

Radio Lehen il-Qala celebrates 30 years

Looking ahead, the station aims to continue serving future generations with the same enthusiasm and dedication

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Radio Lehen il-Qala coordinator Ivan Cefai (right) with presenter Karl Buttigieg during one of the station's live broadcasts, as the station celebrates its 30th anniversary.

Radio *Lehen il-Qala* is this year marking the 30th anniversary of its first official broadcast – an important milestone that reflects not only its longevity but also its unwavering commitment to community service, volunteerism and the preservation of Qala's identity.

Since its inauguration, Radio *Lehen il-Qala* has accompanied the daily lives of thousands of listeners, broadcasting local news, religious celebrations, cultural events, music and programmes that have brought the community together.

While firmly rooted in Qala, its reach has extended well beyond Gozo's shores, becoming a familiar companion for emigrants and members of the Maltese diaspora across Europe, North America, Australia and other parts of the world.

The station proudly holds the distinction of being the first community radio station in Gozo to receive a permanent broadcasting licence from the Malta Broadcasting Authority, a landmark achievement that secured its place within Malta's broadcasting sector.

Its first broadcasts originated from a modest room above the sacristy of the Qala parish church. Few could have imagined that this simple studio would evolve into one of Gozo's most respected community broadcasting centres. Over the years, continuous investment and the tireless dedication of volunteers transformed the station into a modern broadcasting facility equipped with state-of-the-art technology.

The station also embraced the digital era, expanding from traditional radio broadcasting to continuous online audio and video streaming. This technological evolution proved invaluable for the many Gozitans and people from Qala living abroad. Thanks to the radio, they can follow the village's feasts, religious functions, community celebrations and special events in real time wherever they live.

Perhaps one of Radio *Lehen il-Qala*'s greatest contributions has been its investment in people. Throughout the past 30 years, the station has provided generations of children and young adults with their first experience in broadcasting. Many learned how to present programmes, conduct interviews, operate studio equipment and develop confidence in public communication.

For countless volunteers, the station became far more than a hobby – it became a school of responsibility, teamwork and lifelong learning, with skills that later proved valuable in their professional and personal lives.

Maintaining a community radio station around the clock for all these years is no ordinary achievement. Behind every broadcast lies the dedication of dozens of volunteers who have freely given their time, energy and expertise. Equally indispensable has been the generosity of the people of Qala, both on the islands and among the overseas community, whose financial support and encouragement have enabled the station not merely to survive but to flourish.

Radio *Lehen il-Qala*'s success has always been built on a simple yet powerful principle: a community serving its own community. It has remained faithful to its founding mission while continuously adapting to changing technologies and the evolving expectations of its audience.

The anniversary also offers an opportunity to pay tribute to its founders, former and present coordinators, presenters, technicians, volunteers, benefactors and loyal listeners.

Looking ahead, the station aims to continue serving future generations with the same enthusiasm and dedication that have characterised its first 30 years. Under the patronage of St Joseph and the Immaculate Conception, it continues to fulfil its mission of informing, educating, entertaining and strengthening the bonds that unite the people of Qala, locally and abroad.





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