ISSUE 42-MARCH 2022



Foreword

March is synonymous with the opening of the Skolasajf applications, and these were in fact successfully launched by the Hon. Minister for Education and Sports, Dr Clifton Grima. The event was also the perfect setting to reveal the Skolasajf 2022 logo. The design was chosen following the fourth edition of the Skolasajf Logo Competition.

The Skolasajf registrations period marks the middle of an eight months preparation process for the commencement of the Skolasajf service in July. Currently, all the FES Head Office departments are striving to meet ongoing deadlines. Recruitment is in full swing, and this newsletter guides any prospective applicants about the various job opportunities on offer. This year, the work includes also the preparations to start offering the Skolasajf service in the Resource Centres, over the span of five days per week.

The past month was also important for the staff of the FES childcare centres, as they attended the first of the bi-annual seminars. This training empowers staff with skills and knowledge, that are crucial to deliver their service within the childcare setting. Early childhood educators not only need to understand the science of child development, but must also be armed with practical skills that enable them to interact with the children in their care. They also have to observe the children and evaluate their own work, to be able to support the learning.

The following pages also offer further insight into the work that goes on in our Klabb 3-16 Centres, as we meet two of our Klabb 3-16 employees, and also read about one of the activities carried out with the children.

The newsletter is packed, and with good reason!

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The Launch of the Skolasajf Applications

The opening of the Skolasajf 2022 applications was launched at the beginning oF March 2022 at the Pembroke Primary School, by the then Minister for Education and Sport, Dr Clifton Grima. The theme for Skolasajf 2022 was also launched; with the slogan 'Earth Heroes, Unite!', it represents a call for everyone to unite to work in favour of the environment.



Present for the short ceremony were also the FES Chairperson, Ms Pamela Schembri, the FES CEO Mr Michael Bondin, the College Principal Mr Jonathan Attard, and the Head of School Ms Alexandra Farrugia.

Minister Grima was welcomed at the school by the students with a speech and a song. Minister Grima thanked FES for its services and for the synergy with the colleges, producing a cooperation that helped the whole family in the growth and upbringing of the children.

Skolasajf is offered in around 58 localities, five of which are Resource Centres. The FES CEO Mr Michael Bondin announced that as of this year, for the first time, the service in these centres will be offered five days a week, instead of over a 3-day period as was offered in the past years. This is another step to offer a better service and that also makes it more possible for parents to manage their work commitments.

The logo for Skolasajf 2022 was also launched during the event. The logo is based on the winning design submitted by a 9-year-old student, Naielle Formosa Cumbo who attends the Imsida Primary School. The winner was presented with her prize by Minister Clifton Grima. The prizes for Skolasajf were kindly sponsored by Copyclub Live.

More information about this event can be found at https://fes.gov.mt/en/Pages/News/

Skolasajf Applications 2022.aspx

The Skolasajf Logo Competition







The fourth edition of the Skolasajf 2022 Logo Competition came to a close at the end of January 2022, and choosing the winning entry was not an easy task. Participation was once again very positive and the creative response to the slogan 'Earth Heroes, Unite!' was indeed an encouraging confirmation that even young children understand the need to care for our natural environment.

The competition was kindly sponsored by Copyclub Live, with vouchers for the three top placed entries.



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Top Left: The digital design of the winning entry for the Skolasajf 2022 Logo

Middle Left :Hon Minister Dr Clifton Grima presenting the 1st Prize (€100 voucher) to Naielle Formosa Cumbo.

Bottom Left: The FES CEO Mr Michael Bondin presenting the 2nd Prize (€75 voucher) to Thomas Kyle Aquilina.

3rd Prize (€45 voucher) was awarded to Emma Grima.

Skolasajf - Apply Now!

The Skolasajf applications opened on 23rd March 2022 and will close on 2nd May 2022. Parents and guardians are invited to register for the service via the online portal, at the One Stop Shop at the Education Ministry at Floriana, or at one of the servizz.gov hubs.

Parents and guardians who are registering for the first time, have to first create a profile. Once this is done, they will then be able to proceed to register their child by entering the child's details, choosing the preferred centre, and



affecting the payment. Working parents opting for the extended hours' service can also choose the required extra hours.

Further information about the Skolasajf service and about the application process can be found at:

FAQs - https://fes.gov.mt/en/Pages/FAQs/faq_ss.aspx

Terms and Conditions - https://fes.gov.mt/en/Pages/Skolasajf/terms-and-conditions.aspx

Should clients still have queries, they are invited to contact FES via the FB page or else send an email to fes@gov.mt

Whichever mode of communication used, we shall do our utmost to deliver the best service possible.



amazing service!!!

Work with Skolasajf

The Skolasajf service is a great opportunity for thousands of workers who would like to hold a part-time summer job. There are vacancies in various roles. Applications are received via the online portal https://recruitment.fes.gov.mt/



Virtual Job Fair

The Virtual Job Fair was held for the first time over the span of two sessions. The Virtual Job Fair was an opportunity for prospective applicants, to get to know in detail the job description of their preferred chosen role. This invitation enabled interested parties to book a virtual spot for a consultation held via the TEAMS platform, with members from the FES HR Department.

Prospective applicants who may have missed to book a spot for the Virtual Job Fair sessions, and have queries about their possible work during Skolasajf, are invited to send an email with their query to hr.fes@gov.mt, and they will get a personal reply to their question.

Alternatively one may call the HR Department on 225868 11/25/30/35 for direct, personal assistance.



The March Childcare Seminar

During the month of March, FES held the first of the bi-annual seminars for childcare educators working in its childcare centres. The seminar was split across four days, to allow smaller groups and hence more intense discussions on a one-to-one basis when addressing issues that are faced by childcare educators in their work with children.

Titled 'Children's Stories', the sessions were inspired by the baggage that each child brings with him/her to the centre, and how it influences the playtime, and the relationships with peers and educators. This will also influence the way the childcare educators carry out their work and help the children in their care to develop their competencies and reach their developmental milestones. Organised by the Programmes Department, the seessions were delivered by the Programme Coordinators within the same department.



Dealing with Challenging Behaviours

The first session was titled 'Dealing with Challenging Behaviour', and was delivered by Mr Jefflyn Grech, who is the Programme Coordinator in charge of Inclusion. Staff members from the centres had an in-depth discussion about some of the common behaviour difficulties observed in children during the early years, which are biting, tantrums and avoidance behaviours. These behaviours came to the fore during a focus group held with all centre coordinators prior to the seminar. Staff members also collaborated together to define the behaviours, identify potential triggers, and also to formulate strategies to support children when these behaviours are observed.

Different Ways of telling a story

The second session in today's seminar was delivered by Ms Kathryn Xuereb, Programme Coordinator (PDDI). This session explored the different ways how one can tell a story in a childcare setting. Stories are all around us and are a vital part of our lives, whether we learn about a story through a book, a film, a news items, or through a chat with friends. Stories allow us to learn about ourselves, about other people, and about what is happening around us.

Stories are also vital for children to gain knowledge about the journey that they are going to embark on to explore the world around them. Stories entertain and inform children, helps them to develop empathy for other people's situations, and also help the children to extend their vocabulary and patterns of language.

During the session, Ms Xuereb discussed how books, pictures, photographs and tangible objects are tools that can be used to make storytelling an interesting and engaging experience for the children. She also referred to the use of props to help the storyteller support the narrative, capture and maintain the interest, and make the story come more alive. Props do not have to be complicated or expensive. Simple items can serve as an excellent source to trigger the children's imagination.

The March Childcare Seminar

The Story of Geese

The third session in the FES Childcare seminar, was delivered by the Programme Coordinators from the Programmes Department, Ms Bella Said and Mr Justin Balzan. It centred on teambuilding and its importance in productivity and collegiality. Inspired by the teamwork shown in nature, the speakers illustrated the success of teamwork through 'geese'. When geese migrate, they form a V-shape, whereby each individual bird creates an uplift, thus helping the bird behind it. This team effort makes the flight of the whole group more efficient. If a goose breaks free from the V shape, it will immediately have to make more effort to keep up. So the individual goose will not be contributing to the team, but neither will it be benefitting from the collective uplift to help it in flight. So, working in a team, towards the same destination, means less effort needs to be made as an individual.

Ms Said and Mr Balzan spoke about the need for each team mmber to embrace common goals, so that each member knows where they are going and how they can reach the desired destination. They encouraged shared leadership where each team member takes up her/his responsibilities as well as leads according to the task at hand. Effective communication and peer encouragement were also referred to as key elements that serve to strenghten a team, and to better understand each other.





(L to R) - Jefflyn Grech, Justin Balzan, Bella Said, and Kathryn Xuereb,

who delievered the sessions durng the Childcare Seminar

Klabb 3-16 — Our activities

The Klabb 3-16 monthly programme of activities, produced by the Programmes Department at Head Office, is always packed with fun and informative resources that highlight the importance of informal activities as an educational tool. The March Klabb 3-16 programme was dedicated to Transport and the Pioneers that made it possible!

In keeping with this theme, the St Paul's Bay Klabb 3-16 Centre's staff sent in their own interpretation of how they taught road safety to the Early Years classes. It is important that even young children are taught about the importance of road safety as it is a subject that affects them. It is important to help shape the children understanding of, and attitudes towards, road safety, to give them the best chance of keeping safe on the road. For this exercise, the playworkers used toys to create a scenario so common in our lives - crossing the street.



The playworkers taught the children life-saving messages, such as:

- zebra crossings are placed in places where it is safe to cross the road
- cross the road only at zebra crossings
- wait for the cars to stop before crossing; while doing so, focus on the road, look both ways to check that there are no oncoming vehicles
- when using a pedestrian light, make sure to wait for the green light before crossing
- always hold an adult's hand when crossing the road



Meet our staff members

Name: Carmela Nowak

Role: Child Support Worker at Klabb 3-16 Mellieħa

Working with children is always a rewarding experience. Do you recall an incident where a child taught you to appreciate the brighter side of life?

Fifteen years ago, I started my job as a Learning Support Educator in a Secondary School. A year later I was assigned a twelve-year-old boy who was warm hearted, quiet and a very obedient student. This student was mostly dependent on his mother who was a cooperative, caring, and hardworking woman, who was 🎩



raising two boys. His uniform was always immaculate. His packed lunch always looked inviting, and every day he had diverse types of healthy food and fruits. The following year he was again reassigned to me, so I obviously knew him and his family. One day he came to school and told me that his mum had to go to the hospital since she had fallen ill. I told him not to worry as she will soon get better. Initially, he looked quite worried but eventually I managed to calm him down. Unfortunately, the next day I heard that his mum had passed away and this news was one of the biggest shocks of my life. This was devastating news to everyone. I could not comprehend the pain and suffering this boy was going through when losing the most precious person in his life at such an early age, and upon whom he was so dependent. As a result, I have learnt to appreciate the simple things in life. I also learnt that we need to spend time with the ones we love and care about as much as we can, since nobody knows when we will lose them. I have met this boy over the years. He taught me that we all must adapt to the realities of life. After this experience, I always try to see the positive aspect in life, and face the adversities that life throws our way with a smile because there is an incredibly old saying that says, "Laugh and the world laughs with you, cry and you cry alone." And this is a reality of life so now I try to laugh and smile as much as possible.

What is your favourite song, and what meaning does it hold for you?

My favourite song is "We are the world," which is a charity song. This song was recorded in Los Angeles by many international artists who were my role models at that time. It was performed after the American Music Awards ceremony at 22.00 hours on Saturday 28th January 1985. When it was produced, I was a sixteen-year-old and knew extraordinarily little about the world, its population, and its diversities. I have been incredibly lucky to have been brought up in a generation that did not have to endure the troubles that previous generations faced. The song was performed to generate money for aid for the starving millions in Africa. I cannot recall exactly why, but the words and actions of these artists influenced my feelings and opinions about the world and its multicultural societies. As I have grown older, I have adopted the messages of the song such as togetherness, diversity, inclusion, and so on, to heart and tried to be a better person. Children are the heart of our world, and our hopes for peace for future generations. We need to value our attitudes towards life and towards one another.

Meet our staff members......Carmela Novak

Looking back, what advice would you give to yourself at age 15 years?

This question makes me want to shout out loud "If hindsight had a perfect vision", however, nothing is quite that simple! Now at my age, I have faced many challenges and it is rather difficult to comprehensively envisage what I would have done differently if I was granted the possibility to start over again. When you are growing up, the teenage years are such critical and formative years, where you are transitioning between being a teenager and an adult. I would tell myself to look upon life as a journey, with many hills to climb and many rivers to cross. I would remind myself that nobody takes the right decisions or makes the correct choices all the time, and it is okay to make mistakes, and also remember and exercise the right to freedom of expression and choice.

Also to work hard and study hard, for learning is a lifelong experience. Stick to your principles. Appreciate your school life more and realise that educators always want the best for you. I should have taken more notice of what my parents told me and not be in such a rush to move away from home. Never be afraid to seek advice, everyone makes mistakes but face up to them and learn from them. Remember that everyone is born equal and unique, and by giving every individual your respect, your life will be rewarded with meaning and purpose.

If you were not in this line of work, which career would you pursue?

I think I can say without a doubt that I would be making a career in the Hospitality Industry, like hotel management. I think hospitality would fit in with my honed skills and temperament. Just as in education, hospitality gives you the opportunity to improve and expand on the skills you already possess. It's creative, from concocting a new drink to providing a unique customer experience. It enables you to learn on the job a variety of distinct roles, and with demanding work and initiative comes endless opportunities for advancement. Having said this though, I can safely say I am more than happy with the career I have already chosen for myself.

What do you look forward to doing in your free time?

Apart from my work in Klabb 3 – 16 as a Child Support Worker, I work as a Learning Support Educator II, so a lot of my time is spent preparing to give my students good learning resources and experiences. When I am out socially, I am often recognized as Ms Karen, and the young people are very appreciative of the fact that I was part of their childhood journey. In my free time I take online courses related to my career, and to improve my ability to teach. I also ensure I get enough sleep, breathe calmly, exercise regularly and try to eat healthy. As a means of relaxation when I feel stressed, I listen to music which I enjoy and helps me unwind. During weekends, I look forward to lovely long walks through our countryside and try to dedicate some time to the Church. Each summer I plan to travel somewhere different, where I can learn about the diverse cultures of the places I visit.

Meet our staff members



Name: Jonathan Debono

Role: HW Tutor at Klabb 3-16 Mellieha

Working with children is always a rewarding experience. Do you recall an incident where a child taught you to appreciate the brighter side of life?

Working closely with children in a primary school setting is really an amazing journey for all educators. Lots of people believe that schooling provides younger kids with skills and lessons which will be vital for their life-long learning experience and later in the adult-stage in life. However, it is also a rewarding

experience for us adults as well.

As human beings, it is quite natural that we need to face different issues on a day-to-day basis. Some of these issues and decisions are related to our work while others are related to our personal lives, and activities in our leisure time. There may come a time where you might feel like it is too much.

However, when I arrive at school early in the morning and I meet the students, it can sometimes be a relief. Their sense of humour and innocence is evident every day, despite what might be going on in their personal life. There were instances where students of mine had lost a close relative or family member. The positivity that came out when they shared their experience was outstanding! One of them claimed "I do not cry anymore. I don't want anyone in heaven to be sad for seeing me cry. It is a beautiful day today. Let's play!" I realized that even kids sometimes know how to move on when they approach challenges with the right attitude.

I think that as adults, myself included, we need to find our inner child every now and then, and make sure we stay positive and really appreciate the brighter side of life. It helps us face daily challenges better and make teaching and interacting with children, a fruitful and amazing experience.

What is your favourite song, and what meaning does it hold for you?

From a young age, I always followed the group Coldplay. I love their style and the flow of most of their songs. One of my favourite songs is "Something just like this".

I believe that the lyrics of this song speak volumes about the importance we should give to simplicity in life. It is not about what you need or what you want. You do not need any superheroes or huge risks to be happy. Sometimes, all you need is much closer than you might think, such as yourself, or a close friend. It is important to be thankful everyday for all the little things you have in life.

You don't necessarily need something else; sometimes, as the song claims, all you need is 'Something just like this'.

Meet our staff members......Jonathan Debono

Looking back, what advice would you give to yourself at age 15 years?

I think that the best advice I would give is "Be proud of who you are. Whatever you do in life, always do what makes you happy, while being safe. Never let anyone or anything stop you from reaching new heights. Set high expectations for yourself and never give up, be it in school, in sports, and life in general. And oh, I almost forgot. Even though you are getting older at 15, never forget to read! As a quote once said, "Reading is for the mind what exercise is to the body."

If you weren't in this line of work, which career would you pursue?

I always loved teaching. From a very young age, back in my primary years, I loved it when I had the opportunity to help some of my peers in class and assist the teacher during lessons. However, funnily enough, when I was younger, teaching was not the main preference for a future career. I remember myself claiming that when I grow up, I wanted to become a draughtsman or an architect. However, as I grew older, I realized that I preferred languages more than art-related subjects at school.

Aged 11, as a Form 1 student, I preferred subjects like Geography and French rather than Technical Drawing. That was already a major turning point in my career-related decisions. Later, in Form 3, I had yet another option to choose Technical Drawing, but I opted to study more about Computer and Accounts.

Later, after having completed my post-secondary education at Junior college I had a tough choice to make: Education or a Geography-related option. At one point I even considered a career in Meteorology. However, as time went by, I realized that I was more inclined towards a career in Education. Then I had to choose which a specific area, and in fact I had the option to be a Physical Education teacher. So most probably, I would have been a PE teacher. However, today I am a proud Year 4 teacher, and I am glad that I can help these children every year, in the best way that I can.

What do you look forward to do in your free time?

Being a huge football fan, I spend most of my free time following any football-related news. Watching Juventus play every weekend is almost a top priority on my to-do list. I can never imagine myself without football in general. I love the sport and although I don't get to practice it as much as I did when I was younger, I do spend hours weekly trying to follow different leagues in different countries.

I am also a huge fan of personal training. Lately, I got the opportunity to get more involved in personal training sessions after school. It helps me focus more on personal targets while also helps me to stay as healthy as possible every day. Being an educator is not only about teaching skills, problem-solving techniques, and languages. It is about giving the best example to the younger ones and act as a role model. Thus, I believe that by trying to find a healthier version of myself can help others believe in themselves and stay healthy too.

World Down Syndrome Day

World Down Syndrome Day on 21st March is an annual event that help to increase awareness about abilities of people with Down Syndrome. This day is marked at FES Head Office, and in Childcare and Klabb 3-16 Centres, with the symbol of wearing mismatched socks as a show of support.





In 2013, the theme of Wearing Odd Socks was initiated to raise awareness. The idea was created because chromosomes are shaped "like socks" and people with Down syndrome have an extra chromosome. With the help of this campaign, the voices of people with Down syndrome, their families and others who support them, can educate society and influence government policies.

Socks may be different in pattern and colour, but can still be worn together if we change our attitude. This of course translates to other areas of our lives, including how we look at people who may be different from us, but are as unique as each one of us. Wearing mismatched socks is a simple way to draw attention to the needs of people with Down Syndrome, and to share our love and support.





Continued Refurbishment

Żmeraldi, the FES childcare centre at Ħaż Żebbuġ, has had two recent additions to its furnishings, that have helped to create a more secure and stimulating environment for the children in the Baby Room.

Zmeraldi boasts a large outdoor area, which was recently divided by means of a gate, to section part for it and make it dedicated totally for the Babies. This sectioned area has increased the scheduled time when the Babies can make use of the outdoor area. With the onset of the warm weather, the Babies will be able to enjoy more outdoor play safely.



Another structure was the addition of a large mirror in the Baby Room. Mirrors provide great potential to support the childs healthy development and learning. When looking at a mirror, a baby is developing his visual

senses, muscles, and physical abilities.

When gazing at a mirror, babies start to look at their own reflection, and as they grow older, they start to smile at their own reflection and make sounds as a form of communication.

The Childcare Educators make ample use of this resource and as they interact with the babies, they point out parts of the baby's face while having little conversations with them. This not only helps in language development skills, but also serves to nurture the child's development of self-awareness.

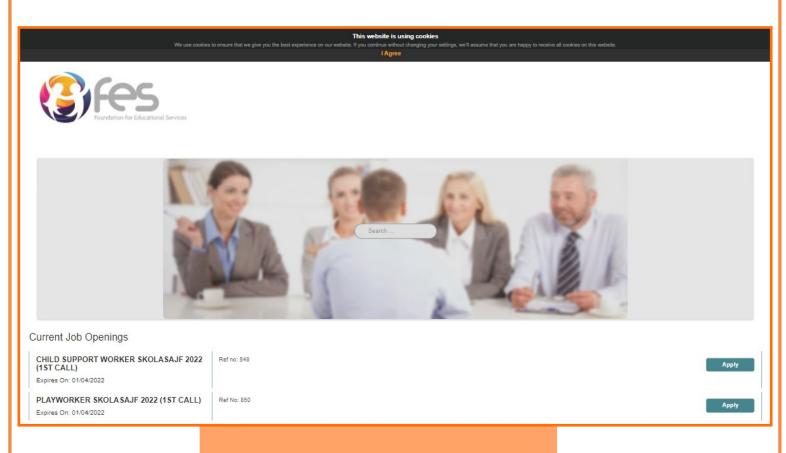


Job Opportunities

The Foundation for Educational Services currently has a number of job vacancies.

Click **HERE** to find out more and apply for the job most suited for you.

For any queries, call **22586830/35**. We will be very happy to assist you.



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the Playworker Development Course, the Child Support Worker Course, applications for Playworkers, Child Support Workers, and applications for **HW Tutors**.

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