

PROMOTING FAMILY WELLBEING



St. Jeanne Antide
Foundation

2019 services contributing to family wellbeing and
social inclusion at community level and beyond



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social inclusion at community level and beyond**

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

2019

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- Voluntary organisation enrolment: VO/0005
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- *Y-Assist* – 2 supported accommodation residences for vulnerable homeless women and children 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: *Reflections of Beautiful Souls* by Amy Camilleri, SOAR Service

Affiliate membership:

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

DEDICATION

Marthese Cini, Senior Practitioner (Family Learning Support)



At the Foundation, we all miss our dear colleague and friend Marthese Cini who passed on, on Sunday, 22nd of December 2019.

Many are those who ask us about her. Parents and children whom she helped to learn how to read and write, provided them with basic courses on how to help their children read and write, accompanied them to school for their child's IEP... Marthese also trained many persons to take up the role of Volunteer Learning Support Tutors. All those whose lives she touched continue to mention her.

Facing up to the fact that we cannot see, talk to, work with her, and laugh with her has been hard. We miss being greeted with a grin and a hug early morning at work on the days she worked at our head office. Some of us have vivid flashbacks of situations we tackled together for the benefit of so many vulnerable children and parents we have been supporting together over the years and missing her.

All of us, her colleagues at the St Jeanne Antide Foundation, feel blessed to have worked so closely with Marthese. Marthese was a great soul – very compassionate, very competent, humble, resourceful, and very dedicated to her field of educational practice – literacy and family learning support. She was vivacious,

warm, affectionate, empathetic, and very lovable. Her service users loved her and will miss her too. So will her Children's Learning Support team of volunteers whom she trained and guided. Marthese really loved her work and loved the children, young persons, and parents whom she nurtured and enabled to learn. For her, no one was unteachable, no one was beyond learning. She always believed in coaxing the learner within each person to peek out and become interested and motivated to struggle against tough circumstances to not only survive but to learn and flourish.

People often say that no one is irreplaceable. We are deeply grateful and blessed for having had the opportunity to work with such a great colleague and friend. But in our heart, we know that, although providence is sure to lead us to a different pathway in the field of family learning support, Marthese is quite irreplaceable.

God bless you Marthese for being such an integral part of the life at the the St Jeanne Antide Foundation.

Nora Macelli, CEO and colleagues

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The St Jeanne Antide Foundation – an introduction

family wellbeing first

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 the oversight of strategic planning, policy development and financial management. Board members come from such diverse backgrounds as social work and nursing, financial management, social care 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 several 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 both local, and national. During 2019, the Foundation ran the following services:

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

Centru Antida is the Foundation's main family services hub. It lies in the heart of Hal Tarxien. In 2019, it was open from 8 am or earlier until 5 pm daily in wintertime (sometimes

later as well) and from 7.30 am to 2 pm in summer. SJAF operates a satellite family support centre in Birżebbuġa - Ċentru Enrichetta which was open on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 7.30 am to 2 pm.

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

..**Social Work**: the family supports provided included needs assessments, care planning, home-visits, advocacy, referral, accompaniment, information giving, emotional support, groupwork and in-kind support. Generic social work support was undertaken mainly in the catchment areas of Ħal Tarxien, Paola, Fgura, Ғaż-Ғabbar and Birżebbuġa. The service was also extended to service-using families that make use of SJAF services that are national in scope such as the LWIEN Service.

..**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, handymen in support of poor families, mentoring, befriending, crafts production and admin support.

..**Bazaar** 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. It opened every Monday and Wednesday from 9 am to noon.

The **SOAR Service** (Scope: national): advocacy and support by survivors for victims and survivors of domestic violence (soar@antidemalta.org). 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 (mental health nurse), home-visits, social work, mediation with employers and officials in 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)

Y-Assist Service (Scope: national): launched in September 2017, Y-Assist is a supported accommodation service commissioned by The Trust Foundation. Two residences provide independent living accommodation coupled with educational support for vulnerable homeless women and their children.

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)

Service sites:

In 2019, SJAF ran support services from six sites:

Site 1: The Tarxien-based *Antide Family Services Centre* helps families from the localities of Ħal Tarxien, Paola, Fgura, and Ғaż-Ғabbar. 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: The Sisters of St Joseph of the Apparition in Haż Żabbar host Saturday clinic days of the Foundation's LWIEN Service for family caregivers of mentally ill persons.

Sites 4 & 5: *Y-Assist* – 2 residences that provide supported accommodation to homeless women and their children.

Site 6: *Bazaar* in Tarxien open to the public on Mondays and Wednesdays from 9am to noon. Service using families are given access to items for free.

Service development

National SOAR Hub: With the professional pro bono services of QPml, SJAF worked on the renovation plans of a premises that will eventually be launched as the national hub for the SOAR Service. An application package has been submitted to the Planning Authority.

Y-Assist 2: Also in 2019, SJAF worked closely with The President's Trust (subsequently renamed The Trust Foundation) to open a second Y-Assist supported accommodation residence.

Human Resources

In 2019, 15 employees were engaged with SJAF, 6 of whom on a full-time basis. Apart from these, 114 Volunteers were engaged in service provision across the different SJAF services and initiatives. The staff and volunteer complement comprised the following:

- 14 remunerated personnel including 3 social workers, 1 psychiatric nurse, 1 family literacy specialist, a service coordinator of SOAR, a Family Centre manager and a manager for finance and administration.
- 114 Volunteers, one of whom led the Emotional Freedom Service on a voluntary basis; 2 co-managed the SJAF bazaar; 45 served as Volunteer Learning Support Tutors.
- 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 2019 totalled 53,601 – equivalent to 26 full-time workers. Their roles varied from that of reception work to learning support, mentoring, supporting vulnerable women, administrative support, handyman work and others. Were the hours of service of volunteers to be remunerated, their service would have cost the Foundation a minimum of €271,205. Their service contribution is invaluable and valued. Volunteers are considered as partner colleagues of the SJAF professionals.

Ethos

Personnel 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 at SJAF, 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 persons 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.

Acknowledgement to donors

The Foundation acknowledges the significant contribution, during 2019, of the following donors:

- 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 Alfred Mizzi Foundation for their highly valued significant financial contribution towards key SJAF services across the years.
- The Malta Trust Foundation which commissions the two Y-Assist supported residences for homeless women and children.
- The Ministry for the Family, Children's Rights and Social Solidarity;
- APS Bank.
- The President's Award for Creativity co-managed by Arts Council Malta and the Office of the President of Malta.
- QPml for its professional pro bono architectural services for the SOAR Hub renovation planning.
- Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector (MCVS).
- HSBC Malta plc for its on-going support in identifying support resources and donations and the Banking on Women group.
- The Archdiocese of Malta.
- Konfraternità tal-Karità.
- The Ħaż-Żabbar Parish for its support for the Lwien Service Family Caregiver clinic on Saturdays in the locality.
- Women for Women Foundation.
- P. Cutajar Foundation.
- Andrew Galea & Associates for the pro bono annual financial audit.
- St Peter Foundation for its sustained in-kind support for vulnerable families.
- MIDI Ltd.
- MITA.

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 public on the SJAF website: <http://www.antidemalta.org/annual-reports.html>



Community-based Family Support Service Centres

reaching out to and supporting families at community level

Ċentru Antida

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

Ċentru Antida has been operating since 2007 and is recognised as a welcoming service hub through which referred individuals and 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 Birḡebbuḡa, 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 wintertime and from 7.30 am to 2.00 pm between mid-July and mid-September. 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 ̦al 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.

The centre is managed by a part-time manager 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 Foundation's social media appeals for food aid, replenishment of the Foundation's Hygiene Bank and household items for service users. The production of the Foundation's electronic magazine is another of her long-time contributions. These are accessible via the SJAF URL: <http://www.antidemalta.org/monthly-e-zine.html>

Ċentru Enrichetta

Ċentru Enrichetta is a satellite family services site based in the locality of Birḡebbuḡa, 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 2019 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 2019, 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.

Ĉentru 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.

Bazaar

Since June 2011, SJAF has been running a bazaar in Tarxien in a property owned by the Sisters of Charity. It operates weekly on Mondays and Wednesdays from 9 am to noon. Regulars find the bazaar a means to access wider support from SJAF. Families ready to part with cherished items for a good cause donate them to the bazaar. The shop has thus become a means through which serviceable items are re-used. It also provides 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 bazaar regularly visit to either donate knick knacks, home furnishings, books, toys, clothing and children's items and to make purchases. The Bazaar has become a re-use hub, with many visitors dropping by to pick up items for their handicraft-making pastime. Donated items are also shared with other organisations that need items for their service users.

Family learning support activities

During 2019, a number of non-formal education opportunities were offered to service users at both family service centres:

- Learning support sessions were held every Friday throughout the scholastic year at Ĉentru Antida and resumed in early October while other groups ran in Summer at Ĉentru Enrichetta.
- Training sessions for different groups of volunteers were held throughout the year.

Volunteer Handymen

In 2019, two Volunteer Handymen carried out basic repair and maintenance works in the homes of 44 service-using families. They also carried out 89 maintenance workdays and errands for the Foundation's service. These included various errands related to pick-ups from sources donating items for families and for the Foundation's charity shops.



Social Work Across all Services

nurturing self-determination and self-empowerment journeys

Social work practice cuts across all SJAF services. Social Work team members have the opportunity to practice within a generic service such as the Antida and the Enrichetta Family Support Services Centres as well as with a specialised in-house services 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 2019

In 2019, SJAF workers supported 313 new families in distress involving 533 individuals through a range of support interventions. Apart from these 313 new referrals, 153 families continued to be supported from the previous year, and another 26 cases were re-activated, thus bringing the total of families receiving support in 2019 to 492. Within the same year, 81 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 2019, SJAF Social Workers were responsible for the following interventions:

- 2,120 office-based sessions.
- 392 home-visits.
- 163 visits to government departments and other service agencies with, or on behalf of, service users.
- 147 advocacy reports.

The referral sources for the 313 new families referred in 2019, were the following:

- 66 or 21% were self-referred;
- 57 or 18% were referred by state agencies;
- 49 were referred by church-based organisations, including parishes;
- 29 were referred by other service users of the Foundation;
- 29 were referred by relatives and friends;
- 25 were identified by SJAF workers through outreach work;
- 17 were referred by their work colleagues;
- 16 were referred by other voluntary organisations;
- 16 were referred by friends of theirs;
- 9 were referred by private practitioners.

Locality of residence of 313 families referred in 2019

Locality of residence	No. of families	% of total new cases
Birżebbuġa	38	12%
Hal Tarxien	37	11%
Paola	22	7%
Haż-Żabbar	22	7%
Fgura	15	4%
Marsaskala	12	3%
Other localities	168	53%
TOTAL	313	100%

The combined number of new referrals in 2019 of families from localities within the catchment areas of the Foundation's two Family Support Services Centres (Tarxien, Haż-Żabbar, Fgura, Paola, Birżebbuġa and to a lesser extent Marsaskala) amounts to 145 or 46% of the total. The rest – 158 or 53% constitute referrals from other localities to SJAF services that are national in scope, such as LWIEN, SOAR, Emotional Freedom and Y-Assist services.

New cases of vulnerable families supported between 2007 and 2019

Year	Individuals	Families
2019	533	313
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 2007-2019	5,935	3,765

Number of newly referred families and percentages, by main presenting problem, in 2019

Main presenting problem of referred families	Number of families	% of total
Overwhelmed and anxious family caregivers of severely mentally ill persons/ mental illness	148	47%
Financial difficulties and slide into poverty	41	13%
Conflictual family relations and inability to manage family affairs	39	13%
Emotional distress	29	9%
Homelessness & substandard housing	24	8%
Lack of basic skills & limited life chances	18	6%
Abuse in intimate relationships	14	4%
TOTAL →	313	100%

Collaborative work with other organisations

At the request of other organisations, SJAF led 11 workshops totalling 24 hours in which 273 persons participated. Workshop themes ranged from emotional freedom (5 workshops) to OCD in school students, dimensions of wellbeing, grandparents' role in the care of grandchildren and victims' perspectives of domestic violence (3).

Continuous professional development opportunities

SJAF staff benefited from a range of continuous development sessions provided by other organisations. The 36 CPDs focused on the following themes:

CPD Theme	Organisers
My responsibility towards the environment	Province of the Franciscans, University Centre for Environmental Education and Research, Interdiocesan Commission of the Environment
Financial Literacy	Foundation for Social Welfare Services (FSWS)
CROP in a POT: Building skills for sustainability and resilience	SOS Malta
OCD in students	Sacred Heart School, St Julians
Open Education Resources: basic skills for adult learning	Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning and Employability, Ministry of Education and Employment
Bringing Social Innovation Ideas to life - ideation to acceleration event	Project partners: MCVS, Impact Hub Siracusa, Malta Life Sciences Park, Malta Enterprise, Malta Innovation Hub
Mentoring Young People who are Homeless or Lack Support of a Family	National Federation of Past Pupils and Friends of Don Bosco
Borderline Personality Disorder	In-house CPD

Sfidi tal-Ħajja	Mental Health Association
The Social Workers' Code of Ethics	Maltese Association of Social Workers (MASW)
The Positive Approach to Working with Disturbed and Challenging Behaviour	Institute of Family Therapy
Capacity-building course in NGO Management	SOS Malta as part of an EEA-funded project titled Active Citizens Fund Malta
Domestic Violence	Norwegian Social Research (NOVA) at OsloMet (Oslo Metropolitan University and the Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies (NKVTS)
Flimkien għal Saħħa Mentali Aħjar	Office of the President of Malta in collaboration with the Commissioner for Mental Health
Mentoring on professionally presenting a project proposal	Take Off Malta at the University of Malta
Mentoring on public speaking and honing grant application	Upstream Ltd - commissioned by Social Impact Awards 2019
Safeguarding policy of the Church in Malta	Safeguarding Commission, Diocesan Curia
Basic Fire Fighting: prevention and emergency action measures	In-house CPD
Water and Energy saving measures: learning to guide our service users	In-house CPD
Change Makers	Malta Innovation Summit
Volunteering: Taking the Next Step	Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector (MCVS)
Ħidma Kummissjoni Djaconija Parroċċa ta' Wied il-Għajj	Parish of Wied il-Għajj
Business consultation and mentoring	Malta Innovation Hub, ENISE Interreg Italia-Malta Programme 2014-2020. Prof. Eng. Nicholas Sammut
Water and energy services	The Water & Energy Authority
Sexual and gender-based violence in the context of migration.	International Organisation for Migration (IOM): PROTECT project funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020), co-funded by the Ministry for Home Affairs and National Security and the Ministry for Health.
Re-Member without Suffering: Tackling Trauma	Richmond Foundation is association with malta Association of EMDR
Involuntary Treatment in Mental Health	Faculty of Medicine & Surgery, University of Malta
Fire Wardens' training	In-house health and safety training
jobsplus/ Lino Spiteri Foundation/ sedqa services, schemes & fiscal incentives for vulnerable groups	Jobsplus

Striving for Excellence - National Quality Conference 2019	Social Care Standards Authority (SCSA)
Il-Progress u l-Faqar	Anti-Poverty Forum, Malta
The Substance-Abuse Free Employees Programme (S.A.F.E.)	jobsplus and Lino Spiteri Foundation
Sehem il-Gvern u l-Volontarjat fis-Settur Socjali	Ministry for the Family, Children's Rights & Social Solidarity
Training day	MEUSAC
The Social Regulatory Standards for Outreach and Community Services	Social Care Standards Authority (SCSA)

Support resource tools for SJAF Social Workers

Social Workers had several 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 longerterm 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 for families: Very vulnerable service users requiring high support were provided with access to food items, secondhand furniture and furnishings, clothing, books, toys and baby items. Such items were made available through the SJAF Bazaar which promotes the re-use of quality items donated by the public. Items such as second-hand computers for families were sourced through the CSR mechanism of several companies. The Women for Women Foundation often helped by providing laptops, printers, baby items and help with unpaid bills.

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 Foodbank Lifeline Foundation Malta. Food items were also sourced from two supermarkets that house two collection boxes for customers' use. Other food items were collected during the year from donations by the public in response to social media appeals and the Christmas Reverse Advent Calendar initiative. Officials from the Water and Energy Authority accompanied SJAF Social Workers to the homes of several service users to carry out energy audits that subsequently led to the provision of energy efficient white goods.

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 in-house opportunities at its two family services centres. During 2019, various initiatives were made available in such areas as literacy and family literacy, self-esteem, self-expressive arts, handicrafts making, and participation in an evolving social enterprise 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 throughout the year to produce quality crafts mostly from recycled materials. In 2019, the group participated in a number of fundraising 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.



SOAR Service

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

SOAR is a survivor-led, strengths-based, peer support service for women and children exposed to domestic violence. SOAR offers a range of long-term services to support women and children survivors who are exiting shelters or already living in the community. To carry out its objectives, every year, SOAR runs a number of initiatives to empower women through access to knowledge, peer-to-peer mentoring, support, in-kind assistance, social inclusion interventions and non-formal education and advocacy. Through these measures, women and their children find loving-kind fellowship, healing, stability and improvement of the quality of their lives while on their journey of recovery away from violence.

At the end of 2019, SOAR had the equivalent of 2 full time workers and 6 volunteers, covering the overall management of SOAR and Meraki Soaps, the SOAR Hub project management, social support provision, event organisation, individual project leadership, social justice advocacy and case management.

Overview of the SOAR Service in 2019

During 2019, SOAR provided the following services:

One-to-One Support: offers a personalised support plan based on an assessment of service users' needs. SOAR staff frequently liaise with other agencies, services, foundations, organisations and benefactors to assist survivors and their children to meet identified needs. A risk assessment is carried out on a case-by-case basis to determine the best way forward for each woman.

SOAR Support Group: the group offers peer-support to survivors within a tight-knit community of women and children. Staff and survivor-volunteers are trained to provide peer-to-peer support. The support group works towards combating exclusion, isolation, loneliness, depression and anxiety through a range of social activities and cultural projects.

Peer-Mentoring: this is offered to survivors who have set particular life goals and have requested support to reach their goals. Whether the goal is to find a rented apartment, find a job, settle in a new community or routine, or take up studies, mentoring is used as a tool to coach and guide a survivor as an elder sister would.

Training on issues related to domestic violence: such training is aimed at students, volunteers, groups, staff, team leaders, HR managers, police recruits, health practitioners, legal practitioners, judiciary, and others. SOAR also offers DASH Risk Checklist (2009) Training (see more below).

Advocacy: this is an essential element of SOAR and rooted in the belief that survivors are experts in their own right. Survivors' wealth of experience of violence and the subsequent difficulty of navigating the services, the national support systems and the struggle to survive means they are well placed to make recommendations for changes to policy and practices.

SOAR works closely with survivors, organising focus groups and online discussions to take survivors' collective recommendations and lobby for the necessary changes.

Supporting Women and Children

In 2019, SOAR supported 112 women survivors, improving the lives of the 155 children in their care. Of these, 28 were new cases, 4 cases less than the previous year. However, the number of already-registered cases carried over or re-opened during 2019 tripled from 28 (in 2018) to 84.

This three-fold increase shows how volatile a survivor's life is in the years that follow their escape from domestic violence. The increase also shows a strengthening in SOAR's capacity with the addition of a part-time support worker and better accessibility to the service through regular and consistent weekly group meetings.

136 face-to-face sessions were held with countless hours of support over the phone or chat apps and occasional accompaniment given to supplement the sessions.

"When a survivor of domestic violence leaves an abusive relationship she becomes like a boat without a rudder in the middle of a stormy sea. The waves are huge and scary, you don't know where the safe haven is and how to get there. SOAR is like a tug boat, helping you navigate a way forward to safety. Along the way, the waves subside and you start to be able to navigate yourself, confident in your skills to face the sea alone. SOAR gives us survivors various tools and supports to build up self confidence, independence and learning to trust one's own abilities again. SOAR is a sum of all its members, each one helping the other, leaving no one behind. All of us have come from a dark place, but we walk together towards the light."



A Community of Survivors

OUTREACH through an Online Support Group

SOAR has been utilising social media to reach out to survivors who lead busy lives but can still benefit from peer-support. In 2019, the SOAR secret online support group had 104 members remaining constant between those joining and those moving on.

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

Offline Support Group

SOAR organised 14 social activities for its member base and their children. These activities provided members with opportunities, which may be out of their reach, to spend quality time with their children and their peers. The outings make survivors feel worthy of the time they take to focus on themselves and build connection. This is often a challenge because they waste a lot of energy and time keeping themselves safe from the continuous abuse that they face.

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

"I'm accepted for who I am, given support when I needed it without a restriction of time. This has lifted my spirit and has definitely given me strength to rebuild my life."

Social Club on Saturdays

SOAR opens the main offices at the Antida Family Services Centre of the St Jeanne Antide Foundation every Saturday afternoon to run a Social Club for a group of women and children. Over the year, 34 women and their children were reached through this activity. Each week, a team of survivors prepared lunch for the group, while a different weekly 'head chef' made her speciality dish for her peers.

The activity is an important weekly appointment that has created stability in the lives of the participants. Survivors provided peer-to-peer support and, from week to week, SOAR staff spotted a multitude of difficulties and subsequent needs that those attending had been facing in their daily lives. These included situations of food and material deprivation, difficulty with paying bills, stress and high anxiety, re-traumatisation and worsening mental health problems, a change in risk level, need for training and education, housing needs, low interpersonal skills, and repeat abuse such as stalking and vexatious reporting.

Follow up meetings were then scheduled to offer a holistic and tailor-made support plan to the survivor and her children. The feedback received has shown that the social club has been a lifeline to those who attend. The following are some testimonies shared within a group discussion about how SOAR and the peer-to-peer support has impacted their lives:

"SOAR gives me unconditional love and support like a normal family should. I feel trusted, accepted and understood and this gives me mental security to be able to heal from my abusive childhood and marriage. It's a healing and personal growth journey I'm embarking on, and I have faith that I can do it. I am learning to be a role model for my children through being loved and accepted without judgement."



"SOAR offers an amazing group of women who support each other like no one else can, as they understand and don't judge as you go through the ups and downs of surviving an abusive relationship. The time spent together helps soothe the scars and give hope."

Mentoring

SOAR offered mentoring to 10 women in 2019: 5 with goals in further education, 5 with personal life goals. Trained survivor-mentors kept weekly contact and set frequent meetings with their mentees to guide them towards their respective goals offering support, access to resources and specialist advice.



Advocacy

SOAR represented the St Jeanne Antide Foundation on the following networks or councils:

- Consultative Council for Women's Rights (Ministry for Equality and European Affairs);
- Network Forum (Members of WAVE); and
- NGO's Network (Commission on Domestic Violence).

SOAR is a tool for survivors through which their perspectives, experiences and recommendations can reach policy makers, researchers and practitioners working in the field. SOAR advocates on behalf of survivors and appeals to boards, agencies, commissioners, practitioners, public officers and ministers and parliamentary secretaries to highlight issues which are barriers to survivors' wellbeing and their children. These barriers result in re-victimisation, re-traumatisation and unnecessary prolonged suffering for the recovering family. Issues that were highlighted during 2019 included:

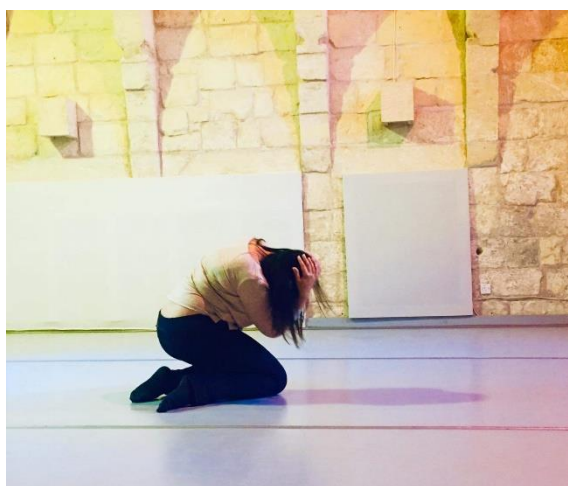
- Lack of housing options for survivors;
- Vexatious reporting by perpetrators;
- The use of legal tools available within the judicial system, specifically the Family Court, by perpetrators to maintain control over their estranged partners;
- The lack of an independent designated key worker providing support for children during Supervised Access Visits;
- The recent change in law on stalking and temporary restraining orders that went through without any consultation with survivors;
- How the current tapering policy on income and social assistance does not provide a solution to a particular bracket of people (including survivors) who are stuck in their circumstances.

Projects

SOAR managed to find much needed funds to implement short-term projects that benefit survivors and their children. In 2019, SOAR concluded one creative self-expression therapeutic project and started two new ones. All three projects were funded through grants from The President's Award for Creativity managed by Arts Council Malta.

On the 8th of March, SOAR launched the **UMAMA** art therapy exhibition with the support of APS Bank and The President's Award for Creativity managed by Arts Council Malta. The exhibition ran between 9th March and 14th April at the head office of APS Bank in Swatar. The exhibition shone a light on domestic violence by proxy, a silent pervasive form of violence where the perpetrator targets the victim through manipulation of the children, vexatious reporting to child protection services, or continuous requests to court for custody and access even when courts have previously decided that this would be detrimental to the children. The exhibition showed expressive works by mothers and children impacted by domestic violence by proxy.





Throughout 2019, SOAR led another project called **Meraki Collective**, making a range of performing arts accessible as part of each individual's personal healing process. Weekly sessions took place over the first half of the year in collaboration with Mill Art Habitat and vocal/dance tutor Ms Pamela Gauna. The process included a sharing session between the participants, where a young survivor singer/song-writer wrote the music and lyrics to a song that reflects the expressions that emerged from this session and others before it. The song *Empty Pages* is bi-lingual and will

be recorded and released with a video in 2020. The song is a provocative monologue on the insidious continuation of violence despite the survivor having ended the relationship and being determined to start a new life away from the violence.

A Stitch In Time is another project embarked upon by SOAR combining the learning of Maltese lacework with peer-support within a safe space for women. The project kicked off in November 2019 with a well attended taster session. The sessions will end in June 2020. The project will include a trip to Gozo during Lace Day. SOAR is collaborating with social enterprise HAJJA on this project funded by the President's Award for Creativity and Arts Council Malta.

"I feel a great sense of achievement when I see the pattern emerge. Time flies when you're having fun!"

"I'm having fun, it's great! I'm learning something new."

"I am totally enjoying the lessons and learning new stitches. It feels so good to create something beautiful out of thread! The teacher makes it so educational, and we can talk about serious stuff or laugh and joke between us. Every Monday I am on edge at work waiting for time to pass to leave to come to the lesson."



Meraki Soaps – an emerging Social Enterprise developed and run by survivors

Meraki Soaps is the result of a long process of evaluation and planning for the setting up of a small social enterprise that could sustain part of the SOAR Service. It is envisaged to start offering part-time work to survivors of domestic violence in 2020 and foresees growth over the coming 3 years. Meraki Soaps operates mainly within a niche market for wedding souvenirs that support a social cause. It also makes seasonal 'Collections' of full-size products and gift boxes from time to time.



A total of 52* mentoring hours on enterprise development (*see in Awards section below) were utilised during 2019 and a feasibility study was carried out. During the year, the team shared skills and knowledge to design, create and test a range of handmade bath and body products. A focus was put on creating products that were made fresh, that utilised local products and that did not use any unnecessary plastic wrapping. Volunteers set up 15 market stalls throughout the year and sales were also made via orders received online through the Meraki Soaps Facebook page and through face-to-face consultations.



ENISIE AWARD for Meraki Soaps: Profit For Purpose



SOAR's Meraki Soaps idea won first place in the ENISIE Award for National Social Innovation, winning 40 hours of business mentoring by Dr. Eng. Nicholas Sammut and the use of the Malta Innovation Hub. The mentoring led to the creation of a feasibility study and the tools required to write a business plan for Meraki Soaps. ENISIE was a project funded by INTERREG Italia-Malta Programme 2014-2020.

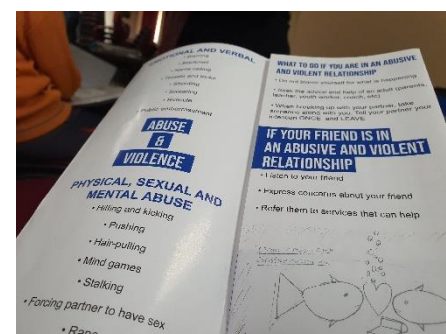
SOAR was a Finalist of the Malta Social Impact Awards

Following an intense and intensive preparatory phase, which included mentoring by Take Off at University of Malta and by Julian Azzopardi at Up Your Level, SOAR became a finalist in the Malta Social Impact Awards 2019. It also participated in the Malta Social Impact Fair. The entry attempted to win funds to set up a Soap Kitchen and a retail shop for its social enterprise Meraki Soaps. Although SOAR did not win any funding in the finals, it raised the interest of a few businesses at the dinner event. MPS Ltd have since become a solid backer for SOAR, supporting the service's marketing and fundraising needs to renovate the SOAR Hub in Tarxien.



Workshops for Teens

In March, SOAR carried out two workshops with children in Form 4 at St Benedict's College as part of a project by Education Plus (Early School Leaving Unit) under the Ministry for Education and Employment. SOAR delivered training on dating violence to prepare students to design an awareness raising brochure for other students across secondary schools in Malta and Gozo. The brochure was launched later on 5th December and named Take Care #tc.

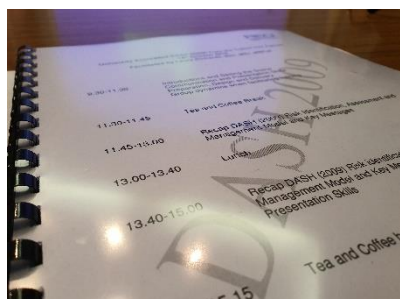


European Conference on Domestic Violence, Oslo, Norway

In partnership with Cohort 4, a UK based organisation offering peer-support to survivors of domestic violence, SOAR co-submitted a paper for consideration by the European Domestic Violence Conference (ECDV). Our submission was approved and on the 2nd of September, Ms Beverley Gilbert (Cohort 4) and Ms Elaine Compagno (SOAR, SJAF) presented their combined experiences of survivor peer-support in Malta and the UK, highlighting the benefits and the challenges of both.



The 3-day Conference brought many researchers, experts and activists together, offering a wide range of themed presentations around domestic violence.



DASH Masterclass and Train-the-Trainer

Two SOAR staff members received training on the DASH Risk Model thanks to the Charles Miceli Scholarship in Social Solidarity awarded by the Alfred Mizzi Foundation. Training was held in London on the 11th and 14th of October, facilitated by psychologist, criminal behavioral analyst and expert Laura Richards. SOAR plans to hold its first DASH Risk Assessment Training, designed for the local context, in April of 2020.

Renovation of an old town house in Tarxien to be transformed into a national SOAR Survivors' Hub

The Dar Tal-Providenza has provided the Foundation with the long-term use of an old disused town house in Tarxien which will eventually, after renovation works are completed, become the Hub for all the services and 2 social enterprises run by SOAR. A rent agreement has been signed by the Archbishop's Curia's asset management office and the Foundation. SJAF is very grateful to Dar tal-Providenza Foundation for its support to new gap-filling initiatives requiring a building to house them.

Employees of Vodafone Malta, LESA and the Malta Police Force and others from the 39th Basic Training Course of the Academy of Disciplined Forces volunteered at the SOAR Hub as part of their organisation's corporate social responsibility. The teams spent days carrying out cleaning works in preparation for the eventual renovation of the building.

QPml continued to provide invaluable pro bono professional services. A QP team has prepared floor plans and a package of applications for the Planning Authority. Meetings and site visits were held throughout 2019 to discuss and plan for water, electrical and drainage services, beam repairs and interior design. The permit application was approved in December.



Once completed, the Hub will be a base for the SOAR service and will include space for expansion of its social enterprise activities.

Continuous professional development

SOAR recognises survivors' competences and acknowledges survivors as experts-by-experience. Opportunities were offered in 2019 to build on these competences to strengthen capacity for effective advocacy, risk assessment, peer-support and peer-mentoring. SOAR staff undertook various up-skilling training opportunities to continue offering a quality service.



Date	Training theme	Members participated
22, 29 March, 5, 12 April	Crop in a Pot: Building skills for sustainability and resilience. Organised by SOS Malta.	2
8-9 May	Bringing Social Innovation Ideas to Life. Interreg V Italia-Malta Programme, ERDF.	3
31-May-19	In-house training on Borderline Personality Disorder.	2

19 June, 10, 24 July 2019	Mentoring on Pitching a Business Idea by the Take Off Business Incubator, University of Malta.	3
2-4 September	3 rd European Conference on Domestic Violence held in Oslo. Organised by the Norwegian Social Research agency (NOVA) and the Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies (NKVTS).	1
21 August, 13 & 16 September	Mentoring on Public Speaking and Project Pitching by Julian Azzopardi from Up Your Level.	3
3 October	In-house training on Basic Fire Fighting: Prevention emergency action measures.	2
9 & 11 October	Accredited DASH Risk Checklist Masterclass Training and DASH Risk Checklist Train the Trainer, Laura Richards BSc, MSc, MBPsP & Associates (London).	6
May to November	Business consultation and start-up mentoring by ENISIE Interreg Italia-Malta Programme 2014-2020. Mentor: Dr. Eng. Nicholas Sammut.	5



LWIEN Service

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 prone to become 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 2019, 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 Mental Health 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 2019

In 2019, the Lwien Service provided intense support to a total of 277 individuals from 148 families. Of the 277 individuals supported, 216 shouldered primary caregiving responsibilities.

Open cases from previous years	New families referred in 2018	Individuals	Female Caregivers (of 161)	Male Caregivers (of 161)
165 individuals from 114 families	148	277	83	31

Types of mental illnesses suffered by family members cared for by the 148 families

Depression (60); Post-partum depression (6)	66	Bi-polar Disorder	13
Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) 14 + Paranoia (2);	18	Severe ADHD	8
Autism	13	Cognitive impairment	2
Schizophrenia	13	Oppositional behaviour	1
Suicide	4	Social phobia	1
Borderline Personality Disorder	8	Schizo-affective disorder	1
Addictions	8	Agoraphobia	1
Narcissism	6	Munchausen by proxy	1
Severe Anxiety	10		

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 2019. Liaison with mental health services for sufferers was maintained to maximise positive outcomes for the families involved.

Since the start-up of the Lwien Service in August 2010, the service has provided guidance and support to 2182 individuals from 1430 caregiving families of mentally ill persons.



Emotional Freedom Service

learning to release emotional distress

The Emotional Freedom Service of the St Jeanne Antide Foundation took 52 new cases in 2019 as well as 8 other cases continued or reopened from previous years. At the end of the year all cases were closed except two that were ongoing.

The service aims at contacting, loving, and releasing the emotional distress that persons suffer when they are carried away by fear, anger, emotional hurt, adverse childhood experiences of adults, anxiety and so on. The service has been always one-to-one and by appointment. Eligible persons are those who are motivated to try and resolve their emotional distress, but do not have mental illness. The latter condition may be relaxed wherever a mental health professional makes the referral to the Emotional freedom Service.

Family breakups and loneliness were among the most frequent presenting problems. Poor self-image, partner domination, and inadequate parenting in childhood were among the most common causes of the emotional distress. Some service users were discovered to be struggling with existential and spiritual challenges for a meaningful life. In almost all cases the service users' declared experience of usually 2-4 sessions with the Emotional Freedom Service was very positive and indicated unexpected peacefulness, healing, positivity, long-term liberation and empowerment with new methods for managing future distress. The average session duration was 2.1 hours per session.

The one-to-one service is available to persons of any faith or none. It is delivered by a person who is qualified in emotional freedom techniques, registered on the Emotional Freedom Register, and accredited as advanced practitioner.

In addition to the one-to-one service, the Emotional Freedom Service has been designing, organising, and delivering experiential workshops – 12 were held in 2019 – for those persons who wish to learn practices, practical knowledge and wisdom that help them to become more whole psychologically and spiritually. These include self-compassion, compassion, and other methods for healing and liberation. One such group of participants – the Wholeness Group - is ongoing; the fellowship involved among them is an additional constructive factor besides the content of the workshop sessions. These workshops were often held in collaboration with other agencies, including the Segretariat for Catholic Action, the Franciscan Porziuncola Centre, and parish Diakonia Commissions. The Emotional Freedom Service and the Franciscan Centre are conducting ongoing sessions in Centering Prayer, a contentless (or apophatic) Christian contemplative practice as taught by Trappist monks.



Y-ASSIST SERVICE

supported accommodation for vulnerable mothers and their children

Y-Assist is a supported accommodation service for homeless women and their children commissioned by The Malta Trust Foundation. Its oversight function lies with a Joint Policy Group comprising members of both organisations. The first residence - Dar Esther – received its licence from the Social Care Standards Authority on the 29th March 2019.

Since its start up, 41 referrals were considered. Of these, 22 reached screening stage and 12 were admitted with a total of 13 children. Social Workers from other agencies intending to refer a service user hold discussions with the Y-ASSIST Coordinator before filling in, and sending, the referral form. Such discussions centre around frequently-asked questions. This aspect of the Y-Assist work entails much work including assessing the referral and sending referring social workers questions needing clarifications.

The Service Management Team (SMT) discusses and evaluates those referrals that meet admission criteria. In-house practitioners are consulted. Followed by a screening interview. Once a woman and her child/ren are accepted for admission, the moving-in process starts and arrangements made for school transfer, change of address and new identity card, application for welfare benefits, building of an individualised plan, moving of personal belongings, and settling in.

In all, between the period of September 2018 and December 2019, Y-Assist welcomed a total of 20 persons: 9 women and 11 children. Ages varied – from 18 years to 43 for mothers and from 3 to 14 for children. During the same period, one eviction had to be resorted to.

The Y-Assist Joint Policy Group, made up of representatives of The Malta Trust Foundation and SJAF, widened the age bracket of women it welcomes to a Y-Assist residence. This proved to be a wise decision since referrals subsequently tripled. The initial age bracket of 18 to 25 had resulted in a majority of referrals of high risk persons.

Depending on the case, volunteers from a corporate body help out with packing, disposal of unwanted items and transport to the allocated Y-Assist residence and unpacking and settling in. On the same day as moving in, the new resident signs a service contract with the referring social worker as guarantor.

The programme includes the following supports:

- *Regular one-to-one sessions* to tackle basic needs such as food, clothing and baby items for which sponsorships are often sought through appeals on social media. Through individual support, feelings of fear, insecurity, anxiety and doubt about one's decision to move are allayed and mood swings are acknowledged and tackled. Access to therapy is facilitated to work on past hurts, traumas and broken relationships with partners and family members. Residents are often referred to SJAF in-house support services to learn about self-compassion and self-awareness and how to manage one's difficult emotions.

- *Monthly meetings with the family's social workers and other practitioners:* During these meetings, the resident's Social Worker from FSWS, the Y-Assist Coordinator and the service user review goals, milestones and obstacles and revise life plans. Support is extended to the resident's family and partners. As long as the partner is supportive and the relationship is a healthy one, sessions may also include such partners and significant others whose support is crucial. Whenever a resident reaches one or more of her goals, an affirmation session is organised while self-confidence is bolstered and nurtured and motivation heightened.



Volunteering at the Foundation

opportunities for active citizenship

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.

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 work, 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 2019 there was a total of 114 active volunteers involved in one or more spheres of service provision. The highest number were Volunteer Learning Support Tutors and Mentors (45) working within the Family Learning Support Service that comprises the children's learning support, non-formal education for parents and other adults as well as mentoring of at risk youth. Of the 114 volunteers, 36 (25%) discontinued their involvement in 2019 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 2019.

2019 Statistical data

114 Volunteer in 2019: their roles and number:

Volunteering roles	No. of active volunteers
Learning Support Tutors and Mentors	45
Social Work support	7
SOAR Service	9
Reception work at the Antide Family Services Centre	14
Handicrafts making	13
Support to administration	6
Bazaar/Fundraising	6
Handymen	2
Befriending	6
Y-Assist volunteers	3
Overseas Development Projects	1
Emotional Freedom Service	1
Book Club	1
TOTAL	114

Ages of the 114 volunteers

Age bracket	No.
Up to 20	26
20-29	6
30-39	9
40-49	9
50-59	16
60+	48

Volunteers discontinuing or remaining in 2019:

Discontinued at some point in 2019	Volunteers still active at the end of 2019	Total volunteers who worked at any time during 2019
36	78	114

Overview of volunteers during 2019 by gender:

Females	Males	Volunteers who worked at any time during 2019
91	23	114

Overview of volunteers during 2019 by regular vs occasional work:

Regular	Occasional involvement	Total Volunteers during 2019
114	0	114



Anti-Poverty Assistance in Developing Countries

supporting poverty alleviation initiatives beyond our shores

The St Jeanne Antide Foundation had no overseas development projects in 2019 because Malawi stopped being considered a priority region in terms of the overseas development funding of the Maltese government. Nevertheless, in May 2019, the Volunteer Project Officer – Darren Formosa – who is responsible for the Foundation’s overseas development project work had the opportunity to visit the Karonga Diocese in Malawi which has been an ODA project partner for the past eight years. Fr Joseph Sikwese kindly accompanied the SJAF ODA Project Officer to visit the projects that have been supported by the St Jeanne Antide Foundation since 2012.

Darren reports: “The visit to Malawi was a two-week cultural immersion experience with priests from the Karonga Diocese. Stationed in the south of the country. We arrived at the Diocesan residence in St Mary’s parish after practically a day’s travel, crossing from the south to the north for 550 Km along Lake Malawi. Upon arrival, I was promptly immersed into a fund-raising activity for the building of a school for the blind. In no more than two hours after my arrival, the Diocesan residence was bustling with locals who danced, sang, prayed and raised funds. This gathering pretty much set the narrative for the rest of my stay.



“The next morning, May 4, there was the inauguration of a new hospital and a maternity ward. The latter was funded through a collaborative project with the St Jeanne Antide Foundation. We headed to St Clara’s outpost at dawn. By 6 a.m., Fr Joseph, another two priests, whom I had not met until then, and myself, were travelling in a 4-by-4 on unpaved roads covered in red soil and lined by the lush foliage of the East African terrain.



“At St Clara’s we were welcomed by the beautiful singing of locals – a perfect harmony of voices. It was a choir of colourfully uniformed young men and women dancing and singing hymns accompanied with ululation – a howl-like sound made by women, long, wavering and high-pitched – as a sign of joy and celebration.

“We visited the hospital and the maternity building that had well-equipped rooms for mothers in labour and expecting mothers. I was invited to inaugurate the building together with the Bishop of Muzuzu, Fr. John Ryan. The highlight of this event was an outdoor mass, under the kind shade of tall trees, where all the villagers attended, sang, prayed, and danced their way to mass offerings with gifts varying from money and food to chickens, calves, and goats. It was an enthralling experience - little did I know it was not to be the only one during my stay.



“Equally riveting and also informative was the visit to Livingstonia. The town is named after the Scottish physician and Congregationalist David Livingstone. Livingstonia was founded by the Missionaries of the Free Church of Scotland in the 18th century. The town is two hours south of St Mary’s and the roadway connecting Livingstonia to the nearest village of Chitimba is a steep hillside route. The road is not only unpaved, but it riddled with hairpin bends of extremely rough terrain, full of rocks and precipices, which takes over 30 minutes of skilled driving to the top. A small gathering for tea and sweets on a mountain-perched, two-roomed quarters filled the interlude between the journey and a mass celebration that was again attended by thousands of residents from all over the village. Bishop Martin Mtumbuka presided mass. In his sermon and also during my one-to-one conversation with him, he was thankful to the Sisters of Charity in Malta for their unwavering support.

“The mass at Livingstonia welcomed two young Indian priests from the Missionaries of St. Frances de Sales who had been on missionary training in Tanzania, and were then embarking on their missionary vocation in Livingstonia. Fr Berin and Fr Satish, whom I had the honour to meet and converse with on a number of occasions, were to start a life in this remote village – a missionary post that has a minimum duration of five years, where the young priests would learn the language and culture, and would work with the inhabitants providing them with pastoral guidance and education. Again, this was a whole day event, and by the time we drove

everyone to their respective residences we were back in St Mary’s parish after sunset.

“Perhaps one of the most touching experiences was our visit to Chitipa. In 2015 and 2016, St Jeanne Antide Foundation had applied for funds from the Maltese government for a socio-economic project in this town. In partnership with the Karonga Diocese, we had helped a group of 40 widowed women to learn farming, and provided them with



the necessary equipment and resources, such as a maize mill, an oil expeller, seeds and fertilizers. The objective of this project was to empower and support the women to start their

own agricultural business so that they would be able to earn a livelihood for themselves and their families. Welcomed with the usual singing, dancing and ululation, the women gifted us chickens and honey, and made sure that their gratitude to the Sisters of Charity in Malta was not to be lost in translation.

“The last but equally fascinating experiences of my trip was meeting with the beneficiaries of the “Give Youth a Chance” project. This was another project supported by the St Jeanne Antide Foundation - 26 young men and women had been provided with tuition and the necessary tools to help them start up their own woodwork and tailoring businesses. I had the honour of presenting certificates to the participants of the training of this project who proudly showed me some of their handicrafts from their client orders. I had the pleasure of talking to the young men who were appreciative of their acquired skills and explained to me how the project had changed their lives. The project was being run by Rosarian Dominican Sister Beatrice Chipeta, who walked me through the various phases of the project.



“I later found out that Sister Beatrice had travelled to Tanzania to procure the sewing machines at a good price. The Sister, whom I had the pleasure to meet at various events during my stay, was considered by the locals as the Mother Theresa of the town, mostly due to the Lusubilo, which she founded in 1997. Lusubilo is a community-based organisation

that is actively involved in the care of orphans, persons with HIV/AIDS, and other vulnerable groups.



“Sadly, and what came as a shock to me, Sister Beatrice passed away a few weeks after my visit, on June 19th, 2019. I consider myself fortunate to have met this woman, who I grew to admire in our few days of acquaintance.

“I know she is survived by a community that continues to respect her and sustain her mission of humility and devoted attention to those in need. May she rest in peace.”

Darren Formosa, ODA Volunteer Project Officer,
SJAF - 16th December 2019



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 qrafa 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.

