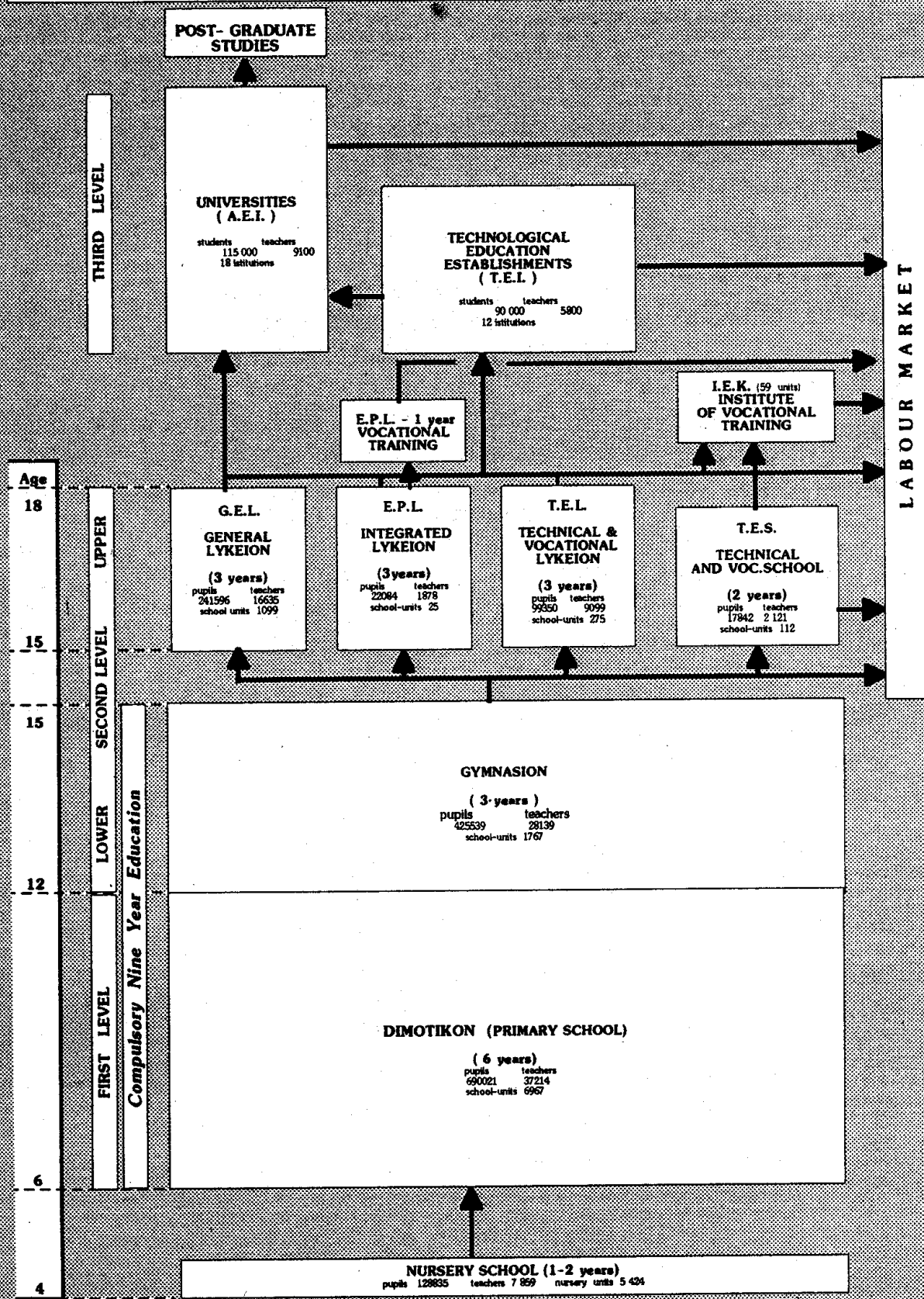


### **III. AN INTRODUCTION TO THE GREEK EDUCATION SYSTEM**

<b>CONTENTS:</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>A Brief Historical Scetch of Education in Greece</b>
	<b>1.1</b>	<b>Basic Characteristics of the Contemporary Educational System</b>
	<b>1.2</b>	<b>Developments During the Latter Half of this Century</b>
	<b>2.0</b>	<b>Educational Level of the General Population and Labour Force Participation</b>
	<b>3.0</b>	<b>Participation in Education</b>
	<b>3.1</b>	<b>Expansion of Enrollments</b>
	<b>3.2</b>	<b>Participation Rates</b>

# STRUCTURE OF THE FORMAL GREEK EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM



### **III AN INTRODUCTION TO THE GREEK EDUCATION SYSTEM**

#### **III 1.0 A Brief Historical Sketch of Education in Greece**

##### **III 1.1 Basic Characteristics of the Current Education System**

Education is the constitutionally designated responsibility of the State and is provided free at all levels of the System from pre-school to university. A relatively small private school sector exists, but only State universities and institutions provide tertiary level education and grant degrees. The Greek education system is very centralised; both in terms of organisation and administration. With regard to schooling principles and practices, there is a national curriculum, uniform school timetables and approved textbooks that are compulsory in the private sector as well.

Before looking at the current education scene in detail, a brief outline of the significant reforms and structural changes which have marked Greek education in the post-war period, is presented below.

##### **III 1.2 Developments during the Latter Half of this Century**

In the 1950's, the education system comprised of a six-year compulsory primary school; a six-year secondary school or *Gymnasium* that had a profound humanistic orientation; and the tertiary level that included the universities and very few tertiary schools of general education, such as the Teacher Training and the Physical Education Academies.

Towards the end of this decade (1950), as the emphasis on modernisation and planned economic development intensified, a comprehensive report on the state of education was drafted and several reforms legislated that sought to expand the technical-vocational sector of education.<sup>1</sup>

The secondary school level was divided into two three-year stages. The first three grades constituted the lower stage and emphasised general and humanistic education. The upper stage was differentiated and divided into separate types of Gymnasia. The two major types were the Practical (scientific) and the Classical (literary), both of which were academic streams, primarily preparing students for university entrance. A parallel system of technical-vocational schools under the MoE was created, covering both upper and lower secondary stages.

The educational reforms of 1964 (a milestone reform but short-lived), further developed the above and extended the reform agenda to fundamental and comprehensive changes in the system that would promote educational equality and economic growth.<sup>2</sup> Free education was extended to the tertiary level, entrance examinations to secondary level were abolished, and basic changes were made in the examination system for university entrance, with a unified national examination system replacing separate examinations by department. The previous two stages of general secondary schooling, were transformed into two separate schools: the non-selective lower secondary Gymnasium - which exists today - and

the upper secondary *Lyceum*. The new Lyceum comprised of practical and classical streams and it was no longer divided into distinct types of schools.

One of the most significant changes of this period (since it touched on one of the most acute and hotly contested issues of the century and therefore stirred great debate), was that ‘demotic’ language (the popular form of Greek language), officially replaced the purist form of *katharevousa* as the medium of instruction. Another aspect of this curricular reform was that classical Greek literature was to be taught in modern translation in the lower secondary school and the systematic study of ancient Greek initiated at the Lyceum level.

With the advent of the military junta in 1967 nearly all these measures were withdrawn, with the language issue first on the agenda. During this period, legislation was also passed that set up a new tertiary level of technical-vocational education, that would, on the one hand, supply vitally needed upper-level technicians, and on the other, act as a breakwater against the continuously rising level of demand for university entrance. Five such centres (KATE) had been established by 1974.

The year 1974 marks the return to democratic government. Educational legislation was enacted thereafter, which essentially restored most of the reforms of the 1964 period. During this period, secondary (general) and secondary (vocational) education was reorganised in order to promote greater parity of esteem between the two sectors. Specific measures included:

- \* The extension of compulsory education from 6 to 9 years
- \* The establishment of the lower secondary Gymnasium as the common school of general education (grades 7 to 9) which meant that
  - a. lower-secondary vocational schools were abolished, and
  - b. entrance examinations from primary to lower secondary level were also abolished
- \* The re-organisation of post-compulsory secondary education (grades 10 to 12) into two equivalent streams or Lycea, the General Lyceum and the Technical-Vocational Lyceum. General Lyceum graduates could sit for entry examinations into all types of higher education institutes, whereas, Technical-Vocational Lyceum graduates could not compete for entry into the Universities.
- \* The re-introduction of demotic language at all levels, and classics in modern translation, taught as part of the curriculum at the lower secondary school level.

From 1981, when the socialist government first came into power in Greece, reforms focused more on internal changes to the education system, aiming more on democratisation than on major structural issues. Salient changes in the system established during the 1980's were:

- \* automatic promotion throughout the primary education level
- \* abandonment of entrance examinations from the lower secondary to the upper secondary school

\* postponement of stream selection to the final year of general lyceum (grade 12) where students now had four curricular areas to choose from rather than the two as was previously the case

\* at the upper -secondary level, a new type of comprehensive lyceum was established in 1984 - the experimental *Eniaio Polykladiko Lykeio (EPL)*, or Integrated Lyceum, which sought to bridge the gap between general and technical education. The EPL continues today to enrol a relatively small proportion of student population in spite of social demand and pressure.

\* various measures to increase participation in school decision-making processes such as the establishment of student councils and the further development of the responsibilities of the teachers' councils. It should be noted however, that while Law 1566/85 made broad provision for decentralised decision-making, few of these measures were ever implemented through accompanying decrees.

During this period, priority was given to reform of higher education. The KATEE's, which were exhibiting severe problems related to their rapid growth, were reorganised into their current form of Technological Education Institutes (TEI's); and for the first time, the universities became the object of reform in the comprehensive Framework Law of 1982 (1268/82). This law sought to expand the basis of decision-making in the universities and to introduce new divisions such as graduate schools. During this period, education departments (for pre-school and primary level teachers) were set up in the universities and the Teacher Training Academies were gradually phased out.

In this first half of the 1990's, a new system of post-secondary vocational training was established that emphasises flexibility and co-operation with social partners. This system incorporates (subject to accreditation), the private Centres of Free Studies which had not previously been regulated. Both public and private Institutes of Vocational Training (IEK's, *Instituta Epagelmatikis Katartisis*), offer relatively short-term training courses and seek to provide a viable outlet to the thousands of lyceum graduates who do not enter tertiary education. Despite the shifts between emphases on equity or efficiency, a constant dilemma for policy-makers, throughout the whole of the period of this historical overview, has been how to respond to the high level of demand for higher education.

The 1990's however, have brought to the fore-front another major concern for educational policy. The quality of education at all levels has become a critical issue and the object of continuous discussion. In the 1990's moreover, fewer and more limited instances of reform and counter-reforms are implemented by successive governments (Kassotakis and Lambrakis-Paganos 1994: 102), and there is greater consensus on defining the current problems of education (though priorities and approaches to their solution vary) such as: under-resourced schools within a general framework of financial constraints in the public sector; an over-burdened and often out-dated curriculum which places an emphasis on memorisation rather than critical-thinking; the number of teachers waiting for placement (often as long as 10 years); a general lyceum which no longer functions as an independent and self-contained school but has been transformed into a preparatory level, like a waiting vestibule, for the universities; the mush-rooming of private cramming-schools and private lessons that prepare candidates for tertiary exams; and the increasing numbers of students delaying graduation, not to mention the high level of unemployment among those who do

graduate. These issues and problems constitute a demanding agenda for today's policy-makers.

The following sections provide some background on the issues outlined above. The general education level of the population is looked at, as well as some of the quantitative dimensions of the growth of education during the last decades. Finally, Chapter VII explores the distributive and equity aspects of the contemporary educational scene.

### **III 2.0 Educational Level of the Population and Labour Force Participation**

Currently, over **a tenth** of the population aged 25 to 64 years holds a tertiary education degree; about **a quarter** are secondary school graduates; and around **half** are at least primary school graduates (Table III.1). Those with no educational credentials, that is, with less than primary schooling, constitute about the remaining **tenth** of the population.

More men than women hold tertiary education degrees (69 women for every 100 men), but the proportions are rather equal for other levels. The significant exception is the category, "less than primary schooling", where women far outnumber men (174 women for every 100 men); indeed, women comprise 63% of this group with no educational credentials.<sup>3</sup>

**Table III.1. Educational Attainment of the Population Aged 25 to 64 years, in 1991, by Sex and Number of Women per 100 Men at each Educational Level**

Educational Level	Total Population		Men Women		Women per 100 Men
	Number	Percent (1,000's)	Percentages		
Tertiary	663	12.5	15.0	10.0	69
Upper Secondary	1,290	24.2	25.4	23.1	93
Lower Secondary	367	6.9	7.7	6.1	81
Primary	2,311	43.4	42.3	44.5	108
Less than Primary <sup>1</sup>	692	13.0	9.6	16.3	174

SOURCE: Estimated from National Statistical Service of Greece (ESYE), 1991 Census, Unpublished Data: Population 10+ by Educational Level, Sex, Age and Area.

<sup>1</sup> Includes categories: Attended primary school, No schooling but literate and No schooling and illiterate.

Overall, however, the educational level of the general population has risen considerably in comparison with the period covered by the last country-review. The proportion of graduates of tertiary education has quadrupled from 1971, secondary education graduates

have doubled, and the number with less than primary education has been significantly reduced, from 37% in 1971 to 13% in 1991.<sup>4</sup>

Illiteracy rates have also fallen sharply. Whereas in 1971, 14% of the population over 10 years of age was illiterate, in 1991 the figure is 7%. And while only 1% of the under 45' year-olds designated themselves as illiterate in 1991; it should be noted that this translates to around 60,000 individuals.

Participants in the labour force constituted 56% of the population aged 14 to 64 years in 1991 (Table II.2). The rate for men was 78% and for women, 35%. Labour force participation for women peaks at 55% for those 25 to 29 years of age in 1991.<sup>5</sup> Notably primary and secondary level teachers accounted for about 5.4% of all working women.<sup>6</sup>

Official unemployment in 1991 stood at 8% but was higher among women (Table II2) and highest among youths 15 to 19 years of age (33%) and 20 to 24 years of age (23%).<sup>7</sup>

**Table III.2. Participation Rates in the Labour Force and Unemployment for Men and Women Aged 14+ to 64 years in 1991**

Population	Economically Active		Unemployed	
	Number (1,000s)	Percent	Number (1,000s)	Percent
Men	2,581	77.8 <sup>1</sup>	163	6.3 <sup>2</sup>
Women	1,217	35.2 <sup>1</sup>	147	12.1 <sup>2</sup>
Total	3,798	56.1	310	8.2

SOURCE: Estimated from ESYE, 1991 Census, Unpublished Data: Economically Active and Inactive Population by Sex, Age and Urbanisation.

<sup>1</sup> Ratio of economically active men or women to total population Men or Women 14+ to 64 years of age.

<sup>2</sup> Ratio of number of unemployed men or women to number of economically active men or women 14+ to 64 years of age.

### **III 3.0 Participation in Education**

#### **III 3.1 Expansion of Enrolments**

The above improvement in the level of educational attainment of the population is related to the significant expansion of education during the last decades. In the following table, the growth of education is charted over the period from 1970 to 1994. The enrolment figures cover both public and private school enrolments. The proportion of private school students

in 1992 was around 5% for most levels of education (4% pre-school, 7% primary, 4% for secondary general) but reached 16% for upper secondary technical-vocational education.<sup>8</sup>

Table III.3. shows that in the 1980's and 1990's, pre-school and primary school enrolments were shrinking. This negative trend has accelerated from 1989 to 1994, reflecting the continuously decreasing birth rate.

**Table III.3: Student Enrolment (Public and Private) 1970 to 1994 by Level and Rate of Change by Level**

Level	Student Enrolment			
	1970-1971	1980-1981	1989-1990	1993-1994
Pre-school <sup>1</sup>	87,087	145,924	141,576	134,332
Primary	919,984	900,641	846,498	744,542
Secondary	555,709	740,058	845,723	881,280
Tertiary <sup>(2)</sup>	85,776	121,116	267,587	-(3)
All levels	1,648,556	1,907,739	2,101,384	-
		Percent Change		
		'80 / '70	'89 / '80	'93 / '89
Pre-school		67	- 3	- 5
Primary		- 2	- 6	- 12
Secondary		33	14	4
Tertiary		41	121	-
All levels		16	10	-

SOURCES: (a) Figures for 1970 to 1989 are from : Varnavas - Skouras, Vasilou and Georgakakos. 1993. *Education in Greece: Quantitative Data (1960-1990)*. Athens: Pedagogical Institute (In Greek)

(b) For 1993-1994, from : Table IV in National Statistical Service of Greece. 1994. *Greece in Figures*. Athens: Author.

(c) Figures for Tertiary Education 1989 are from : MoE, 1994, "2nd Community Support Framework." Athens: Author, pp. 68 and 81.

<sup>1</sup> Includes only MoE Pre-school Centres and not those under other Authorities such as the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare. Thus the drop in pre-school enrolments is perhaps not as marked as shown in the table.

<sup>2</sup> Refers to total number of students enrolled in tertiary education (registered) and not to number of active students only

<sup>3</sup> 1993 - 1994 data not available. However, in 1991-1992 there were 294,134 students enrolled in tertiary education, see source (c) . This represents an increase of 10% from 1989-1990

Secondary education, on the other hand, expanded consistently from 1970 to 1994. That trend seems to be slowing-down in the 1990s (4% versus 14%). Within public secondary education, lower-secondary enrolments have been rather stable, while upper-secondary enrolments grew at higher rates (See Chapter III Appendix A). More specifically, general secondary education has currently stabilised after initial growth from 1975 to 1985 while technical-vocational education continues to expand (see Chapter III Appendix A).

Higher education enrolments have grown and indicate the highest rates of all, especially during the 1980's. This trend however, does not simply reflect an expansion of entrants to

higher education. Since 1984, there has been an increase in the number of registered students not making ‘normal progress’, that is, passing semesters without delay (9) . For example, of all registered students in the 1991-92 academic year, 56% were making ‘normal progress’ toward their degrees (10). Thus, the picture of expanding tertiary enrolment in the 1980’s is somewhat misleading since it is obvious that a greater number of tertiary students are delaying graduation. A variety of institutional factors may be responsible for this delay. However, the ‘warehousing effect’ (Walters, 1986) - with youths remaining in school or university when their unemployment chances are high - seems to be obvious.

### III 3.2 Participation Rates

Youngsters attending public kindergartens (that is, those supervised by the MoE) constituted 57.8% of the population of 4 and 5 year olds in the 1989-1990 school year. Primary school participation rates stood at 97% for 6 to 11 year olds; while secondary school enrolment figures represented 93% of 12 to 17 year olds (Table II.4).

Participation rates for boys and girls are equal at pre-school and primary levels. At the secondary level, however, the participation rate is 95% for boys and 91% for girls. Participation rates at the secondary level might actually be somewhat lower since repeaters, who would be older than 17, are included in the enrolment figures (11) .

**Table III.4: Participation Rates in Education by Level and by Sex (1989-1990)**

Level	Total no. of Students	Size Age Cohort	Ratio of Enrolments to Age Cohort		
			Total	Girls	Boys
Pre-Primary	141,756	245,199	57.8	58.0	57.5
Primary	846,498	872,428	97.0	97.0	97.1
Secondary	845,723	911,465	92.7	90.7	94.6

SOURCES: *Estimated from figures in Quantitative Education Data*, p.6 and 1991 Census Data, Unpublished tables: Population by age and sex

(11) Repeater rates at the primary level are extremely low and would not affect the estimates.(notes)

<sup>1</sup> Age cohorts 4-5 year olds, 6-11 year olds and 12-17 year olds.

At the tertiary education level, the proportion of new entrants (42,187) to the 18 year-old age cohort was 28.1% in 1992, while tertiary enrolment figures accounted for 47.4% of the 18 to 21 year-old age cohort. (12)<sup>9</sup>

Thus it seems that, overall, Greece currently has quite high participation rates at all levels of education and that these rates are more or less equal between boys and girls. However, the exact dimensions of the situation are clouded by the nature of the data which (1) does not identify repeaters within secondary education; and (2) refers to the national level, so

that differences in regional participation rates are not evident. Chapter VII looks at such differences by examining equity aspects of the distribution of educational opportunities in Greece.

**Appendix Table III.A. Student Enrolment and Teaching Force - In Thousands (1,000's) - for Secondary Education from 1970 to 1994 by Level and Type and Rate of Change. Public Schools Only.**

Type	1970-1971		1975-1976		1980-1981		1985-1986	
	Pupils	Teach (1,000's)	Pupils	Teach	Pupils	Teach	Pupils	Teach
<b>*General</b>	396.9	11.4	486.7	17.2	612.8	30.9	677.4	37.0
-Gymnasia					413.8	19.2	413.3	21.6
-GenLycea			71.8	2.5	199.0	11.6	264.1 <sup>1</sup>	15.5
<b>*Tech-Voc</b>	39.7	1.0			81.9	3.9	98.3	7.8
Type	1990-1991		1993-1994		% change 85/75		% change 93/85	
	Pupils	Teach	Pupils	Teach	Pupils	Teach	Pupils	Teach
<b>*General</b>	686.2	46.7	689.2	46.7	39.2	115.5	1.7	26.0
-Gymnasia	424.7	27.0	425.5	28.1			2.9	30.6
-GenLycea	261.5 <sup>1</sup>	19.7	263.7 <sup>1</sup>	18.5			-0.1	19.7
<b>*Tech-Voc</b>	98.1	9.9	136.0	9.9	36.8	212.6	38.3	27.0

SOURCE: MoE, *2nd Community Support Framework*, Tables 5 to 7.

<sup>1</sup> Figures for General Lycea include enrolment at Comprehensive Lycea

## FOOTNOTES

- <sup>1</sup>. Conclusions of the Committee on Education - 1958 and Laws 3971/1959 and 3973/1959. Among the provisions of these laws, at the post-secondary level, two schools for sub-engineers were also established.
- <sup>2</sup>. The reform agenda was quite comprehensive and extended to technical-vocational and higher education; however, the government headed by George Papandreou was short-lived and only the bill on the reorganization of general education had time to be passed (Karmas, Dragonas, Kostakis 1986: 23).
- <sup>3</sup>. Furthermore, women over 50 years of age comprise 56% of the group with less than primary schooling (estimated from ESYE, 1991 Census Data, unpublished figures).
- <sup>4</sup>. see OECD Background Report 1980, Table 2.10, p.53. Those figures refer to the population over 10 years of age, while we focus on the 25 to 64 group; however, the same trends hold with this wider specification. According to the 1991 Census, tertiary graduates are 9% of the total population over 10 years of age, and those who have not completed primary education 17% of the total.
- <sup>5</sup>. Estimated from ESYE, 1991 Census Data, Unpublished figures: Economically Active and Inactive by Sex, Age and Area.
- <sup>6</sup>. 58,073 female teachers in non-tertiary formal education, 1989-1990. Figures from *Quantitative Education Data*, p. 39, and Table 2.
- <sup>7</sup>. See note 3.
- <sup>8</sup>. Estimated from figures in Rangoussis, 1994, "Developpement de l'education: Rapport National de la Grece," UNESCO, 44e Conference Internationale de l'Education - Geneve.
- <sup>9</sup>. Estimated from MoE. , op. cit. , Table 9 , p. 68
- <sup>10</sup>. MoE , op. cit.. , p. 50
- <sup>11</sup>. 42,187 new entrants in 1992 and 149,000 in the 18 year old age cohort. Figures from *Quantitative Education Data*, p. 26 and *Unpublished 1991 Census Data*.
- <sup>12</sup>. Figures on total students registered in tertiary education in 1991-1992 from *2nd Community Framework*, p. 68. and on 17-21 age cohort size from *Unpublished 1991 Census Data*.