



# **Annual Report 2022**

## Introduction



The year 2022 has been a rather busy year for us, reflecting the return to some normality after the pandemic. Last year, MGRM continued to support the community and maintain its projects, welcomed young activists to its newly formed youth subcommittee and opened a role for a Senior Programmes Officer to manage the Dar il-Qawsalla project, whilst ensuring that the positive energy continued well into the year. The areas of healthcare, asylum seekers, families, education, reproductive healthcare, hate crime, trans and gender variant youth and same-sex intimate partner violence, continued to be MGRM's main priorities throughout the year.

In January 2022, we completed the final phase of the VOPS 2021 project, namely the book launch "20 Years of Trailblazing" complementing the exhibition held earlier in 2021. Our VOPS 2022 project was dedicated to Katya Saunders, one of Malta's first openly transgender women. A biography penned by Ramona Depares was published through the project, alongside an exhibition co-curated by Romeo Roxman Gatt & Charlie Cauchi. The exhibition and book were well received amongst the community, her friends and family.

This year also saw us finally carry out the Erasmus+ project Tale & Tell, which had to be delayed from 2021 due to the pandemic. This project, which involved a training course for youth workers in

Italy and a youth exchange in Malta, aimed to enable young adults to create and express their own narratives about their identities, using storytelling methods. The training course took place in April, while the youth exchange took place in July.

Dar il-Qawsalla was given approval by the Planning Authority, and a contractor was appointed later in the year. Due to the rise in costs of materials since the project was initially budgeted, some fundraising took place to raise additional funds to cover new expenses. We also welcomed Alex Caruana back to MGRM as Senior Programmes Officer, to manage the Dar il-Qawsalla Project.

The Rainbow Families Network returned to organising monthly in person meetings, welcoming new same sex parents, trans youths and their families to the fold. We decided to start a youth subcommittee in July to get youths more involved in the organisation, while also developing the activists of tomorrow and supporting them to amplify their voices. As of the end of 2022, we had 6 members, who have been very active in organising various activities. To develop our youth activists, one workshop was delivered on current issues MGRM is working on, but we aim to continue to carry out workshops throughout 2023 for the benefit of the youths, as well as the main committee.

We were happy to see that the blood donations ban on MSMs was finally lifted in September during Pride, where it was announced that anyone can now donate blood, regardless of sexual orientation, if they only had a maximum of one partner in the last four months. In October, HIV Malta and the Public Health Directorate's sexual health unit jointly organised a one day conference on HIV. The conference was part-financed by a grant MGRM had received from ViiV Healthcare (an independent, global specialist hiv company). The concept of U=U (Undetectable equals Untransmittable) was presented during the conference, and since then, it has been accepted by the Health Ministry, forming part of policy and medical practices.

In terms of legislation and policy, it has been a rather quiet year. While there had been some talk about the Equality Bill early in the year, this and the Sex Work reform were put on hold due to the elections held in March 2022. The Equality portfolio is now under the Ministry for Home Affairs, Security, Reforms and Equality. We cannot report any progress on the bills and reforms in 2022, but hope that there will be some progress in the upcoming year. Following internal discussions, MGRM has taken a position on abortion, namely to support decriminalisation, leading to participating in the Pro-Choice Rally and in early 2023, joined the Voice for Choice coalition.

The work carried out in 2022 would not have been possible without the commitment of the executive committee members, youth subcommittee members and volunteers throughout the year. Their dedication and growing expertise enabled MGRM to continue to fulfill its mission as it took on new projects and initiatives. We look forward to 2023, bringing the committee and youth subcommittee together, as well as the current preparations and completion of projects for EuroPride 2023.

# Social Welfare

Colette Farrugia Bennett | **Rainbow Support Service Coordinator**

Mohammed Ali (Dali) Aguerbi | **Migrants Liaison and Mentor**

Robert Attard | **Community Outreach Executive**

## Rainbow Families Network

Rainbow Families Network is a collaboration between MGRM & The Malta Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society, with Elaine Micallef Avallone and Robert Attard being the main contributors towards this partnership on behalf of MGRM. A total of 9 Rainbow Families Network events were hosted in 2022.

This year, the Rainbow Families Network was constantly active, unlike the previous years when it was affected by the COVID19 pandemic. A total of 27 families joined the Rainbow Families Network in 2022.

- 26th February
- 2nd April - Easter Egg Hunt
- 21st May
- 18th June – Picnic
- 9th July
- 27th August
- 8th October
- 20th October - Girgenti Farm
- 3rd December - Esplora

5 RFN activities took place at Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ. An Easter egg hunt & Halloween pumpkin carving were held at Girgenti Farm, a picnic in June was held at Kennedy Grove, and a day out was organized on the 3rd December at Esplora.

The sessions at Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ focused on different talks and workshops for the parents and teenagers, ranging from therapeutic parenting, to sex education. Activities for children consisted of different crafts workshops by volunteers and MGRM committee member Julian Chircop.

## LGBTIQ+ Youth Group

The Rainbow Support Service has continued to offer a safe social meeting place for LGBTIQ young people (13-25) to come together at the LGBTIQ Youth Group on a fortnightly basis. The LGBTIQ Youth Group is facilitated and supported by members of Rainbow Support Service, namely two youth workers - Christian Sammut and Faye Theuma, and one social worker - Robert Busuttil. The youth worker's work is funded through the Memorandum of Understanding with Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ, while the services of the other two facilitators are funded through the Public Social Partnership Agreement with the The Ministry for Social Policy and Children's Rights. The youth group encourages active involvement through volunteering with MGRM and other NGOs, and continues to build the young people's capacity in active participation skills through discussions and other activities.

2022 was the first year since 2019 where the Youth Group returned with no social restrictions. By the end of 2022, attendance dwindled, with 2023's plan of action being to identify the needs of the youths in order to create more outreach. Activities varied from educational, creative, sport and leisure.

7th January	First Session
21st January	Games
4th February	Youth group poster activity
18th February	Cinema Night & discussion
4th March	Debate (several topics to create a fora discussions)
18th March	Sustainability – Reuse (how to be creative)
1st April	Picnic Day in spring
15th April	Good Friday
29th April	Home – Independent living Life skills
13th May	Healthy Choices – Including lifestyle, food and relationships
27th May	Agenzija Zghazagh refresher talk
10th June	Self-defense class
24th June	Session on how to keep accounts, pay taxes, understanding a payslip and CV writing
8th July	LGBTIimpics – Series of fun games
22nd July	Exploring different identities within the community - Drag
5th August	Live-in during summer/BBQ

19th August	Knowing our roots – Session on how MGRM activism started
2nd September	How to write in Maltese
16th September	Hobbies Day – sharing each individual's hobbies which can also serve as a public speaking activity
30th September	Exploring different forms of art
14th October	AZ Talk
28th October	Halloween Crafts
11th November	2023 activities planning / youth group discussion
25th November	Sexual health but interactive and fun not just sitting watching presentation
9th December	christmas crafts
16th December	Xmas Activity - christmas games

## Rainbow Support Service

During 2022, the social welfare team has continued to offer support to individuals and families requesting face-to-face and online sessions to discuss issues around LGBTIQ identities, family relationships and dynamics, coming out, HIV related health matters and Trans\* specific health issues, among others. Like the previous year, higher trends of anxiety and other mental health issues were noted during the whole of 2022, some related to service users' limited social interaction during the global pandemic.

The social welfare team has also continued to provide support services through the National Gay Helpline and the Rainbow Support Service. The service is made up of six social workers, namely Beverley Abela Gatt, Colette Farrugia Bennett, Michael Farrugia, Eman Galea, Gillian Busuttil and Robert Busuttil. This year, 2022, was the third and final year covered by the second Public Social Partnership Agreement (PSP) that MGRM had signed with the Ministry for Social Policy and

Children's Rights, which came to an end in 2022. Negotiations on the third PSP started midway through the year, and its signing is envisaged in the beginning of 2023.

Through this service agreement, MGRM was able to deliver the Rainbow Support Service by contracting professionals to support those service users it came in contact with. This service incorporates:

- the Social Work service
- the Youth Group for LGBTIQ persons aged between 13 and 17, and those 18 years and over
- Psychological Support
- a Legal Consultancy Service
- provision of Support Groups in the communities
- consultation services for professionals and educators
- training and awareness raising sessions with professionals and members of society

During 2022, the Social Work service was in contact with 173 cases, which includes individuals who identify as LGBTIQ, and family members of LGBTIQ children and adults. There was an increase of 60 cases over the previous year. Of these service users, some required regular one-to-one sessions, while others required short term work. An estimated number of interventions, face-to-face, online sessions, telephone, email or online chat contact, amounts to over 869 interventions, which is an increase of over 109 interventions when compared to 2021. The Legal Consultancy Service assisted a number of individuals and families whose issues amongst others were mainly related to marriage registration, the registration of children, the protection of asylum seekers identifying as LGBTIQ, and the legal changes in case of Trans individuals and trans children. Psychological Support was offered to over 10 persons who required further in depth psychotherapeutic support. A further approximate 30 sessions were conducted with other professionals and educators in the process of consultation about LGBTIQ issues, especially in relation to clients or students they are working with.

In 2022, the social workers of the Rainbow Support Service continued to receive supervision from professionals who have experience in working in this field. The social workers received 12 group supervision sessions, and a number of individual supervision sessions as necessary for the benefit of the service users. Supervision is the space for both personal and professional growth, and reflection on the lives of clients that social workers are working with.

## **LGBTIQ Migrants**

In February 2021, MGRM and Moviment Graffiti organised a 2 week online campaign and webinar called "You Say Fair, We Say Unfair", to showcase the realities of LGBTIQ migrants in Malta. MGRM has supported aditus foundation's Safe4all campaign during Pride week, in order to remove countries that criminalise homosexuality from the safe countries list. There hasn't been any positive reaction from the government in this regard.

MGRM continues to provide support to a number of clients (asylum seekers and migrants) with legal support and mental health support through RSS. We accompany clients through their process of asylum. Along with providing support we are advocating and lobbying for LGBT migrants' rights.

## Support to students

The Rainbow Support Service met and supported a number of students who were focusing their research on LGBTIQ issues in various areas of study including Social Work, Social Policy, Gender Studies, Counselling and Psychology, etc. Some of the support included linking the students with potential participants for their research.

## National Gay Helpline

MGRM continues to operate the National Gay Helpline (NGH) through a call divert system. Calls for support are now diverted to the Rainbow Support Service phone number.

## Training

This service offered training session delivery to over 10 organisations, services and agencies, namely in the field of education, social services and health. These included members of the Maltese Association of Social Workers and the Malta Medical Students' Association, as well as professional staff within the Mater Dei Hospital Psychology Services, teachers and psycho-social staff in schools, and occupational therapists.

## Awareness Raising of 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence

As per the previous year, The Commission on Gender-based Violence and Domestic Violence, to put forward proposals for initiatives to raise awareness during this year's 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign. The theme this year was "Domestic Violence is Everybody's Business". With that theme in mind, we organised an online panel discussion hosted by Alex Caruana, with Beverly Abela Gatt & Michael Farrugia from RSS & Lara Dimitrijevic from WRF on "GBV & IPV within the LGBTIQ+ Community". The discussion had a total of 258 views, with 20 viewers tuning in live.

On December 2nd, MGRM has supported Moviment Graffiti's "Fit-Triq Bla Biza- Reclaim the Night", a march that started at the Love Monument and concluded at Ġnien Indipendenza, where MGRM's Amanda Cossai made a speech alongside activists from other organisations.

## Youth Subcommittee

Cynthia Chircop | **Co-coordinator**

Amanda Cossai | **Member responsible for coordinating Youth Subcommittee**

Robert Attard | **Community & Outreach Officer**

In July 2022, we published a call for youths aged 18-25 to form a youth subcommittee, with the intention of encouraging youths into activism. A total of 8 people were accepted, one of whom stepped down after a few months.

The first Youth Subcommittee Workshop was held in November 2022, where the youths were given talks on Current Affairs & Terminology. Cynthia Chircop, Amanda Cossai, Ryan Portelli & Dali Aguerbi did their presentations of current affairs, transgender issues, HIV and migration respectively.



By the end of 2022, the MGRM Youth Subcommittee consists of 6 active members. From September until December 2022, the Youth Subcommittee managed to organise two football matches, two pop up thrift shop events, and together with Graffiti Youths, they co-organised a film screening and a games night.

All of the events were successful and well attended, with the sports events scheduled to become a regular activity throughout 2023.



The queer football match was the first event that the youth subcommittee has independently organized, identifying the need for inclusion for queer people in sports. Held at infetti ground, 14 people (including viewers and player) attended the event.



Taking place at Maori & Rinaxximent tattoo parlor over the space of a weekend, the thrift store event fundraised a total of €505.50 was raised towards Dar il-Qawsalla.



Following the success of the first football event, Nixxuttjaw bil-Kontra was held at Infetti Ground in November 2022, this time raising a total amount of €62 during the match.



Together with Moviment Graffiti Studenti, the Youths organised a film screening of the movie 'Pride'. 26 people attended the event.



In December, the Youth Subcommittee collaborated with Moviment Graffiti, to hold a games night, featuring board games and card games in a safe and friendly environment. The event attracted approximately 20 people.

# LGBTIQ+ Health

Colette Farrugia Bennett | **Rainbow Support Service Coordinator**

Joe Grima | **Member responsible for HIV Malta**

## Trans\* Health

In 2022, the Rainbow Support Service continued to liaise with the Gender Wellbeing Clinic through referrals to the health service. In fact, several trans\* individuals who were supported by the RSS team were later referred to the Clinic to receive appropriate trans\* health care. The Rainbow Support Service continues to liaise with the Ministry for Health and the Gender Wellbeing Clinic through the provision of feedback and referral of service users. Advocacy exercises around trans\* health are channelled to the Ministry for Health through the Policy Executive responsible for the Gender Wellbeing Clinic.

## HIV

HIV Malta remained active throughout 2022 with more projects and awareness campaigns to bring knowledge about HIV and HIV care closer to the community and to medical workers, social workers and mental health practitioners.

Now that the new medication is being distributed normally, although there remains some room for improvement, HIV Malta's focus turned to dissemination of information and mental health support for those who are newly diagnosed. One of RSS' counsellors has now gained considerable experience and knowledge on the topic, and has since become the main point of contact when someone is living with HIV.

Where we are still lacking considerably is in terms of testing, where we still have very long waiting times which are far from ideal, and sometimes exceed 5 months. The GU Clinic still sees people rapidly if there is an imminent health risk however otherwise the waiting time remains an obstacle to knowing one's status.

Finally, with respect to PEP and PrEP, the electoral promise of these being available for free has not been fulfilled yet.

## HIV Conference

In 2022, HIV Malta together with the Public Health Directorate's sexual health unit jointly organised a one-day conference that had more than 140 attendees. The conference was part-financed by a grant that MGRM received from ViiV Healthcare, and some of the speakers included the Superintendent of Public Health, HIV health practitioners and consultants, together with Dr Tristan Barber and Mr Michael O'Dea who are a London-based HIV consultant and the National chemsex coordinator of Terrence Higgins Trust respectively.

For the first time in an event of this type, a person who lives with HIV gave her views on access to treatment and stigma. This was considered to be a breakthrough testimonial that brought to light the difficult realities of living with HIV and being faced with conflicting and outdated information.

The conference was particularly important considering the fact that after its conclusion it brought to light the concept of U=U (Undetectable equals Untransmittable), which was very well presented by most speakers who also presented the studies backing the concept. Since then, U=U has now become accepted by Malta's Health Ministry such that it can now form part of policy and medical practices.





08:30 – 09:00	Welcome coffee and registration
09:00 – 09:10	Introductory remarks <i>Dr. Paula Vassallo (She/Her)</i> Director: Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Directorate
09:10 – 09:20	Representative- MGRM and Sexual Health Malta <i>Mr Joe Grima (He/Him)</i> + <i>Ms Maria Axisa (She/Her)</i>
09:20 – 09:50	STIs in Malta – trends over the last 15 years <i>Dr. Tanya Mellillo (She/Her)</i> Head of Infectious Disease Unit- HPDP
09:50 – 10:20	New HIV Treatment in Malta and other issues <i>Dr. Manuel Fenech (He/Him)</i> Infectious Disease Consultant
10:20 – 10:35	Coffee break
10:35– 11:05	HIV Testimonial on stigma and access to services <i>Ms Jackie Roberts (She/Her)</i> Checkpoint Malta
11:05 – 11:45	Driving Clinical improvements that champions patient centered and holistic care <i>Dr. Tristan Barber (He/They)</i> Consultant Physician at Royal Free London
11:45– 12:35	Understanding the psychology of Chemsex <i>Michael O'Dea (He/They)</i> National Chemsex Service Coordinator – Terrence Higgins Trust
12:35 – 13:00 13:00 – 13:25	PrEP, PEP and STI Testing <i>Dr. Dania Gamoudi (She/Her)</i> (Session to be repeated – 25 minutes each)
12:35 – 13:00 13:00 – 13:25	Sexual Health History and HIV Testing <i>Dr. Tristan Barber (He/They)</i> Consultant Physician at Royal Free London (Session to be repeated – 25 minutes each)
13:25– 13:30	Concluding Remarks <i>Dr. Paula Vassallo (She/Her)</i> Director: Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Directorate
13:30	Networking lunch

## Cross-NGO Collaboration

It is becoming increasingly evident that HIV Malta and Checkpoint Malta, with whom we regularly collaborate, need to create a joint structure of some form. With limited funding related to this topic, it makes more sense to create a single structure that can avail of any funding in order to build a stronger and more unified NGO that can focusing its lobbying energy on this topic. MGRM's Rainbow Support Service would remain the main provider of support services and training whilst activism, community services such as community testing and other activities would fall within the remit of the new structure. HIV Malta and Checkpoint Malta will finalise plans in 2023.

## Blood Donation Ban

The blood donation ban has finally been replaced with more equitable and more scientifically accurate guidelines on blood donation. In September 2022, in an announcement that coincided with Pride Week, Health Minister Chris Fearne announced that 'there will no longer be any discrimination based on sexual orientation when it comes to blood donation'. The policy has thus been replaced with one where anyone who has had no more than one sexual partner in a specific time period will be able to donate.

# Projects

Robert Attard | **Community Outreach Executive**

Alex Caruana | **Senior Programs Officer**

## Katya

MGRM's VOPS funded project (Voluntary Organisations Project Scheme) for 2022 was dedicated to Katya Saunders, one of Malta's first openly transgender women. A biography penned by Ramona Depares was published through the project, alongside an exhibition co-curated by Romeo Roxman Gatt & Charlie Cauchi. The exhibition, held at Spazju Kreattiv in Valletta, from December 17th till January 22nd had regular attendance throughout, with a lot of interest and positive interactions on social media. Approximately 150 people from the guestlist attended during opening night, which was also the official book launch. Speaking at the event, we had co-curator Romeo Roxman Gatt, author Ramona Depares and MGRM's Joe Grima, who took a leading role in this project.

Aside from Katya's photographs, garments, video archives and reimagined installations by Charlie Cauchi, Romeo Roxman Gatt & Mark Edward Mifsud, the exhibition also featured an interview with a friend who Saunders helped and remained close to, as well as a clip celebrating young transgender women in Malta, highlighting Saunders' influence on local contemporary queer culture.

Interest in the book remains following the distribution of the 150 copies, which will be reprinted using additional funds unrelated to VOPS, from MGRM.

MGRM, the curators and the author have worked closely alongside people who knew Katya throughout the months, to ensure an accurate portrayal. This was implemented by conducting face to face and video interviews, as well as exchanging emails with people who she has worked with in the past, dating back to the 1970's and 1980's. In addition to questions about their memories of Katya, photographers who were contacted were also asked for permission to use their photographs of Katya in the publication and exhibition.











## 20 Years of Trailblazing book launch

MGRM's VOPS funded project for 2021 commemorated MGRM's 20 years with an exhibition that was held during Malta Pride 2021, and a book that was launched in January 2022. Using Rosa Kwir's backdrop for the launch, and was attended by approximately 40 invitees. A seated and socially distant event was held for the book's launch using Rosa Kwir's backdrop which was attended by approximately 40 invitees. It included speeches from Gabriella Calleja, Ruth Baldacchino, as well as MGRM's coordinators Cynthia Chircop & Colette Farrugia Bennett

## Rainbow Library

Like the previous year, the Rainbow Library has been open every Tuesday & Thursday excluding public holidays. A total number of 52 new books were donated to the library, adding up to a total of 952 books. 2022 has seen 78 different loans, and 13 new members.

A book club was launched in November 2022, to little success.

## Dar il-Qawsalla

In March 2022, Dar il-Qawsalla received the Planning Authority construction permit. Following this, we have organised a number of fundraising events to sustain the project. Together with a number of volunteers, MGRM issued a call for donations to a selected number of businesses and enterprises. We issued a call for contractors and the cheapest offer was chosen. In December, MGRM held an official meeting with the San Gwann local council where the Dar il-Qawsalla project was introduced.

## Erasmus + Project: Tale & Tell



We finally managed to carry out the Erasmus+ project Tale & Tell, which had to be delayed from 2021 due to the pandemic. This project, which involved a training course for youth workers in Italy and a youth exchange in Malta, aimed to enable young people to create and express their own narratives about their identities, using storytelling methods. The training course took place in April, while the youth exchange took place in July. Our project partners were Giosef (Italy), Altero (Serbia), Stowarzyszenie Fabryka Rownosci (Poland) and Aktive Kosmos (Spain). The project was managed by Marthese Formosa, who also led some training sessions.

The training course aimed to increase the competences of youth workers working with vulnerable youth, provide tools and methods to better facilitate the learning process for youths, and provide a space to reflect and share knowledge. The training course was organised in Alpignano, Italy by Giosef and was attended by 23 persons. Through the training course, participants learned to use a variety of storytelling methods to use in their youth work and/or in their self-expression.

The youth exchange aimed to provide a safe space to share and exchange experiences, backgrounds and cultures between vulnerable youths from different countries, raise awareness on multiple identities and intersectional approaches, and to promote storytelling methods to enable them to express their identities. It was organised in Birkirkara, Malta, and was attended by 32 persons, which consisted mainly of vulnerable youths and a youth worker per participating country. The youth exchange provided a space and materials for the youths to explore, and work on individual and group stories, creating a variety of pieces.

# International Relations

Robert Attard | **Community Outreach Officer**

Mark Harwood | **Member responsible for International Relations**

Amanda Cossai | **Member**

## TGEU

MGRM remains an active member of TGEU. Amanda Cossai attended the Trans Feminine Leadership Academy organised by TGEU in Berlin in August. This has established a relationship with the board and staff at TGEU, and discussions and meetings regarding potential project ideas remained ongoing afterwards.

TGEU's Trans Refugee Network had three online meetings throughout 2022, two of which were attended by Amanda Cossai. The TRN is a platform where members meet to discuss relevant issues surrounding trans and gender non-conforming asylum seekers and refugees around Europe.

The TGEU General Assembly was initially planned to be held in November 2022 however this was moved to March 2023.

## IGLYO

MGRM remained a member of IGLYO, with Nick Ebejer from the Youth Subcommittee attending the Annual General Meeting in October 2023 on behalf of MGRM.

## ILGA-Europe AGM

MGRM remained a member of ILGA Europe, with Robert Attard attending the Annual General Meeting in October 2022 on behalf of MGRM, while also representing LGBTI+ Gozo by proxy. The annual report, candidate profiles and other documents were disseminated during the conference, and voted during the meeting with voting links being provided through an app during the AGM.

## The Commonwealth Equality Network (TCEN)

As outlined in the previous annual report, MGRM was the regional representative for Europe on the TCEN Management Committee (MC). This involved regular meetings of the MC as well as participation in various selection boards as TCEN underwent a governance review in 2021. In the

2021 AGM a new MC was voted in and MGRM, having been Europe Rep for two terms, the maximum allowed under the original statute, helped coordinate the nominations and voting for a new Europe representative. During the AGM the European members of TCEN voted for Scott Cuthbertson of Equality Network (Scotland). Since then, there has been minimal interaction with TCEN other than monitoring the Whatsapp group chat which has slowly declined in importance with fewer and fewer posts from members. TCEN provided an update on its activities in summer 2022 and reached out in November when Luke Stamp indicated that, as recommended by the governance review, TCEN now has a dedicated staff working solely with TCEN as opposed to the previous arrangement where Kaleidoscope Trust, which houses TCEN, had seconded staff to its operation. As part of this new arrangement, TCEN was meeting with all member organisations. Subsequently, Cynthia Attard, Colette Farrugia Bennett and Mark Harwood met with TCEN online on 13 December 2022. The meeting was an opportunity to update TCEN about MGRM's work and our immediate priorities.

We will continue to operate as a member of TCEN and to participate in any future meetings should TCEN request so. (MH)

## **Platform of Human Rights Organisations Malta (PHROM)**

PHROM has been inactive for a number of years. While MGRM sits on PHROM's Executive Committee, the last meeting took place before COVID and the WhatsApp chat has not been used for some years. (MH)

# Media

Robert Attard | **Community Outreach Officer**

Cynthia Chircop | **Co-Coordinator**

## Articles

Rep	ARTICLE	MEDIUM	DATE
	<b>'When Will You Pay Attention?' MGRM Asks Malta's Archbishop As Mosta Priest Says Being Gay 'Worse Than Being Possessed'</b>  <a href="https://lovinmalta.com/news/when-will-you-pay-attention-mgrm-asks-maltas-archbishop-as-mosta-priest-says-being-gay-worse-than-being-possessed/">https://lovinmalta.com/news/when-will-you-pay-attention-mgrm-asks-maltas-archbishop-as-mosta-priest-says-being-gay-worse-than-being-possessed/</a>	LovinMalta	05/01
	<b>Ministers, activists demand police action against priest for homophobic post</b>  <a href="https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/ministers-activists-demand-police-action.925897">https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/ministers-activists-demand-police-action.925897</a>	Times of Malta	06/01
	<b>Sick and tired: Protesters demand justice for female victims of violence</b>  <a href="https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/sick-and-tired-protesters-demand-justice-for-female-victims-of.929584">https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/sick-and-tired-protesters-demand-justice-for-female-victims-of.929584</a>	Times of Malta	22/01

	<b>LGBTQ Advocates Meet with Malta's Bishops as Anti-Gay Priest Charged with Hate Crime</b>  <a href="https://www.newwaysministry.org/2022/02/12/lgbtq-advocates-meet-with-maltas-bishops-as-anti-gay-priest-charged-with-hate-crime/">https://www.newwaysministry.org/2022/02/12/lgbtq-advocates-meet-with-maltas-bishops-as-anti-gay-priest-charged-with-hate-crime/</a>	New Ways Ministry	12/02
	<b>Make right-wing candidate pay defamation costs, MGRM tells Electoral Commission</b>	MaltaToday	15/02

	<a href="https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/114957/make_rightwing_candidate_pay_defamation_costs_mgrm_tells_electoral_commission">https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/114957/make_rightwing_candidate_pay_defamation_costs_mgrm_tells_electoral_commission</a>		
	<b>Min dar abbandunata ssir kenn għal persuni LGBTIQ B'diffikultajiet f'hajjithom</b>  <a href="https://www.gwida.mt/mt/minn-dar-abbandunata-s-sir-kenn-g-al-persuni-lgbtq-b-diffikultajiet-f-ajjithom">https://www.gwida.mt/mt/minn-dar-abbandunata-s-sir-kenn-g-al-persuni-lgbtq-b-diffikultajiet-f-ajjithom</a>	Gwida	23/03
	<b>Rosary rally in reparation for Malta's pride march slammed for being disrespectful</b>  <a href="https://lovinmalta.com/news/rosary-rally-in-reparation-for-maltas-pride-march-slammed-for-being-disrespectful/">https://lovinmalta.com/news/rosary-rally-in-reparation-for-maltas-pride-march-slammed-for-being-disrespectful/</a>	LovinMalta	12/09
	<b>McDonald's celebrate Pride Week with a €10,000 donation to MGRM</b>  <a href="https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/mcdonalds-celebrates-pride-week-10000-donation-mgrm.980375">https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/mcdonalds-celebrates-pride-week-10000-donation-mgrm.980375</a>	Times of Malta	12/09
	<b>LGBTIQ+ Groups Call Out MP Alex Borg For Questioning Prioritisation Of Sex Reassignment Surgery</b>  <a href="https://lovinmalta.com/news/lgbtiq-groups-call-out-mp-alex-borg-for-questioning-prioritisation-of-sex-reassignment-surgery/">https://lovinmalta.com/news/lgbtiq-groups-call-out-mp-alex-borg-for-questioning-prioritisation-of-sex-reassignment-surgery/</a>	LovinMalta	13/09
	<b>Tribute to Katya Saunders, one of Malta's first openly trans personalities</b>  <a href="https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/arts/art/120263/tribute_to_katya_saunders_one_of_maltas_first_openly_trans_personalities">https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/arts/art/120263/tribute_to_katya_saunders_one_of_maltas_first_openly_trans_personalities</a>	MaltaToday	14/12

## Media Appearances

Rep	ARTICLE/PROGRAMME	MEDIUM	DATE
RJA	Kliem Bħal Fr.Muscat Ixekkel Persuni Jkunu Komdi Jitkellmu Dwar L-Orjentazzjoni Sesswali Tagħhom  <a href="https://one.com.mt/kliem-bhal-fr-muscat-ixekkel-persuni-jkunu-komdi-jitkellmu-dwar-l-orjentazzjoni-sesswali-tagghom/">https://one.com.mt/kliem-bhal-fr-muscat-ixekkel-persuni-jkunu-komdi-jitkellmu-dwar-l-orjentazzjoni-sesswali-tagghom/</a>	One News	06/01
CFB	TVAM: Mapping the Rainbow - l-esperjenza ta' ġenitur ta' wild transgender  <a href="https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=254463226755371">https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=254463226755371</a>	TVM	10/01
RA	Aħna Hawn - Radio show with Eman Borg  <a href="https://www.um.edu.mt/services/campusfm/">https://www.um.edu.mt/services/campusfm/</a>	Campus FM	20/01
CFB	Kuxjenza: Fuq familji li għandhom ulied LGBTIQ+  <a href="https://www.facebook.com/labarokka.ii/posts/4719827964733187">https://www.facebook.com/labarokka.ii/posts/4719827964733187</a>	TVM News+	21/01
CFB	TRANSFORM: Raising the standards of health care service provision for LGBTIQ people, hosted by the SOGIGESC Unit within the Human Rights Directorate	Panel	19/01



# Advocacy & Lobbying

Robert Attard | **Community Outreach Officer**

Joe Grima | **Member responsible for HIV Malta**

Cynthia Chircop | **Co-coordinator**

## Local Networking

In 2022, MGRM continued to work with a number of entities through the LGBTIQ Consultative Council, the Consultative Council for Women's Rights, as well as through its membership in PHROM, the Platform for Human Rights Organisations in Malta. It has supported and collaborated with other organisations throughout the year, as well as strengthened our relations with YMCA, while working on Dar il-Qawsalla. Organisations we have worked with include; the Malta Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society, Checkpoint Malta, aditus, Moviment Graffiti, MMSA - Malta Medical Students' Association and Beta Psi. (In Early 2023, MGRM also joined the Voice for Choice coalition)

## Equality Act and Human Rights and Equality Commission Act

During the 2022 elections, Partit Laburista, the elected party, has included provisions for an equality legislative framework in its electoral manifesto. Having said that, any updates with regards to the Equality Act has remained stagnant in 2022.

## Sex Work Reform

Following the election, the Equality portfolio moved to the Ministry for Home Affairs, Security, Reforms and Equality earlier this year. Not much progress has been recorded in 2022. The Labour Party pledged continued support for exit programmes for sex workers in its 2022 electoral manifesto but mentioned nothing on regularisation. MGRM's position has remained to be in favour of decriminalisation of sex work.

## Blood donation ban

The blood donation ban has finally been replaced with more equitable and more scientifically accurate guidelines on blood donation. In September 2022, in an announcement that coincided with Pride Week, Health Minister Chris Fearne announced that 'there will no longer be any discrimination based on sexual orientation when it comes to blood donation'. The policy has thus been replaced with one where anyone who has had no more than one sexual partner in a specific time period will be able to donate.

## Constitutional Amendments

There was no direct lobbying in 2022.



Note for 2023: Early 2023 saw the government propose an amendment to the law banning conversion practices, whereby it will be strengthened to also make it illegal for anyone to promote the practice.

## **Abortion**

After internal discussion on the issue throughout the year and how it affects LGBTIQ persons, MGRM took a position on abortion in mid-2022, to be in favour of decriminalisation of abortion. We attended the Pro Choice Rally in September, marching alongside the Voice for Choice coalition. We officially joined the coalition in early 2023.

In November 2022, some months after the high profile case of Andrea Prudente which highlighted the issues with the abortion law in Malta, The government proposed an amendment to Malta's abortion law to allow for the termination of pregnancy to safeguard the pregnant person's life from grievous danger. Abortion would still be illegal and prosecuted. There is opposition to this amendment by the Parliamentary Opposition, the Church and some NGOs. MGRM had not been involved in the discussions around the amendment as it had not yet joined the Voice for Choice coalition when this was happening.

# Marketing

Cynthia Chircop | **Co-Coordinator**

Joe Grima | **Member responsible for HIV Malta**

Robert Attard | **Community & Outreach Officer**

Kirsty Farrugia Guiga | **Member responsible for memberships**

## Merchandise

Prior to Pride, various merchandise such as flags, pins, badges, fans and other small items were ordered, so they could be sold at events. Most of the merchandise was sold out after Pride month in September. We also continued to sell queer t-shirts and tote bags designed by Kim Cauchi, which were available at our Fresher's Week stands.

## Membership

In 2022, as in previous years, members could opt to choose from the following different types of membership:

**The Bronze Membership:** which is free, however does not give the member/s the right to vote during MGRM's annual general meeting (AGM).

**The Silver Membership:** which is €20 a year and the member/s opting for this option, have the right to vote during the annual general meeting (AGM), for the executive committee that will best represent them and continue building and working on behalf of the LGBTIQ community's best interest.

**The Gold Membership:** which is €50 a year, gives the member/s the right to vote during the annual general meeting (AGM) and €30 of the fee are a contribution/donation towards MGRM's projects and aid to cover further core costs and resources.

Individuals who wish to become a member or renew their membership can do so via MGRM's official website (<http://maltagayrights.org/become-a-member/>) or by filling out the membership form during one of MGRM's events.

When signing up as a member and giving consent, a membership card is sent by post to the provided address, unless the member decides to collect it from MGRM's office. The three different types of memberships expire yearly.

An email is sent to all the members prior to their membership expiry date to inform them about this. In the same email, instructions on how to renew the membership are also included. If the individuals do not renew their membership for another year, their personal data is deleted accordingly from MGRM's membership list in accordance with GDPR.

Throughout 2022, MGRM received a number of new and/or renewed memberships resulting to 53 active members by the end of 2022 and 17 memberships were received during first three months of 2023.

### **Memberships in 2022:**

*28 Bronze Memberships*

*15 Silver Memberships*

*10 Gold Memberships*

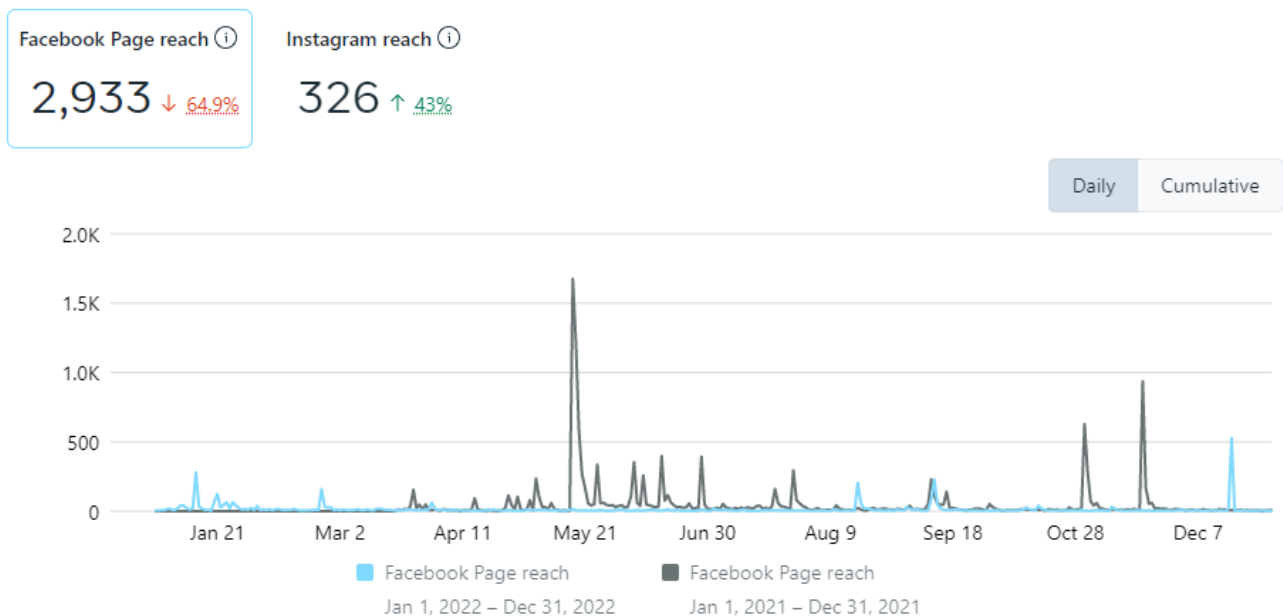
Members are informed and updated about MGRM's ongoing work, projects, events, studies, and updates.

In 2023, MGRM has continued to promote the different membership options on social media platforms, mostly via Facebook, Instagram and Tik Tok and outreach during MGRM's and MGRM's youth subcommittee events as well as EuroPride 2023 to reach further members.

Lately, MGRM has also created a mailing list for individuals who wish to receive communication/updates, even though they might not be members.

## Social Media - Rainbow Support Service

The Rainbow Support Service youth group continued to be promoted on social media, advising followers of the upcoming meetings a few weeks before through posts. The RSS page was also used to promote studies carried out locally by university departments and students. Stories and news were also posted to the page. Posts to the RSS Facebook and Instagram were not as frequent as they were on the MGRM pages. There were 108 new likes and 43 new Instagram followers in 2022.

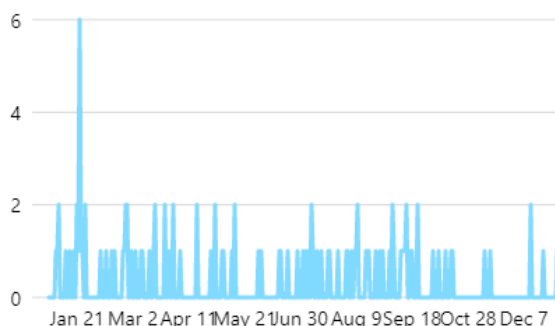


## New likes and follows

Export

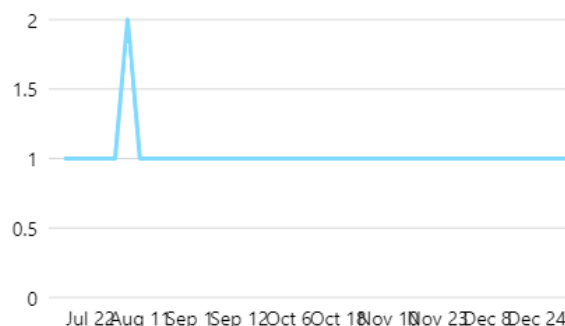
### Facebook Page new likes ⓘ

108 ↓ 36.1%



### New Instagram followers ⓘ

43



## Website & Social Media - MGRM

The website continued to be updated with our projects and various resources throughout 2022. Website visits ranged between 1000-2000 page views per month.

Social media reach was lower in 2022 than in 2021, although has gradually increased throughout the year.

International and local news, as well as reports and promotion of MGRM's own activities, social, educational and advocacy constitute the major part of the content shared on the Facebook page. The MGRM page was also used to promote studies carried out locally by university departments, students as well as educational workshops by organisations.

Our Instagram page was updated with promotion of our events and activities, as well as information on various LGBTIQ+ related issues.

Throughout the year, we gained 743 followers on Facebook, and 394 on Instagram. By time of writing (March 23), our Instagram page has 1655 followers, while our Facebook page has 10,204.

## Audience ⓘ

See Audience Report

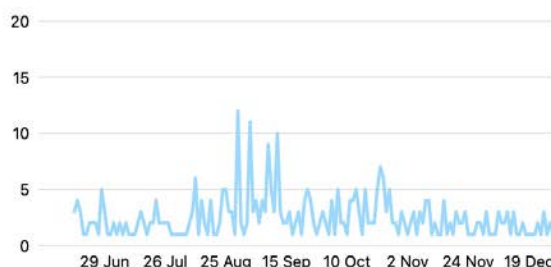
### New Facebook Page followers ⓘ

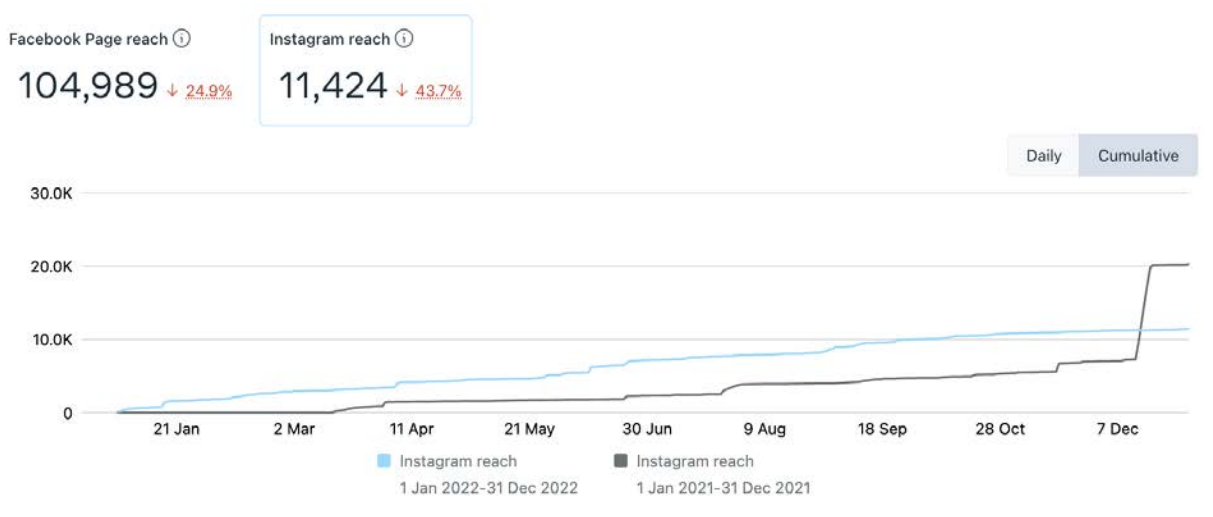
743 ↑ 46.3%



### New Instagram followers ⓘ

394

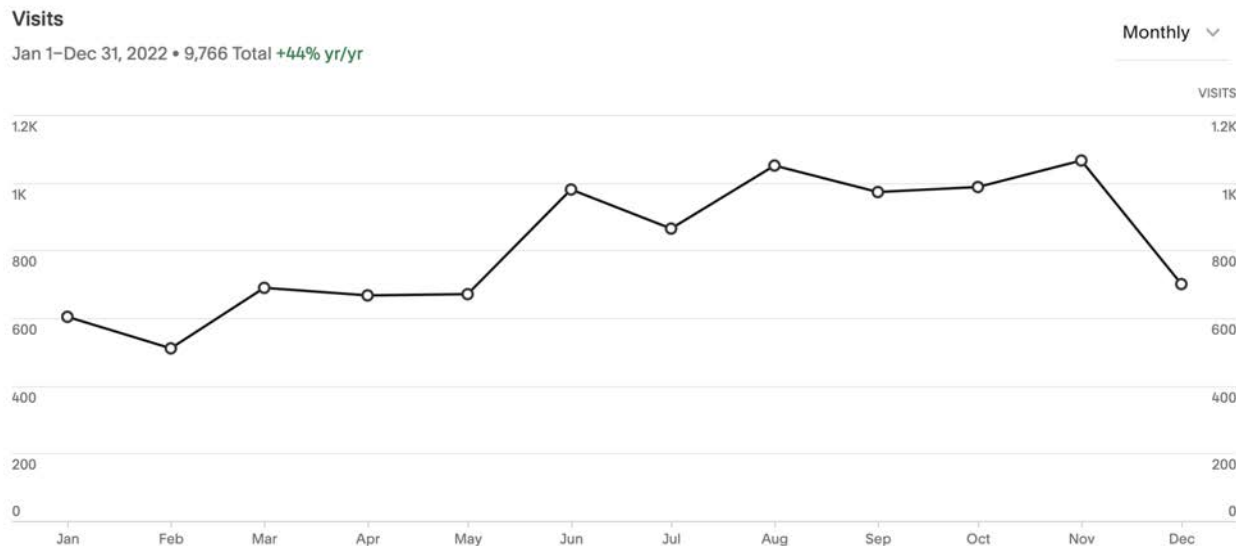




Our TikTok page was updated more often throughout 2022, with one video reaching 11.7k views.

## Website & Social Media - HIV Malta

HIV Malta's internet presence has grown considerably once again in 2022. HIVMalta.com has seen 9,766 visits, which is year-on-year increase of 44% over 2021.

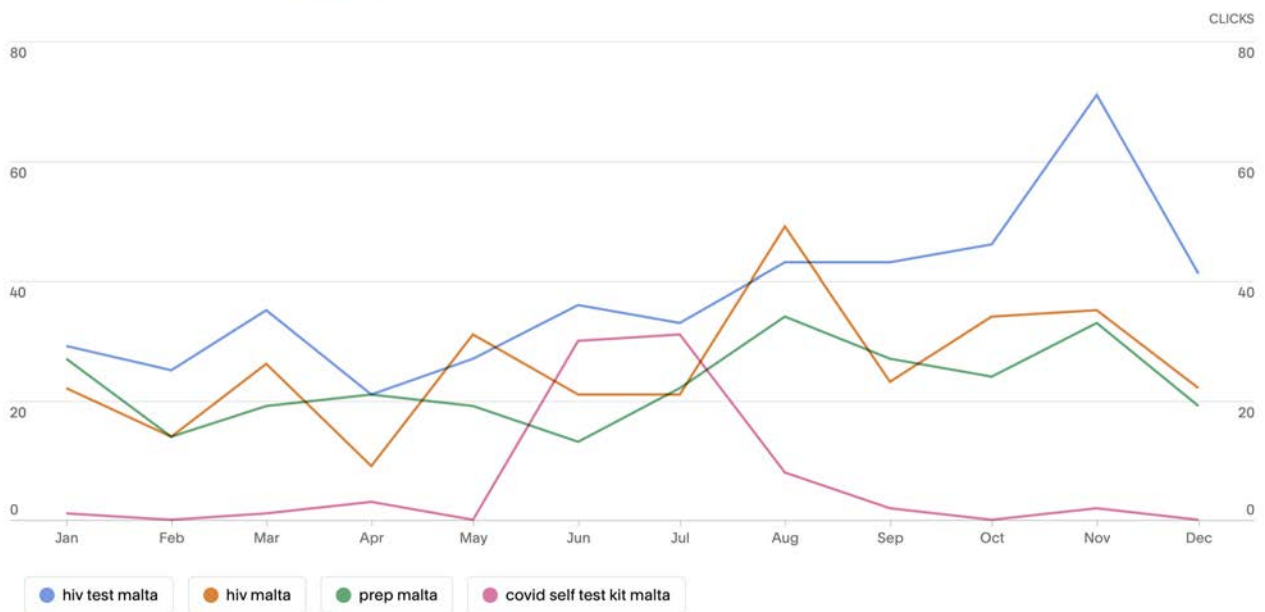


Traffic sources varied this year, however most traffic came from google searches, related mostly to HIV tests. In fact, traffic from Google searches grew by a massive 646% over 2021, which means that the website is being picked up regularly by Google bots, placing us higher and higher in the list of reliable sources ranked through Google's algorithm.

### Clicks (Keywords) ?

Jan 1–Dec 31, 2022 • 6,367 Total +646% yr/yr

Monthly ▾



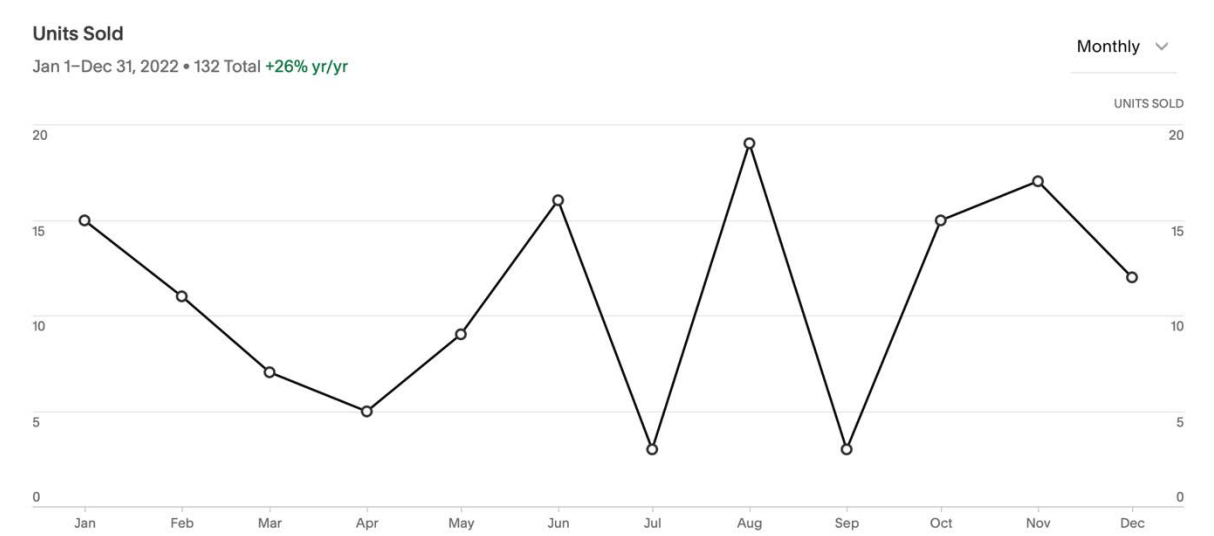
From emails we have been receiving on our HIVMalta mailbox, we have also seen that there is a growing international interest in the website, possibly motivated by the increase in migration to Malta. That said it should also be pointed out that information on HIVMalta.com is factual and verified by HIV consultants, making the website's content also accessible to people who do not live in Malta, and wish to learn more about HIV.

### Visits by Country

Jan 1–Dec 31, 2022 • 9,782 Total



Through HIVMalta.com we have also distributed 132 HIV self-testing kits, which is an increase of 26% over the previous year. The kits are distributed against a donation that covers the cost of the kit and the postage. From this year we also started offering the option for registered post for those who wished to track their parcel.



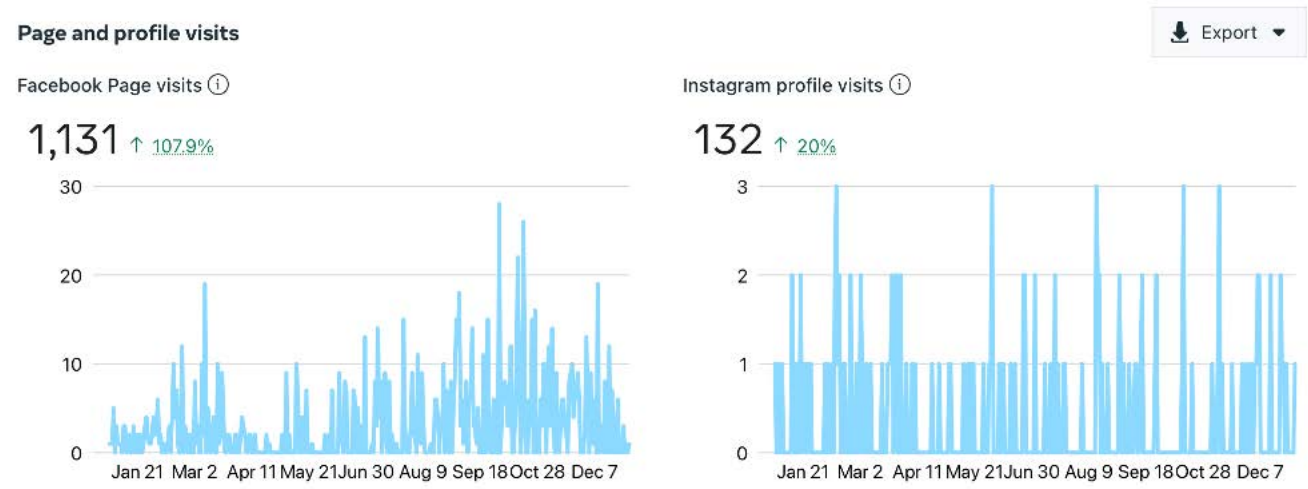
The HIVMalta Facebook page, has been less active in 2022 compared to the website, where reach decreased by 56.20% to 2,851 compared to 2021. The reach increased towards the end of the year as we started to advertise the HIV seminar.



That said, we had more visits than we did in 2021, on both our Facebook and Instagram pages. This might indicate that some people prefer to get information from the page without actually liking it. This

attests to the possibility that there is still stigma attached to following and be associated with a page that has information on HIV.

Followers of the page also remain fairly static at around 600 followers, which as we stated last year, plateaued quickly after the initial launch in 2019.





# Events & Fundraising

Robert Attard | Community Outreach Officer

## Klabb Qawsalla



MGRM's first social event of 2022 was held at Klabb Hawaj, where attendees were asked to register and put their input on the playlist that was played during the night. The event was attended by approximately 50 people, and a total of €42.62 were fundraised.

## Kitba Queer Workshop 4: Getting Inspired



The first Kitba Queer workshop of 2022 focused on finding inspiration for creativity and was held at Kunċett in Valletta. 5 people attended the event.

## Kitba Queer Workshop 5: Queer Terminology



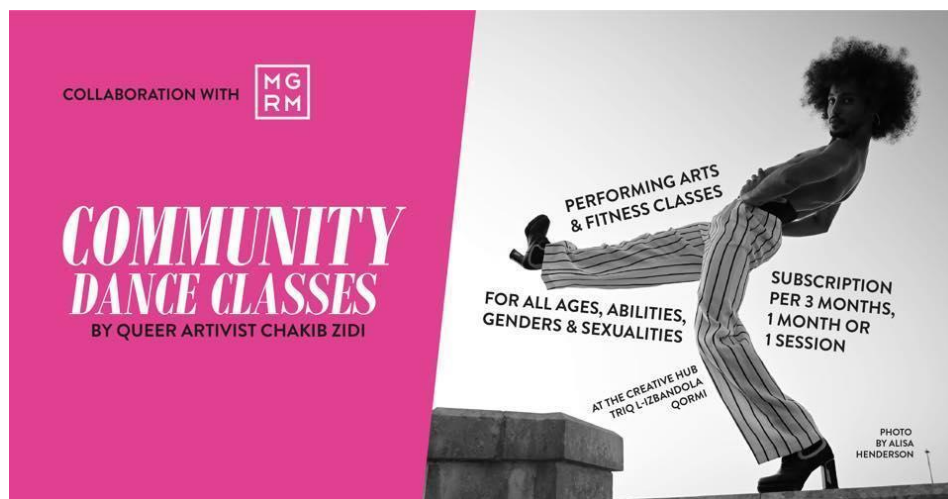
The 5th Kitba Queer Workshop was held at the Volunteer Center in Valletta, and focused on queer terminologies when incorporating different identities in creative writing. 4 people attended the event.

## Films for Freedom



Together with the British Council & British High Commission, we held a private screening of the short films "For Love" & "All Those Sensations in my Belly", through Zoom, followed by discussions on migration in Malta, and LGBTIQ+ realities in Zagreb, featuring Dali Aguerbi & Robert Attard from MGRM and Vir Lev from Zagreb Pride.

## Community Dance Classes



Taking place twice a week from January till June, the Community Dance Classes were held by Chakib Zidi at The Creative Hub in Qormi. While creating a small community of approximately 12 queer people and allies of different performance abilities, a total of €731.63 were raised during these months.

## Gendernauts Film Screening: Trans Day of Visibility

### TRANSGENDER DAY OF VISIBILITY



### GENDERNAUTS FILM SCREENING

Together with Rosa Kwir, MGRM has celebrated Transgender Day of Visibility by screening the 1999 documentary "Gendernauts: A Journey Through Shifting Identities". 5 people attended the screening.

## Disco Fools



On April 1st, MGRM held a disco night in order to fundraise for Dar il-Qawsalla. Approximately 40 people attended the event, with a total of €10 being raised.

## Queer Pub Quiz



Blakk Velvet & Klonn hosted a queer themed pub quiz at Storeroom. A total of 63 people attended, with 8 participating teams, and a total of €93.10 were fundraised.

## Kitba Queer Workshop 6: Giving Feedback



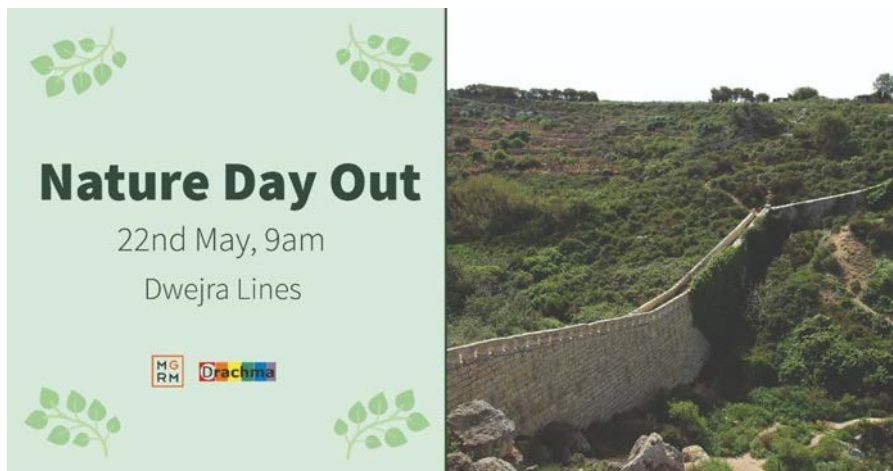
The 6th Kitba Queer workshop revolved around the theme of feedback, and was attended by 7 people, and took place at Hastings Garden in Valletta.

## Gnejna Bay Cleanup



Together with ARC & Nature Trust, we organised a clean-up of Gnejna Bay. 25 people attended, with a total of 40kg of microplastic and rubbish collected.

## Nature Day Out



Together with Drachma, we organized a day out that started off with a walk, at Dwejra Lines. A total of 8 people attended the event.



## SLIP/SLIP 2.0



Two pop music events with Keith St John voluntarily DJ-ing, were held in aid of Dar il-Qawsalla, the first happening on June 23rd, while the second event happened on July 27th. Requests were taken in exchange for donations. A total of €82.70 were raised during the first event, while €29 were raised during the second event.

## Honey Islands Roller Lab



The June edition of Honey Island Roller Lab was held in collaboration with MGRM, providing a safe space to learn the basics of roller skating. Taking place in Fgura playground, a total number of 8 people attended the event.

## Even Rebels Can Dance 2.0



Moviment Graffiti's second Even Rebels Can Dance event was held in collaboration with MGRM, in order to commemorate 53 years from the Stonewall Riots. Around 300 people attended the event, with €232.71 raised during the event.

## International Non Binary People's Day Discussion



For International Non Binary People's Day, we held an online discussion, hosted by Robert Attard and featuring Matthew Chircop & Ruth Baldacchino. The event was livestreamed on Facebook, with a total of 445 views.

## Pride Open Mic



2022's Pride edition of Kitba Queer's open mic took place on Sunday 4th at Maori, had approximately 24 attendees, with a total of €20 being raised during the event.

## Community Dialogues



The first Community Dialogue was held on September 6th at Dar L-Ewropa in Valletta, with 12 people attending. A variety of topics were discussed, including migration, gender neutral language in a Semitic context, queer art expression, and heteronormativity in queer sex.

The second Community Dialogue was held on December 7th at Maori, with a total of 19 people attending the event. The topic of the second community dialogue was more specific, focusing on queer healthcare, with a focus on trans health.



## Queeraoke & Dance



A karaoke event hosted by Crush Velvet was held at Klabb Hawaj, as part of MGRM's pride celebrations. Aside from karaoke, the event also featured performances by Maali Boukadi & Romeo Roxman Gatt. Approximately 200 people attended the event, with a total of €140 being raised.

## WomenSpace 22



WomenSpace returned for Pride 22, for the first time in 2 years. Exclusively held to celebrate and empower women & non binary persons, the event was attended by around 200 people, and featured 9 acts ranging from drag, musicians and a DJ.

## Bi Bi Bi



For Bisexual Awareness Week, a discussion and social event was hosted in order to raise more visibility and awareness, while creating a safe space for bisexual members of the community. MGRM's Cynthia Chircop moderated a discussion with Elaine & Emma. The event was attended by 20 people.

## FemBeats 1.0



Following the success of WomenSpace, FemBeats was created as a relaxed hangout event for women and non-binary persons. €50 were raised during the event.

## Kwirsmas Party



The second community dialogue was followed by MGRM's official Christmas party of the year, which had an attendance of approximately 60 people, while €50 were raised in aid of Dar il-Qawsalla.

## She said Darling with a K (exhibition) and launch of *Katya - Easy on the Tonic*

See **Projects** above

## Christmas Hangout



Inspired by our previous Kafe mill-Uffiċċju event, we opened up our office for some festive drinks, snacks and board games on Boxing Day, to provide a safe space for those who had no one to spend the festivities with, or those who just wanted to socialise in a queer environment. A total of 10 people showed up.

# Finance

## INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

For the year ended 31st December

	2022			2021		
	€	€	€	€	€	€
<b>Income:</b>						
NGO Grant 2014			-			-
PSP Agreement 2017 - 2019			68,114			63,671
US Embassy Grant Rainbow Support Service			-			-
VIIV Healthcare HIV Project			5,744			190
Agenzija Zghazagh MOU			1,775			4,379
Google Grant			-			-
VOPS 2020			-			7,445
COVID-19 Emergency Fund			-			118
Dar Qawsalla			3,250			1,209
VOPS 2021 - 20 YOT			-			3,960
Teatru tal-Miskin			20,000			-
VOPS 2022 - Katya			6,837			-
Donations & Fund-Raising			29,598			8,668
Membership Fees			170			634
			<u>162,074</u>			<u>90,273</u>
<b>Administration Expenses:</b>						
P.R. Literature & Brochures	-			2,275		
Salaries	28,581			18,352		
NI Contributions	586			5,916		
Rent	22,451			3,600		
Water & Electricity	236			301		
Printing	5,084			5,940		
Postage	-			98		
Telephone	1,672			1,984		
Internet & Web-based Subscriptions	1,398			945		
Office Stationery	137			110		
Books	-			384		
Filming & Video Footage	596			8,779		
Legal Fees	1,025			5,584		
Audit & Accountancy Fees	800			400		
Professional Fees	31,569			24,336		
Office Machine Maintenance	-			15		
Refreshments	-			103		
Premises Expenses	-			-		
Bank Charges	544			525		
Insurance	190			190		
Assistance	663			118		
Depreciation - Office Furniture & Equipment	-	95,529		214	80,169	
<b>Event Expenses:</b>						
Travelling	3,440			70		
Conferences & Events	36,420			1,097		
Entertainment	966			439		
Permits	-			1,209		
Equipment Hire	-			-		
Training Costs	12,604			-		
Miscellaneous Expenses	<u>7,967</u>	<u>61,396</u>	<u>156,925</u>	<u>5,478</u>	<u>8,293</u>	<u>88,512</u>
<b>NET SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)</b>			<u>5,149</u>			<u>1,761</u>

**BALANCE SHEET****As at 31st December****2022****2021**

€

€

€

€

**Fixed Assets:**

Office Furniture &amp; Equipment

-

-

**Current Assets:**

Sundry Debtors

-

-

Bank Current A/c #1

36,492

23,857

Bank Current A/c #2

151,622

131,680

Bank Savings

0

0

Bank Current A/c #3 - UNIFORM

2,750

1,999

Bank Current A/c #4 - VOPS18

521

904

Bank Current A/c #5 - Erasmus

418

26,602

PayPal

23

59

Petty Cash

497

192,322

-

1,059186,161**TOTAL NET ASSETS**192,322

-

-

186,161**FUNDS & LIABILITIES****Current Liabilities:**

Sundry Creditors

1,000

1,000

Accruals

36,729

37,729

4,316

5,316

US Embassy Grant Rainbow Support Service Reserve

237

237

EEA/Norway Grant Reserve

-

-

NGO Grant 2014 Reserve

41

41

PSP Agreement 2017 - 2019 Reserve

9,341

1,474

VIIV Healthcare HIV Project Reserve

2,646

8,391

VOPS 2017 Reserve

33

33

AZ Be Active Scheme Broken Lens Reserve

20

20

VOPS 2018 Reserve

225

225

Google Grant Reserve

3,414

3,414

AZ Be Active Youth activism Project Reserve

262

262

Agencija Zghazagh MOU Reserve

1,584

3,359

VOPS 2019 Reserve

86

86

Trans Fund and other Events Reserve

1,669

1,669

VOPS 2020 Reserve

285

285

COVID-19 Emergency Fund Reserve

138

138

Erasmus+ - Tell&amp;Tale Reserve

17

26,602

Dar Qawsalla Reserve

115,541

118,791

VOPS 2021 - 20 YOT Reserve

-

1,369

Teatru tal-Miskin Reserve

-

-

VOPS 2022 - Katya Reserve

363

-

Accumulated Surplus

18,69214,449192,322186,161