



# **SOS Malta Activity Report 2009**



**SOS Malta**

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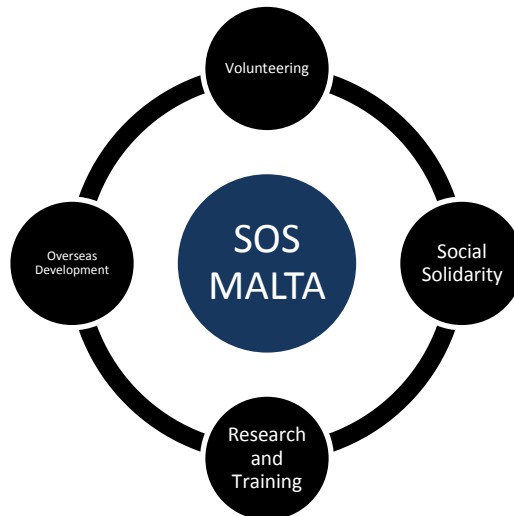
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## Executive Summary

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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 2009, the organisation focused on four main pillars of activities:



### **SOS Malta's Mission Statement:**

“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.”

## **1. Overseas Development**

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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 organisation 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 1990s, 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 organising and financing various activities at community level, including income-generating enterprises for the socially excluded, micro-financing and rainwater harvesting projects (RWH) 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.

In 2009, SOS Malta, with the support of Malta's Official Development Assistance, went into the Masaka District of Namagoma, Uganda, to implement a rainwater harvesting (RWH) project as an entry point to community development. The work was centrally focused around the primary school St. Kizito. Other work was also implemented after a full assessment was carried out to identify the areas of most concern.

SOS Malta's advocacy and awareness-raising among Maltese citizens on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and development issues was also pursued throughout the course of 2009 with the focus being mainly on water and maternal health related issues.

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### **1.1 Operations in Uganda**

Water is one of the focus areas enlisted in Malta's Overseas Development Policy: "Water is a source of life and an essential element of the development process. The 2006 United Nations Human Development Report, focusing on water, notes that while some 1.1 billion people in developing countries have inadequate access to water, and 2.6 billion lack basic sanitation, almost two in three people lacking access to clean water survive on less than \$2 a day, with one in three living on less than \$1 a day. While 1.8 billion people who have access to a water source within one kilometre, but not in their house or yard, consume around 20 litres per day, in the developed world average consumption by a person can reach from 150 to 600 litres a day. Meanwhile some 1.8 million child deaths each year as a result of diarrhoea and millions of women spend several hours a day collecting water... Water is relevant to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals with a particular impact on the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, sustainable health and sensitisation was well as environmental sustainability." SOS Malta notes that Malta is committed to put its acquired water management expertise to the service of developing countries which face the problem of water scarcity: "Water management experience and expertise is greatly needed in many countries where water catchment and water harvesting programmes are

fundamental to improvement in the daily lives of the people.” It is also noted that Malta is committed to supporting sustainable water-related projects and initiatives.

SOS Malta in turn refers to the special importance and focus which Malta’s Overseas Development Policy places on countries in the Horn of Africa and in sub-Saharan Africa – particularly those countries which are the main source of asylum seekers and irregular migrants for Malta.

The benefits of rainwater harvesting have been long underestimated. And yet, it is one of the simplest and most inexpensive methods which can be adopted in working towards the attainment of the Millennium Development Goal for access to safe drinking water by 2015 in areas where people have no access to reliable sources of water. From dry sub-Saharan regions of Africa to remote rural hilltop villages in countries like Sri Lanka, RWH is a valuable option which can secure safe and sufficient drinking water for many local people, as well as improve their livelihood.

Apart from satisfying immediate human needs related to thirst, adequate water supports food gardens, the keeping of livestock, processing of crops, fishing and small-scale economic enterprises. A reliable nearby source of water frees up time previously spent by children and women in water collection, resulting in improved school attendance and women’s involvement in activities that increases the well-being of themselves and their families. Water-enabled opportunities facilitated by RWH projects have the potential of empowering people to improve their livelihoods, providing them with more security and new choices.

SOS Malta has noted that roof RWH from schools, churches and individual houses with corrugated roofs are being tried in Africa and with success. Roof RWH provides adequate water during the rainy season, a period when the rural people are busy with the farm activities and when there is shortage of labour within short distance.

Namagoma, in the Masaka District of Uganda, was identified as the village SOS Malta would support in 2009 with water projects as an entry point to community development. The work was centrally focused around the primary school St. Kizito in collaboration with the village chief and the headmistress. A preliminary needs assessment was conducted and it was decided to renovate all existing tanks digging the necessary trenches for new piping to be able to extend the water flow from the guttering all around the roofs of the school.

Water tanks, piping and requisite materials such as concrete were purchased and transported to Namagoma whilst the engagement of the masons and plumbers was conducted. SOS Malta involved persons living in the village and also trained the individuals in the techniques and knowledge learnt in India and Sri Lanka on RWH.

The RWH project implemented has enabled the full participation of the community in taking pride of their children’s education and well-being. Bringing water was certainly the entry point to discovering the needs of the community but especially of the children who were all suffering from malnutrition, jiggers and other diseases. A full assessment was carried out to identify the areas of most concern and for a full programme to be implemented throughout the twelve months that followed. Priority areas undertaken by SOS Malta were:

- Digging and construction of wells in Namagoma
- Renovation of St Kizito School, Namagoma
- Total eradication of jiggers for the school children
- Distribution of one pair of shoes for each child attending the school

- Food programme for the school children
- Training of the teachers in collaboration with Kyamsansala School in Masaka
- Employment of a nurse to visit all village families for health assessment
- Monitoring of project to be conducted every fifteen days with a visit to the school by SOS Malta's ground contacts
- Exposure to the concept of social enterprises

This work carried out in Namagoma was implemented with the support of Malta's Official Development Assistance for 2009.



## 1.2 Awareness-raising on the Millennium Development Goals and Development Issues

### 1.2.1 Water for Life – Malta



On 1 September 2008, SOS Malta entered into an agreement with Minority Rights Group (MRG) International to implement a national awareness-raising initiative called Water for Life – Malta. This initiative formed 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 had the objective of sensitising children, policy-makers, the private sector, NGOs and civil society organisations, and the general public about the implications of the lack of water supply and sanitation – a reality which few in Malta are exposed to or can appreciate. The project aimed at creating awareness about the realities 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 addressed this by raising awareness about the waste of water carried out by citizens in developed countries, when compared with difficulties encountered by persons in some developing countries in finding enough safe drinking water on a daily basis. Emphasis was placed on the lack of access to safe drinking water and sanitation in developing countries as well as the way in which development problems can be alleviated by adopting a rights-based approach, including the right to water.

The key activities within this project which were carried out throughout 2009 are described hereunder.

#### **School Presentations**

As of November 2008 through to March 2009, SOS Malta gave several presentations within secondary schools, which focused on providing the students with insight into issues related to the right to the access of safe drinking water and sanitation. They aimed at sensitising the children about poverty-related problems linked to water and at bringing them to appreciate the luxury of having access to water in Malta. Other topics addressed included pollution, climate change, water-related diseases, the MDGs 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. Each session lasted approximately 20-45 minutes, depending on the age and the degree of questions posed by the students.

Up until the month of February 2009, each session incorporated a short animated play, a brief DVD and a PPT-based interactive presentation. The animated play involved a story based on two mascots: Sponge Bob and Alex from the cartoon Madagascar. It was based on introducing the children to the right to water, as well as to realities of drought and lack of safe drinking water in certain developing countries. After February, volunteers were no longer available as animators. As a result, the presentations delivered thereafter were carried out using a team of staff members from SOS Malta, who sought to maintain the same interactive concept, utilising the PPT presentation and the DVD. A total of eighteen schools were visited by the end of the 2009 scholastic year, with over 3500 children being addressed.





**Interactive presentations at the schools**

During the presentations, the SOS Malta team informed the children about the art competition which was planned as part of the Water for Life-Malta project. The team also encouraged the children to take initiative in organising small-scale fundraising activities to contribute to water-related projects in developing countries. Furthermore, the children were asked to complete a feedback questionnaire at the end of the session and to ask some questions, in the form of an interview, to family members at home. The idea behind these questionnaires was twofold: a) for the children to think about what they had heard during the presentations and creative ways in which they could contribute towards eradicating water-related poverty; b) for the children to take what they learnt back home, creating discussion about water-related poverty with their family members. Over 600 questionnaires were answered and returned to SOS Malta.

A number of schools went on to carry out fundraising activities which formed part of the fundraising campaign carried out in parallel to this project.

### **Facebook Account**

A Facebook account called Water for Life-Malta was set up in November 2008. Originally, the idea was for children, who attended the school presentations, to join the group, add comments and generate discussions about the topics being addressed by the project. It was also to serve the purpose of having the feedback questionnaire answered online. Unfortunately, due to the fact that many schools in Malta have a general policy of not encouraging children to join online social networks, the SOS Malta team could not promote the Water for Life-Malta Facebook account during the school presentations. It is for this reason that the feedback questionnaire was printed and presented to the children in hard copy. Having said this, activity on the Facebook account gradually picked up among Maltese and foreign persons alike. SOS Malta continued to use and promote this as a communications tool throughout the rest of the project's implementation. By the end of the project, the account had reached approximately 1,500 members.

### **Art Competition**

In view of planning the art competition, SOS Malta drafted and distributed a circular to inform all secondary schools about the initiative. SOS Malta also got in touch with the Ministry of Education to ensure that the art competition circular respected local educational regulations and that all secondary schools in Malta would receive the circular. The closing date for art competition entries was the 8th April 2009. A panel of judges for the art submissions was appointed. All panelists were reknown for their contributions to Maltese society and for their artistic talents. These included Dr. Philip Farrugia Randon – lawyer, artist and author; Mrs. Claudette Pace – TV presenter and singer; and Mr. Kenneth Zammit Tabona – artist and opinionist.

A total of thirty-eight artworks were received and the artwork of an 11 year old student from Sacred Heart Seminary, Gozo, was eventually chosen as the winning entry. The winning entry was chosen for its excellent depiction of what life would be like without water supply. All thirty-eight artworks were then

exhibited at a fundraising event for Water for Life-Malta, which SOS Malta organised together with Vascas Jewellers. This event was inaugurated by His Excellency Dr. George Abela, President of Malta, who presented a prize to the competition winner.



**His Excellency Dr. George Abela, President of Malta,  
presenting the winner with his prize**

### **Water for Life-Malta Calendar**

As mentioned in the rules and regulations of the art competition, the artwork of the winning entry was used as the main image for the 2010 calendar.. Over 4000 desk calendars and 1000 wall calendars were then distributed amongst public, corporate and NGO stakeholders during the second half of 2009.

Shortly after having distributed the calendars to stakeholders via post, a questionnaire was electronically circulated to a sample of these same stakeholders, mainly those within the corporate sector. These stakeholders were requested to complete and return the questionnaire to SOS Malta. This initiative aimed to raise greater awareness among the private sector about potential Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives related to development and water in particular.

Due to a poor response rate, a further email was sent to approximately twenty-five corporations with questions similar to those posed in the abovementioned questionnaire. The objective was to encourage a greater response. Unfortunately, the responses remained low.

### **Media Campaign**

In view of the planned outreach to the general public, contact with members of the media was made in 2008, providing information about the project and asking for interventions on TV programmes, as well as dedicated features in newspapers and magazines.

After February 2009, the project stepped up the awareness-raising efforts targeted at the general public. Throughout the project, Water for Life-Malta featured in numerous online and print articles and TV programmes.

### **Fundraising Campaign**

SOS Malta pre-empted the commencement date for the fundraising campaign, which was indicated in the agreement with MRG. Given that 22 March 2009 was World Water Day, SOS Malta launched elements of its public awareness campaign on this date.

In turn, interventions on TV programmes were held on and around 22 March and articles in key newspapers were published. Furthermore, a press conference was held on 16 March to launch the campaign and promote the project's message. SOS Malta's ambassador, singer and presenter Claudette

Pace, along with Eco Pure Premium Water Company Ltd Operations Manager Mr Tano Vella Bonnici, attended this press conference.



SOS Malta's Managing Director, Claudia Taylor-East, Ambassador, Claudette Pace and Eco Pure Premium Water Company Ltd Operations Manager, Mr Tano Vella Bonnici

Claudette Pace also helped to produce a brief TV clip (30 seconds) which focused on the fight against water-related poverty and the right to water. It included an appeal to viewers to financially contribute to SOS Malta's RWH projects in developing countries. The TV clip was launched on World Water Day and was shown on various TV stations, as well as at Eden Century Cinemas, for a period of six weeks. A voice clip was also aired on a number of local radio stations.

An SOS Malta fundraising initiative was also planned for World Water Day. The event consisted of an afternoon party for Maltese families, involving animation and activities. A stand for Water for Life-Malta was set up and promotional material was distributed. Farsons/Eco Pure Premium Water Company Ltd committed to supplying SOS Malta with free 0.5 litre bottles, which were sold during the event, and the profits generated were fed into the Water for Life-Malta fund.

### 1.2.2 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 eighteen-month transnational project across six new Member States of the European Union. The project, entitled 'Media Engagement in Development Issues and Promotion' (MEDIP), is co-financed 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’. The project is led by SOS Malta in partnership with the Foundation for Development of Democratic Rights - DemNet (Hungary), the European Institute of Cyprus, Slovene Philanthropy (Slovenia), Civil Society Development Foundation (Romania), and the Jaan Tonisson Institute (Estonia).

The project aims at sensitising journalists and the media within these six new EU Member States about the MDGs and development issues. Through the media, the project seeks to create greater consciousness amongst policy makers, the business community, students and academics, as well as the general public.

Below is the list of the key MEDIP activities implemented during 2009.

### **Media Training Workshop – Malta**

The project’s first activity kicked off on 18 March 2009 with a very fruitful three-day training workshop organised for media persons from the six new EU Member States from where the project partners derive. The event served to equip the participants with methods and tools in communicating on the MDGs and development issues. The training workshop also allowed for the exchange of ideas regarding the fieldtrip to Uganda, which would immediately follow the workshop. Uganda would also be the location from where the footage for the six MEDIP documentaries would be taken. The workshop served the purpose of briefing those selected for the fieldtrip to Uganda on the country’s profile, the agenda of the trip and to give guidance on filming the documentaries. Furthermore, it was an opportunity for both the project partners as well as the media representatives to establish solid networks of cooperation and gather valuable information related to communication and presentation methods.

Key speakers during the event included Dr. Clare Thake Vassallo (Chairman of Public Broadcasting Services Ltd, Malta); Ms. Anya Sitaram (Presenter at BBC World News); Mr. Karl Schembri (Chairman of the Journalists’ Committee, Malta); Ms. Vanya Walker-Leigh (Former correspondent of ‘The Guardian’ at the United Nations, Geneva); Ms. Katherine Meenan (Connect-World, Ireland); Mr. Joseph Woods (The World Centre for New Thinking); and Mr. Karl Stagno-Navarra (Correspondent with Al Jazeera English).

The workshop was highly interactive and produced interesting discussions in relation to the role of the media, especially within new EU Member States, in raising awareness about development issues and the MDGs in particular. Reference was also made to the difficulties encountered by NGOs and journalists alike, in ensuring that development and poverty-related stories are regularly covered within local audiovisual and printed media.



**Media Training Workshop – Malta**

### **Field Visit to Uganda**

Following the training workshop in Malta, a group of media persons from Malta, Hungary, Cyprus, Slovenia, Romania and Estonia, together with MEDIP partner representatives, visited Uganda between 22 March and 1 April 2009. The visit was organised and coordinated with the help of a representative from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Uganda), who accompanied the participants on the trip.

The aims and objectives of the field visit were to serve as an opportunity for the participants to gain first-hand experience of the realities of poverty which relate to the MDGs and that need to be addressed. It was also an effective way of sensitising journalists; providing insight into success stories that address poverty, as well as exposure to areas of action which EU Member States and civil society can assist with; and providing the delegates with an opportunity to collate sufficient footage in view of producing six documentaries, each relating to one of the MDGs. SOS Malta's documentary focused on MDG 5, improving maternal health. Given the diversity of the MDGs, numerous geographical points in the South, North, East and West of Uganda were included on the agenda. The delegations visited schools, a health centre, slums, camps for internally displaced persons, and water harvesting and sanitation projects. So as to obtain a better understanding of the situation in the places visited, selected District Council Officials provided delegates with an overview of the district and information pertinent to the regions. Officials also accompanied the delegates on the trips within their respective communities so as to provide expertise as required.

### **Production and Screening of the Documentaries**

Following the field visit to Uganda, the partner organisations were each assigned the task of producing thirty-minute documentaries, these being a tangible result of the field visit to Uganda. In 2009, the MEDIP project produced a total of six documentaries, each addressing a different MDG, which form part of one series. The scope of the documentaries is to provide insight into the realities which each MDG is seeking to address within the context of the realities captured in Uganda. Each partner organisation distributed copies of their documentary to the MEDIP target groups. In addition to this, each partner organisation had their respective documentaries aired on national TV in view of capturing a wider audience. Most documentaries were aired in 2009 and other screenings have been secured for 2010. Throughout 2009, the MEDIP project partners also sought to promote these documentaries elsewhere, such as at shopping centres, schools and at other events attended by the general public.

### **National and Transnational Photo Competitions and Exhibitions**

Another key activity of the MEDIP project involved National Photographic Competitions held in the six new EU Member States participating in the project. The aim of the photographic competitions was to engage photographers and photojournalists and to facilitate image-based communication to members of the general public on issues related to development, poverty and the MDGs. Each National Photographic Competition was followed by a National Photographic Exhibition, exhibiting the entries of the competition. All six National Photographic Competitions and a number of the National Photographic Exhibitions took place in the final quarter of 2009 whilst others are scheduled for 2010.

In addition to this, the top three winning entries of the National Photographic Competitions were entered into a Transnational Photographic Competition which resulted in one overall winner. These top entries of the Transnational Photographic Competition were exhibited in the MEDIP Transnational Photographic Exhibition at La Galleria (AIDCO) in Brussels in November 2009, along with a selection of other related photographs.

This exhibition was inaugurated by Malta's Permanent Representative to the European Union, Ambassador Richard Cachia Caruana. During the exhibition, Ambassador Richard Cachia Caruana presented a commemorative trophy to Ms. Iuliana Rada (Civil Society Development Foundation) on



behalf of the winning photographer. Also present at the event was the Director for Thematic Operations, Mr. Aristotelis Bouratsis.



**Ambassador Richard Cachia Caruana,  
Ms. Claudia Taylor-East (SOS Managing Director) and Ms. Iuliana Rada (CSDF)  
La Galleria (AIDCO)**

### **Other Activities**

Besides the above key activities carried out in 2009, some of the MEDIP project partners also began implementing Roundtable Conferences. These roundtable conferences are aimed at generating discussion and awareness among the stakeholders on the MDGs, poverty and development issues as well as their country's commitment towards the goals both locally and overseas. A number of these were held towards the end of 2009 whilst more are scheduled for 2010.

As part of the MEDIP project, all six project partners also set up blogs. The objective behind setting up the MEDIP blogs is to encourage a more innovative, effective and user-friendly internet and communication tool. The blogs provide visitors with information on the MEDIP activities each partner organisation is implementing and thus serves as a means of promoting the project and its events. Furthermore, the blogs are used as a tool to spread knowledge on the MDGs and development-related issues with articles frequently being posted on the blogs. A Facebook Account called MEDIP-Malta was set up in 2009.

All the six MEDIP partner organisations also participated in a number of complementary activities including the European Development Days in Stockholm in October 2009. The MEDIP project partners saw the European Development Days as an opportunity to showcase the MEDIP project. The partner organisations showcased the MEDIP project by distributing the promotional material, screening the documentaries and displaying images of the top-winning photographs entered into their National Photographic Competitions.



**European Development Days 2009 – Malta Stand**



**European Development Days 2009  
Cyprus Stand (Left) and Slovenia Stand (Right)**

Besides continuing with a number of Roundtable Conferences and National Photographic Exhibitions in 2010, priority will be given to the three main activities left to be implemented, these being the Media Training Workshop in Hungary, the Awareness Campaigns and the MEDIP Final International Conference which will be held in Malta.

### 1.2.3 Save Women's Lives (SWL)



As of 1 January 2009, SOS Malta has been participating in a project entitled 'Save Women's Lives'. The project receives 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 is led by the World Population Foundation (WPF). Other partners include Deutsche Stiftung Welbevölkerung (DSW) (Netherlands), BOCS Foundation (Hungary), German Foundation for World Population Foundation (Ethiopia) and Mosaic (South Africa).

The project aims to increase public awareness on MDG 5 – Improving Maternal Health - through influencing public opinion and fostering and enhancing support among policy-makers. Other issues addressed through the project include raising awareness on poverty eradication, MDG 3 - Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women, sexual and reproductive health and rights, HIV/AIDS, European Union and national development policies.

#### **SWL's Target Groups**

**Journalists** are being encouraged to communicate more frequently and effectively on MDG 5. Through the [www.mothersnight.com](http://www.mothersnight.com) website and Save Women's Lives Facebook Account, journalists are constantly being updated with relevant articles on maternal health issues in the developing world, images and PowerPoint Presentations. A Press Kit, enabling them to focus attention on the human face behind MDG 5, was also made available.

**NGOs/CSOs** - Malta Medical Students' Association (MMSA), YWCA Malta, Malta Confederation of Women's Organisations (MCWO) and Malta Union of Midwives and Nurses (MUMN) were all invited to participate in a communication platform to integrate MDG 5 within various local initiatives.

**MPs/MEPs** - Through informal meetings and various digital communications, policy-makers are being encouraged to act as the bridge between the people and their government on issues relating to MDG 5.

**General Public** – Through the media and various events, citizens are being informed of development issues and MDG 5.

Below is a list of the key SWL activities implemented in 2009.

**Information Kit**

Since the commencement of SWL, SOS Malta has made a number of successful progressions in its effort to promote the importance of MDG 5. A leaflet/fact sheet was produced showing the link between MDG 5 and poverty alleviation. This focused on the key issue of teenage pregnancy, which is one of the many causes of maternal mortality around the world, especially in the developing world. The fact sheet was distributed to the different target groups and was disseminated during public events and meetings with the various target groups.



SWL Factsheet 2009

**Electronic Information Service**

A website was set up and maintained for the project partners and their target groups with background information on MDG 5 and related topics at [www.mothersnight.com](http://www.mothersnight.com). The objective of the website is to generate greater awareness and to promote development education by making the campaign and its objectives and material widely available. Information on SOS Malta's section of the website includes materials from the Mother's Night event, the Information Kit and research and articles relating to maternal and sexual health.

**Press Activities**

Regular press work was carried out throughout 2009 including the dissemination of regular press releases and event-related press conferences. SOS Malta also seeks to create stronger ties with media persons in order to encourage greater and more effective media coverage on MDG 5.



## Advocacy Message 2009

A special advocacy message was prepared and delivered to MPs, MEPs, ODA officials and those who attended the Mother's Night event. SOS Malta's advocacy message 2009 was 'Teenage mothers require targeted attention and together with their partners must be more responsible and involved in sexual health programmes'.

## Mother's Night



Mother's Night is a public event within the SWL project held on the night prior to Mother's Day. The Mother's Night event in Malta took place on 6 May 2009. This was a highly visual event targeting the public and attracting media attention through a mix of information and entertainment. The event itself consisted of an African theme, including Moroccan food, African music and South African wine. Approximately 180 people came out to support Mother's Night. The event focused on the key issue of teenage pregnancy, one of the many causes of maternal mortality around the world. Key speakers included Ms Joanna Drake, Head of the Representation of the European Commission in Malta; Ms Maryanne Massa, the Principle Health Promotion Officer for the Department of Health Promotion and Disease Prevention; Ms Arlette Vassallo, a fifth year medical student at the University of Malta; and Ms Hedwig Bvumburah, Project Officer with SOS Malta.

Facts on the implications of teenage pregnancy on young women, the need for a comprehensive and effective Sexual Health Policy for Malta and the importance of promoting healthy pregnancies and safe child birth, were addressed.



Mothersnight Malta 2009 - Third Country National Band

## Reach on the Beach

SOS Malta together with the Malta Medical Students Association (one of SOS Malta's local collaborators on the SWL project) organised a 'special beach action'. Leaflets with MDG 5 and STI prevention information were distributed to the general public at numerous beaches in August 2009.



SWL Campaign Leaflet 2009

### World Poverty Day

SOS Malta planned an awareness-raising campaign at the Plaza Shopping Centre, Sliema, in the heart of Malta's commercial and shopping district on 17 October 2009. The objective was to hone in on poverty and the MDGs. SWL Malta project material was showcased at this event.



World Poverty Day  
SOS Malta Stand Plaza Shopping Centre

### World Poverty Day Brown Paper Bag Campaign

A bag of campaign material including SWL Malta materials was sent out to Ministers, Parliamentary Secretaries and Government Officials in October 2009 in order to raise awareness on the MDGs and development issues.



SOS Malta Brown Paper Bag Campaign 2009

## **European Development Days**

The European Development Days are Europe's foremost platform for dialogue and exchange on international development issues worldwide. SWL Malta project material was showcased at this event held in October 2009 on the stand hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Malta.



**European Development Days 2009 – Malta Stand**

## **Primary Health Care Conference**

The Minister for Social Policy the Hon. Mr. John Dalli opened the Primary Health Care Conference held on 23 October 2009. The conference was attended by approximately 200 people. A PowerPoint Presentation, giving information on MDG 5, the SWL campaign, the importance of maternal health issues in the developing world and changes that are required in order to contribute towards reducing poverty, was presented together with a case study of Zimbabwe highlighting the realities of maternal health over the past two decades. The latter presentation was given by Ms. Hedwig Bvumburah from SOS Malta.

Raising awareness on development issues and promoting education for development in Malta with a particular focus on improving maternal health and reducing maternal mortality will continue throughout 2010 and 2011.

## **2. Social Solidarity**

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One of the founding principles of SOS Malta is that of solidarity. In line with this, SOS Malta promotes initiatives such as Social Enterprise and Corporate Social Responsibility aimed at increasing inclusion and empowering disadvantaged groups.

Furthermore, the increase of regular and irregular immigration to 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 into Maltese society. It also believes in the empowerment of migrants as well as the provision of structured opportunities for those who wish to return to their country of origin.

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## 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 early 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 part-financed by the European Commission through the PROGRESS programme ‘Mutual Learning on Social Inclusion and Social Protection’. The Italian organisation, Co-Operative Group of the National Consortium of Italian Social Co-Operatives Gino Mattarelli (Gruppo Cooperativo – CGM), coordinates the project. Five other European Organisations partner on this project along with national partners from eight EU Member States, including Malta.

WISE aims at analysing the National Action Plans for inclusion and 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 European Social Fund 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 is to assess the extent to which social inclusion policies and actions are mainstreamed into employment policies and structural funds programmes. In linking the inclusion strategy with the employment strategy and structural funds, this project provides a key opportunity for mutual learning on how to achieve effective mainstreaming of social inclusion.

A Cross Cutting Report was finalised in September 2009 by all the eight participating Member States incorporating all the National Cross Cutting Reports. These will be put together into a booklet which will be published in 2010. A booklet on guidelines for European policymakers will also be published in 2010.

## 2.2 Integration and Reintegration of Migrants

### 2.2.1 Comprehensive Return Programme Including Reintegration – DAR



SOS Malta was involved as a partner in a project entitled ‘Comprehensive Return Programme Including Re-Integration’ since August 2007. The project, codenamed DAR, was part-financed by the European Commission through its RETURN programme. It was led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Malta). Other partners included International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) and Med Europe (Italy). DAR 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. Interviews were conducted with over 120 individuals in 2008.

Assistance provided to returnees included 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 and accommodation) in their country of origin.

Other than interviewing and counseling prospective returnees, SOS Malta also assisted with organising individualised 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 was to assist approximately 50 irregular migrants to return to their country voluntarily, however, more returns were affected than this target number in 2008. By the end of the project, thus by the end of January 2009, approximately 150 persons were returned.

### 2.2.2 Healing Hands



Healing Hands is a pilot project launched in 2009. It is being implemented by SOS Malta in partnership with the Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers (AWAS). The project's main objective is to create opportunities of empowerment and productive activity so that the beneficiaries are able to become economically self-sufficient and integrate into Maltese society. This project is also introducing the concept of social enterprises as a means of income generation. The project is promoting business entrepreneurial skills among the migrants through training, as well as empowering the women to start their own business initiatives through the knowledge gained. Furthermore, the project is a means to encourage cultural expression through arts and handmade crafts. The idea is to encourage migrants to apply their traditional and non-traditional skills within a proactive context which is inclusive, flexible and creative.

As part of this project, English and Business and Empowerment Skills modules were made available to the migrants enlisted on the project and were completed by the end of August 2009 after 50 hours of instruction by qualified teachers and an interpreter. Following this, the training module in Crafts and Tailoring began in October 2009 and is scheduled to continue throughout the beginning of 2010.

Throughout 2009, the Healing Hands project encountered a number of difficulties. This included the poor attendance, commitment and punctuality of the migrants. On top of this, many migrants view Malta as a



transit point en-route to other destinations in mainland Europe and America. This means that some migrants enlisted for the training are being resettled in other countries and thus are unable to continue with their training. The seasonal job offers also posed a problem to the project as some migrants chose to opt out of the training to carry out temporary work.

In the coming months, SOS Malta and AWAS will be exploring ways forward with the project which is set to conclude in mid-2010.



**Crafts and Tailoring Training – Healing Hands Project**

### **3. Research and Training**

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One of the main pillars of SOS Malta relates to research and training. Research is carried out in regard to all of the three other pillars of the organisation: overseas development; volunteering; and social solidarity. SOS Malta is constantly seeking to identify innovative approaches to each of these three fields. Without constant research and training, an organisation risks its work becoming ineffective and unprogressive.

SOS Malta believes in the need for constant training and capacity-building of the civil society sector in Malta. It is in this spirit that SOS Malta had implemented a highly successful four year project, called the Malta Resource Centre for Civil Society NGOs (2004-2008).

The aim of the Malta Resource Centre project was to provide for capacity building measures targeting civil society NGOs in Malta to become more effective to operate and participate within the European Union. These measures were specifically aimed at helping NGOs to become better equipped in influencing policies and plans, as well as in accessing EU funds. These measures included the setting up of networks, provision of training and consultation, research, projects development and providing technical assistance.

In the aftermath of the Malta Resource Centre project, SOS Malta continues to organise occasional training courses for its staff and those of other NGOs, as well as for volunteers – ensuring to focus on innovative and progressive concepts in the sector.

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### **3.1 Volunteering Across Europe**

This research work was a continuation of research on volunteering carried out by SPES (Associazione Promozione e Solidarietà) over the past years. The research work carried out in 2009 was run jointly by a group of Italian volunteering support centres and aimed to cover seventeen countries in order to complete the panorama of volunteering in European Union Member States.

The system used for the project was to run the research in partnership with a volunteering support centre in the respective Member States, thus favouring common goals for the development of the infrastructure for volunteering and the networking among European Volunteer Centre (CEV) members and other potential partners.

The research was based on three tools standard across all countries:

1. Desk research on available data, research and information following a set of titles.
2. Questionnaires for the volunteering support centre on a local, regional and national level or, where these are non-existent, for organisations or federations who perform significant work towards the promotion of volunteering and/or provide services to voluntary organisations.
3. Interviews to leading persons of the volunteering movement according to the defined set of questions.

The Malta report was compiled and completed in October 2009. In November 2009, it was presented at a conference in Lucca, Italy, organised by Centro Nazionale per il Volontariato entitled 'Volunteering across Europe. Research as a tool for policy making'.

### **3.2 Strengthening Engagement in Public Health Research (STEPS)**



In November 2009, an SOS Malta representative attended the STEPS kick-off partners' meeting in Lodz, Poland as part of SOS Malta's involvement as the Malta coordinator for the project.

STEPS is a two-year project part-financed by the 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Research Programme of the European Union and led by the University College London (UCL) partnered by the European Public Health Association (EUPHA) and Association Skalbes (Riga).

The aim of the project is to improve public health research in Europe by engaging civil society organisations in dialogue with other stakeholders (researchers and ministries) in the twelve new EU Member States taking part. SOS Malta has been commissioned by the STEPS partners to implement the project in Malta.

A key objective of SOS Malta's involvement in this project is the organisation of a national workshop whereby all stakeholders linked to public health research are brought together. An organising committee

made up of members of SOS Malta, Malta Health Network (MHN) and Malta Association of Public Health Medicine (MAPHM) was set-up for this event.

All national workshops have the same objectives:

- to provide a discussion forum for various stakeholders (CSOs, public health associations and researchers) to describe the existing system of research in public health on a national level based on proposed themes;
- to offer suggestions on how to improve public health research through actions by the ministries of health and strengthening the engagement of different civil society organisations (CSOs) citizen health organisations.

Following each workshop, suggestions will be presented in a national assessment report, which will include:

A description of the current national system including European involvement

- Suggestions for improvement of the public health research system and engaging civil society organisations
- The target group of the workshop
- Citizen health organisations (including advocacy and service provider organisations)
- Professional representative NGOs including national public health associations
- Research institutes and researchers

Themes of the workshop

- Description of the existing public health research system (legal base, responsible institutions, finances and prioritisation)
- The role of different civil society organisations, especially CSOs contributing to public health research
- A Public Health Research topic specific for Malta
- European dimensions

Malta's National Workshop will be held in **March 2010**. The same sort of event will be held at circa the same time in the rest of the eleven new EU Member States engaged in the project.

#### **4. Volunteering**

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SOS Malta has promoted volunteering from the moment of its inception. The philosophy behind the organisation 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 most importantly, introduces and reinforces the dimension of community support.

The year of 2009 witnessed two main initiatives related to volunteering, these being VolServ and Kellimni.

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## 4.1 VolServ



The aim of VolServ is the organisation and support of voluntary services in the main general hospital (Mater Dei Hospital - MDH) 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

#### i) Campaigning

This year mainly print and radio media were used to advertise VolServ. Also, it was decided to use the hospital itself as a means of highlighting the work carried out by the volunteers and to create further awareness of the project (See section entitled Volunteer Corner at MDH).

#### ii) Interviewing and Assessment of Volunteers

Seventy-three volunteers were interviewed during 2009. From the said number, three volunteers were deemed unsuitable for volunteering in MDH.

### 2. Training of Volunteers

All newly recruited volunteers undergo the same Basic Training Course which includes the following areas: Communication Skills, Basic Hygiene, Volunteering in Health Care and VolServ Policies to Date.

Specific training courses are designed following discussions with nurses in charge of specific sections where volunteers would be introduced. These courses were held for volunteers who were assigned to Pediatric wards and for those in the Psychiatric Unit.

This year, two refresher training courses were held for a number of volunteers who had been offering their service in the hospital for one year and over.

Also, in 2009, VolServ introduced a course in Basic First Aid Training. This was offered to a group of volunteers who had been actively volunteering on a regular basis and was delivered by the Red Cross. This course was sponsored by HSBC Trust Services.

### Summary of Recruitment, Screening and Training of Volunteers - January till December 2009

Total number of volunteers interviewed:	73
Total number of new volunteers trained:	75
Total number of students trained	43
Total number of active volunteers re-trained	73
<b>Headcount of Active Volunteers as of December 2009</b>	<b>164</b>

## New Services

VolServ management explored the idea of introducing volunteers within the Psychiatric Unit within MDH. As a follow up on discussions held in 2008, 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. A call for interested volunteers was made at the beginning of the year and volunteers commenced their services in this unit with a focus on two skills – Basic Cooking Skills and Arts and Crafts. The idea was to have the volunteers support the Occupational Therapy service by adding a skills-enhancing service that provides patients with a positive learning experience.

A team of eight volunteers formed in order to plan and implement fundraising events in aid of VolServ's work in MDH. Fundraising events were organised around some popular calendar dates such as Valentine's Day, Easter, Mother's Day and Christmas. As a result of the fundraising initiatives, resources were given to MDH such as 7000 cups, VolServ Mouse (a life-size costume resembling Mickey Mouse), Arts and Crafts Resources and Psychiatric Unit Resources (for both the cooking and craft sessions).

## Volunteer Corner at MDH

As a means of maintaining the work carried out by VolServ in the public eye and in the media, a Volunteer Corner was set up in the Main Foyer of the hospital between 15 and 30 June 2009. This was in the form of a photographic exhibition of the volunteers in their various roles in the hospital and aimed at raising awareness as to the work carried out by the volunteers. It was also a means of recruiting new volunteers. Volunteers were present in the stand throughout the two weeks talking about their experience and inviting interested persons to apply to join the service.



## 4.2 Kellimni



**116 111 - KELLIMNI**  
**EU Child Helpline - Online Counselling Service for Adolescents**

SOS Malta (in partnership with the Salesians of Don Bosco) continued to work on setting up an Online Counselling system (KELLIMNI) which would be run by volunteers (trained and supported through SOS Malta's volunteering structures) with the collaboration of the Malta Association of Psychotherapists and the Malta Association for the Counselling Profession.

The aims and objectives of this service included the offering of one-to-one, real-time counselling services online to adolescents in Malta within the twelve till sixteen age bracket and to operate the pilot project in the spirit of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child with a specific focus on the protection and 'listening' rights of the child.

During 2009, SOS Malta and the Salesians of Don Bosco invited Agenzija Appogg to collaborate on the project with the intention of also extending the service to operate the EU Child Helpline 116 111.

A partnership between governmental agencies, NGOs and church organisations creates a good framework for a better national vision and policy for children and young people. As documented in Child Helpline International (CHI) reports, research and experience shows that running a child helpline is not something that one organisation can do on its own. A partnership model is important. Each partner holds joint ownership and has the responsibility to reach out to the needs and protection of children.

This project will be further developed throughout 2010.

## 5. Fundraising

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TOONS is an SOS Malta initiative aimed at generating 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 and to also address the work SOS Malta is carrying out in all its four main pillars of activities. 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 and promotions, festivals, fairs and 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 decrease in available grants. One of the greatest challenges facing NGOs is how to sustain and support NGO activities financially

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 organisation to

meet its operating and administrative expenses while maintaining the freedom to determine its programme priorities and projects, irrespective of donor preferences.

TOONS characters were used during SOS Malta's fundraising events and awareness campaigns carried out in 2009.

- Various dates – Awareness Campaigns in schools for the Water for Life-Malta project
- 13 and 14 February 2009 – Fundraising event selling roses at Mater Dei Hospital
- 22 March 2009 - A Tea Party celebrating World Water Day was organised and all the characters mingled with the children and adults in attendance
- 17 October 2009 – World Poverty Day at the Plaza Shopping Centre

TOONS characters were also used by other NGOs, schools and organisations throughout 2009.

- 25 April 2009 – Puttinu fundraising weekend
- 15 - 22 June 2009 – A Theatre Company fundraising for sick children
- 26 - 28 June and 3 - 7 July 2009 - Eden/Razzett(Inspire) at the Trade Fair
- 6 July 2009 - Fundraising event by the Sisters of Mother Theresa
- 14 July 2009 - Opening of a Summer School



## 6. Affiliations

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SOS Malta is a member of various European and local networks which focus on issues related to its four pillars of activities and advocacy. Networks SOS Malta was a member of throughout 2009 are listed hereunder.

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### Memberships

- The European Volunteer Centre (CEV)
- Comité Européen des Associations d'Intérêt Général - The European Council for Non-Profit Organisations (CEDAG)
- Child Helpline International (CHI)
- European Network for Education and Training e.V. (EUNET)
- SOLIDAR

- EUROCARERS
- End Water Poverty
- European Anti-Poverty Network Malta (EAPN Malta)
- The European Network Against Racism Malta (ENAR Malta)
- Anti Poverty Forum Malta (APF Malta)
- National Federation of NGOs of Malta (NFMN)

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