

# National Strategy on Volunteering 2020 - 2025



**VOLUNTEER**



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**T**he National Strategy on Volunteering – Moving Towards 2025 is part of the Government’s policy for a larger democratic participation accompanied by a tangible economic and social improvement for all. It is the aim of the Parliamentary Secretary for Youth, Sports and Voluntary Organisations as well as the Government at large that the Strategy adheres to and reflects agreed standards and principles which are both established within the Voluntary Organisations Act as well as in the informal rules of the same sector.

The Strategy must be set on the following principles. It must be inclusive where all volunteers and their organisations can claim ownership of the Strategy and may shape its direction for the future. It must be built on the knowledge and experience gained over the years by the sector and take into account both the local, European and international perspective and developments which are continuously taking place and shaping the reality around us. It must have a clear action plan with measurable outcomes so that volunteers and the community in which they operate will benefit from the Strategy in a tangible way. The positive role that the voluntary sector and other relevant stakeholders can play in actively supporting and implementing the strategy must be clearly defined and put into practice.

I am sure that this Strategy will address and fulfil the expectations of the voluntary sector while complementing the newly amended Voluntary Organizations Act (later referred to as the VO Act). The effective implementation of the Strategy over the established timeframe 2020 - 2025 will be a priority both to the Parliamentary Secretary for Youth, Sports and Voluntary Organisations and the Government, but also for the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector and all those committed to working within the sector in support of our communities.

**Hon. Dr Clifton Grima**

*Parliamentary Secretary for Youths, Sports  
and Voluntary Organisations*



PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY FOR YOUTH,  
SPORT AND VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS







## Background and Context

The National Strategy on Volunteering – Moving Towards 2025, focuses on three main pillars which are both independent yet still dependent on each other in their growth and functionality.

The first pillar is the reality of the community in which the same community exists in Malta and Gozo today, with all the realities that affect the lives and the environment in which we live in. This pillar looks into the setting up of coherent policies which, through their effective implementation, support communities in an active and effective manner to address realities, needs and aspirations.

The second pillar is the development of the first National Volunteer Strategy to compliment both decades of work undertaken by the sector as well as reflect the newly amended legislation that regulates the same sector. The newly amended VO Act requires that such a Strategy is put in place in order to support and promote the VO Sector in its operation in respect of the established legislations while creating the tools, administrative frameworks and financial support for the sector to work within such legislation.

The third pillar is the Government's policy for greater democratic participation, equitable economic and social progress for all, and inclusive participation. This direction is already enacted in the newly amended VO Act 2018 where the framework for more democratization has been embedded in the law, which now needs to cascade in the various Government policies and initiatives which relate to and effect the VO Sector.











## Context of this Strategic Plan

Our community, as is the world all over, is ever evolving and that we are witnessing to changes and encountering challenges that will call us all to use our resources wisely and respond creatively. Participation, engagement and collaboration are becoming a must. Volunteering is a positive, natural and spirited way to realise meaningful human interaction, collaboration and purposeful contribution. The transformative effect of volunteering on individuals, organisations, communities and society is a portal to active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity. The volunteering infrastructure supported by Government through the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector (later referred to as MCVS) provides nationwide cover. This means that communities and voluntary organisations in Malta and Gozo have access to support and resources, also through the regional Volunteer Centres. Government is committed with MCVS as a central actor on behalf of the Voluntary Sector to strengthen its financial and administrative support, as well as the infrastructure in favour of the same sector.

Volunteering is changing and the way people seek to volunteer and the way that organisations engage and value the contribution of volunteers is shifting. Through this, we are watching the emerging landscape and preparing to respond nimbly and constructively. We intend to support volunteering so that it is an easily accessible, meaningful and enjoyable human experience. We are attentive to ethics and continue to convey the philosophy of quality volunteering and how it can serve causes and policies practically. We also notice that the corporate world is becoming a potential and interesting partner to volunteering, especially meaningful volunteering that supports worthy causes and has positive impact. This is considered a good way to engage employees, build teams and meet corporate social responsibility targets. The sector should also look into responding to the needs of the corporate world and to people who wish to volunteer as part of specific corporate initiatives. All this has to be undertaken in ethical, practical and innovative ways.

Government, while supporting the voluntary sector, must be aware not to interfere in such a manner that may hinder the independence of the voluntary sector. While the latter must be alert to the challenges that changes in government policy may bring, the way the economy can impact volunteering, the effect that expectations and shifting patterns and norms in society may have and the emergence of new ways to resource our work.

The value of volunteering is deepening as it is recognised as a measure and means to encourage engagement, connectedness, community and social inclusion. Both Government and MCVS recognise that in order to deliver the strategic vision in the next years, external collaboration will be critical, working closely with other non-profit organisations, government bodies and companies.







This document establishes an agreement between the Government and the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector on behalf of the voluntary sector in Malta. It is dependent upon the policies and procedures to which the Government commits itself in this document. The Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector will agree upon an action plan setting out specific measures for implementing the *Strategy*, including the targets and timetable against which this is to be measured. A review of the implementation and impact of the *Strategy* and action plan will be conducted annually and a report submitted to the Minister with responsibility for the voluntary sector in Malta.









The Government and the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector agree that the following aims shall guide the work of both partners in the Strategy with the scope of enhancing the voluntary sector within Malta.

The aims are:

1. To encourage good practice and co-operative methods of decision making and for reviewing performance, particularly where organisations receive Government finance as service providers.
2. To encourage voluntary organisations and charities through co-operation and training as well as through financial support.
3. To encourage the work of umbrella organisations (platforms) and co-operation between such organisations.
4. To encourage volunteering initiatives and the idea that voluntary activity is an essential part of citizenship.
5. To recognise specific needs and special contributions made by groupings of voluntary organisations in the community.
6. To encourage a growth in the contribution of different age groups. Voluntary activity must be seen as a part of citizenship for young people while the contribution of older people, who bring to bear a lifetime's experience, should not be underestimated. While many organisations depend on the commitment of their older members and while many young people contribute zeal and energy, the fact is that the potential is not being realised to the full at either end of the age range.
7. To ensure that Government is measuring and recognising things that really matter, both within Government and between Government and voluntary organisations.
8. To review the co-ordination of Government relationships with the voluntary sector across departments.
9. To assess carefully, in consultation with the voluntary sector, the potential impact of policy changes upon the sector.







The Government and the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector share a number of common values about the role of individuals and communities in a modern democracy which will underpin all aspects of this Strategy. Both agree that the main aim is the creation of a civil society which:

1. offers equality of opportunity to all its members regardless of race, colour, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, disability, language preference, religion or family/domestic responsibilities;
2. is inclusive and enables people to participate in all its economic, social and cultural activities;
3. empowers people to participate in the development of their communities;
4. relies on people's voluntary action to foster community leadership and enhance local democracy;
5. comprise public, private and voluntary sectors and its problems best addressed through partnership between them.

The Government and the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector agree that their relationship must be built on integrity, trust and mutual respect.

The Government and the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector agree that partnership means working together towards a common set of goals, based on equality in terms of ownership, decision-making and recognition of each party's distinctive contribution.











The Government recognises:

1. the wide scope and diversity of voluntary activity across the whole spectrum of public life; the contribution voluntary and community organisations and volunteers make to the economic, social, environmental and cultural life in Malta; and the role they play in formulating and delivering public policy;
2. that voluntary and community organisations are independent organisations which determine their own priorities and manage their own affairs;
3. that volunteering is the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community; the environment; or individuals outside one's immediate family. It is undertaken freely and by choice, without concern for financial gain;
4. that voluntary organisations have an obligation to represent the interests of their constituents;
5. that voluntary organisations operate within the principles upon which they are founded, and are accountable to their members and the individuals and communities with whom they work

The Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector on behalf of the voluntary sector recognises:

1. the important strategic role that the Government plays in the development and delivery of public policy and services.
2. the legal and financial framework within which the Government operates.
3. their responsibility to be accountable to the different parties that have an interest in their work, including:
  - a. their members;
  - b. the people who use their services;
  - c. the communities in which they work in;
  - d. the general public and funding bodies that support their work;
  - e. the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations which is the regulatory body that oversee their activities.







The Government is committed to:

1. designate a Minister to have responsibility for the interests of volunteers and voluntary organisations;
2. developing, in consultation with the voluntary sector:
  - a policy on working in partnership with voluntary organisations and measures to support this;
  - a policy on volunteering and measures to promote volunteering;
  - a policy on community development and measures to promote it;
  - a policy to have all funds directed to the Voluntary Sector falling under the responsibility of MCVS.

The Malta Council on behalf of the voluntary organisations is committed to:

1. having clearly defined procedures and structures that enable VOs to fulfil their obligations on accountability and fair and transparent entitlement to funds.











The Government recognises that voluntary organisations have an obligation to represent the interests of the people and communities they work with. The Government acknowledges organisations' right to campaign on behalf of these interests within the regulatory framework.

The Government is committed to:

1. setting out agreed procedures in collaboration with the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector on behalf of the same sector for consultation on policy changes and new policy developments which affect voluntary organisations and/or volunteering interests which include:
  - a. opportunities for ongoing discussion between voluntary organisations and volunteering interests and Government Departments to foster early understanding and involvement in policy development;
  - b. consultation arrangements that normally allow adequate time for wider consultation with networks and service users;
  - c. the role of umbrella bodies and intermediaries in facilitating consultation;
  - d. feedback to respondents on the replies to and outcomes of the consultation;
  - e. opportunities for the sector to continue to be involved at the implementation and evaluation stages of the policy.

Many voluntary organisations and volunteering interests are involved in representing the interests of particular groups or causes in society and campaigning on their behalf.

Voluntary organisations are committed to:

1. defining and demonstrating how they represent their stated beneficiaries/clients;
2. consulting their beneficiaries/clients and accurately representing their views when presenting a case to Government or responding to Government consultations;
3. ensuring that the information they present to Government is accurate and that research has been conducted in an objective and unbiased manner;
4. having regard for the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations, who is the regulatory body that governs voluntary organisations, when campaigning on behalf of their beneficiaries/clients.

Where organisations claim a leading role in representation, they should be prepared to respond in reasonable time to Government consultations on relevant subjects, commensurate with their available resources.



The Government recognises that the voluntary sector and volunteers operate across a wide range of disciplines, in a wide range of roles, and have a particular contribution to make.

The Government is committed to:

1. setting out arrangements for working in partnership with voluntary and community organisations and with volunteering interests in the voluntary, statutory and private sectors in all relevant policy areas;
2. promoting partnerships between public and voluntary sectors through its policies and funding strategies;
3. promoting the role of the voluntary sector throughout the public sector including Non-Departmental Public Bodies;
4. encouraging public bodies to designate a senior official to have responsibility for relations with the voluntary sector;
5. promoting the spirit and principles of the Strategy to Local Councils through the Association for Local Councils;
6. dialogue with organisations on the development of their long-term objectives;
7. proofing of all significant policy changes across all policy areas for their impact on the voluntary sector, volunteering and community interests.

Voluntary and community organisations and volunteering interests recognise the value of working in partnership in addressing society's problems and improving the quality of life of all its members. Voluntary organisations recognise that real partnership brings benefits and responsibilities for all those involved. Voluntary and community organisations and volunteering interests are committed to:

1. developing a partnership approach with government and its agencies in areas of common benefit;
2. co-operating with government departments in setting out joint working arrangements;
3. establishing partnerships with educational institutions namely University of Malta, MCAST, Junior College, setting up volunteering programmes to promote youth volunteering;
4. co-operating with the Ministry for Education and Youth to establish a programme giving students a volunteer experience;
5. taking a proactive approach to informing Government of developments in their work that may be relevant to the formulation of policy and practice;
6. assisting Government to extend the reach of its information sources and partners, particularly amongst under-represented sections of society;
7. developing and sharing innovative approaches to service delivery based on the needs and circumstances of the service users;
8. providing high quality, cost effective services with systems to assure quality and accountability to the people who use them.





The Government recognises that its policies on voluntary organisations, volunteering and community development must include measures for financial support of the sector.

The extent of such measures will be determined by the level of resources available and funds will need to be targeted according to priorities. The Government also recognises its role in ensuring that the voluntary sector has fair and reasonable access to other sources of public funds arising from Government and European programmes operating in Malta. The Government is committed to establishing and maintaining procedures to ensure accepted best practice in the administration of its grant schemes and those of agencies which administer funds on its behalf, including:

1. clarity in the objectives of grant schemes and their eligibility criteria;
2. transparency and objectivity in the administrative and assessment procedures;
3. consistency between funding programmes
4. arrangements that assist voluntary organisations to meet their legal and regulatory obligations;
5. arrangements for agreeing meaningful objectives and performance indicators, commensurate with the level of funding, by which an organisation is to be monitored and evaluated;
6. progress towards three year funding arrangements for core-grants as a means of promoting effective long-term planning;
7. effective arrangements for co-operating between departments over grant aid for activities that do not readily fit within one department's responsibilities;
8. targeting resources effectively.

The Government is also committed to promoting good practice to other funders.

The voluntary sector recognises that receipt of public funds carries with it responsibilities to the funding body and to the public that benefit from the services provided. The voluntary sector is committed to pursuing acknowledged codes of good practice on the use and administration of public funds appropriate to the scale of funding and operation covering:

1. clear and effective employment policies, management arrangements and procedures;
2. effective and proportionate systems for the management, control, accountability, propriety and audit of finances;
3. systems for planning and implementation of work programmes;
4. systems for monitoring and evaluation of activities against agreed objectives and key performance indicators;
5. systems for quality assurance and accountability to users, including complaints procedures;
6. policies for ensuring equality of opportunity in both employment practice and service provision;
7. public acknowledgement of Government support.



All parties recognise the need of creating young willing volunteers and for this reason this strategy needs to look into all stakeholders being 'youth ready' by making roles accessible for young people while providing guidance and support. Young people are not particularly different to other volunteers in experiencing the challenge of making time to volunteer, and no different in what motivates them to volunteer; although their motivations may be held in different priorities to older volunteers, with more value for most young people on skill development, as well as giving something back to the community/pursuing personal interests/being with friends.

Government and MCVS are committed to:

1. Address the issue of creating young willing volunteers by reassuring their confidence through offering peer ambassadors and mentors;
2. Accessing their influencers (including schools and other educational institutions, families and peers);
3. Adapting the length or regularity of their volunteer role to address their transient time commitments;
4. Addressing their access to transport;
5. Understanding how young people prefer to communicate – in terms of media and styles by embracing websites and social networking. Understanding how to effectively use digital communication media to target young volunteer audiences is clearly a huge development area for volunteer-involving organisations;
6. Targeting recruitment of young people by keeping application processes short as possible. Targeted recruitment was essential to attract young people into the organisations, utilising digital and non-digital recruitment mixes, using existing peer networks, schools, colleges, universities and youth centres;
7. Training and using young people as ambassadors, to help potential young people to put themselves in volunteers' shoes;
8. Providing youth workers to train voluntary organisations on how to manage and maintain young volunteers.