



Youth Strategy 2008 / 2009

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Introduction



The Employment and Training Corporation is presenting its Youth Strategy 2008/9 following consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, which concluded with a Consultation Forum held on the 15th February 2008. The Corporation is grateful for the many opinions and suggestions put forward during and after the seminar and has endeavoured to reflect these in the text.

Our Youth Strategy is aimed at young people aged between 16 to 25 who are not currently in post-secondary or tertiary education. This Document is divided into four parts. In the first part, an overview is given of key policy documents that inform our activities. The second part provides some key labour market trends in respect of young people. The third part describes the initiatives that ETC has taken in recent years, as well as our major outputs. In the fourth part, we set out those actions that we intend to take in the months to come. For ease of reference, we present these initiatives in three categories: employment, employability and equal opportunities.

This is a live document and although the formal consultation period may have closed, ETC is always pleased to receive further suggestions from persons and organizations with an interest in the training and employment of young people



If you want one year of prosperity - grow grain,
If you want ten years of prosperity - grow trees,
If you want one hundred years of prosperity - grow people.

Chinese proverb

SECTION I

The Policy Framework



ETC's services for young people are part of the Corporation's overall mission

to provide and ensure equitable access to training programmes and employment services, to contribute towards the social and economic development of the community.

ETC firmly believes in the contribution of young people to the Maltese economy and society. This is made possible through their access to decent work that provides them with dignity and the opportunity to develop into responsible and productive citizens.

We believe that young people in Malta receive a sound educational foundation which enables them to continue learning throughout life. ETC seeks to build upon this foundation to help young persons to make a successful transition into work and to offer training and work exposure to those who choose to use our services. Though ETC aims to provide a wide range of services that are beneficial to young people in all walks of life, ETC also pays special attention to those who may for various reasons require additional assistance. These young people include the unemployed, the under-employed and the discouraged young people who lose hope in their ability to find a job. As pointed out by various stakeholders, the reasons for discouragement among young people extend beyond their labour market experience, and often include social disadvantages that impinge upon their self-esteem and sense of their own potential.

As the ILO (2006) points out in its *Global Employment Trends for Youth*, "a lack of decent work, if experienced at an early age, often permanently compromises a person's future employment prospects and frequently leads to unsuitable labour behaviour

patterns that last a lifetime" (p. 1). The ILO notes that young people who cannot make the most of their potential

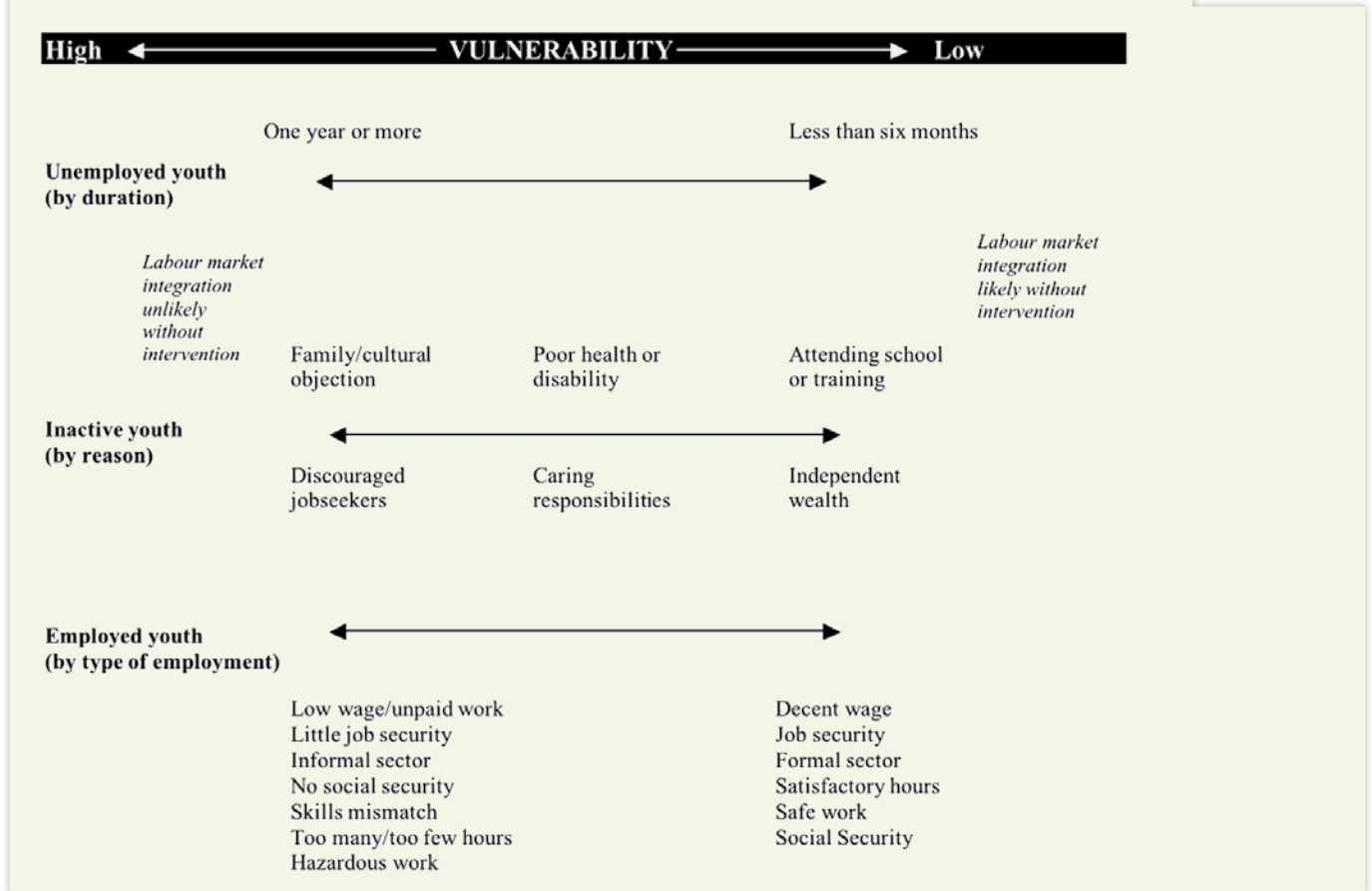
"are susceptible to feelings of despondency, to marginalization and impoverishment, to idleness and potential attraction to illicit activities, to feeling frustrated with their situation and to directing their anger and frustration at the society that created it. These are the young people who would benefit the most from policy interventions aimed to increase decent work opportunities for youth." (2006, p. 5).

It is therefore important to help young people to 'start out right', moving from their education or training into a decent job that helps them to make the most of their talent, creativity and energy. It is also important to try to combat any barriers to the labour market that disadvantaged youth, such as the disabled, may face. ETC seeks to contribute to a good start through its employment, employability and equal opportunity services which will be discussed further on in this document. First, however, it is important to understand the vulnerabilities faced by young people – whether unemployed, inactive or underemployed – and which are categorized overleaf in an adaptation of a diagram from ILO (2006).

The vulnerability of young people, as well as their potential, was recognized in the European Youth Pact, adopted by the Spring



FIGURE 1: Causes of Labour Market Vulnerability among young people



2005 European Council to promote the integration of young people in society and working life. The Pact has three strands, each of which inform the Corporation's services for young people:

- Employment, integration and social advancement
- Education, training and mobility
- Reconciliation of family life and working life

More specifically, through the Pact, the European Council calls upon Member States to develop actions under each of the following:

EUROPEAN YOUTH PACT – LINES OF ACTION

Employment, integration & social advancement

- Monitor policies for the sustained integration of young people in the labour market
- Endeavour to increase the employment of young people
- Improve the situation of the most vulnerable youth and seek to prevent educational failure
- Invite employers to display social responsibility in the area of vocational integration
- Encourage young people to develop entrepreneurship and promote young entrepreneurs

Education, training and mobility

- Ensure that knowledge matches the needs of a knowledge based economy and encourage the development of a common set of core skills, concentrating primarily on youth dropping out of school
- Expand the scope for students to undertake a period of study in another Member State
- Encourage mobility of young people by removing obstacles for trainees, volunteers and workers and their families and step up initiatives under Marie Curie for researchers
- Develop closer cooperation between Member States on transparency and comparability of occupational qualifications and recognition of non-formal and informal education

Reconciliation of working life and family life

- Promote the reconciliation of working life and family life through shared responsibility between partners, particularly by expanding childcare networks and developing innovative forms of work organization
- Consider child-friendly policies especially in the light of demographic change

The Pact also calls upon Member States to utilize available European programmes that involve young people and help them to develop their abilities, such as the European Social Fund, the European Regional Development Fund, Youth and Youth in Action, Integrated Lifelong Learning and others. The Pact encourages the consultation of young people and their organizations.

More recently, the European Commission issued a Communication in 2007 entitled *Promoting young people's full participation in education, employment and society*, which highlights that "using the full potential of youth is a requisite for future economic growth and social cohesion in the EU" (p. 4). The Communication emphasizes the need to persist in promoting the skills and qualifications of young people, especially in light of the move towards more knowledge-based economies which pose a serious challenge to low-qualified youth. The Communication also stresses the enabling of transitions to work and the reduction of labour market segmentation, which sees young people in peripheral positions with poor conditions and prospects. The importance of fostering entrepreneurship among young people and creating the right conditions for young entrepreneurs is also highlighted.

Also in 2007, for a second three-year cycle, the European Commission proposed a package of Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs, which guidelines are to inform Member States' policies and actions. The Guidelines address macro- and micro-economic reforms as well as employment and are similar to the guidelines in the preceding three year cycle 2005–2007. Each year, Member States report their initiatives under each guideline in the framework of their National Reform Programme implementation reports. The Employment Guidelines are captured in the box below:

EMPLOYMENT GUIDELINES

- Implement guidelines that promote full employment, improving quality and productivity at work, and strengthening social and territorial cohesion
- Promote a lifecycle approach to work
- Ensure inclusive labour markets, enhance work attractiveness, and make work pay for jobseekers, including the disadvantaged and inactive
- Improve matching of labour market needs
- Provide flexibility combined with employment security, and reduce labour market segmentation, having due regard to the role of the social partners
- Ensure employment-friendly labour cost developments and wage setting mechanisms
- Expand and improve investment in human capital
- Adapt education and training systems in response to new competence requirements

As noted above, each year Member States submit to the European Commission their implementation reports, enabling the Commission to draw up a Europe-wide Joint Employment Report (JER) analyzing overall progress. In the JER for 2006/7, the Commission noted in Europe progress in respect of young people and labour market is limited and needs to be accelerated. In a Commission Staff Working Document (SEC [2007] 1093), the Commission provides details about policy approaches in various countries to improve youth employment. Some of the more popular approaches include the following:

- Setting and monitoring of targets to provide active measures to young unemployed people, offering them a 'New Start' before reaching six months of unemployment;
- Increased provision of guidance and counseling for young people;
- Improved access to training, especially for the low-qualified, as well as modernized apprenticeships and job creation incentives in low-skilled sectors, and incentives for employers to train their employees;
- Incentives to overcome the lack of practical experience, such as traineeships and work placements and tax and benefit measures to encourage hiring;
- Improved vocational training.



SECTION 2

Key Labour Market Trends



In this section we provide an overview of some key labour market trends in respect of young people. Following a global snapshot of young people, relevant indicators are provided for Europe and in Malta. These trends include employment and unemployment rates, as well as participation in active measures and in lifelong learning.

ILO (2006) provides a number of global indicators that underscore the need for persistent efforts to enable the labour market integration of young people:

- While the global youth labour force has grown, youth inactivity is rising;
- The number of young unemployed persons has increased by 14.8% over the past ten years;
- Youth are not a homogenous group, and some young people find it harder than others to find a decent job. This is particularly true of young women in some regions of the world, for ethnic minorities and for children of poor parents;
- The youth of today continue to be three times more likely to be unemployed than are adults;
- There are approximately 300 million young working poor in the world, earning less than US\$2 per day, and these constitute more than one half of young workers;
- In addition to low pay, very many young people worldwide tend to face substandard working conditions, such as long hours, short-term contracts, undeclared work, little or no social protection, minimal training and no voice at work.

SOME EXPLANATIONS OF YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROBLEMS

Last-in, first out. When the supply of labour is greater than the number of jobs available, and in economic downturns, the youngest workers tend to find it hardest to find work and are more likely to be made redundant.

Lack of expertise in jobsearch. Young people tend to lack information on labour market opportunities and experience in jobsearch. They may not have developed the social networks that enable people to find work by word of mouth.

Shopping around. It is sometimes suggested that young people take longer in looking for the 'right' job for them, especially if they are supported at home and have no financial commitments of their own.

Lack of mobility. While relocation is an option for those without work, it is often less feasible for young people who may lack the financial resources or the information necessary to seek and take up work abroad.

Educational attainment of many young people is still too low

Weak socioeconomic background may have a negative effect on young people's employment prospects, highlighting the need to address poverty and marginalization

Gender inequality may affect women's entry to, and progress within, the labour market.

Disability may be a particular problem in the school to work transitions of young people, as may poor health status.

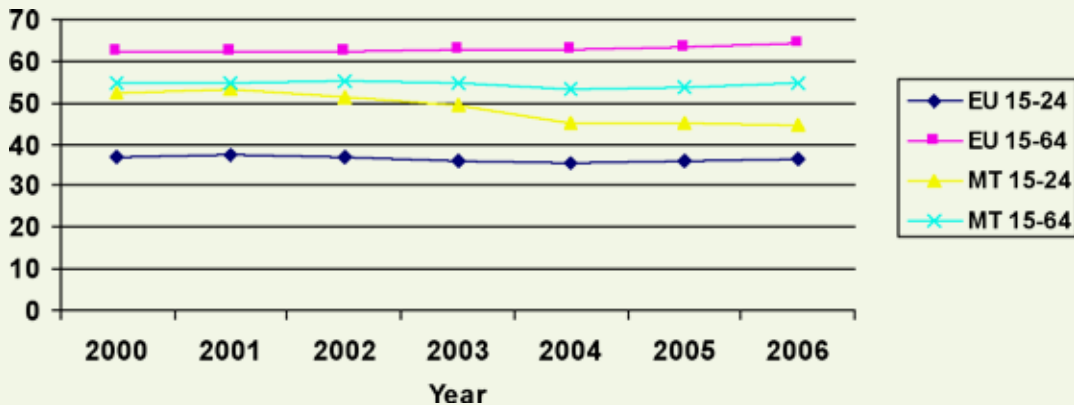
Lack of motivation caused by various adverse experiences, or by low-self esteem.

Adapted from ILO (2006) and CEC (2007)

The remainder of this section will illustrate some key indicators in respect of young people's labour market situation in Malta and, where possible, in Europe. These include the employment and unemployment rates as well as the sectors and occupations where young people work.

As Chart 1 below illustrates, the employment rates for young people in Europe – as worldwide - tend to be considerably lower those of the whole working age population. The employment rate for young people in Malta is higher than that in the 27 EU Member States, though a decline is evident, and may be understood to reflect the sharp rise in recent years of young people pursuing post-secondary education.

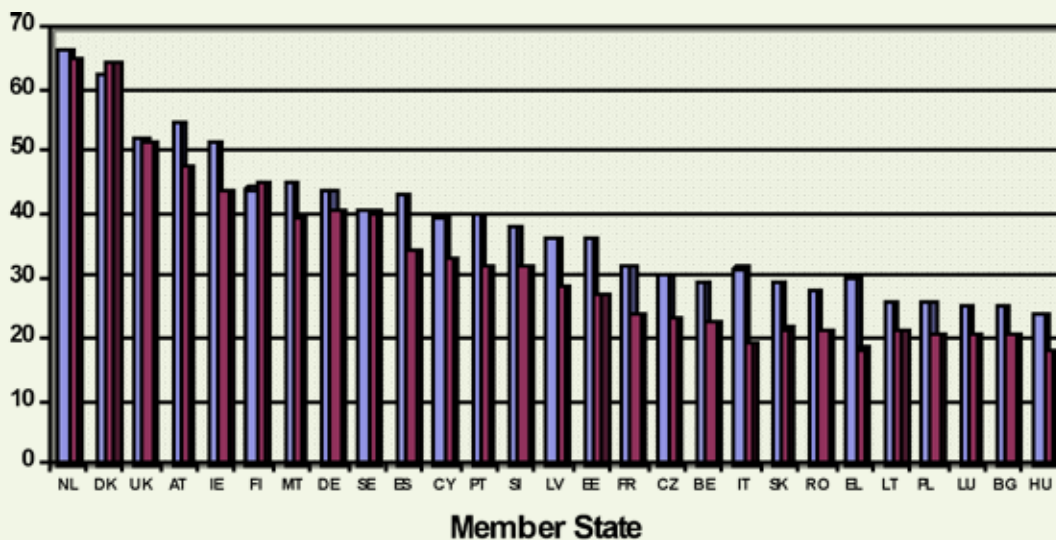
CHART 1: Employment Rates 2000 - 2006



In Malta the employment rate of young people is on the higher side in Europe. The Labour Force Survey of July to September 2007 states that the employment rate for Maltese youth stood at 48.5% overall with very similar rates for young men (48.8%) and young women (48.1%). This reflects a rise of almost three percentage points over the year before, when the rate stood at 45.8%. The largest gains were among young women, whose employment rate rose by over four per cent. The considerable gap between the employment rates of men and women tend to emerge later in the working life, presumably due to work-life choices and opportunities.

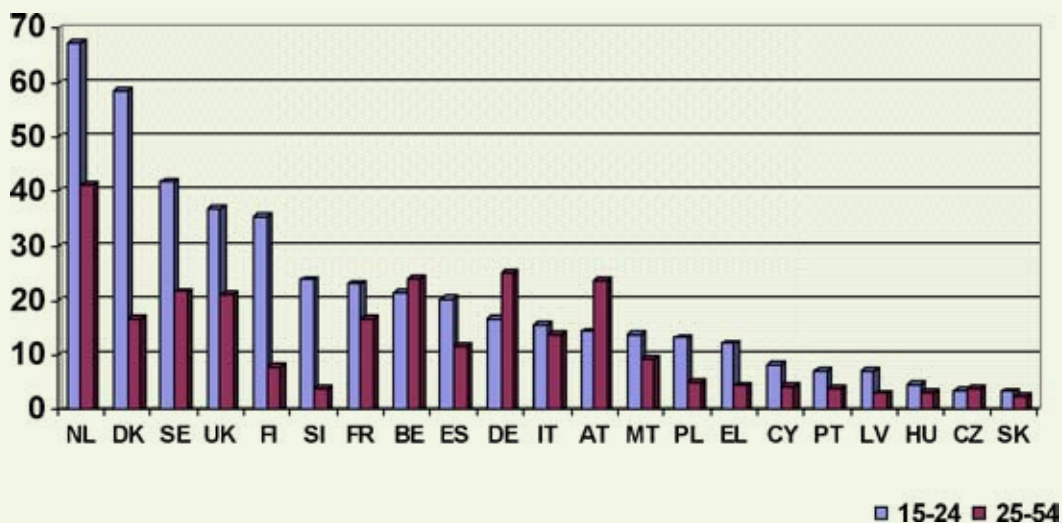
Chart 2 illustrates the employment rates of Maltese youth, compared to their European counterparts at the end of 2006. Part-time work among employed youth in Malta, though rising, is at 13.9% well below the European average of 24.4%. Chart 3 below illustrates the percentage of young workers who were in part-time employment in 2006. As may be noted, part-time work is far more frequent among younger workers than among those aged between 25 and 54. Data is not available for all EU member states, nor is reliable data available that is disaggregated by gender.

CHART 2: Employment Rates of Youth in Europe, 2006



Source: Eurostat

CHART 3: Youth in part-time work, 2006



Source: CEC, 2007b

Self-employment is quite low among young people, standing under 4 per cent of employed youth and mostly self-employed without employees.

Looking at the main occupations of young people in Malta at the end of 2006, one may note that the majority of young people are in services and sales, and clerical positions. There is still a sizeable number of young people who work in elementary and operator jobs. As may be expected, compared to the whole working age population, young people feature more highly in services and sales and at clerical level, and considerably lower in professional, legislative, and senior positions.

TABLE 1: Occupations of Young People, 2006

	Ages 15 to 24		
	Men	Women	Total
	%	%	%
Service Workers & Shop & Market Sales Workers	20.9	24.8	22.7
Clerks	9.8	27.7	18.0
Technicians & Associate Professionals	15.5	13.2	14.5
Elementary Occupations	16.6	8.0	12.6
Craft & Related Trades Workers	19.6	1.4	11.2
Plant & Machine Operators & Assemblers	7.6	14.0	10.5
Professionals	6.5	9.2	7.7
Legislator, Senior Officials & Managers	2.2	1.7	1.9
Skilled Agricultural & Fishery Workers	1.0	0.0	0.6
Armed Forces	0.3	0.0	0.2
Total	100%	100%	100%

Source: Labour Force Survey 2006



Table 2 illustrates the sectors in which young people work. As may be noted, around 57% of young people work in the three sectors of manufacturing, wholesale & retail, and hotels & restaurants. Youth are highly represented in these sectors, which only employ around 40% of the total employed population. (NB shaded data implies under-representation; treat with caution).

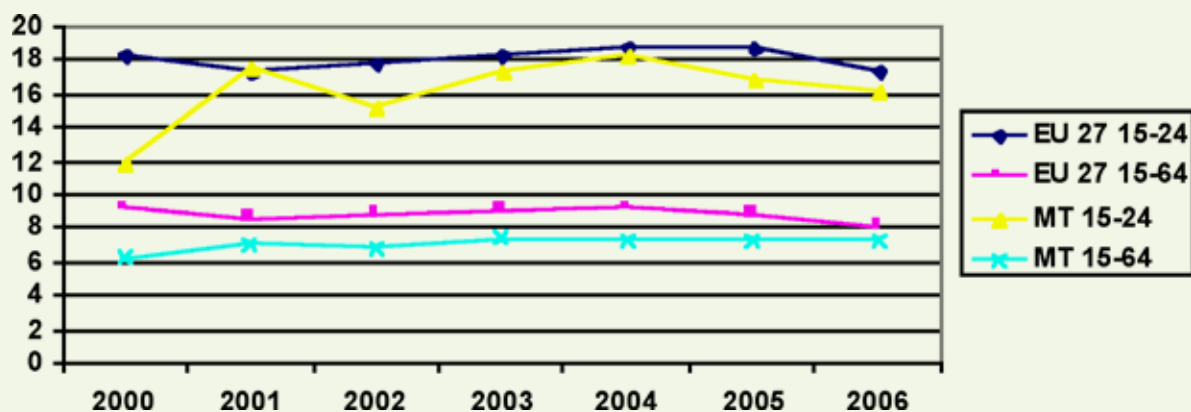


TABLE 2: Economic activity of Young People, 2006

	Male	Female	Total
	%	%	%
Manufacturing	26.6	21.0	24.0
Wholesale and retail trade	19.9	23.3	21.5
Hotels and restaurants	11.1	11.5	11.3
Construction	13.6	0.6	7.6
Real Estate, renting and business activities	7.1	7.3	7.2
Education	1.2	10.0	5.2
Transport, storage and communications	4.5	5.0	4.8
Health and Social Work	2.6	7.0	4.6
Public admin. and defense; compulsory social security	4.5	3.8	4.1
Other community, social and personal service activities	3.2	5.1	4.1
Financial Intermediation	3.1	5.0	4.0
Agriculture, hunting and forestry	1.2	0.3	0.8
Mining and Quarrying	0.8	0.0	0.4
Electricity, Gas and Water Supply	0.3	0.0	0.2
Fishing	0.2	0.1	0.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

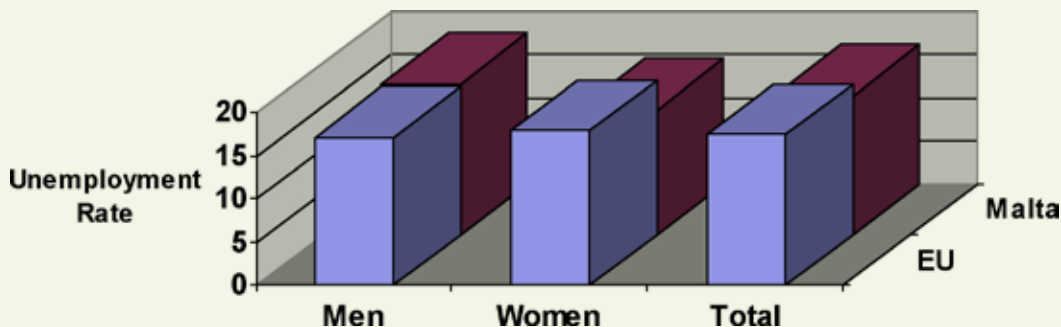
Source: Labour Force Survey, 2006

CHART 4: Unemployment 2000 - 2006



Source: CEC, 2007b

CHART 5: Unemployment by Gender (15-24), 2006



Source: Employment in Europe, 2006

Another important labour market indicator is the unemployment rate. Chart 4 illustrates that the youth unemployment rate in Malta, as in Europe and beyond, continues to be almost twice as high as the rate for the whole working age population, reflecting the challenge that young people face in entering the labour market.

As Chart 5 indicates, at the end of 2006 the youth unemployment rate in Malta hovered around the EU average for young men, while it is over three points lower than the EU average for young women.

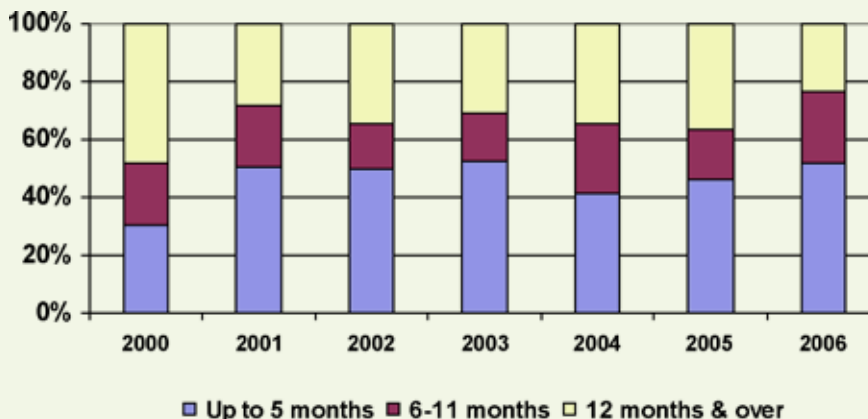
In fact, there has been a decrease of almost two percentage points in the youth unemployment rate from 2006 to 2007 according to the Labour Force Surveys for the July to September quarters. The overall rate decreased from 14.5% to 12.8%. The decline was particularly marked for young women, among whom it decreased by over five percentage

points (from 16.1% to 11.4%) while that for young men rose by one point to stand at 14.1%.

Over the past six years, the average duration of unemployment spells of young people has decreased quite significantly. Chart 6 below illustrates how long-term unemployment among young people has gone down from 69.8% in 2000, to 48.5% in 2006. A young person is considered to be 'long-term unemployed' after six months of unemployment, unlike those aged twenty five and over who are deemed to be long-term unemployed after twelve months of unemployment.

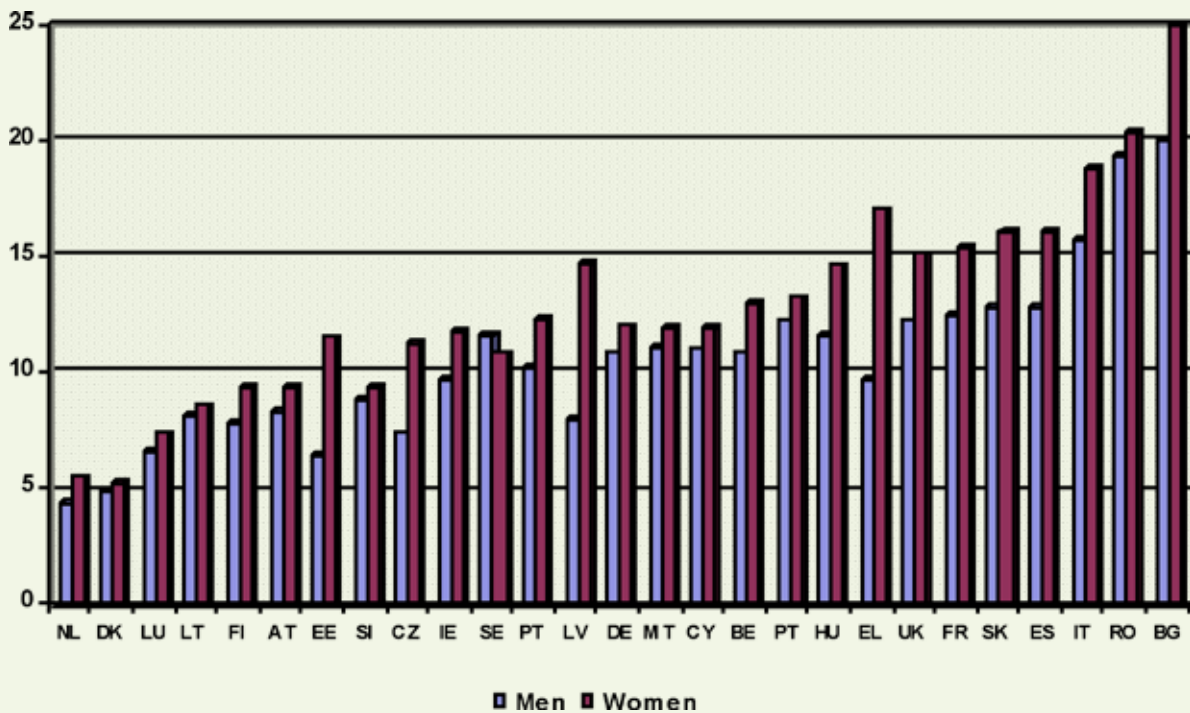
While this shortening of the unemployment duration most probably reflects greater success in finding work, it may also suggest a percentage of young people who are neither in work nor actively seeking it. The Corporation is particularly interested in those young people who are

CHART 6: Duration of Unemployment



Source: Labour Force Survey, 2006

CHART 7: Youth neither in employment nor education, 2006



Source: CEC 2007b

neither in employment nor in education and is striving to reach out to them with a view to encouraging them to either pursue their education or training or to undergo work exposure schemes. As illustrated in Chart 7 o, the rate of such youth in Malta was 11.6% of the cohort in 2006, at around the middle of the European spectrum.

To conclude this section, one may note that the employment rates of young people in Malta are quite high if seen within the European context, and have risen in 2007 over 2006. Over half of young Maltese workers work in services and sales, as clerks or as technicians, while the other half work in elementary, trades or operator jobs. The proportion of

young workers in part-time employment is below the European average, while self-employment among Maltese youth is low. Unemployment is slightly lower than the European average, while it has gone down over the past year, particularly among young women. The length of young people’s unemployment spells has decreased over the past six years. However, there remain a sizeable number of young people who are neither in education nor in employment and who, together with unemployed youth and others who seek to use ETC’s schemes and services, feature highly on the Corporation’s agenda.

The forthcoming section provides an overview of ETC’s initiatives in favour of young people in recent years.



SECTION 3

Recent ETC Initiatives for Young People

The public employment service (PES), which is the generic name for ETC and its European counterparts, has a vital role in promoting young people's integration in the labour market. The PES has direct contact with young people, with regular, face-to-face dialogue with the jobseekers who use its services.

The PES makes the best use of its human resources to offer personalized employment pathways to young people, helping them to determine the most suitable job for them and what training may assist them to acquire it. ETC seeks to adhere as closely as resources allow, to the target set in the Integrated Guidelines which states that every unemployed young person must be offered a new start before reaching six months of unemployment in the form of training, retraining, work practice, a job or another employability measure.

ETC's services for young people may be categorized under three pillars:

- Employment
- Employability
- Equal Opportunities

In the remainder of this section, we provide a brief overview of the schemes and services we have been operating in recent years in favour of young people, and which services we are seeking to develop further through this Youth Strategy.

3.1 EMPLOYMENT

The ultimate aim of ETC's services for young people is to help them to find and take up suitable work. To do this, ETC offers a range of schemes and services which it has sought to develop and consolidate in recent years. These are considered in turn.

3.1.1 SERVICES

Employment services may be further categorized into

- Personal Action Planning and Profiling
- Career Guidance
- YouthStart Initiative
- Jobsearch Facilities
- EURES

A. Personal Action Plan and Profiling

During the first month of unemployment, an Employment Advisor invites the young jobseeker to jointly draw up a Personal Action Plan. The PAP is a written agreement that must be endorsed by both parties and is intended to identify the obstacles that may be preventing the jobseeker from finding his or her desired job, and the action that he or she may take to overcome them. The PAP also addresses CV writing, and is a useful tool for the client's future reference.

During the PAP session, a Profiling interview is carried out. The interview is designed to record in-depth information about the jobseeker, including:

- Relevant personal details
- Skills
- Level of education
- Work experience
- Obstacles
- Training needs

During the interview, the Employment Advisor helps jobseekers to identify an occupation that may suit their skills and experience. The jobseeker is also referred to any relevant courses and/or encouraged to participate in any of ETC programmes. Jobseekers

may also be advised about apprenticeships and traineeships, and referred to any current job vacancies.

Progress on the PAP is discussed on a monthly basis for a duration of six months.

B. Careers Guidance

ETC has worked together with the Guidance and Counselling Section of the Education Division, the University of Malta, MCAST and Euroguidance Malta, to produce the first one hundred career paths to guide young people. These career paths are available on the EURES website, and provide a comprehensive list of career descriptions including information on relevant courses as well as what the particular jobs actually involve.

C. YouthStart Initiative

The YouthStart initiative takes place at the very early stages of unemployment to facilitate the most rapid integration possible and to prevent long-term unemployment among young people. It consists of four main strands:

Jobsearch Seminars help new jobseekers to look for work by providing jobseeking skills, including information on ETC's main services; jobsearch methods; interview skills; current labour market trends; and employment regulations. This one day seminar is offered within 15 days of registration.

Jobskills Courses provide basic skills such as self-awareness; communication and teamwork skills; decision-making and problem-solving skills; assertiveness; preparing a CV; and further in-depth training in the subjects covered in the Jobsearch Seminars. The course is provided for jobseekers who have been registering for work for more than thirty days.

Motivation Seminars are offered to young long-term unemployed who have been registering for more than six months. They are three-day live-in seminars aimed to increase the person's self-esteem and confidence. If deemed necessary, persons attending these seminars are then referred for further tailored assistance.

Job Clubs are six-week programmes for young jobseekers that further empower them through soft skills and jobsearch skills. A manual has been developed in order to provide Job Club facilitators with guidelines. Job Clubs also include orientation visits to different workplaces.

D. Jobsearch Facilities

The Vacancy Profile Unit within ETC receives vacancies from employers, and passes them on to Employment Advisors. ETC has an automated matching system which assists the Corporation to match vacancy requirements with the skills and qualifications of jobseekers on its database. The Employment Advisor filters the results of the automatching in order to send the employer a list of the most suitable clients. This process is ongoing and the young jobseeker is very regularly informed of job vacancies suitable for him or her.

Since 1996, when data was first disaggregated by age groups, ETC has placed 19,874 young persons in employment – an average of 1800 each year.

In addition to using the matching service, clients can also search for vacancies through:

ETC's website, www.etc.gov.mt, which provides jobseekers with the information necessary to search and apply for vacancies, as well as information on courses.

Vacancy automailer is a service whereby an email is sent daily to jobseekers opting to receive it, containing information on current job vacancies notified to ETC as well as those in local newspapers.

SMS Jobseekers registering with ETC may also be informed of jobs that match their preferences via sms.

Jobseeker Direct Freephone is a free telephone service that jobseekers may wish to use to be notified of vacancies, on 80076500.



CV posting online. Jobseekers can choose to post their CV's on the ETC and/or EURES websites, from where they can be contacted directly by employers.

Job Banks are found both at ETC Hal-Far as well as at University and MCAST. These may be used to search for vacancies both in Malta or abroad.

Job Centres. ETC has four jobcentres, in Valletta, Mosta, Birgu and Victoria Gozo. Our Job Centres aim to offer a service closer to the customer, and include the following:

- Vacancy information (also through touchscreen and standalone computers)
- Training referrals
- Employment or registration histories
- EURES information
- Registration of clients on Part 3
- General information on ETC services

Open Days and Job Fairs are organized regularly, and are usually held at the Valletta Job Centre.

E. EURES

EURES is the network of European Employment Services, established to facilitate mobility through easier access to information on living and working in other European Countries. EURES Malta has been operating since 2004 and promotes its activities through various local media on a national level. ETC actively collaborates with various educational institutions and other stakeholders to inform and advise on EURES services, and welcomes all requests for such assistance.

3.1.2 SCHEMES

In addition to its services, ETC also operates a number of employment schemes that benefit young people. These include the Job Experience Scheme, the Active Youth Scheme and Bridging the Gap Scheme. (The latter scheme is discussed under 3.3 Equal Opportunities below.)

A. Job Experience Scheme

New labour market entrants often tend to go to job interviews with little or no job experience. To address this issue, ETC introduced the Job Experience Scheme (JES) which aims to:

- Facilitate the school to work transition by providing new labour market entrants with some experience of the world of work; and
- Improve the participant's employability through work experience, overcoming the vicious circle of 'no job, no experience, and no experience, no job.

JES involves a thirteen week placement with an employer in the private or public sector, during which time the employer is encouraged to expose the young person to as many new skills as possible. The participant is paid an allowance during the placement.

Since it was introduced in 2003, over 830 young persons have benefited from the Job Experience Scheme.

B. Active Youth Scheme

Youth who have been registering for work for at least six consecutive months and who are willing to provide a service to the community are eligible to participate in the Active Youth Scheme.

The scheme aims to help youth discover and develop their qualities and at the same time contribute to the community by working with NGO's such as religious or cultural organizations. It involves a placement of up to six months, during which time the participant receives an allowance.

Since it was introduced in 2006, over 220 young persons have benefited from the Active Youth Scheme.

3.2 EMPLOYABILITY

The second strand of ETC services for young people is that of employability. In addition to the jobsearch training referred to above, ETC also offers four principal forms of assistance to promote the employability of its clients, especially young persons:

- Training courses
- Apprenticeship Schemes
- Traineeships
- Training grants
- Other

A. Training Courses

Providing training that boosts persons' employability has always been part of the *raison d'être* of the Corporation. ETC offers a wide range of courses which are open to young people. Since 1996 (from when data disaggregated by age became available), the Corporation has trained over 27,400 young persons in trade and non-trade subjects. The table overleaf illustrates the number of trainees in courses delivered between October 2006 and September 2007:

TABLE 3: Trainees, by courses delivered in 2006/7

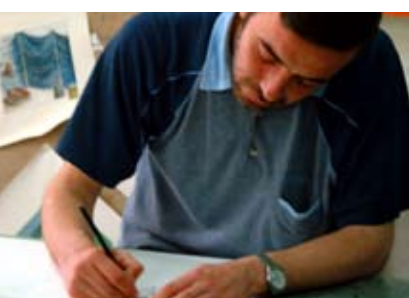
Course Type	2006/2007
Basic skills	726
Office related	265
IT related	230
Trade	207
Business & Management Development	155
Entrepreneurship	16
Technical	20
Other, according to labour market need	998
Thru' Cooperation Agreements with NGOs	61
At Corradino Correctional Facility	56
Total	2774

B. Apprenticeships

Apprenticeship Schemes are an effective medium of vocational education and training for youth. They are a combination of on- and off-the-job training and therefore facilitate the transition from school-to-work and provide employers with a skilled and trained workforce. Participants also come to appreciate the place of work as a site for learning and thus the concept of life long learning is promoted. The Corporation has strengthened the apprenticeship framework by setting up consultative committees for areas in which there is significant labour market demand. These committees made up of employers and representatives from VET institutions help to shape the apprenticeship – the duration, the knowledge content and the kind of complementary on-the-job training needs to be provided at the place of work.

- Technician Apprenticeship Scheme (TAS)
- Extended Skill Training Scheme (ESTS)

The Technician Apprenticeship Scheme and the Extended Skill Training Scheme offer training opportunities in thirty five different occupational areas. The competences achieved differ by scheme as while the TAS offers VET at technician level, the ESTS offers competence building at craftsmanship level. Both Schemes are based on the dual system of VET but the periods during which apprentices are expected to attend an educational institution for the acquisition of knowledge are longer for TAS than for ESTS.



Apprenticeship agreements are entered into by the Corporation, an employer (or 'sponsor') and the apprentice him or herself, which agreement lays down the rights and obligations of all parties during the apprenticeship.

Since its inception, the Corporation has managed 8,453 such agreements in a variety of callings.

C. Traineeships

Traineeships are similar to apprenticeships in that they also involve off- and on-the-job training, though generally of a much shorter duration. When a particular labour market need is identified, ETC draws up a training programme and calls for interested employers to provide the on-the-job training component.

At the end of a traineeship, the trainee sits for a competency test and receives certification. The minimum duration of a traineeship is 13 consecutive weeks while the maximum is 52 weeks. The duration varies according to the programme.

The Corporation launches several callings in different sectors, as diverse as ICT, Croupier, Operator, and Elderly Care skills.

D. Training Grants

In addition to its training programmes, ETC also operates training grant schemes to contribute to lifelong learning in employment.

At present there are two principal forms of grant.

The first are the training grants provided for by the *Business Promotion Act*. The objective of this assistance is to promote the concept of training and retraining of employees, amongst employers. Assistance covers a good part of the cost of the persons delivering the training, the personnel costs, travel expenses and consultancy. Training assistance is more generous to small and medium sized enterprises and where the training is of a general nature, that is, where the training is such that the skills acquired can be transferred across jobs.

The second is the *Training Subsidy Scheme*. This was launched in 2005 with the intention of assisting self-employed persons and those in enterprises with less than twenty employees, to continue

to develop their skills through off-the-job vocational education or training. Assistance is provided in the form of a training grant, and is reimbursed on successful completion of the training.

Through this Scheme the Corporation is empowering persons who may otherwise not have the opportunity to train, by offering them greater choice and control over their learning. It also ensures that learning is taking place at a time, place and pace that suit the individual. From its end the Corporation ensures relevance and usefulness of skills to be acquired by the individual applicant and that the training institution offering the training is properly equipped (in its broadest sense) to do this.

E. Other

From time to time, the Corporation applies to utilize relevant funds available for its clients. One such example is the Leonardo da Vinci Programme. Participation in this programme has included a number of initiatives, such as that in the audiovisual industries. A group of ten young jobseekers from the Cottonera area traveled to Birmingham for a three-week placement with the BBC. Through this project, they acquired practical skills and technical knowledge in film production, and some have since been employed in the local film and television industry while another was employed by an audiovisual company in the UK. This project has recently been classified as one of the 25 best projects under the Leonardo da Vinci Programme in Europe.

3.3 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

ETC seeks to promote equal opportunities across the whole range of its employment and training schemes and services. However, it recognizes that for certain client groups, extra effort is called for to help them overcome the obstacles they may face in raising their skill levels or finding a job. In this section we provide an overview of some of these initiatives we have provided in recent years, by client group for ease of reference.

A. Basic Employment Training

This programme, which has to date been repeated annually, involves the provision of basic employment skills to young school leavers who for various reasons leave education with little or no qualifications and do not intend to further their studies.

Training generally takes place in the summer months and lasts around twelve weeks. It includes training in Maltese literacy, English literacy, Numeracy, Life skills, IT, Technology Education and Employability Skills.

In 2007, the BET was co-funded by the European Social Fund.

B. Bridging the Gap scheme

This scheme aims to enhance the capabilities of disadvantaged jobseekers and to support their transition into work. The scheme offers the participant a period of work exposure with an employer. During their placement, trainees are given a weekly allowance equivalent to 80 per cent of the current minimum wage. Eligible jobseekers include the registered disabled, former substance abusers, and former offenders.

C. Lone Mothers Initiative

Since 2004, ETC has operated a small scale project with young lone mothers, helping them to identify their training or work aspirations and assisting them in this respect.

ETC has also operated a scheme, co-funded by the European Social Fund in 2006/7, to encourage the take-up of training among lone mothers, providing them with core skills and work exposure to enter the workforce. The first phase provided training in basic literacy, a self-empowerment course, and basic IT training. The second phase provided off- and on-the-job training. An allowance for childcare costs during training was also available.

D. Empowerment Programmes

ETC organizes regular empowerment training courses to women including single parents and women in refuges.

E. Youth in Care

ETC has supported the Housing Authority to implement a project in favour of Youth in Residential Care. This was co-funded under the EQUAL programme. The project provided for basic and advanced vocational training to youth in care, which youth then benefited from housing assistance.

In 2007, ETC also implemented another project co-funded by the European Social Fund for other youth in care with the aim of enhancing their employment prospects through basic and vocational training.

F. Overcoming Gender Segregation

ETC has conducted a number of seminars with young people in area secondary schools with a view to broadening their career aspirations and promoting work-life balance and the notion of shared responsibility for work and private life among boys and girls.

Young people also stand to benefit, albeit less directly, from the various campaigns organized by ETC in favour of gender equality and of work-life balance and modern organizational practices.

SECTION 4

Looking Forward: 2008/2009



This final section of this Consultation Document provides an overview of ETC's intentions in respect of young people over the coming two years.

4.1 EMPLOYMENT

ETC will continue to develop its employment services and schemes as mentioned in Section 3.0 above, which included:

- Personal Action Planning and Profiling
- YouthStart Initiative
- Jobsearch Facilities
- Job Experience Scheme
- Active Youth Scheme

4.1.1 EMPLOYMENT AID PROGRAMME

ETC has applied for European Social Funds 2007-2013 to co-finance the Employment Aid Programme that is intended to promote the integration of persons from disadvantaged groups in the labour market. It does so through financial assistance to employers recruiting such persons and retaining them in employment for at least twelve months – during which time, the person acquires valuable work experience.

The Employment Aid Programme will be available – among other groups – to persons aged under 25 and who have not yet had a first regular employment within two years of completing

full-time education. Young people will also benefit through other target groups, such as ex-substance abusers, ex-convicts, very long-term unemployed and inactive persons.

4.1.2 YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME

ETC is developing a Youth Employment Programme intended to increase the employability and labour market integration of young people, particularly disadvantaged young jobseekers but also those in precarious work who would benefit from further training and from greater knowledge of their rights and responsibilities at work. The Programme will involve various aspects, including guidance, training, and knowledge of relevant labour and social security legislation.

This programme will also involve active outreach to identify and assist young people who may not be aware of ETC's service. Various relevant media will be used. The Corporation also intends to develop a dedicated website for young people which will enable their labour market integration and inform them of the range of ways in which they may strengthen their employability.

4.1.3 GRADUATE SCHEME

ETC is actively considering the development of a new scheme targeted specifically at graduates. This scheme would offer graduates an opportunity to apply the skills and knowledge gained during their studies to a work environment. It is envisaged that participants will be placed at a workplace that is relevant to their studies for a period of eight weeks.



4.1.4 CAREERS GUIDANCE

ETC will seek to add to the one hundred career paths already developed and available on the EURES website.

In addition, ETC will actively contribute to career fairs organized in Malta or Gozo, to assist young people to consider various training and employment paths.

ETC intends to promote structured dialogue between career guidance officers and personnel managers. While the latter can provide information on the type of jobs currently required and the skills and qualifications involved, the career guidance officers can transmit this information to the students who seek advice on current and medium term labour market needs.

Based on feedback from various seminars, ETC is currently working to develop aids for PSD and guidance teachers. Although resources do not permit ETC to carry out seminars in individual schools, it is hoped that these aids will be of help to such teachers in their work with students. Having said that, however, should any particular school have a pressing reason for ETC to address their students, they may approach ETC with a request and we will do our best to assist, either at the school itself or by grouping together a number of students at ETC premises. .

4.1.5 TALENT BANKS – DATABASE OF HIGHLY QUALIFIED SPECIALISTS

ETC is exploring the possibility of setting up a Talent Bank, a specialised service for a particular target group, mainly highly qualified persons or job seekers having more than three years experience in their expertise. This would help employers to find specialized personnel in a timely manner.

4.1.6 JOB ROTATION SCHEME

ETC intends to study the feasibility of developing a Job Rotation Scheme for private companies. In such a scheme, job rotation is carried out by temporarily substituting workers (who are on leave for a short period of time, like maternity leave) with unemployed youth suitable for the job at hand. This scheme would help to fill essential gaps for the employer and at the same time, give an opportunity to the unemployed to learn new skills, gain experience and remain active in the labour market.

4.1.7 S.T.A.R.S. PROJECT

Involvement in community activities enables young people to feel connected to community life and to develop into active citizens. Such learning experiences provide a valuable source of healthy social and psychological development, thereby also improving

their employability.

The S.T.A.R.S. project is a proposal put forward for consideration under the *Youth in Action Programme*, where young adults organise activities involving different target groups. These include children, senior citizens and youth from different ethnic/cultural/religious backgrounds. Members of S.T.A.R.S. will be given training on communication skills, motivation and commitment, as well as on how to train others, on diversity, gender equality and health and safety.

Some of the planned activities involve a Kids Club; IT skills for senior members of the community; and a Sports and Social Event with young refugees.

4.1.8 NEWSLETTER FOR YOUNG ADULTS

ETC intends to plan and develop a newsletter to be distributed bi-annually (March and October).

Target groups for this newsletter will primarily be secondary and post-secondary students (to be disseminated in schools) and also to youth job seekers in general (to be distributed at ETC premises and places such as Local Councils and Youth Organisations).

The newsletter will feature articles on issues such as:

- Particular career paths, featuring interviews with employer/employee in such a field;
- Job hunting and interview tips;
- ETC services and procedures;
- Conditions of work;
- Information links;
- Lifestyle section, featuring topics of general interest
- Success stories

4.1.9 INCREASE ACCESS TO INFORMATION

ETC will continue to increase its use of the internet and other ICT facilities to disseminate information on training opportunities and to facilitate jobsearch. These will be complemented by job fairs and recruitment days, especially on request by employers seeking staff. IT facilities for public use will continue to be provided in post-secondary and tertiary educational institutions and in other localities where youth tend to meet. The media will continue to be used extensively to promote the services offered and to encourage young people to use them.

4.1.10 EMPLOYMENT OF MINORS

During consultation, it was brought to ETC's attention by the Office for the Commissioner for Children that the employment

of minors without permission, is still a pressing issue and is harmful to their long-term prospects. ETC will, in addition to its inspectorate function, look into the issue more closely and will investigate the possibility of proposing harsher penalties for employers of minors as well as encouraging such young persons to pursue further training.

Some minors are exempted from school to pursue a particular job. ETC will endeavour to attract such young persons to attend evening courses to supplement their knowledge and skills.

4.2 EMPLOYABILITY

ETC will continue to build upon, and improve, the employability services it currently offers, including its training programmes, apprenticeships and traineeships, and the administration of training grants.

4.2.1 EMPLOYABILITY PROGRAMME

ETC has applied for funds to launch a broader Employability Programme. This will consist in a number of improved and innovative training programmes, for jobseekers, the inactive, prospective entrepreneurs and employees seeking to upgrade their skills. The Programme will provide for the setting up of a specialized Basic Skills Unit, which in addition to training will perform a strengthened assessment function in respect of trainees' competences. The Programme will also involve work orientation and retraining programmes, a range of traineeships, a business start-up initiative, and a broader training subsidy scheme.

4.2.2 TRAINING AID FRAMEWORK

ETC has applied for co-financing under the European Social Funds 2007-2013 to support undertakings that provide training to their employees, through a reimbursement of a percentage of training costs incurred. Undertakings include all private sector entities engaged in an economic activity and having one or more employees. Self-employed persons will also be eligible to participate. The refund will depend on the size of the undertaking and the type of training provided. If approved, eligible costs will include:

- Trainers' fees and/or personnel costs
- Trainers'/employees' travel expenses
- Cost of consultancy in respect of training
- Personnel costs incurred per employee following training

4.2.3 REVIEW OF TRAINING PROGRAMMES TOWARDS CERTIFICATION

Once the Malta Qualifications Council establishes standards of competence for the various occupational areas and levels of competence, ETC will review the content of its training programmes to enable participants attending its courses to satisfy national standards and obtain full or part-certification of the skills they attained, where appropriate.

4.2.4 INTRODUCE A JOB TASTERS SCHEME

ETC intends to implement a new scheme to target youth with little or no skills. The scheme will provide short job experiences in particular sectors where labour is in demand. Through a work exposure period, these young people will be in a better position to identify their job inclinations. In the second phase of the scheme, participants will receive further advice on training options and assisted to follow the necessary training through one of the Corporation's training pathways.



4.2.5 BOOSTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP

ETC believes that entrepreneurship stimulates job creation and will therefore seek to further develop its entrepreneurship scheme entitled INT (*Ibda Negozju Tieghek, or Start your Own Business*). The scheme includes counseling sessions, intensive training, mentoring and grants to assist persons interested in setting up their own business.

In addition, ETC will seek to promote entrepreneurship during youth seminars, in collaboration with Malta Enterprise. The sessions will focus on the legal framework, on one's rights and obligations as an entrepreneur, as well as providing practical examples of how to set up one's own business.

The potential for cooperatives among young people deserves closer attention. ETC will seek to discuss a possible approach with the Board of Cooperatives and with APEX with a view to raising young people's awareness of cooperatives and providing the necessary information.

4.3 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

ETC will continue to promote equitable access to training and to work for all, including – though not exclusively – the client groups already catered for such as the low-skilled, women, persons with disability, and others. It is important to point out that wherever at all possible, ETC will do its utmost to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities in its mainstream services, providing facilitators, aids and transport where feasible. It will also continue to improve the accessibility of its facilities to persons with mobility or sensory impairments.

ETC will also be collaborating with various other stakeholders in the field of disability and disadvantage to ensure an optimal utilization of skills, expertise and resources in favour of these groups. Some of the new or revised initiatives that ETC intends to take to promote equal opportunities in the labour market include the following:

4.3.1 BASIC EMPLOYMENT TRAINING

ETC will review the content of its Basic Employment Training Certificate course to ensure that it meets the standards set by the Malta Qualifications Council at :Level 1 of the National Qualifications Framework. It will then apply to the Malta Qualifications Council to obtain accreditation. This would mean that school leavers who do not intend to further their studies will be able to attend this training programme and to obtain basic competencies which are recognized at the national level. This certificate would enable them to continue to build on these skills in future.

4.3.2 REACH

ETC will continue to work with secondary schools to provide alternative solutions to students with high school absenteeism. This will be modeled on the current REACH programme carried out in Cottonera. REACH is a two-phase programme, run both at school and in a non-formal setting for those who do not attend school. It is run in collaboration with other institutions, including ACCESS, the Cottonera Community Service, SEDQA secondary prevention scheme, and the Cottonera Colleges and its schools.

This programme aims to address the risk factors leading to absenteeism and to encourage and support youth to remain within the education system. A learning mentor is based in the participating schools.

4.3.3 GENDER EQUALITY PROGRAMME

At present, ETC is currently implementing its third two-yearly Gender Equality Plan aimed to help diverse groups of women to enter, retain and progress within employment while achieving a healthy work-life balance.

In respect of young people, ETC will continue with its efforts to empower young males and females to make the best possible career choices in line with their skills and inclinations and irrespective of gender stereotypes. ETC is considering a further rolling-out of the two-day training programme currently being offered to a limited number of area secondary schools per year. It is being proposed that ESF funds are obtained so that the training can be offered to all 4th formers in secondary schools in Malta to cover all students of that age cohort.

The aim of this training is to ensure that both girls and boys are aware of the importance of being financially independent, of joint responsibility for non-remunerated work, and of caring for oneself and one's development. The training involves components on self-esteem and assertiveness. ETC is also considering the adaptation of the training programme and its delivery to students' parents too.

4.3.4 SOCIAL INCLUSION PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME

ETC intends to apply for funding in order to launch a Social Inclusion Partnership Programme. This Programme will entail the development of specialized and individualized support (for employment and training purposes) in respect of various disadvantaged client groups. These groups are likely to include persons with physical and intellectual disability, mental health problems, ex-substance abusers, ex-convicts, persons who are not literate, and persons with social problems. Many of these clients are likely to be young people. It is envisaged that ETC will

collaborate closely with expert non-profit and other organizations in the development and delivery of these services.

4.3.5 EMPLOYMENT OF REFUGEES

At present, recognized refugees, as well as those in the process of seeking asylum and those with temporary humanitarian protection, are entitled to work in Malta. ETC is collaborating closely with other entities working for refugees with a view to their training and labour market integration. The proposal was made during consultation that the rights and needs of young refugees should be studied more closely and ETC intends to do so during the currency of this Plan.

4.3.6 YOUNG PERSONS IN CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

ETC has for a number of years carried out certain training initiatives among persons in correctional facilities and has utilized its employment schemes to strive to find work placements for these persons. ETC will be consulting with authorities in respect of the possibility to consolidate the training and work exposure of young persons in such facilities and particularly those who are soon to leave.

4.3.7 YOUNG PERSONS WITH SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROBLEMS

During consultation it was drawn to ETC's attention that some young people receiving methadone treatment are required to do so between 7 am and 2 pm, which makes it necessary for thought to be given when organizing training and other initiatives for this client group. ETC has taken note, and will endeavour to bear it in mind whenever possible.

4.3.8 YOUNG PEOPLE'S RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS AT WORK

ETC will continue to raise awareness of young people as to their rights and obligations at work, including issues such as conditions of work and health and safety. Efforts will be made, in collaboration with the Department for Industrial and Employment Relations, to strengthen this awareness through our various training programmes and to provide a range of printed media on this issue.

4.3.9 COLLABORATION WITH SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCIES

Recognising that a number of young people face social and psychological barriers to labour market integration, ETC will pursue more closely a collaborative strategy with social welfare agencies in the public and non-governmental sectors to address the needs of these young people in as holistic a manner as possible.

As pointed out during consultation, other professionals in the field who deal with young people, such as social workers, psychologists and youth workers, have very much to offer in terms of their experience. ETC welcomes their suggestions and feedback, and will seek to organize fora at which such expertise may be tapped and shared.

5.0 CONCLUSION

This document illustrates the policy context for ETC's actions for youth, as well as current labour market trends in Malta and, where available, in Europe. The document also sets out – under the threefold strategy of boosting employment, strengthening employability and promoting equal opportunities – the actions that ETC has taken in recent years together with the major measures that it intends to introduce in the two years to come.

These actions will be supported by other initiatives within ETC of a horizontal nature. ETC will be developing further its efforts to monitor and evaluate its services with a view to improving them, through surveys and qualitative research. As pointed out by during the consultation period, it is critical for youth to be involved not only as recipients of employment and training services but also in their formulation and evaluation. ETC has sought to consult young people and will strengthen its ability to do so. ETC will continue to welcome further feedback and suggestions from representatives of young people and from other stakeholders with an interest in the issue of young people in the Maltese labour market.

This document owes a lot to the input of all those who attended the Consultation Forum and who provided written feedback along the way. A very interesting debate has emerged as to the need to strike the right balance between promoting the rights of young people, while ensuring – and enabling – their reciprocal contribution to society. Appropriate levels of protection and encouragement are important, without inducing complacency or lessening the effort necessary for young people's talent and creativity to take shape. ETC hopes that the schemes and services it offers for young people may help in this common goal.

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