**Reducing Stigma Through Exposure: A Sexual Health Care Centre in Msida**

*A space which encourages discourse to reduce stigma.*

*Designing sexual health spaces without taboo and shame by associating them to spaces of education and recreation; creating fun and vibrant architecture to promote activity.*

This project is located in a part of Msida which is currently being used as parking for University Students, close to the campus sports facilities and adjacent to Triq l-Universita. It is intended to tackle the design of Health Care Centres in Malta, as a means to decentralise our Public Health Care system. Early into the design process, it was clear that the primary user of the space would be University Students.

The master plan includes a means to create a new public space which integrates with the building. The plan includes keeping an old farmhouse and repurposing it as student working spaces or a cafe’. It also includes an outdoor amphitheatre space which could be used for educational activities.

It also allows for two parking lots as to not disrupt the use it currently serves. The parking spaces’ entrances and the entrances to the pedestrian spaces are detached, and green spaces are used to separate these spaces from each other, as well as a buffer between the site and the arterial road abutting the space.

The aim of this project was to create a new off-campus hub for social activity, leisure spaces and offices for student organisations, and a sexual health clinic and primary health care clinic; bringing together spaces of education and recreation to reduce stigma related to sexual health and allowing students to make positive associations to the topic of sexual health. This is done through the architecture by **creating a fun and vibrant environment, and by providing a health care space which is empathic, rather than clinical, and one which provides anonymity**. The identity of the user is camouflaged by the constant flow of people and activity going on, and no one may make assumptions to single out any of the users, making them comfortable to access the centre and exposing them to it through the canteen, varied types of spaces and the health care centre.

Sexual health is considered to be very important in the physical and mental well-being of individuals, and achieving sexual wellness is highly dependant on knowledge about consent and the risks of being sexually active, as well as access to sexual health care, and ultimately **an environment that affirms and promotes sexual health**.