

# SOCIAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT



ANNUAL REPORT 2021

# Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs Social Affairs Department

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## Social Affairs Department

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## Social Affairs Department

### Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACCS	Anti-Corruption Commission Seychelles
AG	Attorney General
ASP	Agency for Social Protection
CEPS	Civil Society Engagement Platform
CRC	Convention on the rights of the Child
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DIMO	Defense Institute of Medical Operations (USA)
DV	Domestic Violence
ERIS	End Rape in Seychelles
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GBVWG	Gender Based Violence Working Group
IECD	Institute of Early Childhood Development
IOM	International organization for migration
MDAs	Ministries, Departments & Agencies
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOH	Ministry of Health
MYSF	Ministry of Youth, Sport and Family
NGMT	National Gender Management Team
PSCE	Personal and Social
POA	Plan of Action
SEBSWA	Seychelles Empowerment Based Social Worker Association
SIA	Social Impact Assessment
SIDS	Small Islands Developing States
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
TIP	Trafficking in Persons
UCLG	United Cities and Local government
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UK	United Kingdom
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drug and Crime

# Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs

## Social Affairs Department

### Vision

A Harmonious society where individual respect and uphold values, human dignity and contribute towards their well-being, economic and social stability.

### Mission

Enhance social functioning at all levels of society by promoting, empowering and supporting the functions and responsibilities of individuals and families

### Core Values

The core values of the Department of Social Affairs are;

- **Professionalism:** We will be professional in our line of duty.
- **Integrity:** We will be accountable, reliable and trustworthy.
- **Teamwork:** We will actively engage with all our staff and partners
- **Confidentiality:** We will respect confidential information entrusted to us by all our clients.

## Review of 2021 activities

### Introduction

The mandate of the Social Affairs Department is cross cutting and as such the department through its various sections and units provide intervention services to vulnerable adults, children and the family.

The Principal Secretary along with its senior management team has the responsibility to provide strategic directives for policy decision to ensure the proper functioning of the department, efficient service delivery and effective distribution and management of the resources of the department. With the ever rising social ills in our country, the department has worked tirelessly although faced with various challenges along the way. This annual report will present the activities undertaken by the Social Affairs department during the year.

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### Budget Overview

A total of SR 30.5 million was allocated to the Department of Social Affairs for the year 2021. Total spending for the year amounted to about SR 27.2 million. About 89 percent of the allocated budget was used. The majority of the spending (63 percent) was used for wages and salaries. The table below gives an overview of the allocated budget and spending of the Department.

Table 1: Budget expenditure 2021

	Budget	Actual	Variance
Wages & Salaries in cash	18,602,836	17,289,124	1,313,712
Office Expenses	2,591,473	1,901,734	689,739
Transportation & Travel Cost	406,248	262,330	143,918
Maintenance & Repairs	246,400	211,807	34,593
Materials & Supplies	320,480	250,565	69,915
Other uses of Goods and Services	7,936,321	6,975,935	960,386
Non-Financial Asset	402,995	354,498	48,497
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30,506,752</b>	<b>27,245,992</b>	<b>3,260,760</b>

### Staffing

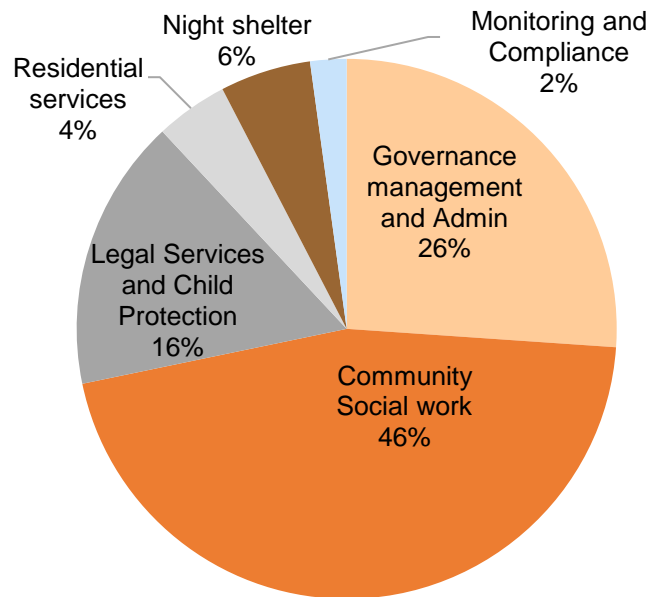
#### *Staff movement*

At the start of the year, there were 20 vacant posts at the Department. Towards the end of the year, the Department managed to recruit 12 staff working mainly in the Social Services Division. Outward movement of staff was also observed in 2021. This was due to retirement, movement to other sectors and termination because of disciplinary issues.

As at December 2021, the total number of staff at the Department stood at 92, with most staff working in the Community Social Work section. The graph below gives more detail about the proportion of staff in each section.

## Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs Social Affairs Department

Figure 1: Distribution of staff in Social Affairs Department



*Source: Social Affairs Department*

### *Training and professional development*

As part of the capacity-building plan, staff benefited from trainings throughout the year in areas such as sign language, Customer Excellence Service, basic fire safety, sensitization on HIV/AIDS and basic first aid training. In addition, staff from the Social Services Division participated in the following workshops and training:

- Virtual presentation on “The Effectiveness of the Antenatal and Post Delivery Parenting Education Programme.” (March)
- Virtual workshop to review and discuss the draft theory of change and results framework of UNICEF Strategic Plan 2022-2025
- Anti-corruption training (September)
- Risk assessment training (September)
- Gender Based Violence Perpetrator Rehabilitation training (September).



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## Social Affairs Department

### New Initiative

#### *Strengthening the child protection mechanism*

- Setting up of the new Monitoring and Compliance Section to take on board the suitability check of staff working in children related settings and monitoring the implementation of standards of care in Children Residential Care Homes.
- Driving the process of discussion for the regulations for suitability check and standard of care that will come into force in 2022.
- Advocating for the new Sexual Offence Act.
- Advocating and driving the process for the one stop center for victims of abuse.

### Social Affairs Department representation on Boards and Committees

The Social Affairs Department has a crucial role to play in contributing inputs on different Boards and Committees for the wellbeing of various population groups. Below are the Boards and Committees featuring the Social Affairs Department's representation during 2021.

Table 2: Boards and Committees

Boards/Committees	Representative	Frequency of meetings
Advisory Committee on the Power of Pardon	PS	Every 2 months
National Coordinating Committee on Trafficking in Persons	PS	Biannually
National Housing Allocation Committee	PS	As required
Children Special Fund	PS	Monthly
National Commission for Child Protection	PS/DSS	Quarterly
Agency for Social Protection	DSS	Quarterly
National Institute for Health and Social Studies	DSS	Monthly
IECD	DSS	Quarterly
Suitability Check Panel	DSS/PSW	Monthly
Daycare Committee Standards	PSW	Weekly/Fortnightly
ASP Review Committee	PSW	Weekly/Fortnightly

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### **International meetings**

Given the COVID situation most of the international meetings were held online. The department participated in the following virtual meetings.

- Meeting with Minister of Internal Affairs (MIA) and Chargee D 'Affaires of US State Department Office of Mauritius on TIP matters.
- Meeting with IOM Consultant for drafting of TIP Action Plan.
- Meeting with UNODC to formalize TIP training for front line officers.
- Meeting with IOM Consultant on migration data and maritime security.
- Meeting with African Development Bank (effects of COVID 19)
- Meeting with UNODC (TIP training)
- Meeting IOM (TIP Action Plan)
- UCLG Africa
- IOM – National Action Plan on TIP
- Meeting with World Bank on Reform Social Protection Programme

### **Building Linkages and Strengthening Partnership**

The Social Affairs Department continued to strengthen partnership through meetings with various MDAs namely, MYSF, Judiciary, Internal Affairs/Education, MOH, IECD, ACCS and Women Caucus of the National Assembly on social related issues and projects. In addition, meetings were also held with various NGO partners (ERIS, SEBSWA, RC Bishop & team).

Minister Francourt headed most of the meetings getting all partners to understand the crucial role of the Social Affairs Department and the need to create the synergy to better respond to the needs of the various target groups that we have to work with. Meetings were also held with international partners - US Chargee D'Affaires, French Ambassador on projects for Gender Based Violence victims. Senior officers of Social Services Division also met with district leaders and partners to discuss issues of common interest affecting their communities, families and children.

### **Social Services Division**

The Social Services Division has the statutory mandate for child protection matters. Its main services include the following:

- Counseling and mediation
- Child Protection Services
- Court and family Tribunal services

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- Promoting rights of the disabled
- Adoption

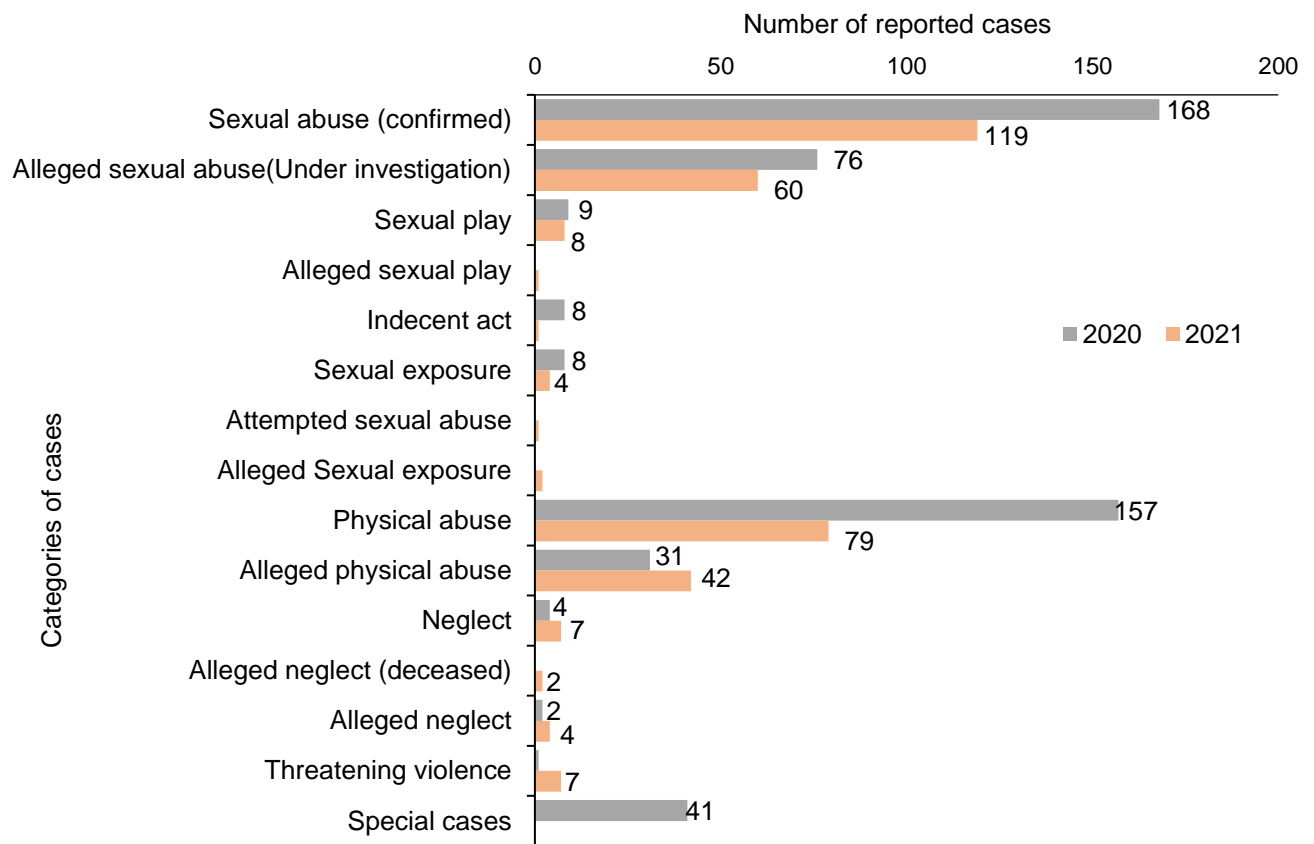
### Legal Service and Child Protection Section

As part of the investigating process and intervention plan, the section undertakes home and school visits as well as counselling sessions. Staffs also works in partnership with stakeholders, (e.g. Police) preparing victims for Court cases and liaison with international authorities.

#### *Child Protection Unit*

The Child Protection Unit recorded 337 cases of abuse during 2021. This represents a decline of 168 in cases of abuse reported when compared to the previous year. The graph below displays the different categories of abuse cases reported during 2020 and 2021.

Figure 2: Abuse cases reported (2021 vs 2020)



Source: Social Services Division

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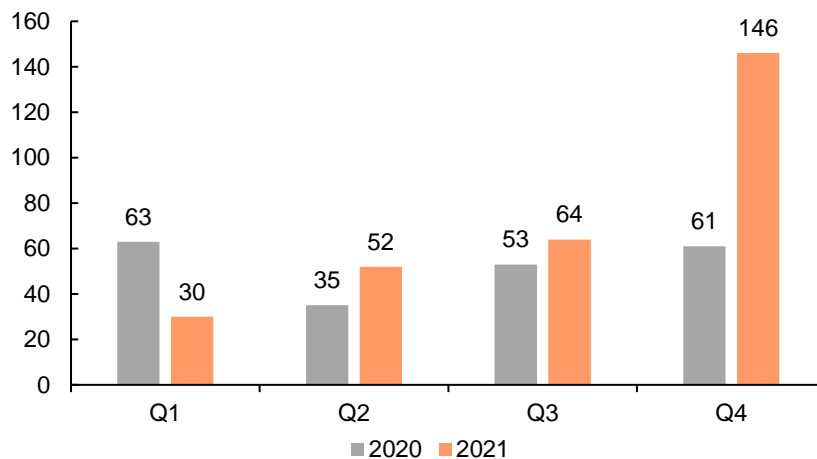
### *Legal Services Unit*

The Legal Services Unit's main responsibility is to handle cases referred by the Supreme Court and Family Tribunal for investigation and submission of reports to address children related issues of custody, access, maintenance, adoption, guardianship and mediation for reconciliation in divorce matters.

During the year, 292 cases was referred for custody, access and maintenance. This shows an increase of 80 in cases referred from the family tribunal in comparison to the previous year. Whereas cases from the Supreme Court declined by four when compared to 2020.

The figure below displays the number of referral cases from the family tribunal for the year 2020 and 2021. The following table provides more details on the number of referral cases from the Supreme Court recorded per quarter.

Figure 3: Custody, Access and Maintenance referral cases (2021 vs 2020)



*Source: Social services Division*

Table 3: Supreme Court referral cases

	2021				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Adoption	1	2		5	<b>8</b>
Guardianship	1	1	1		<b>3</b>
Attempt reconciliation				4	<b>4</b>
Interdicted person				1	<b>1</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>16</b>

*Source: Social Services Division*

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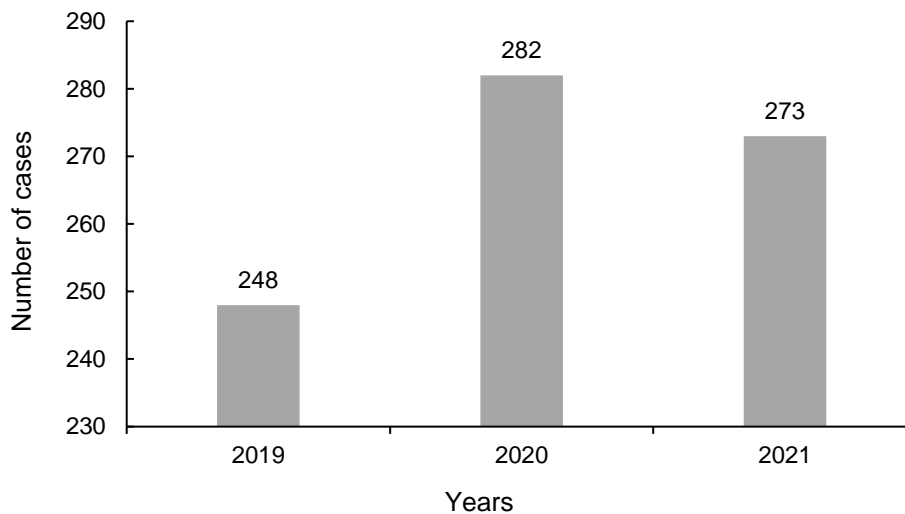
Throughout the year, there were 8 cases of adoption referred by the Supreme Court. This shows a decline of 8 in referred adoption cases when compared to 2020. Guardianship cases increased by two in 2021 whereas attempted reconciliation cases increased by one. There was also one case of interdicted person recorded for the year.

### *Children Helpline*

Social Services introduced the 3-digit helpline operated on a daily basis up to 11.00pm. The helpline is manned on a rotational basis by social workers of the two main sections, Community Social Work Section and Legal and Child Protection Section.

During the year, 273 cases came through the children helpline. This represents a reduction of nine (9) cases when compared to the previous year. The graph below displays the number of cases referred through the helpline for the period 2019-2021.

Figure 4: Children helpline cases per year (2019-2021)



*Source: Social Services Division*

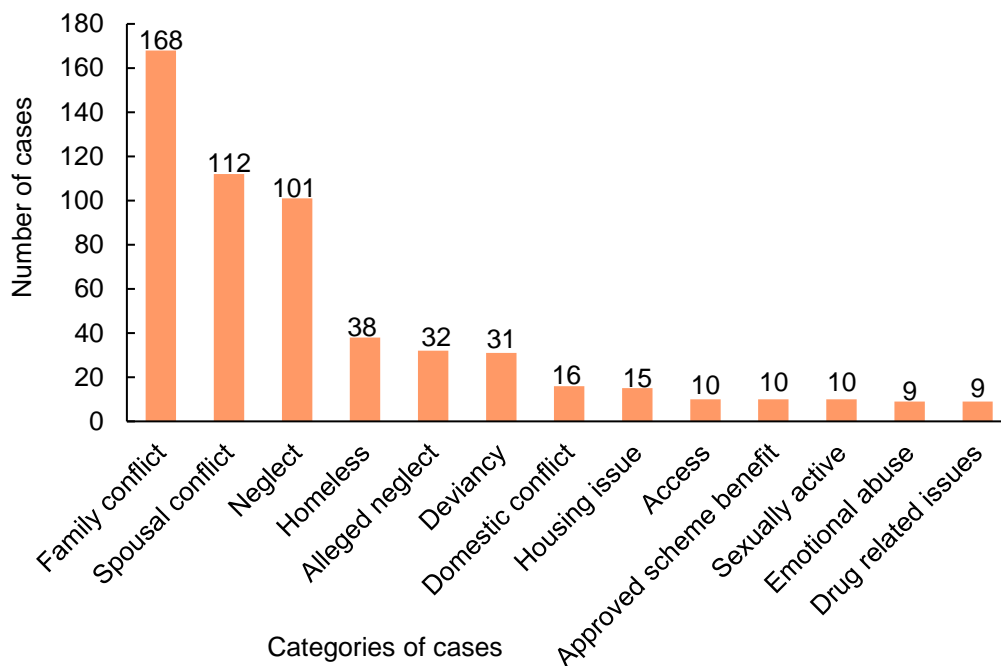
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## Community Social work section

Community social work promotes the wellbeing of families in the community. It encompasses a variety of components focusing on economic needs, educational concerns, family challenges, collaborative and creative solutions at community level. It further emphasizes on advocacy, analysis planning and implementation of activities to support families and alleviate the difficult situation they are going through.

The Community Social Work Section recorded 644 cases. 26 percent of cases originated from family conflicts. The second recurring case was spousal conflict with 112 cases for the year. This followed by 101 cases reported for neglect. When compared to 2020, the total number of reported cases increased by 96. This is attributed mostly to significant increases in the above-mentioned categories.

Figure 5: Highest recurring cases recorded in 2021



Source: Social Affairs Department

### *Referrals to other ministries and agencies*

The Social Services Division has an important role to assess the needs of families and clients when a case is reported or referred to the Division for intervention. The Division works in

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close collaboration with other agencies that are responsible to provide other identified services for the client or family.

This assessment is done through the Risk Indicator Framework. A risk assessment form is completed and the referral to other agencies and vice versa serves to request services to address the identified needs.

### ***Outreach Activities***

Various outreach activities were conducted throughout the year with the aim of providing more support to the community and to sensitize the general public. The activities were as follows:

- **Working session with children from President's village**  
The staff from the section organized this activity on the 25th February 2021. Through this working session, the children were able to talk to the Social workers about their concerns on issues surrounding their lives.
- **Support for Foyer de Nazareth**  
Staff from the section assisted the children with their schoolwork twice a week. This activity also served as respite care for the Sisters.
- Social Services Division led a presentation and discussion session on the division with a community based group named "Improving Kids for tomorrow".
- **Working session with children and sisters from Foyer De La Solitude**  
Principal Social Worker from the section organised this activity on the 27th April 2021. As a result, the children took the opportunity to voice out their issues of concerned.
- **Familiarisation visit/meeting - Perseverance 1**  
As part of the ongoing networking visits, staffs from the section met with the new District Administrator and the office manager on the 29<sup>th</sup> of April 2021.
- **Perseverance Task Force Night Patrol**  
Social Worker joined the District Task Force for the night patrol on 28th May 2021 in the Perseverance district.

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- On the 15<sup>th</sup> of July 2021, Principal Social Workers conducted a virtual session on the role of Social Services and children's right and protection to the SITE students.
- Interactive session/Respite care with children of La Solitude.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> September 2021, Principal Social Workers from the Section spent a day of interaction with residents of La Solitude. Issues of concern in terms of behaviour were addressed. The residents also had the opportunity to voice out their views and address topics that they wanted clarification or views.

- **Door to Door visit**

On the 24<sup>th</sup> of September 2021, staff conducted a door to door visit at Anse Francois housing estate where 18 houses were covered. The aim was to educate the residents on issues of supervision. Leaflets on child protection issues and neglect were also distributed.

- **Familiarisation Visit in Homes.**

Principal Social Workers went on visits to the homes to address issues of concern and to provide support and guidance where appropriate.

- On the 16<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021, social workers conducted sessions with a group of parents addressing matters of normal and abnormal behaviour of teenagers.
- Familiarization visit in Prison was conducted on the 14<sup>th</sup> of December 2021 with the Youth Worker & a group of young delinquent children. The aim was to educate the youth on issues/consequences of defiant behaviour.
- On the 15<sup>th</sup> of December 2021 the Principal Social Workers along with the Human Resource officer carried out a presentation with 3<sup>rd</sup> year NIHSS student on the roles and responsibilities of Social Services

Staff from the Department also participated in the following media programme:

- Mic Live – Economic Abuse
- Dyalog an Direk – The impact of Redundancy on families and children.



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- Paradise FM radio programme under the theme “Re-ankadre nou zenn delenkan” held on the 15<sup>th</sup> of November 2021
- Mic Live – Topik So interview on the Cost of living v/s Income. This was held on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2021
- Interview with TeleSesel on Domestic Violence held on the 15<sup>th</sup> of April 2021. The input from the interview was also incorporated into their special program.

### **Parenting Education programme**

The programme is aimed at empowering parents with appropriate information and necessary skills needed to improve pregnancy and post-delivery outcomes. Parents are offered three antenatal sessions and a visit to the labor room on maternity ward. Three more sessions are offered post-delivery to build the self- esteem and increase parental confidence.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak at the start of the year, there were no antenatal and post-delivery sessions conducted in the first quarter. Where as in the second quarter five sessions was conducted with 31 participants (29 females, 2 males). The sessions were held at Anse Boileau, Anse Royale, English River, Takamaka and Baie Ste Anne health centers.

Throughout the rest of the year, the programme was suspended because of the increase in reported COVID 19 cases. During this time, the focus was on re-evaluating the parenting manuals, relooking at the teaching aids and delivery of the sessions.

### **Night shelter**

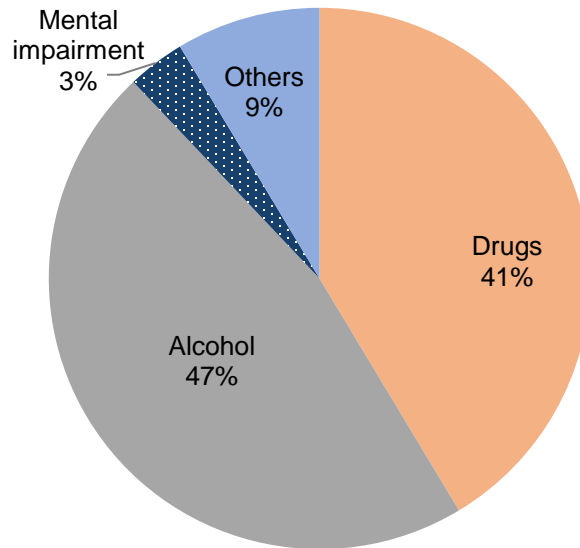
The mission of the night shelter is to cater for those individuals identified as being homeless due to their dysfunctionalities. The main aim is to provide psychosocial support and skills thus promote reintegration within their families and society.

At the start of the year, there were 19 service users already at the night shelter. During the year 39 admissions was recorded, with most of the admission being in the age range 26-45. Since the opening of the night shelter, it has been observed that drugs and alcohol abuse is the most common root factor causing homelessness in the country. In 2021 alone, 88% of the service users had drug or alcohol related issues. The remaining 12 per cent of service users

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suffered from mental impairment or had other forms of issues that landed them at the night shelter. The graph below depicts this information.

Figure 6: Problems faced by clients



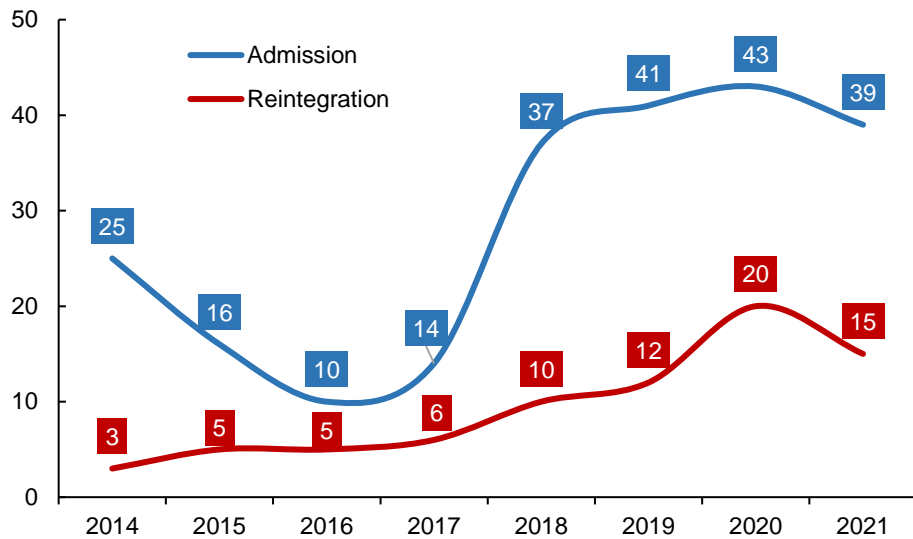
*Source: Night Shelter*

Through counselling sessions, some users were able to reconcile with their families, others entered employment and found alternative accommodation. For the year, 15 reintegration was recorded. In addition to the counselling session provided at the night shelter, the shelter also works closely with several partners such as the employment department, Disability and elderly division, and the Seychelles Police amongst others. This cooperation amongst agencies allows the service users to gain access to different services that will help them plan for a better future.

The graph below displays the number of admissions and reintegration per year since the opening of the night shelter.

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Figure 7: Admissions and Reintegration per year



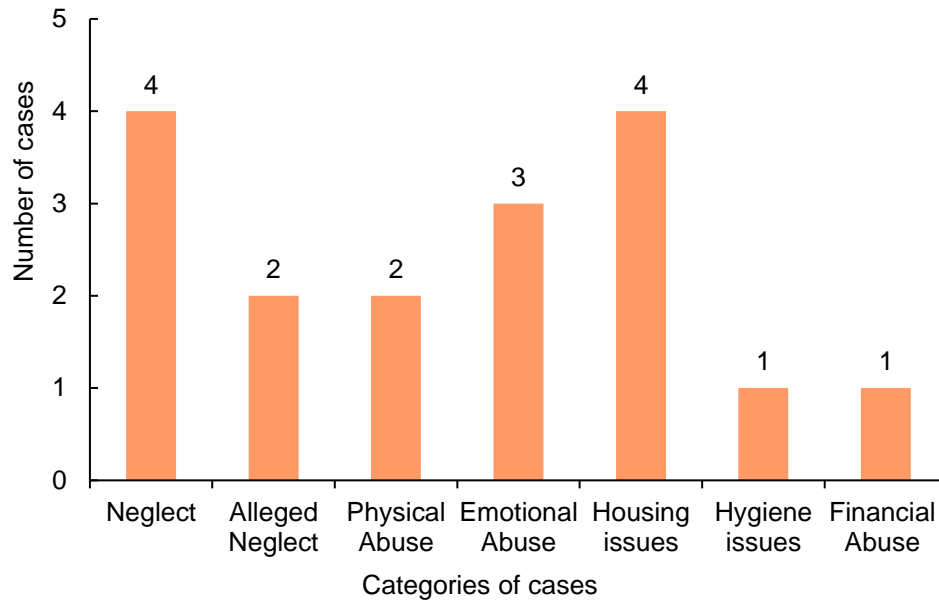
*Source: Social Affairs Department*

### Elderly issues

Various cases of elderly abuse are reported yearly with the Social Services Division. The abuse recorded are neglect, physical and emotional amongst others. In 2021 17 cases of abuse against the elderly was reported. This represents a decline of 24 when compared to the number of elderly abuse cases reported in 2020. The most significant decline was observed in cases of elderly neglect, which previously stood at 14 in 2020 but declined again to 4 reported cases in 2021. The graph below illustrates the different forms of abuse against the elderly recorded in 2021.

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Figure 8: Elderly abuse reported in 2021



*Source: Social Services Division*

### Highlights of 2021

#### *World Social work day*

“Ubuntu: I am Because We are – Strengthening Social Solidarity and Global Connectedness.”

This was theme for International Social worker’s day, celebrated on the 16<sup>th</sup> of March 2021. Given health restrictions put in place due to the COVID pandemic, the activities organized had to be done in such a way that the health regulations were respected for the safety of the staffs and anyone in attendance.

To commemorate this day, the Department organized the following activities:

- Participation in Bonzour Sesel
- Thanks giving and reflection Liturgy held by Father Danny
- Virtual presentation on ‘The Effectiveness of the Antenatal and Post Delivery Parenting Education Programme’.
- Blood donation
- Team bonding sessions per sections

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Photo: Photo: Thanks giving and reflection Liturgy held by Reverend Danny Elizabeth. In attendance were First Lady Linda Ramkalawan, Minister Francourt, PS William Melanie, DSS, PSWs and some social workers.



*Source: Social Affairs Department*

### *Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) projects*

#### **Assessing the effectiveness of Parenting Education session held from 2013 to 2018**

The Antenatal and Postnatal Parenting Education Programme was introduced in 2013 by the Department of Social Affairs with the aim of empowering parents to undertake their roles and responsibilities from the very start.

During the period 2019-2021, an assessment of the Effectiveness of the Parenting Education Programme was conducted. The findings of this assessment was presented in 2021. The aim of this assessment was to identify the lasting impact of the Parenting Education Programme and to identify ways to improve the current methods of delivery.

From the 266 respondents who attended the sessions, about 90 % enjoyed the sessions and they would recommend it to other people. In terms of the topics covers most of them remembered all the topics or 3 or more topics covered during the sessions.

A few of the challenges mentioned by the participants are:

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- Lack of information about the parenting sessions and when information is given it is usually at the later stage of pregnancy.
- Fathers are not encouraged to come to the sessions as much as mothers and
- Venues were at times not conducive for such activities.

The participants also suggested that the sessions should be more relevant to the expected mothers by including sessions on psychological changes for parents and emphasizing the critical role of the father before and after birth. In general, the participants recognised the importance and role of these sessions and proposed that it should be part of a comprehensive package for the preparation of birth.

### **Monitoring the provision for child protection in Children's Homes**

The primary objective of this project is to establish a screening and monitoring structure for the protection of children aged between 0-8 years in care homes. The project entails the installation and monitoring of surveillance devices. These will be placed in the two children's home identified namely Foyer de la Providence and Foyer Nazareth.

This will provide direct access to oversee the activities going on inside the homes and to better assess whether the care home standards are being respected. This project will extend to 2022 where training on child protection standards will be conducted and the review of the surveillance will be done every three months.

### **Welfare of Teenage Mothers**

The key purpose of this project is to identify the level of support and services available to teenage mothers. Given that teenage pregnancy can bring on more social and health issues, it is important to have a better understanding of teenage mothers and the well-being of their child. The pilot study will be conducted in the Perseverance district and will target mothers aged 13- 20 years' old. The survey will present the real situation of the teenage mothers and raise awareness on the availability of services to them. The result from this survey is expected to better inform decision making going forward in regards to teenage mothers.

### ***International Reporting***

The Social Affairs Department is responsible for the monitoring of implementation of the following international treaties and Protocols

- United Nations: Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)
- Optional protocol to the CRC on the involvement of Children in Armed Conflicts.
- Optional protocol to the CRC on sale of Children, Prostitution and Pornography.

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- Optional protocol to the CRC on the communication procedure.
- African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

The Department undertakes the coordination of data collection for reporting. In 2021, the Initial Reports on the Implementation of the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography and the Optional Protocol to the Involvement of Children in Armed conflicts was submitted to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. During the same year, Seychelles also ratified the last Optional Protocol being the Protocol to the CRC on the communication procedure.

Preliminary work has started for collection of information to prepare the 7<sup>th</sup> progress report on implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

#### *National Assembly sessions*

A meeting was held in March to discuss ratification of Optional Protocol on communication procedure with the Internal Affairs committee. Minister Patricia Francourt presented the Departments' 2022 budget to the National Assembly on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2021. The Principal Secretary and accountant were in attendance to support minister

#### **Staff meetings**

The Department maintained its ethos of communication and meetings with staff to provide an avenue to provide staff with information, address their concerns and get their contribution to ensure that the department continues to maintain a good public image.

#### *Senior Management Department meeting*

The Senior Management Committee of the Social Affairs Department held four meetings during the year whereby pertinent strategic issues was discussed for implementation.

#### *Social Services Management Meeting*

Meetings were held to address matters relevant to the work of the Social Services Division and issues of concern of social workers.

#### *Human Resource and Budget management Meetings*

The Human resource and Budget management team along with the Administration team held two meetings during year to discuss issues pertaining to their specific duties.

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### **Note of Appreciation**

The Department notes that staff have worked diligently to maintain a high standard of service despite the COVID 19 pandemic. We equally recognize the contributions of staff who have left the Ministry and note the support of Minister Patricia Francourt who joined the Social Affairs Department Meeting and never failed to meet and greet the staff whilst at Unity House.

### **Conclusion**

Despite the various challenges faced throughout the year, the staff worked tirelessly to provide the best possible service to the clients. This would not have been possible without the support from the different partners who facilitated the work so that children, families and the society in general could be assisted. For the years ahead, the Department remains committed to re-thinking its strategies that will be incorporated in the new Strategic Plan 2022- 2025 to bring meaningful changes in the lives of families and children seeking support to alleviate their distress and other challenging issues affecting them.