



# Implementation of a school social service at Municipality of Glyfada, Attica, Greece. Outcomes of a pilot case study.

**MUNICIPALITY OF  
GLYFADA  
SOCIAL POLICY OFFICE**  
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# Theoretical and Legal framework.

- **The social services' development at a local level is recognized as a good practice in Europe for the promotion of Quality of Life ( QoL) of European citizens .**
- **Kallikratis Programme ( 3852/2010 Act), implements the development of social policy and social equity issues at a local level.**



**SOCIAL POLICY OFFICE ( SPO) STARTED TO OPERATE IN 1996 WITH ONLY ONE SOCIAL WORKER AND THE MAIN TASK WAS TO IMPLEMENT THE SOCIAL POLICY PROGRAMME OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY.**

**FROM 2008-TO DATE ONE MORE SOCIAL WORKER WAS EMPLOYED**

**FROM 2011-TO DATE ONE PSYCHOLOGIST WAS EMPLOYED.**

# Current Responsibilities of the SPO according to Kallikratis Programme

- **Providing services at vulnerable population groups (welfare benefits)**
- **Child Protection ( counseling, case assessment, crisis intervention)**
- **Health Promotion & Prevention Projects ( general population)**



# Aims and objectives of the School Social Work Service ( SSWS)

- Based on the ecological perspective, the school social work service started in 2011 under the umbrella of the Kallikratis Programme in order to:
  - a) Address specific environmental stressors linked with the effects of the economic crisis on the lives of juveniles and their families.
  - b) Enhance coping skills of students.
  - c) Improve and sustain collaboration between the school & other community agencies.

# The Ecological perspective for School Social Work Practice



- There is a reciprocal interaction of students with several environmental factors, which include various social systems, - family, peer group, neighborhood, school-.
- School community is considered a sub-system of the greater social system.
- Teachers, parents, students are the sub-systems of the school community and interrelate with each other.

- Family in crisis
- Negative Psychological effects on student
- Lack of stimuli – bad mood
- Low school performance
- Negative feedback from teachers and parents
- Increase of family stress.



- SSWS' intervention in various social systems



- Increases trust between family and school



- Enhances involvement of student in the class



- Improvement of school performance



- Positive feedback from the school setting



- Enhancement of student self – esteem.





# TYPES OF INTERVENTIONS of SSWS

- **Student focused interventions**
- Enhancing the coping skills of students and those protective factors which will help them and their family to overcome a crisis, support school personnel recognize the signs of vulnerability and support the family environment.
- **System focused interventions.**
- Primary prevention programmes target the whole school population, in order to promote health, and create a positive school climate.

# Stages of implementation of the pilot phase of the SSWS project in Municipality of Glyfada.



# Stages of the implementation of the School Social Work Project (SSWP)

- 1<sup>st</sup> phase: Started June 2011, lasted 6 months
- **Obtain informal political consensus** via proposal submission.
- **Networking** with the Local Parents Councils & key informants in the school community ( key informants)
- **Networking with School Counselors & Principals** (Gate Keepers)
- **Spreading out the word.** Via lectures and open discussions with parents and teachers.



- 2<sup>nd</sup> Phase From Jan.2012-July 2012
- We obtained the **official consent** from the Local Authority Council in order to “ Implement the School Social Service” ( 12/2012)
- The project should have one year pilot period and then after its evaluation, open for more school settings in the community. The first year of the project we started collaboration **with three schools (2 primary schools, 1 high school).**
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Phase lasted from July2012-Sept. 2012  
**Evaluation and Report.**

# Assessment of needs of school settings.

Small scale field research is important in order to identify **the school's culture and climate**.

- The school's culture and climate is related with:
- Special environmental factors of each school community, the school sub-system dynamics, how colleagues interact with each other, and also examine if there are specific issues of concern.
- A school climate and culture influence students' behavior and learning.

- We distributed questionnaires to teachers, parents and students & asked them to identify issues and problems in their school community.
- We had informal meetings with teachers and parents and students in order to clarify our role and to discuss the kind of support SSWS could provide.
- We had informal meetings with school counselors and school principals.

# AXES OF COLLABORATION

- **School Counselor** intervenes in order to facilitate collaboration between home-school-social worker.

## **School Principal/Manager**

A democratic school leader protects crime and violence and enhances engagement and bonding.

School Principal determines school culture and climate.

## **Teaching personnel**

- Teachers **often act as role models**, especially for younger children's attitudes and behavior, and affect them indirectly and directly. Furthermore, teachers can play the role of "**adult supporter or significant other**".



# STUDENT FOCUSED INTERVENTIONS



- **From January 2012 until June 2012, Local School Social Work Service received 32 case referrals**
- **Case assessment process was carried out in collaboration with the School counselor, the School Principal and Personal Tutor of the student.**

Student focused interventions



## Single Case Intervention Stages

- A. Initial phase of investigation
- B. Defining the problem via multidisciplinary meetings
- Γ. Define clear aims and objectives
- Δ. Intervention and / or Referral
- E. Evaluation / Feedback

- **Case examples:**

1. Miranda is a 7 yrs old girl, and goes at the 2<sup>nd</sup> class of the primary school. Her mother 45 yrs old, comes from Albania, she is not fluent with Greek. The father is Greek, 75 yrs old and with severe health problems. The mother referred to the SSWS, and complained for depression problems and also claimed that Miranda was socially excluded from the school environment and her education performance is low. The family lives on a small pension & receives food from the church. There is no support from informal social networks although the father has children from his first marriage. Miranda' mother does not feel comfortable to talk with the school teacher or leader.

- An intervention from the SSWS social worker was made to make a link between Miranda's parents and school teacher in order to facilitate communication between home and school.
- SSWS team had collaboration with the teacher and the school principal so that a volunteer personal tutor could give lessons to Miranda during the summer period.
- The Local Parents Group gave the money for Miranda to participate in all school activities, visits at museums etc.
- The couple received counseling sessions from the SSWS psychologist.
- The family received financial support from a special emergency account of the Glyfada Municipality, to renovate the house.
- Miranda's mother was advised to refer to a special agency for mental health problems for her depression.

- **Case 2.** Eleana is 14 year old girl at the time of case referral she had a lot of drop outs from high school and she was about to lose the school year. The **school principal and the school counselor referred the case to the SSWS.** We contacted the family and we carried out home visits. Home visits revealed that her mother has been in a wheel chair since E. was born. The girl had a history of anorexia, and was passing through a depression period. The family was very close to Orthodox church and denied to visit a psychiatrist.
- **School counselor** made a report so that the girl had the opportunity to be home educated.
- The family accepted the SSWS social worker to have **regular home visits.** **Community agencies' availability enhanced trust** and after a short period the adolescent returned to school. Since then we have frequent follow-up sessions with the family.



# SYSTEM FOCUSED INTERVENTIONS

# SYSTEM FOCUSED INTERVENTIONS

- SEMINARS FOR PARENTS
- DISCUSSION GROUPS WITH THE TEACHERS

# Primary Prevention Projects

- School Bulling
- Relationships with peers & Conflict resolution
- Coping with Loss & Grief





# Thematic interventions- Programme against school bullying.

- The project was included in the school curriculum, it lasted one month and targeted all school student population.
- Class meetings took place in a separate room where we could all sit in a circle for two teaching hours, without a break. The process was mainly experiential ( role playing, small groups tasks, etc) and some classes were co-facilitated by the class personal tutor.



- Group process revealed different personalities ( teaser, peace maker, argumentative etc ) & the participants became aware of communication techniques such as active listening & empathy.

# **Evaluation of the primary prevention activities**

# Method of Evaluation

## combined Quantitative & Qualitative data.

### Quantitative

- **Questionnaires were delivered to all experiential group participants.**
- *1. Which part of the programme did you find the most interesting?*
- *Where there parts that you found difficult to participate?*
- *What did you learn that you can use in your every day life?*
- *What kind of future programmes would you propose ?*

### Qualitative

**Open questionnaires were to teachers**

Teachers were asked to tell the frequency of similar programmes and the types of interventions that they preferred.

# Selected Outcomes from the Pilot Phase of the project



# What did you like the most?

- N= 253 students of high school ( from 12-15 yrs)
- 43% reported that they liked the videos
- 37% group discussion and expression of personal experiences
- 20% small group tasks and role playing

αριθμός ατόμων



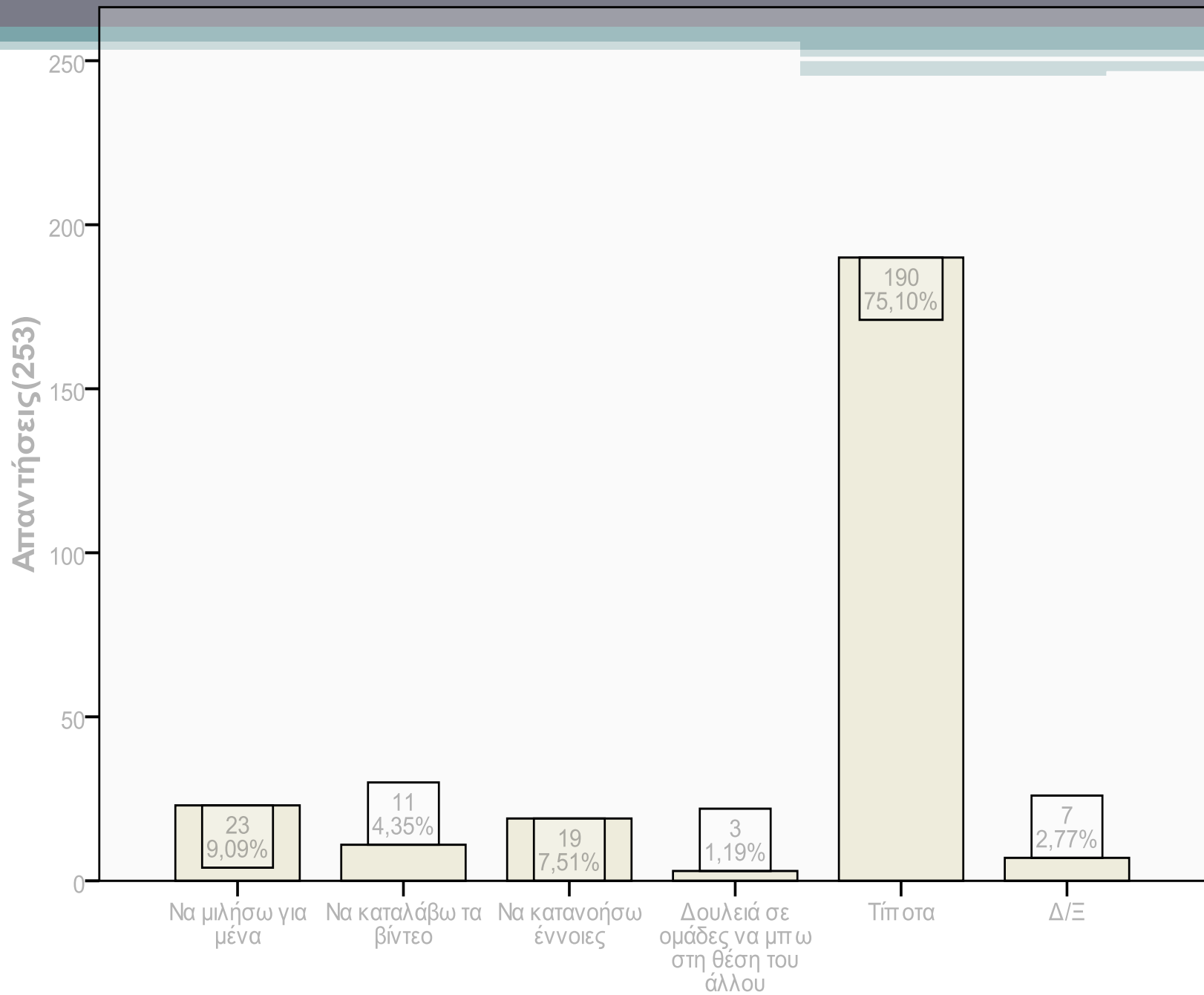
Ποιο κατά τη γνώμη μας ήταν το πιο ενδιαφέρον κομμάτι των δράσεων;

# What did you find difficult for you?

N= 253

- 10 % reported that they found it difficult to talk about themselves in front of their peers.



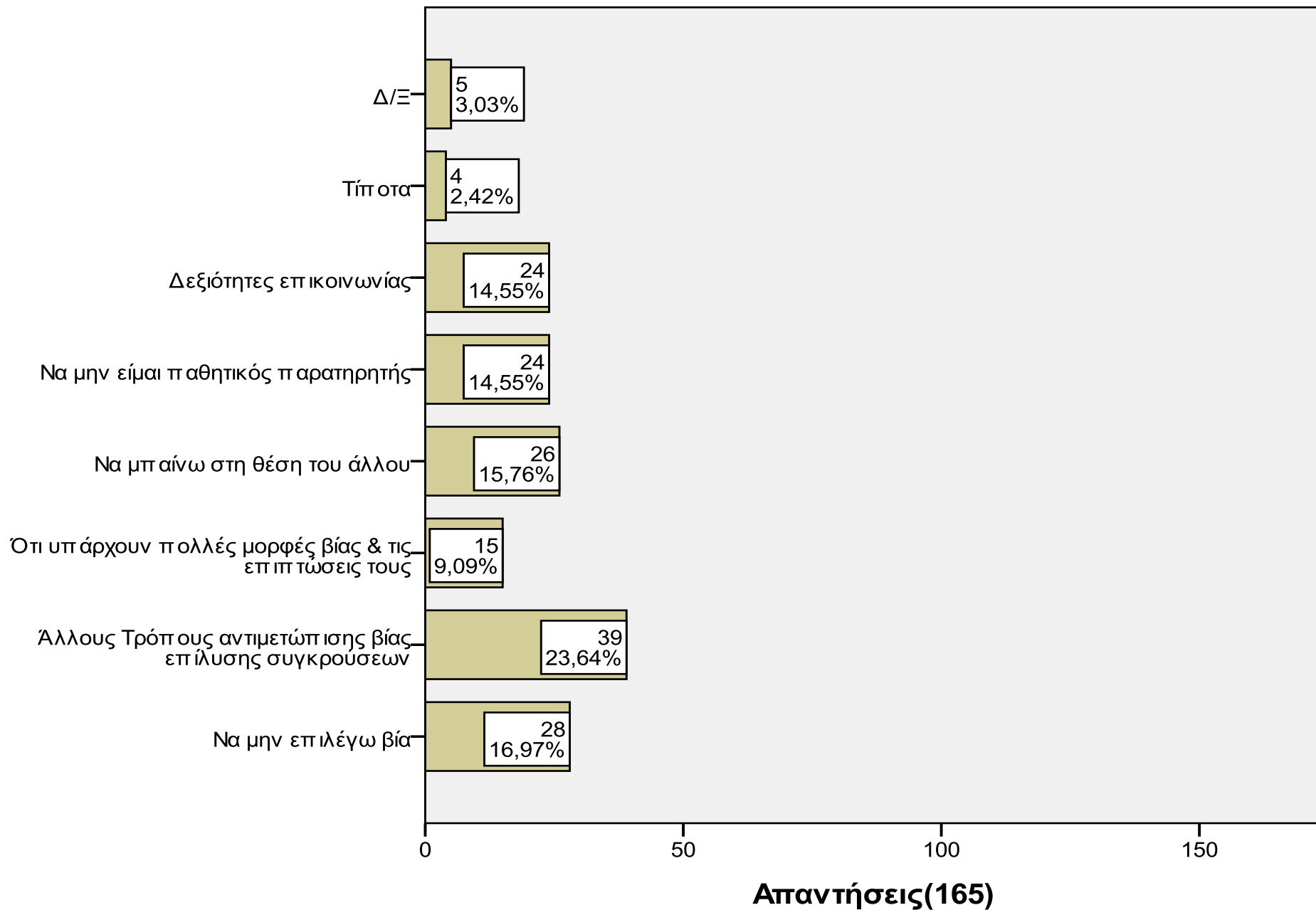


Τι σας δυσκόλεψε;

# Have you learned something that you can apply in your life?

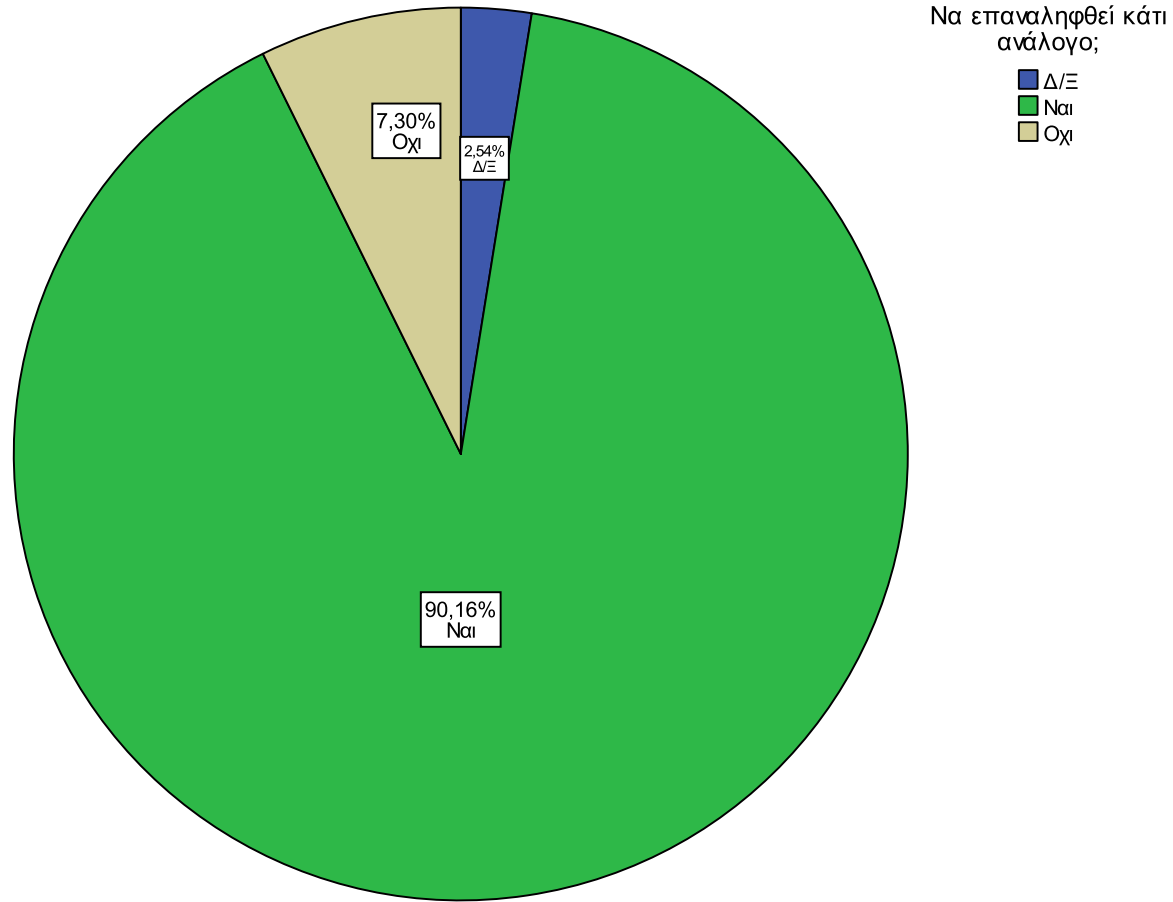
- N= 165
- I learned other ways to resolve a conflict ( 39%)
- I learned to empathize with others ( 26%)
- I do not want to be a passive “ observer” ( 24%)
- I learned new communication skills ( 24%)

# Αναφέρετε ή περιγράψατε κάτι που μάθατε και θα θέλατε να εφαρμόσετε στη ζωή σας;



- Would you like to participate in a similar project again;

- Yes: 90 %
- No 7%
- Don't Know 3%



# Qualitative Outcomes

- **Students' views:**

« It was a great experience for me that I would like to repeat” «I learned alternative ways to deal with my anger” « I felt closer to my colleagues and to the teachers” «I would like to learn more about similar subjects”

# High school Students' views about future programmes.

- Most dominant subjects were:
- School age 12-15yrs.
- Relationships with parents and peers
- Safe use of internet
- School Bulling
- Stress, grief, depression.
- Sex education

# Teachers Views

- ***How often you think that similar activities should take place in your school?”***
- ***At least three times a year.***
- ***Which techniques are more effective and interesting?***
- ***Experiential learning, small groups process.***

-

- *What are the subjects that you would like to cover by a health promotion future programmes in the future?*

**Dominant views for the improvement of the project were:**

- **Crisis management/conflict resolution, mental health and adolescence, self-awareness, safe use of internet racism, violence.**
- **The majority of teachers expressed the necessity for the sustainability of similar activities.**



# Annually Programme Evaluation

Frequent multidisciplinary team meetings took place with a reflective purpose in order to redefine the collaboration of SSWS with the local school settings.

Outcomes of these meetings were written down as a report for the Ministry of Education, Culture & Religious Affairs.



# DISCUSSION

- **School Social Work Service** contributed to the improvement of school climate.
- **Participants reported that they came closer to their tutors after the system focused interventions.**

**The built of trust among teachers and SSWS team determined the positive outcome of student focused interventions.**

- **Students' voice was heard..**

# The impact of the economic crisis on the Quality of Life of children & adolescents.

- Increased poverty during the past 5yrs, is not irrelevant **with the impact of economic crisis on families' lives**. Poverty and examples of child neglect began to concern the local social policy agencies & other professionals who work in the child welfare field in Greece.
- The main goal of the implementation of school social work service is to act at a welfare level, and avoid legal intervention.

# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACT (3500/2006)

- But...when this is not possible... existing law **permits legal intervention in family life.**
- School leaders and teachers are informed that it is legally possible to refer to the Public Prosecutor's Office for Juveniles in order to prevent the worst consequences of existing domestic violence on the lives of students who are at- risk.

# Ethical dimensions of School Social Work Practice

- **Confidentiality** is considered a fundamental principal, and the school setting is a problematic setting for professionals to maintain client confidentiality.
- **Confidentiality and trust** was an issue that arose in the students' group evaluation comments.

# The importance of Networking

- When dealing with student focused interventions, networking with other special agencies in the community is very important.

- **Limitations:** of the pilot phase of the programme.
- Lack of continuous political support.
- Lack of community resources to support interventions.
- Reluctance from parents and teachers in taking responsibility of referring to us especially in cases of severe domestic violence.



# CONCLUDING REMARKS



- **1. Ensure sustainability of the SSWS programme.** Because it responds to the real school community needs.
- And the cost of the service is covered by own resources.
  
- **2. SSWS must be a separate section of the Department of Local Social Services.** It is an innovating project, and can be a “good practice” example for other Self-Government Social Services.

- 3. Information about the SSWS activities should be given at:
  - **Vertical Level**
    - (Ministry of Education, Mayor, Office of Education)
  - **Horizontal level**: Multidisciplinary collaboration with all local communities network.

**The wider community can be informed about SSWS activities via the official site of Glyfada.**

- **4. SSWS must sustain its community character** and do referrals to other more specialized agencies (**CMHC, Family Centers etc**)
- **5. Children's & adolescence's voice must be heard.** All SSWS activities must be annually evaluated **with the involvement of the participants** (students, parents, teachers). **All interventions must be planned and implemented in accordance with the views of the participants.**

# SSWS TEAM

(in alphabetic order)



- **Planning and Implementation of the Project was accomplished by the multidisciplinary SSWS team.**
- Dr. Evita/Evanthia Evangelou, Social Worker, Co-ordinator of the pilot phase of the project.
- Miss Maria Koufonikolakou, MSc, Child-Psychologist, Psychotherapist.
- Miss Evita Michou, MA , School Conselor, at Secondary Education.

Statistical analysis support : Mr. Stamatis Triantafilou

## Cooperators of the Pilot Phase of the SSWS Project

- **School Principals collaborators for case referrals:**
- Dr. Kosmas Vlachos ( 4rth Primary School)
- Mr Nikos Mouzakis, MA ( 3<sup>rd</sup> Primary School)
- Mr Georges Kendros , ( 18nd Primary School)
- **School Principals collaborators for activities against school-bulling**
- Dr. Despina Papageorgiou, ( Principal 4rth High School)
- Mr. Spiros Stragalinos, MA (Vice-Principal 4rth High School)
- **Pilot school setting needs assessment collaborators.**
- **Local Parents Council Representatives.**
- Miss Marina Stavropoulou 4rth High School
- Miss Stavroula Tavoulari 4rth Primary School

# Agencies of Constant Support

- **Ministry of Education, Culture & Religious Affairs.**
- **A) Health Promotion and Education Department**
- **B) Department of Secondary Education**
- **School Counselor: Miss Evita Michou, MA.**
- **Municipality of Glyfada**
- **Office of Education ( Head: Miss Eleni Zafeiropoulou)**

Thank you for  
your  
attention!!!

