

Report of the

# 13<sup>th</sup> European Experts' Meeting on Self-Help Support



May 13-16, 2015 Chania Crete

## *Self-Help Groups and Self-Help Support in transitional times in Europe: Challenges and perspectives for Self-Help Groups and Self-Help Supporters*

Organization



Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

With the Support of



Municipality of Chania



Under the auspices of the Ministry of Health



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## **Self Help Promotion Program**

Self Help Promotion Program is a program of the Psychology Department of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, operating with the cooperation of OKANA (Organization Against Drugs) and financed by the Greek Ministry of Health. Phoebus Zafiridis, psychiatrist and former Associate Professor of Psychology of Addictions, is the scientific supervisor of the Program.

Self Help Promotion Program was founded in 2001 in Thessaloniki and currently it exists in four cities –Thessaloniki, Sitia (since 2008), Chania (since 2012) and Larisa (since 2015). It consists the only state proposal in Greece that attempts to support and promote self-help/mutual aid in addressing addiction and other psychosocial problems, as well as health problems.

The main goals of Self Help Promotion Program are:

- The psychosocial support of drug and alcohol addicts and their relatives, based on the philosophy and the practices of self-help/mutual aid and on critical views in the addiction field.
- The psychosocial support of the members of the Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), and Narcotics Anonymous (NA) groups and also of the members of groups for their relatives (e.g. Family Anonymous, Alanon). This support is achieved with the utmost respect for the autonomy and the traditions of these groups.
- The promotion of self-help/mutual aid philosophy and practices in addressing addiction and other psychosocial problems.
- The facilitation of citizens for the creation of self-selp/mutual aid groups or initiatives.
- The support of self-help/mutual aid initiatives in the field of physical health problems.
- The education of health care professionals in new ways of encountering with citizens and in jointly developing participative interventions for the confrontation of psychosocial and health problems.
- The training of health professionals in self-help support practices.



- The awareness of communities and the general public about self-help/mutual aid philosophy and practices.
- The implementation of studies and researches regarding self-help/mutual aid groups and initiatives and regarding addiction problems.

Self-Help Promotion Program's operation is based on action research principles. Based on this philosophy the program's interventions do not constitute a mere implementation of theoretical models and gestalts by experts, but a product of their constant interaction with the participants or any stakeholders.

The organization of the 13th European Experts Meeting on Self-Help Support coincides with the expansion of Self Help Promotion Program in four Greek cities. Consequently, a potentiality arises for their further application in addressing several psychosocial and health problems. The use of mutual aid and solidarity practices, that comprise the basis of the program's proposal, could constitute an alternative proposal in health policies, especially in the field of psychosocial problems and of health problems.



## Greetings

### ***Greeting from the Greek Deputy Minister of Health***

Dear organizers of the Meeting,

Dear participants,

It is a great pleasure for me as the Deputy Minister of Health to salute the beginning of 13th European Expert Meeting on Self – Help Support. It is an important effort that aims to the development of scientific dialogue, effort which I consider to be worthy both of our attention and support.

It is by now a common belief that the political choices made these last few years, those of the economic and humanitarian crisis, have led to the deterioration of the physical and mental health of our fellow citizens, as well as to the disruption of the public health system. Within this socio-economic landscape, it is crucial to support the efforts that utilize the potential of individuals and of their relations in addressing serious health conditions but also multidimensional problems as the one of addiction.

Particularly regarding the field of addiction, it is our political priority as Ministry of Health, to support the right of people involved with substance abuse for treatment and social reintegration. Our goal is a pluralistic approach and the contribution of all available structures, so that people in recovery receive the best possible and timely care. In this context, self-help groups can play a supplementary role or extend the outcomes of the treatment-recovery process. But mostly, they can contribute in the multi-faceted, holistic support of people, so that they can form the necessary conditions for their autonomous and unhindered participation in social reality.

I would like to assure the participants that we expect with particular interest your findings, conclusions and suggestions, in order to use them for the development of evidence-based and comprehensive



policies for health and social care. Moreover, I would like to congratulate the organizers for their initiative and their work.

With respect,  
Andreas Xanthos,  
Deputy Minister of Health

### ***Greeting from the Mayor of Chania***

It is a great pleasure for me as a Mayor of Chania to welcome in Great Arsenal of Chania all the distinguished and prominent scientists both from Greece and abroad that participate in the proceedings of the 13th European Experts' Meeting on Self Help Support, organized in our city by Self Help Promotion Program of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Despite the difficult setting of the economic crisis and the cutbacks of municipal resources by the central government, Municipality of Chania collaborates with the Self Help Promotion Program, a program of Psychology Department of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, since mid - 2012. Self Help Promotion Program is an innovative program for the prevention and treatment of addiction with significant outcomes until today.

Municipality of Chania supports the fore mentioned program, since it focuses on the idea of mutual help in addressing the problem of addiction. Besides, its main goal is the support of people who deal with addiction to illegal and legal psychotropic substances and their relatives, constituting an alternative approach in addiction treatment field, which comes as a complementary approach to the existing prevention and treatment programs.

At this point, I would like to mention the program's interventions of approaching and motivating users of psychotropic substances, that take place in central places of the city that consist meeting points of



people with addiction problems (street work), which is very important especially if someone considers the fact that addicted people either don't have access to treatment or they don't want to participate in recovery program.

The outcomes of the program are particularly important, since from its inauguration has supported hundreds of people with different needs. It is a worthwhile collaboration of Municipality of Chania, Aristotle University and OKANA for our fellow citizens who took the wrong way in their life.

Therefore, I welcome you all once again in our city, saluting all those who work in the Program and commit themselves to the proper function and the development of the program in Chania as well as in Thessaloniki and Sitia.

Thank you.  
Anastasios Vamvoukas,  
Mayor of Chania

***Greeting by the Scientific Supervisor of Self Help Promotion Program***

Dear participants,

It is a great pleasure for us to have you in Greece for the actualization of the 13th European Experts' Meeting on Self- Help Support. We hope that this meeting will contribute to the exchange of knowledge on self- help/mutual aid issues as well as to the reinforcement of our work in Greece.

In 2001, when I founded the Self – Help Promotion Program in Thessaloniki - the first attempt in the country that reinforces and disseminates self- help/mutual aid practices of directly affected citizens with health problems - I was already convinced for the value

of these practices. This conviction stems from my experience in organizing the first therapeutic communities for addicts in Greece. These communities were based on the professional model of therapeutic communities adapting largely self- help/mutual aid principles and philosophy. This fact along with the admission that professional models are unable to give on their own effective and sustainable answers in addressing such human problems as addiction conduced to the idea of creating Self – Help Promotion Program.

Self – Help Promotion Program is a program of Psychology Department of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. The main goals of the program are both the promotion of the idea and the practices of self- help/mutual aid in the field of addiction and other health problems as well as the training of health professionals in innovative methodologies for supporting citizens' initiatives. Moreover, an additional goal of the program is the research of these issues and the dissemination of self – help/mutual aid within society. All these years, following action research principles, the program has developed a variety of interventions mainly in the field of addiction and secondly in the field of other health problems. The program constitutes a distinct proposal in the field of addiction utilizing the idea of self – help/mutual aid principles. Having already developed 4 Self – Help Promotion Programs in Greece, one of our basic future goals is the promotion of self – help/mutual aid in other health problems. The 15 years of Self – Help Promotion Program's operation has resulted to the accumulation of a significant experience for these issues concerning the positive characteristics of self- help/mutual aid as well as the possible risks and limits of these initiatives.

As for the positive features I would like to mention briefly the following:

- The citizens' activation and the self – organized initiatives in addressing their problems within a collective and solidarity context. The dynamics of active participation in these initiatives often outreach the objective of addressing a health problem and have multiple benefits in a social level.
- The creation of an alternative paradigm for providing support unlike the mainstream paradigm of the active expert and the patient in the

role of a passive service receiver. The shift of the scientific paradigm is one of the fundamental aspirations of critical views in Health and Social Sciences internationally. If Europe intends to resist to the degradation of Welfare State and to the total domination of free market, this shift should be its main goal.

- The creation of low cost and sustainable attempts such as self-help/mutual aid groups and initiatives. In this context, in a country like Greece, the development of such groups could be a significant alternative in the field of health problems. Not only because self-help/mutual aid groups are cost saving solutions for the national health system but mainly because they contribute to the reinstatement of the social coherence which is afflicted by free market economy. The financial benefits for health care system should be considered as a secondary matter.

In conclusion, the issues that need further research according to our experience are briefly the following:

- The “phenomenon of professionalization” of certain veteran members of self- help/mutual aid groups. In my point of view, this phenomenon emerges when members adapt the professional role which is inconsistent with the core operation of the group and thus puts into danger the future of the group.

- The “phenomenon of commercialization” of certain groups which abolishes the basic principles of self -help groups. This phenomenon is inseparably linked with the fore mentioned “professionalization phenomenon”.

- The possibility of manipulation or exploitation of self- help/mutual aid groups. A representative example is the pharmaceutical companies' attempt to get involved into associations and groups of relatives of people with psychiatric problems. Moreover, the late involvement of health professionals and academics in self-help/mutual aid groups with an invasive and patronizing way puts also the basic features of these attempts into danger.

The above - mentioned observations as well as the basic principles that defined self-help/mutual aid movement have formed our viewpoint on self- help/mutual aid promotion in Greece. These



principles are always up to date when it comes to active and independent participation of the directly affected citizens in matters of their concern.

With these brief thoughts, I would like to thank you for your participation in this meeting wishing you luck for your proceedings.

Phoebus Zafiridis  
Psychiatrist,  
Former Associate Professor of Psychology of Addictions  
Scientific Supervisor of Self Help Promotion Program

***Greeting from Supervisor of Department of Risk Factors, Social Factors on Health and Addiction of Ministry of Health***

The Directorate of Public Health of the Ministry of Health welcomes the organization of the 13th European Meeting of Experts on the promotion of Self-Help, which this year, is organized by the Self-Help Promotion Program of the Aristotle University psychology department.

This Self-Help promotion program is the only public proposal at national level, which in cooperation with the Organization Against Drugs, utilizes the philosophy and implementation of self-help/mutual aid in dealing with psychosocial problems and health problems, in the context of addictions, in our country.

In fourteen years of its operation, this self-help promotion program has focused on support for integrated projects for addicts and on educate social scientists to the context of self-help promotion programs.

The Health Ministry approves to continue the program, supervises and funds, to date, its operation in cities such as Thessaloniki, Chania and Sitia and recently in Larissa.



A review of the literature highlights the best knowledge about the problem, reduced inferiority feeling, improved social adjustment and reduced other costs of health care as benefits from active participation in self-help groups.

Sharing experiences of participants with respect, kindness and understanding, confidentiality and right to opinion ensure the safety and protection of all participants in self-help groups.

Internationally, in recent decades, self-help groups utilized in formal health systems.

The current meeting, under the auspices of the Ministry of Health, highlights it.

In this meeting, representatives from eleven countries, exchange experiences and discuss the modern scientific developments in the field of the self-help and mutual aid groups for health issues.

We wish every success to the work of this meeting.

Chatzidimou Sofia,  
Psychologist, PhD  
Supervisor of Department of Risk Factors,  
Social Factors on Health and Addiction, Ministry of Health

## **Participants of 13th European Experts' Meeting on Self-Help Support, May 13 – 16, 2015, Chania, Greece**

### **USA**

**Edward Madara**, MSc in Community Development, Founder and Former Director of the New Jersey & American Self-Help Group Clearinghouses (guest speaker of the meeting)

### **AUSTRIA**

**Andreas Keclik**, Psychologist, Head of the Department of Self-Help and Empowerment at Viennese Health Promotion (Wiener Gesundheitsförderung)

### **DENMARK**

**Casper Bo Danø**, Head of Secretariat-CEO at FriSe, MSc of Arts & MSc of Social Entrepreneurship

**Catherine Sort**, Self-help consultant at FriSe, MSc in Psychology and Communications

### **FINLAND**

**Helena Palojärvi**, Director at Naistenkartano ref., Lic. Social Science & MSc in Social Policy

### **GERMANY**

**Jürgen Matzat**, Psychologist- Psychotherapist, Founder and Board Member of the German Association of Self-Help Groups. Head at the Department of Psychosomatics in Giessen

### **GREECE**

(participants and organizing committee)

**Sotiris Lainas**, Psychologist, PhD, MSc in Social Clinical Psychology of Addictions, Coordinator at Self-Help Promotion Programs in Greece (chief coordinator of the organizing committee)

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**Kiki Dimitriadou**, Psychologist, MSc in Social Clinical Psychology of Addictions and Psychosocial Problems, Coordinator at Self-Help Promotion Program of Chania (coordinator of the organizing committee)

**Alexandros Georgiou**, MSc in Social Clinical Psychology of Addictions, Coordinator at Self-Help Promotion Program of Thessaloniki (member of organizing committee)

**Kostas Fragkiadakis**, Psychologist, MSc in Social Clinical Psychology of Addictions, Self-Help Promotion Program of Thessaloniki (member of organizing committee)

**Dimitra Gavriilidou**, Psychologist, MSc in Social Clinical Psychology of Addictions and Psychosocial Problems, Self-Help Promotion Program of Larisa (member of organizing committee)

**Evi Adamopoulou**, Psychologist, MSc in Social Clinical Psychology of Addictions and Psychosocial Problems, Coordinator at Self-Help Promotion Program of Sitia

**Chatzidimou Sofia**, Psychologist, PhD, Supervisor of Department of Risk Factors, Social Factors on Health and Addiction, Ministry of Health

**Ilias Chouliaras**, Psychologist, MSc in Social Clinical Psychology of Addictions and Psychosocial Problems, Self-Help Promotion Program of Chania

**Maria Dafa**, Psychologist, MSc in Social Clinical Psychology of Addictions and Psychosocial Problems, Special Primary School and Special Kindergarden of Kastoria

**Valentina Dimitriadou**, Psychologist, MSc in Social Clinical Psychology of Addictions and Psychosocial Problems, Self-Help Promotion Program of Chania

**Pavlina Paradomenaki**, Linguistics and Preschool Education Studies, Vice President of Greek Association of Asperger Syndrome

**ISRAEL**

**Anat Moshe**, Community social worker, MSc in Immigration & Social Integration



### **ITALY**

**Fausto Petrini**, Psychologist at Coordinamento Toscano Gruppi di Auto Aiuto, PhD and Contract Professor for the Education and Psychology Department in University of Florence

**Riccardo Pieralli**, Former President of Tuscan Regional Coordination, Representative of Ireos (Self-managed Services Center for the Queer Community)

### **NORWAY**

**Hilde Nøkleberg**, Advisor at Self-help Norway - National Resource Center for Self-Help in Oslo

**Mette Smedstad**, Leader of the regional office at Self-Help Norway - National Resource Center for Self-Help in Oslo

### **SWITZERLAND**

**Bettina Häfeli**, Assistant and project manager of Self-Help Switzerland, Lic. Social Science

**Antonis Purnelis**, Director of Self-Help Center Zuricher-Oberland, Graduate Social Pedagogy

**Carmen Rahm**, Nurse and Director of Self-Help Switzerland, Diploma of Business Management and Direction

### **UNITED KINGDOM (UK)**

**Michele Banton**, Operations Manager at Self Help Nottingham.

**Paige Bramley**, Training and Development Officer at Self Help Nottingham.

**Velma Hamilton**, Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic Health Outreach Worker (BAME) at Self Help Nottingham.

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## Program of the 13th European Experts' Meeting on Self-Help Support at Chania

<b>WEDNESDAY 13/5/2015</b>	
<b>12.30-13.00</b>	Opening of the Meeting/Registration (with Coffee and snacks)
<b>13.00-14.00</b>	<b>Greetings</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Andreas Xanthos, Deputy Minister of Health</li> <li>• Anastasios Vamvoukas, Mayor of Chania</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phoebus Zafiridis, Psychiatrist, former Associate Professor of Psychology Department A.U.Th., Scientific Supervisor of Self Help Promotion Program</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chatzidimou Sofia, Psychologist, PhD, Supervisor of Department of Risk Factors, Social Factors on Health and Addiction, Ministry of Health</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Efstratios Chatziharalampous, Sociologist, MSc, Supervisor of Health Promotion and Prevention Department, Primary HealthCare and Prevention Department</li> </ul>
<b>14.00-16.00</b>	<b>Guest Speaker Presentation</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Ups and Downs of Self-Help Support in the USA, speech by Edward Madara, USA</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">Commentator: Jürgen Matzat, Germany</p>
<b>16.00-16.15</b>	<b>Short break</b>
<b>16.15-18.15</b>	<b>Presentations</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting Self-Help/Mutual Aid Groups in Eras of Social Dislocation: Emerging themes from the Field (Sotiris Lainas and Kiki Dimitriadou, Greece)</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-Help Clearing Houses in Germany: First Results of the SHILD Study (Jürgen Matzat, Germany)</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Research Project for Community Self-Help in Switzerland: Significance, development and its contribution to health care and social services (Bettina Häfeli, Switzerland)</li> <li>Promoting Self-Help in Norway (Hilde Nøkleberg and Mette Smedstad, Norway)</li> </ul>
<b>18.15-19.45</b>	<b>Guided Tour in Old Port of Chania</b>
<b>19.45</b>	<b>Dinner</b>
	<b>THURSDAY 14/5/2015</b>
<b>9.00-11.00</b>	<p><b>Country Reports</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Austria (9.00-9.30)</li> <li>-Denmark (09.30-09.50)</li> <li>-Finland (09.50-10.10)</li> <li>-Germany (10.10-10.30)</li> <li>-Greece (10.30-10.50)</li> <li>-Israel (10.50-11.10)</li> </ul>
<b>11.10-11.40</b>	<b>Coffee Break</b>
<b>11.40-13.00</b>	<p><b>Country Reports</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Italy (11.40-12.00)</li> <li>-Norway (12.00-12.20)</li> <li>-Switzerland (12.20-12.40)</li> <li>-United Kingdom (12.40-13.00)</li> </ul>
<b>13.00-15.30</b>	<b>Lunch Break</b>
<b>15.30-17.00</b>	<p><b>Presentations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-Help in Tuscany: Facing the Change in a Changing World (Fausto Petrini and Riccardo Pieralli, Italy)</li> <li>Encouraging Professionals to understand, support and work with Self-Help Groups (Paige Bramley, United Kingdom)</li> <li>Self-Help: Professionals and Volunteer Work (Helena Palojärvi on behalf of Irja Mikkonen, Finland)</li> </ul>
<b>17.00-17.30</b>	<b>Coffee Break</b>
<b>17.30-19.30</b>	<p><b>Presentations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-Help in Norway (Hilde Nøkleberg and Mette Smedstad, Norway)</li> <li>Men and Self-Help (Cathrine Sort and Casper Bo Danø, Denmark)</li> <li>Empowerment in Self-Help Groups from the Point of View of Social Work (Helena Palojärvi, Finland)</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-help goes self-management (Carmen Rahm, Switzerland)</li> </ul>
19.45	<b>Dinner</b>
	<b>FRIDAY 15/5/2015</b>
	<b>Presentations</b>
9.00-10.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority Groups (Velma Hamilton, United Kingdom)</li> <li>• Unemployment and Self-Help (Anat Moshe, Israel)</li> <li>• Discussing about the Key Features of Self-Help Groups in the Field of Drug and Alcohol Addiction (Valentina Dimitriadou and Ilias Chouliaras, Greece)</li> <li>• The situation of Self-Help Support in Austria (Andreas Keclik, Austria)</li> </ul>
10.30-11.00	<b>Coffee Break</b>
	<b>Workshops</b>
11.00-13.00	<p>Suggested themes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Definitions of Self-Help Groups in different countries</li> <li>2. Self-Help support and emerging citizens' initiatives in the field of health in different countries: Perspectives and dangers</li> <li>3. Potentials and perspectives of wider cooperation among self-help supporters in European Countries.</li> </ol>
13.00-14.30	<b>Lunch Break</b>
14.30	<b>Departure for Heraklion</b>
16.30-19.00	<b>Guided Tour in Archaeological site and Archaeological Museum of Knossos</b>
19.15-20.30	<b>Dinner</b>
	<b>SATURDAY 16/5/2015</b>
	<b>Field Visit (Self-Help Promotion Program of Chania) - Examples from the Field</b>
9.00-11.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting Self-Help/Mutual Aid in the Field of Education and Health (Maria Dafa, Psychologist)</li> <li>• Self-Help / Mutual Aid initiatives in the field of Autism/ Asperger Syndrome and Mental Disability (Pavlina Paradomenaki, Philologist and Nursery School Teacher - Representative of a local initiative)</li> </ul>
11.00-11.30	<b>Coffee Break</b>
11.30-13.30	<b>Closing Remarks/Decision for the next Meeting</b>
13.30-15.30	<b>Lunch</b>

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## Abstracts of the Meeting

### ***The Ups and Downs of Self-Help Support in the USA (pdf)***

**Edward J. Madara**, former director, New Jersey & American Self-Help Group Clearinghouses



It is especially appropriate to meet in Greece, since it is the birthplace of democracy and traditional storytelling, which are both important features of most self-help groups. The aim of this presentation is to highlight program efforts in the United States that support self-help groups.

A wide variety of U.S. government commissions, conferences and policy recommendations have cited the value of self-help groups. While these recommendations proved helpful to some self-help clearinghouses in obtaining local funding, the only major national Federal funding for self-help activities has been provided to consumer-run programs and organizations in the two separate fields of mental health and addictions. It was mental health consumers/survivors, who first fought for this funding for national consumer-run mental health “technical assistance centres” and local self-help centres. Similarly, those people who are in recovery from addictions obtained money for addiction recovery centres and a national addiction recovery advocacy organization.

I regret I cannot fully cite here all the American scholars whose writings have given support to self-help groups. But for research studies showing the value of groups, the most updated effort, which is not limited to American researchers, is the “Resolution on Self-Help Group” pending before the American Psychological Association that cites 92 research studies, supporting seven key actions which the APA should take to promote increased access to, and understanding of, the groups.

Self-help help clearinghouses have played a major role in increasing the awareness, utilization, understanding and development of self-help groups. In the 1980s, local self-help clearinghouses were developed independently by different community, mental health and health organizations.

Started in 1981, the New Jersey Clearinghouse has helped individuals start over 1,150 self-help groups across the state. Multiple requests for unavailable groups often served as a barometer, reflecting needs for new types of self-help groups to be started. Simply asking callers, when there was no local group available to them, if they might be interested in joining with others to help start one, was one method for identifying and helping a small but significant number of potential group co-founders. This resulted in New Jersey having some first-of-their-kind groups in the country.

The American Clearinghouse program began in 1990 to serve those outside New Jersey. It simply placed the existing database of national, international, online and model groups (which the New Jersey Clearinghouse had been compiling and providing since its start) available free online. Potential founders of new types of self-help groups, not yet available, were provided with how-to materials and phone consultation.

Unfortunately, the number of self-help clearinghouses in USA has declined from 53 in 1990 to 10 today. Factors contributing to the decline are: routine government & agency cutbacks; increased competition for less funding among an ever-increasing number of non-profits; the success of mental health & addiction advocates who have stable national funding for their own clearinghouses & centers; and the common belief in the myth that information on good self-help groups can easily be found online.  
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lht8IrC44O4>)

***Supporting Self – Help/Mutual Aid Groups in Eras of Social  
Dislocation: Emerging themes from the Field ([pdf](#))***

**Sotiris Lainas**, *Psychologist, PhD, MSc in Social Clinical Psychology of Addictions, Coordinator at Self-Help Promotion Programs in Greece.*

**Kiki Dimitriadou**, *Psychologist, MSc in Social Clinical Psychology of Addictions and Psychosocial Problems/ Coordinator at Self-Help Promotion Program of Chania.*

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Socioeconomic crises in human history result in to various changes in different levels: societal, economic, interpersonal and personal. These changes also influence human and social sciences in the way of interpreting and intervening in human and social problems. The presentation refers to the values and to a proposed methodology that Self Help supporters utilize in a country in deep economic, social and cultural crisis such as Greece. Apart from the multiple negative effects of the socioeconomic crisis in Greece a positive result arises: the emergence of numerous social movements/ initiatives. Based on this fact, we suggest a methodology that attempts to utilize this reality. The main characteristics/steps of this methodology are: a) Giving emphasis to the support of SH groups with collective action orientation, b) Promoting the horizontal collaboration among these initiatives, c) Educating these initiatives in SH principles. The introduction of different models of SH groups, the cooperation with the Greek Ministry of Health and the sensitization of health professionals in SH ideas is the backbone of our work and perspectives. We conclude suggesting the necessity of a more community oriented SH Support based on solidarity, self- activation and the inclusion of local paradigms. ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1\\_DsD76LIg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1_DsD76LIg))

### ***Self – Help Clearing Houses in Germany: First Results of the SHILD Study (pdf)***

**Jürgen Matzat**, *Psychologist-Psychotherapist, Founder and Board Member of the German Association of Self-Help Groups, Head at the Department of Psychosomatics in Giessen*



The SHILD (Selbsthilfe in Deutschland) study is a study conducted in Germany as an attempt to present, describe and clarify the role, the perspectives and the challenges that Clearing Houses (CH) have. By contacting and interviewing 133 CH in the country, the survey reflects the aims and the targets of Clearing Houses. The networking between self-help groups, the cooperation with experts and the creation of “self -help friendly climate” in the mainstream Health Care system are some of the goals of Clearing Houses in Germany that emerged from the study. Moreover, the presentation describes the providing services for self-help groups and professionals, the working

conditions within CH and discusses the contribution and the adequacy of self- help groups for mental disorders. In the end, the presentation outlines the challenges that self - help groups deal with, such as 1) the adequacy of self-help groups in managing people with mental disorders,2) the aging of group leaders and 3) the misconception of SH groups as an additional service provider. ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3dN5CC\\_CpMc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3dN5CC_CpMc))

***National research project 2014-2016 about community self-help in Switzerland: Significance, development and its contribution to health care and social services ([pdf](#))***

***Bettina Häfeli***, Assistant and project manager of Self-Help Switzerland/ Lic. Social Science.



A nationwide research project about community self-help in Switzerland is carried out by a bilingual research team since January 2014.

The current provision and promotion conditions are evaluated, the benefits and limits of community self-help are identified and conclusions for further development and promotion as well as recommendations to promote community self-help for politicians, institutions, experts, scientists and researchers are made. These aspects are examined nationwide on three levels: on the micro level (individual-related context – activities in the «groups»), the meso level (institutional context – self-help centers and networking) and the macro level (general significance for health care and social services) by using different proceedings (literature reviews, data analysis, interviews i.a. with focus groups and experts, case studies etc.). The research will be finished by the 4th quarter of 2016. ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_14Dmf\\_wE3w](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_14Dmf_wE3w))

### ***Promoting Self Help in Norway ([pdf](#))***

**Hilde Nøkleberg**, Advisor at Self-help Norway - National Resource Center for Self-Help in Oslo

**Mette Smedstad**, Leader of the regional office at Self-help Norway - National Resource Center for Self-Help in Oslo



Our presentation will focus on the main axes of our practical work for the promotion of self-help in Norway. We will describe and analyze some of the key features of the “National Plan for Self – Help” such as the cooperation with local authorities, health services, NGOs and universities in order to communicate the idea of self-help within our society. We will also discuss about our training and educational programs for students, professionals and group founders as an attempt to promote and develop the self-help practices. Moreover, we aim to present the campaign of self-help promotion and its printed material and we will end up discussing the key features and characteristics of our work. ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fkT1-H\\_iayo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fkT1-H_iayo))

### ***Self-help in Tuscany: facing the change in a changing world ([pdf](#))***

**Fausto Petrini**, PhD Psychologist & Contract Professor for the Education and Psychology Psychologist, Member of the Technical and Scientific Committee of the Association “Coordinamento Toscano Gruppi di Auto Aiuto”



Our contribution starts from a small analysis of the rising changes in voluntary work and self-help due to economic pressures. In Italy some of the latest bills, both at the local and national level, are striving to deprive the voluntary sector, while, at the same time, more and more interventions is expected by associations in

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order to deal with the rising needs. In this emerging scenario, The Tuscan Organization of the Self-Help Group launched in the last years a process of self (r)evolution in order to challenge the emerging needs. The first step was an afterthought of the mission and the internal roles and functions, in order to deeply change the organizational culture. This means, as a first empowering strategy, a critical reflection on the role of professionals in the organization.

Moreover, a reframing of the mission was promoted in terms of “communication in favor of groups visibility needs”. Therefore, a set of new communication instruments was developed and will be presented during the contribution. Finally, a new relationship with the academic sector is seen as a strategic action to be improved, in order to produce a more conscious role of future professionals as a long term effect. Thus, the results of the first training activities with young psychologists will be discussed. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YYkd6H1Qakc>)

***Encouraging professionals to understand, support and work  
with self-help groups (pdf)***

**Paige Bramley**, *Training and Development Officer at Self Help Nottingham.*



In this presentation there will be examples of how we work with and encourage professionals to be actively involved with self-help groups. Specific items will be included such as examples of training around the ethos and benefits of self-help groups, how to support groups and the levels of interaction that health care professionals can give. In addition, publications we have produced for professionals will be presented. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=smoPLusHTaM>)

### ***Self Help: Professionals and Volunteer Work***

**Irja Mikkonen**, Social Worker, Psychotherapist, Dr.Soc.Sc. Citizen Forum & Hopealanka ry.

Web Link for the presentation (presented by Helena Palojärvi):  
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1JyZy229Dac>)

### ***Self Help in Norway (pdf)***

**Hilde Nøkleberg**, Advisor at Self-Help Norway - National Resource Center for Self-Help in Oslo

**Mette Smedstad**, Leader of the regional office at Self-help Norway - National Resource Center for Self-Help in Oslo



In our presentation there will be a short description of the social and economic situation of the country as well as a brief description of Norwegian population's health problems. Highlighting the significance of self-help in health issues, we will discuss the inclusion of Self-Help in the Norwegian public health program according to the "National Plan for Self-Help". The latter and its initiative, "The National Resource Center", are aiming at providing information about self-help, educating professionals and students about self-help and providing helping guidelines to anyone who wants to start a self-help group. More specifically, "The National Resource Center" with seven regional offices across the country attempts to disseminate the idea and the practices of self-help through the collaboration with local meeting points, training programs and networking among self-help groups. To conclude, in our presentation we will try to depict the main purposes, tasks and policies we follow for promoting self-help and explain why national plan for self-help constitutes the driving force for the development of such groups.  
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kuqAwreGzyA>)

### ***Men and Self-Help***

**Casper Bo Danø**, MSc of Arts, MSc of Social Entrepreneurship/ Head of Secreteriat- CEO at FriSe.

**Catherine Sort**, MSc in Psychology and Communications/ Self-help consultant at FriSe.



FriSe (Volunteer Centers and Self-help groups) has been organizing and supporting local self-help groups in Denmark for more than 20 years. Even though we and our members have tried hard, it has always been a bit of a challenge attracting men into participating in self-help groups.



With the help from substantial government funding, FriSe has developed a new approach to self-help groups designed to appeal to men. The aim is to attract men who have been divorced (or are in the process of it) or who have lost their job recently.

The approach has some significant differences to the self-help group-concept - compared to how these are usually organized in Denmark. For example, each group meeting has a specific theme; all the groups have an educated group facilitator, all the courses lasts 8 weeks and so on. In short - its structure and purpose is to some extend much more outspoken, than that of the 'classic' groups.

So far, we sense that the project is going really well. This is based on statements from the men who participate in the groups, but also do to the increasing level of media coverage (both local and national), which suggests to us, that we have hid a nerve and the focus on men and self-help is both highly interesting and of great value. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l6wHHr-NKU0>)

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***Empowerment in self-help groups from the point of view of social work (pdf)***

**Helena Palojärvi**, licentiate of Social Science and MSc in Social Policy, director at Naistenkartano



Neistenkartano is a national organization established in Finland in 1922. The organization is financed by Finland Slot Machine (RAY) and its main goal is the support of addicted women and the prevention of women's addiction. Neistenkartano coordinates the NOVAT program which is a 3 semester peer group program for addicted women. This program is an open program to all women with addiction problems and works according to self-help/mutual aid principles.

The presentation analyzes the role of empowerment in self-help groups from a social work's point of view. The presentation also describes some of the key features and empowering elements of NOVAT such as self-determination, self-management and new skills learning for women as well as the peripheral role of professionals in this program. In addition, there is an extent analysis in "action areas of the individual" and the function of empowerment in each area. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qk0HLfZZQbs>)

***Self-Help goes Self-Management (pdf)***

**Carmen Rahm**, Director of Self-Help Switzerland/ Nurse, Diploma of business management and direction.



For many years the words empowerment, autonomy, self-determination and self-competence are integrated in our vocabulary and being used daily in our profession.

Today more and more we're getting confronted with the professional wish, demand and claim that the patient is an individual, who is self-controlled, powerful, full of strength, competent and all-

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knowing. An example shows the federal strategy-paper Health 2020: The word “Self-Management” is present all over the paper, but the word “Self-Help” never gets mentioned. Today it is more fashioned to use the words “caretaker, patient advocates, self-manager competencies & expert capacity”.

The coming up claim that the patient is compliant, full with knowledge and self-confided is demanding a lot for the concerned and for their relatives. Maybe 15% have the courage, the education, the language-skills and intention to confront this demand. But there are so many others, who are stacked in their problems, who do not know how to talk academically, who are not used to work in partnership with the doctor, who don't have the urge to fight against paternalism.

This keeps us up to promote more and more self-help and mutual help. Empowerment, autonomy, capability, self-determination and self-competence construct the fundament for the trendy caretaker, patient- advocate and self-manager. So let us keep on promoting self-help and mutual help!  
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DnToDZWCR4Y>)

***Working with Black , Asian and Ethnic Minority Groups (BAME)  
(pdf)***

***Velma Hamilton, Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic Health Outreach Worker (BAME) at Self Help Nottingham.***



How we have joined BAME long term health awareness with Self Help and forming groups, a model where the community outreach worker, engages with the community about a particular long term health condition, then supports in raising awareness, and makes necessary links with health professionals, with a view to engaging a few to start a self-help group in that community so the awareness can continue and of course that group will have the support of Self Help

Nottingham & training and development to encourage them and be that arm of support to continue.



BAME communities are not hard to reach, it is about the right methods of approach, taking into consideration cultural and faith reasons. It is about the first link, building trust and mutual support.

There will be examples of how joint working with other organisations such as health professionals, doctors and patient support groups has been successful in improving health outcomes in the community.

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i9-scO1XAn8>)

### ***Unemployment and Self Help (pdf)***

**Anat Moshe**, *Community social worker, MSc in Immigration & Social Integration.*



The “Project of Unemployment Inclusion” is an Israeli project addressed to unemployed minority groups such as people with special needs, Arabs Jews and Orthodox Jews. This presentation attempts to describe the key features of the support of unemployed minority groups as well as the promotion of self-help principles within the project. More specifically, the project provides to minority groups one year of training and individual counselling and it has been observed that after this year some of the groups continue the meetings independently without external guidance, altering the group into a self-help group. These groups considered to be as a basis of the promotion of the idea of self-help. Therefore the additional targets of the project is to establish groups of mutual support, encourage the collaboration among the programs, sensitize the staff and the participants for the idea of Self Help and encourage participation in the group process after entering the employment environment. In conclusion, the presentation suggests that the project can be an opportunity for the promotion of SH philosophy as well as a secure network for unemployed.

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pbuw5tFs3G8>)

***Discussing about the Key Features of Self-Help Groups in the Field of Drug and Alcohol Addiction ([pdf](#))***

**Valentina Dimitriadou**, *Psychologist, MSc in Social Clinical Psychology of Addictions and Psychosocial Problems/ Self-Help Promotion Program of Chania.*

**Ilias Chouliaras**, *Psychologist, MSc in Social Clinical Psychology of Addictions and Psychosocial Problems/ Self-Help Promotion Program of Chania.*



This was a presentation of a study on a systematic mapping of the common characteristics and differentiations related to the philosophy, structure and function of 12 world-class self-help groups for substance use. The primary goals of the study were: (i) to map the main features of self-help groups related to substance use, (ii) to examine the differentiation between those features through a categorizing scheme, and (iii) to reach some conclusions in order to understand and frame these differentiations. The material was exclusively collected from official sources and declarations of the groups, whilst for the shaping of the classification-analysis scheme the principles of both qualitative content analysis and grounded theory were employed. The final analytical scheme, constituted by

12 main axes that represented the groups' stances and referred to the definition and treatment of addiction, the goals and means of recovery, the level of professional involvement and the affiliations with –external or internal- funding resources. The results revealed: i) the loose correlation between the axes of groups' definition of addiction and its treatment proposition -as a contradiction between mainly biological definition of addiction combined with a basically non-biological treatment proposition was found to be a usual phenomenon, ii) the “psychologization” of groups' recovery models which is a result of the combination of different structural and functional characteristics of the groups, iii) the increased responsibilities of

external interference agents at the expense of individual groups' autonomy. The discussion of these findings ended with proposals for further research on the interesting and thirsty for more investigation area of self-help movements.  
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LdxtjNNZ8HQ>)

### ***The situation of self-help groups and self-help support in Austria*** ***(pdf)***

**Andreas Keclik**, *Psychologist/ Head of the department of self-help and empowerment at Viennese Health Promotion (Wiener Gesundheitsforderung)*



#### Austria and it's health care system

The confederation of Austria is made up of nine regions/provinces (the Länder) including Vienna as it's capital with a total of 8.42 million inhabitants. The Austrian health care system is primarily financed through a mixed model of financing, to which the state and social health insurance contribute almost equal shares (a combination of income-based social insurance contributions and public income generated through taxes). Comprehensive social health insurance coverage is a major feature of the Austrian health care system: 99.9% of the population is protected. The Austrian health care system is characterised by a high density of easily accessible health care facilities. Patients can choose their family physician and have free access to most other forms of medical care.

#### Self-help groups and self-help support

The number of self-help groups and organizations is estimated at about 1,600, which is about 20 Groups per 100,000 inhabitants. Thus, the relative density is lower than for example in Germany. The distribution across the country is relatively homogeneous. On the

whole, the support of self-help groups is organized province-wise, carried out by local contact and information centres. Within Austria two different kinds of these contact and information centres can be distinguished. On one hand you find self-organised associations which are established by the local self-help groups of the given province. The appointment of board members is the result of democratic elections of the member organizations. On the other hand you find non profit organizations whose tasks also include the support of self-help groups. At the federal level, the “ARGE Selbsthilfe Österreich” represents the interests of their members. Since 2010, the ARGE Selbsthilfe Österreich is organized as an association. Members of the ARGE are both: local contact and information centres and self-help organizations working on a specific problem nationwide. The financing of the self-help at the federal level is inconsistently. While the ARGE succeeded in public funding and therefore has sufficient financial resources to build up structures (such as staff, office, public relations), there is still no systematic funding of self-help organizations at the federal level. Behind this background there are two major tasks of the ARGE. One is the systematic funding of self-help organizations through transparent criteria on a federal level. The second major goal of the ARGE is to push along the patient involvement in the Austrian health care system which goes hand in hand with questions about self-help groups and their legitimation as patient representatives.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qzCSt5d4u00>

### ***Presentation of Self Help Promotion Program ([pdf](#))***

**Sotiris Lainas**, *Psychologist, PhD, MSc in Social Clinical Psychology of Addictions and Psychosocial Problems/ Coordinator at Self-Help Promotion Programs in Greece.*



Self Help Promotion Program is a program of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and it consists the only state proposal in Greece that emphasizes in and promotes the idea of self-help/mutual aid in addressing addiction and other psychosocial problems. The presentation analyses the main aims



as well as the key features of program's operation mentioning some representative examples of its work. There is also a discussion about the difficulties and the challenges that the program confronted in establishing the idea of self-help in a country where these practices were not widespread. The presentation concludes with the description of program's future goals for further legitimization of self-help/mutual aid practices in Greece. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uX8BRM26uMY>)

### ***Promoting Self - Help/Mutual Aid in the Field of Education and Health***

***Maria Dafa***, *Psychologist, MSc in Social Clinical Psychology of Addictions and Psychosocial Problems/ Special Primary School and Special Kindergarden of Kastoria*



#### Physical health

My first attempt of applying the principles of self-help was in the field of physical health, a few years ago, in Kastoria. I learnt about the concept of self-help during my postgraduate studies in psychology. By the end of my studies I was diagnosed having

MS, therefore I started seeking for support in people with the same experience. Then, I accepted an invitation to participate, as a psychologist, in a workshop about MS. My presentation text was based on my double role, both empirical and scientific. As a result of the workshop, a core of six people was created and had systematic meetings. Two months later the meetings became more technical and the target restricted to the founding of an association. Mainly for these reasons, I did no longer cover my need for support and I kept a close distance from the association. Nowadays I' m seeking for the next opportunity for equal meetings with persons, who have the same experiences.

## Education

In the last three years I have been working in special education. My postgraduate studies were in the field of social clinical psychology of addiction and psychosocial problems. The regulation in special education school units defines responsibilities for psychologists such as teachers support, students support and family support. In this frame of work, I tried to create a parents group that was based on self-help principles. The last school year, after the first individual appointments with parents, I invited them to have a meeting. During this first meeting, we discussed about self-help groups and how they could get support that stems from them and addressed to them as well. They asked me to take on the organization of the meetings and so we proceeded. The group met five times and a supportive network was developed. The expectation is to continue the meetings in the next school year. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lrZz9v898Rk>)

### ***Self – Help/Mutual Aid Initiatives in the Field of Autism/Asperger Syndrome and Mental Disability***

***Pavlina Paradomenaki***, *Linguistics and Preschool Education Studies/  
Vice President of Greek Association of Asperger Syndrome*



This presentation attempts to describe the formation, the targets and the philosophy of the “Initiative of Parents and Friends of Adolescents and Young Adults with Mental Disabilities and Autism” as well as the role of “Self Help Promotion Program” in supporting this initiative. The initiative is a movement that was set up by a group of parents supported also by friends and volunteers with experience in communication with people with various diversities. The main targets of the initiative is to create activities that corresponds the needs of adults with autism encouraging communication, education, employment and entertainment and connect people with autism with the broader community. The main concern of this effort is to avoid philanthropic and institutional activities which reproduce the marginalization of people with diversities and promote actions that support integration employment and the self-management of young

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adults with such difficulties. In the end, it is described the collaboration between the initiative and the “Self Help Promotion Program” as well as the perspectives of such a collaboration. ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OUOXkL1\\_R1o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OUOXkL1_R1o))



## Web Links for Country Reports

Country Report Austria (presented by Andreas Keclik):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qzCSt5d4u00>

Country Report Denmark (presented by Casper Bo Danø & Cathrine Sort): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QiY5gsvhDNo>

Country Report Finland (presented by Helena Palojärvi):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NxYv2RJD2Nw>

Country Report Germany (presented by Jürgen Matzat):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8yzYHPPY1dQ>

Country Report Greece (presented by Dimitra Gavriilidou, Alexandros Georgiou & Kostas Fragiadakis):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nmAOtECpeaA>

Country Report Israel (presented by Anat Moshe):

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_Filss7lkAU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Filss7lkAU)

Country Report Italy (presented by Fausto Petrini & Riccardo Pieralli):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p3IcTaZUNew>

Country Report Norway (presented by Hilde Nøkleberg & Mette Smedstad): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kuqAwreGzyA>

Country Report Switzerland (presented by Carmen Rahm):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b1Q3DtR3nYo>

Country Report United Kingdom (presented by Michele Banton):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=waj5BmN3Wr4>

## **Interviews of pioneers in the field of self-help/mutual aid groups and self-help support**

The following interviews with Edward Madara and Jurgen Matzat was taken during the days of 13<sup>th</sup> European Experts' Meeting on Self-Help Support at Chania. These interviews are the first part of an ongoing project which aims to document the experiences and knowledge of pioneers in the field of self-help/mutual aid groups and self-help support.



Interview with Edward Madara:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=36ERB9Ub5NU>



Interview with Jurgen Matzat:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8YnMzpzg\\_M&t=141s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8YnMzpzg_M&t=141s)

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Guided tour in old port of Chania



Guided tour in Archaeological Site of Knossos

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## Self-Help Promotion Program – Contact Information

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