



L-Università ta' Malta
Faculty for Social Wellbeing

UNITY⁷

Faculty for **Social Wellbeing**

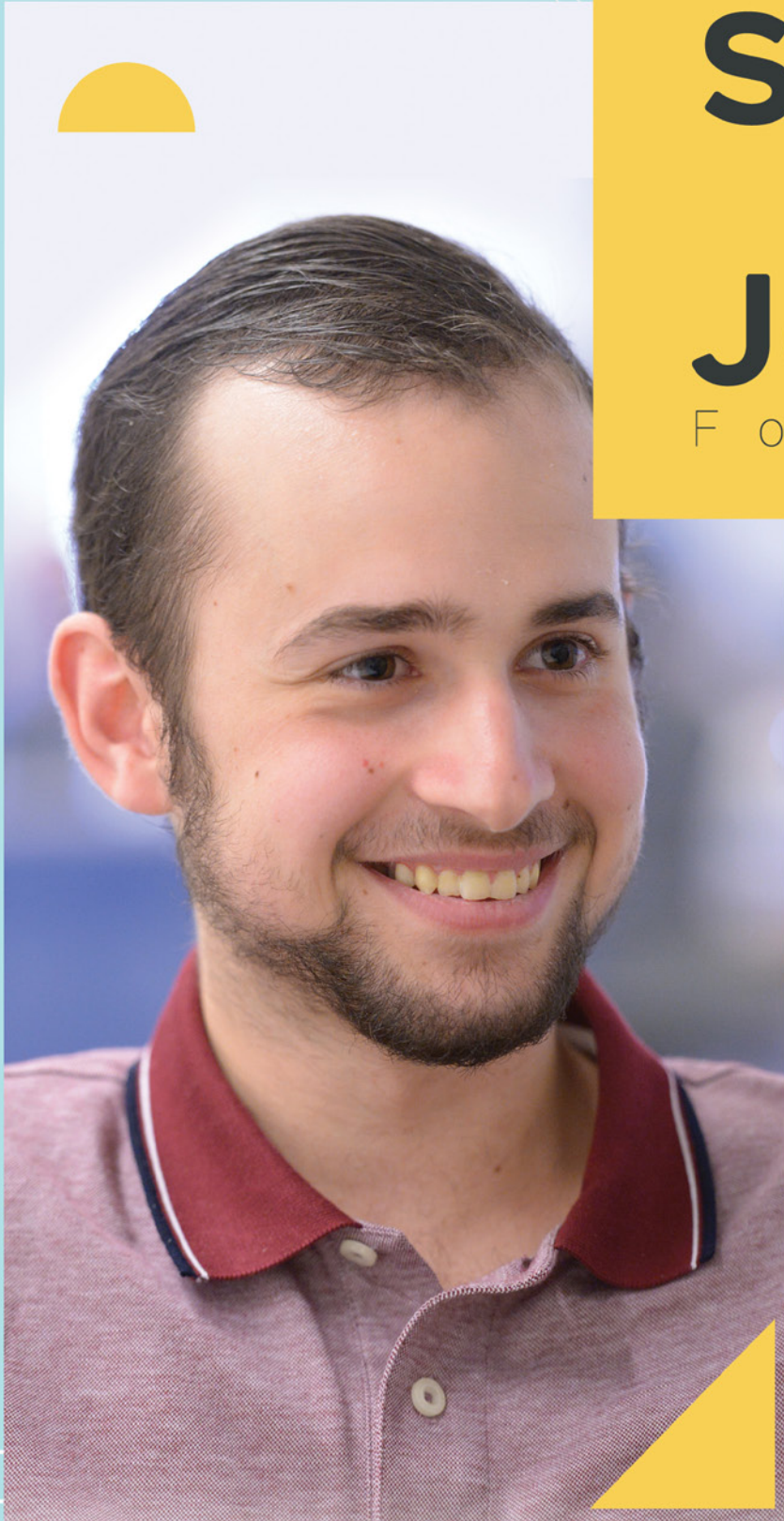
2023

FREE

ISSN NUMBER: 2522-378X

Difficult roads
lead to beautiful destinations

SMILING WITH JEROME
SMILING WITH JEROME
SMILING WITH JEROME



Smiling with Jerome

F o u n d a t i o n

Smiling with Jerome takes care of families whose loved one, mainly of a young age, has been diagnosed with Cancer, Fibromyalgia, Cerebral Palsy, Autism, Down Syndrome, Epilepsy, Rare Diseases and other related serious disability / condition.



WHAT DOES THE FACULTY MEAN TO ME?

What a year this has been... Well, in all honesty, every year is 'what a year it has been' for us. It has been another very busy year with endless experiences. What struck me this year however was the volume of work we were involved in; whether it is our contribution within the community, promoting the work of the Faculty, recruitment of students, running research projects or developing more courses. A Faculty, one of the largest in our Alma Mater, is a dynamic community with so many things happening all the time.

What I feel is a characteristic of this particular Faculty is its ability to reconfigure and reinvent itself in a continuous attempt to respond to what is happening in our community. It is also a Faculty keen to be present in society and actively engage by providing advice, empirical data, new courses and a willingness to be another voice in the social debate.

This year's *UNITY* will once again strive for excellence. In fact, it will be a set of 11 mini-publications for the first time presented in an innovative packaging made up of 9 mini-mags representing every area/discipline within the Faculty, another mini-mag focusing on the Faculty's work and finally a mini-mag designed for children. Our objective is to communicate a freshness and

a commitment to respect the individual disciplines and areas of expertise but at the same time value the intersectionality that our Faculty is trying to develop at the core of its *raison d'être*.

The magazine's theme for this year is 'What does the Faculty mean to you?' and we are really interested in getting to know what the Faculty means to you.

Get in touch, you might want to study with us. It's fun. Being a student of the Faculty myself I can vouch for that!

Charlene

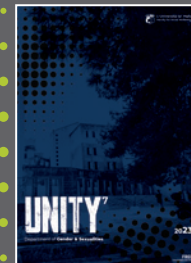
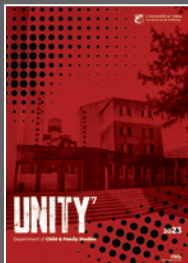
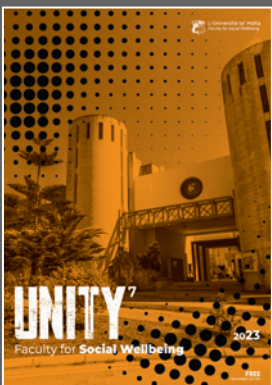


Charlene Fabri
Editor

COVER STORY

This year's art work concept focuses on the notion of intersectionality and connectedness together with a sense of vision. Moving into our 12th year since the setting up of the Faculty in 2012, this colour palette helps us blend uniqueness and individuality of disciplines and areas of study and yet identify as one organisation with a corporate outlook. The innovative design of having a number of mini-mags, for the first time a magazine completely dedicated to children and packed in a unique way to convey the message of freshness, compactness and a drive to go forward. The personalized and interactive element of the magazine combines well with the theme of *UNITY* of this year, namely that of, 'What does the Faculty mean to you?'

UNITY⁷ 2023



A more inclusive and livable society

Personal wellbeing is of central importance to each and every one of us. When one is engaged in academic studies and research purporting to investigate and analyze personal and societal issues with a view to improve the general wellbeing of citizens, then one is confident they are truly pursuing a worthwhile and meaningful goal.



Over the years, the Faculty has trained a multitude of professionals who have made a career out of helping people and especially those who are weaker and more vulnerable than the rest of society.

It gives me great satisfaction and comfort to know that our University had invested in this mission and will continue to do so in future in order to help make ours a better and more inclusive and livable society. This publication is testament to the work done in this area.

PROF. ALFRED J VELLA
Rector

All the content of this magazine was written by Prof. Andrew Azzopardi and Charlene Fabri unless indicated otherwise.

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in the Faculty for Social Wellbeing Unity 7 magazine do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Faculty.



WHEN IN DOUBT - DO NOT OBEY!

The Faculty for Social Wellbeing magazine is another important loop in ensuring that the community that has developed amongst us keeps striving towards ensuring that we remain a relevant and important voice in the social welfare field. My experience of leading this Faculty is informed by a large group of people; academics, administrators, researchers, doctoral candidates, students and stakeholders and together their experiences help us to strive towards transformation within our communities. This year's edition, ably led by the editor and my personal assistant Charlene Fabri, reaches out to a great deal of people asking them what the Faculty means to them. At the end of the day our target can never be what 'we' think is best but what people think, people who are either direct recipients of our services as students or those benefiting from our research, community engagement and scholarship in all its forms and facets.

My message for this year is the following.

I invite our Faculty community to 'disobey' more.

Let me qualify.

We need to 'disobey' more when asked to do the wrong things. We need to be governed by ethical behaviour values and above all our conscience - those are our true guarantee to ensure no one is left behind.

PROF. ANDREW AZZOPARDI
Dean

Some statistics

NUMBER OF
GRADUANDS
2012/13 - 2022/23

3148

FACULTY
M.PHIL./PH.D.
SCHOLARSHIPS

10

M.PHIL./PH.D.
CANDIDATES

100

CURRENT
STUDENT
POPULATION

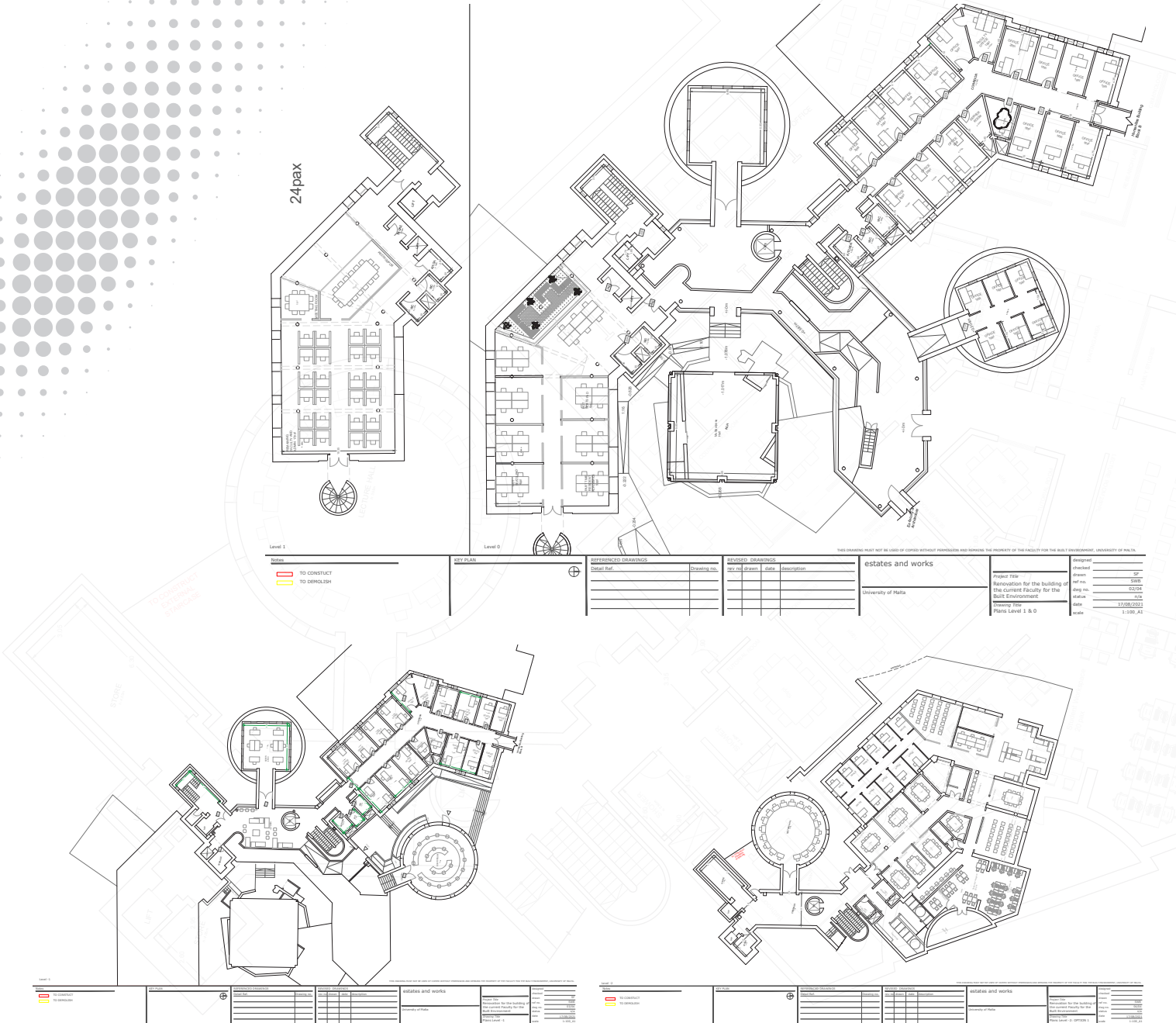
1111

NUMBER OF
FRESHERS
2012/13 - 2022/23

5113

Most of these statistics are estimates.

Just a small peak at how the Faculty's building will look like



NUMBER OF MEDIA CONTRIBUTIONS

250

COURSE PROGRAMMES

59

NUMBER OF RSOs

18

DIGEST WEEKLY MAGAZINE EDITIONS

344

ACADEMIC STAFF (RESIDENT, CASUAL, PART-TIME), SUPERVISORS AND PLACEMENT TUTORS

300

Fostering collegiality



The chosen theme for the Faculty magazine, *UNITY*, skillfully juxtaposes the concept of collective interests alongside individual perspectives. This publication aims to serve as a dynamic platform fostering collegiality. However, this edition recognizes that a Faculty comprises diverse individuals.

The members of the Faculty may belong to various generational categories, including the “Me Generation,” encompassing Generation X, Generation Y, and Millennials; generations that value individualism, self-expression, and personal fulfilment. Moreover, current student cohorts are likely to belong to Generation Z, the first true generation of internet natives. Those born from the mid-1990s inhabit a world that is not only individualistic but also deeply shaped by digital technology and communication.

At face value, promoting a collective spirit among both staff and students presents a complex challenge. We are witnessing more demands for greater autonomy and individual decision-making, while simultaneously being situated within an institution boasting 431 years of history. The call for work-life balance and personal fulfilment, which at times may emerge as being in conflict with work exigencies, is becoming increasingly pronounced. Requests for flexible working hours, remote work options, and policies supporting personal time have become recurring concerns. Paradoxically, addressing such personal requests necessitates greater, not less, collaboration and collegiality to ensure the organization operates seamlessly.

The convergence of individual and organizational needs is also evident in endeavours related to personal and professional development. The “Me Generation” prioritizes self-improvement, seeking an organizational culture that highlights continuous learning, skill enhancement, and pathways for career progression as integral elements. This importance is amplified by rapid technological advancements, necessitating an organizational culture that embraces innovation, access to digital tools, and streamlined communication processes.

Hence, whilst acknowledging “what the Faculty means to YOU”, we must equally emphasize the significance of collaboration and unity. The University’s organizational culture must nurture teamwork, celebrate diverse viewpoints, and foster inclusivity. This entails aligning personal values with the institutional vision and mission. The Faculty’s role is to communicate the University’s values while actively contributing to the University’s development, thus crafting an organizational culture that harmonizes individualism and collaboration within a shared sense of purpose. The Faculty magazine, *UNITY*, represents yet another endeavour among the Faculty for Social Wellbeing’s extensive initiatives. It serves as a tool that helps unite a community of academics, administrators, researchers, and students, all dedicated to the common goal of advancing social wellbeing. This magazine, like other initiatives, solidifies the shared commitment of this community toward a greater societal impact.

PROF. CARMEN SAMMUT
Pro-Rector



Being of service

The Faculty for Social Wellbeing is one of the fastest growing Faculties within the University of Malta. This Faculty provides a real-life example of how it can be of service to students while being a catalyst to motivate societal changes and influence national issues that are impinging on the Maltese society.

As a University, we are proud to see such a rapid development of a modern Faculty in a little more than a decade. The Faculty is contributing to the University’s position to reach out and to provide a space for everyone to be part of the only University on the Island. In future, the Faculty’s role will certainly be of tremendous importance in an era of constant change where the fine balance of economic growth and societal wellbeing is of paramount importance.

DR COLIN BORG
Academic Registrar

A pillar in social inclusion

The Faculty has come to represent one of the pillars of social inclusion, equality and social justice in our Country.



Our nine departments, students, Ph.D. candidates, alumni, Research Support Officers, administrators and academics we all contribute to the social wellbeing of our communities through the various professions and disciplines we embark on, the research we engage with or simply through the difference we make to the lives of others.

DR CLAIRE AZZOPARDI LANE
Deputy Dean

More than just a workplace



I see the Faculty as more than just my workplace. It is a vibrant community of experts from related fields, who can discuss research ideas and complex and important issues in a safe environment.

We are able to disagree on most subjects, but all agree on the love for our students and our wish to make the World a better place by our contributions, however small.

DR GOTTFRIED CATANIA
Deputy Dean

We need to keep growing



This year's magazine is another step in the right direction. It clearly gives a fresh feeling. The message we are conveying is that even though we are in our 11th year and moving to our 12th there is still a lot of work that needs to be done.

It is only by ensuring that we have a team approach that we can move forward. A team approach doesn't mean that we have to agree on everything but that we are clear what the objectives are. I feel that our main target as a Faculty is to continue to improve our services, ensure we are person-centered in our approaches, aim to reach excellence and provide space for all our staff to be creative in the diverse roles that they occupy. It is a privilege to serve in this Faculty.

ALISON DARMANIN
Faculty Manager II



Founded in 1992, Betapsi not only represents all psychology students across Malta and Gozo, but also strives to promote mental wellbeing and foster a more inclusive and psychologically aware student body by maintaining continuous communication with University students in particular.

The Department of Psychology and the Faculty for Social Wellbeing have played an instrumental part in helping us accomplish this mission through their support and collaboration. With the help of the ties we hold with the Department and Faculty, Betapsi aims to promote a more empathic, understanding community where students feel that their voices are heard and cherished.

betapsimalta@gmail.com

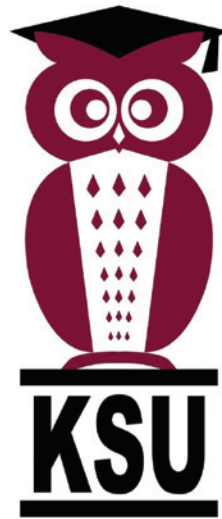


The Faculty for Social Wellbeing means a lot to students who choose to study at the UM. The Faculty has always been there to provide support to students and organisations alike. The support one gets is what makes it stand out, and is a key reason why students decide to pursue studies within the Faculty.

shs.uom@gmail.com

The Faculty for Social Wellbeing is one of the most cooperative Faculties at the University of Malta. KSU appreciates their constant input and contribution to its events and initiatives, most notably; the therapy dogs and pizzas for students studying at the KSU Night-Time Study Area. Most recently, KSU was awarded a Dean's Special Award for its commitment towards the cause of students. The Faculty for Social Wellbeing with the leadership of Prof. Andrew Azzopardi has definitely grown exponentially and is evidently making great efforts and strides forward in its core business and for the wellbeing of students. KSU hopes to consistently find support and a helping hand from the Faculty as it always has and hope our collaboration continues for years to come.

secretary@ksu.org.mt



CRIMINOLOGY
STUDENTS'
ASSOCIATION

CSA

The Faculty has given our organisation the chance to grow. It has helped us improve our outreach with students in our endeavour to promote the course programs with new students. The Faculty has backed up our organisation numerous times whenever we had concerns and we feel we are an integral part of it even though criminology and CSA are only just one segment of the Faculty.

csapublic.uom@gmail.com



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25 YEARS OF SERVICE

The Foundation for Social Welfare Services (FSWS) this year celebrates its 25th anniversary.

The decision to establish the FSWS was taken by Prime Minister Dr Alfred Sant and communicated to the Board of the then Foundation for Medical Sciences and Services (FMSS) on the 27th February, 1998. Following that, the FMSS Board passed a resolution on March 3, 1998 which formally established the FSWS. The end result was that the core business of FMS would focus on medical services while the FSWS took over *Agenzija Sedqa* and the *Social Welfare Development Programme (SWDP)*.

ALFRED GRIXTI
CEO

Foundation
for Social
Welfare
Services

GROWTH

During these 25 years, the social services under the FSWS umbrella have flourished. The setting up of *Agenzija Sedqa* and the SWDP by means of a Cabinet decision in 1994 were vital steps in the right direction. The welfare state model as it was then, basically a cash benefits system which helped people by giving them money, had served well. However, we needed, as a country, to start providing psycho-social services for vulnerable people by trained professionals. *Agenzija Sedqa* and SWDP (which eventually became *Agenzija Appoġġ*), were the strong foundations on which the FSWS was built. Until then substance misuse was still treated as a criminal issue rather than a psycho-social one. Child Protection and Domestic Violence, till then considered private family matters, were the first two issues addressed by the SWDP as it was recognized that they were society's concern.

NEW SERVICES

Today the FSWS has a budget of €30 million and employs 948 people. 80% are professionals from various psycho-social disciplines who carry out direct work with the 22,125 persons who sought our help in 2022. Following the enactment of the Minors Protection (Alternative Care) Act two new Directorates were created within FSWS namely, the Directorate for the Protection of Minors and the Directorate for Alternative Care. Thus, today *Appoġġ* excels in the provision of Domestic Violence Services, social work services in the health sector and for other government agencies along with homelessness and human trafficking. *Appoġġ* runs the highly successful 179 national Support Line and is the leader in internet safety by means of the **Be Smart Online** and **Child Web Alert** projects. *Agenzija Sedqa* is now the leader in substance misuse services, addictions in general and is moving into the field of behavioural addictions. *Agenzija Sedqa* is also the leader in prevention, not only in schools but also at the workplace.

Our community services, which are now also responsible for all therapeutic services, particularly at community level. Now, there are 9 community service centres and 8 outpost services in Malta. Crucially, all the services offered in Malta are also offered in Gozo from 1 community service and 1 outpost plus an administrative office in Xewkija. Following the trends identified by the 2021 census, in 2022 14% of our service users were non-Maltese. Consequently, we are adapting the way we work to be able to serve these people better.

That said, there is still a lot more work to be done. It is the bane of affluent societies that social problems and challenges tend to increase. We are not perfect and recognise that there is always room for improvement. Therefore, we are committed to ongoing training of our employees. Likewise, we will continue to improve our services to reach more people across our country. FSWS looks forward to the next 25 years of service and is committed to being here for the people most in need.

THE GIFT OF LIFE

Jerome was given the gift of life and after twenty years he had to give it back. He lived life to the full even during his last 4 years when he was suffering from a malignant and rare cancer tumour, the Ewings Sarcoma, which targets the bones and the soft tissues!

Whoever met him was left with a very positive outlook on life itself as Jerome transmitted hope and courage to everyone especially to those who were at their most vulnerable and weakest point in their life. His signature smile says it all! The Smiling with Jerome initiative was founded on the 6th of October 2017, the day that Jerome died and it was taken so that help, in any possible form, could be transmitted to anyone in need. Given the high response it got, it was transformed into, and officially registered as a, proper "Foundation" in early 2018. We know that many people suffer in silence. Some need that little bit of extra financial help, others need someone to talk to but do not know where to begin and others need that extra push to get going. This foundation, through help from its wide range of sponsors, provides hope and courage to these persons in need. Smiling with Jerome also takes care of families whose loved ones, mainly of a younger age, have been diagnosed with Cancer, Fibromyalgia, Cerebral Palsy, Autism, Down Syndrome, Epilepsy, Rare Diseases and other related serious disability/condition. This Foundation organises events throughout the year, free of charge, for all the patients and their families. We truly believe that each family deserves to have a well-earned rest and some fun from time to time as positivity and a general sense of wellbeing help with treatment and therapy.

In December 2019 we launched the CHEMO BAGS OF HOPE initiative. These are bags which are being given for free to all inpatients, kids, women and men, who are receiving chemotherapy at SAMOC (Sir Anthony Mamo Oncology Centre) and patients referred to us by Hospice Malta. These bags are packed with specialised items, approved by the Oncology Nurses, which help patients get through the long hours of treatment. As Jerome's parents, together with our other son Jethro, we strongly believe that now it is not a matter of healing, but a matter of adaptation to a new life without the physical presence of Jerome. Losing a child is every parent's worst nightmare, however through this Foundation, we are fully committed to keeping Jerome alive by effectively seeking to put a "Smile" on each face that we meet.

Founders: Kenneth & Josette Frendo
Email: smilingwithjerome@gmail.com
Website: www.smilingwithjerome.com
IBAN: MT30 VALL 2201 3000 0000 4002 5276 992
Revolut: 99872002BOV
Mobile Banking: 99872002

We will never forget you

Dr Jacqueline Azzopardi, former Deputy Dean and Head of the Department of Criminology succumbed to illness in 2016;

Jerome Frendo, a BA (Hons.) Social Wellbeing Studies student succumbed to illness in 2017;

Sarah Lee Borg, a social work alumnus, succumbed to illness in 2017;

Christa Formosa, a social work alumnus, who died in an accident in 2018;

Jason Cauchi, a B.Psy. (Hons.) student, gone missing in 2019;

Fr Alfred Darmanin sj, former lecturer with the Department of Psychology who passed in 2019;

Frances Cini a BA (Hons.) Criminology student, succumbed to illness in 2020;

Prof. Vivian Lee, former lecturer with the Department of Counselling, succumbed to illness in 2020;

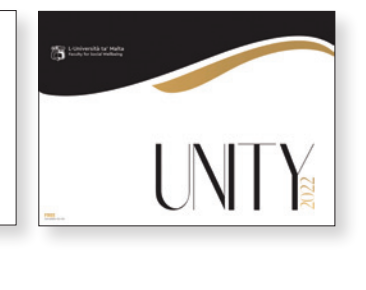
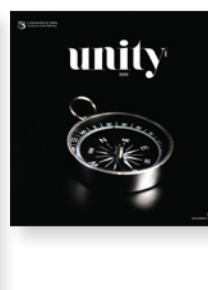
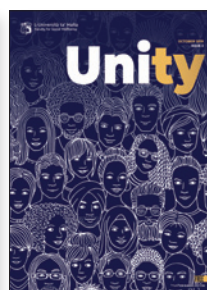
Joseph Cilia Aquilina, former dissertation supervisor and alumnus with the Department of Criminology, succumbed to illness in 2020;

Pierre Camilleri, a youth and community studies alumnus who passed in 2022;

Kevin Tabone, a BA (Hons.) Criminology student, succumbed to illness in 2023;

Dr Sandro Spiteri, former lecturer with the Department of Social Policy and Social Work, succumbed to illness in 2023.

UNITY past issues





FSWS

YEARS OF SERVICE

Foundation for Social Welfare Services

Here for you

fsws.gov.mt

We would like to thank the following sponsors



Foundation for Social Welfare Services
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