The Malta National Disability Strategy
CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

THE MALTA NATIONAL DISABILITY STRATEGY

RIGHTS | RESPONSIBILITIES | ACTION

PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY FOR RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITY AND ACTIVE AGEING

in collaboration with

THE NATIONAL COMMISSION PERSONS WITH DISABILITY & THE FOCAL POINT OFFICE
...individual success depends on a collective effort...

Justyne Caruana (2015)
As pledged, following the launch of the National Policy for the Rights of Persons with Disability, which was a first for our Country, we are now in a position to present the Malta National Disability Strategy. This Strategy will cover all types of impairments and age groups and will seek to address the needs of persons with disability, their family, carers and all other stakeholders.

The Government has repeatedly directed its effort and commitment towards this sector which can only be achieved if we are working together and in tandem with all interested parties. Once again this Strategy inspired by the concept of Società Ġusta has not only been stimulated by the UN CRPD but has also drawn together the various stakeholders who have contributed their ideas along all stages of the development of this Strategy. We believe that the success of such a Strategy depend on the following; a collective and coherent effort; respect to diversity; developing individualised support planning and striving towards active citizenship

The changing nature of disability requires that even though the objectives and complementary measures are tied to timeframes we need to keep the door ajar to ensure that any changes in this volatile experience can be dealt with. The deep-seated purpose of this Strategy remains to set out a high level action framework to give credence and credibility across disability specific areas of policy. We need to ensure an improved performance of service delivery, increase the understanding that every action needs to find a close affiance with persons with disabilty. This Strategy will only make sense when we are able to improve the opportunities for people with disabilities that will intern help them to contribute across all areas of society.

Hon. Justyne Caruana
Acknowledgements

At this stage it is important to acknowledge the work done by the Office of the Parliamentary Secretariat for Rights of Persons with Disability and Active Ageing (PSDAA), the Focal Point Office and the National Commission Persons with Disability.

The immense contribution given by all the Ministries and Parliamentary Secretaries was crucial in formulating this Strategy.

The role of the NGOs, Service Providers, Government Agencies, professionals, allies and stakeholders was pivotal in giving the rightful direction.

But the biggest appreciation goes to all persons with disability and their families in Malta and Gozo who have allowed us to share their narratives, to ask them about the most intimate and personal experiences so that we could have a final product that respects the aspirations, dreams, choices of persons with disability.
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Executive Summary : Summing it up

The Malta National Disability Strategy draws from the National Policy on the Rights of Persons with Disability. Whilst the latter’s scope is to provide direction, in the case of the Strategy the intention is to address those aspirations and layout a national plan that will result in the quality of life of persons with disability and their family to improve.

The outcomes of the Strategy can be seen in a number of over-arching themes that have emanated from it, namely issues around choice and control and the importance of providing services that are tailor made. The family support is of utmost importance and the message that is given in this strategy is that families of persons with disability need to be provided with all the necessary supports.

The Strategy also attempts to address the complex changes that happen between one transition and another in life. Transitions are always difficult and complex but increasingly so if not enough support is provided. The Strategy is based on the fact that every person with disability should lead a confident, enriched life and participate actively in society, politics, culture and economics.

The Malta National Disability Strategy is intended for every person with disability to become an active citizen with the freedom to make choices. The goal of this Strategy is to have better opportunities for people with disabilities in the labour market, improving the educational experience, provide social services in the right formats and focus on emancipating the individual.

This Strategy is aligned within the following notions; inclusive and accessible communities, human rights and civil responsibilities, justice, economic development, personal and community support tailored around needs and not vice-versa and learning skills.
Vision
A 360 Degrees Perspective

Our vision for this sector is to mainstream this community and that this has to be a national effort. Along the years we have always seen the general population respect persons with disability by supporting them in a myriad of ways. We are at a stage where we need to talk less about dis-ability and more about ability.

Our vision for this sector is for the State to have less control over the lives of persons with disability and the latter would have the ultimate control of the choices they want for themselves.

Our vision for this sector is move towards inclusive communities and to create the opportunities for persons with disability to develop their own public policy.

Our vision is to eradicate the following: poor health, lower levels of participation in education, lack of training and employment, social exclusion, inaccessibility, bullying, discrimination and poverty.
Barriers
Walking the talk

A fundamental role of the Malta National Disability Strategy is the active engagement of people with a disability in their own development as people and active citizens. In particular the Strategy will provide opportunities for people with a disability, their families and carers, policy makers, service providers and community operators to work together to ensure that this community can overcome the lack of opportunities.

A key initiative of the Strategy to ensure its effectiveness will be the setting up of a Monitoring Unit based at the PSDAA to analyse the data and ensure that the Government is on track when it comes to implementing it.
Testimonials
Listening to the grassroots

I have been hoping for a long time this country to have a long-term plan in the disability sector, this seems to be a great opportunity.
Mark, 18, Person with Spina Bifida

When I was asked whether I think a strategy is important in this sector I was surprised, we should have been working with a plan for a much longer time. For too long decisions are taken for us and without us getting really involved in how we want our lives to pan out.
Cynthia, 22 years old is Visually Impaired

I really hope that this strategy will not be another document that will be seated on some shelf.
George, 16 years old is Paraplegic

It is important that we keep believing in the role of parents. For children with intellectual impairments the parents remain the most important link.
Shirley, Mum of 8 year old son with Down Syndrome,

Our society is at times very unfair with us.
Damian, 35 years old with an Intellectual Disability
The Government’s Objectives

Reading the signs

Disability is not homogenous so there cannot be a one size fits all strategy.

Matching the person to the right type of service provides satisfaction to the persons with disability and avoids waste of resources.

The concept of living and participating in the life of the community is crucial. Whilst there should be guiding principles that underpin a strategy, the Government is committed to the concept of Società Ġusta (Fair Society) whereby persons with disability are able to enjoy privacy and relationships, participate in the life of the community and manage their own needs as much as possible.

The role of the Government is to provide the required support and facilitate the setting up of services, benefits and provisions to ensure that persons with disability have complete control over their lives.
Introduction

Setting the scene

For the first time in our Country’s social policy history, the disability field is going to be endowed with a national Strategy that emanates from the recently launched National Policy on the Rights of Persons with Disability, another first for Malta. Within the context of a Government that is committed to ensure a socially ‘Fair Society’, a commitment by the State via the signing of the UN CRPD and a constantly evolving legislative base the Malta National Disability Strategy is timely in terms of what direction this sector is going to take. For too long the predictable elements in this field of social policy have not been panned out making it difficult for the unavoidable to be dealt with judiciously and sharply.

According to the latest Maltese Census (2011), 8.55% of the Maltese population have a disability. Consequently, the Maltese Government is determined to minimise the barriers which hinder full participation for persons with disabilities and their families creating a level playing field and engaging these people in the community as full and active citizens. The UN CRPD ratification in March 2012 is another stepping stone together with the upgrade or the Equal Opportunities Act (EOA) to ensure that this principle of inclusion is safeguarded and founded on the right for inclusion, the right to reach one’s full potential thus enjoying a high quality of life and the highest possible standard of living. The Malta National Disability Strategy will address the needs of the individuals who are at the center of this experience, namely persons with disability and their families together with the responsibilities that the wider society needs to endorse.

This Strategy attempts to lay out the milestones that will ensure that the family support systems and the community support systems all lead towards an improved quality of life for persons with disability. Within this context the Strategy will endeavor to contextualise persons with disability who may have a particular physical impairment, difficulty in performing a particular activity or task, or other barriers which may hinder his or her full participation in society. In fact the United Nations Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disability defines disability as follows: “Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others”

1 National Audit Office (NAO), 2011 Census
2 The Equal Opportunities (Persons with disability) Act, Chapter 413, 2000
Principles
Developing the milestones

A number of over-arching principles will guide this work namely, equality, inclusion, cohesion and community development. We feel that it is fitting, at the onset, to lay out some exciting social policy notions that emanate from the Council of Europe’s rich social policy tradition, an organisation that the Government of Malta is a member of. These strategies tally with the model that governs the Malta National Disability Strategy and the approach we are proposing.

Promote Social Cohesion by increasing the capacity of our society to ensure the welfare of all its members, minimising disparities and avoid polarisation. A cohesive society is a mutually supportive community of free individuals pursuing these common goals by democratic means.

Construct Social Cohesion on a basis of human rights and the revised European Social Charter, the starting point of the social cohesion strategy. In this respect welfare implies not only equity and non-discrimination in access to human rights but also; The dignity of each person and the recognition of their abilities and their contribution to society; Respect towards the diversity of cultures, opinion and religious beliefs; The freedom of each individual to pursue their own personal development; The possibility for each person to participate actively as a full member of society.

Social Cohesion is a responsibility shared by all and seen as conscientiousness for all sectors of society. Welfare must become a goal shared by all social stakeholders; the State, the service providers and the concerned individual. This new situation does not imply the withdrawal of the State but leads to its seeking more varied means of action involving the new partners.
Strategy Objectives

Ensuring continuity

This Strategy builds on the valid and reputable work of the National Policy on the Rights of Persons with Disability. Each objective represents a policy item and in that way we can read this work in parallel.

Each objective area has been laid out in the following way; the principle as per National Policy on the Rights of Persons with Disability, a number of strategies and actions to respond to these principles.
Implementation
Standing committee

A standing committee will be set up to oversee the implementation of this Strategy and regularly report and present progress reports to the Parliamentary Secretary for Right for Persons with Disability and Active Aging. All reference to Committees in this document will be referring to this Standing Committee.
Objective 1

Right to live a dignified life

It is a basic and fundamental right for all persons with disability to have a life based on respect and positive engagement in the community. Being cared for is no longer considered enough. Persons with disability are seeking to develop their potential by getting involved in the community as full and active citizens.

Principles

Persons with disability must be treated as equal, and therefore they are not to be subjected to discrimination.

Violence or any other degrading treatment, including any behaviour under the guise of provision of medical treatment and/or scientific research.

Persons with disability must be accorded with equal rights, with particular emphasis on; The Freedom of Movement, the Freedom of Participation, the Freedom of Voting, the Freedom of Association, the Freedom of Expression, the Right to Privacy, and finally the Freedom of religious belief.
Strategy Initiative 1

A UNCRPD Act will be put into place

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1

• Submit to Parliament a ground breaking UNCRPD Act

Strategy Initiative 2

Awareness on how to use EoA in case of alleged discrimination

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1

• An action plan on EoA awareness is to be devised between KNPD and PSDAA to reach pwd, their families and society.

Action 2

• Ongoing information on the EoA via seminars and discussions with Disability NGOs and civil society.

Action 3

• Ongoing media informational programmes/spots.

Strategy Initiative 3

Disability Officer to see the support of persons with disability working in Government Departments

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1

• OPM and Focal Point Office are to organise a structure where each Ministry, Department and other Agencies have a Disability Officer.

Action 2

• Disability Officers shall support staff at the relevant place of work, or other service users with a disability with the key reference point being the Permanent Secretary and the Focal Point Manager.

Action 3

• Disability Officers shall attend ongoing training on Disability related issues organised by the Focal Point Manager.
**Strategy Initiative 4**  
*Develop a legislative compendium on laws that affect Persons with Disability*

*Implementing the Strategy*

Action 1  
- Standing Committee to prepare an initial report.

Action 2  
- Report developments with AGs Office.

**Strategy Initiative 5**  
*Training of persons involved in provision of services*

*Implementing the Strategy*

Action 1  
- Draft Training design outline presented to PSDAA, based on social Construction of Disability and the Social Model of Disability. This course is to promote Inclusion, Independent Living, and Equal Rights.

Action 2  
- Implementation of training to persons involved in provision of services.

**Strategy Initiative 6**  
*All government boards, agencies and authorities to have statutory persons with disability represented in them*

*Implementing the Strategy*

Action 1  

Action 2  
- Implementation of Act.
Strategy Initiative 7

Discussions between political parties on new and inclusive voting mechanisms

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1
- Standing Committee together with Electoral Commission and Political Partier to discuss freedom of voting rights and accessible voting mechanisms.

Action 2
- Draft Suggestions by the Standing Committee based on the UN CRPD directions to the PSDAA.

Action 3
- Consultation with disability activists, NGOs, and other Stakeholders.

Action 4
- Submit consultation Report.

Action 5
- Final amendments of the Electoral Law to be presented in Parliament.

Strategy Initiative 8

Report on leisure strategy for persons with disability

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1
- Standing Committee to discuss current national accessibility of leisure activities and propose a strategy.

Action 2
- Draft Report of strategy on the access of leisure activities

Action 3
- Presentation of Accessible Leisure Activities for All Guidelines.
Strategy Initiative 9

Accessible Information Policy

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1
- Standing Committee to understand current situation and needs.

Action 2
- Standing Committee recommends reports to the Parliamentary Secretary.

Action 3
- Draft of Policy for consultation.

Action 4
- Piloting of Draft Policy.

Action 5
- Implementation Plan laid out.

Action 6
- Dissemination of Training to staff in Governmental Entities.

Strategy Initiative 10

New legislation of professional secrecy

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1
- Drafting of Act

Action 2
- Consultation with Stakeholders.

Action 3
- Consultation between PSDAA and AGs Office.

Action 4
Strategy Initiative 11

KNPD to pilot meetings with all faiths to ensure that venues and services are accessible to all

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1
• Standing Committee to draft a Report on current accessible venues and services.

Action 2
• Design guidelines (Draft).

Action 3
• Highlighting accessibility of services and venues for all.

Action 4
• Consultation with Disability Activists, NGOs and other Stakeholders.

Action 5
• Presentation of Accessible Services and Venues for All Guidelines.
Objective 2

Accessibility

Accessibility is a challenge that the Country needs to face up to. Nowadays accessibility is not just about physical accessibility but it is also an issue of accessing services and opportunities. Whilst the Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability (Cap.413) Act has been increasingly successful in this area there are a great deal of grey areas we need to address to ensure that persons with disability can benefit from their communities by accessing them.

Principles

Accessibility in all its forms and shapes is a key component to a person with a disability independent living taking into consideration all impairments. It is recognized that the following categories of accessibility need to be addressed in order to reach this goal.

Government must promote, endeavour to implement and review standards and guidelines for universal design in buildings that are accessed by the general public and in which persons with disability should have an active role. This should also apply to information and communication accessibility. Government should also recognize and promise Sign Language and Braille signage as recognised alternative language formats. The access for all standards should be adhered to meticulously.

We need to enforce the law to ensure that public and commercial entities guarantee that facilities, goods and/or services are accessible to persons with disability. Such accessibility must come at no extra cost to persons with disability and/or to people accompanying them, and without having to segregate this minority and/or adversely affect their dignity in any way whatsoever.

Persons with disability should have the choice and freedom to access assistive equipment of good standard which reflects their own needs and preferences. Support should be given to make such equipment easily available and manageable.
Strategy Initiative 12
Accessibility assessment and implementation report of all Government departments and entities

Implementing the Strategy
Action 1
- Standing Committee to have ongoing meetings whereby all Ministries will embark on a detailed accessibility assessment report of all governmental bodies.

Action 2
- The report shall analyse both Physical and Informational Accessibility.

Action 3
- The report shall also indicate an implementation programme, together with a financial report.

Strategy Initiative 13
All road signage, signs on public places need to be in formats that are accessible to all

Implementing the Strategy
Action 1
- Ongoing meetings between KNPD and TA.

Action 2
- Identify proper accessible signage for all. Design an action plan.

Action 3
- Implement the Action Plan.
**Strategy Initiative 14**

*It becomes statutory that the new disability icon will replace the old icon*

*Implementing the Strategy*

**Action 1**
- KNPD in collaboration with PSDAA to statutorily replace the current disability icon with new icon.

**Action 2**
- KNPD to promote new icon in public, through media.

**Action 3**
- KNPD will inform all Ministries and other entities about new icon. New icon shall be used in all signage, available in Governmental buildings and published material.

**Strategy Initiative 15**

*Every policy in every sector needs to have a disability impact assessment endorsed by PSDAA*

*Implementing the Strategy*

**Action 1**
- All Ministries and other Governmental Bodies shall be bound to present new policies to PSDAA.

**Action 2**
- PSDAA to organise a Vetting team, composed of representatives from KNPD, NGOs a OPM. PSDAA will vet each new policy, highlighting, possible suggestions for amendments. The vetting teams main targets should be accessibility, and Equal Rights, based on the UNCRPD and Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) Cap. 413 Act.

**Action 3**
- The vetting team shall also initiate a system to revise or amend current policies in all Governmental Bodies.
**Strategy Initiative 16**  
All websites will statutorily have disability features

*Implementing the Strategy*

Action 1
- FITA to design a set of guidelines which will list the essential disability features which shall be available on all websites providing services.

Action 2
- Guidelines to be presented and agreed with MITA, PSDAA and KNPD. MITA shall be responsible for updating governmental websites offering services to the public.

Action 3
- FITA shall monitor, educate and audit all state and private websites providing services to the public.

**Strategy Initiative 17**  
All pelican lights need to be accompanied by voice signals

*Implementing the Strategy*

Action 1
- KNPD and MTI shall identify pelican lights which are not accompanied by voice signals and appropriate kerbing.

Action 2
- MTI and KNPD shall agree on a uniform model of voice signals and kerbing.

Action 3
- An implementation plan with a financial report shall be agreed between MTI and KNPD.

Action 4
- KNPD shall educate the public about the use and importance of voice signals and kerbing.
**Strategy Initiative 18**

**Public transport should guarantee electronic announcement system of their destination**

*Implementing the Strategy*

Action 1
- Ongoing meetings between KNPD and public transport service provider

Action 2
- KNPD, shall on ongoing bases vet the public transport system

**Strategy Initiative 19**

**All beaches to be equipped with accessible apparatus**

*Implementing the Strategy*

Action 1
- Standing Committee together with Local Councils Association Reps, and Malta Tourism Authority to discuss needs

Action 2
- The Committee shall analyse current situation about accessibility in beaches around Malta and Gozo

Action 3
- Strategic report including Financial Report and other technical details are presented to PSDAA for review and implementation
Strategy Initiative 20

Emergency evacuation and safety procedures in schools, places of work and leisure to incorporate strategies for dealing with persons with disability

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1
- Standing Committee to have ongoing discussions between PSDAA, KNPD and OHSA

Action 2
- Draft guidelines for Safety procedures at places of work and leisure based on Universal Design

Action 3
- Submit Guidelines to all public and private sector offering services, employees and / or managing leisure facilities

Strategy Initiative 21

Airport terminals should be equipped with electronic equipment to ensure that persons with different sensorial needs can make use of the MIA as independently as possible

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1
- Setting up of ongoing meetings between KNPD, MIA, and MTI.

Action 2
- A draft strategy plan is designed based on Universal Design, and in conformity with MTI and KNPD guidelines

Action 3
- Draft Strategy plan is presented to PSDAA for implementation discussions with MIA
**Strategy Initiative 22**

*Local councils should audit and present a report of their public spaces in terms of physical accessibility*

*Implementing the Strategy*

**Action 1**
- Standing Committee to regularly evaluate accessibility in the community

**Action 2**
- The committee shall discuss the format of a report highlighting the current situation and suggestions for better physical accessibility of public open spaces in Malta and Gozo

**Action 3**
- Reports shall be presented in 1 year

**Action 4**
- All reports shall be analysed by KNPD, and in conjunction with the relevant Ministry responsible for Local Councils shall present a Final Report Document, including implementation plan

**Strategy Initiative 23**

*Access to cultural venues such as museums shall be made physically accessible, including assistive personnel and electronic devices*

*Implementing the Strategy*

**Action 1**
- Setting up of ongoing meetings between Standing Committee, MTA and Malta Heritage Council

**Action 2**
- A report highlighting current situations and suggestions for better physical and sensorial accessibility in cultural venues and Museums around Malta and Gozo shall be presented to PSDAA

**Action 3**
- Final Document in the form of guidelines, together with an action plan, (keeping in mind reservations set from the Maltese Government when signing the UNCRPD) shall be published
Strategy Initiative 24
Develop a disability mark that shows shops and retail outlets are accessible

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1
• KNPD in conjunction with PSDAA, shall launch a National competition for a new design for a disability mark, to be given to all shops and other retail outlets which are accessible for persons with disability

Action 2
• New design shall be presented to public, through a national campaign

Strategy Initiative 25
In collaboration with the UoM departments of engineering allocate research funds to design prototype specialised equipment required for the local context

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1
• Setting up of a Standing Committee formed by Focal Point, PSDAA UOM Engineering Dept., and Sonia Tanti Foundation that will every three months

Action 2
• Ongoing discussions, and sharing of data and/or experiences and equipment, regarding designs/prototypes of specialised equipment for persons with disability

Action 3
• Standing Committee shall update PSDAA, and suggest new areas of investments in regards to specialised equipment
Strategy Initiative 26

All civil servants and authority staff tasked with dealing with clients are to receive systematic disability awareness training

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1
- KNPD together with the Focal Point Office to revise the current Disability Awareness training for staff

Action 2
- Training outline designed

Action 3
- KNPD to organise a training programme for all civil servants dealing with the public with regards to the revised Disability Awareness Training

Strategy Initiative 27

Governmental/Agencies/Authorities/Educational/Informational material shall be made available in different range of accessible formats especially easy to read versions for persons with intellectual disability

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1
- KNPD to design and publish a National Guideline document about the accessible formats available for persons with disability

Action 2
- After consulting/consultation of the guidelines document with PSDAA and other stake holders, this document should be published

Action 3
- PSDAA will be responsible for disseminating the document, and KNPD will audit the implementation of this initiative
Strategy Initiative 28

Staff training in various government departments such as schools, in Sign Language and other alternative language formats

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1
• Identify which government departments shall participate in Sign Language training and which staff or to take part

Action 2
• Prepare a course outline highlighting disability awareness, sign language or other alternative language formats according to the different departments and/or job descriptions

Strategy Initiative 29

Report regarding accessibility of units for asylum seekers, detention centres, open centers, prisons, shelters and residences

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1
• Focal Point, MSDC, MHAS, shall submit a report to Government and provide for on-going discussion between PSDAA, Focal Point Office, KNPD, Ministry for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties to reflect current accessibility of units for asylum seekers, detention centres, open centre, prisons, shelters and / or residences

Action 2
• In relation to EU, UN Declarations, and other related Conventions, and local legislations, the report shall suggest a strategy plan for the government

Action 3
• Consultation regarding suggested strategies for accessibility of the above mentioned units between PSDAA, and the involved offices shall be ongoing

Action 4
• Final Report shall be submitted to PSDAA for implementing the strategy suggested
Strategy Initiative 30

Procedures in procuring assistive equipment are better accessed and more user friendly through the Sonia Tanti Foundation and in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance enact VAT exemptions.

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1
• KNPD and PSDAA shall discuss the current work done by the Soia Tanti Foundation in Hal Far

Action 2
• If required, a new strategic plan and description of services given by Sonia Tanti Foundation is to be set

Action 3
• KNPD and PSDAA shall organise public Consultation and educate/inform people through media about the services given by the Sonia Tanti Foundation
Objective 3

Education

This is kingpin when it comes to ensuring that persons with disability have all the opportunities that other citizens in the community benefit from. Formal, informal and non-formal education are crucial to ensure that persons with disability can make the choices they want, take advantage of the opportunities that exist and live up to their aspirations.

Principles

Formal and non-formal education and employment are closely-linked. The quality of education provided should be such as to ensure that all people should have the necessary skills-set to be able to make informed judgments, and to develop their potential and talents.

Quality education results in the strengthening of fundamental human rights, the recognition of human freedoms, and the celebration of human diversity.

Students with a disability must benefit from inclusive education as much as possible, with the necessary opportunities and support to ensure quality education.

Resources must be made available for students with a disability to receive quality inclusive education. Resources must include amongst others: ergonomic equipment, transportation, communication and assistive technology apparatus, all of which must be secured before the students start their scholastic education and reviewed annually. State funds need to be allocated to provide these resource on time, for the student to have accessibility to education seamlessly.

Effective individualized support in an environment that is accessible to persons with disability. This should include the provisions of educational material in appropriate modes and/or formats that best suits the needs of students with a disability, including the provision of material in Braille (for visually-impaired people), sign language (for Deaf people) and forms of alternative communication (for persons with learning and communication disability).
Strategy Initiative 31
All students (not only students with a disability) to have an IEP

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1
- This strategy envisages that quality of education provided should be such as to ensure that all people should have the necessary skill-set to, amongst other, develop their potential, talents and abilities. Thus PSDAA and MEDE should initiate on an ongoing basis discussions, about the quality of education that ensures that all people have their development goals set at par according to the different individual needs.

Action 2
- Amongst others, such discussion shall ensure that all students (not only students with a disability) have an IEP.

Action 3
- A strategic plan shall be agreed between both parties in regards to this proposal.

Action 4
- After consulting with the main stakeholders, the strategic plan shall be implemented, both in formal and non-formal education.

Strategy Initiative 32
All students should get a transition programme starting from Form 4 that would be designed on the lines of the Gozo Federation +14 project

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1
- MEDE should discuss within its educational system the best to have a transitive programme for all students, starting from Form 4.

Action 2
- Such programme shall facilitate transition for students to tertiary education.

Action 3
- In the case of students with a disability, such a transition plan shall consider the individual psychological needs, especially for students with intellectual disability.
Strategy Initiative 33
KGAs and Early Education trainers given basic training in disability issues

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1
- After the review of the current disability awareness training, as suggested in this strategy, KGAs and Early education trainers shall receive the training

Action 2
- MEDE shall be responsible to review the training outline, in order to meet the KGAs and early educations trainers needs

Strategy Initiative 34
Basic sign language thought to all secondary school students

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1
- MEDE and PSDAA shall discuss the way forward, to enable students (attending secondary education) to receive basic sign language training / courses.

Action 2
- This training/courses shall be given also in secondary school which are managed privately or by the Church

Action 3
- Specific training / course outline, shall be designed to meet the students age and understanding.
Strategy Initiative 35

Programs by Aġenzija Żgħażagħ and Youth Inc

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1
- Aġenzija Żgħażagħ and Youth Inc., through Youth Workers and with the support of MEDE, KNPD and PSDAA, shall promote more programmes designed especially in promoting diversity in skills, and abilities of students and the crucial focus of these programmes will be empowerment.

Action 2
- Active participation of students with a disability in such programmes is paramount. Such programmes will boost confidence and inclusion of students with a disability with their peers.

Strategy Initiative 36

Transition programme of children with disability from one educational stage to another should be formalised through a statutory MAPS session

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1
- MEDE together with PSDAA, shall discuss and assess the current transition programme of children with disability from an educational stage to another.

Action 2
- This strategy insists in supporting children with disabilities transition programme from an education stage to another, is based and formalised through a statutory MAPS session.

Action 3
- Once agreement is reached between PSDAA and MEDE, consultation for a set of guidelines with professionals involved in such process shall be initiated.

Action 4
- Implementation of guidelines agreed.
**Strategy Initiative 37**

Primary, secondary, post-secondary and tertiary educational set-ups need to have a loop system for hearing impaired students

*Implementing the Strategy*

Action 1
- MEDE together with KNPD, shall discuss the installation of loop systems in all educational systems, being Primary, Secondary and Tertiary.

Action 2
- MEDE shall be responsible of the implementation of this initiative, after consultation with KNPD and experts in this area of disability.

**Strategy Initiative 38**

Each college should prepare an audit report underlying the resources required in terms of physical accessibility and other needs a plan of action is to be included accordingly

*Implementing the Strategy*

Action 1
- Representatives of MEDE and each Collage, being Government, Private or Church managed, shall have ongoing meetings for the organisation of a system where all Collages will report a detailed accessibility assessment of their buildings/facilities.

Action 2
- The report shall analyse both Physical and Informational Accessibility.

Action 3
- The report shall also indicate an implementation programme, together with a financial report.
Strategy Initiative 39
Accessible Information Policy

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1
- As Stated earlier in this Strategy (Objective 2: Accessibility), KNPD are to design and publish a National Guideline document about the accessible formats available for persons with disability.

Action 2
- MEDE will be responsible for the design of an Accessible Information Policy, based on the suggested National Guidelines document presented by KNPD.

Strategy Initiative 40
A dyslexia set of guidelines to be set out for educators

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1
- MEDE shall seek KNPD and Focal Point guidance in order to develop/design a dyslexia set of guidelines for educators.

Action 2
- The first draft shall be discussed with PSDAA and presented in a consultation session with main stakeholders.

Action 3
- MEDE will be responsible for the dissemination of guidelines and for training whenever needed for educators.
Objective 4

Employment

It is a known and accepted fact that through employment people can develop as persons, improve their life chances, sustain relationships, have an improved quality of life and above all be as independent and autonomous as possible. This objective is fundamental because if people are actively engaged in the labour market they will have full control of life choices and transitions.

Principles

Persons with disability have the right to gainful employment at par with non-disabled people.

Persons with disability have the right to strive for employment suitable to their capabilities. Work environments should be safe, accessible and open for persons with disability.

Government should promote and assist initiatives ranging from selfemployment to social enterprises, from cooperatives to entrepreneurship of persons with disability. Assisted or supported employment schemes for persons with a profound impairment should be provided and such work should be remunerated.
**Strategy Initiative 41**
Provide disability awareness training for employers

*Implementing the Strategy*

**Action 1**
- KNPD together with Focal Point Office revise the current Disability Awareness training program for staff.

**Action 2**
- Training outline discussed with PSDAA.

**Action 3**
- KNPD and Focal Point Office to organise a training programme for Employers based on a revised Disability Awareness Training.

**Strategy Initiative 42**
Publication of a disability employment strategy

*Implementing the Strategy*

**Action 1**
- After ongoing discussions with the Focal Point Office, Foundation Lino Spiteri, Sapport Agency, PSDAA and Employers Association, the ETC shall create a reviewed employment strategy that will take into consideration the specific needs of persons with disability.

**Action 2**
- Such a strategy shall highlight the long term plan, mainly by creating systems where it compliments other services given to persons with disabilty from birth. Examples of practices for long term strategy are; Person Centred Approach, Family Centred Approach, and Family Partnership.

**Action 3**
- Consultation of the draft employment strategy document with main stakeholders and Disability Activists.

**Action 4**
- Foundation Lino Spiteri will be responsible for the implementation of the disability employment strategy.
Strategy Initiative 43

Government departments and entities, para-statal and private entities shall enact flexible working hours

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1
- OPM in consultation with Focal Point Office and PSDAA, shall analyse current needs of employees with a disability.

Action 2
- Taking into account different labels of disability, OPM shall be responsible for enacting flexible working hours for persons with disability and care givers if they have a disability.

Action 3
- Such flexible hours, shall also be suggested to the private sector after a period of one year from the introduction in the public sector.

Strategy Initiative 44

Incentivise social enterprise programs

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1
- KNPD and PSDAA shall initiate discussions with MFI for more ideas to initiate more social enterprise programmes involving persons especially youth with a disability.

Action 2
- On a yearly basis, the National Budget should address new ideas and more initiatives related to social enterprise programmes.
Strategy Initiative 45

**Introduce specialised career and vocational guidance training for persons with disability**

*Implementing the Strategy*

**Action 1**
- PSDAA shall initiate discussions in form of Committee together with Focal Point Office, ETC and KNPD, in order to introduce specialised carrier and vocational guidance training for persons with disability.

**Action 2**
- These specialised career and vocational guidance training shall be based on evidence based practices.
Objective 5

Access to Information - Audio, visual & Literary media

Unless we guarantee access to information, provide for easy access in terms of technology and costs, persons with disability will be disadvantaged in this area. Technology can create the right conditions to ensure a level playing field.

Principles

It is a recognised fact that media is an important agent of socialization. Persons with disability have the right to access information and to be represented in a dignified and opposite manner.

Public broadcasting should dedicate resources to make programmes accessible and available for persons with disability.

There should be promotion of literature and performing arts in Maltese that are centred on a non-tragic/non-medicalized perspective on disability. Disability activism initiatives through literary and performing arts are to be supported and promoted.
Strategy Initiative 46

Training for persons with disability to facilitate their physical, informational and communication accessibility

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1
- KNPD together with PSDAA to discuss and organise a training programme, where information and practical training is given to persons with disability, according to their needs. With the main aim to support and facilitate their daily accessibility needs.

Action 2
- Training outline discussed and refined with training instructors/contractors, and other stakeholders such as accessible aids suppliers.

Action 3
- Training is delivered to all persons with disability.

Strategy Initiative 47

Equality Training to persons in the media sector mainly journalists, administrators and technical operators

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1
- Standing Committee within the Broadcasting Authority and representatives from the media are to discuss and organise a training programme, where informational, and equality training is given to persons working in the media.

Action 2
- Training outline discussed and refined with training instructors/contractors, and other stakeholders.

Action 3
- Training is delivered to all persons working in the media.
Strategy Initiative 48

All television programmes should be presented in sign language and with subtitles

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1
- PSDAA shall embark in ongoing discussions with the Ministry responsible for the Public broadcaster and the Broadcasting Authority and the Standing Committee within the BA.

Action 2
- Identification of programmes and particular air times where sign language and / or subtitles are to be included.

Action 3
- Guidelines for Public TV broadcaster, and other private contractors who buy air time from the national TV broadcaster shall be published. Broadcasting Authority must make sure that these guidelines are followed by all.

Action 4
- All other stations shall be involved in this process, and after an agreed period of introduction for such accessible broadcasting by the Nation TV broadcaster, Private TV stations shall also adhere/follow the above mentioned guidelines.
**Strategy Initiative 49**

*Standing committee representing the journalists, and KNPD should be set within the BA to monitor developments*

*Implementing the Strategy*

Action 1

- Setting up of a Standing Committee formed by KNPD, IGM, Focal Point, media representatives and Broadcasting Authority

Action 2

- Standing Committee shall on an ongoing basis monitor, analyse and discuss current situation in regards to Media Accessibility. Standing Committee shall also suggest new ways of facilitating accessible information through broadcasting for persons with disability.

Action 3

- Standing Committee to suggest further data collection and commission studies related to accessible media whenever needed.

**Strategy Initiative 50**

*Introduce regulations on the representation of persons with disability in charity campaigns*

*Implementing the Strategy*

Action 1

- Standing Committee within the Broadcasting Authority, and with Consultation with Disability Activists groups, shall embark on designing guidelines, based on the social model of disability, where persons with a disability are well represented in the media, especially during charitable events.

Action 2

- Once published, these guidelines shall be followed by all Media Houses, both governmental and private.
Strategy Initiative 51

PSIs should be made available for public broadcasting to make programmes accessible and available for persons with disability.

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1

• PSDAA and the Ministry responsible for the public broadcasting shall initiate discussion about how to make PSIs available to make media programmes accessible and available for persons with disability.
Objective 6

Health

It is a well known and established fact that persons with disability use health services frequently due to their life circumstances. It is important that the health needs of the individual are taken care of but it is imperative that persons with disability are given the opportunity to participate in the design of their care programme. It is also crucial that health services maintain the dignity and respect that each individual merits.

Principles

Persons with disability have the right to enjoy the highest possible health care standards.

Persons with disability must be accorded with the same level of quality, range and standards in health care, free and/or at affordable cost, including on sexual and reproductive health.

Persons with disability must not be discriminated against in the provision of health and life insurances policies.
Strategy Initiative 52
Develop further the concept of specialised clinics

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1
• Discussion between PSDAA and MEH to develop the concept of specialised clinics.

Action 2
• Thorough consultation with families and professionals and also analysis of current services is to be made in order to develop this concept based on current national needs.

Strategy Initiative 53
Develop the concept of team treatment

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1
• MEH shall organise a multi-disciplinary team of professionals in the health sectors. This team, based on a social model of disability, thus looking at the individuals development as the main priority, will be able to offer specialised and a more holistic service to persons with a disability.

Action 2
• The team shall initiate first guidance to other specialists and suggest a more holistic service to the individuals ongoing needs. Taking into account the personal development of the individual through different practices shall be the main target of the team.
Strategy Initiative 54

Basic sign language for all professionals

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1

• After consulting the KNPD and the Deaf Association, Basic Sign Language training shall be offered to medical professionals working directly with persons with disability.

Strategy Initiative 55

Training to other health staff, emphasising the needs of persons with disability through accessible information, support and other provisions

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1

• During ongoing meetings between KNPD, PSDAA, and MEH, a strategic plan for better accessible information, support and other provisions of health services for persons with disability shall be designed.

Action 2

• Through consultation with Disability activists and other stakeholders, the final strategic plan shall be presented, and MEH shall look to implement the plan.

Action 3

• Training emphasising the needs of persons with disability through accessible information, support and other provisions, as indicated in the strategic plan shall be offered to all staff working in the health services.
Objective 7

Independant Living

Developing skills, ensuring the right support systems and making certain the community is inclusive will guarantee that the persons concerned can attain the highest level of independence.

Principles

Persons with disability should, when they require such, be provided with a residential placement within the community where they can continue to live comfortably and with dignity.

Persons with disability should not be obliged to live in an imposed living arrangement, thus they should have the right to reside in a place of residence of their own choosing and with people they are comfortable living with.

Community services, goods and facilities should be available to persons with disability, as required.
Strategy Initiative 56
Develop 4 Centres for Independent living; (3 Malta 1 in Gozo)
Implementing the Strategy

Action 1
- PSDAA shall identify 4 Centres to be developed as an Independent Living Centre.

Action 2
- PSDAA in collaboration with Aġenzija Sapport, shall identify, best practices to run the Centres, and to offer a Person Centred Approach to the service users.

Action 3
- Initiation of Development Intake of new service users.

Strategy Initiative 57
Report on the accessibility of services in each locality
Implementing the Strategy

Action 1
- PSDAA, together with KNPD and representatives from Local Councils, shall initiate ongoing discussions, mainly, to review the current accessibility situation in each locality in Malta and Gozo.

Action 2
- An initial report shall be presented for consultation, underlining major accessibility needs, recommendations, and a strategic report on how community services, goods and facilities shall be available for persons with disability.
Strategy Initiative 58
Strategy on the accessibility of services

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1
- Once an initial report of the current accessible situation in localities, in both Malta and Gozo, a strategic program, of how services, goods and other facilities shall be easily accessible for all, shall be drawn.

Action 2
- A strategic Implementation process shall be coordinated by PSDAA in collaboration with Local Councils.

Action 3
- The strategic plan shall have time frames and budget indications, so to ensure implementation of the program.
Objective 8

Residential homes, community & rehabilitation

A significant commitment by this Government is to provide a spectrum of residential services that can provide for persons with disability. This is in-line with the Government’s policy direction to ensure that residential services, community services and support services are strengthened all in the spirit of the UN CRPD.

Principles

Persons with disability should have the freedom to decide where to live and with whom to live, namely either in a residential home or any other place of preferred choice.

Residential homes, community and rehabilitation centres should steer away from medical approaches in the way they are organised and managed, and should focus more on person-centred approaches.

Persons with disability need to have access to a range of community support goods, services and facilities including, but not limited to personal assistants, assistive technology and mobility equipment to ensure effective social inclusion. Such services are to be made available at an affordable cost, and at the persons choosing. Choice of goods, services and facilities should reflect the persons own needs and preferences.

All residential services should subscribe to the Standards for Residential Services for Persons with Disability.
Strategy Initiative 59
Code of Ethics/ Standards of Practice for staff working in residential settings, day services, community services and rehabilitation centres are set out

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1
• In line with the National Standards for Professional behaviour and other staff working with persons with disability, Aġenzija Sapport, shall draw a draft Code of Ethics for all staff working with persons with disability.

Action 2
• The first draft shall be analysed by the PSDAA, and presented for consultation with all stakeholders.

Action 3
• Aġenzija Sapport and PSDAA, shall make sure that the Code of Ethics are followed by all staff working with persons with disability, both in government entities and in the private sector.

Strategy Initiative 60
Strengthen PA schemes

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1
• Aġenzija Sapport, and PSDAA, shall consult with persons with disability or their representatives making use of various services such as residential settings, day services and Community Services. Such consultation shall give Aġenzija Sapport and PSDAA better knowledge of the current needs of the service users.

Action 2
• After this consultation process, Aġenzija Sapport and PSDAA, shall look at the possible ways to increase and strengthen PA schemes. The main aim shall be to support better independent living, social inclusion, and better services for persons with disability.
Strategy Initiative 61

A Training Unit specialised in the disability sector is to be set up to identify needs and provide on-going, on-site training for practitioners in the field

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1
- PSDAA, shall set up a specialised unit where all staff, professionals, trainers and other persons working directly in the disability field shall be trained to better support persons with disability.

Action 2
- This Unit shall offer all those interested profession and specialised training to all sectors/services for persons with disability. This Unit shall also be the official accreditation Centre for staff working with persons with disability.

Action 3
- Best practices, according to the current services offered and updates to services which will be set according to this strategy, shall all be included in the training set up.

Strategy Initiative 62

Develop a comprehensive strategy on alternative models of rehabilitation

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1
- Standing Committee shall initiate ongoing meetings to analyse the current rehabilitation services offered in Malta.

Action 2
- The Committee should identify new alternative models of rehabilitation, and draw a strategy for the development of such services.

Action 3
- The first draft of the strategy shall be presented for consultation with main stakeholders, prior to implementing the strategy.

Action 4
- Partners from other countries should also be identified. Main reasons shall be for sharing of experiences and also to offered rehabilitation services for Maltese Citizens if such services are unavailable in Malta.

Action 5
- Develop policy and regulations for personal assistants and the setting up of qualifications and register to ensure quality controls are in place.
Objective 9

Research

Maybe one of the main shortcomings in this sector was our inability to provide empirical research that can offer insight on how to deal with the constant developments in the disability sector. We need a strong empirical base to ensure that our social policy is governed by hard facts and not by knee-jerk actions.

Principles

Scientific research in the disability sector, be it social, technical, medical or any other professional discipline, has the power to promote social inclusion and hence equality. At the same time it should also be acknowledged that misguided research can potentially dis-empower persons with disability.

Research on persons with disability should only be carried out after participants have given their informed consent. Participants should be informed in advance of the scope of the research, its implications, its benefits and risks.

Any form of data collected from research participants should be used strictly for the scope of the research that has been carried out. It should follow strong ethical guidelines that should respect academic regulations and accepted ethical practices in order to safeguard the principles of confidentiality, dignity and privacy.
Strategy Initiative 63

Protocol established between PSDAA and Disability Studies Unit on identified research areas

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1
- PSDAA in talks with the Disability Studies Unit, shall identify research areas which are essential for today’s needs in this sector.

Action 2
- A memorandum of understanding shall also be established between PSDAA and the Disability Studies Unit on identified research areas.

Action 3
- The Disability Studies Unit shall promote these identified research areas to their students.

Strategy Initiative 64

Widen data base catchment

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1
- The Disability Studies Unit, should seek actions to widen the data base catchment available. This will ensure that students, and researchers have better access for data related the Disability sector.

Strategy Initiative 65

Provide regular data readings for public scrutiny

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1
- The Disability Studies Unit, shall develop a system were better promotion research being held in the disability sector is envisaged.

Action 2
- Through its website and other means such as newsletters, various researches of public interest should be promoted. This will enhance further interest in this sector from the public.
Strategy Initiative 66

Set up a policy unit within the PSDAA to keep tabs with EU and other local Ministries legislation, policies, strategies to ensure streamlining.

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1
• PSDAA shall develop a Policy Unit to follow EU, UN, and other local legislations, policies strategies to ensure streamlining.

Action 2
• Focal Point Office and its Intraministerial representatives with KNPD, shall be represented in order to continuously update the Policy Unit.
Objective 10

Legislation & access to justice

We can only ensure that decisions taken are strong and embedded in society if we have good legislation that support these decisions. For persons with disability to have adequate social justice in their community we need to keep developing and reviewing our laws and adding new pieces of legislation when and where needed.

Principles

Persons with disability should be treated as equal to non-disabled people before the law, and accorded the same level of protection and benefits.
Strategy Initiative 67

Setting up a desk where people can forward their complaints against the State (utilising the UN CRPD)

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1

• KNPD should organise a desk at its offices both in Malta and Gozo, where persons of persons with disability, and their families and/or representatives can come forward with their complaints against the state.

Action 2

• The desk should utilise the UNCRPD and the Equal Opportunities Act
Objective 11

Culture, sports & leisure

A healthy community needs to have opportunities to rest and to have positive and creative occasions for leisure. Leisure is also a great chance for persons with disability to improve their life talents, socialisation skills and abilities. We need to work to ensure that persons with disability have access to mainstream leisure unless they choose to have specialised leisure activities out of choice.

Principles

It is a recognised fact that persons with disability have a right to enjoy cultural events, as well as the right to engage in sports, art and leisure, at par with non-disabled people.

Persons with disability have resource to justice on equal terms with non-disabled people, including on matters concerning investigations, the facilitation of their performance in roles as directed by the court (such as witness) and the provision of procedural and age-related accommodations.

Persons with disability should have equal rights to contract marriage and to have custody of their children.
Strategy Initiative 68

Schemes encouraging formation of various cultural, sports, arts and leisure groups/teams

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1
- PSDAA in continuous discussions with KNPD and Secretariat for Culture and Sports shall create a strategic plan to encourage formation of various cultural, sports, arts and leisure groups.

Action 2
- Such groups shall be represented in their majority from persons with disability.

Action 3
- Promotion of such groups especially during evenings, shall promote further Social Inclusion, Abilities of persons with disability, and thus also give further opportunities for persons with disability to participate in leisure activities.

Strategy Initiative 69

All customer care charters to address the needs of persons with disability

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1
- PSDAA in collaboration with KNPD shall design Guidelines and an implementation plan, so to have all customer care charters more accessible in a way to fully address the needs of persons with disability.

Action 2
- Consultation with main stake holders and persons with disability is paramount, so that the real needs of persons with disability are understood and better tackled.
Strategy Initiative 70
Public events will only be authorised if an accessibility certificate is issued by KNPD

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1
• KNPD, after consultation with PSDAA, OPM, Political Parties, Police Force and other stakeholders, shall design guidelines for the organisation of public events.

Action 2
• All public events shall be accessible, thus when issuing a permit the Police Force, shall inform the applicant, to follow such guidelines.

Action 3
• KNPD, will be responsible to authorise and issue an accessibility certificate for the particular event after considering all the applicants information (event details) is given.

Strategy Initiative 71
Performing art venues to be accessible even if temporary

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1
• As per Accessible Public Events Guidelines suggested earlier, all performing art venues shall be accessible, even if a temporary structure is put in place.
Objective 12

Sexuality & parenthood

This subject has been considered a taboo for too long now. Relationships and the wider notion of sexuality are human dimensions that are crucial for each individual’s development including persons with disability. We need to keep finding ways how to support people with a disability in the challenges they face in this domain of their lives.

Principles

Persons with disability have the right to form intimate relationships and raise families. Awareness of such should be engendered.

Persons with disability must have access to sexual education and to other services and support which are essential to the maintenance of their emotional and sexual needs.

Parent/s with a disability must have access to goods, services and other kind of support that would ensure that they could fulfil their role as parent/s/ guardian/s with the care of their children being performed in a relatively independent way and which is neither detrimental to the privacy and well-being of the parent/s with a disability nor their children.
**Strategy Initiative 72**  
**GU Clinic staff to get specific training on disability issues**

*Implementing the Strategy*

**Action 1**  
- KNPD together with Focal Point Office and MEH shall revise the current Disability Awareness training for staff and incorporate specific training for GU Clinic staff.

**Action 2**  
- Training outline discussed and presented to PSDAA and other professionals in the sector.

**Action 3**  
- KNPD and Focal Point in collaboration with MEH shall organise such training on a yearly basis in form of seminars including updates about new practices available.

**Strategy Initiative 73**  
**Launch National Policy on Sex and relationships**

*Implementing the Strategy*

**Action 1**  
- PSDAA shall initiate within a committee format, an ongoing discussion with MEH, KNPD and Focal Point in order to develop the first National Policy on Sexuality and relationships for persons with disability.

**Action 2**  
- The creation of such policy shall be supported by a research, where persons with disability, family members, friends and professionals in the sector are interviewed in order to have the best picture ever real experiences and situations.

**Action 3**  
- Based on findings from the research, a draft Policy should be brought forward for consultation with the public, persons with disability and stakeholders.

**Action 4**  
- PSDAA shall present final Policy document and promote it on a National level, through media and by organising ongoing meetings.

**Action 5**  
- Training to staff and professionals working directly with persons with disability shall be informed about this strategy and must adhere to it.
Objective 13

Family of persons with a disability

The family unit has been the cornerstone in this sector when it comes to providing support and spurring activism. For many years the family members were the main activists in bringing about change in the sector. Whilst it is now a recognised fact that persons with disability are the protagonists for their own lives, the role of the family remains crucial and this partnership needs to be strengthened.

Principles

Families remain the back bone in the disability sector in Malta. Their expertise, commitment and dedication are commendable and have been pivotal in providing support for persons with disability.

Family support is to be encouraged but in partnership with the aspirations of the family member with a disability.

Family members, parents, guardians, siblings, extended family have a right to psychological and emotional support in dealing with the challenges brought about by disability.
Strategy Initiative 74
Agency SAPPORT to set up a Family Support Services Unit

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1
• Agency Sapport shall set up a new Unit within its services. This Unit shall be responsible for supporting the family of service users, and also to support families who seek their support.

Action 2
• Together with the PSDAA, this Unit is to identify the necessary human resources and a best practise to guide their intervention.

Action 3
• This unit shall act as a liaison between families and services that assist persons with disability.

Action 4
• Aġenzija Sapport shall present to PSDAA, a strategic plan for the setting up of this Unit, prior to further consultation with main stake holders.

Action 5
• Implementation of a strategic plan.

Strategy Initiative 75
Family centre developed that will converge all support services

Implementing the Strategy

Action 1
• After setting up its Family Unit, Aġenzija Sapport shall work hand in hand with KNPD and PSDAA, in order to develop a Family Centre.

Action 2
• Apart from being a one stop shop for all the family of persons with disability needs, shall also link all services together. The family Centre shall also be the place where parents are free to come forward with feedback. Moreover, the family centre shall also be a discussion hub, where parents are supported to learn more, and where professionals learn from the narratives of persons with disabilty.