



L-Università ta' Malta  
Faculty for Social Wellbeing

# UNITY<sup>7</sup>

Department of **Psychology**

2023

**FREE**

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# Resident First

 A better quality of life

Sustainable  
Mobility

Green  
Living

Open  
Spaces

Smart  
Cities



**“The level of scholarship in this Faculty is second to none. I ask myself at times, ‘have we been around 11 years or 110 years?’ with all that we have achieved. The secret is a simple one, it’s not about ‘me’ but about a passion to bring about change, even if at times this means ‘they’ try to hurt us.”**



PROF. ANDREW AZZOPARDI  
Dean

**Working in this Faculty is a privilege. It gives us the opportunity to influence students who will be tomorrow’s professionals, working with people from all walks of life.**



In particular, I feel we have a calling to be a small sliver of hope for the underprivileged, be they persons with mental health issues, those from marginalised groups, or those passing through any form of hardship.

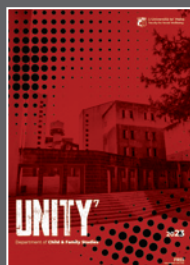
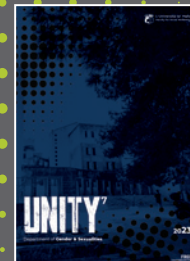
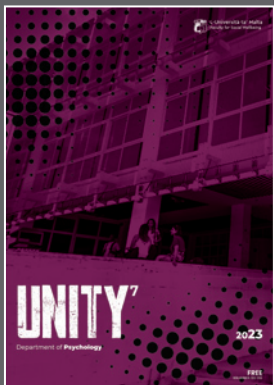
DR GOTTFRIED CATANIA  
Head of Department



**“The value of who we are as a Faculty lies in our ability to bring forward empirical data and solutions that can bring tangible improvements in the lives of the people we are researching on and with.”**

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, Yanika Tabone & Dr Claire Azzopardi Lane

**Yanika Tabone**  
**Alumnus, Master of Psychology (Forensic)**

Yanika is a Forensic Psychology Practitioner who is passionate about the rehabilitation of criminal offenders and their reintegration into society. For the past 5 years, she has been involved with the NGO RISE Foundation Malta, which offers a community-based rehabilitation and reintegration programme to inmates seeking to re-enter society. Yanika is especially active in raising awareness about the importance of implementing restorative justice practises and moving away from punitive measures in order to achieve complete rehabilitation and reintegration.

**SOCIAL COMMITMENT  
AWARDEE**

**DR JACQUELINE AZZOPARDI  
SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT  
AWARDEE**



From left to right: Dr Gottfried Catania, Fr Joe Inguanez & Dr Ingrid Grech Lanfranco

**Fr Joe Inguanez**

Fr Joe is a long time academic and researcher. He was a senior lecturer and Head of Department of the Sociology Department at the University of Malta for over 20 years. He was also a visiting scholar at the University of Cambridge in the UK for various periods and the Chairman and Executive Director of DISCERN which is the Institute for the Research on the Signs of the Times. He is currently the national Chaplain of the Young Christian Workers.

**The Department of Psychology offers courses in psychology at Higher Diploma, Bachelor, Master and M.Phil./Ph.D. level. We aim to increase the knowledge of psychology, the study of human behaviour and individual differences, amongst our students, as well as train professional psychologists in the fields of clinical, counselling, educational, health, forensic and neuro-psychology. We also work closely with other Departments and Faculties to offer joint degrees at Bachelor level and specialised Masters programmes.**

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

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Department of  
**Psychology**

Faculty for **Social Wellbeing**

**Bachelor of Psychology (Honours)**

Full-time/3 years

**Bachelor of Psychology (Honours) (Gozo)**

Part-time (evening)/ 5 years

**Higher diploma in Psychology**

Full-time/ 1 year

**Master of Science in Psychological Studies**

Part-time (evening)/ 3 years

**Master of Psychology (Clinical, Counselling, Educational, Forensic, Health or Neuropsychology)**

Full-time/ 2 years

**Joint Master of Science in Mental Health Studies**

Part-time (evening)/ 3 years

**Joint Master of Science in Addiction Studies**

Part-time (evening)/ 3 years

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

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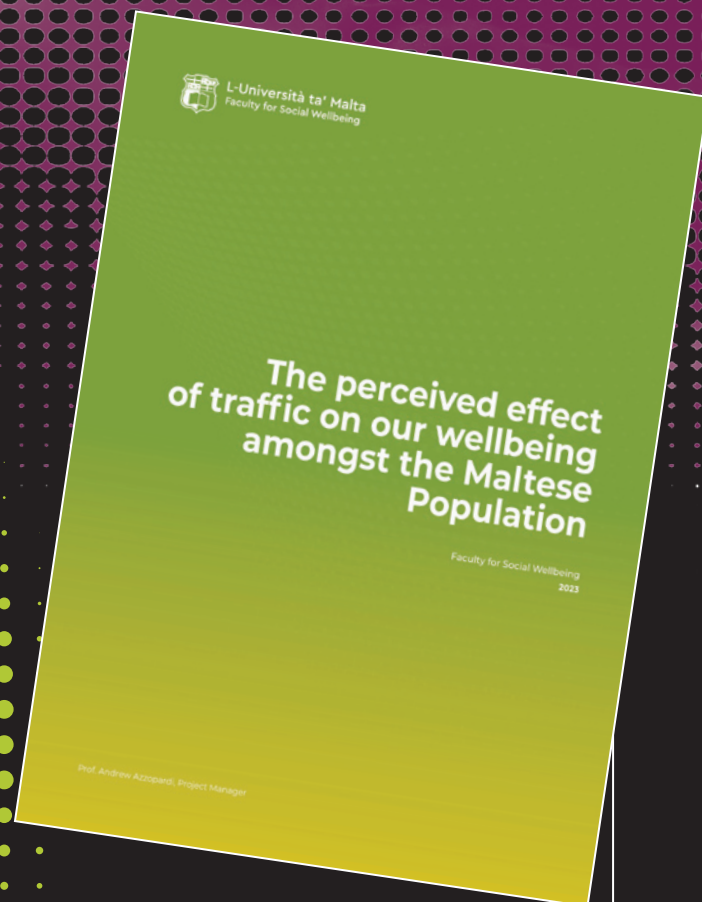
## THE SUBCULTURAL LIFE-WORLDS AND CAREER TRAJECTORIES OF PROBLEM GAMBLERS IN MALTA

**The application of subculture theory, as a conceptual framework for studies on gambling, remains underexplored. This Ph.D. dissertation is grounded in the sociological aspect of gambling.**

It examines problem gambling in Malta as a subcultural phenomenon, exploring gambling from the life world of the gambler. The role of social relationships in gambling and the subcultural context are key in this process, as they give insights into the interaction among gamblers and the language that they use. On the other hand, their career trajectory is also explored to acquire an understanding of how gamblers' lives progress. The research is based on a theoretical framework consisting of various concepts primed by both subculture and career trajectory theories. This study adopts an interpretivist qualitative approach and data will be collected through semi-structured in-depth, face-to-face interviews with gamblers. This research is intended to assist in understanding the gambling subculture from the lived experiences of gamblers in Malta and their career trajectory.

**EDEL ATTARD TREVISAN**

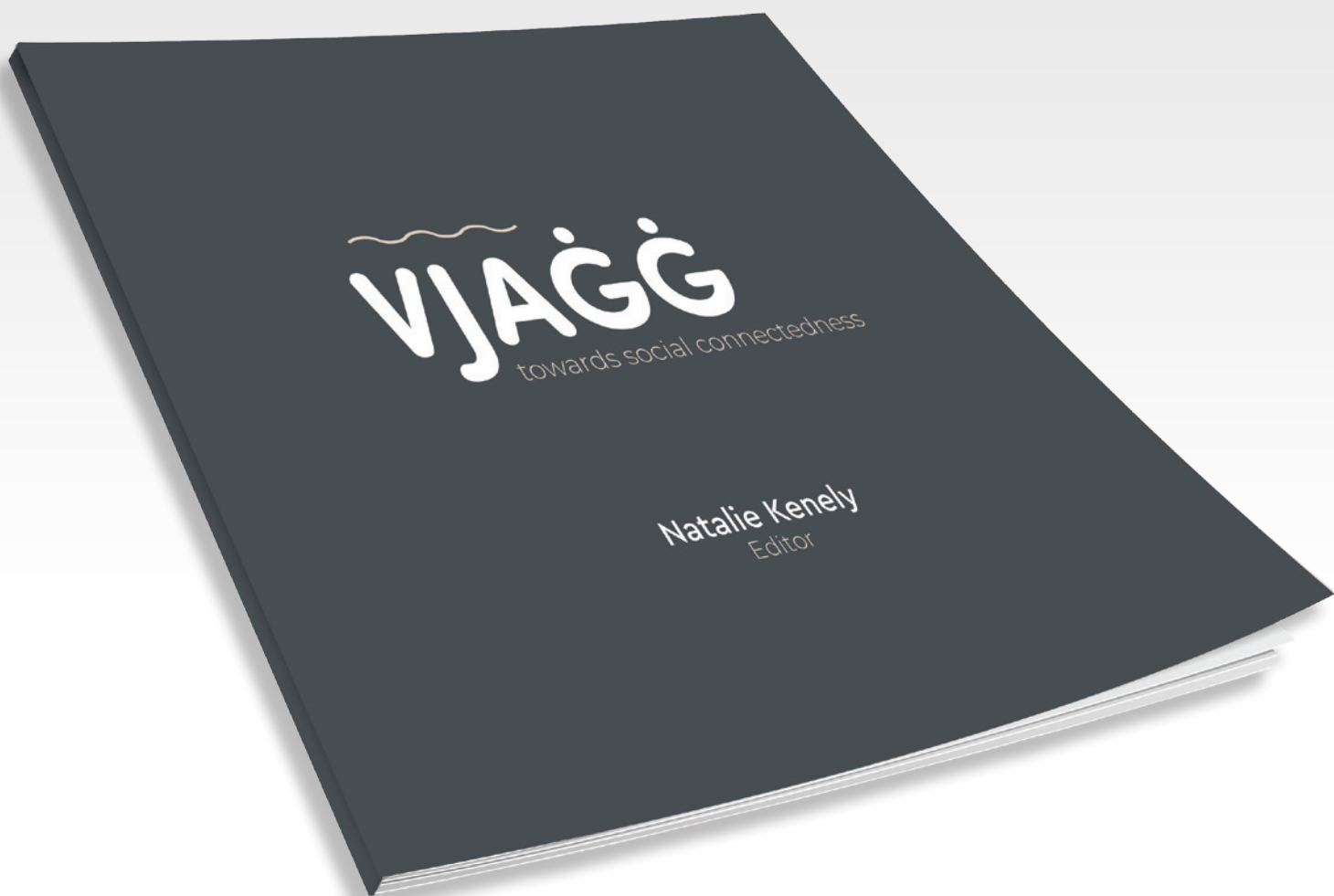
M.Phil./Ph.D. Candidate



**“From the people interviewed who are over 18 years of age, 76% said that when they ‘think about traffic [it] increases their anxiety’.”**

The perceived effect of traffic on our wellbeing amongst the Maltese Population – Faculty for Social Wellbeing (2023)

The full report can be accessed from  
[https://www.um.edu.mt/socialwellbeing/  
ourresearch/researchprojects/](https://www.um.edu.mt/socialwellbeing/ourresearch/researchprojects/)



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**As an alumnus of the Faculty for Social Wellbeing, the completion of my psychology bachelor's degree marked a pivotal moment that profoundly reshaped my life. The Faculty's progressive educational approach not only enriched my comprehension of human psychology but also instilled a steadfast dedication to catalysing positive change in society. This immersive learning experience remains a cornerstone, propelling my ongoing commitment to elevating the wellbeing of individuals and communities.**

MATTHEA BONAVIA FREND0

Bachelor of Psychology  
(Honours)

**Studying within the Faculty for Social Wellbeing offered an enriching educational experience that extended beyond academic knowledge. My experience within the Faculty not only deepened my understanding of psychology, but also fostered a sense of responsibility and time management, traits which have helped me in other aspects of life. Overall, my time in the Faculty was something I really enjoyed and brought with it a lot of insight in my personal journey and academic growth.**

MICHELA LAURENTI

Master of Science in  
Psychological Science



Help is always a phone call away so  
call on 21563333 for more information  
or visit our page on Facebook  
[www.facebook.com/oasifoundation](http://www.facebook.com/oasifoundation) or  
our website [oasi.org.mt](http://oasi.org.mt)

**Primary Prevention**  
**Intermediate Intervention**  
**Addiction Therapy &  
Rehabilitation**



# Why does suicide remain such a taboo subject?

**Suicide is a serious social policy issue. Malta needs a suicide prevention policy addressing the major individual, relational, community, and societal factors which increase the risk for suicide.**

Imparting resilience skills in the form of teaching parenting skills and offering educational programmes is necessary but not enough. Economic support in the form of affordable housing and humane conditions of work including good wages should be strengthened. Community policies which target substance abuse, and which improve the quality of mental health care, are vital. Bolstering social connectedness is key. Strong investment is needed in policies responding to heightened risk for vulnerable groups such as prisoners, migrants, and the LGBTIQ+ community. Suicide is a gendered phenomenon in that more men die by suicide, so strong focus should also be accorded to supporting men's relational embeddedness in family and community life.

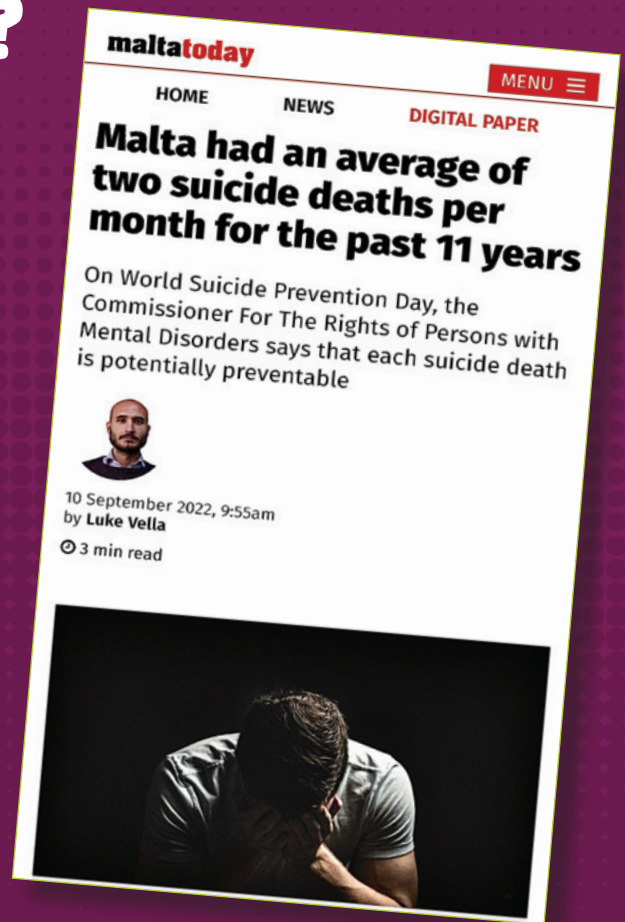
**DR CLAIRE CASHA**  
Academic

**If you need support you can call Helpline 1579**

**The rise in suicide rates is a sign of the numerous challenges faced by individuals. It highlights the urgent need to address the underlying issues and provide comprehensive mental health support.**

Factors such as conflict, violence, abuse, and isolation contribute to suicidal behaviour, necessitating effective prevention strategies. However, stigma around mental health, lack of awareness, and poor-quality data hinder progress in this area. Collaboration among government, healthcare providers, educational institutions, communities, and civil society is crucial. By destigmatising mental ill health, raising awareness, improving access to services, and collecting accurate data, societies can reduce suicide rates and provide the right support. A unified, multi-faceted approach is necessary to make a meaningful impact and save lives and this needs to start at a young age as suicide in youth is on the increase.

**DANIELA CALLEJA BITAR**  
Stakeholder



**I believe that there are primary and secondary factors that lead to suicide. When these two types of factors come together it leads to the person committing the anti-human act of suicide.**

Secondary factors that cause suicide include physical/emotional/sexual abuse, divorce, death, financial debt and others. The primary factor that causes suicide is what I describe as shortcomings in support. Need can take many forms such as a lack of belonging in a community, absence of a family/friends/ neighbours/colleagues support system, access to professionals, and an inability to be true to your identity because of social constructs amongst others.

The above describes a society that fails to prevent suicides. Maltese society is becoming increasingly individualistic where people seem to care only about themselves and disregard others. This causes vulnerable persons to contemplate suicide. We need to reignite belongingness in communities and to offer safe spaces for people to speak out when secondary factors described above are faced by the individual. This will lead us to be able to provide services and through the right choice of words and action, prevent the act of suicide.

**OMAR RABABAH**  
Alumnus



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[www.mut.org.mt](http://www.mut.org.mt)



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SOCIAL WELFARE  
SERVICES**

Here for you



“ I am Oliver Cilia

Social Worker at Homeless Service,  
FSWS (Aġenzija Appoġġ)

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



# FACULTY NEWSPAPER

The Faculty newspaper *Unity* edited by Prof. Marvin Formosa and in collaboration with Malta Today was designed to reach out to the community

## HAPPY? EDUCATION MAKES

The data bears it out: higher job satisfaction and financial security is found among those with tertiary education

**Matthew Vella**  
MaltaToday Editor

LIFE satisfaction in Malta may be considered a given, according to research commissioned by the Faculty for Social Wellbeing: over 70% of Maltese respondents report they are either 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with life in general... and just under 5% think they are not.

The feeling is widespread across various social fabric. On average, most respondents asked to rank their life satisfaction from 1 (not satisfied) to 5 (very satisfied), scored an average of 4.14. Indeed, no noticeable difference in results is apparent between the various social groups. The lowest averages for example, were seen in those not living with a partner (4.04) or those out of a job (4.04). Similarly, low averages could be seen among pensioners (4.06), those with a primary education (4.09), as well as those with a low level of education (4.09).

**Welcome to Unity!**  
Celebrating 10 years of the Faculty for Social Wellbeing



MEET OUR ACADEMIC STAFF • WHAT WE STAND FOR •

Survey suggests that a third of respondents would still use their car less even if public transport is more reliable

**James Debono**  
MaltaToday

DESPITE increased awareness on global warming and emissions, younger people and students seem to be more attached to their cars than older people, a

survey on the effect of traffic on wellbeing undertaken by pollster Vincent Marmara and commissioned by the Faculty for Social Wellbeing at the University of Malta, suggests. This may show that for young people the car remains a powerful

symbol of independence and self-actualisation, despite its negative social and ecological impact, and in other questions in the survey that traffic is having a negative

impact on well-being and mental health.

One of the questions asked to respondents in this survey was whether they agreed with the statement: "I would prefer to not use my car if public transport was more reliable". The question is particularly interesting as it measures public willingness for a nodal shift if public transport becomes more reliable.

The most likely to agree with the statement were respondents aged over 70, while the least likely to agree were respondents aged between 18 to 29. While among the former the average level of agreement was 5 out of a maximum 7, among the latter the average level of agreement was 3.7. In the survey, 1 represented the least level of agreement while 7 represented full agreement.

PAGES 20-21

## Inside...

**Matt Paris: My life with psychosis...**

"I have four negative hallucinations which I experience on a day-to-day basis. At times they are all around, especially on bad days, three persons and a talking dog"



INTERVIEW  
PAGES 14-15

## For & Against Euthanasia

OUR EXPERTS DEBATE  
PAGES 4-5



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