

UNIVERSITY OF MALTA
PROMISE – Executive Meeting 14th September 2025
Doc A – Minutes of Previous Meeting

PROMISE – Executive Meeting
Minutes of Meeting No: 3
17th September at 11:00am Tourism Studies Boardroom

Executive members present:

Prof. Angela Abela (Children and Families Pillar Leader)
Rev. Dr Jimmy Bonnici (Faculty of Theology)
Prof. Christian Borg Xuereb (Older Persons Pillar Leader)
Ms Maria Ellul Desira (Caritas Malta)
Dr Edgar Galea-Curmi (Chairperson)
Prof. Maria Pisani (Young Persons Pillar Leader)
Ms Alexia Vella (Ministry for Social Policy And Children's Rights)
Prof. Sue Vella (Working Age Pillar Leader)
Mr Noel Xerri (Anti-Poverty Forum [APF])
Mr Matthew Zerafa (National Statistics Office [NSO])

Ms Stephania Dimech Sant (Project Manager)
Ms Rajpreet Sandhu Grech (RSO)
Ms Maria Giulia Borg (RSO)

Excused:

Prof. Carmel Borg (Faculty of Education)

Item No.	Discussion and Decision	Responsible Person	Deadline
1.	<p>Welcome and introduction of new ExCo members</p> <p>Dr Galea-Curmi, Chair of PROMISE, welcomed all attendees and introduced the two new members of the Executive Committee, namely, Rev. Dr Jimmy Bonnici (present) and Prof. Carmel Borg (in absentia)</p>		
2.	<p>Minutes from Previous Meeting</p> <p>Minutes from previous meeting were taken as read.</p>		
3.	<p>Arising from the Minutes</p> <p>No items arising from the minutes were presented.</p>		
4.	<p>Introduction of PhD candidates and their proposals</p> <p>The two selected PhD candidates presented their proposal ideas and a brief discussion ensued.</p> <p>Ms. Maria Giulia Borg, will be exploring the impact of the free childcare scheme in Malta on the wellbeing of infants and their parents, applying a capability's approach, thereby going beyond the financial aspects.</p> <p>Ms Rajpreet Sandhu Grech (RSO), will start in April, and will be exploring how the caste system in India, is somewhat replicated in Malta and the TCNs segregated to 'dirty' or suboptimal jobs. She seeks to explore how poverty is intimately related to the accumulation of wealth elsewhere.</p>		
5.	<p>Update re PROMISE Action Plan</p> <p>Most of the action plan for the first year has now been implemented; the following points remain pending:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A need to further push for Academic Membership. - Response re application for APS funding for the elderly loneliness study (Dr Maria Aurora Fenech) - Finalise the Policy document about the external funding - Consolidate the social media pages and launch the website - Hold annual membership meeting <p>Pillar Leads, as well as the other ExCo members should also think of potential areas of study/priority areas</p>	<p>PROMISE Staff</p> <p>PROMISE Staff</p> <p>All Members</p>	<p>Jan '26</p> <p>14 Jan '26</p>

	which PROMISE could ask funding for; ideas would need to be articulated in an actual project and then scoped/budgeted so as to be able to pitch it to possible funders		
6.	<p>Stakeholders' Registration – Approval of applicants</p> <p>Exco Members were presented with a list of entities/ individuals which registered through the stakeholder form. All registrants were accepted and they will be officially emailed/ informed that they have been accepted by PROMISE.</p> <p>Members are encouraged to reach out to other NGOs to encourage them to register as stakeholders.</p>	PROMISE Staff	Jan '26
7.	<p>Homelessness in Malta</p> <p><u>Current Criminalising Approach:</u> The Exco discussed the approach that PROMISE should take in terms of the current criminalisation of homeless people in Malta:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would it be approached exclusively from the legal angle? Homelessness should be tackled structurally, providing support beyond the legal aspect. - Should we wait to issue statements / briefs till after the conference? <p>It was decided that through the conference, recommendations would be brought forward which could also be presented to Ministries.</p> <p><u>Homelessness Conference with APF:</u></p> <p>Agenda for Conference to be held on the 14th November was presented</p> <p>Prof Sue Vella gave a brief overview of the Findings in the ESPAN Report on homelessness in Malta, which she will present at the conference.</p> <p>Panel still to be confirmed; Workshop facilitators and rapporteurs still to be identified.</p> <p>Ministers for Affordable Housing and Social Policy to be invited to respond to outcome of the break-out sessions.</p> <p>The publication of a press statement at the end of the conference was discussed. It was agreed that a draft statement would be drafted prior to the event and read at the start of the conference, amended to reflect the proceedings of the conference, and adopted in its final format and distributed at the end of the conference.</p>	PROMISE Staff	Nov '25

	<p>Prof Maria Pisani suggested that journalists are to be invited, and requests for interviews invited. We could also push to have some programme resulting from the conference. Ms Dimech Sant confirmed that the possibility of a Times Talk episode is being looked into.</p>		
8.	<p>Policy on External Funding</p> <p>Prof Sue Vella has prepared a policy for external funding and PROMISE is currently awaiting feedback following a discussion about the matter with PSSD.</p> <p>A discussion of the sectors which PROMISE should definitely not tap into followed. It was agreed to avoid gaming/gambling and any sector linked to addiction / dependence.</p> <p>In cases of companies with varied portfolios, neutral products could be selected for marketing purposes. In those cases where the sector is 'clear' PROMISE can go straight ahead; on other cases, decisions will be taken on a case-by-case basis.</p> <p>OASI will be sharing a list of sectors from which they do not accept donations.</p>	SDS	Jan '26
9.	<p>Publication of Newsletter vs Poverty Watch: discussion</p> <p>Following a discussion whether to issue a newsletter or a bulletin, it was agreed to publish news on social media, and focus resources on the publication of a bulletin twice yearly.</p>	PROMISE Staff	Dec '25
10.	<p>Update from each pillar about ongoing research projects:</p> <p>Each leader provided a status update on their respective projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and Families (Prof. Angela Abela): Mapping early childhood poverty (ages 0-3) using NSO and Jobsplus data. Meeting with NSO has been scheduled. • Young Persons (Prof. Maria Pisani): Conducting two projects—one on lived experiences of poverty and another on perceptions of poverty using social media "reels". Both sub-groups are working on their FREC applications. 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working Life (Prof. Sue Vella): Studying TCN couriers; however, recruitment has been difficult with only four interviews completed to date. The team will continue to try and recruit individuals till the end of the 2025. • Older Persons (Ms. Dimech Sant for Dr. Fenech): Beginning interviews regarding loneliness as a form of poverty in residential care homes; ethical clearance has been obtained. 		
11.	<p>Other Matters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Studies in Social Wellbeing Journal: will be publishing a special issue on poverty. Call for abstracts is out and closes on the 6th of October 2025. • National Association of Pensioners: PROMISE together with Dr Maria Aurora Fenech carried out a focus group with 9 representatives and some of the findings were presented in the All Digital Summit. • Prof Angela Abela underlined her opinion that PROMISE ought to keep its focus on the economic aspect of poverty. Prof Sue Vella agreed. Dr Edgar Galea Curmi agreed that the focus should remain on economic poverty whilst making sure that even if other capabilities are lacking – this might also be considered a form of poverty. • Simulation of vulnerability and projections: Prof Maria Pisani referred to a person retiring in less than 10 years is paying 50% of her income in rent: What will happen to her at pensionable age? Do we have research indicating what will happen in 10-15 years' time? Ms Alexia Vella informed that the Ministry for Social Policy and Children's Rights forecasts regularly, currently forecasts are being made for 2080. • Role of Treasurer: Following further consultation with RCC, it was determined that the role of treasurer, currently occupied by Prof Sue Vella is not needed for PROMISE, and therefore the role is being removed. 		
	Next ExCo Meeting, January 14th, 1000 till 1200		



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