

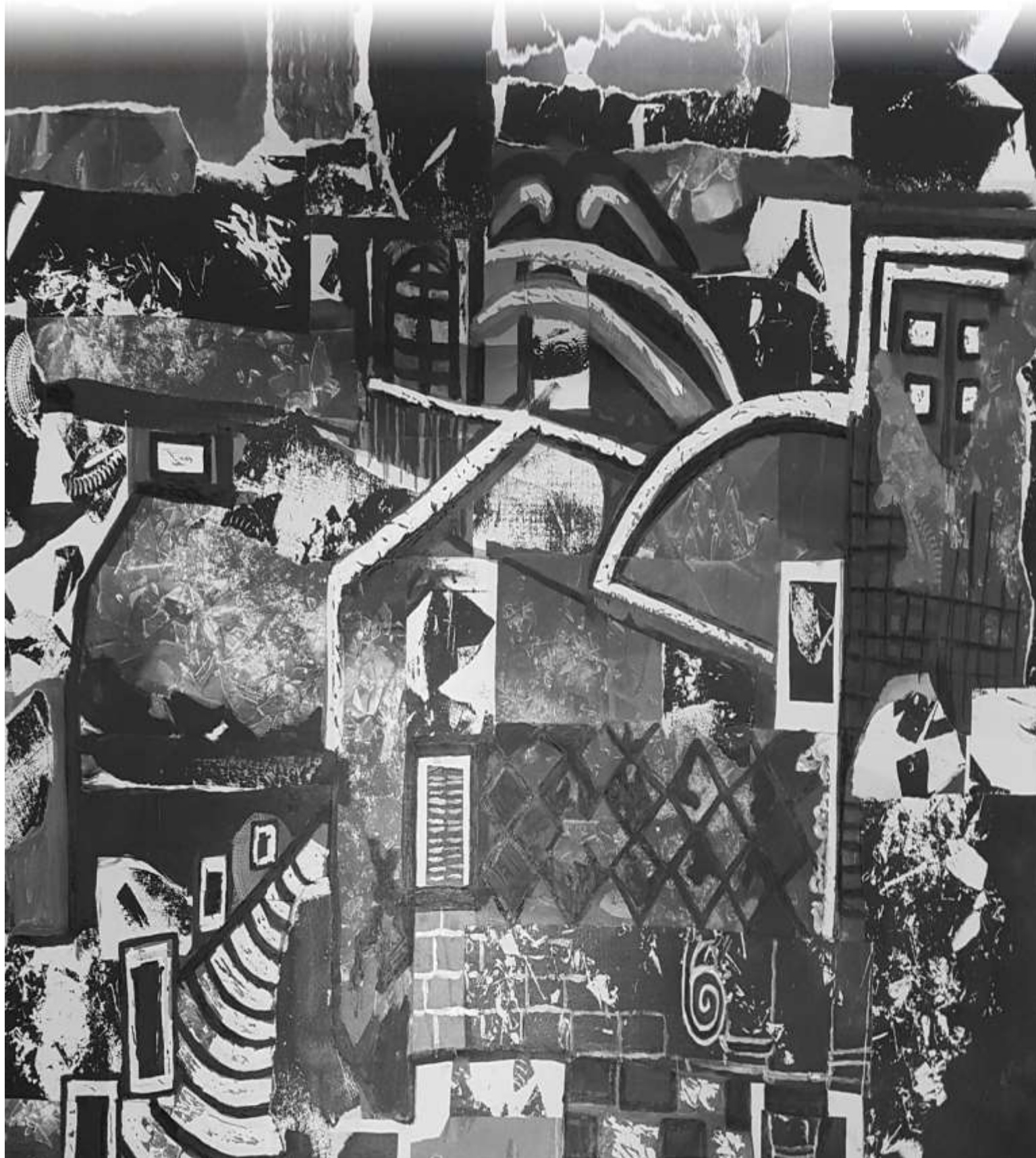
CORRIDORS OF LIFE

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

2016



St Jeanne Antide
Foundation



CORRIDORS OF LIFE

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

**Annual Report of the
St Jeanne Antide Foundation
2016**

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Dar Hosea drop-in centre, IRENE Service
for vulnerable women involved in street prostitution
Tel: 9950 8954 (open weekdays from 10am to 5pm and occasional Saturdays 2-4pm)

Acknowledgement for cover illustration –
Bridget Bugeja, B.Ed.(Hons) student, Geography and Art

Affiliate membership:

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

DEDICATION

We, the team of workers at the St Jeanne Antide Foundation, dedicate this publication to the hundreds of families who touch our lives while giving us the privilege to touch theirs, in the course of a working year.

The title of this publication reflects the reality of vulnerable and at-risk families who spend incalculable time waiting in, and passing through, corridors of the different services they are constrained to make use of in order to gain a measure of relief and dignity.

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Introduction

responding to the expressed unmet needs of vulnerable individuals and families

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. 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).

In 2016, SJAF ran support services from four sites, apart from home visits to service users. Two of the sites are Family Resource Centres. The one based in Ғал Tarxien is called Ċentru Antida and serves families from the localities of Ғал Tarxien, Paola, Ғgura, Ғaḡ-ḡabbar and Santa Luċija. 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. The second Family Resource Centre is Ċentru Enrichetta and is based in the south-eastern harbour town of Birḡebbuḡa; it serves families from the localities of Birḡebbuḡa and Marsaxlokk. In Ғaḡ-ḡabbar, SJAF utilises space at the Dar Sagra Familja of the Sisters of St Joseph of the Apparition to run its weekly mental health clinic for family caregivers of mentally ill persons. SJAF also runs a day centre for vulnerable women involved in street prostitution or trying to live a life away from prostitution; the centre is called Dar Hosea.

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. Being based in a local community, SJAF has naturally evolved into an organisation that is at the service of local communities. Its scope is local, national and international.

Mission

The Foundation is run, and its mission fulfilled, by a community of Sisters and lay people working in partnership systematically in teams for the support and self-empowerment of socially excluded persons, families and minority groups. As a Christian community, it aims to reflect the love of God in all that is done, and to see and love Jesus Christ in persons who are in need. 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. Looking holistically at persons in need, the Foundation's mission is to give moral and spiritual support to such persons.

Objectives

The objectives of the Foundation are:-

- (a) to identify, understand and raise awareness about under-served and un-served categories of excluded or vulnerable persons;
- (b) to develop and implement programmes in support of identified under-served and un-served categories of vulnerable persons, families, and minority groups;
- (c) to support and train a number of persons to make their own contributions to society and to persons in need;
- (d) to provide the opportunity and training to service users so that they themselves can provide services to others in need;
- (e) 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;
- (f) to create links with overseas agencies that work in line with our mission, to share experiences, give and get support, and widen our vision.

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. During 2016, one member resigned from Governing Board membership and two new members joined in June. A new Chairperson joined late in the year as well.

Services

During 2016, the Foundation ran the following services:

1. Two community-based Family Resource Centres:

Ċentru Antida in the heart of Ħal Tarxien . Open from 7.30am to 5 pm daily in winter time (sometimes later as well) and from 7.30am to 1.30 pm in summer.

..Social Work: family support, home-visits, outreach work, advocacy, referral, information, emotional support and groupwork. Social work support is provided in the catchment areas of Ħal Tarxien, Paola, Fgura, and Ғaż-Ғabbar and Santa Luċija.

..Integrating Youths with Autism in the Community (IYAC): three youth groups started in October 2016 and are were run in partnership with the Autism Parents Association.

..Volunteer Handymen in support of vulnerable and poor families.

..Learning Support opportunities for children and adults including self-esteem and literacy groups.

..Volunteering opportunities, including supported volunteering for service users.

..Volunteer Befrienders for lonely, home-bound elderly persons.

..Recycling Bazaar as a fundraising tool and means to provide in-kind support to hard-up families.

Ċentru Enrichetta in Birżebbuġa: Open Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 8am to 5pm. Open to residents from the South Eastern localities of Birżebbuġa and Marsaxlokk.

..Community Social Work including family support, home-visits, outreach work, advocacy, referral, information, and emotional support.

..Family Literacy Support: Literacy strategies related courses for parents of struggling learner and those having children with autism; support to struggling learners;

..Sub-office of the Malta Community Chest Fund (MCCF) on Tuesdays between 9 and 11.30am.

2. SOAR Service: 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 youth on dating violence. Foundation Social Workers co-work with the SOAR Service Co-ordinator to support self-referred and referred women and their children.

3. LWIEN Service: guidance and non-formal education for family caregivers of persons with severe mental health problems: family consultations by Senior Psychiatric Nurse, support groups, home-visits, social work, and support literature in Maltese.

4. IRENE Service in support of very vulnerable women involved in street prostitution: includes Dar Hosea drop-in centre, social work, accompaniment, medical screening for STIs, sexual health education and a crafts-making group for women at the Corradino Correctional Facilities (CCF).

5. Emotional Freedom Service for persons wanting to be free from their anger, fear, grudges and resentment or other emotional distress.

6. Overseas Development Projects: SJAF works with partners in developing countries to formulate anti-poverty projects. It has also arranged for public funding of such projects in Pakistan, Central African Republic, South Sudan Malawi and Peru.

Social Work practice cuts across all services of the Foundation.

Service development

During 2016, through two grants and funding from the Sisters of Charity who own the building, the Foundation completed the total refurbishment of a small three-storey house which will, in 2017, offer accommodation to 3 very vulnerable with no means to rent a place of their own from the open market.

Iso in 2016, in partnership with Autism Parents Association (APA) – VO/0802), SJAF developed and sourced funding for a new initiative titled Integration Youths with Autism in the Community (IYAC). More information is in the Antide Centre chapter.

With another NGO, Men Against Violence (MAV) – VO/0985, the SJAF service SOAR developed a Violence Prevention initiative aimed at youths in secondary schools and in the community. More information is in the SOAR Service chapter.

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

Human Resources

In 2016, the staff and volunteer complement of the Foundation was made up as follows:

5 Social Workers, one of whom is Manager of the Dar Hosea drop-in centre;

1 Senior Practitioner (Psychiatric Nurse);

1 Senior Practitioner (Family Learning Support);

1 Foundation Administrator;
 1 Antida Family Resource Centre Administrator;
 1 SOAR Service Co-ordinator;
 1 Project Manager (on secondment);
 1 Emotional Freedom Service practitioner;
 12 Social Support Workers at Dar Hosea drop-in centre, 9 of whom Volunteers;
 1 Administrative Support worker
 2 Volunteer Bazaar Managers;
 1 Volunteer nurse who visits homebound sick and lonely persons;
 3 professionals who provided their services on a pro bono basis: a lawyer, a doctor, and a notary public;
 1 Literacy Teacher from the Directorate for Lifelong Learning, Ministry of Education and Employment.
 the CEO

Volunteers totalled 124 in 2016. Volunteering hours for 2016 totalled 54,168 – equivalent to 26 full-time workers. Their roles varied from that of reception work to learning support, mentoring, befriending, supporting vulnerable women, administrative support, handymen and others. Were the hours of service of volunteers to be remunerated at a minimum of €5 for every hour worked, their service would have cost the Foundation €270,840.

Practice Placements

The Foundation hosts a number of students seeking a social service agency where they can practice their field of study. During 2016, 8 students undertook a practice placement in the following fields: Masters in Counselling (1), Learning Support (7 from Sixth Form).

Spirituality

The mission statement of the Foundation, besides the specifically social imperatives, includes also this sentence: “As a Christian community, it aims to reflect the love of God in all that is done, and to see and love Jesus Christ in persons who are in need.” An activity of SJAF that contributes to the process of aligning oneself in this way is the Centring 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). At Centru Antida, weekly meetings are held. The Centering Prayer group is open to all who are seriously interested in contemplative practice beyond thoughts and feelings.

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 Christian orientation and personalities 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 field. 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 love.

Acknowledgement to donors

The Foundation acknowledges the significant contribution, during 2016, of the following donors:

- The Malta Delegation of the Sisters of Charity of St Jeanne Antide;
- The VO Fund of the Ministry for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties (MSDC);
- The Malta Community Chest Fund Foundation (MCCFF);
- The Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Overseas Development Unit;
- Dar tal-Providenza Foundation;
- The Alfred Mizzi Foundation;
- The President's Award for Creativity managed by Arts Council Malta;
- Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ;
- The Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector (MCVS);
- People Who Care Fund, Crimsonwing;
- HSBC Bank Malta plc;
- Andrew Galea & Associates;
- St Peter Foundation;
- Social Assistance Secretariat (SAS), Malta Catholic Action;
- the Directorate Lifelong Learning, Ministry of Education and Employment;
- Forestals Ltd.;
- Trellborg Malta;
- Hal Tarxien Parish;
- Strummin' Team, Young Christian Workers (ŻĦN);
- Secondary School, St Clare College, Pembroke;
- Jobs for Women;
- Business and Professional Women Malta.

Gratitude to many 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 for the narrative Annual Reports which are published and made available for 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 2016. A volunteer couple contributed over 15 hours a week each to run a twice-weekly charity shop in Hal Tarxien. Staff organised three fundraising activities, one of which was a concert. 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, three rent-free premises, in-kind support and the salary of the CEO.



Antide Family Centre

reaching out and supporting families at community level

The Antide Centre, or Ċentru Antida as it is known to families, is a family resource centre in the south eastern locality of Ħal Tarxien; its support services are open to families in difficulty from the localities of Ħal-Tarxien, Paola, Fgura, Ħaż-Żabbar and Santa Luċija. It 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 courses, 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 caregivers and handicraft-production group.

During weekdays, Ċentru Antida opened daily from 8am to 5pm or later in winter time and from 7.30am to 1.30pm 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 Ħal 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 kitchen which is also used by Volunteer Mentors and their Mentees. There are showers for temporarily homeless persons as well as a library for young and adult service users. In 2016, the Centre was visited by an average of 22 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.

Ċentru Antida 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>

Charity shop

Linked to Ċentru Antida is an adjacent fund-raising charity shop that is fully managed by two volunteers. This initiative is 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 shop regularly visit it to either donate knick knacks, home furnishings, books, toys, clothing and children's items and to make purchases. The centre has become a recycling hub, with many visitors dropping by to pick up items for their handicraft-making pastime while representatives of other support voluntary organisations drop by to pick up items for financially hard-up members. Donated items are also shared with other organisations that need available items.

Non-formal education opportunities

During 2016, a number of non-formal education opportunities were offered to service users at Ċentru Antida. An open-ended literacy group for vulnerable young persons over the age of 18 ran during the scholastic year and resumed in late September. The teacher was provided by the Lifelong Learning Directorate of the Ministry of Education and Employment. Three courses on self-esteem were offered to service users who expressed the need to develop self-confidence, decision-making ability and self-esteem. These were run between the 14 of January and the 3rd of March; between the 7th and 28th April; and between the 2nd and 23rd June. Two depression support groups ran for ten 90-minute sessions per group, one of which was commissioned by the Mental Health Association (MHA) for its caregiver members. Learning support sessions were held every Friday throughout the scholastic year and resumed in early October. This service benefited 17 children from service-using families who were tutored on a one-to-one basis by 13 Volunteer Tutors. 10 Volunteer Mentors met their mentees at the Centre for weekly sessions and outings. Training sessions for different groups of volunteers were held throughout the year. SOAR Service members met at the centre for art therapy and other support and therapeutic opportunities.

Integration Youth with Autism in the Community (IYAC)

Through funding from the Voluntary Organisations Projects Scheme (VOPs) managed by the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector (MCVS) on behalf of the Ministry for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties (MFSS), SJAF entered into a partnership with Autism Parents Association (APA) to develop three youth groups for youth on the autistic spectrum. APA members had long felt the need for such groups since mainstream youth groups and initiatives lacked inclusive practises for this category of young persons. Through the project, SJAF and APA engaged a young person with experience of working with persons with autism who was completing his Masters degree in autism studies. Two Psychologists undertook assessments of 25 youths on the autistic spectrum to determine their level of preparedness for community participation. Three groups were created and ran in parallel every fortnight on Saturdays afternoon starting from the 14 of October. Until the end of December 2016, the three groups had run 5 times. Apart from the IYAC Coordinator, 5 youths were engaged as Activity Facilitators, while APA member-parents, siblings of participating youths and SJAF Volunteers served as Volunteers. There were 12 Volunteers taking part.

Group 1 - Community Integration (7 members): aimed to nurture the acquisition of socialisation skills and integration in other youth groups. The group visited other mainstream youth groups in order to gain familiarity with the group and its activities and explore the possibility of membership.

Group 2 - Community Exposure (8 members): aimed at providing a range of opportunities for members to engage in a variety of community activities such as sports, music, art and crafts workshops and local community events. Siblings and friends were encouraged to join.

Group 3 - Community Skills (7 members): aimed at providing in-house activities to build skills required for future community participation. Activities included such as social stories and role play on catching a bus in preparation for the next session where youths would actually take a bus. Social stories and role plays prepared members of this group for different settings. A drama

school assisted in the socialisation processes. A movie night and sport activities were also organised.

Volunteer Handymen

In 2016, two Volunteer Handymen undertook 125 service related trips: 46 in support of service users who needed basic repair and maintenance work at their homes; 63 trips related to errands for the different service sites of the Foundation and pick-ups from sources donating items; and 13 trips related to the Foundation's charity shop. In total, they covered 1,322 kilometres on errands and home-visits.



Enrichetta Family Centre

reaching out and supporting families at community level

Ċentru Enrichetta is the second family resource centre run by the Foundation. It is 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. In 2016, Family Resource Centre workers undertook occasional street outreach work in order to identify and support more vulnerable individuals and families with tenuous links to mainstream district and national support services. In collaboration with community-based organisations and others working at regional and national levels, a range of initiatives were initiated to respond to identified needs.

Family-support actions during 2016 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, parents of children with autism and children. Throughout 2016, 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.

Enrichetta Centre opened on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays each week with a team of two Social Workers, a Family Learning Support specialist and a Volunteer to welcome visitors. The Foundation's Psychiatric Nurse undertook home visits with Social Workers whenever a family consultation was indicated.

Family Support

During 2016, 181 vulnerable individuals from 101 families from Birżebbuġa and Marsaxlokk benefitted from support interventions. These families accessed social work support, consultations with the Psychiatric Nurse, literacy assessments and tuition and assistance in accessing other services. Self-referrals and referrals by relatives increased as Ċentru Enrichetta became more known to residents. A total of 27 hours of street outreach work was carried out. Outreach meetings were also held with schools, the Local Council, and the Parish Diaconia Commission.

Ċentru Enrichetta supported 17 individuals from 8 families from neighbouring Marsaxlokk harbour town. These were identified through outreach, the school, the parish and self-referral.

Family Literacy Support

In 2016, discussions continued to be held with the Head of the local state Primary School in order to identify parents of struggling learners. These parents were subsequently enabled to

access one of 4 courses on literacy strategies to support their children's learning journey. This initiative is in line with the Foundation's philosophy of extending non-formal education opportunities to vulnerable parents in order to increase the chances of breaking the inherited cycle of vulnerability. In 2016, through 7 different courses, 41 identified parents were taught strategies that nurture and support their children's (and their own) educational journey. During the summer, literacy assessments of 31 young struggling learners were carried out with the participation of their parents or grandparents and literacy work undertaken with each of the children in the presence of their parents so as to ensure better learning outcomes during the new scholastic year.

Reaching parents of struggling learners through community primary schools and through Autism Parents' Association (APA)

Learning support courses for parents*	Start date	End date	Number of participants
English for parents of vulnerable children who attended the previous summer programme.	13 January	13 April	5
English for parents of Year 2 children identified by the Birżebbuġa Primary school as being at risk of educational failure.	3 February	20 April	4
English for parents of children in Years 1 and 2 identified by the Marsaxlokk Primary school as being at risk of educational failure.	18 May 2016	6 June 2016	6
Maltese and English for parents identified by the school, in Kinder 2.	26 April 2016	21 June 2016	7
English methodology for parents/guardians of children falling within the autistic spectrum referred by Autism Parents Association (APA).	20 July 2016	28 September 2016	9
English methodology for parents/guardians of children falling within the autistic spectrum referred by Autism Parents Association (APA).	30 November 2016	To continue up to February 2017	4
English for parents of children identified by the school as being at risk of educational failure in year 2.	6 December 2016	To continue up to March 2017	6
TOTAL participants			41

*Some courses take longer than planned due to the fact that when there are school holidays/parents days/school activities, sessions are postponed.

Collaboration with other organisations

As part of the day-to-day operations of Ċentru Enrichetta, collaborative relations were maintained with the Malta Community Chest Fund Foundation (MCCFF), the Birżebbuġa and

Marsaxlokk parishes, the Federation of organisations in Birżebbuġa, the local state primary school and other organisations.

During 2016, 15 meetings were held with the following entities to continue to strengthen relations built since 2014 as well as to re-inforce the family referral and support system:

- the Birżebbuġa Parish and its Diaconia Service volunteer team;
- Malta Community Chest Fund Foundation (MCCFF) which runs a branch at Ċentru Enrichetta to assist families needing to apply for MCCFF support schemes. During 2016, a total of 195 persons visited Ċentru Enrichetta to access MCCFF services.
- the Birżebbuġa state Primary School, St Benedict College;
- the Housing Authority;
- the Federazzjoni Għaqdiet Birżebbuġa (Federation of community-based organisations) – 3 meetings attended;
- the Żejtun District Social Security office and its sub-office in Birżebbuġa;
- the Marsaxlokk Parish.



SOAR Service

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

SOAR is a peer-to-peer support and advocacy service for female victims and survivors of intimate partner violence, offered by the St Jeanne Antide Foundation. It offers one-to-one support, a social support group, educational workshops and presentations, prevention workshops, research and publications. SOAR encourages its members to take an active role in advocating for social justice on behalf of victims and survivors less able to do so.

Women supported in 2016

By the end of 2016, the online support group had 70 active members. During 2016, SOAR received 53 new referrals overall and the average age of the survivors seeking support during the year was 41 years.

Maternal Alienation Sub-group

During 2016, a need was felt to set up a sub-group within the SOAR support group with a focus on Parental Alienation. It was becoming increasingly evident that parental alienation of the victim-parent was a concern for some in the group who were experiencing it. The group has 5 members. It was then decided that the focus of the group should be squarely on the Maternal Alienation experienced by survivors of domestic violence. This is not to say that alienation does not happen to fathers too, it does. However, motherhood is a very gendered social construct that places particularly high and different expectations on the female parent. Social and cultural sanctions are imposed on the 'bad mother'. Therefore, the implications of alienation upon the survivor-mother are not only those of continued violence and emotional loss, but alienated survivor-mothers experience a much shame and find themselves having to explain and convince those around them of the alienation and violence they are experiencing. This is highly stressful and upsetting to the alienated mother who is already in great pain.

The Maternal Alienation sub-group is tasked with taking initiative on raising awareness on this hidden form of domestic violence and the ultimate form of hate crime. (See two articles in Appendix 1).

Training and Workshops

During 2016, SOAR has set up and facilitated 23 educational training sessions, workshops or presentations, reaching a total of 1,068 persons. SOAR's work in schools and youth groups is largely in collaboration with Men Against Violence (MAV). During 2016, MAV became partners in a St Jeanne Antide Foundation project titled *A Package of Outreach Services for Social Wellbeing* funded by the Voluntary Organisations Project Scheme (VOPs) of the Ministry for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties which is managed by the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector (MCVS). SOAR and MAV have researched and used educational tools to design and implement workshops on prevention of dating violence. Professional resources and learning

tools for violence prevention workshops were purchased from overseas from the UK (Tender) and the U.S. (Mentors in Violence Prevention). Others were obtained online where these were available (GEAR). Subsequently, different types of age-appropriate workshops were designed around them, with adaptation for the local scenario. This project comes to an end in April 2017, targeting over 2,000 young persons.

Training accessed

SOAR team members received continuing professional development (CPD) training and attended seminars and conferences on 10 occasions:

Understanding some of the problems in the systems that provide family support	22/1/16
Forum on Sexual Violence in Conflict and Beyond	28/3/16
Commission on Domestic Violence Conference – Domestic Violence and Children	30/3/16
Training by Dr Michael Flood on Engaging Men	3-5/4/16
Human Resources Training: Meetings and Leadership	16/4/16
Self-reflective Writing for professionals by Dr Jeannie Wright (organised by SJAF)	27/6/16
Conference on the Implementation of the Istanbul Convention (and proposed changes in the law).	
Beginners' First Aid Course organised by SJAF.	7-9/11/16
Conference organised by the Commission on Domestic Violence on Violence against Women and Domestic Violence: Everybody's business.	23/11/16
Training on Engaging victims of domestic violence in working with children who have witnessed traumatic events.	5-7/12/16

Media participation - TV and radio

SOAR has participated in awareness-raising TV appearances and radio shows 6 times during 2016:

1	Radju Santa Katarina – Breakfast Show	15/1/16
2	Net TV – Elle	29/2/16
3	TVM 2 – Qalb In-Nies	10/5/16
4	Radio 101 – Opportunitajiet Indaqs	6/8/16
5	Radju Hompesch – Bejn Erbgħa Hitan	25/8/16
6	Radju Hompesch – Bejn Erbgħa Hitan	22/9/16

Networking and collaboration

SOAR staff have participated in 25 networking meetings with other NGOs and NGO networks, state agencies, commissions, institutions, and The Malta Police Force. SOAR often collaborates with Men Against Violence, Women's



Rights Foundation, Victim Support Malta, Merħba Bik Foundation, Dar Qalb ta' Ġesu, the Domestic Violence Services (DVS) of Aġenzija Appoġġ and the Commission on Domestic Violence, among others. SOAR represents the Foundation in a number of fora and participates in informal alliances. These include the Platform of Human Rights Organisations in Malta (PHRO); the NGO network under the aegis of the Commission on Domestic Violence; and the DV Shelters Network.

Art Therapy

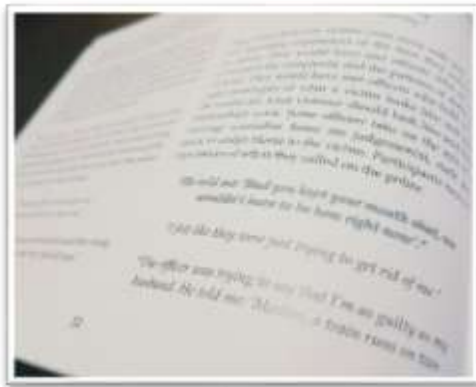
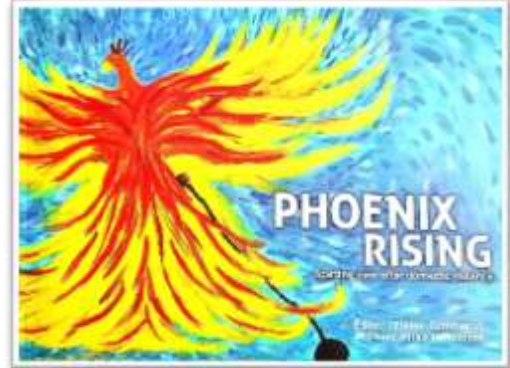
During the second phase of the project *My Survival, My Experience*, 8 survivors participated in 10 sessions of Art Therapy, facilitated by an Art Therapist engaged for this purpose. With the permission of the participants, some of the art that emerged from the art therapy sessions was used to illustrate the book *Phoenix Rising – starting over after domestic violence*. The book brings together survivors' experiences of systemic oppression and re-victimisation and is used as a tool for advocacy and awareness raising.



Publication - Phoenix Rising: starting over after domestic violence

The end product and final action of the project *My Survival, My Experience* funded by The President's Award for Creativity 2015 which is managed by Arts Council Malta was the publication of the book *Phoenix Rising*. This is a distinctive book about the journey of surviving domestic violence, as told by survivors themselves.

The nine (9) chapters in the book immerse readers in the turbulent world of violence, manipulation, desperation and struggle. It is a showcase of the incredible courage of survivors and their undying determination to overcome systemic obstacles and so as to live a life of dignity, free of violence.



The chapters include five (5) papers from qualitative insider-research carried out by SOAR involving 22 in-depth interviews and 15 focus group meetings. The papers explore the collective experience of surviving domestic violence and discuss common themes such as experiences at the police station, experiences at the Courts of law, becoming homeless, the effects of financial violence, mediation and separation. The final chapter includes 37 policy recommendations that emerged from the SOAR National Conference held in December 2015.

Create, Liberate, Integrate!

During November 2016, SOAR launched a new project titled *Create, Liberate, Integrate!* which received funding support from the the Arts Council Malta which manages the annual President's Award for Creativity.

The project is being implemented over the span of 12 months. The creative skill sharing project will involve diverse marginalised women, including migrant women and third country nationals, who are survivors of gender-based violence, and their teenage or young children. The project will consist of a number of therapeutic short programmes based on creativity and skill sharing with the aim of creating a safe space where diverse women and children can connect for healing, integration, improved interpersonal relationships between mother and child and exploration of one's creativity.



Participants will be empowered to learn new skills by which they may find new ways of self expression. Through the project, diverse women will connect and network with each other, learn team building skills, presentation skills and have the opportunity to share their creative artistic skills and culture with other women in

the group.

These are some of the images that emerged from the photography session, the first activity of the project.



SOAR Service – survival of abuse with resilience

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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 care responsibility. This service comprises office-based family consultations via different service sites, home-visits, social work support, support groups, educational literature in Maltese, and liaison with mental health practitioners, mediation with employers and educational establishments and in-house referrals to the Emotional Freedom Service.

Broad Aims and specific objectives of the LWIEN Service

Broad aims:

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

More specifically:

3. To prevent caregiver burnout, depression, job loss and family break-up.
4. 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.
5. To model an interdisciplinary practice at community level.

The Service

As is evidenced by SJAF practice and EUFAMI research, 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 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.

Throughout 2016, the schedule of thrice-weekly family consultations was maintained on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 7am to 4pm. The Saturday family consultations were held at the Ħaż-Żabbar premises of the Sisters of St Joseph. On other days, the Foundation's Psychiatric Nurse provided guidance and support to caregiving families from the North at an Iklin Parish premises.

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.

Caregiving families supported in 2016

In 2016, the Lwien Service provided intense support to:

Open cases from previous years	New families referred in 2016	Individuals	Males	Females
70 individuals from 50 families	125	222	72	150
Cases closed in 2016:		81		

One-hour sessions held with families (with both new and older cases):	1,404
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Types of mental illnesses suffered by family members cared for by new families reached in 2016 (new cases only)

Depression	59	
Bi-polar disorder	6	
Schizophrenia	22	
Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD)	20	
Paranoia	6	
Personality disorders	17	Of which, Borderline PD=8; Schizoid PD=1; Dependent PD=3; Narcissim=11; Sociopathy=1)
Addictions	14	
Anxiety & panic attacks	12	
Defiant behaviour	1	
Dementia	5	
Munchhausen by proxy	1	
Severe intellectual disability	7	Of which: autism=4; AD(H)D=2; Dyslexia=1
Anxiety & panic attacks	20	Of which, 8 were victims of domestic violence
Grief due to suicide of family member	6	
Referred for psychiatric evaluation	8	
Mental illnesses suffered by those cared-for	204	

Summary LWIEN caseload of part-time Senior Practitioner (Psychiatric Nurse) in 2016:

	Families	Individuals
Families still supported from previous years	50	71
2016 new referrals	125	222
TOTAL	175	293

Effective liaison with the mental health system

Maintaining effective links with the 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 2016. Liaison with mental health services for sufferers was maintained to maximise positive outcomes for the families involved.

LWIEN Service wins a national EPALE Award in 2016

EPALE stands for Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe (EPALE) amongst adult learning stakeholders in Malta.

On the 20th October 2016, the St Jeanne Antide Foundation was awarded the Malta 2016 EPALE award for the best *Innovative Adult Learning Project* in Malta. The 2016 EPALE Awards were launched by the Directorate for Lifelong Learning and Early School Leavers within the Ministry for Education and Employment. The SJAF award was for its LWIEN Service which adopts an informal and non-formal adult learning process aimed at caregivers of mentally ill persons. Through a combination of adult learning approaches, caregivers helped by the LWIEN Service are empowered to be more effective informal carers without breaking down emotionally and psychologically.

The LWIEN Service was judged to be learner-centred, flexible, accessible and relevant to the overwhelming daily reality lived by family caregivers who, without such support, would end up chronically depressed and facing problems of their own. The service approach is considered to be innovative in that it addresses all the issues that this hidden reality presents such as the need to understand the mental illness suffered by a family member and the need for support to encourage the ill relative to access psychiatric evaluation, treatment and care if they have been resisting it.

The Malta EPALE awards are meant to ensure that the development of EPALE is relevant to the specific needs and circumstances of the Maltese adult learning community. During the award event, representatives of the Directorate stated that it envisaged that these awards will be held bi-annually, to celebrate adult learning practices within the Maltese context that demonstrate the use of creative and inclusive learning methods that achieve outstanding results, with the potential to be replicated and/or of inspiration to others.

The LWIEN Service approach involves the following informal and non-formal adult learning processes:

(1) *Learning about the relative's mental illness and how to provide care more effectively:* Access to personal guidance through office-based sessions focusing on the nature of the illness suffered by one's relative; the medication and its side-effects; symptoms of relapse and how to prevent these through effective communication with the ill relative; information about other services offered by the state and other NGOs; mediation with the employer of the ill relative to prevent job loss; and referral to self-help books published by the Foundation for Caregivers.

(2) *Support Group:* Caregivers have the opportunity to participate in a 10-session (90 minutes per session) Support Group which combines a presentation on different topics with a discussion of it. The content includes self-care, medications and their effects, relapse prevention, support services in existence, relaxation techniques, welfare benefits for the ill relative, the

impact of caregiving on the family, impact of the caregiving by a parent on the siblings. The main teaching and learning tool used is the Experiential Learning Model combined with facilitated dialogue and suggested reading and access to other learning opportunities. During the support group, the facilitator invites an external resource person from the Directorate for Social Security to dialogue with participants on the many issues they need to discuss about welfare benefits for their mentally ill family member. This dialogue enables them to obtain accurate information which they lacked or previously misunderstood. In 2016, 2 such support groups were held at the Foundation's Ċentru Antida in Tarxien. One of them was specifically commissioned by the Mental Health Association for its caregiver members.

(3) *Courses*: Support Group participants are referred to two other courses: (a) the annual Caregivers Empowerment Course run by the Mental Health Association (Malta) for learning reinforcement; and (b) an online MOOC course designed by EUFAMI (the European Association of Families of Mentally Ill Persons) and Leuven University called Caring for people with psychosis & schizophrenia and delivered by Dr Juliana Onwumere Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience King's College, London.

(4) *Literature in Maltese*: Family caregivers seeking support are also encouraged to read: (a) two books in the Maltese language published by the Mental Health Association and the Foundation for caregivers of mentally ill persons. These are entitled: *Il-Kwiekeb fid-Dalm Jixegħlu - vjaġġi ta' tama mterrqa minn qraba ta' persuni b'mard mentali* (an-ebook version of this book in English is also available online www.antidemalta.org); and *Bdoti fil-Maltemp - kif tiegħu ħsieb qarib b'mard mentali* (each chapter deals with a mental illness and tips for caregivers. (b) Moreover, through the Foundation's monthly electronic magazine called SJAF e-Magazine (accessible online since 2007: www.antidemalta.org), caregivers can access articles on mental health issues.



Dar Hosea

in support of vulnerable women involved in street prostitution

Dar Hosea is a day centre providing a space where women can easily access support while exploring, with dignity, alternatives that are open to other citizens. Women involved in street prostitution come to the attention of mainstream service providers for reasons other than prostitution. These reasons include long-term drug abuse, criminal acts such as stealing, and child neglect. Prostitution is not a primary focus of support of existing key service providers.

Dar Hosea looks at women trapped in a life of street-based prostitution as victims of gender-based violence. Identified women are welcomed to the centre, treated with respect and unconditional loving-kindness and offered a range of supports that meet their expressed unmet needs. Whenever possible, women are helped to bridge fractured relations with relatives and accompanied in their difficult journey to gain a measure of independence, dignity and self-determination.

Dar Hosea has a welcoming milieu. For the women who drop by, it provides a unique safe emotional and psychological space where they can access support that enable them to meet their basic needs, social work, accompaniment, non-formal education, medical screening for sexually transmitted infections, sexual health education and make plans that enable them to move forward in life with dignity.

In 2016, Dar Hosea had a team of 18 workers whose roles ranged from Social Support Work roster duties (12 volunteers and 3 part-timers), a Manager, a pro bono medical doctor who is a sexual health expert and member of the Dar Hosea management committee, and a Social Worker who was available on Wednesdays.

Dar Hosea is managed by a social worker who is mentored and guided by the service sexual health expert. Being the most experienced professional in the service team, she holds a vital leadership, mentoring and practitioner roles which include running of the Thursday STI screening and sexual health educational sessions for service users, participating in the Dar Hosea management team meetings, guiding Manager and the Social Support Workers.

In support of Dar Hosea processes, the Foundation runs weekly women's outreach sessions in prison which focus on handicrafts making as a therapeutic and educational tool. This initiative has become very popular among the female participants.

Target group

The target group of Dar Hosea are vulnerable women involved in street prostitution who have complex underlying issues, lead chaotic lifestyles and face other difficulties that such circumstances present. At the core of their vulnerability to coercion, exploitation and inducement to become involved in prostitution are childhood sexual abuse, the tendency to enter relationships with abusive men, the habit of self-medication with illegal substances so as to cope with their harsh, risky and violent reality, serious health problems, and mental health problems. Some show signs of cognitive and social impairment and many are in conflict with the law; some are repeat offenders. A significant number are controlled by pimps or partners having drug related problems which women end up funding and sustaining through their involvement in prostitution.

While prostitution in Malta is not a crime, loitering is. The most vulnerable and poor amongst women involved in prostitution are the ones who operate from the streets. Given their visibility in offering their services, they are prone to frequent arrests and imprisonment. This vicious cycle renders their chances of improving their situation more remote.

Women are reached through a number of approaches which include liaison with service providers and practitioners across key sectors in order to stimulate referrals and word-of-mouth promotion by service users themselves.

Service elements

Throughout 2016, the Foundation continued to strengthen and consolidate the Dar Hosea operations which continued to provide three tiers of support:

Level 1: meeting women's basic needs for food, clothing, rest space, personal health and hygiene, being treated with respect and love. Dar Hosea is a very welcoming house which provides a quiet and peaceful space that highly contrasts with the harsh reality of working in the streets with all the risks that it involves. During 2016, the Centre was open daily on weekdays from 10am to 4pm and occasionally on Saturdays as well.

Level 2: access to social work support, accompaniment to key appointments when required, in-kind support such as clothing, food items and furniture when accommodation is found, and access to lifelong learning opportunities provided by the Foundation itself and by other providers. *Level 2* support is provided by a team of Social Support Workers most of whom provide their services on a voluntary basis, and Social Workers. At Dar Hosea arts and crafts are practised and a small library is available. Work with women's families is also undertaken to help mend relations.

Level 3: access to sexual health education and screening for sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Level 3 services are provided by a medical doctor who is specialised in sexual health and addictions services who provides her services on a pro bono basis. This specialist is available for service users on Thursdays for STI screening and sexual health education sessions and liaises with the health sector for processing of medical tests.

Support to women who accessed the services of Dar Hosea in 2016

In 2016, the Social Worker managing Dar Hosea brought forward 23 cases of service users from the previous year and accepted 11 new ones. She also supported 22 relatives of service users; carried out 62 home visits; held 184 office-based support sessions; and participated in 12 case conferences. An analysis of women's drop-ins at Dar Hosea between January and December 2016 indicates that 25 women dropped in 734 times. The highest number was in February (106); the lowest in December (32). One woman who was a regular made use of the day centre facilities and services for 1,175 hours during the year. Among the other service users, 5 women spent 300, 259, 247, 197, 183 hours at Dar Hosea.

Medical aspects of the service

The pro-bono doctor specialising in sexual health and addictions who is also a member of the Dar Hosea Management Committee provided the following voluntary service during 2016:

- Mentoring the Dar Hosea Manager and guiding her regarding case management approaches and issues;
- 14 medical examinations for sexually transmitted infections (STIs); women accessing this service at Dar Hosea also accessed follow-up sessions to discuss results and to discuss follow-up after treatment.
- 20 general medical check-ups for women;
- Group-based training for volunteers on STIs and other infectious diseases.

Social Impact Award 2016

In late 2016, Dar Hosea was awarded the Social Impact Award 2016 and provided a grant covering the full operational costs for the following year – 2017. The Social Impact Awards (SIA) initiative was introduced and launched in Malta by the Inspirasia Foundation and the Gasan Foundation in 2016. SIA brings companies and philanthropists together to offer opportunities for organisations to receive financial and non-financial support to create a project that will have a positive social impact on Malta.



Emotional Freedom Service

learning to release negative emotions

The Foundation continued, during 2016, to offer a holistic service of liberation and self-empowerment for persons who wished to release emotional distress, even long-standing distress. In most cases these persons feel themselves under the influence of anger, fear, phobias, emotional hurt from somebody else's actions, a past trauma, excessive self-criticism or self-sabotage, difficulty in forgiving self or others, inability to be happy, and so on. Such conditions expose a person to unhappiness, stress, bad relationships, and psychosomatic illnesses. Most persons obtain freedom from such conditions after a couple of sessions, and remain happier and with a sense of mastery. For example, several cases included tested post-traumatic stress disorder, and the PTSD was removed within 1-3 weeks. Most phobias worked upon were removed or greatly diminished.

Statistics for 2016

Each case required on average 2.2 one-to-one sessions. Each session lasted, on average, 2.18 hours. On average, 4.8 contact-hours were invested in each case. In 2016, 54 different individuals were supported by this service. During the year, 111 office-based sessions were held, and 11 home-visits or Skype sessions. Some cases were later passed to mental health professionals or to social workers. 3 cases remained open at the end of 2016.

The friendly and compassionate service is bound by a code of ethics including confidentiality. It is delivered free of charge on a voluntary basis by an accredited, certified, registered, supervised advanced emotional freedom practitioner. The service is delivered in collaboration with other services of the Foundation, especially the LWIEN service of support for family caregivers of persons with mental illness, the Social Work service, and the SOAR service for survivors of domestic violence.

Anybody may make use of the Emotional Freedom Service free of charge, by appointment, on a one-to-one basis. Persons must have willingness – persons applying under duress, or as part of a bargain with spouse or employer, cannot be accepted as the methods used will not work with them. The success rate is very high compared to other therapies for emotionally distressed persons. Appointments with individuals for the Emotional Freedom Service may be made directly with the practitioner (mob 79326725, SMS only), or through any social worker of the Foundation. Requests by institutions for non-obligatory, half-day workshops for personnel on managing emotional distress are favourably considered.

Several special methods are used, usually successfully, with persons willing to work to release themselves rapidly and often permanently from their emotional distress. An outline of these methods is available in an Information Paper for Professionals on the website of the Foundation. The service is not aimed at persons with mental illness. Persons with mental illness, if previously diagnosed, may make use of this service on the advice of a psychiatric professional, or through a referral from the LWIEN service. Sessions are conducted at Tarxien, though home

visits may be arranged where necessary, and it is even possible to do the work through Skype instead of office visits.

The self-empowerment aspect of the service takes place as follows. Most of the methods used in the sessions can be used by the service users themselves in their home, place of work, etc., and so they can apply the same methods to any new types of emotional distress that may arise. Secondly, other methods are imparted to them to increase their future resilience against being carried away by any kind of emotional distress. Thirdly, those who are comfortable with reading for self-help may be given written materials and work-sheets – some in Maltese but mostly in English – on topics such as the following:

Abandonment	Headaches	Serious diseases
Abreactions	Indecisiveness re Life, Job, etc	Shame
Abuse	Inner Child's unresolved emotions	Stress & Burnout
Anger	Insomnia	Stress re Exams
Anxiety Stress Panic	Jealousy	TRAUMA, PTSD
Asperger	Judgmentalism	
Beliefs, negative - Collapsing limiting beliefs	Limiting beliefs about self	Relating to Self
Bereavement	Loneliness	<i>Beliefs, negative - Collapsing limiting beliefs</i>
Betrayal	Negative Moods,	<i>Cultivate self-compassion</i>
Bullying	living with Negative People	<i>Forgiving Yourself</i>
Challenges, Adversity , Tragedies, Pain	Negative Thinking,	<i>I am not good enough</i>
Childhood: Adverse	Neg Emotional Patterns	<i>I Do Not Deserve</i>
Childhood Experiences (ACE)	Nightmares	<i>I need to feel bad</i>
Codependency	Nonforgiveness	<i>Negative Self-Talk, Negative Beliefs</i>
Crime victims distress	Numb emotions on memories	<i>Self in cases of Childhood Abuse</i>
Depression, Sadness	Pain, Physical	<i>Self Sabotage & Procrastination</i>
Disappointment	Panic, Panic attacks	<i>Self-Acceptance Affirmations</i>
Emotion Dysregulation	Perfectionism	<i>Self-Concept scale</i>
Emotional Pain, recovering from	Performance	<i>Self-Esteem</i>
Fatigue	Phobias	<i>Self-harm</i>
Fear & Phobias	Psychosomatic conditions incl pain	<i>Self-Judgment, Self-Criticism</i>
Fibromyalgia	Rejection	<i>Self-Pity</i>
Grief	Relapsing	<i>Self-Worth</i>
Guilt	Relationship Fears	<i>Worry about what others think about me</i>
	School Issues	

Comments from some users of the Emotional Freedom Service in 2016

(Names have been changed)

CARMEN: *"I started practicing today as advised from Welcome Method to Tapping. I am also going through the book you gave me so that I can find ways to calm down and relax."*

DANNY: *"Feeling good. Today afternoon was a bit dark but only for a short time perhaps just over an hour. [My inner child's] voice comes a lot in mind :). I recognize him [now]."*

JULIA: *"I've missed our sessions as you make them fun as well as healing. Our first session on unworthiness I believe did truly dissolve my "story." I continue to feel the effect. If we were to do another, I think I still have issues on working with male authority figures, and along with 99% of the world probably, worry about change. [Later:] I don't know if I even thanked you after our sessions. Each one helps me see my inner child more clearly and see where my lack of confidence comes from. My ups and downs with grief complicate things but I'm trying to just realize that it will pass to some extent and even out to more gentle waves. I'm so grateful to you."*

EMMA: *"Thank you for the information. The more I read and reflect on what I am learning, the more I understand what's happening and what has been happening...I had known about the term of codependency, but it's after I started doing the tapping techniques, and after being asked*

certain questions in our sessions, is when I became open to a good understanding of it and how it applies to me.”

JACKIE: “Now after I am healing and coming to terms with the harm that he caused on me I felt anger..... But now I am slowly letting go of that anger... Hm actually even words that my boyfriend uses that used to trigger panicked feelings no longer have that effect on me. Also, I am becoming much more flexible in the relationship! I am also keeping a journal where I talk in the 3rd person to learn how to be the observer of my emotions and beliefs. Example when I feel insecure I write “Insecure Jackie” which is operating from fear arising out of the past trauma of having been abandoned.”

SYLVIA: Several months after the sessions she wrote: “The work we did in our sessions with the little [inner] girl who was afraid of her power over her mother, who was angry about having to take care of herself and her mother, that work paved the way, or opened the way, for me to be able to let go of the facial pain and subsequently other issues that arise along the way. I have learned about surrender with my whole being. I feel transformed. Something lasting has happened. I live in a totally different state than I did before our sessions. I have a sense that all will be well. The immediate emotional healing has led to growth in other areas of my life. There is a long term lifting of depression, a greater sense of wellbeing, and the energy to reach out to others who are in emotional distress without losing my own stability. I am able to tolerate difficult things in my life without sinking. I don't think it was solely due to our sessions. But our sessions were pivotal. I am deeply grateful.”



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 Ćentru Antida and Ćentru Enrichetta Family Resource Centres as well as with a specialised service such as LWIEN (mental health), IRENE (women involved in prostitution) and SOAR (female victims and survivors of domestic violence and survivors). The team of practitioners meets monthly to review work outcomes, share developments 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 2016

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

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

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

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

Locality of residence of 397 families referred in 2016

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

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

New cases of vulnerable families supported between 2007 and 2016

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

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

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

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

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

Family Learning Support (FLS) Programme:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Learning Support at the Antide Centre

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

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

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

Other support resource tools for Social Workers

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Volunteering at the Foundation

opportunities for active citizenship

Volunteering is a cornerstone of the Foundation's mission. The Foundation encourages and nurtures volunteering within its range of service provision, in line with three of the Foundation's key 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 of young people who would like to offer time and energy at the service of others in order to gain experience and insight.

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.

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 2016 there were a total of 124 active volunteers involved in one or more spheres of service provision. The highest number were Learning Support Volunteer Tutors and Mentors (37) working within the Family Learning Support Service that comprises the children's learning support, non-formal education for parents and Mentoring. Of the 124 volunteers, 42 (34%) discontinued their involvement in 2016 for a number of personal reasons.

Below is statistical data about volunteering at the Foundation during 2016. Not included in the statistical data are students on a practice placement with the Foundation.

2016 Statistical data

124 Volunteer in 2016: their roles and number:

Roles	No. of active volunteers & %
Learning Support Tutors and Mentors	37 or 30%
Handicrafts making/ teaching	21 or 17%
Support to Social Work service	17 or 14%
Dar Hosea volunteers	13 or 11%
Reception work at Centru Antida Family Centre	11 or 9%
Governance	9 or 7%
Support to administration	8 or 6%
SOAR Service	4 or 3%
Handymen	3 or 2%
Overseas Development Projects	1 or 1%
TOTAL	124 100%

Ages of the 124 volunteers

Age bracket	No.	% of total
Up to 20	11	9%
20-29	7	6%
30-39	7	6%
40-49	13	10%
50-59	23	19%
60+	63	50%

Volunteers discontinuing or remaining in 2016:

Discontinued at some point in 2016	Volunteers still active at the end of 2016	Total volunteers who worked at any time during 2016
37	87	124

Overview of volunteers during 2016 by gender:

Females	Males	Volunteers who worked at any time during 2016
105 (85%)	19 (15%)	124 (100%)

Overview of volunteers during 2016 by regular vs occasional work:

Regular	Occasional involvement	Volunteers who worked at any time during 2016
112 (90%)	12 (10%)	124 (100%)



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 SJAF overseas partners in developing countries. Following the start of the project, the ODA team 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 2016, SJAF obtained funding for a women's entrepreneurship training for economic empowerment in Chinunkha, Malawi.

All project funding to date has been obtained from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Malta.



Publications

writing for empowerment

SJAF publications may be obtained from the Foundation's - 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 tieħu 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.

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.

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 2015 – 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.



APPENDIX 1

Maternal Alienation – a hidden reality focused upon by SOAR Service in 2016

Maternal alienation is the process and the result of the psychological manipulation of a child into displaying unjustified fear, contempt or resentment towards a parent. This may sometimes happen when two parents are going through a difficult separation. However, when domestic violence has been present, the manipulation on the child would have started years before the actual physical separation and consists of small instances of manipulation over a long period of time. In this case, parent alienation happens on the victim parent, who is more commonly the mother, and is used as an extension of the violence upon her. The children are used as proxies, as if the violence was a rubber ball thrown by the abuser, bouncing off the children and flying towards the victim parent.

“The father was constantly undermining me – with my child constantly watching him commit character assassination upon me, constantly running me down, and claiming I am incapable of doing anything right.”

Children caught up in this form of abuse will be encouraged to verbally and physically hurt the victim parent. They may also describe the victim parent using ‘grown-up words’.

“My daughter, barely knowing how to put a whole sentence together, used to call me ‘frigid’.” When children are put under this pressure to extend the perpetrator’s violence onto the victim parent, they feel enormous guilt afterwards. The manipulation does not only result in abuse on the mother, but it also is psychologically abusive on the child.

“My child told me ‘When I’m with daddy, it’s like he puts a spell on me and I want to be mean to you, and I like being mean to you and afterwards I feel so bad’.”

“My child didn’t have a father, and she needed her father so much, now that he’s in her life, she craves his approval – so she does what she thinks her father wants her to do.”

Parental alienation is not only an attempt to keep the child away from the other parent, but it is a form of manipulation of the child’s memory and their image of the victim parent; a complete erasure of the victim parent’s identity.

“It’s not just me that is blocked from my child, but everything that is related to me. It could be a sport I encouraged her to do, or a place I liked to take her to.”

No matter what the victim parent does to try and mend the links with her child, the abusive parent always finds a way of breaking those attempts down.

“When I buy her something he tells her ‘mummy is trying to buy you’, and when I don’t he tells her ‘mummy doesn’t care about you’.”

“He sees her as a prize, and he is winning and I am losing. She would say, ‘You lost me’, like she is a prize. But she is not a prize, she is my daughter. “

The victim parent is forced to make painful and difficult decisions in the better interest of their child. Even though it is best for a victim of domestic violence to distance herself from her abuser, alienated mothers must painfully remain in contact and on good terms with their abuser. This exposes the mother to more abuse.

“I try to have a good relationship with my abuser because he is the only link to my children.”

“When she was with me, she was under so much pressure to hate and denigrate me and you don’t understand it at the time. Why is my child being so mean, so cruel to me? But she’s under so much pressure, she would feel guilty if we were having a good time together. Now that she’s with her father and lost contact with me, she has no pressure.”

It’s difficult not to be moved by the sense of loss and grief that an alienated parent experiences.

"I don't recognise my child, how awful is that when you don't recognise your own child? It's absolutely awful."

"Not seeing her grow up and it's irreplaceable. You're missing out and it can't come back."

"When I go to buy Christmas presents, I don't know what they like anymore. I just don't know."

The alienated parent is left in an emotional and legal strait jacket as she tries to walk the tight rope between claiming her parental and visitation rights and staying away so as not to cause further distress to their child.

"It's important never to blame the children for it and to let them know the door is always open."

"I eventually stopped seeing them because I felt that forcing them to be with me was worse than not seeing me."

"I send emails to her very often, even if she doesn't read them."

"I write a diary to help myself process and let go. Maybe one day it will be a tool to document everything that has happened. Maybe one day she can read it and know that I did not abandon her."



A PERSONAL TESTIMONY FROM A SOAR SERVICE MEMBER (name changed)

Maternal alienation - a mother's worst nightmare

by Maria, SOAR Member

The term ' Maternal Alienation ' was coined by Australian researcher Anne Marris. The term refers to the alienation of children from their mother within the context of Domestic Violence. Manipulation, brainwashing and constant character assassination of the mother are tactics consciously resorted to by the father to separate the child from the mother.

My children were always my greatest treasure. I always thought the worst thing that could happen to a mother was to lose one of her children through death. Little did I know that I myself would one day grieve a son who is still alive.

I endured years of emotional and verbal abuse till one day I decided that I could no longer endure this behaviour that pounded my soul to powder. My children were growing in an unhealthy home environment which was causing them much stress and pain. I decided to start marriage separation proceedings. It was this point that my husband started to systematically brainwash and manipulate our children to hit back at me for daring to leave him. He started to manipulate my eldest with whom I had a very special bond. My son started to change. Gradually, he turned against me.

The situation at home had by then become unbearable. My two younger children urged me to leave as they could not take it any longer. I had no option but to leave the matrimonial home leaving my eldest behind as he did not want to come with us. My eldest son's last words before we left home were those that his father had drummed into his mind. Even then, his true self burst out and he asked me whether I still loved him. I told him that I did with all my heart, forever. That was the last time my son spoke to me. Eventually, he started using the same heart-numbing abusive language his father always addressed me with.

From then on my son refused all contact with me. I tried and still try to send messages; they remain unanswered. Gifts for special occasions are refused and returned. Eventually, I was told to refrain from sending any more. My son is constantly used to hurt me. Especially in court, where he has been a witness against me on several occasions, there was one time where he accused me of trying to physically

harm and threaten him. This was the worst ever day of my life. It was very traumatic for me to hear my own son speak about me in such an untruthful and resentful manner when he practically accused me of being a monster. There are days when I cannot take my son's rejection and hatred. However, deep inside of me, I still believe in the boy I raised with so much love.

My husband tried hard too to turn my youngest against me by constantly badmouthing me. For several years, I endured the effects of lies of physical abuse and neglect of my children. But my determination and strong belief in the truth paid off. I was cleared of all these allegations and, after struggling endlessly to prove my husband was harming my youngest emotionally, I was finally proven right and measures were taken to secure my son's safety from psychological harm.

No child should ever have to endure all this. Children should be loved, cherished, nurtured and protected and not used and abused just to spite the other parent. I am doing my best to instill the values of love and respect in my children. I strongly believe that the values we are nurtured to believe in and practice in our families build up our character and give us a strength no one can take away. In the early days, I promised myself that I would not end up with a broken marriage and separation, that I would never become bitter or let hatred be my driver.

Despite everything, today I can honestly say I was true to my word. I am angry and very hurt, but all along in my now 8 year separation, I have fought my husband with nothing except the truth. It wasn't the easy way but the best. It has been a long road but gradually things are getting better. Along the way I have become stronger and wiser. My daughter, who was strong enough to stand up to her father, was totally rejected by him; he has never tried to contact her or reach out to her.

I long for my eldest to be reunited with us all. He has been completely isolated from all those who love him and long to hug him. I especially years to hear him call my name, especially on special occasions when I miss him even more.

When asked to describe how I feel I about my situation, I always reply that it feels as if part of my body is missing, that it has been renched away. Even if I really long to have my son back, my greatest wish is that one day he will be strong enough to set himself free from his father's control. Inside my heart I do believe my son is not happy and that is what hurts me the most. I will never give up on him; he is part of me and I can never rest till I know he is happy and free.

I beg young women to open their eyes and never accept a relationship where abuse is present. If your partner shows signs of being extremely jealous, possessive and controlling, or that with every argument he blows into a rage, do not accept it. These traits can only change for the worse. Love yourself enough to never accept being disrespected. I would never wish on anyone the high price I had to pay for believing my husband would one day change for the better. Seek help if you think you are in an abusive relationship as the consequences of staying are too much to endure and live with. Love should never hurt. Each and every one of us deserves to be cherished and loved.

