



Dar Hosea

giving back women their dignity

ANNUAL REPORT | 2024





Dar Hosea

giving back women their dignity

a journey of ten years

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List of Abbreviations:

CAP International	Coalition for the Abolition of Prostitution
CSA	Correctional Services Agency
DH	Dar Hosea
DV	Domestic Violence
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
HTP	Human Trafficking and Prostitution
JCI	Junior Chamber International Malta
MASW	Maltese Association of Social Workers
MCH	Mount Carmel Hospital
MDH	Mater Dei Hospital
RENATE	Religious in Europe Networking Against Trafficking and Exploitation
SCSA	Social Care Standards Authority
VOs	Voluntary Organisations

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Annual Report for 2024, coincides with the 10th year anniversary from Dar Hosea's official operations. It has been a blessing for the team to be able to stop and take stock of what we have achieved over this decade and we are also excited to share this with the general public, benefactors and contributors who have allowed our mission and vision to come to life and assist our service users in the most holistic and empathic way.

We would like to start by taking the time to thank all benefactors, entities, companies as well as individuals, who through their financial and non-financial contributions have allowed us to operate over the past ten years and be a constant presence for the women and girls who come to us for refuge and assistance.

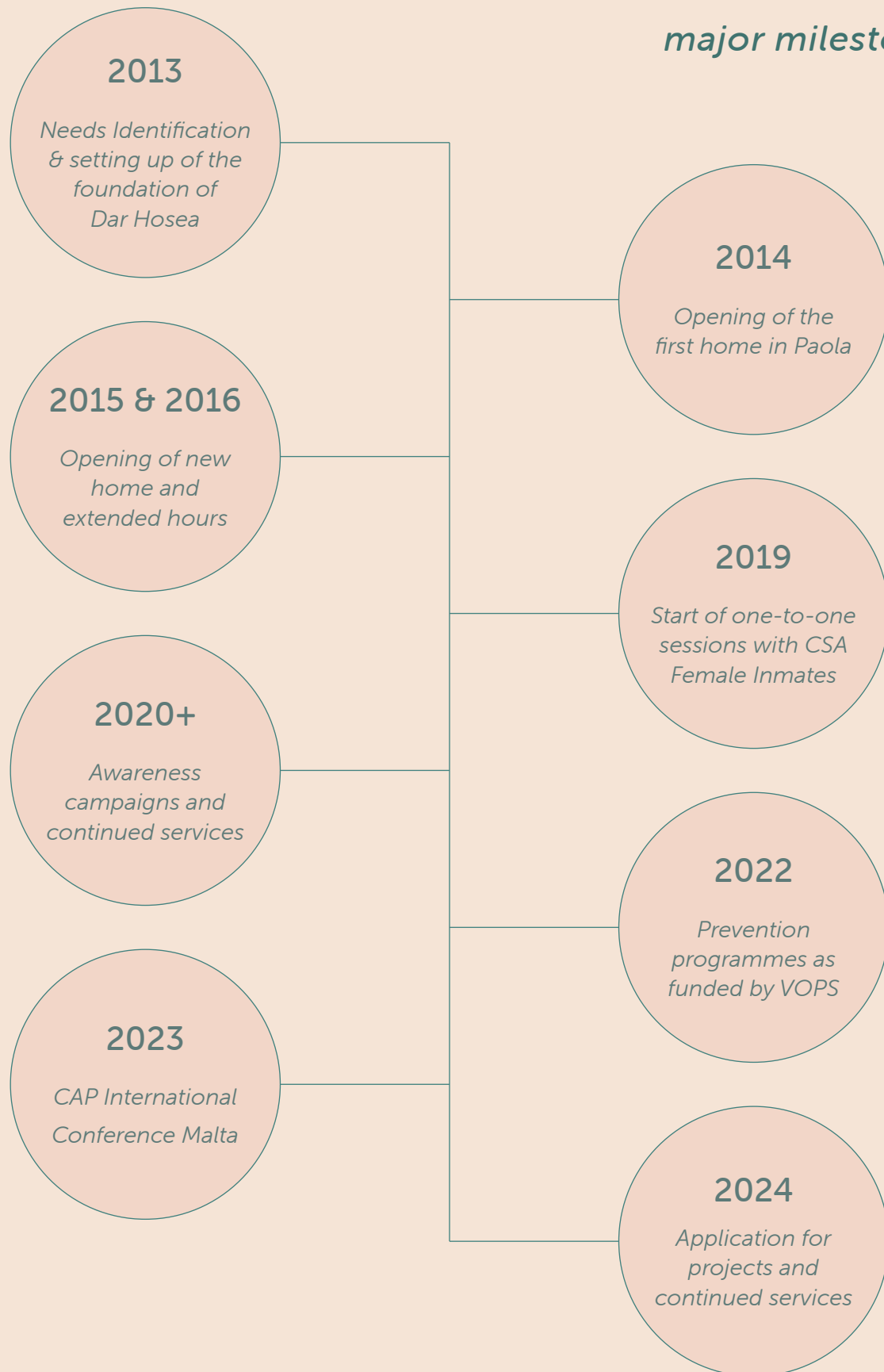


A look in the rear-view mirror: Looking back at the past ten years

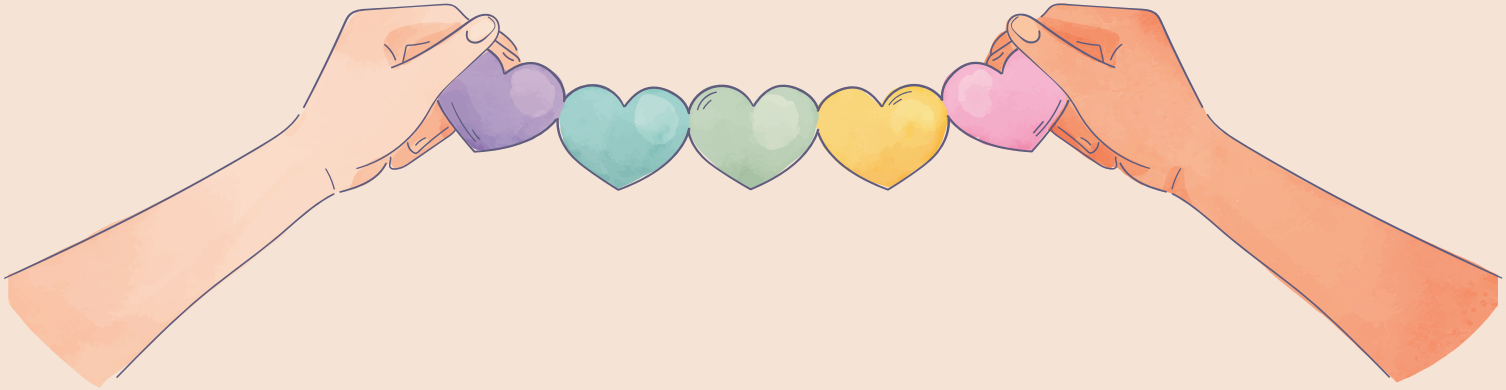
Starting officially offering our services back in 2014 through our first drop-in centre in Paola, we have strived to be a safe space for women and girls who are in the prostitution industry, sexually exploited and/or victims of sex trafficking. From our work with these women, we have come to understand that many times their situations are not a choice they make, but rather a result of a system which has and continues to fail them, many times since childhood, making them victims of violence, abuse and manipulation. For this reason, as a low-threshold drop-in, we aim to create a safe-space for these women, not only to get their basic needs met, but also to hand-hold them in the arduous journey of gaining self-love and respect and in the long-term finding their self-worth allowing to cut off the vicious circles and stand on their own two feet.

This has been our mission and ethos since our inception, that is of helping these women regain their dignity. Over the past ten years, this has been done primarily through the drop-in centre, but we also reached out to women and girls in the various spaces they occupy in society including the Correctional Services Agency, Mater Dei Hospital, Mount Carmel Hospital, rehab programmes, or in their own residences. Wherever the women are, our team feels the need to accompany them – to constantly emphasise our consistent presence in their journey, throughout all their ups and downs. Over these ten years it is estimated that we have reached a total of **370 individuals** through our services. Since 2014 we have also realised that our role is not only that of accompanying the women in their journey, but also to give them a voice through a variety of awareness campaigns, carried out through in person meetings and sessions in schools, parish churches, and the like, through media platforms such as TV, radio, social media, as well as organising our own events, such as the 2023 conference, co-organised alongside the Coalition for the Abolition of Prostitution International under the name of #NeitherSexNorWork: International Conference on the prostitution system. We also carried out prevention programmes to ensure that as much as possible girls avoid falling in such cycles which are so difficult to break with time. The below figure outlines the major milestones over the past decade.

major milestones



The team behind Dar Hosea



Dar Hosea is part of the Association of Friends of Thourret under the auspices of the Sisters of Charity. The service is governed by an executive committee made up of 5 individuals who meet regularly every month to discuss the trajectory of the services provided and any issues which might be arising over the months. Such committee members are professional individuals with years of experience in the field who provide their time and expertise voluntarily.

Moreover, in 2024, Dar Hosea employed 4 employees, including a leader of services, a full-time social worker and a part timer as well as a full-time project assistant. These professionals have key expertise in the area and do their utmost to be present for the women who come into our care, making sure that the services provided reflect the love and care of a family, something which our service users often lack since their early years.

Nevertheless, despite their dedication and passion for the work, they would be unable to meet the high demand for our services without the invaluable work of our volunteers. In 2024, Dar Hosea recorded 61 volunteers having a variety of roles, including the running of our drop-in centre and carrying out external visits to women who are out in the community, professionals providing self-care services, e.g., hairdressing, organising prayers and adoration, maintenance, administration, the running of our charity shop, carrying our marketing and advocacy, as well as a number of professionals (e.g. lawyers, dentist, doctor, psychologist, etc.) who provide their services free of charge to our service users. We would like to take the opportunity to thank again each and every staff member and volunteer who makes a difference in the women's lives, making them feel loved and welcome in a non-judgmental manner.

Services offered in 2024

In 2024, we continued to offer an array of services in line with our mission of giving back the dignity to the women and girls who reach out to us or are referred to us given their involvement in prostitution and /or sexual exploitation. All the work that we do is centred around the empowerment and support of these women in reaching the best version of themselves and taking back control of their life's narrative.

In 2024, we continued to operate the drop-in centre, which is a low-threshold residence whereby the women can come between 09:00 and 17:30 (Monday to Friday) and have meals, wash laundry, rest, engage in therapeutic activities such as having the service of social workers, as well as more creative and artistic activities, amongst others. Women, no matter their physical or psychological state, are welcomed in our drop-in and cared for, putting their immediate needs at the forefront, but also seeking to build a relationship with them which potentially leads to the co-developing of a long-term careplan with our social workers.

During the year, our team members also continued their external visits in the community, whereby women who resided in their own homes were visited and supported through the provision of material items such as groceries, food, toiletries etc., as well as through moral support. Other women were also visited at Mount Carmel Hospital, Mater Dei Hospital, and other residential programmes which they were part of. Our staff also continued the weekly craft sessions provided at the Correctional Services Agency, as well as one-to-one session with specific female inmates, especially those close to moving back into society, so as to prepare a proper care plan to reintegrate in the community whilst preventing them from falling back in the same destructive patterns as before.



Our service users

Hereby we outline the number of women (and accompanying children) whom we assisted over the year, as well as the number of hours which our staff dedicated to interventions and support.

Despite knowing that such statistics are vital for the evaluation of our services and programmes, every woman and girl we come in contact with is seen as an important individual in her own special and unique way. Our aim is to support each one of them and together we strive to make small steps towards a better future, even when the trajectory of these women’s success is non-linear and set-backs are a common place both for the women themselves and for our team. Yet, through sharing these ups and downs, we choose to focus on the wins, big and small, to strive for a better future.

In 2024, we assisted **149 individuals**; 128 women and 21 accompanying children. The women assisted were reached as follows:

Cohort reached	Number
Women visiting the drop-in centre	75
Women reached through other external activities	44
Women visited within the community	9

Moreover, 1,467 hours of interventions from our staff were recorded. These interventions included phone calls to service users and their relatives, phone calls to other persons involved in the care plan of the service users, visits outside Dar Hosea, meetings with professionals, accompanying service users to services and activities outside Dar Hosea, one-to-one sessions and other outreach activities.

Advocacy and awareness raising

In 2024, the team also continued with its awareness raising campaigns as well as advocacy work to give a voice to these women who are often marginalised and placed in the periphery of society, often left unheard and unseen.

For this reason, our team made all efforts to raise awareness about these women's realities in a variety of arenas, including schools, amongst educators, amongst parish groups and with parish priests, at university with social work students, etc. The aim of these sessions was to raise awareness about the lives of these women, as well as to equip people who might directly or indirectly come in contact with victims of sexual exploitation, so as to assist in identifying and reaching out to them. Dar Hosea also participated in Bachelors' and Masters' dissertation research and hosted two social worker students in their placement, since the team believes very much in evidence-based research which could inform policy. Moreover, our staff and volunteers were also present for a number of conferences, including the 4th World Congress for the Abolition of Prostitution in Montreal, Canada, and the RENATE training on Trauma and Mental Health in the Netherlands. Awareness raising was also continued through media presence on TV and radio programmes, newspaper articles and social media platforms (e.g., the 16 days of activism against GBV).



Moreover, in the light of a shifting approach towards prostitution from the policy makers' perspective, our team also made it a point to reach out to them to discuss this evolving policy making context, whereby over the past ten years, prostitution moved from being a taboo to being referred to as 'sex work', often glamorised and portrayed as an activity women engage in out of their own free choice, something which is not reflected in the realities of our service users, which are in such an industry due to abuse, coercion, manipulation and deceit, often from a very young age. Speaking to the policy makers, including MEPs, ambassadors and others, has been important for us to portray the realities of our service users and combat this harmful narrative that prostitution is just another work which women might wish to engage in.

At Dar Hosea, we are very much aware that our work is not done in a vacuum and we cannot operate alone. For this reason, in

2024, we continued to build networks and be part of a variety of platforms, such as the homelessness network, the FSWS roundtables, the Anti-Poverty Forum, the CAP International as well as RENATE. We also maintained a very good relationship with other service providers in the social sphere in Malta, given the number of referrals and shared support provided to our women.

2024 was also a year whereby our work as an NGO, as well as our people has been recognised as well as rewarded. Dr Anna Maria Vella won the title 'Courageous Woman of the Year' given by the US embassy, whilst Dar Hosea service was a nominee for the service of the year by the Malta Association of Social Workers. Maria Borg Pellicano (Leader of Services) was also the nominee of Inspirational Leader by MASW and nominee for the Contribution to World Peace and/or Human Rights by the Junior Chamber International Malta.



Finances

As good practice, to ensure transparency and accountability of our finances, our annual accounts have been audited by a firm engaged by the Association of Friends of Thouret and submitted to the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations.

Apart from the internal raising of revenue through the charity shop, in 2024 Dar Hosea was also the recipient of a number of donations, financial and in-kind, which allowed the team to operate the drop-in centre and the other services described above. One donation campaign which provided our house with meals for our service users was the Move for Meals initiative, whereby the ultrarunner Stephen Sammut Nurminen ran a 765 km charity run in Thailand in aid of the Soup Kitchen OFM and Dar Hosea. We would like to express our gratitude both to Stephen as well as to all other benefactors and contributors. All their donations are greatly valued and appreciated.



Moreover, in 2024, the team also applied and was awarded a number of grants with which they will be able to carry out projects in the coming months. Indeed, the team managed to secure €5,000 from the Academy of Givers to produce a film and disseminate information about the service users' lives. Along with 7 youths, we also managed to be awarded a grant from EUPA Malta, through Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps to run artistic workshops with our service users and ultimately exhibit their work. We also secured €2,000 from the Netherlands' Embassy to carry out further research in our area, to sustain our advocacy through evidence-based research.

Conclusion

We look back at these past ten years with gratitude towards all the people who in some way or another, directly or indirectly, were of support and assistance to our mission. We also thank God for all the people, resources and energy He has provided us with to fulfil His mission of giving these women back the dignity and love they truly deserve as children of God.

We conclude this report with the stories of our own service users, since we believe that ultimately, they remain the protagonists of our work. We thank them for sharing their vulnerabilities with us, as well as for trusting us with their life stories, a trust which we guarantee we do not take for granted, especially knowing the hurt and betrayals many of them have faced over the years by those closest to them. In view of all their circumstances we are humbled at having the opportunity to accompany them in their journey towards renewed dignity and remain committed to continue doing so in the years to come.

A WORD OF THANKS



We, the entire team of Dar Hosea (DH), would like to commence this Annual Report by taking the opportunity to thank all the generous organisations and individuals who have always supported our operations and made the running of our organisation possible through their time, energy, financial support and other donations in kind.

Over the past ten years we have been blessed by the generosity of our benefactors who trust us and support us in our work and enable us to maintain the upkeep and daily running of our residence as well as other external services we offer, thus making an impact in the lives of our service users.

Both the running of the drop-in centre as well as all other services we provide (e.g., external visits etc.) require resources and financial capacity to cover items such as utility bills, maintenance, staff costs, transport costs as well as the provision of daily needs such as groceries and materials for crafts which are used in therapy sessions, amongst others. Therefore, we would like to extend our gratitude to all organisations which have in some way or another contributed to our cause, be it financially or otherwise. A list of these benefactors can be found on page 16.

Moreover, we would also like to thank all the private individuals who contribute, sometimes asking to remain anonymous. Each contribution is an invaluable puzzle piece in our service and our operations would not be possible without each and every one of you.

We assure you that none of the contributions received are taken for granted and that each donation enables us to open our doors daily and welcome the women, providing them with a safe space where they feel protected, respected and cared for and where we strive to give them back their dignity of which they have been robbed through their involvement in the world of prostitution and all the intricate web of other activities this brings with it.

Moreover, your donations also help us in continuing our advocacy and awareness campaigns to dismantle the stereotypes, stigma, as well as lack of knowledge which often arise when speaking about realities of violence and the trauma that women in prostitution endure, as well as the gender-based violence (GBV) dimension linked to it. Through your support we are able to continue advocating for these women and girls who otherwise would be marginalised and possibly left unheard.



list of benefactors

A Drop in the Ocean

Academy of Givers

Autounion Car Rental Malta

Bad Boy Cleaning Services Ltd

Best Print Qrendi

BRND WGN

Confraternity of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Charity

Coalition for the Abolition of Prostitution (CAP)

Collinson Group

Djakonija - Arċidjoċesi ta' Malta

Embassy of the Kingdom of The Netherlands in Malta

Energy and Water Agency

European Solidarity Corps

FEMALE. Community

Garnish

HLL

HSBC Bank Malta

Immaculate Conception School

Lincs Trading

Malta Food Agency

Malta Food Bank Foundation

Malta Information Technology
Agency (MITA)

Ministry for Social Policy and
Children's Rights

Montaldo Insurance Agency

Move for Meals

Moviment tal-Fokolari

MRC Middle School Naxxar

MSSP Oratory Community

Parroċċa Familja Mqaddsa, Iklin

Parroċċa Lunzjata, Balzan

Positive Parenting Malta

RCI Insurance Ltd

Salvo Grima Foundation

Santwarju Qalb ta' Ġesù, Żebbug

Sisters of Charity of St Jeanne Antide

Splash & Fun Water Park

St Augustine College

TantiFy Handmade Artisanal Gifts

Youth Services Malta within the
Directorate Alternative Care of FSWS


WHO ARE WE?

Dar Hosea (DH) makes part of a non-governmental organisation called Friends of Thoutet, operating under the auspices of the Sisters of Charity. Originally ideated in 2013, and opening officially its doors in May 2014, the home has ever since aimed to provide a safe space for women and girls who are or were in prostitution, victims of sex trafficking, women exploited for sex as well as women at risk of becoming victims of such a system.

Through the compassion and care of our team, made up of both professionals and volunteers (see pages 28-44), we strive to fulfil our **mission** of assisting all women who reach out to us, through our drop-in centre, as well as outside of our premises by offering them a safe environment, which they often lack in their daily lives and on the streets. As a team, we strive to accompany these women in their complex and often long journeys of finding their self-worth, dignity and fulfilment, by welcoming them unconditionally, with respect, compassion and acceptance. Our services are offered to any woman who reaches out to us irrespective of age, nationality, socio-economic status and religion.

Our **ethos** is that of restoring a sense of humanity and dignity to these women in prostitution, and provide them with a sense of empowerment and resilience. The team at DH each day works tirelessly to provide every woman with unconditional and non-judgemental positive regard and a sense of belonging which supports her in taking back control of her life and narrative, be who she wants to be and realise her dreams.





The name of 'Dar Hosea' was chosen in line with the Mission and Ethos of the house. Based on the writings from the Old Testament, the Book of Hosea speaks of Hosea (in Hebrew meaning 'salvation'), a prophet who was asked by God to "[go] and marry a harlot. Love her and give her back her lost dignity" (Chapter 2). The name therefore reflects closely what the team at DH tries to achieve, namely, providing dignity, love and respect to women who have been used and abused, denied any means of support and marginalised. By genuinely providing compassion, love and care, including professional expertise, we strive to help women overcome the experiences of abuse, violence and trauma they experience in a life in prostitution. We aim to help each woman to reconnect with herself, restore her authentic self and combat the sense of loss and shattered identity which prostitution brings with it. Through such healing and reconnection with oneself, we believe that women can regain the ability to reintegrate in the community and forge an alternative path forward, a path of dignity and self-love.



LOOKING IN THE REAR-VIEW MIRROR

In 2024, DH celebrated ten years from the opening of its first premises and provision of its services. The journey has not been easy, yet with the perseverance of our founding members, staff and volunteers, the support of our benefactors and with eternal gratitude to God who has given us the fortitude to keep on pushing forward, we can look back over these ten years with pride and confidence that we managed to impact some of the women's lives.

A lot has already been done – yet, a lot of work remains to be done. We therefore believe that it is opportune that in this Annual Report we take time to stop, reflect and take stock of the major milestones obtained over the past decade, as a basis of our future work. In this section we highlight these major steps which also give a context and perspective of where we are headed.

A constant 'home' over these ten years



In 2013, when DH was still being conceptualised, discussions around the harms and violence that women in prostitution encountered were not spoken about but rather kept hidden and considered a 'taboo'. Women in prostitution were often seen as deviant and criminals, often looked down upon and marginalised by the rest of society. This approach made it hard for such women to receive the care and support, including appropriate exit plans/programmes, that they needed. This was so even in cases whereby their involvement in such an industry was a result of exploitation, fraud, force and coercion and being victims to a system which failed and continues to fail them.

Having worked for multiple years in the area of addiction, clearly highlighted to the professional experts, who then became the founding members of DH, that external forces and other social issues, including drug abuse, poverty, homelessness, childhood abuse, family disconnect, coercion, usury and fraud all played a major role in pushing women in prostitution and/or keeping them in it. This hands-on experience was also further confirmed through supporting research from abroad, which seemed to coincide with the findings in the local community.

Such intersectionality of issues was a clear indicator that such women required continuous and concrete assistance in the form of a 'safe space'. This propelled the founding members to set-up a first sub-committee and carry out further field-research, such as scouting Marsa to identify the current needs for the services and interviewing women in the Correctional Services Agency (CSA) sentenced for loitering, to better understand what such women required.

The narratives of the women, despite different, all seemed to have a common thread of how prostitution was led from and/or where leading to abusive and destructive patterns, damaging these women's lives and self-worth, making them suffer on different levels, including physically, mentally, and emotionally. Women often ended up in a vicious circle of sustaining their drug addictions through the money made in prostitution, but then needing to consume more substances to endure the abuse and anguish faced through prostitution itself. These women seemed to have nowhere to turn to, where they could restore their dignity and be respected unconditionally.

For this reason, after searching for a house in 2013, DH opened its first premises in Paola in May 2014, with initially having one service user.

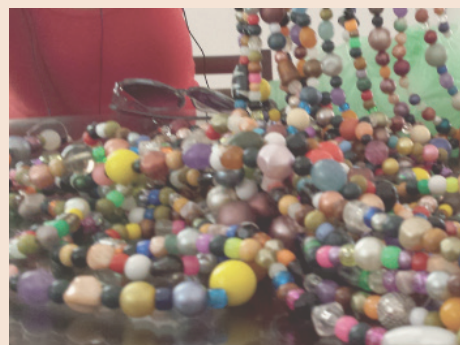



In 2014, the team won a €24,727 grant for a 2-year period as part of the Irene Project funded by the EEA Start-up Fund and in 2015 opened formally their premises in their new current location, providing extended hours to the service users, which again were further extended in 2016.

Since these initial years, the drop-in centre remains a constant point of reference to these women, and a 'home' for those seeking refuge and a safe space from their daily realities. Coming from harsh and disrupted realities, with little structure and certainty, often having to face homelessness, poverty and lack of a sense of belonging, DH provides a rare 'constant' for these women. A space to which they can turn to time and time again, unconditionally finding the support of the team whenever this is required.

It is worth noting that over these years, DH has strived to be more than just a drop-in centre or a set of services provided to these women to cater for their needs in that particular moment. DH's objective has been that of creating a home-like environment and an ambience of a loving family to these women who are very often deprived of any type of care, some of whom, since childhood. Offering such a family-like system is vital to assist them in their journey towards self-love and regaining dignity.


Women in prostitution face a very unsettled and sporadic life, which is also reflected in their attendance to our drop-in centre. Being a welcoming and open home for them means that there are no rules or requirements around the frequency of their attendance. Some women drop by regularly, whilst others do so sporadically, when and how they feel the need. Here, the support, patience and understanding of our staff members is vital – to ensure that no matter how often the woman knocks on our door, someone is there to welcome her non-judgmentally.





When I was asked if I wanted to be a volunteer at Dar Hosea I accepted immediately never imagining that this new experience in my life could become so dear to me. After a year, when Dar Hosea started the outreach in prison, I also felt that I could go out of my comfort zone and I offered to go there once a week to give Craft lessons. It is such a pleasure and gratifying for me to see them leave the lesson with a smile on their face and happy that they succeed to show their hidden talents.

One of the phrases which they tell us is: "During these 2 hours we feel as if we are not in prison". During Covid, when Dar Hosea was closed, I continued the contact with the service users by going to their home to take cooked meals and whatever they needed.



I feel privileged and thankful for caring and empathising with these women, in fact, after all these years, I am still here and I never looked back. I find that it is more rewarding to give than to receive. Some of the many phrases by the service users such as: "This is the only place where we feel safe, and sincere love asking for nothing in return", or after finishing lunch they say: "The meal was delicious and we can feel that it was cooked with love", really make my day and fills my heart with joy. I wish that I could give more of my time to be with them.

Maria Buckle, 10-year volunteer

The past ten years in numbers

As specified earlier, the first-drop in centre started with 1 attendee. Nowadays, through a mix of more awareness amongst our service users, the trust gained over the years, but also the increasing need for our services, we have seen a substantial increase in the number of service users over the past years [Figure 1] as well as the attendance numbers per year [Figure 2].¹ A small dip in attendance of women at the drop-in centre was recorded in 2020 due to the COVID-19 restrictions.

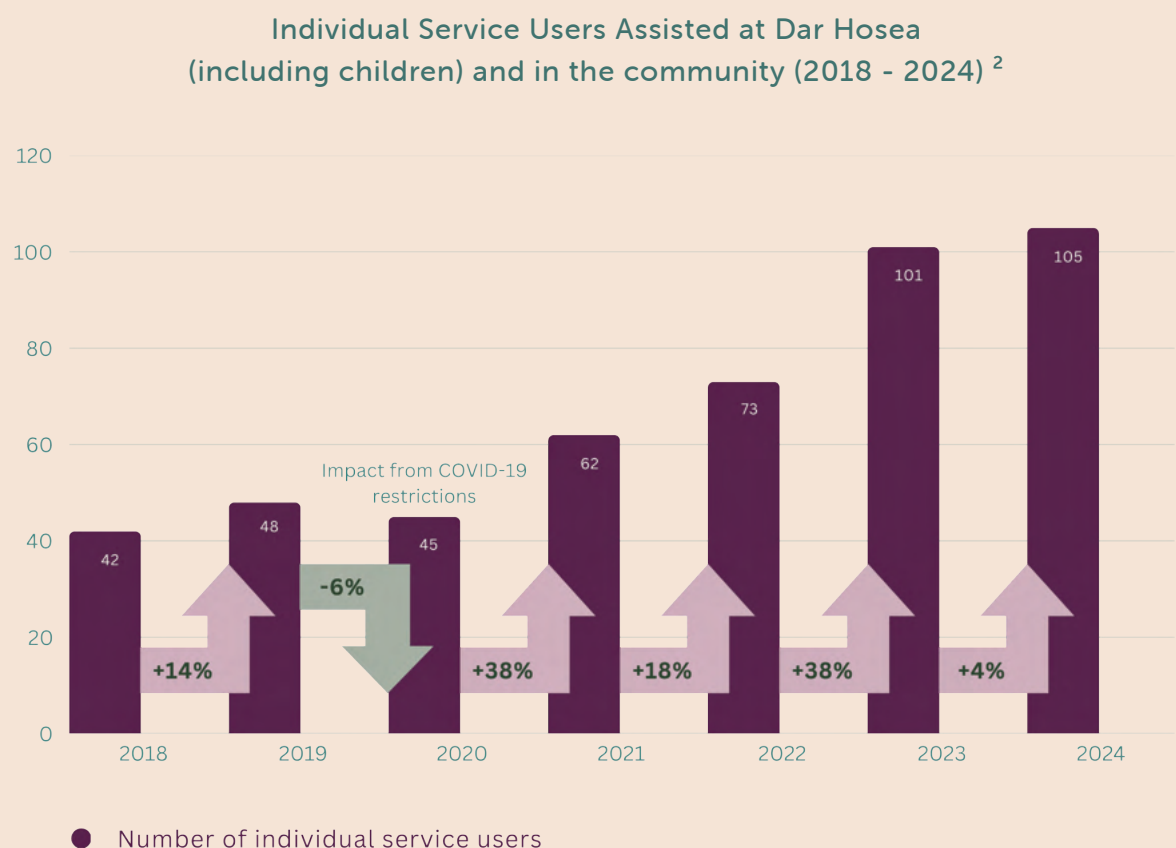


Figure 1

¹ Data has not always been collected in the same manner and format, therefore the figures hereby outlined do not show the full picture since 2014. Nevertheless, the increasing pattern in demand for our services can be confirmed from these figures as well.

² These figures exclude the number of service users reached through outreach activities such as craft sessions at the CSA.

Service users' yearly attendance at Dar Hosea

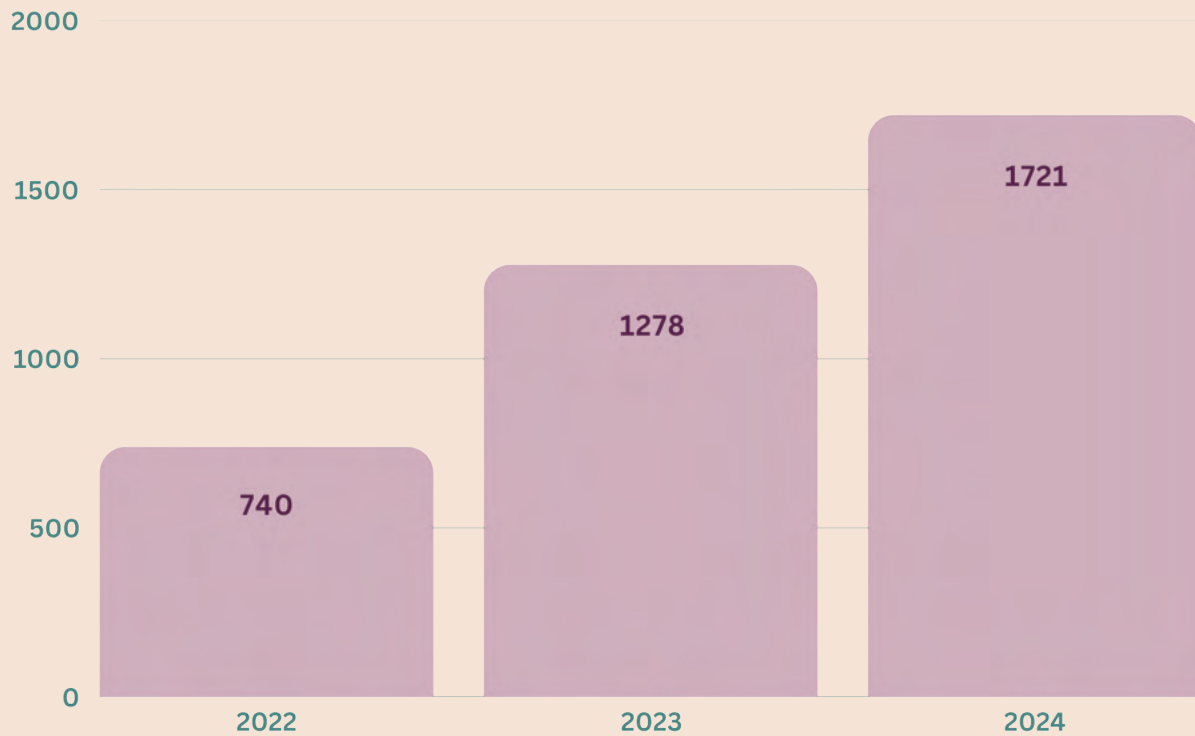


Figure 2

As will be specified in the Services Section (pp. 45 -59), over the years, the team at DH also realised that some women do not reach out to us through the drop-in centre. Instead, either through the referral systems and/or through direct contact outside of the home, various women still request our assistance. For this reason, over these past ten years, the DH team has assisted a number of women through their outreach programmes such as at the CSA with female inmates, as well as through other external services such as visiting in their homes, accompanying them to various medical, legal or other appointments and being present for these women every step of the way – if requested to do so. The overall number of service users (drop-in centre, including children, as well as external services) assisted since 2014 amounts to circa 370 individuals.

A decade of advocacy, awareness raising and more...



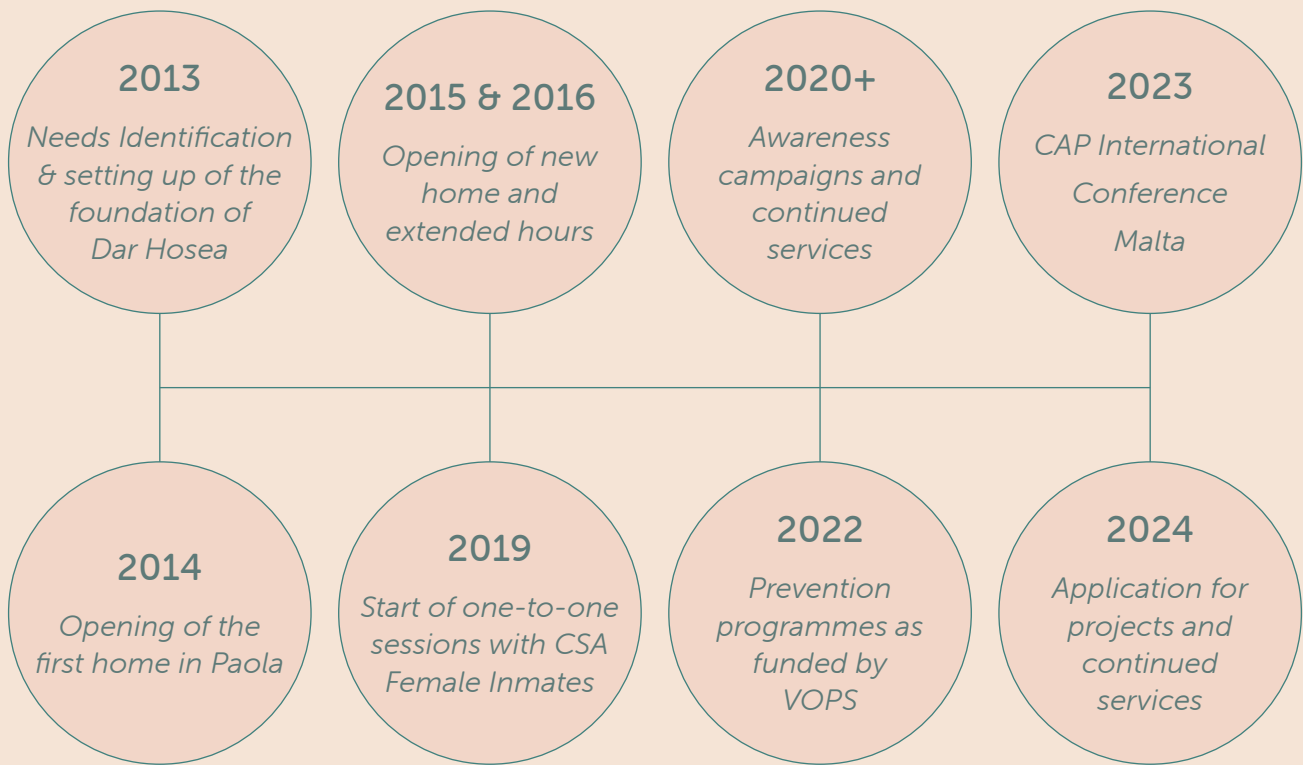
Over the past decade, since its inception DH has also recognised its role to be an advocate for the women it assists on a daily basis, both with the general public as well as with policy makers. It also made sure to be present in the local and foreign arena discussing issues related to domestic violence (DV), gender based violence (GBV), human trafficking, exploitation, prostitution and other social issues which are in some way inter-related to the realities of the women and girls who seek DH's support.

DH participated in a number of local and foreign conferences and training sessions. We also embarked on a series of prevention programmes (since 2022, funded by VOPS funds) and awareness campaigns, which were carried out over the years, both in person (e.g., visiting schools, parish groups, University etc.) as well as through media platforms (e.g., TV and radio) and social media platforms (Instagram and Facebook).

In November 2022, DH also became officially a member of the Coalition for the Abolition of Prostitution (CAP International). This was followed by potentially one of the major milestones for DH in terms of advocacy, in September 2023, whereby we co-organised a conference entitled *#NeitherSexNorWork: International Conference on the prostitution system*, in collaboration with CAP International. This conference brought together a panel of experts, state representatives and international institutions to discuss the best approaches in the fight against the system of prostitution and human trafficking.

Moving forward

This section has highlighted only some of the major milestones which occurred at DH over the past decade. In the illustration below, we are also presenting the major milestones which occurred since 2013. This helps to give a context both to this 2024 Annual Report, as well as where the organisation is headed moving forward.



As will be discussed in this Annual Report, 2024 proved to be yet another dense and busy year for the DH team. The drop-in centre continued to play a vital role for women coming in contact with DH, whilst external activities were also carried out regularly. Moreover, the team also applied for a number of projects with the aim of continuing its advocacy and awareness work in the coming months and years.

In order to outline this work done in 2024, the next section will present the team behind DH, including the executive committee, employed staff and volunteers. This will be followed by a section outlining the services provided in the past year as well as the service users reached. Another section will outline the advocacy and awareness campaigns carried out, and finally a final section will outline the funding programmes, donations and grants applied for and won in terms of our services, which will continue in the months and years to come.

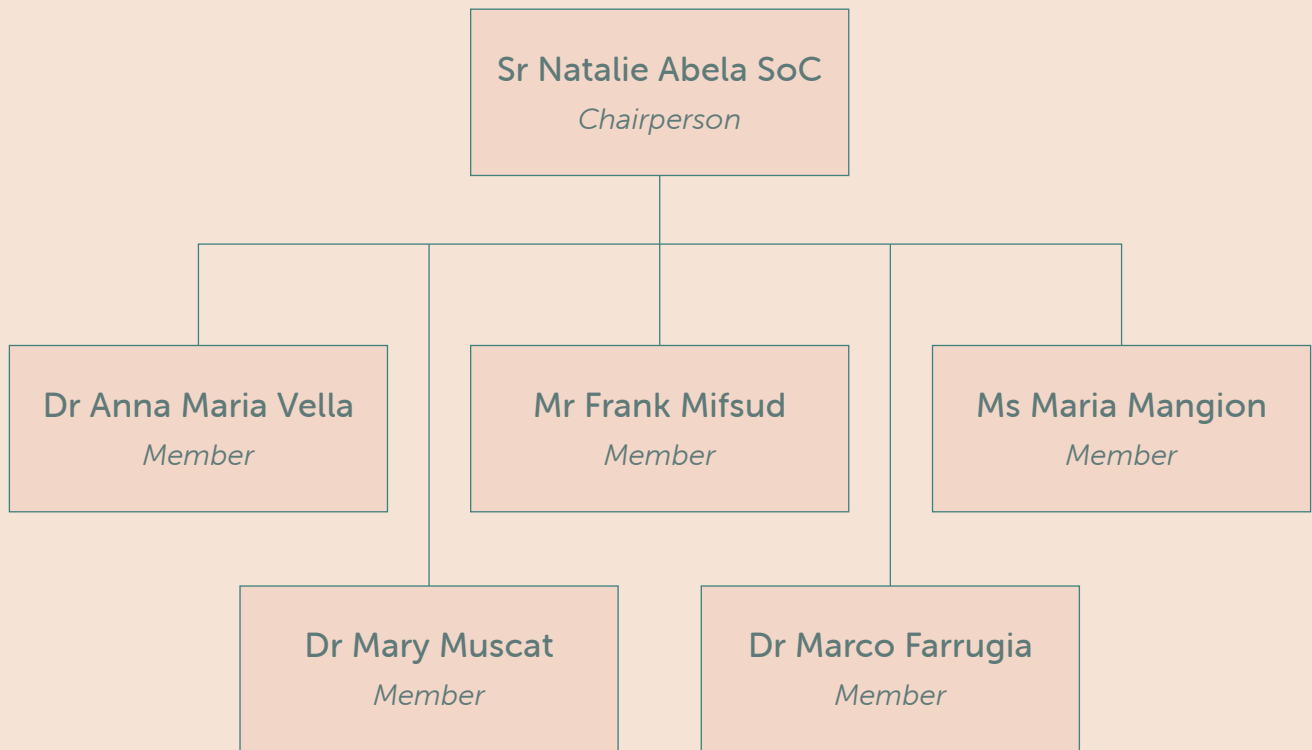
THE TEAM BEHIND DAR HOSEA



As specified above, DH was originally founded in 2013 by St Jeanne Antide Foundation. In 2017, DH joined the Association of Friends of Thouret operating under the auspices of the Sisters of Charity. The organisation is registered with the Commissioner for the Voluntary Organisations under the VO number 1365. DH is overseen by an executive committee composed of a team of professionals with ample experience in the field offering their expertise on a pro bono basis. It is worth noting that ten years on, some of the founding members remain part of the committee, bringing in their expertise, experience and passion for this project.

As per normal practice, the management committee in 2024 held monthly meetings to discern on the trajectory of the organisation as well as to discuss and authorise any necessary decisions. Such frequency allows the management committee to remain in direct contact with the day-to-day operations of the organisation and helps the members to avoid simply becoming a bureaucratic presence. The composition of the management committee as at 2024 is illustrated below.

Management committee



The multidisciplinary team at DH is made up of professional experts as well as committed and energetic volunteers who dedicate their time and energy to create a warm and home-like environment in the house, as well as reach out to women who we accompany outside of our premises, wherever that might be. We pride ourselves on the different expertise, knowledge, wisdom as well as talents of all our staff members. Without their daily commitment and passion for the job, the smooth running of our services would not be possible.

Professional employees

Our team of professional paid staff is small, yet, full of enthusiasm and passion for the cause DH works for. Despite the challenging work they face on a daily basis, the team remains committed and enthusiastic, always looking for innovative ways on how to create a warm and welcoming home for our service users and continue to provide their professional services, in a practical, flexible yet consistent manner. This is done, despite the fluidity of the service itself, given the nature of the service and varying needs of the service users. This flexibility, together with the constant collaboration with volunteers, allows the staff to provide efficient services, as required.

In 2024, DH had three full timers and a part timer as indicated in the organigram below. The team of experts was led by the 'Leader of Services' who was responsible for the running of the home and the duties carried out. She was supported by two social workers (one of which, a part-timer) and a Project Assistant. The strength of the team lies in the constant close collaboration and communication, as well as the provision of mutual support, especially when faced by difficult and complex situations and realities. Our professional staff also plays a vital role in supporting and training the team of volunteers.



Our volunteers and their roles

The above-mentioned dedicated team of paid professional employees do their utmost to be present for each and every woman at the time of need, including at intake and throughout the time they spend in the house and/or when they are visited externally. Yet, the limited resources available and the increasing demand makes it impossible to be present for each and every woman without the assistance of our valuable volunteers.

Our volunteers come from very diverse backgrounds and through their unique passions, talents, skills and availabilities they remain vital contributors to the work we do. Moreover, in their own way they all contribute to the family-like warmth we attempt to provide, whereby the women who drop-in from their distressing realities on the outside will find someone who is ready to listen to them, offer them a cup of tea, provide them with a nutritious meal, assist them in their different needs and simply spend some time with them.

In 2024, DH was blessed with a team of **61 tireless volunteers** who joined us regularly and who generously assisted us in various areas of our services, ranging from direct contact with the women and girls, administrative responsibilities, manning of the charity shop, maintenance and marketing and advocacy, amongst others. The various roles of our volunteers are outlined below.

Day-to-day operations of the house

As mentioned above, the number of paid staff is limited and therefore it is vital that they work hand-in-hand with our volunteers to run the house on a daily basis. Our volunteers make sure that the women who reach out to us always find someone welcoming them at the door, providing them with an ear to listen, daily homely and wholesome meals (breakfast, lunch and snacks), assistance in daily chores such as doing laundry, etc.

They also make sure that each woman is celebrated whenever she reaches a particular milestone or has a personal festivity (e.g., concluding a rehabilitation programme or celebrating a birthday). At DH we believe that each achievement is noteworthy and should be celebrated. This also applies to the children of the service users, who sometimes accompany their mothers and also need the support and the loving care of our staff members.

Moreover, our volunteers also provide our service users with creative outlets which act as an extension of the formal therapy sessions carried out with the professional staff, whereby the women can be creative and uncover skills and talents which they have, making it conducive to interior healing. Such activities include artistic activities, craft making, candle making, jewellery making, gardening and writing workshops, amongst others.

These activities, along with the consistent presence of the volunteers in the house, enable bonds to be formed with the women seeking refuge at DH. Volunteers are seen as reference points by our service users who often feel they can open up to them about their struggles they face. For this reason, all our volunteers are trained on how to handle such conversations in an empathic way providing a non-judgemental and safe space of conversation.



Self-care services

Part of our work at DH is that of assisting the women to love and respect themselves and feel worthy. For this reason, we are great proponents of self-care which is often done through one-to-one sessions with our counsellors, therapists and social workers to work on their interior health. Yet, over time we have come to notice that external self-care can also boost their morale and self-image. For this reason, a professional hairdresser regularly visits DH to provide free services to the women, allowing them to see themselves as beautiful again.

Professional services team

As part of the work carried out within DH's services, we also have a very important group of individuals who provide their professional expertise on pro-bono basis. Their input is vital to complement each and every woman's individual care-plan, as our service users would require different interventions. Within this team, we have:

- a qualified senior social worker who provides supervision to our employees;
- a qualified psychologist who helps service users in addressing past and present traumas allowing for the healing journey to begin and continue;
- a physician who visits our service users when needed and gives consultations especially in relation to sexual health;
- a midwife who supports our service users in sexual health education as well as supports any women who might be pregnant;
- a dentist who provides services at his own clinic for free;
- professional lawyers who assist our service users on any legal issues whilst also assisting us in our advocacy work;
- an architect who assists the DH team whenever we need to apply for permits, prepare plans, designs and similar tasks during construction, repairs and maintenance.

External activities

For a variety of reasons, a number of service users do not make it to the drop-in centre themselves. This could be due to physical illness, emotional struggles and other barriers. Yet, they still seek our assistance. This is where our volunteers, once again play a very vital role in visiting and following up with these women. During such visits the volunteers often provide them with groceries, meals, clothes and toiletries, amongst others, depending on their needs. The services provided usually tend to be centred around the service users and tailor made to make sure that the needs of the women and girls are met. In other instances, our volunteers also accompany the women to medical appointments, legal and court appointments and to similar services. This is based on our belief that we should be present wherever the women need us, thus making us an integral and consistent presence in their journeys. Again, apart from the practical assistance provided, the volunteers are trained to always be open for conversation and have empathy to the stories that the women might want to share during such interactions.

Administrative team

As with any other NGO or household, DH faces a lot of administrative and paperwork. All voluntary workers and staff members diligently make sure that all administrative records are duly filled in, so that the administrative team can send the data to the respective authorities when necessary (e.g., government bodies, banks, the executive committee of the NGO itself). All of this, whilst making sure that all the administrative data is recorded and maintained in the appropriate filing system and kept up to date.

The administrative team also keeps records of the NGOs statistics which feeds in annual reports such as this one, as well as applications for funds, research initiatives and other activities which might have data requirements. It is worth outlining that all data is collected, retained and maintained as required by GDPR rules.

They also take care of the Social Care Standards Authority (SCSA) yearly license which requires to be renewed annually and which entails a lot of paperwork to ensure that the home is compliant to health and safety regulations and operating within the legal framework. The team members of the administrative team are also responsible for keeping the financial records in order whilst also coming up with fundraising ideas aimed to sustain our services.

Maintenance team

Just like any other house, DH requires maintenance and repairs periodically, as fixtures and fittings go through wear and tear and require fixing or replacing, amongst others. This is where our maintenance team kicks in and dedicates their free time to work on the different needs of the house to ensure that the home remains functional, operational and in good shape. Works include repairing, fixing, painting as well as the general upkeep. This ensures that the space offered to the service users remains dignified and welcoming, reflecting the safety and care of our ethos.

Charity-shop team

As part of DH's ongoing fund raising, a group of volunteers run a charity shop in Birkirkara, whereby they collect, sort and organise donations, price them and run the shop daily. The proceeds from the shop help to sustain the running costs of our services.

Moreover, our charity shop also aligns with our concept of operating as sustainably as possible. Such an endeavour acts as our contribution towards the environment, whereby we support recycling and reusing of items, be it clothes, toys or homeware, just to mention a few. The adoption of such a circular economic flow and encouraging people to thrift rather than buy fast-fashion, whilst also saving them money, is in line with our aims of decreasing our carbon footprint and waste.

The charity shop also allows us to provide affordable items to those in need, over and above our own service users. This is something which we hold close to heart, since we are aware that we operate in a larger community which extends beyond the four walls of our house.

It is worth noting that despite the fact that the charity-shop volunteers might not be in close contact with the service users, we still make sure to provide them with information sessions and training in terms of our services, so as to ensure that all our volunteers embrace our mission and ethos and also feel like they belong and have a sense of purpose.



Marketing and advocacy team

As will be explained further in the awareness and advocacy section (pp. 60-68) the role of DH has also evolved over the ten years of its operation, in that it not only aims to meet the needs of the service users and walk with them in their journey of healing, but DH feels it also needs to act as an advocate for these women, who many a times are marginalised and stigmatised in society by the general public. Moreover, as policy makers shift their view on such issues towards a more open and liberal view, many times the abuse, violence and traumas that these women pass through are disregarded, with 'sex work' being described as a personal choice rather than a result of years of coercion and manipulation, as we see in the cases of our service users.


For this reason, a group of volunteers in the marketing and advocacy team work on two parallel tracks. On the one hand the team works to make our services more known to the general public, through various marketing campaigns such as social media platforms and other media sources (e.g., such as TV and radio programmes as well as newspaper articles). This helps in making our services known both to the public as well as potential service users seeking assistance. At the same time, it also helps in raising funds for our cause.

On the other hand, the advocacy team aims to lobby and bring more awareness around the reality of the women we work with, both with the general public as well as with policy makers. The advocacy team is also responsible for applying for funding for advocacy programmes and participating in awareness raising events and conferences as well as organising our own events, such as the conference in 2023.

Prayers and adoration team

Since November 2020, a group of volunteers has taken on the initiative of organising regular prayer sessions and monthly adorations with prayers said for the intentions of all professional staff, volunteers and service users. Being a religious organisation, we believe that such a space and time, is vital for the work we do, as such prayers give us the strength to keep on operating in a niche which tends to be disheartening in nature.





Up to two years ago I had never even heard of Dar Hosea. It was only through a conversation with a friend of mine that I discovered what this organisation was all about, and I was immediately struck by the unique and worthwhile service it provides to a minority of women who are mostly shunned and marginalised by society. Upon learning more about the role Dar Hosea plays in the lives of these women, most of whom have suffered great trauma and abuse from early childhood, I began to understand how vital this drop-in centre is to them.

We volunteers do not offer any particular skills in our contribution. By simply offering a warm welcome to every service user, a cup of coffee, a home-made meal, and most of all a sympathetic ear, we can see that “our” women are getting what they need most at that particular moment – to feel that they matter, and that they are loved unconditionally. I am sure that I speak on behalf of all the volunteers when I say that seeing these women, despite their often-desperate situation, smile and even laugh in this haven we provide, gives us joy and makes us feel that our time here is truly well-spent.

Denise Farrugia, Volunteer

Heartfelt gratitude towards our volunteers

The below table illustrates the number of volunteers per team and the number of hours they have dedicated to DH in 2024.

Volunteering Team	Number of volunteers ³	Number of man-hours dedicated
Direct work with women (drop-in centre & external visits)	25	3,120
Administration	2	624
Maintenance	3	384
Charity shop	13	2,500
Marketing/ Advocacy	10	70
Prayer and adoration co-ordination	6	12
Professionals offering pro-bono services	4	>50
Executive Committee	5	24

We hereby take the opportunity to thank all the individuals who dedicate their time to our cause, giving freely of themselves to help accompany the women and girls who trust us with their vulnerabilities.

We also want to especially acknowledge and show our immense gratitude to those volunteers who have accompanied us throughout this 10-year journey, since the very start and who have been and remain a constant reference point for our staff members as well as service users.

³ It is worth noting that some individuals contributed to more than one service, being the reason why the total number of volunteers in this table tallies to more than the total 61 volunteers mentioned above.

*To all volunteers
Old and New
To all kind hearts
Of which are few.*

*We all appreciate
Your love and devotion,
You deserve a raise,
And a promotion.*

*The care that you give
The love that you show,
You don't have to tell us
Because we all know..*

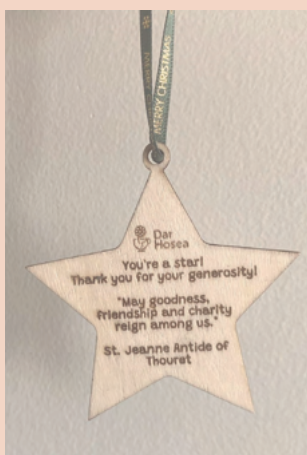
*Come rain and shine
You are always here
And the love that you give
To our eyes; brings a tear.*

- a poem by one of the women
attending the services at Dar Hosea



Sustaining and developing our staff members and volunteers

Working in this field can be rewarding when we see our service users progress and succeed, yet progress is not linear and our staff members and volunteers live through numerous setbacks and relapses together with the service users on a regular basis. Such setbacks can often be discouraging and demoralising for all those involved, yet through the mutual support of the team members, we understand that it is important to keep pushing on and continue providing the unconditional support to the women who seek our help. This means that our own staff members and volunteers require all the support and assistance possible to remain perseverant and not be disheartened by the situations they are faced with. For this reason, in 2024, at DH we continued to provide a number of support services to all our staff members.



supervision and support

All staff members involved in the service provision and in direct contact with the women at DH, be it paid professionals or volunteers, are provided with regular support and supervision, whereby they are assisted in processing the realities they face and any concerns, struggles and feelings which might crop up through the work carried out. This ensures us that the people providing the services are also safeguarded. In 2024, circa 100 hours of supervision was provided to our staff members (including volunteers).

adequate training

Staff members and volunteers are frequently provided with necessary training from experts and professionals, given that they face problematic situations on a daily basis. This helps us to support our staff members and equip them with the required expertise and knowledge required when faced by complex situations and the difficulties that the cohort we work with bring with them. A variety of topics have been covered over the years in terms of training, including but not limited to, empathy, resilience, addiction, trauma, mental-health, trauma informed care and gender sensitive approaches.

In 2024, training focused particularly on drugs and their effects, supporting our service users and their care-plans, as well as training specifically on advocacy.

regular staff meetings

At DH we believe that all those involved should take ownership of the activities being carried out in the house, thus all paid professionals as well as volunteers who work directly in contact with our service users, meet up regularly to discuss any issues which might crop up from time to time, as well as to discuss the way forward for the house and possible changes that could benefit the women attending our services, amongst others. Staff members also bring forward any feedback shared by the women to be discussed and evaluated through these meetings. In 2024, 12 staff meetings were held (one every month) spanning over more than 24 hours.



operational strategy meetings

Apart from the regular staff meetings discussing ongoing issues, in 2024, the management and staff at DH introduced the idea of having operational strategy meetings, aimed towards creating a long-term operational strategy for the organisation, rather than stopping at the day-to-day running of the services. The nature of the services provided often lead to management by crisis, or fire-fighting situations which would have been unexpected. This often means that the resources, time and efforts are all focused on the moment and this might derail the long-term goals and objectives of the entity. These operational strategy meetings were set-up to ensure that despite the need to act when things crop up, DH would still have a long-term road map to follow, to ensure that long-term objectives are achieved. During these meetings team members were kept updated of any new projects and initiatives adopted which were set to ameliorate the service provision for the women we come in contact with.

social events

Apart from providing a family-like atmosphere for the service users, at DH we strive to create a family feel and sense of belonging for our staff and volunteers as well. At DH we also make it a point that each staff member and volunteer is celebrated on special days such as birthdays, graduations, etc. This helps in creating a multi-way relationship of support between staff, volunteers and service users.

We also firmly believe in organising social events which bring all collaborators together and make all staff, no matter what their role, feel like they belong to the DH family. This is especially important for those volunteers who might not be in direct contact in the house or with the service users, since it allows them to feel part of a greater whole. In 2024 the following social events were organised;

New Year Activity

In January 2024, DH organised a social event for all staff and volunteers who provided their support in the previous year (2023), whilst providing a good meet-up opportunity for the people in the various teams to also kick-off 2024 together. This was an occasion for DH to thank every person contributing for their generosity, commitment and dedication.

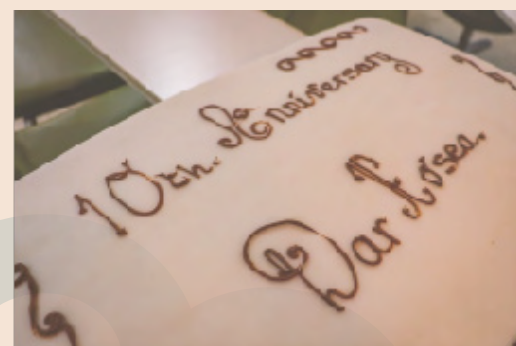
Dar Hosea Anniversary

In September 2024, DH celebrated its 10th year anniversary by inviting all professional personnel, volunteers and main entities that have in some way or another contributed to the cause in the past ten years. This was a good opportunity for the DH team to formally thank all those who in the past ten years made the services offered possible.

The activity included a presentation on the prophet 'Hosea' which helped all those invited to reflect on how the name of the house is indeed in line with the mission and ethos of the organisation and what each individual is being called to do going forward in terms of assisting our service users.

This was followed by a presentation by Dr Anna Maria Vella and Maria Borg Pellicano, who shared the history of DH and how the services have evolved over time, whilst also presenting a list of all projects, initiatives and relevant statistics to outline the impact that the house has had over the past decade.

This was followed by a gathering whereby all the various contributors of the ten years could come together as part of the DH family.

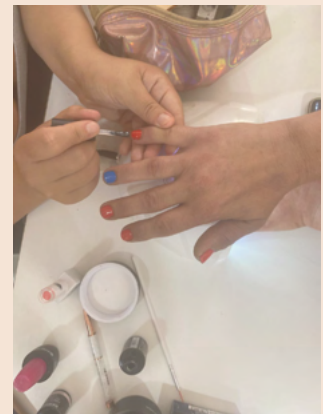


Kulhadd għandu raġuni differenti meta jagħmel xi xogħol volontarju. Jiena jogħġobni għax inħossni kuntenta li qed nagħmel xi ħaġa tajba għal haddieħor. Li ngħin lil xi hadd u innissel tbissima fuq wiċċhom ittini ferħ u sodisfazzjon. B'hekk niltaqa' ma' nies differenti, ngħinhom u nsir naf l-istorja tagħhom. Dan itini ċ-ċans li nifimhom aħjar u anke nirrealizza kemm hawn nies ipprivileġati; meta hawn min lanqas ikla waħda kuljum m'għandu x'jieħu. Issa li rtirajt mix-xogħol, għandi iktar ħin fuq idejja u għadni attiva, nħossni kuntenta li għażilt u sibt familja oħra f'Dar Hosea.

Mary Grace Cucciardi, Volunteer




OUR SERVICES AND OUR SERVICE USERS



The previous sections have already introduced some of the major work being done by our passionate team members. Here we delve deeper into the major services provided by the DH team over the past decade and which continued in the year 2024. This section also highlights particular services which started in this latter year. Moreover, this section also brings to the forefront our service users, outlining who they are and looking at the number of service users assisted in 2024.





Our services



There is no one typical day at DH. All our services remain very service user focused and what might be planned for a particular day might be altered due to the needs of the women who knock at our drop-in centre, a sudden emergency or an unexpected phone call from a person requiring our assistance outside of our premises. All of this occurs whilst working within set financial and human resource constraints. For this reason, our team members remain committed to see to the most pressing needs and be present where they are needed the most, prioritising the most urgent work first.

This is especially true given the fact that many of the women and girls we come in contact with are often caught up in a life in which they have no routine and pattern. Life for them is often a series of events dictated by their pimps or perpetrators, in some cases a haze from substance abuse and in other cases, having no stability due to lack of resources and adequate housing, leading them to a very unstructured lifestyle. For this reason, our team remains flexible and spontaneous trying to meet each woman where she is at.



At the same time, our team acknowledges the need to provide a sense of structure, albeit informally, to the service users who walk through our doors or who request our services outside of the premises per se. Many times, DH is the only place where the person can find some sort of support to start operating in a structure which helps the service user to slowly regain control of her life and start moving forward and reintegrating in a society which is characterised by timetables, appointment times, structures and more formality. Thus, our services aim to balance these two elements of flexibility and structure as much as possible.



drop-in centre

The drop-in centre of DH can be considered to be one of the major service offerings of the team and can be seen as the first port of call for many of the women who access our services. The 'home' is open from Monday to Friday, excluding Public Holidays, from 09:00 to 17:30 and aims to support women in their immediate situations.

Extended opening hours

In 2024, as DH continued to strengthen and build its resource base, the original opening hours were extended so as to increase the window whereby the women could use our services. This has allowed them to spend more time at our drop-in centre [till late afternoon], thereby also bridging further the gap between the closure of our drop-in and the opening of night shelters which some of our service users make use of. This helped in decreasing the amount of time they would spend on the streets with nowhere to go.

Any woman or girl who is seeking assistance can knock at the door of our premises and she will be let in and helped accordingly. Our drop-in centre is considered to be a low-threshold centre and as long as it is deemed safe for the other service users as well as staff and volunteer members, women are allowed in even when they are not in an ideal physical or mental state. This is because the drop-in centre is aimed to provide immediate assistance and a safe space for the women who come searching for refuge from the realities faced in the outside world.

At the drop-in centre, any service user can make use of a number of facilities and services and she can stay for a few minutes or spend the whole day [as per opening hours], as she might deem fit. This further highlights the service user-centred approach we adopt at DH.

At the drop-in centre; the women can access the following home facilities:



warm and home-made meals (breakfast, lunch, snacks as well as be provided with packed lunches if needed)



sanitary and showering facilities

toiletries, contraceptives, personal essentials and clothing when needed

laundry facilities

a resting area



small lockers to lock up their day-to-day items whilst at the drop-in centre

a larger set of lockers which can be used to lock-up personal items when the women are living on the streets and require a safe place to store their belongings



use of the roof garden

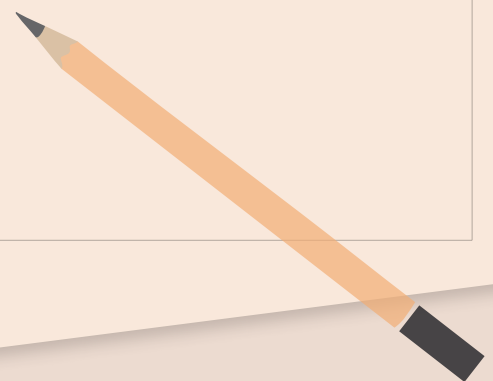
use of the in-house library

use of the art room launched in 2024.



The new art room

In 2024, DH launched an Art Room which is used by the volunteers together with the women, so as to explore various artistic activities within a therapeutic environment and setting. This was made possible through various contributors who generously provided us with furniture, décor and numerous vouchers to equip the room with artistic resources which the women can access during such sessions. We would also like to take the opportunity to thank the volunteers who dedicated time and energy to set up the room and turn it into a lively and joyful space.



The women can also access a number of services, which often make part of their care plan which is developed together with their social worker (as explained below). Such services include:



Assistance in using IT resources (e.g., for job applications, accessing government online services, etc.)

Assistance in seeking employment and developing CVs

Assistance in accessing education, courses and study material



Assistance and accompaniment in seeking other community services such as rehabilitation programmes, medical support, dentistry and legal aid, etc.

Creative therapeutic activities (e.g., arts, crafts, gardening)



One-to-one sessions with the social workers, therapists and other professionals (e.g., psychologist, etc.)

Group sessions with other service users as DH strives to form a family-like ambience and community



Medical assistance in the DH clinic

Other therapeutic support

Hairdressing services.



It is worth noting that despite all of the above services and facilities that the women can access, the drop-in centre also acts as a 'home' and a place to belong. It is not only a place whereby they can tap into resources and get material assistance or access services, but rather a place whereby they can feel the warmth of a family who cares.

One common practice which is adopted and is customary at the DH drop-in centre is that of **having lunch together**. That is, all those present, be it service users, volunteers and employees, all reunite in the dining room to eat together during lunch time. This is a small ritual that in itself aims to make the women feel seen and important, as much as possible mimicking the ‘structure’ of a family setting, whereby eating together becomes a time of communion and sharing, outlining that any other work can wait.

Another common practice which helps us engage with the women and provides a two-way dialogue channel is that of holding regular house meetings which help us to listen to our service users and give them the opportunity to have their say about the services and the home and have an impact on how the house is run. This allows for an open discussion with regards to our services and enables us to understand better what is working and what could be improved.

regular outings

Just like in a family, outings are a great time for the staff, volunteers and service users to spend quality time together in a fun manner, outside of the formal therapeutic setting. For this reason, the women together with the staff organise regular outings and activities outside DH’s premises, including picnics or days at the beach. These activities are also open for those women who might not want to attend the drop-in centre per se, but still receive regular support from our team. In 2024 the following outings were held:

outing	
January	Afternoon tea
February	Cinema
March	Buskett
July	Beach
August	Beach
September	Splash and Fun

A Personalised Care Plan: From intake to reintegration in society

The drop-in centre is a service whereby the service user can have her immediate needs seen to, yet, the aim of DH is not that of simply alleviating the woman from her daily struggle, but rather to hand-hold her through a process of self-love and regaining her dignity, which takes time. In order to make sure that the services provided by DH are not simply touch and go but leave a lasting effect, a comprehensive process is carried out to ensure that a long-term tailor-made and personalised care plan is adopted.

Intake

Each time a new service user comes in contact with DH (through the drop-in centre, referral or in any other manner) a social worker carries out an intake session. This does not necessarily have to be a formal sit-down meeting as one might think. Instead, our social workers are aptly trained to identify the best timing and state of mind of the potential service user, to know how to best approach the intake session and take the woman through its different stages. At first, the social worker introduces herself and explains what DH is, as well as the drop-in services and potentially other services which could be beneficial to the woman in her current situation. At this first stage, the most pressing needs are prioritised, e.g., food or rest.

Drawing up a personalised care plan

Once the most basic needs are seen to and a level of trust and connection is built between the woman and the social worker, a more comprehensive discussion is held. It might take a couple of hours, a number of days or even weeks before this stage is reached, depending on the openness of the woman, the willingness to engage in deeper conversation, her level of trust and the frequency of contact, amongst others.

During this deeper follow-up, the social worker together with the woman will start identifying and discussing issues of trauma, addictions, mental health issues and/or other risk factors to her and her children (if any). Together, they will devise a personalised care plan in terms of future actions, steps and referrals with other professionals (if needed) to start her healing journey. It is imperative to point out that our social workers do not simply present a ready-made care plan. Rather, it is drawn up through discussions with the service user herself, to ensure ownership – which increases the possibility of success.

Follow-up and key contact person

As already highlighted the trajectory of a service user's journey is not linear. Through our experience of working with these women we understand that contexts change, they might be progressing well and then have set backs, relapse to drugs, some might become homeless, others might face legal charges or be imprisoned, others might be leaving the correctional facilities and reintegrating in society, others still might fall pregnant and would need antenatal support or child support. These are just a few of the shifting contexts that women at DH might face. Such changing contexts might make a perfectly valid care plan irrelevant overnight. This is why such care plans are revised as often as necessary.

Moreover, each woman is assigned a key contact person, who does not necessarily have to be the social worker herself. Rather it is a person who follows the woman through her long-term journey of recovery, being a constant reference point. In certain cases, the volatility of their lifestyle might also lead to some women to fall off the radar for some days or weeks at a time. In such cases, our staff make it a point to reach out and try and trace them directly as well as through other channels and networks or organisations, to make sure that the woman is still ok. This indicates how invested the DH team becomes in each and every woman's story. We do not simply provide services if the woman comes to us, but just like family, we look out for each of our women. The ultimate aim of each personal care plan is that of empowering the women to reach their full potential and learn to love themselves again.



external visits

Through the ten years of working with our service users we came to realise that the challenges faced by the women are vast and complex and often hinder them from following a set care-plan and /or reaching out to the drop-in centre itself. For this reason, we extended our services outside of our premises and meet the women where they are at, be it in their own homes, in other residential care homes, in prison or on the streets. For this reason, our team members are not only engaged in providing a 'family-like' environment at the DH drop-in centre, but rather we have extended arms which reach out and visit the women where needed within the community.

Support at other residences, programmes and/or hospitals

In January 2024, DH organised a social event for all staff and volunteers who provided their support in the previous year (2023), whilst providing a good meet-up opportunity for the people in the various teams to also kick-off 2024 together. This was an occasion for DH to thank every person contributing for their generosity, commitment and dedication.

Outreach at the CSA

Our team also reaches out to women at the CSA. Our team organises craft sessions open for all female inmates. Such craft sessions allow the inmates to build an indirect relationship with our staff members which has proven to be a vital point of contact when they are about to exit the correctional facilities and might find themselves back on the streets, isolated, struggling financially, etc. Such a situation might quickly lead them to, or back into a life of prostitution and substance abuse. By creating prior contact with our team, we can have conversations with these women, devise care-plans with them and try and prevent such occurrences by providing them support already before leaving the facilities.

Moreover, for women who are in need of more direct care, the social workers also provide one-to-one sessions to be able to identify issues, challenges and devise plans for when the time comes to leave the prison, whilst providing them with the necessary therapy, training and counselling within the CSA itself.

Support within the community

Other service users might be residing in their own households, alone or with their children. This might be a positive indication that the women might have managed to become more independent and transition into a more stable and self-sufficient lifestyle. Yet, the DH team makes sure that these women are also followed-up to further support them in their reintegration in society. This is done by visiting them when requested or required, providing them with groceries and foodstuffs, especially in the beginning of their transition, helping them with furnishing their home and/or providing them with other resources. DH also helps them with any support to their children, including school supplies, clothes, etc. This again indicates that our team is dedicated to the women throughout their entire journeys making sure that they are a constant presence, through the key contact person, and the extended team when required.

Our service users



Many of the service users we have come in contact with over the years echo a common narrative of exploitation, abuse, mistreatment and deceit from a very young age. A number of service users recall a childhood of abuse and/or domestic violence, whereby themselves or their mothers were physically and/or sexually abused. This has often led them to grow up believing this was normal, that they did not deserve any better or that it was in some way their fault. Moreover, they all share the same narrative, that contrary to what some of the general public might believe, their involvement in prostitution is never by choice, but often the result of manipulation and coercion.

Our service users have often been 'groomed' into prostitution from a very young age (at twelve years of age or sometimes even younger), many times by family members or other people they trusted. This of course resulted not only in the physical and emotional harm that sexual violence brings about, but also resulted in deeper traumas for these women who have been betrayed by the people who were meant to protect them, leaving indelible scars.

Other girls and women who come to DH also fell victims to the 'lover boy' grooming tactic, whereby often when still minors, they would have been lured in by a 'boyfriend' who would have promised them to love them and spoil them with a lot of material gifts, but who over time, through emotional, financial as well as physical manipulation would turn into their pimp, coercing them into abuse by other men and punishing them when they do not conform or bring back enough money. Having such a strong bond and connection with their own perpetrator would make it even more difficult for the women to leave such a situation.

Of course, such negative childhood experiences, traumas and life incidents, have multiple negative ramifications on these women, including mental health problems, drug addictions often used to cope with the situations they find themselves in, sexually transmitted diseases, unplanned pregnancies as well as physical harm as a result of violent perpetrators. The loss of worth faced by such women over the years, often lead them to a place whereby they believe that they do not deserve anything good in their own lives and that they might actually deserve the abusive treatment by both their pimps as well as punters.



A Statistical Overview

This sub-section looks at the number of women who made use of our services in the year 2024. Despite working in this niche for the past decade, each and every story remains shocking and heart breaking for our team. Despite the numerous cases and women we have encountered over the past ten years, each and every one of them remains important as an individual, with her unique story and journey. Therefore, despite outlining the statistics below, we want to emphasise that we never treat any service user as just another number but we dedicate ourselves wholeheartedly to try and ease some of the pain of the traumas described above.

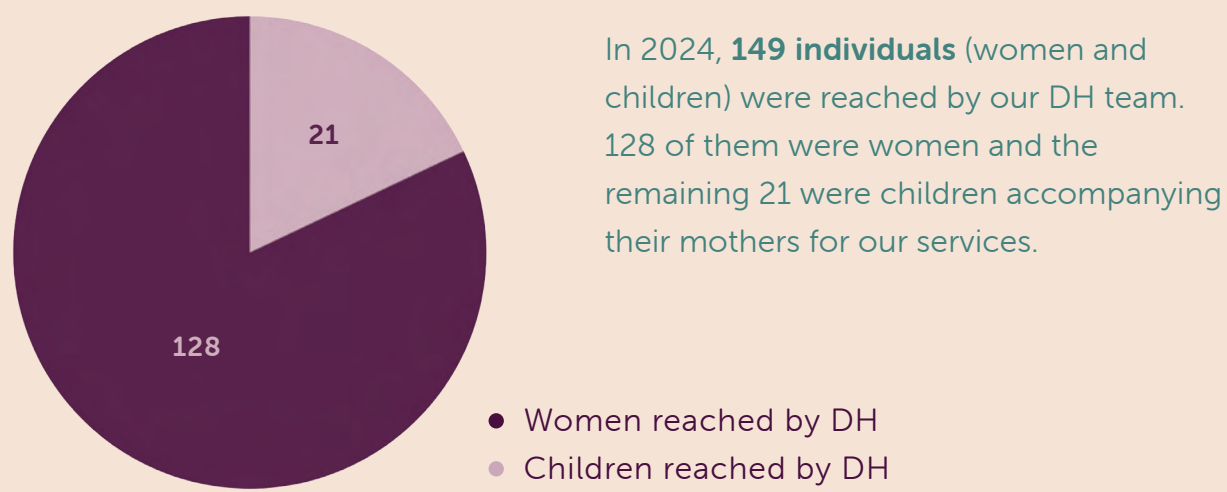


Figure 3

Moreover, the **total of 128 women** reached by DH were split as follows:

Cohort reached	Number
Women visiting the drop-in centre	75
Women reached through other external activities	44
Women visited within the community	9

Zooming in on the **75 individuals** who visited the drop-in centre during 2024, the figure below illustrates the total number of drop-ins per month (dark purple column), which indicate the number of times someone came to our drop-in (including the same individuals coming several times a month), and the number of individuals coming to the drop-in centre per month (violet column). July saw the greatest number of drop-ins, with people coming in 188 times. On the other hand, December saw the greatest number of individual service users reaching out to our drop-in service, 34 in all.

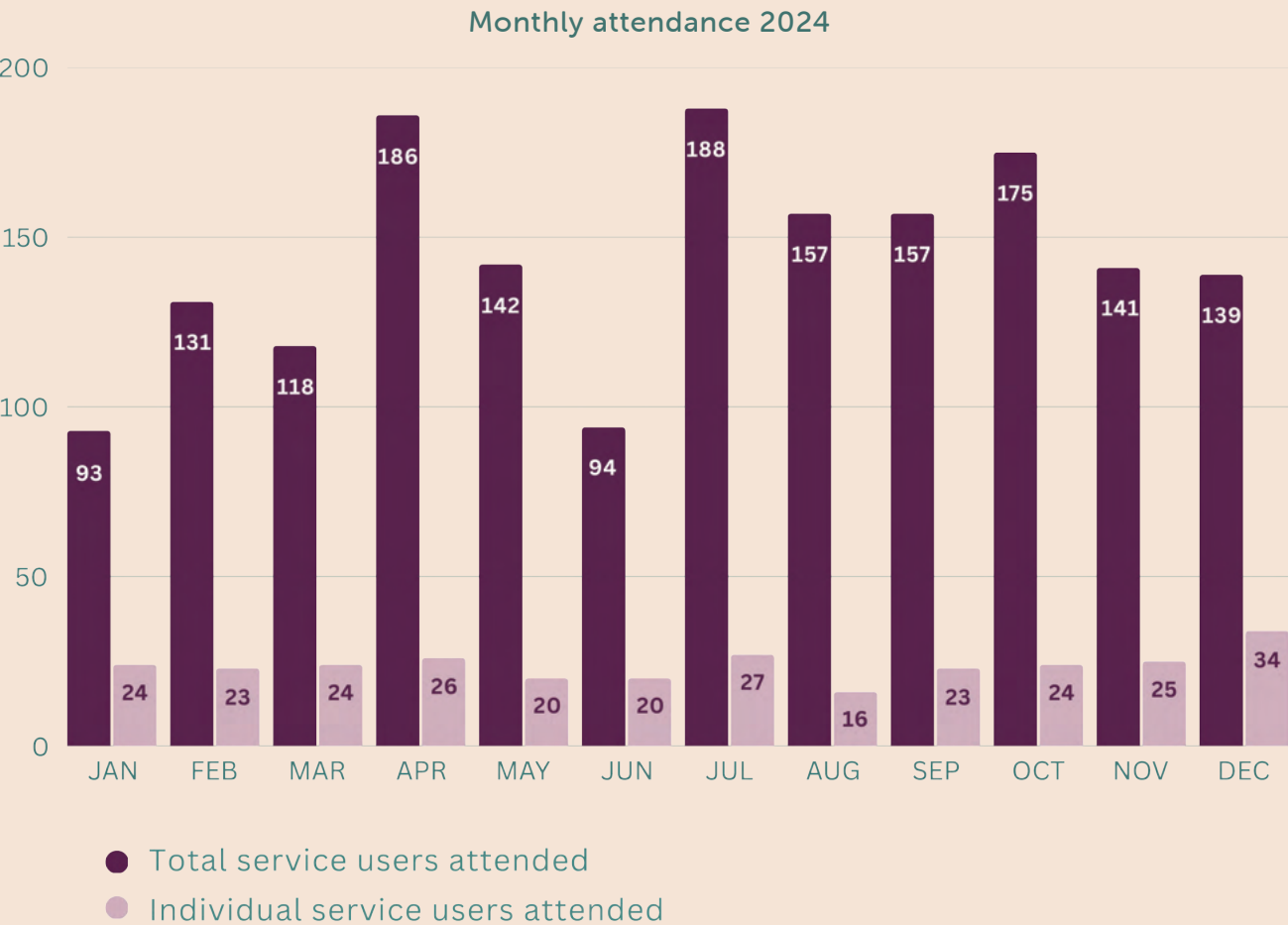


Figure 4

In 2024, **1,467 hours of interventions** from our staff were recorded. These interventions included phone calls to service users and their relatives, phone calls to other persons involved in the care plan of the service users, visits outside Dar Hosea, meetings with professionals, accompanying service users to services and activities outside Dar Hosea, one-to-one sessions and other outreach activities.



ADVOCACY AND AWARENESS RAISING - GIVING A VOICE TO THE VOICELESS

DH has realised that one of its major roles in the Maltese society is that of advocating for the women and girls who fall into prostitution, giving them a voice in the public arena. Over our ten years of operations, the general sentiment towards prostitution has been shifting swiftly from a taboo not to be discussed and to be marginalised, to a more open and liberal approach whereby recently, the policy makers have been toying with the idea of legalising prostitution, often framing it as 'sex work' which a woman engages in out of her own free will, rather than as a result of long-term GBV, coercion and abuse, as our service users clearly are victims of.

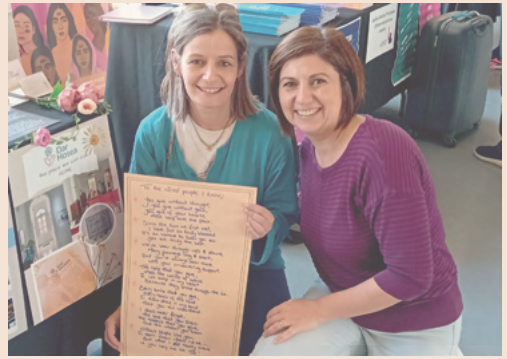
Despite the changing public narrative over this last decade, DH's message has always been consistent. Prostitution is a form of GBV, leaving the women vulnerable to abuse, exploitation and loss of self-respect and love, which ultimately results in other issues of poverty, substance abuse and homelessness amongst others, feeding in a never-ending vicious circle which often times also becomes inter-generational. Prostitution, therefore, is not only the problem of the individual but also a larger societal problem.

Given this context, the DH team is taking on the role of advocacy and awareness raising in various public spaces, to ensure that the real lived experiences of our women are heard and shared, making it clearer that most times prostitution is not a choice of the woman, but rather a weapon used by the perpetrators. This has led the team to be present in conferences, media platforms and also develop different projects to increase the visibility of these women and their stories.

Conferences and trainings attended

In 2024, DH attended several conferences, meetings and training sessions related to topics such as addiction, DV, human trafficking and the safeguarding of vulnerable adults. Our presence in such conferences and training acts twofold. On one end, we want to make sure that we are visible and build networks in such arenas, which will help us leverage further expertise, knowledge and experiences and on the other hand also build connections with other stakeholders working in the same sector.

Moreover, we are also committed in providing training to all our team members, be it paid staff or volunteers, as we are aware that our work is challenging and requires the use of a variety of skills and expertise to face the challenges that we face every day.



The 4th World Congress for the Abolition of Prostitution in Montreal

In June 2024, a volunteer and a staff member from DH attended a congress organised by CAP International, in Montreal (Canada), for the CAP International Abolitionist Week. This World Congress, entitled “Equality in Action”, brought together a panel of different stakeholders in the sector, including survivors, researchers, frontline workers, activists, parliamentarians and other officials. DH, as a service provider in the field, was present to sustain this fight for equality, whilst also promoting the work being done in Malta and making contacts with similar organisations working across the globe.

RENATE training on Trauma and Mental Health

In November 2024, a volunteer from Dar Hosea attended training on trauma and mental health for Renate Members working at grass roots level in anti-human trafficking, organised by the Religious in Europe Networking Against Trafficking and Exploitation (RENATE)⁴. The training took place in Eindhoven, Netherlands and spanned over 4 days (13-17 November), bringing together 16 different RENATE members. This training not only provided us with useful information and training in the area, but it also made us feel more connected to other frontliners who, like us, work in such difficult situations.

⁴ RENATE is a European network of religious people aimed to help and support each other in the work against exploitation and human trafficking.

in person awareness sessions

As part of its advocacy activities, DH also organised a number of different awareness sessions over the past ten years. In 2024, the team continued to take on the responsibility of educating the general public and reached out to a variety of schools, entities and organisations to speak about the realities of our service users and uncover their real-life experiences. In this way, the general public could better understand their lives and realities in an empathic and understanding approach, rather than in a judgemental way.

In 2024, these awareness sessions were extended to professionals or key people who might encounter such women in their day-to-day work and profession (directly or indirectly), such as parish priests and parish groups, professionals working at shelters or residences for vulnerable women, social workers, community workers and youth workers as well as teachers and social work students at the University of Malta. All these individuals might, through their work, come in contact with service users and/or potential young girls who might fall victims to tactics of grooming. Moreover, awareness campaigns with secondary school students were also carried out. This highlights our role as educators in the sector, as well as trying to prevent young girls from entering such activities, which are increasingly being 'glamourised' or 'normalised' through social media platforms and the like.

The below is a list of awareness raising sessions carried out in 2024.

Kulleġġ tal-Kappillani	January 2024
Balzan Parish Church; Women's Group	February 2024
Women's Group at San Ġorg Parish (Qormi)	February 2024
1 st Year Social Work Students at the University of Malta	April 2024
Staff at Dar Ġużeppa Debono	April 2024
St Aloysius School Primary Educators	May/June 2024
St Aloysius College Students	May 2024
Professionals at Youth Services FSWS (including Youth in Focus, Youth Initiatives and Embark 4 Life services)	August 2024

Research and educational support

In line with our belief that education and research is of utmost importance to give a voice to the women and girls in our services, DH participated in a number of Bachelors' and Masters' dissertations and in other interviews conducted by university students as part of their studies. We are of the firm belief that the more research and studies are done on this industry, the more informed the public and policy makers can be in making the right decisions to safeguard the victims of this GBV, since they would be equipped with evidence-based research, rather than anecdotal evidence and/or hearsay. For this reason, DH is open to assist students and researchers in their studies as long as the confidentiality and ethical considerations towards the service users are considered. Moreover, in 2024, DH also hosted two students for their social work placements, since we truly believe that we need to support more students in preparing themselves for the real life they will face when entering the social work world.

Awareness raising through media

Apart from the in-person awareness sessions carried out with particular groups of people, DH also engaged with the general public through its presence on media, be it on TV programmes, radio programmes, through newspaper articles as well as the use of social media platforms. This approach allowed us to reach out to a wider audience of people and increase the education on the subject, which we believe is essential both in the prevention of exploitation, identification and reporting of possible trafficked individuals which might come in contact with the general public, as well as the dismantling of stereotypes and marginalisation of women who are already in the industry.

The below is a list of appearances DH made on the local media platforms,

March 2024	Għal Kulhadd
April 2024	Servizzi fil-Komunità
April 2024	F'Gieħ il-Ġustizzja Soċjali
July 2024	Minn Wara l-Persjana

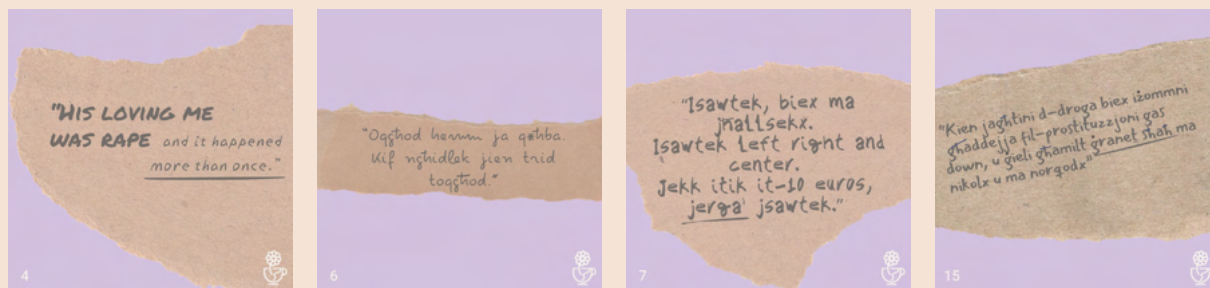
A number of articles on news portals were also shared increasing awareness about our services:

- **September 2024** - Dar Hosea tiċċelebra għaxar snin ta' appogg għan-nisa u l-glieda kontra l-isfruttament ⁵
- **September 2024** – Newsbook: 323 mara vittmi ta' abbuż sesswali assistiti minn Dar Hosea f'dawn l-10 snin ⁶
- **November 2024** – Times of Malta: Prostitution is moving from the street to the screen, making it harder to spot ⁷

Our marketing and advocacy team has also used our own social media platforms to increase awareness about our work as well as share the stories of our service users.



In 2024, one of the major campaigns was the **16 days of activism against GBV**, whereby our team shared quotes from our own service users, which highlighted the horrors of violence and abuse that women in such industry face on a daily basis.



⁵ https://knisja.mt/dar-hosea-ticcelebra-ghaxar-snin-ta-appogg-ghan-nisa-u-l-glieda-kontra-l-isfruttament/?fbclid=IwY2xjawlZUv5leHRuA2FlbQlXMQABHejQak_oNYzvH3R4yGL2PRK6YyumfuEtHoS0dLcUeCC1iPRoOeiuv8wZDw_aem_37-xlpJelT5VVyPOKVjPtW

⁶ https://newsbook.com.mt/323-mara-fvittmi-ta-abbuz-sesswali-assistiti-minn-dar-hosea-finqas-minn-sena/?fbclid=IwY2xjawlZUwRleHRuA2FlbQlXMQABHbT7AY7jyZeSs4LCd2H67skoxdfi0bachtwOSTAnYb2-vpq7AcS9cS62nw_aem_CCknGNnKH3LtNgv7dK7eoQ

⁷ https://timesofmalta.com/article/prostitution-moving-street-screen-making-harder-spot.1101127?fbclid=IwY2xjawlZUppleHRuA2FlbQlXMQABHes2yXgcrF6WZbKbRsZc6S8m3QGeI9P3fDATbms5lKFeCdFfXxjM6fwiTA_aem__6vDUty4ySoSJw36aXcdfA

Engaging with policy makers and stakeholders

As much as awareness amongst the general public is vital and important, DH also feels the obligation to influence the people at the top who make decisions, pass legislations and could have an influence on the systematic elements of this harmful industry.

For this reason, DH has been engaging periodically with policy makers to ensure that the true narratives of our service users are heard and known amongst those making decisions, possibly influencing them when shaping legislation and policies.

In 2024, DH carried out a number of meetings with key persons and stakeholders in the policy realm. In the run up to the European Parliament elections, DH has sent a letter to all Maltese MEPs and has managed to set individual meetings with four of them. The meetings included the presence of some of our service users and together we discussed policies concerning prostitution and other realities encountered by the women who reach out to DH.

Moreover, DH also set up meetings and discussions with ambassadors to discuss the situation of prostitution in Malta. Meetings with embassies included those of Australia, France, Germany, India, the Netherlands and the U.S.

DH also participated in a number of other meetings, set up by the policy makers themselves, including consultation meetings, whereby together with other NGOs, we were able to pass our recommendations on several topics around social justice.



Platforms and networks

DH does not operate in a vacuum and we are very much aware that given the intersectionality of the issues which prostitution brings with it, as well as the complexity of the situation at large, it needs to act in tandem with a number of other players. Moreover, to have a thoroughly long-lasting impact, the organisation needs to liaise and join a variety of networks to gain strength through unity and work in unison with other service providers.

Indeed, in 2024, DH made part of a number of different platforms and networks and acted as active participant in various round table meetings and discussions. It has worked hand-in-hand with other entities, drafting strategies to safeguard the well-being of women particularly in prostitution and sexual exploitation.

The networks and platforms DH was part of in the past year included:

- The Homelessness Network
- The Anti-Poverty Forum
- The FSWS Round Tables
- CAP International
- RENATE.

Moreover, throughout the year, our team liaised with a variety of other NGOs, professionals and organisations who come in contact with our service users, including but not limited to, FSWS services, the Court and Probation Services, rehabilitation programmes, MDH, MCH, CSA, Life Network Foundation, Caritas, Fondazzjoni Sebħ and OASI, amongst others.

As the DH team, we are very much open for collaboration and further networking with all entities which we believe could make part of our extended family of service providers. The major challenge in further collaboration remains our limited resources, in terms of energy, time and personnel. Yet, our team remains open to possible partnerships on various projects which might benefit our service users, as well as other potential service users, which, given our limitations, we might not be reaching (e.g., migrant women in this industry).

Nominations, awards and recognition

In 2024, DH and a number of its team members have been nominated for a number of awards for their immense work they do with our service users. As the team at DH, we are not only immensely proud of these team members, but also grateful for such opportunities which lead to greater awareness of our home and services, and also proud of the recognition being given to the work we do on a daily basis. The nominations and awards were the following:

- **Dr Anna Maria Vella** – Winner of Courageous Woman of the Year - *US Embassy*⁸
- **Dar Hosea service** – Nominee of the Service of the Year - *Maltese Association of Social Workers (MASW)*
- **Maria Borg Pellicano** – Nominee for the Inspirational Leader – *MASW*
- **Maria Borg Pellicano** – Nominee for Contribution to World Peace and/or Human Rights - *Junior Chamber International (JCI) Malta*.

⁸ <https://timesofmalta.com/article/anna-maria-vella-named-us-embassy-2024-woman-courage.1088326>

FINANCES, GRANTS AND OTHER PROJECTS

As one might imagine, the running of all the above services, be it the drop-in centre, the external services as well as the awareness raising projects and educational campaigns are not only human resources intensive, but also result in great financial expenditures.

Our operations would not be possible were it not for the fundraising events and donations organised both internally (e.g. charity shop), but also by independent individuals or companies, as well as projects and grants applied for by our hardworking team.



Financial Accounts

In order to ensure transparency of our finances our accounts are audited annually by an audit firm engaged by the Association of Friends of Thouret and submitted to the Office of the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations as well as to the donors. This keeps our entity in compliance with the VOs requirements, whilst also ensuring that there is accountability in terms of our financing structure.

Fundraising and donations

Apart from internal financing raised through the running of its charity shop, which helps in generating revenue to carry out our operations [p.35] during 2024, DH was also the recipient of a number of donations, both financial and in kind, which helped in the operations of our drop-in centre and other extended services. Indeed, a number of fundraising activities have been organised over the year by a number of different individuals, entities, schools and companies, all of which happily passed the proceeds to DH.

Move for Meals was one example of such fundraising activities. In August 2024, the Maltese Ultrarunner Stephen Sammut Nurminen embarked on a 765 km charity run in Thailand to raise funds through a gogetfunding page to provide meals to the Soup Kitchen OFM as well as DH. This initiative did not only provide our service users with delicious and nutritious meals over a couple of months, it was also a sign that someone cared and was ready to go out of one's way to assist them, making them feel seen. For this we want to sincerely thank Move for Meals and Stephen for being so invested in our organisation.⁹

Grants and projects

Moreover, the DH team also applied for a number of grants which were also won and therefore, have enabled us to carry out further projects, some of which started in 2024 but will continue in the year 2025.



⁹ <https://timesofmalta.com/article/maltese-athlete-sets-off-charity-run-across-thailand.1096604>

Academy of Givers Award

In March, DH was given the opportunity to present at the Academy of Givers Impact Fair. By illustrating the story of one of our service users DH not only brought more awareness in terms of the realities faced by the women and girls we meet on a daily basis, but also managed to resonate with the people present for the presentation and was chosen as the winner of the Pitch Fest and awarded €5,000. This money will be used to develop a short film as educational material to be disseminated in the community, aimed at generating more empathy and understanding by the general public. We would like to take the opportunity to thank the Academy of Givers for providing such a platform whereby we could be a voice for our service users.

EUPA Malta - Erasmus+ & European Solidarity Corps

In 2024 DH with the support of 7 youth who are involved in the European Solidarity Corps Project have also been awarded a grant to work on a project under the name of "Isma' u Għ(id)li", which will include artistic sessions and workshops with a number of service users, with the aim of putting up an exhibition with the work of the women participating. This project not only serves as therapeutic for the women involved, but it is also empowering in that these women will be given a blank canvas to express themselves and communicate their stories to the outside world. In November, DH and the youth were awarded a certificate of recognition for the award. The project will commence in 2025.

Funding from Embassy of The Netherlands

In December 2024, DH has also been awarded €2,000 specifically dedicated to research which will be carried out during 2025, which will include one-to-one interviews with the service users, and which will help to contribute to a wider evidence-based knowledge which we can use to present to policy makers in terms of the industry and the impacts that prostitution has on the women.



CONCLUDING WORDS

We would like to thank you for your interest in our services and for taking the time to go through our Annual Report (2024). This edition is especially close to our hearts, since it gave us the opportunity to stop and take stock of the past ten years, including all the ups and downs, struggles as well as wins, be they small or large.

Through the past ten years, DH has remained a constant presence in these women's lives, a constant which is often difficult to find elsewhere in their rough realities and turbulent life experiences. Hence, the presence of the house and the team, provide a sense of 'home' and stability for these women.

This consistency in our services would not have been possible without our passionate and dedicated team of committee members, staff, volunteers, donors, collaborators and partners. Each and every one of you have made a difference in the life of the women and girls we assist and for this we want to thank you!

Looking ahead into the future, we are excited to continue to work determinedly towards protecting our women, journeying on with them in their quest to become the best version of themselves whilst discovering self-love. We aim to keep empowering them and giving them the necessary tools to reach their dreams and break the cycles which keep them entrapped in a life of violence and abuse.

We will continue to be their voice in the public arena, be it with the general public and more so with the policy makers, to ensure that we abolish the systematic injustices which enable perpetrators to get away with their wrong doings. We also strive to keep on lobbying against the fake glamourisation of this industry as the public narrative evolves.

Finally, we commit ourselves to never lose hope in striving for a better future for our service users and for the abolishment of prostitution, sexual exploitation and trafficking. We do understand that this is an extremely ambitious goal, but we are strong believers that every step and every small win is yet another building block towards a successful story. For this reason, we would like to conclude this report, outlining some of the successes of our service users in moving forward towards a freer and fuller life.

**Content created by Maria Giulia Borg and
designed by Maria Katrina Xuereb**

Steps towards success

How can one measure success when working with people who have endured so much hardship that it seems like all the odds are stacked against them – reasons that could easily lead them to lose hope and give up? Yet, spending time with the women at Dar Hosea has given me the blessing of seeing success in a new light, one that has brought deeper meaning to my own life.

I remember the first time I met one of the women, a particularly 'rough' lady. Her walk, her speech, her hand gestures – everything about her made it clear that she had experienced the harsh realities of life first hand.

I have to admit, I was hesitant to approach her. I wasn't sure how to introduce myself as the new volunteer, or if she would even want to talk. So, I took a step back and let the day unfold. Over the following days and months, we eventually connected, but I always kept my distance. I assumed she wasn't the type to open up, and I didn't want to bring up painful memories, knowing I wouldn't have the right words to comfort her.

Then, a few weeks ago, she came to Dar Hosea to have her hair dyed. I always try to make the women feel special by pampering them during their treatments, and I did the same for her. To my surprise, the small gestures of gentleness and care broke down all barriers between us. What followed was a deep and meaningful conversation I could never have imagined.

As I washed her hair, she shyly admitted that she had never experienced the feeling of being pampered. No one had ever shown her the care and gentleness of washing her hair. From that moment on, her story began to unfold before me.

You might wonder, where is the success in all this?

As we moved to the living area to finish her hair, this woman – who I no longer saw as ‘rough’, but rather as a woman emotionally bruised yet resilient – felt so empowered that she shared her life story, her difficult upbringing and her painful past. She offered counsel, comfort and words of encouragement to a much younger woman sitting at the dining table, who was lamenting her ‘failure’ once again.

This, in my eyes, is success – witnessing, firsthand, how pain can be transformed into strength, not just for oneself but also in offering a beacon of hope to others. The true success lies in observing wounded healers extend their hands in support of one another.

- **Michaela Cauchi, Volunteer**



Claire has been coming to Dar Hosea for a number of years, seeking support on her journey from one step to the next. While her path hasn't always been smooth, her resilience has been evident throughout.

There were times when Claire would show great progress, only to face setbacks that led to her regress and struggle with substance use. During these challenging moments, we would worry as there would often be periods of no contact with her. However, Claire always found her way back to us and found the courage to knock on our door.

Over the years, Claire has spent time at Mount Carmel and explored doing drug rehabilitation programmes. Throughout these experiences, we collaborated with the services she was attending and remained close to her, offering constant support, checking in and ensuring she had a person with whom she built trust over the years on her side.

Recently, Claire made remarkable progress. She has found a job, goes to supervised access with her daughter, keeps her home tidy and organised and keeps up with her daily routine. She occasionally visits DH, a service which she now refers to as her family.

As a service this is one of our main missions, that of being there for our women, both through their toughest times and in their successes. Whether they are at their lowest or thriving, they always know they are welcome and supported here—without judgment, and with an unconditional positive regard, and much love and care. We understand the importance of allowing the women to start anew during difficult times, moving forward at their own pace, and we are privileged that they trust us and allow us to walk alongside them every step of the way.

- **Social Worker at Dar Hosea**

