



SOS Malta

Activity Report 2008



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SOS Malta

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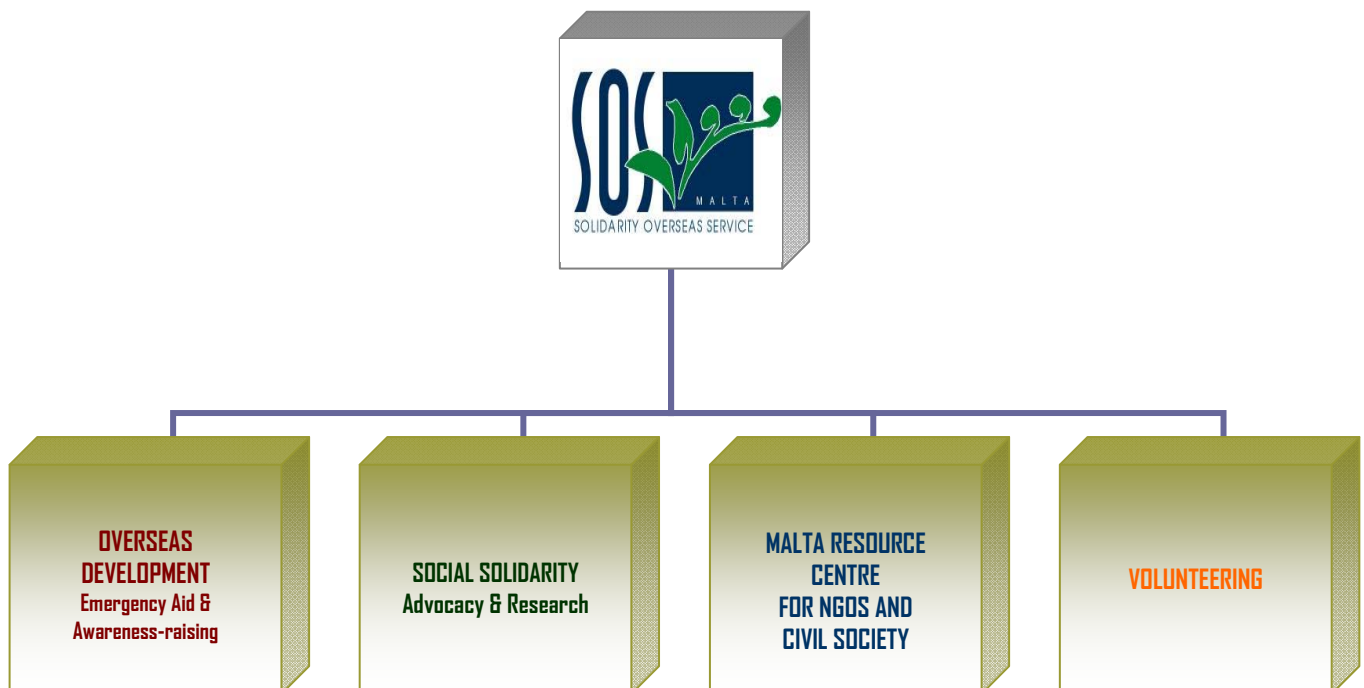
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Executive Summary

SOS Malta, a Maltese-registered NGO set up in 1991, aims at aiding people experiencing times of crisis and empowering them by providing support services and opportunities to implement development and change in their country to ensure a better quality of life. It encourages advocacy on behalf of social causes, as well as promotes models of good care and practice. In all its operations in Malta and overseas SOS Malta also promotes volunteerism for effective sustainable development. The organisation is a source of knowledge and advice about the role and contribution of volunteerism and the benefits of civic engagement.

During 2008, the organisation focused on four pillars of activities. These were:

1. *OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT - Emergency Aid, Livelihood Programmes & Awareness-raising*
2. *SOCIAL SOLIDARITY- Advocacy & Research*
3. *MALTA RESOURCE CENTRE FOR NGOS AND CIVIL SOCIETY*
4. *VOLUNTEERING*



1. Overseas Development - Emergency Aid, Livelihood Recovery Programmes & Awareness-raising

Overseas Development, emergency aid and livelihood recovery programmes have been at the core of SOS Malta's operations since it came into being in 1991. Its work started after the tragic exodus of Albanian refugees to the shores of Italy and Malta. It was then a voluntary organization set up with the objective of assisting materially and morally Albanian refugees and their people in need, especially through projects of a social and charitable nature.

Throughout the 1990's SOS Malta was active in Albania and Kosovo, working in the fields of Palliative Care, Education, and Community Development. On an emergency level, SOS Malta was also involved in managing a Refugee Camp during the Kosovo crisis in 1999 and in the repatriation of refugees.

In 2004, SOS Malta formed part of the Malta Tsunami Humanitarian Mission to Sri Lanka, where it set up a fully operational clinic in Matara, Sri Lanka, offering immediate medical relief to over 3000 persons. Since then, it has been involved, together with its local partner, Healing Hands, in organizing and financing various activities at community level, including income-generating enterprises for the socially excluded, micro-financing and rain-water harvesting projects at village and household levels. This work carried on throughout the course of 2008.

In July and August 2008, SOS Malta also intervened following the Myanmar cyclone gathering emergency funds and donating various basic necessities to victims of the cyclone through its Sri Lankan partner, Healing Hands.

SOS Malta's advocacy and awareness-raising among Maltese citizens about the Millennium Development Goals and development issues was likewise pursued in 2008, with a special focus on water-related issues.

1.1 OPERATIONS IN SRI LANKA

In collaboration with 'Healing Hands' a registered NGO in Matara, Sri Lanka, SOS Malta's focus in 2008 was bringing the support to the Tamil population in the Tea Estates. Our projects aimed at addressing some of the identified needs as well as assessing further additional support required.

SOS Malta implemented their programme on 4 estates:

- Morawaka
- Nilella
- Palagalahena
- Ketawala

The plantation workers have few and simple assets and live in what are known as 'line rooms'. These are small rooms that are dirty and unhealthy, congested, with poor ventilation and lighting, damp and cold. They are amongst the most economically deprived and therefore the most vulnerable to disease and ill-health. Children of 10 take care of their younger siblings and rarely attend any school. They live in isolation and are mostly powerless.

SOS Malta supported:

- Setting up and equipping of a crèche/pre-school in the identified estates supplying a teacher and breakfast and lunch for the children.

- Regular visits by a local medical officer and nurse for child assessments and treatment for disease/malnutrition
- Rain Water Harvesting for the 'line rooms' and the crèche/preschool
- Evening sessions for the parents on hygiene, abuse, alcoholism and any other prevailing issue

Incentives were created for the families to send their children to school stressing on the importance of education and information. Results were encouraging and 90% workers' children were now able to fit in to mainstream education in the respective village Government schools after the informal school set up by SOS Malta and Healing Hands.

Results showed that Water is certainly the entry point to community development:

- Households started cultivating at least 5 different vegetables and fruit
- Meals were more varied
- Community activities undertaken
- Reduced malnutrition and illness

Improved knowledge



Rain-water Harvesting on Tea Estate



Regular medical clinics

Livelihood recovery projects in Matara were further developed and enhanced. In the areas of:

- Printing
- Mushroom Cultivation
- Candle making
- Sewing
- Clay pots for plants

Equipment was purchased and seed money donated to the Matara Parish to carry out the necessary alterations to an area of St Mary's Convent School to be used as a Life Long Learning Centre and small social enterprises.. Unemployed women were trained and equipped with the necessary skills to work and earn a decent wage. The results of these initiatives was excellent and showed a marked improvement in the quality of life of all the women who were empowered to take on new responsibilities and increase of knowledge.



Cultivation of Mushrooms



Candle-making

1.2 OPERATIONS IN MAYANMAR

In 2008, a delegation from SOS Malta's Sri Lankan partner, Healing Hands, carried out an aid visit to Burma following the devastation caused by cyclone Nargis in May of the same year, killing at least 22,000 people.

Kumari Kulatunga, the director of Healing Hands, led a delegation to the country on behalf of SOS Malta, which sponsored the trip which was conducted between the 2nd and the 8th of July 2008.



Clothes, food, cooking utensils, candles and washing powder were bought with the funds collected by SOS Malta from the Maltese.

The delegation visited the village of Sarmaleut, where the main school was destroyed and children took shelter in a monastery. The village originally had 67 families consisting of a total of 346 people. The cyclone killed 136 of them, leaving orphans behind, as well as children with only one parent.

The delegation also visited the village of Thar Pyan Gyi where means of livelihood were totally devastated by the cyclone, as well as another village where the cyclone killed 146 people, including 43 children.

1.3 AWARENESS-RAISING ABOUT DEVELOPMENT ISSUED AND THE MILLENIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

1.3.1 Water for Life-Malta



On the 1st of September 2008, SOS Malta entered an agreement with Minority Rights Group International to implement a national awareness-raising initiative called 'Water for Life – Malta'. This initiative forms part of the programme 'Promoting Development in Europe: Towards a Critical Mass and Beyond' of Minority Rights Group International, funded by the European Commission.

'Water for Life - Malta' has the objective of sensitizing the man in the street and teenage children about the implications of lack of water supply and sanitation – a reality which few in Malta are exposed to or can appreciate. The project aims at creating awareness about realities which are denied of water, and in so doing, engaging its target audience in exploring ways in which water supply and sanitation can become an 'entry point' for the fight against poverty, especially in developing countries. The project is doing this by raising awareness about the waste of water carried out by citizens in developed countries on a daily basis, when compared with difficulties encountered by persons in some developing countries in finding enough water to drink on a daily basis. Emphasis is placed on the lack of access to drinking water in developing countries, as a result of climate change and pollution. The reasons for lack of access to water and sanitation are also being presented and discussed, as well as the way in which development problems in developing countries can be alleviated by adopting a rights-based approach, including the right to water.

As of November 2008, SOS Malta carried out several presentations within secondary schools, which focused on providing the students with insight into issues related to the right to access to water and sanitation. They aimed at sensitizing the children about poverty-related problems surrounding water, and at bringing them to appreciate the luxury of having access to water in Malta. Topics which were touched included pollution, climate change, the human right to water, sanitation and water-related diseases, the effect of lack of water on village & daily life in developing countries, the Millennium Development Goals and the role which we should all play as global citizens in addressing these issues. The presentations were delivered on a class-by-class basis. Promotional material, including rulers and flyers, as well as literature on the right to water, were also distributed to the children.



Educational material distributed to children during school presentations



Animators acting out the Water for Life-Malta roleplay during school presentations.

Various activities are planned for 2009. SOS Malta shall continue delivering these school presentations in the first quarter of 2009. In view of complementing the school presentations, SOS Malta also plans to organise an art competition for school children aged 11-14 years, focused on the theme of the Water for Life-Malta project. The work of art which will win the art competition will be used as the image for a 2010 calendar which will be distributed among public, corporate and NGO stakeholders in Malta. A *facebook* account called *Water for Life-Malta*, set up in November 2008, will be used as a communications tool during the rest of the project's implementation, generating public awareness about Malta's Overseas Development Assistance and development obligations, whilst relating the latter also to the discourse of water poverty. A fund-raising campaign is also being planned for the second quarter of 2009, in view of financing rainwater harvesting projects in developing countries. The Water for Life-Malta project will end in September 2009.

1.3.2 Media Engagement in Development Issues and Promotion (MEDIP)



In December 2008, SOS Malta signed a grant agreement with the European Commission for the implementation of an 18-month transnational project. The project, entitled 'Media Engagement in Development Issues and Promotion' (MEDIP), is being co-funded by the European Commission within the scope of the thematic programme called 'Non-state actors and local authorities in development – Public awareness and education for development in Europe'. It is receiving 828,240.67 EUR from the European Commission, equivalent to 89.57% of the total project budget.

The project, which is being led by SOS Malta, aims at sensitizing journalists and media within these six New Member States about development issues and the Millennium Development Goals. Through the media, the project aims at creating greater consciousness amongst policy makers, the business community, as well as the general public. The project's focus is on six of the new EU Member States of the European Union (Malta, Cyprus, Romania, Slovenia, Hungary and Estonia). Implementing partners, alongside SOS Malta, include: Jaan Tonisson Institute (Estonia), Foundation for Development of Democratic Rights (Hungary), European Institute of Cyprus, Slovene Philanthropy and Civil Society Development Foundation (Romania).

The project's activities are scheduled to start in March 2009, with a specialized training workshop for journalists from the abovementioned Member States. A ten-day field-visit will pursue, serving as an opportunity for journalists from these new Member States to gain first-hand experience of poverty realities which the Millennium Development Goals are concerned about, and which need to be addressed. The visit will also provide insight into success stories in addressing poverty, as well as exposure to areas of action which European Member States and civil society can assist with. Six documentaries will be produced with the footage and information collected on the field visit.

1.3.3 "Save Women's Lives": A Campaign to Raise Public Awareness on Millennium Development Goal 5 (Improving Maternal Health)



As of 1st January 2009, SOS Malta will be participating in an EU project called "Save Women's Lives": A Campaign to Raise Public Awareness on Millennium Development Goal 5 (Improving Maternal Health). The project has received confirmation of co-financing by the European Commission within the scope of the thematic programme, 'Non-state actors and local authorities in development – Public awareness and education for development in Europe'. Save Women's Lives will be led by the World Population Foundation (WPF). Other partners include Deutsche Stiftung Welbevölkerung (DSW); BOCS Foundation (Hungary); German Foundation for World Population Foundation (Ethiopia) and Mosaic (South Africa).

The project aims to increase public awareness about the fifth Millennium Development Goal – improving maternal health - and to influence public opinion to foster and enhance support among decision-makers (national parliamentarians and members of the European Parliament) for policies that seek to do so – particularly in light of the *International Conference on Population and Development* Programme of Action.

Issues which will be addressed by the project also include poverty eradication, MDG3 'Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women', sexual and reproductive health and rights, HIV/AIDS, EU development policies and national development cooperation policies. The project will commence in January 2009 and end in December 2011.

2. Social Solidarity – Advocacy and Research

One of the founding principles of SOS Malta is that of solidarity. SOS Malta promotes initiatives such as social enterprise and corporate social responsibility aimed at increasing inclusion and empowering the disadvantaged groups. It is engaged in research initiatives as well as in pilot projects.

The increase of regular and irregular migrants living in Malta in recent years has created a need for increased intercultural understanding and solidarity. SOS Malta advocates for the introduction and implementation of local measures aimed at the integration and social inclusion of migrants in Maltese society. It also believes in the empowerment of migrants in general, as well as in the provision of structured opportunities for those who wish to return back to their country of origin and start afresh.

2.1 SOCIAL INCLUSION AND EMPOWERMENT

2.1.1 WISE – Work Integration Social Enterprises as a tool for promoting inclusion



MUTUAL LEARNING ON SOCIAL INCLUSION AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

In the beginning of 2008, SOS Malta assumed the role of a partner in a project called Work Integration Social Enterprises as a Tool for Promoting Inclusion (WISE). The project is being part-financed by the European Commission through the PROGRESS programme – Mutual Learning on Social Inclusion and Social Protection. The Italian organisation, CGM, is coordinating the project together with DIESIS. The project involves 16 organisations from eight Member States and five European organisations.

WISE aims at analysing the National Action Plans for inclusion and for employment in order to assess the current and potential role of Work Integration Social Enterprises (WISEs) to support the objectives of these strategies and to promote social inclusion and employment. Structural funds, and in particular the ESF operational programmes, are also being analysed in this project, to identify and evaluate the measures and the tools foreseen to support the development of WISEs. In each partner country, best practices of WISEs promoting social inclusion are being identified in order to show what works on the field and the kind of policy support needed. The main contribution of the project from a mutual learning perspective will be to assess the extent to which social inclusion policies and actions are mainstreamed into employment policies and structural funds programmes. In linking up the inclusion strategy with the employment strategy and structural funds this project provides a key opportunity for mutual learning on how to achieve an effective mainstreaming of social inclusion.

In May 2008, SOS Malta organized a national consultation meeting which provided an opportunity for the exchange of views between public, private and NGO stakeholders about the manner in which social enterprise should feature in national policy.

In August 2008, SOS Malta published 'WISEs and their role in European policies. National Report - Malta 2008', providing an overview of how WISEs are reflected in Maltese policies. The report was authored by SOS Malta researcher Dr. Frances Camilleri Cassar, and shall be used as a basis for recommendations at national level, as well as for a Peer Review exercise between Malta and Spain which scheduled to take place in the first half of 2009.

2.2 INTEGRATION & RE-INTEGRATION OF MIGRANTS

2.2.2 'Comprehensive Return Programme Including Re-Integration' – DAR



SOS Malta has been involved as a partner in a project, entitled 'Comprehensive Return Programme Including Re-Integration' since August 2007. The project, codenamed as DAR, is being part-financed by the European Commission through its RETURN programme. It is being led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Malta). Other partners include International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) and Med Europe (Italy). DAR is aimed at facilitating the Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) of irregular migrants of Sub-Saharan African origin.

Throughout 2008, SOS Malta was directly involved in organising outreach visits to open and closed centres accommodating immigrants, and in conducting interviews with individuals who voluntarily expressed a desire to return to their country of origin and an interest in benefiting from the DAR assistance scheme to do so. Interviews were conducted with over 120 individuals in 2008.

Assistance provided to returnees includes pre-departure training in subjects and areas of interest to the respective migrant; flights; documentation for return facilitation; financial assistance and re-integration measures (such as business start-up; training; job identification; accommodation) in their country of origin.

Other than interviewing and counseling prospective returnees, SOS Malta has also assisted with organizing individualized short training courses which individuals requested to follow prior to their return. These included driving lessons, computer courses, English language courses, sewing and others.

DAR's objective is to assist approximately 50 irregular migrants to return back to their country voluntarily. However, more returns have been effected than this target number in 2008. It is expected that approximately 70 persons would have returned through this project by its completion in January 2009.

The DAR project will be issuing a handbook on re-integration measures, as well as a catalogue of good practices and policy options on cooperation with third countries in the field of return.

3. Malta Resource Centre for NGOs and Civil Society

2008 constituted the last year of implementation of the SOS Malta project called 'Malta Resource Centre for NGOs and Civil Society'. This project, which commenced back in 2004, aimed at providing capacity building and training services to civil society NGOs in view of becoming more effective and efficient as well as better equipped to operate and participate within the European Union, specifically in terms of influencing policies and plans and accessing EU funds. This was done through: setting up of networks, provision of training and consultation, research, projects development, and the provision of technical assistance.

The Malta Resource Centre continued to provide administrative back up to the running of the European Anti Poverty Network Malta, the National Federation of NGOs of Malta as well as to the Malta Health Network.

2008 also witnessed the organisation of capacity-building initiatives for the Malta Health Network, the rounding up of a capacity building initiative for NGOs which focused on EU Structural funds, as well as the organisation of training course for NGOs on advocacy within the European Union.

Other work included the organisation of focus groups for EAPN Malta as well as a national People in Poverty conference; advice to NGOs about enrolment under the Voluntary Organisations Act; as well as information provision related to local civil society events and EU funding opportunities.

3.1 ADMINISTRATIVE BACK-UP TO NGO NETWORKS

3.1.1 European Anti-Poverty Network (Malta)



As in previous years, the Malta Resource Centre continued to act as a secretariat for EAPN Malta. Throughout 2008, the administrative backup service given to EAPN Malta included:

- Liaison with Chairperson of EAPN Malta and with Coordination Committee members;
- Hosting of Coordination Committee meetings and provision of secretarial services (minute-taking, notification of members about upcoming meetings, etc);
- Communication with the media, the government, EAPN Europe and the member organisations;
- Participation in the work of EAPN Europe , particularly the Structural Funds Task Force;
- Administration and updating of EAPN Malta website;
- Liaison and communication regarding EAPN Europe training seminars for members;
- Distribution of EAPN Europe e-newsletters and updates;
- Application for part-financing from EAPN Europe for national network;
- Research study: 'Excluded Groups in Pursuit of Social Justice – Poverty and Inequality in Maltese Society?' – involving the organisation and analysis of various focus groups conducted with categories of persons suffering from social exclusion or poverty.
- Organisation of a conference in August 2008 focusing on the theme, 'Excluded Groups in Pursuit of Social Justice – Poverty and Inequality in Maltese Society?'. The conference was organized at Emigrants Commission in Valletta.

- Coordination of EAPN Malta's input into the National Action Plan Social Inclusion and Social Protection.

3.1.2 Malta Health Network (MHN)



Following the Extraordinary General Assembly held on the 28th of January 2008, when the Malta Health Network was officially launched, the Malta Resource Centre continued to provide administrative back-up to the network. The following tasks were carried out:

- Compilation of list of all MHN members, telephone numbers, email addresses, mailing addresses (MHN database) + Continuous updating of Members List
- Correspondence with MHN members notifying them about AGM
- Preparation of documentation and photocopies prior to meetings
- Responding to and re-directing e-mails to MHN board
- Updating website
- Preparing printed material for MHN events
- Continuous liaison with MHN secretary
- Managing renewals of membership and receipt records
- Assistance in correspondence linked to the charity ball of which patronage was given by MHN
- Availability of MRC premises for meetings, upon request

3.1.3 National Federation of NGOs in Malta (NFNM)



During 2008, the Malta Resource Centre continued to provide administrative back-up services to the National Federation of NGOs of Malta, which had been officially founded back in April 2007. The mission of the Federation is to represent the interests of NGOs operating in Malta, and to strengthen the role of NGOs within civil society.

The services included:

- Hosting of Executive Committee meetings
- Managing the web pages on the MRC website (www.mrc.org.mt) with information about NFNM
- Coordination of applications of new members;
- Promotion of the Federation and its aims, encouraging new NGOs to join;
- Development and updating of NGOs and membership databases;
- Coordination and distribution of NFNM news among members;
- Dissemination and issuing of press releases;

3.3 TRAINING AND CAPACITY-BUILDING OF NGOS

3.3.1 *The Structural Funds Training and Technical Assistance Programme for NGOs and Civil Society Organisations 2007*



STRUCTURAL FUNDS PROGRAMME FOR MALTA
2004-2006
PROJECT PART-FINANCED BY THE
EUROPEAN UNION: EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND
CO-FINANCING RATE: 75%



As of the 24th of April 2007, the Malta Resource Centre at SOS Malta had been coordinating and implementing a project, entitled '*The Structural Funds Training and Technical Assistance Programme for NGOs and Civil Society Organisations 2007*'. It was a sub-project which was implemented within the scope of the overall ESF Technical Assistance project under the Structural Funds Programme for Malta 2004-2006.

The programme was part-financed by the European Union: European Social Fund Co-financing rate 75% and a grant, which SOS Malta received through the Civil Society Fund 2007, was used to finance the remaining 25%. The objectives of the Structural Funds Training and Technical Assistance Programme for NGOs and Civil Society Organisations 2007 were twofold:

- To inform, train and equip NGOs in Malta to plan, access and manage and/or be partners in EU structural funds projects;
- To facilitate partnership among NGOs, and NGO partnership with other civil society organisations and local councils in relation to structural funds projects.

Following the successful completion in 2007 of a 50-hour training programme for 25 representatives of NGOs, social partners, and local councils, which focused on various technical aspects concerning the application for and implementation of Structural Funds projects (in particular those under European Social Fund), the Malta Resource Centre developed a Compendium of Project Concepts based on discussions held by the participants during the training. In June 2008, questionnaires were sent to all the training participants to find out how many of their organizations had submitted a project proposal in answer to two calls for proposals issued earlier during the year under ESF. It resulted that at least six of the organisations trained, submitted proposals in answer to the said ESF calls for proposals issued by the local authorities.

In 2008, the Malta Resource Centre also produced a report of recommendations concerning with the type of technical assistance and capacity-building measures which would contribute to the increased participation of Maltese NGOs and Civil Society Organisations within ESF. The recommendations included within this report were ultimately based on the outcome of the 2007 training programme as well as on follow-up research conducted by the Malta Resource Centre. They focused primarily on the ESF and the underlying principle of partnership.



A total of 250 copies were printed and distributed to participants who attended a closure seminar organized on the 25th June 2008. Approximately 60 representatives from various civil society organisations, local councils and public bodies attended the seminar which was entitled "Towards the increased participation in Structural Funds", and held at the Mediterranean Conference Centre. The event provided a forum for discussion about training, technical assistance and capacity-building needs of Maltese civil society organisations with regard to EU Structural Funds. Presentations were given by Philippa Arrigo, Project Coordinator, Noel Toledo, Director on Cohesion Policy at the Planning and Priorities Coordination Division, Mr. Holger Saliba from Richmond Foundation and Perit Simone Vella Lenicker from Kamra Tal-Periti.

Copies of the manual were also subsequently sent to various stakeholders (NGOs, Social Partners, Local Councils and Consultative Bodies).

3.3.2 Capacity Building and Training for NGOs in the Health Sector

On Thursday 30th October, representatives from twelve health NGOs attended a training seminar entitled 'Capacity Building through Volunteering' at St James Cavalier, Valletta. The training was led by Dr. Yvonne McKenna, CEO of Volunteer Centres Ireland, and focused on the principles of volunteer management including the cycle linked to recruiting, screening, training and retaining volunteers. The creation and importance of a volunteer policy was also highlighted in the training. The overall aim of the seminar was to further equip health NGOs with the appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes linked to managing and retaining volunteers, who are vital resources in these organisations and who amongst other things, impact on social isolation, contribute to independence and general well-being and are often a key link between patients and public services when appropriately built into official systems. The organisations which attended were the following:

- St. Jeanne Antide Foundation
- The Malta Hospice Movement
- Malta Osteoporosis Society
- Daniel Delicata Memorial Foundation
- Caritas Malta
- Malta Association of Shin and Wound Care Nurses
- Malta Society of the Blind
- Richmond Foundation
- Razzett tal-Hbiberija
- Diocesan Youth Commission
- Don Bosco Voluntary Service



3.3.3 Training - “Empower NGO for the EU Challenge”

In September 2008, SOS Malta, together with EuroMed Connect, organised a training workshop entitled "Empowering NGOs for the EU Challenge". The workshop which was spread over two three-hour day sessions, was designed to provide NGOs with a working knowledge of the European Union and help them understand how the whole project of European integration started five decades ago, the institutions that make up the EU and how the EU operates.

The training workshop aimed at assisting NGOs in reaching a deeper understanding on the opportunities that exist for them within the EU, and to acquiring creative tools on how to benefit from these opportunities. Training was designed in such a way as to require the active participation of participants, with practical examples being used throughout the workshop.

Contents of Training Workshop included:

1. Overview of the EU 'project'
2. Institutions of the EU
3. Rationale of EU institutions and EU policies
4. How can NGOs influence the EU's decision making process
5. EU Funding opportunities for NGOs
6. Participation of NGOs in EU funding programmes (advantages and disadvantages)
7. Creative thinking tools - Success elements to translate a concept/idea into tangible results
8. How can Euro-Med Connect Coop Ltd help you in achieving success from EU funding.

A total of 21 NGO representatives attended the workshop.

4. VOLUNTEERING

SOS Malta has promoted volunteering from the moment of its inception. The philosophy behind the organization has always been that of volunteerism. This philosophy was initially applied to the organisation's work in the field of overseas development, emergency relief, and livelihood programmes.

In more recent years, SOS Malta enhanced the promotion of volunteering even locally. SOS Malta believes that volunteers should be a key element in the implementation of all social programmes. The rich mix of skills which volunteers bring with them enlarges the scope of social programmes, but mostly importantly, introduces and reinforces the dimension of community support.

The year of 2008 witness three main initiatives related to volunteering. These included Volserv, Kellimni and the SOS Malta Volunteer Award.

4.1 VOLSERV



The aim of VolServ is the organisation and support of voluntary services in the main general hospital to patients and relatives, as well as in the community. A partnership agreement between SOS Malta and the Ministry of Health, the Elderly and Community Care (currently the Ministry of Social Policy) was signed in April 2007 and VolServ started to operate soon after. Ever since its inception, the key activities of VolServ have constituted:

1. Recruitment of volunteers
2. Training of volunteers
3. Support and supervision of volunteers
4. Networking organisations and engaging organisations to act as partners in Volserv
5. Registration of voluntary organisations and volunteers working in Mater Dei, other health institutions and in the community (including identification systems)
6. Development of a code of conduct for volunteers

4.1.1 Volserv in Hospital

Following the success of 2007, during which VolServ managed to train 161 volunteers and to place 140 volunteers in different areas of the main hospital, the year of 2008 was just as successful. A total of 210 volunteers were placed within the hospital and 178 volunteers were trained. 48 students were also given placements. Only 25 volunteers dropped out during the year under review.

Apart from attending the mandatory training sessions, some volunteers also chose to form part of Psychotherapeutic Support groups, which met on a regular basis (every six weeks).

During 2008, volunteers were introduced to the A&E Department, upon request by the Health Department at the Ministry. Three months down the line, all volunteers placed in the A&E resigned from this post and went back to their original placements. All volunteers had the same reason for leaving this role and that was mainly that they did not feel that they were not in a position to help patients in this role.

In the mean time, Volserv management explored the idea of introducing volunteers within the Psychiatric Unit. Various roles were discussed with the Unit in terms of supervised volunteer input with the patients of the unit including cooking sessions and arts and crafts sessions. It was decided that a call for interested volunteers would be made with the intention of starting the services in January 2009.

Furthermore, new services for the paediatric wards were also planned, including the introduction of a trolley service with books for children in these wards, as well as the organizing of arts and crafts sessions. A stand selling the Christmas *Ponsietta* plants and manned by the VolServ volunteers was organized in December 2008 to purchase the Arts and Crafts resources for the Paediatric wards as well as games and vases for some of the Orthopedic, Surgical and Medical wards.

2008 witnessed significant progress in terms of key landmarks for the volunteering services in Mater Dei Hospital. Key positive growth points included the formulation of MDH'S volunteering policy; the start of VolServ fundraising events and the need to focus less on campaigning for volunteers due to VolServ becoming more institutionalized and synonymous with volunteering in the hospital.

Other highlights included the visits and interactive, educational sessions by key personalities in volunteering organisations overseas, namely Mrs. Donna Gioia from *Roswell Park Cancer Institute* and Dr Yvonne McKenna from *Volunteer Centres Ireland*, both events hosted by VolServ. These events, both held at Mater Dei Hospital, were aimed at motivating both staff and volunteers alike, with the first highlighting the numerous roles that volunteers can be in and the second focused on volunteer management. The latter event brought together the key persons in hospital management including the CEO, Director of Human Resources, the Employee Relations Manager, the Administration Manager as well as numerous Nursing Officers from Outpatient Clinics and Wards alike. This kind of event is important to create the necessary 'buy-in' and dialogue necessary for a project like this to be successful, since all parties including staff and management of the hospital and of VolServ are thus involved in dialogue.



Mrs. Donna Gioia (middle) – special guest for the event *Volunteerism at its Best*, held on the 29th of April 2008 – Volserv's first year anniversary

At the end of the year, on the 9th of December 2008, a Certificate and Gratitude Ceremony was organized for all volunteers at the Westin Dragonara Resort, St. Julian's. Certificates were presented by the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary for Health Dr. Joseph Cassar to all volunteers and students. A reception was then held for all. The event was sponsored by Lombard Bank.



The following table is a calculation of the financial resources saved through the services offered by the volunteers during the period January till December 2008. This calculation is based on the assumption of the *national minimum wage* for 2008, (138.901 Euros (LM 59.63) weekly), and the minimum average number of volunteers in the hospital per day, (circa 22 volunteers each offering 3 hours per day)

Time unit	Financial Amount Saved
Per day	209 Euros
Per week	1,045 Euros
Per month	4,180 Euros
January -December 08	50,160 Euros (Lm 21,533.69)

*** Calculated on the basis of 3.49 Euros (Lm1.50) per hour x 3 hrs x 20 volunteers each day**

4.1.2 Volserv in the Community

Work linked to the setting up of VolServ Voluntary Services in the Community was underway throughout the year of 2008, particularly in terms of identifying key areas where volunteers could make a difference in the community. A helpline for lonely elderly persons was identified as a key need and the first half of the year (January till June) was spent contacting key stakeholders in the community as well as running a needs analysis for the suggested helpline. The second part of the year focused on getting the key people involved with the elderly in the community on board and getting their positions and suggestions on the proposed service.

4.2 KELLIMNI

During 2008, SOS Malta continued to work together with the Salesians of Don Bosco on a joint venture which will involve the setting-up of the project *Kellimni*. This initiative will involve an Online Counselling Service run by volunteers who are working towards a career in Caring and Helping Professions

Kellimni shall have the aim of offering counseling online to children suffering from any kind of social exclusion, abuse, neglect or psychological difficulties. SOS Malta and the Salesian Community held various meetings towards the end of 2008 to plan the project. They also managed to attain funding from L-Istrina for the commencement of the project.

A needs analysis was also conducted in the last quarter of 2008, with questionnaires being distributed among a few state and private schools. Collation of the questionnaires and their analysis will take place in 2009.

Other organisations involved in the project formulation and implementation include the Malta Association for the Counselling Profession, the Malta Association of Psychotherapists and Child Helpline International.

SOS Malta's role will be that of training and managing the volunteers who will be involved in the implementation of the project.

4.3 SOS MALTA VOLUNTEER AWARD



In September 2008 SOS Malta launched the **SOS Malta Award for Volunteering** to recognise the work carried out by those who volunteer with not-for-profit organisations, charities and NGOs.

The award scheme was set up in affiliation with the organisers of the European Trophy for Voluntary Work, the FFBA, so as to provide a Maltese candidate for this established European award.

Eleven eligible nominations were received for the 2008 award by the selection board, chaired by Dr. Alan Deidun. After much deliberation the 2008 SOS Malta Award for Volunteering was awarded to Astrid Vella of FAA for her unrelenting advocacy work related to environmental and heritage issues. Prime Minister Dr. Lawrence Gonzi presented Ms Vella with the award, a cast bronze sculpture designed for the event by Damian Darmanin.

Astrid Vella was subsequently awarded the prestigious Special Jury Prize at the awards ceremony of the European Trophy of Voluntary Work, held at the European Parliament building in Strasbourg on 5th December 2008.

5. Affiliations

SOS Malta is a member of various European and local networks which focus on issues related to its four pillars of activities and advocacy.

5.1 SOLIDAR



SOS Malta assumed the status of affiliate member of Solidar as of 2008. SOLIDAR is a network of social and economic justice NGOs working in co-development and international cooperation, social policy and social service provision, and life-long learning.

www.solidar.org/

5.2 EUROPEAN VOLUNTEER CENTRE (CEV)



SOS Malta renewed its affiliate membership of the European Volunteer Centre in 2008. The European Volunteer Centre (Centre européen du volontariat, CEV) is a European network of currently 60 mainly national and regional volunteer centres and volunteer development agencies across Europe, that together work to support and promote voluntary activity.

www.cev.be/

5.3 EUROPEAN NETWORK FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING E.V.(EUNET)



SOS Malta is a member of the "European Network for Education and Training e.V.", shortly EUNET. EUNET is a network for European educational-facilities. The network consists of Non-Governmental-Organisations that inform, educate or in any other way spreads the European Idea to teenagers and adults.

www.european-net.org/

5.5 EAPN MALTA



SOS Malta has been a member of EAPN Malta since 2004.

EAPN Malta was setup in May 2004 to create a network of Maltese NGOs involved in the fight against poverty and social exclusion. EAPN Malta applied to become a member of EAPN (European Anti-Poverty Network) in July 2004. EAPN monitors and analyses EU policies, which have an impact on people in poverty. EAPN lobbies the European Institutions for the adoption of policies and programmes to combat poverty and social exclusion, provides a 2 monthly newsletter and organises working groups & trans-national seminars.

www.eapnmalta.org/

5.6 NATIONAL FEDERATION OF NGOS IN MALTA



National Federation of NGOs of Malta (NFNM) aims to represent the interests of NGOs working in all sectors, and to strengthen the role of NGOs within civil society.

More information is available on the Malta Resource Centre website: www.mrc.org.mt

5.7 ENAR MALTA



ENAR Malta is a network of NGOs and groups working in the field of anti-racism. Its aims include the promotion of human rights in Malta, Europe and elsewhere, as well as the encouragement of co-operation between organizations working to combat racism. It seeks to promote equal

treatment and equal rights, and to facilitate the exchange of information between organizations about national and European developments relating to these issues.

More information is available on the general ENAR website:
www.enar-eu.org/

6. Fund-raising



TOONS is an SOS(Solidarity Overseas Services)Malta initiative to generate funds which will be directed into SOS Malta's commitment to raise awareness and build support for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 - not only in Malta but internationally.

The initiative was taken on by SOS Malta in 2007, and has since continued to be implemented. TOONS is an animation service providing various popular character costumes together with animators for commercial launches & promotions, festivals, fairs & exhibitions, TV shows as well as for private events such as birthday parties.

SOS Malta felt the need to explore becoming self-sustaining because of the marked decrease in available grants. One of the greatest challenges facing non-profit organizations (NGOs) is how to sustain and support NGO activities financially. The primary reasons why SOS Malta needed to find different strategies for long-term survival are:

- Decreased donor funding in general
- Decreased allocations for NGOs
- Donor focus on other priorities
- Decreased amounts for the social programs

The most sustainable financing strategy is to diversify income sources. A sustainable approach to NGO financing is one that avoids dependency on any single source of revenue, external or internal. However, a balance between externally and internally generated resources is necessary to allow an organization to meet its operating and administrative expenses while maintaining the freedom to determine its program priorities and projects, irrespective of donor preferences. By creating TOONS SOS Malta hopes to meet some of its operational expenses in raising awareness on the Millennium Development Goals in Malta.



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