



L-Università ta' Malta
Faculty for Social Wellbeing

UNITY⁷

Department of **Disability Studies**

2023

FREE

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“I hope that one day I can emulate and be as generous as the many students who are committed to working with people who, not out of their choice, have been sidelined and dealt a bad hand.”



PROF. ANDREW AZZOPARDI
Dean

Disability is a cross-cutting phenomenon in our society. It is present in our communities, in all generations and affects people from all walks of life. This is why we need to talk about it. The Department of Disability Studies was established specifically to generate awareness among students within the various Faculties at the University of Malta on disability-related issues.



Our courses induce students to think critically about their future professions and how disability can be mainstreamed in every policy and practice is at the heart of this exercise. Anyone who is keen on the implementation of a truly inclusive society, is invited to join one of our courses and become an ally with the disabled community. It is the first step towards equality.

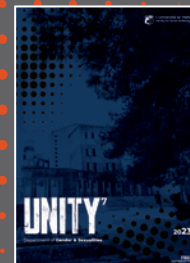
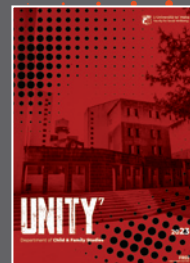
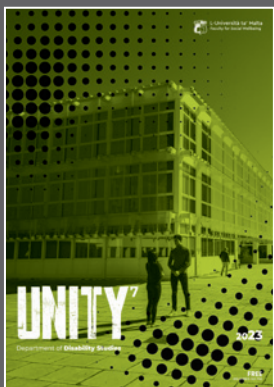
DR MARIA VICTORIA GAUCI
Head of Department



“We have seen our communities struggle, especially those most vulnerable. We cannot turn our face the other way. We need to proactively challenge what isn’t working well – that is the role of the Faculty.”

CHARLENE FABRI
Editor

UNITY⁷
2023



All the content of this magazine was written by Prof. Andrew Azzopardi and Charlene Fabri unless indicated otherwise.

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in the Faculty for Social Wellbeing Unity 7 magazine do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Faculty.

Contact us on: socialwellbeing@um.edu.mt

COVER STORY

This year’s art work concept focuses on the notion of intersectionality and connectedness together with a sense of vision. Moving into our 12th year since the setting up of the Faculty in 2012, this colour palette helps us blend uniqueness and individuality of disciplines and areas of study and yet identify as one organisation with a corporate outlook. The innovative design of having a number of mini-mags, for the first time a magazine completely dedicated to children and packed in a unique way to convey the message of freshness, compactness and a drive to go forward. The personalized and interactive element of the magazine combines well with the theme of **UNITY** of this year, namely that of, ‘What does the Faculty mean to you?’



From left to right: Dr Christian Borg Xuereb, Joseph Stafrace & Dr Claire Azzopardi Lane

Joseph Stafrace
Alumnus, Higher Diploma in Community
Access for Disabled People

Joseph was one of the founding members of The Malta Guide Dog Foundation (MGDF) set up in 2006. The purpose of MGDF is to offer Orientation Mobility Training to people with visual impairment or who are blind and train Guide Dogs. Till today MGDF has delivered around 25 guide dogs which cost around 15,000 euros.

SOCIAL COMMITMENT
AWARDEE

DR JACQUELINE AZZOPARDI
SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT
AWARDEE



From left to right: Dr Gottfried Catania, Christine Mifsud & Dr Ingrid Grech Lanfranco

Christine Mifsud

Christine has been working at the CRPD since 2017 and has accepted the role of Disability Equality Trainer in 2019 and has been leading the Unit for the past year. She has been involved in the disability sector for the past 22 years, since losing her eyesight. She always felt the need to advocate for the safeguarding of her rights and those of others who were experiencing the same challenges.

Through its undergraduate courses, the Department of Disability Studies engages students and future professionals to the challenges being faced by disabled people in all walks of life, from a theoretical and experiential perspective. At postgraduate level, our Master of Arts in Disability Studies course appraises the complexity of the phenomenon of disability; examines current issues and the barriers faced by disabled people and considers alternative solutions for their work and life. The course also explores the wider scope of areas covered in disability studies and related research.

Department of

Disability Studies

Faculty for **Social Wellbeing**

Certificate Course in Community Access for Disabled People

Part-time (day)/ 1 year

Diploma in Community Access for Disabled People

Part-time (day)/ 1 year

Higher Diploma in Community Access for Disabled People

Part-time (day)/ 1 year

Bachelor of Arts in Disability Studies and Gender and Sexualities

Full-time/ 3 years

Bachelor of Arts in Disability Studies and Psychology

Full-time/ 3 years

Bachelor of Arts in Disability Studies and European Studies

Full-time/ 3 years

Master of Arts in Disability Studies [Preparatory Programme]

Part time (day)/ 1 year

Master of Arts in Disability Studies

Full-time /1 year & Part-time (evening)/ 3 years

M.Phil./Ph.D.

Disclaimer: Not all courses listed are offered every academic year

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THE INTERSECTION BETWEEN DISABILITY AND SEX: THE SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS OF DISABLED WOMEN IN MALTA

My research sought to understand the social representations of disabled women held by non-disabled people and disabled women themselves.

My research had two phases. The first phase of the research consisted of a survey and four focus groups with non-disabled people whilst the second phase consisted of fourteen repertory grid interviews with disabled women. The triangulation of data from the two phases of the research yielded ten social representations of disabled women. A number of recommendations were made with the aim of reconstructing some of the social representations of disabled women that emerged from this study.

AMY CAMILLERI ZAHRA

M.Phil./Ph.D. Candidate



“40% of disabled people surveyed said that the needs and expectations of services are not being met.”

Disability Service Provision and Persons with Disability - Commissioned by the Commission for the Rights for Persons with Disability (2021)

The full report can be accessed from <https://www.um.edu.mt/socialwellbeing/ourresearch/researchprojects/>

konnekt


konnekt is a weekly program on Campus FM Radio anchored by a member of the Faculty and supported by the RPSC. It is intended to provide listeners with the latest cutting-edge research in the area of social wellbeing of our academic staff, RSOs and Ph.D. Candidates.

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This Faculty embraces a vision where everyone's voice is worthy regardless of who we are and the context we come from. This socially inclusive atmosphere helped me feel empowered to strive to do my share and to grow as a person. The Faculty was also an opportunity to contribute in both my personal and professional life, towards bringing about the positive changes I would want to see in our society.

CLAIRE BUSUTTIL

Master of Arts
in Disability Studies



The Faculty for Social Wellbeing is where my academic journey has been nurtured and my horizons expanded. It's a place where I have gained knowledge, refined critical thinking skills, and obtained lasting connections that will shape my future.

CHARMAINE MUSCAT

Master of Arts
in Disability Studies

55 years

SOLIDARITY - DIGNITY
EMPOWERMENT - COMMON GOOD



Caritas
MALTA

+356 2219 9000 - info@caritasmalta.org - www.caritasmalta.org

Why is loneliness such a scar on our communities?

As a child, I was always told that we are fortunate as we still have strong external families to support children and adults. This was my childhood, with several aunts and uncles living with two-minute walking distances and cousins and adults meeting every evening.

Further, I never remember having more than 20 minutes of homework and we had activities within the community, leaving us with time to play and meet our friends and neighbours. Today, pressure with time and, perhaps, self-imposed numerous tasks result in us always racing to catch up. The question is: are we living to work or working to live? This is what, in my opinion, is leading to increased loneliness: demands we place on ourselves, not being satisfied with what we have, impatient in our quest to do everything in as little time as possible leading to hardly any free time from the age of eight, and the disappearance of a family network which allowed us to belong to a group. We need to capture this reality again if we want strong resilient adults who do not feel lonely.

PROF. RUTH FALZON
Academic

As time passes, an increasing number of people are finding themselves succumbing to loneliness.

We might keep asking ourselves the reasons behind this phenomenon but the signs are evident. Our society has evolved into one inundated with pressures; work, education, tending to our families, and for some, the struggle to make ends meet. In my view, we have now opted to engage primarily through social media, inadvertently limiting the opportunities for genuine human interaction and connection which hold immense significance for us as human beings. This in my opinion is a sad situation especially in a country like ours which is so small and when we have the opportunity to tackle the effects of loneliness in our communities so effectively, if we really put our minds to it.

Loneliness doesn't impact only the elderly or individuals with disability but it extends its reach to everyone including those who are seemingly surrounded by others.

OLIVER SCICLUNA
Stakeholder



Striking at the heart of our basic need to belong, loneliness is a social epidemic which is rampant across social strata, inflicting suffering at an individual level.

Its prevalence stings like an open wound within a society that has witnessed a change in its social fabric, a shift away from values central to community, through socioeconomic policies that have persistently eroded social bonds in promoting self-interest. Loneliness, therefore, presents us a testament to the failures of a system that has prioritised the growth of the economy as a sole beacon for sustainability, regardless of the human cost.

BERNARD BORG PELLICANO
Student

Have you experienced *discrimination* on the basis of disability?

The Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD) is the national regulatory body for disability in Malta and Gozo. Our role is to safeguard the rights and obligations of persons with disability.

CONTACT CRPD ON

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helpdesk@crpd.org.mt

Gozo

+356 2155 6002

maryrose.attard@crpd.org.mt

**FOUNDATION FOR
SOCIAL WELFARE
SERVICES**

Here for you

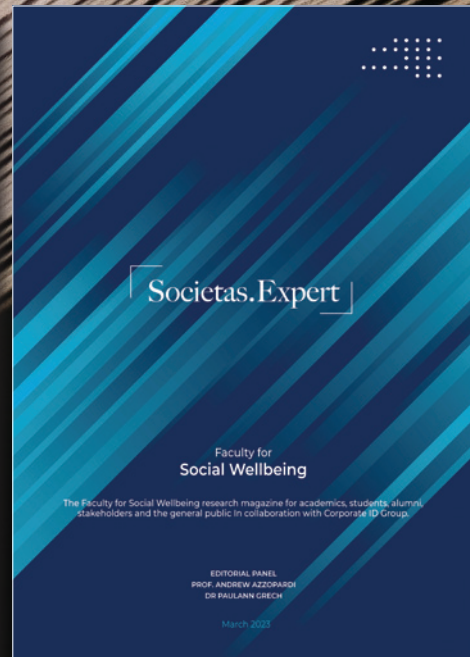


“ I am Raoul Briffa ”

Youth Worker at Community Homes Services,
FSWS (Directorate for Alternative Care)

fsws.gov.mt

Faculty Research Magazine **Societas.Expert**





Societas.Expert is a shared initiative by the Faculty and Corporate Dispatch. It is the first ever Faculty research magazine of its kind. The magazine is intended for academics, students, alumni, stakeholders and the general public both locally and internationally. This research magazine is now accessible on an international platform and is in its third edition.


A free copy can be delivered by sending us an email on socialwellbeing@um.edu.mt

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