



GOVERNMENT  
OF MALTA

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER  
MINISTRY FOR HEALTH

PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIAT  
FOR EUROPEAN FUNDS



EU funds  
for Malta  
2014-2020

PROJECT PART-FINANCED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION



Superintendence  
of Public Health



HOW DOES THE  
WAY WE LIVE

**DETERMINE  
OUR HEALTH?**



# Introduction

Most of us are aware that exercise, a balanced diet, and not smoking are amongst the key factors contributing to better health. But what about our job, education, environment, and relationships? Can they affect our health, too? Research conducted across Europe by the WHO European Region Reports has shown that these things can make a significant difference to the quality of health we enjoy.

For that reason, the Ministry for Health has started working on the *ESF Project – Establishing a National Platform to Address the Social Determinants of Health*. Its aim is to understand which of these factors are most likely to affect the health of the Maltese population, how they can do so, and what we can do to tackle them as individuals and as a nation.

Part of this campaign is the booklet you are holding, which is the third in a series of five. In this booklet, the focus is on how, by taking better care of our environment, we can lead healthier and happier lives.

But, of course, this is not a one-size-fits-all affair. The Ministry understands that each person and family is distinct and faces unique economic, cultural, and societal realities. Nevertheless, change doesn't need to be overwhelming to be effective: small, yet decisive, steps towards being healthier and feeling more fulfilled are just as powerful. Moreover, the Government, through its many services, offers help along the way, fostering and encouraging positive change for all.



## The Joys of Being Outdoors

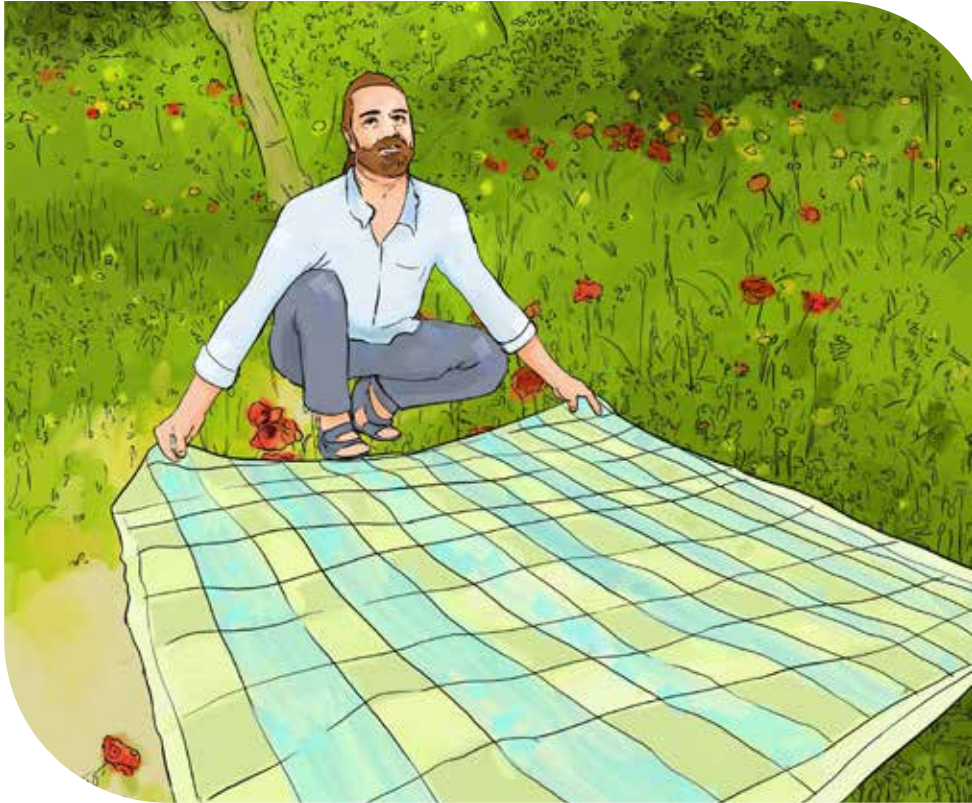
“Oh, I love the countryside,” says Lucy as she runs ahead of her parents, Raymond and Mary, and grandparents, Pawlu and Ćuza.

“It’s wonderful here, isn’t it?” Raymond answers.

“Yes! We’re so lucky to live so close to this place. It makes me so happy to be out in the open, breathing fresh air, and being able to run around!”

“If we all took better care of our countryside, our seas, and our towns and villages, we’d all have such a nicer environment,” Raymond continues.





“And it ultimately affects how we feel, too,” Mary interjects. “Without access to the countryside, we can’t live happy lives.”

“Is the picnic spot far?” Pawlu asks. “My legs are starting to ache!”



## Reducing and Reusing Before Recycling

**R**aymond lays down the picnic blanket on the ground, as his wife Mary and their daughter Lucy start opening the containers of food they brought from home.

“This all looks scrumptious,” says Ġuża, who proceeds to take out a bunch of plastic plates, cups, and cutlery from her bag. “Here you go, Lucy. Pass some on to your parents, will you?”

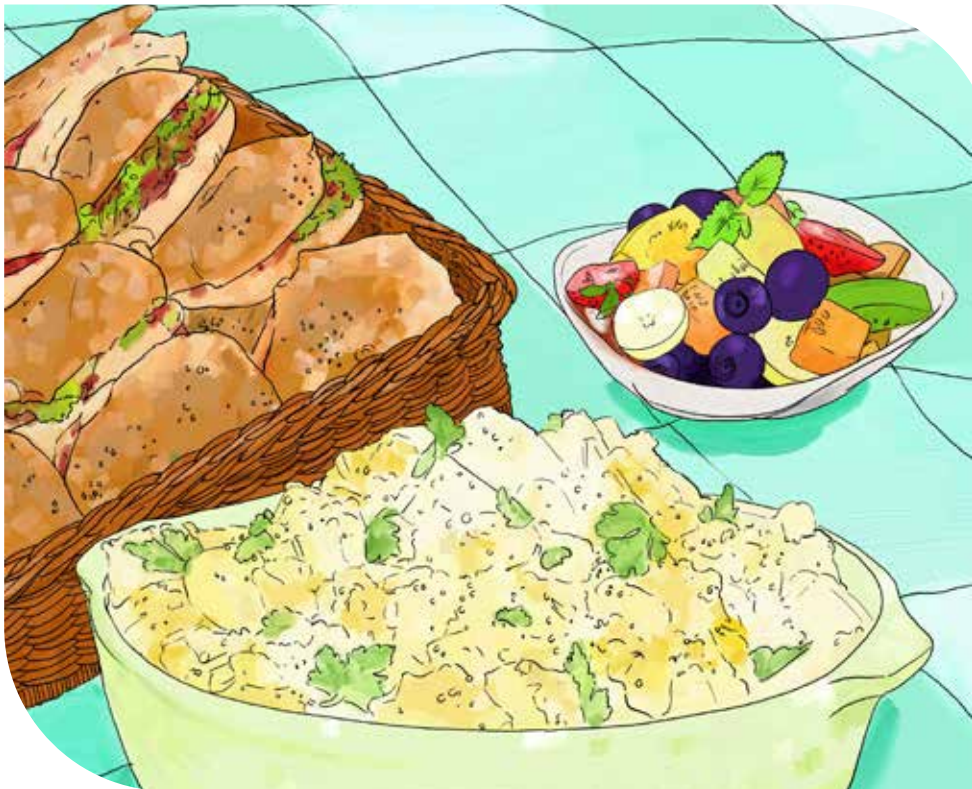


“Mum, we brought our normal plates and cutlery. Let’s use those and then we can wash them when we get home. It reduces waste and it costs less in the long run,” Raymond says, kindly.



“They have a point, Ġuż,” Nannu Pawlu says, smiling at Ġuża.

“Oh, very well... I guess you are right, after all! I will keep that in mind. Now, can we eat?”



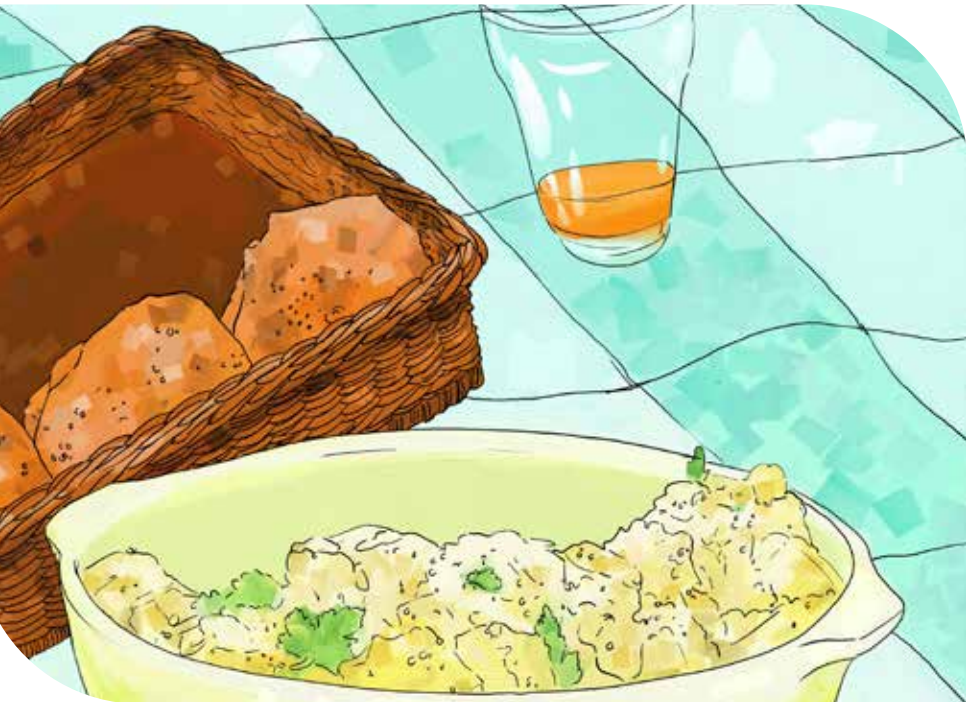
## Making Good Use of Leftovers

"I'm stuffed," Raymond says as he collapses into a foldable chair.

"There's so much food left over!" Nanna Ġuża says, clearly upset by the situation.

"We'll take it back home with us, Ġuż," Mary tells her.

"Yes, Nanna," Lucy says, joining the conversation. "In fact, I'll take some of the sandwiches with me tomorrow to running practice, Mum."





## Repurposing Old Furniture is Fun

Later that day, while driving back home, Mary invites Ġuża and Pawlu over for coffee.

“Mum, come and look at the cabinet you gave me,” Raymond shouts from the other room.

“I know what it looks like, Raymond! I had it for 50 years, remember?” Ġuża says.

Lucy and Mary burst out laughing.

"I think he wants you to see how he's upcycled it, Nanna," Lucy replies, drying tears of laughter from her eyes.

Ġuża goes into the living room, where the pine cabinet she gifted Raymond now takes pride of place.





“It looks so different, Ray! Did you paint it yourself?” she says as she admires it. “It works so well as a bookcase. I’d never have thought!”

“Yes,” Raymond says, proudly. “It’s a new hobby I’ve taken up. It’s really helped me to relax when I’m feeling stressed. This way, I get to do something I love while giving new life to old things. It’s a win-win situation!”



Operational Programme II - European Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020  
"Investing in human capital to create more opportunities and promote the well-being of society"  
Project part-financed by the European Social Fund  
Co-financing rate: 80% European Union; 20% National Funds

