



SEPTEMBER 2018

BETTER FUTURE BY MIGRANT WOMAN ASSOCIATION MALTA

*INCREASING ACCESS
TO MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES
FOR MIGRANT WOMEN*

LOCATION

MALTA

TIMELINE

2017- Present

TARGET AUDIENCE

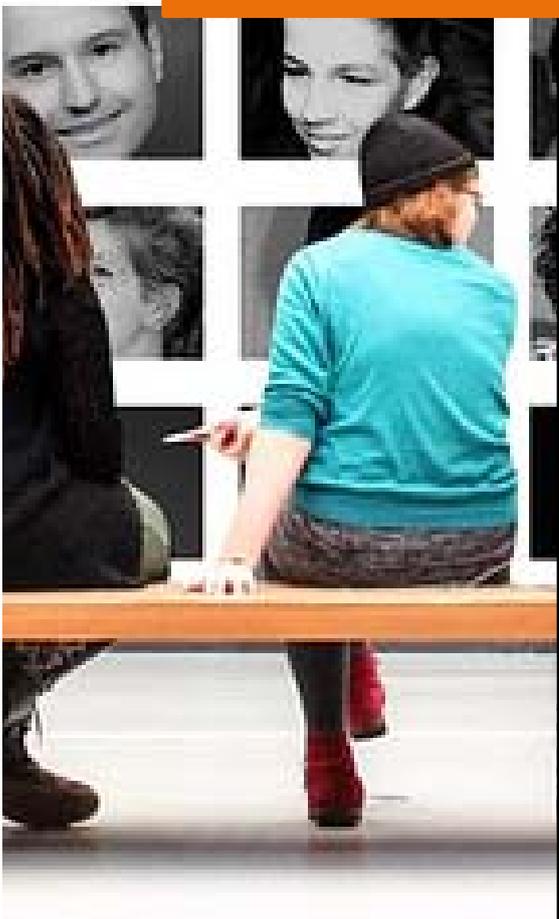
Migrant women with any legal status currently residing in Malta either temporary or permanently

TYPE OF ACTION

Mental health assistance, advocacy, research, capacity building

KEYWORDS

Sexual/gender-based violence, refugee women assistance



ABOUT THE ORGANISATION

As representatives and members of the female migrant community, Migrant Women Association Malta (MWAM) seeks to deploy person-centered, practical solutions with the goal of empowering migrant women in their journey towards achieving a well-rounded, secure integration.

MWAM aims to:

- enable migrant women to find their inner potential and power, allowing them to participate and play a role in society in the their most appropriate manner.
- raise awareness of the challenges and needs of migrant women, as well as the positive contribution they can and do make to the Maltese society
- build bridges between and among different migrant communities and the Maltese community in order to promote tolerance, understanding and intercultural dialogue
- challenge those with power to adopt policies and behaviours that protect and enable migrant women

IN BRIEF

Name: Migrant Women Association Malta

Creation: 2015

Location: Malta

CASE DESCRIPTION

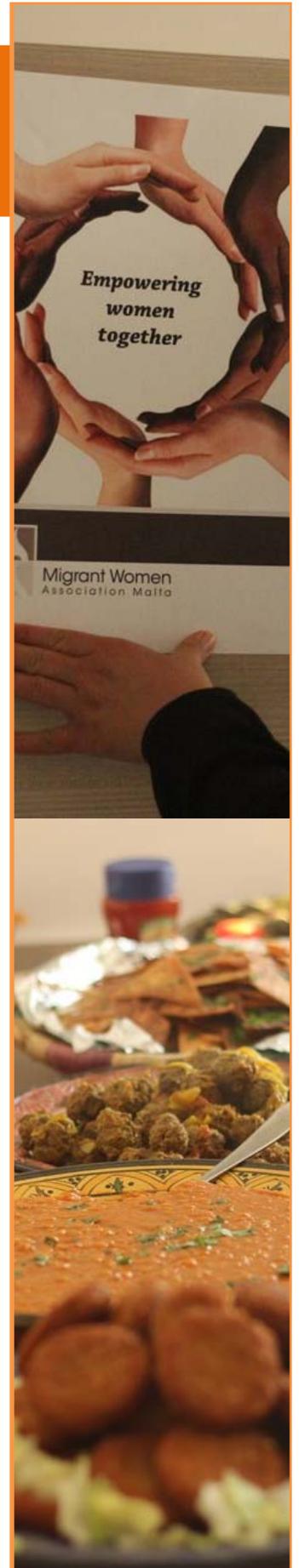
BACKGROUND

Sexual/Gender based violence (SGBV), particularly among migrant and refugee populations, is largely under-reported, for a large number of reasons, including cultural ones (social stigma), but also isolation and lack of support network, fear of consequences on their immigration status especially if women are dependent on their partner's status.

This delay in or absence of help-seeking behaviour is highly detrimental as survivors of SGBV are at high risk of severe mental, physical health and psychosocial problems, sometimes even death.

For these reasons Migrant Women Association Malta seeks to protect, help and support migrant and refugee women by offering the service of "Better future".

The goal is to increase access to and availability of services for refugees and strengthen the response and coordination efforts of the host country to meet the needs of female refugees.



DESCRIPTION OF THE GOOD PRACTICE

BETTER FUTURE

At the start of 2017, with the aim of developing a service which seeks to address Sexual/Gender-based violence following the most recent guidelines, the Migrant Woman Association Malta team conducted a research project which included focus groups targeting S/GBV services for migrant women. Research revealed a gap in mental health support for survivors of S/GBV, and a general lack of specialised services addressing the issue.

“Better Future” is an ongoing pilot project with the support of the “Julia Taft” refugee fund, which seeks to develop a multi-agency referral pathway, in conjunction with attempting to address underlying mental health issues typically associated with the migration journey and potential abuses asylum seekers may have endured as a result of gender power dynamics.

Additionally MWAM is looking to implement an information management system, in order to create a consistent monitoring mechanism to understand the depth of the issue. It is the first of its kind in Malta.





MWAM also engages with other newly developing efforts to address S/GBV by providing consultancy, engaging interested migrants in offering their assistance, and using newly developing resources to create a single response.

TYPE OF ACTION

- Gender and culture sensitive mental health support to migrant women
- Outreach and awareness raising on gender and mental health issues
- Capacity building and consultancy towards external stakeholders
- Engagement of skilled asylum applicants in meaningful work



MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

- ✓ Created a network of stakeholders and raised awareness for further projects to develop
- ✓ Hired skilled interpreters with medical training skills to assist the project and create a basis of trust with disenfranchised communities
- ✓ Created a platform of discussion on gender issues with women residing in open centres across Malta
- ✓ Created an intake and referral system

STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERS

- United States Embassy Malta (donors)
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Malta
- International Organization for Migration (OIM) Malta
- Agenzija Appogg (Domestic Violence Unit - Government)
- JRS Malta (Psychosocial / Legal - CSO),
- SOAR Malta (Legal - CSO)
- Aditus Foundation (Legal - CSO)
- Agency for Welfare of Asylum Seeker (governmental)
- Malta Mental Health (Psychological / Psychiatric / Social Work - Government)
- EDMR group (psychotrauma - CSO linked to Government)
- Women's Rights Foundation (Legal - CSO)

FOLLOW UP

Due to the huge positive impact of the program, Skills to Succeed has been transformed from a project into an independent organisation continuing its services for the development of the local community and serving as a sought-after kick starter for new job opportunities in the region. The organisation has a fulltime team of eight internationally trained professionals and an experienced board of directors committed to the development of the region.



CONTACT

MIGRANT WOMAN ASSOCIATION MALTA

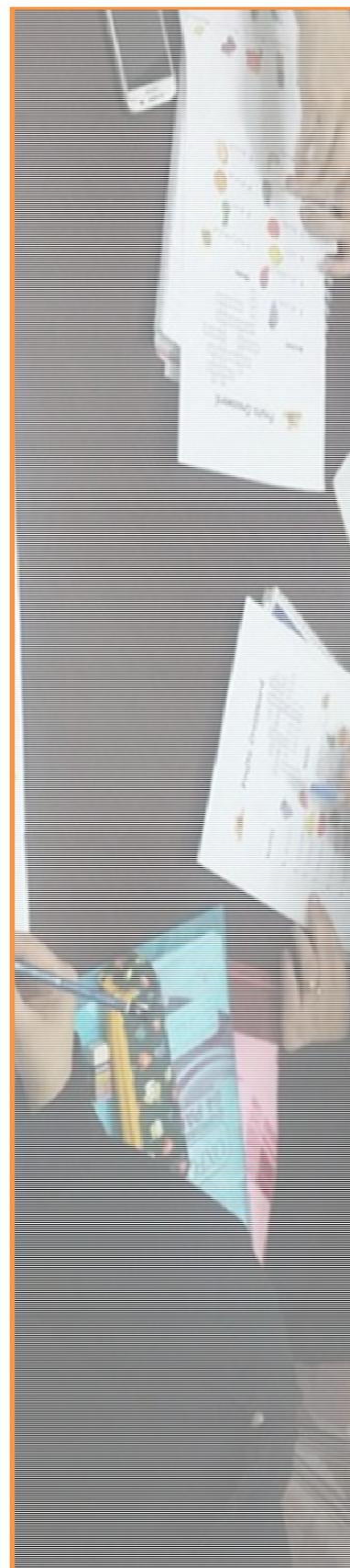
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