

2020, will be remembered as the year in which the world transposed its work, social and education online due to COVID-19 pandemic. This was also the reality for activist across Malta and Gozo. As LGBTI+ Gozo we recognised from early on that this pandemic was going to be a long haul process, in which the safety and wellbeing of our members and the general public was always at a centre stage. Therefore we translated our work into two pillars: Online engagement through online events, meetups and collaboration and restructuring of internal processes of the organisation. This Annual report will dissect the work done in the last 12 months.

Online meet ups

Due to the limitation to continue host the monthly LGBTI Youth Drop in. LGBTI+ Gozo organised a number of online meet ups with different themes. These meetups were held every 2 weeks in April and May to serve as a means of connecting with one another and offer a space for conversation during the COVID-19 pandemic. Such meet ups included:

- Saturday 4th April: Queeritina - Open Discussion
- Saturday 25th April: Queeritina - Movie (The Normal Heart)
- Saturday 2nd May: Queeritina - Quiz Night
- Saturday 9th May: Queeritina - Movie (The Life of Marsha P Johnson)
- Saturday 16th May: Queeritina - Eurovision special screening
- Saturday 30th May: Queeritina - Pub Quiz Night

On in person social event was held on Sunday 28th June - Lunch

Online Discussions

Once again, the organization was forced to organise its annual campaign “Better together” online. Better together serves as an open space for discussions and educational seminars to be held on different themes about sexuality, gender, equality and human rights. The campaign involves various experts, professionals, activists and individuals with a story to tell. For 2020 - LGBTI+ Gozo kept its quarterly commitment with the following events:

1. Saturday 16th May: The Relevance of IDAHOBIT in 2020?

This event was held organised by LGBTI+ Gozo, and for the first time in LGBTI+ Gozo history collaborated with all LGBTI+ & People living with HIV in Malta organisations. The discussion was split into 3 panels:

- Discussion about People living with HIV. (Together with HIV Malta & Checkpoint Malta)
- Trans* reality and the role of parents in the Queer movement (Together with ARC & Drachma)

- Pride in Malta and an in-depth review of Malta in the Rainbow Index 2020 (Together with MGRM)

We do not have any information on how many individuals attended due to some technical problems that were encountered, however the event was well received.

2. Saturday 19th September: The Relevance of Pride in 2020?

As part of LGBTI+ Gozo pride event for 2020, the organisation organised an online discussion titled “The Relevance of Pride in 2020?”. The event aimed to highlight that it is not pride if it is Racist and Trans exclusionary - additionally it aimed to promote more the limitations of Sexual health services and the impact of COVID 19 on such services with particular mention to limited resources, and outdated Sexual Health Strategy and a dire situation both in Malta and Gozo.

The discussion had an intervention from Hon. Josianne Cutajar MEP.

Over 2.2k individuals tuned in at some point and watched this discussion.

3. Saturday 14th November - Casual Sex

Better together: Casual Sex was our last seminar for the year. Through online conversation this seminar discussed various elements of casual sex and how this phenomena is portrayed in local scenes. The conversation also ensued on how casual sex looks during COVID-19.

Over 5.4 individuals tuned in at some point and watched this discussion.

Online Collaborations

LGBTI+ Gozo collaborated with all Queer organisation and HIV organisations in Malta to send a message of solidarity to all Queer individuals who might feel alone during the COVID-19 pandemic - such collaboration was a means of a video titled “Reach Out” Our own Antonella participated in this video. The Reach out video was part of a larger campaign by all organisations mentioned above “No one left behind” where a platform was created where the general public can donate or offer shelter to LGBTI peers who might be struggling during the COVID-19 pandemic. Here we thank MGRM for taking the lead.

LGBTI+ Gozo was able to secure beds, in an apartment if the needs arised.

Another collaboration was with the newly formed group “Jimputana” in which this group aims to tackle a different topic every month and discuss pertinent issues related to that specific topic from different perspectives. The month of September as Pride Month LGBTI+ Gozo was invited to answer several questions and myths on the work and realities of being Queer in Gozo.

Meetings

LGBTI+ Gozo held a number of meetings with various stakeholders. These meetings discussed various difficulties and challenges that the organisation is facing - principle the need for an office space in Gozo and the need to engage a full time worker with the organisation. Moreover it discussed topics that are key for Gozo such as Pride in Gozo, GU Clinic in Gozo and Trans health care access for Goztians.

- 12th June: MEP Josianne Cutajar
Outcome from this meeting was a video that was shared on MEP Cutajar and LGBTI+ Gozo social media page calling for the need of an update on Sexual health policy and provision of services related to sexual health in Gozo.
- 8th July: Hon. Clint Camilleri - Minister for Gozo
Outcome from this meeting - a follow up meeting for September 2020
- 29th June: Hon. Chris Fearne - Deputy Prime Minister & Minister for Health.
- 2nd September: Ms Ryan Janda - US Embassy
Outcome from this meeting - support and guidance on specific funds if possible.
- 10 September: Hon. Clint Camilleri & Hon. Rosianne Cutajar - Minister for Gozo & Parliamentary Secretary for Equality.

Outcome from this meeting - the installation of Rainbow monument at Xewkija Roundabout for the month of September. The repairing of Rainbow cross in Victoria, the upkeep of rainbow bench at villa rundle and the installation of Pride Colours within the facade of Ministry for Gozo. Possible long term investment and collaboration being discussed.

- 8th January: Ecc. Anton Theuma - Bishop for Gozo
Outcome from this meeting is the commitment for bi monthly (once every two months) meeting.

Other Meetings

LGBTI+ Gozo were invited for a number of consultation meetings from different stakeholders:

- 12th August: Dr Claire Azzopardi Lane - Deputy Dean of Faculty for Social Wellbeing
- 28th October: Youth Consultation on National Youth Strategy - National Youth Agency

LGBTI related Meetings

LGBTI+ Gozo throughout 2020 was committed to continue voice the Gozitan Queer reality in national founs - such LGBTI fora are a place where all Queer realted and supporting NGOs come together and discuss, organise and collaborate on different event and or discuss legal provisions that are pertinent during that time. LGBTI+ Gozo are members and contributed to meetings for the following bodies:

- LGBTIQ+ Consultative Council under the remit of the Ministry for Governance, Equality & Justice
- Pride Committee 2020
- Euro Pride Committee 2021
- LGBTIQ Coalition

Press statement

LGBTI+ Gozo issued a number of press statements in 2020. On various topics that concern the Gozitan Queer and General community. These being:

PR-001 - Sexual health services in Gozo - 9th June 2020

PR-002 - There is beauty in diversity - Appointment of New Bishop - 17th June 2020

PR-003 - Sexual health services in Gozo - Update on service professional GU Clinic service in Gozo - 11th July 2020

PR-004 - Queer Friendly Professionals Directory in Gozo - 19th September 2020

PR-005 - Declaration on GU Clinic in Gozo - 11th November 2020

Media

- LGBTI+ Gozo were invited on the magazine show “Bejntietna” on Net TV during Pride month in September 2020. The organisation was represented by Wilbert Tabone and Antonella Bugeja
- Additionally, a radio interview was held on Ahna Hawn LGBTIQ a discussion program on Campus FM.

- During Pride month - an article about LGBTI+ Gozo was published on the student organization “Insite” website and social media.

Newsletters + Membership Updates

As part of our outreach program LGBTI+ Gozo did send monthly newsletter updates for over 500+ emails who at some point have communicated and showed interest in LGBTI+ Gozo and to keep updated without work. During these newsletter updates (10 editions in total) - a sexual health blog was created and monthly articles about sexual health was written by Donia Gamaudi. We are always looking for content creators to engage and share their opinions and work on our newsletter so do reach out.

In 2020, we started our Membership update - an email communication tool to communicate updates, upcoming events and consult with you. This was a suggestion from last year's AGM that LGBTI+ Gozo took on board.

International

Whilst LGBTI+ Gozo had planned and was invited for a number of trips in 2020, in which they were cancelled or postponed, the organisation kept committed and in communication with its international affiliations of ILGA-Europe and IGLYO. To strengthen our representation during 2020 LGBTI+ Gozo applied and were accepted also in TGEU (Transgender Europe) the main European body that represents Trans* individuals across European countries. Through this affiliation LGBTI+ Gozo is the only LGBTI organization from the Maltese island represented in the three highest bodies.

Whilst a number of international trips were cancelled LGBTI+ Gozo applied as partners for two upcoming trips in 2021

- Queer Camp 2021 in France with MAG
- Gendernation 2021 in Portugal with AZEC

Moreover, LGBTI+ Gozo participated in:

- TGEU - One to One meeting - 18th August
- ILGA Europe - General Meeting - 19-21 October
- TGEU - Workshops - Throughout October

Due to time constraints the organisation did not participate in this year's IGLYO virtual assembly but voted through the online platform.

Pride

Through its commitment to participate in Pride on a yearly basis - LGBTI+ Gozo together with other Queer Organisation sought to have a more symbolic pride. In order to enshrine this symbolic message at the heart of Pride in Gozo the organisation in Collaboration with the Ministry for Gozo worked on the following installations:

- Re painting of rainbow bench at Villa Rundel
- Re painting of rainbow cross in front of Arkadia
- Installation of rainbow colours with facade in front of the Ministry.

LGBTI+ Gozo also participated in the symbolic pride held in front of Castille held on Friday 11th September. The organisation live streamed this symbolic pride for those who were not able to attend due to the restrictions of the pandemic.

As part of Pride week commemoration LGBTI+ Gozo launched also a Queer Friendly Professional and helpline service.

Queer Friendly professional services

As need of COVID-19 on our mental health was evident the organisation opted to create a new platform of Queer Friendly professionals. Whilst, the organisation recognise that professionals across Malta are Queer Friendly - the organisation reminds that the needs of LGBTI+ individuals are different and it would be at fault to disregard that once we are all equal, we are different. The Queer friendly profesional services ensure that Queer Gozitan have a platform for a direcotry of professionals who are trained to assert to the needs of the idnivdiauls. LGBTI+ Gozo have engaged 17 professionals who come from different professions and offer their service in Gozo.

LGBTI+ Gozo helpline

Additionally, due to the growing need to offer professional counselling services for free for Queer Gozitans, the organisaition offer professional counselling service on 356 9935622. The mechanism ensued that when a call comes in, an intake session is held and the needs of the client are assesed and transposed to one of our Queer friendly professionals or throughout the network that LGBTI+ Gozo has build in the last few years.

Ġbejniet Academy

Through the summer months the organisation promoted the first edition of Ġbejniet Academy, whilst this edition was promoted from May and was aimed to be held in June due to the fluidity of the COVID-19 pandemic it was held between 25-27 September and online.

16 members applied to participate for this online weekend training that included team building activities, skills workshops such as communication, time management and stress management and planning of events. 6 members committed to the weekend. The trainers pool of LGBTI+ Gozo which includes Reb Xiberras, Steve Borg and Valentina Bezzina took charge of such a well thought, planned and executed program.

Ġbejniet Academy 2021

As the first edition of 2020 came to a conclusion, LGBTI+ Gozo recognised the need to apply for funding in order for this Academy to strive and move forward. Therefore through the National Youth Agency Be Active fund LGBTI+ Gozo applied and were awarded the amount of 1,398,30c to plan this Academy in 2021. The call for applicants will open in April 2021.

Training Initiative Scheme

LGBTI+ Gozo applied and was awarded 875.00 euros as part of the Training Initiative Scheme organised by the Malta Council for Voluntary Sector to organise a training weekend for its executive members in capacity building skills. This training is kickstarting today and will commence till this upcoming Sunday.

Executive meetings

During the months of March 2020 to March 2021 - LGBTI+ Gozo executives meet 14 times.

Internal Processes (Finances)

After the engagement of Antonella Bugeja as Membership & Outreach Officer, the organisation co-opted in June 2021 - Jacques Le Roux as Financial Officer. Throughout the Summer and Autumn months, Jacques created an internal system of process when it comes to Finances and Funding. Moreover, the engagement of a Bank account with Lombard Bank was settled - and the organization is now a Lombard Bank customer. LGBTI+ Gozo is also using Xero accounting services to mirror our back

account and have full transparency in the incoming monies and expenses. Financial report will be given after this administrative report.

Code of Conduct

During 2020, LGBTI+ Gozo committed itself to create a Code of Conduct which safeguards and protects LGBTI+ Gozo members. This Code of Conduct was written in consultation with your members and calls for the need of an Advisory board - to account for any provisions of sexual harassment or unwanted behaviour at the account of one of our members. This Advisory board will be called upon later on during this Annual General Meeting. The Code of Conduct is available on our website.

Membership Guidelines

During 2020, LGBTI+ Gozo drafted through consultation with you our members a fresh structure for the Membership Guidelines. These membership guidelines plan out and explain the role of an LGBTI+ Gozo member in its structure and what perks one can benefit from as a member. This is to be voted upon tonight.

Dormant Projects.

Unfortunately due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the organisation did not work on the Annual open day during Valentine's day called "Love is Love". This event is usually held in collaboration with the Ministry for Gozo.

Moreover, the organisation has acquired 6500 euros from the Good Causes Fund, in which a non binary photo exhibition is planned to be held. This exhibition showcases the life of two non binary individuals one from Malta and one from Gozo. Photographs are already taken. The next stage is the printing and launching of events.

Conclusion

As 2020 is now history we look back at the previous year and remember the core strengths of the organisation - that through determination we can achieve our goals and what we set our mind towards, and through the collective collaboration of everyone we can truly inspire and foster change in our community. We thank you our members for actively engaging with LGBTI+ Gozo and as without you there is no organization. Thank you :)