

## *Final conference of the 3-year H2020 initiative*

# ASSIST Project develops a successful multidisciplinary strategy to tackle energy poverty in Europe

## *Consumer's empowerment and the collaboration between social, energy and public sector are the key elements of the ASSIST solution*

After three years of hard and successful effort in tackling energy poverty, the [ASSIST project](#) (ASSIST - Support Network for Household Energy Saving, G.A. No 754051) is approaching its end. In these years the consortium has been able to **implement a holistic approach** to contribute to tackle energy poverty by carrying out **in depth analysis** on the phenomena, **increasing competencies** of operators and **delivering actions** on the field.

ASSIST model takes into account the **multidisciplinary** and **multispectral** dimension of energy poverty through the **training, networking** and **action** of the **Home Energy Advisors (HEA)**, an enhanced professional profile competent on energy, communication and social issues, vulnerability as well as other dimensions related to energy poverty.

The actions developed have led to an **overall view** of the problem at European and especially at local level, leading to the preparation of a **policy framework paper to tackle energy poverty**. ASSIST experience and the policy framework were presented, together with other local and European experiences synergetic to the Project, at the [final conference](#) held online the past 9, 10 and 11 of June with a daily average of 120 attendants.

*"This level of participation (More than 320 people registered for the conference), together with the active involvement shown during the debate with the audience, is just another evidence of how relevant this issue is in our society and how necessary it is to search for multidisciplinary replicable solutions adapted to all contexts and regions, such as the one proposed by ASSIST", expressed Marina Varvesi, ASSIST project coordinator.*

The ASSIST solution can be adopted by different stakeholders, by institutions such as local administrations, social actors or utilities and can be valid in the fight against energy poverty. Some municipalities have expressed their interest in the take-off of ASSIST model within their sustainable and energy and climate action plan to target energy poverty.



## ASSIST IN A NUTSHELL

### The challenge

How to develop **concrete solutions** to improve the levels of **empowerment** and **engagement** of vulnerable consumers and energy poor in a scenario of increasing market complexity?

### The response

ASSIST offers a two-way approach to the problem: **active engaging** of consumers in the energy market as well as a **positive change of behaviour** in relation to energy use, and to **influence the design of policies** at all levels to tackle energy poverty issues.

The project has generated **in depth knowledge** on consumer vulnerability and on energy poverty, with the aim to foster the development of a clear and unique definition for its identification and measuring in Europe.

### The impact

- Nearly 100K vulnerable consumers reached through "soft" and big actions.
- Energy saving of 2 % of > 12K vulnerable consumers.
- > 500 trained Home Energy Advisors (HEA) in 6 countries.
- Identification of national measures and best practices to address energy poverty in Europe.

## Highlighted comments from the speakers

### Marina Varvesi, AISFOR (Italy). Project coordinator

*"ASSIST has developed a model to tackle energy poverty. AFTER 3 years, the model is now ready to be taken up by stakeholders."*

### Marta García, Ecoserveis (Spain). ASSIST partner

*"Energy poverty reduction is not only about meeting our basic needs, it's also about participation, influence and power and local actors are key players"*

### Carmen Redondo, HISPACOOP (Spain)

*"Consumers associations shall work to introduce consumers protection regulation in policies [...] we need to defend vulnerable consumers in the electricity market."*

### Enzo Bertolotti, municipality of Parma (Italy)

*"Municipalities have social services and energy services in different departments and usually they don't cooperate. We need to put them in contact in order to tackle energy poverty."*



**Johanna Kirkinen, Finnish Energy Authority (Finland)**

*"The Assist project has been the first project clearly focusing on energy poverty (...) we need more statistics and data to better understand vulnerable consumers and energy poverty."*

**Stefan Goemaere, Samenlevingsopbouw West-Vlaanderen (Belgium)**

*"We need to put people at the heart of policies because we have to start from their needs – what do people need themselves to be able to tackle energy poverty?"*

**Mariusz Swora, specialist on energy law (Poland)**

*"What is important for the future is (...) to make the regional concept of household energy advisor a permanent solution and not just an idea abandoned after the end of the project."*

**Neil Penny, NHS Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group (UK)**

*"Raising awareness about energy poverty: the Assist project has been invaluable on that matter."*

**Vincent Berrutto, EASME (Belgium)**

*"Most of our projects do focus on fostering, empowering and targeting all actors, including those who cannot heat their home properly."*

**Stefan Bouzarovski, ENGAGER (UK)**

*"We will be talking about the various EE projects that have been actives in the field of Energy Poverty."*

**Silvia Vivarelli, EASME (Belgium)**

*"EASME has been set-up by the European Commission to manage on its behalf several EU programmes in the fields of SME support & innovation, environment, climate action, energy and maritime affairs."*

**Cezara Popovici, STEP Project (Belgium)**

*"STEP is a H2020 project that aims at tackling energy poverty through low cost measures and behaviour change."*

**Daan Creupelandt, REScoop project (Belgium)**

*"Energy cooperatives give power to people (...) ensuring citizens' voices are heard."*

**Clotilde Clark-Foulquier, FEANTSA (Belgium)**

*"Aiming for large-scale investment in renovations for energy efficiency of the housing stock that is socially just."*



**Mathias Maucher, EAPN (Belgium)**

*"Today, we will discuss how we can use policy recommendations to help reducing the number of vulnerable consumers."*

**Cornelia Ernst, European Parliament, GUE/NGL group (Germany)**

*"Access to energy must be treated as a right."*

**Giustino Piccolo, Covenant of Mayors (Belgium)**

*"it's key to position energy poverty not as a policy on its own. Local level is the best place to do so."*

**Julien Dijol, Housing Europe (Belgium)**

*"When talking about energy poverty and energy proficiency, we need to discuss how the policy makers at the EU and national level can support the local level."*

**Anne Weidenbach, European Commission (Belgium)**

*"Member states are requested to set up measures to address energy poverty."*

**Contact for more info**

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**Resources for more details**

[Final conference web](#)  
[Conference act](#)

