





Aġenzija Sapport, Malta Biennial Report, 2018-2019

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#### **List of Abbreviations**

| AED   | Automated External Defibrillator  |
|-------|---|
| AFM   | Armed Forces of Malta   |
| ASW   | Administrative Support Worker   |
| CEEP  | European Centre of Employers and Enterprises providing Public Services  |
| CEO   | Chief Executive Officer   |
| CPD   | Continuous Professional Development                                     |
| CRPD  | Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability                    |
| EAP   | Employee Assistance Programme   |
| EASPD | European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities |
| EDF   | European Disability Forum   |
| EFSLI | European Forum of Sign Language Interpreters                            |
| EIRA  | Employment and Industrial Relations Act                                 |
| ЕМР   | Electoral Manifesto Proposal  |
| ERDF  | European Regional Development Fund                                      |
| ESF   | European Social Fund  |
| ESN   | European Social Network   |
| ESP   | Employee Support Programme  |
| FITA  | Foundation for Information Technology Accessibility                     |
| HR    | Human Resources   |

| ICL    | Independent Community Living  |
|--------|---|
| ІСТ    | Information and Communication Technology                                |
| ISP    | Individual Support Programme  |
| LSM    | Lingwa tas-Sinjali Maltija  |
| MCA    | Malta Communications Authority  |
| MEA    | Malta Employers Association   |
| MEIB   | Ministry for Economy, Investment and Small Businesses                   |
| MFCS   | Ministry for the Family, Children's Rights and Social Solidarity        |
| NGO    | Non-Governmental Organisations  |
| ODI    | Office of Disability Issues   |
| ОРМ    | Office of the Prime Minister  |
| ОТ     | Occupational Therapist  |
| PAF    | Personal Assistance Fund  |
| PAS    | People Assistance Schemes   |
| PSAAD  | Parliamentary Secretariat for Active Ageing and Persons with Disability |
| PSP    | Public Social Partnership   |
| SCSA   | Social Care Standards Authority   |
| SLI    | Sign Language Interpreter   |
| STILC  | Sonia Tanti Independent Living Centre                                   |
| UNCRPD | United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities    |
| VAT    | Value Added Tax   |

## **OUR MISSION**

Agenzija Sapport is committed to enhance the quality of life of persons with disability through innovative personalised support, expertise and advocacy.

## **OUR VISION**

- Equality, choices and opportunities;
- · Inclusion of persons with disability in all aspects of society;
- Holistic, person-centred approach rooted in the principles of shared power and self-determination.

## **OUR VALUES**

Mutual support and interdependence - giving and receiving based on the understanding that both the person with disability and society stand to gain through the advancement of persons with disability as contributing members of society.





### **Foreword**

The Government's main vision in this sector is to eliminate all barriers to access that people with disability face on a daily basis, to improve their quality of life and to improve all the services offered to them.

Throughout the years 2018 and 2019, many crucial initiatives and improvements in this sector were made:

- Social Work Service was strengthened
- More investment as part of Projett Socjetà Gusta was made to open up and build new residences in the community for persons with disability
- More emphasis on the use of assistive technology was made and technology was made more available to persons with disability
- Over €500,000 were spent in two years for service users and their families in subsidies through the Empowerment Scheme
- More investments for the benefit of service users through the procurement of vehicles for a cost of €320,000 and Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) for over €30,000
- The INK Project to empower persons with disability to enter employment was launched
- · The launch of the REACH project, and
- Standards in the provision of social welfare services, including the disability sector, were set up.

It is also worth mentioning that the total government grants to Agenzija Sapport in 2018 were €16.02 million and €20.9 million in 2019.

Several other initiatives and projects in the disability sector as a whole are also underway. We are currently working to set up a strategy for screening children with the aim of identifying and recognising both physical and intellectual difficulties from an early age. With regards to Autism, a National Plan is also being set up. The Day Centres for persons with disability are also being modernised and the services offered will increase. Furthermore, the REACH Project will be strengthened; the role of the Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD) will be reinforced; a Lifelong Inclusion Unit within Agenzija Sapport as well as a National Fund for an Independent Life shall be set up; one of the board members of every major government entity will be a person with disability; and a gap analysis of existing services will be performed.

This biennial report, together with all the current and future plans, are a clear proof that we are committed to continue promoting equality for persons with disability and to safeguard their right to active inclusion and participation as well as their right to live independently in our community.



### **Foreword**

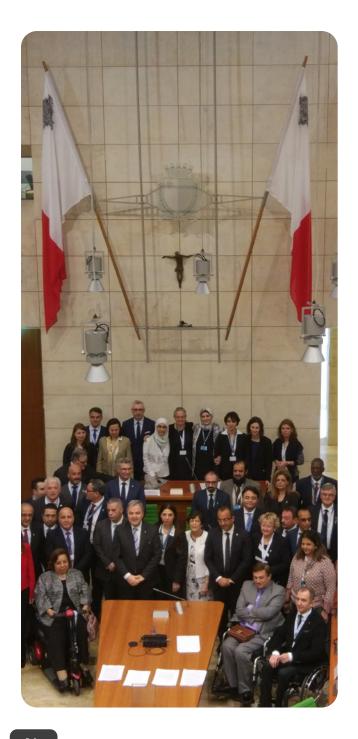
Introducing this biennial report covering the years 2018 and 2019, is an honour for me as the newly appointed Chief Executive Officer (CEO) at the end of this period not only because I hereby introduce the achievements of these two years to our stakeholders, but also because Agenzija Sapport is a significant driver for change, inspiring new ways of thinking and innovative practices across the sector.

Agenzija Sapport is the National Agency and we are actively involved in the consultations to shape a future national disability strategy for beyond 2020. The National Disability Strategy provides a unified, national approach to improving the lives of people with disability, their families and carers, and also provides leardership for a community-wide shift in attitudes. These two years indeed attest this promise through continuous efforts to improve the services in the disability sector, invest in resources, create and implement new projects and get even nearer to the audience by further engaging the service user when it comes to service provision.

At the top of the agenda is the Agency's emphasis on strengthening relationships and building new networks with other entities and professionals, both locally and on an international level. This is not only to put the Agency on the

map of the disability sector, but also to ensure that the service user is provided with a holistic service offered by a myriad of professionals, as necessary. Complementing this, is the aim to share best practices and adapt emerging tools to improve our level of service. Such examples would be the move towards digitisation, more access to assistive technology and a greater push towards a more inclusive community living. These are also the basis for projects which will be the starting points of 2020.

These two years are markedly remembered for the various initiatives and investment in projects such as more residences within the community; the emphasis on Sharing Lives service and its extension to Gozo; participation in the Euro-Arab high level meeting and summit; the Accessible Europe 2019 conference; more agreements with public, private and non-governmental entities; investment in research and collaborations with academic and educational institutions to ensure more promotion of local-based studies and generate more knowledgable workforce in the disability sector; and continuous efforts to engage persons with disability into gainful employment by providing them with the necessary skills to improve their employability and giving them the opportunity to gain on-the-job training, thus empowering a more independent living.



These two years also saw further investment in substantial projects such as increasing the number of Day Services, Residences, and also preparing for the development of new services which will mark the way forward for 2020, particularly the continuation of the REACH project, which will be the first of its own kind in Malta, and also the provision of assessments and early intervention services through the use of modern assistive technology.

Modernising the Agency's offices to provide an adequate work environment, continuous investment in training and development, and embarking on staff well-being initiatives is the Management's way of investing in our biggest resource, the employees. Thanks to our hundreds of workers, we are able to present this report full of projects and initiatives and ensure that the service users get their deserved support to the highest level of service. With the introduction of the Social Care Standards Authority (SCSA), the Agency's Management is even more committed to ensure such levels of service. During the period under review, all the Agency's frontline services were indeed audited and licensed, thus guaranteeing a high level of service provision. This took place while the Agency was also setting up its first Service Audit & Quality Assurance Department.

Other vital collaborations include those with CRPD and the Office of Disability Issues (ODI), with which the Agency constantly collaborates both on policy level and also on projects of national interest such as key government priorities. The Stakeholders' Networking Forum in 2018 gave the Sapport Management team a better picture of where the Agency needs to be heading and how it can further its projects and cooperations in the best interest of the service users.

Another milestone is the strengthening of Sapport services in Gozo and the extension of the Sharing Lives service, which has been widely accepted and grew in demand over the span of the last few months of 2018. Families making use of Sapport services in Gozo were also given the opportunity to participate in a two-day conference about issues they face in the upbringing of their children with disability.

The commitment shown during these two years attest that disability is high on the national agenda. Not only the sector gets increased investments throughout the years, but we have collectively, with all stakeholders, put more focus on the developments, needs and challenges that mark the sector. Thus it is our mission to continue providing services, develop new ones according to emerging needs, empower service users and promote self-advocacy, aiming to celebrate abilities and full inclusion of persons with a disability in society.

44 I look forward to working with all of you to make sure we get it right for every client, every time.



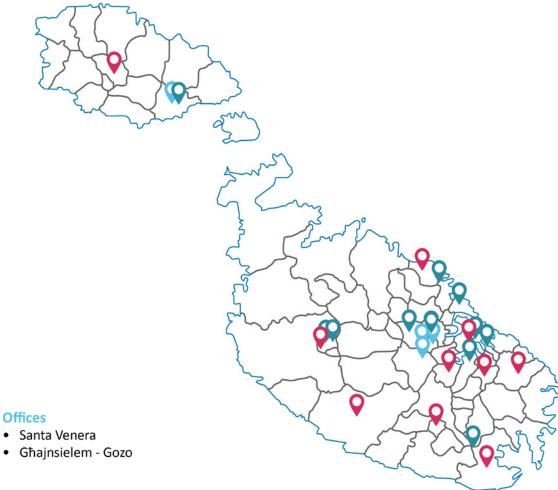


## **Services**

## **Service users within Sapport core services**

| Services                                   | Number of Service<br>Users 2018 | Number of Service<br>Users 2019 |
|--|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Social Work Services                       | 720                             | 700                             |
| Day Services                               | 532                             | 534                             |
| Residential Services                       | 58                              | 70                              |
| NGO Services                               | 110                             | 110                             |
| Community Services                         | 337                             | 373                             |
| Sharing Lives                              | 86                              | 112                             |
| Sign Language Interpreting Service         | 83                              | 89                              |
| Empowerment Scheme                         | 616                             | 725                             |
| Vehicle Road License Exemption Scheme      | 425                             | 524                             |
| Vehicle Registration Tax Exemption Scheme  | 307                             | 255                             |
| Grant on the Purchase of Special Equipment | 345                             | 305                             |

Table 1: Number of service users who benefited from core Sapport services, 2018 – 2019





#### Offices



#### **Day Centres**

- Baħar iċ-Ċagħaq, Birkirkara, Ħal Far, Mtarfa (x2), Paola, Senglea, Sliema, Swatar, Vittoriosa
- Għajnsielem Gozo



#### Residences

- Birżebbugia, Cospicua, Fgura, Kirkop, Marsa, Mtarfa, Pembroke, Siġġiewi, Żabbar
- Victoria Gozo

#### **Social Work Services**



18 parents and 15 siblings attended Social Work workshops in 2018

The Social Work Services within Agenzija Sapport are the first point of contact for prospective service users having a disability and their respective families. As an initial step, the Social Workers meet with service users and their families to assess their needs and desired objectives. Service users are, at times, referred to funds they are entitled to and/or other services within Agenzija Sapport such as Day Services, Community and Residential Services. They may also be referred to other funds and services outside the Agency. The Social Work team also offers support and guidance when this is needed to service users and their family members.

In spite of a challenging year in 2018, the Social Work team dealt with increasing caseloads and also delivered workshops and support groups to parents of children with disability and to adult siblings. The team also kept to its commitments of mentoring students and participating in media interventions. Social Workers also regularly attend specialised training and conferences both locally and abroad.

Particularly in relation to workshops, the Social Work team organises monthly group sessions for parents who have minors with a disability and also for adult siblings of persons with a disability. These groups have a purpose of being informative and different topics are discussed. A milestone is the two-day event organised for Gozitan parents and family members, presenting them with the opportunity to attend these sessions in Gozo.

Specific measures were taken in 2018 to ensure that the Social Work team works in a more qualitative way and major decisions were taken with regards to the role of the Social Workers within the Day Centres in particular. The Social Workers' role within the Day Centres has changed and now the Agency adopts a referral system whereby the Leaders of the Day Centres refer individual cases for social work intervention. A specific Social Worker is still assigned with a particular Day Centre but the time spent within the Day Centre premises by the Social Worker has been reduced to carry out interventions only when necessary.

In 2019, the Agency recruited six Social Workers followed by focus on the training and development of these new team members. Four of these new Social Workers were new graduates while the other two came from other social work agencies. The team also increased with two Occupational Therapists (OTs), who work hand-in-hand with the Social Workers in the generic cases that require such intervention of an OT.

With a full staff complement it is still important to ensure effective ways of operating in order to address the growing demands for the services, which could be due to increased exposure and significant input by the Agency's Marketing Department since the Agency's autonomy in 2016.

Apart from having full staff complement, working efficiently is also crucial to be able to constantly address the needs and demands for the service.

The planned way forward for 2020 is to review the Social Work Services' input and role within the Community Services. The changes envisaged within the latter department should ease the pressure on the Social Work team and as a consequence, the waiting list can be tackled in a better way. Also, the involvement of the two OTs in relation to initial assessments will be something new in 2020 and this will further tackle the current waiting list.

2019 has also been a year of transition in which the team was strengthened and consolidated, full of valid and enthusiastic Social Workers who do their utmost in their professional capacity for persons with disabilities and their families.

The team's constant aim is to remain efficient and effective in dealing with situations that require social work intervention within the Agency to all those who request it and especially to those who are still waiting to receive such a service, whilst adopting innovative practices and systems proved effective in the disability sector.

20 parents and 15 siblings attended Social Work workshops in 2019



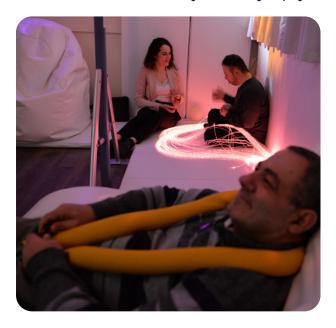
## **Day Services**

The Day Services' mission is to develop service users' ability with regards to independent living skills and self-determination, and thus empowering them to live as independently as possible to the maximum of their potential. Agenzija Sapport operates 11 Day Centres and has contractual agreements with two entities for the provision of another two services: Star 25 (Inspire) and Spero (Outlook Coop). Star 25 is a day service for persons with profound multiple learning disabilities, whereas Spero is for service users with visual impairment.

The highlights of the Day Services during the period under review were as follows:

- The initiation of the implementation of three core programmes within all Centres, which programmes include Community, Independent Living and Self-Advocacy. Combined with these programmes, we had ongoing training to Support Workers so that they could facilitate these programmes.
- Introduction of the Therapeutic team, comprising a counsellor, OTs and a professional who focused on active support, in collaboration with Social Workers. Thus, Agenzija Sapport embraced this holistic service which enhanced the level of service delivery through a multidisciplinary approach.
- Introduction of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the delivery of Individual Support Programme (ISP) through interactive whiteboards and other assistive equipment.
- One-to-one sessions with service users based on their ISP goals.

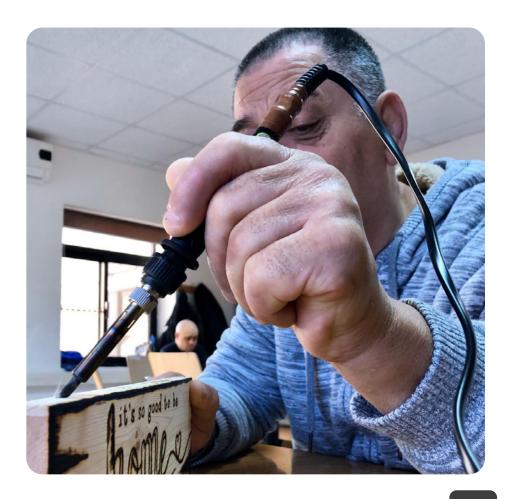
- Until the end of 2019 all Centres had tablets which are utilised in the implementation of diverse programmes.
- All Centres now have Wi-Fi access within all units. This aids in service delivery and enhances quality of programmes that are carried out.
- Each Centre is equipped with a relaxation area so that we can cater for service users who may manifest challenging behaviour.
- Interactive whiteboards were installed in Day Centres.
   These are used for a wide range of programmes and help by making the learning process more engaging.
- Some service users participated in INK project where they had the opportunity to improve their employability skills.
   Some service users were eventually successfully employed.



The Day Services team continuously aims to develop its service delivery. This is reached by implementing programmes based on service users' needs, identifying training needs to enhance staff skills and providing increased support to frontliners who are implementing these programmes.

Day Centres' environment is regularly modernised and equipped with cutting edge equipment. This is done to accommodate for all service users' needs and meet present trends.

534 service users were benefiting from Day Services operated by Agenzija Sapport as at end of 2019



Other 2019 initiatives included the following:

- Paola Day Centre kitchen was upgraded so that it can better cater for service users' needs.
- Purchasing of equipment for a cafeteria in Sliema Skills Space Centre.
- Service users attending Gwardjola Day Centre had the opportunity to participate in outwork activity. These activities were carried out both onsite and at the Centre. This good practice is something to be explored with other Centres.
- Community inclusion is highly encouraged amongst service users. Such an example is the fact that service users at Cottonera Day Centre go to the market every Tuesday, attend mass regularly at St. Dominic's Parish Church and the yearly festivities around the area.
- Day Services team participated in a gala night that was organised by the Residential team. This helps to enhance collaboration between teams and support service users who reside within residences.
- Introduction of Zumba classes in many Centres. Most of the service users lack the opportunity to carry out any type of exercise throughout their day, thus the Day Centres were able to respond to this need through identifying exercise as a goal and introducing exercise activities as one of the several programmes followed.
- Introduction to Sexuality discussions with service users and their parents (Sliema Skills Space Centre).
- Food handling course attended by service users who then acquired the Food Handling Licence (Baħar iċ-Ċagħaq Day Centre).

- Launch of Hammett Bath and multi-sensory room facilities at Mtarfa Day Centre.
- Introduction of collaboration with entities to enhance service users' involvement within the community, such as wood-carving carried out by Gozo Learning Hub service users and dog walks carried out by Fleur-de-Lys Day Centre service users in collaboration with SPCA.



8 - the number of Social Workers who perform assessments, conduct case reviews and provide ongoing support to the service users and their care givers. They work as advocates for the service user according to need.



#### Highlights of activities held:

 Pink October – Service users together with staff participated in Pink October. This activity helped to challenge the general public idea that persons with disabilities cannot contribute to society.

- Numerous bazaars were carried out, where service users had the opportunity to exhibit and sell items produced by themselves.
- Outings in smaller groups were held to increase service users' participation within the community.
- Cake sale carried out by Gwardjola Centre. Service
  users baked muffins, which were later sold during a
  bazaar. All the money collected was donated to children
  in need. Such activities challenge stigma associated
  with persons with disabilities.
- Enhancing service users' general knowledge by integrating the learning process with activities such as a day spent at the Armed Forces of Malta (AFM) barracks (Sliema Skills Space Centre), Mdina and Museum visits (Sliema Skills Space Centre), Esplora visits and a day trip to Sicily (Sliema Skills Space Centre) and animal care at Dreams of Horses in Gozo (Fleur-De-Lys Day Centre).
- Service users participated in a live-in where they had the opportunity to spend three days together with their friends (Baħar iċ-Ċagħaq & Sliema Centres).
- Camping experience (Mtarfa Day Centre).
- Christmas concerts by various Centres, with an emphasis on continuous development in inclusion and quality.
- Participation in an exhibition in Valletta where items produced by the services users from several Day Centres were exhibited.

The Day Services team strives to enhance quality of service by propounding a holistic service to all service users, including 285 Support Workers and a team of professionals who work hand-in-hand with frontliners so that the level of service improves. The professional team involves Leaders, Social Workers, a Counsellor and OTs, complementing the Centres' Management team. The team also includes Support Executives who are actively involved in the preparations of the Day Centres' calendar of events, student placements and other specific specialist programmes offered within the service.



2 - the number of OTs who provide training, assessments, intervention, home assessments, functional assessments and retraining, wheelchair assessments, evaluation and consultation to the Day Services.

4 - the number of Support Executives who provide assessments, intervention and evaluation of individual service users through individual support plans and ongoing support to the Centres.



44

Kurt is a 23-year-old man with autism and hypersensitivity to stimuli in the surrounding environment. For the last three years, Kurt spent his days outside the Centre. Be it rain or sunshine he refused to enter the Centre and integrate with other service users. With a specifically individually tailored support plan, after lots of hard work and dedication the team managed to integrate him back into the Centre and today he is an active participant in sessions and activities being organised in the Centre.

Paola Day Centre

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I like the Day Centre that I attend, I will not change it for anything. It is nice and modern. I like how we plan the day. Out of all the interesting sessions I participate in, my favourite is that about Health and Safety. I get along well with everyone here.

Maryanne Agius, service user, Sliema Skills Space Centre

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#### **Residential Services**



The Agency operates 9 residences across Malta and 1 in Gozo

Sapport Residential Services are aimed at providing a residential option to minors and adults with a disability who, for one reason or another, cannot continue living independently or with their own family. Other service users are at risk of being in an institution or already are in an institution such as Mount Carmel Hospital.

Such residential support is provided within small and personalised apartments or houses, with the residents being provided with the necessary assistance on a 24/7 basis. The main aim for the Residential Services is to enable the person with disability to live as independently as possible within the community. The philosophy of the service is that of focusing on developing the service user's abilities through support rather than care.

Service users within the residences are also involved in various activities and social events. During the period under review, such opportunities included the yearly Premju Soċjetà Ġusta events, Bethlehem f'Għajnsielem and other local events.

Each residence has a team of Support Workers, who are the frontliners and have a key role in assisting the service users with various aspects of their lives and to ensure that they are fully participating and included in the community. All Support Workers are followed, monitored and supported by a Leader and a Coordinator, who also have a crucial role in the overall service provision.





In 2019 a new role was introduced in the residential structure, that of Senior Support Worker. The role entails that Senior Support Workers guide the team of Support Workers within each residence especially during the time when the Leaders/Coordinators/Executives are not present within the residence. Also, Senior Support Workers are now responsible for on-call in relation to staff replacements (in case of emergency leave and/or sick leave).

Ages of service users within Sapport Residences vary between 14 years to late 70s

Furthermore, in 2019, a second Senior Services Executive was appointed within the Management structure of the Residential Services. Having two Senior Services Executives will ensure a better quality of service and more focused support for the Leaders and Executives within the residences. From the administrative aspect, in 2019 a second Administrative Support Worker (ASW) was introduced within the team to cope better with all the administrative tasks and demands related to the Agency's residences.

70 services users have benefited from Residential Services in 2018 and 2019



During the 2018-2019 period, Sapport Residential Services reached more service users when Dar Ave Maria in Marsa, Dar Iris in Żabbar and Dar Warda in Pembroke became operational. Work on other residences, namely in Żurrieq and Qrendi, were also initiated in 2018 and continued in 2019 but are not operational as yet.

The Residential
Services team
consists of 2
Senior Services
Executives,
7 Leaders, 8
Coordinators, 1
Support Executive
and 2 ASWs

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I have been living at Marsa residence since its opening. At first, I found it difficult to adapt as the environment is different to that of where I used to live before. Once I came here, the staff got me clothes, shoes, and everything I needed. I started attending INK training and eventually, the team also helped me find employment with a catering company. Today I am a part-time employee. I am happy there as I get my own income and can buy whatever I need and be independent. The Leader and the staff here help me manage my money. I do my share of chores at the residence, I attend training with Special Olympics, and in the weekends I do voluntary work...I am very happy here and as time goes by, I am gaining more skills and be more independent.

Raphael, Marsa Residence

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125 - the number of Support Workers within Sapport Residential Services

16 - Senior Support Workers within Sapport Residential Services as at end 2019

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I feel very happy now that I am living in a residence as I have been through a very difficult time in the past, especially when I was institutionalised. I feel proud of myself that I am able to carry out tasks independently such as taking a shower and helping out in household chores such as doing the laundry, the dishes and washing the floor. I like to go to the Youth Centre and go out on outings with my friends, especially during the weekend. Some of my favourite places are Gozo, Żurrieq and Birżebbuġa amongst others. Also, my hobbies are doing crafts especially creating jewellery. I am also in a relationship and I feel very happy, loved and appreciated. I like to spend time watching movies and going out with my boyfriend.

Doreen Demicoli, Żabbar Residence

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## **NGO Agreements Service**

The Ministry for the Family, Children's Rights and Social Solidarity (MFCS), Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Aġenzija Sapport have been working together for a number of years to provide residential services to persons with a disability. Aġenzija Sapport, through assigned employees within its NGO Department, is responsible for the implementation of the Public Social Partnership (PSP) contracts between NGOs and the MFCS. This includes all service users (under the PSP agreement) that avail themselves of the services offered by NGO residences in Malta and Gozo. The Agency carries out this responsibility mainly through the regular monitoring of the service and level of support that is provided to these service users. Apart from the monitoring aspect, Aġenzija Sapport is also responsible for admissions of new service users and making assessments, while also carrying out the quarterly financial invoicing in relation to the service users within the NGO residences.

The Sapport NGO Department was established by the end of 2017 and is responsible for 14 PSP contracts of which 12 are residential homes, 1 independent living home, 2 Respite / Day Services and an Intervention Day Programme.

| NGO                            | Number of residences | Number of service users |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Fondazzjoni Arka, Gozo         | 2                    | 15                      |
| Fondazzjoni Wens               | 3                    | 35                      |
| Fondazzjoni Nazaret            | 3                    | 28                      |
| Dar tal-Providenza             | 3                    | 18                      |
| Dar Bjorn                      | 1                    | 13                      |
| Fondazzjoni Ħajja Indipendenti | 1                    | 1                       |

Table 2: Service users within NGO residences followed by Sapport NGO Department as at end 2019

Apart from the residences mentioned in Table 2, the NGOs team also assesses and monitors service users of respite services provided by Dar il-Kaptan and HILA, whilst also administering the PSP of 40 service users benefiting from the day programme by the Malta Autism Centre.

The new agreement with HILA Services was signed in 2018 to provide respite to service users from the age of 5 years to 60 years at Casa Apap Bologna in Mosta. In July 2018, Dar Merhba was launched in Fgura in collaboration with Fondazzjoni Wens and in April 2019 the agreement with Fondazzjoni Hajja Indipendenti for an independent living apartment in Naxxar was inaugurated.

During the period under review, the NGO Department also dealt with the following tasks:

- The number of assessments carried out in 2019 for respite at HILA was 210, out of which 181 service users made use of the service.
- 30 assessments and reassessments were carried out for admission into an NGO residence for increase in level.
- In 2019 there was the introduction of tablets to be used by the professionals when carrying out the assessments.
   The aim of the tablets is to fill in the assessment reports electronically and reduce paperwork.

Since its setting up, this Department has experienced growth both in its structure and more so in the number of service users reached. Through the various meetings, discussions and set procedures, it ensures that service users benefiting from this service are also provided with a high level residential service. This is thanks to the excellent service provided by the NGOs and the smooth networking between entities.



## **Community Services**

Community Services are one of the pivotal services offered by the Agency. Community living is encouraged and supported in order to enable and empower the persons with disability to continue living within their family setting where the situation allows it. Sapport Community Services facilitate this through support on a community level in both Malta and Gozo. This personalised service targets a variety of needs as experienced by the individuals with disability and/or their family/caregivers.



When a person with disability requests a Community Service, a Social Worker will carry out the intake assessment and arrange for follow-up services. The team of Social Workers will shortlist the referrals based on the significant and critical needs of the individuals and submits such assessments to the relevant Board according to need.

## Number of staff in 2018: 11 full-timers and 14 part-timers

In 2018 the Community Services team consisted of a Manager, Leader, two Support Executives, one OT and three Administrative Support Workers, which was increased by a Support Executive and an Administrative Support Worker in 2019.

## Number of staff in 2019: 13 full-timers and 14 part-timers

Community programmes can be offered for personal assistance, socialisation, community access, intervention and/or monitoring of a situation. Various group community services have also been initiated. The Community Services entail:

- Personal Assistance, that provides direct personalised support to help persons with disability with activities of daily living within their home, workplace or in the community, where and when needed. This support is also commonly sought out by, but not limited to, primary caregivers who support persons with severe disabilities.
- Socialisation, to provide the opportunity to service users to have the necessary support to be able to get involved in the community and do things that they might have difficulty doing within the community.
- Community access, that provides the support necessary for service users who may find it difficult to access community-based services without the adequate support.

- Interventions, to provide an opportunity for persons
  with disabilities to continue developing their skills or
  receive training to learn new skills within the community
  environment. The main goal is to focus on daily living
  skills, communication and social interaction to prepare
  persons with disabilities for school, work, day centres,
  or general socialisation within the community.
- Monitoring, as a way of following up on a very regular basis on situations that might need ad hoc interventions and might degenerate at a fast rate unless someone is checking up on a regular basis and updating the Social Workers and professionals involved so that they would be able to take the necessary proactive steps to keep the environment stable.

In 2018, a number of groups, one for adults and two for minors, were initiated. During 2019, these developed into one for adults, three for minors which include one for children, one for pre-teens and one for teens, according to the needs observed by the Community Services team. The group structure gives service users the opportunity to become involved in a peer group, practice decision-making and work towards self-advocacy. This is done through enabling and supporting the service users in choosing their own activities and at certain times, even organising the activities themselves.

Agenzija Sapport provides intervention strategies developed to address specific areas of needs experienced by the person with disability. The service can be offered on a long-term or short-term basis depending on the needs of the person following consultation and assessment of the Social Worker.



Community Services also include:

- Direct Payment
- Independent Community Living (ICL) scheme
- Personal Assistance Fund (PAF)

**Direct Payment:** A financial package is offered to persons with disability giving them the opportunity to select their own personal carer to provide a service based on conditions and tasks agreed upon between the end service user and Agenzija Sapport. Direct Payment is to be considered as a subsidy to assist persons with disabilities to manage their selected services.

Services through the Agency's human resources and Direct Payment can be accessed when requests are less than 13 hours per week. Independent Community Living scheme: Similar to Direct Payment, the ICL scheme is a financial package offered to persons with disability to live more independently or provide more assistance in more intense situations. The package can cover services provided by a carer for an amount of hours which exceeds the maximum offered through the Agency's own human resources or Direct Payment (13 hours per week) up to 30 hours per week, whilst also offering the possibility of minors with disability accessing more than 30 hours per week. This service can also be accessed by those already receiving other services depending on the situation and needs.

Personal Assistance Fund: The PAF was founded in 2017. This caters mainly for carers and service users who are allocated a monthly / yearly financial package to subsidise the costs of the carer. The PAF can be utilised by adults who have been assessed as needing more than 30 hours per week of ongoing personal assistance. This scheme is mostly targeted towards service users who need 24/7 care.

All intervention strategies or personal assistance needs are reviewed according to necessity to determine whether the identified outcomes are being achieved.

# 341 - The number of beneficiaries of Community Services in 2018



Initiatives undertaken by Community Services during the 2018 period:

- The function of the Community Services progressed to also monitor for specific service users' situations.
- The creation of three new groups.

Initiatives undertaken by Community Services during the 2019 period:

- The creation of two new groups.
- Review of all the forms and documents utilised by the service.
- Tablets have been acquired by the Agency to be used by Community Support Workers.
- Internet connectivity for the tablets was also given so to facilitate its usage during contact hours.
- · Several outings and group activities were held.
- An increase of two vehicles for the Community Services was granted. A wheelchair accessible vehicle and a light car have been leased until more new vehicles are purchased.
- Support groups and team-building sessions for the Support Workers were also introduced.

# 373 – The number of beneficiaries of Community Services in 2019



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Maria is 10 years old. She has joined the Community Children's Group about a year ago. Maria has no friends outside school and that is something she misses and asks for. Thanks to the support of the Children's Group, Maria made new friends and now looks forward to meet up with them and her Support Workers every Saturday morning. She loves her Support Workers, who are very dedicated and caring; we trust her with them. We are very grateful for this service.

Sandra Callus, parent of service user

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\*Sandro has been using the Community Services within Agenzija Sapport since it was launched. For him, Community Services give him time to go out and enjoy walks in the countryside, by the sea, public parks, etc. The Support Workers also do their best to intervene in teaching Sandro life skills. For us as parents, whilst Sandro is receiving the Community Service, it gives us time for respite and be able to also do the necessary errands. As parents, Community Services give us the possibility to spend some quality time between us as our days and nights are quite tense. This service is indispensable to Sandro and to us as a family.

\*Names have been changed Parents of service user

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\*Brian is a 28-year-old man who lives with his elderly mother \*Rose and younger brother \*Jean. He has been benefiting from Community Services for around five years. Before making use of this service, Rose would do everything needed to the best of her abilities, whether it was cutting his hair or taking care of other daily activities and needs. Going out was very limited. Sapport Community Services have helped by taking Brian out twice a week so that he is able to socialise within the community, exposing him to different environments and different people beyond his family and his home. Brian is also learning skills to enhance his day-to-day activities.

\*Names have been changed

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#### **Sharing Lives**

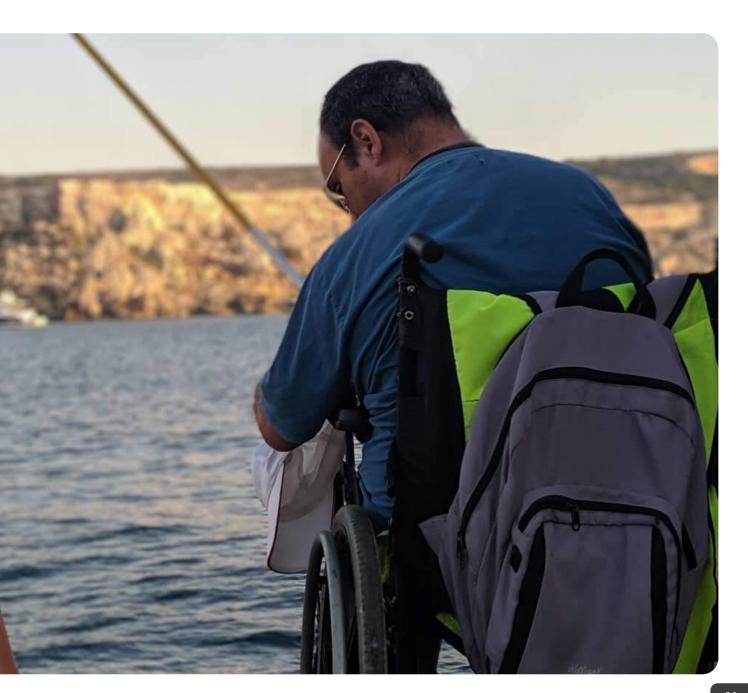
The Sharing Lives service was launched in 2017 and is led by the belief that people with disability have a right to live a full life as any other individual in society. Quality of life is also determined by the positive relationships we have in our lives that help us grow and become full persons and the possibility to access social events and experience new things where we discover our strengths and passions. With this vision, Sharing Lives has continued to work in setting up new creative initiatives, tapping resources in the community and collaborating with other organisations to bring unique activities to the service users.

## 34 – the number of Sharing Lives volunteers in 2018 – 2019

Volunteers came from all walks of life including young students, foreign volunteers, professionals and even pensioners. These volunteers were involved in helping the team to organise unique and creative activities and assist service users to have better access to activities in the community. They also offered their services at the Day Centres or by acting as social contact to a number of persons with disability. During 2018 and 2019, there were 12 service users who received the service as a social contact, mainly with the contribution of foreign volunteers.

## 23 social activities were organised in 2018







The social activities organised provided opportunities to attend local music festivals such as Isle of MTV and Summer Daze and also participate in major culture events related to the Valletta 2018 European City of Culture activities, namely in the professional production Orfeo and Majnun.

The Sharing Lives team also collaborates with entities to be able to develop events for its beneficiaries, such as collaborations with HSBC and Excelsior Hotel, Agenzija Sedqa and Valletta18 Foundation. This was further enhanced in 2019 through joint projects with organisations such YMCA, Youtheme Foundation, Noah's Ark and The Brain Foundation. Together with these entities, the team managed to deliver programmes with sessions taking place every two weeks focusing on music and sports. Another milestone was that Sharing Lives service users were eventually integrated in voluntary work opportunities themselves.

## 41 social activities were organised in 2019



Highlights of activities held in 2019:

- Summer live-in where a group of 15 young people attended a three-day long live-in at Villa Psaigon, Dingli.
- Rave party which the service users called Power Pie, during which they launched a music track produced by themselves during the previous months.
- · Rhythm of Life sessions.
- Youth club sessions.
- Rugby sessions.
- Launch of Sharing Lives service in Gozo in September 2019.

The majority of the applicants for Sharing Lives are under the age of 30 years, with a growing demand for the service steadily increasing in particular from young people.

86 service users in 2018, 112 service users in 2019, benefited from Sharing Lives

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The experience with Sharing Lives gave me more then I ever expected. I improved a new understanding about socialising, learnt a lot about myself and how important it is to open your mind, your thoughts, your heart. In the end, it's all the same, where we all came from. We have dreams, we have love deep inside of us, let us share it. Let's share our lives and get connected. This is what we're waiting for. Thank you Sharing Lives for this unforgettable experience. It will stay in my heart and my memories.

Hannah Schäfer, German Sharing Lives volunteer

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#### **Sign Language Interpreting Service**

Agenzija Sapport offers the service of sign language interpreting between Maltese Sign Language (LSM – Lingwa tas-Sinjali Maltija) and spoken language (Maltese and English) and vice-versa.

Interpreting services are offered to facilitate communication in everyday life and therefore include a variety of sectors, further aligning Malta with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). These sectors include, but are not limited to, education, employment, health, law and court, social and leisure activities. This service is available to hearing-impaired individuals and for individuals and entities who would like to make their services or events more accessible to service users.

Offering a personalised service to all their service users, each Sign Language Interpreter (SLI) takes time to understand the context where interpretation is required to ensure the highest service user satisfaction. For every hour of service offered, at least one hour is required for preparation and countless hours dedicated to learning new subjects to best support persons in furthering their education, communicating and enhancing inclusion within society. The Interpreters also meet with Deaf researchers to assist in developing the language further and individuals to develop new signs to explain specific terminology during their appointments, which may not yet have been added to LSM, which was established in 2016. Ongoing professional development is essential, requiring the interpreters to ensure they are up to date with the local development of LSM and international standards for sign language interpreting.

Over 6,000 contact hours of interpreting service were provided in 2018-2019



During the period under review, 18 students benefited from the Sign Language Interpretation service during lessons and exams throughout both scholastic years.

In total, 279 appointments were attended by the Interpreters in 2018, benefiting adult service users during medical, court or legal appointments, employment, courses, NGO meetings, and other personal appointments such as banking or job interviews. This also included requests for interpreting services during filming by entities wishing their audio-visual productions to be accessible. Despite the absence of two interpreters throughout 2019, the team managed to attend 234 appointments benefiting adult service users whilst still providing interpretation services to students.

Interpreting service was also provided to service users travelling abroad for medical reasons or to participate in opportunities which may otherwise not be accessible, including Erasmus projects and international conferences. Interpreters were twice sponsored by the Agency in 2018 and 2019 to attend and support Deaf service users for a trip to the United Kingdom for medical reasons to ensure communication is enabled between the medical staff and the family.

279 - the number of interpreting appointments attended to by Sapport SLIs in 2018

Highlights in 2018:

- Maltese SLIs took part in European Forum of Sign Language Interpreters (EFSLI) training held at Agenzija Sapport in April 2018. This training was about Interpreting for Deaf Refugees / Migrants. The second part of this training was held in Tirana, Albania, and was also attended by the Interpreting team. This area still requires further understanding to be able to address local cultural development.
- The team interpreted at an Erasmus+ international youth exchange in Germany entitled 'Let Our Bodies Speak' for Deaf and hearing participants from Malta.
- Outings and learning activities were organised for service users throughout the year including cultural visits to the Postal Museum, Mediterraneo Park and a public library for skills enhancement.
- The SLIs continued to enhance their skills by starting a Post Graduate Diploma in SLI in October 2018.

234 - the number of interpreting appointments attended to by Sapport SLIs in 2019

#### Highlights in 2019:

- SLIs provided their service during the One Young World Summit in October of 2019 where a service user was a participant.
- The SLI team interpreted for a service user who won a competition organised by the British High Commission to mark International Women's Day.
- The team interpreted all throughout the Euro-Arab Disability Conference and Summit held in May 2019.
- SLIs interpreted all throughout the Accessible Europe Conference in December 2019.
- The team members attended the conference held in Sweden by the EFSLI.



#### Way forward

In 2020, the SLI team look forward to welcoming back two of the interpreters from long absence and further developing their abilities and skills to better provide for the increasing demand for the service. Tablets will be utilised to make the service more flexible, mobile and accessible for their service users of all ages. By June 2020, the interpreters will be finishing the Post Graduate Diploma in Sign Language Interpreting held by the University of Malta and further professional development will continue to be sought to continue catering to the changing needs of the service users. A proposal for more social support for the Deaf Community is also currently being developed and the SLI team encourages their service users to put forward any suggestions and feedback to continue improving their services.

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The interpreting team is an excellent team who works very hard to ensure a high level of service is provided to the Deaf community. They manage to do this despite the fact that they work long hours and have a substantial workload. It is very positive that the demand for the service is growing as other Deaf people learn how important the service is in all areas of life. My only concern is that the current team cannot keep up with the growth in this demand and that Deaf people may suffer. I am aware that there is a course for interpreters at the University of Malta and I sincerely hope that the interpreting team will grow to maintain the service's high standards.

Loran Ripard Xuereb, President, Deaf People Association

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All interpreters are very willing to provide their services regardless of their current situation. They are always very enthusiastic about interpreting services with a considerable amount of technical words used by the bank during the meeting and training sessions that they have never heard before...May I encourage them to continue to be motivated as they are. I would like to take the opportunity to thank them for always being there to provide interpreting services in all that is asked. Interpreters, please keep up your excellent work, good attitude, determination and positive outlook. Well done and thank you all.

Elise, service user

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I am very proud of the interpreting service provided by Agenzija Sapport. I think they are doing an excellent job which is indispensable for my life as it allows me to gain access to communicate. I know they are an experienced team who work very efficiently. They accompany me in various appointments thus making my life better.

George Vella, President - Deaf Sports Association, Malta Vice-President - Malta Paralympic Committee Member - Malta Sign Language Council

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Thanks to your professional service, I have a better quality of life due to having more accessibility, in personal, educational and work-related settings. Your service also provides me with accessibility when participating in various other activities and opportunities.

Sandra, service user

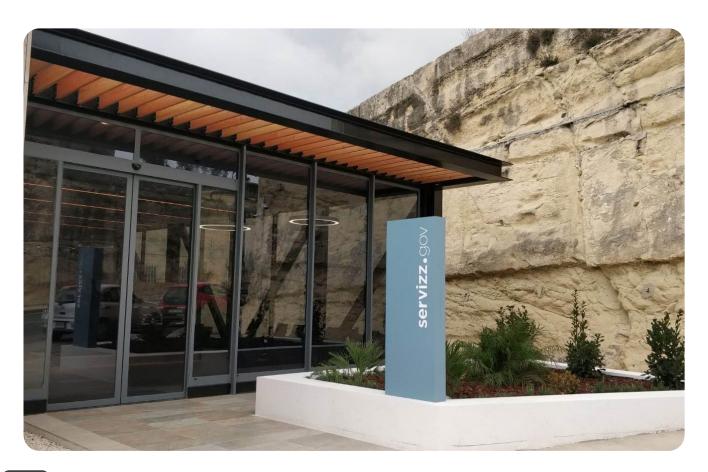
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#### **People Assistance Schemes**

The People Assistance Schemes (PAS) department incorporates three main schemes, which are:

- · Empowerment Scheme
- · Vehicle Road License Exemption Scheme
- Vehicle Registration Tax Exemption Scheme

Furthermore, the PAS works in liaison with the Value Added Tax (VAT) Department with regards to another scheme – the Grant on Purchase of Specialised Equipment, whereby this office assist applicants who want to apply for this scheme but are unable to post their application online. During this period under review, the service was extended also to Centru Servizz Familja in Floriana and the Ghajnsielem Learning Hub, thus adding two points were the public can seek assistance and apply for these schemes.



#### **Empowerment Scheme**

The Empowerment Scheme provides financial support and guidance to persons with disability enabling them to purchase equipment which would allow them to lead a more independent life. The scheme is run by an independent Board which includes a number of professionals who advise and provide information to persons with disability on how they can purchase equipment according to their individual needs.

The Empowerment Scheme also offers subsidies on individualised transport services to persons with disability who would need to go to work, to a post-secondary education institution, or attend sports activities. Such subsidy is given to persons with disability who are not able to make use of the public transport.

|                                       | 2018        | 2019        |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Total number of applicants            | 637         | 766         |
| Total number of approved applications | 616         | 725         |
| Total of funds approved by Board      | €294,228.00 | €225,402.00 |

Table 3: Empowerment Scheme beneficiaries and allocated funds, 2018 - 2019

#### **Vehicle Road License Exemption Scheme**

The Vehicle Road License Exemption Scheme allows people with disability or their parents/carers to be either partially or fully exempted from paying the annual road license, depending on the age of the vehicle.

The PAS team liaises with the Ministry of Finance, which ultimately grants the exemption from payment of the road license.

|  | 2018 | 2019 |
|--|------|------|
| Malta                                  | 376  | 446  |
| Gozo                                   | 49   | 78   |
| Total number of processed applications | 425  | 524  |

Table 4: Vehicle Road License Exemption applications, 2018 – 2019

#### **Vehicle Registration Tax Exemption Scheme**

The aim of this scheme is to provide support and financial assistance to persons with disability and their families to acquire a means of transportation suitable for their needs.

The PAS team liaises with the Ministry of Finance, which ultimately grants the exemption from payment of the registration tax.

|  | 2018 | 2019 |
|--|------|------|
| Malta                                  | 280  | 231  |
| Gozo                                   | 27   | 24   |
| Total number of processed applications | 307  | 255  |

Table 5: Vehicle Registration Tax Exemption applications, 2018 – 2019

#### **Grant Scheme**

The Grant on the Purchase of Special Equipment provides support and financial assistance to persons with disability and their families in relation to the purchase of special equipment, which is included on a defined list.

The PAS team assists applicants to access and apply for this Grant operated by the Ministry of Finance.

|                                 | 2018 | 2019 |
|---------------------------------|------|------|
| Total number of applicants      | 511  | 325  |
| Total number of cases processed | 345  | 305  |

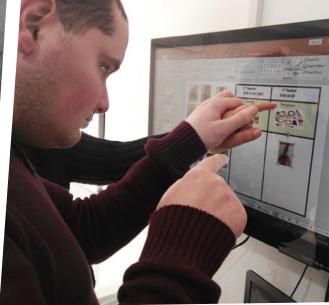
Table 6: Applications for the Grant on the Purchase of Special Equipment processed by the PAS team, 2018 – 2019

In October 2018, applicants could apply directly online and therefore, the PAS team dealt only with applicants who, for some reason or another, could not input their application online themselves.

















#### **Projects**

£105,775 - total funding for maintenance works in 2018 and 2019

720 maintenance interventions in 2018 964 maintenance interventions in 2019

Our mission is to provide quality project management that will enhance the quality of life of our service users and the Agency's personnel.

By the end of the period under review, the Projects & Estate Management team was constituted of six persons, including a Director, a Manager, a Leader, an Administrative Support Worker and two maintenance staff.

#### **Maintenance Interventions**

Throughout the years 2018 and 2019, the Projects & Estate Management team continued its series of preventive and non-preventive interventions, not only by being directly involved through the technical team, but also by outsourcing such works to contractors depending on the work required. Such works provide assurance that the Agency's properties are well maintained and up to standard.

Such interventions range from minor to more significant maintenance works such as full electrical installation, plastering and painting of residences, day centres and offices.

Out of the 964 completed interventions in 2019,

- 495 were carried out in residences
- 291 at day centres
- 178 at offices

#### Progett Socjetà Gusta

The Electoral Manifesto Proposal (EMP) Projett Soċjetà Ġusta refers to the construction and development of residences for persons with disability within the community. Aġenzija Sapport is the operator of a number of residences within this EMP. Thus the Agency is tasked to construct and develop new residences for persons with disability within the community in accordance with highest international and CRPD guidelines. After having successfully launched four new residences by the year 2017, the Agency embarked with developing another three residences through the Projects team. One is based in Żabbar, which was completed and launched in 2018, hosting seven persons with disability. This project costed over €555,000 in capital funds.



Photo: DOI - Clifton Fenech

#### Electoral Manifesto Proposal 07.070 -Progett Socjetà Gusta

Another two residences were in an advanced stage of completion by the end of the period under review, one in Żurrieq and another one in Qrendi. The Żurrieq apartments will, in total, host 11 persons with disability over three floors. Capital costs for this project are of €850,000. Works on this residence are estimated to be completed in 2020.

The Qrendi Residence will host nine persons with disability. Such project will cost €950,000. Works on this residence are estimated to be completed in 2021.





#### Modernisation & Upgrading of Day Centres

EMP 07.078 is another project that has been tasked to Agenzija Sapport to upgrade the Day Centres spread around Malta and Gozo to a more modern and accessible environment that caters for the emerging needs of the service users and accomodate the various active support programmes that are implemented within the Agency's Day Centres. The Projects team, together with the Day Services Management, identified those Centres which require the necessary upgrades. This involved a needs analysis excercise, preparing plans and technical specifications, issuing of Tenders, request for quotations, and thereafter, implementation of refurbishment works to be carried out.

During the years 2018 and 2019, extensive refurbishment works were done at the following Centres:

- Swatar Day Centre
- Mtarfa Day Centre
- Cottonera Day Centre
- · Paola Day Centre

#### Other works

Other works spearheaded by the Projects team included a new set-up for offices on all floors at the Agency's main head office building in Santa Venera, including the reception area. This involved the setting up of a new meeting area for service users and families to meet and discuss matters with the Agency's professionals, re-painting of the whole building and new office furniture to accommodate the teams' compositions and layout.

£217,549 - cost of modernisation of a number of Day Centres, 2018 - 2019

£78,710 - cost of modernisation of Agency's Head Office, 2018 - 2019

#### **Way Forward**

- Continue with the completion of the Żurrieq Residence project.
- Ensure that the Qrendi Residence project is kept on track.
- Commission drawings, plans, Tender drafting and Bills of Quantity for a new residence in Kirkop.
- Commission drawings, plans, Tender drafting and Bills of Quantity to construct an annex office and additional storey at the Sonia Tanti Independent Living Centre (STILC) in Hal Far.
- Replace the current electrical system to a 3-phase at the Independent Living Unit at Hal Far Day Centre and the Gwardjola Day Centre in Senglea.

- Following the publication of Tender and successful adjudication, commence demolition and minor excavation works at the Vajrita Complex in Marsascala.
- Commence phase 1 of civil works of the Mtarfa Day Centre following successful adjudication of the Tender.
- Refurbishment works required in a number of day centres such Hal Far, Paola and others.
- Refurbishment works at the Siggiewi, Cospicua, Żabbar and Pembroke residences.
- Replace the current 13 doors at the Birżebbuga Residence.

#### Kumpless Vajrita











#### **Human Resources**

People Management & Employee Well-being

The remit of the People Management and Employee Well-being Department, also known as Human Resources (HR), includes: recruitment and selection, payroll and data management, training and development, employee relations and people management, and employee well-being.

This Department was set up in April 2016 when the Agency was set up as a separate entity under Legal Notice 104 of 2016. The remit of the department now encompasses a more holistic function including the area of employee well-being and staff engagement. This Department currently has ten employees who work on different aspects related to the field of HR.



#### Staff Complement within Agenzija Sapport

|                        | 2018 | 2019 |
|------------------------|------|------|
| Total male employees   | 127  | 132  |
| Total female employees | 408  | 433  |
| Total                  | 535  | 565  |

Table 7: Sapport staff complement, 2018 – 2019

10 employees were working within the People Management and Employee Well-being Department by end 2019



#### Recruitment

As a public sector entity, the Agency follows the provisions of Directive 7 with regards to recruitment processes. Moreover, guidelines and best practices issued by the People and Standards Division and the Public Service Commission are adopted to ensure fair and transparent processes based on the principle of meritocracy.

| Grade   | Males | Females | Totals |
|---|-------|---------|--------|
| Administrative Support Worker                 | 3     | 2       | 5      |
| Campaign Officer (INK Project)                | 0     | 1       | 1      |
| Director                                      | 0     | 1       | 1      |
| Executive III                                 | 1     | 0       | 1      |
| Job Coach (INK Project)                       | 0     | 2       | 2      |
| Project Administrator (INK & REACH Projects)  | 1     | 1       | 2      |
| Project Leader (REACH Project)                | 1     | 0       | 1      |
| Project Manager (INK Project)                 | 0     | 1       | 1      |
| Psychosocial Well-Being Officer (INK Project) | 1     | 0       | 1      |
| Senior Executive                              | 2     | 1       | 3      |
| Social Mentor (INK Project)                   | 1     | 6       | 7      |
| Social Worker                                 | 1     | 4       | 5      |
| Support Executive                             | 1     | 9       | 10     |
| Support Worker                                | 4     | 42      | 46     |
| Trainer (INK Project)                         | 1     | 4       | 5      |
| Totals  | 17    | 74      | 91     |

Table 8: New recruits (including replacements) between 1st January 2018 – 31st December 2018

| Grade   | Males | Females | Totals |
|---|-------|---------|--------|
| Accounts Executive II                                 | 0     | 1       | 1      |
| Administration, Procurement & ICT Manager             | 1     | 0       | 1      |
| Administrative Support Worker                         | 6     | 3       | 9      |
| Allied Health Practitioner                            | 0     | 2       | 2      |
| Allied Health Professional                            | 0     | 2       | 2      |
| CEO   | 0     | 1       | 1      |
| Cleaner   | 4     | 0       | 4      |
| Coordinator   | 0     | 10      | 10     |
| Counsellor  | 0     | 1       | 1      |
| Director  | 2     | 1       | 3      |
| Finance Executive (Executive IV)                      | 1     | 0       | 1      |
| Job Coach (INK Project)                               | 0     | 2       | 2      |
| Occupational Therapist                                | 0     | 2       | 2      |
| Project Executive (INK)                               | 0     | 1       | 1      |
| Psychosocial Well-Being Officer (INK Project)         | 0     | 1       | 1      |
| Senior Executive I Marketing                          | 0     | 1       | 1      |
| Senior HR Executive I                                 | 0     | 1       | 1      |
| Senior Services Executive I                           | 1     | 1       | 2      |
| Senior Services Executive II                          | 0     | 2       | 2      |
| Senior Social Worker I                                | 0     | 1       | 1      |
| Senior Social Worker II                               | 0     | 1       | 1      |
| Senior Support Worker                                 | 7     | 8       | 15     |
| Service Audit & Quality Assurance Executive III       | 0     | 1       | 1      |
| Services Manager                                      | 0     | 2       | 2      |
| Social Mentor (INK Project)                           | 1     | 0       | 1      |
| Social Worker   | 1     | 5       | 6      |
| Special Projects & Maintenance Manager                | 1     | 0       | 1      |
| Strategic Marketing & International Relations Manager | 0     | 1       | 1      |
| Support Executive                                     | 1     | 8       | 9      |
| Support Worker  | 7     | 38      | 45     |
| Trainer (INK Project)                                 | 0     | 3       | 3      |
| Totals  | 33    | 100     | 133    |

Table 9: New recruits (including replacements) between 1st January 2019 - 31st December 2019

During the period under review, 90 calls were issued, including replacements.

| Internal Calls | 29 |
|----------------|----|
| External Calls | 61 |

Table 10: Calls issued between 1st January 2018 – 31st December 2019

#### Collective Agreement 2017-2021

A new Collective Agreement 2017-2021 was finalised and signed in October 2018 following weeks of negotiations headed by the Industrial Relations Unit within the People and Standards Division within the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM). The HR Department was actively involved in these discussions and provided all the administrative and logistical support, statistics and coordinated the proposals made by the Management of the Agency.

#### **Outreach Meetings and Consultation Processes**

During the period under review, the HR team held a number of visits within the Sapport Day Centres and Residential Services. The Department listened to the employees, shared the operational plans and provided a forum of open dialogue and discussion.

The team was also involved in a number of outreaches within the community, including visits to primary and post-secondary schools and other careers conventions.





#### **Employee Well-Being**

The Agency, through the People Management and Employee Well-being Department, provides psychological assistance to employees going through personal and work-related issues. These schemes include the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) and the Employee Support Programme (ESP). Employees benefiting from such assistance have given positive feedback about the scheme.

A number of team-building sessions are also held on a regular basis to ensure that healthy team dynamics are in place. The HR team also had their own team-building session, which was very fruitful.

In addition to the above, an organising committee was set up to come up with a number of staff well-being initiatives, in order to reach a good number of employees. These activities included yoga, trekking, abseiling, horse riding and football. Health screening sessions by the Department of Primary Health Care were also organised.







#### **Training and Development**

The Department coordinated and organised a number of training initiatives, in order to cater for the employees' training needs, thus investing in human resources development.

During the period under review 30 employees benefited from the Sapport Training Fund, with an additional 11 employees accessing the Continious Professional Development Programme.

| Training  | Number of employees<br>benefiting from training |
|---|---|
| 100 Mirrors Inclusive - Women Empowerment with no Limits                                  | 10  |
| Accessible Europe Conference  | 47  |
| Active Support + Positive Support   | 121   |
| Active Support: Values and Beliefs  | 88  |
| Activity Analysis   | 11  |
| Addiction Training  | 22  |
| Addressing Significant Performance Issues   | 4   |
| Are you GDPR Ready?   | 1   |
| Arts and Mental Well-being  | 1   |
| ASD Apps for iPads  | 5   |
| Autism Training   | 22  |
| Award in Leading People at the Workplace  | 1   |
| Awareness Sessions- Residential Services- Disability Standards                            | 11  |
| Basic Accounting Training   | 1   |
| Basic Fire Awareness  | 13  |
| Basic Principles in relation to Supervision   | 10  |
| Behavioural Health Interpreting: Speciality Training for Building New Competences for SLI | 1   |
| Best Practices  | 12  |
| Biennial Conference on Palliative Care  | 2   |
| Bringing Reflection into Practice   | 4   |

| Cancer Journey: Embracing the Care   | 1   |
|--|-----|
| Clinical Supervision (mentorship)  | 2   |
| Colorectal Cancer Screening - A Life Saving Tool   | 1   |
| Compassionate Care for Health Workers  | 8   |
| Conference: Every Life Matters   | 3   |
| Coping with Difficult People at Work   | 1   |
| CPI  | 27  |
| Customer Care Studies  | 2   |
| Data Protection and Retention Policy   | 21  |
| Data Protection Information Session  | 125 |
| Day Services – Intake and Review Procedure 2018  | 32  |
| Dealing with Autism  | 3   |
| Defibrillator Training   | 31  |
| Dementia Training  | 16  |
| Disability and Mass Displacement Intersections and Interventions for Humanitarian Action | 2   |
| Driver CPC Training  | 1   |
| Easy-to-Read Guidelines  | 12  |
| ECDL: Base Computer Essentials   | 3   |
| Electronic Public Procurement  | 2   |
| Emergency First Aid  | 1   |
| Emerging Disability Issues 2018  | 3   |
| Emotional Literacy & Conflict Resolution Skills for Children                             | 2   |
| Employing Third Country Nationals  | 2   |
| Employment and Dyslexia MDA Biannual Conference  | 1   |
| Employment Law   | 2   |
|  |     |

| Employment Law Updates  | 1   |
|---|-----|
| Epilepsy Training   | 85  |
| EU-Arab Summit  | 5   |
| Facilitating Language Through Play                                | 6   |
| Feeding and Swallowing Difficulties in Adults                     | 26  |
| Fire Warden Course  | 11  |
| First Aid   | 282 |
| FITA Info Session to make ICT more accessible to disabled persons | 25  |
| Food Handling   | 26  |
| Food Handling Training  | 74  |
| Foundation Course in Customer Care                                | 3   |
| GDPR Law Information Session                                      | 54  |
| GDPR Training   | 17  |
| Global HR Trends Summit   | 4   |
| Global PR Summit Malta  | 2   |
| Guardians of Persons with Visual Impairment                       | 1   |
| Handling Training   | 34  |
| Health and Safety at the Workplace                                | 3   |
| Health and Safety Representative                                  | 11  |
| How to Communicate with Users of Different Abilities              | 10  |
| How to Manage EU funds Projects                                   | 7   |
| How to Organise and Minute Meetings                               | 1   |
| HR Policies and Practices   | 26  |
| Implementing Green Public Procurement                             | 1   |
| Inclusive Activation  | 1   |

| Induction Training   | 106 |
|--|-----|
| Induction Training for Senior Support Workers                              | 8   |
| Interactive Whiteboard Training  | 33  |
| Interpreting in Mental Health Settings                                     | 1   |
| Introduction to Demand Control Scheme                                      | 1   |
| Is-Saħħa Mentali Tiegħi fuq il-Post Tax-Xogħol                             | 1   |
| IT Basic Training  | 1   |
| Job Coaching   | 22  |
| Konsultazzjoni Pubblika - Abbozz ta' Liģi dwar il-Care Workers             | 2   |
| Language, Power and Resistance - Mastering Deaf Education                  | 5   |
| Lean Auditing  | 1   |
| L-Esperjenza tal-Persuni<br>b'Diżabiltà Għawdxin — X'tgħid ir-riċerka?     | 3   |
| Life Saving course   | 4   |
| Life Support   | 1   |
| Literacy Programme Hand-Over Training                                      | 5   |
| Linguistics for SLI  | 4   |
| Making the Global Sustainable Development Goals Local Business             | 1   |
| Maltese Sign Language  | 1   |
| Managing Projects with Microsoft Projects                                  | 3   |
| MEA Conference: Today's SMEs Opportunities and Challenges in<br>Employment | 3   |
| MEA Conference: Multiculturalism   | 2   |
| MEA Conference: The Reform of the Industrial Tribunal                      | 2   |
| Media Training   | 31  |
| Medical Cannabis World Forum   | 2   |
| Inclusive Activation   | 1   |

| Mental Health Conference2Mental Health First Aid111Microsoft Excel1Mobile Public Services Take-up1Multi Family Therapy8MUMN Commonwealth Conference1National Child Well-being Conference1National Conference - Disability Week 20182One Day Sustainability Course8Parents Support Groups Conference1 |
|--|
| Microsoft Excel  Mobile Public Services Take-up  Multi Family Therapy  8  MUMN Commonwealth Conference  National Child Well-being Conference  National Conference - Disability Week 2018  One Day Sustainability Course  Parents Support Groups Conference  1  |
| Mobile Public Services Take-up 1  Multi Family Therapy 8  MUMN Commonwealth Conference 1  National Child Well-being Conference 1  National Conference - Disability Week 2018 2  One Day Sustainability Course 8  Parents Support Groups Conference 1   |
| Multi Family Therapy  8  MUMN Commonwealth Conference 1  National Child Well-being Conference 1  National Conference - Disability Week 2018 2  One Day Sustainability Course 8  Parents Support Groups Conference 1  |
| MUMN Commonwealth Conference 1 National Child Well-being Conference 1 National Conference - Disability Week 2018 2 One Day Sustainability Course 8 Parents Support Groups Conference 1   |
| National Child Well-being Conference 1 National Conference - Disability Week 2018 2 One Day Sustainability Course 8 Parents Support Groups Conference 1  |
| National Conference - Disability Week 2018 2  One Day Sustainability Course 8  Parents Support Groups Conference 1   |
| One Day Sustainability Course 8 Parents Support Groups Conference 1  |
| Parents Support Groups Conference 1  |
|  |
|  |
| Payroll and Fringe Benefits 2  |
| PECS 1   |
| Physical Restraint in Maltese Care Homes 4   |
| Planning and Priorities Co-ordination Division: Public Procurement Training  |
| Procurement by Contracting Authorities 1   |
| Programme for Data Protection 1  |
| Prompting Levels and Sensory Strategies 9  |
| Residential Standards Training 86  |
| Retirement and Financial Capability in Malta 1   |
| Richmond Foundation Annual Conference 2  |
| S.A.F.E. Training Programme 4  |
| Seminar on European Perspective on the UNCPRD 1  |
| Sexuality and Disability 10  |
| SIBSHOPS: Empowering siblings 4  |
| SPSS 1   |

| Staff Development Day   | 31    |
|---|-------|
| Substance Abuse Awareness Seminar   | 1     |
| Suicide Prevention and Self Harm Behaviour Conference   | 6     |
| Sustaining Hope in the Face of Disenfranchisement   | 2     |
| Taħriġ fil-Lingwa Maltija   | 1     |
| Taking Stock of Evidence-based Research of Sharing Experiences from Europe                          | 1     |
| Taking up Residence in Malta  | 2     |
| Technology and Employment of Disabled People in Malta   | 2     |
| Telephone Skills  | 2     |
| The Council of the Europe Child Participation Assessment Tool                                       | 1     |
| Train the Trainer — Assistive Technology  | 4     |
| Trauma-Informed Approach  | 2     |
| Visual Aids and Social Stories - Communicating Clearly  | 4     |
| Voicing Strategies for the Interpreter's Toolbox: We can learn from International Sign Interpreting | 1     |
| What is Autism?   | 7     |
| Women with Disability and Domestic Violence   | 3     |
| Workshop on Fiscal Responsibility and Public Procurement  | 1     |
| Writing Skills  | 1     |
| Yes Conference by CRPD  | 1     |
| Zero Project Conference   | 1     |
| Total   | 1,989 |

Table 11: Training attended by Sapport staff between 1st January 2018 – 31st December 2019

A number of employees also participated in training courses, both locally and abroad, under ESF.02.063 – 'Knowledge, Training, Communications and Support Measures in Support of Vulnerable Groups' in which the Agency is a partner.

| Local Training   |     |  |  |
|--|-----|--|--|
| ABA Course   | 9   |  |  |
| Diploma in Leadership and Management                       | 2   |  |  |
| Financial Literacy   | 39  |  |  |
| Intervention Mental Health                                 | 10  |  |  |
| Level 5 Award in Leadership and Management                 | 1   |  |  |
| Mental Health First Aid                                    | 20  |  |  |
| Sex Education for Persons with Disability                  | 15  |  |  |
| Supervision  | 4   |  |  |
|  | 100 |  |  |
| International Training                                     |     |  |  |
| 10th Anniversary Autism Professionals Conference           | 2   |  |  |
| Active Support Coaches Programme                           | 1   |  |  |
| Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training               | 2   |  |  |
| Community Care Live UK                                     | 1   |  |  |
| Division of Occupational Psychology Annual Conference 2019 | 2   |  |  |
| EFSLI  | 2   |  |  |
| EUSE 2019  | 3   |  |  |
| ICASSI   | 1   |  |  |
| Inclusive Education  | 2   |  |  |
| NAPPI RREC Trainer   | 3   |  |  |
| NAPPI: Train the Trainer                                   | 10  |  |  |
| National Assistive Technology and Seat Tech Services       | 5   |  |  |
| Positive Behaviour Support                                 | 3   |  |  |
| Positive Behaviour Support Part 2                          | 3   |  |  |
| Undertaking a Parenting Assessment                         | 2   |  |  |
|  | 42  |  |  |

Table 12: Training attended as part of ESF.02.063 project 1st January 2018 – 31st December 2019

Furthermore, the finalised Collective Agreement (2017-2021) mentions two opportunities regarding to training and development:

- Continuous Professional Development (CPD) applicable to warranted professionals and for Allied Health professionals, who have a licence to practice issued by the relevant medical board and who practice their profession within the Agency
- Training Fund

# Administration and EU Funds

#### **Administration & Procurement**

The Administration and Procurement section within the Administration and EU Funds Department coordinates procurement on many levels including the drafting, publication and evaluation of Tenders and quotations as needed on a day-to-day basis.

Furthermore, an additional nine Tenders were still works-in-progress as at end of period under review, planned for publication in early 2020.

Two of the major procurement initiatives concluded in 2019 were related to the Supply of Passenger Vans and Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles and the procurement of Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs). The former process led to the purchase of 15 vehicles with a total investment of circa €320,000 to enhance the Agency's services; whereas the latter led to the procurement of 23 AEDs to further enhance health and safely within the day centres, residences and offices.

18 Tenders were drafted and processed for publication in 2019, with a total contracted value of circa £2m



### **INK - Person Focused Inclusion Project** EFS.02.054



101 persons with disability benefited from INK training in 2019



The INK Project, an EU co-funded project under the European Social Fund (ESF), 2014 – 2020, is a person-focused inclusion project, which aims at maximising the abilities of persons with disability whilst supporting their chances of inclusion in the labour market and strengthening their social engagement.

One of the key components of the project is the training component — a component that not only focuses on persons with disability who may potentially find employment (with the right training), but also brings in parents, frontline professional staff and employers. Hence, the project brings on board all stakeholders in the field with the intent of creating a holistic journey. Each year the project intends to train 100 persons with a disability, employers and next of kin respectively and 50 frontliners.

The project was officially launched in January 2018, with the first certificates being awarded in February 2019 to the first cohort of persons with disability who completed the mandatory 32 weeks of training.

The project has had many success stories. Whilst the ultimate aim is to bring persons with disability into employment, there is much more than can be gained by project participants. Key among these is a deeper sense of independence. One of the training components relates to the use of public transport. Participants who manage to master this inherently gain a degree of independence as it will allow them to travel more freely and in fact many clients successfully gained this knowledge and independence.

Another interesting element relates to the beneficiaries' interpersonal skills and ability to communicate. With the help of the INK team and the many interactions with other project beneficiaries, several were able to gain new communication skills, and increased sense of confidence and self-worth and even managed to make new friends and expand their circle of interaction.

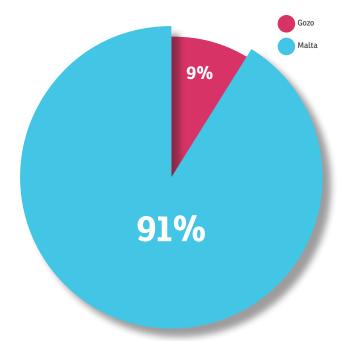


Figure 1: Percentage of persons with a disability who benefited from INK Project in 2019



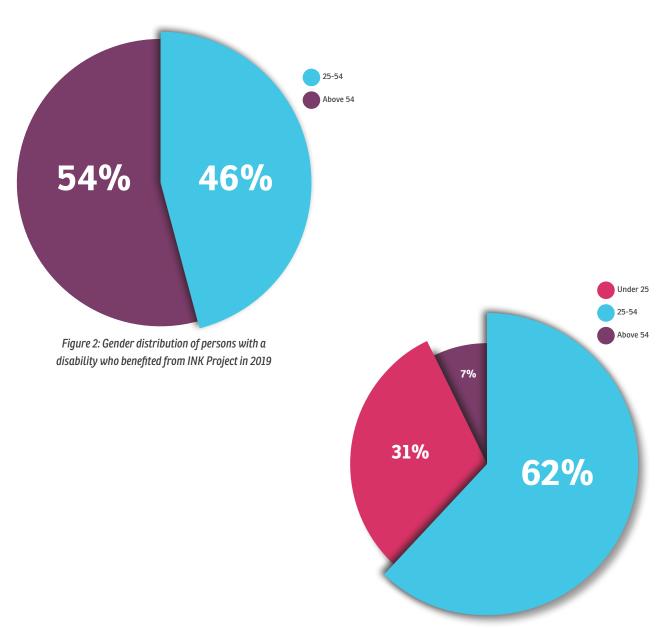


Figure 3: Age groups of persons with a disability who benefited from INK Project in 2019

## REACH – Fair and Inclusive Society that promotes and advocates independent living and employment ERDF Project 08.039

The REACH Project is a project co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), 2014 – 2020, and aims at creating a fair and inclusive society that promotes and advocates independent living and employment.

The project incorporates semi-independent living arrangements and designed with a special social benefit in mind, intended for improved quality of life. The project will be entirely accessible to all users. More specifically, the project will support the integration of vulnerable persons within the community through public infrastructure by providing them residential and employment opportunities. Vulnerable persons will be brought closer to the labour market through support and training offered within the community centre and workshops.

This will further promote social inclusion and reduces the risk of their exposure to poverty. Apart from equipping persons with disability with independent living and employability skills, the project will provide improved social services including a respite centre, therapeutic treatments, physiotherapy area, gym, pool and other amenities.

With the project officially launched in May 2019, excavation works continued to pave the way for the infrastructure being planned in the area. Works on the design and build were initiated in 2019. The project is envisaged to be finalised by 2023.



REACH
will come at
an investment
cost of circa
€32m

# Research, Service Audit & Quality Assurance

A Research Unit was set up in 2017, under the responsibility of the Operations Director. This was done to address the need felt by the Agency to procure further data concerning matters it was dealing with, as a way to be able to better shape the services it then developed.

#### **Quality Assurance and Service Audit**

In 2018 a further element was introduced, in the form of Quality Assurance which was then followed up by Service Audit in 2019. Thus, a new perspective to achieve objectivity and parity was required. To achieve this, it was decided to separate the Research Unit from the remit of the Operations Director, and to instead fuse it into a newly formed Department, responsible for Research, Service Audit & Quality Assurance.

The Research, Service Audit & Quality Assurance Department is the key entity tasked with empowering towards change and ensuring quality within Agenzija Sapport. In line with the Agency's mission and vision, and international standards of disability rights, the ultimate goal is to provide recommendations to encourage high quality services and experiences for persons with disabilities, their support networks and all employees.

This latest unit set up within Agenzija Sapport is a team of professionals with diverse backgrounds, who value teamwork and multi-stakeholder collaboration. Their expertise is used to address the reality of the Agency's services increasing and cope with the demand to ensure their continuous quality. Furthermore, the team will be seeking out CPD to knowledgeably perform the functions of the Department.

The Department's mission involves creating a complete picture of the situation across the entirety of Agenzija Sapport by centralising knowledge and acting on the identified needs and areas for improvement. Ultimately, the Department's analyses and recommendations, together with the production of research and policy-development, are put forward for the CEO's consideration.

As one of its initial plans of action, in 2019 the Department initiated an internal situational analysis, which targets all stakeholders involved with the Agency. The team started a series of working groups with staff and service users from the three core services of Agenzija Sapport: Residential, Day and Community Services. The Department has also conceptualised a Sapport Helpline, which will encourage ownership and increase accountability. Such a project would provide all stakeholders

with the opportunity for advocacy and participation, whilst fostering positive working relationships.

Furthermore, the Department also offers its full cooperation with regard to several assessments conducted by the SCSA, supporting other Agency personnel within the services and ensuring that any feedback provided is followed up, whilst good practice is acknowledged and reported to Management.

#### Way forward

The Research, Service Audit & Quality Assurance Department has also proposed a yearly forum and conference inviting service users and their relatives for an open dialogue with Agenzija Sapport. This represents the vision of the Department: working hand-in-hand with service users, their support networks, employees and stakeholders for an Agency which holistically meets the best interests of all.

The team's ongoing commitment is to ensure that the services provided and developed by Agenzija Sapport respect the service user's dignity and quality of life. This, in turn, is a further commitment to assure all persons with disability, relatives, support network and stakeholders that they are at the core of its operation and evolution.

Our mission is to oversee the implementation of best practices, with national and international recognition, and safeguarding disability rights



# Strategic Marketing & International Relations

The Strategic Marketing & International Relations Department experienced yet another development during the period under review, with the latter function being introduced for the first time within the Agency's organisational structure in 2019 and as part of the remit of this department.

#### **Marketing and Communications**

The function of the Marketing Department was even strengthened during these two years by focusing on increasing exposure of the Agency and its services externally through more media interventions, dissemination of information and participation in public events and outreaches.

Of particular importance are the Stakeholders' Networking Forum and the Accessible Europe: ICT for All conference held in 2018 and 2019 respectively. Both events were coordinated by the Marketing Department. The 2018 Forum was the first for the Agency since its autonomy, bringing together representatives of all its stakeholders: service users, family members, professionals, academia, NGOs, and also representatives from the education, employment and health sectors. A moderated discussion provided feedback and a number of recommendations to Sapport Management on which it could base its forthcoming plans and service development.



The international conference Accessible Europe 2019 was hosted by Sapport within the Parliamentary Secretariat for Active Ageing and Persons with Disability (PSAAD) and other entities including the ODI, the CRPD, the Malta Communications Authority (MCA) and the Foundation for Information Technology Accessibility (FITA). This saw around 200 delegates attend a three-day conference coordinated by the International Telecommunications Unit within the United Nations and the European Commission and discuss various topics about accessible technology, challenges and emerging opportunities experienced by persons with disability across Europe in this specialised sector.

# Accessible Europe ICT 4 ALL-2019

Further projects coordinated by the Marketing team in collaboration with the ODI included the Euro-Arab Summit held in Malta in April 2019 and a meeting with Maltese candidates of the European Parliament elections about autism in May 2019.

The maintenance of the Sapport brand is an ongoing process that was continued during these two years, with various training sessions held for Sapport staff during the Induction training coordinated by the HR Department; a training session to PSAAD customer care staff about Sapport services; continuous updating of the Agency's website and online presence through social media, leading also to create various profiles. At the end of the period under review, the Marketing team was administering two official Facebook pages, LinkedIn, Instagram and Twitter accounts, and a YouTube channel, thus reaching the public through as many media as possible. During 2018, the team also worked on making all Sapport forms available online through the government e-form system in collaboration with the Information Management Unit within the MFCS.



Another important development was training of Sapport professionals to develop easy-to-read documents for the benefit of the service users. The Marketing team developed training sessions based on the easy-to-read guidelines for further dissemination of this practice. It is envisaged that as way forward to continue promoting self-advocacy with clients and accessibility of information, in 2020 more training sessions will be delivered and a handbook will be developed and disseminated by the Marketing team about how other teams can adopt an easy-to-read system in documents and across programmes for service users. Further development on training initiatives included the collaboration with HR Department to coordinate a training session on manning of exhibition stands, in view of the various opportunities for Sapport staff to represent the Agency during fairs, exhibitions, conventions and outreaches. This training will be delivered in 2020.

Various merchandise items and a publication aimed to promote careers within Agenzija Sapport were also produced to support the HR Department in attracting more applicants to the Agency's vacancies. This was reinforced by the coordination of various outreaches during careers fairs at secondary and post-secondary schools and colleges. The Sapport merchandise portfolio was enhanced by the production of the Agency's first business card in Braille, to increase accessibility. Braille was also used for the conference agenda during the Accessible Europe 2019, in collaboration with FITA.

32 radio interventions coordinated between January 2018 and December 2019

Other yearly campaigns and initiatives spearheaded by the Marketing team include promotion of parents' and siblings' workshops organised by the Agency's Social Work team, and the Sharing Lives service, targeting mainly young people and promoting voluntary work within this service. Another milestone achieved was the coordination of a conference in Gozo aimed for parents, family members and professionals working with children with disability in November 2018. In December 2018, the Marketing team also set up an extensive Christmas market in Valletta which got together all Day Centres to promote items handcrafted by service users, followed by two exhibitions in 2019 at the Ministry for Economy, Investment and Small Business (MEIB) to display handcrafted items and promote abilities of service users.



79 TV programmes were coordinated between January 2018 and December 2019

Other launches coordinated by the Marketing team included the INK Project launch in January 2018; the launch of a residence for persons with disability in Żabbar in March 2018; the launch of HILA respite service in December 2018; the certification award ceremony for the first group of INK beneficiaries in February 2019; the launch of the REACH project in May 2019; the signing of an agreement with the University of Malta in March 2019 and another agreement with Malta Employers' Association (MEA) in October 2019 to promote the Agency and its initiatives with MEA members.

In 2018, the team was also instrumental in coordinating the first staff well-being campaign in October 2018 – a month of activities aimed towards engaging Sapport employees in well-being initiatives. This became a yearly event coordinated in collaboration with the HR Department.

In October 2018, another event was held for Sapport staff based at Head Office and Professional Development Centre aimed to be a teambuilding opportunity and get together the back-office employees of the Agency.

#### International Relations

This new role within the Agency was set up in May 2019. The Agency had already been represented on various international for a number of years however this sector could be developed futher and more Sapport employees benefit

from sharing of best practices, training opportunities and collaboration with international service providers. Thus during 2019, more emphasis was done on building more associations and engage the Agency in memberships including the European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD) and European Social Network (ESN). Further research to engage with the European Centre of Employers and Enterprises providing Public Services (CEEP) and the European Disability Forum (EDF) were also done. Various opportunities for workshops and conferences were also explored for the benefit of various staff members who had the opportunity to share knowledge and present Sapport practices and studies to the Agency's international counterparts.

The way forward for the Strategic Marketing & International Relations Department is definitely to continue enhancing market visibility, market placement, strengthening communication channels, not only locally but also on an international level where the Agency has already a reputable name in the sector of service provision.

Each year, the initiatives embarked on are planned to be stategic and in line with the Agency's mission, vision and way forward, and ultimately to ensure its levels of trust and reputation in ensuring high quality of services given in the best interest of its service users.



#### Financial Report

The Finance Department is entrusted with the responsibility of the overall financial governance of the Agency. It is responsible for the processing of all accounting transactions, financial analysis and reporting, budgetary allocation and control, and treasury management. All functions are conducted in accordance with statutory obligations, the Fiscal Responsibility Act and other relevant legislation. The Finance Department members strive to provide adequate and timely financial reporting; and to act as a supporting arm to the other departments within the Agency.

During the years under review the Agency's services increased substantially due to additional service users applying for more services, widening of support schemes, expansion of the Agency's estate and refurbishment works on the Agency's premises. This generated an increased workload on the Finance Department as one of the supporting arms.

The increase in services has undoubtedly brought about an increase in expenditure over the previous years; however, the Agency strived to provide continued service provision to vulnerable persons and society in general at the best value for money for the Government.

It is relevant to note that during the year 2018, a new Collective Agreement was concluded with the employees' union, incorporating ameliorated working conditions for our workforce and bringing about a substantial increase in payroll cost.

#### **Government Grants**

In order to maintain a sustainable service, the Agency required additional Government funding, which increased over the previous years. In 2017,  $\[ \in \]$  13.2 million were received in government grants, programmes and initiatives and capital grants, whilst this increased by 21% in 2018 to  $\[ \in \]$  16.02 million and by 31% in 2019 to  $\[ \in \]$  20.9 million.

|                       | 2017        | 2018        | 2019        |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Government Subvention | €12,038,253 | €13,742,635 | €15,500,000 |
| Other Income & Grants | €1,246,160  | €2,279,037  | €5,436,457  |
| Total                 | €13,284,413 | €16,021,672 | €20,936,457 |

Figures for 2019 are pre external audit

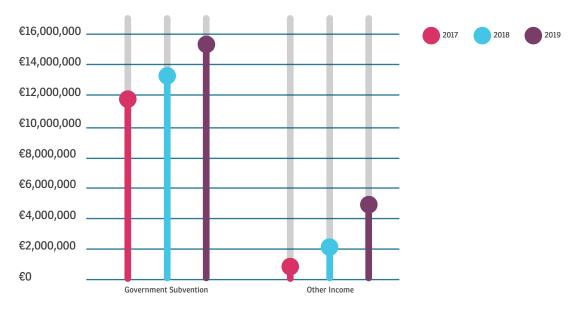


Figure 4: Total Agency income comparisons, 2017 - 2019

#### **Recurrent Expenditure**

The operational and administrative expenses of the Agency are subdivided into two main cost centres, being Day Centres and Sapport, the latter incorporating the expenses incurred in the Agency's Residences, Community Services, Social Work, Administration and Management, NGOs and other Schemes.

Arising from an expansion and increase in service provision, during 2018, costs continued to increase over year 2017. This increase was mainly due to an increase in headcount, the new collective agreement which ameliorated basic salaries, allowances and other conditions overall. Other notable increases were related to outsourcing of services, transportation and cleaning expenses.

In 2019, a significant increase in the operational expense was registered. This due to new contracts, namely that of transport provision for clients. The foremost expense at the Agency continued to be that of payroll, growing further through the employment of several professionals and other care workers in the field. The specialised services continued to increase, with assistance provided to clients in the community through the provision of care, goods and assistive technology.

|                         | 2018        | 2019        |
|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Payroll                 | €11,342,827 | €12,377,912 |
| Direct Expenditure      | €2,814,349  | €6,448,649  |
| Operational Expenditure | €1,970,677  | €2,245,451  |
| Total                   | €16,127,853 | €21,072,012 |

Figures for 2019 are pre external audit

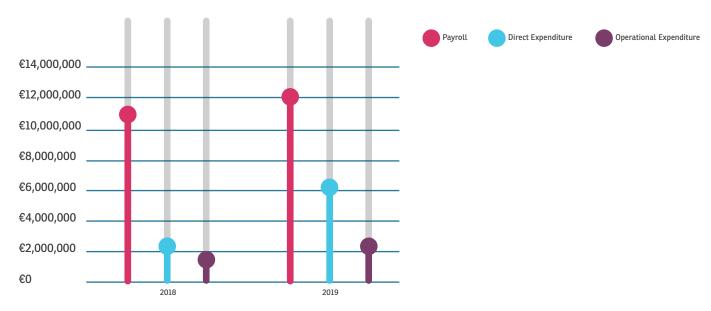


Figure 5: Recurrent expenditure and payroll cost per Unit, 2018 – 2019

The Finance Department ensures that all expenditure is disbursed in line with Public Procurement Regulations and Employment and Industrial Relations Act (EIRA) regulations. Expenses are authorised in line with policies, established procedures and internal controls. All Government grants received by Agenzija Sapport were utilised in the most efficient way possible in order to provide the best value for money service to vulnerable clients.

During the years 2018 and 2019, the Agency continued implementing two EU-funded projects, namely INK with a budget of €3.3 million, and the REACH project with an infrastructural total investment estimated at €32 million.

#### Capital Expenditure

The Agency continued to invest in its asset base embarking on several capital projects, primary of which are the building of the Żurrieq and Qrendi new residences. Moreover, refurbishment was carried out at the Agency's Head Office in Santa Venera as well as the acquisition of more office space due to expansion required. A number of smaller refurbishment projects were also carried out in our day centres and residences.

During 2019, the Agency acquired AEDs for its premises in line with Health and Safety requirements. To further enhance the service user's requirements the Agency entered into a substantial investment by acquiring fifteen vehicles for the Agency's residences and day centres.



2018-2019