



NCPE's participation in the Malta Pride Week 2021

The Malta Pride Week took place from 10th September until the 19th September. Due to the Covid-19 restrictions, the traditional Pride March could not take place and instead various events were held at different locations throughout the week. All events were organised by the E4D project partners; the Allied Rainbow Communities (ARC), who are an established NGO in Malta that has been in charge of organising Malta Pride since the first Pride in 2004.

The theme for this year's Pride was **#YouAreIncluded**, which served as a reminder that ensuring equality for everyone cannot be achieved through a one-size-fits-all approach and that despite the progress achieved by the LGBTIQ+ movement over these past six years, especially due to the enactment of legislative provisions enhancing LGBTIQ+ rights in Malta, there are still members of the community whose identities and experiences are not considered to be valid. Some members of the LGBTIQ+ community may still feel excluded due to the discrimination faced in their day-to-day life. The chosen slogan embodies the sense of community and belonging when a person is seen, heard and believed.

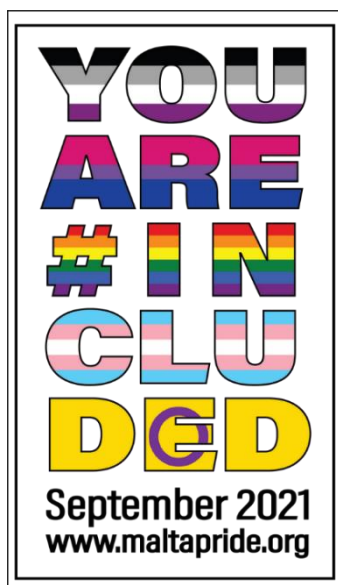
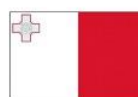


Figure 1: The theme for the Malta Pride Week 2021



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Prior to the Pride Week events, the NCPE was constantly updating its social media by creating posts about the Pride Week's events, and by resharing posts by ARC about the upcoming events. In this way, the NCPE was informing the general public about the participation of NCPE officers to the Pride events. One of the aims was to further increase the NCPE's visibility and thereby making it easier for LGBTIQ+ persons to approach the NCPE and to get to know about how the NCPE can help them in cases of discrimination. NCPE officers were going to be at the Pride events making themselves known and available for any queries or comments which attendees of Pride might have. Moreover, the NCPE wanted to publicise the fact that its remit covered sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics thereby enabling the NCPE to investigate cases of alleged discrimination on these grounds. To further publicise the NCPE's participation at Pride, a newspaper article was published on this occasion to inform readers on the E4D project and its objectives and to announce that NCPE officers would be at events of the Pride Week.

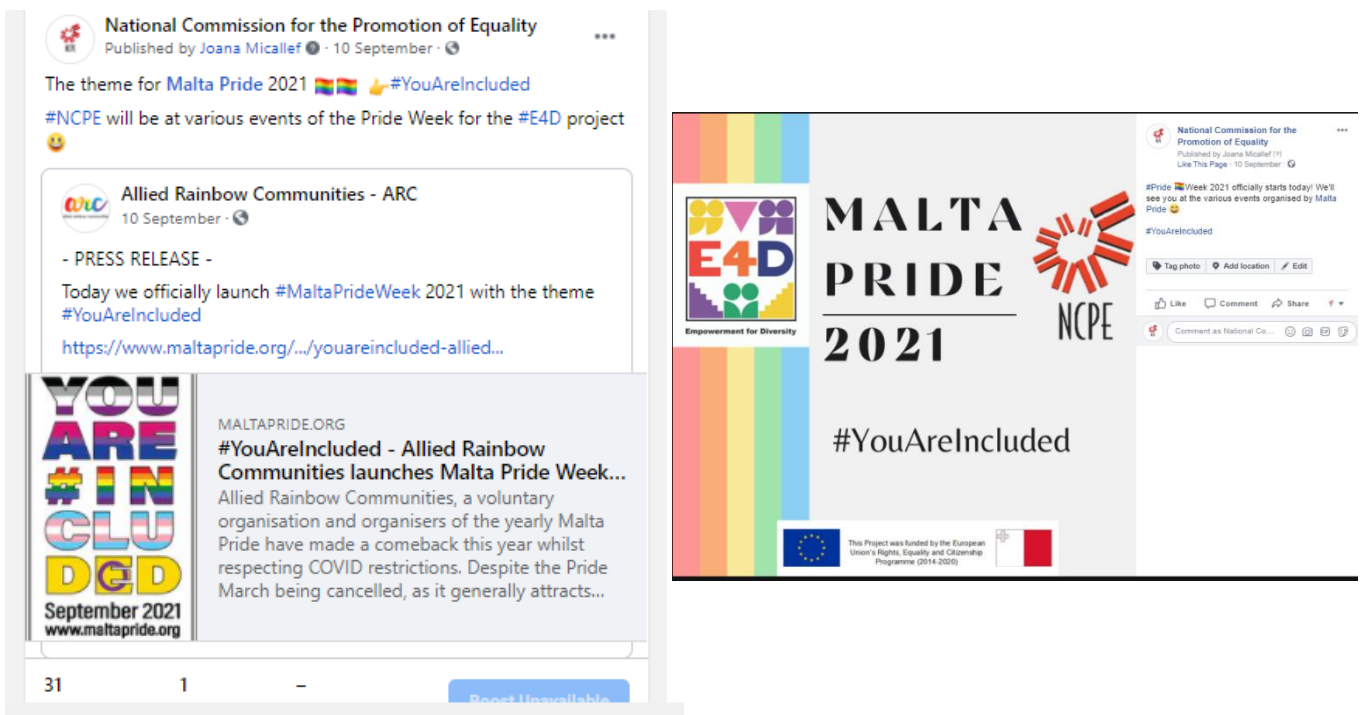


Figure 2: Posts uploaded on NCPE's social media prior to the Malta Pride Week

Event 1: 6 Colours – 6 Locations – 1 Pride

11TH SEPTEMBER 2021

Objectives of the event

The first event entitled 6 Colours – 6 Locations – 1 Pride¹, attended by the NCPE officers was a demonstration organised by the Ministry for Equality, Research and Innovation in collaboration with Allied Rainbow Communities. For this event, representatives of different LGBTIQ+ NGOs and governmental entities showed up in 6 different locations around Malta and Gozo, holding a 25-metre Pride banner symbolizing what Pride stands for; unity in diversity.

Role of the E4D Team

NCPE Commissioner Renee Laiviera represented the NCPE and the E4D team at the event. Photos of the event were uploaded in real time on the NCPE's social media with the aim of reaching out to the LGBTIQ+ community and increasing the NCPE's visibility with the general public. Since this event was the first one which the NCPE team attended during the Malta Pride, it was ensured that the public were informed that NCPE will be at the events taking place that week by posting on NCPE's social media. Furthermore, the E4D team took this opportunity to network with the members of the community present at this event.

Result

As a result of the interactions at the event, the NCPE increased its visibility particularly on its social media. Following the uploading of posts, sharing and re-sharing of stories on the NCPE's social media, its pages increased in followers and likes.

As this was the first event attended by the NCPE representatives, it was the first step to reaching out to the LGBTIQ+ community and letting them know the NCPE will be in attendance at various events during Pride Week.

¹ <https://www.maltapride.org/post/6-colours-6-locations-1-pride>



Figure 3: NCOPE Commissioner Renee Laiviera holding the flag during the first event NCOPE attended to for Pride 2021

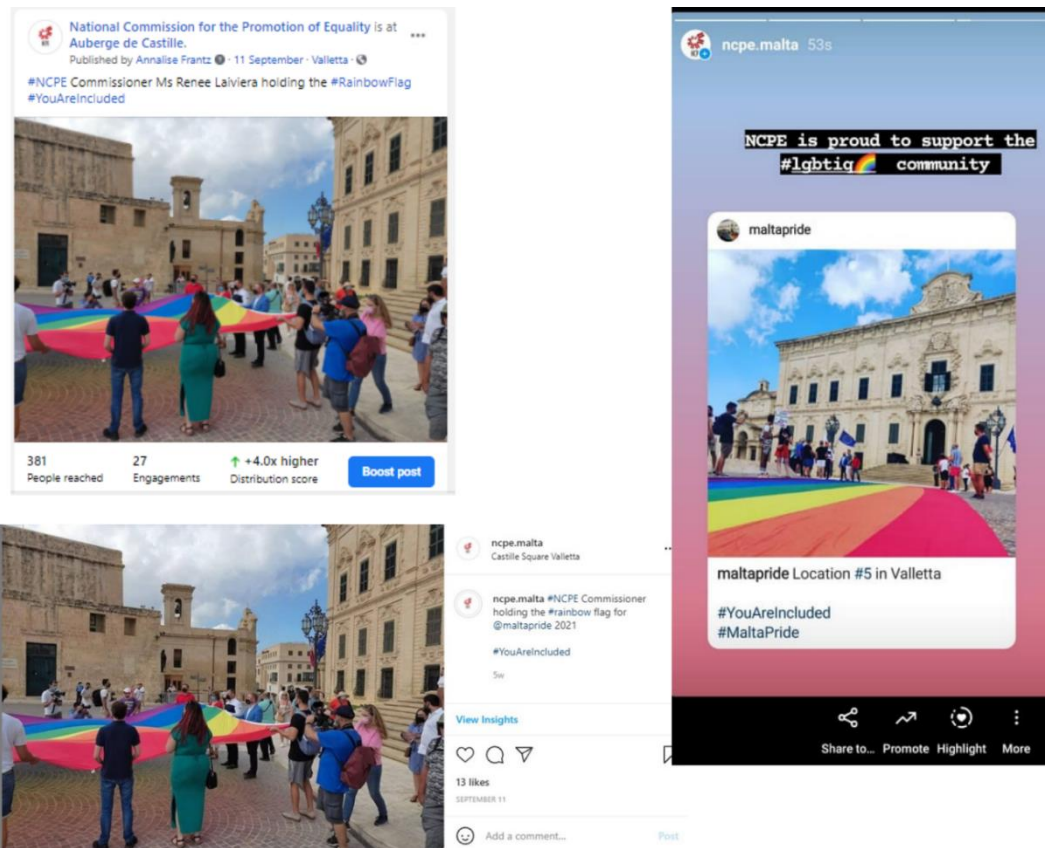


Figure 4: Posts on NCOPE's social media featuring the first event during Pride Week 2021

Event 2: Community Discussion: 'Queerness matters at home'

13TH SEPTEMBER 2021

Objectives of the event

The second event the NCPE team attended was a Community Discussion named 'Queerness matters at home: Our Storytelling Space', delivered by queer urban anthropologist Dr Rachael Scicluna². Using everyday objects such as books, photos, and art, Dr Scicluna attempted to challenge the normative and traditional understanding of the home and of space. Through her research, Dr Scicluna explores the meaning and experiences of home and spaces through the framework of sexuality. It explores the ways in which the space and the home is constructed and experienced in relation to sexuality and gender.³

This was a safe space where participants, mostly members of the LGBTIQ+ community, could share their experiences as well as their coming out stories, shaped by the space and objects surrounding them when they disclosed this information to their families and friends.

Role of the E4D Team

During this interesting event, the participants present had the opportunity to talk about what objects and which spaces shaped their sexuality, as well as their coming out story. It was a good way for the NCPE officers to learn how the spaces surrounding us, which might be taken for granted such as one's kitchen, might be symbols of oppression or might be considered as safe spaces, and might also shape one's identity and sexuality.

Before the event started, the NCPE officers distributed the E4D leaflets⁴ which explain what the NCPE is, its remit, as well as the E4D project. The leaflet also includes information on how to contact the NCPE when experiencing discrimination. Attendees of the event could get acquainted with the NCPE officers during Pride Week events.

² <https://www.maltapride.org/post/queer-anthropologist-to-hold-a-community-talk-about-queerness-in-the-home>

³ Pilkey, B., Scicluna, R., Campkin, B & Penner, B. Sexuality and Gender at Home: Experience, Politics, Transgression (Bloomsbury Publishing), 2017

⁴ <https://ncpe.gov.mt/en/Documents/NCPE%20leaflet%20final%202.pdf>

Result

The attendees of the event took an interest in what the E4D officers were distributing. In fact, once the Community Discussion ended, the NCPE team were approached by some people present at the event who, after reading the NCPE leaflet, wanted to ask some questions about the E4D project's activities, and hence the NCPE staff took this opportunity to describe what the E4D project is about, its objectives and its outputs.



Figure 5: Advert for the 2nd event attended by the E4D Team during Pride Week



Figure 6: Photo from the 1st Community Discussion posted on NCPE's social media

Event 3: Community Discussion: 'Are we there yet?'

13TH SEPTEMBER 2021

Objectives of the event

This event was organised in collaboration with 'Għajjejt u Xbajt' ⁵, which describes itself as an online non-judgemental feminist platform. This event was the first ever salon event by this feminist platform held specifically for Pride Week. For this event, a panel made up of several representatives from different local NGOs discussed intersectionality in conversation. The panelists included Mina/Jack Tolu (they/he); a trans-feminist activist from Malta with over ten years experience in campaigning for LGBTIQ+ rights on the national and international level, Maria Pisani an academic, youth and community worker and an activist, Moussa Hammoud Secretary of Allied Rainbow Communities and social activist in equality, anti-discrimination, and anti-racism, and Amanda Cossai an LGBTIQ+ rights activist. The discussion addressed the topic of inclusivity for all in Malta, which was also the theme of this year's Malta Pride. Members of the panel and the public were asked how, in their opinion and from their perspective, we can prioritise moving into a future that is inclusive of everyone in Malta. For this reason, the panel was made of members of the LGBTIQ+ community as well as migrants who shared stories of discrimination and intersectionality.

Role of the E4D team

Since the set-up of this event was a slightly more formal one than on the previous day, the NCPE officers made sure to distribute enough leaflets on each table prior to the discussion. Following the discussion, participants and members of the panel approached the NCPE officers asking about the NCPE and about the project.

Result

The discussion was an interesting one for it included different perspectives of the community with regards to inclusivity and intersectionality. The participants of this event took an interest in the NCPE's leaflet. Following this event, the NCPE also received correspondence from some

⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/ghajjejtuxbajt>

of those present who wanted to be involved in the E4D project and learn more about the activities of the project.



Figure 7: Post uploaded on NCPE's Facebook during the 2nd Community Discussion

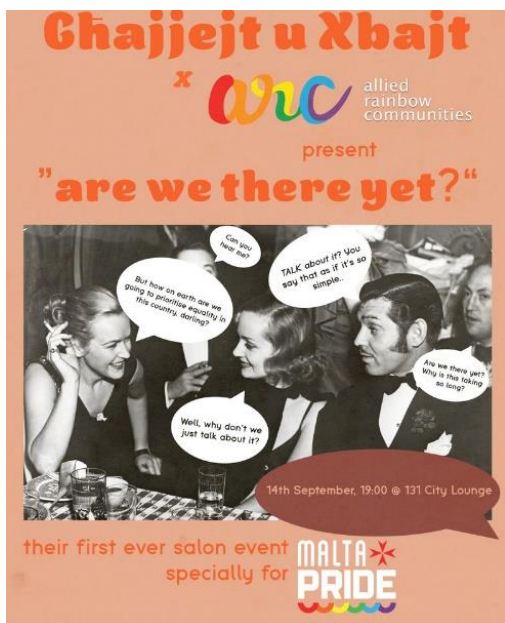


Figure 8: Advert for 3rd event attended by the E4D team during Pride Week

Event 4: 'Kitba Queer' Pride Open Mic Night

15TH SEPTEMBER 2021

Objectives of the event

The event 'Kitba Queer'⁶ was organized in collaboration with another local LGBTIQ+ NGO; the Malta LGBTIQ Rights Movement (MGRM). The idea for the event was an open mic workshop open for all members and allies of the LGBTIQ+ community. It was a safe space where they could come forward and share their writing, be it poems or short stories, about any experience related to their LGBTIQ+ journey. The theme for this workshop was queer writing, and anyone was welcome to participate and do so in any language they felt comfortable in.

Role of the E4D team

The set-up of this event was a somewhat different one from the previous events primarily due to its more relaxed setting in an open-air bar by the sea in Valletta. For this reason, the E4D team prepared several promotional items in advance. These involved t-shirts, sunglasses, lanyards, cups, pens as well as leaflets. All the promotional items featured the E4D logo and were designed according to the project corporate image.

The project team, wearing E4D t-shirts, set up the promotional items at the entrance of the venue, where people could approach them upon entering the venue. Upon seeing the logo with the rainbow colours, the attendees of the event were asking what it stood for, and if they could help themselves to the merchandise. This was a great opportunity for the NCPE officers to mingle with members of the LGBTIQ+ community and explain what the E4D logo stood for, as well as the NCPE, as the national equality body implementing the project.

Result

While the project team was distributing the promotional items, they were explaining NCPE's role as the national equality body responsible for investigating cases of alleged discrimination received from the public. Some had never heard of the NCPE whilst some others were not

⁶ <https://www.gaymalta.com/events/queer-open-mic-night>

sure what the NCPE did. The NCPE team explained how the Commission works for a Maltese society free from any form of discrimination based on several grounds, highlighting especially sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics.



Figure 9: NCPE officers manning the E4D stand at the 'Kitba Queer' event



Figure 10: Post uploaded on NCPE's social media during the 'Kitba Queer' event

Event 5: David Bowie Made Me Gay

17TH SEPTEMBER 2021

Objectives of the event

The event 'David Bowie made me gay'⁷ was a social evening organised in collaboration with local NGO 'Moviment Graffiti'. The idea was for all attendees to come dressed as their favourite LGBTIQ+ musical icon whilst taking part in a quiz filled with games and tunes. The event was once again open to all members and allies of the LGBTIQ+ community, making it a safe space for all attendees to enjoy their night.

Role of the E4D team

This time the E4D team displayed a 4 by 6 feet rainbow flag featuring the NCPE and the E4D logo. By this time, some of the attendees had become familiar with the project's logo and promotional material and had told their acquaintances to help themselves to the promo items on display.

Once again, the E4D team's role was to reach out to whoever was at the event and let them know about the project currently being implemented by NCPE. This task was made easier by the eye-catching promotional material on display which attracted the attention of those present at the social evening.

⁷ <https://www.maltapride.org/event-details/david-bowie-made-me-gay-a-social-evening-by-moviment-graffiti>



Figure 11: Promo items on display at the 6th event during Pride Week

Result

When attendees were approaching the NCPE stand at the venue, the NCPE officers were asking them whether they are aware of who the NCPE is, if they have ever seen the NCPE or the E4D logo. Whilst some attendees were aware of the NCPE and were also following its social media, others were not. This was a good opportunity to explain who the NCPE is, what it does and also explain the objectives of the E4D project. Attendees were asked to like and follow the NCPE social media to keep themselves updated on the upcoming events organized by the NCPE.

Following these interactions, the engagements on NCPE's social media increased substantially.

Event 6: Pride Concert

18TH SEPTEMBER 2021

Objectives of the event

Malta's Pride Week 2021 ended with the open air #YouAreIncluded- Malta Pride Concert, with around 500 attendees. The theme for this year's concert was #YouAreIncluded was chosen to remind everyone that equality is to be inclusive and cannot be a one-size-fits-all. The concert featured a variety of acts that included song, dance, comedy, and a drag competition. The concert was live-streamed across various social media channels.

Role of the E4D team

The E4D team prepared the E4D tote bags with all the promotional items produced for the project. Due to the Covid-19 measures, the NCPE officers was not allowed to put up a stand at the concert, however, the tote bags were placed on the chairs by the organisers of Pride prior to the attendees' arrival.

The officers attending the concert made sure to be waving the E4D rainbow flags to attract the attention of all attendees. By now, members of the LGBTIQ+ community who had attended several of the events of the Pride Week had grown accustomed to both the NCPE and the E4D logos as well as some of the NCPE officers.

Result

The Pride Concert, being the final and main activity of the Malta Pride Week 2021, served as a significant way to end the week with a celebration of diversity and inclusion. It was therefore another occasion for interaction to take place between the NCPE officers and members and allies of the LGBTIQ+ community.

Attendees of the concert who received an E4D tote bag, together with the promotional items also received the leaflet with all the necessary information to contact NCPE in case they want more information on our services, or also in case they want to lodge a complaint.

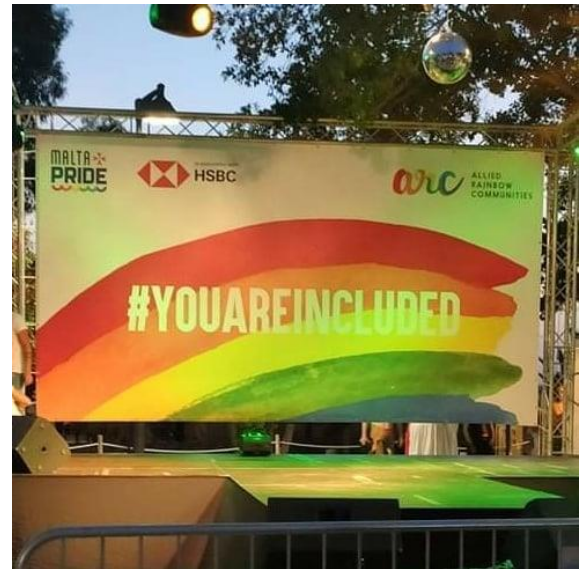


Figure 12: NCPE staff at the Pride Concert carrying the E4D rainbow flag

Conclusion

NCPE's participation in the Malta Pride Week 2021 proved to be fruitful in that it maximised the Commission's exposure, in particular on the SOGIGESC grounds amongst the LGBTIQ+ community.

Even though this year's traditional Malta Pride March could not take place due to the Covid-19 restrictions, the events which the NCPE officers attended were a good opportunity to meet members of the LGBTIQ+ community. This was beneficial to both parties. On one hand, attendees of the events learnt what the NCPE is and what it strives to achieve, and the NCPE officers learnt more about the discrimination the LGBTIQ+ community in Malta still faces nowadays, such as harassment when visiting nightclubs, bars, etc.



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