

# FINDINGS FROM THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

# PROĠETT KOMUNITÀRJA 2019-2020



**The Malta Foundation  
for the Wellbeing of  
Society**



# PROGETT KOMUNITÀRJA 2019-2020

**With the  
participation  
of over 900  
children  
from all over  
Malta and  
Gozo**



The Malta Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society

# INDEX

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• <b>Ethos of the Malta Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society</b>	04
• <b>Proġett KomunitArja by Children’s Hub - MFWS</b>	
(a) Child Participation – Key to Wellbeing	06
(b) Children as essential stakeholders	08
(c) The Way Forward:	09
i. Child Participation	
ii. Green Open Spaces	11
iii. Understanding Wellbeing	12
• <b>Report of findings of the consultation process with children</b>	14
(a) Background and Methodology	
(b) Findings of the Initial Process	17
(c) Finding from the Online Survey	20
(d) Satisfaction with the amount of opens paces	23
(e) Improving the Community	24
(f) Benefits of having green open spaces	26
(g) Designing and Regenerating an open space for children	27
(h) Safety measures	28
(i) Amenities in open spaces	29
(j) Outdoor activities	31
• <b>Conclusion</b>	32
• <b>References</b>	35



# ETHOS OF THE MFWS

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## **Context**

Scientific evidence as well as on-the-ground experience indicate that there are marked differences in the quality of life and wellbeing enjoyed by the members of society in Malta. These differences are reflected in inequitable access to physical and mental health, income and employment, family and social interaction, levels of education and skills, freedom of expression and engagement, leisure, environmental quality and open spaces, and other benchmarks of wellbeing. Such inequalities may grow wider among future generations and the MFWS believes that transformative action in these and other areas are a matter of urgency.

## **Mission Statement**

The MFWS believes in an aspirational, inclusive, just, equitable and eco-friendly society where all people may grow, enjoy a quality life which is sustainable, and engage in productive and meaningful relationships. In such a society nobody is sidelined and human rights and dignity are respected.

**Strategic Orientation:** The Foundation works towards achieving positive social change through:

**Advocacy:** The Foundation will advocate tirelessly for active citizenship and social responsibility to one another as human beings, at community level, nationally as well as internationally;

**Community-based projects:** The Foundation pledges to coordinate community-based projects which are research-informed;

**Safe spaces:** The Foundation will provide safe spaces for human encounters and dialogues;



**Alliances:** The Foundation will forge alliances with other entities within civil society, and with local and international institutions, to avoid duplication and to promote collectively as an antidote to individualism and territorialism;

**Measurement:** The Foundation seeks to develop appropriate mechanisms to measure wellbeing on a national level, so that these findings can direct its future work and areas of focus as well as influence governmental policy.

**Action:**

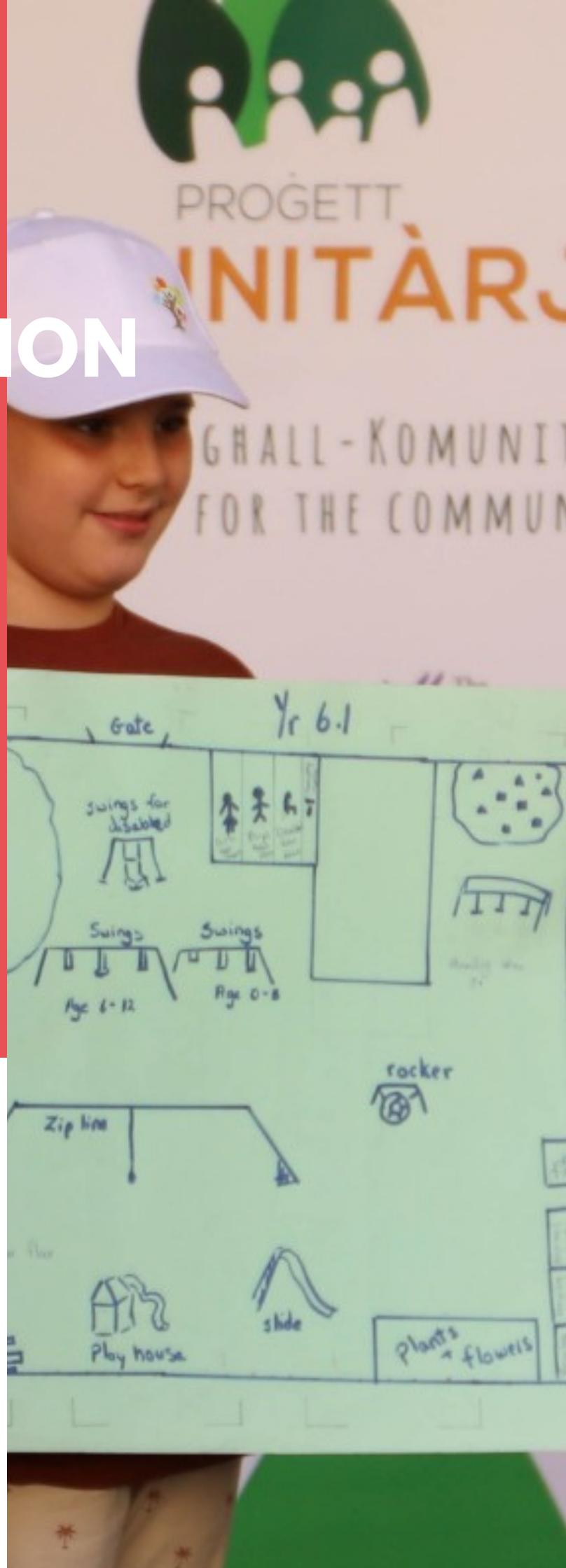
To achieve its vision, for the period 2019-2022, the Foundation will be dedicating its resources to activities and projects that promote active citizenship, focusing on children in the context of their families and the larger community as the target demographic.



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# CHILD PARTICIPATION KEY TO WELLBEING



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# CHILD PARTICIPATION

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Until some time ago, children living in Malta and Gozo were often seen playing outside, riding their bikes, creating and inventing games, building and making their own toys. The experience, however, of children today is different. This is partly due to over development and the lack of community-based open, green and safe spaces for Children and Young People. Most children today rely on technology for most of their play and unfortunately miss out on the healthy connection to the natural environment.

## **Children's Right to Play:**

**The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child gives importance to play and recreation in the life of every child. Article 31 emphasises that: "State parties recognise the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child to participate freely in cultural life and the arts".**

Children today are facing increased levels of stress which is a consequence of the increased academic demands, leaving them with little or no time to engage in play. Play is an essential component in the development of children. Lack of time to play is leaving serious repercussions on their wellbeing, their health, and their development.

The repeated statements from children living on the Maltese Islands, regarding the lack of safe and green spaces where they can play, learn, share and connect with one another, has been an ongoing experience for The Malta Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society. Over the years MFWS has engaged with thousands of children living on the Maltese Islands and subsequently through its Children's Hub developed the fundamental methodology for appropriate child participation, aiming at giving safe spaces for children to voice their aspirations and be listened to.



# CHILDREN AS ESSENTIAL STAKEHOLDERS

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Child participation is one of the core principles of the United Convention for the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Children and Young People have the right to freely express their views, while it is an obligation for adults to listen to them and to facilitate their participation in all matters affecting them within the family, schools, local communities, public services, institutions, government policy and judicial procedures". (UNCRC: Article 12, 1989) As stipulated in Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (1989), and in Article 24 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (FRA), the free expression of views and active participation is every child's fundamental human right.

Moreover, from the right to be heard, children's views are to be given the deserved consideration, according to their age and maturity. Therefore, the children's right to be listened to and taken seriously is a right and not a privilege. The Malta Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society (MFWS), in adherence to the fundamental children's right to be listened to, established the Children's Hub - the Children's and Young Persons' Council. These endeavours aim at promoting child participation at a national level and an international level.

Quite recently, the Malta Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society collaborated with Eurochild, in a project entitled: 'You Matter No Matter What', whereby 1,500 children from 42 schools in Malta and Gozo participated in a national participatory discussion organized by the children themselves and for children. It was a truly innovative and creative approach that was chosen by the Children's Council that through the designing of T-Shirts, the children expressed what they feel to be heard, and what hinders their attempts to be heard. This set of 80 T-shirts were later exhibited at the European Parliament in Brussels.



# GREEN OPEN SPACES IN THE HEART OF THE COMMUNITY

## PROĠETT KOMUNITÀRJA

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The United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child also gives importance to: ***“Environments in which play, and recreational opportunities are available to all children provide the conditions for creativity; opportunities to exercise competence through self-initiated play enhances motivation, physical activity and skills development; immersion in cultural life enriches playful interactions; rest ensures that children have the necessary energy and motivation to participate in play and creative engagement”.*** (UNCRC, Article 31, 1989)

The concept underpinning the Proġett Komunitàrja reflects this fundamental children’s right and is the overarching mission of the Children’s Hub within the Malta Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society. This project is mainly aiming to promote and support child participation in the Maltese Islands and beyond. This project is also motivated by principles drawn from peace education to uphold the value of respect to one another and acknowledge diversity as an opportunity. It is through inclusion and the building of positive relationship that this project aims to enhance wellbeing.

In 2019, the Children's Hub within the Malta Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society, held a series of meetings and consultation sessions with members of the Children's and Young Persons Council as well as members of the Interfaith Children’s Councils. During these consultation meetings, children discussed ways and ideas about activities and projects to generate wellbeing at large. The most prominent statement highlighted by the children and the young persons, was the need to create green, open, and safe spaces in the community. Following further research and consultation with adults, it became apparent that at a wider level, people of all ages feel the need for increased spaces for play and recreational activities for children.



Up to few years ago, Maltese villages had a strong sense of community life centred on the village “pjazza”, the village square. Although community life is different from one locality to another, communities had a high level of active participation among residents including children. Today, the spirit of the village “pjazza” vanished, leaving little or no physical spaces in which to celebrate the feeling of connection among the community and the development of positive relationships which is central to wellbeing.

It was the result of this process of child participation and consultations that the Malta Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society created Proġett Komunitàrja.

Proġett Komunitàrja focuses on building an inclusive community of learning through active participation. It aims to revive the communal feeling. A number of fundamental components underpin this community project mainly:

- (1) The identification of unused land in the heart of the community;**
- (2) Children are the primary designers, supported by the community (local council and community level NGOs);**
- (3) Children’s designs are then translated into professional and technical plans by designers and architects;**
- (4) The support and funding by government authorities and agencies and**
- (5) The involvement of the local council from the outset and in particular to administer and maintain the project sustainably.**

Proġett Komunitàrja aims to create an open, safe, inclusive, and environmentally friendly space, primarily with children and for children. The project also aims to give children and young people the opportunity to play, exercise, share and learn through a programme of non-formal education, which is being developed by the Malta Trust Foundation as a partner to the project in collaboration

with the Faculty of Education of The University of Malta.



PROĠETT  
**KOMUNITÀRJA**



# PROĠETT KOMUNITÀRJA

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The first pilot project has been launched in Zabbar. The first phase of the project focused on an intensive process of child participation with all the children living in Zabbar, including very young children, as young as three years old. There were also consultation meetings with community level leaders. The second part of the project is focusing on technical meetings with the designing house DAAA House which has done the designs pro bono and representatives of the four different ministries (Infrastructure, Environment, Education and Local Councils) and their technical teams.

This report, therefore, will focus on the proceedings and findings through the consultation meetings held with the children and their feedback.



27th July 2020



# WELLBEING A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL AND INTERSECTING CONCEPT

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## Understanding Wellbeing in the context of children and children's rights.

Wellbeing is a much used and accepted term in many ways. It is more than economic security, freedom from poverty, and access to health care. Wellbeing also means happiness, job and educational satisfaction, respect, healthy and positive relationships, and psychological health.

“Wellbeing touches on the satisfaction of material, physical, affective, and psychological needs. Most importantly it also relies on the presence of a healthy and just society that affords people opportunities for growth and development.

Wellbeing is also associated with rights deriving from the concept of human worth and involve the guaranteed satisfaction of basic human rights.”

“Rights are political goals that Governments ought to aim to achieve for each individual”.  
(Amaryta Sen, 1981)

If wellbeing is perceived as the enjoyment of rights, therefore it must apply for all citizens, including children.

The UNCRC, Article 3.2 establishes that: “States Parties undertake to ensure the child such protection and care as is necessary for his or her wellbeing, taking into account the rights and duties of his or her parents, legal guardians, or other individuals legally responsible for him or her, and, to this end, shall take all appropriate legislative and administrative measures”.

Wellbeing for children, encompasses quality of life in a broad sense. It refers to a child's economic conditions, peer relations, political rights, and opportunities for development”.

When a state also defines wellbeing in the context of children's rights, it is acknowledging its obligations towards each child as rooted in the United Nations Convention of the Right of the Child (UNCRC) and other relevant legislation.

This reinforces the idea that wellbeing is reliant on relationships; in this context between the State and each child in its care.



# REPORT OF FINDINGS OF THE CONSULTATION PROCESS WITH CHILDREN

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**The Malta Foundation  
for the Wellbeing of  
Society**



# 1. BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

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The Malta Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society (MFWS) observed that the Maltese islands are lacking open spaces in which children and the community can meet. It has also noted that the community feeling that was once a fundamental characteristic of the Maltese society is diminishing. To address this need, the MFWS embarked on the Proġett Komunitàrja initiative with the children as its focus.

Article 31 of the United Nations Convention of the Right of the Child recognizes the right of all children to engage in play, rest and leisure and take part in cultural and creative activities. The twelfth article of the same convention explicitly declares that the children have a fundamental right to be heard and taken seriously in matters that concern them. Within this framework, MFWS in collaboration with a four ministries - being, the Ministry for Transport, Infrastructure and Capital Projects; the Ministry for Sustainable Development, Environment and Climate change; Ministry for Education and the Ministry for the National Heritage, the Arts and Local Government - started an extensive consultation with children to gather their opinion and feedback on how they would like open spaces in the community to be.

This process took a mixed-method approach, and hence integrated quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. Methodologies in which different data collection and analysis methods are used collectively, have the advantage to yield more comprehensive data, which is richer in both depth and breadth, as well as provides the possibility of triangulation, that is the confirmation of the results.

In the initial phase of this process, the MFWS Child's Hub core team members met with the children from the locality of Zabbar, Malta. This consultation was carried out in 2019, and it involved a number of physical sessions with two primary schools, the scouts group, two children's homes and two band clubs of this locality. In light of the current COVID-19 situation, subsequent face to face sessions with children hailing from other localities could not be held. Thus, online sessions with children who attended Skola Sajf in the other eight localities, being Siggiewi, St Venera, Kalkara, Vittoriosa, Qormi San Gorg, Qormi San Bastjan, Floriana and Pieta', were organised. In the latter process, participation comprised of a total of 33 classes of children, with an average of 8 to 12 children each.

In both processes, the children were initially given a verbal explanation about the concept of the Progett Komunitàrja, following which they were asked to give their opinion on what they would like to see in open areas for children through an open discussion moderated by the MFWS Children's Hub member. The children were also given blank pages to draw designs about their ideas. The findings extracted from these bilateral processes are presented in the following section of this document, under heading 2.0. Moreover, a number of designs made by the children may also be accessed in Appendix A of this document.

Nonetheless, MFWS wanted to extend this consultation process to reach as much children as possible, and hence, an online survey was devised by the MFWS Children's Hub core team members with the aim of obtaining more perspectives of children regarding the design of open spaces in the community. Following approval from MEDE Ethics board, this online survey was sent to all heads of state, church and independents schools in Malta and Gozo for wide-spread distribution to all students. A link to the survey was also uploaded on social media to possibly obtain more exposure.

**Siggiewi**

**St Venera**

**Kalkara**

**Vittoriosa**

**Qormi (SG)**

**Qormi (SB)**

**Floriana**

**Pieta**

The consultation process through this online survey was carried out between August and October 2020. Participation in this survey was voluntary, and guardians of young children were encouraged to support their children in filling the form and in creating a design of how their child would like open spaces to be. Guardians were advised to write at the back of the drawing what their child was saying about the design that was created.

142 duly filled online surveys were received, whilst no designs were received through the online consultation. This report will be presenting the analysis of data retrieved from this online survey, under Heading 3.0. Ultimately, All the children’s drawings and findings will be forwarded to a professional designer so that a prototype of the designated open spaces could be drawn, based on the children’s voices expressed through this consultation process.



1. Picnic area
2. Small children area
3. Petting farm
4. Boċċi għal anzjani
5. Vending machines
6. Panelli and water solar heaters
7. Changing area
8. Kiosk
9. Nappy changer
10. Breast feeding area
11. Bigger children area
12. Football and basketball area

# 2. FINDINGS OF THE INITIAL PART OF THE CONSULTATION PROCESS WITH CHILDREN IN SCHOOLS

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As stated previously, face-to-face sessions were carried with children from the locality of Zabbar in 2019, whilst online sessions were carried out with children attending Skola Sajf in the six localities, in 2020. Analysis of the gathered responses was carried out with the aim to find common themes. This analytic process resulted in the extraction of eight salient points with regards to the children's perspectives on how they would like open spaces to be and what they would like them to contain. These will be explained one by one under the following sub-headings.

## 2.1 Theme 1: Green

In the children's drawings and responses, it was noted that multiple references was made for the open spaces to be green. In fact, there were 30 mentions of gardens with trees and flowers, picnic areas, green houses and turf recreational areas. Furthermore, 15 children proposed fountains, while another six stated that they would like to have ponds with fish, ducks and turtles. Another eight children also put forward the idea of having places for gardening and plantation.

## 2.2 Theme 3: Ecofriendly

The issue of renewable energy was mentioned 17 times by the children, with suggestions of installing solar panels, solar heaters, water reservoirs, use of sea water as well as the use of recycling and reusable material; and recycling bins.

## 2.3 Theme 3: An extensive outdoor play area

The children came up with many creative ideas regarding types of different playground equipment and activities they would like to have in these open areas. Almost all children mentioned playgrounds with swings and slides of different colours and shapes, such as, dinosaurs and pirate ships.



# 2. FINDINGS OF THE INITIAL PART OF THE CONSULTATION PROCESS WITH CHILDREN IN SCHOOLS

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Moreover, 12 children called for water play, six children for a pool, and nine for a trampoline. Other suggestions included a sandpit, an outside library, a robot, a ball pit, climbing walls, climbing ropes, merry-go-round, bumping cars, a dog park and a jumping castle. Furthermore, six children proposed treehouses, whilst another six suggested a petting farm (zoo). An outside gym was suggested by ten children.

## 2.4 Theme 4: An indoor facility

Apart from the outdoor play area, there was a lot of reference for an indoor sheltered area and games rooms in which can play in. The reason for this indoor facility was two-pronged. On one hand, children spoke of games they would like to carry out comfortably inside, like painting and crafts. On the other hand, children also stated that an indoor facility will provide the opportunity to play when the weather is not favorable, be it heavy rain in Winter or scorching heat in Summer. In this facility, children wished for a toddler area, painting and crafts area, music and dancing, and games room with indoor games such as, table tennis.

## 2.5 Theme 5: Equipped with different amenities

The children suggested that these open spaces should be equipped with different amenities. These include toilet facilities with nappy changing and breastfeeding facilities (n=10) as well as eating facilities offering healthy food alternatives and vending machines (n=14). Other amenities frequently proposed by the children included benches, gazebo and garbage bins. One child proposed a free drinking water fountain, whilst another mentioned a suggestion box. Ten children advocated for the Scouts headquarters in this area. Moreover, three children suggested a car park, with two of them proposing it to be underground. Only one child recommended wifi.



# 2. FINDINGS OF THE INITIAL PART OF THE CONSULTATION PROCESS WITH CHILDREN IN SCHOOLS

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## 2.6 Theme 6: Safety

With regards to safety, children mentioned fencing around the play areas, the presence of a security person, as well as security cameras. Eight children suggested a first aid area with medical attention in place at all times.

## 2.7 Theme 7: Sports facilities

Ten children wished for a football ground, whilst another five for a basketball court. Other sports mentioned included a skatepark, bicycle areas, archery, tennis, and hockey.

## 2.8 Theme 8: Inclusivity

The issue of inclusivity was highly noted in the children's responses. 15 stated that open spaces should be completely accessible for children with different abilities, such as children who are wheelchair users, children with impaired sight and children with autism- both in playing areas and amenities. One child also mentioned a multi-sensory room. Furthermore, 12 children underlined the importance of different play areas for different age groups.



# FINDINGS FROM THE ONLINE SURVEY

PROĠETT GĦAT-TFAL  
KOMUNITARJU U GĦAŻ-ŻGĦAŻAGĦ



MINISTRY FOR TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE  
AND CAPITAL PROJECTS



MINISTRY FOR THE NATIONAL HERITAGE,  
THE ARTS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT



MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT,  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE



MINISTRY FOR EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT



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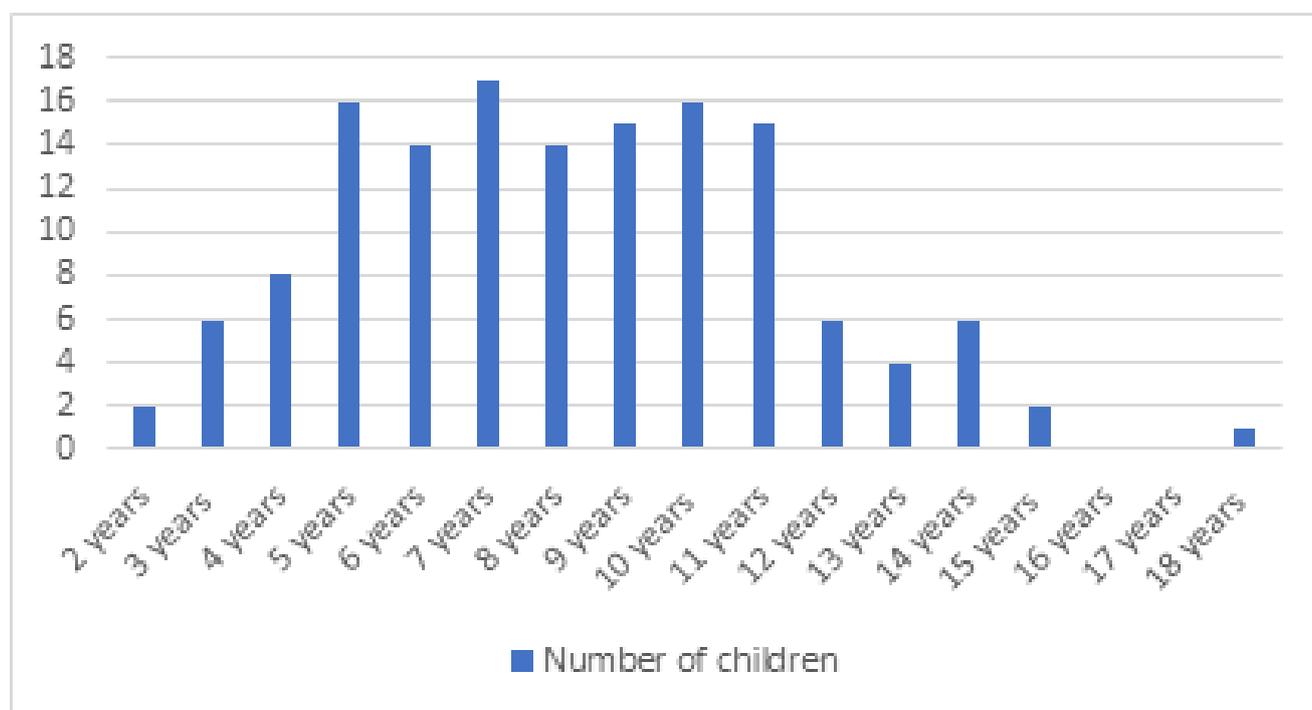


The  
Malta  
Trust  
Foundation

# 3.0 FINDINGS FROM THE ONLINE SURVEY

## 3.0 Findings from the Online Survey: Demographic Data of the Child Participants (Questions 1 to 6)

A total of 142 children participated in this online survey, after obtaining the consent of their guardian/s. The following graph (Figure 1) shows the age distribution of the child respondents, with 75% of the children (n=107) aged between 5 to 11 years.

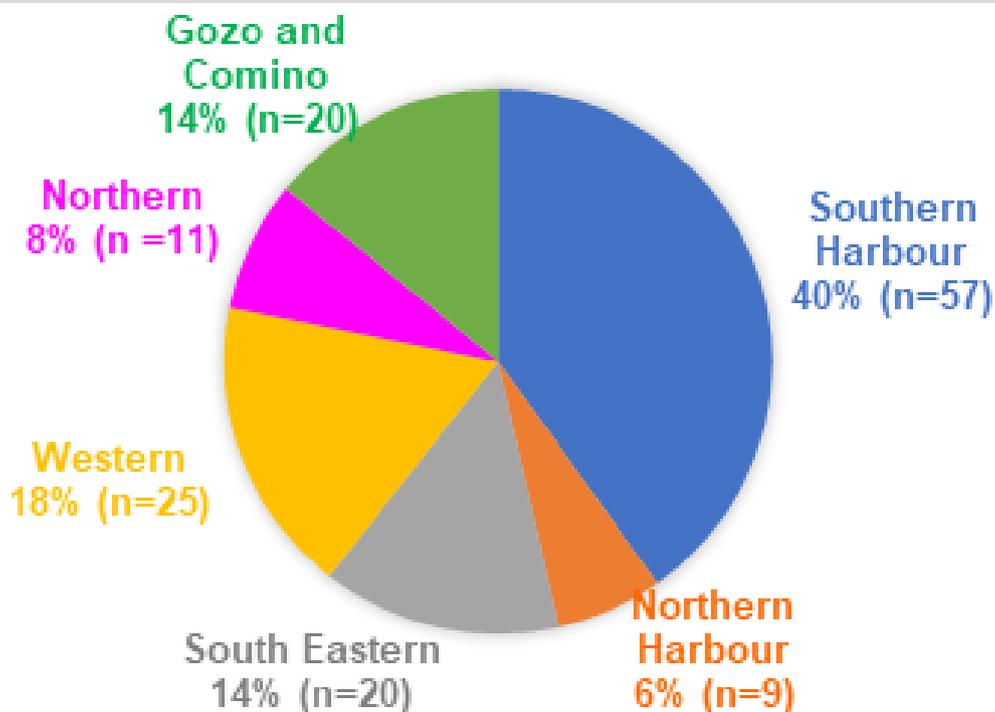


**FIGURE 1.**

Child participants by age (n=142)

# CHILD PARTICIPANTS BY LOCALITY

Of these respondents, 122 children hailed from Malta, whilst 20 from Gozo; with 40% of the respondents residing in the Southern Harbour region. The following chart (Figure 2) illustrates the distribution of the child participants' localities in line with the National Statistical Office (2020) Eurostat system of classification of localities of the Maltese Islands .



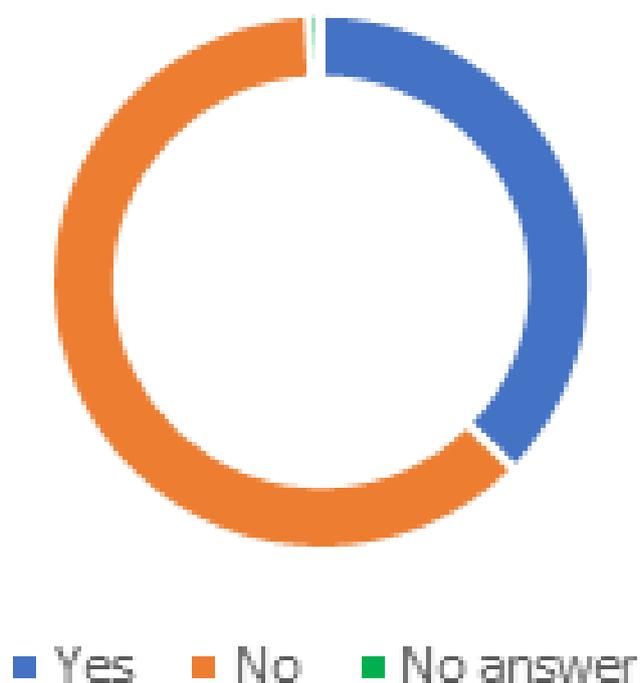
**FIGURE 2.**

Child participants by locality (n=142)

# 4.0 SATISFACTION WITH THE AMOUNT OF OPEN SPACES

## 4.0 Satisfaction with the amount of open spaces (Online Survey: Question 7)

When asked if they are satisfied with the amount of open space, only 36 % of children (n=53) responded in the affirmative, whilst almost the vast majority, that of 61 % (n=88) answered in the negative. Only one child did not answer this question.



**FIGURE 3.**

Satisfaction with the amount of open spaces (n=142)

# 5.0 ONE THING WHICH THE CHILDREN WOULD LIKE TO IMPROVE IN THEIR COMMUNITY

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## 5.0 One thing which the children would like to improve in their community (Online Survey: Question 8)

In the eighth question of this survey, children were asked to name one thing they would like to improve in their community. 118 children (83%) came up with valuable suggestions, 17 did not answer this question (12%), and an additional 7 (5%) wrote that there is nothing that they wish to see any different.

Data analysis of the available responses revealed that the majority (over 60%) of the children (n=73) suggested more open and safer dedicated places in which they can play and meet their friends, enjoy time with their family and practice recreational activities, both in the outdoors and in the indoors. From these findings, it was moreover noted that four separate, yet intertwined themes can be extracted from the children's answers. These are: greener spaces, open recreational spaces, safer spaces and cleaner spaces. These themes will be discussed in further details under their respective subheading.

### 5.1 Theme 1: Greener spaces

In this received responses, the word 'green' was mentioned 34 times by the children, who stated that they wished that there is more greenery (n=11), less buildings (n=6), more gardens and/or parks (n=11), as well as more plantation of more trees (n=9) in their locality. The core substance of the children's suggestions was about the improvement in quantity, availability, accessibility, and maintenance of available green spaces within their community.



## 5.2 Theme 2: Open Recreational Spaces

Linking with the first theme, the children cited the word 'open spaces' 14 times and the word 'play' 31 times. They pointed out the wish to have recreational indoor and outdoor spaces in which they can freely play, practice their sport/s and hobbies- both on an individual level as well as with their family and friends. 17 children stated that they would improve the availability and size of the playground, whilst listing several different kinds of play. These included ball games, skateboard, adventure, water play and trampolines. Some children also pointed out the need for more spaces in which they can practice both indoor and outdoor sports and physical activities, such as a gym, sports complex, areas for trekking, running tracks, football grounds and cycling lanes. Others suggested more place for interactive and creative activities for children of different age groups in their locality, such as petting farms, crafts, drawing, as well as youth centres and places for older children to hang out.

Moreover, four children referred to the need of having shaded playgrounds and indoor recreational airconditioned areas in which children can play in during the hot Summer months and also on rainy days. It is also worth noting that - as stated earlier - six children wrote that they wished to see less buildings, noting that the community they live in feels 'crammed' and 'suffocating'.

## 5.3 Theme 3: Safer spaces

The issue of safety and security in their locality was mentioned 20 times by the children. In this regard, there were three perceived areas for improvement, being:

- (1).** More safety and security measures in public places for children within the community with regards to the upkeep and maintenance, security surveillance and adequate enclosures of children's playgrounds and gardens/parks (n=18).
- (2).** Improved infrastructure, such as the introduction of car-free zones and bicycle lanes; less traffic; and better roads and pavements (n=16).
- (3).** The enforcement of COVID-19 measures in the community to feel safer in relation to the risk of transmission of this virus (n=5).

## 5.4 Theme 4: Cleaner Spaces

The issue of a cleaner environment was also mentioned twenty times in the responses, with 17 referring to a general cleanliness of their locality, such as less garbage and 'dirt'; and more available bins. On the other hand, nine children pointed out that they wished to have cleaner air (n=3), less noise pollution (n=3) and less cars (n=3) in their locality.



# 6.0 BENEFITS OF HAVING OPEN GREEN SPACES

## 6.0 Benefits of having open green spaces (Online Survey: Question 9)

In this question, children had to tick one option out of the following three benefits: a safe place to play, better health and wellbeing; and a place to meet your friends. All children answered this question with almost half of the children (45%) linking open spaces to better health and wellbeing. The following diagram (Figure 4) shows the children's responses for this question in more detail, as well as the verbatim responses of three children who added free text to this question.

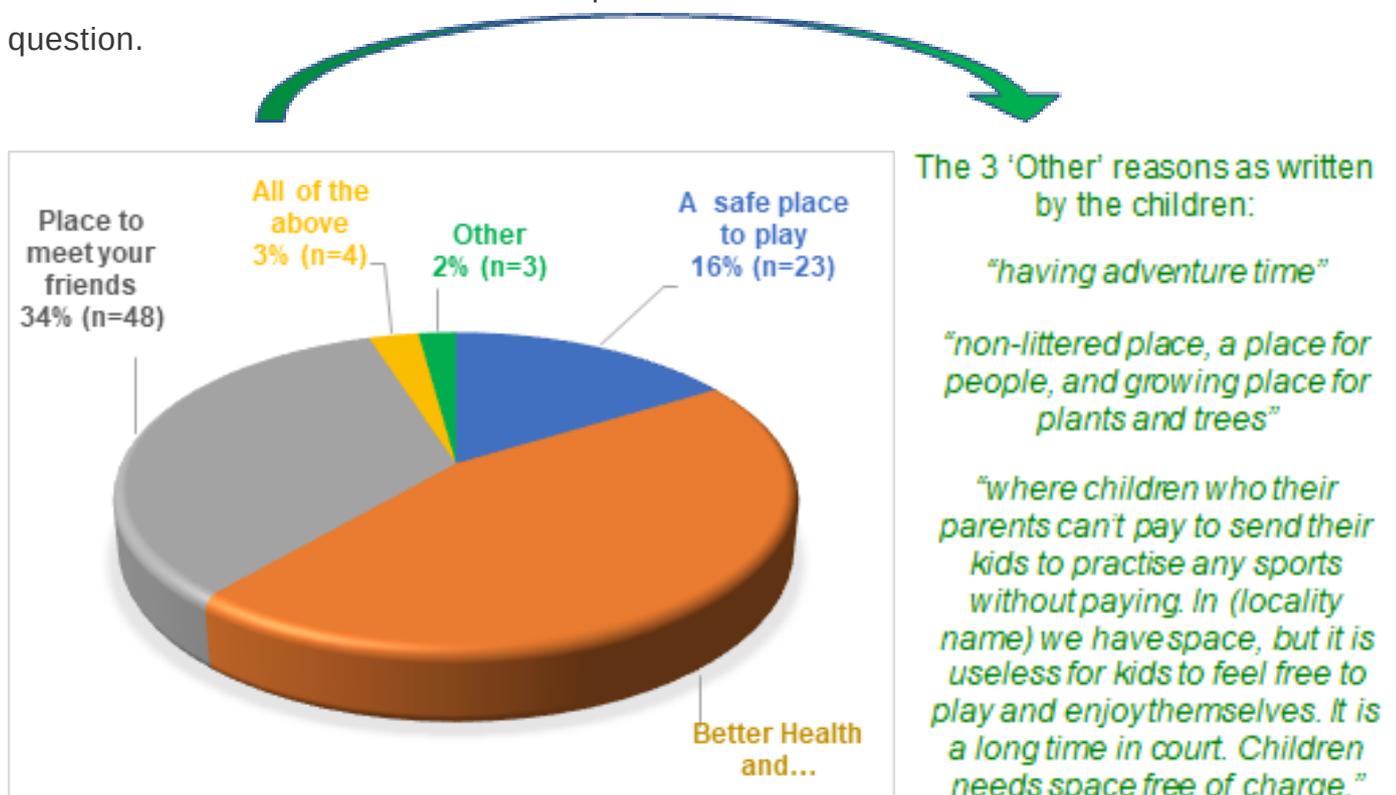


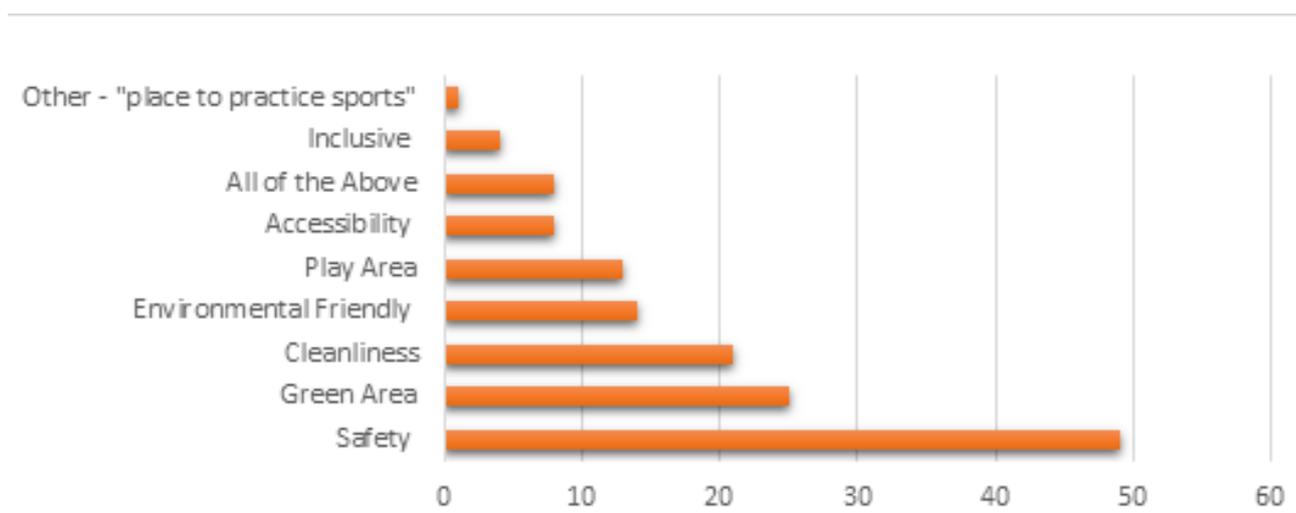
FIGURE 3.

Benefits of having open green spaces

# 7.0 IMPORTANT THINGS WHEN DESIGNING AN OPEN SPACE FOR CHILDREN

7.0 The most important things to keep in mind when designing and regenerating an open space for children (Online Survey: Question 10)

In this question, the children were presented seven options regarding the design and regeneration of open spaces, plus an additional option to write any other ideas which were not listed in the survey. All children answered this question, with one child writing free text in the 'other' option and eight opting for all choices. Figure 5 below shows the children's choices, with inclusivity being the least chosen option (n=4) and safety the most chosen option (n=49).



**FIGURE 3.**

Important things to keep in mind when designing and regenerating an open space for children

# 8.0 SAFETY MEASURES IN OPEN SPACES FOR CHILDREN

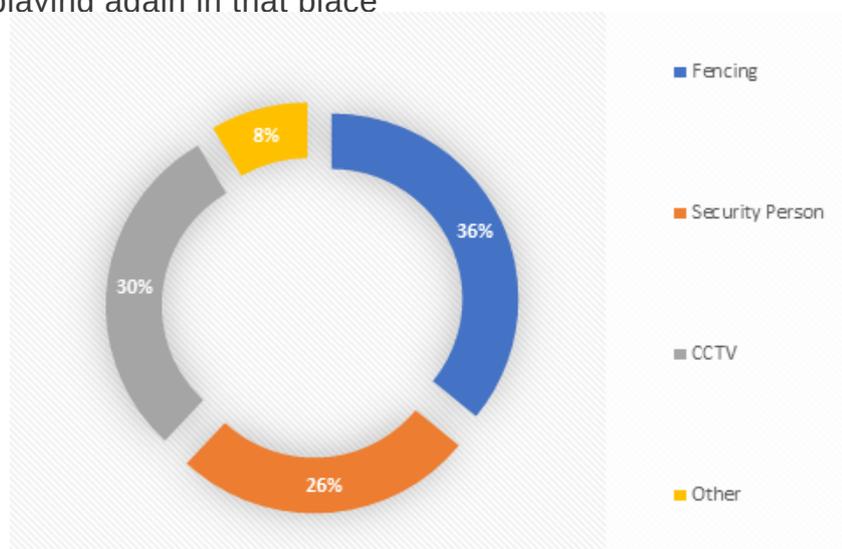
## 8.0 Safety Measures in Open Spaces for Children (Online Survey: Question 11)

In Question 11, children were asked about safety measures that are needed to be in place in open spaces for children. This question was answered by all children. As illustrated in Figure 6, fencing was chosen as the primary safety measure, ticked by a total of 51 children. This was followed closely by CCTV chosen by 42 children and security person by 37.

Twelve children opted to tick the 'other' option, out of which 8 children wrote 'all of the above', whilst the remaining four left the following feedback (in verbatim):

- (1). "This space shouldn't turn into a place where drug abuse can take place"
- (2). "No broken equipment or garbage"
- (3). "Soft floor"
- (4). "Sometimes children are left alone doing whatever they want. Perhaps if there will be instructions with CCTV where one can inform children that if they do offend other kids they can be prohibited from playing again in that place"

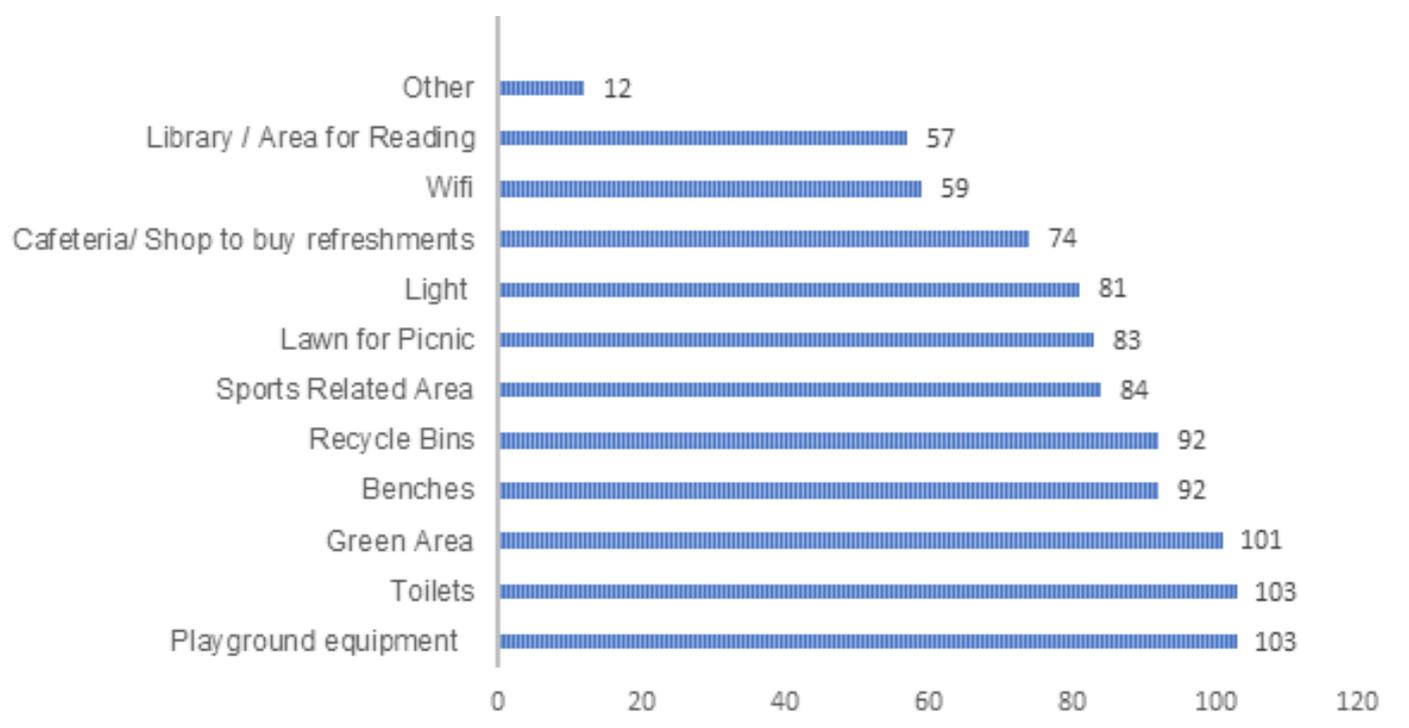
**FIGURE 3.**  
Safety measures  
in open spaces  
for children



# 9.0 AMENITIES IN OPEN SPACES

## 9.0 Amenities in Open Spaces (Online Survey: Question 12)

In this question, children were presented with eleven items and were asked to tick any of the given amenities which they feel open spaces should be equipped with. All children answered this question. Figure 7 presents the full list and the frequency of the children's responses.



**FIGURE 3.**

Amenities that open spaces should have

# 9.0 AMENITIES IN OPEN SPACES (OTHER)

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The 12 children that chose the 'other' option box, suggested the following (verbatim):

- Waterplay (n=3)
- Monkey bars and climbing frames/ walls (n=3)
- Trampoline (n=2)
- Camping area (n=1)
- CCTV and security guards (n=1)
- Age appropriate playground equipment (n=1)
- A good example is Kennedy Grove (n=1)
- Music (n=1)
- An area for indoor activities in case of rain or blistering sun (n=1)
- Zip line (n=1)
- Adventure activities and Obstacle course (n=1)
- All the above except for Wifi as it distracts parents watching their kids (n=1)

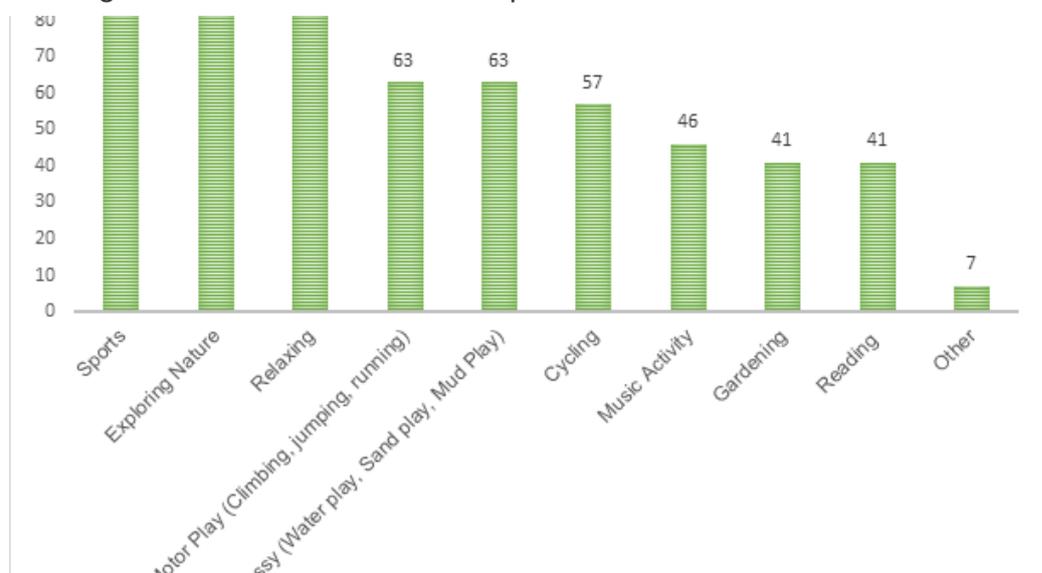
# 10.0 OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES PREFERRED BY THE CHILDREN

## 10.0 Outdoor Activities preferred by the children (Online Survey: Question 13)

In the last question, children were given a list of nine activities and were asked to tick any of these activities which they enjoy doing. All children answered this question. The following graph (Figure 8) illustrates the children's responses starting from the most to the least preferred activity.

Similar to previous questions, the respondents had the option to tick the 'other' box and write free text. Verbatim feedback included the following:

- Treehouse and Water fountains
- Kids over 10 years needs grounds to have fun playing, football, basketball and cycling instead of staying home playing online
- Fun play area with lots of slides, water fountains, bubbles
- Big screen movies
- Dancing with friends
- Classes to learn cooking or robotics or chemical experiment
- Trampoline



# CONCLUSION

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From this consultation process, six salient overarching and interlaced messages emerged from the children's responses, being:

(1). The majority of the child respondents are not satisfied with the open spaces currently available, and hence wish to see further improvements in their locality.

(2). Half of the children linked the benefit of having an open space in their locality with attaining better health and wellbeing. This direct relationship further emphasises the need to put serious attention and efforts on the availability of such spaces.

(3). The children presented complaints and concerns on the environment, with regards to lack of cleanliness and greenery. They also put forward ideas on how these areas can be

(4). Eco-friendly using recycling materials and renewable energy. The environmental and infrastructure issue is definitely worth further exploration, particularly in a context in which a substantial number of children in this consultation have remarked on the need to plant more trees, to have less pollution, less cars, cleaner localities, and advocating for better waste control management.

(5). The child respondents listed different kinds of recreational events, play and sports activities which they enjoy doing, either alone or with their family and friends, both in the outdoors and in indoors settings – with sports, adventure and nature being the most cited. This continues to re-enforce the importance that play has in the children's lives and the need to provide such open and clean spaces in which play can take place.



# CONCLUSION

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(6). Children's responses show an ongoing steady prioritisation of safety. In this consultation, children called for better upkeep, maintenance, security and surveillance of children's playgrounds and family parks, as well as road and traffic infrastructures. This feedback also suggests the need for adults to delve furthermore into the aforementioned issues so that these open spaces can offer a safe haven for children.

(7). The children gave weight to inclusivity with regards to these open being accessible to all children with different abilities and specific needs. They also highlighted that attention should be given to include children of all age group children, particularly the younger and older children whose developmental stage and interests may differ from school-aged children.

Ultimately, the aim of Progett Komunitarja was perhaps summarised in one statement by a child respondent in the online survey, as he/she described the benefits of an open space as:

***“a non-littered place, a place for people, and a growing place for plants and trees” -in sum, a community in which humankind is in harmony with each other and with Mother Earth.***

# CONCLUSION

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This unique process to put child participation at the core of the policy decisions that affect them, has brought together hundreds of children. Children were not mere spectators, but full active participants. They were invited to discuss, share their ideas and dreams, and create their own designs. More than 900 children were tasked with sharing their aspirations and designs for the area, which was identified by the Local Council, which will subsequently be brought to life by the architects and other technical professionals.

This is not a one-off initiative. The Malta Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society is pleased that Government is committed to dedicate similar spaces in other localities, which through processes of consultation with schools, local councils and other stakeholders, Malta and Gozo will provide safe, inclusive spaces for all the children living in these islands.

Proġett Komunitàrja will undoubtedly create a much-needed green lung for all the members of the community but particularly and especially for children and young persons.

The idea is that the local council will have a children's council and that this space will be populated with non-formal education where, through the input of the Malta Trust Foundation, leadership skills and self-confidence can be nurtured in a fun, safe space.

- Child Participation empowers children;
- Empowering Children increases their self-esteem;
- Higher self-esteem helps children flourish;
- Flourishing is healthy;
- Health is a basic right and;
- Rights are a vital ingredient to Wellbeing



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