



ANNUAL REPORT

2022



ANNUAL REPORT



2022



Foundation for Educational Services

Zentrum Business Centre

Level 1, Mdina Road,

Qormi QRM 9010

Tel: 2258 6810

Email: fes@gov.mt

www.fes.gov.mt

© Foundation for Educational Services

All rights reserved. No part of this document may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any way or by any means, without prior permission of the author which must be obtained beforehand.

Published by: **Foundation for Educational Services**

INTRODUCTION.....	5
FES BOARD MEMBERS.....	7
MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, SPORT, YOUTH, RESEARCH, AND INNOVATION	8
PERMANENT SECRETARY WITHIN THE MINISTRY FOR EDUCATION, YOUTH, SPORT, RESEARCH, AND INNOVATION.....	9
CHAIRPERSON OF THE FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL SERVICES	10
CEO OF THE FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL SERVICES.....	12
THE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE.....	14
THE PROGRAMMES DEPARTMENT	15
Introduction.....	16
The FES Childcare Service	17
The Klabb 3-16 Service	20
Skolasajf 2022	23
Going the extra mile!.....	34
The Sports and Games Programme	37
Literacy as part of the Programme of Activities	38
The Inclusion Unit	42
The Programme Coordinators - Programmes Department.....	44
Responding to vulnerable families	44
Inclusion Matters in the Courses held by FES	45
FES at the National Parents Council Primary Conference.....	45
Conclusion	46
The Marketing and Communications Unit.....	46
EMPLOYEE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT	53
HUMAN RESOURCES & SUPPORT SERVICES DEPARTMENT	63
HR Unit	64
Skolasajf 2022.....	64
Childcare	66
Klabb 3-16	66
Support Services.....	67
THE BUSINESS SUPPORT DEPARTMENT	73
Introduction.....	74
Estate Management.....	74
Procurement.....	77
IT	78
Administration	81
Data Protection	82



INTRODUCTION

2022 was a year that started with changes in the leadership of the Foundation for Educational Services, both from a Ministerial perspective and within the Foundation's immediate ranks. As from January 2022, FES welcomed Dr Clifton Grima as the new Minister for Education Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation, and Mr Matthew Vella as the new Permanent Secretary. On the other hand, we also welcomed a new CEO, Mr Michael Bondin.

While each leader brings with him his own leadership style, strengths, and abilities, we were sure of one common intent; that of continuing to strengthen the services delivered by FES, in its bid to continue in its mission of *'supporting an evolving society through a holistic service to the child'*. This was evident from the onset with the embarkation on an evaluation exercise of the services to consolidate strengths and take seemingly unpopular decisions

that served to mitigate any weaknesses. These included the introduction of staggered times in the Klabb 3-16 service, which not only gave children a more structured schedule and opportunity to finish activities with their peers, but also reduced the ongoing disruption of administrative tasks needed for the running of the centres.

Other changes brought about in 2022 had long been in discussion since 2021, and their implementation was the result of building on past work to bring the projects to a successful conclusion. These changes included the introduction of the extended hours of service in 6 of the FES Childcare Centres, namely those located at Birgu, Birkirkara, Naxxar, Pembroke, Ғаž Žebbuġ, and Qawra. The wider window of service meant more accessibility for those clients who work between 6am and 6pm on weekdays, and who could not use the FES

childcare service because the previous hours of service were a limiting factor.

Another major step forward was the commencement of the training of the Childcare Educators in the Emergent Curriculum pedagogy. Not only did it include meticulous planning skills to train the staff while not disrupting the service, but it was also a challenge to change mindsets and set new practices. However, the successful outcome of its implementation in 6 centres during 2022, meant that the FES childcare centres are on their way to better facilitate the transition of the children to kindergarten, where the Emergent Curriculum is being applied.

A fourth successful change planned in 2021 was in the area of service in the Resource Centres, as access to our clients was brought up to par as to that delivered in mainstream schools. This meant that the Klabb 3-16 service in the Resource Centres started to be delivered on a whole day basis during the scholastic holidays, which covered the holidays of the mid-term, Christmas, Carnival, and Easter periods.

The whole day service also started to be offered during the July and September Bridge holidays. Another change in this area of education, was the introduction of the Skolasajf service in Resource Centres across the whole five days of the week.

These changes were not easy to bring about. All stakeholders had to be addressed, their needs and concerns were discussed, and a viable solution to ensure a quality service was found. Collectively, the manpower at FES demonstrated a strong will to develop and guide initiatives that were seemingly fraught with hurdles and challenges, but which they still managed to steer towards completion.

One hopes that all the information gathered within the pages of this report does justice to all the work involved by the dedicated FES employees. All those involved know what was entailed in the reaching of these milestones and know also of the appreciation of the parents and our service users. An appreciation that confirms that we are indeed serving an evolving society through a holistic service to the child.

FES BOARD MEMBERS



Ms Pamela Schembri
Chairperson



Dr Tiffany Attard
Board Member



Ms Philippa Attard
Board Member



Ms Helen Farrugia
Board Member



Ms Sharon Grech
Board Member



Prof. Andrew Azzopardi
Board Member



Mr Mario Grima
Board Member



Mr Jesmond Aquilina
Board Secretary



Message by the

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, SPORT, YOUTH, RESEARCH, AND INNOVATION

Hon. Dr Clifton Grima

Undoubtedly the Foundation of Educational Services is one of the main pillars of our educational system and has been providing an outstanding contribution to the education sector for over 20 years, reflecting its vision statement “Together we contribute to the educational development of the learner whilst supporting an evolving society”.

FES provides various innovative educational services, namely Childcare Centres, Klabb 3-16 and Skolasajf centres. These offer not only a holistic range of and initiatives contributing to the wellbeing of our younger generations, but also an excellent service to the working parents in providing a good alternative where their children can further their development. The Foundation’s services, including childcare, after-school care, and holiday programmes enable learning and personal development for both children and parents. The programmes provided in the services are engaging our children in non-formal educational activities, which are so important in teaching children important life skills transferable to other areas of their lives.

The FES has a rich history with impressive statistics, and I am sure that it will maintain

and build on its past achievements so that it will continue to strengthen the educational journey of our children for generations to come. I am sure that looking back at the accomplishments that the Foundation has achieved, gives all of us the necessary motivation to strive further in our next challenges, as we further build on the services and programmes being offered.

During these two decades, FES has excellently managed to adapt to the ever-changing needs of our country’s economy and the varying lifestyles of our families. The Foundation’s enhanced services are a testimony of a leading stakeholder in the field.

I would like to show my gratitude and appreciation to the Foundation and thank the Chairperson and Members of the Board, the Chief Executive Officer, and all the employees for their commitment and arduous dedication.

I also reaffirm my commitment in giving all the needed support to the Foundation, for it to continue to offer the same level of excellence and provide more innovative services, to benefit our younger generation and their families.



Message by the

PERMANENT SECRETARY WITHIN THE MINISTRY FOR EDUCATION, YOUTH, SPORT, RESEARCH, AND INNOVATION

Mr Matthew Vella

For another year, the Foundation for Educational Services has worked in collaboration with the Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation, and provided sought-after services that address the ever-changing needs of our families. The Foundation's commitment in ensuring a wide range of services that cover childcare centres, after-school hours care, and summer programmes, is twofold. It enables parents and guardians to manage their work and family responsibilities, while simultaneously complementing the children's educational journey, through its enriching educational activities.

The number of children and families who made use of the services during 2022 reflect the annual increase in the demand for such services. For instance, the Childcare Centres were frequented by 558 service users. The fact that all FES childcare centres are registered with the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education, and they all follow the National Standards for Early Childhood Education and Care Services (0-3 Years) (2021) gives parents/guardians peace of mind that their children are receiving high-quality care.

In this respect, to enhance quality from an early age, in July 2023, the Ministry for Education, Youth, Sport, Research and Innovation, launched the Quality Assurance Framework for Education in Malta for children from 0 to 16 years, which marks a key milestone in the transformation of Malta's education system. It is the belief of the Ministry that quality in education influences the children's overall development and impacts their life's trajectory

in a variety of ways. Furthermore, as mentioned in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4, effective education from a young age attempts to provide inclusive and fair opportunities for all children. This is part and parcel of the new National Education Strategy 2024-2030 which is expected to be launched in the first quarter of 2024.

During 2022 there were also 6580 children enrolled in the Klabb3-16 service, which runs after school hours. During this time, children are provided with various activities which range from arts and crafts, drama, storytelling, as well as the homework club overseen by qualified teachers. In addition, more than 12, 000 children attended Skolasajf with the theme 'Earth Heroes, Unite!'. FES should be commended for establishing new activities by partnering with 49 different government and non-government organisations and entities. These activities were either held at Skolasajf centres where partners visited and carried out activities with children, or in the form of outings where children had the opportunity to visit the facilities and participate in activities as offered by the venue. These non-formal educational experiences translate into a range of personal, social, and developmental benefits, that in turn lead to active global citizenship, engagement in the world of work, and lifelong learning.

I augur the Foundation for Educational Services ongoing success in delivering an optimal service to support the educational journey of the children entrusted in their care, while remaining accessible to meet their families' requirements.



Message by the

CHAIRPERSON OF THE FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

Ms Pamela Schembri

As we present the annual report for the Foundation for Educational Services (FES), we celebrate a remarkable year of resurgence and growth following the challenging times brought on by the global pandemic. Throughout the year, FES has achieved significant milestones that have propelled us forward, and we are proud to highlight two initiatives that hold a special place in our hearts. For the first time in our history, we expanded the service of Skolasajf in the Resource Centres to operate five days a week, and we extended the opening hours of our childcare centres. These milestones exemplify our unwavering commitment to providing enhanced educational opportunities and support to our community.

Skolasajf remains at the heart of FES's mission, a pillar of our organization as it has been for years. During 2022, we proudly extended the summer program in the Resource Centres to operate for five days each week and continued to offer the Klabb 3-16 service during scholastic holidays. By doing so, we have significantly broadened the reach and impact of this program, enabling more children to benefit from its transformative power.

Recognising the evolving needs of our community, FES responded proactively by extending the opening hours of our childcare centres. This step was essential in supporting working families who wanted to use the FES Childcare Service but were limited due to the opening hours of the

centres not coinciding with their shift work schedules.

By extending the operating hours of our childcare centres, we have extended the opportunity of a safe and nurturing environment where children can thrive, to more service users. The additional hours provide more flexibility for parents, allowing them to balance their professional responsibilities while ensuring their children receive the care and support that they need. Our dedicated staff continues to provide high-quality care and employ the stimulating pedagogy of the Emergent Curriculum, to engage children in activities that promote their cognitive, emotional, and social development.

These extended hours have not only offered practical assistance to families but have also reinforced our commitment



**As we reflect on
the achievements
of the past year,
the Foundation for
Educational Services
stands tall as a beacon
of hope, resilience, and
progress.**



to empowering children holistically. By providing a secure and enriching environment for longer periods, we foster a love for learning and instil valuable life skills in our young charges.

The accomplishments achieved this year are a testament to FES's resilience, adaptability, and dedication to the well-being of our community. As we continue to build upon this success, we remain committed to excellence in non-formal education and to making a lasting difference in the lives of our students, educators, and families.

As we reflect on the achievements of the past year, the Foundation for Educational Services stands tall as a beacon of hope, resilience, and progress. Moving forward, we are steadfast in our mission to foster a vibrant educational landscape that equips our children with the tools they need to succeed. Together, with the steadfast support of our community, we will continue to nurture the minds and hearts of the future generation, ensuring a brighter tomorrow for all.

None of these accomplishments would have been possible without the resolute dedication and leadership of our esteemed CEO Michael Bondin. His vision, guidance, and unwavering support have been instrumental in driving the Foundation for Educational Services forward. I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to the entire staff of FES,

whose tireless efforts and unfaltering dedication have made a lasting impact on the lives of countless children and families. From the educators who inspire young minds, to the administrative and support staff who ensure smooth operations, each member of our team plays a vital role in our collective success.

In conclusion, I extend my deepest gratitude to the parents who entrust us with the precious gift of their children. Your partnership and your faith in our organisation, have been instrumental in our success. With your continued support, we look forward to making an even greater impact on the lives of our students and the community we serve. Thank you for being an integral part of the Foundation for Educational Services family.



Message by the

CEO OF THE FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

Mr Michael Bondin

As the government entity entrusted with Early childhood education and Care, the Foundation for Educational Services strives to support an evolving society through a holistic service to the child.

The quantity of the provision spans from 12 childcare centres to 35 after school Klabb centres going up to 58 centres during Skolasajf. Through this provision FES aims to support particularly working families, to juggle between work and family commitments while ensuring that their kids are safe and actively engaged in our centres, in their absence. The safe environment that we offer also helps to entice more women to contribute actively to an ever-growing economy, while targeting also the national employee gender gap that has long existed. The latter also happens to be a European target within the EU social pillar agenda for 2030.

The statistics of quantity for the provision of our service attest to the ongoing commitment of the Foundation to fulfil its mission. During the year 2022, 558 young children were registered and attending our childcare centres, operating almost at maximum capacity. Moreover, 2022 saw an unprecedented increase in the demand for Klabb 3-16 with more than 1000 new clients over the previous year, and a staggering 1,2000 applications for Skolasajf with a constant 80% of students attending daily throughout summer.

However, while the provision of the service is there and its uptake is hugely popular,

the Foundation cannot sit on its laurels and relax. Rather, it has to constantly evaluate and scrutinise the quality of the service on offer. Besides parents, our primary clients are small children and school aged students who are entrusted with us. The Foundation holds the key to these children's present childhood memories and the time spent with us should be nothing less than well spent quality time.

In 2022, the Foundation saw the rolling in of the emergent curriculum in half of its childcare centres. This pedagogy, which builds on the interests of the child moves away from prescriptive teaching where the child engages in the activity set by the educator. Instead, with the child-led approach, the childcare educator prepares different activities for the children to choose from and builds on that activity which is more conducive to the child. This methodology helps children take the initiative from a very early age while it encourages active participation. Moreover, with this methodology children are better prepared to move on to kindergarten, where this methodology is also in place. This shift in pedagogy involved a paradigm shift from all those involved to embark on this exciting and different new way how to prepare activities. Heartfelt thanks are due to the Programmes Department within the Foundation, who mapped out the training programme, drew up customised documentation and delivered the training with the most favourable instructional methodology so as not to disrupt the service. A schedule was also planned for

it to be delivered and mentored in all the centres by mid-2023. Thanks are due also to all our childcare staff members who embraced this pedagogy despite all the difficulties that change brings about.

2022 also saw the introduction of staggered times across all Klabb 3-16 centres. The coming and going of parents collecting their children at all times as was custom, was disrupting a structured quality service. Activities in the centres were continuously being disrupted and cut short with playworkers and children finding it difficult to work on an activity from start to finish. The new system suggested that parents pick their children every half hour according to the booked times. Playworkers and children could start and finish an activity without disruptions. This bold decision is another step in the right direction towards a child centred approach in the service that the Foundation offers.



The statistics of quantity for the provision of our service attest to the ongoing commitment of the Foundation to fulfil its mission.

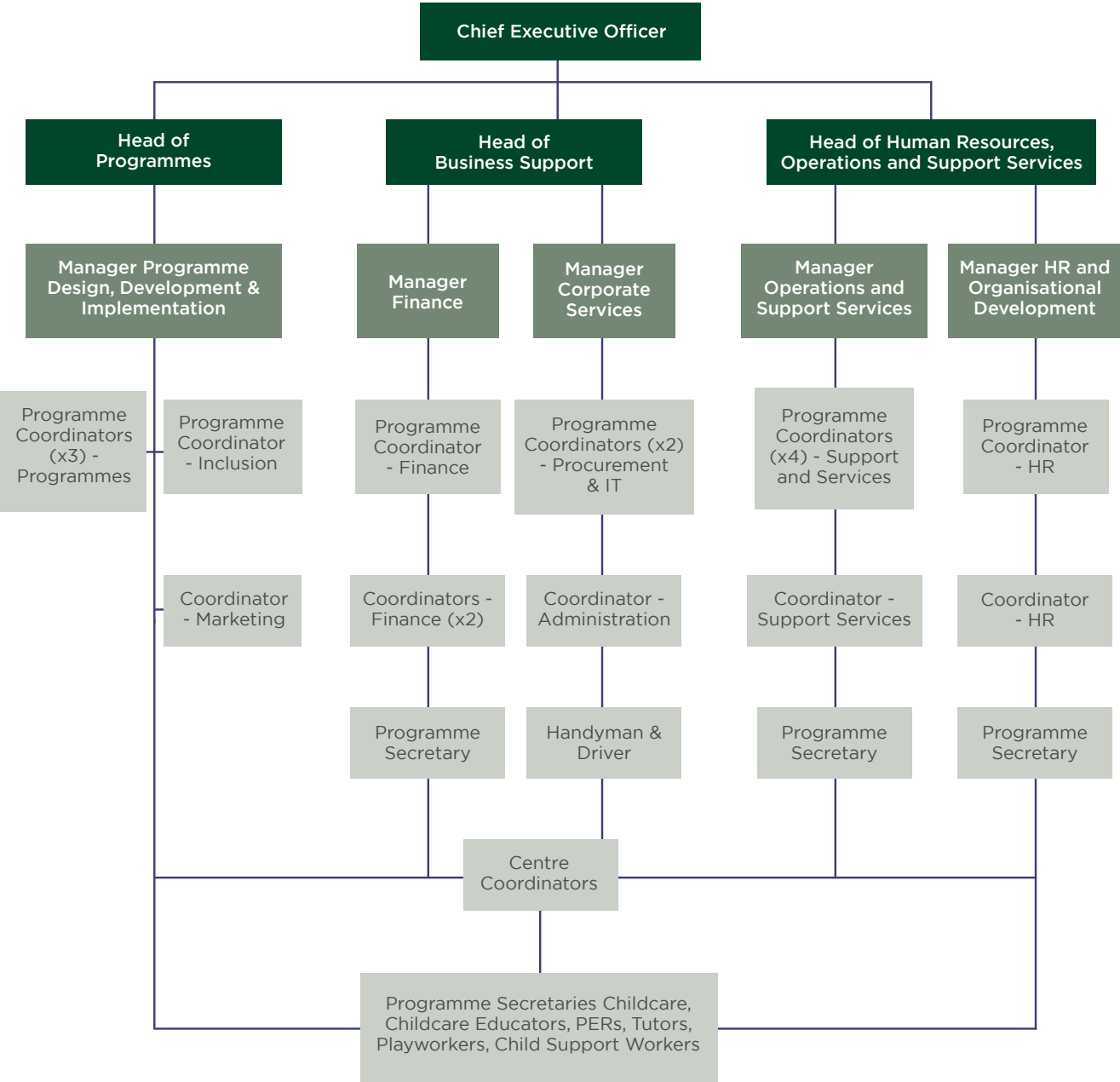


A child centred approach requires that the staff are well trained to work with the children under their care and are well equipped with activities that are engaging and fun. It is the intention of the Foundation to continue to invest in training programmes for all employees and to collaborate with other entities to provide such training. All employees working directly with children should at least have a sound knowledge of basic pedagogy before they are engaged with to work with FES.

Moreover, the Foundation is aware that most of the children entrusted with us are at a disadvantage when compared with other peers, who have the means and time to pursue extra-curricular activities after school hours. It is the intention of the Foundation to explore and collaborate with partners to bridge this gap and bring professional cultural and sports activities to the centres. Such collaborations would undoubtedly add value to the programme that is already on offer.

Such initiatives would not be possible, if not acceded to by the Foundation's Board Members and the Ministry of Education, Youth, Research, and Innovation. Such initiatives would not happen, without the backing and ownership of a hard-working team at Head Office and in all our centres. Such initiatives would be futile, if not taken up by parents and not enjoyed by our beloved students. It is the synergy of all this, that makes this mission and vision of the Foundation so important to succeed in its endeavour to be of service to the community at large.

THE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



THE PROGRAMMES DEPARTMENT





THE PROGRAMMES UNIT

Introduction

The remit of the **Programmes Department** within the FES organisational structure is salient to the activities being delivered across the three main services of the Foundation. It incorporates the **Programme Design, Development and Implementation Unit (PDDI)**, in charge of the creation of content to be delivered with the service users, the monitoring of the performance of the staff members and their training to do their job the best of their abilities. There is also the **Inclusion Unit**, in charge of the implementation of an inclusive environment within the centres through support to students with individual education needs, and guidance to the relevant staff members. Another area managed by the Programmes the Department is the **Marketing and Communications Unit** in charge of events, Corporate Social

Responsibilities initiatives, and other activities organised by FES.

The following pages give testament to all the work carried out by the Programmes Department during 2022, in its commitment to maintain an output that matches the expectations of authorities, service users, and clients.

The English actor and director Mark Ryan is quoted to have said that *you can't please everyone, but I've always felt you cannot ultimately lose if you give everything you try 110%*. This maxim lies behind each effort carried out by the members of the Programmes Department team. Pleasing different stakeholders affected by the FES services may be a tall order, however the common baseline of the education and welfare of the child, helps us to deliver a

quality service that is appreciated by the different players that have a stake in the FES services.

By the end of 2022, the team in the Programmes Department was made up of seven staff members, as follows:

- Head of Programmes
- Manager Programmes
- Three Programme Coordinators (PDDI)
- Programme Coordinator (Inclusion)
- Marketing and Communications Coordinator

The FES Childcare Service

The childcare service in the FES Childcare Centres is one of the three pillars that serve the community at large. FES is entrusted with the operation of the State's childcare service, and the responsibility to maintain this service as a flagship of quality learning and care is high on the FES agenda.

The childcare centres in operation during 2022 totalled to 12. Children aged 3 months to 3 years were welcomed daily to embark on their daily journey of development and learning. A journey facilitated by the Childcare Educators,



who are in turn supported by the Centre Coordinators, and Programme Coordinators (PCs) from Head Office.

The PCs from the Programmes Department observed, mentored, and followed-up, on how the learning environment, resources, and interactions, could be improved and tailored to address the children's interests and needs. During 2022, the three PCs in charge of Programme Design, Development, and Implementation, carried out a total of 55 support visits to the 12 centres, and 15 online support sessions with the Centre Coordinators. The three PCs would confer regularly between themselves to share observations and best practices, and discuss any challenges faced. Through these visits and meetings, the PCs made sure that their feedback was aligned with the training being given to the childcare educators in the delivery of the emergent curriculum in the FES Childcare Centres.

The input of the three PCs PDDI and of the PC Inclusion, was also required in the delivery of training sessions, including in the Childcare Seminars organised annually for all the childcare centres staff members.

The Emergent Curriculum in the FES Childcare Centres

The implementation of a pedagogy based on the children's interest within the FES childcare centres, continued in earnest in 2022. Following the training and enactment of the Child-Led Approach (CLA) at Il-Bebbuxu during 2021, the next centre to be trained was is-Sardinella at San Gwann. This was facilitated by the lifting of the COVID restrictions and therefore the PC from the Programmes Department who was going to carry out the training, could visit the centre and deliver a hands-on approach.

The focus on one centre and the constant presence of the trainer with the staff members, accelerated the conclusion and

the eventual launch of the CLA at Is-Sardinella. In fact, the CLA started to be put in practice by March 2022. However, this approach of introducing the CLA in one centre at a time, coupled with the COVID situation which had set back the roll-out of this pedagogy by nearly two years, necessitated that a different approach is devised.

Therefore, the training was planned on the Train the Trainer approach, where the Centre Coordinators were given the training first, so they could later pass on their knowledge, monitor, and assist the staff in their respective centres. This training plan provided an accelerated route that led to the implementation of the CLA in four childcare centres at a time, in a relatively shorter period. It was also more sustainable, as it required no disruption of the service for the FES clients. The four centres that were chosen to initiate this training were *Ix-Xemx*, *Id-Denfil*, *Žmeraldi*, and *Il-Bejta*.



The four Centre Coordinators participated in a two-week course, delivered by Ms Catherine Xuereb, the Programme Coordinator within the Programmes Department with the remit of delivering the CLA training. The course was held at *Il-Bebbuxu*, where the child-led approach was already the basis for all the learning opportunities that were presented in the centre. The training was based on a combination of theory and hands-on activities. The hands-on training was intended to address the theoretical element of the Child-Led Approach and to instil the habit of reflective practice within the trainees.

The principle of the emergent curriculum is the foundation for the planning and preparation of the CLA, which is based on the children's interests and needs. In the morning, the four Centre Coordinators immersed themselves in the centre's programme of activities and engaged with the children, while being supported by their colleagues from *Il-Bebbuxu*. They observed the learning environment, including the learning opportunities presented and resources used, the Circle Time activity, the children's engagement during play, and the interactions between the children, and between the Childcare Educators and the children.

In the afternoon, the trainees discussed their morning observations with the Centre Coordinator of Il-Bebbuxu Ms Thelma Gatt, and with Ms Catherine Xuereb. Their observations were sustained by academic theories that highlighted the level of accurate observations and reflections that were made by the trainees. The Centre Coordinators also participated in workshops about the use of loose parts in children's activities, and schematic play. Two professionals in the field of Early Years Education were also invited to deliver a short session about the importance of the Child-Led Approach with both babies and toddlers.

This peer-to-peer learning served as a great training tool to quell the cognitive dissonance that one may experience with change, as one moves from the comfort zone of known practices to new experiences and challenges. The concurrent theoretical and practical sessions re-enforced the learning and enabled the trainees to witness in person the learning objectives behind the emergent curriculum. The training also encouraged collaboration and connectivity, while it also strengthened the networking between the centres.



Following the two-week training, each Centre Coordinator chaired a one-day seminar with their own staff, where they shared their insights and experience. Useful resources were the videos of the learning opportunities that the Centre Coordinators had participated in while at il-Bebbuxu Childcare Centre. The unedited footage allowed the Childcare Educators to also witness the genuine and spontaneous reactions of the children. The Childcare Educators were also given the opportunity to create learning opportunities based on the interests of the children already in their care.

Once this intensive training ended, the four Centre Coordinators felt more equipped to embark on this journey. They were more confident and knowledgeable in the subject and implementation of the emergent curriculum. This enabled them to smoothen this transition from the prescriptive approach to the child-led approach mode of learning, and to support the Childcare Educators in their planning and preparation.

Following the one-day seminar each centre launched the CLA process. Each centre continued to be supported by Ms Catherine Xuereb, with frequent visits to the centres.

Induction Sessions for new Childcare Educators joining FES

New Childcare Centre Coordinators and Childcare Educators joining FES, were prepared for their role by their attendance for an Induction Session, before joining their peers in the centres. These sessions centred on bringing the new recruits in line with the FES policies that govern learning and care, and the pedagogy being used in the implementation of the emergent curriculum in the FES Childcare Centres.

During these sessions the new recruits built a relationship with the PCs in the

Programmes Department, who would be their point of reference in matters related to children's learning and development. The sessions were also an opportunity to introduce FES policies and how they align with the overall learning objectives planned for the children in the childcare centres. Another crucial element was the gauging of understanding of the concept of the emergent curriculum, their experience of its implementation, and their overall outlook on the learning opportunities that this pedagogy presents to the children. Admin practicalities related to the emergent curriculum were also tackled, in terms of the relevant paperwork required to make sure that all centres have a standardised process.

All these issues were tackled to ensure that new childcare educators understood their role within the FES framework of the childcare service, and how their job performance had to be always in line with the FES policies, which conform to the *National Standards for Early Childhood Education and Care Services (0-3 Years)*.

Finnish experts visit Is-Sardinella Childcare Centre

The successful implementation of the Emergent Curriculum within the FES Childcare Centres was also recognised by counterpart peers in other areas of education. In October, the childcare centre *Is-Sardinella* at San Gwann, hosted a delegation of Finnish experts in Early Childhood Education and Care. This visit was organised upon the request by the Maltese Ambassador for Estonia and Finland, H.E. Dr Kenneth Vella, and the Finnish Association Suomen Varhaiskasvatus. Finnish pedagogies are world-renown for their high standards of a child-centred education.

The aim of this visit was to observe the pedagogical practices that the centre embraces, based on a curriculum that



emerges from the children's interests. The children are exposed daily to learning opportunities that are engaging and stimulating, aimed to provoke the children's senses, cognizance, creativity, and imagination. The Finnish experts observed the learning opportunities presented by the Childcare Educators and spoke at length with the Centre Coordinator Ms Svetlana Gauci and with the Childcare Educators, about the milestones being reached through this form of pedagogy.

The Finnish guests were all lecturers and researchers in the field of ECEC, and members of the Suomen Varhaiskasvatus RY (Finland Early Education Association). Their visit to *Is-Sardinella* was carried out as part of the Association's goal to encourage interaction between researchers, educators and those doing practical education and teaching work, in order to promote favourable conditions for children's growth both at home, in early childhood education and in society.

The Klabb 3-16 Service

Every month, the students in the Klabb 3-16 centres are given the opportunity to explore a different theme through the Programme of Activities prepared by the

Programmes Department. The themes serve as a springboard for topics that aim to provide children with a holistic perspective and understanding of the world that they are growing up in. The learning outcomes cover a broad range of topics and issues, ranging from explaining a scientific concept to the acquisition of soft skills.

During the year 2022 students were acquainted with the concept of perseverance and creativity, through the world of insects that work as a team, and through the pioneering work of inventors who discovered the various forms of travel. There was a month that was dedicated to science, as without experimenting, observation, and determination, the world would remain static. Another topic dealt with games and the skills gained through simply playing and being together. Other topics centred on skills, self-care, and safety. For example, it is important to help shape the children's understanding of, and attitudes towards, road safety, to give them the best chance of keeping safe on the road. For this exercise, the playworkers used toys to create a scenario so common in our lives - crossing the street.

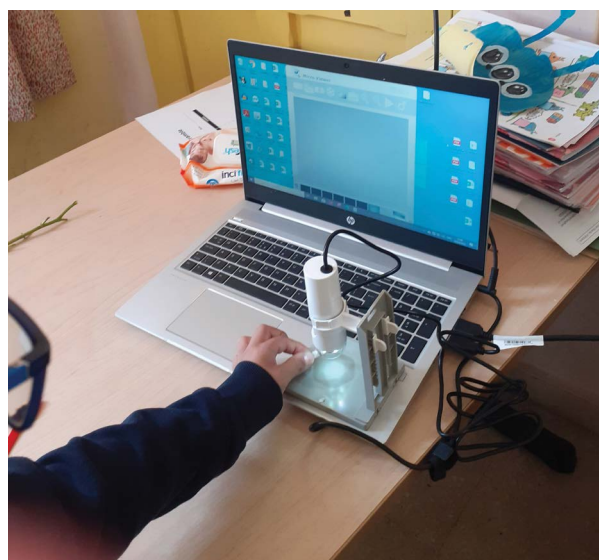
The playworkers taught the children life-saving messages, such as:

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

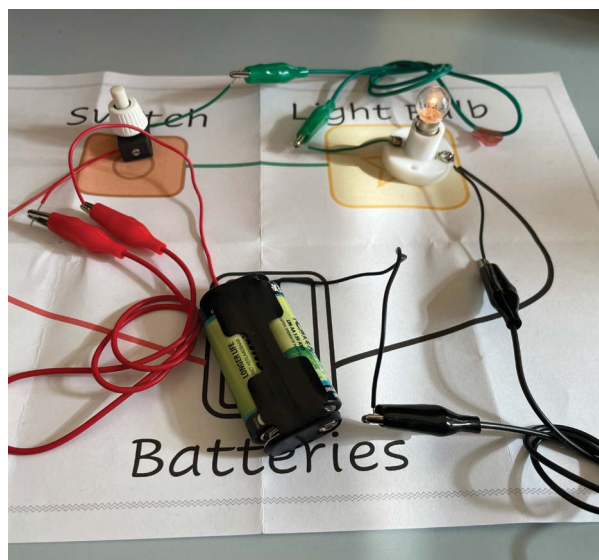
All this and more were covered through over 300 activities for early years children (3 - 7 years old), and 294 activities for primary children (8 years and above). All these activities touched on areas that involved literacy through stories; experiencing nature hands on through gardening; practicing of fine motor skills through various targeted exercises especially through artwork; the creation of rhythm and song, by playing drums, maracas, bells and wooden sticks; exploring physical activity and dancing which has the dual effect of keeping one healthy and happy by releasing endorphins; learning life skills such as cooking to learn how to become independent, while improving communication and observation skills.



All the thought and work that goes into the creation of the monthly programme, aim to inspire the children to feel empowered, to see multiple perspectives of a situation, and encourage them to express themselves from a young age. Discussions enable participants to appreciate different point of views and break down preconceptions. In turn, one builds a point of view, with facts, with compassion, and a holistic view of the situation. All this served to encourage the children to stand up for what they believe, and for themselves and others.



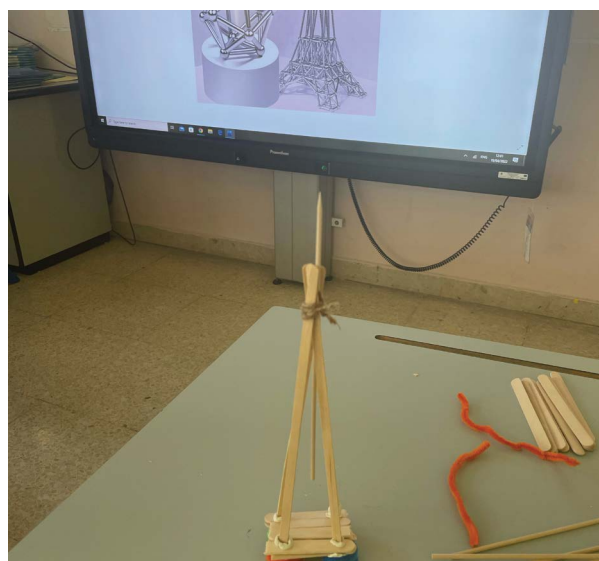
All of this requires resources provided to the centres through the work of the Corporate Department. However, the activities also identify a large percentage of recycled material to be used as materials, thus encouraging children to be resourceful. It also helps them to see items for more than what they are; a recycled toilet roll can be a telescope, a tunnel, or a tower. This feeds the children's creative spirit and expands it during play. Creativity is a central subtheme within our programmes, as through creativity, one learns to think outside of the box, encourage problem solving skills, and see the world as full of possibilities.



Apart from the Klabb 3-16 Programme of Activities, FES occasionally also partners up with entities who would like to reach the Klabb 3-16 students. This was applied during 2022, when FES teamed up with the Science Centre, part of the Directorate for Learning & Assessment Programmes (DLAP), to organise a Mathematics and Science education popularisation initiative.

X'hemM? Jgħaqqadna

This initiative, titled X'hemM? Jgħaqqadna, targeted all students from Kinder 1 to Year 6 (ages 3 to 11 years). The theme was developed by the Klabb 3-16 centres in a way that provided a scientific explanation



for what is happening when we are doing basic things, such as running and stopping (Laws of Motion), drinking through a straw (negative pressure and atmospheric pressure), cooking and baking (heat and chemical change), flying paper airplanes and kites (opposite forces, lift, wind). The monthly theme titled Science in Spring also delivered a number of activities that allowed the children the hands-on experiences to discover different scientific principles. The cooking sessions, arts and crafts activities, simple experiments, quizzes, and show and tell initiatives, enabled shared learning as well as the cultivation of curiosity towards the scientific and mathematical principles that shape our lives.

The themes during the year 2022:

- January – We are Klabb!
- February – Around the World in February
- March – Vehicles, Vessels and Flying Machines, and the pioneers that made it possible
- April – Science in Spring
- May – All fun and Games
- June and July Bridge Holidays – Once Upon a time... in an enchanted Forest
- September – Learning is Fun!
- October – It’s a Bug’s Life!
- November – Stories of Halloween, Magical Dreams, and Big Friendly Giants.
- December – A Green Christmas

Skolasajf 2022

The Skolasajf service is a highly popular service, attracting an annual client base of over 12K, and reaches children who attend State, Independent and Church schools. This high demand places a higher onus on the Programmes Department, especially where the participation of partners is concerned, to try and provide an external contribution to the programme through centre-based visits and also outing to places of interest, to as many service users as possible.



The Programme

The theme chosen for 2022 was “Earth Heroes, Unite!”. This theme was decided after the Programmes Department held a number of focus groups with students attending the Klabb 3-16 service during the winter months. They gave their views about the service and what type of subjects they would like to explore in the summer activities. The final theme urged people to be pro-active and punctuated the need to be united in the face of adversary. This unity will in turn help us to reap the fruit of our work and commitment. The collective of everyone will help to build a better and stronger society.



The logo was also tied to the theme and was based on the winning design submitted by a 9-year-old student, Naielle Formosa Cumbo who attended the Imsida Primary School.

The activities as presented in the Programme Manual brought to the attention of the Skolasajf 2022 participants, a number of sub-themes that helped to explore the main theme 'Earth Heroes, Unite!'. The sub-themes were the following:

1. Living as Hero!
2. Working as a Community
3. Earth our Home: Flora and Fauna
4. Our tiny home in the BIG universe
5. Building a foundation for future innovators
6. Small Hands, Big Strides towards sustainability (EY)/ Engineers of sustainability (P)
7. Communicating through Arts, Stories and Cultures
8. Stories that help us understand and Imagine (EY)/Our world through our eyes and Voices: Making a Documentary (P)

The programme was based on a number of non-formal activities, that included 59 activities for the Early Years group and

57 activities for the Primary Years. All this was further complemented by the Sports Programme, and over 100 additional activities that could be used as filler activities in-between the main activities.

The Programme Manual was also a useful tool for Child Support Workers (CSW) working with children who need individual support, both in Mainstream Centres and in Resource Centres. The CSWs got to know the students in their charge and adapted the activities according to the competencies of the students. The adaptations were based on guidelines and recommendations that could be implemented according to the different learning domains.

Added value to the programme was also provided by the collaboration of 49 external partners who are annual contributors, and whose participation enhanced the learning opportunities provided to the students.

All the activities were constructed to foster a love for learning that goes beyond the traditional classroom setting. Through a diverse range of activities, children were allowed to explore their interests, challenge themselves, and develop new skills. The students



embarked on a journey that was not just about academic growth but also about fostering a sense of community, friendship, and personal development.

The implementation of the Skolasajf Programme of Activities could not have been possible without the input of all the workers employed by FES, to fulfil the roles of Regional Coordinators, Centre Coordinators, Playworkers and Child Support Workers, and Sports Playworkers. Their unwavering commitment to create a supportive and nurturing environment was the driving force behind the success of every educational programme launched by the Programmes Department. This was also evidenced in the final week of Skolasajf, as every centre organised an Open Day or a Concert. These events were the highlight of the Skolasajf Programme, and the staff worked with the children to be able to invite the parents and relatives to the school, to witness their accomplishments.

Partners during Skolasajf 2022

During Skolasajf 2022 there was a total of 49 total external partners. Five of them carried out online sessions through the Teams Platform, 30 partners carried out the sessions at the respective Skolasajf Centres, and 14 partners invited different centres to visit their centres in the form of an outing.

All this totalled to 102 outings, 178 online sessions and 856 centre visits. The outings in Gozo were made possible thanks to the committed support shown annually by the Ministry for Gozo and the ECO Gozo Directorate, who once again sponsored the transportation costs.

The below is the list of partners who participated during Skolasajf 2022:

Ambjent Malta - Ambjent Malta is the Authority within the Ministry for Environment which manages sites of

Ecological importance. During the sessions representatives encouraged short discussions on the importance of trees and a hands-on session. Students were encouraged to plant carob seeds in pots to bring more awareness about tress native to the Maltese Islands.

Animal Welfare Directorate and the Office of the Commissioner for Animal Welfare - Part of the work of these two entities is that of animal rescue operations and the protection of animals in need. There is also the sterling service delivered in school to increase awareness about



animal safety. These sessions were also offered during Skolasajf, where officials were accompanied by the lovely canine companion Luna.

BeSmartOnline - The BeSmartOnline project is implemented through a consortium coordinated by by FSWS Agenzija Appogg together with the Office of the Commissioner for Children, the Directorate for Learning and Assessment Programmes (DLAP) and the Malta Police Force - Cyber Crime Unit.

All partners worked together to raise awareness and educate children and teens, parents/carers and educators on the safer use of the Internet. The partners also established and promote www.childwebalert.gov.mt, an online reporting facility for illegal online content, particularly child abuse material and offers support services to respective victims. Interactive sessions with children about the good use of technology. Games were used during the session n to make it more interesting.

Central Bank of Malta - The Central Bank of Malta is an independent institution that carries out its statutory responsibilities in the public interest. Educational presentations were conducted with the intention of promoting awareness of the Euro Bank notes and counterfeiting. They served to demonstrate multiple ways how students and persons from every aspect of life can detect counterfeits banknotes.

E-Bugs - The Malta Medical Students Association (Public Health). together with the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and the Infectious Diseases Prevention and Control Directorate, participated in the E-bugs project. This involved a series of peer education sessions given to children on microbes, the importance of hand and respiratory hygiene and antimicrobial use.



Faraxa Publishing - Faraxa Publishing was established in 2011, with the aim of publishing literary and non-literary translations into Maltese of world-renowned authors and also lesser-known authors. During Skolasajf, Faraxa Publishing conducted book reading sessions by local authors.

Junior Achievers Young Enterprise (JAYE) - JAYE Malta Foundation is a member nation of Junior Achievers (JA) Worldwide which represents a global network of non-profit organisations sharing a common mission and purpose to be leaders in the field of enterprise education. JAYE Malta aims to spur economic development through improving young people's understanding of business, economics, employability, and entrepreneurship. The entity provided two programmes for different age groups.

- Our Community - The OC programme was designed to introduce students to the community, where they discover the identity of a community, its activities, its people and jobs, as well as understanding how money moves through the community. After assessing the needs and wants of the community, the students were taken through an entrepreneurial journey to design a

business idea for an empty shop in the community. They learnt the basics of business planning and produced a prototype.

- **Economics for Success** – This programme was designed to introduce students to personal finance and the importance of identifying education and career goals based on their own skills, interests, and values. Using an interactive board game, the students thought about some of life’s decisions, while providing the skills needed to manage money better.

Servizzi Ewropej Malta (SEM) - SEM provides information on European Union related matters, including EU funds. Skolasajf students were hosted at the entity’s Head Office in Valletta where they engaged in an interactive game that enabled them to understand what it means to be a European citizen, and how each one of us can contribute to a sustainable, environment-friendly future. Students from Skolasajf Tarxien also got some inside knowledge about European Funds, during a Q&A session with the Parliamentary Secretary for EU Funds, Hon. Dr Chris Bonett Dr Bonett who visited them on the premises of SEM.

Missio - Missio is the international mission agency of the Catholic Church in Malta and is supported by HSBC Malta. Skolasajf sessions centres on the culture of different countries, with the additional activity of creating a craft related to a specific country. The aim was that understanding cultures is conducive to understanding and empathising with others.

Sedqa (Malta Branch) - Sedqa provided four activities on rotation, with each representing a different scenario. The students were engaged in different games and activities which focused specifically on Self-Love, Effective Communication, Coping Skills, and Addictions focusing Alcohol. The students will



WasteServ - Wasteserv is responsible for organising, managing and operating integrated systems for waste management. Education is at the very core of Wasteserv’s endeavours. The company’s aim is to encourage people to make waste management an integral lifestyle practice. Wasteserv Malta focused their sessions on teaching about waste management in a fun way, with interactive online characters addressed the students according to the age group.

Prayer Spaces - Prayer Spaces provided hands-on spiritual experiences, inviting children to reconnect with their inner selves and with God through practical ways of prayerfully expressing their innermost desires, pains, aspirations, relations, and thirst for meaning in life. Children and young people had time to explore life questions and interact in a safe environment, irrespective of their faith.

Community Police – The members of the Community Police have the two-fold mission of community building and problem solving. Members of the Community Police visited the Skolasajf Centres so that the students could familiarise themselves with this service of the Malta Police Force and understand their role as helpers of the community. The students were also taught about how to



use the emergency number, the rules and regulations to follow on the road, and about how to deal with suspicious strangers.

Inizjamed - Inizjamed is a voluntary non-governmental cultural organisation committed towards the regeneration of culture and artistic expression in the Maltese Islands and actively promotes a greater awareness of the cultures of the Mediterranean. During Skolasajf they carried two separate creative writing workshops led by an author Antoinette Borg. The children were guided to work on their own writing and share it.

Ghajn - Water Conservation Centre -The National Water Conservation Awareness Centre offers an interactive experience on the need for the conservation of water resources in the Maltese islands. The educational activities at the Centre were based on four different educational trails – The Water Cycle, The Water Operator, The Fairly Hydrated Knight, and the Water Hero. Before playing the interactive games, visiting groups are provided with an introductory presentation of the particular water management issue addressed in the selected educational activity. At the end of each visit, visitors were invited to leave their “water conservation messages”.

Saving our Blue Campaign -The Ministry for the Environment, Energy and Enterprise organised the Saving Our Blue campaign with the aim of raising awareness on the harms that single-use plastics are causing on the environment, especially on marine life. The campaign with the students focused not only on reducing marine litter, but also to become proactive and to opt for more sustainable behaviours. An online activity book was also shared, with activities, to help a better understanding of the marine litter problem. During an educational activity held at Ramla Bay in Gozo, 60 Gozitan Skolasajf students visited the turtle nest at Ramla Bay, in an opportunity to further learn about marine life.

The mascots ‘Maggie the Turtle’ and ‘Stephen the Seagull’ were brought in for the activity, to explain the damage caused by waste disposed irresponsibly and illegally on marine life. The children had the opportunity to share their ideas on sustainable solutions and practices.

Heritage Malta -Heritage Malta is the national agency for museums, conservation practice and cultural heritage. The sessions consisted of an online presentation about WW2 and also a tour of the War Museum.



Financial Literacy Campaign - GEMMA
 - GEMMA, within the Ministry for Social Policy and Children's Rights, and the HSBC Malta Foundation, offered a financial capability programme directed at primary level children. The programme was based on games and a workshop and was titled 'Healthy Choices'. It focused on explaining the difference between needs and wants, and on the development of the skills which are necessary for making responsible purchase judgements, especially when influenced by media advertising. Participants were also invited to participate in a competition, where they had to create a Superhero Costume with a €5 budget, preferably using recyclable material, thus encouraging creativity, sustainability, and money management. The selected winners attended a prize giving ceremony.

Dental Public Unit (Malta & Gozo) -The main endeavour Dental Public Health Unit is to promote oral health, to increase awareness of the connection between oral health and general health, to integrate oral health into the wider public health agenda, and to put oral health on the agenda of all policies. Skolasajf centres provided an important setting for prevention on a community basis since at the centres

one could reach a large portion of the younger generation at an early age, staff, families and the community as a whole. Reinforcement of health promotion messages at this influential stage of children's lives is essential to enable them to develop lifelong sustainable attitudes and habits.

GreenPak Coop Society Ltd -GreenPak Coop is the pioneer of post-consumer waste recovery in Malta. During Skolasajf they carried out talks to children aging from 9 years and over, and also promoted the campaign to dispose of used batteries safely. The initiative was aimed at increasing the recycling of batteries whilst at the same time helping those in need. The campaign *Batteries for Hospice* linked two common goods - recycling and charity.

Blue Flag Malta - Through the Blue Flag Awareness Campaign, students were taken on outings to localities where there are Blue Flag beaches. They were accompanied by the turtle mascot Luna, who read out her story to the students. Awareness visits and activities were also held at- various beaches in Malta including Golden Bay and St George`s Bay.





Malta Union Teachers (Fondazzjoni Saghtar) -Fondazzjoni Saghtar within the Malta Union of Teachers is a registered voluntary organisation with an educational and professional remit. During the last scholastic year, the foundation has re-issued the popular magazine ‘Saghtar’, which was used as a resource for the storytelling sessions with the students.

The Armed Forces of Malta (AFM) - AFM is Malta’s military organisation tasked with primary defence functions and safeguarding national sovereignty and interest, both in peacetime and in crisis. During Skolasajf various outings were held at the AFM premises including visits to the Safi Barracks , to Lyster Barracks at Hal Far, to the Airwing at Luqa, and JAYEto the Qortin Army Base in Gozo. The AFM Military Band also delivered a concert with music appreciation interactive sessions, aimed at different age groups.

Health Promotion and Disease Prevention -The mission of the Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Directorate is to promote and support the health and wellbeing of the Maltese Population. The theme for the 2022 campaign was ‘Know your Sugar’. The aim of this campaign was to increase the knowledge of the Maltese population on the harmful effect of sugar,



and to improve their dietary attitude and behaviour, with the ultimate goal being to reduce sugar consumption.

Transport Malta - Multimodal /Alternative Transport - The mission of Transport Malta is to promote and develop the transport sector in Malta. During Skolasajf six ‘stations’ were set up in the visited centres, each exploring different themes. The themes that were presented were: Electric Vehicles, Walking & Cycling, Public Transport, Enforcement, Road Safety and Maritime Transport. To further promote cycling as an alternative means of transport, all children were given a bicycle lock.



Lascares War Rooms -Lascares War Rooms is a heritage site administered by the NGO Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna. During Skolasajf representatives visited the centres to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the Operation Pedestal, better known as the Santa Marija Convoy. The young students were informed about the importance of this event in the history of Malta and were invited to participate in an art competition about the same subject.

Malta Dance Sport Association -The Malta Dance Sport Association is a non-profit organization affiliated with The Malta Olympic Committee and Sports Malta, with its main purpose to further the activity of Amateur Dance Sport in all its forms. The president of the association, Mr. Chris Zammit, who is also an International coach, International adjudicator and organizer recognized by The World Dance Sport Federation, visited two centres delivered theoretical and practical dancing classes.

Climate On Change Campaign -The Ministry for the Environment, Energy and Enterprise (MEEE) launched the 2nd Edition of the Nation-wide public awareness campaign “Climate On”, with the slogan “Turn on the Power for Change”. During Skolasajf, a set of friendly challenges were presented to students aged 7 to 10, to find practical solutions to make a difference to climate action.

Agenzija Zghazagh -SWISH was offered by Agenzija Zghazagh as an inclusive physical education programme, in collaboration with the Maltese Olympic Committee and The Ministry for Education and Sport. The session focused on practising a sport while using a wheelchair, which makes one realise and appreciate the special skills needed to manoeuvre the chair and play a sport at the same time.

e-Skills Malta Foundation - The eSkills Malta Foundation is a national coalition



made up of various representatives from the Government, industry, and education. Its aim is to contribute to the increase in digital skills and the development of the IT profession. The sessions consisted of a live demonstration about Robotics and coding.

Malta Public Transport - This entity used animators to deliver street-smart games. The games focused on the explanation of road signs, road rules and their infringement, and how to obey road rules. A certificate of attendance was awarded to all participants.

The Malta Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society -Children’s rights and meaningful child participation constitutes an integral part of the work of the Malta Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society. The Children’s Hub within the Malta Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society is crucial to the implementation of this child participation process. It creates a safe space encouraging and enabling children to have a voice and at the same time help adults understand children’s issues through children’s eyes. The sessions focused on mental health and involved reading, discussions as well as some writing and drawing.

Dr Api Dog Therapy Sessions - Dr Api is a non-governmental organisation which

focuses on the health and care of our pets. A dog therapy session was held at the Marsa Skolasajf Centre. The sessions was delivered by a professional dog handler and the discussion centred on dog handling, grooming, and on how to walk a dog. There was also a demonstration by a dog trainer.

Mtarfa Youth Nursery - Mtarfa Youth Nursery organised a training session in two centres Dingli and Rabat. The scope of these training sessions was to promote Football and Sports Familiarisation to Young Children.

Emergency Response and Rescue Corps (ERRC) -ERRC offers water rescue service at popular beaches around Gozo and Comino during the summer months, and ambulance services and first aid posts during public events. ERRC is a volunteer-led humanitarian organisation that helps people in crisis, whoever and wherever they are. The sessions consisted of an online interactive presentation full of information, videos, pictures and games. Students were encouraged to engage themselves and discuss about the topics, including sharing previous knowledge and experiences they would have encountered.

Sedqa Gozo Branch - The sessions were aimed at enhancing the student's understanding of their coping skills including what lies beneath the surface within us. Activities also raised awareness of the consequences of addiction while promoting self-love and care. One of the main catalysts of these activities was for the student to live a happy and healthy lifestyle.

Blue Flag Gozo & Globe Programme -The Blue Flag programme is an international award given to beaches, harbours, marinas and boats which participate in the programme and have proven to be clean

and safe and respecting the environment. Sessions were held at various beaches in Gozo about sustainable development at beaches/marinas through strict criteria dealing with water quality, environmental education and information, environmental management, and safety and other services.

SK Lions Football School - This is one of the main football nurseries in Gozo, catering for boys and girls aged 5 to 16 years, with a focus on player development. The qualified coaches offer the kids the possibility to learn both football and social skills in a fun environment. During Skolasajf coaches created a programme of different sports activities that focused on basic skills like mobility, balance, coordination, and teamwork through fun exercises.

OASI Foundation - OASI is a philanthropic and voluntary organisation, which is free from any political, religious, or sectarian affiliation. Sessions were based on the biopsychosocial approach which considers biological, psychological, and social factors and their complex interactions in understanding health, illness, and health care delivery. The organised activities consisted of drawing, quizzes, and group work.



Foundation for Social Welfare Services Gozo -FSWS Gozo Branch is constantly striving to bridge the gap in the provision of social welfare services between Malta and Gozo and strives to maintain high ethical and professional standards in all interventions for its service users. Activities were aimed at understanding the role of the social worker and raising awareness about the services available within the FSWS Gozo Branch. Activities included crafts, songs and games.

Alka Ceramics - Alka Ceramics organised art therapy sessions in the Resource Centres across Malta and Gozo. These included the creative process of making art to improve a person's physical, mental, and emotional well-being. These sessions served to help people with disabilities explore different ways of expressing themselves.

Opening Doors Association - Opening Doors Association is an arts organisation that provides opportunities for youth and adults with diverse intellectual disabilities, in Theatre, Dance/Movement and Music. Sessions included Creative Movement and Dance Sessions which focused on the personal physical expression, spatial awareness and improvisational games working within the group and at times using the buddy system. The sessions also focused on drumming workshops, following drumming and percussion techniques, and developing the ability of the group to be aware of each other when playing. Sessions will also explore leading and responding to basic improvisatory skills, including changing tempo, rhythm, dynamics and so on. Each participant had the opportunity to lead, follow and improvise using the drums and other percussion instruments.

Societa Filarmonica Maria Mater Gratiae Haz Zabbar - This band club in Haz Zabbar offers musical tuition for all ages

and also boasts a unique open-air theatre situated on its premises During Skolasajf 2022 the social band club welcomed Skolasajf students at their premises, where they went through the history of Haz Zabbar and the club, together with the services offered by the club for the local community.

Socjeta' Muzikali La Stella Levantina AD1894 Banda Santa Marija H'Attard -During Skolasajf 2022 this band club welcomed students for a visit at their premises so that the students could appreciate the historic place, see some of the traditional feast decorations, and witness the process of making and restoring the same decorations. They were also shown the music room and band instruments, where free tuition is available for all. Members of the club also visited the Attard Skolasajf Centre, just before the feast of Santa Marija, where a band played some of the traditional band marches. A small procession was also organised around the school premises, with the children carrying a small statue of St. Mary. The Band Director was also present to talk to the students and encourage them to join the music academy for free music tuition.

Ghaqda Banda Zejtun 1933 - Ghaqda Banda Zejtun conducted a 7-week course targeted for age group 8 to 9 years at Zejtun Skolasajf. Tutors gave an intensive course of how to play certain band instruments and also sent musicians at the centre to play live music and create a festa atmosphere.

Peace Band Club, Naxxar - Students from Naxxar Skolasajf centre visited the Peace Band Club premises. Students were shown different instruments found at the Club and were also informed about the local feasts, and the work involved to organise such large-scale events.

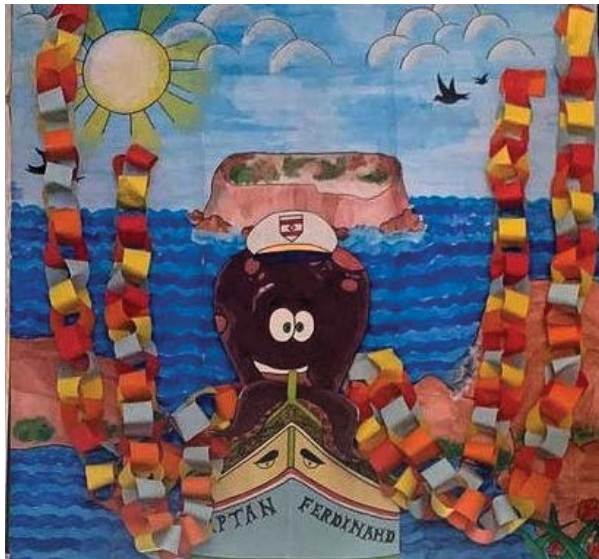


National Literacy Agency (NLA) – The commitment by NLA to increase awareness about the joy and benefits of reading, continued throughout the summer months, as it once again partnered with Skolasajf to provide reading animators for the Skolasajf centres. The animators carried out read aloud sessions from age-appropriate books.

Going the extra mile!

Skolasajf 2022 was offered in 57 centres, with six of them being in Gozo. Each centre has its own staff, who do their best to give the students in their care, wonderful memories of a summer worth remembering. Most of them go the extra mile, trying to embellish the premises, organising whole school events, and working towards instilling a sense of citizenship and responsibility towards the local community where the centre is located.

The following pages are just a few examples that reflect the commitment of the staff towards the Skolasajf students.



Welcome to our SS centres: 11th July 2022 marked the first day of the Skolasajf service and staff members wanted to make sure that it would be a day to remember. The centres were prepared just like one prepares a house to welcome invited guests. It was a task that the staff undertook with enthusiasm, due to their pride in their work. They decorated the premises and made them as welcoming as possible to the students whom they were going to receive for the eight weeks of Skolasajf. From front gardens and gates to foyers and corridors, doorways and classrooms; every nook that lent itself as a platform for our staff's creativity was used as a canvas.



The Zejtun Creative Project: This was a communal project of transforming the

main external gate, used both during the scholastic year, and also during the Klabb 3-16 and Skolasajf services, form a plain green iron gate, into a colourful entrance that beckons students to enter the school.

All the manual work was carried out by the staff, while students provided their artistic skills towards the final stages. It started with the peeling off of the old green paint with the use of paint remover and a grinder and finished with an artwork made up of a rainbow of hues and embedded meaning.

The caterpillar, for instance, represents the kindergarten 1 students who, like the caterpillar, go through a process of metamorphosis as they proceed through their learning journey. As they move to the Primary School, they evolve and transform themselves into a beautiful and colourful butterfly.

Skolasajf Siggiewi keeping Maltese traditions alive: Part of the Earth Heroes, Unite! activities at Skolasajf aimed to keep the Maltese cultural activities alive and appreciated. The Skolasajf Siggiewi centre took this task to heart and devoted time and energy to organise a mini-festa in honour of the village's patron saint, St. Nicholas.

With the support and participation of the local Church and Kazin Banda San Nikola, the Skolasajf Siggiewi students got the opportunity to experience and participate wholeheartedly during this Maltese tradition. All the efforts were appreciated by the whole community, as people joined in the merriment in the church, and from their windows, balconies, and in the streets.

Festa Time at Mqabba: The Centre Coordinator of the Mqabba centre too is known for his love of the Maltese festa, and he once again set on the arduous task of planning and preparation for a celebration of religious devotion, merriment, and creativity.



The festa started with a procession with the statue of the Holy Mother, held aloft by a number of students. The colourful sight of the students wearing their favourite festa shirt was a lovely sight to behold, as they went through the streets of Imqabba on their way to the village square. There they posed for photos in front of the church, before proceeding back to the school. The 'Ave Maria' and popular band marches were played on loudspeakers along the procession. The children waved flags as they were accompanying the statue of the Holy Mother, many accompanied by their parents who joined the procession too.



The festivities continued once everyone was back at the centre, in the school's main yard, where a traditional festa march was organised.

Art for our environment at Skolasajf Valletta: The students at Skolasajf Valletta outdid themselves in a piece of exceptional creative artwork, commemorating their environmental concerns and their role as Earth Heroes during Skolasajf 2022.



With the support of the Valletta Local Council, the staff and children rolled up their sleeves as they set to work to build a tree made up of wood and papier-mâché. All children were involved according to their age group, taking part in the different stages of the production. The final colourful touch was the cutting and painting of 300 hand shapes, representing the helping hand that is needed to make sure that the environment is well taken care of. This installation also served to brighten up an unadorned area of the Valletta Primary School.

Preparing students for a night to remember: One of the remarkable achievements by our students was their attendance in the awards night organised by Junior Achievers (JA) Malta,

following their Skolasajf programmes "Our Community" and "Economic for Success". The facilitators from the JA Malta Foundation carried out the sessions with knowledge and care, and the Playworkers did their best to help the students in their projects, while gaining a good understanding of what it means to create a feasible business and being able to work in a team environment. All this led to the teams being invited to compete in a final event against other centres during the Junior Entrepreneurs Presentation night, where the teams had to present a business plan for their ideas for a small business. In the 'Our Community' presentations, the team from Hamrun GP won first place. Their idea was to open up a restaurant with an interactive play area. In the 'Economics for Success' presentations the team from Zejtun won first place with their idea to open a perfumery.



The Sports and Games Programme

The focus on the well-being of the students who attend the Skolasajf service is also reflected in the implementation of the Sports and Games Programme, based on a manual of activities that aim to teach transferable sports skills common in different sport disciplines, while fostering an active lifestyle in the students. The Sports and Games Programme offered daily physical education sessions in a structured manner to all the children. It also inspired the staff to act as role models and participate as well.

The programme was delivered by 84 Sports Playworkers, who received training delivered by four PE teachers from the Ministry for Education. The four-hour training session both theoretical and practical in nature. The theoretical part highlighted FES policies and practices, and then moved on to issues such as group management, behaviour management, and lesson delivery.

The hands-on sessions were based on the Sports and Games Manual, which helped the participants to understand how to use the manual, and also identify common components that needed to be mastered by the students. These sessions also tested

the stamina of the Sports Playworkers as they were formed in groups and had to play some of the games featured in the manual.

Another topic was about the organisation of a Sports Day, which takes place in every centre towards the end of Skolasajf. The Sports Day serves as the culmination of the Sports and Games programme and saw children competing eagerly in an





environment of a healthy competition based on sportsmanship and fair play.

The successful outcome of the Sports and Games Programme was thanks to the Sports Playworkers, but also thanks to the invaluable help of the Education Officer Physical Education (Primary), Mr Marvin Spiteri, and to the Heads of Schools, as they made available an amount of sports equipment to be used during Skolasajf.

Literacy as part of the Programme of Activities

Literacy within the Childcare setting

Part of the ongoing training to the FES Childcare Educators in Induction and Professional Development sessions, focuses on an invaluable tool that help in the children's development. This subject was also in fact tackled during the March 2022 Childcare Seminar, where Childcare staff explored the different ways how one can tell a story in a childcare setting, and how they can foster and increase literacy within a childcare setting. Stories help to make and communicate meaning and include both oral and written modes. They are embodied within songs and nursery rhymes, everyday conversations, mark-making, and art, pretend play, puppet use, and book

reading, which are all activities that the FES Childcare Educators employ in their arsenal of learning opportunities. Children follow stories as they watch, listen, and engage in the storytelling in various modes of expression as gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, and gestures.

One cannot underestimate the importance of books for children, from an early age. Books help to stimulate the children's imagination and creativity while also building language skills. The availability of books in a childcare centre is an optimal resource, used by adults to read to children, and by children to look at pictures while using their imaginations, and create their own stories.

Books are in fact made available to children in the FES Childcare Centres, as early as within the Baby Room, so that babies can start becoming familiar with the concept of a book as Childcare Educators read to them. Though they do



not understand exactly what is being read to them, babies love to listen to voices and over time, will start to associate pleasant feelings with books and reading.

The toddler areas in all the FES Childcare Centres also have a designated reading area, made colourful, cosy, and inviting. The centres' also have a library of age-appropriate books which can be easily seen and reached by children. Children are given daily opportunities to pick a book from the centre's library and either invite the Childcare Educator to read to them as they hand her their chosen book, or they go and settle down to leaf through the book on their own.

Reading aloud is also carried out with small groups of children, as Childcare Educators share illustrations, and change their voice to make stories come to life. These times are used to encourage children to talk about the story and characters and to share their ideas.

Reading to children is also recommended within the family, as parents are encouraged to read with children. With this aim in mind, a lend-on library was created at Il-Bebbuxu Childcare Centre.

This initiative was the brainchild of the coordinator of the centre Ms Thelma Gatt, who thought of transforming a dedicated area on the premises and maintaining it in a very sustainable manner, by collecting donated books kindly donated by Recycle Malta and the Central Public Library at Floriana.

This lovely children's book collection became available to all the children attending the centre, to borrow books and experience the beauty of literacy and storytelling at home as well. Parents are encouraged to make use of this service to help continue to foster the love of reading in their children.



This initiative is in fact another step that consolidates the FES adherence to the National Standards for Early Childhood Education and Care Services, which highlight the importance of working in partnership with parents in the quality area of learning and care. This project is another way how the FES childcare centres support parents in the educational journey of their children, and guide and support parents in the learning and development progress of their children.

Not only is this project designed to nurture the love for books and reading from a very young age, but children and adults are also being taught about the importance and advantages of sustainability.

Story telling for the older students

The thematic Programme of Activities issued by the Programmes Department at FES for the Klabb 3-16 and Skolasajf services, is an essential tool to keep children who are using the engaged, through its use as a learning medium via non-formal activities. The learning domains vary to provide an eclectic array of activities, and they include the art of storytelling.

Many of the literacy activities presented in the Programme Manuals use the

technology available in schools as a medium for storytelling. Students are presented with a very short video of a story in Maltese or English, and this becomes a complement to the main activity. The animation used attracts the children's attention, and Playworkers use it as a steppingstone to elicit engagement, self-expression, and dramatization as the story progress. The video is stopped at various intervals to check the level of understanding and allow time for questions from the children. The learning from the video-clip is then scaffolded through activities in other learning domains.

Using Literature to teach values during Klabb 3-16 and Skolasajf

Storytelling activities can be very imaginative, giving rise to opportunities for self-expression. However, their content is also the perfect resource to teach children about moral values and reasoning. As an example, one of the books used in the Programme of Activities, was Roald Dahl's "The BFG". While "The BFG" has a hilarious and dark storyline, it also has a sentimental message at its core, which the students in the Klabb 3-16 centres embraced fully as they worked through the activities with their Playworkers and Child Support Workers.



Children's books often carry storylines that model appropriate social behaviour, and help children to relate to characters and experiences, parallel to their level of understanding and maturity. Children's literature provides excellent examples from which students can learn, such as conflict resolution, sharing, dealing with emotions, and about interpersonal relationships, with reminders about the essential dignity and worth of individual human beings.

The narrative of "The BFG" follows young orphan Sophie, and her friendship with the Big Friendly Giant. The Big Friendly Giant and Sophie remind the readers how friends come in different sizes and shapes. No matter what, they are always there for their friends. True friends encourage others to be brave, to stand up to be counted, and above all they respect and include their peers in their daily lives.

True friends also find time to really listen to us, and the BFG reminds us about the importance of listening to each other. By listening to each other, and caring for them, we are able to bring peace to others, and also build on our own happiness and inner peace. Expression our emotions and finding an ear that listens and understands, helps to build a community of empathy and understanding.

This mode of communication was one of the subjects of discussion between the playworkers and the students. They explored and discussed why it is important to listen to people and not just hear them. Using the popular story of The Big Friendly Giant, they created the big ears of the BFG. The BFG has enormous ears that he can swivel and move about, so very different from the other giants. His ears are what makes him special.

The BFG uses his fantastic ears to listen for dreams and catch them, and then



blows happy dreams into the rooms of children as they sleep. In fact, the concept that dreams can come true and that one should work for them, is one of the other themes in “The BFG”. Other lessons encountered in this imaginative story are that one should not judge people by appearances, to give people a chance, and that one can be strong on his own.

Visits to the Library

Children attending Skolasajf were also taken on weekly trips to the local Branch Libraries, which were located on the same schools’ premises. This initiative fostered not only a positive habit of looking at libraries as a font of an important resource that might otherwise be unaffordable for the family, but also helped to promote literacy and encouraged children to read for pleasure. Children were helped to choose their books based on interests and reading levels, and guided on how they could explore and learn from different cultures around the word, be it through different languages or traditions.

The National Literacy Agency during Skolasajf

For the ninth consecutive year, the National Literacy Agency (NLA) worked with FES to organise the *Aqra fis-Sajf* summer reading campaign during

Skolasajf, to encourage children to continue reading during the summer months. This campaign was organised in order to sustain the abilities and skills pupils would have acquired throughout the school year.

Daily reading sessions in Maltese and English, were delivered by reading animators trained by the National Literacy Agency. These reading for pleasure sessions were held in 47 Skolasajf centres across Malta and Gozo, resulting in a total of 2,538 reading sessions. Pupils engaged in fun and interactive sessions that boosted their language and critical thinking skills.

Furthermore, the National Literacy Agency also offered the ‘*Għidli Storja/ Tell Me a Story*’ Summer Programme to 846 students, aged between 7 and 10, in 14 Skolasajf centres and 5 Catch-Up centres. They had the opportunity to enjoy listening to tales and legends, either in Maltese and English, and participate actively in oracy-based kinaesthetic activities. These storytelling activities were aimed to boost students’ imagination and creativity, as well as their confidence and fluency in spoken language.



The NLA reading animators also carried out *Seher I-Istejjer/The Magic of Stories* sessions during Skolasajf.

The Inclusion Unit

During the year 2022, the Foundation for Educational Services continued to endeavour to place the child at the centre of all its services, namely the Childcare, the Klabb 3-16, and the Skolasajf Services.

The Inclusion Factor

The year was marked by an increased demand support for students with specific personal needs, with requests totalling 1,705 children, including Childcare, Klabb 3-16, and Skolasajf users. The Programme Coordinator Inclusion (PC Inclusion), who works within the Programmes Department, supported children in their Individual Educational Needs, irrespective of the fact of whether the child had a Statement of Support or not. This included in-depth support to children who benefitted from the support of Child Support Workers, and children who had social and/or other difficulties.

The PC Inclusion conducted a total of 47 physical support visits at the Childcare and Klabb 3-16 Centres, while the Regional Coordinators Inclusion conducted daily visits to the centres during Skolasajf 2022. The PC Inclusion also carried out a total of 145 online sessions with staff, professionals, and parents, across all three of the FES services.

Given the huge workload involved, it is planned that another PC Inclusion would be employed during the first quarter of 2023.

The FES Inclusion Policy

The FES Inclusion Policy plays an important role in guiding educators in their efforts to place the child at the centre of their practice. The policy

advocates the values of collaboration and respect between all stakeholders so that all educators respond effectively to the child's individual educational and developmental needs. Therefore, the FES 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.

Support during the Klabb 3-16 and Skolasajf 2022 programmes

At the outset, the PC Inclusion assisted those children who had a Statement of Support, when they applied for the Klabb 3-16 and Skolasajf service. In fact, the PC Inclusion has the enormous task of vetting those applications who are claiming that support from a Child Support Worker (CSW) is needed. It must be noted that given the non-formal nature of the programme delivered during the Klabb 3-16 and Skolasajf services, every effort is made to minimise such support if possible, so that the child's independence is promoted. However, if there are sensory, physical, developmental delays and / or medical conditions, then support is provided, subject to staff availability.

Support is not only given by the CSW. All stakeholders are involved so that the child's individual educational needs are supported. Therefore, the PC Inclusion coordinates these human resources and draws up an Action Plan, with the stakeholders' input. The Action Plan is a strategic plan that focuses on the strengths and needs of the child and endeavours to guide those stakeholders to support such needs.

The PC Inclusion, as noted above, supports all children irrespective of whether a child has a Statement of Support or not. In cases where a child is finding it difficult to follow the Klabb and/or Skolasajf programme, the PC Inclusion intervenes

and an action plan is drawn up together with all the stakeholders involved. Moreover, in extreme cases, if it is felt that a child would benefit from CSW support, this would also be provided, subject to staff availability.

Support to children with a Statement of Needs during the Klabb 3-16 service, was provided to 274 children. Child Support Workers (CSWs) were employed to provide this service both during the after-school service and during the scholastic holidays. These CSWs not only followed the Plan of Action as drawn up by the PC Inclusion, but also adapted the Programme of Activities, as part of the same Action Plan to reach the designated goals.

The same procedure is followed by CSWs working during Skolasajf. Skolasajf is the largest project of FES to date, with the number of children who have a Statement of Support continuing to increase from one year to the other. During Skolasajf 2022, FES employed 563 Child Support Workers to support children with a Statement of Needs. In addition, given the increasing numbers of children requiring support, FES also employed two Regional Coordinators (RC) Inclusion. The remit of these RC Inclusion was to support the Skolasajf Resource Centres and other mainstream schools on site, as directed by the PC Inclusion. This joint effort continued to be instrumental in effectively supporting children's needs.

Working closely with the National School Support Services (NSSS), the PC Inclusion ensured that children needing medication were catered for by the nursing contractor. Medication was administered in all the mainstream and Resource Centres. In fact, during Skolasajf 2022, 39 children made use of the nursing Service in the mainstream schools, while the Resource Centres had resident nurses.

During 2022, service to children attending Resource Centres was offered during all the School Holidays, namely Carnival, Easter July Bridge Holidays, Skolasajf, September Bridge Holidays and Christmas Holidays. The Services during Skolasajf was also increased from three days to five days a week.

Supporting Children in the FES Childcare Centres

The PC Inclusion also supports children attending the FES Childcare Centres. Though children below the age of three years are not yet diagnosed, children who are observed by the childcare staff to exhibit challenging behaviour, have a disability and/or a medical issue, or are showing signs that their development is not at par with the child's chronological age, are referred by the Centre Coordinator to the PC Inclusion. Once again, observations are carried out at the centre, referrals are made to the CDAU Consultant, meetings are held with all stakeholders, and an Action Plan is drawn up. The latter helps the Childcare Educator to effectively support the child's needs and helps the Child reach his / her developmental milestones.

Childcare Centres cater for children from 0 to 3 years of age. Consequently, such children are still too young to be diagnosed and hence do not yet have a Statement of Support. It must be noted that the Statementing Board only issues a Statement of Support when the child reaches formal School age, which is when the child is three years old and is eligible to attend Kinder 1. Consequently, during the last year that the child is attending the Childcare Centre, parents / guardians may apply to the Statementing Board when children are about to attend formal schooling. It is important to note that a psychological report is in hand before asking the Head of School to apply to the Statementing Board on the parents' / guardians' behalf.

FES operates its childcare centres in strict adherence to the National Standards for ECEC Services (0-3 years), which also stipulate the ratio of children to each childcare educator. However, during 2022 FES had requests from clients to admit children who needed care in a group of a reduced ratio. The social responsibility of the entity is such that it tries its best to accommodate such requests whenever possible, depending on the period when the request is made, the number of children and staff in the Service, and the capacity of the facility. During 2022, FES acceded to two such requests. Selected staff members were included in the meetings with the relevant stakeholders and trained on how to deliver the best care possible. The satisfying outcome of this commitment was not only the knowledge of having helped the family, but also the encouraging great physical and cognitive improvements shown by the children.

The work of the childcare educators in general is also an instrumental factor in supporting inclusion within the childcare centres. Training in the Emergent Curriculum or the Child-Led Approach (CLA) continued during 2022. Moreover, the two childcare seminars were dedicated to the CLA. The distinguishing factor of this pedagogy is that the learning opportunities are based on the children's interests and takes in account the children's questions and curiosity. This sparks intrinsic motivation within the child, which leads to enhanced engagement, longer attentions spans, and meaningful learning.

Childcare Educators implementing this emergent curriculum in their activities reported a decreased level of challenging behaviour, less anxiety and less tantrums in the children in their care. They also observed that the emergent curriculum facilitated their communication methods with the children, hence enhancing the inclusion factor as an overall practice with all the children.

The Programme Coordinators – Programmes Department

In addition to the PC Inclusion, the Programmes Department had three other Programme Coordinators in charge of programme development and implementation within the centres. These PCs also carry out visits to support all the stakeholders within the three different services. The ultimate purpose of such support visits is monitor the quality of the Services, the adherence to FES policies, support staff members when needed, and to pass the important message to all educators that they are to create an environment whereby all children feel that they belong to the centre. The three PCs work in synergy with the PC Inclusion prior and post to the support visits. Before visiting a centre, the PCs would get a briefing from the PC Inclusion who may request follow-ups on specific cases. They would also discuss directions with respect to children's skills and personal and social development. After the support visit, the PCs report and discuss any children's difficulties that they would have observed.

Responding to vulnerable families

The Foundation for Educational Services is very conscious of the fact that some families are in a vulnerable position due to issues such as unemployment, medical illnesses, and mental health issues. Consequently, in liaison with the Foundation for Social Welfare Services (FSWS), 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 applicants benefit from exemption of fees and prioritisation of access to the services. During 2022, the FES Social Board

approved 16 cases for Childcare, 18 cases for Klabb 3-16 and 31 cases for Skolasajf.

Responding to children's needs is also the aim of the FES' collaboration with The Karl Vella Foundation (KVF). The Karl Vella Foundation was established to provide educational and psychological support to children of families disrupted by serious illness or loss of a family member. Between 2019 and 2021, FES supported KVF by providing the services of two Playworkers, who carry out non-formal educational activities to children making use of the KVF service. During 2022, FES renewed its commitment towards KVF and facilitated the recruitment of people suitable to address the children's emotional and psychological problems, by providing 3 Child Support Workers and a HW Tutor. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreed upon by the two entities, continues to solidify the FES' social commitment, and supports KVF in its mission.

Inclusion Matters in the Courses held by FES

In its commitment to enhance the skills of its workforce, FES continued to work in collaboration with the Institute for Education (IfE), to organise a number of courses for Playworkers and Child Support Workers. During 2022, six PW courses and four CSW Courses were held, which reached 72 and 13 applicants respectively. These courses seek to impart those necessary skills that are needed by the Playworkers and the Child Support Workers in their work with the children entrusted in their care. Moreover, the topics covered in these courses seek to instil and empower the Playworker and the Child Support Worker to embrace a culture of inclusion and acceptance of diversity in their work with children, in collaborating with their colleagues and in their daily life. Other common areas teach participants on how to deal with challenging behaviour and

disabilities, and how to deal with children's difficulties in communication.

FES at the National Parents Council Primary Conference

The summer service delivered by FES in the Resource Centres was a subject of interest for counterparts in Ireland. Due to this, the FES CEO, Mr Michael Bondin, and the Manager Programmes, Ms Therese Ellul, were invited by the National Parents Council Primary (NPCP) in Ireland, to address a conference about the provision of a summer programme for students with different educational needs.

The NPCP is the only national organisation for parents of pre-school and primary school aged children in Ireland and has recently established a forum for parents of children with additional education needs. Previous contacts with FES by the Principal Officer in the Department of Education in Ireland and the ensuing meetings, led to this invitation for this participation for the sharing of ideas and practices.

During the conference, Mr Bondin presented the approach adopted by the Foundation for Educational Services to deliver its summer programme for students with additional educational needs, the hurdles faced with logistical problems, and the ongoing evaluation and work to improve the service and its sustainability. This was followed by the participation of Mr



Bondin and Ms Ellul in various workshops where they chaired discussions and answered questions from the participants.

Other speakers at the conference were Mr Frank Hanlon, Principal Officer in the Department of Education, and Mr John Kearney, CEO at the National Council for Special Education, in Ireland. Following the conference, Mr Bondin and Ms Ellul were invited for a meeting with Mr Frank Hanlon, and with the Assistant Principal Officer in the Department of Education, Mr Kenny Noonan. Present for the meeting were also Ms Aine Lynch (CEO) and Ms Catherine Cross (Services Manager), both from the NPCP. The summer service in Malta was discussed at length, with the sharing of best practices and how the service compares to the one in Ireland.

Conclusion

The primary stakeholder in all the Services provided by the Foundation for Educational Services, is undoubtedly the child. FES is therefore committed to an inclusive philosophy that seeks to ensure that the child is at the centre of all its initiatives and projects. It is only in this way can it fulfill its promise to deliver a holistic service to the Child.

The Marketing and Communications Unit

The Marketing Unit within the Programmes Department plays a pivotal role in promoting the entity's services. It employs a comprehensive approach that encompasses both physical and digital channels to expand the Foundation's reach and enhance its influence. The strategy involves leveraging a variety of platforms, with the online ones being Facebook and YouTube, in addition to media events. This multi-pronged approach is designed to raise awareness and pique interest in the Foundation's services.



Foundation for Educational Services

23K likes · 24K followers

FES is an entity within MYER that provides a range of innovative educational services.

Contact Us

Message

Liked

...

FES Social Media Platforms

The online presence, particularly on social media, serves as a showcase for engaging content that effectively communicates the value and benefits of our services. The Facebook page of the Foundation, in addition to a Facebook account for each FES Childcare Centre, provide the ideal direct line of communication for both the promotion of activities and events, and to advertise services and vacancies, facilitating the reach to a vast pool of potential employees and service users.

Central to the marketing strategy is the dedication of FES to maintain timely communication with its customers. Through online channels, there is prompt communication that address enquiries, concerns, and feedback from our customers. In fact, throughout 2022, the Marketing Unit dealt with 214 clients via Whatsapp messages, and with 965 clients via FB Messenger. This proactive engagement fosters trust and fortifies the customer relationship.

Another use of the FES FB page was for the promotion of, and information

about, the Programme of Activities being implemented in the Childcare, Klabb 3-16, and Skolasajf centres. Centre Coordinators shared images of specific activities being carried out by the staff members with the children in their charge, with the Programme Coordinators in the PDDI section. They ensured that the application of the Data Protection and Parental Consent Policies were adhered to prior to passing them to the Marketing Coordinator. During the 8-week period of Skolasajf 2022 alone, over 120 posts of centre activities were uploaded.

The Marketing Unit serves also to promote information issued by the HR and Services Department. This entails the in-house and timely creation of online posts and posters to promote mainly recruitment needs, and the opening and deadlines of applications.

Facebook Online Metrics – Foundation for Educational Services:

From January to December 2022, the Foundation for Educational Services achieved an impressive reach of 1,039,154 accounts. This figure encompasses all those who engaged with the FES FB page or encountered content related to our page, including posts, stories, adverts, and social interactions originating from the Foundation of Educational Services. This substantial outreach highlights the commitment of disseminating information about the services and engaging with a wide audience throughout the year. The FES Facebook page was visited 40,947 times and registered an additional 1,704 Likes between 1st January 2022 and 31st December 2022.

Facebook Likes	
December 2019	14,948
December 2020	17,565
December 2021	19,753
December 2022	21,457

Boosting posts on Facebook has proven to be a powerful tool in expanding our online presence and connecting with a larger and more specific audience. Between January and December of 2022, there was a substantial reach of 10,030 individuals who saw the FES boosted adverts at least once. The total amount spent on Facebook boosted adverts was €458.49. Additionally, the paid impressions reached the figure of 17,801, showcasing the effectiveness of the advertising efforts in getting our message in front of our target audience.

Facebook Metrics – Childcare Centres:

Centre	Page Reach	Page Visits	New Likes
Il-Kuluri	1,247	1,288	51
Il-Ferrovija	8,942	5,832	137
Il-Bejta	7,655	4,403	68
It-Tghanniqqa	1,593	3,491	62
Zmeraldi	5,613	2,723	106
Il-Pespus	6,749	3,863	91
Pizzi Pizzi Kanna	2,291	7,135	115
Il-Merill	2,158	4,053	62
Ix-Xemx	2,921	5,213	59
Is-Sardinella	7,954	7,700	80
Id-Denfil	4,859	3,863	91
Il-Bebbuxu	246,630	10,124	317

In-Touch, the FES Newsletter

Another in-house production in both design and content, is the *In Touch* FES Newsletter, which has been in circulation since 2018. During 2022, 12 newsletters were published, closing the year with issue 51 for December 2022. The monthly newsletter serves to not only highlight all the achievements in the centres and at Head Office, but also to inform about job and training opportunities.



Foreword

The newsletter is circulated every month to each staff member working with FES and is also sent to each parent of our services users. This means that during the scholastic months the newsletter has an average reach of around 5000 recipients, while during the summer months it reaches an average of 13,000 recipients, via the FES portal system. The FES newsletter is also shared via the Registry (Education Division) at MEYR to all users at MEYR, staff owning an iLearn email account, to CEO entities and to Educational Officers.

Outreaches at the University of Malta and MCAST

The Marketing Unit also organised outreaches to meet University of Malta and MCAST students, by taking part in the popular Freshers' Weeks in October 2022, on the respective campuses. The aims of these days are to welcome students to their educational institution of choice and allow the students to seek information about opportunities that are available for them.

FES Head Office staff spent two weeks mingling with the students, giving them information about the job opportunities and services offered by FES. The exchange with the students, amid the positive energy associated with the enthusiasm of new beginnings, made for productive sessions. The students were offered an insight into the services offered by FES, and the associated job opportunities for the students, both at part-time level while they are still studying, and at full-time status after completing their studies.



In-house design

The Marketing Unit is also the source of in-house design outputs. These include not only the posters which are uploaded online, but also materials for the print medium. These included posters promoting children's slots in childcare centres, the posters promoting the longer hours of service in 6 of the FES childcare centres, leaflets about the FES services, and flyers about the different work opportunities available within the ranks of the main FES services.

Organisation of media events

The Marketing Unit is also heavily involved in the organisation and coordination of media events and appearances. Apart from the coordination with media houses, it also provides content for press releases, and radio and television interviews.

It is also tasked with liaising with the Communications Unit at MEYR for the organisation of media opportunities, such as the annual events to launch the much-awaited Skolasajf applications in March, and the opening of Skolasajf as a service in July.

In fact, in March 2022, Minister Hon Dr Clifton Grima launched the Skolasajf 2022 applications at the Pembroke Primary School. This was followed up with the issue of relevant information to the media that covered the event.

The event was also the perfect setting to reveal the Skolasajf 2022 logo. The winning design was submitted by a 9-year-old student, Naielle Formosa Cumbo, who attended the Imsida Primary School. It was chosen following the fourth edition of the Skolasajf Logo Competition, which was promoted to all children in Malta aged 3 to 16 years.



In July, another event was organised at the Skolasajf St Julian's Centre, for the launch of the actual Skolasajf service.

Media Appearances and Reporting during 2022

The Marketing Unit was also responsible for creating content for media appearances, such as radio, TV, and press conferences. Content was also created for the FES Newsletter, FB posts, the FES Website, other websites such as <https://newsbreak.edu.mt/> (MEYR website), and print newspapers and magazines.



- 11th March 2022 - Opening of Skolasajf applications press conference.
- 25th May 2022 - TVAM
- 12th July 2022 - Opening of the Skolasajf Service at St Julians Skolasajf Centre press conference.
- 5th August 2022 - <https://www.gov.mt/en/Government/DOI/Press%20Releases/Pages/2022/08/05/pr221044en.aspx>
- 16th September 2022 - Newsbreak: Aqra fis-sajf
- 29th September 2022 - press release 'HSBC Malta backed recycling competition showcases Skolasajf students' creativity'
- 5th October 2022 - One TV: Kalamita
- 6th October 2022 - a 2-week radio campaign on Radju Malta, covering 112 spots, each 30 seconds duration
- 6th October 2022 - FLiving
- 12th October 2022 - One TV: Kalamita
- 13th October 2022 - FLiving
- 26th October 2022 - Radju Malta
- 26th October 2022 - FLiving
- 26th October 2022 - Interview on Radju Malta 'Ghal Kulhadd'
- 3rd November 2022- Net: Gimgha b'Gimgha
- 6th November 2022 - <https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/introducing-children-entrepreneurship-financial-planning-employment.992018>
- 9th November 2022 - One TV: Kalamita
- 9th November 2022- FLiving
- 23rd November 2022- Net: Gimgha b'Gimgha
- 24th November 2022- FLiving
- 18th December 2022- Article on Eduka Magazine
- 21st December 2022 - Net: Gimgha b'Gimgha
- 22nd December 2022 = FLiving
- 26th December 2022 - Presentation of donation to L-Istrina on TVM
- 26th December 2022 - Interview on Eduka radio programme on Radju Malta
- 27th December 2022 - Interview on Eduka radio programme on Radju Malta (repeat)

Corporate Social Responsibility

Initiatives related to Corporate Social Responsibility also fell within the remit of the Programmes Department, with a joint effort by all the staff, and their organisation and promotion being taken care of by the Marketing section. The CSR activities that were embarked on during 2022 were the following:

Blood Donation - Four staff members from the FES Head Office teamed together to go and donate blood. Leanne Borg (Finance Unit), Rosann Grech (Services Unit), Martina Bianco (HR Unit), and Bella Said (Programmes Unit), visited the National Blood Transfusion Service Centre at G'Mangia, and gave their contribution for such a noble cause.

Their action also served to raise awareness about the importance of ensuring that national blood supply levels are always kept at an adequate supply, to save lives. The guaranteed provision of blood supply can only be attained thanks to the continuous support through regular blood donation, and also by encouraging family, friends, and colleagues to donate when possible.

FES Food Bank Drive - The annual FES Food Bank Drive was once again a resounding success, as members of the FES community donated non-perishable food items for the Food Bank Life Foundation. Each food item collected for this initiative served a noble purpose of making sure that there are less people who go to bed without a nourishing meal. The collective effort came from the staff members at



Head Office, Childcare and Klabb 3-16 Centres, and our valued service users, who all made generous offerings.

A Food Bank representative visited the various centres to collect the donations from the Centre Coordinators, and also Head Office where the donation was handed over by the FES CEO.

Once again it was an exercise in solidarity that taught children and adults alike how to be altruistic with people in need.

Pink October - In the annual list of corporate social responsibility commitments on the FES agenda, lies the undertaking of raising awareness about cancer, and creating fund raising opportunities for related causes, throughout the months of October and November.

Funds were collected in a three-way approach, as service users and staff in the Childcare and Klabb 3-16 Centres, and staff members at Head Office, organised different activities that highlighted the importance of a healthy lifestyle, and of helping others in need.

The various initiatives reached the handsome sum of €2000, which was donated to Hospice Malta. The FES CEO Michael Bondin presented the sum to the Chief Relations Officer of Hospice Malta, Mr Andrew Zammit.



The President of Malta was greatly touched by this annual show of support by the children, parents, and staff who use the service or work during Skolasajf. He spoke extensively about how these funds will be used to help Maltese patients in hospitals abroad. His Excellency also showed great interest and discussed at length with the FES representatives, about how the FES services are increasing from one year to another.



Moreover, the representatives from the FES team were also invited to attend the L-istrina 2022 event held on 26th December 2022, to make a public presentation of the funds.

Mr Zammit thanked all the contributors and spoke about how the funds will contribute to help Hospice Malta continue to offer its services to the increasing number of cancer patients that need help, especially in palliative care.

Other Skolasajf 2022 Fund Raising Events – Skolasajf centres have the opportunity to raise funds for a second registered NGO. The beneficiaries were Dar tal-Providenza who were donated €200 through the fund-raising efforts of the Siggiewi Skolasajf Centre, and the Puttinu Cares Foundation, who received €379 from the Zurrieq Skolasajf Centre.

Skolasajf 2022 Donation to MCCF - The annual donation of funds collected for the Malta Community Chest Fund during Skolasajf 2022, totalled to the amount of €11,334.

Beneficiary	Amount Donated (€)
Dar tal-Providenza	200
MCCF	11,334
Hospice Malta	2,000
Puttinu Cares Foundation	379
Total	13,913

This sum was presented to H.E. the President of Malta Dr George Vella, during a courtesy visit at the San Anton Palace, by the FES Chairperson Ms Pamela Schembri, the CEO Mr Michael Bondin, and members of the FES management team namely, Mr David Chircop (Head of Programmes), Ms Mariella Stivala (Head of HR and Support Services), and Mr Mark Cassar (Head of Business Support).



EMPLOYEE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT





STAFF TRAINING

Team Building Activity

February 2022 saw the FES staff at Head Office dedicate some hours to Team Building activities. The event was organised by the Programmes Department and was created and led by the Programme Coordinators Justin Balzan and Bella Said. It was an event that helped one to remember the true driving force behind a successful outcome, the interpersonal and intrapersonal communication skills that need to be continuously honed, and the far-reaching effects of our actions on colleagues, and eventually on clients. It was an opportunity for cross-departmental co-operation on tasks that were alienated from the usual schedule, but provided a chance for developing communication, listening, and collaboration skills.

Teamwork isn't just about working in a team together. It is about working together

as a team, towards a shared vision. It is something that can be experienced in every pillar of the FES services. The synergy between the different FES Head Office departments is paramount for the fluid operation of the entity, especially in the service delivery in the centres. The ongoing co-operation enables the centres to be a creative hub, where children are not only cared for, but are also invited to participate in extra-curricular activities. This is the result of a network of collaboration between the FES Head Office, the leadership of the respective Centre Coordinators, and the collaboration of the staff complement at the centres.

The short event kicked off with a presentation and discussion based on the thesis presented by Patrick Lencioni, in his book titled 'The Ideal Team Player'. Patrick Lencioni is an American author

about business management, particularly in relation to team management.

Patrick Lencioni's central thesis in this book is that an ideal team player should possess a mix of three virtues, whereby he is Humble (forgoes the ego), Hungry (motivated to work), and Smart (possessing emotional intelligence and interpersonal awareness). A real team player embodies all three qualities.

By being humble, Lencioni refers to the fact that a team player forgoes his ego, and even any credit, and is more concerned with the collective's outcome than with the personal successes. Such people are self-confident, but they are not arrogant. They are sure of themselves and contribute their talent for the goals of the team.

This theoretical background served as a launching pad for the way the teams worked together in a number of tasks, often against the clock. The assignment of roles and delegation of tasks; the delivery of, and listening to, directions; the contribution of suggestions and ideas that ensued, were all practical demonstration of the previous presentation.



CPD Training for FES Head Office Employees

The team building session was followed up in April by a CPD session organised by various Head Office staff for all the members of the departments. Two departments gave a presentation about their work, while a third reported on the outcome of a study carried out with FES employees. These sessions served to encourage a better understanding of the work processes and operational function of the different departments to meet the entity's objectives.

Amanda Mifsud, the Manager for Corporate Services, is also the Data Protection Officer for FES. She delivered a presentation to all HO staff explaining the basic principles of data protection and their implications on the work of the Foundation. Further emphasis was given to what constitutes a data breach and the relative consequences.

Rosann Grech, Programme Coordinator (Services), presented the results of her Masters dissertation that she carried out for her Masters degree, titled *The Impact of Psychological Capital on Employees' Job Performance in a Public Entity in Malta with the Mediating role of Job Satisfaction*. It investigated how Psychological Capital is associated with positive workplace outcomes, including attitudes such as job satisfaction, commitment, and job performance. The research was conducted amongst FES employees.

The last session was delivered by the HR Department. Mariella Stivala (Head of Department), accompanied by the team made up of Martina Bianco (Manager HR), Akvile Barauskite (Programme Coordinator), Mariella Bonello (Coordinator) and Mikael Bezzina (Programme Secretary). They shared the work in relation to recruitment for



available vacancies within the entity. The HR team outlined the engagement process of new employees, the ongoing work to further support each employee throughout his employment with FES. Relationships within the Head Office units were also linked to various HR processes, emphasising the importance of teamwork and healthy work relationships.

Ongoing Professional Development for Childcare Centre Coordinators

A CPD session was also held specifically for FES Childcare Centre Coordinators, the topic of which was *An Analysis of the Present to Map the Future*.

The day kicked off with a presentation by the FES CEO Mr Michael Bondin, who held a plenary session dealing with research findings, both locally and internationally, that influence or reflect the way a childcare centre is run. This session addressed not only the pedagogy used when educating children in such a small age group up to 3 years of age, but also the competencies of the staff within the centres to achieve the FES mission of offering a quality childcare service.

The rest of the day enabled the Centre Coordinators and staff from the Programmes, Services, and HR departments at the FES Head Office, to be active participants, as they- engaged in group discussions. Each group was in charge of carrying out a SWOT analysis and use the framework to increase awareness of the factors involved when making decisions that impact not only

one's own centre, but the entity as a whole.

The findings were discussed with all those present, and then were used as a basis for setting a number of SMART goals, decided on by the individual groups of participants. This intertwining of the SWOT and SMART tools, helps to improve resource management and define projects by cross-referencing these two tools.

Childcare Seminars

FES is committed to holding two seminars every year, dedicated to matters related to the ongoing professional development of staff members working in the FES childcare centres. This training empowers staff with skills and knowledge, that are crucial to deliver their service within the childcare setting. Early childhood educators not only need to understand the science of child development but must also be armed with practical skills that enable them to interact with the children in their care. They also must observe the children and evaluate their own work, to be able to support the learning.



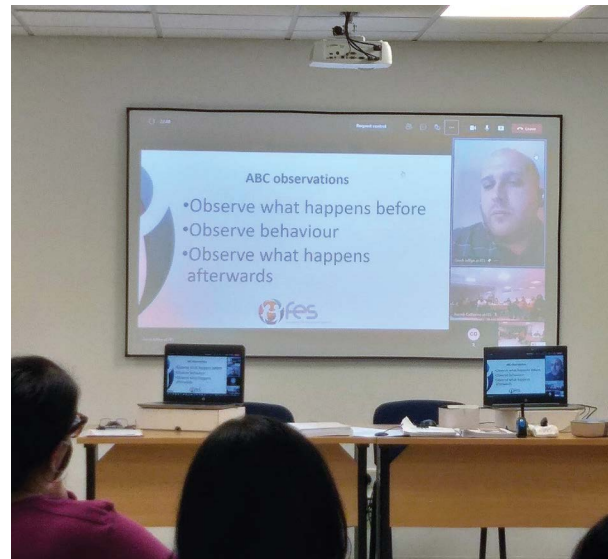
The first of the bi-annual seminars was held in March. The seminar was split across four days, to allow smaller groups and hence more intense discussions on a one-to-one basis when addressing issues that are faced by childcare educators in their work with children.

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

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

Different Ways of telling a story: The second session in today's seminar was delivered by Ms Kathryn Xuereb, Programme Coordinator (PDDI). This session explored the different ways how one can tell a story in a childcare setting.

During the session, Ms Xuereb discussed how books, pictures, photographs, and



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

The Story of Geese: The third session in the FES Childcare seminar, was delivered by Ms Bella Said and Mr Justin Balzan, Programme Coordinators (PDDI). It centred on teambuilding and its importance in productivity and collegiality. Inspired by the teamwork shown in nature, the speakers illustrated the success of teamwork through 'geese'. When geese migrate, they form a V-shape, whereby each individual bird creates an uplift, thus helping the bird behind it. The Programme Coordinators spoke about the need for each team member to embrace common goals, so that each- member knows where they are going and how they can reach the desired destination. They encouraged shared leadership where each team member takes up her/his responsibilities as well as leads according to the task at hand. Effective communication and peer encouragement were also referred to as key elements that serve to strengthen a team, and to better understand each other.

The second childcare seminar was organised in October 2022, and was titled *Honing our Personal Development Skills - Values and Practices*. It covered aspects of personal development, skills, values, and practices, for all the childcare educators working in the FES childcare centres.

The childcare educators were addressed by the FES CEO Mr Michael Bondin, who

explained the importance of continuous training in paving the way for an effective educational programme, that leaves a positive impact on the children's learning and development. Mr Bondin stated that FES strives to offer a high-quality educational experience, and that in the coming months a child-centred approach will be adopted in all the childcare centres administered by the Foundation.

The first session was delivered by Ms Amanda Mifsud, the Manager in charge of GDPR related matters at FES. Ms Mifsud spoke about the FES GDPR policy and the importance of adhering to its direction to fulfil the FES's obligations to protect children and staff.

Another speaker who addressed this seminar was Mr Steve Libreri, Director at the Directorate for Child protection services. He gave a detailed presentation on the services of the Directorate and on how childcare educators can be vigilant in identifying potential abuse on children.

The third session was delivered by Dr Lara Ann Vella from the National Literacy Agency. She discussed the characteristics of oral communication and the development of bilingualism in different and multiple settings. Dr Vella went on to explain how children can learn languages naturally if they are exposed to the language in the right way, and emphasized that bilingualism does not affect speech delay.

The final session was delivered by Ms Stephanie Azzopardi, Occupational Therapist at Mater Dei Hospital, and the Child Development Assessment Unit. Ms Azzopardi showed and discussed the physical handling techniques of children from 3 months to 3 years of age. Topics included in the discussion were typical development through correct handling and positioning, how to prevent strain

and injury arising from inefficient lifting and handling, and tips and tricks to have a safe and energy efficient childcare environment.

Mr David Chircop Head of Programmes at FES closed the seminar by addressing all the major points, observations, and techniques that were discussed by all the speakers during the seminar.

Ongoing Induction Sessions for new Childcare Educators

New Childcare Educators who joined FES during 2022, were given thorough induction training sessions by all the departments at Head Office (Programmes, HR and Services, Corporate and Finance). Each department tackled issues that could impact in some way or another, the performance of the new recruits at the centre. These included interpersonal relationship at work and working hours, GDPR issues, use of resources including IT, and wages.

From the point of view of the Programmes Department, these centred on bringing the new recruits in line with the pedagogy being used in the implementation of the emergent curriculum in the FES Childcare Centres.

The CLA Training in four childcare centres

The implementation of the Emergent Curriculum in the FES Childcare Centres was delayed by a number of months, especially due to the COVID restrictions. While it had been started in 2020 in two centres, during the last quarter of 2022 this type of pedagogy that provides for authentic assessment in the Early Years sector started to be implemented in four more centres. The Programme Coordinator Catherine Xuereb in the Programmes Department delivered a training programme based on the Train the

Trainer approach, where four Coordinators received an intensive two-week course. This was based on hands-on experiences with children and staff at *Il-Bebbuxu* Childcare Centre, and on theoretical and reflective discussions on what had been observed. By the end of 2022 the Emergent Curriculum was being practised in 6 of the FES Childcare Centres. It was planned that the remaining 6 centres will be trained in the year 2023.

These training sessions are discussed in detail in the section titled Childcare in the Chapter dedicated to the Programmes Unit.

Fire Warden course

The Fire Warden Course was attended by FES employees from several Head Office departments and various Childcare and Klabb 3-16 centre. The objectives of this course were to make the participants aware about the dangers posed by fire and help them understand the causes and effects of fire. They were also guided on how to identify the risks that can lead to a fire in the workplace, and how to reduce these risks. Apart from the awareness about potential fire hazards in the workplace, the staff were also advised about



evacuation methods, and how to make risk assessments.

Conference about ECEC Pedagogy in Finland

Staff from the FES Programmes Department attended a conference organized by Mindful Education Malta in collaboration with Mater Boni Consilii St. Joseph School Paola and the Suomen Varhaiskasvatus RY (Finland Early Education Association). It was held under the auspices of the Ambassador of Malta to Estonia and Finland, His Excellency Dr. Kenneth Vella.

Titled *Early Childhood Education in Finland*, the conference addressed issues that dealt with:

- Pedagogical leadership in ECEC in Finland
- Children's wellbeing in the heart of Finnish ECEC
- Curriculum issues in Finland
- New trends in pedagogy in Finland

Defibrillator Training

The FES employees from several Head Office departments and various Childcare and Klabb 3-16 centres, took part in an Artificial External Defibrillator Training session, which was organised at the entity's Head Office at Qormi. This training was complementary to the installation of various AEDs at Head Office and in the centres.

Defibrillation is an important addition to cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). The trainer in fact covered the procedure for chest compressions and artificial ventilation, as the vital techniques to maintain blood flow to the brain in a person who has suffered cardiac arrest. These measures are essential to try to restore independent blood circulation and breathing in a person. The use of an AED will assist the first aider as it helps

to analyse the heart's rhythm, and then deliver electrical shocks, or defibrillation, to help the heart re-establish an effective rhythm.

After the successful completion of the AED Training, all the participants were presented with an internationally recognised St John Ambulance certificate, valid for one year and recognised by the Occupational Health and Safety Authority.

The Playworker Development Course

Playworkers are an important role in the organizational structure of the Klabb 3-16 service. Their duties cover the safety and well-being of the children and are based on the benefits derived from non-formal education.

To prepare Playworkers for their duties, FES continued to work in conjunction with the Institute for Education and organised 6 Playworker Development Courses. Applicants for the role of a PW are usually University or MCAST students with the eligibility qualifications required for the job, however they recognise the benefits of the course and apply to attend, especially if their area of study is not related to Education. Other applicants for the course include people who may have been away from their schooling and perhaps even from the workforce and would like to work part-time as Playworkers.

The sessions were delivered by the Head of Programmes and the Manager Programmes, together with tutors from I/E. They covered areas relevant to the work responsibilities, such as Dealing with Challenging Behaviour and Disabilities; Communication and Teamwork; Classroom Management; Activity Design, Implementation & Evaluation; and Diversity and Inclusion.

There was also an intensive Induction Training session with the different departments of the FES Head Office, and participants were also offered a First Aid Course. Following the theory sessions, the playworkers were placed in a centre where they underwent a job shadowing experience, which was paid upon the successful completion of the whole course.

One is to note that the course started to be offered also to 17-year old students. This is an age bracket that often want to start working, so FES gave them the opportunity to do so as playworkers, following the successful completion of the Playworker Development Course.

The Child Support Workers Course

FES organised 4 Child Support Workers Courses during 2022.

The course was organised by FES, in conjunction with the Institute for Educations, and was delivered by a number of professionals in the field of Inclusive Education. The topics which were covered were:

- Creating an Inclusive Culture in the Classroom
- Dealing with Challenging Behaviour
- Support Procedures and Documentation
- Supporting children with Individual Educational Needs
- Communication Skills and Teamwork.
- Dealing with Children's Difficulties in Communication
- Supporting Children's Participation in daily life through Sensory Processing Knowledge

Induction Seminar for Klabb 3-16 Employees

A new scholastic year means that the Klabb 3-16 after-school service returns to cater for the hundreds of parents who entrust the children in our care. The Klabb, as it is commonly known, is a commitment



to deliver a dedicated service in all the centres managed by FES. This service necessitates the employment of hundreds of staff members to fulfil the various roles. To facilitate the delivery of this service, FES organised training sessions in September 2022 for all staff members that work in the roles of Playworkers and Child Support Workers. New recruits who joined after September, attended the training in December. These sessions were held in the form of two half-day seminars, with the training tailored for the responsibilities of the duties of the PWs and CSWs and served to identify the skills needed for the job, how to keep abreast of latest development in the field, and to inform the employees about the Foundation's policies and practices.

The seminars highlighted the importance of the service on a national level, and the support being provided to all the employees to deliver a good service. Other topics included the value and implementation of the programme of activities, matters related to Inclusion, and finally issues related to Human Resources and Data Protection.

These seminars reached over 800 employees and addressed both returning and new employees.

Skolasajf 2022 Evaluation Seminar

Every project should be evaluated for reflective practice enables one to learn how to avoid past mistakes, and also how to reinforce best practices. Following the end of Skolasajf 2022, an evaluation exercise was carried out with internal and external stakeholders. The FES Head Office team then met to evaluate the Skolasajf

2022 service, and to discuss and analyse all the feedback gathered from the centres, parents and guardians respectively. The discussion served as an opportunity to better understand areas that may need to be revisited and enhanced, so that FES keeps on delivering a service that meets the requirements and expectations of students and parents alike.





**HUMAN RESOURCES & SUPPORT
SERVICES DEPARTMENT**



HR & SUPPORT SERVICES

HR Unit

The **Human Resources Unit** is responsible to the functions related to HR within the organisation. These include the recruitment process, the implementation of policies related to HR, dealing with issues related to staff, and administrative duties. This list is not exhaustive.

For the year 2022, the HR Department remained with the same organisational structure as in the previous year. The Department now consists of: Head of Human Resources, Manager, Programme Coordinator, Coordinator and Programme Secretary.

Skolasajf 2022

For the period of Skolasajf the HR Department received more than 2,000 applications. These employees were

required to work in 57 centres distributed amongst Malta and Gozo, both in mainstream and in resource centres. The recruitment process for Skolasajf is one of the major tasks of the HR Department.

Recruitment process

Like every year, preparation work for Skolasajf 2022 commenced as early as November 2021. This included applying for permits, ensuring that the required budget is available, and plan for any training required. During 2022 once again the HR Department continued working towards its vision to go paperless throughout the recruitment process. This entailed that the whole process from application stage to contract signing stage was all done online and digitally.

Tables 1, 2 and 3 below, captioned *Skolasajf 2022 Recruitment Statistics*, explain the

number of employees who were employed for Skolasajf 2022. Given that in 2022 all operations went back to normal after two years working with specific measures due to COVID, the number of children in the centres increased. This required the recruitment of more staff.

Call Title	total number of employees working with Skolasajf
Playworker Skolasajf	1053
Child Support Worker Skolasajf	464
Playworker with extra Responsibility Skolasajf	107
Centre Coordinator Skolasajf	47
Regional Coordinator Skolasajf	9
Regional Coordinator Inclusion	2
Sports Playworker Skolasajf	104
MITA Student	40

Table 1:- Skolasajf 2022 Recruitment Statistics in Malta

Call Title	total number of employees working with Skolasajf
Playworker	68
Child Support Worker	26
Playworker with extra Responsibility	5
Centre Coordinator	6
Regional Coordinator	1
Sports Playworker	5
MITA Student	10

Table 2:- Skolasajf 2022 Recruitment Statistics in Gozo

Call Title	total number of employees working with skolasajf
Child Support Worker	47
Playworker with extra Responsibility	50
Centre Coordinator	5
Regional Coordinator	1

Table 3:- Skolasajf 2022 Recruitment Statistics in Resources Centre

Various induction meetings were carried out with the Regional Coordinators, Centre Coordinators and Playworkers with Extra Responsibilities. To meet the high demand for the service, FES employed external seasonal employees. These were in addition to the workers on an indefinite contract who work in the Klabb 3-16 service and continued working during Skolasajf. It is important to highlight that some of the workers on an indefinite contract chose to work in 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.

Throughout the period of Skolasajf there were very good relations between the Centre Coordinator, the Regional Coordinators and the Human Resources Department. The procedures adopted ensured that any problems related to staff were immediately dealt with.

Childcare

A major change which happened in 2022 in the provision of childcare centres was the extension of hours in six childcare centres, from 6am till 6pm. Service for these hours started to be provided and sustained by employees of an external contractor. After a tender was issued, HealthMark was chosen as the service provider. This required constant contact between the HR Department and HealthMark so to ensure the smooth transition of the contractor into our centres.



Klabb 3-16

Two new Centres

Throughout 2022 two new centres were opened. One was at Zabbar and the other one at Mosta Annex, taking the number of Klabb 3-16 centres to 31. This allowed FES to work on its mission to enable parents to be in employment whilst the children are being taken care of at Klabb 3-16.

Employees

Like Skolasajf, the recruitment process for Klabb 3-16 is a very demanding one. Due to the high number of employees working within this service, the HR Department is constantly liaising with the Centre Coordinators to be able to address the demand for staff. Staff required for this service included Centre Coordinators, Playworkers with Extra Responsibilities, Child Support Workers, Playworkers, and Tutors. 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. In fact, together with the Services Department, meetings were held with individual centres so to analyse well staff rostering and operations. This enabled the constant monitoring of centres so to ensure efficiency in our operations.



Training

The priority as regards to training within Klabb 3-16 was induction of employees. A plan was drawn to ensure that all employees within this service attended an induction training prior and/or throughout their employment so to ensure that the employees understand well the mission and the vision of the organisation. Employees were trained in different areas such as activity planning, inclusion, classroom management and data protection.

Training was also given prior to Skolasajf 2022. Various courses for prospective

Playworkers with Extra Responsibilities were held. The aim of these courses was to inform staff of duties and responsibilities prior to being employed. This also ensured further support and assistance to the Centre Coordinator.

Plans for 2023

The plans for 2023 are that the HR Department strengthens its procedures. Given that there is the possibility of a different service provider in relation to the portal, the HR Department needs to ensure that current practices in the recruitment process are maintained and enhanced where necessary. The HR Department plans also to establish further contact with the centre coordinators in all the services – Childcare, Klabb 3-16, and Skolasajf.

Support Services

The **Operations and Support Services Unit** is responsible for the supervision of the day-to-day operations of the different services



offered by FES, which are Childcare, Klabb 3-16 and Skolasajf. The Services Department has to work hand in hand with the other departments within the entity to ensure a smooth running of the service, however it is also responsible for tasks related to the admin of the centres, such as checking about staff availabilities in the centres, and availability of classrooms in schools for service delivery.

The structure of this department is the following: Head of Human Resources and Operations and Support Services, Manager Operational and Support Services, four Programme Coordinators, a Coordinator, and a Programme Secretary.

Role of programme coordinators within the Services Department.

The role of the Programme Coordinators within the Services Department is to support the centre coordinators in the day-to-day operations of the service. Their role is crucial to the overall service since they provide immediate guidance and assistance to the centre coordinators. All Programme Coordinators have a number of Childcare, Klabb 3-16 and Skolasajf centres that fall under their remit. Throughout the year 2022 plans were being made to restructure the Department in a different way. Instead of having all centres distributed amongst all the Programme Coordinators, the plan was for one Programme Coordinator to be in charge of all 12 child care centres. The other 3 programme coordinators were to be assigned to all the Klabb 3-16 centres between them. The Programme Coordinators guide the Centre Coordinators and Playworkers with extra Responsibilities to abide by the Operations Manual issued from Head Office.

There are other duties which the Programme Coordinators are in charge of. These include Scheme 9, Placements of students doing courses in childcare in the FES childcare

centres and managing the Portal System through which parents book and pay for the Klabb 3-16 and Skolasajf service.

Role of Coordinator within the Services Department

Another task within the Services Department is to coordinate transport required both for Klabb 3-16 and Skolasajf Services. The Coordinator within the Services Department is in charge of this task. Throughout 2022 the Resources Centres opened during the bridge holidays and also increased the number of days in operations in summer from 3 days to 5 days. This required more collaboration with the Transport Section of MYER since transport was required during the increased number of days of service.

The Coordinator also communicates with the Heads of Schools, from where the transport departs, to ensure a safe transition between the two services. The Coordinator is also responsible of the CRM which is a database incorporating all queries received from Servizz.gov. These queries are to be answered in a timely manner.

Role of the Programme Secretary

The Services Department serves also as a link between the service users and the entity. Most of the queries received through emails and telephone calls are dealt with by the Services Department. It is the role of the Programme Secretary to ensure that emails and phone calls are replied to in an adequate timeframe as per Directive 4.2.

The Programme Secretary is also responsible to collect monthly reports and statistics for all services provided by FES.

Klabb 3-16

At the end of June 2022 there were 30 centres operating in Malta and one in Victoria Gozo. In September 2022 there was the opening of two new centres i)

Mosta Annex and ii) Zabbar B. This decision helped to reduce the number of students attending both Mosta primary school and Zabbar A. Both Centres remained under the supervision of the coordinators of Mosta and Zabbar however new staff was recruited, including child support workers and tutors.

By the end of June 2022 there were 4898 applications for Klabb 3-16. In the beginning of September 2022, 4377 children were registered for the service.

As per procedure, all applications are to be submitted online through the FES Portal. During 2022, FES liaised once again with Servizz.gov, whose role is to support those potential applicants who would be having difficulty to apply and pay online. Servizz.gov also answer calls and emails from the general public about Klabb 3-16, which calls are received on Freephone 153.

As of September 2022, there were 31 Centre Coordinators in Malta and 1 Centre Coordinator in Gozo. There were 16 Playworkers with Extra Responsibilities (PERs) who assist the centre coordinators in centres which have more than 100 registrations. Other workers involved in the operations of Klabb 3-16 are playworkers, child support worker and tutors.



Klabb 3-16 during holidays

The Klabb 3-16 service is offered also during the scholastic holidays, to students of working parents. Service during the holidays is available from 7am till 5.30pm. The table hereunder explains the number of applications received for the holidays throughout 2022.

Period	Number of Service users
Carnival Holidays	930
Easter Holidays	1160
Bridge Holidays (June)	1378
Bridge Holidays (September)	1562
Mid-term Holidays	892
Christmas Holidays	1145

During the July Bridge Holidays, the service was also offered at the Helen Keller Resource Centre, where it was attended by 14 students.

During the September Bridge Holidays, the demand for the service was also offered in the following centres, as per table below.

Guardian Angel	4
Helen Keller	5
San Miguel	4
Wardija Resource Centre	4
Sannat Special Unit	0

The opening of Resource Centres throughout scholastic holidays required more liaison with the HR Department to ensure provision of staff. There was also constant liaison with the transport section within MYER to ensure all students could access the service as required.

Skolasajf 2022

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 2022, the service of Skolasajf was provided in 52 primary schools across Malta and Gozo, and also in five Resource Centres. All centres offer the core programme of activities between 8:30am and 12:30pm. However, 35 centres also offered extra hours of service from 7:00am till 8:30am, and from 12:30pm till 5:30pm. Extra hours are offered to 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. Transport was provided for students travelling from the closed centres to the host centres. The following centres were amalgamated as follows:

Malta	
Closed Centre	Hosting Centre
Senglea & Cospicua	Vittoriosa
Għaxaq	Żejtun
Kalkara	Xghajra
Pieta	Marsa
Qormi SG	Qormi SB

Mtarfa	Rabat
Kirkop	Safi
Msida	St. Venera

Gozo	
Closed centre	Hosting Centre
Nadur	Qala

San Lawrenz/ Kerċem	Victoria
Għarb/Żebbuġ	Xagħra

Number of applicants for Skolasajf 2022
(Core Hours)

Name of centre	Number of applicants
Attard	330
Birkirkara	359
Birżebbuġia	206
Burmarrad	38
Dingli	94
Fgura	410
Floriana	65
Għargħur	191
Għaxaq	78
Gudja	73
Gżira	156
Hamrun GP	160
Hamrun SS	67



Haz Zebbug	313
Kalkara	32
Kirkop	27
Lija/Balzan/Iklin	157
Luqa	240
Marsa	65
Marsascala St Joachim	357
Marsascala St Anne	195
Marsaxlokk	101
Mellieħa	303
Mgarr	242
Mosta	337
Mosta Annex	117
Mqabba	160
Msida	31
Mtarfa	16
Naxxar	280
Paola	229
Pembroke	324
Pieta`	16
Qormi SB	259
Qormi SG	77
Qrendi	73
Rabat A	259
Safi	45
San Giljan	143
San Gwann	321
Senglea	17
Siggiewi	347
Sliema	323
St. Paul's Bay	272
St. Venera	288
Tarxien	106
Valetta	52
Vittoriosa	34
Xghajra	41
Zabbar A	266
Zabbar B	141
Zejtun	349
Zurrieq	368
Total no. of students in Malta	9550

RESOURCE CENTRES	
Name of the centre	
Guardian Angel Rc Hamrun	49
Helen Keller RC Qrendi	22
San Miguel RC Pembroke	22
Sannat Special Unit - Gozo	7
Wardija Resource Centre	44
Total no. of students in Resource Centres	144

Gozo	
Name of centre	Number of applicants
Victoria	129
Xagħra	104
Għajnsielem	71
Għarb	20
Kerċem	25
Nadur	62
Qala	38
San Lawrenz	9
Sannat	56
Xewkija	48
Żebbuġ	2
Total no. of students in Gozo	564

Number of applicants for service in centres offering after hours:

Name of the centre	AM	PM
Attard	100	138
Birkirkara	113	179
Birzebbuga	67	85
Fgura	132	169
Floriana	27	126
Gzira	31	66
Għargħur	51	68
Hamrun	103	133
Haz Zebbug	89	95
Luqa	70	92

Marsascula St Joachim	72	119
Marsascula St Anne	72	98
Mellieha	64	123
Marsaxlokk	21	34
Mgarr	55	72
Mosta	123	135
Mosta Annex	51	66
Mqabba	47	58
Naxxar	74	133
Paola	84	94
Pembroke	68	143
Qawra	123	239
Qormi SB	82	105
Rabat B	69	83
San Giljan	35	93
San Gwann	115	154
Siggiewi	76	119
Sliema	44	150
St. Paul's Bay	74	142
St. Venera (Msida)	103	137
Zabbar A	92	117
Zabbar B	42	45
Zejtun	99	106
Zurrieq	97	117
TOTAL	2575	3742

Gozo	
Name of the centre	
Victoria - Gozo	37 63
Total	37 63

Childcare

During 2022, FES was had in operation 12 childcare centres. The underlying philosophy in the management of the childcare centres is to offer a high-quality service to all children up to three years of age. The aim of childcare centres is to support and strengthen the family unit, guided by the underlying principle that the family is the best environment for personal growth.

The programme coordinators within the Services Department are responsible to assist the childcare centres in their daily operations. 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 must be present at opening and closing times of the childcare centre.

As of October 2022, FES embarked on a pilot project where six of the centres offered extended hours from 6am till 6m, depending on bookings received. Centres offering this service are located at Haz Zebbug, Birgu, Birkirkara, Naxxar, Qawra and Pembroke. For this project FES started contracting childcare educators from Healthmark to meet the required staff complement..

Applications for children to attend the childcare centres are received by the Centre Coordinators either through emails, phone calls or even walk-ins in the centres. Every application is processed, and an individual assessment is carried out in order to determine the applicant’s needs. Applications are filled in and submitted manually.



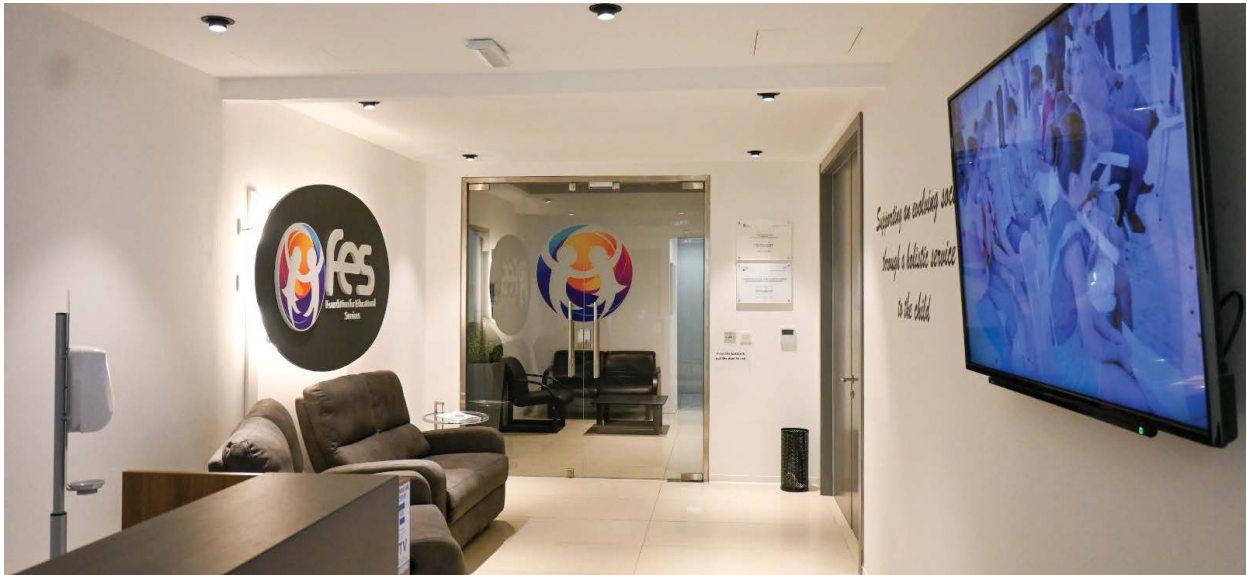
The following list provides a description of registrations per centre.

Centre	Total number of service users in 2022
Birgu, Il-Kuluri	26
Birkirkara, Il-Ferrovija	61
Cospicua, Il-Bejta	34
Floriana, It-Tgħanniq	18
Haż-Żebbuġ, Żmeraldi	55
Marsa, Il-Pesp	32
Naxxar, Pizzi Pizzi Kanna	55
Pembroke, Il-Merill	65
Qawra, Ix-Xemx	47
San Ġwann, Is-Sardinella	63
Santa Venera, Il-Bebbuxu	39
Siġġiewi, Id-Denfil	63
Total	558

Centre Coordinators are also encouraged to ensure that staff performance is of high quality. This requires daily monitoring of what is going on in the centre, regular supervision with staff and assisting employees where required to deal with day-to-day issues and challenges. Centre Coordinators work together with the Programmes Department, Services Department, and Human Resources Department to address issues related to staff performance. This consolidates the FES beliefs that employees’ effectiveness is the critical component in improving children’s achievement. The wellbeing of employees is of utmost importance and hence, FES always strives to provide an adequate support to those in need. With this in mind, employees are encouraged to refer to their centre coordinator on any problems encountered, who in return will do their utmost to assist the employees by clarifying expectations, helping in meeting expectations, and provide high-quality feedback and support.

**THE BUSINESS
SUPPORT DEPARTMENT**





CORPORATE SERVICES UNIT

Introduction

Throughout 2022, the **Corporate Services Unit** made the necessary adjustments needed across all areas to go back to normality as it was pre-COVID. This eased up the rigid procedures that had to be followed previously but also increased the workload in other aspects, since life in the FES centres was going back to normal. Projects that previously had been put on hold could resume, such as purchasing of toys and other centre equipment, and refurbishment exercises in various centres.

Estate Management

Head Office

In January 2022, awning windows were installed at Head Office. The intention was to have better air circulation. Now, all offices overlooking the façade have a window that can be opened.

After months of discussion, the FES managed to introduce a second exit at the Head Office, to be used in case of an emergency. Following discussions with the landlord and next-door tenants, a door was installed in the kitchen leading into the neighbouring premises, which are very close to another emergency staircase. Security and access are as per established procedures.

Due to the increase in staff complement at Head Office, plans were made to reorganise the office layout and make a more efficient use of the space available. This entailed creating a new office plan, taking the appropriate measurements to ensure that all offices have the space needed for their staff complement, procurement for all the works required and additional furniture, and coordination with the contractors to finalise the works in the shortest time possible. It was decided



by management that all HO staff effected by this reorganisation will be working from home, and the Corporate Services Unit made arrangements to provide them with mobile phones in order to avoid any disruptions in the workflow. Thanks to the support and collaboration, and the onsite presence of all the members of the Corporate Services section, this project was completed in 5 weeks.

Child Care Centres

Following the major refurbishment exercises that were carried out in the previous years in childcare centres during 2021, follow ups were carried out and other day-to-day maintenance continued taking place.

The below list explains the major works carried out in childcare centres.

A. Birgu - tiles in various parts of the centre were changed since they were shifting. A welcome sign was fixed to

the centre's façade making it more visible from the street.

B. B'Kara - a low-floor mirror was installed in the baby room. This will further help the childcare educators during the delivery of the programme of activities.

C. Bormla - towards the end of the year, discussions were started to upgrade the outdoor area. Quotations were requested to have the walls plastered since they were very old and flaking. Works are planned to start in the first quarter of 2023.

D. Floriana - following an inspection carried out by the architect in 2021, the roof of the bathrooms in the Floriana childcare centre was changed during 2022. The centre was closed for business for health and safety concerns due to such works. These included the removal of the old roof, removal of all plumbing works, placing the new roof, new plumbing works, and a new soffit. Whilst these works were being carried out by the MEYR team, the FES handyman repainted all the centre to give it a fresher look. The door leading to the yard was also replaced since it was very old.

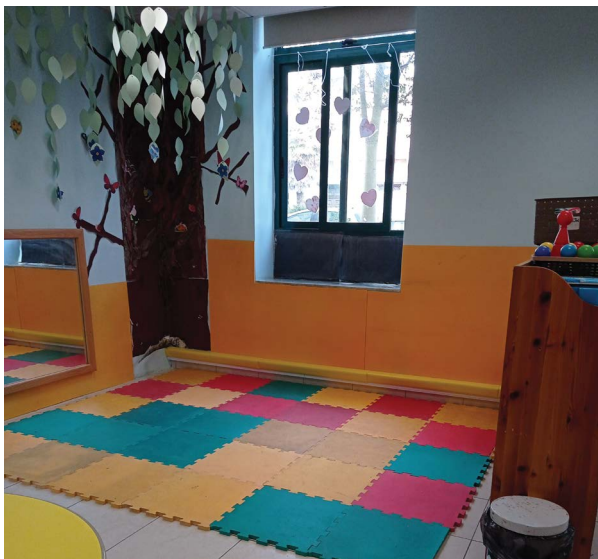
E. Naxxar - works were carried out to have the roof membrane in this centre fixed.

F. Pembroke - the works on the centre's new store were finalised. This centre was



also used by the Electoral Commission as a voting centre during the weekend of the General Elections. The centre had to be cleared of resources to make it available as a polling station. Immediate support and assistance were provided to have all the centre equipment moved, cleaned, and placed back in time before the centre re-opened for children the following Monday.

G. San Gwann - works were carried out to have the roof membrane in this centre fixed. Works in the yard were still going on at the start of by the end of 2022.



H. Santa Venera - the contract with St Joseph's Home for the continued use of the Il-Bebboxu premises, was renewed in 2022. An old theatre stage was removed from the back of the centre. This was dismantled, carted away and various gypsum, plumbing and electrical works were carried out in the area to transform it into a baby room. Discussions were also held with the landlord regarding the maintenance required in some of the beams in the centre. These were planned to take place in early 2023.

- I. Siggiewi - one of the activity areas was refurbished, and new foam wall panelling was installed to make it safer for the children using it.
- J. Qormi CC - as at end 2022, the childcare centre in Qormi was still closed due to the refurbishment works in the school. During 2022, the premises were being used as a store by the Foundation.

Throughout the year, the re-organisation of the furniture layout was needed across all the centres. This took place when all COVID regulations were lifted and there was no longer the need for the children to be segregated into separate bubbles.

Apart from interventions in the existing centres, the Corporate Services Unit continued providing assistance to maintenance issues arising at the Gzira, M'Scala, and St Julian's childcare centres to ensure that these were privatised according to the contract signed. The Gzira childcare centre was successfully passed on to the private contractor on the 1st of August 2022. The St Julian's childcare centre was planned to start operating on the 1st of January 2023. Additional interventions from the FES were still needed in relation to the St Julian's centre to ensure that the plans submitted were in line with the DQSE requirements. As at year end, maintenance was being carried

out at M'Scala childcare centre to install turf and protective aluminium fencing. Discussions were still going on regarding the privatisation date of this centre.

Klabb 3-16/Skolasajf Centres

General maintenance interventions were done in both Klabb 3-16 and Skolasajf centres. During the year, the Sliema and Attard Klabb 3-16 offices were refurbished. This entailed painting of the room and new furniture being provided. With the opening of 2 new centres - one at Mosta Annex and another one at Zabbar Primary B, assistance was provided in the setting up of the Klabb office. At Mosta Annex, the Head of School provided the FES with its own office space. As at year end, quotes were being collected to transform the room into an office that meets the needs of the centre's administration.

Throughout the year various maintenance interventions were requested, mostly to address items broken during Klabb or Skolasajf operations. As part of the yearly procedure, additional fans were fixed in Skolasajf centres as required.

Procurement

The Procurement function is getting more important for the Foundation. Purchasing is getting larger and more complex, frequently requiring expert advice on what is the best way forward, both in terms of value as well as to adhere to the public procurement regulations.

Throughout the year 833 purchase orders were issued. These were all matched with their respective invoice, certified, and passed over to the Finance Department for processing. Purchases which were considered important include:

- the installation of windows at Head Office
- the installation of access cards at HO

- the provision of nursing and care worker services for Resource Centres during the Bridge Holidays service
- the installation of new signs on the childcare centre facades
- the testing of the electrical installations across all the childcare centres
- the installation and testing of CCTV cameras systems
- various training and team-building sessions
- works related to the refurbishment exercise done at HO.

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 2022:

Call for Quotations/Expressions of Interest

1. CFQ/FES/001/2022 - Call for Quotations - Provision of Legal Services
2. CFQ/FES/003/2022 - Call for Quotations - Provision of Medical Services
3. CFQ/FES/002/2022 - Call for Quotations - Nursing Services - Carnival Holidays
4. CFQ/FES/005/2022 - Call for Quotations - Nursing Services - Easter Holidays
5. CFQ/FES/009/2022 - Call for Quotations - Nursing Services - Bridge Holidays
6. CFQ/FES/008/2022 - Call for Quotations - Care Worker Services - Skolasajf
7. EOI/FES/001/2022 - Expression of Interest - General Hand & Messenger (Part Time) - April
8. EOI/FES/004/2022 - Expression of Interest - General Hand & Messenger (Part Time) - September
9. EOI/FES/002/2022 - Expression of Interest for People beyond Retirement Age - Playworkers for Klabb 3-16 and Skolasajf (Part-Time)

10. EOI/FES/005/2022 - Expression of Interest for People beyond Retirement Age – Playworkers for Klabb 3-16 and Skolasajf (Part-Time)
11. EOI/FES/003/2022 - Expression of Interest – Part-Time Administration Assistant
12. EOI/FES/006/2022 - Expression of Interest – Part-Time Administration Assistant

Requests for Quotations on the ePPS

1. CFQ/FES/012/2022 - Leasing of Two (2) Brand New Energy Efficient A3 Colour Multifunction Printers for the Foundation for Educational Services
2. CFQ/FES/011/2022 - Call for Quotations – Provision of Nursing Services
3. CFQ/FES/013/2022 - Call for Quotations – Provision of Professional Services by Warranted Architect and Civil Engineer (Perit)

Tenders awarded on the ePPS

1. SPD1/2021/218 - Tender for the Provision of Insurance Brokerage Services for the Foundation for Educational Services
2. SPD1/2021/187 - Tender for the Provision of Management and Support Services on the Services Portal and Recruitment Portal of the Foundation for Educational Services for 60 Months
3. SPD1/2022/095 - Tender for the Appointment of External Auditors for the Foundation for Educational Services for Four (4) Years
4. SPD1/2021/170 - Lease of Thirteen (13) Brand New Energy Efficient A3 Colour Laser Multifunction Printers for the Foundation for Educational Services
5. SPD1/2022/165 - Purchase of Thirty-Three (33) Brand-New A4 Energy Efficient Monochrome Multifunction Printers for FES Klabb 3-16 Centres including Full-Service Maintenance Agreement

6. SPD1/2022/181 - Framework Contract for the Supply of Bottles of Drinking Water, Dispensers, and Stands for the Foundation for Educational Services

Tenders that were still works in progress by the end of 2022 were:

1. Drinking Water Tender – this tender was awaiting publication.
2. A tender for the provision of care worker services was being drafted.
3. A tender for the provision of an electrical vehicle was being drafted.

Advice related to procurement was provided to colleagues in other departments within the FES Head Office, when needed. Discussions were ongoing throughout the year in relation to the implementation of the Tender for Childcare Educators which started operating in November 2022. Further assistance was provided in relation to the awarded Tender for the Provision of Management and Support Services on the Services Portal and the Recruitment portal, since handing over was required between the previous supplier and the new one. Consultancy between the two service providers was still ongoing by the year end and is deemed to continue throughout 2023.

Discussions were also underway with the Foundation for Tomorrow Schools (FTS) in order to set up a Memorandum of Understanding whereby the FTS will be assisting in the drafting and contract management of tenders related to the installation of turf in childcare centres, and other major maintenance projects that might be required.

IT

With the overall increase in reliability on information technology, the demand for technical support assistance is always on the increase. During 2022, the Programme Coordinator Technical Support continued



building on the initial work started in the previous year, providing continuous assistance to all FES staff.

Photocopiers

Following the publication of a tender to supply all childcare centres with photocopiers, the deliveries and installations were made during 2022. This entailed liaising with both the supplier and MEYR to coordinate the installation and ensure this is done as smoothly as possible. This also entailed the pickup of all the old photocopiers by the supplier or their responsible disposal.

One of the biggest technical projects for 2022 was the writing and publication of a tender to supply all Klabb 3-16 centres with a multifunction printer, especially since some of them had to be replaced as they were beyond repair. The Programme Coordinator Technical Support and Programme Coordinator Procurement worked jointly on this tender. This entailed liaising with MITA and the Sectoral Procurement Directorate to have the tender published according to their requirements. By end of the year, this tendering process was finalised and it was planned that all printers were to be delivered and installed during 2023.

With regards to all photocopiers within the FES Head Office, the supplier was contacted whenever troubleshooting was required, or else new users had to be

added to the system. Where Skolasajf was concerned, communication was carried out with both the supplier and the school in question to provide the necessary codes to be used during Skolasajf. These codes were helpful especially at the end of summer, as these provided the data for the issued invoices from the school, in accordance with the usage per code.

Telecommunications

In 2022, negotiations were made with the FES main telecommunications supplier to renew the contract. At Head Office level, due to the increase in staff complement, the PABX had to be upgraded to cater for an increased need for telephone lines, especially after the renovation of the physical layout of the office was carried out.

Towards the end of 2022, an investment was made to procure new digital cameras for Klabb 3-16 centres. These were used in those centres where it is not possible to have a physical line, and in case of emergencies.

In 2022, the FES started offering a Whatsapp messaging service for parents. Assistance was provided to the Programmes Department in the setting up prior to commencing with the service.



Website

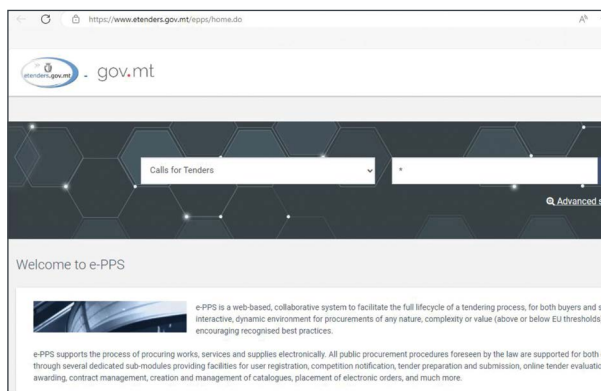
Regular updating of the FES website was carried out throughout 2022. In addition, the FES was instructed by MITA to start working on a new website. MITA's plan was to have all governmental websites transferred to Wordpress. In view of this, meetings were held to establish a way forward and by end of year, the development of this new website was well advanced. The official launch of the new website was planned to take place in 2023.

Procurement

Procurement of IT related equipment was done by the Programme Coordinator Technical Support, and where tenders were involved, assistance was provided during evaluation. Such purchases included toners for all Klabb 3-16 printers; walkie talkies for Klabb 3-16 centres to be used as communication devices in large centres; more digital cameras for all Klabb 3-16 and childcare centres; better quality laptops across the board; better quality mobile phones for Klabb 3-16 centres; monitors and docking stations for HO staff; the of headsets for HO staff; and telephone sets for those Klabb and childcare centres which use the MEYR telephony system.

CCTV cameras in childcare centres

Following an exercise carried out in the previous year, a CCTV policy outlining the retention periods of the existing CCTV cameras in childcare centres was created.



The Programme Coordinator Technical Support who visited such centres, ensured that cameras were functioning properly, and that the footage being taken is according to data protection regulations.

Apart from this, new systems at the Marsa and Naxxar childcare centres were installed, the one at Floriana was fixed, and towards the end of year the procurement process to install other CCTV cameras was on-going.

Training

The Programme Coordinator Technical Support gave training to all HO and childcare centre staff on how to use the OneDrive efficiently.

Apart from giving training, the Programme Coordinator Technical Support received training in General Data Protection Regulations to further the awareness of the implementation of Data Protection requirements and related issues in the Public Service.

In addition, the Programme Coordinator was appointed as the Nominated Freedom of Information Officer of the FES. His role is to assist the Freedom of Information Officer and the CEO, in case the entity receives any requests that need to be addressed on the FOI portal. Adequate training was provided in this regard.

Skolasajf

Skolasajf is a major annual project for FES, that carries its own specific IT requirements. During Skolasajf 2022, FES collaborated with the Ministry in relation to a project that started across all schools. This entailed changing the current network infrastructure in all schools in both Malta and Gozo to make it more secure. Since this changeover continued taking place during summer, support was provided to those centres affected by providing them

with usernames and passwords so that playworkers and child support workers could make use of interactive whiteboards which are now required by the new system.

Others

On a daily basis, the Programme Coordinator addressed troubleshooting issues related to hardware, software, networking, and telephony. In some cases, coordination with the MEYR networking team was required to solve networking issues and to install new network points where required.

An open-source asset management system software was installed to help with laptop inventory management in all FES centres. This helped the FES keep better track of laptop devices across all centres to enhance efficiency in IT operations.

Additionally, the FES purchasing order module was updated to reflect certain amendments to facilitate POs issued by the FES. This was done in collaboration with the Procurement Section, Accounts Section, and Programme Coordinator Technical Support.

During the refurbishment process at Head Office, assistance was provided during the drafting of the new office plan which was followed with direct contact with the supplier to install the additional network and telephone points required.

Administration

With the increase in centres and FES staff, the administrative burden on the Corporate Services Unit is more challenging. The collective work of the Coordinator Administration, Administration Assistant, Handyman, and Driver, strive to provide all centres with the resources needed and maintain a safe environment.

Centres Upkeep

Basic administrative tasks such as AC servicing, fire extinguisher servicing, electrical appliances and electrical installation testing, legionella testing, and pest control were carried out at regular intervals at Head Office and in the childcare centres. The Manager Corporate Services and Coordinator Administration liaised with health and safety officers and architects to ensure that a good level of health and safety is maintained throughout. In turn, coordination is done with the FES handyman and MEYR to carry out the maintenance tasks needed.

Inventories

On a yearly basis, the Administration Assistant updates the inventories for Klabb 3-16 Centres. The inventories, together with those of childcare centres, are then submitted to the FES insurance company to ensure that documentation and insurance coverage is always up to date.

Cleaning

The FES uses the same tender issued by MEYR in relation to the provision of cleaning services, across all centres. During 2022, daily issues in relation to cleaners' absenteeism, lack of cleaning material, issues with the performance of the cleaners provided, were reported to the Corporate Services Department. These were in turn addressed with MEYR or the contractor directly. The reconciliation process involved was enhanced by obtaining the cleaner's timesheets on a monthly basis, in order to ensure the accuracy of the filed timesheets and record absenteeism.

Stationery

All stationery orders are centralised at Head Office level, whereby Childcare and Klabb3-16 Centre Coordinators submit their requests and delivery is made by

the supplier directly at the centre. For Skolasajf, orders are done beforehand by the Manager Corporate Services and Coordinator Administration to ensure adequate supply and distribution in time before the commencement of Skolasajf.

Skolasajf

Skolasajf on its own brings a lot of other administrative work which needs to be in place before the Skolasajf centres open their doors. These include: the procurement and distribution of all cleaning material and stationery items, liaising with MEYR regarding the cleaners and security guards needed, liaising with Local Councils to ensure that the street signs reflect the appropriate road closure time, liaising with LESA and Police Officers to provide traffic management assistance during admission and dismissal times, liaising with Head of Schools in relation to the schools' contracts and other urgent maintenance issues in centres, and informing all Centre Coordinators regarding general routine administrative tasks in relation to resources and centres upkeep.

Apart from this, in 2022 there were other initiatives in relation to Skolasajf. For the first time the FES gave the opportunity to students to carry out summer work within our centres. Since these students were mostly 17 years of age, they needed to have a risk assessment carried out in accordance with the Maltese legislation. During this risk assessment, the students were given an explanation of any possible hazards one may meet at their specific workplace. The Corporate Services section thus engaged the services of an OHSA recognised Health and Safety Officer who visited the schools and spoke to all students in both Malta and Gozo.

Another new initiative was the opening of Resource Centres on a daily basis rather than just 3 times a week, including during the Bridge Holidays. This entailed providing additional resources to cover for the additional days, and also to ensure that adequate nursing services were provided according to the needs of the clients of the centres.

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 Policies were being updated on a regular basis to ensure that all aspects related to the FES areas of work were being covered.

Along 2022 various training sessions were offered to staff in relation to Data Protection. All staff at Head Office, and the Centre Coordinators of the Childcare, Skolasajf and Klabb 3-16 centres, received in-depth training on data protection; the roles of the Data Protection Commissioner, Data Controller and Data Protection Officer; the rights of data subjects; and what constitutes a data breach. In addition, more concrete examples were provided during induction sessions held for new staff, including Playworkers within Klabb 3-16 and Skolasajf. These sessions helped the current and new employees understand the importance on adhering to the Data Protection Regulations, to ensure that sensitive data such as children's records is maintained in an adequate manner and safeguards are applied against any possible breach.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT



Statement of comprehensive income

	Year ended 31 December	
	2022 €	2021 €
Revenue	14,236,814	10,589,988
Operational expenses	(12,299,185)	(10,002,184)
Surplus from operations	1,937,629	587,804
Administrative expenses	(1,313,951)	(1,364,651)
Finance income	14,519	15,398
Finance costs	(6,062)	(7,758)
Surplus / (Deficit) before tax	632,135	(769,207)
Tax expense	-	-
Surplus / (Deficit) for the year – total comprehensive income	632,135	(769,207)

Detailed statement of comprehensive income

For the financial year ended 31 December 2022

	Schedule	2022 €	2021 €
Government subvention		1,230,000	1,175,000
Surplus/(Deficit) from operations	III	707,629	(587,196)
Total operating surplus		1,937,629	587,804
Administrative expenses	II	(1,313,951)	(1,364,651)
Finance income		14,519	15,398
Finance expense		(6,062)	(7,758)
Surplus for the year		632,135	(769,207)

Schedule II

Detailed statement of comprehensive income

For the financial year ended 31 December 2022

	2022	2021
	€	€
Administrative expenses		
Accountancy fees	-	68
Advertising and recruitment fees	19,217	7,951
Audit fee	3,068	3,776
Bank and other charges	15,698	16,981
Cleaning	23,537	19,882
Consumables	6,185	4,969
Computer expenses	13,451	-
Depreciation charge	103,157	79,494
Depreciation charge of right-of-use asset	143,093	108,717
Honoraria	26,017	26,250
Educational material	29	52
Fines and penalties	28	5,008
Insurances	14,642	14,079
Legal fees	5,412	-
Licenses and fees	21,754	12,187
Motor vehicle expenses	1,273	128
Office expenses	37,938	39,403
Professional services	11,123	16,281
Repair and maintenance	9,765	1,577
Staff development	3,066	184
Subcontracted workers	18,702	19,942
Sundry expenses	2,359	159
Telephones	11,207	12,097
Transportation costs	768	1,255
Wages and salaries	822,462	974,211
	1,313,951	1,364,651

Schedule III

Detailed statement of comprehensive income (operational segments)

For the financial year ended 31 December 2022

	Child care		Skola sajj		Klabb 3-16		Other		Total	
	2022	€	2022	€	2022	€	2022	€	2022	€
Income from clients	179,813		569,615		703,998		-		1,453,426	
Subsidy from government	1,367,844		-		-		-		1,367,844	
Total revenues from operations	1,547,657		569,615		703,998		-		2,821,270	
Reimbursements:										
Government	2,140,294		5,044,639		2,817,109		183,502		10,185,544	
EU funding	-		-		-		-		-	
Total reimbursements	2,140,294		5,044,639		2,817,109		183,502		10,185,544	
Total inflows	3,687,951		5,614,254		3,521,107		183,502		13,006,814	
Expenditure:										
Operational expenses	(612,086)		(863,443)		(615,114)		-		(2,090,643)	
Wages	(2,281,570)		(4,190,420)		(3,553,297)		(183,255)		(10,208,542)	
Total outflows	(2,893,656)		(5,053,863)		(4,168,411)		(183,255)		(12,299,185)	
Net surplus/(deficit)	794,295		560,391		(647,304)		247		707,629	



Foundation for Educational Services

Zentrum Business Centre

Level 1, Mdina Road

Qormi QRM 9010

Tel: 2258 6810

Email: fes@gov.mt

www.fes.gov.mt

© Foundation for Educational Services