



Annual Report 2016

Summary

2016 was a good year for Dr Klown. It was a year of consolidation in important aspects of the Association, whilst we progressed in some other areas. The *Brand Name Awareness Survey* carried out during the summer months showed an increase of 21% over 2014 regarding the number of Maltese who know Dr Klown. It stands now at 64%. The fact that so many people know Dr Klown has a clear impact on the support from the general public as well as from schools, clubs and companies.

Two major fund raising campaigns required a lot of energy from all our volunteers:

 42 mins · 🌐

Hi Chris. Just wanted to let you know that I had the pleasure of sleeping on one of the beds in the Disneyland ward this week. Very comfy. I slept like a baby 😊😊 A far cry from the many nights that I slept in an armchair by my son's side a few years back!! A big well done. Feel proud. We need more people like you in this world to put right what is missing. A heartfelt thank you coming your way from myself and I am sure the countless other families that you have helped xx
— 😊 feeling grateful.

1. Project 20-20-20 – which aimed to provide the parents a comfortable bed to stay overnight with their hospitalised child in 20 single rooms

2. The publication of *More Common Sense*, a practical guide book for relationships by Dott. Edward Curmi, in aid of Dr Klown.



As to the fulfilment of the purpose of our Association, to visit **Every Child, Every Week** with our volunteers, we managed pretty well (see facts below). We got plenty of positive feedback from the parents, nurses and Consultants. The most common requests from children at the end of a Klowns' visit are: "Why can't you stay?" and "Are you coming back tomorrow?"



Thanks to Dr Buttons and Dr Bubbles for a memorable event at the paediatric ward in Gozo.

We extended our service to **Gozo General Hospital** and were welcomed enthusiastically; a pilot project is set up to determine the best way of servicing the hospital and a few Gozitan potential Clown Doctors have started the training process.

Operating Results 2016 in numbers:

1. **Frequency** of Hospital visits in 2016: 98, or **1.9 visits a week**
2. Total **number** of children visited: **3135** (approx.)
3. Total **time** spent by Clown Doctors in MDH Wards: **713 hours**
4. **Use of funds***:
 - 62%** went to Direct Operations: Training, coaching & props, team-building
 - 20%** went to Awareness Building, PR, fund raising expenses
 - 18%** went to Administration (IT, telecommunication, printed matter ...)

* The expenses for the purchase of 20 beds (Project 20-20-20) and the printing of the book *More Common Sense* have not been taken into account to calculate these percentages: These two items alone represent together 53% of our expenses in 2016 and would completely distort the picture about our "normal" operations)

In their first 5 years, the Maltese Clown Doctors visited 10,000 times a hospitalised child in Malta!



Little Zaira Chetcuti performing during our 5th Anniversary Fun Day

Achievements versus the major objectives set for 2016

Objective 1, Operations: A NEW HRM AND PLANNING SYSTEM

We have compared pros and cons of different options to identify a system that requires little maintenance, which integrates all HR data and operational activities (visits to hospital), with proper reporting possibilities and an easy-to-use flexible planning procedure for the KlowN Doctors. We have come to the conclusion that the major drawback of “complete and performing systems”, when compared to our reality, are far too complicated and require too much input time to keep them up to date and running, let alone the reality that KlowNs are clowns – and most dislike admin. We tried the “*if you can’t beat them, join them*” approach, tested the possibilities of **Facebook Events** for our purpose of planning hospital visits, and this planning-system is running satisfactorily since June. For HRM we are using Excel files to record Personal Data, Hospital visits and Attendance to Training and Peer Review sessions.

Objective 2: FUNDRAISING

We scheduled two major fundraising events for 2016.



1. Marathons Project with Chris Mamo. The idea was to raise funds to provide the parents of children in the Paediatric wards with a **bed** to stay comfortably in the room with their child overnight in Mater Dei Hospital.

The name - **Project 20-20-20** – reflects the challenge Chris faced to run **20 marathons in 20 days for 20 beds**. The campaign was received well with the public and a good number of organisations, who sponsored **20 foldable beds**, 18 for Mater Dei - one for each single room - and 2 beds for Gozo General Hospital.

Moreover, we could offer **16 beds-on-wheels** for the shared rooms where the cupboards for foldable beds didn't fit, and **benches, chairs and a table in teak wood** for the playground at MDH and the rest-garden in Gozo.

The planned "*mobile Circus*", serving also as a puppet theatre for the Klown Doctors, has been **postponed** because the idea needs further development.



2. The book *More Common Sense*, written by Edward Curmi and published by Dr Klown was launched in April by H.E. the President at The Palace, Valletta.

About a third of the copies were sold by year end. Proceeds go to Dr Klown.

< Support Group volunteers at the launch

Objective 3: TEAM BUILDING

Besides from the active use of our internal Facebook group, *Dressing Room*, where all of us share experiences, encouragements, ideas, good practices and plan our visits to MDH, we held two major team building activities in 2016:

1. One session was integrated in the live-in Training session held between 23-24 **April**. Apart from training together with the whole group of Klowns, we spent time to discuss "the planning matter" together to find workable solutions.
2. Another Team Building event was organised on 4 **December**, where we came together as a team to analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation. The ideas and suggestions put forward during this event will be tackled one by one in 2017. The volunteers' positive involvement demonstrates their dedication to Dr Klown.



Working on a Strengths / Weaknesses Analysis together

Objective 4: STREAMLINE TRAINING

In the programme for the new recruits, which started on December 10, we **eliminated** the less practical training content, due to the limited training time available versus the development needed. We *doubled the time* spent on some of the most relevant skills: **Less topics, more depth**.



For the experienced Klown Doctors, we introduced **on-the-job coaching**, during which a professional trainer accompanies a team of Klowns during their ward round and gives them immediate, personalised feedback. This training took off in October, and the initial reactions have been very positive. We will evaluate the impact mid-2017.

< OTJ Coaching of Dr Buttons, Dr Heidi and Dr Pixie with their coach Tara-Louise Zammit

Objective 5: NEW WEBSITE

Our new simple but stylish website is up and running, and well maintained by Maurice Aquilina (M7 Alpha Creative Studios). It is an active tool for **general information, fund raising** and applications of new recruits. Our input of news and events details on the website can still be improved, however we seem to use our Facebook page more frequently for this purpose.

Objective 6: BACK UPS

Some key responsibilities in support of management have been taken up by various members of the **Support Team**, as well as by **some Klown Doctors** who combine their visits with specific support to the organisation. For most areas we have sound policies and procedures in place. However, the Association still needs to become less dependent on individuals. This process will continue during the coming years.

Some other interesting facts about 2016

1. According to our Brand Name Awareness Survey 2016, by end of August 2016 Dr Klown was known **by 64%** of the Maltese population.
2. The highest contribution, by far, to the public's awareness of Dr Klown, is delivered by **Television** appearances.
3. We started visiting children in **Gozo** General Hospital in October 2017; the project is led by Dr Buttons. We received a very warm welcome from children, nursing staff, medical consultants and management.

4. Our *Fifth Anniversary* was celebrated with the Team during an informal gathering and walking dinner on a beautiful Summer evening, for which H.E the President had put the Verdala Palace to our disposal.
5. We celebrated our Anniversary with the public during a Free *Fun Day* at Mater Dei on October 15.



6. We received over 50 applications to join the team in 2016. After being thoroughly briefed, many decided that volunteering as a Clown Doctor would consume more time than they had available. The challenge was taken on by *9 aspiring Clown Doctors*, who passed the psychological evaluation and artistic skills assessment test. They started the year-long training session to be ready for their debut at the end of 2017.
7. As of 31 December 2016, our association is made up of *45* volunteers, 28 Clown Doctors, 8 Support Team volunteers, 6 Committee members, 3 PR-Team volunteers.
8. We wish to thank the many Maltese *celebrities* who posted a selfie with a positive comment on Facebook to promote the book More Common Sense, as well as our PR-Team for developing and organising this idea. It turned out to be a beautiful and successful campaign.
9. Our finances are healthy, so that *sustaining our services* should not be a problem for the short term, allowing us to *further invest in the quality* of our services.
10. Our Clown Doctor *Manual* is a beautiful piece of work, containing loads of information, good practices, clown techniques, policies & procedures to guide the volunteers. The new recruits will use it as their handbook during training.

Our plans and objectives for 2017

In the year ahead, we intend to focus on two major issues.

1. A moment that lasts a week!

First of all, we want to take another co-ordinated step forward to increase our “clown quality” to the point where we can rightfully say that the short time, or “*moment*” that we spend with a kid in hospital, will leave an impression that “*lasts a week*” in good memories, stuff to talk about and re-enact with family and visitors, until the next Klowns’ visit.

To achieve this, we are planning to invest in more elaborate props for the Klowns and have set out a training programme between February and October, with specialised clown trainers from abroad: **John Wright (UK), Ton Kusrstjens (The Netherlands) and Laurence Quetel (France)**, as well as local professionals: Sean Buhagiar, Tara Louise Zammit, Jacob Piccinino, Sean Briffa, Johann Bellizzi, Noel D'Amato.



We thank the MCCF for the grant that covers part of the expenses for our elaborate development programme.

Malta Community Chest Fund



FOND
GĦALL-GĦAQDIET
VOLONTARJI

First Call – Social Projects

Projects part-financed by Malta Community Chest Fund

Co-financing rate: 90% MCCF funds. 10% Beneficiary's funds

2. Continue to structure the Association

In order to build a stable organisation for the future, we have to continue to take measures to make the Association independent of its members.

We will have to further complete, review and organise our Policies & Procedures Handbook to make it easy to use for anyone who has management responsibility in the organisation. We will have to continue decentralising tasks to people willing to take up an active role in the daily running and growth of the Association.

Quote of the year

The *Nanna* of a little girl who has been fighting a serious illness for a few years, hospitalised in Malta as well as in the UK, approached us, saying:
***“We have seen clown doctors in both hospitals, but let me tell you, the Maltese Klown Doctors are better than those in the UK:
You can see it comes from the heart!”***

