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## Social structures to tackle poverty in Greece: A quantitative interpretation

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# Social structures to tackle poverty in Greece: A quantitative interpretation

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## Οι κοινωνικές δομές άμεσης αντιμετώπισης της φτώχειας στην Ελλάδα: μια ποσοτική ερμηνεία

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### ABSTRACT

The present article focuses on the Social Structures to Tackle Poverty in Greece (hereinafter under the term "SSTPG") and their implementation during the period 2012-2017. On the one hand, the article sheds light on the results of the quantitative research conducted and, on the other hand, on the evaluation of the performance indicators of the program. The question that arises concerns the impact of SSTPG on the immediate beneficiaries, still also the degree to which the intended goals of the program were successfully met. The main conclusion reached in this article is that the SSTPG's contribution to the local communities of the respective Municipal areas has been significant. This fact alone is further justified via the evaluation of the indicators as well as through the genuine answers provided by the beneficiaries themselves, in the context of the quantitative research.

**KEY WORDS:** Interventions to tackle poverty, Social Policy at the local level, social policy assessment, SSTPG.

### ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Το παρόν άρθρο επικεντρώνεται στις Κοινωνικές Δομές Άμεσης Αντιμετώπισης της Φτώχειας (εφεξής ΚΔΑΑΦ) που υλοποιήθηκαν στην Ελλάδα κατά το χρονικό διάστημα 2012-2017. Πιο συγκεκριμένα, παρουσιάζει τα αποτελέσματα ποσοτικής αξιολόγησης που διενεργήθηκε στις ΚΔΑΑΦ σε πέντε (5) Δήμους της Αττικής. Το άρθρο εστιάζει αφενός στα αποτελέσματα της ποσοτικής έρευνας που διενεργήθηκε και αφετέρου στην αποτίμηση των προθετημένων δεικτών του προγράμματος. Το βασικό ερώτημα που τίθεται είναι ποιος ήταν ο αντίκτυπος των ΚΔΑΑΦ στους άμεσα ωφελούμενους αλλά και η διερεύνηση του εάν καλύφθηκαν οι προθετημένες στοχεύσεις του προγράμματος. Το βασικό συμπέρασμα στο οποίο καταλήγει το παρόν άρθρο είναι ότι η προσφορά των εξετασθεισών Κ.Δ.Α.Α.Φ. ήταν σημαντική στις τοπικές κοινωνίες των Δήμων όπου λειτούργησαν. Το γεγονός αυτό εξήχθη και ποσοτικώς, μέσω της αξιολόγησης των δεικτών, αλλά και από τις απαντήσεις που έδωσαν οι ίδιοι οι άμεσα ωφελούμενοι κατά την ποσοτική έρευνα.

**ΛΕΞΕΙΣ-ΚΛΕΙΔΙΑ:** Κοινωνική Ανάπτυξη, Διακυβέρνηση, Δημοσιονομικό Έλλειμμα, Δημόσιο Χρέος, Πολιτικοί-Δημοσιονομικοί Κύκλοι, Παραοικονομία.

## 1. Introduction

The purpose of this article is to examine and evaluate the Programme «Social Structures to Tackle Poverty in Greece» and its effect in overcoming to the phenomena of social exclusion and poverty. The SSTPG is a Project that aimed to combat poverty and social exclusion in Greece, implemented during the period 2012-2017.

The above mentioned Programme is part of the "Europe 2020" Strategy, utilized by the EU, intending, among other things, to reduce, to at least twenty (20) million, the number of individuals who have already been or are currently at risk of poverty and social exclusion in Europe. In the framework of the "Europe 2020" Strategy, two (2) national priorities with their corresponding goals were set to be fulfilled within the year 2020. The first one concerns poverty and the target to reduce the number of people at risk of poverty, particularly referring to households without working members" to 450,000 by 2020 (reduction of the total rate from 28% in 2008 to 24% in 2020). The second one focuses on establishing a social security network as a counteract to social exclusion, which will ensure access for all to basic services such as medical care, housing and education.

Two (2) categories of people have been described as beneficiaries, the direct and the indirect ones. The direct beneficiaries were, in turn, divided into the following categories: Homeless and people in poverty or at risk of poverty. The homeless, according to the proposal, have been defined as all persons legally residing in the country, who either do not have access or have unwarranted access to a sufficiently privately owned, rented or allotted residence that meets the required technical specifications and is equipped with the basic water and electricity facilities. Homeless people include those who live on the streets, in hostels, those who are temporarily housed in institutions or other closed structures, as well as those who live in unsuitable lodgings. On the other side, the indirect beneficiaries are considered to be people employed in the SSTPG, catering for the direct beneficiaries.

The anti-poverty and social exclusion programmes in Greece need to be examined and evaluated in their implementation so as to assess whether and to which extent they have produced real benefits ultimately making improvement recommendations towards a more effective performance. Thus, the intention of the present study is to answer those questions, in order to fill in this scientific gap. There is a limited number of studies examining the pathogenesis of any programme regarding providing for socially disadvantaged beneficiaries. As a result, the conduction of the present study, consists an imperative need. The case studies referenced here involve the Municipalities of Glyfada, Metamorfofi, Philadelphia - Chalcedon, Heraklion, Attica and Lykovrysi-Pefki.

## 2. The background

Since the beginning of the past decade, Greece has undergone a period of economic austerity followed by reductions in wages and pensions, not to mention the imposition of additional taxation measures. An immediate consequence of this situation has been the diminution of the Greek social policy, the increase in the number of citizens living in poverty (Matsaganis, 2004), the increase in the number of unemployed and of people in need of healthcare treatment (Econo-

mu, 2015). Taking into consideration the fact that the state is unable to serve the needs of vulnerable citizens (Matsaganis, 2012), the burden of their weight falls on society and the NGOs, the local administration and the EU welfare programmes (Skamnakis & Chardas, 2017).

As a matter of fact, the EU policies, both by institutional and financial means, do come to the rescue of the Greek social policies but cannot substitute the latter whatsoever. What is more, on a more macroscopic level, they fail to interpret correctly the specific and needs and priorities of sensitive groups of citizens. (Sakellariopoulos and Economou, 2006). Nevertheless, the state remains a key point of reference in any case, since one of the basic principles governing the operation of the EU dating back to its birth, has been that of subsidiarity (Sakellariopoulos & Angelaki, 2016).

On the one hand, the economic crisis of the past years has clearly highlighted the inadequacy of the established welfare state, with an apparent societal failure (Sakellariopoulos, 2011), whereas, on the other hand, equally striking is the impact of globalization on modern societies, exerting a significant influence on them, which has led to wage cuts and an increase in social inequalities (Economou & Feronas, 2006). As a result, the discrepancies in the exercise of national social policy created during this period, and the deficiency of the latter to project itself positively on society, has inevitably contributed to the strengthening of social solidarity (Feronas, 2019).

An immediate result of the former has been the emergence of the family as a network of social support (Ferrera, 1999) and also the remodeling of local administration with the responsibility of exercising social policy (Skamnakis & Pantazopoulos, 2015). Indeed, local administration along with NGOs are essentially contributing to the enhancement of people's lives, enabling society to overcome problems that the state is unable to solve (Loughlin, 2004, Spicker, 2004).

For several years now in Greece, both Regions and Municipalities, have been providing social services to their citizens (Stathopoulos, 1999:184), which comprise an integral and essential part of their responsibilities (Pantazopoulou, 1999:126-127). In this context, they have implemented EU funded Programs, which have served a fairly large number of citizens. Technically though, their implementation has evoked the necessity of assessment so that their role could be evaluated and any potential drawbacks amended (Kontiadis, 2006:57). At local government level, the Authorities are called upon to evaluate the services that they offer and reorganize them, in order to respond more accurately to citizens' requests, while also reinforcing the concept of social protection and solidarity.

In this context, assessment procedures are usually designed according to the services provided in Municipalities and Regions. Indicatively, the process of evaluation and reconstruction in the Municipality of Heraklion, Crete, was carried out with the purpose to improve the *modus operandi* of the social services of the particular Municipality. Practically, the project generated proposals for upgrading and restructuring the existing social services (Municipality of Heraklion, Crete, 2017). Similar partnerships have been applied to other Greek Regions where social policy programmes were in effect and have truly produced major improvements. These procedures assessed the existing structures and redesigned interventions to fortify the services offered. For instance, the Regions of Western Greece, the Ionian Islands, Thessaly and Crete are some to be reported.

However, the only evaluation study that has been conducted in relation to SSTPG, took place in the year 2015, on behalf of the National Strategic Reference Framework – NSRF and the Special Service for Strategy, Planning and Evaluation (EYSSA) of the Ministry of Economy, Development and Tourism. This study, although assessing the work of SSTPG (i.e. structures, employees, beneficiaries and costs) in depth, has yet overseen the last two (2) years of the Social Structures opera-

tion, thus overshadowing its mission to evaluate the SSTPG programme itself, with the purpose to investigate whether it should be continued or terminated. Moreover, the statistics used with respect to the main indicators of poverty and inequality, refer to the year 2013, whereas the primary data were collected not after December 2014. Therefore, this study basically captures just the first two (2) of the total five (5) years of the SSTPG programme.

Last but not least, it has concluded that the main aim of SSTPG, (which was the provision of well-rounded services to the homeless and people in need or threatened with poverty), was neglected due to another specific goal, namely to provide employment to young unemployed people, reaching the point of 80% of eligible costs relating to employee payments. Ultimately, within that framework, the independent and autonomous continuation of the programme became impossible even though the performance indicators had been exceeded.

### 3. Research methodology and statistical analysis

**I**n the context of the present paper and for the successful completion of its research survey questionnaires have been distributed to SSTPG beneficiaries in the municipalities of Glyfada, Metamorfofi, Philadelphia - Chalkidona, Heraklion Attica and Lykovrisi - Pefki. The survey began with the provision of a pilot questionnaire in the aforementioned municipalities on 4/9/2017 and ended on 9/9/2017. The questionnaire was constructed around the following question: "What is the contribution of SSTPG programmes and do they fulfill their mission. The questionnaire also included feedback comments on the social structures' effectiveness provided by the beneficiaries themselves. According to the analysis outlined above, the effective control of the country's fiscal problem in the long run presupposes the following. Firstly, improving the public sector's productive process, notably by reducing the negative effects of its bureaucratic mode of production (budget control and public spending), which can be achieved by introducing a system of incentives and disincentives for the public sector management. Increasing public sector productivity and in particular increasing the productivity of the public sector employees can be achieved by improving its organization and administration methods, via the use of new technology, and by improving the quality and the use rates of the factors of production used and in particular of labor (education, retraining and specialization of public employees).

The basic reason for selecting that particular research method (i.e. questionnaire) has been its advantage of allowing the collection of raw material directly, yielding, in turn, quantified data. The specific time frame for the implementation of the survey has been chosen intentionally, leaving behind the void of summertime, a period when social structures admittedly demonstrate a decline in their performance.

For the description of the quantitative variables, the scientific terminology corresponds to average prices (mean), standard deviation (SD), median and interquartile ranges, accordingly. Absolute (N) and relative (%) frequencies are used to describe the qualitative variables. Also, students' t-test has been a means to compare quantitative variables between two groups. For the juxtaposition of quantitative variables among more than two groups, parametric analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used. Additionally, in order to monitor error type I, caused by overlapping comparisons, the Bonferroni correction method was employed, according to which the significance level is  $0.05/k$  ( $k$ =number of comparisons). Furthermore, Pearson's or Spearman's correla-

tion coefficient ( $r$ ) was also used to define the relationship between two quantitative variables. The correlation is considered low when the correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) ranges from 0.1 to 0.3, moderate when the correlation coefficient is from 0.31 to 0.5 and high when the coefficient is greater than 0.5. Next, linear regression analysis was used in order to detect independent factors related to satisfaction scores, resulting from the dependence coefficients ( $b$ ) and their standard errors (SE). Finally, significance levels are two-sided and statistical significance is set at 0.05; SPSS 22.0 was used for the statistical analysis.

In terms of participants, eighty-six (86) beneficiaries in equal numbers from social partnerships<sup>1</sup> (forty-three from the North and forty-three from the South) answered the pilot questionnaire. The results of the pilot questionnaire revealed that twelve (12) questions coincided with one another, being worded differently. For this reason, six (6) questions were removed, keeping another six (6) answerable questions in the questionnaire. In addition, two (2) questions were removed due to the fact that the majority of respondents refused to answer them. The questions concerned whether the Municipalities that carried out the Programme, interfered in the implementation process, as a whole.

Drawing on the beneficiaries' comments, the final questionnaire incorporated thirty (30) questions divided into five (5) categories: A. Demographic and socio-economic data, B. Services Frequency of use, C. Satisfaction from services, D. Access and Infrastructure and E. Social Structure Personnel. Of those thirty (30) questions, ten (10) are of closed type, seven (7) open-ended "yes" or "no", nine (9) closed type of measurement, two (2) closed multiple choice and two (2) open type.

First, closed-type questions are used because they can provide directly measurable data and also because the possible answers given are specific and prescriptive. Hence, they tend to exhaust all possible responses. Second, open-type questions corroborate the closed-type questions.

The wording of the questions adheres to the following methodological principles:

Simple language usage, as evidenced by the initial processing of the beneficiaries' data, where the majority of the SSTPG beneficiaries are upper secondary graduates. The questions are clear and precise in order to ensure understanding on the part of the interviewees. The questions are structured based on the aforementioned category and then divided into individual conceptual categories, thus achieving the best possible consistency and continuity.

On the other hand, personal questions, obscure words, ambiguous answers to each question, guided questions to specific answers, and questions that are hypothetical and unrelated to the aims and objectives of the research are overall avoided. In general, the questions have an intuitive background as their meaning has been easily understood by the respondents.

The distribution of the finalized questionnaires began on 25/9/2017 to the beneficiaries of the Glyfada SSTPG and ended on 1/11/2017. The following day the distribution of the questionnaires to the SSTPG of the Northern social partnership took place, with the particular process being completed on 15/12/2017.

For the selection of beneficiaries there was no consideration in terms of numbers supplied by the particular SSTPG structure they catered for, as there is a general disproportionality in beneficiaries' figures from one structure to another. The questionnaires were delivered to the Intermediation Office, which all beneficiaries belonged to compulsorily. Individuals who participated in the quantitative research were utilizing SSTPG throughout the aforementioned duration of the survey. After all, the purpose of the research has been a holistic evaluation of the Structures concerning all beneficiaries and not a fragmented one.

The total amount of beneficiaries registered in the Glyfada Corporate Structure were one thousand ninety-five (1,095). Of these, four hundred and thirty-seven (437) consented to participate to the present survey. Accordingly, in the Northern Corporate Structure, nine hundred fifty-seven (957) were the total direct beneficiaries. Of those, four hundred and twenty-four (424) participated. Ultimately, eight hundred and sixty-one (861) of them (almost 42% of the total population of beneficiaries) answered the survey's questionnaires.

In practice, the beneficiaries were approached upon their arrival at the Intermediation Office. The answers and results derived from the survey were put in contrast to the results of the 2011 ELSTAT census, both in terms of gender and age, in order to eliminate possible inequalities. In addition, all questionnaire responses were reviewed thoroughly to avoid errors out of carelessness. According to the above, the Quantitative Survey achieved:

- The participation of a representative sample of SSTPG beneficiaries.
- A satisfactory stratification of beneficiaries - users from all existing Structures.
- The involvement of the largest possible number of beneficiaries due to the targeted timing of the survey.
- The penetration to each municipality separately, as there has been an effort to include a proportion of residents from all municipalities.
- Finally, the involvement of the SSTPG employees, who have been encouraging the beneficiaries to respond to the questionnaires.

## 4. Results of the survey

Of the total one thousand and ninety-five (1,095) beneficiaries of the Glyfada Corporate Structure, four hundred and thirty-seven (437) agreed to answer the questionnaires, that is approximately 40% of the total population of beneficiaries, and 53% of those approached initially. In the Corporate Structure of the Northern Municipalities, the responses were four hundred and twenty-four (424), a number which corresponds to 44.3% of the total population. Therefore, the sample consists of 861 people with a mean age of 56.1 years (SD=14.7 years).

**Table 1: Demographic data of the respondents**

Sex	Male Female	N	%
			356
		505	58,7
Age, Standard Deviation		56,1 (14,7)	
Educational Level	Illiterate	25	2,9
	Elementary School Graduate	202	23,5
	High School Graduate	298	34,6
	Upper School Graduate	195	22,6
	Post High School Education	66	7,7
	Technological Institute Graduate	53	6,2
	University Graduate	22	2,6

Marital Status	Unmarried	239	27,8
	Married	308	35,8
	Divorced	235	27,3
	Widowed	79	9,2
Number of children, Standard Deviation, median		0,7 (1,1)	0 (0 - 1)
Citizenship	Greek	861	100,0
Employment Status	Employee	37	4,3
	Unemployed	660	76,7
	Retiree	164	19,0
If you are unemployed, how long have you not been having a job?	Up to 6 months	33	5,0
	7 to 12 months	52	7,9
	13 to 36 months	181	27,4
	More than 36 months	394	59,7
If you work, what position do you hold?	Employee in the private sector	13	35,1
	Self-employed	24	64,9
With whom of the following did you have an experience when joining the social structures?	Homeless	29	3,4
	Individuals threatened by poverty	14	1,6
	Individuals in poverty	723	84,0
	Individuals with disabilities	93	10,8
	Not belonging to a vulnerable social group	2	0,2
Place	Northern Partnership	424	49,2
	Southern Partnership	437	50,8

Source: Author's own processing.

Approximately 58.7% of the participants are women. 34.6% of the participants are high school graduates and 23.5% are elementary school graduates. 35.8% of the participants are married, while 27.8% are single. All participants are of Greek nationality. In terms of employment, 76.7% of the participants are unemployed and, more specifically, 59.7% of them have been unemployed for more than 36 months. Yet, at the same time, 4.3% of the participants are employees and, in fact, 64.9% of the are self-employed. The majority of participants (84.0%) joined the social structures as "people in poverty". Almost half of the participants, that is 49.2%, belong to the northern structures.

The most dominant reason for joining the SSTPGs was the fact that they were in a state of poverty. Still also, the percentage of people with some kind of disability was high (10.8%) as well, followed by the homeless (3.4%) and beneficiaries at risk of poverty (1.6%). As a last comment, 0.2% of the respondents does not fall into any of the above categories.

### 4.1 Frequency of use in services

Passing on to the use of services by the beneficiaries, the respondents were asked to answer how frequently they use each structure.

**Table 2: Frequency of use in structures**

	Frequency					
	Type of Service	Daily	Sometimes a week	Once a week	Sometimes a month	Once a month
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
Time Bank	410 (47,6)	32 (7,8)	117 (28,5)	130 (31,7)	93 (22,7)	38 (9,3)
Social Grocery Store	597 (69,3)	38 (6,4)	138 (23,1)	201 (33,7)	176 (29,5)	44 (7,4)
Social Pharmacy	416 (48,3)	10 (2,4)	95 (22,8)	137 (32,9)	120 (28,8)	54 (13)
Social Kitchen Service	265 (30,8)	133 (50,2)	56 (21,1)	47 (17,7)	19 (7,2)	10 (3,8)
Public Garden <sup>2</sup>	86 (20,3)	9 (10,5)	15 (17,4)	54 (62,8)	6 (7)	2 (2,3)
Open Day Center for Homeless	44 (10,4)	3 (6,8)	5 (11,4)	7 (15,9)	12 (27,3)	17 (38,6)
Intermediation Office	861 (100)	376 (43,7)	206 (23,9)	184 (21,4)	48 (5,6)	47 (5,5)

Source: Author's own processing.

On the ground that respondents form part of the total user population, all participants are considered to have used the Intermediation Office. As far as the rest of the services are concerned, 69.3% of the participants have used the Social Grocery Store, 48.3% the Social Pharmacy and 47.6% the Time Bank. On a daily basis, the services used at higher rates are the Social Kitchen Service and the Intermediation Office, with a score of 50.2% and 43.7%, respectively. On the contrary, at a rate of 13% are the beneficiaries who have used the services of the Social Pharmacies once a month.

### 4.2 Satisfaction drawn by the services

On the level of satisfaction, the beneficiaries were asked to answer a series of questions aimed at evaluating the services and products provided by the Structures, specifying the level of their satisfaction.

**Table 3: Respondents' satisfaction from the structures**

		N	%
Have the structures met your needs?	Yes	41	4,8
	No	820	95,2
Are the provided services, tools, products and materials useful?	Yes	60	7,0
	No	801	93,0

Has the guidance and assistance delivered to you by employees in the structures been adequate during the grant process?	Yes	74	8,6
	No	787	91,4
Do you benefit from other types of anti-poverty structures (eg Church meals, NGOs, etc.)?	No	861	100,0
	Yes	0	0,0
Who has informed you about the social structures' activity?	By the Structures themselves	276	32,1
	By the Municipality	311	36,1
	From other sources	0	0,0
	From relatives and friends, other structures users	274	31,8

Source: Author's own processing.

Drawing on the responses, 95.2% of the participants stated that they have covered their needs via SSTPGs, a particularly high percentage. In particular, 93.0% of the participants has expressed the opinion that the services, tools, products and materials provided in/by the structures were useful, and 91.4% has argued that the guidance and assistance provided to them by employees during the granting process was sufficient enough. In terms of information dissemination, 36.1% of the participants said that they were informed about the structures through the municipality, 32.1% via the structures themselves and 31.8% following relatives and friends' recommendations or through other users of the structures.

As a step further, beneficiaries were then asked to indicate their level of satisfaction regarding the use of the services in the Structures, as well as to assess the quality of the services offered.

More specifically, 91.5% of the participants were moderately-very satisfied with the facilities in particular, while 87.9% with the services provided by the structures. It is noteworthy that the beneficiaries reported a 59.3% per cent to have been moderately-very satisfied with the staff in the structures, a fact which is rather questionable. Also, although there is a general satisfaction with services and facilities (i.e. 90%), with respect to staff evaluation, the percentage is reduced by thirty (30) points. These low satisfaction rates are probably caused due to the daily friction with the SSTPG staff.

On the opposite, however, the high satisfaction rates of the participants in terms of service quality, ranges from 91.5% to 100%. To elaborate on that, 91.5% of the participants were moderately/very satisfied with the quality of the Social Grocery and all of them were moderately/very satisfied with the Homeless Day Reception Center.

Accordingly, one out of two survey participants fully agreed with the proposal "Structure workers are interested in my problems", which suggests that there the relationship between the beneficiaries and the staff might have been at times problematic. Furthermore, the percentage of those who say that the Structures seem close to their home or workplace is relatively low, reaching a 64.7% in positive responses. It is also worthy to mention that 33.1% of users considered the structures not sufficiently equipped.

On the other hand, 99.3% of the beneficiaries agreed with the proposal "It is easy to navigate within the structures" while about 92% that the Structures were clean and easily serviced.

For the 70.0% of participants the waiting time has been up to 15 minutes, and for the 17.5% from 15 minutes to half an hour. The percentage of those who argued that one hour has been a short time to wait reaches 6.9%, while only 2.2% of the respondents exceeded one hour of waiting time. Next, the beneficiaries were asked to assess how important the various dimensions of the structures.

Thus, 77.2% of the participants considered the proposal "The opening hours should be convenient" to be important/very important, which proves that this dimension was of significant value to them. More than 99% interpreted the dimensions related to the services, such as waiting time and employees' behavior towards them, as extremely important. Generally, users defined as important the dimensions of services with regard to solving their daily and everyday issues.

Of special interest are also the responses concerning problem-solving on the part of the SSTPGs administration, as the interviewees were asked to provide feedback on the quality of support according to the benefits they have gained through the Structures. In detail, 89.1% of the participants argued that the social structures helped to address their problems. Also, 74.6% of the participants claimed that the social structures supported them to improve their psychological state and 69.9% to enhance their lives in general. On the contrary, the percentage of users who managed to find a job (12.4%), who managed to improve their financial situation (14.4%) and who, in their opinion, acquired some kind of knowledge (16.3%) was smaller. Yet, the most valuable result among the findings is the fact that 97.1% of the beneficiaries insisted that SSTPGs should not cease their operation thus clearly acknowledging their important role.

### 4.3 Access and infrastructure

Drawing on the field of infrastructure, users have been asked to assess the Social Structures in terms of accessibility.

**Table 4: Evaluation of social structures accessibility**

Depending on the Social Structure you have made use of, evaluate its accessibility	Very easy	Easy	Neither easy nor difficult	Difficult	Very Difficult	Easy/Very Easy (%)
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	
Time Bank	142 (34,6)	82 (20)	52 (12,7)	34 (8,3)	100 (24,4)	54,6
Social Grocery	222 (37,2)	101 (16,9)	59 (9,9)	38 (6,4)	177 (29,6)	54,1
Social Pharmacy	117 (28,1)	76 (18,3)	53 (12,7)	21 (5)	149 (35,8)	46,4
Social Kitchen Service	109 (41,1)	50 (18,9)	24 (9,1)	40 (15,1)	42 (15,8)	60,0
Intermediation Office	508 (59)	177 (20,6)	92 (10,7)	34 (3,9)	50 (5,8)	79,6
Public Garden <sup>3</sup>	4 (4,7)	8 (9,3)	18 (20,9)	21 (24,4)	35 (40,7)	14,0
Open Day Center for the Homeless	3 (6,8)	5 (11,4)	2 (4,5)	6 (13,6)	28 (63,6)	18,2

Source: Author's own processing.

The percentages of great ease in accessing the structures ranged from 14.0% to 79.6%. More specifically, 14.0% of the participants considered easy/very easy the access to the Public Garden and 18.2% to the Open Day Center for the Homeless. Also, 79.6% of the participants considered access to the Intermediation Office easy/very easy.

As shown above, in all Structures Services, the negative answers derive from an approximately 70% of the beneficiaries in the Northern Corporate Structure and from a 30% of the corresponding ones in the Southern Corporate Structure. Coupled particularly with the 86% of negative responses concerning the Public Garden and 81.8% regarding the Open Day Center for the Homeless -which though operated only in the Northern Structures- it is evident that users in the Northern Municipalities express great dissatisfaction in terms of accessibility to the social services.

Furthermore, 54.0% of the participants claimed that the Structures did not have appropriate building infrastructure, 46.2% that they lagged behind in material and technical infrastructure and 37.0% that there is poor transportation or that the Structures are difficult to be accessed. Again, in terms of accessibility, the vast majority of negative comments is recorded by beneficiaries from the Northern Corporate Structure.

#### 4.4 The SSTPG personnel

The next topic to be examined is the assessment of employees at the SSTPGs (i.e. the indirect beneficiaries). According to the survey, 75.5% of the participants described the staff in the social structures as generally very good/excellent. Also, 74.3% of the participants commended on the behavior of the personnel as very good/excellent. In addition, 29.5% of the interviewees considered the Structures workforce (i.e. number of staff) to be sufficient enough, while in relation to employees' qualifications, knowledge and skills 59.9% of the respondents answered positively.

#### 4.5 Satisfaction ratings

**Table 5: Type of respondents' satisfaction**

Minimum Value	Maximum Value	Average Value	SD	
Total Satisfaction (%)	28,3	81,2	57,7	8,1
Employee's Satisfaction(%)	24,4	97,6	71,1	14,3
Access Satisfaction (%)	0,0	71,4	27,8	15,3
Infrastructure Satisfaction (%)	20,0	100,0	84,5	13,9

Source: Author's own processing.

Interpreting the results, the total satisfaction score concerning the employees ranges from 24.4% to 97.6%, with an average at 71.1% (SD=14.3%). Also, the rate of satisfaction regarding the access varies between 0% and 71.4%, with the average price being 27.8% (SD=15.3%). Last but not least, feedback on the facilities ranges from 20% to 100% with the average at 84.5%

(SD=13.9%). Finally, the overall satisfaction score falls between 28.3% and 81.2%, with the average price being 57.7% (SD=8.1%).

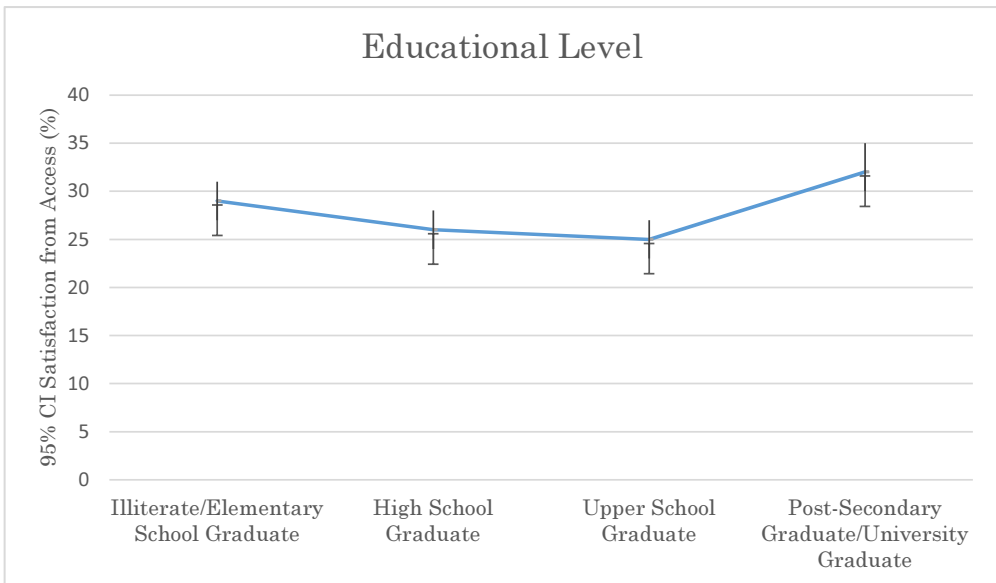
With respect to access quality, in particular, satisfaction rates are significantly lower compared to both employee-related ( $p < 0.001$ ) and facilities-related satisfaction ( $p < 0.001$ ). Drawing on the latter, satisfaction regarding the facilities is evidently lower than satisfaction concerning the staff ( $p < 0.001$ ).

### 4.6 Correlation between satisfaction scores and participants' demographic data on the basis of the SSTPGs use

An apparently lower evaluation score, indicating significantly lower employee-related satisfaction is recorded by participants who had visited the Open Day Center for the Homeless. On the level of methodology, multifactorial linear regression has been employed with dependent variable the score of respondents' satisfactions in relation to the staff, and within dependent variable participants' demographic data as well as data on the use of social structures.

Also, in order to extract the results, the stepwise method has been used.

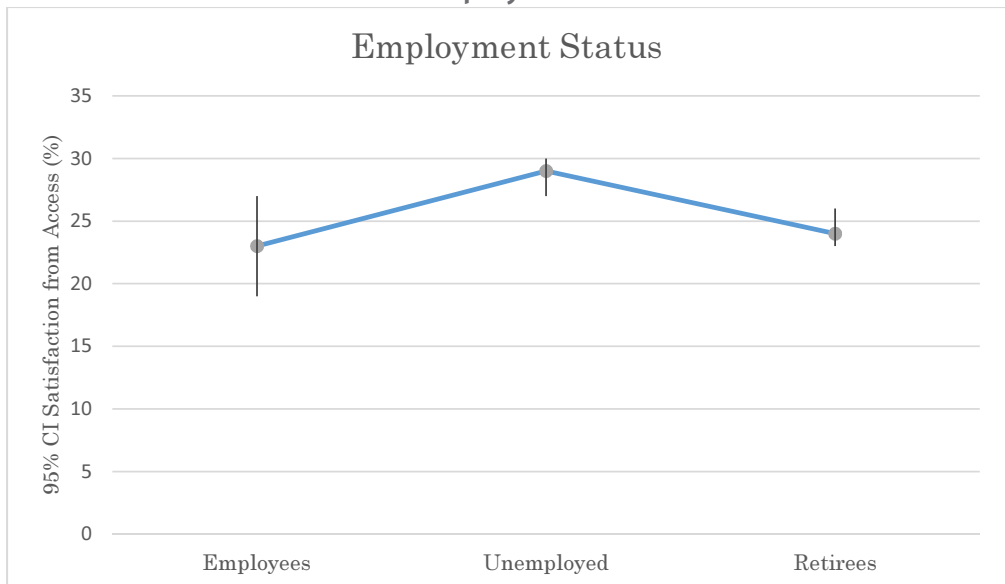
**Chart 1: Satisfaction in terms of accessibility, on the basis of the beneficiaries' educational level**



The correlation shows that only waiting time affects customer service performance. In particular, the more the participants waited to be assisted by a representative, the less satisfied they were. At the same time, the score of satisfaction related to accessibility expressed by the participants from Glyfada Municipality is significantly higher than that of the Northern Corporate Structure. Also, the satisfaction rates on accessibility present considerable differences

depending on their respondents' educational level and employment status. To expand on this, by applying the Bonferroni correction, it occurred that participants with post-secondary education and graduates from Technological Education Institutions /Universities demonstrate significantly higher scores, meaning that they were more satisfied with the access compared to high school graduates ( $p < 0.001$ ). Also, high school graduates present significantly lower scores than illiterate and elementary school graduates ( $p = 0.046$ ). Still, the unemployed were far more satisfied with the access in relation to retirees ( $p = 0.003$ ).

**Chart 2: Satisfaction in terms of accessibility, on the basis of the beneficiaries' employment status**



The data analysis shows that the respondents who have benefited from the Time Bank, the Social Grocery, the Social Pharmacy, the Social Kitchen Service, the Public Garden and the Open Day Center for the Homeless reach significantly higher rates, indicating an even greater satisfaction with SSTPGs access. What is more, the participants who were informed about the social structures by the municipality were far more satisfied with accessibility, while those informed by a relative, friends and acquaintances or by other users of the structures demonstrate a significantly lower satisfaction. Additionally, participants who were supported by the structures in dealing with their problems were significantly more satisfied with access. However, interviewees who consider transportation provided by the structures ineffective, obviously present less satisfaction in relation to the access. Also, the interpretation of findings shows that participants accompanied by children, whose waiting time was relatively short, were more satisfied with regards to accessibility.

Comparing the Municipality of Glyfada to the Northern Municipalities in terms of satisfaction drawn from the facilities, the score of their respondents' satisfaction is significantly higher in the first case. On educational level, the satisfaction concerning the facilities presents great dif-

ferences among participants. In particular, following the Bonferroni correction, it is proved that high school graduates reach a significantly higher score, i.e. more satisfied with facilities than elementary school graduates ( $p=0.026$ ).

Moreover, the overall satisfaction on the part of the participants from Glyfada Municipality reaches the highest level. Again, satisfaction differ so great extents in relation to the educational level and employment status of there spondents. More specifically, by applying the Bonferroni correction, it becomes evident that participants with post-secondary education and TEI / University graduates demonstrate a significantly higher scores, i.e. more satisfied in general, compared to high school graduates ( $p=0.024$ ). Still, again, the unemployed were overall far more satisfied than the retirees ( $p=0.014$ ).

## 5. Assessing the set goals

### 5.1 Performance indicators

Taking into account the number of beneficiaries in the two (2) Corporate Structures, it becomes evident that the SSTPGs under discussion showcase extremely positive results, on the whole. In the case of the Northern Corporate Structure, the pre-set indicators in all services are achieved. For the Social Grocery, the level of performance is estimated at a 105% of success, while the Social Pharmacy exceeds its monthly-set target with a 112% of success. For the Intermediation Office, the level of achievement reaches 106%, for the Social Grocery 121%, the Social Kitchen Service 186%, the Time Bank 166% and, finally, for the Open Day Center for the Homeless 140%.

**Table 6: Indicators and their fulfillment by partnership**

Indicator	Northern Partnership		% of achievement
	Target	Result	
Social Grocery	150 families <sup>4</sup> per month	182 <sup>5</sup>	121%
Social Pharmacy	100 beneficiaries per month	112	112%
Social Kitchen Service	100 beneficiaries <sup>6</sup> per day	186	186%
Public Garden	100 beneficiaries per year	105	105%
Open Day Center for the Homeless	50 beneficiaries per day	70	140%
Intermediation Office	200 beneficiaries per month	212	106%
Time Bank	200 beneficiaries per month	332	166%
	Southern Partnership		
Social Grocery	150 families per month	176	117%
Social Pharmacy	100 beneficiaries per day	134	134%
Social Kitchen Service	100 beneficiaries per day	201	201%
InterIntermediation Office	200 beneficiaries per month	203	101%
Time Bank	200 beneficiaries per month	213	106%

Source: Author's own processing.

On the other side, all Services of the Southern Corporate Structure managed to reach and exceed the indicators that had been set from the beginning. The Intermediation Office fulfilled 101% of the requirements, the Time Bank 106%, the Social Kitchen Service 201% and the Social Grocery 117%. Lastly, the Social Pharmacy achieved 134% of its set targets.

Each individual service is considered successful in both Corporate Structures, with the exception of the Intermediation Office which is marginally below expectations in either case. At this point, it should be noted that these percentages determining success refer to a population of beneficiaries not individually but as a whole.

**Table 7: Initial objectives and their achievement**

Indicator	Northern Partnership		Achievement of the Target (%)
	Target	Result	
Jobs created during implementation of the Programme	33	33	100%
Number of unemployed and socially vulnerable groups that benefited from ESF actions (index 5049)	550	1.457	265%
Number of people who benefit from social and professional actions of integration (index 5053) <sup>7</sup>	630	3.266	518%
Number of jobs co-financed	33	33	100%
Man-months of Indirect Employed Beneficiaries	24	49	204%
	Southern Partnership		
Jobs created during implementation of the Programme	21	21	100%
Number of unemployed and socially vulnerable groups that benefited from ESF actions (index 5049)	550	2.195	399%
Number of people who benefit from social and professional actions of integration (index 5053) <sup>8</sup>	750	4.256	567%
Number of jobs co-financed	21	21	100%
Man-months of Indirect Employed Beneficiaries	24	48	200%

Source: Author's own processing.

In terms of employability during the implementation of the SSTPG programme in both Corporate Structures the success rate was 100% while the number of unemployed and socially vulnerable groups that benefited from the Structures reached 265% and 399% respectively. In other words, 100% was the coverage of the index that concerns the number of job vacancies offered

in/by both Corporate Structures. Remarkable is the index regarding the number of people from socially vulnerable groups who have benefited from social and professional integration activities; percentage-wise, in either of the two Corporate Structures the rate of achievement in this was over 500% (518% in the Northern Corporation and 567% in the Southern).

From the available data it could be argued that the achievement rates of the previous indicators of the examined SSTPGs are much higher than those identified by the evaluation study of EYSSA. Indeed, the latter concluded that the index of individuals benefiting from social and professional integration actions was 213%, while the index of unemployed people benefiting from actions was 188% (265% and 399% in Northern and Southern Structures respectively).

Distinguishing the data collected from the SSTPGs under discussion, it becomes clear that the indicators achievement scores exceed those of the EYSSA research survey. For instance, in the Municipality of Glyfada, the EYSSA concluded that the achievement rate of the index 5049 was 123% and that of index 5053, 397% respectively. The corresponding percentages in the Northern Corporate Structure are 252% and 252% accordingly. Based on the available data, the survey conducted for the purposes of the present research paper draws the conclusion that the corresponding percentages for index 5049 and 5053 in the Southern Structures were 399% and 567% while in the North 265% and 518% respectively.

Here, it should be highlighted that the EYSSA evaluation study reports data on the SSTPGs until November 2015, a period during which the Social Structures were at their peak, concerning both services and products as well as in terms of number of Structures in operation. Thus, in relation to the SSTPGs there is a contradiction of results between the present research and the conclusions of the EYSSA evaluation study.

## 6. Discussion

The article has hereby showcased the assessment results of SSTPGs in five (5) municipalities around Attica. The total number of users-respondents to the survey has been eight hundred and sixty-one (861), about 42% of all beneficiaries who have made use of SSTPGs. The factors according which they were asked to evaluate the Social Structures concerned the quality of performance based on the provided services (satisfaction, frequency of use), the existing facilities (accessibility and satisfaction) and the staff –indirect beneficiaries.

The first basic conclusion is that in both Corporate Forms, greater use has been made of the Structures of the Social Kitchen Service, the Social Grocery, the Social Pharmacy and the Intermediation Office, with high percentage of use on a daily basis. The second conclusion refers to the services and products offered where satisfaction exceeds 90%. However, it should be mentioned that 33% of the participants claimed that the Structures were not sufficiently equipped, implying that there had been material and technical deficiencies.

Also, very important is the generalization regarding waiting time. More than 70% of users reported that they waited less than a quarter to be assisted, indicating that delivery of service took place within a reasonable time frame. Equally important are the conclusions on how they perceive the support they received from the SSTPGs. More specifically, 89.1% of the survey participants stated that social structures helped them solve their problems. Also, 74.6% of the respondents admitted that social structures contributed towards a more positive psychological condition and 69.9% towards a better life, in general. Yet, the most interesting of all the findi-

ngs has been that 97.1% of the beneficiaries acknowledged the SSTPGs role as vital, claiming that they have proved useful and hence that they should not cease their operations.

As far as accessibility to facilities and infrastructure is concerned, the conclusions appear to be pretty vague. On the one hand, 99.3% of respondents said that it was easy to navigate within the structures and about 92% said that the Structures were clean. However, only 14.0% and 18.2% of the participants in the Northern Corporation considered easy or very easy the access to the Public Garden and to the Open Day Center for the Homeless respectively, thus expressing their dissatisfaction particularly with the possibility of transfer there. In total, 37.0% responded that there was no good transportation network and that the Structures were difficult to be accessed. Also, 54.0% of the participants claimed that the Structures were lacking proper building infrastructure. In terms of SSTPGs staff evaluation, 75.5% of the interviewees generally described the employees as very good to excellent, with a 74.3% defining behavior of staff as very good to excellent. Finally, it should be stressed that 70.0% of the beneficiaries considered workforce in the structures to be inadequate, while 40.0% thought that employees did not possess sufficient knowledge.

Drawing on the correlation between beneficiaries' satisfaction and the data on the use of SSTPGs, it seems that the minimum satisfaction with staff performance comes from respondents who had visited the Open Day Center for the Homeless. On the other hand, though, significantly higher are the satisfaction scores with respect to access by survey participants of the Municipality of Glyfada. Of course, the latter differs vastly depending on the respondents' educational level and employment status. Particularly, it has been found that participants with post-secondary educational background and graduates from Technological Education Institutes or Universities express much higher satisfaction with accessibility than high school graduates. In turn, the latter exhibit significantly lower satisfaction compared to illiterate and elementary school graduates. Also, the unemployed have been far more satisfied with access compared to retirees.

Finally, the beneficiaries who have used the Structures of Time Bank and Social Grocery Repository demonstrated greater satisfaction overall. In terms of accessibility, users of the Social Pharmacy and Social Kitchen Service appear quite satisfied.

Comparing the initial SSTPG star gets with their operational performance, it is concluded that the expectations set for all Social Structures in operation have been fulfilled and, in some cases, even exceeded. In fact, the Structures have exceeded the identified indices by up to more than 100%, while for those concerning the social integration and the integration of beneficiaries the success rate goes beyond 500%.

## 7. Conclusions

**T**he main conclusion drawn by the present research is that throughout the SSTPGs operation the establishment of a social security network against social exclusion has been achieved, thus ensuring access to basic services such as medical care and food for people in need.

After all, this goal is one of the basic reasons for designing and implementing SSTPGs. Another aim served has been the SSTPGs assessment of effectiveness with measurable data. In the examined Corporate Forms at least, it was possible to retrieve percentages of achievement for the corresponding indices. Furthermore, the cooperation with the local community for the successful completion of the SSTPGs evaluation (i.e. research survey), as exemplified in the beneficiaries' responses, resulted in the mobilization and active participation of institutions and individuals. Un-

fortunately, though, the SSTPGs viability, being the most fundamental purpose of the Programme itself, has not managed to survive the funding cuts, thus causing the failure of the whole venture.

## Notes

1. The northern social partnership combating poverty operated in the municipalities of Metamorfosi, Philadelphia - Chalkidona, Heraklion Attica and Lykovrisi - Pefki with the NGO "Scientific Society for Social Cohesion and Development". The Southern social partnership operated in the Municipality of Glyfada with the cooperation of the NGO "Scientific Society for Social Cohesion and Development". They are referred to as northern and southern due to the geographical dispersion of the municipalities in Attica.
2. The data relate only to the Northern Structures, since only the Social Grocery and the Open Day Center for the Homeless were in operation.
3. The data are taken from the Northern Partnership.
4. The families' data are extracted from the monthly reports submitted by Partnerships.
5. These data refer to beneficiaries at an average per month.
6. One hundred (100) beneficiaries or portions per day.
7. This index includes the beneficiaries of the 5049 indices, their protected members, as well as other individuals who benefit without being classified under the 5049 index.
8. This index includes the beneficiaries of the 5049 indices, their protected members, as well as other individuals who benefit without being classified under the 5049 index.

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## Biographical Note

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