



Youths

The following are the proposals received to date:

Affordable fitness centres open till late, targeting specific areas such as the Bugibba, Qawra and Marsascala locations where there could be a large number of vulnerable youths possibly coming from lower income families. Fitness centres are seen as a tool in terms of crime prevention by providing a meaningful and motivating activity for youths, apart from being seen as a medium to develop discipline.

Tax exemptions such as 5% Vat for Under 18 youth gym memberships were also mentioned, this would be of help in order to encourage youths to become fitness centre members. This proposal would help youths to get off the streets and make better use of their time and energies.

To confirm the latter view, I have met a businessman last week who is willing to equip a fitness centre in the Bugibba/Qawra area instead of opening a restaurant. This goal has developed within him after he recently became aware, that many youths in the areas are coming from families who are under or close to the poverty line. He rightly believes that these youths require more support and direction because they spend a lot of time wandering about leading to a greater possibility of criminality and bad habits. This businessman is asking for premises in the area - he will then invest from his private funds and also work on a voluntary basis to attract youths towards his fitness centre. These were his precise words:

“I can invest in a restaurant but I want to do something meaningful for these Bugibba/Qawra kids, because life is not just about making money”.

Beyond the fitness centre, this same businessman is interested in creating another regatta event which goes wider than the annual regatta villages. This time on a more national level, by holding another annual regatta event in the north of the island with more towns (even from the centre of Malta) including their own teams to compete in a national event which marks another national feast or occasion. This could be organised better via local councils. One of the new teams could possibly sprout right from the fitness centre he is willing to create. He has a ‘Bugibba and/or Qawra and/or St.Pauls Bay regatta team’ which competes both in the traditional regatta and in the new one.

