

Fondazzjoni Sebħ

The mission of *Fondazzjoni Sebħ* began in 1952 when the Archdiocese of Malta decided to coordinate the work done with children living in residential homes run by male and female religious congregations. *Fondazzjoni Sebħ* was initially known as *Ufficju Djoċesan Djar tat-Tfal* and later changed to *Ufficju Ejjew Għandi*. In 2018 the entity registered itself as an NGO and in 2019 it became established as *Fondazzjoni Sebħ VO/1622*. Since 1952, the primary focus was on Children's Homes. This changed in 2000 when the Archdiocese of Malta opened *Dar Qalb ta' Ġesu*, a second-stage shelter for survivors of domestic violence. This shelter was the first of its kind in Malta as it focussed on empowering women and children to reintegrate into the community, independent from their abuser. Since then *Fondazzjoni Sebħ* has also incorporated a Community Prevention Service which covers the areas of Hamrun and Marsa.

Vision Statement

Fondazzjoni Sebħ strives to nurture an environment for growth, recovery and fulfillment ensuring the dignity and value of each individual, children and families for a more inclusive society.

Mission Statement

"To accompany children and families in their journey towards reaching their full potential by providing community, residential, and educational therapeutic services."

Services

Fondazzjoni Sebħ runs the following services:

Children's Services

- *Dar Fra Diego in Ħamrun* – home for 12 children
- *Dar San Nikola in Ħamrun* – home for 10 children
- *Dar Sagra Familja in Zabbar* – home for 12 children
- *Dar Santa Tereza Zurrieq* – home for 6 children

Family and Community Services

- *Il-Milja* – shelter for 12 families, survivors of violence against women and their children and an after care residential service for 3 families and a community support service.
- Community-based Prevention Team, working with families in Ħamrun and Marsa areas.

1. Children in Care Services

These services fall under the responsibility of the Children in Care Service Manager. The Children in Care Services strive to:

- Offer a safe, structured and loving environment to all children and young people, a strengths- based approach which focusses on the child's attributes and skills to promote emotional growth and resilience is practiced.
- Affirm the worth and dignity of every child and commits to enable each child to reach their full potential.
- Foster all-inclusive approach where children are involved in the running and decision making of the Homes is applied.
- Include in the decision making process children, young people and their parents (where relevant and appropriate) and any significant other about the minor's future.
- Maintain links with the minors' family and the community.

Fondazzjoni Sebħ advocates that the place of the child is within the natural family, however due to various challenging circumstances, this is not always possible. A placement in out of home care should only be considered if the relevant social agencies assure that the minor has no possibility to remain living within his/her family of origin. Only then, we offer a safe and loving home to children who need out of home care. *Fondazzjoni Sebħ* is firmly against institutionalisation and proactively believes in promoting individual care plans for children and young people who reside in our care. The model of practice is built on the belief in the positive value of residential care focussed on meeting the individual needs of children within a group living experience

We believe that when a child is placed in care, the following principles are paramount:

- The best interest of the child needs to be implemented;
- Siblings should be kept together where possible unless it poses a risk to either child or it jeopardises the stability of the placement;
- Permanency should be sought at the earliest opportunity.

2. Family and Community Services

These services fall under the responsibility of the Family Services' Manager.

- i. *Il-Milja* is a therapeutic setting which provides holistic services for victims of Violence Against Women and their children. Its team is made up of Social Workers, Social Support Workers, Care Coordinators, Care Workers, and a Psychologist. The set up offers a communal living arrangement which supports the principle of women helping women which is highly promoted by women's organisations. However, each family lives in a small flat thus enabling and empowering women to

develop independent living which supports them to live a life free from violence and abuse. The stay is usually 18 months long, depending on the individual case and family care plan. The team works with every member of the family to assess their needs and to identify appropriate interventions which enable a family to live in a healthy and safe manner.

The shelter accommodates twelve families and the number of service user can be up to 36 individuals including children. The support offered covers the area identified below which amongst others include :

- Individual psychosocial support;
- Training and employment;
- Parenting after experiences of violence;
- Financial management especially in cases where financial abuse prevailed;
- Maintaining a safe and healthy home;
- Support to deal with the impact of the traumatic events which were experienced by the women and their children;
- Facilitating the access to legal support;
- Support to find alternative accommodation;
- Support to access community resources;
- Enabling the women and children to break the cycle of violence;
- Empower the women to take decisions which protect them and their children best.

The service accepts referrals from the Foundation of Social Welfare Services. Every person referred is assessed by a social worker and the Home Manager of il-Milja to ensure that the service can meet their needs. The service also offers an after care service for a period of around six to twelve months. Following the 18 month programme, women and children may be offered the possibility of living in one of the 3 flats it offers in the community, with the aim of supporting them further to move towards independence. Alternatively residents may move into independent living and continue to benefit from social work support provided by the service.

ii. Community Prevention Team

Following an evaluation of the preventive services previously offered by *Fondazzjoni Sebħ* until 2016, it was decided to amend the service provision in order to compliment the residential services which the foundation offers. In view of this, the Community Prevention Team was launched in 2019, to offer evidence-based community support to children and families living in Ħamrun and Marsa.

The primary aim of the service is to focus on prevention by promoting positive and safe relationships within the family. The team's objectives can be summarised in the following three ways:

- Safeguarding the wellbeing of children within families;
- Promoting positive parenting;
- Improve the outcomes for children;

- Facilitate community based initiatives which promote integration, participation and citizenship of all members of the community.

Where possible, the Community Prevention Team uses family approach and develops one family plan which will be managed by one lead professional. The plan will be formulated with the family and it is reviewed regularly with the family and other services involved.

The team aims at supporting children who are at the 'edge of care' and promotes a nurturing environment within families: an environment that is free from abuse and violence towards any member of the family. The team works with all family members where there are concerns of either child abuse or maltreatment or domestic violence.

The team engages with community stakeholders in order to explore a collaborative approach which enhances the sense of belonging to the community, participation and citizenship of all community members. This is usually done through community-based projects which are held in collaboration with governmental and non-governmental agencies within the community.