



Annual REPORT

2014/2015



FOUNDATION FOR
EDUCATIONAL SERVICES



MINISTRY FOR EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Annual REPORT

2014/2015

Foundation for Educational Services

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FOUNDATION FOR
EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

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MESSAGE FROM **THE CEO**

The Foundation for Educational Services has gone through a time of evaluation and evolution throughout the years under review. Some of the services offered by the Foundation moved to Aġenzija Żgħażaġh and the newly set up National Literacy Agency. The remit of the Foundation focused on three main national services: Childcare service provision, Klabb 3-16 and Skolasajf.

It was a challenging time for the Foundation as it transitioned from one phase to the next. By the end of 2015, together with the employees of the Foundation we reflected about the need to evolve to meet the needs of the service users. The Foundation established itself a crucial stakeholder in Active Labour Market discussions since our services enabled parents and guardians to enter the workforce whilst their children were in our care.

It was also a time where we discussed ways to improve service and efficiency in terms of operations and programmes. We wanted to ensure that the service we offer complements formal schooling and bridges the policies and priorities established by MEDE.

Whilst thanking all our service users and their families for using our services and believing in our programmes, words of appreciation are due to all employees of the Foundation who played a crucial role throughout this challenging time. Looking back at the accomplishments that the entity achieved gives us the necessary motivation to strive further in our next challenges as we further build on the services and programmes that we offer.



FOUNDATION FOR
EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

MISSION STATEMENT **AND GOALS**

MISSION STATEMENT

The Foundation for Educational Services aims to work with families and individuals through the development and implementation of educational programmes and services to promote integration and social inclusion.

GOALS

- To provide an after-school service,
- To establish a comprehensive childcare service,
- To develop a post-secondary educational programme for young people,
- To encourage lifelong learning through the setting up of community learning centres,
- To raise the profile of the Foundation to ensure accessibility to all programmes and services particularly amongst those at risk of social exclusion,
- To collaboratively work with local and international organisations having similar goals to the Foundation,
- To build the capacity of the Foundation by actively seeking additional sources of funding and investing in the development of its human resources.

BOARD MEMBERS

CHAIRPERSON

Mr Charles Cilia

MEMBERS

Ms Elena Borg

Dr Andrew Azzopardi

Mr Saviour Grima

Mr Mario Mallia

Ms Carmen Nygaard

Mr Eric Saliba

SECRETARY

Ms Marcon Cassar

KLABB 3-16



OPERATION HOURS

KLABB 3-16

DURING SCHOOL DAYS

Monday to Friday:
(2:15pm – 6:00pm)

DURING SCHOOL
HOLIDAYS:

Monday to Friday:
(7:00am – 5:30pm)

INTRODUCTION

Klabb 3-16 is an after schools' hour service that acts as a link between the normal school hours and the parents' working hours throughout the year. The service is also offered during the school holidays and caters for students aged 3 to 16, who attend State and Non-State Schools. Klabb 3-16 was designed in line with the national reform programme, aiming to improve the work-family balance thus leading to an increase in women participation in the labour force.

Children attending Klabb 3-16 follow a structured programme that enables them to relax and also to continue their academic work. Children are offered the opportunity to have a healthy snack, engage in physical activity, and do their homework under the guidance of a homework tutor. They can also participate in thematic activities that enable them to explore and enrich their creative potential, while others enable them to learn about human diversity, emotions and different point of views. This programme of activities emphasises the development of the individual as a whole, while promoting social awareness and acceptance of peers and others in society.

A TYPICAL DAY AT KLABB 3-16 DURING SCHOOL DAYS

14:30 - 15:00	Arrival of children at Klabb 3-16. Centre and Healthy Snack break	17:00 - 18:00	Sessions of activities with the playworkers.
15:00 - 17:00	Children older than 5 years join the Homework Tutors to do their HW (including reading sessions, depending on the individuals' needs); kinder-aged children join the playworkers to do play activities; children who finish their HW can join the playworkers' class. All activities are age-appropriate and related to a weekly theme.	18:00	Latest time for parents/carers to pick up children. Parents/carers can pick up their children anytime according to their family needs.

A TYPICAL DAY AT KLABB 3-16 DURING SCHOOL HOLIDAYS (MID-TERM, CHRISTMAS, CARNIVAL, EASTER, SUMMER)

07:00 - 08:00 Arrival of children at Klabb 3-16 Centre

08:00 - 17:30 Structured Programme of activities related to a weekly theme with break times in between. The Programme consists of: Crafts, Cookery sessions, Physical Activities and Cultural outings.

All activities are age-appropriate and children are grouped according to their ages.

17:30 Latest time for parents/carers to pick up children. Parents/carers can pick up their children anytime according to their family needs.

DEVELOPMENTS IN 2014-2015

Service users may avail themselves of the Klabb 3-16 service in thirty(30) centres in the following localities:

Attard	B'Bugia	B'Kara	Cospicua	Fgura
Floriana	Hamrun	Żabbar	Żebbug (Malta)	Luqa
Mellieħa	Mġarr	Mosta	M'Scala	Naxxar
Paola	Pembroke	Qormi	Rabat	Siggjiewi
Sliema	San Ġwann	St Julians	St Paul's Bay	Santa Venera
Valletta	Victoria	Xagħra	Żejtun	Żurrieq

FIGURE 1: KLABB 3-16 CENTRES, 2014-2015

In 2014, 9 new centres were opened in Cospicua, Mġarr, Sliema, St Julian's Santa Venera, Valletta, Żejtun, Floriana, Paola and St Julians. In view of this, more families could benefit from the service; both homework tutoring and after school-hours' care could be reached by a greater number of children and families.

As a result, FES embarked on a recruitment drive to meet the needs of the extended service. By end of 2014, the After School Initiative Service Area was composed of a Senior Executive, a full-time Programme Secretary, two full-time Programme Coordinators, ten full-time Centre Coordinators and five part-time Centre Coordinators.

Each Centre is run by a professional team. The Coordinator is responsible of two Klabb 3-16 Centres; a Play Worker with Extra Responsibilities (PER) is in charge of the Centre in the absence of the Coordinator; Homework Tutors, who are qualified teachers, assist children with their homework; and Play Workers organise the hands-on educational and fun activities.

In the Foundation's bid to improve the service and tap the full potential of the resources available in the educational sector, open and continuous communication is maintained with the College Principals, Head of Schools, parents and other stakeholders. This is done as part of the service's mission to build on the schools' culture and climate, where children experience a set of values and beliefs within a safe environment.

During the period under review, promotion was done through printed leaflets and magazines, radio and TV programmes. Klabb 3-16 was also marketed through the Foundations' website and Facebook page.

The number of students benefitting from Klabb 3-16 Service between September 2014 and March 2015 was 1297.

During the scholastic year 2014-2015, a maximum of 1,988 children made use of the 30 centres offering Klabb 3-16.

SKOLA SAJF

INTRODUCTION

2015 has been a year of consolidation and improvement of the services being offered by FES, including Skolasajf. The initiative aims to help families achieve a better work-family balance, while also helping the children in their academic journey and personal development as future citizens.

DEVELOPMENTS IN 2014

In 2014, Skolasajf was for the first time opened for all children aged 3 to 16. The chosen theme was Mediterranean Kaleidoscope. The service was provided from 64 centres: 11 centres in Gozo, 4 resource centres and 49 centres in Malta as follows:

Attard	Birżebbugia	B'Kara	Burmarrad	Cospicua
Dingli	Fgura	Floriana	Għargħur	Għaxaq
Gudja	Gżira	Ħamrun	Kalkara	Kirkop
Lija/Balzan	Luqa	Marsa	Mellieħa	Mġarr
Mosta	Mqabba	M'Scala	Msida	Mtarfa
M'Xlokk	Naxxar	Paola	Pembroke	Pietà
Qormi (San Bastjan)	Qormi (San Ġorġ)	Qrendi	Rabat	Safi
San Ġwann	Senglea	Sigġiewi	Sliema	San Ġiljan
St Paul's Bay	St Venera	Tarxien	Valletta	Xgħajra
Żabbar	Żebbuġ	Żejtun	Żurrieq	

FIGURE 2: SKOLASAJF MALTA CENTRES, 2014

Għajnsielem	Għarb	Kerċem	Nadur	Qala
Sannat	Victoria	Xewkija	Żebbuġ	Hellen Keller
San Miguel	Guardian Angel	Sannat		

FIGURE 3: SKOLASAJF GOZO CENTRES, 2014

The Skolasajf Programme started daily between Monday 7th July 2014 and Wednesday 17th September 2014. However, due to unforeseen circumstances, the Programme started on Friday, 11th July 2014. There was a break between the 13th and 17th August 2014.

The service provided included fun and educational activities in a safe, stimulating and child-friendly environment with adequate adult supervision. The Skolasajf Core Programme was offered from 08.30 to 12.30 in 30 Centres, whilst the extended hours were provided in 34 Centres, from 07:00 to 08:30 and 12:30 and 17:30.

Service users were required to pay a registration fee of €25 for the whole Core Programme. Other users, who wished to make use of the external hours were required to pay €0.80 to the hour. Around 11,000 students from State and Non-State Schools registered to attend.

Five Coordinating Mentors were deployed in Malta and one in Gozo. The Mentors served as a liaison between the FES management and the Centre Coordinators. Throughout Skolasajf, several other meetings were also held with the Coordinating Mentors, whose role was to monitor and support the staff in the Centres and to stimulate and encourage all stakeholders to participate in the activities that were scheduled for their respective centre.

PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES

In collaboration with Paolo Bonnici Ltd, agents in Malta for Weetabix Co Ltd., Skolasajf organised two main events: an Educational Quiz and a Fun Games Festival.

All Skolasajf Centres in Malta and Gozo participated in an Educational Quiz. The main aim was for the children to have a fun learning experience. Each participating team was made up of four participants. They were very well prepared and it resulted to be a very successful learning event. All students participating in the final session were given a medal. A winner token and four finalist tokens were also given to each Skolasajf Centre during the final event. Minister

for Education and Employment, Hon. Evarist Bartolo was also present.

During the Fun Games Festival, all Centres reaching the final stage of the festival were awarded a commemorative trophy. All students reaching the final were each given a medal to further highlight their keen participation. The Hon. Parliamentary Secretary, Chris Agius was present for the final event.

The planning, implementation and evaluation process of the Skolasajf Programme involved a heavy and full schedule of meetings and continual contacts and consultations. These



include a number of meetings that were held with the NGOs and other entities so as to build the schedule of the Special Programmes. These programmes were designed to provide a more creative and colourful touch to Skolasajf. The Programmes focus more on socio-educational direction are delivered in an informal manner.

All Skolasajf Centres benefitted from these programmes.

The John XXIII Peace Laboratory, organised a drawing competition and a writing competition. This was open to Skolasajf students, between the ages of 7 and 12. The winners were awarded with certificates and books.

All Centres planned their initiatives around the main theme: Mediterranean Kaleidoscope while focusing on the need to increase creative skills in pupils. They managed to do this through the Educational Quiz, cultural outings, inviting special guests, drawing and painting, creative skills in crafts making, presentations of centre-based talent shows, educational games and cooking sessions.

Skolasajf 2014 was full of exciting and colourful events. Though at the beginning we did encounter tough situations and circumstances, the Skolasajf team managed to find the right solutions. With great effort, determination and full commitment all difficulties were faced and many times overcome successfully.

DEVELOPMENTS IN 2015

During summer 2015, FES offered Skolasajf in 63 different localities. These included 48 localities in Malta and 11 in Gozo. The programme was also offered in four Resource Centres, one of which was in Gozo. These centres were a source of physical, cultural and artistic activities, and outings, for over 12,000 children who attended Skolasajf 2015 between the 13th July and 4th September 2015.

Each centre was administered by a Centre Coordinator, assisted by a number of Play Workers with extra responsibilities, Play Workers, and Child Support Workers. The staff was supported by a number of mentors who visited the centres to ensure the maintenance of quality standards, and Head Office staff who paid frequent visits to ensure the smooth running of the whole operation.

PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES

The programme of activities operated during Skolasajf 2015 was governed by the slogan adopted by the European Union to celebrate the European Year for Development 2015. The slogan, 'Our World, Our Dignity, Our Future', helped Skolasajf pupils to learn about different realities around the world, and how virtues such as tolerance and generosity support the right to respect and dignity, and help to unite nations in different countries.

Another major activity in Skolasajf 2015 was the celebration of CHOGM, which was hosted in Malta between the 27th and 29th of November 2015. Each centre was assigned a country from the Commonwealth, and children explored all the richness that each country offered through music, history, art, traditions and even culinary delights.

Children who attended Skolasajf 2015 also benefitted from a number of centre visits by, and outings to, NGOs who collaborated with FES to offer socio-educational activities that made children more aware of certain issues around us. These included history, health, animal welfare,

technology, tourism, recycling, drama and music, tourism, environment, and social work. The NGO's who collaborated with FES are:

- » Vortex Creativity Centre
- » Aġenzija Sedqa
- » Animal Welfare Directorate
- » MITA
- » Malta-EU Steering Action Committee (MEUSAC)
- » American Embassy
- » Malta Tourism Authority
- » WasteServ
- » Dental Health Department (Malta and Gozo)
- » More or Less Theatre (Valletta 2018 Foundation)
- » KantaKantun (Valletta 2018 Foundation)
- » Malta Medical Students Association
- » HSBC Water Programme
- » CARITAS
- » "Ixrob L-Ilma" Campaign
- » The Education, Science and Culture Centre (Gozo)
- » Ministry For Justice , Culture and Local Government as sponsor of the Skolasajf Film Festival

READING A PRIORITY!

Skolasajf 2015 was also a vehicle to promote reading through the 'Aqra fis-Sajf' campaign. The summer reading campaign was organised by the National Literacy Agency in collaboration with the Foundation for Educational Services, the Malta Libraries, the National Book Council and the Directorates of Education of the Ministry for Education and Employment, and a number of sponsors. The initiative saw thousands of children take up the challenge posed by the Minister for Education and Employment, Hon. Evarist Bartolo, to read at least five books in summer.

Children attending Skolasajf 2015 also benefitted from the literacy guided reading programme. This was entrusted to the care of the National Literacy Agency. This programme was implemented in 9 Skolasajf centres in Malta and 1 in Gozo. 85 children were enrolled in this programme, and they were grouped according to their reading level, as established in a prior evaluation session where Reading Running Records were carried out with each child on an individual basis.

COMPETITIONS, QUIZ AND GAMES

Other initiatives that engaged children in a creative way while making them aware of their active role as citizens included the competitions of the John XXIII Peace laboratory, and the Selfie with My Pet competition. The former included a drawing and writing competition for all children, with the following themes:

- a. Saint Francis and nature
- b. Saint Francis and the less fortunate people
- c. For a better world

The “Selfie with My Pet” Competition organised by the Directorate for Animal Welfare, in collaboration with Skolasajf Programme 2015, involved four categories of age groups. Each had to present a photo of themselves with their favourite pet.

Both these competitions helped children to focus on the natural world around us. Children attending Skolasajf 2015 also lent a helping hand to the Malta Community Chest Fund. Piggy banks distributed in the centres were

used to collect funds for this cause. H.E. Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca launched this initiative during a visit at the Skolasajf Centre in Siggiewi. She was given a tour around the centre and an overview of children’s activities.

Further educational activities involved children battling it out between centres for the title of Winner of the Weetabix Educational Quiz 2015. The aim was for the children to collaborate within a team and acquire more general knowledge. ‘Water: A Source of Life’, ‘Brain Test’, ‘European Football 2014 – 2015’, ‘Crossword Challenge’ and ‘Skolasajf Theme: ‘Our World, Our Future, Our Dignity’ were the innovative sections throughout the 2015 Weetabix Educational Quiz.

All Skolasajf Centres also participated in the Fun Games Festival. The final was held on 27th August 2015 at the Cottonera Sport Complex. The Centres who reached the final stage were awarded trophies, whilst all the children who reached the final stage were awarded a medal.

CHILDCARE CENTRES

INTRODUCTION

The National Childcare Unit within the Foundation for Educational Services (FES) was created in March 2010. During 2014 and 2015, this Unit was responsible for the running of thirteen (13) Smart Kids Childcare and Family Support Centres.

Childcare services are offered to children aged between three months and three years. A personalised service of quality care for all children is offered, most particularly to children at risk of social exclusion. All FES-run childcare centres are registered with the Department of Social Welfare Standards and follow the National Standards for Child Day Care Facilities (2006).

The service provision is based on the principle of Edu-care; activities are focused on all areas of child development including social, emotional, physical, intellectual, communication and creativity. The caring and teaching given to our service users is based on best practices to ensure that children are prepared for school by providing them with an environment that is conducive to the enjoyment of learning through play.

The daily programme is balanced to include a wide variety of play activities that stimulate learning in a modern, safe and fully equipped environment. FES staff work together with parents/guardians to ensure that the full potential of each child is reached. Parents/guardians are welcome within FES childcare centres to discuss and plan their child's needs together with childcare staff.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

FES CHILDCARE SERVICES ARE OFFERED TO CHILDREN, AGED BETWEEN 3 MONTHS AND 3 YEARS, WHOSE PARENTS:

1. Are in work or education;
2. Referrals from social workers (e.g. Aġenzija Appoġġ or other) in the case of children coming from disadvantaged backgrounds;
3. Referrals from other professionals (e.g. medical doctors, psychologists, speech language pathologists, etc.) in the case of children with developmental difficulties/ disabilities;
4. Families with health issues;
5. Siblings;
6. Parents actively seeking employment;
7. Others (depending on family income – low family income to be given priority).



FAMILY CONTRIBUTION FOR CHILDCARE SERVICE

The contribution by parents/guardians for the above service is assessed through means testing.

There are different rates depending on the use of the service.

COMBINED FAMILY INCOME	MONTHLY CONTRIBUTION	1 DAY /WEEK	2 DAYS /WEEK	3 DAYS /WEEK	4 DAYS /WEEK	5 DAYS /WEEK
0 – € 10,000	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
€10,001 – € 12,000	€40	€8	€16	€24	€32	€40
€ 12,001 – € 14,500	€65	€13	€26	€39	€52	€65
€ 14,501 – €19,500	€90	€18	€36	€54	€72	€90
€ 19,501 plus	€150	€30	€60	€90	€120	€150

FIGURE 4: FAMILY CONTRIBUTION FOR CHILDCARE SERVICE, 2014-2015

THE FREE CHILDCARE SCHEME

The Free Childcare Scheme was launched by the Ministry of Education and Employment in April 2014. Parents in work or in education benefit from this scheme. FES Childcare Centres participate in this scheme and therefore those parents who are eligible for free childcare do not pay the contributions as shown above.

OPERATING CENTRES

One new childcare centre opened its doors to service users in 2014. Il-Qawsalla Smart Kids Childcare and Family Support Centre, Gzira within the Gzira Primary School, was officially opened in April 2014.

The following is a list of all the centres that were operating during 2014 and 2015:

- Smart Kids Childcare and Family Support Centre, Access Birgu
- Smart Kids Childcare and Family Support Centre, Access Qawra
- Smart Kids Childcare and Family Support Centre, B’Kara (l-Istazzjon)
- Id-Denfil Smart Kids Childcare and Family Support Centre, Primary School St. Ignatius College, Siggiewi
- Il-Bejta Smart Kids Childcare and Family Support Centre, Primary School St.Margherita College, Cospicua
- Il-Merill Smart Kids Childcare and Family Support Centre, Primary School St. Claire College, Pembroke
- Il-Bebboxu Smart Kids Childcare and Family Support Centre, Sta Venera
- It-Tghanniqqa Smart Kids Childcare and Family Support Centre, Primary School St. Gorg Preca College, Floriana
- It-Tbissima Smart Kids Childcare and Family Support Centre, San George Primary School St. Ignatius College, Qormi
- Il-Pespup Smart Kids Childcare and Family Support Centre, Primary School St. Gorg Preca College, Marsa
- Pizzi Pizzi Kanna Smart Kids Childcare and Family Support Centre, Maria Regina College, Naxxar
- Is-Sardinella Smart Kids Childcare and Family Support Centre, Primary School Santa Clara College, San Gwann
- Il-Qawsalla Smart Kids Childcare and Family Support Centre, Primary School Santa Clara College Gzira

STATISTICS: CHILDREN WHO MADE USE OF THE SERVICE DURING 2014-2015

By the end of 2014, 924 children made use of FES Smart Kids Childcare Service whilst in 2015 there were 863 children. The following is a breakdown of service users per childcare centre.

	CHILDCARE CENTRE	NO. OF CHILDREN	
		2014	2015
1	Smart Kids Access Birgu	83	79
2	Smart Kids Access Qawra	56	48
3	Smart Kids B'Kara	41	38
4	Il-Bejta Smart Kids, Cospicua	46	40
5	Il-Merill Smart Kids, Pembroke	59	107
6	Id-Denfil Smart Kids, Siġġiewi	97	74
7	Il-Bebbuxu Smart Kids, Sta Venera	89	69
8	It-Tghanniqa Smart Kids, Floriana	58	48
9	It-Tbissima Smart Kids, Qormi	95	74
10	Il-Pespus Smart Kids, Marsa	73	49
11	Pizzi Pizzi Kanna Smart Kids, Naxxar	92	102
12	Is-Sardinella Smart Kids, San Gwann	91	74
13	Il-Qawsalla Smart Kids, Gżira	44	61
	TOTAL	924	863

FIGURE 5: CHILDREN USING THE SERVICE DURING 2014-2015

INTER-PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION

Research evidence highlights the importance of early intervention in the development and education of young children. The collaboration between professionals has always been encouraged when children attend FES Smart Kids Childcare Centres.

One of the services considered to be highly beneficial to all service-users is that provided by the paediatric team led by Dr Chris Sciberras, Consultant Paediatrician, who is in charge of the Community Health Services. Services offered by Dr Sciberras include the following:

1. Screening of all new service users
2. Referrals of babies and toddlers to other professionals where necessary
3. Professional advice to FES management
4. Advice to parents regarding concerns related to child development, healthy eating, hygiene, etc.
5. Advice to staff to help them in the care given

to babies and toddlers

6. Training /workshops for staff and community

In 2015, a total of two hundred and sixty-five (265) children were screened, of whom twenty-one (21) children were referred to other professionals.

FES staff and families have given very positive feedback regarding this service. The benefits received from the paediatric service are twofold:

1. immediate in that there is early identification of any problems and
2. far reaching as it educates FES staff and families on how to take better care of children.

Besides the very effective paediatric service, a number of professionals carried out regular visits in FES childcare centres and collaborated with FES staff for the benefit of the children in their care (e.g. Early Intervention Teachers, Speech Language Pathologists, Social Workers, etc.)

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

FES childcare services depend on the knowledge, skills, expertise and motivation of its staff members. FES is, therefore, committed to provide training opportunities in order to achieve maximum effectiveness in service delivery. Development and training is a continuous and regular process.

In 2014, FES organised two training days for all childcare staff. The first training day held in April 2014 focused on the National Curriculum Framework and how this could be extended to the 0 – 3 age group. A presentation was delivered by Ms Suzanne Vassallo, Programme Coordinator - Childcare, which was followed by

workshops. At the end of the workshops, there was sharing of good practice whereby each centre presented an activity that was enjoyed by all the children. The second seminar focused on Story-Telling Techniques. A presentation was delivered by Ms Suzanne Vassallo, Programme Coordinator, Childcare, and was followed by workshops on the different ways in which adults relate stories to children. Presentations of different methods of story-telling were then delivered by each group. Positive feedback was received about both training days.

In 2015, FES organised two training days for all childcare staff. During the first part of the training day held in April 2015, a presentation

on the Manual Handling of Children was delivered by the Institute of Health and Safety. This training was recommended by the Occupational Health and Safety Authority (OHSA). A presentation on Secure Attachment was then delivered by Ms Barauskaite (Centre Coordinator) and Ms Garzia.

During the second training day held in November 2015, Ms Vassallo (Programme Coordinator –

Childcare) delivered a presentation on Policies and Procedures. This was followed by workshops on best practice and team-building activities organised by Outdoor Living. This proved to be a very successful training day.

Between April and July 2015, childcare staff attended a First Aid Course organised by ETC. A total of thirty-six staff members attended and were awarded a First Aid Certificate.

INDUCTION DAY

An induction day for new members of staff was held on the 26th August, 2014 at the National Curriculum Centre, Hamrun. Ms Mallia, Senior Executive – Childcare, and Ms Vassallo, Programme Coordinator – Childcare, addressed the staff members.

Another induction day for new members of staff was held on the 23rd March 2015 at the National Curriculum Centre, Hamrun. A

total of twenty-five (25) childcare assistants/coordinators attended.

Attendees were given an explanation about the set-up and the importance of the National Standards for Child Day Care Facilities and FES Smart Kids Policies. They were also given information about HR issues, the daily running of the centre and the duties and responsibilities of the childcare assistants.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES

Early Childhood Education and Care: for more and better quality for all, Athens, Greece

Ms Frances Mallia Senior Executive Childcare was invited by the Greek EU Presidency to attend a conference on Early Childhood and Care (ECEC) which focussed on the better quality of childcare for all. The conference was held between the 19th and 20th June 2014. During the conference it was stressed that the educational journey of the children starts from ECEC. Therefore quality in ECEC is very important as it is the foundation for school readiness and the following continuum of the educational journey. Furthermore, it is important to note that good quality ECEC is

a children's right. It was also suggested that there is a correlation with attending quality ECEC and fewer early school leavers.

Early Childhood Education and Care & Early Language Learning, Reggio Emilia, Italy

Ms Mallia, Senior Executive, and Ms Vassallo, Programme Coordinator, were invited by the Italian Presidency of the Council of the European Union and of the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research and the Directorate General for School and Evaluation of the National System of Education to attend the International Conference on Early Childhood Education and Care and Early Language Learning in Reggio Emilia, Italy. The

conference was held between the 16th and 18th December 2014. The aim of the conference was to analyse ECEC models in Europe and in the world, from a global perspective, with a focus on ECEC and immigrants. The second key issue was Early Language Learning: the conference provided an opportunity to share

and gather experiences and good practices in these fields. During the conference, Ms Mallia and Ms Vassallo also had the opportunity to visit the “Loris Malaguzzi” Foundation and “Reggio Children” schools, which are an outstanding example of good practice in ECEC models in Italy.

PARTICIPATION IN ŽIGUŽAJG INTERNATIONAL ARTS FESTIVAL

Žigužajg is an annual International Arts Festival for children and young adults. Its vision is to position the creative arts for children and young people at the core of Malta’s creative ecology.

For the third year running, children attending FES Smart Kids Childcare Centres had the

opportunity to participate in this festival together with their parents. This festival was held at St James Cavalier Centre for Creativity, Valletta.

Positive feedback was received by all those who attended. Parents shared in their children’s enthusiasm and marked their toddlers’ first visit to the theatre with photographs and videos.

STORY-TELLING SESSIONS

1. *Aqra Miegħi* sessions were held on a weekly basis at two of FES Childcare Centres, namely Qormi and Pembroke. These sessions were open to children from the community together with their parents and children attending childcare.
2. Story-telling sessions in conjunction with Maria Regina College were held at Pizzi Pizzi Kanna Childcare Centre, Naxxar in April 2015. This was a pilot project introduced during Book Week. The aim was to help expose students from the middle school to read to young children and understand how story-telling is done. As a result, children at Pizzi Pizzi Kanna benefitted from the enhancement of their emergent literacy skills. This project also helped to improve the cognitive and language skills in children.

The pilot project was a success with both the Middle school students and children at the childcare centre. Enthusiasm was registered from the Middle School Students with the school librarian reporting a long list of students interested to attend. Since October 2015 this project became a weekly “story-telling club” coordinated by the school librarian and the coordinator at Pizzi Pizzi Kanna Childcare Centre.

3. Children attending FES Smart Kids Childcare Centres were invited to participate in Story-Telling (*Aqra Miegħi*) and interactive music sessions at the President’s Garden during the summer months.

A total of 230 children together with their parents took part. Positive feedback was received regarding these sessions.

WORKSHOP FOR PARENTS ON NUTRITION

FES Childcare in conjunction with the Home Economics Seminar Centre organised a workshop for parents of children attending FES childcare centres in May 2016. This was held at M'Assumpta Secondary School, Hamrun (Home Economics Building).

The workshop was open to 40 parents and approximately 30 attended. A practical session focusing on healthy snacks/lunches for children under three years of age followed the presentation on nutrition.

LEARNING OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK

In May 2015, Ms Suzanne Vassallo, Programme – Coordinator was selected to contribute in the Learning Outcomes Framework Project (ESF 1.228) as a Local Curriculum Development Expert in developing LAPs of the Early Years Childhood Education and Care Sector and specifically the 0 – 3 age group.

As part of this undertaking, Ms Vassallo attended a study visit in Oslo between 1st and 6th June 2015. The study visit comprised seminars and workshops organised by the hosting university – Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences (OAUC). Orientation visits in a number of settings offering an early years' context were carried out.

YOUTH INC. PROGRAMME

INTRODUCTION

Youth. Inc is an educational programme for young people who want to build on their educational experience and gain more knowledge, values and skills to either enter the labour market or gain qualifications to continue further training.

Youth.inc programme believes that success can be achieved by the young people if they are engaged and motivated to participate actively in an applied learning environment and practical approach.

The programme demands the young people's commitment to expand knowledge beyond the classroom and develop their independent and employability skills in the world of work and responsible relationships.

DEVELOPMENTS IN 2014¹

In the first half of 2014, we had 16 students following level 2 course and 51 students following Level 1 course. Another 60 students have already registered to join the course starting next October. In February 2014, for the first time, Youth.inc accepted a group of 35 fifth form students who joined the Alternative Learning Programme. These students continued their level 1 programme through the summer months.

New Computer Lab

A new computer lab has been installed at the Youth.inc Training Centre in Umberto Colosso Complex Santa Venera. This new Computer Lab was sponsored by HSBC and opened by the Minister of Education and Employment Mr. Evarist Bartolo.

1. The Youth.inc service was transferred to Aġenzija Żgħażaġh in 2015.

ECDL training is part of the Youth.inc programme and young people following the Level 2 programme are provided with the tuition to sit for the ECDL Core module. The process has started for Youth.inc to become an ECDL licensed centre where the young people can sit for their ECDL examinations.

Youth Exchanges

During 2014, we had another three groups who participated in Youth Exchanges which were held abroad. Young people visited Sweden, Turkey and Croatia and met with other young people from European countries.

Activities

During the first half of the year, Youth.inc organised various new activities including the Carnival Party and the Valentine Breakfast Party. The annual Summer Bar-B-Que was also organised at Little Armier Bay which brought about the conclusion to the Level 1 and Level 2 programme for 2013/2014 programme year.

Annual REPORT

2014/2015

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