

## *The Use Of EU Funds For Improving Social Services And Inclusion Of Vulnerable Groups*

<b><u>Organisation(s):</u></b>	The University of West Attica - Social Administration Research Lab (SARL UNIWA)	
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<b><u>Theme:</u></b> <i>Choose at least one option</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ageing & Care <input type="checkbox"/> Asylum & Migration <input type="checkbox"/> Young People <input type="checkbox"/> Support for Children & Families <input type="checkbox"/> Community Care <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Integrated Care & Support <input type="checkbox"/> Co-Production <input type="checkbox"/> Disability <input type="checkbox"/> Housing & Homelessness <input type="checkbox"/> Artificial Intelligence <input type="checkbox"/> Digitalisation <input type="checkbox"/> Quality Care	<input type="checkbox"/> Labour Market Inclusion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social Inclusion <input type="checkbox"/> Technology <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Workforce and Leadership <input type="checkbox"/> Social Benefits <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EU Funding <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social Service's Resilience <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health <input type="checkbox"/> Person-Centred Care <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Research & Use of Evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify:
<b><u>Principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights:</u></b> <i>Check the 20 principles <a href="#">here</a>.</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1. Education, training, life-long learning <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Gender equality <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Equal opportunities <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Active support to employment <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Secure and adaptable employment <input type="checkbox"/> 6. Fair Wages <input type="checkbox"/> 7. Transparent employment conditions <input type="checkbox"/> 8. Social dialogue <input type="checkbox"/> 9. Work-life balance <input type="checkbox"/> 10. Healthy, safe work environment	<input type="checkbox"/> 11. Childcare and child support <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 12. Social protection <input type="checkbox"/> 13. Unemployment benefits <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 14. Minimum income <input type="checkbox"/> 15. Old age income and pensions <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 16. Health care <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 17. Inclusion of people with disabilities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18. Long-term care <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19. Housing and assistance to homeless <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20. Access to essential services
<b><u>Current status of the practice:</u></b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept and Design Phase <input type="checkbox"/> Execution & Monitoring Phase <input type="checkbox"/> Consolidation Phase <input type="checkbox"/> Scaling Up and Transformation Phase <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)	
<b><u>Context/ Social issues addressed</u></b>	The West Athens Functional Urban Area (WA FUA) faces significant social challenges in the light of traditional key risks related to unemployment, poverty and housing insecurity. In addition, the demographic ageing and the awakening of family	

<p><i>Please explain the problem you attempt to solve.</i></p>	<p>support leads to the development of the so-called social care crisis, not adequately addressed by the current fragmented national social care model in Greece. Social care is managed by the state through a decentralized system with public and private non-profit providers, but this structure lacks standardization, effective monitoring and sufficient funding, leading to inadequate coverage for basic needs and inconsistent access to services.</p> <p>In response, the WA FUA designed the Resilient West Athens 2021-2027 Strategy to address these gaps. This Strategy covers nine municipalities with shared socio-economic characteristics and will be implemented during 2024-2029 under a 76.000.000 € financial mechanism, monitored by the West Athens Development Agency (a legal body of private law created by Municipalities in the West Athens area) and its nine founding Municipalities, with the support of the University of West Attica and relevant public bodies and civil society actors.</p> <p>This funding is part of the Regional Operational Programme “ATTICA” within the context of the Greek Partnership Agreement 2021-2027. It will support particular the Policy Objective 5 “A Europe closer to citizens by fostering the sustainable and integrated development of all types of territories and local initiatives” of the EU Cohesion Policy 2021-2027, as laid down in article 5 and specified in articles 28-34 of the EU Regulation 2021/1060 (<a href="http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/1060/oj">http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/1060/oj</a>).</p> <p>SARL UNIWA was responsible for drafting the Social Agenda of the Strategy, using regulatory analysis, functional comparative analysis, qualitative and quantitative methods, focus group surveys with stakeholders and target groups and open consultation methods. This Agenda aims to improve social service quality and inclusivity in the region through a €16 million budget. It targets vulnerable groups, including minimum income beneficiaries, people with disabilities, children, Roma, and migrants, with actions such as establishing new care centres, training social services staff, and creating research observatories.</p>
<p><b><u>Objectives:</u></b> <i>Please provide a maximum of three objectives in bullet points.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improve social services: expand and enhance care facilities and services for better access and quality.</li> <li>2. Support vulnerable groups: provide targeted help for minimum-income beneficiaries, people with disabilities, children, Roma, and migrants.</li> <li>3. Strengthen local capacity and coordination: train social services staff and improve coordination among local agencies.</li> </ol>
<p><b><u>Activities:</u></b> <i>Please summarise the activities put in place to achieve the objectives (maximum 300 words).</i></p>	<p>To achieve the objectives, the following activities are in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the development of new open care centres and integrated health and social services</li> <li>• the activation of welfare beneficiaries</li> <li>• the provision of training to the community social services workforce</li> <li>• the development of the social economy ecosystem</li> <li>• the establishment of Social Services Research Observatories.</li> </ul>

<p><b><u>Outcomes:</u></b>  <i>Please explain what the results were/are so far and how you evaluated this.</i></p>	<p>The WA FUA <i>Resilience Strategy</i> was evaluated and approved by the Region of Attica as a de facto community good practice for using the <i>functional area approach</i> to introduce an innovative, inclusive development policy based on the real needs and opportunities of Local Government Authorities.</p>
<p><b><u>Links to supporting documents:</u></b>  <i>e.g. website or report of the practice</i></p>	<p>The WA FUA Resilience Strategy: <a href="https://efd.asda.gr/en/west-athens-sud-i-t-i/">https://efd.asda.gr/en/west-athens-sud-i-t-i/</a>  The West Athens Development Agency: <a href="https://efd.asda.gr/en/home-page/">https://efd.asda.gr/en/home-page/</a></p>
<p><b><u>Comments and tips</u></b> <i>i.e. for people willing to use your Practice</i></p>	<p>Municipalities across Europe are struggling nowadays to use external additional funds to support the development of quality social services and improve the adequacy of active inclusion paths for people at risk of poverty and social exclusion.</p> <p>In addition, the academia is strongly interested in promoting partnerships with local authorities to advance feasible and resilient social agendas using evidence - based research models.</p> <p>In this context, local authorities based on EU Member States should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• invest on innovative social agendas related to the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights using the functional area approach.</li> <li>• identify and take advantage of Sustainable Urban Development (SUD) strategies supported by their National Partnership Agreements in the light of the EU Cohesion Policy 2021-2027.</li> <li>• cooperate with the academic community to strengthen the design, implementation and evaluation phases or relevant agendas.</li> </ul>