

# **RETICULATE STUDY VISIT N.2**

**Athens, 21-22 June 2022**

## **Organiser:**

European Social Network

## **Co-Organisers and Hosts:**

Directorate for the fight against poverty (Greek Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs)  
Municipality of Galatsi

### **The Directorate for the Fight Against Poverty**

The Directorate for the Fight against Poverty of the Hellenic Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is of particular interest for the role played by integrating different institutions in the delivery of the new measure called GMI (Guaranteed Minimum Income), and especially its strategic design and monitoring, which includes: - the determination of the terms and conditions of the national implementation; - the suggestion of the legislative and regulatory framework; - the issuance of guidelines and instructions to competent services for the implementation of the programme; - the cooperation with the services of the Public Employment Services for the planning and the implementation of programmes for the integration or the reintegration of the target groups of GMI in the labour market; - the cooperation with competent services of local bodies, such as with Municipalities, for the connection of the target groups with additional social services, benefits and goods; - the evaluation of GMI and the integration of the findings into its redesign. The GMI, launched in 2017 is a welfare program that combines income support (1st pillar), complementary social services (2nd pillar), actions for integration and reintegration into the labour market (3rd pillar). The system is digitalized and foresees support from Municipalities or Community Centers for those not familiar with new technologies.

### **The Municipality of Galatsi**

The Municipality of Galatsi extends over an area of 4,026 km<sup>2</sup> and connects the northern residential suburbs of the area with the centre of Athens.

The Galatsi and Community Centre team, provided a flyer (digital and printed) presenting the social services activated in the municipality.

## Study Visit Day One (2pm to 5pm)

General Secretariat for Social Solidarity and the Fight Against Poverty  
Solomou 60, 104 32 Athens, Greece <https://ypergasias.gov.gr/>

1.

The Welcome speech was done by **Ms. Athina Diakoumakou**, General Director of the Social Welfare

2.

**Mr George Planiteros** Director of Fight Against Poverty, presented the social protection system in Greece, analysing in detail the Guaranteed Minimum Income (GMI) scheme and the role of the Community Centers.

The presentation started with a short introduction on the social protection system its main features and the administrative responsibilities.

### Social protection expenditure (% of GDP)

	Greece % of GDP	EU % of GDP
Sickness/Health care	5	8
Disability	1	2
Old age	14	11
Survivors	2	1
Family/Children	2	2
Unemployment	1	1
Housing	0	0
Social exclusion n.e.c.	1	1
Total	<b>25</b>	<b>27</b>
Pensions related	16	12
Health care	5	8
Social benefits	4	6
Total	<b>25</b>	<b>27</b>

Source: ESSPROS data

One of the main current components of the Greek social welfare protection system is the

### THE GUARANTEED MINIMUM INCOME (GMI)

The Guaranteed Minimum Income is a welfare program addressed to households and homeless people living in conditions of extreme poverty.

The program combines:

#### Income Support

The amount guaranteed by the program is:

**200€/month** for a single-person household, increased by:

- **100€/month** for each additional adult and

- **50€/month** for each minor member

Beneficiaries' access to **complementary social services, benefits and goods**.

**Activation services:** provided that beneficiaries are able to work, they are encouraged to participate in actions targeted at their integration or reintegration into the labour market. The cash benefit is paid for six (6) months from the date of first payment. After the lapse of the above period, the beneficiary is required to resubmit an application for inclusion in the program.

For the “reference period” of six months the amount of income support is fixed. Taking up employment during the “reference period” is irrelevant

Household owners may file an online application for the program (using their personal tax codes) or via the competent services of the Municipalities or the Community Centers of their municipality of residence. The application is approved if the income, asset, and other criteria set out in the Joint Ministerial Decision on the program are met.

The introduction of the GMI has been conditioned by **macroeconomic conditions**:

- Greece was hit by the 2008 banking crisis only indirectly
- In late 2009, early elections due to implicit government inability to pass the budget
- In 2010 Greece could not tap the international markets anymore
- Forced to seek borrowing from our European partners and the IMF
- Three Economic Adjustment Programs: 2010, 2012 & 2015

GMI, introduced for the first time in 2017, is a welfare program that combines income support (1th pillar), complementary social services (2th pillar), actions for integration and reintegration into the labour market (3th pillar).

The system is digitalized and foreseen support from Municipalities or Community Centers for those not familiar with new technologies.

1 <sup>st</sup> Pillar : Income Support	2 <sup>nd</sup> Pillar: Complementary Social Services	3 <sup>rd</sup> Pillar: Actions for integration into the labor market
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of a cash benefit to a recipient unit</li> <li>• It is used to “top up” other income sources</li> <li>• It is non-contributory and not taxable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free medical treatment of persons not entitled to health benefits by a social security institution</li> <li>• Referral and inclusion in social care and support structures and services, e.g. social groceries, social pharmacies</li> <li>• Inclusion in actions implemented under the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived</li> <li>• Social tariff of power providers</li> <li>• Social tariff of water providers</li> <li>• Discount or exemption from municipal charges</li> <li>• Free admission to museums and archeological sites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation in public work schemes</li> <li>• Participation in vocational training programs</li> <li>• Integration or reintegration into the educational system and second-chance schools</li> <li>• Development of an Individualised Action Plan in cooperation with Public Employment Service (DYPA)</li> </ul>

#### GMI: 1st Pillar – Income Support

- The benefit is set up as a top up, as opposed to having a flat benefit structure
- The size of the benefit is determined as the difference between the equivalized income thresholds and the assessed income of a given applicant unit
- The maximum benefit amount is set at 200€ per month for a single person household

#### GMI: 2nd Pillar – Social Services

Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) has been totally integrated since 2017 in the GMI eligibility rules and business processes. Each GMI’s recipient unit can be automatically included in FEAD directly through the GMI platform skipping the application

part (a separate one at least). Each recipient unit that is included in FEAD's terms and conditions, receives a food package, or takes part in the accompanying measures if the payment of the GMI income support has not been discontinued.

#### GMI: 3rd Pillar

Since August 2018 all work-able unemployed beneficiaries have to register with Public Employment Service (DYPA), by the end of the next month following the month during which GMI application has been approved. In June 2021 there has been the GMI kick-off. The business process includes:

- a session with a community center's social worker in order beneficiaries to be informed about services of the 2nd pillar
- the development of an Individualised Action Plan, in cooperation with DYPA's competent bodies

The terms and conditions of **implementation of GMI** are designed by the Directorate for the Fight Against Poverty – Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and it is implemented nationally.

In a nutshell:

- Directorate for the Fight against Poverty: Ensures overall program coordination, monitoring and implementation
- OPEKA: Ensures payment procedures, considers administrative appeals, processes requests for retroactive payment and for recovering unduly paid amounts
- IDIKA: Develops and manages the information system of the GMI
- Social Services of Municipalities – Community Centers: Provide local access point/support for application
- Public Employment Service (DYPA): Unemployment registration, 3rd pillar project implementation



#### **The GMI functionality is regulated as following**

##### Recipient Units

- Single adults living alone (except students – see below)
- Multi-person households consisting of individuals living under the same roof, including adult children up to the age of 25 if in tertiary education regardless of their place of residence

- Homeless, provided they are registered with municipal social services Individuals in residential care, assisted living, transitional housing, rehabilitation, monasteries, and prisons cannot apply for the programme

Key determinants:

- Minimum wage
- Unemployed assistance
- Adequacy: benefit amount relative to poverty line
- Fiscal Envelope

Enrollment: targeting and eligibility

- Income: The reported income of the household, in the six (6) last months prior to submission of the application, cannot exceed six-times the amount of the guaranteed amount for each type of household
- Real property: The total taxable value of the household’s real property, may not exceed €90,000 for one-person households, increased by €15,000 for each additional household member with an overall maximum threshold of €150,000
- Movable property: The objective value of the household’s vehicles, may not exceed €6,000 in total
- Residence criteria: Households reside legally and permanently in Greece

Application process, decision upon eligibility

Each applicant shall submit the application electronically through the web site of the program\*, using their tax credentials. The use of the credentials serves as consent to cross-checks of the information of all members of the household. Alternatively, applications can be submitted in person, at the Municipalities’ Social Services or Community Centers.


The IT platform cross-links electronically in “real time” information from several Government databases:

1. Tax returns and Electronic leases – Ministry of Finance
2. Unemployment benefits and voucher fees – Public Employment Service
3. Salaries, Pensions – National Social Security Entity
4. Family benefits – Organization of Welfare Benefits and Social Solidarity
5. Student Identities -- Ministry of Education
6. Residence permits – Ministry of Migration Policy
7. Social Security Number

General elements

AMKA	VAT number
Last name	Name
Father's name	Matronym
Surname (Latin)	Name (Latin)
Patronymic (Latin)	Nickname (Latin)

- The turquoise-colored information, is the info retrieved automatically using interoperability from different sources.
- The form is populated with this information, but the user can update if it is needed. There are some fields (that are mastered by external registries) that are read only (mostly the demographics).

Eligibility Elements 

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES	Are you staying or being cared for in an intensive care unit or in a foster home?
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES	Are you staying in a psychosocial rehabilitation unit (boarding schools, hostels) or are you a beneficiary of the program of protected apartments of no. 9 of Law 2716/99;
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES	Are you hosted in Monasteries?

At the end of the application, there is a place for showing remarks about the eligibility checks. Some of the remarks can be “corrected” or are just indicators for missing information, others are explaining the rejection reason(s).

If all pre-filled information is up to date and consistent with official databases, then the applicant can submit the application form and automatically see the outcome. If there are inconsistencies, a notification appears, highlighting 'missing' or 'incorrect' information, and asking the applicant to visit a municipal office or community centre. Once an application is submitted, the applicant is informed of whether or not it is accepted - If it is accepted, the GMI benefit amount to be awarded is also notified. The first payment takes place one month after the application.

**The GMI payment is automatically suspended:**

- if electronic cross-checks reveal discrepancies - beneficiaries are notified by email or text message, and given two months to provide additional documentation
- if children in the household are absent from school without justification

An appeal may be lodged against the acts of suspension (as well as of approval and rejection)

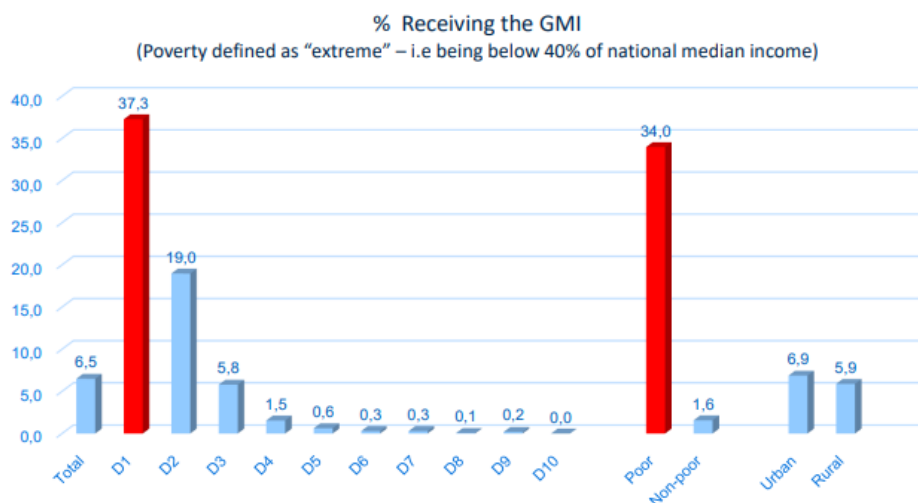
The appeals are examined by a competent single-member body of the Social Solidarity and Welfare Benefits Agency.

**Communication and Outreach**

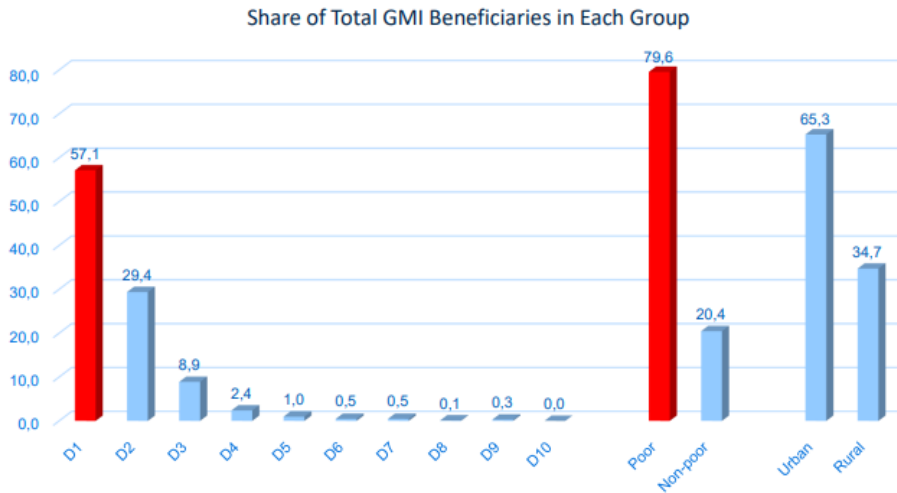
- In person trainings, were carried out before and after the program was launched for municipal staff
- An open access e-learning program, accessible through the GMI website has been developed
- An implementation guide of the program has been uploaded on the program's website
- An e-mail account has been created by Directorate for the Fight Against Poverty to receive questions from municipal staff
- A call center has been set up to respond to municipalities questions related to IT issues
- A call center was set up at Ministry of Labor, which operated for one year
- Leaflets with the basic rules of the program were disseminated. Posters were placed in public spaces which target groups were likely to visit. A short video was released on Internet

**Evaluation of the Programme**

**About 6.5% of the population receives the GMI; almost 35% of the poor receive it**

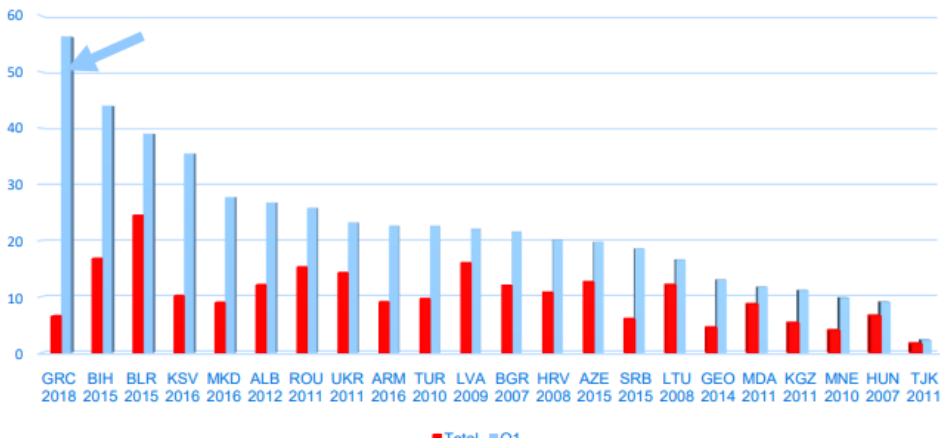


**Almost 60% of GMI beneficiaries in the first decile; 80% of the beneficiaries are poor!**



**The Greek program targets better;**  
Coverage in 1<sup>st</sup> quantile is the highest across the countries compared

Proportion of Population Receiving Guaranteed Minimum Income Schemes in Europe and Central Asia



**Poverty and Inequality Impact of Selected Policies**

Year	Policy change	Impact on poverty (percentage points change in headcount ratio)	Impact on inequality (% change in Gini)
2013	introduction of child benefit	-0.72	-1.24%
2014	provision of 2014 social dividend	-1.66	-1.90%
2016	provision of rent allowance & food stamps	-0.60	-1.69%
2016	provision of lump-sum benefit for low-paid pensioners	-0.79	-1.00%
2017	provision of 2017 social dividend	-1.71	-2.85%
2017	<b>introduction of GMI</b>	<b>-0.82</b>	<b>-2.97%</b>
2018	provision of 2018 social dividend	-1.63	-2.46%
2018	change in child benefits	-0.57	-0.87%
2019	introduction of housing benefit	-1.47	-2.34%

Source: Council of Economic Advisors using EUROMOD Version I1.0

## COMMUNITY CENTRES

The community centres are structures designed by the Hellenic Ministry of Labour which creates a large network of social care and solidarity system. The centres are currently located in 250 municipalities and are funded by the [ESPA](#). In the community centre every citizen can be informed on all government allowances a person is entitled to in the public authorities.

Community centres also provide counselling services for finding a job

- Community Centers play a prominent role in the institutional set up of the National Mechanism at the local level
- They operate as “one-stop shops” for a wide of social services, in collaboration with the Directorate of Social Services of each municipality
- Their objective is to provide a wide range of social and other services and to supply integrated intervention across many groups of the population
- Their aim is to develop a local reference point, which receives, serves and connects citizens with all the social programs and services being implemented in an intervention area

### Community Centres and the GMI

Community centres are the intersection between the Guaranteed Minimum Income (GMI) program and applicants. They are responsible for:

- hiring and training case managers
- supporting applicants unable to apply online or unsure about how to fill-in the form
- checking documents attached to applications
- conducting spot-checks to verify the residence, composition and living conditions of the applicant household
- informing GMI beneficiaries about the rights and obligations arising from participation in the programme
- referring household members to complementary social services, benefits and goods at local and national level under Pillar 2
- implementing outreach and communication strategies to the general public
- targeting vulnerable groups such as the homeless

3.

**Mr Alfonso Lara Montero**, ESN CEO – made a presentation on “Integrated social services for unaccompanied children & migrant families”

When it comes to unaccompanied children, social services have a duty to guaranteeing their protection and development through ensuring access to mainstream care, education, housing and health, as well as programmes guaranteeing their long-term social inclusion.

The first part of the intervention was used to present the European Social Network and its policy activities, including the promotion and protection of the rights of children. The second part concerned the reception of unaccompanied children to the last phase of their inclusivity in the society and the challenges for this transition to the adulthood:

Lack of personnel

Enough and properly trained to follow on suspicions of violence



Non-take up of services  
 MH problems & lack of specialist expertise  
 18+ transition

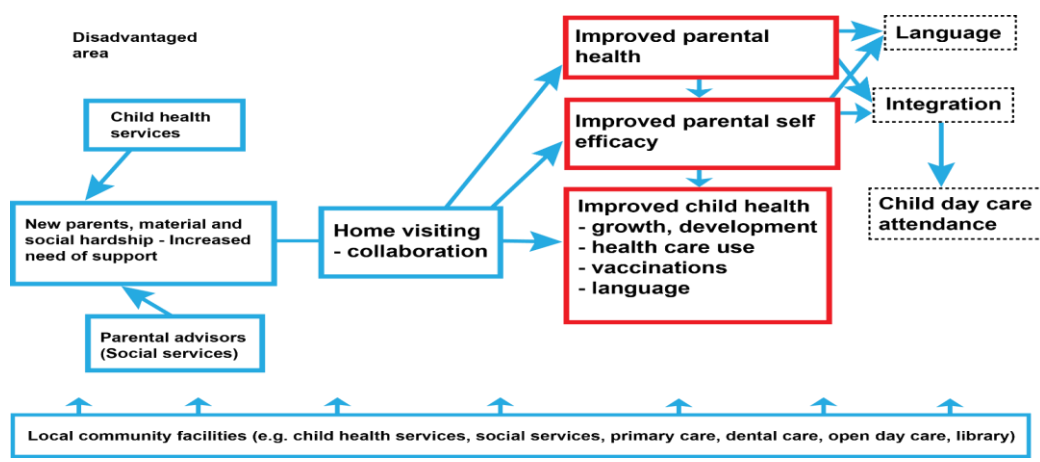
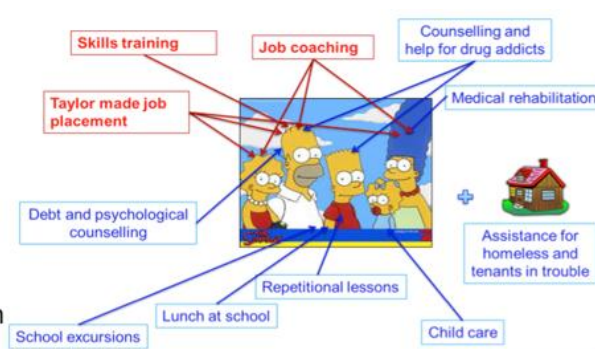
Child protection is a decentralised matter and the responsibility lies with local authorities' social services, who assess the needs of children and young people and look after them to prevent any risk or harm. When migrant children are transferred to municipal social services they are supported in accessing essential services such as guardianship, healthcare and education. Though public authorities are their corporate parent, guardians (whether a professional or a volunteer) can be instrumental in helping children navigate access to services.

Family support, prevention and the provision of stability for all children have become key principles. However, the realities that local social services may confront, as has been the case with the significant increase in unaccompanied children in some countries, mean that implementation in practice is challenging. This is why new professional profiles have had to be developed and new solutions found that engage the third sector and local communities.

Education and labour market integration play a key role in securing the successful social inclusion of migrant children and young people. We learned about the importance of matching training and skills development with the arrival age of migrant youth, and of innovative approaches in promoting their transition to adulthood

### Supporting migrant families

- Social Services Support
- Accessing Essential Services
- Cooperation across Services
- Support for women with children



## Concluding remarks

- Address issues from a child protection perspective
- Unaccompanied children should be provided with a guardian
- Resolving the status is key to be able to access government benefits to combine with services
- Access to care should be improved
- Need of preparing young migrants in their transition to adulthood with after care package 18+
- Effective service coordination is key to successful social inclusion

From the report of the ESN Seminar on Migrant children and young people – Social inclusion and transition to adulthood: *The problems faced by unaccompanied children are far too often addressed from a migration perspective rather than from a child protection angle. Participants felt that this created challenges for how social services care and protect the most vulnerable migrant children due to delays in appointing guardians, the uncertainty surrounding the outcomes of asylum-seeking procedures, or difficulties in accessing specialist healthcare. At a moment of crisis, all agencies should pull together to care for children properly. Participants recognised the difficulties in finding placements for all unaccompanied children and with providing adequate support for migrant young people in their transition to adulthood. However, they agreed that getting it right requires putting children at the centre as well as partnerships and cooperation across all agencies involved.*



4.

**Ms Chiara Crepaldi**, Italian Institute for Social Research – Main feature of the four One-Stop-Shop Models from Spain, Germany, Belgium, and Greece

Chiara Crepaldi presented, through the support of a video uploaded on [YouTube](#) (as she could not attend the visit), the main features of the four One-Stop-Shop Models considered as best practices for the implementation of the Model which will be tested in Tuscany in the second half of the project lifetime.

For the purpose of this document, only the lessons learned will be reported (please refer to the document drafted by Chiara Crepaldi and distributed on 19 June 2022 :

- How to overcome the structural fragmentation between the two services (social and work)
- The training of the integrated teams plays an important role
- Prepare together with the employment centers tools and methods aimed at favoring the job placement of the most vulnerable groups
- Develop the interconnection of databases • Reduce the territorial variation of activation policies, pay attention to the homogeneity of the offer throughout the territory
- Implement a monitoring and evaluation system
- Work on raising awareness and disseminating knowledge of the approach and activation tools
- Develop a clear link between the different levels of government in highly decentralised countries
- Promote collaboration between public bodies favored and supported by the central level, with a clearly identified role for each
- Develop operational integration between different sources of funding
- Reduce bureaucracy

 YouTube <sup>BE</sup>



## Day Two (9am - 1.30pm)

*The Cultural Centre "Kamini" (address: Valtetsiou, 111 46 Galatsi)*

*The Town Hall of the Municipality of Galatsi (address: Arximidous 2, 111 46, Galatsi)*

The Second day was opened by the vice mayor of Galatsi Ms Aspa Panaiotakopoulou Afterwards while the work of the Galatsi Community Centre was presented by two employees Mss Panagiota Aggelidi and Konstantina Hampimpi

**Galatsi Community Centre** is a social agency that started operating in September 2017 and will continue to operate until June 2023.

It is the first point of contact for the residents of the Municipality to be informed about all the benefits to which they are entitled, all bodies, services and programmes that provide social care of any kind at the level of the Municipality, the Region or the State.

The Community Centre is currently staffed by 2 social workers and 1 psychologist; 1 more social worker and 1 more psychologists are expected to join the team.

The provide provides an holistic support to the residents of the Municipality, through the provision of a comprehensive network of services aimed at combating poverty and further exploring and supporting their demands.

### First contact:

- Form fill-out, investigation of needs
- Data registration on Platform
- Informing on the benefits
- Intervention planning, new appointments scheduling
- Filling in the beneficiaries' daily forms
- Filling in the statistical data for the Region of Attica



Late morning, there was the presentation of two NGOs that cooperate with the municipality

1. <https://babeldc.gr/> Centre Babel
2. <https://omorfoskosmos.gr/> Omorfos Kosmos



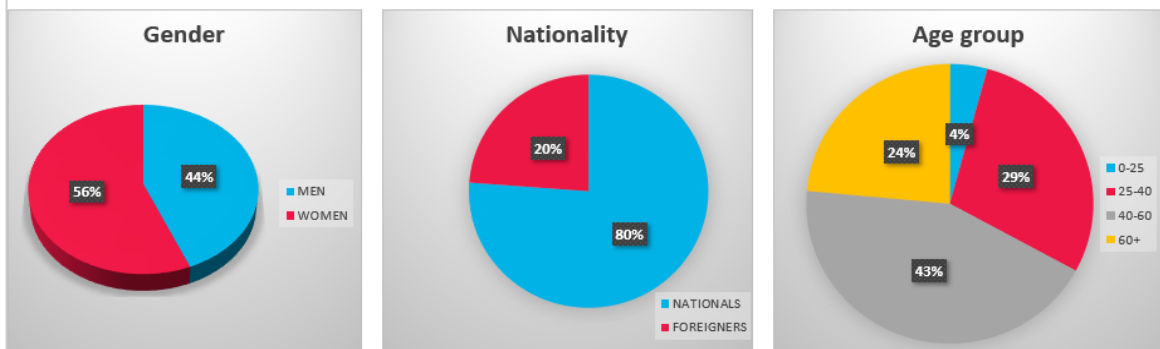
Συμβουλευτικό Κέντρο  
Οικογένειας - Παιδιού



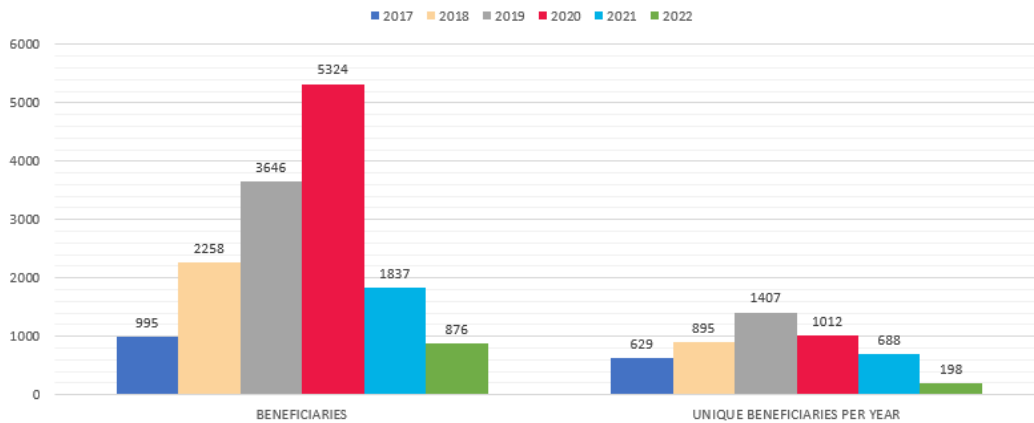
The last part of the presentation regarded three case studies treated in the Community Centre.

1. Family of four foreign citizens
2. Single parent family applying for GMI
3. Single-parent family with 2 minor children born out of wedlock, non-recognized Applications for the Guaranteed Minimum Income and Housing allowance

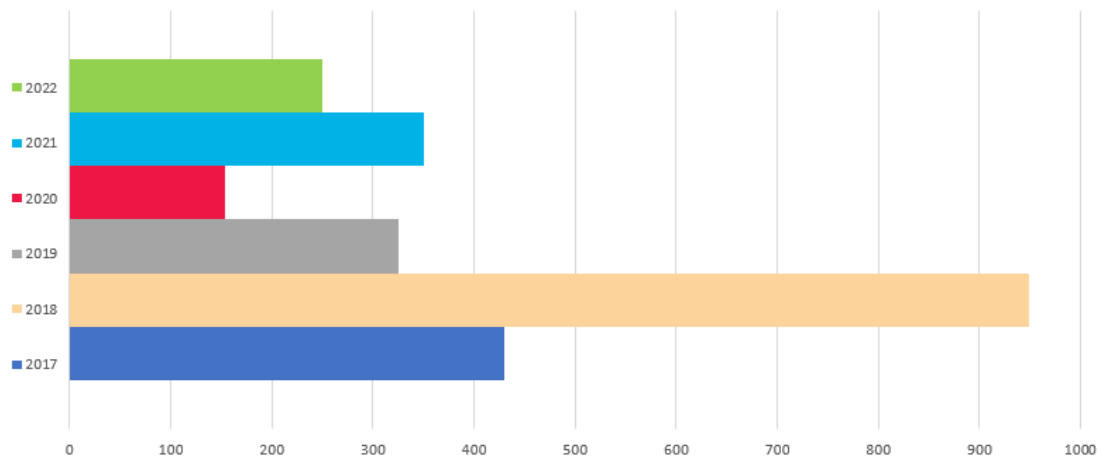
### Beneficiaries of the Community Centre of the Municipality of Galatsi



## Beneficiaries of the Community Centre of the Municipality of Galatsi



## Processing Guaranteed Minimum Income requests



The two-days study visit has been closed by Mr Andrea De Conno, ANCI Toscana and Project Coordinator and Mrs Gogou Maria director of social services.

