

# The pulse of Malta's future generations

EY Generate Youth Survey

2021



Building a better  
working world

A sunset over the ocean with a yellow frame around the text.

Will you shape  
the future or will  
it shape you?



The better the question. The better the answer.  
The better the world works.



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## About

The 4th *Generate Youth Survey* gathered the views of over 750 Generation-Z and Millennials in Malta between August 15th - September 15th, 2021.

The surveys purpose is to provide public and private sector leaders with deeper insights into the thinking of Malta's younger generations, their similarities, and their differences.

Questions were specifically tailored. This report includes sections on the economy and entrepreneurship, Covid-19 recovery, society and the future.

Gen-Z refers to ages 16-24 while Millennials ages 25-39.

# Foreword

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## The right questions but even better answers



**Ronald Attard**  
Country Managing Partner,  
EY Malta

It's hard to imagine what our vibrant society would be like without the input of our energetic, intelligent, and forward-looking youth. They are the product of the generations that came before them but if you only look at what the media or social media might portray, you might foolishly tar them all with the same brush. They are so much deeper than people, from my generation, might give them credit for.

The 4th *EY Generate Survey* really does shine a light on what is going on in the minds and hearts of our younger people. The future leaders of this country have a lot to say and this is precisely why we believe so much in gathering their opinions and showcasing them for all to see.

This year over 750 Gen-Z and Millennials contributed to this study and not a single voice should be overlooked. They are now in the second year of a global pandemic, many of them passing through their formative years. They have shown resilience throughout this crisis and will undoubtedly be pivotal in helping Malta to emerge even stronger than before.

Economies all over the world are passing through turbulent times, and we are no different. This is reflected in their mood on the economy with very little believing it is in excellent condition, but this is to be expected. Fortunately, their financial situation seems to be improving and hopefully this trend continues.

Interestingly, their apprehension with Covid-19 on their own health has diminished since the previous year, but the same cannot be said for their concern on the economy.

But as the country continues adjusting to new realities, our youth are firmly focused on the preservation of Malta's environmental landscape, our built environment, and the green economy. It is once again encouraging to see how unified they are in the steadfast desire to safeguard our Island's natural beauty - before it is too late. Almost all believe Malta's environment is getting worse and many put this down to overdevelopment. It would be unwise to not pay notice to their uneasiness with the current situation.

A pleasant result is that so many harbour dreams to become entrepreneurs. They are a resourceful generation, packed with ideas which will transform not only their lives, but those around them with meaningful employment, as well as the entire country. Their aspirations should be wholly encouraged, and their boldness rewarded.

I encourage all to read through the results, analyse and discuss the implications. Our young people are seeing what's happening around them in the world today and not simply asking questions but promoting workable solutions. Let us pay attention.

A scenic photograph of a sunset over a body of water. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright orange and yellow glow that reflects on the water's surface. In the foreground, there are large, dark, textured rocks. The sky is filled with soft, orange and yellow clouds. A small yellow square is visible in the top left corner.

# Economy and entrepreneurship

# 1

The world is now in the second year of a global pandemic which has upended economies, disrupted markets, and changed the way we live and work. At the onset of 2021, Governments began introducing national vaccination programmes and within a few months Malta managed to almost inoculate the entire adult population. While restrictions and precautions remain in place in Malta and worldwide, economies are pushing for recovery, slowly but surely.

Pre-pandemic, Malta's booming economy meant one of the highest GDP growth rates in the European Union (EU) and record low unemployment.

Almost two years on since stimulus packages were introduced to help companies with the financial burden, the private sector will be encouraged to do what it does best: generate business, opportunities, and employment.

The country is also facing new challenges, with Malta being put on the grey list by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), skill shortages deepening, and sustainability coming to the fore.

So, with so much going on around us, what do Malta's young people think?

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**Pre-pandemic, Malta had one of the  
highest GDP growth rates in EU and record  
low unemployment**

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**Figure 1: Malta's economy these days**

— Excellent — Good — Fair — Poor  
 → % Change from 2020

**Gen-Z**



**Millennials**



When it comes to the economy these days, the result is similar to the previous year but there are some increases at the lower end of the spectrum. For Gen-Z, the economy is poor for 23%, an increase of 7%. While Millennials have shifted 6% of their good replies towards the lesser ranked fair or poor. Very few respondents from both generations believe the economy is excellent.

**Figure 2: Financial situation compared to last year**

— Better — Same — Worse  
 → % Change from 2020

**Gen-Z**

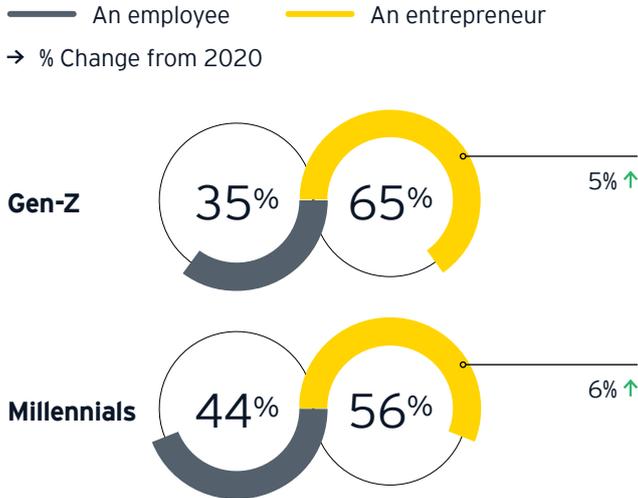


**Millennials**



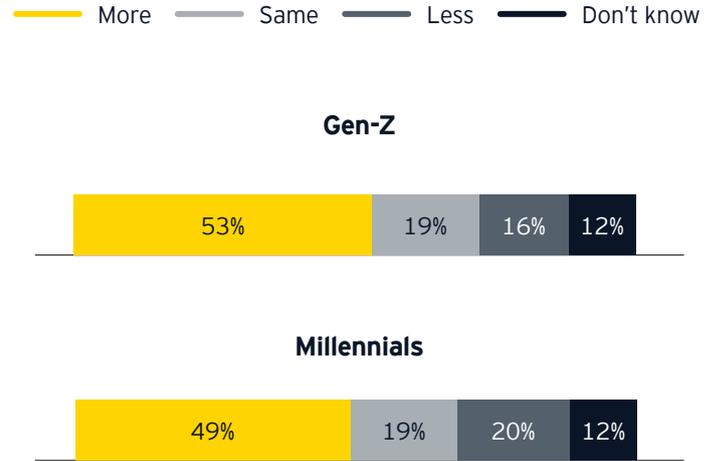
When it comes to their personal financial situation compared to a year ago, it is looking positive. For Gen-Z, those that are doing better increased by 12%, with 42% now stating they are in a better financial situation. Millennials report a 15% increase as now 46% believe they are better off.

**Figure 3: Would you rather be...**



Dreams and aspirations to become entrepreneurs have also increased over a single year. Like 2020, Gen-Z are more inclined to rather be entrepreneurs over their Millennial counterparts with 65% to 56% respectively. With entrepreneurship being the backbone of a thriving economy, these results bode well for Malta.

**Figure 4: Believe their generation is more entrepreneurial than previous ones**



A slightly higher percentage of Gen-Z (53%) than Millennials (49%) believe their generation is more entrepreneurial than previous ones.

A sunset over the ocean with a large white number 2 overlaid on the left side. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm orange and red glow across the sky and water. The waves are breaking gently on the shore, and the overall scene is peaceful and hopeful.

# Covid-19 and recovery

2

Passing through a global pandemic was never going to be easy. The first of its kind for 100 years and with movement of people and communication having changed so much in that timespan, a lot of uncertainty existed. There was no playbook and many nations are still figuring out the next steps as new variants pose fresh threats and vaccine hesitancy creates delays.

No end-date is yet in sight, but with economies opening more and more, a return to normal is on the cards, even if a return to our 'old ways' is not. The EU and many countries are certain that any economic recovery from Covid-19 relies on the green economy. It is no secret that climate change, biodiversity loss,

waste management and air and water pollution were problems that the world faced long before the onslaught of the virus. However, these challenges have been exasperated because of the pandemic and this means authorities will be looking at new ways to stimulate economic growth, create new niches and prioritise the environment and people's health going forward.

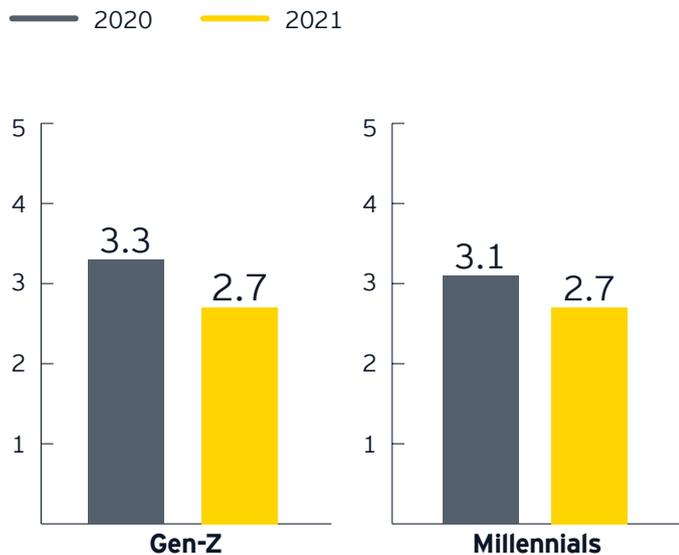
This survey has tracked young people's sentiment after one year and the biggest message is that they are still more concerned by the virus's impact on the economy, rather than the impact on their own health.

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**Young people are still more concerned by the virus's impact on the economy, rather than the impact on their own health**

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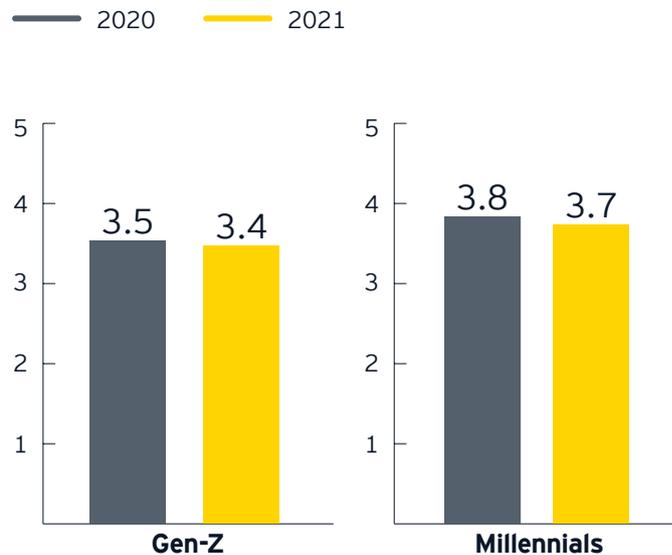
**Figure 5: Concerned by impact on health**



*Concern rating: 5 is most concerned and 1 is least concerned.*

Gen-Z gave their own health a concern rating of 2.7/5.0 this year, compared to 3.3/5.0 in 2020. Millennials concern rating on the impact on their own health has also decreased from 3.1/5.0 to 2.7/5.0 this year.

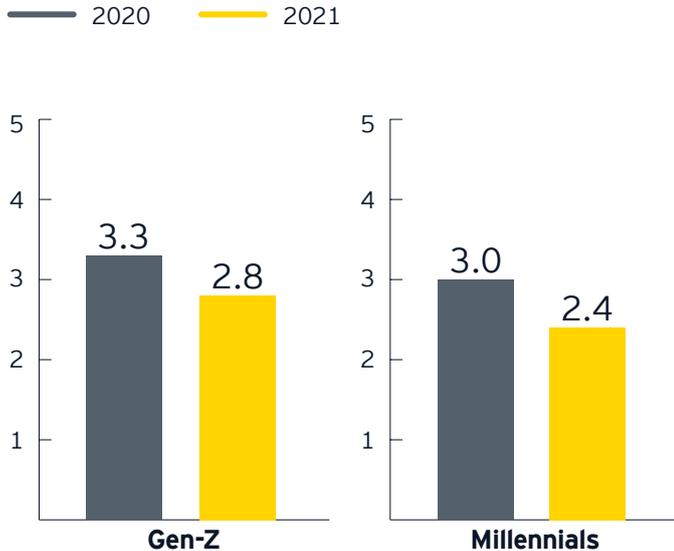
**Figure 6: Concerned by impact on the economy**



*Concern rating: 5 is most concerned and 1 is least concerned.*

Gen-Z and Millennials concern for the economy has decreased but only slightly by 0.1 each downwards, leaving it as their biggest concern.

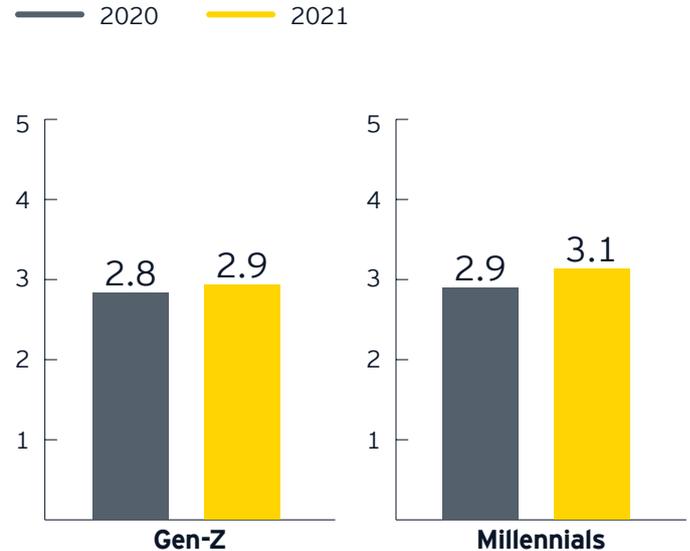
**Figure 7: Concerned by impact on employment or potential employment**



*Concern rating: 5 is most concerned and 1 is least concerned.*

Concern for their employment or potential employment has also decreased substantially. For Gen-Z it decreased by 0.5 and now stands at 2.8, while Millennials saw a decrease of 0.6, giving them a final concern rating of 2.4

**Figure 8: Level of success in addressing public healthcare crisis**



*Success rating: 5 is very successful and 1 is not successful.*

When it comes to the level of success in addressing the public healthcare crisis, across both generations the authorities scored an average rating of 3.0/5.0. Millennials are slightly more upbeat with a 3.1 score compared to Gen-Z with 2.9. Both have increased slightly since the survey was held in the previous year.



# Society and future

# 3

A scenic landscape at sunset or sunrise. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm, golden glow over the scene. The sky is filled with soft, wispy clouds, some of which are illuminated from below. The foreground shows rolling hills with sparse vegetation, including several evergreen trees and a few deciduous trees. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and contemplative.

A small island state in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea with history and culture dating back hundreds of years. The Maltese and the Islands inhabitants have a lot to be proud of and it's worth reminding ourselves where we came from to understand where we should be heading. Our forefathers-built bastions to protect themselves from invaders, worked together in times of immense economic strife, persevered through wars and pandemics, ultimately fighting for the Malta we all know and love. Today, it's our turn to look after the island for future generations.

The 21st century brought societies worldwide many comforts. The digital age has ushered in a new era of connectivity no matter where you are in the world, certainly of huge benefit to Malta. As we harness these technologies, build stronger communities, enhance inclusivity, and aim for a greater quality of life, today's youths are clear with their priorities. They do not hold back when it comes to their wishes for a better future and they are unwavering in their belief that Malta's environment needs protecting.

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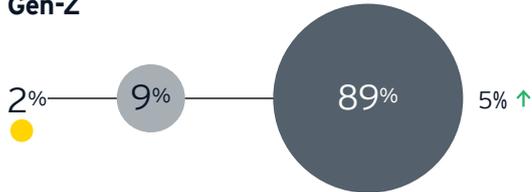
Young people today have developed a very strong environmental conscience

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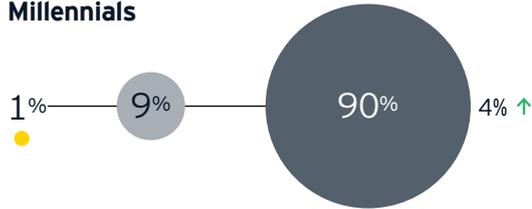
**Figure 9: Malta's environment is getting**

— Better    — Same    — Worse  
 → % Change from 2020

**Gen-Z**



**Millennials**



Nine out of every ten youths in Malta believe that Malta's environment is getting worse. An extremely high result that demonstrates young people today have developed a very strong environmental conscience. Those that claim that it is getting worse increased for both generations in a single year by around 5%.

**Figure 10: Malta's biggest challenges**

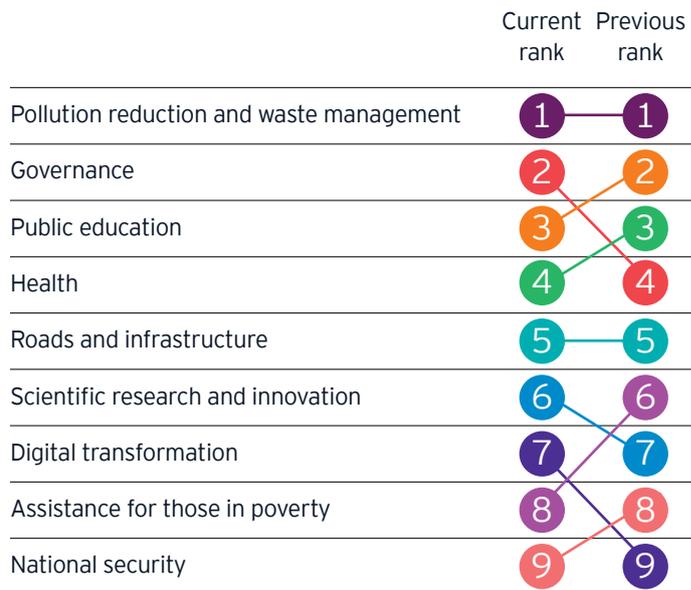
	All	% Change	Gen-Z	Millennials
Overdevelopment	68%	9% ↑	64%	71%
Environment	55%	4% ↑	53%	56%
Traffic	26%	7% ↓	24%	27%
International image	24%	3% ↑	17%	30%
Economy	21%	8% ↓	22%	20%
COVID-19	20%	39% ↓	22%	18%
Climate change	20%	n/a	33%	6%
Education	19%	8% ↓	19%	19%
Immigration	14%	n/a	15%	12%
Brain drain (people leaving Malta)	9%	n/a	6%	12%
Inequality	8%	9% ↓	8%	8%

Building on their concerns for the environment, overdevelopment has once again placed first in the list of Malta's biggest challenges (68%), followed by the environment (55%). Covid-19 was previously in 3rd place but has seen a substantial decrease by 39% in one year, now placing 6th with just 20%. Traffic (26%) is now in 3rd place but has decreased by 7% in just one year, while international image (24%) is in 4th place.

Looking at generational differences, Millennials (71%) are slightly more alarmed by overdevelopment than their Gen-Z (64%) counterparts. Another difference can be seen when it comes to international image, as Millennials (30%) believe it is a bigger issue than Gen-Z (17%). One of the new survey options, climate change, scored as high as Covid-19 (20%) overall but it seems that this is seen as a much greater challenge to Gen-Z (33%) than Millennials (6%).

Considering their concerns for the environment, Malta's youth believe the government should prioritise investing in pollution reduction and waste management, followed by governance and public education.

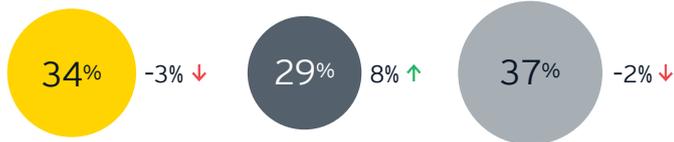
**Figure 11: Government's investment priorities**



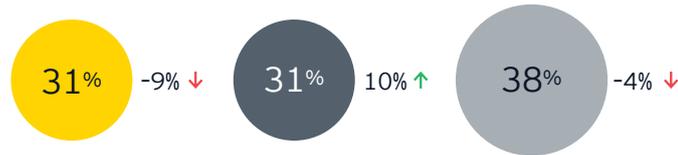
**Figure 12: Living better today than in 5 years' time**

— Yes    — No    — Don't know  
 → % Change from 2020

**Gen-Z**



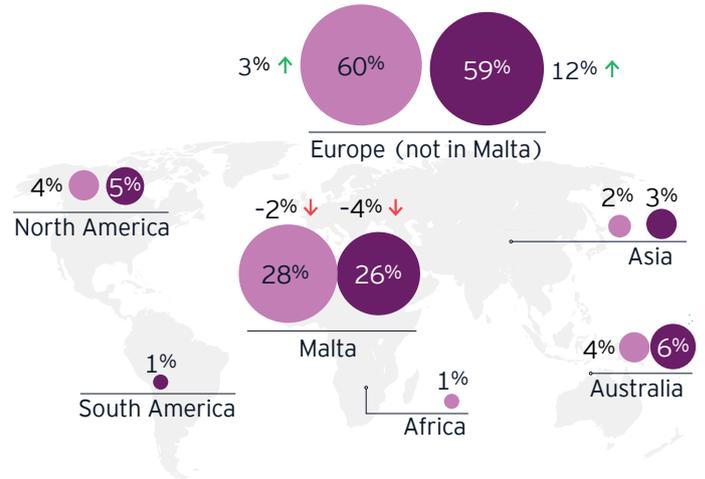
**Millennials**



Worryingly, those that believe they will not be living better in 5 years' time has increased by 8% - 10% in a single year. Their responses indicate that there is still a lot of uncertainty as close to 40% stated they do not know. Around one-third are hopeful that they will be living better than today in the future.

**Figure 13: Would rather live and work in ...**

— Gen-Z    — Millennials    → % Change from 2020



When asked which part of the world they would rather live in, close to 60% stated in another European country, while around 27% said Malta. These results are similar to last years, however a greater share of Millennials now also dream of moving abroad following a 12% increase. While spending some time away from our shores is certainly beneficial as it opens young people up to different cultures, experiences, and ways of living, it should be noted as a cause for concern.

A sunset over the ocean with a large white number 4 overlaid. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a golden glow across the sky and reflecting on the water. The number 4 is positioned in the lower-left quadrant of the image. A small yellow square is visible in the top-left corner.

Their ideas for a  
better Malta...

4

So, what are their thoughts for a better future? Their comments provide us with extra insights.

# 1

## **Greenify our surroundings**

In line with their strong comments on Malta's environment, Malta's youths are big exponents of greening projects around the Island. Many want to see large afforestation plans take

prominence over developments which remove trees and naturally kept areas. Their wishes here can be categorised into three: 1) Protecting ODZ areas and natural sites 2) Expanding woodland where possible 3) greenifying urban areas and creating more green lungs in busy town centres.

Many of them do not believe these actions would necessarily sacrifice economic growth, on the contrary it can spur new avenues and opportunities. Improving people's overall quality life through clean air, open spaces, and nature in its purest form. They also mention education campaigns on waste management, tackling harmful single-use plastics through legislation and decreasing our reliance on heavy fossil fuels by shifting to renewables.

# 2

## **Promote healthy lifestyles**

Amid a pandemic that's classifying some people as vulnerable due to harmful eating and lifestyle habits, young people are realising the importance of taking care of oneself - both physically and

mentally. A healthy Mediterranean diet can improve immune systems and lift moods, while alcohol and other substances should be increasingly discouraged from a young age.

When it comes to health, some even mention improved health and safety regulations on construction sites - but not only. They believe the authorities as well as employers should create awareness for people to avoid unnecessary danger and be in a better position to look after themselves.

# 3

## **Raise living standards and control rising costs of living**

Many young people today have travelled abroad, rented apartments in other European cities, dined in their restaurants, and are living an ever-

increasingly globalised existence. They're comparing their way of life in Malta to other countries and while they appreciate the positives, they are questioning how we can strike a balance. Property prices is one instance that has become increasingly unaffordable as wages have not increased while even the cost of food is sometimes a bit too exorbitant. Authorities need to tackle these issues with a view to both the short and long-term effects that certain schemes are having on the market.

# 4

## **Push education to the max**

Our people remain Malta's best resource for a brighter future. It is thanks to our well-established education sector that industries such as financial services, manufacturing, iGaming, and tourism

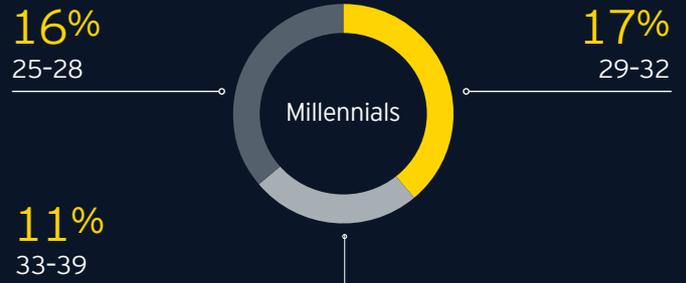
can thrive. Young people see education as the answer to many of societies woes, whether its to gain employment, safeguard the environment, improve standards, or tackle inequality.

The teaching profession needs to be treated with extra care and incentives for capable and inspirational people to become educators need to be launched. Salaries that match their responsibility would also go a long way to improving the system that is currently in place, while best practices from other EU countries for digital and new age curriculums should be adopted.

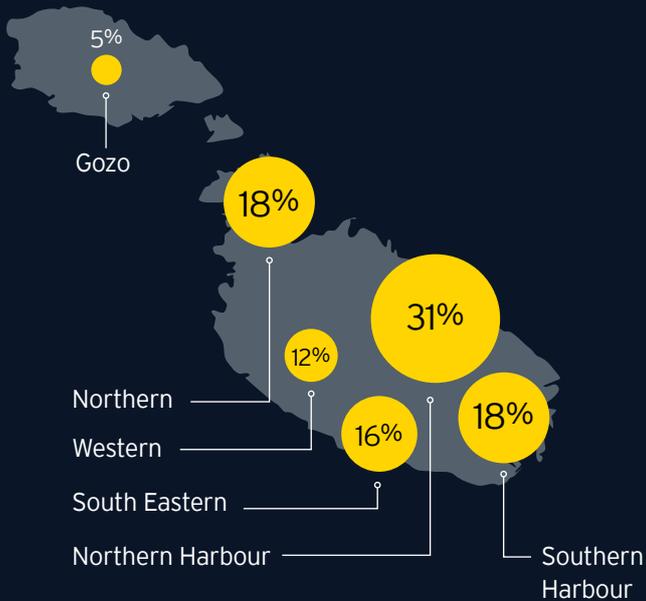
# Demographics



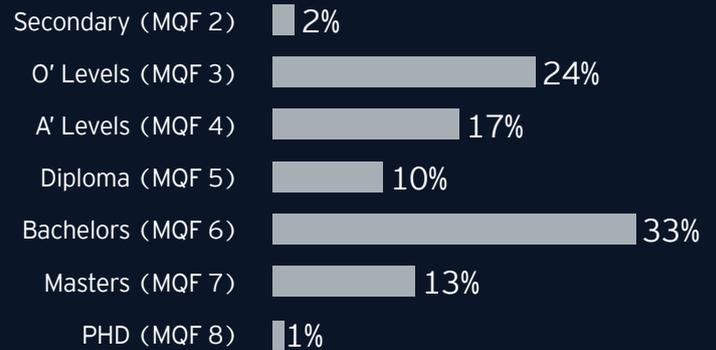
## Age by group



## Region



## Education



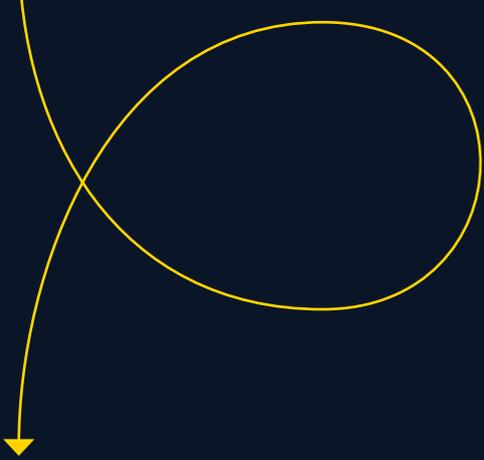


*It's Yours  
to Build*



THE EXCEPTIONAL  
EXPERIENCE





Who we are

# Builders of a better working world

- ▶ Dedicated to solving our planet's toughest challenges
  - ▶ A global firm with over 300,000 exceptional people
  - ▶ 700 offices
  - ▶ Over 150 countries
- ▶ 5 different areas of specialisation
    - ▶ Assurance
    - ▶ Tax
    - ▶ Strategy and
    - ▶ Transactions
    - ▶ Consulting
    - ▶ Compliance
- ▶ Limitless career opportunities
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lifetime ...

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Designed to give young leaders the chance to shine and learn from the sharpest minds in the business.

# 1

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Open to B.Com students majoring in Accounts, Economics or Banking or Finance

- ▶ Work and get paid during the summer months
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- ▶ Trained by the best mentors
- ▶ Includes study and dissertation guidance
- ▶ Full-time opportunities once you graduate

# 2

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- ▶ Hands-on experience
- ▶ Exposure to ongoing projects
- ▶ Full-time opportunities once you graduate
- ▶ Earn valuable industry experience while pursuing your qualification.

“

The EY360 Programme was perfect to launch my career. Hands-on work experience while studying made it easier to merge theory with practice and develop the required skills to start working full-time.”

Mandy Stivala  
EY360 Graduate



# EY360 ACCA Programme

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- ▶ Plug into the EY global network
- ▶ Full-time opportunities once you complete the course

**Open to Accounts 6th Form Students upon completion of A-Levels, and those looking to become ACCA qualified.**

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- ▶ Organised lectures and work experience - 40/60 split
- ▶ Completion of Applied Knowledge & Applied Skills Exams (F1 - F9)
- ▶ Get paid while you study and work

## Phase 2: Assistant 2

- ▶ Organised lectures and work experience - 20/80 Split
- ▶ Completion of Strategic Professionals
- ▶ Get paid while you study and work



We believe a better working world is one where economic growth is **sustainable** and **inclusive**. We work continuously to improve the quality of all our services, investing in our people and innovation. And we're proud to work with others – from our clients to wider stakeholders – to use our knowledge, skills and experience to help fulfil our purpose and **create positive change**.

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# Anatomy of the innovative mindset



## EY | Assurance | Tax | Strategy and Transactions | Consulting

### About EY

EY is a global leader in assurance, tax, strategy, transaction and consulting services. The insights and quality services we deliver help build trust and confidence in the capital markets and in economies the world over. We develop outstanding leaders who team to deliver on our promises to all of our stakeholders. In so doing, we play a critical role in building a better working world for our people, for our clients and for our communities.

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