



L-Università ta' Malta  
Faculty for Social Wellbeing

# UNITY<sup>7</sup>

Department of **Youth & Community Studies**

2023

**FREE**

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YOUTH.GOV.MT



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zghazagh**



**“Listening to what stakeholders, whether it is those offering a service or those getting a service, is fundamental in ensuring that the Faculty remains true to its mission. Our core business as a Faculty is very simple, that of contributing towards a better quality of life, and let’s face it, at the moment we are not in a comfortable place.”**



PROF. ANDREW AZZOPARDI  
Dean

**Twenty-eight years ago I registered for a degree in Youth & Community Studies as a mature student; what I lacked in certificates I made up for in life experience and fragile determination. I was both excited and scared.**



As I look to my first academic year as Head of Department, the love and support I have received over the years is passed forward to each of our students. We know that the learning process of each individual is unique, it can take different directions, it is never linear, nor complete. Studying with the Department of Youth & Community Studies is just one route, and we welcome every student who chooses to share a part of their journey with us.

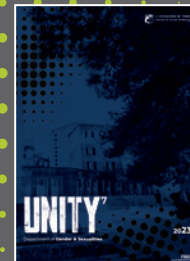
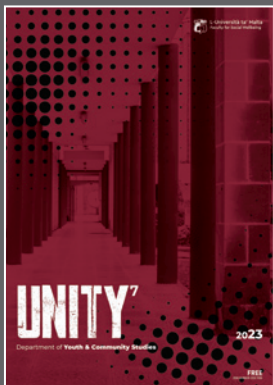
DR MARIA PISANI  
Head of Department



**“So many students, so many course programs, so many staff members, so much research but we are all focused on one objective that of supporting people to have their own voice.”**

CHARLENE FABRI  
Editor

**UNITY**<sup>7</sup>  
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](mailto: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, Noel Aquilina & Dr Claire Azzopardi Lane

**Noel Aquilina**  
**Alumnus, Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Youth and Community Studies**

Even before he took on the role of President of the Malta Wheelchair Basketball Association, Noel Aquilina had established himself as an athlete, and a trailblazer for inclusive sport. Over the years, Noel has dedicated himself to service, in volunteering, coaching, and mentoring young athletes both nationally and internationally.

**SOCIAL COMMITMENT  
AWARDEE**

**DR JACQUELINE AZZOPARDI**  
**SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT  
AWARDEE**



From left to right: Dr Gottfried Catania, Jon Mallia & Dr Ingrid Grech Lanfranco

**Jon Mallia**

Jon Mallia's counterculture platform aims to foster free speech and critical thought to as broad an audience as possible. The Podcast he anchors seeks to be a conduit that drives complex academic ideas into mainstream debate.



**This year the Department of Youth & Community Studies celebrates its 30th birthday, 12 of which have been within this Faculty! Over three decades the Department has continued to evolve and develop, reflecting and responding to the social, cultural, economic, geo/political, technological and ecological changes that mark our historical moment. Our focus on young people, juvenile justice, and communities, is framed within our commitment to social wellbeing – wherein the ‘social’ starts with the ‘local’ and transcends borders, recognising and affirming the diversity of experiences and situated realities, including our relationships with flora and fauna, and the Planet we all call home. As a Department, our focus on conceptual clarity and theoretical development, research, teaching and our participation in public debate and policy development reaffirms this commitment.**

*Disclaimer: Not all courses listed are offered every academic year*

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Department of  
**Youth & Community  
Studies**

Faculty for **Social Wellbeing**

**Bachelor of Arts (Honours)  
in Youth and Community Studies**

Full-time/3 years

**Bachelor of Arts (Honours)  
in Youth and Community Studies**

Part-time (evening)/5 years

**Master of Arts in Youth Justice**

Part-time (evening)/2.5 years

**Master in Youth  
and Community Studies**

Part-time (evening)/3 years

**Master of Arts in Community  
Action and Development**

Part-time (evening)/3 years

**M.Phil./Ph.D.**

**FOLLOW OUR SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS**

 @um.socialwellbeing

 @Facultyforsw





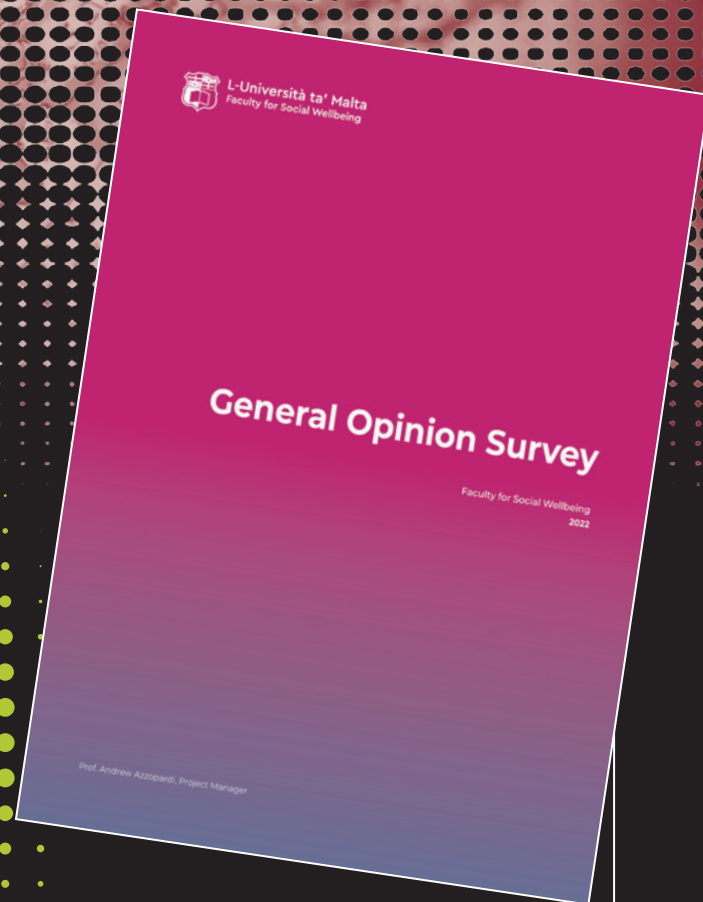
## AN INTERSECTIONAL STUDY OF TRANSITIONING MENA YOUTH RESIDING IN MALTA

**Youth transitions refer to the process that young people go through, from childhood to adulthood, and the changes that take place, including for example, leaving the family home, transitioning to employment and/or education, intimate relationships, marriage and becoming parents.**

These transitions all occur within a particular temporal framework and spatial context. MENA (Middle East and Northern Africa) youth in transition residing in Malta might have to face other challenges related to elements of migration. The research will attempt to shed light on the intersectional diversity and potential inequalities that migrant MENA youth in transition encounter. The study will try to determine the main causes impacting the life courses and transitions of these youths as it is of paramount importance to keep in mind that not all migrant MENA youth in transition might possess a solid social identity required to overcome these intersectional mechanisms.

LARA SAMMUT

M.Phil./Ph.D. Candidate



**“88.5% feel that is important or very important that we fight corruption.”**

General Opinion Survey – Faculty for Social Wellbeing (2022)

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



# Faculty Research Projects



This sample of research front covers is a reminder of the diversity of projects (more than 60) the Faculty for Social Wellbeing has been involved in during these last years. These research projects have led to over 1000 tangible social proposals that emanated from evidence-based data collection.

A copy of most of these research projects can be accessed from <https://www.um.edu.mt/socialwellbeing/ourresearch/researchprojects>

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**For me the Faculty is there first and foremost for its students and staff members. I feel that the course has helped me to grow in the profession but also as a person.**

DAVID GRIMA

Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in  
Youth and Community Studies



**The Faculty embraces the values of social justice and solidarity and empowers students to become leaders and agents of change. Embarking on such an enriching journey at age 54 broadened my knowledge and gave me a deeper understanding of the needs of our communities. I am honoured to be the product of the Faculty for Social Wellbeing.**

STEPHANIE BUGEJA

Master of Arts in Community  
Action and Development

**Join us to make a difference!**

To volunteer please send an email [info@ymcamalta.org](mailto:info@ymcamalta.org)



In 2022, more than 40% of referrals were people under the age of 25



517 children under the age of 18 were homeless in the past 10 years



To make a donation:

SMS: 50618088 - € 4.66 or call: 51802068 - €15



# Why did the death of Lassana Cisse shock the nation?

**The 6th of April 2024 commemorates the fifth anniversary from the brutal murder of Lassana Cisse. A tragic memory which is often portrayed as an isolated motiveless act from two individuals acting in their own personal capacity.**

The murder of Lassana is not an isolated senseless act. It is a political crime driven by an institutionalised form of racism, shaped by a rhetorical discourse of racial hatred and an inhumane immigration policy that lets people drown at sea, whilst ruthlessly exploiting them for profit. The murder of Lassana is a clear example of how the rightist fascist dogma forms an integral feature of the neoliberal free market ideology which condones colonialism, cheap labour and slavery – an ideology that Malta is actively adopting in pursuit of economic growth. Justice for Lassana, as is the case for many other victims of racial hatred and political economic crimes, such as victims of the construction industry, remain unresolved. This unfortunately speaks a lot about the significance that Maltese society bestows to human rights and social justice.

**DR MARY GRACE VELLA**  
Academic

**We're a nation born from a melting pot of cultures. Hatred of 'the other' defies our ethnicity.**

Have we lost our humanity? Are we so alienated, trying to make sense of our unstable world, that we need to scapegoat others - through racial hatred, hateful social media comments, road rage, violence?

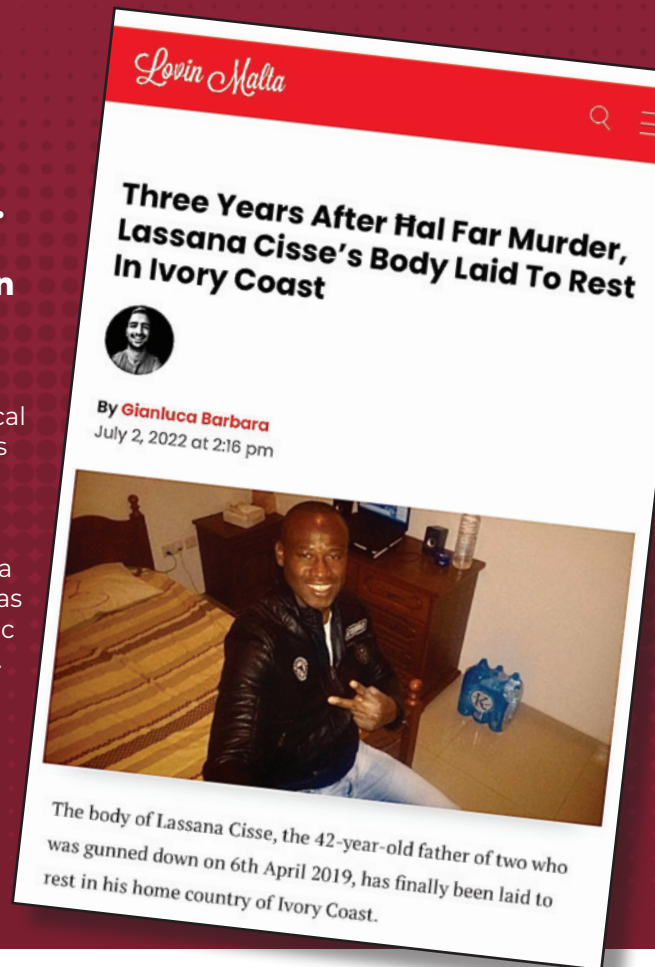
Climate change, a pandemic, financial, environmental, institutional and governance challenges – We are living in an unstable world, which leads to polarisation: us and them (Sacks, 2008).

But are we losing the plot? Lassana, I am ashamed you died where, in times much less affluent, "the islanders showed us unusual kindness" (Acts 28:2).

*Sacks, J. (2008). All Faiths Must Stand Together Against Hatred. In Sacks, J. (2021). The Power of Ideas. Of Faith and Wisdom. (pp. 136-138). Hodder and Stoughton.*

*The Holy Bible, Acts of the Apostles, Chapter 28, Verse 2.*

**STEPHANIE DIMECH SANT**  
Stakeholder



**Malta has been facing alarming manifestations of racism and xenophobia, notably through the proliferation of hate on social media towards migrants.**

While it is crucial to acknowledge that not all Maltese harbor such sentiments, most of the Islands' society and their politicians have often displayed apathy and neglect. The tragic death of Lassana Cisse and the subsequent lack of accountability served as distressing confirmation of this disturbing reality. Structural violence and inhumane pushbacks further underline the systemic issues plaguing the country. Regrettably, the media's failure to address this problem adequately only perpetuates marginalization and moral panic, unfairly labeling refugees as folk devils. Integration has not been prioritized, leaving migrants vulnerable to exploitation and discrimination in the workplace and housing. Unfortunately, Malta learned nothing from the death of Lassana Cisse. A humane stance is needed to bring about change, demanding action from the government, media, and society as a whole to confront and dismantle these injustices and promote compassion and justice for all.

**NIKITA CASSAR**  
Student



# Goalscore

**FIGHTING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE through football is a project which will ultimately create training and awareness on domestic violence issues in football and within our communities. Coaches coaching female football teams will be given social awareness sessions on how to deal with domestic violence issues at various levels: from recognising, acknowledging to dealing with domestic violence issues.**



The Malta FA will be reaching out to local football clubs to engage with them and promote the Goalscore sessions. Goalscore is an FSR Malta FA project in partnership with the Portuguese FA, the Romanian FA, Unimore, Malta Womens' Lobby, Filia and Apav (two women NGOs in Romania and Portugal) and a communications agency Euractiv.



Co-funded by  
the European Union

For more information you can access  
<https://projectgoalscore.com/> or contact us on [fsr@mfa.com.mt](mailto:fsr@mfa.com.mt)



**FOUNDATION FOR  
SOCIAL WELFARE  
SERVICES**

Here for you



“ I am Melissa Mifsud

Social Worker and Family Therapist,  
FSWS (Directorate for Alternative Care)

[fsws.gov.mt](https://fsws.gov.mt)



# OCVO

Office of the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations

Building a sector that reflects the realities of the VOs, & the needs of their beneficiaries.

**The ultimate mission of the OCVO is to give more visibility to the voluntary sector as well as to guarantee transparency and accountability of the voluntary organisations that compose it in the carrying out of their important work.**

