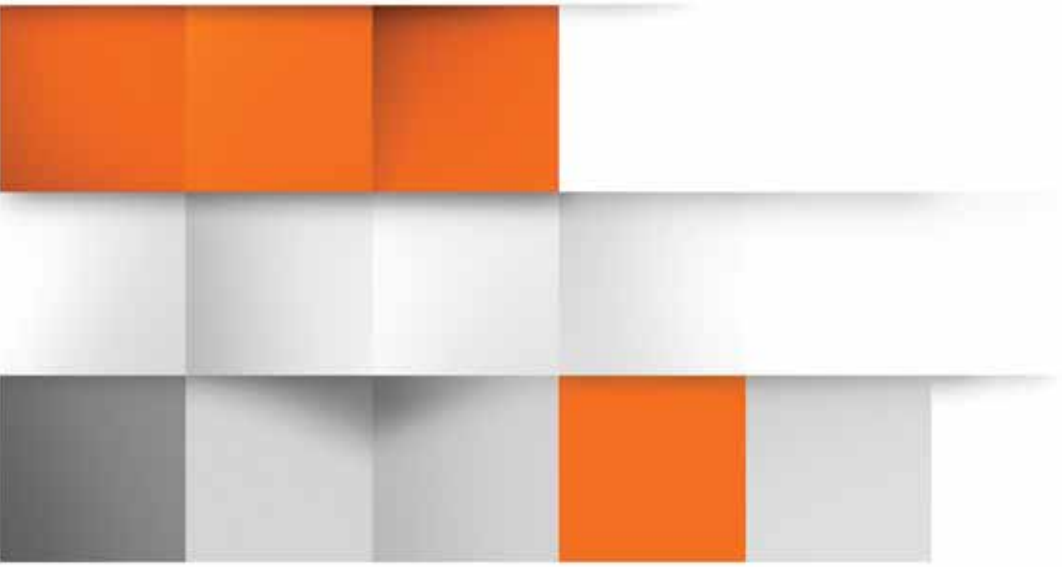
# MALTA NATIONAL LIFELONG LEARNING STRATEGY 2020



MINISTRY FOR EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

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# Forward

The development of our Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020 has been an opportunity to take stock of the state of adult learning in Malta, and challenge what we mean by the very notion of 'learning'. School is merely the first building block of our Lifelong Learning system. As policy-makers, we have the duty to provide and facilitate tangible opportunities for relevant education beyond compulsory schooling age. We need to address the ongoing and often unique education requirements of people in different stages of their life – from those who are in employment and seek self-fulfilment in learning to those in phases of 'non-paid' work, those who wish to use education to re-engineer their lives and their careers to people in their third age.

Like many of our European counterparts, we are aware that we need to accelerate our reform agenda for education and training and invest in efficient, high quality education and training. We need to make better use of education as a driver for growth, jobs, global competitiveness and social change. Access to relevant learning throughout life is a fundamental cornerstone in our aspirations to have a sustainable knowledge-based society and economy.

Our vision is for Malta to become a learning nation - a society in which learning plays its full role in personal growth and emancipation, prosperity, solidarity and local and global responsibility. Equally important is our determination to lever on this strategy to empower citizens through more personalised and innovative approaches to adult education.

**EVARIST BARTOLO**
Minister for Education and Employment

# Introduction

*This document sets out the National Lifelong Learning Strategy for Malta for 2014-2020. It meets Malta's obligations within the EU Lisbon process; addresses the challenges faced in embedding Lifelong Learning within our society and identifies the areas of national priority in the years to come.*

*Lifelong Learning is an all embracing concept. The simplest iteration means that people should have the opportunity to learn throughout their lives. It comprises all learning from 'the cradle to the grave' (Mayo, 2007): from early childhood education and compulsory schooling to vocational education and training (VET), higher education, adult education and learning in our senior years. The process of Lifelong Learning may also take place through the integration of formal, non-formal and informal learning so as to create the ability for continuous lifelong development of the quality of life*[1].

**This document focuses on adult learning, for a number of reasons:**

- Within the EU, Lifelong Learning is often used interchangeably with "Adult Learning" and measured by the indicator "participation of people aged 25-64 years old in Lifelong Learning".
- Within the context of the European Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020, the focus is on post-compulsory education, where Lifelong Learning is mainly understood as a continuous process of flexible learning opportunities, linking learning and competencies acquired in formal institutions with skills developed in non-formal and informal contexts, notably the workplace [2].
- The global economic and financial crises of the past few years are forcing EU member states to reassess the very notion of what constitutes adult learning, since those who are aged between 25 and 64 are expected to participate in a form of economic activity. The instability in global labour markets and the need to mitigate the risk of social exclusion are some of the compelling reasons why adult learning constitutes a national priority.
- While compulsory schooling already incorporates frameworks and governance, adult learning remains the weakest link in the national Lifelong Learning system. Alternative learning pathways and opportunities – whether it be second chance adult education or more job-related continuing training – need new approaches and new forms of governance.

The Lifelong Learning strategy consolidates, crystallises and builds on ideas and processes already taking shape in different organisations and institutions in Malta, such as to ensure a single, coherent place to guide actions in Lifelong Learning. Throughout the past two decades, several measures were adopted to reflect our societal and economic exigencies. In 2003, Prof. Kenneth Wain presented a comprehensive document entitled "Lifelong Learning in Malta: Towards the Learning Society - Draft Strategic Plan." Although never published, most of the recommendations have been implemented in part or in full by the Ministry of Education.

This strategy should also not be considered as a stand-alone strategy. It needs to be read in conjunction with several important national documents published in recent years whose recommendations dovetail those in this document. These include:

[1] *Lifelong Learning (as defined by the European Commission (2001: 33) is an all learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competences within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective. Lifelong Learning encompasses the whole spectrum of formal, non-formal and informal learning. The objectives of learning include active citizenship, personal fulfilment and social inclusion, as well as employment related aspects. The principles which underpin Lifelong Learning and guide its effective implementation emphasise the centrality of the learner, the importance of equal opportunities and the quality and relevance of learning opportunities (European Commission 2001: 3-4).*

[2] *Source: European Commission, Guidance on Ex ante Conditionalities Part 11*

- National Employment Policy (2014)
- National Strategic Policy for Active Ageing (2014)
- National Literacy Strategy (2014)
- Malta's National Reform Programme under the Europe 2020 Strategy (2013)
- A Strategic Plan for the Prevention of Early School Leaving Strategy for Malta (2012) [3]
- National Strategy for the Cultural and Creative Industries (2012)
- A National Curriculum Framework for All (2012) [4]

**This strategy also builds on the recommendation of recent and seminal studies[5] and a number of international documents relating to adult learning, including:**

- The Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC): Implications for education and training policies in Europe (October 2013)
- Education and Training Monitor (2013)
- Opening Up Education: Innovative teaching and learning for all through new Technologies (2013)[6]
- Education and Training 2020 (ET 2020), the new strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training that builds on its predecessor, the Education and Training 2010 (ET 2010) work programme.
- Europe 2020 – a European Framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET2020) (2010)
- Key Competencies for Lifelong Learning (2006)
- Memorandum on Lifelong Learning (2000)
- Outputs from the Copenhagen Process[7] (2002) and its Bruges Communiqué[8] (2010) that help develop vocational education and training systems
- Council conclusions on efficient and innovative education and training to invest in skills, supporting the 2014 European Semester, particularly those on the role of education and training in the implementation of the 'Europe 2020' strategy (2011/C 70/01) and the final outcomes of the Budapest Conference (March, 2011) on implementing the Action Plan on Adult Learning.
- Key reports on VET, particularly those developed by Cedefop and ETF.

## Designing an Enabling Framework for Lifelong Learning

For a Lifelong Learning framework to be sustainable, it must be designed to cover learning in all contexts: formal, non-formal or informal education, including education in the workplace; and at all levels: from early childhood education and schools through to higher education, vocational education and training and adult learning.

In line with the primary goals of EU 2020, an enabling framework for Lifelong Learning must recognise a number of pre-requisites:

1. Lifelong Learning presupposes opportunities for learning at any age.
2. Learning can occur in traditional education and training institutions, but also at the work place (on or off the job), at home and during one's free time. Learning may occur in the family, and in many different cultural and community settings, including virtual settings.

[3] *The Early School-leaving Strategy is currently being revised and an updated version was published later in 2014.*

[4] *Although there is no specific mention of adult courses, the National Curriculum Framework provides the building block for compulsory learning in Malta.*

[5] *See the 'Further Reading' section in this document.*

[6] *COM(2013) 0654 and the accompanying staff working document on analysis and mapping of innovative teaching and learning for all through new Technologies and Open Educational Resources in Europe (SWD (2013) 0341).*

[7] *See http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/education_training_youth/vocational_training/ef0018_en.htm*

[8] *See http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/vocational-policy/doc/brugescom_en.pdf*

3. Learning relates to a process of constant intentional acquisition of knowledge. Lifelong Learning spans the acquisition of life skills to adaptability to active ageing.
4. We use 'learning' to refer to all kinds of formal education and training, irrespective of whether these are associated with certification.
5. Lifelong Learning is synonymous with personal fulfilment, critical thinking and active citizenship.
6. Much of our learning takes place once we have completed our formal compulsary education. Informal modes of learning nevertheless tend to reflect a degree of personal organisation.
7. The skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours that people acquire in day-to-day experiences outside formal education are valued by employers, and yet are not necessarily recognised as 'valuable' since they often lack accreditation in the form of acquired, legally-regulated certificates.
8. Adult learning is increasingly associated with entrepreneurship, human skills development and the processes that enhance people's skills and make them more employable, including continuing professional development (CPD) and the acquisition of soft and communications skills.
9. Lifelong Learning is increasingly associated with the empowerment of vulnerable and marginalised groups and fundamental in contributing to social inclusion and integration.
10. Lifelong Learning skills need to be transferable within an EU-wide learning framework. The recent European Memorandum on Lifelong Learning called for the establishment of a pan-European area of Lifelong Learning within which there should be freedom of movement for citizens to travel between learning settings, mirroring the freedoms of movement between jobs that exist in the European system.
11. The Europe 2020 Strategy, and in particular the 2014 Annual Growth Survey, requests that member states protect or promote longer term investment in education and training, and pursue the modernisation of education and training systems, including Lifelong Learning, vocational training and work-based learning schemes, with a view to enhancing skills performance.
12. While investing public money in knowledge and skills brings direct economic benefits both to individuals and to Maltese society, this strategy recognises Lifelong Learning as a fundamental right of all citizens living in a modern democracy that believes in social cohesion, active citizenship, social justice and intercultural dialogue. There must be equal opportunities and room for all. Lifelong Learning helps people to achieve goals other than those aimed at increasing earnings, such as taking an active part in civic life, leading a more sustainable lifestyle, improving health and wellbeing and active ageing. Lifelong Learning has the potential to benefit society by reducing crime and encouraging community activities.

## Addressing the Immediate Challenges

Our immediate challenges with Lifelong Learning are evident in the following pervasive trends:

### 1) LOW LEVEL OF ADULTS PARTICIPATING IN ADULT LEARNING

Eurostat data for 2012 states that 7% of the Maltese population aged 25 to 64 is participating in education and training[9]. The EU-27 average for participation in 2012 was 9%, but the EU 2020 target is 15%. Even if we assume an increase in participation to 8% currently taking part in some form of adult learning, we have to make a significant effort in the immediate future to meet EU 2020 targets[10].

### 2) EARLY SCHOOL-LEAVERS AND LOW SKILLS ACHIEVEMENT [11]

Malta has a high number of early school leavers (22.6% compared to the EU average of 12.8%). Even if it is slowly declining, Malta's rate of early school leaving is much higher than the Europe 2020 average target of 10%. The percentage of 30 to 34 year-olds attaining tertiary education is relatively low (22.4% compared to the EU average of 35.8%). At 22.4%, the figure for Malta remains lower than both the national target (33%) and the Europe 2020 average target (40%). There is a much higher share of adults with low-level education in Malta compared with the EU (61.9% versus 25.8%). The Europe 2020 strategy set a specific objective of improving education levels by increasing the share of young people having successfully completed tertiary, or equivalent, education to at least 40% by 2020.

[9] *See: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=0&language=en&pcode=tsdsc440*

[10] *There are 17,550 adults aged 25-64 who are participating in some form of adult learning. If we are to meet the EU target for 2020, over 32,000 adults are to be engaged in learning and training by that date.*

[11] *All data from Cedefop (2014) relates to 2012.*

Despite relatively low overall and youth unemployment rates[12], the skills issue is set to become increasingly challenging in the next few years. Low basic skills achievement, a modest rate of tertiary education attainment and a vocational training system in need of modernisation are key indicators of action areas that require attention by policy-makers.

### 3) LOW NUMBER OF WOMEN ACTIVELY AT WORK OR ENGAGED IN LIFELONG LEARNING

Gender issues remain a priority area for any initiatives related to Lifelong Learning. According to the Labour Force Survey for Q4 2013, only 50.4% of women aged 20 to 64 years are in employment. For 2020, the Commission's target is an overall employment ratio of 75%. Figures for women aged 25-64 participating in education and Lifelong Learning are similarly low: according to the Adult Education Survey (AES), only 46.8 per cent of women aged 20 to 64 years were engaged in adult learning during 2011. In the same survey, 53 per cent of participants engaged in education and Lifelong Learning (formal, non-formal and informal learning) were men, while 47 per cent were women. The results also indicated a declining participation rate as persons grow older. This trend was observed for both sexes, with the 25-34 age groups accounting for the largest participation rate and the 55-64 age groups for the lowest. (NSO, 2013)

### 4) PERSISTENCE OF LOW EDUCATION PASSED ON FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION

Malta's higher education system is still emerging. While in 2000 only 7.4% of 30-34 year olds held higher education qualifications this figure increased to 26.0% of 30-34 year olds in 2013. Given this relatively recent and substantial increase it is not surprising that there is still a very strong link between the level education held from one generation to the other, in particular of individuals with low levels of qualification.

A Eurostat survey[13] of Maltese adults aged 25-59 compared the level of education of respondents with that of their parents and found that among respondents whose parents had a low level of education: 73% had a low level of education themselves; 17% had a medium level; and only 10% had attended university. This link can also be witnessed by other Mediterranean countries with growing higher education systems, in particular Italy and Portugal, as evidenced by their well above average intergeneration persistence of low education and their low rates of 30-34 year olds with higher education attainment[14] .

When comparing the education attainment of students' parents with the education attainment in the total population Malta showed both a high representation of students from higher education backgrounds as well as from lower education backgrounds, classifying it as a higher education system in transition[15] . The challenge for Malta's higher education system in the future is to ensure that increasing capacity in higher education continues to benefit in particular those individuals from lower education backgrounds.

We need to understand the reasons for these correlations and address these four key inter-related challenges not just through funding regimes, but through concrete steps to better understand the failure of our existing learning systems. We need to understand the lack of motivation for learning before devising new initiatives to create it. We need to address the attraction of early school leaving for specific socio-economic groups and pursue policy efforts in the education system specifically to address this. We need to invest in quality localised research that can inform policy-makers as to whether educated people are indeed inheriting an apparent lack of ambition from their parents to pursue higher education and training, or whether this is simply a reflection of an emerging higher education system.

This strategy sets out to manage the ongoing tensions between two prevalent policy themes in lifelong learning in Europe: adult education (and training and learning) for productivity, efficiency and competitiveness on the one hand; and education for broader personal development and 'social inclusion' on the other. It is aware that the onus of responsibility for adult education needs to be finely-balanced between individual and state responsibility. As a starting point, we need to focus on lifelong learning as the means for personal empowerment and social fulfilment for all Maltese citizens.

[12] *The employment rate for 20 to 64 year-olds (63.1%) is lower than the EU average of (68.5%) as is the NEET rate (11.7% compared to 17.0%). The unemployment rate for 20 to 34 year olds is much lower in Malta (6.3%) than in the EU (14.5%).*

[13] *See: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_PUBLIC/3-11122013-AP/EN/3-11122013-AP-EN.PDF Among respondents whose parents had a medium level of education, 43% had a low level of education, 29% a medium and 28% a high level of education. For respondents with parents with a high level of education, 26% had a low level of education themselves, 25% had a medium level and 50% went on to pursue higher education.*

[14] *See: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/download.do?tab=table&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=tsdsc480*

[15] *See http://www.eurostudent.eu/download_files/documents/IB_HE_Access_120112.pdf.*

# Structure of this document

This document first identifies a set of BASIC PRINCIPLES that cut across all components of the Lifelong Learning Strategy It then adopts a pyramid structure approach[16] as follows:

Wherever possible, objectives, strategies and indicative programmes are presented as lists within a tabular structure to facilitate review, discussion and engagement.

## Basic Principles Underpinning Strategies

The Lifelong Learning Strategy is underpinned by a commitment to a set of basic common principles that cut across the entire Lifelong Learning framework. They encompass all relevant institutions and individual areas of responsibility.

### 1. COMMITMENT TO TRANSLATE POLICY INTO PROCESS

This document is directed as much by political ideology and socio-economic exigencies in Malta as by EU frameworks and best practices. The successful implementation of a lifelong strategy is as dependent on political will to support resourcing and structural changes as on the systemic embedding of key strategies into day to day Lifelong Learning practices. Clear central ownership of this strategy and a commitment to deliver its underlying programmes within prescribed timeframes and benchmarks represent a vital first step in the journey to implementation. It is equally important that we move away from considering Lifelong Learning as a set of 'siloed' practices that are managed by separate institutions within the jurisdiction of separate ministries, public bodies and institutions and focus firmly on the strategies that may deliver value to learners.

[16] *In practice, several Strategic Measures and Indicative Programmes can apply to more than one particular Strategy. Nevertheless, the pyramid approach enables key ideas to be quickly absorbed, pivoted and validated.*

## 2. RAISE AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF LIFELONG LEARNING WITHIN MALTESE SOCIETY AND ENSURE IT ADDRESSES ALL LIFE PHASES

People must be provided with the information and guidance they need to make effective learning decisions and transitions. All adults - including the highly qualified - can benefit significantly from Lifelong Learning. Individual rights to learning will only be effective when they are well known to end-user groups and are matched with well-developed communication systems from the institutions with the legal obligation to provide the learning activity. Such communication systems need to be relevant, cost-effective and facilitate two-way engagement with potential learners.

## 3. RECOGNISE, MANAGE AND ADDRESS THE DIFFERENT, COMPLEX AND PERSONAL LEARNING NEEDS OF ADULTS

Our Lifelong Learning strategy must be flexible, relevant and personalised. Adult learners are not a homogeneous group, but a disparate set of stakeholders with different, overlapping and occasionally conflicting requirements. These may include:

- Experienced adults whose skills have become outdated and who need to invest in vocational training.
- People who want to improve their skills for a variety of reasons, including a need to change career.
- Young people who might not continue in formal education because of a variety of social-economic reasons, including budget and family-related issues.
- People who have been prevented from taking up learning opportunities because of childcare or other caring responsibilities.
- People looking for 'second chance' education, including early school leavers without adequate qualifications and those who missed out on tertiary education.
- People who have shown little interest in learning and have a low level of education qualifications (all age groups, including people aged 35+).
- People who historically have participated less in post-16 non-compulsory learning, such as young people who have left school and not gone on to further or higher education, employment or training, who may have become disaffected with school and have limited or no qualifications.
- People with specific education support needs, such as people with disabilities.
- People in employment who wish to keep learning, and who may find it difficult to continue to learn because of factors relating to their work.
- People working on temporary contract, including those using lower level skills at work and who do not have access to training.
- Older people who wish to lead a meaningful life and need stimulation and support for learning.
- Early school-leavers.
- Long-term unemployed.
- Under-represented and disadvantaged people who may be prevented from taking up education because of disability, race, social-marginalisation etc., and groups less likely to access education.
- Migrants who are seeking integration in Malta.

## 4. RECOGNISE THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATORS, EMPLOYERS AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN LIFELONG LEARNING

Equally important stakeholders in Lifelong Learning are:

- Educators and educational institutions, including the University of Malta and MCAST and private education providers
- Parents and Guardians
- Employers
- Trade Unions
- Publicly-funded providers of Lifelong Learning
- Religious Institutions
- NGOs and VOs

We have a social and moral obligation to address different strata of Maltese society and their specific needs and interest in Lifelong Learning without discrimination and with equal commitment.

### 5. RECOGNISE LIFELONG LEARNING AS A TANGIBLE CONTRIBUTOR TO MALTESE SOCIETY THROUGH SOCIAL COHESION, CULTURAL AND GENDER DIVERSITY, EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES, SOCIAL MOBILITY AND CITIZEN EMPOWERMENT

We need to improve access to Lifelong Learning while answering critical questions of who exactly has access to Lifelong Learning, in what form, under what conditions and who gains what from it. Lifelong Learning is a key instrument for employability but above all for social inclusion and democratic participation, personal development and well-being. People need to be given fair opportunities to discover and nurture their talents. Equality of opportunity is also an economic necessity for potential to be maximised. We need to achieve a socially mobile society that is open to advancement and receptive to enhanced learning opportunities.

### 6. REAFFIRM THE KEY COMPETENCES FOR LIFELONG LEARNING WITHIN AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

The eight key competencies proposed by the European Council and the European Parliament European Reference Framework for knowledge, skills and attitude represent a constant point of reference for the Lifelong Learning strategies and indicative programmes[17]. There is greater awareness that by attaining proficiency in these eight key competencies during compulsory education, citizens are better equipped to cope with socio-economic changes and become true lifelong learners. Nevertheless, we need to recognise that we may not be addressing the so-called transversal competencies through an integrated approach. We need to open up a wide range of learning contexts to learners to enable them to acquire these key competencies in line with their individual needs. Accessibility and accreditation issues become of paramount importance within the context of this strategy:

#### Accessibility Issues

- Physical accessibility to centres for learning, workshops, laboratories and similar for personal research projects as part of high-level courses, learning institutions etc.
- Time constraints for courses held at all levels. For instance, people in employment and especially those working on a shift system often find difficulty in attending a course on a regular basis as they must dedicate their limited free time outside working hours to learning.
- Health issues, including those related to disability, mental health problems, caring responsibilities and access difficulties.
- Cultural issues, such as the perception that adults in employment need to learn only to overcome difficulties in their career or to attempt to address mistakes of the past.

#### Accreditation Issues

- Informal and non-formal learning is important, yet difficult to measure and difficult to express, even within the context of VET goals. Individuals in the labour market might have a wealth of knowledge acquired through practical work experience but no formal qualifications. Within the narrow context of the labour market, the accreditation of non-formal learning becomes as vital as the accreditation of formal learning,
- As long as accreditation is associated with demonstrating the value of learning to third parties, it remains a litmus test of the relevance and validity of 'learning per se'. The accreditation of informal and non-formal learning is as much a challenge as the increasing pressure to measure all instances of Lifelong Learning within the structure of a recognisable accreditation framework.

[17] *See Annex 3.*

# Vision

*Our vision is that Lifelong Learning will facilitate personalised and supportive learning systems for all adults in Malta and Gozo.*

*In the process, this strategy will ensure that adult education delivers economic development, social and civic participation, personal fulfilment and well-being.*

# Strategic objectives

The Lifelong Strategy has five strategic objectives:

1. **STIMULATE PARTICIPATION IN LIFELONG LEARNING** by Maltese adults by creating a demand and a desire for learning. This latent demand does not lie solely among those with low-skills and at risk of poverty and social exclusion, but also among people in employment who wish to further their skills set and job mobility.

2. **PLACE THE 'LEARNER' AT THE CENTRE** by optimising all possible types of innovative learning methods and environments to make learning flexible, personal, accessible and relevant. This implies a commitment to alternative pathways, beyond those defined by formal learning.

3. **IMPROVE SKILLS SETS** that contribute to professional development, employment mobility and active citizenship.

4. **DEVELOP SUPPORT STRUCTURES** for adult learning.

5. **IMPROVE GOVERNANCE** in the Lifelong Learning sector, exploring structural, institutional, fiscal, legal, political and administrative measures available.

**STRATEGIC BENCHMARKS**

Malta has set the following quantitative and qualitative targets for Lifelong Learning:

| **KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS** | **Malta 2012** *(base value)* | **Malta 2020** *(target)* | **EU 2020** *(target)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Early leavers from education and training | 22.60% | 10% | 10% |
| 2. Level of participation of adults aged 25-64 in Lifelong Learning | 7% | 15% | 15% |
| 3. Share of Students in Vocational Education and Training at ISCED 3 | 38.90% | 45% | N/A |
| 4. 30-35 year olds completing tertiary or equivalent education (MQF Level 6) | 21.10% | 33% | 40% |
| 5. Women in employment aged 20-64 (note 1) | 46.9% | 70% | 75% |
| 6. Literacy skills in men aged 25-64 | 96.70% | 98% | N/A |
| 7. Digital Technology skills in adults aged 25-64 | | | |
| - MQF level 5 for working age adults | N/A | Level 5 | N/A |
| - MQF level 6 for people aged 18 to 29 | N/A | Level 6 | N/A |

**NON-QUANTITATIVE BENCHMARKS**

10. Implement a transparent and sustainable system within NCFHE to validate and recognise non-formal and informal learning by end 2016

*Note 1: Women in employment figure for Malta (Q4, 2013) refers to women aged 15-64). The comparable figure for Males is 74.8%.*

# Strategies

*This strategic plan has 10 strategies supporting the 5 Lifelong Learning objectives.*
*These strategies are not mutually-exclusive, but are fundamentally inter-related and inter-dependent.*

*Strategies are broadly measures to empower, connect and value learning acquired in different tracks (e.g. Vocational Education and Training and higher education) and settings (formal, non-formal, informal learning) and to improve guidance.*

# Strategy 1

## Coordinate delivery of Lifelong Learning by public organisations

**Strategic Objectives Supported: Objectives 1, 4 and 5**

### CURRENT CHALLENGES

There are a number of institutions and organisations engaged in the provision of adult learning:

| PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS ENGAGED IN ADULT LEARNING | OTHER ORGANISATIONS ENGAGED IN FORMAL AND INFORMAL ADULT LEARNING |
|---|---|
| • University of Malta (self-accrediting, post secondary and tertiary level courses) | • Foreign Universities |
| • MCAST (self-accrediting, post secondary and tertiary level courses up to MQF Level 6) | • Private Training Organisations |
| • Higher Education Institutions, mainly representing foreign universities (post secondary and tertiary level courses, accredited by NCFHE) | • NGOs and NVOs |
| • The Directorate for Lifelong Learning (courses up to MQF Level 5, accredited by NCFHE)<br>• The Employment and Training Corporation | • Prison Education Association at Corradino Correctional Facility |
| • Institute of Tourism Studies (self-accrediting, courses up to MQF Level 5) | • The Catholic Church<br>• Trade Unions |
| • Foundation for Education Services [18] | • Political Parties |
| • Aġenzjia Żgħażagħ | • Sports and Cultural organisations |
| • Local Councils | • Private Museums and Libraries |
| • Museums and Public Libraries | • Correction Institutions |

- The post-age 25 or adult learning sector is highly fragmented. As a result, the outcome of learning may not necessarily be addressing national priorities.
- There needs to be clarity on the roles and contributions of public entities engaged in Lifelong Learning. Some entities are clearly regulatory bodies; others are in the business of providing Lifelong Learning courses; others, such as the Foundation for Educational Services (FES) are hybrid organisations providing support services (childcare centres) and a limited set of courses that but do not actively contribute to the quality of Lifelong Learning in Malta[19].
- There are few incentives to encourage cooperation between institutional players in the education sector and between education institutions and industry. Much of the cooperation between entities on Lifelong Learning happens because of individual goodwill and personal networks.
- There is awareness at peer levels of the need for more nuanced, updated and personal approaches to adult learning than those currently available in Malta. There may be less awareness of the need for the coordination of the institutional changes that need to be implemented to accommodate these needs.
- The current baseline statistical data on the participation, providers, outcomes and wider benefits of adult-learning in Malta is considered to be unreliable. Current available data from the National Statistics Office on Lifelong Learning probably does not reflect the actual participation rate of Maltese citizens in courses which constitute 'adult learning' for the purpose of this strategy.

[18] *See http://www.youthinfo.gov.mt/default.asp?m=cat&id=793*

[19] *FES manages the Youth Inc. programme in conjunction with ETC and the Malta Qualifications Council.*

- The resources of the major providers of adult education are stretched and the delivery of courses fragmented. The Directorate for Lifelong Learning alone is currently delivering courses in 54 distinct disciplines.
- The Directorate for Lifelong Learning has an identity crisis when it comes to the planning, delivery and accreditation of Lifelong Learning courses. While ETC and MCAST own and deliver a set of courses some of which have Lifelong Learning attributes, the Directorate appears to have ownership of courses up to Level 5 without actually being in a position to directly influence course content or delivery. The common practice is for requests for learning at community level to be accommodated without the requisite checks on the capability of the Directorate to deliver the course, or on the quality of the proposed curriculum for the course. The Directorate is not adequately resourced as a teaching and learning organisation; neither can it operate as a stand-alone regulatory body for community courses.
- Public information on scholarships and other incentives available for adult learning needs to be improved. The policy implementation coordinates a number of scholarship schemes [20] , including the Malta Government Scholarships Scheme (MGSS) at undergraduate and postgraduate level [21] . Citizens would benefit from improved information on the qualifying criteria for eligible courses, transparent guidelines on the adjudication criteria and clear identification of the public entities coordinating such schemes. From time to time, different incentives are available through ETC, mainly through EU funding. Incentives include the provision of grants for target priority sector areas (such as ICT and Finance)

**STRATEGIC MEASURES**

1.1 Develop a coherent and effective governance framework for the Lifelong Learning sector in Malta.

1.2 Allocate clear responsibility for the implementation of specific programmes of the Lifelong Learning Strategy among public stakeholders.

1.3 Strengthen, clarify and consolidate the remits of public institutions in the Lifelong Learning sector by responding to the needs of stakeholders and capitalising on socio-economic and technological developments.

1.4 Separate Lifelong Learning policy and strategy functions from the actual delivery of Lifelong Learning courses. The Directorate for LifeLong Learning is currently engaged in all of these functions.

1.5 Identify, address and eliminate operational overlaps related to Lifelong Learning courses and support services provided by the Directorate for Lifelong Learning, ETC, MCAST and FES.

1.6 Facilitate structured coordination and partnerships between public adult learning institutions in the Lifelong Learning sector and private teaching institutions when such coordination and partnerships provide tangible benefits to learners and improved returns on public investment in adult learning.

1.7 Introduce incentive and audit frameworks to ensure that public adult learning institutions actively cooperate in the field of basic adult education and competencies in order to jointly carry out necessary development work, mutually benefit from experiences and promptly disseminate good practice models.

1.8 Improve the content and delivery of community-based learning by developing a closer working relationship between the Directorate for Lifelong Learning and the Local Government Department.

1.9 Ensure all public learning organisations commit to partnering and consulting with recognised social partners[22] when planning and delivering VET courses. VET system development and provision within a Lifelong Learning perspective requires effective horizontal and vertical pathways with other components of education and training, in line with the needs of the labour market. The successful collaboration between learning organisations and social partners should include forecasting, adaptation of curricula, improving individuals' access to further education and training and raising public awareness of the benefits of Lifelong Learning.

[20] *See www.myscholarship.gov.mt.*

[21] *The undergraduate scheme was introduced in 2007 and aims at increasing student participation at undergraduate level studies in Malta and abroad, promotes academic excellence in the private tuition sector and increase student choice of degrees and institutions. The postgraduate scheme was introduced in 2006 and offers opportunities for students to specialise at higher levels of education at Masters or Doctorate level, particularly in those areas of national interest. MGSS allows students to read for their doctoral degrees on a part-time basis, thereby further encouraging students to further their education at this level. The stated objectives of the postgraduate scheme are to: assist exceptional applicants to pursue further levels of academic research; encourage and promote further participation at a postgraduate level of academic research, both locally and internationally; contribute towards research in identified areas of national priority; increase the capacity and level of research, innovation and development activity in Malta.*

[22] *Social partners mean trade unions and employers' associations and representatives.*

# Strategy 2

## Promote Adult Skills and VET as the optimum, flexible route to employability, personalised professional development and economic well-being

**Strategic Objectives Supported: Objectives, 3, 4 and 5**

In recent years, Lifelong Learning and adult education in particular have become increasingly associated with jobs, employment and employability[23]. The central message emerging from both PISA and the PIAAC Survey of Adult Skills[24] is that skills transform lives, drive economies and have a major impact on an individual's life chances.

The actual proportion of learning that takes place in a real workplace can vary considerably, ranging from a high-intensity and high frequency of work-based activities (such as apprenticeships and in-company training) to a low-intensity and low frequency of work-based activities (such as internships and work-life familiarisation). According to research from Cedefop, young people with vocational education and training (VET) qualifications, which include a significant amount of work-based learning, have higher employment rates compared to those who come from general education or from fully or mainly school-based VET.

### CURRENT CHALLENGES

- One person in five among the EU working-age population has low literacy and numeracy skills and despite some progress in basic skills the number of school pupils performing poorly in mathematics is still high [25].
- On average, as adults' skills proficiency increases, their chances of being in the labour force and being employed increase, as do their wages. Skills proficiency is also positively associated with other aspects of well being. In the very near future thousands of jobs will require high qualifications, while the demand for low skills will drop by several thousands. Moreover, achieving longer working lives will also require the possibility to acquire and develop new skills throughout one's lifetime.
- Constant technological progress and prolonging careers require continued efforts to maintain and adapt skills once they have been acquired. While newly created jobs require more information processing skills such as literacy, numeracy and ICT knowledge, the number of jobs that require low levels of skills is declining.
- Many VET systems in the past have specialised in preparing people for a clearly defined trade or profession. Nowadays, labour market conditions in both developed and transition economies are often extremely volatile, rendering traditional approaches to training quickly obsolete. Nevertheless, modern VET systems continue to attempt to manage the dialectic between the three variables of: a) employment requirements (what the student needs to be able to do in employment); b) learning requirements (what the student needs to learn to be effective in employment); and c) assessment requirements (to demonstrate what the student has learned and is able to do in employment) [26].
- The key claim that education and training have a strategic role to play in supporting the economic recovery in Europe[27] needs to engage with a global conundrum - the twin crises of a shortage of jobs and a shortage of skills. According to McKinsey (2013) only half of young people believe that their post-secondary studies improve their employment opportunities; yet 39% of employers say a skills shortage is a leading reason for entry-level vacancies. This implies a

[23] *The EU's policy interpretation of 'Lifelong Learning' is frequently criticised as being narrower than UNESCO's master concept of education. The association of the term with 'employability' and the 'knowledge economy', and a narrowly defined notion of active citizenship have been interpreted as a conscious oversight of the collective dimension of education for social change, and even given rise to accusations of a neo-liberal agenda (see Fleming, 2010; Holford and Spolar, in Riddell et. al, 2012; and Mayo, 2014).*

[24] *There are seven key findings of the OECD 2013 Survey of Adult Skills (Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competences or PIAAC), which are all specifically relevant for EU education and training policies:*

*1. 20% of the EU working age population has low literacy and low numeracy skills;*

*2. Education and skills increase employability: this represents a challenge for the one in four unemployed who has low literacy and numeracy skills;*

*3. The high-skilled are progressing well through adult learning, but people with low proficiency are easily caught in a 'low skills trap' as they are less likely to participate in learning activities;*

*4. There are significant differences between individuals with similar qualifications across the EU17 member countries: upper secondary graduates in some Member States score similar or better than higher education graduates in others;*

*5. 25% of adults lack the skills to effectively make use of ICTs;*

*6. The skills of a person tend to deteriorate over time if they are not used frequently. The gap in literacy proficiency skills between generations is more than two thirds of a proficiency level (equivalent to five years of education);*

*7. Sustaining skills brings significant positive economic and social outcomes*

[25] *Data according to PIAAC and the 2012 PISA Survey of ability in reading, maths and science among 15-year-olds (Programme for International Student Assessment).*

[26] *See numerous publications by Cedefop and ETF.*

[27] *See Council conclusions of 26 November 2012 on education and training in Europe 2020 - the contribution of education and training to economic recovery, growth and jobs 2012/C 393/02*

disconnect in the perceptions of employers, education providers and young people. One-third of employers say they never communicate with education providers; of those that do, fewer than half say it proved effective. Meanwhile, more than a third of education providers report that they are unable to estimate the job-placement rates of their graduates. Of those who say they can, 20 percent overestimated this rate compared with what was reported by youth themselves. Nor are young people better informed: fewer than half say that when they chose what to study they had a good understanding of which disciplines lead to professions with job openings and good wage levels.

- Available education and courses for adults with poor basic skills are not sufficiently motivating, so we need relevant courses that motivate and boost self-confidence. Many adults need to strengthen their basic skills without necessarily taking a full primary and lower secondary education. Many cannot leave work and can only learn after working-hours. There are few goal-oriented courses for basic skills; the same applies for adapted courses in the workplace or in connect in with vocational training or other job-related training.
- There is an overall lack of knowledge and updated research about the learning needs of adults. We need to have better charting of adults' needs for either basic skills or for completion of primary / secondary education. We need to ask learners what knowledge and skills they want to learn, and how they want to acquire these. Both learning objectives and pedagogy have to consider the individual's starting level and needs.
- There is a lack of pressure on adults with little education to learn. This is often associated with a generational problem. Moreover, a large percentage of people not in work do not have any qualifications. As a modern state, Malta needs to address the opportunity gap between people who achieve their full potential and those who do not; and the skills gap between people in work and those who are not.
- The productivity gap between Malta and the leading economies of the world needs to be narrowed. Bridging these gaps is vital if Maltese businesses are to grow and prosper. Our Lifelong Learning strategy inevitably needs to find a balance between personal fulfilment and enterprise, employability and adaptability, and active citizenship and social inclusion.

**STRATEGIC MEASURES**

2.1 Assess existing VET systems to ensure alignment with the best practices articulated in the Copenhagen Process as amended by the Bruges Communiqué: these practices have gradually shifted VET to a learning outcomes approach[28].

2.2 Raise public awareness of the correlation between skills and qualifications and active participation in the labour market. We will do this by focusing on concrete initiatives that can bridge the gaps between: a) the rights of learners to an education that empowers them as individuals and thinking citizens; b) the needs of employers to have employees with relevant skills; and c) the obligations of education providers to both empower individual learners and facilitate their engagement in the workplace.

2.3 Raise public awareness of the linkage between an improvement in individual skills sets and enhanced flexibility in the work place. Flexibility contributes to improved productivity in the economy, reduced skill mismatches and promotes competitiveness. In a flexible labour market, changes to employment patterns reflect the skills required, and possessed, by the workforce. A healthy and sustainable labour market, characterised by a low unemployment rate, a high level of labour force participation and low skill shortages, is vital to meet the low growth, low productivity and demographic challenges described above.

2.4 Develop programmes aimed at stimulating a demand for learning that is associated with skills sets that are relevant to the labour market. People who experience strong demands for skills in their daily work tend to be interested in formal continuing education and training. This indicates that putting learning pressure on and making demands of all employees, including those with less education and poor qualifications, may lead to a great deal of improvement both with regards to the individual's and the enterprise's development.

[28] *For VET to respond to current and future challenges, European education and training systems should ideally have the following attributes:*
*a) be flexible but of a high quality;*
*b) adapt to labour market evolutions and understand emerging sectors and skills;*
*c) provide tailored and easily-accessible continuing training;*
*d) sustain VET through a common approach to quality assurance;*
*e) empower learners to adapt to and manage change by enabling them to acquire the key eight key Lifelong Learning competencies (see Annex 3);*
*f) be inclusive;*
*g) facilitate and encourage VET learners' and teachers' transnational mobility; and*
*h) be adequately, efficiently and equitably funded.*

2.5 Ensure public learning institutions understand and are aligned with industry's needs for relevant skills and competencies.

2.6 Offer second chance education to those who enter adulthood without any qualifications through alternative pathways in education and training.

2.7 Continue to support measures in working life directed towards poorly-educated employees who lack basic skills. The challenge is to develop personalised solutions based on research that neither stigmatise nor create exclusion in such learner groups.

2.8 Reduce labour shortages due to demographic changes by raising skill levels in the workforce and by upskilling low-skilled workers.

2.9 Promote linkages between VET participation and 'pleasure and self-fulfilment through Lifelong Learning'.

2.10 Develop the current guidance system into a comprehensive educational counselling and career guidance system implemented by multi-professional teams (teachers, school psychologists, external experts) in all state and private schools from year 6 onwards, and with binding regulations concerning scope and structure of courses. The system must be an integrated component of the entire education framework: an overall qualitative and quantitative system that helps young people and adults make the right choices, find the right offers and design a lifelong project for themselves.

2.11 Consult learners, parents and enterprise to make adult learning relevant. We need to move from top-down approaches to more inclusive and permeable approaches to adult education. Specifically, we need to develop convincing arguments for each of the three critical intersections of VET: enrolling in postsecondary education; building skills, and finding a job.

2.12 Ensure that public organisations engage competent personnel who are familiar with information relating to the labour market, VET and EU guidelines[29] such that they may guide individuals to the learning programmes that would be best for their prospective careers. Public employment services can also play a crucial role in facilitating skill matching especially at local levels by working closely with local employers as well as education and training providers.

2.13 Use digital technologies to enable decision-makers to be more responsive to the adult learning requirements of the labour market.

2.14 Encourage SMEs, social partners and civil society to articulate training needs and resource public organisations to provide pragmatic support in the development of concrete learning opportunities for adults.

2.15 Develop programmes in conjunction with trade unions and employers' associations to promote learning at the workplace, adapting learning activities to workers' learning needs and abilities. This is particularly important for adults since learning must often be combined with other activities. The opportunity and motivation to participate in learning activities is largely dependent on whether education and training are perceived as relevant to the rest of the learner's working and social life; when a practical combination of such activities with work and family life is possible; and when the activities are affordable. Flexibility remains important for organised learning in the workplace[30].

2.16 Provide education and training opportunities and Lifelong Learning support structures for young people who are not in employment, education and training, targeting those 'distant' from formal learning or who are early school leavers.

2.17 Develop the concept of "key competences" – a generic set of skills and attitudes which can be useful in all work situations – as a means of keeping education and training relevant in a fast-changing environment and equipping people to adapt to changing circumstances and deal with unknown situations. As well as instilling specific knowledge and skills, today's education and training systems must encourage motivation, reflection, self-evaluation, self-guidance, critical and cross-disciplinary thinking, teamwork and problem-solving skills. They should train people to respond to complex demands, communicate with and understand others, plan ahead, make innovative choices and take risks and accept the consequences. These kinds of competences cannot be taught or assessed in isolation nor can they simply be bolted onto existing programmes designed to produce narrow trade-related knowledge and skills. They call for a much more holistic approach to organising education and training in which both course content and the roles of teachers and learners will change dramatically.

2.18 Focus on evidence-based analysis of vocational education and training (VET) policies.

[29] *See http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/vocational-policy/index_en.htm*

[30] *A learning activity is considered to be flexible when:*
*a) it is the users themselves who decide time, place, progression and educational / practical methods (including the use of ICT) for the learning;*
*b) the actual learning objectives are adapted to the learning needs of the users; and*
*c) as many people as possible are motivated and have a reasonable opportunity to participate.*

2.19 Promote the adoption of re-skilling and up-skilling measures through strengthened Lifelong Learning and adult learning with a focus on the very low-skilled.

2.20 Integrate formal training and learning with informal learning processes in the workplace, accommodating training around work demands and minimising time spent off-site. Nevertheless, despite the best efforts to encourage employees to pursue accredited academic education, the workplace demands skills that are more often acquired from informal learning experiences than from formal higher education.

2.21 Present 'the business case' to small firms, to change prevailing perceptions/culture, including the desirability of skills-intensive production and workplace development strategies. Public learning organisations should explore outreach mechanisms for small business owner-managers, providing them with information and support (including HR support and management training) and identifying ongoing training appropriate to their evolving business needs.

2.22 Reduce training costs through financial incentives, e.g. through subsidies and tax concessions, targeted on small firms and existing workers.

2.23 Encourage training partnerships between larger firms and small businesses, and facilitate collaboration between small businesses through pooling resources and networking. There may be opportunities for small businesses to share skills, knowledge and experience with other business people.

2.24 Fund a wide range of VET measures, ranging from placements abroad to cooperation projects between training organisations in different countries.

2.25 Recognise that Maltese society is increasingly multi cultural, and encourage the teaching of other languages beyond the core languages of Maltese and English.

2.26 Ensure people have access to apprenticeships at all age groups and not just in their youth. Where possible, apprenticeship-style training should be accredited.

2.27 Facilitate courses that lead to a transition from agriculture, industry and service to a knowledge based society moving from the hyperlocal context and culture to the global context.

2.28 Raise public awareness of the close relationships between adult education and entrepreneurship and of the opportunities for hybrid solutions, as opposed to entrenched approaches when it comes to policy leadership.

2.29 Monitor progress in the European Commission's EU2020 initiative "Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs[31]" which aims to tackle the lack of ICT skills and unfilled ICT-related vacancies in Europe by creating awareness about ICT services and careers, increasing access to ICT training, sharing and replicating best practices, and celebrating ICT and web entrepreneurship.

[31] *The Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs has the following objectives:*

*1) Improve the image and attractiveness of ICT careers;*

*2) Offer training packages co-designed with the ICT industry;*

*3) Offer more aligned degrees and curricula at vocational and university level education that will respond to the needs of the students and the industry;*

*4) Improve recognition of qualifications across countries by stimulating take-up of a European certification scheme for digital skills of ICT professionals, based on the existing e-Competence Framework;*

*5) Reduce labour market mismatches by stimulating mobility;*

*6) Stimulate digital entrepreneurship by liaising with Startup Europe, a single platform for tools and programmes supporting people wanting to set up and grow web start-ups in Europe.*

# Strategy 3

## Develop a coherent, equitable and sustainable accreditation system for adult learning

**Strategic Objectives Supported: Strategic Objective 2, 3 and 5**

Further to the publication of the PIAAC report, the Commission has again reinforced its commitment to present substantial analysis on the issues of quality and funding of adult learning in 2014, recognising the need for better provision of adult learning. Furthermore, a study is envisaged to support the implementation of effective adult learning policies through the Open Method of Coordination[32]. The one constant in recent intelligence is the importance of accreditation to all forms of adult learning.

### CURRENT CHALLENGES

- Qualification levels of Lifelong Learning are still largely assessed on the basis of acquired, legally-regulated certificates. Non-accredited, non-academic learning at non-formally organised places of learning is not necessarily valued. Accreditation needs to extend to learning which is not necessarily undertaken through institutions and practice-based learning which is specific to particular industries: for instance, the Creative Industries Strategy identifies a number of lacunae in the current education framework when it comes to heritage, arts, media and creative business services.
- The national minimum curriculum and the vast majority of higher education courses at the University of Malta are not necessarily considering the needs of industry.
- Educational establishments autonomously implement permeability and credits for acquired skills and competencies, yet there is little consistency in the overall approach to acquiring qualifications.
- There is a lack of vocational schools and academies: student atelier facilities are also non-existent.
- Certification and accreditation systems for teachers of Lifelong Learning courses are weak or non-existent.

### STRATEGIC MEASURES

3.1 Implement a modern, transparent, equitable qualification system for Lifelong Learning nationwide that may facilitate access to education and the transition to work by establishing uniform quality standards for supported programmes. The improved comparability of qualifications, independent of where and how these qualifications have been acquired, is a cornerstone of this Lifelong Learning strategy.

3.2 Ensure adult courses are regularly reviewed and benchmarked against the Mita Qualifications Framework (MQF). This includes courses offered by University of Malta, MCAST, the Directorate for Lifelong Learning and ETC.

3.3 Develop and extend the current accreditation system managed by NCFHE to ensure that transparency and recognition instruments in formal education also cater for new forms of learning in line with the Council Recommendation on the Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning[33].

3.4 Assess formal, non-formal and informal education processes on the basis of their learning outcomes. Informal and non-formal learning, particularly those acquired during working life by people looking at up-skilling and re-skilling should be recognised as competence building: the recognition of the outcomes of learning processes should ideally involve competent social partners. Currently no NQF accreditation is available for private tuition, skills and competencies which have been acquired informally in community and volunteer work that takes place at all education and qualification levels.

3.5 Consider the implementation of trade testing and occupational standards in order to validate informal learning. Standardise procedures to validate informally or non-formally acquired knowledge, skills and competence, irrespective of where and how these have been acquired. The procedures need to be transparent and easily-understood by learners, parents and employers.

3.6 Encourage mutual, cross-institutional and cross-sectorial recognition for qualifications are incorporated as a principle in the entire educational and vocational qualification system. This would be an important step in establishing an open, motivating Lifelong Learning culture.

[32] *See European Commission, The Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC). Implications for education and training policies in Europe. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework/doc/piaac_en.pdf*

[33] *OJ C 398, 22.12.2012, pp. 1-5.*

3.7 Monitor developments in European common methodological frameworks such as ECTS, ECVET [34] and Europass [35] to ensure citizens benefit from mutual recognition and transfer of skills and foster a culture whereby learning outcomes do become the new defining perspective in qualifications.

3.8 Develop comprehensive validation systems for skills acquired through accredited digital and blended learning, including skills acquired by completing an online course from a virtual teaching institution, such as a digital media school[36]. To adhere to high quality standards, online courses need rigorous structures and processes combined with peer reviews throughout the life cycle of courses: this should apply to both online and distance teaching and learning [37].

3.9 Ensure that NCFHE is adequately resourced to manage the accreditation of Lifelong Learning courses within prescribed timeframes.

3.10 Further develop curricula at schools and higher education establishments in line with learning outcome orientation. This should also apply to the curricula at VET institutions whose courses are accredited within the NQF framework.

# Strategy 4

## Improve the overall quality of adult learning in Malta and Gozo

**Strategic Objectives Supported: Objectives 2, 3, 4 and 5**

NCFHE currently has formal responsibility for both accreditation and quality assurance of Lifelong Learning courses for adults aged 25-64.

### CURRENT CHALLENGES

- The teaching of basic literacy classes requires high quality adult educators. Resourcing issues also come into play: literacy, numeracy and computer awareness courses are coordinated by two, part-time coordinators who are also responsible for recruiting and training adult educators and making classroom support visits as part of quality assurance procedures.
- Citizens have a right to request and providers an obligation to deliver a high quality adult learning experience.
- NCFHE does not currently have the resources and competencies to conduct ongoing quality assurance of Lifelong Learning courses, even when these are benchmarked to the NQF.

### STRATEGIC MEASURES

4.1 Secure support from key public learning institutions to implement a comprehensive quality assurance system based on regular inspections and audits of adult education courses in line with transparent, quality management criteria. The performance and effectiveness of the education, economic and labour markets are increasingly determined by the quality of processes between systems, functioning competition and the individual's sense of responsibility.

4.2 Coordinate the requisite efforts to improve standards and quality in the adult education sector by engaging core stakeholders and social partners. It is fundamental that the rationale for any change programme related to improving the quality of adult learning is supported by a clear and inclusive communications programme.

4.3 Switch the perspective of adult education from supply-orientation towards needs-orientation, taking into account different life-cycles and educational careers and facilitating the acquisition of qualifications independent of age and socio-economic background.

4.4 Develop new curricula for adult education, with consistent orientation towards learning outcomes and sustainability, as well as cross-curricular and

[34] *The Commission defines the European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) as a methodological framework that can be used to describe qualifications in terms of units of learning outcomes with associated points. Within this context, 'unit of learning outcomes' means a component of a qualification, consisting of a coherent set of knowledge, skills and competence, which can be assessed and validated. 'Credit points' or ECVET points mean a numerical representation of the overall weight of learning outcomes in a qualification and of the relative weight of units in relation to the qualification.*

[35] *Europass is an EU initiative which aims to help people make their skills and qualifications clearly and easily understood in Europe, thus facilitating the mobility of both learners and workers.*

[36] *Also see Strategy 5 - Connected Learning*

[37] *Within this context, the quality benchmarks for online and distance learning developed by EADTU are to be monitored, at the level of the institutional management, curriculum and course development, course delivery, tutoring and staff support. EADTU is continuing to share its work with universities and quality and accreditation agencies in order to jointly establish a European framework for quality assurance and accreditation for online and distance education.*

interdisciplinary teaching models which focus on the acquisition of key competencies. Learning outcomes must become the new defining perspective in qualifications.

4.5 Commit to an improvement in the overall quality of adult education by focusing on teachers and trainers, innovative pedagogies, and updated curricula. Quality assurances will need to centre on evaluation and review functions and the use of appropriate indicators if there is to be an improvement in the professionalism and competencies of teachers in adult education[38].

4.6 Differentiate between accreditation of courses, licensing of teaching organisations and monitoring of Lifelong Learning courses.

4.7 Address the issue of lifelong course benchmarking, ensuring alignment with the European Qualifications Framework.

4.8 Participate in European networks involved in European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET). The main purpose of the network is to create a structured and sustainable platform for policy makers, social partners and providers to exchange information and experience on their quality assurance policies and practices, and thereby strengthen the culture of quality assurance in vocational education and training.

4.9 Improve Lifelong Learning monitoring. This is likely to involve a system for data collection, monitoring and evaluation and a mapping of any necessary infrastructure investments needs.

4.10 Ensure that Lifelong Learning is available throughout the year.

4.11 Invest proportionately in teaching resources for adult educators. It should be mandatory in future community building to have a learning zone for adults with appropriate resources that facilitate learning.

4.12 Encourage peer learning and peer review schemes.

4.13 Encourage the use of EU funds, particularly the Structural Funds and the Erasmus+ Programme, to tackle key education, training and skills challenges or bottlenecks.

4.14 Support teachers in acquiring a high level of digital literacy skills.

4.15 Adopt best practices and competence profiles for adult educators from other countries, including flexible training, incentive schemes and updated curricula for educators' induction courses and professional development.

4.16 Facilitate the mobility of teachers, trainers and other adult learning staff.

4.17 Open structured career paths and improve professionalisation in the adult teaching sector through training and further qualification for trainers in competence-oriented teaching.

4.18 Introduce basic qualifications for youth leaders and youth workers.

4.19 Consolidate adult educational institutions and structures and initiatives that can provide excellence in the formative needs of educators and adult students who pursue training leading to careers in Lifelong Learning. Ensure that a framework for professional recognition, accreditation and networking is sustained to cater for the professional development of the sector.

4.20 Develop procedures for sustained quality assurance in the field of provider-neutral educational counselling and career guidance. Quality assurance extends to courses offered to people in the period after retirement: experts active in educational work with elderly people also need to have the requisite certifications and accreditation.

[38] *Adult educators should be able to dynamically link knowledge, abilities and attitudes, both in theory and practice.*

# Strategy 5

## Embrace emergence of Open Education Resources as opportunity for Connected Learning

**Strategic Objectives Supported: Objectives 1, 2, 3 and 4**

The combination of smartphones, tablets and high-speed internet are ushering in significant changes not just for higher education institutions, but for all forms of adult learning. The ability of students to take classes over the Internet represents a significant opportunity to address the long-standing failure of existing adult learning systems to deal with different individual abilities and requirements of today's learners (Baker & Goldberg, 1970). Learners are individuals and need to be taught accordingly. Open Education Resources (OER) and the emergence of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are facilitating the selection of both the curriculum and the manner in which it is presented for each individual learner. More importantly, there is the potential for learners to take control of their own learning, selecting variables such teaching provider, modules, learning approach, time to study etc. The principles of andragogy and individualised learning are being combined with connectivism (Siemens, 2005) to deliver early examples of "connected learning". One of the most appealing promises of MOOCs is that they offer the possibility for continued, advanced learning at zero cost, allowing life-long learners to acquire new skills and improve their knowledge and employability (Johnson et al., 2013).

The recent initiative of the European Commission "Opening Up Education" is positioned as the first step for an EU-wide policy framework that may stimulate the introduction of innovative learning and teaching practices through quality educational content made available over digital technologies in schools, universities, vocational education and training (VET) and adult learning institutions. The EU is promising an "open public debate in the context of the consultation on the European Area of Skills and Qualifications on the impact of new technologies and digital content in current practices and EU instruments and policies, including issues such as quality assurance, assessment and certification"[39].

### CURRENT CHALLENGES

- MOOCs and OER raise complex issues including (but not limited to): online course accreditation; EU-wide programme / course certification; quality assurance; data protection and privacy; copyright and protection of intellectual property rights (IPR). All of these require informed research and a trusted pan-European information exchange network that can contribute towards the development of a pragmatic, trusted regulatory framework for the licensing of digital media schools and their courses. The development of such a framework will require significant investment by member states and requires support by the EU. It also requires a commitment to monitor and adapt best practices from other jurisdictions (such as the United States) that currently enjoy a headstart in developing quality, accredited online educational material.
- There is a need to examine these new approaches through a critical lens to ensure they are effective and evolve past the traditional lecture-style pedagogies. There are concerns within some higher education institutions about the quality of OER that need to be addressed and overcome: specifically, some OER and MOOCs have been associated with poor quality materials on the basis that they are "free". The corollary is that educators are starting to realise that content is no longer a valuable commodity because of its abundance on the Internet: 'ownership' is taking an alternative definition, reflecting owning by participation and contribution rather than possession and control of the education commodity.
- The great majority of schools in Europe are not digitally equipped and their students are not taught by digitally-literate teachers; teachers who mainly use ICT to prepare their teaching but not as a skill for students to develop in the classroom.
- There is a danger of a new digital divide, between those who have access to innovative, tech-based education and the digitally excluded. 25% of adults lack the skills to use digital technology and therefore to exploit the opportunities available in technology-rich environments. Education in Europe runs the risk of failing to meet the challenge to keep pace with these developments and harness the possibilities offered by innovative teaching and learning methods, such as massive open online courses in higher education.

[39] *Council of the European Union, 5949/14*

- Forecasts suggest that 90% of the jobs in the future will require at least basic digital skills. In schools, the take-up of ICT remains very low. Only 25% of 9-year-old children study in highly-digitally equipped schools; more than 50% of students in EU countries never use digital textbooks or other educational digital content. At tertiary level, European education systems are slow to respond to the quick expansion of MOOCs or blended learning, and their implications for teaching, assessing and certification.

**STRATEGIC MEASURES**

5.1 Embrace potential of ICT, digital content and the availability of OER as a tangible opportunity to explore new, flexible and alternative learning methods and routes to adult learning and secure participation from all social strata. The fact that OER uptake has now spread to the secondary level of education in other countries can greatly help address gaps in education delivery and provide flexible and adaptable means of continuing education beyond primary and secondary year. It offers significant potential to those who have left mainstream education and wish to have access as adult or lifelong learners.

5.2 Use the European Commission's call for EU-level cooperation on OER as the platform from which to push reforms towards the adoption of open learning environments within adult education. This will involve the development of a sound policy framework for the introduction of innovative learning and teaching practices through technologies in schools, universities, VET and adult learning institutions. There is a significant opportunity to re-think the role of digital technologies within adult learning institutions.

5.3 Embrace the potential of connected learning[40] to explore and develop new models of adult education rooted in the principles of human social activity. These models are based on the key assumption that knowledge is a three-fold dynamic process of cognition, communication and co-operation[41].

5.4 Encourage the use of OER in vocational education and in other informal learning settings, where student-centred learning combined with ICT also carries huge potential.

5.5 Address OER policy advocacy from the outset, including issues relating to online course accreditation, licensing, quality assurance, intellectual property rights (IPR), data protection and privacy. OER require open licensing and extended copyrights [42] for wider use without compromising the moral and intellectual rights of the creators. A lack of understanding copyright and open licensing issues at senior levels in academic institutions and public organisations may be a roadblock for OER development. Our intention is to develop a framework for connected learning in Malta that will eventually be considered as an example of best practice for the regulation of the pan-European digital media schools of the future. This process is likely to include: the adaptation of validation and recognition instruments used in formal education to recognise the emergence of a much more diversified educational offer brought about by new education providers; new forms of learning made possible by technology; new tools to support the accreditation of technology-supported learning taking place outside the immediate remit of formal education institutions.

5.6 Lever on the mass take-up of OER in other countries to mobilise support from stakeholders including teachers, learners, parents and social partners and drive much-needed change within the adult education sector.

5.7 Lever on current research and best practices on OER to improve delivery methods of adult education and challenge long-standing positions on pedagogy, context and social interactions. Connected learning reinforces a number of principles that may appear to challenge traditional approaches to Lifelong Learning and adult education in particular:

5.7.1 A stronger use of learning experiences can be created by combining face-to-face tuition with and online learning through blended learning.

5.7.2 OER can be used to stimulate and increase students' motivation for learning, as well as the overall effectiveness of learning.

5.7.3 Students are expected to build knowledge from open and free sources other than their teachers and institutions, and with different methods.

[40] *Claims for the benefits of connected learning include: a) It is equitable, social, and participatory.*
*b) It draws on the power of current technology to connect different areas of a learner's life and create new, robust learning experiences.*
*c) It involves hands-on production, open networks, and shared purpose as part of the learning process.*
*d) It encourages active experimentation/design/production/creation.*
*e) It leverages interests of each student to keep them engaged.*
*f) Extensive ongoing participation by members of the communities which in turn helps encourage participation, feedback and engagement.*
*g) Learning is linked between school, home, and the community, rather than as an isolated activity in a classroom.*
*h) Social media and networking are used to link common goals of learners and to share information.*

[41] *See Hofkirchner (2013) in Fuchs (2014).*

[42] *Creative Commons Licenses provide the means through which OER may be developed and shared along a spectrum of openness. Traditional copyright ensures that materials may not be used in any way without permission.*

5.7.4 'Learning' may take place anywhere and anytime where learners have access to technology and an Internet connection, and with minimal formal institutional support. Students are actively encouraged to develop learning communities beyond their classrooms: everyone may engage in learning/study groups

5.7.5 Personalisation and customisation of education becomes an easier task because of the underlying characteristics of OER. OER can immediately be used within a blended learning context, using a mix of face to face learning experiences and online lectures and course work.

5.7.6 Teachers can also use OER to create communities of practice, collaborate and exchange teaching materials and best practices.

5.7.7 Initial teacher education and continuing professional development will need to place a strong emphasis on digital-supported teaching methods (digital pedagogies).

5.8 Support learning institutions, teachers and learners in acquiring and improving the digital literacy skills needed to use OER for their present and future connected learning. The development of a critical spirit among teachers, all educational institutions and adult learners in particular improve citizens' capacity to adapt and promote innovation in education.

5.9 Incorporate OER as standard digital technologies within education institutions.

5.10 Develop incentives for teachers, learners and organisations who wish to use programmes delivered through the use of OER and ideally in blended learning format. These incentives could include: funding and research grants; scholarships for promising educators; and the nurturing of international specialist networks for educators interested in OER and connected learning, levering on formal EU networks where possible.

5.11 Explore new, flexible and alternative learning methods for both structured and personalised and informal learning facilitated by OER. The provision of multiple pathways should encourage people from all backgrounds to follow and build on their interests to become 'creative learners'. School subjects tend to be taught in a uniform, structured manner which cannot appeal to all students: technology can be used to alert educators of students' individual needs and shortcomings, with computer algorithms sifting through masses of information to continually assess students and tailor lessons to their needs.

5.12 Explore mobile learning for adult learning across multiple contexts through social and content interactions. The diffusion and growing widespread availability of OER together with the extended reach of smart phones, tablets and netbooks have opened up opportunities for ubiquitous learning.

5.13 Promote awareness of the various interpretations of 'open licensing' [43] and its implications to Maltese society. OER need to be positioned as teaching, learning and research resources that reside in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property licence that permits their free use or re-purposing by others. The widespread use of social technologies by Maltese citizens can also be used strategically to raise awareness of the benefits of online and blended learning as new approaches to adult learning, and the possibility of OER actually increasing students' motivation to learn.

5.14 Use OER to facilitate the connection and networking of learning communities in Malta and Gozo, and more importantly within the global learning community.

5.15 Embrace opportunities for economies of scale through the use of OER at various tiers of adult learning. This is especially relevant and beneficial for emerging economies such as Malta's with challenges including: a) shortages of qualified teachers; b) a lack of high-quality adult learning materials and c) the need to expand access to both formal and informal education to reduce early school-leavers[44].

5.16 Work with public and private ICT organisations to develop the infrastructure that can bridge the remaining digital divide and make digital education available to all citizens in Malta and Gozo. The required infrastructure for digital education is not available everywhere and access to open resources is not always free. An investment in infrastructure can range from subsidised hardware for learners to ubiquitous Wi-Fi in Malta and Gozo.

5.17 Ensure that educational materials produced with public funding, whenever possible, are also made available to all citizens as OER.

[43] *Any general, royalty-free copyright license would normally qualify as an open license because it provides users with the right to make more kinds of uses than those normally permitted under law. These permissions are granted to users free of charge. However, there is a narrower definitions that effectively limits open content to 'libre content' whereby any free content license would qualify as an open content license. According to this narrower criteria, the following still-maintained licenses qualify: a) Creative Commons licenses ; b) Open Publication License; c) Against DRM license; d) GNU Free Documentation License; e) Open Game License ; and f) Free Art License.*

[44] *For instance, the cost of textbooks can be greatly reduced through the use of open textbooks. Coupling technology-the Internet and other low-cost outlets-and a highly standardised curriculum can help to supplement faculty and spread consistent instruction at a modest cost. Technology, in the form of "serious games" and other kinds of simulations, may well become the apprenticeship of the 21st century, by offering tailored, detailed, practical experience to large numbers at a comparatively low cost.*

# Strategy 6

## Facilitate Women's participation in workplace through Lifelong Learning

**Strategic Objectives Supported: Objectives 1 and 4**

Malta needs to continue to take measures to address skills gaps and facilitate the integration of women in the labour market. According to the Labour Force Survey (Q4 2013) female participation in the labour force increased from 41.1% in 2011 to 46.9% in 2013.

The PIAAC Survey of Adult Skills provides several insights into issues relating to gender equality in the workplace and women's empowerment:

- Despite best efforts, equal skills do not always imply equal opportunities in most EU member states. The average participation in Lifelong Learning is higher for females (9.7%) than for males (8.4%). Women and men have very similar proficiency levels in terms of numeracy and literacy. On average, men and women use their skills in different ways, partly because of their jobs. With only a few country exceptions, the survey shows that on average men use literacy and numeracy skills at work more frequently than women.
- Gender differences in the use of literacy and numeracy skills are partly due to the fact that men appear to be slightly more proficient but also that they are more commonly employed in full-time jobs, where these skills are used more intensively. At the same time, this is not the case when the type of job is taken into account; when it is, the differences in how men and women use their skills at work are larger.
- While women tend to be concentrated in certain occupations, they use their skills more intensively than do the relatively few men who are employed in similar jobs.
- The use of problem-solving skills at work explains about half of the gender gap in wages. About half of the cross-country differences in the gender gap in wages can be predicted by differences in the use of problem-solving skills at work. However, this relationship is no longer apparent once gender differences in a number of other factors, namely proficiency in literacy and numeracy skills, educational qualifications, occupation, and the industry of the jobs, are taken into account.

### CURRENT CHALLENGES

- Parenthoodhas a significant effect on the participation of women on the labour market. Despite higher rates of female graduates from tertiary education, the employment rate of women in Malta remains low, with the gender employment gap the highest in the EU - a coverage rate of 10% or less [45].
- Based on data published by the National Statistics Office (NSO), the share of women and men in the general population in Malta in 2009 was that of 50.23% and 49.77% respectively. Considering that women make up 55% of all students in Higher Education, they are, therefore, very well represented amongst tertiary level students. However, while females make-up the majority of University students, in non-University Higher Education settings (where in Malta this mostly represents vocational oriented Higher Education Institutions) the majority of students are males with a share of 56%. Therefore although females form the majority of students in Higher Education, they are underrepresented in non-University settings. Females make up the majority of Bachelor students (57%), whereas at Master level the share of female students declines slightly (54%). This suggests that with advanced levels of higher education the gender distribution becomes more balanced. At the same time it suggests that participation of women at advanced levels of higher education tends to decrease, while a larger share of males tends to continue their education.
- The improvement of childcare is still perceived by the EU to be a key means for attracting more women into the labour market as well as promoting equal opportunities in the workplace[46]. Government, Church and Private Institutions in Malta provide an extensive network of kindergarten facilities across Malta and Gozo for children between the age of 3 and the mandatory school age.

[45] *Memo/08/592, Brussels, 3 October 2008*

[46] *At the Barcelona Summit in 2002, the European Council had set the targets of providing childcare by 2010 to at least 33% of children who are under 3 years of age and at least 90% of children between 3 years and the mandatory school age.*

- The lack of availability of appropriate child care facilities has long been recognised as a barrier to both women and men combining family and work responsibilities with learning. Nevertheless, gender issues and gender discrimination in particular cannot just be reduced to or resolved by with the availability of child care facilities at community level.

**STRATEGIC MEASURES**

6.1 Reiterate the fundamental principles that there must be equality of opportunity for women and men in education and training, work and career as ell as in family work. Gender equality is a cross-cutting goal that needs to take into consideration both women's and men's views and needs if Lifelong Learning programmes and organisational policies and processes are to address long-standing gender equality issues.

6.2 Provide women with parental or care obligations with pragmatic assistance and comprehensive schemes as well as flexible career change models.

6.3 Position Lifelong Learning as one of the most pragmatic means of empowering women in Maltese society. The commitment to improve women's access to relevant learning is about unlocking their potential to make a difference, particularly in those areas of Maltese society where gender discrimination continues to be rife. Lifelong Learning programmes for women should build on women's strengths through relevant, affordable and easily-accessible training in communications, assertiveness and leadership[47]. Women can bring collaboration, team-building and inclusiveness to institutions and organisations: they can be great reconcilers within and between communities. Lifelong Learning needs to recognise these characteristics if it is to become truly empowering.

6.4 Raise awareness of socio-economic and socio-cultural differences and common features in the fields of education and work associated with gender issues to contribute to a consistency in the appreciation, support and use of diversity in social systems.

6.5 Provide financial and fiscal incentives for training and adult education aimed at women who wish to return to the workplace.

6.6 Stimulate women's entrepreneurship by improving legal and economic protection. Incentives for women starting up businesses can be in the form of guidance, training in businesses-related issues and leadership, mentoring and financial grants[48]. Training programmes and grants aimed at assisting women who already have a small business or wish to move up the value chain by improving their business skills will also be actively supported.

6.7 Introduce fiscal incentives for employers who engage women in specific sectors where women are under-represented.

6.8 Introduce fiscal incentives for employers who sponsor VET and CPD training in sectors where women are under-represented.

6.9 Incentivise enterprises who facilitate the engagement of women on flex-time, or who provide opportunities for women with young children to work from home.

6.10 Ensure Lifelong Learning is made available during times that are suitable for women with young children. Within this context alone, open and distance learning (ODL) and the increasing availability of OER represent significant opportunities for personalised learning for both female learners and educational and training providers.

6.11 Develop more flexible regimes for maternity and adoption leave [49]. It is important that women are not obliged to work overtime, either from the birth or from the effective date of the adoption of their child (current set for a 12-month period). Moreover, mothers on maternity leave may wish to ease back into the working routine during the last few weeks of maternity leave. Flexibility of working hours and tasks allocated could make this possible.

6.12 Use targeted offline and online media to promote financial independence for women and the need for greater involvement of men in the sharing of non-remunerated family work.

6.13 Provide grants and other financial help for VET for women. Develop special training for women based on formal education (such as technical schools running special programs for women who start to go back to school.)

6.14 Conduct regular discussion and measures with NGOs and other organisations representing gender issues.

6.15 Expand needs-oriented all-day care for children on a nationwide basis.

6.16 Expand needs-oriented all-day care for children on a nationwide basis.

[47] *The attributes of 'leadership in women' is linked to the growing body of research that demonstrates that: women bring the "softer" skills and attributes of leadership into organisations; much more so than men; and that organisations are starting to recognise the great value of these skills. These leadership skills include: integrity, orientation to service, optimism, decisiveness, courage, resilience, self-reflection, discipline and a sense of humour (see Gourle, 2013 in Commonwealth of Learning, 2013).*

[48] *A current example of such an incentive is the ETC INT scheme ("Ibda Negozju Tiegħek") targeting people interested in starting their own business. On completing the training programme and presented a viable business plan, participants are awarded an enterprise grant of €5,000.*

[49] *Maternity and adoption leave is currently at 18 weeks. Adoption leave is available to both men and women. Adoptive parents may also utilise 1 year unpaid parental leave for each adopted child and a once only career break of 5 years unpaid leave for the same purpose.*

# Strategy 7

## Lever on Lifelong Learning to support inclusivity & empower marginalised communities

**Strategic Objectives Supported: Objectives 1, 2, 3 and 4**

Education, training systems and employment need to be permeable and support social mobility. More needs to be done to address issues related to diversity in Maltese society, and specifically marginalised individuals and communities. Aspects and criteria that come into play with an inclusive adult education system include gender, class, age, sexuality, physical and mental capacities, ethnic group and origin, social group, care obligations, access to education, training and qualification, professional experience, work content / environment and networks. Access to relevant Lifelong Learning is vital if people are to be given fair opportunities to discover and further develop their talents: it is also an economic necessity if all potential in the labour force is to be maximised.

### CURRENT CHALLENGES

- The economy does not provide equal aspirations and meaningful opportunities for all citizens. The educational system actively segregates low achievers from high achievers through the streaming system: in the process, it actively discriminates against traditionally marginalised students through a low-expectations regime complete with segregationist and deficit-oriented policies (Borg, 2014).
- In the same way that learning plays an important role in providing a route out of poverty, uneven access to Lifelong Learning can entrench inequality.
- For an education regime to be truly inclusive, it needs to be directed at all life phases, extend beyond the obligatory school years and address the needs of all stakeholders, including those who are actively or socially marginalised.

### STRATEGIC MEASURES

7.1 Position Lifelong Learning as a primary means of addressing social inequalities, resisting and eliminating discrimination and prejudice in our society and securing equal opportunities for all citizens.

7.2 Promote the mainstreaming of equality in the development of adult learning policy and the shaping of education legislation. People need to be given fair opportunities to discover and further develop their talents. Equality of opportunity for learners is a core component of democratic politics and enables fair opportunities for social advancement: it is also an economic necessity. Learning must be made available and accessible to all citizens of all ages in a transparent manner.

7.3 Develop 'education safety net systems' in collaboration with state and private schools that can accurately identify possible dropouts. The early identification of such students would activate targeted, personalised, motivational programmes that provide the necessary assistance until students have obtained their respective qualification; can be motivated to enrol in the next higher level of education and training; and / or supported in their integration in the labour market.

7.4 Raise awareness among marginalised groups that adult learning reduces the chances of poverty and social exclusion, and can both improve people's skills and help them achieve active citizenship and personal autonomy.

7.5 Actively engage people from marginalised communities as stakeholders in working groups developing and evaluating Lifelong Learning programmes to ensure that Lifelong Learning is both accessible and relevant to the most marginalised.

7.6 Lever on the opportunities provided by ODL and OER to help overcome problems of access, equity, distance and time.

7.7 Focus on the integration of migrants in society and labour markets through adult learning. Tailor-made courses, including language learning, are vital in this process.

7.8 Provide clear advice and support systems to help migrants secure quick validation and recognition of academic and professional qualifications obtained in other countries, including non-EU countries. The validation of such qualifications is currently a significant barrier to the integration of migrants into the Maltese workforce.

7.9 Provide clear advice and support systems to help migrants conduct relevant VET that may facilitate their entry in the work place.

7.10 Support people with low access to education in their efforts to secure qualifications. Such people include those rebuilding their lives (such as former prisoners); long-term unemployed and those living on public benefits.

7.11 Expand needs-oriented support schemes for groups at risk, and strengthen preventive approaches by making more flexible use of available resources and introducing specific schemes to benefit the education of highly talented young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

7.12 Identify a set of educational processes that promote active family, community and school engagement, specifically targeting to interrupt structural cycles of marginalisation.

7.13 Enhance social inclusion by developing programmes that identify reluctant learners such that they may be reengaged in educational and training experiences.

7.14 Develop courses on the principles of popular education to engage with people who for various reasons are marginalised from education. Within this context, state schools are to be considered sites of social justice, and the platform for learning which is both socially permeable and leads to personal development.

7.15 Develop Lifelong Learning benchmarks for categories of the population most likely to be marginalised and discriminated against. This process must be pursued with increasing levels of granularity. For instance, with regard to persons with disability there must not be one benchmark for all, but benchmarks for the broad categories of disability – intellectual, blind, deaf, mental illness, physical etc.

# Strategy 8

## Improve the quality of life of older people through Lifelong Learning opportunities

**Strategic Objectives Supported: Objectives 1, 2, 3 and 4**

As a result of the post-war baby boom and increased life expectancy, the number of people in their sixties is now rising, while the number of people of working age will soon start to decline, with fewer young people entering the workforce in the future. The socio-economic challenges of this demographic shift and a growing post-retirement population are not unique to Malta, yet need immediate attention as their effects may be even more dramatic in a micro, bounded nation-state.

### CURRENT CHALLENGES

- The labour market has a greater supply of older workers than younger workers and the demographic trends indicate that this will continue. Maintaining a sufficient supply of labour that is able to respond quickly to changes in demand will require older workers to stay in the labour market for longer. As the demographic changes continue, employers will increasingly need a workforce of all ages and with the right skills for the 21st century. At the same time, many older people are likely to wish to continue working.
- Older workers receive too little stimulation and support for learning, adaptation or career changes at later stages in their lives. The PIAAC report has identified that Europe will not be able to realise the vision of smart growth, set out in the Europe 2020 Strategy, if its workers lose employability as they grow older. The prevailing emphasis of co-operation between EU Member States on education and training is based on the fundamental concept that people need to continue to learn throughout their entire life if the current skills deficit is to be addressed, and the skill decline of its workforce through ageing reversed.
- Older adults in Malta are underrepresented as far as educational policy is concerned: older adult education practice ignores the larger structural issues that affect people's ability to participate in learning activities (Formosa, 2012). Training for older workers is virtually non-existent.
- At present, learning and CET are largely oriented to the world of work. Learning in the period after retirement is limited, and educational counselling for elderly people is virtually non-existent.

**STRATEGIC MEASURES**

8.1. Support the recommendations of the National Strategic Policy for Active Ageing by coordinating efforts between national stakeholders to implement the Lifelong Learning programmes proposed in this policy under the three major themes of: active participation in the labour market; participation in society; and independent living.

8.2. Develop high-quality, easily-accessible educational offers for elderly people near their place of residence. These offers must enable older people's further development, their updating of life skills, responsible health management, social integration and participation in society.

8.3. Develop active ageing public programmes that raise awareness of Malta's ageing population, and the urgent need to take concrete action to prepare for the re-skilling of people in their late 40s and 50s, even if they appear to be in long-term careers. We need to recognise the need to provide access to appropriate training opportunities for older people, both for those in employment and for those seeking employment, and that this need will increase in the future. Active ageing needs to become part of the Maltese vernacular, as both the state and the private sector join forces to support older people contribute to the economy and society as they age, and to remain independent for as long as possible. Seniors and ageing persons have the right to continue to participate in the formal labour market, as well as engage in other unpaid productive activities: these may range from care provision for family members to volunteering, whilst leading healthy, independent and secure lives.

8.4. Develop new continuous vocational education and training (CVET) programmes for ageing and older workers. These programmes should target increased productivity and economic growth, both for participants and industry, and developed in conjunction with public and private stakeholders, and lever on the expertise of the National Commission for Active Ageing and the European Centre for Gerontology at the University of Malta.

8.5. Work with industry to improve the opportunities for vocational education and training of ageing and older workers according to their needs and employer and workplace requirements. CVET for older people is not just a means of securing flexibility in the supply and quality of labour, but a means for people to participate fully in society and lead an independent life. This also includes programmes that support older people moving from full-time employment to more flexible forms of work.

8.6. Support and train facilitators and instructors in CVET to ensure they are sensitive to the unique learning and teaching styles preferred by older and ageing workers.

8.7. Create opportunities for skills upgrading, retraining of workers and the continuous development of knowledge. The promotion of a healthy labour market needs to ensure that: a) every individual has the information, opportunity and skills necessary to participate in the labour market; b) the whole workforce is encouraged to learn and develop, thereby improving its productivity and employability; and c) employers are able to recruit skilled workers, and are satisfied with the skills of their employees.

8.8. Provide career guidance throughout professional life, including personalised counselling and outplacement services which may help retain and reintegrate older workers, and assist the unemployed back into employment in the event of redundancy.

8.9. Collaborate with social partners to develop outreach programmes which facilitate learning opportunities outside formal settings with older adults who could or would not usually participate in formally-organised learning programmes.

8.10. Develop late-life learning initiatives to attract older adults with working-class backgrounds, older men, elderly people living in rural regions, housebound seniors, low-skilled people and socio-economically disadvantaged groups. Lifelong Learning must contribute tangibly to wider participation in adult education, particularly in response to older adults who are still educationally excluded and socially disadvantaged. There must be widespread and free access to second chance education and training aimed at getting older people to complete basic competence education.

8.11. Develop a scheme for Lifelong Learning Ambassadors as a means of encouraging intergenerational learning. This scheme could include incentives and systems to encourage older people to transfer acquired knowledge to younger people. The scheme would inculcate the core elements of social justice and social equity in an intergenerational pact, whereby the ambassadors are valued within the community as opposed to being isolated in senior citizens' homes. Active ageing also includes volunteering and pursuing initiatives to exploit the knowledge, skills, and competencies of older people for the benefit of society as a whole. Intergenerational learning provides a valuable opportunity to build on learning that brings different generations and different cultural backgrounds together and exploits the knowledge, skills and competencies of older people for the benefit of society as a whole.

8.12. Develop ICT, e-learning and digital literacy courses for older people, with a particular emphasis on vulnerable older people with the objective of bringing about improved levels of personal transformation.

8.13. Develop programmes at community and higher education levels, targeting the "fourth age" when people are much more likely to become dependent on others for part or the entire day. Educational opportunities must be directed at frail persons as well as their carers: programmes must be made available, free of charge, to relatives and volunteers involved in the care of older persons and courses should address issues about identity, health, social engagement and wellbeing during the final stages of life. Older people who continue to engage in cognitively-stimulating activities have been found to be in a better position to adopt strategies assisting them to augment their well-being and independence. The higher education sector in particular needs to play a key role in encouraging new types of adult learning through all phases of the course of life by embracing its clear obligations towards older learners.

8.14. Provide training for prospective educators of both active and frail elderly people residing in the community and residential homes respectively. The University of Malta, especially through the auspices of the European Centre of Gerontology, provides specific training for this purpose.

8.15. Provide "personal development" programmes which identify new types of courses and markets among a diverse and segmented post-50s market, and ''health and social care'' programmes orientated towards professionals working with older people that vary from foundation degrees through to modules for continuing professional development.

8.16. Ensure that the results of research conducted by the European Centre of Gerontology at the University of Malta relating to the educational participation by people in the period after retirement and in the post-family stage of life is rapidly diffused to entities that are engaged in Lifelong Learning in the field, including the Directorate for Lifelong Learning and NGOs. Basic research on the linkage between Lifelong Learning and older people needs to be intensified and the data material improved.

8.17. Support and promote innovative geragogical projects through public programmes.

# Strategy 9

## Coordinate ownership and delivery of Community Learning

**Strategic Objectives Supported: Objectives 1, 4 and 5**

Learning in the community is a pre-requisite for an empowered civil society, and every form of participation is perceived to be a valuable learning experience. Participatory learning processes contribute to citizens' empowerment and secure their participation opportunities through self-organisation, taking local community needs into account.

In 2010, a partnership was created between the Directorate for Lifelong Learning and the Department for Local Government (DLG) so that Local Councils may actively participate in providing adult learning courses in their localities, bringing learning closer to the community. To date, courses offered are mainly related to basic literacy and foreign language teaching. .

### CURRENT CHALLENGES

- There needs to be a balance between the social obligation to meet the demand for Lifelong Learning within the community, and the need to deliver quality, sustainable, accredited courses, optimising on available resources.
- Some courses currently offered by the Directorate for Lifelong Learning are tantamount to 'social courses', covering topics that are more akin to hobbies and crafts. These courses may well contribute to individual well-being and harmony at local community level, but have weak academic and VET attributes and cannot qualify as accredited learning. Participation in these courses is not regulated, with some people attending the same course for several consecutive years. The continuity of these courses is often down to the individual reputation of the instructor and availability of students, rather than the result of a formal certification process.
- The lack of formal quality standards for crafts-type courses and an audit process for most adult courses means that the Directorate is locked into providing resources which may be better used elsewhere, particularly if a primary objective is to contribute to a knowledge society in Malta.
- The corollary is that community-type learning plays a role in widening access to Lifelong Learning. Many such courses may be considered to be measures that facilitate participation in learning activities for people who are generally underrepresented (older workers, low-skilled people, socio-economically disadvantaged groups, etc.). They also have a part to play in maintaining social cohesion.

### STRATEGIC MEASURES

9.1 Facilitate and promote alternative, locally-coordinated adult education programmes at community level. The linkages between 'community education' and 'civic participation' and well-being in the local community need to be strengthened.

9.2 Strengthen community education approaches through programmes delivered by Local Councils and civil society, and incorporate Lifelong Learning as a topic to be addressed by all local councils. If Lifelong Learning is to become tantamount to democratic participation, citizens need to be involved in planning and educational processes and empowered in changing existing initiatives at community level.

9.3 Develop robust partnerships across all relevant local actors, particularly learning centres and learning communities within Local Councils which have a strong link to social networks. The community must not be a passive recipient of centrally-developed programmes, but must serve as a learning enhancing resource.

9.4 Create, develop and nurture local community learning opportunities[50] (such as the learning of specific skills within localities) by introducing new programmes based on the identified needs and issues of each particular community. Learning in the community is fundamental to avoid the 'Matthew Effect' and therefore should:

9.4.1 have a widening participation agenda, which aims to reach individuals / groups in communities who would / could not normally attend institutionally-based adult learning;

[50] *This form of community education adopts an integrated approach to work with children, young people and adults, and by providing educational support for community development. Great importance is placed on maximising the specific learning opportunities that each community offers. For instance, in fishing villages, the members of the community possess skills related to the fishing industry; in rural areas, communities possess a wealth of skills related to agriculture and rural economy. The courses should facilitate the transmission of knowledge that transcends from one generation to another, within and between communities.*

9.4.2 address the learning needs of specific individuals/ groups in communities through customised provision;

9.4.3 bring formal, informal and non formal learning opportunities into a community location;

9.4.4 take a learner-centred approach where learners are involved in negotiated learning programmes;

9.5 Target marginalised groups with whom it is traditionally hard to engage (such as migrants and unemployed people) through community projects and programmes.

9.6 Commission an audit of all community-type courses currently managed by the Directorate for Lifelong Learning. Courses that do not meet pre-determined criteria (such as education accreditation, minimum numbers for student participation, maximum times a student may participate in the same course) could be delivered by Local Councils (if funding is available) in conjunction with third parties such as NGOs, rather than as standard courses delivered by the Directorate for Lifelong Learning.

9.7 Collect, organise and disseminate existing information on institutional and central Lifelong Learning activities to local councils through social media channels. It is vital that models for community education approaches are fine-tuned through a dialectic approach, particularly in developing procedures for the recognition of informally acquired competencies and skills.

9.8 Expand and enhance the visibility of learning projects and related activities initiated and conducted at local community level, and launch school profile development initiatives oriented towards community education approaches.

9.9 Identify options for transforming strategically-placed state schools (which constitute public resources in the first place) into community Lifelong Learning centres. Links between schools and the community would also create greater space for the involvement of parents in the school process and foster closer ties between schools and their pupils' immediate home environment. The challenge is to find both a global and local dimension to the education provided; otherwise, one would be restricting children's different 'universes of knowledge' (Mayo, 2014).

9.10 Manage issues of social stigma when extending the role of state schools into adult community learning centres. Some adults may be reluctant to use premises used during the day as primary and secondary schools. Some buildings may well need to be restructured to accommodate adults; new state schools need to be conceptualised as community learning centres from the very start.

# Strategy 10

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

Malta is subject to a number of ongoing social and environmental pressures, such as over-population and pressures on the built environment by pro-development lobbies that highlight the need to incorporate greener living as a core component of Lifelong Learning. By 'green living', we mean embracing a lifestyle which seeks to bring into balance the conservation and preservation of the islands' natural resources, habitats, and biodiversity with culture and communities. Greener living is engaged in concrete actions for the responsible use by individuals and communities of both natural and personal resources.

**Strategic Objectives Supported: Objectives 1, 2 and 3**

### CURRENT CHALLENGES

- Issues of size, culture and lack of natural resources have highlighted the urgent need to incorporate 'green living' into our adult education systems.
- It is vital that Lifelong Learning incorporates a road map for the actions that need to be taken in our daily living habits to sustain the communities in which we live. We need to embrace practices which have little or no negative impact on our environment, reduce waste and consumption, work to create sustainable food systems and living arrangements and strengthen local communities and relationships.

### STRATEGIC MEASURES

10.1 Identify environmental protection, biodiversity and healthy living as the three core pillars for living in a sustainable Maltese society. Sustainability needs to be inculcated as both a state of mind and way of life. Within the context of adult education, it incorporates sustainability principles, concepts and approaches in both formal and informal education processes.

10.2 Commit to funding greener living adult education initiatives that can lead to quick knowledge transfer about sustainability and help institutionalise greener living concepts and encourage their widespread adoption throughout Maltese society. For people to become actively involved in designing their living environment and their community, they need to have access to resources that can facilitate innovative models and new spaces for community-based learning within the short term.

10.3 Develop learning resources on greener living for schools, teachers, parents and students. As an indication, these resources would need to address subjects such as:

10.3.1 Reduced Environmental Impact and Cost: Energy and Water Efficiency, Alternative Transportation, Recycling and Waste Management, Green Computing, Building Design and Performance.

10.3.2 Health and Wellness: Air Quality Preservation, Asthma and Sun Safety, Contaminant Management, Green Cleaning and Procurement, Physical Fitness and Nutrition.

10.3.3 Environmental and Sustainability Education: Energy Conservation, Energy, Environmental and Sustainability Education, Assessing Sustainability Literacy, Design and Architecture, School Gardens and Landscape Management.

10.4 Lever on core principles of popular and community education to raise awareness of the need to take action at local and national level. Greener living needs to be positioned at par with active citizenship and civic engagement. Its roots are in the core ethics of family life and then reiterated at various stages of the Lifelong Learning journey.

10.5 Coordinate with Local Councils to develop grassroots community initiatives that can be internalised and communicated as community adult training programmes.

10.6 Use OER and the mass take-up of social media networks to raise awareness and engage with target communities and various tiers of society. The mindful use of social technologies provides us with the opportunity to identify influencers within Maltese society, including those who have a deep interest in a more sustainable Maltese society. The combination of pervasive social technologies with active living and personal responsibility means we can use 'greener living' as an ideological platform whereby we may start to move away from traditional models of one-way, top-down adult education systems to co-learning, individual empowerment and personal learning systems within the community.

# Indicative programmes

*The Lifelong Learning strategy is underpinned by a set of indicative programmes, with each programme supporting at least one of the ten strategies.*

*These indicative programmes represent the starting point for the implementation of the overall Lifelong Learning strategy, and include a level of granularity and detail to the ten strategies. Any programme would be subject to constant monitoring and realignment with Government policy.*

# Programme 1

## Set up a National Lifelong Learning task force

**Type: Policy**

**Supports: All Strategies**

- Set up a National Lifelong Learning Task Force with the primary objective of owning, leading and coordinating the implementation of this strategy. Ownership and governance of this strategy and the implementation of programmes are pre-requisites, since the structures involved in this strategy are not just limited to adult education institutions, but other Ministries, public and private entities, NGOs and members of civil society. This strategy should form the basis for the Task Force's terms of reference.
- Ensure the Task Force is chaired by the Permanent Secretary and includes participation from the Directorate for Lifelong Learning, the University of Malta, MCAST, ETC and FES.
- Develop a 12-month implementation plan and set up processes for regular reviews on progress.
- Set up procedure for a review of the Lifelong Learning strategy on a 24-month rolling basis.

# Programme 2

## Develop a coherent communications plan for Lifelong Learning across all media

**Type: Policy**

**Supports: All Strategies**

- Ensure that the National Lifelong Learning Task Force develops a coherent, inclusive communications plan to support the implementation phase of this strategy. The primary objective of the plan is to raise awareness of the relationship between Lifelong Learning, GDP and societal well-being. Effective communications are a component of good governance: the changes related to structure, policy, VET. OER, quality and accreditation will need to be communicated coherently to various internal and external stakeholders.
- Use the media and technologies used by citizens, including OER and social media tools in particular. The strategic use of social media tools will help in communicating in a human, personal manner that connects and engages with disparate stakeholders, including learners in very different stages of their learning journeys. It also opens up the opportunity for two-way engagement with stakeholders.
- Ensure that regular updates of progress of the implementation are provided to stakeholders, using a mix of offline channels and paid, earned and owned media for online channels.
- Ensure that information on Lifelong Learning is accessible to all – that is, in terms of physical access, time, opportunity costs, literacy and language.
- Bridge and align differences on what constitutes Lifelong Learning in Malta.

# Programme 3

## Direct and coordinate funding towards adult education

**Type: Policy**

**Supports: All Strategies**

- Use the publication of the Lifelong Learning Strategy as an opportunity to focus on the funding of adult education in Malta and Gozo. This strategy places greater emphasis on the quality and efficiency of adult education as well as the need to derive tangible returns from educational expenditure. The segmentation of education budgets within various Ministries, learning institutions and agencies constitutes a challenge to any proposed changes for adult education funding. Nevertheless, it is vital that a working group is set up within the Ministry of Education and Employment, with the support of external expertise, to study the sustainability and efficiency of the various systems in place to fund current adult education initiatives before introducing new fiscal incentives. Government already heavily subsidises adult learning courses organised by the Directorate for Lifelong Learning[51] and this is not the only incentive to promote adult education and training[52]. The working group should report to the National Lifelong Learning Task Force with an accurate snapshot of the current state of financing of adult education at ministerial, institutional and community level.
- Ensure that the funding of adult learning is based on a viable and transparent system based on shared responsibility with an adequate commitment to the sector; support for those who cannot pay; and exploration of innovative means for more effective and efficient funding. From a capacity building perspective for the sector, this requires expertise and professional approaches depending on the availability of participants in various parts of the adult education value chain. There is a continuum in this process: ideally, educational processes lead to innovation and business start-ups, which in turn secure finance through traditional or non-conventional means, and whose long-term success depends on the ability to penetrate markets through a quality offer that remains faithful to the cultural and creative core of their activity, and communicated across cultural and geo-political boundaries. The point of departure for the future funding of adult education in Malta must be that we need to pool various existing funding instruments and orient them towards learners' needs to ensure a standardised, coherent, equitable and efficient funding logic and system.
- Pursue opportunities for the EU funding of adult education in a structured manner, targeting funding for programmes at all life stages and levels of adult education. This overall approach should not detract from focusing on specific groups (such as the low-qualified) and expanding group-specific incentives through dedicated and niche incentive and funding instruments.
- Centralise programmes to secure EU funding for adult education within one public agency. Targeted projects to reach particular segments of the population, as well as for the training of adult educators and the production of much needed teaching and learning tools are sporadic[53]. In the short term, the Directorate for Lifelong Learning and EUPA need to reach out to adult educators and learners to make maximum use of EU funds available under the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP). The implementation of several initiatives can be successfully implemented by using the open method of coordination and levering on good practices and experiences in other EU countries.
- Explore the introduction of new, long-term funding-instruments which encourage equality of opportunity, particularly those that facilitate the acquisition of qualifications and competencies later in life. For instance, a system similar to the UK's Individual Learning Accounts operates by way of tax credits and partial funding. A similar system is more flexible than the current scholarship system as an incentive for learners to commit to pursuing their own learning and development needs. The introduction of a smart card as part of a Personal Learning Profile system (see programme 18) could also help identify those in need of specific adult learning courses and their card credited with funds which could eventually be exchanged for training courses specifically intended for their professional or skills development.
- Develop a participatory social budget for every locality for which educational programmes are provided to ensure popular participation. The educational budget for Local Councils should ideally be used solely in developing community education programmes. Similar programs should be considered for NGOS.

[51] *L.N. 396/2010 stipulates that: Basic Literacy Courses in Maltese, English, Maths and Science are exempted from payment. Most courses (including courses in traditional academic subjects and handicrafts) are pegged with a fee of €34.94 for the whole duration of the course. Other more specialized courses have a fee of €46.59 and €58.23 for the whole duration of the course. Through local funds Government is subsidizing each course from 50 to 70%.*

[52] *Since human capital is crucial to achieve economic growth, employment and social cohesion, Government is implementing other incentives such as: Zero rated VAT on educational material; VAT exemption on private teaching; Deduction of up to €10,000 against one's income for tuition fees paid, on successful completion of a tertiary education course (L.N. 427 of 2010); and Stipends to post-secondary students up to the first cycle degree.*

[53] *The Ċavetta project, led by Paulo Freire Institute is an excellent example of such an initiative.*

- Create streamlined, transparent, accessible financial mechanisms (such as tax credits) to support learning across all life phases. These should include funds to support the education of marginalised communities, including low income families, particularly those where the main breadwinner is not in employment. Funding of education should also extend to assistance in the purchasing of assistive ICT which could translate into a tax credit for the person making the purchase (in this case, the financial benefits are only available to those who work).
- Make full use of the new generation of financial instruments, in particular the Erasmus+ Programme and the Structural and Investment Funds in order to address the above challenges in education and training.
- Develop and expand attractive support schemes for qualifications in areas and qualifications segments for which there is a particular demand. The operations of the National Skills Council should input directly into these support schemes in identifying target sectors (see Indicative Programme 5).

# Programme 4

## Identify and resource the public entity charged with the coordination of Lifelong Learning policy

**Type: Policy**

**Supports: Strategies 1, 4 and 10**

- Separate the functions of policy making, financing, regulation, audit and service delivery of the adult education sector. The Directorate for Lifelong Learning's operations currently involve all of these functions, albeit in different measure. This is neither possible, with the Department's limited resources, nor optimal in view of the potential conflicts in executing each of these functions.
- Reposition the Directorate for Lifelong Learning as the national entity in charge of Adult Learning policy in Malta. In addition to developing policy, providing direction to the Lifelong Learning sector and networking with local and foreign adult education institutions on matters of policy, the Directorate would work alongside EUPA to enable NGOs and State entities involved in adult education access EU funds. The Directorate would need to be adequately resourced with the requisite expertise if it is to be positioned as the hub of national Lifelong Learning policy.
- Ensure that the NCFHE is adequately resourced with the requisite expertise to provide prompt and efficient accreditation of courses, licensing of providers and regulation of the Lifelong Learning sector.
- Consider outsourcing quality assurance functions to competent private sector organisations. This includes the ad hoc monitoring and regular audits of adult learning institutions and their educators.
- Identify the entity or entities reporting to the Ministry of Education and Employment to provide adult education services at an acceptable price and service quality. This process should include a re-evaluation of the role of the Foundation for Education Services (FES). Since its foundation in 2001, FES has provided several initiatives in Lifelong Learning and could potentially take over the adult learning service provider functions currently managed by the Directorate.

# Programme 5

## Set up a national skills council

**Type: Structure**

**Supports: Strategies 2, 4, 6, 7 and 10**

- Set up a National Skills Council with clear terms of reference so it may contribute to the alignment of adult Lifelong Learning with present and future industry skills, needs and competencies. The terms of reference should include a national skills audit and a national skills gap analysis conducted in conjunction with industry and employer representatives. The Skills Council should inform policy debate on a range of issues including: a) labour market changes and their implications for the employability of individuals; b) the development of responsive VET systems for young people and adults; and c) the actions that improve the quality of the labour force within the framework of employment policies.
- Ensure that the Council includes representation from interested stakeholders, including NCFHE, the University of Malta, MCAST, social partners including the Malta Council for Economic and Social Development (MCESD)[54], ETC, Jobs Plus, the Directorate for Lifelong Learning and ministries such as the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity. The Council should aim for closer cooperation between industry, higher education, and governance structures in all matters relating to VET and CVET and improve data on business skills needs. The participation of employers in the identification of any skills gap analysis will also contribute to employment retention.
- Ensure that the Council's recommendations will be taken into consideration when making changes to national education and employment policies. The Council's operations should impact the operations of public organisations engaged in Lifelong Learning, and the related frameworks and support systems, such as scholarships and incentives.
- Recommend VET systems which are relevant and add value to both the individual and the enterprise by: a) anticipating skills needs, in consultation with the economic players; b) enhancing employability; c) matching the supply and demand of skills in the short, medium and long-term, identifying and addressing skills gaps (where people in jobs are not yet proficient) as opposed to skills shortages (skills deficiencies being more common in lower-skilled jobs); d) addressing skills in the informal sector for the promotion of decent work and Lifelong Learning opportunities.
- Ensure that the Council is guided by best practices, including recent EU communications[55] and the findings of the PIAAC report.
- Work with European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) to extract maximum value from planned skills analysis of the Maltese labour market.
- Collect timely information about the demand for and supply of skills in Malta. It is imperative that there is an improvement in data collection greater transparency about skills demand and supply across economies if the skills mismatch is to be addressed.
- Investigate the development of EU "Education and Skills Online", a web tool which the EU asserts will allow adults to self-assess their skills.
- Strengthen and support efforts at capacity building and professionalisation in the creative economy, incentivise creative entrepreneurship through apprenticeships, and support the establishment of industry-led governance structures (skills council).
- Audit the provision of services provided by ETC and DLL and other state financed adult learning services, so as to harmonise the learning provision, maximise on their resources, assess, and better respond to the needs of new skills required. The audit can also be a catalyst for closer collaboration between public learning organisations when exploring learning opportunities.
- Focus on training programmes for key skills which improve young people's career prospects, and enable employers to have competent and motivated staff. These key skills are also vital for the success of most organisations and include: soft skills and oral and written communication skills in particular; teamwork and entrepreneurship; digital literacy; problem-solving, planning and organising; and the ability to think critically and creatively.

[54] *The Malta Council for Economic and Social Development (MCESD) is an advisory council that issues opinions and recommendations to the Maltese government on matters of economic and social relevance. A sub-committee of MCESD brings together as one forum adult learning providers and interested parties, with the stated objective of developing a coordinated action plan on second chance education and skills for life and supporting better-skilled, more competitive Maltese workers.*

[55] *See the EU "New Skills for New Jobs" initiative at http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=568&langId=enl*

# Programme 6

## Set up a technical working group to address accreditation and recognition of skills and competencies acquired via Lifelong Learning and non-formal and informal learning routes

**Type: Structure**

**Supports: Strategies 3 and 10**

- Develop a coherent accreditation framework for personal and informal learning. A technical working group will be set up for this purpose with representation from NCFHE, the Directorate of Lifelong Learning, ETC and with regular interface with industry representatives. The working group should also monitor best practices in other EU countries and lever on external expertise via Erasmus+ and other funding mechanisms.
- Build on the linkage between MQC and the European Qualifications Framework to ensure transparency of the entire adult education system, and that qualifications for informal learning are coherent, easy to interpret, and consistently awarded. .
- Ensure that all courses offered by Government institutions, including short term courses, are referenced to the MQF, VET and VPA awards.
- Develop accreditation systems for short courses within a VET and CVET framework that recognises the realities of a mobile workforce in the 21st century. Adults must have access to a continuous certification system that incorporates non-formal and informal learning over their working life, including learning conducted in different countries and working contexts. The recognition of foreign diplomas is also important: many regular migrant workers in Malta currently hold jobs for which they are over-qualified because their qualifications and foreign work experience are not fully recognised in Malta as the host country.
- Determine the level of resourcing required to support NCFHE's activities in the licensing of adult education providers and accreditation of Lifelong Learning courses. The Technical Working Group should also consider options for outsourcing some elements of this work if it cannot be managed entirely by one organisation.

# Programme 7

## Set up formal partnerships between educators, enterprise and trade unions to develop work-based learning environments[56]

**Type: Policy**

**Supports: All Strategies**

- Set up and develop formal working networks between adult education institutions and organisations, industry and trade unions to develop, nurture and expand opportunities for accredited learning in working environments. The successful development of such partnerships need to be based on mutual recognition of fundamentals:
- There is a need for better collaboration between education institutions and working life if adult education is to be more integrated, responsive and relevant to the needs of learners and industry. Incentives for such collaboration and to actively understand each other's worlds are currently missing in the adult education framework.
- It is during working life that adults participate most in learning activities, and where competencies are built. This is why collaboration schemes between the education sector and enterprise is so important.
- Enterprise provides young people with the environment, real-life challenges and learning opportunities which are not available within education institutions.
- Closer collaboration with educational institutions early on can provide significant benefits to enterprise through improved recruitment processes and a better supply of workers with relevant qualifications.

[56] *Also see Indicative Programme 17.*

- Establish and brand an eventual collaboration framework between educators, enterprise and trade unions aimed at nurturing work-based learning environments[57]. This framework would include a definition of the roles, responsibilities and commitments of educators, enterprise, trade unions and learners in the work-based learning environment (WBL). It would also identify individual obligations by the key players:

*Educators and Learning Providers:*

- Ensure that learning provision meets the needs of learners.
- Ensure that academic component of the WBL programme is of the highest quality and that all courses are validated on the MQF.
- Plan and adapt provision of adult education to be relevant to Malta's social and economic needs.
- Explore partnerships and synergies with enterprise to match students with the right employers, and to explore multi-employer placements.
- Recognise and accredit the experiences of learners engaged in apprenticeships and internship programmes.

*Enterprise:*

- Recognises that high quality products and services are delivered by a skilled and motivated workforce.
- Invests in the training of employees in order to have a highly-skilled and productive workforce.
- Works with trade unions to tackle skills gaps in the workplace.
- Works with educators and learning providers to design curricula.
- Facilitates opportunities for their employees to operate as faculty.

*Trade Unions:*

- Champion the benefits of up-skilling and re-skilling.
- Work with employers to tackle skills gaps in the workplace.

*Learners:*

- Commit to pursuing their own learning and development needs.
- Invest the time, energy and other resources required to develop their own potential.
- Make use of pathways, advice and assistance available to support their learning.
- Lever on past experiences between public organisations and industry to develop alternative pathways to adult education through courses in the workplace. The Directorate for Lifelong Learning has already piloted literacy and numeracy projects with corporates on an ad hoc basis. The success of such pilot schemes indicates a latent demand for customised courses for industry and their value needs to be communicated more effectively to enterprise.

[57] *There are several options for the design of such collaboration frameworks. In an optimum framework, employers and education providers work with their students early and intensely. Instead of three distinct intersections occurring in a linear sequence (enrolment leads to skills, which lead to a job), the education-to-employment journey is treated as a continuum in which employers commit to hire young people before they are enrolled in a program to build their skills.*

# Programme 8

## Set up a working group with social partners to develop fiscal, operational, administrative and social incentives to encourage women to re-enter workplace

**Type: Structure**

**Supports: Strategy 6**

- Set up a working group to implement Lifelong Learning measures that can incentivise and fast-track women to work. "Good practice in entrepreneurial learning" and "women and entrepreneurship" usually fall outside the formal education system and therefore entities such as the Directorate for Lifelong Learning, the University of Malta, MCAST, the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity, the Ministry of Finance, ETC, the Malta Employers Association, the Chamber of Commerce, Trade Unions, NGOs and private training and recruitment organisations are all important players. The success of the working group will depend on its ability to communicate and network effectively with Government and enterprise, and develop an action plan that addresses a range of critical issues including:
  - Flexible arrangements for work, including remote working from home and part-time work.
  - Fiscal and other incentives for employers engaging women.
  - Financial and other incentives for women entering or re-entering the workforce, including grants, soft loans and free training.
  - Support with childcare, including accessible childcare centres in all localities.
  - Recognition and accreditation of non-formal education, community development work and online learning, including learning through OER and MOOCs.
  - Specialist training, including training for confidence and assertiveness, entrepreneurship skills, computer literacy and ICT.
  - Assistance with procurement of technology infrastructure (hardware and software).

# Programme 9

## Facilitate partnerships and synergies between public & private learning institutions to improve and extend adult education offer

**Type: Structure**

**Supports: All Strategies**

- Commission an audit of adult education courses currently being conducted by the Directorate for Lifelong Learning and ETC and determine if these can be delivered more cost-effectively by private learning organisations. This exercise should extend to lifelong guidance services.
- Develop a database of private learning institutions interested in delivering adult education at various levels in conjunction with, or independently of, public learning institutions.
- Work with NCFHE to fast-track the accreditation of adult education courses to be delivered by private learning organisations, including those to be delivered through blended learning approaches.
- Provide financial incentives for private learning organisations to develop courses which have been identified as strategic by the National Skills Council.
- Build on the current partnerships with NGOs already providing Lifelong Learning in the community and explore the possibility of outsourcing courses currently being operated by the Directorate for Lifelong Learning and ETC.
- Use digital media to raise public awareness of Government's interest in private-public partnerships in adult education.

# Programme 10

## Investigate feasibility of a dedicated Lifelong Learning village

**Type: Structure**

**Supports: Strategies 1, 7 and 9**

- Commission a study to investigate the feasibility of setting up a dedicated Lifelong Learning village in 2015. This Strategy indicates the need for an identifiable hub and centre for excellence for adult learning, better equipped with teaching and learning resources than the current fragmented approaches being offered by various organisations. The current locations being used for Lifelong Learning courses in Malta cannot be easily re-purposed to accept more learners and lack teaching resources. A central location would also attract private-public partnerships in the field of adult education. The study should address issues relating to logistics, funding, curricula and teaching resources. The concept of a 'Lifelong Learning village' could also encapsulate the need to find a location for the Academy of the Visual and Performing Arts.
- Explore the Lifelong Learning village concept within the context of a second, alternative evening public university which combines face to face teaching and / learning with online teaching and blended learning. Some of the vacant industrial and manufacturing sites could be put to good use within this context.

# Programme 11

## Set up working group to identify tangible measures to help people with disability engage in Lifelong Learning

**Type: Structure**

**Supports: Strategy 7**

- Set up a working group to develop a Lifelong Learning Action Plan for people with Disability. The group should be coordinated by the Directorate for Lifelong Learning and requires the direct input of KNPD, Aġenzija Sapport, Heads of ETC Resource Centres, specialist NGOs and expertise from the University of Malta and other foreign partners on a needs basis. The Action Plan needs to incorporate vocational profiling of each person with a disability, ideally to be initiated while the person is still attending the Resource Centre. Vocational Profiling for current older adults may be carried out at the Day Centres.
- Use Vocational Profiling to develop the persons' own awareness and understanding of opportunities and obstacles in the labour market. Work experience placements and job tasters are possible tools to be utilised in the vocational profiling process. The aim of the placements should always be clearly defined as part of the individual planning process and should be strictly time limited. Placements should always be a means to develop skills and opportunities for work and should not be seen as an aim in their own right. The process should always lead to a support strategy that is owned and understood by the person, regardless of the disability. Being a person-centred approach, vocational profiling is an individual, flexible and ongoing process with detailed information gathered relating to the job seekers' abilities, motivation, skills and knowledge. The Plan should also clearly define the support strategies and resources that are required to meet the individuals' support needs. These have to be provided by the tailored-made responses to be offered by the Lifelong Learning service providers. The main focus should be on specific learning skills for work, enjoying leisure activities, improving the communication skills, developing self-confidence and self-advocacy, and to help participants become an integral part of their local community.
- Provide a democratic space for persons with a disability to work with experts in the sector to critically analyse gaps in education for persons with a disability and identify barriers to fully-inclusive education opportunities
- Ensure that all spaces of education are designed with the needs of persons with a disability in mind, ensuring full physical, economic, social, political, psychological and technological accessibility.
- Make provisions for the assistants of persons with a disability and for a system that provides pastoral, psychological and emotional support.

- Ensure that all information on disability is accessible, as well as its dissemination over traditional and digital media.
- Ensure that all educators are trained in disability issues, sensitive to the needs and demands of persons with a range of disabilities (not only educational ones) and to make all necessary adjustments.
- Provide a disability-sensitive and useable effective feedback and evaluation loop that may enable immediate changes in practice, with the process ideally managed by persons with a disability.
- Design mainstream programmes that account for and are sensitive to different learning paces, languages, levels of literacy, physical and intellectual abilities, and literacy among other requirements
- Provide fully-accessible learning materials and tools to all e.g. Braille, computer software for persons with visual impairments (e.g. JAWS software) and ensure that mainstream material is fully accessible.
- Provide support for the provision of adequate equipment and assistive devices that can help facilitate access to educational opportunities and maintenance of these e.g. mobility devices, computers.
- Ensure that accessible and affordable transport is available, flexible and responsive to the needs and demands of people with a disability (particularly immediate demands).
- Ensure that home-based forms of education using the latest technologies are exploited to reach those with very limited mobility, including online certified courses. These can usefully be combined with outreach, and home-based teaching.
- Train persons with a disability to become trainers and provide solid measures for their inclusion in mainstream facilities and to teach others.
- Build on fora such as KK16+, which brings together several stakeholders together, including ETC, FES, KNPD, Aġenzija Sapport, the Student Services Department (which is administratively responsible for Resource Centres), MCAST and the University of Malta.
- Develop a database of adult educators who can be engaged to help persons with a disability in specific areas of learning while attending day centres. Adult educators are currently trained by the Directorate for Lifelong Learning and run a basic programme of learning which is personalised and continuously adapted and upgraded to meet job requirements when these are identified by ETC. The programme includes: basic literacy and numeracy skills; basic ICT skills; basic general knowledge; basic social skills; basic community skills; basic budgeting skills; basic sports and leisure activities.

# Programme 12

## Set up department of adult education at university of malta

**Type: Structure**

**Supports: Strategies 4, 6, 7, 8 and 9**

- Set up a new department of Adult Education within the Faculty of Education at the University. There are several reasons for establishing the department:
- Adult education is a specialised area which requires applied research on areas that include and are not limited to: community development, online learning, continuing professional development, flexible learning pathways; prison education; educational gerontology, adult education and work-formation of educators and research.
- The Department's research will inform studies at undergraduate and graduate levels, adult education and vocational and educational training.
- Adult education is a contested terrain (Mayo, 2012). It is important that Malta has access to alternative approaches to an "excessively economistic view of Lifelong Learning" where the dominant discourse concerns new basic skills, focusing on ICT and a variety of narrowly defined competences. Adult education policy needs to be receptive not just to ideologies that can be readily-funded by EU funding mechanisms[58] but to approaches that focus on inclusion and social justice.
- The Department can coordinate, monitor and engage with research carried out by private organisations, academics and NGOs. Such research is usually very localised and grounded and would contribute in locating, for instance, groups and individuals with literacy and numeracy problems. The Department would provide institutions providing adult education with raw data relating to adults who attend courses. Academic research at undergraduate and graduate level will have a

triangulation of data by tapping different quantitative and qualitative sources. Such data will be extremely useful for policy makers and service providers, particularly in field of adult literacy, where we need to complement the excellent work already being done in relation to compulsory school age. Applied research can also add a rich layer of analysis of the outputs by state agencies such as the Adult Education Unit within the Directorate of Lifelong Learning, local councils and private institutions. A sound policy with the contribution of NCFHE in relation to accreditation will help to bring much-needed accountability, quality assurance and transparency in the adult learning sector.

# Programme 13

## Invest in short term courses to improve skills for work

**Type: VET**

**Supports Strategies: 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6**

- Lever on the work of the National Skills Council to focus on developing, supporting and promoting short term courses in skills areas which are particularly valuable to the labour market.
- Ensure that short-term training always leads to certification and ideally also to learning credits, such that if a learner a person decides to further improve on his / her learning in the future, past learning can be "cashed in". Short term courses for skills improvement should be considered as building blocks within a system of Lifelong Learning accreditation.
- Develop and disseminate transferable models of cooperation between the school system, youth work and companies, while integrating innovative schemes of mentoring and volunteer work.
- Ensure strategic partnerships are in place between companies and their professional associations as well as with educational establishments.
- Ensure that both the transferring and accepting educational institutions at the transition to more advanced education have flexible organisation forms in place to enable the completion of programmes for as many young people as possible, despite their different learning speeds. This is important to prevent dropout from the education system. Those who refuse to take part in education may still be integrated into easily accessible CET / VET courses in line with their current life stage.
- Set up optional, competence-based assessment procedures at the interface of school education and the world of work to align pupils' positioning with the requirements of life and the world of work. Ideally, this assessment will immediately lead to a planned programme of short term courses. Both education institutions and enterprise need to cooperate to ensure sustainable integration of pupils into the education system and the labour market. Short term courses can fit within a comprehensive system ranging from preventive coaching structures to full-time job offers.
- Provide incentives for teaching organisations, academics and experts to develop courses that address specific skills shortfalls in the labour market. The weak links between adult education and the labour market have been acknowledged as a major bottleneck to the development of skills, and need to be addressed as a matter of urgency.
- Ensure that educational programmes are structured flexibly through modularisation at schools and study programmes and courses for employed students. Wherever possible, teaching institutions need to ensure that high-level CET does not exert unnecessary pressure on learners, particularly those who have to fulfil care obligations. Low-qualified people often do not become active learners before going through times of impending unemployment as they are not able to activate some of their resources.
- Facilitate career breaks for educational purpose in the final third of employment and facilitate career coaching in critical life stages.
- Explore the establishment of a unit within ETC or the Directorate for Lifelong Learning to support the development, organisation and funding of VET short courses. Assistance can range from the provision of adult educators for VET courses to financial grants to support organisations whose employees are attending relevant, accredited Lifelong Learning courses. VET courses should target the reintegration of job seekers and inactive persons into the labour market while also

[58] *The EU through its various actions and other sources, notably the ESF, is increasingly becoming a key provider of funds for adult education in Malta Corporations such as the ETC benefit from ESF funding. Other agencies such as the FES have been tapping ESF funds. It was through these funds that the FES sought to implement the provision in the NMC document regarding the development of schools as community learning centres (Mayo, 2012)*

providing assistance to those in employment to secure and advance their position within the labour market. VET courses can also provide the opportunity for people who have been absent from the formal economy for a relatively long period of time to regain their confidence, brush up on their skills and prepare for reintegration to employment.

- Set up a working group that includes the Directorate for Lifelong Learning, the University of Malta, MCAST and ETC to determine a programme for a set of courses that enhance the prospects of people securing and retaining meaningful employment or participation in the workplace[59]. There needs to be a concerted effort to challenge the perception that VET courses are tantamount to the delivery of short courses in the evening. Lifelong Learning needs to be reflected in the core curricula at University and MCAST. There is a need for greater institutional flexibility on the organisation, delivery and accreditation of VET courses. Adults may learn best when they have control over their learning. Courses must allow for more mature students whereby the work experience of these students is also recognised by the relevant institutions. MCAST has already demonstrated an interest in developing courses based on informal adult education, self-direction and andragogy.
- Ensure where possible that short term courses are made available at no cost for people looking for second chance education.
- Introduce Job Coaching as an accredited training programme. Ideally this programme is given a higher profile as an MCAST or University programme at Diploma level.
- Focus on Numeracy & Literacy Skills Courses for Adults as an academic discipline in its own right. Numeracy and literacy skills need to remain the focus of academic research in order to prepare adult educators who specialise in the field. An institute of Adult Education at the Faculty of Education could help to train adult educators teach literacy to adults using teaching methods and tools that are appropriate for adults, especially in Maltese, and Maltese as a Foreign language.

# Programme 14

## Invest in blended learning at the University of Malta and Mcast and other higher education institutions

**Type: VET**

**Supports: Strategies 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6**

- Use a mix of OER and face to face tuition as the guiding principles to develop and support new flexible VET pathways that may support Lifelong Learning skills development.
- Explore opportunities with institutions such as University of Malta, MCAST and other higher education institutions to set up blended online and in-person courses that can lead to modular, multidisciplinary, accredited courses for adults.
- Support programmes such as the University's programme in Liberal Arts & Sciences to be launched in Q4 2014. University intends to introduce this programme through a number of evening courses to be taken for credit by members of the general public. Participants can limit themselves to any amount of courses. It is possible, however, that participants can gradually (without any stipulated time frame) accumulate enough credits to obtain a certificate, diploma and a degree (Liberal Arts and Sciences). The programme could be positioned as a public good and university service to the public sphere (Mayo, 2012), and its courses important pilots for adults seeking a more flexible approach to securing accreditation in their studies. It also mirrors the notion of "education as a consumer good" that already underpins the booming HRD, ICT and the English language (to foreigners) industries in Malta.
- Support blended learning programmes developed by MCAST, supported by ESF 2.139. MCAST is restructuring a number of training courses to enable students to access training modules from home (through e-learning options such as online course notes, broadcasted lectures, teaching material adapted for distance learning, forum discussions etc). These modules will be supported with traditional lecturing, practical sessions and class tutorials for subject areas that require contact with lecturing staff and flexible access to the College's facilities.

[59] *ETC's "Active Youth for Employment" Programme aims to: increase the employability of young people and facilitate labour market integration of youth; help youth make informed choices through personalised jobseeker services, increased access to information about services available, training courses and the labour market; equip youth with the motivation and skills needed to enter, retain and progress within work.*

# Programme 15

## Introduce adult digital literacy courses at the University of Malta and MCAST and encourage introduction in other teaching institutions

**Type: VET**

**Supports: Strategies 2 and 5**

- Introduce digital literacy[60] courses as a vital component of 21st century adult education. A typical digital literacy course would include:
  - An introduction to digital media and social networking theories.
  - A pragmatic grounding in the fundamentals of online engagement, focusing on the needs of people in specific industries and in the use of technologies as a means of political participation.
  - A hands-on understanding of the dynamics of disruptive technologies when used as professional and social communication tools.
  - Engagement with online social networks, videos, blogs and micro-blogs as tools for personal branding, citizen journalism and creativity.
  - An introduction to digital curation and infotention skills for improved digital literacy.
- Digital marketing strategies.
- Support educational institutions in developing new educational models, innovative pedagogical approaches, updated curricula and methods of skills assessment, using the opportunities available under the Erasmus+ Programme.

# Programme 16

## Explore opportunities with higher education institutions to develop modular, multidisciplinary adult learning courses

**Type: Policy**

**Supports: All Strategies**

- Set up a working group between the Directorate for Lifelong Learning, the University of Malta and MCAST to determine how higher education institutions can become more responsive to the needs of adult students, beyond the provision of prescribed courses within the current accreditation system.
- Use the University of Malta's programme in Liberal Arts & Sciences as a pilot for a set of courses that demonstrate higher education institutions' willingness to be responsive to the needs of adult students. Students take up courses at every stage of life - what was once seen as the preserve of the young is now rightfully an arena for all, with a significant proportion of the full-time student population aged 25 years. "Mature" students are valued not just for their enthusiasm, but also for the experience, skills and critical approaches to education. .
- Focus on multidisciplinary approaches to adult education as a means of displaying social responsibility and greater openness towards the community at large. MCAST in particular has an opportunity to lever on its traditional VET course base to explore more interdisciplinary courses: these have been significantly missing in Malta's higher education offer.
- Review student admission requirements at higher education institutions and explore how these may be made more flexible for mature students.
- Offer more flexible learning arrangements, using available popular technologies including digital TV and social networks such as Facebook and LinkedIn to reach out to the learning community. TVM's access to resources and archives should

[60] *The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) stresses that digital literacy is a core competence that opens a gateway to Lifelong Learning. It enhances the teaching and learning processes, the interaction among peers, and interactions between students and teachers. It is driven by the need for increased access to learning which can be facilitated through a move towards 1:1 (one to one) student-centred teaching and learning that makes full use of the potential of technologies to enable children to show and create knowledge rather than passively consume it.*

be exploited for adult learning purposes. Emerging technologies including 4G (and eventually 5G) telecommunications systems should also facilitate ubiquitous access to relevant Lifelong Learning content.

- Explore and facilitate strategic partnerships between entities such as the Directorate for Lifelong Learning, TVM2 and telecoms companies. TVM2's programming frequently focuses on culture and education and increasingly appears to be sensitive to demographic challenges and the demands of an ageing society.
- Lever on the increasing popularity of social media, OER and MOOCs to develop programmes of blended learning within higher institutions. Blended learning needs to be positioned as an essential component of flexible learning, maximising the potential of new technologies for personal learning and existing academic resources. This form of learning has to be supplemented by relevant campus activity and an awareness of emerging pedagogies.
- Develop and promote the principle whereby the general public may attend particular lectures as "non-matriculated students". This concept should be more widely publicised and a protocol should be developed. It can eventually be credited within the Personal Learning Profile (PLP) System[61] .
- Introduce Job Coaching and Adult Education Guidance as an MCAST or University programme at Diploma level.

# Programme 17

## Incentivise learning-friendly environments and promote work-based learning

**Type: VET**

**Supports: Strategies 2 and 7**

- Set up a working group to focus on work-based learning. The group should include the Directorate of Lifelong Learning, ETC, the Malta Employers Association and the Chamber of Commerce. The primary objectives are to:
  - develop guidelines for work-based learning (WBL) programmes, forming the basis for eventual accreditation of informal learning and CPD by NCFHE;
  - ensure that there is a high degree of responsiveness to the changing qualification requirements of companies and employees; and
  - ensure that WBL is relevant to both employee and employer, and accredited within the NQF framework.
- Develop incentives for WBL which could contribute to greater participation in learning and competence development from employees with a lower education level.
- Support flexible labour market arrangements that can mitigate employee risk in the process. The manner in which these arrangements are made, particularly in terms of employment protection, can both facilitate and hinder the effective use of skills and address skill mismatches. These can have a particularly pernicious effect on young people making the transition into the labour market as well as others, such as displaced workers or those seeking to re-enter the workforce. They may also discourage workers from moving from one job to another that would offer them a better skills match but also expose them to greater risk.
- Develop and promote a user-friendly, transparent system linked to the NQF that can be introduced within enterprise to document and validate non-formal and informal learning processes. The same transparency instruments from mainstream education need to be applied to CVET and WBL. The success or otherwise of such a system impacts the workforce's mobility and educational permeability.
- Facilitate the transition from school to work, promoting WBL schemes and increasing the availability of good quality traineeships and apprenticeships.
- Identify measures that can act as incentives for enterprise to engage in WBL participation. Enterprise must be prepared to actively support and offer learning for target groups, work-based professional training, higher education programmes for adult learners, etc. Ultimately, CVET and WBL programmes will be judged successful if they raise the general level of skills – and thus also the incomes of employers and employees – to a greater extent than the cost of the programmes.

[61] *See Indicative Programme 18.*

- Address the mismatch between employees' needs and interest in CVET, and employers' propensity to invest only in those specialised skills whose value they can fully capture. Employers do not wish to invest in employees who might take their expertise elsewhere; in the case of providers, it is expensive to develop solutions for every employer. One proven approach is to combine customisation and scale by offering a standard core curriculum complemented by employer-specific top-ups.
- Consider adopting the "education system integrator" approach adopted by some EU countries. The system integrators take a high-level view of the entire heterogeneous and fragmented education-to-employment system and work with education providers and employers to develop skill solutions, gather data, and identify and disseminate positive examples. For instance, the Personal Learning Profile (PLP) concept could become the hub of all CVET and WBL initiatives in enterprise. The most transformative solutions are those that involve multiple providers and employers working within a particular industry or function. These collaborations solve the skill gap at a sector level: by splitting costs among multiple stakeholders (educators, employers, and trainees), investment is reduced for everyone and serve as an incentive for increased participation. Agreements such as non-poaching deals can also boost employers' willingness to collaborate, even in a competitive environment
- Develop apprenticeship and internship schemes for young people in specific sectors which have been identified as sustainable by the Skills Council. Such schemes can lead new entrants into the sector through facilitated pathways into industry.
- Develop a compelling communications programme, supported by offline and online media, that raises awareness of the advantages of WBL to key stakeholders[62]:

*Benefits of WBL to Participants*

- Develops expertise not only through the acquisition of technical skills and personal and social competences but also through socialisation in the workplace. The extent to which these competences are acquired differs significantly from one workplace to another and depends on the situations that learners are exposed to and the support they receive.
- Hard skills, technical expertise and tacit knowledge - the kind of skills and competence that are highly relevant to a particular profession and a specific workplace.
- Acquisition of tacit knowledge (know-how or procedural knowledge) and the development of technical skills and disciplinary knowledge due to the close relationship between learning and real-life work processes. The nature of the WBL process (learning by observing and doing), goes hand in hand with academic knowledge (tacit or implicit).
- Development of soft skills[63] which are difficult to develop outside of a real workplace. Formal and informal interaction with colleagues, management and customers and the resolution of real-life challenges are invaluable. There is less consensus on the effectiveness of WBL in developing more academic knowledge and cognitive skills, such as problem solving.
- Socialisation and motivation. A growing body of research[64] shows that WBL helps individuals gain a better understanding of the workplace culture and its expectations and to acquire good work habits, with positive effects on self-confidence, self-efficacy and learner motivation. It also develops career awareness and career management skills, which are often crystallised into higher earnings (particularly when work-based and school-based learning contexts are compared in terms of wages and school-to-work transition outcomes).
- Smoother school-to-work transitions. Preparing young people and students for the world of work through real work experience improves their employability. Apprenticeships and internships are associated with very positive early employment outcomes in both developed and developing countries.
- Entrepreneurship skills. Data from the UK show that former apprentices between the ages of 25 and 27 are almost three times more likely to set up their own businesses than their peers who followed other education paths.
- Improvement in employees' quality of work, professional status, career development, and job satisfaction. Mechanisms that formally recognise workplace learning are important because they facilitate skills portability and worker mobility.
- Attractive study path for vulnerable young people and the unemployed: many reintegration/re-training programmes already use WBL in a non-formal manner, by offering participants from target groups a route back into formal education or to facilitate their transition to employment.

[62] *In Malta, many employers are unaware of the potential benefits for their business of providing WBL, and the incidence of WBL also varies by sector and company size. If more employers are to be persuaded to engage in WBL they not only need to be made aware of the benefits of doing so but also convinced.*

[63] *Soft skills include: attitudes towards work, including taking responsibility, meeting deadlines, and knowing how to act in a given situation, communication, teamwork and customer relations skills, general competences (project planning and problem-solving skills) etc.*

[64] *See several publications from ETF (2013).*

*Benefits of WBL for employers*

- Financial benefits (increased productivity, including new hires who have participated in WBL requiring less training and possessing broader skills).
- Soft benefits (increased staff morale; enhanced corporate image and reputation).
- Immediate benefits (acquisition of skills needed in the workplace; recruitment benefits in identifying the most talented people on work placements / apprenticeships and reducing the cost of external recruitment and internal induction).
- Medium-term benefits (lower staff turnover and higher staff work satisfaction; tangible opportunity to address skills gaps which may delay the development of new products and services or lead to increased operating costs).
- Long-term benefits (enhanced profitability and improved business performance).

*Benefits of WBL for society*

- Increased employability. WBL produces a broad range of relevant skills and fosters employability. Studies comparing the performance of WBL and school-based learning indicate that WBL prepares learners more effectively for the labour market and fosters the acquisition of soft and employability skills.
- Youth employment. National studies and cross-country comparisons show that countries with strong apprenticeship systems have better youth employment patterns and lower youth unemployment rates.
- Inclusion in society. WBL can offer intrinsic benefits in terms of inclusion. It can lay down an important foundation for social integration and participation, particularly for vulnerable groups. It also helps to keep dropout rates low.
- Economic return. WBL makes sound economic sense because the costs of achieving learning outcomes are transferred from publicly funded educational institutions to enterprises, thus reducing public expenditure and freeing up funds for other priorities.
- Necessary for the technological upgrading of an economy, its potential for innovation and creativity, and the learning needed to foster both.
- Work with enterprise to find a balance between investment and return. WBL involves costs for companies, including wages or allowances paid to trainees as well as costs associated with supervision and mentoring, tools and materials, administration, and other expenses. The benefits must outweigh the cost for WBL to become accepted practice in Malta[65].
- Consider public funding of a Union Learning Representative (ULR) on a case by case basis. The ULR would be instrumental in raising interest in training and development, from among unskilled workers to highly qualified professionals; from those with real literacy and numeracy needs, to those who benefit from simply refreshing such skills. Government funding would be subject to the ULR meeting pre-determined targets that can complement and add value to employers' efforts to engage workers in work-based learning, and closer collaboration between training institutions and employers, particularly in the training of low skilled workers[66]. A ULR who shares a level of trust with peers can often engage those who would be embarrassed about admitting their personal learning needs to the employer. The ULR plays a key communications role in interfacing between fellow workers, employers and training providers to identify the range of learning opportunities available.
- Support and expand VET and CET for coordinators and managers of volunteer workers, contributing to quality development and assurance.
- Enhance start-up opportunities for creative businesses and operators by assisting creative individuals and enterprises in finding their route to market. These opportunities can include: investment programmes, fiscal measures and minimal bureaucracy, whilst promoting a sustainable entrepreneurial culture through professionalisation, inter-industry synergies and clustering.
- Explore the feasibility of and funding for the EU Youth Guarantee scheme[67] that recommends that member states ensure that all young people under the age of 25 years receive a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education. The good-quality offer should be for a job, apprenticeship, traineeship, or continued education and be adapted to each individual need and situation.

[65] *According to EFT, studies in a number of countries with well-developed WBL programmes have shown that productive returns from apprenticeships outweigh training costs, although net costs are initially higher due to the lower productivity of apprentices in the initial stages of their training. In most cases, apprenticeship is even profitable because companies eventually reap net benefits. The cost-benefit ratio is dependent on several factors, including the share of general and company-specific training, length of training, and the size of the company and sector.*

[66] *In accordance with Council conclusions of 18-19 November 2010 on enhanced European cooperation in VET – OJ C 324, 1.12.2010, pp.5-15.*

- Extend the Council declaration on a European Alliance for Apprenticeships adopted on 15th October 2013 beyond the narrow scope of 'youths', such that high quality apprenticeships and other work-based learning schemes are particularly effective instruments to improve sustainable transitions from school to work, notably by fostering skills that are relevant to the labour market and improving skill matches.
- Explore flexi-learning at the shop-floor. In times of economic crises, ETC responded by re-training, re-skilling and up-skilling workers who were temporarily on a reduced working week. While these workers continued to receive their pay of their five-day-week, workers were expected to attend such courses. ETC has an extensive programme which needs to be sustained further (exploring all possibilities of ESF funding) and respond instantaneously to the needs of the job market.
- Explore how flexi-learning can be offered to workers at their place of work, such as the use of mobile classrooms visiting industrial areas during workers' breaks. This flexi-learning could assist local businesses in reaching new markets, assist workers to acquire new skills for new technologies, provide language teaching, and other demands synonymous with new skills.

# Programme 18

## Set up the personal learning profile concept

**Type: VET**

**Supports: Strategies 2, 3 and 5**

- Set up a system whereby every Maltese citizen has a Personal Learning Profile (PLP) that can recognise, document, update and account for all accredited forms of adult learning, whether formal or informal. The PLP will be kept updated throughout the lifetime of a citizen.
- Use OER and work in conjunction with social partners and partners in industry to develop the technology for the PLP system. Citizens should be able to access their data online, and interface seamlessly with the national e-ID account. Applications could also include a physical swipe card that would be used by duly-authorised teaching / learning organisations to enter details of completed, accredited training courses and relevant training credits. Such organisations would be institutions recognised by NCHFE (or the Directorate for Lifelong Learning) as providers of accredited courses validated on the Malta Qualifications Framework.
- Use the Secondary School Certificate and Profile as the building block for the PLP system. PLP would lever on the valuable experiences of the Malta Qualifications Council (MQC) in developing a system that links long-standing qualifications recognised by the Malta Qualifications Recognition Information Centre (MQRIC) with that of other Member States on the European Qualifications Framework. The successful implementation of the PLP system would be an important step in promoting learning mobility and ensuring that all relevant Lifelong Learning is recognised, accredited and valued on the labour market. It would also address issues relating to inclusivity: for instance, the system could be used by migrants (particularly those who originate from outside the EU) to validate learning and skills that are not currently recognised in Malta. Employers would also have a clearer profile of candidates' knowledge, competencies and skills, including those obtained through informal learning routes.
- Use the implementation of the PLP system to regularise the Lifelong Learning market. The PLP system and the introduction of any training funding programme would be an incentive for organisations involved in adult learning to have their courses accredited and validated / re-validated with NCFHE.
- Use the Lifelong Learning Account concept in the UK as a model for developing the PLP system. The core functionality could include: updating and storage of CV; skills action plans; course details to help learners progress through their learning and working life; storage of all qualification details; tracking financial contributions made towards learning; and personalisation and management of information gathered which may then be shared with employers, learning providers and advisers.

[67] *Set up by Council Recommendation of 22 April 2013. See http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1079&langId=en*

# Programme 19

## Work in conjunction with public and private partners to introduce OER within the adult course and Lifelong Learning framework

**Type: OER**

**Supports: Strategies 5, 7, 9 and 10**

- Set up a working group to plan for the necessary changes in institutional mechanisms and processes that have to be put in place the facilitate the growth and mainstreaming  These changes are likely to include:  developing ICT policies within higher education and other public learning institutions; elaborating on copyright policies; providing incentives for faculty members, such as increments in salary and recognition of OER towards promotions etc.  The working group should include representation from the Directorate for Lifelong Learning, the ICT Strategy Group within the Ministry of Education and Employment, the University of Malta, MCAST and NCFHE.
- Prepare to mitigate typical change management challenges associated with the deployment of OER.  These include: the significant amount of time required by groups to set up tasks within OER; instructional design; technological learning curves; team composition and availability; quality control; demand for training and support throughout development phase; unrealistic expectations and need for a interdisciplinary skills, particularly in writing and instructional design.  Perhaps the most difficult challenge to manage is the impact on open school culture, since it takes time for adult teachers to become used to the idea of more open approaches to schooling.
- Commission the development of a set of local OER in English and Maltese for use within an online or blended context. The successful deployment of such courses may enable institutions and individuals to secure grassroots support from key stakeholders.  OER need to become associated with emerging and alternative adult education pathways, enabling individuals to access education anywhere, anytime and through any device – and also lead to accreditation.
- Train teachers in the development of high-quality, self-instructional learning materials.
- Increase the supply of quality Open Educational Resources and other digital educational materials in different languages as a means of promoting e-learning.  E-learning is seen as an excellent tool for Lifelong Learning with its capacity to make learning available in an affordable way for people living in remote areas or with limited time to study.  Projects such as MEDA - Education and Training for Employment have developed e-learning capacities for teacher trainers in Mediterranean countries and it is the countries themselves who are now continuing this work.  Organisations such as ETF regularly use e-learning as a vehicle for networking and information exchange within their own projects through the provision of virtual communities where project participants can lead their own debates.  We need to lever on such expertise to inculcate e-learning frameworks into adult education, using quality OER and ideally within a blended learning context as a point of departure.
- Explore the new EU web platform Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe (EPALE).  This is being positioned as a tool to enhance cooperation of the European adult learning community by providing a platform for staff, curriculum and learning material development as well as for policy improvement.

# Programme 20

## Set up a portal to curate information on and raise awareness of OER to adult learners

**Type: OER**

**Supports: Strategies 1, 5 and 7**

- Set up a portal to curate information on courses of interest to adult learners and based on OER. The portal will be positioned as part of public guidance system, and will include information on MOOCs, online courses and blended courses. It will also support the development of local personal learning networks, using social media tools such as Facebook and YouTube to encourage learning communities.
- Raise awareness of the Open Education Europa portal[68] as a gateway for existing open educational resources produced in the EU. This portal can bring a considerable value added in improving the attractiveness and visibility of quality educational resources produced in different languages and stimulates European education institutions to upscale the use of digital learning methods.

# Programme 21

## Participate in international research networks and fora that focus on developing more personal learning systems for citizens

**Type: OER**

**Supports: Strategies 4 and 5**

- Monitor content on the Open Education Europa portal, set up to provide access to all existing high-quality European OER repositories and facilitate for learners, teachers and researchers. The portal's objective is to foster the wide use and creation of OER in several languages, for all educational sectors and disciplines, and to help overcome the current fragmentation of European OER use.
- Lever on membership of organisations such as EADTU and the Commonwealth of Learning (COM) to gain access to formal and informal networks with an expertise in OER and new approaches to Lifelong Learning, including project management skills.
- Participate in the forthcoming EU summit on Digital and Open Education on the challenges related to the use of technologies in education particularly in relation to quality assurance as well as assessment and certification of skills acquired by new modes of learning.
- Participate in the ongoing open public debate on the "European Area of Skills and Qualifications", focusing on the impact of new technologies and digital content in current practices and EU instruments and policies, including issues such as quality assurance and certification
- Organise an EU-wide conference on Digital and Open Technologies for Lifelong Learners in Malta.
- Participate in the European Civil Society Platform on Lifelong Learning (EUCIS-LLL)[69], which includes 33 European networks working in education and training. Together, these organisations cover all sectors of education and training including networks for secondary and higher education, vocational education and training, adult education and popular education; networks for students, school heads, parents, HRD professionals, teachers and trainers.

[68] *at http://openeducationeuropa.eu/en*

[69] *See http://www.eucis-lll.eu/eucis-lll/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/EUCIS-LLL-Brochure-EN.pdf*

# Programme 22

## Improve the quality of adult training programmes

**Type: Quality Assurance**

**Supports: Strategies 4 and 8**

- Coordinate efforts to develop a blended, diploma course in adult education that can eventually lead to a warrant for educators in the field.
- Coordinate efforts for the institutionalisation of adult education at the University of Malta. This could include the establishment of the Department of Adult Education within the Faculty of Education, or a Centre for Lifelong Learning with the specific remit of transforming the University of Malta into a Lifelong Learning University.
- Consider providing training for all adult teaching staff based on a joint core curriculum for all education professions. This could include a robust CPD programme for adult educators, targeting general skills as well as specialised competencies.
- Organise a professional development course in andragogy for all Adult Educators which would lead to a qualification equivalent to MQF Level 4. This would be the first step to improve the quality of adult learning and ensure that learners can benefit from innovative methodologies that focus on learning outcomes and learner responsibility and autonomy.
- Consider merits of introducing an Undergraduate Diploma course on the teaching of adults, within the Faculty of Education at the University of Malta.
- Develop the professional profile of the "Adult Educator" as one which is distinct from that of the "Teacher". In this case, both the Directorate of Lifelong Learning (with its recently accredited diploma course) and the Faculty of Education have a critical contribution to make.
- Incorporate inclusive, personal development-oriented and integration-specific contents in the training of all adult educators. The Directorate for Lifelong Learning has launched a National Diploma in Teaching Adults[70], which should be a useful pilot for future programmes to improve the quality of adult education in Malta.
- Develop "train the trainers" programmes for all tiers of adult education. Train people in Lifelong Learning guidance to ensure sound, professional, lifelong guidance services, accessible to all. This is not tantamount to providing "advice on the job" or limited to sector-related learning, but quality training on all forms of Lifelong Learning that impact on all life phases.
- Consider options for adult education to become an academic area of study at the Faculty of Education at diploma, first degree and Master's level (levels 5, 6 and 7). This is in line with the need for better training of adult educators who at the moment are either specialists in their fields but have never been trained as adult educators, or else are qualified teachers who have never been trained to teach adults.
- Lever on Erasmus+ funding programme for education, training, youth and sport to identify opportunities for teachers, trainers and youth workers to study and train in another country. All three Key Actions of Erasmus+ (learning mobility of individuals; cooperation for innovation and exchange of good practices and support for policy reform) have particular relevance to the successful implementation of this strategy.
- Support educational institutions in developing new educational models, innovative pedagogical approaches, updated curricula and methods of skills assessment, using the opportunities available under the Erasmus+ Programme. There are opportunities to use existing European platforms for adult educators with a view to establishing collaborative peer-based teaching practices across the EU.
- Lever on Youth in Action and other international programmes that focus on formal and informal learning across EU borders to improve the skills and employability of students, educators and workers. Such programmes should reflect the priorities of the Europe 2020 strategy and its flagship initiatives which provide support for mobility and cooperation, the exchange of best practices and for policy reform.
- Lever on the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) and particularly the "ET 2020" Working Groups which serve to assist in following up on identified challenges[71].

[70] *The Diploma in Teaching Adults consists of 18 modules. Applicants may attend for all modules or choose any one of them. A Professional Development Award will be issued for each successfully completed Module. Applicants who manage to obtain an award in 13 modules will be awarded the National Diploma in Teaching Adults (MQF Level 5).*

[71] *These working groups - first established by the Commission under the Education and Training 2010 work programme in order to implement the Open Method of Coordination in education and training - offer a forum for the exchange of best practices in these fields and currently bring together - on a voluntary basis - experts from the Member States in 6 key areas: schools, higher education, VET, adult learning, transversal skills and digital learning.*

# Programme 23

## Set up a career and Lifelong Learning guidance & counselling system in conjunction with target users

**Type: Quality Assurance**

**Supports: Strategies 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10**

- Develop sustainable career and Lifelong Learning guidance and counselling systems that raise awareness of the contribution of adult education to citizens. Career guidance is a collective term for services aimed to help individuals of all ages to make educational and career decisions and to manage their own career development. It includes personalised counselling and outplacement services throughout professional life including those aimed at retaining and reintegrating older workers and courses assisting the unemployed back into employment in the event of redundancy. Lifelong guidance should be a continuous process that enables citizens at any point in their lives to identify their capacities, competences and interests, to make educational, training and occupational decisions and to manage their life paths in learning, work and other settings.
- Ensure that at the centre of guidance and counselling for groups at risk there is a process-orientation and longer-term assistance to enable high-quality decision-making and therefore make decisions on educational and career paths as sustainable as possible in all stages of life.
- Expand needs-oriented schemes for groups at risk and strengthen preventive approaches by making more flexible use of resources as well as specific schemes for highly-talented young people.
- Provide enhanced support and guidance to young people who are having difficulty at school and those likely to be early school-leavers. A denser network of specific coaching and mentoring schemes needs to be introduced for specific target groups or groups at risk. Initial vocational education and training needs to be positioned as independent educational counselling, and ideally start at lower and upper secondary school in line with students' needs.
- Extend the concept of guidance and counselling to become a Lifelong Learning service. It should not be confined to school age and not be 'remedial' in its approach but serve a proactive purpose throughout a person's lifespan.
- Ensure that employers and trade unions become stakeholders in the development of any career guidance systems. It is vital that the demands of certain life phases still give people the 'space' to learn and think about learning. Specifically, we need to inculcate a culture that reiterates the need for a 'time for people to learn', and particularly when people are in employment. This may range from school counselling guidance at universities and colleges and other training institutions, in ETC, in enterprises and in the voluntary sector. Guidance here is synonymous with giving advice, placing the user at the helm, emphasising the individual's mastering strategies and independence. Employers are particularly important when organising learning and guidance services for persons in employment who wish to attend adult courses within their immediate locality.
- Raise awareness of the need for people to make 'time to learn'. Lifelong Learning guidance needs to make learners aware of opportunities and educate employers of the return on any investment they make in providing employees with the 'space' and opportunities to learn.
- Invest in specialist training for councillors, levering on the Erasmus+ programme.
- Set up guidance at CVET level. ETC has a system of employment advisers for unemployed persons, but the service is not open to those adults who wish to follow guidance either to change their current employment or else to improve their possibilities for career advancements.
- Consolidate the training of career guidance teachers through the Career Guidance Capacity Building Scholarship scheme which allows persons in career guidance to invest in post-secondary studies. The University of Malta's Post Graduate Diploma in Lifelong Career Guidance and Development is funded through this scheme and enables career guidance teachers in secondary schools and the ETC to pursue further studies in the area. Government continues to provide sponsorships to professionals wanting to carry out career guidance studies at foreign universities at Masters level.
- Review the guidance services currently being provided at the ETC Job Centres in Malta and Gozo. Staff in these centres need to be adequately trained and supported to give personalised careers guidance, perform individual skills analysis and provide independent information to adults about courses offered by all providers on how to improve skills through re-skilling and up-skilling.

- Establish a single point of contact in every local council for educational and social counselling and labour market advice, as well as for recognition, credit and notification procedures.
- Secure EU funding for personalised guidance systems and develop a Directory of all adult learning courses provided in Malta and Gozo. The Directory should be available online and continuously updated. An essential element of the Directory would be to distinguish between courses accredited by NCFHE and those that do not lead to an official qualification.
- Complement personalised careers guidance with a psychotherapy service to help individuals showing signs of anxiety, depression or lower levels of mental wellbeing as a result of losing their job or being unemployed for a long time.

# Programme 24

## Develop a Lifelong Learning certification & audit system

**Type: Quality Assurance**

**Supports: Strategies 3 and 4**

- Develop a detailed, updated database of all adult education providers in Malta and Gozo and their respective courses.
- Improve the monitoring and impact assessment of the performance of the adult learning sector, making better use of existing instruments where possible.
- Introduce quality audits of Lifelong Learning courses against pre-determined and updated learning outcome benchmarks. This is a distinct function from course accreditation, which normally occurs when the course is first assessed by NCFHE.
- Introduce quality audits of lifelong learning courses against pre-determined and updated learning outcome benchmarks. This is a distinct function from course accreditation, which normally occurs when the course is first assessed by NCFHE. Regular external quality assurance audits (say on a five-yearly basis) may become the norm as the quality assurance regime in Malta becomes more mature.
- Audit the provision of courses provided by ETC, the Directorate for Lifelong Learning, ITS and other state financed adult learning services, to harmonise the learning provision, maximise on resources and better respond to the needs of new skills required. These audits could be outsourced by NCFHE to an accredited third party organisations.
- Develop interfaces between the Lifelong Learning audit system and the PLP system (see Indicative Programme 18).
- Develop a transparent, cost-effective system of validation of formal and non-formal learning
- Investigate the "Education and Skills Online Assessment", a web tool proposed by PIAAC and supported by the EU and OECD which will allow adults to self-assess their skills[72]. The tool will be deployed in 2014.

# Programme 25

## Commission study to align scholarships schemes with skills required for Lifelong Learning

**Type: Quality Assurance**

**Supports: Strategies 1 and 7**

- Commission an audit of the current scholarships schemes for adult education. The current systems are subject to a number of administrative challenges, including an excess of demand over supply of scholarships, an appeal procedure and a lack of clear guidelines on adult education subject areas which are a priority for national funding[73].

[72] *See http://www.oecd.org/site/piaac/ENG_Brochure%20Education%20and%20Skills%20Online%20SAS_Feb%2014.pdf*

[73] *While each learner should have the liberty to choose any area of specialisation, in times of global economic crisis, the priority for national funding of further adult studies should be linked to identifiable sectors leading to competitiveness, as well as research and innovation in science and technology (including ICT), addressing pre-identified skills mismatches, and addressing imbalances in the capacity building of the education system, should be positively discriminated. This direction is in congruence with the Europe 2020 flagship initiative "Innovation Union", whereby we promote further excellence in education and skills development in order to ensure future growth from innovation in products, services and business models in a scenario marked by an ageing population and strong competitive pressures.*

- Determine the entity to coordinate and manage scholarship systems. Ideally this should be a one stop shop Scholarship Support Unit working with transparent, prescribed guidelines and data disseminated from the work of the National Skills Council.
- Expand the existing scholarship scheme to defined, longer-term, full time VET programmes ("higher VET") outside the higher education system. The current system has several lacunae since it is directly linked to higher education institutions. In order to excel we must create opportunities whereby highly motivated students and workers are offered placements in internationally renowned workplaces known for their excellence. The Directorate for Lifelong Learning, the University of Malta, MCAST, MCST, ETC and the Malta Employers Association should create a working group to identify, contact and establish links with such internationally renowned workplaces in order to create placements and develop a grant system to support a scheme called International Work Experience Grant.
- Disseminate information about the availability of scholarships as part of lifelong guidance. This should include the regular update of a website and the use of social media to engage with communities of learners and adult education providers.
- Develop and maintain a set of transparent policies, procedures and guidelines for scholarship schemes. These guidelines should include a constantly-updated database of skills that are to be actively supported by scholarship schemes. This data should be provided by the National Skills Council and be aligned with the primary objectives and benchmarks of this strategy. It is vital that public funding of adult education and scholarships in particular, meets the needs of adult learners and the wider needs of society, including the skills needs of the labour market.
- Ensure that procedural bottlenecks with the administration of scholarships are addressed and resolved, including procedures for managing appeals. Future schemes avoid regulations based on a one size fits all approach but continue to embrace a one step up philosophy.
- Develop a coordinated approach for the funding of scholarships. This extends to the identification of further ESF funds under the 2014-2020 programme of initiatives
- Invest in post doctoral Research Fellowships on Lifelong Learning. The criteria for selection of selection of candidates should include: academic profile and track record; the correlation of the proposed research with the priority/focus areas identified by various working groups proposed by this strategy, including the National Skills Council.
- Support scholarships which involve courses run by education institutions with strong links to enterprise. Work placements with foreign enterprise contribute significantly towards mobility in education and training and networking. Inevitably, the attendance of renowned institutions open personal learning possibilities which also tend to lead to wider socio-economic benefits for the country in terms of personal contacts with academics, future intellectuals, researchers and industry leaders.

# Programme 26

## Explore accreditation framework for organisations primarily using oer and blended learning for delivery of adult learning

**Type: Quality Assurance**

**Supports: Strategies 1 and 5**

- Set up a working group within the Ministry of Education and Employment composed of educators and experts in technology and education and education legislation, to explore alternative accreditation models for adult education delivered by organisations using OER, blended learning and totally virtual teaching models.
- Secure an understanding of the legal and licensing requirements of local and international institutions who may wish to provide accredited education services in Malta through the use of digital media ('digital education'). These services may: be delivered exclusively online or in a blended format; be made available on a free or paid basis; use content which is subject to a variety of variety of licensing arrangements, ranging from open education resources to copyrighted material; and lead to formal accreditation by an institution that may or may not already be formally accredited in an EU country.
- Review options available for both providers of digital education and the courses they propose to deliver in terms of: Accreditation; Regulation of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) and Copyright; and Data Protection/Privacy.
- Provide recommendations for legal and licensing changes to be made to current legal and regulatory regimes.

- Explore and nurture networks, initiatives and projects between creators of educational content with a view to increasing the supply of quality Open Educational Resources and other digital educational materials in different languages, whilst paying due regard to issues of copyright and licensing.
- Investigate best practices and structures for the regulation and operation of digital education in Malta.
- Investigate current models of digital, personalised and networked education systems, ranging from Massive Open Education Resources (MOOCs) to courses developed locally and for specific purposes (including vocational education and training and other forms of adult education).
- Investigate quality management and quality assurances systems for digital education.
- Support the current structure, resourcing and operations of the National Commission for Further Higher Education (NCFHE) within the context of digital education.
- Encourage partnerships at national and European level to position Malta as an attractive, contemporary and stimulating hub within the Mediterranean region for innovative approaches to the digital education sector, with strong emphasis on exchange and access to international markets.
- Monitor the Open Method of Coordination (OMC), including the "ET 2020" Working Groups[74] which should be following up on a number of identified challenges with digital and virtual education, including issues related to IP and accreditation of courses delivered online or through a blended format.

# Programme 27

## Develop accreditation framework for creative industries

**Type: Quality Assurance**

**Supports: Strategies 2 and 3**

- Focus on developing a structure for accrediting skills for the creative industry sector[75].
- Strengthen and support efforts at capacity building and professionalisation in the creative economy, incentivise creative entrepreneurship through apprenticeships, and support the establishment of industry-led governance structures, such as a Skills Council.
- Promote alternative learning pathways by setting up the Academy of Visual and Performing Arts, thus diversifying the spectrum of adult learning opportunities offered by education institutions.
- Develop a sectoral qualifications framework for the Visual & Performing Arts Awards (VPA Awards), so that a Skills Council may establish a framework of qualifications for the Visual & Performing Arts[76], including art, dance drama, film, music and television.
- Set up the infrastructure and the administrative structure of the Academy of the Visual and Performing Arts. Rather than competing with the private sector, the Academy should be a centre for the propagation of specialisation in the arts and support and work in collaboration with the private tuition centres.
- Provide specialised support in the fields of visual and performing arts to the state, church and independent schools for the teaching of these art disciplines at primary, secondary, post-secondary and possibly at tertiary levels.
- Provide professional development to the teachers of art, music and drama employed in state, church and independent schools.
- Explore how compulsory education provided to children with exceptional talent in the visual and the performing arts can be extended beyond school.

[74] *These working groups - first established by the Commission under the Education and Training 2010 work programme in order to implement the Open Method of Coordination in education and training - offer a forum for the exchange of best practices in these fields. They bring together - on a voluntary basis - experts from the Member States and, in their current format, cover 6 key areas: schools, higher education, VET, adult learning, transversal skills and digital learning.*

[75] *The creative economy in Malta is driven by some 3,600 enterprises and employs 7,500 creatives, growing at an average 9% per annum. It generates 47.5 million Euros from tourism, contributing to 4% of GDP, similar in size to the construction industry, and slightly less than the financial intermediation services. Between 2008 and 2012, government investment in the sector grew by 63%, while the 2014 budget strengthens this trend by providing an injection of over 31 million Euros in the sector, an increase of 14% over the previous year.*

[76] *Referencing of the Malta Qualifications Framework to the European Qualifications Framework, page 172-173. All courses offered at the Academy of Visual and Performing Arts are to lead to a qualification on the VPA Awards of the Malta Qualifications Framework. Courses should lead to VPA Awards levels 1 to 5, and be complimentary to courses offered at MCAST and at the University of Malta. Further specialisation (from MQF levels 5 to 8) may then be continued at MCAST or at the University of Malta.*

- Explore opportunities for collaboration with the private sector in establishment of a multipurpose auditorium for the Academy of the Visual and Performing Arts.
- Lever on the Academy's curriculum to attract foreign students such as those who are in Malta to study English.
- Lever on the Academy's activities and courses to raise awareness within communities of the importance of the arts as part of citizens' Lifelong Learning journey and provide an additional, alternative learning pathway to potential early school-leavers.

# Programme 28

## Participate in the PIAAC data collection round

**Type: Quality Assurance**

**Supports: Strategy 4**

- Invest in securing accurate data on adult learning that can then translate into improvements to policy and strategy, meaningful benchmarks and key performance indicators. To date, Malta has not participated in the PIAAC data collection round, primarily because of issues relating to funding and human resourcing of such a significant initiative. Nevertheless, there is an urgent need for a solid knowledge base about the need for, participation in and learning outcome of learning activities throughout the adult education system. Malta should participate in the next PIAAC data collection round, with the third round for new countries scheduled to start in May 2014.

# Programme 29

## Improve processes to collect data on Lifelong Learning practices

**Type: Quality Assurance**

**Supports: Strategy 1**

- Improve the collection of baseline data on the participation, provision, outcomes and wider benefits of adult-learning in Maltese society. It is likely that currently-available reported data does not reflect the actual participation rate. Better quantitative and qualitative data on Lifelong Learning needs to be collected and analysed if policies and service provision are to be adequately monitored, analysed and improved. Better data will inform the operations of teaching institutions, the informed choices of parents and young people on adult education and the fine-tuning of adult education policy.
- Develop a working group between the Directorate for Lifelong Learning, the new Department of Education at the University of Malta and the National Statistics Office (NSO). The objectives of the working group are to: revamp the methodologies for the collection of data relating to Lifelong Learning; ensure that data collection metrics for adult learning are incorporated within the NSO's standard reporting obligations; improve analysis processes that eventually feed into applied research and quality of adult courses. Evidence-based-policy-making in the field of adult learning calls for comprehensive and comparable data on all key aspects of adult learning, for effective monitoring systems and cooperation between all stakeholders, as well as for high quality research activities. It is essential that sufficient baseline data is collected on: participation, providers, the outcomes and the wider benefits of learning for adults and society. Data coverage needs to be extended to the age-range beyond 64 in keeping with the prolongation of working life.
- Educational institutions in particular need to be as motivated to systematically gather and disseminate data regarding students after they graduate (for instance, job-placement rates and career trajectory five years out) as they are regarding students' records before admissions. The analysis of such data would provide young people taking up a course of study with an indication of variables such as job prospects upon leaving school or a higher education institution.

# Programme 30

## Coordinate delivery of sustainable community-based programmes by public stakeholders

**Type: Community**

**Supports: Strategies 1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10**

- Set up a working group between key public stakeholders to develop sustainable community-based programmes. The members of the working group should include the Directorate for Lifelong Learning, ETC, Local Councils and State school colleges. If public resources are to be maximised, Lifelong Learning policy authorities and providers of adult learning need to work alongside social partners and civil society organisations to identify a set of community-based programmes that merit public funding.
- Commission an audit of adult courses managed by public organisations such as the Directorate for Lifelong Learning and ETC to determine alignment with this strategy, sustainability, resourcing and return on public investment.
- Reposition state school colleges within the adult education infrastructure. The Directorate for Lifelong Learning current runs seven evening centres in state schools, using 5 secondary schools, 1 primary school and 1 post secondary school. The remit of schools should not be restricted to teaching institutions that cater for children but extended to education institutions that also support families and communities in an organic manner. For instance, each state college could be required to have at least one school within its set-up which functions as an adult learning centre in the evening and possibly also in the morning. State schools can become the linchpin between children's education and adult education if there is a coordinated effort to help state schools make the paradigm and ideological shift from "children's schools" to "community schools".
- Use the repositioning of state school colleges to improve cooperation at policy, strategy and service delivery level between the colleges within the Directorate for Educational Services (delivering compulsory education) and the Directorate for Lifelong Learning (delivering post-compulsory education).
- Consider using some day school premises for adult evening classes, with a particular focus on parents' education. Parent's education benefits compulsory schooling in that better educated parents stand a much better chance to help in their own children's education, and are more empowered adults when engaged in the social, economic and political life of the country.
- Set up a project team to explore the use of OER and blended learning in community learning, and use technology as an opportunity to re-think the responsibility for the delivery of courses that are tantamount to crafts and hobbies. Where funds are not available for such courses to be transferred to local councils, there may well be an opportunity to use technology to develop the content as an online course.
- Address the ongoing challenge of people participating indefinitely in craft-type courses. One option may be to stream applicants to such courses into a two-track programme. Learners who simply enjoy the social and co-learning experience and who treat the course as a hobby could be place in one track without any time restriction within which to complete the course; other learners who wish to gain a qualification could be placed in a separate track progressing from VET 1 to VET 2 and VET 3, without the option to repeat any of the stages of the course.

# Programme 31

## Expand network of childcare centres in Malta and Gozo

**Type: Community**

**Supports: Strategies 6 and 9**

- Invest in an extended network of childcare centres, in line with family-friendly measures and practices to support and facilitate female participation in the labour market. Child care centres also help young families to achieve balance between work and family life.
- Explore options to transform some day care centres into all-day and regional day care centres. This will act as a one stop shop for childcare services and will further facilitate access to the labour market by women. The time when nursery schools and schools provide care for children should also meet the work-related requirements of parents.

- Provide fiscal incentives for establishment of private childcare centres.
- Explore options to use childcare centres as centres for adult learning. Courses at the day care centres could be directly related to family issues (e.g. promoting healthy living practices among children) or unrelated.
- Develop funding models for demand-oriented expansion of childcare especially at timed of the day which are outside usual hours for childcare and during holiday periods.

# Programme 32

## Develop and facilitate community-programmes to address issues of inclusivity and empower marginalised communities

**Type: Community**

**Supports: Strategies 6, 7 and 9**

- Set up a working group to deliver a set of adult education courses targeting marginalised communities and which can be delivered at community level. Marginalised communities need to be clearly identified into sub-groups, and benchmarks set for each of these, if this strategy is to be truly inclusive. For instance, in the case of people with a disability, there must not be one benchmark for adult learning participation, but benchmarks set for the broad categories of disability (intellectual, blind, deaf, mental illness, physical etc.)
- Identify locations that can be used as university outreach centres for accredited adult courses (an existing example is the Cottonera centre).
- Develop community 'drop in spaces' for learning activities and sharing of skills such as parenting and intercultural exchanges.
- Work with local councils to make accessible spaces within their direct management as points of contact and information for volunteer commitment, placement and networking offices and to assist volunteer workers.
- Work with NGOs and experts in the field to develop supportive environments, fora and courses for people with learning disabilities. People who feel marginalised from mainstream society are more likely to engage with learning programmes if these are delivered at community level as opposed to centralised learning units, such as school buildings. There is a great probability that such marginalised persons are victims of bullying or unpleasant experiences associated with institutional school environments.
- Ensure that facilities for adult education courses are accessible to all, including people with a disability.
- Use OER and social technologies to develop accessible, personalised adult courses for marginalised communities. Technology in adult education can also provide an additional layer of support, particularly when programmes are delivered within a blended learning format. Support should not be limited to the availability of learning support assistants but also the manner and duration of delivery of adult programmes. Technology offers persons with disability and who have mobility issues with an important access channel.
- Commission a report to determine how adult courses can be extended beyond the traditional evening slots. Alternative solutions need to be found to the current format whereby teaching is the domain of teachers with a day job, and where facilities may only be available in the evening. For instance, partnerships could be set up with education NGOs and industry to address both the resourcing and logistics issues.

# Programme 33

## Make Lifelong Learning accessible to vulnerable groups and marginalised citizens

**Type: Community**

**Supports: Strategies 2 and 7**

- Set up a working group of specialists, with representation from the Directorate for Lifelong Learning, ETC, MCAST, the University of Malta and sector NGOs together with educational experts in poverty, disability and migrant issues. The primary objective is to establish demand-driven, quality adult courses for a wide range of groups and individuals who are marginalised in Maltese society, and particularly from adult education. They include those who leave initial education and training early and would like a 'second chance'; those with special needs and those with insufficient basic skills or low educational achievements.
- Provide adult learning available for free for those who are living in poverty. The European Platform against Poverty provides guidelines for the development of innovative education for deprived communities, in order to enable those experiencing poverty and social exclusion to live in dignity and to take an active part in society.
- Provide literacy programmes for young adults, targeting early school leavers. It is vital that Lifelong Learning is associated with alternative paths to self development, actively aiming at eradicating the mentality of assistencialism and helplessness.
- Support educational institutions in developing new educational models, innovative pedagogical approaches, updated curricula and methods of skills assessment, using the opportunities available under the Erasmus+ Programme,
- Build on programmes such as the Job Bridge Programme run by ETC with ESF funding to prepare and equip people with disabilities to meet the challenge of seeking gainful employment[77]. Specialist specialised training for disabled persons needs to focus on building competence and developing the necessary skills to adapt to the job market, transiting from pre-employment to on-the-job training. Equally important is the identification of each individual's abilities, vocational preferences and aptitudes, personal connections, support needs and circumstances that would help transition to employment.
- Work with social partners to develop tailor made programmes to address the learning needs of people in specific situations of exclusion - such as persons in hospitals for a long stay and in care homes.

# Programme 34

## Develop adult learning programmes to facilitate integration of migrants in Maltese society

**Type: Community**

**Supports: Strategies 6 and 9**

- Set up a working group to develop adult learning programmes to activate and facilitate the integration of migrants in Maltese society. The working group will be coordinated by the Directorate of Lifelong Learning in conjunction with ETC, and include participation from NGOs active in the field. The primary objectives of the group are to identify and remove barriers to adult learning among migrants, particularly those not in education, employment and training (NEETs). There should be no discrimination between economic, regular or irregular migrants.
- Address the current fragmentation of integration efforts in the adult education sector with the objective of identifying synergies and eliminating overlaps. The Directorate for Lifelong Learning, ETC, the Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers (AWAS), Local Councils and sector NGOs should coordinate efforts and agree on a master plan which can guide cost-effective approaches to the integration of migrants in Maltese society.

[77] *In 2013, out of 27,400 disabled persons only 1246 or 4.5 percent were employed. Also, whilst 4,360 persons had been interviewed for full time jobs only 17 had been placed (all figures from ETC). Participants in the Job Bridge Programme are offered a 20-hour weekly temporary mock placement for a period of 6 to 8 weeks and receive an allowance equivalent to the minimum wage, paid pro rata during the programme. At the end of the programme, they are provided with a vocational profile, facilitating ETC's efforts to identify a suitable job match. Towards the end of the programme, trainees will be able to demonstrate levels of independence, social skills and employability skills compatible to employment in open work settings on individual or group engagements.*

- Ensure that programmes targeting migrants address core subjects related to integration, including: communication skills; citizen's rights and obligations; active community integration and participation; sharing of migrant knowledge with the host community. The focus needs to be on the provision of a training that improves the chances of migrants to integrate in Maltese society, find employment, become self supporting, contribute to the Maltese economy, and if necessary, move onwards towards other host countries. The teaching of English and Maltese as well as ICT is central in this process.
- Use opportunities provided by adult education to raise awareness of the need to revisit the notion of detention as punishment and move towards a more productive policy which benefits both the immigrant and the host nation. Residence at the open centres should be a period of preparation for moving out into the community. The teaching of literacy to residents of the open centres should start with courses held at the open centre itself, and migrants should also be assisted in seeking adult education courses outside the centre. Literacy programmes for immigrants contribute to social integration and should be complemented by cultural orientation courses that will further help their integration into the community and into the workforce. The active participation of trade unions in this process would also be highly beneficial to Maltese society.
- Ensure that the teaching of literacy to migrants is sensitive of migrants' cultures, and specifically personal stories, motivations in leaving the country of origin, precarious travels and personal aspirations. These issues are not just pertinent to the 'visible' African migrant community but also to 'invisible' vulnerable immigrants such as Philppinos, Eastern Europeans and people from the former Soviet Union who are likely to live in social isolation partly because of their lack of literacy skills in both English and Maltese.
- Cross train adult educators in mainstream provision in the management of multicultural classrooms, particularly those who come into contact with foreigners learning Maltese and English. Adult educators need to have the requisite skills to identify and manage instances of racism and deal with the insecurity immigrants feel in the context of a multicultural context where they are mostly considered outsiders.
- Develop concurrently a radical community development programme to address areas where citizens are in regular contact with economic migrants. The rationale behind this programme is to avoid the cultivation of xenophobic attitudes in such local communities and raise awareness of the positive impacts of migration, from cultural diversity to much needed resources in specific labour sectors.
- Work with social partners and NGOs to educate citizens of the increasingly multicultural reality of Maltese society. The building blocks have to be inserted in primary school and carried forward to higher education, short courses, training programmes, VET and CVET. The delivery of training in languages other than Maltese and English provides tangible benefits both to Maltese citizens wishing to engage in the global community, and for migrants who have international protection and can become net contributors to the Maltese economy.

# Programme 35

## Partner up with museums, heritage NGOs and public libraries for adult learning programmes

**Type: Community**

**Supports: Strategies 4 and 9**

- Develop and support a set of adult learning programmes in collaboration with public and private players engaged in heritage management. These include organisations such as Heritage Malta, Public Libraries and the National Archives and NGOs such as Din L-Art Helwa and Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna. These organisations already have in-house public programmes of interest to children and adults. Heritage Malta in particular has developed (and continues to develop) educational material to enhance the visitor experience, using a range of offline and online material to interpret a culture and its artefacts from prehistory to date.
- Support the operations of heritage organisations to encourage local adult learners to be more frequent visitors to museums and heritage sites. Borg and Mayo (2010) stress the need for citizens to become critical adults capable of raising questions in a problem posing approach. Sites like museums are spaces of hope that offer opportunities to reclaim democratic citizenship and transform private relations with artefacts into possibilities for public pedagogy (McLaren, 1997).

- Carry out targeted measures to support public libraries and national archives as invaluable resources for Lifelong Learning. Public libraries and the National Archives should act as a hub to connect and network the local learning setting with the global resources of information and knowledge through ICT, creating an informed democratic knowledge society. Archives in particular are invaluable Lifelong Learning assets that contain the collective memory of the nation, enabling citizens to use the past to help make sense of the present and the future. Archival material has signify Lifelong Learning potential which may motivate the most disengaged young person or adult to embark upon Lifelong Learning pathways. With free internet-enabled PCs available, the library plays a vital role in reducing digital exclusion. Professional librarians can put their time, energy and expertise into supporting those who find reading more of a challenge.

# Programme 36

## Regenerate and sustain the university of third age

**Type: Community**

**Supports: Strategies, 3, 7 and 8**

- Support the operations of the 'Universita Tat-Tielet Eta' (U3E). Universities of the Third Age can be loosely defined as socio-cultural centres where older persons acquire new knowledge of significant issues, or validate the knowledge which they already possess, in an agreeable milieu and in accordance with acceptable methods. U3E should have a presence on the University campus and aim at providing educational and social activities to all those interested, with no age restrictions.
- Reposition the U3E from its current peripheral and even elitist status within society associated with 'positive ageing' into a fully-fledged, inclusive institution.

# Programme 37

## Support Lifelong Learning activities for older people in the community [78]

**Type: Community**

**Supports: Strategy 8**

- Work in conjunction with the European Centre of Gerontology at the University of Malta to provide a cadre of adult educators that can activate old people's homes, state and private, and help animate these spaces through collective learning activities
- Empower Local Councils to meet their responsibilities towards the welfare and well-being of their communities. The Directorate for Lifelong Learning and Department of Local Government need to work closely with local councils in the planning, coordination and financing of adult and late-life learning. In partnership with third sector agencies, local councils must take on the role of learning hubs that bring public, private, and voluntary providers together and coordinate resources to optimise learning among older people.
- Set up a working group between the Directorate for Lifelong Learning and the Department of Local Government to determine Lifelong Learning courses that should be directly managed as community programmes by local councils. This process includes setting and monitoring targets for participation. This would warrant as broad a range as possible of community learning opportunities for older adults through collaboration between education and other regional services, ranging from health and social services to leisure organisations. This process is also part of a necessary restructuring within the Directorate for Lifelong Learning.
- Determine financing for programmes designed to help those with least initial schooling and those with the lowest levels of income. There needs to be recognition that society has an obligation towards its citizens to provide them with learning initiatives that help them plan for their third and fourth ages. A truly democratic pre-retirement education is not simply instruction about the formalities surrounding pensions, the drawing up of a will, and health, but one which also includes a discussion of psychological and social strategies that lead older adults to improve their quality of life.
- Recognise the empowering benefits of coordinating educational activities that link older adults with children, teenagers, adults and even much older peers and coordinate educational initiatives that increase cooperation, interaction or exchange between different generations.

[78] *These proposals primarily lever on Formosa (2012).*

- Provide learning opportunities for informal family carers of older persons to enable them to focus on the dynamics of caring, empower the lifelong development of frail elderly people, and anticipate and recognise the needs of the person under care;
- Include outreach strategies, such as mobile library services, intergenerational linkages, and visiting learning bodies that bring the learning experiences to the homes of housebound seniors.
- Coordinate educational sessions in residential and nursing homes so that all older persons, even those suffering from confusion or dementia, have an opportunity to participate in third-age learning.

# Programme 38

## Develop adult programmes within correction and rehabilitation institutions

**Type: Community**

**Supports: Strategies 3 and 7**

- Set up a working group to develop adult learning opportunities for people in rehabilitation institutions. The working group should include the Directorate for Lifelong Learning, national and social partners including: the Corradino Correctional Facility (CCF) at the main prison compound in Malta; the Substance Abuse Therapeutic Unit in Mtaħleb; the Valletta Lock-Up below the Malta Law Courts; the Forensic Unit (Mount Carmel Hospital) in Attard; and NGOs offering rehabilitation programmes in Malta and Gozo.
- Lever on the Inmates' Education Programme at the Corradino Correctional Facility to develop education programmes for inmates based on personal interests and needs. It is vital that former offenders are also equipped with skills for self-employment, in view of cultural issues and challenges (such as prejudice and social stigma) which are prevalent in a small island state like Malta. The Directorate for Lifelong Learning will foster closer channels of cooperation with the Prison School, especially in the areas of Literacy, Numeracy and ICT where the Adult Education Unit is building important expertise. It will work in conjunction with the Prison School and ETC to address the high drop-out rate in courses organised at the prison school and bolster attendance not through any form of constriction but through more positive, coordinated reinforcement methods - possibly linked to the parole system and through cooperation with ETC in view of possible working possibilities beyond prison.

# Programme 39

## Develop adult education programmes within closed and open centres

**Type: Community**

**Supports: Strategies 3 and 7**

- Develop a structured, accessible and sustainable adult education programme within both closed and open centres. The current initiatives involving ETC and NGOs are sporadic and need to be considered as pilots from which a sustained programme can be developed which prepares participants for inclusion in Maltese society or for resettlement.
- Focus on the provision of a set of core subjects as accessible and ongoing as possible within a structured adult education programme. As long as detention centres remain part of Government policy, it is vital that English and Maltese language lessons and literacy continue to be delivered within both open and closed centres, responding to different learning needs. These lessons should be supplemented with lessons in: computer literacy; information on Malta, including information on the asylum process, immigration laws, inter alia healthcare, employment, further adult education opportunities, children's education, housing and sports clubs. Other non-formal educational activities and resources may also provide some relief from boredom and frustration, particularly for those in closed centres. etc. Open centres in principle provide residents with access to mainstream services. However, occupants of these centres still require tailor made, ongoing, educational programmes: ideally, these programmes should be continuous and not project based.
- Provide teachers and trainers working within closed and open centres with specialised training in working with asylum seekers, and a diverse, transnational population. Training is available from a number of specialist NGOs working with irregular migrants.

# Programme 40

## Develop greener living adult education programmes at national and community level

**Type: Community**

**Supports: Strategy 10**

- Commission a study to take stock of sustainability issues in Malta, and develop a two-pronged action plan at national and local community level to address critical weaknesses and implement adult education solutions in full respect of the environment.
- Set up a working group to develop guidelines for teacher resources on greener living over a range of platforms. The working group should be coordinated by the Directorate for Lifelong Learning and its membership should include representation from the University of Malta, MCAST, Ministries, public bodies such as MEPA and WasteServ and Heritage Malta, Local Councils, environmental NGOs and experts in the field, particularly those working in energy and water efficiency.
- Identify hands-on greener living education pilot projects and events that can be supported by nation-wide offline and online public programmes. These projects are likely to deal with sustainability issues relating to Energy, Recycling, Pollution, Waste, Global dimension and Active Citizenship.
- Extend the concept of greener living beyond eco school awards to post-secondary institutions including colleges and universities.
- Work with mainstream (press, TV and radio) and alternative media (bloggers, Video-makers etc) to develop sustained campaigns.
- Explore opportunities for stand-alone national eco workshops and conferences as well as regular eco programmes at school, HE and community level.
- Consider case study for setting up a Centre for Greener Living & Sustainability.

# Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| **CVET** | Continuing Vocational Education and Training |
| **CEDEFOP** | European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training |
| **DQSE** | Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education |
| **EACEA** | Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency |
| **ECTS** | European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System |
| **ECVET** | European Credit Transfer System for Vocational Education and Training |
| **EQF** | European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning |
| **ESCO** | European Skills / Competencies Qualifications and Occupations |
| **ETC** | Employment and Training Corporation |
| **ETF** | European Trading Foundation |
| **EU** | European Union |
| **EUCIS-LLL** | European Civil Society Platform on Lifelong Learning |
| **EUPA** | European Union Programmes Agency |
| **FES** | Foundation for Educational Services |
| **ICT** | Information and Communication Technologies |
| **IL** | Intergenerational Learning |
| **IVET** | Initial Vocational Education and Training |
| **LLL** | Lifelong Learning |
| **MCESD** | Malta Council for Economic and Social Development |
| **MGSS** | Malta Government Scholarship Scheme |
| **MOOC** | Massive Open Online Course |
| **MQRIC** | Malta Qualifications Recognition Information Centre |
| **NCFHE** | National Commission for Further & Higher Education |
| **ODL** | Open and Distance Learning |
| **OER** | Open Educational Resources |
| **PIAAC** | Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies |
| **PISA** | The Programme for International Student Assessment |
| **SEC** | Secondary Education Certificate |
| **VET** | Vocational Education and Training |

# Definitions

**Adult Education** refers to the entire body of organised educational processes - whatever the content, level and method, whether formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, colleges, universities and apprenticeships - whereby persons regarded as adults by their respective communities improve their technical or professional qualifications, further develop their abilities and enrich their knowledge. Their objectives would include completion of a formal educational level, attainment of skills in a new field and updated knowledge in a particular field.

**Adult Learning** means the entire range of formal, non-formal and informal learning activities - both general and vocational - undertaken by adults after leaving initial education and training. Adult Lifelong Learning is generally shown in the literature to have two main aims: increasing skills and competences which have positive personal and social outcomes, and generating positive employment effects (see for example DG EaC, 2010; and Buiskool et al, 2010).

**Andragogy** means the process of helping adults learn. As opposed to pedagogy, where the teacher is the focal point, andragogy shifts the focus from the teacher to the learner.

**Career guidance** means services aimed to help individuals of all ages to make educational and career decisions and to manage their own career development. These services may include school counselling, guidance at universities and colleges, in other training establishments, at ETC, in enterprises and in the voluntary sector. The central element of career guidance will in most cases be the individual guidance conversation. Other methods could be group guidance, visits to study places and workplaces, printed and electronic information, interest and personality tests and various types of practical placements or trials.

**Competence** means the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and personal development. In the context of the European Qualifications Framework, competence is described in terms of responsibility and autonomy.

**Connected Learning** means a theory of learning that strives to connect and leverage all the various experiences, interests, communities and contexts in which learners participate—in and out of school—as potential learning opportunities. Connected learning represents a framework for understanding and supporting learning, as well as a theory of intervention that grows out of our analysis of today's changing social, economic, technological and cultural context. Increasingly, connected learning is associated with a model of learning that holds out the possibility of reimaging the experience of education in the information age. It draws on the power of technology to fuse young people's interests, friendships, and academic achievement through experiences laced with hands-on production, shared purpose and open networks.

**Connectivism** means the integration of principles explored by chaos, network, and complexity and self-organisation theories. Learning is a process that occurs within nebulous environments of shifting core elements which are not entirely under the control of the individual. Learning (defined as actionable knowledge) can reside outside of ourselves (within an organisation or a database), is focused on connecting specialized information sets, and the connections that enable us to learn more are more important than our current state of knowing. As a theory, Connectivism is driven by the understanding that decisions are based on rapidly altering foundations. New information is continually being acquired. The ability to draw distinctions between important and unimportant information is vital. The ability to recognise when new information alters the landscape based on decisions made yesterday is also critical.

**Digital Literacy** means having the knowledge and ability to effectively and critically navigate, evaluate and create information using a range of digital technology tools. A digitally literate person can use technology strategically to find and evaluate information, connect and collaborate with others, produce and share original content, and use the Internet and technology tools to achieve many academic, professional, and personal goals.

**Early School-Leaver** means somebody who does not pursue education after secondary school.

**European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System** or ECTS means a system developed by the European Commission in order to provide generally valid and accepted procedures for the recognition of study qualifications gained by students on courses outside their home country. It is also intended to provide more binding conditions, more flexibility and a greater degree of clarity in the organizing and running of courses for foreign students. ECTS gives students the opportunity to clarify

definitively with their home university how many courses or classes they should attend while they are abroad and under what conditions the qualifications they obtain will be recognized by the home university on their return.

**European Credit Transfer System for Vocational Education and Training** or ECVET means a common methodological framework that facilitates the accumulation and transfer of credits for learning outcomes from one qualifications system to another. It aims to promote transnational mobility and access to Lifelong Learning. It is not intended to replace national qualification systems, but to achieve better comparability and compatibility among them. ECVET applies to all outcomes obtained by an individual from various education and training pathways that are then transferred, recognised and accumulated in view of achieving a qualification. This initiative makes it easier for European citizens to gain recognition of their training, skills and knowledge in another Member State.

**European Qualifications Framework** (EQF) means a translation device to make national qualifications more readable across Europe, promoting workers' and learners' mobility between countries and facilitating their Lifelong Learning. The EQF aims to relate different countries' national qualifications systems to a common European reference framework. Individuals and employers will be able to use the EQF to better understand and compare the qualifications levels of different countries and different education and training systems. Agreed upon by the European institutions in 2008, the EQF is being put in practice across Europe. It encourages countries to relate their national qualifications systems to the EQF so that all new qualifications issued from 2012 carry a reference to an appropriate EQF level. An EQF national coordination point has been designated for this purpose in each country.

**Formal Education** is the type of schooling provided in the system of primary schools, secondary schools, universities and other educational institutions that leads to attaining an official qualification.

**Formal Learning** means learning which takes place in an organised and structured environment, specifically dedicated to learning, and typically leads to the award of a qualification, usually in the form of a certificate or a diploma; it includes systems of general education, initial vocational training and higher education

**Human Capital Development** means the work which contributes to the lifelong development of individuals' skills and competences through the improvement of vocational education and training systems.

**Individualised Learning System** means a highly flexible system of multiple materials and procedures, in which the student is given substantial responsibility for planning and carrying out his / her own organised program of studies, with the assistance of his / her teachers, and in which his / her progress is solely determined in terms of those plans.

**Informal learning** means learning resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure and is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support; it may be unintentional from the learner's perspective. Examples of learning outcomes acquired through informal learning are skills acquired through life and work experiences, project management skills or ICT skills acquired at work, languages learned and intercultural skills acquired during a stay in another country, ICT skills acquired outside work, skills acquired through volunteering, cultural activities, sports, youth work and through activities at home (e.g. taking care of a child).

**International sectoral organisation** means an association of national organisations, including, for example, employers and professional bodies, which represents the interests of national sectors.

**Knowledge means** the outcome of the assimilation of information through learning. Knowledge is the body of facts, principles, theories and practices that is related to a field of work or study. In the context of the European Qualifications Framework, knowledge is described as theoretical and/or factual.

**Learning outcomes** means statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process, which are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competences. Learning outcomes are the common theoretical denominator underpinning all tools in EU education and training policies, including the EQF, Europass and ECVET.

**Lifelong learning** means all learning from 'the cradle to the grave' (Mayo, 2007): from early childhood education and compulsory schooling to vocational education and training (VET), higher education, adult education and learning in our senior years. The process of lifelong learning may also take place through the integration of formal, non-formal and informal learning so as to create the ability for continuous lifelong development of the quality of life.

**Literacy** is defined as the ability to understand, evaluate, use and engage with written texts to participate in society, achieve one's goals, and develop one's knowledge and potential. Literacy encompasses a range of skills from the decoding of written words and sentences to the comprehension, interpretation and evaluation of complex texts. It does not involve the production of text (writing).

**National qualifications framework** means an instrument for the classification of qualifications according to a set of criteria for specified levels of learning achieved, which aims to integrate and coordinate national qualifications subsystems and improve the transparency, access, progression and quality of qualifications in relation to the labour market and civil society;

**National qualifications system** means all aspects of a Member State's activity related to the recognition of learning and other mechanisms that link education and training to the labour market and civil society. This includes the development and implementation of institutional arrangements and processes relating to quality assurance, assessment and the award of qualifications. A national qualifications system may be composed of several subsystems and may include a national qualifications framework.

**Non-formal Education** entails organised and sustained educational activities which do not lead to attaining an official qualification. Non-formal education may take place both within and outside educational institutions and caters to all age groups.

**Non-formal learning** means learning which takes place through planned activities (in terms of learning objectives, learning time) where some form of learning support is present (e.g. student-teacher relationships); it may cover programmes to impart work skills, adult literacy and basic education for early school leavers; very common cases of non-formal learning include in-company training, through which companies update and improve the skills of their workers such as ICT skills, structured on-line learning (e.g. by making use of open educational resources), and courses organised by civil society organisations for their members, their target group or the general public;

**Numeracy** means the ability to access, use, interpret and communicate mathematical information and ideas in order to engage in and manage the mathematical demands of a range of situations in adult life. To this end, numeracy involves managing a situation or solving a problem in a real context, by responding to mathematical content/information/ideas represented in multiple ways.

**Open educational resources (OER)** means materials used to support education that may be freely accessed, reused, modified and shared by anyone[79]. Increasingly, it means digitised materials offered freely and openly for educators, students and self- learners to use and reuse for teaching, learning and research; it includes learning content, software tools to develop, use and distribute content, and implementation resources such as open licences.

**Open Education (OE)** means practices and organisations aiming at removing barriers to entry to education, often through the use of ICT.

**PIAAC** means the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies. The Survey of Adult Skills directly assesses the skills of about 5,000 individuals per participating country, representing the countries' working age population (16-65 year olds). The skills tested are literacy, numeracy and problem solving in technology-rich environments (solving problems in a computer environment). The survey also asks about the use of ICT at work and in everyday life, generic skills required at work, whether the skills and qualification match the work requirements and questions about e.g. education, work and the socio-economic background. The first round was carried out in 2011/2012 in 24 countries, among them 17 EU Member States, representing about 83% of the EU28 population. The proficiency that respondents showed in the test is reported on a scale from 0 to 500 points, which is divided into "Skills levels" ("below 1" to "5" for literacy and numeracy; "below 1" to "3" for problem solving.

**PISA** means The Programme for International Student Assessment, a triennial international survey which aims to evaluate education systems worldwide by testing the skills and knowledge of 15-year-old students. To date, students representing more than 70 economies have participated in the assessment.

[79] *Downes, 2011 in Commonwealth of Learning, "Perspectives on Open and Distance Learning", 2013. Open Education Resources (OER) were also defined by UNESCO in 2002 as "teaching, learning or research materials that are in the public domain or released with an intellectual property license that allows for free use, adaptation, and distribution".*

**Problem solving in technology-rich environments** (sometimes known as digital literacy) is defined as the ability to use digital technology, communication tools and networks to acquire and evaluate information, communicate with others and perform practical tasks. The assessment focuses on the abilities to solve problems for personal, work and civic purposes by setting up appropriate goals and plans, and accessing and making use of information through computers and computer networks.

**Qualification** means a formal outcome of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards.

**Sector** means a grouping of professional activities on the basis of their main economic function, product, service or technology.

**Skills** mean the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems. In the context of the European Qualifications Framework, skills are described as cognitive (involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) or practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments).

**Skills Audit** means a process aimed at identifying and analysing the knowledge, skills and competences of an individual, including his or her aptitudes and motivations in order to define a career project and/or plan a professional reorientation or training project; the aim of a skills audit is to help the individual analyse his/her career background, to self-assess his/her position in the labour environment and to plan a career pathway, or in some cases to prepare for the validation of non-formal or informal learning outcomes;

**Validation** means a process of confirmation by an authorised body that an individual has acquired learning outcomes measured against a relevant standard and typically consists of the following four distinct phases: 1) Identification through dialogue of particular experiences of an individual; 2) Documentation to make visible the individual's experiences; 3) A formal Assessment of these experiences; and 4) Certification of the results of the assessment which may lead to a partial or full qualification. Recognition of prior learning means the validation of learning outcomes, whether from formal education or non-formal or informal learning, acquired before requesting validation.

**Vocational Education and Training** (VET) means that part of tertiary education and training which provides accredited training in job related and technical skills. It is a complex policy area, situated at the intersection of education, training, social, economic and labour market policies. It is expected to address a range of issues: the present and future skill demands of the economy; individual citizens' needs for short- and long-term employability and personal development; and society's requirement for active citizens. Initial vocational education and training (IVET) is VET delivered in the initial education system, usually before entering working life. Continuing vocational education and training (CVET) is VET delivered after initial education and training or after entry into working life, and aims to help individuals to improve or update their knowledge and/or skills; acquire new skills for a career move or retraining; and continue their personal or professional development.

**Work-Based Learning** (WBL) means a set of learning practices that differs from those of school-based or classroom learning in that learning takes place in a real working environment through participation in the work process, irrespective of whether learners are young people, students, unemployed people or employees, or whether they are paid or unpaid. WBL includes a number of different activities that can be situated along a continuum from shorter-term introductory types of experiences in a workplace to longer-term, more intensive placements, including internships, apprenticeships and in-company employee training. Applied learning that takes place through school-based or student-led enterprises, workplace simulations, workshops and even project-based learning in the classroom can also be labelled as WBL. WBL programmes may be designed exclusively for students at different levels of education or for employees. They may be company-specific, school-wide, local, regional or national, or they may include a combination of local and national implementation and oversight

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# Annexes

# Annex 1

## Primary Operators in Lifelong Learning Sector in Malta

**DIRECTORATE FOR Lifelong Learning**

The Directorate for Lifelong Learning ('The Directorate') within the Ministry of Education and Employment is the primary public organisation in charge of Lifelong Learning in. Its primary objective is to develop a strong and responsive adult learning sector.

- The Directorate engages 440 adult educators and offers numerous courses for adult learners during the mornings and evenings in various centres around Malta and Gozo, including 8 Evening Classes Centres, the Morning Classes Centre at the Lifelong Learning Centre in Msida and various locations at community level[80]. In October 2013, 14,831 learners registered for courses, of which 64% were female participants and 36% were males.
- The Adult Learning Courses cover the 8 key competencies for Lifelong Learning and include both academic and vocational subjects. Learners have the option to acquire a qualification on the National Qualifications Framework from level 1 to level 4; including courses in Literacy (Maltese & English), Numeracy (Maths) and ICT (Computer/Internet Awareness).
- The Directorate interfaces on a regular basis with a number of stakeholders with an interest in Lifelong Learning. These include: ETC, ITS, MCAST, FES, NCFHE, MQRIC, the University of Malta, Jobs Plus, NGOs, Local Councils and private training organisations.
- The Directorate provides ad hoc assistance to public and private organisations in Malta and Gozo seeking assistance with bespoke VET and Lifelong Learning programmes.
- The Directorate provides MQF1 level courses in Maltese, English, Numeracy and Computer Awareness. Literacy and Numeracy courses are 32 weeks long, three hours per week. The Computer Awareness course is a 14 week course, 3 hours per week. These courses are offered at Adult Learning Centres and in Local Councils as well as in a number of NGOs. As from October 2013 the Directorate offers a pre-entry level, which will be called Basic Skills, in Maltese, English and Numeracy. A good number of local councils have shown interest in offering Basic Skills Courses. These will be short 14 week courses of 3 hour weekly sessions. A first course programme will set off in October and another programme will set off in February. Learners who complete part 1 will be encouraged to do also part 2 in the first year so that in the following year they will pass on to an MQF1 level course. In 2012/2013, courses in Maltese, English and Numeracy were also offered at level 2. The process for the accreditation of this level with the National Commission for Further and Higher Education (NCFHE) is still being discussed.
- Literacy and Numeracy courses were also offered at ACCESS Birgu and ACCESS Qawra through agreements with the Directorate. As from October, ACCESS Valletta will also be involved. These partnerships with ACCESS aim at offering more courses to people in the community as well as reach the vulnerable groups usually availing themselves of the services of agencies involved in ACCESS centres. The Directorate also works with other NGOs to provide basic literacy and digital literacy skills to vulnerable groups. These include St Jean Antide Foundation, Down's syndrome Association, National Council of Women and FITA. After an experimental course carried out at St Vincent de Paule residence for the elderly, the authorities have requested a basic computer course for residents and their relatives to be held alongside other inter-generational courses held by the Directorate's adult educators at the residence.
- Basic Skills classes are offered free of charge while MQF level 1 courses are offered at a subsidised rate[82].

*For more information, visit www.lifelonglearning.gov.mt.*

[80] *A list of adult courses managed by the DLL is available at: https://lifelonglearning.gov.mt/Home.aspx*

[81] *Currently €34.95 per course*

### EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING CORPORATION (ETC)

ETC focuses on enhancing employability by recommending policies and implementing initiatives aimed at empowering, assisting and training jobseekers. ETC facilitates their entry or re-entry into the active employment market, promoting workforce development through skills and competency development, and by assisting employers in their recruitment and training needs. Basic skills courses are also offered.

Another state vocational education and training provider which provides services for the unemployed is the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC). In supporting people to find work, ETC offers short training courses for the unemployed with the aim of increasing their opportunities of employment.

*For more information visit: http://www.etc.gov.mt*

### MALTA COLLEGE OF ARTS, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY (MCAST)

MCAST provides Vocational Education and Training through ten Institutes, Pathway Programme and the Gozo Centre. The Pathway to Independent Living Programme provides an opportunity for applicants with mild to moderate intellectual disability in possession of the school leaving certificate to follow a structured programme of study focusing on the individual students' needs. The Learning Support Unit (LSU) offers support to students who have no formal qualifications or who do not have the required levels of Maltese, English, Maths and IT basic skills. The Inclusive Education Unit (IEU) ensures that learners with particular needs including disabilities and/or learning difficulties are given the necessary support for their studies. MCAST levers on ERDF (European Regional Development Funds) to develop relevant vocational education.

*For more information visit: http://www.mcast.edu.mt*

### INSTITUTE OF TOURISM STUDIES (ITS)

ITS is a higher education institution aimed at meeting the changing needs of the Hospitality and Tourism Industry. A number of courses (from level 1 to level 6) related to the hospitality industry are offered. Level 1 qualification covers Key Skills for Independent Living and Employment in the Hospitality Sector while Level 2 covers the ESTS Apprenticeship and a Foundation Certificate in Hospitality Trades. Tourism studies have long been recognised as post-secondary/Vocational Education which builds up to a tertiary degree at ISCED 4-5.

*For more information visit: http://www.its.edu.mt*

### THE NATIONAL COMMISSION PERSONS WITH DISABILITY (KNPD)

KNPD is committed towards inclusion within the Maltese society, in a way that persons with disability reach their full potential in all aspects of life including Lifelong Learning while enjoying a high quality of life thanks to equal opportunities. In fulfilling this mission, KNPD works in order to eliminate any form of direct or indirect social discrimination against persons with disability and their families while providing them with the necessary assistance and support.

*For more information visit: http://www.knpd.org*

### THE UNIVERSITY OF MALTA

The University of Malta has fourteen Faculties, sixteen Institutes and nine Centres of Studies including a Centre for Literacy and a School of Performing Arts. It also offers a postgraduate Master of Arts course in Adult Education. There are some 11,000 students including over 650 international students from 77 different countries following full-time or part-time degree and diploma courses.

*For more information visit: http://www.um.edu.mt*

# Annex 2

## European and Malta Qualifications Frameworks Malta Qualifications Framework[82] for Lifelong Learning

## European Qualifications Framework

| LEVEL | AWARD | |
|---|---|---|
| 8 | Doctoral Degree | |
| 7 | Master's Degree<br>Postgraduate Diploma<br>Postgraduate Certificate | |
| 6 | Bachelor's Degree | |
| 5 | Undergraduate Diploma<br>Undergraduate Certificate<br>Higher Education Certificate | VET Higher Diploma[83] |
| 4 | Matriculation Certificate<br>Advanced Level<br>Intermediate Level | VET Diploma[84] |
| 3 | General Education<br>Level 3<br>SEC Grade 1-5 | VET Level 3[85] |
| 2 | General Education<br>Level 2<br>SEC Grade 6-7<br>Secondary School Certificate and Profile (B) | VET Level 2[86] |
| 1 | General Education<br>Level 1<br>Secondary School Certificate and Profile (A) | VET Level 1[87] |

[82] *The National Qualifications Framework has been designed such as to facilitate the inclusion of diverse forms of qualification that are not as yet covered by the Framework.*

[83] *See http://www.oecd.org/site/piaac/ENG_Brochure%20Education%20and%20Skills%20Online%20SAS_*

[84] *The University of Malta awards the Higher Education Certificate to students who do not complete a degree programme but have a minimum of 60 ECTS.*

[85] *The Malta Qualifications Council recommends that a full VET Diploma should enjoy the same parity of esteem as Advanced Level Subjects.*

[86] *The Malta Qualifications Council recommends that a Full VET Level 3 Qualification should enjoy the same parity esteem as 6 General Level subjects at Grades 1 to 5.*

[87] *The Malta Qualifications Council recommends that a Full VET Level 2 Qualification should enjoy the same parity of esteem as 4 General Education Level 2 subjects or a Secondary School Certification and Profile (B) at the MQF Level 2 at Grades 6 and 7.*

## European Qualifications Framework

| Award | MQF Level | Workload |
|---|---|---|
| Academic Higher Education Award<br>Including VET Awards | Level 8<br>Level 7<br>Level 6<br>Level 5 | Doctoral degree<br>60 – 120 ECTS/ECVET<br>180-240 ECTS/ECVET<br>30-90 ECTS /ECVET |
| VET Awards | Level 4<br>Level 3<br>Level 2<br>Level 1 | 60-120 ECVET<br>60-120ECVET<br>60-120 ECVET<br>Minimum 40 ECVET |
| Continuing Profession la Development | Level 6<br>Level 5<br>Level 4 | Min of 4 ECTS/ECVET<br>Min of 4 ECTS/ECVET<br>Min of 4 ECTS/ECVET |
| Customised Awards | Level 6<br>Level 5<br>Level 4<br>Level 3<br>Level 2<br>Level 1 | Min of 4 ECTS/ECVET<br>Min of 4 ECVET<br>Min of 4 ECVET<br>Min of 4 ECVET<br>Min of 4 ECVET<br>Min of 4 ECVET |
| Work-based Learning Awards | Level 6<br>Level 5<br>Level 4<br>Level 3<br>Level 2<br>Level 1 | Award based on Supervised on-the –job training with a minimum of 5 ECVET OR the validation of prior learning and a minimum of 5 years of professional experience in a recognised sector. |
| Legacy Award<br>( General Education MQF L1 to L8 or VET-related MQF L1 to L5) | Level 8<br>Level 7<br>Level 6<br>Level 5<br>Level 4<br>Level 2<br>Level 1 | Award conferred to individuals prior to 2010 and which have relevance to the labour market and employment. VET awards are classified up to MQF Level 5. |
| School Awards | Level 4<br>Level 3<br>Level 2<br>Level 1 | Matriculation Crtificate<br>6 SEC Grades 1-5<br>4 Sec Grades 6-7<br>Secondary School Certificate and Profile |

*See http://ec.europa.eu/eqf/compare/mt_en.htm#comparison*

# Annex 3

## Eight Key Competencies for Lifelong Learning

The Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for Lifelong Learning which every citizen should acquire. OJ L 394, 30.12.2006, pp. 10-18.

They include knowledge, skills and attitudes:

1. Communication in the mother tongue is significant to enable students to express themselves and to interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions, and thereby facilitate a full membership of and an active participation in society.
2. Communication in foreign languages is a necessity to ensure social and economic cohesion in a world of mobility, where borders are becoming more fluent and people migrate from country to country either as employees, entrepreneurs, students or jobseekers.
3. Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology: The effective use and practice of basic mathematical principles and processes gradually become more essential in both labour-market relations and in everyday contexts.
4. Digital competence: ICT skills are regarded as crucial as they gradually dominate all aspects of life. This means that the lack of the ability to use these technologies can result in a marginalisation not only in the labour market, but also in the civic society as a whole.
5. Learning to learn is one of the most crucial competences in a knowledge based economy, as this competence creates a base for continuous learning and upgrading of skills both within and outside the formal education system.
6. Social and civic competences comprehend the awareness of basic concepts relating to individuals, groups, work organisations, gender equality and non-discrimination, society and culture, mobility, and the promotion of mutual understanding and tolerance.
7. Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship: the knowledge society needs individuals with creative minds and the willingness and skills to take new initiatives and create new business.
8. Cultural awareness and expression is another aspect of ensuring not only economic sustainability but also social cohesion and social fulfilment through the understanding and use of various cultural expressions.

# Annex 4

## Quality Indicators for Lifelong Learning

**Area A: Skills, Competencies & Attitudes**

1. Literacy
2. Numeracy
3. New Skills for the Learning Society
4. Learning-to-Learn Skills
5. Active Citizenship, Cultural and Social Skills

**Area B: Access and Participation**

6. Access to Lifelong Learning
7. Participation in Lifelong Learning

**Area C: Resources for Lifelong Learning**

8. Investment in Lifelong Learning
9. Educators and Learning
10. ICT in Learning

**Area D: Strategies and System Development**

11. Strategies for Lifelong Learning
12. Coherence of Supply
13. Guidance and Counselling
14. Accreditation and Certification
15. Quality Assurance

# Annex 5

## PIAAC Key Performance Indicators

Brief description of proficiency levels, score point ranges and "can do"- statements for literacy, numeracy and problem-solving in technology- rich environments[88]

| Level | Score | Literacy | Numeracy |
|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 500 to 376 | Adults are able to e.g. perform tasks that involve searching for and integrating information across multiple, dense texts; constructing syntheses of similar and contrasting syntheses of similar and contrasting ideas or points of view, or evaluating evidence and arguments. | Adults can e.g. understand complex representations, and abstract and formal mathematical and statistical ideas, sometimes embedded in complex texts. They can integrate several types of mathematical information where considerable translation is required. |
| 4 | 375 to 326 | Adults can perform multiple step operations to integrate, interpret, or synthesise information from complex or lengthy continuous, non – continuous, mixed, or multiple-type texts that involve conditional and /or competing information. | Adults understand a broad range of mathematical information that may be complex, abstract or embedded in unfamiliar contexts. They can perform tasks involving multiple steps and select appropriate problem solving strategies and processes. |
| 3 | 325 to 276 | Adults can understand and response to dense or lengthy texts, including continuous, non-continuous or multiple pages. They understand text structure and rhetorical devices and can identify, interpret or evaluate one or more pieces of information and make appropriate interferences. | Adults can complete tasks that require an understanding of mathematical information and ideas embedded in context that are not always familiar, and represented in more complex ways. They can perform tasks requiring several steps and that may involve a choice of problem- solving strategies. |
| 2 | 275 to 226 | Adults can integrate two or more pieces of information based on criteria, compare and contrast or reason about information and make low-level interferences. They can navigate within digital texts to access and identify information from various parts of a document. | Adults can perform tasks that require identifying and acting upon mathematical information and ideas embedded in a range of common contexts where the mathematical content is fairly explicit or visual with relatively few distractors. The tasks may require applying two or more steps. |
| 1 | 225 to 176 | Adults can read relatively short digital or print continuous, non-continuous, or mixed texts to locate a single piece of information, which is identical to or synonymous with the information given in the question or directive. | Adults at Level 1 can complete tasks involving basic mathematical processes in common, concrete contexts where the mathematical content is explicit with little text and minimal distracters. They can perform one- step or simple processes involving e.g. counting, sorting and basic arithmetic operations. |
| below 1 | below 176 | Individuals can read brief texts on familiar topics and locate a single piece of specific information identical in form to information in the question or directive. They are not required to understand the structure of sentences and only basic vocabulary knowledge is required. | Adults can only cope with very simple tasks set in concrete, familiar contexts where the mathematical content is explicit and that require only simple processes such as counting; sorting, performing basic arithmetic operations with whole numbers or money. |

[88] *Source: International report on the Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC), Volume II*

| Level | Score | Problem solving in technology rich envirnments |
|---|---|---|
| 3 | 5000 to 340 | Adults complete tasks involving multiple applications, a large number of steps, impasses, and the discovery and use of ad hoc commands in a novel environment. |
| 2 | 340 to 291 | Adults can complete problems that explicit criteria for success, a small number of applications, and several steps and operators. They can handle unexpected outcomes or impasses. |
| 1 | 290 to 241 | Adults can complete tasks in which the goal is explicitly stated and for which the necessary operations and performed in a familiar environment. They can solve problems whose solutions involve a small number of steps. |
| below 1 | below 241 | Tasks are based on well – defined problems involving the use of only one function within a generic interface to meet one explicit criterion. Few steps are required and no sub-goal has to be generated. |
| Failed ICT core | - | Adults had prior computer experience but failed the ICT core test, which assesses basic ICT skills. Therefore, they did not take part in computer-based assessment, but took the paper based version of the assessment. |
| NO computer experience | - | Adults reported having no prior computer experience; therefore, they took the paper based ICT skills. Therefore , they took the paper based version of the assessment, which does not include the problem solving in technology rich environment domain. |
| Opted out | - | Adults in this category opted to take the paper based test without first taking the ICT core assessment, even if they reported some prior experience with computers. |

# Annex 6

## Relevant Malta Statistics

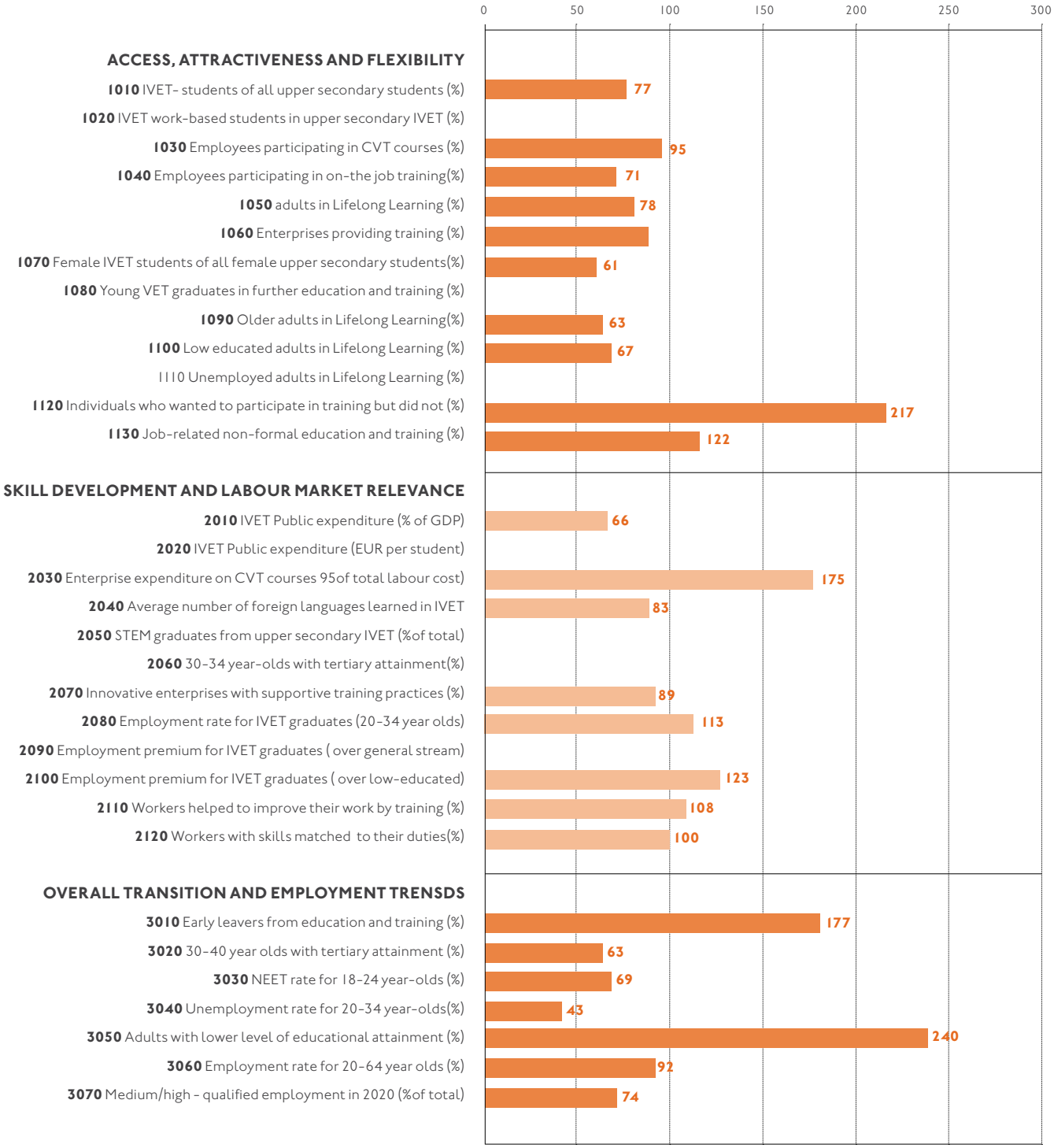
### Population aged 16 or more by literacy - Census of Population and Housing 2011

| Age group | Literate | | illiterate | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Count | Row N % | Count | Row N % | Count | Row N % |
| 16-24 | 50,108 | 98.9 | 564 | 1.1 | 50,672 | 100.0 |
| 25-64 | 218,409 | 94.2 | 13,472 | 5.8 | 231,881 | 100.0 |
| 65+ | 58,479 | 85.8 | 9,712 | 14.2 | 68,191 | 100.0 |
| **Total** | **326,996** | **93.2** | **23,748** | **6.8** | **350,744** | **100.0** |

### Population aged 16 or more by educational level - Census of Population and Housing 2011

| Education level (MQF level) | age_imp_gp2 | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 16-24 | | 25-64 | | 65+ | | Total | |
| | Count | Column N % | Count | Column N % | Count | Column N % | Count | Column N % |
| ISCED 0 - No schooling | 0 | 0.0 | 24 | .0 | 5,924 | 8.7 | 5,948 | 1.7 |
| ISCED 1 - Primary | 169 | .3 | 33,556 | 14.5 | 37,512 | 55.0 | 71,237 | 20.3 |
| ISCED 2 - Lower Secondary | 14,563 | 28.7 | 111,044 | 47.9 | 15,383 | 22.6 | 140,990 | 40.2 |
| ISCED 3 - Upper Secondary | 26,428 | 52.2 | 34,217 | 14.8 | 3,137 | 4.6 | 63,782 | 18.2 |
| ISCED 4 - Post-Secondary Non-Tertiary | 3,247 | 6.4 | 13,805 | 6.0 | 1,740 | 2.6 | 18,792 | 5.4 |
| ISCED 5 - Tertiary (Stage 1) | 6,265 | 12.4 | 38,382 | 16.6 | 4,289 | 6.3 | 48,936 | 14.0 |
| ISCED 6 - Tertiary (Stage 2) | 0 | 0.0 | 853 | .4 | 206 | .3 | 1,059 | .3 |
| **Total** | **50,672** | **100.0** | **231,881** | **100.0** | **68,191** | **100.0** | **350,744** | **100.0** |

## VET Indicators for Malta (Cedefop, 2014)[89]




*NB: the index numbers are derived from data summarised in the table but which have not been rounded. All data in the table have been rounded.*

[89] *Based on 2011 provisional data, the share of upper secondary schools enrolled in IVET programmes in Malta is 38.9%. This should be interpreted with caution, since, even though with big fluctuations, values for Malta have been much higher in the recent past. Malta has proportionately fewer adults involved in Lifelong Learning than the EU as a whole (7% compared with an EU average of 9.0% in 2012). This percentage is below the average target (15%) set by the strategic framework 'education and training 2020'.*

## Score on VET indicators in Malta and in the EU, 2006, 2010 and 2011/12 (where available)

| Indicator label | 2006 | | 2010 | | Change 2006-10 | | 2011/12 updates | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | MT | EU | MT | EU | MT | EU | MT | EU |
| **1010** IVET-students as % of all upper secondary students | 46.9 | 51.7 | 49.3 | 49.9 | 2.4 | -1.8 | 38.9 | 50.3 |
| **1020** IVET work-based students as % of upper secondary IVET | | 27.7 | | 27.9 | | 0.2 | | 27.0 |
| **1030** Employees participating in CVT courses (%) | 32 | 33 | 36 | 38 | 4 | 5 | | |
| **1040** Employees participating in on-the-job traning (%) | 17 | 16 | 15 | 21 | -2 | 5 | | |
| **1050** Adults in Lifelong Learning (%) | 5.4 | 9.5 | 6.2 | 9.1 | 0.8 | -0.4 | 7.0 | 9.0 |
| **1060** Enterprises providing traning (%) | 4.6 | 60 | 54 | 66 | 8 | 6 | | |
| **1070** Female IVET students as % of all female upper secondary students | 36.6 | 46.3 | 39.8 | 44.2 | 3.2 | -2.1 | 27.3 | 44.7 |
| **1080** Young VET graduates in further education and training (%) | | | | 30.7 | | | | |
| **1090** Older adults in Lifelong Learning (%) | | 5.1 | 3.3 | 5.3 | | 0.2 | 3.3 | 5.3 |
| **1100** Low-educated adults in Lifelong Learning (%) | 2.8 | 3.7 | 3.4 | 3.9 | 0.6 | 0.2 | 2.6 | 3.9 |
| **1110** Unemployed adults in Lifelong Learning (%) | 11.0 | 7.7 | 14.9 | 9.2 | 3.9 | 1.5 | 8.8 | 9.0 |
| **1120** Individuals who wanted to participate in training but did not (%) | 27.4 | 14.5 | 23.6 | 10.9 | -3.8 | -3.6 | | |
| **1130** Job-related non-formal education and training (%) | 71.0 | 84.5 | 99.3 | 81.4 | 28.3 | -3.1 | | |

*NB : b = break in series. Where the break in series occurs in 2011/12, data for 2006 and 2010 are not presented. If break in series occurs between 2006 and 2010, neither data for 2006 nor the change in 2006-10 are shown; d=definition. Date are treated in a similar way to breaks in series. When the change in definition is in 2008 or 2010, these data are also not presented because comparability over time is affected; u=unreliable; p=provisional.*

| Indicator label | 2006 | | 2010 | | Change 2006-10 | | 2011/12 updates | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | MT | EU | MT | EU | MT | EU | MT | EU |
| **2010** IVET public expenditure (% of GDP) | 0.38 | 0.67 | 0.47 | 0.71 | 0.09 | 0.04 | | |
| **2020** IVET public expenditure (EUR per student) | 5.481 | 7.089 | | 8.549 | | 1.460 | | |
| **2030** Enterprise expenditure on CVT courses as % of total labour cost | 1.0 | 0.9 | 1.4 | 0.8 | 0.4 | -0.1 | | |
| **2040** Average number of foreign languages learned in IVET | | 1.2 | 1.0 | 1.2 | | 0.0 | 1.0 | 1.2 |
| **2050** STEM graduates from upper secondary VET (% of total) | 26.5 | 32.0 | | 28.7 | | -3.3 | | 29.4 |
| **2060** 30-34 year-olds with tertiary VET attainment(%) | | 7.3 | | 7.3 | | 0.0 | | 8.6 |
| **2070** Innovative enterprises with supportive training practices(%) | 38.1 | 42.8 | 36.9 | 41.5 | -1.2 | -1.3 | | |
| **2080** Employment rate for IVET graduates (20-34 year old) | | | 89.7 | 79.1 | | | | |
| **2090** Employment premium for IVET graduates ( over general stream) | | | -3.6 | 5.6 | | | | |
| **2100** Employment premium for IVET graduates ( over low- educated ) | | | 21.4 | 17.4 | | | | |
| **2110** Workers helped to improve their work by training (%) | | | 96.7 | 89.7 | | | | |
| **2120** Workers with skills matched to their duties (%) | | | 55.3 | 55.3 | | | | |
| **OVERALL TRANSITIONS AND LABOUR MARKET TRENDS** | | | | | | | | |
| **3010** Early leavers from education and training (%) | | 15.5 | 24.8 | 14.0 | (B0 | -1.51 | 22.6 | 12.8 (P) |
| **3020** 30 -40 years old with tertiary attainment (%) | 21.6 | 28.9 | 21.5 | 33.5 | -0.1 | 4.6 | 22.4 | 35.8 |
| **3030** NEET rate from 18-24 years olds(%) | | 15.1 | 10.6 | 16.5 | (B) | 1.4 | 11.7 | 17.0(B) |
| **3040** Unemployment rate for 20-34 year olds (%) | 7.0 | 10.6 | 6.3 | 13.1 | -0.7 | 2.5 | 6.3 | 14.5 |
| **3050** Adults with lower level of educational attainment(%) | | 30.1 | 64.8 | 27.3 | (B) | -2.8 | 61.9 | 25.8 |
| **3060** Employment rate for 20-64 year –olds(%) | 57.8 | 69.0 | 60.1 | 68.5 | 2.5 | -0.5 | 63.1 | 68.5 |
| **3070** Medium/ high –qualified employment in 2020 (%of total) | | | 61.0 | 82.3 | | | | |

# Annex 7

## Scholarships and other Adult Education Funding Schemes

The Directorate for Lifelong Learning managed various scholarship schemes aimed at providing opportunities to promote further specialisation at higher levels of education particularly at a Masters and Doctoral level thus increasing the availability and employment of high-level graduates in the priority sectors of the knowledge-based economy in Malta. In the three preceding years before the Directorate was set up (between 2006 and 2008), 311 scholarships were awarded, of which 39 were for Doctoral studies. In the period from June 2009 till March 2012), 1,160 scholarships were awarded, of which 163 lead to Doctoral studies. Currently, the scholarship schemes are managed by the directorate for programme implementation within the ministry for education and employment.

Incentives and stipends to people attending tertiary education in Malta amounted to €23 million in 2012. During the past few years Government has undertaken several initiatives to support citizens in specialisation in higher levels of education. Government is making use of ESF funds to sponsor Academic Courses in Developing Core Skills in the Public Service. There is the Get Qualified scheme by Malta Enterprise which is an initiative that supports the personal development of individuals for the achievement of qualifications and certifications required by industry. ETC offers the Training Aid Framework (TAF) where local companies can invest in their human resources. The training can even lead to a PhD. Self-employed persons are also eligible. Some Ministries have introduced initiatives of sponsorships in specialized fields. One example is the Ministry of Resources and Rural Affairs which is sponsoring potential students studying to become veterinarians. Through the Youth Specialisation Studies Scheme (YSSS), Aġenzija Żgħażagħ and APS Bank are offering the opportunity for young people, aged between 18 and 30 years, to apply for a soft loan at a subsidised rate of interest to further their studies or follow distance learning courses, provided that such courses of study are not available in Malta.

# Annex 8

## Lifelong Learning Historic Context

Malta has a long tradition of education and learning beyond schooling.

Our University traces its origins to the founding of the Collegium Melitense which was set up late in the sixteenth century. There is documented evidence that Malta has long recognised the importance of languages for jobs, probably dating back to the end of the 17th century when mâtelot schools were opened for the teaching of French to Maltese sailors.

In mid-19th century, Rev. Paolo Pullicino (then Director of Primary Education) is credited with the setting up of adult education schools on the lines established in Italy. In 1850 he set up the Scuola Serale at Zabbar. At least two other evening schools were opened, one at Floriana and the other at Valletta.

The British had encouraged prospective Drydocks workers and potential emigrants to attend evening classes in spoken and written English during the mid-twentieth century. Throughout the years, we consistently recognized that to survive under various rules, and later as an independent state, the sensible response to obsolescence was to learn throughout life. Therefore, we immediately saw relevance of the conclusions of UNESCO's 1960 Montreal Conference. These conclusions highlighted the priority to eradicate illiteracy, pronounced that adult learning should henceforth be accepted by people everywhere as normal and encouraged all governments to treat such learning as a necessary component of educational provision. The Conference also focused on the emerging educational needs of women and families[90].

Adult education continues to mean different things to different people in Malta. As Mayo (2012) observes, it was traditionally associated with adult literacy and basic education in the late 19th and first half of the 20th century at a time when there was no mass public education. It was linked, for the most part, with emigration and involved literacy especially in English. The main purpose was to assist emigrants in settling in former British colonies of settlement such as the USA, Canada and Australia. Vocational education, often with a strong agricultural bias, was also instrumental in this regard (these receiving countries preferred country to city dwellers). Adult education was also associated with religious instruction and with social development. Social development was initially often promoted by institutions that followed the social teachings of the Catholic Church.

In 1996, Malta celebrated the European Year of Lifelong Learning[91]. The aim was to make the European public aware of the importance of Lifelong Learning; to foster better cooperation between education and training structures and the business community, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises, to help establish a European area of education and training through the academic and vocational recognition of qualifications within the European Union, and to stress the contribution made by education and training to the equality of opportunities.

Throughout the past two decades, the concept of education from the cradle to the grave gained currency and several measures were adopted to reflect our societal and economic exigencies. Compulsory education for 5 to 16 year-olds in Malta has been transformed into one that is more inclusive and more responsive to the growing demands of the information and technological advancements of the globalised world. Further, it has made us more aware that we need to inculcate in our children's minds the idea we are lifelong learners. This is one of the fundamental aims of the National Curriculum Framework.

[90] *The Montreal Declaration, Second World Conference on Adult Education, Education Studies and Documents No. 46, UNESCO, 1963.*

[91] *1996 was established as the 'European year of Lifelong Learning` by Decision No 2493/95/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 1995.*