

Social Cohesion and Development

Vol 16, No 1 (2021)

No 31

Social Cohesion and Development

Biannual Scientific Review,
Spring 2021, volume 16, issue 1

Κοινωνική Συνοχή και Ανάπτυξη

31 Εξαμηνιαία Επιστημονική Επιθεώρηση, Άνοιξη 2021, τόμος 16ος, τεύχος 1

ARTICLES Άρθρα

George Bithymitris, Michalis Christodoulou, Panagiotis Koustenis, Triantafyllia Iliopoulou, Manos Spyridakis, The Social Production of Vulnerability: Sub-regional and Class Inequalities in Attica

Maria-Eleni Syrmali, Institutions and Growth: A Social Perspective

Stavros Pantazopoulos, The Impact of the "Social Structures to Tackle Poverty in Greece" through the eyes of its people

REPORTS Εκθέσεις

Antonios Karvounis, Networks of Solidarity Cities: The Social Dimension of the City Networks within the Europe for Citizens Programme, 2014-2020

DOCUMENTATION Τεκμηρίωση

Stavros Pantazopoulos, Social Structures to Tackle Poverty in Greece. A holistic overview

BOOK REVIEWS Βιβλιοκριτικές

Χριστόφορος Σκαμνάκης, *Η Κοινωνική Πολιτική στην Τοπική Αυτοδιοίκηση*, (Μαρία Στρατηγάκη),
Μαρία Καραμεσίνη & Μαρία Συμεωνάκη, *Συμφιλίωση Εργασίας και Οικογένειας στην Ελλάδα: Γένεση, Εξέλιξη και Αποτίμηση μιας Πολιτικής*, (Αγγελική Αθανασοπούλου),
Αντώνης Καρβούνης, *Διπλωματία Πόλεων και Εξευρωπαϊσμός της Τοπικής Αυτοδιοίκησης-Ο Διοικητικός Εκσυγχρονισμός και οι Προοπτικές της Ευρωπαϊκής Δικτύωσης των Ελληνικών Δήμων*, (Χριστόφορος Σκαμνάκης)



Social Structures to Tackle Poverty in Greece. A holistic overview

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doi: [10.12681/scad.32115](https://doi.org/10.12681/scad.32115)

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To cite this article:

Pantazopoulos, S. (2021). Social Structures to Tackle Poverty in Greece. A holistic overview. *Social Cohesion and Development*, 16(1), 89–92. <https://doi.org/10.12681/scad.32115>

Social Structures to Tackle Poverty in Greece.

A holistic overview

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Concluding the examination and evaluation of the Program of “Social Structures to Tackle Poverty in Greece” (hereinafter under the term “SSTPG”) that operated in Greece during the period 2012-2017, it should be reported the full number of the SSTPGs that operated.

In total¹, two hundred and sixty-seven (267) Social Structures operated in forty-seven (47) partnerships. Sixty-six (66) Municipalities, forty-eight (48) Non-Governmental Organizations, ten (10) local administration legal entities, sixteen (16) Public Sector entities and twenty-two (22) private sector entities participated in them. The number of Social Structures was as follows: forty-nine (49) Social Groceries, forty-two (42) Social Pharmacies, twenty-eight (28) Public Gardens, forty (40) Social Kitchen Services, thirty-eight (38) Time Banks, forty-three (43) Intermediation Offices, fourteen (14) Open Day Centers for the Homeless and six (6) Dormitories. For the years 2012 and 2013 the total budget of the SSTPGs amounted to 28.770.700€, while were benefited approximately 63.000 homeless and people in poverty or at risk of poverty, within the first two (2) years of their operation².

The basic and fundamental question that arises is how many Corporate Partnerships operated, under the SSTPG programme. From the processing of the available data³, it becomes apparent that during the period (2012- 2017) forty-seven (47) Social Corporate Schemes operated. The data from the Ministry of Labor, Social Security and Social Solidarity indicate forty-six (46) Social Corporate Partnerships. The valuation study conducted on behalf of the Service for Special Strategy, Planning and Evaluation, reports forty-seven (47) Social Corporate Schemes, however the data on which the aforementioned report is based, conclude in October 2015 and do not exhaust the full duration of SSTPGs operation.

The forty-seven (47) Social Corporate Partnerships operated in almost all regions of Greece. 55% of them operated in the Attica Region, while the remaining Structures were distributed almost equally in the other regions. It is noteworthy that more than half of the SSTPGs operated in the Attica Region, while the population of this Region was about 35% of the total population of the country⁴.

Out of the total of sixty-six (66) Municipalities in the Attica Region, forty-five (45) Municipalities (approximately 68% of the Municipalities⁵) hosted SSTPG structures (either with the cooperation of Municipalities or independently). Their dispersion by regional unit is as follows. Seven (7) Municipalities implemented this Program in the Central Sector of Athens. In the Southern Sector of Athens, seven (7). In the Northern Sector of Athens, seven (7). In the Western Sector of Athens, six (6). In the Piraeus Sector, five (5). In the Sector of West Attica four (4) and in the Sector of East Attica, nine (9). Examining the population of the Municipalities, it is highlighted that the Municipalities of Attica that implemented the SSTPGs, constitute 83.6% of the total population of the Attica Region⁶.

Sixty-six (66) Municipalities, forty-eight (48) NGOs, ten (10) local government legal entities, sixteen (16) Public Sector bodies and twenty participated in these forty-seven (47) Social Corporate Partnerships that operated. two (22) private sector entities. Among the NGOs and private sector actors, twenty-two (22) participated in a single Corporate Partnership, seven (7) in two (2), one (1) in three (3), one (1) in four and one (1) in five (5).

From the processing of the available data became obvious that during the first year of the SSTPGs operation, thirty-six (36) Corporate Partnerships operated in forty-nine (49) Municipalities. The total number of SSTPGs' users amounted to seventeen thousand four hundred thirty-four (17,434) beneficiaries. Approximately 4.7% of them were homeless (819 beneficiaries). In this first year of operation, only three (3) Municipalities, these of Heraklion Crete, Ilioupolis and Patras had a four-digit number of beneficiaries. The rest of the SSTPGs allocated proportionally, having a three-digit number. In terms of homelessness, the Municipality of Thessaloniki (269) and the Municipality of Heraklion, Crete (194) had a three-digit number. Several Municipalities follow with double-digit number of homeless beneficiaries⁷.

The data also pinpointed that the direct beneficiaries were 101.444 people, single users, who had access to the products and services of the Social Structures. However, many more people have been indirectly served by SSTPGs, if the protected members of the beneficiaries and the close relatives of the users of SSTPGs are taken into account.

Various sources state that when the SSTPGs ceased to operate, the immediate beneficiaries were 100.000⁸, while in others the number 118.000⁹ has been reported. The research showed that the immediate beneficiaries did exceed 100.000, while the previous number is likely to be even higher, given the fact that the primary data suffer from the shortcomings mentioned above.

Regarding the services' dispersion of the beneficiaries per Municipality, the research showed that the large Municipalities of Greece served the most beneficiaries, as expected, due to their population size. In particular, the Attica Region emerged first having served 57,87% of the immediate beneficiaries (i.e., 58.702 people). It is followed by the region of Central Macedonia with 10,75% and then that of Crete with 7,48%. It is therefore observed that in the Regions where there is a large accumulation of Corporate Partnerships, there is also a correspondingly large number of beneficiaries served.

In conclusion, it could be stated that their dispersion on the map shows that there is a hydrocephalus system, while their headquarters are located in the Capitals of the Municipalities, thus excluding areas of Greek territory, which are socially excluded (mountainous and insular). It should be also noted that the total number of all persons who received products and services from the SSTPGs is unknown, due to the fact that, in addition to the immediate beneficiaries, their protected members were also benefited, as well as other close relatives of them. Consequently, a very large number of beneficiaries have benefited from the services and products provided.

Notes

1. Data from the Ministry of Labor, Social Security and Social Solidarity, Directorate for Combating Poverty, Department of Planning and Institutional Support. Also from Bee Group, administrator of the Information System "Estia", available at <http://www.koinoniasos.gr/the-project/structures>. Accessed on 21/11/2020.
2. Ministry of Labor, Social Security and Social Solidarity, General Secretariat for the Management of Community and Other Resources, Special Management Service (2012). Annual Implementation Report 2012, Athens, p. 187, (in Greek) and Ministry of Labor, Social Security and Social Solidarity, General Secretariat for the Management of Community and Other Resources, Special Management Service (2013). Annual Implementation Report 2013, Athens, p. 217, (in Greek).

3. Data collected by Bee Group and the Ministry of Labor, Social Security and Social Solidarity.
4. According to the 2011 census, the population of Greece amounted to 10,816,286 permanent residents, while 3,828,434 permanent residents lived in the Attica Region. See Greek Government Gazette no 698 / issue B / 20-10-2014, p. 10799, (in Greek).
5. According to the first invitation of the SSTPGs, the Greek Municipalities that were eligible to implement them had to have a population of over 80,000 inhabitants, "according to the 2011 Census 10%). Especially for the Attica Region and the Thessaloniki Regional Unit, proposals could be submitted for neighboring Municipalities, which had a total population of over 80,000 inhabitants (with a deviation of 10%), given that they also have the highest concentration of population that has been affected by the phenomenon of poverty and its consequences ". Announcement of the Ministry of Labor and Social Security, online publication number: B443A-6P5, p. 11, (in Greek). With the second announcement, the population of the Municipalities was reduced to 60,000 inhabitants, Ministry of Labor and Social Security, online publication number: B45AA-Θ2Δ, p. 11, (in Greek).
6. As above, Greek Government Gazette no 698 / issue B / 20-10-2014, p. 10799, (in Greek), own processing.
7. The first two (2) ranked Municipalities regarding homeless beneficiaries (Thessaloniki and Heraklion, Crete) are also the largest in population of those who implemented the SSTPG programme during the first year of their operation. The following municipalities with double-digit number of homeless people are either populous (Patras, Piraeus), or in the past had a strong industrial and manufacturing core of companies, which was hit by the economic crisis (Municipalities of Perama, Aspropyrgos, Keratsini, Elefsina, Mandra-Idilira).
8. This number refers to the question of the MP of Aitolokarnania and Deputy Head of Labor, Social Security and Social Solidarity of the Party New Democracy, Marios Salmas, which was submitted to the Minister of Labor, Social Security and Social Solidarity (8/3/2017) regarding the future of the SSTPGs. Available at https://www.hellenicparliament.gr/Koinovouleftikos-Elenchos/Mesa-Koinovouleftikou-Elegxou?pcm_id=8c58cf1b-1b67-4023-85f6-a73101548006. Accessed on 11/1/2021.
9. Letter from the, at the time, President of Central Union of Greek Municipalities, Mr. Patoulis to Mrs. Theano Fotiou, Deputy Minister of Labor, Social Security and Social Solidarity, Mr. Alexandros Haritsis, Deputy Minister of Economy and Development and Mr. Georgios Choularakis, Minister of Finance on the subject: "Ensuring the operation of the Social Structures for the Immediate Address of Poverty", with Reference number 633 / 10-2-2017. Also, a thank you letter, sent by the Association of people working at Social Structures for Tackling Poverty (S.KOIN.D.A.F.) to the, at the time, President of Central Union of Greek Municipalities, Mr. Patoulis, with Reference number 10 / 31-10-2016.

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