



Youth Wiki national description

Youth policies in Malta

2018

The Youth Wiki is Europe's online encyclopaedia in the area of national youth policies. The platform is a comprehensive database of national structures, policies and actions supporting young people. For the updated version of this national description, please visit

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Overview

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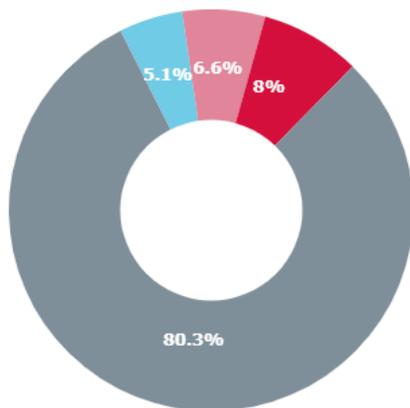


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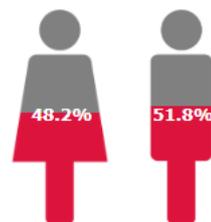
Young People in Malta

Ratio of young people in the total population on 1st January



- Age group 15-19
- Age group 20-24
- Age group 25-29
- Other age groups

Total number of young people:



Ratio of men and women in the youth population

Ratio of young immigrants in all immigrants from non-EU countries

- Age group 15-29
- Other age groups

References:

Ratio (%) of young people in the total population (2017): Eurostat, yth_demo_020 [data extracted on 4/09/2018].

Absolute number of young people on 1 January for the age group 15-29 (2017): Eurostat, yth_demo_010 [data extracted on 4/09/2018].

Ratio (%) of men and women in the youth population (2017): Eurostat, yth_demo_020 [data extracted on 4/09/2018].

Young immigrants from non-EU countries (2016): Eurostat, yth_demo_070 [data extracted on 4/09/2018].

Malta

Youth Policy in Malta

Youth Policy in Malta falls under the responsibility of central authorities. The core responsibility lies with the Ministry of Education and Employment and the Parliamentary Secretariat for Youth, Sport and Voluntary Organisations. However, due to its transversal nature different Ministries are responsible for particular policy fields that affect young people.

Up to the early 1990s Malta had no coherent youth policy, it had education policies, health policies, culture policies and other policies that directly or indirectly affect young people, but a standalone youth policy was missing.

In 1991 the National Youth Council – Kunsill Nazzjonali Żgħażaġħ (KNŻ) – was set up. A year later, in 1992, the Institute for Youth Studies was established at the University of Malta. The following year in 1993, the then newly established Ministry for Youth and Art published the first youth policy document. Since then the document has been revised five times, each time reflecting more the realities of young people's lives at the time.

In 1998 the Maltese Association of Youth Workers (MAY) was set-up.

In 2010 Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ, the Maltese National Youth Agency, was set up and has since been the implementing arm of the Parliamentary Secretariat for Youth. One of main aims of the agency is the coordination of the implementation youth policy.

The latest version of the National Youth Policy entitled Towards 2020: A shared vision for the future of young people, was published in 2015. Catering for all young people between 13 and 30 years old the document has two main aims. First to support and encourage young people in fulfilling their potential and aspirations while addressing their needs and concerns. Second to support young people as active and responsible citizens who fully participate in and contribute to the social, economic and cultural life of the nation, Europe and beyond.

1. YOUTH POLICY GOVERNANCE

Youth policy in Malta is primarily administered at a central level. In 2015 the Government issued the document '[National Youth Policy Towards 2020: A shared vision for the future of young people](#)'. Youth policy falls under the main responsibility of the Ministry for Education and Employment. However its transversal nature requires cross-sectoral support from other relevant Ministries.

Youth Policy in Malta looks at the young person as a resource and as such it strives to both support and encourage young people in fulfilling their potential and aspirations while addressing their needs and concerns. The National Youth Policy also supports young people as active and responsible citizens who fully participate in and contribute to the social, economic and cultural life of Malta, Europe and beyond.

1.1 Target population of youth policy

Youth policy in Malta is primarily administered at a central level. In 2015 the Government issued the latest version of the document entitled '[National Youth Policy Towards 2020: A shared vision for the future of young people](#)'. The main responsibility for youth policy falls within the Ministry for Education and Employment, through the Parliamentary Secretariat for Youth, Sport and Voluntary Organisations. However due to its transversal nature the implementation of the youth policy requires cross-sectoral support from other relevant Ministries.

National youth policy in Malta looks at the young person as a resource and strives to both support and encourage young people in fulfilling their potential and aspiration while addressing their needs and concerns. It also supports young people as active and responsible citizens who full participate in and contribute to the social, economic and cultural life of Malta, Europe and beyond.

The main policy document that defines which age group can be considered as youth in Malta is the Maltese National Youth Policy. The latest revision of the national youth policy document that was issued in 2015 entitled '[National Youth Policy Towards 2020: A shared vision for the future of young people](#)' states that youth is the cohort of all persons between 13 and 30 years old.

This age group has been the same since 2010, when the [third](#) revision of the National Youth Policy was launched. Previous National Youth Policy documents targeted different cohorts. The 1993 National Youth Policy, which was the [first ever National Youth Policy document](#), defined youth as the cohort between 16-30 years; the 1999 and 2004, which were the [first](#) and the [second](#) revision of the National Youth Policy documents respectively, defined youth as the cohort between 14-30 years.

There are also other official documents that define which age group can be considered as youth or young people. Among such documents there is the [National Strategic Policy for Poverty Reduction and for Social Inclusion \(2014-2024\)](#) issued by the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity that defines young people as the cohort between 18 and 24 years old. The [National Employment Policy](#) issued by the Ministry of Education and Employment defines young people as the cohort between 15 and 24 years old.

Other relevant policy documents do not define youth or young people by age.

1.2 National youth law

Existence of a National Youth Law

Currently there is no comprehensive Youth Law in Malta. A number of special provisions for young people can be found in a number of different laws, that target the whole population. These laws make reference to young people, using terms such as young persons, minors or persons under 18 years of age.

1.3 National youth strategy

Existence of a National Youth Strategy

In 2015 the Maltese Government revised its National Youth Policy for the fourth time. This document is entitled '['Il-Politika Nazzjonali taż-Żgħażaġħ Lejn l-2020 Viżjoni Komuni għall-Futur taż-Żgħażaġħ'](#) – '[National Youth Policy Towards 2020 A Shared Vision for the Future of Young People](#)'.

Scope and contents

The National Youth Policy is underpinned by three separate but interlocking pillars. The first pillar is the reality of the lives of young people in Malta; the second pillar relates to the development of youth policy over the past 20 years at both European and national levels; and the third pillar concerns greater democratic participation, equitable economic and social progress for all, and inclusive change.

The policy intends to effectively support and encourage young people in fulfilling their potential and aspirations while addressing their needs and concerns. It intends to support young people as active and responsible citizens who fully participate in and contribute to the social, economic and cultural life of Malta, Europe and beyond.

This document aims to achieve this through two different but interrelated strategies.

Strategy 1 focuses on the 'core' services and activities such as youth work and services for young people including non-formal education, participation, mobility and youth information.

Strategy 2 relates to cross-sectoral support for young people which include the areas of education and training; health and well-being; employment and entrepreneurship; arts and culture; social inclusion; voluntary and community activities and sport and recreational activities.

The document focuses on all young people between 13 to 30 year olds.

Young people and youth organisations were directly consulted in the formulation of this document. The National Youth Council - [Kunsill Nazzjonali taż-Żgħażaġħ](#) (KNŻ) - was part of the Policy Advisory Group appointed by the [Ministry of Education and Employment](#) during the drafting of the document. Also [Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ](#), the National Youth Agency, after the publishing of the first draft document held a seminar for Youth Organisations and organisations working with youth to gather their feedback on the document. Concurrently the [Ministry of Education and Employment](#) had launched the draft for public consultation, before the finalised version was published.

Responsible authority for the implementation of the Youth Strategy

The [Ministry of Education and Employment](#) and the [Parliamentary Secretariat for Youth and Sport and Voluntary Organisations](#) have the overarching responsibility for the

coordination and the implementation of the National Youth Policy. [Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#), the National Youth Agency, which is the operating arm of the Parliamentary Secretariat is responsible for the strategic planning and day-to-day operational matters of Strategy 1.

All other relevant Government Ministries and entities are responsible for the Strategy 2 depending on the area, for instance, Health and Well-being falls under the main responsibility of the Ministry for Health; Arts and Culture fall under the responsibility of the Ministry for Justice, Culture and Local Government. In both cases [Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#), the National Youth Agency, has the responsibility of promoting, coordinating and facilitating such cross-sectoral approaches.

The implementation of the National Youth Policy over the period 2015-2020, will be monitored on an ongoing basis by the Ministry for Education and Employment and the Parliamentary Secretariat for Youth and Sport and Voluntary Organisations. [Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#) will employ its Annual Reports to record progress in relation to Strategy 1, while an inter-Ministerial group, led by [Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#), will be established to report annually on progress in relation to Strategy 2.

This document has a timeframe of 6 years. At the end of the period 2015-2020, an independent evaluation will be conducted on the overall impact of the policy and the benefits accruing for young people, the voluntary youth sector and the wider society.

The Government is committed to ensure that youth policy is evidence-based and outcome-focused. Priority will continue to be given to research as the Government believes that this provides all those working with and for young people with an invaluable tool and source of relevant and up-to-date information. The research programme for the period 2015-20 will target the main areas that concern young people today, such as education (including the digital divide and skills gaps), employment, environment, rights and responsibilities, health and well-being, and justice.

The National Youth Policy is a standalone document, however it gathers the vision of all the relevant Ministries as through its 10 Action plans it sets out the Government's vision for young people. This frames this document as an integral part of the overall national development.

Revisions/updates

The very first Parliamentary Secretariat for Youth in Malta was appointed in 1990. Two years later in, 1992 the [Kunsill Nazzjonali taż-Żgħażaġh](#) (KNŻ) and an Institute for Youth Studies at the University of Malta were set up. The former was established as a non-governmental organisation to represent the interest of young people through its member organisations while the latter was established to provide professional training for youth workers (Teuma, 2014). During that same year the Parliamentary Secretariat was elevated to the level of a Ministry and riding on that momentum it launched the [first National Youth Policy document](#) in 1993. The document recognised the value of young people as a major human resource and provided a framework and objectives for those working with young people. It highlighted youth information, education, employment, health, culture, family and mobility as policy priority areas.

The policy document was revised and in 1999 a [second updated version of national youth policy](#) was issued. This version increased the targeted cohort by including young people between the age of 14 and 30 years old. The new document aimed at providing young people and policy makers with clear objectives in the political, social and economic development targeting a wide range of policy areas such as education, employment, health, housing, culture, intergenerational communication, sport, leisure and enterprise.

At this point Malta had representation on the European Steering Committee for Youth and this led to a successful application for a youth policy review by a group of experts appointed by the Council of Europe. The Review Team visited Malta in 2003, and later that year presented a report to the Parliamentary Secretariat (Ciorbaru, [2005](#)). Following

this report the [national youth policy document was revised and updated for a third time](#) in 2004. The priority areas for this policy documents were Education; Employment; Health; Culture; Environment; Leisure; Mobility; Participation; Information Technology and Youth at Risk. The document also called for the establishment of a national youth agency that would replace the Youth Services Department within the Ministry of Education in monitoring the policy implementation.

Another [revision of the national youth policy](#) was published in 2010. This was the first revision since Malta's accession to the European Union and as such it was rooted and reflected European Youth Policy documents. The definition of youth was again extended to include young people between the ages of 13 and 30 years old. This document intended to target the holistic development of young people and highlighted a wide range key areas, namely, education, employment, health and wellbeing, youth justice, transition, culture and arts, community cohesion and volunteering, sports, leisure, environment and information technology. Most importantly it established an instrument for policy implementation – [Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#) – the National Youth Agency (Teuma, 2014; [Legal Notice 522/2010](#)).

In 2014, the Parliamentary Secretariat for Research, Innovation, Youth and Sport set up a youth policy advisory group to update the 2010 document and in 2015 a new youth policy document entitled '[National Youth Policy – Towards 2020. A Shared Vision for the Future of Young People](#)' was published. The document highlights priority areas such as education and training, employment and entrepreneurship, health and well-being, voluntary and community activities; sports and recreational activities.

The next revision of the National Youth Policy is envisaged for 2021.

1.4 Youth policy decision-making

Structure of Decision-making

Youth policy-making takes place primarily at a central government level. The main responsibility for youth policy lies within the [Ministry of Education and Employment](#), mainly through the [Parliamentary Secretary for Youth, Sport and Voluntary Organisations](#).

However there are other institutional actors that are formally involved in youth policy making such as the [Office of the Prime Minister](#); [Ministry for Health](#); [Ministry for Gozo](#); [Ministry for Home Affairs and National Security](#); [Ministry for European Affairs and Equality](#); [Ministry for Justice, Culture and Local Government](#); [Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Trade Promotion](#) and the [Ministry for the Family, Children's Rights and Social Solidarity](#).

Within these Ministries there are a number of important stake holders in youth policy-making such as the [Parliamentary Secretariat for Reforms, Citizenship and Simplification of Administrative Processes](#); [Parliamentary Secretary for European Funds and Social Dialogue](#); the [Parliamentary Secretariat for Local Government and Communities](#); the [Parliamentary Secretariat for Social Accommodation](#); and the [Parliamentary Secretariat for Persons with Disability and Active Ageing](#).

In addition to these Ministries and Parliamentary Secretariats other entities also play an important role in youth policy decision making:

[JobsPlus](#) is the public employment service in Malta, providing a service for employers to search for employees, and for jobseekers to apply for different jobs. Jobsplus also offers various training opportunities, ranging from basic skills to more technical and advanced courses. Jobsplus strives to enhance employability by recommending policies and implementing initiatives aimed at empowering, assisting and training jobseekers to facilitate their entry or re-entry into the active employment market, promoting workforce

development through skills and competency development, and by assisting employers in their recruitment and training needs.

The Faculty of Social Wellbeing within the University of Malta has a [Department of Youth and Community Studies](#) that was set to carry out research within the areas of youth and community studies. It also sets up and delivers courses in youth and community studies which lead to academic qualifications. The Department of Youth and Community Studies also strives to engage in public debates on issues that concern young people through the organisation of conferences and fora with the aim of contributing to the identification of efficiencies and lacunae in legislation and in the youth service and to challenge dominant discourse on youth.

The office of the [Commissioner for Children](#) was set up in 2003, to promote the welfare of children (0-18 years old) and the compliance with the UN Convention on the rights of the child, as ratified by Malta, and such other international treaties, conventions or agreements relating to children as are or may be ratified or otherwise acceded to by Malta. Rather than simply acting on adult assumptions regarding the needs of children, the Commissioner promotes children's rights by being informed directly of the experiences of children themselves. The Office acts as a focal point which monitors the current social and cultural situation in relation to children in the Malta, such that it can contribute substantially in the co-ordination that needs to take place across all sectors in order to have family-friendly policies that are also child oriented.

The [Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability \(CRPD\)](#) was established in to monitor the [Equal Opportunities \(Persons with Disability\) Act](#). It also provides the independent mechanism for the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). Together with fighting for disabled persons' rights and dealing with cases of discrimination on the grounds of disability, CRPD also develops policy recommendations, conducts research and undertakes other initiatives with the aim of enhancing the quality of life of disabled people and their families and their full inclusion in society. Furthermore, it organises awareness-raising campaigns with the aim of increasing knowledge about disabled persons, about their rights and needs, and about their potential.

The [National Commission for the Promotion of Equality \(NCPE\)](#) is an independent, government funded body whose primary task is to monitor the Equality for Men and Women Act; Equal Treatment of Persons Order; Access to Goods and Services and their Supply (Equal Treatment) Regulations and the Procedure for Investigation Regulations. The Commission works to ensure that Maltese society is free from any form of discrimination based on sex, gender and family responsibilities in employment, and racial and ethnic origin and gender in the provision of goods and services and their supply.

The [Social Affairs Committee](#) within the Maltese Parliament deals with all matters relating to social policy, including social assistance and family matters, which may be referred to it by the House or by the Standing Committee on House Business. It is responsible of youth issues.

The [Foundation for Social Welfare Services \(FSWS\)](#) offers prevention and treatment services, both on community and residential settings within the fields of substance abuse; children, families and communities; and disability. The foundation incorporates Aġenzija Appoġġ, Aġenzija Sedqa and Leap.

[Aġenzija Appoġġ](#) has as its ultimate aim the enhancement of the lives of people in need, through the provision and availability of professional care and support. It offers a wide range of community-based and specialised social welfare services, Appoġġ is the central national agency for children and families in need.

[Aġenzija Sedqa](#) is the national agency against dependencies, offers health promotion, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation services to persons with drug, alcohol, and/or compulsive gambling problems, and to their families. Sedqa is made up of two divisions, namely Care and Prevention. Each of the said divisions contributes in a specific manner to the issue of dependencies.

[Leap](#) is made up of 11 centres around Malta and Gozo aiming to empower people to take control of their lives and make the necessary changes to finally take the 'Leap' forward towards a better future. Leap combats social exclusion and poverty through employment, capacity building, social integration and social mobility to reduce poverty amongst vulnerable families through employment and education.

[Aġenzija Support](#) provides social work services; community, day and residential services and works with persons with disability and their families to secure the means, opportunities and services whereby they can execute their right to fully participate in community life.

The [Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector](#) aims to support the development of a more effective and efficient voluntary and community sector in Malta and Gozo. In this regard the Council delivers a range of support and capacity building services including information, advice and training. The Council also aims to support the development of a more influential and cohesive voluntary and community sector in Malta and Gozo by facilitating networking and partnership within the sector, and between the same sector and the private and public sectors.

The role of the [Social Care Standards Authority \(SCSA\)](#) as a Regulatory Body is to improve quality and standards in social welfare services to protect and enhance the dignity, safety and welfare of all service users. This vision is to be achieved through support and regulation. Both service users and service providers will be actively involved in the ongoing process of standard development and improvement. The process of regulation is intended to be a positive experience, which is carried out through consultation, collaboration and dialogue. It is envisaged that through its operations, the Authority will positively influence social welfare practices and the qualitative development of services in the sector. The Social Care Standards Authority was established under [ACT No. XV of 2018](#).

Main Themes

The [National Youth Policy](#) is informed and built upon by 3 separate but interlocking pillars. These are:

- the reality of lives of young people in Malta today;
- the development of youth policy in the past 20 years (both on a European and national level);
- Government's policy for greater democratic participation, equitable economic and social progress for all, and inclusive change.

The policy was developed on the notion that the social and cultural boundaries that have long distinguished childhood, youth and adulthood are now blurred. Children are developing faster and facing a much more complex reality. Traditional transitions from education to employment and from family home to independence are becoming much more complex. Such transitions are also changing in terms of personal lives, the idea of the traditional family is in itself changing. However, while young people in Malta today do have more choices and personal freedom than any other previous generation, the challenges and the pressures they face are also significant.

This policy is the first to be framed within the EU Youth Strategy framework and as such it took into consideration the strategy's goals and aims but also kept the development and experience of youth policymaking in Malta over the past 20 years. In the light of the Government's policy for greater democratic participation, equitable economic and social progress for all, and inclusive change the [Ministry of Education and Employment](#), through the Parliamentary Secretary for Research, Innovation, Youth and Sport, set up a Policy Advisory Board drafted a National Youth Policy in consultation with young people. The Policy Advisory Board presented the draft discussion document following further consultations with number of other entities, namely the Church, the National Youth Council, Youth NGOs, youth workers, youth work professional bodies, stakeholders in the

youth field and the broader general public. The updated version of the draft discussion document was again presented to all stakeholders for consultation and [National Youth Policy](#) - Towards 2020: A shared vision for the future of young people.

The [National Youth Policy](#) is implemented through two strategies, which comprise of a number of Action Plans.

Strategy 1: Youth work and services for young people - Services, programmes, projects and activities in support of young people and youth organisations

Action Plan - New spaces at local community level for young people and youth organisations.

Create new spaces and facilities at local community level to support the development of young people through their active involvement and participation in non-formal learning opportunities

Action Plan - Awareness raising, listening to and supporting the voice of young people.

Create initiatives and opportunities that enhance young people's social and political awareness and that enable their voices to be heard on issues that impact on their lives.

Action Plan - Initiatives for the active engagement, empowerment and participation of young people and youth organisations.

Develop and implement initiatives, programmes and activities that actively involve young people and youth organisations in developing young people's competences and skills that enhance their future learning and employment prospects.

Strategy 2: Cross-sectoral supports for young people - Cross-sectoral supports for young people that enhance their social participation and their learning and employment prospects.

Action Plan - Education and training.

Develop and implement initiatives that utilise both formal education and non-formal learning, as mutually reinforcing agents, with a view to enhancing young people's educational attainment levels and progression.

Action Plan - Health and well-being.

Develop and implement initiatives that seek to improve the physical, mental and emotional health and well-being of young people and address issues that impact negatively on such well-being.

Action Plan - Employment and entrepreneurship.

Develop and implement initiatives with a view to enhancing young people's participation in the labour market and their future employment, occupational or professional prospects.

Action Plan - Arts and Culture.

Develop and implement initiatives with a view to enhancing young people's artistic gifts and promoting cultural and artistic awareness and participation in and attendance at cultural and artistic pursuits and events.

Action Plan - Social Inclusion.

Develop and implement initiatives with a view to the active participation of young people with fewer opportunities and those from a migrant background.

Action Plan - Voluntary and Community activities.

Develop and implement initiatives to enable young people to be active members of their local communities and take responsibility for the quality of community life and the local environment.

Action Plan - Sport and recreational activities.

Develop and implement initiatives to support young people's active participation in sports that enhance their physical and mental well-being, competitiveness and social relationships.

The National Agency for Youth

The [National Youth Agency - Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ](#) - was established in February 2011 by [Legal Notice 522/2010](#). Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ was established to mainstream youth related issues and further develop youth services in Malta. Its overall objective is to provide a coherent, cohesive and unified governmental approach to youth related policy issues.

For young people, it aims to enhance participation, empowerment and dialogue as well as expand supports and services. For policy makers, it aims to bring about a change in attitudes and work culture, to include a youth perspective, greater coherence in policymaking and better data and information on youth issues. The mission statement of Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ is to coordinate the implementation of the National Youth Policy to promote and safeguard the interests of young people.

The agency falls within the responsibility of the Minister responsible for Youth affairs and is under direct supervision of the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry responsible for Youth. The Agency is governed by the provisions of the Financial Administration and Audit Act.

The budget for the National Youth Agency for 2018 is €1,150,000.

The Agency has the following functions:

- to liaise and ensure the necessary coordination between Government departments and other agencies in the implementation of youth policy and measures or initiatives proposed by Government or the Agency from time to time;
- to undertake and co-ordinate research into specific issues aimed at assessing the state of play with respect to youth affairs;
- to formulate, co-ordinate, manage and evaluate youth work programmes which promote active youth participation and the empowerment of young people;
- to provide local and EU information to youth on any matters which may be of interest to their development and facilitate the participation of youths and youth organisation in EU and Euromed programmes;
- to liaise with the National Authority and National Agency of the Youth in Action programme for a coherent operational programme;
- to act as a focal point for the involvement of youth in the decision-making process;
- to promote the role of youth in local Government;
- to assist and support national and regional voluntary youth organisations and other organisations working in the youth field.

The Agency shall assume the following duties:

- to coordinate, evaluate and monitor the implementation of the National Youth Policy;
- to ensure that all Government programmes concerning the affairs and interests of young people are implemented in accordance with the National Youth Policy;
- to keep direct and continuous contact with local and foreign bodies working in the field of youth, and with other groups, agencies or individuals as the need arises;
- to ensure the highest standards in youth work; and
- to keep under review the workings of this Order, and where deemed required, at the request of the Minister or otherwise, submit proposals for the Order's review.

Policy Monitoring and Evaluation

The implementation of the national youth policy over the period 2015-2020, will be monitored on an ongoing basis by the Ministry responsible for Youth. [Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ](#)

uses its [annual reports](#) to record progress in relation to Strategy 1, while the inter-ministerial group reports on progress related to Strategy 2.

It is envisaged that at the end of the period 2015-2020, an independent evaluation will be conducted on the overall impact of the policy and the benefits accruing for young people, the voluntary youth sector and the wider society.

1.5 Cross-sectoral approach with other ministries

Mechanisms and actors

The idea of a cross-sectoral approach to youth policy was first introduced in the [second revision of the national youth policy](#) in 2004. This was again emphasised in the [third revision of the document](#) in 2010. The two documents however made no reference to any specific mechanisms other than a National Youth Agency that would coordinate the process.

Following the setting up of [Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#), the National Youth Agency, in 2011 efforts for a more cross-sectoral youth policy were made. Coordinated collaborative efforts were made for instance with the Ministry for Education and Employment, the Ministry for Health, the Ministry for Gozo, and the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity. However, this was all on an ad-hoc basis depending on specific policy issues and no explicit legal framework or specific political commitment that underpinned cross-sectoral youth policy existed.

The ad-hoc approach started to change [National Youth Policy Towards 2020: A shared vision for the future of young people](#). This fourth revision of the National Youth policy was developed and formulated taking on a cross-sector approach. The document is based on two strategies. The first relates to core youth work services and falls directly under the responsibility of [Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#). The agency started to facilitate a more approach to coordinated partnerships with different entities within other Ministries to coordinate a smoother implementation of the National Youth Policy. Such partnerships are particularly prominent in the Culture and Education field. As for the Culture field [Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#) together with [Arts Council](#) Malta has a number of Empowerment projects that provide a space where young people can grow artistically. On the other hand in a collaborative effort with the Ministry for Education and Employment, [Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#) is coordinating a youth work programme in secondary schools in Malta as part of the curriculum with Social Science as well as Personal, Social, Career Development with an emphasis on civic and political participation.

The second strategy, 'Cross-sectoral supports for young people' tackles the cross-sectoral dimension of youth policy. The 7 action plans that make up the strategy, Education and Training; Health and Well-Being; Employment and Entrepreneurship; Arts and Culture; Social Inclusion; Voluntary and Community Activities and Sport and Recreational Activities, were developed together with the relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies responsible for the implementation of the particular action plan.

The document also proposed the establishment of an inter-ministerial group on youth policy intended to harmonise the implementation of youth policy. The group which is set to be coordinated by [Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#), is to report bi-annually on state of play of youth policy in relation to the cross-sectoral supports as indicated in Strategy 2. The group comprising of representatives from all relevant Government Ministries, including the [Office of the Prime Minister](#); [Office of the Deputy Prime Minister](#) and [Ministry for Health](#); [Ministry for the Economy, Investment and Small Businesses](#); [Ministry for Education and Employment](#); [Ministry for European Affairs and Equality](#); [Ministry for Justice, Culture and Local Government](#); [Ministry for Gozo](#); and the [Ministry for the Family, Children's Rights and Social Solidarity](#), met for the first time in November 2018.

The mandate of the inter-ministerial group is to monitor and report on the implementation of a cross-sectoral approach to youth policy and later during 2019 to start the formulation of a new National Youth Policy.

1.6 Evidence-based youth policy

Political Commitment to Evidence-Based Youth Policy

The Government, through the [National Youth Policy Towards 2020: A Shared Vision for the Future of Young People](#), has proposed a commitment to a youth policy that is evidence-based and outcome-focused. Within this document there is no explicit definition of evidence-based youth policy. However, priority is given to research as it believed that this provides all those working with and for young people with an invaluable tool and source of relevant and up-to-date information. In this regard, [Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#) continuously monitors research reports concerning Maltese young people and also finances research itself so as to increase its evidence base.

The research programme for the period 2015-20 targets the main areas that concern young people today, such as education (including the digital divide and skills gaps), employment, environment, rights and responsibilities (particularly the political participation of young people), health and well-being, and justice.

Cooperation between policy-making and research

In 1992, following an approach from the then Ministry of Youth and the Arts, the University of Malta set up an Institute of Youth Studies. This was later developed into a Programme within the Department of Educational Studies, and now it forms part of the Faculty for Social Wellbeing. During this time, it has developed extensively both in vision and range of activities.

Today, the mission of the [Department of Youth and Community Studies](#) at the University of Malta is to carry out research within the areas of youth and community studies on its own and in collaboration with other interested bodies. It also engages in public debates on issues that concern young people through the organisation of conferences and fora with the aim of contributing to the identification of efficiencies and lacunae in legislation and in the youth service and to challenge dominant discourse on youth.

In 2017, [Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#) commissioned a national youth research, focusing on the participation of young people in society, in particular the Structured Dialogue provisionally entitled "Evidence Based Dialogue." With this research the agency has a clear understanding of what political participation means for young people in Malta and how young Maltese people would like to be involved in the Structured Dialogue in the future. The research will be published early 2019.

In 2018, [Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#) commissioned another national youth research called "Youth Vioce" as part of a project called Polifest, co-financed through Erasmus+. This national research was specifically designed so as to gather an evidence-base on a number of major issues that would eventually facilitate the policy process.

Also, in 2018 [Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#) formally acknowledged the collaboration with The University of Malta, through its Department of Youth and Community Studies, Faculty for Social Wellbeing by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Both Parties agreed that all collaborative initiatives undertaken by them in the context of this MOU shall be guided by the aims and strategies of the National Youth Policy Towards 2020. Through this agreement, which is valid for three, amongst other things is intended to consolidate and increase collaboration in research.

As yet no evaluations were carried out through systematic reviews, randomized controlled trials.

National Statistics and available data sources

National statistics are collected by the [National Statistics Office](#). This office does not produce any documents specifically on young people. However, some of its documents do have sections relating to young people. In the [Labour Market Statistics](#) the [Labour Force Survey](#) and the [Accidents at Work](#), both issued quarterly and the [Registered Unemployed](#), issues monthly all offer statistics on young people. Also, as part of the [Education and Information Society Statistics](#) the [Students Enrolment survey](#), [Graduate Student](#) survey and [Absenteeism in Schools survey](#), which are issued yearly, also make reference to young people. Also issued yearly as part of the [Living Conditions and Cultural Statistics](#) are the [International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development survey](#) and the [International Day of Families survey](#).

There is no regular youth report produced at a national level. Aġenzija Żgħażaġh has however produced the following research reports on a national level:

[Mirrors and Windows: Maltese Young People's Perception of Themselves, their Families, Communities and Society](#). This research aimed to construct social and cultural characteristics of young people, their views, opportunities and also the difficulties encountered.

[Leisure Trends among Young People in Malta](#). This report presents the most common types of leisure activities older children and young people engage in, as well as the amount of time they spend on such activities. The study also identifies barriers that hinder wider participation in leisure activities and how the issue of greater accessibility could be addressed.

[The Participation of Maltese Young People in the Voluntary Sector](#). This report unearths the level of participation and contribution of Maltese youth in voluntary work both in Malta and abroad.

The Voices of The Young and Vulnerable in Malta: A Qualitative Study. This report was commissioned by Aġenzija Żgħażaġh and issued in 2018. The study highlights the main challenges that vulnerable young people, between 17 – 28 have to face in the course of family and community life as well as in accessing welfare and other state and voluntary support systems.

The latest 2 national youth research documents “Evidence based Dialogue” and “Youth Voice” will be published in early 2019.

Budgetary Allocations supporting research in the youth field

The Government has no line of funding for research on youth explicitly supporting evidence-based youth policy making or evidence-based evaluation of its youth-related programs or of policy outcomes.

1.7 Funding youth policy

How Youth policy is funded

There is a specific budget for the Agency that is charged with the coordination of youth policy. The budget for 2015 was EUR 1,105,000. An extra Eur 1,500,000 was voted in 2015 for the development of a Youth Village. For 2016 the budget is EUR 1,600,000 which was increased to EUR 1,645,000 in 2017.

Apart from these line votes youth policy is also funded ad hoc from several other budget lines within the different Ministries that provide services for young people. No information on such budget lines is available.

What is funded?

The policy priorities that are being funded are the following:

1. Extending and increasing Outreach and Detached Youth Work.
2. Social Inclusion of migrant and LGBTIQ young people.
3. Include more facilities for mobility projects through Erasmus+ in the Youth Village.

Financial accountability

In order to access public funds any youth organisation must be enrolled with the [Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations](#). The enrolment necessitates the youth organisation has a Statute or Deed that are in line with the [Voluntary Organisations Act](#). To qualify for enrolment the organisation has to be non-profit; autonomous; voluntary; that no part of the income, capital or property of the organisation shall be available directly or indirectly to any promoter, member, administrator, donor or other private interest and must have a dissolution clause whereby upon winding up the organisation any remaining assets should be applied in favour of another organisation/s with similar aims. Also the Act states that the youth organisation must produce annual accounts which need to be authenticated by at least 2 authorised persons and an annual administration report that needs to be authenticated by at least 1 authorised person.

Use of EU Funds

Erasmus+ Programme

Activities funded include:

- Mobility of young people through Youth Exchanges and European Voluntary Service;
- Mobility of Youth Workers: Youth Workers' training and networking.

Erasmus+ Budget

Year	Key Action 1	Key Action 2	Key Action 3	Total
2016	€ 1, 194 802	€ 347 140	€ 70 448	€ 1, 612 390
2017	€ 1, 662 236	€ 456 493	€ 72 660	€ 2, 191 389

The MT NA is part of the [Research-based Analysis and Monitoring of Erasmus+](#): Youth in Action Programme (RAY Network) and is currently involved in two research exercises - [Research-based Analysis and Monitoring of Erasmus+](#): Youth in Action and [Research project on long-term effects of Erasmus+](#): Youth in Action on participation and active citizenship.

Trends cannot really be established as the support to activities is determined by the budget available. At present, youth exchanges are most apt to be supported.

European Social Fund (ESF) Programme

Activities funded include:

Training, counselling and job exposure to young NEETs under the age of 25 to equip them with the necessary skills and competences to either access educational/training paths or re-enter the labour market.

The Youth Guarantee. Youth Guarantee Budget 2013-2015 Eur 3,134 432.00

1.8 Cross-border cooperation

Cooperation with European countries

A collaboration programme between Italy and Malta came into effect in 2014. This collaboration programme promoted cooperation between universities and higher education institutions of culture.

International cooperation

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between Malta and China in the field of Sport in 2014. This was intended to promote invitation to athletes from the two countries as well as exchange of information on sport and physical education.

An agreement between China and Malta was signed in 2013 intending to facilitate the mutual recognition of higher education degrees, diplomas and certificates awarded to students in the two countries.

An Intergovernmental Joint Committee between Palestine and Malta came into being in 2015. This Intergovernmental Joint committee amongst other things promotes the cooperation of scholarships and the exchange of undergraduate and graduate students.

[Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#) represents Malta on the [Council of Europe CDEJ](#) which coordinates and promotes youth related issues among Member States and where the policy focus is on young people's access to fundamental human and social rights. Aġenzija Żgħażaġh has also been proactive in promoting the Council of Europe's No Hate Speech Campaign and in the Youth Mobility Platform.

[Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#) represents Malta in cooperating with the [Partnership between European Commission and the Council of Europe](#) in organising seminars and projects that aim to promote European cooperation in the youth field and in contributing to the Partnership's Youth Knowledge publication on the History of youth work in Europe and in working with the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (EKYCP) in building the research base on youth related issues.

[Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#) represents Malta in cooperation initiatives under the [Commonwealth Youth Programme](#) and in promoting the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment its strategic policy framework, the Commonwealth Youth Civil Activism Network and initiatives to professionalise the youth work sector

[Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#) is a member of [European Youth Information and Counselling Agency](#) (ERYICA) a non-profit association and network of members and affiliated organisations working in 31 countries that provide young people with general information under the principles of the European Youth Information Charter.

[Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#) is a member of the [European Youth Card Association](#) which comprises 38 organisations in 36 different countries across Europe. Over 4 million young people make use of the card annually. [Karta Żgħażaġh](#) is available for free in Malta to young people aged from 13 to 30 years and offers discounts on a wide range of products and services relating to culture, travel, accommodation, shopping and other services that are of interest to young people.

1.9 Current debates and reforms

Forthcoming policy developments

After setting up the [Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#) – the national youth agency – in 2011, and having professionalised youth work in 2015, the next policy development that is currently being discussed is the setting up of several regional youth centres across Malta and Gozo.

The idea is to systematically take youth work to the grass root level. The Regional Youth Centre will function as a hub from where youth services provided centrally are disseminated through youth workers providing services in schools and local communities. They will also provide a one-stop-shop for services already provided in the community for young people such as youth cafes, youth hubs and detached youth work services. The regional service is also being devised a means to gather data so as ensure that policy is more knowledge based.

Ongoing debates

One of the main current debates related to young people relates to the area of Youth Justice. In 2016 the Government had published the [Crime Prevention Strategy](#) which had a chapter relating to youth justice. An inter-ministerial working group consisting of several stakeholders led by [Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#) was set up by the [Ministry of Home Affairs and National Security](#).

The main remit of this working group primary will be to implement a thorough review of youth justice in Malta; from arrest to prosecution to sanctioning and treatment. This review will then guide the proposed strategies and could also be pivotal to the potential draft of a Youth Justice Act. Once this review is accomplished, the main remit of this working group would be of identifying a pool of professionals, identification of training of professionals and deciding on the referral process necessary for implementing front-line services and youth intervention teams.

2. VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES

Youth Volunteering falls under the responsibility of the Ministry For Education and Employment and the Parliamentary Secretariat for Youth Sport and Voluntary Organisations. The national programme for youth volunteering entitled 'Youth Voluntary Work Scheme' offers the possibility to young people, between the age of 16-30 years old, to do some volunteering both in-country and abroad.

2.1 General context

Historical developments

In their extensive sociological study of Malta, Sultana and Baldacchino (1994) identify the Church of Rome as one of the most decisive influences on contemporary Malta. This is reflected in the Maltese historical culture of volunteering. According to a [national report](#) submitted as part of Study of Volunteering in the European Union, volunteering in Malta has a relatively long established tradition, which is especially rooted in the activity of the Church organisations, particularly their missionary work. The report also notes that the teaching profession also played an important role in establishing volunteering and subsequently civil society. Since the beginning of teacher training in the 1940s, there has been a continuous practice among teachers over the following decades to become strongly involved in sector activities – such as setting-up organisational structures and offering voluntary services.

Traditionally youth organisations seemed to mirror such reality with church-based / affiliated youth organisations being among the most active, together with political parties' youth organisations. During the last decade this seems to be changing. Young people's involvement in traditional voluntary organisations (political parties, religious associations and church bodies) has declined, but membership has increased markedly in other organisations like trade unions, sports, health and third world development groups ([Council of Europe, 2005](#)).

Historically, on a youth policy level, the notion of youth volunteering first appeared in the [first revision of the National Youth Policy](#) in 1999. This document called for young people to take up volunteering while also highlighting a statutory commitment to recognise the importance of youth volunteering in the development of young people and pledging to offer assistance to organisations that work with and for young people.

The interest in youth volunteering also continued to manifest in all the other revisions of the National youth policy. The [second revision of the National Youth policy](#) in 2004. The document clearly noted that the State should recognize, encourage and support young people who are involved in voluntary work. The [third revision of the National Youth Policy](#) went a step further. This document presented 11 vertical policy thematic statements including Community Cohesion and Volunteering. Amongst other things the document noted that through volunteering initiatives, the community benefits from the resource of young people's creativity and innovation and appealed for the safety and well-being of volunteers as well as the recognition of the achievements of the young volunteers. This approach was also adopted in the [current formulation of the National Youth Policy](#). This documents emphasised a cross-sectoral approach to youth policy and identified youth volunteering as one of its 7 main action plans. The document emphasises a statutory commitment to encourage and facilitates young people's engagement in volunteering on both a National and European level.

Further to this, another historical landmark came about in 2007 when the [Voluntary Organisations Act](#) was enacted in the Laws of Malta intended to regulate voluntary organisations and their administration in Malta.

Moreover, the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector, set up through the Voluntary Organisations Act of 2007. As part of its remit this Council is charged with the promotion of a culture of volunteering and participation in especially children and youth, as an aspect of personal and social development, established a Youth Voluntary Work Scheme on a national level. The intention behind this scheme is to help young people improve their skills and employment prospects by giving them an opportunity to take up volunteering as part of their formal and informal learning process. The scheme also enables young volunteers to discover the value of voluntary service and helps to foster a sense of community and active citizenship. The second goal of the Youth Voluntary Work Scheme is to support Voluntary Organisations in attracting young people to volunteering, enabling them to enhance their capacity with new volunteers and fresh ideas.

In 2016 a national survey conducted by the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector showed that 15% of the respondents between 18 -24 years old and 16% of 25 – 34 years old were actively involved in the voluntary sector.

Main concepts

Malta has no official definition of youth volunteering. However, the [Voluntary Organisations Act](#) defines a 'volunteer' as a person who provides unremunerated services through or for voluntary organisations. However, the act does not exclude the possibility that members of a voluntary organisation receive remuneration from the organisation when they are engaged or are an employee of the organisation under a written contract or when they are the providers of any goods or services to the organisation.

Voluntary organisations are then defined as foundations, trusts, associations of persons or temporary organisations which are independent and autonomous of the Government and such organisations shall have their status respected by the Government at all times.

In addition, the [third revision of the national youth policy](#) that had been published in 2010 stated that volunteering contributes to a cohesive society creating bonds of trust and solidarity as well as social capital and so youth volunteering not only contributes to personal development, but also to a cohesive society. Building on this the [National Youth Policy Towards 2020: A shared vision for the future of young people](#) looks at youth volunteering as initiatives to enable young people to be active members of their local communities and take responsibility for the quality of community life and the local environment.

2.2 Administration and governance of youth volunteering

Governance

Although voluntary organisations, included those ran by young people, are governed by the [Voluntary Organisations Act](#), this framework does not directly provide for individual volunteers. The Act addresses the institutions responsible for volunteering and voluntary organisations in general and makes no reference to volunteers as individuals.

Anyone interested in taking up volunteering is not required to obtain specific permits to engage in voluntary activities and there are no specific restrictions which limit participation in volunteering activities. In this regard, volunteering happens both formally and informally.

Formal volunteering is governed centrally and the main governmental authority responsible for volunteering and hence youth volunteering in Malta is the Parliamentary Secretariat for Youth, sport and Voluntary Organisations within the Ministry for Education and Employment. Both the [Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations](#) and the [Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector](#) fall under this Ministry. The [Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations](#) is the regulatory authority responsible for this sector with the aim of monitoring and supervising the activities of voluntary organisations as well as supporting

them. The [Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector](#) sees over the development of an effective and efficient voluntary sector through the delivery of a range of support and capacity building services.

Main actors

With the introduction of the [Voluntary Organisations Act](#) in 2007, two key institutions were established to ensure coordination, support and monitoring within the voluntary sector. These institutions are the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations and the Council for Voluntary Organisations.

Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations

The [Office of the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations](#) is responsible for establishing appropriate communication systems to support Maltese citizens engaged in voluntary activities, whether in Malta or abroad. The first Commissioner was appointed in 2007. The term of office runs for three years and a Commissioner can be reappointed at the end of the period.

The Commissioner must follow a set of guiding principles:

- Recognise, encourage and promote the value and importance of voluntary activities and voluntary organisations, whether operating independently of government institutions or in a supporting role, and the benefit deriving to the social and cultural life in Malta;
- Recognise the contribution of voluntary activities and voluntary organisations, as expressions of participation, solidarity, pluralism and subsidiarity, towards the continued enjoyment and enrichment of democratic life in Malta;
- Recognise the direct economic benefit of voluntary and unremunerated activities and of initiatives undertaken by voluntary organisations and volunteers;
- Recognise the importance of the co-ordination of efforts by voluntary organisations with similar purposes so as to achieve a greater concentration of resources and the benefits of economies of scale, whilst avoiding any duplication of efforts and always acting in the interests of their beneficiaries; and
- Recognise the importance of the creation of federations or of associations of members in order to regulate member organisations and their activities in order to achieve the benefits of self regulation in the voluntary sector.

The main duties of the Office of the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations are to:

- provide enrolment facilities for organisations;
- monitor the activities of voluntary organisations to ensure observance of the Act;
- provide voluntary organisations with information about the benefits and responsibilities as a result of enrolment;
- provide information and guidelines to individuals engaged in voluntary activities and to members of voluntary organisations;
- make recommendations to the Minister responsible for social policy on legislation and policies in support of voluntary organisations, volunteers and voluntary activities;
- assist the government, government departments, public agencies and entities controlled by the government in preparing and reviewing policies in support of the voluntary sector;
- investigate any complaints relating to voluntary organisations and to take such action as is in their power to redress any justified grievance that may come to their notice;
- monitor the promotion of voluntary organisations and the behaviour of their administrators so as to ensure the observance of high standards of accountability and transparency and cooperate with and support the Council for the Voluntary Sector in developing policies which will be of benefit to the voluntary sector.

Council for the Voluntary Sector

The [Council for the Voluntary Sector](#) is composed of a Chairperson and an additional ten members. Of these eleven members, one is appointed by the Minister to represent the Government, a second is the Commissioner ex officio and the remaining nine members are appointed from the voluntary sector to represent the voluntary sector. The Council is appointed for a two year term – after this period it can either be reappointed or changed.

One of the Council's primary aims is to represent the voluntary sector and promote its interests. While serving as a consultative body to the Commissioner when developing policies in relation to this sector. The Council is also meant to counterbalance the power of the Commissioner.

The key tasks of the Council include overseeing the volunteer sector; representing the interests of the voluntary sector as a whole; assisting the voluntary sector capacity building and training; helping with troubleshooting; creating programmes and projects for the voluntary sector; administering a voluntary organisations fund to promote voluntary activities.

In general, the Council for the Voluntary Sector acts as a platform from which co-operation is developed between voluntary organisations and the government and between voluntary organisations themselves.

European Union Programme Agency

Also established in 2007 the [European Union Programme Agency](#) is responsible for the management of the Erasmus+ programme of the European Commission. Within Erasmus+ there is the European Voluntary Service, through which young people can commit to volunteering for up to 12 months in a foreign country.

Also the new European Solidarity Corps will provide opportunities of volunteering for young people.

Aġenzija Żgħażaġh

[Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#), the National Youth Agency, is the entity charged with the coordination of youth policy within which there are a number of action plans. One of these action plans is Voluntary and Community Activities.

2.3 National strategy on youth volunteering

Existence of a National Strategy

In Malta there is no national Strategy on Youth Volunteering. However the principles of youth volunteering are incorporated the [National Youth Policy Towards 2020 A shared Vision for the Future of Young People](#) that came into effect in 2015.

Scope and contents

This document proposes a set of cross-sectoral supports for young people that enhance their social participation, their learning and employment prospects. These cross-sectoral supports are made of a number of Action Plans. One such Action Plan is called Voluntary and Community Activities. This action plan is intended to develop and implement initiatives to enable young people to be active members of their local communities and take responsibility for the quality of community life and the local environment. It proposes actions that:

- create opportunities for intergenerational awareness and dialogue through the active involvement of young and older people;
- increase participation in Youth Local Councils;
- increase awareness in historical, architectural and cultural heritage

- engage more young people in the Youth Voluntary Scheme and the European Voluntary Service.

Responsible authority

The Governmental authority responsible for this action plan is the Ministry responsible for the Voluntary Sector – currently the [Ministry for Education and Employment](#) under which the entities that regulate voluntary activities fall. [Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ](#) – the National Youth Agency - has the overarching responsibility for promoting, coordinating and facilitating this Action Plan.

Revisions/ Updates

The concept of youth volunteering has always been part of the National Youth Policy Documents and was always given its due importance. However it was since the [third revision of the national youth policy](#) published in 2010 document that volunteering as a standalone concept was really highlighted. This is evident as in this [third revision document](#) Community Cohesion and Volunteering' became one of the main themes in the document. Volunteering started to be seen as a means of engaging young people and instil in them a sense of community. Also the experience gained through volunteering started to be recognised as an asset when such young people would enter the world of work. Such a direction was maintained in the [latest version of the national youth policy](#) published in 2015 within which Voluntary and Community Activities is one of the main Action Plans.

2.4 Youth volunteering at national level

National Programme for Youth Volunteering

The national programme was launched in 2015 and it is called [Youth Voluntary Work Scheme](#). The scheme is managed by the [Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector](#). The national programme intends to achieve two main goals. The first goal is to help young people improve their skills and employment prospects by giving them an opportunity to take up volunteering as part of their non-formal and informal learning process. The programme also enables them to discover the value of voluntary service and helps to foster a sense of community and active citizenship. The second goal of the scheme is to support Voluntary Organisations in attracting young people to volunteering, enabling them to enhance their capacity with new volunteers and fresh ideas.

In 2016 the Scheme started supporting voluntary experiences abroad for young people through locally registered voluntary organisations to carry out an international volunteer service in Europe, Africa, Asia or South America.

The Youth Voluntary Work Scheme is open for young volunteers between the ages of 16-30 who would want to do volunteer work in Malta and from 18-30 years old for young volunteers who would like to do volunteering abroad.

Interested young volunteers submit an online application indicating the period of volunteering (up to 12 months) and the number of hours of work per week (8hrs, 15hrs or 30 hrs) they would like to commit themselves to and the Voluntary Organisation where they would like to volunteer.

Upon receiving the application, the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector will contact the indicated Voluntary Organisation to see if they are willing to host voluntary workers under the scheme. There is a maximum of 4 volunteers per organisation. Should the indicated voluntary organisation accept the offer, they are given the details of the young volunteer to set up an interview. If accepted, the young person signs a contract, and starts receiving a monthly stipend.

The scheme pays a stipend of Eur 2 per hour up to a maximum of Eur 60 per week.

The specific objectives pursued by the Youth Voluntary Work Scheme are to:

- Promote the participation in the community as an active citizen;
- Improve the level of key competences and skills of young people, including those with fewer opportunities;
- Foster quality improvements in youth voluntary work;
- Promote an intercultural dimension with a non-formal approach.

The policy priorities pursued through the Youth Voluntary Work Scheme are:

- Promoting active citizenship to young people by fostering social inclusion and the active participation of young people in society;
- Promoting young people's social inclusion and well-being, mainly through the empowerment and up skilling of young people, to combat youth unemployment;
- Raising awareness about voluntary work;
- Developing basic and transversal skills, such as entrepreneurship, working in a team and leadership skills;
- Increase the skills of young people through the practical experience of volunteering abroad;
- Encourage the learning of another language;
- Develop the ability to interact with persons of different language and culture;
- Spread tolerance among young people.

In 2015, 71 young people participated in the Youth Voluntary Work Scheme. In 2016 50 young people volunteered in Maltese organisations while 16 went to do their volunteering abroad.

Funding

The funding for the Youth Voluntary Work Scheme comes from a specific central national fund. For the years 2015 and 2016 the budget was EUR 200,000 per year.

Characteristics of youth volunteering

Apart from the data on the Youth Voluntary Work Scheme, there are no official statistics that specifically target the level of participation of young people in volunteering. The only data available comes from [National Statistics Office](#) that publishes a yearly [International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development](#) survey. Within such data the National Statistics Office publishes the level of participation for the 12-24 year old cohort. Since 2012 the average number of participants between 12-24 years was that of 4,000 which make up an average of about 13% of whole cohort of volunteers in Malta.

Young people participating in the Youth Voluntary Work Scheme chose very different areas for their volunteering. The most popular organisations however are those who deal with animal welfare, emergency and rescue and scouting.

Support to young volunteers

Youth Volunteers participation in the [Youth Voluntary Work Scheme](#) are given the opportunity to contribute to the daily work of voluntary organisations according to the particular nature of the same organisation. Youth Volunteers will be allocated a monthly stipend by the Scheme which will be paid to them directly by the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector. In the case of the volunteer experience taking place overseas, the Scheme shall also cover 75% of the travel and accommodation.

The financial assistance for the stipend under this Scheme will last for not more than twelve months from date of engagement of the eligible person/s with the accredited Voluntary Organisation. The Youth Volunteers will be required to work with the

organisation for either 8, 15 or 30 hours weekly placements. The financial assistance given in the form of stipends is fixed at an hourly rate €2.00 to cover travel expenses and food. (Example: €30.00 per week for Youth Volunteers undertaking a 15hr week placement).

In the case of the volunteer experience taking place overseas, the Scheme shall also cover the following:

- a. A per diem allowance as per established list for each country, which shall cover accommodation, food and local transportation;
- b. 75% Travel expenses (flight);
- c. Travel and health insurance.

Youth volunteers under the Youth Voluntary Work Scheme are covered by a health insurance. Those participating in the Overseas part of the scheme are also covered by a travel insurance.

Quality Assurance (QA)

A formal monitoring and evaluation mechanism to assure the quality of the Youth Voluntary Work Scheme is set in place and is managed by the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector and Aġenzija Żgħażaġh.

This happens through a system of accreditation that is required for Voluntary Organisations to host Youth Volunteers under the Youth Voluntary Work Scheme. It is designed to ensure consistently high standards in the Scheme and to help Youth Volunteers find placement in Voluntary Organisations and vice versa.

All accredited Voluntary Organisations must show they have the capacity and structure to be able to engage, train, manage, monitor and support Youth Volunteers.

The accreditors' assessment of an applicant Voluntary Organisation will be based on the following:

- Motivation and experience, in particular the motivation for taking part in Scheme;

Previous experience with similar placements of such as The European Voluntary Service (EVS), international projects and working with full-time volunteers.

- The organisation's aims, activities and capacities, in particular the organisation's aims and objectives; regular activities;
- Organisational and administrative capacity, particularly in order to have assurance regarding the number of volunteers the applicant Voluntary Organisation has capacity to host or coordinate at the same time
- Risk, safety and well-being, in particular capacity on how to prevent risks and crisis management; how to manage conflicts and cultural shock and how to guarantee safe working conditions
- The management of volunteers, in particular the training and managing Young Volunteers; the monitoring, mentoring and supporting Young Volunteers, especially those working in Voluntary Organisations in the areas of Health, Social and Humanitarian Action.
- Ideas for future placements, in particular the possible themes and activities;
- The relevance to Youth Voluntary Work Scheme objectives and priorities;
- The inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities;
- The plans for evaluation during and after a placement and ideas concerning visibility of Youth Voluntary Work Scheme.

Accredited host Voluntary Organisations are listed in the Youth Work Voluntary Scheme [database](#) of accredited organisations in . The database is the main tool for Youth Volunteers to find host Voluntary Organisations.

Target groups

The [Youth Voluntary Work Scheme](#) does not specify any particular target group to be recruited as a volunteer. In this regard any young person between the ages of 16 - 30 can apply for volunteering in Malta and any young person between the ages of 18 - 30 can apply for volunteering abroad.

However, the [Youth Voluntary Work Scheme](#) states that if the placement targets young volunteers with fewer opportunities, facilities and capacity in providing tailor-made preparation, support and follow-up have to be in place prior to the placement.

2.5 Cross-border mobility programmes

EU programmes

Malta participates in Erasmus+ programme: Mobility of Young People (Youth Exchanges and European Voluntary Service [EVS]) and Mobility of Youth Workers (Youth workers' training and networking).

The [European Union Programmes Agency](#) uses statistics to measure the number of participants taking part in the different activities in terms of gender, young people with special needs and those with fewer opportunities.

The [European Union Programmes Agency](#) is in charge of organising and monitoring these EU programmes at national level.

Other Programmes

In 2016 the [Youth Voluntary Work Scheme](#) started supporting voluntary experience abroad for young people through locally registered voluntary organisations to carry out an international volunteer service in Europe, Africa, Asia or South America.

Legal framework applying to foreign volunteers

If the voluntary work to be conducted will be less than 3 months in total, a Visa will suffice. If the voluntary work will be longer than 3 months the following forms and documents are also needed:

Forms (can be downloaded from [Identity Malta](#))

- Form O – Application for a temporary residence permit
- Form ID 1A – Identity Registration Form
- Rental Declaration Form (applicable for applicants who are renting property in Malta)

Additional documents

- Copy of the full passport, showing valid Visa stamps;
- Original covering letter from an NGO to verify that they will host the young person (NGOs registered with the Voluntary Organisations Commissioner are given priority);
- Proof of means of subsistence in the form of a recent local/foreign bank statement (Volunteers can be sponsored by family members or given a stipend by the NGO itself);
- Evidence of a comprehensive health insurance policy which covers the applicant for any type of medical assistance or hospitalization which could be needed during the applicant's stay in Malta.
- Lease agreement showing the residential address of the applicant (the address will be visible on the residence permit which also serves the purpose of an identity document).

2.6 Raising awareness about youth volunteering opportunities

Information providers

The Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector in 2016 has undertaken a Volunteer Awareness National Campaign, and one of the three main target audiences of this campaign are young people. As part of this campaign The [National Volunteer Award](#) is held annually in December. The awards include the Youth Volunteer of the Year. This award shall have the same aims as the National Volunteer Award and has the main scope to promote volunteering amongst young people. The aim of these awards are to:

- To give broad recognition to the service done by the nominees;
- To create awareness of the exemplary values displayed by the models for youth and wider society;
- To recognise the important contributions made in various fields.

The National Volunteer Award shall be awarded to an individual volunteer between the age of 16 and 30 years who has contributed in any field, such as social, humanitarian, health, ecological, cultural, education, sports, etc. The voluntary work must have had a positive contribution towards a particular field and should ideally have served as an inspiration to others.

Information on volunteering can also be accessed online. Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ hosts an online [Youth Information Portal](#). Information provided is continually updated and includes detailed contact information of various institutions, agencies and organisations together with embedded hyperlinks to access further details directly from the source. Youth Information Malta provides also a showcase of news, events and activities pertaining to the youth field and aims to be a common meeting place for young people, institutions, organisations, and youth workers. One section in the portal is dedicated directly to [volunteering](#).

Also, the [Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector](#) manages three [Volunteer Centres](#), the North Hub, the South Hub and the Central Hub. These centres serve as volunteer hubs and resource centres, where voluntary organisations, including those of young people, may use as their base and meeting points. These centres also hold training programs addressed to administrators and members of voluntary organisations. These facilities are open 24/7 and intended to support networks of volunteering organizations, assisting newly founded volunteers organisations and promoting volunteering opportunities.

Key initiatives

The [Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector](#) in 2016 is undertaking a Volunteer Awareness National Campaign, and one of the three main target audiences of this campaign are young people.

[Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ](#) also send information to youth organisations on volunteering opportunities in its monthly newsletter. Later in 2016 a publication will be launched highlighting volunteering opportunities in different sectors.

2.7 Skills recognition

Policy Framework

The responsible authority for validation and recognition of skills is the [National Commission for Further and Higher Education](#). [Subsidiary Legislation 327.432](#), aptly entitled, the 'Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning Regulations' establishes a

process which identifies, assesses and formally certifies the knowledge, skills and competences which individuals develop throughout their lives by means of participation in non-formal and informal learning.

[Subsidiary Legislation 327.432](#), which regulates the validation of informal and non-formal learning in Malta, states that any individual with a minimum of three years' experience in a particular occupation is allowed to apply for validation. Volunteering in particular occupations and sectors for which validation is already taking place in Malta would count towards the required years of experience.

Existing arrangements

As per subsidiary Legislation 327.432, the [National Commission for Further and Higher Education](#) (is to set up and coordinate the work of Sector Skills Units (SSUs) for different sectors. Through these SSUs, national occupational standards are developed to ensure the proper set up of the validation process.

As of December 2018, the [National Commission for Further and Higher Education](#) has set up SSUs for 8 different economic sectors. These are: Hospitality and Tourism, Automotive, Education Support, Health and Social Care, Hair and Beauty, Printing and Digital Media, Building and Construction, and Information Technology. This means that individuals who have three years' experience in occupations in any of these sectors, are eligible to apply for validation of their learning. The three years' experience may also include voluntary work.

2.8 Current debates and reforms

Forthcoming policy developments

On a national level the main current debate on volunteering are the amendments to the [Voluntary Organisations Act](#) that are currently being scrutinised by the Parliament and will be enacted end 2018. One of the main amendments to the act is the fact that all voluntary organisations, including youth organisations, will be obliged to notify the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations of their existence. Moreover, those organisations that make public collections, receive Governments or sponsorships, or any organisation with an income of over €25,000 or had an income of over €5,000 for 3 consecutive years annually will be obliged to enrol with the Office of the Commissioner. The Commissioner will also be vested with the power of investigation on money laundering and the financing of terrorism.

The amendments will also make possible for minors who attained the age of 16 to establish a Voluntary Organisation and also to vote in Annual General Meetings.

Also, the [Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector](#) will be reorganised and shall have representatives from 6 sectors one of which is Youth. In this regard youth organisations will be having an elected representative on the Council.

Ongoing debates

The [Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector](#) has issued a discussion paper entitled – National Strategy on Volunteering 2018. This would be the first time Malta would have a volunteering strategy. This National Volunteer Strategy intends to provide connection and co-ordination across both National and Local Government to support better on all dimensions the volunteer sector and make better use of all available resources. The Strategy would focus on co-ordinating research, consultation with the sector and implementation of reforms to support the sector at an organisational and individual level. A truly national strategy must provide an opportunity for coordinated policy development and decision-making at the national and local levels that will be reflected in specific

national and local actions. In this regard the Discussion paper is proposing a number of recommendations:

- That all levels of government make an commitment, in principle, to the development of a National Volunteer Strategy with a long term vision to strengthen volunteering in Malta;
- That an appropriate level of government funding be allocated to support the development and ongoing viability of a National Volunteer Strategy;
- That a National Volunteer Strategy be sector-driven with input and support from all stakeholders – community, government and business;
- That the development of a National Volunteer Strategy would serve to expand volunteering infrastructure of national, regional and local organisations avoiding duplication of resources in the creation of parallel infrastructure.

The current debate on Youth Volunteering circles around the newly introduced European Solidarity Corps through which young people will be able to do voluntary work both in-country and abroad. The current debate revolves around the issue of how such a programme will affect volunteering in Malta both as hosts and volunteers.

3. EMPLOYMENT & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Jobsplus is the Maltese public employment service and falls under the responsibility of the ministry for Education and Employment. In this regard Jobsplus deals with issues of youth employment and traineeships in Malta. The main employment programme for young people offered through Jobsplus is the Youth Guarantee. One particular scheme under the Youth Guarantee is called the youth Activation Scheme within which young people receive personalised attention as they go through a process that includes profiling, education and work exposure and a traineeship.

Apprenticeships are dealt with at the Malta College for the Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST). Apprenticeships are a requirement for any course at MCAST that offers an Apprenticeships as part of its syllabus.

3.1 General context

Labour market situation in the country

Malta has been exhibiting a positive economic performance with low unemployment rates. As illustrated in the table below, the unemployment rate in Malta in 2015 stood at less than five per cent, as opposed to the EU average of over nine per cent. Moreover, its employment rate has continuously risen throughout the last decade. The employment rate in Malta significantly increased from 61.6 per cent in 2011 to almost 68 per cent as of the end of 2015. These increases are backed up by the positive economic growth, which is further enhancing the demand for expanding the local labour market.

[Unemployment rate: Age 20 to 64 years](#) (Eurostat)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
EU28	9.3	10.1	10.6	10.0	9.2
MT	5.6	5.5	5.7	5.3	4.9

[Employment rate: Age 20 to 64 years](#) (Eurostat)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
EU28	68.6	68.4	68.4	69.2	70.0
MT	61.6	63.1	64.8	66.4	67.8

Several projects aimed at enhancing work opportunities and improving the skill levels of individuals in order to enhance their job prospects are being implemented. Additionally, there have been various changes within the welfare system which promote the concept of [Making Work Pay](#). The concept focuses on rewarding people who find employment, making active participation in the labour market more attractive than dependency on social benefits. Such initiatives include financial aid programmes ([Tapering of Benefits](#) and the [In-work Benefit](#)), work exposure, traineeships and free childcare services.

Current youth employment situation within the labour market

With an unemployment rate of 11.1 per cent in 2016, Malta is placed among the countries with the lowest unemployment rate within the EU. The EU28 unemployment rate in 2016 stood at 18.7 per cent, representing a 7.6 percentage point difference from Malta. Compared to 2012, when the unemployment rate was 14.1 per cent, Malta saw a decrease of 3 per cent.

[Unemployment rate: Age 15 to 24 years \(%\)](#) (Eurostat)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
EU28	21.7	23.2	23.6	22.2	20.4	18.7
MT	13.3	14.1	13.0	11.7	11.8	11.1

Various initiatives have been introduced to encourage youth participation in education, training and employment. Through the [Youth Guarantee](#), a second chance at education, work exposure and traineeship, as well as counselling and guidance on how to transit from inactivity into the labour market, is offered.

Apart from the implementation of the Youth Guarantee, a research project, the [Employability Index](#), was conducted to determine vertical and horizontal mismatches experienced by graduates when entering the labour market.

This information can be used by both prospective tertiary students and local authorities as a means of career guidance: while in the process of choosing the right career path, one can evaluate the risk of vertical and horizontal mismatches for each course. Through this means, students can analyse and determine which courses have the lowest chances of leading to job mismatch.

Definitions and concepts

Young people: Young people are categorized as persons aged between 15 and 24 years old.

NEETs: NEETs is the abbreviated form of the label given to young people who are neither in employment nor in education and training. In practice, it corresponds to the percentage of the population of a given age group and gender who are currently [not employed](#), and not involved in any form of [education](#) or training.

Active groups and inactive groups: Active population, includes both [employed](#) (employees and self-employed) and [unemployed](#) people, but not the economically [inactive](#), such as pre-school children, school age children, students and pensioners, provided that they are not working and not available or looking for work even if of working-age.

Registering/Unemployed groups: Registering groups includes people who are not working but actively seeking to find employment by registering with Malta's Public Employment Services - [Jobsplus](#).

An unemployed person, according to [Eurostat](#) is defined as someone who is currently aged between 15 to 74 years old; is without work during the reference week, who is available to start working within the next two weeks (or has already found a job to start within the next three months) or was actively seeking employment at some time in the last four weeks.

Vulnerable groups: Vulnerable groups, according to the [Inclusive Employment Services](#) at Jobsplus, are persons who, at present, fall within the socially disadvantaged categories of former substance abusers, former prison inmates or who are experiencing other socio-economic difficulties, and are therefore in need of customized care and support vis-à-vis training and guidance towards employment and job retention.

In addition to the above definitions, Malta's [Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan](#) also defines what constitutes good-quality offers. A good-quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship refers to the opportunity given to young people through the Youth Guarantee during the four months period of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education. For each type of offer, whether it is employment, training or education, criteria are established on whether or not the activity is applicable for the young person to participate in.

If a job opportunity is offered, it needs to last for at least six months. Moreover, if the employer is engaging the participant through the Youth Guarantee, the employer is legally bound to complete an engagement form and needs to submit it to the Public Employment Services.

If the young person is provided with an offer of traineeship, the traineeship needs to be set on a limited period of work practice and whether or not the trainee is paid, the

traineeship needs to offer learning and training components. Thus, the young person needs to be engaged on the basis that he or she is gaining practical and professional experience which will in turn facilitate their transition into regular employment.

If an offer of education is provided, the course needs to be issued from a recognised training institution (public or private). Furthermore the course should lead to an educational attainment of minimum Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF) Level 2. Short courses are not considered 'quality' offers. Programmes targeted at early school-leavers and low-skilled young people meeting quality requirements of curricula, assessment and validation of learning outcomes, and which lead to a recognised qualification, are also considered to be 'quality' offers.

For young people with a disability, an offer of supported or sheltered employment providing practical employment training in various sectors of the labour market, and including the assistance of job coaches is deemed to be a 'good quality' offer.

Self-initiated traineeships, education or employment opportunities are also considered as an offer subject to participants demonstrating that the criteria for assessing a 'quality' offer as established in other forms of 'offers' are met. This means that a traineeship offer needs to be accompanied by a written agreement between the employer, participant and the Public Employment Services; an education initiative needs to lead to a qualification from a recognised institution; and an employment offer needs to be regulated by an engagement form submitted to the Public Employment Services.

The NEET Activation Scheme is part of the youth guarantee and it starts off with profiling, behavioural training, guidance on employment, development of communication skills, CV writing and interview skills. Following the initial phase, young people are requested to either further their training through continued education or participate in a work exposure which would eventually lead to an offer of traineeship.

3.2 Administration and governance

Governance

Following the Council Recommendation establishing the Youth Guarantee, Member States issued National Youth Guarantee Implementation Plans detailing the approach to implementation, the roles of public authorities and other actors, sources of funding, arrangements for monitoring and evaluation and the envisaged timetable. In parallel, the Commission together with the Employment Committee (EMCO) developed an Indicator Framework for monitoring the Youth Guarantee implementation.

[The Ministry for Education and Employment](#) was entrusted with the responsibility for the overall co-ordination of the Youth Guarantee. Malta's Public Employment Services - [Jobsplus](#) is the main entity responsible for the profiling, assessment of registering youths who are currently unemployed and providing other services. These services include the setting up of a personal action plan for each individual, offering them advisory services with regard to the labour market, guidance on the development of employability skills and introducing active labour market measures such as traineeships.

Additionally, Jobsplus, in collaboration with the Ministry for Education and Employment, monitors the implementation of the Youth Guarantee through the Indicator Framework for Monitoring the Youth Guarantee.

Main actors

Malta's main governmental authorities responsible for youth employment consist of the [he Ministry for Education and Employment](#) and [Jobsplus](#). Although both authorities do not exclusively deal with young people, this cohort forms part of the entities' responsibilities and priorities.

Cross-sectorial cooperation

Malta recognizes that for the Youth Guarantee programme to be effective, partnership approaches with key stakeholders are essential. To this effect, an inter-agency approach is adopted where multiple actors collaborate to provide a holistic service to these young people. Such stakeholders include [Malta College for Arts, Science and Technology \(MCAST\)](#) and [Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ](#) - Malta's National Youth Agency.

MCAST, is Malta's leading vocational education and training institution which covers MQF Level 1 to MQF Level 6 courses and encourages and supports students to progress to higher levels through a continuous pathway. Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ is the entity entrusted with mainstreaming youth issues into national policies and has a central role in bringing together the interests of youth with government policies.

Another important stakeholder is the [Directorate for Lifelong Learning and Early School Leavers](#) which is the contact point established within the compulsory education structure to capture early school leavers from the education stream.

3.3 Skills forecasting

Forecasting system(s)

In 2016, the [National Commission for Further and Higher Education \(NCFHE\)](#), [Jobsplus](#) and [Malta Enterprise \(ME\)](#) launched the [Employee Skills Gap Survey](#). The objective was to gauge the extent of the existing skills gap, to contribute effectively to improvements in the educational system in Malta, to make it more responsive to the needs of the labour market and to provide policymakers with the information necessary to identify potential shortcomings in the Maltese labour market that could be hindering companies from finding employees with adequate skills. The population for this study included all employers in Malta's Public Employment Services' database excluding the self-employed (without employees). The sample size was 500 employers sub-divided by NACE classifications and employer size.

The stakeholders involved in this survey grouped together to carry out the study in a complete and comprehensive manner. Jobsplus focused on recruitment difficulties, employability skills and labour market needs fluctuations. The National Commission for Further and Higher Education put more impetus on education and skills gaps whereas Malta Enterprise provided knowledge and experience regarding employers' skills needs. Following the presentation of findings, representative bodies and industry players were invited to participate in sector-specific focus groups to discuss selected skills-related issues in more detail. A [summary](#) of the main results and findings of this research were published in 2017.

Skills development

The [Employee Skills Gap Survey](#) is a research project aimed at identifying shortages in skills, while gaining insight on supply and demand in different sectors of the labour market in Malta. Moreover, apart from gauging the extent of the existing skills gap, the survey also aims to contribute effectively to improvements in the educational system in Malta. The survey will help to make the education system more responsive to the needs of the labour market. It will also provide policymakers with the information necessary to identify potential shortcomings in the Maltese labour market that are hindering companies from finding employees with adequate skills. This exercise is deemed particularly important in light of the relatively strong and sustained growth recorded by the Maltese economy in recent years, which requires an increasingly diversified set of skills to enable companies to meet market demand.

As highlighted in various publications such as CEDEFOP's [Skills Panorama](#), which serves as a forecasting tool of the skills needed, skills are crucial for the economy to reach new heights. Such insights have shown that although machines are 'doing jobs' which used to be conducted by humans, this does not really mean that machines replace the need to have people in employment. This development has undoubtedly replaced how one looks at the work dimension and the skills needed but it has not changed the need for people to perform tasks. Furthermore, the digital revolution in itself was a source of job creation.

This need for skills has also been evident in other studies such as the [Employability Index](#) which consisted of a study on the employment of graduates. Although not a forecasting exercise, the Employability Index provided fruitful insight into areas related to tertiary-level education courses where graduates are least likely to be underemployed (both horizontal and vertical underemployment). This in turn indicates the specific skills and areas of specialisation which are in high demand in the Maltese labour market. When taken together, all these tools provide an evidence-base for employment, training and education institutions, especially when designing programmes and measures.

3.4 Career guidance and counselling

Career guidance and counselling services

The [Jobseekers' Advisory Services Unit](#) within Jobsplus offers career guidance services to both jobseekers and job changers.

Jobsplus offers both:

- Individualised Career Guidance
- Support in developing a Personalised Action Plan (PAP) for employment

The career guidance provided varies according to the needs and level of the individual. The intervention may involve face-to-face meetings (where together with the advisor the jobseeker will discuss their current situation and options, and develop a Personalised Action Plan), or else opt for advice over the phone or by e-mail.

Among other things the advisor can help a jobseeker:

- Choose their career
- Plan and set goals
- Search for a job
- Apply for a job
- Prepare for a job interview

As part of a general PAP, the initial session also involves the provision of information on where to search for jobs, local training opportunities and relevant Jobsplus services such as short courses, work exposure schemes, traineeships and any other Jobsplus initiatives.

Mainstream Jobsplus advisors currently focus on:

- Youth (from school leaving age to 24 years old)
- Young Adults (ages 25 to 29)
- Adults (aged 30+).

In addition to these mainstream services, Jobsplus also offers specialized Inclusive Employment Services which are specifically designed to help disadvantaged individuals who have a harder time finding work. These include:

- Individuals with disability
- Former substance abusers
- Former prison inmates
- Other people with different social problems.

Apart from providing career guidance, employment advisors play a significant role in matching Youth Guarantee participants with employers.

The implementation of the Youth Guarantee in Malta is the responsibility of different actors and is implemented through collaboration between the Ministry for Education and Employment and Jobsplus. The Ministry is responsible for overall co-ordination. Jobsplus is also involved in the implementation and monitoring of the Youth Guarantee, in particular, through the provision of monitoring, evaluation, advisory services, work exposure and traineeships.

The process adopted in implementation is as follows: young people who are registering with the Public Employment Services meet with the youth employment advisors so that a profiling exercise is conducted. Following the profiling phase, a personal action plan is designed, and training services are offered to assist the young person in developing the skills and competences needed in a fluctuating labour market. Following this phase, young people are provided with a work exposure and traineeship placement according to their area of preference. Inactive young people who are interested in the Youth Guarantee Scheme are also being individually profiled. Such profiling is being done under the NEETs Activation Scheme. Participating young people are provided with an offer of continued education or a traineeship.

The Jobseekers Advisory Services work hand-in-hand with third parties targeting young people, including educational institutions such as secondary schools, post-secondary schools/colleges and universities. This support is offered either in the form of group sessions/one-to-one information sessions or through information stands during fairs, etc. Normally contact is done through the career guidance practitioner who is also a youth worker. The Jobseekers Advisory Unit collaborates also with other agencies such as [Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#) and [Aġenzija Appoġġ](#). They also work with private entities or voluntary organizations with the aim of outreaching to young people. Advisors also participate in various school activities and educational fairs. Past collaboration requests have also included advisors acting as mentors to students and other groups.

[Career Guidance Service](#) is available to young people in secondary schools, higher education, participants in non-formal education, young jobseekers and young job changers, as well as other groups such as young mothers and victims of domestic violence.

Specific target groups within the youth client groups include the low skilled, long-term unemployed and NEETs. Career guidance service include choosing a career, getting the right training/experience, looking and applying for a job, preparing for a job interview and job interview follow-up. Clients receive individualized assistance according to their respective needs.

Funding

Jobsplus is allocated an annual budget through the Central Government. Part of this budget is dedicated to the Jobseekers' Advisory services. No budget is provided for particular and specific career guidance services.

Quality assurance

Statistical data is used to track the movement of jobseekers from unemployment to employment. Additionally, a manual of procedures has been provided to advisors in order to assist and standardize staff operations. Additional protocols explaining particular processes, new ways of operating, together with regular emails informing advisors about procedures, are also carried out.

Additionally, in the third quarter of 2016 a new survey will be conducted by the national Public Employment Services. This survey will seek to gauge the satisfaction of jobseekers with the services provided by the Public Employment Services.

3.5 Traineeships and apprenticeships

Official guidelines on traineeships and apprenticeships

Until 2014 both Traineeships and Apprenticeships in Malta fell under the responsibility of the Employment and Training Corporation (now Jobsplus), however since 2014, Traineeships have fallen under the responsibility of Jobsplus, while the Malta College for Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) is responsible for Apprenticeships.

Traineeships are offered in accordance with the [Employment and Training Services Act Cap 343](#). The Act outlines that a participant (trainee) is to attend both off-the-job (formal training provided by Jobsplus or another institution approved by Jobsplus) and on-the-job training (placement with an employer).

When a person is enrolled in the [Traineeship Scheme](#), Jobsplus issues an agreement which is signed by the employer, the trainee and a representative of the Corporation. This agreement outlines the obligations of all parties (including the duration of the traineeship and the facilities and amenities that need to be provided by the employer to safeguard the health and safety of the trainee).

Apprenticeships are managed and coordinated by the [Apprenticeships Department](#) at Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST). Up to now, the framework that regulates apprenticeships has been the [Employment and Training Services Act Cap 343](#). However, a new law that will regulate apprenticeships was issued for public consultation and will then be tabled in Parliament to be enacted. When a young person enrolls in a course that requires an apprenticeship, the young person signs the [Apprenticeship Workplace Regulations Agreement](#) that details the apprentice duties, rights and responsibilities.

Since a trainee taking part in a traineeship is not considered an employee, s/he is not entitled to any social security coverage. Moreover throughout the traineeship, a trainee receives a training allowance, which is based on the National Minimum Wage, paid by Jobsplus. The trainee is paid for each hour attended.

During an apprenticeship offered through MCAST, the apprentice benefits from social security coverage as listed in the [Apprenticeship Workplace Regulations Agreement](#). These include:

- National Insurance (NI) Contributions: Weekly rate of NI contributions payable by the employer and the apprentice: Under 18 years: 10% of weekly wage up to a maximum of €4.38 (Category E) Over 18 years: 10% of weekly wage up to a maximum of €7.94 (Category F)
- Bereavement Leave: two days bereavement leave if the deceased is the wife, husband, mother, father, guardian, son, daughter, sister or brother of apprentice
- Marriage Leave: three days
- Injury leave: One year full pay
- Vacation Leave: Upon completion of the observation-probationary period apprentices are entitled to two working days' vacation leave for every 20 days attendance at the place of work.
- Sick Leave: Upon completion of the observation-probationary period apprentices are entitled to 15 days full and 15 days half pay sick leave pro-rata.
- Statutory Bonuses: Apprentices are entitled to half of the statutory bonuses (€67.55 in June and €67.55 in December).
- Overtime: Apprentices are eligible to work overtime provided the necessary consent is provided by MCAST which will ascertain that the extra hours do not influence badly the time the apprentice needs to either rest or study. Overtime rates are those applicable to full-time employees performing the same job. No overtime rate is to be worked out on a wage below the National Statutory minimum wage.

Apprenticeships are a requirement for any course offered at MCAST that has an apprenticeship as part of its syllabus. Such courses amount to approximately 50 per cent of all courses offered at MCAST. On the other hand, within Jobsplus, traineeships form part of the labour market initiatives aimed to assist jobseekers in acquiring formal training as well as hands on training to facilitate their transition from unemployment to employment.

Before launching new traineeships, Jobsplus seeks feedback from different stakeholders to ensure that the traineeships offered meet the demands of the labour market. Feedback is also sought from employers with respect to the knowledge, skills and competences to be incorporated into the formal training provided by Jobsplus.

Persons who are either unemployed or inactive are eligible to join the [Traineeship Scheme](#) offered by Jobsplus. Any student that enrolls at MCAST and chooses a course that has an apprenticeship is obliged to follow the apprenticeship.

Traineeships are covered by articles 29 to 45 of the Employment and Training Services Act. Traineeships are offered to those young people participating in the Youth Guarantee as well as adults registered with the Public Employment Services. As a result of the Youth Guarantee, investment on work exposure and traineeships has been strengthened as they are considered to be a very effective means for individuals to enter the labour market following a definite period on-the-job and off-the-job training. The traineeship offered as part of the Youth Guarantee implementation is offered as the last phase, following motivational training and a period of work exposure.

MCAST has no programme that is directly linked to the Youth Guarantee.

Promoting traineeships and apprenticeships

Persons who are registering for work with Jobsplus are automatically informed about the [Traineeship Scheme](#). The Ministry for Education and Employment refers young people who are not registering with Malta's Public Employment Services for the latter to provide them with a traineeship offer. Jobsplus also participates in different fairs and sometimes on television and/or radio stations, where information about this scheme is disseminated. More information about traineeships is available on the Jobsplus website.

As for apprenticeships, students who enrol at MCAST can choose from courses that offer an apprenticeship according to their preferences and academic achievements and qualifications. Professional guidance is offered to students on an individual level and an annual prospectus with all courses, and their respective entry requirements, syllabi and MQF level is issued.

Traineeships are facilitated through collaboration between the Public Employment Services and employers that are providing the traineeship opportunity. In order to monitor the process and ensure that the training provided matches the needs of the labour market, Malta's Public Employment Services is committed to ensure that regular contact is made with the various employers participating within the traineeships programme. Moreover, Jobsplus has recently set up a Unit to make outreach to employers, with the marketing aspect of traineeships dealt with by this Unit during their one-to-one meetings with employers. The theoretical tuition is either delivered by Jobsplus at its Training Complex and/or by any other entity approved by Jobsplus to provide this service on its behalf.

Apprenticeships providers interested in offering apprenticeship opportunities are dealt with on a one-to-one by the Apprenticeships Department at MCAST.

Information about the Traineeship Scheme is available on the Jobsplus website, while on a more ad hoc basis, marketing of the scheme takes place through fairs, television and/or radio programmes and adverts on local newspapers.

A portal dedicated entirely to apprenticeships will be available as of 2017. Moreover, every year MCAST organises its Annual National Conference. In 2015 the theme of the conference focused on Apprenticeships, highlighting the collaborative practice between MCAST and local industry which provides apprentices with high-quality underpinning knowledge. In 2016 the Annual National Conference addressed the skills gap and during the event, stakeholders and social partners discussed skills gaps, mismatches or surpluses in European jobs and skills, and local labour demands versus the existing human resource supply, as well as the college's response to these situations.

Recognition of learning outcomes

Trainees participating in traineeships are awarded two certificates: a certificate to cover the theoretical component delivered during the off-the-job training (in this case, if the courses offered are accredited trainees are awarded a certificate pegged between EQF/MQF level 1 to 4 depending on the traineeship) and another certificate to recognize their participation in the on-the-job training (Apprenticeship review Malta).

MCAST offers two year apprenticeship programmes at EQF/MQF Levels 3 and 4, depending on the particular courses (Apprenticeship review Malta).

Trainees participating in a traineeship are requested to fill in a handbook, whereby they need to include all the competences acquired throughout their on-the-job training.

Students following an apprenticeship at MCAST are requested to fill in a vocational competence logbook that needs to be verified by the employer.

The formal qualification provided by Jobsplus is accredited and based on the ECVET system. On the certificates issued to those who successfully complete the formal training, one can find the EQF/MQF level of the course as well the number of ECVET points.

All apprenticeships offered by MCAST are formally accredited and students obtain ECTS and ECVET credits.

Funding

During past years, the funding of traineeships was organized through the European Social Fund. Jobsplus has applied for ESF funding for the programming period 2014-2020. During this period (2014-2020) the percentage of co-financing will be 80% through ESF and 20% through Malta National Funds. Funding will be used to cover the training allowance payable to trainees. Trainees receive a training allowance, which is based on the National Minimum Wage. The maximum amount that a trainee can earn ranges from €2,352 to €2,688 depending on the duration of the traineeship (currently between 14 to 16 weeks).

Employers are entitled for a tax rebate whenever they offer a placement to a trainee for a period of six months as per [Legal Notice 179 of 2014](#). By means of such an initiative, a tax deduction equivalent to €600 for each work placement shall be allowed provided that such placements are of at least six months in duration.

Apprenticeship providers pay the apprentices' wages and part of the apprentices' National Insurance. They are also entitled for a tax rebate whenever they offer a placement to a trainee for a period of six months as per [Legal Notice 179 of 2014](#). By means of such an initiative, a tax deduction equivalent to €600 for each work placement shall be allowed provided that such placements are of at least six months duration.

Quality assurance

Trainees enrolled on traineeship are monitored by Jobsplus. During the monitoring visits that take place to evaluate the on-the-job training, Jobsplus staff seek feedback from

both trainee and employer to gather additional information on their experience throughout the Scheme.

During the off-the-job training, quality visits are performed by the Quality Assurance Unit, whereby the role of the latter is to ensure that the delivery of the off-the-job training is in accordance with the accredited course; the trainer uses different delivery methodologies to meet the needs of all trainees and the tools and facilities used by trainers to deliver the course are in line with standards established by the Corporation.

When it comes to the funding of the training allowance, trainees are requested to fill in attendance sheets that must be endorsed by the employer. These attendance sheets are vetted by Jobsplus officials. Trainees are only paid for attended hours, meaning deductions are automatically made before payment is issued.

The Apprenticeship Department at MCAST have developed a Monitoring System where lecturers who are VET experts are monitoring in the industry. This ensures that the people who are actually monitoring the students know both the industry and the competences that the students should be gaining. Once a student is placed in an internship, they are assigned to a lecturer, and an online report is completed by the lecturer. The report can be flagged by both the employer and also by the student. At the end of each month, a report on the particular placement is compiled. The monitoring lecturers also provide feedback to the apprenticeship provider.

3.6 Integration of young people in the labour market

Youth employment measures

Through the Youth Guarantee 2.0 young people who are at risk of social exclusion and or at risk of becoming long-term unemployed can benefit from initiatives specifically targeted at youth. The project focuses on both the current stock of NEETs as well as on those at risk of becoming NEETs. Both registered jobseekers and economically inactive young people can benefit from the Youth Guarantee measures, administered jointly by Jobsplus and the Ministry of Education and Employment. These include the [NEET Activation Scheme II](#), the ICT Summer Courses, the [SEC Preventive Classes](#) and MCAST Preventive Classes.

Through the different phases of the [NEET Activation Scheme II](#), young people receive personalised attention. These phases include:

- Profiling, Behavioural and Employability Courses
- Continued Education or Work Exposure
- Traineeship (following work exposure).

The [NEET Activation Scheme II](#), which succeeded the first NEET Activation Scheme, focuses more on the psychosocial services offered to young people. Furthermore, as a result of the findings of the NEET Census, young people defined as NEET participating in the new scheme were classified in three categories. The first is Transition NEET, i.e. young people who have chosen to take time out before progressing onto further or higher education opportunities. The second is Floating NEET, i.e. young people who lack direction and motivation who tend to have spells of being NEET in between further education courses and employment, with no training. The third is CORE NEET, i.e. young people with social and behavioural issues, including those who come from families where 'worklessness' and unemployment is accepted as a norm, and further and higher education are not given much importance. This classification aims to ensure that the intervention provided is targeted to their needs.

To this effect, services are provided according to three methods of intervention:

The first is the normative method which addresses the category of young people who generally cope well with stressful situations. These young people will undergo training

focusing on budgeting skills and advanced communication skills. The second is the internalising method which addresses the category of young people who tend to have emotional difficulties. These young people undergo training that focuses on social anxiety management and personal care and hygiene. The third is the externalising method that addresses the category of young people with impulse control difficulties. These young people will undergo training focusing on anger management and improving attention.

The [Summer ICT Course](#) runs for two weeks (60hours) and aims to help young people to improve their ICT skills. The courses are offered to students of the Alternative Learning Programme School who are in their last year of compulsory education and who have indicated that they will not further their studies. The option for the participants to undergo either the Practical ICT course or the ECDL at MQF Level 3, allows the project to reach a broader spectrum of students having diverse abilities, attitudes, behavioural issues and objectives. As a result, the eligibility criteria were widened to also include youth referred by the school guidance teams, and inactive youth aged between 16 – 25 who are not in education, employment or training.

Participants are obliged to attend a minimum of 80 per cent of the course and upon successful completion they gain a qualification and receive an allowance equivalent to the minimum wage. To address deficiencies in social skills, non-obligatory psychological services are also provided. Following completion of the Summer ICT Course, young people are encouraged to either enrol in an educational institution or participate in the NEET Activation Scheme II.

With regards to the ALPplus students, there were Fifty-seven (57) students attended at ALPplus during scholastic year 2017/2018. Sixteen (16) of these students are currently furthering their studies, out of which five (5) students are attending the ALPplus second year, who have started the Level 4 award in Welding as part of the apprenticeship scheme, while the remaining eleven (11) students are pursuing a course at MCAST according to their area of interest. Eighteen (18) students are currently working within the private and public sector respectively. On the other hand, twenty-one of these students are awaiting employment. Two students are currently abroad.

Statistical Summary:

Table 1: MCAST Institutes

Name of institute	Number of students
Institute for the Creative Arts	1
Institute of Tourism Studies	2
Malta College of Arts Science and Technology (Paola)	8

Table 2: Area of employment

Area of Employment	Number of students
Mechanical	2
Hairdressing	2
Customer care	14

Table 3: ALPplus 2nd Year

Name of institute	Number of students
ALP school	5

The SEC Preventive classes are aimed at young people who do not attain a grade one to five (one being the highest) in the SEC mandatory subjects. Revision classes are provided in core subjects such as Maltese, English, Mathematics and Physics, and students can apply for up to three subjects. These classes are provided free of charge during the summer period and last for five weeks. At the end of the classes participants sit for an exam and are encouraged to enrol in a post-secondary educational institution.

Apart from the NEET Census, which was an outreach project, the Youth Guarantee administrators ensure that information on the different initiatives is provided to all young people who are NEET or at-risk of becoming NEET. Such dissemination initiatives include meetings with employment advisors, information sessions, social media campaigns, media interventions and school visits.

In 2017, a total of 876 youths participated in the Youth Guarantee Scheme, of which, 200 participated in the NEET Activation Scheme, 498 participated in the SEC Preventive Classes, 103 and 75 participated in the MCAST Preventive Classes and the Summer ICT Courses respectively. 95% of participants exited the scheme in 2017, of which 13% exited into employment whilst 62% continued into education.

The [Work Exposure Scheme](#) is intended to facilitate transition into employment by providing jobseekers with initial hands on training that will help individuals obtain the knowledge, skills and competences required to find and retain employment. This scheme is designed to meet contemporary labour market demand, whereby the job preferences of the jobseekers are matched with employers' requests. The duration of the work exposure is of 12 weeks and a participant is to report to the place of work for an average of 20 hours/week. The on-the-job training takes place at the employer's premises. Throughout the scheme trainees receive a training allowance for every hour attended. The training allowance, which is paid by Jobsplus through an ESF funded project, is calculated on the National Minimum Wage. In 2017, 101 youths participated in the Work Exposure Scheme. Out of the total youths who exited the scheme in 2017, 15% exited into employment.

The [Traineeship Scheme](#) is intended to provide jobseekers with initial vocational training (pre-employment training) that will help individuals obtain the knowledge, skills and competences required to find and retain employment. Traineeships are based on the dual system of vocational training providing a combination of on-the-job and off-the-job training. The programmes offered are labour market driven, whereby the job preferences of the jobseekers are matched with the requests made by employers participating in the scheme. The duration of a traineeship is determined by the content of the theoretical programme and the hands-on training required to meet the objectives. Throughout the scheme trainees receive a training allowance for every hour attended. The training allowance, which is paid by Jobsplus through an ESF funded project, is calculated on the National Minimum Wage. In 2017, 53 youths participated in the Traineeship Scheme, where approximately 25% of youths who exited the intervention in the same year, exited into employment.

The Jobseekers Advisory Unit within [Jobsplus](#) keeps contact with a number of educational entities, agencies and non-governmental organisations that work with youth. Through these stakeholders, [Jobsplus](#) offers a number of services to young people, including information sessions, workshops, career tests, tailor made mock interviews, and short training sessions amongst others to youth coming from different educational attainments and backgrounds. [Jobsplus](#) participates in a number of activities, such as career days, which are organised by other entities. [Jobsplus](#) also presents its services to key stakeholders as they have a key role in referring youth to Malta's PES. These professionals include college career guidance practitioners, Personal, social and career development (PSCD) teachers and guidance teachers. Social media is also used to promote youth related services.

Flexicurity measures focusing on young people

Currently there are no flexicurity measures focusing on young people.

Reconciliation of private and working life for young people

Currently there are no specific measures that address the reconciliation of private and working life for young people. Still, reconciliation measures that are applicable to adults are also applicable to young people.

Funding of existing schemes/initiatives

The initiatives targeted at youth are funded through both European Social Funds and national funds. The training allowance payable to youth participating under the [Work Exposure Scheme](#) and the [Traineeship Scheme](#) is part-financed by the European Social Fund. The co-financing rate is set at 80% through EU and 20% through the National Funds. For these two schemes, which form part of ESF.01.001 – Training for Employment Project, there is a budget allocation of €1,614,000 and €6,038,400 respectively. This budget covers the period 2016 till 2020.

Quality assurance

To ensure the effectiveness of the training being given to trainees by employers, each trainee is visited at least three times by Jobsplus Monitoring Officers. During the on-the-spot check, Monitoring Officers are assisted through a checklist to ensure the publicity material is adequately displayed in a prominent place, that the employer has retained copies of documentation, that the same documentation is complete, and that the current attendances are being recorded on a daily basis. Monitoring Officers attach photographic evidence of the publicity material as displayed, as well as photographic evidence of the participant's presence to the first checklist, whilst in subsequent visits, attach only the participant's photo on the day, whilst ensuring that the publicity material is still present, recording the same on the checklist. Both the employer and participant are questioned about the progress up to that point. Answers are recorded on the checklist, and feedback to project implementation staff at Jobsplus is provided as and where necessary. During the visits Monitoring Officers also ask questions related to the placement to ensure that the exposure offered is in line with what was originally promised by the employer through its application. In those instances, where it is deemed that the quality of exposure provided is not up to the required standard, Jobsplus reserves the right to terminate the placement and to find an alternative placement for the trainee.

When it comes to the Traineeship Scheme, in particular the off-the-job training component, trainees are also visited by a Training Design and Quality Assurance Executive, whose role is to evaluate the trainers' ability to deliver training, the trainers' ability to encourage participation in class and the delivery/assessment methodology being used.

The impact of the scheme is measured by assessing the employment status of the trainee within six months following end date of scheme.

Following the experience gained in implementing these schemes and the feedback received from the Monitoring Officers, Jobsplus implements changes to the scheme. Moreover, Jobsplus monitors closely the uptake of the schemes and the employment prospects offered by employers. To this end, Jobsplus incorporated further checks to limit the potential abuse by employers (for example: number of trainees enrolled with an employer depends on the number of employees). In addition, for every placement Jobsplus enters into an agreement with the employer and the trainee to enlist the roles and responsibilities of each party.

[Jobsplus](#) in collaboration with the [Ministry for Education and Employment](#) is responsible for the monitoring of all initiatives falling within the Youth Guarantee framework. The Youth Guarantee is co-financed through EU funds. The data gathered is subdivided in three levels:

- Information on participants
- Duration of intervention
- Follow-up.

To supplement this data, a number of evaluation exercises are carried out. These include exit questionnaires as well as feedback from professionals working with young people and employers involved in the work exposure and/or traineeship phase. Programmes are assessed by [Jobsplus](#). During the work exposure and traineeship monitoring visits, feedback from the trainee and employer is sought as a means of gathering additional information on their experience throughout the scheme. During the off-the-job training, quality visits are performed whereby the assessor ensures that the delivery of the off-the-job training is in accordance with the course. The trainer uses different delivery methodologies to meet the needs of all trainees and the tools and facilities used by trainers to deliver the course are in line with the standards established by [Jobsplus](#).

3.7 Cross-border mobility in employment, entrepreneurship and vocational opportunities

Programmes and schemes for cross-border mobility

No programmes or schemes that are managed by EURES are aimed at young people going abroad for a traineeship, apprenticeship or for work. Your First EURES Job is an EU run mobility programme whereby young people are given financial assistance when moving abroad for work. However, [EURES Malta](#) has never participated in the running of this project. This is not to suggest that Maltese young people do not have access to financial assistance under this project but it would not be EURES Malta receiving the application. What Jobsplus does with any young people who are interested in moving abroad is to advise them of this project and the option of obtaining financial assistance (if their employment sector fits within one of the funded sectors – this changes and is dependent on the different YFEJ projects currently open and the focus areas that have been selected).

[EURES Malta](#) provides advice and guidance to all persons including young people regarding mobility. Jobsplus advises them on how to search for a job in another country. Interested participants are put in touch with the EURES network in the country they wish to move to as it is the EURES advisers in the country of destination that can assist them in regard to procedures and processes. Jobsplus also directs people to the [EURES Portal](#) where they can find job opportunities and living and working information for all member states. Jobsplus also advises people on the appropriate processes locally (i.e., inform tax department that a participant is moving abroad, transfer of social benefits, etc.). Jobsplus has in the past held information sessions and training for people interested in moving abroad to live and work. Jobsplus also promotes recruitment events abroad that are organised by EURES in other countries.

The EURES office in Malta operates with National funds.

Legal framework

No specific legal framework exists for the cross-border mobility of young workers, trainees/apprentices and professionals/entrepreneurs. However, EU Nationals have access to the Maltese Labour Market and can work in Malta without restrictions (with the exception of Croatian Nationals where transitional arrangements still exist).

Irrespective of age, the rights and obligations of non-EU citizens depend mainly on their conditions of entry. Third Country Nationals (TCN's) who obtain a single permit application or TCN's who have obtained long-term residence can enjoy the same equal treatment as nationals in regards to access to employment and self-employed activity, and access to education and vocational training.

However, there is an exception for youths who come from Australia and USA due to bilateral agreements between Malta and Australia/the USA, whereby there is an opportunity for young people under the age of 30 years old to obtain a working/holiday visa. This authorises them to work in Malta without being subject to any labour market testing.

3.8 Development of entrepreneurship competence

Policy Framework

Malta has no specific national strategy for the development of entrepreneurship competence and of an entrepreneurial mind-set among young people.

The [National Youth Policy: Towards 2020](#), features an action plan on supporting youth in employment and entrepreneurship. Many of these activities within the action plan are training opportunities and individual supports such as coaching and mentoring. Also, the [National Curriculum Framework](#) (2012) lists 'Education for Entrepreneurship, Creativity and Innovation' as one of six cross-curricular themes that are deemed to be crucial for the education of all students. This therefore calls for entrepreneurship education to be infused throughout the curriculum of mandatory schooling and proposes a whole school approach to fostering an entrepreneurial mind-set.

Formal learning

The [University of Malta](#) (UoM) aims to foster socio-economic development in Malta by transforming entrepreneurial initiatives into real-world activities, such as the creation of enterprises. Entrepreneurial education (EE) at UoM aims to promote entrepreneurship in general, and also more particularly seeks to foster a knowledge-intensive entrepreneurial culture, i.e. the process of transforming scientific advancements into marketable goods and services. Entrepreneurial education is integrated into the curriculum through curricular and extra-curricular offers.

Courses and study units such as 'Entrepreneurship and Business Venturing' and 'Entrepreneurship and Innovation' are taught at the [Department of Management](#) within the [Faculty of Economics, Management and Accountancy](#), and the [Edward de Bono Institute](#), as part of a Masters programme in 'Creativity and Innovation' at the University of Malta.

The [Centre for Entrepreneurship and Business Incubation](#) (CEBI) at the University of Malta offers a Master programme in 'Knowledge-based Entrepreneurship' which is an intensive training programme (ITP) for graduates. It is taught in four week-long bursts over two semesters, using traditional teaching methods such as lectures and seminars. The programme consists of seven study-units, and mentored feasibility and business planning projects.

The [Ministry for the Economy, Investment and Small Business](#) together with the [Ministry for Education and Employment](#) offer the [Entrepreneurship Through Education Scheme](#), which provides funds of up to €5,000 to schools and colleges wishing to implement projects related to entrepreneurship education, such as training programmes for teachers and school-based mini-enterprises.

Maltese schools and colleges may also be eligible for the [National Enterprise Support Awards \(NESA\)](#), which are held every year by the [Ministry of Economy, Investment and Small Business](#) to reward entities which support entrepreneurship and enterprise growth. NESA winners receive cash prizes of up to €30,000. These financial incentives open up opportunities for local service providers to collaborate with schools and colleges in promoting entrepreneurship education. For example, St Nicholas College was the runner-up in the 2012 NESA Awards and used the funds to collaborate with The Edward de Bono

Institute at the University of Malta to publish a book entitled *Fostering Entrepreneurship through Education: A Handbook for Teachers* (Baldacchino & Pulis Xerxen, 2013).

Malta College for Arts, Science and Technology has introduced entrepreneurship as a core subject to students from the various institutes who are following Level 4 courses with the intention to eventually spread it to other levels. It also set up its own Entrepreneurship Centre using four units available at the [Kordin Business Incubation Centre](#) (KBIC), as an incubation centre for students with entrepreneurial ambitions.

The [Ministry for Economy, Investment and Small Business](#) in collaboration with the [Ministry for Education and Employment](#) issues an annual scheme called Entrepreneurship through Education that gives a grant to secondary education institutions to fund projects related to entrepreneurship education. The scheme aims to address the promotion of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial qualities through education, by sponsoring projects submitted by educational institutions through a competitive call for proposals.

Non-formal and informal learning

[Junior Achievement Young Enterprise Malta Foundation](#) (JAYE Malta) offers entrepreneurship programmes to students throughout the various stages of education.

Through its [Company Programme](#) JAYE Malta offers upper-secondary level students an opportunity to form a mini-company over three modules covering a scholastic year. A team of students develop a business idea in the form of a product or service, they conduct their research, produce, market, and eventually sell the product or service with the intention of making a profit. Through this experience, students raise capital and call an annual general meeting to declare their dividends at the end of the scholastic year. Each Company Programme team will have a business advisor to guide them through this business experience. The Company Programme enables the student to embark on a learning experience which involves responsible and active citizenship at both the local and international level, via the formation of a company or a social enterprise. Through the creation of a product, service or process, the students sharpen their critical thinking as well as their creativity and innovation skills, and they can do so by applying their creation to various spheres, including the fields of technology and the sciences.

[Junior Achievement Young Enterprise Malta Foundation](#) offers tertiary and vocational students (aged 18 to 30 years old) the opportunity to participate in the [JA-YE StartUp Programme](#). The StartUp Programme provides the opportunity to experience the set up and running of their own company, giving them an insight into how their talents could be used to set up in business for themselves. The StartUp Programme participants gain real experience of the world of business: creating a business concept, carrying out market research, creating budgeted financial statements and finally drawing up a business plan to present to a panel of judges. This programme is supported by volunteer business consultants, who help the teams every step of the way. Students will also develop attitudes and skills necessary for personal success and employability. They gain insight into self-employment, business creation, risk taking and coping with adversity.

Educators support in entrepreneurship education

A book called *Fostering Entrepreneurship through Education: A Handbook for Teachers* (Baldacchino, L. & Pulis Xerxen, S. 2013) was distributed to all schools in Malta. The book consists of almost 200 suggestions, activities and strategies for embedding entrepreneurship across the curriculum at all levels of compulsory education.

As part of its recent restructuring, the Faculty of Education at the University of Malta has set up a Department of Technology & Entrepreneurship Education which caters for Initial Teacher Education for subjects related to the area of Entrepreneurship Education.

Continuous Professional Development courses on entrepreneurship education are organised in Malta and are available for all teachers up to upper secondary education

level, including school-based IVET teachers. [Junior Achievement Young Enterprise \(JA – YE\)](#) Malta also plays a role in the development of CPD in the field. No Continuous Professional Development activities on entrepreneurship education form part of the official undergraduate or post-graduate education courses given by the University of Malta, which is the only gateway to qualified teacher certification at this level. However, Junior Achievement Young Enterprise (JA–YE) Malta may be invited to provide Continuous Professional Development activities for educators to familiarise themselves with the JA – YE Malta educational programmes on offer, as well as with methodologies to implement entrepreneurship education activities in classrooms.

Various schools and colleges have obtained funds through the Entrepreneurship through Education Scheme to provide training for teachers as part of their continuous professional development. These programmes however are not mainstreamed and take place on the initiative of particular schools and colleges.

3.9 Start-up funding for young entrepreneurs

Access to information

[MCAST Entrepreneurship Centre](#) was set up in collaboration with [Kordin Business Incubation Centre \(KBIC\)](#) and [Malta Enterprise](#). The Centre offers a framework for ideas to thrive and encompasses a series of activities that address the needs of [MCAST](#) students and alumni. Through this close collaboration, MCAST students and alumni who demonstrate an entrepreneurial flair are provided with space within KBIC where they can nurture, grow and launch their business ideas. The possibility of developing further ideas is also made available to alumni of the College.

[MITA Innovation Hub](#) forms part of the [Malta Information Technology Agency](#), which is responsible for the implementation of the Government's ICT policy, programmes and initiatives in Malta. The Hub supports students, start-ups and innovators and creates the environment to transform their ideas into products or services through digital technologies. It supports start-ups by presenting them with a problem that requires solutions and financing the start-up which comes up with the best proposition.

The [Takeoff](#) program, based at the University of Malta, delivers a tailored package of benefits and guidance to entrepreneurs, most of whom are young people, from inside and outside of the University of Malta. The programme aims to help entrepreneurs transform their ideas into market and investor-ready ventures. The programme is specifically designed to help innovators and aspiring entrepreneurs create successful science, technology, engineering, creative media and knowledge-based start-up business. Takeoff brings together innovators, entrepreneurs, mentors and investors and aims to close the skills and resources gap experienced by entrepreneurs as they embark on their start-up ventures.

[Microsoft Innovation Centre](#) supports students and start-ups through its facilities and offers training courses ranging from development to gaming. The MIC start-up programme is targeted towards start-ups in the early stages of business and offers incentives such as office space, hardware and technology skills. Students are encouraged to explore and develop their interest in technology and build technology-related skills.

The [Junior Chamber International Malta](#) organises an annual '[Hack-it-on bootcamp](#)', where keynote speakers and trainers help young people to generate their business ideas and validate them. They organise competitions for the best business idea/plan and incentivise them with support and cash grants. The winning idea receives 1,000€ together with consultancy hours with a European funding consultancy agency and branded stationery.

[Junior Achievement-Young Enterprise](#) (JA-YE) complements classroom learning by offering learning-by-doing programmes at primary, secondary, post-secondary and

tertiary levels. The most popular are the Company Programme (post-secondary level) and Start-Up Programme (tertiary level). JA-YE also offers group coaching and mentoring for youths through these programmes.

The [Business First](#) service provides information and assistance regarding administrative procedures. The service also offers information for those seeking to improve their business or even close their business. Young people can have access to this information, which is made available via the 'Business First' website, telephone number, email, and one to one meetings.

The [Business Advisory Scheme](#), which includes one-to-one coaching and mentoring is designed to provide businesses operating in Malta with advisory services that suit their specific circumstances. Business advisory services are provided to support undertakings, identify strengths and overcome weaknesses in specific areas. A range of business advisors services are available and every effort is made to match the right advisor to the specific needs of the applicant. This is available to the general public including all the social target groups.

The [Dun Manwel Attard Resource Centre](#) offers the 'Hands-On' project for people with disabilities. The project helps develop entrepreneurial skills. It involves an initial tailor-made training programme in entrepreneurship skills for the Resource Centre's educators, followed by the transfer of the acquired entrepreneurship skills from the educators to their students through a process of coaching, mentoring and hands-on workshops where the students produce and later sell hand-made items.

Access to capital

There are no funding programmes that are offered specifically to young entrepreneurs. However, young people can benefit from schemes that are open to the general public including:

The [Ministry for Economy, Investment and Small Business](#) (MEIB), and the [Centre for Entrepreneurship and Business Incubation](#) (CEBI) of the University of Malta, together offer the [TAKEOFF Seed Fund Award](#) (TOSFA) at the TAKEOFF Business Incubator, situated at the University of Malta. The award distributes up to 100,000€ in seed funding to groups of innovators and entrepreneurs.

Innovative start-ups in specific sectors may benefit from the [B.Start](#) scheme offered by Malta Enterprise, which offers a seed fund of up to 10,000€ and an additional fund of up to 15,000€ calculated upon the full time employment with the start-up.

Malta Enterprise offers a [Micro Invest Scheme](#) which mainly supports self-employed individuals registered with the Employment and Training Corporation and small enterprises that employ less than 30 employees who either undertake new investments in their own operations and/or increase their workforce.

Malta Enterprise also offers the [Micro Guarantee Scheme](#) which provides eligible undertakings with a guarantee of up to 80 per cent on loans of up to 100,000€ which may be used to finance projects leading to business enhancement, growth and development.

The [ZAAR Crowdfunding Platform](#) is a crowdfunding platform, aimed as an alternative access to finance for start-ups, business projects and ideas. Aspiring entrepreneurs in Malta can crowdfund their business ideas through ZAAR. ZAAR is a project spearheaded by Promotion of Entrepreneurial Initiatives (PEI) Limited, which was set up jointly by the Malta Business Bureau (MBB) and the University of Malta (UoM). This initiative is also supported by the Ministry for Economy, Investment & Small Business and the Arts Council Malta.

[Go Beyond](#) offers early stage business angel investment to start ups in five industry categories, including technology, internet and cellular phones.

Bank of Valletta offers two financing packages for entrepreneurs in Malta:

The [BOV Start Plus](#) package is a business loan aimed at start-ups and micro-enterprises that require funding of up to 25,000€ for investment purposes and initial related working capital requirements. This package offers advantageous interest rates, involves no advance related fees and, most importantly, requires no collateral as it is secured by a guarantee issued under the European Commission's Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme.

The [BOV JAIME](#) (Joint Assistance Initiative for Maltese Enterprises) Financing Package provides SME with up to 50,000€ for capital investment and related working capital at advantageous interest rates and reduced collateral obligations.

The annual [National Enterprise Support Awards](#) (NESA), which offer cash prizes of up to 10,000€ in recognition of initiatives which support entrepreneurship and enterprise growth in six categories, including in 'Responsible and Inclusive Entrepreneurship'. Although these prizes are awarded to entities supporting entrepreneurship and not directly to entrepreneurs, the latter still benefit indirectly from the projects and initiatives being recognised.

In addition, a small number of initiatives are targeted at specific groups. There are two funding schemes that are targeted at female entrepreneurs:

Malta Enterprise offers a [Micro Invest Scheme](#), which was recently amended so that self-employed women (including young women) and businesses owned in their majority by females are granted a maximum tax credit of up to 50,000€ instead of 30,000€.

[Malta Microfinance Ltd.](#), which is a non-profit financial institution, offers loans to people struggling financially. Three main types of loans are offered, one of which is a Business Loan to provide funding and support to start or expand one's business.

3.10 Promotion of entrepreneurship culture

Special events and activities

For the past eight years, [Malta Enterprise](#) has been organising the [Malta SME Week](#). Its aim is to promote entrepreneurship so that more people, in particular young people, seriously consider becoming entrepreneurs. Malta SME Week also provides insight on what is offered to support start-ups and micro, small and medium-sized businesses. Each year, one specific activity focuses on youth entrepreneurship. These activities have either been carried out through simulation exercises, workshops, discussions and business pitching by young people themselves or through conferences involving tertiary education students.

The University of Malta's [Centre for Entrepreneurship & Business Incubation \(CEBI\)](#) has been set up to put knowledge intensive entrepreneurship at the top of the University of Malta's outreach agenda. Its aims are to promote the development of a knowledge-intensive, entrepreneurial culture in Malta, with the wider aim of fostering the socio-economic development of the Maltese Islands. The Centre is currently targeting knowledge intensive sectors such as science, technology, engineering and creative media at the University of Malta and in the wider Maltese context.

The [National Enterprise Support Awards](#), which are organised by the Commerce Department and the Enterprise Policy Directorate and Schemes within the Ministry for the Economy, Investment and Small Business, are intended to foster awareness of the importance of entrepreneurship. One of the award categories concerns 'Responsible and Inclusive Entrepreneurship' to recognise initiatives to promote entrepreneurship among under-represented or disadvantaged groups including people with disabilities, the unemployed, migrants and people from ethnic minority backgrounds.

A number of organisations are active in promoting youth entrepreneurship, including [JA-YE Malta](#), [Junior Chamber International Malta](#), [Young Business Entrepreneurs](#) and [Young Entrepreneurs and Leaders](#). JCI promotes business and entrepreneurship among its members through networking events, training and competitions. Young Business Entrepreneurs, which targets young, aspiring entrepreneurs by working on five strategic priorities, namely scientific research, education, entrepreneurial programmes, policymaking and raising awareness about entrepreneurship with young people and Maltese society. Young Entrepreneurs and Leaders aims at encouraging youths to enhance their entrepreneurship and leadership skills.

There are also a large number of initiatives and organisations that promote an entrepreneurial culture in Malta. For example, there are a number of radio programmes, including the 'Fi Kliem Iehor' programme on the national Radio Malta - the Maltese National Radio Station and 'Entrepreneur Clinic', which aired in 2016 on Campus FM, the local radio station broadcasting from the University of Malta. The Malta Chamber of Commerce and Industry also actively promotes entrepreneurship.

Networks and partnerships

Activities organised during the [Malta SME Week](#) have provided the space to young people to consider entrepreneurship as a career option and allow them to meet and network with Maltese entrepreneurs who can share their stories and best practices.

[Global Entrepreneurship Week](#), which is held in November. The Edward de Bono Institute collaborates with various partner organisations to put together programmes of activities to celebrate Global Entrepreneurship Week (GEW). This initiative, which takes place in 160 countries around the world, is designed to connect aspiring and inspiring entrepreneurs, helping them embrace originality, imagination and ingenuity through local and global activities.

Global Entrepreneurship Week also has activities for youth including the [Budding Rockstars Conference](#). This entrepreneurship and innovation conference was targeted at Malta's brightest young minds. It used panel discussions, presentations and group activities to promote entrepreneurship and to get young people to work together and with experienced entrepreneur. This helps them develop their networks. This conference was organised by The Malta Communications Authority (MCA) in collaboration with other entities.

[Takeoff's](#) incubation programme focuses on exposing and connecting entrepreneurs and start-ups to an expanding community of mentors who have a desire to share their business and technology development experience, knowledge and networks. Experienced innovators, serial-entrepreneurs, domain experts, professional advisers help Takeoff entrepreneurs get on the right path and succeed.

3.11 Current debates and reforms

Forthcoming Policy Developments

From the Entrepreneurial perspective, the Malta College for Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) has in place the Malta Entrepreneurship Center (MEC) which was launched in 2014 with the aim of providing MCAST students and alumni with the opportunity to transform their creative and innovative ideas into profitable and sustainable business ventures. A number of alumni have been provided not only with a space where they can develop their start-up business ideas, but are also being mentored throughout their experiential learning endeavour. The center is also being utilised to host adhoc entrepreneurship activities for students and interested individuals.

It is also pertinent to note that MCAST has also consolidated the entrepreneurship-related tuition that students receive. Indeed, Entrepreneurship has been introduced as a

key skill at across the Foundation, Technical and University Colleges. Students are not only receiving knowledge in relation to the typical operations of an enterprise but are also being trained to think like an entrepreneur and foster an entrepreneurial mindset. They are encouraged to turn their ideas to business proposals which are subsequently evaluated. Promising ideas are nurtured and developed further within the MEC.

Ongoing Debates

At present, with reference to labour market initiatives targeted at young people, from Jobsplus' end there are no new planned initiatives or reforms to existing initiatives.

4. SOCIAL INCLUSION

Social Policy falls under the responsibility of the Ministry for the Family, Children's Rights and Social Solidarity. In 2014 the Ministry had published the National Strategic Policy for Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion. This document aims to reduce poverty by taking on a cross-sectoral approach.

Also one of the action plans in the National youth Policy Towards 2020: A Shared vision for the future of young people is Social Inclusion. The document strives to develop and implement initiatives with a view to enhance the wellbeing and active participation of young people with fewer opportunities and those with a migrant background.

4.1 General context

Main challenges to social inclusion

Income, education, employment, access to social services in areas such as housing, access to health services and health literacy, the environment, as well as cultural and leisure involvement, all impact on the social inclusion prospects of young people. These pose a challenge to general well-being and can lead to poverty and social exclusion. Hence barriers include social background, dependency on welfare benefits, psycho-social situations and the cultural traditions of young people.

Other issues such as having a migrant background, LGBTIQ and drug abuse also impact on a young persons' social inclusion prospects. Young people experiencing inequality or disengagement since their early years are more likely to become entrapped in a system of disconnection from society and its institutions.

Definitions and concepts

In 2014, the Government of Malta launched the [National Strategic Policy for Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion \(2014-2024\)](#) aiming to address poverty and social exclusion through a comprehensive, long-term, results-oriented, participatory approach. The strategy is based on the values of solidarity, equality, dignity and respect for fundamental human rights and social justice. While this strategy aims to provide a policy framework that promotes the well-being and improves the quality of life for all vulnerable groups, children and young people were one of the cohorts given additional attention.

Malta has a hybrid social welfare model built upon a wide range of universal and targeted benefits. This model offers 'a set of programmes, benefits and supports designed to ensure that people do not lack the basic necessities of life' ([Mims, 2011](#)). It also offers specific measures for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged. Social policy has been developed on 'the principles of solidarity and subsidiarity, participation, decentralisation, prevention, empowerment and self-reliance with a special focus on the family' ([Abela, 1999, para. 2](#)) ([Vella & Gauci, 2016](#)).

The proportion of young people aged 18-24 years old and living in households at-risk of poverty or social exclusion stood at 22.8 per cent in 2013, while 22.7 per cent and 11.9 per cent respectively faced material deprivation and severe material deprivations ([National Strategic Policy for Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion \(2014-2024\)](#)). The higher likelihood of being at risk of poverty or social exclusion among young people primarily derives from high school absenteeism, early school leaving and lack of vocational training leading to inappropriate or insufficient skills to enter the labour market, as well as due to socio-emotional difficulties, such as addictive behaviour.

4.2 Administration and governance

Governance

The main responsibility for the provision of social welfare services lies within the [Ministry for the Family, Children's Rights and Social Solidarity](#), which is responsible for social policy in general including family and child policy, social housing, social security, pensions and other solidarity services, as well as issues concerning disability, the elderly and community care. The establishment of [Local Government](#) in 1993 gave greater powers and autonomy to local communities, however such powers tend to be significantly limited in terms of social welfare provision which continues to be the prerogative of central government (Vella & Gauci, 2016).

Main Actors

The [Ministry for the Family, Children's Rights and Social Solidarity](#) is responsible for social inclusion in general and is Malta's main social welfare service provider.

The [Foundation for Social Welfare Services \(FSWS\)](#) which incorporates two agencies, namely [Appoġġ](#) and [Sedqa](#), provide services to families and individuals, including young people.

The main services offered by the foundation through [Appoġġ](#) fall under three main pillars providing for:

- family services
- children services
- general community services.

The family services incorporate child and adolescent support services, family-oriented services such as family therapy, positive parenting coaching and domestic violence, and addiction services. Children services incorporate issues related to adoption, looked after children and fostering. General community services incorporate initiatives aimed at combating poverty and social exclusion, promoting community development and outreach, as well as complementing the provision of health services.

Besides these services, [FSWS](#) through the [Sedqa](#) agency, provides services to help people with addictive behaviour. These include prevention and early intervention, as well as care services.

Apart from the support rendered by these two agencies, the [Ministry for the Family, Children's Rights and Social Solidarity](#), through the [Support agency](#), offers services to individuals, including young people, with disability. These include:

- [Social Work Services](#)
- Community Services
- [Residential Services](#)
- [Resource Services](#)
- [Day Services](#).

Cross-sectorial cooperation

It should be noted that given the wide range of issues which impact upon social protection and social inclusion, a large number of other Government entities contribute to the well-being of society including young persons, such as the [Ministry for Health](#) (MfH), [The Ministry for Education and Employment](#) (MEDE), [The Ministry for Justice, Culture and Local Government](#) (MJCL) and the [Ministry for European Affairs and Equality](#).

There are also a number of non-public actors that contribute to the social inclusion of young people such as:

- [Rainbow Support Services](#) provide information, consultation and psycho-social welfare services through an approach that considers an LGBTI identity as equally valid
- [Inspire](#) provide people with disabilities and their families with educational, therapeutic and leisure services. They also advocate for inclusion, educate the general public and raise awareness among peers
- [Jesuit Refugee Service](#) in Malta seeks to accompany, serve and defend the rights of asylum seekers and forcibly displaced persons who arrive in Malta
- [SOS Malta](#) advocates for the introduction and implementation of local measures aimed at the integration and social inclusion of regular migrants in Maltese society
- [Mid-Dlam ghad-Dawl](#) helps prisoners and their families undergo the prison experience with more dignity and self-esteem
- [Caritas Malta](#) strives to alleviate poverty and promote human development and social justice, witnessing to the Christian faith and Gospel values
- [The St Jeanne Antide Foundation](#) offers support and self-empowerment of socially excluded persons, families and minority groups.

4.3 Strategy for the social inclusion of young people

Existence of a National Strategy on social inclusion

The main official document that relates to the social inclusion of young people is the [National Strategic Policy for the Reduction of Poverty and Social Exclusion](#) (2014-2024). This document addresses the whole population but regards young people as a cohort that require particular attention.

The document was introduced in 2014 and has a time-frame of ten years, up to 2024.

Scope and contents

This document recognises three overarching challenges that underpin Malta's success in effectively addressing poverty and social exclusion, namely:

- Increasing national sustainable development
- Promoting empowerment and social solidarity
- Consolidating social services.

It focuses on six key dimensions that can determine or alleviate poverty and social exclusion, namely:

- income and social benefits
- employment
- education
- health and environment
- social services
- culture.

The document proposes various strategic policy actions that should be undertaken on each of these dimensions with a view to enhancing prospects for all citizens in general and vulnerable groups in particular. These proposals range from enhancing social protection systems and promoting activation measures to creating more employment opportunities and facilitating mobility and de-segmentation in the labour market. Additionally, there is an addressing of educational inequalities, ensuring equal access to quality healthcare, the promotion of an environmental health friendly approach, decentralisation and integration of social services at community level, development of evidence-based policies and practices that address emerging needs and challenges and the enhancement of the potential for equality and social inclusion through everyday culture.

Hence, the key political objectives of this policy are to provide a policy framework that promotes the well-being and improves the quality of life for all. In particular, it targets persons at risk of poverty or social exclusion, based on the values of solidarity, equality, dignity and respect for fundamental human rights and social justice.

Among young people, this policy targets in particular those who have high levels of school absenteeism, early school leavers and those who lack of vocational training leading to having inappropriate or insufficient skills to enter the labour market. It also highlights young people who have compound disadvantages, such as inter-generational poverty and other structural factors that serve to increase alienation, leading to social exclusion.

Responsible authority

The top-level authority responsible for the implementation of this policy is the [Ministry for the Family, Children's Rights and Social Solidarity](#). However, the strategy has a cross-sector approach and other actors are involved, such as the Ministry of Education and Employment and the Ministry for Health.

The [Ministry for the Family, Children's Rights and Social Solidarity](#) monitors the policy's implementation through an inter-ministerial committee that regularly compiles reports on the progress achieved in the realisation of strategic policy actions laid down in the [National Strategic Policy for Poverty Reduction and for Social Inclusion \(2014-2024\)](#).

Revisions/Updates

The Strategy was launched in 2014 and has not yet been revised.

4.4 Inclusive programmes for young people

Programmes specific for vulnerable young people

[Appoġġ](#) agency offers the programmes Youth in Focus, the Adolescent Day Programme and Embark for Life.

[Youth in Focus](#) provides social work interventions to children and young people aged between 13 and 18 years old, with the scope of assisting them throughout their adolescence through addressing their needs and empowering them to reach their full potential. While the focus is on the adolescent/young person, the social worker maintains close collaboration with the parents/carers and other significant people in the lives of the young person. There is a wide range of presenting problems that the team encounter and deal with. These may include: anger management, involvement in vandalism, turbulent relationships with parents, partners and others, alcohol/drug abuse, promiscuity, coming out, self-identity crisis, experimentation with substances, time management, bereavement, employment, petty crime, emotional abuse on parents, past traumas, computer addiction, difficult past health traumas, problems with self-esteem, poverty & homelessness and money management. During 2015, 280 young people made use of Youth in Focus. 223 young people made use of the service up to June in 2016.

[The Adolescent Day Programme](#) started in July 2015. The programme runs for 12 consecutive weeks with participants attending for four days a week for a span of four hours each day. This three-month intensive programme provides non-formal therapeutic and educational sessions, which assist young people to develop the necessary coping mechanisms that will help them throughout their lives, and aide in preventing their exploitation. The programme covers various life skills and also gives young people (aged between 14 and 18 years old) the opportunity to spend two weeks with the Armed Forces of Malta. Upon completion of the programme, participants are awarded the Bronze, Silver or Gold level depending on their participation. Between 2015 and 2016, there were three

programmes of eight participants in each group. Three participants reached the Bronze Level, five reached the Silver Level while 12 completed the Gold phase.

[Embark for Life](#) was originally an ESF funded project. After its completion, local funds were provided for the project to continue. It targets young people aged between 15 and 24 years old and aims to help them in their level of education and in finding employment; however there are diverse problems that hinder these young people to achieve goals set in these areas. This includes addiction, family dynamics, mental health issues, problems with the law, emotional instability and behavioural difficulties, among others. In order to address these goals, Embark for Life works one-to-one with young people together with their respective professionals and support network. The service provides their clients with the information and support they require. Group interventions are also carried out and this helps young people prepare themselves for employment. During 2015, 197 young people made use of Embark for Life and 152 young people had made use of the service up to June 2016.

Further information on these three programmes can be found on the [Appogg](#) website. Agenzija Appogg, which forms part of the Foundation for Social Welfare Services, is the responsible authority for the implementation and coordination of these programmes and projects.

The aim of Youth in Focus, the Adolescent Day Programme and Embark for Life is to provide structure in the lives of young people who are at risk and require support by developing and maintaining healthy relationships with young persons' support networks, helping them in becoming independent by being actively involved in different activities, delivering specialised professional social work services and supporting the young people concerned within their own environment. This is enabled through adhering to the following principles:

- Working in partnership with the service user on all aspects of service delivery
- Linking service users to other resources or services when deemed appropriate and necessary
- Ensuring ongoing training for staff members in order to enhance and maintain optimum standards of service delivery
- Developing and maintaining an accessible, realistic and user-friendly service
- Developing the existing strengths of service users
- Referring adolescents to psychological sessions when deemed beneficial and necessary
- Introducing and developing the concept of youth and outreach work with this particular service user group
- Working with other outside entities to ensure the availability of accommodation for young people facing homelessness or difficult living situations.

These programmes are in line with prioritised goals as they address skills training, employment and social inclusion.

Apart from the above programmes, Appogg offers five Community Services – programmes for young people.

The [Alternative Youth Entertainment](#) (AYE) is a group of young people (aged between 16 and 19 years old) committed to organising alternative healthy activities for other young people in their community, with the purpose of preventing them from engaging in excessive alcohol use and other risky behaviour. They plan a number of activities throughout the year, and invite other young people to attend. To this effect, they build networks with stakeholders in the community, and their activity includes obtaining sponsorships for their activities. The group is supported by the community development worker of the Msida Community Service. The project is ongoing. The group takes between 10-15 participants.

The [Youth 12-14](#) targets young people (12-14 years of age) residing in Valletta and Floriana. The young people are targeted through various outreach exercises, giving

particular attention to those young people who are at risk and who are not able to engage in other healthy activities.

The sessions provide a space for the young people to develop life skills in a non-formal and informal setting. They usually run through the scholastic year, that is, between October and May. There are some recreational activities organised during the summer months.

The sessions are facilitated by the community development worker, who is assisted by a community social worker (Valletta Community Services). The group takes between 10-15 participants.

The [Youth 16+](#) is a continuation of the group which had participated in the early teens project in the past (Valletta and Floriana). The group decided to continue to meet on a monthly basis. Some of the members are being supported to engage in voluntary work with younger age groups from the same community.

This group is also facilitated by the community development worker and the community social worker, and takes between 10-15 participants.

[iTeens](#) sessions are organised for adolescents aged between 12 and 16 years old. They are provided with activities that touch upon social themes, thus providing the space for personal and social development. Although the sessions are co-ordinated by community development workers (Cottonera Community Services), the participants take an active role in developing the programme of activities. There are two schedules: one for winter and one for summer, with the summer schedule including more recreational outdoor activities. The group takes between 10-15 participants.

The [Community Workshop](#) is a workshop which is equipped to provide a non-formal setting for young people to develop manual skills (such as basic carpentry and stone work). The aim is to help the participants test their skills and interest in such trades and to eventually enrol in formal courses in the trades. The workshop provides space for informal social skills training. It is run by the community development worker who is assisted by a tutor provided by MCAST. The group takes up to eight participants.

The aim of the sessions in community projects is to provide a space for young people to develop life skills in a non-formal and informal setting. Each Community Service has its catchment area. Participants are recruited through the social work service, outreach or through other projects the participants may be attending that are provided by the Community Service.

Funding

The budget allocated for Youth in Focus programme in 2015 was €272,909 and a further €284,110 in 2016.

The budget allocated for the Adolescent Day Programme in 2015 was €34,656 and a further €70,000 in 2016. The change in budget was due to the fact that in 2015 the service was not in operation for the whole year.

The budget allocated for the Embark for Life programme in 2015 was €134,290 and a further €150,000 in 2016.

Community Projects are part of the work carried out by Appogg Community Services with no specific budget allocated for these initiatives.

Quality assurance

Evaluation of programmes is held on a regular basis and the service concerned makes sure that FSWS policies are implemented. The aim of the evaluations is to always improve service delivery.

FSWS has an Audit and Quality Assurance Service which was set up two years ago but this Service has not yet audited the concerned services.

No formal evaluation of these Services has as yet been carried out by the Research Department within FSWS.

4.5 Initiatives promoting social inclusion and raising awareness

Intercultural awareness

[Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#) in partnership with [SOS Malta](#) undertook a project entitled [Youth Upbeat](#). The project aimed to promote integration between different sectors of Maltese society. It focused in particular on young people, and refugees or persons with humanitarian and subsidiary protection by providing opportunities for interaction and awareness-raising through the use of culture and the performing arts as a tool for social cohesion. Partners in the project believe that culture is a comprehensive and an effective tool for integration in Malta. This approach provided opportunities to promote interaction through shared interests. Through enabling participants to understand and appreciate the cultural richness that can be contributed by immigrants to Malta, this project was successful in promoting an understanding of the positive impacts Beneficiaries of International Protection can have for Maltese society and culture.

Six Cultural Ambassadors, all having refugee or humanitarian/subsidiary protection status, were trained to work with young people as part of the project to share aspects of their culture as well as their personal stories within 26 interactive workshops, with approximately 500 13 to 14 year olds participating. These workshops focused on learning with an interactive methodology and treated such issues as perceptions, relationships, difficulties, positive experiences, culture through role plays, conversations, music and dance. The Project was co-financed through the European Refugee Fund.

The outcomes of this projects were:

- 11 Beneficiaries of International Protection trained in facilitation and working with young people
- Over 500 young people with increased awareness of the situation of refugees or migrants with living in Malta
- Increased interaction between young people and Beneficiaries of International Protection, leading to more understanding of each other
- 12 young people with concrete experience of working together with five Beneficiaries of International Protection in a cultural context through a live-in performing arts weekend
- 100 members of the public more informed about the situation of refugees and migrants with subsidiary protection status in a cultural context through attendance at the Final Performance
- Documentary shown as part of final performance and distributed to approximately 200 schools and key stakeholders from government and civil society.

It was recognised by all those involved in the project that the key outcome of the project was the change in perceptions reached by all those participating in the project, both the Maltese young people and the Beneficiaries of International Protection themselves. Initial preconceptions, fears and attitudes were changed to that of ensuring an environment of understanding, friendship and cultural exchange.

Young people's rights

The [Office of the Commissioner for Children](#), which falls under the Ministry for the Family, Children's Rights and Social Solidarity, carries out various initiatives to create awareness

about rights. These initiatives are carried out in schools, through the dissemination of [publications](#) and the media, as well as by organising activities for children and young people. The Office also makes use of its [website](#) and its Facebook page to create awareness.

One of the main initiatives is the annual [Rights 4U live-in](#). This activity consists of an interactive programme which includes various activities in which young people not only learn about their rights, but also actively explore and engage in discussions on these rights. The participants develop critical thinking skills, build social ties and implement concepts such as respect, responsibility and inclusion.

The main target groups are children and young people under the age of 18 years old as well as parents/carers, educators and other professionals working with children.

Key initiatives to safeguard democracy and prevent radicalisation leading to violent extremism

No initiatives have been taken to safeguard democracy against and prevent radicalisation which lead to violent extremism.

4.6 Access to quality services

Housing

A number of housing services and initiatives are offered through the [Housing Authority](#) from which young people may directly or indirectly benefit. Some of these schemes and services offered by the Housing Authority include:

- A [grant](#) to assist with the Construction and/or completion or rehabilitation of a first dwelling
- [Installation of lifts](#) in Government owned blocks to render them more accessible
- [Rent subsidy](#) to tenants on rents paid for their ordinary residence leased from the private sector
- [Scheme for persons with disability](#) to provide financial aid and technical advice to persons with disability to carry out adaptation works related to their disability in their residence
- [Sir Sid Darek](#) to encourage residents of apartments/terraced houses and maisonettes owned by the Housing Authority and the Government Property Department to become owner occupiers and continue using the property as their ordinary residence
- [Subsidy](#) for adaptation works in owner occupied, privately rented or government rented residences. Landlords of private dwellings rented to tenants can apply for assistance to eliminate dangerous structure only and on just one property. This aid helps to render premises in a habitable and acceptable standard
- Young people were enabled to become home-owners through, for example, the [First Time Buyers Stamp Duty Relief Scheme](#) whereby first time buyers can benefit up to €5,000 in stamp duty on the purchase of immovable property.

Malta also provides a number of special housing facilities and residential settings for children and young people at risk of social exclusion, particularly those requiring out-of-home care. Aside from a number of residential homes for children, such as the [Crèche](#) run by the Ursuline Sisters, there are also a number of residential facilities for adults and young people which include:

Fejda provides shelter and a safe environment for female adolescents who suffer from emotional and/or behavioural difficulties

[Dar Osanna Pia](#) provides professional intervention and shelter for young men aged 18 years old and over who are experiencing various forms of crises and social difficulties

Dar Niki Cassar welcomes homeless young people

[Suret il-Bniedem Foundation](#) offers holistic residential care through its four homes. Dar Tereza Spinelli welcomes homeless, single women, girls aged between 15 and 18 and women with children

Dar Patri Leopoldo welcomes homeless men and boys

Dar Victoria and Dar Franġisk welcome people who suffer from mental health problems

[Sedqa agency](#) and [Caritas Malta](#) offer a number of residential settings for the rehabilitation of people with addictive behaviour

[Appoġġ agency](#) also provides residential care to children and young people in need by offering a therapeutic programme to cater for children and young persons who require semi-secure residential accommodation, and providing adequate placements for children and young people who require out-of-home care and experience socio-emotional difficulties

[Sapport agency](#) provides various residential facilities for persons with disability as well as a temporary residential programme to support these young people in their transitional phase to more permanent accommodation.

Social services

Malta offers a number of social benefit provisions and in-kind which directly or indirectly assist young people experiencing poverty and social exclusion. The main social benefit provisions and in-kind benefits include:

Social assistance

Social assistance is provided to each person aged 18 years old or over, who being a head of household who is deemed unfit for employment due to physical or mental illness; being a single parent or separated person who is unemployed because of family responsibilities; being a single person living alone or with anyone else not being his/her parents who is unemployed due to illness and; or persons considered as being unable to enter the labour market by the [Jobsplus](#), Malta's Public Employment Service.

In addition, persons in receipt of social assistance are entitled to an energy benefit, while those living in privately rented accommodation are also entitled to a rent allowance.

Persons who are 16 years of age or over, registered under Part 1 of the [Jobsplus](#) and who satisfy a minimum of 50 paid social security contributions from their first date of employment and an average of 20 contributions in the two years prior to date of registering as unemployed, are entitled to unemployment benefit. This benefit is intended to be a short-term measure lasting for a maximum period of 156 days while a person is actively seeking employment. Following this period, the unemployed person may apply for long-term social assistance in the form of unemployment assistance which is means tested. In order to qualify once again for unemployment benefit, the person has to work for 91 continuous days (13 weeks) beginning from the 156th day of his/her previous unemployment benefit entitlement.

Unemployment benefit, which is not means tested, is flat rated and subject to a yearly percentage raise according to the cost of living allowance (COLA) granted in the national annual budget. Entitlement to this benefit is calculated on a six day week basis.

No benefits are allocated personally to unemployed persons of less than 18 years of age. Young people benefit from social welfare benefits through custodial care benefits, such as children's allowance, disabled child allowance and foster care allowance, which are paid up to the age of 16 years old. Young people aged 16 years old and over who are certified by a Medical Panel appointed by the [Ministry for the Family, Children's Rights and Social Solidarity](#) as suffering from a disability as listed in the [Social Security Act Chapter 318](#) (section 27) are entitled to a disability pension (14 years old in the case of people who

are visually impaired). As from January 2015, all young people up to the age of 23 years old who are not engaged in studies or work are encouraged to join the [Youth Guarantee Scheme](#) offered by the [Ministry for Education and Employment](#), which provides a work placement or a training programme to enhance their skills, together with support from psychologists, occupational therapists and job coaches.

People who are unable to continue working due to medical reasons, are awarded an invalidity pension at a rate which is based on the number of social security contributions paid. A contributory invalidity pension is awarded to those who have paid 250 contributions, completed a minimum of six months of uninterrupted employment or one year of the [Jobsplus](#) Part 1 registration, and are found by the [Social Security Department](#)'s medical board to be permanently unable to work due to physical or mental illness. Eight different rates of invalidity pension are available, depending on the applicant's civil status and his/her paid/or credited social security contributions.

Non-Financial Benefits

Apart from the provision of financial benefits payable by virtue of the [Social Security Act](#) and other in-kind benefits, as explained above, the [Ministry for the Family, Children's Rights and Social Solidarity](#) also offers housing arrangements and social welfare services to help young people overcome inequalities and have a better quality of life.

Throughout these last few years, various reforms have been undertaken in the area of social welfare provision in order to promote a more integrated and holistic service. Following the successful implementation of the EU co-financed [LEAP pilot project](#), locally-based Family Resource Centres and Regional Development Centres are currently being set up with the aim of providing a point of reference within the community through the provision of various forms of social support. Specifically aimed at combatting poverty and social exclusion through a more grassroots outreach-oriented and integrated approach, these Centres are designed to foster more inclusive communities through the empowerment and participation of disadvantaged groups, and collaborative networking among stakeholders. Indeed, they offer a one-stop shop approach through multiple services and support in a number of areas including training, employment, social benefits and childcare service, as well as a wide range of social work and community services to reduce poverty and promote social inclusion. These Centres offer services to vulnerable and disadvantaged groups which are often at risk of poverty, such as single parents, people with disabilities, ex-offenders, migrants and the working poor, which populations also include young people.

The type of service provided depends on the specific target groups. Apart from a wide range of universal services, the [Ministry for the Family, Children's Rights and Social Solidarity](#) also provides a number of targeted and specialised services, particularly for vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people, such as those with disabilities, those experiencing abuse and violence, and those residing in out-of-home care.

Health care

The [Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Directorate](#) promote healthy lifestyles through initiatives in various settings including community, schools and the workplace through various mediums including social media. The main focus is on well-being, healthy eating, weight management, physical activity, tobacco prevention, oral health and smoking cessation, infectious disease prevention and sexual health. This is done in collaboration with various entities including the Ministry of Education and Employment, Ministry for Family and Social Solidarity, Workplaces, Local Councils, Agenzija Zaghzagh, Sport Malta, NGOs and youth clubs. The opportunity is available for all to ensure accessibility to all.

Various strategies have been outlined including the [Healthy Weight for Life strategy](#), [Food and Nutrition Policy and Action Plan](#), [Sexual Health policy and strategy](#), and the draft Health Enhancing Physical Activity Strategy.

Some examples of specific initiatives include Schools on the Move, 360° Project, Peers Training on Sexual Health and Tobacco Cessation.

Research projects are also carried out including the Health Behaviour Study in School Children, targeting young people aged 13 and 15 years, national food consumption survey, national physical activity survey across all age groups including a representative sample of youths.

Training is carried out to health professionals and educators to ensure a consistent message is transmitted.

Mental Health Services have specifically designed services for young people.

A [Crisis Intervention Service](#) for children and adolescents is available from seven am to five pm at the Accident & Emergency at Mater Dei Hospital. Through this service, children and adolescents who are experiencing mental health related issues can drop in and be reviewed by a psychiatric specialist and by a child and adolescent psychiatric nurse. If required the client can be referred further to a psychologist or social worker.

Regular psychological services can also be accessed through the [Child and Young People's Services](#).

In addition, for those young people requiring inpatient treatment, a new unit 12 bed unit has been set up just outside of the perimeter of [Mount Carmel Hospital](#). This [Youth Residence](#) provides a 24-hour protective, therapeutic environment with professional assessment and stabilisation of acute mental health issues. It provides both inpatient care facilities as well as therapeutic day programmes as part of a patients care plan. Access to on-going education at the appropriate developmental level also forms an essential criteria of the service.

Professional development for health care mediators is provided through training such as '[Cultural Mediators in Health Care](#)'. This is delivered to interested candidates by the Migrant Health Liaison Office within Primary Health Care. Two of the present Cultural Mediators working at the Primary Health Care took part in the LEAP Project where they received training and a skills passport. Individuals interested in this role are also encouraged to attend courses to improve their English and computer skills.

The cultural mediation service is a collective effort between Mater Dei Hospital and the Primary Health Care Department. This method would be beneficial if adopted in other health and social care settings.

Financial services

See Social Services.

Quality assurance

The [Department for Social Welfare Standards](#) (DSWS) is responsible for drawing up national standards of care and for issuing codes of conduct and practice for social care workers and their employers. On the basis of these standards, the DSWS licenses, registers and monitors care services.

DSWS has developed a number of standards to assess the quality of social services such as the out-of-home child care, social services delivered to persons with disability, and child day care services.

The DSWS monitors social welfare services in accordance with these established standards so as to continually improve service provision.

4.7 Youth work to foster social inclusion

Policy/legal framework

The main policy framework designed for youth work to foster social inclusion is the [National Youth Policy Towards 2020](#). This document sets two main strategies. One of these strategies is Youth Work and Services for Young People. The [Ministry of Education and Employment](#) and the [Parliamentary Secretariat for Youth, Sport and Voluntary Organisations](#) have over-arching responsibility for implementing this strategy. [Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ](#) is responsible for strategic planning and day-to-day operational matters in implementing the strategy. The focus of this strategy is on supporting the personal development and well-being of young people through projects, initiatives and activities based on youth work and non-formal education.

Main inclusive Youth-Work programmes and target groups

There are five main youth work programmes delivered towards vulnerable young people. These are the [Youth.Inc Programme](#), [Youth Cafes](#), [Detached Youth Work Programme](#); [Youth Work in Youth Hubs](#) and Youth Work Programmes in Schools.

The [Youth.Inc Programme](#) targets young people between 16 and 21 years old and not in Education Employment or Training. The programme is designed in a way to up-skill young people to facilitate their engagement in further education, training or employment. The Youth.Inc Programme has an annual budget of €400,000.

[Youth Cafes](#) cater mainly for young people between 14 and 20 years of age and at risk of poverty. The programme strives to create inclusive and tolerant spaces in the heart of the community. The Youth Café Programme has an annual budget of €30,000.

The [Detached Youth Work Programme](#) targets young people between 15 and 25 years of age at risk of social exclusion. The Detached Youth Work Programme has an annual budget of €30,000.

The [Youth Work in Youth Hubs](#) programme targets post-secondary students aged between 16 and 20 years of age who are attending Foundation Classes (MQF Levels 1 and 2) and the Pathway to Independence Programme, a programme designed to give lifeskills to young people with different learning difficulties. The Youth Hubs Programme has an annual budget of €150,000.

The Youth Work in Schools programme targets 13 to 16 year old students with challenging behaviour. The Youth Work in Schools has an annual budget of €120,000.

Young people who participate in these programmes do not have direct involvement in the design and delivery of these programmes.

[Youth.Inc Programme](#) can be cited as an example of good practice in existing cooperation between youth workers, teachers and trainers. Youth.inc is an inclusive education programme, based on applied learning, for young people between the ages of 16 and 21 years old. These young people have completed full-time compulsory education, often without qualifications, and were not in education, training or employment before entering the programme. The aim of the programme is to help young people to improve their standard of education and gain more knowledge, values and skills to enable them to enter the labour market or gain qualifications to continue in further education and/or training.

The number of course options available to young people at Youth.inc is quite broad. While core curriculum subjects such as English, Maltese and Applied Maths and Basic IT Skills remain in place, along with the development of core competences, there are a range of optional courses for young people including animal care, auto electric, beauty care, cooking, fretwork, electronics, entrepreneurship, hairdressing, social care, home

cooking, cake decoration, nutrition and health, building and construction, fashion design, music production, photography, web design, upholstery, art, customer care and sales techniques.

With this wide range of course options being delivered by outside professionals/practitioners and a more personalised and individualised learning programme, the youth worker has become a go-between, facilitator, mediator and negotiator between young people seeking knowledge and professionals/practitioners who have such knowledge. The focus of the youth worker's work is on building supportive relationships between these two parties, engaging with them to help young people discover their strengths and weaknesses and encouraging them to map and pursue future career and learning paths. The youth worker role within Youth.inc exists in the demanding, difficult and often uncharted landscape between young people, often socially and economically excluded, at risk, with poor levels of educational attainment, and the realities, demands, disciplines and responsibilities of the world of education, training and work.

Youth work providers in the field of social inclusion for young people

There are no other Youth Work providers. The main Youth Work programmes are all provided by the State.

Training and support for youth workers engaged in social inclusion programmes

Youth Workers are offered three courses at the University of Malta. Two of these are provided by the Faculty of Social Well-being through the [Department of Youth and Community Studies](#). Another one is provided by the Faculty of Theology in collaboration with the Department of Youth and Community Studies and Diocesan Youth Commission.

The Faculty of Social Well-being offers a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Youth and Community Studies. The course is offered both on a three year full-time programme or a five year part-time programme. This faculty also offers a Master of Arts in Youth and Community Studies through a three year part-time programme. The Faculty of Theology in collaboration with the Department of Youth and Community Studies and Diocesan Youth Commission offer a Master of Arts in Youth Ministry through a three year part-time programme.

[Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#), the national youth agency, acts as a youth work foundation. Agenzija Zghazagh signed a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) with the University of Malta. In this MOU the agency agreed to promote and resource youth workers in supervision skills and students following the course can have their field work placements at the agency.

Financial support

There are no other publicly funded programmes.

Quality assurance

Four of the main inclusive Youth work programmes in Malta fall under the direct responsibility of [Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#), the National Youth Agency. The other, that is, the Youth Work Programme in Schools, falls under the responsibility of the [Student Services Department](#) within the Ministry for Education and Employment. The [law](#) that established the agency states that the agency has the responsibility to ensure the highest standard of Youth Work in Malta. The Agency was set up under the [Public Administration Act](#), Article 36. There are a number of Key Performance indicators to ensure quality in the delivery of programmes including the actual number of young people participating in the

programmes and the number of tailor made programmes and initiatives targeting young people. The Chief Executive of the agency is liable to these Key Performance indicators.

4.8 Current debates and reforms

Social policy in Malta is undergoing a process of change characterised by reforms which aim to promote greater decentralisation of social welfare services, a more targeted approach to the provision of benefits, the flourishing of public-private partnerships in health and social care, a rights-based as opposed to a charity-based approach, and greater differentiation and specialisation of services, particularly 'enabling' services. These reforms reflect new needs and evolving realities within the context of an active inclusion and participatory approach (Vella & Gauci, 2016).

5. PARTICIPATION

In Malta young people can be active and participate in societal and political life in a number of ways including being members in political parties, student councils, youth parliaments, youth local councils etc. Young people are also represented in the Malta Committee for Economic and Social Development.

As of 2015 16 year olds were extended the right to vote in local council elections. A consultation process is happening at the moment to extend voting rights for 16 year olds for National and European Parliament elections.

5.1 General context

Definitions and concepts

One of the eight principles that underlie the [National Youth Policy Towards 2020](#) is participation. The document states that: young people should be consulted and be involved in all planning and decision-making as active participants in their own development and in that of wider society.

Institutions of representative democracy

Malta is a constitutional republic and parliamentary democracy. The [Constitution of Malta](#) states that the President is the Head of State and is appointed by the unicameral parliament, the House of Representatives. The President appoints as Prime Minister the leader of the party winning a majority of seats in parliamentary elections.

At a national level, Malta's main representative institution is the Parliament of Malta. This consists of the President and a House of Representatives.

With the introduction of the [Local Councils Act](#), Malta is divided into five regions. Each of these regions is made up from a number of localities. Each locality elects its own Local Council consisting of a Mayor, a vice Mayor and Councillors.

Voting in Malta is cast by ballot and it is not compulsory.

5.2 Youth participation in representative democracy

Young people as voters

In 2015, amendments in the [Local Councils Act](#), lowered the voting age limit for Local Elections from 18 to 16 years. However only young people who have attained the age of 18 can present themselves as candidates for Local elections.

On the 5th March 2018, the Maltese Parliament unanimously approved a motion to allow young people at the age of 16 to also vote in the General Elections, European Parliament Elections and Referenda. However, according to the Maltese Constitution only young people who have attained the age of 18 can present themselves as candidates for General Elections and European Parliament Elections.

There are no special provisions for young people in the electoral law.

Turnout figures relating to young people's participation in the total recent local, national, and European Parliament elections are not available. However according to a [discussion document](#) issued by the [Office of the Prime Minister](#) on lower the voting age to 16, the turnout of 16 and 17 year olds for the last local election, which happened to be the very first election in which 16 year olds could vote was that of 62.3%.

Young people as political representatives

Malta has 2 major political parties the Partit Laburista – the Labour Party and the Partit Nazzjonalista – the Nationalist Party. There is also smaller parties, namely Alternattiva Demokratika – The Green Party, as well as the Partit Demokratiku.

[Forum Żgħażaġh Laburisti](#) is the youth organisation of Partit Laburista. It encourages the participation of Maltese young people in politics, and ensures that the voice of younger generations is represented in the Labour Party's policies. Members of the Labour Party aged between 16 and 35 years old are automatically members of Forum Żgħażaġh Laburisti. The [Moviment Żgħażaġh Partit Nazzjonalista](#) (MZPN) is the youth movement within the Nationalist Party. MZPN works on its own initiative mainly to involve young people within the party; it pushes forward the needs and aspirations of young people within party policy and promotes the policies agreed by the party. Any PN member between the age of 16 and 30 years old is automatically a Moviment Żgħażaġh Partit Nazzjonalista member.

[Alternattiva Demokratika \(AD\) Żgħażaġh](#) – Green Youth is the youth wing of AD - The Green Party and is committed to green principles, environmental protection, social justice and social cohesion principles with special emphasis on respect for human and civil rights. Members of Alternattiva Demokratika aged between 16 and 35 years of age are members of Alternattiva Demokratika Żgħażaġh.

There are no special provisions or quotas reserved for young people that facilitate their candidature for local, national or European elections. Any person who is a registered voter over the age of 18 can submit nominations to be considered to be candidates in elections.

Currently there are 4 young people (under the age of 30) among the members of the representative assembly in the current term.

5.3 Youth representation bodies

Youth parliament

A Youth Parliament is established annually by the [National Youth Council](#) according to the latter's statute. This platform does not form part of the country's constitutional structure and is supervised by the National Youth Council.

The Youth Parliament has no fixed number of members. Interested young people apply to form part of the youth parliament through a call issued annual by the National Youth Council. The youth parliament is divided into two groups. One group for young people ages between 13 and 18 years old and another for those between 19 and 35 years of age. The mandate of the youth parliament is for a year.

The two age groups are divided into three further groups. Each of these six groups will work on a resolution and present it to their peers for amendments. During this period, they meet as often as necessary to finalise the resolutions. When such resolutions are finalised, they are presented in a session of parliament.

There are two main objectives for the Youth Parliament. The first is to present the resolutions in parliament to the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and the President of the Republic. The second is that the Youth Parliament serves as a form of training and political simulation for the young people participating in it.

The National Youth Council funds the Youth Parliament.

Additionally since 2018, after the lowering of voting age to 16 years, through a budgetary measure the Government committed itself to enhance the remit of the National Youth Parliament. In this regard, in an effort to increase young people's political awareness that facilitates their critical engagement in democratic processes, Aġenzija

Żgħażaġħ – the National Youth Agency – was charged to provide a non-formal education training for young people interested in the Youth Parliament.

This training will be offered by youth workers employed by Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ in collaboration with schools to young people between the ages of 13 and 16 years and will be divided into 3 phases.

During the first phase young participants will receive a training on different political systems, highlighting the Maltese system including Parliamentary, policy and electoral systems, public speaking and debating; pitching, formulating policy recommendations and lobbying.

This phase is then followed by a second phase where young participants will get together and work on developing a number of policy recommendations on topics that impact on their well-being.

The third phase and final phase will take the form of a debate society where young participants will have the opportunity to take part in a debating competition where they would debate the recommendations that they themselves would have formulated during the third phase.

Such training is envisaged to empower young people to participate in the National Youth Parliament organised by the National Youth Council and also other political participation projects such as the Model European Parliament, Youth Local Councils or School Councils.

Youth councils and/or youth advisory boards

Following a recommendation in the first National Youth Policy Document in 1993, a National Youth Council – [Kunsill Nazzjonali Żgħażaġħ](#) (KNŻ) – was established. However, there are no legal frameworks that establish the Council. The Council operates at a national level. It is autonomous non-governmental youth organisation and does not form part of the country's constitutional structure.

The age range of the Council members is between 15 and 35 years old. There are no special public measures or guidelines facilitating greater inclusiveness and diversity, however any young person nominated by a youth organisation that is a full member of the National Youth Council can be a candidate.

The National Youth Council has 4 Statutory Bodies mainly:

The General Assembly

This is the highest organ of the National Youth Council and has the authority to decide on any matter raised. The General assembly is composed of representatives of each member organisation, together with the Executive Committee. Amongst other functions, the General assembly is responsible for the admission of new members in the National Youth Council; appointing the Executive Committee for the upcoming term; approving the Annual Report of the preceding year; approving the Financial Report of the preceding year; appointing the Vigilance Board for the upcoming term; appointing the Auditors for the upcoming year.

The Annual General Assembly meets in November, however an Extraordinary General Assembly may convene whenever this is requested by a simple majority of members during the Organisations' Committee, the Executive Committee, or the Vigilance Board or else by 40% of all members within KNŻ.

The Organisations' Committee

This body is composed of the Executive Committee and a representative of each Member Organisation and is convened at least once every three months. This body may also be convened by the Executive Committee whenever a demand is made by at least 5 Member Organisations

The Organisations' Committee is responsible for discussing and deciding any issue raised by the Executive Committee or the Member Organisations; during the first meeting after the General Assembly, approving the Work plan proposed by the Executive Committee; drafting and adopting any policies or regulations upon a recommendation made by the Executive Committee.

The International Committee

This committee is appointed by the Executive Committee after the General Assembly is composed by the International Secretary of the Executive Committee as Chairperson; any other Member from the Executive Committee as Vice-Chair; the President and the Secretary General of the Executive Committee, or their representatives, ex-officio; two representatives appointed by the Organisations' Committee; representatives of the National Youth Council elected in any European Youth Forum Organ; other persons, as appointed by the Executive Committee, who have gathered experience in International Relations and are currently elected or appointed to represent their organisation in an International Organisation; International Secretaries of Member Organisations who want to join the International Committee

The International Committee is convened according to whenever this is necessary, but must be convened prior to any statutory meeting of the European Youth Forum.

The Vigilance Board

This Board is appointed and approved by the General Assembly and it is responsible to decide on any disciplinary issue raised by the Executive Committee, the Organisations' Committee or any Member Organisation and assure that the National Youth Council's Statute is not infringed and also give its interpretation on its provisions whenever this is requested.

The Vigilance Board is composed of a Chairperson and two other members, together with a supplementary member. Members of the Vigilance Board may not be members of the Executive Committee

The Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is elected and approved by the General Assembly and is made up of 13 members and is responsible for the administrative and executive direction of the Council. The executive convenes at least once a month and holds office for 2 years.

The main role and responsibility of the National Youth Council is to represent the interests of Maltese youth organizations and also to work for the interests and needs of unorganized young people both at national and international levels. The Council does so by:

- promoting the participation of young people in society;
- promoting a spirit of cooperation, pluralism and equality among young Maltese people;
- promoting Maltese culture among young people;
- serving as a medium for the exchange of ideas and information among young people;
- assisting youth organizations in their objectives;
- making proposals for government assistance programmes to the Ministry responsible for youth;
- raising awareness among Maltese people for a wide variety of cultural activities and entertainment;
- organising social, educational and cultural activities that interest all Maltese young people;
- monitoring and evaluating the work of the Government, especially in the youth field and by actively contributing in the preparation of the National Youth Policy.

The National Youth Council receives public funding. This funding is audited every six months a report is sent to the Ministry of Education and Employment.

[Aġenzija Żgħażaġh's Advisory Board](#) is made up of 3 young people appointed by the Minister for Education and Employment, being the Minister responsible for the agency, after an expression of interest. The role of the Advisory Board is to advise and support the Chief Executive Officer of Aġenzija Żgħażaġh in the discharge of her duties and responsibilities.

Higher education student union(s)

The [University Students' Council](#) – Kunsill Studenti Universitarji - is an independent body at the University of Malta. The official organs of Kunsill Studenti Universitarji are the General Meeting, the Executive, the Education Commission and the Social Policy Commission. The General Meeting is the highest institution within the KSU structure.

The University Students' Council is composed of an executive of 13 people. 11 members of the executive are elected through a general election for a one-year term. The candidates are chosen by political organisations on campus and selected in a manner that covers all faculties and institutions within the university to ensure full representation. The remaining two candidates are elected through the education and social policy commissions, and are independent candidates. The Council represents approximately 13 000 students from both the University of Malta and Junior College.

The executive is made up of five members at an administrative level, and four offices, with two members in each office. The offices are social policy, education, international and entertainment. The social policy and education commission meetings take place at least once a month, while the executive meets on a regular basis.

The main roles and responsibilities of the Kunsill Studenti Universitarji are to:

- serve and represent students in all that is in their interest;
- serve as an official means of communication between students and the relevant authorities;
- give voice, strength and power to students;
- promote the value of lifelong learning;
- cultivate an educational, social and cultural awareness among students;
- work to protect the rights listed in the Charter of Students' Rights.

KSU does not receive any public funding. The council depends on its main partners and its own activities to be able to sustain itself. KSU holds an annual audit and financial statements are presented to its stakeholders, the students, during the annual general meeting. A vote is also taken during the Annual General Meeting to approve the financial year.

School student union(s)

Maltese secondary level students have Student Councils representing their interests but there is no established network of inter-linked student representation bodies. The establishment of such councils is referred to in several documents such as Democracy In Schools – Setting Up Of Student Councils and Class Committees (1999); National Minimum Curriculum (1999); [For All Children To Succeed](#) (2005) and [National Curriculum Framework](#) (2012).

Student Councils in each school are guided by their Link Teacher/s (voluntary), who link with the school administration and the rest of the school. At departmental level, help and guidance is provided by a Head of Department (Citizenship Education). Each Student Council has its own statute and is composed of its members and officials: president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer and public relations officer.

As of 2018, Aġenzija Żgħażaġh -The National youth Agency – in collaboration with interested schools will be providing non-formal education training programme on youth participation methods. This training will target Schools Councils and aims are twofold.

The first is to empower young people into taking more of an active role in their education. Young people are provided with a non-formal training programme highlighting democratic processes. The second aim is to train the Link Teachers that would eventually work with these students on a daily basis.

Each Student Council is composed of two or three representatives (members) from each form (or year). Therefore, a school with five forms would have ten. The selection method of the Student Council representatives encompasses a democratic school election after a campaign is held. This usually follows a call for interested students. The council elects its own officials from its elected representatives. The council's mandate is usually for two years but annual elections are held for new Form I students. Student Councils are to meet once a week.

Student Councils' primary role is the listening to and representing students' views and concerns within the school context. However, it is not only limited to this activity and councils are constantly being encouraged to become involved in awareness raising, campaigning for change, establishing links within the wider community and aim at local, national, and international involvement. Some councils do get involved in some of these activities. The main domains of councils' activities are in educational, health, charity and sports.

Despite efforts being made in this direction, Student Councils' have no role in policy-making.

Student Councils receive no public funding and mainly raise money through fundraising activities. A Student Council is responsible for its own accounting under the guidance of their Link Teachers.

Other bodies

[Kunsill Lokali taż-Żgħażaġh](#) is a project coordinated between Aġenzija Żgħażaġh - the National Youth Agency and Kunsill Nazzjonali taż-Żgħażaġh - the National Youth Council. The central aim of the project is to encourage young people between the ages of 14 and 18 years old to become active participants in their communities. It also promotes a number of principles including democracy, active citizenship, participation, dialogue, leadership and equality.

Throughout the project Kunsilli Lokali taż-Żgħażaġh young councillors are engaged in research in an effort to discover needs and aspirations in their localities and come up with a project to act upon these needs. Afterwards, an action plan and a budget are prepared to explain how the youth local council intends to bring about the necessary changes. Young people are obliged to attend training seminars designed specifically for them. The first seminar provides a general overview of the project and what different roles within the Local Council entail. This is followed by a meeting in the respective Local Councils, where young people vote or agree on the roles that they will be assuming within the Youth Local Council. The second training seminar focuses on providing young people with the skills needed for their respective roles. Following training, young people meet on a fortnightly basis in their respective Local Councils and discuss matters of interest between themselves.

Subsequently, proposals are submitted and a committee appointed by the Organizing Committee selects the ten best projects. The whole process is facilitated by a youth worker who assists the young Councillors for the duration of the project. The winning projects are awarded a grant to help them realise their proposed project.

5.4 Young people's participation in policy-making

Formal Mechanisms of Consultation

Young people are represented in a standing committee called [Civil Society Committee](#) of the [Malta Council for Economic and Social Development](#) (MCESD). The MCESD functions as an advisory council that forms opinions and issues recommendations to the Maltese government on matters of economic and social relevance. As per [S.L. 431.01](#) of the Laws of Malta, the [Civil Society Committee](#) must have a youth representative.

Also, since 2014, young people may also avail of a consultation platform hosted by the [Ministry for European Affairs and Equality](#) called [Public Consultations Online](#). In this platform legislations, policies, strategies, green papers and white papers are uploaded and become available for public consultation.

Consultation with young people also happens on an ad-hoc basis according to issue e.g. during the drafting of the National Youth Policy Towards 2020, the Sexual Health Policy, the National Pensions Reform or the Campaign the Vote 16.

Actors

Young people are represented in the [Civil Society Committee](#) by the [Junior Chamber International Malta](#).

Also, since 2014, young people may also avail of a consultation platform hosted by the [Ministry for European Affairs and Equality](#) called [Public Consultations Online](#). In this platform legislations, policies, strategies, green papers and white papers are uploaded and become available for public consultation.

Consultation with young people also happens on an ad-hoc basis according to issue e.g. during the drafting of the National Youth Policy Towards 2020, the Sexual Health Policy, the National Pensions Reform or the Campaign the Vote 16.

Information on the extent of youth participation

Data on young people's participation is not collected.

Outcomes

The Standing Committee is consulted by MCESD on social matters.

During instances of ad-hoc consultation young people are asked for feedback on the policy to be discussed at that particular time. During the consultation period of the National Youth Policy, apart from having the National Youth Council as part of the Ministerial Advisory Board, feedback was sought from youth organisations through a consultation seminar. During this seminar, workshops were held to represent young people's voice.

Through the online platform young people can give feedback on anything that relates to the document that is open for consultation. A detailed report of the outcome is published and made available to the public on the [Public Consultations Online](#).

Large-scale initiatives for dialogue or debate between public institutions and young people

Debates are organised by [Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#) in partnership with the [Malta Union of Teachers](#) on an ad-hoc basis in secondary schools.

The Faculty of Social Wellbeing organises the [Dean's Forum](#). Through this initiative students and academics discuss and debate on social wellbeing issues and current events.

5.5 National strategy to increase youth participation

Existence of a national strategy to increase young people's political and civil society participation

The strategy to increase young people's political and civil society participation is part of the [National Youth Policy Towards 2020](#). One of the ten action plans in this document is called: Awareness raising, listening to and supporting the voice of young people. This document was introduced in 2015 and has a timeframe of five years, until 2020.

Scope and contents

The national action plan, targeting all young people between 13 and 30 years old, proposes initiatives and opportunities that enhance young people's social and political awareness and enables their voice to be heard on issues that have an impact on their lives. The action plan intends to strengthen the youth information services, further promote the European Youth Card, expand the Structured Dialogue, increase the number of projects relating to political awareness and democratic participation and publish a training manual for youth participation.

Responsible authority for the implementation of the strategy

The action plan is under the direct responsibility of [Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ](#) - the national youth agency. The document states that it will use the agency's annual reports as a means to monitor progress on each action plan of the document.

Monitoring and evaluation

The implementation of the national youth policy over the period 2015-2020 will be monitored on an on-going basis through Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ's Annual Reports. At the end of this period, an independent evaluation will be conducted on the overall impact of the policy and the benefits accruing for young people, the voluntary youth sector and wider society.

Revisions/Updates

Since its launch in 2015 there were no revisions or updates.

5.6 Supporting youth organisations

Legal/policy framework for the functioning and development of youth organisations

There is no legal or policy framework specifically designed for youth organisations.

Just like other non-governmental voluntary organisations, youth organisations may apply to become enrolled with the [Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations](#). Once enrolled such youth organisations become subject to the observance of applicable provisions and regulations of the [Voluntary Organisations Act](#) and enjoy its privileges. These include grants, sponsorships or other financial aid from the Government, any entity controlled by the Government or the Voluntary Organisations Fund; be the beneficiary of any policies

supporting voluntary action; benefit from exemptions, privileges or other entitlements in terms of any law; and be a party to contracts and other engagements, whether against remuneration or not, for the carrying out of services for the achievement of its social purpose at the request of the Government or any entity controlled by the Government. As of 2018, with the amendments to the [Voluntary Organisations Act](#), the presimibble registration age with the [Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations](#) was lowered from 18 to 16, making it possible for young people at the age of 16 years to form, mange and run youth organisations that qualify for all the benefits and regulations found in the [Voluntary Organisations Act](#).

Public financial support

[Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ](#) has two funding schemes developed specifically for youth organisations

Youth organisations/groups who are registered with Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ and are enrolled and compliant with the Office of the Commissioner of Voluntary Organisations to be eligible to apply for support through Assistance4You - [A4U scheme](#). This scheme provides financial support, of a maximum of €1,500 to help youth organisations/groups develop and increase resources, improve premises and facilities and develop and deliver training for their current and prospective leaders.

Youth organisations/groups who are registered with Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ and are enrolled and compliant with the Office of the Commissioner of Voluntary Organisations to be eligible to apply for support through The [Be Active scheme](#). This fund aims primarily to provide youth organisations/groups with financial support, of a maximum of €2,000 to develop projects/initiatives for their respective service users and the community in general. Organisations/groups are invited to develop a project in connection to a set of priority areas.

Youth organizations, that are either run by young people or that provide services to young people are entitled to register as members of Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ. Registered organisations can benefit from the following advantages.

Registered organisations may hire equipment against a fully refundable deposit. The deposit will be fully refunded once that the equipment is returned in time, fully functional and in the same condition that was handed over to the organization.

Registered organisations are also entitled to a subsidised rate when making use of the facilities available at the Marsaxlokk Youth Activity Centre and Villa Psaigon.

Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ also support activities that are organised by registered organisations through free publicity on its Facebook page and website.

There are also a number of funding schemes that are not exclusive to youth organisation but are still tapped quite frequently by youth organisations, amongst which are:

The Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector issues the [Small Initiatives Scheme](#) that supports small initiatives by Voluntary Organisations. Funding is awarded to initiatives particularly related to encourage projects in areas such as training courses for volunteers or the public, events such as exhibitions, festivals, websites, publications and other initiatives related to the voluntary sector.

The Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector issues the [Civil society fund](#) provides financial assistance for the purpose of facilitating affiliation with and participation in European groupings, associations, federations, confederation networks, and training related to EU Policy/Programmes. The objectives of the Civil Society Fund (CSF) are to assist CSOs to keep abreast with the developments occurring at an EU level; to enable CSOs to better educate their members on EU matters related to their respective fields of competence; and to enable CSOs to participate effectively in the decision-making process at a European level. Interested youth organisations may apply so as to first, to receive

assistance with affiliation of their organisation to European umbrella organisations, grouping, federations, confederations or networks. Secondly, to facilitate their attendance at conferences, seminars and meetings abroad in relation to affiliations in European umbrella organisations, groupings, federations, confederations or networks and participation in Training Abroad related to EU Policy or Programmes.

The Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector issues the [Training Initiatives Scheme \(TIS\)](#). The main objectives of this scheme are to offer support for individual volunteers who form part of a Voluntary Organisation in one's training which will be beneficial both to oneself, one's Voluntary Organisation, to other Voluntary Organisations and to the community at large. The scheme also supports Voluntary Organisations in the organisation of training initiatives which are beneficial both to the same organisation, to other Voluntary Organisations and to the community at large.

Arts Council Malta issues the [Creative Communities](#) programme that enables voluntary organisations to carry out projects related to culture and the arts in local communities. The funding can include informal training and development programmes; research or events, productions and/or exhibitions.

The [President's Award for Creativity](#) is a fund support to organisations, especially those working with vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, to engage these groups in creativity and arts-driven projects and thereby increase their level of integration and engagement in society.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Trade Promotion issues the [Official Development Assistance](#) Fund for voluntary organisations offering humanitarian and development assistance to developing countries with the aim of supporting economic and social progress based on the notion of 'eradicating poverty through development', in the light of the 2030 Agenda.

The Ministry for Gozo issues the [Gozo NGO Scheme](#) designed to provide support and facilitate the realisation of small projects, activities and initiatives on the Island of Gozo by Voluntary Organisations. The objectives of this scheme are to enhance the social, cultural, economic and ecological fabric of the Gozitan society; promote and encourage a culture of volunteering and the participation in volunteer activities amongst the Gozitan society; stimulate co-operation and networking between Voluntary Organisations; foster co-operation between Voluntary Organisations and the Ministry for Gozo through collaborative initiatives.

The Ministry for the Environment, Sustainable Development, and Climate Change issues the [Sustainable Development Fund](#) Support Scheme for Voluntary Organisations is aimed to support non-Government, non-profit voluntary organisations to undertake tangible sustainable development projects and initiatives that have the potential to cover activities and initiatives in line with the Sustainable Development Goals

Initiatives to increase the diversity of participants

There are no large-scale initiatives aiming to increase the diversity of young people participating in youth organisations.

5.7 “Learning to participate” through formal, non-formal and informal learning

Policy Framework

The national strategy which applies to social and civic competences and their development is the [National Youth Policy Towards 2020](#). One of two aims of this policy is to effectively support young people as active and responsible citizens who fully participate in and contribute to the social, economic and the cultural life of the nation and

Europe. The National Youth Policy Towards 2020 is made up of two strategies. Strategy 1, through its three action plans, relates directly to civic competences and their development in young people. Action plan 1 focuses on creating new spaces and facilities at community level to support the development of young people through their active involvement and participation in non-formal learning opportunities. Action plan 2 focuses on creating initiatives that enhance young people's social and political awareness, and that enable their voices to be heard on issues that impact upon their lives. Finally, Action plan 3 focuses on the development and implementation of initiatives, programmes and activities that actively involve young people and youth organisations in developing young people's competences and skills that enhance their future learning and employment prospects.

The policy targets all young people aged between 13 and 30 years old.

Also the National Curriculum Framework - [A National Curriculum Framework for All 2012](#) - aims to enable individuals to become lifelong learners. This implies an effort by all to give learners the knowledge, skills, competences, attitudes and values necessary to be attracted to further and higher education, to re-skilling and up-skilling during the working years and to active participation in the civic and social life.

Formal learning

Citizenship education is not a standalone subject. It falls within Education for Democracy Learning Area and is directed towards developing responsible citizens. It is integrated into Social Studies; Personal, Social and Career Development and European Studies.

The learning objectives are about learning the principles of democracy, active citizenship and active participation in society.

Non-formal and informal learning

Participative structures within formal education settings

The [Youth Hub](#) is a non-formal educational service provided and funded by [Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ](#) – the National Youth Agency - within formal upper-secondary education set-ups. Youth Hubs offer an informal and recreational environment in which a youth worker can build a healthy relationship with young people. As a result of this relationship the youth worker can work with young people so that they can come up with projects and initiatives that enhance both their personal and social skills that in turn upgrade their educational attainment and employability. The Youth Hubs serve a number of purposes and aims. First, the distinctions between formal, non-formal and informal learning environments are at once both articulated and resolved: learning becomes a lifelong pursuit regardless of age or environment. Second, the merits and ends of particular forms of learning emerge as both distinctive and mutually supportive. Third, the effect on young people's moral and confidence through their active involvement and participation in shaping and developing their own learning environment is a means of empowering them to make decisions, to work towards the achievement of their aims and aspirations and to take responsibility for their actions both as individuals and citizens.

Since scholastic year 2018/2019 within a new training programme for young people called "Award in Youth Leadership" is being delivered by youth workers and teachers together. This training programme is made up of 4 modules:

- Introduction to Leadership
- Communicating Effectively
- Strategic Planning
- Civic responsibilities and Active Citizenship

This training programme is designed so as to enable young people to acquire skills which will allow them to serve as catalysts for change in their personal and social lives, be it in organisations or communities where they belong.

All State Schools in Malta have the opportunity to elect a [School Council](#), regulated through the [Education Act](#) of the Laws of Malta. The School Council is a forum where teachers and parents work together for the benefit of the children and the school. In post-secondary schools (with students of 16 years and older) 3 members of this Council are elected by and from the students themselves during bi-annual elections. The school Councils are responsible for:

- administrating the funds and assets of the School
- discussing the school environment and the school amenities and propose ways to ameliorate them.
- discussing the curriculum and the educational services offered by the school and make suggestions to the Department of Education regarding changes or additions to the curriculum.
- discussing and monitoring any environmental, transport and other problems
- organising fund-raising activities as well as educational and cultural activities both for students and parents

Partnerships between formal education providers, youth organisations and youth work providers

[Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ](#)- the Maltese National Youth Agency in collaboration with [Scouts \(Malta\)](#) signed up a Memorandum of Understanding to develop a programme to help young people enhance their personal and social skills, integrate within their communities and engage in extra-curricular and after-school activities. Students from different schools within the 13 to16 and 17 to18 age groups using the service benefit from non-formal outdoor education expertise of the organisations such as the Scouts and the youth work expertise provided through Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ. The salaries of the youth workers employed with this project and the resources to run the project are paid through public funding.

[Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ](#) - the Maltese National Youth Agency in collaboration with [Żgħażaġħ Azzjoni Kattolika](#) – Catholic Action Youth signed a Memorandum of Understanding and developed a project called Fast Forward. This project aims to help young people in secondary education who are experiencing various challenges by providing a safe space for these young people. Groups of up to 15 young people between 15 and16 years old participate in a four-day programme aiming to impart soft skills needed for personal and social development. These include abilities related to communicating, goal achievement, teamwork and conflict resolution. Having these skills helps students to integrate better within their communities, establish their own identities and cultivate a sense of personal responsibility.

Also as part of this Memorandum of Understanding [Żgħażaġħ Azzjoni Kattolika](#) – Catholic Action Youth are now co-managing a number of [youth cafes](#) where young people can meet up informally and participate in activities that are inductive to learning of civic and social competences. The salaries of the youth workers employed with this project and the resources to run the project are paid through public funding.

[Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ](#) in collaboration with the Ministry for Education and Employment are providing 2 standalone hands-on training courses for students between the ages of 14-16-year-old. The first seminar - 3E Citizens – is divided into 3 workshops:

Enfranchise – This will take the form of a panel discussion with school students sitting on the panel to elaborate more on implications, rights and responsibilities of 16+ voting

- Educate – This workshop is intended to help students explore and understand how a bill becomes law
- Engage – The last workshop will give the students the opportunity to work in groups to discuss given issues and then to defend them with the rest of the other students

The second seminar Voting Voices, Responsible Choices – is divided into 4 workshops:

- Introduction to topic / Interactive Q&A session (survey voting)
- Understanding the Electoral Process
- Simulation Exercise – General Council of Students will approve by voting for the candidates and manifesto they will present for the next General Election
- Reflection and Evaluation

Supporting non-formal learning initiatives focusing on social and civic competences

The [Youth Local Councils](#) are a project coordinated between Aġenzija Żgħażaġh - the National Youth Agency and Kunsill Nazzjonali taż-Żgħażaġh - the National Youth Council. The central aim of the project is to encourage young people, between the ages of 14 and 18 years old, to become active participants in their localities. It also promotes a number of principles, mainly democracy, active citizenship, participation, dialogue, leadership and equality.

Throughout this project, young councillors are engaged in research in an effort to discover the needs and aspirations of their localities and come up with a project to act upon these needs. Afterwards an action plan and a budget are prepared to explain how the youth local council intends to bring about the necessary changes. Young people are obliged to attend training seminars designed specifically for them. The first seminar provides a general overview of the project and what different roles within the Local Council entail. This is followed by a meeting in the respective Local Councils, where young people vote or agree on the roles that they will be assuming within the Youth Local Council. The second training seminar focuses on providing young people with the skills needed for their respective roles. Following training, young people meet on a fortnightly basis in their respective Local Councils and discuss matters of interest between themselves.

Subsequently proposals are submitted and a committee appointed by the Organizing Committee selects the best ten projects that are awarded 3,000 euros each to realise the project. The whole process is facilitated by a youth worker who assists the young councillors for the duration of the project.

[Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#) coordinates the [Model European Parliament](#) (MEP) in Malta. This project creates an opportunity for young people who are interested in politics and wish to develop their skills in public speaking and political debate to participate in a simulation of the European Parliament. As the representative of MEP Europe in Malta, organises national selections to choose the best delegates from 16 to 19 years old to represent Malta for upcoming international MEP sessions which are held twice a year in different European countries. National selections include training and information workshops following by a simulated European Parliament session which discusses and debates topics of current interest of controversy. Those young people deemed the best contributors in debates can take part as Maltese delegates to the following international MEP session.

[Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#) also provides further training and travel costs the chosen delegates for an international MEP session. Maltese delegates who excel during international MEP sessions also have the possibility of returning to the next MEP session as Committee Presidents.

Quality assurance/quality guidelines for non-formal learning

All quality assurance for the above projects falls under the responsibility of [Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#). The [law](#) that established the agency clearly states that one of the roles and responsibilities of the agency is to ensure the highest standards in youth work in Malta.w

Educators' support

The [Institute for Education](#) organises Professional Learning Sessions for teachers that serve their Continuous Professional Development. Teachers are obliged to attend such courses prior to the start of every scholastic year.

Trainers and youth workers can participate in an annual programme of [Transnational Cooperation Activities](#) organised by the [European Union Programme Agency](#). During 2016, a Seminar for Youth and Sport policymakers on Democracy, youth and sport - cross-sectoral approaches for the active participation and engagement of young people in civic and democratic life through sport was held. The seminar considered how, through their active participation and engagement in sports, young people can experience the pressures, responsibilities and rewards of working and interacting with each other in group activities that have particular disciplines and aims and how these can help inform and prepare them for democratic and civic engagement in the wider society.

5.8 Raising political awareness among young people

Information providers / counselling structures

One of the roles of the Office of the Commissioner for Children, as stipulated by law, is to create awareness as well as an understanding of children's rights. The term children refers to all those under the age of 18 years old. The [Commissioner for Children Act](#) also sets up a Council for Children which consists of various representatives from Ministries as well as six young people between the ages of 13 and 17 years old. This Council supports the Commissioner in the work carried out by her Office. The young people not only learn more about their rights but also guide the Commissioner with regard to the realities faced by children and young people, as well as the most effective way to create awareness.

The Youth Information One Stop Shop (YIOSS) is an information centre, housed in [Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#), that works with young people to enable access information and advice in a safe and friendly environment. The centre's aim is to help young people find answers to questions about education, work, housing, health, relationships, money, leisure and cultural activities among others.

YIOSS provides:

- Information on the Aġenzija Żgħażaġh's programmes and services;
- Issuing of youth card (EYCA);
- Information on job, training and further education opportunities;
- Support in drawing up a CV, job application or preparing for an interview;
- Guidance in choosing a career path or in planning for the future;
- Information on opportunities to develop skills and talents;
- Personal support and someone to talk to and referral to specialised support services if required;
- Information on volunteering opportunities in Malta and abroad;
- Information on youth organisations.

There is no top-level framework existing for youth information and counselling structures, however YIOSS services is a full member of ERYICA and as such it the principles of the [European Youth Information Charter](#), formally signed by [Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#)

Youth-targeted information campaigns about democratic rights and democratic values

The [Office of the Commissioner for Children](#) carries out various initiatives to create awareness. These initiatives are carried out in schools, through the dissemination of [publications](#) and the media as well as by organising activities for children and young people themselves. The Office also makes use of social media to create awareness.

One of the main initiatives is the annual [Rights 4U live-in](#). This activity consists of an interactive program.

me which includes various activities in which the young people not only learn about their rights but also actively explore and engage in discussions on their rights. The participants develop critical thinking skills, build social ties and implement concepts such as respect, responsibility and inclusion.

The main target groups are children themselves (under the age of 18) as well as parents/carers, educators and other professionals working with children.

Promoting the intercultural dialogue among young people

[Youth Upbeat](#) was a one year project which aimed to promote integration between different sectors of Maltese society, in particular young people, and refugees or persons with subsidiary protection. The project providing opportunities for interaction and awareness-raising through the use of culture and the performing arts as a tool for social cohesion.

Through this project, six Cultural Ambassadors, all having refugee or subsidiary protection status and who had a particular performing arts skill, shared aspects of their culture as well as their personal stories within 24 interactive workshops with approximately 480 13 to 14 year olds. These workshops focused on learning with an interactive methodology and treated such issues as perceptions, relationships, difficulties, positive experiences, culture through role plays, conversations, etc. The second part was about practical arts workshops (such as learning an instrument or a traditional dance), where young people had the opportunity to learn a new skill.

Promoting transparent and youth-tailored public communication

There are no policy frameworks or guidelines on transparent public communication targeting young people.

5.9 E-participation

There are no legal frameworks aiming to promote young people's e-participation.

The [Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#) in collaboration with the [National Youth Council](#) has started a process where every, quarter young people are consulted on a particular issue (e.g. social media, education or health). Consultation is open to all young people and it is done using online survey platforms. The results of these surveys are then published and presented to relevant policy-makers.

The Maltese National Working Group for the [Structured Dialogue](#) also makes use of online survey platforms when collecting feedback from young people.

[Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#) coordinates and manages the Maltese [Opin.me](#) platform. This platform creates a space where young people can be consulted online on a number of policy issues that affects them directly or indirectly.

Also, since 2014, young people may also avail of a consultation platform hosted by the [Ministry for European Affairs and Equality](#) called [Public Consultations Online](#). In this

platform legislations, policies, strategies, green papers and white papers are uploaded and become available for public consultation.

5.10 Current debates and reforms

Forthcoming Policy Development

The forthcoming Policy Development will happen in November 2019 when Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ will organise the Model European Parliament in Malta. The Model European Parliament is an international simulation of the working of the [European Parliament](#) for students aged 16–19. The aim of the programme is to give young people an insight into the workings of the European Parliament and raise their awareness of European citizenship. delegates of different nationalities form a committee that debates a certain topic extensively and drafts a resolution, a non-binding piece of legislation outlining the key issues of the topic and proposing solutions. The drafting process is followed by lobbying, during which delegates may debate and propose amendments for other resolutions. The finale of a session is the General Assembly (GA). During this, resolutions and amendments are debated and voted upon by all of the delegates. Any successful resolutions are then forwarded to the [European Parliament](#), the [European Commission](#) and the [Council of the European Union](#).

After participating in the project for 2 years the Maltese National Youth Agency will be organising the forum in Malta that will bring around 200 young people and policy makers to discuss European issues that affect the well-being of young people.

Ongoing Debate

The major debate vis-a-vis youth political participation in Malta regards the age when a young person can stand for election, whether it is local, national or European. This policy debate is the natural progression after the voting age in all forms of elections was lowered from 18 to 16 in March 2018. In this regard a debate is now going on whether such young people should also stand for elections.

6. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The Ministry for Education and Employment is responsible for Education in Malta. Having completed compulsory schooling at the age of 16, young people have the option to further their education in post-secondary institutions, including Vocational and Training Courses before engaging in tertiary education.

Currently there is a general effort to move away from the one size fits all education to an approach that is more student centered and caters for the specific learning needs of the individual.

6.1 General context

Main trends in young people's participation in education and training

Malta regards the investment in young people and job-creation as yielding towards the emergence of an adaptive workforce which is able to actively lead and remain at the forefront of modernisation in an increasingly globalised and rapidly-changing labour market. Various initiatives aim to provide Malta's youth with the necessary skills and talents for citizenship and employability for the 21st century. It is important for young people to develop both personal and social skills, and acquire the appropriate knowledge, key skills, competences and attitudes through a value-oriented formation including equity, social justice, diversity and inclusivity.

Access to relevant learning throughout life is a fundamental cornerstone in our aspirations to have a sustainable knowledge-based society and economy. Malta's vision is to become a learning nation - a society in which learning plays its full role in personal growth and emancipation, prosperity, solidarity and local and global responsibility.

Malta's past and present experiences have helped policy experts to identify areas of strength and limitations of standing practices, suggesting what should be sustained or improved, as well as where prevention or intervention are necessary to equitably promote values which help achieve the targets highlighted in the [Framework for the Education Strategy for Malta 2014-2024](#).

In this regard, the [Framework for the Education Strategy for Malta: 2014-2024](#) is a manifestation of the [Ministry for Education and Employment](#)'s commitment to provide present and future generations with opportunities to develop the necessary values, skills and attitudes for active citizenship and employability in the 21st century and increasingly close the gap between the world of education and the rest of the world, including the world of employment. Malta stipulated four main targets in this framework, to:

- Reduce the gaps in educational outcomes between boys and girls and between students attending different schools, and decrease the number of low achievers and raise the bar in literacy, numeracy, and science and technology competence, and increase student achievement;
- Support educational achievement of children at risk-of-poverty and from low socio-economic status, by reducing the relatively high incidence of early school-leavers;
- Raise levels of student retention and attainment in further, vocational, and tertiary education and training; and
- Increase participation in lifelong learning and adult learning.

In this context, one of Malta's aims is to reach a more equitable quality secondary education. Education and training risks become irrelevant if tangible links with life beyond the school walls, remain sporadic and superficial. In November 2016, Malta's [Ministry for Education and Employment](#) launched the initiative - '[My Journey – Achieving](#)

[Through Different Paths Inclusive and Comprehensive Equitable Quality Learning Programmes](#)'. Secondary school students will be able to choose between academic, vocational, applied subjects or a combination of the three elements during the senior cycle of secondary education. This will involve moving from a 'one size fits all' system to a more inclusive and equitable programme which can specifically cater to each learner's individual talents.

The intended inclusive and comprehensive equitable quality learning programmes for the compulsory secondary schooling structure is driven both by the values of inclusion, social justice, equity and diversity. This evolved education system is also inspired by the philosophy of values based education promulgated in the [Respect for All](#) document and guided by the [Education for All](#) audit report. It is also very much in line with the UNESCO Sustainable Development Goal 4 in ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all".

The [Ministry for Education and Employment](#) is committed to sustaining this educational journey whilst expanding it to increase accessibility to quality vocational training and provide opportunities for more applied learning programmes to all students ensuring parity of esteem and equivalence of qualifications. Malta aims to have a single structure comprehensive and inclusive secondary school with equitable quality academic, vocational and applied learning programmes within the same school for all students.

In addition, the re-introduction of Vocational Education and Training (VET) subjects in secondary schools was a fundamental initiative to provide learners with alternative assessment which is also based on learning outcomes approach. The choice of subjects include: Agribusiness, Engineering Technology, Health and Social Care, Hospitality, and Information Technology. The selection was inspired by priorities and needs expressed by the local industry. Consequently, the introduction of vocational subjects in the secondary school cycle serve as a measure to bring education processes closer to industry needs and thereby ensuring that education caters better for market realities. Alternative Learning Programme for students who pursue a vocational pathway instead of the one in mainstream education have also been successfully implemented.

Malta has also placed VET high on its agenda, with emphasis being placed on apprenticeship programmes and work-based learning initiatives. The [Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology](#) (MCAST) has been responsible for the implementation of the National Apprenticeship Scheme since 2014. Apprenticeship programmes have been merged with the complimentary modes of the 'off-the-job' education and 'on-the-job' training brought within the structure of the Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF) level 3 and MQF Level 4. The reformed scheme has created a single focal point for apprenticeship training central to which is the quality of vocational and technical training, and is now offering new apprenticeships at different competence levels to reflect labour market needs. The implementation of a three-tier framework for work-based learning has been launched wherein young people enrolling at MCAST Foundation College – Levels 1, 2 and 3 (Placements and Apprenticeship), MCAST Technical College – Level 4 (Apprenticeship) and MCAST University College Levels 5, 6 and 7 (Internship) are given the opportunity to access and progress to all levels of vocational education offered by MCAST. The number of apprentices has increased in the past years. In fact, MCAST is currently offering 50% of all its MQF Level 3 and MQF Level 4 programs on apprenticeship, which provide 1000 apprentices with a minimum of 1400 hours of 'on-the-job' training.

Malta also has a [Strategic Plan for The Prevention of Early School Leaving](#) that aims at facilitating focused action that will support students to make the best out of their school years, from early childhood to the end of compulsory school. The aim of this strategic plan is to enable students to develop their potential as citizens and as stakeholders in the economy. School communities have changed over the years in terms of student diversity. Preventing early school leaving enables all students to receive their educational entitlement in terms of the opening up of educational pathways that foster fulfilled individuals, empowered citizens and productive and creative workers.

A number of measures that make up Malta's Early School Leaving strategic plan includes 'prevention, intervention and compensation measures'. Some of the measures include the provision of free childcare for parents in employment, education or training and the promotion of literacy through family literacy programmes for young children and their parents/caregivers. Malta has plans to update its ESL strategy and an important study was carried out by the Early School Leaving Unit (ESLU) s with 579 students who dropped out of post-secondary education during the academic year 2015-2016 in order to understand the current trends in ESL.

Addressing the ongoing and often unique education requirements of people in different stages of their life is crucial – the development of [Malta's National Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020](#) has been an opportunity to take stock of the state of adult learning in Malta, and challenge what one means by the very notion of 'learning' .

The [National Commission for Further and Higher Education](#) (NCFHE) was also officially launched to foster the development and achievement of excellence in further and higher education in Malta through research, effective licensing, accreditation, quality assurance and recognition of qualifications established under the Malta Qualifications Framework. NCFHE is also responsible for the validation of informal and non-formal learning process.

The setting up of the [National Skills Council](#) is one strategic initiative to centrally manage the various complementary initiatives and to seek to align the education and training provision to the needs of the industry. A strategy is currently being drafted for the National Skills Council. Furthermore, three committees have been set up within the council each responsible for one of the following areas: work-based learning, digital skills and research and development. The work of the subcommittees has two aims: gathering information and compiling reports to guide educational entities; and to serve as consultative fora which bring together different stakeholders.

Organisation of the education and training system

Maltese education system is largely centralised and governed by:

- [The Ministry for Education and Employment](#) (MEDE)
- [The Education Act](#)
- The Government's education policy documentation at all levels of education

Education in Malta is compulsory for all children and young people aged from five to sixteen years. This is defined in Chapter 327 of the Laws of Malta - [The Education Act](#) - and subsequent amendments. Compulsory education covers six years of primary education followed by five years of secondary education.

All schools in formal education are obliged by law to follow the same national minimum curriculum (National Curriculum Framework) and to abide by all the regulations as listed in the [Education Act](#).

Secondary Education (ISCED Levels 2 and 3) - In Malta, secondary education is divided into two cycles: Middle schools and Secondary schools which last till students reach 16 years, this being the end of compulsory schooling. At secondary level, students follow a set of core compulsory subjects including the three core subjects of Maltese, English and Mathematics together with Integrated Science, one compulsory science subject (Biology, Chemistry or Physics).a foreign language, Religious Knowledge, Physical Education, History, Geography, Art, Personal and Social Development (PSD) and ICT. One compulsory elective subject is also offered during the first two years of secondary education (middle schools) and another one or two elective subjects are offered during the final three years of secondary education.

Students are assessed by sitting for school-based half-yearly examinations and centrally-set annual exams at the end of the year. Continuous formative assessment of the students' work also takes place. At the end of the compulsory education (Year 11), students sit for their Annual Examinations for Secondary schools and the marks attained

form part of the [Secondary School Certificate and Profile](#) (SSC&P). This certification shows a record of achievement based on the students' profiling in formal, non-formal and informal educational experiences taking into account students' attendance and development of personal qualities and abilities during the five years of secondary schooling. This new certificate has the advantage that it is accredited at either Level 1, Level 2 or Level 3 of the [Malta Qualifications Framework](#) (MQF) and the [European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning](#) (EQF). A detailed transcript is also issued by the school. Students may also sit for the [Secondary Education Certificate](#) (SEC) examinations set by the [Matriculation and Secondary Education Certificate](#) (MATSEC) Board of the University of Malta.

At the end of compulsory education students can further their education and training in higher and post-secondary and tertiary educational institutions.

At post-secondary level students can follow a programme of their choice after they have completed compulsory education and are 16 years of age and older. State general upper-secondary education is provided at the [G. Curmi Higher Secondary School](#), the [Sir M. Refalo Higher Secondary School](#), Gozo and the [Junior College](#). The latter falls under the responsibility of the [University of Malta](#). There are also private educational institutions which provide courses at this level of education.

The overall responsibility for vocational education and training (VET) in Malta lies with the [Ministry for Education and Employment](#) (MEDE). However the two main state VET providers are the [Malta College for Arts, Science and Technology](#) (MCAST) and the [Institute for Tourism Studies](#) (ITS) are self-accrediting institutions offering VET courses.

Tertiary Education: Tertiary education in Malta is provided mainly by the [University of Malta](#) which is an autonomous and self-governing body, totally funded by the Government. The University structure has been reviewed according to the [Bologna Process Framework](#) which envisaged the establishment of the [European Higher Education Area by 2010](#). The governing bodies of the university are the [Council](#) and the [Senate](#).

To gain entry to University, candidates need to be in possession of two Advanced Level (Matriculation Certificate) subjects and four other subjects taken at Intermediate Level including Systems of Knowledge as well as passes in the Secondary Education Certificate at grade 5 or better in Maltese (a non-Maltese candidate may offer his own language instead of Maltese), English Language and Mathematics.

Adult Education: Young people aged 25 and over can participate in a number of [courses](#) offered by the lifelong learning directorate. It embraces post-compulsory education, Vocational Education and Training (VET), higher education, and adult education

Main concepts

Malta defines [early school leaving](#) as those persons between 18 and 24 years of age who do not have at least the equivalent of [Secondary Education Certificate](#) (SEC) passes (grades 1 to 7) in five different subjects and who are not in education or training. While the EU defines [early school leavers](#) as those “young people leaving education and training with no more than lower secondary education”, early school leavers are those who will have limited life chances, will be channelled towards dead-end jobs if any, are more prone to join the working or non-working poor and are at risk of social exclusion. Early school leavers are thus those who will be less likely to fulfil their potential as human beings, as active citizens and as principal actors in the labour market.

According to the [Education Act](#) ‘Non-formal learning’ means learning embedded in a planned activity organised outside the formal educational system, which activity is not explicitly designed as learning but which contains an important learning component.

The [Education Act](#) defines ‘special need education’ and ‘individual educational needs’ as “a minor shall be deemed to have special educational needs when that minor has special difficulties of a physical, sensory, intellectual or psychological nature”.

6.2 Administration and governance

Cross-sectorial cooperation

Cross-sectorial cooperation is fundamental in today's society in order to provide youth with the necessary knowledge and adequate tools to fully integrate in a continuously changing labour market and actively participate in society. Refer to section 6.2 to see a list of all appointed bodies and agencies working under the Ministry of Education and Employment that have great autonomy to administer the education system within the legislative framework set up by the government. They are bound by law to provide to the public and private sector, youth and educators with a number of basic services.

Malta has also integrated the following key initiatives to enable better cross-sectorial cooperation:

Work-based vocational competences are integrated in Malta's educational and training programmes emphasising on quality qualifications whilst: increasing economic competitiveness and ensuring that the skills gap between education and work is addressed, producing a skilled labour force which responds better to the labour market needs.

The [Apprenticeship Department within MCAST](#) provides apprentices with the embedding of knowledge and skills which are reinforced through exposure to the work place within industry. During the Year 2016, 829 students were enrolled for apprenticeships.

The introduction of [Vocational Education and Training \(VET\)](#). The choice of subjects was inspired by priorities and exigencies expressed by the local industry, these include - Agribusiness, Engineering Technology, Health and Social Care, Hospitality, and Information Technology. The national implementation of these vocational subjects took place during the scholastic year 2015-16. All State and Church secondary schools, as well as some Independent schools offered these vocational subjects as electives to Year 9 students. The subjects of Retailing, Hairdressing & Beauty, Textiles & Fashion and Media are expected to be also added to the list of vocational students which students can choose at state secondary schools. To date there are five vocational subjects offered to secondary school students at Government schools, namely Agribusiness, Hospitality, Health & Social Care, Information Technology and Engineering Technology. Since these subjects were introduced five years ago, a quarter of the students have chosen one of these subjects in Form 3. (Refer to section 6.9 for further information)

The [Skills Kit](#) is a programme intended for students who prefer to study at their own pace and explore different vocational areas. It is made up of a number of Skills Kits (small bite-size topics) covering various vocational areas as well as personal skills and employability skills. The programme gives the students the possibility to choose how many Skills Kits to study over a period of time. It also gives the students the opportunity to choose their own combination of Skills Kits which they would like to register for.

Governance

The [Ministry for Education and Employment](#) has four Directors General (DGs) that are responsible for different education Departments. Each Department has a number of Directorates headed by a Director. The DGs are sectioned as follows:

The [Directorate General for Curriculum, Research, Innovation and Lifelong Learning](#) is composed of the Learning and Assessment Programmes Directorate, Research, Innovation and Lifelong Learning, Digital Literacy and Transversal skills. This DG is in charge to sustain a knowledge-based economy, learning as a lifelong pursuit is the key to success and to ensure a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. It offers adult learning classes in several areas of knowledge and it is also contributing towards a strong base of

high level graduates by offering scholarships in several priority sectors of the knowledge-based economy.

The [Directorate General for Educational Services](#) (DES) is in charge to ensure the effective and efficient operation and delivery of services to the Colleges State schools within an established framework of decentralisation and autonomy. (College Principals, National School, Education Resources, Education for all, Migrant Learners, Education Logistics and Support, Schools Internal Review and Support).

The [Directorate General Strategy and Support](#) the departments that fall within this remit are the International Affairs, Strategy and Programme Implementation, Finance and Administration and Human Resources.

The [Directorate General for Quality and Standards in Education's](#) (DQSE) role is to regulate, establish, monitor and assure standards and quality in the programmes and educational services at the compulsory level of education provided by State and non-State schools. The functions of the DQSE are established by the Education Act (CAP 327 of the Laws of Malta). As part of the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education (DQSE) the mission of the Quality Assurance directorate is to establish and ensure high quality educational standards that promote well-being through the programmes and educational services provided by Maltese State and Non-State Schools, as provided for in the Education Act.

Officially appointed agencies/public actors within the Ministry of Education and Employment

[Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#) mainstreams youth related issues and further develop youth services. It enables further investment in young people and helps them realise their potential.

[English Language Teaching Council](#) (ELTC) fosters the ELT Profession and Industry in all its various aspects.

[European Union Programmes Agency](#) (EUPA) implements and manages the Erasmus+ Programme, previous programmes and other programmes and initiatives of the European Union.

The [Examinations Directorate](#) is responsible for the administration of the examinations for induction into the Public Service, public corporations and commercial partnerships in which the State has majority shareholding, intra-Service written Examinations; examinations for the issue of Local Licences; examinations on behalf of their parties. The Department also acts as an agent for Local and Overseas Examining Bodies responsible for the award of Academic, Vocational and Professional Qualifications.

The [Foundation for Educational Services](#) (FES) works concurrently with the Education Directorates to provide a range of innovative educational initiatives to meet the needs of the community. The FES is committed to ensuring that all service users are supported through informal educational initiatives. It strives to offer quality educational services through structured contemporary programmes, financial sustainability and ethical behaviour.

The [Foundation for Tomorrow's Schools](#) (FTS) is the public entity in Malta responsible for the construction of Malta and Gozo's State-owned schools.

The [Institute for Education](#) promotes high quality education for all educators and fosters learning communities of the highest standard, educational leaders at all levels and instills education with equity and social justice.

[JobsPlus](#) enhances accessibility to the labour market through modernised and targeted services, whilst facilitating labour mobility and promoting investment in human capital. Jobsplus has provided thousands of local jobseekers and employers with successful and rewarding work experiences by empowering, assisting and training jobseekers; promoting workforce development; and assisting employers in their recruitment and training needs.

The [Malta Libraries](#) are responsible for the National Library of Malta, the National Library (Gozo), the Central Public Library, the Gozo Public Library, and all Regional and Branch Public Libraries in the Maltese Islands. The mission of Malta Libraries is to ensure the collection and conservation of Malta's documentary heritage for present and future generations, to maintain and develop the libraries regulated under the Malta Libraries Act, and to encourage reading for study, research, self-development and lifelong learning information and leisure purposes.

The [Malta College for Arts, Science and Technology](#) (MCAST) is a leading vocational education and training institution. It has six Institutes in Malta and the Gozo Campus and offers 185 full-time and over 300 part-time vocational courses ranging from certificates to degrees (MQF Level 1 to Level 6). Students are prepared for careers in different sectors of the economy or for higher education.

The [National Archives](#) is currently working on the appraisal and cataloguing of an extensive backlog of records of post-Independence Malta. It is also preparing itself to face the challenge of managing electronic records.

The [National Commission for Further and Higher Education](#) (NCFHE) fosters the development and achievement of excellence in further and higher education in Malta through research, effective licensing, accreditation, quality assurance and recognition of qualifications established under the Malta Qualifications Framework.

The [National Literacy Agency](#) (NLA) seeks to promote and enhance lifelong and life wide, high quality literacy practices among children, youth, adults, third country nationals and persons with learning difficulties. It also strives to improve literacy outcomes, resulting in inclusive practices, higher educational qualifications, and better job prospects.

The [Scholarships and National Skills Council Unit](#) aim to first review the past and present available skills within our labour work force and evaluate the changes required to meet current and future needs. The main aim being that to minimise the skill gaps that exist in some of the demanding and rewarding sectors such as the digital, technical and financial sectors where Malta is, and can maintain, excellence. It is the council's task to recommend policy changes to the government that would reduce these gaps and prepare the labour force with the right skills, to meet the future challenges.

[SportMalta](#) is Malta's national sport agency core purpose is to inspire Maltese and transform the nation through sport. Its role is to also create greater sporting opportunities and access, more inclusivity and integration as well as broader development of capabilities.

The [Students' Maintenance Grants' Board](#)'s main functions are to: oversee the effective allocation and payments of Students' Maintenance Grants to students; offer guidelines and regularly review procedures in the management and implementation of all the stages leading up to payments of Students' Maintenance Grants to students; oversee the effective assessment, review and payment of Supplementary Grants to students; process reports submitted from educational institutions and apply any sanctions when necessary; oversee the management of payments and take action to recover any overpaid Students' Maintenance Grants; recommend changes to already-existing policies to improve the support the student receives.

The [University of Malta](#) is the highest teaching institution in Malta. It is publicly funded and is open to all those who have the requisite qualifications.

Other social partners contributing to the development of policies in the field of education and training are the following the [Malta Union of Teachers](#); [School Councils](#); [Junior College Students' Council](#); The [Kunsill Studenti Universitarji](#) (KSU) and [Student Organisations](#) within KSU

All local entities and authorities with their respective responsibilities fall under the portfolio for Education and Employment. The organisational structure of the Ministry for Education and Employment can be found in this [organigram](#).

6.3 Preventing early leaving from education and training (ELET)

National strategy

In 2014, the framework for the [Education Strategy for Malta 2014-2024](#) was launched which aligns all sectoral education strategies and policies, and has four broad but measurable targets in line with European and world benchmarks and that set the education agenda in Malta:

- reduce the gaps in educational outcomes, decrease the number of low achievers and raise the bar in literacy, numeracy, and science and technology competence;
- support educational achievement of children at-risk-of-poverty and from low socio-economic status, and reduce the relatively high incidence of early school-leavers;
- raise levels of student retention and attainment in further, vocational, and tertiary education and training; and
- increase participation in lifelong learning and adult learning.

This framework offers focus and direction for other policy documents, such as the [National Curriculum Framework](#), [National Literacy Strategy for All in Malta and Gozo](#), a [Strategic Plan for The Prevention of Early School Leaving in Malta](#), the [Higher Education Strategy for Malta](#), the [National Vocational Education and Training Policy](#) and the [Malta National Lifelong Learning Strategy](#). Measures that are already in place and others set to be initiated are aimed to reach across all socio-economic sectors and different cultural, ethnic, religious, gender and sexual status. While acknowledging that out-of-school factors like poverty and social exclusion affect student achievement, the Ministry is seeking to improve students' learning experiences by encouraging creativity, critical literacy, entrepreneurship and innovation at all levels. Objectives falling within compulsory education are set to be achieved through the provision of a relevant curriculum built on a learning outcomes approach and a variety of learning experiences and qualifications pegged to the Malta Qualifications Framework. On the other hand different pathways and opportunities to increase the relevance of learning to the labour market will be increased during post-compulsory education and training. This Framework thus aims to contribute towards a society that is competent, resourceful, critically conscious, and competitive in a global economy driven by information, knowledge and innovation.

Two national strategies stemming from the above framework that address ELET are:

- A Strategic Plan for The Prevention of Early School Leaving In Malta and;
- The Malta National Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020.

The first strategy document a [Strategic Plan for the Prevention of Early School Leaving In Malta](#) has a timeframe for this document is 2014 – 2020. This Strategic Plan for the Prevention of Early School Leaving in Malta aims at facilitating focused action that will support students to make the best out of their school years, from early childhood to the end of compulsory school and beyond. The aim is to enable students to develop their potential as human beings, as citizens and as stakeholders in the economy. This strategic plan caters for prevention, intervention and compensation measures so it targets early years, primary years, middle school, secondary school and upper secondary (post compulsory) thus the age is not up to 16.

The actions outlined in this strategic plan are in line with the Framework for the Education Strategy for Malta 2014-2024 that centres around four measurable targets that both individually and collectively contribute directly towards the reduction of the number of early school leavers in Malta. The Framework highlights the need for Malta to reduce the gaps in educational outcomes between boys and girls and between students attending different schools. It aims at decreasing the number of low achievers and raise the bar in literacy, numeracy, and science and technology competence while increasing

student achievement. Another measureable target to achieve is the provision of support in educational achievement of children at-risk-of-poverty and from low socio-economic status, and reduce the relatively high incidence of early school leavers. A third target put forward by the Framework is to raise levels of student retention and attainment in further and higher education, followed by another target to increase participation in lifelong learning. These four measureable targets form the basis of the present document. The document a Strategic Plan for The Prevention of Early School Leaving In Malta envisages structures that enable stakeholders to monitor implementation for the purpose of revising plans when the need arises, with the specific target of keeping on track in the quest for providing a more meaningful and successful educational experience for all students. The Early School Leaving Strategy is currently being revised on the basis of evidence-based monitoring, assessments and evaluation that have taken place. The revision process will be complete by 2017-2018.

The second strategy document the [Malta National Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020](#) has a timeframe 2014 – 2020. The Directorate for Research, Lifelong learning and Innovation within the [Ministry for Education and Employment](#) is responsible for the implementation, coordination and monitoring of both strategies. The National Lifelong Learning Strategy for Malta 2020 focuses on adult learning, specifically the participation of people aged 25 to 64 years in lifelong learning. It embraces post-compulsory education, Vocational Education and Training (VET), higher education, and adult education. The Lifelong Learning Strategy consolidates and builds on ideas and processes already taking shape in different organisations and institutions in Malta, such as to ensure a single, coherent place to guide actions in lifelong learning. All applicants must be sixteen years of age or over, if not stated otherwise in certain specific sections or Centres.

The Strategic objectives of this document are

- Stimulate participation in lifelong Learning by Maltese adults by creating a demand and a desire for learning. This latent demand does not lie solely among those with low-skills and at risk of poverty and social exclusion, but also among people in employment who wish to further their skills set and job mobility.
- Place the 'learner' at the centre by optimising all possible types of innovative learning methods and environments to make learning flexible, personal, accessible and relevant. This implies a commitment to alternative pathways, beyond those defined by formal learning.
- Improve skills sets that contribute to professional development, employment mobility and active citizenship.
- Develop support structures for adult learning.
- Improve governance in the Lifelong Learning sector, exploring structural, institutional, fiscal, legal, political and administrative measures available.

The Lifelong Learning Strategy has 10 strategies supporting the 5 Lifelong Learning objectives. These strategies are fundamentally inter-related and inter-dependent. Strategies are broadly measures to empower, connect and value learning acquired in different tracks (e.g. Vocational Education and Training and higher education) and settings (formal, non-formal, informal learning) and to improve guidance.

- Coordinate delivery of Lifelong Learning by public organisations
- Promote Adult Skills and VET as the optimum, flexible route to employability, personalised professional development and economic well-being
- Develop a coherent, equitable and sustainable accreditation system for adult learning
- Improve the overall quality of adult learning in Malta and Gozo
- Embrace emergence of Open Education Resources as opportunity for Connected Learning
- Facilitate women's participation in workplace through Lifelong Learning
- Lever on Lifelong Learning to support inclusivity & empower marginalised communities
- Improve the quality of life of older people through Lifelong Learning opportunities
- Coordinate ownership and delivery of Community Learning

- Raise awareness of Greener living as a core component of Lifelong Learning

The National Lifelong Learning Strategy for Malta 2020 focuses on adult learning, specifically the participation of people aged 25 to 64 years in lifelong learning. The strategy was published for consultation in November 2014 and adopted as final in January 2015. It embraces post-compulsory education, Vocational Education and Training (VET), higher education and adult education. The Lifelong Learning Strategy consolidates and builds on ideas and processes already taking shape in different organisations and institutions in Malta, to ensure a single, coherent focus and framework to guide actions in lifelong learning.

The strategy addresses a number of challenges including:

- Low level of participation of adults in adult learning

Early school leavers and low skills achievement

- Low number of women actively at work or engaged in lifelong learning
- Intergenerational cycle of disengagement from education

In February 2015, a task force was set up to monitor the implementation of the strategy. The task force includes representatives from the Directorate for Lifelong Learning, the University of Malta, the National Commission for Further and Higher Education (NCFHE), Jobsplus, Foundation for Educational Services and Malta College for Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST). The task force meets on a regular basis and takes stock of progress on the implementation of the 40 strategy programmes. The task force has also set up 3 working groups to focus on specific adult learning aspects: community learning and vulnerable groups; employment and accreditation; and connected learning.

The task force consolidated and eliminated duplication in provision to eliminate operational overlaps related to lifelong learning courses. It also submitted an action plan to the Ministry for Education and Employment with the objective of separating lifelong learning policy and strategy functions from the actual delivery of courses. Main initiatives in the implementation of the strategy include also the setting up of the National Skills Council in 2016 and the establishment of the Department for Arts, Adult Education and Open Communities within the Faculty of Education at the University of Malta.

Formal education: main policy measures on ELET

ESL Prevention, Intervention and Compensation measures are available in the [Strategic Plan for the Prevention of Early School Leaving In Malta](#)

Prevention measures that have been implemented so far to prevent early school leaving, supporting young people to stay in school, and offering opportunities to early leavers for re-entering education include:

- The launching of the [Free Childcare Scheme](#), with more than 90 childcare centres registered with the scheme.
- The setting up of the Cultural Integration Unit to facilitate the integration of the increasing number of foreign students in school communities.
- A rewriting of all school programmes at compulsory level using a Learning Outcomes approach and which are currently being negotiated with relevant stakeholders.
- The introduction of co-education at secondary level.
- A sustained investment in educational technology including the phasing in of tablet technology in primary schools.
- The introduction of VET subjects as part of mainstream secondary education.
- More investment in transition processes between one educational stage and another in order to increase student retention at all levels of education.
- The involvement of parents in the education of their children, particularly in programmes implemented by the [National Literacy Agency](#).

- The setting up of the [Institute for Education](#) which started operating in 2015 with the aim of providing CPD for educators and educational leaders in order to equip them with the skills to deal with the challenges of providing a meaningful educational experience to all students.

Intervention measures to prevent early school leaving, supporting young people to stay in school, and offering opportunities to early leavers for re-entering education include;

- a more focused monitoring of students' attendance through a data management system (the E1 platform) that serves as an early warning system that triggers off intervention processes by psychosocial professionals,
- recruiting of more psychosocial professionals to give a more focused service in the schools,
- more awareness about the contribution that youth workers can make to motivate students to learn, as well as the recruitment of youth workers to offer services within day-schools and programmes at lower and upper-secondary level,
- the development of special services in primary and secondary schools for students with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD),
- the development of a number of programmes by the National Literacy Agency aimed at both students and their families,
- the setting up of the Alternative Learning Programme to offer an applied-learning oriented programme for vulnerable students in their final year of compulsory school who were in danger of dropping out,
- the introduction of modular programmes for vulnerable students in secondary schools, such as the [Prince's Trust International's XL Programme](#).

Compensation measures to prevent early school leaving, supporting young people to stay in school, and offering opportunities to early leavers for re-entering education include;

- The setting up of the [Foundation Certificate Programme](#) at MCAST and a similar programme at ITS both aimed at students who leave compulsory education without the necessary qualifications but who are keen on continuing with their education,
- The setting up of a new school for students who leave compulsory schooling without the necessary entry qualifications, but who would like to have a second opportunity to follow the academic route, [GEM 16+](#), which was set up in September 2015,
- The implementation of academically-oriented second chance programmes in the two other further education institutions of the Ministry,
- The development of a VET oriented second-chance programme run by the national youth agency using a youth-work approach in order to offer training to young adults and facilitate their transition to employment,
- Second chance programme offered by the Foundation for Social Welfare Services of the Ministry for Family and Social Solidarity targeting vulnerable young people,
- A well-developed part-time adult education programme currently run by the Directorate for Lifelong Learning and Early School Leavers and also a VET-oriented part-time adult education programme offered by MCAST.
- At least three entities belonging to the Ministry for Education offer second chance programmes for young persons with disability.
- Jobsplus, the Public Employment Service (PES), is also using ESF funds earmarked for the [Youth Guarantee](#) in order to fund programmes specifically aimed at vulnerable young people who include students who need to re-sit for the Secondary Education Certificate examinations that would enable them to progress further in their educational path, and also programmes aimed at NEETs, through the NEET Activation Scheme.

Addressing ELET through non-formal and informal learning and quality youth work

The [Youth.inc](#) programme is an inclusive education programme, based on applied learning, for young people between the age of 16 and 21. The aim of the programme is

to help young people to improve their standard of education and gain more knowledge, values and skills to enter the labour market or gain qualifications to continue in further education and/or training. Youth.inc is under the remit and management of Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ, which adopts a more youth-centred approach and seeks to strengthen the complementary role of formal and non-formal learning. The programme has a strong youth work component and all young people attending the programme are assigned to a youth worker who works with them on a daily basis. The project is divided into five main areas: basic skills courses, work placement, vocational courses, activities, life skills programme. Once a week young people have a whole day is dedicated to Life Skills programme where through the engagement with a qualified youth they can benefit from the youth work approach.

The [Youth Hubs](#) area non-formal education service provided by Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ in higher education institutions. Youth Hubs offer an informal and recreational environment where young people can develop projects and initiatives with the support of youth workers, that build their personal and social skills and improve their educational and employment opportunities.

The [Youth Village](#) provides space, facilities and supports for young people and youth organisations to stage events and initiatives. The youth Village aims to create a physical, and learning environment that will attract both young people and youth organisations.

Cross-sector coordination and monitoring of ELET interventions

The Early School Leaving Unit has three ESL Working Groups that include representatives of various entities within and outside the Ministry for Education and Employment, that may contribute to the reduction of the ESL phenomenon. These groups will be rescheduled on finalisation of the ESL strategic plan's revision.

The Compulsory Education Working Group consists of representatives from:

- the 10 Colleges -1 representative from each of the 10 Primary and Secondary Education Colleges
- Church and Private Schools
- the ALP Resource Centre, Paola
- the Department for Student Services (DSS)
- the VET Department
- the Quality and Assurance Department
- the Institute for Education

The **Post-Secondary Education Working Group** consists of representatives from:

- Malta College for Art, Science and Technology (MCAST)
- Junior College
- Giovanni Curmi Higher Secondary School, Naxxar
- Sir Mikiel Ang Refalo Sixth Form, Gozo
- GEM 16+
- Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ
- Dun Manwel Mallia Resource Centre, Wardija
- ALP+
- Institute for Tourism Studies
- Youth Guarantee

The **Inter-ministerial Committee** consists of representatives from:

- Ministry for Gozo
- Ministry for EU Affairs and Equality
- Ministry for Finance
- Ministry for Health
- Ministry for the Family, Children's rights and Social Solidarity (through FSWS)
- Ministry for Economy, Investment and Small Businesses

- Ministry for Tourism
- Ministry for Justice, Culture and Local Government

The ESL Working Groups have the responsibility of:

- determining, coordinating and monitoring services that address the needs of children and young people who are disengaged or at risk of disengaging in specific local conditions;
- ensuring that pro-active preventive measures are in place;
- identifying the need for professional development of school administrators, teachers, psycho-social professionals and others working with children and young people at risk;
- facilitating the establishment of parents, family and community networks that would work with schools to intervene and prevent ESL;
- establishing support mechanisms that parents, families and carers may require to better support children or young persons;
- ensuring that this is done in a concerted and mutually supportive manner, especially when the services are being given by entities that fall within the same Ministry and aiming to reach connected cohorts of students.

6.4 Validation of non-formal and informal learning

Arrangements for the validation of non-formal and informal learning

As stipulated under the [Education Act](#), Malta established the [National Commission for Further and Higher Education](#) (NCFHE) to be responsible for the validation of informal and non-formal learning process.

The general process of validating informal and non-formal learning (VINFL) consists of:

- identification through dialogue of particular experiences of an individual;
- documentation to make visible the individual's experiences;
- formal assessment of these experiences; and
- certification of the results of the assessment which may lead to a partial or full qualification.

NCFHE has worked in collaboration with [different sectors](#) in developing occupational standards.

NCFHE had started working on the childcare occupational standards by organising the Health and Social Care SSU according to the requirements listed in the Subsidiary Legislation. NCFHE has seven functioning Sector Skills Units working on Occupational Standards and is in the process of setting up another Sector Skills Unit. The roles of these Sector Skills Units vary from proposing occupational standards relevant to the sector, to providing guidance and counselling services to individuals submitting their documented experiences for validation and audit all assessment processes and results achieved thereby.

The following policies and documents serve as a reference to the development of the professional competences of staff involved in the validation process across all relevant sectors:

- [Subsidiary Legislation 327.433](#) Further And Higher Education (Licensing, Accreditation And Quality Assurance) Regulations
- Manual of Procedures for Provider Licensing and Programme Accreditation Version 1.2 Updated September 2016
- The [National Quality Assurance Framework](#) provides guidance to educational institutions that embark on the processes of Internal and External Quality Assurance

in order to enhance the learning outcomes provided through their educational programmes. It is underpinned by the following six principles.

- The [Manual for VET Providers](#) and the Handbook for VET Providers (CEDEFOP)
 - The handbook is meant to guide VET providers through a quality journey, based on the PDCA (plan-do-check-act/review) cycle, which underlies any quality management system (QMS). The handbook's guidelines, advice and practical examples are taken from 20 providers of initial, continuing or sector-based vocational training, all of which have successful and mature quality management in place.
 - The Manual for VET Providers is a guideline on how to implement Quality Assurance and is not prescriptive in any way. The Manual provides examples of good practice on how quality indicators can be used in the quality cycle systematically. It does not prescribe one system to be adopted by all. It does not set the criteria for accreditation required by the National Commission for Further and Higher Education (NCFHE).

The [NEET Activation Scheme II](#) aims at encouraging the re-integration of young people who are detached from the education system or from the labour market through targeted intervention and empowerment. Through this scheme, participants are individually profiled and receive forty hours of personalised assistance from assigned youth workers and another eighty hours of motivational and behavioural training intervention covering topics such as: Guidance on employment; Communication skills; and CV writing skills. This training enables participants to develop skills that are necessary for them both as members of society and as prospective employees. Following this initial phase, young people are requested to either further their training through continued education or else participate in a work exposure experience, leading to an offer of traineeship. In both instances, participants receive an allowance which should be equivalent to the minimum wage (subject to a number of conditions including performance and attendance).

Information and guidance

The [National Commission for Further and Higher Education](#) (NCFHE) was officially launched to foster the development and achievement of excellence in further and higher education in Malta through research, effective licensing, accreditation, quality assurance and recognition of qualifications established under the Malta Qualifications Framework.

NCFHE focuses on:

- providing accreditation to further and higher educational institutions;
- providing accreditation to programmes or courses of studies at further and higher education levels;
- quality assurance of both educational institutions and programmes or courses;
- recognition of obtained national or international qualifications as well as prospective qualifications;
- validation of informal and non-formal learning;
- research and policy recommendation on issues related to further and higher education.

Quality assurance

The following [National Commission for Further and Higher Education](#) (NCFHE) frameworks are providing guidelines to assess and validate non-formal and informal competences in Malta. The national criteria and guidelines focus primarily on systematic quality work and assurance to carry out validation at first hand and also include external quality assurance.

- [Internal and External Quality Assurance in Further and Higher Education](#)
- [National Quality Assurance Framework for Further and Higher Education](#)
- [External Quality Assurance - Provider Audit Manual of Procedures Updated May 2017](#)

6.5 Cross-border learning mobility

Policy framework

In November 2011, Member States agreed on a benchmark of at least 20% of higher education graduates having had a period of study or training abroad, and 6% for vocational education and training students, both to be reached by 2020.

Main cross-border mobility programmes for students in formal education

The [European Union Programmes Agency](#) (EUPA), is a legal autonomous agency established through the [legal notice 128 of 2007](#). The aim of the EUPA has always been to support Maltese individuals and entities in availing themselves of funding under the various educational programmes provided by the European Commission. Yet the aim of the Agency is deeper than simply a financial contribution or sponsorship through which projects may be realised. Between 2007 and 2013 the EUPA was responsible for the management of the decentralised action of former generations of EU programmes for education including the Youth in Action and Lifelong learning programmes.

The Agency acts as a link between the European Commission and project promoters both at national as well as the local level, while it also promotes and manages EU projects of an educational nature, content or objective. The EUPA engages itself in initiatives that are consonant with the educational policies and strategies of the Ministry responsible for education.

For the current programming period (2014- 2020), the European Commission developed the new EU programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport under the name of Erasmus+. Programme decentralised actions are implemented at national level by a network of National Agencies. In Malta the National Agency responsible for the management of these actions is the European Union Programmes Agency (EUPA).

EUPA provides a web portal, <http://eupa.org.mt>, that gives information to both students, teachers and organisations. Erasmus+ is an exchange programme that provides the opportunity to study abroad for 3–12 months. It is financed by the European Commission. In Malta, Erasmus+ is administered by the National Agency (EUPA) and the higher education institutions that participate in the programme.

The European Union Programmes Agency (EUPA) in Malta reported the following latest information:

Higher Education and School Education (June 2016)

Year	Type of Mobility	Amount	Status
2014	Studies	207	Realised
2014	Traineeship	125	Realised
2015	Studies	268	Awarded
2015	Traineeship	127	Awarded
2016	Studies	261	Awarded
2016	Traineeship	136	Awarded
2017	Studies	353	Awarded
2017	Traineeship	126	Awarded

Youth

Year	Mobility Projects Awarded	Number of Participants in Project	Realised Mobilities to Sate	Participants' Profile
2014	47 (3deadlines)	1452	1430	Staff: 436 Learners: 994
2015	38 (3deadlines)	1404	1337	Staff: 282 Learners: 1055
2016	36 (3deadlines)	1459	771	Staff: 226 Learners: 545
2017	21 (1deadline)	863	0	0

KA2 school education partnership projects

Students in secondary education can participate in a KA2 school education partnership project. The main aim of Strategic Partnerships is to support the development, transfer and/or implementation of innovative practices as well as the implementation of joint initiatives promoting cooperation, peer learning and exchanges of experience at European level. The primary goal is to allow schools to develop and reinforce networks, increase their capacity to operate at a transnational level, share and confront ideas, practices and methods. A Strategic Partnership is transnational and involves a minimum of three organisations from three different Programme Countries. Exceptionally, the following types of projects may involve a minimum of two organisations from two different Programme Countries: Strategic Partnerships for schools only: This type of partnership may only apply for projects supporting exchange of good practices between organisations from Programme Countries.

In the field of school education there are a number of priorities. Strengthening the profile(s) of the teaching professions, including teachers, school leaders and teacher educators, through actions with the following objectives: making careers more attractive; strengthening selection and recruitment; enhancing teachers' professional development and linking its different phases in a continuum from Initial Teacher Education and induction to continuing professional development; supporting teachers in dealing with diversity in the classroom (including pupils with a migrant background); supporting teachers in adopting collaborative and innovative practices; strengthening leadership in education, including the role and profile of school leaders, distributed leadership at school and teacher leadership.

Promoting the acquisition of skills and competences, for example by: addressing underachievement in maths, science and literacy through effective and innovative teaching and assessment; promoting entrepreneurship education; fostering critical thinking especially through teaching science in environmental and/or cultural context; adopting a holistic approach to language teaching and learning, building on the diversity found in today's increasingly multilingual classrooms.

Supporting schools to tackle early school leaving (ESL) and disadvantage, and to offer quality education, enabling success for all students, from the lowest to the highest end of the academic spectrum, including children with a migrant background who might face specific (e.g. linguistic) challenges; strengthening collaboration among all actors within schools, as well as with families, and other external stakeholders; improving transition between different stages of education; supporting networking by schools which promote collaborative and holistic approaches to teaching and learning; improving evaluation and quality assurance.

Supporting efforts to increase access to affordable and high quality early childhood education and care (ECEC). Enhancing the quality of ECEC systems and provisions in order to foster age appropriate development of children, to achieve better learning outcomes and ensure a good start in education for all - in particular through taking the EU ECEC quality framework further, as well as ensuring that the benefits of early

childhood education are carried through to other school education levels, and projects that develop new models of implementation, governance and funding for ECEC.

The duration of the project can take place between 12 and 36 months.

Eligible activities within a school partnership project are the following:

- Blended mobility of pupils and learners combining short-term physical mobility (5 days to 2 months; excluding travel days) with virtual mobility;
- Short-term exchanges of groups of pupils (5 days to 2 months; excluding travel days);
- Long-term study mobility of pupils (2 to 12 months).

Eligible participants within a school partnership project are the following:

- Pupils of any age, accompanied by school staff (in short-term exchanges of groups of pupils);
- Pupils aged 14 or older enrolled in full-time education at a school participating in the Strategic Partnership (in long-term study mobility of pupils);

The main funding components under a KA2 school education project are the following:

- Project Management and Implementation costs
- Transnational project meetings
- Exceptional costs
- Special needs support

In addition for cross sectoral Strategic Partnerships supporting innovation any intellectual outputs and multiplier events are also eligible.

For transnational learning, teaching and training activities within the strategic partnership: travel and individual support, linguistic support and exceptional costs, are eligible costs.

VET mobility programmes

EU (Erasmus+) funded VET mobility programmes belong to the VET educational context and the purpose of these mobilities is the placement of learners in companies and VET learners in schools. Mobilities are only for outgoing learners and students go for short term duration mobilities (2 weeks).

The Erasmus+ funding provides students with funding to cover travel, subsistence as well as linguistic preparation expenses.

Cross-border learning mobility - Tertiary education

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) which are established in a Programme Country and awarded with an Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE) in advance by the European Commission can apply and participate in a KA1 Mobility project for higher education students and staff. In Malta there are 7 HEIs in possession of an ECHE charter. The 3 most established HEIs which benefit on yearly basis from the Erasmus+ programme are [University of Malta](#), [Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology \(MCAST\)](#) and the [Institute for Tourism Studies \(ITS\)](#).

Student mobility:

- a study period abroad at a partner higher education institution (HEI);
- a traineeship (work placement) abroad in an enterprise or any other relevant workplace.

A study period abroad may include a traineeship period as well. Such a combination creates synergies between the academic and professional experience abroad and may be organised in different ways depending on the context: either one activity after the other or both at the same time. The combination follows the funding rules and minimum duration of study mobility.

To ensure high-quality mobility activities with maximum impact on the students, the mobility activity has to be compatible with the student's degree-related learning and personal development needs. The study period abroad must be part of the student's study programme to complete a degree at a short cycle, first cycle (Bachelor or equivalent), second cycle (Master or equivalent) and third or doctoral cycle. Traineeships abroad at a workplace are also supported during short cycle, first, second, third cycle studies and within a maximum of one year after the student's graduation. This also includes the 'assistantships' for student teachers. Wherever possible, the traineeships should be an integrated part of the student's study programme. Student mobility can be in any subject area/academic discipline.

Staff mobility:

- teaching periods: this activity allows HEI teaching staff or staff from enterprises to teach at a partner HEI abroad. Staff mobility for teaching can be in any subject area/academic discipline.
- training periods: this activity supports the professional development of HEI teaching and non-teaching staff in the form of training events abroad (excluding conferences) and job shadowing/observation periods/training at a partner HEI, or at another relevant organisation abroad. A period abroad can combine teaching and training activities.

The [University of Malta](#) participates in the Erasmus+ programme at tertiary level. University students proceed on an Erasmus+ mobility which is fully recognised as part of the course they would be reading with the [University of Malta](#). The average duration of the mobilities for study purposes is mostly 1 semester (4-5 months) or a year (9 months). Students who proceed on an Erasmus+ training mobility are allowed a minimum of 2 months up to 1 year, the average duration is that of 3 months. Academic and administrative staff exchanges to and from partner institutions are also catered for by the Erasmus+ programme.

The main purposes of students participating in the Erasmus+ programme is either to study for a period of time in a partner university in their field of studies or to carry out a traineeships or research mainly linked to their future profession or degree. While on an Erasmus+ exchange students are given to opportunity to follow the [Online Linguistic Support](#) (OLS) services which aim to improve a person's language competences while on Erasmus.

Members of staff proceed on Erasmus+ to obtain more experience through the mobility of administrative/ technical staff or to carry out teaching and research through the academic mobilities.

Erasmus+ allows for both outbound and inbound mobility. The University sends and receives students through Bilateral Agreements specifically signed in relevant fields of studies that the partner universities have deemed as mutually beneficial. When undertaking Erasmus+ for training students are free to proceed to partner institutions and other institutions/ companies that may be relevant to their field of interest.

The minimum duration for beneficiaries to proceed on Erasmus+ is a minimum of 3 months and a maximum of 12 months for studies and a minimum of 2 months and a maximum of 12 months for training. As stated above on average students proceed on study mobilities for about 1 semester (4 to 5 months) and proceed on traineeships for an average duration of 3 months. Under the current Erasmus+ programme students may proceed on both studies and traineeship mobilities. The average duration of staff exchanges is about 1 to 2 weeks

The Erasmus+ grants beneficiaries receive consist of a travel grant, which is a lump sum calculated, by the EU Commission, according to their destination and a monthly grant depending on destination too. A similar progress is implemented for staff mobilities too.

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Promoting mobility in the context of non-formal learning, and of youth work

In 2017 [Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ](#) coordinated a project called '[Let's Talk about Life](#)'. This project was a multilateral 6 day exchange involving 4 countries. The participating countries include Poland, Ireland, Estonia and Malta, as the hosting country. 36 young people between the ages of 13 to 17 years participated in the youth exchange.

The primary theme of the exchange was focused on young people's life with particular focus on Bullying and Gender Stereotyping. In line with this thematic focus, the project aimed at creating more awareness on the issue of gender stereo typing and bullying both in public spaces where young hang out and on social media through Peer Education. The project aimed to consolidate young people`s knowledge and understanding the ethical responsibility to prevent bullying and gender stereotyping and avoid being bystanders. By being aware of the impact of bullying and gender stereotyping, the young people were better equipped in bringing positive change and aware of their duty to stand up when discrimination takes place.

The project aimed to encourage young people to use their own knowledge and abilities to create peer educational material that could be used with their peers. The methodologies utilized during the youth exchange included a combination of non-formal learning methods such as interactive workshops, team building activities, inter-cultural events, experiential experiences, and evaluation and reflective sessions.

As a result of the project the participants became aware that in various situation injustices, discrimination and bullying can be minimized by speaking up and not being indifferent and hence becoming proactive citizens. Moreover, the project helped in encouraging young people to take on active roles in their respective communities, thus sustaining the European democratization process.

The project made use of Erasmus+ funding.

The main mechanisms in place to monitor and ensure the quality of the programmes implemented were an APV at the start of the project during which management of project was discussed and various evaluation tools during the project such as Mood Boards, comparing expectations shared on first day of the project to the participants actually experienced, mid-way evaluation activity, national group evaluations, daily leaders meeting, informal discussion about the project with the young people .

The main criteria and indicators used to assess the quality of programmes were a Presentation of exchange programme on the first day; a discussion and activity about the youthpass, the 7 competencies, youthpass journal; a daily reflection time with youth leaders from respective groups and the completion of Youthpass online

The main outcomes of quality assurance process given through the MT NA the [European Union Programmes Agency](#).

Quality assurance

[European Union Programmes Agency](#) (EUPA) constantly monitors closely all awarded projects through:

- a. General Monitoring Meetings
- b. Desk Monitoring
- c. Regular one to one meetings with all ongoing projects (bilateral meetings)
- d. On-site monitoring visits
- e. Quarterly round table meetings with all awarded Higher Education Institutions having an ongoing KA1 mobility project.
- f. Mobility tool training

The MT NA also created a [handbook](#) listing all the necessary guidelines and procedures that entities need to abide to. This is distributed to all institutions having an ongoing project.

In addition, the MT NA holds a number of checks both during the implementation of the project, therefore an on the spot during the action, while also a check after the project has been finalised, therefore an on the spot after the action. The MT NA also conducts system checks on recurrent beneficiaries such as Higher Education Institutions.

The MT NA closely monitors all 7 entities holding an Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE) through monitoring visits, by using the ECHE monitoring guide provided by the European Commission.

The main criteria for the assessment of the quality of the programmes consist in the assessment of the quality of outputs and deliverables against what is declared at application stage. In the latter, applications are assessed vis-à-vis the adherence to Commission as well as local priorities. Following qualitative evaluation and financial evaluation, funding can be withheld (namely the final payment) if the programme is deemed unsatisfactory in terms of quality.

6.6 Social inclusion through education and training

Educational support

Malta's education system aims to cater for students with different abilities, to have access to the learning that matches their technical skills and therefore ensuring that all students are engaged. A tangible inclusive education is achieved by improving the required support and assistance in the learning journey. This is done through the provision of the professional development of learning support educators, teachers and staff together with the provision of an environment fit for the needs of students with special abilities. Investment in the infrastructure of Resource Centres and the services offered form an integral part of the strategy. In addition, the physical environment in mainstream education is undergoing further improvement to ensure the wellbeing of students with special needs through the introduction of multi-sensory rooms and other environment upgrades.

Malta's education strategy is based on four main principles; equity, social justice, diversity and inclusivity. The [Framework for Education Strategy 2014-2020](#) places emphasis on students learning to live together. The [Respect for all Framework](#) also states that for these principles to be achieved the values of co-operation, responsibility, unity, tolerance, honesty, peace, happiness, love, freedom, humility, simplicity, courage, friendship and respect need to form the general values to behaviour in schools. The value of respect is considered as a prerequisite.

As highlighted in the [National Curriculum Framework for All](#), acquiring positive attitudes and a respect for human rights, is one of the learning outcomes for Education for Democracy as a cross curricular theme in Social Studies, Environmental Studies and aspects from Personal and Social Development as well as Home Economics. Through their studies in this area, learners acquire skills in enjoying rights and exercising responsibilities in various communities; dealing with conflict and controversy; making informed choices and decisions, and taking action, individually or collectively to promote

a just and sustainable society whose policies are based on justice, equity and a respect for the community of life. As they develop their learning in this area, young people learn to employ citizenship skills, showing responsibility towards their environment and their world, and understanding the impact of enterprise and industry on the local and global community.

Malta also believes that for the education regime to be truly inclusive and convey a message of respect for the individual's dignity, it needs to be directed at all life phases and extend beyond the obligatory school years in order to address the needs of all stakeholders, including those at the risk of social marginalisation. In this regard one of the strategies of [Malta's National Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020](#) stipulates that lifelong learning needs to support inclusivity and empower marginalised communities.

The Ministry for Education and Employment has also launched the initiative '[My Journey – Achieving Through Different Paths Inclusive and Comprehensive Equitable Quality Learning Programmes](#)'. Through this initiative, secondary school students will be able to choose between academic, vocational, applied subjects or a combination of the three elements during the senior cycle of secondary education. This will involve moving from a 'one size fits all' system to a more inclusive and equitable programme which can specifically cater to each learner's individual talents.

The **National School Support Services** within the Ministry for Education and Employment is implementing the following social inclusion measures:

- Pilot project for students on the spectrum with severe challenging behaviour attended a programme which offers the below interventions.
 - Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA)
 - Verbal Behaviour
 - Behaviour Modification
 - Natural Environmental Teaching (NET)
 - Discrete Trial Teaching (DTT)
 - Visual Schedules
 - Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)
 - Pivotal Response Training (PRT)
- Setting up and equipping six new Multi-sensory rooms so that students on the autism spectrum and students with severe disabilities can use in their mainstream school - Three multi-sensory rooms were set as from scholastic year 2016-2017 having a sensory garden also in one school as from 2017 – 2018. Work is in progress for another 6 multi-sensory rooms for six different primary schools which will start operating as from January 2019.
- Compiled guidelines including a checklist for the school environment to become more autism friendly;
- Autism Toolkit was compiled to be used in schools and it will be used during scholastic 2018 -2019.
- Intense training was given to 50 educators on developing and utilising effective strategies and resources for learners with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Other training included strategies to support diverse needs, how to adapt curricular aspects for the various needs, how to support children with autism in relation to their behaviour, practical strategies on literacy and students with disability.
- Reinforced the practice of support services giving guidance and support as well as sessions inside the classroom in order to guide and support the educators together with the learners
- Research and more support to students with complex communication needs in order to establish an effective mode of communication together with strategies and devices/software to access curriculum
- Implementation of the Provision Map Tool to enhance the compilation of Individual Education Plans in schools.
- A new policy on Inclusive Education in Schools has been drafted. The aim is that this new Policy be launched during scholastic year 2018/2019 together with a National

Inclusive Education Framework. The policy embraces the concept, values and principles of Inclusive Education into the realm of responding positively to all learners' diversity. It will bring together all educators and practitioners, learners, families and community members who create colleges and schools that are conducive to learning, thereby giving all learners the education they need.

One of the key educational policies of Malta to [include students with special needs within mainstream](#) education and assign a Learning Support Assistant (LSA) on a one-to-one basis or on a shared basis depending on the student's needs. The role of the LSA is to assist students with special educational requirements in the classroom and provide additional support to enhance their learning experience.

Students with dyslexia are provided with one-to-one attention, support with the transition from primary to secondary school, and use of a specific needs-based library. Whole-class measures are being implemented in a way the dyslexic child receives the support required without making the learning difficulties evident.

The '[Alternative Learning Programme](#)' (ALP) is aimed at students who are reaching the end of compulsory schooling, but who clearly demonstrate that they will not attain the desired qualification. This programme has a strong vocational component and students are expected to continue with their education or training in a full-time higher education institution or in other lifelong learning institutions on a part-time basis. Following the implementation of the ALP, the programme's effectiveness in ensuring that students remain in the education and training system is currently being assessed. Besides the ALP programme, two other programmes are offered to students who at the end of compulsory education manage to acquire no or minimum qualifications, giving the opportunity of a 'second chance education'. '[Youth Inc.](#)' is an inclusive education programme based on applied learning offered by Malta's National Youth Agency to people between 16 and 21 years of age. It seeks to strengthen the complementary role of formal and non-formal learning, and to assist young person in gaining key competences and sectoral skills. The second programme offered is '[GEM16+](#)', launched by the Ministry for Education and Employment in October 2015. This programme is aimed at students who lack the necessary qualifications to continue their studies, and focuses on preparing its students in Maltese, English, mathematics and physics at SEC level.

The Personal, Social and Career Development (PSCD) programme was created for all students of compulsory schooling age in order to develop young people's personalities and mind-sets which is done both through student councils that function within schools as well as through PSCD lessons that focus on gender issues, racism, migration, religious diversity, disability and sexual orientation (in an age-appropriate way) both in primary as well as secondary schooling. During PSCD all students learn to work in a group and understand the functions of the various roles one can take.

The Achieve XL programme seeks to provide the opportunity to develop the confidence and skills of young people, supporting the disadvantaged, vulnerable and those struggling in education. This programme is an occasion to tackle early school leaving and youth unemployment.

A number of structures are also in place within Malta's education system in a bid to help asylum seekers, migrants and third country nationals.

- The [Ministry for Education and Employment](#) (MEDE) has formally set up a [Migrant Learners' Unit](#) to develop and implement an organisational structure for the provision of education to learners having a migrant background under the age of 16. The Migrant Learners' Unit provides language support for Maltese and English at both the primary and secondary cycles of education. It offers various types of services depending on the needs of schools and/or individual learners. An induction course is offered to all newly-arrived learners whatever their provenance (EU or TCN) who cannot communicate in Maltese and English, and who would therefore be unable to cope with the mainstream curriculum. The induction programme acts as a form of intervention. It takes place for a limited period of time (usually one year) and is

discontinued as soon as the learner is considered able to cope in the mainstream classroom. Induction enables better social integration whilst ensuring that students adjust to Malta's education system. The programme enacted focuses on cross-curricular language learning where subjects such as Physical Education, Mathematics, Music and Art are taught with the primary intention of enhancing language competency. This not only introduces a dimension where children can explore and develop their creativity but also strives to achieve a sense of well-being through sports and games. The teachers delivering the induction programme have all been provided with specialised training in managing classes that include newly arrived learners to provide them with the skills to be integrated in mainstream classes.

- "Making Friends" is an initiative that was launched by the Migrant Learners' Unit in April 2018. The objective of this practice is to encourage active inclusion and integration between learners having a migrant background and Maltese learners. This objective is achieved through the formation of friendships between the participants in the Club. Activities organised by the Club are specifically designed for participants aged between 5 – 10 years old. It is offered on an after-school basis and each session is of 2 ½ hours duration. In this after-school environment, an informal and creative learning programme focusing on becoming friends through an appreciation (and thus better understanding) of cultural differences is offered to participants. Dialogue and respect are key to achieving this objective. The "Making Friends" activities also focus on facilitating peer learning under the supervision of specially trained teachers and other members of staff.
- Non-English speaking students are offered a one-year induction course in basic functional English and Maltese. MCAST is also offering a course in functional Maltese for non-Maltese speaking students at post-secondary level, as well as additional learning support in English through its Learning Support Unit.
- The Directorate for Lifelong Learning within the Ministry also pursues a policy of inclusivity. It has developed courses for Maltese and English as a foreign language, accredited at MQF level 2.
- The University of Malta has launched SPARK – a voluntary network of lecturers within the University assisting migrants with obtaining a sound knowledge of the English language and to sit for exams such as [IELTS](#) and [TOEFL](#).
- The University of Malta is also offering two courses which assist in the development of learning on migration and migrant affairs, these are: M.A in Humanitarian Action offered by the Department of International Relations, and M.A. in Transcultural Counselling offered by the Faculty of Social Wellbeing.
- In addition, a proposal on Race and Ethnicity issues is currently being reviewed by the Senate.

Social cohesion and equal opportunities

[The Respect for All Framework](#) is based on a philosophy of values-based education, supporting active citizenship. The work of the educator is to promote this philosophy through the different educational activities in a way that develops relationships and promotes positive human values.

The [Framework for the Education Strategy 2014 - 2024](#), based on the 4 principles of equity, social justice, diversity and inclusivity addresses the learning to know and the learning to do through the Curriculum whilst placing emphasis on students learning to live together and students learning to be.

The [Trans, Gender Variant and Intersex Students in Schools Policy](#) is developed within the context of the Framework for the Education Strategy for Malta 2014-2024 and the values promoted through the Respect for All Framework . Every student, in the present and in the future will be provided with the necessary knowledge, skills, competences and attributes for citizenship and employability within an inclusive, safe, secure and motivating school environment that inspires and facilitates learning.

The implementation of the policy on [Addressing Bullying Behaviour in Schools](#) serves to continually support and guide schools and colleges to address bullying in schools.

In Malta, CPD courses and seminars relating to citizenship take place from time to time. For example, in September 2009 a number of such courses for teachers in charge of the subject 'Personal and social development' (PSD) were held in connection with citizenship and human rights education and students' active participation. The CPD courses for PSD peripatetic primary teachers organised in 2011/12 have included citizenship education with a focus on student councils.

6.7 Skills for innovation

Innovation in formal education

Innovative skills are part of the National Curriculum Framework document (2012) and are also part of the cross-curricular themes which have been developed, under [Education for Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Creativity](#).

Innovative skills are also included in the [My Journey](#) document which encourages the development of innovation in the choices that learners opt for, during their secondary cycle of compulsory education.

Entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation are considered to permeates all aspects of the curriculum. The overall goals of entrepreneurship education are to give learners the attitudes, knowledge and capacity to act in an entrepreneurial way and to acquire the skills that will promote their lifelong employability in a rapidly changing commercial, economic and social environment. This includes becoming entrepreneurial citizens in other spheres beyond industry or employability. These goals require the development of the 'soft' generic personal and interpersonal skills fundamental to becoming entrepreneurial, as well as the fostering of the more discrete entrepreneurial knowledge and understanding required to pursue entrepreneurial endeavours and to possess an entrepreneurial mindset which is both creative and innovative.

Creativity is generally recognised as both an innate yet often under-developed quality in young people, as well as a practical skill that helps to unlock an entrepreneurial disposition. It is a skill that can be taught and that everyone can aspire to. It involves opening up young peoples' thinking processes in ways that help them to look at familiar things with a fresh eye, to identify and frame a problem and to generate solutions whilst using their imagination, knowledge and skills to explore new possibilities rather than established approaches.

The ability to be innovative and the confidence to look for innovative responses to opportunities or problems encountered is best nurtured in a safe, supportive environment where this type of approach is encouraged, recognised and rewarded. Such a pedagogy requires allowing learners time to reflect on a situation and tap their resources and imagination to develop plans and solutions. It also requires time for implementation of new processes and the application of new ideas. Teaching and learning for innovation might even include space to 'learn from failure'.

Providing pedagogical tools and support is intended to be part of the training provided to educators, with respect to all the cross-curricular themes within the [Learning Outcomes Framework](#).

Fostering innovation through non-formal and informal learning and youth work

As part of its [Empowerment Programme Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#) organised the [Innovation Challenge: Go Green](#). This project was a competition for young people aged between 17 and 30. Individuals or groups of up to three members each were invited to identify an

environmental problem that affects Malta, and to come up with a green innovation solution to this problem.

Any theme or subject concerning green innovation and environmental sustainability is welcome. These include (but are not limited to) water conservation, alternative energy, pollution reduction, waste management, agriculture, architecture, urban planning, traffic management, transportation, manufacturing and construction.

Participants had the opportunity to attend workshops on idea generation and development, feasibility studies, and intellectual property rights as part of this Challenge.

6.8 Media literacy and safe use of new media

National strategy

Currently there is no official document on media literacy however there are a number of initiatives that Malta is undertaking in connection to media literacy and digital education.

Currently an official document on media literacy is not available. However, the following are some of the initiatives that Malta is undertaking in connection to media literacy.

Media literacy is a cross-curricular subject and it is mainly tackled in Personal, Social and Career Development (PSCD) and in Religious Studies covering media awareness and its use. It is also used to enrich Maltese and English language development and use.

The issue of "critical thinking" and "being media literate" are both tackled within the Learning Outcomes Framework for Personal Social Career Development and Social Studies.

Within the Secondary School Social Studies Outcomes Frameworks there are units that tackle the issue of responsible media use. These coalesce with and reinforce the Religious Studies and PSCD as well as Media Literacy work on the use of media in a responsible manner.

Students are guided by teachers particularly in PSCD lessons and during the 'be safe programmes' on what is acceptable for students to view and use on social media.

The Cyber Crime Unit, a specialized police internet vice squad within the Malta Police Force protects citizens from any abuse deriving from the social media.

A good example of media literacy is a programme within [St. Thomas More College's](#) PSCD Primary school teachers entitled: Media Awareness Talks with year 4 students. This is about the use of Media Tools as part of our daily lives. These sessions highlight the quick methods of communication via electronic Media but also the potential dangers of misuse or overuse. Such talks also include Parent Talks and some PD Sessions with teachers in other Colleges as requested by different schools.

Malta is addressing the challenges related to media literacy by introducing the subject for teacher-training (through the Institute for Education); and for digitalisation (through MOOC programmes), lifelong learning and media literacy through the operations of the Commonwealth Centre for Connected Learning.

Additionally, the Personal, Social and Career Development (PSCD) Section in conjunction with the [Malta Communication Authority](#) (MCA) have a structured ongoing programme entitled [BeSmart Online!](#) This programme targets students of all ages and parents about the safe use of Social Media in general. What is needed to be added is that the MCA and the PSCD Education Officers regularly organize Seminars for teachers and Administrative Teaching Grades with regards to Internet Safety Use.

Digital Education

Malta is also investing in digital skills in compulsory education curricula and through an investment in ICT infrastructure in classrooms.

The [Framework for Education Strategy for Malta \(2014-2024\)](#) emphasizes various goals, such as reducing the high incidence of early school leavers in Malta, decreasing the number of low achievers, raising the bar in literacy, numeracy, and science and technology competence, increasing student achievement and raising the levels of student retention and attainment in further, vocational, and tertiary education and training attainment. Therefore, the aim for the OTPC which has now entered its third year with 15,000 tablets distributed to all students from Year 4 to Year 6, is to partially contribute to the fruition of the set goals through employing learning initiatives in all Maltese and Gozitan primary schools. The OTPC project is intended to provide a supportive technical and pedagogical framework for the tablet to be effectively used in the teaching and learning environment.

There are increased levels of motivation, self-esteem and confidence where tablets are more used. It is very common to see students searching for educational information on the web. Supported by teachers, students are sharpening their critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Computational thinking skills and coding sessions through particular apps are also being done. In these instances, collaboration and communication competences are continually addressed. Students have also the opportunity to browse through various educational and fiction ebooks, through the recently launched Literacy Pro App and even from the National Public Library of Malta. BrainPop UK and News-o-Matic are particular apps where various students are benefitting from daily articles aimed for students.

Malta has also launched the introduction of learning outcomes programmes in primary and secondary schools in Malta as from September 2018. This should increase the skills and competences of students and future graduates; and to ensure that all children will be given a fair and equal opportunity to be closer to technology.

Digital Skills are cross curricular, and students are expected to use technology across all the subjects in schools. A new ICT programme, entitled ICT C3, has been introduced in Year 7, to replace the traditional ECDL. The new ICT C3 programme will ensure that students will learn about safety on the net, robotics, coding and other new technologies which are the basis for further generations.

With regard to transforming teaching and learning of digital skills in a lifelong learning perspective, including the training of teachers, the [Directorate for Digital and Transversal Skills](#) within the [Ministry for Education and Employment \(MEDE\)](#) has carried out work on mainstreaming the EU's digital competence framework (proposed by the Joint Research Centre [JRC] for institutions and citizens). The National Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020 and report on the future of post-secondary education both engage with the need to enhance digital skills – focusing on digital literacies and 21st century skills.

Online course on Using Mobile Devices in Education for teachers in primary schools - Currently there are two online courses which are professional development courses for teachers: Using Web 2.0 tools in education and Using Mobile devices in Education. Both courses aim to promote new ways of learning and teaching; to involve teachers in the quest of using new tools; to promote online collaboration and sharing of information and to develop cross-curriculum activities engaging different teachers and subjects. The overall objective is that these acquired digital competences and skills diffuse to the teachers' classes. Through this diffusion student will also be benefitting when the tablet is used both in school and at home.

A digital system is available to assist teachers in the assessment process and recording of absenteeism. This will be strengthened further through the phased in introduction of a new management information system as from 2018/19.

Schools are being equipped with an infrastructure fit for today's and tomorrow's needs such as interactive whiteboards, all-in-one computers, Wi-Fi, 3D printers and scanners and the provision of tablets to students. In fact, by 2018/19 all students in Year 4, 5 and 6 in both State and Non-State schools will have a LearnPad Workbook 10.1" tablet as a

learning tool that could help achieve a number of educational objectives. The vision is to empower all students to become global digital citizens.

Malta is currently giving a fresh impetus to digital education. Malta is in the process of developing an Open Education Resources Policy, coordinated in conjunction with the Commonwealth Centre for Connected Learning, the Commonwealth of Learning in Vancouver and Creative Commons.

A green paper developed by the Directorate for Digital Literacies in 2017, and the Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020 form the basis for the digital education strategy steered by MEDE in compulsory education.

Media literacy and online safety through formal education

Media/Digital literacy is a cross-curricular subject and it is mainly tackled in Personal, Social and Career Development and in Religious Studies covering media awareness and its use.

The National Curriculum Framework for All sees Digital literacy as a cross-curricular theme where learners acquire skills in the confident and critical use of Information Society Technology for communication, work and leisure. They acquire basic skills in ICT organised around four major overlapping strands: data sources and manipulation; information communication and presentation; programmed control; and social, ethical and personal aspects. They discover and use digital data sources, and learn to organise, manipulate, interrogate and interpret data. They learn to communicate and present information using multimedia presentations; send emails and attachments; use VOIP and video-conferencing, and chat to collaborate with others. They use collaborative authoring tools and program devices to respond to input using a simplified iconic interface. They also explore social and ethical dimensions of digital technologies and learn to practice netiquette and online safety measures.

Digital literacy enhances the teaching and learning processes, the interaction among peers, and interactions between students and teachers. It is driven by the need for increased access to learning which can be facilitated through:

- a shift to constructivist education philosophies;
- a move from teacher to student-centred learning activities;
- accessing both local and global resources;
- making full use of the potential of technologies to enable children to show and create knowledge;
- an increased complexity of tasks and use of multi-modal information.

Amongst other general teaching tools, as part of the [BeSmartOnline!](#) project in Malta, Personal Social and Career Development (PSCD) Education Officers have developed a series of workbooks to help teach young people digital citizenship skills. The aim of the workbooks is that of developing 21st century digital citizenship skills from a very young age. The workbooks, which are interactive, fun and thought provoking, are an important tool being used by PSCD teachers so that students learn how to communicate and collaborate safely and responsibly online. Comparison between online and offline citizenship is emphasised within the workbooks to ensure that students are made aware that the virtual community to which they belong also has its rules and regulations.

With the aid of these workbooks, various areas related to digital citizenship education are being explored since children and youth, more often than not, embrace technology without examining the consequences of what they post, search or download. Therefore, emphasis on the importance of protecting one's private information, communicating respectfully, and being careful on what one posts online are all given their due importance. Attention is also given to the importance of creating online personas that project a positive and constructive image, how to prevent, protect and report

cyberbullying, and how students look up, select and streamline information from the internet and thus choose authentic sources of information.

The workbooks provide a proactive way of helping students engage with the digital world, being an excellent tool to help students acquire the necessary skills that include, among others, media literacy skills and communication and critical skills.

Promoting media literacy and online safety through non-formal and informal learning

Young people are amongst the biggest users of online and mobile technologies. Whilst Malta's education system undertakes every effort to ensure the safety and well-being of ourselves and others in the real world, the same has to be done in the virtual world.

[BeSmartOnline!](#) is a programme which was set up in 1999 and evolved over the years, taking into account the latest technological developments and their impact on adolescents' lives. The Safer Internet Programme is present in 30 European countries and supports the development of awareness-raising material and the organisation of information sessions for children, parents and teachers. The Programme also supports the establishment of Hotlines and Helplines. The Hotlines and Helplines are intended to receive reports on illegal content found on the Internet as well as give advice on how to stay safe online. This has been the national flagship initiative that promotes the safer use of the Internet for the past 6 years. The overall objective of the [BeSmartOnline!](#) Project is to act as a Safer Internet Centre in Malta. The project is coordinated by the Malta Communications Authority and implemented through a consortium made up of the Foundation for Social Welfare Services, the Office of the Commissioner for Children and the Directorate for Learning and Assessment Programmes. The overarching mission of the consortium is to proactively safeguard the well-being of children as they navigate and explore the Internet in order to ensure a positive online experience. It also aims to help children fully recognise and reap the benefits of the many opportunities that the Internet can present. This is done through the implementation of a number of awareness raising and educational initiatives targeting children and their supporting networks; particularly, parents, carers, and educators. In this regard, the learning objectives and outcomes of the Personal, Social and Career Development subject, which focus on digital citizenship, are instrumental in reaching all students within compulsory schooling.

This website is intended to help children, youths, parents and educators understand the basic principles and best practices for a safer online experience for children. It will also act as a tool to communicate news, announce events and share resources. Specific guidelines are available to all parties (websites, lesson plan, Power Point Presentations, educational games, tip sheets, helpline, brochures, a hotline – [ChildWebAlert](#)).

The [BeSmartOnline!](#) project is funded by the European Union through the Safer Internet Programme and national funds.

Apart from having a dedicated website to proactively safeguard the well-being of children as they navigate and explore the Internet in order to ensure a positive online experience – BeSmartOnline, various partnerships have been created with key supporters to promote and disseminate information on online safety:

- [Kellimni.com](#)
- Malta Police Force - [Cyber Crime Unit](#)
- Secretariat for Catholic Education
- [Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#)
- [University of Malta](#)

Raising awareness about the risks posed by new media

A number of awareness raising initiatives were organised targeting young people primarily, amongst which were:

- Campaigns on safer internet
- Public Discussions on Digital Awareness
- Children's Internet Use and Parents' Perceptions of their Children's Online Experience
- Conference for Professionals Working with Children
- Safer Internet Day
- Conferences for Educators
- Seminar for eLearning, ICT teachers and PSCD teachers
- Safer Internet Forums
- [Maltese Safer Internet Centre](#)
- [Guide to protecting your kids online](#)

6.9 Awareness-raising about non-formal and informal learning and quality youth work

Information providers / counselling structures

[Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ](#) uses its information services at YIOSS, Youth Information Portal and Website to promote and raise awareness on non-formal and informal learning and quality youth work.

Awareness raising initiatives

Target youth workers and youth leaders, [Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ](#) and [EUPA](#) collaborate to organise the National Tool Fair. The aim of the Tool Fair is to promote quality in youth work and support capacity building of youth workers and to raise awareness of best practices of non-formal education and youth work practices.

It is an opportunity for participants to shape educational and experiential pathways, to run a workshop and to share tools for learning with colleagues, as well as to participate in workshops conducted by their peers. Beyond merely experiencing a wide variety of tools for learning, the Tool Fair aims to provide a space to reflect on tools, give and receive feedback, pave the way for their transferability and further development.

The theme for 2016 was [#Ready for the ROAD](#) and the tool fair provided a stimulating environment for innovative pedagogical approaches and practices.

6.10 Current debates and reforms

Forthcoming Policy Developments

The Maltese Government is developing a reform called 'My Journey: Achieving through different paths', which is to be implemented in lower secondary school in the school year 2019/2020 in order to move from a 'one size fits all' system to more inclusive and equity-oriented programmes, catering to pupils' individual aptitudes. The aim here is to promote inclusion and respond to diversity by allowing students to choose from several education routes among general, vocational or applied subjects for their elective subjects (beyond the core curriculum). Under the current system, students are focused mainly on areas of general education, e.g. science, business etc.

A number of vocational subjects were introduced and learning outcomes developed to be offered at levels 1-3 on the Maltese Qualifications Framework (MQF). 'My Journey' introduces applied subjects, thus changing the secondary education system (beyond core curriculum) into three main streams: general, which reflects current subjects offered; vocational subjects which build on existing ones; and applied subjects (Secondary Education Applied Certificates). Once the new system is in place, students will be able to choose either an individual pathway or a mixed one. The reform is intended to promote

inclusion and to reduce the number of early school leavers by making education relevant to more students and to an evolving labour market.

As from 2019 the following VET subjects to be taught in schools are Retail, Media Literacy, Hairdressing & Beauty, Textiles and Fashion, Agribusiness, Engineering Technology, Health and Social care, Hospitality and Information Technology.

Options exercises for students

All state colleges will be undertaking an exercise among Year 8 students and their parents/guardians to enable them to choose the option subjects they will choose to start following during the following scholastic year. This exercise will guide them to choose between academic, vocational and applied subjects through the 'My Journey' reform which will be introducing a number of these subjects for the first time.

My Journey – Labs in Schools

Scholastic year 2019-2020 will also see the completion of 77 labs spread among 13 secondary schools, aimed to offer facilities for the teaching of vocational and applied subjects. The supplies for these labs are being co-financed by a European Social Fund Project. ESF funds (INVEST) to be used to finance the labs' equipment.

As part of the implementation of My Journey, a new [career guidance platform](#) will be launched in December 2018. This interactive platform will help to facilitate career choices for secondary school students between the ages of 11 and 15. During their secondary level of education, students need to choose a number of subjects to focus their studies on and which will pave the way for their professional choices later on in their lives. This project will indeed tackle these issues and provide a solution. Through focused research, all available information will be channelled to one platform and will include a series of videos portraying 'a day in the life of', giving students a better idea of what the job they are aspiring for is all about.

The Reading Recovery (RR) training programme

Through the Reading Recovery (RR) training programme 14 complementary and literacy teachers are following the RR teacher training course and 8 Heads of Department (HODs) and literacy support teachers are following the Masters RR leader course consisting of 4 face-to-face sessions to the MARR course participants and 2 face-to-face sessions to the RR teachers' course at Malta's National Curriculum Centre.

The [National Literacy Agency](#) (NLA) has distributed all the educational resources required to the nine schools involved in the programme. The RR rooms in the same schools have nearly all been set up. When all the RR rooms are fully functional, the RR teachers and leaders will commence the RR intervention programme, circa 88 low ability Year 2 pupils will benefit from Reading Recovery.

Ongoing Debates

New learning outcome programmes and syllabi

A new learning outcome programmes and syllabi was introduced for Kinder 1, Year 3 and Year 7. These programmes aim to make teaching more student-centred and all the activities set in class help to achieve the learning outcomes for that particular year programme. Children will be assessed continually since mid-year exams will be removed. New learning programmes and syllabi based on learning outcomes will continue to be introduced in other year groups during subsequent scholastic years on a year by year basis.

7. HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Health and Well-Being is primarily under the responsibility of the Ministry for Health. Health policies are not specifically directed towards young people however, this cohort, feature significantly in all the policies developed by the Ministry.

Health education is also given particular attention in school. A number of initiatives were directed to tackle obesity through both nutrition and physical activity.

7.1 General context

Main trends in the health conditions of young people

Over the past 15 years Malta has experienced a rise in life expectancy and Maltese people spend on average close to 90% of their lifespan in good health. Life expectancy at age 15 has increased from 63.86 years in 2000 to 67.77 years in 2014, being higher among females than males (WHO, 2016a).

According to the Health Behaviour of School-aged Children Study, the percentage of Maltese 15 year olds rating their health as fair or poor is higher than many other countries, with a high proportion of Maltese youngsters reporting multiple health complaints more than once per week (WHO, 2016b).

HCBS Study among 15 year olds	Malta			
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
Fair or poor health	30%	13%	21%	13%
Multiple health complaints	65%	44%	50%	27%

The self-perceived health of young people aged between 16 and 29 has been relatively stable since 2005. Those rating their health as very good or good ranged from 91.8% in 2010 to 96.7% in 2006, with less than 1% rating their health as bad or very bad (Eurostat, 2010).

Daily tobacco smoking prevalence has decreased from 23.4% in 2002 to 20.1% in 2014, with WHO estimated age-standardized prevalence of current tobacco smoking among those aged 15 years and over standing at 25.9% in 2003 (30.9% in males and 20.9% in females) (WHO, 2016a). Specifically in the 15-29 year age group, figures from 2008 show the prevalence of daily smokers to be 20.9%, with 16.8% of females who smoke, and 25.3% of males smoking (Eurostat, 2010). Looking just at 15 year olds, 12% of girls and 11% of boys report smoking at least once a week, which is in the same as the HBSC average. (WHO, 2016b).

Information in the [draft National Alcohol Policy](#) shows that binge drinking in adults has increased between 2008 and 2014 (results from European Health Interview Survey). However, data from the European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD) shows a downward decline in most patterns of alcohol use among young people aged 15 and 16. Alcohol use (20+ times) in the last 12 months declined from 51% in 1999 to 19% in 2015, while alcohol use in the last 30 days declined from 30% to 11%. Heavy episodic drinking in the last month (drinking more than five drinks in a row) declined from 57% in 2007 to 47% in 2015. Drunkenness in the last 30 days also declined from 19% in 2007 to 15% in 2016.

Looking just at Maltese 15 year olds, 26% of girls and 32% of boys report drinking alcohol at least once a week, the highest percentages in the HBSC study (WHO, 2016b).

Obesity is the principal public health problem in Malta, with 25% of the adult population and 27% of children (aged 11–15 years) being obese: the highest rate in the EU. (WHO, 2017)

Age-standardised prevalence (WHO estimated %) of overweight in people aged over 18 years increased from 62.1% in 2010 to 64% in 2014, and of obesity increased from 24.7% in 2010 to 26.6% in 2014 (WHO, 2016a). Obesity levels in the youth age group (16 - 29 years) in 2008 were 13.8% of males and 11.5% of females ([Eurostat, 2008](#)). Looking particularly at 15 year olds, Malta's youngsters top the charts when it comes to overweight and obesity, with over a third of adolescents found to be overweight or obese by the HBSC study, which demonstrated that boys tend to have significantly higher prevalence. 26% of girls and 34% of boys are overweight or obese, a lot higher than the HBSC average of 13% in girls and 22% in boys (WHO, 2016b).

Tying in with this are the nutrition habits of the Maltese. The proportion of adolescents consuming soft drinks daily was highest in Malta (37%), and while decline in such consumption has been observed in almost all countries and regions and among boys and girls, no significant change in consumption over time was seen for girls in Malta. Significant decreases in daily fruit consumption were observed in boys and girls in five Malta between 2002 and 2014, however at the same time, adolescents in Malta reported the one of the largest increases in vegetable intake over time (WHO 2017).

According to the 2012 [National Sexual Health Survey](#) 78% of those aged 16 – 40 years old are sexually active. 41% of those aged 16 to 18 report having had sexual intercourse. 41% of those sexually active reported having known their partner for a few months, while 6% had only just met before having intercourse. As many as 30.1% did not use contraception during their first sexual intercourse encounter. With 20.7% having had 6 or more sexual partners in their lifetime, multiple partners are more common among males. Sexually transmitted infections were diagnosed by a medical professional in 6.6% of respondents).

According to the [Infectious disease prevention and control unit](#) within the HIV has a relatively higher prevalence in Malta compared to other European countries, and while there is an increasing trend in HIV incidence in Malta since 2009, among the 15-24 age group this has been minimal.

Main concepts

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (WHO)

Mental Health Mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community (WHO)

Wellness: the optimal state of health of individuals and groups. There are two focal concerns: the realization of the fullest potential of an individual physically, psychologically, socially, spiritually and economically, and the fulfilment of one's role expectations in the family, community, place of worship, workplace and other settings (WHO).

Obesity: the condition of severe overweight where a person has a body mass index (BMI) equal to or greater than 30. The obesity rate is the proportion of the total population (or of a subgroup based on gender, age, etc.) with a BMI of 30 or above (Eurostat)

Drugs: All drugs including medicines, volatile substances, alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs (World Health Organisation WHO).

Drug use: Drug taking through which harm may occur, whether through intoxication, breach of laws or school rules, or the possibility of future health problems, although such harm may not be immediately perceptible. Drug use will require interventions such as management, education, advice and information, and prevention work to reduce the potential for harm.

Drug misuse: Drug taking which harms health or functioning. It may take the form of physical or psychological dependence or be part of a wider spectrum of problematic or harmful behaviour. Drug misuse will require treatment.

Harm reduction techniques: A range of public health policies designed to reduce the harmful consequences associated with human behaviours, even if these behaviours are risky or illegal.

7.2 Administration and governance

Governance

While there are no specific policies targeting only the dimension of youths, and their health and well-being, this age group of the population features very significantly in all the various policies and strategies developed for the improvement of the health and well-being of the population. The [Ministry for Health](#) has three main actors involved in policy-making. These are the Department for Health Policy who are responsible for overall policies; the Department of Health Regulation who are responsible for the formulation of policies in the field of Public Health as well as its regulatory function to ensure standards; and the Department of Health Care Services who are responsible for the provision - organisation and delivery of the public system of health care services.

Other Ministries that are also responsible and are involved in a variety of aspects that affect the health and well-being of young people include the [Ministry for Education and Employment](#) and the [Ministry for the Family, Children's rights and Social Solidarity](#), who are responsible for social, family and child policy.

The [Foundation for Social Welfare Services](#) has responsibility in the fields of social services, who provide social welfare services, in particular in relation to alcohol and substance abuse and in relation to other social welfare problems prevalent in the country, especially those related to family welfare; [Aġenzija Sedqa](#), whose remit covers the provision of care, prevention and research services with regard to drugs and alcohol abuse, compulsive gambling and other dependencies, together with [Aġenzija Appoġġ](#) and [Aġenzija Sapport](#), forms part of this Foundation for Social Welfare Services. Aġenzija Appoġġ is the National Agency for children, families and the community, who safeguards and promotes the well-being of these persons through the development and provision of psycho-social welfare services. Also, [Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#) is responsible of coordinating the implementation the [National Youth Policy Towards 2020](#) and promote and safeguard the interests of young people. Within the National Youth Policy Towards 2020, one of the nine action plans is Health and Well-Being.

Other social partners that play an active role include a variety of foundations, groups, NGOs that are listed with the Office of the [Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations](#), and committees such as the Advisory Council on Health Lifestyles, Advisory Committee on Immunization Policy and others.

The Richmond Foundation is a leading local NGO in the provision of community services for persons with mental health difficulties and in the promotion of mental health and the prevention of mental illness amongst the public. It strives to combat stigma and increase awareness on the subject through the local media.

The [President's Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society](#) aims to produce relevant, appropriate and timely research by seeking innovative methodologies to engage with society for the promotion of peace and unity.

Cross-sectorial cooperation

There are no existing formal mechanisms of cross-sectorial cooperation. However as already indicated the [Ministry for Health](#) and [Ministry for Education and Employment](#) and

the [Ministry for the Family, Children's rights and Social Solidarity](#) work in close cooperation.

7.3 Sport, youth fitness and physical activity

National strategy(ies)

Currently a draft version of the [national policy for sport in Malta](#) is available. The document focuses on three pillars: sports and education, sports participation, and sports as a means of economic growth.

Promoting and supporting sport and physical activity among young people

The main programme promoting and supporting sport and physical activity among young people in Malta in the , developed, coordinated and managed by .

[#OnTheMove](#) offers a dynamic programme divided on 3 modules running annually from October to May. One of these module the Performance module is open to young people up to 16 years. Activities for these modules are mainly held on a Saturday mornings and adults are also invited to support their children and join in the fun by taking part in the adult activity class held concurrently with the children's activity.

The Performance module strives towards improving standards once youngsters have undergone (ideally) both stages and are in a position to choose their sport discipline. #OnTheMove has been giving this opportunity to youngsters between the 11 to 16 age group, however this is now being extended to children from 9 years of age who have undergone the foundation and participation programmes and now would like the option to choose a particular sport with the desired outcome being that of retaining and attracting more children at this age band (9 to 10 years old). Youngsters can choose a sport from an extensive list and learn the skills, tactics and rules of that sport. Sport Associations and Clubs partner with SportMalta in the provision of training for most of the sports. The Performance module different sport disciplines where youngsters learn the skills, tactics and rules of the respective sport. Disciplines include: Athletics, Badminton, Ballet, Baseball/Softball, Basketball, Bowling, Dance, Football, Gymnastics, Handball, Hip-Hop, Karting, Rugby, Sailing, Squash, Swimming, Table-Tennis, Tennis, Traditional Karate and Volleyball

Swimming sessions are also available. Lesson objectives are specifically related to the age and ability of the participants. For beginners, these include increasing confidence in water, learning how to float without floatation devices, and enjoy water safely. More advanced courses aimed at teaching and improving the stroke technique for each of the four strokes are also being planned.

The Adult Programme is designed to encourage those of 17 years and over to take up physical activity an activity at least once weekly. Our programme is flexible enough to embrace all abilities, from the very beginner to the most veteran and trained athlete. This module offers a choice of fitness activities for adults in all the different venues catering for all levels of fitness and ability. Activities include Aerobics, Aqua Aerobics, Dance Fitness, Physical Fitness, Swimming, Zumba and for the first time a Programme of different sport and team games.

[#OnTheMove \(Summer Programme\)](#) is the continuation of the [#OnTheMove](#) programme and consists of one module running from July to September. In addition through [#OnTheMove academies](#) SportMalta offers a number of specialised Sports Academies that run in conjunction with various Sports Organisations and Associations including Triathlon; Basketball; Horseracing; Gymnastics; Volleyball; Handball and Synchronised Swimming.

Additionally SportMalta also offers a programme of [adventure and multi-sport](#) to entice and encourage young people to participate in a programme that is both fun and challenging. In these programmes Young people are challenged in a variety of adventure activities including, amongst others abseiling and canoeing. In a multi-sport programme youth will be given the opportunity to play a variety of games and learn the rules, techniques and tactics. At the end of a course with SportMalta young people can choose to join an organisation and take up further training or else pursue the activity with their friends at a recreation level.

Physical education in schools

Secondary Level

Physical education (PE) in schools is a compulsory subject that provides regular opportunities of physical activity for children in a school setting. Physical Education (PE) is a core subject within the curricula across the educational spectrum, promoting a healthy lifestyle in all students. Subject content focuses on the development of psychomotor skills and physical, social and psychological development through a variety of games, sports and exercises that teach fair play, values, equity, teamwork, leadership and social inclusion.

At secondary level, Health Education includes Physical Education and Sport (PE), aspects of Home Economics (HE) and Personal, Social and Career Development (PSCD). This learning area promotes enjoyment through engagement in physical activity that inculcates a healthy lifestyle as well as a positive disposition towards oneself, others and life. Commitment to social communities and environmental issues also forms part of the students' development at this level.

Provision of physical activity at post-secondary level is also being catered for though as yet this is not mandatory.

The minimum number of hours of participation in PE, as outlined in the [National Curriculum Framework](#) of 2012 is 5% and 10% of the total taught time for lessons of primary school and secondary school respectively.

Professional Learning Courses, dealing with different topics, are organised annually and normally target a specific cohort of teachers. Attendance is mandatory for PE teachers hailing from State Schools while those employed by Non-State Schools may apply on voluntary basis. Guest speakers may also include specialists from overseas.

The Physical Education Department works in close collaboration with schools to develop a School Development Programme (SDP) specifically targeted towards fostering a healthy lifestyle among students, including through the provision of extracurricular activities. The sharing of good practice is also highlighted during such meetings and to this effect a social media network has been established in order for schools to demonstrate what is being done and, in most cases, is emulated by other schools.

As per above mainly through the formation of schools teams that will go on to participate in national interschool festivals and competitions organised by the Physical Education Department in conjunction with . It is to be noted that emphasis is laid upon participation rather than the competitive element.

During scholastic year 2016-2017 a pilot project entitled " " was launched by in collaboration with the St James Capua Hospital and the (ITS). Students from three different colleges will be participating in this project which consists of 360 minutes of more physical activity per week and healthy eating. Participating students will then be compared with students who did not participate in this programme, to evaluate the effectiveness of this project.

Tertiary Level

In tertiary education the [Institute for Physical Education and Sport](#) (IPES) of the [University of Malta](#) was established in 2002 with the aim of providing Certificate, Diploma, Degree Courses and professional development courses in Physical Education and Sport and to carry out research in the same area. It also services the requirements of the [Faculty of Education](#) in Physical Education. PE has been taught at University since the establishment of the Faculty of Education in 1978.

The Institute also strives to establish National and International links related to PE and Sport and to attract foreign students under European programmes. Current affiliations include the European Health and Fitness Association (EHFA), the European Network of Sport Science, Education and Employment (ENSSEE), the UK Association for Physical Education (AfPE), and the Federation Internationale du Sport Universitaire (FISU) to entice and encourage young people to participate in a programme that is both fun and challenging. In these programmes Young people are challenged in a variety of adventure activities including, amongst others abseiling and canoeing. In a multi-sport programme youth will be given the opportunity to play a variety of games and learn the rules, techniques and tactics. At the end of a course with SportMalta young people can choose to join an organisation and take up further training or else pursue the activity with their friends at a recreation level.

Collaboration and partnerships

[SportMalta](#) has teamed up with a local bank to introduce a financial scheme to revamp the [Youth Development Scheme](#). This scheme is intended to maximize the benefits from funds available for the development of young elite athletes who have not yet attained 18 years of age. The Youth Development Scheme shall focus on a maximum of 20 athletes are chosen according to their merits connected to their performance in their sport.

A project entitled '[Move 360](#)' was launched by [SportMalta](#) in collaboration with the [Health Promotion Unit](#), St James Capua Hospital and the [Institute for Tourism Studies](#) (ITS). Students from three different colleges will be participating in this project which consists of 360 minutes of more physical activity per week and healthy eating. Participating students will then be compared with students who did not participate in this programme, to evaluate the effectiveness of this project.

Also, national sport organisations are invited to visit schools in order to promote their sport, even if it does not form part of the fixed syllabus. It is strongly believed that such a collaboration offers a win-win situation as the students would be exposed to a new discipline through training from a qualified instructor while national sport organisations stand to benefit by luring students towards their sport, this increasing the basis of their fundamental groups.

The government is increasing financial incentives to tackle the lack of professional athletes, assists financial local councils to organise specific sporting activities, offers grassroots and elite level financial support and provides financial incentives for structured projects. Moreover it provides financial assistance to sport organisations.

Also an alternative source of funding is through EU funds which some organisations managed to tap successfully and have provided high quality programmes to students.

7.4 Healthy lifestyles and healthy nutrition

National strategy(ies)

The [Healthy Lifestyle Promotion and Care of Non-Communicable Diseases Act](#) was enacted with the purpose of establishing and ensuring an inter-ministerial lifelong approach favouring physical education and healthy balanced diets for a healthy lifestyle

and reducing the level of noncommunicable diseases throughout all age groups. The act stipulates that there shall be established an Advisory Council on Healthy Lifestyles, to provide advice on any matter related to healthy lifestyles particularly to:

- advise the Minister on matters relating to health, physical activity and nutrition;
- advise the Minister on policies, action plans and regulations intended to reduce the occurrence of noncommunicable diseases among the general public;
- upon the request of any other Minister advise such Minister on such matters as may be required in order to achieve the objectives of the Act;
- encourage an inter-ministerial approach to issues related to physical activity and a healthy lifestyle; and
- encourage a lifelong approach, from intrauterine life till old age, to physical activity and a healthy lifestyle.

The [Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Disease in Malta](#) was developed with the overall goal of developing a multifactorial approach to NCD prevention through tackling common risk factors targeting both at a population level, and also high-risk groups. The strategy aims to:

- Reduce the burden of NCD by targeting the following major chronic diseases: cardiovascular disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, mental ill-health and cancer;
- Reduce the burden of oral diseases;
- Improve the individual risk profile by focusing on: four lifestyle-related factors: diet, physical activity, tobacco and alcohol; and four biological risk factors: obesity, hypertension, hyperlipidaemia and carbohydrate abnormalities

'[A Healthy Weight for Life: A National Strategy for Malta](#)' seeks to address the many challenges we are experiencing to maintain a healthy weight across the population. It aims to halt the rising overweight and obesity rates and eventually to decrease the number of people suffering from this condition, subsequently reducing morbidity and mortality from related conditions and healthcare and productivity costs and aiming towards an improved quality of life. This covers the time-frame 2012-2020.

The [National Food and Nutrition Policy and Action Plan for Malta](#) covers the period 2015-2020, and addresses the main public health challenge facing the Maltese Nation in the area of nutrition and food security that are associated with diet-related noncommunicable diseases and conditions including obesity whilst promoting better health and wellbeing for the Maltese population. Its vision is to improve dietary habits to maximise health and well-being. Actions that specifically address young persons include:

- To promote plain water consumption in schools
- To reduce the availability and intake of foods high in fat, sugar, and salt in schools

The [National Sexual Health Strategy](#) was developed in 2011 following the launch of the National Sexual Health Policy. The principles guiding this strategy are underpinned by human rights and social justice principles. The core principles stemming from this approach are:

- Respect and care towards human life from its conception
- Individual rights and responsibilities in the context of the broader society
- Adequate, accessible and accurate information and education which is equally accessible to all members of the population, enabling informed choices
- Freedom from exploitation and abuse
- Freedom to express one's sexuality
- Psychological and physical expression of one's sexuality in the context of a sound family unit is valued as an essential cornerstone of a society while respecting diverse family structures and lifestyle choices

The [National Breast Feeding Policy and Action Plan 2015-2020](#) seeks to increase both the initiation of breastfeeding rates at hospital discharge and its exclusive continuation for the first six months. With many mothers falling into the youth age group of 15-30 years,

this is most relevant for young people. This policy updates the previous policy in line with current scientific evidence on the short and long term benefits of breast feeding to the mother and child, to achieve higher exclusive breastfeeding rates for the first six months and thereafter for breastfeeding to continue with appropriate complementary foods.

The [National Cancer Plan](#) aims to reduce incidence, prolong survival and ensure the best quality of life possible for cancer patients by ensuring the prevention of preventable cancers and the provision of high quality and equitable cancer services to all cancer patients in Malta.

Encouraging healthy lifestyles and healthy nutrition for young people

As already mentioned, there is are no top-level policies, programmes, projects or initiatives specifically targeting young people, however there are a number that encourage healthy lifestyles and healthy nutrition on a population basis.

Malta is participating in the [Joint Action on Nutrition and Physical Activity \(JANPA\) project](#). The overall aim of the project is to contribute to halting the rise of overweight and obesity in children and adolescents by 2020. In accordance with the policy actions that addresses overweight and obesity at European level and as a contribution to the [EU Action plan on childhood obesity 2014-2020](#). JANPA has focuses on aspects such as: the economic burden of obesity in national health systems, the multilevel and multi-sectorial and life-course approach for preventing health problems that originate from childhood obesity, sedentary lifestyle and unhealthy nutrition and related health problems, taking into account social inequality.

JANPA intends:

- to use the economic evaluation of the cost of overweight and obesity in children to encourage public actions
- to support a healthy start in life by promoting healthy nutrition and physical activity to pregnant women and families with young children, through identifying the successful multi-component interventions for different settings
- to promote healthier environments in schools and pre-schools
- to identify and share actions at local or national level regarding nutrition and physical activities.
- to share specific tools to promote healthy eating and drinking practices and improve the consumers information at national level.

[JANPA](#) is carried out by a network of [institutions](#) from 25 European countries plus Norway. The consortium plays a crucial role in the development of a joint effort to provide a valuable source of information: the project, through the identification, selection and sharing of best data and best practices within the 26 countries involved, concentrate on specific actions to give a strong contribution to the nutrition and physical activity policies regarding obesity in children and adolescents.

[JANPA](#) would like to reach primarily decision makers, educational bodies, schools, parents' & citizen associations and all the other professionals in the fields of nutrition, physical activity and obesity prevention that are working to implement the actions among the final target groups (children, mothers and families).

[JANPA](#) is a 27 months project, started on September 2015 and will continue until November 2017.

Malta is also part of another Joint action initiative called [Chrodis Plus](#), a three-year initiative (2017-2020) led by the Institute of Health Carlos III and is being funded by the European Commission and the participating parties. This Joint Action raises the awareness that in a health-promoting Europe – free of preventable chronic diseases, premature death and avoidable disability – initiatives on chronic diseases should build on four cornerstones:

- health promotion and primary prevention as a way to reduce the burden of chronic diseases
- patient empowerment
- tackling functional decline and quality of life as the main consequences of chronic diseases
- making health systems sustainable and responsive to the aging of our populations associated with the epidemiological transition

[Chrodis Plus](#) is a high level response from EU countries to step up together and share best practices to alleviate the burden of chronic diseases, as well as raise awareness and acceptance in decision makers on improved actions to combat chronic diseases. The pilot projects focus on the following areas: Health promotion & primary prevention, Integrated Multimorbidity care model, Fostering quality of care for people with chronic diseases, ICT based patient empowerment and Employment & chronic diseases.

Work has also begun on a project 'Establishing a National Platform to address Social Determinants of Health' which embarked on structured awareness building among all stakeholders in promoting healthier lifestyles in various settings such as schools, community, homes, work. The project offers specific capacity building sessions in intersectoral and cross sectoral collaboration. Tackling social determinants will reduce health inequalities through a Health in all policies whole-of-government and a whole-of-society approach, which is dependent on awareness among all sectors – policy makers, government, civil society and general public.

Actions of this project include:

- extensive review of health inequalities status in Malta, leading to development of a national action plan to promote healthier lifestyles and health and safety at work using different mediums.
- Establishment of partnership and network - working with a wider range of partners increases commitment towards tackling health inequalities
- Up-skilling and updating knowledge of professionals working within Health and care sectors through training.

Health education and healthy lifestyles education in schools

The area of Health Education includes Physical Education and Sport and Personal, Social and Career Development (PSCD) as well as aspects of Home Economics. The learning experiences that take place during health education activities aim at equipping learners with the necessary knowledge, competencies, skill, attitudes, and values which they need to maintain, promote and enhance physical, emotional, psychological and social wellbeing throughout their school life and as lifelong learners. Educators are encouraged to collaborate with parents and the wider community to ensure meaningful and long-lasting experiences in order to inculcate a deep understanding of 'self', 'other' and the impact of choices and actions upon individuals, communities and the environment. Health Education lays the vital foundation for dispositions necessary for lifelong learning.

One of the [Learning Outcomes Framework](#) of the [National Curriculum Framework](#) is Health and Physical Education which encourages learners to deal with the following topics:

- actively and enthusiastically participate in activities to develop important physical skills in an enjoyable way.
- learn the skills and rules of collaborative play, sportsmanship, leadership and competitiveness.
- participate in teamwork and develop team spirit.
- begin to appreciate the importance of a healthy body and physical well-being.
- become aware of and appreciate the changes that take place physically as they grow.

- experience activities that encourage social interaction, promote self-awareness, reflective behaviour, decision-making processes and consequential thinking to develop the necessary skills of emotional and social intelligence.
- begin to become aware of the importance of a healthy mind and body.
- understand the importance of nutrition and eating in a healthy way.
- discover their strengths and weaknesses.
- learn to understand and manage both positive and negative feelings.
- develop the important dispositions of active thinkers and learners especially during key transitions.

The legal basis for the Maltese [National Minimum Curriculum](#) can be found in the [Education Act](#). Education on Human Sexuality, Strengthening of Gender Equality and Wise Choices in the Field of Health are three of the Educational Objectives listed in the [National Curriculum Framework for All](#) which indicated the knowledge students and young persons needed to acquire and the skills and attitudes they needed to develop. The National Curriculum Framework for All continues to emphasise the need that students and young persons are equipped with the necessary knowledge, attitudes and skills which they will need to maintain, promote and enhance physical, emotional, psychological and social well being throughout their school life and as lifelong learners. The delivery of Sexuality and Relationship Education (SRE) lessons is also guided by the [Guidelines on Sexuality and Relationships Education in Maltese Schools](#), which highlights the skills, competencies and knowledge students should be exposed to for an effective SRE programme.

The delivery of sexuality and relationships education in Maltese Colleges and Schools is guided by the following principles:

- The acknowledgement that children and young persons are sexual beings and develop at different rates.
- The provision of a safe, caring, inclusive and non-judgemental environment that is conducive in promoting a positive attitude towards sexuality.
- The provision of a comprehensive and inclusive curriculum which takes into account the gender, age, orientation, cultural, religious, social and geographic backgrounds of children and young persons.
- The promotion of the importance of healthy relationships in the context of respect, intimacy, readiness, love and the law.
- The promotion of abstinence and postponement of sexual activity and sexual intercourse for children and young persons.
- The provision of age appropriate and scientifically correct information about harm reduction strategies to minimize the risks associated with promiscuous behaviour and drug use.

It is important to point out that SRE lessons in PSCD start in the primary sector with year 4 students (9 year old) and continue till the end of compulsory schooling (16 years old). Specific workbooks have been developed throughout the years to encourage parents or caregivers to have a greater role in the Education of their children in issues related to health and growing up.

In Malta, PSCD teachers are specifically trained at initial professional tertiary education training and qualify as PSCD teachers with a bachelor's degree (B.Ed Hons) or post-graduate certificate in education (PGCE). All PSCD teachers teaching in State Schools must have received this mandatory training. They are also obliged to attend training which is regularly organized by the Education Officers. This a list of the training carried out during the years in relation to SRE.

- 2007- 2008 - The Health Promotion Department coordinated and delivered a training course entitled 'Issues in Health and Sexuality'. Guest speakers covered the topics related to Sexual Health, STI's and the GU Report of 2006 and Contraception including Family Planning

- 2010 - A seminar 'Should I say that? Sexual Health Related Issues?' was organized for all PSD teachers and other stakeholders in conjunction with the PSD association.
- 2011 - The University of Malta delivered a seminar to all primary PSD teachers as part of their continuous professional development sessions on 'Issues related to Sexuality Education in Primary Schools'
- 2014 - A four day seminar on various issues related to SRE organized in conjunction with the Health Promotion Unit as part of the Strategy for Sexual Health
- 2016 - A three day inset course entitled 'Reflecting on Sexuality and Relationships Education Issues' for secondary PSCD, Religion and Science teachers.
- 2017 - Three day inset course entitled 'Reflecting on Sexuality and Relationships Education Issues' for secondary PSCD, and Religion teachers.

The main pedagogical tool used by teachers are the reflective workbooks for the different years. These compliment the resources and material used by teachers themselves. They also help to assess whether learning outcomes have been achieved.

The teachers are supported by continuous visits in class and lending of resources which they can use with their students. Resources include 'Contraceptive Kit', 'Testicular Cancer Kits' and 'Breast Cancer Kits'. The teachers can also make use of the PSCD website which is continuously updated and uploaded with resources which teachers might find helpful in class. Additionally, teachers also make use of the FRONTER VLE. On FRONTER, the PSCD room is used as electronic information repository from where teachers can have updated, important resources for them to download such as curricula and syllabi.

Peer-to-peer education approaches

There are currently no top-level guidelines, programmes projects or initiatives facilitating or relying on peer-to-peer education.

Collaboration and partnerships

There is no legal framework for collaboration with other entities however they had closely collaborated with the Ministry for Health, Elderly and Community Care to develop a Health Strategy 2011. As a result, various initiatives were taken up such as the training of educational personnel on issues related to SRE.

The research department also closely collaborates with different entities to distribute and collect health related questionnaires in schools like the [ESPAD](#) and [HBSC](#).

Raising awareness on healthy lifestyles and on factors affecting the health and well-being of young people

The [Directorate for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention](#) is the main public authority responsible for disseminating information about health which is generally targeted at population level, however includes aspects that are more commonly youth health related areas, such as sexual health.

No specific contact point exists which specifically targets young people and where young people can access to receive information.

No top-level framework exists for youth information and counselling structures other than through the support of [Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#).

Currently there are no major, largescale, youth-targeted information campaigns on healthy lifestyles and factors affecting the health and well-being of young people. These only exist at population level, targeting all age-groups, including young people.

Initiatives targeting the population at large are on-going and these include:

- Campaign to promote a Mediterranean diet

- Campaign on the benefits of drinking water
- Weight Management classes including aerobics, life skills and nutritional advice
- Smoking cessation classes
- Community outreaches throughout the year that target different areas of health such as anti-smoking and on sexual health
- Talks on depression given to health care workers, in conjunction with Mental health services
- Outreaching at University fresher's week on sexual health

National strategy(ies)

A National Strategy for Mental Health for the whole population is currently being discussed.

Improving the mental health of young people

The [Child and Young People's Services](#) (CYPS) at St. Luke's Hospital offers assessments and management for mental disorders in young people. This is done in a collaborative multidisciplinary way with young people and their carers, rather than guide them and tell them what is best to do.

With regards to assessments, there are two functioning multimodal pathways: one for Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD); and one for autism. These follow NICE guidelines.

Interventions include individual therapy for young people with depression, anxiety, bipolar and early onset psychosis and group dialectical behaviour therapy (DBT) such as emotional dysregulation, distress tolerance, interpersonal skills for young people suffering from emerging personality disorders and low moods and self-harm behaviour.

CYPS also offers psychoeducation to parents with children with ADHD and Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD), and to parents with children who have autism.

The Innovations Team 13-25 years, is for young people with multiple complex mental disorders. This team offers multidisciplinary intense intervention, including home visits and weekly reviews and therapy.

The Young People's Unit at [Mount Carmel Hospital](#) within Mental Health services uses a pre-admission system to screen patients and only admit young people between the ages of 12 and 18 with mental issues such as bipolar disorder, depression and autism with aggression issues.

The [Children Development Assessment Unit](#) (CDAU) at St. Luke's Hospital assesses and treats young people up to 16 years referred by consultants/doctors. Young people seen at CDAU are referred for various limitations and difficulties including Autism, Global Developmental Difficulties, Learning Difficulties, ADHD, Cerebral Palsy, Head Injuries, Down syndrome and other syndromes. Children may be treated individually or in groups. Group therapy includes the Sensory Motor, Handwriting, Prewriting, Perceptual Motor and the Alert Group. The CDAU aims to provide assessment, therapy and support to patients with a cognitive impairment and their families from a very early age. Children can be referred to the unit as early as, immediately after birth.

The assessment and treatment services at the CDAU, are provided by a multidisciplinary team of professionals consisting of paediatricians, nurses, psychologists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and speech and language pathologists.

[Children and Adolescents Psychiatric Emergency Service \(CAPES\)](#) offer mental health emergency service at Mater Dei Hospital.

[Kellimni.com](#) is a joint effort between SOS Malta, the Salesians of Don Bosco, Aġenzija Zghazagh and Aġenzija Appoġġ. This initiative is an online support service run by trained staff and volunteers reachable through e-mail, chat and smart messaging for support.

Through Kellimni.com, young people can, in an anonymous way, express their concerns and talk about the issues directly affecting them. Kellimni.com is aimed at young people who are suffering from any form of social exclusion, abuse, neglect, and/or psychological difficulties and are in need of immediate emotional, moral and social support.

[Youth in Focus](#) provides social work intervention to adolescents and young persons, aged between 13 and 18, with the scope of assisting them throughout their adolescence, by addressing their needs and empowering them to reach their full potential. There is a wide range of presenting difficulties and issues that the team encounter and deal with. These may include, anger management, mental health difficulties, turbulent relationships, alcohol/drug abuse & other addictions, promiscuity, time management, prostitution, criminal behavior, employment, petty crime, past traumas, poverty & homelessness, etc.

In 2017 the service offered support to a total of 211 young people and received 68 new cases.

[Embark for Life](#) (E4L) targets young people aged 15-24 years and supports them in finding employment. This service was already in existence as it was a service funded by the EU under the European Social Fund and, following its success, local funds were provided and the service started operating in July 2013. E4L contributes towards the community strategic guidelines by matching project participants to avail of the already existing schemes and educational/vocational training in the country, whilst supporting them in finding suitable employment. Disadvantaged young people are often likely to fall into the social benefit trap. Thus, by supporting them to lead a sustainable healthy lifestyle and have job security, their dependence on social assistance and the revolving syndrome of attaining support from various public services is minimized.

In 2017, the service worked with a total of 188 young people and received a total of 52 new cases. During the said year 42 young people were successfully engaged in employment and continued to receive the support of the workers within the Embark for Life team.

The Adolescent Day Programme is a 16-week programme spread onto 3 phases namely Bronze, Silver and Gold. Activities/sessions range from intrapersonal and interpersonal skills learning to more active outdoor sessions. The programme includes also a 2-week experience with the Armed Forces of Malta. The programme is aimed at young people with challenging behavior and addictions and helps in trying to provide them with a secure and stable lifestyle. Young people meet 4 times a week for a 3-4-hour session. In 2018, the programme received accreditation from the Education Department, to implement the Prince Trust Achieve Programme.

7.6 Mechanisms of early detection and signposting of young people facing health risks

Policy framework

In 2014 the [Ministry for Education and Employment](#) issued a set of guideline for '[Substance abuse Prevention Programmes and Interventions in State School](#)'. The guidelines focus on both informative and formative aspects so that young people are given the opportunity to develop the necessary skills to deal with such issues.

Stakeholders

The guidelines are directed to school teachers in particular those who teach Personal, Social and Career Development and School Support Staff such as youth workers, social workers working in schools and Learning support Assistants.

The guidelines also point out to other stakeholders such as [Sedqa](#), [Caritas](#) and [OASI](#).

Guidance to stakeholders

Continuous professional development of school staff and school support staff is necessary to improve their skills and provide a more specialized area of knowledge and service to students. This training is important if class teachers are to do follow-up sessions after programmes are delivered.

The training to school support staff will help teachers to identify early signs of drug abuse or misuse and refer as necessary.

Schools can make use of the different agencies and services to organize training for school staff and school support staff as necessary.

Target groups

The direct target group is the Secondary School Students cohort.

Funding

These drug education programmes are publicly funded

7.7 Making health facilities more youth friendly

As such, there are not many top-level policies, programmes, projects or initiatives that specifically aim to make health facilities more youth friendly. However there are initiatives that have been introduced to facilitate things, such as the introduction of free WiFi in public hospital areas, and for example the completely confidential and anonymous/un-identifiable nature of the Genito-Urinary Clinic which helps youths to feel more secure.

The Young People's unit at [Mount Carmel Hospital](#) opened its doors to adolescents with facilities which are more conducive to the wholesome well-being of these young adolescent patients, as one of a number of initiatives that have been under way to give equal priority to mental and physical health. The new facility has separate dormitories for male and female patients and a recreational area, including open-air spaces. The plan behind this was to change the outdated system at the young people's unit, which is set up in an asylum format in an old house to that of an acute ward whose indoor environment is more therapeutic and youth friendly.

7.8 Current debates and reforms

Currently there are no new policies being formulated by the Ministry for Health that are specifically in the field of youth health and well-being. However Malta is also in the process of drafting an HIV strategy as well as a Health-enhancing physical activity policy which once again will not be specifically youth or young person oriented, however they will be very relevant to this age-group. A new Mental Health strategy and action is also planned for the future.

Currently a draft version of the [national policy for sport in Malta](#) is available. The document focuses on three pillars: sports and education, sports participation, and sports

as a means of economic growth. Each section analyses the current situation for each pillar, followed by a number of targets and recommendations to achieve the desired results. This national sports policy is an attempt to provide ideas for the national stakeholders in sport, namely the government, through the Ministry of Education and Employment, the Parliamentary Secretariat for Youth, Sport and Voluntary Organisations and SportMalta, and all national sports organisations, to utilise in the period between 2017 and 2027, ensuring the administration of sport in Malta is target oriented. The aim is to drive all stakeholders to perform the required actions to reach the objectives set out by this policy and meet the aspirations of the Maltese sport movement and the citizens of Malta and Gozo. Emphasis is placed on the role of SportMalta as the national authority on sport and the prime motor for the promotion of sports participation across all sectors of society, including leisure activity and amateur and elite sporting competitions. It collaborates with the [Maltese Olympic Committee](#) (MOC). It also provides ideas for the growth of the sporting industry with the intention that Maltese sport may one day be financially self-sustainable and start contributing to the country's economy.

8. CREATIVITY AND CULTURE

Culture falls under the responsibility of the Ministry for Justice, Culture and local Government. A recent survey reported that the 16-24 and 25-34 year old cohorts have the highest rates of participation in cultural activities when compared to other age groups.

A number of creative artistic and cultural activities were created targeting young people such as Ziguzajg and Atrivisti. Also young people have access to the Culture Card which gives them opportunity to experience, at least, one cultural event a year.

8.1 General context

Main trends in young people's creativity and cultural participation

In the most recent [Cultural Participation Survey 2016](#) young people from the age groups 16-24 and 25-34 had the highest rate of participation in most cultural activities compared to other age groups. The below are a few salient points on young people's cultural participation based on these statistics followed by a summary of main statistical findings (total population aged 16+ for the survey amounted to 360,335):

- Young people registered the highest rate of internet use for cultural purposes. The most popular activities included listening to music online, watching movies and reading newspaper articles.
- The 16-24 age group had the highest readership rate (63% read at least one book in 2016).
- Young people are more likely to listen to music everyday
- Young people registered the highest attendance in most cultural activities from all age groups except for dance performances, museums and historical sites. As for art exhibitions it is the 16-24 age group that the highest attendance rate followed by the 45-54 age group. The most attended cultural activities by young people are cinema and live music performances.
- The 25-34 age group are had the highest rate of regular yearly attendance to traditional events from all age groups except for Good Friday/passion plays. Parish feasts are the most popular from the traditional events which is also the case for the rest of the population.
- As for engagement, the most popular cultural activity in which young people take part is creating digital artworks or animations for the 16-24 age group and crafts for the 25-34 age group.
- Young people are the most likely to have volunteered with a cultural organisation at some point in their life. However the 16-24 age group was the second most likely to have volunteered in a cultural organisation in the 12 months preceding the survey after the 35-44 age group.
- The 16-24 age group are the most likely to perceive themselves as being artists (28% of them do so) from all age groups.

The survey also revealed some barriers that young people face to participate in cultural activities. The 25-34 age group were the mostly likely to agree with the statement "Other commitments in my life prevent me from having enough time to go to arts or cultural events" with 69% saying they tend to agree or strongly agree. Also 16-24 and 25-34 age groups had the highest rate of agreement with the statement "I do not find enough of the kind of events I am interested to attend" (37% and 33% respectively).

Main concepts

Culture is not specifically defined in the [National Cultural Policy](#) and the document clearly acknowledges the difficulty and restrictions in defining culture. However, the principles guiding the policy indicate an open and evolving definition that is driven by the concept of culture as a network which bridges differences and which brings people and communities together, while providing opportunities for self-fulfilment through employment and economic activity. [Section 8](#) of the Maltese Constitution states that "The State shall promote the development of culture and scientific and technical research." Malta subscribes to the notions of culture adopted by international bodies such as UNESCO and the Council of Europe.

According to the [Cultural Heritage Act](#) cultural heritage means movable or immovable objects of artistic, architectural, historical, archaeological, ethnographic, paleontological and geological importance and includes information or data relative to cultural heritage pertaining to Malta or to any other country. This includes archaeological, paleontological or geological sites and deposits, landscapes, groups of buildings, as well as scientific collections, collections of art objects, manuscripts, books, published material, archives, audio-visual material and reproductions of any of the preceding, or collections of historical value, as well as intangible cultural assets comprising arts, traditions, customs and skills employed in the performing arts, in applied arts and in crafts and other intangible assets which have a historical, artistic or ethnographic value.

8.2 Administration and governance

Governance

Culture

The [Ministry for Justice, Culture and Local Government](#) has the role of initiating cultural policy developments and strategies through the Directorate. The [Culture Directorate](#) re-established in 2013. The aim is to ensure that the governance role of the [Ministry for Justice, Culture and Local Government](#) responsible for culture is fulfilled efficiently and expediently, and that important issues affecting the sector are brought to the attention of the competent political and administrative authorities.

The [Directorate's](#) main responsibilities are as follows:

- provision of policy, direction and advice on the arts, heritage, and audiovisuals;
- management of two programmes related to culture, arts and the creative industries, namely the Culture Pass and the Cinema Digitisation Scheme
- preparation of contributions for public debate and discussion;
- liaising with the relevant entities and stakeholders on all matters related to Malta's cultural and creative sectors.

Apart from the policy-determined functions listed above, the Directorate hosts the contact point for the Creative Europe Programme. The Creative Europe Desk Malta promotes awareness and understanding of Creative Europe. It provides free advice and support to applicants, and encourages organisations from Malta to become involved in successful applications.

- The [Ministry for Justice, Culture and Local Government](#) includes within its portfolio the responsibility for cultural heritage.

The [Cultural Heritage Act](#) and the [National Strategy for Cultural Heritage](#), launched during the 2006 National Forum, clearly define the responsibilities and competences of the entities.

The [National Forum](#) is an annual event, which brings together entities responsible for, or interested in, the preservation of cultural heritage, to discuss the state of cultural

heritage in general. The entities include the [Superintendence of Cultural Heritage, Heritage Malta](#), the [Malta Centre for Restoration](#), the [Committee of Guarantee](#), the [Catholic Cultural Heritage Commission](#) and other Religious Cultural Heritage Commissions, government departments and entities, [Local Councils](#), NGOs, the [University of Malta](#), and other educational institutions, specialists, consultants, and any other parties registering their interest in writing to the Minister.

The [Superintendence of Cultural Heritage's](#) mission is to fulfil the duties of the state in ensuring the protection and accessibility of Malta's cultural heritage.

Within this legal framework of the [Cultural Heritage Act](#), the [Superintendence of Cultural Heritage](#) was established and given the mission to ensure the protection and accessibility of cultural heritage. The [Act](#) also establishes the functions of the [Superintendence](#).

[Heritage Malta](#) is the national government agency, set up in 2002 under the provisions of the [Cultural Heritage Act](#), entrusted with the management of national museums and heritage sites and their related collections in Malta and Gozo, including seven UNESCO World Heritage Sites. It operates within four key aspects, namely management, conservation, interpretation and marketing. The agency is responsible for immobile heritage (e.g. museums and heritage sites), developing measures to ensure educational promotion, accessibility, conservation and the proper operation and marketability of Malta's vast patrimony in heritage sites, buildings, collections and museums, both locally and overseas.

One of the main initiatives of [Heritage Malta](#) is to attract more people from a young age to visit and interact with museums, thus fostering a love to the nation's rich cultural heritage.

The arts

Cultural governance in the arts operates differently from cultural heritage. [St. James Cavalier Centre for Creativity](#), the [Manoel Theatre](#), the [Malta Philharmonic Orchestra](#), [Pjazza Teatru Rjal](#) and the [Mediterranean Conference Centre](#) are the entities which organize the artistic events in Malta and Gozo.

[Arts Council Malta](#) is legally responsible for creating the necessary synergies between all artistic entities. Synergies between public cultural organisations (PCOs) are now facilitated through regular meetings chaired by the Minister and Valletta 2018 Foundation. A new board was set up in 2013 to oversee the implementation of the cultural infrastructure programme. This board has the remit of developing the cultural infrastructure programme leading up to Valletta 2018 as European Cultural Capital. The main focus is to develop a contemporary arts space, a music hall/centre for performing arts and creative clusters.

The [Arts Council Malta](#) operates through three specific directorates. The creation and development of strategies for the sector falls under the Strategy Directorate. The Directorate is built on five strategic focal points which include internationalisation and business development but also research, education and training and diversity and communities. These points also run through the council's national strategy for the cultural and creative sectors for the years 2016-2020, which was published recently.

The directorate also focuses on the management and development of the funding portfolio, which currently includes nine national funding programmes amounting to around 1.5 million euro. A brokerage team also assists operators in the cultural and creative sectors to maximize their potential.

The aim is the creation of a one-stop shop for culture, a service hub for those working in the sector, mainly characterized by micro-enterprises and individual operators.

[Arts Council Malta](#) promotes and supports young people's cultural participation and nurturing their creative potential through specific initiatives and funding programmes being [Kreattiv](#), [Professional Development Grant](#), [Artivisti](#). Other programmes which are

not exclusively aimed towards young people but are still open to their participation are [Premju tal-President għall-Kreattività](#), [Cultural Export Fund](#) and the [Malta Arts Fund](#).

Spazzju Kreattiv

The mission statement for [Spazzju Kreattiv](#) focuses on its role as a catalyst for the contemporary art scene in Malta, as well as a hub where people of all ages and from all walks of life can join in the enriching act of creativity. Run by a creative team, the Centre emphasises the need to foster aesthetic and cultural awareness among the younger generation and the socially and economically disadvantaged. The Centre houses a theatre, a music room, five exhibition spaces and an art-house cinema. [St. James Cavalier](#) is constantly seeking partnerships with Maltese, European and Mediterranean partners to develop innovative cultural projects. Relative autonomy is given to the running of the Centre and programming of events and activities is devised by the General Manager, with the assistance of programme coordinators. The Board of the Foundation Centre for Creativity monitors the work and approves yearly objectives set by the creative team.

Teatru Manoel

Built in 1732, the [Teatru Manoel](#) in Valletta is not only Malta's oldest theatre, but one of the oldest in Europe. Embellished over the centuries, this theatre is a true architectural gem. Today, the theatre is one of Malta's foremost performing spaces, offering a wide range of productions including opera, ballet, contemporary dance, music, children's performances and drama. Teatru Manoel manages an education programme named '[Toi Toi](#)' aimed towards young people which includes the Teatru Manoel Youth Theatre, Youth Opera and Toi Toi Schools project.

Malta Philharmonic Orchestra

In September 1997, the orchestra previously known as the Manoel Theatre Orchestra became an autonomous organisation under the responsibility of the Culture Ministry and was officially named as the National Orchestra of Malta. Ten years later the [Malta Philharmonic Orchestra](#) was launched on the 12th January, 2008. The MPO is also responsible for the orchestral training and professional development of young musicians, through the formation of the MPO Academy and the Malta Youth Orchestra.

Valletta 2018 Foundation

The [Valletta 2018 Foundation](#) is responsible for Valletta's journey towards the title of the [European Capital of Culture in Malta](#) in 2018. The Foundation was responsible for the bidding process starting with the pre-selection phase in January 2012, the final selection in October 2012 and the official declaration by the Council of Ministers in May 2013. The implementation of Valletta's 2018 is also responsible to leave a legacy of high profile cultural activity in and around the capital city of Malta.

Cross-sectorial cooperation

The Ministry for Justice, Culture and Local Government collaborates with a number of Ministries, agencies and entities in relation to the National Cultural Policy:

Ministry for Education and Employment

The National Archives of Malta

The National Archives of Malta aims to preserve the collective memory of the Maltese nation and protect the rights of citizens through ready access to essential evidence. The administration of the National Archives incorporates the general direction of the services, the coordination of accessions from government departments, and the representation in national co-ordinating bodies such as the National Archives Advisory Committee. Specialised advice on research, palaeography, and contacts with international research institutions are also carried out.

Malta Libraries

In May 2011, Parliament approved the legislation for the establishment of Libraries Malta, a national agency that absorbs the functions of the National Library and the Department of Libraries. The mission of the Malta Libraries is to ensure the collection and conservation of Malta's documentary heritage for present and future generations, to maintain and develop the libraries regulated under this Act, and to encourage reading for study, research, self-development and lifelong-learning information and leisure purposes.

Ministry for Home Affairs and National Security

Public Broadcasting Services

PBS owns TVM (the most popular TV station in Malta) as well as Radio Malta1 & 2 and Magic Radio.

Broadcasting policy in Malta is the responsibility of the Ministry responsible for Culture. It also sets guidelines for Extended Public Service Obligation programming (drama, current affairs, documentaries, children and entertainment programmes) funded directly by the Ministry. However, PBS falls within the portfolio of the Minister for Home Affairs and National Security who appoints the Board and the Editorial Board.

Malta Film Commission

The Malta Film Commission is a government organisation, established by Chapter 478 (Act No. 7 of 2005) of the Laws of Malta, with the role of advising the Minister responsible for the film sector on policies pertaining to the promotion, development and support of the audiovisual and film servicing industry. The board is composed of a chairman and four board members, including the Film Commissioner who is responsible for the implementation of Malta's audiovisual policy. The board of the Malta Film Commission has a largely non-executive function except for the approval of applications for both fiscal and financial incentives. Over the years, the role of the Film Commission has evolved from an entity that promotes the production of foreign films in Malta, to one that also develops the Maltese Film Industry through the management of the Malta Film Fund, the Malta Film co-production fund and training programmes.

Ministry for Finance

Apart from approving and monitoring all financial matters for all Ministries and Agencies, the Ministry administers the National Lottery Good Causes' Funds with beneficiaries including artists and cultural organisations. The Ministry for Finance also spearheaded the development of Malta's creative economy through the development of a creative economy working group and was instrumental in ensuring substantial increases in public expenditure for culture.

Ministry for the Economy, Investment and Small Business

Malta Crafts Council

The Malta Crafts Council set up by virtue of *Act XXI of 2000* is also another entity contributing to the development of the creative industries. The aims of the Council are focused on the encouragement, promotion and regulation of crafts and craftsmen and entrepreneurs dealing in Maltese craft products. The work of the Council is currently absorbed by the Commerce Directorate.

Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Trade Promotion

Cultural diplomacy falls within the remit of the MFA. Through the Cultural Diplomacy unit, Maltese Representations abroad are encouraged to facilitate cultural cooperation and presentation of Maltese culture. The Ministry is also responsible for the bilateral cultural agreements with other countries.

Ministry for Gozo

This Ministry is responsible for the administration of Malta's sister island. Through the culture department and Gozo Culture Council, it runs an exhibition space, supports amateur cultural organisations and programmes, as well as ad hoc artistic events.

8.3 National strategy on creativity and culture for young people

Existence of a national strategy

In December 2015, [Arts Council Malta](#) launched the five-year strategy [Create2020](#) for 2016-2020 with the vision of placing culture and creativity at the heart of Malta's future.

Scope and contents

[Create2020](#) is comprised of 5 goals and 70 actions addressing creative professionals, communities and public cultural organisations.

The goals include:

- Nurture creative potential and support its development into professional activity
- Invest in artistic excellence
- Connect Malta to the international artistic community
- Provide more opportunities for people to engage in creativity
- Build the capacity of public cultural organisations

With regards to young people the strategy aims to achieve the following through its goals:

- An increase in the number of young people studying the arts who are equipped with skills to manage their own business
- Continue bringing artists and schools closer together and emphasise the importance of working with and for young audiences and the elderly
- Development of a strategy working group involving all public cultural organisations to address programming requirements through audience development initiatives with a particular focus on young audiences, hard-to-reach communities and new audiences.

Responsible authority for the implementation of the strategy

The responsible authority is the [Arts Council Malta](#) (ACM). The ACM operates through three specific directorates. The creation and development of strategies for the sector falls under the Strategy Directorate. The Directorate is built on five strategic focal points which include internationalisation and business development but also research, education and training and diversity and communities. These points also run through the council's national strategy for the cultural and creative sectors for the years 2016-2020, which was published recently.

The directorate also focuses on the management and development of the funding portfolio, which currently includes nine national funding programmes amounting to around 1.5 million euro. A brokerage team also assists operators in the cultural and creative sectors to maximize their potential.

The aim is the creation of a one-stop shop for culture, a service hub for those working in the sector, mainly characterized by micro-enterprises and individual operators.

[Arts Council Malta](#) promotes and supports young people's cultural participation and nurturing their creative potential through specific initiatives and funding programmes being [Kreattiv](#), [Professional Development Grant](#), [Artivisti](#). Other programmes which are

not exclusively aimed towards young people but are still open to their participation are Premju tal-President għall-Kreattività, Cultural Export Fund and the Malta Arts Fund.

At the end of 2016 an [Arts Council Malta Annual Report](#), 64 actions from the 70 were evaluated as being completed or in progress. The report provides further details on the deliverables of each action.

Revisions/updates

No revisions or updates are yet available.

8.4 Promoting culture and cultural participation

Reducing obstacles to young people's access to culture

[Arts Council Malta](#) facilitates young people's access to cultural environments and foster their participation in cultural events and experiences through the following initiatives and funding programmes:

[Creative Communities](#) is a fund for community-led creative and artistic activities, primarily addressing local communities. It provides the opportunity for training, research and the development of artistic projects led by the community for the community, while celebrating cultural diversity.

[Creative Communities](#) aims to:

- Boost art and culture in the community through projects managed by voluntary organisations active in the local community
- Enable voluntary organisations to carry out projects related to culture and the arts in local communities
- Encourage active participation of local communities in the culture and arts sector
- Celebrate the cultural diversity found in the various towns and cities around Malta and Gozo
- Support projects that encourage cultural integration
- Strengthen and increase knowledge of local tangible and intangible heritage

The projects the fund invests in are:

- Informal Training and Development Programmes which boost the artistic development of the applicant organisation or which encourage the creative development of the community. This may include exchange programmes on a local and international level
- Research related to aspects of the collective memory of the community and/or cultural identity of the community
- Events, productions and/or exhibitions which encourage active cultural participation, boost the community's creative expression or appreciation of its history and identity

II-[Premju tal-President għall-Kreattività](#) provides recognition and support at the highest level of the State to organisations, especially those working with vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, to engage these groups in creativity and arts-driven projects and thereby increase their level of integration and engagement in society. The Award is managed by the Office of the President and [Arts Council Malta](#).

The Award aims to:

- Support organisations and institutions that target the social needs and well-being of the community at large, especially the more vulnerable sectors and hard to reach groups – with a special emphasis on children, youth, the elderly, hard-to-reach groups, people with different abilities, people from different ethnic backgrounds – through creativity and the arts

- Provide accessibility to disadvantaged groups to a wide range of quality art experiences and art-engagement activities, as well as act as a platform for young promising talent
- Incentivise the contribution of arts organisations towards community development and collaborative arts project

The [Professional Development Grant](#) is a new grant launched by [Arts Council Malta](#) as outlined in its Create2020 Strategy, with a particular focus on nurturing creative potential and supporting its development into professional activity. The grant programme forms part of the National Fund for Artistic Excellence

The [Professional Development Grant](#) supports the continuous professional development of Maltese or Malta-based artists and cultural operators who are active in the cultural and creative sectors and seeking to engage in short term professional training to improve their skills and advance their specialisation. The programme is also open to students engaged in the cultural and creative sectors, as long as the proposed training programme is not related to the full-time studies.

The programme reflects the drive towards further professionalisation of the sectors and the promotion of an entrepreneurial culture among creative professionals. It provides opportunities that can strengthen the knowledge base and strategies of cultural and creative enterprises. By investing in processes designed to improve the quality that is needed to generate artistic work of excellence, our goal is to support the development of a sustainable creative ecology, providing value added and job opportunities in the sector.

The [Kreattiv](#) funding programme engages educators and creative practitioners in dialogue and collaboration while encouraging students and educators towards further engagement within the creative sector. Kreattiv aims to bring creative practitioners into schools to work with teachers and students to inspire, learn and create in a collaborative and innovative way.

The aims of the fund are to:

- Initiate creative projects in classrooms, schools and colleges through collaborations between teachers, students and creative practitioners and, in so doing, to facilitate creative education as a key tool for holistic development.
- Introduce children and young people to potential careers in the cultural and creative sector, through selected collaborations with higher educational institutions.
- Embed cultural and creative entrepreneurship in schools as expressed in the National Cultural Policy.
- Encourage collaboration between educational institutions, the culture and creative industries, and other relevant sectors such as science and technology.
- Create employment opportunities for creative professionals.
- Encourage creative collaborations amongst educational institutions, and partnerships with public and private cultural operators.

The [Culture Pass](#) is an initiative of [Arts Council Malta](#) through which every secondary school student in Malta is given the opportunity to experience a minimum of one artistic production a year produced by creative professionals and presented through a curated [programme](#).

[Divergent thinkers](#) is an annual collective exhibition for young artists managed by [Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#) in collaboration with St James Cavalier Centre for Creativity. Divergent Thinkers creates a platform for young contemporary Maltese artists to exhibiting and promote their work. Young artists between 18 and 30 years old are invited to submit their artistic proposals and be considered for public exhibition. Selected artists receive an honorarium and participate in a curated exhibition. The works are included in an illustrated catalogue accompanying the exhibition. The artist with the best work are awarded with a residency in an international art centre. The winning artist and runner-up are given support to set up their own exhibition.

[It-Taħriġ Mużikali taż-Żgħażaġħ fil-Każini tal-Banda](#) is a project managed by [Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ](#) with the support of [Għaqda Każini tal-Banda](#) that offers financial assistance to band clubs to develop initiatives to bring more people into the teaching of music or to improve facilities which teach music.

The aim of [Music Quest](#) is to help young emerging singers, musicians and bands wishing to break into the music scene. Young artists between 13 and 30 years are submit a demo with an original song. Selected participants are given free coaching management and opportunities for live performance. The winner with the best demo song is given financial assistance to help with the professional production in a studio.

[Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ](#) together with [Kunsill Nazzjonali tal-Ktieb](#) organise the annual [Konkors ta' Kitba – Letteratura għaž-Żgħażaġħ](#) which is a writing contest that selects, rewards and publishes Maltese novels written for young adolescent readers. Submissions for this contest explore themes related to the different situations encountered by young people during this stage in their lives.

Organised by [Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ](#) the Malta Youth Film Festival is aimed at young people between 16-30 years old interested in filming, production, and cinematography. Young artists are invited to submit their short film productions (not exceeding 10 minutes) in any genre. The aim of the festival is to provide a platform for young people who are interested in this sphere. Through this festival interested young people can participate in a number of workshops that guide them from the submission process onwards. awards are given for seven different categories including best script, actors and direction as well as a final evaluation to each participant to help them improve in this art.

[Artivisti](#) is a collaboration between [Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ](#) and the [Arts Council Malta](#) and is intended to be a development platform for youth collaboration in the creative worlds. [Artivisti](#) is designed to recognise the talent of emerging young artists in the creative and artistic field, and to foster their potential, creativity, talent, initiative and social responsibility.

[Taħżiż](#) is a programme managed [Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ](#) and the [Għaqda tal-Malti](#) of the University of Malta. Taħżiż creates an opportunity for young writers between 18 and 30 years old to participate in a series of three intensive residential seminars on creative writing. At the end of the program have performed work during the seminars publication.

[ŻiguŻajg](#) is an annual International Arts Festival for children and young people organised by [Fondazzjoni Kreattività](#) with the support of [Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ](#) that aims to foster aesthetic and cultural awareness amongst the younger generation. ŻiguŻajg has a vision of positioning the creative arts for children and young people at the core of Malta's creative ecology. The festival aims to do this by showcasing professional arts specifically designed for children and young people in various disciplines at a high level of excellence. It does this through the development of a national repertoire of works for children and young people and by creating an accessible and inclusive artistic programme which increases cultural participation.

[Young Talent Fund](#) is an annual grant that supports the participation of young artists and performers in international platforms such as festivals, competitions, exhibitions and/or performances organised by [Arts Council Malta](#). The Young Talent Fund aims to support the mobility of young creatives to explore, build networks and to engage in international collaborations; to encourage young creatives to actively engage in international platforms and to facilitate and expose young talent to other international practices. The programme is also open to young creatives engaged in technical skills within the creative sectors, such as backstage crew, audio visuals, set design, marketing and management. The fund does not cover short or long-term professional training or workshops.

The [Young Artist of the Year Award](#) is a collaboration between [Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ](#) and the Arts Council Malta as part of the council's National Arts Awards.

[Malta Youth Film Festival](#) is an annual festival organized by [Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ](#) in collaboration with the [Malta Film Foundation](#) and the [Parliamentary Secretariat for Youth](#).

[Sport and Voluntary Organisations](#). The Malta Youth Film Festival is open to all film genres including animation, drama, thriller, music video, documentary and others. Film duration is not to exceed 10 minutes. Participants must be between 16 and 30 years. Awards include best script; best direction; most original concept; best actor; best cinematography; best overall film; public choice award.

[Għanja tal-Poplu Żgħażaġh](#) is a collaborative project between [Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#), Għanja tal-Poplu the Akkademja tal Malti and the Ministry for Education and Employment. This initiative is part of Għanja tal-Poplu a festival that celebrates Maltese popular song.

MalTeen is residency with a focus on young people organised by [Spazju Kreattiv](#) in collaboration with [Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#). This residency is an opportunity for young people aged 13-17 to participate in a short project with creatives that are sensitive to work with younger people. MalTeen is a year-long arts programme geared towards active youth involvement and empowerment.

Disseminating information on cultural opportunities

[Arts Council Malta](#) also organises regular information sessions on its funding programmes to inform the young people and the general public on the opportunities it offers as well as regular meetings, networking and matchmaking. These sessions entitled [ACMLab](#) taking place monthly serving as a platform to share information and good practices, debate cultural matters and facilitate networking between peers and other stakeholders. In these sessions young people have the opportunity to learn about opportunities available that may be offered by other organisations external to Arts Council Malta.

The [Youth Information Portal](#) a service provided by [Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#) is an online information service provided through the web portal of the National Youth Agency. The portal provides information on a number of topics, one of which is culture. Young people can also find information about events related to youth related to both young and even youth organizations.

Knowledge of cultural heritage amongst young people

[Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#) offers the [Karta Żgħażaġh](#) to all young people aged between 13 and 30. Karta Żgħażaġh forms part of the [EYCA Card network](#) and offers discounts to a number of cultural activities in 36 different European countries.

[Heritage Malta](#) introduced the [Heritage Passport](#) for all secondary and post-secondary school students. Students receive a card at their respective schools and will eventually receive a passport on their first visit to a Heritage Malta site or museum.

The passport will be stamped every time the students visit a site or museum. Ten stamps will entitle the student to a 'visa' which will allow them to access a site which would normally be closed to the general public. Twenty stamps will allow access to two of these sites.

When the passport is stamped 27 times, students will be given a special visa which will allow them to visit the Ғal-Saflieni Hypogeum UNESCO World Heritage Site with one adult for free or a gift from Heritage Malta.

8.5 Developing cultural and creative competences

Acquiring cultural and creative competences through education and training

Education for Entrepreneurship, Creativity and Innovation is one of the cross curricular themes at compulsory education level that have been developed as part of the [Learning Outcomes Framework](#), based upon the [National Curriculum Framework](#). Creativity is

generally recognised as both an innate yet often under-developed quality in young people, as well as a practical skill that helps to unlock an entrepreneurial disposition. It is a skill that can be taught and that everyone can aspire to.

The ability to be innovative and the confidence to look for innovative solutions to opportunities or problems encountered are best nurtured in a safe, supportive environment where this type of approach is encouraged, recognised and rewarded. Such a pedagogy requires allowing learners time to reflect on a situation and tap their resources and imagination to develop plans and solutions. It also requires time for implementation of new processes and the application of new ideas.

As part of the [National Curriculum Framework for All](#) and in line with the [Framework for the Education Strategy for Malta 2014-2024](#), the education authorities re-introduced vocational programmes at level 3 of the MQF in the final three years of compulsory schooling (year 9 to year 11) from ages 14 to 16. In 2011 vocational subjects at MQF level 3 were piloted successfully in a number of state and non-state secondary schools following an intensive teacher training programme. Subjects such as Textiles and Fashion and Media are expected to be also added to the list of vocational students which students can choose at state secondary schools.

A new secondary school for [Visual and Performing Arts](#) was set up in September 2017. The school provides a setting for the teaching of Arts, Music, Drama, Media Literacy and Dance to talented students who were chosen following an audition. Learning programmes were developed for each of these subjects, and appropriate teachers were chosen to teach the subjects. The new school will give students the opportunity to further their artistic talents without renouncing their proficiency in core academic subjects.

The Performing Arts Schools in Malta and Gozo are namely, the:

- [Johann Strauss School of Music](#)
- [Malta Drama Centre - Mikelanġ Borg](#)
- [School of Art](#) (Malta)
- [Visual and Performing Arts School](#) (Gozo)

The Visual and Performing Arts schools provide training in art, dance, drama and music. The main focus is the provision of a learner-centred curriculum which promotes creativity, innovation, participation, reflection, personal independence and the development of lifelong learners. These schools offer effective exposure to meaningful creative practices and educational experiences. They also play a significant role in developing future audiences that will appreciate and actively participate in national and international cultural events. The faculty currently consists of over 30 dedicated teachers who are all experts in their own creative fields. This makes it possible for the school to offer a broad range of subjects across the four disciplines. In fact, over 1,200 pupils were registered at the School in 2014/15, and they successfully attended one or more of the 46 evening courses offered over a span of a six-day.

Also, the Ministry for Education and Employment invited public officers in the grade of teachers/instructor to perform duties and give lessons in different subjects, including the following creative topics such as Peripatetic Art; Peripatetic Drama and Peripatetic Music.

University of Malta

The [School of Performing Arts](#) at the [University of Malta](#) brings together the disciplines of Dance Studies, Music Studies and Theatre Studies, and to provide a sound base for the development of new programmes of study together with more specialised fields of research. The school highlights the performance dimension of the respective disciplines, integrating the interplay between the technical and artistic aspects of performance and the ability to reflect critically on performance within an array of theoretical contexts in contemporary and historical practice.

The School of Performing Arts guides students to develop the skills, knowledge and expertise in their respective disciplines, pertinent to Malta's needs. This means that

programmes consider the integration of theoretical approaches with artistic practices, focusing on the education of concepts, frameworks and principles that support creative processes.

The [Edward de Bono Institute for the Design and Development of Thinking](#) at the [University of Malta](#) set up in collaboration with Professor Edward de Bono, the originator of Lateral Thinking offers a wide range of courses and events to University students and to the general public in the following interrelated subject areas: Creativity and Idea Generation; Innovation Management; Entrepreneurship; and Foresight.

The [Institute](#) offers the following study-units to a wide variety of faculties, institutes and centres at the University of Malta: design and Innovation, an introduction to creativity, critical thinking, communication and innovation, foresight – a tool for scenarios and visions, leadership and organisational innovation, innovation and entrepreneurship, psychology of creativity, a toolkit for thinking out of the box, creativity, innovation and digital technologies, innovation and entrepreneurship: practical approaches, creative and critical thinking for social intervention. These study-units help students develop skills and attitudes that are required in public and private organisations where key competencies, transferable skills and knowledge concerning creativity, innovation, entrepreneurship and foresight are considered to be crucially important. These skills and attitudes will enable students to recognise opportunities and will improve their future career options.

The [Institute](#) also offers a [Master degree in Creativity and Innovation](#). The course is an interdisciplinary programme designed to assist participants to expand their perception, employ creative skills, develop ideas individually and in teams, sustain a creative climate and manage innovation. It offers methods and processes which help to identify opportunities and cultivate appropriate skills and attitudes. It promotes imaginative, flexible and practical thought and action, and improves the ability to respond practically and creatively to problems and opportunities.

MCAST

The [Malta Collage for the Arts, Science and Technology](#) (MCAST) offers a vast range of courses which prepare students for the creative industries where students are trained with specific vocational and professional objectives. Within MCAST the [Institute of Creative Arts](#) provides underpinning knowledge and practical skills, giving students an introduction to specialisation spectrum on various aspects of the creative industries. These programmes are especially beneficial for those students who intend to work in the creative industries and range from Art and Design to different Media to fashion to Cultural Heritage Skills.

Malta Arts Scholarships Scheme

The [Malta Arts Scholarships Scheme](#) aims at providing more opportunities to support individuals who are exceptionally talented in the creation and/or promotion of professional in the Expressive arts. Theatre, music, dance, design, creative writing, film, the visual arts or any combination thereof shall be given priority.

Specialised training for professionals in the education, culture and youth fields

The [Institute for Education](#) has been established to develop and coordinate all continuing professional learning for educators within the [Ministry for Education and Employment](#). The Institute promotes high quality education for all educators and fosters learning communities of the highest standard, educational leaders at all levels and instills education with equity and social justice. The outcome is to provide a structured, coherent and comprehensive Continuous Professional Development (CPD) system by moving away from traditional methodologies and adopting a more transformative stance, which would lead educators to understand the importance of CPD and take responsibility for their own Professional Development. Additionally, [MCAST](#) has a strong system of professional

development of its staff, including a mandatory pedagogical course for academic staff going through the staff progression process at MCAST. The UoM also has a mandatory programme that provides professional development to academics seeking the tenured path.

Through the [Youth and Community Studies Department](#), students studying at the [University of Malta](#) to qualify as youth workers go through a unit called [Theatre and Young People](#). During this unit prospective youth workers will discuss Boal techniques for the Theatre for the Oppressed including: 'Forum Theatre', 'Invisible Theatre', 'Cop in the Head', 'Rainbow of Desire', and 'Legislative Theatre'. This study-unit will examine the applicability of this type of theatre when engaging with young people. A particular focus will be placed on theatre for and by young people, and the range of learning that takes place through young people's engagement in, and appreciation of this form of art.

Two training courses were organised for youth workers entitled [Interactive Media Project](#) and [Advanced Drama for Youth Workers](#). Participants in the Interactive Media Project participated in the training course the purpose of which was to help them acquire both knowledge and ideas on how the potential of media can be used constructively and effectively in supporting young people's development. During the Advanced Drama for Youth Workers, participants acquired skills on how to use drama to reach young people and help them in their various issues.

Providing quality access to creative environments

The mission statement for [Spazzju Kreattiv](#) focuses on its role as a catalyst for the contemporary art scene in Malta, as well as a hub where people of all ages and from all walks of life can join in the enriching act of creativity. Run by a creative team, the Centre emphasises the need to foster aesthetic and cultural awareness among the younger generation and the socially and economically disadvantaged. The Centre houses a theatre, a music room, five exhibition spaces and an art-house cinema. [St. James Cavalier](#) is constantly seeking partnerships with Maltese, European and Mediterranean partners to develop innovative cultural projects. Relative autonomy is given to the running of the Centre and programming of events and activities is devised by the General Manager, with the assistance of programme coordinators. The Board of the Foundation Centre for Creativity monitors the work and approves yearly objectives set by the creative team.

[Creative Communities](#) is a fund for community-led creative and artistic activities, primarily addressing local communities. It provides the opportunity for training, research and the development of artistic projects led by the community for the community, by encouraging the active participation of local communities.

The [Youth Village](#), ran by [Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#) provides space, facilities and support for young people and youth organizations to take up their initiatives. The purpose of the Youth Village is to create a non-formal learning environment and attract both young people and youth organisations to make use of the site and to attend or organize seminars, workshops and similar activities.

8.6 Developing entrepreneurial skills through culture

Developing entrepreneurial skills through cultural activities

In boosting young people's entrepreneurial skills, [Arts Council Malta](#)'s strategic tools is mainly business development with aim of creating an environment to:

- empower cultural entrepreneurs to act as agents of change and resourceful visionaries organising cultural, financial, social and human capital, and generating revenue from cultural activities;

- support creative practitioners to turn their artistic ideas and disciplines into sustainable economic activities

The actions supporting these aims are:

- Invest €700,000 in creative entrepreneurship;
- Invest €500,000 in games development;
- Create a comprehensive cluster policy programme;
- Manage a tax deductions programme for arts sponsorships;
- Foster connections between the creative industries and businesses;
- Collaborate with Malta Enterprise on bridging the gaps in areas of access to finance, skills and incentives;
- Collaborate with the respective entities to address legislation and regulations impacting the production of cultural events;
- Collaborate with the respective entities to address the legal status of the creative professional.

Support young entrepreneurs in the cultural and creative sectors

In 2017 [Arts Council Malta](#) launched the [Creative Industries Platform](#) to give creative entrepreneurs the skill-set required to launch their business idea. The scope of these platforms is also to provide support and services to help creative professionals improve their product and take their creative ideas to market. The funds received by successful applicants are therefore to be used to provide one or more sub-sectors within Culture and Creative Industries with access to professional mentoring, capacity building initiatives, networking, and export development opportunities.

8.7 Fostering the creative use of new technologies

New technologies in support of creativity and innovation

[Arts Council Malta](#) manages the [Malta Digital Games Fund](#) which aims to encourage the creation of digital games by small companies, small teams and groups of individuals based in Malta, support Malta-based creative talent that demonstrates long-term potential, strengthen digital games as a cultural product and promote Malta as a hub for digital design and innovation.

The [Ministry for Economy, Investment and Small Business](#) organises the annual [Malta Innovation Awards](#). The aim of these awards is to recognise the efforts of individuals and companies that have taken their ideas and concepts or their operational processes a step forward. Through these Awards, Government is encouraging the development of Innovative ideas and products which have a degree of potential that is both unique and sustainable. One of the awards is the Award for Creative Innovation. The Award rewards individuals or enterprises operating in the cultural and creative industries, which have an excellent combination of creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship. The contribution can be a new product, innovation of a process or a new way of working.

A Special Award is also awarded to the Emerging Innovator which is chosen by the Adjudicating Committee from all the submissions received for the three Categories. This award is furthermore divided into two sections according to age group i.e. over 30 and under 30.

Facilitating access to culture through new technologies

The [National Archives](#) is currently building a new website that opens access to much of the digital catalogues that it currently holds. The main targets shall be giving access to extensive digital catalogues during 2018 and all open items it holds in digital form by the end 2019.

The [National Archives](#) is also a partner in the [Archives Portal Europe](#), the largest European collection of arrival collections online. The archives aims to have 100,000 descriptive units and over 350,000 digital items on the European portal by the end of 2019.

A major project that the [National Archives](#) has started in 2017 is the Memorja. This is the first oral and sound archive in Malta, that shall be made available online for access to everyone. The aim is to have over 500 hours of sound clips describing the first-hand experience of historically important events on a wide variety of themes. All young people, who are doing historical research, are looking for artistic inspiration, need historical bases for fictional writing or scripts, or are just interested in Maltese culture, would have over 200 years of history at their fingertips. The five officers working on the construction of this portal are also young people.

The [Malta Tourism Authority](#) in collaboration with [Heritage Malta](#) have launched an application called the [Malta Culture Guide](#) with which one can explore the best cultural highlights of Malta and Gozo, and locate them on the map without roaming costs. The application gives practical information through which a person can plan for cultural events. It also features a free podcast.

As part of the activities that are taking place during European Capital of Culture 2018 in Valletta, the [Valletta 2018 Foundation](#) developed an application called [Valletta18](#) intended to connect users to the foundation in real time and offer them a more accessible experience. The application's purpose is to create value for Valletta18's audience and serves as a real time event guide for events taking place in various venues across Malta and Gozo. Moreover, using category selection during the signup process, a user can tailor event feeds displayed. A user who is interested in art will see an event feed that is different from a user interested in music. Users will have the possibility to add an event to their mobile calendars as a reminder to not miss the event and also to plan their schedules around it. A user can mark events as favourite to stay up to date with any event changes or updates. Favourites will be stacked away in a separate section for ease of future access. Push notifications will notify users of nearby events or newly added events.

Heritage Malta in collaboration with Google, launched an online platform called [Wonders of Malta](#) through which the public can access high-resolution images of artworks housed in the initiative's partner museums. Through this platform audience with Internet access or smart mobile technology have access to a number of artefacts from the National Museum of Archaeology can now be viewed online on [Google Arts & Culture](#).

[Heritage Malta](#) in collaboration with Google Expeditions also launched a virtual reality teaching tool that lets the user lead or join immersive virtual trips all over the world. Google Expeditions, allows for children from around the world to discover the beauty of the Megalithic Temples of Malta. Expeditions enable teachers to bring students on virtual trips to places like museums, underwater, and outer space. Expeditions are collections of virtual reality 360° panoramas and 3D images – annotated with details, points of interest, and questions that make them easy to integrate into curriculum already used in schools. Finally, visitors can discover a number of interactive stories and cardboard tours about the top wonders of Malta. For this exhibition, more than 27 cultural institutions under the remit of Heritage Malta created over 35 exhibits, sharing a total of 600 assets and more than 800 images online in collaboration with Google. The exhibition is available for free on the web and through the new Google Arts & Culture mobile app on iOS and Android.

[Heritage Malta](#) together with St Martin's Institute of IT launched the St Paul's Catacombs Oculus Project. The new extended site includes a visitor centre incorporating all amenities and interpretation facilities and a walkway which provides access around the site. The project also incorporated a number of scientific studies, including archaeological research, environmental studies and ground penetrating radar scans, the construction of new visitor facilities, 3D navigation through parts of the site, new interpretation of the

site and its different phases, and access to previously inaccessible areas and to a number of catacombs.

The site's interpretation includes a number of audio-visuals with information on various aspects of the site. Heritage Malta has also implemented an interactive immersive experience of the Catacombs through a setup of virtual reality goggles and 3D navigation systems using the Oculus Rift technology. Instead of viewing a screen in front of them, users are immersed in the Catacomb and able to interact with physical objects, sounds and other sensations that simulate a user's physical presence in a virtual or imaginary environment. The aim is to provide alternative accessibility to the catacombs. Allowing people with mobility problems to virtually access the St Paul's Catacombs

[Heritage Malta](#) has also launched [MUŻA](#), an Arts museum. This museum will be different to others as the visitor, apart from admiring the exhibited works of art, will be helped to understand and possibly even discover the muse of the artist in order for him to create, or try to create, a particular painting, sculpture or other artistic objects. In order for those who visit MUŻA to appreciate the works on display, it was decided to use technology in all its forms to understand the history of the artistic work, and to possibly even discover what inspired the artist. To this end, various professional artists worked on audio-visual material projects, some of them interactive, intended to allow the visitors to not only experience the museum, but to be critical, ask questions and possibly even provide them with their own muse to be artistic. The project is partially funded by the EU, as part of the European Regional Development Fund and the European Structural and Investment Fund 2014-2020.

8.8 Synergies and partnerships

Synergies between public policies and programmes

[Arts Council Malta](#) collaborates with other public entities from outside the cultural sector in order facilitate young people's participation in cultural activities. This is done through the following initiatives:

[Il-Premju tal-President għall-Kreattività](#) provides recognition and support at the highest level of the State to organisations, especially those working with vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, to engage these groups in creativity and arts-driven projects and thereby increase their level of integration and engagement in society. The Award is managed by the Office of the President and [Arts Council Malta](#).

A memorandum of understanding was signed in 2017 between [Arts Council Malta](#) and the [Malta Council for Science and Technology \(MCST\)](#). This MoU will serve to strengthen the collaboration between the two institutions and through its funding programmes and initiatives, [Arts Council Malta](#) shall encourage artists to pursue their interests in science and technology and to collaborate with individuals and organizations in these fields of knowledge. It will also encourage the integration of science and technology in the [Kreattiv](#) funding programme while [Esplora](#), which forms part of the MCST, shall provide mentorship and assistance to beneficiary projects that include a science and technology component. Esplora will be offering its premises to selected projects to exhibit their work where such events are open to the general public visiting Esplora as well as jointly collaborate in activities and events organised by ACM including the Malta International Arts Festival. Moreover, ACM and Esplora shall co-organise networking and information sessions whereby artists, public cultural organisations, educators and individuals in the fields of Science and Technology will have the opportunity to discuss and explore potential ideas for future projects or other collaborations.

Collaborations with [Malta Enterprise](#) on bridging the gaps in areas of access to finance, skills and incentives – In 2016, In collaboration with Malta Enterprise, ACM organised information sessions for newly registered self-employed in the cultural and creative sectors. The sessions focused on tax obligations, e-business, copyright and incentives

available from Malta Enterprise and were attended by around 50 people. 42 meetings were held, focusing on Malta Enterprise incentives, the majority of which were eligible to make use of [Microinvest](#). Additionally two creatives benefited from [B.Start](#) and one from the [Microguarantee](#).

The [Kreattiv](#) funding programme engages educators and creative practitioners in dialogue and collaboration while encouraging students and educators towards further engagement within the creative sector. Kreattiv aims to bring creative practitioners into schools to work with teachers and students to inspire, learn and create in a collaborative and innovative way.

The aims of the fund are to:

- Initiate creative projects in classrooms, schools and colleges through collaborations between teachers, students and creative practitioners and, in so doing, to facilitate creative education as a key tool for holistic development.
- Introduce children and young people to potential careers in the cultural and creative sector, through selected collaborations with higher educational institutions.
- Embed cultural and creative entrepreneurship in schools as expressed in the National Cultural Policy.
- Encourage collaboration between educational institutions, the culture and creative industries, and other relevant sectors such as science and technology.
- Create employment opportunities for creative professionals.
- Encourage creative collaborations amongst educational institutions, and partnerships with public and private cultural operators.

[Divergent thinkers](#) is an annual collective exhibition for young artists managed by [Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#) in collaboration with St James Cavalier Centre for Creativity. Divergent Thinkers creates a platform for young contemporary Maltese artists to exhibiting and promote their work. Young artists between 18 and 30 years old are invited to submit their artistic proposals and be considered for public exhibition. Selected artists receive an honorarium and participate in a curated exhibition. The works are included in an illustrated catalogue accompanying the exhibition. The artist with the best work are awarded with a residency in an international art centre. The winning artist and runner-up are given support to set up their own exhibition.

[It-Taħriġ Mużikali taż-Żgħażaġh fil-Każini tal-Banda](#) is a project managed by [Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#) with the support of [Għaqda Każini tal-Banda](#) that offers financial assistance to band clubs to develop initiatives to bring more people into the teaching of music or to improve facilities which teach music.

[Artivisti](#) is a collaboration between [Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#) and the [Arts Council Malta](#) and is intended to be a development platform for youth collaboration in the creative world. [Artivisti](#) is designed to recognize the talent of emerging young people in creative and artistic field, and to foster their potential, creativity, talent, initiative and social responsibility.

[Taħżiż](#) is a programme managed [Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#) and the [Għaqda tal-Malti](#) of the University of Malta. Taħżiż creates an opportunity for young writers between 18 and 30 years old to participate in a series of three intensive residential seminars on creative writing. At the end of the program have performed work during the seminars publication.

[ŽiguŽajg](#) is an annual International Arts Festival for children and young people organised by [Fondazzjoni Kreattività](#) with the support of [Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#) that aims to foster aesthetic and cultural awareness amongst the younger generation. ŽiguŽajg has a vision of positioning the creative arts for children and young people at the core of Malta's creative ecology. The festival aims to do this by showcasing professional arts specifically designed for children and young people in various disciplines at a high level of excellence. It does this through the development of a national repertoire of works for children and young people and by creating an accessible and inclusive artistic programme which increases cultural participation.

Partnerships between the culture and creative sectors, youth organisations and youth workers

[Creative Communities](#) is a fund for community-led creative and artistic activities, primarily addressing local communities. It provides the opportunity for training, research and the development of artistic projects led by the community for the community, while celebrating cultural diversity.

[Creative Communities](#) aims to:

- Boost art and culture in the community through projects managed by voluntary organisations active in the local community
- Enable voluntary organisations to carry out projects related to culture and the arts in local communities
- Encourage active participation of local communities in the culture and arts sector
- Celebrate the cultural diversity found in the various towns and cities around Malta and Gozo
- Support projects that encourage cultural integration
- Strengthen and increase knowledge of local tangible and intangible heritage

The projects the fund invests in are:

- Informal Training and Development Programmes which boost the artistic development of the applicant organisation or which encourage the creative development of the community. This may include exchange programmes on a local and international level
- Research related to aspects of the collective memory of the community and/or cultural identity of the community
- Events, productions and/or exhibitions which encourage active cultural participation, boost the community's creative expression or appreciation of its history and identity.

8.9 Enhancing social inclusion through culture

Fostering equality and young people involvement through cultural activities

[Creative Communities](#) is a fund for community-led creative and artistic activities, primarily addressing local communities. It provides the opportunity for training, research and the development of artistic projects led by the community for the community, while celebrating cultural diversity.

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- Events, productions and/or exhibitions which encourage active cultural participation, boost the community's creative expression or appreciation of its history and identity

The [Kreattiv](#) funding programme engages educators and creative practitioners in dialogue and collaboration while encouraging students and educators towards further engagement within the creative sector. Kreattiv aims to bring creative practitioners into schools to work with teachers and students to inspire, learn and create in a collaborative and innovative way.

The aims of the fund are to:

- Initiate creative projects in classrooms, schools and colleges through collaborations between teachers, students and creative practitioners and, in so doing, to facilitate creative education as a key tool for holistic development.
- Introduce children and young people to potential careers in the cultural and creative sector, through selected collaborations with higher educational institutions.
- Embed cultural and creative entrepreneurship in schools as expressed in the National Cultural Policy.
- Encourage collaboration between educational institutions, the culture and creative industries, and other relevant sectors such as science and technology.
- Create employment opportunities for creative professionals.
- Encourage creative collaborations amongst educational institutions, and partnerships with public and private cultural operators.

II-[Premju tal-President għall-Kreattività](#) provides recognition and support at the highest level of the State to organisations, especially those working with vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, to engage these groups in creativity and arts-driven projects and thereby increase their level of integration and engagement in society. The Award is managed by the Office of the President and [Arts Council Malta](#).

Combating discrimination and poverty through cultural activities

The [Kreattiv](#) funding programme engages educators and creative practitioners in dialogue and collaboration while encouraging students and educators towards further engagement within the creative sector. Kreattiv aims to bring creative practitioners into schools to work with teachers and students to inspire, learn and create in a collaborative and innovative way.

The aims of the fund are to:

- Initiate creative projects in classrooms, schools and colleges through collaborations between teachers, students and creative practitioners and, in so doing, to facilitate creative education as a key tool for holistic development.
- Introduce children and young people to potential careers in the cultural and creative sector, through selected collaborations with higher educational institutions.
- Embed cultural and creative entrepreneurship in schools as expressed in the National Cultural Policy.
- Encourage collaboration between educational institutions, the culture and creative industries, and other relevant sectors such as science and technology.
- Create employment opportunities for creative professionals.
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8.10 Current debates and reforms

In 2012, Malta's capital - Valletta - was declared European Capital of Culture (ECoC) for 2018. The [Valletta 2018 Foundation](#) is responsible for the implementation of the Cultural Programme which aims to foster citizen participation while promoting a European dimension. Valletta 2018 will enable the participation of European citizens and will form an integral and sustainable part of the long-term social, economic and cultural development of Malta. The [Cultural Programme](#) is built around four themes: Generations, Routes, Cities and Islands, with a number of activities specifically targeting young people. In conjunction with the Cultural Programme, the Foundation is developing a programme of consistent, accessible and comparable research and evaluation directly linked to culture.

The [Culture Directorate](#) is in the process of formulating a new culture policy which looks towards 2020 and beyond. It is the Directorate's intention to target young people in becoming more interested and participative in culture and arts, as well as to build a young cultural audience that appreciates more culture and arts.

9. YOUTH AND THE WORLD

The Ministry of Education and Employment, through Aġenzija Żgħażaġh and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Trade Promotion promote global issues among young people. Malta is particularly active in the Commonwealth and the Euromed platform.

Young people have the opportunity to learn about global issues both at school in the formal way or else through opportunities of non-formal learning.

9.1 General context

Main concepts

The geographic, cultural, and economic differences that long defined the world are fast disappearing and are being replaced by new realities, new opportunities and new challenges for young people.

Young people today are confronted with new developments in the ways and means of learning; often rapid economic change, social dislocation and growing, if uneven, affluence; increasing urbanization and rural isolation; and the affects of climate change and threats to the natural environment. Political instability and the shadow of ethnic and religious conflict and violence hang over the lives of many young people.

Geographic location, physical environment, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic background, religious beliefs, cultural background, and sexual orientation are some of the characteristics that differentiate young people. Consequently, young people require supports and different resources based on their differing characteristics, aspirations and needs.

Malta is of the view that in this global context empowering young women and young men is critical if they are to successfully overcome the challenges and avail of the opportunities that face them today.

Empowerment is based on respect for the individuality, worth and dignity of every young person regardless of their gender, beliefs, ethnicity, capacities, socio-economic background and sexual orientation; for the right to have their voice heard and to be informed on all issues that concern them; and for the right to determine their own future and happiness.

Empowerment upholds the human rights and responsibilities of young people. It fosters gender equality and equal treatment for all as well as social solidarity, civic engagement and volunteerism. It promotes good and responsible governance and strengthens the democratic process. It recognises the particular needs and aspirations of young people with disabilities, young people at risk, and those living in indigenous communities.

In its foreign policy, Malta seeks to support young people and youth organisations both in the Mediterranean region and further afield, while domestically it seeks to encourage young people to be opened to the wider world and to engage actively with its many peoples and cultures.

Youth interest in global issues

There are no surveys or studies that describe recent general trends on youth interest in global issues. A study entitled "[The Participation of Maltese Young People in the Voluntary Sector](#)" published in 2012 had noted that "the voluntary youth sector lacks the human resources necessary to see through its plans and seems to be experiencing difficulties in attracting the participation of young people. Voluntary organisations also seem to have a dearth of the basic resources they require to cope with the complex process to apply for

funding through EU programmes. Most lack legal, financial and a governance framework.” However, a number of youth organisations, such as [Malta UNESCO Youth Organisation](#), [MaltMUN](#), [Kopin](#) and [AIESEC](#), offer opportunities for young participants to get involved in global issues such as UN Millenium Development goals, Human rights and Sustainable development.

9.2 Administration and governance

Governance

Youth cooperation, participation and contribution to policy-making at the global level is promoted by [Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#), the national youth agency, in cooperation with the [Ministry for Education and Employment](#) and the [Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Trade Promotion](#). Malta also plays an active role at regional level - the Mediterranean region - in cooperation with the [EU-CoE youth partnership in the youth field](#), and at global level through the [United Nations](#) and the [Commonwealth](#). Aġenzija Żgħażaġh represents Malta in cooperation initiatives under the [Commonwealth Youth Programme](#) and in promoting the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment its strategic policy framework, the [Commonwealth Youth Civil Activism Network](#) and initiatives to professionalise the youth work sector.

Aġenzija Żgħażaġh collaborates also with the voluntary youth sector and NGOs such as [SOS Malta](#) and [Anna Lindh Foundation](#). Also youth organisations such as [Malta UNESCO Youth Organisation](#), [MaltMUN](#), [Kopin](#) and [AIESEC](#) participate in the development of policies related to young people’s contribution on global issues.

Cross-sectorial cooperation

[Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#), the national youth agency, in cooperation with the [Ministry for Education and Employment](#) collaborates with the [Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Trade Promotion](#) on policies related to young people’s contribution on global issues.

9.3 Exchanges between young people and policy-makers on global issues

Global issues exchanges with policy-makers at the domestic level

To mark the International Youth Day in Malta, [Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#) organises annual meetings and events for youth organisations at the Youth Village. The aim of such meetings is to initiate discussions on the International Youth Day theme. In 2014 as part of the [International Youth Day 2014](#), Aġenzija Żgħażaġh and the Maltese Olympic Committee organised a sport event to promote physical activity. In 2015 Aġenzija Żgħażaġh teamed up with Parliamentary Secretary for Research, Innovation, Youth and Sport and the Maltese National Youth Council to commemorate the [International Youth Day 2015](#) focusing on Youth Civil Engagement. The theme for the [International Youth Day 2016](#) was The Road to 2030: Eradicating Poverty and Achieving Sustainable Production and Consumption and young people had the opportunity to discuss with national policymakers ways on how to tackle the issue of poverty, especially with regards to young people. In 2017 as part of the [International Youth Day 2017](#) youth organisations attended a meeting at Aġenzija Żgħażaġh's Youth Village with the aim of initiating discussions on the International Youth Day theme and encourage young people to become agents for social change in their communities and contribution to peace building at international level. In 2018 as part of the [International Youth Day 2018](#), themed 'Safe Spaces for Young People' Aġenzija Aġenzija Żgħażaġh launched Polifest, a

12 month initiative, during which young people will have the opportunity to discuss with policy makers issues that effect their well being in safe environments.

Global issues exchanges with policy-makers at the international level

Commonwealth Youth Forum

The [Commonwealth Youth Forum](#) is held every five years, in parallel with the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), the last of which was held in Malta in November, 2015. [Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#) was actively involved in organising and hosting the event.

The [Commonwealth Youth Forum](#) runs in parallel with the CHOGM programme and its primary aim is to facilitate and encourage constructive dialogue between young people and heads of government in addressing youth related issues.

The overall theme of the Common Wealth Youth Forum was '[Adding Global Value...#WhatNext?](#)'. The forum discussed practical solutions and strategies focusing on how young people can contribute and add value to upholding and promoting the Commonwealth Charter, achieving the goals of the post 2015 development agenda to eradicate poverty and promote sustainable development in the Commonwealth

The [Commonwealth YouthCan Network](#) was officially launched in November 2015, following the conclusion of the Commonwealth Youth Forum. This initiative was possible through the collaboration of the Institute of Strategic Dialogue, the Commonwealth Youth Division and the Parliamentary Secretariat for Research, Innovation, Youth and Sport in Malta. The aim of this network is to upscale and optimize grassroots efforts to combat violent extremism of all forms. It enables an ongoing and international exchange of practices and know-how and fosters collaboration and co-creation between its members. Through the network, young people's needs and views can be represented to policy makers.

The Commonwealth Youth Forum concluded a number of outcomes targeted for action over the next five years under economic, environmental, social and political agendas.

Under the Economic agenda action is to be taken to promote open and fair access to science and technology; create pathways to sustainable development and promote decent employment; and support youth entrepreneurship for economic growth.

As part of the Environment agenda action is to be taken to address disaster risk reduction and management; balance production and consumption patterns with sustainable development; and transform climate change into relevant opportunities for the youth.

Under the Social agenda action is to be taken to re-assess access to quality education for youth; create alternate pathways for accessing medical and health services; and supporting and recognising Youth Workers.

As part of the Political agenda action is to be taken to counter the rise of global extremism; promote social cohesion and reconciliation; and develop and promote human rights across the Commonwealth.

Young Mediterranean Voices

[Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#) and the [Anna Lindh Mediterranean Foundation](#), have the strategic intent to deepen their cooperation in the domain of intercultural dialogue and youth development. This will be achieved through the development and establishment of a regional "Debate Academy" in Malta for Young Mediterranean Voices, the flagship debate programme that connects civil society, education and policy-makers across the Euro-Mediterranean region, and provides a pioneering platform to open doors for young influencers to shape policy and media narratives.

In preparation of this new stage of cooperation, the [Anna Lindh Foundation](#) and [Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#) piloted together a series of joint activities during the Foundation's previous multi annual phase (2015-2017). This included the piloting of the intercultural debate methodology for the new Young Mediterranean Voices programme on the occasion of the landmark MED FORUM in Malta (October 2016) and preparation of policy voice events hosted at the Malta House in Brussels on Youth, Peace and Security (June 2017), in the framework of the Maltese Presidency of the European Council.

MED FORUM in Malta was also the platform for the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs, Federica Mogherini, to announce the launch of the flagship debate programme Young Mediterranean Voices. As an immediate follow up, the EU's HR/VP Youth Dialogue Initiative was designed and launched with Young Mediterranean Voices in March 2017.

With co-funding secured from the European Commission (European Neighbourhood Instrument), Young Mediterranean Voices is also embedded in a series of new EU policies (joint communication on the European Neighbourhood Policy, first EU International Cultural Relations Strategy co-launched by the Commissioner for Education and Culture and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs) as well as referenced in a series of Ministerial frameworks and declarations (5+5 Ministerial, League of Arab States-EU Foreign Affairs cooperation). The programme is also embedded in cooperation agreements with UNESCO, the League of Arab States, and EUNIC Global (the European Union network of cultural institutes).

The inception phase for Young Mediterranean Voices officially began on 1st January 2018 and there is a regional operational plan now in place to 2020. The Foundation organised the inception "management retreat" and "strategic partners' forum" in Malta (May 2018), with the participation of representatives of regional institutions and the director of the National Youth Agency of Malta - [Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#).

The outcomes of the inception meeting included the strategic intent until 2020: (a) to refine the model of Young Mediterranean Voices, and its theory of change, as a model of pioneering practice that can be replicated worldwide in partnership with the United Nations and regional institutions; and (b) to reaffirm the central role of Malta as a unique space to connect youth agency and voice across the two shores of the Mediterranean.

This cooperation agreement is also aligned with the United Nations Strategy on Youth (Youth2030) adopted in September 2018, and the implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions 2250 and 2419, with a particular focus on moving from youth-led debate to youth leadership and advocacy.

9.4 Raising awareness about global issues

Formal, non-formal and informal learning

Formal Education

As part of the [National Curriculum Framework For All](#) the following courses tackling global issues are covered in formal education in secondary level schools during Personal, Social and Career Development; History; Geography and Social Studies.

Personal, Social and Career Development deals with issues such as migration, sustainable development, health, safety and wellbeing, democracy, domestic violence and LGBTIQ issues. This subject adopts a developmental syllabus whereby it tackles different themes at different levels of education. The recommended time is a 90-minutes lesson.

History is divided in History General (11-16 years) and History Option (14-16 years). During History General aspects concerning awareness and preservation of the world heritage in connection to Ancient Mediterranean civilizations, democratic rights, freedom of the press, right for education, gender equality within Malta's 19th and 20th century

political and social and economic history are tackled. During History Option the causes and consequences of international terrorism with special emphasis on the western world and the Middle East; the many facets of globalisation (e.g. political, economic, cultural, environmental etc.) causes and consequences of post-World War II regional conflicts. Such global issues are included in the curriculum and are treated as part of a wider theme. Global issues are taught in the form of case studies where students are taught how to compare and contrast the causes, events and consequences in relation to one another and bring out their own conclusions and generalizations.

Geography deals with global issues such as climate change, sustainable development, over fishing, soil erosion, land, air, sea pollution, acid rain, deforestation, and famine. These topics are covered separately in geography both in the general and option. These topics are covered together with other topics over a period of three years whereby students have one lesson a week if it is Geography general and 4 lessons if it is Geography option.

During Social Studies themes such as sex and gender, racial discrimination, democracy, human rights, consumerism, diversity, types of families, global democracy, fundamental human rights, consumers and poverty, education, global peace, cultures, Economy, tourism, democracy, WHO, social exclusion, mass media, sustainable development and migration. Such global issues are tackled during the subject. The allotted time is only 40 minutes a week from Year 7 till Year 11.

A number of initiatives also take place in a non-formal learning environment. Nature Trust (Malta) representing FEE (Malta) co-ordinates [EkoSkola](#). This initiative, which is part of Eco-Schools, aims at mobilizing whole schools to empower students to adopt an active role in environmental decision-making and action in their school and in their community. Schools that have successfully achieved this goal are awarded a Green Flag – a prestigious eco-label testifying the school's commitment to fostering sustainable lifestyles.

A number of initiatives also focus on developing young people's sense of identity and respect for other people's identities such as the No Hate Speech Campaign. The campaign's main objectives are to support human rights education activities for action against hate speech, to develop and disseminate tools for reporting hate speech, to mobilise partners to prevent and counter hate speech and intolerance both online and offline. [Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#) joined forces with [SOS Malta](#) and the [American Embassy](#) in order to create more awareness on a national level about the No Hate Speech Campaign and participated with a number of partners in a number of activities.

Aġenzija Żgħażaġh, in partnership with [SOS Malta](#), initiated a project, [Youth Upbeat](#), co-financed by the European Refugee Fund, that aimed to promote integration between different sector of Maltese society, in particular, young people and refugees, or people with subsidiary protection, by providing opportunities for interaction and awareness-raising through the use of culture and the performing arts as tools for social cohesion. Six 'Cultural Ambassadors', all having refugee or subsidiary protection status, who had a particular performing arts skill, shared aspects of their culture as well as personal stories during 24 interactive workshops in which almost 500 young aged 13 and 14 participated.

Youth-targeted information campaigns on global issues

In 2016 the focus of the No Hate Speech Campaign was on raising awareness among post-secondary school and university students in Malta. [Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#) raised awareness about the No Hate Speech movement in four (4) higher secondary schools in collaboration with [Studenti Demokristjani \(SDM\)](#), a student organisation. No Hate activities were also organised in post-secondary institution and at the university where young people were given the opportunity to voice their thoughts and concerns about young immigrants and refugees. Young people participating also had the opportunity in workshops to discuss the various attitudes that can be adopted when encountering and living near young immigrants and refugees.

A seminar entitled "[The Contribution of Youth Organisations in Sport](#)" was organised by Aġenzija Żgħażaġh in collaboration with Sport Malta as part of the National Sport Forum. During this seminar, physical activities were proposed as tools that youth workers and youth organisation can use to promote No Hate Speech Campaign and intercultural dialogue.

To mark World Refugee Day, Aġenzija Żgħażaġh, [SOS Malta](#), [Integra](#), [Migrant Women's Association](#), [African Media Association Malta](#) and [Spark 15](#) joined together for a march to take a stand against hate speech targeting refugees and a No Hate monument was erected by Youth Local Councils.

Information providers

[Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#) is the public authority responsible for providing information related to youth global issues. The agency uses its own [website](#), [youth information portal](#) and [newsletters](#).

Key initiatives

Aġenzija Żgħażaġh, in partnership with [SOS Malta](#), initiated a project, [Youth Upbeat](#), co-financed by the European Refugee Fund, that aimed to promote integration between different sector of Maltese society, in particular, young people and refugees, or people with subsidiary protection, by providing opportunities for interaction and awareness-raising through the use of culture and the performing arts as tools for social cohesion. Six 'Cultural Ambassadors', all having refugee or subsidiary protection status, who had a particular performing arts skill, shared aspects of their culture as well as personal stories during 24 interactive workshops in which almost 500 young aged 13 and 14 participated.

SOS Malta, in collaboration with Aġenzija Żgħażaġh offered a training course entitled '[Blogger Training on No Hate Speech in Malta for Young People: Developing participant's knowledge, skills and attitudes in human rights](#)' that focused on developing knowledge skills and attitudes in human rights and supporting participants to recognise and act against racism and discrimination in their online form of expression, while also supporting them to further promote human rights values among young people online.

Malta avails of the opportunity provided by International Youth Day to promote and raise awareness of national and global issues. The theme of International Youth Day 2017 was Youth Building Peace. There is growing recognition that young people are agents of change in conflict prevention and sustaining peace. International Youth Day 2017 was dedicated to celebrating young people's contributions to conflict prevention and transformation as well as inclusion, social justice, and sustainable peace. To mark [International Youth Day 2017](#) in Malta, youth organisations attend a meeting at Aġenzija Żgħażaġh's Youth Village with the aim of initiating discussions on the International Youth Day theme and encourage young people to become agents for social change in their communities and contribution to peace building at international level.

9.5 Green volunteering, production and consumption

Green volunteering

The [Ministry for the Environment, Sustainable Development and Climate Change](#) (MESDC) offers support to NGOs (including youth NGOs) engaged in environmental conservation and its promotion, through a financial scheme that incentivates them to undertake further environmentally-beneficial projects and initiatives. The objectives of this financial scheme entitled '[Environmental Funding Support Scheme for Voluntary Organisations](#)' are to:

- improve the state of conservation of the environment;

- promote responsible environmental management and raise awareness about environmental conservation and protection;
- assist in progressing good environmental management practices;
- restore degraded environments to their pristine condition;
- combat, and if possible, reverse environmental degradation and habitat deterioration;
- protect, rescue or rehabilitate indigenous wildlife (both terrestrial and marine);
- develop and foster closer collaboration on environmental initiatives between these organizations and the MESDC;
- strengthen the set-ups engaged in environmental conservation, environmental restoration and provision of environmentally-beneficial services;
- enhance the provision of community education programmes, including development of educational material, regarding the environment, its appreciation and its conservation;
- and/or otherwise contribute to any of the above-listed objectives, inter alia by serving as pilot initiatives for eventual environmental projects, or by catalysing or kick-starting any such project.

Green production and consumptions

As part of the [Ministry for the Environment, Sustainable Development and Climate Change](#) (MESDC), [Wasteserve](#) organises the [European Waste Reduction Week in Malta](#). The aim is to encouraging a wide range of audiences, including young people, to come up with practical solutions and activities that help to reduce waste or increase recycling, and promote these actions amongst peers.

The Thematic Focus for 2017 “Give it a new life”, which encourages reusing and repairing rather than throwing away. Behind this topic is the need to shift from a throw-away attitude towards more appreciation for products and the resources used. This year the EWWR will open your eyes about how easy it is to find value in something you thought had become useless.

9.6 Intercontinental youth work and development cooperation

Intercontinental youth work cooperation

Our White Seas

A number of seminars and symposiums have been organised on the initiative of [Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ](#) and the [EuroMed Youth Platform](#), together with the [Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the youth field](#), the League of Arab States and the North-South Centre on the promotion of the active citizenship and participation of young people in the south Mediterranean region with a focus on the:

- Development of a common cooperation framework on youth related issues for sharing good practices and information on youth partnerships and funding opportunities
- Capacity building for NGOs and youth organisations in the region, through cooperation, training and other online supports with a particular focus on youth exchanges, culture, education and human development issues, and
- Employing non-formal learning and youth work practice in the region to enhance the skills and competencies of young people particularly in relation to employment, entrepreneurship, participation and social inclusion.

A series of five international conference organised by the [EuroMed Youth Platform](#) under the general heading “[Our White Sea](#)” has also been held under the following themes:

- Youth participation for the promotion of peace, human rights and fundamental freedoms

- Empowerment of Youth Organisations and Youth-led Civil Society Initiatives
- Euro-Arab Youth Policy Co-operation.

As EU funding for the EuroMed Youth Platform has now ceased, it is no longer active. The North African region is encompassed by the EU's European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP).

3rd Commonwealth Conference on Youth Work

In 2018, [Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#) organised the 3rd Commonwealth Conference on Youth Work called "Crosscurrents Steering a course for youth work as a growth profession in the Commonwealth and in Europe". As part of both, the Maltese Islands are in the crosscurrents between the Commonwealth and Europe, and in the crosscurrents between how they interface and interact in the development of youth work as a growth profession. The conference addressed youth work across the Commonwealth and Europe while examining, connecting and looking to strengthen the status and standard of practice. The conference included exploration and discussion of professionalisation, its place, the potential and actual development of its meaning and contextual relevance globally.

The conference was organised in a context where recent policy initiatives and developments in the youth work field in both the Commonwealth and Europe provided an opportunity to discuss and consider together some of the salient features of youth work and how it can best be promoted as a professional practice that supports the education and development of young people worldwide. The conference discussed what are the values, policies, methods, practices and priorities that we have in common? Where are the points of difference, variation and perhaps counterflow? What can we learn from each other and how do we go about sharing our knowledge and experiences to enable us to work together in the future, alongside young people, to create a better world?

The conference aimed for:

- The promotion of discussion, debate and exchange between practitioners, Ministers and other stakeholders,
- Provision of opportunities for CAYWA members and others to liaise/work with senior government officials in developing potential actions/strategies to raise the quality of youth work in Commonwealth member states and Europe,
- Facilitation of the building of partnerships between European and Commonwealth where possible/appropriate.

The conference focused on four themes:

1. Developing and implementing policy and strategies

Many countries have legislation, policies and/or strategies in place aimed at or encompassing young people, their education and welfare; some include youth work. However, relatively few countries appear to have specific legislative provision, policies and or/strategies for youth work:relatively few have any 'legal' or agreed practice based definition of youth work.

2. Professionalisation, education and training

The education and training of youth workers in many countries appears to be a mix of the formal/non-formal approaches and/or accredited/non-accredited programs/courses; the relative balance between these differs from country to country and sometimes within national contexts. The professionalisation of youth work is often seen as a contentious issue, in terms of both what it means and implies and its impact on what has often been understood traditionally as the essentially voluntary nature and character of most youth work.

3. Ethics and young people's welfare

Ethical considerations are a feature of youth work in all countries; however, addressing issues such as the protection and safeguarding of young people varies globally. What might be considered to be ethical practice within any profession logically needs to be established by that profession. However, there are relatively few national professional

associations for youth workers, fewer still can claim to be the voice of the majority of youth workers in their context. This means what is ethical, in large part, has to be assumed, using guidelines from other contexts or referral to sources that are, in the main, generated more from academic settings, rather than by the involvement of and consultation with grassroots practitioners. Often, what passes for ethical consideration is closer to expressions of personal and group morality.

Nonetheless, it is common to look to apply ethical standards that can work to ensure appropriate behaviour/conduct, something that is central to the very concept of youth work. It is hard to see how such considerations might not be a defining feature of professionalisation. For youth workers, both professional and voluntary, standards of ethical practice and behaviour are essential for what they do.

4. Emerging issues and innovative responses

The old geographic, cultural, and economic differences that long defined the world have either vanished or are fast disappearing. These often oppressive or at least limiting structures are being replaced by new realities, new opportunities and new challenges for the youth of the world. Young people today are confronted with novel developments in the ways and means of learning; often rapid economic change, social dislocation and growing, if uneven, affluence; increasing urbanization and rural isolation. At the same time the effects of climate change and threats to the natural environment pose far reaching and complex challenges to future populations. Political instability and the shadow of ethnic and religious conflict, increasing social and economic inequalities, forms of radicalization, extremism and violence hang over the lives of many young people. How youth work and youth workers respond to these new challenges and opportunities will determine the future of youth work but also this can potentially play a positive part in addressing national, regional and global agenda and concerns.

Development cooperation activities

[Young Mediterranean Voices](#), was held in Malta in October 2016 under the [Anna Lindh Foundation's MED FORUM 2016](#), the largest youth, media and civil society gathering for intercultural dialogue across the MENA region and Europe. Following on the forum, [Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#), in collaboration with the Foundation, organised the first Young Mediterranean Voices debate following on the establishing of a debating hub in Malta affiliated to the regional programme.

Malta also has a number of protocol agreements on youth issues with a number of countries including Egypt (2010), Tunisia (2011) and Azerbaijan (2016). These protocol agreements aim to encourage and promote cooperation and joint actions and exchanges in the youth field particularly in such areas as:

- youth employment and entrepreneurship;
- youth participation in public and social life;
- youth organisation capacity;
- rights and the protection of young people;
- youth and health promotion;
- youth and environmental protection;
- youth and volunteering; youth and art/culture;
- youth and ICT.

In addition, short term mobility programmes are to be encouraged and good practices shared and promoted.

9.7 Current debates and reforms

In 2016 the [Commonwealth Secretariat](#) planned and implemented a 35 country baseline survey on progress in the recognition of youth work in selected member states. Malta

was one of the 35 member states of the Commonwealth selected to participate in the baseline survey.

The report of the baseline survey, [Youth Work in the Commonwealth - A Growth Profession](#), was published and presented at the Commonwealth Youth Ministers' Meeting in Kampala Uganda, in August 2017.

The survey aims to establish a baseline to inform planning and implementation of initiatives to professionalise the youth work sector at the Commonwealth Secretariat. The data will help identify national strengths and gaps in professionalising youth work in order to inform the Commonwealth's programme decisions in enhancing youth work sectors.

In the long-term, this data will serve as a beginning point for the setting up of a user-friendly data base on the status of professionalizing youth work across the Commonwealth that will help governments assess their status and move forward in strengthening processes to professionalize the sector.

This baseline serves as an inquiry into the professional identity and multiple practices of youth work, a look at the way in which its professionalisation has been approached in Commonwealth member states, and a preliminary look at how it has begun shaping and benefiting young people's autonomy, self-empowerment and productivity.

The study was conducted in 35 Commonwealth member states, including Malta, that were considered by regional consultants - comprising Africa, Asia, Caribbean, Europe and Canada, and Pacific - in relation to the extent of steps taken to professionalise youth work.

Out of the 35 countries in the sample, 12 countries (34%) had taken significant steps to professionalise the youth work sector. Only 11 (31%) countries, including Malta, had distinct national-level policies that recognised youth work. Twelve countries (34%), including Malta, had youth workers' associations that help safeguard the integrity and quality of the profession, and 25 (71%), including Malta, could claim at least a Diploma-level qualification for youth work professionals.

The survey report also considers regulating practices, professional validation and supervision, financial investment and remuneration and sets out general conclusions of the way forward for professional youth work in the Commonwealth.

Malta was seen as one of the richest examples of systematic state-supported youth work structures and was also identified as the strongest example of sustained links between legislation and policy and established and systemic structures and processes for youth work practice. While all four countries in the European/Canada region had legislation and policy relating to young people, only Malta had specific commitments to youth work in the form of a Youth Work Act. In terms of the actual advancement of youth work practice, the clearest correlation between policy and practice was seen in Malta.

GLOSSARY

Aġenzija Appoġġ - Social Work Provision Agency

Aġenzija Sapport - Social Work Provision Agency

Aġenzija Sedqa - Social Work Provision Agency

Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ - National Youth Agency

Alternattiva Demokratika Żgħażaġħ - Alternative Democratic Party Youth Movement

Artisti - A Culture Programme

Dar Osanna Pia - A shelter for homeless young people

Fondazzjoni Kreattività – A government entity created to take on the role of safeguarding a number of roles in Malta’s creative sector.

Forum Żgħażaġħ Laburisti - Labour Party Youth Movement

Karta Żgħażaġħ -European Youth Card

Kellimni.com - An online support platform for young people to through SMS, e-mails, chat or discussion fora.

Konkors ta’ Kitba – Letteratura għaż-Żgħażaġħ - a literature for young people funding scheme.

Kreattiv – A funding programme engages educators and creative practitioners in dialogue and collaboration while encouraging students and educators towards further engagement within the creative sector.

Kunsill Nazzjonali taż-Żgħażaġħ - National Youth Council

Kunsill Studenti Universitarji - Universtiy Students’ Council

Mid-Dawl għad-Dlam – An NGO set-up to help prisoners and their families undergo the prison experience with more dignity and self-esteem.

Moviment Żgħażaġħ Partit Nazzjonalista - Nationalist Party Youth Movement

OASI – Drug and alcohol rehabilitation Centre

Premju tal-President għal-Kreattività - A funding scheme launched by the Office of the President for creativity

Sir Sid Darek – A scheme to encourage tenants of apartments, houses and maisonettes Authority Housing and Property Department of the Government become home owners.

Spazzju Kreattiv – Malta’s National Center for Creativity

Studenti Demokristjani - Democratic Christian Students

ŻiguŻajg - A Youth Culture Festival

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[Artivisti](#)

[Arts Council Malta](#)

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