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# **FSWS Strategic Objectives 2021-2031**

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# 1. Executive Summary & Statistics – Strategic Objectives 2021-2031

## 1.1 Executive Summary

The Foundation for Social Welfare Services is a progressive, proactive and connected organization that constantly strives to place the needs and best interest of its clients at the forefront by offering quality social services to individuals and families in need. As part of its campaign to further support its development and innovation, the FSWS has embarked on an exercise to determine its strategic objectives for the upcoming 10 years, culminating with this document containing the vision, aims and aspirations of the various departments, services, and agencies within it.

The FSWS, as the main government entity, aims at being the best in the business and at being the focal point for all matters relating to the social field. This target is achievable through a consistent media presence and an emphasis on the positive influences the FSWS services have on society. Before anything else however, the FSWS primarily targets being client-centred, aiming at enhancing the voice of the client and creating the climate for the client to always be an active participant and contributor, who is not lost in the system.

The FSWS aims at offering the best services possible to its clients, and this document testifies to the multiple points of intersection that exist across the various FSWS services. Intersectionality is in fact a core component of this document, highlighting how services from different agencies or departments can come together to create state-of-the-art support while avoiding duplication and engaging in meaningful and transparent sharing of information and data.

A seamless and coordinated back-office and synchronized centralized services handling the various sectors, including the Administration, Finance, Corporate and EU Affairs, Marketing, Training and Human Resources, Compliance, Data Protection, International Relations, Quality Assurance, Service Audits and Research Teams with their own aims and objectives complement the efforts of the FSWS and its services.

Emphasis is placed on strengthening and solidifying already existing reliable and effective approaches and services, while seeking new ways of collaborating on an inter- and intra-agency level. This is further compounded by a determination to embrace the multi-disciplinary approach within services and agencies, while also networking with entities outside of the FSWS in an effort to establish collaborative solutions for all involved.

Evidence-based approaches and outcome measures are given more prominence, including proposals for new methods of operating in order to address new trends and circumstances that the organization is faced with. This also involves pioneering new approaches aimed at groups and communities, particularly in view of the general lack of employable professionals.

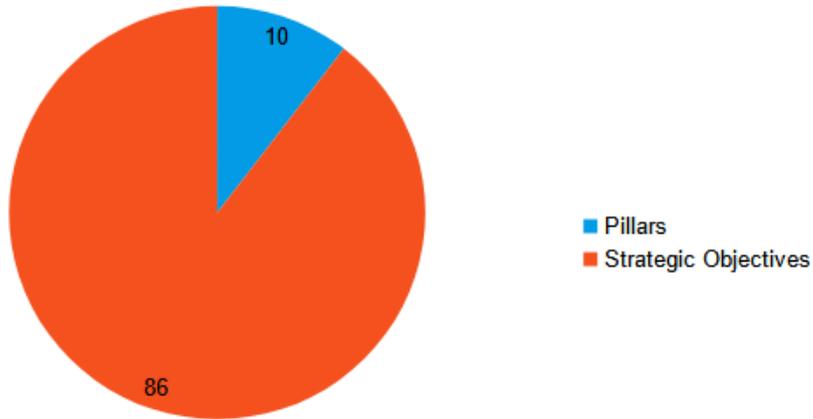
Community based work (fuelled by the Community Development Approach) and preventive work have the support of all of the FSWS and are deemed to be crucial to address difficulties before they develop or worsen, while also relieving the tension from high traffic and crisis-oriented services.

Despite having big dreams and an even bigger determination to see them come true, all of the above would not be possible without an investment in the capacity building, funding and resources of the various agencies and departments. In view of this, the FSWS's main resource (its employees) must be nurtured through further training, career progression opportunities, support and other incentives to make the FSWS the best employer in the social field.

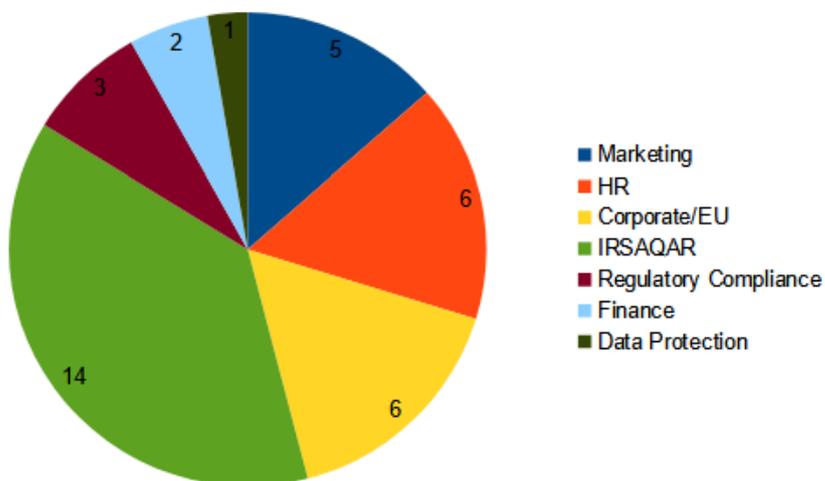
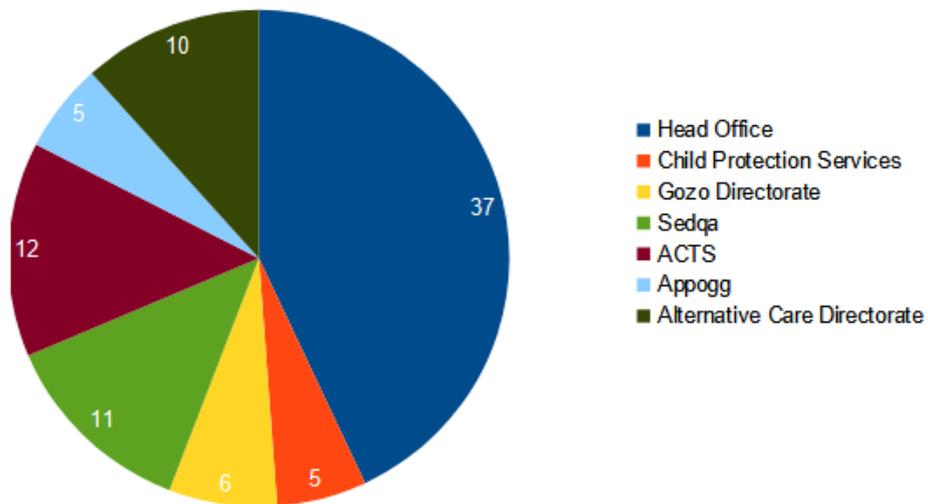
This strategy is being built on the following 10 pillars:

1. Good governance (this will include solidifying already good and strong practices)
2. Evolving social realities
3. Development and innovation
4. The FSWS being the focal point of social solidarity sector in the Maltese Islands (this will include Client Centered Services)
5. New ways of collaborating between the FSWS agencies and external stakeholders on the national and international level (this will include Sharing and cascading of information inter and intra-agencies and stakeholders)
6. Evidence – based approaches and outcome measures
7. Preventive and community-based work
8. Multi-disciplinary approaches and services (this will include Specialized parenting groups)
9. Capacity building, restructuring, expansion of services, staff training and retention of incentives and support
10. Further enhancing of FSWS media presence

## 1.2. Statistics



### Strategic Objectives



### 1.3. FSWS Working Group participants on the compilation of the strategy documents:

- Claudette Abela Baldacchino – Director IRSAQAR (International Relations, Service Audits & Quality Assurance and Research)
- Claire Sammut – Director ACTS (Director Agency for Community and Therapeutic Services)
- Steve Libreri – Director CPS (Child Protection Services)
- Melissa Mifsud - Assistant Director Alternative Care
- Mike Orland - Operations Manager Community Services, Sedqa
- Joseph Antoncich - Manager, ACTS (Agency for Community and Therapeutic Services)
- Isabella Farrugia - Service Manager, Agenzija Appoġġ
- Ann Marie Ciantar – Service Manager, CPS (Child Protection)
- Loraine Borg – Co-ordinator, FSWS Gozo Branch
- Marie-Antoinette Borg Schembri – Leader, Marketing and Communications FSWS
- Steven Vella – Executive II – IRSAQAR (International Relations)



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## 2. Head Office Strategic Objectives 2021-2031

## 2.1. Introduction

The purpose of this section is to establish the strategic objectives of the directorates within the Head Office of the Foundation for Social Welfare Services (FSWS). These directorates provide the platforms for the operational agencies and directorates required to deliver a wide range of services to vulnerable people for free.

The FSWS agenda includes a focus on good governance. Efficient public management, openness, accountability, technological capability, leadership, and the delivery of public social services are all priorities for FSWS. Accountability is essential in all of its branches, directorates, and agencies, ensuring that all employees are responsible for their decisions and attentive to service users. The Foundation ensures that sound governance standards are developed. FSWS also ensures that financial and human resource management are well-managed.

To achieve these goals, it is imperative to be sensitive to the rapidly evolving current social realities and update the strategic vision while remaining at the forefront of improving social solidarity at the Maltese Islands.

- Strategic objective 1: Increase the FSWS' presence on social media.
- Strategic objective 2: The provision of media training to staff
- Strategic objective 3: The In-house production of a television programme
- Strategic objective 4: Designing campaigns.
- Strategic objective 5: Effective Budgeting
- Strategic objective 6: The Human Resources and Training will boost a constant flow of information.
- Strategic objective 7: Attract more professionals to work with the Foundation for Social Welfare Services
- Strategic objective 8: The Human Resources and Training will develop a career progression path for Administration staff.
- Strategic objective 9: Develop more opportunities for staff training.
- Strategic objective 10: Increasing support services to assist employees to deal with the different emerging challenges.
- Strategic objective 11: Make use of Artificial Intelligence.
- Strategic objective 12: Introduce training for employees to deal with challenging behaviour.
- Strategic objective 13: The Regulatory Compliance Department will address psychosocial risks.
- Strategic objective 14: Strengthening Health and Safety Obligations
- Strategic objective 15: The Finance Department will move towards the amalgamation and centralization of accounts, procurement and payroll process.
- Strategic objective 16: Increased attention to internal controls and risk.
- Strategic objective 17: Training to all employees to inculcate a culture focused on Data Protection.
- Strategic objective 18: Better use of internal resources and expertise
- Strategic objective 19: Reduce bureaucracy; sustainability and continuity of services rendered.

- Strategic objective 20: The FSWS back-office administration going greener.
- Strategic objective 21: Undertake initiatives that will be 'game changers' for the service provision across the Foundation for Social Welfare Services
- Strategic objective 22: Development of new schemes to keep abreast of the rapid changes in society.
- Strategic objective 23: Integrating students into our operational system.
- Strategic objective 24: Improve the quality and timeliness of the data produced.
- Strategic objective 25: Further utilise FSWS data for research
- Strategic objective 26: Support research ambassadors within the FSWS' Agencies.
- Strategic objective 27: Strengthen collaboration with external stakeholders
- Strategic objective 28: Promote the importance of research and data.
- Strategic objective 29: Review of the service audit role.
- Strategic objective 30: Improving FSWS profile while compiling ad-hoc documentation.
- Strategic objective 31: Keep abreast with FSWS services, especially new ones
- Strategic objective 32: Re-structuring of the SA&QA unit
- Strategic objective 33: Writing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) as necessary, to regulate the relationship of IR unit with other FSWS services.
- Strategic objective 34: Strengthening networks with international organisations.
- Strategic objective 35: Increasing exposure and awareness with Embassies, High Commissions and Consuls.
- Strategic objective 36: Capacity Building
- Strategic objective 37: Increased Harmonisation

## 2.2 Overview of Strategic Objectives

### 2.2.1 Marketing and Communication Department

The Marketing and Communications Department (MCD) strives to keep the public well informed about the services offered by the Foundation and to always provide timely and accurate data to ensure that the most vulnerable in our society are kept updated about all new FSWS services and events.

The success of the MCD marketing strategy is defined by the impact of a service on clients.

#### Strategic objective 1: Increase the FSWS' presence on Social Media

- The MCD will have a social media strategy focused on helping people.
- The department will share a variety of content that connects with service users. The MCD will share video productions and eye-catching visuals to encourage interaction, build relationships and increase followers.

## Strategic objective 2: The provision of media training to staff

- The MCD will establish a training programme to ensure that staff representing FSWS on radio and television programmes have the knowledge and skills necessary to interact with the media.
- Emphasis will be placed on ensuring that staff participating in such programmes will be able to convey the Foundation's message in a clear, consistent and credible manner.

## Strategic objective 3: The In-house production of a television programme

- The MCD will develop a programme on the national channel TV which will take up a different theme/service every week.
- Various professionals from different services within the Foundation will participate during the broadcasts to share their expertise on the topic.

## Strategic objective 4: Designing campaigns

- In the coming years, Marketing and Communications Department will continue to develop campaigns in an organised way, according to the needs of the Foundation and the current social realities.
- The marketing campaigns will include various platforms to reach a wide audience, which platforms will include television, radio, print and online media.

## Strategic objective 5: Effective Budgeting

- The MCD will continue to perform its duties in the most cost-effective manner.
- FSWS presence on online platforms will increase as they have proven to be one of the best and most cost-effective mediums to reach the public.
- In addition, the MCD needs a healthy budget to manage various marketing strategies. In the coming years, the department will continue to effectively and responsibly manage the appropriated and allocated funds to operate and communicate the Foundation's message effectively and professionally.

## 2.2.2 Human Resources and Training

The FSWS is growing and developing rapidly, so the role of the Human Resources and Training Department is crucial in developing services and reaching more people who need the support of the FSWS. To ensure this, FSWS employs professionals who can respond to the needs of the community. Another important function within this department is training, with the goal of improving the expertise and knowledge of the workforce.

The Human Resources and Training Department provides a service to all employees and works hand-in-hand with all agencies for the well-being of employees by making FSWS an enjoyable and enriching place to work.

### Strategic objective 6: The Human Resources and Training will boost a constant flow of information

- The department will ensure that internal downward communications are made through a trusted source. Strategically, this will be driven by the Human Resources and Training Department in consultation with the CEO, particularly for communications related to organisational policies and directives, guidelines, and any changes that may take place from time to time.
- This will be done in the form of memos through emails to all staff, in addition all information sent will be stored in a shared folder that all staff can access for future reference.
- Information must be clear, direct, timely and consistent.
- The department will also have ongoing meetings with employees, especially new recruits.
- An employee satisfaction survey will be administered to all employees every three years for the next ten years.
- A steering committee will be organised to address issues raised in the Employee Satisfaction Survey.

### Strategic objective 7: Attract more professionals to work with the Foundation for Social Welfare Services

- The Human Resources and Training Department will increase its presence in educational institutions such as G.F. Abela Junior College, MCAST and the University of Malta. The department will be tasked with highlighting the advantageous salary package and other benefits for social sector employees within the FSWS.
- Media slots will be planned in collaboration with Marketing and Communications Department to enable Foundation professionals to promote the benefits of working within FSWS and highlight the rewarding aspects of a career in the social sector where one can really make a difference in someone's life.

### Strategic objective 8: The Human Resources and Training will develop a career progression path for Administration staff.

- The Human Resources and Training Department will create advancement opportunities for administrative staff based on their administrative skills and experience. The goal is to maintain a quality workforce in the Foundation's back office.
- Back office administrative workload will also be recognised with a plan to address this challenge.

### Strategic objective 9: Develop more opportunities for staff training

- Training for back office and administrative staff is encouraged to ensure that staff have the necessary skills and competencies.
- Staff training needs are identified through individual staff annual performance appraisals.
- Each employee should attend two training sessions per year.
- To achieve this goal, the Human Resources and Training Department will invest in a fully equipped training centre to conduct professional training for FSWS employees outside of the office.
- All training sessions will be recorded.
- The Human Resources and Training Department will encourage experienced staff to share their skills and knowledge with other staff by establishing appropriate compensation for conducting such training, consistent with that required of outside trainers.

### Strategic objective 10: Increasing support services to assist employees to deal with the different emerging challenges.

- The department will act as an intermediary with other Operations Directors if an employee is having difficulty getting along within a service. The department will also attempt to provide alternative solutions.
- To ensure that professionals achieve a holistic approach, the department will encourage managers and leaders to rotate and work in different services more frequently.
- To best support staff, any psychological support will be recommended to staff who need it.
- The Human Resources and Training department will create a system where HR management will manage a special fund to directly support employees in need.

## Strategic objective 11: Make use of Artificial Intelligence

- To achieve this strategic goal, all appropriate tools and training will be provided.
- Instant statistics will be provided. Analysis of statistics and comparisons between previous years must be made available so that decisions are strategically based on evidence, particularly where service user demographics are concerned.
- The Case Management System (CSM) will be used as an evaluation tool for balancing cases to achieve a more equitable distribution of cases and avoid duplication, particularly for service users who receive more than one service from one of the agencies or directorates.

### 2.2.3 Regulatory Compliance

The Regulatory Compliance Division is responsible for both Social Care Standards Authority (SCSA) licensing and Occupational Health & Safety of all FSWS services and premises and its directorates and agencies.

## Strategic objective 12: Introduce training for employees to deal with challenging behaviour.

- In collaboration with the Human Resources and Training Department, the Regulatory Compliance Department will design a training programme to equip employees with the skills necessary to manage challenging behaviour.

## Strategic objective 13: The Regulatory Compliance Department will address psychosocial risks.

- Over the next ten years, the department is committed to addressing psychosocial risk factors. This will be achieved by completing a risk assessment that identifies risks such as excessive workloads, ineffective communication, lack of management or peer support, etc.

## Strategic objective 14: Strengthening Health and Safety Obligations

- In collaboration with the Human Resources and Training Department, the Regulatory Compliance Department will support health and safety commitments by being more vigilant and proactive in maintaining a pleasant working environment.

- Work-life balance should continue to be a priority by considering the demands of the services and the needs of staff.

## 2.2.4 Finance

The Finance Department is responsible for the accounting matters of all agencies and directorates within the Foundation.

The department strives to provide meaningful and timely reports to the top management and concerned ministries to make proper management decisions. It is also entrusted with providing accurate information to acquire the correct funding for the smooth running of FSWS and its entities.

### Strategic objective 15: The Finance Department will move towards the amalgamation and centralization of accounts, procurement and payroll process.

- The department will be organising the required logistics to achieve this strategic objective.

### Strategic objective 16: Increased attention to internal controls and risk.

- An employee has been hired with the responsibility for monitoring internal control and risk. A programme will be designed to determine which aspects needs to be explored.

## 2.2.5 Data Protection

The Data Protection Office within FSWS is responsible for creating a culture in which the protection of personal information is continuously maintained in all operations.

### Strategic objective 17: Training to all employees to inculcate a culture focused on Data Protection

- This office will work closely with the Human Resources and Training department to organise training to ensure that all staff, including newly recruited staff within the Foundation, are familiar with the basic principles of data protection.
- The training will encourage all staff to take ownership when it comes to protecting the personal data they handle.
- Wherever personal data is handled, data protection will be integrated as a focus in the daily tasks of employees. These initiatives will ensure that personal data and its protection are central to preserving the dignity of the data subject.

## 2.2.6 Corporate and EU

The focus of the Corporate Services Directorate is to provide the prompt and professional support necessary to ensure the optimal operation of FSWS while maximising the use of available resources.

Tasks that fall under the purview of Corporate Services include:

- Procurement, tenders and supplies
- ICT services
- Insurance cover
- -Estate management and storage
- -Implementation of EU and nationally funded projects (FEAD / SFFD)

### Strategic objective 18: Better use of internal resources and expertise.

- This office will encourage more collaboration and communication to ensure better use of resources.
- The strategic objective will be met by ensuring a more sophisticated logging system of services provided.

### Strategic objective 19: Reduce bureaucracy; sustainability and continuity of services rendered.

- To achieve this strategic goal, the Corporate Services Directorate will focus on ensuring cost effectiveness in the services to be provided.
- The Directorate will improve the digital property management system to capture all ancillary and utility costs for each site.

### Strategic objective 20: The FSWS back-office administration going greener.

- Through this initiative, the office will encourage back-office staff to go paperless. The first step is to ensure that all logging is done electronically, including procurement and the ISC system through an end-to-end payment system.
- Another measure will be to install energy and water efficient equipment, including photovoltaic panels where possible.

## Strategic objective 21: Undertake initiatives that will be 'game changers' for the service provision across the Foundation for Social Welfare Services.

- In an ongoing effort to improve service provision, the Corporate Services Directorate will encourage the centralisation of back-office needs.

## Strategic objective 22: Development of new schemes to keep abreast of the rapid changes in society

- With service users in mind, the Directorate will undertake research to develop new schemes and respond to emerging needs.

## Strategic objective 23: Integrating students into our operational system.

- The Directorate will develop a strategy to engage both home and overseas students in its operational system.
- It will also explore the possibility of funding, for example through Erasmus+.

## 2.2.7. IRSAQAR – International Relations, Service Audit, Quality Assurance and Research

### 2.2.7.1 Research

The Research Team conducts quality research that contributes to a knowledge base that educates and informs quality responses to societal needs to improve the well-being of children, families and communities.

## Strategic objective 24: Improve the quality and timeliness of the data provided

- This strategic goal will be met by co-ordinating with the relevant FSWS staff to ensure and improve the quality and timeliness of FSWS data and improving the processes used to analyse data.

## Strategic objective 25: Further utilise FSWS data for research

- Identify key topics of relevance to the FSWS for which service user data and other data, including that from the ESPAD study, can be utilised, and conduct further research.
- For the coming years, the Research Office also identifies the value of studies that examine the linkage of economic and social issues and supplementary qualitative research on the trajectories leading to the issues faced by service users trajectories.

### Strategic objective 26: Support research ambassadors within the FSWS' Agencies.

- Establish research ambassadors within FSWS Agencies, who will be mentored and supported by staff from the Research Team.

### Strategic objective 27: Strengthen collaboration with external stakeholders.

- Identify national and international entities which the FSWS Research Team could initiate or further develop collaboration with.
- Communicate with identified entities and collaborate (further) where relevant.

### Strategic objective 28: Promote the importance of research and data.

- Disseminate research outputs to FSWS front liners and external stakeholders more widely, including through the use of social media, to reach a larger audience with less impact on operational time.
- Promote the vision and mission of the Research Team to a broader audience.
- Highlight the role of research and data with students.

#### 2.2.7.2 Service Audits & Quality Assurance

The mission of the Service Audits and Quality Assurance is to achieve and maintain a high level of quality service through continuous quality assurance and improvement of social care services within the Foundation for Social Welfare Services. All operations of the Foundation should reflect and respond to the needs of service users whilst providing the best possible service with the resources available.

The vision of Service Audits and Quality Assurance is to ensure the best delivery of social care services within the Foundation through continuous improvement and development of its services.

### Strategic objective 29: Review of the service audit role.

- In consultation with the CEO and in accordance with FSWS priority areas, the service audit function will be reviewed.

### Strategic objective 30: Improving FSWS profile while compiling ad-hoc documentation.

- SA&QA will work with Directors from different agencies to identify one experienced professional from each Agency to act as a focal point expert whenever the department would require feedback on documentation.

### Strategic objective 31: Keep abreast with FSWS services, especially new ones

- Members of IRSAQAR Department will twice a year ask the different directors for an update about any changes in services and to update our department with new services that could have been introduced to remain well versed with latest developments.

### Strategic objective 32: Re-structuring of the SA&QA unit

- SA&QA has been experiencing an increase in international documentation such as requests for feedback or to fill in questionnaires. IR section can take up this role, provided that there is an increase in the workforce.
  -
- SA&QA will consequently focus on strategic local documentation and public consultations.

## 2.2.7.3 International Relations

The mission of the IR Department is to coordinate, implement, and administer FSWS policies in International Relations and to promote the interests and values of the FSWS.

The vision of the IR division is to link different sectors within FSWS that deal with foreign issues and to promote the relationship between international organisations that plan, manage and implement social services in the field of social care, social work and social policy. The International Relations Department also serves as a bridge for any opportunity to expand its role within the international field.

### Strategic objective 33: Writing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) as necessary, to regulate the relationship of IR unit with other FSWS services.

- The IR unit will contact all services within Head Office and agencies as necessary to find out what SOPs need to be established within IR. Once agreed, IR will liaise with the respective services so that SOPs will be written accordingly.

### Strategic objective 34: Strengthening networks with international organisations.

- The Department will seek to improve and continue cooperation with international organisations. It will carry out an exercise to identify these organisations, establish contacts, and find areas where the Foundation can collaborate further.
- Communication with all services within the Foundation will take place with the aim of identifying whether there are international organisations with which FSWS needs to either initiate or enhance networks with.
- Through this input, the IR department will enhance collaboration, initiate new memberships and keep the FSWS membership list updated. The goal is to take advantage of the opportunities presented by these memberships and provide opportunities for FSWS staff, including but not limited to conferences, webinars, training, or post- COVID travel meetings.
- The IR department will collect travel/webinar reports and submit an annual report to the CEO with the main highlights.

### Strategic objective 35: Increasing exposure and awareness with Embassies, High Commissions and Consuls.

- The Department will collaborate more with embassies, High Commissions and Consuls to streamline a process whereby the IR Department is a focal point to ensure that the work carried out by the Foundation's directorates and agencies is visible. It will also look at ways in which it can continue to work with these stakeholders.

### Strategic objective 36: Capacity Building

- Through the strategic objectives outlined for the back-office departments, the Foundation aims to remain at the forefront of the social welfare sector in Malta and Gozo by supporting all its operational agencies and directorates. This can be achieved by maintaining a high-quality workforce through staff development and by investing in capacity building. Strengthening building capacity in the back office will be crucial in achieving the strategic

objectives set out in this document as these departments are the backbone of the Foundation for Social Welfare Services.

### Strategic objective 37: Increased Harmonisation

There is a need for increased harmonisation between all directorates and agencies within FSWS. This means bringing people and processes together. Increased harmonisation will improve the internal communication strategy.

- To achieve this strategic objective, certain functions will be merged between the back-office administration of the different agencies and directorates to ensure a more consistent approach.
- A point of reference will be established between the respective agencies and directorates to promote greater harmonisation with the back-office administration of the FSWS.
- Procurement and Finance will work more closely together so that challenges and responsibilities at this level are also addressed.
- Another strategic objective required to achieve greater harmonisation will be to ensure that Operational Plans is consistent for each Director within FSWS.

This strategic vision will be achieved over a period of 5 to 10 years.



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# 3. Agency for Community and Therapeutic Services (ACTS) Strategic Objectives 2021-2031

## 3.1. Summary of Objectives

In this section, the Strategic Objectives of ACTS are listed and will be further explained in further detail in Section 3. These Strategic Objectives are only possible provided that the relative financial means and human resources are made available to the Agency.

1. Strategic Objective 1: Increasing Community Services in more localities
2. Strategic Objective 2: Expanding the reach of the Community Development Approach
3. Strategic Objective 3: Inter-Agency and Intra-Agency Collaborations for better service provision
4. Strategic Objective 4: Implement Group Social Work and Therapeutic Groups
5. Strategic Objective 5: Strengthen existing Community, Therapeutic and Parenting Services
6. Strategic Objective 6: CSRs with private organisations
7. Strategic Objective 7: Research Initiatives
8. Strategic Objective 8: Community Mapping and Engagement
9. Strategic Objective 9: Creating Innovative Projects
10. Strategic Objective 10: Networking for Collaborative Solutions
11. Strategic Objective 11: Parenting Programmes
12. Strategic Objective 12: Evaluating service provision - Expansion of good practice and unlocking interventions towards areas of improvement

## 3.2. Strategic Objectives

The strategic objectives listed in this section of this report are being presented based on how wide-ranging or narrow they are and the timeframe that they are expected to be achieved within, along with any other additional objectives required to reach such objectives. These strategic objectives that are being proposed will only be achievable so long as the relative financial means and human resources will be provided. Due consideration to requests made in this and previous years for increases in the Agency's capacity building also need to be considered.

### 3.2.1. Strategic Objective 1 – Increasing Community Services in more localities

The Community Services are located in a number of localities and while mentoring coverage is on a national level, the available resources still do not allow for thorough coverage of the totality of Community Services in all localities in Malta. Opening more Community Services in localities that are currently not serviced by ACTS would be crucial to providing the best possible and personalised service while increasing the proactive approach of supporting the well-being of communities, particularly those that are struggling. The Community Services serve as FSWS ambassadors in the community and thus also help increase the visibility of other FSWS services, while also raising the reputation of the FSWS in terms of positive actions taken with and in support of the residents of geographical communities.

- ✓ A study of the needs of localities should be undertaken to establish which localities would best be served with a Community Service first. This must be done in conjunction with existing reports and data from other FSWS services (such as IFSS, CPS, LAC, HBTS). This must be reviewed and repeated periodically in order to ensure that the most recent data is used for this purpose.
- ✓ Stakeholders must be engaged following a decision on which localities to focus on. Ideally, a collaboration with the local council, including premises provision, should take place in order to ensure that any new service has a premises to operate from and has the backing of the local council as one of the major stakeholders within a locality.

- ✓ A plan must be prepared for any new service that will be created, including the staffing requirements, the mapping and outreach processes, the premises from where the service will operate and the remit of operations.

This objective is expected to be reached within the next ten years. This is an ongoing objective that can be satisfied multiple times and at multiple points during the next ten years.

### 3.2.2. Strategic Objective 2 – Expanding the reach of the Community Development Approach

The Community Development Approach has proven to be a crucial tool to addressing difficulties within communities, empowering people and identifying their strengths. However, this approach isn't exclusive to the Community Services and should be extended to other services within the FSWS in order for the same to occur in other services. This should not change the ethos or vision of the other services but should help to complement the work already being done.

- ✓ A working group of experts in Community Development is established in order to create a platform whereby discussions on how the Community Development Approach can be meaningful to other services with a view toward adopted or adapting the Community Development Approach to said other services.
- ✓ The working group must identify services that may benefit from such a task, focusing on piloting the approach with one service in the beginning.
- ✓ A review of the pilot testing will be undertaken and if successful, the approach will be brought to other services.

This objective requires a long-term investment and is expected to be reached within the next ten years, although the piloting process can be reached within the next five years.

### 3.2.3. Strategic Objective 3 – Inter-Agency and Intra-Agency Collaborations for better service provision

The Community and Therapeutic Services have good and, in some cases, long-standing collaborations with agencies and services outside of the FSWS. However, these relationships are based on the connections established at a local level rather than on a national level. The FSWS has also entered into multiple collaborations that have been very fruitful for the organisation and its clients which makes such a venture encouraging. The Community and Therapeutic Services believe that MOUs and working groups with key entities, agencies and organisations at a national level can be crucial toward influencing collaborations on a local level.

The success of our clients also depends on the relationships fostered with other FSWS agencies. For this reason, the Community and Therapeutic Services aim at maintaining ongoing discussions, workshops, cross-trainings, and collaborations with other FSWS Agencies and Services. This is being done so that the bridging of services, sharing of good practices and resources, and the joining of forces in addressing clients' needs can take place.

- ✓ Identify the entities, agencies and organisations that the Community and Therapeutic Services would like to begin such dialogue with. These must include entities external to the FSWS such as JobsPlus, the Social Security Department/Servizz.gov, MCAST, Foodbank Lifeline Foundation, NGO community services and other similar organisations and Agencies and Services within the Foundation itself.
- ✓ Draft and sign an MOU that would detail the collaboration to take place with the input of both entities.
- ✓ The creation of projects that target joint collaborations. Examples of this include:
  - i. Persons on social benefits for extended periods are referred to community projects, including core programs (employment, housing and financial stability).
  - ii. Identifying beneficiaries based on pre-established criteria to then create projects based on the needs of the community.
  - iii. Community-based educational courses that deliver basic skills courses, advocate for community-based learning and other courses within the community rather at the

educational institution. Through such collaborations, ACTS can help in outreach and offering premises too.

- iv. A joint stand on how charity services are accessed and what interventions must follow to ensure clients do not depend on donations alone.
- v. Holding workshops, discussions, and collaborations with other FSWS services where cross-training takes place, procedures are devised, and relationships are strengthened.

This objective is expected to be achieved within the next five years, although it must be consistently revisited according to the needs that emerge.

#### 3.2.4. Strategic Objective 4 – Implement Group Social Work and Therapeutic Groups

Group social work and therapeutic groups are seen as a more cost-effective approach that allows for interventions to be targeted at multiple clients and for clients to learn from one another and create support networks with one another. With the lack of social workers and therapists in the field, this would be another way of maximising an already limited resource.

- ✓ Pilot group social work in one Community Service (Mosta identified). This must be reviewed periodically through the use of outcome measures and through a final evaluation report. Piloting of a separate therapeutic group will also take place and will be reviewed in the same manner.
- ✓ Draft a manual based on the pilot groups to guide other social workers and therapists when creating groups.
- ✓ Impart Group Social Work and Therapeutic group training, possibly in collaboration with the UOM, for select staff that would then re-deliver such training to colleagues.
- ✓ Implement Group Social Work and Therapeutic groups in other communities.

This goal is expected to be reached within the next year, depending on human resources and COVID-19 restrictions being eased.

### 3.2.5. Strategic Objective 5 – Strengthen existing Community, Therapeutic and Parenting Services

While increasing the amount of Community and Therapeutic Services is an important goal, this must not come at the expense of strengthening the existing services. The existing services may be better served with more staff, training and resources at their disposal. The refurbishment of the current premises in order to ensure that the premises abides by the relevant health and safety standards and the needs of the community and ACTS staff is also necessary.

- ✓ Investing in human resources such as social workers, community mentors, community development workers, and therapists to further prevent issues from escalating further.
- ✓ Focusing on continuing to invest in excellent financial packages and flexible packages which promote the wellbeing of the employee in order to make the field more attractive.
- ✓ Consider a campaign to encourage more students to enter fields like Social Work, Community Development and Therapy.
- ✓ Training agreements with the UOM, MCAST and other organisations to increase the skills of current staff in Social Work, Community Development and Therapy.
- ✓ Introduction of a case weighing system that is common across the Community Services.
- ✓ A reduction in caseload to increase the amount of in-depth work being carried out with clients.
- ✓ Continue measuring the impact of interventions on clients through the use of outcome measures, which while requiring intensive work, is expected to encourage the use of precise and timely interventions that ultimately would allow for problematic situations to be resolved in a more expeditious manner.

This objective is expected to be achieved within the next five years, although it must be periodically reviewed and extended for the subsequent five years too.

### 3.2.6. Strategic Objective 6 – CSRs with private organisations

The Community and Therapeutic Services should be equipped to support clients with their basic needs. A social committee can tap into resources, including collaborations with private entities (CSR initiatives) to address such basic needs. Dealing with basic needs will allow clients to focus on long-term planning.

- ✓ Identify the organisations that would be willing to collaborate on specific initiatives with ACTS and draft MOUs that detail the specific project or initiative.
- ✓ Establish a social committee that reviews and decides on requests.
- ✓ Establish a timeframe for such projects and extend/review according to the need.

The expected timeframe for this objective is for the next five years.

### 3.2.7. Strategic Objective 7 – Research Initiatives

Apart from the recommended studies in separate strategic objectives, the strategic operations team of ACTS will analyse data from outcome measures and together with the management team will identify potential areas for research.

The expected timeframe for this objective is for the next five years.

### 3.2.8. Strategic Objective 8 – Community Mapping and Engagement

Mapping of communities must be undertaken on a regular basis and while this may be done in different ways, this must be regularly documented. Therefore, all community services must, with the right resources, map the communities they service in order to identify strengths, needs and resources.

The expected timeframe for this objective is for the next five years.

### 3.2.9. Strategic Objective 9 – Creating Innovative Projects

The Community Services are constantly developing community projects that celebrate the strengths of the community to address other emerging needs. The Community Services will endeavour to continue to be innovative and inclusive in its approach for community-based projects.

- ✓ Joint collaborations will be sought to not only address needs but use mediums like sport in order to support the well-being of people in the community.
- ✓ Collaborations with stakeholders will be explored in order to provide outpost services within localities that are hard-to-reach or that require further support. Outposts in the localities of Rabat, Birzebuga and Kalkara are the primary targets, however, other outposts must be considered in the future, not only in specific localities but also in conjunction with existing initiatives such as tied into foodbanks, local events (feasts for example) and so on.

This objective is expected to be achieved within the next five years, although it must be consistently revisited for future years.

### 3.2.10. Strategic Objective 10 – Networking for Collaborative Solutions

More networking, cross-training and joining forces with Government entities, NGOs, the Education system, community leaders and other external services as well as intra-foundation services. Professionals from other fields outside of therapy, such as occupational therapists, psychiatrists as well as, community and mental health nurses, can enrich our therapeutic work in reaching multi-stressed families. This networking will strengthen our service effectiveness and will ensure that those hard-to-reach clients' needs can be addressed.

- ✓ Create platforms for networking with entities based on common goals, common client groups or common themes in order to encourage discussion, cross-training, sharing of ideas and collective action.

- ✓ Widen network collaborations with other entities.
- ✓ Obtain training from specialized services and professionals (including those that exist abroad) in relation to targeting the community and therapeutic needs of multi-stressed clients in an effective manner.
- ✓ Employ occupational therapists, psychiatrists as well as community and mental health nurses within our multi-disciplinary therapeutic teams.

This objective is expected to be achieved within the next five years depending on human resources and funding, although it must be consistently revisited for future years.

### 3.2.11.Strategic Objective 11 – Parenting Programmes

Parenting programmes need to be more widely implemented. More investment should be put into strengthening services such as home start, parent support for challenging behaviour, school social work and the Incredible Years Programme. This will support primary prevention by addressing problems as they appear and before they escalate, therefore ensuring that families ‘in need’ don’t become ‘at risk’.

Outcome measures and feedback forms are proving the effectiveness of our Parenting Services. Currently there is a high demand for the Incredible Years parenting programme, however a shortage of staff limits the ability of the service to have a wider reach.

- ✓ To employ junior and senior practitioners within the Incredible Years team.
- ✓ To provide accreditation opportunities to team members in order to improve team sustainability.
- ✓ To expand the remit of the Incredible Years team in order to support families at risk.

This objective is expected to be achieved within the next two years depending on human resources.

### 3.2.12.Strategic Objective 12 – Evaluating service provision: An expansion of good practice and unlocking interventions towards areas of improvement

As ACTS we have been operating for the last two years. So far feedback of clients and professionals indicates that we are being successful in certain cases. Nevertheless, some questions are left unanswered:

1. What is working and what is making our interventions successful?
2. Are we failing in certain aspects? Why? What interventions need to be undertaken in order to be more successful?
3. As a foundation, why are we still failing to reach the hardest-to-reach clients?
4. Why are we retaining some staff but losing others? What can be done in order to retain team members?
5. Are there any lessons which can be shared with other agencies in order to improve practice across the foundation?

This reflective process and evaluation is imperative in order to ensure sustainable management of our services both within our agency as well as across the foundation.

- ✓ To triangulate data gathered from closure sheets, feedback forms and outcome measures to ensure a more holistic understanding based on different perspectives.
- ✓ To conduct an evaluative study with (past & present) clients, team members as well as services and agencies, based also on the data gathered from the previous point. This will be done in order to answer the questions posed above as well as to understand what effective in-service provision is.
- ✓ To carry out case studies in order to identify examples of good practice and service gaps.

This objective is expected to be achieved within the next two years depending on human resources. This objective needs to be replicated on a periodical basis.



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# 4. Agency APPOGĠ Strategic Objectives 2021-2031

## 4.1. Overview of Agency Appoġġ

### 4.1.1 Mission Statement

Aġenzija Appoġġ as the agency offering quality psycho-social welfare services to individuals and families inclusive of all diversities through empowering, advocating and safeguarding the well-being of these persons. (This new mission statement was discussed with Agency Appoġġ Management but it still needs to be discussed with CEO to approve change).

### 4.1.2 Vision

That the Agency, in collaboration with all stakeholders, provides welfare services of the highest possible standard for its service users such that they are supported and empowered in addressing their needs and enhancing their quality of life.

### 4.1.3 Background information

In 1994 the Social Welfare Development Programme was set up to work for the improvement and development of services in the social welfare sector. At the time the programme comprised of the Child Protection Service, Domestic Violence Unit and the Community Development Unit which offered services in Cospicua, later on expanding to cover the Cottonera area. In the year 2000, a re-structuring exercise was implemented which led to the setting up of Aġenzija Appoġġ in 2001. At the time, the Agency comprised over 30 services, all focusing on children, families and adults in vulnerable situations and/or at risk of social exclusion, and communities. Today, after another re-structuring exercise, the Foundation for Social Welfare Services incorporates Agency Appoġġ, Sedqa, ACTS, DAC, CPD, Gozo Branch and the Head office. The same focus remains but the different Agencies and Directorates have the possibility to go in more depth to develop their services according to the emerging needs of society.

Here the focus is on Agency Appoġġ. In line with Government policy the Agency offers services to:

support and work with families and/or individuals at risk of poverty and social exclusion to empower them to attain the best quality of life;

- support and assist adults, young persons and children who are in vulnerable situations and whose needs can be met through the services currently offered by the Agency;
- support the therapeutic process with such identified persons;
- empower and support families in their needs, with particular emphasis on their parenting role, so as to promote a healthy living environment for children and families;
- work on enhancing community networks to support families and individuals within their environment with special emphasis on those at risk of poverty and/or social exclusion;
- network with stakeholders involved in supporting vulnerable children, families and communities to create a continuum of services to maximise an active participation of service users in society;
- reach out to vulnerable people by providing a platform be it by phone, online or in person;
- promote and implement a zero tolerance to domestic violence and all other forms of abuse, violence and/or exploitation;
- raise awareness on various social issues in particular those addressed by the Agency's services;
- make efficient use of available resources to work towards helping service users gain access to services in a timely manner;
- work towards efficient and effective services at all levels of intervention;
- enhance intra-agency communication and collaboration to ensure best quality services;
- create an environment conducive to best practices;
- advocate for the resources necessary to provide the Agency's services.

The Agency is led by an Operations Director, 4 Managers and a group of Service Area Leaders. Aġenzija Appoġġ incorporates: The Health Social Work Services which are present in diverse health settings; the Domestic Violence Services; the Intake and Family Support Service which include the sub teams on Homelessness and Human Trafficking and the Support line 179 together with the Hotline and the Out of Hours Emergency Service. Included with these services there is the Administration team who supports the running of the Agency. Social welfare services aim at bringing change and through our services we hope to bring about change in people's life - change that will enable them to enhance their potential through the support, care and understanding that they receive from the social welfare professionals that they come in contact with through Aġenzija Appoġġ.

## 4.2. Summary of Objectives

This section highlights the Strategic objectives of Agency Appogg which will be further explained in detail in section 3. The following strategic objectives can only be reached if the necessary financial means and human resources are made available to the Agency.

1. Strategic Objective 1: Service Users of Agency Appogg
2. Strategic Objective 2: People Expertise
3. Strategic Objective 3: Digital Technology
4. Strategic Objective 4: Financial Sustainability
5. Strategic Objective 5: Specific objectives for the different services within the Agency

### 4.3. Strategic Objectives

This is a strategy that focuses on promoting the **NEW** remit of the Agency. Focusing on online services in relation to both generic and specialized services that form part of the Agency. Looking beyond the current services but focusing on the emerging trends and challenges that society is facing. The following strategic objectives will be achieved through a number of measures and initiatives that will be completed in the next five to ten years' subject to the financial means and human resources provided.

#### 4.3.1 Strategic Objective 1 - Service users of Agency Appogg

Achieve and maintain outstanding customer service, by building good service user relationships and offer the best psycho-social welfare services. Improve our services opportunities for new and existing service users.

- ✓ Engaging and empowering our service users to give their feedback, offer their experiences when using our services through involving them in the monitoring and evaluation exercises of our diverse services.
- ✓ Set up a multidisciplinary group with service user involvement to address specific issues that our service users face particularly in situations concerning housing, health, employment, education.
- ✓ Enhance the networking system by assigning cases to workers within the Intake team of the Agency who will focus on their identified designated localities.
- ✓ Awareness programmes with student doctors, nurses and other professionals so they understand the role of the social workers and other professionals employed by FSWS, within the health settings.
- ✓ Addressing Emotional Abuse, both within the domestic environment but also within the services that our service users are accessing.

#### 4.3.2 Strategic Objective 2 - People Expertise

The future of our Agency weighs heavily on creating a space where all employees are continuously trained to develop their potential and keep up with the ongoing emerging trends in our society. We will improve retention and create career advancement opportunities for all our employees. Creating diverse platforms where different service providers and professionals can share their expertise.

- ✓ Ensure continuous training and invest in staff development to continue offer the best services but also for the employees to develop their potential and strengthen service delivery whilst keeping up with the current and emerging trends.
- ✓ Continue to establish different collaborative practices such as Round Table Meetings with different stakeholders and service providers on various topics and share best practices.
- ✓ Organise more internal training and sharing of expertise as well as participate in other training initiatives both locally and abroad.
- ✓ Provide specific and ongoing training to all those in a supervisory role on Supervision so as to be able to supervise their supervisees both on the content and the process.
- ✓ More intensive training programme to our front-line operators, (which can target different Agencies within FSWS and FSWS customer care personnel) to enhance online skills when service users get in touch with our services.
- ✓ Encourage our employees to be pro-active in organising and leading collaborative practices with intra-agency services but also inter-agency.
- ✓ Engagement of a forensic psychologist accessible for consultation (this can be a joint venture with the domestic violence unit and maybe with other services within FSWS).
- ✓ Extend our services to include other professionals within our current services such as cultural mediators, psychiatric nurses, accessible for immediate consultations and interventions together with our professionals.
- ✓ A special focus will be given to Early interventions and Prevention in the different services that fall under the Agency. This will happen both internally but also in collaboration with other services within the FSWS and outside.
- ✓ Improve the capacity building for the different services by looking into different professions that can enhance and support the delivery of our services.

### 4.3.3 Strategic Objective 3 - Digital Technology

As an Agency we aim to offer operational excellence. To achieve this, we aim to increase efficiencies and quality of our services through the use of wireless and virtual technologies. This with the aim to reach a wider spectrum of service users.

- ✓ Invest in I.T resources that can lead to increase efficiencies and quality of the Agency services thus contributing to offer more accessible services to our service users.
- ✓ Enhance our online presence to reach out to service users, through various mediums of online communication together with an effective digital campaign promoting new online social platforms.
- ✓ Discuss the possibility of introducing an online database, accessible both by internal and external services which gives real time information about the available placements for homeless persons.
- ✓ Introduce a technological ideation so elderly can communicate with their relatives particularly those who are in residential care.
- ✓ Organise an online system (similar to the one used by Supportline 179) which is accessible by all employees including internal and external services which gives information about the various services that are provided in the community.

### 4.3.4 Strategic Objective 4 - Financial Sustainability

The Agency intends to continue using and managing its financial resources to ensure the continuity of efficiency and economy of our services that are required to achieve the desired outcomes, that will serve the needs of our service users and communities.

- ✓ Focus on good, creative leadership and accountability by evaluating and monitoring the different services, encourage dissemination of best practice, organise different in-house training sessions to update and remind the workforce of the different remits of services the Agency offers as well as to update procedures with new trends in society.

- ✓ Continue to identify different areas of research to forward to FSWS Research Department that will inform our practice and be in a better position to offer relevant, effective and quality services.
- ✓ Continue to work and present initiatives to the Foundation for Social Welfare Services to be allocated the required recurrent annual expenditure to sustain the current and future services of the Agency.
- ✓ Tap into and explore different European Funds for innovative and creative projects for the Agency's Services with the help of the Corporate Services Directorate within the Foundation.
- ✓ Continue using and introducing the Case Management System to the different Agency services to enhance efficiencies, support and monitoring of such services.
- ✓ Refurbish and maintain a good décor and appearance of the Agency's building/offices so that employees and service users feel more welcome by the environment surrounding them.

#### 4.3.5 Strategic Objective 5 – Specific objectives for the different services within the Agency

##### 4.3.5.1 Intake and Family Support Service

##### 4.3.5.11 Homelessness

- ✓ Liaise with entities outside FSWS to build a solid network and identify resources that each entity can supply for the benefit of homeless individuals such as language courses, employment opportunities and others. This can be reached through setting up of round table meetings every month.
- ✓ Meet the basic needs of the homeless individuals –having basic items like food on premises as it is difficult to do an assessment when the person lacks basic needs such as food and/or clothing. Having a place where such items who are sometimes donated can be stored and accessed easily can be very helpful for the running of this service.

- ✓ Reach Out and Work from the communities. Continue to liaise with the already existing Communities on homelessness but also target other areas where there are no community centres by reaching out through local councils, Parishes and other local entities.
- ✓ Focus on a long-term plan for the homeless individuals once they are settled in a shelter so as to reduce the possibility of having recurrent service users with same issue. Continuous discussions with the Housing Authority need to be kept.
- ✓ Develop an emergency shelter that fall under the Agency, for homeless persons who seek support through FSWS services, whereby following an initial assessment, a care plan is prepared for each individual with stipulated timeframes and eventually referred to other shelters and/or Housing with an action plan in place.

#### 4.3.5.12 Human Trafficking

- ✓ Enhance communication and awareness with the Malta Police Force to refer cases to the service.
- ✓ Develop a Facebook page and an online referral system for victims to approach the service through online means/social media.
- ✓ Raise awareness on targeted victims mainly those of domestic servitude and sexual exploitation by leaving leaflets informing the public of our service in nearby stores such as Grocery stores, hairdressers and others.

#### 4.3.5.2 Support line 179, Hotline and Emergency Service

- ✓ Together with the Helpline continue to provide online help for persons who need guidance regarding internet related risks.
- ✓ Provide a new service for child sexual abusers and for persons who have paedophilic ideations to be able to prevent the abuse from happening. Staff would need to be trained abroad. A

training programme has already been identified from a reliable organisation within the UK and with whom the Hotline personnel already is in contact.

- ✓ Setup a service targeting youths who are engaging into excessive use of the internet in collaboration with other services within the FSWS who are more specialised in the addiction field.
- ✓ Continue to honour the membership within the INHOPE and Insafe, to adhere to their vision for the coming years, continue to contribute to their database, and to actively participate in their trainings, conferences and annual general meetings.
- ✓ Invest in an App which is reliable and allows telephone calls to work without flaws.
- ✓ The Support line 179 professionals envisage to provide specialised training for various entities including the Malta Police Force, Health professionals and other front liners who often make use of 179. They will explore with the Employment Support Programme a collaboration to offer such training.
- ✓ Work on a digital marketing campaign to reach out to those members of the general public who have more presence online and do not follow other media such as television and radio.
- ✓ An evaluation of the current after-hours emergency service and the deliverables the service is achieving which can lead to a service that can be amalgamated and/or extended, to move away from the notion of after-hours emergency service **BUT** a service available 24hours a day to deal with regular referrals/emergency/crisis situation.

### 4.3.5.3 Health Services

#### 4.3.5.31 SAMOC Social work service

- ✓ Re-start the Just Sibs group in collaboration with Karl Vella Foundation. Continue to help and support siblings of children or their parents who have/had cancer to meet and enjoy some time with other children through various means. They are also offered therapeutic sessions.

- ✓ Establish diverse platforms where collaborations and discussions with different entities within and outside FSWS are held with the aim of improving the service delivery of this specialised area of social work.

#### 4.3.5.32 MDH Social work service

- ✓ Will be working on creating awareness with other professionals within MDH to help them understand the role of the social workers within the health setting. This liaison will help to facilitate the work of social workers but also to offer all the services available to our service users who will be at their most vulnerable time in their life.

#### 4.3.5.33 Benniena Service

- ✓ Social workers are to be involved in the Pilot Project with regards to Positive Parenting.
- ✓ Continue to attend to meetings organised by the Health Professionals to give the social input on social cases that deem attention by our services.

#### 4.3.5.34 Active Ageing and Community Care

- ✓ Addressing the issue of elderly abuse by their children/relatives by introducing and engaging professional support workers to support vulnerable people (elderly, persons suffering from mental illness such as Dementia) both in the community and also whilst in residential care focusing on emerging needs such as:
  - Liaising more with different community services and NGO's
  - Addressing basic needs such as lack of food through different means
  - Money management skills both one to one sessions but also group work
  - Mental health support
  - Transportation and,
  - Housing issues.

#### 4.3.5.34 Domestic Violence Services

- ✓ Introduce a support group and after care services for victims of domestic violence and their children.
- ✓ Evaluate the service given by the Department of Probation and Parole, and identify commonalities and lacunas in relation to the services offered by Agency Appogg.
- ✓ Employment of Legal support that is directly accessible for professionals working within the Domestic Violence Field.
- ✓ Organize an awareness campaign with our younger generations due to an increase in cases of child to parent violence. This could be done in collaboration with the Prevention Team within FSWS.
- ✓ Raise awareness together with other professionals on the importance of having DV cases handled by the same Magistrate(s).



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# 5. Directorate for Alternative Care (Children and Youths) Strategic Objectives 2021-2031

## 5.1. Summary of Objectives

The Directorate for Alternative Care (Children and Youths) offers specialized services for children in alternative care and for vulnerable youths. The directorate is responsible for the care of children who had to be removed from their parents' care for various reasons. The directorate's aim is to work closely with these minors who would have experienced traumatic episodes in their lives and their families, so that where possible, the minors are reunited with their birth families. When this is not possible, the directorate advocates for minors to find stability and permanency in alternative care placements.

The Directorate's vision is to offer an individualized care plan for minors living in out of home care. The professionals within the directorate holistically address the needs of the minors in care since every minor has a unique story and experience. The directorate is equipped with various professionals, from different backgrounds, so that the minors can be followed from various aspects of their lives, including their health, education, identity, psychological development, and relationships.

## 5.2. Overview of the strategic objectives for the coming 10 years:

### 5.2.1 Strategic Objective 1: Embracing a multi-disciplinary approach

As a directorate we feel enriched that our professionals come from different professional backgrounds. This enhances our practice by incorporating different expertise in our daily practice. This year, apart from various professionals from the helping profession, the directorate has also welcomed a consultant paediatrician and a lawyer, with the purpose to enrich our everyday practice.

- **The vision of the directorate for the coming years is to continue to embrace this multi-disciplinary approach in our practice.** At present none of the services within the directorate is made up from team members holding a uniform profession.
- The directorate's aim is to continue to enhance this way of practice and to open possibilities for people from different professions to join our teams.
- **This vision will be immediately adopted by DAC, and it will be ongoing for the upcoming ten years.**

### 5.2.2 Strategic Objective 2: Working within a multicultural context

Our ethos is to offer a service to everyone, thus as a directorate we feel that we need to equip ourselves to reach and help out persons coming from different cultural backgrounds. Our professionals keep an open and curious stance so that we get to know our clients and their families and get acquainted with their cultures and traditions.

- **Our vision for the coming years is to offer training to professionals to be more open in their work with clients coming multicultural backgrounds.**
- **As a directorate we need to become more culturally sensitive and open to new realities.**
- This strategy will be implemented in the upcoming **two to three years**.

Our directorate has the responsibility to train and assess foster carers and adoptive parents. Over the past years we have been encountering more applicants with diverse multicultural backgrounds.

- Thus, **another goal for the coming years is for the directorate to introduce more culturally sensitive training courses and assessment tools to cater for all the applicants interested in fostering or adoption**, notwithstanding their cultural background.
- This strategy will be implemented in the upcoming **two to three years**.

### 5.2.3 Strategic Objective 3: Training in parental skills for parents to cater for emerging trends

As a directorate we believe that parents need support and guidance throughout their journey, since parenting is a life changing experience. As a foundation we already offer parenting skills courses to multi-stressed families, however the directorate feels the need that families who are not experiencing social or psychological problems, should also be supported.

- The vision of the directorate is to **introduce accessible means to share parenting tips for different kinds of families.**
- These tips can be **shared through social media or mobile phone applications**, in order to be reached by the targeted audience.
- The directorate also believes that these **parental skills tips should be shared also with grandparents**, who today support many families and children.
- Nowadays, most of the parents are in employment, thus **the directorate believes that liaison with employers should be held to help us reach all the working parents**. By having employers on board, working parents will feel that they are being understood and supported in their family roles.
- **This vision is envisaged to be reached in the upcoming five years.**

The directorate has the responsibility to work with families whose children have been taken into care. A vision that the directorate strives to solidify is **the importance of direct work with biological families, especially during the first few years of when a minor is taken into care**. Chapter 602, Minor Protection (Alternative Care) Act, structured our work and allowed us to allocate timeframes to cases of looked after children. As a directorate we are embracing a new principle of practice which allows us to work thoroughly with the biological families of children in care, to determine whether there is a chance for reunification as soon as the children are taken into an out of home care placement.

Regardless of the history of the family whose child was placed into care, the directorate still works and invests in the family to explore its strengths and resources.

- **The vision of the directorate is to continue to solidify this principle of practice and to make sure that there are no chances of reunification before a minor is granted permanency in an out of home care placement.**
- The directorate plans to **introduce training in an evidence-based programme to structure the work carried out with parents whose children have been taken into care .**
- **The directorate plans to reach this vision in the upcoming two years.**

#### 5.2.4 Strategic Objective 4: Advocating for minors under the age of three to be placed in foster care

The directorate's aim is to ensure that minors under the age of three, who need to reside in an out of home care placement, should be placed in a family setting and not a residential care setting. The directorate believes that all minors should be given the possibility to be placed in a family setting, if this is in their best interest, however emphasis is placed on minors below the age of three who are still in their crucial years of development.

The directorate works closely with the biological families of minors who are taken into care, to explore possibilities for reunification. However, when this is not possible, the directorate will advocate for minors under the age of three to be given stability and permanency through a fostering placement.

- At present the directorate is already addressing these cases individually, and **the aim for the coming years is to continue to solidify this practice; where cases of minors below the age of three are given high priority, to ensure that these infants are being brought up in an environment where they are given individual attention.**
- **This vision has already started to be implemented and the directorate plans that it will be ongoing for the upcoming ten years.**

#### 5.2.5 Strategic Objective 5: Promoting emergency and short-term foster care

Foster care is evolving together with the vision of the directorate. Since professionals are working intensively with biological families during the period after the minor is taken into care, to explore any chance of reunification, the need for more short-term foster care placements is emerging.

The directorate is already investing in trainings, seminars and webinars to introduce this new emerging trend and to share this principle of practice with our foster carers.

- The aim of the directorate is to **continue to solidify this notion and to rope in foster carers in the whole process.**
- **Foster carers have to be active participants during the whole process, even when professionals from the directorate are exploring chances of reunification.**
- **The directorate has already started to work on this vision and plans to keep on**

**strengthening this vision in the coming one to two years.**

### **5.2.6 Strategic Objective 6: Catering for minors of ages between 7-15 who are living in residential placements**

Even though out of care placements started to be more regulated with the introduction of Public Social Partnerships (PSPs), there is a lacuna in residential placements catering for ages between 7 to 15. The Community Residential Homes run by the Directorate offer placements to various minors who fall in this age group. The directorate also strives to find a foster care placement for these minors, however given the challenges that they might present, foster care might not always be the best option for them.

- **The directorate will continue to lobby and advocate so that more placements for this age group are created.**
- **The directorate also believes that residential settings should shift towards a community care approach so that these minors are brought up in homes integrated within the community.**
- **The aim of the directorate is to tackle this vision in the coming three years.**

### **5.2.7 Strategic Objective 7: Eradicating the “lost in care” phenomenon**

The term “lost in care” refers to minors who have been living in the care system for a number of years without a concrete and individualized care plan, that explores either the possibility that they are reunited with their birth family or the right to be given permanency in out of home care.

- **The directorate’s vision is to eradicate this possibility, by providing individualized care plans to all minors in care.**
- **Care plans are revised regularly with the aim to establish reunification or permanency in out of home care following few months of years in the care system.**
- **The directorate has already started to address this vision and aims to continue doing so for the upcoming ten years.**

This year the directorate also introduced the after-care service with the aim to support youths approaching the age of eighteen who are living in the care system.

- **The aim of the directorate is to continue to solidify and expand the aftercare service, with the aim to establish a plan for smooth transition out of the care system for our youths.**
- **This vision has already started to be implemented; however the directorate’s aim is to solidify this service in the upcoming two years.**

### 5.2.8 Strategic Objective 8:: Mentoring of young persons

The directorate's vision is to invest in more professionals who will work closer and hands on with vulnerable young persons followed by our youth services. The directorate believes that working on the ground hand in hand with young persons is a principle of practice that can be solidified in the coming five years.

- **The vision of the directorate is that in the coming years professionals will be trained to go in the residences of where problematic youths reside, to work with them hands on, such as help them to wake up in the morning, motivate them to start the day in a productive way, and help them in their day-to-day struggles.**
- **This vision will be implemented in the upcoming three years.**

### 5.2.9 Strategic Objective 9: Advocating for the development of a national alternative care policy

One of the directorate's vision for the coming five years is to advocate for the development of a national alternative care policy.

- **The directorate believes that minors in out of home care should have their own national policy that regulates aspects of their out of home care experience.**
- Stakeholders, main carers, care leavers, and minors residing in care, should all contribute to this national policy, which will be a tool that strengthens the voice of minors who are brought up in the care system.
- **The aim of the directorate is to work on this vision in the coming five years.**

### 5.2.10 Strategic Objective 10: Advocate for minors in care and set up a committee made up of children and young persons in care to put forward the voice of our children in care

Another vision which the directorate aims to work on in the coming five years is the **setting up of a committee, made up minors in care, to put forward their voice.** The directorate already started to hold a number of focus groups with minors residing in care to gather an understanding of their experiences and needs. However, the directorate would like to take this to a bigger level by setting up a committee. The directorate believes that the key to improve our practice is to listen to the voices of minors in care and they hold first hand experiences of being brought up in the care system.

- The vision is to set up a committee, made up of minor in care, to put forward their voice. **The aim of the directorate is to set this committee in the coming one to two years.**



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# 6. Directorate for Child Protection Services Strategic Objectives 2021-2031

## 6.1. Strategic Objectives for 5 to 10 years' time

In ten years' time the Directorate for Child Protection Service aims to operate on three fundamental pillars:

- A. **a preventative pillar**, which includes research and development ability, content creation ability for national campaigns, continuous training culture, administrative support
- B. **an investigative pillar**, which includes the opening of 6 regional teams of child protection investigation teams, set up the national focal point for international matters relating to child abuse/ trafficking of minors, court case management system, parental alienation assessments, children's house and Lab.
- C. **a therapeutic pillar**, which includes one-to-one support to clients, specialized therapies for traumatized children, specialized support groups to different groups of perpetrators and reunification program.

To achieve these goals, the DCPS is setting the following 5 strategic Objectives:

### 6.1.1 Strategic Objective 1 – Court Services and the Parental Alienation Syndrome

The Child Protection Directorate is clearly moving into a court culture, which requires evidence-based practice and a heightened scrutiny of the child protection architecture. A rise in parental alienation reporting is being noted and it requires the association to the parent alienation movement.

- 1.1 In the coming year, the Directorate will be restructuring the court services and introduce new assessment tools to assess court mandated cases.
- 1.2 The Directorate will identify the key stakeholders who will join the court network for better communication and work collaboration between entities.
- 1.3 In order to achieve a competent professional reputation in separation cases, and especially those cases which are presenting the Parental Alienation Syndrome (PAS), workers will be trained on this phenomenon.
- 1.4 In 3-years' time, the DCPS is envisaging that it will be equipped enough with the training and knowledge gathered to develop a Parental Alienation Syndrome assessment.
- 1.5 Once the assessments are in place and workers are competent in using them, the Re-unification Programme will be the next step to be follow.

### 6.1.2 Strategic Objective 2 – AWAS/UMAS

- 2.1 In the coming two years, the Directorate will be setting up the AWAS team and an official unaccompanied minors asylum seekers (UMAS) system, in order to assess all the unaccompanied

minors identified by AWAS and/ or other organizations working with immigrants and asylum seekers.

### 6.1.3 Strategic Objective 3 – National Guidelines in relation to abuse and parenting and Media Campaigns

- 3.1 In the coming Year, it is envisaged to begin a functional parenting campaign.
- 3.2 The Directorate will be drafting the first National Guidelines in relations to Abuse and Parenting.
- 3.3 The Directorate will assert more presence in the media especially on sexual abuse and functional parenting.
- 3.4 In five-years' time, the Directorate will set up the playfield Campaign project in collaboration with the Marketing department of the FSWS.

### 6.1.4 Strategic Objective 4 – Therapeutic services

- 4.1 The Directorate perceives the need of a therapeutic pillar especially in services provided to paedophiles.
- 4.2 In 4-years' time, the DCPS aims to offer enough variance of specialized services to help perpetrators relearn new ways.
- 4.3 During this time, the DCPS aims to help parents to improve their conditions and support victims of trauma to overcome their abuse.
- 4.4 In five years' time, the Directorate will develop a support group for non-custodial parents and another support group for parents using corporal punishment.

### 6.1.5 Strategic Objective 5 – Operations of all services

- 5.1 In the light of all these changes, CP appears to have a much greater need for an evidence-informed assessment, have a much greater need for metrics to support clinician observations and have a much greater need for new competencies to improve agility around and within court procedures.
- 5.2 The challenges identified in this area are various, of which the judicial system is not child friendly and the rights of the child, both as a victim and as a witness, are shadowed by the rights of the parents, who in the scenario of Child Protection situations are the accused.
- 5.3 The Directorate for Child Protection Services aims to a child friendly judicial system that is sensitive to the children's needs and whereas professionals from different services and entities come together to achieve a common goal.
- 5.4 The Directorate for Child Protection Service aspires to reach a target where it is difficult to distinguish who is the lawyer and who is the child protection worker in the court room.

- 5.5 Between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> year of this strategic plan, the DCPS is aspiring to have a functional children's house and its own laboratory to gather evidence.
- 5.6 During this period, the Directorate is aiming to have the child protection networks functioning smoothly and the child protection regions increased to 6.
- 5.7 In 7 years' time, the capacity building of the Directorate is required to increase to absorb the load and operate efficiently and effectively throughout the expansion of services.



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# 7. Gozo Branch Operations Strategic Objectives 2021-2031

## 7.1 Introduction

In June 2018, the Foundation for Social Welfare Services set up a directorate in Gozo to ensure that its services to vulnerable persons are extended to Gozo without any compromise in quality, which in normal circumstances could be expected due to distance and lack of accessibility. Thus, the mission of the Gozo Branch Operations is to provide the same services to all Gozo residents, irrespective of whether they are Gozo born or Maltese and foreigners living in Gozo. Currently, the services offered by this directorate are the: Generic Social Work Service, Looked After Children, Fostering, Home Start Għawdex, Courts Services and Supervised Access Visits, Social Work Service within the Gozo General Hospital including psychiatry, Marsalforn Community Service, Community Services (previously known as LEAP), Gozo Prison Project, HBTS, Psychotherapy Service, Preventive Services which include TFAL 3, TFAL 5 and SAFE, and the Emergency On-Call service.

The vision of the FSWS Gozo Branch Operations is to extend the services offered in Malta, in a uniform manner in Gozo, while aiming to strengthen the social infrastructure on the island. This is continuously worked on through the constant investment in our services and by working tirelessly with the various social stakeholders. The values considered central in achieving our mission and vision are commitment, fairness, responsibility, diligence, integrity and quality and timely service.

## 7.2 Current situation

The services in Gozo need to meet a wide array of social issues from all walks of life. Since the launch of the Gozo Branch Operations 3 years ago, and through continuous effort to make the residents of Gozo aware and comfortable in using the services offered, the demands are ever-increasing. Additionally, due to the cheaper rent when compared to Malta, a considerable number of individuals have relocated to Gozo, further changing the Gozitan demography and increasing the volume of social problems.

Gozo saw an increase in immigration, both legal and illegal, yet integration is still lacking. Maltese, European and third county national individuals living in Gozo, often have no social support coming

from family and friends and thus rely more on the services offered by the Gozo Branch Operations and other stakeholders. A substantial number of foreign residents are still unable to communicate in English or Maltese. This language barrier often hinders their integration and holds them back from seeking assistance from services. Recently, there was also an increase in unemployment and homeless individuals especially refugees and foreigners hailing from Eastern countries.

## 7.3 Strategic Objectives

### 7.3.1 Strategic Objective 1 – Address Immigration in Gozo

The language barrier may be one of the reasons why immigrants or refugees do not approach our services. This is an issue since most shelters do not accept residents who do not speak Maltese or English. The lack of translators hinders integration within the Maltese context and enhances the existing xenophobia.

- The Gozo Branch Operations aims at working with the relevant stakeholders to provide interpreters when non-Maltese/English speaking service users seek our services.
  - This objective is expected to be achieved within the next 2 years, although it might be reviewed depending on the demand and the availability of funds.
- Increased intercultural awareness is needed for locals to be on board and engaged in welcoming foreign residents while also assisting the latter in adapting better to the Maltese culture. This can be done through specified programs and initiatives, incorporating different stakeholders, local families, and service users.
  - This objective is expected to be achieved within the next 5 years, although it must be consistently revisited according to the needs that emerge.
- Increase communication with UNHCR and JRS to better liaise with them.
  - This objective is expected to be achieved within the next year, depending on the availability of the stakeholders.

### 7.3.2 Strategic Objective 2 – Strengthen Family Support Services

The Gozo Branch Operations is aware of the lack of basic parenting skills and budgeting skills amongst the service users. Moreover, certain basic family services that are offered in Malta are not yet being

offered in Gozo. These services include the specialisations of incredible years, youth, addiction, and domestic violence.

- The Directorate aims at gradually increasing the services being offered in Gozo to bring the help closer to the service user and thus making assistance more accessible.
  - This objective is expected to be achieved within the next 10 years and must be consistently revisited according to the needs that emerge.
- Training about parenting skills and budgeting skills will be organised by the directorate's professionals to be provided to our service users with the intention of dealing with situations proactively while breaking the cycle.
  - This objective is expected to be achieved within the next 2 years and must be consistently revisited according to the needs that emerge.
- Awareness programs intended to empower children to know their rights and be prepared to defend them will be organised while keeping the parents on board.
  - This objective is expected to be achieved within the next 3 years and must be consistently revisited according to the needs that emerge.

### 7.3.3 Strategic Objective 3 – Address Addiction in Gozo

Given that addiction preventive programs have lacked for 14 years in Gozo, there is a large number of young people who were not reached. According to the ESPAD, addiction is quite high, especially in Gozitan youngsters.

- For this reason, the directorate aims to deliver addiction preventive programmes to adolescents and youths in Gozo. These programmes are to be offered through the secondary schools, the Sixth Form Facility and MCAST Campus.
  - This objective is expected to be achieved within the next 3 years, depending on the availability of the stakeholders.
- The Gozo Branch Operations will also work towards providing an alternative addiction service in Gozo and to provide a more suitable DETOX centre location.
  - This objective is expected to be achieved within the next 5 years and must be continuously reviewed according to the emerging needs.

### 7.3.4 Strategic Objective 4 – Engage Service Users

The Gozo Branch Operations believes that we need to move away from giving boxes and evolve into outreach and integration.

- The Directorate will work with different stakeholders to help in the development of social enterprises with the intention of helping service users to depend less on benefits and take on a more functional role in society. It would also be beneficial to have a learning hub where education on vocational skills and mentoring can take place. Gozo can act as the ideal model due to the small scale.
  - This objective is expected to be achieved within the next 5 years and must be continuously reviewed according to the emerging needs and provision of funds.
- Going forward, the emphasis is more on community work as a pro-active tool in order to be with the service users and shift the services according to the shift in societal needs.
  - This objective is expected to be achieved within the next 5 years and must be continuously reviewed according to the emerging needs.

### 7.3.5 Strategic Objective 5 – Invest in Multidisciplinary Approach

The current system of the so-called ‘multidisciplinary approach’ is not truly working. There is still a lot of loopholes, silos, and duplication of work. The court, police, hospital, church, education and FSWS all share service users and a set of common goals, therefore more factual and organised multidisciplinary teams need to be established and followed up. These stakeholders need to collaborate more together in order to complement each other.

- In this regard, the Gozo Branch Operations will create an equip with representatives from the different stakeholders in order to be able to better discuss and tangibly act in a holistic way and for the benefit of the collective service users. This will enable all the social stakeholders to help the vulnerable together and see that people do not fall in the cracks.
  - This objective is expected to be achieved within the next 2 years and must be continuously reviewed according to the emerging needs and availabilities of the other stakeholders.
- The Directorate will work towards organising a court multidisciplinary team where the magistrate would have social workers, psychologist, psychotherapists, police, etc., to discuss and tackle certain issues such as SAVs and Domestic Violence .

- This objective is expected to be achieved within the next 5 years and must be continuously reviewed according to the emerging needs and availabilities of the other stakeholders.
- Have memorandums of understanding in place or at least protocols with the various stakeholders.
  - This objective is expected to be achieved within the next 5 years and must be continuously reviewed according to the emerging needs and availabilities of the other stakeholders.

### 7.3.6 Strategic Objective 6 – Reinforce Operations

Unfortunately, the lack of professional and administrative staff makes it difficult to meet the increasing demand for the services. For this reason, much of the work currently being done is based on crises intervention.

- The Gozo Branch Operations will offer more employee support such as group supervision in order to retain workers and keep burnout at bay while improving service provision.
  - This objective is expected to be achieved within the next 2 years and must be continuously reviewed according to the emerging needs.
- Increase in capacity building for the Gozo Branch Operations.
  - This objective is expected to be achieved within the next 10 years and must be continuously reviewed and updated according to the emerging needs and in line with the Human Resources directives.
- The Directorate plans to implement outcome measures and collect feedback from service users and stakeholders in order to improve and provide an evidence-based service according to the needs emerging from statistics (CMS).
  - This objective is expected to be achieved within the next 5 years and must be continuously reviewed according to the emerging needs.



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# 8. Sedqa Strategic Objectives 2021-2031

## 8.1 Introduction & Pillars

Agenzija Sedqa evolves in an ever-changing milieu where societal changes and drug abuse trends vary constantly. For this matter, this vision incorporates a list of objectives which aim to enable the agency to continue its mission, notwithstanding the trends or changes that may come along in the future, whilst keeping the service users of the agency at the heart of its operations. This vision for the years 2021 – 2030, is based on an on the ground analysis of the current societal trends and the developments seen in the past years to the drug scene in Malta.

The main 4 pillars on which this vision is based, are;

**Pillar 1: Shift in Language** – A shift in the language around substance users, abuser and people who have a substance use disorder to ensure they are not stigmatised by society at large.

**Pillar 2: Improved Pedagogy**– A strong focus on improved pedagogy leading to a better-informed society about the challenges of addictions as well as everyone’s role towards a healthy society.

**Pillar 3: Deliver a strong, well targeted message** – In an era in which society is continuously bombarded by messages from all over, Agenzija Sedqa must have a strong and well targeted message that can reach society at large, specially designated groups and social partners alike, in a way to reach everyone according to their needs and the role they have in line with the agency’s vision and mission.

**Pillar 4: Attuned Service Delivery**– There is no service that in its form or essence can be valid for ever without undergoing any changes. For this matter, Agenzija Sedqa is duty bound by its own nature as a service for an ever-changing society, to keep up with the trends and changes within society itself and the addictions scene. In doing so, the agency ensures that it is in touch with the people it serves and their needs, for its services to remain relevant and effective.

## 8.2 Pillar 1 – Shift in Language

In any society, language defines the way members of a community, describe, think, form judgement and shape action around a particular subject. It is for this very reason that managing the discourse and language used in relation to substance and behaviours that can cause addictions, as well as around people effected by addictions helps by itself to shape society's outlook on this social issue. As the national Agency, we are duty bound not only to help people in need on an individual level, but also to having a leading role in helping society embrace and positively contribute towards the well-being of anyone going through addiction related difficulties.

### 8.2.1 Objective 1: The Addict is not the Problem.

Agenzija Sedqa has a key role in helping society at large shifting the language about persons dealing with substance or behaviour addictions. There is a strong need to move away from seeing the addict as opposed to the person with addiction difficulties. In looking at a person as an addict, society stops seeing the person and sees, the behaviours of the person as a source for their identity. This highly impact the way people undergoing duress due to an addiction or the abuse of a substance or behaviour look for help. A change in the language around addictions will help people in search of help come forward without fear of labelling and stigma. It will help shape the way family members and the significant others view the person asking for help about their addiction related difficulty. It will also help shape the outlook society has on persons who underwent a rehabilitation process leading to a higher chance of a full reintegration into society.

Agenzija Sedqa has also a key role in promoting a HUMAN RIGHTS APPROACH when dealing with people who have addiction related problems. Professionals within the agency still experience serious difficulties to ensure service provision to people who might be still struggling with addiction difficulties. A human rights approach can ensure that the addiction does not take over the human behind it, no matter the extent to which the addiction itself shapes the person's behaviour. Agenzija Sedqa must ensure that person with addiction difficulties have their needs seen to and take priority over the addiction issues.

This Objective requires continuous work throughout the whole span of this ten-year period to ensure that the shift occurs within individual, communities, and institutions alike.

### 8.2.2 Objective 2: Become a Reference Point.

In relation to its standing as the national agency, Agenzija Sedqa is bound to be a central reference point to Government and the Addictions Advisory Board in the drafting of policy and legislation. This will in turn ensure that policies and legislation truly hold the persons effected by addictions at their core. Agenzija Sedqa needs to reach out and become a reference point to government entities and NGOs to ensure that the needs of people dealing with addictions are not overlooked or worse off unmet due to the addiction problem.

This Objective requires continuous work throughout the whole span of this ten -year period to ensure that Agenzija Sedqa is consulted with, in matters which directly or indirectly effect the well-being of persons dealing with addiction problems.

### 8.2.3 Objective 3: Create a Common Understanding Framework with other entities.

Agenzija Sedqa is just one service in a complex network of services that clients may need. The best way of ensuring the needs of Sedqa clients are met, is to ensure that cooperating entities share a common understanding as to the needs of persons with addiction problems. For this reason, Agenzija Sedqa needs to invest in strong relationships with other entities both within as well as outside of FSWS itself. Entities such as child protection services, homeless shelters, mental health institutions, correctional facilities, the Housing Authority, Jobs+, UNHCR and Migrant organisations as well as the education sector (Primary/Secondary/Higher Secondary & Tertiary institutions) all play a major role in ensuring support to Sedqa clients, both during rehabilitation as well as in the re-integration phase.

This objective may in itself bring to light new necessary or relevant synergies with entities with which to date Agenzija Sedqa does not collaborate. It may also give space to collaborations on different levels with some entities with which contact already exists.

This Objective can be reached within the next 5 years and continue to develop there after wherever new emerging trends may highlight the need for the development of further collaborations.

## 8.3 Pillar 2 – Improved Pedagogy

The way we understand addictions changed through the past decades, and with that, the way we treat addictions and go through prevention work. These changes bring along with them the need to conceptualise the changes in society differently and for this reason to tackle issues in a different way.

### 8.3.1 Objective 1: Parents as Social Partners.

One of the major shifts which needs to happen in the way Agenzija Sedqa educates about addiction is to start looking at those interested in our message not merely clients or service users, but as social partners. The most important lesson gained from the achievements of the Icelandic model was the way in which Iceland brought everyone together, not to learn, but to do something which serves society at large in a way to keep youths away from substance abuse. Agenzija Sedqa needs to work more at engaging parents in order to enable them to become part of a culture change. The public needs to feel empowered to do anything within his ability, as little as that can be, influencing family members, communities and ultimately society and its norms at large.

We need to sustain parents in with their efforts of upbringing and nurturing of children by giving them information about the world their children grow in. We need to strengthen their digital awareness and make them believe in the power of connection with their children. In this way, we will have stronger family units and stronger communities to which young people and adults alike feel they belong to.

Agenzija Sedqa should aim to work on developing stronger, parent-oriented material in the next coming 4 years.

### 8.3.2 Objective 2: Early Interventions.

Early intervention is already one of Sedqa's strongest points with prevention sessions held with school children as early as when they are seven years old. The skills-based programmes need to continue being strengthened with services that target children's wellbeing to ensure healthier upcoming generations who are better equipped to deal with traumas and challenges encountered in life.

Early interventions however should also be extended to other societal structures, which in themselves offer an environment where children and youths grow. Of utmost importance are early interventions within family units who might be enduring difficulties on different levels. Family breakdown is one of those events that highly impact children and early intervention to either prevent or if not, avert negative impact of such situations is necessary. Sedqa needs to continue liaising with other institutions such as courts to ensure that any help offered is given as early as possible and not after a net deterioration of familial relationships.

Agenzija Sedqa aims to start working as early as possible to bring together numerous stakeholders with a common interest in this area. Throughout the coming three years it will participate in developing an operating procedure with interested parties for early interventions with children, youth

and family units in distress. The objectives of this operating procedure should aim to offer children healthy environments necessary for them to grow into health adults.

### 8.3.3 Objective 3: Strengthening Communities.

No one is better placed to help different communities than important figures such as community leaders. Sedqa already invests a lot through interventions with important community stakeholders. Starting from schools to community groups, youth organisations and sport organisations, Sedqa has deep rooted links to the Maltese community, which links need to continue being strengthened through more investment in community leaders. Sedqa can help leaders of community groups to be equipped with intervention skill that can help early detection of issues that might arise. In this way Sedqa could ensure that leaders within the community, can become points of reference to the community itself bringing together acquired knowledge about addictions with their role as trusted individuals/organisations very close to the grassroots of the community. This objective will ultimately align and continue to be strengthened by Sedqa's continuous involvement in community-driven projects which give us space to deliver our message.

Sedqa aims to working in the coming years on enlarging its network of stakeholders rooted in the community and to set up a programme that addresses the necessary areas of knowledge.

## 8.4 Pillar 3 – Deliver a strong, well targeted message

Effective communication with each target audience is crucial to ensure that Sedqa's message reaches everyone in society. A concoction of elements needs to come together for this to happen effectively, amongst which, a good knowledge of the audience to be reached, a clear idea of what Sedqa needs them to know, a message that is clear ensuring it moves the audience and gets them on board and finally a good medium through which to communicate.

### 8.4.1 Objective 1: Know the audience.

Knowledge and data related to the area of expertise and the population the agency works with is a vital tool for services development. With Sedqa's reach spanning out to all areas of society from the generalised reach through its addiction's prevention programmes, to the help offered to individuals and families in distress through its therapeutic services as well as the specialised help offered to person with addiction difficulties, Sedqa's services reach all cohorts within society. For this reason, it is important for Sedqa to understand trends through prevalence studies held with the general public. For this reason, Sedqa need to work on partnerships that could help it study the general prevalence of addiction and other social issues in the whole populations.

In the coming 10 years Sedqa is to establish a continuous contact with entities carrying out studies such as the University of Malta, the National Statistics Office which could help it keep a close contact with the trends in society it is set to serve.

### 8.4.2 Objective 2: Reach the public effectively.

In a strong collaboration with the FSWS Marketing department, Sedqa needs to ensure that its message reaches society at large. For this reason, it has to adopt different marketing strategies that will ensure that its messages are formulated in a creative way to ensure a maximum reach to the public. This message needs to be transmitted through cohort appropriate platforms in line with the media sources that each cohort uses and is most comfortable using. Throughout its work however, Sedqa might also opt to reach specific target audience with target audiences with specific messages. For this reason, market research may be needed to ensure that the right message reaches the targeted audience for maximum effectiveness.

With this objective already undertaken, Sedqa is to continue working with FSWS' Marketing Department on improving its message delivery.

### 8.4.3 Objective 3: Showcase all we are about.

Sedqa is very much aware that the field of addictions is one that draws a lot of attention from the public. Having said that, addictions, as a subject, remains quite a complex sometimes heavy subject to

discuss due to its serious implications. For this matter Sedqa is also duty bound not to make its message stale and unappeasable to the public in general. Being able to offer a positive message is crucial in delivering an effective message to the public. A message of empowerment and one which promotes healthy alternatives and educates about their importance for societal wellbeing, is particularly important to highlight the fact that people are not only victims of addictions but can also actively participate in staying healthy and therefore away from addictions...

In line with the other objectives within this pillar, Sedqa needs to work in an ongoing manner and all throughout the period of this vision document to freshen up its message, ensuring it delivers a message of hope and empowerment.

## 8.5 Pillar 4 – Attuned Service Delivery

An attuned service delivery is one which evolves around the service users, based on their needs and experiences. For this reason, Sedqa’s service delivery can benefit from an ongoing evaluation carried out with the help and participation of clients as well as its own workforce who is constantly in touch with the agency’s clients.

### 8.5.1 Objective 1: Invest in Workforce.

In order to ascertain that service delivery is of the utmost quality Sedqa needs to continue investing in its workforce. A well-prepared workforce needs to benefit from continuous training on intervention methods based on best practice models. These interventions need to be rooted in the latest research whilst remaining faithful to the mission and vision of the agency. Such investment in the workforce should in turn help the agency to ensure a higher retention rate of its employees. Internal exercises towards improved employee participation the mission of the agency also increases belonging and elevated the motivation of the workforce.

Agenzija Sedqa can also help by giving better focus to its employees in relation to assessments and therapy. This area of expertise can be enhanced if the agency achieves a better definition of roles and the expectations from its workers and then give the necessary training as part of a structured plan of continuous professional development.

Agenzija Sedqa aims to do this in an ongoing manner throughout the coming years in order to consolidate its operations.

### 8.5.2 Objective 2: Develop Service in line with client needs.

Agenzija Sedqa aims to keep its focus on emerging trends in service provision. Through continued knowledge about observed trends coming through studies and even workers’ field and clients’ life experience, Sedqa will ensure to keep offering services that are in line with the real needs of the Maltese community.

Along with the numerous services offered on a continuous basis, Sedqa also needs to see that it caters for particular groups in society that may need specific cohort related services. Some cohorts who may benefit of such services, are:

- Young females (showing high prevalence of experimentation with alcohol in the ESPAD study),
- Youth and social media use,
- Youth between the ages of 18 and 23years,
- LGBTIQ community,
- Dual Diagnosis,
- Clients with complex social situations,
- Families in distress,
- Families experiencing relationship difficulties.

It is very important for Sedqa to see that such groups receive services that fully understand their possibly unique needs. In this way, Sedqa can ensure effective service delivery without having any cohort left behind.

A major emphasis needs also to be placed on early interventions in families at risk of breakdown. Currently, therapy services at Sedqa find themselves starting to work with families that have already been through long court battles rendering any interventions ineffective due to long endured damages to relationships. Agenzija Sedqa aims to be present to work with these family at a much earlier phase, possibly at the first phases of mediation. This ensures that families in distress get their best chance of working things out better, and when a marriage still breaks down, this is done in the least damaging of ways possible, safeguarding the children in the process.

Agenzija Sedqa also needs to continue leading the way with its advocacy towards a stronger harm reduction approach. Sedqa needs to explore other ways how to help clients through secondary and tertiary prevention by:

- Explore the idea of an Injecting Clinic for clients with a dependence to intravenous opiate abuse,
- Low Threshold homeless shelter for clients who fail to satisfy requirement of other homeless shelters due to their continued substance abuse,
- Attendance to mass events as part of a stronger preventive presence (such as beer fest/earth garden etc....).

Work on achieving this objective needs to be continuous. Sedqa aims to have a strategy that enables it to plan the introduction of some of these measures in the first two years. At that point implementation of services will be staggered according to arising needs.



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# 9. Conclusion – Strategic Objectives 2021-2031

## 9.0 Conclusion

This document is the fruit of a bottom-up consultation process with all dedicated professionals of the foundation. Their work experience with each individual service user of the various agencies and directorates within FSWS places them at the heart of the work this foundation does on a daily basis. Each employee's experience is for this reason crucial to understand the present challenges clients experience and how services can be better tailored to address these challenges and meet clients' needs in an effective manner.

This document aims to lay bare the short to mid-term goal of each agency and directorate of the Foundation, in its effort to be closer to the most needy and vulnerable elements of Maltese society. In this way, the Foundation can continue to be truthful to its mission, whereby it states that "by providing quality and timely service and support, the Foundation for Social Welfare Services empowers and helps to develop individuals to become responsible, integrated and productive members of society who value life as a resource for self-actualisation".