

PRESS RELEASE:

The importance of men's role in gender equality and in work-life balance

Raising awareness on the importance of men's role in gender equality and in work-life balance was the focus of the project – *Equality Beyond Gender Roles* - that the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) implemented during the past two years.

During a Conference concluding this project, NCPE's Commissioner Ms Renee Laiviera stated that it is important to create a fairer society where women and men alike can achieve their full potential. Ms Laiviera said that equality of opportunity can only be achieved if both women and men actively engage in making it a reality as both of them have much to gain from gender equality.

As part of *Equality Beyond Gender Roles*, men acting as role models in fostering work-life balance particularly highlighted the importance of men's role in achieving gender equality. NCPE's Senior Executive (Projects) Annalise Frantz outlined how these role models shared their experiences in order to raise awareness on men's role in reconciling work and family life for all thus enhancing gender equality in society.

The project aimed at reaching out to target groups and to society at large about breaking down stereotypes tied to traditional gender roles, and the uptake of various incentives by both men and women. An event for the general public was held at Pjazza San Gorg in Valletta that included a mixture of music, art and literature.

An on-going online social media campaign as well as adverts on TV and radio were the means used to spread these messages. NCPE's Project Promoter, Ms Sharon Farrugia, said that students and youths were targeted not only through this online campaign, but also through a roving van in various post-secondary and tertiary locations that reached around 900 students and an on-campus event for all post-secondary and tertiary students.

In order to break down the stereotypical notions tied to the traditional roles of men and women and to challenge such notions, 2,000 young students aged 14-16 years, participated in interactive drama sessions entitled '*Theatre in Education*'.

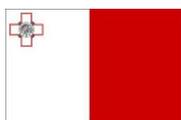
To increase the awareness on various types of family-friendly measures and the benefits and responsibilities of making use of such initiatives, Mr Andre Callus, NCPE's Training and Policy Executive, explained how during consultation sessions for employers discussion focused on these measures and their implementation, how to adapt management styles to take them on board and how to draft an inclusive policy. Around 150 employers gathered for a Business Breakfast and a two-day training session to increase their awareness and knowledge on such measures aiming at diminishing perceived obstacles of employers when offering such arrangements whilst acknowledging the benefits for the workplace as highlighted in various research studies.

In order to evaluate the outcome of this work, a gender impact assessment of all the project's activities was also carried out, from which a series of recommendations were drawn as highlighted by Mr Ramon Muscat from Grant Thornton, the company responsible for the project's external evaluation.

In her concluding remarks, NCPE's Commissioner Ms Renee Laiviera, whilst acknowledging the valid work undertaken, stated that the recommendations emanating for the evaluation report will be taken on board to advance further action to enable women and men to reconcile the demands of remunerated work with the demands of non-remunerated work related to the home and the family. In this context, the use of family-friendly measures should be further encouraged particularly for take-up by men. Engaging men as change agents for gender equality can be challenging, said Commissioner Laiviera; however working with men is essential to make gender equality a reality in society.

The project, *Equality Beyond Gender Roles*, was co-financed by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme 2014 – 2020.

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