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Annual General Meeting

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2012

During the year 2012, the focus of APF Malta was on internal affairs and the members worked towards revitalising the organisation. The overall aim of the members was to work towards creating a better future for all those suffering from social exclusion and relative and exclusive poverty.

I would like to thank each and every individual who has dedicated his/her time towards working in order for us to achieve our scope. It was not an easy year and we had encountered many problems which hindered our work. I would like to thank those members who believed that APF could have a strong impact on those with whom we worked and on individual NGO's. I thank them for dedicating their time and energies in order for the organisation to proceed with its goals.

Meetings that were attended by APF members

From January 2012 to February 2013, EXCO organised various meetings in which different subjects were discussed, including the various problems that EXCO was encountering throughout the year and the correspondence and meetings that members attended. EXCO meetings were held once a month and at times, members met up even more than once a month.

A few members attended various meetings which were held locally and also abroad. These are a few of the meetings which were attended :- a seminar that organised by the SOS Malta, Musec, meetings organised by the professional sector and meetings organised by the European sector.

During the year, there were also various meetings held by the EAPN. These meetings were attended by members from EXCO and EUISG. Also, a meeting entitled "People experience Poverty and Strategy Meeting" was held in September. Godwin Callus and myself attended the AG meeting that was held in Norway.

In December 2012, Godwin Callus attended a meeting in Brussels together with a Maltese delegation and represented the APF.

During the month of March 2012, a meeting was held with Mr. Edwin Vassallo, who is the Chairman of the Social Affairs Committee and we discussed the issue of persons who experience poverty and how we were going to tackle together this major problem.

During December 2012 and February 2013, I attended various meetings organised by the Sectoral Sub-Committee for Social Inclusion and during these meetings we discussed social and inclusive plans for the years 2014 – 2020.

Financial Report

During the year 2012 we felt the need to begin using a new accounting system. Mr. Godwin Callus took the initiative to implement this reform and he also gathered all the necessary information regarding the APF accounts. We have also began using internet banking in order for it to be easier for us to access information regarding our financial situation and in order to ameliorate our work. We have also written up a new list of all associations that form part of APF and all the fees paid by these associations.

Articles and interviews appearing on local newspapers

During these last months, various persons from the APF forum offered their views regarding poverty in Malta. On the day dedicated to poverty and social exclusion, the people who attended the meeting “People Experience Poverty” were interviewed. Several radio interviews were held and other interviews were held on several television stations and on programmes related to poverty and exclusion.

A water campaign was also organised by the APF Malta and GWU. The theme of the campaign is “water and sanitation are human rights”. A conference was also held at the GWU, which was organised by the APF Malta and the GWU, in which Claudia Taylor East and myself spoke about the importance of water. After this conference, a petition and a declaration were signed in St. George’s Square in Valletta. The APF, in collaboration with Millennium Chapel voluntary workers, collected about 1400 signatures. This petition was sent to the EPSU and these signatures will be added to the rest of the other signatures collected all over Europe, totalling a million by April 2013. A total of 950 signatures were to be collected from Malta.

The “People Experience Poverty” meeting in 2012

In Brussels, on the 10th and 11th of May 2012, the 11th meeting entitled “People Experience Poverty” was held. The subject discussed was “Homeless and housing rights in times of crises. Is having a roof enough to feel at home in EU of 2012 ?”

During the 11th European meeting, a total of 150 delegates (persons who experienced poverty personally or/and who were homeless) from 30 different countries gathered together in order to reflect upon this issue, mainly about :- the impact of the crisis, practical examples and political recommendations. The delegates shared their ideas and opinions with the representatives from national ministries, the European Commission, the Economic and Social European Committee, academics, researchers and social NGOs.

As had been done in past years, the national delegates were invited to make a creative presentation in order to demonstrate the reality of poverty. This year, the presentations were oriented towards the rights of the homeless and the subsequent provision of accommodation during financial crisis. These presentations included the use of drama, films and slides.

The three Maltese representatives who attended this meeting were all homeless at one point or another in their lives.

The delegates attended 6 different workshops and were invited to share their experiences, ideas and thoughts which were focused primarily towards replying 3 questions, which were :-

1. In 2012, when compared to 2008, what are the main differences in respect of the homeless and violation of residential rights ?
2. What is considered right or wrong action in relation to the homeless and the violation of residential rights ?
3. How is it best for local, regional, national and European politicians to address the problem of homelessness and the violation of residential rights ?

The participants of the workshop then discussed the results of the workshop with 3 important representatives of the European Union.

In relation to the poverty reality, the homeless and exclusive accommodation, the following was discussed :-

- Anyone is at risk when it comes to experiencing poverty and homelessness, losing one's job, experiencing physical and mental problems,
- Discrimination is a massive problem :- persons who experience poverty, an unconventional style of living, inadequate lodging, criminal activity, have to face significant prejudice and discrimination in relation to residential access. This discrimination is two-fold for persons who are disabled, immigrants (undocumented and irregular), single parents and ethnic minorities.
- This situation of crisis has increased the number of persons at risk, such as :- youngsters are finding it very difficult to find employment; the value which the elderly have given to their pensions and savings has decreased; the middle-class population is facing greater financial loans
- The authorities need to tackle the situation of poverty much better.

- A situation of poverty results in a decrease in residential accommodation, social exclusion, unemployment, health problems, etc. Poverty also leads to a person's incapability of retaining a job or finding employment due to the fact that they would not have stable residential accommodation. This also leads to poor health and being unable to live a dignified life. Persons experiencing accommodation instability would also be unable to completely contribute towards society. The result of all this is social exclusion.

These three persons have undergone a preparation before attending this conference by attending several meetings locally. They contributed very well during these meetings and workshops.

The problem with EXCO

A major difficulty has arisen between the members of the EXCO committee in working together from March 2012 to October 2012. After experiencing these difficulties during several meetings, I had requested a voting to take place so as to enable the members to choose to elect me as Chairman once again. I had requested another voting to take place in regards to the secretary. After the voting had taken place, the secretary had sent a letter to the Commissioner of Voluntary Organisations, Prof. K. Wain, in May 2013. From that day onwards, the members were unconvinced that EXCO could not survive. So an extra ordinary AG had been proposed so as to rectify this situation. 2 meetings with the Commissioner of Voluntary Organisations were set up in order to solve this problem.

During the meeting held on the 2nd of August, decisions had been taken so as to set up a very important meeting which was to be held at the Richmond Foundation. During this meeting, the difficulties that EXCO was experiencing were discussed. After a voting took place so as to elect a new committee. The election was held on the 7th November 2012.

The New Committee - November 2012

The present members of this committee are the following :-

Fr Saviour Grima who represents the Millennium Chapel
 Ms Lino Callus who represents the National Association of Pensioners
 Mr Godwin Callus who represents Faith and Justice
 Mr Leonid McKay who represents Caritas Malta
 Fr. Emmanuel Cordina who represents OASI
 Fr Vince Magri who represents Paulo Frer
 Mr Charles Mifsud who represents "Fundazzjoni Suriet il-Bniedem"
 Mr Holger Saliba who represents Richmond Foundation
 Ms Robert Vella Bonnici who represents "Tfal ejjew ghandi"

During the first meeting of EXCO, the members discussed future proceedings and the establishment of a plan for 2012 – 2013. During this meeting, which was held on the 30th November 2012, an election took place so as to elect members officially according to the statute of the APF.

Afterwards, a discussion was held as regards the work to be done and an election according to the statute was held. The results of this election was that the following persons were elected accordingly – Fr. Saviour Grima as President, Mr. Charles Mifsud as Vice-president, Mr. Godwin Callus as secretary, Ms. Roberta Vella Bonnici as Treasurer.

During this first meeting, the roles of each member were defined and the type of work to be carried out abroad by each member was also established. Fr. Vince will be representing Malta on the EUISG Board and I will be representing on the EXCO one. Before each member attends these meetings abroad, he/she has to notify the EXCO committee.

The work carried out by EXCO and the sub-groups

There was a need being felt for this group to be divided into smaller groups. Most of the work will be carried out by these smaller groups. This work includes the Strategic Plan for 2013. This plan involves the type of work to be carried out by the members of the APF and the type of funds that we will be able to gather. In one of the meetings that were held, we had met Claudia who provided us with information regarding EEA Grants 2009 – 2014.

Conclusion

As can be seen, the year proved to be one where we all had to make sacrifices even though, however, we worked wholeheartedly against all odds. Sometimes, we were also about to surrender. However, the year ahead proves to be one in which we have much to do. This is not enough because our goal is to help, as best we can, all those who are suffering a situation of poverty.

We would like to have a clearer goal and plans in order to be able to attract many more members who would participate actively.

I cannot conclude without thanking wholeheartedly each and every member of this Executive Committee for all the work that they carried out and for all the support that they had given me every time I needed their help.