. The revised and expanded Music School curriculum offers a more balanced music programme, thus, creating favorable conditions for learning. The Music School programme is offered to successful applicants on a full scholarship basis. All sixth class Primary School pupils are eligible to apply for the entrance examination.

Based on an all-day school format, music schools are integrated in the state educational system. In addition to the official school curriculum, the music school programme includes additional music subjects in all classes, offered as afternoon classes. All Music Schools are hosted in selected Gymnasia and Lycea and are provided with music specific facilities and equipment.

#### **B. MUSIC EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES**

- «Zypriotishes Galakonzert» in collaboration with the Cyprus Cultural Center in Vienna and the Cyprus Youth Symphony Orchestra

This annual event is organized by the Cyprus Cultural Center in Vienna in collaboration with the MoESY and the Cyprus Youth Symphony Orchestra (CyYSO) under the artistic direction of the renowned Cypriot soloist Kyros Patsalidis (baritone). The concert takes place at the Wiener Musikverein in Vienna, Austria.

- **1st Pancyprian Instrumental Performance Competition**

In 2022, the Pancyprian Instrumental Performance Competition was inaugurated aiming at promoting the Cyprus Music Schools' activities and providing specifically Music School pupils with the opportunity to increase their level of stage skills and experience, showcasing their talent, providing motivation for further musical skills development and enhancing the performance / interpretation of musical works.

- **Educational Activities in collaboration with the Cyprus Symphony Orchestra (CySO)**

Educational programmes are offered by the CySO for pupils and their teachers on a yearly basis. Educational concerts, open rehearsals and school specific educational projects are designed to promote musical knowledge, musical skills and creativity, aiming at connecting school music education with community music, fostering a diverse and comprehensive education for future artists, and increasing public participation in arts.

- **Educational Activities in collaboration with the Pharos Arts Foundation**

The Pharos Arts Foundation, in the context of its Music Education Programme, presents educational concerts, master-classes and music workshops for the benefit of pupils of state and private schools from different ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds.

- **Annual Pupil Song Composition Festival "Marios Tokas – Kostas Montis" in collaboration with "Photos Photiades" Foundation**

The Festival, which is co-organised by the Department of Secondary General Education and the non-profit "Photos Photiades" Foundation, features three categories: Gymnasium, Lyceum and Music School and is open to the participation of secondary education pupils from all over Cyprus. This action, which aims at promoting cultural heritage awareness and enhancing pupil creativity and new cultural production, is dedicated to two renowned Cypriot artists, the songwriter Marios Tokas and the poet Kostas Montis.

- **Wind Ensemble Programme**

In 2022, the instrumental community music programme continued its implementation, aiming at offering the opportunity to pupils with particular interest and potential in music, developing performance skills on wind instruments. By offering young people the opportunity to learn how to play a musical instrument, this programme aspires to encourage life-long music participation.

- **MusEdX2022**

In April 2022, the MusEdX event was organized for the second time, after its inauguration in 2021. This event is inspired by successful contemporary international events, such as TEDx, Ignite, IdeaCity and so on. Young people from 12 to 23 years old are invited to present live on stage an original and very interesting idea, directly or indirectly connected with the music, aiming at engaging and moving the general public. This unique event aims at offering the younger generation the opportunity to develop the 21st century skills such as personal development, communication and entrepreneurial skills, as well as promoting their creative ideas.

- **Participation in the 5th International Music Olympiad**

The following pupils participated successfully in the 5th International Music Olympiad organized online in May 2022 by the Ljubljana University and Academy of Music, Slovenia:

Markos Kalavas – Pangiyprio Gymnasium – Lefkosia Music School: silver medal and special prize for Exceptional Musical Knowledge.

Maribel Kassianidou – Laniteio Gymnasium - Lemesos Music School: bronze medal.

Evanthia Harilaou – Laniteio Lyceum - Lemesos Music School: bronze medal.

Charalambos Konstantinou – Nikolaideio Gymnasium - Pafos Music School: bronze medal.

Pavlos Ellinas – Lyceum A' Ethn. Makarios III Pafos - Pafos Music School: bronze medal.

### **3.2.5 THE LITERACY PROGRAMME IN SECONDARY EDUCATION**

The Literacy Programme operates for all the Gymnasium classes. It consists of the Morning and the Afternoon Programmes. Pupils of Class A' and B' attend the Programme during the morning school hours, whilst the pupils of Class C' attend the Programme in the afternoon. The morning programme runs under the responsibility of the Special Education Office, whilst the Afternoon Programme runs under the responsibility of the State Institutes for Further Education, which operates under the auspices of the Department of Secondary General Education. 1115 pupils were enrolled in the morning Literacy Programme during the school year 2021 - 2022, being taught for a total of up to 490 periods.

### **3.2.6 ACTIVITIES IN PHYSICS FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2021–2022**

#### **A research paper competition for the Science of Meteorology**

The MoESY in collaboration with the Cyprus Meteorological Association had announced the annual writing research paper competition on a voluntary basis. The competition was held in the memory of Poyiadji Maria (daughter of Mr. Andreas Poyiadjis, former member of the Cyprus Meteorological Association and Mrs Anthi Poyiadjis) a chemistry teacher who lost her life during the tragic plane crash in August 2005. The special theme of the competition for the school year 2021 – 2022 was: "Study and comparison of past and recent temperatures, time series of meteorological stations, and drawing conclusions. Proposals and suggestions".

The aim of the competition was to bring together pupils attending secondary schools in the public and private sector. This was done with the use of the scientific / research methods and aimed at promoting the establishment of an environmental consciousness and the development of an environmental culture in collaboration with partners from the community. Additionally, the aim was to make pupils and their teachers aware of issues related to current environmental problems.

Meanwhile, pupils were involved in all stages of the research process. Those were the design of methodology, the formulation of hypotheses, the collection and analysis of the existing data using scientific research methods, data processing, and interpretation of results, conclusions, hypothesis testing, practical and theoretical applications.

The research went through an evaluation and the two best in each category: (a) Gymnasium, (b) Lyceum/Technical School) were awarded cash prizes, while for the third-place teams received an honorary award. All the groups that were distinguished received awards, as well as the supervised teachers and the schools whose pupils were distinguished.

#### **Training Seminars for Physics Teachers**

The Physics Inspectorate of Secondary General Education of the MoESY in collaboration with the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute organized training seminars to train teachers on issues related to the exploitation of experiments in physics and the use of digital technologies in teaching and learning.

The seminars were conducted in five online meetings and the participants were over sixty teachers, who teach in public and private secondary schools. The participants had the opportunity to discuss with the lecturers about the Physics lesson and exchange ideas.

### **3.2.7 THE CHEMISTRY COURSE IN SECONDARY EDUCATION**

The Chemistry curriculum in secondary education institutions is founded upon a humanistic philosophy, with a central focus on the holistic development of pupils and their specialization in secondary education. The curriculum design takes into account orientation groups and course selection, while drawing upon theoretical frameworks and international expertise in programme development. This approach ensures that the curriculum prioritizes continuous improvement and yields optimal outcomes.

The curriculum content places equal emphasis on various types of learning, including the acquisition of information that has the inherent potential to generate new knowledge, the development of cognitive and practical skills, the cultivation of strategic and critical thinking abilities, and the nurturing of positive attitudes and values. It encompasses all the competencies recommended in European education systems, with a particular emphasis on fostering active citizenship within a modern multicultural society. Furthermore, it aims at cultivating awareness against racism and intolerance, fostering respect for human rights, promoting environmental protection, and encouraging sustainable development.

The teacher assumes a pivotal role as a catalyst for educational success, particularly in terms of ensuring the quality of school life and the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Therefore, the primary goal and priority lie in the training and professional development of teachers, facilitated through flexible training opportunities within the school unit, classroom settings, and through distance and live seminars. Moreover, in order to achieve the course objectives, priority is given to the continuous enhancement and enrichment of Chemistry teaching materials, digital upgrades to the course, and the monitoring and improvement of the infrastructure in Chemistry laboratories. In Secondary education, in Cyprus, schools are equipped with at least one fully equipped Chemistry laboratory, operating in compliance with the current legislation on Safety and Health at Work, as well as guidelines and regulations regarding the safe use and storage of chemical substances in laboratories.

#### **Actions taken during the 2021 - 2022 academic year:**

##### **Procurement of Chemistry Laboratory Equipment for Secondary Education**

Compilation of a comprehensive list specifying the necessary instruments and reagents, followed by diligent monitoring of the contract implementation resulting from the tender process. Collaboration with schools, overseeing and approving the final allocation of equipment sent to each institution.

##### **Acquisition of ChemDraw Programme Software Licenses**

Acquisition of licenses for teachers in secondary education to utilize the ChemDraw programme software, accompanied by systematic training on its operation and usage.

##### **Pupil Competition on "Chemistry for Humanity and the Environment" in secondary education.**

The competition aims at facilitating pupil engagement with scientific and research methodologies, while concurrently promoting environmental awareness. Additionally, it highlights the significant role of Chemistry in everyday human life.

##### **Chemistry Olympiads**

The Pancypriot Union of Chemical Scientists (PEEX), with the support of the Directorate of Secondary General Education, organizes Chemistry Olympiads for pupils in the first, second, and third year of the Lyceum. Outstanding pupils have the opportunity to participate in international Olympiads, as well as Pan-European Chemistry and Science Competitions.

#### **Teacher Training**

##### **Chemistry in Education Conference**

The 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Chemistry in Education Conference, themed "Chemistry and Health: New Challenges and Developments in Education," was jointly organized by the Directorate of Secondary General Education, the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute, the Department of Communication and Internet Studies at the Cyprus University of Technology (TEPAK), the Department of Chemistry at the University of Cyprus (PC), the Pancyprian Union of Chemical Scientists (PEEX), and the Association of Chemistry Teachers O.E.L.M.E.K. (SYHIKA).

##### **Seminars via MS Teams**

In addition to training programmes organized by the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute, a series of seminars and meetings were conducted to enhance the preparation of Chemistry teachers. These initiatives aim at improving the quality of learning experiences and achieving higher levels of learning outcomes.

## 3.3 SECONDARY TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### 3.3.1 ESTABLISHMENT OF EVENING SCHOOLS OF TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN LARNAKA, PAFOS AND AMMOCHOSTOS

Taking into account the successful operation of the Evening School of Technical and Vocational Education in Lefkosia, which was established in 1999, and of the Evening School of Technical and Vocational Education in Lemesos, which was established in 2012, the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth proceeded to establish, as of September 2019, three new Evening Schools of Technical and Vocational Education in Larnaka, Pafos and the free area of Ammochostos. The objective was to further promote participation in Secondary Technical and Vocational Education and support the integration of school dropouts in the workplace and society, in general.

The programmes offered at the five Evening Schools of Technical and Vocational Education are equivalent to the secondary technical and vocational education programmes that are offered in the morning. The material taught in each field of study and specialization is the same as the material taught in the respective field of study / specialization offered at the Technical and Vocational Schools of Education and Training that operate in the morning, adapted, however, to the particular characteristics and needs of adults who attend Evening Schools. The duration of studies varies from one to three years, depending on the educational level of those interested in attending the Evening Schools of Technical and Vocational Education.

Attendance at the Evening Schools of Technical and Vocational Education is free of charge and leads to the acquisition of a school leaving certificate (apolyterion), which is equivalent to that awarded to graduates of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education and Secondary General Education. This means that the school leaving certificate awarded by the Evening Schools of Technical and Vocational Education entitles graduates either to pursue further studies at Institutions of Higher Education in Cyprus or abroad, provided that they meet the entry requirements, or access directly the labour market as skilled workers.

### 3.3.2 ESTABLISHMENT OF THE POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTES OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (MIEEK)

The Post-Secondary Institutes of Vocational Education and Training (MIEEK in the Greek language) were set up in November 2012. They operate at the existing Technical and Vocational Schools of Education and Training, under the supervision of the Department of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education and Training of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth. They provide an alternative learning pathway to secondary education graduates, thus enhancing the image of VET in Cyprus. By attending these Institutes, students, especially those who wish to access the labour market immediately, have the opportunity to acquire or complete their technical and vocational education, since the Institutes provide opportunities to citizens, and especially young people, to acquire, improve, or upgrade their qualifications and skills in order to become better prepared for participation in the labour market.

In April 2017, the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education accredited the Post-Secondary Institutes of Vocational Education and Training as a Public School of Higher Vocational Education and Training and classified their programmes at Level 5 of ISCED. **Successful completion of the programmes leads to the acquisition of a Diploma of Higher Vocational Education and Training.**

For the establishment and smooth operation of the Institutes, the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth cooperates with the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance, the Ministry of Finance, the Directorate General for European Programmes, Coordination and Development, the Human Resource

Development Authority, Organizations of Employers and Manufacturers, Associations of Employees, and other stakeholders relevant to the world of work. Representatives of the above-mentioned organizations participate in the MIEEK Council.

The objective of the Institutes is to offer higher vocational education and training and provide students with the necessary qualifications by imparting academic and technical knowledge, as well as professional and practical skills. Additionally, they offer students the possibility to develop those skills that will enable them to adapt to the changing needs of industry.

The programmes have been especially designed to be relevant to labour market needs. During the academic year 2021 - 2022, the following **accredited** programmes of study were offered:

- Pastry - Bakery
- Computer and Communication Networks
- Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Installations
- Organic Horticultural Crops
- Supply Chain Management and Maritime Studies
- Design and CNC Technology – Woodworking Industry
- Dairy Technology – Cheese Making
- Electrical Installations and Automation Systems
- Culinary Arts
- Catering Services
- Automotive Technician.

Attendance at the Post-Secondary Institutes of VET is free of charge. The duration of the programmes offered is two years, on a 5-day basis. The premises and facilities of Technical and Vocational Schools of Education and Training are used for this purpose. Attendance includes practical training in industry and businesses / enterprises.

During the academic year 2021 - 2022, 508 students attended the programmes offered. A student placement system with selection criteria (favouring young unemployed individuals in particular) was applied, since the number of applicants exceeded the number of the available positions.

### **3.3.3 UPGRADING OF LABORATORIES / WORKSHOPS OF TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

During the 2021 - 2022 school year, significant upgrades were made to special rooms and laboratories of Technical and Vocational Schools of Education and Training, through the co-financed Project "Improving the Quality, Attractiveness and Efficiency of Vocational Education and Training and New Modern Apprenticeship". In particular, in order to keep up with the modern trends that characterize Vocational Education and Training and with the aim of implementing the objective included in the Strategic Planning of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth to adapt to the new industry requirements through the suitable training of human resources, robotic arm systems were purchased, in order to improve learning outcomes. Moreover, the workshops of Electricity and Electronic Applications, Hotel and Catering Professions, Building Works and Constructions, Refrigeration, CNC, Mechanical Engineering and Vehicle Technology were upgraded. In addition to the above, the planning for the upgrade of school rooms / workshops to high-tech school rooms in five Technical and Vocational Schools of Education and Training began.

### **3.3.4 DEVELOPMENT OF NEW CURRICULA AND TEXTBOOKS**

The Department of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education and Training, aiming at the development of quality textbooks as a necessary condition for quality teaching and learning, implemented, through a broad collaboration of educational staff, inspectors and academics, the production of quality textbooks for pupils of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education. Specifically,

new textbooks were developed for the fields “Hotel and Catering Professions”, “Applied Arts” and “Mechanical Engineering”.

Moreover, the Department of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education and Training carried out an evaluation of the timetable and curriculum of the specialization “Vehicle Technology”, developed new curricula for the fields of “Maritime Professions” and “Hairdressing”, and proceeded to update the curricula of all other fields of study / specializations.

### **3.3.5 ELECTRONIC PLATFORM FOR ADULT LEARNING IN EUROPE - EPALE**

The Department of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education and Training is the coordinator of the Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe (EPALE) in Cyprus. EPALE is a multilingual online space aiming at exchanging, showcasing and promoting methods of good practice in adult education. Individuals involved in organising and delivering adult education can access an online adult learning platform to share the latest developments and learn from each other. EPALE also includes a library of resources, a calendar of courses and events of interest for adult education professionals, as well as a partner-search tool.

EPALE supports the following goals:

- make lifelong learning and exchange of experience a reality,
- improve the quality and efficiency of adult learning, and
- promote equality, social cohesion and active citizenship through adult learning.

Anyone involved in providing and organising adult education, including teaching and administrative staff, policymakers, researchers and media can take part by registering on the platform.

### **3.3.6 NATIONAL COORDINATION POINT FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CYPRUS NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK**

The Department of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education and Training is the National Coordination Point (NCP) for the implementation of the Cyprus Qualifications Framework (CyQF). The National Qualifications Framework of Cyprus includes the development and implementation of institutional arrangements and procedures related to quality assurance, evaluation and awarding of qualifications. It is also the "tool" for the categorization of qualifications, according to a set of criteria in order to achieve defined levels of learning.

The Cyprus National Qualifications Framework (CyQF) aims at bringing together and coordinating national qualifications subsystems, as well as improving the transparency, access, development and quality of qualifications in relation to the labour market.

### **3.3.7 PARTICIPATION IN THE EUROPEAN VOCATIONAL SKILLS WEEK**

The Department of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education and Training participated in the European Vocational Skills Week by organizing activities both during the week itself, i.e. between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> May 2022, but also throughout the year.

The campaign theme for the European Skills Week 2022 was 'Skills for the Green Transition' based on the European Green Deal, which is the European Commission's commitment to take all necessary action to achieve zero carbon emissions by 2050 and includes taking steps to equip all young people with the right skills for employment in the green economy.

The European Vocational Skills Week celebrates good practices in Vocational Education and Training (VET) and encourages the organization of events by local, regional and national organizations and other partners in the VET sector, as well as the promotion of THE VET with the aim of increasing participation.



### **3.3.8 OTHER ACTIVITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SECONDARY TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

- Pupil and parent guidance, aiming at informing pupils and their parents about the fields of study and career prospects offered by Secondary Technical and Vocational Education.
- Co-operation with CEDEFOP.
- Co-operation with the European Training Foundation (ETF).
- Co-operation with stakeholders and social partners, including Organizations of Employers and Manufacturers, Organizations of Employees (Trade Unions), the Council of the Post-Secondary Institutes of Vocational Education and Training and so on.

## **3.4 HIGHER EDUCATION**

### **3.4.1 VISION**

It is a well-known fact that the key for a strong, viable, even prosperous economy lies in education. Following Aristotle's wise affirmation that "the fate of empires depends on the education of youth", governments worldwide, increase their resources in education and support their Higher Education (HE) systems, because they know that this will eventually result in international students of high calibre with strong entrepreneurship skills, rich investments, technological and scientific development.

In the light of the above, the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth (MoESY) aspires for Cyprus to be established as a Regional and International Educational and Research Centre of Excellence. As such, and in alignment with the policies and measures followed by the European Union (i.e. the Bologna Process, achieving the European Education Area by 2025, the European Universities Alliances initiative, the Euro graduate pilot survey, the Recovery and Resilience Facility), HE of Cyprus aims at promoting excellence in teaching, encouraging quality assurance, addressing the skills mismatched among qualifications offered by the Higher Education Institutions and skills and qualifications required by the labour market and, at the same time, safeguarding diversity and Higher Institutions' autonomy. It is believed that HE should be accessible to all, encompassing both those who are already at work and those who do not have the means to pursue their education at a higher level. At the same time, the MoESY aspires to further promote lifelong learning, upskilling and reskilling to help students and current workers to be in position, both academically and professionally, to deal efficiently with the demands of the changing society.

### **3.4.2 INTERNATIONALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

Over the last 20 years, the internationalization of Higher Education (HE) in Cyprus has become more central to the agenda of the Government and as a result to the agenda of the Department of Higher Education (DHE). The main goal is to establish Cyprus as a Regional and International Educational and Research Centre and as a hub for European and International scholars and students.

In October 2018, the DHE took advantage of the peer counselling instrument which is part of the toolbox of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020) and asked for peer counselling on the promotion of the internationalization of the Cyprus HE. Based on the experts' report, a series of measures have been taken by the DHE (or are still in progress), and many others are on the agenda for future action. Some of them are described below:

- **Cross-border collaborations**

The MoESY promoted the signing of Bilateral Agreements with other countries for the mutual recognition of academic qualifications offered in the HE and Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) for further collaboration and cooperation in the areas of Science, Research and the HE. At the same time, HEIs in

Cyprus open channels of collaboration with HEIs of other countries through the promotion of Mutual Bilateral Agreements between Cyprus and other countries. Furthermore, the afore mentioned Agreements include academic exchanges of staff and students, exchanges of administrative staff, exchange of good practices and expertise, and development of common programmes of study.

In 2022 the following Memoranda of Understanding were signed:

- Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the fields of Higher Education and Research between the Cyprus Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth and the Ministry of Culture and Innovation of Hungary, signed on 24 October 2022.

- Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the fields of Higher Education and Science between the Cyprus Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth and the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China for the years 2022 - 2026, signed on 13 May 2022.

- **Participation of Cyprus HEIs in the European Universities alliances**

Since 2019 the Cyprus HEIs have been participating in the European Commission's initiative "European Universities" by forming alliances with other European Institutions and applying for Erasmus+ funding through a highly competitive procedure. After the 3<sup>rd</sup> Open Call in 2022, Cyprus was represented in the European Universities alliances by the University of Cyprus, the Cyprus University of Technology, and the Frederick University. Following a recommendation by the European Committee, and through a Council of Ministers decision, the DHE succeeded in: (i) securing governmental financial aid, and (ii) amending the National Qualifications Framework so that Cyprus HEIs which become Members of the European Universities Alliances, would be able to offer joint first-degree programmes of study (Level 6) of a duration of three years and 180 ECTS.

- **Programmes of Study at Public Universities with English the Language of Instruction**

The House of Representatives, after the suggestion of the MoESY, voted law amendments in order to allow Public Universities to offer Master programmes of study in English. The Open University of Cyprus offers undergraduate and postgraduate programmes of study in English.

- **Attracting European and International Students to Study in Cyprus**

The DHE has proceeded to the development of information brochure about HEIs in languages other than Greek, such as Arabic, Chinese, English, and Russian. Additionally, the DHE participated along with HEIs in various activities for the promotion of the Cyprus HE (i.e., Higher Educational Fairs) in Europe, Asia and the Arab World.

In 2022, the DHE participated in the following Educational Fairs (indicative list):

«Global Higher Education Exhibition - GHEDEX 2022», Muscat, Oman, 27<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

«University Expo Qatar 2022», Doha, Qatar, 19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> September 2022.

- **Scholarships**

Cyprus HEIs offer a number of short-term and long-term scholarships to European and International students. European and International students studying at private Universities are eligible to receive grants based on their academic performance.

- **Institutional activities**

The Department of Higher Education encourages the signing of bilateral agreements for collaboration between the Cyprus Higher Education Institutions and Higher Education Institutions around the world for academic exchanges of staff and students, exchanges of administrative staff, exchange of good practices and expertise, and development of common programmes of study.

### 3.4.3 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BOLOGNA PROCESS IN CYPRUS

The Bologna Process started on June 19<sup>th</sup>, 1999 when 29 European Ministers responsible for Higher Education signed the Bologna Declaration. Currently, 49 countries participate in the Bologna Process, including Cyprus, which has become a full member in 2001. In March 2010, the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) was launched.

During these last twenty-three years, the members of the EHEA have succeeded in building a sustainable European Higher Education Area through the implementation of reforms in Higher Education (HE) on the basis of common key values such as freedom of expression, institutional autonomy, independent students' unions, academic freedom and academic mobility of students and staff. Through this process, countries, Institutions and stakeholders of the EHEA, continuously adapt their Higher Education Systems, making them more compatible and strengthening their quality assurance mechanisms.

- **Qualifications Framework**

In September 2018, the BFUG formally established this **Thematic Peer Group A on Qualifications Framework (TPG A on QF)** to work on Key Commitment 1: a three-cycle system compatible with the overarching frameworks of the EHEA and first and second cycle degrees scaled by ECTS – based on the interests and needs indicated by the BFUG members and Consultative members in a survey conducted during the summer of 2018.

Specific thematic indications include topics such as:

- self-certification of the national qualification frameworks the overarching Qualifications Framework of the EHEA,
- complete implementation of the ECTS User's Guide,
- short cycle higher education,
- multiple purposes and use of the qualification frameworks by the stakeholders,
- study programmes outside the Bologna three-cycle structure,
- relationship between the qualification frameworks and quality assurance.

- **Quality Assurance**

In September 2018, the BFUG formally established this **Thematic Peer Group C on Quality Assurance (TPG C on QA)** – more specifically on Key Commitment 3 (Quality Assurance in compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area) – based on the interests and needs indicated by the BFUG members and Consultative members in a survey conducted during the summer of 2018.

Specific thematic indications include topics such as:

- legislative framework in line with the ESG (introducing changes),
- ensuring effectiveness of internal quality assurance arrangements, including the use of QA results in the decision-making process and quality culture as well as links to learning and teaching,
- the role and engagement of stakeholders in internal and external QA (students, teachers, employers),
- Cross-border QA,
- European Approach to the QA of joint programmes.

As part of the European agenda for the modernization of HE, issues of quality assurance are constantly being revisited, in an attempt to ensure that institutions of HE revolve around and build a culture of quality. Within this framework, Cyprus has placed quality assurance issues very high on its political and educational agenda. In this sense, in 2022 the Department of Higher Education was actively participating in the following working groups:

- Working Group on the Quality Assurance of the European Universities initiative.
- Working Group on the Quality Assurance of Microcredentials.

- PLA European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes.

In 2015, the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (CYQAA) was established replacing the existing Bodies of Evaluation and Accreditation, aiming at enhancing the quality in HE, offered in the Cyprus Academic Institutions, according to the European Standards and Guidelines for HE.

- **Social Dimension**

The overarching aim of the Working Group on Social Dimension is to develop proposed instruments and policies to fulfil the objective of the Paris Communiqué 2018 and support national plans and strategies aimed at strengthening social dimension of higher education, as well as improving access and completion by under-represented and vulnerable groups.

- **Lisbon Convention**

The DHE participates in the **Thematic Peer Group B (TPG B)** on Lisbon Recognition Convention. TPG B is one of the three thematic groups established to facilitate the implementation of the Bologna key commitments. TPG B is responsible for the implementation of the Key Commitment 2, namely the national legislation and procedures compliant with the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC), through the establishment of the legal framework to allow the implementation of the LRC, achievement of automatic recognition, recognition of alternative pathways and optimization of digital technology for the recognition agenda and Diploma Supplement. The TPG provides a space for sharing the experience and expertise in this field, suggesting the possibility to offer and receive peer support on the topics of interest. Some thematic orientations of the group include the following:

- Establishing the legal framework to allow the implementation of the LRC.
- Launching the distribution of work and responsibilities among the competent institutions that have the right knowledge and capacity to carry out recognition procedures.
- Achieving automatic recognition.
- Recognition of alternative pathways.
- Qualifications held by refugees.
- Optimising the potential of digital technology for the recognition agenda and the Diploma Supplement.

## 3.5 CYPRUS PEDAGOGICAL INSTITUTE

### 3.5.1 DEPARTMENT OF TRAINING

According to the Council of Minister's Decisions (August 2015, July 2017), the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute (CPI) is the Directorate of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth, which officially runs teachers' professional development. It offers a variety of training programmes that are repetitive and compulsory for teachers, mainly because they are either offered according to education laws and service plans, or because these programmes are developed with reference to the current needs and context of schools.

According to the Council of Ministers' decision, the aim of the Professional Development Strategy is the quality improvement of teachers' and pupils' education. Therefore, all schools are expected to prepare a Professional Development Action Plan (PDAP), which would consist an integral part of the School Improvement Action Plan. The PDAP should be focused on a specific issue that would be set as a priority to be improved, according to teachers' and pupils' needs assessment at each school. It should include focused school-based training as well as a number of school-based activities, according to teachers' decisions. Activities should be internally evaluated, so as further decision-making to be made. For the preparation and implementation of the PDAP described above, schools have at their disposal

the Electronic Base for Professional Development, which offers supporting material (e.g. needs assessment specimens, suggestions for actions), suggestions for cooperating opportunities with the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth or other institutions (e.g. universities), as well as additional instructions.

#### **3.5.1.1 Implementation of Teachers' Professional Learning Strategy**

In parallel with the opportunity offered to all schools to enhance teachers' professional development, an opportunity was offered to a small number of schools, on a voluntary basis, to follow a more systematic procedure with annual systematic support from the CPI. The CPI Professional Development Support Programme, which is one of the ways that schools could choose in order to implement their teachers' professional development, follows a similar procedure as that described above, but in a more systematic way. Each school follows a methodology (e.g. action research, lesson study, quality teaching rounds approach, case study), which is considered suitable according to the specific issue set as priority and the teachers' specific needs. The CPI supports teachers of the participating schools in order to decide, plan and implement a variety of actions and practices that are consistent with the educational reality in their school and reflect on them, aiming at critical awareness, always in order to meet the professional and developmental needs of each school teacher. During the school year 2021 - 2022, thirty-eight schools participated in the CPI Professional Development Support Programme; eight pre-primary schools, sixteen primary schools, twelve secondary schools, one technical-vocational education school, and one special education school.

#### **3.5.1.2 School-Based Seminars and Seminars for Parents**

In the school year 2021 - 2022, the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute continued to organize and run school-based seminars and seminars for parents in schools across Cyprus.

School-Based Seminars aim at providing information and support concerning the specific subject chosen by the school. These seminars take place within school hours; either integrated within the weekly staff briefings or as a separate activity for those who have expressed interest. During the seminars, particular emphasis is given towards teaching techniques and methods, covering a vast range of the curriculum. Additionally, the seminars address the immediate needs of the school, whilst combining theory and practice.

Seminars for Parents aim at supporting parents / guardians' needs within an educational setting and play a vital role in the home-school collaboration. Seminars take place post school hours and after consultation with the relevant school authorities.

The seminars are conducted by the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute officers and external collaborators, selected via an evaluation process and then included in the CPI's official record of collaborators. Seminars conducted in 2021 - 2022 covered different areas of interest and thoroughly addressed the issues confronted by parents and educators. Three hundred and twenty-two applications were submitted for school-based seminars and twenty-six applications for parents' seminars.

#### **3.5.1.3 In-Service Training Programmes for School Leaders**

In-Service Training Programmes for School Leaders mainly focus on enhancing Newly Promoted Head teachers (Primary and Secondary Education), and Deputy Head teachers' (Secondary Education) Professional Development in order to become effective leaders and change agents for their school units. In-Service Training Programmes are included in a comprehensive content of school leadership, based both on the European Union for School Leadership policy and on recent national and international literature review and research results on effective leadership. The main priority of the In-Service Training Programmes for School Leaders is to put theory into practice, so that to enhance participants effectiveness in their leading roles. Therefore, in the specific Programmes, expert practitioners presented practical implications concerning leadership practice. Additionally, in the case of the Newly Promoted Head teachers, experienced Mentor Head teachers provided them with guidance and support.

Furthermore, in the case of the In-Service Training Programme for Deputy Head teachers, experienced practitioners also presented practical implications from their leadership experience.

In May 2022, nineteen Newly Promoted Head teachers of Primary, Secondary and Technical Schools successfully completed the Programme. Additionally, in May 2022, ninety-three Deputy Head teachers successfully completed the Programme.

#### 3.5.1.4 Optional Series of Training Seminars

The Optional Series of Training Seminars were offered successfully, aiming at the professional development of teachers on issues related to pedagogy, psychology, methodology, the teaching of specialized subjects of the curriculum and educational technology. Optional Training Seminars include seminars for teachers of each level of education separately and seminars which are addressed to teachers of all levels of Education. They are offered in the non-working hours and utilize both the methodologies of distance education as well the physical participation. They aim at promoting coherence, continuity and consistency of knowledge and methodology at each level of education and among the different educational levels and therefore, encourage communication and cooperation among teachers of different educational levels. Additionally, they seek to connect theory with practical application in schools, and therefore enhance teachers' professional learning and development, in general. The topics of the seminars were decided on the basis of teachers' educational needs and arose through an investigation process implemented by the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute, as well as from the proposals submitted by the Directorates of the different levels of Education.

During the school year 2021 - 2022, eighty-nine optional seminars were offered, to teachers of all levels of education. A total of one thousand nine hundred and twenty-seven teachers from all levels of education participated in the optional seminars, as follows (Table 1): Teachers had access to information and enrollment in the optional seminars through the electronic platform [www.pi-eggrafes.ac.cy](http://www.pi-eggrafes.ac.cy).

**Table 1: Participation in the Optional Seminars per level of education**

LEVEL OF EDUCATION	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
Pre-primary	445
Primary	634
Special Education	37
Secondary General Education	687
Secondary Technical & Vocational Education	124
Total	1927

#### 3.5.1.5 Training Days for Teachers

During the school year 2021 - 2022, the "Teacher's Days" of Secondary General and Secondary Technical and Vocational Education and Training, were held on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2021 and 17<sup>th</sup> February 2022. The "Teacher's Days" aimed at encouraging school training that would meet training needs of teachers. The Cyprus Pedagogical Institute offered one hundred and ten different topics through the online platform and schools were able to choose the topic that interested them. In addition, several schools requested specific topics / presenters through letters and all their requests were satisfied.

#### Primary teachers' two-day training seminars

The Cyprus Pedagogical Institute in cooperation with the Department of Primary Education organized two-day training seminars from 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> September, 2022. The aim of the first day training seminars was teachers' professional development based on their current needs. During the second day of the training, a specific programme was implemented, organized by the school itself and focused on the

training needs, interests and priorities of each school unit, along with a needs assessment procedure on which the school action plan was based.

Twenty-three seminars were offered for kindergarten teachers, ten seminars for Special Education teachers and ninety-five seminars for Primary Education teachers. Furthermore, forty-eight of the seminars were organized for teachers of all educational levels. Each Primary or Special Education teacher attended two different seminar topics, while kindergarten teachers participated in one eight-hours seminar that was split in the two-day training period. The seminars were attended by 5420 teachers, of which 761 were kindergarten teachers, 838 Special Education teachers and 3821 Primary Education teachers.

#### **3.5.1.6 Training for Secondary Schools Teachers of Design and Technology**

According to the Service scheme for teachers of Design and Technology, candidates have to attend an Educational Programme, which is offered by the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute in cooperation with the Department of Secondary General Education of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth. The Programme aims at introducing / familiarizing prospective teachers with the content of the curricula of Design and Technology (Gymnasium and Lyceum), as well as understanding and implementing the design process for the teaching of the course.

The Educational Programme took place between November 2021 and March 2022 and was addressed to twenty-five candidate teachers who had been invited by the Cyprus Educational Service Committee to attend this Training Programme.

#### **3.5.1.7 Seminars “Teachers present their work”**

During 2021, the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute (CPI) offered teachers the opportunity to present their work within 1.5 hour seminars. These seminars aimed at disseminating teachers’ knowledge and experience on pedagogical issues and on effective teaching approaches that were applied in their classroom. The Seminars covered seven broader thematic sections: Teaching / Learning Evaluation, Educational Sociology, Educational Psychology, the use of digital Technology in the learning process, Educational Research, Pre-school education, Prevention of Violence. Altogether, sixteen seminars were offered by fifteen teachers / trainers from pre-school, primary and secondary education. In total, three hundred and twelve teachers attended these seminars. The seminars took place during January - May 2022, via on-line learning.

#### **3.5.1.8 Training Programme for Substitute School Teachers**

During the school year 2021 - 2022, the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute, in collaboration with the Departments of Primary and Secondary Education, offered a Training Programme for substitute teachers at all levels of education.

The purpose of the Programme was the enhancement of substitute teachers’ teaching and learning efficacy in aspects such as legal and administrative issues of the Cyprus Educational System, the National Curriculum, current teaching methodology trends, lesson organization and preparation, as well as classroom organization and administration. Moreover, the Programme aimed at informing the participants about everyday school life and supporting them in organizing an effective substitute period in schools they are called to serve.

The Programme took place between November 2021 and January 2022 and consisted of five two-hour afternoon sessions, involving the following thematic units:

- Legal and administrative issues.
- Basic pedagogical principles and lesson planning.
- The National Curriculum and student assessment.
- Effective teaching.
- Classroom organization and administration and effective classroom teacher substitution.

A total of one hundred and nine substitute teachers participated in the Programme, of which forty-five were primary school teachers and sixty-four were secondary teachers (serving in both General Secondary as well as Secondary Technical & Vocational Education).

#### **3.5.1.9 Seminar “Teaching practices in the course of Physics in Secondary Education”**

The aim of the Seminar "Teaching Practices in Physics in Secondary Education" was to facilitate the exchange of views among physics teachers on effective physics teaching approaches that had already been applied in the classroom. In the Seminar, teachers presented teaching practices on specific subjects of physics teaching. During the 2021 – 2022 school year, seven Seminars were held, all of them via teleconference. Several teaching approaches were presented by active Physics teachers and academics. During the meetings, special emphasis was placed on the distance teaching of Physics and the utilization of new technologies in Physics. The full Programme of the Seminar and the teaching materials used are posted on the Seminar's webpage on the website of the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute.

#### **3.5.1.10 Conferences - Seminars - Workshops**

During the school year 2021 - 2022, the CPI organized sixty-six seminars, conferences and workshops in collaboration with the Departments of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth and/or other partners. The seminars and conferences included a theoretical part, followed by workshops offered by the CPI or the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth trainers and in some cases in collaboration with teachers and / or university associates. In total, nine thousand six hundred seventy-three participants registered for the seminars and conferences. All the above actions were uploaded on the websites of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth and the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute as well as on the CPI Facebook page.

#### **3.5.1.11 Implementation of the Antiracist Policy: “Code of conduct against racism & Guide for managing and recording racist incidents”**

During the school year, 2021 - 2022, all schools, at all levels of education, were required to implement the anti-racist policy of the Ministry of the Education, Youth and Sport "*Code of Conduct against Racism and Guide for Managing and Recording Racist Incidents*". The policy conceptualizes racism in a broad manner, including all sorts of discrimination. It includes definitions of basic concepts which form the theoretical background (e.g. racism, racist incident, discrimination, stereotypes, diversity, and so on.), outline the responsibilities and commitments expected by each member of the school community, and provide the steps to be followed by schools in order to deal with racist incidents in a practical manner. It supplies schools and teachers with a detailed plan on how to deal with and prevent racist incidents. As the antiracists view diversity as a multidimensional phenomenon, involving various aspects of people's identities, it is expected to contribute towards the decrease of bullying and discrimination based on any form of diversity in schools (religion, ethnicity, language, appearance, disability, gender, sexual orientation, and so on.).

The Cyprus Pedagogical Institute has conducted several actions during the school year 2020 - 2021 in order to support teachers and schools implementing the antiracist policy. At the same time, the antiracist policy website is continually updated with information on the implementation, supporting material and answers to frequently asked questions. A support line (email and telephone) was operating throughout the year ([kodikas@cyearn.pi.ac.cy](mailto:kodikas@cyearn.pi.ac.cy)).

For the evaluation of the implementation of the policy for the school year 2021 - 2022, thirty-four schools and thirty-four teachers from all levels and provinces participated in the Network's training activities.

#### **3.5.1.12 School networks to support teaching Greek as a second language**

The Cyprus Pedagogical Institute (CPI) supported the creation of school networks in all school districts in Cyprus, in order to organize training and promote cooperation between schools on teaching Greek as a second language. The CPI supported school networking in order to implement the Action Plan of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth, for the inclusion of children with a migrant background in the Cyprus Educational System as well as one of the European Commission's Peer Counselling Report



Recommendations (March 2019) on “facilitating networking between teachers and schools”. The operation of the Networks began in September of 2021 for schools of pre-primary and primary education and in January of 2022 for schools of secondary education. Three hundred and twenty-four teachers participated in the networking of pre-primary schools, and one hundred and eleven for secondary schools networking. The design of the meetings was based on a blended learning approach, which included the combination of face to face meetings, videoconferencing, and networking through discussions and activities on the Moodle platform, as well as synchronous and asynchronous communication.

### **3.5.1.13 In-service training for Entrepreneurial Education**

The Cyprus Pedagogical Institute (CPI) implements programmes of continuing professional development in the areas of Entrepreneurial education. Following the guidelines set by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union (2006), entrepreneurial education, is named as one of the eight key competences for lifelong learning, which is defined as ‘an individual’s ability to plan and translate ideas into action’, towards the achievement of objectives.

Programmes are also implemented in accordance with the National Policy Statement for the Enhancement of the Entrepreneurship Ecosystem in Cyprus (2015), the new legislation for Social Entrepreneurship (2018), and the European Union’s Policy on new strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020). The aim is to foster entrepreneurial mindset and culture in Cypriot education, by providing training on the essential knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to this competence; which integrated to support different aspects of life.

### **3.5.1.14 The Love of Reading “Filanagnosia” school network (Preprimary and Primary education)**

The Love of Reading School Network was established in September 2021, involving schools from Preprimary and Primary Education. The Network was designed in order to educate teachers in matters concerning the love of reading, children’s literature, and teaching methodology. The Network also aimed at creating reading and writing communities between children and teachers, strengthening collaboration between schools and teachers with relevant interests, offering training, opportunities for reflection, and exchanging of good practices. More specifically, the teachers of the Network:

- Participated in training seminars, focusing on literary genres, lesson design, and action and activity planning.
- Prepared an action plan aiming at promoting the love of reading (the action plan was in tune with the School Professional Learning Plan and the School Improvement Plan).
- Collaborated with other schools and with other organizations, e.g., the Cyprus IBBY (Cyprus Association on Books for Young People) and specialists, such as authors, academics, and so on.
- Exchanged good practices.
- Uploaded material, such as action plans and examples of good practices in an online learning environment, contributing thus to the creation of an interactive space for the Network’s members and a depository of useful learning material.

In October 2021 the Network operated with fourteen schools, twelve primary schools and two preprimary (261 teachers and 2481 pupils) and in September 2022 with sixteen primary schools (256 teachers and 2223 pupils).

The Network was operating with sixteen schools, twelve primary schools and two preprimary schools. A total of 261 teachers and 2,481 pupils attended.

### **3.5.1.15 On line training programme for expatriate teachers of the Greek language**

The Cyprus Pedagogical Institute, in order to disseminate the Greek language, History and Civilization in countries with Greek Diaspora, offers the training programme “Greek Language and Greek Civilization”, which is of interest to teachers of Greek abroad.

After the Cabinet of Ministers' decision (NO. 81.738 dated 2/12/2016) since 2017 - 2018 the Pedagogical Institute has been offering teachers' training extending to a period of three months to teachers of Greek as a second / foreign language.

In 2022 the programme was offered online due to the pandemic COVID-19. Fifteen teachers residing in eight countries (Serbia, Germany, Albania, Ukraine, Russia, Egypt, Sweden, and the U.S.A. and six countries (Azerbaijan, Armenia, Germany, Spain, Ukraine and Russia) attended the sessions from April to June 2022.

### **3.5.1.16 Online education programme to support teaching Greek as a second language - Cyprus Educational Mission in the UK**

During the school year 2021 - 2022, the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute, in collaboration with the Department of Primary Education, offered special online training courses on the Teaching of Greek as a second language for the teachers of the Cyprus Educational Mission in the United Kingdom from March - April 2022. The courses were attended by twenty six hourly-appointed Teachers and Teachers on secondment.

### **3.5.1.17 European programmes**

In 2022 the CPI Department of training participated in a series of European projects related to different aspects and priorities of the CPI.

#### **T4E "Teachers 4Europe: Setting an Agora for Democratic Culture", Erasmus Plus - Key Action 3 (31/12/2018-31/08/2022)**

The Erasmus+ KA3 European Programme "Teachers4Europe: setting an Agora for Democratic Culture" aims at addressing a number of challenges, using education as a vehicle to promote principles and values, including the EU democratic culture. Teachers4Europe (T4E) act as social and cultural agents, disseminating European values to school community, colleagues, young people and society. In addition, it promotes a dialogue between stakeholders at a social and political level and contributes to realizing synergies and improving the quality of education and training, through knowledge about Europe and its values, with an emphasis on the field of Democratic Culture. In particular, the T4E programme (<https://www.teachers4europe.eu/en/>) aims at creating a cross-border, sustainable and long-term network of teachers, which will promote the social and political skills of pupils and support democratic values, fundamental rights, intercultural understanding and the acquisition of relevant knowledge. The coordinator of the proposal is the University of Piraeus through the Jean Monnet Chair in Education, Training, Research and Innovation Policies of the European Union, of the Department of International and European Studies. The participating countries in the project are Cyprus, France, Germany, Malta, and Romania.

#### **LESSAM "Lesson Study as a vehicle for improving achievement in mathematics", Erasmus Plus-Key Action 2 (01/09/2020-31/08/2023)**

The project LESSAM (<https://www.ucy.ac.cy/lessam2/>) aims at investigating the impact of the model of Lesson Study on teacher learning and, consequently, on pupil learning outcomes. The core model involves to: a) plan lessons during planning meetings, b) teach / observe those lessons; c) reflect on lessons during reflection meetings. Variations of the model include the presence of a LS facilitator during teachers' planning and reflection meetings, guiding teachers as they construct new knowledge. The objectives of the project, therefore, are to examine the: 1. effects of teachers' participation in Lesson Study on their own learning and on pupils' mathematical reasoning; 2. potential impact of the role of an LS Advisor and LS Facilitators on dialogues and teacher learning; 3. relationship between teacher intentions and teaching practices. In order to examine the above, an experimental design is employed in the four participating countries. Forty-five mathematics teachers who teach in the first three years of secondary education will be recruited in each country. These teachers are randomly allocated to one of three groups: 1) LS+Advisor group, 2) LS+Facilitator group, and 3) Control group. Teachers in the experimental groups (i.e. groups 1 and 2) will form LS teams and conduct three-cycles LSs (i.e. total of nine lessons during the school year). Findings from this project will contribute to important evidence in

relation to the effects of LS. In addition, findings will shed light on the role, value and cost-effectiveness of the roles of an LS Advisor and LS Facilitator. Based on these findings, policy recommendations will be made regarding the implementation of LS as a teacher professional development model and the promotion of mathematical reasoning in teaching practices. The country partners of the project are Cyprus, Greece, Belgium and Netherlands.

**PASSAGE – “Pedagogies of Passing from Reception to Education”, Erasmus Plus - Key Action 3, (15/1/2021-14/01/2023)**

The two-year Project PASSAGE has been completed. The project was implemented in collaboration with partners from Slovenia Ljudska univerza Ptuj (LUP - lead partner), Greece (Symplexis), Portugal (Casa do Professor), Lithuania Jaunimo Karjeros Centras (JKC) and Italy (CESIE). The aim of the PASSAGE Project was to promote inclusive and quality education for all newly arrived pupils with a migrant biography, from the initial stages of their integration process. The project focused on empowering teachers to more effectively address existing pedagogical challenges through the design and promotion of a pilot mentor / role-model programme involving pupils. The information and training materials produced under the project are available to all teachers and schools in the participating countries in the national languages and in English. The Final Project Conference was held on 10/1/2023 and 11/1/2023 in Slovenia (Ptui) and the results of the implementation of the project deliverables by each participating country were presented. In addition, representatives of the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute presented the recommendations to policy makers for the integration of children with migrant biography at school level and at the level of relevant ministries, as they had been recorded by all countries and codified and communicated to the participating countries and other national and European stakeholders in the framework of the Deliverable coordinated by the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute. Information is available on the project website (<https://passageproject.eu/>).

**ProW – “Promoting Teachers Well-being through Positive Behaviour Support in Early Childhood Education», Support for policy reform, Erasmus Plus - Key Action 3 (28/02/2021-28/02/2024)**

The project “Promoting Teachers Well-being through Positive Behaviour Support in Early Childhood Education (ProW), Key Action 3 - Support for policy reform” is a three-year project that focuses on the enhancement of the pre-primary schoolteachers’ well-being, job satisfaction and prevention of burnout, through a number of Positive Psychology interventions based on the PERMA model. Cyprus, Greece, Romania and Portugal are the four participating countries in the project. The first phase of the project that includes selection of participating pre-primary school and training of teachers regarding the PERMA model and the SWPBS (effective management techniques of children’s challenging social behaviours) programme, as well as the first and second implementation phases, including data collection from all subjects (pre-primary school teachers and pupils) have been completed. During the third phase, writing up, dissemination of results and good practices, as well as discussion and presentation of potential applications at school level and at policy level will take place. Further information can be found on the site of the project [ProW – Promoting Teachers Well-being through Positive Behaviour Support in Early Childhood Education \(prowproject.eu\)](http://prowproject.eu)

**RESILIENCE “Resilience and Well-being in preschool education to prevent emotional, social and behavioral problems (Resilient Preschools)”, Erasmus Plus - Key Action 3 (1/12/2020-31/11/2022)**

The Resilience and Well-being in preschool education to prevent emotional, social and behavioral problems - RESILIENT PRESCHOOLS project is funded by the European Commission under the ERASMUS+ programme KA2 - Cooperation for Innovation and the Exchange of Good Practices (Strategic Partnerships for school education); project number: 2020-1-CY01-KA201-066080. The Project was launched in December 2020 with 24 months duration (01/12/2020 – 31/11/2022) and counts with the participation of six entities in Europe to develop quality resources for positive culture in preschools, based on Positive Psychology practices and scientific findings.

Resilient Preschools focuses on building the capacity of preschool teachers in order to foster in pre-school children psychological resilience and safe proof their overall well-being. The importance of cultivating these capacities as early as the preschool age is pivotal, since the earlier children start to become aware and build on their own capacities and character strengths, the greater will be the results

in the long run. In order to achieve that, the Resilient Preschools project developed a multifaceted toolkit and training package that addressed several psychological characteristics that derive from Positive Psychology core principles, Positive Education approach and Seligman's (2011) PERMA model, as well as an E-Learning Space providing instant access to open educational resources for a positive culture in preschools.

### **PLCs for us “Professional Learning Communities in the post-covid era: Collaboration between University and Public School System”, Erasmus Plus - Key Action 3 (1/6/2022-1/5/2025)**

The Research Project PLCs for us - Professional Learning Communities in the post-covid era: Collaboration between a University and a Public School System (EXCELLENCE/0421/0333) focuses on the Professional Learning of teachers at all levels of education, from Pre-Primary to Higher Education, with an emphasis on the creation of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), through the cooperation of the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute of the Cyprus Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth and the European University of Cyprus. The Research Project is funded by the Research and Innovation Foundation and aims at exploring the characteristics of PLCs and support the PLCs of teachers and academics in Cyprus. The Project Partners have completed the dissemination and exploitation of the activities (WP2), the Conceptual Framework (WP3) and the development of a PLC activities Toolkit (WP3). They have also completed: 1. Literature review 2. Four training sessions to empower the coordinators of public schools 3. The administration of questionnaires, in both Higher Education and public schools, to explore the three areas of interest (good practices, needs, practices COVID-19) 4. The administration of a questionnaire to the coordinators of PLC's 5. Publications presenting the findings from WP3. The deliverables are available on the Project website <https://plcsforus.eu/> The development of the training programme for the PLC coordinators.

### **ECO-MUSE “Network of Open EcoMuseums for the Promotion and Gentle Enhancement of Areas with Environmental History” (1/6/2021 31/10/2023)**

The programme aims at contributing to the achievement of the objectives set out in the cooperation programme Interreg V-A Greece-Cyprus. In summary, these objectives are: the avoidance of abandonment of mountain communities, highlighting the identity of the area, the development of a common approach to integrate network design of transnational eco-museums, the exchange of expertise and the twinning of the two areas (Sitia Lassithi and Marathasa Lemesos), the unified sustainable management of the natural environment of anthropogenic activities, the increase of visits to the area by the creation of special products friendly to the environment and the development of alternative tourism, the extension of the tourist season through the development of a multi-thematic tourist product, the strengthening and protection of natural and cultural heritage sites, the reuse of an abandoned building stock, the interconnection of visit areas that operate in fragments, and finally the promotion of experiential education. At present, the physical implementation of the project has progressed with the implementation of the Deliverables related to the studies: Identification and evaluation of the existing situation of the cultural heritage of the area. Identification and evaluation of the current state of the cultural heritage of the area - Kaminaria. Museological study for the Information Centre and Workshops for the promotion and presentation of agricultural and agri-food products - Treis Elies gastronomy. Museological Study for the Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Heritage Information Centre of the region and the workshop of hagiography and other ecclesiastical arts in Lemithou. Additionally, the deliverable "Creation of audiovisual material for the promotion of the intervention areas was completed. Further information can be found on the site of the project [Home](#) / [Projects and documents](#) / Eco.MusE

## **3.5.2 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL DOCUMENTATION**

The Department of Educational Documentation, in 2022, published The Cyprus Pedagogical Institute Bulletin, Issue 24.

### **3.5.2.1 The Pedagogical Institute Library**

The emphasis on the teachers' professional development, as well as the growing interest by educators at all levels of education for self-improvement and development, have enhanced the role of the Library

of the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute. The Library was enriched with new volumes of books and compact discs (CD, DVD). Overall, the Library has more than 54.933 volumes of printed material while subscription is also paid to printed titled scientific journals related to education and educational issues.

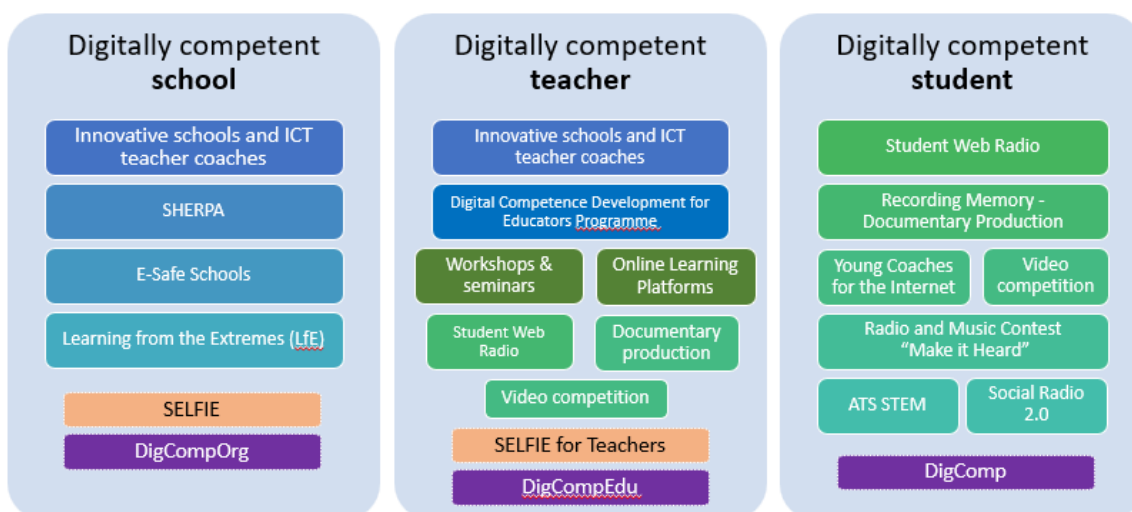
As part of an effort to upgrade the Library of the CPI, computerization of the Library material and resources by the use of the Koha Library Software is continued. It is, also, noted that the Library of the CPI participates in the Library Consortium of the Cyprus University Libraries and has access to online sources such as Scopus Freedom Collection - Science Direct, SAGE Journals, Springer Link, PsychARTICLES, Taylor & Francis, Wiley Online Library (books and journals) and to the search engines Ebscohost databases and EBSCO, EDS.

### 3.5.3 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

The Department of Educational Technology (DET) promotes innovations related to the use of digital technologies for teaching, learning, and assessing, guided by national and EU digital strategies. Specifically, the Department implements Continuous Professional Learning Programmes, advances digital skills in education, explores and recommends new implementations through European, research and intervention programmes, maintains online and onsite learning environments, produces audio-visual and other material for the needs of the Cyprus Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth, and provides training and technical support to the staff of CPI (<https://tet.pi.ac.cy>). In addition, the DET contributes to national and European policy papers and guidelines on behalf of the Cyprus Ministry and implements projects that support the work of the Ministry's Information and Communication Technology Unit.

The various actions of the DET focus on the priorities of Education and Training 2020 and the Digital Strategy for Cyprus and are based on the principles set out in [the European Commission Action Plan for digital Education \(2021 - 2027\)](#). They are also based on European digital competence frameworks such as: 1) [DigComp 2.2](#), which provides a common language and understanding at a EU level to identify and describe the key areas of citizens' digital competence, 2) [DigCompEdu](#), which aims at providing a general reference framework to promote the digital competence of teachers, and 3) [DigCompOrg](#), which aspires to encourage and support educational organizations for an effective use of digital technologies in teaching and learning.

Under this scope, the following actions on advancing education through digital technologies and open educational resources have been taking place during the year 2022, emphasizing on the horizontal key skills of the 21st century. The actions aim at the effective teaching and learning at school level, teacher level, and pupil level (Diagram 1).



**Diagram 1: Using digital technologies for effective teaching and learning**

### 3.5.3.1 DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES IN THE LEARNING PROCESS

- **Use of Digital Technologies in teaching and learning**

- *Innovative schools and teacher coaches for ICT in teaching and learning*

(<https://innovativeschools.pi.ac.cy>)

The Innovative Schools and Teacher Coaches for ICT in the Teaching and Learning Programme is an annual recurring programme for primary and secondary schools. It aims at helping schools gain a better understanding of their needs in terms of using digital technologies to support teaching and learning and develop their own digital action plan addressing the needs identified. Each school unit participating in the Programme is invited to engage in a process of reflection on the use of digital technologies in the school through the SELFIE tool. It is then invited to use the SELFIE PTK toolkit (<https://selfieptk.eu/>) to interpret the results from the SELFIE, to set goals in terms of digital education and develop, implement and evaluate an action plan based on SELFIE. This process is expected to contribute to the development of the digital capacity of the personnel in the school unit. During the school year 2021 - 2022, a total of fourteen schools were chosen to take part in the Programme, in response to an open invitation.

- *Recording Memory* ([www.pi.ac.cy/katagrafoumemnimi](http://www.pi.ac.cy/katagrafoumemnimi)). The aim of the programme is to engage pupils in an experiential play of embodying collective and individual memory through the audiovisual recording of personal experiences by members of the pupils' family or local community to create a short documentary film (10' - 45' max. duration). Teachers are trained and supported throughout the duration of the programme (usually a school year) on researching, filming, and editing, so that they can support and guide their pupils through research and production. All necessary audiovisual equipment to produce the documentaries is allocated to schools. Pupils decide on the concept they want to explore within several thematic areas: environment and sustainability, cultural heritage, liberation struggles, occupied land. Some of the pupils' films have been broadcasted by the Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation and were screened during local and international film festivals. Most of the films are available online on the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute's platform of educational films (<https://paragoges.pi.ac.cy/?teachers>). During the year 2021 - 2022, nine schools, 22 teachers and 110 pupils participated in the programme, including special education schools.
- *Pupil Web Radio* ([www.pi.ac.cy/radio](http://www.pi.ac.cy/radio)). The aim of the programme is to involve pupils in the production of a web radio show or podcast (10' - 180' max. duration) that will be broadcasted through the European Social Radio platform (<http://europeanschoolradio.eu/>). The theme of the radio show / podcast may vary between school curricula to extra curricula subjects. Teachers are being trained and supported throughout the duration of the programme (usually a school year) on researching, audio recording, editing, and disseminating the audio work, so that they can support and guide their pupils through research and production. All necessary audio equipment to produce the works is allocated to schools. Depending on the theme of a radio show / podcast, each school may choose to collaborate with local community professionals (e.g., journalists, musicians, and human and environmental rights activists), NGOs, the Public Sector, and others. During the year 2021 - 2022, 15 schools, 48 teachers and 321 pupils participated in the programme, including special education schools.
- *Radio and Music Pupil Contest "Make it Heard"* ([www.pi.ac.cy/kantonakoustei](http://www.pi.ac.cy/kantonakoustei)). The contest is organised by the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute, the European School Radio Scientific Society (Greece), the Educational Radio Television of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs (Greece), and the National Centre of Audiovisual Media and Communication (Greece). Pupils can submit radio messages of up to 90 seconds and songs up to three minutes, relevant to each year's contest theme. Evaluation committees consist



of professional journalists, musicians, and teachers, while the pupils who participate in the contest evaluate the submissions as well. Awards are being given to the first three contestants of each category / age group. Also, the public votes for two audience awards. The theme of the contest changes every year. This year's theme (2021 - 2022) under the title "Journeying" received 342 submissions from schools of Cyprus and Greece. A total 29 submissions, which received the highest scores in their category, were awarded, among them six schools from Cyprus.

- Learning designs and educational material for the use of digital technologies in the learning process (<http://photodentro.pi.ac.cy>). *Photodentro Cyprus* is a repository of user generated open educational content. Teachers can upload their educational scenarios and respective material or search for other users' educational scenarios and material. Teachers register to the platform via the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute Portal.
- Seminars, presentations, and workshops for the use of educational technologies in teaching and learning. An example is two series of video and audio editing workshops for teachers offered twice a year.
- The use of the online self-assessment tool for the schools' digital competence SELFIE: Self-reflection on Effective Learning by Fostering Innovation through Educational Technologies <https://ec.europa.eu/education/schools-go-digital>, <https://innovativeschools.pi.ac.cy/selfie>
- SHERPA: SELFIE Helper and Pedagogical Innovation Assistant (<https://sherpa4selfie.eu>)
- **Creative, safe and responsible use of the Internet**  
The Cyprus Safer Internet Centre – CYberSafety (<https://www.cybersafety.cy>), building on European funding as part of the Better Internet for Kids project, aims at strengthening efforts for the creative and safe use of the Internet in Cyprus. Focusing on the new and increasing needs, which constantly rise, at national and European level, regarding Internet technology, the Centre promotes cooperation between national stakeholders, aiming to create a Cyber Security culture. It has also promoted the National Strategy for Better Internet for Kids in Cyprus.

An Awareness Centre supports the work for Safer Internet Centre in Cyprus – CYberSafety, by developing rich educational / informational material, resources and tools, as well as organising campaigns to empower children, young people, parents, carers and teachers with skills and knowledge on how to be safe online and benefit from the advantages that the digital environment can offer. Furthermore, the Awareness Centre works closely with children and young people allowing them to actively share their experiences, ideas and views, reinforcing them to formulate suggestions and actions regarding the creative and safe use of digital technologies and the Internet. CYberSafety Youth Panel members act as ambassadors of best practices and actions, aiming at creating innovative resources and disseminating messages about the safe use of the Internet to their peers and other involved groups.

- The Helpline (<https://www.cybersafety.cy/helpline>) and the Hotline (<https://www.cybersafety.cy/hotline>) support the work of the Safer Internet Centre of Cyprus – CYberSafety. The operation of the Helpline aims at ensuring that all users will receive expert advice and support on issues related to the use of digital technologies and the Internet. More specifically, Helpline provides information, advice and assistance to children, young people and / or parents, teachers and professionals, on how to deal with harmful content, contact (such as grooming) and conduct (such as cyberbullying or sexting). The operation of the Hotline offers a direct, easily accessible and responsible point of contact for users to report illegal content or actions related to illegal child sexual abuse material.
- Young coaches for the Internet (<https://youngcoaches.pi.ac.cy>)  
Young Coaches for the Internet is a Cyprus Pedagogical Institute (CPI) programme that runs under the activities of the CPI and other organizations as partners of the Cyprus Safer

Internet Center (SIC). This programme aims at engaging pupils in training others on the creative exploitation and safe use of the Internet. With the guidance of their schoolteachers and the support of specialists on the subject, young coaches are invited to develop an action plan for their school unit to design and implement activities to raise awareness about the safe and responsible use of the Internet in their school and community. Pupils are invited to think creatively and implement at least three activities, report on those activities in a reflective journal, participate in the Safer Internet Day (SID) activities, and organize an event at their school in order to receive a Young Coaches Certificate.

Since 2013, when the programme first started, pupils have exceeded expectations and amazed everyone with their creativity. Among other activities, they have created and shared printed materials such as posters, leaflets, bookmarks and cartoons, digital material such as videos, blogs and animations, they have written and acted in theatrical activities, and written and performed songs, provided peer and parent training presentations, organized events and talent shows, created board and online games, completed questionnaires, and run research on Internet-related topics. During the 2021 - 2022 school year, a total of seventy-eight pupils successfully completed the programme and obtained certification as 'Young Coaches,' under the support of seven teachers, spanning two schools.

- Safe school for the Internet (<https://esafeschools.pi.ac.cy/>)

The programme aims at helping schools implement internet safety actions to enhance the digital skills of pupils and teachers, as well as to raise awareness on the safe use of the internet. Moreover, the aim of the Programme is to help schools exploit the potential of the Internet, but also prevent or deal with problems that may arise in the use of modern technologies. Through the Programme, schools that wish to do so can be certified as Safe Schools for the Internet for one school year. Among the obligations of the schools are the implementation of learning activities on the safe and creative use of the Internet in all classes of the school unit, organising workshops for teachers and parents, and the pan-European certification with the eSafety Label. For the 2021 - 2022 school year, three schools - one Primary and two Secondary Schools - were chosen to participate, following an open invitation, and were certified.

- Cybersafety Video Production Contest (<https://internetsafety.pi.ac.cy/competitions/short-video-2021-2022/>)

The Cybersafety Video Production Contest is an annual contest of short films by pupils within the thematic area of safe Internet. Pupils' video production aims at developing children's skills in relation to Media Literacy as well as at constructing knowledge and shaping their attitudes regarding the safe and creative use of the internet. Through this creative learning process, pupils engage in activities related to the production of video, such as researching about the theme, writing the story and script related to the key messages and narrative they want to pass to the audience, rehearsing, directing the camera, sometimes performing, editing and other production tasks. This process contributes, quite effectively, to a deeper understanding of all the interconnected issues of adopting a safe, creative, and responsible use of the Internet. Thirty pupil groups submitted ideas and illustrated scenarios. The sixteen best entries (seven primary schools, nine secondary and technical schools) were then invited to participate in experiential workshops, where they were guided by professionals in creating animation short films. Six films received awards and were also presented during the Safer Internet Day national conference. The pupils' videos are hosted on the CPI's Educational Technology Department YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCi7UsCg5wW9IMWr8t7QxT3w>

- Children educate digitally illiterate adults in safe and creative web (EduWeb) ([www.pi.ac.cy/eduweb](http://www.pi.ac.cy/eduweb))
- Seminars, presentations and workshops for the creative, safe and responsible use of the



Internet and Media Literacy (<https://workshops.internetsafety.pi.ac.cy>). During the 2021 – 2022 school year, a total of fifty-three activities were conducted, benefiting 2212 students, 232 teachers, and 175 parents.)

- eSafetyLabel (<https://www.esafetylabel.eu/>)
- Happy Onlife online game ([https://web.jrc.ec.europa.eu/happyonlife/webgame\\_en.html](https://web.jrc.ec.europa.eu/happyonlife/webgame_en.html))
- eFollow me game (<http://efollowme.cs.ucy.ac.cy>)
- Helpline and Hotline 1480 services on the safe use of the Internet (<https://www.cybersafety.cy/helpline>, <https://www.cybersafety.cy/hotline>)

○ **Transversal and digital skills for pupils and teachers**

- **ATS STEM - Assessment of Transversal Skills in STEM** (<http://www.atsstem.eu>)
- **Digital Competence Development for Educators (DCDE) Programme**

The Cyprus Pedagogical Institute (CPI) of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth (MoESY) implements the Programme “Digital Competence Development for Educators” (DCDE) aiming at strengthening and further developing teachers’ digital competences in order to promote the effective use and integration of digital technologies in the teaching and learning process. The intended outcome of the Programme: Teachers should

- be able to use online learning environments, electronic learning tools, open digital educational content and learning communities, in order to enhance their professional development and lifelong learning skills,
- develop the necessary digital skills to become effective in providing innovative learning environments in the Cyprus educational system, in order to support their pupils acquire knowledge, while cultivating values and attitudes, and also developing the necessary horizontal skills essential for the 21st century.

The Programme is offered following a distance learning approach and methodology, utilizing the CPI’s eLearning Environment (<https://elearn.pi.ac.cy/>). It consists of an Introductory Module and ten Learning Modules with content on thematic areas that have been defined through a process of diagnosing the needs of teachers but also following European and national directions.

The Programme supports and contributes to the implementation of educational policies of the MoESY, mainly the Policy for Digital Education and the integration of digital technologies in the learning process, as well as the implementation of the Policy for Teachers’ Professional Development.

○ **Conferences**

- - Digital Education - Facts and Challenges (<https://www.pi.ac.cy/digitaleducpi2022>). An online Day event on digital education was organised by the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute in May 2022. The aim of the event was to present topics related to the development of digital competence in education, emerging technologies, media literacy education and the safe, creative and responsible use of the internet.
- Safer Internet Day (<https://internetsafety.pi.ac.cy/saferinternetday> and <https://internetsafety.pi.ac.cy/safer-internet-day/SID2022/>)
- The Cybersafety Video Production Contest Day Event took place online on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of February 2022, where entries were presented, evaluated, and awarded. (<https://internetsafety.pi.ac.cy/competitions>)

○ **Learning environments and repositories**

- <https://digilearn.pi.ac.cy>
- [www.e-epimorfosi.ac.cy](http://www.e-epimorfosi.ac.cy)
- <http://photodentro.pi.ac.cy>

- <https://elearn.pi.ac.cy>
- <https://mahara.ats2020.eu>
- <http://office365.ats2020.eu>
- [www.pi-elearning.ac.cy](http://www.pi-elearning.ac.cy)
- [www.pi-egrafes.ac.cy](http://www.pi-egrafes.ac.cy)

- **Workshops, presentations, seminars in schools, for pupils, teachers and parents**

### 3.5.3.2 Audiovisual material production

DET maintains a studio of audio and audio-visual production. It has in its collection several productions and co-productions, some of which were screened in local and international film festivals and were broadcasted through the Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation and the National Greek TV. An online platform hosts these productions (<https://paragoges.pi.ac.cy/>) giving direct access to teachers, pupils and the public. CPI collaborates with public and private organisations, production companies, scholars, researchers, and other professionals for the production of these films. The films are available through an online platform where one can also find educational films produced by the Educational Radio television of Greece and films produced by pupils under the programme “Recording Memory – Documentary production by pupils”. More than 400 titles are available for screening on the platform.

### 3.5.4 THE CENTRE OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND EVALUATION (CERE)

The Centre of Educational Research and Evaluation (CERE) was established in August 2008, following a decision by the Council of Ministers. The CERE undertakes and coordinates a range of activities in three different directions. Firstly, the CERE assumes responsibility for the implementation of international and national research studies on pedagogical and educational issues (e.g. educational policy, national curricula, and teacher training). Secondly, the CERE undertakes evaluation studies on educational innovations, interventions and programmes of the Cyprus Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth (MoESY), implemented in Cyprus schools. Thirdly, the CERE seeks to develop and sustain research-oriented culture within the educational system (schools, pupils, and teachers).

During 2022, in accordance with its annual action plan, the CERE engaged in various actions, as follows:

#### 3.5.4.1 Participation in local and international research educational studies

##### 3.5.4.1.1. International research

The CERE is involved in a number of research studies coordinated by international organisations (e.g. the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), some of which are co-funded by the European Commission. Specifically, the CERE represents the MoESY in the following international studies:

- **Programme for the International Pupil Assessment (PISA)** – The study aims at developing reliable indicators for the learning outcomes of educational systems (knowledge and skills of 15-year-olds in Reading, Mathematics and Science) towards or upon the completion of compulsory education. The study is implemented every three years. More information is provided at: <http://keea-pisa.pi.ac.cy/pisa>.
  - **PISA 2022:** This is the fourth participation of our country in the study, with the focus being placed on Mathematics. During 2022 the Main Study took place (March - May 2022), with the participation of 6618 pupils from 102 public and private secondary general and vocational education schools. The CERE organized, coordinated, and supervised the process of data collection and coding and implemented quality control measures. The coded data were submitted to the Educational Testing Service (ETS), according to the timelines set, so that they could be processed, along with the respective data from the other participating countries. The results of the study are expected to be announced in December 2023.

- **Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)** – The study aims at assessing the performance of fourth and eighth graders in Science and Mathematics, at an international level. In addition, TIMSS is intended to collect information about the implementation of the national curriculum, the teaching practices and school resources. The study is implemented every four years. More information is provided at: <http://keea-timss.pi.ac.cy/timss>.
  - **TIMSS 2023:** This is the seventh participation of Cyprus in TIMSS. Since the last TIMSS cycle (2019) participating countries have started transitioning to electronic administration of the data collection instruments (eTIMSS). In this cycle, Cyprus will make this transition in the case of Grade 8, whereas Grade 4 will use paper-based data collection. The Field Study took place in spring 2022 with 550 eighth graders, i.e. only the pupil population that transitioned to the electronic version (Grade 8). During 2022 the CERE has organized, coordinated, and supervised the process of data collection and coding. In addition, it engaged in various tasks pertinent to the preparation of the participation in the Main Study. In particular, the CERE has (a) coordinated with the organizers of the study on various matters that emerged from the Field Study (e.g., adjustments of tasks), (b) made adjustments in the translation of the testing material, (c) prepared the sampling frame for the selection of the participating schools, and (d) organized meetings to coordinate with the Directorates of Primary and Secondary Education. The Main Study will involve about 4000 fourth graders and 4000 eighth graders.
  
- **Teaching and Learning International Study (TALIS)** – The study focuses on the learning environment and working conditions of teachers in schools. It offers an opportunity for teachers and school principals to provide data for education analyses and policy development. The study collects information from principals and teachers in the gymnasium at an international level, with respect to aspects, such as professional development, evaluation, teaching and pupils' learning. The study is implemented every six years. More information is provided at: <http://keea-talis.pi.ac.cy/talis>.
  - **TALIS 2024:** The fourth cycle of TALIS 2024 began in 2021 with an online briefing of the National Project Managers. This cycle had an increased number of participants (around 55 countries) and offered more options for participation. Cyprus participates in TALIS for the third time with co-funding by the European Commission. The Pilot Study took place in February - March 2022. The use of focus groups with teachers and school principals in lower secondary education allowed the testing of the reliability and validity of the Field Study research instruments. The Field Study will take place in 2023, whereas the Main Study will take place in 2024. The Field Study will involve about 200 teachers from ten schools, whereas the Main Study will engage all schools, private or public, and will involve about 3600 teachers.
  
- **Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS)** – This international study provides data on trends in comparative reading achievement for fourth graders, across participating countries. PIRLS collects considerable background information on how educational systems provide educational opportunities to their pupils, as well as the factors that influence how pupils use these opportunities. The study runs every five years. More information is provided at: <http://keea-pirls.pi.ac.cy/pirls>.
  - **PIRLS 2021:** This is the second participation of Cyprus in this study (previous participation was in 2001). The Main Study was completed in spring 2021 and involved 4602 pupils from 162 public or private schools. The data that were collected were processed locally (data coding and data entry) and the database was submitted to the organizers in 2021. In 2022 the organizers processed the data and the international results will be announced in spring 2023.
  
- **International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS):** This study investigates the ways in which young people are prepared to undertake their role as citizens in a world where contexts of democracy and civic participation continue to change. It focuses on pupils' knowledge,

understanding and attitudes towards citizenship and seeks to explore factors that may come to influence their behavioral intentions with respect to participating in activities related to civics and citizenship. More information is provided at: <http://keea-iccs.pi.ac.cy/iccs>.

- **ICCS 2022:** Cyprus participated in this study for the second time (previous participation was in 2009). During 2022 (March - May 2022) the Main Study took place, with the participation of 3160 pupils and 1214 teachers from 98 public and private secondary education schools. The CERE organized, coordinated, and supervised the process of data collection and coding and implemented quality control measures. The coded data were submitted to the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), according to the timeline, so that they could be processed, along with the respective data from the other participating countries. The results of the study are expected to be announced in November 2023.
- **Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC)** – This international study of World Health Organization (WHO) collects data on pupils' (11, 13 and 15-year-olds) health and well-being, social environments, health behaviors and so on. More information is provided at: <http://keea-hbcs.pi.ac.cy/hbcs>.
  - **HBSC 2022:** Cyprus participated in this study for the first time. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the data collection period was extended until April 2022 (instead of December 2021, as planned) with the participation of 4818 pupils from 276 classes and 208 schools. The CERE organized, coordinated, and supervised the process of data collection and coding and implemented quality control measures. The data were submitted to the HBSC Data Management Centre, to be processed, along with the respective data from the other participating countries. The results of the study are expected to be announced in the summer of 2023.
- **International Computer and Information Literacy Study (ICILS):** This study investigates how well are Grade 8 pupils prepared for study, work, and life in a digital world. The study measures international differences in pupils' computer and information literacy knowledge and skills (CIL). More information is provided at: <http://keea-icils.pi.ac.cy/icils>.
  - **ICILS 2023:** Cyprus participates in this study for the first time. During 2022, the CERE coordinated the process of conducting final adaptations and translations on the data collection instruments (test and questionnaires) and manuals for the Main Study. Promotional material was prepared and the local ICILS website was set up. The Main Study is expected to take place in the spring of 2023, with the participation of about 3500 pupils and 1400 teachers.

#### 3.5.4.1.2 National research

In addition to the above, the CERE implements two longitudinal large-scale national studies as follows:

- **Programme for Functional Literacy for Third and Sixth Graders** – At a local level, the CERE conducts the longitudinal 'Programme for Functional Literacy' (PFL) on a national scale for all primary school pupils of the third and sixth grade. The study aims at the identification of pupils 'at risk' for functional illiteracy. The results of the study are forwarded to schools and Directorates of Education of the MoESY, so that these pupils receive the necessary support. In 2022, the tests were administered on the 1<sup>st</sup> of December (Greek Language) and on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December (Mathematics). In sum, 6835 pupils participated in the Greek language test and 6903 pupils participated in the Mathematics test for the third grade. Additionally, 8047 pupils participated in the Greek language test and 8093 pupils participated in the Mathematics test for the sixth grade. More information is provided at: <http://keea-literacy.pi.ac.cy/literacy>.
- **Learning Greek as an Additional Language** – This programme intends to diagnose the level of competence in Greek as an additional language for children with immigrant background, in public primary schools of Cyprus, so that they can receive targeted remedial instruction. Participants are

pupils across the primary school grades (Grades 1- 6), who currently attend (or will attend in the following school year) remedial instruction for learning Greek as an additional language. During 2021 - 2022, 2037 pupils (initial assessment) and 1993 (final assessment) should have participated in the programme. These numbers included the pupils who did not complete their initial or final assessment for the programme in the school year 2020 - 2021 due to the pandemic. In sum, 1844 pupils out of 2037 (90,5%) participated in the initial assessment and 1696 pupils out of 1993 (85,1%) participated in the final assessment. More information is provided at: <http://keea-ellinomatheia.pi.ac.cy/ellinomatheia/>

In addition, at a local level, for the first time during the school year 2021 - 2022, the CERE conducted the "Programme Greek Language Test for First Graders" on a national scale for all primary school pupils attending the first grade. The Programme aimed at investigating the extent to which first year graders achieved basic goals in reading comprehension and in writing. In sum, 7166 out of the 7528 pupils (95,2%) participated in the Programme. More information is provided at: <https://keea-pami-a.pi.ac.cy/pami-a/>.

#### **3.5.4.2 Evaluation of innovations and programmes of the MoESY**

During the school year 2021 - 2022, the CERE implemented the following evaluation study, which is expected to facilitate the MoESY in evidence-based decision-making:

- **Pilot implementation of the school counselor programme in primary education** – During the school year, 2021 – 2022, the CERE assessed the pilot implementation of this programme and aimed at the investigation of the perspectives of all the parts involved, regarding its effectiveness in relation to its specified goals, namely the (a) enhancement of the well-being of pupils and (b) strengthening of the efforts to tackle and prevent misbehavior / misconduct in school. Two primary schools, in the two biggest districts, were involved. In total, participants included two head teachers, two school counselors, 29 teachers and 226 pupils. The results of the evaluation were presented in a report prepared by the CERE (July, 2022).

#### **3.5.4.3 Promotion of research culture within schools**

The CERE assures that all individuals conducting research in Cyprus public schools use appropriate instruments and follow proper methodological approaches / ethical protocols. It reviews more than 200 research plans submitted by individual researchers per year. In addition, since 2016 the CERE employs an electronic platform to submit and organize the research outcomes of the various research plans that were implemented. The systematic collection of these outcomes on an electronic database will contribute to the development of a shared repository with research results.

### **3.5.5 CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT UNIT (CDU)**

The Curriculum Development Unit is responsible for:

- The coordination of procedures for the issuance and revision of national Curricula.
- Editing and updating of teaching textbooks and the production of educational material for teachers and pupils, at all levels of education.
- Purchasing of teaching textbooks published by the Computer Technology Institute and Press "Diophantus" in Greece, and arranging the process of transporting them from Greece to Cyprus.
- Issuance of educational/promotional material (e.g. booklets, posters, cover art, flyers) for the purposes of:
  - the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth (MoESY),
  - the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute, and
  - other Services of the MoESY.

- Preparing documents for printing tenders. Coordinating and monitoring all necessary administrative procedures (publication, evaluation and awarding of tenders), and supervising publications during the process of printing.
- Cooperating with the Departments of Primary, Secondary General and Secondary Technical and Vocational Education and the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth Store, for the operation of a database that facilitates ordering textbooks electronically.

In order to carry out the work effectively, the Curriculum Development Unit works closely with the Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Sport of Greece, the Institute of Educational Policy of Greece, the Computer Technology Institute and Press "Diophantus", the Departments of Education, the Tender Board of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth, the Government Printing Office, private printing presses, the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth Warehouse, the universities of Cyprus and the Trade Unions of teachers.

### 3.5.5.1 Books used in the Cyprus educational system

The books used in the Cyprus educational system include publications by the CDU, the Computer Technology Institute and Press "Diophantus" and by other sources. The table below shows in detail the number of books used at each level of education.

LEVEL OF EDUCATION	NUMBER OF BOOK TITLES			
	CDU	Computer Technology Institute and Press "Diophantus"	Other Sources	Total
Preprimary / Primary	101	40	-	141
Secondary General	154	63	26	243
Technical and Vocational	183	149	8	340
<b>Total</b>	<b>438 (60,5%)</b>	<b>252 (34,8%)</b>	<b>34 (4,7%)</b>	<b>724 (100%)</b>

### 3.5.5.2 Curriculum Development Unit budget

The following table shows the expenditure for the financial year 2022:

	COST
Reprints/ Revisions/ First editions of CDU books and educational packages	€1.725.000,00
Purchase of textbooks from the CTI "Diophantus", books sent abroad/books received from abroad.	€1.300.000,00
Purchase of foreign language books (English, French, and so on) and literature books for Secondary General and Secondary Technical Education.	€1.600.000,00
<b>Total cost</b>	<b>€4.625.000,00</b>

# 4.

## PARTICIPATION IN EUROPEAN PROGRAMMES

### 4.1 EURYDICE NETWORK

The Eurydice network supports and facilitates European cooperation in the field of lifelong learning by providing information on education systems and policies in 37 countries and by producing studies on issues common to European education systems. It consists of:

- 39 national units based in 37 countries participating in the Erasmus+ programme (27 Member States, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, The Republic of North Macedonia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland and Turkey), and
- a coordinating unit based in the European Education and Culture Executive Agency in Brussels.

Since 1980, the Eurydice network has been one of the strategic mechanisms established by the European Commission and Member States to support European cooperation in the field of education. Since 2014, Eurydice has been included in Erasmus+, the EU programme for education, training, youth and sport. The Cyprus Eurydice Unit has been operating within the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth since June 2002. For more information on Eurydice, visit the following website: <https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice>.

### 4.2 ELECTRONIC PLATFORM FOR ADULT LEARNING IN EUROPE - EPALE

The Department of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education and Training is the coordinator of the Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe (EPALE) in Cyprus.

EPALE is a multilingual online space aiming at exchanging, showcasing and promoting methods of good practice in adult education. Individuals involved in organising and delivering adult education can access an online adult learning platform to share the latest developments and learn from each other. EPALE also includes a library of resources, a calendar of courses and events of interest for adult education professionals, as well as a partner-search tool.

EPALE supports the following goals:

- Make lifelong learning and exchange of experience a reality.
- Improve the quality and efficiency of adult learning.
- Promote equality, social cohesion and active citizenship through adult learning.

Anyone involved in providing and organising adult education, including teaching and administrative staff, policymakers, researchers and media can take part by registering on the platform.

## 4.3 HIGHER EDUCATION

### 4.3.1 PROGRAMMES FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND STUDENT MOBILITY

The Department of Higher Education (DHE) places great emphasis on promoting learning mobility in Higher Education (HE) for students, teaching staff and researchers. Such mobility contributes to the enrichment of human capital and the strengthening of employability through the acquisition and exchange of knowledge and intercultural competences.

Considering that international cooperation programmes also contribute towards enhancing the quality and international visibility of HE and fostering mobility and intercultural dialogue, the DHE encourages and supports Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) of Cyprus to actively participate in European and international cooperation programmes, such as Erasmus+, Marie Curie and so on.

### 4.3.2 REGIONAL CO-OPERATION PROGRAMMES

The Department of Higher Education participates in Regional Co-operation Programmes such as Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (Euromed), and the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM).

## 4.4 CYPRUS PEDAGOGICAL INSTITUTE

The Cyprus Pedagogical Institute participates and coordinates a number of European competitive programmes for innovative learning projects:

PERIOD	PROJECT	CO-FUNDING
<b>Information and Communication Technologies</b>		
18/02/2019 -27/05/2022	ATS STEM: Assessment of Transversal Skills in STEM	Erasmus+ Programme Key Action 3 - Support for policy reform - initiatives for policy innovation, European policy experimentations in the fields of Education and Training led by high-level public authorities
01/01/2020 -30/06/2022	SELFIE Helper and Pedagogical Innovation Assistant – SHERPA	ERASMUS + Programme KA3 – Forward-Looking cooperation Projects in the Field of Education and Training
01/12/2020-31/11/2022	Social Radio 2.0: The European School Radio and Podcasting Community for Active Citizenship Education	Erasmus+ KA2-Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices  KA201 - Strategic Partnerships for school Education
01/01/2021-30/09/2022	Safer Internet (CyberSafety III)	Connecting Europe facility in the field of trans-European



		telecommunication networks, CEF-TC-2020-1-Safer Internet
01/02/2022 – 31/01/2024	Learning from the Extremes – LfE	PPPA-2021-RemoteDigEdu (Preparatory action - Increasing access to educational tools in areas and communities with low connectivity or access to technologies)
<b>Period</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Co-funding</b>
<b>Education for the Environment and Sustainable Development</b>		
2020 - 2025	PEDIA: Promoting Energy efficiency & Developing Innovative Approaches in schools	HORIZON 2020
01/05/2020-31/10/2022	Network of Open EcoMuseums for the Promotion and Gentle Enhancement of Areas with Environmental History	Cooperation Programme INTERREG V-A Greece – Cyprus 2014-2020
<b>Teaching methodology</b>		
31/12/2020-30/12/2023	Using digital tools for formative assessment in mathematics classroom (Dig_ForMath)	Erasmus+ Programme Key Action 1 - Learning Mobility of Individuals, KA101 - School education staff mobility, Call 2020, Round 1
01/09/2020-31/08/2023	Lesson Study as a vehicle for improving achievement in mathematics (LESSAM)	Erasmus+ KA2: Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices  KA201 - Strategic Partnerships for school education
<b>Emotional enhancement</b>		
01/12/2020-30/11/2022	RESILIENCE -Resilience and Wellbeing in preschool education to prevent emotional, social and behavioral problems	Erasmus + KA2-Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices  KA201 - Strategic Partnerships for school education
28/02/2021-28/02/2024	Promoting Teachers Well-being through Positive Behavior Support in Early Childhood Education-ProWell	Erasmus + KA3 - Support for policy reform Initiatives for policy innovation-European Policy Experimentations
<b>Period</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Co-funding</b>
<b>Safe and friendly school environment</b>		

01/11/2019-31/10/2022	SeBI: Securing the Best Interest of the Child in Educational School Administration.	Erasmus+ KA3, Social inclusion and common values: the contribution in the field of education and training
1/12/2020 - 30/11/2023	SAFER: Social competences and Fundamental Rights for preventing bullying (including on-line bullying)	Erasmus+ KA3, Social Inclusion and common values: the contribution in the field of education and training
<b>Multicultural education</b>		
15/1/2021-14/01/2023	PASSAGE - Pedagogies of Passing from Reception to Education	Erasmus+ KA3: Social inclusion and common values: The contribution in the field of education and training (LOT1)
01/11/202-31/10/2023	Assessing Newly Arrived Migrants' Knowledge in Science and Math using Augmented Teaching Material - Augmented Assessment	Erasmus KA3- Support for policy reform - Social inclusion through education, training and youth
<b>Professional and learning Communities</b>		
01/06/2022 – 01/05/2025	PLCs for us "Professional Learning Communities in the post-covid era: Collaboration between University and Public School System»	Erasmus Plus - Key Action 3

# 5.

## OTHER SERVICES OF THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SPORT AND YOUTH

### 5.1 EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, LIFELONG LEARNING AND ADULT EDUCATION BUREAU (EIALLAEB)

#### Overview

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth (MoESY) seeks to build on relations and strengthen cooperation with the institutions of the European Union (EU) and other member states (MS), neighboring and other third countries, as well as collaborations with international organizations. It develops an extrovert approach and aims at maximizing benefits in all areas of its competence, namely Education, Youth and Sport. The European and International Affairs, Lifelong Learning and Adult Education Bureau (EIALLAEB) contributes significantly to the development, implementation and coordination in the following key areas: cooperation agreements; international relations of the ministry; policies that feature a European and international dimension.

#### 5.1.1 COORDINATION OF EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL POLICIES

EIALLAEB undertook the coordination of the role of the ministry in the EU institutions, the competent bodies of the Council of Europe (CoE) and other international organizations. Leading a network of collaborators from all the directorates / services of the ministry, the Youth Board of Cyprus (CYB), the Cyprus Sports Organisation (CSO) and other government departments, EIALLAEB contributed to the formulation of national contributions and the dissemination and implementation of European and international policies at national level. EIALLAEB worked closely with the General Secretariat for European Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and with the Permanent Representation of Cyprus to the EU (PRoCY-EU) for the timely, targeted and effective management of policy development pertaining to Education, Culture / Audiovisual (*until the establishment of the Deputy Ministry of Culture on 01 July 2022*), Sports and Youth. EIALLAEB, acting within its areas of competence, carried out these responsibilities on behalf of the Republic of Cyprus, as a EU member state.

In order to promote the cooperation of the MoESY with other countries, EIALLAEB coordinated with the staff of our diplomatic missions abroad and with diplomatic missions of countries here in Cyprus. In this context, EIALLAEB coordinated the implementation and renewal of bilateral and trilateral agreements, memoranda of understanding and executive cooperation programmes related to matters of Education, Culture (*until the establishment of the Deputy Ministry of Culture on 01 July 2022*), Sport and Youth. EIALLAEB cooperated with the Office of the Minister in scheduling the meetings of the minister with ambassadors / high commissioners posted to Cyprus, in addition to briefing the minister prior to these high-level meetings.

Within the framework of its responsibilities, EIALLAEB was also responsible for briefing the minister in preparation for meetings of the EU Council of Ministers, informal ministerial meetings and others held

abroad. It also coordinated the Minister's participation in high-level teleconferences whenever those replaced physical conferences.

#### **5.1.1.1 Participation in the Council of the European Union**

EIALLAEB coordinated Cyprus' official positions as they related to the Priorities of the French Presidency (January - June 2022) and of the Czech Presidency (July - December 2022). In cooperation with PRoCY-EU in Brussels, these positions were developed, addressed and adopted in the various Committees and Working Groups of the Council of the European Union (Education Committee, Working Group on Sport, Committee on Cultural Affairs, Working Group on Audiovisuals, Working Group on Youth).

One of the most important European top-level actions is the participation of the Minister in the Council of Ministers of Education, Culture / Audiovisual, Youth and Sports of the European Union. EIALLAEB prepared the Minister's participation in the individual Council meetings, formal and informal, held within the framework of the French and Czech Presidencies of the Council of the European Union. EIALLAEB additionally prepared the Minister's participation in the 5th EU Education Summit entitled "Bright Young Minds".

#### **5.1.1.2 Official Visits Abroad**

Contributing to the promotion of international relations within the ministry's areas of competence, the minister participated in the following meetings:

- Informal meeting of the EU Ministers of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, in Paris, 25/01/2022, under the French Presidency of the Council of the EU.
- Informal meeting of the EU Education and Youth Ministers, in Strasbourg, 27/01/2022, under the French Presidency.
- Statement of the Minister at the Conference "Investing in an integrated Early Childhood Education and Care System: Growing the Next Generation of the EU", in Bologna, Italy 23/2/2022.
- Ministerial Conference under the French Presidency on "Integrating a European Perspective into the professional profile of teachers", Poitiers, 3/3/2022, under the French Presidency.
- Informal Council of the EU Culture and Audiovisual Ministers, in Angers, 7 - 8/03/2022, under the French Presidency.
- Council of Ministers for Education, Youth, Culture and Sport, Luxembourg, 4 - 5 April, under the French Presidency.
- Official visit to the United Kingdom in the framework of Cyprus' participation in the World Summit on Education, May 2022.
- Official visit to Athens and meetings with Minister of Culture and Sports and Minister of Education and Religious Affairs, June 2022.
- Official visit to Austria in the framework of the established annual institution "Cypriot Concert", organized by the Cyprus Cultural Centre in Vienna with the support of the Deputy Ministry of Culture, 18 - 21/11/2022.
- Council of Ministers of Education, Youth and Sport, in Brussels, 28 - 29/11/2022.

#### **5.1.1.3 Official visits of dignitaries / delegations from MS, EU partner countries and non-EU states**

EIALLAEB undertook the preparation for meetings and briefing of the minister with the heads of diplomatic missions and high-level visiting envoys:

- Ambassador of Ukraine (March & August)
- The US Assistant Secretary of State for Cultural and Educational Affairs (April)
- High Commissioner of Sierra Leone (April)
- Ambassador of China (May)
- Ambassador of Slovakia (June),
- Ambassador of Italy (July),
- Ambassador of the Dominican Republic (July)

- Ambassador of Switzerland (July)
- Ambassador of Libya (October)
- Ambassador of Palestine (November)

The Minister also held the following meetings with his counterparts and other senior officials:

- Minister of Education and Minister of Youth, Sports and Family of Seychelles (May)
- European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture and Youth, Mariya Gabriel, (May)

EIALLAEB contributed, in general, to the successful organization of the 9th Ministerial Meeting on the Environment in Europe of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), which took place in Lefkosia between 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> October 2022, with the participation of 72 Ministers from 75 countries and the attendance of more than 1200 participants. As a member of the National Secretariat of the Meeting, EIALLAEB undertook communication with the diplomatic missions of foreign countries in Cyprus, as well as with the delegations of international organizations and with the ministry representatives of other countries. In addition, it organized the training of liaison officers and volunteers who worked for the implementation of the meeting.

Within the framework of the 9<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Meeting on the Environment in Europe, bilateral meetings of the Minister were held with the following officials:

- Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of Armenia
- Minister of Education and Higher Education of Lebanon
- Minister of Education, Culture, University Research and Youth of San Marino
- Minister of Education and Religious Affairs of Greece.

#### **5.1.1.4 Signing of Memoranda of Understanding and Cooperation Programmes**

In cooperation with the ministry's competent directorates and departments and in cooperation with other ministries, EIALLAEB serves as the lead coordinator in the drafting, signing and renewal of all international agreements, executive programmes and memoranda of understanding between the ministry and corresponding government bodies.

The following documents were drafted and signed or updated and renewed between the ministry and the following countries or organizations:

- *Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Youth of the Republic of Cyprus and the Hellenic Foundation in Paris for the period 2022 – 2032.*
- *Memorandum of Understanding in the Field of Greek Language Learning between the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth of the Republic of Cyprus and the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs of the Hellenic Republic for the years 2022 – 2027.*
- *Protocol of Cooperation in the field of Sports between the Republic of Cyprus and the Hellenic Republic, for the years 2022 – 2024.*
- *Memorandum of Cooperation between the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth of the Republic of Cyprus and the Cultural Action and Cooperation Service of the Embassy of France in Cyprus / French Institute of Cyprus for the implementation of DELF Scolaire French language certification in public schools, for the years 2022 – 2027.*
- *Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Fields of Higher Education and Science between the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth of the Republic of Cyprus and the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China for the period 2022 – 2026.*
- *Memorandum of Understanding in the fields of Higher Education and Research between the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth of the Republic of Cyprus and the Ministry of Culture and Innovation of Hungary for the period 2022 – 2023.*

#### **5.1.1.5 Coordination of Working Groups of the European Commission (EC)**

EIALLAEB coordinated the representation of Cyprus in seven Working Groups of the European Commission for the first cycle of the Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in the field of

Education and Training towards the Single European Area and beyond for the years 2021 - 2025. EIALLAEB represents the ministry in the committees of the ERASMUS+ Programme and the European Solidarity Corps.

#### **5.1.1.6 Youth Issues**

EIALLAEB represented the ministry in the National Working Group for the EU Youth Dialogue, the Youth and Youth Organizations. Participation in the Working Group, chaired by the Youth Council, was made by representatives of the Cyprus Youth Board (CYB). The topic of the consultations for the 18-month period that started in 2020 and ended in 2022 was the 9th Youth Goal on "Space and participation for all". The final joint recommendations of this cycle were taken into account in the Council Resolution on the results of the 8th cycle of the EU Youth Dialogue, adopted by the Council of the European Union.

EIALLAEB, in cooperation with the competent officers of CYB, contributed to the best possible representation of the youth sector in the EU, the Commonwealth, and the United Nations and so on. EIALLAEB was represented in the Steering Group for monitoring the implementation of the National Youth Strategy, with the aim of utilizing European and international good practices in this field in the best possible way.

The EU declared 2022 as the European Year of Youth. In cooperation with the National Coordinator for the Implementation of the European Year of Youth in Cyprus, Mr. Panagiotis Sedonas and the Youth Board of Cyprus, relevant actions were organized.

#### **5.1.1.7 Sports Issues**

EIALLAEB, in cooperation with the Cyprus Sports Organisation (CSO) and other competent directorates and departments of the ministry, has always coordinated issues related to Sports arising from the work of the various Working Groups and Committees of the EU and the Council of Europe.

EIALLAEB coordinated and contributed to the preparation and representation of the ministry in the meetings of the Working Group "Developing a Model Position of Trust Legislation" of the Commonwealth for the preparation of a model aimed at improving the legal protection of individuals in positions of trust in the countries of the Commonwealth, in general. Additionally, as part of its cooperation with CSO, EIALLAEB coordinated the minister's representation in the Commonwealth Advisory Board for Sport (CABOS).

#### **5.1.1.8 Monitoring European and international policies in Lifelong Learning and Adult Education**

EIALLAEB is committed to the monitoring and study of European and international policies in Adult Education, in order to gather and utilize best practices and tools. The monitoring of these policies, together with the use of relevant tools / publications / surveys (e.g. EU Education and Training Monitor, EPALE Platform, CEDEFOP Reports, validation mechanisms for non-formal / informal learning, EU Working Group on Adult Education, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning), aims at strengthening and improving existing policies. These actions simultaneously contribute to the development of new, strategic objectives, based on national priorities. EIALLAEB promotes the development of collaborations and networks between national, European and international organizations, within areas of common competence and promotes the exchange of good practices on relevant issues with European organizations, such as the European Basic Skills Network (EBSN) of which the ministry is a member.

#### **5.1.1.9 Participation in initiatives of the Council of Europe (CoE)**

An important action of the EIALLAEB is the participation in initiatives of the CoE. Specifically, EIALLAEB participates in the meetings of the Steering Committee for Education of the Council of Europe (CD-EDU) and also coordinates and participates in various other educational initiatives of the CoE. In 2022, EIALLAEB coordinated and promoted Cyprus' participation in the Council of Europe's Extended Partial Agreement on the Observatory on History Teaching in Europe.

## **5.1.2 EXPLOITING OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUNDING AND PARTICIPATION IN ACTIONS WITH A EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE**

The implementation of programmes, the adoption of good practices and peer-to-peer learning is used by several MS and other international organisations to improve their performance. Within this framework, EIALLAEB contributes to the implementation of programmes resulting from International and European collaborations and coordinates or participates in relevant interdepartmental committees. Participation in relevant projects and actions aims at strengthening and improving national policies, strategic objectives and needs.

### **5.1.2.1 Capacity building of the MoESY staff to exploit funding opportunities from European and other programmes**

EIALLAEB organizes actions aimed at enhancing the capacity of the staff of the ministry to take advantage of funding opportunities from European and other programmes for policy implementation. The role of EIALLAEB is to provide, inter alia, the correct guidance for targeted submission of proposals, in accordance with the strategic planning and the priorities of the ministry. In this context, EIALLAEB has established the Interdepartmental Working Group for the utilization of European and other resources for the implementation of the ministry policies. The working group is comprised of representatives from the ministry's directorates and departments, to whom the relevant information is transmitted. EIALLAEB provides the above working group with administrative support by providing the following services: sharing timely information relevant to funding opportunities; mapping of the current situation for feedback purposes; maintenance of a significant network of potential partners.

In order to achieve the above, a process of participation in competitive EU programmes is in force, so as to follow the appropriate procedures and ensure that the requirements of the programmes are handled effectively.

### **5.1.2.2 Establishing mechanisms for the validation of non-formal and informal learning**

As per the project on "Establishing Non-Formal / Informal Learning Validation Mechanisms and Pilot Implementation", the contractor has completed the development of the qualification validation framework for the needs of the pilot implementation in the fields of Youth, Volunteering and Adult Education. The project was completed on 25/11/22.

### **5.1.2.3 Operation of an Interdepartmental Committee on Global Education**

The Interdepartmental Committee on Global Education was created on the initiative of the EIALLAEB in 2009. The committee has since been involved in activities related to the goals of global education with a view towards promoting them effectively. Appropriate administrative actions were implemented so that, as from 2022, global education is under the purview of the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute (CPI) and the Unit for Education for the Environment and Sustainable Development (UEESD).

### **5.1.2.4 Operation of an Interdepartmental Committee for the examination of Language Proficiency in accordance with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) of the Council of Europe**

The committee was reorganized in 2022 with the following mandate: to (a) study the existing lists of acceptable language certification documents of the Educational Service Commission and the Public Service Commission; (2) create a single list; (3) update them by defining the documents in relation to CEFR; (4) submit recommendations for their implementation. The committee is composed of senior educational officers, inspectors and faculty advisors of the ministry's Greek, English and French departments, language experts and academics of universities in Cyprus. Its work is coordinated by the EIALLAEB.

### **5.1.2.5 Coordination of the participation of the MoESY in Francophonie activities and events**

In the context of the Cyprus' participation in the International Organisation of La Francophonie (OIF) (*fr. L'Organisation internationale de la Francophonie*), EIALLAEB has taken all necessary steps to

coordinate the actions / events of the ministry during the Francophonie Month. For the year 2022, EIALLAEB undertook the responsibility of organizing the press conference for the events of the "Francophonie Season 2022", the coordination of the actions for the screening of the Cypriot film "Elderly Citizen", which opened the film festival and the Pancyprian Interschool Francophonie Competition on "Europe of the Future: Francophonie and diversity through illustrations". EIALLAEB also coordinated Cyprus' participation in the 9<sup>th</sup> Francophonie Artistic and Sports Games (owing to pandemic-related restrictions, the games were postponed to summer 2023).

#### **5.1.2.6 Cooperation with the Office of the European Parliament and the European Commission Representation**

EIALLAEB serves as the link between the ministry and the Office of the European Parliament and the Representation of the European Commission in Cyprus, providing the necessary support and coordinating all the necessary actions in order to promote, inform, implement and successfully conduct the educational activities of the EU. For the academic year 2021 - 2022, Euro-awareness activities, information on the European Charlemagne Youth Prize 2022 and the European Youth Event (EYE) were promoted in secondary education and secondary technical and vocational education and training schools. With the coordination of the EIALLAEB, the European Parliament Ambassador School (EPAS) programme was carried out. Through this programme, the First Pancyprian Interschool EUROGNOSY Competition was conducted for second-year lyceum pupils.

#### **5.1.2.7 Coordination of the participation of the MoESY in the governance system of the Schola Europaea (European Schools)**

EIALLAEB coordinates the participation of Cyprus in the bodies of the European Schools, in cooperation with the relevant inspectors of Primary and Secondary Education for the European Schools. The primary responsibility of EIALLAEB is to participate in the meetings of the Board of Governors concerning financial and personnel issues, budget and curricula. In 2022, EIALLAEB participated in both online / hybrid meetings in August and April and the in-person meeting of the Board of Governors in Brussels (6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> December 2022). Other responsibilities include coordinating the processes for the secondment of qualified teaching staff to European Schools, in cooperation with the Directorates of Primary and Secondary General Education.

#### **5.1.2.8 Coordination of the actions of the MoESY's departments for the education of Ukrainian nationals fleeing to Cyprus due to the war in Ukraine**

Since the beginning of the war in Ukraine in February 2022 and in the context of the renewed Council Implementing Decision establishing the existence of a mass influx of displaced persons from Ukraine and on the provision of providing temporary protection to Ukrainian refugees fleeing to the territories of MS (Council of the European Union, 04.03.2022), EIALLAEB has been coordinating all actions concerning the education of Ukrainian refugees, including:

- cooperation with the Embassy of Ukraine and representatives of the Ukrainian community in Cyprus,
- coordination with the MoESY's departments for the smooth reception of displaced children from Ukraine and their integration into the school environment,
- contribution to reports, surveys, collection of statistics / information concerning Ukrainian refugees of various local, European and international organizations,
- participation in Working Groups and monitoring of good practices of other MS, and
- coordination and monitoring of a project funded by the European Funds Unit of the Ministry of Interior for the Education of Ukrainian refugees, lasting one year (14/4/2022-14/6/2023).

#### **5.1.2.9 European Agenda for Adult Learning**

The budget of the project for the years 2022 - 2023 amounts to €246.648 (80% from European Commission resources and 20% from National resources).



The project aims to further enhance the digital skills of adult educators and adult learners in the following ways:

- Enhance the capabilities of the Moodle Platform, introducing new online courses, as well as introducing modern learning in its features for adult learners' access.
- Promote the professional development of adult educators, through training on the digital skills of adult learners as well as the development of an online MOOC course for trainers teaching basic skills to adults.
- Strengthen synergies and coordination between the various institutions within and outside the Ministry, offering adult education and training, mainly with the aim of enhancing the digital skills of adults.

All information about the Project is posted on the ministry's website:

<http://www.moec.gov.cy/aethee/index.html>.

### **5.1.3 UPGRADING OF ADULT DIGITAL SKILLS**

The ADULTDIGITALUP project (2021 - 2023), aims at promoting adult digital literacy with a special focus on low-skilled adults and adult educators. Supported by the EU's Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support (DG REFORM) and coordinated by CARDET (Center for the Advancement of Research & Development in Educational Technology), the project is aligned with the EU's digital strategy, the European Skills Programme and the EU Council resolution on a new European Agenda for Adult Learning 2021.

The project promotes the exchange of good practices and experiences, in order to fulfill the common European vision of the digital age. In addition, it is in full alignment with the Ministry's commitment and strategic plans to enhance and develop the digital skills of adult educators in Cyprus.

The project focuses on the training of adult educators under three main pillars:

- Pedagogical skills of adult educators - adult teaching and learning and digital skills.
- Design adult learning programmes and exploit new technologies to promote digital skills.
- Low-skilled adult teaching practices.

During 2022, the following actions were implemented:

- Investigation of the needs of adult educators in Cyprus, through quantitative (questionnaire) and qualitative (semi-structured interviews, roundtable) methods, regarding their training needs. More information on the methodology and findings can be found in the specific deliverable D1.1 Needs Assessment.
- Study of good practices in European Union countries and identification of specific examples / models of training and educating teachers with similar objectives and common with the AdultDigitalUp project.
- Two Study visits – study visits to Estonia (online) and Ireland (in-person). Virtual and face-to-face study visits help to further collect data and examples, enriching the good practices identified by the literature. The experts hosting the study visits share practices, knowledge and relevant examples. The visits are enriched with localized information that contributes to a better understanding of the actual application of the tools they developed, as well as relevant methodologies related to the training of low-skilled adults and adults in digital competences.
- Development of the first edition of the training material for adult educators.

The training material is developed for the hybrid implementation of the planned training of adult educators, including digital and face-to-face learning materials. The training material is structured under three pillars:

- Development of pedagogical knowledge, competences and skills.
- Use of digital tools and methods in adult learning.
- Management of low-skilled learners.

The digital development of the training material is expected to be completed by the end of May 2023, and the trainings to be implemented during the period June to November 2023. A total of 20 trainers and 100 adult educators will be trained.

#### **5.1.4 PREPARATION OF REPORTS**

The participation of Cyprus in various international organizations and networks, such as the European Union, the Council of Europe, UNESCO, the United Nations, the Commonwealth, the International Organization of the Francophonie, the Eurydice Network, CEDEFOP and ReferNET and so on, give rise to obligations for the submission of periodic or extraordinary reports and reports on the part of the Republic of Cyprus. The most important contributions produced during 2022 for the following reports were:

- Report on the National Reform Programme.
- Data collection for the Education and Training Monitor 2022.
- Report on the implementation of the Council's Recommendations on the validation of non-formal and informal learning.
- 2023 ReferNet Report on Vocational Education and Training Policies.
- Human Rights Report prepared by the U.S. Department of State.
- Report on the implementation of the Council of Europe's European Social Charter.
- EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) report on Asylum and Migration.

#### **5.1.5 DEVELOPMENT OF COLLABORATIONS / NETWORKS WITH NATIONAL, EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

The exchange of good practices and peer learning from other EU or UNESCO Member States and European / international organizations (e.g. European Association for the Education of Adults and European Basic Skills Network, Lifelong Learning Platform) is a means to further promote lifelong learning and adult learning. To that end, the exchange of good practices and the development of cooperation with European / international organizations (e.g. European Observatory on Infringements of Intellectual Property Rights) is a means to promote the benefits for culture, society and the economy of the protection of copyright and related rights in the field of education.

At the same time, the development of intra-governmental partnerships is promoted under the areas of common competence (e.g. Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance, Foundation for the Management of European Lifelong Learning Programmes, Deputy Ministry of Innovation, Research and Strategic Policy, Statistical Service, and so on), as well as the Republic of Cyprus's commitment to participate in the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA).

## **5.2 SCHOOL CLERKS ADMINISTRATION OFFICE**

The School Clerks Administration Office is responsible for the administration and organization of all School Clerks, who serve mainly in Secondary General and Secondary Technical and Vocational Education and Training School Units, but also in large School Boards.

Specifically, it is responsible for the staffing of 106 Secondary Education Schools, five Evening Gymnasia-Lycea, 13 Technical and Vocational Schools of Education and Training (TESEK), five Evening Schools of Technical and Vocational Education (ESTEE), seven Afternoon / Evening Classes of Technical Schools, 44 School Boards, 42 State Institutes for Education (K.I.E.), five Music Schools, four Post-Secondary Institutes of Vocational Education and Training (M.I.E.E.K.) and the Library of the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute.

The School Clerks Administration Office makes informed suggestions to the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry for better staffing of the above-mentioned educational units. It monitors and controls the organic positions, and takes care of the filling of vacancies.

Furthermore, it has numerous responsibilities, such as the whole process of recruiting temporary School Clerks through the submission of a relevant proposal to the Department of Public Administration and Personnel, and the approval of the annual budget, according to the needs of the Service. It also sets criteria, evaluates candidates' applications, prepares and publishes a preliminary list, examines objections, and proceeds to the publication of a final list, with which the recruitment of temporary School Clerks is made. In addition, the Office is responsible for the procedures of the placement of School Clerks, on the basis of the Service Plan and the relevant legislation.

Furthermore, it keeps records of all School Clerks, approximately 452 (Personal and Licence Files), carries out work on rest leave, sickness, maternity / paternity leave, parental leave, medical boards, retirements, gratuities, evaluates service reports, and so on.

The office is responsible for coordinating and supervising the work of the School Clerks. It is a link between School Heads, Chairpersons of School Boards, School Clerks and Ministry of Education.

In order to train staff, the 'learning core' organizes seminars and programmes on issues where needs are identified.

The Office provides School Clerks with access to useful information, forms and aids through the website of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth: [http://www.moec.gov.cy/grafeio\\_dioikisis\\_epimeliton/](http://www.moec.gov.cy/grafeio_dioikisis_epimeliton/)

## 5.3 MoESY WAREHOUSE

The main objective of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth, Warehouse is the dispatching of scholastic needs to public schools. In addition, the Warehouse assists all the schools throughout the year.

Arrangements are made by the Warehouse, in co-operation with the successful tenderers, for receiving and storing, for Primary Education, books, note books and teaching methodology materials (for the lessons of Art, History, Geography, Mathematics, Music, Physics, Design and Technology) and for Secondary Education, books and teaching methodology materials (for the lessons of Physics, Biology, Chemistry, Music, Home Economy, Design and Technology). All done according to the quantities, the terms and specifications of tenders awarded. The Warehouse is responsible for the follow-up of the contracts and for ensuring that all the terms and conditions are fully met, working in close co-operation with the Accounts Department for the payments.

The preparation of dispatches is carried out by the Warehouse in close co-operation with the schools, school boards and community councils.

The Warehouse prepares a timetable and undertakes the responsibility to serve the needs of all public, private schools of Elementary and Secondary Education and the community schools, after receiving their orders. The transport and delivery of the required items of Primary Education in each district, is undertaken by a transporter under contract and a Warehouse employee.

Books donated by various authors and approved by the Ministry are also delivered to school libraries. Apart from the above, the Warehouse sells to individuals books published by the Curriculum Development Unit. In 2022 the Warehouse has attended approximately 1000 schools.

## 5.4 OFFICE OF CIVIL DEFENCE, HEALTH AND SAFETY MISSION

### 5.4.1 MISSION AND STRUCTURE

Civil Defence, Health and Safety Office's mission is to create a safe and healthy environment for all pupils, teachers and employees in public schools, in all buildings of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth (MoESY), which host educational departments and services. It ensures the prompt and effective response of schools to emergencies. The main task of the Office is to ensure safe working conditions that are in line with the European Directives and the respective legislation of the Republic of Cyprus.

The Office reports directly to the Permanent Secretary. It has an horizontal structure and it is headed by the Director of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education.

### 5.4.2 ACTIONS

- Civil Defence, Health and Safety Office's actions extend to a wide range such as receiving, surveying and updating all public schools' Action Plans in case of an emergency, cooperating with the Department of Labour Inspection (TEE) for measuring the long term effects of radon on the general population, the measurement of harmful particles in the Ministry's central buildings, conducting training programmes for the newly promoted Principals and Assistant Principals in matters of Health and Safety, receiving the completed interactive OIRA tool from schools, updating office's portal and so on.

Among others, the Office organized and coordinated:

- Visits and inspections in schools and other services of the MoESY: The office consults and provides advice on Civil Defence or Health and Safety issues, investigating accidents, identifying hazards and preparing reports on all the above mentioned.

- Public School's Security: The Office controls and coordinates the security services in Secondary General and Secondary Technical and Vocational Education and Training. The security services in Primary Education offered are purchased. It coordinates the security services of the central building of the MoESY and also carries out the inspections of the completion of the project for the fencing of the school premises and the installation of entrance phones.

- The office collaborated with the University of Cyprus to carry out a pilot air cleaning programme in a certain number of schools. In the central building of the MoESY demonstrations of air cleaning technologies took place. For the evaluation of the air cleaning solution in public schools, the Ministry cooperated at a technocratic level with services as the Ministry of Health, the Department of Electromechanical Services and so on.

- Competitions: Co-organization with the Department of Labour Inspection of the Ministry of Labour Welfare and Social Insurance, competition on "School Examples of Good Practice in Health and Safety issues in Cyprus' Education" and a poster competition.

- Actions to cope with the Covid-19 pandemic: In collaboration with the Ministry of Health, it actively participates in the formulation, modification and updating of the Protocols to deal with the spread of the pandemic in schools, organizes and coordinates the conduct of rapid antigen tests within schools, through mobile units, for pupils, teachers and school staff as well as within the building of the Ministry of Education for the employees. Furthermore the Office of Civil Defence, Health and Safety controls and evaluates the work of the inspectors for the observance of the measures and protocols and all the issues that arise regarding their employment conditions, informs and provides clarifications and instructions to school principals, teachers and parents about government mandates and school protocols and so on.

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2022

PART B:  
Sport

# 1.

## CYPRUS SPORT ORGANISATION (CSO)

The Government of the Republic of Cyprus, has established by Law No. 41 of 1969, a public body, "The Cyprus Sport Organisation (CSO)", in order to regulate and promote sports in Cyprus. The CSO is an independent, non-profit institution governed by a Board of Directors appointed by the Council of Ministers, and its primary objective is the promotion of sports, physical training and athleticism. It is the highest authority, and by law possesses extensive powers over sport activities in Cyprus. It has its own offices and staff and is financed by public funds.

The Organisation is empowered by law to:

- exercise control over sport activities and sport facilities and take all necessary steps required for the promotion of sports,
- monitor and license private gymnastics schools,
- maintain a register of physical instructors / educators,
- advise all athletic and gymnastic clubs on their athletic programmes and regulate their activities,
- provide financial and technical assistance to communities, sport clubs, gymnastic clubs, athletic teams and representatives abroad,
- establish and operate athletic centres for use by the public,
- establish and maintain stadiums and create athletic playgrounds for use by communities, athletic and gymnastic clubs and so on,
- encourage, promote, organize and finance the participation of Cyprus in international athletic meetings,
- organize local and international seminars and meetings,
- publish and circulate bulletins and other publications for the promotion of sports,
- act as arbitrator and regulate disputes, within its powers of authority, between the various athletic, and other sport clubs and federations,
- impose punishments, within its powers of authority, on athletic and other sport clubs and federations,
- award prizes and trophies to individuals rendering high sport services and performance, and
- attest to and recognize federations, and other athletic clubs.

In addition to the above, the CSO is actively involved in various European Union committees in order to develop skills and expertise in the direction of promoting the Organisation's objectives.

In this direction a budget of approximately €47 million was allocated as follows, for the promotion of the Organization's main objectives:

	<b>Expenses</b>	<b>2022 Budget €</b>
01	Regular - Administrative Expenses / Maintenance	14.659.540
02	Regular - Sponsorships	15.575.000
03	Development - Creation & Improvements of Sports Areas	14.628.210
04	Regular - Repayment of Loans & Other Liabilities	1.950.000
05	Regular - Unforeseen Expenses	400.000
06	Regular - Implementation of Law on Prevention and Suppression of Violence in Sports Venues	20
07	Regular - Programmes Against Violence	10
	<b>Total</b>	<b>47.212.780</b>

The CSO runs successfully the “Sports for all” programme, by offering various mass sporting programmes, with the aim to improve the quality of life of each person, mostly children, through physical activities.

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# 2022

## PART C: Youth



# 1.

## YOUTH BOARD OF CYPRUS

### 1.1 WHO WE ARE

The Youth Board of Cyprus (YBC) is a public organisation responsible for youth issues. It was founded in 1994 and has since actively contributed to Cyprus youth empowerment in multiple ways. It is governed by a Board of Directors of seven members who are appointed by the Council of Ministers.

#### **Vision**

To be established as the organisation whose core focus is on young people, inspiring and empowering them to pursue their dreams and ambitions.

#### **Mission**

We believe in the power of Youth. We offer young people the opportunity to reach their full potential through modern policies, innovative programmes and quality services, today, for a better tomorrow.

### 1.2 CONTRIBUTION TO YOUTH POLICYMAKING

The YBC's main objective, which derives from the Law on the Youth Board, is to contribute creatively towards policymaking on youth-related matters, focusing on current challenges for an optimal positive impact on young people.

Since 2017, the YBC has coordinated the implementation of the National Youth Strategy (2017 - 2022), which is the first official youth policy document in Cyprus. Among the Strategy's main principles are to ensure youth participation in decision-making on youth-related matters, and close cooperation among all state institutions that run youth projects and activities.

As part of its responsibility to submit youth empowerment policy proposals to the state, the YBC conducts specialised surveys on young people's needs, consultations and open discussions with the youths themselves, with the use of multiple methods and structures, such as Advisory Bodies, the Youth Summit and the National Group of the EU Youth Dialogue. Furthermore, the YBC participates in working groups on a national, European and international level, actively contributing to youth policymaking at all levels and drawing on good practices.

In 2022, the YBC Policy Department, which is responsible for implementing and coordinating the above, conducted the following:

#### **European Year of Youth**

The European Union declared 2022 as the European Year of Youth, to highlight how important European young people are in building a better future – that will be greener, more inclusive and digital. It included multiple events, activities and opportunities to help young people across Europe move on and enter the post-pandemic era with faith and hope. All the Youth Board's events in 2022 were dedicated to the European Year of Youth.

#### **4<sup>th</sup> National Youth Conference**

The Youth Board of Cyprus held the 4<sup>th</sup> National Youth Conference on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2022, at the Filoxenia Conference Centre in Lefkosia, entitled: “Shaping Together the Cyprus of tomorrow: Recovery, Accessibility, Empathy”. The aim of the conference was to focus on young people and enhance their participation in decision-making on matters of their concern. The conference, which was under the auspices of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Annita Demetriou, was attended by government and state officials, pupils, students and representatives from organised youth bodies. Some 350 pupils participated in the Conference’s activities, getting the opportunity to exchange views and discuss ways to improve vital issues through a series of thematic workshops. At the same time, it gave them the opportunity to share ideas on how to build a better future for all. The Conference closed with a presentation of the workshops’ findings and reference to the next steps to be taken, with particular focus on drafting the new Youth Strategy 2023 - 2030.

#### **Surveys**

Surveys are a vital tool that enhance the Youth Board’s work in its advisory role to the State in youth policymaking, as they reveal the young people’s real needs and views.

In 2022, the YBC announced the results of its survey into young people’s mental health, which was conducted in late 2021 with the participation of 500 youths aged 18 - 35 years old. The aim of the survey was to capture the young people’s emotional state, explore their depth of knowledge and opinions about the state structures / support programmes currently in place, and pinpoint the youths’ current needs to offer them the best possible support when it comes to mental health issues. According to its findings, most young people in Cyprus are struggling with anxiety and pressure / stress, with 76% saying they had experienced personal anxiety and uncertainty about the future, and 70% admitting feeling under pressure / stress. Insecurity about their professional future followed with 58%, while 50% said they were anxious and insecure about their finances. Almost six in 10 said they felt the need to visit a mental healthcare provider, the majority being women. One very important finding was that most youths scored high in all aspects of their mental resilience assessment (going by their answers to various statements). This finding indicates that they can recover from any difficulties and adversities that may arise in their lives.

Furthermore, on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2022, the results of a survey on the **level of young people’s financial literacy** were presented in the presence of state officials and representatives of several services and other bodies. According to an analysis of the findings, just two in 10 participants had an adequate level of financial knowledge and skills, while there also appeared to be a weakness in understanding basic financial terms, such as interest rate, bank rate, compounding, inflation and borrowing.

Another **survey that was carried out in 2022 among young people in rural areas** explored how these youths go about their daily lives and identified their needs in terms of accessing services. It looked at what opportunities they have and their level of participation in local activities, as well as how much aware they are about the state support schemes and how they rate them. The data collection process took place in July 2022 and covered all rural areas island-wide. The survey’s findings were presented on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2022 at an event held at the Omodos Conference Centre, with the participation of youths from the Omodos School and state officials. The survey found that eight in 10 young people were quite to very satisfied with their lives in the countryside. One in two young people (57%) declared limited job opportunities as the most important problem they face while living in rural areas, while the road network and public transport was cited by 40% of those asked. Limited career opportunities were listed by 29%. The vast majority of youths (81%) mentioned the business support schemes for rural areas, saying they were vitally important and needed to be immediately developed or supported further by the State so as to be more helpful. Finally, the data was collected for the fourth consecutive Youth-Barometer in December 2022. The survey’s findings are expected to be announced in 2023. All the surveys’ findings are available on the Policy Department’s online library, at: [youthpolicy.onek.org.cy](http://youthpolicy.onek.org.cy).

### **National Youth Strategy (2017 - 2022)**

By a Council of Ministers decision on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2017, the Youth Board of Cyprus has been the coordinating institution, responsible for the implementation of the National Youth Strategy (2017 - 2022).

In 2022, the Second Action Plan of the National Youth Strategy was completed. It involved the state youth organisations' activities and programmes for the period 2020 - 2022. As part of monitoring the Strategy's implementation, the Second Progress Report for the period 2020 -2022 will be prepared in 2023 and will make up the basis for the Strategy's final assessment. Meanwhile, the YBC started working in 2022 on the new Strategy that will apply as of 2023.

### **Youth work**

As the competent government agency responsible for youth-related matters, the YBC implements a series of activities and actions to enhance and improve youth work in Cyprus. In 2022, the YBC held a social media awareness campaign aimed at informing the public on youth work practices that are already being applied in Cyprus with multiple benefits for young people. Furthermore, a special youth work section has been added to the Policy Department's page, as a useful source of information on the matter. The YBC also actively participated in a project coordinated by the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth on the "Formulation of validation mechanisms of non-formal and informal learning - pilot application", which among other includes the introduction of a professional standard for youth workers.

## **1.3 EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND POLICIES**

### **Participation in Youth Work Groups**

In 2022, meetings were held with the Working Groups for the Presidencies of France (in the first half of the year) and the Czech Republic (second half). To this end, the YBC actively contributed to preparing positions on the matters that were discussed within the Groups as well as at the Council of Ministers, always in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth.

The priorities of the French Presidency on youth-related matters: Emphasis was paid on youth mobility and the role that young people have to play in protecting the environment. More specifically, the aim was to update the Recommendation of the Council of the European Union (EU) on the mobility of young volunteers that was adopted in 2008. According to the recommendation, "Voluntary activities constitute a rich experience in a non-formal educational and informal learning context which enhances young people's professional skills and competences, contributes to their employability and sense of solidarity, develops their social skills, smooths their integration into society and fosters active citizenship".

Furthermore, a text of Conclusions of the Council of the EU was prepared under the French Presidency for the involvement of young people, as bearers of change in environmental issues, in an effort for a sustainable, green Europe in line with the 10<sup>th</sup> European Youth Goal.

The priorities of the Czech Presidency on youth-related matters: In the context of the European Year of Youth 2022, the Presidency placed emphasis on improving the productive and constructive dialogue with youths and promoting young people's participation in decision-making on political procedures. More specifically, the Working Group on Youth discussed a text of conclusions on promoting the intergenerational dimension of strengthening dialogue and social cohesion in the field of youth. The 9<sup>th</sup> round of the EU Youth Dialogue wrapped during the Czech Presidency. It had focused on the European Youth Goal #3 for societies without exclusions.

The EU Youth Conferences were also held in the context of the two Presidencies, in hybrid form due to the measures still applied because of the Covid-19 pandemic, while under the Czech Presidency, the YBC actively participated with physical presence in the deliberations of the EU Youth Conference with

two representatives (July 2022 – Prague). The results of the Working Group on Youth’s discussions, including those that took place during the EU Youth Conferences, were discussed and approved by the Council of Ministers of each presidency. Furthermore, representatives of the Youth Board actively participated in the Meeting of Directors - General of both France (May 2022 in Bordeaux) and the Czech Republic (September 2022).

### **Youth Wiki**

As the National Correspondent for the EU’s online encyclopaedia Youth Wiki, the Youth Board collected, updated and published in 2022 all the necessary information on youth-related policies, measures and actions that are implemented in Cyprus.

Furthermore, in a bid to promote Youth Wiki locally, the EU’s online encyclopaedia was presented on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2022 in the presence of 35 representatives of public, semi-government and non-government organisations. They were shown the content of the platform, which can be a useful tool for policymakers, technocrats, youth workers and youth organisations. It provides data and best practices on policies and actions that apply both in Cyprus and the rest of Europe on several issues, such as youth employment, participation, health, training and many more.

Several social media campaigns were also conducted in 2022 to promote Youth Wiki as well as the platform’s individual thematic units, such as sustainable growth and green volunteerism.

It is worth noting that to mark World Mental Health Day on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2022, the Youth Wiki network published a comparative study with the policies and interventions that were made by European countries to alleviate the impact of the pandemic on young people’s mental health. The study was based on data submitted by the national authorities responsible for Youth Wiki, including the YBC.

Additionally, in 2022, the EU prepared a revised comparative map on the volunteerism thematic, which can be found on the Youth Wiki page [www.youthwiki.eu](http://www.youthwiki.eu). It is noted that the comparative maps help compare each country’s policies on a broad range of topics.

### **Participation in the European Steering Committee for Youth of the Council of Europe (CDEJ)**

In 2022 the Youth Board of Cyprus participated in two meetings of the European Steering Committee for Youth of the Council of Europe (CDEJ), the first held in hybrid form between 21<sup>st</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2022 (68<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the CDEJ and the 46<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the CMJ) and the second with physical presence on 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> October in Budapest (69<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the CDEJ and 47<sup>th</sup> meeting of the CMJ). The countries-members of the European Cultural Convention participate in the CDEJ meetings with representatives who have a good knowledge and expertise on youth policy matters. They are also joined by representatives of other non-government youth organisations (mainly National Youth Boards) as well as other recognised organisations under the framework of the Council of Europe that concerns mainly the participation in the Joint Council of the CMJ.

### **European Knowledge Centre on Youth Policy - EKCY**

The YBC, in its capacity as national correspondent, participated in the deliberations of the European Knowledge Centre of the EU-Council of Europe Cooperation in the youth sector, with the collection and delivery of data and the exchange of best practices on youth policy matters.

### **United Nations**

In 2022, the YBC continued to study texts and other documents relating to the United Nations, such as the Agenda 2030, which the YBC takes into consideration when drafting the National Youth Strategy.

### **Commonwealth**

In 2022, the Youth Board continued its work on issues pertaining to the Commonwealth. To begin with, it appointed the national correspondents for Commonwealth youth issues and then paid the annual

contribution to the Commonwealth Youth Fund, which totalled €36,829.51. The contribution is determined by the Fund's managers and is usually a fixed sum without significant variations. There were not any trips or missions to youth forums or conferences.

### **Young Cities**

After successfully completing the first two rounds of the Young Cities programme, the Youth Board of Cyprus and the National Betting Authority moved on to the third round. A tender was also opened by the National Betting Authority to fund the project, with aiming at continuing and extending the programme to include more municipalities and communities. The third round is expected to launch in 2023.

### **Municipal and Community Youth Councils**

Municipal and Community Youth Councils are an institution that contributes towards a constant and substantial connection and dialogue between local authorities and the youth, with the aim of reinforcing young people's participation in decision-making on local societal issues. Through this institution young people and youth organisations have an active involvement in issues of their interest and in decision-making processes within their municipalities or communities. The YBC provides financial, technical and advisory support to the Municipal and Community Youth Councils. It continued to do so in 2022, providing advice on their role and institution, as well as financial assistance through the Youth Initiatives programme.

### **General Advisory Body**

The Youth Board of Cyprus' General Advisory Body (GAD) was established pursuant to the Youth Board Law 33 (1)/94 and counts over 40 members. In 2022, the GAD met twice for its regular meetings. During the meetings, members exchanged views and tabled suggestions on matters relating to the general principles of the youth policy, offering youths themselves the opportunity to discuss matters of their concern. The meetings concluded on specific policy proposals that were forwarded to the competent authorities.

Moreover, in 2022, working groups were established under the GAD which invited stakeholders to participate. The aim of these groups was to further discuss and prepare proposals for discussion by the GAD plenary. As a rule, these groups meet every three months. They cover a broad range of topics, including "Work and Employment", "Education and Training", "Environment", "Health and Wellness" and "Volunteerism, Participation and Social Integration".

### **EU Youth Dialogue**

In 2022, the EU Youth Dialogue process continued at a national and European level. In Cyprus, work on the process for the Dialogue of the National Working Group – with representatives of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth, the Youth Board of Cyprus and the Cyprus Youth Council, which holds the coordinating role – continued. For the Dialogue process and consultations, the instructions of the Committee for the EU Dialogue at European level were taken into consideration, always based on the guidelines and thematic units of each Presidency (French, Czech). As part of the Dialogue process, consultations were held island-wide and actions were taken to further promote the Structural Dialogue process, while the team of Youth Ambassadors was also reinforced.

### **Partnerships**

Beyond the YBC's existing partnerships with various services and organisations (government or not), in 2022, the Youth Board of Cyprus joined the National Agricultural Network and the Committee for Monitoring the National Strategy for a Common Agricultural Policy 2023 - 2027, which further reinforces its intersectional cooperation in youth-related matters.

## 1.4 PROGRAMMES AND SERVICES

### Funding Opportunities – Youth Initiatives

The “Youth Initiatives” Programme funds activities that are implemented by young people and organised by youth groups. Its aim is to contribute towards creating active citizens through volunteerism, by providing incentives to youths to actively participate in Cyprus’ cultural, sporting, political and social scene. In 2022, there were three application - submission rounds that were directed towards the following groups / beneficiary categories:

1. Informal Youth Groups.
2. Young individuals up to 35 years old.
3. Youth organisations with proven action on a national level.
4. Youth organisations without local action.
5. Youth Clubs.
6. Youth Coordinating Bodies.

In 2022, 555 applications were submitted to the Programme requesting the total sum of €2,046,936. Of those, 400 were approved totalling €842,558. The activities that were funded included, among other, cultural events (theatre, dance recitals, concerts, solo exhibitions, youth festivals and so on), educational trips, conferences, seminars and workshops, sport events, reinforcing organised youth organisations with technological and other equipment, youth participation in conferences / seminars abroad and in European and international competitions, as well as boosting the coordinating youth bodies, which received €333,446. Furthermore, in 2022, through the same Project, the sum of **€55,000** was granted towards various activities of the Young Overseas Cypriots (NEPOMAK), which among others involved learning the Greek language and becoming acquainted with Cyprus’ history and culture.

### European Programme “Erasmus+ Youth”

The European Programme Erasmus+ funds activities in the fields of education, youth training and sports for the period 2021 - 2027. The YBC is the National Agency responsible for allocating funds for youth and non-formal learning. All information about the European Programme Erasmus+ can be found at [www.erasmusplus.cy](http://www.erasmusplus.cy). The funds that were granted to the YBC by the European Commission under the Programme for 2022, totalling €4,442,900.00, were almost entirely used up.

In 2022, 153 applications were submitted of which, based on the available EU funds, 65 were approved. Of those approved, 49 concerned youth mobility projects (two Accreditation Schemes, 24 Youth Exchanges, 15 Youth Worker Mobility Projects and eight Collaborative Partnerships). It is noted that 2,059 young people and 797 youth workers participated in the Mobility projects of 2022. The beneficiaries in 2022 included NGOs from across Cyprus, youth organisations, informal youth groups, private organisations, research centres, and more.

**Transnational Partnerships – Erasmus+** Transnational Partnerships are educational events or seminars that promote Erasmus+ priorities and objectives. Through these partnerships, Agencies and participants develop cooperation and exchange good practices, amplifying the social impact of the programme. These activities address people who are involved in the field of youth, being members of a youth organisation or an informal group of young people, and who organise activities (e.g., seminars, forums, trainings) addressing specific target-groups.

In 2022, 144 people participated in educational activities in Cyprus and abroad, either with physical presence or online. At the same time the Youth Board, as the authority that manages the Erasmus+ Youth Programme, implemented the following actions:

- **“The role of youths in local administration decision-making”**. The workshop took place on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 with the participation of 30 representatives from organised youth organisations and local administrations. The aim of the workshop was to explore how local communities can become more

flexible and effective, empower citizens and especially youth by giving them a more active involvement in matters of their concern.

- **“Youth@Work: Digital, Green, Innovation Conference”**: The transnational conference was held on 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> May 2022 with the participation of 53 people from 15 European countries. The aim was to develop innovative schemes on green development and the digital transformation, while also exploring the employment opportunities on offer in these two sectors.

- **“Digital Youth Work and STEAM”**: The three-day workshop took place on 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2022 with the participation of 30 people from several Cypriot population groups (youth, teachers, Municipality representatives). The aim of the workshop was twofold. On the one hand it aimed at strengthening the participants’ digital skills so they could pass on their knowledge to the circles they are in daily contact with, and on the other hand, at promoting the European programmes Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps.

- **“Youth@Work: Youth Guarantee”**: The two-day transnational, online seminar was held on 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> December 2022 with the objective to boost youth participation in the future formation of the EU Youth Guarantee initiative.

It is worth noting that to mark the European Year of Youth 2022 and the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Erasmus+ Programme, the YBC in cooperation with the Foundation for the Management of the EU Lifelong Learning Programmes organised a plethora of successful events, which were open to the public and the Erasmus+ Programme’s beneficiaries. The aim of the events was to showcase the innovative actions that are being implemented by the Programme’s beneficiaries, as well as make the Programme known to the broader public and reinforce its impact on a national level.

It is noted that the YBC, in 2022, continued to actively participate in the Strategic Partnerships “Youth@Work”, “Democracy Reloading”, “New Power in Youth” and “Digital Youth Work”, with the aim of promoting the priorities of employability, entrepreneurship, participation and digital transformation at national level, the training and strengthening of the skills of the Erasmus+ Programme’s beneficiaries, as well as the development of substantial partnerships and synergies with other relevant bodies, outside the field of youth.

### **European Programme “European Solidarity Corps”**

The YBC was assigned as the National Agency to manage the European Solidarity Corps (ESC) in Cyprus back in 2018. The ESC is a European Union funding programme that creates unique opportunities for youths aged 18 - 30 years old who wish to volunteer in Cyprus and abroad, and deal with various societal and humanitarian challenges. It is worth mentioning that this is a very special programme, where young people gain by giving, showcasing their love for their fellow humans and the environment. With an allocated budget of €1.009 Europe-wide, the programme is expected to open opportunities for at least 270,000 young people over the 2021 - 2027 period. The aim is to encourage youths and their organisations to participate in high-quality solidarity activities. It is meant to boost cohesion, democracy, the European identity and active citizenship in the EU and beyond. It helps young people put the EU’s values into practice and gain valuable experience for their personal and professional growth along the way.

In 2022, the EU introduced new innovations, focusing on Volunteering and Solidarity Projects with the aim of creating a real, positive long-term impact on a local, national and European level. To this end, a new review and funding system has been introduced for organisations that wish to participate in the Volunteering Projects. Any organisation that would like to become involved in the Volunteering Projects must first obtain a Quality Label. This label certifies that the organisation participating in the Project can provide youths with the necessary conditions to participate in solidarity activities. It must provide beneficiaries the ability to access funding with simple procedures for the entire Programming period



2021 - 2027. This will reduce the administrative burden for beneficiaries and make the system more attractive and sustainable for the organisations. At the same time, quality will improve faster as the organisations will be rewarded based on their real achievements.

It is worth mentioning that in 2022, a total of 75 applications were submitted – 10 for a Quality Label, 10 to join the Volunteering Projects and 55 for the Solidarity Projects. Of those, two were for Quality Labels (six are still under review), seven for Volunteering Projects and 34 for Solidarity Projects. Some 270 volunteers were expected to participate, 97 in the Volunteering Projects and 173 in the Solidarity Projects.

The National Agency placed a lot of its focus on raising awareness about the Solidarity and Volunteering Projects in 2022, as they offer organisations and young people the opportunity to show solidarity, support others, such as vulnerable population groups, take responsibility and commit to becoming catalysts for positive change in their communities. Through a targeted strategic communication campaign, which included a combination of actions such as an online information campaign, workshops and meetings, the Agency managed to draw the attention of organisations and youths. As a result, the applications for the Solidarity Projects increased from 25 in 2021 to 55 in 2022, catapulting the fund's commitment rate to 99.65%. The applications for the Solidarity Projects increased from five in 2021 to seven in 2022, with a commitment rate of 65.34%.

In addition, 1,444 young people from Cyprus expressed interest in participating in the Programme through the European Youth Portal. In 2022, there were 330 registrations – 34.1% men, 65% women and 1% other, while 64.5% were aged 17 - 25 years old and 35.5% aged over 25.

The number of accredited Cypriot organisations remained the same at 20 in 2022, as the organisations that were accredited under Erasmus+ can no longer participate in the Volunteering Projects. There was, however, an increase in the Heads of organisations, who went from five in 2021 to seven in 2022, while a further five for head of press and one for Partner, which came from a new organisation, are under review.

In the context of the Corps Training and Evaluation Cycle (TEC), the National Agency organised five training sessions for 39 volunteers, either live or online. The training was given to volunteers implementing their voluntary service in Cyprus for a period of two months or more, and the aim was to help shape an informal network of volunteers, create an environment that promotes learning but also assess the volunteers' experiences.

### **Networking Events**

For the National Agencies that manage the European Solidarity Corps, Networking Events are a tool that promotes the goals and priorities of the project in order to achieve a more effective implementation and a higher social impact. The activities in question are aimed at young people and youth workers who can act as multipliers in the areas of ESC.

In 2022, 19 people participated in activities that were held by other National Agencies, either with physical presence abroad or online. These activities had various themes, including climate change, integrating youths with fewer opportunities and digital transition. At the same time, the Youth Board, as the Agency that manages the European Solidarity Corps in Cyprus, implemented the following activities:

-**“Your organisation’s future is in your hands”** – National training on the Corps’ Quality Label took place on 25<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> May 2022 at Pefkos Hotel in Lemesos. It was preceded and followed by online meetings with the participants. The aim of this activity was to promote the Volunteering Projects to youth organisations and educate young people as well as previous beneficiaries about the requirements for the Quality Label, which is a prerequisite for the organisations to participate in the Project.



**–“TOSCA - Training and support for organisations active in the Solidarity Corps”** – A transnational activity took place on 20<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> June 2022 at Pefkos Hotel in Lemesos. It was preceded by online meetings with the participants. The aim was to develop synergies between the organisations involved in the Volunteering Projects, create a network of mutual support, reinforce their knowledge and skills for better quality management of the Projects and empower them to continue being committed to the Corps’ principles and values.

**-Solidarity Project lab - “Solidarity projects step by step” – Round 2** – Several workshops were held in all the districts to raise awareness and promote Solidarity Projects, following feedback meetings with those who wanted to participate in the workshops and planned to apply. The workshops were directed at a targeted audience, including Youth Centres, Primary Schools and Community Youth Councils, NGOs, students, non-organised youths aged 18 - 30 years old, associations for persons with disabilities and other volunteer organisations supporting individuals with limited opportunities. To further enhance the skills of ESC beneficiaries, the National Agency of Cyprus started participating in the Strategic Partnership for social integration in 2022, this being an integral part of the Programme. Partnerships are transnational schemes aimed at developing, transferring and / or implementing innovative practices, and implementing common initiatives that promote cooperation, cooperative learning and the exchange of experiences at European level. To this end, it completed its strategy and action plan for the inclusion of youths with fewer opportunities for the programming period 2021 - 2027, which involves a comprehensive approach to youth organisations already active in this field as well as support to existing beneficiaries. All the information about the Programme can be found at: <http://eusolidaritycorps.onek.org.cy/>.

## **EURODESK Cyprus**

The purpose of Eurodesk is to provide information to young people and youth workers regarding European policies and opportunities, giving immediate access to specialised and accurate information on topics such as employment, studies, mobility, volunteerism, funding, exchanges, non-formal learning, and so on. Eurodesk may be contacted at [eurodeskcy@eurodesk.eu](mailto:eurodeskcy@eurodesk.eu), on the European Youth Portal through its “Ask a Question” service, or on the telephone number 25871405. Eurodesk is co-funded by the European Commission and operates in 36 European countries. In Cyprus it is run by the YBC.

- **Information on mobility opportunities:**

In 2022, Eurodesk Cyprus participated in festivals, conferences, informative events, exhibitions by the National Agencies of Erasmus+ and events by youth organisations and universities, providing information and updates to young people and youth workers. Furthermore, the Network was very active on social media, posting information about several opportunities daily for youths, schools, teachers and organisations, as well as competitions.

Eurodesk also provides information on the EU Initiative “Discover EU” which is now part of the Basic Action 1 of the “Erasmus+: Youth” programme and is directed towards 18-year-olds, offering them the opportunity to travel – mainly by train – across Europe. There is also the EU’s programme European Solidarity Corps, which can be joined by people aged 18 - 30 years old for volunteer work or to implement their own Solidarity Projects.

- **European Campaign “Time to Move”:**

“Time to Move” is the largest European campaign organised by the Eurodesk network, which is held every October. It brings together a wide range of events and activities addressing young people, aiming at informing them on mobility opportunities. In Cyprus, this campaign was held in 2022 by Eurodesk Cyprus and its multipliers and the national services involved in the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes. The campaign included online as well as live informative and fun interactive activities, such as recycling and life skills workshops, treasure hunts, trivia, graffiti, online presentations and educational activities at universities and so on. As part of the campaign, Eurodesk Cyprus participated in the Erasmus Festival with its own kiosk and interactive activities. All the events that were held under the TTM campaign can be found at <https://eurodesk.onek.org.cy/time-to-move-2022/>

- **European Year of Youth, 35 years of Erasmus+:**

Eurodesk participated in co-organising and promoting all the relevant activities and events, both of YBC and its partners, such as the Europe Direct Centres of Larnaka and Lefkosia. The European Year of Youth and the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Erasmus were the central themes of the campaign Time to Move.

- **European Youth Portal:**

The European Youth Portal contains information and opportunities that may interest people who live, study and work in Europe. On the Portal, one can find articles, news, events on youth-related matters on a national or European level. The Youth Portal is available in 29 languages. Eurodesk Cyprus is responsible for managing Cyprus-related content. In 2020, the website's content continued to be updated and upgraded, with the contribution of the entire Eurodesk network's users, including those of Eurodesk Cyprus.

## 1.5 ENTREPRENEURSHIP

### **Scheme for the Enhancement of Youth Entrepreneurship**

The YBC actively supports the Scheme for the Enhancement of Youth Entrepreneurship offered by the Ministry of Energy, Commerce and Industry, by providing information on the Scheme and support for application submission to young people aged 18 - 55 years old. The Scheme's objectives are to develop, support and promote entrepreneurship, and create new and sustainable small and medium sized businesses through funding and training seminars. The Evaluation Committee had meetings throughout the year to assess Applications for the first call of the "THALIA 2021 - 2027" programme.

## 1.6 INFORMATION

### **Youth Information Centres (YIC)**

Youth Information Centres (YIC) are a YBC project that aims at providing comprehensive information services on matters related to the interests of young people in a modern, safe and friendly environment. All YICs operate in line with the standards of the European Youth Information Centres and the information provided is aligned with the European Youth Information Charter of the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (ERYICA). In addition, YICs operate as Eurodesk Cyprus contact points.

Further objectives of the YICs are to provide young people with general information on topics of their interest, facilitating their social inclusion as independent individuals, and helping them tackle life challenges. These objectives are achieved through information and counselling services.

In 2022 the YICs held 46 events of which 27 were with physical presence at the centres and 19 online. The YICs adapted to the new pandemic conditions swiftly and successfully, both when it came to defining the topics of the workshops / activities as well as when it came to practical organisational issues – fewer participants, ability to implement actions remotely – offered young people from all over Cyprus the opportunity to participate.

Throughout the year, the YICs organised skill development workshops, lectures and discussions on education, studies and training, socio-economic workshops and participated in festivals, educational exhibitions, school events and exhibitions held by other agencies. The main topics of the activities were Labour, Mobility, Skill Development, Entrepreneurship and Education. The events were joined by 1,904 people.

The successful lecture series “Discover” was implemented for another successful year in 2022. The aim of the series is to familiarise participants with various professions, and is directed at young people as well as their parents. By participating, youths get the chance to learn about various professions, post-graduate programmes and career opportunities. The first workshop, which launched the series and focused on the fields of IT - Technology and Biology, was held in July 2021, while the second series of lectures – focused on Architecture and Civil Engineering.

Furthermore, the YICs organised for the second time in 2022 in collaboration with the Cyprus Centre of the International Theatre Institute a series of workshops on "Theatrical translation: Theory and Practice", with the aim of introducing the participants to the difficulties created and the opportunities offered by the dual nature of theatrical text when translated from one language to another, offering them the opportunity to edit multiple translations of the same text, but also do their own translation (from English to Greek) under the evaluation by theatre professionals.

This series included workshops, while the curators were authors, directors, dramatists, actors and academics. The following workshops were held, among other: “Introduction to translational theory and practice,” “Principles of theatrical translation”, "Theatrical translation from a director’s and actor’s perspective”.

Aware of how important financial literacy is for young people as well as for the low level of Cypriot youths’ financial knowledge and skills (according to relevant surveys and studies), the YICs in close cooperation with the Technological University of Cyprus organised a series of workshops under the general title: “Personal Finance Management”. In cooperation with the Department of Commerce, Financial Services and Shipping, six lectures were held with the aim of reinforcing and empowering youths with the necessary knowledge and skills on matters like entrepreneurship, savings, investments, borrowing, credit and its sources, “good” and “bad” debt, insurance and so on. The large number of participants as well as the positive feedback from the participants prompted the YICs to plan another such workshop series in the future.

At the same time, following the huge success and response to the Virtual Career Academy, the action returned but this time with physical presence on 18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> March 2022 at the Larnaka Multipurpose Centre for Social Welfare and Employment. The 4<sup>th</sup> Career Academy: “Launching your future” – New people. New abilities. New skills, offered participants the ability to develop new professional skills and create a suitable CV. They also had the chance to participate in communication and skill development workshops, while the event was addressed by young professionals, to inspire other young people to follow their example. The action was joined by 70 people.

2022 was the European Year of Youth and aware of the young people’s concerns and needs, the YICs and specifically the Pafos Youth Information Centre in cooperation with the Municipality of Pafos, launched the “Ideas Cube” in June 2022. The “Ideas Cube” was a special installation that was designed and built using the YBC’s pioneering and innovative tech programme Youth Makerspace Larnaka. The “Ideas Cube” launched an informal public debate where anyone could write down their views, while participants had the chance to share their thoughts and feelings, writing them directly on the surface of the cube. This unique venture was an empowerment tool for young people and was part of the general European Year of Youth 2022 framework. It is worth noting that this activity was included in the guide of good practices in youth information and counselling that is issued every two years by the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (ERYICA), while it was also published in the guide that was issued by Eurodesk and ERYICA on the participation of young people in information services for youths.

### **Pupil Empowerment Summer Schools**

The Youth Information Centres in Lefkosia, Larnaka, Lemesos and Pafos organise annual Pupil Empowerment Summer Schools for Secondary Education pupils, which have become an annual event for the YBC. In 2022, the Pupil Empowerment Summer School returned with the physical presence of

106 pupils aged 14 - 17 years old. This interesting programme included workshops on emotional management, photography, online game creation and other interesting topics. The Pupil Empowerment Summer School lasted 10 days and the aim of the workshops was to help pupils achieve personal and emotional growth, as well as acquire skills that will help them become more efficient pupils and meet, coexist and cooperate with other children of the same age at every step of the programme.

## 1.7 COUNSELLING SERVICES

### **Career Counselling Services (CCS)**

Career Counselling Services is the YBC project which offers services and guidance to young people of various ages and needs on matters related to academic studies, career and personal development. It addresses pupils and students, young job seekers and young professionals. The services provided are offered free of charge and revolve around the following four action pillars:

#### 1. Personalised meetings with Career Counsellors:

The personalised meetings are arranged between the YBC career counsellors and pupils, students, and youths, in general. The thematic units for the personalised meetings vary: Guidance on course choices for Secondary schools, assistance in completing applications for admission to state universities, information on studies in Cyprus and abroad, creating a CV, educational and professional options for young people, and so on. In total, the YBC counsellors held 1,650 personalised meetings with youths on matters relating to education, studies, job interviews, CV preparation and so on. Due to the measures imposed to curb the pandemic, some of these meetings were held online.

#### 2. Career Test and Analysis of Results:

Career Test is a valuable supportive tool for counsellors, which facilitates their individualised approach to the needs of young people based on their interests and skills. It can be taken by pupils, students, as well as other young people. The test helps young people improve their self-awareness, by identifying their interests, personality traits, skills and talents, enabling them to take more informed decisions regarding their academic and professional path.

#### 3. Professional Skills Development Workshops:

A third pillar of Career Counselling Services is the organisation of skills development workshops for young people who are in search for work, as well as for young professionals. The workshops aim at preparing young people for the job market (e.g., CV drafting, preparation for a job interview, good practices for job hunting, and so on). They also provide professional development skills (e.g., leadership and decision-making, emotional intelligence, presentation and communication, and so on), which help young people succeed as professionals. In 2022, the experienced counsellors of the YBC's CCS held online lectures and workshops aimed at helping youths but also their parents find the necessary information to make the right decisions when it comes to their choices at school but also in their future academic lives. These included the following activities:

### **Psychological and Social Empowerment Programmes**

In 2022, the Psychological and Social Empowerment Programmes were assessed in terms of their adequacy and effectiveness, to bring them up to date and ensure they meet young people's current needs. As a result of this process, the decision was made to redesign these Services under a new philosophy but with the same consistency and scientific validity. The new Services will come into effect in 2023.

### **Help Line 1410 & E-Counselling**

The Help Line 1410 is contacted by young people in search of responsible answers to daily life matters, but also more complex issues such as addictive substances, sexuality issues, eating disorders, and so on. Counsellors handle all the cases with professionalism, without discrimination, on a confidential basis

and they never ask for personal details. The line operates all year round, Monday to Sunday and the calls are free of charge.

The 1410 website can be found at [www.onek.org.cy](http://www.onek.org.cy). It deals with the same issues and follows the same principles and ethics as the Help Line. The conversation with the consultant is conducted through software that supports confidentiality, hence, no one has access to it, apart from the caller and the counsellor.

The two programmes received 1,136 calls (1,120 by phone, 16 online and two on the helpline for students studying abroad). The callers were by majority male (55.4%). By age group, the majority came from adults aged over 36 years old, followed by young people aged 26 to 35. The main topics of discussion were anxiety, managing other negative feelings (sadness, disappointment and so on) brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic, relationship problems, mental health issues, self-confidence and self-image. As in previous years, some issues that required further consideration had to do with Parent Counselling (questions and concerns regarding teenage addictions, issues of bad behaviour).

### **“Protasi” Counselling Services**

The aim of “Protasi” Counselling Services is to provide support and counselling to young people, couples and families that are facing difficulties and wish to speak to a professional counsellor confidentially on issues such as (a) relationship problems (friendships, sexual relationships or marriages), (b) substance abuse problems, (c) domestic violence, (d) antisocial / delinquent behaviour, (e) any other issue of concern.

The “Protasi” Counselling Services served 43 people in 2022, with 81.4% being women. More than 325 meetings were held throughout the year, of which 150 were online. More analytically: 93% were personal, 2.3% couples and 4.7% family meetings (with the participation of parents and children). As far as the cases’ development is concerned, two cases were interrupted (4.7%), 17 were interrupted and referred to another body (39.5%), and 24 were completed (55.8%). Managing anxiety was the main issue, concerning 26 cases. The second most popular issue was managing negative feelings like sadness, disappointment and problems in interpersonal relationships (social, professional, friendships), making up 16 of the cases. The third most frequent issue was relationship problems (sexual, love) with 12 cases and decision-making (also 12 cases). Demographically, 27.9% of those who sought help were from Lemesos, 39.5% from Lefkosia and 32.6% from Larnaka. Of those who sought help, 18.6% were teenagers aged 15 - 18 years old, 18.6% were young adults aged 19 to 25, while 37.2% were youths aged 26 to 35. The age-group 36 and above made up the remaining 25.6%. Most people who applied to “Protasi” were single (51.2%), while in terms of their educational level, a significant 37.2% had attended a college of higher education for at least three years, while 53.5% were full time employed and 4.7% unemployed.

### **“Mikri Arktos” Psychosocial Empowerment Programme**

The aim of the “Mikri Arktos” Psychosocial Empowerment Programme refers to personality development, improvement of social skills, confidence boosting and personal empowerment that will enable individuals to deal with daily challenges successfully. Through psychoeducational groups and experiential workshops, young participants have the chance to discover and develop their personal skills, identify and overcome their weaknesses, discuss their concerns and search for solutions. The programme addresses young people, aged 16 - 35 years old, who wish to participate individually, as well as groups and organisations.

In 2022, eleven Group Psychological and Social Empowerment Trainings were held, which were joined by 295 young people. There were 17 fragmented workshops that were joined by 683 people. The most talked-about topics had to do with anxiety and other negative emotions, communication skills, self-esteem and self-confidence as well as work burnout.

## Creative Activities

### The STEAMers

2022 was a year that gave new impetus and momentum to "The STEAMers" programme, which faced various difficulties and challenges in the previous period due to the pandemic. In 2022, the programme became fully operational again in all the towns where it is run (Lefkosia, Lemesos and Pafos), while there was an increase in the number of pupils who participated in the STEAMers workshops in all the participating towns during the 2022 - 2023 school year. More specifically, in the 2021 - 2022 academic year there were 143 workshops with 642 attendees, while in 2022 - 2023 there will be 213 workshops with the participation of 1,005 pupils. At the same time, towards the end of the year, the programme was expanded to include the city of Larnaka as well! Following an agreement between the YBC and the Municipality of Larnaka, the latter granted a space at the Multipurpose Social Welfare and Employment Centre (Faneromeni 62), which the organisation now uses as a Multipurpose Youth Centre. As the case is with the other towns' centres, the Larnaka centre hosts "The STEAMers" workshops as well as the YBC's advisory services for young people.

During the same year, the Board launched contacts with other local administrations to further extend the programme to include rural, mountainous or remote areas, for youths with fewer opportunities compared to their counterparts in the city centres. To this end, the programme is expected to launch in the Sotira Municipality in 2023, as well as the Evrychou community, while efforts are underway to open two more in Agros and Polis Chrysochous. It is worth noting that towards the end of 2022, the STEAMers in Lemesos were moved to a new, fully renovated building that was granted by the Municipality of Lemesos, within the "Ploutis Servas" municipal blocks on Misiaouli & Kavazoglou Street.

In 2022, beyond the regular workshops aimed at providing children and young people aged 6 - 35 years old with creative occupations and skills, the STEAMers organised several events while also participating in events organised by third parties, as follows:

- 19<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> February 2022: "*Entrepreneurship in the Digital Age Meetings*" for children aged 8 - 12 years old at the Lefkosia and Pafos Multipurpose Centres.
- 18<sup>th</sup> June 2022: Final Event "*Meet the STEAMers Day Pafos*" at the Pafos Multipurpose Youth Centre.
- 25<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> June 2022: STEAMers participated in *Robotex Cyprus* winning important awards (1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> prize).
- 20<sup>th</sup> June – 29<sup>th</sup> July 2022: *2nd STEAMers Summer School* at the Lefkosia Multipurpose Youth Centre, for primary school pupils in fourth, fifth and sixth grade.
- 24<sup>th</sup> September 2022: STEAMers participated with their own kiosk in the 6<sup>th</sup> Youth Festival "Up to You(th)" at Acropolis Park.
- 30<sup>th</sup> October 2022: STEAMers events were held in Lefkosia as part of the *Europe Code Week* at the Lefkosia Multipurpose Youth Centre.
- 25<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> November 2022: STEAMers competed in *Robotex International* that was held in Tallinn, Estonia.
- 11<sup>th</sup> December 2022: STEAMers in Pafos participated in the Municipality of Pafos' Christmas event "*Santa Run*".
- 17<sup>th</sup> December 2022: Christmas events at the STEAMers of Lefkosia and Lemesos entitled "*STEAMers all the Way*".

Furthermore, in the second half of 2022 and as part of the Youth Board's general social contribution and particularly that of STEAMers, individuals from the Agios Stefanos Foundation started participating in the morning workshops in Lemesos. The aim is for the youths to become integrated in the programme and follow whichever workshops they want, reinforcing the spirit of acceptance, respect to diversity and boosting their skills. The participation of the friends from Agios Stefanos is free of charge.

### **Youth Makerspace Larnaka**

Youth Makerspace Larnaka was launched on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2018 and has since provided an innovative space for young people to create pioneering projects, develop their ideas and use its technological equipment to create their own original designs and implement their business ideas. It is housed in a renovated building that was offered to the YBC by the Municipality of Larnaka, a kind contribution. It was once the residence of the British Commander during the colonial era. Now it has been transformed. Young people can learn about the latest technologies by attending one of the many specialised workshops organised by the YBC, get involved and develop their own creative procedures and methods, share their knowledge and skills, and put this knowledge and skills into practice. The equipment includes 3D printers, laser cutters, drones, virtual reality, robotics, programming and more.

Youth Makerspace Larnaka is directed at children and young people as well as organised youth groups, classes or educational institutes and schools, among other. In 2022, some 1,166 pupils from 51 schools and institutes visited the space. All the programme's activities and the use of equipment are offered completely free of charge. In the four years since its launch, Youth Makerspace Larnaka counts 650 members and through its active presence on social media, it has 1,312 Instagram followers and 3,440 Facebook followers. The Youth Board of Cyprus' innovative programme is an important factor on the island's making ecosystem, STEAM and technological advancement.

In 2022, Youth Makerspace held a significant number of educational workshops and other activities. With the aim of educating young people on how to use the equipment, it held 56 educational workshops for makers, which were joined by 498 people from across Cyprus. At the same time, it organised 21 events that were attended by over 630 people in total. Additionally, the space was granted to youth NGOs, universities and other organised youth bodies to carry out events or workshops.

In January 2022, the Youth Makerspace Larnaka contributed to the important work of the Bank of Cyprus Oncology Centre (BOCOC). More specifically, an original custom made dipper was designed and printed with the use of its technological equipment. Nuclear medicine dose calibrators are used to evaluate the radioactivity administered to patients. The devices consist of an ion chamber in which two electrodes have been placed within an enclosed volume of gas to create an electric field. The radioactive ingredients are placed in syringes or vials and submerged in the dipper's cylindrical opening to ensure they are assessed properly. At the BOCOC, the calibrator is built into a specially designed isolator with a narrower cylindrical opening for the dipper. For this reason, a custom made dipper was designed and printed in 3D to better fit the centre's needs.

In the months of February and March as well as October and November 2022, Youth Makerspace Larnaka continued to run workshops for creators, educating attendees on the technological equipment that is available at the space. The aim of the "Workshops for Makers" was to invite makers to get informed and educated on how new forms of technology can contribute towards creating original ideas. The workshops focused on teaching new technology programmes and equipment, with the aim of improving the networking between teachers and the public and in turn broadening the Youth Makerspace Larnaka community. More specifically, workshops were held in the spring of 2022 on 3D printing and laser cutting, as well as programming through the Arduino board. In autumn of 2022, workshops were held on Woodturning, Lathe and 3D Design, and Virtual Reality.

In April 2022, Youth Makerspace Larnaka cultivated the garden of the future in cooperation with the Gardens of the Future initiative. The event was attended by over 50 people, who helped create a unique and original garden and come up with smart solutions for the garden. The primary objective of the Gardens of the Future project is to develop a cyclical and green economy that provides solutions to multiple socio-economic and environmental challenges facing Cyprus. The aim is to create around 300 such gardens island-wide, with Youth Makerspace leading the way in Larnaka by using its own outdoor space to create the "Smart Garden" project. The aim is to promote innovation and the agricultural economy as well as grant the community the opportunity to experiment, cultivate and share experiences,

thus promoting a new culture in Larnaka. Exhibitions and a competition based on the STEAM sector. In May 2022, Youth Makerspace Larnaka participated in the Larnaka Youth Festival on Europe Square. Youth Makerspace Larnaka's staff and the Mobile Makerspace participated and presented their technological equipment, including the Green Screen, VR, 3D pens and so on.

In May of 2022, the Larnaka Tourism Development and Promotion Board, along with the Youth Board of Cyprus and Larnaka Municipality as well as the Agios Varnavas School for the Blind organised a special tour for individuals with visual impairments. The group of 25 people was taken on a tour around Larnaka's main sights, starting from Europe Square and ending up at the Medieval Castle, taking in numerous museums along the way.

Youth Makerspace pioneered by printing a copy of the Zeno of Citium statue on its 3D printers, especially for the occasion, which was handed out to the participants to explore as the tour guide relayed the history of the stoic philosopher.

In June of 2022, European Maritime Day (EMD) was celebrated for the second year running in Cyprus. It was coordinated by the Cyprus Marine and Maritime Institute Centre of Excellence. Youth Makerspace Larnaka participated as one of the contributing bodies, by organising a workshop for creations using recyclable materials. Furthermore, as part of the actions to mark European Maritime Day, Youth Makerspace co-organised a competition for primary schools in the town and district of Larnaka, along with the Cyprus Marine and Maritime Institute Centre of Excellence. The schools had the opportunity to become actively involved in the process of naming a natural reef that can be found in the Larnaka marine area. The children broadened their knowledge on the environment, sea and the district's history, and had an active role in a unique initiative and collective action in their country.

Youth Makerspace Larnaka in cooperation with the Pafos Youth Information Centre and the Municipality of Pafos, built the "Cube of Ideas". It is a special construction that has been created by the Youth Makerspace team, specifically Nikolas Anastasiou, in a woodworking workshop, which through an interactive way, invites the youth to directly express their vision for a better, more optimistic future. The creation was presented at an event on Kennedy Square in Pafos in June 2022.

In the summer season of 2022, more specifically July and August, a new activity was introduced at Youth Makerspace Larnaka, entitled Youth Makerspace Summer Workshops. It was a series of summer workshops on technology and innovative equipment available through the programme. The aim of the Young Makers Summer Workshops was to develop children's 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, such as cooperation, problem-solving, critical thinking, creativity and so on. Another objective, beyond personal growth, was to provide them with skills that will help them discover new technologies and scientific fields that they may not have the opportunity to learn about at school. The Young Makers Summer Workshops were directed at children aged 7 to 17 years old and lasted four weeks. More specifically, over the period 18<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> July, of the 58 applications of attendance, 25 children aged 10 - 12 years old participated, while during 25<sup>th</sup> July – 5<sup>th</sup> August, of the 20 applications submitted, 14 children aged 13 - 17 years old attended. In total, over 100 applications were submitted for the workshops. In the first and second weeks of Young Makers Summer Workshops, the children used various technologies and developed valuable skills in fun and creative ways. The pupils became engineers, architects, designers and STEAM professionals. At the same time, they had the opportunity to become educated through the use of technology, art, robotics, engineering and design. Participants of all age groups got to use the various technological tools, participate in STEAM activities and become familiar with technological equipment such as 3D printing, laser cutting, Virtual Reality, Arduinos, robotics and so on. The 13 - 17-year-old age group was taught and worked using Youth Makerspace Larnaka's innovative equipment and presented their own prototypes at the end of the two-week period. More specifically, they worked in teams to resolve certain problems they were given. Through the specialised workshops organised for them by the makerspace's staff, they designed, built and presented their own original lighting fixtures.



Youth Makerspace Larnaka in cooperation with the Larnaka Tourism Development and Promotion Board, created a bench for the Livadia Craft of Caning Museum. The bench was created using the traditional caning technique combined with a more modern and contemporary material, resin. Constantinos Charilaou, a member of the Youth Makerspace team, designed the bench with the aim of “freezing” the cane in time and preventing its deterioration. So, the resin was combined with the canes and straw, making them look like they were floating mid-air. An Arduino Uno programming board was added to the bench, illuminating it internally with automation, making the bench change colour on regular intervals. It is worth noting that this initiative of the Larnaka Tourism Development and Promotion Board, the Livadia Municipality, the Youth Makerspace Larnaka and the Phivos Stavrides Larnaka Archives is pioneering for Cypriot standards. The successful design and combination of the materials was achieved following multiple trials and experiments using resin and electronic additions with traditional materials. The public can view the new creation in the outdoor premises of the Livadia Craft of Caning Museum, where people can also learn in depth about the history of this traditional Cypriot art, which is included in the UNESCO National Lists of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The MAKERSHOUSE Residency Programme announced an open call in the first half of the year for the fourth consecutive year, aiming at strengthening the creative community, supporting artistic production but also promoting research and innovation in Cyprus. The call was addressed to young creators who come from the fields of design, engineering, construction, art, interactive technology, education and social entrepreneurship, and who are interested in developing and promoting original ideas, products and workshops, using innovative technological equipment.

Youth Makerspace co-organised the “Girls in STEAM Academy” initiative in December 2022 for the second year running in December 2022. It is of its most important initiatives. The aim is to bridge the gap of female representation in STEAM sector jobs (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math). The educational programme was co-organised with the Be An Ally Foundation and lasted for two days. It was exclusively directed at young girls and the aim was to empower and inspire them to follow a career in one of the STEAM sectors. The 25 young participants were empowered through three different pillars: a) programming, robotics, artificial intelligence training workshops; b) being informed about career opportunities within the STEAM sectors; and c) meeting women who are considered role models in Cyprus’ STEAM sector. The programme also included an educational workshop on the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs).

As part of Youth Makerspace’s contribution to Education, it also runs the “Skills Development Programme for the Third-Grade Gymnasium pupils through drone technology”. The programme in question has been implemented in the Ammochostos District since 2019, while it was also implemented in the Larnaka district for the 2021 - 2022 and 2022 - 2023 academic years. By participating in a series of workshops, the third grade gymnasium pupils got to develop their digital and makers’ skills, became familiar with technology in the STEAM sector and broadened their horizons in terms of what education and career path to follow, and the sector of the labour market they will join in the future.

The YBC’s Youth Makerspace Larnaka and the Larnaka Tourism Development and Promotion Board won the Gold and Silver awards at the 2022 Cyprus Tourism Awards for their “Storytelling Statues” and “Ancient Kition Port 3D Virtual Reconstruction” projects, which combine the latest technology with historical research and Larnaka’s wealth of history. Through these projects, Youth Makerspace Larnaka aims to draw young people’s attention to their country’s history in an interactive and modern way, stepping away from the traditional and tiresome teaching methods.

### **Mobile Makerspace**

The success of Youth Makerspace Larnaka since 2018 onwards has prompted the Youth Board to create a Mobile Makerspace, which is a specially designed mobile unit that carries similar equipment to the Youth Makerspace Larnaka.

The mobile unit is based on the same principles as Youth Makerspace Larnaka and focuses particularly on youths with fewer opportunities who live in isolated or remote areas and do not have the ability to visit the Larnaka makerspace. The mobile unit visits schools and other organised groups in rural and geographically remote areas and carries out STEAM-based workshops with its technological equipment. Through Mobile Makerspace, the YBC aims at sharing these technologies, making them accessible to a larger audience, so as to inspire young people and encourage their further engagement with new technologies.

In 2022, the Mobile Makerspace visited 56 primary schools island-wide, primarily in the countryside, providing 3,927 pupils the opportunity to become familiar with its equipment and participate in technology workshops.

In 2022, Youth Makerspace Larnaka created its own educational material with the aim of empowering primary and secondary education pupils by offering to them the opportunity to become actively involved in creative, STEAM-based activities. The programme, which follows the problem-solving methodology, the design-thinking methodology while at the same time developing 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, was enriched in 2022. Through the educational workshop, pupils get to develop their creative thinking, problem-solving skills, critical thinking, communication and cooperation skills and so on. The educational material was approved by the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth, and can be implemented in public and private Primary and Secondary Education schools island-wide.

### **Up to You(th): Youth Festival 2022**

After a two-year absence due to the pandemic restrictions, the “Up to YOU(th)” Festival returned on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2022 at Acropolis Park in Lefkosia.

With the same strong pulse and the motto "Up to You(th)", the 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the Youth Board of Cyprus' Youth Festival once again invited the public to celebrate youth, with the young people themselves as protagonists, sending out the powerful message that the present and future are in the hands of the new generation; a generation that dares to dream and hope for a better tomorrow.

The Festival included the established NGO Fair, in cooperation with the NGO Support Centre and the Cyprus Youth Council, which brought together youth organisations as well as organisations active in sectors of interest for young people, such as the environment, health, culture, social affairs and so on. It also included short films, open discussions, technological apps, music and other events. Over 100 organisations and educational institutions participated in Up to You(th) while it was visited by over 4,000 young people.

## **1.8 OTHER BENEFITS TO YOUNG PEOPLE**

### **European Youth Card**

In 2022, the Youth Board made some significant changes to the European Youth Card and Student Card for young people aged 13 to 30 years old, which provides various benefits such as discounts on a variety of products and services, as well as participations in seminars both in Cyprus and another 40 European countries. Some of the most noteworthy changes include: a) implementation of the digital card through a special application b) inclusion of improved benefits for young people that better meet their needs.

In 2022, there were over 8,500 cards in circulation. During the year, a delegation from the European Youth Card Association (EYCA) visited Cyprus, including its Project Manager, to exchange views / ideas / suggestions on how to improve the Card's functions in Cyprus. The visit took place on 21<sup>st</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2022.

**In conclusion**

The above data and information regarding the programmes, services and activities we have implemented, reflect the work of the Youth Board of Cyprus and, at the same time, serve our Thematic Priorities.

The ultimate goal through implementing the above is the achievement of the Strategic Objectives derived from the Strategic Plan for the three-year period 2020 - 2022.