

Annual Report

2020



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Foundation for Educational Services

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Introduction

In a year characterised by the Covid-19 pandemic, the ensuing restrictions, and the mitigating measures to control the viral spread, it is a given that the year 2020 was a challenging one for the Foundation for Educational Services (FES). Just like other organisations, FES had to act fast to continue being of service to its clients, and to continue with its contribution to the Maltese society. The Foundation's ability to remain relevant to the market's needs and demands along the years, has stemmed from the ongoing review of the needs of stakeholders. It was nothing less in 2020. This helped FES to set the direction for how its services were to be adapted to the circumstances imposed on society by the pandemic.

The work put in by all sectors of the Foundation for Educational Services, was paramount to the success of the new management and implementation of procedures, that still honoured the same principles and policies. There was continuous and sterling cooperation with the Ministry for Education and Employment, and with the Health Authorities, to create guidelines that supported the ongoing service during the lockdown period. Other guidelines were created or the eventual reopening of the centres. The FES Childcare Centres and the Skolasajf Centres were the first educational institutions to open and thus enabled the return of the children and students

to the childcare centres and to the schools. This paved the way for the return of schoolchildren to the schools in September 2020.

Amidst all this turmoil and change, FES continued with its organisational work, characterised majorly by its relocation of the Head Office to a brand-new building at Qormi. The negotiation and overseeing of the works had been ongoing for several months, and the move in June 2020 coincided with the re-opening of the childcare centres. The year continued to be characterised by the ongoing consolidation of current programmes and planning for new ones; extending the services to vulnerable members of society, and to students and their parents whose situation was affected by the pandemic; and the enforcement of Covid-19 guidelines as a responsible commitment towards the health and safety of students, staff, and related society members.

FES closed off 2020 with the FES Management Team holding a day seminar dedicated to discussing milestones achieved during 2020, and the way forward for 2021. The team analysed the impact of the situation on the Foundations' main services, on its in-house operations, and on the partnerships with relevant stakeholders. Presentations by the respective departments not only showcased the work done, but also the planned projects for 2021.

Board Members



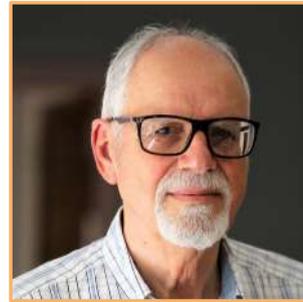
Ms Pamela Schembri
Chairperson



Prof. Andrew Azzopardi
Member



Mr Mario Mallia
Member



Mr Joseph Abela
Member



Ms Carmen Nygaard
Member



Mr Paul Debono
Member



Dr Tiffany Farrugia
Member



Ms Marcon Cassar
Board Secretary



MESSAGE FROM THE **Minister for Education**

Dr Justyne Caruana

The Foundation for Educational Services (FES) is another important organization within our educational institutions, that offers a holistic educational package to our younger generations.

Along the years since its inception, FES, guided by its vision, contributed to the educational development of the learner, and has adapted to the times and served the community in areas that emerged with the changing lifestyles and needs of the family unit. This it did by setting high standards and working arduously towards achieving them.

The year 2020 was no exception. In a year during which the world had to adapt to a new reality – the challenge of the Covid-19 pandemic – FES rose to the occasion. It successfully managed to not only continue offering the extended care programmes aimed primarily at helping working parents balance their work and family commitments, but FES opened its childcare centres for the children of essential workers.

FES is doing sterling work when it comes to inclusion and offering programmes to engage children in non-formal educational activities, which are so important in teaching children important life skills, transferable to other areas of their lives.

Whilst thanking the FES Chairperson and Members of the Board, the Chief Executive Officer, and all the employees for their commitment, I will continue to encourage and support the Foundation and its employees, to continue to transform itself and remain innovative to offer services which are relevant to the present and future needs of our younger generation.

Dr Justyne Caruana



MESSAGE FROM THE **FES Chairperson**

Ms Pamela Schembri

2020 was the year when I was entrusted with the role of Chairperson of the Board of Directors for the Foundation for Educational Services. I must say that I was wary at first, however, the initial concerns soon transformed into an invigorating challenge. Today, it is indeed both an honour and a pleasure to be able to report that over these past months, as a Board we have borne witness to a Foundation that can only be lauded for meeting the needs of families and children, especially during these unprecedented times.

The year 2020 has been one to remember. A year in which we were asked to partially lock ourselves in our homes and stay away from people. The pandemic has forced us to change the way we operate to be able to continue delivering our services. It was a tough year for the world, no less for our country, and even for the Foundation. However, FES did not give up. Rather, it rolled up its sleeves in order to keep up with the rough times.

In fact, the Foundation, through the childcare centres, was the first educational entity to open in June 2020, after the partial lockdown which saw the schools close their doors three months before. They were moments of uncertainty, which the Foundation overcame through intensive preparations. The pandemic was leaving its toll on the children, and they needed to get back into a routine that would help them so much.

In addition to the re-opening of the childcare centres, the Foundation launched the SkolaSajf 2020 service two weeks earlier than usual. This means that the service was offered for a span of 10 weeks, rather than the usual 8. The two-week extension involved a higher investment in programme resources, staff, and supplies to maintain a high level of health and safety. The programme was extended, and kept its high standards.

The intense work involved in Skolasajf 2020, was immediately followed by the participation in a working group to find a solution being faced by Church Schools. FES rose to the occasion with the opening of two temporary services, the Maria Bambina Klabb 3-16 Centre at Junior College, Msida, and the St Joseph Klabb 3-16 Centre at MCAST. These met the needs of a number of working parents whose children attend Church schools, and required the adoption of a rotation model to be compliant with the Public Health Authorities' Guidelines. These centres came to the rescue of those parents who had no one to take responsibility for the supervision and welfare of their children, on days when these could not physically attend school.

During the period of remote work in the months of March, April and May 2020, with the employees working from home, the Foundation for Educational

Services took the opportunity to organise a smoother transition from the offices in Mtarfa to the new ones in Qormi. These new offices now cater for the growing need of the Foundation in assuring a healthy working atmosphere for its workers.

The Board also notices the efforts in organising diverse online courses, ensuring that programmes and services form a spectrum of leading-edge educational services. The way forward is to consolidate new programmes and keep on revitalising established ones to ensure that they maximise their potential.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Foundation's dutiful CEO and Senior Management Team, and all the staff members at the Head Office and centres. In addition, heartfelt thanks also go to all those who, in one way or another, have contributed to ensuring that FES keeps on providing a good service while meeting the necessities set by the unprecedented times. We look forward to future projects and challenges.



Ms Pamela Schembri



MESSAGE FROM THE **CEO**

Mr Dermot Galea

It always seems impossible until it's done

NELSON MANDELA

2020 was a very tough year, not just for the Foundation for Educational Services, but for the whole world. The main theme in 2020 was that of change, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. With pride I must say that FES managed to adapt its services to go online within a few days in March 2020. It was a transition for which we were never prepared, but which we managed to achieve at a short notice. Klabb 3-16 centres provided day-to-day activities through Facebook and other social media platforms, and the same was done by the childcare centres. Such service was very well received by the parents, and I can only thank all staff for their efforts to provide fresh material on a daily basis.

During this time, FES was also preparing for the eventual safe re-opening of the centres. In fact, the FES childcare centres were the first educational institutions to open. With the implementation of measures such as revised ratios, wearing of PPE, and ongoing cleaning and sanitization, the centres welcomed their children back on 5th June 2020.

Yet, the biggest challenge of 2020 was Skolasajf. The service was offered two weeks earlier than usual, 1st July 2020, for a period of 10 weeks rather than the usual 8-week period. There was a lot of preparation to abide by the Covid guidelines set by the Health Authorities. All staff rose to the occasion

and I must say that we received a lot of praise by the parents for the service provided, even though the conditions were very restrictive.

Another landmark for the Foundation in 2020 was the new Klabb 3-16 service which was provided for those students attending church schools, and who could not be accommodated in their own schools due to the COVID-19 area regulations. FES opened two centres, one at MCAST and the other at Junior College, to assist such students from 7am till 6pm, daily whilst keeping strictly in line with the Covid regulations. These two services were set up in no less than two weeks, which was a great feat on its own. This is especially when one considers that during such time, not only did we have to recruit staff, plan the programme and open applications, but also structurally prepare both buildings to accommodate the students.

Also worthy of mention is the signing of the Collective Agreement, which covers the period from 2019 till 2024. This Collective Agreement has improved working conditions for all staff members at FES, whilst also tackling certain issues which have been pending for a long period of time. I would like to take this opportunity to thank UHM – Voice of the workers, for their cooperation, and also the Industrial Relations Unit for their assistance. Cooperation and teamwork prevailed here.

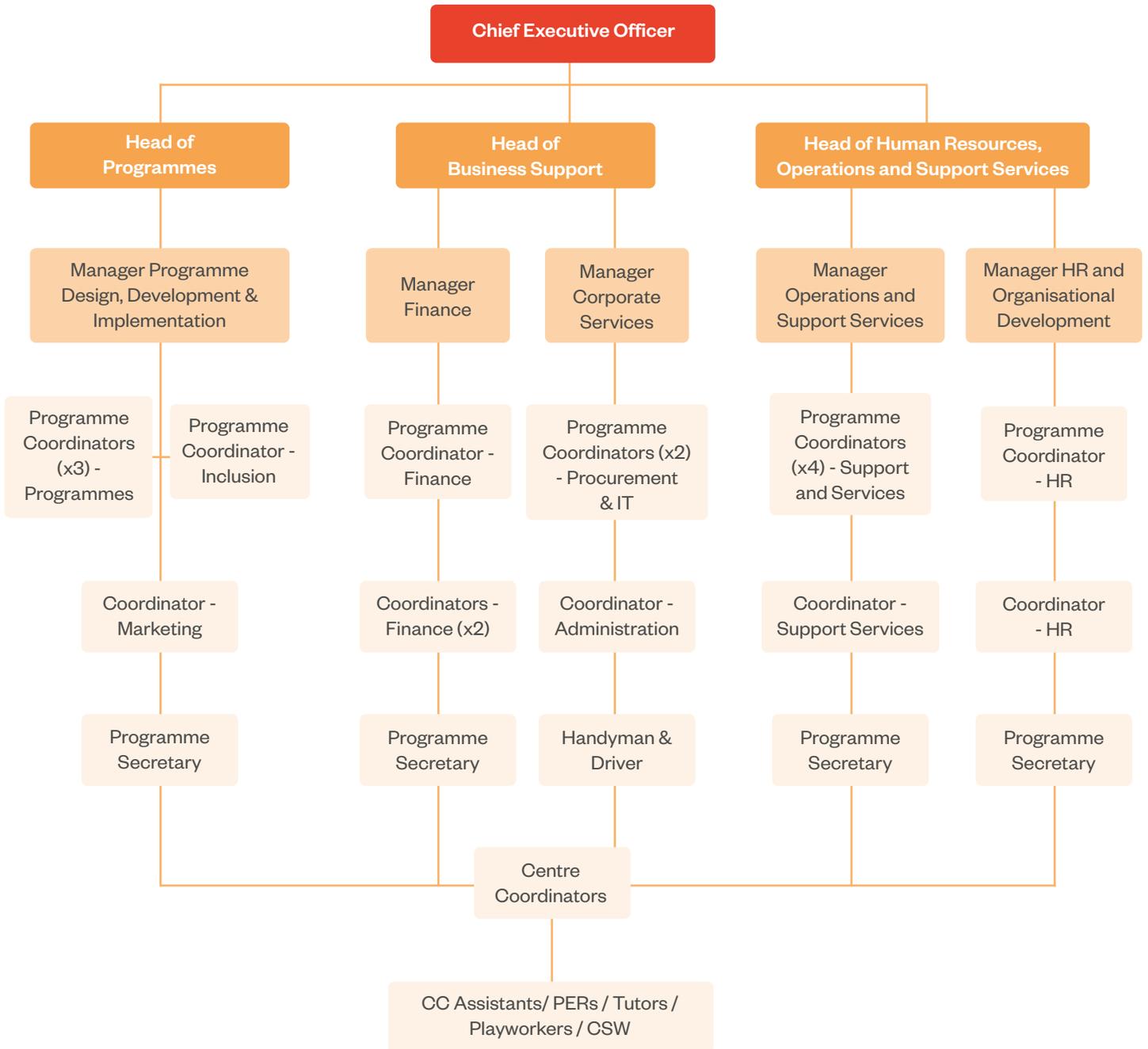
The new circumstances and work environment in 2020, and the ever pressing deadlines, provided challenges which could not have been overcome without the commitment and support of the staff members. I would like to thank my team at Head Office, and all the Centre Coordinators and employees at the centres, for all their work to provide a top-level service. I would also like to thank the ex-Chairperson Ms Elena Borg, the current Chairperson Ms Pamela Schembri, and the Board of Directors; the ex-Minister for Education, the Hon. Minister Dr. Owen Bonnici, and the present Minister for Education Hon. Minister Justyne Caruana; the Perm Sec Dr Frank Fabri, and all the officials at the Ministry for Education.

Teamwork is what makes FES the entity that it is today, and I hope that such spirit is kept up for years to come. FES proved from time to time that it can adapt to all changes in a very short period of time, and always rose to the occasion in times of need. My hope is that the entity continues to be valued more, and that it continues to thrive and provide services which everyone can benefit from.



Mr Dermot Galea

The Organisational Structure





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The Programmes Department

Programme Design, Development, and Implementation Unit

- Childcare
- Klabb 3-16
- Skolasajf

Inclusion Unit

Marketing Unit

Educational Partners and Projects

Corporate Social Responsibility

Administration

The Programmes Department during 2020

The changes brought about by the year 2020 saw a great upheaval in the modus operandi of the Programmes Department. What started off as a normal year, two months in, it developed into a drastic change brought about by the closure of the educational institutions. This necessitated the need to continue being in touch with the service users and monitoring staff's performance in a totally new manner.

The impact was felt across all the different sectors of the three major services, and in the administrative tasks needed to manage the department. The units within the Programmes Department, namely the Programme, Design, Development, and Implementation Unit (PDDI), the Inclusion Unit, and the Marketing & Communications Unit, worked hand in hand to counteract these effects. They worked to take measures to maintain contact and programme delivery with the service users, while they were physically absent from the centres.

The eventual re-opening of the educational institutions in turn resulted in new measures to control the viral spread, to ensure the safety of the children and staff as they attended the services physically. Moreover, the work involved aimed at supporting the staff at the centres in the delivery of the programme while respecting the COVID-19 guidelines.

The Programmes Department was a member of the working group set up by FES to create and



share with the competent authorities, COVID-19 guidelines for Childcare, Klabb 3-16, and Skolasajf. These were created and discussed during the period of remote working, in preparation for the secure re-opening of the centres in June 2020. These guidelines were used for the eventual re-opening of all Childcare Centres, After-School Clubs, and Summer schools in Malta, from June 2020 onwards, after the first closure of the educational institutions.

Among the measures taken in consideration were those related to:

- Health and Safety
- Programme implementation
- Staff work schedule

The measures taken to contain the spread of the pandemic also affected the programme implementation, including the limited access to third parties to the centres, and eventually the total exclusion of third parties as the pandemic reared its head once again.

However, despite all the resulting problems and restrictions, quality assurance was not neglected. The Programme Coordinators maintained contact with the centres through routine online meetings, online support visits, and spot checks at the centres. These meetings and spot checks were documented in Support Visit Sheet, focusing on observation, recommendations, and referrals to other departments within the FES Head Office.



Programme Design, Development, and Implementation Unit

Childcare

Childcare during the period of remote work – March 2020 till end of May 2020.

When the educational institutions were closed on 13th March 2020, the FES childcare centres closed their doors. However, there was an immediate move to maintain contact with the service users and their parents, in a bid to bolster and not lose the developmental milestones achieved by the Childcare Educators (CEs), with the children in their care.

However, this was a totally new scenario that had to be built, to address the issue of accountability

during remote work, and also keeping up a certain level of standard through an online channel. To this aim, the Programmes department built a schedule of activities that guided the childcare staff members in their remote duties. The Programmes Department created detailed guidelines on how to manage the new reality of remote working, and addressed the issues of:

- CEs Working online –3 daily online activities were uploaded by each centre on its Facebook page
- CEs held Live online interaction with children in their care in the presence of their parents, and facilitated by the Centre Coordinators
- Direction on the management of the Facebook pages for each Childcare Centre





- The daily work schedule for the Childcare Centre Coordinators, and for the Childcare Educators, to follow during remote working. This included the inclusion of a number of training webinars on the use of technology for remote learning, challenges faced by children with specific needs and how to meet these challenges, and other areas of research specific to the needs of the individual childcare educators

Another issue that was tackled during this period was the training of childcare educators employed as relievers. The nature of their work, during normal circumstances, necessitates the movement from one centre to another, and this meant a lack of consistency when attending centre-based training. During the remote-work period, the Programme Coordinators (PDDI) caught up with the relievers to bring them up to scratch with policies and any missed training.

In addition, all this was complemented with regular online meetings with the Childcare Centre Coordinators to address concerns and arising problems. The centres were also supported by the Programme Coordinators within the Programmes Department, as they helped the Centre Coordinators in the vetting of activities

to be uploaded online, and provided advice on how learning could be scaffolded for different age groups. The Centre Coordinators were also supported by the Marketing and Communications Coordinator, in the uploading of activities, and maintenance of the centres' FB pages.

The Programme Coordinator Inclusion was also instrumental during this period, as contact was maintained on a one-to-one basis, with parents of children who were being followed by this member of the Programmes' Team. Action plans, and development milestones were discussed, providing the parents with a channel of support specific to their child' needs.

During this period of remote work, the team within the Programmes' Department were also drafting the chapters to introduce a manual dedicated solely to the programme implementation within the FES Childcare Centres. To date, the only available manual was the Operations Manual which focused mainly on the centre's administration and just touched upon programme related matters. The introduction of the Programme Manual will address any lacunae in the area of early childhood education within the FES Childcare Centres, especially with the introduction of the Child Led Approach.

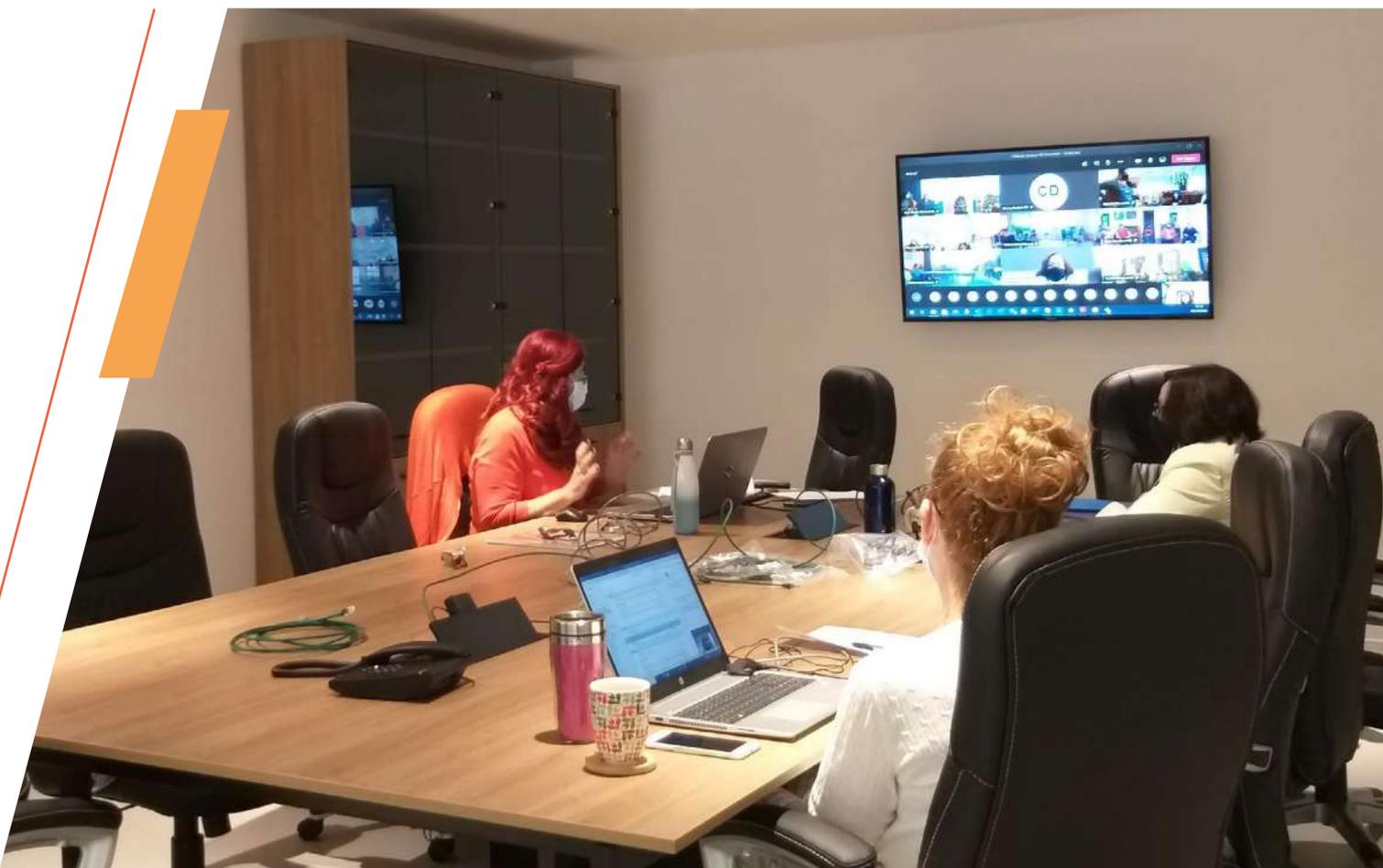
The Child Led Approach in the Childcare Centres

The activities held in the FES childcare centres have always focused on strengthening the basics of early childhood education. However, with the signing of the new Collective Agreement in August 2020, the journey to embark on the introduction of the Child Led Approach in the centres, was started.

The Child Led Approach is centred on the child choosing the main subject of an activity. The childcare educator will in turn adapt the activities to address the child's interest, and carry out observation to gain information about, and further, the child's development. The Childcare Educators use the child's curiosity and choices to inform planning and assess learning through observing the child's play.



Work to introduce the Child Led Approach had been ongoing since 2019, when various training sessions were held with all the staff of the childcare centres. It was also discussed in detail during the online Childcare Seminar held in November 2020. The seminar focused on 'The Learning Outcomes Framework' and was organised and delivered by the Programme Coordinators within the Programmes Department.



The first presentation during the seminar focused on the Learning Outcomes Framework, and the related achievements to provide clear guidelines for learning and assessment. During the second session, the childcare educators within their respective centres worked together to set up a project plan linked to a topic. The aim of these workshops was to give the Childcare Educators the hands-on experience of exploring a subject of interest across different learning domains.

The third presentation outlined the results presented in Prof Valerie Sollars' research "Defining quality in early childhood education: parents' perspectives" (2020). The results of this research were used to draw up a picture of how these results impact quality within the local childcare centres.

Following the seminar, the Centre Coordinators were asked to provide the Programmes' Department with information regarding the stage at which the Child Led Approach was being implemented in each centre. On this information this information was then used by the Programme Coordinators to provide training tailored to the centres' needs.

The introduction of the Child Led Approach in the FES Childcare Centres, and its impact on the work of the childcare educators, led to



a more centralised approach when recruiting new staff. When employed, new staff attended induction sessions by the different departments at Head Office. This included sessions with the Programmes Department, highlighting aspects of Early Childhood Education and Care, and the FES policies in this regard.

The work by the Programmes' Department in regard to the Child Led Approach, also included visits to Childcare Centres by the Programme Coordinators, to observe programme implementation, adherence to standards, and use of principles of Early Childhood Education and Care. These aspects were observed always within the respect to the COVID-19 guidelines for the opening of the childcare centres, including social distancing, maintenance of bubbles, and cautionary use of resources.



Monitoring of the service

The care and educational aspects involved in the provision of childcare services within the FES childcare centres, are governed by the National Standards for Child Day Care Facilities. These standards help to ensure that the environment, programme of activities, and care givers, are creating a holistically safe and developmentally appropriate childcare service.

During the months when the service was available at the Childcare Centres, the two Programme Coordinators (PDDI) carried out a total of 26 support visits at the centres. These were also complemented by a further 6 online sessions which were carried out specifically to target the training needs and any arising concerns of the staff members who were on reliever duties. These visits served to alleviate any concerns and answer queries of staff members, but also for the Programme Coordinators (PDDI) to monitor the service to make sure that it is compliant with the National Standards.

Another measure to monitor the service are the visits by the Department for Quality and Standards in Education (DQSE). Following each visit, a report is issued, and the Programme Coordinators (PDDI and Inclusion) addressed relevant matters flagged in the report, with the Centre Coordinators. During 2020, onsite visits to the centres by the DQSE were very limited due to the COVID related restrictions. However, communication was constant, and directions and recommendations were incorporated in the way forward for the service.

Childcare - the way forward

The plans for 2021 for the Childcare Service are based on a four-pronged training strategy, featuring training on:

- i) Child Led Approach;
- ii) Centre Management;
- iii) English Language Proficiency;
- iv) Live/recorded online presentations

These four areas of training are all geared towards improving the quality of services given to the children in the FES childcare centres.

Other projects in the pipeline include the:

- Finalisation of the Childcare Programme Manual
- Hands-on Child Led Approach training in childcare centres during visits by the Programme Coordinators. This will be rolled out in gradually in different centres.
- Focus on quality assurance where the Centre Coordinators will be taking on more responsibility with respect to the programme implementation
- Continued monitoring of management of challenging behavior in undiagnosed children



Klabb 3-16

Klabb 3-16 during the period of remote work – March 2020 till end of May 2020

The after-school service that welcomes thousands of children across the Maltese islands, and provides peace of mind for working parents, was also affected with the closure of the educational institutions. However, just like in the case of the childcare centres, FES worked to continue providing support to the children registered for the service.

The Programmes Department worked on a series of guidelines that helped the Centre Coordinators to manage the centres remotely, in the assignment of tasks to the centres' employees, and in the ways how to communicate with the children online.

These guidelines included that the Playworkers and Child Support Workers had to create recordings of activities, which were in turn posted online by the Centre Coordinators on the Teams platform or on each respective centre's FB page, accessible only by the registered centre users. Once again, the Programme Coordinators within the Programmes Department provided support in vetting of activities to ensure quality and the provision of advice for better programme implementation. Since the FB pages were for a closed group of people, each centre was scheduled to send two activities, Kinder and

Klabb 3-16 Service Online Activities



Primary, to the Programmes Department, to be uploaded on the FES FB page and Website. This made the activities available to the general public.

A major part of the Klabb 3-16 service is also the assistance by HW Tutors. These were also enlisted to work online with the children. However, their service was not limited to the children registered for the Klabb 3-16 service. It was opened to the general public and any parent requiring help with the children's HW could register for the service.

Klabb 3-16 – back at the centres

The Klabb 3-6 service returned to the centres in September 2020. Following the roll-out of the Skolasajf Service in the months of July to September 2020, the students returned to the after-school service, but with measures in place to mitigate the viral spread. These included once again the adherence to the official COVID-19 guidelines, that included the maintenance of bubbles and social distancing. Such measures once again affected the way the HW tutors' service and the way the programme of activities, were implemented.



HW assistance was delivered both at the centres and continued also via the online system within the centre itself, where social distancing posed a problem. The implementation of the programme of activities continued to happen however the children were in smaller groups to maintain the bubbles' system.

The monthly programme of activities continued to be issued by the Programmes Department, except during period of remote work. This ensured consistency of programme delivery across the centres, so that children were engaging in the same activities, irrespective which centre they attended.

Monitoring of the way the programme was being delivered was done through support visits by the Programme Coordinator. The two Programme Coordinators within the PDDI Unit carried out thirteen support visits following the commencement of the service in the centres in September 2020. The focus was the performance by the Playworkers and the Child Support Workers in relation to Programmes, and inclusion matters for children with a Statement of Support. The performance of HW Tutors in relation to the level of HW assistance was also monitored to make sure that the service users' needs were being addressed.

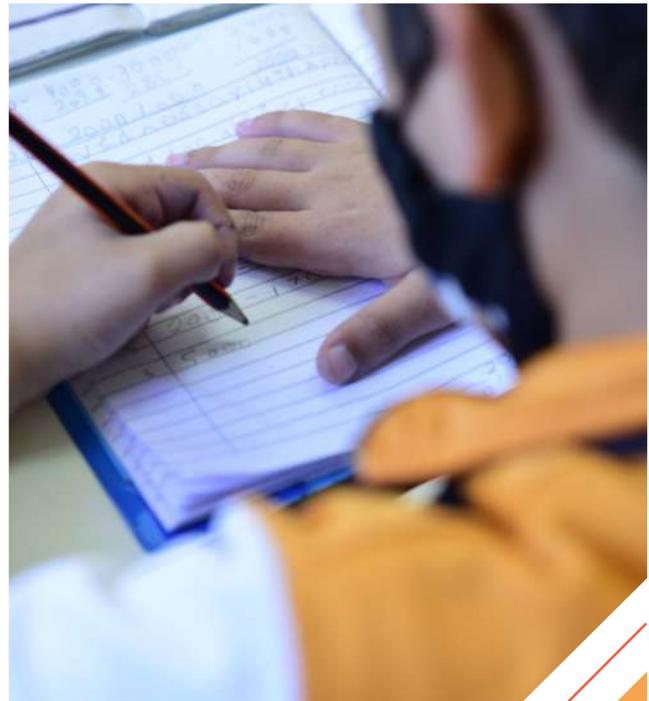
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Centres for Church school students

The social responsibility and commitment borne by FES, were once again manifested in September 2020, when the Foundation was called to action to help resolve a problem that was being faced by Church Schools' students.

Respect of the COVID-19 guidelines meant that certain school had to operate on a rotational basis, where children attended their school on alternate days or alternate weeks. Working parents faced the problem of who would accompany their children in their online lessons. FES worked hand in hand with the Ministry for Education and Employment to open two new centres dedicated towards catering for the educational needs of these students. These centres were the Maria Regina Klabb 3-16 Centre at Junior College, Msida, and at the San Guzepp Klabb 3-16 Centre at MCAST, Paola.

The Programmes Department worked in liaison with the Heads of the Church Schools for the timetabling of the online lessons of the individual schools, grouping of students to maintain the bubbles' system, assisting the children during



their lessons and any classwork or homework, and the monitoring of fun activities when children did not have lessons. Students who attended hailed from the Church Schools of Our Lady Immaculate (Hamrun), St Aloysius (B'Kara), St Francis (B'Kara), St Francis (Cospicua), St Francis (Msida), St Francis (Sliema), and St Monica (B'Kara).





Working parents faced the problem of who would accompany their children in their online lessons. FES worked hand in hand with the Ministry for Education and Employment to open two new centres dedicated towards catering for the educational needs of these students.

Klabb 3-16 - the way forward

The plans for the Klabb 3-16 service for 2021 will be once again determined by the circumstances regarding the COVID restrictions. However, as a rule, the following issues will continue to apply:

- Continued enforcement of the implementation of the programme of activities
- Focus on quality assurance, where the Centre Coordinators will be taking on more responsibility with respect to the programme implementation
- Monitoring of HWT in terms of level of assistance, especially within the current reality



- Creation of training courses for the Centre Coordinators and for the Playworkers with Extra Responsibilities
- Re-establishment of contacts with potential partners (depending on the circumstances)

Skolasajf

Skolasajf 2020 amidst the uncertainty of the pandemic.

The Skolasajf service is one of the most sought-after services of the FES portfolio. This is because it attracts thousands of clients, who are aiming to combine the students' holidays with a period of structured fun activities based on the principle of non-formal education.

While the population for 2020 decreased by a fourth compared to the previous years, attracting just over 8000 students due to the concerns surrounding the pandemic, the work involved in the preparation for it was very intense.

This was because of the mitigating measures which permeated every aspect of the Skolasajf service, and also because the service was offered over a 10-week period, instead of the usual 8 weeks.

Work on Skolasajf 2020 in fact started with the launch of the second Skolasajf Logo Competition in December 2019. Based on the theme 'My Planet, My Home', tied to topics like nature, the environment, and culture amongst others, it attracted entries from children aged 3 to 13 years. Once the winning entry was chosen, a digital logo was created, together with roll-up banners bearing the same image. These were then used on all the relevant documentation and for all the marketing activities, in the run-up to Skolasajf.



The Launch of Skolasajf 2020

The opening of Skolasajf 2020 was celebrated by a press conference, which was attended by the FES Chief Executive Officer, Mr Dermot Galea, by the FES Chairperson Ms Pamela Schembri, the Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Education and Employment Dr. Francis Fabri, and the Minister for Education and Employment, Hon. Dr. Owen Bonnici. Other guests were the Head of College Network Mr Paul Debono, the Head of School Mr Paul Sammut, and the Zurrieq Mayor Ms Rita Grima.

The Hon. Minister Bonnici explained that Skolasajf was the first step taken towards normality in education. He thanked all the staff at FES who had worked tirelessly since the beginning of the year. This was done in spite of the ongoing challenges created by the circumstances of the pandemic, which were overcome to the point that FES managed to start operating Skolasajf 2020, two weeks ahead of schedule.

The Permanent Secretary Dr Frank Fabri noted that the opening of Skolasajf was another

milestone in the educational sector, following the opening of the Childcare Centres. Mr. Dermot Galea, CEO of FES, also expressed the satisfaction that work on Skolasajf dated back to January and continued during the period of remote working. The collective effort of all the staff members resulted in FES delivering the Skolasajf service as expected and running for an extended period.

The Chairperson Ms Pamela Schembri, reiterated that the early commencement of the service enabled the parents to ease their children back into a routine. She stressed that the program was not just a baby sitting service, noting that Skolasajf meets specific targets giving the participants the opportunity to explore their creative skills.

The results for the Skolasajf Logo Competition were also announced during the conference. The first three winners were presented with books and vouchers sponsored by Miller Distributors and Merlin Publishers. The winners were Isabelle Eileen Lucica (1st), Mia Polak (2nd), and Kyle Micallef (3rd).





The Programme for Skolasajf – keeping the children engaged

Creating a Programme Manual to guide the schedule of activities for Skolasajf 2020, was a more concentrated effort than usual. Not only did it have to offer activities for a span of ten weeks, it also had to be built around the COVID-19 mitigating measures recommending social distancing, and the lack of sharing of resources amongst others. This challenge was overcome with extensive research for, and adaptations of, activities that facilitated the respect to these guidelines.

The final result was the creation of two Programme Manuals catering for the mainstream centres, one for the Early Years and one for the Primary sector. There was also a third programme manual for implementation in the Resource Centres and by Child Support Workers in the mainstream centres.

During Skolasajf 2020, the Sports and Games Programme was deemed by the Programmes

Department as even more important than in previous years. The lack of outings, the keeping to one's bubble, social distancing within the same class, the staggered breaks within a cordoned off area, and the lack of interaction with children in other classes, were not very good prospects for the physical activity of the children. Therefore, more emphasis was placed on the work of the Sports Playworker. The class Playworkers were also given a number of simple physical activities and yoga exercises that could be carried out by the children near the desks.

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The activities involved in the programme, their delivery and deadlines, and other related commitment expected from the staff members in the centres, were discussed at length in a series of online Induction Meetings with the Regional Coordinators and the Centre Coordinators. The information was also communicated to these staff members in a series of soft copy presentations, including material prepared for

the Centre Coordinators to deliver induction meetings to PWs. The Head of Programmes also delivered a presentation during the induction meeting of the Child Support Workers, targeting their specialised role and expected performance. For the first time, a soft copy of the Programme Manual and related documentation, was sent to all the staff members in all the different roles.



Partners of the Skolasajf programme

The programme of activities was also supported by several partners. The identification, contact, discussions with partners, and scheduling of a calendar of partners, is a major part of the Skolasajf project. Discussions were held about the content of physical sessions and about the delivery in respect of the restrictions.

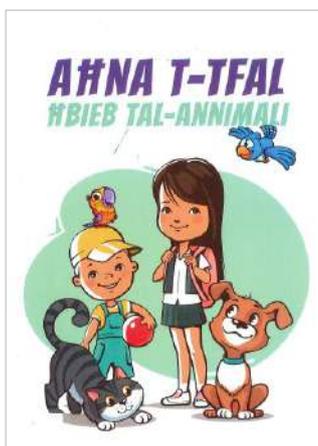
In 2020 the number of partners decreased somewhat from the previous years, due to the recurring concerns with the viral spread. However, 30 partners still confirmed their participation. While outings were not allowed according to the COVID-19 guidelines, partners could deliver activities in the centres, while respecting all the mitigating measures. However, with the rise in COVID cases on a national level, after the first few weeks FES took the initiative to cancel external visitors to the centres. Partners who could do so were asked to transfer their activities to an online platform, while others who could not, unfortunately had to stop their service.

The partners who took part in Skolasajf 2020 were:

- Alka Ceramics
- Ambjent Malta
- Animal Welfare Directorate
- BeSmart Online
- CBM Online Sessions
- CPS Display

- Dental Health
- E-Bug (Malta Medical Students Association)
- Emergency Fire Rescue Unit (EFRU)
- Emergency Response and Rescue Corps (ERRC)
- Faraxa Publishing
- GEMMA/HSBC
- HSBC
- Inizjamed
- LESA
- Lifetime Malta
- Malta Police
- MEUSAC
- MMSA
- Prayer Space by the Secretariat for Catholic Education
- PTI Achieve/HSBC/MGG
- Rabat Ajax
- ROTA Project/HSBC
- Schola Cantorum Jubilate
- Sedqa
- Superheroes in Science Project
- The Malta Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society
- The National Literacy Agency
- Transport Malta
- WasteServ

In August 2020, one of the annual Skolasajf partners, took their participation a step further. The Animal Welfare Promotion and Services Directorate, which delivers educational interactive presentations about animal welfare, published a book titled 'Ahna t-Tfal Hbieb tal-Animali'. This book is a collection of original poems written by students who attended Skolasajf 2019. The book was launched during a press conference held by Minister Anton Refalo and attended by the FES CEO Mr Dermot Galea. Mr Galea thanked Minister Refalo for this initiative and the colleagues from Animal Welfare for their continued support. All this has contributed to this successful writing project that promotes the children's positive thoughts and feelings about their relationship with animals, and the respect shown towards all creatures.





...this successful writing project that promotes the children's positive thoughts and feelings...

Monitoring the Delivery

All the work involved in the planning of the programme does not stop with the commencement of Skolasajf. The Regional Coordinators monitoring the activities in the centres were asked to observe and report on the staff's performance, and fill in the Weekly Feedback Form for each centre under their remit. This feedback was in turn shared with the Programme Coordinators, PDDI and Inclusion, who followed up on matters that required their attention. Incidents requiring immediate attention were actioned immediately via phone calls to Head Office, while other matters were discussed during the weekly meeting with the Regional Coordinators. In this way, the Programme Department had indirect access to each centre and could address any concerns or breaches of policies, while also praising good practices and sharing them with other centres.

This exercise ran parallel with the daily direct support to all centres via phone calls, emails, and support visits by the Programme Coordinators, PDDI and Inclusion. The two Programme Coordinators within the Programmes Department carried out 12 on site visits to the Skolasajf

Centres. This facilitated the direct contact with the Centre Coordinator, and the enhanced communication contributed to building better working relationships with the colleagues in the centres.

Feedback was further collected after the end of Skolasajf. The Programmes Department issued a questionnaire which addressed different aspects of the Skolasajf service. This was sent to all the Regional Coordinators, Centre Coordinators, and parents. The data collected was analysed and a report was drawn up. The report was used as an internal operational report, where findings were shared with the other Head Office departments who addressed aspects related to their remit.





Skolasajf – the way forward

- Very much dependent on the circumstances
- Direct meeting with Health Authorities should the service still be affected by Covid-19 mitigating measures
- Strengthening of relationship with long term partners
- Enlisting the participation of new partners
- Launch the Skolasajf Logo competition and design the new logo for Skolasajf 2022
- Launch the new slogan and create the related programme of activities
- Working with partners on a two-pronged approach (physical presence and/or online)
- To formalise and enforce the procedure for any money collected for activities (accountability)
- Regional Coordinators to be more accountable for reporting on programme implementation
- Focus on increased support to, and monitoring at, Resource Centres

All the work involved in the planning of the programme does not stop with the commencement of Skolasajf.

Inclusion Unit

The philosophy of Inclusion

The focal point of all the services offered by FES are the children and the needs of their families. The hallmark of all this is that every child matters. 2020 was no exception.

The Programme Coordinator, Inclusion

A new role, the Programme Coordinator (Inclusion), was set up in 2020 specifically to assist those children exhibiting challenging behaviour in childcare centres, and those with a Statement of Support who attend the Klabb 3-16 and Skolasajf Centres. The number of children who were followed by the PC Inclusion during 2020, according to the service, were as follows:

Service	Number of children followed
Childcare	81
Klabb 3-16	142
Skolasajf	493

The PC Inclusion supports all stakeholders involved in the child’s learning, namely, the Child Support Worker, the Playworker, the Regional and Centre Coordinator and the Parents. However, the main focus remains on the child; the PC Inclusion will visit the centres to observe the children in their natural setting of play, and will then set up an Action Plan together with all the stakeholders, including any professionals who may be already seeing to the child’s needs, so that these are met.



The recommendations as set in the Action Plan act as guidelines for the staff members when carrying out their duty with the child.

It must be noted however, that the PC Inclusion does not only cater for children having a Statement of Support, but also all other children who are still too young to be diagnosed and hence do not yet have a Statement of Support. These are children attending the FES Childcare Centres. Support is therefore given to those children who are offering challenging behaviour, have a disability or are showing signs that their development is not at par with the child’s chronological age. Once again, observation is carried out at the centre, meetings are held with all stakeholders, and an Action Plan is drawn up



to help the Childcare Educator when caring for the child and supporting him/her to reach his/her developmental milestones.

Consequently, the PC Inclusion carries out visits to all the three different centres offering his support so that every child is included.

During 2020, the practice of training specifically on inclusion matters was put into place. This was introduced during the period of remote work back in March 2020, with Childcare Centre Coordinators and Childcare Educators. The training on relevant inclusion matters aim to help the staff members understand better the different symptoms exhibited by different conditions, and how the caring adults can adapt activities to be able to cater better for the children's needs. Online training, carried with each of the thirteen childcare centres, dealt with challenging behaviour. This was particularly useful to the childcare educators who work with children from 3 months to 3 years and whose intellectual, language, emotional and social skills are still developing, and who might also be hailing from difficult home backgrounds.

During 2020, the Programme Coordinator and the Regional Coordinator, Inclusion, carried out a total of 104 support visits.

Service	Total number of Support Visits
Childcare	20
Klabb 3-16	19
Skolasafj 2020	65

Table 1: Support visits (Inclusion) during 2020

The role of the PC Inclusion also includes the approval or otherwise, for the need of Child Support Workers. The PC Inclusion vets the new Klabb 3-16 and Skolasafj applications of those children who have a Statement of Support and advises the Human Resources Department on the required Child Support Worker (CSW) personnel.

Children with specific conditions may have difficulty in conceptualising time, understanding instructions and routines, and expressing themselves. The lack of competence in these areas may make it difficult for them to integrate with their peers and in their programme of

activities. To this end, in 2020 FES invested in acquiring licences for the Boardmaker software. One of the aims of this software is to improve communication skills through visual support. The PC Inclusion, in fact supported staff to use this specialised software so that visuals that aid communication, visual schedules, and visual routines could be created.

Inclusion during Skolasajf 2020

Skolasajf is one of the largest projects of FES, with the number of children who have a Statement of Support rising drastically compared to the Klabb 3-16 population. To address the increase in demand for support in inclusion matters and thus widen the reach when addressing inclusion concerns, the post of Regional Coordinator (RC) Inclusion was created in 2020. It was set up so that s/he would support the Skolasajf Resource Centres and other mainstream schools as directed by the PC Inclusion. This cooperation and synergy between these two roles has proved to be fruitful in that productive dialogue ensues and more children are eventually supported more effectively.

Children's medical needs are also being catered for during Skolasajf. The PC Inclusion coordinates the process of checking whether a child needs to have medication during Skolasajf and provides all the information to the nursing contractor. During 2020, 29 children made use of the nursing service during Skolasajf.

The FES Inclusion Policy

2020 was also the year when the FES Inclusion Policy was developed and finalised, following discussions with the concerned stakeholders via a focus group. The FES Inclusion Policy upholds the Foundation's belief that all the children making use of our services, are to be supported to ensure success in their development and learning.

The FES Inclusion Policy seeks to inform educators in the FES centres, that inclusion is a process where every child is part of the centre where s/he is attending. It therefore advocated the values of collaboration and respect between all members of its community. Responding effectively to the child's individual educational and developmental needs is key to the FES Inclusion Policy. By placing the child at the centre of the learning experience, the inclusion policy exhorts its educators to adapt the pedagogy and resources to the child's needs, and to seek professional support when they feel that some children may be at risk of exclusion.

Responding to external organisations

The Foundation for Educational Services has continued to cooperate with the Foundation for Social Welfare Services (FSWS) whereby the FES Social Board vets and accepts FSWS referrals for Childcare, Klabb 3-16 and Skolasajf. Once the FES Social Board receives all the required documentation, each application is processed and successful applications benefit from exemption of fees and from prioritisation of access to the services. During 2020, the FES Social Board approved 8 cases for Childcare, 11 for Klabb 3-16 and 49 cases for Skolasajf. It must be pointed out that the majority of the Skolasajf social cases were exempted from paying both for the core programme and for the extended hours.

Another inclusive collaboration that continued throughout 2020 was that with the Karl Vella Foundation (KVF). The Karl Vella Foundation was established to provide educational and psychological support to children in families disrupted by serious illness or loss of a family member. FES supports KVF by providing the services of two Playworkers, who provide



non-formal educational activities to children make use of the KVF service. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreed upon by the two entities, continues to solidify the FES' social commitment, and supports KVF in its mission.

Abetting Inclusion through training

The Playworker and Child Support Worker Courses have continued to be organised by FES, in collaboration with the Institute for Education (IfE). In all, 5 Playworkers Courses and 3 Child Support Workers Courses were held during 2020.

Both courses propound the values of diversity and inclusion by seeking to highlight the importance of the educators' commitment to the principle that every child matters. Moreover, the courses also seek to share this spirit of inclusion with its course participants. For instance, the Playworker Course is primarily open to those 'mothers' who would like to either return to the world of work or seek work experience despite not having formal qualifications. The Playworker course gave some individuals a taste of academic success which in their own words, 'they had never experienced before'.

To conclude, the Foundation for Educational Services will always be committed to the inclusive philosophy by seeking to support the child's needs. Moreover, it will always endeavour to ward off prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination so as to abide by Article 21 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Inclusion Matters – the way forward

- Continued support for staff in all the centres
- More streamlined communication with Finance and HR re support needs in the centres
- PC Inclusion to team up with RC Inclusion in the writing of the Skolasajf Programme for Resource Centres.
- Consolidation of inclusion matters in staff training
- Dissemination of documents that guide inclusion practices such as the FES Inclusion Policy, and its implementation
- Meetings with professionals with regards service to children with individual educational needs (IEN) in childcare.



Marketing Unit



Marketing Communications

The introduction of the position of Marketing and Communications Coordinator in December 2019, saw the addition of a staff member joining the Programmes Department in January 2020. This role was created to support the Manager Programmes in the development and implementation of marketing activities. From the onset, the role was to not only to highlight the Foundation’s achievements, which unfortunately may go unnoticed amongst the daily pressing commitments, but also to have an easily accessible point of contact for current and potential clients who may have queries about the service.

The immediate task set for the Marketing and Communications Coordinator was that of maintaining a level of positioning within the

market, which included working on sustaining the image of the entity a market leader in educational services for children between the age of 3 months and 16 years of age.

The Facebook as a marketing tool

During 2020, there was a focus on increasing the use of the Facebook platform as a marketing tool. This was applied not only to the main FES page, but also to the marketing of the FES Childcare Centres. To this aim, a FB account was created for each childcare centre. The centres’ pages in turn proved especially useful in the period of remote work when the children centres were closed from March till end of May 2020. The FB pages served as a direct channel of communication with the clients and offered activities to keep the children occupied.





The Marketing and Communication aspect included showcasing and promoting activities from all the sectors of the Foundation (Head Office, Childcare, Klabb 3-16, and Skolasajf). Other tasks were the promotion of the services to attract clients, keeping an open line of communication with clients, and managing and updating online platforms and other channels of information.

This strategy of continuously updating the FB pages in fact reaped an increase of 2672 Likes on the FES FB page alone during 2020. While the Likes on their own do not have any monetary value, supporting the organisation through a simple Like, can have significant results. They give an indication of the level of awareness among the general public about the organisation. The FB platform in fact acts as a place where to build a community and gain social status. Thus, the number of Likes can also be instrumental in compelling people to make real-life recommendations.

Customer Care

The Marketing and Communications Coordinator also had the key role of maintaining the FES Facebook page to address in real time all types of incoming queries, including following up on leads that may result in new intakes. For this reason, there was constant communication with the other Head Office departments, in the channeling of related queries and passing on confirmed replies to the people submitting their enquiries.

It is to be noted that these queries are also posted on the Childcare Centres' FB pages, and the Marketing and Communications Coordinator oversaw these pages and addressed those queries too.

The service that garners the most queries all year round is in fact that of childcare. Amongst the list of queries, one finds those from new parents who are shopping around for a childcare service, or from parents who may be requesting a transfer to another FES centre due to work or residence relocation.

During 2020 there were 77 childcare related queries on the FES FB page and on those of the centres. The following breakdown shows the end-result of these queries:

- 21 resulted in intakes
- The rest were cases where:
 - Children who were going to be born in 2021 - **19**
 - Clients who changed their minds because of the rise in COVID-19 cases - **4**
 - Hours of service not suitable for the clients - **4**
 - Clients who found a centre nearer to their residence - **1**
 - Clients who did not reply to follow up communication - **22**
 - Wanted to visit the centre physically - **3**
 - Changed their mind since being on the waiting list - **2**
 - Request for a transfer between centres - **1**

Other queries tended to be seasonal according to the service. These included enquiries about the application periods for the Klabb 3-16 service during the scholastic holidays and the Bridge Holidays, about the applications for Skolasajf, recruitment queries, and about the programme of activities during Klabb 3-16 and during Skolasajf. The Courses sector of the Programmes Department also generated queries. These were mostly about the opening of the application period, about eligibility criteria, and the content of the course.

Further Marketing Communications Activities

During 2020, the Programmes Department was entrusted again with the creation of the FES Annual Report, for 2019. Apart from the distinct aims of displaying the financial performance and goals, and to meet regulatory requirements, the annual report was used as marketing opportunity. It gave an overview of the achievements of the Foundation, not only to show the identity of FES as an organisation and as a brand, but also to inform and make an emotional connection with the target audience.

Another public channel of communication was the FES newsletter *In Touch*, which continued to be produced by the Programmes Department and reached its 27th edition by the end of 2020. There were also three special editions dedicated to the Skolasajf activities, which were issued at the end of the months of July, August, and September 2020. These brought the total number of FES newsletters issued in 2020 to 15 publications. Each newsletter was distributed to all the staff members, to all the clients on the FB database, to MFED employees via the Directorate's intranet service, and distributed to all public service employees via the sector's intranet service. Each FES newsletter is also accessible on the FES website.

The Programmes Department is also in charge of organizing PR events which offer opportunities for FES to showcase its works. In 2020, this included the organisation of the ceremony to inaugurate the opening of the FES Head Office at the new building in Qormi. The ceremony was held on 25th September 2020. The FES CEO Mr Dermot Galea, and the FES Chairperson Ms Pamela Schembri, welcomed for the first time at the premises, the then Minister for Education Dr Owen Bonnici, and the Permanent Secretary Dr Frank Fabri. Following the inauguration, the Minister and Permanent Secretary toured the offices and met the Head Office staff.



The table below presents other different tasks carried out, and events created, to promote the FES achievements during 2020.

Section	Selected achievements
Head Office	Official opening of the new premises; creation of recruitment ads, information posters, and promotional banners; philanthropic events
Childcare	creation of videos showcasing each centre on the FB pages; uploading of activities and photos; meetings with the Childcare Centre Coordinators to discuss local promotional opportunities in the different localities; adverts (online and printed publications); two open days at <i>Il-Bebbuxu</i> and at <i>Il-Ferrovija</i> Childcare Centres
Klabb 3-16	showcasing of the centres' activities on the main FB page; communication of service dates and application periods
Skolasajf	official launch press conference; write up in the papers; daily uploads on FB of photos of events/activities;
General	Radio and TV appearances; articles (online and press publications); mention in press releases by partners who collaborate with FES

Table 2: Other Marketing activities during 2020

Marketing Communications – the way forward

- Work on the FES 20th Anniversary celebrations
- Work on embellishing the outside areas of the Childcare Centres
- Signage to the Childcare Centres, and at the centres
- Creation of an official information pack about the Childcare Service, that will be given to prospective clients
- Continue with meetings with the different Childcare Centre Coordinators about promotion on a local level
- Maintenance of the level of customer care and following up on customer queries
- Answer queries about childcare available slots in the FES centres
- Follow up on sales leads
- Promotion of Klabb 3-16 activities and service periods
- Marketing of the different stages in the run up to Skolasajf 2021
- Organisation of the Skolasajf 2021 Logo Competition
- Media events in association with the launch of Skolasajf 2021
- Promotion to showcase the activities of Skolasajf 2021 via various platforms
- Work on creating contacts with mass media channels for FES presence

Apart from the distinct aims of displaying the financial performance and goals, and to meet regulatory requirements, the annual report was used as marketing opportunity.



REGISTER
NOW!



Childcare Centres

Birgu - Il-Kuluri
B'Kara - Il-Ferrovija
Cospicua - Il-Bejta
Floriana - It-Tghanniqqa
Gżira - Il-Qawsalla

Haż-Zebbuġ - Z-meraldi
Marsa - Il-Pespus
Naxxar - Pizzi Pizzi Kanna
Pembroke - Il-Merill
Qawra - Ix-Xemx

San Gwann - Is-Sardinella
St Venera - Il-Bebbuxu
Siggiewi - Id-Denfil



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Educational Partners and Projects

Partners and Research

A missing element in the Childcare, Klabb 3-16, and Skolasjaf services during the 2020 period, was the marked absence of student placements and educational partners, who partner with FES for the objectives of their tasks. This measure was taken as part of the adherence to the COVID-19 guidelines.

A programme which in fact faced a setback within the COVID-19 scenario, was the continuation of the *Making Friends, Bringing Friends Project*, in collaboration with the Migrant Learners' Unit within the Ministry for Education and Employment. The two groups of students taking part had their 10 sessions cut short after the sixth session, when the educational institutions were once again closed in March 2020.

Other stakeholders in this area are MCAST, Junior College, and University students. These seek assistance from FES to complete placement hours related to their respective course, while organisational partners would deliver activities related to their field.

This mitigating measure of not allowing third parties in the centres, also influenced the number of research requests that could be accommodated. It is one of the duties of the Programmes Department to receive and vet research requests, abetting students and researchers in their collection of local data to further their academic studies.

While FES accepted 13 research requests in 2019, only 4 requests could be accepted in 2020. This was due to the nature of the methodology being requested to be carried out by the researchers. On-site visit in the centres could not be accepted, and only online data collection methods were allowed. These requests were accepted following the formal procedures of compliance with ethical and GDPR issues, acquiring consent from the Ethics' Board of the educational entity, and the consent of the parents of participating students.

During 2020, the Manager Programmes was appointed as Research Liaison Officer to act as a contact point between FES and the Research and Policy Documentation Centre (RPDC) through liaison with the Research Unit at the Department for Research, Lifelong Learning and Employability (DRLLLE). The RPDC contributes to the development of evidence-based policy and practice by facilitating the exchange of information, related to the remit of the Ministry for Education and Employment (MEDE), in a reliable and timely manner. This role entailed that as a Liaison Officer, the Manager Programmes was responsible for furnishing the RPDC with the following documents, as and when applicable:

- Documents which currently bind practice, i.e. policies, strategies, manuals, laws and regulations;
- Documents which currently guide practice and policy, but which are non-binding, i.e. guidelines, communications, qualitative and quantitative research reports, reports on best practice;

- Documents, dating from 2009, which inform practice and policy, i.e. research, audit and assessment reports;
- Databases, which can be analysed to inform practice and policy;
- Malta positions related to MEDE's remit;
- Consultation documents.

Courses and CPD

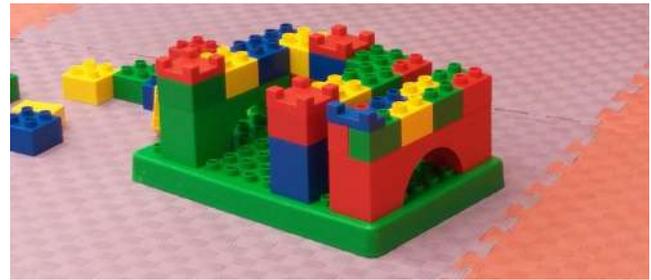
Continuous professional development and courses tailored-made for the specific roles of staff who work with FES, have always been high on the FES' agenda. Ongoing learning is paramount to keep oneself updated with changes and developments in whichever one works, and this is even more so in the field of education. This belief has paved the way for a number of training sessions and courses for new and prospective staff members in 2020, since well trained staff members are the best resource to offer the children in the care of the FES services.

During the remote work period between March and the end of May 2020, there was ongoing training by the staff from the Programmes Department, online research, and also online seminars with the Institute for Education, for all Childcare Coordinators and Educators.

Sessions by the staff from the Programmes Department focused on the Basics of Early Childhood Education and Care, the Child Led Approach, and Training on Behaviour Management.

Online research topics focused on *Storytime for toddlers*, *Teaching children to read*, *Early Writing Activities*, *Activities to do with Babies*, *Respecting and responding to children*, *Observing young children's learning and development*, and *How to use observation data*.

The Childcare Centres' staff members also attended online seminars by the Institute for



This mitigating measure of not allowing third parties in the centres, also influenced the number of research requests that could be accommodated.

Education, the titles of which were *Hands-on Minds-on Math*, *Supporting a Child with Autism*, *Effective Home-School Partnership* and *Encouraging Reading & Writing*.

During 2020, the Foundation for Educational Services once again registered as a member of the Early Childhood Development Association of Malta (ECDAM), thus giving its members access to monthly lectures about Early Childhood Education and Care, and other various topics that address the needs of the child in his / her early development. For the May 2020 meeting, ECDAM invited FES to be a speaker and give information on how the remote work of the Childcare Educators was delivered during the pandemic. To complement the talk, the Programme Department produced a short video showcasing the online work that was being done by the Childcare Educators in their bid to remain in contact with the children. It was shown during an ECDAM event and it was very well received, with many positive and encouraging comments from all participants.

In June 2020, all the staff from the FES Head, and Centre Coordinators from the Childcare, Klabb 3-16, and Skolasajf services, also attended the 'COVID-19 Pandemic - Managing Changing



Realities' online seminar, delivered by Dr. Claudette Portelli. This seminar, which was requested by FES and organised in collaboration with the Institute for Education, was delivered exclusively for FES personnel employed with FES. The seminar touched upon the changing realities experienced by individuals caused by COVID-19. Such changes could have been either positive or negative, or perhaps a combination of both. The seminar sought to raise awareness of such emotional states and the coping skills and strategies that were used. The re-visiting and refining of such coping skills and strategies to manage the ever-changing realities caused by COVID-19 could provide support to FES personnel in their professional and personal lives.

Further courses and training during 2020 included in-house productions by FES and also in association with organisations. These included:

- Induction training for new staff members in all roles across all the sectors
- 5 PW and 3 CSW Courses for prospective employees
- 4 First Aid courses which were held for a selection of CEs, CCCs and PWs & CSWs Course Participants
- The November Childcare Seminar which focused on the Child Led approach and on the results of a study on Parents' Feedback,

conducted by Professor Valerie Sollars, and part of which was conducted amongst FES Childcare staff.

- Two Childcare Centres received training on the use of the Epipen

Courses and CPD ...the way forward

- Continue to organise and deliver PW & CSW Courses in line with the exigencies of FES
- The PW Course will be marketed further to encourage more unemployed parents to re-enter the world of work, with FES
- Further First Aid and Firefighting Courses for OEs, CCCs, PWs, and CSWs
- PER and Klabb Centre Coordinators courses planned – focus on the admin needs of the Klabb 3-16 and Skolasajf centres
- More Childcare Centres will be undergoing training on the use of the Epipen
- English Language Proficiency Course for all childcare staff, focusing on their duties
- FSWS Training - concerning needs of those children who have or are still undergoing a trauma; for Childcare and Klabb 3-16 Staff
- Childcare Centre Coordinators will receive training on the management aspects of the Childcare Centres
- Consolidation of Induction Sessions for all new Childcare and Klabb 3-16 staff

Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate Social Responsibility

Activities aimed at upholding the corporate social responsibility of the FES staff members and service users, continued throughout 2020. While the pandemic brought certain financial problems to a number of families, attempts were still made to help philanthropic organisations and other NGOs, whose funds consequently also suffered in 2020. Monetary funds and physical resources were distributed to different beneficiaries who appreciated each donation as a show of gratitude and support for their missions

CARITAS – one of the affected organisations was indeed Caritas Malta, which in July 2020 confirmed that due to the economic difficulties brought about by the pandemic, there were

families in Malta and Gozo who had ended up with lack of food on their table. A fundraising drive by Caritas was one where companies and organisation were encouraged to sponsor a family. This led to the initiative by FES employees who agreed to donate a small sum from their wages to sponsor a Maltese family with 2 children in need. The final sum collected was €955, which was presented to the Director of Caritas Malta, Mr. Anthony Gatt.

Lifetime Malta - Lifetime Malta was one of the NGO which collaborated with FES during the Skolasajf service, with the organisation of the “Children’s COVID-19 Masks Challenge”. The initiative had the aim of engendering social responsibility at an early age. A total of 66 masks with motivational messages were donated to under-privileged children through





the Millennium Chapel, as support during the difficult times faced in 2020.

Another initiative by the same organisation was the “Christmas Toy Challenge for Children”. The aim of the activity was for children to cultivate their altruistic qualities of sharing and caring towards less fortunate children. Children attending the Klabb 3-16 service were asked to create an original toy, write a brief story to support it and describe what motivated them to create the toy. The toys were donated to less advantaged children through the Millennium Chapel.

PINK October and November – The months of October and November 2020 were once again the time to create awareness about cancer. Apart from spreading information, FES staff and service users collected funds for the Malta Hospice Movement, to help them in their sterling work in the community. The total sum collected was €1,403.21, and it was generated from donations by Head Office staff, Board Members, Childcare and Klabb 3-16 staff, parents and children.

Blood donation - Staff members from the FES Head Office visited the Blood Donation Centre at G'Mangia, to donate blood as part of the

November activities. These first-time donors expressed their wish to do their bit in supporting the treatment of patients, and volunteered for this commendable deed.

MCCF - For the sixth consecutive year, the Foundation for Educational Services teamed up with Skolasajf and collected the sum of €5909.95. these funds were donated to the Community Chest Fund during a presentation to His Excellency Dr George Vella, the President of Malta.

Puttinu Cares – One of the Skolasajf centres also collected funds for the non-government and non-profit making organisation, Puttinu Cares, which supports children and even adults suffering from cancer. The sum collected was of €246.27.

Foodbank Lifeline Foundation – The annual food collection for the Foodbank Lifeline Foundation, once again took place throughout the month of December 2020. Once again, staff members at Head Office, Childcare and Klabb 3-16 Centres, and our valued service users, exhibited their generous offerings on a grand scale. It was a great satisfaction to see a van packed to the hilt with scores of bags and boxes of non-perishable food items.



 THE MALTA COMMUNITY CHEST FUND FOUNDATION
The Palazzo, Valletta, Malta | T: +356 2124 0268
San Anton Palace, Axtard, Malta | T: +356 222 6220

EN^o 000985 Date 23/11/2020

Received from: Foundation for Educational Services

The sum of Five thousand nine hundred nine euro + 95c

€

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Cheque N^o: 27549

APS BOV HSBC LOMBARD BNF OTHER

In respect of: Donation

The Malta Community Chest Fund Foundation is a philanthropic organisation regulated by the Civil Code under the auspices of the President of Malta.

www.mccff.org.mt 
Grazella Zerafa
Chief Financial Officer

Administration

Administration of the Programmes Department

The administration of the Programmes' Department was an ongoing fixture throughout the whole year, based on ongoing communication between the different units which worked in synergy to produce uniform programmes and policies to the entity and to all the service centres.

Lead by the Head of Department, and assisted by the Manager Programmes, there were ongoing departmental meetings, online and office based, and one to one meetings with departmental staff to assess performance and address specific concerns.

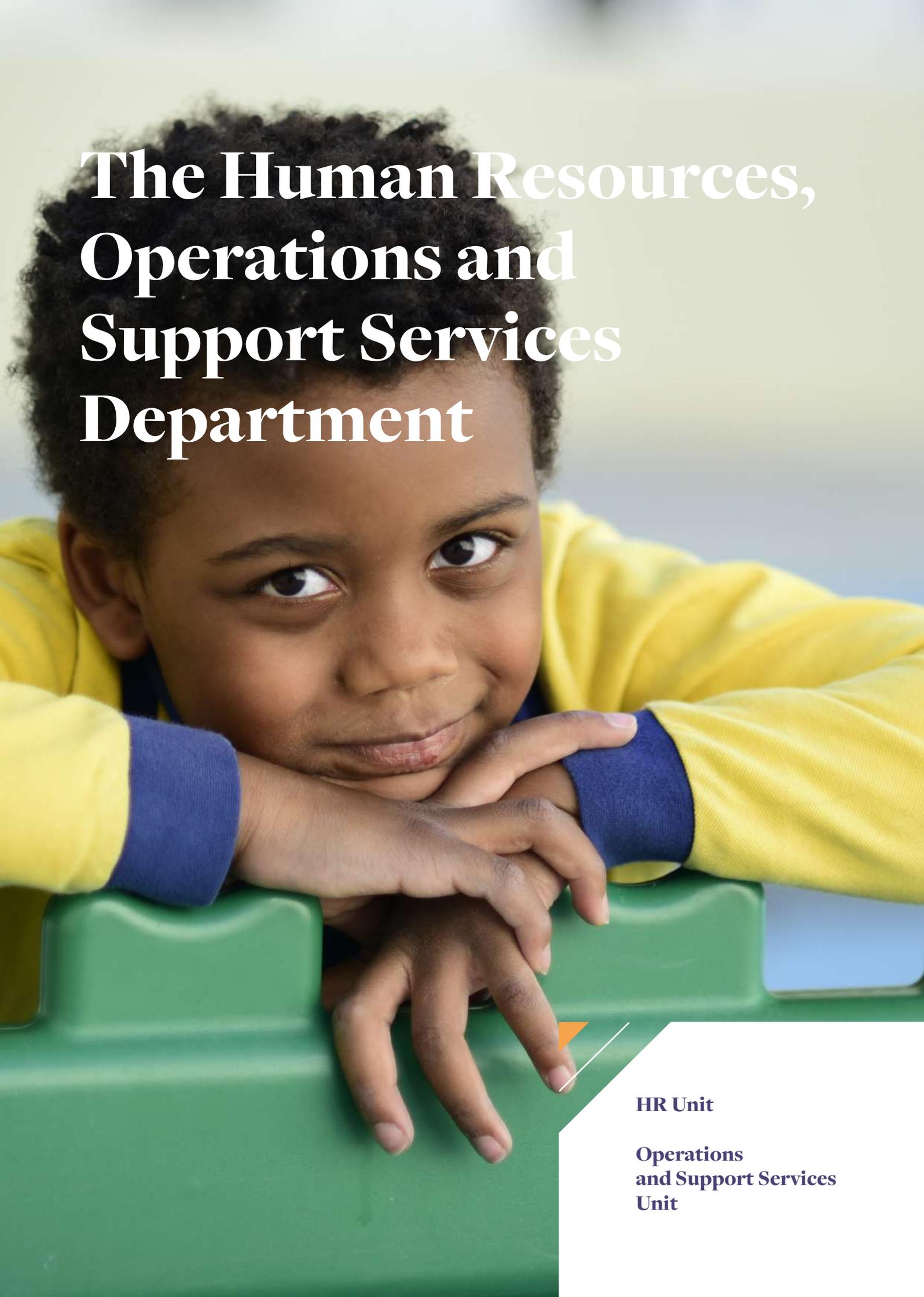
The Programmes Department also worked in close contact with the other FES Head Office departments on organisational policies and practices; addressed and oversaw the cases

forwarded by *Servizz.gov* on the CRM Portal; contributed personnel to act as members on interviewing boards and disciplinary boards; and collaborated with other organisations and agencies to be part of policy working groups.

Administration of the Programmes Department – the way forward

- To boost the staff complement in the Programmes Department, in view of the new planned projects
- Re-organisation of staff duties according to staff availabilities
- Implementation of any changes that *servizz.gov* will communicate to FES
- Improving on synergy with other departments at FES
- Writing of the Annual Report 2019.
- Writing the 20th Anniversary Commemoration Book, and organise other celebratory activities





The Human Resources, Operations and Support Services Department

HR Unit

**Operations
and Support Services
Unit**

HR Unit

The HR Unit during 2020

The HR Department remained with the same organisational structure as per previous year. The Department now consists of: Head of Human Resources, Manager, Programme Coordinator, Coordinator and Programme Secretary.

Skolasajf 2020

Once again, one of the major tasks of the HR Department was the ongoing process related to Skolasajf.

Recruitment process - Work related to Skolasajf 2020 began as early as November 2019. This included revision of job descriptions, preparation of vacancy forms and preparation of interview questions and contracts. This year there was an

increase in the number of calls issued to allow immediate placements. Due to the shutdown period in the months of March, April and May all interviews had to be done online. Also due to COVID measures, the contract signing process this year was different than previous years. In fact this year all employees signed their contracts in their respective Skolasajf centre on the first two days of Skolasajf.

Table 1:- Skolasajf 2020 Recruitment Statistics below explains the different roles employed and the number of employees engaged for Skolasajf 2020. From comparison of figures with the year 2019 one can see that the number of CSW s for 2020 was almost half as that of the previous year. This could be explained through the fact that due to COVID children considered as vulnerable might not have been registered to attend for Skolasajf 2020.

Call Title	Persons Recruited Externally
Playworker Skolasajf	671
Child Support Worker Skolasajf	497
Playworker with extra Responsibility Skolasajf	110
Centre Coordinator Skolasajf	30
Regional Coordinator Skolasajf	11
Sports Playworker Skolasajf	78
MITA Student	48
Total	1,922

Table 3: Skolasajf Recruitment Statistics



Induction meetings this year and initial meetings with Regional Coordinators and Centre Coordinators were all done online. Employees recruited externally were as described hereunder. Together with these, one must also include those workers on an indefinite contract who also worked during Skolasajf. It is important to highlight that some of the workers on an indefinite contract chose to work a different role for Skolasajf. This is encouraged so that employees would have a holistic experience of the different roles within the entity. It also helps for the development of new skills and knowledge.

All employees working with Skolasajf received the Employee Handbook. This incorporates all policies and procedures related to HR. The aim of this handbook is to provide the employees with a clear vision as to what the Foundation stands for, highlighting its aims and objectives as well as providing a clear direction of what is expected of them.

One of the major policies described in the Employee Handbook is the Disciplinary Policy. Given the high number of employees working with the entity over a period of ten weeks, it is very important to have a procedure related to situations where issues arise with the employees' performance. Once again, this Summer, the Regional Coordinators were encouraged to deal directly with issues arising in the centres. If the issues persisted, then the Regional Coordinators

liaised with the programme coordinators and the respective departments, providing further direction. The focus all along however was on guiding employees to improve their performance. This entailed formulating a way of discussing with them their mistakes, offering a way forward and monitoring feedback. This required the cooperation of staff from other departments at all levels.

Due to the COVID situation there were a number of employees who resigned half-way through Skolasajf and others were in quarantine. These led to a situation where the process of recruiting and engaging new employees was ongoing throughout all Summer. It is important to note that during 2020, Skolasajf was ten weeks long instead of the usual eight weeks. There were few cases of COVID infections and transmissions were reported in our centres. This is mainly due to the fact that all the staff abided with COVID measures issued by the health authorities for summer schools.

Child Care

A major task of the HR Department this year was for all posts within the childcare centres to be fully staffed. This year childcare centres were supported by further staffing; there was the addition of a new childcare secretary, and a number of relievers which was brought up to

Call Title	Persons Engaged throughout 2020
Head of Department – Business Support Unit	1
Programme Coordinator	3
Child Care Educators Relievers	4
Child Care Educators	8
Acting Centre Coordinators Church Services	2
Centre Coordinators Klabb 3-16	16
Play Workers Klabb 3-16	299
HW Tutor Klabb	25
Child Support Workers Klabb	36
PER Klabb 3-16	2

Table 4: Recruitment for 2020 (excluding Skolasajf)

six. An induction course for new staff was also organised for childcare. We also had preparatory sessions for those staff who were interested to apply for the post of Child Care Centre Coordinator, the aim was to help them understand the role and what would be expected of them if they had to be chosen.

Another target set for this year was to ensure that all staff were accredited by DQSE and verified by court as per the Protection of Minors Act (POMA). Training courses in first aid and firefighting were organised so to be able to complete the process of accreditation.

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JOB VACANCY

Vacancies

1

2

3

Klabb 3-16

Throughout 2020 a new centre was opened at Marsascala St Joachim school, therefore taking the number of operating Klabb 3-16 centres offering after hours up to 29. Given the COVID situation, two new centres were opened which were responsible to supervise children who usually attend church schools but had to study from home as a COVID measure. This service enabled children to still follow the lessons even though, due to work issues, parents could not stay with them at home. Two centres were opened: - Maria Bambina at MCAST and San Guzepp at the Junior College. The service was offered from 7am till 6pm. For this reason, two new Centre Coordinators were recruited on a full-time basis so to coordinate these two centres.

Recruitment

Table 2 hereunder depicts the different calls issued during 2020 related to full time jobs (Head Office and Child Care) and part-time (Klabb 3-16). This data excludes recruitment done for Skolasajf. This process of recruitment helped the organisation structure to strengthen itself and immediate action was taken where required to ensure that service provision is not disrupted.

The HR Department liaised directly with the Services Department together with Centre Coordinators respectively to ensure that vacancies within Klabb 3-16 centres were filled immediately. This required an intensive recruitment process to ensure that the appropriate staff with the required availabilities were employed.

Training

This year, as well, the HR Department liaised with the Programmes Department in the organisation of the development courses for Playworkers and Child Support Workers. At the end of 2020 the HR Department was also involved with other Departments in the organisation of a training calendar for the year 2021. Discussions involved the continuation of the courses for Playworkers and Child Support Workers, organisation of English language courses for childcare staff, a course for prospective PERs for Skolasajf, first aid training and also paediatric training.

Plans for 2021

One of the projects for the HR Department for 2020 was the application for the FHRD Award in Human Resources. The award was not achieved however work is being done on recommendations received. These recommendations as explained hereunder form the basis of work planned for 2021 within the HR Department. These include: -

- Writing a code of ethics for all employees within the entity;
- Writing a diversity and inclusion policy;
- Providing a more integrated approach to Corporate Social Responsibility Activities;
- Setting up a system of exit interviews;
- Supporting the Management team in the organisation of a process for recognition awards
- Organising a climate survey within the entity for all levels across the organisation
- Working on a process of employment reviews where the Head of HR is to be part of the process
- Developing a holistic HR integrated system;
- Setting up a system for continuous professional development;
- Formulating specific procedures for succession planning;
- Organising a social committee to work on the organisation of social events.

Operations and Support Services Unit

The Services Unit during 2020

The Operations and Support Services Department is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the different services of FES which entail Childcare, Klabb 3-16 and Skolasajf.

The Operations and Support Services Unit was further strengthened throughout 2020 by the engagement of the fourth programme coordinator. Therefore, the present structure includes the following: Head of Human Resources and Operations and Support Services, Manager Services, four Programme Coordinators and a Programme Secretary.

Klabb 3-16

At the beginning of 2020 there were 28 centres operating in different schools all over Malta and Gozo, offering after-school hours service. In September 2020, two new centres were opened in Qawra and Marsascala (St. Joachim), therefore taking up the number of centres to thirty (30). As regards to Marsascala, the opening of the second Klabb 3-16 centre in the same locality but situated in the new primary school, alleviated some of the pressures being felt at Klabb 3-16 St Anna due to the large number of children who were attending. As regards to the centre in Qawra, situated in the new Qawra Primary School, this also helped to reduce the large number of children attending at Klabb 3-16 Saint Paul's Bay. The opening of these two new centres led to the engagement of new

Centre Coordinators and more staff to help with the running of the centre.

Applications for the Klabb 3-16 service were received online through the FES portal. Service users who had difficulty to access the online application could go to the Servizz.gov for assistance for the application. All payments for the service were also done online. During the scholastic year 2019/2020, there was a total of 3,632 service users.



Every Klabb 3-16 centre is managed by a Centre Coordinator. Some of the coordinators would be assisted by a playworker with extra responsibilities. Other workers involved are tutors who would be assisting the children in their homework, child support workers who would assist those children who require one to one support, and playworkers whose role is to supervise the children whilst engaging them in activities.

The role of the Programme Coordinators within the Services and Support Unit is to support the centre coordinators in the day to day operations of the service. Both the Programme Coordinators and the Centre Coordinators worked together with the Finance Department to reduce the negative balances by parents who would have booked for the service but did not pay in a timely manner. They also liaised with the Heads of Schools were required, to ensure that children were not left on a waiting list. However, bubbles of children created due to the COVID guidelines, were not compromised. One of the Programme Coordinators liaised regularly with the Transport Department within the Ministry for Education and Employment, in relation to transport offered to children who attend schools where the Klabb 3-16 service is not available, to a nearby school where the Klabb 3-16 service is available.



Klabb 3-16 during the scholastic holidays

Klabb 3-16 offers the service to students of working parents also during the scholastic holidays. Service was available from 7am till 5.30pm. The table hereunder explains the number of applications received for the holidays throughout 2020.

Period	Number of Service users
Carnival Holidays	871
Easter Holidays	Following the closure of the educational institutions from March till the end of May 2020 due to the COVID situation, the service was not offered in the centres during the Easter period. The service was offered online to all service users and not only to working parents
July bridge holidays	Following the reopening of the educational institutions in June 2020, the July bridge holidays were superceded by Skola Sajf 2020, which started operating from the beginning of July
September bridge holidays	893
Mid term Holidays	638
Christmas holidays	558

Table 5: Service use during the holidays 2020

The impact of COVID

One of the biggest challenges throughout 2020 was to keep the students in bubbles/ groups, so as to limit the transmission of COVID. Communication was done with the Heads of Schools at the beginning of the scholastic year so as to try as much as possible, to group children together in the morning who will be making use of Klabb 3-16 after school. This had the aim of avoiding the mixing of children in different bubbles. Moreover, more staff were employed so as to cater for the increased number of classes. Staff were guided to adhere to the guidelines issued by the Health Department. A procedure for contact tracing in case of a positive case was set up following instructions by the Health Authorities.

Another consequence of COVID was the opening of two new centres. Klabb 3-16 Centre Maria Bambina was situated in the Junior College, Imsida, and the Klabb 3-16 Centre San Guzepp was situated in the MCAST building at Paola. The opening of these centres was brought about by the fact that church schools were operating on a system where children were attending lessons online from home. This created a problem for those parents who had to be present at work and could not stay at home with their children. These centres gave the opportunity to students to attend online lessons and participate actively in the lessons under the supervision of a playworker. The centres opened in September 2020.

Skolasajf 2020

Skolasajf is an annual national programme catering for learners during summer holidays. It extends the services usually provided by Klabb 3-16, such that it offers our service users an educational experience during the summer holidays. This programme is offered in a number of schools around Malta and Gozo, so as to meet the needs of the families.



In 2020, the Skolasajf service was provided in 53 state primary schools across Malta and Gozo and also in five Resource Centres. Centres open for the Skolasajf Programme from 8:30am till 12:30pm. Moreover, there were 28 centres which offered the extra hours service from 7:00am till 8:30am and from 12:30pm till 5:30pm. Extra hours are offered to those children of working parents. There were also some centres both in Malta and Gozo which, due to the limited number of applications received, were amalgamated with other centres with the provision of transportation from one locality to another.

Due to maintenance works which were being carried out in the Marsascala St Anna school, service was provided from the new school in Marsascala St Joachim. Also due to increased number of children and limitation of space, service for Kindergarten children in Mosta was provided from Mosta Annex.

Number of applicants for Skolasajf 2020 Core Hours

MALTA

Name of the centre	Number of applicants
Attard	259
Birkirkara	208
Birzebbuga	113
Burmarrad	28
Dingli	69
Fgura	282
Floriana (Valletta)	36
Gharghur	76
Ghaxaq (Gudja)	98
Gudja	26
Gzira	85
Hamrun	118
Kalkara	34
Kirkop	20
Lija/Balzan/Iklin	114
Luqa	153
Marsa	21
Marsascalea (new)	266
Marsaxlokk	44
Mellieha	178
Mgarr	118
Mosta	166
Mosta Annex (KG)	89
Mqabba	79
Msida	9
Mtarfa	9
Naxxar	161
Paola	95
Pembroke	323
Pieta (Pieta)	34
Qormi SB	103
Qormi SG	111
Qrendi	31
Rabat B (Mtarfa)	93
Safi (Kirkop)	15
San Giljan	102
San Gwann	215
Senglea	7
Siggiewi	158
Sliema	280
St. Paul's Bay	364

St. Venera (Msida)	179
Tarxien	48
Valletta	26
Vittoriosa (Senglea)	26
Xghajra	12
Zabbar A	116
Zabbar B	75
Zebbug - Malta	133
Zejtun	162
Zurrieq	144
Total no. of students in Malta	5711

RESOURCE CENTRES

Name of the centre	Number of applicants
Guardian Angel Rc Hamrun	27
Helen Keller RC Qrendi	7
San Miguel RC Pembroke	18
Sannat Special Unit - Gozo	4
Wardija Resource Centre	38
Total no. of students in Resource Centres	94

GOZO

Name of the centre	Number of applicants (22.06.2020)
Victoria - Gozo	72
Xaghra - Gozo	49
Ghajnsielem - Gozo	8
Gharb	7
Kercem - Gozo	17
Nadur	32
Qala	5
San Lawrenz	0
Sannat - Gozo	27
Xewkija - Gozo	11
Zebbug	12
Zebbug(San Lawrenz/Gharb) - Gozo	
Total no. of students in Gozo	240

Table 6: Number of applicants for Skolasajf 2020 Core Hours

Number of applicants for service in centres offering after hours**MALTA**

Name of the centre	Number of applicants	AM	PM
Attard	154	11	141
Birkirkara	105	72	94
Birzebbuga	53	41	46
Fgura	157	117	130
Floriana (Valletta)	24	15	18
Gzira	52	29	51
Hamrun	70	45	65
Luqa	96	66	79
Marsascala (new)	150	99	143
Mellieha	90	49	85
Mgarr	64	44	61
Mosta	150	40	66
Mosta Annex (KG)	139	95	129
Mqabba	45	26	41
Naxxar	104	68	93
Paola	53	29	43
Pembroke	172	98	160
Qormi SG	64	56	61
Rabat B	40	28	36
San Giljan	69	35	57
San Gwann	111	70	102
Siggiewi	80	52	71
Sliema	140	75	132
St. Paul's Bay	201	112	191
St. Venera (Msida)	104	78	89
Zabbar A	64	51	78
Zabbar B	37	22	33
Zebbug - Malta	63	44	54
Zejtun	96	67	87
Zurrieq	76	52	71
	2823	1686	2507

GOZO

Name of the centre	Number of applicants (22.06.2020)		
Victoria - Gozo	26	11	15
Xaghra - Gozo	8	4	7
	34	15	22

Table 7: Number of applicants for service in centres offering after hours

The impact of COVID on Skolasajf 2020

Just like the situation in Klabb 3-16 for 2020, one of the biggest challenges throughout Skolasajf was to keep the students in the same groups to limit the transmission of COVI. Even though the number of applicants for Skolasajf was less than the previous year, however, there was still the need of the same number of classrooms and the same number of staff members. Class ratios had to be stipulated depending on the size of the classrooms, which varied from one school to another, and sometimes even within the same school. Centre Coordinators were instructed on how to do the students' class lists, in way to avoid the mixing of students together during afterhours. Staff were guided to adhere to guidelines by the Health Department. A procedure for contact tracing in case of a positive case was set up following instructions by the Health Authorities. Guidelines were adhered to and in fact there was no transmissions of cases in the Skolasajf Centres.

Child Care

FES is responsible of thirteen childcare centres. Each childcare centre offers quality childcare services in order to support and strengthen the family unit, guided by the underlying principle that the family is the best environment for personal growth. The main aim of the centres is to offer a personalised service of quality care for all children.

The FES aims to ensure that children and families from all walks of life, but especially those families at risk of social exclusion, have access to the setting through open, fair and clearly communicated procedures, depending on the number of vacant places available. The Centre coordinator regularly monitors placements so as to determine the number of placements which are vacant.

The FES Childcare Service is provided from Monday to Friday between 07:30 and 16:00 excluding Public Holidays and shut down days. The Childcare Centre Coordinators are responsible to roster staff in childcare centres. Childcare Educators are rostered to cover service hours and according to the exigencies of the service. A minimum of two members of staff have to be present at opening and closing times of the childcare centre.

The number of Child Care Centres in 2020 was 14 however due to refurbishment works to be done in the centre of Qormi, this was temporarily closed. Employees from this centre were transferred to other childcare centres.

Applications for childcare centres were received by the Centre Coordinators either through emails, phone calls, or even walk-ins in the centres. Every application was processed, and an individual assessment was carried out in order to determine the applicant's needs. During 2020, all applications were submitted manually. However, one project for the year 2021 is to have an online application which can be easily filled by the service user. Given the COVID situation, the number of children in centres had to be kept within ratios as stipulated by the Health Authorities. However, both Centre Coordinators and Programme Coordinators worked together to reduce the number of waiting lists in every centre.

Payment for the service was either done through the Free Childcare Scheme or through contributions. The Free Childcare Scheme is an initiative provided by the Government where parent/guardians who are in employment or are pursuing their education, can make use of free childcare services. Those who do not satisfy any of these criteria but would still wish to avail themselves of the service can do so by paying a contribution.

The following list provides a description of registrations per centre for the year 2020.

Centre	Total number of service users in 2020
Birgu, Il-Kuluri	31
Birkirkara, Il-Ferrovija	49
Cospicua, Il-Bejta	27
Floriana, It-Tgħanniqa	43
Gżira, Il-Qawsalla	18
Ħaż-Żebbuġ, Żmeraldi	40
Marsa, Il-Pespup	31
Naxxar, Pizzi Pizzi	
Kanna	70
Pembroke, Il-Merill	49
Qawra, Ix-Xemx	39
Qormi, It-Tbissima	35
San Ġwann, Is-Sardinella	60
Santa Venera, Il-Bebbuxu	44
Siggiewi, Id-Denfil	54
Total	590

Table 8: List of registrations per childcare centre

The FES Childcare Centres work in compliance with the National Standards for Child Day Care Facilities published by DQSE. Centre Coordinators are encouraged to ensure that a high-quality level of service is provided to our service users. Regular visits by DQSE ensure that these standards are kept. Reports from these visits identify strengths



of service provision and also identify areas for improvement. Each Unit and Department within Head Office takes note of the matters pertinent to their remit. The Services and Support Unit works together with the other departments at Head Office, and with the Centre Coordinators, to address any issues flagged by the visiting DQSE officials.



The Business Support Department



**Corporate Services
Unit**

Finance Unit

Corporate Services Unit

The Corporate Services Unit during 2020

Throughout 2020 the Corporate Services Unit faced several very important projects, which despite the difficult worldwide situation were carried out in a successful manner. The department was composed of the Manager Corporate Services, Programme Coordinator Procurement, Coordinator Administration, Administration Assistant, Handyman and Driver. In November, a new addition was the Programme Coordinator Technical Support, filling up a lacuna in terms of assisting our members of staff in issues of a technical nature.

Estate Management - Head Office

2020 marked the move from the Foundation's Offices in Mtarfa to Zentrum Business Centre, which is newly built in Qormi. This move was a difficult task to endure, since it was carried out during the COVID 19 lockdown. Extra precautions were taken in order to ensure the health and safety of the employees involved.

2020 marked the move from the Foundation's Offices in Mtarfa to Zentrum Business Centre, which is newly built in Qormi.





In early 2020, the works at the new offices were taking place at a very fast pace. Daily visits were carried out to guarantee that works were being done up to standard and according to plan. Snag lists were revised daily on site with the site project manager and contractors. At the same time the procurement process for the required items was in progress. These items included additional furniture required, IT equipment needed to

upgrade the current internet and telephone system, health and safety equipment, amongst others. The new offices are now equipped with 2 stores, an archive room, a maintenance room, kitchen, board room, and 2 meeting rooms that when joined can fit up to 120 persons (under normal circumstances). A fire alarm, CCTV cameras and proper air conditioning system were also installed.





The lockdown imposed on the country was seen as an opportunity for the FES to be able to move its offices in a safer way. A plan was done so that staff could go to pack their items individually at the old offices in Mtarfa, thus limiting contact. The same procedure was adopted after all the items were moved and unpacking had to be done. All the Corporate Services team assisted for the setting up of the new offices. This included coordinating the packing and unpacking, receiving deliveries, liaising with MITA, coordinating the setting up the furniture, and cleaning. All this work enabled the Foundation's staff to return after the lockdown to better equipped offices.



The new FES Head Office was officially inaugurated on 25th September 2020 by the then Minister for Education and Employment, Dr Owen Bonnici (2020)





Estate Management - Child Care Centres

During the COVID 19 lockdown, since all our centres were closed we were limited with regards to the level of maintenance that could be done. However, several interventions still took place where the Handyman carried out work that he could do on his own without any assistance. During 2020, the below issues were tackled:

1. Marsa Child Care Centre – general maintenance such as plastering and painting was carried out. The main door was refurbished. As at year end, plans are in place to change the main gate leading to the centre.
2. Siggiewi Child Care Centre - general maintenance such as plastering and painting was carried out. The baby room was completely renovated, and an aluminium partition was removed and placed in another area within the centre. This helped to enlarge the baby room and thus increase the intakes of babies.
3. Bormla Child Care Centre – the works that started in 2019 in the centre’s bathroom were finally completed towards the beginning of 2020. A fire alarm was installed and the baby room was renovated.
4. San Gwann Child Care Centre – the centre’s main door was changed since it was not locking properly. Several glass panes were changed

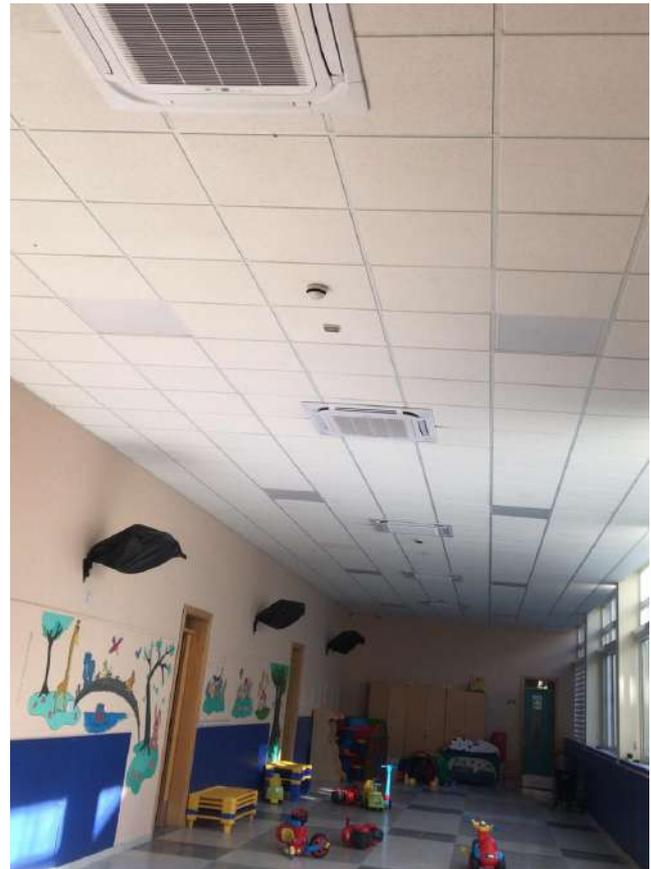
since they were slowly cracking. The centre did not have proper access to its roof; thus a ladder was installed making it safer for the Handyman to access the roof when the need arises.

5. Floriana Child Care Centre – roofing in one of the outdoor areas was changed completely since it was very old, and water was leaking. Various columns in the outdoor area were treated since they were too old, and pieces of stone started falling off.
6. Naxxar Child Care Centre – the outdoor area was re-painted together with other minor parts of the centre.
7. Pembroke Child Care Centre – towards the end of 2020 works were carried out to equip the child care centre’s main corridor with an AC system. This will help to increase the total number of children that can be accommodated within the centre.



8. Santa Venera Child Care Centre – various parts of the centre were plastered and painted. A net was installed to protect the centre’s outdoor area toys.
9. Gormi Child Care Centre – due to major works planned in the school complex, a decision has been taken to close the centre until such works are finalised. Since the children within this centre were transferred to other FES centres, the Corporate Services Department facilitated such process by transferring items to other centres as required.

Apart from the above interventions, various other issues were tackled in view of COVID 19. Legionella testing was carried out across all centres before children and staff returned after lockdown. Risk assessments were carried out to identify any risks associated with the pandemic and to determine the total number of children that a centre can take according to the regulations published by the Health Authorities. Sanitiser dispensers were installed across all centres and isolation rooms setup as per guidelines provided by the Health and Safety Officer.



Another major project that the Corporate Services Department worked on during 2020 was the move of the child care centre in Qawra from its current location to the new primary school. Various on-site meetings were held with the Foundation for Tomorrow Schools (FTS) to have the necessary alterations made and paperwork in order to apply for the centre’s license. As at year end, meetings and discussions were still on-going and the target is to shift the centre’s operations in early 2021. The procurement process on toys and other educational resources initiated late in 2020 with a thorough search for quotations being deemed necessary prior to entering into a purchasing commitment with the chosen suppliers. The Centre Coordinator collected the quotations by visiting a number of shops and also through a number of local websites. Verification and comparison was done at Head Office Level after which the orders were made through a Purchase Order.

Estate Management - Klabb 3-16/Skolasajf Centres

Various discussions were held with MEDE prior to the re-opening of Klabb 3-16 centres after the COVID 19 lockdown to ensure that schools were following the guidelines issued by the Health Authorities. All schools were subject to a risk assessment, specifically focusing on COVID19 and tanks were all checked for legionella.

The Klabb 3-16 at Rabat B was moved to Rabat A due to major infrastructural works within the school premises. Two new Klabb 3-16 centres were opened, one in the Qawra new primary school and another one in the M'Scala St Joachim Primary School. Apart from this, a similar service was also being offered at MCAST (San Guzepp) and Junior College (Maria Bambina) as from October 2020. This was being offered for around 8 hrs daily to children attending church schools. The aim was to assist those parents whose children could not attend school on a daily basis due to space limitations within church schools' premises as these were either to operate on a day-in day-out basis or week-in week-out basis. Through the opening of these centres, the FES could contain a maximum amount of 600 students in line with the approved classroom ratios under COVID-19 limitations.

Procurement

2020 was a very hectic year in terms of procurement. During the COVID19 lockdown, all hands were on deck to assist in the procurement of items needed for the Head Office move, the cleaning and sanitisation items needed in advance in preparation for the re-opening of all of our centres and the items required to equip the new child care centre in Qawra.

COVID19 proved to be quite a challenge. Research was done in order to ensure that the correct cleaning and sanitisation agents are being procured for the best interests of our service users and staff. This created a logistical challenge, where goods were being delivered to our new head office rather than the various centres since these were closed. With the help of the Handyman and Driver these items were delivered to the centres on time so that the necessary cleaning could take place before re-opening. Another major problem encountered was the lack of resources available in the market. Since the quantities required by the FES were quite large and the supply was very low, it was very difficult to acquire what was required at a reasonable price and on the deadline requested. There were times when the cheapest prices being quoted were still considered as very expensive for the product being requested.





A greater challenge was the distribution of cleaning material to all our Skolasajf centres. The quantities required to be able to cater for the pandemic were significantly larger than those of the previous years. The table below shows a breakdown of the cleaning and sanitisation items acquired for Skolasajf 2020.



Name of Item	Cost	Quantity
Items acquired due to COVID19		
Alcohol Disinfectant Wipes	€161.66	20 cans of 100
Aprons	€636.91	200 packs of 100
Face Shields	€7,546.61	2410
Infrared Thermometers	€7,573.98	162
Surface Sanitiser	€1,152.86	100 x 5L jerry cans
Items usually acquired (but with increased quantities)		
Antibacterial Hand Soap	€5,895.82	660 x 5L jerry cans
First Aid Items	€1,647.76	
Floor Disinfectant and Floor Soap	€2,570.96	Floor Disinfectant: 350 x 5L jerry cans Floor Soap: 660 x 5L jerry cans
Garbage Bags	€5,117.18	
Gloves	€4,998.00	
Hand Sanitiser with Pump	€19,133.70	4500
Kitchen Rolls	€3,250.00	10,000
Resource Centres Items	€523.12	
Sgrassatore Spray	€3,772.50	2515
Toilet Paper	€3,021.21	23,040 rolls
Grand Total	€67,002.27	

Table 9: Breakdown of cleaning and sanitisation items for Skolasajf 2020

Another major purchase for Skolasajf was stationery. Since group activities were very limited due to the pandemic, more stationery resources were needed to implement the Skolasajf Programme. A tender was already in place MEDE/MPU/FES/003/2018 - Tender for the Supply of Stationery and Recycled Office Paper for Skolasajf for 24 Months. This covered 2019 - 2020 and the full remaining tender balance, €27,083.75, was exhausted by the end of Skolasajf. The only problem encountered was a delay in deliveries. Due to COVID19 lockdown, deliveries had to start very late as some stationery items were still in transit to Malta from abroad.

With regards to the relocation of the Qawra Child Care Centre, a decision was taken to change all the toys and equipment of the old centre instead of relocating them to the new one. These items



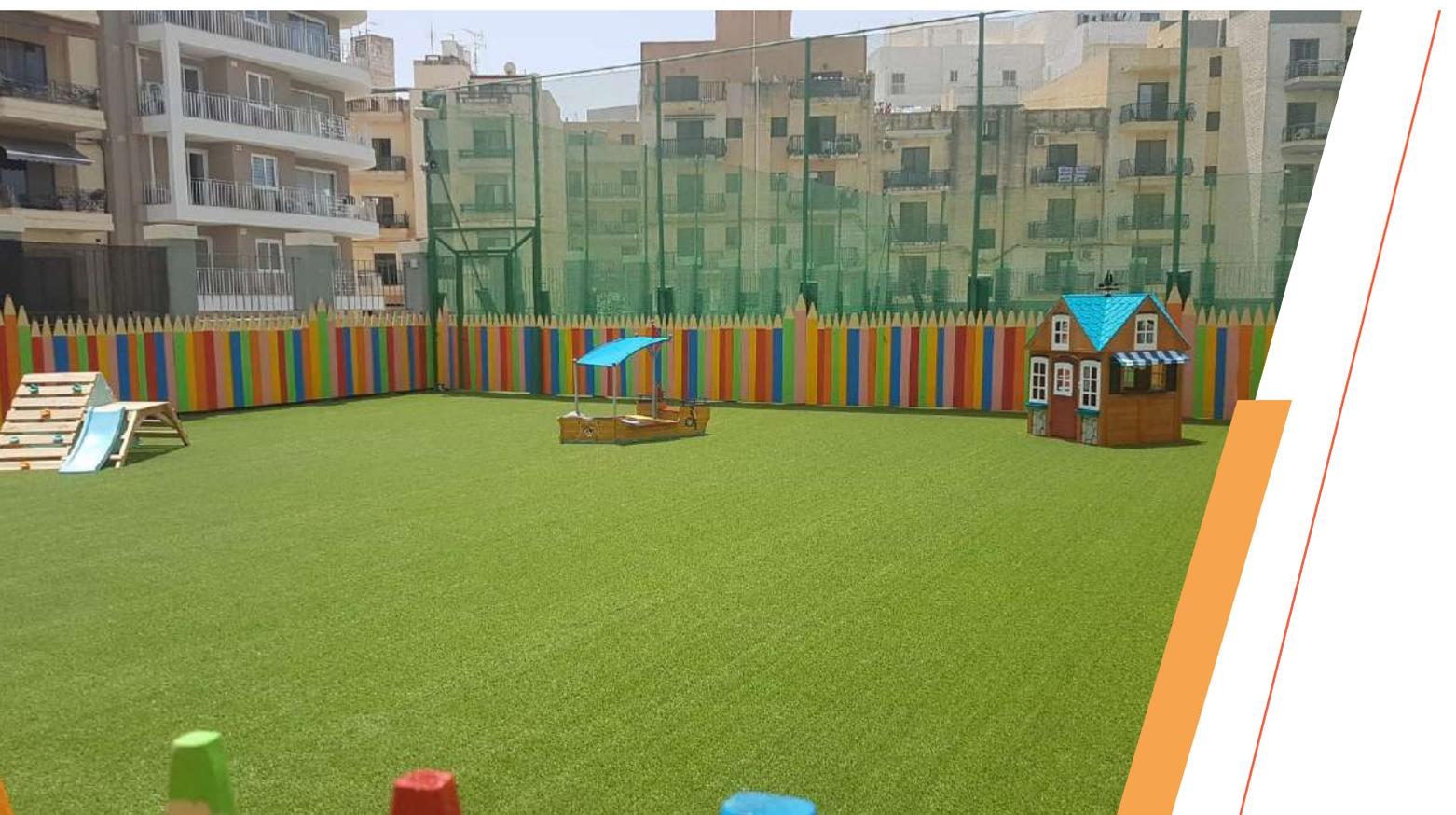
were quite old and some of them even broken. With the help of the Centre Coordinator, an extensive procurement exercise was undertaken to acquire such items. These varied from kitchen items, health and safety items, with the majority being toys. As at year end, the total expenditure amounted to €11,465.72.

Due to COVID19 lockdown, deliveries had to start very late as some stationery items were still in transit to Malta from abroad.



Apart from the above-mentioned projects, the day-to-day procurement was still on-going. Throughout the year 943 purchase orders were issued. Apart from the minor items for which 3 quotes were requested, the list below explains the tenders/requests for quotations which were dealt with throughout 2020 on the ePPS:

- MEDE/MPU/FES/01/2020 - Tender for the Provision of a Cloud Based Payroll System for the Foundation for Educational Services for Three (3) Years - this tender was issued on the 21st August 2020. 5 bids were received, and the tender was awarded for the value of €33,392.10.
- MEDE/MPU/FES/02/2020 – Tender for the Supply of One (1) New Low Emissions Crew Cab Van for the Foundation for Educational Services – this tender was issued on the 10th September 2020 and 1 bid was received. This tender was cancelled since the only bid received was technically non-compliant.
- CFQ/FES/001/2020 - Call for Quotations for the Leasing of Three (3) Brand New Energy Efficient Multifunction Printers for FES Childcare Centres for 24 Months: this Request for Quotations was issued on 3rd February 2020 and 4 bids were received. It was successfully awarded on the 25th May 2020 for a total contract value of €4,284.00 excluding VAT.
- RFQ/FES/002/2020 - Call for Quotations - Provision of Legal Services: this Request for Quotations was published on The Government Gazette on 4th February 2020. 3 bids were received, and the procurement procedure was awarded for the value of €21.00 per hour excluding VAT.
- RFQ/FES/003/2020 – Provision of Medical Services: this was published on The Government Gazette of the 13th March 2020 and 1 bid was received which was awarded for a charge out rate of €15.95 excluding VAT per each house visit.
- CFQ/FES/004/2020 - Expression of Interest – General Hand & Messenger: this Request for Quotations was published on The Government Gazette on 20th March 2020. 1 bid was received, and the procurement procedure was awarded for the value of €9.00 per hour excluding VAT.
- CFQ/FES/005/2020 - Leasing of One (1) Brand New Energy Efficient Multifunction Printer



for the Foundation for Educational Services. Published 12th November 2020. 2 bids received and awarded for €2,400 excluding VAT for 24 months.

- CFQ/FES/006/2020 - Expression of Interest – Administration Assistant: this Request for Quotations was published on The Government Gazette on 8th May 2020. 4 bids were received, and the procurement procedure was awarded for the value of €9.00 per hour excluding VAT.
- CFQ/FES/007/2020 - Expression of Interest – Call for Quotations - Provision of Consultancy Services related to Online Portal Management: this Request for Quotations was published on The Government Gazette on 15th May 2020. 4 bids were received, and the procurement procedure was awarded for the value of €4,880 excluding VAT.
- CFQ/FES/009/2020 - Expression of Interest – General Hand & Messenger: this Request for Quotations was published on The Government Gazette on 9th October 2020. 1 bid was received, and the procurement procedure was awarded for the value of €9.00 per hour excluding VAT.
- CFQ/FES/010/2020 - Expression of Interest – Purchase of Brand New Low Emissions Crew Cab Van: this Request for Quotations was published on The Government Gazette on 13th November 2020. Unfortunately, this request for quotations had to be cancelled.
- CFQ/FES/011/2020 - Expression of Interest – Administration Assistant: this Request for Quotations was published on The Government Gazette on 4th December 2020. 5 bids were received, and the procurement procedure was awarded for the value of €9.00 per hour excluding VAT.

Other projects that are still works in progress are the Tender for the Supply of Stationery and Recycled Office Paper for the Foundation for Educational Services for thirty-six (36) months; a tender for an online system management and maintenance, a tender for insurances, a re-issue of a tender for a crew cab van, and a request for

quotations for the leasing of photocopiers for child care centres.

Information Technology

Until November 2020, various minor interventions were carried out by the Manager Corporate Services and Coordinator Administration in relation to IT. These were addressed with MEDE IMU and MITA and included interruptions in internet service, adding new network switches in centres, assigning Microsoft licenses, installation of printers, raising ERFs, and other day-to-day problems as they arise. Constant communication was also going on with the telephony provider in relation to service interruptions and emergency mobile services.

Together with the Manager Corporate Services, the Coordinator Administration facilitated the transition of the internet and telephony services from the old offices in Mtarfa to the new ones in Qormi. Various delays were registered due to the COVID19 lockdown, however everything was set up in time for all employees to return back to their normal work routine. All services were upgraded and the meeting rooms were equipped with TVs, projectors and sound system to ensure the perfect delivery for training sessions. The Coordinator Administration liaised with MITA, and the telephony and network providers to ensure that each employee had an appropriate network point and telephone system in place. Three photocopiers were also set up at Head Office.

Assistance was provided during the COVID19 lockdown when all employees were working from home. Activities organised by the respective centres were uploaded online on a daily basis and technical issues from members of staff were addressed in the best way possible considering the health and safety of all individuals involved in the current circumstances.

Work was also done to ensure that the proper IT infrastructure was present in the new centres opened as explained further above. Such centres were also equipped with photocopiers and laptops.

As from November 2020, the position of Programme Coordinator Technical Support was introduced. This shall facilitate further the ever-increasing IT issues within the Foundation, leaving the Coordinator Administration to focus entirely on administration matters.

Cleaning Services

Cleaning services and procedures were given much more importance than usual considering the effects of the pandemic. As explained in the Procurement Section more cleaning agents were acquired across the board. Constant communication was kept with MEDE officials, who have trained cleaners on how to address current circumstances and updated their work practices.

With regards to child care centres, the cleaning hours were increased in all centres. Each centre now has 8 hours of daily service for cleaning to ensure that the regulations issued by the health authorities are adhered to. Moreover, all child care centres were opened 3 days before children actually returned to the centre. During

such period, members of staff and cleaners re-organised the centre to ensure that the regulations were being followed and carried out an extensive cleaning exercise.

Where Klabb 3-16 and Skolasajf are concerned, cleaners were also increased to ensure that each centre has a cleaner until its closing time. This ensures that classes are done before start and after the end of Klabb 3-16. In addition, a cleaning procedure was introduced whereby a checklist needs to be filled in daily to ensure that all regulations are being adhered to.

Another change in relation to cleaning was at Head Office. A full-time cleaner has been engaged to meet the requirements of the new premises and increased number of staff ensuring that cleaning is given the utmost importance in the circumstances.

Data Protection

In the role of Data Protection Officer, the Manager Corporate Services continued to address queries related to data protection. Following feedback received from staff, the Data Protection and Retention Policy were being updated on a regular basis to ensure that all aspects related to the FES area of work are being covered.



Finance Unit

Foundation for Educational Eervices

Annual Report and Financial Statements - 31 December 2020

Statement of comprehensive income

	Year ended 31 December	
	2020	2019
	€	€
Revenue	11,614,874	9,778,918
Operational expenses	(8,747,693)	(8,545,675)
Surplus from operations	2,867,181	1,233,243
Administrative expenses	(1,236,255)	(1,042,421)
Other income	-	3,100
Finance costs	(5,844)	-
Surplus before tax	1,625,082	193,921
Tax expense	-	-
Surplus for the year – total comprehensive income	1,625,082	193,921

Table 10: Statement of comprehensive income

Schedule I**Detailed statement of comprehensive income***For the financial year ended 31 December 2020*

	Schedule	2020	2019
		€	€
Government subvention		1,802,755	1,620,000
Other income		-	3,100
Surplus/(Deficit) from operations	III	1,064,426	(386,756)
Total operating surplus		2,867,181	1,236,344
Administrative expenses	II	(1,236,255)	(1,042,422)
Finance expense		(5,844)	-
Surplus for the year		1,625,082	193,922

Table 11: Schedule I – Detailed statement of comprehensive income

Schedule II**Detailed statement of comprehensive income***For the financial year ended 31 December 2020*

	2020	2019
	€	€
Administrative expenses		
Accountancy fees	25,562	9,008
Advertising and recruitment fees	1,400	3,010
Audit fee	3,776	3,776
Bank and other charges	9,816	6,463
Cleaning	10,696	6,739
Consumables	19,549	3,319
Depreciation charge	69,334	49,589
Depreciation charge of right-of-use asset	79,296	-
Honoraria	25,703	23,500
Educational material	1,049	4,531
Insurances	11,750	10,829
Licenses and fees	1,302	6,189
Motor vehicle expenses	6,743	3,044
Office expenses	16,633	24,429
Professional services	11,330	56,498
Repair and maintenance	1,418	2,796
Staff development	1,289	2,128
Subcontracted workers	20,207	17,612
Sundry expenses	8,107	32,472
Telephones	8,655	6,215
Transportation costs	12,375	654
Donations and sponsorships	7,313	-
Wages and salaries	882,252	769,621
Marketing expense	700	-
	1,236,255	1,042,422

Table 12: Schedule II - Detailed statement of comprehensive income

Schedule III**Detailed statement of comprehensive income (operational segments)***For the financial year ended 31 December 2020*

	Childcare	Skolasajf	Klabb 3-16	Church schools	Other	Total
	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020
	€	€	€	€	€	€
Income from clients	104,192	310,121	269,064	-	-	683,377
Subsidy from government	1,109,246	-	-	-	-	1,109,246
Total revenues from operations	1,213,438	310,121	269,064	-	-	1,792,623
Reimbursements:						
Government	2,184,866	3,368,559	2,253,504	-	210,839	8,017,768
EU funding	-	-	-	-	1,728	1,728
Total reimbursements	2,184,866	3,368,559	2,253,504	-	212,567	8,019,496
Total inflows	3,398,304	3,678,680	2,522,568	-	212,567	9,812,119
Expenditure:						
Operational expenses	(339,555)	(650,415)	(190,389)	(43,194)	(12,548)	(1,236,101)
Wages	(2,033,571)	(3,317,166)	(2,032,544)	(-)	(128,311)	(7,511,592)
Total outflows	(2,373,126)	(3,967,581)	(2,222,933)	(43,194)	(140,859)	(8,747,693)
Net surplus/(deficit)	1,025,178	(288,901)	299,635	(43,194)	71,708	1,064,426

Table 13: Schedule III – Detailed statement of comprehensive income (operational segments)



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