

GENDER EQUALITY & MAINSTREAMING STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN 2022 - 2027

Annual Report 2025

Foreword



I am pleased to present the Gender Equality & Mainstreaming Strategy and Action Plan (GEMSAP) Annual Report 2025, which reflects the continued commitment of Government to advance equality and ensure that gender considerations are meaningfully integrated across public policy and decision making.

As the Strategy reaches its mid term point, this report demonstrates tangible progress across a broad range of measures, supported by stronger coordination, improved use of data, and sustained engagement by Ministries and public entities. Key advances were achieved in areas such as legislative reform, education, employment, health, and participation in decision making, while important initiatives continued to challenge stereotypes, address intersectional discrimination and promote equal opportunities for women and men.

At the same time, the report provides a realistic assessment of areas where further effort is required. This clarity allows us to focus the remaining implementation period on measures that will deliver the greatest impact and ensure lasting structural change. Gender equality is an ongoing process, requiring consistent political leadership, institutional accountability and collective responsibility.

Gender equality is a shared responsibility. The achievements documented in this report are the result of the collective efforts of public officers, institutions, social partners, civil society and academic stakeholders who continue to contribute expertise, commitment and innovation. I thank all those involved for their contribution and commitment.

As we move forward, our priority remains clear: to consolidate progress, address remaining gaps, and ensure that equality and dignity remain central to Malta's social, economic and democratic development.

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PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY FOR EQUALITY & REFORMS

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List of Abbreviations

CCWR	Consultative Council for Women’s Rights
CGBVDV	Commission on Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence
CRPD	Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability
DELH	Department of Education and Lifelong Learning
DIER	Department for Industrial and Employment Relations
DQSE	Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education
DSVP	Department for Student and Vocational Preparation
FES	Foundation for Educational Services
FSWS	Foundation for Social Welfare Services
GMU	Gender Mainstreaming Unit
HRD	Human Rights Directorate
IPS	Institute for the Public Service
MCAST	Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology
MEYR	Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation
MEEP	Ministry for the Economy, Enterprise and Strategic Projects
MFIN	Ministry for Finance
MFT	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Tourism
MHA	Ministry for Health and Active Ageing
MHAL	Ministry for the National Heritage, the Arts and Local Government
MHSE	Ministry for Home Affairs, Security and Employment
MIV	Ministry for Inclusion and the Voluntary Sector
MJR	Ministry for Justice and Reform of the Construction Sector
MPF	Malta Police Force
MSAA	Ministry for Social and Affordable Accommodation
MSPC	Ministry for Social Policy and Children’s Rights
NCPE	National Commission for the Promotion of Equality
NLA	National Literacy Agency
NSC	National Skills Council
NSO	National Statistics Office
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
OPM – EES	Office of the Prime Minister – European Funds, Equality, Reforms and Social Dialogue
P&SD	People and Standards Division
PSD	Pension Strategy Directorate
PSCD	Personal, Social and Career Development
RSIRU	Research and School Internal Review Unit
UM	University of Malta

Background

The Gender Equality and Mainstreaming Strategy and Action Plan (GEMSAP) provides the national strategic framework guiding Government's efforts to promote and strengthen gender equality, while systematically integrating a gender perspective across policies, programmes, and decision-making processes.

A key mechanism supporting the implementation of this Strategy is the Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC), through which every Ministry is represented. The IMC serves as a platform for Ministries to provide data and report on progress achieved, while the Human Rights Directorate (HRD) monitors and supports the overall implementation of the Strategy. In parallel, individual Ministries may also undertake their own initiatives that go beyond the scope of this Strategy, further contributing to gender equality outcomes. In this regard, active and consistent participation within the IMC remains crucial to ensure coordinated efforts, accountability, and sustained progress.

The current reporting year marks a significant milestone in the implementation of the Strategy, as it falls within its mid-term implementation phase. This stage presents a critical opportunity to take stock of the progress achieved to date, assess remaining gaps and challenges, and reinforce the measures required to ensure the effective attainment of its strategic objectives.

During this period, steady progress has been registered across the various objectives, reflecting continued commitment towards embedding gender mainstreaming practices and advancing equality outcomes. At the same time, the mid-term point allows for a more focused reflection on areas requiring further attention, ensuring that efforts in the remaining implementation period are both targeted and impactful.



Objective 1

Strengthening of Institutional Mechanisms for Gender Mainstreaming and Gender Equality

1.1.1 Address the intersectional aspect of gender with other grounds of discrimination in policy making, taking into particular account persons who are at risk of poverty and social exclusion.

Status: **Completed**

To continue effectively implement this measure, ministries and entities have undertaken various initiatives and actions throughout 2025. Key highlights include:

- The Department of Industrial and Employment Relations (DIER) introduced new legislation regulating temporary work and employment agencies, aimed at promoting fair treatment and preventing discrimination against vulnerable workers.
- Transport Malta has institutionalised teleworking arrangements, flexible hours, and modern work practices for all employees, supporting equity and work-life balance. Additionally, a deliberate strategy aimed at a dedication to a multicultural and globally aware workforce enhances the ability to meet the needs of the community.
- Departments such as MTCA, MEYR, FES, and Sport Malta have adopted policies to ensure equality in pay, employment opportunities, training, and service provision. These departments have also developed targeted programmes for persons with disabilities, women, girls, and other marginalised groups. Additionally, The ELT council have been awarded the Equality Mark by the NCPE, reflecting their robust Equality and Harassment Policies in place.

DES continued to integrate an intersectional approach into policy development and service delivery. Work focused on ensuring that gender is analysed together with disability, migrant background, socio-economic vulnerability, belief, age, and sexual orientation when reviewing procedures, planning support, and advising schools. Staff were guided to identify compounding risks affecting learners and families, particularly those experiencing poverty or social exclusion, and to apply inclusive, non-discriminatory practices across all DES-led processes.

- National initiatives, including the Malta Diversity & Inclusion Charter and the National Disability Strategy, have enhanced training, awareness campaigns, and support systems for persons with disabilities and other vulnerable populations. The total number organisations signatory to the Malta Diversity & Inclusion Charter increased to 70 organisations.

The National Disability Strategy has continued work on adapted PSCD lessons on Sexual and Relationship Education with specific teaching resources for students with a disability. The manual of procedures to establish criteria and support for disabled parents and disabled prospective parents was completed by Aġenzija Sapport.

- The National Strategic Policy for Active Ageing (NSPAA 2023–2030) promotes intersectional measures, providing community-based care, lifelong learning, and integrated services for older adults at risk of poverty or social exclusion.
- NCPE-led projects, such as SKIN, integrate gender considerations with race, ethnic origin, and religion, and include gender-specific focus groups, childcare during sessions, and gender-sensitive training scenarios.

Additionally, in all its input to policies, laws, and strategies issued for public consultation, the NCPE emphasises the importance of adopting an intersectional perspective. It provides relevant points and examples that highlight how grounds such as sexual orientation, religion, ethnic origin, and age intersect with gender. The NCPE gave feedback on the following public consultations; Pre-Budget 2026 Document, MCAST Vision Towards 2030 Strategic Plan, National Patient Safety Strategy 2025-2035, National Transport Master Plan.

1.2.1 Strengthen the collection of gender disaggregated data across the board

Status: **Completed**

Ministries and entities across Malta have made progress in collecting and utilising gender-disaggregated data to inform and improve policies and services. The following examples illustrate these efforts:

- In the education sector, MEYR and MCAST gather gender-disaggregated data on student participation, staffing, and programs. Similarly, Transport Malta and other ministries monitor gender statistics in recruitment, training, and remote working arrangements.

DES continued improving its data systems to ensure consistent gender-disaggregated information across all services. Templates and reporting tools were updated, staff were guided on accurate data entry, and regular checks were introduced to improve completeness and reliability of gender-based datasets used for planning and monitoring.

Additionally, the National Skills Council (NSC) collects and uses gender disaggregated data in key areas such as workforce and management composition. This data is available on the NSC website as part of the Gender Equality Plan (GEP). As indicated in Q2 update, while disaggregation may risk employee anonymity in certain cases, the NSC remains committed to strengthening gender-disaggregated data collection, including through relevant internal surveys, in a way that safeguards anonymity.

- The MJR is incorporating gender-based data collection into its new digital case management systems to enhance transparency and promote equality.
- MIV, in collaboration with representatives from CRPD, Aġenzija Sapport, CIO-MIV, NSO, and ENGAGE, is developing a Disability Data Register that will include gender and other intersectional factors.
- The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) and the Housing Authority use gender-disaggregated data to monitor access to services and opportunities. Following the submission of the Gender Mainstreaming Report 2024, and the consequent identified gaps in Malta in gender disaggregation of data, the NCPE put forward a recommendation of applying gender disaggregation to all data used and produced by Government. The NCPE emphasises the importance of using gender-disaggregated data in the formulation of government actions, as well as collecting such data during their implementation.
- Residential care facilities routinely collect gender-disaggregated data on older persons as part of their reporting and care management systems. However, these figures are dynamic due to changes in the resident population, such as admission and mortality. Wider data on older people living in the community or accessing services is also collected where possible.
- Within the MEEP, various departments analyse statistical data on the economy, industry, and competitiveness. The Human Resources section compiles internal data on sick leave, family-friendly measures, salaries, and remote working, which is managed by the Director of Corporate Services and used for reporting and analysis.

- Malta Enterprise tracks data such as the number of female and male entrepreneurs applying for funding. The Micro Invest Scheme offers enhanced support to businesses with majority female ownership, and gender-disaggregated data is used to inform strategic planning and policy development.
- The Malta Digital Innovation Authority (MDIA) monitors gender balance among its employees and reports this in its annual review. HR collects data on recruitment, promotions, training, and work-life measures, ensuring all staff have equal access to benefits and opportunities regardless of gender.

These ongoing efforts demonstrate a commitment to using gender-disaggregated data to promote equality and inform better decision-making across all sectors.

1.2.2 Further collaboration with the National Statistics Office (NSO) on the collection and sharing of data related to gender equality and gender mainstreaming

Status: **Completed**

- The National Statistics Office (NSO) collects data on various domains, all releases published are gender disaggregated where applicable. All releases from the NSO may be found on their website.
- The Ministry for Inclusion and Voluntary Sector (MIV) continued to work with different representatives to discuss future plans of intersectional disaggregated data collection, and the formulation of a Disability Data Register.
- The Human Rights Directorate launched the publication titled “Measuring Gender Equality: A Gender Analysis Based on Sex-Disaggregated Data Indicators” in collaboration with the National Statistic Office.



Human Rights Directorate publication in collab with NSO

This publication features seven chapters; each chapter examines a variety of gender-disaggregated data across a number of indicators. The key indicators include population, health, social care and well-being, poverty, education, the labour market, crime, and political participation and decision-making.

1.3.3 Revisit the current gender mainstreaming reporting system within Government to ensure that the public service and public sector fully implement the principles of gender mainstreaming and gender equality

Status: **Completed**

- NCPE discussed with OPM-ES OPS how important it is for this circular to be updated reflecting today’s realities. Together with the Office of the PS, the circular was updated and subsequently approved by the PPS. The circular will be disseminated in January 2026.

Additionally, two training sessions for public officers were held, and individual requests for assistance were attended to, by the NCPE. 137 reports were submitted by ministries, departments and entities, on their gender mainstreaming work, which were evaluated by the NCPE and submitted to the Permanent Secretary OPM-ES.

1.3.4 Investing in gender audit training for professionals

Status: **Delayed**

The HRD has been awarded a TSI project which has commenced in Quarter 4 of 2025, One of the intended objectives is to provide gender mainstreaming training to public officials. This component will be incorporated into this project; however, the training will commence in 2026.

1.3.9 Boost cooperation and the exchange of best practices through existing fora within professional spheres

Status: **Completed**

- The Human Rights Directorate (HRD) held an annual GMU Conference which provided valuable networking opportunities for members of the CCWR and key stakeholders from public service. Discussion topics were centred around women in leadership, the importance of care work, and menstruation. The

annual Conference of the Gender Equality Commission was hosted by HRD in collaboration with GEC and served as a valuable networking platform for the GEMSAP IMC focal points, members of the GEC, and both local and international gender equality experts to exchange views and share good practices on addressing sexism and violence against women in the political sphere.

- The publication 'Structural and Systemic Change' features Malta's first research symposium dedicated exclusively to gender mainstreaming, covering a range of topics including pension gaps and inclusion. Students whose papers were published had the opportunity to elaborate on their research findings and share their perspectives on care work.

1.4.1 Introduce a gender responsive budgeting system with clear, measurable targets, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms

Status: **Delayed**

- The Ministry for Finance (MFIN) has continued its research and discussion into the gender-responsive budgeting system.
- Through an awarded TSI project, the Human Rights Directorate will develop a national toolkit on gender budgeting and implement a pilot project on its implementation.

1.5.1 Adopt the Equality Act and the Human Rights and Equality Commission Act to effectively tackle intersectional discrimination in all its forms in all spheres of life

Status: **On Time**

- The Office of the Prime Minister - Equality, Reforms and Social Dialogue (OPM-ES) is preparing a bill that establishes a National Human Rights and Equality Commission explicitly aligned with the UN Paris Principles and mandated to promote and protect human rights and the right to equality and non-discrimination.

The commission shall have a broad mandate, covering promotion, protection, monitoring, advisory functions, investigations, complaints handling, and participation in judicial proceedings.

The Bill shall also consolidate and update equality legislation and transposes EU Directives on equality bodies, ensuring coherence between the NHRI mandate and EU standards.

1.5.2 Strengthen the review process of Maltese legislation to identify and remove any provisions which needlessly differentiate between men and women, where applicable

Status: **On Time**

- A bill was presented which included an act to amend various laws that differentiate between genders and to make ancillary and consequential provisions thereto. This included amendments to the code of organisation and civil procedure, specifically to article 180, 745, 781, 782, 784, 785, 787 and 788 of the Code. This was primarily done to substitute the words “paternal authority” by “paternal authority”. Amendments were also done to the commercial code to substitute the word “salesmen” by “salespersons” and the Civil Code to substitute the word “workman” by “worker”. Moreover, this bill included amendments to the Malta Government Savings Bank Ordinance through a substitution to the principal law which references “the father or tutor” to the words “any of the parents or the tutor”.

In addition, the following legal notices were published:

Shops for the Sale of Wine, Beer or Spirituous Liquors (Licences, Good Order and Public Decorum) (Amendment) Regulations, Legal Notice 185 of 2025- <https://legislation.mt/eli/ln/2025/185/eng>

Online version may be found here: legislation.mt

National Malta Library (Amendment) Regulations, Legal Notice 173 of 2025 - <https://legislation.mt/eli/ln/2025/173/eng> and consolidated

Regulations found here: legislation.mt

Discussions are ongoing with the Directorate’s legal unit and the contracted independent legal expert to continue the drafting of further laws which have been identified as needlessly differentiating between men & women.

Objective 2

Guarantee equal access to employment in all sectors, combat segregation and ensuring Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value

2.1.1 Study whether the feminisation of labour is occurring in certain aspects of the public service and public sector and, if so, draw a plan

Status: **Completed**

- The Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) continuously collects data by section and gender in the Public Service and ensures that both men and women are involved in any promotions or campaigns occurring.
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2.1.3 Strengthen the monitoring and enforcement process ensuring that tenderers awarded public contracts comply with, and ensure, gender equality and equal pay throughout their structure

Status: **Completed**

- The Department of Contracts (DoC) within the MFIN has noted a number of established good practices of ensuring gender equality. These include The General Rules Governing Tenders which includes a Gender Equality Proviso, and the principles of non-discrimination. The latter includes that Procurement-Related Documentation utilises gender-neutral terminology where possible, and that Procurement Calls do not request knowledge related to a specific gender.

Importance of fair pay and fair working condition is placed through the blacklisting process of any operator found guilty of offence of the Employment and Industrial Relations Act (EIRA)

2.1.4 Raise awareness and provide support for the adoption, and upgrading, of gender equality policies by: i. assisting in the preparation of equality plans and the promotion of equality within the workplace, in accordance with the Equality Act and Maltese legislation; and ii. revamping and relaunching the Equality Mark Certification

Status: **Completed**

- During the NCPE Annual Conference held in September, 10 organisations were certified with the NCPE Equality Mark Certification for the first time, and 37 were re-certified as confirmation of this commitment. In total, The NCPE has currently certified 155 organisations with the Equality Mark award, employing more than 37,640 employees in equality-certified conditions. More information, including the full list of certified organisations may be found on NCPE’s official website.

The NCPE continued supporting companies applying for the Equality Mark certification and those due for the re-certification, including the finalisation of the certification process of two companies. The Equality Mark committee will meet in Q1 2026 to review and endorse this process.



NCPE annual conference

2.1.5 Encourage further dissemination of tools for companies, for them to voluntarily self-diagnose their wage structure, and detect and correct pay inequalities

Status: **Completed**

- Five organisations completed the Equal Pay Tool process and were sent the report with their result. Four of the Five organisations were awarded the NCPE Equal Pay Certification.

The NCPE Equal pay tool facilitates the application of equal pay for same work and work of equal value between women and men in organisations that employ at least 50 employees, and which are certified with the Equality Mark. The Tool helps organisations identify and address potential pay inequalities which are not justifiable.

2.1.6 Promote further the 'Equal Pay' Equality Mark Certification, including recognition and promotion of companies achieving this mark

Status: **Completed**

- The NCPE offers support to organisations interested in achieving the Equality Mark and conducts comprehensive training sessions to aid their efforts. Additionally, the NCPE recognises and promotes companies that attain this certification during their Annual Conference.

During the NCPE Annual Conference held in September, the NCPE awarded the Equal Pay Certification to another company in recognition of its compliance with the principle of equal pay for work of equal value. In total, there are currently 4 companies with the Equal Pay Certification.

Five organisations completed the Equal Pay Tool process and were sent the report with their result. Four of the Five organisations were awarded the NCPE Equal Pay Certification.

In total, The NCPE has currently certified 155 organisations with the Equality Mark award, employing more than 37,640 employees in equality-certified conditions. The NCPE Equal pay tool facilitates the application of equal pay for same work and work of equal value between women and men in organisations that employ at least 50 employees, and which are certified with the Equality Mark. The Tool helps organisations identify and address potential pay inequalities which are not justifiable.

2.2.1 Invest in further training for public service and public sector officials in the practical implementation of gender mainstreaming

Status: **Completed**

- The Institute of the Public Service reviews training material and integrates gender equality in training offered for public service and public sector officials. Additionally, the Gender Mainstreaming Unit at HRD is giving training through IPS on "gender mainstreaming for public officials".
- The Human Rights Directorate made accessible a training module focused on gender mainstreaming via the IPS portal. The Gender Mainstreaming Unit is also providing training on gender discrimination and stereotypes to all heads of schools across Malta and Gozo.

2.2.3 Ensure that upskilling training and employment guidance programmes for women belonging to vulnerable groups are provided (namely, migrants, persons with a disability, the elderly and LBTIQ people) for them to access, and remain in, the labour market, and be fully included in society

Status: **Completed**

- The Autism Advisory Council within MIV organised specialised training for professionals and employers with enhancing opportunities for neurodivergent individuals. This pilot initiative supported training officials and frontliners from Aġenzija Sapport, CRPD, Jobsplus, Lino Spiteri Foundation, Directorate for Lifelong Learning and Employment, Aġenzija Żgħażaġh and AX Group with the tools and knowledge to better support neurodivergent employees. The training also addressed a broader spectrum of neurodivergent conditions, reflecting an inclusive and holistic approach to workplace support for employers.
- The Human Rights Directorate made accessible a training module focused on gender mainstreaming via the IPS portal. The Gender Mainstreaming Unit is also providing training on gender discrimination and stereotypes to all heads of schools across Malta and Gozo.

Additionally, the Autism Advisory Council was invited to participate in a Think Tank on Autism and Ageing in New York hosted by the Permanent Mission of Malta to the UN in conjunction with the Autism Research Institute and Nancy Lurie Marks Family Foundation. The discussion addressed intersectionality including LGBTQI+, experiences of older adults on the autism spectrum, how age and neurodiversity intersect.



Autism advisory council at think tank

MIV participated as a partner in an Erasmus+ project titled “Digital for All,” led by Estonia. The project was aimed at teaching digital skills to persons with disabilities, while also raising awareness of digital literacy. It emphasised the importance of ensuring that, as services such as health and social services become digitalized, they remain accessible to persons with disabilities. This Erasmus+ funded initiative aims to facilitate digital learning for persons with disabilities. A consortium of European NGOs and government bodies working in the disability sector, including EUCAP, EPIK, EDF, EPIFOND, Malta’s Ministry for Inclusion and the Voluntary Sector, and the Agency for the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities under Lithuania’s Ministry of Social Security and Labour, have come together to develop this project. Partner organisations represent four EU Member States: Estonia, Lithuania, Malta, and Czechia.

DDI-MIV is additionally the lead partner in the Erasmus+ project ACTIVATE, aimed at raising awareness and developing advocacy skills among autistic youth. The ACTIVATE project, standing for Autistic Community through Advocacy, Learning, and Empowerment, is a dynamic initiative funded by the Erasmus+ Programme under KA220-YOU – Cooperation Partnerships in Youth. This project aims to foster the empowerment of autistic youth by promoting acceptance, advocacy, and collaboration across Europe. ACTIVATE’s core mission is to elevate the voices of autistic youth, providing them with the tools, knowledge, and confidence to self-advocate for their needs and rights. Autistic youths from the LGBTQI+ community are involved in the project.

The Neuro-Affirming Care Conference, held between on November of 2025 and organised by the Autism Advisory Council within MIV, highlighted the shift from traditional medical diagnostic models to holistic, strengths-based, neuro-affirming healthcare for autistic people. The conference was tailored for autistic adults, medical and allied professionals, and families of autistic children and adults. Over 60 attendees, including autistic youths, health professionals, parents, students, and regulatory bodies, engaged in discussions on autistic mental health, neurodiversity, human-rights-based care, and concerns around overmedication. Lived experience contributions from autistic youth (included youths from the LGBTQI+ community) and professionals grounded the discussions in real-world challenges. The conference emphasised moving beyond linear diagnostic labels toward collaborative, empowering clinical practice. Key outcomes included plans for GP training, neuro-affirming workforce development, integration of insights into healthcare standards, and further parent support initiatives. Networking across sectors strengthened future collaboration possibilities. Overall, the event reinforced the urgent need to embed a neuro-affirming, person-centred care across healthcare systems and community support structures.

- Jobsplus continued to offer upskilling and guidance services to all client groups, including women belonging to vulnerable groups.

In relation to Upskilling services, Jobsplus delivered training sessions to 7,201 individuals during 2025. Of these 7,201 participants, 4,437 were female, a percentage of 65.43%, and 2 were non-binary. 1,045 training instances were given to females with additional vulnerability. Of these, training instances, 76 training instances were with Registered persons with a disability, 13 were with Social Cases, 7 were carried out with persons undergoing detox treatment, and 949 training instances were with beneficiaries of international protection or asylum seekers.

Moreover, A total of 1,511 persons participated in a Jobsplus or LSF scheme throughout 2025, of which 724 were female, a percentage of 47.92%, and 2 individuals were non-binary. 99 female participants with additional vulnerability took part in these training sessions. Of these 99, 90 participants were registered with a disability, 5 were individuals in recovery of substance misuse, and 4 were beneficiaries of international protection or asylum seekers.

A total of 96 persons were trained under social partner agreements with Caritas and Oasi, 10 of which were females in recovery of substance misuse, a percentage of 10.42%, and 4 were formerly incarcerated women.

In relation to Guidance Services, a total of 18,667 guidance instances took place, of which 6,586 instances were offered to females, a total of 35.3%, and 55 instances to non-binary people. 1,595 instances were offered to females with additional vulnerability. Within these, 1,304 instances were to registered persons with a disability, 8 instances of which were also beneficiaries of international protection or asylum seekers. 14 instances were to females in recovery of substance misuse; 32 instances were with individuals undergoing detox treatment. 24 instances of Guidance services were with formerly incarcerated females. 121 instances were social cases, 2 of which were also beneficiaries of international protection or asylum seekers. 100 instances were with migrants, 35 instances of which were also beneficiaries of international protection or asylum seekers. Additionally, 23 Guidance instances were with Non-binary people with additional vulnerability, 4 of which were formerly incarcerated, 13 of which were social cases, and 6 were registered with a disability.

- Jobsplus also continued to hold outreach activities with vulnerable clients through NGOs and other bodies in line with identified need of vulnerable groups with the aim of facilitating access and retention in employment.

In February of 2025, Jobsplus actively participated in the Stakeholder breakfast organised by the Jesuit Refugee Services, which allowed a platform for discussion on issues relating to employment for people in precarious legal situations and undocumented people, including the need for flexible and readily available childminding services to minimise the likelihood of migrant women ending up in the black economy.

In March of 2025, Jobsplus held the final conference of the ALMALTA project. During the conference participants and mentors shared their mobility experience. ALMA - which stands for "Aim, Learn, Master, Achieve", is an EU initiative, aimed at supporting young people that are not in any kind of employment, education or training (NEETs), typically vulnerable youths largely affected by personal and structural factors. The goal is to help the most disadvantaged young people (aged 18-29) integrate into society by gaining access to work or training. Analysing the outcomes of the 38 young people who completed the programme, notable achievements emerge; two participants were offered employment with their employer in another EU country, eighteen found full-time jobs in Malta, three enrolled in tertiary education, four pursued further training, and the remaining participants registered with Jobsplus for continued support. Of the 38 participants, 14 were female and 5 of these females participated in the mobility training. Of these notable achievements emerge, 1 self-employed, 1 further training, 1 tertiary education, 1 registering, 1 full-time employment. Staff training at Jobsplus included sessions with multiple agencies on Gender-Based Violence, and sessions with PAPT (Professional Advisory Prevention Team) in relation to the Sheltered Employability Training Programme.

Jobsplus also attended multiple discussions and conferences to ensure it keeps abreast with various developments and promotes its services, with a focus on vulnerable clients through the Inclusive Employment Services Unit of Jobsplus, Lino Spiteri Foundation (LSF). These discussions and conferences included the Malta Diversity and Inclusion Charter Conference, Signatory Process Malta Diversity & Inclusion Charter, New Beginnings Round Table Meeting, Homelessness Round Table Meeting, Cedefop Brussels seminar on Youth in education, youth in employment – Boosting European policies for social inclusion, and the Webinar on Jobsplus Services on CORE. Additional conferences and discussions include the National Conference: A Place to Call Home: Reimagining Homelessness, The EuroGuidance Annual Conference, the 3rd Exclusive Meeting for Malta Diversity and Inclusion Charter Signatories, The Policy in Practice: Understanding the Labour Migration Policy - EMN National Conference 2025 Labour Migration, and The Neuro Affirming Care Conference 2025.

Of the most significant outreach meetings were the Jobsplus seminar for Guidance Practitioners, the Launch / Press Release of the VASTE II Programme, and the TV AM Interview where the VASTE-II programme was explained.

- In September of 2025, The National Skills Council launched the Emerging Careers Awareness Campaign which underscores the need for citizens, including vulnerable groups, to pursue training to upskill and reskill in line with labour market demands. Additionally, it encourages individuals to seek career guidance by providing a list of national career guidance providers on the

National Career Guidance website page, including free-of-charge services to ensure accessibility for all.

At the third National Career Guidance Network meeting in September of 2025, existing research within the field of career guidance were discussed to identify gaps that require further local research and ideal data collection. At the 4th National Career Guidance Network meeting on the 18th of November, committee members discussed updates and strategic actions to strengthen inclusive career guidance and improve access to training and employment for vulnerable groups. A presentation by the Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers highlighted its role as an information hub supporting migrants in employment, education and integration. Key barriers and support measures were discussed. The committee also reviewed research on the competence needs of career guidance practitioners. Further discussion identified gaps in supporting individuals with disabilities and neurodiversity, cultural diversity and migrant integration, as well as the need to strengthen links between guidance services, employers and training providers.

Furthermore, on the 25th of November, the Study on Adult Career & Training Choices was presented during Skillscape, the National Skills Council's flagship annual conference focusing on the future of work, skills and lifelong learning. The findings highlighted that career decisions are influenced by personal interests, exposure, lived experiences and the desire for growth. Many adults continue to rely on informal sources of guidance, underlining the need to improve access to structured and accessible career support throughout the life course. Overall, the study emphasised the importance of empowering adults with transversal skills, a growth mindset and a commitment to lifelong learning, enabling individuals to adapt, remain employable and thrive in a rapidly evolving labour market.

2.3.2 Undertake regular raising awareness initiatives on careers within the ICT Sector, and equal opportunities within it

Status: **On Time**

- The Malta Digital Innovation Authority (MDIA) has cultivated numerous connections with women operating within the digital sphere, allowing them to act as ambassadors by increasing awareness of opportunities, inspiring, and guiding girls and women in pursuing a digital career. An overarching aim of the above is to transcend the boundaries of gender, culture, and religion in the inclusivity of digital skills.

The Digital Women Ambassadors participated in school visits to encourage girls in pursuing careers in ICT, continuing to raise awareness and contributing to the Girls

in ICT campaign. Additionally, the MDIA provides hands-on learning experiences at Summer Schools and Bootcamps and through collaborations with different partners, including UM, MCAST, and Esplora. In 2025, 69 girls and 167 boys participated in MCAST and UM Summer Bootcamps.

On International Day of Women and Girls in Science, MDIA shared the stories and experiences of female professionals in the sector.



2.3.3 Propose further fiscal and financial incentives for women taking up entrepreneurship, ICT careers, and employment opportunities related to the finance and science sector

Status: **On Time**

- The Ministry of Finance is carrying out ongoing research into possible initiatives.

2.4.1.1 Improving data collection on elements related to equal pay for work of equal value and research its root causes, with a view of implementing targeted solutions

Status: **On Time**

- The NSO calculates the gender pay gap, defined as “the difference in average wages between men and women” worked out as the difference between the average gross hourly earnings of male and female employees, as a percentage of average gross hourly earnings of male employees, on an annual basis, and publishes the results on the Eurostat website.

2.4.1.2 Ensuring that employees and prospective employees are given accurate and updated information on their employment contract, pay policies and practices, pay structures, starting salaries, pay and promotion progression, as well as access to additional payments and bonuses, among others

Status: **On Time**

- The Department of Industrial and Employment Relations (DIER) has initiated both internal and external discussions with the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) and the Employment Relations Board (ERB) on the EU Pay Transparency Directive and on matters related to pay transparency and equal pay.

Notably, Legal Notice 112 of 2025 was published in 2025, introducing measures aimed at enhancing pay transparency prior to employment, including requirements related to the provision of salary information to prospective employees during the recruitment process. These measures represent an important step towards strengthening transparency and addressing pay disparities ahead of the full transposition of the EU Pay Transparency Directive, which is currently anticipated for the first or second quarter of 2026.

2.4.3.1 Raising awareness on equal pay for work of equal value within society at large, and develop tools that workers can use to ensure that they are receiving equal pay for work of equal value, and to address any discrepancies

Status: **Completed**

- By the end of Q4 2024, a total of 151 organisations had been certified with the EqualityMark, collectively employing over 37,300 individuals. More information, including the full list of certified organisations and the press statement from the annual conference may be found on NCPE’s official website. The Tool facilitates the application of equal pay for same work and work of equal value between women and men in organisations that employ at least 50 employees, and which are certified with the Equality Mark. The Tool helps organisations identify and address potential pay inequalities which are not justifiable.

Alongside the Equal Pay Certification, the NCPE have ongoing discussions with Government authorities on the transposition of the Pay Transparency Directive.



NCPE equal pay mark logo

2.4.3.3 Providing specialised advice and legal information to victims of pay discrimination

Status: **On Time**

- During Investigations of allegations of pay discrimination, none specifically involving gender discrimination, DIER officials are engaged with the purpose of providing guidance in connection with applicable regulations related to conditions of employment and in insisting on compliance where irregularities are detected. Moreover, a customer care service is provided by the Department, through which queries and complaints related to conditions of employment are received and addressed.

In addition, an educational campaign is currently being prepared to inform employees of their rights in relation to conditions of employment and equal treatment at work, in line with Budget Measure 364. This initiative aims to increase awareness, improve access to information, and strengthen the prevention of pay-related discrimination.

2.4.3.4 Supporting the EU's directive to strengthen the application of the principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value between men and women through pay transparency and enforcement mechanisms

Status: **On Time**

- The Department of Industrial and Employment Relations (DIER) has initiated both internal and external discussions with the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) on the EU Pay Transparency Directive and on matters related to pay transparency and equal pay.

Notably, Legal Notice 112 of 2025 was published in 2025, introducing measures aimed at enhancing pay transparency prior to employment, including requirements related to the provision of salary information to prospective employees during the recruitment process. These measures represent an important step towards strengthening transparency and addressing pay disparities ahead of the full transposition of the EU Pay Transparency Directive, which is currently anticipated for the first or second quarter of 2026.

Objective 3

Enhancing women's economic independence

3.1.1 Reinforce actions to achieve equal economic independence for women and men by promoting tax incentives which strengthen women's participation in the labour market

Status: **On Time**

- This is considered ongoing work by the Malta Tax and Customs Administration who facilitate existing incentives.
-

3.2.1 Review and revise inland revenue policies and legislation to ensure equal treatment between men and women, irrespective of civil status and, or sex

Status: **Completed**

- The Malta Tax and Customs Administration's Legal section verified that the laws were up to date and valid to legal provision.
-

3.2.3 Explore the current gender gaps in pension, assess the risks to these gaps and identify solutions

Status: **On Time**

- The Ministry for Social Policy and Children's Rights and Ministry for Health and Active Aging have acknowledged pensions as a relevant research topic during Pension Strategy Group (PSG) meetings. Active dialogue and coordination between the two entities remain ongoing. It is expected to be integrated into the broader strategic framework and reviewed within each five-year cycle.

Objective 4

Strengthening the principle of gender equality & mainstreaming in the education system and challenging gender stereotypes

4.1.1 Strengthen positive gender representation in formal education of all subjects to tackle gender stereotypes and to ensure that the content of the curriculum includes values and attitudes of gender equality

Status: **Completed**

- The Education Resources Directorate and the Resourcing Directorate note that the majority of educators are female, but they have consistently ensured gender representation in the role of guidance teachers.

A coordination and updating meeting was held in February of 2025 with the Heads of Department of Ethics Education to explore elements related to GEMSAP, with a focus on strengthening sensitivity to gender representation and addressing gender stereotypes in the Ethics Curriculum. Related Resources and case studies, which prioritise gender equality, mainstreaming concepts and diversity issues, can be found on the Ethics Education website. Ethics Education contributes to GEMSAP objectives at both Primary and Secondary levels.

A follow-up and Information sharing meeting was held in June of 2025 with various Directorate of Early Years, Languages and Humanities Education Officers to discuss curricular aspects, including those related to gender representation, gender-based violence, the effects of social media on gender attitudes and conflict resolution skills. During the meeting the following themes and the extent to which they are being tackled in current curricula were discussed:

- Gender equality, sexual harassment and online harassment of women, including hate crimes.
- Safe dating and building healthy relationship boundaries in schools.
- Harmful gender norms / stereotypes and barriers to female presence in certain male dominated occupations.
- The gender backlash against women’s rights and the concept of gender equality in recent years, also in Malta.
- The effects of online youth digital misogyny particularly amongst adolescents in Maltese schools.

- Peaceful conflict resolution skills and the prevention of all types of violence against women.

Recommendations for future action, consulting important stakeholders such as NGO's against GBD, included mapping relevant LO's, and discussing related training for all educators and SLT.

In July of 2025, a consultation meeting was held with the Career and Guidance Counsellors to discuss ways in which gender stereotypes in the choosing of career paths by students can be tackled through their services.

In November of 2025, a meeting was held for Education Officers in charge of primary, middle and secondary school curricular areas falling under the Directorate for Early Years, Languages and Humanities. A briefing was provided covering a range of initiatives related to Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination issues undertaken by DELH during 2025. This was followed by a presentation outlining the contribution of the Personal, Social and Career Development curricular area over recent months, highlighting various actions taken and their relevance to interconnected topics and strategies as:

- Gender Equality & Mainstreaming Strategy Action Plan 2022-2027 (GEMSAP)
- Women in Peace & Security Action Plan 2025 -2030
- GREVIO (Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence).

One of the main discussion points throughout this session revolved around the need to further strengthen positive gender representation in formal education of all subjects, starting as early as the Early Years cohorts. This will help in tackling gender stereotypes and to ensure that the content of all curricular areas also embrace values and attitudes of gender equality.

4.1.2 Carry out gender equality audits in all schools and higher education institutions to assess the gaps in the present allocation of resources and the gender relations and representation within them

Status: **Delayed**

- The internal Audit office within MCAST has commenced work on the gender equality audit process. Two meetings have already been held, one of which documented the progress made on the recommendations of the 2023 report, and the other meeting was carried out with the external contracted expert who is supporting the audit process.

Due to the directive, the School Development Plans of the respective schools were not collected and evaluated.

4.1.3 Ensure that the necessary resources are made available to ensure that gender equality is mainstreamed throughout the educational system, including the national curriculum, educational facility setups, as well as sports and STEM facilities

Status: **Completed**

DSVP contributed to the mainstreaming of gender equality by ensuring that human, pedagogical and programme-based resources were embedded across STEM, VET, PE and non-formal education initiatives. This included EO training and awareness-raising, gender responsive programme design, inclusive participation frameworks in STEM and sports initiatives, and the promotion of equitable access to learning spaces and facilities. DSVP also coordinated with relevant directorates to share good practice and align curriculum-linked initiatives with national gender equality objectives.



DSVP stem activity with girls and boys

4.1.4 Address the gender dimension in the preparation of specific educational support and reinforcement programmes directed at vulnerable groups likely to experience multiple discrimination (such as the Ġuzè Ellul Mercer educational programme and Alternative Learning Programmes)

Status: **Completed**

During the reporting period, key stakeholders were identified and engaged to support the delivery of professional sessions focusing on educational support programmes that integrate a gender perspective. These included entities such as Aġenzija Support and other relevant partners.

Professional development sessions were organised in collaboration with the Personal, Social and Career Development (PSCD) framework to address inclusive practices with Heads of Department responsible for Inclusion, Inclusion Coordinators (INCOs), and Senior Leadership Teams (SLTs) across all Colleges.

In addition, continuous collaboration was maintained with the Directorate for Inclusion – Educational Services to provide ongoing support to schools and to strengthen the implementation of inclusive and gender-responsive educational support initiatives.

4.1.5 Provide relevant, up to date resources for schools and libraries, including resource packs for teachers, story books, fiction and non-fiction for children and adolescents

Status: **On Time**

- Education Officers within the Directorate for Early Years, Languages and Humanities (DELH), especially those of the subjects more directly relatable to GEMSAP issues, like PSCD, Global Citizenship Education (GCED), Social Studies, Ethics Education and Religion have continued providing their input in Primary, Middle and Secondary Schools, to ensure that:
- Positive gender representation and gender equality are tackled effectively, and that this is also reflected in the respective textbooks, workbooks, handouts and online materials utilized by teachers in their subjects' teaching and learning.
- Gender issues are being addressed in Continuous Professional Development sessions to ensure that participating educators and educational leaders are well equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills, strategies and resources to ensure teaching and learning opportunities that cater for the diverse needs of their learning communities.

- The PSCD Department within DELH is collaborating with the Commission on Gender based and Domestic Violence in the use of drama as a tool to present scenarios related to Gender Based and/or Domestic Violence, in order to promote critical thought and instigate discussion.

A number of professionally produced short playlets, built and used around the local Maltese context, are now also being filmed so that they could be employed as learning resources with students in schools. These resources revolve around such themes as harmful gender stereotypes, stalking and harassment, intimate partner violence, cyberviolence, gender-based violence within same sex relationships and gender-based violence at the workplace.

Students are then encouraged to explore several themes through the discussions generated after the plays, such as issues of consent, control, initial signs of abuse, mental health, helping victims and the multiple effects of harassment, stalking and cyberviolence on victims. These audio-visual resources will be launched in the coming weeks.

4.1.6 Introduce higher education training blocks divided into attainable steps (without stipulated timeframes), especially for women whose regular educational path was truncated

Status: **Completed**

- MCAST offers a number of Award qualifications that can be grouped to form a larger qualification, available on a part time basis. MCAST continues to offer an increasing number of micro credentials on part-time basis as a means of attracting more lifelong learners to develop and improve skills.

Furthermore, MCAST has launched the Institute for the Trades, all the courses of which will be offered as an asset of Award Qualifications, through the assistance of the newly established Micro-Credentials Working Group to explore the policy framework and practical considerations for implementing Micro-Credentials across the college.

Through this policy the College can now pilot the offering of a suite of flexible micro-credentials that can be stacked and potentially lead to full qualifications at the lower levels of the Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF).

4.1.7 Review the sex education currently being given within formal education

Status: **Completed**

A meeting was held in February of 2025 by DELH to discuss the current delivery of sex education within formal education settings.

A meeting was held in April of 2025, as a follow-up to the recommendations that emerged from the 2023 'Sexuality and Relationship Education Survey' with PSCD teachers and Senior Leadership Teams (SLTs).

Additionally, through the interministerial working group it was noted that further research among students and parents is necessary on this topic. Therefore, further research on the topic of sex education delivered during PSCD lessons has been prepared using specific tools which were drafted for target age groups. Presently, MHA are currently pending the ethics clearance of these second nationally representative survey drafted by the working group which aims to survey the responses of students and their parents on SRE component of PSCD. This will be able to give a complete situation analysis of the SRE delivered at a national level.

The Sexuality and Relationships Survey had been planned for last May. However, additional time was required for the health authorities to obtain approval from the Education authorities for its dissemination. As a result, the survey is now scheduled to take place this coming May. The committee conducting this task is expected to meet in the coming weeks to plan for the survey's implementation.

4.1.8 Establish an MoU between the Equality Ministry and Academic Entities, with the aim of identifying research areas related to equality and promoting these identified areas to their students and academics.

Status: **Completed**

- In addition to the MoU with the University of Malta, which was signed in 2023, an additional MoU was again signed between the Human Rights Directorate and the Department of Gender and Sexuality for the creation of a new academic journal, Astarte. The focus of this journal is to focus on scholarly studies related to various aspects of gender and sexuality in the Mediterranean region.

4.2.1 Create information sessions specifically designed for girls and women interested in careers which are traditionally predominantly male

Status: **Completed**

- The Wellbeing Services Directorate within MEYR collaborated with the MDIA to organise the 'Girls in ICT' campaign. Middle School Tarxien, STMC, and Middle School Rabat SNC were participants in this campaign.
- The tiny Teen Science Cafe' initiative aims to promote STEM careers amongst primary students, educators and parents/guardians. Students and their caregivers are provided with the opportunity to informally discuss STEM career paths and aspirations. Professionals from a range of STEM fields, including beekeeping, marine life, engineering, artificial intelligence, medical sciences, among others were invited to participate in this initiative to engage the audience while informally discussing different aspects related to their career.

The tiny Teen Science Café sessions were held throughout this scholastic year in approximately 15 primary schools in Malta and Gozo with the participation of around 650 students and their parents/guardians. This was the first time that primary schools took on the ownership of the tiny Teen Science Cafe' initiative and organised the event within their schools.

- Teen Science Café is a yearly initiative organised by the Directorate for STEM and VET Programmes, as part of a suite of outreach interventions aimed at promoting STEM-related careers and at exposing up-and-coming STEM professions. The activity involves encounters between successful STEM professionals and Year 8 students (12-year-olds). STEM professionals would share their experiences and provide encouragement for students to take a similar career path. These encounters are also motivational as STEM professionals speak about major job satisfactions and particularly rewarding experiences. During these encounters, students are given the opportunity to ask questions to the experts meeting them.

This year Teen Science Café was organised in 11 different schools, namely SMC Middle School Cospicua, SCC Secondary School Pembroke, SCC National Sport School Pembroke, MRC Middle School Naxxar, SGPC Middle School Blata l-Bajda, STMC Secondary School Zejtun, STMC MVPA Hamrun, SBC Middle School Kirkop, SIC Middle School Handaq, STC Middle School Ta Paris and SNC Middle School Rabat. It is estimated that 1800 students were reached. Numerous organisations including various industry partners, NGOs, public service units and directorates, further and higher educational institutions, and professional bodies have contributed to this year's Teen Science Café, with the participation of around 85 different professionals.

- The directorate continues to support and encourage female participation across all mainstream STEM and VET initiatives, the Girls 4 STEM initiative was rebranded as Tween 4 STEAM to bring boys and girls together, with the aim of challenging stereotypes, shifting mindsets, and fostering a more inclusive environment in which girls feel a sense of belonging. Similarly, initiatives such as Code.Sprint and Robo.Sprint have seen girls participating alongside boys on an equal footing, engaging collaboratively and confidently.



4.2.2 Promote and encourage women to make use of Recognition of Prior Learning programmes and institutions to recognise such programmes

Status: **Completed**

- The process of amending Subsidiary Legislation 607.02 in collaboration with the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA), on the Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning (VNFIL) has been finalised by the Office of the State Advocate. On 11th March 2025, the NSC collaborated with the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) and with the support of MFHEA, to organise a conference titled: Validate to Elevate – Empowering People with Job Standards and Skills Cards. This conference brought together various policymakers, industry leaders, educators and students, to discuss best practices, challenges and innovations in skills validation (including Recognition of Prior Learning, RPL) and workforce development.
- In May and June of 2025, introductory meetings were held online with the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology, MCAST and University of Malta to brainstorm additional avenues by which to promote Recognition of

Prior Learning. Additionally, work on the Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning (VNFIL) Regulations was finalised and as of 1st January 2026 the NSC is responsible for the policy role within this remit. The NSC remains committed to supporting future efforts that encourage the uptake of Recognition of Prior Learning.

The Admissions Office, within the Registrar's Office, manages the RPCL, the RPEL, and the Maturity Clause intakes. Despite promoting the different routes available, the RPCL attracted 4 applicants, no applicants for the RPEL option, and 95 eligible applicants for the Maturity Clause route. The Maturity Clause route provides adults without the formal qualifications needed to meet the entry requirements. Out of the 95 applicants, 39 males and 20 females started a course at MCAST.

4.2.3 Promote the reinforcement and implementation of gender equality and non-discrimination in sports, drama, art, music, and organisations offering non-formal education

Status: **Completed**

- Officers within the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education (DQSE) responsible for non-formal licensing are actively encouraging applicants to integrate gender equality and non-discrimination into their policies and practices. This initiative, carried out during visits and meetings as part of the non-formal accreditation process, ensures that organisations offering non-formal education are aligned with inclusive principles. It is being ensured that relevant policies are being implemented and incorporated into each institution's manual of policies. Support is provided during all stages of the evaluation process so that any discrepancies in these policies are met by the providers as part of their accreditation.
- In April of 2025, an information sharing and awareness raising meeting with the Education Officers from the Creative Arts Department within the DELH was held to further promote Gender Equality and Mainstreaming. The aim of the meeting was to generate a deeper awareness and disseminate information about GEMSAP related concepts and initiatives with the EOs of the Creative Arts subjects, and to evaluate the related work being carried out and potential areas to be widened and improved.

Some points that developed from the meeting are as follows:

- The importance of appreciating the Creative Arts as tools for raising awareness about important issues, exemplified by a Theatre-in-Education project produced by the Drama Unit which aimed to raise awareness about GEMSAP related issues. In this TIE students were presented with 'role

reversal' situations in everyday life, promoting ways in which traditional gender stereotypes can be challenged and reversed. Women in Peace & Security Action Plan 2025 -2030

- The reinforcement of discrimination can sometimes be felt even amongst the curricular subjects themselves. The Arts are very low down on the priority list and there are a lot of discrepancies which work against these subjects even in terms of budgetary provisions. Additionally, while subjects like Maths, English and Science are compulsory, subjects like Music, Art, Dance and Drama are optional and extra-curricular.

Part of this scholastic year's (2025-2026) secondary Art teachers' training revolved around collaborative, participatory art made by and for communities, focusing on dialogue, solidarity, and social inclusion. This type of 'Community Art' provides marginalized voices with a space to be heard and seen.

Using 'Artivism', art as a form of social or political action, challenges dominant narratives and promotes justice, equality, and awareness. Such art aims to inspire reflection, empathy, and bring about change through creative expression.

Today, artivism is more prevalent and diverse than ever through a diversity of forms of artistic expression, including visual arts, music, literature, performance, and digital media. Through the exploitation of the power of global communication networks and social media, those engaging in artivism can reach a wider audience, making their messages stronger, more immediate and far-reaching.

It is therefore essential for educators to acquire more awareness and knowledge of these artistic developments so that they can adapt their pedagogy to the socio-cultural changes their students are already dealing with and will be facing in the near future.

This training initiative was held during the Professional Development Art training sessions held on the 31st October 2025, and will be repeated with another cohort of Art teachers on the 30th April 2026.



Artivism women empowerment

4.2.4 Support sectoral women’s rights organisations to implement a systematic programme concerning educational and professional networking events

Status: **Completed**

- DELH participated in the Women in Peace and Security Agenda, by supporting educational and professional events.
-

4.2.5 Enhance awareness of the importance and positive aspects of STEM tertiary education for girls and women

Status: **Completed**

- The UM’s science engagement and outreach specialist within the MCAO Office, continues to organize events and activities such as school visits and Science in the City. In addition, a STEM platform is being developed, along with another long-term initiative. Access to funds for another project with regards to enhancing awareness of women in STEAM is in the process of being secured.
- MCAST monitors gender representation across each Institute to ensure that STEM-related institutes include female role models for younger students. Over the past 5 years, the IICT, the IET and the IAS have continued to report a year-on-year increase in the number of female academic staff members.

Moreover, DSVP commits to keep further ongoing discussions to collaborate with tertiary education providers to potentially increase the awareness of the importance of STEM tertiary education for girls and women.

4.3.1 Ensure that all personnel of educational institutions are adequately trained to tackle gender discrimination and stereotypes, promote equal treatment and equal value, and guarantee a safe and inclusive environment free from discrimination, marginalisation and/or violence

Status: **Completed**

- Throughout the year, training by RISRD within MEYR was conducted, primarily with the Senior Leadership Team members due to the Union’s directive, on aspects pertaining to the school internal review process and on school development planning that are at the basis of tackling any gender related educational inequities.

The general feedback received from colleges and schools in relation to the training provided was positive as the training participants engaged throughout the delivered sessions and could link the presented material to their practices in schools as demonstrated by the interactions sustained during the sessions. Some schools and colleges even requested further meetings and training that is more focused on their individual context and responsive to their individual needs.

- Additionally, training was provided by the WSD within MEYR to guidance teachers and career advisors who provide career guidance to students when choosing their option subjects/career paths, so they are adequately trained to tackle gender discrimination and stereotypes.

During March / April 2025 a training needs analysis was undertaken through discussions with PSCD Education Officers and various other stakeholders within DELH. Following these discussions a plan for training sessions in small groups related to good practice in favour of Gender Equality and Mainstreaming will be proposed. The sessions are meant to explore the role/s that educators play, in their professional capacities as educators, vis-à-vis Gender Equality and Mainstreaming issues.

During April and May 2025, the PSCD Department within DELH organized COPE training for educators about Gender Based and Domestic Violence. A total of 178 PSCD teachers participated in these training seminars. The training agenda focused on Signs of abuse and a brief overview of all types of abuse, ways of empowering students to speak up, presentation of Child witness and safe-dates research conclusions, and a legal overview of duties of teachers when it comes to DV and GBV and what the national education policy guides for teachers to do in such situations and Case Studies.

Moreover, in May of 2025, a meeting to discuss the need of, and plan for, future GEMSAP related training for educators was held with PSCD EOs. The following points emerged from this meeting;

- The vitality of engaging participants' emotions and not remain on an intellectual level.
- SLT members and teachers of other subjects may feel that GEMSAP issues are not directly related to their subjects. However, all educators should be exposed to such training to develop their levels of awareness, as they will probably have to deal with students or even colleagues who are going through related problems.
- The meeting participants suggested that the first, introductory, training session can be centrally set by DELH in the following format:

- **Part 1:** An overview of what GEMSAP and the WPS Agenda are.
- **Part 2:** Exploring types of abuse through a Drama Forum with the help of the Commissioner for Gender-based and Domestic Violence. (The Commission has produced around five playlets which deal with different aspects of gender based or domestic violence).
- **Part 3:** Issues related to LGBTIQ realities from a parent's perspective (through DRACHMA).
- **Part 4:** Short questionnaire about those themes or issues (related to the above discussed themes), about which the participants would like to receive further training.

DELH has also held various meetings, with several stakeholders, to discuss a professional development needs analysis and subsequently coordinate a training programme for educators and educational leaders. In discussion of the professional development sessions, a range of stakeholders were consulted, including Education Officers of various subjects both within DELH and outside of DELH. Other departments and ministries, including the GMU, SOGIGESC, and the Integration and Anti-Racism Unit of the HRD, and the DG Global Issues, International Development & Economic Affairs, within the Office of the DPM & Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Tourism, were also consulted.

Several planning and organizational meetings were held with regards to Teacher Training that will focus on 'Approaches to Diversity in the Classroom' and deal with various types of diversity and discrimination issues. These training sessions are with the collaboration and input of the Integration and Anti-Racism Unit (HRD), the NGOs KOPIN and UNHCR Malta, the Mount Carmel BST Psychiatry Unit and the FSWS. These Training sessions aim to address topics such as Refugee children, and their inclusion in Malta's education system, bias, stereotypes and prejudice, multiculturalism in our schools and our classrooms, anti-racism in school and classroom settings, adolescent mental health issues and marginalization, and students at risk of family problems arising from substance abuse.

- A meeting was held in August of 2025 with regards to training for History Teachers of History in Middle and Secondary State Schools about 'Women in History in the local context and the social, legal, educational and economic advancement of women in Maltese contemporary society'. The planned professional development sessions are being held in collaboration with Heritage Malta and the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE).

Following a needs analysis carried out during July, August and September 2025, DELH developed a professional development training programme for educators and educational leaders for the period covering October to December 2025. This training programme constituted the main action focus of DELH for the last quarter of 2025 with regards to national strategies such as those of GEMSAP and the Women in

Peace and Security Agenda (UN Resolution 1325). The main training initiatives were centrally established by the Education Department for the 31st October 2025 as the day for these Professional Development training sessions. Another training day is set for the 30th April 2026.

Subsequently on the 31st October 2025 a substantial number of educators, from diverse teaching and learning areas, participated in a full day of training activities, some of which were directly or indirectly related to GEMSAP issues. The issues covered include:

- Bias, Stereotypes and Prejudice
 - Recognizing and Responding to Trauma in Children and in Youth
 - Child Safety, Anti Bullying and Anti Substance Services
 - UNHCR Teacher Training Sessions on Forced displacement and Refugee Education
- Additionally, DES provided ongoing training and support to ensure all school personnel are equipped to prevent and address gender discrimination, challenge stereotypes, and promote equal treatment. Staff received guidance on inclusive practices, safeguarding, and responding to incidents of bias or violence. Schools were supported in creating safe, respectful environments through updated procedures, awareness initiatives, and strengthened pastoral structures.
 - The Gender Mainstreaming Unit attended several head of college meetings to provide training on gender mainstreaming and discrimination.

4.3.2 Monitor the newly adopted Gender Representation Guidelines for Discussion Programmes and ensure that adequate training and support is provided as required

Status: **Delayed**

- Due to a lack of resources, the Broadcasting Authority were unable to analyse and process the data.

4.3.3 Train science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) teachers in gender-responsive pedagogy and classroom management

Status: **On Time**

- MCAST has prepared an inclusive language guidebook. This is available on the MCAST Website. To encourage staff to improve the use of gender-neutral language in classroom settings, MCAST had prepared a workshop, however, attendance was poor. MCAST is currently exploring options for asynchronous training on the use of gender-neutral language in the teaching and learning spaces. Until such time that the College is able to offer an asynchronous option, MCAST will continue to offer in-person workshops in this regard.

Efforts are also underway to integrate the same content in the pedagogy courses offered by the College, namely the B.VET and the M.VEAR.

Moreover, DSVP constantly encourages EOs to transfer their knowledge through any training given to support teachers accordingly. As per previous measure, through the internal working group, the intention is to reach out to further training opportunities.

4.4.1 Create safe and inclusive STEM learning environments and promote the uptake of these subjects among female students

Status: **Completed**

- MCAST has prepared an inclusive language guidebook. This is available on the MCAST Website. To encourage staff to improve the use of gender-neutral language in classroom settings, MCAST had prepared a workshop, however, attendance was poor. MCAST is currently exploring options for asynchronous training on the use of gender-neutral language in the teaching and learning spaces. Until such time that the College is able to offer an asynchronous option, MCAST will continue to offer in-person workshops in this regard.

A handbook was created by the Wellbeing Services Directorate in collaboration with the Department of Curriculum, Lifelong Learning and Employability (DCLE) giving information about the different subjects and the possible career paths associated with these subjects. A national fair was also organised by the above departments in collaboration with the Events Office (MEYR) to ensure that students are provided with information about all the subjects, including those not offered by the schools.

- In their prospectus, as part of the MCAST student recruitment campaign, MCAST is mindful of ensuring representation of the non-dominant gender in the pictures it includes. As well as promotes non-stereotypical student ambassadors through the choice of students on its promotional material, events, panel discussions, and on-campus support.

4.4.2 Enhance mentoring, apprenticeship and career counselling to ensure a fair and equal orientation of female students on STEM studies and careers

Status: **Completed**

- At Primary School level, Workshops were organised with year 5 students focusing on Nursing, the Creative Arts, Teaching and Hospitality. These Workshops were organised in collaboration with the Nursing Directorate, the Arts Malta Council, career guidance teachers at NSWS and the Malta Tourism Authority. The idea is to create awareness/positive perceptions/challenge stereotypes of diverse careers from an early age to both boys and girls. This initiative started during scholastic year 2019-20.

STEM career days known as 'KurżitàJiem' are organised by ESPLORA aiming at Years 4, 5 and 6 primary school level students. The objective of the visit is to meet the professionals working within STEM fields and engage in hands-on activities that will help them identify the skills and competencies needed for particular STEM-related jobs.



A pilot project with Valletta Primary School with Year 4 students, particularly addressing gender stereotypes is being carried out. Resources for students to challenge stereotyping are available, including Career posters with career related messages to combat gender stereotyping hung in Primary schools.

- At Middle/ Secondary school level, The Malta Digital Innovation Authority (MDIA) together with the Wellbeing Services are organising ICT Talks for Year 7 female students. These sessions are specifically being organised to explore and discuss the importance of girls' role in ICT and inspire the young minds of these female students to explore this dynamic field.

- The aim is to address the gender gap in the tech industry and to empower young girls to pursue careers in ICT. Female speakers as role models will be sharing their personal journeys and experiences. This initiative was piloted in 2 colleges in 2023/2024 and is now open to all middle schools since scholastic year (2024/2025). MDIA in collaboration with NSW also organises career orientation visits for Year 9 students.

Every year, the Wellbeing Services also collaborate with the Chamber of Engineers in the Engineer your Career Initiative whereby a number of videos and audio-visuals were developed by the Chamber as part of an Engineering Campaign. These resources were distributed among guidance teachers and career advisors. They showcase the experiences of both males and females who have taken up a career in the sector. These videos are also uploaded on the <https://euroguidance.gov.mt> website. The Chamber, also in collaboration with NSSS organises career orientation visits for Year 9 students. Students and their parents are also invited to attend the Engineer Your Career: Goes Live! By the Chamber of Engineers – this year event was fully booked, and many parents and their students attended this event.

The Wellbeing Services collaborates with the Faculty of Engineering to promote the Engineering Technology Clubs. This event provides students with the possibility to participate in hands-on workshops carried out in various laboratories within the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Malta. These clubs, therefore, give students a taster of the different aspects of the modern Engineering profession and are ideal for students who are about to make their option choices.

To support Year 8 students with their choice of option subjects, and to ensure that all students are exposed to all subjects on offer regardless of gender, the Wellbeing Services in collaboration with PRISMS (an NGO) have together worked on the development and updating of the Explore More Portal: <http://exploremoreproject.eu>. Year 8 students and their parents/guardians can acquire information on the option subjects on offer and the different career paths and post-secondary courses that these subjects can lead to. The information is presented in an interactive way with short videos outlining all subject options on offer, videos with first-hand testimony from the people who work in the industry (with an emphasis on gender balance) and a short quiz which helps students identify the work sector/subjects of their interest.

MEYR in collaboration with the Wellbeing Services also organise the Choice of Subjects National Fair for Year 8 students where students and their parents/guardians are provided with detailed and accurate information about ALL option subjects on offer. Another national fair which exposes students to different careers is the I Choose Fair for Year 11 students. The latter (together with their parents) have the opportunity to meet with role models coming from the diverse sectors of the labour market. Efforts to broaden receptiveness of STEAM subjects to all genders is also emphasised in these public events.

As part of the career guidance programmes delivered in our State Colleges a number of initiatives take place within the career guidance service such as, career orientation visits, Talks/Information sessions, choice of subjects' exercises, one-to-one sessions and transition exercises to facilitate the transition from compulsory schooling towards the world of work/post-secondary path. The main aim behind these initiatives is to make students become aware of the world of work even though they still attend school, to ensure that both boys and girls are exposed to ALL opportunities regardless of their gender. Parents are involved in many of these initiatives to ensure that they are provided with the support needed.

Resources for students to challenge stereotyping including 'My Career Journal' which includes an overview of career opportunities within various sectors aimed at Secondary School students to help them reflect on their future career paths while at the same time challenge their thinking with regards to stereotypical careers. This journal will be disseminated among all Year 9 students – girls and boys alike.

Resources for students to challenge stereotyping. Resources include Career Posters with career related messages to combat gender stereotyping which were hung in Secondary schools.

The inclusion of applied and vocational subjects introduced in Malta in 2019 has provided students of all abilities the opportunity to choose options involving STEAM subjects according to their interests, abilities and aspirations – academic, vocation and applied routes. These routes are also reflected in the options students have available after compulsory education with both vocational and academic post-secondary educational routes.

- Moreover, The Wellbeing Services has organised and continues to organise on a regular basis professional development programme for educators focusing on promoting gender equity in STEAM education. Training addresses unconscious biases, career guidance interventions highlighting the different career options available for both males and females. Once again, this year training on gender equality will be organised in collaboration with NCPE during the third term.

4.4.3 Promote mentoring programmes for girls and women on the practical and creative applications of STEM and AI

Status: **Completed**

During the year, the Directorate for STEM and VET Programmes (DSVP) continued to advance targeted efforts to promote mentoring opportunities designed to support girls and women in the practical and creative dimensions of STEM and AI. Mentoring elements were integrated across DSVP-led initiatives to ensure direct exposure to

female professionals, role models and industry practitioners, thereby strengthening participants' understanding of real-world STEM and AI pathways.

Initiatives such as Tween 4 Steam, Thematic STEM debates across all years, and more emphasised hands-on, applied learning experiences and showcased the creative and innovative potential within STEM and AI fields. Female learners were given structured opportunities to engage in discussions, career talks, and practical workshops led by women working in technology, engineering, digital design, and AI-related domains.

This measure has been completed as part of the wider, ongoing commitment of DSVP to support gender equality in STEM subjects. The Directorate continues to explore opportunities for developing these activities into more formalised mentoring structures, complementing DSVP's contributions to national digital education strategies and gender mainstreaming processes.

4.4.4 Create and support more initiatives for girls with regard to computer science and entrepreneurship learning in and out of the classroom, and encourage and support their participation in mainstream activities and competitions

Status: **Completed**

- The all-female robotics team will be chosen from the new cohort of students enrolling in the academic year 25-26, by The Institute of ICT.

This measure is also constantly ongoing and remains one of the main commitments for DSVP. All initiatives organised by the directorate factor in girls' participation but not exclusively. Further to this, DSVP's management are actively engaged in the Digital Decade Roadmap Strategy.

Objective 5

Promoting Co-Responsibility & Balance of Work, Private & Family Life

5.3.1 Incentivise companies to develop reconciliation and co-responsibility measures, and promote the adoption of equality plans in small and medium-sized enterprises

Status: **Completed**

- To incentivise companies to adopt equality plans, the NCPE continued supporting companies which showed interest in making use of the Equal Pay Tool. The Tool facilitates the application of equal pay for same work and work of equal value between women and men in organisations that employ at least 50 employees, and which are certified with the Equality Mark. The Tool helps organisations identify and address potential pay inequalities which are not justifiable.

The NCPE continued supporting companies applying for the Equality Mark certification and those due for the re-certification, including the finalisation of the certification process of two companies. The Equality Mark committee will meet in Q1 2026 to review and endorse this process. The NCPE finished the re-certification process of seven companies for reviewing and endorsement by the Equality Mark committee in Q1 2026. By end of Q4 2025, there were 155 organisations certified with the Equality Mark with over 37,640 employees.

- During the GMU Annual Conference on May 7th, one of the panel discussions focused on the importance of gender representation in leadership roles. The panellists tackled the implications of the Women on Boards directive, highlighting its impact on fostering diversity and inclusion in decision-making positions. As well as the challenges still faced by women in leadership positions.



Hon. Rebecca Buttigieg speaking at the GMU Annual Conference 2025



5.3.3 Extend free childcare services for employees who work in the evening, weekends and on a shift basis

Status: **Delayed**

- FES plans to establish a public-private partnership with private childcare providers to subsidise childcare services for parents working atypical hours. To ensure effective implementation, FES approached Jobsplus to facilitate market research targeting employees working atypical hours, given Jobsplus' access to relevant data. Work on this measure is still ongoing.

Objective 6

Achieving gender balance in political and public decision making

6.1.2 Raise awareness on the benefits of equality of representation and the sharing of power between women and men

Status: **Completed**

- During the GMU Annual Conference on May 7th, one of the panel discussions focused on the importance of gender representation in leadership roles. The panellists tackled the implications of the Women on Boards directive, highlighting its impact on fostering diversity and inclusion in decision-making positions. As well as the challenges still faced by women in leadership positions.

The Annual Conference of the Gender Equality Commission (GEC), titled “Tackling Sexism and Violence against Women – An Essential Step Towards Equal Participation,” aimed to address the growing incidence of sexism and violence against women in politics, both online and offline, and to explore ways to strengthen institutional responses.

The conference centred on two core thematic areas:

1. Breaking down barriers to equal and meaningful participation – ending sexism and violence, including technology-facilitated violence, in political life.
2. The future of women in politics – confronting the anti-feminist backlash and advancing gender equality in governance and decision-making.



Annual Conference of the Gender Equality Commission (GEC)

Panel Discussions

Panel 1

Sexism and Violence in Political Spaces: Online and Offline Barriers to Women's Equal Participation

Speakers:

- **Boris Radanović** – Head of Engagement and Partnerships, Southwest Grid for Learning Trust Limited (SWGfL)
- **Karen Buttigieg** – Former President, Malta Girl Guides
- **Shanley Clemot McLaren** – Feminist Activist and Expert on Gender Digital Rights, UN Young Activist Laureate
- **Zita Gurmai** – Member of the Hungarian National Assembly, Deputy Leader of the Socialist Group, PACE SO

This discussion examined how women in politics continue to face significant sexism and violence, both online and offline, which undermines their participation and leadership. It addressed harassment, intimidation, and sexual violence within political parties and institutions, as well as technology-facilitated abuse such as disinformation campaigns and AI-driven harassment particularly targeting women from marginalized groups. Addressing these challenges requires stronger legal protections, effective enforcement mechanisms, and safer political spaces that enable women to participate freely and without fear.

Panel 2

Addressing Sexism and Violence in Politics: The Role of Political Parties and Institutions

Speakers:

- **Yulia Netesova** – Chief of Democratic Governance and Gender Unit, ODIHR
- **Carmen Sammut** – Professor and Pro-Rector, University of Malta
- **Georgios Stamatis** – Member, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
- **Cecilia Dalman Eek** – President, Chamber of the Regions & Vice-President, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, Council of Europe

This session explored how acts of sexism and violence function as deterrents to women's political engagement and reinforce structural gender inequalities. Panellists discussed the crucial role of political parties and institutions in preventing and addressing such behaviour. The discussion highlighted examples of good practices, including internal accountability systems, codes of conduct, and gender-sensitive complaint mechanisms, while emphasizing the urgent need for stronger monitoring and enforcement frameworks to ensure accountability and lasting cultural change.

Panel 3

Navigating the Backlash: Women's Leadership and the Fight for Equal Participation in Politics

Speakers:

- **Naomi Cachia** – Member of Parliament, Government Whip, and Head of the Maltese PACE Delegation
- **Deborah Frances-White** – Writer, Comedian, and Host of The Guilty Feminist Podcast

This fireside chat explored the lived experiences of women in politics and the impact of sexism and violence on their leadership, participation, and private lives. The discussion addressed how disinformation related to gender equality and technology-facilitated abuse influence women's engagement and visibility in political spaces. It also explored what different actors, including governments, institutions, and civil society can do to protect and promote women's participation, foster solidarity, and counter the backlash against women's leadership.

Panel 4

Addressing Structural Barriers to Women's Equal Participation amid the Sexist Backlash

Speakers:

- **Lucina Di Meco** – Co-Founder, She Persisted
- **Cherise Sultana** – President, National Youth Council Malta
- **Susana Pavlou** – Director, Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies
- **Sandra Lengwiler** – Vice-Chair, Gender Equality Commission

This discussion explored how the backlash against women's rights is affecting policies and actions aimed at addressing structural inequalities, and how gendered political expectations continue to limit women's access to decision-making roles and political spaces. Panellists presented concrete solutions, including legal frameworks and institutional reforms such as parity laws and gender quotas, as well as good practices to advance gender equality in politics. The session emphasised that achieving a truly inclusive and democratic future requires a sustained commitment to dismantling systemic barriers and promoting women's equal representation.



Panel 1 from the Annual Conference of the Gender Equality Commission (GEC)



Closing remarks from Maria Ellul, Assistant Director at the Human Rights Directorate

Exhibition

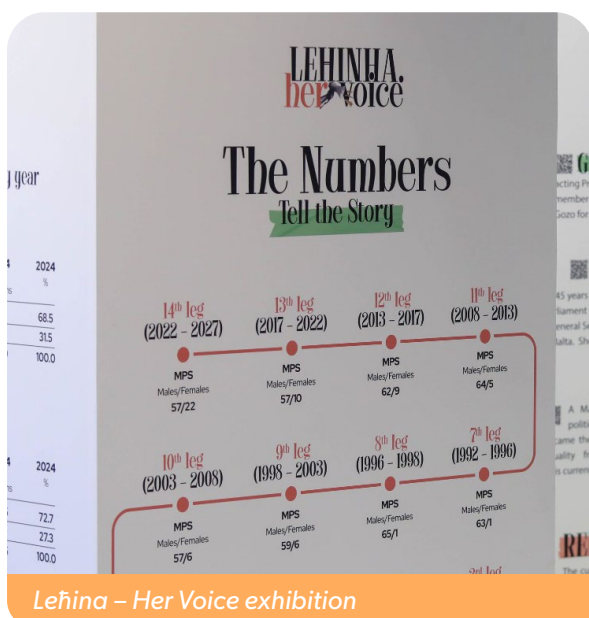
On the eve of the Conference, the Directorate also launched the exhibition titled *Leġina – Her Voice*. The exhibition traces the journey of women in Maltese politics, from the pioneers who broke the first barriers to today’s ongoing efforts toward gender parity.

Divided into four sections, the exhibition presents a timeline of major milestones in women’s political history from 1908 to 2021. It explores the faces of women who have shaped the course of Maltese politics as pioneers and leaders, with media coverage reflecting both their accomplishments and the challenges they have overcome in positions of power.

It also highlights the evolution of women’s representation in Maltese politics, revealing their consistent underrepresentation in Parliament from 1962 to 2022, while tracking progress among cabinet members, the European Parliament, and local government roles. Finally, it provides an explanation of the gender corrective mechanism, first implemented in the 2022 general election, which helped increase the proportion of women in Parliament from 13% in 2020 to 28% in 2022.

- The NCPE published an article in a local newspaper titled 'Leadership positions: the advantages for men and the struggles for women'. Reference was being made to the underrepresentation of women in political leadership, the gender imbalance in corporate boards of listed companies, and to the Women on Boards Directive. The article was shared on the NCPE's Facebook Page. Another article was published in a local newspaper titled 'Making gender equality a reality: a shared commitment'. The article highlighted the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions and was also shared on the NCPE's Facebook Page.

Additionally, a social media post was shared on the NCPE's Facebook and Instagram accounts to raise awareness on the NCPE's Directory for Professional Women. Furthermore, an infographic based on the '2025 Report on Gender Equality in the EU' was shared on the NCPE's Facebook page. It included statistics on women in decision-making, women on the boards members in the EU's publicly listed companies, women on board chair positions, and of women in CEO positions.



Leĥina – Her Voice exhibition



Leĥina – Her Voice exhibition session



Leĥina – Her Voice exhibition participants

6.1.3 Raise awareness on gender bias and stereotypes, sexism and discrimination against women including sexist hate speech online and offline in the political discourse

Status: **Completed**

- In May of 2025, year 8 students at the Naxxar Middle School had the opportunity to engage in workshops led by professionals from different fields, focusing on dismantling stigma and challenging gender stereotypes linked to various careers.



Students talking to professionals from different fields

- The 2025 Annual Conference of the Gender Equality Commission hosted by the Human Rights Directorate in collaboration with the Council of Europe’s Gender Equality Commission brought together policymakers, academics, civil society representatives, and gender equality advocates to address the growing incidence of sexism and violence against women in politics, both online and offline and to explore ways to strengthen institutional responses. The conference centred on two core thematic areas:
 1. Breaking down barriers to equal and meaningful participation – ending sexism and violence, including technology-facilitated violence, in political life.
 2. The future of women in politics – confronting the anti-feminist backlash and advancing gender equality in governance and decision-making.

The conference consisted of 4 panels, as follows:

Panel 1 – Sexism and Violence in Political Spaces: Online and Offline Barriers to Women’s Equal Participation

Panel 2 – Addressing Sexism and Violence in Politics: The Role of Political Parties and Institutions

Panel 3 – Navigating the Backlash: Women’s Leadership and the Fight for Equal Participation in Politics

Panel 4 – Addressing Structural Barriers to Women’s Equal Participation amid the Sexist Backlash.

A total of 82 participants registered for the conference, including focal points from the Gender Equality and Mainstreaming Strategy and Action Plan (GEMSAP) Inter-Ministerial Committee, members of the Gender Equality Commission, and a number of academic and gender equality experts.

- The Human Rights Directorate also launched the exhibition titled Leĥina – Her Voice. The exhibition traces the journey of women in Maltese politics, from the pioneers who broke the first barriers to today’s ongoing efforts toward gender parity.

The exhibition was also showcased at the Parliament of Malta, the Junior College, MCAST the Higher Secondary.

6.2.1 Ensure that at least 40% of appointments made to officially designated bodies are women

Status: **Completed**

- Efforts to ensure that at least 40% of appointments to officially designated bodies are women are in line with the principles set out in the Public Service Management Code (PSMC). The PSMC requires that all recruitment and appointment processes within the public service are based on merit, fairness, and equal opportunity. Specifically, Clause 3.1 on Gender Equality calls for the promotion of gender balance and the prevention of discriminatory practices in appointments. Additionally, Clause 2.5 on Equality of Opportunity states that selection boards must treat all candidates equally, regardless of gender, family responsibilities, or marital status. All ministries are required to follow the PSMC.
- DES continued to monitor gender representation across all appointments and ensured that shortlists and nominations reflected a balanced pool of candidates. Most DES-related boards and committees met or exceeded the 40% threshold, supported by transparent selection processes and active encouragement of qualified female staff to take on leadership and governance roles.

Furthermore, the National Skills Council (NSC) does not currently have any officially designated boards or bodies within its organisational structure, therefore no appointments of this nature have been made during this period. Should such structures be established in the future, the NSC reaffirms its commitment to ensuring that at least 40% of appointments are women. The NSC continues to embed gender equality principles within its internal processes, including gender balanced recruitment panels wherever possible in line with the GEP 2024-2027.

6.2.2 Collect and analyse relevant gender disaggregated data with regard to women's representation in Parliament, local councils and government appointed boards

Status: **Completed**

- On the 27th of January, GMU launched the publication titled "Measuring Gender Equality: A Gender Analysis Based on Sex-Disaggregated Data Indicators" in collaboration with the National Statistic Office. This publication features seven chapters; each chapter examines a variety of gender-disaggregated data across a number of indicators. The key indicators include population, health, social care and well-being, poverty, education, the labour market, crime, and political participation and decision-making.

Additionally, through a collaboration with the NSO the HRD launched a publication on a number of sex-disaggregated indicators. One of the chapters is focused on gender, politics and decision-making. Through an awarded TSI project we aim to continue enhancing this collaboration by creating a dedicated gender database within the NSO's portal.

6.2.3 Ensure systematic periodic data collection on the presence of women and men in senior positions in all sectors

Status: **Completed**

- The NSO publishes quarterly data on the distribution of persons with a main job by occupation groups using ILO's ISCO classification, which is a classification of occupations. The top-most occupation group 'managers' is the equivalent for 'senior positions' and it includes occupations such as CEOs, directors, managers and other headship positions.

The latest Labour Force Survey news release was published by the NSO on 11th December 2025.

6.2.4 Ensure gender balanced representation among speakers and panellists in events and organised conferences

Status: **On Time**

Throughout the year various entities actively worked towards promoting gender balance in events and conferences.

- MCAST makes every effort to seek to secure a balanced gender representation amongst speakers and panellists.

Moreover, on the 25th November 2025 the NSC organized its flagship annual conference focused on the future of work, skills, and lifelong learning. This year's edition, themed "State of Flux", explored how global megatrends were reshaping the way we work, learn, and live. The conference shone a spotlight on the human edge — the skills that set us apart in an increasingly automated and unpredictable world: creativity, empathy, adaptability, critical thinking, and resilience. The event featured panel speakers, with women predominantly represented in this role. Male participation was also ensured, demonstrating the NSC's commitment to fostering gender balanced representation and inclusivity across activities.



6.3.1 Introduce mentoring and leadership training programmes designed to enhance women's presence in senior managerial and directorship positions

Status: **Completed**

- Women in Leadership course is offered by the Institute for the Public Services on online platforms. 41 participants completed training, and 6 others requested an extension.

6.3.2 Provide support and assistance to companies that voluntarily choose to enhance the principle of gender equality in their human resources policies

Status: **Completed**

- The NCPE continued supporting companies applying for the Equality Mark certification and those due for the re-certification, including the finalisation of the certification process of two companies. The Equality Mark committee will meet in Q1 2026 to review and endorse this process. The NCPE finished the re-certification process of seven companies for reviewing and endorsement by the Equality Mark committee in Q1 2026. By end of Q4 2025, there were 155 organisations certified with the Equality Mark with over 37,640 employees. Certification and re-certification processes are ongoing.

Objective 7

Promoting gender equality in social wellbeing and healthcare policies

7.1.1 Raise awareness among professionals in health and social services on gender stereotypes and gender-specific health risks

Status: **Delayed**

This measure will be tackled in the upcoming reporting period.

7.1.2 Launch a far-reaching sex education campaign targeting different age groups so as to ensure that adequate and up-to-date information is available to all with regard to the methods of contraception, fertility issues, pregnancy, and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases

Status: **Completed**

- Throughout the reporting period, the Sexual Health Malta team implemented a range of initiatives aimed at increasing public awareness and engagement around sexual health.

Digital and Media Outreach

The Sexual Health Malta website and associated social media platforms continued to be actively maintained, providing up-to-date information on sexual health services, safer sex practices, and campaign activities.

To further amplify these efforts, a series of radio and television advertisements were launched. These media spots promoted the importance of safer sex and directed audiences to the Sexual Health Malta website for further resources and support.

HPV Vaccination Outreach

The HPV vaccination outreach programme remained active, with continued collaboration between Sexual Health Malta and Primary Health Care. These outreach sessions were regularly conducted at the Campus Hub, targeting young adults in an accessible and familiar setting.

Valentine's Day Campaign

Heart 2 Heart A new awareness campaign titled Heart to Heart was launched in February to mark Valentine's Day.

This campaign explored the intersection of mental and sexual health, focusing on the importance of Consent, relationship education, and healthy communication. The campaign was disseminated through multiple channels, including Radio messages, Vox pop interviews in collaboration with Bay Radio and Vibe FM, Social media posts, Visual advertising at bus stops around Malta. This multi-platform approach ensured widespread visibility and engagement, particularly among younger audiences.

Additionally, Sexual Health Malta continued its commitment to promoting sexual health and well-being through a range of outreach and educational initiatives. Including Sexual Health Education with Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ, consisting of a series of interactive sexual health sessions were delivered in collaboration with Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ, targeting young people across various localities. These sessions focused on STI prevention, consent, healthy relationships, and the importance of regular testing.

Sexual Health Malta took part in Earth Garden, one of Malta's largest music and culture festivals, over a period of three days. The team engaged with hundreds of festival-goers, distributing free condoms, educational leaflets, and awareness materials. This outreach aimed to promote safer sex practices in a relaxed, approachable environment.

In collaboration with the EU-funded REACH OUT project, Sexual Health Malta offered free and confidential STI and HIV testing at multiple locations especially during Earth Garden Festivals, and Refugee and Migrant events. This initiative enhanced access to testing and early detection, particularly among hard-to-reach populations, while also providing on-site counselling and linkage to care where needed. Through these initiatives, Sexual Health Malta strengthened its presence in the community and reinforced its role in fostering a more informed and health-conscious population.



7.2.1 Provide further specialised training for professionals working in health and social services to ensure effective service provision to vulnerable women

Status: **Completed**

- Additional sessions of multiagency training on GBV/DV, and a catch-up session for those members who had already undergone such training previously, were carried out during 2025 and numerous hcp have attended for these sessions from primary health care, mater dei and mental health services.
-

7.2.2 Review guidelines and provide further training regarding female genital mutilation to healthcare practitioners and other support services providers

Status: **Delayed**

- Lectures on migrant health/Harmful Traditional Practices including FGM/ cultural competence in health care were delivered to health professionals at the Children, Adolescent and Youth CAYS Services in Gozo. Harmful traditional Practices and Human Trafficking lectures were delivered to Blue doors NGO and to government representatives attending the National GBV training.
 - Unfortunately, the Practice Nurse who has carried out numerous training sessions annually on FGM and Migrant health has retired and a replacement is in the process of being recruited.
-

7.2.3 Provide training to professionals in health and social services on people's sexual health, including the exchange of good practices

Status: **Completed**

- Talks to YMCA, IDEA Academy, ESP offices, Sedqa by Sexual Health Promotion Unit within HPDP were carried out.
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7.4.4 Provide free menstruation products in schools to eliminate the stigma that exists around this issue

Status: **Completed**

- The tender for the provision of menstrual products and the leasing of self-service dispenser machines in schools was awarded in July 2025. This was followed by a series of logistical coordination meetings with the selected supplier to ensure

effective implementation. The project was officially launched in October 2025 through a press conference held at St Thomas More College in Żejtun. In parallel, a multi-platform awareness campaign was rolled out with the aim of addressing and reducing stigma related to menstruation.

While some shipping and connectivity challenges were encountered, which resulted in delays to the installation process, mitigating measures were put in place to address these issues.

Under the initiative, smart vending machines have been installed in more than 50 secondary (and associated middle) schools across Malta and Gozo with these machines dispensing free sanitary pads and tampons to approximately 11,000 students.

This project builds on earlier pilot efforts that saw free menstrual products provided to 900 students across three schools, enabling us to gather data and refine logistics ahead of national implementation.

The primary aim of this project is to challenge and ultimately eliminate the stigma and taboo often associated with menstruation. It also seeks to encourage open dialogue about menstruation, reframing it as a natural and healthy biological process. Aligned with the Government's commitment to addressing menstruation stigma, the campaign aims to foster a culture of acceptance, respect, and empowerment, particularly among the younger generation. Students should feel comfortable seeking information about their period and expressing discomfort or pain without fear of shame or judgment.



'End the Stigma Period' press conference



'End the Stigma Period' press conference

7.4.5 Study the introduction of free contraception, including its cost and methods of distribution

Status: **On Time**

The Sexual Health Strategy 2025-2030 was launched for public consultation during this quarter, and this included feedback and research on contraception. Final National Sexual Health Strategy 2026-2030 and feedback and changes from the public consultation were recently accepted at cabinet level.

Measure: 7.4.7 Study the health and wellbeing of older people in relation to the gender aspect of life expectancy

Status: **Completed**

The Policy and Projects team, within the MHA – Active Ageing, has compiled a comprehensive report based on recent research covering key areas including Demographic Trends in Ageing, Health Status of Older Adults, Gender Dimensions of Ageing, Care Infrastructure and Policy Response, as well as an Integrated Analysis and Policy Implications.

Objective 8

Eliminate gender imbalance in the field of justice by addressing gender bias and gender stereotypes

8.1.1 Ensure women's equal participation and full involvement in all efforts to maintain and promote peace and security, in line with the WPS agenda

Status: **On Time**

- Lectures on WPS were delivered by MFT to the Malta Police Force on 9th January and 19th February 2025.

On 31 January 2025, MFT organised a 'Women in Sanctions Networking Breakfast' that sought to explore the technical dimensions of sanctions as tools for addressing sexual violence in conflict-affected regions. Participants, who stemmed from the private sector, had the opportunity to discuss sanctions listings and processes established by international bodies, discussing best practices for implementing targeted measures that not only hold perpetrators accountable but also support victims and promote gender equity. The aim was to sensitise the private sector stakeholders on this important subject matter.

MFT also sponsored a study by the Soufan Centre entitled 'A Roadmap to Criminal Justice Accountability for Sexual and Gender Based Violence linked to Terrorism – Lessons from Nigeria'. As acknowledged by CTED, despite global condemnation of these acts of violence and the acknowledgement of the instrumentality of SGBV for terrorist groups, accountability for these acts remains elusive. This study, which has been published in February 2025, draws lessons from the Nigerian experience where it underscores the importance of integrating SGBV-specific prosecutorial guidelines and fostering international collaboration to ensure justice for survivors. The MFT also sponsored programme 'Nisa u Pači' on radio station RTK103 that focuses with issues related to Women, Peace and Security.

In March, Malta was appointed as Focal Point on Gender Provisions on the Treaty on the Prohibition of nuclear weapons (TPNW) starting March 2025 until December 2026. Through this role, Malta will be highlighting the importance of gender perspectives in the implementation of the TPNW, including through the organisation of briefings and will also be able to put forth recommendations in this regard. Additionally, Malta submitted a letter signed by Malta's Ambassador to Brussels, H.E. Vanni Xuereb, to

NATO Secretary General’s Special Representative on Women, Peace, and Security, Ms Irene Fellin informing her of Malta’s intention to associate with Malta’s NATO Policy on Women, Peace and Security.

In May of 2025, MFT participated in the WPS Focal Points Network meeting, and the Strategic Level EU Taskforce on WPS meeting. MFT also delivered a session on Women, Peace and Security to Libyan women in the margins of the “Award in Leadership Essentials” training course offered International Centre for Migration Policy Development in Malta.

An opinion piece written by Director Christianne Caruana and First Secretary Lynette Camilleri on ‘Women in Diplomacy’ was published on the Times of Malta on 26th June 2025.

In September of 2025 MFT participated in the EU Taskforce on WPS meeting, in the annual High Level WPS Focal Points Network meeting in New York, and in the High-Level Meeting on Women, Peace and Security organised by Morocco.

the Ministry launched Malta’s second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. This plan builds on its predecessor and was drafted together with various Ministries, government entities, the Disciplined Forces, academics and civil society. It has four main pillars: the promotion of the agenda, the prevention of violence, the participation of women at all levels of decision-making, and relief and recovery.

Malta delivered a national statement during the High-Level Meeting on the Common Pledge to Increase Women’s Participation in Peace Processes, held on 28 October 2025 in New York

The third edition of the Women, Peace and Security Degree Plus course for University Students was held between 15th October 2025 – 10th December 2025. The aim was to bring the agenda closer to the students and to encourage their further engagement and research in the area.

8.1.2 Collaborate with MFET to commemorate the day when the Security Council adopted the resolution on women and peace and security on 31 October 2000

Status: **On Time**

- The MFT issued a national statement during the United Nations Security Council Annual Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) that was held on 6 October 2025 that marked the 25th Anniversary of the Resolution.

8.2.1 Develop and disseminate training tools and materials on gender equality issues and human rights in the context of international conventions and legal frameworks, which are tailored to the needs of justice professionals and members of law enforcement bodies

Status: **Delayed**

- The launch of the Temi platform has been scheduled for the end of February 2026.
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8.2.2 Develop training modules on gender equality and gender mainstreaming for police officers

Status: **On Time**

- The Malta Police Force has provided updated information about the Training Courses provided to officers. These courses include:
 - Fundamental Human Rights
 - Ethics, Diversity & Professional Standards
 - GHQ Circulars (Int. Policies)
 - Hate Crime
 - Human Trafficking
 - Women, Peace & Security
 - Prevention of Sexual Exploitation & Abuse
 - Domestic Violence & Victim Support
 - LGBTIQ
- A Course Leading to The Promotion of Police Sergeants, carried out with 19 participants. This course included the following subjects:
 - Fundamental Human Rights and Ethics
 - Police Ethics
 - Internal Policies and Circulars
 - Victims of Crime
 - Women, Peace & Security
 - Prevention of Sexual Exploitation & Abuse
 - LGBTIQ

- 16th Officer Cadets - A Course Leading to the Promotion of Inspector, carried out with 10 participants. This course included the following subjects:
 - Fundamental Human Rights
 - Ethics and Policies
 - Trafficking of Human beings
 - Sexual and Domestic Violence
 - Victim Support

- In- Service - Continuous Professional Development for Police working in Operational and Field, carried out with 212 participants. This course included the following subjects:
 - Fundamental Human Rights
 - Policies, Procedures, and Police Ethics
 - Hate Crime
 - Trafficking of Human beings
 - Customer Care
 - Community Policing
 - Domestic abuse and Vulnerable Victims

- Reserve Police Constables Induction Course, carried out with 30 participants. This course included the following subjects:
 - Fundamental Human Rights
 - Policies, Procedures, and Police Ethics
 - Introduction to Mental Health
 - Customer Care
 - Community Policing
 - Domestic abuse and Vulnerable Victims

- Induction Training for new members of Community Police, carried out with 17 participants. This course included the following subjects:
 - Police Code of Ethics, Internal Policies and Procedures
 - Policing in Intercultural Contexts: Challenges and Opportunities

- Gender Based Violence and Domestic Violence to Police Officers, carried out with 10 participants, about various Subjects in Relation to Topic.



Officers receiving training about dv

8.3.1 Encourage research and standardised data collection to tackle gaps and lack of data disaggregated by sex concerning women's access to justice

Status: **On Time**

- In support of efforts to enhance awareness and capacity on sex-disaggregated data collection, a study titled 'Measuring Gender Equality' by the NSO and the HRD was distributed amongst the Police. This study, which provides a gender analysis based on sex-disaggregated indicators, is intended to assist and inform the Police in their future work toward strengthening data collection practices in line with the objectives of this measure.

8.3.3 Identify, compile, and disseminate good practices from other member states to reduce obstacles and facilitate women's access to justice

Status: **Completed**

- A comprehensive research initiative was undertaken to identify and analyse effective practices implemented by other Member States aimed at reducing barriers and enhancing women's access to justice. It draws on international frameworks like CEDAW and the Istanbul Convention to guide reforms and highlights a range of innovative practices across the EU.

Across the EU, various Member States have implemented effective practices and policies that address systemic barriers preventing women from accessing justice. These initiatives span legal aid services, specialized judicial systems, targeted support for victims, and awareness-raising campaigns. This report highlights key examples of these practices to inspire actionable strategies for fostering inclusive legal systems. Discussions on this research are ongoing internally as well as with the MHSE.

Malta stands to benefit significantly from the practices outlined in the report, especially in its ongoing efforts to strengthen gender equality through its national strategy and action plan (GEMSAP 2022–2027). The report’s examples from other EU Member States offer practical, proven models that Malta can adapt to address its own challenges.

8.3.4 Monitor and follow up court decisions to raise awareness and ensure a better understanding among legal professionals of issues related to women’s access to justice, including judicial stereotypes and the protection against gender-based violence and discrimination

Status: **On Time**

- The Commission on Gender-Based Violence & Domestic Violence (CGBVDV) consulted with NGOs and IMC on the implementation of this measure, which is also listed in the National Strategy on GBV and DV (2023-2028). From the consultation process, the research topic was extended to cover multiple facets of victims’ and professionals’ experiences in the Criminal Court and work linked to the methodology and the literature review had been initiated. However, considering the complex nature of this study, the CGBVDV is going to divide this research project into 4 parts: i. Analysing court decisions in cases of DV ii. Conducting research on victims’ and professionals’ experiences related to court procedures in cases of DV iii. Analysing the behaviours and attitudes of the judiciary towards victims (and perpetrators?) of DV iv. Analysing cases of DV victims which were brought to the Constitutional Court.

The procurement for the first project has been initiated and CGBVDV is planning to involve MJR and CSA in order to conduct the data collection. The analysis of court decisions in cases of DV will lay the groundwork for the implementation of the three remaining projects as it will delve into highlighting current patterns or consistencies when it comes to sentences given in such cases. Moreover, the findings will provide a set of recommendations which will continue to inform the other research projects and policy formation.

8.3.5 Carry out a gender equality audit within the Malta Police Force to assess the gaps in the present allocation of resources, and the gender relations and representation within them

Status: **Completed**

The Malta Police Force have been awarded the Equality Mark and will work towards maintaining it.

Mid-Term GEMSAP Implementation Update

Objective	Total No of Measures	Completed Measures	On Time Measures	Delayed Measures	Completed Percentage
1	17	10	5	2	58.82%
2	20	11	9	0	55%
3	6	2	4	0	33.33%
4	20	16	2	2	80%
5	7	4	1	2	57.14%
6	9	9	0	0	100%
7	16	10	4	2	62.5%
8	9	4	4	1	44.47%
Totals	104	66	29	9	
		63.46%	27.88%	8.65%	

