Evaluating a Greek National Action on Parents' Training on ICT and Internet Safety

Nikos Manouselis[1], Katerina Riviou[2,*], Nikos Palavitsinis[1],
Vasiliki Giannikopoulou[1], and Panayotis Tsanakas[1]

[1] Greek Research & Technology Network (GRNET S.A.), Athens, Greece
`{palavitsinis,nikosm}@grnet.gr`
[2] Doukas School S.A., Athens, Greece
`kriviou@doukas.gr`

Abstract. The Greek national action "Goneis.gr" educates and trains the parents of highschool children on the issue of safer internet, as well as on the use of ICT. Having trained more than 28.300 parents, the initiative aims at providing about 45.000 parents with the same training. Examining the Beneficiaries' degree of satisfaction by the initiative, we conducted a survey in a sample of Beneficiaries that completed the training. This paper introduces the initiative and presents the results of the survey in order to conclude to specific decisions about the future implementation of the initiative which is still running.

Keywords: Training, parents, ICT, internet.

1   Introduction

In summer 2008, a Greek national action called "Goneis.gr: Training the Parents of Highschool Pupils on ICT and Safer Internet" (http://www.goneis.gr) was launched. The "Goneis.gr" (meaning Parents.gr) initiative aims at educating and training the parents of highschool children on the issue of safer Internet. It also educates parents on how they can protect of their children from online threats.

This initiative is co-funded by the Greek Ministry of Economy and Finance and the European Union. More specifically, it concerns the training of the parents of students that enrolled in the obligatory second grade education of Greece (middle school – from 11 to 14 years old) for the school year 2008-2009. It is being implemented by the Greek Research & Technology Network (GRNET), in cooperation with the Ministry of Economy & Finance and the Ministry of Education. The initiative has a budget of 21MEuros and has provided training to over 43.000 parents so far, through 852 Educational Service Providers. It started in summer of 2008 and is ongoing until the end of spring 2009, aiming to train about 45.000 parents all over Greece [2, 3].

Beneficiaries of the programme are the parents of pupils that are enrolled in one of the three years of any type of high school (daily, experimental, musical, etc.), private or public. Beneficiaries of the programme are also the parents of students that study in schools for challenged children. This initiative aims at familiarizing the parents with

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Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), focusing on the Internet, its safer use and its educational applications.

Relevant projects have been identified in other countries as well. A couple of depicting examples include the "Computers in Homes (CIH)" Project in New Zealand, (http://www.computersinhomes.org.nz/christchurch.htm) and the "Egyptian Education Initiative" (http://www.eei.gov.eg/) in Egypt. The Computers in Homes (CIH) Project aims to provide all New Zealand families who are socially and economically disadvantaged with a computer, an Internet connection, relevant training and technical support. At October 2007, 1.398 families had graduated from CIH projects across New Zealand. In Egypt in the Egyptian Education Initiative (EEI) project, a specialised training program for the parents of EEI students took place, covering basic ICT skills and safe use of the Internet and also the capacity was built of 7.864 parents to use ICT tools during the specific training [1, 4].

In this paper we present extended results from the ongoing evaluation of the "Goneis.gr" project. More specifically, we present results from a survey aiming at the parents that completed the program. This paper directly addresses the topic of Training and Education and describes a way in which society can adapt to and adopt the ICT technologies.

2 Goneis.gr Initiative

The initiative's beneficiaries are provided with free-of-charge home training from specialised instructors, as well as with access to educational packages for autonomous learning through the Internet (e-learning courses). The duration of the home based training is at least five (5) hours and it can take place in more than one visits to the Beneficiary's house. The content of the e-learning courses has a duration of at least forty (40) teaching hours. In addition, the Beneficiaries have the option to apply for a pre-paid high-speed internet connection (ADSL) for at least two (2) months. In order to participate in the programme, the Beneficiary must have a computer (either a laptop or a desktop) with an Internet connection of any type.

The training of the parents is carried out through the cooperation with education providers that are responsible for the entire training process of each parent as far as the educational aspects are concerned. The education providers were also responsible for the e-learning platform that was used during the training which was implemented and maintained by each education provider. All e-learning platforms had to fulfill some predefined criteria in order to be used in the training procedure.

The home training that the Beneficiaries are entitled to covered the following topics:

- Basic concepts on the use of the Internet, communication and information search.
- Safe use of the Internet and child protection from malicious and inappropriate online content.
- Educational applications of the Internet and services of the Panhellenic School Network.

Additionally, the e-learning courses that the Beneficiaries undertake:

- Cover at least forty (40) teaching hours
- Provide the Beneficiaries with all the necessary knowledge to be able to participate in "Basic ICT Knowledge and PC skills" certification exams.
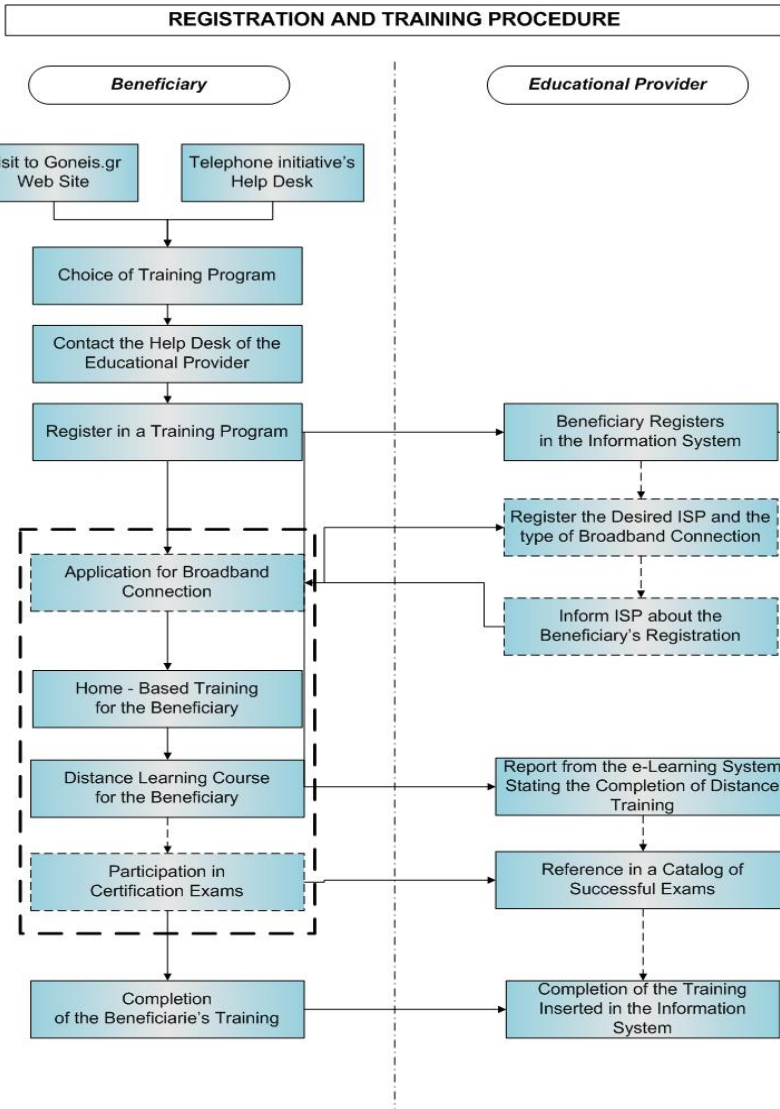
REGISTRATION AND TRAINING PROCEDURE

Beneficiary

Educational Provider

Visit to Goneis.gr Web Site

Telephone initiative's Help Desk

Choice of Training Program

Contact the Help Desk of the Educational Provider

Register in a Training Program

Beneficiary Registers in the Information System

Register the Desired ISP and the type of Broadband Connection

Application for Broadband Connection

Inform ISP about the Beneficiary's Registration

Home - Based Training for the Beneficiary

Distance Learning Course for the Beneficiary

Report from the e-Learning System Stating the Completion of Distance Training

Participation in Certification Exams

Reference in a Catalog of Successful Exams

Completion of the Beneficiarie's Training

Completion of the Training Inserted in the Information System

Fig. 1. Registration and training procedure in Goneis.gr initiative

After the completion of the e-learning courses, the Beneficiaries are entitled to participate (free of charge) in certification exams so as to acquire a certificate on "ICT knowledge and PC skills" in at least three of the units of basic knowledge (i.e. Basic concepts of ICT, Use of PC and File Management, Word Processing, Spreadsheets, Databases, Presentations and Internet Services). In Figure 1 above, the process of registering and training for "Goneis.gr" is presented.

3   Evaluation of Users' Satisfaction

This section aims to analyse the answers provided by the Beneficiaries in the survey that evaluated the initiative through relevant questionnaires deployed. The feedback was gathered through telephone communication. The methodology followed in the survey was also deployed in past relevant surveys (Manouselis & Sampson, 2004; Manouselis et al., 2004). The analysis of the answers provided by the Beneficiaries in the questionnaires provided, is carried out through the use of methods of descriptive statistical analysis (tables and graphical visualisation). For the statistical analysis and the creation of the graphs we used the Microsoft Excel.

From the overall population of about 43.000 parents that have completed their training, approximately 1.500 have been contacted through telephone, and 667 responses (completed questionnaires) were collected. The collection of this data took place during December 2008, thus corresponding to the intermediate evaluation of the programme. In the next pages the most important facts and figures from the Beneficiaries' survey are presented. The evaluation and commentary on each set of graphs and tables, takes place just after the end of each set. From a total of 667 questionnaires, 30 of them were not completed in full (0,04% of the total) so they were not taken under consideration whatsoever. When using the term "Beneficiary" in this part of the paper, we will actually be talking about the Beneficiaries that filled out the questionnaire. From the total of 667 that participated in the survey, 184 (29%) were men and 453 (71/%) were women. 28,1% of the Beneficiaries that participated in the survey, resides and was trained in the Attica region, while 11,46% resides in Thessaloniki region. The Larissa region follows with 4,55%. The other regions were more or less equally represented. Summarising Tables 1 and 2, we note that:

- The Beneficiaries were generally satisfied in high percentages (75% and 74% respectively) by the information provided to them regarding both the training procedures and their obligations and rights.
- The Beneficiaries were pretty satisfied (almost 70% rated with 4 and 5 out of 5) by the instructions provided regarding the registration to the initiative.
- Almost 72% of the Beneficiaries were satisfied by the time it took the registration code to reach them through SMS.
- Finally, 85% of the Beneficiaries stated that they were pretty satisfied by the time between their registration and the start of the training.

Table 1. Satisfaction by the information provided to the Beneficiaries related to…

The training procedures		
1 (lowest)	23	3.62%
2	51	8.03%
3	88	13.86%
4	172	27.09%
5 (highest)	301	47.40%
Their obligations and rights		
1 (lowest)	30	4.73%
2	51	8.04%
3	84	13.25%
4	181	28.55%
5 (highest)	288	45.43%

Table 2. Satisfaction of Beneficiaries by the registration process related to…

The provision of instructions for the registration		
1 (lowest)	19	3.00%
2	33	5.21%
3	77	12.15%
4	132	20.82%
5 (highest)	373	58.83%
The time from registration to receiving the registration code via SMS		
1 (lowest)	51	8.03%
2	43	6.77%
3	83	13.07%
4	127	20.00%
5 (highest)	331	52.13%
The time from registration to the start of training		
1 (lowest)	17	2.69%
2	15	2.37%
3	65	10.27%
4	140	22.12%
5 (highest)	396	62.56%

Table 3. How useful was the knowledge you acquired through the home-training?

Answer	Number of Answers	Percentage
Very much useful	328	52,23%
Useful	278	44,27%
Indifferent	22	3,5%

Table 4. Which specific modules did you choose in the context of distance learning courses?

Answer	Number of Answers	Percentage
Basic ICT concepts	369	13,07%
PC Use and File Management	399	14,13%
Word Processing	566	20,05%
Spreadsheet	496	17,57%
Databases	202	7,16%
Presentations	262	9,28%
Internet Services	529	18,74%

Table 5. The level of users' satisfaction with the material and content of the distance learning courses

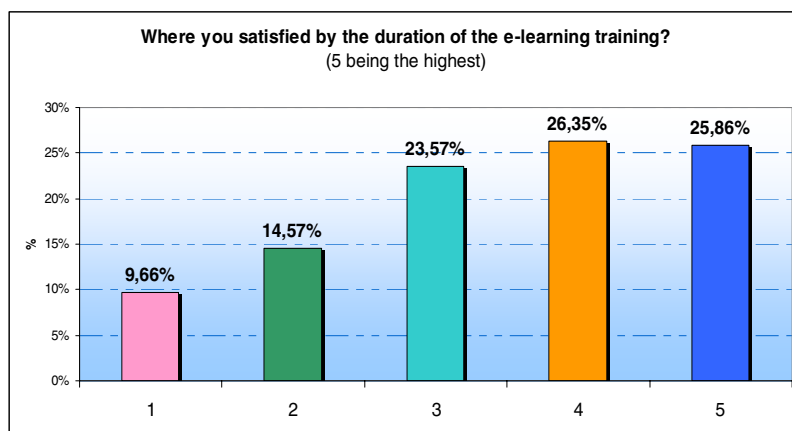| Answer	Number of Answers	Percentage
1 (lowest)	9	1,48%
2	21	3,46%
3	41	6,75%
4	217	35,75%
5 (highest)	319	52,55%

Fig. 2. Percentage distribution of answers to the question "Rate your degree of satisfaction from the duration of the e-learning courses"
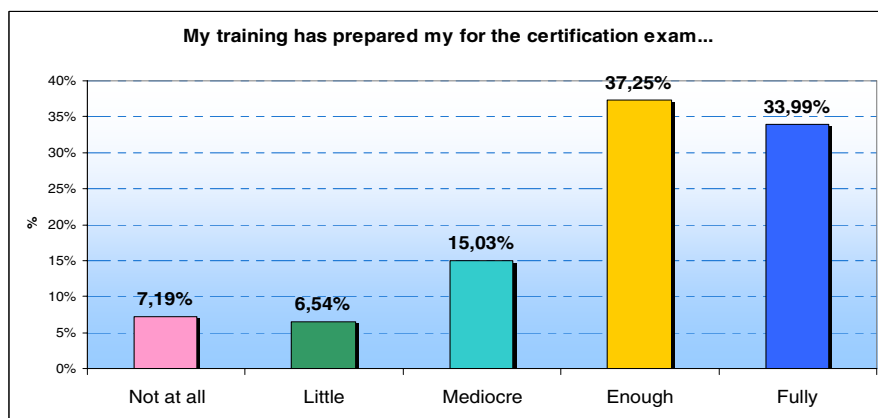

Fig. 3. Percentage distribution of answers to the question "Do you think that the training you received prepared you enough for the certification exams?"

Table 6. Level of satisfaction with the Goneis.gr web portal and its functionalities

Answer	Number of Answers	Percentage
1 (lowest)	0	0%
2	7	1,76%
3	41	10,33%
4	181	46,59%
5 (highest)	168	42,32%

Table 7. Level of satisfaction with the support offered through the help desk

Answer	Number of Answers	Percentage
1 (lowest)	1	0,43%
2	2	0,87%
3	8	3,48%
4	38	16,52%
5 (highest)	181	78,70%

As the related figures and data indicate:

- 52% of the Beneficiaries believe that the new knowledge acquired from the home training are much useful whereas 44% states they are just useful while a mere 3.50% though of the acquired knowledge to be indifferent.
- The most popular module of the e-learning courses is the Word Processing with 20%, while Internet Services follow with 19% and Spreadsheets with 17%.
- 26% of the Beneficiaries are fully satisfied from the duration of the e-learning courses (rated with 5 out of 5) while a similar percentage declared that they are very much satisfied (rated with 4 out of 5).
- 53% of the Beneficiaries are fully satisfied from the content/material provided with the e-learning courses (rated 5 out of 5) whereas 36% rated this with 4 out of 5.
- Percentages of 34% and 30% of the Beneficiaries think that their training prepared them fully and fully enough respectively so that they could handle the certification exams.
- 70% of the Beneficiaries visited the Goneis.gr Web Portal whereas 23% did not visit the portal as they did not need to do so. Only 7% of the Beneficiaries are not informed for the portal's existence.
- 42% of the Beneficiaries graded with "excellent" their degree of satisfaction by the operation of the Goneis.gr Web Portal (rated with 5 out of 5) whereas 46% are very much satisfied (rated 4 out of 5).
- 48% of the Beneficiaries did not need to contact the helpdesk whereas 38% of them did contact the helpdesk to address their questions regarding the initiative. 14% declared that they did not know about the existence of the helpdesk.
- The majority of the Beneficiaries is satisfied by the operation of the helpdesk as 78.7% of those that contacted the helpdesk characterized their degree of satisfaction as "excellent" (rated with 5 out of 5) whereas 17% of them are very much satisfied (rated with 4 out of 5).

Again, as it illustrated by the available data:

- 38% characterised the percentage of knowledge acquired from their participation to the program as very much satisfying whereas 51% though of the knowledge as simply satisfying. Only 11% of the Beneficiaries thought that the acquired knowledge think their participation to the initiative was little.
- 37% of the Beneficiaries are totally satisfied from their participation in the programme (rated 5 out of 5), whereas 45% of them are very satisfied (rated 4 out of 5). 12% of the Beneficiaries are partially satisfied (rated 3 out of 5), while the percentage of them that are less than satisfied only reaches 6%.
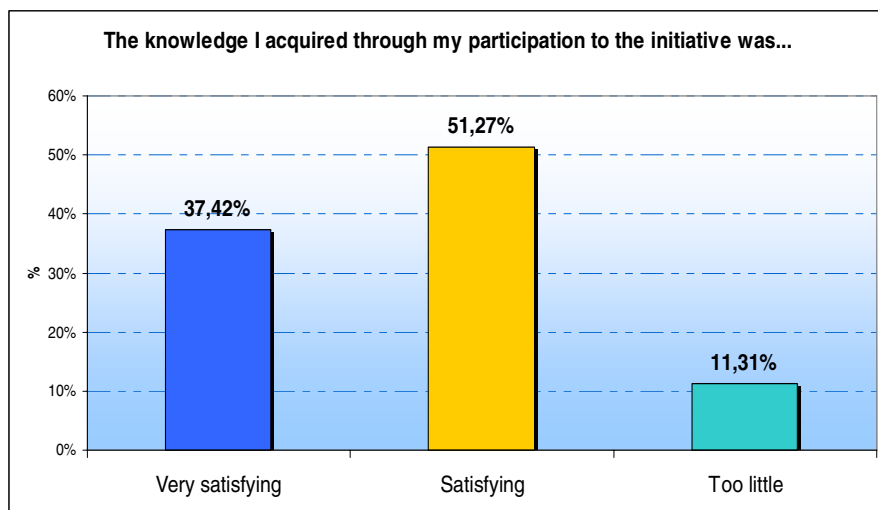
Fig. 4. Percentage distribution of answers to the question "Do you think that the percentage of knowledge acquired though your participation in the initiative was…"

Table 8. Level of satisfaction with the participation in the initiative

Answer	Number of Answers	Percentage
Not at all	16	2,54%
Little	24	3,80%
More or less	78	12,36%
Partially	283	44,85%
Fully	230	36,45%

4 Conclusions

Summarising the main points that concern the evaluation of the Goneis.gr initiative we must state that:

- The respective percentages of Beneficiaries that are more than satisfied with the initiative are over 80% which indicates that the initiative is successfully deployed in all of its aspects (promotion, implementation, administrative, etc.)
- Focusing a little bit on the Beneficiaries, we see that their satisfaction regarding the initiative and its services equals with 4,09 in the 5-grade scale.
- The duration of the home-based training and the e-learning courses is highly appreciated by the Beneficiaries thus indicating that the whole training process is well-designed and implemented.
- The Goneis.gr Web Portal is widely praised both by the Beneficiaries indicating the quality and high functionality of the Web Portal.
- The helpdesk support is also highly appreciated by all participants of the initiative indicating the willingness and high level of support that the helpdesk staff provides.

The Goneis.gr initiative has proven to be very successful thus providing the basis for a possible repetition of the program and/or the extension of the training framework to other population groups that were not addressed in the first implementation of the initiative. The study presented in this paper has already indicated problematic aspects that can be looked at in order to increase the satisfaction of the public and the educational outcomes of the process. Also, some exciting and fruitful opportunities have risen that can multiply the initiative's added value if they are carefully exploited.

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