



St Jeanne Antide
Foundation

PATHWAYS TO A BETTER LIFE



services contributing to family wellbeing and
social inclusion at community level and beyond

2018

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inclusion at community level and beyond**

**Annual Report of the
St Jeanne Antide Foundation
2018**

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Dar Esther, Y-Assist Initiative of The President’s Trust - supported accommodation for vulnerable young pregnant women and mothers Tel: 77052305

LWIEN Service site at Dar Sagra Familja, Sisters of St Joseph, Ғaż-Żabbar (Saturdays)

SOAR SERVICE HUB in Tarxien (under renovation)

BAZAAR at 55 Tarxien Road, Tarxien (Mondays and Wednesdays, 9am to noon)

Acknowledgement for front cover illustration: Yanica Farrugia, SOAR Service

Affiliate membership:

- NGO network under the aegis of the Commission on Domestic Violence;
- Network of service providers in area of domestic violence
- SKOP (Solidarjetà u Koperazzjoni) – an NGDO Forum;
- Diocesan Diaconia Secretariat - Forum of Church-based organisations;
- Mental Health Association, Malta
- Anti-Poverty Forum (APF) – Malta
- Platform of Human Rights Organisations in Malta (PHRO)
- Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ
- Malta Health Network.

DEDICATION

To the resilient families and individuals whose difficult journey brings them through our doors, to the Foundation's staff and volunteers whose collective contribution oils the cogs for those who are stuck and in difficulty, and to our corporate partners, sponsors and donors whose contribution makes it all possible.

To the Sisters of Charity who, like St Jeanne Antide, opened up their doors to the unexpected.

CONTENTS

The St Jeanne Antide Foundation – an introduction	6
family wellbeing first.....	
Community-based Family Support Service Centres	12
reaching out to and supporting families at community level.....	
SOAR Service	24
support, awareness raising, research and advocacy by survivors of domestic violence.....	24
LWIEN Service	31
supporting family caregivers of mentally ill persons	
Emotional Freedom Service	34
learning to release emotional distress.....	
DAR ESTHER – Y-ASSIST initiative	39
supported accommodation for vulnerable homeless mothers and mothers-to-be	
Social Work Across all Services	40
nurturing self-determination and self-empowerment journeys	
Volunteering at the Foundation	47
opportunities for active citizenship	
Anti-Poverty Assistance in Developing Countries	50
supporting poverty alleviation initiatives beyond our shores	
Publications	52

The St Jeanne Antide Foundation – an introduction

family wellbeing first

Corporate objectives:

- ≈ to identify, understand and raise awareness about under-served and un-served categories of excluded or vulnerable persons;*
- ≈ to develop and implement programmes in support of identified under-served and un-served categories of vulnerable persons, families, and minority groups;*
- ≈ to support and train a number of persons to make their own contributions to society and to persons in need;*
- ≈ to provide the opportunity and training to service users so that they themselves can provide services to others in need;*
- ≈ to be open to voluntary service of young people who would like to offer time and energy at the service of others in order to gain experience and insight;*
- ≈ to create links with overseas agencies that work in line with our mission, to share experiences, give and get support, and widen our vision.*

The St Jeanne Antide Foundation (SJAF) is a registered social purpose non-profit organisation. It is the social care services arm of the Sisters of Charity of St Jeanne Antide Thouret. Its overarching aim is to provide professional support services to very vulnerable individuals and families who are suffering due to very difficult life circumstances and those who are sliding into poverty and are socially excluded. SJAF is administered by a Governing Board with a Chief Executive Officer and is registered as an NGO with the Office of the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations (VO/0005) and as a Foundation with the Registry for Legal Persons (LPF-101).

The Foundation has always followed a non-discrimination policy towards service users. It celebrates the beliefs, religious identity, and dignity of persons who belong to any religious or spiritual tradition (or none) – all are loved and respected. Thus we see, welcome, and celebrate the infinite value of any human being, just as they are. We guarantee that anyone intending to make use of any of the Foundation's services will be made to feel comfortable, whoever they may be.

Workers at the Foundation work in partnership systematically in teams for the support and self-empowerment of socially excluded persons, families and minority groups. The mission of the Foundation is to be present for individuals and families who need someone who can listen to them with compassion, link or guide them to appropriate existing support services, support them in the restoration of their dignity, and guide them towards self-reliance, resilience and fulfilment of their potential. Looking holistically at persons in need, the Foundation's mission is to give all round support to such persons.

Governance

A Governing Board is responsible for strategic planning, policy development and financial oversight. Board members come from such diverse backgrounds as social work and nursing, education, financial management, social welfare service planning and management, medicine and overseas development work. The CEO is a non-voting member of the Governing Board that meets monthly.

Services

The Foundation works in partnership with community-based organisations as well as State agencies and NGOs that are national in scope. Since 2007, it has carried out street outreach work as a means of identifying and extending support to hard-to-reach vulnerable families, assisting them as close as possible to where they live.

Since its establishment, the Foundation has set up a number of core services. Operating from two community-based service sites, SJAF has naturally evolved into an organisation that is at the service of neighbouring communities. Its scope is local, national and international. During 2018, the Foundation ran the following core services:

Family Support Service Centre and satellite centre (*Scope: community based*).

Ċentru Antida is the Foundation's main family service hub. It lies in the heart of ̄al Tarxien. It is open from 8am or earlier until 5 pm daily in winter time (sometimes later as well) and from 7.30 am to 2 pm in summer. It operates a satellite family support centre in Birzebbuġa through which some of the services are extended. The satellite centre – Ċentru Enrichetta – is open on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 7.30 am to 2 pm.

Support services available at the 2 family services centres include the following:

..Social Work: family support, home-visits, outreach work, advocacy, referral, accompaniment, information, emotional support, groupwork and in kind support. Social work support is provided in the catchment areas of ̄al Tarxien, Paola, Fgura, ̄aŷ-ŷabbar and Birzebbuġa.

..The Social Integration Programme for Teens (SIPT) aimed at young persons on the autistic spectrum: this is an initiative developed and implemented in partnership with the Autism Parents Association. It is an element of a wider project funded through a grant from the Malta Community Chest Fund Foundation (MCCFF) until March 2019.

..Volunteer Handymen who are also deployed for basic repair and maintenance work in support of vulnerable and poor families.

..Learning Support opportunities for vulnerable children and adults, including self-esteem, literacy tutoring, hands-on parent workshops on teaching and learning strategies.

..Volunteering opportunities, including supported volunteering opportunities for service users and volunteer mentoring.

.. Charity shops in Tarxien, next door to Ċentru Antida, which operates as a fundraising mechanism and a means to provide in-kind support to families facing financial hardship. Another is based at Ċentru Enrichetta in Birzebbuġa and is open on Tuesdays between 8.30 and 11.30 am.

The **SOAR Service (*Scope: national*)**: advocacy and support by survivors for victims and survivors of domestic violence (soarmalta@gmail.com). The service includes a preventive dimension through its workshops for stakeholders. The Foundation's Social Workers co-work with the SOAR Service team to support self-referred and referred women and their children.

The **LWIEN Service** (*Scope: national*): offers professional guidance and non-formal education for family caregivers of persons with severe mental health problems. The service includes family consultations by a senior practitioner (psychiatric nurse), support groups, home-visits, social work, mediation with employers and officials of post-secondary education and training establishments, and support literature in Maltese.

Linked to the LWIEN and the Social Work services is the **Emotional Freedom Service** for persons wanting to be free from their anger, fear, grudges and resentment or other emotional distress. (*Scope: national*)

Dar Esther (*Scope: national*): launched in September 2017, Dar Esther is a supported accommodation forming part of the Y-Assist initiative commissioned by The President's Trust to provide independent living accommodation coupled with educational support for vulnerable homeless pregnant women and mothers above the age of 18.

The **Social Work Service** of the Foundation cuts across all the above services. In the main, workers operate at community level. (*Scope: mainly community-based*)

Overseas Development Projects (*Scope: international*): SJAF works with partners in developing countries to formulate anti-poverty projects. SJAF has been awarded public funding of such projects in Pakistan, Central African Republic, South Sudan, Malawi and Peru.

Service sites:

In 2018, SJAF ran support services from five sites:

Site 1: The Tarxien-based *Antide Family Services Centre* helps families from the localities of Ħal Tarxien, Paola, Fgura, and Ħaż-Żabbar. Since Ċentru Antida is also the hub of support services that are national in scope, families from localities around Malta access services at the Centre.

Site 2: The Birżebbuġa-based *Enrichetta Family Centre* is based in the south-eastern harbour town of Birżebbuġa and serves families from that locality.

Site 3: In 2016, the Sisters of St Joseph of the Apparition in Ħaż Żabbar opened their convent door to the LWIEN Service of the Foundation to run the weekly Saturday Family Caregiver clinic there. Each Saturday, the Foundation's Psychiatric Nurse who runs the LWIEN Service meets with family caregivers of mentally ill persons at this site. Nine families access this consultation service each Saturday.

Site 4: *Dar Esther* - In 2017, SJAF was commissioned by The President's Trust to plan and set up an accommodation and educational support service for vulnerable homeless pregnant women and mothers above the age of 18.

Site 5: *Charity shops* - Since June 2011, SJAF has been running a charity shop in Tarxien in a property owned by the Sisters of Charity. It operates weekly on Mondays and Wednesdays from 9 am to noon. SJAF service users are given access to needed items such as clothing and household goods at no cost. Regulars find the shop a means to access wider support from SJAF. Families ready to part with cherished items for a good cause donate them to the SJAF shop. The shop has thus become a means through which serviceable items are

re-used. At Ċentru Enrichetta in Birżebbuġa, a bazaar was opened in 2018. It opens once weekly on Tuesday between 8.30 and 11.30 am.

Service development

National SOAR Hub: During 2018, SJAF worked on the development of a new initiative in support of the expansion of the SOAR Service led by survivors of domestic violence. Through Dar tal-Providenza and the Diocesan Curia, SJAF obtained the use of a town house in Tarxien which is being renovated as a national hub run by the SOAR Service. Through social media exposure, companies and organisations have come forward, offering a range of professional services on a pro bono basis. A number of teams of workers from a number of companies and organisations carried out a number of volunteering activities as part of their organisation's corporate social responsibility policy and practice (CSR).

Also in 2018, SJAF worked closely with The President's Trust to start a second Y-Assist supported accommodation, scheduled to be launched in early 2019.

Human Resources

In 2018, 16 employees were engaged with SJAF, 8 of whom on a full-time basis and 8 working part-time. Apart from these, 129 Volunteers were engaged in service provision across the different SJAF services and initiatives. The staff and volunteer complement comprised the following:

- 16 remunerated personnel including 6 social workers, 1 psychiatric nurse, 1 family literacy specialist, a service coordinator of SOAR, a Family Centre manager and an administrator. Of the 6 Social Workers, 2 concluded their employment mid-year and 2 joined SJAF shortly afterwards; and
- 129 Volunteers one of whom led the Emotional Freedom Service on a voluntary basis and 2 co-managed the SJAF charity shop;
- 3 professionals who provided occasional professional services on a *pro bono* basis;
- 2 persons served at SJAF under a community service sentence.

Volunteering hours in 2018 totalled 52,186 – equivalent to 25 full-time workers. Their roles varied from that of reception work to learning support, mentoring, supporting vulnerable women, administrative support, handymen and others. Were the hours of service of volunteers to be remunerated, their service would have cost the Foundation €263,428. Their service contribution is invaluable and valued. Volunteers are considered as partner colleagues of the SJAF professionals.

Practice Placements and assistance to external researchers

The Foundation hosted a number of students seeking a social service agency to practice their field of study. During 2018, 29 students undertook a practice placement with SJAF in the following fields: Masters in Counselling (2), Masters in Gestalt Therapy (4), Masters in Drama Therapy (1); B.Sc. in Home Economics (1); MCAST Degree in Financial Services (1); and Learning Support (20) from the Systems of Knowledge (SoK) project of St Aloysius College, St Martin's College, Giovanni Curmi Higher Secondary and J.F. Abela Junior College.

Seven external researchers were assisted with their research studies through access to staff and service users.

Ethos

Personnel of the Foundation maintain a friendly, humour-filled atmosphere in relating to each other - this is detected and appreciated by visitors and service users. The personal values, compassion and respect for others of the main workers, including volunteers, and the policies of the Foundation, have created an environment and an approach to vulnerable service users that has resulted in a certain ethos, culture and atmosphere.

Service users frequently comment on the attentive listening, acceptance, peacefulness and love they find in the SJAF premises, and on the humane and personal approach in the different fields of practice. The economic, psychological, emotional and social freedom and self-acceptance found by distressed or vulnerable people through the work of the Foundation recovers human dignity. Not only do the staff love the service users but the latter also come to discover their own capacity to love. Spontaneously or through SJAF encouragement, some service users even offer their voluntary service to help others. These are signs of the healing power of the divine at work through loving-kindness and compassion.

Centering Prayer-Meditation weekly practice group

A long-standing activity of SJAF is the Wednesday Centering Prayer group. Mainstream Christian tradition states clearly that the three major forms of prayer are *oratio* (with words), *meditatio* (with thoughts), and *contemplatio* (without thoughts). The Centering Prayer group is open to all who are seriously interested in contemplative practice beyond thoughts and feelings.

The Centering Prayer method was developed by a group of Trappist monks, and is now very popular worldwide. It is even useful in encounters with other faiths. The method is “resting in God,” and does not rely on thoughts, words, or mental images. It is a contentless contemplative practice, different from those kinds of meditations or prayers where you visualise scenes or think about something. It is not a biblical-study group, nor is it a religious emotional-support group. The group is small, friendly, and open to persons who want to deepen their openness to God within.

Acknowledgement to donors

The Foundation acknowledges the significant contribution, during 2018, of the following donors:

- The Alfred Mizzi Foundation for their much valued significant financial contribution towards key SJAF services. They were SJAF’s main contributors in 2018.
- The President’s Trust which commissions the Y-Assist supported accommodation – Dar Esther.
- The Malta Delegation of the Sisters of Charity of St Jeanne Antide which contributes the use of four service sites and the salary of the CEO.
- The Voluntary Organisations Projects Fund (VOPs) of the Ministry for Education and Employment (MEAE) managed by the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector (MCVS).
- The Malta Community Chest Fund Foundation (MCCFF) for the project.
- The AGAPI Trust 1.
- APS Bank.
- The Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Overseas Development Unit for the project.
- The President’s Award for Creativity co-managed by Arts Council Malta and the Office of the President of Malta.

- Helping Hands Magazine for its 2018, new-format issue number 4.
- HSBC Malta plc for its on-going support in identifying support sources.
- QPml.
- The Haż-Żabbar Parish for its support for the Lwien Service Family Caregiver clinic on Saturdays.
- Archdiocese of Malta.
- St Jeanne Antide College.
- MISSIO Malta.
- Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ for the awarded A4U project.
- Andrew Galea & Associates for its pro bono annual financial audit.
- St Peter Foundation for its sustained in kind support for vulnerable families.
- Christine Farrugia and friends for their annual fundraising stall during Festa Frawli.
- Social Assistance Secretariat (SAS), Malta Catholic Action.

Gratitude is expressed to countless other benefactors and members of the general public who contributed donations.

Financial Management and Annual Audit

A financial audit is carried out annually by the auditing firm Andrew Galea and Associates; the firm provides this service on a *pro bono* basis as part of its Corporate Social Responsibility policy. Audit reports for the previous years were submitted to the Office of the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations and to donors. Similarly, the narrative Annual Reports which are published and made available to donors and the general public on the SJAF website: <http://www.antidemalta.org/annual-reports.html>

Fundraising activities

The Foundation organised a number of fundraising activities during 2018. A volunteer couple contributed over 15 hours a week each to run a twice-weekly charity shop in Hal Tarxien. Another volunteer started running a bazaar at the Foundation's Enrichetta Family Services Centre in Birżebbuġa. Staff organised the annual concert in October 2018. Grants for core services and projects were obtained following the submission and approval of a number of grant proposals. Full details of grants received are made available to all major donors. The Province of the Sisters of Charity, which is the founding body of the Foundation, continued to provide significant financial backing - four rent-free premises, in-kind support and the salary of the CEO.



Community-based Family Support Service Centres

reaching out to and supporting families at community level

Objectives:

- ≈ To provide a base for a range of community-based individual and group-based support opportunities radiating outwards to a number of communities.*
- ≈ To create a welcoming hub and satellite service sites for vulnerable families from the localities of Ħal Tarxien, Paola, Fgura, Ħaż-Żabbar and Birżebbuġa through which they can access information, support services, volunteering opportunities, links to other service providers, advocacy and non-formal education opportunities.*
- ≈ To combat poverty and social exclusion by creatively, sensitively and flexibly responding to identified needs of local communities.*
- ≈ To engage in processes whereby vulnerable individuals and families who feel marginalised and excluded due to complex life-challenges are enabled to gain in self-understanding, self-compassion and self-confidence while seeking to provide them with the skills and resources required to meet these challenges and to become resilient.*
- ≈ To provide a range of volunteering opportunities for community members, service users and others outside the service catchment areas.*

Ċentru Antida family services hub and its satellite site Ċentru Enrichetta

The Antide Family Service Centre, or Ċentru Antida as it is known to families, is a community-based hub in the south eastern locality of Ħal Tarxien. Its support services are open to families experiencing poverty and social exclusion and those who are facing complex life challenges such as mental health difficulties and domestic violence. Services are extended to the localities of Ħal-Tarxien, Paola, Fgura, Ħaż-Żabbar and Birżebbuġa.

Ċentru Antida has been operating since 2007 and is recognised as a welcoming service hub through which referred families are able to access a range of support initiatives that include social work, non-formal education opportunities, support groups, peer-to-peer support offered by survivors of domestic violence, literacy assessments and learning support for children and parents, mentoring for young persons, therapeutic emotional freedom support, mental health consultations for family caregivers and handicrafts-production as a therapeutic tool. In 2010, Ċentru Antida extended its catchment localities to include Birżebbuġa, utilising a renovated disused kindergarten building owned by the Sisters of Charity of St Jeanne Antide.

During weekdays, Ċentru Antida continued to be open daily from 7.30-8 am until 5 pm or later in winter time and from 7.30 am to 2.00 pm between mid-July and mid-September. The facilities of the centre were also accessed by other organisations. In order to

accommodate the needs of highly anxious service users who cannot easily take a few hours leave, the Centre opened at 7am twice a week.

Ċentru Antida is based on the ground floor of 51, Tarxien Road in Hal Tarxien, part of the main convent of the Sisters of Charity in Malta. It is accessible, having a welcoming environment with space for group-work, courses, offices, counselling rooms, socialising and relaxation space, and a small multi-use kitchen. There are showers for temporarily homeless persons as well as a library for young and adult service users. In 2017, the Centre was visited by an average of 23 persons a day. Moreover, the Sisters of Charity enable the Foundation to make use of a large hall for group activities and a conference hall for seminars and courses accommodating 80 persons.

The centre is managed by a part-time administrator who is responsible for the management of a team of Volunteer Reception workers and a team of Volunteer Handymen and provision of back-up support to practitioners across services. She is also responsible for the production of a monthly electronic magazine which is widely disseminated and accessible from: <http://www.antidemalta.org/monthly-e-zine.html>

Ċentru Enrichetta Family Service Centre

Ċentru Enrichetta is a satellite family services site based in the locality of Birżebbuġa, a harbour town in the South-Eastern region of Malta. The services offered at the Centre respond to the identified needs of vulnerable individuals and families in this community of over 11,000 with a growing multi-cultural base.

Family-support actions during 2018 at this centre included community social work, home-based family consultations for relatives of chronically mentally ill persons, and family learning support including courses for parents of struggling learners, and struggling learners themselves. Throughout 2018, the service team supported single parent households, families facing complex problems, frail elderly who feel lonely and on the periphery of the community, families sliding into poverty, persons with low basic skills, and families with one or more members with chronic, undiagnosed and untreated mental illnesses or who are non-compliant with prescribed medication.

An official from the Malta Community Chest Fund Foundation (MCCFF) continued to run an MCCFF office every Tuesday morning to screen applicants for MCCFF family support schemes and to help applicants fill-in their application form. For part of the year, a SJAF Volunteer took up this role.

Ċentru Enrichetta opened on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays each week with a team of two Social Workers taking turns each day and a Family Learning Support specialist. The Foundation's Psychiatric Nurse undertook home visits with Social Workers whenever a family consultation became necessary. The team works closely with the parish volunteer support service team and collaborates with the regional LEAP Centre based in Hal Kirkop.

Charity shops

Linked to Ċentru Antida and Ċentru Enrichetta family support services centre are two fund-raising charity shops managed by volunteers. These initiatives are a means of providing low cost or free good-quality clothes and household items to service users and a place to which lonely persons turn to for a chat. Families who are aware of the charity shops regularly visit it to either donate knick knacks, home furnishings, books, toys, clothing and children's items and to make purchases. Both centres have become re-use hubs, with many visitors dropping

by to pick up items for their handicraft-making pastime. Donated items are also shared with other organisations that need available items.

Family learning support activities

During 2018, a number of non-formal education opportunities were offered to service users at both family service centres:

- An open-ended literacy group for vulnerable young persons over the age of 18 which was started a number of years ago, continued to run during the year. Learners were very vulnerable persons who would otherwise not have had 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. The teacher was provided by the Lifelong Learning Directorate of the Ministry of Education and Employment.

- Learning support sessions were held every Friday throughout the scholastic year at Ćentru Antida and resumed in early October while other groups ran in Summer at Ćentru Enrichetta. A narrative account of these initiatives can be found in another chapter.

- Training sessions for different groups of volunteers were held throughout the year.

- SOAR Service members accessed a range of non-formal education initiatives, as outlined in the section on SOAR.

- Self-esteem groups: During 2018, three groups ran for service users wishing to develop self-confidence and self-esteem. Each group meeting lasted 90 minutes. These ran as follows:

Group duration	No. of participants	No. completing group sessions	Average participation
Group 1: Monthly January to December (12 sessions; 18 hours)	8 (2 of whom were males)	8 participants completed the group.	75%
Group 2: Weekly January and February (4 sessions; 6 hours)	6 (1 of whom male)	6 participants completed the group.	90%
Group 3: Weekly April to June (12 sessions; 18 hours)	6	6: all later decided to join the longer-term support group	85%

Volunteer Handymen

In 2018, two Volunteer Handymen carried out basic repair and maintenance works in the homes of 28 service-using families. They also carried out maintenance works and errands for the Foundation's two family service centres – 12 tasks at Ćentru Antida and 8 at Ćentru Enrichetta; 10 errands linked to the Tarxien and Birżebbuġa charity shops; 5 tasks at the SOAR Hub, 25 at the Y-Assist Supported Accommodations and 48 for the Foundation. The latter included various errands related to pick-ups from sources donating items for families and for the Foundation's charity shops. In total, they undertook 136 tasks.

Family Learning Support (FLS) at the two Family Support Service Centres

Objectives:

≈ To enable service users of all ages to overcome their fear of and resistance to accessing learning opportunities and to help them embark on their lifelong learning journey.

≈ To provide non-threatening spaces and opportunities for vulnerable persons to engage in group-based learning activities as a spring-board to widely available mainstream non-formal and formal educational opportunities.

≈ To provide children from difficult home environments with a welcoming nurturing space where they can continue to learn and where they can form meaningful relationships with others.

Family learning is an approach that engages families in learning activities that ultimately have an impact on the whole family. It encourages family members to learn together with a focus on intergenerational learning. Activities are specifically designed to enable parents to learn how to support their children's learning and growth. FLS is a powerful method of engagement and learning which fosters positive attitudes towards life-long learning, promotes socio-economic resilience and challenges educational disadvantage (Family Learning Network, 2016).

There are nine values that underpin family learning. These are:

- It recognises the role of the parent as the first educator.
- It is inclusive.
- It recognises and values diversity of culture, race, relationships and beliefs.
- Equal partnership is the basis for all developments in family learning: all learners and educators, regardless of generation, recognise that learners and educators can frequently exchange ideas.
- It recognises that it is acceptable to make mistakes, which are part of the process of reflective learning.
- Achievements within family learning benefit the wider learning community through promoting change and empowering individuals.
- It helps to raise aspirations.
- It operates within a culture of mutual respect for individuals, communities, colleagues and organisations.
- It also enables better home-school links which is an important element in the education of all the family.

FLS supports the very complex work undertaken by Foundation Social Workers who strive to meet complex and varying needs of different members of vulnerable families. Whenever a family's care plan establishes the need to stimulate and nurture learning, the Family Learning Support practitioner is requested to provide a tailormade solution. Thus, the project's family learning support interventions included:

- Courses for parents and/or guardians on how to support their children's literacy attainment.
- All year round literacy sessions for adult learners;
- Weekly one-to-one/two-to-one learning support provided by a team of 24 Volunteer Learning Support Tutors;
- A Summer Literacy programme for Young learners at risk of educational failure;
- Recruitment and mentoring of Volunteer Learning Support Tutors;

- Supporting parents and guardians through school visits when Individual Educational Programmes (IEP) of service users' children are taking place;
- Working with Foundation Social Workers when educational input is needed;
- Educational talks for parents.

During the year, FLS reached 111 individuals from 84 families: 61 children and 50 adults.

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

The aim of these courses was to equip parents and guardians with the necessary skills that enable them to support their children's literacy acquisition. Four different courses were designed to cater for the different needs of parents and guardians and different age groups. Participants were all service users of the Foundation's Social Workers.

Course 1 (13 sessions): aimed at parents and guardians on the theme of supporting their children (ages 3 to 5) in literacy acquisition in both Maltese and English languages.

Course 2 (9 sessions): aimed at parents and guardians on the theme of helping their children (ages 5 to 7) improve their reading and writing skills in the English language.

Course 3 (6 sessions): aimed at parents on the theme of supporting their children (ages 3 to 5) in oracy and literacy acquisition in both Maltese and English. It also targets parents who are not conversant with the Maltese Language.

Course 4 (9 sessions): aimed at parents on the theme of supporting their children (ages 3 to 7) in Oracy and Literacy acquisition in the English language. It is also meant for parents who are not very conversant with the English language.

In all during 2018, three of the above designed courses were run. These addressed the needs of parents of struggling learners from early years classes. The courses were very hands on so as to stimulate active participation and included the involvement of parents in preparing visual aids. To maximise learning outcomes of participants lacking literacy skills themselves, group membership was limited to a small number. In all, 21 parents benefited. Participants were given a certificate of attendance at the end of the course they followed.

Course, venue and title	Start date	End date	Number of participants
English for parents of vulnerable children at risk of educational failure in Year 1	8 th January 2018	5 th March 2018	8
English for parents of children at risk of educational failure in year 1	14 th February 2018	25 th April 2018	6
English for parents whose children attended the summer programme	20 th November 2018	5 th February 2019	7 9 started but 2 stopped due to illnesses

Learning Support Programme for children at Antide Family Centre

As is the norm each year, a Learning Support programme for children was run at the Antide Family Service Centre in Tarxien, every Friday afternoon from 4 pm to 6 pm. A team of 24 volunteer FLS tutors provided one-to-one or two-to-one support to children taking part.

The support consists of enhancing the reading skills in both the English and Maltese Languages and homework assistance. Sessions start with a reading session for the learners who still find it difficult to read and then this is followed by homework support. In 2018, these volunteers provided 994 hours of service.

Sessions started in January and continued up to June; they re-started in October until the Christmas recess. The children attending the October sessions varied from the January sessions since a couple discontinued and a few new ones joined up.

Months in 2018	No. of Friday Sessions	Support session hours	No. of Volunteers	Children benefitting	Total hours worked by Volunteers
January to June	19	38	25	29	796
October to December	8	16	16 (8 were brought forward from January and 8 new)	17 (14 were brought forward from January and 3 new)	198
Total	27	54	33	32*	994

* Note 1: 12 of the 32 vulnerable children who accessed learning support came from migrant families from Africa.

* Note 2: Another Volunteer supported a group of 4 individuals (Adults) from migrant families from Africa, in an English Language programme.

During 2018, 33 group sessions of 1 hour each were held, together with 8 hours of preparation bringing a total of 41 hours of service.

Service provided	No. of Sessions	Support session Hours	Number of Volunteers	Children and adults benefitting	Total Hours worked by Volunteers
Friday sessions	27	54	33	32	994
Monday group sessions	33	33	1	4	41 (including preparation)
Summer Volunteer	9	5	1	16	45
Total	60	87	35	36	1080

Training of Volunteer Tutors

Tutors who volunteered to support learners who attend the Friday Family Learning Support programme were given training in multi-sensory teaching and learning methodologies for literacy acquisition. This training enabled the tutors to adopt a common approach, using child friendly methods to make learning an enjoyable experience. These multi-sensory techniques are also used when supporting learners who are identified as dyslexics. Three 90 minute sessions were held and the team of volunteers were also provided with resources which they were trained how to use.

Summer Literacy Programme for Learners at Enrichetta Family Support Service Centre

Between July and September 2018, a summer literacy programme was held at Enrichetta Family Centre in Birżebbuġa. Vulnerable children at risk of educational failure were identified by the senior management team of the Primary School of Saint Benedict College. The majority of the learners came from the school's Year 1 classes. Weekly sessions were held for both the learners and their parents. The parents were encouraged to attend with their children so as to understand the methodology used during the sessions and practice them at home so as to consolidate the learning process.

At the start of the programme, a basic skills assessment was administered for each child and an action plan devised and discussed with the parents. At the end of the programme, the same basic skills assessment was repeated in order to gauge the progress achieved and an outcome report is given to the school for continuity's sake.

During 2018, 27 parents and 2 grandparents, and 29 children benefitted from the summer programme.

29 sessions	448 hours of learning support	29 learners	27 parents +2 grandparents	1 volunteer Tutor	9 sessions x 5 hours = 45 hours of voluntary service
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Mondays: 10 sessions x 2 hours x 5 learners = **100 hours** (20 hours per learner)
 Tuesdays: 10 sessions x 1.5 hours x 16 learners = **240 hours** (15 per learner)
 Wednesday: 9 sessions x 1.5 hours x 8 learners = **108 hours** (13.5 per learner)

The above hours excluded around 29 hours of preparation time. Other elements of pre-session time include the following:

- Meetings with the school's senior management team to identify vulnerable children; and parents who could benefit from the summer programme;
- Contacting all the identified parents and explaining the support being offered;
- Preparing the summer schedule of sessions;
- Preparation of resource material to be used.

Supporting Adult Literacy

During 2018, FLS provided intensive one-to-one literacy support to 12 vulnerable adult service users.

- 3 followed Maltese Language sessions;
- 5 followed English Language sessions;
- 2 followed English and Maltese sessions;
- 2 followed English, Maths and Maltese sessions.

Sessions were held on a weekly basis throughout the year. Service users could access personal tuition in either Maltese, Maths and/or English so as to increase access to better job opportunities. One service user managed to get into MCAST while another managed to sit for the Jobsplus august examination.

Adult Learners	Period of Individual Tuition	Number of Sessions	Number of hours of service delivery
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1	January – June 2018	24	24
2	January – June 2018	23	46
3	January – July 2018	24	48
4	January – December 2018	37	37
5	January – December 2018	46	46
6	January – December 2018	40	40
7	January – December 2018	30	30
8	January – December 2018	24	24
9	January – December 2018	33	33
10	June – September 2018	5	5
11	November – December 2018	2	4
12	November – December 2018	1	2
Total	12 adults benefitted	289	339

The above hours do not include hours of preparation which amount to around 40 hours. The service was provided by the programme coordinator.

Adult Tuition in English provided by a Volunteer Tutor (under supervision of programme coordinator)

At Ćentru Enrichetta, tuition in the English language was offered to service users coming from African countries. The service was offered by a volunteer tutor on a weekly basis. This service started being offered in February 2018; 33 group sessions were held.

Adult Learner	Period of Tuition	Number of sessions	Number of hours
1	February – December 2018	25	25
2	February – December 2018	11	11
3	April – December 2018	11	11
4	October – December	9	9
Total	4 adults	33 group sessions	33 total hours

To the total hours 8 hours of preparation by the volunteer tutor have to be added.

Accompaniment to parents for key school meetings

Besides offering parental training in literacy support, FLS also supported vulnerable service users through accompaniment to important school meetings such as IEPs and meetings with Heads of Schools. Support was also given to parents whenever they received reports from other professionals. The reports were discussed and wherever necessary, school meetings with the SMT were held.

Educational Talks

FLS also supported schools and other entities through talks to parents and other professionals. Talks to parents focus on how they can support the educational journey of their children, while those for professionals focus on understanding the particular needs of

vulnerable children and how best to support them and their families. During 2018, three such talks were held.

Volunteer training and support

Guidance was provided to Volunteer Learning Support Tutors each Friday before the start of their one-to-one learning support with the child they are matched with. Approaches were discussed, resources shared, difficulties tackled as they arose. The person who runs learning support is an expert teacher-trainer and literacy teacher; she is also competent in teaching students with learning difficulties, including those on the autism spectrum.

SOCIAL INTEGRATION PROGRAMME FOR TEENS – SIPT

≈ an educational, socialising, community exposure and community integration initiative for youth with autism spectrum disorder

For many years, parents who are members of the Autism Parents Association (APA) had been consistently mentioning the gap that existed in community integration opportunities for young persons aged 14+. Through its networking processes, the St Jeanne Antide Foundation (SJAF) embarked on a partnership initiative with the Autism Parents' Association to develop and run an appropriate youth programme. The SIPT programme was thus developed as a key strand of the wider project funded by the Malta Community Chest Fund Foundation (MCCFF)'s grants for NGOs - Project Ref: MCCFF-C3-004-2016.

The main aim of the initiative was to create opportunities for youth with autism spectrum disorder to participate in youth activities like other youth in society. Integration, skills building and participation were the pillars of this new initiative. SIPT thus bridged the identified gap through in-house activities, outings and outreach with other organisations at community and national levels.

Activities

For the first year of this project initiative, please also see the attached chapter from the SJAF 2017 Annual Report.

For the second year of the project: Through 2018, the following activities were successfully organised:

- 4th January: El Catalan invited SIPT youth to prepare a pizza themselves and enjoy eating their own cooking. During this activity, participants also learnt different skills while eating in a restaurant.

- 20th January: a collaboration between Żejtun Youth Group and SIPT was initiated and our youths were ably involved in co-working with other youth in preparing different crafts related to Carnival. During this activity, SIPT youth and members of the Żejtun Youth Group also played a football game together.

- 21st January: Scouts Group together with SIPT youth to set up a tent together. The activity involved fine motor skills development.

- 12th February: APA parent members whose children form part of SIPT, together with SIPT personnel, took part in the organisation of a carnival party.

- 17th February: In order to further develop their cooking skills, members spent time at the SJAF family service centre in Tarxien (Ċentru Antida). They prepared hotdogs and cakes – skills they could easily practise at home.
- 3rd March: This time around, a velocity training fun activity was organized – using trampoline - to stimulate gross motor and cognitive skills.
- 17th March: An activity where SIPT young members made use of the Cospicua to Valletta Ferry service. The goal was to further break barriers when using different forms of local transport.
- 7th April: A sports event was organized in collaboration with the Marsascala Local Council. The aim was to enable youth to understand the concept of healthy competition, working in a team where all team members have a common purpose and can succeed.
- 18th April: Visit to SJAF by Her Excellency Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, President of Malta, for a meeting with the young persons benefiting from SIPT, their parents, members of the Autism Parents' Association and SJAF management.
- 21st April: Another visit to Explora Science Centre was organized and participated in 2 workshops.
- 12th May: Through collaboration with the Marsaxlokk Local Council youths were able to taste local traditional fish cuisine and tried their hand at fishing in a Luzzu.
- 9th June: Members visited the Malta Aquarium in Qawra.
- 23rd June: An event where the members practised gross motor and cognitive skills through archery.
- 7th July: A bowling activity enabled members to use their gross motor skills and cognitive skills during archery.
- 28th July: Members organized a day trip to Gozo that included a train tour, Rabat tour and a meal.
- 11th August: APA organized an annual Summer BBQ at which SIPT members took a lively part.
- 1st September: Group members requested a session at Robotica. A professional Tutor agreed to hold a session during which youths followed instructions given and managed to build robots.
- 13th October: Members participated in cooking session at a chocolate factory. Once again the objectives were of how to work in a team and preparing a snack independently.
- 10th November: A planned visit to ECO-Farm had to be cancelled due to bad weather.
- 17th November: A day trip to Sicily took place. Trip was planned by members and their parents. The group experienced another means of transport, visited Etna and an eco-village and did some shopping.
- 24th November: SIPT was invited to attend a show at Manuel Theatre. Members interacted with other groups.
- 26th December: A Christmas dinner was organised by youth and their parents. Secret Santa, exchange of gifts and other fun games made the event a joyful one.

Feedback from Parents

"The youth club changed both my life and my son's life. My 17 year old son now has friends and activities to look forward to. The minute he gets home from a youth club activity he asks me when the next one is. As a mother I have also found friendship and support and I

too look forward and join in activities. No words could express the heartfelt gratitude I have for the people who dedicate their time to make this possible.”

“SIPT made it possible so that my youth could socialize in a safe environment. With this project we also managed to build a strong relationship between us parents and this helped us to support each other in difficult time.”

Feedback from young SIPT participants

“The SIPT Youth club is a very good idea. It is nice to have friends in youth club and it is important to have friends. Youth club has fun activities. It is great to have somewhere to go on Saturdays. Youth club is great for teens and for the adults too.”

“Our meetings are very important for my life since I made new friends with whom I can have fun. By this youth group I managed to go abroad for the first time. I was so excited to this. I would like to thank all those involved who made it possible.”

Photos of Activities





SOAR Service

support, awareness raising, research and advocacy by survivors of domestic violence

Broad aims:

- ≈ To mobilise women who have experienced intimate partner violence to influence policy and practices.*
- ≈ To enable families to break the cycle of vulnerability caused by violent intimate relationships.*
- ≈ To contribute towards the elimination of violence against women.*

Specific objectives:

- ≈ To provide opportunities and safe spaces that make it possible for members to participate in initiatives that raise self-confidence, encourage fellowship and mutual support, nurture skills and competencies and open doors to other life-enhancing opportunities for themselves and their children.*
- ≈ To provide access to a range of training opportunities in peer mentoring and peer support to recovered survivors.*
- ≈ To analyse relevant legislation and practices so as to pinpoint aspects that are oppressive to victims and survivors of violent relationships and present recommendations to policy-makers.*
- ≈ To raise awareness about attitudes and practices that are helpful and empowering to victims and survivors.*
- ≈ To network and participate in different fora to present the perspectives and interests of survivors and their children.*

SOAR is a survivor-led strengths-based peer support service for women and children exposed to domestic violence. SOAR strives to enable women and children who have survived domestic violence to come together for collective wellbeing. SOAR offers a range of support services and advocacy initiatives to empower women and their children on their journey of recovery away from violence.

Supporting Women and Children

In 2018, SOAR supported 32 women and continued to provide assistance to 28 women referred to SOAR in previous years. SOAR supported these survivors and their children holistically by offering the following services: one-to-one support, an online support group, weekly creative group work, monthly social activities, art therapy (UMAMA project - see below), drama therapy, accompaniment to agencies, in-kind support, online support-chat and referrals to other services and agencies.

Support Group

Survivors who are often left isolated after domestic violence benefit from joining the SOAR support group. This group is user-led with a core team of 6 volunteers who assist with

the upkeep of the group's online space. The volunteers also provide logistic and emotional support to other members online and during social activities.

The SOAR members' online group is a safe space for survivors to chat and share interesting information and articles. For the service, it serves as a key tool for instant group-based communication and allows for the consented collection of data from polls and other focus-group type discussions that may be started. It also serves as a notice board for the group where information about short courses, job openings, project participation applications, social outings and other opportunities are shared.

Social activities are a perfect opportunity for survivors to build new social support networks with other women who have overcome many of the same challenges facing the 'new' survivors. In 2018, 12 social events were organised successfully for support group members. During a typical social meeting there is an exchange of 'best practice' on managing difficult moments in practical ways, strengthening parent-child relationships, learning to develop healthy boundaries and learning to overcome structural hurdles in the systems, whilst maintaining a supportive, loving and joyful environment.

"This group helped me get back the confidence I lost. I lost trust even though I tried to hide behind a smile. This is a space safe for me because I have your support and I thank you all for that. Because of this group I know I am never alone."

"It's amazing to be supported instantly, during situations in which one feels alone, by people who have been there."

"This online chat has given me hope and a sense of belonging and safety."

"It is a wonderful way to feel safe. I know that what I say will not be judged and that others will support me and keep my secrets."

"Being able to open up about my worries or just to express my achievements with those who understand me fully, and so quickly as it is online, is fantastic. It feels reassuring."



Photos: In-house social events. (Left) A social sharing and networking event with migrant women in collaboration with UNHCR and Migrant Women Association. (Right) A food making activity for SOAR women and children.

Creating and sustaining a creative, adult-learning, craft group

Kind Krafts Club was created in early 2018 following a successful project that married the creative arts with healing therapies. The feedback received from participants showed that creative arts have a key role in the healing process for survivors. It also brought women together, giving them the opportunity to meet and build a new social life after having been cut off and isolated by their abuser.

By Summer, the group learned how to make soaps, bathbombs, body scrubs and candles through online learning programmes, tutorials and practical demonstrations. The weekly activity brought survivors together, for a fun and educational activity that included learning about recycling, chemicals, mathematics (weight, volume, percents, fractions, time, cost, conversion etc.), reading and listening to tutorials in English, video making, editing, marketing and planning, labelling requirements, entrepreneurship and leadership.

The Kind Krafts Club used a drop-in approach, where survivors are invited to attend but not required to. This respects their need for flexibility and remained something they choose to keep coming back to, without pressure. Women were offered the opportunity to develop their creative selves in a safe space at their own pace. Some of the women preferred to create food and, together, they made delicious low-cost lunches for the whole group.

Items made had to pass a quality control test following which they were then sold; all proceeds went back to supporting this and other SOAR support initiatives. Survivors were encouraged to participate in the craft markets and corporate events where the products were sold boosting their self-esteem and self-confidence. Survivors learned to build trust in their skills and abilities, slowly recovering from psychological harm caused by verbal abuse (such as being repeatedly told: "Can't you do ANYTHING right?").

Throughout 2018, 25 women and 22 children used the service of the Kind Krafts Club with an average of 8 – 9 women participating each time.

"I love the fact that I belong and I am encouraged in my weaknesses. I love the happy atmosphere and the togetherness."

"SOAR has helped me a lot. On Saturday we make soap and candles, we cook... I love it! Sometimes when I am at home alone I cry, but when I speak to Elaine or Shakira I feel so much better."

"It's always fun, the atmosphere is welcoming and the air smells so nice. I enjoy knowing that I helped to make something pretty and that people want to buy it."

"I feel accepted, trusted and loved without judgement. I can be myself and it's always something to look forward to. In fact I cannot come next Saturday and I am already sad about it."

"The Saturday club is a place where I feel safe and not judged in a family-like environment."



Photos: (Left) Preparing for a soap making activity. (Right) A Christmas market stand in collaboration with HSBC Foundation



UMAMA

In 2018, the project UMAMA, meaning ‘mother’, was launched. It was a creative project that involved particularly vulnerable women and children affected by domestic violence, marrying the arts with a therapeutic process that left a great positive impact on the lives of participants.

The project consisted of two main activities that focused on establishing and strengthening the mother-child relationship after escaping violence, through creativity and artistic expression. The aim was to create a safe space where mothers and their children to connect for therapeutic healing, improved relationships, strengthened inclusion and the exploration of one’s ability for self-expression through art and creativity. Group sessions were held in 2018 with the final exhibition planned for launch in March 2019. The 2019 end-of-project exhibition will give the women an opportunity to raise awareness on the many hidden challenges faced by mothers after domestic violence. The exhibition and a printed booklet, to be hosted and supported by APS Bank, will give Art Therapy the public recognition it deserves as a creative healing therapy.

“You can feel that your child has become a weapon for revenge and you don’t want to be party to your child being torn apart. In the end you let go. You let go to save her, and then you grieve for the loss of your living child.”



St Jeanne Antide Foundation thanks the President's Award for Creativity, Arts Council Malta and APS Bank for their invaluable support.

SOAR Survivors’ Hub

In 2018, St Jeanne Antide Foundation secured the long-term use of a premises in Tarxien belonging to Dar tal-Providenza. Once refurbished and furnished, the house will serve as the national base for SOAR services. The acquired town house will be a survivor-run, physical safe space offering the much-required infrastructure and information relating to all services, provided for domestic violence survivors and their children.

The town house was in a bad state, since it had been abandoned for a considerable amount of years. Nonetheless, following a planned extensive restoration and conversion project, it will house offices that provide SOAR support services, two small social enterprises

and it will be the location for several SOAR survivor-led creative and therapeutic projects aimed at enhancing the social, emotional and psychological wellbeing of survivors.

The renovation process started in October 2018 with the cleaning up of the garden from overgrown vegetation and debris with the assistance of various CSR teams from different corporate bodies.



From left to right, the team from HSBC call centre that kicked off the works. A skilled worker from Local Government removing wiring. His team managed to clear several disposable items on the day. Environmental Landscapes Consortium (ELC) Gardeners pruning the trees along with police recruits in the garden.



From left to right, volunteers who gave their time to remove the foliage and tree trunks along with Elaine Compagno SOAR Service Coordinator and Inspector Charlotte Curmi, Project Officer at the SOAR Survivor's Hub. Thurston Attard is with KPMG volunteers, explaining on how to proceed with the work. Form 4 students from St Joseph School Blata il-Bajda, whilst visiting Ċentru Antida. Employees of HSBC call centre who opted to spend a Saturday assisting us at the Hub.

Heartfelt appreciations go to the Alfred Mizzi Foundation; HSBC Malta plc; QP Management; Fidem Foundation; Turning Point Investments Ltd.; ELC; Academy for the Disciplined Forces; St Jeanne Antide Primary School; Borg Brothers furniture movers; Sanitech; Department for Local Government; Tarxien Local Council; Wasteserv; Rock-A-Go Skip Rentals; and SOAR volunteer Rita Spiteri. SOAR also thanks MCAST marketing students and their lecturer for working on the design of a short-term social media promotion during Christmas time.

SOAR is overwhelmed by the positive attitude and the support of volunteers provided through the Corporate Social Responsibility activities of several organisations. We truly value their time and the way their generous efforts have filled us with hope and encouragement.

Advocacy and Networking

Women survivors have first-hand experience of the often inefficient justice and protection systems, and a unique understanding of how policies are falling short of being practical and effective for the survivor and her children. However, because they are women, they have less cultural capital, lacking resources and opportunities to participate and to have an active influence in the policies that effect their lives. Women as a group struggle to be heard and be taken seriously. When these women are victims and survivors of domestic violence, victim-blaming in public discourse shuts down their voices even more severely. Survivors are shamed and discouraged from speaking out, afraid of the stigma and shame that they perceive will have negative consequences for their children, their families and their career. Inadequate and uncreative opportunities for engaging survivors limit them from challenging public discourse and ineffective policies.

In 2018, SOAR enabled the self-empowerment of women survivors to become actively involved in processes that influence policy, since they are considered to be experts-by-experience. SOAR brokered their engagement with other organisations, networks, institutions, and Government bodies during the President's Road Table (see below).

SOAR organised support services, mentoring and capacity building for the participating women. Powerful narratives are used to influence local policy and public discourse, challenging some of the strongest held cultural myths and stereotypes about violence against women (VAW). SOAR provided opportunities for authentic participation in processes that aimed to effectively influence policy and practices

President's Round Table on perpetrators' manipulation of the justice system

On 6th April 2018, SOAR set up and accompanied 3 survivors to a meeting with Her Excellency Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, President of Malta. During this meeting, Her Excellency heard the testimony of the survivors about how the support systems, the justice system in particular, were being used by the perpetrators as tools to continue their campaign of violence against them and others. The survivors outlined how the system was being used to terrorise them and to break down the relationships they had with their children. Her Excellency was visibly moved by the disclosures of the women and she offered to host a round table to provide that safe space that the survivors needed to talk about their experiences with members of the judiciary. They did this not for their own benefit, but to raise awareness and advocate for the benefit of those who were yet to suffer the same fate.

SOAR subsequently collaborated with emPOWER which is supported by the President's Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society and a round table was held on 29th November 2018. Members of the judiciary, the Commissioner on Domestic Violence and other stakeholders were present on the day. A sound system was set up to allow the three survivors to speak from a different room to protect their identity. Their poignant testimonies highlighted difficulties, trauma and risks that survivors and their children face when they are dragged through and caught up in the inefficient wheels of justice. A follow up is being planned to take place in 2019.



“It was such an honour to be able to share my experiences with Her Excellency and to feel that she identified with the situation and that she wants to help women survivors. After the round table, I felt emotionally drained but hopeful for the future. Thanks to SOAR for making this possible.”

“This provided a great platform where as a survivor I could safely voice my experience through the legal system safely. Not only my own, but also that of my children, the silent victims of legal loopholes. Hopefully it will be the start of change.”

Training provided

SOAR contributed to training sessions, seminars and conferences on 11 occasions throughout 2018. Police recruits, nurses, midwives, family doctors, corporate staff, degree students, community workers and migrant women are some of those who received our training.

Continuous Professional Development (CPDs) and training

SOAR recognises survivors’ competences and acknowledges survivors as experts-by-experience. Opportunities are offered to build on these competences to strengthen capacity for effective advocacy, risk assessment, peer-support and peer-mentoring. SOAR staff and the Core Team (volunteers) have undertaken various trainings to enrich their learning and offer a top quality service.

Date	Training	Number of Staff/Volunteers
5 February	Full Cooperation: Zero Violence - Launch of research findings.	1
6-8 March	Full Cooperation: Zero Violence. Part 2 of the raining course	1 staff + 3 Volunteers
17 July – 30 August	Award in Financial Literacy (Level 3) consisting of 60 contact hours and 90 self-study hours. Course provided by FSWS and MCAST.	2
23 July	UNHCR – Seminar on the new Domestic Violence Law and Migrant Communities.	1
27-28 September	Mental Health First Aid for Youth Leaders consisting of 14 contact hours.	1
22-23 October	WAVE Conference.	2
7 – 11 November, 2018	DASH Risk Checklist Training, OCN Accredited Peer-Mentoring Training, Self-care and Motivational Interviewing by Cohort4, Atherstone, UK.	2 + 4 volunteers



LWIEN Service

Broad aims:

- ≈ *To fill a gap in community mental health care in Malta.*
- ≈ *To acknowledge, affirm, guide and support family caregivers of mentally ill persons as key providers of community mental health care.*
- ≈ *To combat stigma and reduce self-stigma.*

More specifically:

- ≈ *To prevent caregiver burnout, depression, job loss and family break-up.*
- ≈ *To bolster caregiver resilience, caregiving stamina and commitment through a range of interventions that include family consultations, emotional freedom therapeutic work, support group and mediation with the wider state mental health care system.*
- ≈ *To model an interdisciplinary practice at community level in support of caregiving families.*

supporting family caregivers of mentally ill persons

Family caregivers of mentally ill persons constitute a category of citizens who lack support in fulfilling their challenging and overwhelming caregiving responsibility.

As is evidenced by SJAF practice and research carried out by the European Union Federation of Associations of Families of the Mentally Ill (EUFAMI), family caregivers of mentally ill persons are highly prone to becoming highly anxious and depressed. Constant caregiving becomes a major family stressor. Through the LWIEN service, the Foundation comes in regular contact with distressed family caregivers whose financial means are diminished, constraining the family to sell assets, abandon their job or switching to a less demanding one, close a business and doing whatever it takes to pay professionals privately so as to cope with the constant strain of caring for the mentally ill family member. It is the experience of the Foundation that primary family caregivers rarely seek help for themselves, limiting their access to state and private mental health services for their ill family member.

The Service

The LWIEN service comprises office-based family consultations via different service sites, home-visits, social work support, support groups, educational literature in Maltese, referral to available courses on mental health, liaison with mental health practitioners, mediation with employers and educational establishments and in-house referrals to the Emotional Freedom Service. Throughout 2018, the schedule of thrice-weekly family consultations was maintained on Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 7 am to 4 pm. The Saturday family consultations continued to be held at Dar Sagra Familja of the Sisters of St Joseph in Haż-Żabbar. Apart from these three days, the Foundation's Senior Psychiatric Nurse provided guidance and support to caregiving families from the North at various informal venues on other weekdays.

Apart from supporting families who come from all over the island, the service is intrinsically linked to social work interventions provided by the Foundation's Social Workers and the input of other in-house practitioners. The main focus of the service are the relatives who assume the primary responsibility of care for a member of their family. Caregivers, as is evidenced by the data of the localities where the service users of Lwien reside, come from all

over Malta. In those cases where sufferers themselves try to access Lwien, the Psychiatric Nurse meets up with them to determine whether they are already linked to mainstream state mental health services. If it is determined that they are not, efforts are made to help the sufferer access support as quickly as possible. In cases where the sufferer insists on accessing private mental health services and has no other community based support, Lwien monitors the sufferer from the point at which they visit a psychiatrist until a period of six months to ensure that the person is doing well. At that stage, the case is closed unless, during that period, and with the sufferer's consent, the service succeeds in reaching out to the sufferer's family to offer guidance and support.

Caregiving families supported in 2018

In 2018, the Lwien Service provided intense support to a total of 295 individuals from 178 families. Of the 295 individuals supported, 161 shouldered primary caregiving responsibilities.

Open cases from previous years	New families referred in 2018	Individuals	Female Caregivers (of 161)	Male Caregivers (of 161)
30 individuals from 24 families	154	295	119	42

Localities of residence of supported 178 caregiving families in 2018:

Birżebbuġa	23	Qrendi, Għaxaq, Safi, Gudja, Kirkop, Żurrieq, Żejtun, Luqa	20
Haż-Żabbar	15	Fleur-de-Lys, Sta Venera, Birkirkara, Swieqi, Balzan, Attard, Iklin	20
Tarxien	15	Msida, Gżira, Sliema, St Julians, Madliena	11
Marsaskala	12	Mgarr, Mosta, Naxxar	10
Paola	10	Burmarrad, Manikata, Buġibba, St Paul's Bay, Mellieħa	5
Cottonera	7	Haż-Żebbuġ. Hal Qormi. Siggiewi	5
Fgura	5	Marsa, Hamrun	5
Marsaxlokk	4	Blata-l-Bajda, Pietà, Floriana, Valletta	4
Santa Lucia	2	Rabat, Mdina, Dingli	5

Types of mental illnesses suffered by family members cared for by the 178 families

Depression (40; Post-partum depression (4)	44	Bi-polar Disorder	11
Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) 14 + related: Hoarding (3); Morbid Jealousy 3); Paranoia (2); OCPD (1); Voyeurism (1);	24	Severe ADHD	10
Autism	21	Cognitive impairment	10
Schizophrenia	15	Psychosis	9
Suicide	14	Psychopathy	4
Borderline Personality Disorder	14	Domestic violence	4
Addictions: Drygs (5); Alcoholism (6); Gambling (3)	14	Sexual identity crisis	3

Health conditions: Dementia (4); Huntington's Chores (3); Hypochondriosis (1); Muscular Dystrophy (1); Cancer (1); Meningitis (1); Parkinsonism (1); Prader Willy syndrome (1); other (1)	14	Mood disorder	1
Severe Anxiety & panic attacks (8); Separation Anxiety (3)	11	Serial promiscuity	1
Still undiagnosed	2		

Ages of the 161 primary family caregivers:

Less than 20 = 3 50's = 38
 20's = 7 60's = 27
 30's = 33 70+ = 16
 40's = 37

Consultations with families and home-visits (with both new and older cases):	1,303
Guidance through long telephone calls	143

Summary LWIEN caseload of part-time Senior Practitioner (Psychiatric Nurse) in 2018:

	Families	Individuals
Families still supported from previous years	24	30
2018 new referrals	154	265
TOTAL	178	295

Effective liaison with the mental health system

Maintaining effective links with existing community mental health services is crucial to the wellbeing of family caregivers. Hence, the service liaised closely with state and NGO service providers in this key sector. Referrals both ways continued to take place throughout 2018. Liaison with mental health services for sufferers was maintained to maximise positive outcomes for the families involved.



Emotional Freedom Service

learning to release emotional distress

Broad Aim:

The target category of service users are persons with emotional distress who are freely motivated to try releasing it, and who do not have mental illness unless referred by a mental health professional. The overall aim is to reduce suffering of such distressed individuals, of any faith or none, and to promote their self-empowerment so that they may have life that is freer and more abundant, psychologically, socially, and where appropriate spiritually.

Specific objectives:

≈ To release emotional distress of motivated distressed individual service users, and bring about happiness and peace.

≈ To assist user self-empowerment by investigating with the users their root issues, and by sharing with them self-help methods of releasing such distress and of preventing future distress.

The Emotional Freedom Service of the St Jeanne Antide Foundation has been running for some 7 years. In 2018, it handled 41 new cases of individuals and involved 195 one-on-one contact hours. Each case consisted of an average of 2.0 sessions. Each session averaged 2.4 hours. Persons usually need 2 or 3 sessions, rarely 4 or 5.

Workers, such as social workers, in SJAF and other agencies and the public are welcome to make use of this service. Referrals are often received from other services of SJAF, notably the LWIEN Service mental health professional and the social workers of the Social Work Service.

The service is limited to persons who: 1. have emotional distress; and 2: are motivated to try and release their distress; and 3: do not have mental illness (unless referred by a mental health professional). By emotional distress we mean chronic or acute symptoms such as anger; fear; the effect of adverse childhood experiences on adults; long-term grief; resentment; non-forgiveness; emotional hurt; non-endogenous depressive symptoms resulting from reactions to an event; self-sabotaging and harsh self-criticism or very low self-evaluation. The service of course is no substitute for medical attention.

The service is delivered by a certified advanced practitioner in emotional freedom techniques. It is free of charge and confidential. One to four sessions, as required, with one individual at a time are the usual method. In certain circumstances, the service aims are promoted by delivering support group sessions, workshops and seminars on request from other agencies and groups. This service *does not* have aims that include persuasion on behalf of parents or employers, problem-solving, social work, couples therapy, family therapy, or mental illness counselling or treatment. It always encourages users to refer to a medical professional when medical concerns or symptoms are suspected

The *one-on-one sessions* are held at the SJAF family services centres, unless there is a request to hold them at any other specific location, such as the suitable premises of another agency or a parish. Parish priests are welcome to offer a quiet room in their parish for occasional use. Related self-help *workshops* are held by this service where required. Other agencies are welcome to enquire about these and tell us their needs.

The success rate is high provided the service user is motivated to change and is not pressured in any way to take part (e.g. by parent or spouse). This is a concern especially where the distressed person is an adolescent or a child. In such cases parents, whatever their own motivation, are requested not to apply for this service unless their child or teenager is truly motivated to seek help to try and release her or his distress. Our methods are self-help and do not work in the absence of adequate motivation. In the case of minors, one parent must be present during the session, or the parent may request an additional SJAF professional to attend instead of themselves. This is recommended when a teenager is motivated to talk about the distress in the absence of the parent.

The emotional freedom service practitioner works with service users to help them identify the distress and, where possible, its root cause. Service users are shown how to practice a number of self-help techniques for the release of distress; in most cases these are practised successfully during the session. The subjective level of distress is “measured” and recorded during the session, and also in back-home “testing” later. The service users are also helped to practice relaxation techniques and other techniques that in their daily life can help them dissolve the damaging effects of future hurtful and stressful events. Most service users are thus empowered and self-empowered to face life’s difficulties with more strength and equanimity than before treatment.

In our Emotional Freedom Service, the psychological safety of the service users is protected by having referrals both to and from the LWIEN mental health service of the Foundation, whose senior psychiatric nurse intervenes directly where needed, and liaises with external psychological and psychiatric professions where needed. In all cases where the practitioner suspects that a medical professional is required, the service user is encouraged to seek one.

Contact between sessions and after treatment is retained as long as needed by email. In most cases, service users declare themselves very calm and liberated from their distress; and the effect is usually long-term or permanent.

Here are comments from some of the users of the Emotional Freedom Service during 2018. Names have been changed, and identifying details omitted.

- **Albert** is a young man having intense back-home tensions. In the 2nd Session: (After a long silence) “I am feeling like melted butter. As if I am in a forest, feeling positive. I am going to have a picture of a forest made for me. I am feeling that I am passing through a deep change, like from a caterpillar to a butterfly.”
- **Alex** is an elderly man experiencing alienation from close family members. In the 1st Session: “I feel much better than when I came in for the session.”
- **Agnes** is a middle-aged woman struggling with her emotions. “You have calmed me miraculously. During this method, I feel happier! No, I wasn’t sleepy, but I could not open my eyes because I relaxed so much!”

- **Adrienne** is a young woman angry at her parents' separation that disrupted the family and emotionally removed the children from their sources of support. "I do not feel the anger at all now. I feel better."
- **Brenda** is a middle-aged woman with a painful self-image and a lack of confidence in certain contexts. Shortly after her first session, she wrote: "I just had my first Trial. I met one of those persons I mentioned in our session, the ones that make me feel inferior and, to my big surprise, I could talk to the person with more confidence than I usually do. It's amazing. I think it's working."
- **Carol** is a young woman whose feelings of rejection and bereavement grief and sadness have made her feel humiliated and lonely, closed in upon herself. In the 1st session she said: "Earlier in this session, when I visualized myself giving love to someone, I had stomach-tightening and a voice saying, 'No, no, no, don't give love!'. But now the voice is much less strong, and my stomach less tight." In the 2nd session she said: "I am now accepting reality; I accept now that things are not perfect, and that's the way it is. I spoke to [the person who rejected me] and I now understand that he has fears of getting hurt, and is afraid of getting together with me."
- **Cynthia** is a woman who was still troubled by events at her former place of work. In the 2nd session she covered her mouth with her hand and, when asked whether she was well, she explained: "It's as if I am releasing stuff from my stomach. I am burping and a little nauseous as if I need to throw up. No, not literally; I don't need to go to the toilet."
- **Colin** is an elderly man troubled by anxieties. After the 2nd session he said: "I have found my new self."
- **Conrad** is a young man with a chaotic parental home, poor level of confidence in his own perceptions and a phobia of getting sick, being afraid of touching surfaces for fear of contaminating his hands. Four days after the 1st session, he wrote: "I had much less obsessive thoughts about getting sick – and only one-tenth the intensity of before." During the 2nd session he said: "I now see that it was my parents that were delusional [not myself], and my own perceptions were true. I now see that I was observant! This boosts my current [adult] self-worth." In the 3rd session, he said: "My phobia regarding getting [a particular type of sickness] over the last week recurred only once, and only lightly. When I thought about it, it was not with fear. I can't even see why I was phobic about vomiting. The shouting at home no longer triggers a fear of sickness, just an anxiety. The phobia was taking over my life and I did not have any choice. It's a miracle – within the [7 days of] these sessions the phobia symptoms have disappeared. I was surprised by their effectiveness. The next morning, I did not even have a thought of what I had been fearing. Before, I had been so anxious, always thinking of the worst-case scenario."
- **Damaris** is a woman who has been angry since childhood because of her father's behaviour that "took away her childhood". During the 1st session she said: "I feel much better now. I feel a new person! The inner child work really helped me. I never did that kind of work with my past therapists – they just told me I have to confront dad."

- **Edna** is an elderly Christian woman troubled for years by anger, insecurity, and endogenous depression. In one of her sessions she said: "I feel perfectly safe and good. ...I think you are my teacher. It's amazing how you are guiding me through this process of re-organising my "self" on the way to becoming Christ-led and free of the fear of surrendering."
- **Laurel** is a middle-aged woman troubled by childhood related non-forgiveness issues; eating and sleeping difficulties and psychosomatic symptoms; excessive fearfulness of risk and disasters; finding it hard to release repetitive thoughts; and insufficient self-appreciation. In the 1st and 2nd sessions it was discovered that a major source of her troubles was that she was unable to distinguish her own from her deceased mother's values and bitter perceptions of people. At one point in the 1st session, she sighed in relief and said: "Inhållejt!" (I feel tensions dissolved). She forgave the person concerned. She reported that she felt happy after the session. During the 2nd session, she felt the strong umbilical cord binding her to her late mother's perceptions went from 100% to zero. She found the experience "relieving!". She called the session "very helpful."
- **Miro** is a young boy, overstressed, fearful, and angry because of fighting parents. Although it was clear during the session that the accompanying parent was unloading adult frustrations judgmentally onto the boy, the boy reported practically total relief of his felt distress. Because of the style of parenting involved, there is no doubt that the boy faces renewed excessive and damaging stress daily. During the session he said: "If I had magic, I would stop my [parent] shouting."
- **Roderika** is a woman who has extreme anxiety, stress, fear, embarrassment, and certain medical issues. In the 1st session she said: "I am feeling my body releasing stress. I feel that I am being released from everything. There is a slight pleasant shivering. I felt the stiffness releasing out of my body. These methods work! I am super tranquil. I am feeling tears of joy."
- **Ronalda** is a troubled young woman bearing the emotional scars of close family member's sexual abuse, horrible past and present relations with her mother, and various traumas. Her emotional scars included intense hatred, anger, hurt, sadness, a sense of being rejected and betrayed, and possibly an aversion against becoming happy, which at some level she feels she does not deserve to be. In the 2nd session she was able to relax deeply, saying: "I feel calmer already. I felt my body pleasantly parked; I'm not sleepy but rather more awake, and calm." In further sessions she released much of her traumatised and made progress towards forgiveness.
- **Sandrine** is a middle-aged working woman suffering from the emotional impact of put-downs from senior colleagues at work. These events, coming on top of earlier marital problems, resulted in a sense of unworthiness, self-blame, fear, sadness, lack of energy, lack of capacity for enjoying previously enjoyable pursuits, eating problems, and a sense of hurt, which she felt attacked her from the inside. The sense of hurt vanished in the 1st session. The fear and stress dissolved away in the 2nd session. While relaxing, she saw colours that she understood to mean: "I feel the light coming in; it has replaced the darkness." At the end of the session she said, "I feel great peace and relief."

- **Seraphine** is a middle-aged woman with a serious personality disorder, referred to the Emotional Freedom Service by a mental health professional. She has had a history of various traumas, including being violently physically attacked, various felt betrayals, etc. In one of her several sessions she said, “You are giving me something that no doctor or anybody has been able to give me.”
- **Serena** is a young woman troubled by adverse childhood experiences, depressive, obsessive, and invasive thoughts, fears, and insomnia. In the 1st session a major fear subsided completely. On arriving for the 2nd session she reported: “My main obsession vanished because of what we did in the 1st session.” Improvements were obtained in other aspects of her distress. However, mental illness was suspected, and she was thus referred to the LWIEN service of our Foundation.



DAR ESTHER

supported accommodation for vulnerable young mothers and mothers-to-be

Dar Esther forms part of the Y-Assist initiative of The President's Trust; the latter organisation became known, in early 2019, as The Malta Trust Foundation chaired by President Emeritus Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca. In 2017, SJAF had been commissioned to develop, start and run supported accommodation for young vulnerable pregnant young women and mothers aged between 18 and 25, having children up to the age of 5 years. Practice experience led to the eventual widening of the age bracket.

Dar Esther is the first supported accommodation forming part of the Y-Assist initiative. It welcomes young women who lack family support and risk becoming homeless or staying in harmful relationships and home environments not of their own which are unwelcoming and chaotic and risky for the kind of life they wish to build with their children. Dar Esther offers a space for such young women to learn to live independently while accessing non-formal education and other supports that enable them to move forward in life.

The property of Dar Esther belongs to the Sisters of Charity of St Jeanne Antide in Malta and entrusted to the St Jeanne Antide Foundation for use for a social purpose. The oversight function for the Y-Assist initiative lies with a Joint Policy Group comprising officials from both The President's Trust and SJAF. The Group is responsible for the development and review of policies and procedures, development of new residences and financial oversight.

In January 2018, two officials from the UK-based NGO Life Charity travelled to Malta and led a 2-day training programme for the Y-Assist Joint Policy Group members, workers and volunteer mentors. Following this training, the Y-Assist policies and procedures were reviewed and new ones drawn up.

Based on the experience gained during the first year of Y-Assist and the outreach with key agencies to solicit new referrals, a review of the intake criteria was also carried out leading to the extension of the ages of both vulnerable homeless women lacking family support and their children.

Key elements of the Y-Assist initiative include the following:

- access to an **Educational programme** which is aimed at the personal and inter-personal development of the mother or mother-to-be.
- **Practical activities** to help in the self-actualisation of the young women.
- Cross agency **collaboration**.
- Nurturing **Independence** through a range of supports including Mentoring by volunteers, guidance on financial literacy, access to non-formal education to increase the chances of further studies and access to better jobs.
- **Personal and Inter-personal Development**.

During 2018, provided supported accommodation to 5 women, 2 of whom were pregnant and 3 lived with one child each.

Aġenzija Appoġġ practitioners continued to provide social work support and Home-based Therapy Services to Y-Assist service users.



Social Work Across all Services

nurturing self-determination and self-empowerment journeys

Objectives

- ≈ To identify and support hard-to-reach socially excluded families and those at risk of poverty;*
- ≈ To dialogue with and build a genuine, supportive and loving-kind rapport with identified vulnerable, socially excluded and poor families;*
- ≈ To engage such families in a relationship that enables them to explore different solutions to their pressing problems and life challenges;*
- ≈ To carry out holistic family-support interventions through access to a range of supports available in-house as well as those provided by other organisations;*
- ≈ To develop a transdisciplinary, community-based practice involving practitioners from diverse fields of practice – social work, counselling, mental health, non-formal education, youth work, training and employment, complimentary therapies, entrepreneurship and the expressive arts;*
- ≈ To enable vulnerable families to build bridges with enabling parish structures and support organisations across sectors: social welfare, education, health, mental health, employment, entrepreneurship;*
- ≈ To advocate on their behalf when the situation so requires and to submit policy recommendations to policy makers;*
- ≈ To learn from community social work practice so as to share insights about what works with other practitioners from state and non-state organisations;*
- ≈ To refer individuals and families to other service providers as and when required to maximise well-being outcomes and to minimise duplication;*
- ≈ To always ensure the safety and protection of children and adults deemed vulnerable and to always act in their best interests.*

Social work practice cuts across all SJAF services. Social Work team members have the opportunity to practice within a generic service such as the Antida and the Enrichetta Family Support Services Centres as well as with a specialised in-house service such as LWIEN (mental health), SOAR (female victims and survivors of domestic violence), and Dar Esther (supported accommodations for homeless and unsupported mothers and pregnant women). The team

of practitioners meets monthly to review work outcomes, revisit policies, practices and procedures, share developments, dialogue with invited guests, and plan collaborative work processes. Practitioners identify areas for further personal and 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 2018

In 2018, SJAF workers supported 381 new families in distress involving 664 individuals through a range of support interventions. Apart from these 381 new referrals, 263 families continued to be supported from the previous year, and another 27 cases were re-activated, thus bringing the total of families receiving support in 2018 to 671. Within the same year, 283 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. The work and output of other practitioners engaged in specialised service provision is highlighted in other sections of this report.

In 2018, SJAF Social Workers were responsible for the following interventions:

- 2,080 office-based sessions;
- 304 home-visits;
- 172 visits to government departments and other service agencies with or on behalf of service users;
- 137 advocacy reports.

The referral sources for the 381 new families referred in 2018, were the following:

- 101 (27%) - self-referrals;
- 80 (21%) - state agencies, of which 29 by state schools; 27 by services within the Foundation for Social Welfare Services (FSWS); 9 from the health sector; 6 from Mental Health Malta; and 9 from other sources.
- 56 (15%) - voluntary organisations;
- 36 (9%) - SJAF outreach work;
- 28 (7%) - other service users;
- 27 (7%) - parishes;
- 24 (6%) - colleagues;
- 21 (6%) - relatives and friends;
- 4 (1%) - media;
- 4 (1%) - others.

Locality of residence of 381 families referred in 2018

Locality of residence	No. of families	% of total new cases
Birżebbuġa	88	23%
Haż-Żabbar	23	6%
Paola	28	8%
Hal Tarxien	27	7%
Fgura	19	5%
Other localities	196	51%
TOTAL	381	100%

The combined number of new referrals in 2018 of families from localities within the catchment areas of the Foundation’s two Family Support Services Centres (Tarxien, Haż-Żabbar, Fgura, Paola, and Birżebbuġa) amounts to 185 or 49% of the total. The rest – 196 or 51% constitute referrals, from other localities, to SJAF services that are national in scope, such as LWIEN, SOAR, and the Emotional Freedom Service.

New cases of vulnerable families supported between 2007 and 2018

Year	Individuals	Families
2018	664	381
2017	706	375
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 2007-2018	5,402	3,452

Number of newly referred families and percentages, by main presenting problem, in 2018

Main presenting problem of referred families	Number of families	% of total
Overwhelmed and anxious family caregivers of severely mentally ill persons	160	42%
Financial difficulties and slide into poverty	65	17%
Conflictual family relations and inability to manage family affairs	38	10%
Lack of basic skills	28	7%
Emotional distress	26	7%
Disability related difficulties, including autism	24	6%
Domestic violence	20	5%
Homelessness & substandard housing	15	4%
Other	5	2%
TOTAL →	381	100%

Collaborative work with other organisations

During the year, SJAF workers took part in case reviews organized by other family support agencies, took part in a discussion with policy makers involved in the development of Malta's Mental Health Strategy 2020-2030 held in September, chaired two round-table discussions for experts in the field of Mental Health () and Domestic Violence () which were organized by the President's Foundation for the Well-being of Society, and provided input in the video on Loneliness developed by the Faculty of Wellbeing and Caritas Malta.

Moreover, at the request of other organisations, SJAF led 23 workshops totalling 48 hours, on the following themes, reaching 981 participants:

Date	Session title	Participants	No. of participants
7 February	Seminar on Managing Difficult Emotions	Teachers and SMT, Immaculate Conception Girls Secondary School	42
13 February	Mental Health and the Church in Malta with special reference to pastoral care	Friars of the Province of the Conventual Franciscans (OFM, Conv)	50
15 February	Looking at Health through the Gender Kaleidoscope - Domestic Violence: Before and After Leaving	Health Practitioners	100
16 March	Gender Equality	CS Technologies staff	14
27 March	A Case Study - Working Together for Better Practices	Peer-to-Peer Group, Commission on DV	9
23 April	Governance and Administration in Social Welfare - dialogue with students	Students, Department Social Policy & Social Work, Faculty of Social Wellbeing, UoM	50
26 May	SOAR - Introduction to the Service	Delegation of Swedish Women's Shelter Volunteers	8
4 May	Mental Health and the School Community	Teachers and SMT, St Joan Antide Primary School, Gudja	25
7 May	How youth can contribute to the wellbeing of disadvantaged children and youth through Volunteering	Youth group members led by the Ħaż-Żabbar Parish Priest	6
15 May	Volunteers in Adult Learning - sharing one's humanity	EPALE National Support Service Malta, Directorate for Curriculum, Lifelong Learning and Employability, Ministry of Education and Employment	50
15 May	Our own mental health	Friars from the Province of the Conventual Franciscans	50

24 May	The SOAR Service	LEAP network stakeholders	20
20 June	Domestic Violence and the challenges faced by differently-abled persons	Differently abled persons/ Commission for the Rights of Persons with a Disability (CRPD)	18
21 June	Breaking the Cycle of Violence	Persons with a disability following a CRPD course on sexuality	20
Repeated thrice	Responding to Domestic Violence: Learning from the Survivor's Perspective	Police cadets	60
10 September	Nurturing our own mental health in today's Church realities	Friars from the Province of the Conventual Franciscans	50
11 October	Our daily work alongside vulnerable families: the support services of the St Jeanne Antide Foundation	The Alfred Mizzi Foundation, Annual Conference for the Alfred Mizzi Group	200
18 October	Common issues faced by family caregivers of mentally ill persons	President's Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society (PFWS)	20
27 October	From disconnect to connect: common factors in the lives of couples that lead to fractured relationships	Couples meeting at the St Paul's Bay Parish Centre (run by the Friars of the Conventual Franciscans (OFM, Conv))	100
9 November	How families are sliding into poverty and the services offered by SJAF	GRUFAN members, Siggiewi Parish	19
12 November	How we, as religious, should respond to a fellow monk or person we meet who is visibly in distress.	Friars from the Province of the Conventual Franciscans (OFM, Conv)	45
29 November	Round Table discussion on Manipulation of Court System by Perpetrators for stakeholders	Organised by EmpowerHer, Office of the President of Malta for Judiciary	15
30 November	Domestic violence affects victims' ability to work.	Youth and the general public at the General Workers' Union	10

Between November 8th and December 6th, practitioners from Aġenzija Sedqa led a 5-session, 15-hour course on positive parenting for service users of the Foundation.

SJAF staff benefited from a range of continuous development sessions provided by other organisations. CPD themes included the following:

- ≈ Managing supported accommodations for vulnerable young pregnant women and mothers;
- ≈ Launch of National Patients' Organisation;

- ≈ Full Cooperation - Zero Violence course for practitioners;
- ≈ Common Challenges - Shared Solutions
- ≈ Faith as Healing
- ≈ Prevention Is No Invention - Just Being Smart
- ≈ Data Protection Act: how it effects Voluntary Organisations and their work
- ≈ Entrepreneurship for Women
- ≈ 3Es for Youths in VET: Engagement, Empowerment, Employability
- ≈ Financial Literacy
- ≈ Mental Health First Aid Course for Youth Leaders 19+
- ≈ Train the Trainers - Zero Violence
- ≈ Financial Management for VOs - Good Practices & Risk Mitigation
- ≈ Revision of the Official Development Assistance (ODA) Guidelines
- ≈ National Policy on Volunteering (MCVS)
- ≈ Developing Bystander Responses to Sexual Harassment among Young People
- ≈ Listening to issues raised by family caregivers of mentally ill persons
- ≈ Beneficiary Owners - How will they affect VOs?
- ≈ WAVE Conference
- ≈ Safeguarding your Voluntary Organisation from Abuse
- ≈ New VO Amendments Act
- ≈ Fight against poverty and social exclusion
- ≈ Nibnu Darna fuq il-Blat
- ≈ Homelessness in Malta - a study (FSWS)
- ≈ Women with Disability and Domestic Violence
- ≈ Malta's Mental Health Strategy
- ≈ Project Development and Writing to tap EU funds.

Support resource tools for SJAF Social Workers

Social Workers had a number of support resources at their disposal in support of the care plans they drew up with service-using families. Supports included the following:

Volunteer Mentors: these 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.

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 shops which re-use quality items donated by the public. The Secretariat for Social Assistance (SAS) also approves tiny cash grants as emergency help for families. Items such as second-hand computers for families are sourced through the CSR mechanism of a number of companies. Social Workers regularly 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. Food items were also collected by administrative staff during the year from the general public through facebook appeals and the Christmas Reverse Advent Calendar initiative. Food items are additionally made available to SJAF through the MCCFF Food Drive campaign through which SJAF collects food items donated by customers of Carters and Chain's Supermarkets.

Non-formal adult education: Social Workers encouraged service users to indicate their interests in accessing 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 overwhelmed by the idea of accessing mainstream opportunities and in cases where no opportunities existed to fill their expressed need for adult learning, SJAF staff created opportunities through its two family centres. Hence, during 2018, various initiatives were made available in such areas as literacy and family literacy, caregiving, 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 2018, the group participated in a number of 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.



Volunteering at the Foundation

opportunities for active citizenship

Objectives:

≈ to support and train a number of persons to make their own contributions to society and to persons in need;

≈ to provide the opportunity and training to service users so that they themselves can provide services to others in need;

≈ to be open to voluntary service by young people who would like to offer time and energy at the service of others in order to gain experience and insight.

Volunteering is a key pillar of the Foundation's family services operations. The Foundation encourages and nurtures volunteering within its range of service provision, in line with three of the Foundation's objectives.

Volunteering is an opportunity for people to engage in meaningful activities beyond their personal and professional spheres. Irrespective of one's age, volunteering has several impact outcomes:

- it draws a person, away from self-centredness, towards an understanding of, and compassion for others;
- it significantly enhances a person's sense of well-being that is often not derived from other spheres of life;
- it injects meaning in an often materialistic lifestyle devoid of altruism;
- it provides an opportunity for forging new friendships;
- it makes it possible for social care organisations to create new, creative and effective ways of supporting vulnerable individuals and families;
- it creates the fabric of a robust welfare society;
- above all, it is a powerful way of living one's faith and stimulating hope in lives that are bereft of kindness, respect, dignity, love and compassion.

SJAF personnel consider volunteers as valued colleagues whose services extend wellbeing outcomes for service users. Persons are motivated to volunteer for a variety of reasons. But, whatever their reason, their volunteering experience nurtures in them such values as altruism, readiness to understand the reality of suffering others, respect and compassion. And they volunteer for no financial gain. Naturally, volunteering contributes to improved intra- and inter-personal development, self-reflection, ability to relate better with others and the learning of social care skills, all of which are put to good use to promote goodness and to improve human quality of life. Volunteering thus has incalculable positive benefits for the volunteers themselves as well as for those being supported, for the organisation engaging them and for local communities served.

A significant amount of volunteers are matched to SJAF services led by practitioners. Practitioners who are responsible for a team of volunteers act as volunteer managers. The Ćentru Antida manager herself is responsible for volunteers involved in reception worker, volunteer handymen, handicraft production and admin support. Volunteers at the Foundation are screened and assessed before their induction and are provided with a Code

of Practice to guide them in their work. Throughout 2018 there were a total of 129 active volunteers involved in one or more spheres of service provision. The highest number were Learning Support Volunteer Tutors and Mentors (41) working within the Family Learning Support Service that comprises the children’s learning support, non-formal education for parents and other adults and mentoring of at risk youth. Of the 129 volunteers, 65 (50%) discontinued their involvement in 2018 for a number of reasons, foremost of which was to move on with their studies and life circumstances.

Below is statistical data about volunteering at the Foundation during 2018.

2018 Statistical data

129 Volunteer in 2018: their roles and number:

Roles	No. of active volunteers
Learning Support Tutors and Mentors (43) + 10 with Y-Assist	41
Social Work support	24
SOAR Service	13
Reception welcome work at the Antide Family Centre	13
Handicrafts making/ teaching	11
Support to administration	9
Governance (one of whom outgoing)	8
Fundraising	7
Handymen	2
Overseas Development Projects	1
TOTAL	129

Ages of the 129 volunteers

Age bracket	No.	% of total
Up to 20	22	17%
20-29	18	14%
30-39	13	10%
40-49	11	9%
50-59	24	19%
60+	41	31%

Volunteers discontinuing or remaining in 2018:

Discontinued at some point in 2018	Volunteers still active at the end of 2018	Total volunteers who worked at any time during 2018
65	64	129

Overview of volunteers during 2018 by gender:

Females	Males	Volunteers who worked at any time during 2017
109	20	129

Overview of volunteers during 2018 by regular vs occasional work:

Regular	Occasional involvement	Total Volunteers during 2018
127	2	129

Stella Farrugia (Volunteer Reception worker and support to Ċentru Antida manager

“Jiena nieħu gost li nagħmel dan il-volontarjat għax itini sodisfazzjoni kbir u nkun dejjem looking forward għad-darba li jmiss. Barra minn hekk, inħossni veru kuntenta li nagħmel parti minn tim li joffru tant u tant imħabba u għajjnuna lil kull min ifittex għajjnuna minn din il-Fondazzjoni.”



Anti-Poverty Assistance in Developing Countries

supporting poverty alleviation initiatives beyond our shores

The Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) unit of the Foundation obtains Malta Government funds for anti-poverty projects of overseas SJAF partners in developing countries. Following the start of the project, the ODA Unit liaises with overseas partners from these countries to ensure that they have no difficulties with the required quarterly reports. These include detailed financial accounts, progress reports, and photographs of the activities. So far, the Foundation has obtained such funding for a clinic in Pakistan; women's small enterprises in South Sudan; infrastructure development and educational resource procurement at a women's vocational centre in the Central African Republic; the creation of a remote rural health clinic in northern Malawi; resources for a home in the Peru rainforest area for destitute elderly women; hospital beds for AIDS patients in Peru; and a women's farming and production project in Malawi.

The unit is run by a volunteer project officer, and the services of the SJAF administrator. In 2018, SJAF obtained funding for the project described below.

Give Youth a Chance – a project undertaken in Malawi in 2018

Since 2012, this has been the fourth overseas development project that St Jeanne Antide Foundation carried out in partnership with the Karonga Diocese in Malawi. The proposal developed by the Diocese for implementation in 2018 had the objective of empowering a cohort of adolescents by giving them the skills and the tools they require to start their own tiny enterprise.



The project design and writing were completed by February 2018 and by the time the project was awarded and the funds released, the actual implementation started in July 2018. In Karonga, youths make up the largest percentage of the population. However, most youth do not make part of the district's workforce. Finding work is not easy in Karonga, mostly because of barriers to enter the marketplace such as middle-men and lack of land assets. Poverty is acute and the Diocese is actively involved in the socio-economic development of its parishes. Without vocational skills and guidance, many young persons end up in the streets and fall victims to prostitution, theft, and drug abuse - mostly alcohol and hemp. The project, headed by Fr Joseph Sikwese, has selected youth to embark on a training programme of approximately 8 months.

Youth benefiting from project training have been learning tailoring and carpentry and entrepreneurial skills such as starting and managing a tiny enterprise and financial management. The different elements of the training programme are intended to give young

potential entrepreneurs the basics with which they can build their own small businesses through which they will be able to earn a living and contribute to the local economy.



Malawi's open economy in eastern Sub-Saharan Africa relies on the contribution of its population, 50.7% of which lives below the poverty line and 25% of which lives in extreme poverty (IMF, 2017). The per capita income for this country has grown at an average of little more than 1.5 percent between 1995 and 2014 (IMF, 2017). The country has a low life expectancy and high infant mortality. There is a high

prevalence of HIV/AIDS, which is a drain on the labour force and government expenditure. Notwithstanding this, Malawi is endowed with diverse natural resources, ranging from land, water, forests, livestock, minerals and human resources. Within this context, the project aims at providing tools to young people which drive them to make use these resources.



The project has also provided the thirty-six young persons benefiting from the project with carpentry kits and sewing machines. During their training, the project beneficiaries made use of the tools purchased through the project. At the end of the project, they will be given their trade equipment to start their own businesses.

The project is expected to be complete by the end of May 2019. The total project cost amounted to €12,210, of which €6,190 were provided by the Malta Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade promotion. Using personal funds, the SJAF Volunteer Overseas Development Project Officer will be visiting Malawi to familiarize himself with the outcomes of the ODA projects in Malawi assisted by SJAF.

All project funding, except for one by MISSIO, obtained by SJAF to-date has been obtained from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Malta. In 2018 as well, MISSIO Malta provided a grant which was utilised to purchase 301 French textbooks for students of the St Joseph De Bouar School run by the Sisters of Charity of St Jeanne Antide in Central African Republic (C.A.R.).



Publications

SJAF publications may be obtained through the Foundation's website - www.antidemalta.org.

For adults:

SJAF Magazine: a monthly e-zine recording the work of the Foundation and providing articles on specialised topics. Accessible from: <http://www.antidemalta.org>

Phoenix Rising – starting over after domestic violence. Edited by Elaine Compagno. 2016. Published with funding from the President's Award for Creativity 2015 which is managed by Arts Council Malta.

Bdoti fil-Maltemp – kif tieġu ħsieb qarib b'mard mentali. 144 pages. Jointly produced with the Mental Health Association, Malta, 2015. Editors: Nora Macelli and Connie Magro. 144 pages. ISBN number: 978-99957-0-677-7. Cover illustration by Marisa Attard. Published with funding from STRINA of the Malta Community Chest Fund Foundation (MCCFF).

Il-Kwiekeb fid-Dlam Jixegħlu: vjaġġi ta' tama mterrqa minn qraba ta' persuni b'mard mentali. Jointly produced with the Mental Health Association, Malta, 2011. 146 pages. Editors: Connie Magro and Nora Macelli. ISBN number: 978-99932-0-965-2. Illustrations by Tony Macelli. Published with funding from STRINA of the Malta Community Chest Fund Foundation (MCCFF).

Stars Shine Brightly in the Dark: journeys of hope of relatives of mentally ill persons. Jointly produced with the Mental Health Association. E-book format, 2013. Editors: Nora Macelli and Connie Magro. 78 pages. ISBN number: 978-99957-0-455-1. Illustrations by Tony Macelli. Accessible from: http://www.antidemalta.org/uploads/5/7/2/6/57264959/ebook_stars_shine_brightly_in_the_dark_englishillustfinal__1_.pdf

Annual Reports, 2008 to 2017 – accessible from: <http://www.antidemalta.org>

For children:

Il-Mela Darba tiegħi - ġrajjet veri tagħna t-tfal. Editor: Ruth Stafrace. 2015. ISBN number: 978-99957-0-820-7. Illustrated by the child authors and Marisa Attard. Published with funding from the President's Award for Creativity.

Caterpillar in a Jar by Elaine Compagno. 2015. ISBN number: 978-99957-0-821-4. Illustrated by Marisa Attard. Published with funding from the President's Award for Creativity.

Publications in which SJAF contributed articles:

Helping Hands Magazine, Issue number 51, December 2012. 12 pages of articles about the services of the Foundation.

Helping Hands Magazine, Issue number 70, October 2015. 10 pages full of articles about domestic violence.

Helping Hands Magazine, Issue number 79, December 2016 – January 2017. 10 pages on violence against women.

Helping Hands Magazine, Issue number 4 of the new series – November 2018. Central 10 pages on emotional freedom self-help tools. 