

An overview of KETHEA

Treatment works!

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“KETHEA is one of the leading European organisations in substance abuse and mental health prevention, treatment, and research. In the last several years I had a great pleasure of assisting KETHEA in strengthening their training and education programmes, and I have always been impressed by the extent and quality of care provided by this organisation.”

Igor Koutsenok, Professor of Psychiatry, University of California San Diego, former Chief of Prevention and Treatment Branch, United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime

Who we are

KETHEA, NGO in special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and one of the principal implementation bodies of the Greek national strategy on drugs, is the largest Greek network of addiction treatment, rehabilitation and social reintegration services. It has been supporting drug users and their families since the foundation of the first Greek Therapeutic Community, in 1983.

KETHEA offers its services within community, prison and residential settings, and has the capacity to respond to clients with diverse needs, including adults, adolescents, parents, immigrants, refugees, prison inmates, released prisoners, alcoholics, gamblers and pathological internet users, at every stage of their recovery.

KETHEA programmes are drug-free and offer a comprehensive continuum of services, focusing on the recovery and the development of a new way of living, where the individual is a productive and equal member of the society. All services are provided free of charge.

KETHEA also runs school and community based prevention and early intervention programmes and is active in training and research in the field of addiction.

KETHEA'S INTERNATIONAL AFFILIATIONS

KETHEA is in special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and is associated with the UN Department of Public Information (DPI). KETHEA is also a member of the:

- World Federation of Therapeutic Communities (WFTC).
- Board of the European Federation of Therapeutic Communities (EFTC).
- International Council on Alcohol and Addictions (ICAA).
- Forum of Family Therapy Training Institutes of the European Family Therapy Federation (EFTA).
- Conference of NGOs in consultative status with the UN (CoNGO).
- Vienna NGO Committee on Drugs (VNGOC).

Our nation-wide network of services



- 3 Low Threshold Units
- 3 Mobile Units for the Care of Homeless Drug Users
- Street-Work Programmes
- 29 Counselling Centres
- 5 Residential Treatment Programmes for Adults
- 9 Non Residential Treatment Programmes for Adults
- 7 Non Residential Treatment Programmes for Adolescents and Young Adults
- 18 Counselling Programmes and 4 Therapeutic Communities within prison
- 2 Re-ception & Re-entry Centres for Released Prisoners
- A Counselling Centre at the Juvenile Court of Athens
- Specialised programmes for addicted parents, refugees, alcoholics, gamblers and pathological internet users

- 14 Re-Entry Centres
- 4 Transitional Schools
- 2 Specialised Social and Vocational Integration Centres
- 5 Vocation Training Institutes
- A Legal Support Service
- A Physical Health Unit
- A Mental Health Unit

- 27 Family Support Programmes
- A Drug Addiction Help-line
- A Gambling Help-line
- A Prevention and Early Intervention Network
- A Research & Education Institute
- A printing unit, a ceramics workshop, a carpentry shop and a farm

What we do

The KETHEA treatment programme is based on the psychosocial model of Therapeutic Communities, one of the most effective approaches to tackling addiction. KETHEA has adapted this model to the needs of the full range of Greek drug addicts.

KETHEA believes that effective treatment needs to go beyond drug abuse and offer an overall therapeutic process that addresses every aspect of an individual's life, i.e. their emotional, mental and physical health, family and social relations, history of offences, education, employment, housing etc.

Members of KETHEA treatment programmes have to participate actively and commit to change. They need to gain an insight into and understanding of why they use drugs, take responsibility for their situation, and gain control over their lives.

With more than 100 units across Greece, KETHEA can provide treatment programmes of varying intensity and duration on a residential, outpatient or day-care basis.

In Greece, seven out of ten drug users live with their families, and close relatives can contribute significantly to the effectiveness of their treatment. Family involvement is thus an integral part of all KETHEA programmes.

All services are provided free of charge and on an entirely non-discriminatory basis.

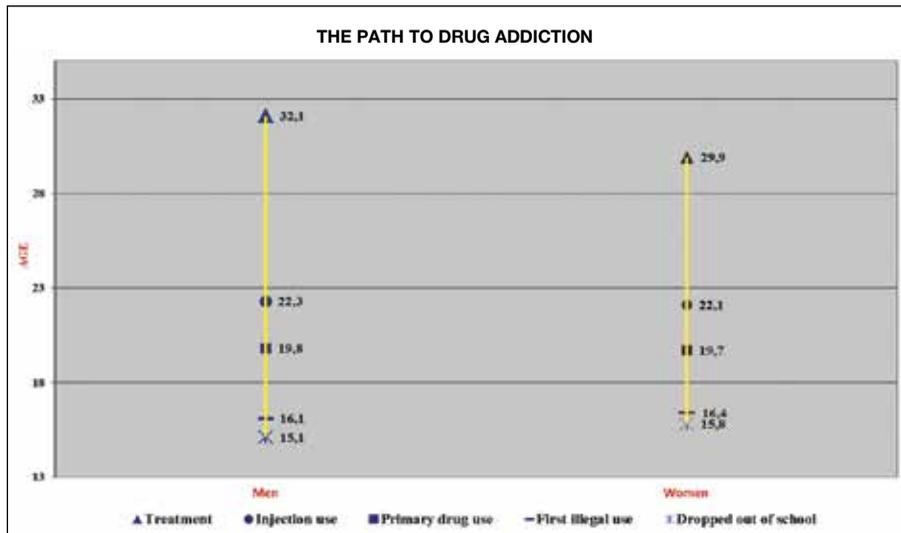
Every year:

- 3,000 drug users are supported through our street-work programmes.
- 3,000 addicted individuals contact our Counselling Centres, thereby taking the first step towards changing their lives.
- 1,500 people enter our Therapeutic Communities and Social Re-entry Centres on their way to full recovery and social rehabilitation.
- 2,000 prisoners and ex-prisoners attend our programmes at different levels of the criminal justice system and the community.
- 6,000 family members participate in our Family Support Programmes.
- 7,000 members of school and local communities take part in our prevention and early intervention activities.
- 700 health care and other professionals receive training from us in the field of drug prevention and addiction.

Our client profile

BASIC CHARACTERISTICS 2015 (n=2310)

- Men 86.7%
- Women 13.3%
- Mean age 31.0
- Previous treatment experience 60.0%
- Living with family of origin 55.2%
- Greek nationality 89.7%
- Unemployment 60.8%
- Mean age at dropping out of school 15.2
- Mean age at first use ever 16.2
- Cannabis as substance of onset of use 84.5%
- Systematic use of heroin 56.8%
- Mean age at first use of the primary substance 19.7
- Intravenous use at some point in drug career 55.8%
- Systematic intravenous use 20.9%
- Sharing syringes 29.3%
- Health problems 40.3%
- Arrested at least once 76.9%
- Convicted at least once 46.5%
- Pending legal issues 41.9%



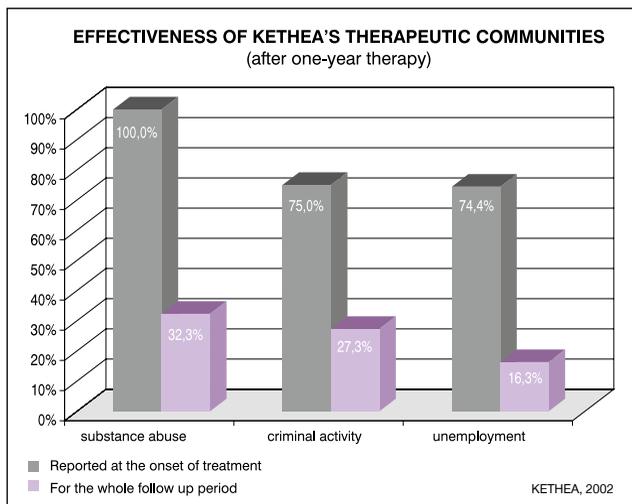
How effective we are

The results of an evaluation study conducted by the National School of Public Health, Athens (2001), provide explicit indications for the effectiveness of treatment in KETHEA Therapeutic Communities and directly link them to the time spent in treatment. The study involved persons enrolled in KETHEA Therapeutic Communities in 1994-1995. Looking at this sample of individuals at least 5 years after they entered treatment, the study showed that of those who had completed one year of treatment:

- 67.7% had abstained from the use of any illegal substance,
- 72.7% had avoided any legal trouble (arrests, convictions, imprisonment, etc.),
- 83.7% were in employment.

Even those who had participated in a Therapeutic Community for less than a year but for at least 90 days derived many benefits from their participation. These benefits include a general improvement in their health, lower levels of HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C, a reduced likelihood of involvement in illegal activities, and improved social and interpersonal ties.

KETHEA programmes are subject to ongoing evaluation to improve the quality and effectiveness of the services provided to drug addicts and their families. In 2010 a new KETHEA International External Evaluation Committee was founded, which is composed of leading authorities on substance abuse treatment, research and organisational management, from Europe and the USA. The Committee visits Therapeutic Communities, performs ad hoc research, and evaluates finances, effectiveness, and the satisfaction of the staff and the wider community.





KETHEA showed me the way to achieve abstinence and full recovery from addiction. I have gained back my dignity and self-respect, I have created meaningful relationships and found real enjoyment in life. I am also proud, because while a member of the treatment programme, I was given the opportunity to take part in many events and activities aimed at raising awareness and combating stigma.

George A., KETHEA alumnus

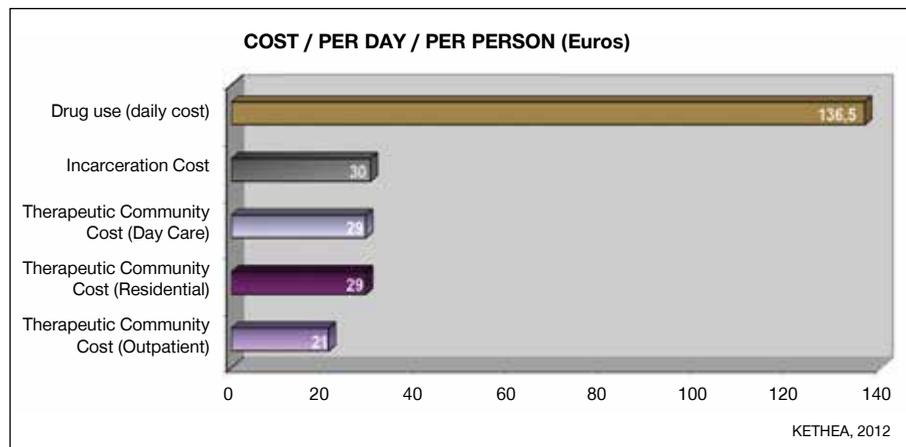
How cost effective we are

In times of economic crisis, the efficiency of drug rehabilitation programmes funded by public money becomes highly topical. Accordingly, KETHEA conducted a cost efficiency study of its therapeutic communities in 2012 in order to be in the position to give an informed answer to this question. The survey, which involved 340 members of KETHEA programmes, analysed the social cost of drug use and compared it with the cost of participation in a Therapeutic Community.

The survey showed that for every €1 invested in a KETHEA Therapeutic Community, society saves between €4.6 and €6.5, depending on the type of treatment programme (residential, out-patient, day care). The savings result from reducing the costs associated with substance abuse, which include criminal activities, persecution and incarceration, hospitalisation and unemployment.

The outcome effectiveness of KETHEA Therapeutic Communities increases the benefits to society over time, since a significant proportion of Therapeutic Community members will abstain from drug use and delinquency and re-enter society and the active workforce. The same survey found that drug treatment also costs less than confinement.

These results indicate that the treatment of addiction is a social, humanitarian and economic imperative, particularly in times of economic crisis, which pose a threat to social cohesion as well as increasing substance use.



The impact of the crisis on drug use

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The economic crisis has had a dramatic effect on the physical and mental health of the Greek population. The data show that rising unemployment and a significant fall in income has led to a clear deterioration in various indicators, including an increase in depression, suicide rates and the use of legal and illegal substances.

The recession has also had a negative impact on existing drug-related problems, worsening physical health, increasing levels of homelessness, self-destructive behavior, and the marginalization of drug users. HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases, such as Hepatitis C, have increased among drug users. More expensive drugs give way to cheap substances, such as Sisha, a combination of methamphetamine and dangerous chemicals, also called the “drug of the poor”.

Furthermore, a bleak outlook for the post-treatment stage will most likely discourage drug users from contacting treatment and rehabilitation services. High unemployment makes the professional and social rehabilitation of former drug users even more difficult, increasing the risk of a relapse.

In this difficult period, KETHEA is being called upon to respond to increasing needs while facing budget and personnel cuts.

Our strategy during the crisis

- Re-organising KETHEA's service network.
- Monitoring developments systematically in order to respond to emerging needs.
- Promoting networking, cooperation and complementarity with other agents in the field.
- Continuously assessing and improving the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of our services.
- Actively participating in the public debate on a timely and effective drug policy.
- Supporting professionals in the field through lifelong training.
- Reducing operating costs and increasing self-funding.
- Promoting the active involvement of volunteers and civil society in the fight against addiction.
- Increasing accountability and transparency.

Prevention and community development

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KETHEA runs prevention programmes and activities for the general population and for high-risk groups in varying locations and settings, with an emphasis on community and school-based responses. These programmes combine different scientific approaches and aim to enhance protective factors while reversing or reducing factors which increase the risk of drug use. They are tailored to meet the needs and profile of the groups they address, and are subject to evaluation to ensure continuing improvement. KETHEA also focuses on developing innovative programmes based on a comprehensive approach that includes family, community, school and media interventions.

KETHEA trains mental health professionals and teachers in planning, implementing and evaluating prevention programmes. It also produces prevention material which is used in Greek primary and secondary education.

Since the beginning of the crisis, KETHEA has set up a Community Intervention Centre in the heart of Athens. Located close to the city's traditional drug-sale zones, the Centre aims to meet the new needs generated by the economic crisis, with a focus on teenagers and young adults facing personal, interpersonal and social difficulties. The Center mobilizes community volunteers, fostering participation at the community level in partnership with schools, service providers and a range of professionals in the community.

Promoting lifelong training of professionals and scientific knowledge

The promotion of scientific knowledge and professional development in the field of addiction are key KETHEA objectives.

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To achieve these goals, KETHEA:

- Collaborates with national and international partners to provide training programmes to professionals working in the field of drug addiction, and to students in the spheres of mental health, social care, teaching, sociology, psychiatry, justice, etc. Major partners in KETHEA training programmes are the Greek National School of Public Health, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, University of California, San Diego - Department of Psychiatry, and Tavistock Institute of Human Relations.
- Systematically collects, analyses and processes data on the socio-demographic characteristics and patterns of drug use (based on data from the members of its programmes), evaluates its services and takes part in special addiction research programmes in cooperation with Greek and foreign entities.
- Coordinates and participates in European programmes which seek to educate professionals, stimulate research and the exchange of know-how, and develop innovative rehabilitation services.
- Offers international professional certification in the treatment of addictions in collaboration with the International Certification & Reciprocity Consortium (IC & RC).
- Organises workshops, seminars, European and International conferences.
- Maintains a scientific library based in Athens and publishes the journal “Exartisis” (‘Addiction’).
- Offers internships to professionals and students, as well as research programmes for post-graduate or PhD students of Greek and foreign universities.



“I worked with many organisations in my career, and KETHEA was one of the most admirable I came across. The staff were accomplished and professional, careful and creative with their budget to ensure the best use was made of limited resources. What they achieved with their clients was inspiring, and their programmes should be a template for drug addiction services throughout the world.”

Deirdre Moylan, Former Clinical Director, Adolescent Department, Tavistock Clinic, Former Co-Director, Tavistock Consultation Service, Tavistock Clinic, Former Director, MA and Doctorate programmes, 'Consultation and the Organisation' Tavistock Clinic and University of East London

Our resources

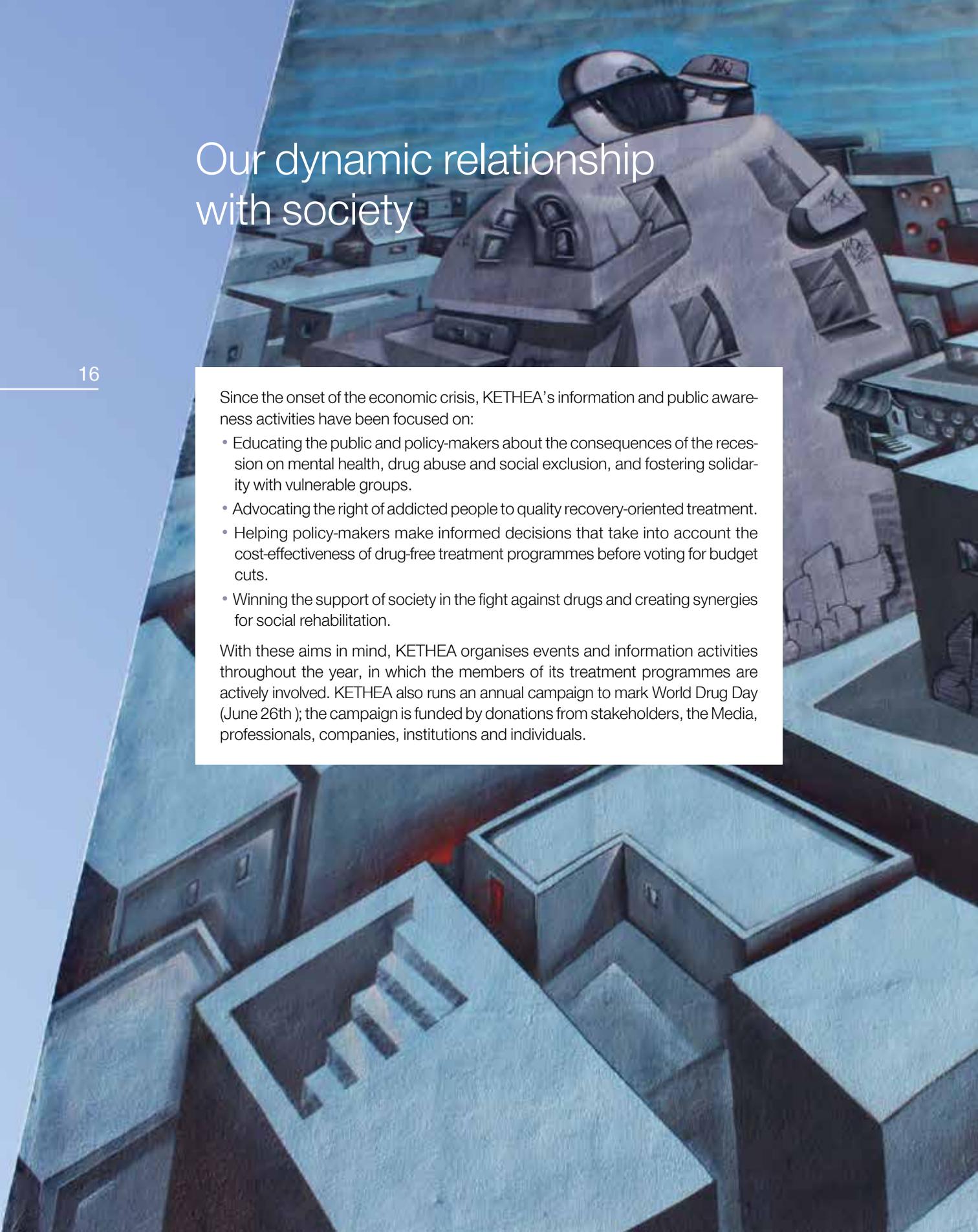
KETHEA is funded by the Hellenic Ministry of Health, by its workshops and production units, and by private donations and EU programs. Since a substantial part of KETHEA's expenditure is covered by state funding, the organization can provide its services to drug users and their families free of charge and without contributions from social insurance funds. Unfortunately, the recession has led to a significant reduction in the state funds allocated for the treatment of addiction.

KETHEA's annual state grant has been decreasing since 2009. Overall reduction between 2009 and 2016 reaches approximately 33%. KETHEA has responded by equivalently bringing down its operating costs. KETHEA has also channeled its efforts into increasing its own income through its production units (a printing unit, a carpentry shop, a ceramics workshop and an organic farm) private donations and its participation in National Strategic Reference Framework operational programmes.

KETHEA's treatment costs are significantly reduced thanks to the work undertaken by volunteers, especially the voluntary Family Associations supporting its therapeutic programs, and by the fact that it does not employ auxiliary staff or security personnel. The tasks associated with the daily running of the therapeutic programmes (such as cleaning, preparing meals, making repairs, shopping etc.) are performed by the members themselves, and comprise an integral part of the therapy.

KETHEA has created a system of internal auditing and employs chartered accountants to carry out annual audits of its financial statements. Its annual report is presented in a press conference and forwarded to the Hellenic Ministry of Health, and to the General Accounting Office.

KETHEA's dynamism stems from its staff, most of whom are engaged in the front line providing services to drug users and their families. Since the onset of the crisis, KETHEA's staff has decreased by approximately 20%, due to restrictions in hiring, imposed by Greece's bailout agreements. Currently (end of 2016) KETHEA employs 447 staff member, 15% of whom are treatment programme graduates. Imposed reductions in salaries, together with an increase in the work load, and a decrease in other resources put serious strain on the staff and may endanger the quality of services. KETHEA provides a counterbalance through continuous training, supervision, promotion of professional ethics and standards, and involvement of the staff in decision-making.



Our dynamic relationship with society

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Since the onset of the economic crisis, KETHEA's information and public awareness activities have been focused on:

- Educating the public and policy-makers about the consequences of the recession on mental health, drug abuse and social exclusion, and fostering solidarity with vulnerable groups.
- Advocating the right of addicted people to quality recovery-oriented treatment.
- Helping policy-makers make informed decisions that take into account the cost-effectiveness of drug-free treatment programmes before voting for budget cuts.
- Winning the support of society in the fight against drugs and creating synergies for social rehabilitation.

With these aims in mind, KETHEA organises events and information activities throughout the year, in which the members of its treatment programmes are actively involved. KETHEA also runs an annual campaign to mark World Drug Day (June 26th); the campaign is funded by donations from stakeholders, the Media, professionals, companies, institutions and individuals.

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