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Minister laments low sense of adventure amongst Maltese youth

National Youth Policy calls for Youth Village, Gozo youth hub, programmes to increase political awareness amongst youth, school campaigns to encourage integration of minorities, higher youth participation in European exchange programmes



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Education Minister Evarist Bartolo



David Agius, Chris Agius, Evarist Bartolo and Miriam Teuma launch the national youth policy

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Maltese youth are too protected and lack a sense of adventure when compared to their European peers, education minister Evarist Bartolo claimed.

“Malta’s inclusion model that we have developed over the past twelve years is one that encourages dependency, rather than the harnessing of individual skills,” Bartolo said at the launch of a national youth policy for 2015 till 2020. “Youth must be more willing to widen their borders.”

He said that very few Maltese students go on exchange programmes such as Erasmus+ and that local companies dealing in science and technology often complain about Maltese workers refusing to

enroll in overseas training courses.

Bartolo also pointed out that Malta’s gender gap with regards educational outcomes at school is one of the highest in the world, with the average exam results of girls some 20% higher than those of their male counterparts.

"We need to discover the reason behind why Maltese boys are under-achieving at school."

He said that around 23% of the 4,000 students who graduated from Form 5 at the end of the 2013/14 academic year are not working, training, or pursuing further education. In 2013, around 7,000 youths between 18 and 24 years old were not employed, in education or in training.

While he admitted that some of these youth might be working illegally, “in which case, at least they’re active”, he warned that a good proportion of them are disabled people, and youth who have lost heart in life from an early age.

PN whip and youth spokesperson David Agius praised the policy and suggested that its newly-set up monitoring board compose an annual report on its implementation that will be debated in Parliament. This suggestion was later given the nod of approval by youth parliamentary secretary Chris Agius who reiterated the government's commitment to giving youth a voice.

National Youth Policy: Key features

A Youth Village will be set up at Santa Venera to provide support services, programmes and activities for both youths and youth workers.

A youth café and a youth hub will open in Gozo, youth hub opening hours will be extended and the youth activity centres at Villa Psaignon (Dingli) and Marsaxlokk will be upgraded. More youth local councils will be set up.

Projects will be launched to increase political and democratic awareness amongst youth. A training manual for youth participation will be disseminated. Training will be provided for the professional development of youth workers.

School campaigns will be launched to increase integration of minorities and to raise awareness of diversity. LGBTIQ youths, youths from a migrant background, young people with disabilities or challenging behaviour, youth from families at risk of poverty, and youth leaving care detention will be integrated further.

E-learning and lifelong learning among youth will be promoted, the validation of non-formal education will be pursued, and the number of low-achievers will be reduced. The gender gap in school exam results between males and females, and the social gap between students attending different schools will be tackled.

Young people's musical skills and appreciation in the arts will be supported. Young writers and dramatists will be supported, youth literature will be promoted, and youth will be given better access to artistic and cultural sites.

Youth will be encouraged to take part in the European Voluntary Service and other youth exchange programmes.

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