

MIGRANT WOMEN ASSOCIATION, MALTA

<http://migrantwomenmalta.org>

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Migrant Women Association is a complex NGO, rooted in its members' core talents. We bank on the power of an ideal coming to life, we work for the betterment of our society around us and rely on our greatest quality to move forward: our compassion. Migrant Women Association Malta is currently embarked on a catering enterprise that provides world cuisine for cultural events & festivals. This enterprise started out from understanding that cuisine is an excellent bridge between cultures, a bridge which may overcome language barriers.

This NGO was started out by the leader of another very well known one, called SOS Malta. The head of SOS saw great potential in one migrant woman, which was sadly unfulfilled in Malta. That migrant woman would later become the co-founder, president,

and leader of our association. She started to draw around her a network of equally skilled people, and developed strong leadership prowess, which may now be used as an example.



Two years later, we launched ourselves into the world of event catering. We did so, because we saw it as a way to take something from our migrant communities, and pass it on to our hosts.

I began my own path in a similar way. My abilities were gravely underused by a society which uses language as a way to block out any migrants - for as long as it can. The day I was introduced to this association, I have to admit, was the day my life started turning around. It gave me the space and the support to grow out the best of my qualities, by providing a beautiful motivation: to find and ameliorate other's situations by using my skills. I was sharply aware how much value lays wasted in a country, by not allowing it into society. Migrants have always been at the fringe for various reasons, many of which unfair. By allowing me to push back on



the unfairness, I became the woman of today, who is fearless and fights for what she believes in. Opportunities rain down as a result - catering for festivals, presenting work in EU countries, opening up forums and allowing policy makers meet refugees.

I see our success to be the value-based compassion that we, at Migrant Women Association, share. It makes us cross boundaries of culture, habits and economic status, and see, beyond all else, the good and the abilities in people.

Our main source of success is our ability to go where our clients are, to cater for their necessities, and to respond to our volunteers' expectations. When it comes to volunteers, which carry out the bulk of the organization's work, we do our best to place them where they want to be, to channel them where their interests lie, and that has expanded the organization to a new level.

Our greatest challenge is working day by day without any funds, and all the difficulty that entails. We constantly have to find creative ways to cover for the lack of funds, or reduce our client pool to cover for those we have the capacity to help. Day by day, we have to think about the next week, about what will happen after, and what we can do to help out when we ourselves are in no position to help. We overcome it with a lot of heart, and a lot of resilience in the face of challenges and that is the lesson we pass on to our clients as well.



Another unique challenge in working in this field, is maintaining our boundaries. We become emotionally invested in every story, and we help people because of it, but we need to constantly remind ourselves that we need to stay objective.

Within the next 6 months, MWAM will develop in three directions: as a social entrepreneurship, by consolidating the already existing team of cooks, and by providing training and development for them. We are focused on building a sustainable, well-versed, well trained team of cooks and managers who are able to continuously provide world cuisine to important events, thus becoming Malta's first migrant social entrepreneurship. As a language hub for mothers - where they will be able to network, learn English and develop their communication skills; as a health service - where skilled psychologists will offer mental health treatment and support and as a business hub - where mentoring, consulting, and skills training would be conducted on a case-to-case basis. Simply put, we'll tackle women's issues one by one, by each of our professions.