

## **On the importance of what to do, when to do it and why**

*'If you think you are too small to be effective, you have never been in bed with a mosquito.'* This quote by Betty Reese struck me when I first met it. Many a time we think that we are too small to change the world or at least make a difference. But people who have made a difference are human beings, just as you and I. Just consider our parents, our peers and our loved ones. They all do us a difference, without them asking anything in return.

Through all the situations we, as workers, meet at Agenzija Appogg, when meeting with people coming around with their concerns, difficulties and personal tragedies, we note the unspoken thirst for acknowledgment, compassion, or simply some guidance on how to learn to cope with the daily struggles. We are not born knowing how to deal with any situation we encounter in our lives. And sometimes we come to a state where we need some assistance, small as it may be.

And that is where the priceless work of volunteers in an agency such as Appogg comes to be needed. The Appogg logo encompasses three major realities in our own daily contacts, which are children, the family and community. If you are interested in joining the ever growing pool of dedicated people offering their time there is a wide range of situations where you can use your talents and creativity. This might simply be befriending a family member who might just need some company at some point in his or her time.

### **Children . . .**

*'We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future.'* ~ Franklin Delano Roosevelt

Sometimes we get carried away with the idea that children have an innate ability to learn, and learn fast. This might be the majority of the cases but there are those who, due to particular family situations or conditions, find great difficulties in coping with the educational structure. And that is where you might fit in. Offering some of your time helping a child in distress may increase your worth as a person and also improve the quality of life of that child and those around him or her.

Accompanying the child to a psychologist, or a hospital appointment, might be enough to reduce some of the stress the child's family might be passing through.

### **The family . . .**

*'Nobody can do everything, but everyone can do something.'* ~ Author Unknown

Actually, improving the quality of life of people living in our community is the ultimate aim of every kind of voluntary work. Take, for example, a young mother with her first-born. It has always been assumed that women have a natural instinct for motherhood. But having a first-born (or even other children) to care for and handling tenderly all those long hours may be a tough job for a person with no knowledge of motherhood. That would be the time where your skills and experience may come at hand. Helping the

mother with her baby, especially if she lacks the support of other family members, and simply showing her how to change a nappy or do the feeding may help the person get that missing confidence, and there again the quality of life of that mother, that baby and all those who are around them, may improve drastically, just with a simple act of generosity and goodwill.

You might also be helping out a family who is finding difficulty planning the daily needs, such as cookery, cleaning the house or budgeting skills. With some simple steps you might offer the family, or showing hands on how to maximize the potential of what is found at home, will give a sense of pride to such family. All this can be possible with some of your time and simple creative ways to perpetuate your knowledge.

You might not consider yourself a genius, and you do not have to be one, for all that matters, but nonetheless you can still give back that little knowledge you acquired back to the community. Or you think you have a lot to offer but simply do not want to show yourself and prefer giving your time anonymously, there is also a place for you and your skills.

### **The community . . .**

*'Kindness is the language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see.'* ~  
Mark Twain

Take the situation of a family who is passing through a rough patch. They might not have those basic needs that we are so accustomed with, such as furniture or simply clothing, so you can be the one to give these needs and thus make such families' life all the better. A simple act of kindness may make all the difference.

Agenzija Appogg also has a helpline for those who might have an immediate need or are passing through some moments of distress and want to talk it out. You might be the person on the other end of the line who is listening and can guide the person to seek adequate professional advice.

You might have office skills or have a naturally flair for administrative and organizational skills. Go ahead, there is also a place for your talents as much of the services, though monitored by professional workers, are manned by volunteers themselves.

All depends on what and how much you want to offer. Seneca once said that *'Wherever there is a human being, there is an opportunity for a kindness.'* And voluntary work within Appogg is what it is all about. A natural flair for creativity, or even practicality, might do wonders with people we barely know, or even our neighbours.

When you apply to offer some of your time to persons needing your help you will not be left alone. Apart from offering intense induction training before getting the job started, Appogg offers continuous support in all difficulties encountered and periodical training which enhances your performance with varying situations.

All the work done by professionals within the agency needs to be complimented by the work of volunteers. This is a chain that needs to be strengthened as there are a lot of

individuals and families asking silently that someday someone might make a difference in their lives.

**If you think you can make a difference...**

...small as it may seem ask for more details at Appogg on 22959000 or call at Supportline 179, where your future colleagues will guide you accordingly. Or alternatively you can visit the agency website [www.appogg.gov.mt](http://www.appogg.gov.mt) and download the application form.

Don't wait too long as there is a deadline, the 30<sup>th</sup> January 2009. You will be contacted to attend an information meeting where you can get an idea of the service you might eventually want join.

And finally some wise words which are the inspiration of those who do voluntary work and those who are responsible for such an important part of many people's lives; *'Volunteers don't get paid, not because they're worthless, but because they're priceless.'*  
~ Sherry Anderson

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**Agenzija APPOGG forms part of the Foundation for Social Welfare Services, which also incorporates Agenzija Sedqa ([www.sedqa.gov.mt](http://www.sedqa.gov.mt)) and Agenzija SAPPOR ([www.sappor.gov.mt](http://www.sappor.gov.mt)).**