

MARLEN SALIBA, MANAGER II MHSR



Over the past two years, the Commission for Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence (CGBVDV) under the remit of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Security, Reforms and Equality has unveiled a progressive approach to combat intersectional discrimination against migrant women.

Last year, CGBVDV launched a touching campaign, 'All Humans have Dignity. RESPECT! PROTECT!', aiming to highlight the prevalence of gender-based violence and domestic abuse across Maltese society. Crucially, this initiative acknowledged the intersecting barriers encountered by migrant victims. This campaign's inclusive nature culminated in the creation of awareness-raising posters addressing Female Genital Mutilation, a critical issue affecting migrant women.

On November 29th of this year, the Commission presented its comprehensive third national strategy on gender-based violence and domestic violence. This strategy encompasses integrated policies related to prevention, protection, support, and prosecution. Notably, it integrates diverse national stakeholders, even if their work indirectly relates to gender-based violence and domestic violence.

Acknowledging the challenges faced by migrant victims, specific measures have been proposed in this strategy. CGBVDV will be conducting extensive research within migrant communities to inform policy development. Furthermore, the Commission is also aiming to design specific programs for professionals working with migrants to recognise early signs of abuse and to navigate the unique barriers faced by migrant victims of domestic violence. The Commission's commitment extends further by its support for comprehensive research on all forms of gender-based violence, particularly on groups experiencing intersectional discrimination, individuals with disabilities, and the LGBTQIA+ community.

Critical to this approach is the guarantee of victims' rights and interests, with a specific focus on migrants and individuals with disabilities, thus ensuring that laws and administrative procedures do not perpetuate their vulnerability or hinder their ability to seek safety.

The headway made by the Commission underscores Malta's dedication to fostering an inclusive, supportive environment for migrant women affected by gender-based violence and domestic abuse. It serves as a guiding light, underscoring the necessity of tackling intersectional challenges to foster a more equitable society.



**EMN MALTA ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2023**

MARGARET BARAHMANDPOUR, MANAGER I MHSR



This much awaited EMN annual conference focused on Intersectional Integration. In her opening remarks, the Honourable Parliamentary Secretary Ms. Rebecca Buttigieg indicated that migration has become an integral part of our lives. She pointed out that we now need to implement more effective strategies for integration, thus paving the way for a more inclusive society. Moreover, she argued that integration should not remain an exclusive concern of central Government, but rather it should involve the work of regional and local councils, as well as civil society organisations. The Parliamentary Secretary also expressed the view that an intersectional approach, which considers the diversity and various needs of our migrant population, is beneficial to all our society.

MHSR Permanent Secretary Ms. Joyce Dimech praised the efforts of the directorates behind the organisation of the conference, namely the Policy Development and Programme Implementation Directorate and the Human Rights Directorate. She also gave an overview of the work of the Ministry's EMN team, including its liaison with various Ministries and the facilitation of research endeavours.

Three panels discussed Intersectional Integration from various perspectives. The first panel focused on 'Who are we...a conversation on intersectional identities', while the topic addressed by the second panel was 'Towards intersectional approaches in policy and projects'. This panel was followed by a presentation by Magali Gay-Berthomieu titled 'How intersectionality improves gender equality policies - examples at EU level'. The third and last panel debated the 'Intersectional approach in the Public Service'. Various experts participated in the three panels, and they were asked to consider the different aspects of Intersectionality in Malta.

PDP Senior Officer Dr Joseph St John delivered the closing remarks; he highlighted the importance of building on what has been achieved so far, while adapting to an evolving scenario.



**MARGINALISATION AND DISCRIMINATION ORIGINATING FROM INTERSECTIONAL IDENTITIES**

NIKITA CASSAR, UNIT LEADER SERVICES SOCIAL WORK UNIT, AGENCY FOR THE WELFARE OF ASYLUM SEEKERS



Intersectional integration, a term coined by Kimberle Crenshaw, highlights how individuals can face marginalisation and discrimination based on the various intersecting identities they hold. At AWAS, we recognize the significance of considering these intersecting factors in order to promote healthy integration and foster harmonious communities.

The Psychosocial Unit focuses on meeting the psychological needs of beneficiaries, both within our centres and the broader community.

The Care Team takes a social work perspective, assisting beneficiaries in communicating with the various entities they encounter as asylum seekers.

Additionally, we have a unit dedicated to supporting beneficiaries in enrolling in courses, searching for housing and employment, and enhancing their overall well-being. This approach ensures that, although the diverse necessities of individuals are recognized and addressed, systematic challenges will always persist and, in fact, our work also consists of identifying the gaps that prevent integration and advocating for them to be addressed.

A crucial aspect of intersectional integration is the reflection of professionals on their work, which will lead to addressing integration on a case-by-case basis rather than as a whole group. Discrimination and inequalities persist due to power imbalances and privilege.

The commitment to an intersectional approach at AWAS goes beyond rhetoric - it manifests itself in proactive and tailored strategies for each individual. By recognizing and embracing the diverse identities that shape people's experiences, we aim to dismantle the barriers of discrimination and inequality.

In our pre-integrational stage at AWAS, we adopt a tailored approach for each individual, acknowledging the diverse identities one holds. We recognize that as professionals, we are in a position of privilege, and true integrational approaches can only occur when we acknowledge this privilege, see each person as an individual, and address their distinct needs.

Advocating for intersectional integration is not merely a professional obligation but a moral imperative. As professionals, we champion the cause of intersectionality not only in policies and programs but in the very fabric of our interactions. It is through this empathetic lens that we strive to create a space where every individual's unique journey is acknowledged, respected, and supported.

AWAS has established multiple units to comprehensively address and identify different requirements. The Vulnerability Assessment Unit is dedicated to detecting various vulnerabilities individuals might have.

**THE MARSA COMMUNITY POLICE**

SHAUN BORG AXIAQ, COMMUNITY POLICE TEAM LEADER (MARSA AREA)

Community policing with migrants involves fostering collaboration between law enforcement agencies and migrant communities to enhance safety, trust, and communication. This approach recognizes the unique needs and challenges faced by migrants, aiming to build positive relationships and address concerns in a culturally sensitive manner.



One key aspect is the establishment of cultural liaisons within the police. In an effort to address this, the Malta Police Force recently engaged officers with different religious knowledge and beliefs, thus enabling them to bridge communication gaps, understand cultural nuances, and build a healthy rapport. By having officers who are familiar with the languages, traditions, and values of different migrant groups, law enforcement can respond more effectively to the diverse needs of the community.

The Marsa Community Police regularly have community meetings and outreach programs that are vital components of community policing with migrants. These fora provide an opportunity for law enforcement to engage with community members, discuss safety concerns, and address any issues or misunderstandings. It is a platform for building trust and ensuring that migrants feel comfortable approaching the Police when necessary. Police consider it essential to engage with migrants on a daily basis during their foot patrol around Marsa.

Every year Police also participate in the refugee week with the NGO Dance Beyond Borders. This helps Police integrate better and learn about migrants' backgrounds and culture.

Collaboration extends beyond law enforcement, and involves community leaders, social workers, and non-profit organizations. Together, all stakeholders develop programs that promote integration, offer support services, and educate both law enforcement and migrants about each other's perspectives. This collaborative approach helps break down stereotypes, reduce prejudice, and foster a sense of belonging for migrants in the community.

In essence, community policing with migrants revolves around building a symbiotic relationship between law enforcement and migrant communities. It is about creating an inclusive, safe environment where everyone feels valued and protected, regardless of their religious or cultural background or immigration status. It is a great satisfaction that in 2022, Marsa Community Policing Team won the Inclusivity Award within the Public Sector, after just one year of operations.

When the Marsa Community Policing team was formed, for example, it was decided to transform the original local council waste collection schedule into a multilingual one. During their daily patrols, the Community Police officers assisted in the distribution process. This was only possible with the assistance of interpreters, non-governmental organizations and the local administration. This initiative created a sense of inclusion among migrants, allowing them to completely understand what is being requested from them.

Through mutual understanding and cooperation, community policing contributes to a harmonious coexistence that benefits not only law enforcement and the migrant population, but also the population as a whole.