

Project ENTER for Migrants and Support Workers

As part of its continuous drive to reduce gaps in ICT usage, the Malta Communications Authority (MCA), is working on a number of initiatives aimed at supporting social cohesion and inclusion. These initiatives are designed to deliver tangible benefits to citizens such as improved skills, better employability, increased quality of life and strengthened community cohesion. Whilst a good number of initiatives have already been delivered, some of which are still ongoing, our efforts are now targeting specific niche groups, one of which is migrants.

Each year Malta takes in a significant number of immigrants and refugees, each originating from different countries and with multicultural and diversified ethnic backgrounds. They individually face several types of difficulties in adjusting and integrating fully into their adopted society. The MCA is therefore committed to supporting the Government in the implementation of its integration policy by helping refugees to acquire sufficient knowledge in the use of ICT thus providing additional skills to facilitate their integration into our society.

The MCA is extending the ICT training programme launched in 2013 under the 'ENTER' programme to the *Foundation for Shelter and Support to Migrants (FSM)*, which was specifically setup to provide services for the residents. This training programme aims to provide basic and advanced training to individuals aged 25 years and over to both the FSM residents and support workers.

During a visit to one of the training sessions, Dr Edward Woods, Chairman at the MCA, stated that "our aim is to achieve widespread e-literacy, digital inclusion and the use of ICTs as a tool to improve quality of life for all individuals in particular, disadvantaged groups, with no exception. We are giving migrants the opportunity to discover the use and potential benefits of information technology and encourage them to develop the required skills to better integrate in our society."

Dr. Jose Herrera, Parliamentary Secretary said that "through this project, as well as other projects funded by this government, we are offering the possibility for everyone to have an equal opportunity to integrate well into society. Apart from social integration, ICT also opens up greater opportunities for employment, which will consequently have a positive impact on the Maltese economy. We need to look into the respective niches of our society and address these on a case by case basis in order to address their individual requirements. Our immigrants are but one niche which we are targeting."

For further information, you are kindly requested to contact:

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Dr. Ahmed. Z. Bugri, Director of FSM said that "The Foundation for Shelter and Support to Migrants (FSM) believes that education is an important tool for the personal development, empowerment and social inclusion of migrants into the Maltese society and in Europe at large. Particularly, building the ICT competence of migrants will directly impact on their employability and integration in Malta and in Europe."

Mr Alexander Tortell, Head of the Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers, which coordinates the open reception centre network, thanked all the stakeholders involved in putting this project together, saying that "ICT literacy is crucial to the future prospects of the women, men, and children who every year land on our shores, whether their future lies here, elsewhere in Europe or in the USA, or back in their countries of origin. In all cases, better education and better ICT literacy will also benefit society as a whole, primarily by having a better educated workforce, which is one of the keys to wealth creation. He addressed centre service-users directly, encouraging them to not only address their immediate needs but also invest in their training and education."



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