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**"Athena – Life":  
Organizational Aspects and Implementation of a Comprehensive Drug  
Rehab Program in the Municipality of Athens**

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**MUNICIPALITY  
OF ATHENS**



ΥΠΟΥΡΓΕΙΟ ΥΓΕΙΑΣ  
&  
ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΚΗΣ ΑΛΛΗΛΕΓΓΥΗΣ

**HELLENIC MINISTRY OF  
HEALTH  
& SOCIAL SOLIDARITY**

**“Athena – Life”:**

**Organisational Aspects and Implementation of a  
Comprehensive Drug Rehab Program in the  
Municipality of Athens**



## **DRUGS: A Serious Public Health Problem I**

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- n **Drug addiction is a complex disorder that can involve virtually every aspect of an **individual's** functioning in the family, at work, and in the community.**
- n **Drug addiction is a major public health problem that impacts **society** on multiple levels. This include health care expenditures, lost earnings, and costs associated with crime and accidents.**



## **DRUGS: A Serious Public Health Problem II**

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n Because of addiction's complexity and pervasive consequences, **drug addiction treatment** typically must involve many components. Some of those components focus directly on the **individual's drug use**. Others focus on restoring the addicted individual to **productive membership** in the family and society.



## **DRUGS: The Role of Local Communities**

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- n In terms of National Policy recognizing that local problems need local solutions, Greek government works with local communities across the country to promote **local drug prevention strategies**.
- n In 2006 a new **National Law (3459/2006)** was launched that **allows** the development of drug **treatment** and social rehabilitation and employment reintegration programs **at the municipal level**.



## **DRUGS: Municipality of Athens**

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- n **Athens** is the capital of Greece, but it is also the capital of the Attica Periphery and the Athens Prefecture.
- n The Municipality of Athens has an official population of **745,514** with a metropolitan population of **5 million** and is divided into seven municipal districts.



## Athens: **Community-Based Prevention Centers**

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Today there are **seven Community-Based Prevention Centers** in the Municipality of Athens to be used by schools, parents, community organizations and individuals.

These Centers **are designed to address** a wide range of risk and protective factors, by teaching general personal and social skills, along with drug resistance skills and education in order to reduce the onset and regular use of drugs among youth and adults.



## **DRUGS: Municipality of Athens**

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- n **Based on demographic and socioeconomic studies, Athens daily faces the consequences of drug abuse. The development of a **Drug Rehab Program** focusing at all three levels of intervention, **primary, secondary and tertiary**, seemed imperative in order to minimize the social complications of drug abuse and addiction.**



**Drug Rehab Program “Athena - Life”**

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**A collaboration of the Municipality of Athens and the Hellenic Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity led to**

**“Athena – Life”**

**a Comprehensive Drug Rehab Program  
for a **Life without Drugs****



## Drug Rehab Program “Athena - Life”: Main Axes I

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- n **The purpose of this program** is to foster the development of state-of-the-art recovery for individuals with drug dependence and to foster the joint cooperation among substance abuse agencies, schools, courts, probation, health and mental health providers, job training programs, and human service.



## Drug Rehab Program “Athena - Life”: Main Axes II

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- n **The goal of drug treatment is to support an individual's journey to a healthy lifestyle for himself, and for his family whenever possible. Because drug dependent individuals tend to have few economic and social resources, comprehensive treatment is extremely important. The purpose of comprehensive treatment is to address substance abuse in the context of relationship to family, community, and society.**



## Drug Rehab Program “Athena - Life”: Main Axes III

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- n Treatment that addresses the full range of an individual's needs is associated with increasing abstinence and improvement in other measures of recovery, including parenting skills and overall emotional health. Treatment that addresses drug abuse only may well fail and contribute to a higher potential for relapse.**



## **Drug Rehab Program “Athena - Life”: Services**

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- n Counselling & Family Services: 100 individuals and their families**
- n Medical Detoxification Program (DETOX): 30 beds**
- n X2 Open Therapeutic Communities Programs for Adults and Adolescents: 60 adults and 40 teenagers each**



## **Drug Rehab Program “Athena - Life”: Services**

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- n X2 Social Rehabilitation Units: 40 adults and 30 teenagers each**
- n Educational, Financial and Legal Services: for all the participants and their families**
- n Research in Drug Prevention, Relapse and Rehab Unit: supporting a wide range of basic, clinical, and epidemiologic research into all aspects of drug abuse and addiction.**



## Drug Rehab Program “Athena - Life”: Services

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- § **Street-based work has grown significantly in recent years**, therefore the Municipality of Athens is engaged to develop **two Community Mobile Units** for psychosocial support of drug dependent individuals, operating **24\*7**.
- § Also patients will be regularly monitored, relapses are prevented and admissions to hospital are significantly reduced and **continuity of care** could be achieved.



## **“Athena - Life”**: Figures

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- n **“Athena - Life”** will employ 96 health professionals
- n **Volunteer opportunities** are also available in many areas
- n **More than 1.170 drug dependent individuals per year and their families** will benefit from the Comprehensive Drug Rehab Program
- n **Budget: 6 million euros per year** (state & municipal expenses)



## **“Athena - Life”**: Interagency Cooperations I

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- n In order to increase and maintain the skills and knowledge of the health workforce, **educational programs** will be held and coordinated by several institutions already implementing community drug abuse programs in Greece (Therapy Center for Drug Addicts - KETHEA, Organization Against Drugs - OKANA, State Mental Health Hospitals of Athens & Thesalloniki)



## **“Athena - Life”**: Interagency Cooperations II

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- n **A continuum of care** that includes a customized treatment regimen, addressing all aspects of an individual's life, including medical and mental health services, and follow up options (e.g., community- or family-based recovery support systems), educational programs, prison-based treatment programs **can be crucial to a person's success** in achieving and maintaining a drug-free lifestyle.
- n **Therefore a number of initiatives among the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Labour & Social Insurance and the Ministry of Education will be enforced.**



## **“Athena - Life”**: Building Infrastructures I

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National Real Estate Agency deputed an area of **14.061,52m<sup>2</sup>** to the Municipality of Athens, in order to develop and construct all the services of the **“Athena - Life” Drug Rehab Program**



## **“Athena - Life”**: Building Infrastructures II

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- § This area is located near **General Hospitals of Athens**, therefore medical and/or psychiatric care for drug dependent individuals (adults and adolescents) can be enhanced
- n **Services for drug abuse treatment are combined with mental health services at the level of clinical interaction**, which means that health professionals team up with to provide appropriate mental health and substance abuse interventions in a coordinated, seamless fashion
- n **Despite this area is located accurately in the “heart” of the city of Athens, constitutes an ideal therapeutic campus**



## **“Athena - Life”**: Building Infrastructures III

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- n **700m<sup>2</sup>**: Medical Detoxification Program
- n **1500m<sup>2</sup>**: Adults Unit
- n **1500m<sup>2</sup>**: Adolescents Unit
- n **Open door activities**: Basketball court, football court, greenhouse, sheltered workshops (vocational services)



## Conclusions I

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**Drug addiction constitutes a multifaceted and complex phenomenon** and any attempt or policy strategy to reduce drug use and the damage that drugs can cause, both to those who use them and the communities in which they live, has to reflect this underlying reality.



## Conclusions II

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**Results from well-documented research studies have shown that prevention and rehab programs that involve the family, schools, communities, justice and the media are effective in reducing drug abuse.**

**Local authorities in cooperation with central administration and other actors can play a leading role towards this direction.**



## **Conclusions III**

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**The Municipality of Athens has decided  
to play this role!!!**

**Thank you for your attention.**