



National Literacy Agency



**The National Literacy Agency
Annual Report 2020 - Highlights**

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The following is a snapshot of the work carried out by the National Literacy Agency in 2020, the year of the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. Notwithstanding the challenges imposed by this unprecedented event, the National Literacy Agency staff has exercised its creativity and flexibility to maintain its service in the interest of its clients and the public in general.

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The National Literacy Agency Annual Report 2020 - Highlights

Our mission and core values

3

Raising awareness programmes

4

Intervention programmes

14

Literacy Resources

21

Specialised Units

26

**Continuous Professional
Development**

31

Our mission

The National Literacy Agency (NLA), of the Ministry for Education and Employment, seeks to promote and sustain lifelong and life wide, high quality, literacy practices among children, youth, adults, migrants and persons with learning difficulties. It strives also to improve literacy outcomes, resulting in inclusive practices, higher educational qualifications, and better job prospects. The Agency was established in September 2014 to promote and ensure the delivery of the different aspects of the *National Literacy Strategy for All in Malta and Gozo* and serve as a main driver in the field of literacy (Legal Notice 192/2014).

Our core values

biliteracy
multilingualism
parental empowerment
literate communities
literacy across the curriculum
social inclusion
participatory democracy
balanced literacy

Raising awareness programmes



Aqra Miegħi Read with Me

Target audience – Children (0-3 years) and their parents/caregivers

Main partners – Centre for Literacy (UoM), Malta Libraries, Bank of Valletta

Main objectives – To promote the love of books, to develop children's imagination through fun and play activities, to develop oracy skills, to make parents aware of the benefits of reading.

Main achievements

70 centres across Malta and Gozo → 866 sessions → 1,487 children
1066 parents/caregivers

reached out to the Italian community through *Legge con Me*

Adaptations following Covid-19 outbreak

927 videos uploaded on Facebook → 770,293 post reaches
197,233 views

Information sessions for parents/caregivers about early literacy

Target audience – Expectant parents, parents/caregivers of new-born babies

Main partners – Parentcraft Services, Well Baby Clinic

Main objectives – To raise awareness of early literacy practices, inform about *Aqra Miegħi*/Read with Me, encourage parents to read aloud to their babies.

Main achievements

108 Well Baby Clinic sessions reaching 1,594 adults

Parentcraft sessions reaching 59 expectant families

Adaptations following Covid-19 outbreak

Parentcraft online sessions reaching 128 expectant families

Distribution of literacy resource packs to 129 expectant families



Seher l-Istejjer

The Magic of Stories

Target audience – Children (4-7 years) and their parents/caregivers

Main partners – Centre for Literacy (UoM), Malta Libraries

Main objectives – To promote a love of books among children, to model how parents/caregivers can share books with their children in an effective manner.

Main achievements

64 centres across Malta and Gozo

**Reached 2,223 children
(1,147 boys + 1,076 girls)**

**Participation of 465
parents/caregivers**



Adaptations following Covid-19 outbreak

Uploaded 928 videos on Facebook

312,328 post reaches and 91,430 views

Online sessions to 41 primary schools (October to December)

Reached 1,824 children in schools

Gost il-Qari

The Pleasure of Reading

Target audience – Children (7-11 years)

Main partners – Malta Libraries

Main objectives – To enhance reading ability and understanding through fun, multi-sensory and interactive activities.

Main achievements

45 centres across Malta and Gozo

Reached 1440 children (740 boys + 700 girls)



Adaptations following Covid-19 outbreak

Uploaded 417 videos on Facebook

61,667 post reaches and 19,935 views

Online sessions to 31 primary schools (October to December)

Reached 1,635 children in schools

Naqraw Flimkien

Let's Read Together

Target audience – Children (0-11 years) and their parents/caregivers

Main partners – Central Public Library (Malta Libraries), Public Broadcasting Services, and Local Councils, NGOs, other entities upon request

Main objectives – An on-demand programme to promote reading for pleasure



Main achievements

6 sessions in January reaching 106 children and 10 adults

188 different episodes on TVM/TVM2 from April to December

Setting up of a virtual video lending library comprising 600 sessions, availed of by 59 families.

L-Ambaxxaturi tal-Qari

Reading Ambassadors

Target audience – Children and young people in schools

Main partners – Agenda Bookshop, various Reading Ambassadors appointed by the Ministry for Education and Employment

Main objectives – To promote the pleasure of reading through organised events involving local personalities



Main achievements

17 activities – 16 in primary schools, 1 in Fairyland Ward (Mater Dei Hospital) – reaching 1,304 children (January to March)

10 videos of interviews with Reading Ambassadors uploaded on Facebook with estimated reach of 18,559 (March to September)

10 online Reading Ambassadors activities reaching 705 children (October to December)

Il-Programm tal-Kitba ta' Malta

The Malta Writing Programme (MWP)



Target audience – Children and their families, as well as college literacy teams, schools, educators, and local communities.

Main partners – Merlin Publishers, Heritage Malta

Main objectives – To offer support in the implementation of writing process methodology; to promote writing process methodology and writing in fun and interactive settings.

Main achievements

Xalati ta' Kitba/Family Writing Activities – 3 onsite (January and February) and 2 online (December) events

Organised a writing club for 12 talented young writers *SWAR: Minn Libretto ta' Opra għal Rumanz* (could not be completed due to Covid-19)

The **Writing Unites Us!** initiative was launched in March. 128 stories, poems, or cartoons shared by children of different ages were uploaded on Facebook, registering a total of 114,590 reaches

Supported students through **5 writing prompts** published on Facebook: 3,970 reaches, 25 shares

Online writing courses for parents/caregivers uploaded on Facebook:

Il-Kitba żzommna Magħqudin! 13,569 reaches, 106 shares, 3,931 views

Il-Kitba tgħaqqadna! 5,644 reaches, 45 shares, 1,604 views

Skejjel Rakkontaturi

Storytelling Schools (Malta)

Target audience – Educators in participating primary and middle schools

Main partners – Storytelling Schools Limited (UK)

Main objectives – To provide educators with the necessary storytelling skills to help students build confidence and fluency in the spoken language, and to raise the standards of reading and writing.



Main achievements

Training for around 500 educators from 10 primary schools and 1 middle school.

Encouraging outcomes from survey of educators who received training (response rate of 57%):

- 94% reported use of the programme's methodology in the classroom
- 80% claimed programme helped improve learners' speaking, listening, memory, and sequencing skills
- 64% claimed programme helped improve learners' writing

The training course for Storytelling Schools leaders was followed by 9 educators, 5 of whom are now licensed trainers.

Upload of 10 storytelling videos provided by Storytelling Schools (UK).

Upload of 19 additional videos produced by the Agency which registered 2,868 reaches and 1,746 views.

AI Puppets for Literacy Education

Target audience – Students in the age group 8 to 10 years, their parents, and educators

Main partners – The Centre for Literacy (University of Malta) and the Malta Digital Innovation Agency

Main objectives – In line with the National Strategy and Vision for AI in Malta 2030, the main purpose of this project is to develop and promote Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Education projects with children, educators and parents.



Main achievements

Started to develop the programmes for two learning projects which promote AI in Education:

- AI puppets as AI conversational agents, to demonstrate radio communication and machine learning
- AI literacy related games, including speech/voice recognition

The launch of a training programme for reading animators

Other raising awareness initiatives

The Symbol Literacy Project

Objective – To help children learn to recognise, read, and interpret symbols and metaphors and give meaning to traditions, wisdom and heritage passed on by previous generations

Partners – Malta Arts Council, Culture Pass Scheme

Achievement – 10 sessions reaching 357 children from 5 different schools (January to March)



International Literacy Day Activity

A reading celebration was organised in collaboration with the Office of the Prime Minister on 7th September 2020 at Castille, Valletta. During this activity, 19 children from various local Scouts groups took part in reading sessions delivered by various Reading Ambassadors.

Brillantini tal-Kitba/Writing Stars

A two-day trip to Brussels full of engaging literacy activities was organised for thirty-five 14-year-old children from State and Church secondary schools, who excelled in the English and Maltese annual examinations.

An interactive workshop was led by 5 renowned Maltese authors for 29 talented 9-year-old children who excelled in the writing component of the English and Maltese annual examinations. (Planned visit to Rome had to be cancelled due to Covid-19 outbreak.)

Intervention programmes

Nwar Family Literacy Programme



Target audience – School children (8-10 years) who have not acquired the required basic literacy skills by the end of Year 3 and their parents/guardians

Main partners – Book Distributors Limited

Main objectives – To support students with literacy difficulties to acquire basic literacy skills by the end of Year 6. To encourage, upskill and motivate their parents/ guardians to support their children to become confident readers and writers

Main achievements

16 regional centres



197 students and their families benefitted from the programme

Adaptations following Covid-19 outbreak, including induction sessions for tutors and modification of programme to 20 min one-to-one online sessions

Participation of 187 children and their families (up to June)

Participation of 207 children and their families (October to December)

Klabb Naħla

Literacy Programmes

Target audience – School children in Year 2 to Year 6 identified by schools for additional literacy support

Main partners – Klabb Kotba Maltin

Main objectives – To consolidate children's reading and writing skills in Maltese or English through a balanced literacy and hands-on multisensory approach



Main achievements

4 schools

51 students benefitted from the service

Adaptation following Covid-19, including induction sessions for tutors and modification of programme to 20 min one-to-one online sessions

Participation of 62 children from 7 schools (April to June)

Participation of 35 pupils from 5 schools (October to December)

Reading Recovery



Target audience – The lowest achieving children aged 6

Main partners – University College London

Main objectives – To enable children to reach age-expected literacy levels in English within 20 weeks

Main achievements

Initial professional development for 32 teachers and continuous professional development for 15 Reading Recovery (RR) teachers led by 7 qualified local RR teacher leaders

31 primary schools benefitting from RR intervention

17 children provided with tablets to carry on with online sessions

177 pupils benefitted from online RR intervention

Bil-Qari u l-Kitba Niskorja Footballers' Read and Write Programme (FRWP)

Target audience – Upper Primary and Middle State School students who are reluctant readers

Main partners – Malta Football Association, Sports Malta, Secretariat for Sport, Youth and Voluntary Organisations, various local sports organisations

Main objectives – To utilise the passion and enthusiasm for football to inspire a love for reading and writing



Main achievements

Cycle 6 (October 2019 – February 2020) was completed in 7 primary schools and 2 middle schools

Reached 51 boys and 20 girls

85% of students registered significant improvement

Cycle 7 started with 8 primary schools and 2 middle schools, reaching 68 boys and 24 girls (could not be completed due to Covid-19)

Adaptations following Covid-19 outbreak

275 online reading sessions related to sports and healthy living with 172,639 post reaches

67 video uploads of football or fitness related activities with 60,791 post reaches

Organised the Football Skills Challenge with the participation of 96 students

Online FRWP version targeting Y4 and Y5 students – 114 sessions delivered to 12 primary schools

Għidli Storja Tell Me a Story



Target audience – Year 5 primary school students

Main objectives – To help students improve their oracy skills (speaking and listening) as specified by the Learning Outcomes for Maltese and English.

Main achievements

Delivered 73 sessions in 18 different schools, reaching 450 children in 25 classes (January to March)

Uploading of 48 online story clips (April to December)

Asynchronous online sessions for teachers to practise the storytelling methodology and implement in class

Summer Intervention Programmes

Target audience – Students who had been receiving support through one of the intervention programmes offered by the Agency; in the case of *Aqra fis-Sajf* and one-off FRWP sessions, all children attending *Skolasajf* centres

Main partners – Foundation for Educational Services, Students Maintenance Grants Section

Main objectives – To minimise summer learning loss



Main achievements

Klabb Naħla: Summer sessions for 17 children from 4 schools

Klabbsajf: online one-to-one sessions with 239 students from 64 localities

SURF: daily online sessions for 27 students from 14 different primary schools

Aqra fis-Sajf: 1,902 reading sessions benefitting 2,304 children in the first phase and 1,153 children in the second phase

FRWP: one-off sessions in 18 centres benefitting 141 children

Other Intervention Initiatives

Kliem

Raddiena Kliem/Spell it Out

Objective – To encourage and assist Year 5 and Year 6 students to spell better in Maltese

Achievements – 32 online live 1-hour sessions in 10 primary schools, reaching 415 students

Ir-Rimonta

Objective – To help middle school students master basic literacy skills and become confident readers in 100 sessions over a period of 20 weeks

Achievements – Unfortunately, only 4 out of 13 participants followed the programme on a regular basis after the Covid-19 outbreak forced it to go online.

Literacy Resources

Aqra kemm Tiflaħ

Enhancing Classroom Libraries Programme

Target audience – Students in State Schools and their educators and parents

Main partners – State Schools, GO plc (primary classroom bookshelves sponsor)

Main objectives – To enhance classroom libraries in order to enable children to interact directly with books, demonstrate positive attitudes towards reading, spend more time reading, and exhibit higher levels of reading achievement.



Main achievements

Enhancement of 25 Y4-Y6 classroom libraries with 2,691 books, reaching 395 children

Production and uploading of 26 interactive games for Y4-Y6

Enhancement of 94 K1-K2 classroom libraries with 5,862 books, reaching 1,076 children

The procurement of 622 books for one middle school

Adaptations following Covid-19 outbreak

Upload of 42 videos on Facebook promoting books that feature on our catalogue



Provision of guidelines to schools on the use of classroom libraries abiding by Covid-19 mitigating measures

Upload of *Aqra kemm tiflaħ* book catalogues featuring covers and blurbs to facilitate book selection without handling

Enhancement of 43 K2-Y6 classroom libraries with 4,397 books, reaching 689 children (November – December).

Librerija f'Kull Dar

Scheme 9 – Home Libraries

Target audience – Vulnerable children identified for support through Scheme 9

Main partners – Foundation for Social Welfare Services

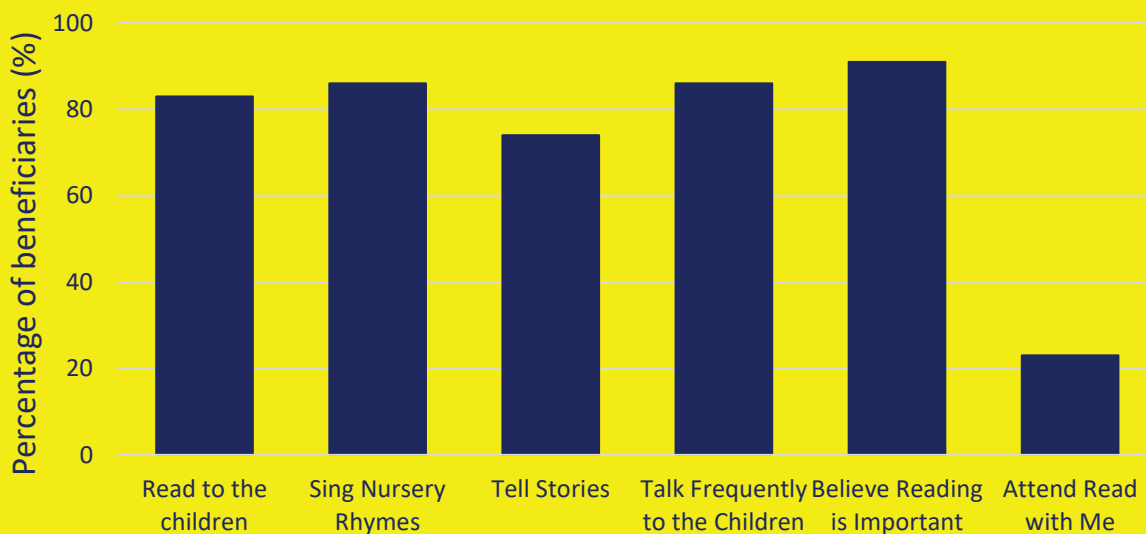
Main objectives – To set up home libraries for vulnerable children

Main achievements

Through the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived, distributed 796 book packs to 398 families, reaching 439 children

Through the State Funded Food Distribution scheme, distributed 436 book packs to 218 families, reaching 223 children

Reading and Communication Habits of Beneficiaries with their Children (0-3 years)



Other Literacy Resources Schemes

L-Għodda f'Idejk

Objective – To support, facilitate, and encourage good literacy practices, such as shared reading, creative writing, and storytelling, through the provision and distribution of books and other resources; to provide support to primary schools that invest in banded reading books and other resources, by sharing the cost.



Achievements –

Distribution of 1,742 books and 717 posters, flashcards, and other educational resources among all primary State schools.

Distribution of 1,205 dyslexia friendly resources.

Partial funding of the purchase of 6,892 reading books, 49 educational resources, 18 bookshelves, 10 subscriptions.

Bil-Ħila Tagħkom

Objective – To encourage the production and dissemination of innovative resources to promote Maltese.

Achievements – In 2020, 8 big books, 10 reading books, 1 eBook/app, and 18 posters produced by local educators were published by the Agency in collaboration with local publishing houses.



Bis-sehem tagħkom/Promoting good practice

Objective – To support the publication of original teaching and learning material in Maltese through funding of selected projects up to €2,500.

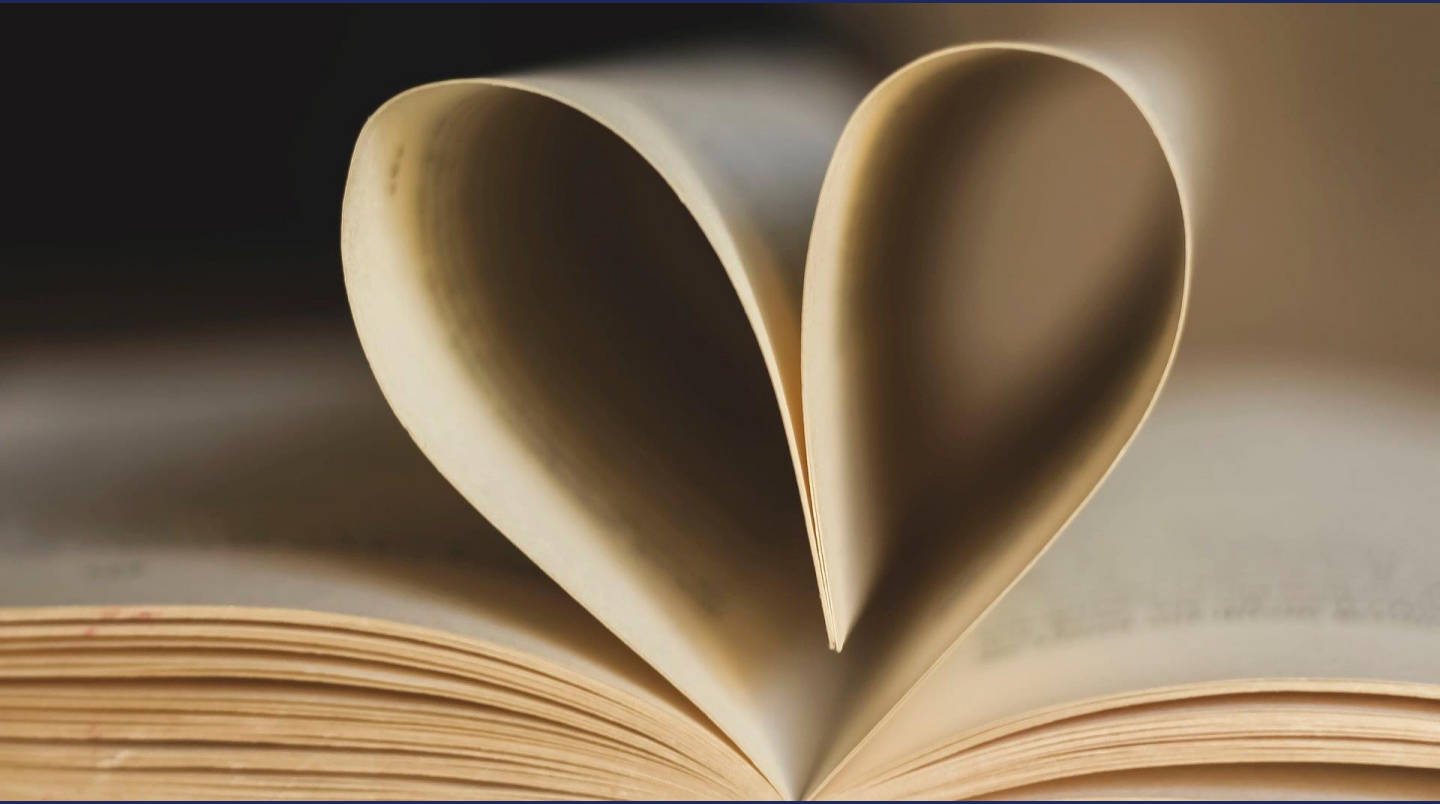
Achievements – In 2020, 2 big books, 16 reading books, 6 cartoons and video clips, and 2 educational games were produced.

Other Initiatives and Projects

Books are your Best Friend!

Objective – To promote the benefits and pleasure of reading in all children’s residential homes, particularly in the context of the challenges brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Achievements – Distribution of 1,716 books in Maltese and English to 18 residential homes, reaching more than 200 children.



Little Stars Library

Objective – To encourage children aged between 1 and 18 to read at home during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Achievements – The distribution of 1,926 books between April and July.

Specialised Units

The Literacy and Information Support Unit (LISU)

Target audience – School libraries in Malta and Gozo.

Main objective – To support school libraries in both the technical and curricular aspects of libraries.

Main achievements

Support to 28 middle, secondary, and post-secondary schools.

Support to 68 primary schools.

Processing of 31,509 books for use in school libraries.

Weeding of 1,299 books in middle and secondary schools.





Main achievements (... continued)

Invited and supported middle and secondary State and Church schools to open school libraries one day a week in the summer months – 4 State middle, 6 State secondary, and 4 Church school participated.

Continued work in collaboration with Malta Libraries on the integration of school libraries with the public libraries management system and on the enhancement of the virtual public library.

Distribution of 2,122 dyslexia friendly books, graphic novels, and high interest/low reading level (hi-lo) books to middle and secondary schools and public libraries.

Literacy Resource Centres

Main objective: To cater for educators with high quality books and resources and to offer relevant support



The Literacy Resource Centre in Malta is located within the premises of the National Literacy Agency in Hamrun. The collection consists of 14,694 books and resources, including 3,305 new books and resources.

The Literacy Resource Centre in Gozo is located within the Gozo College Sannat Primary School and has a collection of around 4,000 resources.

The Language in Education Policy Unit

Main objectives

To collaborate with the Language Policy in Education Committee in drawing up language in education policies for the early, junior, and secondary years; to organise seminars on the use of languages with children and adolescents; to create resources to promote bilingualism in educational settings; to conduct research on language use in schools to inform policy development.



Main achievements

Organisation of 10 seminars/meetings for parents/caregivers, kindergarten educators, and SMT members on the *Language Policy for Early and Junior Years* reaching 137 educators and 134 parents/ caregivers (Jan-Feb).

The creation of 5 video clips on the use and value of bilingualism in families, which registered 919 views.

Organisation of 5 talks for parents/caregivers via Microsoft Teams on the promotion of bilingualism, with an average participation of 30 parents/caregivers per talk.

Four online workshops for childcare educators on language development in a bilingual context, with an average participation of 61 educators per workshop.

Publication of an article on early language education in Malta and a report on language use in Mathematics education in Malta.

Compilation of two internal reports.



Photo - DOI - Jeremy Wonnacott

Main achievements (... continued)

The organisation of a language competition for the European Day of Languages, which attracted 54 entries in 13 different languages.

Participation in the working group for the development of a bilingual glossary for Mathematics.

The initiation of the consultation process for the development of the National Literacy Strategy (2021-2030).

Continuous Professional Development

Sessions for College Literacy Teams in:

- Children's literacy development
- A balanced literacy approach to teaching reading and writing
- Using guided and shared reading to develop a life-long love of reading
- Storytelling methodology
- Symbol literacy
- Reading Recovery



Delivery of literacy modules in courses organised by the Institute for Education:

- Literacy – primary subject methodology
- Reading and writing development
- Embracing a literacy strategy and the language in education policy (standalone module)



Training for Reading Animators:

- Using Microsoft Teams
- How to create an online learning experience for pre-schoolers
- Artificial intelligence project
- Reading for pleasure (National Literacy Trust, UK)




Our vision


**To make a difference in people's lives,
whoever they are
and wherever they come from,
by fostering the development
of literacy skills.**



**Let us work together
to achieve this!**



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