



17th July 2018

Proposal for the Rainbow Families Network hosted by the Malta LGBTIQ Rights Movement in collaboration with the President's Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society.

Background for idea: How it all originated

Since its inception the Malta LGBTIQ Rights Movement (MGRM) has been working directly with members of the LGBTIQ community. However, in most cases, work is not only done with the individual but also with the family from where the person is coming from. In the seventeen years of operation MGRM has supported and was there for countless families during times of both hardship and celebration. In recent years, especially after MGRM launched the Rainbow Support Service (RSS) in 2013, the team of social workers operating this service continued to offer support to LGBTIQ individuals and their families in a more concrete and consistent way than ever before. As social workers, we often accompany our clients and their relatives during times of crisis or adversity and with a saddened but hopeful heart we terminate the case with an invitation for clients to come back if ever in need. We have met with a number of families who share their difficulties in finding spaces where they can speak of their family life, with the difficulties and joy that this brings, in a safe and non-judgmental environment. Over the past few years we have organised spaces for families to meet and voice their concerns and opinions about matters that are pertinent to policies that would have been discussed at that point. A common feedback that we always received following such meetings was how helpful it was for them to meet with other families going through similar experiences. In light of this, we have been thinking about organising a somewhat more consistent space for families to come together.

The proposal: What can be done?

We are proposing that a Rainbow Families Network is set up that includes parents who identify as LGBTIQ and their children, along with parents of trans* children and the children themselves. This network would be given the opportunity to meet up formally in a social gathering that will be organised by the PFWS in collaboration with RSS & MGRM. During these meets parents and children will be given the opportunity to mingle but also participate in debates or discussions that will be facilitated by professionals coming from MGRM, RSS

Malta LGBTIQ Rights Movement
32, Parish Street, Mosta, MST 2021
+356 2143 0009 / +356 9925 5559 - mgrm@maltagayrights.org



and PFWS. Children will also be given the opportunity to participate in similar debates and discussions which may be facilitated by professionals who have experience of working with children and young people in different settings. The PFWS would contribute towards the network meetings through the facilitation of the groups by professionals and academics who they work with, and through the support of an administrator.

What will be the focus of the debates and discussions?

It is being proposed that during the first meet, a consultation about areas of interest takes place so that RSS may be able to plan sessions accordingly.

When and where will these meets take place?

It is being proposed that meetings are held once a month on a day in the weekend, ideally a Saturday. Meets can take place in the afternoon or early evening depending on the season and/or the weather. MGRM does not have access to safe open spaces and thus it is being proposed that these meets are held at the President's Gardens as per availability.

We look forward to collaboration with the President's Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society, and are open to discuss the parameters and structure of this proposal.

Regards,

Ms Colette Farrugia Bennett
MGRM Acting Coordinator
&
Service Coordinator
Rainbow Support Service

