



# **PANAGIA ELEOUSA, Greece**

## **The challenges in providing services to people with intellectual disabilities when getting older**

Friday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2021

**Online National Awareness Raising Event  
Challenges and Good Practices Supporting Older People with Disabilities**

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**PANAGIA ELEOUSA** is a **private, non for profit** service provider and is located in **Western Greece**, in the cities of Messolonghi and Agrinio. It employs **55 members of staff**, it **currently provides services to 160 service users** and it has a **31 year experience** in providing services **free of charge** to people with intellectual disabilities.





## ***Panagia Eleousa in a few words...***

### **Panagia Eleousa in its 3 Day Care centers provides:**

Education and training in departments where handmade products are produced and they are promoted to the local market in our two shops, in Messolonghi and Agrinio cities. The training of the service users aims to develop their individual and social skills.

### Therapeutic programs by specialized scientists:

- **Speech therapy, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, music therapy, therapeutic horse riding, art therapy and in the cases that it is required medical support by the psychiatrist of our centre.**





## ***Panagia Eleousa in a few words...***

For people who are deprived of parental care, “PANAGIA ELEOUSA” founded and operates two facilities of Assisted Living in Messolonghi and Agrinio cities.

**Panagia Eleousa organises and implements:**

**Cultural and social Events, Conferences, Scientific Days**

➤ **aiming at raising the awareness of the society.**

**Community-based activities**

➤ **aiming at the:**

**-the Development of the service users’ social skills**

**-the Contribution to the service users’ integration to the community**

**-Raising community awareness and Stimulation of volunteering**

**-the Activation of the State for the creation of facilities and legislation concerning disability issues**





# ***Our target group***

Our target group, are **people over 15 years old** with intellectual disabilities, autism and severe disabilities (Down syndrome, disabilities of sensory organs, and speech, kinetic disabilities, mild intellectual disorders, etc.). We have experienced **that persons with disabilities** face a number of obstacles including attitudinal and environmental barriers preventing their full and equal participation in all aspects of life. In addition to this, as our service users get older we experience that **older persons with disabilities are among the most adversely affected, facing further age barriers in society.**





# *The challenges...*



- Therefore, as an organisation providing lifelong services to this specific target group for 31 years, we face the challenge that our service users are getting older as years pass by.
- One emerging need from this situation is that while people with disabilities are getting older their parents are getting older at the same time.
- So, from the parents' side there is concern, who will take care of their children when they pass away. ➡ Request to introduce them to Assisted Living Facilities
- ✓ **Panagia Eleousa managed to face this challenge by constructing 2 more Assisted Living facilities in Agrinio city in order to cover the needs of the service users and meet the parents' requests**



# ***The challenges...***

- **When elderly people with disabilities live in assisted living facilities this requires ...**
  - that the facilities are staffed with health professionals, trained carers, psychologists, social workers and other experts providing services to the residents.
  - that **there is specialized training for staff** who provide long-term care in order to support the elder service users with various disabilities, especially intellectual disabilities in our case.
  - that **the sustainability and continuous funding of the structures is ensured**
  - that **the structures providing long-term care are certified as a guarantee to ensure that all people with disabilities, including the elderly, can live with dignity and enjoy quality of life.**



# ***The legal framework***

**The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) sets out the legal obligations of States to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities in society and development. So, the Convention provides a concrete framework for action.**

However, in Greece there is no relevant legislation and policy concerning, in particular, older people with disabilities, so the legislative framework for People with Disabilities is applied in general in this case.







# *Suggestions*

- At PANAGIA ELEOUSA we have a **person-centered approach** and in this way we plan and provide our services according to the needs and expectations of our service users. **Quality of Life** at PANAGIA ELEOUSA means that each person receives individualized services based on their needs and accordingly they have the freedom of choice and initiative based on his / her abilities. **So, every service provided should meet the needs and capacities of every person.**
- **New perspectives for the development of structures and services for the elderly people with intellectual disabilities should be opened.** We strongly believe that **it is time to invest in the Third Age of people with disabilities and in their accessibility either to facilities, to goods or services, and to all aspects of life that each citizen is entitled to and must enjoy.**





# *Conclusion*

**\*As life expectancy in general increases, persons with disabilities who survive into old age can also be expected to contribute to the overall growth in the population of older persons with disabilities.**

**This highlights the need for countries to take a longer-term approach to investment in the planning, design and construction of their community to ensure environmental inclusiveness and accessibility in moving towards the goal of creating a society which meets the needs and capacities of all users.**

**It demonstrates a clear need to start articulating policies and programmes with regard to ageing which takes into consideration the cross-sectionalities between ageing and disability and how society can ensure programmes and facilities designed to meet the needs of an ageing population are also successful in meeting the needs of older persons with disabilities.**

**\*Source:<https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/disability-and-ageing.html>**



Thank you for  
your attention!



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