Message by the Permanent Secretary
Mr Frans Borg

AĊĊESS Centres have proven their utility from the very start. When in 2002 the first AĊĊESS Centre was opened in Birgu, the idea was to gather under one roof a number of services provided by Government, its agencies and entities, so as to facilitate access to the public and to ensure the provision of a better service. Cottonera residents, therefore, no longer needed to go to Ħal Far to register for work. Neither did they have to go to Santa Venera to get a service from Appoġġ.

Over time, the services provided from AĊĊESS increased, with the opening of a childcare centre, a day care centre for persons with disability, and offices for the Department of Social Security and the Housing Authority, amongst others. Throughout the years, two AĊĊESS Centres were opened – one in Valletta and another in Qawra – to cater for the requirements of the surrounding community. A number of social workers and community workers started working from AĊĊESS Centres providing their services to the community. The entire concept of AĊĊESS Centres follows the requirements of the respective communities which these Centres operate in. A cursory look at the positive effect which the work of AĊĊESS Centres is having shows that in the past months from the existing three Centres, the Department of Social Security and the Employment and Training Corporation carried out 37,000 and 10,000 interventions respectively, while the Housing Authority reached 112 clients. Additionally, 100 children make use of the child care facilities offered by Smart Kids and 17 disabled persons make use from the services provided by Sapport.

All this shows us that we are on the right track and fills us with courage and determination to continue working so as to widen further the range of services provided from AĊĊESS Centres. Now that we shall shortly be reaching the ten year mark from the first time in which the one-stop shop concept was applied to services provided in the social policy area, we are working to open the fourth AĊĊESS Centre shortly in Msida. In the meantime the Board of Directors has prepared a two-year plan and is carrying out a thorough evaluation exercise of the services currently offered by AĊĊESS Centres so as to ensure their continuous amelioration and fine-tuning.

This will allow us to ensure that you are being provided with the best service!
Message by the Hon Minister Chris Said
Minister for Justice, Dialogue and the Family

In today’s world, we are gaining an ever-greater understanding of how important it is to invest in the continuous development of our workers’ skills and in our students. Lifelong training and education leave lasting results. Studies show how workers who continue to follow training have more possibilities to find a better job and to ameliorate their pay-package.

Government’s work in the areas of employment and education is producing wished-for results. In four years 20,000 new jobs were created. In the first three months of 2012 new work continued to be created in our country, so much so, that jobs have increased by 3,247 over the past year. In the area of education a new school was constructed each year for the past six years. Investment in MCAST continued, and year after year we are seeing an increase in the number of students who decide to further their education – even at the University of Malta.

While work and education remain major priorities, since they enable our workers to increase their skills and abilities to work and therefore avoid relying on social benefits, Government also remains committed to help the most vulnerable Maltese and Gozitan families.

Government dedicates €2.5 million each day to the social sector. In 2012 Government’s expenditure on social benefits amounted to €749 million. This signifies a substantial increase of €124 million on 2008. These social spending statistics – with amounts that increase each year - is testimony to the importance which Government attaches to the social sector.

This context enables us to better understand Government’s commitment to continue enlarging accessibility for social welfare services by strengthening ACCESS Centres, not only in terms of infrastructure but also through the provision of additional financial and human resources. Financial resources and the types of services provided are greatly important. Nonetheless, it is also necessary for these services to be rendered by dedicated professionals. The plan in this regard is to extend social welfare and community services through the availability of more professionals such as social workers and community workers, and to increase therapeutic services through the provision of psychologists and therapists for families in need.
Another way to provide better services in our communities is by encouraging more Local Councils, associations and NGOs to establish a special relationship with AČCESS Centres and the professionals offering services therein. A certain level of collaboration and cooperation already exists in some AČCESS Centres, even in the organisation of community activities. In the coming years we have to find ways of strengthening this synergy for the benefit of our communities.
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Qawra ACCESS Centre Activity Report

General Management

Projects and Initiatives

Appogg Qawra Community Service
FES Child Day Care and Family Support Centre
DSS District Office
ETC Job Centre
## Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CCS</td>
<td>Cottonera Community Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DES</td>
<td>Directorate for Educational Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSS</td>
<td>Department for Social Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETC</td>
<td>Employment and Training Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVS</td>
<td>European Voluntary Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FES</td>
<td>Foundation for Educational Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KMS</td>
<td>Kunsill Malti ghall-iSport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCA</td>
<td>Malta Communications Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEEF</td>
<td>Ministry for Education, Employment and the Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAP</td>
<td>Personal Action Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPB</td>
<td>St Paul’s Bay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VAC</td>
<td>Valletta Access Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YEP</td>
<td>Youth Employment Programme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

The first ACCESS centre was set up in November of 2002 in Cottonera and the project has now expanded to incorporate three centres. The philosophy of ACCESS, from its inception, has always been to move away from mere service consumption to one of individual and community empowerment. The principles on which it is based include supporting the family as the best environment for personal growth; mobilising resources within the community; building informal and formal support networks; developing the individual potential; participation of residents in order to foster a sense of ownership and creating self-reliance rather than dependency. The initial report drew up a number of aims to be addressed by the project. These were:

- to provide a service platform for the fulfilment of the social and personal needs of families as units and of individual family members themselves;
- to strengthen the fabric of society by a strengthening of families/individuals in this region;
- to assist and facilitate the operations of existing local groups and of new ones which may arise to fulfil some, as yet unmet, social need or common interest;
- to serve as the focal point for the delivery of a wide range of services for families and individuals in Cottonera;
- to assist in the social regeneration of the Cottonera region, in such a way as to complement the physical and architectural regeneration being undertaken or which shall be undertaken in the near future.

In 2006 these aims were further developed with the formulation of the mission and vision statements for ACCESS drawn up by the management team of the Cottonera complex.

The mission statement set ACCESS ‘to be a catalyst for sustainable community development and long-term social change through a genuinely collaborative, participatory, holistic and empowering approach which improves the quality of life for all residents in the respective community.’

The vision for the project encompassed the aims of enabling and facilitating the development and well-being communities by:

- listening to people and assessing their needs and issues;
- being supportive, inclusive and valuing all service users, volunteers and staff regardless of age, race, religious belief, gender, ability or sexual orientation;
- working in partnership with others and seeking to build alliances of benefit to the community;
- delivering quality in all that we do to achieve the best within our resources;
striving to remove barriers to participation through ensuring accessibility to services and working with community groups to build their skills, knowledge and capacity so they can act to address their community needs and issues;

- planning and evaluating practice and enabling staff to work effectively with the community;

- addressing the particular needs of children, listening to them and enabling them to have a voice;

- promoting a culture of service user involvement in the planning, implementation and evaluation of projects and services.

Acess Set-up

Acess falls under the Ministry for Justice, Dialogue and the Family as do the Department for Social Security, Sapport Day Centre for Persons with Disability and the Housing Authority. The Employment and Training Corporation, Appogg Community Services and FES Smartkids Childcare Services on the other hand fall under the Ministry for Education and Employment. A Board of Directors, chaired by Mr Raphael Scerri, oversees the overall strategy of the complex and its various services and projects. Senior officials from the entities involved in the three Acess centres are present on this board as well as a representative from the Ministries concerned. The Acess managers also attend Board meetings which are held regularly, rotating among the three centres. Management Teams for each Centre comprising the Unit Leaders of the entities meet on a regular basis to discuss operations, joint projects, emerging needs, new developments in the community, staff training issues and to update one another on any new initiatives which might be undertaken by each service.

The partners in the Access project are Access, Foundation for Educational Services Childcare, the Employment and Training Corporation, the Department for Social Security, SAPPORT Day Centres for Adults with a Disability, Appogg Community Services and the Housing Authority.

There are currently three ACCESS Centres. These are based in Birgu, Qawra and Valletta. The services offered by these Centres are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Birgu</th>
<th>Qawra</th>
<th>Valletta</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APPOGG Community Services</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FES Smartkids Family and Childcare Centre</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment and Training Corporation Job Centre</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department for Social Security Regional Office</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A brief description of each of the ACCESS partners is provided below. The activity reports for each of the three ACCESS Centres provides further information on specific initiatives and programmes provided by each partner in the various localities.

**Smartkids: Foundation for Educational Services**

Responsibility for Childcare provision, including Smartkids centres was transferred from Appogg to the FES in 2009. The centres are administered by a coordinator and a team of childcare assistants. The FES is committed to provide quality childcare services in order to support and strengthen the family unit, guided by the underlying principle that the family is the best environment for personal growth.

Smartkids Day Care and Family Support Centres incorporate the services of daycare and family support, catering for the whole family. The service offers children the possibility to develop in a healthy way whilst helping parents strike a balance between their careers and family life.

During 2011, due to increased demand, the Centres operational hours were extended, offering a service from Monday to Friday, between 7.30am to 4.00pm. Although it is offered to all children and families, intakes are processed according to an established set of criteria.

The main aim of the Centres is to offer a personalized service of quality care for all children attending. Activities presented to the children focus on the various areas of child development and are varied so as to stimulate learning. Apart from Childcare, the centre also offers family workshops in which parents/guardians are given the opportunity to discuss and learn about good practices in child rearing.

**Appoġġ Community Services**

The aim of the Appoġġ Community Services is to work closely with the local communities in which they are based in order to facilitate and encourage a process of change through local participation. The Unit strives to enhance the local potential, to offer optimal individual and family social work services that are aimed especially at the most vulnerable in the community, whilst taking into consideration the context, culture and everyday life of the residents. The service offers social work support on, amongst others:

- Childcare/parenting issues and children at risk.
- Children and adolescents with emotional and behavioural problems;
Families or individuals living in a chaotic and unstable environment due to poor coping skills, health problems or financial difficulties;

Intra familial relationships

The social workers work closely with other entities offering support services within the community. Community workers also work with the community directly creating tailor made projects according to the specific community needs.

**Employment and Training Corporation Job Centre**

The Employment and Training Corporation, Malta’s Public Employment Service, was set up in 1990, to provide and maintain an employment service; to find suitable employment for registrants and to assist employers to find suitable employees and to provide training services to clients seeking new jobs and to clients already on the job but wanting to improve their knowledge and skills. Job Centre Services include:

- Promotion of job vacancies - daily vacancies updates on display;
- Access to touch screen machine for easier job searching;
- Providing information about schemes, training, services and other incentives;
- Particular assistance to the unemployed, especially those with literacy problems;
- Data entry registration of Part 3A and Part 3B; Renewal Part 3 registration;
- Filling of engagement and termination forms;
- Work with service users on the drawing up of a Personal Action Plan (PAP);
- Paperwork and correspondence related to social cases, registration, sickness, court cases and other matters that require immediate action;
- Issuing particular and confidential information, such as employment and registration history or employee lists to service users on request.

**Department for Social Security**

The Department for Social Security (DSS) administers a wide range of social security benefits including Maternity, Child Allowance, Sickness and Unemployment, Social Assistance and a number of benefits for the disabled. The Department also carries out financial investigations for benefits in kind which includes free medical aid (Karta Roża) and the EU Food Scheme as well as other assistance such as Electricity Rebates, University Examination (Matsec) and Treatment abroad. The Department is also responsible for a number of pension schemes including invalidity, retirement and widows as well as pensions under the Reciprocal Agreements with Canada, Australia and New Zealand and social security schemes coordinated by EU Regulations 883/2004 and 987/2009. An in-service training programme on various social security benefits and customer service is delivered regularly throughout the year to help the staff become confident and successful in their jobs.

**SAPPORT Day Centres For Persons with Disabilities**
Service users with varying intellectual disabilities attend this Centre on a daily basis. The activities offered at the Centre are designed to encourage and lead service users to manage their lives better and according to their personal wishes and preferences. Individual plans therefore play an important role in meeting the needs, abilities and wishes of each service user. Social, educational and recreational activities are held regularly throughout each week. SAPPORT is committed:

- To provide training in independent living and thus enhance service users’ self-esteem;
- To encourage social inclusion by participating in various educational, social and spiritual activities within the community;
- To establish networks with other entities such that service users can benefit from the support offered by other services;
- To provide day care services that also serve as respite for the service users’ main Carers. Such support makes it more possible to the ageing carers to lengthen their support towards the service user and thus keep the person in the community.

**Housing Authority**

The Housing Authority is delivering its services through the Housing Community Worker affiliated with and supervised by the Appoġġ Community Service. The community worker deals with matters related to Care and Repair, Housing Schemes and alternative accommodation and delivers the following services:

- Carrying out home visits of new clients;
- Conducting follow up of contacts through home visits, office visits or telephone calls;
- Writing housing reports focusing on the social aspects of the respective family;
- Attending the public during respective opening times;
- Preparing and organising information meetings for the residents;
- Carrying out outreach work to encourage more residents to use the services.

This service is presently provided in Cottonera only.
Other Community Actors

The ACCESS Centres work with a number of local, regional and national organisations. These include among others, Local Councils, Parishes, Schools and Colleges, NGO’s, the Malta Communications Authority, the DES Lifelong Learning Centre and the Malta Sports Council. Collaboration with these entities allows the centres to provide a richer and more varied programme of events and ensure a community based approach to service provision.
Access Cottonera Activity Report 2011

Customer Care Facilities

In order to promote a holistic approach, the Cottonera AÇŒESS centre provides a joint Customer Care service, based in the reception area. This is aimed at providing information regarding the services delivered at the centre thus enhancing accessibility. Service users seeking assistance are referred to the right entity within the centre or to other services provide at the national level. The public may also gain access to information about events, activities and further services available through the notice board. In 2011, the Customer Care officer provided assistance to a total of 9,832 service users, out of which, 1,602 had established contact by telephone. Though this figure may contain repeat service users, it is to be noted that regular service users do not generally stop at the customer care desk but head directly to the respective department.

The customer care desk is also providing job mentoring and coaching. This is done in collaboration with Agenzija SAPPORT through the “Me2” programme funded through the European Social Fund. This programme targets the integration of persons with disability in the labour market.

Apart from customer care duties, the customer care officer also engages in administrative tasks related to the day-to-day running of the centre.

Computer Lab, Internet Access, Hall facilities

In an effort to promote digital literacy and to assure that each resident has internet access, the Cottonera AÇŒESS centre is equipped with a computer lab. This serves as a centre for ICT training delivery utilised by various collaborating entities. In 2011, AÇŒESS worked on reaching an agreement with the Malta Communications Authority (MCA) to upgrade the centre by installing better technology and software. AÇŒESS also worked closely with MCA and ETC in organising a schedule of ICT Courses.

In addition to the Computer lab, AÇŒESS Cottonera offers Internet access free of charge. During 2011, 604 service users made use of this service. In most cases, service users were also provided with assistance. The most common queries regarded the process of creating e-mail accounts, searching for a particular topic and gaining access to governmental services. A number of young students were also assisted in conducting school projects.

The computer lab, also serves the function of a hall and hosts meetings conducted by social entieties in the area. In 2011, an agreement with the security personnel, allowed AÇŒESS Cottonera to offer the use of the hall after operating hours for 3 days per week (Monday to Wednesday).

The hall is also used for training. In 2011, AÇŒESS Cottonera reached an agreement with ETC regarding the delivery of Maltese and English Literacy courses for adults. This initiative was taken in order to promote literacy and to provide the basic literacy skills, which are often essential to gaining employment.
Activities

A new manager was appointed to AĊĊESS Cottonera in April 2011. Various initiatives were undertaken to build relationships with NGOs and other entities in Cottonera and Kalkara. The synergy between services delivered at AĊĊESS Cottonera and further NGOs in Cottonera and Kalkara could be noted during an Open Day held on the occasion of Children's Day. This activity was aimed at developing networking amongst the participating entities as well as promoting public awareness regarding the multiple entities in the Cottonera community, their work and the services available.

In 2011, AĊĊESS Cottonera implemented various maintenance works in order to assure better security both to the workers and the service users. Plans for further works, especially focusing on refurbishment have been drawn up. Such works are expected to take place in 2012.

Appoġġ Cottonera Community Service

The staff

CCS staff consists of a Service Area Leader, Coordinator, 2 full time social workers, 1 part time social worker, 1 full time community worker and 1 full time worker whose hours are equally divided between Housing and community work.

Training attended by staff

Members within CCS attended a number of training sessions during 2011. The community workers attended a First Aid course whilst social workers attended training on:

- Adolescents Offending Behaviour;
- Parenting; Interviewing
- Children with Disabilities;
- Dual Diagnosis;
- Interviewing skills;
- Commonwealth training on Child Protection;
- Reflective Practice and
- Sexual Health.

Media Awareness

Community workers within CCS carried out a number of talks on radio and television programmes in order to create awareness about the different projects being organised within the community.
Professional Supervision

All social workers and community workers within CCS received supervision once every three weeks. A group supervision was also held once a month whilst case consultations and discussions took place on a daily basis.

Restructuring of rooms

During 2011 the need for a second counselling room was raised especially since apart from CCS workers, the counselling room is also used by a trainee counsellor and a trainee psychologist as well as other social workers within Appoġġ. The office space was therefore restructured with a bigger room accommodating all staff and a smaller space now serving as a second counselling room.

Social Work Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CCS Social Work Case Load 2011</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Cases Allocated</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average of active cases (varies each month)</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closed cases</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiting List (December ’11)</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The work of social workers consisted mostly of home visits and office visits as well as school visits, attending and organising case reviews and case conferences, attending court hearings and maintaining contact with other professionals. Working within the community has its advantages, one of which is the implementation of projects targeting the more vulnerable in the community. Thus, social work within the community has another dimension, that of addressing the problems within the environment of a project rather than solely on casework. In fact, during 2011 one particular social worker was actively involved in the delivery of a project aimed at young people who were mostly on her caseload. Such involvement aims, amongst other things, to tackle the dependancy of some persons on the social work service. This project is still in its early stages.

The following chart is a visual representation of the main problems that service users present upon first contact with social workers.
Community Work Initiatives

A number of initiatives were undertaken by the community workers. These include:

Klabb Sajf; This is a summer school organised for children within the community in collaboration with St Margaret’s College and the Foundation for Educational Services. Thirty seven volunteers contributed to this year’s project with 66 children participating. The theme chosen was Malta Through the Ages. The children and volunteers had the opportunity to explore the history of Malta and represent what they learnt in the form of a mini musical held at the end of the summer school. Volunteers who participated in the project were all awarded a certificate of participation at the end of the project.

Progett taghlim; This project focuses on helping primary school children with their homework after school hours whilst also developing social skills. Volunteers from De La Salle College worked with children from Birgu and Isla primary schools. During the scholastic year 2010 – 2011 particular focus was placed on Isla primary where a community worker from CCS together with an FES tutor worked with 10 children after school hours, once weekly.

Mental Health Training: In collaboration with Bormla Mental Health Team, CCS staff held talks at St Margaret’s College Girls Secondary School, Verdala and tackled issues such as bulimia, anorexia and depression.

Girls 15+: This is a new project started in September 2011, focusing on young people above the age of 15 who want to form part of a group in which several topics and activities are carried out weekly. These included a photoshoot around Cottonera and a cookery session.

Pre-adolescents: This group was created in 2009 with the aim of creating a space for young people between the ages of 11-13 where they could discuss several issues and be involved in different activities. This year 14 boys and girls took part in this project and activities varied from a discussion on perserverance by a popular local...
singer, to cooking sessions with service users from the Adult Training Centre within Sapport, to a treasure hunt around Cospicua. This project was held in collaboration with Agenzija Sedqa where topics regarding drug prevention were also tackled.

Helping young people towards Employability: The community worker assisted several people in drawing up an updated C.V. whilst providing guidance on how to prepare for an interview. During 2011 14 females and 1 male over the age of 16 received assistance.

Home Start Malta

Homestart has been operating in Malta since 2005 providing support to parents with at least one child under the age of 5 years through the assistance of volunteers. Twenty two families are currently being aided through the project. Fifteen new volunteers began offering their services following a preparation course held in March 2011 bringing the total number of volunteers to 24. Volunteers, who themselves have parenting experience, visited the family an average of once a week.

Housing

Another service being provided through CCS is that of a community worker who aids people with their applications and any queries regarding Housing. The community worker is available every Tuesday and Thursday and in 2011 dealt with 66 new cases. Eighty three families are currently being followed. The service also included home visits and preparing social reports for many of the families.

SAPPORT Day Centre For Persons with a Disability

Staff

SAPPORT aims at providing a holistic service to its service users and thus has a dynamic and interdisciplinary team. During 2011, the team consisted of a Leader, Coordinator, Social Worker, Professional Support Worker and Support Workers.

Service Users

During 2011, the centre provided regular services to 17 service users (9 females and 8 males). A further two service users had irregular attendance due to medical reasons with a new service user joining the centre in December. The services users come from: Birgu, Bormla, Kalkara and Marsascala and their disability ranged from intellectual disability to Down’s syndrome and Autism.

Eight of the clients attending this centre received training and support aimed at helping them integrate in the labour market. This was done through the project ME2 which is funded through the European Social Fund. Two of the mentioned service users also undertook job placements in order to gain work experience.
In 2011, as in previous years, at least one case review was held for each of the service users. This involved bringing together professionals from the centre together with the service user, his family members and/or relevant others to discuss the wellbeing of the service user in order to formulate an individualised support plan. This ensured that service users were engaged in programmes and activities in line with their own desires and developmental needs.

Activities

During 2011, SAPPORT Day Centre focused mainly on the following:

- Basic Education - the use of telephones, reading, writing, and budgeting;
- Personal Care - nutrition, physical exercise, health and personal hygiene;
- Integration in the Community
- Independent Living Programme
- Gardening skills
- Social Skills
- Educational, Cultural and Social Activities
- Housework – food preparation and cleaning;
- Sensory Stimulation;
- Drama and Singing;
- Music and Percussion Programme
- Sign Language
- IT Programme
- Pottery
- Crafts
- Physical Exercises & Sports

In order to promote integration in the community, the centre also organised a number of activities and programmes. These included:

- 6 evening activities, which included outings, BBQs, parties & shows
- Sports Day- where service users were able to participate in sports together with persons with disability from other centres.
- A Carnival Activity
- An Easter activity, Mass and Party
- A Good Friday Activity including Mass and Via Sagra at the centre
- Christmas Mass and Christmas Party
- Outings to Tigne, Valletta, Gardens of Serenity in St Lucia and other places of interest.

ETC Job Centre

Introduction

The Cottonera Job Centre is a regional centre situated at the Access Complex in Vittoriosa. The was able to offer the necessary employment services, training and job searching especially for job seekers. This comprised the registration area and all the information required in relation to employment and training.
Job Centre Services

Profiling

A caseload of Cottonera job seekers from 25 to 61 years was submitted to the job centre each month in order to check new entries especially those who were first time registrants. After a month from the date of registration, appointments were issued on the fingerprint registration chit to profile job seekers for the matching system. This involved a confidential interview to input personal data which made possible the screening of registrants for vacancies according to the specifications requested by employers.

General Interviews

All job seekers aged 25 to 61 years of age were periodically called in for a general interview to discuss job opportunities. This involved the reviewing of preferences and updating of information on certificates, addresses, telephone numbers and remarks. Where necessary registrants were referred to medical, support services or the Department of Social Security. During the interview information was also provided to the job seekers regarding lifelong learning opportunities and new training focusing on changes in modern technology. A screening for job opportunities was also conducted following the review of data from the caseload list indicating the number of submissions sent to the job seeker, as well as employment history, preferences and profiling data. Questions on submission letters, interviews with employers and attendance of courses served as an indication of the initiatives undertaken by the job seeker. Assessment of the registrants telephone skills was sometimes made possible by requesting the job seeker to call a potential employer about a vacancy during the general interview.

Registration

Registration was held every Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays with the exception of public holidays starting at 8.00am till 12.30pm all year round.

<p>| ETC Cottonera Job Centre Statistics |   |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Access Centres</th>
<th>Annual Report 2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One to one interviews with employment advisor</td>
<td>676</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submissions Letters sent to registrants</td>
<td>1,897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registrants referred for Training</td>
<td>303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons who were placed in a job</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People removed from the part one register as somehow did not abide to ETC regulations</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other Matters

The Cottonera Regional Centre is to undergo major structural works in 2012 in order to be able to accommodate more staff. This should enhance service provision.

Department for Social Security District Office

Staff

The office staff complement includes one district manager, five front desk officials and one messenger.

The Birgu Social Security District Office covers the whole area of Cottonera which includes the localities of Vittoriosa, Cospicua and Senglea together with that of Kalkara.

The work carried out by the Birgu District Office consisted mainly of dealing with customer queries, filling of applications for contributory and non-contributory benefits and pensions, and the registration under the Social Security Act of newly employed workers. The aim of the district officials is to assist service users in understanding the benefit system and in completing the necessary paperwork for any benefits which they may be entitled to. The service included advice on a wide range of social security benefits, completion of claim forms, calculation of benefits and advice on all benefits.

The Birgu District Office served an estimated total of 8,000 service users split between 3,589 Contributory and 4,372 Non-Contributory cases. The majority of the customers (circa 95%) were served in person while the rest mainly over the phone. The figures include repeat clients which is a common occurrence especially since most of the service users are entitled to non-contributory benefits and hence are economically inactive.

Training

An in-service training programme on various social security benefits and customer service was delivered regularly throughout the year to help the staff build confidence and be more effective in their jobs.
Accessibility

It is planned that new working hours will be introduced extending the service to the public on Saturdays. This will also help the staff to balance their work and family life.

FES Smartkids Child Day Care and Family Support Centre

Staff

In 2011 more Care Workers were recruited in order to meet the new arising needs. The centre now comprises a Centre Coordinator, seven Child Care Assistants and a Programme Secretary.

Activities

In 2011, Smartkids extended its service by offering childcare facilities to babies, thus now delivering service to children aged from three months to three years, as opposed to the earlier age bracket of 18 months to three years.

The various activities carried out daily at the Centre were carefully planned with the goal of enhancing the different areas of development: physical, emotional, social and mental. The activities were based on monthly themes which explored several educational topics such as weather and seasonal changes, major holidays such as Christmas and Easter as well as the importance of family and friendship.

The Centre also provided supervised placements to MCAST students as well as foreign students reading for accredited Childcare courses.

There was extensive refurbishment at the Centre in order to make it more comfortable as well as safe, and utilize the whole area in order to improve the service. Educational toys, including puzzles and age-appropriate books, were among the many useful resources acquired. The restructuring included the setting up of a baby area in order to accommodate the service extension to babies. During 2011, the centre also extended the service time and is now open from 7:30 to 16:00.

Through 2011, the centre organized a number of workshops and seminars for parents to enhance the ability of parents and caregivers involvement in the education and care of their children. The centre provided for parental skills seminars and workshops for the benefit of the parents and caregivers of children attending the Centre. The Centre Coordinator organized Parent Training Workshops while the Centre’s Pediatrician provided training on Nutrition.

During 2011, a total of 63 children made use of the child care centre.
Valletta ACCESS Centre Activity Report

Introduction

The main aim of the complex is to ensure a good and efficient service to the Valletta and Floriana community and be a stimulus to positive change based on the community’s needs and wants. All departments seek to work in synchrony in order to provide a quality service to the community.

General Management

The ACCESS Manager ensured the smooth running of the centre through routine administrative duties that were performed, good communication with all the team leaders and the availability to listen both to staff and service users alike. During 2011 general maintenance works were performed in order to keep the Valletta ACCESS premises in a welcoming state both for staff members and service users.

Team Meetings

In order to ensure a smooth running of services and to provide motivation, empowerment as well as a positive attitude to clients, team leaders at AĊĊESS met on a monthly basis. These meetings served to establish a good working relationship among all the departments, to discuss any arising issues, to plan team building activities and to provide peer support.

Valletta AĊĊESS Hall

The Hall was used to host various events, activities and also conferences. It was made available to entities and NGOs within the community as well as to host activities for the benefit of residents.

Table: Use of Hall

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No. of Bookings</th>
<th>No. of Guests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Community Projects

A number of community projects were organised throughout the year targeting children, young people and the unemployed among others. These included:

Pre Teens: Appoġġ community team in collaboration with AĊĊESS hosted a group of pre-adolescents aged 10 – 12 providing healthy fun activities which also enhanced basic and educational skills.

Homework Club: This was held twice a week at St. Albert School, Valletta and assisted children in their homework and studying difficulties. Children were able to raise any academic difficulty encountered and were assisted by a dedicated team of volunteers. Those children who did not bring along any work were given revision sheets and exercises in order to help them study. Assistance was provided by the various volunteers who apart from the academic work also organised arts, crafts and games for the children after the allotted homework or studying period. This was done in order to maintain a relaxed atmosphere and provide the children a means to express themselves creatively.

Sajf Flimkien: The Appoġġ Community team, AĊĊESS and Valletta local council hosted children twice a week during the summer months in order to promote education through arts and crafts activities which would enhance their basic skills. The activities also aimed to encourage and enhance their talents through the organisation of a talent show which the children were able to present with the help of volunteers. Weekly outings were organised as part of the summer programme. Most of the outings incorporated an educational element. These included a tour of the Grand Harbour, Xrobb l-Ghagin Nature Reserve, Bahar ic-Caghaq Animal Park and the Ta Qali Crafts Village and Adventure Park amongst others.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals:</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>1826</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
More info and statistics regarding Pre teens, Homework club, and Sajf Flimkien is provided in the Appogg section below.

Nghajtu Flimkien Kontra I-Faqar: This was held on the 17th October – the International day for the Eradication of Poverty. Various NGOs, personalities, Valletta Local Council as well as the general public participated in this running and shouting exercise symbolic of energy and anger towards the reality of poverty.

After giving a donation people were invited to simultaneously run and shout. Once they finished shouting they stopped running and their covered distance was recorded. All funds raised during this event were in aid of the Community Chest Fund. Towards the end, the distance run by individual participants was totalled symbolising how together we can make a change and create a difference in relation to poverty. During the event NGOs as well as AĊĊESS put up stands to raise awareness about programmes and services. The concluding forum on poverty was hosted by AĊĊESS.

35+ Project: During 2011 Valletta AĊĊESS together with Valletta Local council and ETC initiated a pilot project targeting those aged 35+ who were unemployed. The project is to be continued in 2012. The participants were brought together in small groups to discuss the reasons why they believed they were unemployed and what could help them find employment. Information was provided on ETC services and Social Security benefits and the positive outcomes to their health, family life and well being were highlighted in order to address motivation. The project also sought to explore the possible causes of the high incidence of unemployed or inactive in the community and what could be done to address the issue with the younger generation.

Other initiatives: During the year other initiatives were undertaken in order to continue assisting the community at large. Staff attended sessions for the elderly in order to maintain a healthy relationship with the aging group of residents. AĊĊESS also formed part of the Valletta Community network (VCN) where a group of entities, NGOs as well as the local council met periodically in order to establish a working relationship, avoid duplication of work and share good practices. AĊĊESS also hosted a Food Handling course for the Valletta and Floriana community and aims to organise more of such trainings in collaboration with ETC in the future.

Outreach
Time was dedicated to being in the community and going around the streets, neighbourhoods, shops and places people frequent to get to know the people and their needs. This has helped to establish a relationship of trust and a sense of belonging.

**Appogg Valletta Community Service**

**Staff**

Appogg Valletta Community Service has been operating from AÇŒESS complex at Melita Street since August 2009. The team is made up of a Services Area Leader, two social workers, and two community workers, one of which is funded through the Valletta Local Council.

**Social Work**

There were 74 new referrals between January 2011 to December 2011, mostly comprising families from Valletta. Social workers provided intake services daily dealing with new situations or referrals from other services/agencies. As at December 2011 the service had a list of 19 individuals awaiting allocation.

During the year the Valletta Community Service worked with individuals, families and the elderly. The interventions involved phone calls, office visits, home visits and accompanying service users on various appointments. Social workers within these services dealt with several issues including unemployment, family issues, relationship problems, health (mental and physical), substance abuse, learning difficulties, poor parental skills, neglect cases, mild abuse cases and support for people lacking support systems. The vast majority of cases were self-referred.

**Projects**

The team was involved in a number of community work projects and initiatives, addressing a range of social problems affecting the community. Meetings were organised with residents from time to time to consult and involve them in the planning of projects. Participants were also involved at evaluation stage.

**Homework Club**

This project was set up in 2009-2010 following requests by a number of service users who expressed concern at their inability to help their children with homework. The project was repeated in the scholastic year of 2010-2011. The project focused on providing help and guidance in academic subjects to children aged 5 to 11 years (from year 1 to year 6) with the assistance of 20 volunteers. In order to help children with their academic difficulties, a number of handouts were provided and children
were encouraged to carry out extra work. Arts and crafts were introduced to the homework sessions, once the children finished their work. This initiative was well received by the children.

Sajf Flimkien
The summer school “Sajf Flimkien” was organised for children residing in Valletta. It was led by the Local Council in collaboration with Valletta Community Service. Around 65 children applied for the 6 week programme which was run with the help of 40 volunteers.

Pre-teens
This initiative was set up in 2011 for pre-adolescents who were empowered to develop their skills, socialising with pre-teens from different parishes through a variety of fun activities such as quizzes, movies, talks by the internet safety team, cooking and pasta day among others. The project was coordinated by the community worker with the help of the service area leader and the ACCESS Manager. The response from the pre-teens attending was a positive one and it is expected that this project will continue in 2012 focusing on the children and their families.

Glow Drama Group
This project used drama, singing and dancing with children and young people and was implemented with the help of 20 volunteers. The project came to an end in December 2011.

Rush
Project “Rush” focused on the organisation of sports activities for children aged 5 to 10 years as well as a Christmas talent show in Valletta which was held on the 16th December 2011 at the ta’ Giesu auditorium.

Talent shows
Two talent shows were organised throughout the year, the first in September at Lower Barakka and the second in December. Over 200 spectators attended the children’s performance. A group of parents also got together and prepared some pastries for the December event.

Other work
- Over the past two years VCS team member attended some of the social activities which were organised once a month for the elderly by the three parishes.
- The community workers took part in an activity which was set up by the Third World Group ‘Naghjtu Kontra l-Faqar’ held on the 15th October 2010
- Contact building was conducted through regular meetings with other entities within the Valletta area including the Local Council, St.Albert college, the Mental Health Team, Local Parishes, St Francis College, YEP, Post Secondary School and the Valletta Community Network.
- The community worker was involved in the organisation of an Id F’Id course for parents provided by the FES. The course was aimed at those parents wishing to obtain more knowledge and skills on how to help their children with their homework. The meetings were organised once a week for 5 consequent weeks
- Regular meetings were set with volunteers who played a very important role in many of the community projects to prepare and coordinate activities and events.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Participants in Community Initiatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre Teens (project KUWL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Work Club (Project Spark)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FES Id F’Id Course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sajf Flimkien 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glow Drama Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooking with Parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RUSH (Sports activities)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Floriana has not been targeted by the community workers due to the lack of resources and the on going demands from the Valletta community. It is hoped that this will become possible in the future. Social work service is, however, offered to a number of Floriana residents.

**Department for Social Security District Office**

The Valletta District Office together with the Customer Care Unit started operating from the Valletta AĊCESS in 2009.

Staff

The office staff complement included one district manager, two front desk officials and two minor staff. The latter perform the duties of receptionists at the reception area within the Valletta AĊCESS Centre.
The complement of the Customer Care Unit was of four clerks. The intention of this unit was to provide specialised advice to the public from all around Malta on matters of social security. The customer service provided by the customer care officials mainly focused on queries from the public, additional information and assistance and the filling of application forms. In October 2011, as part of the continuous restructuring of the customer area within the DSS, the Customer Care branch at Valletta Access Centre was integrated with the pool of District Offices across the mainland and ceased operating as a single identifiable unit.

Services

The work carried out by the Valletta District Office mainly consisted of dealing with customer queries, filling of applications for contributory and non-contributory benefits and pensions, and the registration under the Social Security Act of newly employed workers. District officials were also entrusted with the collection of monies resulting from overpayment of benefits to beneficiaries to be recorded in the appropriate accounts.

A total of 1,546 customers were rendered a service at the Valletta District Office during 2011, of which 371 enquired on contributory benefits and the remaining 1,175 on non-contributory benefits. The data contains the number of customers that have attended or have phoned the Valletta District Office according to the total counts for each week and divided between contributory and non-contributory queries. The non-contributory queries were significantly higher and this gives a true indication of the social cases in the area of Floriana and Valletta.

ETC Registration Unit

Staff

The Registration Unit at the VAC comprises four employment advisors and one customer care officer (registration clerk). Having an ETC official as a customer care officer has greatly improved ETC operations. The officer not only helped clients by filling the ETC35 form but also by inputting details and registering clients from the waiting area, thus allowing the advisors to dedicate more time to the profiling process of first time registrants. The officer also provided clients with information about ETC services. These new procedures have minimized waiting time for clients.

Services

At the Valletta ACCESS Complex, employment advisors met first time registrants, both Maltese and foreigners (EU & non-EU nationals) and other service users who lost their card or have an invalid card. Service users were registered and given information about the different parts of the register. Advisors checked and inputted personal details, qualifications and work preferences. Clients were also referred to training courses and given the contact details of their respective employment advisor. Information on the part-time register, EURES services, auto mailer, and ETC website
and job centers’ facilities was also provided. Clients were also given the New ETC32 form and a thorough explanation of the regulations and procedures of registration. In addition, clients were given a copy of the registration chit as a guide to facilitate their first time registration and a copy of the ETC34 form in order to inform the ETC when they start work. Though a leaflet stand is available for the public in the waiting room, packs with information leaflets were prepared and handed out to first time registrants.

Cards Issued

The duties of the VAC registration officers included the reissuing of cards which were damaged or had been lost/stolen. Below one can find the records of the cards reissued in 2011:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>No of cards issued</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,340</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Training and Meetings

ETC staff members attended several meetings and trainings during 2011 both at Valletta AĊĊESS Hall and in other venues.

Difficulties encountered

A number of problems were encountered in 2011 mainly due to computer hardware or software malfunctions, staff shortages and power cuts due to electrical faults in the complex.
Total number of people catered for during 2011 at ETC office

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>No. of clients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>642</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4,997</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Qawra ACCESS CENTRE Activity Report

Qawra Access Centre has been operating within the community of St. Paul’s Bay, Burmarrad, Qawra, Bugibba and Xemxija since 2009. During this period various initiatives were taken to raise awareness in the community of the services and initiatives that may be accessed through the centre. This period was also instrumental in establishing a working relationship with different local NGOs who are targeting various groups of residents in the different localities.

General Management

Maintenance

During 2011 various initiatives were carried out to create a more welcoming environment for the personnel working at the centre and for its service users. Personnel from the then Ministry of Education, Employment and the Family were responsible for the painting of the premises and to conduct other work that had to be carried out in relation to the general maintenance of the centre.

A water leakage in the Smart Kids Premises was finally resolved through the intervention of the Housing Authority when the source of the leak was identified. This involved works being carried out in the residential premises located above the Access Centre. This made it possible for Smartkids to utilise all the available space making the service much more efficient and effective.

Recruitment of General Hands Personnel through the Community Work Scheme.

General hands personnel was recruited within the Qawra Access Centre to contribute to the upkeep of the premises and the common areas in front of the centre. This allowed the centre to embark on a number of initiatives to enhance the physical environment of the Centre and the surroundings. The recruitment was possible through the Community Working Scheme administered by the ETC.

Customer Care Service

Two customer care personnel were also recruited at the Qawra Access Centre through the ETC Community Work Scheme. These staff members were responsible for the running of the reception area and to direct service users to the required service. Since mid February records of the number of people making use of the services at the Qawra Access Centre started to be collected. The following are statistics gathered by the customer care officers:
Month | Number of Service Users that came in contact with customer care as from 16 February 2011
--- | ---
Jan | NA
February | 632
March | 1,769
April | 2,213
May | 2,386
June | 2,096
July | 2,180
August | 2,147
September | 2,128
October | 2,459
November | 2,449
December | 2,115
The above figures do not include regular service users such as ETC registrants, SmartKids service users and some of the service users of the Qawra Appogg Community Team who proceed directly to the desired service provider.

Projects and Initiatives

A number of community projects and initiatives were conducted through a collaborative effort between the different entities. These included:

Familiarisation meeting with Employers

Qawra Access Centre organised a Familiarisation Meeting for Employers on Wednesday 2\textsuperscript{nd} March 2011. This meeting aimed to provide interested parties from the business sector information about the services being offered by the entities forming part of the Qawra Access Centre. Leaders from all entities forming part of the Centre provided information which gave rise to interesting discussions between the said leaders and the representatives from the business entities present.

This familiarisation meeting led to the establishment of good working relationships between Access staff and the business community which resulted in employment opportunities being offered to a number of service users.

Women at Work

This project was carried out for the first time in collaboration between the Appogg Community Service and ETC. A total of 10 women interested in finding employment participated in the project. A number of information sessions provided participants with the opportunity to work in small groups to discuss and develop a number of practical job-seeking skills. Following this training opportunity, ETC personnel continued to follow the participants on an individual basis and most of them were successful in finding employment.

Job Club

This project was organised by the ETC for young people aged between 16 and 24 years who were classified as being inactive. A number of young people were referred to the project by the Appogg Community Service. The club consisted of 4 sessions each with a duration of 3 hours. The interactive sessions gave the opportunity to the participants to obtain new skills to enhance their employability. Ten young people confirmed their participation in this project, however only three youth actually attended.
Welcome Spring Festival

The Centre organised an activity entitled ‘Welcome Spring Festival’ with the support of Agenzija Zghazagh, held on Sunday 20th March 2011 at the Kennedy Grove Park. It served as an opportunity for families to participate in an informal event that aimed to provide the community with a safe and informative environment. Through fun activities and information provided by local NGOs and national entities, those attending had the opportunity to get to know more about the existent resources within their respective community.

This project served to build good working relationships with local NGOs. Positive feedback was obtained from different entities about the activity and in fact a number of them suggested that the event be repeated.

Consequently a funding application was submitted in collaboration with the St Paul’s Bay Local Council through which €6,000 were obtained toward the organisation of the 2012 edition which is to take place on the 4th March 2012.

Common Unity Newsletter

Common Unity is a Newsletter that was sent to various entities, stakeholders and individuals forming part of the community. The newsletter was issued by the Qawra Access Centre from time to time and aimed to provide the community with useful information related to the services offered. Common Unity also aimed to provide space for local NGOs to promote their work within the community.

It is estimated that more than 1,000 people are receiving this newsletter through the e-mail shots sent by the local council, parishes, head of school and NGOs.

Parents Support Group

This group provided parents, who were waiting for their children during catechism classes, with the opportunity to participate in informal and interactive sessions about parenting. The process was mainly conducted through the use of discussions, non-formal education and processing of outcomes.

Pre Teens Group

The Pre Teens Group was organised in collaboration with the Qawra Parish and was open to young people born in 1999. The group offered young people who attended the catechism lessons at Qawra as well as other interested young people the opportunity to meet in an informal set up. The Qawra Access personnel supervised and mentored the volunteers involved in the project in the preparation and
implementation of sessions. Throughout the course of the project the volunteers were empowered to take on a leadership role assuming increasing responsibility for the group.

Environmental Education Initiative

This initiative was carried out following suggestions from the neighbours and staff of the centre to create a concrete opportunity for young people and children residing in the area to raise awareness of the advantages of having a clean and appealing environment. Access Staff made contact with children and young people residing in the area around the centre whilst they were playing and through a letter that was posted to around 600 households. The children and young people were shown how to plant the plants provided by the St Paul’s Bay Local Council in the yard of the Access Centre. This activity saw the participation of a number of residents residing in the area as well as members of the Qawra Scout Group.

Educational Activities for Children during Summer Time

Children’s groups were organised on a weekly basis to provide an opportunity to participate in informal sessions that focused on the theme of ‘Self Appreciation’. The project was carried out at the Melita Gardens in Salina and aimed to provide children with the possibility of making new friends and at the same time learning through the experience of cooking.

Summer Alternative Leisure Activities for Youth

This summer project aimed to provide young people from the community the possibility to participate in fun and learning activities. These activities provided participants the opportunity to engage in a number of informal sessions which included a quiz, karaoke and the creation of mocktails amongst other initiatives. This weekly project was carried out at the Melita Gardens Salina.

Child Development Workshops at Smart Kids

The FES SmartKids Childcare and Family Support Centre in collaboration with Qawra Access Centre organised a series of talks delivered by a professional in the area of Communication Development aimed at parents with children between the ages of 0 to 5. These talks took the form of workshops of around two hours duration and were held periodically throughout the year. The workshops focused on language development, play - with particular emphasis on symbolic play - and emergent literacy.

Launching of Survey Results Related to Maltese Citizens Reading Trends
The Centre hosted a Press Conference held by the National Book Council (KNK) and the Ministry of Education, Employment and the Family. Following this press activity the Minister had the opportunity to visit the staff and services of the Centre.

Presidents Award for Creativity.

A funding application was submitted to the President’s Award for Creativity for a project entitled ‘Focus On Our Concerns’ which aimed to provide adolescents in the locality with an opportunity to develop skills on how to communicate their own concerns in a creative manner through the use of photography and editing. The outcomes of the project would be exhibited in a permanent exhibition to be set up at the new Qawra Community Centre by means of a wallpaper installation. An informative flyer to be sent to every household within the community to inform people about the outcome of this project was also planned.

Consultations with local NGOs and Parishes:

Various consultation meetings were carried out with local NGOs and Parishes in order to maintain a good working relationship with these entities. The meetings served to create further collaborative projects of benefit to the community.

Following these meetings a number of projects and initiatives were created within the community most of which have been presented above.

Consultations and collaborations with the Local Council

Various informal meetings were carried out with representatives from the local council on ongoing issues related to the locality. Amongst the issues discussed were the upkeep and embellishment of the area surrounding the Access centre; community development initiatives; unsupervised presence of children and young people and concerns about the potential formation of street gangs.

Media

Throughout 2011 a number of initiatives were taken to promote the work which was carried out by the management and the different entities of the centre. These included:

- A feature on il-Mument about the services and concept of Access
- Promotion of the Welcome Spring Festival 2011
- Promotion about the Educational Water Games organised in front of the Qawra Access Centre.
- Features on the Local Council’s magazine ‘il-Malja’
Appogg Qawra Community Service

Throughout 2011 the social work team built a good relationship with community stakeholders including schools, parishes and the police with service users being either encouraged or referred to the service. The team benefitted from 20 hours of community work financed by the St Paul’s Bay Local Council which allowed for new initiatives to be undertaken. The recruitment of the Access manager made embarking on joint initiatives with Access and other community partners possible. On the downside, staff turnover created some difficulties in handling the case load. The absence of security staff on site was also a concern in certain cases.

Caseload for 2011

The social work team dealt with 110 cases of which 105 were new cases and 5 were reopened cases. Ninety five of these were self-referred whereas 15 were referred by other professionals. One hundred cases were closed.

Table: Presenting problems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parenting</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others skills</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homelessness</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family problems</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Behavioural problems</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Addictions</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Domestic violence</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>19</td>
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<td>Mental health</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>Legal issues</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health/disability</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>17</td>
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FES Child Day Care and Family Support Centre

Staff

The centre is managed by a coordinator and currently employs 5 care workers. The recruitment of an additional care worker provided the possibility of increasing the number of children attending the centre. The Centre also benefitted from the services of a paediatrician upon request. A number of service-users made use of this and found it to be very beneficial. The paediatrician attended the childcare centre every six weeks.
SmartKids also accepted MCAST students undergoing the National Diploma in Children’s Care, Learning and Development on placement. All placement students were supervised by the childcare centre co-ordinator.

Activities

During 2011 2 Nutrition seminars and 3 Communication Development talks were held at the Qawra Access Centre. These sessions were open to Smartkids service users as well as to the community.

Group discussions with parents and guardians of children who attended the childcare centre took place in which participants were given the opportunity to be educated on particular themes related to child development. These events were also aimed at creating a support system for families. In June 2011 an outing to Salini Gardens was organised for all the service users who enjoyed a day together filled with fun activities for the children and their families with a further aim of promoting peer support among service users.

SmartKids was extensively refurbished transforming the activity areas which are now much more welcoming and more child friendly. New equipment and educational toys were acquired. The most important development was the new baby room. It is furnished purposely and includes all the needs that babies from 3 months to 1 year require. The services were therefore extended to this age group and the centre now welcomes children aged between 3 months and 3 years. Forty two children made use of the service in 2011.

In March 2011, a presentation regarding the service provision in the Qawra area was delivered to employers in the locality. Smartkids also took part in the The Welcome Spring Fair which was organised by ACCESS. The centre was also promoted further in an article in the newspaper il-Mument. In November 2011, the coordinator represented Smart Kids Qawra when she delivered a presentation regarding the day to day management of Smartkids to first year Masters students of Family Studies.

Department Of Social Security District Office

Staff

The staff consisted of the manager and two clerks with an additional clerk joining the team in October 2011.

Service
The year 2011 was a very hectic one. During the month of January the office was inundated with queries regarding the various budget measures. The district office maintained constant contact with the Head Office in Valletta enquiring about file movements and other queries that arose from time to time. Staff also assisted service users in contacting other government departments as sometimes this could prove difficult. Records compiled by the Access customer care officer indicates that 25,497 interventions were carried out by the Qawra District Office between mid February and December 2011.

Staff were able to attend a number of seminars, meetings and other gatherings that were held at various venues to keep abreast of any changes within the sector. Staff also liaised with other entities present at the Access Centre.

ETC Job Centre

Introduction

During the year 2011, the Qawra Job Centre continued to improve its quality services and operations that offered a wide range of labour market incentives for training, assistance and other information tailored to the needs of service users which included both job seekers as well as potential employers.

Interviews and Profiling

This involved the reviewing of preferences and inputting changes, if any, from previous meeting such as certificates, addresses, telephone numbers, preferences and remarks. It was sometimes necessary to refer persons to medical advisors, support services or to the Department of Social Security. Importance was given to increasing awareness of the importance of lifelong learning among job seekers. Screening for job opportunities was conducted after reviewing data from the case load list that indicated the number of submissions sent to the client, as well as employment histories, preferences and profiling data. During the matching process, questioning on submission letters to job seekers, interviews held with employers and attendance to courses gave an indication of the initiative of job seekers. Some job-seekers were encouraged to contact employers who had made a request with ETC for particular vacancies suitable to the job seekers in the presence of the employment advisor. This gave an indication of the job seeker's telephone skills when contacting potential employers.

Clients registering for the first time were required to enter into a Personal Action Plan (PAP) agreement with their Employment Advisor for a maximum of six months. Upon signing this agreement an instructional booklet was given to each individual with the aim to support the job seekers in their search for employment by assisting, guiding and monitoring all the actions taken within this period of time. They were called in to discuss and evaluate their personal action plan on a monthly basis. During this phase adjustments or changes to the PAP, including referrals to training and contacts with
various employers were conducted with the intention of reducing the period of time spent unemployed. Those job seekers that failed to list job preferences were assisted in identifying possibilities based on labour market needs.

Vacancies

Once the job centre received the list of vacancies, submission letters were sent to select jobseekers with the necessary information to contact the employer for appointments to attend interviews. Daily updates of vacancies coming from various sources like DOI, News Papers, Eures, employers etc, were displayed on the notice boards until the closing date. Access for these vacancies could be obtained through an automailer sent daily with fresh vacancies through e-mail. Vacancies were also accessible through the ETC web site www.etc.gov.mt.

Familiarisation meeting with the Employers

Qawra Access Centre organised a Familiarisation Meeting for employers on Wednesday 2nd March 2010. This meeting aimed to provide interested parties from the business sector information about the services being offered by the entities forming part of the Qawra Access Centre.

Leaders from all entities forming part of the Qawra Access Centre presented an informative presentation which eventually led to interesting discussions between the said leaders and representatives from the business entities.

This familiarisation meeting led to the establishment of a good working relationship between personnel working within the Qawra Access Centre and the employers attending this meeting. In fact our service users benefited from working opportunities which were offered by these employers.

Job Club

This project was organised by ETC for young people aged between 16 and 24 years who were classified as being inactive. This club consisted of 4 sessions each with a duration of 3 hours. The interactive sessions gave the opportunity to the participants to obtain new skills to enhance their prospects for employability. Referrals were also carried out by the social workers of the Qawra Community Service of Appogg. The project was done through the YEP programme.

Welcome Spring Festival

ETC took part in this Festival through the YEP program that advertised employability programs and gave out freebies to interested service users. This activity was organised with the support of Agenzija Zghazagh.
Common Unity Newsletter

The Job Centre utilised the Access Centre newsletter to provide information on Services offered by the ETC Job Centre, the I Can Employability Program, participation in the welcome spring festival, the jobs and training fair, Job Club, EURES, Supported Employment, Nista Sharing Work Life Responsibilities Campaign, Training Schemes, INT scheme and YEP.

Interview published on Local Newspaper

An interview was carried out on February 2011 by a local newspaper journalist to Darren Muscat on information regarding Qawra Job Centre services that was published a few weeks later. Information about opening hours, all Job Centre services and future plans and projects were published.

Employers Meetings

After the familiarisation meeting with St. Paul’s Bay area employers a number of individual appointments at the Job Centre were set with those who were unable to attend. Various vacancies were advertised, mostly in catering. Employers also requested information about ETC schemes. It was not always possible to meet eligibility criteria set by employers due to a lack of suitably qualified job seekers and skills shortages.

Woman at Work project

This was a joint project between the Qawra Community Services and the Employment and Training Corporation. The main objectives are to identify difficulties encountered by unemployed women and ways to support them in order to encourage them to take up remunerated employment. Meetings were held between ETC and Appogg staff to schedule a programme and to promote the activity. A set of question regarding the main problems encountered when searching for a job and the assistance and guidance expected from ETC and Appogg were drawn up. The project also explore the women’s interest in acquiring information, training and learning to increase their employment prospects. Data was also collected to identify their preferred employment areas. Ideas regarding different work options and the the most suitable time for training were discussed. Follow up of the project was carried out in the first three months of 2011 and almost all of the women participating were successful in finding new jobs.

Orientation visits

Forty hours was spent in fruitful orientation visits to Trelleborg Hal Far, Gaming Operations LTD - Fair Play, Qawra and Dragonara Casino, St. Julians. Information was given on operations, positions and grades, company structure, benefits, the
philosophy of the organisation, strengths, weaknesses, day to day responsibilities, vacancies and positions in which shortage in the labour market are envisioned. Questions asked related to criteria for choosing their ideal candidate to fill the required vacancy. These included experience, qualifications, ideal attributes and requirements for each position. Information was gathered regarding staff training and development, career paths and prospects of advancement. Information was provided on how those two companies decide between recruiting from within the organisation and going for an external call. Both companies emphasised commitment, work ethic, proper execution of tasks and the need to be proactive in order to be competitive.

During 2011 2,775 interventions were carried out by ETC within Qawra Access Centre.