A shared vision for the future of young people

Draft National Youth Policy Framework
2015-2020
Discussion Document
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Documentation: A Shared Vision for the Future of Young People
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Foreword

The Government has taken a number of policy initiatives aimed at strengthening the delivery of effective services and ensuring quality outcomes for all. My Ministry recently published the Framework for the Education Strategy for Malta (2014-2024), the Strategic Plan for the Prevention of Early School Leaving, the National Employment Policy and The National Literacy Strategy for all in Malta and Gozo. The purpose of these policy initiatives is to put in place clear policy aims and objectives, with accompanying actions that are specific, measurable, realistic and time bound, and which will result in quality outputs and outcomes.

This National Youth Policy, which will cover the period 2015-2020, and is aimed at supporting young people in the 13 to 30 age group, is another of these policy initiatives. As with all such initiatives, consultation with all relevant stakeholders, including end users, is of vital importance. For any policy to be effective and successful it must be owned by all those concerned. The designers need to work closely with those that will implement the policy and these must in turn, take into account the impact that this policy will have on the end user. This necessitates joint ownership of the policy in both the design and implementation stage of such policy.

Following this launch, we will hold discussions with relevant Ministries, entities and stakeholders to finalise specific action plans for implementation. A consultation seminar for young people and the various stakeholders will be convened to discuss and consider the draft National Youth Policy.

I am confident that all those people, groups and organisations who work for and with young people and who are committed to help ensure both their well-being and development, will actively participate and contribute. National youth policy is as much their policy as it is the policy of my Ministry and the Government.
As part of the Government’s policy of greater democratic participation, equitable economic and social progress for all, and agenda for inclusive change, the Ministry for Education and Employment and the Parliamentary Secretariat for Research, Innovation, Youth and Sport, established a Policy Advisory Group in 2013 with the task of drafting a new national policy for and with young people.

The aim was to prepare a draft National Youth Policy (focusing on the needs and aspirations of young people aged 13 to 30) for public consultation, before submitting the agreed draft for Government consideration and approval with a view to publication and commenced implementation of the policy as of January 2015.

Consultation with all relevant Ministries, entities, the Church, the National Youth Council, Youth NGOS, stakeholders in the youth field and the broader public is an integral and indispensable part of this process. For this Government, National Youth Policy needs to adhere to and be informed by certain principles and standards. Its overall aims and strategic objectives need to be clear and achievable. The policy must be an inclusive one: one that all young people and those who work with and for them can shape and claim ownership of. It must be built on our knowledge and experience and also take account of youth policy developments and implementation at European and international level. There needs to be a focus on “action” resulting in “tangible outcomes” so that young people, their families and communities will see and reap the benefits of the policy. The positive role that the voluntary youth sector and other relevant stakeholders can play in actively supporting and implementing the policy must be defined and activated.

I am confident that this draft discussion document, will be further strengthened and enhanced as a result of public consultation and when presented to Government and published will be an effective and flexible instrument in helping young people meet their needs and fulfil their aspirations.
A shared vision for the future of young people
In considering and formulating a National Youth Policy for 2015-2020, three separate but interlocking pillars have been identified and these provide the background and context for the development of this policy.

The first of these pillars is the reality of the lives of young people in Malta today and how coherent policies, effectively implemented and actively supported, can help young people in meeting their needs and aspirations.

The second pillar is the development of youth policy over the past 20 years at both national and European level. The evolution and implementation of youth policy provides us with not only the aims and objectives towards which such policy should be directed, but also the underlying principles, methodologies, tools and administrative and financial supports.

The third pillar is the Government’s policy for greater democratic participation, equitable economic and social progress for all, and inclusive change. This policy is already evident in the Framework for Education Strategy for Malta (2014-2024), the National Employment Policy (2015), the Green Paper - A Framework for Poverty Reduction and for Social Inclusion (2014-2024), and the National Health Systems Strategy for Malta (2014-2020) as well as in a range of other policy initiatives in such areas as Literacy, Early School Leaving, the Youth Guarantee and the VOTE 16 campaign.
1.1 Voice and lives of young people in Malta

The 2011 Census indicates that there are 101,476 people between the ages of 13 and 30; of whom 52,288 are males and 49,188 are females.

Youth is often seen as a period of change or transition - from childhood to adulthood, from dependence to independence - where young people have to negotiate personal and socio-economic changes and to assume personal responsibility and social commitment. This transition generally encompasses the years from 13 to 30 and is often seen as a series of developmental phases.

Socio-economic background, age group, gender, religious beliefs, cultural background, ethnicity and sexual orientation are some of the characteristics that differentiate young people. Consequently, young people require different supports and resources based on their differing characteristics, aspirations and needs. There are, however, a number of commonalities in outlook and behaviours among the broad spectrum of Maltese young people.

As a result of a study of Maltese young people’s perceptions of themselves, their families, communities and society1, the voice of young people can be heard on a range of topics that includes their emotions and behaviours, family life and relationships, health and well-being, their attitudes to the people, professions and institutions that influence their lives, and the impact of new communication technologies and leisure.

Young people in Malta are, in general, well behaved and law-abiding, and have strong relationships with their parents and siblings. They are motivated, concerned with and supportive of others and display a need and a desire to communicate and foster human relationships.²

However, young people and all those who work with and for them also face a number of challenges.

Malta has the highest level of young people in the EU who are obese, with almost 9% of young people being affected³. While a majority claim to regularly or occasionally do physical exercise, a significant minority appear to never do any physical exercise.

A majority of young people appear not to smoke, while a majority appear to drink alcohol regularly or occasionally. However, the results of a 2011 study⁴ conducted in 35 European countries, indicated that, young people in Malta had a high prevalence of alcohol use, with six out of every ten young people purchasing alcohol. Also, other than cannabis, young Maltese people had the same lifetime prevalence of illicit drug use, when compared to the other participating countries. According to a national survey on sexual knowledge, attitudes and behaviours⁵, the mean age at first sexual intercourse among Maltese people is 18. About 41% of those aged 16 to 18 reported that they have had sexual intercourse at least once. Records from the Genitourinary Clinic (GU) report⁶ of 2012 show that 25% of women aged 15-25 years attending the clinic make use of contraception. 26% of the teenage group reported consistent contraception use. In the 16-18 age group the proportion reporting that they were under the influence of alcohol/drugs when having sexual intercourse for the first time was 6.3%.

In 2010, out of a total of 255 births to mothers under 20 years of age, 212 were outside marriage⁷. Teenage parents are often unmarried and unemployed. Socio-economic status is a major factor in teenage parenthood in Malta, with almost 50% of teenage parents having a lower socio-economic background.

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1 Agenzija Żgħażagħ (2012), Mirrors and Windows: Maltese young people’s perceptions of themselves, their families, communities and society
2 Ibid
3 European Commission (2012)
5 Directorate for Health Information and Research [Ministry of Health, 2012], Sexual Knowledge, Attitudes and Behaviour.
6 Carabot P. (2012), The Genitourinary Clinic Report, Malta: Ministry for Health, the Elderly and Community Care.
The proportion of Maltese 20-24 year olds who had completed post-secondary education, increased significantly from over 40% in 2000 to nearly 60% in 2011: the highest increase across 36 European countries. The gap in terms of gender is, however, one of the highest in the EU, with nearly 20% more male students than female students having completed post-secondary education in 2011. The proportion of women achieving qualifications at tertiary level was, however, slightly higher than that of men. Almost, 15% of young people aged 15-29 travelled abroad for learning or training purposes in 2011. Malta, however, has the highest rate of early school leavers in the EU at almost 22.3% in 2012.

The employment rate of Maltese graduates (aged 20-34) who had left education 1 to 3 years previously was over 90% in 2012. This was above the EU average of 77.7%. In 2013, 15% of young people (aged 15-25) were unemployed. Malta has the fifth lowest youth unemployment rate in the EU.

While interested and participative in religion, and somewhat less so in politics, young people appear to be less attracted by institutionalised religion and politics and more trusting of individuals than institutions. Only a small minority appear to have a strong commitment to a particular political party, while most appear not to be members of a political party. Significantly perhaps, while the level of membership of political parties appears to be low, the level of interest in politics appears to be much higher. This is evidenced by the fact that voting among young people, aged 18-30 years, is particularly high at 76%.

Voluntary and community work, cultural and artistic pursuits and sporting activities are not as common among young people as might be generally thought or desired. In general, young people appear to have a low level of commitment to organisations and NGOs, with less than 20% being members of youth clubs and organisations. Nonetheless, Malta has one of the highest levels of youth participation in NGOs in the EU.

In material terms, most young people live at home, have computers/laptops, mobile phones and access to the internet and spend half their money on recreation, shopping and travel. The growing importance and omnipresence of communication technology – the internet and mobile phones – in young people’s lives is most noticeable.

Most young people appear to spend their leisure time with family and friends. Watching television/DVDs, surfing the internet, social networking, and phoning and texting friends are also common pursuits.

While reading daily appears to be common among the majority of young people, a substantial minority do not appear to read on a daily basis. There also appears to be a preference for reading in English than in Maltese.

Among 15-30 year olds, 38% regularly go for a walk, bike ride or engage in other sport activities during their leisure time. However, the percentage of Maltese young people who regularly play sports during their leisure time is relatively low when compared with other European countries. With regard to cultural activities, Malta has one of the lowest rates in the EU of young people’s visiting museums and art galleries and attending theatrical, dance or opera performances. However, cinema or concert attendance appears to be more regular.

While most young people are benefiting positively from educational, social and health services, others

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8 European Commission (2012).
9 Aġenzija Żgħażagħ (2012).
11 Aġenzija Żgħażagħ (2012).
13 Aġenzija Żgħażagħ (2012).
have limited access to education and employment and are at risk of poverty, unemployment, gender inequality, poor health and substance abuse. Between 2008 and 2010, Malta had one of the highest rates of at-risk-of poverty or social exclusion among young people aged 18-24 in the EU. The at-risk-of poverty rate for those under 18 was 23% in 2012.

Maltese juveniles that appear in Court are, on average, likely to be aged 15, have committed offences against the person in the local area and be given a probation order. The number of cases in the juvenile courts in Malta and Gozo increased from 49 cases in 2006 to 110 cases in 2011. Young Maltese offenders are more likely to live in disadvantaged areas, come from difficult family backgrounds, suffer from peer pressure, and use retaliation as a means of rebellion.

In Malta, sexual orientation and gender identity are recognised as grounds of discrimination in European and national legislation. While evidence suggests that young people in general are tolerant towards LGBT people, a majority do not perceive gay and lesbian cohabiting couples as constituting a family. LGBT young people claimed to have “always” or “often” hidden or disguised their sexual orientation during their schooling.

There are some 5,000 young people aged 13-29 who have a disability. Maltese young people with disabilities feel that Maltese society still limits their choices in everyday life and that inclusion is limited.

Immigrants or asylum seekers who arrive in Malta are, on average, aged between 25 and 35. Less than 3% of Malta’s youth population is composed of those from outside the EU. In 2010, there were 431 male and 313 female migrants aged 15-24 years.

1.2 The development of youth policy in Malta and in Europe

It is now over 20 years since the publication of the first youth policy in 1993. Since then, Malta has experienced major changes, including membership of the EU in 2004.

Malta’s first National Youth Policy (1993), as well as the second policy document (1998) sought to provide young people and policy makers with clear objectives in the political, social and economic development of the nation. The then Ministry responsible, had responsibility for implementing the policy with the support of the National Youth Council and national and local voluntary youth organisations together with the Youth Section in the Education Department.

The National Youth Policy (2004), which followed on a Council of Europe National Report on Malta conducted by an international group of experts, continued with the themes and concerns of the previous policies. It aimed to ensure social justice; opportunity and equity; promote the authenticity of the identity, diversity and responsible independence of young people; as well as promoting active citizenship and participation. The most significant feature of the 2004 policy document however, was its reference to the need for establishing a National Youth Agency.

The following National Youth Policy (2010-2013) had a number of significant features. First, it was based on an extensive consultation with all the relevant stakeholders. Second, it established an instrument for policy implementation, Aġenzija Żgħażagħ, the National Youth Agency. Third, it emerged in a context of a new policy initiative at European Union level, the Renewed Framework for European Cooperation in the Youth Field.

20 Aġenzija Żgħażagħ (2012).
1. Background and context

(2010-2018). It was also the first policy approach to embed youth policy in the context of UN Conventions and European policy documents.

Before 2001, youth policy at European Union level focused mainly on the provision of specific programmes for young people; such as *Youth for Europe*, which was launched in 1988. However, the *White Paper on Youth* (2001), proposed further increased cooperation in the youth field and identified four priority areas: participation, information, voluntary activities and a greater understanding and knowledge of youth.

In 2002, a Framework for European Co-operation in the Youth Field was agreed. This new framework comprised three main strands:
- Young people’s active citizenship;
- Social and occupational integration of young people; and
- Inclusion of the youth dimension in other related policy areas.

Following on consultation and an impact assessment in all the Member States, the European Commission published a new strategy *Youth – Investing and Empowering* in 2008. As a consequence, a Renewed Framework for European Cooperation in the Youth Field (2010-2018) was adopted by EU Youth Ministers on 27 November 2009.

The overall objectives of the new framework for European cooperation in the youth field are to:
- create more and equal opportunities for all young people in education and in the labour market; and to
- promote the active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity of all young people.

In achieving these objectives, a dual approach is to be adopted involving the development and promotion of both:
- specific initiatives in the youth field - i.e. policies and actions specifically targeted at young people in areas such as non-formal learning, youth work, mobility and information; and
- mainstreaming initiatives - i.e. initiatives to enable a cross-sectoral approach where due account is taken of youth issues when formulating, implementing and evaluating policies and actions in other policy fields which have a significant impact on the lives of young people.

The main fields of action in which initiatives are to be taken are: education and training, employment and entrepreneurship, health and well-being, participation, voluntary activities, social inclusion, youth and the world, and creativity and culture.

The working methods to be employed in the context of European cooperation are: three year work cycles; agreed priorities and implementation instruments (knowledge building and evidence-based youth policy; progress reporting; dissemination of results; monitoring of the process; consultations and structured dialogue with young people and youth organisations; and mobilisation of EU programmes and funds). The particular role of youth work is also recognised.

There have also been a number of other significant developments at European level in relation to youth policy development. *Europe 2020 - A European Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth* identifies 10 flagship initiatives, one of which, *Youth on the Move*, seeks to increase the youth employment rate by making education and training more relevant to young people’s needs, encouraging more of them to take advantage of EU grants to study or train in another country, and encouraging EU countries to take measures simplifying the transition from education to work.

*Erasmus +*, the new financial support framework for education, training, youth and sport (2014-2020) focuses on learning mobility, cooperation for innovation and exchange of good practice, and support for policy reform.

The Council of Europe’s youth policy, *Agenda 2020*, prioritises human rights and democracy, living together in diverse societies, and social inclusion.
for young people. Particular focus is placed on ensuring young people’s full enjoyment of human rights and human dignity, empowering them to promote, in their daily lives, cultural diversity as well as intercultural dialogue and co-operation, and supporting the integration of excluded young people.

1.3 The Government’s policy for greater democratic participation, equitable economic and social progress for all, and agenda for inclusive change

While mindful of policy development in the youth field over the past 20 years at both European and national level, and seeking to build on past achievements, the Government, in light of its policy of greater democratic participation, equitable economic and social progress for all, and agenda for inclusive change, decided on a new approach to national policy development for and with young people. Accordingly, the Minister for Education and Employment and the Parliamentary Secretary for Research, Innovation, Youth and Sport, established a Policy Advisory Group with the task of drafting a new national policy for and with young people. The Policy Advisory Group were asked to prepare a draft National Youth Policy, for the Ministry’s consideration and for consultation with all relevant Ministries, entities, the Church, the National Youth Council, Youth NGOs, stakeholders in the youth field and the broader public.

In preparing and drafting this National Youth Policy framework, the Government emphasised to the Policy Advisory Group that the underpinning principles, overall aim, objectives, and headline features and components of the policy approach needed to be based on: inclusiveness, past achievements and good practices, identifiable outcomes for young people, clearly defined roles for relevant Ministries and entities, the European and international context, effective institutional capacity, research and knowledge building, and the positive role played by both the voluntary youth sector and the private sector.
A shared vision for the future

2.1 Vision
Every young person is respected, valued and listened to; is supported and encouraged in building fulfilling personal and social relationships and in developing their innate abilities and talents for the benefit of themselves, their communities and society.

2.2 Values
In seeking to realise this vision for the future of young people, the following overarching values shall inform all aspects of the National Youth Policy and its implementation.

- **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.
- **Sustained support** for all young people in developing their physical, intellectual and emotional capacities, skills, talents, strengths and abilities; promoting their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being, and in fulfilling their potential and aspirations and in meeting their needs.
- **Solidarity** of young people, families and communities so as to ensure young people’s active participation, sense of responsibility and caring, and capacity to build quality and life enhancing relationships with their parents, siblings, peers and elders in the home, school, workplace and community.
2.3 Principles
These overarching values will be underpinned and informed by the following principles.

Responsiveness. Key stakeholders such as Government, the Church, civil society, and the public and private sectors, as appropriate, should respond to the needs and concerns of young people and act in their best interests with a view to maximising their human potential.

Access. Young people should have user-friendly access to quality services and equality of opportunity with the aim of ensuring their active participation in society.

Participation. 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 the wider society.

Inclusion. Barriers and impediments to young people’s active participation in the political, educational, social and economic spheres should be removed and positive steps taken to help ensure that young people are not directly or indirectly excluded.

Integration. Key stakeholders such as Government, the Church, civil society, and the public and private sectors should cooperate and coordinate their efforts to ensure greater impact in supporting the development of young people and in helping them to realise their full potential.

Diversity. The diverse backgrounds and identities of young people should be recognised and respected and the positive role they can play in their emotional, social, cultural and spiritual development acknowledged.

Empowerment. Every young person should be enabled to take control of their own lives and to take responsibility for their decisions and actions, to forge their own future and to bring about positive social change.

Equality. Every young person is of equal value and should be given equal respect, dignity and opportunity, regardless of age, gender, origin, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, physical and intellectual capacity or economic status.
In realising this shared vision, the challenges and opportunities that face young people today in an increasingly globalised world need to be considered and a National Youth Policy has to be articulated and implemented to help young people meet these challenges and avail of the opportunities.

3.1 Challenges and opportunities young people face

The social and cultural boundaries that have long distinguishing childhood, youth and adulthood are becoming eroded and blurred. Children are physically developing earlier and faster and because of the internet, they have access to a virtual and limitless world outside their families and communities. They are growing up in a world more culturally diverse. The period of transition from childhood to adulthood is becoming extended and more complex. The transition from education to employment reflects these complexities in particular. Traditionally, young people moved from formal education or training to work, with gender and socio-economic background being major determining factors. Now education and work often occur simultaneously and re-training or lifelong learning is becoming a feature of adult life.

In terms of young people’s personal lives, the traditional pattern was for them to progress from their teens, through heterosexual courtship, to marriage and parenthood. While this is still the general pattern for most, more young people are today exercising a greater variety of choices about lifestyle, relationships and sexuality, leisure, and how they spend money. As a result, the family itself is undergoing change.

While young people today may have more personal freedom and choices than those of previous generations, the challenges and pressures are also significant. Peer pressure, parental expectations, exam stress, cyber bullying, health issues, substance misuse and the lure of a consumerist culture - what to buy, what to wear, what to listen to, what to watch - are but some of the challenges and pressures that confront young people today.

This trend towards greater individual freedom and choice is also apparent in areas of personal morality, belief systems and public behaviour. Young people are more sceptical and questioning of religious and political institutions.

However, for most young people in Malta these changes, challenges and pressures can be faced with confidence and resolution. Young people, in general, have firm emotional, cultural and spiritual foundations, which, together with the active support of their families and communities, the state, church and the wider society, enables them to face the future with confidence and resolve.
3.2 Aims of National Youth Policy (2015-2020)
Youth policy, as it has evolved at European and international level, has two inter-related dimensions.

The first of these is what are often describe as “core” services and activities such as non-formal education, participation, mobility and youth information. Youth work, in particular, is widely regarded as one of the main drivers of effective youth policy. Youth work is the process employed through which non-formal learning can come about. Youth work can be described as a planned learning programme, project or activity aimed at the personal, social and political development of young people based on their voluntary participation and on mutually respectful and supportive relationships between young people and adults and built on strong working relationship between the individual young person and youth workers.

Second, youth policy has a cross-sectoral aspect. This means that youth policy must encompass and contribute to those policy areas that impact on the lives, development and well-being of young people: education and training, employment, health, social welfare, arts and culture, volunteering, etc.

Having regard to the changing lives of young people in Malta today and the need for employing effective strategies in support of them, the National Youth Policy (2015-2020) focuses on all 13-30 year olds and has two related aims:

- to effectively support and encourage the young individual in fulfilling her/his potential and aspirations while addressing their needs and concerns, and
- to effectively support young people as active and responsible citizens who fully participate in and contribute to the social, economic and cultural life of the nation and Europe

3.3 Implementing National Youth Policy (2015-2020)
While all relevant Government Ministries and entities, in respect of their designated responsibilities, will be responsible for implementing the policy; overarching responsibility will rest with the Ministry for Education and Employment and the Parliamentary Secretary for Research, Innovation, Youth and Sport.

The policy will be implemented through two specific but interdependent strategies that complement the two inter-related policy aims.

Each of the two strategies will have a number of designated Action Plans under which specific actions will be undertaken and implemented over the six year timeframe of the National Youth Policy.
3.3.1 Strategy 1 -
Youthwork and services for young people

Services, programmes, projects and activities in support of young people and youth organisations

The Ministry of Education and Employment and the Parliamentary Secretariat for Research, Innovation, Youth and Sport will have over-arching responsibility for implementing this strategic approach, while Aġenzija Żgħażagħ will be responsible for strategic planning and day-to-day operational matters in implementing the strategy.

The focus in this approach will be on supporting the personal development and well-being of young people through the implementation of programs, projects and activities based on youth work and non-formal education, as well as on youth information, participation and mobility as set out in the following Action Plans:

**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.

Proposed Actions

- The physical infrastructure and human resource capacity of the Youth Activity Centres at Villa Psaigon and at Marsaxlokk, the Youth Cafes at Qawra, Msida, Cottonera and Valletta and the Youth Information One-Stop-Stop will be further developed and enhanced and opening hours will also be extended.
- In addition to the Youth Hubs at Sta Venera and MCAST, Youth Hubs will also be opened in colleges and in other higher secondary Institutions including Junior College, Higher Secondary School Naxxar/Gozo and the Institute of Tourism Studies.
- Youth services will be expanded to include secondary schools.
- A Youth Cafe and Youth Information-One-Stop Shop will be opened in Gozo.
- A Youth Village will provide a wide range of support services, programmes, activities and resources for young people and youth workers in a specially designed and centralised facility at St Venera.

**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 voice to be heard on issues that impact on their lives.

Proposed Actions

- The Youth Information web portal and the online support service *Kellimni.com* will be further developed and expanded.
- The European Youth Card will be promoted with a view to increasing the number of young people using the card to 10,000.
- The Structured Dialogue will be expanded with a view to involving more young people and youth organisations through campaigns, debates and vox pops on issues that impact on the lives of young people.
- An educational programme for Vote 16 will be undertaken and other projects will be initiated to increase the political awareness and the democratic participation of young people which will further strengthen the Youth Local Councils.
- Awareness raising on responsibilities and access to youth rights.
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 competencies and skills that enhance their future learning and employment prospects.

Proposed Actions
• The Youth Empowerment Programme at both national and local level (which includes projects in literature, visual arts, media, music, volunteering, specialised study, community activity and empowerment) will be continued, further developed and expanded to include new and innovative projects according to the needs of young people.
• Youth. Inc will be incorporated into Aġenzija Żgħażagħ and its activities orientated towards innovative and smooth transitions from school to further education and training and/or the labour market.
• The Professional Youth Work Act will be implemented, training will be provided for the professional development of youth workers and accreditation of youth work and non-formal learning progressed.
• Initiatives will be undertaken to integrate young migrants in schools and the community. Campaigns and educational programmes will also be conducted to increase integration and raise awareness of diversity.
• Outreach and detached youth work services will be put in place to address, in particular, the needs of socially excluded and at-risk young people.
• A range of initiatives and projects in literature, visual arts, media, music and local history, architecture and the environment will be undertaken to celebrate and contribute to Valletta 18.
• Support for youth organisations will be strengthened.

Additional actions, measures and initiatives under each of these Action Plans may be incorporated into the Annual Business Plans of Aġenzija Żgħażagħ for the years 2015-2020.
3.3.2 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.

All relevant Government Ministries and entities will be responsible for this second strategic approach. Aġenzija Żgħażagħ will have overarching responsibility for promoting, coordinating and facilitating such cross-sectoral approaches. The focus will be on cooperation and mutual support and endeavour between relevant Ministries and entities in providing programmes, projects and activities for the development of young people's potential, skills and competencies in the designated Action Plans as outlined below.

**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.

Suggested areas for cross-sectoral cooperation in education and training.

- Early school leavers and young people in NEET (not in education, training or employment).
- Literacy problems among young people.
- Effective transition from compulsory to higher and further education.
- Integration of young migrants into the educational system.


**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.

Suggested areas for cross-sectoral cooperation in health and well-being.

- Healthy lifestyles.
- Sexual health.
- Substance/Alcohol abuse.

**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.

Suggested areas for cross-sectoral cooperation in employment and entrepreneurship.
- Smooth transitions from education to employment.
- Promoting entrepreneurship through non-formal learning.
- Kick starting small businesses.
- The Youth Guarantee.


**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.

Suggested areas for cross-sectoral cooperation in arts and culture.
- Visual arts and media.
- Music and musicianship.
- Theatre.
- Writing and literature.

Lead Ministry: Ministry for Justice, Culture and Local Government.

**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.

Suggested areas for cross-sectoral cooperation in social inclusion.
- Integration of young migrants.
- Gender equality and awareness.
- Youth projects for young people with fewer opportunities.

Lead Ministries: The Ministry for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties, the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity and the Ministry for Home Affairs and National Security.
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.

Suggested areas for cross-sectoral cooperation in voluntary and community activities.
- Intergenerational awareness and support.
- Local youth environmental projects.
- EVS and youth exchanges.

Lead Ministries: The Ministry for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties, the Ministry for Sustainable Development, the Environment and Climate Change and the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity.

ACTION PLAN - Youth Justice
Develop and implement initiatives with a view to increasing awareness of restorative justice, reform in the Juvenile Court, avoiding institutionalisation with a particular focus on prevention.

Suggested areas for cross-sectoral cooperation in youth justice.
- Restorative Justice
- Juvenile Court
- Crime Prevention


ACTION PLAN - Gozo
Develop and implement initiatives with a view to addressing the specific needs of young people in Gozo.

Suggested areas for cross-sectoral cooperation in youth justice.
- New spaces for young people
- Projects and initiatives to increase the participation of young people

Lead Ministry: Ministry for Gozo.

Additional actions, measures and initiatives under each of these Action Plans may be undertaken by the relevant Ministries and entities, in consultation with Aġenzija Żgħażagħ, over the timeframe of the National Youth Policy (2015-2020).
4. Supporting this shared vision

In addition to the two strategies and accompanying Action Plans set out in the previous chapter, additional support measures, as outlined below, will be put in place to ensure that the National Youth Policy (2015-2020) is effectively implemented, monitored and evaluated in line with best international practice and that a solid research base on young people’s lives, experiences and aspirations is in place for the development of future National Youth Policy.

4.1. Resources and supports for youth policy

Resources and supports will be further developed and expanded over the period 2015-2020 with the twin objective of building the human and infrastructural capacities of the youth sector, including the voluntary youth sector, and providing it with the skills and capacities to support the development of young people.

Measures will also be put in place over the period 2015-2020 to further enhance and support professionalism and the highest standards of quality, efficiency and safety among national and local youth organisations. In this regard, the Youth Work Profession Act, 2014, will give formal professional recognition and status to youth workers, as well as regulating the profession and determining the qualifications and conditions under which youth workers can acquire such recognition. Further steps will be taken over the period 2015-2020, to engage with the private sector with a view to strengthening their support for and commitment to young people’s development. The private sector has a vital and distinctive role to play in supporting the development of young people, particularly in such areas as further education and training, entrepreneurship and labour market participation and progression.

4.2. European and international dimension

The period 2015-20 has particular importance in light of the fact that Malta will, for the first time, hold the Presidency of the European Union in the first half of 2017 and Valletta will be European Capital of Culture in 2018. The Commonwealth Youth Conference will also be held in Malta in 2015. 2014 also marks the commencement of the new EU financial support framework for education, training, youth and sport Erasmus+ (2014-20), and a mid-term work plan under the Renewed Framework for European Cooperation in the Youth Field will also be put in place over the period 2015-20.

Malta has been playing and will continue to play a proactive and positive role in the European youth policy field, through the active ongoing involvement with the European Commission, the Council of Europe and other European bodies such as the Youth Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth, the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (ERYICA), the European Youth Card Association (EYCA) and the European Youth Knowledge Centre (EKCYP).
The European Union Programme Agency (EUPA) will actively engage with Agenzija Żgħażagħ in maximising the benefits of Erasmus + for young people and the voluntary youth sector.

Malta’s Presidency of the EU (January-June, 2017) provides an unprecedented opportunity not alone to highlight the country’s achievements and ambitions in the youth field but also to make a significant contribution to shaping and determining the future of youth policy in Europe. Valetta 18 also provides the country with a showcase for promoting youth issues with the active involvement of young people and national and local youth organisations.

Additional measures and resources will be made available to ensure that Malta’s presidency of the EU, Valetta 18 and other international events will be both memorable and productive for young people.

4.3. Research and Knowledge Building
The Government is committed to ensuring that youth policy is knowledge-based and outcomes-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, employment, environment, rights and responsibilities, health and well-being, and justice.

4.4. Monitoring and Evaluation
The implementation of the National Youth Policy over the period 2015-20, will be monitored on an ongoing basis by the Ministry for Education and Employment and the Parliamentary Secretary for Research, Innovation, Youth and Sport. Agenzija Żgħażagħ will employ its Annual Reports to record progress in relation to Strategy 1, while an inter-Ministerial group will be set up to report annually on progress in relation to Strategy 2.

At the end of the period 2015-20, 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.