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Social Work across all Services

nurturing self-determination and self-empowerment journeys

Social work practice cuts across all SJAF services. Social Work team members have the opportunity to practice within a generic service such as the Ċentru Antida and Ċentru Enrichetta Family Resource Centres as well as with a specialised service such as LWIEN (mental health), and SOAR (female victims and survivors of domestic violence and survivors). The team of practitioners meets every six weeks to review work outcomes, share developments and plan collaborative work processes. Practitioners identify areas for further professional development on the basis of which continuous professional development opportunities are offered with input from both external resource persons and Foundation staff.

Casework in 2016 In 2016, SJAF workers supported 397 new families in distress involving 622 individuals. Apart from these 397 families, 240 families continued to be supported from the previous year, and another 24 cases were re-activated thus bringing the total of families receiving support in 2016 to 661. Within the same year, 252 cases were closed. As the supportive social work relationship develops, Social Workers work in consultation with practitioners from other disciplines and often refer service users internally for further psycho-social support. Social Workers were responsible for the following interventions:

- 2512 office-based sessions;
- 104 home-visits;
- 325 visits to government departments and other service agencies with or on behalf of service users;
- 170 advocacy reports;
- 105 supervision sessions accessed.



Inside this issue

Social Work across all services	.....	Pg. 1,2,3,4,5
Tibżgħu xejn intom tiswew hafna aktar mill-ghasafar tal-bejt	.....	Pg. 5
EU Delegates visit to SJAF	.....	Pg. 6,7
SOAR Projects	.....	Pg. 8
Silence isn't always golden—the voice of mental health service users	.....	Pg. 9,10
SJAF ODA Project—2017	.....	Pg. 11
Hsieb Spiritwali	.....	Pg. 12,13
Avviżi	.....	Pg. 14

State agencies topped the list of referrals (25%) of families to the Foundation's services in 2016. Of the total 397 new families referred in 2016, the different referral sources included:

- 98 (25%) - state agencies, of which 32 were referred by Aġenzija Appoġġ;
- 78 (20%) - self-referrals;
- 51 (13%) - voluntary organisations;
- 45 (11%) - parishes;
- 32 (8%) - relatives
- 30 (8%) - SJAF outreach work;
- 23 (6%) - friends
- 16 (4%) - other service users
- 15 (4%) - private practitioners;
- 6 (1%) - SJAF literature and website.

Locality of residence of 397 families referred in 2016

Locality of residence	No. of families	% of total new cases
Birżebbuġa	62	16%
Paola	23	6%
Ħal Tarxien	35	9%
Ħaż-Żabbar	19	5%
Fgura	32	8%
Marsaxlokk	10	3%
Santa Luċija	6	1%
Other localities	210	52%
TOTAL	397	100%

The increase in referrals of families from localities other than the catchment areas of the Foundation's two Family Resource Centres is linked to the fact that SJAF services such as Lwien, SOAR, Emotional Freedom and Dar Hosea are national in scope. Hence, in 2016, 48% of new referrals were from the catchment areas of Ċentru Antida and Ċentru Enrichetta whereas the remaining 52% were from other localities across Malta.

New cases of vulnerable families supported between 2007 and 2016

Year	Individuals	Families
2016	622	397
2015	543	373
2014	424	288
2013	481	320
2012	473	298
2011	540	324
2010	412	284
2009	185	150
2008	231	169
2007	121	93
TOTAL for 2007-2016	4032	2696

Number of referred families and percentages by main presenting problem – 2016

Main presenting problem of referred families	Number of families	% of total
Mental illness & difficulties faced by	130	33
Domestic violence	47	12
Financial difficulties	39	10
Conflictual family relations and inability to manage family affairs	40	10
Disability related difficulties	32	8
Lack of basic skills	27	6
Elderly chronic ill health, loneliness and	22	5
Emotional problems	20	5
Persons involved in criminal behaviour	14	4
Unemployment	10	3
Loss	7	2
Homelessness (2) & substandard hous-	5	1
Challenging behaviour	4	1
TOTAL →	397	100%

Outreach work as an approach to the identification of hard-to-reach vulnerable families

Street outreach work continued to be a key tool in community social work practice at the Foundation. The modality used leads to the identification of un-served and under-served categories of vulnerable and poor persons. The rate of service users identified through outreach work in 2016 was 8%. Parishes where this approach was used by Foundation personnel express high satisfaction at the way very vulnerable families in the community are being identified, befriended and supported. During community outreach home visits, team members introduce themselves, discuss the services being offered by the Foundation in the community and engage in a discussion about their perceived needs at community level.

Family Learning Support (FLS) Programme:

Family Learning Support is one of the pillars of the work of the St Jeanne Antide Foundation. It is a home-grown initiative to support social worker's complex work with vulnerable families and constitutes a key element of a family's care plan with which the family is in agreement. The primary aim of the FLS programme is to support vulnerable families who are in need of literacy skills and access to educational opportunities. The programme is coordinated by a Senior Practitioner (Family Learning Support) with extensive experience in designing and delivering support courses and interventions for vulnerable parents and their children who struggle with literacy attainment.

Family learning support initiatives are run at both the Foundations's Family Resource Centres in Tarxien and Birżebbuġa. The main interventions of family learning support included the following:

- courses for parents and guardians on how to support their children's literacy attainment.
- a child-focused learning support programme for struggling learners based at Ċentru Antida in Tarxien. It runs throughout the scholastic year on Fridays between 4pm and 6pm. Volunteer Tutors are matched with a child to maximise the development of a supportive relationship and beneficial outcomes;
- a summer literacy programme for struggling learners held at Ċentru Antida in Hal Tarxien;
- a literacy group which runs from September to the end of May each year. It is run by a teacher provided by the Directorate Lifelong Learning of the Ministry of Education and Employment. Learners are very vulnerable persons who would otherwise not have access to self-development and non-formal learning had this opportunity not been available for them at a community-based family centre they value and feel very welcomed in.
- liaising with other organisations regarding literacy support needs;
- training and on-going support and guidance to SJAF Volunteer Tutors (15);
- supporting parents and guardians during school visits for Individual Educational Plan (IEP) review meetings, whenever

such support is needed.

- co-working with SJAF Social Workers whenever educational input is needed.

Courses for parents and guardians on how to support their children's literacy attainment

As part of the family learning support programme, 7 short courses were designed and delivered in order to equip 41 vulnerable parents and guardians with the necessary skills that enable them to support their children's literacy acquisition. Although these 7 different courses were designed to meet the needs of 41 vulnerable parents who were being supported by SJAF social workers serving different SJAF services, 6 were delivered at Enrichetta Family Resource Centre (see list in Chapter on this centre) and one in Marsaxlokk.

The courses are very 'hands on' and the participants, besides gaining skills on how to support their children's literacy achievement, were able to prepare all the visual aids needed for use at home. Given that some parents lack basic skills and in order to provide maximum attention and guidance to participants, a small number of participants were accepted in each course. On completion of each course, a certificate of attendance was provided to participating parents.

Learning Support at the Antide Centre

During the scholastic year months, Social Workers referred 14 children for learning support. Each child was matched with a Volunteer Tutor who worked with the child on a one-to-one basis each Friday afternoon. Volunteer Tutors supported their child's literacy needs and provided homework support. Each session started with literacy support for those who still struggled with their reading and writing followed by homework help. Six learners concluded their participation mid-year; hence 6 more children were admitted. In total, 20 children benefited from the service in 2016.

Each weekly session lasted one and a half hours; parents were free to be with the children during the sessions.

Volunteer Tutors were given training in the multi-sensory methodology for literacy acquisition to enable them to use standard teaching and learning techniques. Three 90-minute training sessions were held during the year.

Other support resource tools for Social Workers

Social Workers had a number of positive support resources which service users accessed for enhanced wellbeing:

Volunteer Befrienders: A group of 10 Volunteer Befrienders assisted Social Workers by providing home-based fellowship to lonely home-bound service users from Ħal Tarxien, Paola and Fgura. Each Befriender is linked to a Social Worker for guidance and mentoring. Befrienders have a code of practice to guide them and meet to discuss their work and how it is impacting the lives of the persons they support as well as their own life. Issues of boundaries, confidentiality, practical helping tips and links with relatives are often revisited.

Volunteer Mentors: Volunteer Mentors were matched with an at-risk young person. The matching process for mentors and mentees is critical to the development and maintenance of an enduring supportive relationship and enhancement of the positive development of mentees. Mentors provide sustained relationships with a young person who needs support, guidance and assistance. Mentoring is a powerful support tool for the development of self-esteem, self-control and emotional growth of young persons whose parents are either unable or refuse to provide care and support. At the core of mentoring is the belief that if caring, concerned adults are available to young people, the young person will be more likely to become successful adults themselves. Care was taken to identify optimal personal characteristics, skills and longer term availability of mentors. Mentoring was augmented with other services such as learning support and parental support.

In 2016, SJAF co-worked with the President's Trust in the design and delivery of a training course for Mentors for at risk youths leaving residential care.

Volunteer Handymen: these undertook basic repair and maintenance in low-income households lacking the means to engage a person to carry out these repairs.

In-kind support: Very vulnerable service users requiring high support had access to food items, second hand furniture and furnishings, clothing, books, toys and baby items. Such items are available through the SJAF charity shop which recycles quality items donated by families. The Secretariat for Social Assistance (SAS) regularly approved tiny cash grants as emergency help for families. Items such as computers-for-families were sourced through the CSR mechanism of a number of companies. Social Workers assisted service users to apply for much needed items such as food vouchers and white goods from the Malta Community Chest Fund Foundation (MCCFF) and the Food Bank of the St Andrew's Scots Church.

Non-formal adult education: Social Workers encouraged service users to indicate their interests so as to access existing

non-formal as well as formal adult education and training activities run by the state and NGOs at both local and national levels. In cases where service users were still fearful of accessing mainstream opportunities and in cases where no opportunities existed to fill their expressed need for adult learning, SJAF staff created opportunities through the two Family Resource Centres. Hence, during 2016, groupwork was provided in the areas of literacy, caregiving, overcoming depression, self-esteem, art and handicrafts making, art therapy and various learning support courses for parents.

Handicrafts production group and handicrafts class: The handicrafts production group continued to create quality items for fundraising purposes. Members were recruited internally through Social Workers who encouraged highly skilled services users to tap into this therapeutic resource. The group met regularly on 3 mornings a week to produce quality crafts from recycled materials. In 2016, the group participated in three public events and fairs to sell their products.

Volunteering opportunities for service users: Social Workers continued to encourage service users to volunteer as part of their personal growth journey. Fourteen service users became volunteers in 2016.



Tibżgħu xejn intom tiswew ħafna aktar mill-għasafar tal-bejt.

Hi tassew meravilja kif f'gurnata ta' riħ qawwi, l-għasafar tal-bejt jibqgħu jtiru qisu xejn mhux xejn. Għasfur daqs naqra kif inhu kapaċi jibqgħu jtir bla ma jaqilbu r-riħ? Min-naħa l-oħra, Alla mhux għalhekk ħalqu, biex itir. Allura kif jista' jkun ma jkunx aktar b' saħħtu mill-elementi tan-natura?

U anke jien bħall-għasfur tal-bejt, irrid nemmen li jien ferm aktar b'saħħti minn dak kollu li nħossu li qed ikissirni fil-ħajja. Għax meta ħalaqni Alla tani l-ispirtu tiegħu biex inkun nista' ntir, intir mhux bis-saħħa tiegħi, għax kieku żgur naqgħu mal-ewwel buffura, imma ntir bis-saħħa tal-ispirtu.

Dan l-ispirtu li jneħħi minni kull tip ta' biża' u nimtela bil-kuraġġ. Kuraġġ li jgħinni naffronta dawk is-sitwazzjonijiet l-iżjed imwiegħra b'determinazzjoni, derterminazzjoni tant kbira li naf li jiġrili x'jiġrili l-ispirtu tiegħi ħa jibqgħu jtir bla mittiefes.

Din il-fiduċja f'Alla li jien mistennija ngħix. Fiducja li tgħarrafni kemm hi sabiħa meta tara d-dinja minn fuq. Minkejja li fid-dinja, isfel jista' jkun fiha l-ġenn u l-inkwiet, meta ninqata' mill-art u ntir ' il fuq bl-ispirtu nkun nista' nara u nimraħ lil hnin mill-ġenn għax tilqagħni armonija sħiħa. Armonija sħiħa ta' mħabba li tixhed l-għaqda nfinta li teżisti bejn il-Missier, l-Iben u l-Ispirtu s-Santu.

Għaqda li tnissel f'qalbi ċertu paċi u serħan il-moħħ għax naf li dawn it-Tlett Persuni tat-Trinità Mqaddsa li dejjem ħa jieħdu ħsiebi, mhux billi jneħħuni mid-dinja, imma billi jħalluni fid-dinja u jqawwuni bil-preżenza tagħhom f'ħajti. B'hekk ħajti tkun xempju ta' trankwilità u tal-imħabba li teżisti fis-sema pajjiżi.

Lynn Aquilina





EU Delegates meeting (COREPER 1) at SJAF - Friday 2nd June 2017

“Solidarity, inclusion, and processes of democratic participation, are the spirit of togetherness, which bridges the great divisions created by inequality, by the abuse of privilege, and by injustice.” *Her Excellency Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, President of Malta*



On an invitation by the The Malta Community Chest Fund Foundation SJAF hosted an MCCFF event at SJAF premises on June 2nd. The event was related to a visit by an EU delegation to Malta to learn more about the MCCFF itself and about some of the NGO initiatives it funds. The delegation visited SJAF for a briefing about two of the SJAF Services - SOAR and Lwien.



The EU delegation trip to Malta was attended by the Deputy Permanent Representatives and the Mertons of all the 28 Member States, together with their spouses, and their respective counterparts within the Commission, the General Secretariat of the Council and the Council Legal Service.



The above mentioned delegates meet up at the meeting of the 'Committee of the Deputy Permanent Representatives of the Governments of the Member States to the European Union', more commonly known as COREPER I, which has a rotating 6 month Presidency. The COREPER I meeting is responsible for 6 Council configurations, namely: - agriculture and fisheries - competitiveness - education, youth, culture and sport - employment, social policy, health and consumer affairs - environment - transport, telecommunications and energy.



COREPER 1's main tasks include the coordination and preparation of the work of the different Council configurations, ensuring consistency of the EU's policies and works out agreements and compromises which are then submitted for adoption by the Council. Furthermore, the work of COREPER I is prepared by the 'Mertens Group'.

This informal group helps to form an initial idea of the positions that the various member state delegations will take at the COREPER I meetings.

EU Delegates visit at SJAF

During the visit the group of 120 delegates had the opportunity to take part in presentations and discussions on the SOAR Service led by survivors of domestic violence and on the Lwien Service that provides guidance and support and non-formal learning to family caregivers of mentally ill persons.

The half-day event was launched by Her Excellency Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, President of Malta who gave the EU delegates an overview of the work of the Malta Community Chest Fund Foundation (MCCFF). This introductory speech was followed up by Professor Carmel Borg who presented an overview of the MCCFF NGO Fund, its scope and remit, its selection criteria and the NGO projects it has funded in the past few years. Prof. Borg also explained the funding modality for the new phase of MCCFF Project applications.





SOAR Projects

SOAR has a notable track record of projects that it has designed and implemented with success over the last 3 years, *as is evidenced from the list below*. These initiatives have left an impact on all the women and children who participated in them, on a number of stakeholders such as practitioners, policy makers, other NGO working in this field, teachers, senior management teams in schools and relatives. Past project initiatives include the following:

Past initiative: My Survival, My Experience – Research and Conference

In 2015, SOAR undertook a research project to investigate the common systematic obstacles faced by survivors who struggle to regain a life of dignity and non-violence after leaving a violent relationship. The qualitative insider-research uncovered the systemic oppression in the services and highlights areas that could be improved. A conference was held bringing policy makers, grassroots workers and survivors together. 37 recommendations for policy emerged from the workshops held during the conference. These were sent to all Members of Parliament and have had a positive effect on proposed policy that is being tabled in Parliament. *(Part-funding from The Voices Foundation 2014)*

Past initiative: My Survival, My Experience - Phoenix Rising

Five papers from the research held for the project *My Survival, My Experience* mentioned above were printed in the Foundation's new publication ***Phoenix Rising – starting over after domestic violence***. For this book, an art therapy programme was held, where 8 survivors used creative media to express their pain, joy and struggle for justice. Some of their paintings illustrate the chapters and the cover of the book. The 37 policy recommendations and survivor's testimonials of the SOAR service were also included as the final chapter of this book. The publication is being used by academics, students, survivors, practitioners and policy makers for the rich insights it offers on the experience of leaving domestic violence as told by the survivors. *(Part-funding from The President's Award For Creativity – Arts Council Malta, 2015)*

Past initiative: Violence Prevention workshops for youth (reaching 2,000 persons)

This initiative was part of a wider project of the St Jeanne Antide Foundation titled *A Package of Outreach Services for Social Inclusion and Wellbeing*. The project element implemented by SOAR involved teaming up with Men Against Violence to research, design and deliver workshops for young people on violence prevention; the initiative reached 2,000 individuals. These outreach workshops reached secondary school students, youth groups in the community, teachers, support-line workers, police cadets and university students. *(Part-funding from Voluntary Organisations Project Scheme (VOPs 2016) managed by the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector (MCVS) on behalf of the Ministry for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties; funding concluded in April 2017).*

Current SOAR Project initiatives include the following:

Create, Liberate, Integrate!

SOAR designed a creative activity-packed project with the aim of bringing survivors together in a safe space for healing. The activities include Drama Therapy, Art Therapy, Drum Circles, Photography, Self-reflective writing and artisan crafting (jewellery, paper etc.). The project is creative a 'bridge' between a second-stage shelter and the SOAR service to enable survivors who are living in an institutionalised setting to meet other survivors and make new friends. The aim is to enable them to create links with women of the SOAR support group so that they know that they have a support service to turn to when they leave the shelter. *(Activities themselves fully funded through a grant from the President's Award for Creativity – Arts Council Malta, 2016. Currently being implemented in 2017).*

Orange Circles

This project is aimed at providing training to survivors of domestic violence. Parenting workshops for the survivor-mother of domestic violence do not exist in Malta. Together with an expert in the field, a pilot workshop was designed for survivor-mothers that answers many of their questions and helps them understand the particular needs of their traumatised children. Another training workshop on *budgeting* will be delivered for survivor-mothers to learn methods of budgeting for a family on a single income. *(Activities fully funded through: E4C – Educating for change: Capitalising on the EU Presidency in Malta to raise awareness on Agenda 2030 – a project of SKOP, the National Platform of Maltese Development NGOs (VO/0366) 2017. Currently being implemented in 2017).*

SILENCE ISN'T ALWAYS GOLDEN – the voice of mental health service users

Paper prepared by Service Users and Occupational Therapists working together, from the Mental Health Community Day Centres in Qormi, Floriana, Paola, Bormla and Zejtun, May 2017
(Community Mental Health Services, Allied Health Care Services Directorate)

Occupational Therapists leading these community mental health Day Centres gave us service users an active role and we can state that we are highly empowered. We can state from experience that service user involvement is a means of enabling service users, like us, to regain a sense of control and increase our ability to make choices and decisions that will ultimately improve our quality of life. Nowadays, many health care professionals are still finding it very hard to embrace this philosophy and for some reason, they prefer to apply a paternalistic approach to their practices. Health care professionals usually assume they know our wants and needs, to have the power to make decisions on our behalf without involving us during our care process, and believe us, it's not nice. We would prefer that professionals engage in partnership with us, and allow us to be active participants in our own treatment and care.

To us, recovery is not just about symptom management, but we view recovery as being able to experiment on new positive opportunities, such as the simple task of being able to doll up for a special occasion, to being employed, passing the driving test, enrolling in Art courses, dancing classes, to being invited to a granddaughter's hens party etc. We thus urge you to collaborate with us and our families, to focus on what is important to us, to let us come up with our own goals and also allow us to share our dreams. We have had enough of boring reviews where the psychiatrists' only interest is to question us repeatedly on pills and symptoms. We are well aware that health care professionals might do this as they are pressed with time, but this should not justify an inappropriate approach.

Some of us participated during this year's National Nursing Congress last month (Horatio: titled - Working in

Partnership), and we delivered a presentation to those who attended. We also assisted a lecturer at the University of Malta. During the lecture, we shared our experiences and I noted that we helped students learn about mental health recovery in a stigma free environment. My plea to all the lecturers is this: Invite service users to assist you during lectures as **books cannot beat lived experiences**.

Stigma

Mental health-related discrimination and stigma is not only a local issue, but a global problem.

Our society has become more accepting of mental illness, as many can relate to this reality among their families and friends. Having said that, the Maltese prefer to avoid talking about the subject. This might be because of stereotyped views on mental illness. Many still believe that we are violent, aggressive and dangerous. The media is a major influence in this regard, as it feeds negative, discriminatory and biased views on mental health in order to ensure sensationalism. Otherwise we are viewed as vulnerable and unable to have opinions and take decisions on our own. This might also be reflected at work. Employers assume that because we have a mental health condition, we can only do the very basic and simple work tasks, such as cleaning, typing and assembling.

There might be instances where our family members may not treat us age appropriately and exclude us from important decisions. We are often discouraged from having steady relationships, because our relatives believe that marriage will complicate our lives and make us more vulnerable. Even our communities act as a barrier, as it fails to accept us whenever we attempt to be included.

Stigma and discrimination can delay or impede people from getting help and treatment. This usually makes matters worse, as people become trapped in a cycle of illness. *"It took me quite a while to express my symptoms to my GP, and being referred to a Psychiatrist was tragic to say the least. Nowadays, I do not regret getting help, as I am stronger and healthier."*

Even though stigma is a harsh reality, we are ready to challenge it through firsthand contact. We are ready to share our experiences, to change public attitudes to mental health and most of all, to generate awareness for those who are suffering in silence. We are proving people wrong by showing how capable we are. We participate in mainstream activities such as voluntary work, lectures, joining groups such as in NGOs. This results to change in attitudes and approach towards service users with mental health issues.

Throughout the past two years, service users attending community mental health centers have expressed their wish to be involved in social media to combat stigma and raise the bar for mental health. Four service users did two interviews on social media. These respectively generated over a thousand views.

A group of service users participated in a series of live local radio shows. They discussed bullying in schools, stigma, psychiatric medication, employment, a holistic approach to mental health care, patients' rights and community mental health services.

Our wish is for us to be involved in primary and secondary schools to educate students from a young age, as mental health is as important as physical health.

Making the voice of the service user heard

Our voice needs to be heard amongst policy makers and decision makers within different levels. Individuals who have other conditions such as physical problems, make their voice heard through public forums where governmental entities consult with the public. This is why we were empowered to make the voice of mental health service users heard in similar discussions. Such an exercise was done when the parlia-



mentary Secretary for Health published the Patient Charter for public consultation. This document, which lists the rights and responsibilities of individuals who make use of the Public Health Service was discussed during a national forum and our concerns were brought forward.

We were also represented when a consultative meeting discussed the National Disability Strategy. This document lays a plan to address the needs of persons with disabilities and their family have in order to improve their quality of life. Last year, Her Excellency the President of Malta visited the day centers and we had the opportunity to make our voice heard with the most influential person in Malta. We spoke about our daily experiences and about the struggles that we face when living in the Maltese community. We also gave suggestions on how the system can improve. Another two meetings were held with high officials within the government. The first one was with Health Minister Chris Fearne, where different issues regarding how the services are being provided and suggestions were given in order to improve the services. The second meeting was held with Dr. Miriam Dalli who is a member of European Parliament and the chair person for the Coalition for Mental Health and Well Being. Another meeting was held with the Community Administration Team and higher hospital management, where similar issues were discussed. These discussions helped to exercise our right to share our

opinions and elevate us from being passive recipients to active participants in the service we receive.

Discussions about our rights are followed up on regular basis, where we meet with all service users coming from the five day centers during Advocacy Groups. These meetings are meaningful and purposeful since we are given the opportunity to voice our concerns and provide suggestions in decisions concerning the day centers, how to improve the services given as well as planning joint projects and activities. Discussions on how to increase awareness on mental health issues are also an integral part of our meetings. The issues brought forward during such meetings are then addressed with the community administration team by means of a user representative.

Recommendations

With the implementation of the Mental Health Act, we as service users within the Mental Health services, have been given more rights to make our voice heard with the service providers. However, I think that we are only at the beginning of the path which leads to patient involvement. By having patient and relative representatives in various boards in different levels of organization, we would be properly represented in boards taking decisions directly about service users.

The need for adequate information about mental health is very important since most of us resort to the internet, which is sometimes very intimidating and misleading. By having access to

lectures held by both professionals and service users, one would have the opportunity to learn and discuss various topics related to mental health.

Proper forums which give opportunities for service users to channel feedback about the services received should be implemented and regular meetings should be organized to collect such feedback, like the advocacy groups. Professionals who deliver services should be encouraged and educated to listen to our voice, as service users, in order to involve us in important decisions about our care.

Conclusion

We are proud of the improvements that we have been witnessing, but we are well aware that there is still a long way to go. In order for this to be reached and successfully maintained we need to work together. We are reaching our arms out to you to offer our knowledge, experience and dreams. We look forward for you accepting such offer as you have a different knowledge and experience to help make things better.

***We realized we can dream big
and aim high..... let us make it
happen.***



SJAF ODA Project - 2017

2017 - Chinunkha Women Economic Empowerment Project

The Overseas Development Assistance project for 2017 that is managed by the Foundation is taking place in Malawi. The Foundation received a grant of €7,726 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the partner in this project, the Karonga dioceses of Chitipa, will be sourcing the amount of €4,700 to fund the rest of the project.

Malawi is a landlocked country in southeast Africa formerly known as Nyasaland. The country has three large cities Lilongwe, the capital – located towards the centre of the Malawi, Blantyre the second largest, located in the South and Muzuzu the third largest city located in the North. The project is taking place 300km North of Muzuzu, in a place known as Chinunkha, in the district of Chitipa.

The project involves nurturing the self empowerment of 40 vulnerable women and widows to actively and productively participate in the local community. These women are now involved in generating economic activity and promoting farming, business management, cooperative management and marketing. The group of women have been undergoing a training programme consisting of book-keeping concepts, village savings and loan making practices, and irrigation and farming techniques. Booking-Keeping training included: the use of cash book, profit and loss and essential business planning. The village savings and loans training, delivered across 18 weeks of 2 hour sessions per week, was delivered by a Community Development Assistant from Government, and included: training in group dynamics, formation and management and social funding and record keeping. The Farming practices training included topics pertaining to: introduction to irrigation, types of irrigation, water use management and pump operation.

In addition to the training delivery, the project has also progressed on the farming aspect. 150 kg of NPK fertilizers for basal dressing and 200 kg of Urea for top dressing were purchased, and the group applied the dressing, fertilizers and organic manure during the early stages of crop development. 40kg of maize seed have been procured for winter cropping and have been planted accordingly. Also, vegetable seeds of tomatoes, green peppers, and rapeseed, were planted in nurseries that have been setup for each type of vegetable. The planting of these vegetables was done in September 2016.

Through the project, 4 treadle pumps have also been procured assembled and tested. Treadle pumps are human-powered irrigation devices usually fixed on well tops, and are activated by stepping up and down on treadles that create cylinder suction to draw groundwater to the surface. These pumps free farmers from dependence on rain-fed irrigation and allow the possibility to raise crops in two growing seasons per year thus maximizing their return from their land. The treadle pumps are being used by the women to irrigate their crops.

In the final phase of the project, that is expected to be completed by April 2017, the farming activities will be expanded to include the plantation of sunflower and legumes. Trading of these crops will also commence in early 2017 and further training in Cooperative Management will be delivered to the group of women.



nsieb spiritwali



Charon, the ferryman of the dead

What can you carry...

...when you're dead?

— Here is an amusing Greek answer from the 2nd century AD

In Greek mythology, Charon is the ferryman of Hades who carries souls of the newly deceased across the rivers Styx and Acheron that divided the world of the living from the world of the dead.

CHARON --- I'll tell you how things stand. Our craft, as you see, is small, and leaky, and three-parts rotten; a single lurch, and she will capsize without more ado. And here are all you passengers, each with his luggage. If you come on board like that, I am afraid you may have cause to repent it; especially those who have not learnt to swim.

HERMES --- Then how are we to make a trip of it?

CHARON --- I'll tell you. They must leave all this nonsense behind them on shore, and come aboard in their skins. As it is, there will be no room to spare. And in future, Hermes, mind you admit no one till he has cleared himself of encumbrances, as I say. Stand by the gangway, and keep an eye on them, and make them strip before you let them pass.

HERMES --- Very good. Well, Number One, who are you?

MENIPPUS --- Menippus. Here are my wallet and staff; overboard with them. I

... Continued on page _____

X'Ninza'?

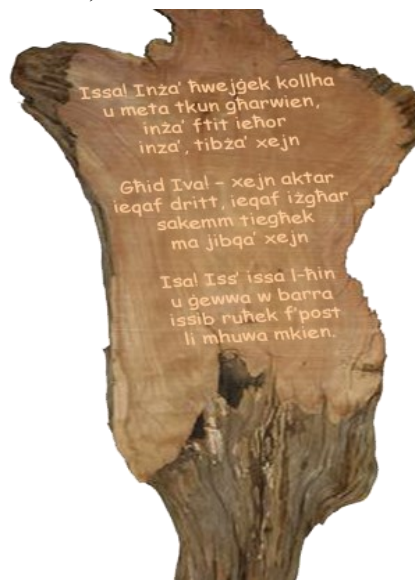
Rieqed jew imqajjem, billejl jew binhar, iż-żerriegħa tinbet u tikber, bla ma jaf kif. (Mk 4:26-29)

F'din il-kelma tal-Għerf, Ġesù donnu qed jassikurana li s-sehem tagħna fir-Renju divin għandu l-enerġija tiegħu, u mhux immexxi 'l quddiem mill-ego. Wara ċertu żmien, l-iskop divin għal dik il-persuna jkun intlaħaq, u dak huwa l-grazzja tal-Ħsad.

Xi ngħidu allura dwar id-dellijiet tagħna, dwar il-proġetti tal-ego tagħna, u dwar kull haġa li nkunu marbutin magħha? Dawn kollha inċeduhom, aħna w ninzghu kollox. L-enerġija tar-Renju stess isaħħuna u jgħinuna inċedu. Forsi dik hija tifsira tal-parabbola tas-sikrana.

Il-parabbola taż-Żerriegħa li Tinbet Wehidha

U qal: "Is-Saltna ta' Alla hi bħal meta raġel ikun xeħet iż-żerriegħa fl-art. Rieqed jew imqajjem, billejl jew binhar, iż-żerriegħa tinbet u tikber, bla ma jaf kif. L-art trodd minnha nfisha l-ewwel il-barra, mbagħad is-sbula, mbagħad il-qamħ mimli fis-sbula. U meta l-frott isir, malajr il-bidwi jmidd idu għall-mingel, għax ikun wasal żmien il-ħsad." (Mark 4:26-29)



Il-Parabbola tas-Sikrana

Ġibilhom parabbola oħra u qalilhom: "Is-Saltna tas-Smewwiet tixbah lil wieħed raġel li żara' żerriegħa tajba fl-għalqa tiegħu. Izda xhin in-nies kienu reqdin, ġie l-għadu tiegħu, żara' s-sikrana qalb il-qamħ u telaq. Meta mbagħad il-qamħ nibet u hareġ is-sbul, tfaċċat ukoll is-sikrana. Resqu l-qaddejja fuq sid l-għalqa u qalulu, 'Sinjur, int mhux żerriegħa tajba żrajt fl-għalqa tiegħek? Mela dis-sikrana mnejn ġiet?' Izda hu qalilhom, 'Dil-biċċa għamilhieli xi għadu tiegħi.' 'Tridx immorru niġbruha?' qalulu l-qaddejja. 'Le,' qalilhom, 'għax intom u tiġbru s-sikrana għandkom mnejn taqilghu magħha l-qamħ ukoll. Erħulhom jikbru t-tnejn flimkien sal-ħsad; meta mbagħad jasal il-ħsad, ngħid lill-ħassada: 'Iġbru s-sikrana l-ewwel, u orbtuha qatta qatta għall-ħruq, mbagħad qiegħdu l-qamħ fil-maħžen tiegħi.'" (Matthew 13:24-29)

Minuxa fil-Baħar

*Ricetta li sibt
imnaqqxa fuq
biċċa 'njama
fuq wiċċ
il-baħar:*

"Issa! Inza' ħwejġek kollha u meta tkun għarwien, inza' f'tit ieħor inza', tibza' xejn

"Għid lva! – xejn aktar ieqaf dritt, ieqaf iżgħar sakemm tiegħek ma jibqa' xejn

"Isa! Iss' issa l-ħin u ġewwa w barra issib ruħek f'post li mhuwa mkien."

tony macelli

Charon the Ferryman...*Continued from page ____*

had the sense not to bring my cloak.

HERMES --- Pass on, Menippus; you're a good fellow; you shall have the seat of honour, up by the pilot, where you can see every one.—ere is a handsome person; who is he?

CHARMOLEOS --- Charmoleos of Megara; the irresistible, whose kiss was worth a thousand pounds.

HERMES --- That beauty must come off, —lips, kisses, and all; the flowing locks, the blushing cheeks, the skin entire. That's right. Now we're in better trim;— you may pass on.—And who is the stunning gentleman in the purple and the diadem?

LAMPICHUS --- I am Lampichus, tyrant of Gela.

HERMES --- And what is all this splendour doing here, Lampichus?

LAMPICHUS --- How! would you have a tyrant come hither stripped?

HERMES --- A tyrant! That would be too much to expect. But with a shade we must insist. Off with these things.

LAMPICHUS --- There, then: away goes my wealth.

HERMES --- Pomp must go too, and pride; we shall be overfreighted else.

LAMPICHUS --- At least let me keep my diadem and robes.

HERMES --- No, no; off they come!

LAMPICHUS --- Well? That is all, as you see for yourself.

HERMES --- There is something more yet: cruelty, folly, insolence, hatred.

LAMPICHUS --- There then: I am bare.

HERMES --- Pass on.—And who may you be, my bulky friend?

DAMASIAS --- Damasias the athlete.

HERMES --- To be sure; many is the time I have seen you in the gymnasium.

DAMASIAS --- You have. Well, I have peeled; let me pass.

HERMES --- Peeled! my dear sir, what, with all this fleshy encumbrance? Come, off with it; we should go to the bottom if you put one foot aboard. And those crowns, those victories, remove them.

DAMASIAS --- There; no mistake about it this time; I am as light as any shade among them.

HERMES --- That's more the kind of

thing. On with you.—Crato, you can take off that wealth and luxury and effeminacy; and we can't have that funeral pomp here, nor those ancestral glories either; down with your rank and reputation, and any votes of thanks or inscriptions you have about you; and you need not tell us what size your tomb was; remarks of that kind come heavy.

CRATON --- Well, if I must, I must; there's no help for it.

HERMES --- Hullo! in full armour? What does this mean? and why this trophy?

GENERAL --- I am a great conqueror; a valiant warrior; my country's pride.

HERMES --- The trophy may stop behind; we are at peace; there is no demand for arms.—Whom have we here? whose is this knitted brow, this flowing beard? 'Tis some reverend sage, if outside goes for anything; he mutters; he is wrapped in meditation.

MENIPPUS --- That's a philosopher, Hermes; and an impudent quack not the bargain. Have him out of that cloak; you will find something to amuse you underneath it.

HERMES --- Off with your clothes first; and then we will see to the rest. My goodness, what a bundle: quackery, ignorance, quarrelsomeness, vainglory; idle questionings, prickly arguments, intricate conceptions; humbug and gammon and wishy-washy hair-splittings without end; and hullo! why here's avarice, and self-indulgence, and impudence! luxury, effeminacy and peevishness!—Yes, I see them all; you need not try to hide them. Away with falsehood and swagger and superciliousness; why, the three-decker is not built that would hold you with all this luggage.

PHILOSOPHER --- I resign them all, since such is your bidding.

MENIPPUS --- Have his beard off too, Hermes; only look what a ponderous bush of a thing! There's a good five pounds' weight there.

HERMES --- Yes; the beard must go.

PHILOSOPHER --- And who shall shave me?

HERMES --- Menippus here shall take it off with the carpenter's axe; the gang-

way will serve for a block.

MENIPPUS --- Oh, can't I have a saw, Hermes? It would be much better fun.

HERMES --- The axe must serve.—Shrewdly chopped!—Why, you look more like a man and less like a goat already.

MENIPPUS --- A little off the eyebrows?

HERMES --- Why, certainly; he has trained them up all over his forehead, for reasons best known to himself.—Worm! what, snivelling? afraid of death? Oh, get on board with you.

MENIPPUS --- He has still got the biggest thumper of all under his arm.

HERMES --- What's that?

MENIPPUS --- Flattery; many is the good turn that has done him.

PHILOSOPHER --- Oh, all right, Menippus; suppose you leave your independence behind you, and your plain—speaking, and your indifference, and your high spirit, and your jests!—No one else here has a jest about him.

HERMES --- Don't you, Menippus! you stick to them; useful commodities, these, on shipboard; light and handy.—You rhetorician there, with your verbosity and your barbarisms, your antitheses and balances and periods, off with the whole pack of them.

RHETORICIAN --- Away they go.

HERMES --- All's ready. Loose the cable, and pull in the gangway; haul up the anchor; spread all sail; and, pilot, look to your helm. Good luck to our voyage!—... here we are in port. ... the ferryman and I must go back for a fresh load.

MENIPPUS --- Good voyage to you, Hermes.—Let us be getting on; what are you all waiting for? ... Every detail of our lives will now come to light!

Lucian of Samosata was a Greek satirist who flourished in Syria in the 2nd Century A.D. He wrote works interesting for the student of myths. The above text "Charon and Hermes" is Chapter 20 of Lucian's Dialogue of the Gods.





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