



NATIONAL YOUTH EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY 2015



Ministry of Education and Employment

www.education.gov.mt

NATIONAL YOUTH EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY

2015

Author and Researcher

Dr Andrew Azzopardi
Department of Youth and Community Studies,
University of Malta

Co-Author

Ms Doriana Bezzina
Ministry of Education and Employment

Coordinator

Dr Roberta Avellino
Ministry of Education and Employment



Ministry of Education and Employment
201 Strait Street
Valletta VLT 2000

Tel: +356 2568 9000
www.education.gov.mt

Commissioned by
Ministry of Education and Employment
in collaboration with the Employment and Training Corporation

CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

MR MARIO AZZOPARDI

Directorate for Lifelong Learning

MR STEPHEN CACHIA

MCAST

MR RAYMOND CAMILLERI

Directorate for Research and Development – Education

MR NOEL CARUANA

University of Malta

MR ROBERT CASSAR

MCAST

MR MARTIN CHETCUTI

ACCESS – Qawra

MS SANDRA CORTIS

Student Services Department

MS JACQUELINE DRURY

ITS

DR FRANCIS FABRI

Kulleġġ Santa Tereża

MR CLAUDIO FARRUGIA

ETC

MR JONATHON FERRITO

ETC

MR ADRIAN MAMO

ITS

MR CHRISTOPHER SCHEMBRI

Directorate for Research and Development – Education

MS MIRIAM TEUMA

Aġenzija Żgħażaġh

“The best way to appreciate your job
is to imagine yourself without one”

OSCAR WILDE

The bottom half of the page features a series of overlapping, wavy lines in various shades of blue, creating a sense of movement and depth. The lines are more pronounced on the right side and fade towards the left.

MINISTER'S FOREWORD



DOLORES CRISTINA
MINISTER FOR EDUCATION
AND EMPLOYMENT

At a time when societies around the world are experiencing financial turmoil and unrest, every nation owes it to its youth to offer a social fabric which is endowed with the necessary instruments that guarantee protection, trust and opportunities. The effects of the economic crisis, as well as demographic, technological and social changes, are all leaving an imprint on young people's transition from childhood to adulthood. The ultimate mission belonging to the National Youth Employment Strategy 2015 is to ensure that all young people, irrespective of the different qualities that characterise them, have a smooth journey endowed with learning, participation, and skills development.

Young people can be both the designers and the artifacts of decisions. This is the founding principle of this Strategy which throughout its drafting stages, has listened to what young people have to say about their prospects in the transition from education to the world of work, and from one job to another. With youth unemployment reaching staggering highs around the EU27 Member States, our country had to ensure that early intervention and prevention mechanisms, as well as active labour market policies, were strengthened to guarantee investment, competitiveness and continuity,

as opposed to uncertainty and instability. The youth unemployment rate in Malta, which is amongst the lowest in the European Union, the participation rate of seventeen year olds who choose to further their studies, and the significant decrease which our nation state proudly managed to achieve in the rate of young people who are neither in education, nor in employment or training, are success stories which encourage us to further strive for better results.

My Government is committed to strengthen the measures targeted at young people through a number of indicators listed in this Strategy which focus on employability, educational attainment, lifelong learning, active inclusion, formalisation of skills and job sustainability amongst others. It is acknowledged that the support and collaboration of all stakeholders are fundamental to the realisation of this Strategy.

The successful implementation of the National Youth Employment Strategy entails both challenges and opportunities. It is a mutual learning exercise through which young people, adults, employers, institutions and society at large will all bear fruit. Once we embrace the challenges and design the opportunities we will offer young people the present and the future they deserve.

CHAIRPERSON'S FOREWORD



DR SANDRA SLADDEN
CHAIRPERSON, ETC

The transition from education to employment is one of the key stages in a young person's life. We want to ensure that proper systems are in place so as to enable us to assist youth during this challenging journey in securing employment. Giving our young people the opportunity to direct their talent, enthusiasm and energy into sustainable and rewarding employment is critical to our country's future economic success. We want to ensure that our young people, irrespective of their background, gender or education, have the choices and chances to enable them to reach their full potential.

This strategy will drive a number of initiatives that will build upon the success that the corporation has already achieved in integrating youth in the labour market. However we are aware that that we must go further and that we need to have more holistic programmes that will support more young people. This strategy brings together the various actors and we have partnered with

them to ensure that young persons not already in work, education or training will have access to a suitable place in learning or training.

We recognise that our response to youth unemployment must go beyond education and training. Through this strategy we shall support young people and will make certain that funds are directed toward youth employment. Increasing youth employment in the current economic climate is undoubtedly a complex challenge that has no single solution and will require a range of different approaches and input from different areas. Through this strategy we have thus designed a number of different paths that will assist youth in seeking and securing sustainable employment. By working together across government, with different organisations and employers we can assist our young people into work and ensure they have the opportunities that we all believe they firmly deserve.

CONTENTS

1	Executive Summary.....	09
1.1	Rationalising the Strategy.....	09
2	The Strategy Context.....	11
2.1	Overview of the Economic and Social Context.....	11
2.2	Securing Access to the Labour Market.....	16
2.3	Review of Existing Policies and Programmes.....	21
3	Planning Action and Setting Priorities.....	37
3.1	Developing Priorities.....	37
3.2	Strategic Recommendations.....	39
3.2.1	Renewed Youth-Centred Investment.....	39
3.2.2	Early Intervention and Prevention.....	39
3.2.3	Facilitating Transition between Education, Training and Employment.....	42
3.2.4	Equal Access and Opportunities to Education, Training and the Labour Market.....	44
3.2.5	Sustainability of Jobs.....	49
3.3	Concluding Remarks.....	51

List of Figures

Figure 1	Youth Unemployment Rates.....	11
Figure 2	Gainfully Occupied by Sector.....	13
Figure 3	Youth not in Employment, Education or Training.....	15
Figure 4	Youth Unemployment by District.....	15
Figure 5	Employability by Education Attainment.....	16
Figure 6	Unemployment by Level of Education.....	19
Figure 7	Employability Factors.....	20
Figure 8	Long-term Development of ESL Rates in all ET2020 Countries.....	32

List of Tables

Table 1	List of Initiatives by ETC and Outcome.....	22
Table 2	Duration of Unemployment for Youths.....	26
Table 3	17 Year Old Student Participation in Further and Higher Education.....	28

4	Annex	
4.1	Short Description of key overall indicators.....	53
4.2	A Statistical Portrait.....	56
4.3	Action Plan.....	57
4.4	Consulted Stakeholders.....	64



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 RATIONALISING THE STRATEGY

Young people are a dynamic and heterogeneous social group deserving particular attention both at the national and European level, in a multiple of mutually reinforcing sectors, including employment, education and social welfare. The National Youth Employment Strategy 2015 will focus on the 15-24 age group; a cohort which experiences a number of significant transitions both at the individual and institutional level. In 2010, the population of 15 to 24 year olds in the EU represented 12.1 per cent of the whole population¹. In Malta, the number of persons aged between 15 and 24 in 2010 stood at 57, 931² representing approximately 14 per cent of the total population.

Focusing on the inter-relatedness and inter-dependency of economic and social policies, this Strategy aspires to develop a number of thrusts which address the challenges owing to macro- and micro- constraints. The aim is to design a holistic framework that yields both immediate and long-term returns. The heterogeneity of young people and the fluctuating labour market are the main variables delineating a Strategy with multiple policy objectives that focuses on a multiple group of policy clients. The target groups of the National Youth Employment Strategy 2015 include:

- Young job-seekers;
- Inactive Youth;
- Young people who are in the labour market.

The horizontal priorities characterising the vision of this Strategy include the successful integration of youth into employment, social and economic inclusion, adequate support and the acquisition of education attainment. These priorities are also conveyed in the European Union 2020 Strategy, the National Reform Programme, Vision 2015 and Beyond, a number of European Union council conclusions and resolutions, and national policies. To this effect Member States are committed to adopt concrete active labour market programmes targeted at those groups within society which are most at risk of becoming detached from the education system and the formal economy.

The piloting of this Strategy has been construed within the international and national context surrounding the Maltese society. Central to this theme is the volatile environment in which young people interact, characterised by the worst economic crisis of the European Union, the effects of globalisation as well as the technological and demographic demands which societies around the world are requested to address. It is recognised that education, training and the acquisition of employability skills are an integral part of sustainable economic growth and social development. This reinforces the demand for young people to be equipped with the necessary knowledge and competencies needed to adapt to a competitive and fluctuating labour market.



The priorities which the National Youth Employment Strategy focuses on are:

- Supporting school completion;
- Encouraging educational attainment and formal validation;
- Facilitating the successful reintegration into education, training or employment of young people who are disengaged or at-risk of being disengaged;
- Providing the learning tools which ascertain that young people are equipped with the necessary employability skills;
- Ensuring the sustainability of young people's entry into the labour market by addressing temporary, precarious and informal work arrangements.

The initiatives proposed in this Strategy are split into five main categories:

- Renewed Youth-Centred Investment;
- Early Intervention and Prevention;
- Facilitating Transition between Education, Training and Employment;
- Equal Access and Opportunities to Education , Training and the Labour Market;
- Sustainability of Jobs

This Strategy acknowledges that the entry patterns into the labour market and the choice of transition from school to further and higher education are dependent on a number of variables. These include:

- Qualifications, Skills and Competencies attained through schooling and training;
- Learning Experience in Compulsory Education;
- Individual and Family environment and aspirations;
- Active Labour Market Programmes;
- Guidance and Counselling.

These indicators highlight the significance of investing in programmes which combine employment policies with targeted interventions in other policy areas. It

is recognised that for young people to have smooth transitions from schooling to employment at different periods in their life, there needs to be a collective commitment from all stakeholders. The risk factors of inefficiency in intervention are considerable individual, economic and social costs translated in loss of output, lower economic growth, higher unemployment incidence, inferior competitive advantage, lesser earnings, precarious employment, lower quality of life, lesser sense of achievement and lower social cohesion.

With youth unemployment in Europe reaching staggering highs, and with increasing economic demands shifting towards jobs which are more services, knowledge- and skills-intensive as opposed to low-qualified occupations³, European countries are expected to devise recovery and job-centred inclusive growth plans. Malta is not immune to these challenges and although figures indicate positive trends in youth unemployment when compared to the European Union 27 Member States, a number of constraints still remain. Being responsive to these challenges requires a forward-looking strategy which puts education, training and employment at the heart of national policies. This Strategy forecasts that the most effective entry path towards successful integration into the labour market lies in early intervention, basic education, vocational training or higher education, support schemes, apprenticeships, traineeships, entrepreneurship and alternance programmes between school and work.

Whilst recognising the importance that States should give to labour supply, it is also critical that the demand side is addressed, by stimulating job creation, investing in new sectors and ensuring that all social partners work towards enhancing the prospects of young people. Focusing on both demand and supply requires a multi-disciplinary approach where policy areas interact towards common objectives.

1 European Parliament

2 Eurostat, Population Statistics

3 CEDEFOP (2010). *Skills Supply and Demand in Europe medium-term forecast up to 2020*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. Available from Internet: http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/Files/3052_en.pdf

THE STRATEGY CONTEXT

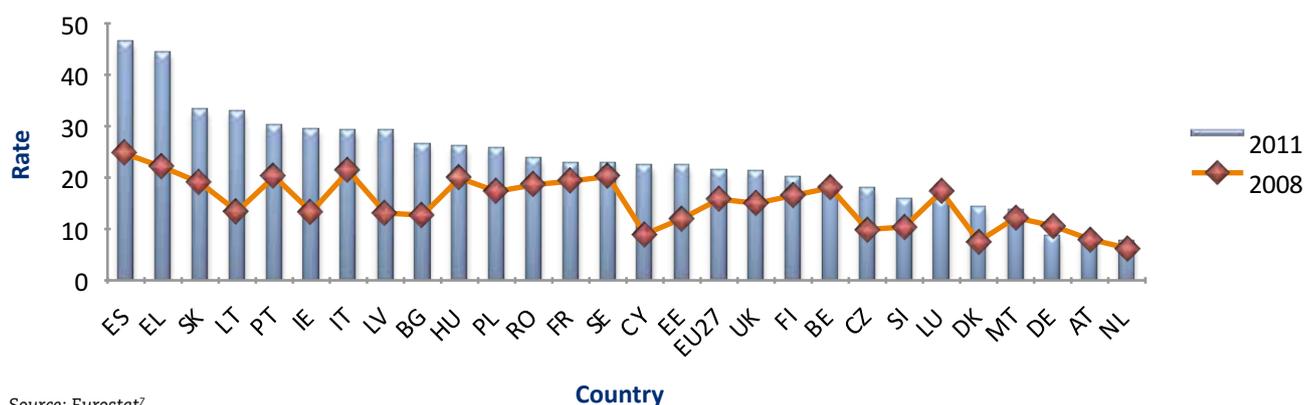
2.1 OVERVIEW OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONTEXT

Economies around the world are operating in environments characterised by uncertainties. Financial risks are producing significant spill-over effects to the real economy, in particular to the Euro area member states. Statistics indicate that several cross-country differences were recorded in the impact of the economic crisis with Southern Europe countries being more severely hit than other EU countries in terms of job losses. Austria, Belgium, Germany, Luxembourg and Malta are the only countries which have registered an increase in total employment over the 2008 rate⁴, with Malta having an employment rate of 61.5 per cent

in 2011 when compared to 59.1 per cent in 2008. In contrast the EU 27 employment rate registered a decline from 70.3 per cent in 2008 to 68.6 per cent in 2011⁵.

The outlook in youth unemployment at EU level is even more worrying with an overall increase of 5.6 percentage points from the 2008 EU27 rate (15.8% in 2008; 21.4% in 2011). Malta's youth unemployment rate stands at 13.7 per cent (13.7% - male; 13.7% - female) as compared to 12.2 per cent in 2008 (13.7 - male; 10.4 - female) and 16.6 per cent in 2004 (15.9% - male; 17.4% - female)⁶. As Figure 1 indicates, there are large differences between Member States, with only two countries registering a decrease in youth unemployment from their 2008 rate.

Figure 1: Youth Unemployment Rates (15-24), 2008 and 2011



Source: Eurostat⁷

Within the EU 27, youth unemployment suffered a sharper rise than the overall unemployment with the latter standing at an average of 9.7 per cent (2011) from the 2008 rate of 7.1 per cent, signifying a 2.6 percentage point increase. Malta's total unemployment rate registered the same levels as the 2007 rate with 6.5 per cent of the labour force being unemployed. This signifies an increase from the 2008 figure of 6.0 per cent and a successful drop from the 2009 and 2010 unemployment rates which stood at 6.9 per cent⁸. These figures denote that the ratio of the youth unemployment rate to the adult unemployment rate is twice as much, highlighting young people's vulnerability in the labour market. The sensitivity of young people in employment may be due to several factors. These may include:

- Lack of experience, with young people competing with other job-seekers who have more employment experience;
- The mismatch between young people's skills and the skills needed by employers;
- An increased probability of temporary jobs and of non-renewal of temporary contracts;

In consequence, countries are urged to restore confidence in citizens and in young people in particular through a multi-pronged approach geared towards growth and resilience.

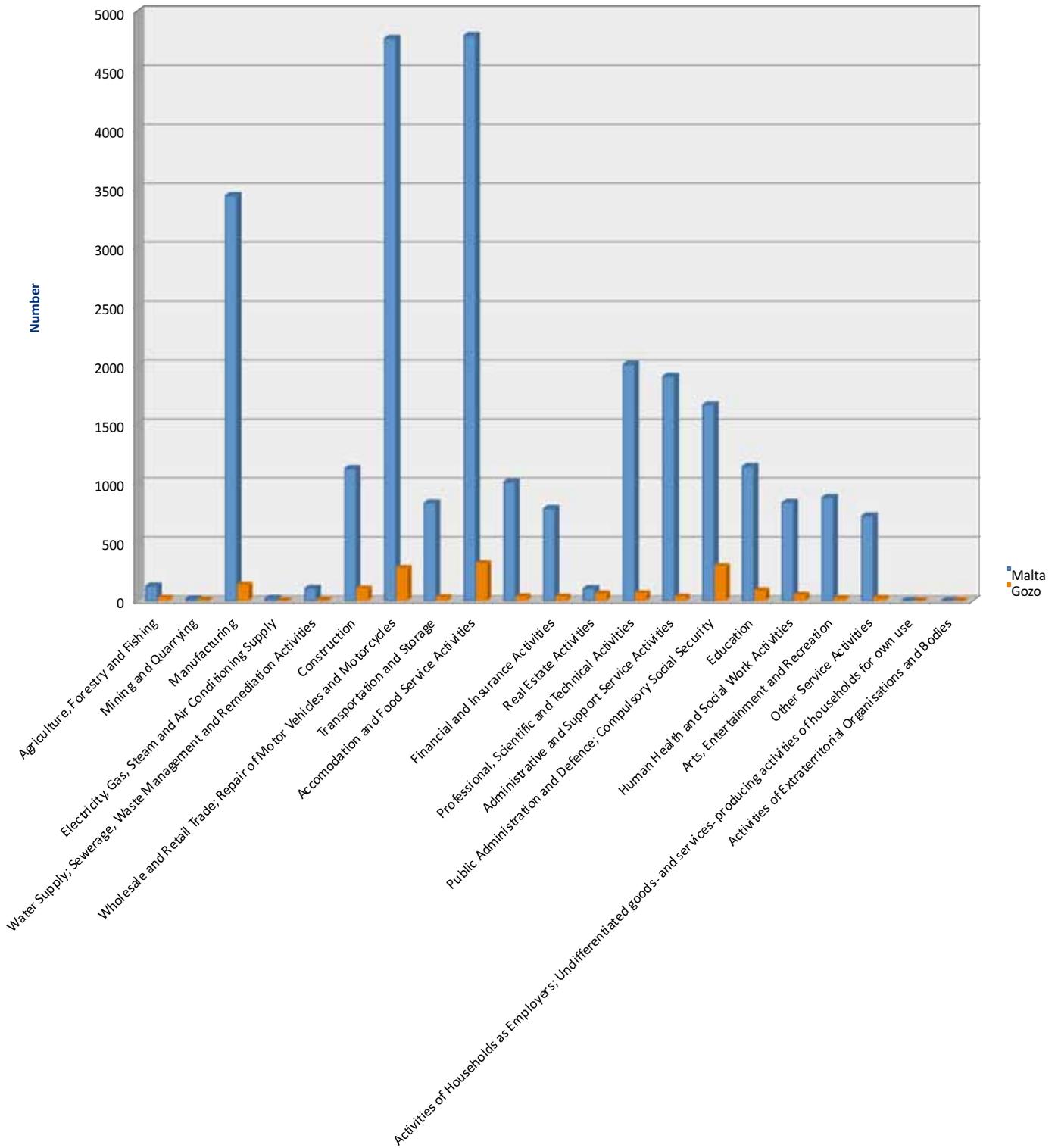
The EU 27 employment rate of young persons as a percentage of the population in the same age group (15-24) has decreased from 37.5 per cent in 2000 to 33.6 per cent in 2011. A similar trend can be observed in the employment rate for young people in Malta with a decline from 52.8 per cent in 2000 to 44.7 per cent in 2011⁹. This decrease can be mainly attributed to the increased participation of young people in education following compulsory schooling.

Data provided by the Employment and Training Corporation (Figure 2) indicates that in June 2012, the 'Accommodation and Food Service Activities' sector accounted for the highest share of gainfully occupied youth aged 15 to 24 in full-time and part-time employment. The same trend is also registered in Gozo. Other sectors which register a high share of youth labour supply are 'Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles', 'Manufacturing', 'Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities', 'Administrative and Support Service Activities', 'Public Administration and Defence; Compulsory Social Security' and to a lesser extent 'Education', 'Construction' and 'Information and Communication'.



In consequence, countries are urged to restore confidence in citizens and in young people in particular through a multi-pronged approach geared towards growth and resilience.

Figure 2: Gainfully occupied by Sector (15-24)



JOBS



REBEKAH CUTAJAR, 20

MCAST-BTEC Higher National Diploma in Health and Social Care, MCAST

“I’ve always dreamt of establishing a career through which I could help people in need. Five years ago I joined MCAST to find out more about health and social care. Since then, I’ve come a long way, not only by what I learnt in class, but also through the hands-on training experiences which MCAST offered me in homes for the elderly, hospitals and within the public health authorities. I met many persons in different situations and got to know more about them and the kind of assistance they require to lead a more comfortable life. Now I am studying about health and social care at a more advanced level, to learn and gain experience on how to manage the different support services involved in this sector. My dream is to graduate and eventually form part of the management of a hospital or any other entity that offers assistance to people in need.”

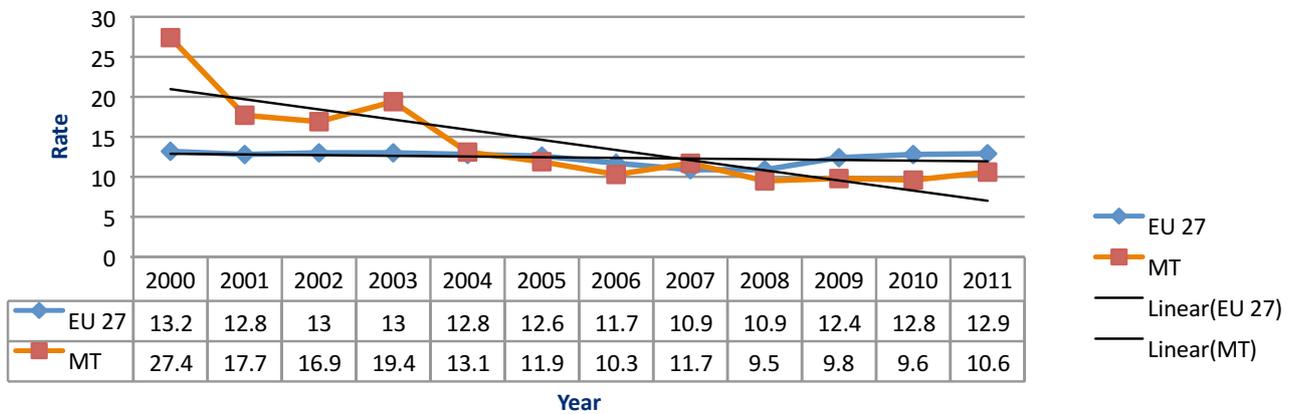


JEAN PIERRE DALLI, 22

Pathway to Independent Living, MCAST

“MCAST’s Pathway course helped me learn how to lead a more independent life without requiring my relatives’ assistance at all times. I gained confidence in how to handle essential daily needs, like cooking and employment issues. I learnt how to present myself in different situations – when I’m off to work I wear smart clothes that are of an office environment. I learnt that it is important to act upon your own initiative whenever there’s work to be done, rather than waiting for your employer to spoon feed you with specific instructions at all times. After completing the Pathway course, I joined another course, the MCAST Foundation Certificate in Computing. I used to enjoy using my computer at home, but this course helped me learn how to apply ICT skills in different work environments. I particularly enjoy programming and using different software programmes. Today, I’m using the knowledge and experience I gained during my studies in my work as a clerk in an administrative office.”

Figure 3: Youth not in Employment, Education or Training



Source: Eurostat¹¹

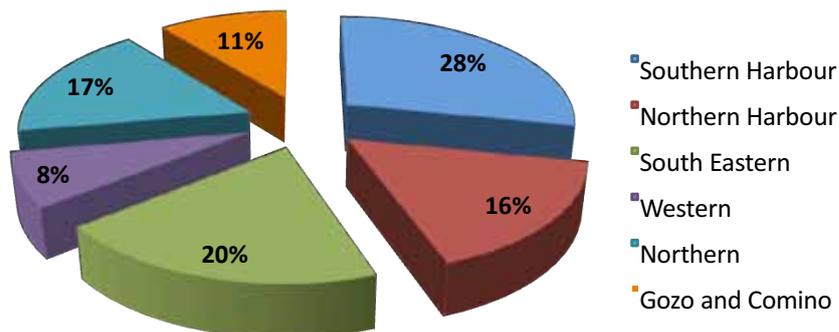
As Figure 3 indicates around the EU 27, the rate of young people who are neither in employment, education or training (NEET) decreased from 13.2 per cent in 2000 to 12.9 per cent in 2011. Malta was the country amongst the twenty-seven Member States which registered the sharpest decline in the NEET rate, from 27.4 per cent in 2000 to 10.6 per cent in 2011 (9.9% for men and 11.4% for women).¹⁰

Albeit the positive trends across the EU, policy makers across Europe are called to intensify their efforts in designing and implementing specialised measures focusing particularly on this group which is disengaged both from education and the formal economy, and who is at a higher risk of poverty and social exclusion. The NEET population is very heterogeneous and this is to be addressed when designing policies specifically targeted at this cohort. Research conducted by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions suggests that the largest subgroup of the NEET population is those youth who are conventionally unemployed. Other young people not in education, employment or training include youth with a disability, young people who are sick and young carers. Other sub-

groups include young people who may not necessarily be vulnerable who are engaged in other activities outside the formal economy¹². Notwithstanding the heterogeneity of the NEET population, there are several risk factors which make certain subgroups more vulnerable than others. Eurofound indicates that young people with a low level of education are three times more likely to become NEET when compared to others. Moreover, the study indicates that the probability of young people to become NEET increases by 17% when their parents would have experienced unemployment. The study also suggests that young people with a low household income and youth living in remote areas are more likely to become NEET¹³.

Official data from the National Statistics Office indicates that some differences can be noted when analysing the youth unemployment ratio by district (Figure 4). The ratio is defined as the number of unemployed in the 15 to 24 age bracket as a percentage of the labour force (*employed + unemployed*) in the same age bracket. This divergence calls for a concerted effort at national and local level to address the particular needs of young people through a targeted approach.

Figure 4: Youth Unemployment by District (2011)



Source: NSO¹⁴

Data on income and living conditions underlines the connection between active participation in the labour market and risk-of-poverty or social exclusion. In effect, data for 2010 indicates that in the EU 27, 55.4 per cent of the 18-24 age cohort who were classified as unemployed were at-risk of poverty or social exclusion. In Malta, the rate stood at 47.3 per cent¹⁵. Subsequently, nation states are to ensure that young people are adequately protected through policy responses which promote active labour market programmes and support mechanisms that lead to both economic and social empowerment. It is hence critical that comprehensive action is taken to ensure recognition of the human and social capital, where inequalities are replaced by social integration.

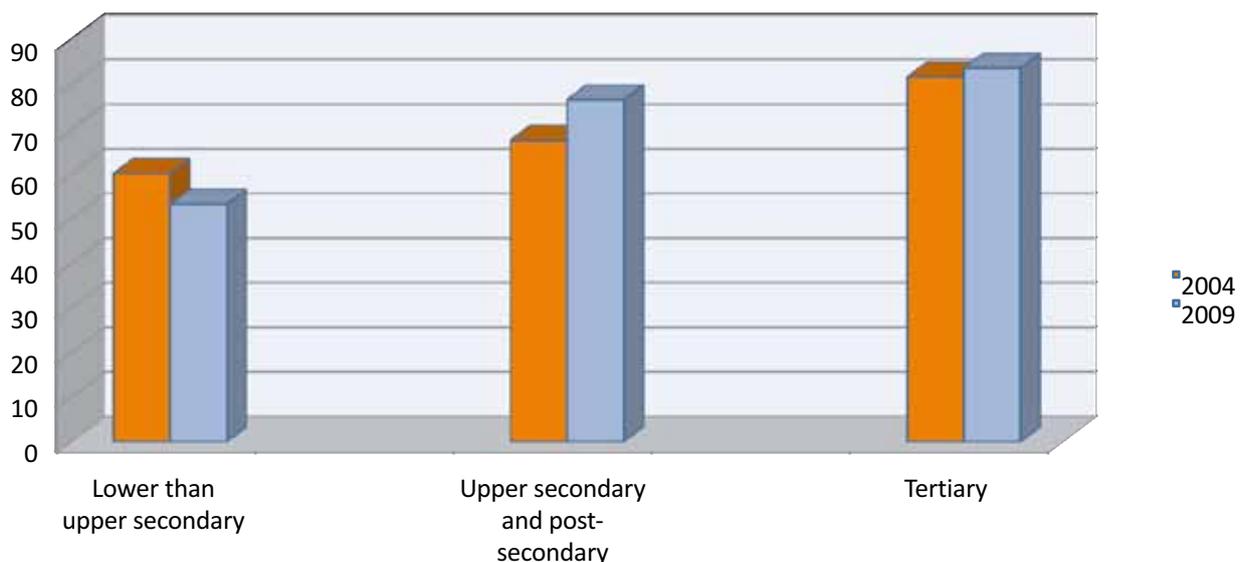
2.2 SECURING ACCESS TO THE LABOUR MARKET

The labour market is critical in sustaining the development of young people. As societies around the world are undergoing a demographic transition, it appears that the formal economy is heading towards sound educational infrastructure embedded with skills and competencies as requested in a competitive knowledge-based society. A study which projects skill demand and supply up to 2020 by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) suggests that the supply of those with medium-level qualifications, mainly vocational, will form the majority with 50 per cent of the European

labour force in 2020. The projections highlighted in the study also suggest that it is likely that countries register an increase in demand for persons with high and medium qualifications even in occupations which were traditionally attributed to lower skills. As a result the demand for people in the labour market with low or no formal qualifications will decline. It is estimated that the share of jobs necessitating high-qualifications will increase from 29 per cent in 2010 to approximately 35 per cent in 2020, whereas the share of jobs requesting low qualifications will decrease from 20 per cent to less than 15 per cent¹⁶. A recent study commissioned by *Union Haddiema Maghqudin* indicates that the skills gap between Malta and the EU27 is expected to be halved by 2020, from 26 per cent in 2000 to 14.6 per cent in 2020. The study projects that unless Malta takes proactive measures, the skills shortcomings will not be overcome until 2045¹⁷.

As indicated in Figure 5, Eurostat data denote that education attainment is a key determinant to employability. Figures covering the period 2004-2009 suggest that for the EU27, in 2004 the employment rate for persons with lower than upper secondary education stood at 60.2 per cent. In 2009, this rate went down to 53.3 per cent. In contrast, for persons with upper secondary and post-secondary attainment (non-tertiary), the employment rate registered an increase from 67.6 per cent in 2004 to 76.7 per cent in 2009. The same upward trend is registered for the employment rate of persons having a tertiary education attainment with 81.8 per cent in 2004 to 83.8 per cent in 2009.

Figure 5: Employability by Education Attainment



Source: Eurostat as cited in Commission Staff Working Paper (SEC (2011) 670 final)¹⁸





MICHAEL DEBATTISTA

University of Malta

“This course in Youth and Community Studies helped me reflect and helped me mature and was a big step which led to my involvement in the field of disabilities. I came across a lot of academic material which I found useful and helped me make sense of my experiences and appreciate life in a better way.

The course helped me find my inner self better and offered challenges which I never expected. In August 2009 I made a very important experience. I embarked on an Outdoor Education Course in Lake District: this helped me to dismiss the wrong idea that visually impaired persons cannot participate in outdoor sport. In fact I did participate in outdoor sport unhindered and realized that if society provides more accessibility to disabled persons and removed obstacles such as negative attitudes and organizational barriers, the life of disabled people can make a qualitative leap. This would also dispel the perception that disabled people are different persons and should be considered as normal human beings.

The degree I managed to get helped me to voice and discuss my ideas about the theme of disability which I experience daily. This I did not only during lectures but even when given the opportunities to speak with students reading for a Diploma in Inclusive Education and in various discussion programmes on local media.

This served me as a stimulus to advance in my studies at Masters level on this same theme which is so close to my heart. With God's help I would like to even go for a Doctorate after successfully concluding my Masters.

I trust this degree is the beginning of a career in the field of disability not only in an academic sense but also by involving myself in this sector and together with others strive to make society lend an ear to the disabled which will eventually lead to a more inclusive society.”



KURT BONNICI

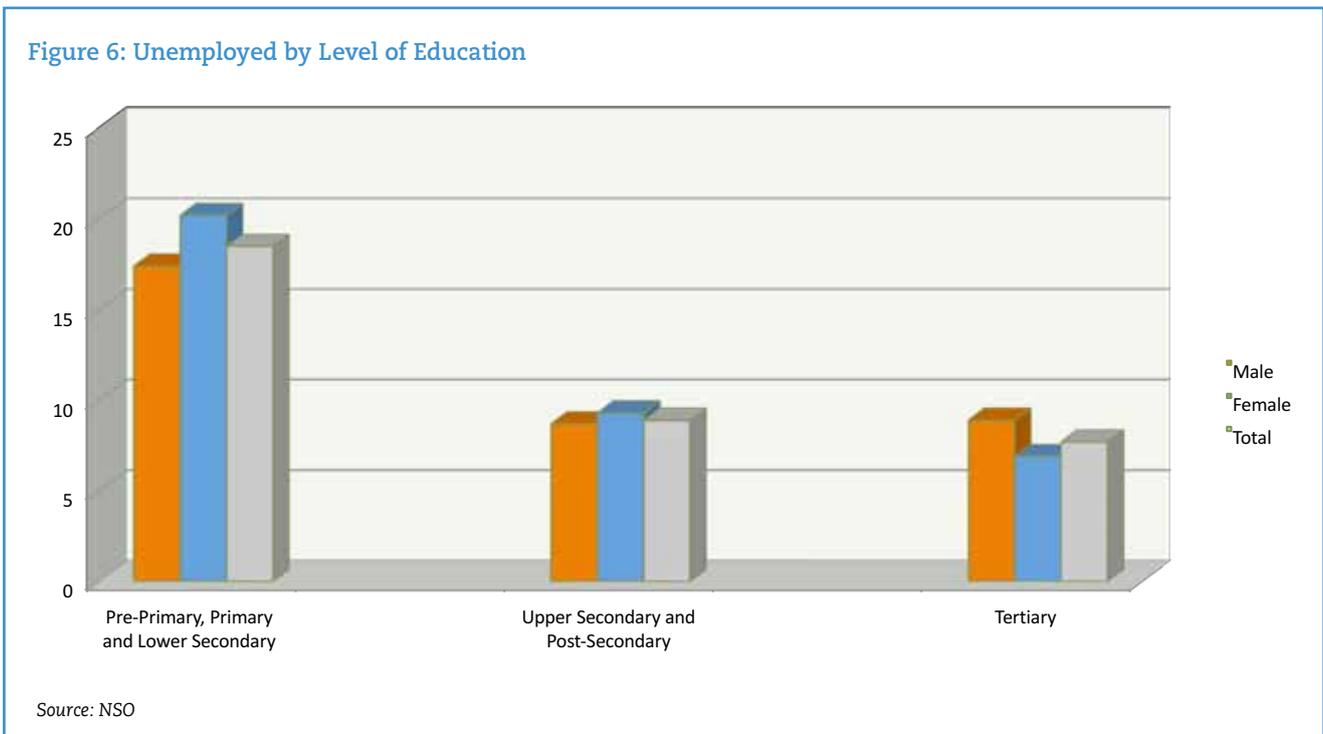
Giovanni Curmi Higher Secondary

“I joined the Matriculation Course at Giovanni Curmi Higher Secondary School as I wanted to get the necessary qualifications to proceed to University. In the two years I have been at this school I found the necessary help to achieve my goals. The institution also provides a second chance to those who did not succeed in their first opportunity. I form part of the School's Student Council and this helped me to develop values that will help me in life and particularly the importance to hear and respect others' opinions and to be tolerant of others.”

In Malta figures suggest that the employment rate for the three categories ranged from 85.9 per cent (2008) for individuals with lower than upper secondary education; 88.1 per cent (2009) for persons with upper secondary and post-secondary education; and 97.8 per cent (2009) for those with tertiary educational attainment¹⁹. As indicated in Figure 6, for individuals aged 15-24 who were unemployed, out of the total of 13.7 per cent, 18.5 per cent (17.4% - male; 20.2% - female) had pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education (levels 0-2); 8.9 per cent (8.7 male; 9.3 female) had upper secondary and post-secondary, non tertiary education (levels 3 and 4); and 7.7 per cent (8.9% - male; 6.9% - female) had a first and second stage of tertiary education (levels 5 and 6)²⁰.

Education and training are major drivers in achieving social and economic objectives. As Malta's *National Strategic Reference Framework (2007 – 2013)* states: *'the underlying basis for this Strategic Objective is to support an increased employment rate by providing quality education for all, complemented by strengthened labour market structures... On the other hand, strengthened labour market structures facilitate labour market integration.'*²¹

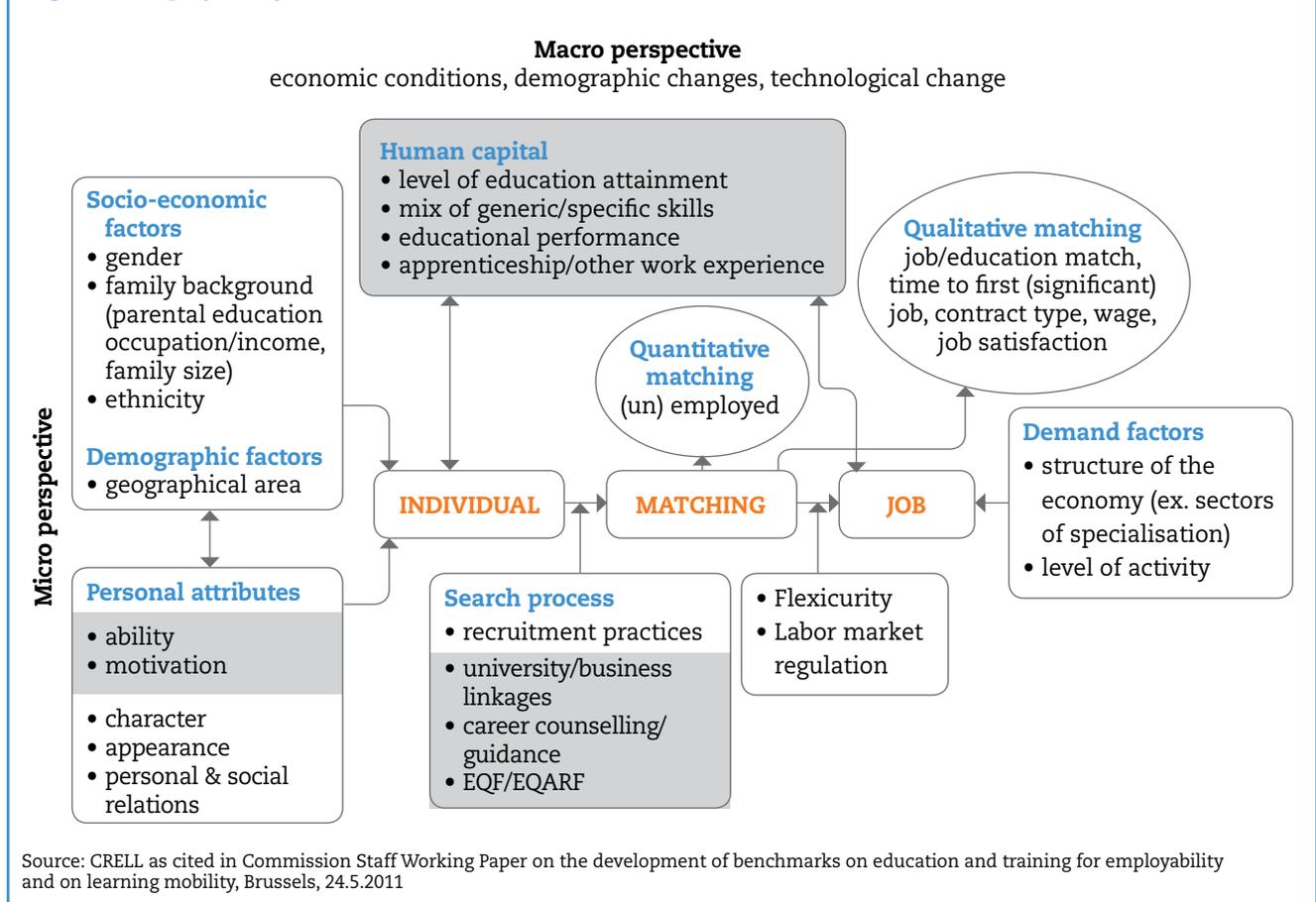
It is acknowledged that for current and future labour market demands to be addressed sustainably both individuals and states are to focus on the micro and macro constraints which may inhibit the desired outputs needed in a knowledge-based competitive



'the underlying basis for this Strategic Objective is to support an increased employment rate by providing quality education for all, complemented by strengthened labour market structures...'



Figure 7: Employability Factors



economy. As Figure 7 indicates there are various socio-economic determinants which play a significant role in shaping the choice architecture of a particular person.

On the one hand, there are the micro-constraints which depend on the person’s aspirations, perception of the role they occupy within the society they are embedded in, family environment, social capital, educational attainment, and other personal characteristics. On the other hand, there are the macro-constraints which are influenced by the national, European and international economic climate, demographic and technological changes, labour market regulations, as well as institutional and support structures of the respective country. A sustainable employment strategy which has long-lasting effects thus entails that different policy sectors plough through the complexity of integration in the labour market, taking into account the socio-economic milieu and the measures which are to be taken both on a micro- and in a wider context. Whilst in the former level, strategic actions are to be targeted towards a behaviour change through public policy; the latter depends on the liaison between various players who have a significant role in ensuring that the overall economic and societal dimensions affecting employability prospects are addressed.

Access to employment is strongly associated with education attainment and the transition from school to work. Notwithstanding, a successful strategy entails that individuals not only enter the formal economy, but are capable of retaining their occupation and move the employment ladder in forthcoming years. For youth to be competitive and adept, initial education and lifelong learning are to converge, recognising that employment outcomes are dependent on continuous skills development. It is recognised that to address skill mismatch and to strengthen the capacity for job mobility, actions are to be taken to ensure that young people are equipped with both specific skills (qualifications) and transversal skills (generic skills).

Participation in lifelong learning is a means towards the acquisition of new skills and competencies needed for individuals to deal with changing labour market demands, and for industries to respond to new market trends. Societies which acknowledge that preparation for work is a continuum of education and training adhere to the conviction that constant investment in education and training is valuable both for the employee and the employer, as well as for the economy as a whole.

This principle entails a coordinated approach where the three tiers are at play; State, industry and individuals are active participants in ensuring that society is equipped with the necessary competencies needed to anticipate demands. Individuals who do not possess the skills needed in the formal economy become more vulnerable to labour market change and to the likelihood of improved job mobility. Societies have a crucial role in tapping the potential of persons by creating the support structures needed to encourage individuals to be innovative and productive. Institutions are to be endowed with modernised tools and the resources needed to address changing demands. Early intervention and preventive services, guidance, counselling and skills matching are instrumental in identifying and amending possible threats of disengagement from the labour market. Moreover, societies are to invest in emerging industries which have an economic potential for growth and are to be a driving-force in offering opportunities for flexible working arrangements and continuous skills development. Such opportunities may include apprenticeships and traineeships. When these forces interact, the chances for economic and employment growth are broadened.

2.3 REVIEW OF EXISTING POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

The former Strategy formulated by the Employment and Training Corporation for the years 2008-2009 remains pivotal in assisting young people at-risk of being disengaged from the formal economy. Nonetheless, it is recognised that a comprehensive strategy focusing on the integration of youth is to encompass the multi-dimensionality of youth employment and the exchange of experience with other sectors influencing young people's choices in their path from compulsory schooling to working life.

Young people's perception on the effectiveness of the measures and the actions that need to be taken to meet the forecasted challenges and to enhance employability is instrumental in designing the National Youth Employment Strategy 2015. The analysis which young participants made when drafting the Strategy was:

1. Young people feel that 'training opportunities' exist and are on the increase (namely, those offered by the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) amongst other) but according to them, they do not always seem to be having the desired effect in getting them into the labour market quick enough. The school leaving certificate that is detailed with the achievements of students not only at formal but in other aspects is a step in the right direction.
2. Young people feel they have to struggle repeatedly with 'employers' perceptions'.
3. Youth feel that employers are not giving them enough opportunity, time and trust for them to settle down.

4. Employers want young people who have 'experience' but the young aspirants feel they are not given the opportunity to gain that required experience.
5. Youth feel that it is also imperative to take note and exercise caution to avoid circumstances that may lead to young people on short term and unsecured contracts of work which may potentially lead to precariousness.
6. Those young people who have low levels of literacy feel that another very important issue is the challenge they come across when it comes to reading, maths and writing amongst others. This is a massive barrier to overcome when it comes to looking for a job.
7. Youth also felt that their own personal narrative is another card that needs to be laid on the table. Whilst most, if not all, young people go through a series of emotional, psychological and intellectual transformations, the scars, namely, dysfunctional families, history of bullying or abuse, drug and alcohol addiction, and gambling, haunt their employment opportunities, directly or indirectly, as they affect their self-esteem.
8. Young people have also floated the idea that there seems to be a skills mismatch between what they are learning at school and the qualities needed when they come to the employment market. Some young people have also expressed their concern that even with further education, it is taking them considerable time to find a job and pursue the career of their choice. More effort needs to be invested in communicating with potential employers on the intensity of field work placements. It is the right time to engage employers more directly in the area of post-secondary, higher and tertiary education.
9. Young people feel that important elements that should factor into this strategy are: new products and services, improved access to information, more tailor made support packages and administrative responsiveness.
10. Young people feel that in general they have a good channel of communication going with the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC).
11. Young people are interested in exploring and capitalizing on their skills. They are particularly interested in being encouraged to unpack the qualities and skills they have and this can be done if liaison between the education and employment sectors is strengthened.

An evaluative assessment indicates that most of the initiatives planned in the Youth Employment Strategy 2008-2009 have been completed or are working in sync with the wider agenda and work programme of the Employment and Training Corporation.

Table 1 shows the list of initiatives adopted by the Employment and Training Corporation and their respective outcome until December 2011.

Table 1: List of initiatives by the Employment and Training Corporation and outcome

4.1 EMPLOYMENT

Initiatives 2008/09

Outcome 2008/2011

ETC to continue developing its employment services and schemes including:

- Personal Action Planning and Profiling (PAP)

Personal Action Planning was adopted as a standard procedure and all youths registering with the Corporation are placed on a PAP within the first month of registration. Between September 2007 and December 2012 a total of 5319 new personal action plans for youth clients were developed. These were supplemented by 23431 personal action plan reviews.

- YouthStart Initiative

Implemented mainly through Jobsearch Seminars, Jobskills Courses, Motivation Seminars and Job Clubs. Between September 2007 and December 2012, more than 2959 youths participated in the Job Search, Job Skills and Job Club measures.

- Jobsearch Facilities

Offered through various facilities including ETC’s Website online facilities such as the CV upload, Vacancy Auto mailer, Vacancy Direct Free phone, Job Banks, Job Centres, Open Days, employment and training fairs and recruitment days.

- Job Experience Scheme (JES)

JES was offered as an ESF programme under the Single Programming Document 2004-2006. A total of 847 persons participated in the scheme through the project. 78% of the participants successfully completed the full duration of the scheme placement. 36% of the participants were in employment on successful completion of the scheme.

- Active Youth Scheme (AYS)

AYS was offered to youths placed with NGOs. This scheme was initially offered for a longer period of time (i.e. 6 months) and youth underwent a placement of 30 hours a week.

Therefore an amended version of the Active Youth Scheme (AYS) & the Private Sector Placement Scheme (PSPS) was implemented under the ESF 72 Job Experience Scheme. 103 youths utilised the AYS between 2008 and 2009.

The Private Sector Placement Scheme (PSPS) was an additional scheme launched in 2009. Private sector employers were eligible for participation and through this scheme participants worked 30 hours per week for up to 12 weeks. A weekly allowance equivalent to 75% of the minimum wage was provided. 119 youths utilised the PSPS between 2008 and 2009.

The Corporation offered various schemes for its clients, however in 2009, with the aim of simplifying the application process the mainstream schemes were merged into a single scheme called the Work Trial Scheme. Two of the eligible groups under this scheme target young jobseekers aged 16-24 specifically. These target groups are (a) youth with no previous work experience; and (b) youth with previous work experience not in line with their respective job preferences. Until December 2012 a total of 1370 youths participated in the WTS

4.1.1 Employment Aid Programme (EAP)	The Employment Aid Programme was launched in 2009 and will remain operational until 2013. The Programme involves the award of a grant to employers whenever they recruit persons coming from disadvantaged backgrounds. Youth aged 16 to 24 can be eligible under one or more of these target groups. Over 50% of clients under the Employment Aid Programme are youth. Until December 2012 a total of 1686 youths participated in the EAP.
4.1.2 Youth Employment Programme (YEP)	The Youth Employment Programme was officially launched in March 2010. Until December 2012 a total of 6257 clients made use of the YEP initiatives. Through YEP the Corporation launched the Youth Days, developed a new dedicated youth website www.youth.org.mt which offers an online chat within one of the YEP team members and a blogging facility for youths. YEP facebook and twitter pages were launched, and also a YEP TV programme series was aired on national television and uploaded on you-tube. The YEP guidance services provide career guidance services including occupational therapy services and the services of a psychologist free of charge. Various workshops, information session and visits were organized. The YEP project has been extended till the end of 2012.
4.1.3 Graduate Scheme	The Graduate Scheme was integrated within the Work Trial Scheme. The target groups of the WTS include graduates and other persons who completed their studies and never worked in their field of study.
4.1.4 Careers Guidance	Apart from the services offered to registering youths, career guidance is offered to non-registering youths under the YEP. In addition, ETC actively contributes in both national and college level organised career fairs.
4.1.5 Talent Banks	Similar initiatives to the talent bank have been implemented such as the CV function and other enhancements available through the Corporation's website.
4.1.6 Job Rotation Scheme	ETC explored the possibility of implementing such scheme however, due to legal issues it was decided to limit this scheme to placements offered under the WTS.
4.1.7 STARS Projects	This project was not implemented.
4.1.8 Newsletter for young persons	The newsletter for young persons is informative. The first newsletter was issued in October 2008. Newsletters are sent to youth stakeholders, career guidance offices, secondary and post secondary schools and those who show interest in receiving it. Furthermore the newsletter is uploaded on various websites
4.1.9 Increase access to information	Implemented and constantly looking for ways on how to improve access. ETC will continue to increase its use of the internet and other ICT facilities to disseminate information on training opportunities and to facilitate job search. In order to outreach further to young people, ETC created the YEP programme.

4.1.10 Employment of minors Some minors are exempted from school to pursue a job. ETC will endeavour to attract these young persons to attend evening courses to supplement their knowledge and skills. Legal Notice 440 of 2003 ‘Young Persons Employment Regulations’ established a number of criteria related to the conditions of employment and the health and safety of Young Persons and Children at the place of work.

Through the ESF 3.60 YEP the ETC carried out information sessions and workshops with young persons identified as being at risk of leaving school early. During these sessions, the ETC aimed to bring about greater awareness on the growing needs of the Maltese labour market and informed youth about various options available to them including the take up of relevant short courses.

The Corporation’s inspectorate arm had identified 87 minors working illegally during September 2007 and December 2012. Action was being taken accordingly against the employers of these minors.

4.2 EMPLOYABILITY

4.2.1 Employability Programme In 2009 ETC launched the Employability Programme partly financed through the European Social Fund. Training opportunities are being provided through this programme and are being taken up well by the young people. More than 120 different training programmes, ranging from basic skills to job skills courses, IT, hospitality and trade training programmes to advanced training programmes have been offered. The Corporation launched for the first time in 2011, the Training Subsidy Scheme (Academic) through the Employability Programme. This scheme is intended to provide financial assistance in the form of a training grant, payable to individuals who are either job seekers or employed and are interested in obtaining a Higher Education qualification at EQF/MQF level 5 and level 6 in an area related to Digital Media or Financial Services. From the launch of the Programme till the end of December 2012, the number of young persons who participated amounted to 10932.

4.2.2 Training Aid Framework The Training Aid Framework was launched in 2009 and was closed in June 2012. Since the launch of the scheme the TAF unit received over 5,500 applications, out of which over 4,420 were accepted for processing and out of these, 3,800 were eligible against which a Grant Agreement was signed. From data collected at application stage, the number of trainees covered by the TAF applications is estimated at around 48,000. Although the actual successful completers are determined at reimbursement stage, sample data has shown that the percentage of youth trainees participating under the scheme amounts to approximately 22% of the full population which would amount to approximately 10,560 trainees between 15 and 24 years of age at reimbursement stage.

4.2.3 Review of Training Programmes towards certification ETC has held discussions with MQC with the aim of obtaining accreditation for existing and new courses organised by the Corporation. These courses were either developed internally or internationally recognised in which case the MQC level rating was sought. Two such programmes were those dealing with the provision of basic skills. Basic skills programmes at EQF/MQF level 1 and Level 2 dealing with the eight key skills were developed. Once approved, these will be promoted amongst job seekers who lack a valid school leaving certificate. Besides programmes dealing with basic skills the ETC sought MQC’s recognition for most of its other programmes that are aimed to provide knowledge, skills and competence in trade and non-trade related areas.

4.2.4 Introduce a Job Tasters Scheme
 Job tasters were held for youth attending the Youth.Inc initiative organised in collaboration with the Foundation for Educational Services (FES). A similar initiative was also held with different colleges that were aimed to guide students to choose the right career option. A similar initiative was also carried out amongst youths registering with the Corporation.

4.2.5 Boosting Entrepreneurship
 ETC believes that entrepreneurship stimulates job creation and will therefore seek to further develop its entrepreneurship scheme entitled INT (Ibda Negojzu Tieghek, or Start your Own Business). Furthermore ETC has also held a number of information sessions on entrepreneurship.

4.3 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

4.3.1 Basic Employment Training (BET)
 It is ETC's policy to provide a second chance to those who come out of mainstream education with low qualifications. The BET is currently being offered under the new flexible initiatives offered through the employability programme – The Basic Skills Training.

4.3.2 Reach
 ETC continued to work with secondary schools to provide alternative solutions to students with high school absenteeism. This will be modelled on the REACH programme which was carried out in Cottonera. This programme addressed the risk factors leading to absenteeism and encouraged youth to remain within the education system.

4.3.3 Gender Equality Programme
 The publicity component of this Programme has been incorporated within the NISTA project while gender mainstreaming is being adopted in the provision of all ETC services.

4.3.4 Social Inclusion Partnership Programme
 The SIPP programme was not implemented as it was determined that its intended objectives could be reached through other ETC measures. In fact, a number of 'ad hoc' courses specifically targeting 'disadvantaged clients' were organized through the Employability Programme.

4.3.5 Employment of Refugees
 ETC clients enjoying a refugee status are serviced within the mainstream caseloads. Refugees have also been included in workshops under the YEP.

4.3.6 Young Persons in Correctional Facilities
 The Corporation continued with its effort to help the local community by delivering training to various vulnerable groups in society. Training was offered to a number of facilities including Corradino Correctional Facility (CCF), Dar Sant'Anna and Dar Santa Marija, and Caritas rehabilitation centre at San Blas. Currently an exercise with Corradino Correctional Facility is underway to offer training to most of the inmates and also to assist in the building up of a training complex within the correctional facility.

4.3.7 Young Persons with Substance Abuse Problems
 Methadone Treatment Department opening hours are noted and taken into consideration when organizing courses or participation in schemes of methadone users.

4.3.8 Young People's rights and obligations at work
 Collaboration with the Department of Industrial and Employment Relations (DIER) through their participation in the YEP TV program and also dissemination of DIER printed material.

4.3.9 Collaboration with Social Service Agencies

Various meetings with agencies in the public and non-government sector were organized by the Corporation’s Supported Employment Section to promote its services which are flexible to cater for different needs. Entities/Professionals that ETC contacted include KNPD, CCF/YOURS Section, Deaf People Association, Equal Partners, Down Syndrome Association, the Foundation for Social Welfare Services (FSWS) whereby ETC is a partner in an ESF project, Mt Carmel Rehab Scheme Office, and Heads of Caritas shelters and Rehab programme.

Apart from these programmes, the Employment and Training Corporation offers other initiatives aimed at attracting young participants to the labour market. These include the Bridging the Gap scheme which had 23 applicants aged between 16 and 24 in 2011 and Cooperative Agreements which attracted 19 young applicants for the same timeframe.

Table 2 illustrates the duration of the youth unemployment spell. The table indicates that the long-term unemployment amongst youth has been decreasing from 2007 to reach 23.7 per cent in 2011.

This Strategy recognises that active labour market programmes prove to be effective in supporting labour market participation. However, activation measures have to be complemented with educational initiatives which facilitate young people’s access to education, training and employment. Through effective co-ordination of different policy sectors, strategic measures can improve the chance of educational attainment and further participation, whilst offsetting the disincentive to work. The intended effect will result in increased employability skills and the achievement of economic and social goals.

Early intervention and preventive services targeted at improving outcomes of young people at-risk are crucial. Adequate provision of good-quality and affordable service provision is an essential tool to warrant equal opportunities for all and foster social mobility. Successful early intervention measures are central in detecting signs of difficulties and avoid amplifying the vulnerability of disengaged youth, as well as guiding young people through transition points.

Based on the principles of equity and quality, the Directorate for Educational Services has been striving along the years to strengthen the support services through the adoption of a multi-disciplinary approach. The presence of various professionals is aimed at promoting preventive programmes towards the early identification of social, emotional and behavioural problems leading to absenteeism. In concert with the trainee counsellors and guidance teachers, a team of social workers and social support workers carry out regular interventions with children who are absent from school and their families. The provision of soft skills, career guidance and job exposure schemes have been piloted to bridge the gap between compulsory schooling and working life.

Notwithstanding the creation of support services, this Strategy acknowledges that more efforts are to be taken to ensure that the scarring effects of absenteeism are reduced considerably. A review of absenteeism indicates that data is not collated at a national level. Consequently, the analysis of figures may be flawed presenting solely the absenteeism rates in state schools. It is also to be ascertained that data is gathered systematically to ensure that all state, independent and church schools present statistics based on the same definition and methods of interpretation. Early intervention and preventive structures are to be intensified to ensure that students do not exit compulsory schooling without formal qualifications.

The student who leaves school without completing compulsory schooling or who has not acquired the necessary skills needed in the formal economy has limited prospects of engaging in the labour market. As a

Table 2: Duration of unemployment for youths (15-24 age group) (% Of Youth Unemployment)

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Less than 5 Months	51.9	51.6	52.1	42.3	45.3	53.8
6 – 11 Months	24.8	19.2	19.8	22.1	22.9	29.6
12 + Months	23.3	28.9	28.1	35.6	31.8	23.7

Sors: NSO



consequence, the young person will be more vulnerable to unemployment and economic shocks and less equipped to respond to changing demands emanating from the knowledge-based society. Increasing educational attainment and participation in further and higher education are subsequently two goals which this Strategy aims to bring forward.

With the aim of increasing educational attainment and offering more access to further studies, Government, through the Directorate for Lifelong Learning, has embarked on a number of scholarship schemes. In 2007, the Undergraduate scheme of the locally funded Malta Government Scholarships Scheme (MGSS) was launched. Through this scheme, support which is available to undergraduate students at the University of Malta is being extended to those Maltese students who choose to undertake equivalent studies leading to reputable and qualitative local and foreign degrees. Between 2007 and 2011, 622 young people benefited from this scheme. The MGSS Post-Graduate scheme was launched in 2006. Post Graduate education forms an increasingly important part of the country's economic and social agenda, and is also a key element in lifelong learning. For this purpose, this programme aims at providing more opportunities to promote further specialisation at higher levels of education particularly at a Masters and Doctoral level. In 2009, the Strategic Educational Pathways Scholarships Scheme (STEPS) was launched. This scheme is co-funded from European Social Funds. Over 80 per cent of the beneficiaries are young people under the age of 25. In all, both programmes (MGSS and STEPS) have supported 1200 students of whom 231 are following studies leading to a Doctoral degree. In 2010 and 2012 respectively, another two scholarship schemes were introduced; Arts Scholarships and Sports Scholarships. The former is aimed to provide more opportunities of specialisation for excellence in the arts, while the latter is aimed at promoting the development of high performance athletes. The elevation of the status of sport in Malta will not only bring about international recognition with economic benefits for the tourism industry, but will also encourage the uptake of sport and physical activity across the country. Since 2010, 36 young persons have benefited from the Arts Scholarships, whilst 14 athletes have been awarded a Sports Scholarship. ETC and MCAST are also offering a number of specialised scholarships in the areas of finance and information

technology. In 2012, a new scholarship scheme was launched. STAR (Scholarships to Achieve Results) is aimed at persons who want to study for a first degree in ICT or financial studies.

As Table 3 illustrates, figures indicate that the participation rate in further education has increased, with the participation rate of seventeen year olds fuelling up to 82 per cent in 2011 from 73 per cent in 2010 and 43 per cent in 1999.

The increased participation rate can be attributed to several factors including the inception of the Malta College for Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST). It is acknowledged that MCAST has a crucial role in enhancing the employability of young people by offering a strong educational pathway in the vocational education sector. This is done through:

- A range of courses from Level 1 to Level 6 of the National Qualification Framework catering for the needs and potential of a wide range of youths. In this manner, courses at level 1 and 2 offer another important opportunity to students who may have missed out on fulfilling their potential during their years of compulsory schooling. Courses at level 3 and 4 having a dual function, allowing for both employment at technical/operational level but also academic progression to higher levels at level 5 and 6 at MCAST. In this unique environment students are choosing just how far up the academic and vocational ladder they wish to progress before embarking upon a career.
- A strong focus on learning through hands on practical experience, based on a pedagogy which links study to the world of work. This is also done through apprenticeship schemes, work placements and the strong links all MCAST institutes have developed with Industry and Enterprise.
- A formative assessment policy which focuses on assessment methods based on learning outcomes which highlight the knowledge, skills and competences students are expected to achieve, many times linked to practical, real life work scenarios.
- The enhancement of the employability possibilities of youth both through the features of its curricular and academic organization described above as well as through the various student support services it offers. This focus also enables MCAST to engage in a positive manner with at-risk youths.

Table 3: 17 Year Old Student Population Participating in Further and Higher Education

	1999	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Participation	43%	45%	56%	66%	67%	59%	65%	59%	60%	73%	82%

Source: NCHE Statistics





ELAINE TWAN BEZZINA
Work Trial Scheme (WTS)

“I am Elaine Twan Bezzina and participated in one of ETC’s schemes. Through this positive initiative and in collaboration with my employer I made my first work experience which helped enter the labour market. Today, after 18 months I am still working with the same employer. I would like to thank the Employment and Training Corporation for helping me find a job through this scheme. The Work Trial Scheme helped me train and learn to be able to do a good job.”



NICOLE WOOLLARD
Apprenticeship

“As an apprentice in the trade of moulding technician, I am given the opportunity to learn both theory and practice. Qualifications and experience are very important to enter the labour market and this apprenticeship scheme will help me achieve both. With ETC’s assistance I was placed in one of Malta’s leading manufacturing companies. The experience I am gaining will simplify the theory I am getting from MCAST. I am very happy with what I am doing because it is very interesting and offers good prospects of employment.”



SARAH CARUANA
Employment Aid Programme (EAP)

“Through the Employment Aid Programme Scheme, I have been working with Playmobil Malta Ltd., for the past two years. This has been a very positive experience since today I feel that I have become an independent person. Moreover I have my own income and have made a lot of friends. I would like to thank ETC and my employer for giving me the opportunity to integrate in the labour market.”

- A range of part-time courses which give the opportunity to youths already in employment to study new skills to enable them to explore new employment pathways.

Albeit MCAST's prominent role in facilitating the transition from school to the labour market through an approach based on the principles of applied learning, there are a number of challenges which are to be addressed by MCAST to improve young people's employability. These include:

- Finding a balance between preparing students for the present needs of industry and enterprise while being aware that a continually changing economic scenario means that these present needs can change or disappear very rapidly. In this sense, an important challenge is to continue fostering cross-curricular skills as an important part of the pedagogy at MCAST to enable students develop the flexibility in employment which the present economic scenario dictates. These skills include teamwork, co-operation, communication, motivation, entrepreneurship and creativity.
- Updating apprenticeship schemes and work placements to make them more relevant and to link them more clearly to the learning outcomes expected of students while at the work place;
- Exploring the possibility of forms of work placements/internships for level 1 and 2 students to encourage youths to continue studying after ending compulsory education and to remain in education

after entering the post secondary sector, thereby increasing their employability potential.

- Reviewing the curriculum at all levels to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of industry and enterprise while remaining relevant to students' needs. An important challenge is to continue to develop pedagogical approaches which motivate as many students as possible to keep on studying to the maximum of their potential.
- Strengthening student support structures so as to ensure that the pastoral care needs of all students are supported while creating a truly inclusive learning community.

The goal of the Institution of Tourism Studies (ITS) is to be responsive to the changing needs of the hospitality and tourism industry through the provision of training programmes which integrate theoretical knowledge and practical experience. Innovation, creativity, leadership and entrepreneurship lie at the heart of the educational structure. The Food Service and Housekeeping Pre-Employment Scheme which was launched in 2009 aims at facilitating the transition from compulsory schooling to employment through five core objectives:

- Introducing hospitality vocational education within the secondary school system;
- Encouraging students to choose tourism as a career;
- Assisting the industry in the challenges faced to find professionally trained personnel in food service and housekeeping areas;



- Giving students exposure to the realities of working environments; and
- Facilitating the entry path to the Institution of Tourism Studies.

Upon completion of this training programme, students are awarded a certificate of achievement, where successfully listed modules are enlisted.

Moreover, the Institution of Tourism Studies provides placements within each programme of study with the aim of providing familiarisation at the place of work. Such placements can be either locally or internationally based. ITS offers also a number of part-time courses targeted mainly at those individuals who are already in employment but who want to improve their skills and competencies or learn new skills related to tourism and hospitality.

The setting up of MCAST and ITS is a model of good practice in increasing education attainment, enhancing skills and facilitating the transition from school to the labour market. Notwithstanding, it is acknowledged that institutions face a number of constraints which need to be addressed. One of the areas of concern is the rate of students who drop-out of the learning pathway without the acquisition of formal qualifications. A number of students fail to successfully complete their studies in further and higher institutions. This may be caused by several variables which include:

- The course does not meet the expectations of the student;

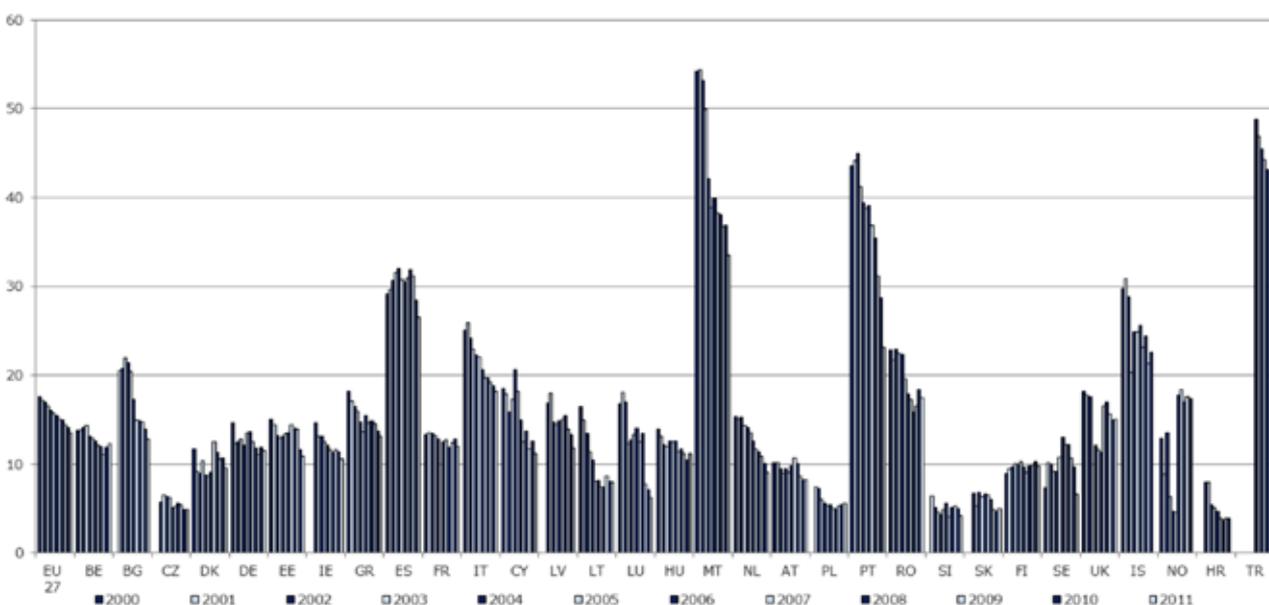
- The content of the programme is too theoretical;
- The course is too difficult;
- Options for re-sits are restrictive;
- The student chooses employment over education.

It is recognised that qualitative data on the number of students who drop-out of post-secondary education would portray an interesting picture of analysis. It is, therefore, critical that exit assessments are conducted by the respective institutions to present an evidence-based image to the measures which need to be taken.

One of the headline targets of the EU 2020 Strategy is to reduce the rate of early school leavers which is the percentage of persons aged 18-24 with at most lower secondary education and not in further education and training. For the first two quarters of 2012, the rate for Malta stood at 30.9 per cent. As indicated in Figure 8, it is worth noting that despite Malta's high rate, a steady decline was registered from 2000 when the registered rate was of 54.2 per cent. The target for Malta is to lower the rate to 29 per cent by 2020.

Simultaneously, the National Statistics Office under the guidance of the European Commission and Eurostat is conducting an exercise to ensure that the measurement adopted when calculating the national early school leavers' rate is comparable to the measurement used by other countries. It is recognised that Malta's rate is currently based on a threshold which is excessively high when compared to the threshold used by other

Figure 8. Long –Term Development of ESL Rates in All ET 2020 Countries



Source: Education and Training Monitor 2012



countries. In contrast with other Member States, Malta does not split secondary education in two levels. Rather, secondary education is taken as one whole educational period without distinction between lower and upper secondary education. Upon applying an interpretation of the definition which is more equitable with the interpretation used in other countries, Malta's "Early School Leavers" 2011 rate stands at around 24 per cent. This has also been confirmed in the Education and Training Monitor published by the European Commission. Malta's target to reduce the early school leavers rate to 29 per cent by 2020 is expected to be reviewed.

Statistics from the National Statistics Office indicate that 52 per cent of the unemployed population of 18 to 24 year olds are early school leavers whereas 14.5 per cent of the inactive 18-24 population are early school leavers (a substantial number of the inactive from this age group are in training or education). Reducing the rate of early school leavers is a gateway to acquiring the necessary skills and competencies required in society through educational attainment and training. Furthermore, it is recognised that the reduction in the number of early school leavers is a direct contribution to combating social exclusion, as well as a social and economic potential for society as a whole.

Young people who encounter a number of barriers in formal schooling are provided with an access route towards validation of skills and working-life familiarisation through the concept of second-chance learning opportunities. The Youth.Inc Programme managed by the Foundation for Educational Services provides a reintegration project by providing personalised support to youth who do not have formal qualifications. Through the adoption of a person-centred approach, an action plan is devised according to the needs of the individual. The notion behind Youth.Inc is to offer young people the opportunity to acquire knowledge, skills and work exposure through an environment which is not associated with the academic stream. Whilst acknowledging the gains that participants can acquire, it is nonetheless recognised that this project needs to be strengthened to tackle a number of lacunas which still persist. These include:

- Validation of skills acquired through the programme in instances of non-completion;
- Alternatives for young people who show an interest in following the programme but who cannot participate during the day;
- The ratio of theoretical learning to practical learning;
- Motivating young people who are disengaged from education to participate in the programme.

The Directorate for Lifelong Learning is also a leading provider in second-chance opportunities for learners. A

number of young people who did not obtain the entry qualifications to pursue their studies at post-secondary and tertiary level are attending evening courses organised by the Directorate. In the last scholastic year a total of 441 and 773 individuals aged 15 to 20 years and 21 to 30 years respectively pursued an evening programme. In the scholastic year 2011/2012 a Lifelong Learning Centre in Msida was opened for young people who did not attain a SEC certificate. 49 young people aged between 16 and 24 (18 – male; 31 – female) joined the programme. Moreover, the Directorate for Lifelong Learning offers a number of programmes through the Visual and Performing Arts Schools which help young people to develop their creative talent in the field of arts. The number of attendees in the age cohort under study (16-24) totalled 969 (400 – male; 569 – female).

When evaluating skills development, it is mandatory to explore the notions of traineeships and apprenticeships. Facilitation of the transition from school to the formal economy is a focus which the Directorate for Education Services is striving to instil through a number of programmes. The role of such programmes is to bridge the gap between the knowledge gained through formal teaching in schools with the skills and competencies needed at the place of work. In addition to the career guidance which is provided in schools, specific career programmes are prepared for students to facilitate young people's access to the world of work. Through the course of the academic year, students are given the opportunity to participate in job exposure initiatives. These are complemented with visits to work places and post-secondary institutions.

The National Curriculum Framework puts employability, quality of life and lifelong learning at the forefront. With the aim of equipping young people with the competencies and skills needed to adapt to the demands of the future labour market, the Curriculum recommends that schools focus on a number of cross-curricular themes which are considered as key competencies of lifelong learning and are essential in the formal economy. These include digital, numerical and linguistic literacy, communicative skills, creativity and innovation, initiative and entrepreneurship. The latter is instrumental in the labour market since it refers to the person's ability in turning ideas into concrete action, whilst managing risk and acquiring competencies which make an individual competitive in the world of work.

The Policy Brief on Youth Entrepreneurship issued by OECD and the European Commission acknowledges that the younger cohorts may offer the most potential for entrepreneurial activity. This is confirmed in a Eurobarometer Study commissioned in 2009 which highlights that 40 per cent of the 15-24 replied in the

affirmative when asked about the feasibility of self-employment. However, the Policy Brief states there is a gap between intent and action, since only 4 per cent of those aged 15-24 were registered as self-employed. The Policy Brief identifies a number of barriers which may inhibit young people from turning their entrepreneurial ideas into concrete action. These include:

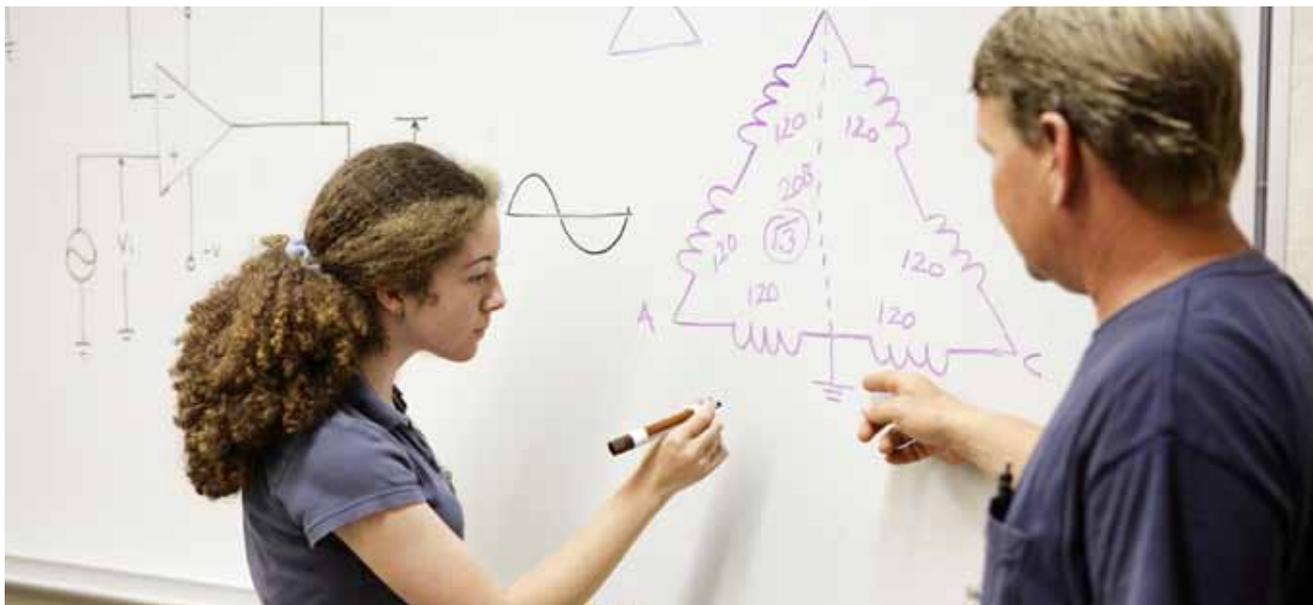
- The influence of families, teachers and society as a whole;
- A lack of focus on entrepreneurial attitudes and skills in education and training programmes;
- Lack of human, financial and social capital necessary for both business start-up and to successfully run a new business;
- Difficulty of young people to obtain external finance, including debt finance;
- Limited business networks and business-related social capital;
- Market barriers which may be biased from supporting youth-owned businesses.²⁷

A recent news release issued by the National Statistics Office confirms that in 2011, there were 1,090 young entrepreneurs in Malta. 87 per cent of the 1,090 young entrepreneurs aged 15-24 stated that they had some form of entrepreneurial activity as their main job. It is recognised that the Malta Enterprise and the Employment and Training Corporation have a prominent role in ensuring that the barriers which young people face when starting an entrepreneurial

activity are addressed. They are also instrumental in assisting young people through the provision of information, advice, mentoring and adequate training to develop their entrepreneurial skills.

The Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) is entrusted with administering apprenticeships in Malta, leading to the formal validation through the Journeyman's Certificate which gives recognition of competence in the particular area of specialisation. Apprenticeships aim to provide a bridge between the theoretical knowledge acquired from a VET institution and the practical relevance acquired through a hands-on experience at an employer's establishment. The two institutions offering apprenticeships are MCAST (85%) and ITS (15%). Currently, there are over 600 participants following an apprentice scheme under the Technician Apprenticeship Scheme (TAS) and the Extended Skill Training Scheme (ESTS). An analysis conducted by the Employment and Training Corporation indicates that the present system is beneficial both for the employer and the student. As the study by the European Commission affirms, *'Apprenticeship-type schemes facilitate rapid school-work transitions for students in comparison to exclusively school-based VET schemes: the combination of theoretical and practical skills acquired in enterprises is regarded as useful both for enterprises and for VET students, considering that training contents are closer to enterprises' needs, students get in direct contact with companies and many of them remain after the apprenticeship*





period. Also, apprenticeship-type schemes provide a very strong signal for detecting skills shortages identified by enterprises.’²⁹

According to the tracer study of former apprentices who have successfully completed the apprenticeship programme, 75 per cent of the participants were actively engaged in the labour market, whilst 70 per cent of the apprentices are retained in employment by their respective company following the apprenticeship programme.

Notwithstanding the positive results obtained in the last years, it is acknowledged that the time is ripe for reviewing the apprenticeship system with the aim of formulating a scheme which is more responsive to the labour market requirements. Moreover, further effort will be made to ensure that young people are engaged in sustainable employment following the completion of the scheme.

4 ILO (2012). *Eurozone Job Crisis: Trends and Policy Responses*. Switzerland: International Institute for Labour Studies. Available from Internet: http://www.ilo.org/global/research/publications/WCMS_184965/lang--en/index.htm

5 Eurostat, EU Labour Force Survey

6 NSO (2012). *Key Indicators on the Labour Market: 2004-2011*

7 Eurostat, EU Labour Force Survey

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

12 Eurofound (2012). *NEETs Young people not in employment, education or training: Characteristics, costs and policy responses in Europe*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. Available from Internet: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/pubdocs/2012/54/en/1/EF1254EN.pdf>

13 Eurofound. *Young people and 'NEETs'*. Available from Internet: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/emcc/labourmarket/youth.htm>

14 NSO statistics (statistics for Western, Northern, and Gozo and Comino districts may be under represented due to a small sample size)
 Note: **Southern Harbour** (Valletta, Birgu, Isla, Bormla, Zabbar, Fgura, Floriana, Kalkara, Luqa, Marsa, Paola, Santa Luċġja, Tarxien, Xghajra); **Northern Harbour** (Qormi, Birkirkara, Gżira, Hamrun, Msida, Pembroke, Pieta, San Ġiljan, San Ġwann, Santa Venera, Sliema, Swieqi, Ta' Xbiex); **South Eastern** (Żejtun, Birżebbuġa, Gudja, Ghaxaq, Kirkop, Marsaskala, Marsaxlokk, Mqabba, Qrendi, Safi, Zurrieq); **Western** (Mdina, Żebbuġ, Siġġiewi, Attard, Balzan, Dingli, Iklin, Lija, Rabat, Mtarfa); **Northern** (Għargħur, Mellieħa, Mgarr, Mosta, Naxxar, San Pawl il-Baħar); **Gozo and Comino** (Rabat, Fontana, Ghajnsielem and Comino, Għarb, Għasri, Kerċem, Munxar, Nadur, Qala, San Lawrenz, Sannat, Xagħra, Xewkija, Żebbuġ)

15 Eurostat, EU Labour Force Survey.

16 CEDEFOP (2010). *Skills Supply and Demand in Europe medium-term forecast up to 2020*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. Available from Internet: http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/Files/3052_en.pdf

17 Union Haddiema Maqghudin (2012). *The Next Leap*. From Labour Market Programmes to Active Labour Market Policy.

18 Commission Staff Working Paper on the development of benchmarks on education and training for employability and learning mobility of 24.5.2011 (SEC (2011) 670 final).

19 Ibid.

20 NSO statistics (statistics segregated by sex for Levels 3 and 4 and Levels 5 and 6 may be under represented due to a small sample size)

21 National Strategic Reference Framework 2007-2013

22 European Commission. Commission Staff Working Document: Education and Training Monitor 2012

23 European Commission. Commission Staff Working Document: Education and Training Monitor 2012. Pg. 14

24 European Commission and OECD (2012). *Policy Brief on Youth Entrepreneurship: Entrepreneurial Activities in Europe*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

25 European Commission (2009). *'Entrepreneurship in the EU and beyond – A survey in the EU, EFTA countries, Croatia, Turkey, the US, Japan, South Korea and China'*. Flash Eurobarometer 283

26 European Commission and OECD (2012). *Policy Brief on Youth Entrepreneurship: Entrepreneurial Activities in Europe*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

27 Ibid.

28 NSO (2012). *A Focus on Youth Entrepreneurship*.

29 European Commission (2012). *Apprenticeship supply in the Member States of the European Union*



PLANNING ACTION & SETTING PRIORITIES

3.1 DEVELOPING PRIORITIES

The National Youth Employment Strategy acknowledges that the efforts made to assist young people in the transition between education and employment are commendable. Nonetheless, it is evident that more needs to be done to ensure that young people are not left behind. Education, training, employability, equal opportunities and community engagement are five ingredients that cut across social and economic integration of young people. Converging all of these areas is a challenge when it comes to initiative development.

The Employment and Training Corporation has a fundamental role in implementing this Strategy but it cannot do this alone. Youth employment requires the commitment and synergy of all stakeholders. A strategy centred on job-centred inclusive growth is dependent on a broad context which relies on both the economic and social structure of society. Employment is a key means of promoting quality of life and equality by facilitating social mobility and enhancing social inclusion. In this respect policies need to enable people to access and progress within the labour market, supported by skills development in accordance with labour market demands.

The aim of the National Youth Employment Strategy is to map out a direction towards a society which empowers and supports its young citizens

towards realising their life projects underpinned by the principles of solidarity and inclusion.

It is acknowledged that whilst a number of recommendations may not yield imminent results, the legacy of the actions proposed should be long-lasting. The approach adopted for the projected initiatives is mainstream, targeted or specialised, depending on the particular needs of the population under study.

It is recommended that the Ministry responsible for employment is the focal point for the coordination and monitoring of the implementation of this Strategy. In terms of budgeting, it is estimated that the proposed recommendations will, mainly although not exclusively, require financial input from public and European funds.

The targets which determine the effectiveness of the National Youth Employment Strategy 2015 are:

- Reducing absenteeism in compulsory education;
- Increasing the participation rate of young people at further and higher education ;
- Increasing the participation rate in lifelong learning;
- Reducing the early-school-leavers rate ;
- Increasing educational attainment at different levels of the education system;
- Increasing participation in non-formal activities;
- Reducing young people's unemployment rate;
- Reducing the NEET rate;
- Increasing apprenticeships and traineeships;
- Reducing the incidence of precarious and informal work.



“



JOAN HABER
Employer

“As an employer, I always seek to have a good balance between the skills and ages of my employees. When I engage youths within my company I always look for trained people in the field. As a result of this I advice all youths to continuously strive to improve their skills through training which in turn will enhance their chances of employability”

“



KENNETH MALLIA
Director

“In my short experience I have learnt that there are varies skills that can help you out towards a successful career. One of the main skills that are needed to be successful in your business is motivation and eagerness to always continue to improve your service towards customers. Customers are vital elements within a firm and surely, a firm will not function properly without them. As so the best quality products and services must be given to them, exactly like Seamless’s Products. Obviously to start a private company is not that easy at first as there might be lack of funds. But thanks to the Government scheme to help out the small firms with a valuable project, this was possible to grow and process.”

3.2 STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

The proposed recommendations are split into five categories:

- [Renewed Youth-Centred Investment](#);
- [Early Intervention and Prevention](#);
- [Facilitating Transition between Education, Training and Employment](#);
- [Equal Access and Opportunities to Education , Training and the Labour Market](#);
- [Sustainability of Jobs](#)

3.2.1 RENEWED YOUTH-CENTRED INVESTMENT

- The National Youth Employment Strategy calls for Government to adopt a youth-centred investment approach. This involves mainstreaming youth related issues in all policies and policy implementation measures at both national and local level to assess the impact of policy decisions on the lives of young people. Accordingly, it is recommended that “youth proofing” of all policy decisions and policy implementation measures are included in all policy proposals at both national and local level. To give effect to this, it is proposed that Aġenzija Żgħażaġh draws up a protocol on “youth proofing” for all policy proposals. This protocol should also include advice on how young people are actively consulted and given a voice in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of policies.
- Aġenzija Żgħażaġh, in conjunction with the Economic Policy Division within the Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment, will also be entrusted with conducting ‘youth budgeting’ to ensure that young people’s needs are adequately reflected in national budgets.
- In line with Malta’s National Reform Programme under the Europe 2020 Strategy which covers the period 2012-2015, it is to be ensured that the Employment and Training Corporation takes the necessary steps to continue exploring the possibility of utilizing European Social Funds targeted at young people.
- Youth impact-assessments are to be conducted, by the responsible ministries on national policies and programmes that influence young people. Aġenzija Żgħażaġh shall foresee and monitor the carrying-out of impact-assessments, in particular in areas related to education, employment and the economy.
- Research on young people needs to be strengthened in particular in the economic, social and educational sectors. To this effect, Aġenzija Żgħażaġh is to liaise with different stakeholders to ensure that evidence-based decision-making is reinforced. Structured dialogue with young people on several cross-cutting themes should also be the basis of research to

ensure that the measures adopted and the needs of youth converge.

- Statistics, collected from different sources related to the labour market is to be harmonised, and more variables studied to ensure that labour market information on young people is at the root of policy making.
- Aġenzija Żgħażaġh and the Employment and Training Corporation, together with other key stakeholders, should strengthen their collaboration and disseminate information and good practices. At EU level, the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) is a particularly appropriate instrument and organizations at national level are to use this tool to facilitate discussion as well as policy and strategic formulation between different policy sectors.

3.2.2 EARLY INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION

- The formation of skills and aptitudes is a life-cycle process and it is to be ensured that all young people are given the opportunity to have a strong start. It is acknowledged that the social costs of low performance and exclusion are higher than early intervention, preventive and referral services. Not all children have a level playing field, and it is recommended that early intervention services are strengthened to ensure that a targeted approach is adopted giving particular attention to those children who require additional support. For this to be achievable, it is crucial that educational services at different levels and welfare services are to be designed and coordinated jointly, in order to ensure that the inclusion of children and their families is safeguarded.
- A number of measures adopted in this Strategy aim to target specifically those young people who are neither in education, nor in employment or training. To ensure consistency and to further decrease the NEET rate, it is suggested that the following initiatives are pursued:
 - Review of existing measures to ascertain that initiatives adopted are in-line with current needs;
 - Follow-up students who are at-risk of dropping out or becoming NEET from secondary education;
 - Strengthen student-support services to ensure that the resources match the needs;
 - Work on a one-to-one basis with parents/ guardians of students who are at-risk of dropping out or becoming NEET.
- It is recognized that children and young people who are at risk of social exclusion as a result of various characteristics may find it even harder to participate actively in further and higher education, and the formal economy. Whilst acknowledging the developments which took place in the past years



with the recruitment of different professionals in the education sphere who offer support and assistance to children requiring particular attention, it is recommended that the multi-disciplinary approach is strengthened. Professionals representing different sectors will coordinate to assist the child, whilst devising an assessment of the care plan of the particular child. A mentor is to be appointed to ensure that a holistic approach is adopted when relating to the child. Both the child and the legal guardians need a point of reference to relate to, and it is thus necessary that the teacher and the mentor are equipped with the necessary information to make sure that the child is adequately followed.

- The role of the community in ensuring that young people are given the necessary opportunities to succeed is vital. To this effect, the concept of ACCESS which brings together different social services should be extended. Parents and families of young people who come from vulnerable backgrounds, who have multiple problems or who require additional protection are to be given specialized support services. At community level, an increased investment is to be dedicated towards professionals working in the social development field who are equipped to assist the young person and the family needing targeted support. A case manager is to be appointed to ensure that the programmes devised by the different entities which the young person may come across are tailor- made to the specific needs.
- Transition from education to work entails that young people are given the necessary information to choose the route to their career. A recent Eurobarometer study indicates that when asked how useful it would be to receive information about the skills that are likely to be needed in the future job market, 92 per cent of Maltese respondents aged 15 to 24 compared to 81 per cent in the EU27 answered that it would be 'useful'. This rate is compared to a total average for all age groups of 53 per cent and 57 per cent respectively for Malta and the EU27 who gave the same answer . Information should be accessible and the language used is to reflect the language preferred by the target population. It is thereby recommended that Aġenzija Żgħażaġh in collaboration with the Employment and Training Corporation take on board the views of young people on whom and what influences their decisions on the choices made, as well as the best means to find out about jobs and careers. It is therefore proposed that advice is formulated and delivered according to young people's perceptions of the effectiveness of such service.
- Measures are to be broadened to ensure that parents and families, as well as front-liners working with young people, have the required knowledge and understanding of the labour market. It is suggested that Aġenzija Żgħażaġh and the Employment and Training Corporation work closely with families and front-liners to inform them on the fluctuating labour market, the needs of the economy and the requirements needed to undertake such career prospects.

- The notion of career and life planning blends with the provision of the Personal and Social Development (PSD) lessons in schools. Teachers are to work in partnership with the Employment and Training Corporation, the Cooperatives Movement as well as Malta Enterprise to ensure that young people are given the relevant information on the career prospects, the skills and competencies needed in the labour market and the forecasted emerging industries.
- A specialised unit focusing on young people should be developed within the Employment and Training Corporation to ensure that following contact with the employment advisors, a detailed individualised action plan is conducted. The aim is to identify young people's needs and to contribute to the design of a programme which takes into consideration the aspirations of the young person, the educational and family environment, and the prospects available in terms of employment, training or education. It is further recommended that trans-disciplinary teams made up of youth workers, psychologists, community workers, mentors and career guidance personnel follow up the young person.
- A Youth Skills Inventory should be established within the Employment and Training Corporation to ensure that traineeship programmes are matched with the skills and aspirations of the young people who are registering for formal employment. Traineeship programmes are an important tool for the development of employability skills. The Eurobarometer Survey 'Employment and Social Policy' indicates that 84 per cent of Maltese respondents who have completed a traineeship stated that the traineeship helped them to get a permanent job. This rate is significantly higher than the EU27 rate which stands at 44 per cent .
- Qualified youth workers are to become statutory in key service delivery points ranging from the Employment and Training Corporation to community centres to schools and further and higher institutions. In collaboration with the Youth and Community Studies Department within the University of Malta, training should be provided to those individuals who are already working with young people. These traineeships shall be accredited accordingly.
- The advent of Youth Cafes provides an opportunity for the further enhancement of informal guidance and information services. Aġenzija Żgħażaġh is encouraged to collaborate with the Employment and Training Corporation and the social economy to ensure that young people are given access to information through an informal environment. This concept should be broadened and extended to different parts of Malta. The prospect of developing a Youth Cafe in Gozo, Valletta and in further and higher educational providers is to be explored.
- Job-seeking information as well as possible options for training and/or education should become more



accessible. For this purpose it is suggested that local councils develop more information desks.

- Following the positive results accomplished by the Employment and Training Corporation in the number of persons trained along the years through its programmes, it is suggested that the collaboration between the Employment and Training Corporation, local councils and community centres is strengthened to ensure that training courses are more accessible to the public.
- A marketing campaign should be developed where, through the structured use of mass media and social media, information on the labour market, career guidance, job opportunities and effective transitions from school to work are highlighted. The media plan should be a joint effort between the Employment and Training Corporation, Aġenzija Żgħażaġh, educational institutions, the industry and non-governmental organisations. Aġenzija Żgħażaġh is to act as the information focal point for young people.

3.2.3 FACILITATING TRANSITION BETWEEN EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

- For this Strategy to be truly effective, it is imperative that educational institutions work closely with the labour market and the community. Integration of social and economic policies is fundamental to yield results which are sustainable and which leave a positive impact on the cohort of the population this Strategy aims to target. Partnership between the public employment service provider, training organizations, the industry, schools, further and higher educational institutions and the social welfare agencies is to be strengthened. Coordinated support is at the heart of this Strategy because it leads to a more comprehensive approach focusing in a multi-disciplinary manner on the individual needs of the young person.
 - The education system plays a pivotal role in ensuring that young people are equipped with the necessary skills and competencies to compete in a fluctuating labour market. Technological advances and increased access to information have changed the role which educators have in the classroom. Authorities are to ensure that gaps are eliminated between the updated National Curriculum Framework and its implementation at grass-roots level. It is further proposed that teachers are given the necessary space to develop flexible teaching methods as opposed to rigid forms of teaching which stifle creativity. Furthermore, more student-centred blended learning is to be used in the classroom with interactive and flexible modalities of learning.
 - Employers coming from different occupational sectors are to be invited to classrooms to discuss with the students the nature of the sector and the skills and competencies needed to work in the sector.
 - Colleges are organising a series of exploration visits in places of work to familiarise students with the working life through an applied learning environment. Guidelines should be designed to ensure that the goals of these programmes are being met. Moreover, it is proposed that the familiarisation programme for students in their secondary school years is split into three cycles:
 - Cycle I: General Information and guidance;
 - Cycle II: Development of soft skills needed for participation in the labour market;
 - Cycle III: Job exposure in an area of the students' preference.
- In the third cycle, students from all colleges shall be asked to show their inclination to the areas which they would like to have job exposure in, and will later through their secondary school years have the experience of a one-week job taster. Skills matching should be effected to make sure that participation is linked with the strengths of the student. It is imperative that collaboration between schools and the industry is strengthened, and that students are given the required protection and supervision needed when they are involved in out-of-school work placements.
- Participation of young people in non-formal activities is to be recognised. For this purpose, it is recommended that post-secondary institutions provide a school-leaving certificate to all students attending a programme, listing the modules studied and the participation in non-formal activities.
 - Involvement of young people in the voluntary sector is to be strengthened. It is acknowledged that the experience acquired from participation in voluntary work increases the employability prospects. For this purpose, it is suggested that educational institutions both at compulsory and further and higher education strengthen their collaboration with the voluntary sector to ensure that young people are given the opportunity to participate in training programmes with voluntary institutions. Participation is to be accredited accordingly.
 - Malta Enterprise and the industry are to be involved in the design of programmes and qualifications which involve the skills and abilities needed for entry to the labour market. Flexibility of skills and competencies are instrumental to be competitive in the global formal economy, and schools must keep abreast with the changing traits needed in the specific sectors.

- During the scholastic year 2011/2012, secondary level students were given the opportunity of choosing BTEC vocational areas, which include engineering, hospitality, information technology, health and social care. Through this measure, students were introduced to vocational pathways which may further encourage them to continue their education to MCAST and ITS. This initiative was piloted in four state schools and four non-state schools and will continue in the scholastic year 2012/2013. Following this initiative, it is proposed that this pilot project is extended to reach more students.
- The inception of the Malta College for Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) opened up a myriad of opportunities for young people who would have otherwise disengaged from traditional academic settings. It is thus recommended that the concept of MCAST is further developed and strengthened through more courses which are aligned with different labour market sectors.
- To address the drop-out rate at MCAST, a pilot project is to be developed where an in-depth assessment is carried out with all students who resign from the Foundation Course Level 1. This project should be extended gradually to cover all other levels.
- A review of the foundation courses at MCAST should be conducted to ensure that courses at Level 1 and 2 are tailor-made to the expectations and needs of young people.
- Following the good practice model of MCAST it is further proposed that the idea of colleges focusing on specific sectors is replicated. To this effect, it is augured that the concept of the Academy of Arts is developed in the coming years to give the opportunity to students to further their talents and maximize their potential in visual and performing arts.
- The investment in scholarships is to be continued and more specialized scholarships as is the case of the Arts Scholarships and the Sports Scholarships are to be offered.
- Stimulating job creation entails matching skills supply with demand. It is, therefore, to be ensured that young people are channelled into training opportunities that meet the demands of the market. Apprenticeship systems can contribute to the development of skills and the competitiveness of the company. Following an analysis by the Employment and Training Corporation, a number of amendments are being proposed to address the present anomalies. These include:
 - Establishing a National Apprenticeship Scheme that replaces the existing two schemes (TAS and ESTS);
 - New apprenticeships at more levels to include Level 2 (equivalent to SEC Grade 6-7 or VET Level 2) and Level 5 (Equivalent to Undergraduate Diploma or Undergraduate Certificate or VET Higher Diploma);
 - Launching of Apprenticeships with other training institutions;
 - Introducing Apprenticeships in other sectors according to the needs of the industry;
 - Reviewing the remuneration and maintenance grant given to apprentices to make such remuneration more attractive;
 - Providing fiscal incentives to employers participating in the Apprenticeship scheme.
- A Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme to be administered by the Employment and Training Corporation is to be developed. This programme shall be aimed at promoting entrepreneurship amongst young people, providing training and supporting youth in preparation for entrepreneurship and setting up of cooperatives.
- The role of the Malta Enterprise in business, entrepreneurship, competitiveness and innovation is central. This Strategy recommends that collaboration is strengthened between different stakeholders to ensure that entrepreneurial education and incentives to foster an entrepreneurial market are offered. A systematic channel of communication between Malta Enterprise and education institutions at different levels, as well as the Employment and Training Corporation should be created. The aim will be to forecast potential industries and to anticipate the competencies and skills needed to meet the demands of the industry.
- It is essential that the Malta Enterprise through its various projects, continues to present young people with innovative start-up programmes, advisory services, mentoring and grants to assist them in their entrepreneurial venture.
- Flexible labour markets require employees who are equipped with the necessary aptitude skills to enter the formal economy and to perform at par with other competitors. It is to be ensured that graduates are prepared for their entry into the labour market. For this purpose, it is suggested that employers work in tandem with MCAST and the University of Malta to plan courses' contents. In addition, relevant work placements should be offered in the duration of the course to enhance work-based learning.
- Meaningful and relevant work experience is essential in the acquisition of skills needed to be competitive in the labour market. For this purpose, it is suggested that students in post-secondary and tertiary education are offered internships during the course of their studies. Through this proposal, students will be provided with on-the-job training and structured work opportunities in settings which are associated with their area of studies. It is further suggested that a three-tier assessment model is adopted including self-assessment; assessment from the employer; and assessment from the mentor.

- An important ingredient in modern labour markets is continuous training and the development of a life-long learning aptitude. This is also instrumental in the transitions from school to work, and in job-to-job transitions. To this effect, it is suggested that supported action programmes are devised to incentivise the industry to assist young employees to study and/or work abroad. Through these opportunities, labour mobility would be facilitated and adaptability in fluctuating labour markets enhanced.
- Young people are to be informed about the training programmes and opportunities that are offered at EU level. The Eurodesk within European Union Programme Agency (EUPA) shall coordinate this initiative through Aġenzija Żgħażaġh to ensure that young people in different educational institutions are aware of the possibilities which exist for student and trainee mobility.
- The centralised Education Information Centre (EDINFO) within the Ministry of Education and Employment shall develop a data bank of all the courses and training opportunities that are offered to young people, as well as enrolment dates and contact details of respective institutions.
- Information on the different paths which young people have can be facilitated through the improved access to social media and the internet. Stakeholders are to ensure that the instruments used to deliver messages to young people are tailor-made to the communication tools used by young people.

3.2.4 EQUAL ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO EDUCATION, TRAINING AND THE LABOUR MARKET

- A guiding principle in this Strategy is that all young people should have equal access and opportunities at all stages of their life to education, training and employment. Schemes targeted specifically at incentivizing young people to follow education or training are to be strengthened. The Directorates of Education are called upon to adopt a unified approach towards identifying these young people. A specialised programme for youth of compulsory schooling age is to be devised, whereby students aged 13-16 are encouraged to develop their vocational inclinations whilst learning the basic competencies through the concept of embedded learning. By means of the integration of different workshops, short placements and entrepreneurial activities with basic literacy programmes, these students will be encouraged to follow a training programme whilst in compulsory education in a different learning environment. Opportunities for progression to higher levels following completion of compulsory learning should also be discussed by the Directorate responsible for compulsory education and MCAST, ITS and Youth.Inc.
- For authorities to understand the complete dimension of absenteeism, there should be a national data collation system which measures the rate of absenteeism at state, church and independent schools. Moreover, it is to be ensured that all schools responsible for collecting data use the same definition and the same means of interpretation.
- The Research and Development Department and the Student Services Department within the Ministry responsible for education together with the National Commission for Further and Higher Education and the Employment and Training Corporation are to engage in a tracer study which follows and guides young people from compulsory schooling to the age of twenty-four. Presently the tracer study analyses the situation of fifth-formers as they leave compulsory education. This study is to be extended with the aim of having a longitudinal analysis of young people on their transition following compulsory education. For this to be possible, it is understood that discussions with the Commissioner for Data Protection should be held to make the necessary legal amendments to ensure that such dissemination of data is abiding by the set law.
- Engaging young people to be active citizens entails a commitment from institutions to identify the links between vulnerability and attainment. It is understood that lack of educational attainment leads to lesser possibilities of skills and competencies needed to adapt to the fluctuating labour market. Furthermore, lack of attendance at school and low performance reduce the probability of social mobility later on in life. School authorities are to ensure that absenteeism rates are minimized through the strengthening of school and community support services which give individualized attention to the student and the family.
- Following the initiative adopted by the University of Malta of launching the Cottonera Resource Centre which will encourage potential students from the inner harbour area to further their studies, it is suggested that a pilot project is designed. This proposal will ensure that young people coming from areas which are more at risk of inactivity and unemployment are followed through a three-tier system of support, training and mentoring.
- Young people who fall out of the education system are to be given an opportunity of a second-chance education. Whilst acknowledging the education reforms which should be having a positive impact on the drop-out rate and the rate of people not in education, employment and training, it is recommended that life-long learning initiatives and tailored programmes to young people are strengthened. To this effect, a number of



recommendations are proposed for the Youth.Inc programme which falls under the auspices of the Foundation for Educational Services:

- Extension of the programme to be more accessible and attractive to young people who are not in employment, education or training;
- Amending the entry requirements to ensure that admission to this programme is not limited to 21 years. The proposal is to extend it to 24 years;
- Introducing the concept of an ongoing intake system to ensure that students who drop-out from other educational institutions can participate in the Youth.Inc programme;
- Developing a Level 3 programme which focuses more on applied learning;
- Providing the opportunity for young people to follow the Youth.Inc programme on a part-time basis to ensure that those youths who find employment can complete the programme of studies in a flexible manner;
- Introducing the concept of partial qualifications to ensure that young people who resign from the course are given accreditation for the modules completed, together with a certificate of attendance.
- Reviewing the course contents to certify that the programme of studies is tailor-made to the target population, through the provision of more opportunities for familiarisation of working life.
- Liaising with MCAST and ITS to make sure that participants in Youth.Inc can progress in courses offered by the two institutions. This requires a structured dialogue between MCAST, ITS, Youth. INC and the National Commission for Further & Higher Education on the eligibility criteria and the equivalence of qualifications.
- Creating partnerships with voluntary organisations to extend the Youth.Inc concept in the community.
- The Ministry responsible for Education together with the relevant stakeholders involved in the employment industry is to ensure that accreditation of informal and non-formal learning is given due consideration. This should include validation of skills acquired through non-formal activities or on the place of work. For this purpose young people should be encouraged at different stages of their life to be involved in various non-academic activities which give them the opportunity to build skills as well as foster intra-personal and inter-personal relationships.
- Validation of short-courses offered by the Employment and Training Corporation should also be developed to ensure that participants' successful completion is formally recognised.
- Participation in civil life yields benefits both to the individual and to the wider society. Aġenzija Żgħazagh together with educational authorities and voluntary organisations are to collaborate to ensure that young people are encouraged to participate. A targeted out-reach approach should be adopted with those youths who are less motivated to voluntarily participate owing to their vulnerable life circumstances.
- The role of the Church and its institutions is essential in providing support to young people at community level. To intensify efforts, it is suggested that a committee between representatives from Government institutions and the authorities of the Church is set up to:
 - Raise awareness on education, training and labour market opportunities;
 - Provide support; and
 - Incentivise young people, in particular those coming from a vulnerable background towards educational attainment and participation in the formal economy.
- The National Employment Strategy adheres to the principle that all young people should be empowered to take an active part in society and to succeed. However, it is recognized that not all young people begin their route to active participation from the same starting position. There are young people who from birth are reared in circumstances which put them at a disadvantage when compared to their peers, whereas others experience vulnerability at a later stage. This Strategy recognizes that the State is to intervene to ensure that these young people are not entrapped in a system which hinders their development. Increased attention should be given to young people who are in care to ensure that they are given the opportunities needed to succeed both in their educational attainment and in employment. Hence for this purpose, this strategy urges the authorities to ensure that the EU co-funded project, 'Embark for Life' which came to an end in 2012 is continued to maintain continuity for young people who are participating in these programmes.
- A new project for looked-after young people following their care should be designed in collaboration with public social welfare agencies, education institutions, the Employment and Training Corporation and the Housing Authority. Through this project, looked-after youth are provided support to progress to further and higher education and are offered the life skills needed for their independent living, whilst being supported through training and job coaching. For the duration of the training programme, participants are to benefit from grants which are equivalent to the minimum wage.
- Young people who are victims of domestic violence, abuse or who have experienced family breakdown, trauma or a mental health problem are susceptible to facing difficulties in their educational attainment and employability prospects. As a result, a

programme specifically designed for youth who are facing these problems which may hinder their life chances, is to be designed focusing on therapeutic services, mentoring, second-chance education, and work-exposure.

- Measures taken to support persons with disability are to be strengthened. The National Youth Employment Strategy encourages the public sector to be a model of good practice in this respect through more active measures towards supported employment. It is acknowledged that presently there are a number of EU co-funded projects which work towards providing opportunities for people who are in a vulnerable situation. These include ME2 which focuses specifically on persons with disability and who are assisted to integrate in the labour market; the Work Trial Scheme which offers work placement for people coming from vulnerable backgrounds whilst receiving 50 per cent of the minimum wage; and the Bridging the Gap scheme which is designed to support participants in the transition period from unemployment to employment, whilst offering an allowance of 80 per cent of the minimum wage for the duration of the work exposure scheme. A new initiative was introduced in 2012 whereby persons with disability are given the opportunity to work in local councils. These projects are to be pursued, and specific family-friendly measures should be adopted which focus on the specific needs of the individual, aiming to turn barriers into opportunities for participation.
- Young people who are in correctional facilities are to be provided with the necessary education, training and job exposure to give them the opportunity to reintegrate into society. Currently, the Employment and Training Corporation in collaboration with the Kordin Correctional Facility is providing courses to these people, as well as providing them with the technical assistance to develop their manual skills through the construction of workshops. Presently, the Employment and Training Corporation is providing the Bridging the Gap Scheme, the Work Trial Scheme and the Cooperative Agreement signed with Caritas Malta towards providing training and placements for former convicts and former substance abusers. It is augured that this momentum is maintained and that with the collaboration of social welfare agencies, these

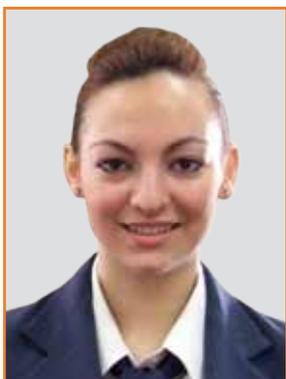




MARTINA SCALPELLO

University of Malta

“My name is Martina Scalpello. As a recent University of Malta graduate in B.COM (Hons. Banking and Finance), I found employment immediately. I was literally spoilt for choice. The jobs in financial sector, both in Malta and abroad, are numerous and varied. I believe that my studies at university helped to prepare me for the world of work. The theory I learned gave me a good grasp of the knowledge required to perform well in this sector. Of course experience on the job is the greatest teacher of all but without this degree I wouldn't have been able to follow this career path.”



BRIDGET BORG

HND Hospitality Management - ITS

“The fact that I was involved in a great deal of things at the outset helped me to settle down immediately and to start enjoying my time at the Institution. I travelled in order to participate in the Gran Trofeo D'Oro, a Food & Beverage and Culinary Arts competition which helped me to understand all the hard work, and preparation that goes into an event of this calibre.

Hands-on training and work placements give us a better perspective of what the work environment is like. I aim to continue my studies, and finish them successfully. During this time, I will also be evaluating the branch in which I would like to specialise.”

individuals are assisted following their acquittal to be reintegrated into society. It is further suggested that MCAST opens its doors to the residents of Kordin Correctional Facility who wish to pursue their studies or training.

- Migrant youth potential should be evaluated and assessed. The Employment and Training Corporation should recruit a culture mediator who acts as a mentor to young people coming from a migrant background.
- In collaboration with non-governmental organisations and the Agency for Welfare of Asylum Seekers, a scheme is to be developed to help young immigrants with the necessary language, cultural and other skills they may need to move on in life. It is also vital that through this scheme, these young people are assisted in developing their portfolio and curriculum vitae.
- The Ministry responsible for Employment is working towards developing the concept of ACCESS focusing specifically on young people. The identified place is Valletta, and through this centre which will serve as a one-stop-shop, young people will be followed by a number of professionals including youth workers who will assist them in the provision of services involving amongst others training, job search, social assistance and housing advice. Such concept is to be developed and investment in youth and community workers maximized, aiming at assisting young people to engage in society and to build a trusted relationship. Front liners are to be adequately trained to ensure that they understand the benefits of young people's participation and provide them with the needed information and tools to effectively support these individuals.
- A new scheme administered by the Employment and Training Corporation, entitled 'Active' is to be introduced. Following first contact of jobseekers, a nine-month training programme will be formulated which will include:
 - 1st Month: Job search seminar; meeting with the employment advisor; design of the personalised action plan;
 - Between 3rd and 6th month: new activation courses; job skills course;
 - Between 6th and 9th month: Work-placement in the area of preference.

This programme will ensure that young job-seekers are thoroughly trained on the acquisition of the employability skills needed to participate in the labour market, whilst being closely followed by a mentor. The seminars and courses which the participant will follow will be youth-centred and will be designed in accordance with the particular characteristics of the young person. At the end of this programme, the trainee will be provided with a recognised certificate that will group together both the formal and the on-the-job training.

- It is recognised that specialised programmes

which take into account the realities of the Gozitan labour market should be planned for unemployed youths. The 'Active' Traineeship Programme is to be extended to Gozo. However, regional mobility should also be encouraged by informing young jobseekers from Gozo on the different labour market prospects that are available to them.

- A pilot project in a number of local councils in Malta and Gozo should be developed to assist young people who are disconnected from the education system and the labour market. The scope of the project is to offer non-formal guidance at community level to inactive youth, with the aim of encouraging them to be active participants in society.
- Capacity-building should be strengthened in Gozo to ensure that in concert with the Employment and Training Corporation personnel, young jobseekers can also avail of the services of a youth worker with youth advisory roles which are extended to cover the social and educational dimensions.

3.2.5 SUSTAINABILITY OF JOBS

- A report published by the European Commission indicates that employers tend to evaluate current skills needs, rather than anticipate long-term skills needs³⁴. For this purpose, it is suggested that the Employment and Training Corporation conducts periodic forecast reports on skills supply and demand. These studies are to be carried out in collaboration with education institutions, the Economic and Policy Division within the Ministry for Finance, the Economy and Investment, and the Central Bank.
- The needs of the labour market are constantly evolving, and societies are to ensure that they have the tools and means which are required to adapt. To this effect, it is recommended that a more targeted approach is adopted focusing on emerging industries and on sectors where shortfalls are registered. The creative industries, agribusiness, the green economy, life sciences, the pharmaceutical industry, financial services, and the digital economy are sectors which represent potential economic growth. Investing in these industries is a significant tool which generates economic sustainability, job creation and social inclusion. The Malta Enterprise has a prominent role in being the link between the industry and the education institutions at different levels to ensure that young people are receiving the forecasted skills needed in a competitive market.
- Following the success of the Training Subsidy Scheme (Academic), it is encouraged that the Employment and Training Corporation carries on with the provision of financial assistance schemes which encourage young people to improve their



competences and skills through further training in particular sectors.

- Part-time courses offered by the University of Malta, MCAST, ITS and the Directorate for Lifelong Learning should be strengthened to ensure that young people continue to acquire and develop the skills and competencies needed in a competitive knowledge-based economy. Institutions are to make sure that new modalities of learning are introduced and that modernised means of technology is used to facilitate skills development and the acquisition of accredited certification.
- To address the barriers faced by Gozitans, it is recommended that courses offered by the Employment and Training Corporation, the Directorate for Lifelong Learning, the Malta College for Arts, Science and Technology and the Institution of Tourism Studies are revised. This is to ensure that the opportunities provided are in line with the needs of the market and the aspirations of young people.
- The National Youth Employment Strategy adheres to the principle that national public policies are to ensure that the economic outlook of young people is not put at peril as a consequence of undeclared work. The phenomenon of undeclared work is influenced by several variables including economic, social and cultural factors, and puts at danger the sustainability of social protection systems as well as the competitiveness of the labour market. On a national level measures should be taken which focus both on deterrence and prevention. On these lines it is suggested that research is carried out to understand the reasons behind informal activity amongst the young population. The Department of Social Security in liaison with the Employment and Training Corporation should take up the role of informing and educating young people on the causes of participation in the informal economy which deters them from their right to social benefits. Young people are to understand that they will be better off if they choose to be active in the formal economy.
- The State is to further ensure through its departments that enforcement to breaches of the employment conditions is strengthened. Through an investment in personnel and a structured system it is to be guaranteed that employers who are not in compliance with established employment regulations are penalised accordingly.
- To address the incidence of informal work, it is recommended that the Ministry responsible for employment explores the possibility of creating a temping agency. Its functions will include:
 - Having a pool of workers who are seeking employment;
 - Assessing the skills of the job-seekers;
 - Formulating a contractual agreement which includes the conditions of work and the pay with the employers who approach the Agency;
 - Matching the skills of the job-seekers with the demands of the employers;
 - Paying the worker the established rate;
 - Collecting the money from the employer for all the work provided by the employee.
- The Employment and Training Corporation, in liaison with the Department of Social Security, is to further ensure that the concept of mutual obligation is enforced, where social benefits are complemented with effective activation measures. If adequately implemented, this concept, will ensure that young recipients of social benefits are contributing to society through the involvement in traineeship programmes, lifelong learning, and short work placements. Moreover, as a result of enforcement of the mutual obligations concept, those youth who are involved in the informal economy will be detected.
- The rise in temporary work is leaving an impact on the financial independence of young people who are lacking economic security and in turn inhibiting them from availing themselves of home loans. Because of the temporary nature of the post, the turn-over rate of EU funded projects is very high. This is detrimental both for the organization and the individual. The public sector should ensure that individuals who are employed in temporary positions, in particular through EU co-funded projects, are given the opportunity to stabilize their position before the contract comes to an end. Presently, EU legislation states that following renewal of four years employment in the same post, the person is to be granted an indefinite status. A unit under the public sector employing persons as project leaders or administrators for EU co-funded projects, should then deploy these employees to organizations to administer the specific projects. With this scenario, these people would be given the same opportunity to obtain an indefinite contract as other employees in the public sector who start off with a definite status.
- A scheme is to be developed to regularise summer jobs. These temporary work experiences should be capitalised and skills attained validated. Through systematic enforcement it is to be ensured that employers abide by the working regulations and that young people are not exploited through precarious conditions.

3.3 CONCLUDING REMARKS

An effective Youth Employment Strategy conveys the message that countries cannot stand idle in front of the reality of youth unemployment, which is a scar on every nation and its economy. Within this whole scenario the Strategy outline for the forthcoming years

is embedded in a context construed around the realities that impinge on society, namely globalisation, changing lifestyles and a volatile employment market that is conditioned by so many factors that may not be entirely predictable and immediately visible.

Young people are a potentially vulnerable group when they are on the stepping stone of the employment market. Ensuring a smooth route towards and into sustained employment entails a coordinated effort and a concrete strategy which addresses the challenges coherently. Youth can become a liability if not given the space to participate actively in their communities. Through a youth investment strategy and a plan which focuses on inclusive growth, young people can contribute to the architecture of a sustainable society centred on economic success and social cohesion. Access to education, training and employment are central in ensuring that youth are given their fair share of resources.

No strategy functions in isolation and the National Youth Employment Strategy 2015 is no exception. The essence of this Strategy is in presenting a number of recommendations that reflect the needs felt by young people in the different transition points they come across. Stakeholders' involvement, including the participation of young people, should be an integral part of the evaluation process which will measure the effectiveness of this tool. Whilst acknowledging that the proposed actions may impact young people differently owing to the group's heterogeneity, it is pivotal that the resultant policy change will allow youth to improve their life chances and achievements.

30 Participation rate refers to students following full-time further and higher education programme as enrolled with an education institution in Malta

31 An early-school leaver is defined as a person aged 18 to 24 recorded in the Labour Force Survey whose highest level of education or training attained is ISCED 0, 1, 2 or 3c short, and who received no education or training in the four weeks preceding the survey. (Eurostat)

32 European Commission (2011). 'Employment and Social Policy'. Special Eurobarometer 377

33 Ibid

34 European Commission (2011). *Transferability of Skills across Economic Sectors. Luxembourg*. Publications Office of the European Union, 2011

Annex

4.1 SHORT DESCRIPTIONS OF KEY OVERALL INDICATORS

Overall Employment rate	The overall employment rate is calculated by dividing the number of persons aged 20 to 64 in employment by the total population of the same age group. The indicator is based on the EU Labour Force Survey. The survey covers the entire population living in private households and excludes those in collective households such as boarding houses, halls of residence and hospitals. Employed population consists of those persons who during the reference week did any work for pay or profit for at least one hour, or were not working but had jobs from which they were temporarily absent.
NEET	The indicator on young people neither in employment nor in education and training (NEET) corresponds to the percentage of the population of a given age group and sex who is not employed and not involved in further education or training. The numerator of the indicator refers to persons who meet the following two conditions: (a) they are not employed (unemployed or inactive according to the International Labour Organisation definition) and (b) they have not received any education or training in the four weeks preceding the survey. The denominator in the total population consists of the same age group and sex, excluding the respondents who have not answered the question 'participation to regular education and training'. Both the numerators and the denominators come from the European Labour Force Survey.
Employment rate of older workers	The employment rate of older workers is calculated by dividing the number of persons aged 55 to 64 in employment by the total population of the same age group. The indicator is based on the EU Labour Force Survey. The survey covers the entire population living in private households and excludes those in collective households such as boarding houses, halls of residence and hospitals. Employed population consists of those persons who during the reference week did any work for pay or profit for at least one hour, or were not working but had jobs from which they were temporarily absent.
Employment rate of non-EU nationals	The employment rate of migrants is calculated by dividing the number of non-EU27 nationals resident in the country (aged 20 to 64) in employment by the total resident population of non-EU27 nationals of the same age group. The indicator is based on the EU Labour Force Survey. The survey covers the entire population living in private households and excludes those in collective households such as boarding houses, halls of residence and hospitals. Employed population consists of those persons who during the reference week did any work for pay or profit for at least one hour, or were not working but had jobs from which they were temporarily absent.

Long term unemployment rate in % of active population	<p>Total long-term unemployed population (≥ 12 months' unemployment; ILO definition) as a proportion of total active population (i.e. employed and unemployed) aged 15 years or more. The very long term unemployment rate is the share of the unemployed persons since 24 months or more in the total number of active persons in the labour market.</p> <p>Unemployed persons are all persons 15 to 74 years of age (16 to 74 years in ES, SE (1995-2000), UK, IS and NO) who were not employed during the reference week, had actively sought work during the past four weeks and were ready to begin working immediately or within two weeks.</p>
At risk-of-poverty rate of unemployed	<p>The poverty risk for the adult population (aged 18 to 64) that is unemployed (according to the status that individuals declare to have occupied for more than half the number of months in the calendar year for which information on occupational status is available.) At risk-of-poverty are persons with an equivalised disposable income below the risk-of-poverty threshold, which is set at 60 % of the national median equivalised disposable income (after social transfers). The indicator is calculated from the EU SILC (survey of income and living conditions).</p>
Unemployment trap	<p>The unemployment trap measures the percentage of gross earnings which is taxed away by higher tax and social security contributions and the withdrawal of unemployment (and other) benefits when an unemployed person returns to employment. It is defined as the difference between gross earnings and the increase of the net income when moving from unemployment to employment, expressed as a percentage of the gross earnings. This structural indicator is available only for single persons without children earning 67% of the AW when in work.</p>
Inactivity and part-time work due to personal and family responsibilities	<p>Persons aged 20 to 64 who are inactive or work part-time because of personal and family responsibilities as a share of the overall population in the same age group. The indicator is calculated from the Labour Force Survey.</p>
Employment growth	<p>The employment growth is the year-on-year increase in the number of persons employed.</p>
Gender employment gap	<p>The gender employment gap corresponds to the difference in percentage points between the employment rate of men and women in a given age group.</p>
Gender pay gap in unadjusted form in % - NACE Rev. 2 (Structure of Earnings Survey methodology)	<p>The unadjusted Gender Pay Gap (GPG) represents the difference between average gross hourly earnings of male paid employees and of female paid employees as a percentage of average gross hourly earnings of male paid employees. The population consists of all paid employees in enterprises with 10 employees or more in NACE Rev. 2 aggregate B to S (excluding O) - before reference year 2008: NACE Rev. 1.1 aggregate C to O (excluding L). The GPG indicator is calculated within the framework of the data collected according to the methodology of the Structure of Earnings Survey (EC Regulation: 530/1999). It replaces data which was based on non-harmonised sources.</p>

Share of adult population with upper secondary or tertiary education	Population aged 25-64 with upper secondary or tertiary education as a share of the overall population in the same age group. Source: LFS.
Life-long learning	Life-long learning refers to persons aged 25 to 64 who stated that they received education or training in the four weeks preceding the survey (numerator). The denominator consists of the total population of the same age group, excluding those who did not answer to the question 'participation to education and training'. Both the numerator and the denominator come from the EU Labour Force Survey. The information collected relates to all education or training whether or not relevant to the respondent's current or possible future job.
Early leavers from education and training	Early leavers from education and training refers to persons aged 18 to 24 fulfilling the following two conditions: first, the highest level of education or training attained is ISCED 0, 1, 2 or 3c short, second, respondents declared not having received any education or training in the four weeks preceding the survey (numerator). The denominator consists of the total population of the same age group, excluding no answers to the questions "highest level of education or training attained" and "participation to education and training". Both the numerators and the denominators come from the EU Labour Force Survey. From 20 November 2009, this indicator is based on annual averages of quarterly data instead of one unique reference quarter in spring.
Real unit labour cost growth - Growth rate of the ratio: compensation per employee in current prices divided by GDP in current prices per total employment	This derived indicator compares remuneration (compensation per employee) and productivity (gross domestic product (GDP) per employment) to show how the remuneration of employees is related to the productivity of their labour. It is the relationship between how much each "worker" is paid and the value he/she produces by their work. Its growth rate is intended to give an impression of the dynamics of the participation of the production factor labour in output value created. Please note that the variables used in the numerator (compensation, employees) refer to employed labour only, while those in the denominator (GDP, employment) refer to all labour, including self-employed.

4.1 A STATISTICAL PORTRAIT

Employment rate of young persons (15 to 24 years) (% of population in same age group)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
EU 27	37.5	37.5	36.7	36.1	36.1	36.0	36.6	37.3	37.4	35.0	34.0	33.6
MT	52.8	52.3	50.5	47.2	46.2	45.3	44.2	45.7	45.9	44.0	44.8	44.7

Source: Eurostat³⁵

Youth part time employment rate (as primary employment)

The rate of Youths (ages between 15 – 24) working on part-time basis (as primary employment) vis-à-vis the total number of persons on part-time employment (as primary employment)

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
EU 27	14.5	14.6	14.7	14.3	14.0	13.6
MT	23.3	23.5	21.3	18.2	19.8	23.9

Source: NSO – LFS Data

Youth unemployment rate (% of labour force under the age of 25)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
EU 27	17.5	17.2	17.9	18.6	19.0	18.8	17.5	15.7	15.8	20.1	21.1	21.4
MT	13.7	18.8	17.1	17.4	16.6	16.8	15.9	13.9	12.2	14.4	13.1	13.7

Source: Eurostat³⁶

Youth neither in employment nor in education or training (NEET)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
EU27	13.2	12.8	13.0	13.0	12.8	12.6	11.7	10.9	10.8	12.4	12.8	12.9
MT	27.4	17.7	16.9	19.4	13.1	11.9	10.3	11.7	9.5	9.8	9.6	10.6

Source: Eurostat³⁷

4.3: ACTION PLAN

4.4.1 Renewed Youth-Centred Investment

Measure:	Entity Responsible:	Resources Needed:	Timeframe:	Budget (EU/National)
Youth Mainstreaming and Youth Proofing	Aġenzija Żgħażaġh	Human	Ongoing ³⁸	National
Youth Budgeting	Aġenzija Żgħażaġh & Economic Policy Division	Social Researcher/ Economist	From Budget 2014	National
Utilisation of EU Structural Funds on projects related to youth	Employment and Training Corporation	Human	Ongoing	National & EU
Conducting Impact-Assessments	Aġenzija Żgħażaġh	Social Researcher	2013	National/ EU
Strengthening of Research	Aġenzija Żgħażaġh	Social Researcher	Ongoing	National/EU
Harmonisation of data and examination of more variables	NSO in collaboration with the Employment and Training Corporation	Human	Ongoing	National
Dissemination of information and sharing of good practice	Aġenzija Żgħażaġh & Employment and Training Corporation	Human	Ongoing	National

4.4.2 Early Intervention and Prevention

Measure:	Entity Responsible:	Resources:	Timeframe:	Budget:
Coordination of educational services and welfare services focusing on early intervention	Directorate for Educational Services, Foundation for Social Welfare Services & Health Department	Social Workers, Support Workers, Early Intervention Teachers, Health Workers	Ongoing ³⁸	National
Addressing NEETs through review of existing services; following up students; strengthening student support services; work with parents/ guardians	Directorate for Educational Services; Employment and Training Corporation; Aġenzija Żgħażaġh; Further and Higher Institutions (Employment and Training Corporation; Aġenzija Żgħażaġh for research and analysis on NEETs)	Social Analysts, Social Workers, Support Services, Youth Workers, Career Advisors	Ongoing	National/EU
Adopting a multi-disciplinary approach and the appointment of a mentor	Directorate for Educational Services	Human	2013	National
Extension of the concept of ACCESS and appointment of case manager	Foundation for Social Welfare Services	Financial, Human	2013 -	National
Dissemination of information and guidance	Aġenzija Żgħażaġh & Employment and Training Corporation	Human	Ongoing	National

Work closely with families and front-liners to inform them about the fluctuating labour market; the needs of the economy; and the requirements needed to undertake such career prospects	Aġenzija Żgħażaġh & Employment and Training Corporation	Human	2013	National
Career and life planning through the provision of Personal and Social Development lessons	Directorate for Educational Services & Employment and Training Corporation, the Cooperatives Movement, Malta Enterprise	Human	2013	National
Specialised unit focusing on youth	Employment and Training Corporation	Human, Youth Workers, Financial	2013	National
Youth Skills Inventory	Employment and Training Corporation	Human	2014	National/EU
The appointment of youth workers in key delivery points and training of people working with youth	Overarching (in liaison with the UoM Department for Community Studies)	Human, Financial, Time	2013-2015	National
Broadening the concept of Youth Cafes	Aġenzija Żgħażaġh in collaboration with the Employment and Training Corporation and other government entities	Financial, Human	Ongoing	National
Dissemination of information on job-seeking, as well as options for training and/or education through information desks	Local Councils in collaboration with the Employment and Training Corporation and the Education Information Centre	Human, Information from respective entities	2013/2014	National/EU
Strengthening collaboration with local councils and community centres to increase accessibility of training programmes	Employment and Training Corporation	Human	2013	National/EU
Marketing Campaign	Aġenzija Żgħażaġh, the Employment and Training Corporation, educational institutions, the industry and non-governmental organisations	Human, Financial	2013-2015	National/EU

4.4.3 Facilitating Transition between Education, Training and Employment

Measure:	Entity Responsible:	Resources Needed:	Timeframe:	Budget (EU/National)
Strengthening partnership between the public employment provider, training organisations, the industry, schools, further and higher educational institutions and the social welfare agencies	Ministry responsible for employment to facilitate group meetings		2013	NA
Developing flexible teaching methods, and student-centred blended learning	Directorate for Educational Services	Technological and modernised equipment, Financial, Time (not to conflict with syllabus)	2013	National
Creating more effective engagement in the classroom with entrepreneurs and employers through embedded learning	Directorate for Educational Services in collaboration with the Employment and Training Corporation & Malta Enterprise	Human	2013	NA
Work-Exposure Programme in secondary schools	Directorate for Educational Services	Human, Time (to be inserted in programme)	2013	National
School-leaving certificate in post-secondary institutions	Post-secondary institutions	Human	2013	National
Facilitating and strengthening participation in the voluntary sector	Education institutions and the voluntary sector	Human	2013	National
Collaboration in the designing of programmes and qualifications involving the skills and competences needed in the labour market	MCAST, ITS, Directorate for Educational Services, Directorate for Lifelong Learning, National Commission for Further and Higher Education, Malta Enterprise, Employment and Training Corporation	Human	2013	NA
Extending the pilot project in secondary schools which introduces students to vocational pathways	Directorate for Educational Services	Human, Financial	2013/2014	National
Introducing new courses at MCAST to be aligned with labour market needs	MCAST	Human, Financial	2013	National
Pilot project to address students who drop-out from MCAST	MCAST	Human	2012/2013	National

Review of MCAST's Foundation Courses	MCAST	Human	2012/2013	National/ EU
Developing the concept of the Academy of Arts	Directorate for Lifelong Learning	Human, Financial	2013	National
Strengthening the concept of scholarships and offering more specialised scholarships	Directorate for Lifelong Learning in collaboration with the Ministry responsible for Education and the Ministry responsible for employment	Financial	2013-2014	National & EU
Reviewing and strengthening apprenticeships	Employment and Training Corporation	Human, Financial	2013	National
Introducing a Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme	Employment and Training Corporation	Human, Financial	2013	National
Strengthening collaboration between different stakeholders to promote entrepreneurship	Malta Enterprise and Directorate for Educational Services	Human, Time (to be integrated in syllabus and school programme)	2013	National
Strengthening innovative start-up programmes, advisory services and grants	Malta Enterprise in collaboration with the Employment and Training Corporation	Human, Financial	Ongoing	National/EU
Collaboration between employers, MCAST and University of Malta to plan the courses' contents and offer work placements	University of Malta & MCAST	Human	2014	NA
Introducing Internships for students in post-secondary and tertiary education	Educational Institutions; the Public Service and Public Sector; Industry	Human, Financial	2013	National
Facilitating labour mobility and development of skills through an experience of study and/or work abroad	Ministry responsible for Economy and Investment; Industry	Financial	2014	National
Enhancing information provided to young people on training programmes opportunities at EU level	EUPA, Aġenzija Żgħażaġh	Human	2013	National
Development of a data bank of all the courses and training opportunities	Education Information Centre in collaboration with service providers	Human, Technological	2014	National
Improved access to social media and the internet	Aġenzija Żgħażaġh in collaboration with Employment and Training Corporation & Directorate for Educational Services	Human	2013	National

4.4.4 Equal Access and Opportunities to Education , Training and the Labour Market

Measure:	Entity Responsible:	Resources Needed:	Timeframe:	Budget (EU/National)
Targeted programme for youth aged 13-16 who are at-risk-of dropping out	Directorate for Educational Services in collaboration with MCAST, ITS & Youth.INC	Human, Financial	2014/2015	National
A national data collation system on absenteeism	Directorate for Educational Services	Human, Financial	2013/2014	National
Tracer Study of young people from compulsory schooling to the age of twenty-four	Directorate for Educational Services, National Commission for Further and Higher Education, the Employment and Training Corporation	Human, Financial	2014	National
Strengthening of school and community support services	Directorate for Educational Services, Foundation for Social Welfare Services	Human, Support Workers, Social Worker, Youth Workers, Financial	Ongoing	National
Pilot project for localities which are more at risk of inactivity and unemployment	Local Councils, ETC	Support Workers, Youth Workers, Trainers, Financial	2014	National/EU
Reviewing, strengthening and extending the Youth. Inc programme	Foundation for Educational Services	Human, Social Workers, Financial	2013	National
Validating informal and non-formal learning	National Commission for Further and Higher Education	Human, Financial	2012/2013/2014	National
Validating short courses offered by the Employment and Training Corporation	Employment and Training Corporation, National Commission for Further and Higher Education	Human, Financial	2012/2013	National
Targeted out-reach programme on participation in civil life for those youths who are less motivated to be involved	Aġenzija Żgħażaġh in collaboration with educational authorities and voluntary organisations	Human, Financial	2014	National
Setting up a committee with representatives from Church authorities and Government institutions to assist young people in particular those coming from a vulnerable background	Ministry responsible for Family Affairs, Ministry responsible for Education, Ministry responsible for Employment, Church	Human, Financial	2014	National
Targeted intervention with young people in care through the continuation of the Embark for Life project	Aġenzija APPOGG, Aġenzija Sedqa, the Employment and Training Corporation & the Housing Authority	Human, Financial	2013	National/ EU

Targeted programme for looked after care leavers focusing on life skills and employability	Employment and Training Corporation, Housing Authority, public social welfare agencies & educational institutions	Human, Financial	2015	National
A specialised programme focusing on therapy, mentoring, second-chance education, work-exposure	Employment and Training Corporation, Foundation for Social Welfare Services, educational institutions	Human, Financial	2015	National/EU
Supported employment for persons with disability	Public Sector	Human, Financial	2013/2014	National & EU
Targeted programmes for young people who are in correctional facilities and/or who have experienced substance abuse	Employment and Training Corporation, MCAST	Human, Financial	Ongoing	National & EU
Recruitment of a culture mediator	Employment and Training Corporation	Human, Financial	2014	National
Development of a scheme targeted at young immigrants	Agency for Welfare of Asylum Seekers, non-governmental organisations	Human, Financial	2015	National & EU
Developing a centre for youth serving as a one-stop-shop in Valletta	Aġenzija Żgħażaġh, the Employment and Training Corporation, Foundation for Social Welfare Services	Human, Youth Workers, Financial	2012	National
A targeted scheme 'ACTIVE' focusing on young people registering for work	Employment and Training Corporation	Human, Financial	2013	National
Extension of the 'ACTIVE' scheme to Gozo	Employment and Training Corporation	Human, Financial	2013	National
A pilot project in local councils in Malta and Gozo focusing on guidance at community level	Ministry responsible for Employment in collaboration with Ministry responsible for Local Councils	Human, Support Workers, Financial	2014	National
Recruitment of youth workers in Gozo	Employment and Training Corporation	Human, Financial	2013	National

4.4.5 Sustainability of Jobs

Measure:	Entity Responsible:	Resources Needed:	Timeframe:	Budget (EU/National)
Periodic studies on skills supply and demand	Employment and Training Corporation in collaboration with education institutions, the Economic and Policy Division and the Central Bank	Human, Financial	2012 -	National
Targeted approach focusing on emerging industries	Malta Enterprise in collaboration with education institutions	Human	Ongoing	National
Financial Assistance schemes that encourage young people to improve their competences and skills	Employment and Training Corporation	Human, Financial	2013	National & EU
Strengthening part-time courses	University of Malta, MCAST, ITS and the Directorate for Lifelong Learning	Human, Financial	2013	National
Reviewing courses offered in Gozo to address the needs of the market and the aspirations of young people	Employment and Training Corporation, Directorate for Lifelong Learning, MCAST and ITS	Human, Financial	2013	National
Tackling undeclared work	Department for Social Security in collaboration with the Employment and Training Corporation	Human, Financial	Ongoing	National
Strengthening enforcement on the conditions of work	Department for Industrial and Employment Relations	Human, Financial	Ongoing	National
The exploration of the creation of a temping agency	Ministry responsible for Employment	Human, Financial	2014	National
Enforcing the concept of mutual obligation	Department for Social Security in collaboration with the Employment and Training Corporation	Human, Financial	Ongoing	National
Addressing temporary work, in particular for employees working on EU projects	PPCD	Human, Financial	2013	National
Regularise summer jobs and validation of skills	Department of Industrial and Employment Relations, National Commission for Further and Higher Education	Human	2013	National

35 Eurostat Database

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.

38 Ongoing means that the measure is already in existence, but that it needs to be strengthened, reviewed or amended

4.4: CONSULTED STAKEHOLDERS

Abela Marco, Malta Enterprise
Agius Roderick, Foundation for Educational Services
Attard Grace, National Council of Women
Barbara Franklyn, MUT
Bell Dr. Albert, Department of Youth and Community Studies, University of Malta
Camilleri Joe, National Commission Persons with Disabilities
Camilleri Raymond, Directorate Educational Services
Cassar Miriam, Alternattiva Demokratika
Cini Nicola, Employment and Training Corporation
Cutajar Stephanie, Office of the Prime Minister
Debono Manwel, Centre for Labour Studies, University of Malta
Fenech Pace Mikela, OPM
Genovese Audrey, Malta Enterprise
Gerada Joe, Foundation for Human Resources Development
Gili Suzanne, Office of the Commissioner for Children
Grech Louisa, Equal Partners Foundation
Mifsud Anthony, KDZ
Mifsud Joyce, Foundation for Educational Services
Pearsall James, Employment and Training Corporation
Pisani Marcel, Aġenzija Sapport
Scerri Raphael, Employment and Training Corporation
Scicluna Alison, Inspire Foundation
Tonna Lara, Girl Guides & ETC Board Member
Vella Gejtu, U H M