



L-Università ta' Malta
Faculty for Social Wellbeing

Iklin Community Project

Research Team

Prof. Andrew Azzopardi, Dean, Faculty for Social Wellbeing, Project Manager

Olga Formosa, Research Support Officer

Faculty for Social Wellbeing - University of Malta

Commissioned and Funded by the Iklin Local Government

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
1. Introduction	11
2. Literature Review	13
<i>Community Identity</i>	13
<i>Community Cohesion</i>	18
<i>Community Development</i>	23
<i>The Community of Iklın</i>	25
3. Methodology	32
<i>Research Rationale</i>	33
<i>Data Collection</i>	34
<i>Research Instruments</i>	36
<i>Data Analysis Strategy</i>	36
<i>Limitations of Research Design</i>	37
4. Results	39
4.1 <i>Composition of the Town</i>	39
4.2 <i>The Views of Residents (analysis of the findings)</i>	50
5. Conclusion and Recommendations	77
<i>Recommendations for further research</i>	88
References	90
Glossary	102
List of Figures	102
Appendices	103
<i>Appendix A</i>	103
<i>Appendix B</i>	104
<i>Appendix C</i>	105
<i>Appendix D</i>	113
<i>Appendix E</i>	121

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



*“Li tkun għaddej fit-triq u xi ħadd
jgħidlek bonġu, tiegħu pjaċir”*
(Participant 14)

Communities provide their members with a network of junctures that can shape facets of their behaviours, social exchanges, as well as their identities (Devine-Wright, 2009; Brown et al., 2003). The geographical closeness within a locality provides avenues for social connections (Easterbrook & Vignoles, 2015) and can nurture a degree of shared interest due to a shared environment (McNamara et al., 2013). When a resident of a community considers themselves to be a member of that community, as a place where they belong and share attributes with, this can contribute to improved self-reported health (McNamara et al., 2013), and promote social exchanges and wellbeing (Stevenson et al., 2014). When, however, members of a community feel detached from each other and do not share a communal identity, this can give rise to marginalisation, alienation and potential conflict (Stevenson et al., 2014).

The community of Iklin is a relatively young town finding its beginnings in as recent as 1954. Founded by a small group of residents in somewhat remote residences spread across a mostly rural landscape, the town is now only still hosting its second or third generation of these families. Over the years, the town's families grew in size and number, creating a landscape of one or 2 storey family, with residents working in unison in the interest of bringing resources and developments to the community. Landscape plays an important role in the quality of life of people related to it (Council of Europe, 2000) and design and architecture of urban spaces, therefore play a crucial role in forming the identity of a space (Madanipour, 1996). Recent changes in construction permits at a nation level however are now bringing rapid changes to Iklin's community, not only in the aesthetics of the town but consequently, also in the density and nature of its residents, and the challenges they face.

Place of birth and duration of permanence, naturally, contribute to the development of identity ties with a locality (Hui et al, 2012; Casakin et al., 2015), although these are not exclusive for the formation of community identity (Feldman, 1990; Cuba & Hummon, 1993; Ng, 1998). Notwithstanding the earlier Iklin generations' now lengthier period of residence in

the town, as well that of their offspring, the second generation Iklinizi who were brought up there, the lack of internal resources and services in a town that was still at developmental stage, meant that this group of residents often resorted to neighbourhood ties for services such as education. This meant that ties between locals were still more sparse and slower in their establishment. As the town grew and services such as groceries and a church started developing across Iklin however, the community started facing new challenges brought about by a fast boom in construction in the area. The earlier residents, at infantile stages of developing a sense of community, now saw a rapid influx of new residents, accompanied by changes in the environment they once knew and loved.

When it comes to a sense of community, Deener (2010) observed that in the case non-native residents, involvement in regular activities and festivities with other locals could contribute towards promoting a sense of belonging. A cohesive community is in fact often seen as centred around contact between the groups within it (Wetherell et al., 2007). Attachment to one's community is in fact considered to be rooted in meaningful and active social interactions (Brown & Perkins, 1992). Several researchers have also added that amenities, including clubs, playgrounds and places of gather are at the root of a sense of belonging to a community (Hanley, 2007a; Clarke et al., 2007). Green spaces and open public spaces too may have a positive impact on the development of a sense of community (Rugel et al., 2019; Firth et al., 2011; Kingsley & Townsend, 2006). They bring aesthetic appeal, an area for leisure and a space for the enhancing of social connections (Firth et al., 2011). They also impart a sense of collective pride and ownership amongst residents (Wakefield et al., 2007). Within the community of Iklin, several activities such as coffee mornings or special occasion day-trips were organised in efforts to bring residents together. Often however, these were one-off initiatives or a yearly event, making regular meetings harder to be pursued. Another important local festivity renowned for bringing residents together, the traditional Maltese *festta*, is also not carried out in Iklin. Moreover, the town does not share a common point of gather such as a town square or amenities such as a football ground, further restricting residents' opportunities to connect with each other. In addition to all this, the rapid construction wave is also quickly sweeping away any green areas that the town, a mostly rural one until not too long ago, used to enjoy.

For the young community of Iklin, these challenges are even further exacerbated by the backdrop of modern societies, where the creative class are seen to prefer weak social ties instead of strong community and family bonds (Florida, 2002) and modernity is seen to give rise to less neighbourly behaviours (Young & Wilmott, 2013; Blackshaw, 2010). Tam (2007,

pp. 18) claims that the “*social fabric which holds us together is being corroded*” and attributes this, in part, to the reduction of participation in group activities outside work, at the expense of involvement in activities that bring people from together towards shared interests. Rorty (2007) in fact suggests that an alternative way of thinking about community and the dance of cultural politics be established in order for communities to be developed and sustained. Nevertheless, while the role of one’s community as part of one’s sense of identity may have become of lesser importance (Vidal et al., 2012), developing small-scale community characteristics in order to create a ‘local identity’ can prove to be essential in untied residents together (Thwaites, 2007).

Faced by these challenges, the Iklin Local Government in collaboration with the Faculty for Social Wellbeing embarked on this research project documenting Iklin’s residents’ and key stakeholders’ views on these issues. This project was guided by the following objectives:

- understand who the community is by identifying the different stakeholders and identities present within the community;
- identify the issues and problems that the Iklin community prioritize;
- identify communal assets both physical and social that pertain to the Iklin community;
- attempt to propose ways how to resolve the issues using Community Assets; and
- present suggestions and recommendations for community engagement.

Section 1 introduces the subject matter, presenting a rationale for the study and framing the way forward for this research study. Section 2 presents a descriptive review of the literature surrounding the topic of communities. In particular, the nuances related to the identity of a community, as well as the factors at play when it comes to its cohesion and with that, the development of a sense of community amongst a locality’s residents. Amongst other, factors such as the role of involvement in regular activities within the community, local festivities and landscape are discussed, noting their contribution to the development of a sense of a community amongst residents and in turn, the impact of that on their quality of life of people. An overview of the town of Iklin is also presented, framing the following sections.

Section 3 presents the research approach adopted for the purposes of this study. A multi-faceted approach involving both quantitative and qualitative branches was adopted towards aiming to capture the demographics and views of the town’s residents and key players. This included a series of interviews carried out with 15 interviewees, a focus group with 6 individuals including residents and other key representatives, as well as a questionnaire that was distributed throughout households in Iklin of which 231 were received. A discussion about

limitations of the research is also presented in this section. Section 4 presents an analysis of the data collected. This chapter discusses figures collated from feedback from residents, representing the demographic tapestry of the town in its many facets. This is also accompanied by a presentation of the findings related to the views of residents and relevant stakeholders addressing the community of Iklin.

Section 5 describes the salient findings and resulting recommendations for action. The literature reviewed and the findings gathered for the purposes of this study in fact lead to a number of recommendations. These are outlined below and presented in more detail in Section 5:

1. Represent and **stand for residents' views** in the face of legislative development frameworks displaying sensitivity to the contexts and needs of residents.
2. Carry out the functions of the Local Government in **unison across council members**, dedicating attention to elements of teamwork, communication and collaboration, thereby creating a fair and safe space amongst members of the Council.
3. Regenerate Local Government members' **initiative** in creating new proposals for the community and act upon driving these ideas to bring them to fruition. This can be done through **renewed enthusiasm**, while encouraging and working with sub-committees as well as links with groups within the community such as the Scouts Group, ŽAK, etc.
4. **Listen to residents' voices** and engage in public consultation. This entails not only the following through of the outcomes of this report, but also developing channels of communication and continuous opportunities for dialogue, through direct events and initiatives as well collaborations and links with their representatives and groups.
5. Develop a **long-term plan for the community** seeking the wellbeing of the town and involving the residents along the process for these efforts to be sustainable and withstand changes in legislatures across time.
6. Be sensitive to the needs and characteristics of the distinct parts of Iklin in ensuring **fair distribution of resources** across the town.
7. Establish a new concept of community through **alternative cultural practices**, such as, for instance, the installing and promotion of roof gardens and vertical gardens, which could be pivotal in defining Iklin's identity as a green town, as well as the development of online media for links across the varying population of residents.
8. Invest in **urban planning** that can bring **aesthetic features and landmarks** to the community in order to **create spaces for leisure and people to meet**, keeping the value placed by residents on green elements as a lens towards this.

9. **Stimulate cultural interests and awareness**, particularly that related to the background and historical heritage of the town, through initiatives such as information talks, cultural walks around the locality and friendly information panels.
10. **Encourage civic participation** through culturally diverse activities and events in order to attract wider groups. This means, developing and investing in the continuation as well as introduction of ongoing popular activities.
11. Further develop **collaborations with the business community** with the aim of seeking a balance between the needs of the group and residents alike.
12. Support the initiatives of groups within the community that presently offer opportunities for **social and developmental activities**, while developing these further in order to cater for the wider resident group.
13. Introduce local **services that can cater for the residents** of the community, such as for instance, the services of the Silver Service Van that can aid commuting for the elderly group of residents.
14. Seek connections with land-owners of the **upper rural areas of Iklin** with the aim of negotiating an agreement for land to be safely accessible for residents or visitors.
15. Seek the channels to propose the introduction of **underground parking** around Iklin, with these then bringing **embellishments and gardens** above them. Actions like these could be cornerstones in defining Iklin's identity as Malta's green town.
16. Remain consistent in the **maintenance and upkeep** of all areas of Iklin, in particular those susceptible to more wear and tear.
17. Commit to listening to the loudest of people's cries, that is, **creating more green spaces** through the introduction of **long-term, sustainable solutions**.
18. In parallel with the above, **fulfil long-standing projects** especially those addressing green initiatives such as the planting of trees that was planned for the B'Kara bypass through the right political channels.
19. **Collaborate with the town's relevant groups or individuals** in order to bring insight from their experience and from there develop beyond project and initiatives that can address the wider population of the town.
20. Consider introducing **alternative means of transport**, promoting or facilitating the use of alternatives such as a shared shuttle bus service, or the introduction of a cycling culture in order to provide easier and cleaner commuting and access to nearby-locality amenities. This too could contribute towards transforming Iklin's identity into a **green community**.
21. **Give time to time**, sustaining energy levels and initiative even when results and outcomes of efforts invested are not instantly evident.
22. As **residents, contribute and participate** towards achieving the town's aims and developing a sense of community across all of its members.

1. Introduction

Community identity is at the root of a fruitful urban environment. One's locality nurtures a space for residents to feel they belong, express themselves and seek to be involved. While researchers agree that older localities find their character through arrangements into districts, roads and squares (Oktay, 2002), modern urban developments are bringing about a contrasting landscape of repetitive construction patterns, often lacking particular aesthetic sensitivity and typically characterised by sequences of apartment blocks. With this, open public spaces are also often seen reducing or becoming less welcoming. The community of Iklin, typically known for its characteristic terraced houses embellished with their owners' personal touches, is now too facing a rapid escalation in the density of its population and with it, a fast transformation of its urban landscape. In a young town, birthed in relatively recent years from branches of other localities, the impact of these changes on the community's identity and its residents' quality of life can be widespread.

Iklin is in fact a relatively young town, having been established in 1954. It is intersected by two arterial roads that connect the north of Malta to important infrastructural sights such as the University of Malta, the national Mater Dei Hospital and linkages to the capital city. Additionally, it is located next to neighbouring towns that have a long history and a strong sense of communal identity, such as Birkirkara and Ħal Lija. In rapidly developing countries, such as is Malta, morphological development of urban areas has often followed a path of scattered distribution of buildings (Davison, 2012), typically lessening distinctions between different localities and the boundaries that surround them (Shao et al., 2007; Oktay, 2002). This in turn, impacts the social and cultural formation of a sense of place and identity within a locality (Oktay, 2002; Yaldız et al., 2014; Boussaa, 2018; Gür, E., & Heidari, 2019).

These factors have contributed towards the lack of establishment of a tangible community identity in the community of Iklin, which creates barriers when it comes to Community Development. Additionally, changes to building permits over the last years, allowing several stories of flats to replace traditional two-floor townhouses has further exacerbated these challenges, shifting the demographics of the community and creating additional uncertainty as to the composition of the town and the needs and priorities of its residents.

The targets of Community Development projects can vary in different contexts. Typically, they seek to guide those concerned towards understanding and addressing a particular situation (Fritz, 2014). This project aims to undertake research looking into the characteristics and trends surrounding the community of Iklin in order to gain a more in-depth understanding of the various identity groups and stakeholders that comprise the community as well as the issues, problems and assets that belong to the community. This will subsequently guide the provision of strategic recommendations towards addressing issues being encountered based on the community's assets with the aim of developing community engagement as part of a Community Development programme.

2. Literature Review

This section addresses the concept of community identity, cohesion and Community Development through an examination of key theoretical findings in this respect. It also looks into the knitwork of the community of Iklin, its structure, administration and amenities.

Community Identity

“A deep human need exists for associations with significant places” (Relph, 1976, pp. 147).

Community identity is a shared group identity, described as *“a set of people with various kinds of shared elements, which can vary from a situation such as living in a particular place, to other interests, beliefs or values”* (Obst & White, 2005). Most researchers describe it as developing organically from its members and created in relation to others, that is, built around the characteristics that distinguish a particular community from other neighbourhoods (Shao et al., 2017; Moore, 2005). A communal identity is typically known and used by both outsiders as well as the residents of the locality itself and informs about the social order of urban life by distinguishing zones within geographical areas, grouping them according to significant social traits, such as upper and lower, urban or rural, and so on (Suttles, 1972; Suttles, 1968). Community identities in fact, contain information about common traits and behaviours of the members of that community (Cuba, & Hummon, 1993; Suttles, 1972; Suttles, 1968). Williams (1976, pp. 66) summed up the bringing together and the distinguishing from others feature of communities nicely when they said:

“Community can be the warmly persuasive word to describe an existing set of relationships, or the warmly persuasive word to describe an alternative set of relationships”.

Moreover, the identity of a community also represents a locality's experiences along the years and traditional qualities (Deffner, 2007), and reflects the extent to which those that inhabit it identify with the geographical community where they live (Hummon, 1986). Whether accurate or not, ultimately, community identities create a structure that organises, and in some way, influences individual lives.

Communities in fact, provide their members with a platform of junctures that may influence many aspects of their experience, including behaviours, social relations, and identities (Devine-Wright, 2009; Brown et al., 2003). The geographical closeness within a locality creates opportunities for regular contact, which may develop into more meaningful relationships (Easterbrook & Vignoles, 2015), and the physical aspect of neighbourhoods can provide a plethora of features which can shape the identities and social bonds of its residents, creating a sense of “place identity”, which, in turn, will determine how they behave within that locality (Devine-Wright, 2009; Dixon & Durrheim, 2000). The knitwork of a community also brings a degree of shared interest due to communal environment (McNamara et al., 2013). Community identity in fact has often been discussed in research as being deeply linked to a sense of community, that is, the feeling of belonging to a larger community nurtured by shared interests and emotional connections (Obst & White, 2005).

At a personal level, community identity is viewed within the self-concept approach of identification as being rooted in a multifaceted exchange between the self and the urban environment, as part of the larger picture of a person’s self-identity (Vidal et al., 2012; Lalli, 1992; 1988; Proshansky et al., 1983). Abrams & Hogg (2006) add that when a resident of a community considers themselves to be a member of that community, s/he might take on the positive stereotypes typically related to it by society, thereby gaining distinctiveness over others identifying with other communities (Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996; Hummon, 1986). This process of social self-stereotyping reinforces the creation of a community identity (Yang & Xin, 2016). Identification with a community has also been linked with improved self-reported health (McNamara et al., 2013), with research pointing at the fact that when residents share a sense of belonging within their community and feel they share attributes with which they identify with others in their neighbourhood, this promotes more positive social exchanges and wellbeing (Stevenson et al., 2014). A sense of community belonging in fact increases resident interest in the things that happen in their community and makes them more inclined to contribute towards their community’s development (Jiang & Zhen, 2021). On the other hand, if the members within a community feel separate of each other and the community does not share a communal identity, this can give rise to marginalisation, alienation and potential conflict (Stevenson et al., 2014). Attributes that contribute to individuals identifying with a community’s uniqueness in being distinct from other towns include cultural events such as markets, fairs, exhibitions, or other events (Manahasa & Manahasa, 2020), as would, for instance, be the case in Malta with a town’s traditional religious *festà*. Additionally, community identity is further strengthened through the use of symbolic representations, such as locality emblems, flags and anthems, which harness a shared sense of pride among members of a community

(Isaacs, 1975). Not surprisingly, traumatic events also typically contribute to consolidating community identities (Muldoon & Lowe, 2012; Hutchison, 2010; Drury et al., 2009).

Birthplace and duration of residence, naturally, contribute to the development of identity ties with a locality (Casakin et al., 2015; Hui et al., 2012), however are not exclusive for the formation of community identity (Ng, 1998; Cuba & Hummon, 1993; Feldman, 1990). Casakin et al. (2015) for instance, found that patterns of identification with and attachment to localities were similar between both natives as well as those who were not born in a specific locality, even though the formation of identity is slow and complex (Vidal et al., 2012; Hernández et al., 2007; Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001). Deener (2010) added that in the case of non-native residents, identity with a community was best consolidated through involvement in regular activities and festivities with other locals. Along the formation of one's community identity, two bonds have been widely discussed amongst researchers:

- (i) Place attachment (Zenker & Rütter, 2014; Shamsuddin & Ujang, 2008; Lewicka, 2005; Giuliani, 2003; Deaux, 1996; Altman & Low, 1992; Hummon, 1992), which relates to the multidimensional concept surrounding emotional bonds that people form with their places of residence (Scannell & Gifford, 2010; Brown et al., 2003; Giuliani, 2003; Manzo, 2003; Bonaiuto et al., 1999), within which close relationships are typically maintained (Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001); and
- (ii) Place identity (Soltani et al., 2013; Oktay, 2002; Lalli, 1992; Proshansky et al., 1983; Proshansky, 1978), which refers to the positive affective bond with one's place of residence (Casakin, 2015; Hernández et al., 2007; Knez, 2005; Jörgensen & Stedman, 2001; Kyle et al., 2005; Lalli, 1992; Shumaker & Taylor, 1983), often used interchangeably with concepts such as community identity (Hummon, 1992; Vidal, 2010) and largely regarded as being part of one's personal identity (Jörgensen & Stedman, 2006; 2001; Kyle et al., 2004; Stewart et al., 2004; Pretty et al., 2003; Stedman, 2002; Mazumdar et al., 2000; Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996; Low & Altman, 1992).

Place identity and place/community attachment are in fact intimately intertwined and connected concepts (Casakin et al., 2015; Lewicka, 2011; 2008; Chow & Healey, 2008; Knez, 2005; Kyle et al., 2004; Pretty et al., 2003; Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001; Reid & Deaux, 1996; Giuliani & Feldman, 1993). Shao et al. (2017) summarised 4 facets at play when it comes to the development of community identity and attachment:

- (i) Aesthetic features, which may face modifications over time (Lynch, 1960);
- (ii) Specific backgrounds and historical heritage (Lewicka, 2005);
- (iii) Functionality, that is, the town's ability to satisfy a diversity of users' activities (Montgomery, 1998; Jacobs, 1961); and
- (iv) Connections amongst its members, bridging across races, ethnicities or class identities (Rose, 1995).

Place attachment is also considered to facilitate civic activity (Kyle et al., 2004; Brown et al., 2004; 2003; Guardia & Pol, 2002; Pol, 2002; Uzzell et al., 2002; Vorkinn & Riese, 2001; Warin et al., 2000; Saegert, 1989). Thus, community/place attachment serves the interests of citizens at a personal level, as well as the wider community. Xin and Ling (2015) also added to the concept of community identity, proposing that it is founded on two facets: (i) A community's functional identity, that is, the residents' level of satisfaction with the locality's running and organisation, relating to aspects of the community such as convenience, the condition of its environment, and whether it satisfies their needs; and (ii) its emotional identity, referring to residents' emotional connection with their locality.

In addition to their social characteristics, localities are typically also characterised by particular physical and aesthetic features that shape their personality, while distinguishing them from other areas (Manahasa & Manahasa, 2020; Lewicka, 2011; Swanwick, 2009). These features are considered in research to be essential in providing identity-generating connection and in creating identification with the locality (Belanche et al., 2017; Shao et al., 2017; Lalli, 1998; 1992). Housing, for instance, is reported to be the most identity-influencing factor, with characteristics such as the architectural, historical, outdoor physical environment, and location features of it, impacting the generation of urban identity (Manahasa & Manahasa, 2020). This would mean that the identity of a locality develops through a mutual exchange of its physical characteristics shaping its residents' shared identity while at the same time, reflecting its residents' needs and meanings in the 'city milieu' (Haapala, 2003). The distinctive features of buildings in an area therefore nurture a better sense of identity and characterise the personality of such space (Shao et al., 2017; Ohta, 2001). The Council of Europe (2000) also emphasized that landscape plays an important role in the quality of life of those related to it, in particular, the residents of the area. With residents being a central element of urban spaces, community identity is in fact not founded only on the unique aesthetic or social aspects of a locality, but also the potential of these to bring psychological wellbeing to those within in (Carmona et al, 2003; Jacobs, 1961).

Further developing this, Galindo and Hidalgo (2005) identified three kinds of urban places considered to promote people's wellbeing, based on their attractiveness and distinguishable aesthetics: cultural-historical, recreational, and panoramic. From studies carried out in Italy, Fornara and Troffa (2009) and Fornara (2010) observed that natural areas (urban park), historic sites and panoramic promenades were considered by residents to be more restorative and de-stressing than a built place of leisure (in this case, a shopping mall). Vidal et al. (2012) also added that, even amidst the modern-day challenges of increased mobility, urban environments and landscapes can therefore foster identity formation, highlighting the key role of urban planning in increasing people's wellbeing. These findings therefore, leave no doubt on the fact that any harm, damage or lack of aesthetic sensitivity in the physical characteristics of a locality, carry the potential to impact its identity and the relevant meanings with which its residents identify (Manahasa & Manahasa, 2020).

The rapid process of urban development for instance, has greatly impacted the uniqueness and distinguishing features of urban aesthetics (Shao et al., 2017), with fast expansions of monotonous, repetitive building environments (Davison, 2012; Oktay, 2002) contributing to the sense of loss of place identity (Gür, E., & Heidari, 2019; Boussaa, 2018; Casakin, 2015; Yıldız et al., 2014; Lewicka, 2010). *"At the urban level, the environment should be such that it encourages people to express themselves and to become involved"* (pp. 261), however trends in contemporary urban planning often show little concern for their impact on the city (Oktay, 2002). Oktay (2002) claims that a sensitivity to public spaces should be developed, especially in urban and peri-urban areas, where densities are increasing. Public space is regarded as *"the common ground where people carry out the functional and ritual activities that bind a community, whether in the normal routines of daily life or in periodic festivities. [...] These dynamic spaces are an essential counterpart to the more settled places and routines of work and home life, providing the channels for movement, the nodes of communication, and the common grounds for play and relaxation"* (Carr et al., 1992, pp. xi; pp. 3). The concept of public realm, considered to connect people and contribute to fundamental social connections, has in fact been a recurrent focus of research, with the rapid decrease of such spaces being highlighted for almost the last 40 years (Bentley et al., 1985). Considered to be amongst the most significant parts of localities, the quality (Bonaiuto et al., 1999), design and architecture of urban spaces, therefore play a crucial role in forming the identity of a space (Madanipour, 1996).

It has long been established in research that social relationships and social identity hold a profound bearing on mental and physical wellbeing (e.g. Haslam et al., 2020; Steffens et al.,

2019; Stevenson et al., 2019; Haslam et al., 2018; Cruwys et al., 2014; Gallagher et al., 2014; Khan et al., 2014; Jetten et al., 2012). It improves sleep quality through its impact on loneliness and depression (Wakefield et al., 2019), as well as overall life satisfaction (Haslam et al., 2020; Greenaway et al., 2015). In turn, community identity is also considered to act as a mediator for positive psychological changes, affecting individuals' emotion, cognition and behaviour (Wakefield et al., 2019; Hornsey, 2008), particularly in instances such as mass trauma (Muldoon et al., 2017; Yang & Xin, 2016), where identification with one's own community is reported to yield fewer symptoms of post-traumatic stress and better adjustment (Kellezi & Reicher, 2012; Canetti et al., 2009; Muldoon & Downes, 2007). When a community provides its members with a sense of meaning, purpose, and belonging, these can give rise to positive psychological consequences (Haslam et al., 2009) as well as an increased level of altruism and participation in society (Wang et al., 2020; Yang et al., 2020; Gray & Stevenson, 2019; Fritsche et al., 2017; Yang & Xin, 2016). Community participation relates to individuals' involvement in community matters and group activities on a voluntary basis (Xin, 2020) and can yield several outcomes, including the sense of community, subjective wellbeing as well as enhancing Community Development (Christens et al., 2016; Christens, 2012; Albanesi et al., 2006). It can also prove to be essential through circumstances such as pandemics as is that currently being faced globally with coronavirus (Kwok et al., 2020; Marston et al., 2020; Gillespie et al., 2016). The value that community identity holds in the wellbeing of its residents and communities is therefore not to be underestimated.

Community Cohesion

A cohesive community can be described as one where (Wetherell et al., 2007, pp. 3):

- *“There is a common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities;*
- *the diversity of people's different backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and positively valued;*
- *those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities; and*
- *strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds and circumstances in the work-place, in schools and within neighbourhoods”.*

Clarke et al. (2007) view the concept of community and neighbourhoods as a space nurturing a sense of familiarity, trust and commonality, providing feelings of security, ownership, a sense

of shared belonging and safety. They view communities as representative of a distinct set of values. A cohesive community is seen as centred around contact between the groups within it (Wetherell et al., 2007), and is rich in what sociologists such as Putnam (2000), refer to as 'bridging social capital', that is, connections across groups in addition to associations within groups. Attachment to one's community is in fact a psychosocial process (Brown et al., 2004; Brown et al., 2003), rooted in meaningful and active social interactions (Brown & Perkins, 1992). It is also indicative of feelings of satisfaction about one's locality (Brown & Werner, 1985) that emerge from regular interactions amongst residents. Others add to this by highlighting the value of these bonds and informal interactions with a social network within one's neighbourhood in contributing to the generation of civic activity (e.g. Lewicka, 2005; Putnam & Feldstein, 2003; Perkins & Long, 2002; Berkowitz, 2000). A number of researchers have also added that amenities, such as clubs, playgrounds and places of gather are critical in yielding a sense of belonging to a community (Clarke et al., 2007; Hanley, 2007a; Knox, 1987), with Ng et al. (2005) adding that environmental variables surrounding the quality of a residence and neighbourhood strongly impact feelings of belonging when compared to other sociodemographic variables.

Florida (2002) however points to the fact that more people, particularly the creative class, are preferring weak social bonds instead of strong community and family networks. Blackshaw (2010) too claims that over recent years, homeowners have tended to steer away from communal association, at times preferring privacy and personal space over ties with neighbours. They suggest that modernity is unquestionably giving rise to less neighbourly behaviours. This could possibly be a result of what Abrams (1980) had brought forward when they considered historical communities to be an association that came about as a consequence of a network of people's state of deprivation and need, as opposed to them seeking mutuality or solidarity. Together with other researchers, they question the natural, organic aspect of communities, arguing that these could have resulted more out of economic rather than social needs (Shaw, 2008; MacGregor et al., 2001; Suttles, 1972). Taking this forward, Tam (2007) as well as Clarke et al. (2007) also highlight the fragmentation of society and the weakening of social ties. Tam (2007, pp. 18) in fact claims that the "*social fabric which holds us together is being corroded*" and attributes this, in part, to the reduction of participation in group activities outside work, resulting in reduced involvement in activities that bring people from various backgrounds together towards shared interests. The expansion of social mobility and decreasing job security too, he finds, may have brought about a decrease in communal relations, with people moving around in response to economic forces and often not residing in a community long enough to establish trust with neighbours and affiliations with local groups.

Adding to this, Tam (2007) also considers the increase in consumerist individualism and the “*obsession with celebrating the success of those who can make the most money*” (pp. 20) to be contributing factors. These, he claims bring about unfair distribution of power and with it, the alienation, marginalisation and lack of participation in decision-making of many. He criticises these divisions, pointing out a rising trend in polarisation of sharply defined groups, with individuals seeking changes on behalf of their specific group interests, as opposed to social justice and overall cohesion. Johnson (2007, pp. 25), too argues that “*we have emphasized what divides us over what unites us, and tolerance of diversity has led to the effective isolation of communities*”. Moreover, these social and economic changes, coupled with the considerable technological advancements witnessed over recent decades, have changed the shape of human environments, and with them, the places we inhabit, visit and hold dear (Vidal et al., 2012). Notwithstanding these claims, some researchers are counteracting these arguments, pointing out that mobility and people-place bonds are not necessarily opposed (Gustafson, 2001; Feldman, 1990), with some claiming that mobility and distancing oneself from one’s community, may in fact strengthen people’s attachment with that place, with positive feelings for home becoming intensified (Case 1996). In the light of all this, Vidal et al. (2012) propose that a new approach to viewing the psycho-environmental agenda be considered within the context of new residential mobility patterns.

In order to nurture the confidence and abilities that can bring people together as well as with public institutions, so that they can wilfully contribute towards the decisions that affect their communities, the distribution of power needs to be addressed (Wilkinson, 2005). For a sense of community to be attained, it is critical that participants feel they hold some form of control of that place (Power, 2007). According to Tam (2007), if left unchecked, socio-economic pressures can bring a decline in communal and democratic bonds, highlighting the value of engaging the public in policy deliberations and the benefits this can bring in reducing in inequalities.

Recent decades have brought significant new challenges on society. Since the 1950s, rates of global urbanisation have seen more than a 20% rise, with this trend rising further as the years go by (United Nations, 2018). Moreover, increasing life expectancy rates (European Commission, 2011) also present uncharted territories towards the goal of protecting this group of people, keeping these individuals active and healthy. Meanwhile, according to Bauman (2000), over the last decades, modernity’s political, social, cultural and economic changes have transformed the nature of communities through the emergence of a more ‘liquid’

world. With consumerism, as the backbone of global capitalism, society has come to be more about individualisation, which Bauman (2000) contends is liquid modernity's major driving force. Faced with relentless changes, uncertainty and fragmentation, he views today's world as chains of experience, cluttered with incessant new arrivals and speedy departures, exacerbated by unplanned diversions, derailments and cancellations (Blackshaw, 2010). When compared to the more 'solid', relatively stable, pre-modernity way of life, liquid modernity's men and women are both forced, but also choose to live lives where social relations are experienced as quick and transitory short-life encounters (Bauman, 2002; Blackshaw, 2010). Bauman (2006, pp. 21) finds that liquid modernity is "*marked by the dissipation of social bonds*", with people seeking 'networks' to connect with, rather than communities. He views people as growing less roots and experiencing their life in episodes (Bauman, 2007). Consequently, he finds that communities, exist in a similarly episodic way, lacking lasting unity except for occasions brought about by immediate events, such as an important victory for their football team, or good holiday, such as would be the case with Malta's traditional local village '*fešta*'. Naturally, Bauman's liquid modernity also considers physical location to be less central to people's experience of community than it used to be.

"The reality is that living in the contemporary modern world means living without foundations; it also means living with difference" (Blackshaw, 2010, pp. 40). While communities are often delineated by geographical regions and are regarded as areas in which face-to-face relations are more prominent and where the formation and maintenance of communities takes place due to feelings of security, commitment and belonging (Delanty, 2003), in post-modern communities, bonds are often not formed through knowing and committing to one another, but through surface relations, with little or no sub-surface unity (Blackshaw, 2010). People are seeking less attachment to a specific physical locality and relating more towards communities of interest (Green & Haines, 2016b). Whilst not a new phenomenon (Putnam, 2000), particularly in recent years, largely catalysed by technological advances such as online channels and globalisation, people may be connecting with similar interest groups or international platforms rather than territorial links. Nevertheless, the concept of community, and the social networks, associations, face-to-face interactions, communal identity, values and sense of belonging that it encompasses, continue to be a valuable social structure for individuals (Blackshaw, 2010). In this respect, Rorty (2007) proposed the replacement and establishment of the concept of community through alternative cultural practices, creating a common ground for the post-modern community by providing an alternative way of thinking about community and the dance of cultural politics.

The impact of modernity is of course no less present in Malta, and with it, the town of Iklin, mostly evident in the landscape of building developments in the neighbourhood, or in the diversification and expansion of the residential pool. The impact of newcomers on an established neighbourhood, however, may have an impact on the social bonds within localities, which may discourage the feelings of trust and altruism that give rise to neighbourhood cohesion (Putnam, 2007; 2001). Nevertheless, other researchers argue that residential diversification can bring opportunities for more positive contact, in turn, elevating levels of trust and cohesion (e.g. Savelkoul et al., 2015; Schmid et al., 2014; Sturgis et al., 2014; Laurence, 2009; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; 2008). Overall, residents of neighbourhoods that are diversifying may therefore experience both negative and positive consequences, depending upon the structure and development of interactions. In these cases, establishing links across longer-term residents and newcomers is pivotal in preventing social isolation and weaker degrees of trust amongst neighbours (Stolle & Harell, 2013). Moreover, reviewing a town's identity to include the characteristics of new members can create supportive intra-group processes (Haslam et al., 2003; Reicher et al., 2006).

It is often agreed that the lack of permanence and increased mobility, characteristic of modern lifestyles, have contributed to the general fading away of social ties and social cohesion (Clarke et al., 2007). Modern trends, such as the reliance on shopping malls rather than local corner stores, together with virtual links in addition to place-based ones (Stokols et al., 2009), also leads to fewer opportunities for interaction with neighbours (Hanley, 2007b). These factors create a new community scenario where the need or opportunity to nurture communal ties no longer stand, with some researchers arguing that place attachment and its dependence on a specific locality may in fact inhibit mobility - a core component of globalisation - and with it, individual progress (Giddens, 1991; Gifford, 1997; Fried, 2000; Jałowiecki, 2000; Williams & McIntyre, 2001; Florida, 2002). In this way, the role of one's community as part of one's sense of identity may have become of lesser importance (Vidal et al., 2012). In response to this, researchers such as Thwaites (2007) have proposed developing small-scale community characteristics in order to create a 'local identity' and improve urban sustainability. In the local context, Vassallo (2003) considered religion to play a central role in nurturing connection amongst people, with the larger part of the Maltese population being of Roman Catholic faith. He pointed out however that this phenomenon was changing, observing a fading out of traditional values and priorities that shaped the nation's social fabric and attributing this to frequent exposure to outside values through tourism and travel, media, changing education levels, as well as political changes.

Community Development

Community Development work has been ongoing for as long as there have been places that need improving. As an approach, it is participatory and democratic, and it can be difficult, time-consuming, and costly (Zdenek & Walsh, 2017; Green & Haines, 2016a). Given the unique nature of communities and their needs, no definitive road map to their development exists. The approach undertaken towards this aim therefore varies depending on resources, timing, as well as the context of the community itself (Green & Haines, 2016a). The challenge is finding and adjusting to the right tools and approaches in meeting the needs of the community.

Community Development can be defined as *“a purposeful effort to improve a place while involving the people who live in that place”* (Zdenek & Walsh, 2017, pp. xii). It creates a space for the voices of those involved to be acknowledged and, in unison, craft a shared vision aimed at strengthening the fabric of that community. Recognising and building upon a locality’s assets, Community Development mobilises residents, while developing bridges amongst these and businesses, institutions, organisations and administrators within that community (Zdenek & Walsh, 2017). Green & Haines (2016a, pp. 78) however, voice concerns towards this claiming that *“community residents often are more concerned with daily tasks than thinking about, and coming up with, a vision of their community’s future”*. In this respect, in order to successfully address today’s environment, Community Development needs to respond to the economic, social, and physical conditions that surround modern day’s communities (Zdenek & Walsh, 2017).

Place-based Community Development focuses on strategies aimed at improving the wellbeing of its members, through establishing suitable institutions, developing the physical infrastructure, while also building on the assets already present in the community (Green & Haines, 2016b). Community assets are considered to be the skills and capacities of individuals, associations and entities found within a community (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993), and include physical, human, social, financial, environmental, political, and cultural characteristics. Community Development therefore is founded on understanding the relationships between social interaction, organisations, institutions, and resources. Social interaction is a main contributor to the development of a sense of community. With it, the establishment and participation in local institutions enhances the social capacity in the community and develops neighbourhood trust while aiding to better serve residents’ needs (Green & Haines, 2016b). The participation of residents is also a main component of

Community Development, in that they can be the main contributors towards identifying the strategies that can ameliorate their quality of life (Green & Haines, 2016b). Community-based institutions, including non-profit organisations (NGOs) such as religious organisations can also be key players in offering services within a community and mobilising assets and can therefore also play a critical role in developing communities (Green & Haines, 2016b).

Facing rapidly increasing urbanisation and associated social isolation, it comes as no surprise that green spaces and open public spaces too may have a positive impact on the development of a sense of community, providing opportunities that benefit both residents and the community as a whole (Rugel et al., 2019; Firth et al., 2011; Kingsley & Townsend, 2006). Green spaces have been receiving considerable acknowledgement for their contribution towards urban sustainability. They are in fact also mentioned in the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals Target 11.7, which considers *"universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities"* to be an indicator of the sustainability of cities and communities (United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, 2021, pp. 12). In addition to their aesthetic appeal, natural amenities such as community gardens and open spaces create an area for leisure, for the enhancing of social interaction and connections, *"bringing people together with a common purpose to participate in a joint activity or venture"* [...] potentially serving as *"very inclusive spaces and open to a range of social backgrounds"* (Firth et al., 2011, pp. 564-5). They contribute towards resident wellbeing (Rugel et al., 2019) and support the development of social connections (Dzhambov et al., 2018; Dadvand et al., 2016; Ulmer et al., 2016; Holtan et al., 2015; Fan et al., 2011). They also impart a sense of collective pride and ownership amongst residents, while also opening up opportunities for further Community Development initiatives (Wakefield et al., 2007). Moreover, in addition to urban community gardens and open spaces, urban environmental design and the distribution of community site, naturally, also contribute in generating the social capital and cohesion of a community (Altschuler et al., 2004; Baum & Palmer, 2002) aside from providing access to services and opportunities for development.

The Community of Iklin

“An urban and rural locality with its own parish church and a population of 3,200 inhabitants. It is a modern place with big and popular establishments. L-Iklin is in the centre of Malta” (Malta Local Government, n.d. a.).

Iklin was established in 1964. It stands in the centre of Malta however forms part of Malta’s Western district in statistical data (NSO, 2020), and lies on the southernmost slope of the extensive hill that houses Naxxar, Ғal Għargħur and San Ġwann. To the south, the Iklin slope is surrounded by a triangle comprising the towns of Birkirkara, Balzan and Ғal Lija (Bonanno, 1981). The locality is situated close to several important locations, such as Mater Dei national hospital and the University of Malta, as well as several commercial outlets. While as a locality, Iklin is semi-urbanised, reported to have a population of 3,205 in 2014 (NSO, 2016), some of its surrounding towns, in particular Birkirkara, one of Malta’s largest towns, with a population of over 22,000 in 2014 (NSO, 2016), followed by Naxxar with a population of over 13,000 in 2014 (NSO, 2016), are on the other hand, heavily urbanised.

Named after the aromatic herb *rosmarinus*, rosemary (kiln in Maltese), Iklin was founded in the mid-20th century. The first house in Iklin, *Dar il-Lewża*, was built in 1954 by Dr. Zammit on *Triq in In-Naxxar*. This was to be the only building in Iklin for the next fifteen years, however during the sixties and seventies the development of luxurious villas commenced in the area known as Upper Iklin. By the end of the seventies and throughout the eighty’s further development around more parts of the area, including the lower side of the valley kept taking place. One of the largest developments was the construction of a bypass, replacing a green area, spanning from the Tal-Qroqq area until Iklin. This bypass served to create a boundary for Iklin however tumoli of fertile land were sacrificed in the process (Malta Local Government, n.d., b). More recently, local changes in legislation related to construction have also impacted Iklin. Construction projects around the town are transforming its aesthetic character and bringing with them an influx of a rapidly changing community of residents. Moreover, in a country where property values are typically on the rise (Vakili-Zad & Hoekstra, 2011), the impact of new developments may bring new challenges to the town’s property owners or those looking to move there, as well as those who were brought up there seeking to establish their own nest there. Amongst its appealing features, Iklin is renowned for the chapel of St. Michael the Archangel which was built in 1615, as well as a number of archaeological sites.

Boasting a coat of arms depicting a shield on a blue background with Saint Michael in the centre and, the six roses representing the borders of Iklin, the locality of Iklin is a relatively new one, previously forming part of the nearby towns of Ħal Lija, Birkirkara, Naxxar and San Ġwann till 1985 (NSO, 2014). Its first statistical data was in fact compiled in 1995 (NSO, 2014). Prior to the time of writing of this report, one of the town's main arteries – Triq il-Wied – approximately 1km in length, and that crosses the town from its upper to its lower sections, had just faced a long-drawn period of roadworks. The project was carried out to address flooding occurring on the lower parts of the road. This through the inclusion of a storm-water culvert, the revision of the sewer main and overall, the improvement of the infrastructure to cater for this issue. These works were managed by Infrastructure Malta, included Malta's Water Services Corporation as well as the Council as a stakeholder in the project. Unfortunately, the project, already a substantial one of its own accord, also faced considerable delays due to hiccups such as issues with the contractor who was assigned the tender and several others along the way.

The Iklin Local Government

“The office of councillor is probably one of the most misunderstood, criticised and maligned of political positions [...] It is also an office which enables communities to govern themselves, as far as the centre will tolerate, and, even in highly centralised systems, it can provide the localities with a line of defence against any central power. But it is also a position from which councillors can co-operate with and work alongside any government for the betterment of their communities. It is an office that makes demands on its holders, not just politically, but personally, on their careers, families, friends, neighbours and on their personal and private time – but [...] councillors give willingly of this time and do so knowing the personal costs it may entail” (Copus, 2015, pp. vii)

Local Governments represent an important conduit through which central policies and services can be distributed and followed closely across localities. Councillors work to define and serve the public interest in a particular locality and are responsible for a tapestry of services to residents and businesses in their community, together with the maintenance and up-keep of it (Bezzina et al., 2015). The vast changes brought about by modernity mean that the role of local governments is often faced with unprecedented realities and with that, the ongoing need for finding novel solutions to challenges. Notwithstanding their dynamic role

entailing political, social and administration facets however, local government's room for action is often limited (Copus, 2015). Limited financial resources and few governing powers mean that enthusiasm and ideas often translate into the juggling of networks of public and private bodies (Bezzina et al., 2015; Copus et al., 2013). Copus (2015, pp. viii) in fact adds that the *"skills of negotiation, compromise, coalition and alliance building, persuasion"* are among councillors' critical assets when it comes to fulfilling their roles. Moreover, the role of a councillor is reported not to bring monetary returns (Lundqvist, 2011), described by Bezzina et al. (2015) as a volunteering role, it involves lengthy hours of work (Dahlgaard et al., 2009, as cited in Copus, 2015) and over recent years has often been challenged as a result of reduced levels of trust in local councillors on behalf of citizens (Lidström et al., 2016; Schaap & Daemen, 2012; Kersting & Vetter, 2003).

"The life of the councillor is one big balancing act, or rather a constant process of reconciling competing pressures and demands, political and personal, and doing so while at the same time being under constant scrutiny from the local public and press and from higher levels of government" (Copus, 2015, pp. viii)

In Malta, local governments were established in 1993 through the Local Council Act (Chapter 363, Laws of Malta), bringing about, amongst others, the Iklin Local Government. Prior to that, the early residents of Iklin had set up the Għaqda Residenti Iklin that on a smaller scale, was aimed towards similar purposes. Members of this group also eventually became involved in the Local Government when this was introduced. The current Local Government was elected in 2019 and is comprised of:

- Dr. Dorian Sciberras (mayor)
- Ms Yvonne Bartolo (deputy mayor)
- Ms Bernice Farrugia
- Mr Emanuel Zammit
- Mr Godwin Catania
- Etienne Montfort (Executive Secretary)

These councillors were elected through associations with their respective political parties and represent 3 members of the Nationalist Party and 2 from the Labour Party. This means that against the strong local dichotomous political background, the Iklin Local Government is able to represent views from both political orientations. Nevertheless, Córdova and España-Nájera (2021) investigated the effect of multi-party councillors within a council and observed that when the number of councillors representing the opposition is low, councillors from both the

opposing as well as governing party considered the council's performance to be poorer. They added that the inclusion of councillors from opposition parties may not be sufficient to improve democratic governance unless the opposition representatives are relevant actors.

The majority of the Iklin councillors hold regular jobs and carry out their political duties during their spare time. Sometimes referred to as a volunteering role (Bezzina et al., 2015), with minimal monetary returns (Lundqvist, 2011), the value of the councillor's personal investment of time and dedication in their role is therefore considerable. Resident expectations combined with reducing levels of trust (Lidström et al., 2016; Schaap & Daemen, 2012; Kersting & Vetter, 2003) also bring additional demands to the role of councillors, coupled with limitations beyond their means when it comes to the execution of these demands (Bezzina et al., 2015; Copus, 2015; Copus et al., 2013). Each of the councillors is responsible for a sub-committee or project within the Council (Government of Malta, n.d.). When councillors are assigned their sub-committees, a call for volunteers to participate in the running of these sub-committees in order to generate ideas and bring action in those areas. The sub-committees are:

- Sub Committee for Finance, Administration, Public Order, Environment, Infrastructure;
- Capital Projects, European Union, Local Organisations, Traffic Management, Government Departments and Public Entities;
- Sub Committee for Youths, Sports, Bye-Laws, Information, Legal Affairs and Town Twinning;
- Sub Committee for Consumer Rights, Local Tourism, Commercial Entities and Animal Welfare;
- Sub Committee for Women Rights, Persons with Special Needs; and
- Sub Committee for Family, Education, Elderly, Health and Culture.

The offices of the Iklin Local Government are situated in the lower/central part of Iklin. Currently, they are run by a team of staff that includes 2 members of staff who work on full-time hours of work, and an additional two members of staff who work on reduced hours of work. The role of volunteering amongst residents who contribute to the running of the council's functions also brings an added dimension to the work carried out by this office. The Council also hosts a Facebook page for Iklin residents. Online communities provide new tools for Community Development and bring new channels for connections with interested parties, such as residents (Leidner et al., 2010; Dellarocas, 2006), they can be a source of support (McCabe & Harris, 2021; Nandy, 2021; Seow et al., 2021; Maloney-Krichmar & Preece, 2005), they provide an area for sharing of information (Gu et al., 2007; Wasko & Faraj, 2005), and of

course, can serve as a platform, an online 'public garden' for the development of social connections (Agarwal et al., 2008; Wellman, 2001). Mediated largely through the use of smartphones and mobile technological devices, online platforms and social media now shape large parts of everyday life, offering endless opportunities to develop and connect groups and communities, overcoming what may be geographical or other limitations (Marlowe & Chubb, 2021; Greijdanus et al., 2020). Particularly through times when physical social contact is reduced, such as the current reality being faced with COVID-19, the use of an online presence and connections have become even more valuable for the development of communities (Kenny, 2020).

Amenities

Schools

Iklin does not host any schools of its own. The town relies on schools in neighbouring towns, mostly the Lija-Iklin-Balzan primary school, as well as alternative private or Church schools.

Football Clubs

In 2002, the Lija/Iklin Football Nursey was established as a result of a collaboration between the Lija Football Club and the Iklin Local Government (Bonnici, 2009).

Scouts Group

The Iklin Scout Group was set up in 1991 and is part of the Malta Scout Association (Iklin Scout Group, n.d.). The group's premises are located in a site that was previously a fireworks factory in Birkirkara (The Malta Independent, 2012). The group provides non-formal education and adventurous activities for its members (Iklin Scout Group, n.d.).

Green Areas

Zarb (2003) reported that in 1993 the upper part of Iklin was largely sought after as an exclusive hillside locality, criticising the rampant development occurring alongside the Iklin valley, exacerbating flooding in the area and depriving locals of green areas. He proposed that what's left of the Iklin Valley should be scheduled in order to protect these green lungs in an urban monopoly.

In 2017, Prof. Alan Deidun criticised the removal of mature holm oak trees (reputed to be at least 100 years old) in Lija, claiming however territorial disagreement, referencing the Ħal Lija mayor contending the site as falling within the confines of Iklin. He attributed the decision to remove these trees to issues related to traffic in the area, an issue which was also brought up in a dissertation a few years earlier (Ancilleri, 2015).

Coffee Shops

The area of Iklin hosts a number of coffee shops. These are mostly based around the lower area of Iklin and opening hours and services tend to cater for office and shop opening hours.

Churches

The parish church of Iklin and its pastoral centre was set up, through a donation of a benefactor, in 1993 (Parroċċa Familja Mqaddsa, 2021), is the Holy Family Parish Church. Mass is typically offered in Maltese at least twice a day (Quddies, 2020). The church is also responsible for organising several social activities, including a Social Club for Over 60s, activities for youths and activities for children, amongst others. The church also houses a multi-sensory room that caters for children with sensory needs to be used during mass as well as during catechism lessons.

Medical Services

While a number of pharmacies can be found in the locality of Iklin, residents of the locality make use of the Birkirkara Health Centre for public health services. The Birkirkara Health Centre in fact, offers its services mainly to residents of Birkirkara, Iklin, Lija and Balzan (Ministry for Health, 2020a). The town is also provided with the services of a community clinic once a week, where a general practitioner holds clinics regularly with a nurse in attendance. This service provides basic medical and nursing services by appointment, however due to the COVID-19 pandemic these services are currently suspended (Ministry for Health, 2020b).

Megalithic sites

The historical heritage of a locality can be a valuable contributor in defining its character and identity (Oktay, 2005). Typically, this is manifested through physical and cultural heritage, as well as historical sites and monuments amongst others (Shao et al., 2017). A number of megalithic sites were discovered over the years in the area of Iklin. The discovery of one these dates back to the late sixties (Anon, 1967) however a proper examination of the remains was performed by Professor Bonanno later in 1981 (Bonanno, 1981). The site consists of large

megaliths (stones blocks measuring 2 metres by 1 and a half metres) forming a semi-circle and a line of 5 smaller stones at a short distance from them (Briffa, 1998). A few prehistoric sherds and the partial remains of a statuette were also found in the area (Bugeja, 2000). In 1998, Buhagiar and Bugeja confirmed the site of the temple in the area of Triq il-Plejju and Triq in-Namur (Bugeja, 2000), claiming that building activity had, over the years, had managed to retain the site untouched, *“stopping only forty or so metres away from the temple remains”* (Bugeja, 2000, pp. 39). Bugeja (2000) states that the megaliths could offer unique insight into Malta's prehistory, easily following other similar remains such as those at Borġ il-Għarib, Borg I-Imramma and I-Imrejsbiet which are listed as Class A scheduled buildings. He suggests that it is likely that the remains stretched further north, positing that further studies on the site might shed new light into the understanding of similar temple period structures. Bugeja (2000, pp. 40) claimed that *“if these megaliths are the last remains of prehistoric temples, then the surrounding area still hides an as yet undiscovered burial ground”*. In addition, Iklin is also home to an exterior wall of yet another a megalithic temple located on Ta' Raddiena along the Birkirkata bypass (Azzopardi, 1999; Bugeja, 2000), a rectangular Roman well (Department of Information, 1976) and, although now no longer standing, was the site of a Roman villa (Briffa, 1998). Other findings, such as a small faience amulet linked to Phoenician-Punic sites (Zammit Maempel, 2001) have also been reported.

Sub Post Office

In 2015, MaltaPost set up a new Sub Post Office with a stationery in Iklin. Through this Sub Post Office, the locality is provided easy access to an array of postal services such as registered mail and bill-payment facilities (De Battista, 2015).

3. Methodology

This section presents a discussion on the tools and approaches applied towards understanding and gathering data regarding the community of Iklin and development of community identity. The methods undertaken with the objective of gaining a comprehensive understanding of the state of play at the community of Iklin will be presented.

Systematic literature reviews provide an opportunity to collate literature addressing a specific subject in a structured manner thereby providing insight towards the topic in question. A literature review was conducted as a first step in order to frame the approach undertaken for the purposes of this study and gather an understanding of current research on the concept of community identity and development, as well as gain insight on the community of Iklin itself. We sought to understand the predominant views of prominent literature surrounding the topic of communities and the establishment and development of community identity. In doing so, common and current themes and trends that could guide the unfolding of this research were extracted and applied in the research approach undertaken and later analysis of findings. Community identity is typically viewed as built around the qualities of a region or group of people that distinguish them from other neighbourhoods (Moore, 2005). This literature review served to bring insight on some of the nuances surround communities, their identity, the cohesion within them and the factors that contribute to these. Subsequently, the review also served to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the community of Iklin. This included taking stock of its assets, including amenities such as football clubs, green spaces, churches and other physical resources, as well as its social assets, and encompassing this in an understanding of the town's historical background and its development since it was established in 1954.

To this effect, desktop research was first undertaken. This included a meticulous search for relevant literature through the University of Malta's library services HyDi portal as well as Google Scholar using searches including 'community', 'community identity', 'development of community identity', 'community development', 'sense of community' and 'Iklin'. Similar searches were also carried out using the OAR@UM repository. Additionally, a google search for material pertaining to the town of Iklin was also carried out and included material such as the town's Scouts Group, the Iklin Local Government as well the Iklin Parish Church. Keywords are a key component of any literature review, allowing the researcher to extract relevant findings on the subject at hand. Scholarly and grey literature was gathered following this

approach. Seeking to bring insight on the experiences of the Iklin community, formal and informal sources were considered pertinent to the lived experience of the community. The material collated was then reviewed to identify information relevant to the objectives of this research and selected for the systematic literature review (Denyer and Tranfield, 2009). Investigating what is known is a crucial prerequisite for a thorough understanding that can then inform policy and practice. An organised and methodical evidence base remains the most effective tool for gauging and developing initiatives targeted towards developing the wellbeing of citizens and communities.

Research Rationale

Making use of insight from the literature, this research sought to carry out action research, bringing together theory and practice. Action research is an exercise of social analysis which shifts the traditional interaction between researchers and their 'subjects' through empowering participants to work towards joint participation and a bringing together of knowledge (Blackshaw, 2010). It is an approach to social inquiry seeking participative efforts, based on collaborative relationships towards effecting social change (Reason, 2003). In itself, action research can be viewed as a democratic approach, open to the participation of all those involved, as well as equitable, valuing the equality of worth in their contributions (Stringer, 1999) and as an essential tool for Community Development (Blackshaw, 2010). It is an approach toward research that looks beyond mere description, understanding and explanation, but towards providing concrete recommendations for action that can sustain positive social change. In this respect, initial meetings were held with key community leaders of the locality of Iklin, seeking to establish a working relationship with these while getting to know the community and identifying the different stakeholders and identities present within the locality. An initial meeting was held with representatives from the Iklin Local Government, aimed at setting the context for the research, while defining the data gathering strategy, particularly the distribution of a questionnaire to residents as well as related logistics. Another initial meeting was also held with the Iklin Parish Church, identified by the Local Government as one of the main key players in the Iklin Community. These meeting established the groundwork for the unfolding of the research and helped to create networks of relevant connections and individuals that could contribute towards reaching the research objectives.

According to Hawtin et al. (1994, pp. 5), a community profile is *“a comprehensive description of the needs of a population that is defined, or defines itself, as a community, and the*

resources that exist within that community, carried out with the active involvement of the community itself, for the purpose of developing an action plan or other means of improving the quality of life in the community". Community Development surrounds itself on the involvement of residents in recognising the needs and approaches they would like to see developed in order to improve their wellbeing (Green and Haines, 2016b). Moreover, resident participation in Community Development also has the ability to empower residents in the process (Blackshaw, 2010). Through a three-fold data gathering approach, this research sought to carry out a process exploring the lived experiences and views of key players and citizens within the community of Iklin, identifying their concerns, priorities and standpoints. We attempted to capture a sense of the Iklin resident's shared experiences and the meanings they attach to these.

Data Collection

Following ethical clearance by the Social Wellbeing Faculty Research Ethics Committee at the University of Malta, the following were carried out:

1. 15 interviewees were involved in the research. These included formal and informal community participants (government entities, NGOs, entities with artistic and commercial interests, people in the social professions whose work is related to the area, etc.). Amongst interviewees, some participated on behalf of groups, such as the elderly group of residents whose feedback was collected by a representative prior to the interview and then discussed during the interview itself. Interviews were held between August and October 2021. These were aimed at understanding the community identity and interest groups that form part of the community, while shedding light on any issues and problems that matter to the community. Interviews were carried out on a voluntary basis, provided participants with the option of withdrawing their participation at any point and took around 1 and a half hours each to be completed. Participants were provided with an information and recruitment form, as well as a consent form prior to their participation (Appendix C). These documents provided detailed information about what their participation would entail, what their rights were and sought participant's informed consent prior to starting the interview process. The opportunity to have any questions or queries addressed was also provided to participants. During each interview efforts were made to ensure participants felt at ease in order to share their experiences in the agreed interview format. The interviews were all conducted in English and Maltese. All interviews were carried out via Zoom and were video recorded and transcribed for thematic analysis.

2. A focus group was carried out and included the participation of various stakeholders involved in the community of Iklin. This was held in November 2021 and included 6 participants. Of these, 3 were residents, 2 of which volunteered within the community, 1 resided on the periphery of Iklin but also volunteered within the community, and 2 were representatives of Iklin organisations cater for children and youth. The residents had resided in Iklin for 5, 20 and 37 years respectively. The periphery-resident volunteer had been involved in the community for 20 years, while the organisation representatives had been involved in the Iklin community for 10 months and 3 years respectively although in both cases they were representing entities that had been established for longer than that.

The focus group was aimed at understanding the community from the views of its participants. Participation in the focus group was on a voluntary basis, provided participants with the option of withdrawing their participation at any point and took around 1 and a half hours to be completed. Participants were provided with an information and recruitment form, as well as a consent form prior to their participation (Appendix D). These documents provided detailed information about what their participation would entail, what their rights were and sought participant's informed consent prior to starting the interview process. The opportunity to have any questions or queries addressed was also provided to participants. During the focus group attention was given to provide participants with a comfortable space where they could share their experiences, while also allowing fair participation of all parties. The focus group was conducted in a combination of English and Maltese. It was carried out via Zoom and video recorded and transcribed for thematic analysis.

3. A questionnaire (Appendix E) investigating the demographics surrounding Iklin residents while also aiming to bring further insight into what it means to live in Iklin was distributed to residents of the Iklin community during the month of August 2021. Participation in the questionnaire was on a voluntary and anonymous basis and required 5-10 minutes to complete. A total of 231 complete questionnaires were submitted. The questionnaire focused on gathering residents' views on their experience within the Iklin community and on better understanding the community's assets and opportunities. The questionnaire was distributed to Iklin residents through the Iklin Local Government in hard copy and was also made available to them alternatively via email. The questionnaire was also promoted via the Council's social media channels, inviting residents to submit their views through the use of a hard copy questionnaire or google form. It was also made available in hard copy at the Iklin Parish Church and brought to the attention of residents during mass announcements.

Research Instruments

A questionnaire (Appendix E) was developed in order to examine demographic data across Iklin as well as the views of residents. It included a quantitative section, capturing demographics such as age, nationality, religion, and gender, length of residence and location of residence in Iklin, amongst others. Participants were invited to choose from a defined list of responses in most of this questionnaire, with the possibility of adding an alternative response in cases where that was applicable (such as 'do you participate in any civic activities?' where respondents were asked to identify if they participated in any of the provided responses or include an additional response if that was the case). Respondents were also invited to indicate their current level of satisfaction with their experience living in the community of Iklin and separately, with life in general on a 5-point Likert scale. A qualitative element was also included in the questionnaire where participants were invited to indicate their reasons for choosing to live in Iklin.

The interviewing tool adopted for the interviewing process was a structured interview (Appendix A). This organised the interview into a sequence of questions. Similarly, the investigating tool adopted during the focus group too followed a structured approach (Appendix B). This research tool provided participants with a sequence of questions in a structured format in order to guide the progress of the focus group. In both cases, interview and focus group tool questions were aimed at capturing the views of residents surrounding their experience in Iklin, such as, why they decided to move there, whether they had seen any changes in Iklin, if they felt there were any issues and how these could be addressed, amongst others.

Data Analysis Strategy

The qualitative data collated was analysed following a process of (Braun & Clarke, 2006):

- Familiarisation
- Coding
- Extracting themes
- Reviewing themes
- Defining and naming themes

The strategy adopted for data analysis entailed a methodical coding approach in order to extract and categorise themes emerging from the qualitative data captured. This thorough process of data analysis addresses potential researcher bias while providing detail and reliability. This is vital in supporting integrity across qualitative research methods by means of a truthful representation of the data collated. Credibility strategies therefore included the use of a competent interviewer, as well as a methodical sequence applied for analysis of the transcripts compiled from the qualitative branches of the project. Expert reviews were also carried out across the research team throughout this process. These efforts were carried out in order to enhance the accuracy and validity of findings resulting from this research project, by confirming the participants' intended meanings.

Limitations of Research Design

While this research brings several strengths in its approach, design and analysis, there are important study limitations to note. First, although the questionnaire was open to participation by all Iklin residents and was distributed by the Iklin Local Government to all its residents, participation was on a voluntary basis. This means that participation was dependent on individual preferences in participation. Additionally, the questionnaire was made available in Maltese and English, which, while capturing those comfortable with the local national languages, may have influenced the representation of groups of people who speak other languages such as some groups of foreigners (such as the group of Russian-speakers that were made reference to during interviews). Aside from language, the level of involvement in the community experienced by these groups may have also impacted their choice regarding whether to participate. Attempts were made to connect with these groups through the data collection process, including personal invitations to participate in an interview or the focus group through the participants who were familiar with these individuals, however these were not successful. Efforts to reach hard to reach groups and listen to their views can address this factor. Secondly, while the research questionnaire included various household status alternatives, feedback from respondents evidenced the possible presence of household arrangements including siblings living in family homes. Consequently, it is unclear whether those who indicated they live in a: 'caring for another family member', 'living with parents or family', 'house-share' and 'living with siblings' all reside in similar household arrangements. This might also be the case for those reporting the live in a 'household with children'.

Thirdly, interview and focus group participants were largely identified through initial meetings with the Iklin Local Government and the Iklin Parish Church. While door-to-door visits were made by the researcher team to attract additional representation, such as from local business, participation in the latter case did not result in any additional participations. This implies that the views represented through the interviews and focus group may not be entirely representative and inclusive of members of the community of Iklin who are not involved in these groups or who are harder to reach groups. Nevertheless, while this selection of participants may have influenced the representation of the findings to include the views from different members of the community, efforts were made to ensure the participants identified represented a healthy variety of official bodies representatives, residents, community players, and volunteers, businesses, NGOs and associations representing varying age-groups. Finally, throughout the research it emerged that the distinction between the different areas of Iklin (further discussed below in 'Iklin's Community Identity') can be considerable in some facets and may in itself hold a certain momentum and impact on the community's identity, cohesion and development. Further understanding the particular views, needs, circumstances and distinctions and similarities across these areas can aid in the bridging of the town's tapestry together.

4. Results

This chapter will bring together the findings from data collection exercises carried out for the purposes of this research project. The findings exposed through the research questionnaire distributed across residents are presented, observing demographical data related to the community. The findings from the questionnaire will then be further developed through a discussion that reviews these in relation to data collected from the interviews and focus group carried out.

4.1 Composition of the Town

The following section provides a breakdown of the demographic data gathered from the residents' questionnaire. 231 questionnaires were submitted. All except for 4 of these were aged 19 or over. According to NSO (2016), the town's population stood at 3,205 in 2014. Current estimates indicate that presently, the town is composed of approximately 2,832 individuals over the age of 16, 50% of which are male (Faculty for Social Wellbeing, 2022). By the understanding that questionnaire respondents aged 18 or less were aged 16 or over, this would mean that the rate of participation in the resident questionnaire stood at 8.15%. Related findings gathered from other data collection channels are also presented as applicable.

Gender and Nationality

Of the 231 questionnaires submitted, 51% were female respondents, while 49% were male. According to local data, approximately 50% of Iklin residents are male (NSO, 2016). Amongst respondents, the majority were Maltese with only 3 participants stating to be from Russia, Italy and Belarus respectively. 4% of participants did not state their nationality. Feedback from a number of interviewees also pointed out that a community of non-Maltese nationals is also present in Iklin, referring to a growing community of residents from the Philippines, Pakistan, India as well as Russia, with comments such as *“għandna ħafna barranin hawnhekk”* (Participant 10), and *“this area has a large concentration of Russian speakers, not just Russian people, anything, Ukraine, Latvia, Estonia...”* (Participant 9). These groups however are not reflected in the data collected, possibly indicating these communities are less involved in the town, potentially feeling lesser need to complete and submit the questionnaire or may have been harder to reach through the Local Government's distribution channels. Other than when requiring services from the Council's offices, overall, it seems like the communities or individuals of foreign nationality are not being attracted or do not seek much connection with

the community, its members or activities. Throughout the research, many seemed to be aware of the presence of foreign groups of residents however, those who had developed connections to them were only participants who were married to a non-Maltese person or who resided next door to someone. The minimal level of participation of non-Maltese residents in the questionnaire is also very indicative of the fact that this group is somehow not connecting with the operations of the community. In this respect, participant 2 comments, *“ma narax li hemm interest”*.

Age

The largest age group amongst participants were 61-80 year olds which formed 37% of respondents. Not surprisingly, of these, none were brought up in Iklin. The majority of them however, have lived in Iklin for more than 8 years with only less than 3% of them who had lived there for between 3-8 years. Participant 1 commented, *“I think they all aged together. They all came together at the same age”*, referring to the group of first Iklin residents who moved to the town upon getting married, have resided in the area since, and are now an ageing population. To this effect, participant 16 also commented, *“Raġal modern, għalkemm ġenerazzjoni li qed issir anzjana”*. This age group was followed by 18% which were 31-40 year olds. Amongst these, in contrast to the older group, a much larger part 76% were brought up in Iklin. The distribution of the varying age brackets of questionnaire participants are represented below in Figure 1.

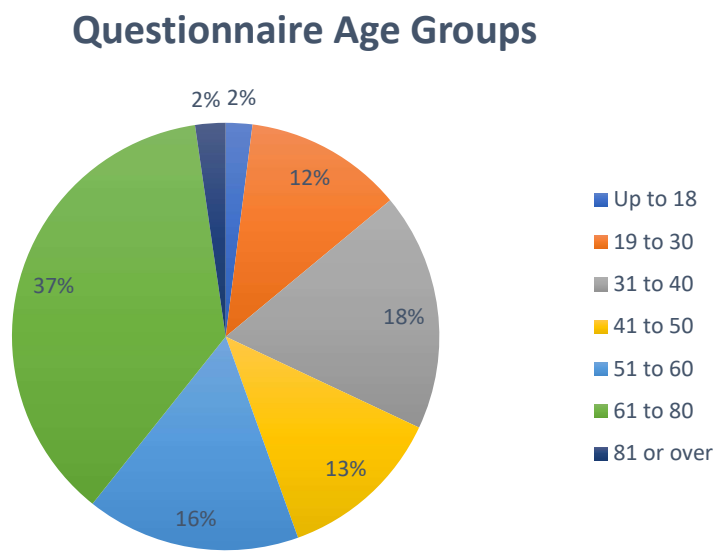
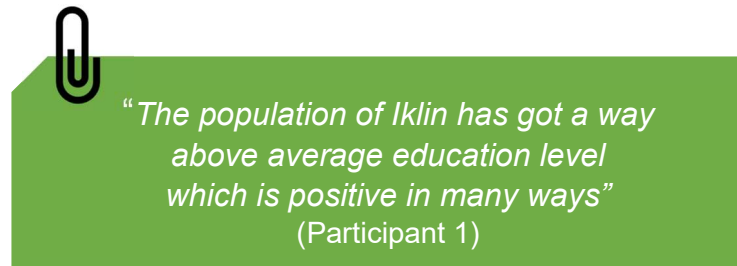


Figure 1: Age group distribution of questionnaire participants

Level of Education



Amongst questionnaire participants, the larger part had a postgraduate level of education, representing 25.5% of the group. This was followed closely by 24% of the group who had a secondary level of education and 23% who had a post-secondary or vocational level of education. Those with a tertiary level of education formed 22.5% of participants. Only 4% had a primary level of education while 1% had a doctoral level of education. A visual distribution of levels of education amongst questionnaire respondents is presented in Figure 2 below.

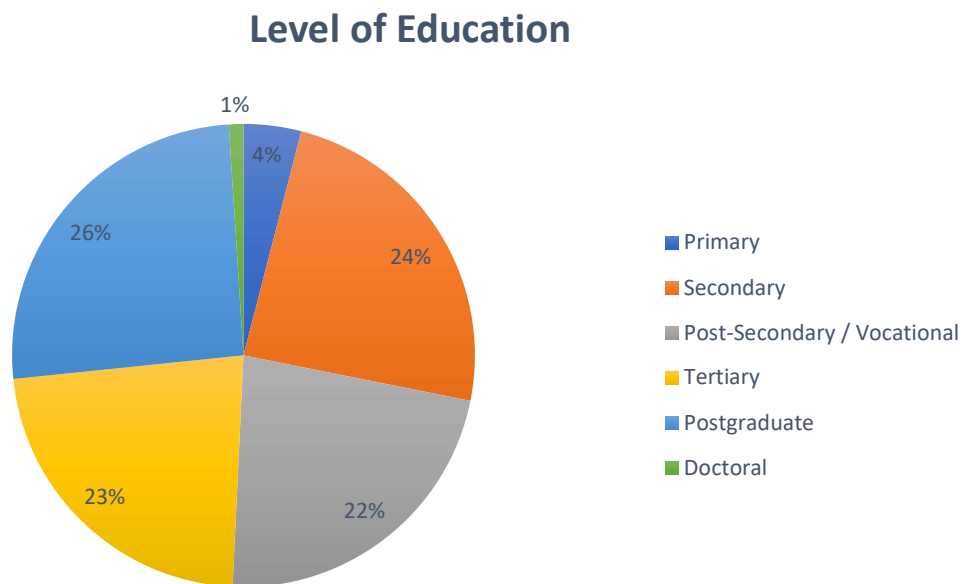


Figure 2: Levels of Education across questionnaire participants

Employment Status

Of the residents participating in the questionnaire, 45% are in full-time employment, forming the larger group in this demographic. Given the larger group of respondents were aged over 61 (37%), it comes as no surprise that the second largest group amongst respondents were retired, representing 26% of the group, one of whom still performed part-time work; followed by those who were self-employed (10%). 7% reported being in part-time employment, less than 1% worked on reduced hours, just over 1% worked in casual employment, while 2% were unemployed. 5% of participants were housewives, with 1 reporting to be a widow, while less than 1% were students. Just over 1% (3 participants) of the group chose not to state their employment status. A visual distribution of levels of education amongst questionnaire participants is represented in Figure 3 below.

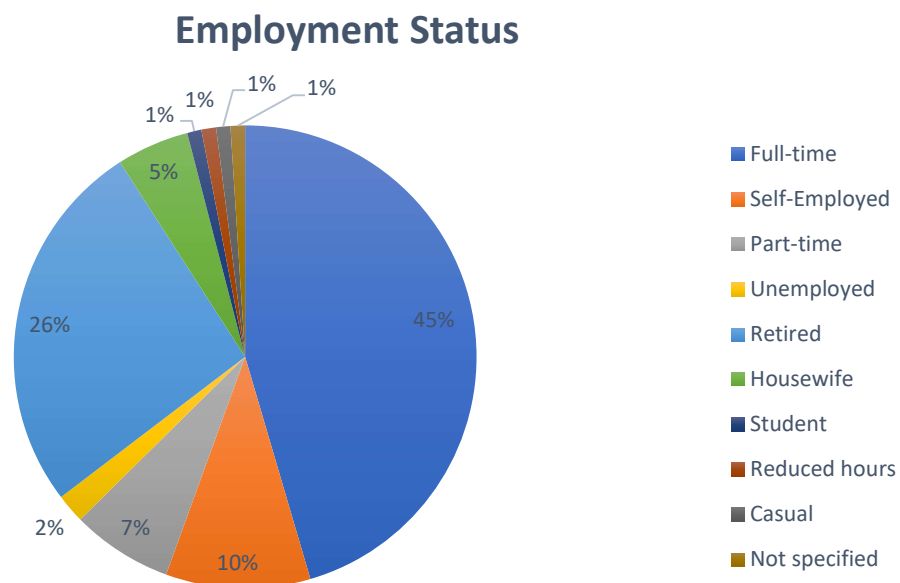


Figure 3: Employment status across questionnaire participants

Household Status

46% of respondents stated they reside in a household with children, which was found to be the largest group amongst questionnaire participants. This was followed by 35% who were a couple living together with no children. 6% were from households caring for another family member, while 5% were individual occupants. 3% of participants reported living with their parents or family, while another 3% resided in a house-share arrangement. Some, less than 1% reported living with siblings in a family home. 1 participant chose not to specify their

household status. It is unclear whether the categories reporting: 'caring for another family member', 'living with parents or family', 'house-share' and 'living with siblings' all reside in similar household arrangements, typically those of second-generation residents still residing in their family home, either with their elderly parent/s or still residing in the family home with siblings. In fact, 50% of these were brought up in Iklin, while 73% have lived in Iklin for over 8 years. The same could also be the case when it comes to 'individual occupants'. 45% of the latter group are aged over 61 and all have resided in Iklin for 8 or more years, indicating these are probably first generation Iklinizi. 22% are 41-50 years old and none were brought up in Iklin. The remaining 33% are under 40 years of age, 67% of which were brought up in Iklin, indicating a high probability that these are second generation Iklinizi. The distribution of household status across respondents is further displayed in Figure 4 below.

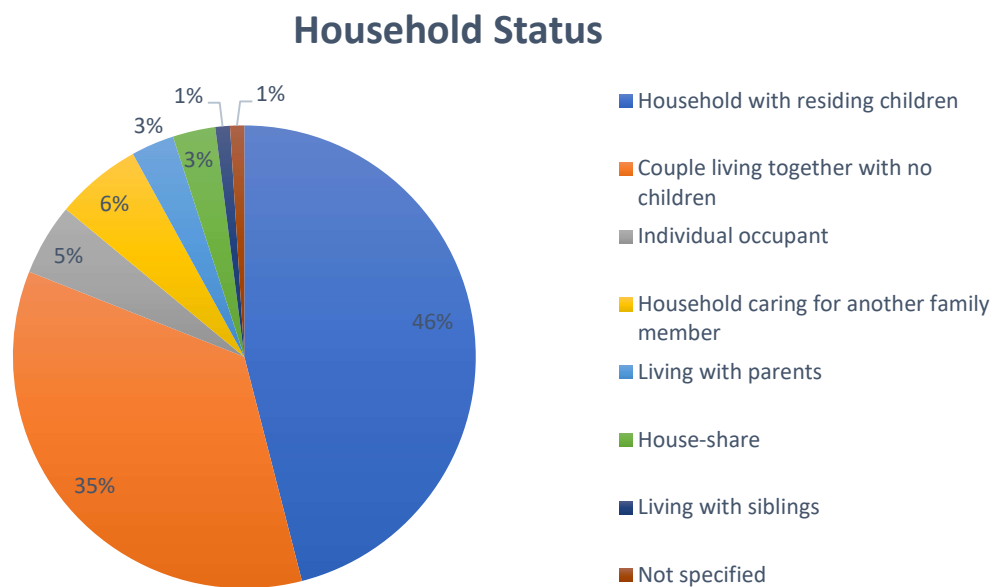
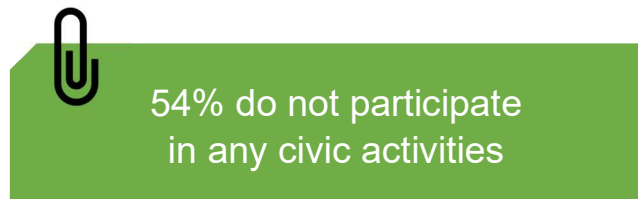


Figure 4: Household Status of questionnaire participants

Religion

The largest part of questionnaire participants, 85%, were of Roman Catholic religion. This was followed by the second largest group who did not practice a religion or were non-believers, forming 10% of the group. 3% were Christian (but not Catholic) such as Orthodox, Protestant, etc. Less than 1% of participants reported to be from each of the following categories: Muslim, Buddhist and Humanist (non-religious), while less than 1% preferred not to define their religious status.



54% of the questionnaire participants claimed not to participate in any civic activities, representing the largest group in the category. This group represents residents from varying age groups: 30 or less (21%), 31-40 (27%), 41-50 (14%), 51-60 (17%), over 61 (21%). 53% of them are females while the remaining 47% are males. 58% of this group has resided in Iklin for 8 or more years. Interestingly, across interviews and the focus group, it came across that there are members of the community who would like to contribute however have either had negative experiences in the past or struggle to connect with the activities available to get involved in. So much so, that during the focus group, a participant who was disgruntled over a past experience offering voluntary work (*“ma bqajtx immur għax qisu m’hemmx sens ta’ familja”* – Participant 17) and did not presently participate in any civic activities, was pleased with an offer from another participant to contribute and offer volunteering work with them. They came across as pleased to have been validated as a valuable contributor and to have been given a chance to have their views acknowledged. The second largest group in this category was represented by 38% of participants who participated in civic activities related to the church. This is not surprising in view of the fact that the larger part of the church’s initiatives are run by volunteers (further discussed in ‘The Iklin Local Government and the Parish Church’ below). Resident views gathered from interviews and focus group also echoed this. Participant 5 for instance, spoke about the work of Iklin’s parish church has been developing over the years: *“naħseb illi l-attività żdiedet [...] żdiedet il-ħajja [...] rajt li l-parroċċa kibret. Anki n-nies illi jinvolvu ruħhom fil-parroċċa”*. Several focus group participants also shared they were involved in civic activities with the Iklin parish church, although the channels for selection of focus group participants may have influenced this. Nevertheless, ever since the early days of Iklin, the church comes across as an agent for social connection, described by many participants as bringing residents together while also creating events and activities for the development of the community. Participant 18 recalled how before the town had a physical church, residents used to meet in a basement to celebrate mass and bring cakes and tea for all of them to share together. She described how they used to gather for activities like Christmas carolling even though the houses were very few and expressed how these activities helped create a sense of community.

The next group of respondents - 12% - participated in civic activities related to the Local Government. Referring to activities organised by the Local Government, Participant 4 shared: *“meta norganizzaw attività, il-konkorrenza tkun baxxa ħafna”*. 1% reported being involved in the neutering of stray cats, while another 1% were involved in Ġieħ I-Iklin. Another 1% claimed to be involved in cultural or philanthropic activities on a national level, not specifically in Iklin, while another 1% claimed to participate in civic services with the Church however not in the community of Iklin (e.g. Naxxar). The following civic participation categories were also represented by less than 1% of participants in each case: an NGO (not specified is specific to Iklin), the Scouts Group, a wellness group and lectures for the over 60 group. 1 participant claimed not to be involved in any civic activities due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Interestingly, data from interviews and the focus group also revealed that the early residents of Iklin had sought to create a sense of community and bring people together to participate in group activities for the town. The Għaqda Residenti I-Iklin was in fact set up by early residents prior to the setting up of the Iklin Local Government.

Distribution across Iklin



“There’s 3 sections of Iklin. There’s Upper Iklin, villas, [...] the there’s lower Iklin by the Church and then there is the bit of lower Iklin nearer to Lija”
(Participant 1)

Questionnaire participants were presented with a map of Iklin in order to indicate what part of Iklin they resided in (see Figure 5). Amongst respondents the larger part (52%) were from Area 5, one of the more densely population parts of the town, also home for a larger part of the town’s business community. The second largest group (28%) were from Area 6. This area also appears to be among the more densely population areas and also houses a number of commercial stores. These areas are the ones forming the lower part of Iklin and are also representative of the areas where most commercial activities in Iklin occur. 11% where from Area 3, 7% were from Area 1, while 2% were from Area 4. The latter areas are more synonymous with larger residential properties such as villas and fewer commercial entities. None of the respondents were from Area 2. This area still houses some rural land, which a number of participants have made reference to (further details presented below).

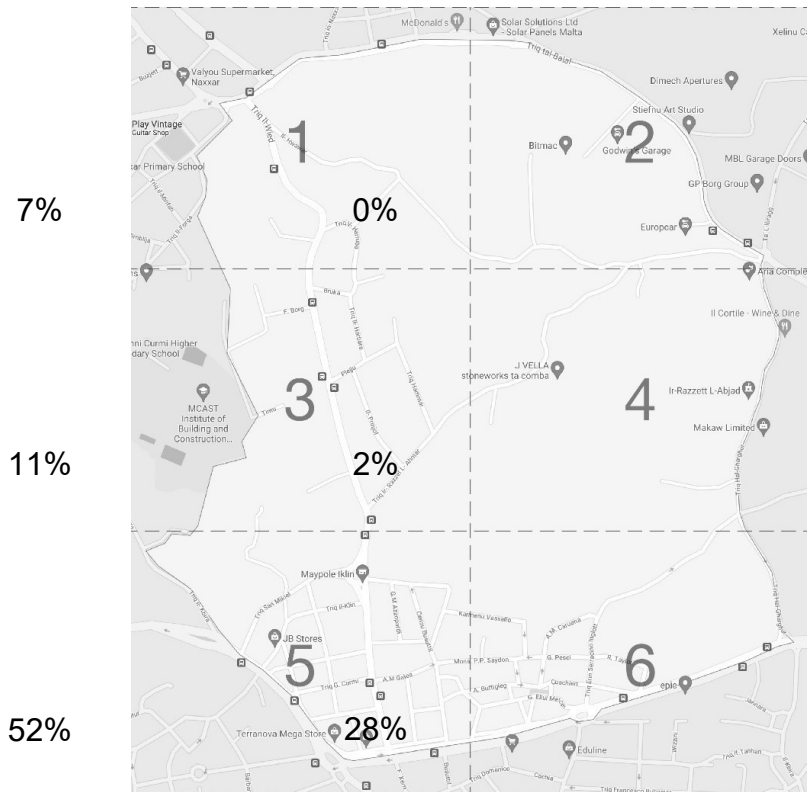


Figure 5: Distribution of participants according to the map presented to questionnaire participants to indicate which area they reside in

Length of Residence

The larger part of participants (77%) reported having resided in Iklin for 8 or more years. 14% had lived there for 3-8 years, while 9% had resided there for less than 3 years. None of the respondents were living in Iklin temporarily. This data is represented on Figure 6 below.

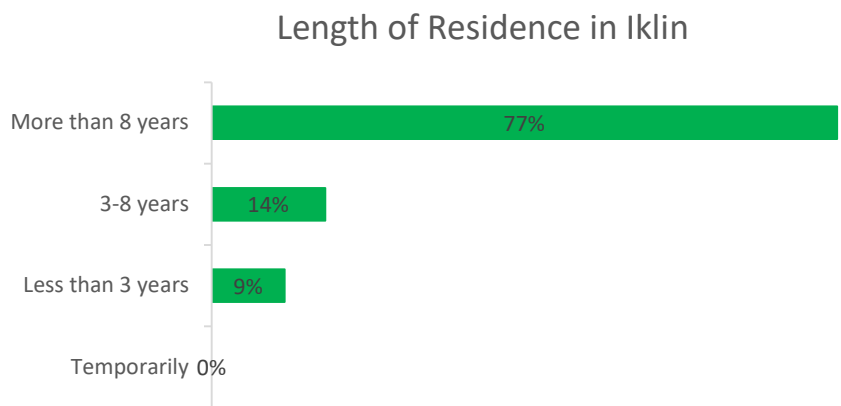


Figure 6: Length of period of residency in Iklin as reported by questionnaire participants

Those brought up in Iklin

84% of participants were brought up in Iklin – the born and bred Ikliniżi, while the remaining 16% were not. All of the participants were brought up in Iklin are of Maltese nationality. Also, all of these had spent their life living in Iklin, except for 1 participant, aged between 41-50, who was brought in Iklin but at the time of the research had only been residing there for the last 3-8 years, indicating the participant relocated to another town and subsequently returned to their hometown of Iklin. Amongst those brought up in Iklin, the largest part (38%) were aged between 19-30. These were followed by 27% who were aged 31-40 while 22% were aged 41-50. 5% of those brought up in Iklin were 51-60 year olds while only 8% were aged under 18. These figures are represented in Figure 7 below.

Age Groups of those brought up in Iklin

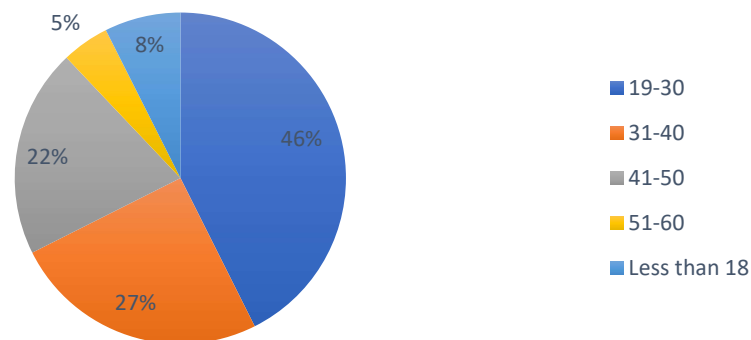


Figure 7: Age group distribution of questionnaire participants who were brought up in Iklin

Reasons for living in Iklin

In addition to those who were brought up there and have lived in Iklin throughout their life, Figure 8 below lists the reasons expressed by participants for residing in Iklin in order of frequency.

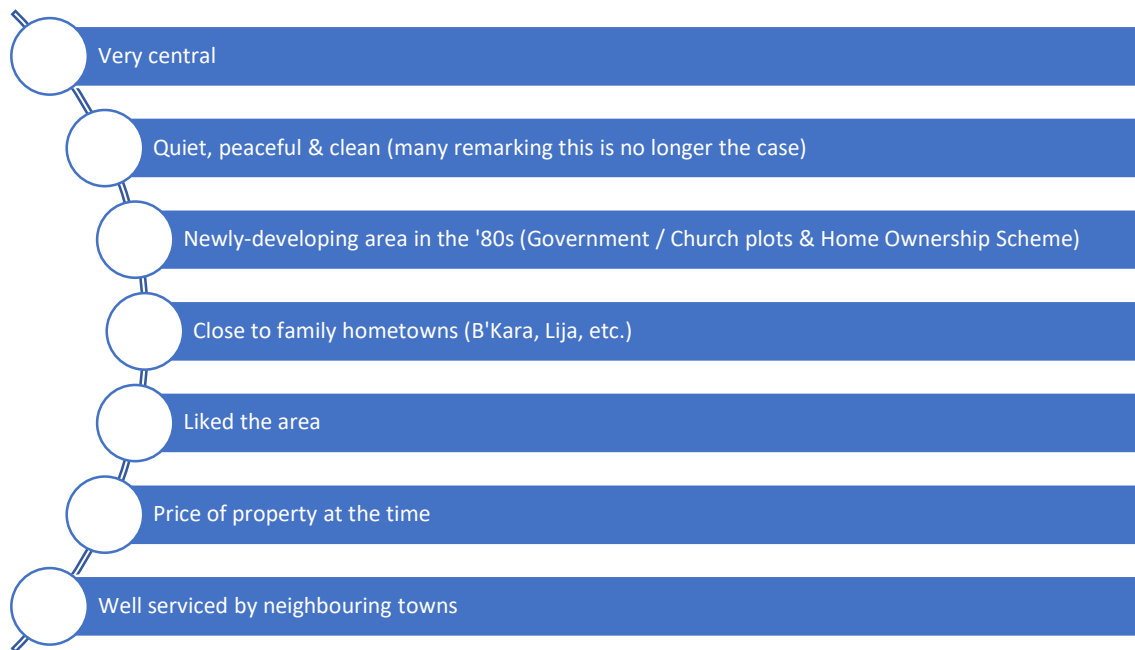


Figure 8: Reasons for living in Iklin as expressed by questionnaire participants in order of frequency of reason

These views were reflected across interview and focus groups participants. Several made reference to the previously calm and peaceful nature of the town as a catalyst for their choice to live there, although most of these moved on to expressing the experience was now “bittersweet” (Participant 17) as they watch the town’s landscape change with many of the town’s characteristic terraced now being converted into apartment blocks.

“Illum kif iddur u taqgħad, f’kull triq qed issib dar imwaqqa u reġgħat qed titla’ blokka flats. Qisu qed tiflew il-karatteristiċi tiegħu oriġinali li kienu qabel ftit żmien ilu”
(Participant 19)

“Inħossni proud illi noqgħod l-Iklin. Li ninkwieta għalih għax qisna se nitilfu dak ir-raħal gustuż li kien” (Participant 18)

Amongst other motives for residing in Iklin, a number of participants also referred to the purchasing of plots during the ‘80s. Reference was made to government schemes promoting the development of land in the area which was then merely a rural site.

“Aħna meta ġejna noqgħodu hawnhekk, apparti li la kien hawn toroq, ma kien hawn xejn” (Participant 18)

“Iklin was fields, rubble really, in the 80s” (Participant 1)

Levels of Satisfaction

Questionnaire participants were invited to rate their personal level of satisfaction in relation to their experience of living in Iklin, as well as their level of satisfaction with life in general at the moment. They were asked to do so by rating their level of satisfaction from 1 to 5 with indicating they were least satisfied while 5 indicated they were most satisfied. 24% of respondents felt they were most satisfied with their experience of living in Iklin, giving a rating of 5. 32% rated their experience at 4, 27% rated it at 3, 10% at 2, and 7% rated it at 1, indicating they felt least satisfied with their experience living in the community of Iklin. These figures are further displayed in Figure 9 below.

51% of those who rated their level of satisfaction with the experience of living in Iklin at most satisfied (rated at 5) were females. 2% were aged 31-40, 8% were aged 41-50, 13% were under 30 years of age, 21% were aged 51-60, while the largest group, 56% were 61 and over. This would suggest that as age increases, level of satisfaction with the experience of living in the community in Iklin is rated as higher. Across respondents aged 61 or over, 36% rated this at a 5. Amongst those who rated their level of satisfaction with their experience of living in the community of Iklin as least satisfied (rating of 1), 47% were female. Within this group, 7% were aged 41-50 and another 7% were aged 51-60, 13% were aged 31-40, 27% were 19-30-year olds, while the largest group, 46%, were aged 61-80, which is the largest age group amongst respondents. Of the group of respondents aged 61 or over, only 8% rated it at 1.

When it comes to satisfaction with life in general at the moment, 26% rated their current level of satisfaction as mostly satisfied, that is, rating it at 5. 39% of respondents rated it at 4, 23% rated it at 3, 8% rated it at 2, while 4% felt they were least satisfied, rating their current level of satisfaction of life in general at 1. These figures are further displayed in Figure 9 below.

52.5% of those reporting feeling most satisfied with life in general (ranking of 5) were females. Among these, 7% - the smallest group of those rating their current level of satisfaction with life in general as mostly happy, were 31-40-year olds, 11% were 41-50 year olds, 14% were under 30 years of age, 19% were 51-60 year olds, while the largest group - 49%, were over 61 years of age. Amongst respondents aged 61 or over, 34% gave a rating of 5. When it comes to those who rated their current level of satisfaction with life in general as least satisfied (ranking of 1), 60% were female. Amongst these, 20% were aged 31-40 and another 20% were aged 51-60.

60% were aged between 61-80. This is reflected as 7% of the group of respondents aged 61 or over. None of the respondents' who rated their current level of satisfaction at 1 were 41-50 year olds.

The figures above show a small variation in the levels of satisfaction reported by respondents about their current level of satisfaction with life in general when compared to their levels of satisfaction with their experience of living in the community of Iklin. Table 9 below displays the comparison of the two.

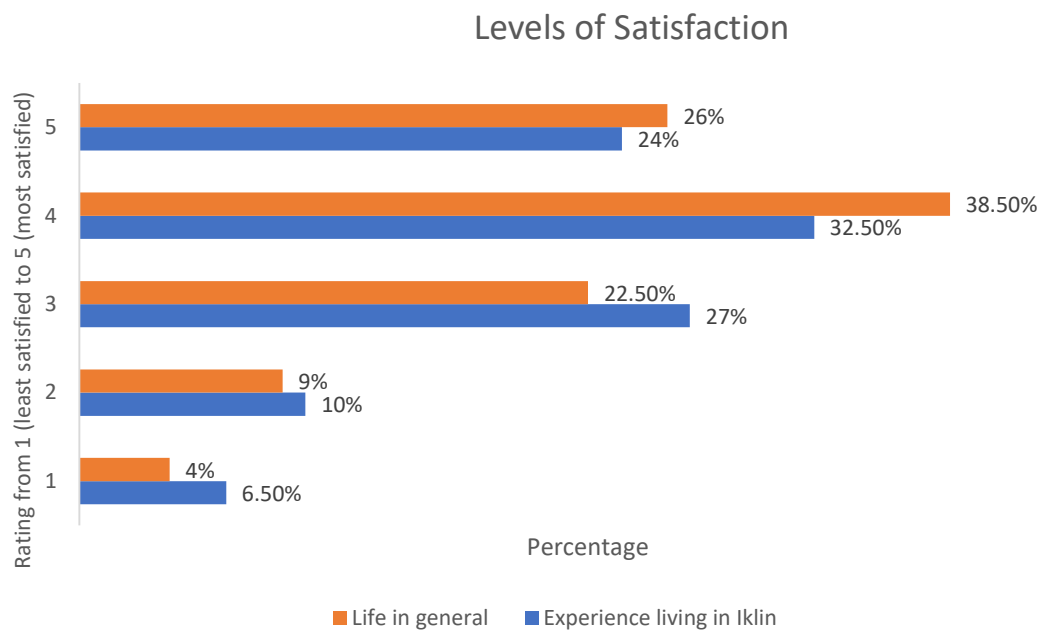


Figure 9: Comparison of respondents' self-evaluation of their level of satisfaction with their life in general at the moment and respondent's self-evaluation of their level of satisfaction with their experience of living in the community of Iklin.

4.2 The Views of Residents (analysis of the findings)

The views of the residents of the community of Iklin were gathered through 3 different sources for the purposes of this research. These include:

- (i) The residents' questionnaire (see Appendix E), where residents were invited to share their views on what they would like to see in Iklin and rate their experience living within this community as well as their level of satisfaction with life in general. 231 of these were submitted.

- (ii) The 14 interviewees (see Appendix A) involving Iklin residents and various stakeholders from the Iklin community, including the Iklin Local Government, members of the Iklin Community, representatives from the Iklin Parish Church, volunteers, representatives of groups such as the elderly, and employees in the community. These provided a platform for these parties to share their views and experiences surrounding the community of Iklin
- (iii) The focus group (see Appendix B), which involved 6 participants from the community of Iklin. These included residents, volunteers as well as representatives from organisations within the Iklin community provided a space for these to expose their views on the community of Iklin, discussing positive and negative ideas they had about the town, any issues they felt surrounded it, trends and changes, as well as recommendations for these to be addressed.

The questionnaire, interviews as well as the focus group elicited rich data surrounding the community of Iklin. The data collected was coded based on the themes and conceptual categories identified. This section presents these themes while discussing these in light of the literature and supporting the process with in vivo quotations from the interview and focus group efforts as well as references to data findings from the questionnaire when applicable. The participants' identity has been anonymised and will be referred to as Participant 1 through to Participant 21 (14 interviewees and 6 focus group participants) while any references to gender in the Malta language, where applicable have been contained.

Iklin's Community Identity



A sense of shared identity is often linked to improved levels of trust amongst individuals, thereby facilitating altruistic behaviours and collective unity (Haslam, 2014; Haslam et al., 2009). Within a locality therefore, a shared community identity can be a catalyst for collective support structures across its members, and for unified neighbourhood action. The views of

most participants however express dismay about the community of Iklin having little when it comes to an identity and even more so, a sense of community.

“M’għandhiex dik l-identità’ ta’ raħal tradizzjonali ħabba li kienet qisha dak li ommi u missieri mingħalihom li kienu joqogħdu B’Kara, in-naħa l-oħra tal-Iklin mingħalihom li ħa jmorru joqogħdu Ħal Lija, imbagħad minħabba li għaddiet il byPass u saru l-konfijiet tal-lokalità’, nbidlet f’lokalità” (Participant 3)

“L-Iklin kien maqsum fil-biċċa ta’ Ħal Lija, u l-biċċa ta’ B’Kara. Lanqas kien hemm identità bħala l-Iklin as such. Li bdiet tinħoloq bil-mod il-mod meta ingħaqadna u gejna parroċċa waħda” (Participant 18).

“There isn’t much identity in Iklin [...] we’re like, part of B’Kara” (Participant 8)

Three respondents in particular, seems to have found a few words for a shared description, somewhat of a definition for the residents of Iklin, the Ikliniżi:

“L-Iklin hemm nies li huma tal-affari tagħhom, nies kwieti, nies li l-maġġoranza tagħhom tista’ titkellem magħhom. Ma ngħidlekx għax huma ħaddiema jew huma sinjuri huma foqra. [...] Dak huwa l-istil” (Participant 10)

“Hawnhekk kulħadd independenti, kulħadd għalih, hekk, għal-rasu bħal-speċi. Saħħa u bonġu, titkellem, forsi tiltaqa’ ma’ xi ħadd tkellmu f’it u daqshekk. Bħal-speċi mhux minn dawk il-kunfidenzi kulħadd gėj u dieħel id-dar” (Participant 6)

“In-nies tal-Iklin huma iktar riżervati” (Participant 11)



“Festa interna aħna biss”

(Participant 20)

Interestingly, in concurrence with the work of numerous researchers (e.g. Young & Wilmott, 2013; Vidal et al., 2012; Clarke et al., 2007; Tam, 2007; Bauman, 2006; Florida, 2002) a new interpretation and value may be associated to social bonds in today’s world. Across interviews and the focus group, while most expressed a desire to have a stronger sense of community, most still somehow expressed a preference for the privacy and somewhat level of anonymity – call it social distance if you may – that the town provides. Most for instance, agreed that a

village *festa* would bring the town together, however while some still sought their *festa* spirit in neighbouring or previously-lived-in towns, a number did express that they still would rather do without. Participant 11 for instance expressed, *“Li kieku hemm każin, ma naħsibx jiffrekwentawh”* (referring to residents). The *festa* is further discussed below. Some participants attributed the fading community identity to the comparatively young town and the family ties still being connected to other localities with comments such as, *“Hařna nies hawn huma ġejjin minn lokalitajiet oħra, ma jkunux qishom Ikliniżi”* (Participant 4), others find that the rapid changes particularly those due to construction are impacting the nature of the town itself, not only in its aesthetic character but with it, also as a result of the influx of new residents who have minimal roots and connections within the town. Meanwhile, others, such as those who were raised in Iklin and do share some bonds with it, are finding themselves having to move out of the town because increases in the cost of property in the area *“makes youths impossible to actually buy in Iklin”* (Participant 7), further uprooting the young ties that were being formed with the community. Several participants also felt that the lack of common activities or public spaces make coming together even harder. Amongst others, the fact that the town does not have a local feast and related groups such as a band club or political clubs of its own were often brought up. As were the lack of a football club, a coffee shop that appealed more to residents rather than shoppers in the area and overall, the lack of recreational spaces.

“L-Iklin jien narah maqsum qisu bejn 3 u 4 partijiet differenti...għadek il-parti tal-knisja, dik għaliha, għandek il-parti tal-JB, dik maqtugħha għaliha. Imbagħad għandek upper Iklin, maqtugħ għalih ukoll. Mela inti diġà qsamt iktar minn lokalitajiet oħra” (Participant 10)

“Fil-komunità tal-Iklin għandek strata ta’ nies differenti. [...] Anke, il-way of living. [...] Tinħass id-differenza bejn in-nies t’hemm fuq u n-nies li jgħixu fil-parti ta’ madwar il-knisja...” (Participant 2)

Some participants also brought up a very unique fact about the community of Iklin, and that is the fact that the upper part of Iklin, mostly composed of larger villas is considerably distinct from the lower part of Iklin where residences may be smaller, parking issues may be more condensed, commercial activity is rife and apartment blocks are fast being developed. *“There is distinction because we don’t mix”* expressed Participant 18, with Participant 17 adding, *“Separation more than distinction”*. As also echoed in the comment by Participant 10 above, Participant 1 referred to this by stating, *“There’s three sections of Iklin: There’s Upper Iklin,*

Villas, [...] then there's lower Iklin by the church, and then there is the bit of lower Iklin near Lija". Participant 10 reflected on the impact of this comparing it to an unknown factor and comparing it to rivalry amongst band clubs in other towns only that in this case, the phenomenon is an unusual one and therefore less straightforward to understand and address. Throughout data collection exercises in fact, it was observed that the discourse used by participants to describe the town often resorted to describing the town as made up of:

- 'The villa area' (the upper area), which some expressed *"has a bit of a posh-connotation"* (Participant 9) where residents are seen as typically *"don't care about the Local Council. They don't need the LC, they already have contacts"* (Participant 7)
- 'The JB area' (the lower-Western side of Iklin),
- 'The Model Shop area' (the lower-Eastern side of Iklin), with these two sometimes being referred to as one area, and
- The 'Church area' (the central part of Iklin)

All of these appear to have their own characteristics. Participant 7, a resident of the lower parts of Iklin narrates, *"I would love to see [...] more balance between the different areas. We have the area next to the garden, parish church, which is, I would say it's the favourite, it has always been the favourite area for the local councillors; then we have the high privileged area, the upper Iklin side; and then you have an area [...] the area 'tal-minsijin' [...] we need even more investment in it, because if it's heavily used, all the time"*, also expressing that they would like to see fairer opportunities and funding distributed across the different areas. Also making reference to the 'tal-minsijin', Participant 21, even though not from that area themselves commented, *"Ikun hemm min jitlob, ikun hemm bżonn ta' xi ħaġa. Tiegħu ma ssirx u ta' ħaddieħor issir mil-lum għal għada"*. Respondents from the two lower areas where commercial activity is at its highest as is proximity to major road arteries would often refer to parking issues, road upkeep, litter and traffic congestion. Some even commented about the impact of these factors on the value of their properties. Those from the central region shared some of these however to a lesser degree. Meanwhile, residents those from the upper area, while still sharing most of the sentiments of residents from other areas regarding the town's identity and development, were less impacted by issues such as the changes brought about by mass construction. In contrast with those from lower parts who would describe their current experience in Iklin as *"Storbjuza, traffiku il-ħin kollu, kostruzzjoni bl-addoċċ, trabijiet"* (Participant 14), some residents from the upper part of the town still referred to Iklin as *"mainly quiet"* (Participant 8) and at times felt that the population of Iklin *"has grown, as in population and density [...] But, honestly not that much"* (Participant 8). This group tended to be less

affected by the town's parking problem with comments which every other group tended to agree upon, with comments such as, "*Kullimkien hemm nuqqas ta' parkeġġ*" (Participant 6), meaning to say that the problem is a national one and Iklin is just part of it, and typically, residents from this part of Iklin over appear to potentially have a preference for a more private over interconnected lifestyle. With respect to residents from the upper area of Iklin, Participant 2 commented, "*Jista' jkun illi mhumieq soċjevoli, jew forsi ma jithalltux, jew ma jipparteċipawx [...] jista' jkun għax iħossuhom maqtugħin*", observing a lesser participation from members of this area in activities as well as reduced use of public services and amenities such as the local public medical services, although they also acknowledge that notwithstanding the footprint of the area, the ratio of actual families is in fact much smaller compared to the lower sides, quoting maybe 150 families that live in the upper Iklin area. Amongst questionnaire participants, only 18% were from this area. As somewhat of a 'gated community' this area of Iklin could be viewed as a 'private community' (Delanty, 2003) where residents are detached from outsiders, even through the use of high gates, CCTV, etc.

Interestingly, across data collected, it came across as though participants from the upper part of Iklin were amongst those who were perceived by participants as participating least; those from the central area, although still impacted by issues such as increased traffic, were still conscious of the impact of construction and were least troubled by any underlying disparities between the different areas of the town; whilst the participants from the lower area were amongst the residents who were most exacerbated by the changes in the town and felt disparities across parts of the town. These observations however require additional investigation to be corroborated and cannot be confirmed statistically through the data gathered from this research. The distinctions between the different areas resulted through data collection exercises and were not factored for at draft stages of the research design. Nevertheless, data from the questionnaire points out that 26% of those from Area 5 and 6, the lower parts of Iklin, rated their level of satisfaction with their experience of living in Iklin at 5 (most satisfied) and 6% rated it as 1 (least satisfied). Meanwhile, 30% of those from other areas (namely the upper part of Iklin) rated this at 5, while 11% rated it at 1. The most shared aspects, common amongst the different areas were the craving for green spaces and public spaces for leisure, and the fact that the town is often used as a bypass by cars, making it more heavily congested and polluted as a consequence. In addition to the nature of the town being somewhat diverse within these areas, links and associations with neighbouring towns are also often evident, for instance, in the putting up of flags related to the feast of a nearby village.

Place of birth and duration of permanence are often associated with the forming of identity ties with a locality (Hui et al, 2012; Casakin et al., 2015). However, while the majority of questionnaire respondents (84%) reported to have been brought up in Iklin, the town was often referred to by the majority of participants as one void of a shared, common identity - "*Komunità bla identità*" (Participant 3) where a sense of community is very lacking. The identity of a community is founded on characteristics that distinguish that community from other neighbourhoods (Shao et al., 2017; Moore, 2005), resulting from common traits and behaviours of the members of that community (Cuba & Hummon, 1993; Suttles, 1972; Suttles, 1968) as well the locality's historical heritage and traditional characteristics (Deffner, 2007). The several distinctions across the groups within the community of Iklin may be playing a critical role in this respect.

Cultural events such as fairs, exhibitions, markets or similar activities also contribute to individuals identifying with a community (Manahasa & Manahasa, 2020), as does the use of symbolic representations, such as emblems, flags and anthems, which harness a shared sense of pride among members of a community (Isaacs, 1975). In addition to serving as an arena for public circulation, public spaces also create several opportunities to support other activities that can bring a town together. They are "*the common ground where people carry out the functional and ritual activities that bind a community, whether in the normal routines of daily life or in periodic festivities*" (Carr et al, 1992, p xi). The town however, is reported by most participants not to have public spaces for residents to gather in. A small playing field that stands in the centre of the village by the town's church is referred to by many as not enough to cater for the town.

"It doesn't have a village core [...] It's not really a village or a town. You can't go to a square, even Balzan has this and Attard, and there's the community there. Here there is a little church but, it's kind of between 2 roads. It lacks a heart, so we have to be creative" (Participant 9)

"In-nies m'għandhomx fejn jiltaqgħu, mela huwa kulħadd individwali" (Participant 10)

"In Iklin we need a square, somewhere which could be assembly, a focal point", Participant 9.

"I-Iklin m'għandniex għonna, jew fejn in-nies jistgħu imorru" (Participant 4)

“M’hawnx postijiet ta’ rikreazzjoni. Lanqas per eżempju ġonna, każini, ħwienet fejn tmur tiegħu kafè u hekk, m’għandekx [...] Naħseb għall-anzjani, biex tnejn jiftehmu per eżempju wara l-quddies jmorru jieħdu kafè u joqgħodu jitkellmu naqra naħseb tgħin” (Participant 14)

A number of cultural and social events have been organised within the town of Iklin, mostly by the Local Government and Parish Church. Amongst these, the largest-scale one is the Festa Fjuri, although when asked about the town’s activities, not all recalled this activity. Opinions about it amongst participants are in fact varied. Some were pleased with it and its activities such as information talks and felt it should be developed further:

“Festa Fjuri used to bring people out and together” (Participant 18)

“It could be a bigger and wider event – maybe not only on 1 street – should also be in differenti areas in Iklin. Like feasts, it should be around streets around the town to bring people together” (Participant 16).

Others however lamented that attendance was not as popular and still had their reservations:

“In this concrete jungle what is the relevance of fjuri? [...] He phoned up his friend at the government nursery qallu gibli ffit fjuri and we all pretended that we like flowers” (Participant 1)

“Ma tantx konna naraw konkorrENZA min-nies. Il-konkorrENZA kienet tkun ffit” (Participant 4)

“Minix kuntent li laħqet l-għan tagħha l-verita’ ma naħsibx illi laħqet il kulħadd ħa ngħidu hekk” (Participant 3)

[Did not attend] *“I don’t feel that I belong” (Participant 17)*

[Attended and participated] *“Ma naħsibx li qed tilħaq l-għan tagħha. L-idea ma kinitx ħażina, assolutament. Ma kinitx qed tiġbed la n-nies tal-lokalità u lanqas minn barra l-lokalità. [...] L-attendenza kienet tkun batuta u fqira” (Participant 12)*

With reference to residents’ attendance and participation at the event, the Participant 2 stated, *“Il-Kunsill qatt ma kien kuntent bl-outcome [...] Il-Kunsill stenna ħafna aktar konkorrENZA. Mhux qed ngħidlek li ma kien hemm però, għax xogħol li jkun qed isir, [...] naħseb li din hi l-problema ta’ din il-lokalità – m’hemmx sense of belonging”*. They pointed out however that, *“Fl-aħħar*

waħda li saret kien hemm parteċipazzjoni ħelwa” and expressed a desire for it to be invested in and developed further, possibly with extensions of it through, for instance, related cultural and education talks throughout the year, confident that in time an improvement is being noticed and that it is a crucial necessity of the town to bring people together.

A major event embedded in Maltese culture, renowned for bringing people together is the Maltese traditional village *fešta* (feast), the annual celebration to commemorate a parish’s saint. This celebration typically includes a variety of events, such as dedicating church activities, the ‘triduum’, held on the day prior to the feast and on the feast day itself, as well as several outdoor celebrations including band marches, fireworks displays and processions. Throughout the year, teams of people also come together through connections with the *fešta*, such as members of the related band club, the teams responsible for festive decorations, as well those related to the preparation of fireworks. Most *festas* are typically celebrated in the summer months and, in addition to religious functions, are often also synonymous with rowdy street celebrations, at times rivalry between opposing groups within the *fešta* (Cassar, 2015) such as band clubs, however are also strongly agreed upon as being catalysts for the bringing together of people and the weaving of social connections (Azzopardi, 2015). Participant 19 describes the *fešta* as something that *“speċjalment fil-kultura Malta hija l-iktar ħaġa li tgħaqqad il-komunità”*. Unlike most other localities in Malta, the town of Iklin celebrates its *fešta* in January. The celebration, in contrast with traditional practices, involves no marches, band clubs, street decorations or fireworks. As described by the participants, it is a humble, indoor celebration with initiatives such as the bringing over of a speaker to give a talk to residents.

Opinions about the fact that Iklin does not hold traditional outdoor celebrations for its *fešta* are varied across participants. *“Il-fatt illi m’għandekx il-każin tal-banda, il-każin tal-fešta, tibda tasal tifhem għalxiex m’hawnx sense of belonging għal dan il-lokal”* (Participant 2). Similarly, several participants across data collection exercises brought up the lack of an outdoor *fešta* as a possible contributor for the reduced sense of community in the town. For instance, Participant 15 commented, *“Il-każini tal-baned u tal-futbol u hekk, dawk jiġbdu n-nies u jiġbruhom, allura n-nuqqas tagħhom hawn jinħass. Fejn tiltaqqgħa”*. Nevertheless, very few of these conversations, brought about a sentiment of a strong desire for there actually to be one. While all agreed it brings people together, including youth as well as the elderly and children, none actually mentioned it when asked what they would like to see in Iklin. Additionally, comments such as the following were also shared:

“Il-festa toħloq il-folla, u l-folla daħlet fi trance u whatever. Però dak jgħaddi l-għada, l-għada jkun spiċċa kollox. F’dan l-ambjent in-nies qed jikbru iżjed” [referring to religious faith] (Participant 5)

“Il-fatt illi m’hemmx il-festi, m’hemmx distractions anke fuq ir-riżorsi, fuq in-nies” (Participant 10)

“Il-każini ma naħsibx li hu l-kas, ma naħsibx li huma xi ħaġa pożittiva, pjuttost xi ħaġa li tista’ toħloq il-firda wkoll” (Participant 12)

Participant 5 in fact added that not having a festa brought the advantage of the town not facing issues of rivalry that are often seen in other towns. Participants who are keen on the *festa* spirit, whilst still not expressing it amongst the things they would like to see for the community of Iklin, appear to seek involvement in feasts in other neighbourhood localities or their town of origin. About this, Participant 4 said, *“Jekk xi ħadd ikun ġej minn B’kara, ikun eżempju ma’ Santa Liena, fil-festa ta’ St Liena idendillek il-bandiera. L-Iklin qisu m’għandux hekk, bħal lokalitajeta oħra”* (Participant 4). Overall, it appears as if although all participants agreed that *festas* can bring people together, potentially contributing to the generation of a sense of community, most seem to be quite satisfied or even prefer doing without one. Participant 2 may have summed this up when they said, *“Naħseb qegħdin kwieti, happy u ma jridux problemi”*.

Centrality: A major advantage at an uncomfortable price



“We’re a big traffic island in the middle of a motor way of a ring road. [...] This must have some impact on the health of the population”

(Participant 1)

The central location of Iklin is undoubtedly a major consideration for those who have decided to move to Iklin. Several participants from all three sources of data collected in fact expressed this as a major advantage of the town, for residents and the business community alike, with some even associating the town’s centrality amongst the reasons for their choosing to live there. Participant 9 found that *“amenities are easy here”*, while Participant 10 shared, *“Viċin ta’ kollox, fin-nofs ta’ Malta”*, as did several others. The town’s proximity to major destinations

such as the capital city, the national hospital, the University of Malta and other major sites in Malta is in fact considered by many, across interviews, focus group and questionnaire to be a major advantage of the locality. And in this proximity to other landmarks also provides the opportunity for what Participant 9 described as, *“You learn to walk here. Literally, is at 17 mins. It’s a nice walk. [...] I love to use my bicycle. So does my wife. We use the bicycle to access Attard, San Anton, Corinthia...Ta’ Qali is very close. By bicycle you’re there in 10 minutes. If you run you’re in Ta’ Qali in 15 minutes. You can walk to Għargħur very easily”*. The town is in fact also well serviced by surrounding localities, including green areas in spaces such as San Anton Gardens in nearby Attard, which many residents consider to be very important, especially in cases where the town itself does not provide these services. Some have expressed a desire for more in-house services such as an ATM or a postal service, however many feel that the town has been developed sufficiently and would rather forfeit having services directly in-town for more open, green and public spaces.

The centrality of Iklin unfortunately brings a major disadvantage echoed consistently by all participants of the study: the issue of traffic. Especially amongst elderly participants, this factor appears to impact their quality of life considerably. *“Hawnekk m’hawnx fejn immorru nimxu mingħajr ma jkun hemm ħafna karozzi”* (Participant 20). The town of Iklin is adjacent to a number of the countries’ main traffic arteries crossing from region to region across the country. Noise and air pollution were found to be common ailments amongst participants, with the consequences of these being highlighted, including health concerns as well as more immediate issues such as dangerous driving and a constant flow of traffic along the town’s streets.

“Il-problema li aħna qisu qegħdin bypass u jgħaddu ħafna karozzi. Allura anke is-sens ta’ pollution dejjem qed jiżdied ħafna. [...] Minn dejjem konna esposti għat-traffiku, imma issa żdied immens” (Participant 18)

“Hemm an increase vera kbira ta’ traffiku illi n-naħa, per eżempju, tal-knisja qegħda tkun bypass” (Participant 15)

“The privilege of living near to everything that’s one of the prices you have to pay” (Participant 1)

“Ġejna qisna bypass [...] l-Iklin huwa bypass. [...] “L-arja spiċċuta bid-dħaħen li hawn” (Participant 10)

A number of different questionnaire respondents as well as interviewees and focus group participants alike in fact, suggested the introduction of a speed camera or more efficient road-crossing systems. Overall however, the dissatisfaction with Iklin being used as a “roundabout” (Participant 19 and 21) or a “by-pass in itself” (Participant 15 and 18) through the heart and streets of the town is a resounding concern for most participants. One respondent also lamented the fact that this scourge could have been alleviated referring to plans for the construction of an additional bypass that would have reduced the diverting of traffic into that town that however was scrapped and never executed.

The Iklin Local Government the Parish Church



Participants were asked for their views about the Iklin Local Government as part of the research process. Members of the Local Government itself were also involved in data collection exercises in order to observe their stance on the matter. The Local Government is responsible for most of the daily running operations of the town, such as upkeep and maintenance, general cleanliness, locality permits, etc. Amongst its amenities, the Council’s premises are placed in the centre of the town, close to the parish church. About these a resident, not a member of the Council themselves, Participant 12 commented, “*Il-Kunsill għandu bżonn bażi tixraqlu minn fejn jaħdem. [...] Jekk il-Kunsill irid jikber u jekk irid jipproponi attivitajiet oħra għall-komunità, irid ikollu fejn. [...] Kif għandha tixraq lill-Kunsill amministrattiv*”, also pointing out that on occasion, the Council has had to resort to the Church for premises for activities to be held. The Council also rents out a hall that is uses for some of its events. It also hosts a Facebook page for its residents and also utilises door-to-door print media in order to advertise initiatives and events. In its efforts to address the realities and challenges of the town, the Local Government has developed a rapport with a number of members of Iklin’s business community in order collaborate on issues that may impact the town and bridge the gap between the business community and the residents’ community. This positive rapport was also observed from comments expressed during interviews by representatives of the business community. To this effect, for instance, a joint venture between members of the business

community and the Iklin Local Government brought about the distribution of re-usable plastic containers amongst households in Iklin, following a proposal made by the Local Government, in order to promote recycling whilst also establishing a positive collaboration between businesses and residents.

Participant 2 spoke about the members of the Council as follows: *“kemm is-sindku preżenti u anke l-kollegi tiegħu ... iħobbu jisimgħu, jġigifieri huma nies li jisimgħu għax huma fil-maġġor parti tagħhom huma żgħażaġħ, huma membri ġodda fil-Kunsill, qegħdin on the learning curve fil-Kunsill Lokali”*. They also praised the Council for having investing in creating a pathway through a green area for residents to be able to access this. Overall, the sentiment shared by many is that the members of the Iklin Local Government are limited in how much they can offer. Some, for instance, commented about the fact that they are not full-time councillors but have to keep up with the demands of the council outside their full-time commitments. Others however, expressed that they would like to see the Council and its members more active and involved in the running of the town. Referring to the councillors, Participant 4 shared, *“Inħoss li hemm nuqqas ta’ interess, kif ħa naqbad ngħid...inkun nixtieq li jaħdmu iktar. Bħala membri kollha, nixtieqhom jaħdmu iktar”*. *“They could do a lot more, but they don’t”*, narrated Participant 9. *“Fil-limitazzjonijiet tagħhom jagħmlu. Però naħseb li jista’ jsri ħafna aktar”*, continued Participant 20.

Some felt the Council shared a long-term vision and planning aspect, with comments such as *“Tul dawn l-aħħar snin [referring to the Iklin Local Government since its inception, not solely the current legislature], il-Kunsill mexa [...] però kien jagħmel iktar kieku kellu pjan fit-tul, 5-year plan, 10-year plan. Kif tridha l-lokalità tiegħek, xi tridha? U trid taħdem biex iġġibha dik il-lokalità skont il-viżjoni li jkollok (Participant 12) describing the Council’s practices were sometimes “management qisu by crisis” (Participant 12). The same limitation when it comes to resources was also felt about the Local Government as an entity in itself. Participant 10 for instance, expressed that local governments, including that of Iklin, serve *“taħt il-liġi tal-gvern. Minn dejjem ta’ dejjem hekk eżistew il-kunsilli. Naħseb forsi llum għandhom naqra iżjed poteri, imma l-poter vera mhux qiegħed għand il-kunsill”*. To the same tune, Participant 7 also said, *“your hands are always tied with government restrictions. [...] Even though I was super motivated at first to actually create the change, unfortunately when you see a lot of red tape, etc., you end up losing a lot of motivation”*. In this respect, a number of council members express disappointment with the fact that while they would like to do more for the community, they often feel limited and come across as disappointing their residents who may not be aware of the logistical ceilings limiting*

them. Adding to this, a number of participants also shared that the Iklin Local Government's budget is very minimal and that their operations are often stifled by bureaucracy, political pressure or bias and logistical stumbling blocks. The *“Local Council is very limited in funding because Iklin is considered to be a small town”*, according to Participant 16.

Additionally, the current Local Government came into effect in 2019, shortly before the rise of the COVID-19 pandemic, which greatly impacted the functions and activities of its members and their respective sub-committees and initiatives. Monthly Council meetings in fact, started to be held online. To this effect, Participant 1 in fact narrated, *“Is-sotto kumitati sfaxxaw kompletament”*. Nevertheless, some participants expressed that they would like the Council to organise more social and cultural activities, some of which do not require much funding, such as exhibitions and talks. In participants' descriptions of the work of the Local Government, while none had direct criticism for the work carried out, the overall view held by residents regarding the Council seem to be that of well-intended but with fading levels of initiative and enthusiasm, that translates into ideas not following through. Participant 4 commented, *“Qishom qas jeżistu. Suppost qegħdin hemmhekk però ma jġugx attwati l-affarijiet”*, referring to healthy ideas that are proposed but that from concept to execution, gradually lose momentum. The same participant also commented on the fact that this, in turn, reduces residents' appeal towards volunteering and being involved. Referring to councillor's sub-committees, the participant disclosed, *“Suppost ilaqgħu lil min ikun interessat. Ilaqqgħuhom, u jippruvaw, jien naf, joħolqu inizzjattivi jew proġetti, però sfortunatament ma jsirx jew mhux qed isir dawn l-aħħar snin. Jew isiru tnejn fil-bidu u daqshekk. [...] Min-naħa tal-kunsilliera, m'hemmx, ma jirsistux. [...] Mhux mal-COVID biss. Qabel kienet qed tmur lura l-biċċa”*. Participant 2 added, *“Fil-bidu ta' din il-legislatura [...] dehret enerġija vera hekk, riedu li tinħass il-bidla fil-lokalità, ideat godda. Però sfortunatament - j'alla li ħabba l-pandemija - kulħadd spiċċa qisu f'apatija”*.

Nevertheless, the Local Government used to organise several activities along the years. Amongst these is the Festa Fjuri, an open-air event organised once a year where information talks and interactive activities are offered including tit-bits relating to the culture of Iklin such as the presentation of a rosemary drink given the town's link with the rosemary herb (Klin in Maltese), as well as the giving out of flowers to those present. The event entails a series of gazebos offering different themes and also included the involvement of the Iklin Scouts Group and on occasion, collaborations with Lija-Iklin-Balzan primary school. This has been amongst the larger-scaled initiatives that the Council organised in its attempt to create a sense of

identity and community (the Festa Fjuri has been further discussed above in 'Iklin's Community Identity'). Other activities organised by the Council include:

- A yearly buffet breakfast for women's day;
- a free carnival party for children aged 5-10;
- a yearly weekend break for adults and families;
- one-off cultural outings;
- yearly Christmas activities such as distribution of gifts and musical events;
- one-off educational meetings with guests to discuss different topics; and
- a yearly social BBQ;
- sessions of weekly pilates, aerobics and dance fitness classes for periods of 10 weeks in the Local Government's hall that can fit 15 people per session, as well as a sports day, that were funded by central government. Almost none of the interview and focus group participants had participated in these however attendance is reported to be very high, particularly from female residents, with waiting lists and additional sessions organised on occasion; and
- yearly day trips to Gozo for Mother's Day.

Overall, a general sense of collaboration came across amongst councillors during the data collection process, with some commenting that notwithstanding the fact that a majority of them were associated to one political party and therefore opinions at times were skewed, in most cases, the members strived to work hand in hand. Some comments were shared about operations at times being impacted, credit not being given, or initiative being shot down as a result of political and personal associations amongst councillors. Others commented that the Council's online presence tended to be biased politically, while some pointed out that councillors at times tended to favour residents from their part of the community. Participant 12 for instance commented, *"Min ikun fil-kunsill forsi jfittex iktar l-interessi tan-nies li jivvutawlu"*. Others added that this may impact the vision or quality of decision-making made by the Council, feeling that different areas might be being given priority or precedence over others when it comes to the allocation of resources and initiatives. Participant 21 too stated, *"Biex jivvutawlu, jekk ngħidlu, 'ara, inqatgħat il-bozza, għamili'. Mela jiena nagħmilhielek ħa naqla l-vot mingħandek. [...] Jagħmel affarijiet mingħajr viżjoni"*. Bringing significant food for thought was also the fact that comments from members of opposing political parties too expressed concern about decisions being taken by the Council at times being skewed for votes, rather than the common interest. This point is also discussed earlier on in 'Iklin's Community Identity'. Nonetheless, in their totality, the views shared agreed that most of the times, the team typically managed to take decisions

together and at times shared views even beyond political parties. Moreover, amongst a number of councillors, resounding was the commitment to work for the locality and its members.

The Iklin Local Government also collaborates with the locality's parish in order to organise events, particularly Christmas ones, together. Iklin's Holy Family Parish Church is located in the centre of the town. As a young church, the church's building is a one-storey site housing a modern mosaic as a backdrop to its altar. The building itself, unlike more traditional, older churches typically known as the heart of a town, does not include a cupola or a large, imposing presence. The Iklin parish church offers regular celebration of mass in Maltese, prayer groups and also offers catechism lessons in the community. The latter in combination with other services also offered by the church, together with the Scouts Group and the poorly-attended (further discussed below) Iklin-Lija football club, are the sole providers of ongoing services that cater for and gather children in the community. The parish also hosts an online presence through its website and considerably active Facebook page that act as channels to disseminate information and attract individuals to activities being held. Throughout the data collection exercise, it emerged that the town's parish is probably the largest catalyst of several of the town's group activities that cater for different age groups. In contrast with the experience of the Local Government who all expressed that *"diffiċli ssib in-nies"* (Participant 2), it is also largely founded on a network of volunteers, including professionals, mobilising a widespread team of people for activities such as the running of the church's multi-sensory room, general help, catechism, etc. The multi-sensory room, for instance, is overseen by a specialist in the area who then plans out activities for the children who make use of it so that learning support educators can assist them when they visit.

Amongst the initiatives brought about by the church is the Żgħażaġħ Azzjoni Kattolika (ŽAK) that focuses on youth and meets on a weekly basis. Together with the Scouts Group, these are only ongoing services currently catering for youth in the community of Iklin. The service is once again run by volunteers, is reported to currently cater for about 60 individuals from Iklin as well as neighbouring towns and works with those aged even up to the age of 30. The group, notwithstanding its religious background, is an inclusive one, catering for people with different needs, and provides those who attend with services such as talks, hands-on activities and games addressing various topics such as autonomy, self-esteem, self-advocacy skills, resilience, leadership skills, teambuilding skills, and on occasion, offers accredited training opportunities in addition to acting as a caring presence and support system. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic when meetings in person were not possible due to social distancing

measures, the group offered online sessions for those who wanted to attend. About ŽAK, Participant 5 expressed, *“Iġġib in-nies naqra aktar flimkien. Liż-żgħażaġħ tipprova tttrihom kemm jista’ jkun iċ-ċirkustanzi, exposure, u hemm iktar apprezzament lejn iż-żgħażaġħ [...] iż-żgħażaġħ iħossuhom iktar parti mill-komunità”*. They commented that participation from young people from the community of Iklin itself has increased healthily over the years and interestingly, in a town where its members consistently feel there is a lack of sense of community, this participant felt that with ŽAK’s work, *“Saret iktar komunità minn lenti parrokkjali”*. The team in fact, works to develop communities of support that in time, can be autonomous and grow further independently. The group attracts its members by reaching out to youngsters after the religious confirmation, through its online channels mostly on Facebook and Instagram, through contacts of current members, through awareness being made by the parish priest, as well as on occasion, through door to door visits. For data collection exercises it emerged that participants in ŽAK tend to be more from the lower parts of Iklin as opposed to the upper ‘villa area’. It also transpired that the group is supported mostly by the church but does not have any links or connections with the Local Government. Participant 5 in fact, expressed a desire for this to improve, stating *“Iktar kollaborazzjoni mal-kunsill dwar iż-żgħażaġħ [...] forsi iktar kif ħa nħeggu iktar żgħażaġħ [...] l-kunsill jaħseb kif jista’ jagħti servizz lil żgħażaġħ li mħumiex interessati jkunu fi grupp tal-knisja”* since the group is ultimately founded on religious beliefs and may not be catering for those of different religious views.

Another initiative brought about by the church is the Group 60 Plus. This is currently the sole ongoing initiative catering for elderly residents, although the Local Government is also working on launching a project - *Anzjanità Attiva* in collaboration with the Balzan Local Government, that also caters for this group. Feedback from participants brought up the fact that whilst some of the elderly members of the community are aware of this upcoming project, they do not really know much about it. The group is run by elderly volunteers and meets on a weekly basis. Founded on casual social gatherings where the elderly can meet and have a chat, it also provides mass, light snacks, talks from professionals regarding topics such as social services, medical services, dentistry, representatives from the bank, as well as outings, tombolas, coffee mornings, etc. The parish priest is also regularly involved in meeting up with the group. Due to COVID-19 measures the outdoor activities of the group have reduced however the group still has continued to meet once social-distancing measures were reduced. The group is typically attended by a group of 25-30 people, although since the pandemic struck this number has almost halved, with participants reporting that some of the elderly members in fact no longer leave their homes. The group’s activities are funded by the church and are also fuelled through their own initiatives such as proceeds from the tombola activities. Participants

expressed how more activities aimed at the elderly group of residents were needed and that people sought them out. Elderly participants also commented on the fact that amongst other things, elderly groups tended to particularly enjoy activities such as outings, such as those visiting churches or museums, and explained how especially for those who were alone, this would help to reduce loneliness and connect.

The church also overviews several other initiatives. These include:

- it works with a team of 4 volunteers to coordinate a group of young people to offer altar services; a team of volunteers who aid with holy communion during mass;
- a team of 5 volunteers run the *Kummissjoni Tfal*, that caters for children's participation in activities related to the parish, represents the voices of children in the community, and organises activities aimed at supporting their development. Initiatives include regular meetings, direct participation in mass once a month such as welcoming people or presenting the mass readings, adapted masses for children, blessing of school bags, preparation for sacraments, processions as well as live-ins, visits to elderly people's homes and other outings;
- a group of another 28 voluntary catechists, LSEs, helpers, safeguarding officers and first aiders work together with an inclusion coordinator, mostly to cater for the multi-sensory room and related activities;
- an unspecified number of volunteers that run the services of the *Kummissjoni Djakonija* that provides house visits to the ill and offers talks about various topics such as mental health, parenting, etc. The *Kummissjoni Djakonija* also collaborates with the Department of Counselling at the University of Malta to offer a confidential helpline 'Nisinghek' that is open to anyone in need, even since the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic;
- an adult formation programme, also run by volunteers, that meet on a weekly basis and carry out initiatives such as 'Hop on Hop Off Formation Wednesdays', retreats, seminars and information talks for parents and children; and
- several other volunteer-based groups addressing the different needs identified in the church and the community.

The Iklin-Lija Football Club and the Iklin Scouts Group

Smaller groups present in the community of Iklin include the Iklin-Lija Football Club and the Iklin Scouts Group. Representatives from the Local Government are also involved on the Iklin-

Lija football, with the aim of bringing the views of the locality forward. The links with Iklin are nowadays more focused on the nursery, rather than the club itself. Prior to the arrangement made between the towns of Lija and Iklin for the joint football venture, the town of Iklin had also obtained access, on initiative of the residents, to make use of a football ground in a school in Naxxar to set up its own nursery there. The Iklin-Lija Football Club (nursery services) and the Iklin Scouts Group appear to be exclusively the only entities that cater for children and youth, aside from the ŽAK, that is however ultimately a religious-based group. To this effect Participant 21 commented, *“X’hemm għat-tfal? Daqsxejn ta’ playground żgħira”*. In the past, the Local Government used to offer activities for children too, such as outings to the cinema and similar events, however, was reported by participants that attendance to these activities diminished critically and that especially following the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, the organisation of these activities by the Local Government has now come to a halt. The entities catering for youngsters were involved in this research study in order to directly capture their views. These groups were also enquired about with other participants to observe the perception and feelings of the residents about these entities.

Both the Iklin-Lija Football Club and the Iklin Scouts group expressed how the Iklin Local Government supports their work. For instance, at the time of writing, the Local Government provides a site for the Scouts Group activities to be held. Both groups in fact expressed that they have worked and/or work with the Local Government to support their activities, such as guidance on accessing available public funding opportunities as well as to the running of their activities. Some commented that notwithstanding all this, space for more dissemination of information about the groups’ activities through the Local Government’s channels could still be strengthened.

Participation by young residents and adult volunteers alike in these two activities by members of the Iklin Community still leaves space for further improvement. Figures in both cases are reported to be below what was estimated based on the size of the community, even though the Scouts Group are reported to be observing an increase in participation. At the time of writing, in the region of 40 children attended activities at the Scouts Group. Their age groups are as follows: 18 cubs (7-11 year olds), the largest group, followed by 12 troops (11-14 year olds), approximately 10 ventures (14-18 year olds). Until recently, those reaching ‘ventures’ age were so few that the ‘troops’ would join other localities when reaching this stage. Over the months prior to this research, the Scouts Group were investing in developing their online presence through channels such as Instagram and Facebook in order to attract youth and

their parents/guardians and with that, create awareness about their activities with the aim of increasing participation. This may be contributing to the recent increases observed.

The Iklin-Lija football club however appears to have smaller outreach efforts, with Participant 15 stating *“ma naħsibx li [...] minn naħa tal-football qed jiġi promoted fil-l-lokalità tal-Iklin. Għalkemm [...] msemmijin Lija/Iklin ma naħsibx li fin-naħa tal-Iklin qed tkun promoted”*. Participation in the Iklin-Lija football club by children from Iklin is reported to be as low as 10 youngsters out of a group of approximately 130 children. Some commented on the fact that since the premises and the football ground are not located in Iklin itself, many may be opting to go to other potentially larger clubs in nearby localities such as Birkirkara. Participant 18 for instance expressed that once she had to use the car to take her son to a football activity, she then opted for an alternative club: *“Il-fatt illi m’għandekx ġor-raħal tiegħek, allura inti tiġi ħa nagħžel”*. Participant 15 too shared: *“Il-fatt li m’għandniex preżenza reali speċjalment tal-football, dik tagħmel allura a choice fuq il-parents u fuq it-tfal, depending on where friends are, etc.”*.

Further exacerbating the football scene for those who may have been keen to seek activities related to it, is the fact that residents were under the impression that a football ground was going to be developed in their community, however this did not come into effect. Participant 18 shared, *“Il-biċċa tal-JB kienu suppost ħa jagħtuha għal football ground. X’ġara? Ingħatat għal parking. Seta jekk riedu jagħtu parking, jagħmlu underground parking u jħallu fuq xi ħaġa oħra. Anke nagħmlu 4 sigriet ukoll ġa biżżejjed. Kien isir xorta l-football ground, allura, kien ikun hemm ċans li t-tfal jilgħabu hemmhekk”*. Participant 6 similarly narrated, *“Dejjem qalulna li se jsir fejn hemm il-car park, hemmhekk aħna dejjem xtaqnih li nagħmluha underground parking u fuqha embellished”*. Participant 15 too expressed, *“There had to be a football ground in Iklin for our club to have some sessions there, but it didn’t happen”*. Not surprisingly, research participants who live in the proximity of the site that was intended for the development of the football ground do not lament an alleviation of the parking problem in the more-commercial areas of Iklin, however some feel that alternatives could have been considered to cater for more demands than solely that of parking problems. In fact, the introduction of a football ground was amongst a number of the recommendations for improvement brought up by participants throughout the research, claiming it would benefit not only the sport in itself but could also be a place for parents to gather, for the elderly to play for instance games of *boċċi*, for youngsters to use for activities such as skateboarding and overall act as a recreational area, of which many have expressed there is a severe lack of in Iklin’s community.



*“I used to feel proud
but now not really”*
(Participant 17)

The landscape of Iklin was referred to by many as one that was originally almost entirely composed of terraced houses of one or two floors, the majority of which were adorned with gardens. The area also boasted several untouched, rural spaces since development only started increasing over the last few decades. Changes in building permits however have had a considerable impact on this, in fact, all of the participants reported that the locality is drastically changing as a result of houses being converted into blocks. Many have lamented the lack of urban planning and attributed this to the town losing its character and the aesthetic that many previously felt proud of and that was associated with the nature of Iklin.

“Meta ġejt kont nara kullimkien pjan wieħed [...] kien hawn dil-karatteristika ħelwa. Fil-parti t’isfel tal-Iklin kien hawn dawn it-terraced houses, kollha hemm ċertu uniformità allura l-istreet-scape u l-isky-scape tara ċertu trankwillità, ċertu serenità, ċertu paċi, bil-parapett, bil-back gardens, vera sabiħ. Però f’daqqa waħda, niżlin ukoll dat-terraced houses sfortunatament, u qed jitolgħu l-blokki. [...] Ser inkunu qed nindirizzaw sfidi ġodda” (Participant 2)

“Kienet il-pride tagħna li t-triq kollha kienet ġonna twal imbagħad il-vilel wara. Issa l-ġonna kollha qed jinbnew, so għandi maġenbi ħajt fejn suppost nieħu pjaċir nara l-veduta, maġenbi telqu, qed nittama li mhux ħa jixtriha xi kuntrattur u jibni xi condo, u minn hawn l-isfel, kollha nbnew sat-triq” (Participant 17)

“Bini tiela’ bl’addoċċ [...] Għalkemm m’għandniex dik it-tip ta’ raħal l-antik dik iċ-ċentru l-antik, toroq dojoq hekk li huma sbieħ, imma kelli ċertu pride jiena li t-toroq tagħna ħelwin, kulħadd bena kif xtaq hu. Issa, qed nitiflu dak is-sabiħ tiegħu” (Participant 18)

“The beautiful houses that made l-Iklin, I don’t know, in the 80’s and 90’s - one after the other, they just go down” (Participant 1)

The widespread and rapid changing of the town's previously-synonymous family homes has also brought a sequence of other changes with it. Aside from the direct impact from the construction works themselves, the changing aesthetics of the town, and with it, the reduction of landscapes from houses with front gardens to blocks of buildings, this phenomenon also directly impacts the already strained parking situation in Iklin, with some commenting that developers would rather pay a fine and get it over and done with that develop garages for the apartments being built. Several participants also expressed how the construction marathon is also indirectly largely impacting the nature of Iklin and the sense of community it once owned. The larger apartment blocks now accommodate a considerably larger population of new residents, with some residents adding that developers prefer to rent out rather than sell, creating a transient community of residents, even though this is not apparent in data findings. This phenomenon further dilutes the ties amongst residents. Such distinction between the long-standing residents, some of which were amongst the first residents of the town, and 'newcomers' is the modern manifestation of what Elias and Scotson (1994) had referred to as the 'Established' and those who were 'Outsiders' in their research of community relations between established residents of a locality and those who have fewer ties from recently joining the locality.

With the fast increase in population density and composition, also come increased demands on the community, such as more litter, a larger demand for parking spaces, as well as an increasing pressure on the infrastructure that creates a larger need for frequent upkeep on roads, pavements and the environment. Most highlighted across participant was the impact that the rapid development is having on the major reduction in green spaces and public open spaces. Originating as an area largely rural in nature, many participants now lament the scarcity of places to go for a walk, sit for a picnic or spaces for children to play in, for young people to meet or for families to gather for leisure and social opportunities. Another consequence of the fast development largely echoed across participants is its impact on health. Described by Participant 1 as "*making a lot of people sick*", several participants expressed how it is impacting stress levels and mental wellbeing, in addition to the direct exposure to noise and air pollution. Research often points out how expansive development is often linked to environmental stressors that can impact the mental health and wellbeing of those affected by it (e.g. Zijlema et al., 2017; Gong et al., 2016; Lambert et al., 2015, Parra et al., 2010).



*“Tħares fejn tħares, tara
l-bini tiela’, tiela’, tiela’ ”*
(Participant 15)

The increase in apartment blocks and rapidly-changing influx of new residents also brings a community scenario composed of combinations of people whose ties with the community itself are also still at foetal stage. Participant 9 commented, *“There have been a lot of changes in the last 8 years in particular, because a lot of houses are being pulled down and they are being replaced by apartments. And normally, some are residential, they are bought by couples, but many are done very quickly, to rent out to non-Maltese citizens. So there are a lot of demographical changes”*. Although not exclusive, place of birth and duration of permanence, are strong contributors to the development of identity ties with a locality (Hui et al, 2012; Casakin et al., 2015). This phenomenon is also still evident across a number of participants, that is, residents who have resided in Iklin for some years, yet still identify with neighbouring towns through associations with the village *fešta*, evidenced by the adorning of houses in Iklin with flags of neighbouring towns’ *festas* during the *fešta* period, or other family roots in towns such as Lija and B’Kara, as well as elsewhere in Malta. This is even more so the case when it comes to new residents who still need to establish their links with their new hometown. Additionally, although findings from the residents’ questionnaire indicate that the larger part of respondents are individuals who were brought up in Iklin (84%), for whom Iklin therefore has been their hometown across their lifespan, the reduced availability of internal services such as a school or even initially a church, may have meant that the town, while still being the place of birth of those brought up there, may still not have been their nucleus throughout their children. These comments from Participant 11, a resident who was brought up in Iklin however since services were not available in the town, narrated having been baptised in Ħal Lija, then attending catechism lessons in Ħal Balzan, display this: *“meta kont żgħir konna ninfirxu, allura mbagħad meta bdejna nikbru ma kienx hemm daww in-nies, eh nafu mill-mużew, nafu mill-iskola [...] Illum il-ġurnata kulħadd imur fl-istess post”*.

Participant 1 also made reference to this when they described the offspring of the first generation of Iklin residents who still reside in Iklin in cases where the family home is

passed down following the parents' passing, or in cases where the family home is developed into apartments with different members of the family residing in the different apartments. Maybe not surprisingly, the largest age bracket amongst those brought up and currently residing in Iklin (38%) are now aged 19-30. Amongst this age bracket, the largest part (50%) live in a household with residing children, while 14% are adults living with their parents and another 14% live in a house share arrangement (it is unknown whether these are siblings). The remaining part are a couple living together with no children, a household caring for another family members, or an individual occupation with each category forming 7% of the group respectively.

What residents and stakeholders would like to see in Iklin



Resounding across questionnaire participants as well as interview and focus group participants, is the desire for more green areas. To the question: 'Do you wish to see any more of these in Iklin?' in fact, 87% selected 'Green Areas', with this feeling also being echoed in the comments section of the questionnaire. During an interview, one participant (Participant 10) commented that people have a right to clean air and that while trees were included in the plans of the B'Kara bypass, these were never placed on the site. Several participants also sought solutions to this issue by referring to the value of possible channels for access created with the remaining rural area around the upper part of Iklin between Iklin and Għargħur. Aware of difficulties this may entail due to land ownership or safety, and doubtful this idea being followed-up, so keen was their desire for more green spaces that they felt that this, or similar alternative solutions should be sought. In a similar tune to other residents in fact, Participant 9 explained:

"I dream of this... [...] there is still countryside between here and Għargħur. But it's privately owned, but it's also very...it's not well kept...it's actually really nice. Typical Maltese countryside – old farmhouses built with rubble stone, beautiful carob trees. I would create a hub, a little one, it doesn't have to be expensive. None of this stupid refurbishment of gardens [criticising the use of things like turf,

pesticides, glass, decking, plastic swings, etc.]. I think they could create, even without taking anyone’s private fields, they could make a deal with them and create walkways for the public, maybe with a tiny seat. [...] Just walks, a maybe a little lane where you can go up with a bicycle”.

The participants bringing up this proposal, urged the Local Government to take action on this through the right political channels, also commenting on the fact that the Local Government seems to be reluctant to plant trees whenever these are proposed. Participant 10 spoke for many when they stated, “Nixtieq nara l-Iklin mimli sigar, kullimkien aħdar, ikun hemm iktar postijiet fejn in-nies joħorġu u għandhom post ta’ rikreazzjoni, bħal ġonna u nixtieq nara li jkollna mqar post wieħed, mhux qed ngħid tipo ta’ bar, li jistgħu jiltaqgħu n-nies ġo fih – social club”. Together with several others, Participant 8 also added to these when they said, “In the evening there’s nowhere for people to meet and like have a drink jew hekk [...] There’s no, like a bar, like a coffee shop for people in the evening to meet”.

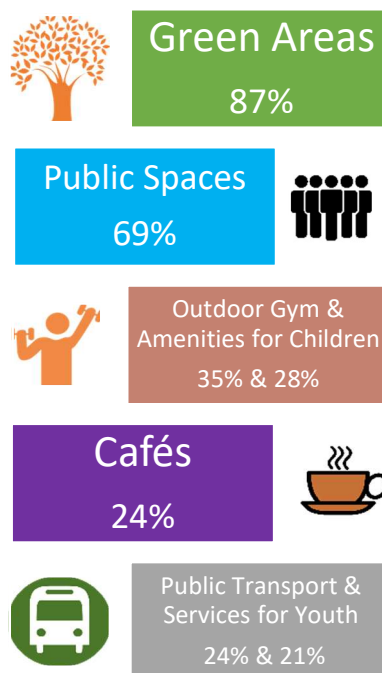


Figure 10: What Iklin residents would like to see more of according to questionnaire responses

The resounding need for 'Green areas' was followed by a choice of 69% who would like to see more 'Public Spaces'. An 'Outdoor Gym' followed amongst preferences, at 35%, while 28% expressed a desire for more 'Amenities for Children' and 24% would like to see more 'Cafés', with one participant proposing it includes a bar. 24% and 21% preferences was also indicated for 'Public Transport Services', and 'Services for Youth' respectively. A call for improvement in public transport services was also brought up during the interview process, particularly to cater for the needs of the elderly since the current service involves a route that passes by tourist sites prior to Iklin and is therefore often full once it reaches the town and routes that connected the town to areas like Sliema have been stopped. In this respect, the elderly also brought up the possibility of a Silver Service Van, which is offered in several localities across Malta but not in Iklin (Servizz.gov, 2021). 10% hoped to see more services such as hairdresser, green grocer, fish shop, butcher, etc. 3% expressed they would like to have the services of a post office, another point also highlighted by the elderly group of residents across interviews, with another participant adding this could include the services of a courier delivery hub, while 2% respectively expressed they would like to see a dog park in the area as well as the services of an ATM. 2% would like to see more traffic, while 2% of respondents claimed there is nothing they would like to see more of in Iklin. Given the option of adding their comments to the list of things they would like to see in Iklin, a number reported that they would like to see more of the following (with less than 1% for each): shops such as clothes shops, garbage collection skips, cleanliness and public services such as Enemalta and Waterworks services, more wardens and police presence, also echoed in some interviews with comments such as, *"They talk a lot but they don't enforce anything"* (Participant 9). Other proposals included a centre for the elderly, traffic speed bumps, creative spaces, more inclusive engaging of foreign residents, vegetarian and vegan restaurants, a library and less apartment blocks. Amongst the latter list of personal respondents' comments were once again additional remarks highlighting the need for more green areas, places to go for a walk and public spaces, once again bringing this topic to the forefront. Some in fact remarked that Iklin is well serviced by neighbouring towns and available spaces should be used for greener and public areas. The key highlights of these findings are displayed in Figure 10 above.

These views were also often reflected throughout the interviews and the focus group, with several participants expressing similar desires for the town. Amongst elderly groups, a need for improved pavements and walkways was also expressed, sharing that the current situation makes it harder for them to go out for a walk and sustain a health level of independence and activity. Participant 14 expressed, *"Il-bankini qegħdin biex iservu l-garaxxijiet mhux biex iservu n-nies"*. As superficial as a detail like this may seem, even things like having garbage bags on

pavements were brought up by this group as having an impact on their activities since because of at times reduced mobility it could present to be a challenge for them. Some expressed they often resort to walking past cars in the streets to avoid these issues. The elderly group in particular, expressed an important need for an overall healthy upkeep of the town and maintenance of its amenities that was sensitive and inclusive of all. Another related and frequently brought up matter was also the need for a guardian service around the town of Iklin. This in order to carry out surveillance of the area and alleviate frequent problems such as littering and to maintain some order around the town (similar to a warden service). Police presence was also considered to be lacking.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations



*“Jiena nara li hemm problemi,
però hemm soluzzjonijiet ukoll”*
(Participant 12)

The value of sense of community is largely recognised across literature. In addition to the benefits it brings to the community itself, it is also a major catalyst for positive behaviours and attitudes, as well as overall wellbeing for its members (e.g. Stevenson et al., 2014; McNamara et al., 2013). Undoubtedly, cultural events such as exhibitions and fairs (Manahasa & Manahasa, 2020), symbolic representations such as flags and monuments (Isaacs, 1975), and length of residence (Casakin et al., 2015; Hui et al., 2012) all contribute towards developing residents' sense of belonging within a particular space. Physical and aesthetic features of a locality to support the drawing out of town's identity (Manahasa & Manahasa, 2020; Belanche et al., 2017; Shao et al., 2017; Lewicka, 2011; Swanwick, 2009; Lalli, 1998; 1992), thereby strengthening the bonds its members form and associate with it.

Several changes brought about by modernity often bring new threats and challenges for the preservation, and even more so the creation of community identities. Rapid urban development for instance, largely impacts the identity of a place (Gür, E., & Heidari, 2019; Boussaa, 2018; Casakin, 2015; Yıldız et al., 2014; Lewicka, 2010). Precipitous development is in fact creating an urban landscape where the identities of towns are rapidly deteriorating. In addition, or in consequence to this, research also points at changes in social preferences, highlighting that over recent years, modernity may have given rise to a scenario where people may be favouring weaker social ties instead of strong community bonds, preferring personal space over communal association (Blackshaw, 2010; Florida, 2002), with some debating whether the concept of community is actually organic in nature at all (Shaw, 2008; MacGregor et al., 2001; Suttles, 1972). Either way, contemporary changes in modern life, such as increases in population densities and changing landscapes caused by construction developments often bring a considerable impact on the wellbeing of a town. They are linked to an array of environmental stressors (Zijlema et al., 2017; Lambert et al., 2015; Parra et al., 2010), mental health issues (Gong et al., 2016) and, in turn, can bring considerable distress and lower levels of social connection (Evans, 2003).

These challenges, however, also create opportunities for innovative, novel approaches towards developing and maintaining the wellbeing of communities. Communities, whether geographical or otherwise, present openings for connection, and in the face of increasing figures of loneliness rates and mental health struggles, are becoming ever so critical for the quality of life of individuals.

The community of Iklin is a relatively young one, established less than 40 years ago. Consisting mostly of a small group of young families at its inception, these residents established themselves within the town and along the years, invested in developing connections to give their locality a collective identity and a voice. The Għaqda Residenti Iklin, developed by the residents themselves in fact, brought the town's first body of representation, which was then followed by the establishment of the Iklin Local Government more recently in 1993. As the town's sense of community started to take shape however, Iklin was faced by new, considerable challenges. Changes in construction permits brought a wave of construction across large parts of the town, with apartment blocks replacing the once characteristic family homes. With it, this also brought an influx of new residents, impacting the town's population density and social bonds.

The town's layout is centred around its main and sole square, although its confines spread vastly, connecting its perimeters to several other larger localities. The square houses the Iklin Local Government's office as well as the town's parish church. A small playground is also present in the square, although many seem to feel it doesn't cater for the town's needs. As the only place of gathering of the town, also one that provides limited incentives to meet and linger in, this square presents considerably limited opportunities for resident's social exchanges and connection. The surrounding parts of Iklin outside the square consist mostly of a network of roads which, as a result of its centrality, quickly connect the town to popular destinations. A main advantage of the town for most residents, Iklin's central location, however, also often results in it being used by vehicles to intersect traffic junctions and traffic jams in the main road arteries that surround the town.

The dispersion and nature of houses around Iklin, combined with the distribution of different services around the town, gives rise to a phenomenon that is rather unique to this town. Residents from different areas of the town view the town as composed of distinct quarters, each with their own character and needs. Impacting the population of residents' sense of

community and togetherness therefore are not only external factors, but even a significant number of internal ones. Distinctions between the lifestyles and needs of residents from Iklin's different quarters were in fact highlighted by several participants. These were also evidenced in the issues expressed by residents, such as for instance, those from the lower areas of the town expressing concern over matters such as traffic, parking and pollution, which appeared to impact others from the upper area to a much lesser degree, if at all. Bringing together a group of residents may prove to be a challenge when the members of that community do not feel like they have shared interests. This distinction between Iklin's different quarters may also be accompanied by differences in resident profiles. Although it is unclear whether this is a feature pertaining to one or more specific 'quarters' of the town, or attributable to all residents across it, our finding seems to indicate that while a need for sense of community is valued by most participants, the value of privacy and personal space is also a strong element across many residents. A trait that is not exclusive to Iklin, but a trend across time, the need for strong social bonds may not be a priority to many of Iklin's residents. The success of developing a sense of community within such a context, therefore, may depend on creative and innovative ways to interpret what defines and characterises that community.

In this young, very rapidly growing and equally rapidly changing town, a combination of lack of places for people to gather, be it squares, bars, clubs, monuments or landmarks, a church parvis, or places for recreation, coupled with fading occasions and incentives for people to gather, has brought severe challenges to the residents' sense of cohesion within their community. While the Local Government boasts a chain of events put up for families, the elderly as well as children in the community, as the town grew, these on-off events don't seem to have caught up with the speed at which community ties were fading. Comments such as, "*Kultant ikun hawn xi lejla imma mhux regolari*" (Participant 20), highlighted how these may not have been sufficient to actively keep people coming together and sustain their enthusiasm towards this aim. Faced by the predicament of a global pandemic shortly after the current team of councillors was elected, notwithstanding the young and enthusiastic team, may have impacted the level of initiative and involvement these councillors were able to bring, and may have also influenced the degree to which their level of enthusiasm remained alive since then. Iklin's parish church, also recently established within the community, appears to be the town's main contributor when it comes to community cohesion and development. Providing several initiatives that address different age groups through regular gatherings largely run by community volunteers, Iklin's parish church is where most of the town's social pulse occurs. Regular meetings for children, youth, adults and the elderly alike are in fact organised by the parish church. The dependence on religious beliefs of these activities, however, may still mean

that other parts of the community are still not being addressed by these groups. In addition to the church and Local Government, Iklin's Scouts Group and the town's collaboration with the Iklin-Lija Football Club also extend opportunities for children and young residents to engage within their community and develop social connections, however rates of participation, particularly in the case of the football scene, are still considerably low. Nevertheless, the foundation of social groups addressing varied age brackets may serve as a platform for the development of more similar services that can attract residents' involvement.

As the years went by, what started as the Għaqda Residenti Iklin, on initiative of the residents themselves, is seen transforming gradually into a town where residents feel like they cannot connect. Particularly for long-term residents a predominant theme amongst concerns is in fact the town's lack of sense of community, with many reporting that construction developments and the changes these have brought to the population are undermining the previous sense of community that the town's first residents had seeded. Blaring across residents' voices is also the town's need for green spaces. Such is the craving for green elements across their town that even a compromise for a few trees in street corners and alleys comes across as a thought that brings relief and reassurance to residents. Consistent was the importance of green spaces resounding across participants from all sources of data gathered. Public spaces and places of leisure were also amongst their main highlights of ambitions for the town.



“Ma narahiex xi ħaġa impossibli fil-bandli, kieku per eżempju f’dik il-gazebo li hemm jew jivvintaw xi struttura, jien naf, biċċa kafetterija żgħira fejn dak li jkun tħajjar imur hemm biex joqgħod jieħu kafè u forsi jkun hemm xi parent ieħor u noqgħod nitkellem u nieħu l-kafe’ miegħu jew xi snack żgħir u tiġbidhom in-nies. Jew xi picnic area żgħira, 4 bankijiet, biex inti hemm spazju fejn il-pulmuni tagħna jieħdu naqra arja għax 4 sigriet qalgħuhom ukoll u għamluh konkos. Ikun hemm ħafna benefiċċji. Qed iġġib lill-komunità flimkien, tagħti opportunità lit-tfal jiċċaqalqu naqra mhux il-ħin kollu mqabbdin mal-playstation, qed tagħti opportunità fejn insiru nafu naqra lil xulxin”

(Participant 17)

All of the issues that were brought to light by participants in this research present long-standing as well as new challenges for the town of Iklin. These challenges, of course, also bring opportunities for community building and development through traditional as well as alternative means. The review of the literature and the findings from data collection exercises carried out for the purposes of this study lead to a number of recommendations:

1. **Legislative development frameworks**, whether addressing new developments, regeneration, embellishment or management of localities, including the community of Iklin, should be **sensitive to their contexts and the needs of residents**. This, especially because of the role these play in shaping the identity of a community and its impact on residents' wellbeing. While the Local Government may not directly be responsible for legislation, **representing residents' views** through the right political challenges whenever this is possible and relevant can in the very least, reassure residents that there is unity in the sentiment surround this controversial and largely impactful matter. Moreover, in the face of large construction waves, efforts towards the preservation of what is left of the town's rural areas, heritage and Outside-Development-Zones becomes critical.
2. **Commit to carrying the functions of the Local Government members in unison**, dedicating attention to elements of **teamwork, communication and collaboration amongst councillors**. Working as a team to strengthen the relationship and synergy between group members to generate ideas and enthusiasm in a united front can aid in delivery healthy services to the community. In Participant 2's words, "*Iridu jaqħtu naqra iktar input*". **Creating a fair and safe space amongst members of the Council** can also buffer any internal friction brought about by conflicting positions. Ultimately, it is the benefit of the town as a whole that has brought the team of councillors together and this should remain at the heart of its functions, beyond politics, votes or personal preferences.
3. **Regenerate Local Government members' initiative in creating new proposals for the community**. This can be done for instance, through encouraging and **working with sub-committees as well as through links with groups within the community such as the Scouts Group, ŽAK, to mention just a few**. not only to disseminate a sense of ownership and encourage involvement but also largely so that ideas and initiatives can be relevant to the groups in questions and address their realities. The distance and obstruction brought about by factors such as in large part the COVID-19 pandemic, may have contributed towards impacting the level of energy and enthusiasm that a newly elected, in the larger part youthful Council members brought along. Developments in the sub-committees' disciplines can bring fresh perspectives and ideas and yield progress

in the respective areas ranging from services catering for specific groups such as the elderly and those with disabilities as well as more general realms such as the environment. For instance, older residents, that is, those who have resided in Iklin longer, can be invited to set up an exhibition with photos from Iklin when they first moved there, possibly recounting anecdotes about the town. This could be developed further through related information panels around the town or in common areas such as the church and in order to incentivise participation and support with expenses, sponsors can be sought from local businesses who might want to support the initiative while using it as a channel to promote their business or products. This format can be applied to several other ideas relating to the different groups that form the entirety of the community of Iklin. Varied channels such as online and print material can be utilised for communication and involvement from sub-committee volunteers in order to gather ideas and enthusiasm to develop in this fields. For instance, an appealing postcard can be sent out to residents to drop off at the Council's offices or the church, where residents can select one of the sub-committees they feel most strongly about, propose a couple of improvements they could see in that area and maybe expressing whether they wish to attend an online (or in-person) meeting with the respective councillor in order to discuss these ideas further. Those interested can then be invited to participate in activities generated and contribute while also having a sense of ownership. Tapping into the Local Government's young team can bring renewed enthusiasm to attract and develop the creation of fresh initiatives and a new approach to collaborations with the Council and amongst residents.

4. **Listen to residents' voices and engage in public consultation.** One of the research participants commented, "*Il-kunsill huwa maqtugħ minn man-nies*" (Participant 10). Referring to the outcomes of this research, another commented, "*Ir-recommendations x'ha jgħri minnhom? Ħa jgħu shelved?*" (Participant 21) Engaging residents can be done through **regular activities**, for instance cultural ones, such as exhibitions and talks, thereby providing a space where a relationship of familiarity and trust with residents can be developed, while also creating a space for residents to connect with each other and enjoy cultural and education activities. Other ways to capture and connect with the views of groups within the community is to **create channels of communication with their representatives**, such as with the ŻAK, that can bring valuable insight about the experiences and views of youth in the community (potentially linking this with the respective councillor and sub-committee), the 60 Plus Group, that can shed light on the ideas and sentiments of the elderly community, as well as other groups. For instance, elderly participants commented on the fact that they did not know what was being planned regarding a new upcoming project (Anzjanità Attiva) that aimed at their group entailed. The involvement of interested parties and relevant stakeholders can enrich the

design process of activities, especially those that target them. Involving representatives from the community can not only support adequate development of initiatives but also enhance their sense of ownership and belonging along the process, while establishing positive bonds between the residents and decision-makers. Listening to people's views is essential not only in **building a rapport with residents** but also in guiding the practices of the Council forward. Whilst this research has brought about a commendable investment in bringing the residents' views to the forefront, the insight brought forward, and the results achieved here should not be an end to this process but the beginning of a conversation with residents and consequent action.

5. Based on the views of residents – both through this research as well as ongoing discussions, **draft a long-term plan for the community seeking the wellbeing of the town**. The involvement of residents in this exercise is critical not only because they are ultimately the end-receiver of initiatives and measures drawn up, but also because it brings stakeholder buy-in and ownership, whilst also making it possible for longer-term plans to withstand any changes in legislatures or councillors.
6. Given the unique tapestry of Iklin's community being made up of distinct areas each with distinct qualities and challenges, the **distribution of resources** across these areas should be sensitive to the realities of these quarters. Creating links with representatives of residents of these areas can also nurture channels of communication that can aid in understanding their respective, needs, concerns and suggestions for ways forward. This can aid in reducing the feeling of being the '*minsijin*' and of improving inclusion and development of all areas as is required.
7. Seek to **establish a new concept of community through alternative cultural practices**, creating a common ground for the post-modern community by providing an alternative way of thinking about community and cultural politics. Drawing on traditional practices and re-thinking these within today's realities can be valuable in paving the way through to the contemporary context. For instance, in response to the fast evolution of society as well as digital spaces, in addition to traditional door-to-door channels which may be better suited at reaching the older generations within the community, online tools such as social media, despite their limitations, can reconfigure the fostering of community connections, can potentially appeal more to younger individuals as well as potentially groups who prefer a more 'private' approach towards connecting. Establishing a bank of residents' email addresses for instance, can greatly widen channels of prompt communication with residents. Other creative alternatives could also include, for instance, the promotion (maybe through tapping into relevant funding) of roof gardens of vertical gardens on new buildings – this in turn could be linked to talks and

activities that the town has already been investing in such as Festa Fjuri and will in turn also be addressing the residents' craving for green elements.

8. **Urban planning** plays a key impact on individuals' wellbeing (Vidal et al., 2012). The introduction and upkeep of **aesthetic features and landmarks** can develop and nurture residents' sense of community identity and belonging. The resounding craving across participants for green areas and public spaces, together with their cries for the loss of the aesthetic balance that the town is losing because of construction, all points towards the need to **create spaces for leisure and people to meet**, with the backdrop of people hungry to see **green spaces and the introduction of trees and green elements** wherever these are possible. These can take many forms, such as the embellishment or refurbishment of a square to include more trees, fewer vehicles and maybe a few benches. Talks may already be underway in this respect, however it is important that these are followed-through in order to yield adequate and timely delivery. Additionally, the involvement of residents along the way, can aid in solidifying elements of trust, and communication channels with these, whilst also taking on board feedback gathered through this research project; the introduction and upkeep of aesthetic features such as water features, trees, information plaques, ambient lighting or light features, a painting, a statue, a friendly map of the area, artefacts that could for instance involve the Scouts group, etc. These, especially in areas that are heavily consumed by commercial activity, bringing personal touches that can bring pride to residents and embellish their environment.
9. Consider **stimulating cultural interests and awareness through initiatives** such as including the history of the locality (for instance, the presence of megalithic remains) into popular channels across the community encouraging residents and visitors alike to explore the roots of the town. An interest in one's roots may strengthen bonds with the town (Lewicka, 2005), instil a sense of pride and with that, encourage involvement in volunteering opportunities for the locality (Lewicka, 2005). This can be done through information talks (online or in person), print material, cultural walks, information panels located around the town, etc.
10. **Encourage civic participation**, including from new residents and hard-to-reach groups. **Culturally diverse activities** and events may enrich the town's tapestry and potentially attract different members of the community. These initiatives can provide spaces for the creation of bonds between previous and new residents. Against a backdrop of fast-paced development where personal bonds easily dissipate, social activity can bring a major strength that could distinguish different localities from one another (Shao et al., 2017). **Developing and investing in the continuations as well as introduction of**

ongoing popular activities that can bring the public to meet on 'neutral ground' and for a common goal can aid in establishing connections and participation.

11. **Further develop collaborations with the business community** present in Iklin in order to reduce the gap between these and residents and attempt to reach a balance of *modus operandi* that can be **mutually beneficial** as much as possible, in particular for residents who are directly impacted by the business community, that is, the lower parts of Iklin. Initiatives such as the sponsoring of recycling bins by the business community for residents are commendable. Similar initiatives, possibly following the recommendations of the research, such as the very loud call by residents for embellishment and introduction of greener areas, can be pursued through local-business sponsorships. Initiatives catering for specific target groups such as children could be discussed, such as, for instance, tapping into the assets of the local art gallery, the model shop and the services of the professional currently volunteering at the parish's multi-sensory room, to generate creative, educational, developmental or even therapeutic programmes entailing a series of sessions where children and families could meet and engage in a group, learning activity. Initiatives like these can support the Council in achieving the aims dictated by residents throughout this research, can service as the business sector's satisfying of their corporate social responsibilities while promoting their business, and overall, improve the quality of life of residents in the area.
12. **Support and develop from the initiatives of groups within the community that offer opportunities for social and developmental activities**, such as increasing awareness about the Iklin-Lija Football Club initiatives, those of the Scouts Group as well as those organised by the church. The Local Government's channels can serve as a channel to enhance awareness about these initiatives and encourage participation.
13. Seek to **introduce local services that can cater for the residents of the community**. These include amongst others, the service of the Silver Service Van for the elderly, as well as connections with entities such as Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ who work with youth.
14. Copus (2015) considered negotiations skills, alliance building and persuasion to be critical to the role of councillors. In this respect, while not straightforward, assess the possibility of **developing links with land-owners in the upper rural areas** of Iklin in order to **negotiate an agreement for land to be safely accessible for residents** or visitors. This has the potential to alleviate the critical deficiency in green areas that the residents are experience and could be used for a walk in the countryside, or maybe even for the allocation of small allotments of land to residents and develop a community growing experience. An initiative like this could also aid in the creation of bonds amongst residents and the development of a sense of community. Urban green spaces bring several advantages through giving people access to experiencing nature in their town

(Dymek et al., 2021). Moreover, spaces such as these green lungs in urban environments should be protected and safeguarded from further development.

15. Consider longer-term planning towards proposing the development of **underground parking** or sections of road networks areas that can boast **embellishments and gardens** above them.
16. Naturally, **maintain the upkeep** of all areas of Iklin, in particular those susceptible to more wear and tear due to increased passage of people, traffic and commercial vehicles passing through. This includes elements such painting of road markings, bins, refuse disposal, etc.
17. Commit to listening to the loudest of people's cries, that is, **creating more green spaces. Long-term, sustainable solutions** include for instance, planting indigenous trees (that can survive with minimal water and care demands) in the ground wherever this is possible, such as in corners, larger walkways, squares, etc. Residents can also be invited to participate in these initiatives by for instance, being offered indigenous tree seeds to plant at home, being invited to planting events, putting up information panels about the distinct trees being planted, and so on. Initiatives like these can be carried out through the Council's channels (typically through ELC), however other creative routes can involve one or more of the several local NGOs focused on related issues to collaborate with the town in order to develop and sustain a project to cater for this demand. Groups such as Grow-10-Trees, Saġġar, Nature Trust (who also work with schools and could involve children in the area), amongst several others can be a source of knowledge to be shared with residents and to guide on practical ways forward to develop the town's green lungs.
18. In addition to the above, the Local Government could mobilise to **long-awaited planting of trees that was planned for the B'Kara bypass**. Through the right political channels, these trees or if no longer possible due to construction, alternative trees in other areas should be given priority to the introduction and increasing of green areas and green elements within the community.
19. **Collaborate with the town's relevant groups or individuals**, for instance, through the already-establish church groups, in particular when it comes to specific sectors such as youth and the elderly. This in order to gather the views and bring insight from their experience on the running of activities for these parties and from there develop beyond the confines of religious beliefs to address the realities of the entire town's population. Ongoing services such as a youth club or regular meetings for groups can support the establishment of connections and a support network towards instilling a sense of community and belonging. One-off activities can also aid in this pursuit and should, in all cases, be culturally sensitive and inclusive off different religious-beliefs, ethnicities,

etc. For instance, a recent phenomenon in the Maltese Island is the door to door trick-or-treating associated with Halloween. From data gathered it emerged that the residents of Iklin have autonomously started carrying out this activity that can nurture the development of bonds across residents. The role of the Local Government in catering for the town's needs should look to support and develop opportunities for connection whenever this is possible.

20. Consider piloting a project involving **alternative means of transport** in order to provide easier commuting and access to nearby-locality amenities. Given the vicinity of the town to nearby sites, including some substantial green areas, as well as the vast provision and reliance on services in neighbourhood towns, promoting or facilitating the use of alternative means of transport has the potential to buffer several of the issues identified, while contributing to defining the town as a greener community. With the call for green spaces being the loudest across residents, this challenge could very well be transformed into an opportunity to create a town's identity centred on this resounding resident priority. This can be achieved through services such as a shared shuttle bus service, or the introduction of a cycling culture, even though the latter might not always appeal to older residents, although not necessarily. Initiatives such as these could alleviate the impact of barriers imposed by the saturated parking situation, reduce traffic congestion, promote healthier lifestyles and overall, generate channels for improved resident wellbeing by providing easier access to sought after destinations, while also forming Iklin's drive towards a **greener way of living**. Although the introduction of new approaches to challenges might require time and effort for its recipients to adjust, investing in these strongly and accompanying them with proper promotional campaigns and the involvement of target recipients throughout their design-process, can generate novel approaches to the issues the town is facing. If successful, ideas such as these could be the foundations for Iklin's identity, transforming it from a "*concrete jungle*" (*Participant 1*) into **Malta's first 'green locality'**. A project such as this can also be developed further to establish it as part of Iklin's identity, maybe through links with local cycling groups, the introduction of a network of cycling routes, or it could varied to appeal to more people, such as having cycling lines accompanied by pedestrian lanes (void of parking, cars, etc.) making a walk around the town easier and safer to do, potentially becoming an attraction for visitors from other towns¹.
21. **Give time to time.** The development of a sense of community is a process that needs to simmer and requires time to come about. As a young town, currently housing what are, at most, its second or third generation of residents, and also one that is facing new,

¹ See for instance: <https://visitbristol.co.uk/things-to-do/sports-and-adventure/cycling>

fast changes, long-term visions, persistence and commitment towards developing the identity and sense of community of Iklin are key in making sure this happens. Participant 2 explained this well when they said, “*Kollox irid jinbena over time*”. Participant 12 too augured for the work of this research to be the “*sowing of the seed*” for the flowers, plants, and trees to grow from it in years to come. The outcomes of initiatives may not be immediate. Neither are they often tangible. Nevertheless, continuing slowly but surely in the right direction and through the delivery of suitable projects, can gradually support the drawing out and development of the Ikliniži’s community.

22. As residents, remember that while top-down initiatives towards Community Development can benefit the improvement of a sense of identity and community, it is ultimately its residents that form the knitwork that drives a town. Participant 20 expressed, “*Dik tiği min-nies*”. Expressing a shared desire across participants for their town to own a sense of community, residents too are key players in making this ambition possible. A balance of policies and initiatives, enforcement and upkeep are essential in creating a framework for a town to develop. But none of these will yield positive outcomes unless resident responsibility and participation towards these aims is present.

Recommendations for further research

While this research brings forward several valuable findings and recommendations, gaps in knowledge that could benefit the community of Iklin through further investigation have also been identified:

1. Seek the views of new groups within the community. These include, for instance, the group of Russian-speakers that were made reference to during interviews, as well as other members of the community who may have not been reached through the channels used for selection of participants across interviews and the focus group and who may have not felt incentivised or sufficiently-involved community to participate in the questionnaire. Efforts to reach hard to reach groups and listen to their views can address this factor.
2. Investigate the finding that emerged from this study regarding the distinct ‘quarters’ of Iklin. This aspect of Iklin’s community may hold a certain momentum and impact on the community’s identity and development. Further understanding of the particular views, needs, circumstances and distinctions and similarities across these areas can aid in the bridging of the town’s tapestry together.
3. Examine current knowledge addressing how social media and online platforms can be applied in today’s world towards driving Community Development.

References

1. Abrams, D., & Hogg, M. A. (2006). *Social identifications: A social psychology of intergroup relations and group processes*. London: Routledge.
2. Abrams, P. (1980). Social change, social networks and neighbourhood care, *Social Work Service*, 22.
3. Agarwal, R., Gupta, A., & Kraut, R. (2008). Editorial Overview - The Interplay Between Digital and Social Networks. *Information Systems Research*, 19(3), 2.
4. Albanesi, C., Cicognani, E., & Zani, B. (2006). Sense of community, civic engagement and social well-being in Italian adolescents. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 17, 387–406.
5. Altman, I., & Low, S. (1992). *Place attachment*. New York: Plenum.
6. Altschuler, A., Somkin, C. P. & Adler, N. E. (2004). Local services and amenities, neighbourhood social capital, and health. *Social Science and Medicine*, 59(6), 1219–1230.
7. Ancilleri, C. (2015). *School generated transport needs and impact on traffic flow in Iklin*. [Higher Diploma dissertation, University of Malta]. Open Access Repository. Retrieved June 26, 2021, from <https://www.um.edu.mt/library/oar/handle/123456789/24569>
8. Anon. (1967, September 22). *Discovery of Megalithic Temple* (pp. 9). The Times of Malta.
9. Azzopardi, A. (2015). Young people manoeuvring in the religious feast. In A. Azzopardi (Ed.). *Young People and the Festa in Malta* (pp. 19-50). Mqabba: Society of St. Mary and King George V Band Club.
10. Azzopardi, A. (1999). *Fdalijiet Puniċi f'Birkirkara tal-qedem*. Programm tal-festa Sant'Elena Imp. Awg. fil-Bażilika Kolleġjata ta' Birkirkara, 111-116.
11. Baum, F. E., & Palmer, C. (2002). 'Opportunity structures': urban landscape, social capital and health promotion in Australia. *Health Promotion International*, 17(4), 351–361.
12. Bauman, Z. (2000). *Liquid Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
13. Bauman, Z. (2002). Cultural Variety or Variety of Cultures? In S. Malešević & M. Haugaard (Eds.) *Making Sense of Collectivity*. London: Pluto Press.
14. Bauman, Z. (2006). *Liquid Fear*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
15. Bauman, Z. (2007). *Consuming Life*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
16. Belanche, D., Casaló, L. V., & Flavián, C. (2017). Understanding the cognitive, affective and evaluative components of social urban identity: Determinants, measurement, and practical consequences. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 50(4), 138-153.
17. Bentley, I., Alcock, A., Murrain, P., McGlynn, S., & Smith, G. P. (1985) *Responsive Environments*. Architectural Press, London.
18. Berkowitz, B. (2000). Community and neighbourhood organization. In J. Rappaport, & E. Seidman (Eds.), *Handbook of community psychology* (pp. 331–357). New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.
19. Bezzina, F., Cassar, V., Azzopardi, J. G., & McKiernan, P. (2015). The matching of motivations to affordances among maltese elected local government volunteers: Implications for sustaining civil society. *Journal of Global Responsibility*, 6(2), 178-194.
20. Blackshaw, T. (2010). *Key concepts in community studies*. SAGE Publications Ltd.
21. Bonaiuto, M., Aiello, A., Perugini, M., Bonnes, M., & Ercolani, A. P. (1999). Multidimensional perception of residential environment quality and neighbourhood attachment in the urban environment. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 19(4), 331-352.
22. Bonanno, A. (1981). Two archaeological sites recently discovered at I-Iklin. *Hyphen*, 2(5), 212 – 220.

23. Bonnici, C. (2009, February 15). *Għeluq is-sittin sena mit-twaqqif ta' Lija Athletic F.C. - rinnovazzjoni li saret fil-klabb*. Festa tas-Salvatur, [Lija], 67-73.
24. Boussaa, D. (2018). Urban regeneration and the search for identity in historic cities. *Sustainability*, 10(1), 48.
25. Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, 77-101.
26. Briffa, J. M. (1998). Siti arkeoloġiċi fl-Iklin. *Tabor* [festa tas-Salvatur, Lija], 69 - 71.
27. Brown, B., & Perkins, D. (1992). Disruptions in place attachment. In I. Altman, & S. M. Low (Eds.), *Place Attachment* (pp. 279-304). Human Behaviour and Environment: Advances in Theory and Research, Vol. 12. Springer, Boston, MA.
28. Brown, B., Perkins, D. D., & Brown, G. (2003). Place attachment in a revitalizing neighbourhood: Individual and block levels of analysis. *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 23(3), 259–271.
29. Brown, B. B., Perkins, D. D., & Brown, G. (2004). Incivilities, place attachment and crime: Block and individual effects. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 24(3), 359–371.
30. Brown, B., & Werner, C. (1985) Social cohesiveness, territoriality and holiday decorations: the influence of cul-de-sacs. *Environment and Behaviour*, 17(5), 539-565.
31. Brown, G., Brown, B., & Perkins, D. (2004). New housing as neighbourhood revitalisation: place attachment and confidence amongst residents. *Environment and Behaviour*, 36(6), 749-775.
32. Bugeja, A. (2000). Rediscovering forgotten sites: A megalithic site at I-Iklin. *The Oracle*, 1, 39 – 40.
33. Canetti, D., Halperin, E., Sharvit, K., & Hobfoll, S. E. (2009). A new stress-based model of political extremism personal exposure to terrorism, psychological distress, and exclusionist political attitudes. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 53(3), 363–389.
34. Carmona, M., Tiesdell, S., Heath, T. & Oc, T. (2003). *Public Places Urban Spaces: The Dimensions of Urban Design*. Oxford: Elsevier.
35. Carr, S., Francis, M., Rivlin, L. G., & Stone, A. M. (1992). *Public Space*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
36. Casakin, H., Hernández, B., & Ruiz, C. (2015). Place attachment and place identity in Israeli cities: The influence of city size. *Cities*, 42(B), 224-230.
37. Cassar, G. (2015). The Maltese Festa: A Crossover of Traditional and Contemporary Cultural Realities. In A. Azzopardi (Ed.). *Young People and the Festa in Malta* (pp. 1-18). Mqabba: Society of St. Mary and King George V Band Club.
38. Chow, K., & Healey, M. (2008). Place attachment and place identity: First-year undergraduates making the transition from home to university. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 28(4), 362-372.
39. Christens, B. D. (2012). Targeting empowerment in community development: A community psychology approach to enhancing local power and well-being. *Community Development Journal*, 47, 538–554.
40. Christens, B. D., Speer, P. W., & Peterson, N. A. (2016). Assessing community participation: Comparing self-reported participation data with organizational attendance records. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 57, 415–425.
41. Clarke, S., Gilmour, R., & Garner, S. (2007). Home, Identity and Community Cohesion. In M. Wetherell, M. Laflèche & R. Berkeley (Eds.). *Identity, Ethnic Diversity and Community Cohesion* (pp. 87–101). London: Sage.
42. Copus, C. (2015). *In defence of councillors*. Manchester University Press.
43. Copus, C., Sweeting, D., & Wingfield, M. (2013). Repoliticising and redemocratising local democracy and the public realm: Why we need councillors and councils. *Policy and Politics*, 41(3), 389-408.

44. Córdova, A., & España-Nájera, A. (2021). Do Multi-Party Municipal Councils Improve Local Governance? Municipal Councillors' Opinions in El Salvador. *Journal of Politics in Latin America*, 13(2), 192-218.
45. Council of Europe (2000). European Landscape Convention [webpage]. Retrieved July 16, 2021, from <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/176>
46. Cruwys, T., Haslam, S. A., Dingle, G. A., Haslam, C., & Jetten, J. (2014). Depression and social identity an integrative review. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 18(3), 215–238.
47. Cuba, L., & Hummon, D. (1993). A place to call home: Identification with dwelling, community, and region. *Sociology Quarterly*, 34(1), 111–131.
48. Dadvand, P., Bartoll, X., Basagaña, X., Dalmau-Bueno, A., Martinez, D., Ambros, A., Cirach, M., Triguero-Mas, M., Gascon, M., Borrell, C., & Nieuwenhuijsen, M. J. (2016). Green spaces and general health: roles of mental health status, social support, and physical activity. *Environment international*, 91, 161-167.
49. Davison, G. (2013). Place-making or place-claiming? Creating a “Latino Quarter” in Oakland, California. *Urban Design International*, 18(3), 200–216
50. Deaux, K. (1996). Social identification. In E. T. Higgins & A. W. Kruglanski (Eds.), *Social psychology: Handbook of basic principles* (pp. 777–798). The Guilford Press.
51. De Battista, J. V. (2015). Postal Diary 21st August 2015- 24th November 2015. *Journal of the Malta Philatelic Society*, 45(1), 34 – 47.
52. Deener, A. (2010). The ‘black section’ of the neighbourhood: Collective visibility and collective invisibility as sources of place identity. *Ethnography*, 11(1), 45-67.
53. Deffner, A. (2007). *Place marketing, local identity and cultural planning: The CultMark INTERREG IIIc project*. Discussion Paper Series, 13, 367-380.
54. Deidun, A. (2017, July 23). Using the law to chop down trees (pp. 26). The Sunday Times of Malta.
55. Delanty, G. (2003). *Community*. London: Routledge.
56. Dellarocas, C. (2006). Strategic Manipulation of Internet Opinion Forums: Implications for Consumers and Firms. *Management Science*, 52(10), 1577-1581.
57. Denyer, D., & Tranfield, D. (2009). *Producing a systematic review*. In *The Sage handbook of organizational research methods* (pp. 671–689). Sage Publications Ltd.
58. Department of Information, Malta (1976). *Report on the working of Government Departments*. Repubblika ta' Malta. Retrieved June 24, 2021, from <https://culture.gov.mt/en/culturalheritage/Documents/form/MAR1975-76.pdf>
59. Devine-Wright, P. (2009). Rethinking NIMBYism: The role of place attachment and place identity in explaining place-protective action. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 19(6), 426–441.
60. Dixon, J., & Durrheim, K. (2000). Displacing place-identity: A discursive approach to locating self and other. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 39(1), 27–44.
61. Drury, J., Cocking, C., & Reicher, S. (2009). Everyone for themselves? A comparative study of crowd solidarity among emergency survivors. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 48(3), 487–506.
62. Dymek, D., Wilkaniec, A., Bednorz, L., & Szczepańska, M. (2021). Significance of Allotment Gardens in Urban Green Space Systems and Their Classification for Spatial Planning Purposes: A Case Study of Poznań, Poland. *Sustainability*, 13, 11044.
63. Dzhambov, A., Hartig, T., Markevych, I., Tilov, B., & Dimitrova, D. (2018). Urban residential greenspace and mental health in youth: Different approaches to testing multiple pathways yield different conclusions. *Environmental research*, 160, 47-59.
64. Easterbrook, M. J., & Vignoles, V. L. (2015). When friendship formation goes down the toilet: Design features of shared accommodation influence interpersonal bonds and well-being. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 54(1), 125–139.

65. Elias, N., & Scotson, J. L. (1994). *The Established and the Outsiders*. (2nd Ed.). London: Sage.
66. European Commission (2011). *Third demography report. 2011 Third Demography Report: population is becoming older and more diverse*. Retrieved August 21, 2021, from https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/MEMO_11_209
67. Evans, G. W. (2003). The built environment and mental health. *Journal of urban health*, 80(4), 536-555.
68. Faculty for Social Wellbeing (2022). *[internal findings]*. University of Malta.
69. Fan, Y., Das, K. V., & Chen, Q. (2011). Neighborhood green, social support, physical activity, and stress: Assessing the cumulative impact. *Health & place*, 17(6), 1202-1211.
70. Feldman, R. M. (1990). Settlement-identity: Psychological bonds with home places in a mobile society. *Environment and Behaviour*, 22(2), 183-229.
71. Firth, C., Maye, D., & Pearson, D. (2011). Developing “community” in community gardens. *Local Environment*, 16(6), 555-568.
72. Florida, R. (2002). *The rise of the creative class*. New York: Basic Books.
73. Fornara, F. (2010). Are “attractive” built places as restorative and emotionally positive as natural places in the urban environment? In M. Bonaiuto, M. Bonnes, A. M. Nenci, & G. Carrus (Eds.), *Urban diversities, biosphere and wellbeing: Designing and managing our common environment*. Hogrefe & Huber, Gottingen.
74. Fornara, F., & Troffa, R. (2009). Restorative experiences and perceived affective qualities in different built and natural urban places. In H. Turgut Yildiz, & Y. Ince Guney (Eds.), *Revitalising Built Environments: Requalifying old places for new uses. Proceedings of the IAPS-CSBE & Housing Networks International Symposium* [CD-ROM, pp. 1-10]. Istanbul: Istanbul Technical University.
75. Fried, M. (2000). Continuities and discontinuities of place. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 20(3), 193–205.
76. Fritsche, I., Barth, M., Jugert, P., Masson, T., & Reese, G. (2017). A social identity model of pro-environmental action (SIMPEA). *Psychological Review*, 125, 245–269.
77. Fritz, J. M. (2014). Chapter 2: Essentials of Community Intervention. In J. M. Fritz & J. Rhéaume, *Community Intervention* (pp. 15 – 30). Springer, New York, NY.
78. Galindo, M. P., & Hidalgo, M. C. (2005). Aesthetic preferences and attribution of meaning. Environmental categorisation processes in the evaluation of urban scenes. *International Journal of Psychology*, 40(1), 19-27.
79. Gallagher, S., Meaney, S., & Muldoon, O. T. (2014). Social identity influences stress appraisals and cardiovascular reactions to acute stress exposure. *British Journal of Health Psychology*, 19(3), 566–579.
80. Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and self-identity. Self and society in the late modern age*. Cambridge: Polity Press & Blackwell Publishers.
81. Gifford, R. (1997). *Environmental psychology. Principle and Practice*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
82. Gillespie, A. M., Obregon, R., El Asawi, R., Richey, C., Manoncourt, E., Joshi, K., & Quereshi, S. (2016). Social mobilization and community engagement central to the Ebola response in West Africa: Lessons for future public health emergencies. *Global Health: Science and Practice*, 4, 626–646.
83. Giovanni Curmi Higher Secondary School (n.d.) *About us* [webpage]. Retrieved June 26, 2021, from <https://gchss.edu.mt/>
84. Giuliani, M. V., & Feldman, R. (1993). Place attachment in a developmental and cultural context. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 13(3), 267-274.
85. Giuliani, M. V. (2003). Theory of attachment and place attachment. In M. Bonnes, T. Lee, & M. Bonaiuto (Eds.), *Psychological theories for environmental issues* (pp. 137-170). Aldershot: Ashgate.

86. Gong, Y., Palmer, S., Gallacher, J., Marsden, T., & Fone, D. (2016). A systematic review of the relationship between objective measurements of the urban environment and psychological distress. *Environment international*, 96, 48-57.
87. Government of Malta (n.d.). *Iklin – Mayor and Councillors* [webpage]. Retrieved June 25, 2021, from <https://localgovernment.gov.mt/en/lc/iklin/Pages/The-Local-Council/Mayor-and-Councillors.aspx>
88. Gray, D., & Stevenson, C. (2019). How can “we” help? Exploring the role of shared social identity in the experiences and benefits of volunteering. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 30(4), 341–353.
89. Green, G., & Haines, A. (2016a). The community development process. In *Asset building & community development* (pp. 78-110). SAGE Publications, Inc.
90. Green, G., & Haines, A. (2016b). The role of assets in community-based development. In *Asset building & community development* (pp. 1-31). SAGE Publications, Inc.
91. Greenaway, K. H., Haslam, S. A., Cruwys, T., Branscombe, N. R., Ysseldyk, R., & Heldreth, C. (2015). From “we” to “me”: Group identification enhances perceived personal control with consequences for health and well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 109(1), 53–74.
92. Greijdanus, H., de Matos Fernandes, C. A., Turner-Zwinkels, F. et al. (2020). The psychology of online activism and social movements: relations between online and offline collective action. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 35, 49–54.
93. Gu, B., Konana, P., Rajagopalan, B., & Chen, H. W. M. (2007). Competition Among Virtual Communities and User Valuation: The Case of Investing-Related Communities. *Information Systems Research*, 18(1), 68-78.
94. Guardia, J., & Pol, E. (2002). A critical study of theoretical models of sustainability through structural equation systems. *Environment and Behaviour*, 34(1), 137–149.
95. Gür, E., & Heidari, N. (2019). Challenge of identity in the urban transformation process: The case of Celiktepe, Istanbul. *A|Z ITU Journal of the Faculty of Architecture*, 16(1), 127–144.
96. Gustafson, P. (2001). Roots and routes. Exploring the relationship between place attachment and mobility. *Environment and Behaviour*, 33(5), 667-686.
97. Haapala, A. (2003). The Urban Identity: The City as a Place to Dwell. In V. Sarapik, & K. Tüür (Eds.), *Place and Location III* (pp. 13-24). Estonian Academy of Arts.
98. Hanley, L. (2007a). *Estates: An Intimate History*. London: Granta.
99. Hanley, L. (2007b, May 24). My new old neighbours. *The Guardian*. Retrieved June 28, 2021, from <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2007/may/24/comment.society>
100. Haslam, S. A. (2014). Making good theory practical: Five lessons for an applied social identity approach to challenges of organizational, health, and clinical psychology. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 53(1), 1–20.
101. Haslam, C., Cruwys, T., Chang, M. X. L., Eckley, B., Buckingham, H., & Channon, E. (2020). Community group membership protects the well-being of adults experiencing socio-economic disadvantage. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 30(4), 381–387.
102. Haslam, C., Jetten, J., Cruwys, T., Dingle, G., & Haslam, S. A. (2018). *The new psychology of health: Unlocking the social cure*. New York: Routledge.
103. Haslam, S. A., Jetten, J., Postmes, T., & Haslam, C. (2009). Social identity, health and well-being: An emerging agenda for applied psychology. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 58(1), 1–23.
104. Haslam, S. A., Postmes, T., & Ellemers, N. (2003). More than a metaphor: Organizational identity makes organizational life possible. *British Journal of Management*, 14(4), 357–369.
105. Hawtin, M., Hughes, G. & Percy-Smith, J. (1994). *Community Profiling. Auditing Social Needs*. Buckingham: OUP.

106. Hernández, B., Hidalgo, M. C., Salazar-Laplace, M. E., & Hess, S. (2007). Place attachment and place identity in natives and non-natives. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 27(4), 310–319.
107. Hidalgo, M. C., & Hernández, B. (2001). Place Attachment: Conceptual and Empirical Questions. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 21(3), 273-281.
108. Holtan, M. T., Dieterlen, S. L., & Sullivan, W. C. (2015). Social life under cover: tree canopy and social capital in Baltimore, Maryland. *Environment and behavior*, 47(5), 502-525.
109. Hornsey, M. J. (2008). Social identity theory and self-categorization theory: A historical review. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 2(1), 204–222.
110. Hui, E. C. M., Zhong, J., & Yu, K. (2012). Mobility and work-residence matching for new immigrants in Hong Kong. *Habitat International*, 36(4), 444-451.
111. Hummon, D. M. (1986). City mouse, country mouse: The persistence of community identity. *Qualitative Sociology*, 9, 3–25.
112. Hummon, D. M. (1992). Community attachment: local sentiment and sense of place. In I. Altman, & S. Low (Eds.), *Place attachment* (pp. 252-278). New York: Plenum
113. Hutchison, E. (2010). Trauma and the politics of emotions: Constituting identity, security and community after the Bali bombing. *International Relations*, 24(1), 65–86.
114. Iklin Scout Group (n.d.). Home [Facebook page]. Retrieved June 29, 2021, from <https://www.facebook.com/iklinscouts/>
115. Isaacs, H. L. (1975). *Idols of the tribe: Group identity and political change*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
116. Jacobs, J. (1961). *The death and life of great American cities*. New York: Random House.
117. Jałowiecki, B. (2000). *Społeczna Przestrzeń Metropolii (Social space of a metropolis)*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe 'Scholar'.
118. Jetten, J., Haslam, C., & Haslam, S. A. (2012). *The social cure: Identity, health and well-being*. Hove: Psychology Press.
119. Jiang, Y., & Zhen, F. (2021). The role of community service satisfaction in the influence of community social capital on the sense of community belonging: a case study of Nanjing, China. *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*. Web.
120. Johnson, N. (2007). Building an integrated society. In M. Wetherell, M. Laflèche & R. Berkeley (Eds.), *Identity, ethnic diversity and community cohesion* (pp. 24-33). SAGE Publications Ltd.
121. Jörgensen, B. S., & Stedman, R. C. (2001). Sense of place as an attitude: Lakeshore owners attitudes toward their properties. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 21(3), 233–248.
122. Jörgensen, B. S., & Stedman, R. C. (2006). A comparative analysis of predictors of sense of place dimensions: Attachment to, dependence on, and identification with lakeshore properties. *Journal of Environmental Management*, 79(3), 316-327.
123. Kellezi, B., & Reicher, S. (2012). Social cure or social curse? The psychological impact of extreme events during the Kosovo conflict. In J. Jetten, C. Haslam, & S. A. Haslam (Eds.), *The social cure: identity, health and well-being* (pp. 217–233). Hove: Psychology Press.
124. Kenny, S. (2020). Covid-19 and community development. *Community Development Journal*, 55(4), 699–703.
125. Kersting, N., & Vetter, A. (Eds.). (2003). *Reforming local government in Europe*. Opladen: Leske + Budrich.
126. Khan, S. S., Hopkins, N., Tewari, S., Srinivasan, N., Reicher, S. D., & Ozakinci, G. (2014). Efficacy and well-being in rural north India: The role of social identification with a large-scale community identity. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 44(7), 787–798.

127. Kingsley, J. Y., & Townsend, M. (2006). 'Dig In' to social capital: community gardens as mechanisms for growing urban social connectedness. *Urban Policy and Research*, 24(4), 525–537.
128. Knez, I. (2005). Attachment and identity as related to a place and its perceived climate. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 25(2), 207-218.
129. Knox, P. (1987). *Urban Social Geography: An introduction*. (2nd Ed.). Harlow: Longman.
130. Kretzmann, J. P., McKnight, J. L., & Sheehan, G. (1997). *A guide to capacity inventories: Mobilizing the community skills of local residents*. Chicago: ACTA Publications.
131. Kwok, K. O., Li, K. K., Chan, H. H. H., Yi, Y. Y., Tang, A., Wei, W. I., & Wong, S. Y. S. (2020). Community responses during early phase of COVID-19 epidemic, Hong Kong. *Emerging Infectious Diseases*, 26, 1575–1579.
132. Kyle, G. T., Graefe, A., & Manning, R. (2005). Testing the dimensionality of place attachment in recreational settings. *Environment and Behaviour*, 37(2), 153–177.
133. Kyle, G., Graefe, A., Manning, R., & Bacon, J. (2004). Effects of place attachment on users' perceptions of social and environmental conditions in a natural setting. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 24(2), 213–224.
134. Kyle, G., Mowen, A. J. & Tarrant, M. (2004). Linking place preferences with place meaning: An examination of the relationship between place motivation and place attachment. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 24(4), 439-454.
135. Lalli, M. (1988). Urban Identity. In D. Canter, J. C. Jesuino, L. Soczka, G. M. Stephenson (Eds.), *Environmental Social Psychology* (pp. 303-311). NATO ASI Series (Series D: Behavioural and Social Sciences), Vol. 45. Springer, Dordrecht.
136. Lalli, M. (1992). Urban-related identity: Theory, measurement, and empirical findings. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 12(4), 285-303.
137. Lambert, K. G., Nelson, R. J., Jovanovic, T., & Cerdá, M. (2015). Brains in the city: Neurobiological effects of urbanization. *Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews*, 58, 107-122.
138. Laurence, J. (2009). The effect of ethnic diversity and community disadvantage on social cohesion: A multi-level analysis of social capital and interethnic relations in UK communities. *European Sociological Review*, 27(1), 70–89.
139. Leidner, D. E., Koch, H., & Gonzalez, E. (2010). Assimilating Generation Y IT New Hires into USAA's Workforce: The Role of an Enterprise 2.0 System. *MIS Quarterly Executive*, 9(4), 229-242.
140. Lewicka, M. (2005). Ways to make people active: The role of place attachment, cultural capital, and neighbourhood ties. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 25(4), 381-395.
141. Lewicka, M. (2008). Place attachment, place identity, and place memory: Restoring the forgotten city past. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 28(3), 209-231.
142. Lewicka, M. (2010). What makes neighbourhood different from home and city? Effects of place scale on place attachment. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 30(1), 35-51.
143. Lewicka, M. (2011). Place attachment: How far have we come in the last 40 years? *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 31(3), 207-230.
144. Lidström, A., Baldersheim, H., Copus, C., Hlynsdóttir, E. M., Kettunen, P., & Klimovský, D. (2016). Reforming Local Councils and the Role of Councillors: A Comparative Analysis of Fifteen European Countries. In S. Kuhlmann, & G. Bouckaert (Eds). *Local Public Sector Reforms in Times of Crisis. Governance and Public Management*. Palgrave Macmillan, London.
145. Low, S. M., & Altman, I. (1992). Place attachment: a conceptual inquiry. In I. Altman, & S. M. Low (Eds.), *Place attachment* (pp. 1–12). London: Plenum Press.
146. Lundqvist, H. (2011). *Is it Worth it? On the Returns to Holding Political Office*. Job Market Paper, IEB Working Paper N. 2013/014. Retrieved August 1, 2021 from https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2341119

147. Lynch, K. (1960). *The image of the city*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
148. MacGregor, S., May, M., Page, R., & Brunsdon, E. (2001). *The problematic community, Understanding Social Problems: Issues in Social Policy*. Blackwell.
149. Madanipour, A. (1996). *Design of Urban Space*. Wiley, New York.
150. Maloney-Krichmar, D., & Preece, J. (2005). A Multilevel Analysis of Sociability, Usability, and Community Dynamics in an Online Health Community. *ACM Transactions on Computer-Human Interaction*, 12(2), 201.
151. Malta Local Government (n.d. a). *Geography* [webpage]. Retrieved June 26, 2021, from <https://localgovernment.gov.mt/en/lc/iklin/Pages/Locality/Geography.aspx>
152. Malta Local Government (n.d. b). *History* [webpage]. Retrieved June 26, 2021, from <https://localgovernment.gov.mt/en/lc/iklin/Pages/Locality/History.aspx>
153. Manahasa, E., & Manahasa, O. (2020). Defining urban identity in a post-socialist turbulent context: The role of housing typologies and urban layers in Tirana. *Habitat International*, 102, 102202.
154. Manzo, L. C. (2003). Beyond House and Haven: Toward a Revisioning of Emotional Relationships with Places. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 23(1), 47-61.
155. Marlowe, J. & Chubb, L. A. (2021). Social media and (im)mobility: implications for community development, *Community Development Journal*, 56(4), 587–607.
156. Marston, C., Renedo, A., & Miles, S. (2020). Community participation is crucial in a pandemic. *Lancet*, 395, 1676–1678.
157. Mazumdar, S., Mazumdar, S., Docuayan, F., & McLaughlin, C. M. (2000). Creating a sense of place: The Vietnamese-Americans and little Saigon. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 20(4), 319–333.
158. McCabe, A. & Harris, K. (2021). Theorizing social media and activism: where is community development? *Community Development Journal*, 56(2), 318–337.
159. Micallef, J. (2014). Letter Circular HR/19/2014 [webpage]. Retrieved June 29, 2021, from <https://education.gov.mt/en/Circulars/Human-Resources-Circulars/Circulars2014/2014/19.pdf>
160. Ministry for Health, Malta (2020a). *B’Kara Health Centre* [webpage]. Government of Malta. Retrieved June 29, 2021, from <https://deputyprimeminister.gov.mt/en/phc/Pages/Health-Centres/BKara-Health-Centre.aspx>
161. Ministry for Health, Malta (2020b). *Malta Community Clinics* [webpage]. Government of Malta. Retrieved June 29, 2021, from <https://deputyprimeminister.gov.mt/en/phc/Pages/Clinics/Community-Clinics/CC-List.aspx>
162. Montgomery, J. (1998). Making a city: Urbanity, vitality and urban design. *Journal of Urban Design*, 3(1), 93-116.
163. Moore, K. S. (2005). What's Class Got to Do with It? Community Development and Racial Identity. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 27(4), 437-451.
164. Muldoon, O. T., Acharya, K., Jay, S., Adhikari, K., Pettigrew, J., & Lowe, R. D. (2017). Community identity and collective efficacy: A social cure for traumatic stress in post-earthquake Nepal. *European Journal of Social Psychology* 47(7), 904–915.
165. Muldoon, O. T., & Downes, C. (2007). Social identification and post-traumatic stress symptoms in post-conflict Northern Ireland. *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, 191(2), 146–149.
166. Muldoon, O. T., & Lowe, R. D. (2012). Social identity, groups, and post-traumatic stress disorder. *Political Psychology*, 33(2), 259–273.
167. Nandy, R. (2021). Facebook and the Covid-19 crisis: building solidarity through community feeling. *Human Arenas*, 1–11.
168. National Statistics Office (NSO), Malta (2020). *Regional Statistics Malta. 2020 edition*. Valletta: National Statistics Office.

169. National Statistics Office (NSO), Malta (2016). *Demographic Review 2014*. Valletta: National Statistics Office.
170. National Statistics Office (NSO), Malta (2014). *Census of Population and Housing 2011*. Valletta: National Statistics Office.
171. Ng, S. H. (1998). Canada as a new place: The immigrant's experience. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 18(1), 55-67.
172. Ng, S. H., Kam, P. K., & Pong, R. W. M. (2005). People living in ageing buildings: Their quality of life and sense of belonging. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 25(3), 347-360.
173. Obst, P. L., & White, K. M. (2005). An exploration of the interplay between psychological sense of community, social identification and salience. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 15(2), 127-135.
174. Ohta, H. (2001). A phenomenological approach to natural landscape cognition. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 21(4), 287-403.
175. Oktay, D. (2002). The quest for urban identity in the changing context of the city: Northern Cyprus. *Cities*, 19(4), 261-271.
176. Oktay, D. (2005). *How can urban context maintain urban identity and sustainability?: Evaluations of Taormina (Sicily) and Kyrenia (North Cyprus)*. The International Conference for Integrating Urban Knowledge and Practice. Gothenburg, Sweden.
177. Parra, D. C., Gomez, L. F., Sarmiento, O. L., Buchner, D., Brownson, R., Schimid, T., Gomez, V., & Lobelo, F. (2010). Perceived and objective neighborhood environment attributes and health related quality of life among the elderly in Bogota, Colombia. *Social science & medicine*, 70(7), 1070-1076.
178. Parrocča Familja Mqaddsa (2021). *Noti storici* [website]. Retrieved on August 1, 2021 from <https://parroccaiklin.com/il-parrocča/taghrif/noti-storici/>
179. Pettigrew, T. F., & Tropp, L. R. (2006). A meta-analytic test of intergroup contact theory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 90(5), 751-783.
180. Pettigrew, T. F., & Tropp, L. R. (2008). How does intergroup contact reduce prejudice? Meta-analytic tests of three mediators. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 38(6), 922-934.
181. Perkins, D. D., & Long, D. A. (2002). Neighbourhood sense of community and social capital. In A. T. Fisher, C. C. Sonn, & B. J. Bishop (Eds.), *Psychological sense of community. Research, applications and implications* (pp. 291-316). New York: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
182. Pol, E. (2002). The theoretical background of the city-identity-sustainability network. *Environment and Behaviour*, 34(1), 8-25.
183. Power, A. (2007). *City Survivors: Bringing Up Children in Disadvantaged Neighbourhoods*. Bristol: Policy.
184. Pretty, G. H., Chipuer, H. M., & Bramston, P. (2003). Sense of place amongst adolescents and adults in two rural Australian towns: The discriminating features of place attachment, sense of community and place dependence in relation to place identity. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 23(3), 273-287.
185. Proshansky, H. M. (1978). The city and self-identity. *Environment and Behaviour*, 10(2), 147-169.
186. Proshansky, H. M., Fabian, A. K., & Kaminoff, R. (1983). Place-identity: Physical world socialisation of the self. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 3(1), 57-83.
187. Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
188. Putnam, R. D., & Feldstein, L. M. (2003). *Better together. Restoring the American community*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
189. Quddies.com.mt (2020). Familja Mqaddsa. Holy Family [webpage]. Retrieved June 29, 2021, from <https://www.quddies.com.mt/churches/121/Familja-Mqaddsa/lklin>
190. Reason, P. (2003). Pragmatist Philosophy and Action Research: Readings and Conversation with Richard Rorty. *Action Research*, 1(1), 103-123.

191. Reicher, S., Cassidy, C., Wolpert, I., Hopkins, N., & Levine, M. (2006). Saving Bulgaria's Jews: An analysis of social identity and the mobilisation of social solidarity. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 36*(1), 49–72.
192. Reid, A., & Deaux, K. (1996). Relationship between social and personal identities: Segregation or integration. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 71*(6), 1084–1091.
193. Relph, E. (1976). *Place and Placelessness*. Pion London.
194. Rorty, R. (2007) *Philosophy and Cultural Politics: Philosophical Papers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
195. Rose, G. (1995). Place and identity: A sense of place. In: D. MASSEY, & P. JESS (Eds.), *A place in the world: Places, cultures and globalization* (pp. 87-132). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
196. Rugel, E. J., Carpiano, R. M., Henderson, S. B., & Brauer, M. (2019). Exposure to natural space, sense of community belonging, and adverse mental health outcomes across an urban region. *Environmental Research, 171*, 365-377.
197. Saegert, S. (1989). Unlikely leaders, extreme circumstances: Older black women building community households. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 17*(3), 295–316.
198. Savelkoul, M., Hewstone, M., Scheepers, P., & Stolle, D. (2015). Does relative out-group size in neighborhoods drive down associational life of Whites in the US? Testing constrict, conflict and contact theories. *Social Science Research, 52*, 236–252.
199. Scannell, L., & Gifford, R. (2010). Defining place attachment: A tripartite organising framework. *Journal of Environmental Psychology, 30*(1), 1-10.
200. Schaap, L., & Daemen, H. (Eds.). (2012). *Renewal in European local democracies*. Wiesbaden: Springer VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.
201. Schmid, K., Ramiah, A. A., & Hewstone, M. (2014). Neighborhood ethnic diversity and trust: The role of intergroup contact and perceived threat. *Psychological Science, 25*(3), 665–674.
202. Seow, H., McMillan, K., Civak, M., et al. (2021). #Caremongering: a community-led social movement to address health and social needs during COVID-19. *PLoS One, 16*(1), e0245483.
203. Servizz.gov (2021). *Silver T Service* [website] Retrieved November 24, 2021 from https://www.servizz.gov.mt/en/Pages/Inclusion_-_Equality-and-Social-Welfare/Social-Inclusion/Elderly-Care-and-Services/WEB2376/default.aspx
204. Shamsuddin, S., & Ujang, N. (2008). Making places: The role of attachment in creating the sense of place for traditional streets in Malaysia. *Habitat International, 32*(3), 399-409.
205. Shao, Y., Lange, E., Thwaites, K., & Binyi, L. (2017) Defining Local Identity. *Landscape Architecture Frontiers, 5*(2), 24-41.
206. Shaw, M. (2008). Community development and the politics of community. *Community Development Journal, 43*, 1, 24–36.
207. Shumaker, S., & Taylor, R. B. (1983). Toward a Clarification of People-Place Relationship: A Model of Attachment to Place. In S. Shumaker (Ed.), *Environmental Psychology. Directions and Perspectives* (pp. 125-171). London, United Kingdom: Sage Publications.
208. Soltani, L., Zangiabadi, A., & Nastaran, M. (2013). The quarter: an effective pattern for satisfying women's sense of place in the city of Isfahan. *Cities, 30*(1), 161-174.
209. Stedman, R. C. (2002). Toward social psychology of place. Predicting behaviour from place-based cognitions, attitude, and identity. *Environment and Behaviour, 34*(5), 561–581.
210. Stevenson, C., Easterbrook, M., Harkin, L., McNamara, N., Kellezi, B., & Shuttleworth, I. (2019). Neighbourhood Identity Helps Residents Cope with Residential Diversification: Contact in Increasingly Mixed Neighbourhoods of Northern Ireland. *Political Psychology, 40*(2), 277-295.

211. Stevenson, C., McNamara, N., & Muldoon, O. (2014). Stigmatised identity and service usage in disadvantaged communities: Residents', community workers' and service providers' perspectives. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 24(6), 453–466.
212. Stewart, W. P., Liebert, D., & Larkin, K. W. (2004). Community identities as visions for landscape change. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 69(2-3), 315–334.
213. Stokols, D., Misra, S., Runnerstrom, M. G., & Hipp, J. A. (2009). Psychology in an age of ecological crisis. From personal angst to collective action. *American Psychologist*, 64(3), 181-193.
214. Stolle, D., & Harell, A. (2013). Social capital and ethno-racial diversity: Learning to trust in an immigrant society. *Political Studies*, 61(1), 42–66.
215. Stringer, E. (1999). *Action Research: A Handbook for Practitioners*. Newbury Park: Sage.
216. Sturgis, P., Brunton-Smith, I., Kuha, J., & Jackson, J. (2014). Ethnic diversity, segregation and the social cohesion of neighbourhoods in London. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 37(8), 1286–1309.
217. Suttles, G. D. (1968). *The social order of the slum: Ethnicity and territory in the inner-city*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
218. Suttles, G. D. (1972). *Social construction of community*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press
219. Swanwick, C. (2009). Society's attitudes to and preferences for land and landscape. *Land Use Policy*, 26(1), S62-S75.
220. Tam, H. (2007). The case for progressive solidarity. In M. Wetherell, M. Laflèche, & R. Berkeley (Eds.), *Identity, ethnic diversity and community cohesion* (pp. 17-23). SAGE Publications Ltd.
221. The Malta Independent (2012, September 15). *Iklin scouts to get new premises* [webpage]. Retrieved June 26, 2021, from <https://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2012-09-15/local-news/Iklin-Scouts-To-get-new-premises-316050>
222. Thwaites, K. (2007). *Urban sustainability through environmental design*. London : Routledge.
223. Twigger-Ross, C., & Uzzell, D. (1996). Place identity and place attachment. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 16(2), 205-220.
224. Ulmer, J. M., Wolf, K. L., Backman, D. R., Tretheway, R. L., Blain, C. J., O'Neil-Dunne, J. P., & Frank, L. D. (2016). Multiple health benefits of urban tree canopy: The mounting evidence for a green prescription. *Health & place*, 42, 54-62.
225. United Nations (2018). *World urbanization prospects: The 2018 revision*. Retrieved September 20, 2021 from <https://population.un.org/wup/Publications/Files/WUP2018-KeyFacts.pdf>
226. United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (2021). *Global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. A/RES/71/313. E/CN.3/2021/2. Retrieved February 15, 2022, from <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/indicators-list/>
227. Uzzell, D., Pol, E., & Badenas, D. (2002). Place identification, social cohesion, and environmental sustainability. *Environment and Behaviour*, 34(1), 26–53.
228. Vassallo, M. (2003). Local community, identity and problems of ultimate meaning. *Humanitas: Journal of the Faculty of Arts*, 2, 61-71
229. Vidal, T., Troffa, R., Valera, S., & Fornara, F. (2012). Place identity as a useful psychological construct for approaching modern social challenges and new people-environment relations: Residential mobility, restorative environments, and landscape. In H. Casakin, & F. Bernardo (Eds.), *The Role of Place Identity in the Perception, Understanding, and Design of Built Environments* (pp. 78-91). Bentham Science Publishers.
230. Vidal, T., Valera, S., & Peró, M. (2010). Place attachment, place identity and residential mobility in undergraduate students. *PsyEcology*, 1(3), 291-307.
231. Vorkinn, M., & Riese, H. (2001). Environmental concern in a local context. The significance of place attachment. *Environment and Behaviour*, 33(2), 249–263.

232. Wakefield, J. R., Bowe, M., Kellezi, B., McNamara, N., & Stevenson, C. (2019). When groups help and when groups harm: Origins, developments, and future directions of the “social cure” perspective of group dynamics. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 13(3), e12440.
233. Wakefield, S., Yeudall, F., Taron, C., Reynolds, J., & Skinner, A. (2007). Growing urban health: community gardening in South-East Toronto. *Health Promotion International*, 22(2), 92–101.
234. Wang, Y., Yang, C., Hu, X., & Chen, H. (2020). Community identity as a mediator of the relationship between socioeconomic status and altruistic behaviour in Chinese residents. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 31, 1–13.
235. Warin, M., Baum, F., Kalucy, E., Murray, C., & Veale, B. (2000). The power of place: Space and time in women’s and community health centres in Australia. *Social Science and Medicine*, 50(12), 1863–1875.
236. Wasko, M. M., & Faraj, S. (2005). Why Should I Share? Examining Social Capital and Knowledge Contribution in Electronic Networks of Practice. *MIS Quarterly*, 29(1), 35.
237. Wellman, B. (2001). Computer Networks as Social Networks. *Science*, 293(14), pp. 2031-203.
238. Wetherell, M., Laflèche, M., & Berkeley, R. (Eds.) (2007). *Identity, ethnic diversity and community cohesion*. SAGE Publications Ltd.
239. Wilkinson, R. (2005) *The Impact of Inequality - How to Make Sick Societies Healthier* (1st ed.). Routledge.
240. Williams, R. (1983). Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society (London, 1976). *Writing in Society*.
241. Williams, D. R., & McIntyre, N., (2001). Where heart and home reside: Changing constructions of place and identity. In: Trends 2000, *Shaping the future, September 17–20, 2000* (pp. 392–403). Dept. of Park, Recreation and Tourism Resources, Michigan State University, Lansing, MI.
242. Xin, Z. Q. (2020). *Social governance psychology and social psychological service*. Beijing, China: Beijing Normal University Press.
243. Xin, Z. Q., & Ling, X. H. (2015). Urban residents' community identity: Concept, measurement and its correlates. *Psychological Research*, 8, 64–72.
244. Yaldiz, E., Aydın, D., & Sıramkaya, S. B. (2014). Loss of city identities in the process of change: The city of Konya-Turkey. *Procedia-Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 140, 221–233.
245. Yang, C., Wang, Y., Hall, B. J., & Chen, H. (2020). Sense of community responsibility and altruistic behaviour in Chinese community residents: The mediating role of community identity. *Current Psychology*, 0(0), 1–11.
246. Yang, Z., & Xin, Z. (2016). Community Identity Increases Urban Residents' Ingroup Emergency Helping Intention. *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*, 26(6), 467–480.
247. Young, M., & Wilmott, P. (2013). *Family and kinship in East London*. Routledge.
248. Zammit Maempel, G. (2001). Avian representations from prehistoric and medieval sites on the Maltese Islands. *Malta Archaeological Review*, 5, 23 – 39.
249. Zarb, J. (2003, October 19). In A. Deidun, (2003, November 9). *Tourists and the environment - the MHRA survey* (pp. 1 – 3). The Times of Malta.
250. Zdenek, R. O., & Walsh, D. (2017). *Navigating Community Development*. Palgrave Macmillan, New York.
251. Zenker, S., & Rütter, N. (2014). Is satisfaction the key? The role of citizen satisfaction, place attachment and place brand attitude on positive citizenship behaviour. *Cities*, 38, 11-17.
252. Zijlema, W. L., Triguero-Mas, M., Smith, G., Cirach, M., Martinez, D., Dadvand, P., ... & Julvez, J. (2017). The relationship between natural outdoor environments and cognitive functioning and its mediators. *Environmental research*, 155, 268-275.

Glossary

NSO	National Statistics Office, Malta
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
ŻAK	Żgħażaġh Azzjoni Kattolika

List of Figures

Figure	Description
1	Age group distribution of questionnaire participants
2	Levels of Education across questionnaire participants
3	Employment status across questionnaire participants
4	Household Status of questionnaire participants
5	Distribution of participants according to the map presented to questionnaire participants to indicate which area they reside in
6	Length of period of residency in Iklin as reported by questionnaire participants
7	Age group distribution of questionnaire participants who were brought up in Iklin
8	Reasons for living in Iklin as expressed by questionnaire participants in order of frequency of reason
9	Comparison of respondents' self-evaluation of their level of satisfaction with their life in general at the moment and respondent's self-evaluation of their level of satisfaction with their experience of living in the community of Iklin.
10	What Iklin residents would like to see more of according to questionnaire responses.

Appendices

Appendix A

Interview Guide

1. How long have you lived in Iklin? OR (for business) How long have you been involved from a business perspective with the community of Iklin?
2. Why did you move to Iklin? OR (for business) Why did you establish your business in Iklin?
3. How do you feel about it?
4. What does it mean to you to live in Iklin? OR (for business) What does the community of Iklin represent to you?
5. Has Iklin changed? If so, how?
6. What are the advantages and disadvantages of living (or running a business) in Iklin?
7. Do you feel there are any issues related to the community of Iklin that need to be addressed? What are these?
8. If any, how do you feel they can be addressed?
9. What do you think of the Iklin Local Council?
10. What would you like to see in Iklin?

Mistoqsijiet gwida għall-Intervisti

1. Kemm ilek tgħix l-Iklin? JEW (għan-negozji) Kemm ilek involut b'mod ta' negozju fil-komunità tal-Iklin?
2. Għalfejn ġejt tgħix l-Iklin? JEW (għan-negozji) Għalfejn għażilt l-Iklin għan-negozju?
3. Kif tħossok dwar il-fatt li tgħix l-Iklin? JEW (għan-negozji) Kif tħossok dwar din l-għażla?
4. Xi tfigħer għalik li tgħix l-Iklin? JEW (għan-negozji) X'taħseb dwar il-komunità tal-Iklin?
5. Taħseb li l-Iklin inbidel? Jekk iva, kif?
6. X'inhuma l-vantaġġi u l-iżvantaġġi li tgħix (jew ikollok negozju l-Iklin)?
7. Tħoss li hemm xi *issues* dwar il-komunità tal-Iklin li għandhom jiġu ndirizzati? X'inhuma?
8. Jekk tħoss li hemm xi *issues*, kif taħseb li għandhom jiġu ndirizzati?
9. X'taħseb dwar il-Kunsill Lokali tal-Iklin?
10. X'tixtieq tara l-Iklin?

Appendix B

Focus Group Guide

11. How long have you lived in Iklin?
12. Why did you move to Iklin and how do you feel about it?
13. What does it mean to you to live in Iklin?
14. Has Iklin changed? If so, how?
15. What are the advantages and disadvantages of living in Iklin?
16. Do you feel there are any issues related to the community of Iklin that need to be addressed? What are these?
17. If any, how do you feel they can be addressed?
18. What do you think of the Iklin Local Council?
19. What would you like to see in Iklin?

Mistoqsijiet gwida għall-Focus Group

11. Kemm ilek tgħix I-Iklin?
12. Għalfejn ġejt tgħix I-Iklin u kif tħossok dwar il-fatt li tgħix I-Iklin?
13. Xi tfisser għalik li tgħix I-Iklin?
14. Taħseb li I-Iklin inbidel? Jekk iva, kif?
15. X'inhuma l-vantaġġi u l-iżvantaġġi i tgħix I-Iklin?
16. Tħoss li hemm xi *issues* dwar il-komunità tal-Iklin li għandhom jiġu ndirizzati?
X'inhuma?
17. Jekk tħoss li hemm xi *issues*, kif taħseb li għandhom jiġu ndirizzati?
18. X'taħseb dwar il-Kunsill Lokali tal-Iklin?
19. X'tixtieq tara I-Iklin?

Appendix C



Faculty for Social Wellbeing

University of Malta
Msida MSD 2080, Malta

Tel: +356 2340 2672
socialwellbeing@um.edu.mt

www.um.edu.mt/socialwellbeing

INFORMATION AND RECRUITMENT SHEET – Interviews

Project Leader

Name: Prof Andrew Azzopardi

Email: andrew.azzopardi@um.edu.mt

Contact no: 23403720

Research Support Officer

Name: Ms Olga Formosa

Email: olga.formosa@um.edu.mt

Contact no: 23403720

1st June 2021

Dear Sir/Madam,

The Faculty for Social Wellbeing at the University of Malta will be conducting research, in collaboration with the Iklin Local Council. We wish to gain insight into what it means to live in Iklin.

We would like to invite you to participate in this research, which would involve voluntarily participating in an interview regarding your experience within the Iklin community. Participation is entirely voluntary, you are to accept or refuse to participate without needing to give a reason for your choice. Your participation does not entail any known risks. Below you will find information about what your involvement would entail, should you decide to take part. Your participation would help contribute to a better understanding of the community of Iklin. Any data collected from this research will be used solely for purposes of this study.

Should you choose to participate, the one-time interview will be held at the Iklin Local Council Premises at the following address: 11, Three Villages, Trejġet ir-Rumanzieri, L-Iklin at a time that is convenient for you. Alternatively, you can opt for the interview to be held online via Zoom at a time convenient for you. In both cases, the interview will take approximately an hour. During the interview, you will be asked to discuss your views on the Iklin community. Interviews held in person will be audio recorded for later written analysis. Online Zoom

interviews will be video recorded for later written analysis. This recording will make use of Zoom security features such as end-to-end encryption. In both face-to-face and online interviews, your name and surname and any other personally-identifiable details will not be used in the study or disseminated in any way.

Following the interview, the researchers will transcribe and code the data gathered. This will be pseudonymised upon transcription and end-to-end encrypted, so that your confidentiality will be respected. The data will be used for the sole purpose of this study, will be stored in an anonymised form and raw data will only be accessed by the team of researchers directly involved in the project. Any data gathered will be destroyed within 2 years of completion of the study: any recordings will be deleted and any transcribed material will be deleted and shredded. Until then, any printed material will be stored in a locked, safe location separately from any identifying information. Throughout the publication of findings, reference will be made to the community of Iklin.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary; in other words, you are free to accept or refuse to participate, without needing to give a reason. In accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and national legislation, you have the right to information, access, rectification, objection, erasure, data portability, and to withdraw your consent, without needing to provide any explanation and without any negative repercussions for you. Should you choose to withdraw your participation, any data collected from you will be deleted, if this is technically possible, unless erasure of data would render impossible or seriously impair achievement of the research objectives. This is acknowledged in point 2 of the consent form and is in line with the exemptions provided for in GDPR Article 17(3)(d).

If you choose to participate, please note that there are no direct benefits to you other than helping to better understand your community, and that your participation does not entail any known or anticipated risks. In order to participate you will need to sign a consent form.

A copy of this information sheet is being provided for you to keep and for future reference.

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact us by phone or email.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Your contribution is of great value to this study. Whilst thanking you in advance, we look forward to your participation.

Yours Sincerely,

Prof Andrew Azzopardi

Ms Olga Formosa



**L-Università
ta' Malta**

**Faculty for
Social Wellbeing**

University of Malta
Msida MSD 2080, Malta

Tel: +356 2340 2672
socialwellbeing@um.edu.mt

www.um.edu.mt/socialwellbeing

CONSENT FORM - Interviews

The Faculty for Social Wellbeing at the University of Malta will be conducting research, in collaboration with the Iklin Local Council. We wish to gain insight into what it means to live in Iklin.

Thank you for considering to take part in this research. Please fill in this form after reading the Information Sheet and the information listed here. If you have any questions, please ask the researchers before you decide to sign this consent form and participate in this research.

I, the undersigned, give my consent to take part in the study conducted by Prof Andrew Azzopardi and Ms Olga Formosa. This consent form specifies the terms of my participation in this research study.

1. I have been given written information about the purpose of the study; I have had the opportunity to ask questions and any questions that I had were answered fully and to my satisfaction.
 2. I also understand that I am free to accept to participate, or to refuse or stop participation without giving any reason and without any penalty. In the event that I choose to withdraw from the study, any data collected from me will be erased if this is technically possible, unless erasure of data would render impossible or seriously impair achievement of the research objectives. Should I choose to participate, I may choose to decline to answer any questions asked.
 3. I understand that I have been invited to participate in a one-time interview in order to discuss my experiences and views on the community of Iklin. I am aware that the interview will take approximately one hour. I understand that the interview is to be conducted in a place and at a time that is convenient for me or online, via Zoom, at a convenient time.
 4. I am aware that, if I give my consent, this interview will be audio recorded in the case of face-to-face interview or video recorded if held online via Zoom.
 5. I am aware that, if I give my consent, the recording will be converted to text as it has been recorded (transcribed). In the case of a Zoom interview, the recording will make use of Zoom security features such as end-to-end encryption. The audio or video recording will be deleted two years from completion of the study.
 6. I am aware that upon transcription, my data will be pseudonymised; i.e. my identity will not be noted on transcripts or notes from my interview, but instead, a code will be assigned. The codes that link my data to my identity will be stored securely and separately from the data, in an encrypted file on the researcher's password-protected
-

computer, and only the researchers will have access to this information. Any hard-copy materials will be placed in a secure place. Any material that identifies me as a participant in this study will be stored securely for the duration of the study and destroyed within 2 years of completion of the study.

7. I am aware that, if I give my consent, extracts from my interview may be reproduced in the publication of findings, either in anonymous form, or using a pseudonym [a made-up name or code – e.g. respondent A] and that reference will be made to the community of Iklin in the study outputs.
8. I am aware that my identity and personal information will not be revealed in any publications, reports or presentations arising from this research.
9. I understand that my participation does not entail any known or anticipated risks.
10. I understand that there are no direct benefits to me from participating in this study, but that my participation can contribute towards better understanding my community.
11. I understand that, under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and national legislation, I have the right to access, rectify, and where applicable, ask for the data concerning me to be erased.
12. I understand that all data collected will be stored in an anonymised form and only the research team will have access to the raw data. Data will be erased within 2 years of completion of the study.
13. I have been provided with a copy of the information and recruitment letter and understand that I will also be given a copy of this consent form, which includes the contact details of the researcher.

I have read and understood the above statements and agree to participate in this study.

Participant's name

Participant's signature

Date

Name of Academic researcher: Prof Andrew Azzopardi

Contact: andrew.azzopardi@um.edu.mt Tel no: 23402918

Name of researcher: Ms Olga Formosa

Contact: olga.formosa@um.edu.mt Tel. No.: 23403720



**L-Università
ta' Malta**

**Faculty for
Social Wellbeing**

University of Malta
Msida MSD 2080, Malta

Tel: +356 2340 2672
socialwellbeing@um.edu.mt

www.um.edu.mt/socialwellbeing

ITTRA TA' INFORMAZZJONI U REKLUTAĠĠ - Intervisti

Akkademiku

Prof Andrew Azzopardi

Email: andrew.azzopardi@um.edu.mt

Tel: 23403720

Riċerkatriċi

Ms Olga Formosa

Email: olga.formosa@um.edu.mt

Tel: 23403720

1 ta' Ġunju 2021

Għażiż/a Sinjur/a,

Il-Fakultà għat-Tisħiħ tas-Socjetà fl-Università ta' Malta, qiegħda taħdem fuq riċerka, wara ftehim mal-Kunsill Lokali tal-Iklin. B'din ir-riċerka nixtiequ nifhmu aħjar xi jfisser illi wieħed jgħix fil-komunità tal-Iklin.

Nixtiequ nistednuk tipparteċipa f'din ir-riċerka, billi b'mod volontarju tipparteċipa f'intervista dwar l-esperjenza tiegħek fil-komunità tal-Iklin. Il-partecipazzjoni tiegħek hija b'mod volontarju u għandek id-dritt illi taċċetta jew tirrifjuta li tiegħu sehem, mingħajr bżonn li tagħti raġuni. Din ir-riċerka ma tinvolvi l-ebda riskju magħruf jew antiċipat. F'din l-ittra għandek issib l-informazzjoni dwar x'tinvolvi l-partecipazzjoni tiegħek, fil-każ illi tagħzel illi tipparteċipa. Il-kontribut tiegħek jista' jgħin sabiex nifhmu aħjar il-komunità tal-Iklin. L-informazzjoni u d-data miġbura f'din ir-riċerka ser tintuża biss għall-iskopijiet ta' dan l-istudju.

Jekk inti tagħzel illi tipparteċipa, l-intervista, li ser issir f'darba, issir fl-uffċju tal-Kunsill Lokali tal-Iklin, f'dan l-indizir: 11, Three Villages, Trejġet ir-Rumanzieri, L-Iklin f'ħin konvenjenti għalik. Tista' tagħzel ukoll li l-intervista issir online fuq Zoom f'ħin konvenjenti għalik. L-intervista għandha tiegħu madwar siegħa. Waqt din l-intervista, ser tiġi mitlub tiddiskuti l-fehmiet tiegħek rigward il-komunità tal-Iklin. Jekk issir wiċċ imb'wiċċ, l-intervista tiġi awdjo rreġistrati sabiex tiġi traskritta għall-analiżi. Jekk issir online fuq Zoom, l-intervista tiġi vidjow rreġistrati sabiex tiġi traskritta għall-analiżi. Din ir-reġistrazzjoni ser tagħmel użu mill-karatteristiċi ta' sigurtà ta' Zoom, b'hal 'encryption end-to-end'. F'intervista wiċċ imb'wiċċ kif ukoll fuq Zoom, ismek u kunjomok u kwalunkwe dettalji personali oħra mhux ser jintużaw fl-istudju jew ikunu mxerrda bl-ebda mod.

Wara l-intervista, l-informazzjoni miġbura tiġi traskratta u kodifikata mir-riċerkatriċi. Id-data miġbura ser tkun psewdonomiżzata waqt it-traskrizzjoni, jiġifieri ser jintużaw psewdonimi (ismijiet fittizji) sabiex il-kunfidenzjalità tiegħek tiġi rrispettata. Kwalunkwe data miġbura ser tiġi użata biss għall-iskopijiet ta' din ir-riċerka, ser tkun miżmuma b'mod anonimiżzat u d-data mhux proċessata ser tkun aċċessibbli biss għar-riċerkaturi involuti direttament f'dan l-istudju. Kwalunkwe data miġbura ser tiġi distrutta fi żmien sentejn minn tmiem ir-riċerka: reġistrazzjonijiet ser jiġu mħassra u materjal traskritt ser jithassar u jitqatta'. Sa dakinhar, kull materjal stampat ser ikun miżmum f'post imsakkar u sikur separatament minn kwalunkwe informazzjoni ta' identifikazzjoni. L-isem tal-komunità tal-Iklin ser jkun imsemmi fil-pubblikazzjoni tar-riżultati tar-riċerka.

Qis li qiegħed/qiegħda tagħżel illi tipparteċipa f'dan l-istudju b'mod volontarju u li għandek id-dritt illi taċċetta jew tirrifjuta li tiegħu sehem, mingħajr bżonn li tagħti raġuni. Kif skont il-liġi tal-General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) u leġiżlazzjoni lokali, għandek dritt għall-informazzjoni, aċċess, rettifika, oġġezzjoni, tħassir, portabbiltà tad-data, u biex tirtira l-kunsens tiegħek mingħajr il-bżonn illi tagħti spjegazzjoni u mingħajr riperkussjonijiet għalik. Jekk tagħżel illi tirtira l-parteeċipazzjoni tiegħek, kwalunkwe informazzjoni li tkun ipprovdejt tiġi mħassra sa fejn hu teknikament possibbli u sa fejn it-tħassir tad-data ma jagħmilx impossibbli jew ifixkel b'mod drastika il-kisba tal-għanjiet tar-riċerka. Dan huwa rikonoxxut f'punt 2 tal-formola ta' kunsens u huwa konformi mal-eżenzjonijiet previsti f'Artiklu 17(3)(d) tal-GDPR.

Jekk tagħżel illi tipparteċipa, mhux ser ikun hemm kumpens għal parteċipazzjoni, ħlief li tgħin biex nifhmu aħjar il-komunità tiegħek, u l-parteeċipazzjoni ma tinvolvi l-ebda riskju magħruf jew antiċipat. Sabiex tipparteċipa ser ikollok bżonn tiffirma formola ta' kunsens.

Qed tiġi pprovdut/a b'kopja ta' din l-ittra ta' informazzjoni sabiex iżżommha għal referenza fil-futur.

Jekk tkun meħtieġa aktar informazzjoni, jekk jogħġbok ikkuntattjana permezz ta' ittra elettronika jew b'telefonata.

Grazzi għall-attenzjoni mogħtija. Il-kontribut tiegħek huwa ta' valur għal dan l-istudju. Filwaqt li niringrazzjawk bil-quddiem, nittamaw il-quddiem għall-parteeċipazzjoni tiegħek.

Dejjem tiegħek,

Prof Andrew Azzopardi

Ms Olga Formosa



FORMOLA TA' KUNSENS - Intervisti

Il-Fakultà għat-Tisħiħ tas-Socjetà fl-Università ta' Malta, qiegħda taħdem fuq riċerka, wara ftehim mal-Kunsill Lokali tal-Iklin. B'din ir-riċerka nixtiequ nifhmu aħjar xi jfisser illi wieħed jgħix fil-komunità tal-Iklin.

Grazzi talli qed tikkunsidra tiegħu sehem f'din ir-riċerka. Jekk jogħġbok imla dil-formola wara li taqra l-folja tal-informazzjoni u l-informazzjoni inkluża hawnhekk. Jekk għandek xi mistoqsijiet, jekk jogħġbok staqsi lir-riċerkaturi qabel tiddeċiedi li tiffirma dil-formola tal-kunsens u tipparteċipa fir-riċerka.

Jiena, is-sottoskritt/a, nagħti l-kunsens tiegħi sabiex nipparteċipa fir-riċerka immwettqa minn Prof Andrew Azzopardi u Ms Olga Formosa. Din il-formola ta' kunsens tispeċifika t-termini tal-parteeċipazzjoni tiegħi f'dan l-istudju ta' riċerka.

1. Irċevejt, qrajt u fhimt l-ittra ta' informazzjoni bid-dettalji ta' dan l-istudju; staqsejt għall-informazzjoni kollha li għandi bżonn biex nkun parteċipant/a f'dan l-istudju u li l-mistoqsijiet kollha għew risposti.
2. Jien qed nifhem illi l-parteeċipazzjoni tiegħi hija b'mod volontarju u għandi d-dritt illi nagħzel illi nipparteċipa jew nirrifjuta, jew li nwaqqaf il-parteeċipazzjoni tiegħi mingħajr il-bżonn illi nagħti raġuni u mingħajr penali. F'każ illi nagħzel illi nirtira l-parteeċipazzjoni tiegħi, d-data tiegħi ser tiġi mħassra sa fejn hu teknikament possibbli u sa fejn it-tħassir tad-data ma jagħmilx impossibbli jew ifixkel b'mod drastika il-kisba tal-għanjet tar-riċerka. Jekk nagħzel illi nipparteċipa, nista' nirrifjuta li nwieġeb għal kwalunkwe mistoqsijiet magħmula lili.
3. Jien konxju/a li l-parteeċipazzjoni tiegħi se tikkonsisti f'intervista li ser issir f'darba, sabiex niddiskuti l-esperjenza u l-fehmiet tiegħi dwar il-komunità tal-Iklin. Nifhem illi din id-diskussjoni fi grupp ser tiegħu madwar siegħa. Nifhem ukoll illi din ser isseħħ f'post u ħin li huma konvenjenti għalija jew online fuq Zoom, f'ħin konvenjenti li jkun miftiehem qabel.
4. Jiena konxju/a li, jekk nagħti kunsens, intervista wiċċ imb'wiċċ tkun awdjo registrata għal analiżi għall-iskop tar-riċerka u li din ser tiġi transkrittata. Intervista li ssir fuq Zoom tkun vidjow irregistrata għal analiżi għall-iskop tar-riċerka u li din ser tiġi transkrittata. Reġistrazzjoni ta' intervisti fuq Zoom tagħmel użu mill-karatteristiċi ta' sigurtà ta' Zoom, b'hal 'encryption end-to-end'. Ir-reġistrazzjoni ser tiġi mħassra fi żmien sentejn minn tmien ir-riċerka.
5. Jiena konxju/a li fit-traskrizzjoni, d-data tiegħi se tkun psewdonimiżzata, jiġifieri l-identità tiegħi ma tkunx innotata fuq traskrizzjonijiet jew noti mill-intervista bl-użu ta' kodiċi. Il-kodiċijiet li jgħaqqdu d-data tiegħi mal-identità tiegħi ser jinħażnu b'mod sigur

u separat mid-data, b'mod kriptat (encrypted) fuq kompjuter tar-riċerkatur protett b'password u r-riċerkaturi biss ser ikollhom aċċess għal din l-informazzjoni. Kwalunkwe materjal stampat ser jinżamm f'post imsakkar u sikur separatament minn kwalunkwe informazzjoni ta' identifikazzjoni. Kwalunkwe materjal li jista' jidentifikani bħala parteċipant f'dan l-istudju ser jinħażen b'mod sikur sa tmiem l-istudju u ser jinqered fi żmien sentejn minn tmiem ir-riċerka.

6. Nifhem illi, jekk nagħti kunsens, siltiet mill-intervista jistgħu jiġu riprodotti fil-pubblikazzjoni tas-sejbiet b'mod anonimu, bl-użu ta' psewdonimu (isem magħmul jew kodiċi eż. parteċipant A) u li fil-pubblikazzjoni tar-riżultati tar-riċerka ser issir referenza għall-komunità tal-Iklin.
7. Jiena konxju/a li l-identità tiegħu u informazzjoni personali mhux ser jiġu żvelati fl-ebda publikazzjoni, rapport jew preżentazzjoni li tirriżulta minn din ir-riċerka.
8. Nifhem li l-parteċipazzjoni tiegħi ma tinvolvi l-ebda riskju magħruf jew antiċipat.
9. Nifhem ukoll illi ma hemmx benefiċċji diretti marbuta mal-parteċipazzjoni tiegħi f'dan l-istudju iżda l-parteċipazzjoni tiegħi ser tikkontribwixxi sabiex tiġi mifhuma aħjar il-komunità tiegħi.
10. Nifhem li l-informazzjoni kollha li tiġi miġbura se tiġi mmaniġjata skont il-proviżjonijiet tal- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) u leġiżlazzjoni lokali, u għandi d-dritt li naċċessa, nirrettifika u fejn applikabbli nħassar data dwari nnifsi.
11. Nifhem illi d-data miġbura ser tiġi miżmuma b'mod anonimiżżat u li ser ikollhom aċċess għal data mhux ipproċessata r-riċerkaturi biss. Id-data ser tiġi mħassra fi żmien sentejn minn tmiem ir-riċerka.
12. Jiena ġejt ipprovdut/a b'kopja tal-ittra ta informazzjoni u nifhem li ser ningħata kopja ta din il-formola ta' kunsens, li tinkludi d-dettalji tar-riċerkaturi.

Jiena qrajt u fhimt id-dikjarazzjonijiet ta' hawn fuq u naqbel illi nipparteċipa f'dan l-istudju.

Isem tal-parteċipant

Firma tal-parteċipant

Data

Isem ir-Riċerkatur Akkademiku: Prof Andrew Azzopardi

Email: andrew.azzopardi@um.edu.mt

Tel: 23403720

Isem ir-riċerkatriċi: Ms Olga Formosa

Email: olga.formosa@um.edu.mt

Tel: 23403720

Appendix D



**L-Università
ta' Malta**

Faculty for Social Wellbeing

University of Malta
Msida MSD 2080, Malta

Tel: +356 2340 2672
socialwellbeing@um.edu.mt

www.um.edu.mt/socialwellbeing

INFORMATION AND RECRUITMENT SHEET – Focus Groups

Project Title: Mapping the Iklin Community

Research Team & Contact Details:

Project Leader

Name: Prof Andrew Azzopardi

Email: andrew.azzopardi@um.edu.mt

Contact no: 23403720

Research Support Officer II

Name: Ms Olga Formosa

Email: olga.formosa@um.edu.mt

Contact no: 23403720

1st June 2021

Dear Sir/Madam,

The Faculty for Social Wellbeing at the University of Malta will be conducting research, in collaboration with the Iklin Local Council. We wish to gain insight into what it means to live in Iklin.

We would like to invite you to participate in this research, which would involve voluntarily participating in a focus group regarding your experience within the Iklin community. Participation is entirely voluntary, you are to accept or refuse to participate without needing to give a reason for your choice. Your participation does not entail any known risks. Below you will find information about what your involvement would entail, should you decide to take part. Your participation would help contribute to a better understanding of the community of Iklin. Any data collected from this research will be used solely for purposes of this study.

Should you choose to participate, you will be invited to take part in an online focus group of approximately 1 and a half hours, held via Zoom at a convenient time. During the focus group, you will be asked to participate in a discussion about the groups views on the Iklin community. The focus group will be video recorded for later written analysis. This recording will make use

of Zoom security features such as end-to-end encryption. Your name and surname and any other personally-identifiable details will not be used in the study or disseminated in any way.

Since you will be participating in a focus group, other participants will be present. While all participants will be asked to declare that they will not to divulge details about other participants, the researcher cannot guarantee confidentiality in this regard. Should you participate, your participation in the focus group should be considered confidential and you are therefore expected not disclose details of those participating and/or of the nature of discussions to others. Furthermore, as there will be other participants present, participants will be identifiable to each other.

Following the focus group, the researchers will transcribe and code the data gathered. Data will be pseudonymised upon transcription and end-to-end encrypted. Pseudonyms will be used for different respondents so that your confidentiality will be respected. The data will be used for the sole purpose of this study, will be stored in an anonymised form and raw data will only be accessed by the team of researchers directly involved in the project. Any data gathered will be destroyed within 2 years following completion of the study: any recordings will be deleted and any transcribed material will be deleted and shredded. Until then, any printed material will be stored in a locked, safe location separately from any identifying information. Throughout the publication of findings, reference will be made to the community of Iklin.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary; in other words, you are free to accept or refuse to participate, without needing to give a reason. In accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and national legislation, you have the right to information, access, rectification, objection, erasure, data portability, and to withdraw your consent, without needing to provide any explanation and without any negative repercussions for you. Should you choose to withdraw your participation, any data collected from you will be deleted, if this is technically possible, unless erasure of data would render impossible or seriously impair achievement of the research objectives. This is acknowledged in point 2 of the consent form and is in line with the exemptions provided for in GDPR Article 17(3)(d).

If you choose to participate, please note that there are no direct benefits to you, other than helping to better understand your community, and that your participation does not entail any known or anticipated risks. In order to participate you will need to sign a consent form.

A copy of this information sheet is being provided for you to keep and for future reference. Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact us by phone or email.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Your contribution is of great value to this study. Whilst thanking you in advance, we look forward to your participation.

Yours Sincerely,

Prof Andrew Azzopardi, Project Leader

Ms Olga Formosa, Research Support Officer II



**L-Università
ta' Malta**

**Faculty for
Social Wellbeing**

University of Malta
Msida MSD 2080, Malta

Tel: +356 2340 2672
socialwellbeing@um.edu.mt

www.um.edu.mt/socialwellbeing

CONSENT FORM – Focus Groups

The Faculty for Social Wellbeing at the University of Malta will be conducting research, in collaboration with the Iklin Local Council. We wish to gain insight into what it means to live in Iklin.

Thank you for considering to take part in this research. Please fill in this form after reading the Information Sheet and the information listed here. If you have any questions, please ask the researchers before you decide to sign this consent form and participate in this research.

I, the undersigned, give my consent to take part in the study conducted by Prof Andrew Azzopardi and Ms Olga Formosa. This consent form specifies the terms of my participation in this research study.

1. I have been given written information about the purpose of the study; I have had the opportunity to ask questions and any questions that I had were answered fully and to my satisfaction.
 2. I also understand that I am free to accept to participate, or to refuse or stop participation without giving any reason and without any penalty. In the event that I choose to withdraw from the study, any data collected from me will be erased if this is technically possible, unless erasure of data would render impossible or seriously impair achievement of the research objectives. Should I choose to participate, I may choose to decline to answer any questions asked.
 3. I understand that I have been invited to participate in a one-time focus group in order to discuss my experiences and views on the community of Iklin. I am aware that the focus group will take approximately one and a half hours. I understand that the focus group will take place online, via Zoom, at a convenient, previously-agreed time. Furthermore, as this is a Focus Group, I understand that other participants will be present and that therefore participants will be identifiable to each other.
 4. I am aware that, if I give my consent, the Zoom focus group will be video recorded and converted to text as it has been recorded (transcribed). This recording will make use of Zoom security features such as end-to-end encryption. The recording will be deleted two years from completion of the study.
 5. I am aware that upon transcription, my data will be pseudonymised, i.e. my identity will not be noted on transcripts or notes from my focus group, but instead, a code will be assigned. The codes that link my data to my identity will be stored securely and separately from the data, in an encrypted file on the researcher's password-protected computer, and only the researchers will have access to this information. Any hard-copy materials will be stored in a secure place. Any material that identifies me as a
-

participant in this study will be stored securely for the duration of the study and destroyed within 2 years of completion of the study.

6. I am aware that, if I give my consent, extracts of the discussion may be reproduced in the study outputs in a pseudonymised form (a made-up name or code – e.g. respondent A) and that reference will be made to the community of Iklin in the study outputs.
7. I am aware that my identity and personal information will not be revealed in any publications, reports or presentations arising from this research.
8. I am aware that focus group discussions should be considered confidential and that I should not disclose details of those participating and/or of the nature of discussions to others.
9. I understand that my participation does not entail any known or anticipated risks.
10. I understand that there are no direct benefits to me from participating in this study but that my participation can contribute towards better understanding my community.
11. I understand that, under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and national legislation, I have the right to access, rectify, and where applicable, ask for the data concerning me to be erased.
12. I understand that all data collected will be stored in an anonymised form and only the research team will have access to the raw data. Data will be erased within 2 years of completion of the study.
13. I have been provided with a copy of the information and recruitment letter and understand that I will also be given a copy of this consent form, which includes the contact details of the researcher.

I have read and understood the above statements and agree to participate in this study.

Participant's name

Participant's signature

Date

Name of Academic researcher: Prof Andrew Azzopardi

Contact: andrew.azzopardi@um.edu.mt Tel no: 23403720

Name of researcher: Ms Olga Formosa

Contact: olga.formosa@um.edu.mt Tel. No.: 23403720



**L-Università
ta' Malta**

**Faculty for
Social Wellbeing**

University of Malta
Msida MSD 2080, Malta

Tel: +356 2340 2672
socialwellbeing@um.edu.mt

www.um.edu.mt/socialwellbeing

ITTRA TA' INFORMAZZJONI U REKLUTAĠĠ - Diskussjoni fi Grupp (Focus Group)

Akkademiku

Prof Andrew Azzopardi

Email: andrew.azzopardi@um.edu.mt

Tel: 23403720

Riċerkatriċi

Ms Olga Formosa

Email: olga.formosa@um.edu.mt

Tel: 23403720

1 ta' Ġunju 2021

Għażiż/a Sinjur/a,

Il-Fakultà għat-Tiŝiħ tas-Socjetà fl-Università ta' Malta, qiegħda taħdem fuq riċerka, wara ftehim mal-Kunsill Lokali tal-Iklin. B'din ir-riċerka nixtiequ nifhmu aħjar xi jfisser illi wiehed jgħix fil-komunità tal-Iklin.

Nixtiequ nistednuk tipparteċipa f'din ir-riċerka, billi b'mod volontarju tipparteċipa f'diskussjoni fi grupp (focus group) dwar l-esperjenza tiegħek fil-komunità tal-Iklin. Il-partecipazzjoni tiegħek hija b'mod volontarju u għandek id-dritt illi taċċetta jew tirrifjuta li tiegħu sehem, mingħajr bżonn li tagħti raġuni. Din ir-riċerka ma tinvolvi l-ebda riskju magħruf jew antiċipat. F'din l-ittra għandek issib l-informazzjoni dwar x'tinvolvi l-partecipazzjoni tiegħek, fil-każ illi tagħzel illi tipparteċipa. Il-kontribut tiegħek jista' jgħin sabiex nifhmu aħjar il-komunità tal-Iklin. L-informazzjoni u d-data miġbura f'din ir-riċerka ser tintuża biss għall-iskopijiet ta' dan l-istudju.

Jekk inti tagħzel illi tipparteċipa, id-diskussjoni fi grupp (focus group) għandha tiegħu madwar siegħa u nofs u ser issir online fuq Zoom f'ħin konvenjenti li jiġi miftiehem qabel is-sessjoni. Waqt din id-diskussjoni fi grupp (focus group), ser tiġi mitlub tipparteċipa f'diskussjoni dwar il-fehmiet tal-grupp rigward il-komunità tal-Iklin. Id-diskussjoni ser tiġi vidjow rreġistrati sabiex tiġi traskritta għall-analiżi. Din ir-reġistrazzjoni ser tagħmel użu mill-karatteristiċi ta' sigurtà ta' Zoom, bħal 'encryption end-to-end'. Ismek u kunjomok u kwalunkwe dettalji personali oħra mhux ser jintużaw fl-istudju jew ikunu mxerrda bl-ebda mod.

Peress li ser tkun qed tipparteċipa f'diskussjoni fi grupp (focus group), ser ikun parteċipanti oħrajn preżenti. Filwaqt illi l-partecipanti ser jiġu mitluba jiddikjaraw li mhux ser jiżvelaw dettalji dwar parteċipanti oħra, ir-riċerkatur ma jistax jiggarantixxi kunfidenzjalità f'dan ir-rigward. Jekk tipparteċipa, il-partecipazzjoni fid-diskussjoni fi grupp (focus group) ser tkun kunfidenzjali, għaldaqstant inti mistenni/ja ma tiżvelax id-dettalji tal-partecipanti l-oħrajn u/jew in-natura tad-

diskussjoni ma' terzi persuni. Barra minn hekk, minħabba li ser ikun parteċipanti oħra preżenti, il-parteċipanti jistgħu jkunu identifikabbli minn xulxin.

Wara li tiġi konkluża d-diskussjoni fi grupp (focus group), l-informazzjoni miġbura tiġi traskratta u kodifikata mir-riċerkatriċi. Id-data miġbura ser tkun psewdonomizzata waqt it-traskrizzjoni, jiġifieri ser jintużaw psewdonimi (ismijiet fittizji) għall-parteċipanti differenti u ser tkun 'end-to-end encrypted' sabiex il-kunfidenzjalità tiġi rrispettata. Kwalunkwe data miġbura ser tiġi użata biss għall-iskopijiet ta' din ir-riċerka, ser tkun miżmuma b'mod anonimizat u d-data mhux ipproċessata ser tkun aċċessibbli biss għar-riċerkaturi involuti direttament f'dan l-istudju. Kwalunkwe data miġbura ser tiġi distrutta fi żmien sentejn minn tmiem ir-riċerka: registrazzjonijiet ser jiġu mħassra u materjal traskritt ser jithassar u jitqatta'. Sa dakinhar, kull materjal stampat ser ikun miżmum f'post imsakkar u sikur separatament minn kwalunkwe informazzjoni ta' identifikazzjoni. L-isem tal-komunità tal-iklin ser jkun imsemmi fil-pubblikazzjoni tar-riżultati tar-riċerka.

Qis li qiegħed/qiegħda tagħżel illi tipparteċipa f'dan l-istudju b'mod volontarju u li għandek id-dritt illi taċċetta jew tirrifjuta li tiegħu sehem, mingħajr bżonn li tagħti raġuni. Kif skont il-liġi tal-General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) u leġiżlazzjoni lokali, għandek dritt għall-informazzjoni, aċċess, rettifika, oġġezzjoni, tħassir, portabbiltà tad-data, u biex tirtira l-kunsens tiegħek mingħajr il-bżonn illi tagħti spjegazzjoni u mingħajr riperkussjonijiet għalik. Jekk tagħżel illi tirtira l-parteċipazzjoni tiegħek, kwalunkwe informazzjoni li tkun ipprovdejt tiġi mħassra sa fejn hu teknikament possibbli u sa fejn it-tħassir tad-data ma jagħmilx impossibbli jew ifixkel b'mod drastika il-kisba tal-għanjiet tar-riċerka. Dan huwa rikonoxxut f'punt 2 tal-formola ta' kunsens u huwa konformi mal-eżenzjonijiet previsti f'Artiklu 17(3)(d) tal-GDPR.

Jekk tagħżel illi tipparteċipa, mhux ser ikun hemm kumpens għal parteċipazzjoni, hlief li tgħin biex nifhmu aħjar il-komunità tiegħek, u l-parteċipazzjoni ma tinvolvi l-ebda riskju magħruf jew antiċipat. Sabiex tipparteċipa ser ikollok bżonn tiffirma formola ta' kunsens.

Qed tiġi pprovdut/a b'kopja ta' din l-ittra ta' informazzjoni sabiex iżżommha għal referenza fil-futur.

Jekk tkun meħtieġa aktar informazzjoni, jekk jogħġbok ikkuntattjana permezz ta' ittra elettronika jew b'telefonata.

Grazzi għall-attenzjoni mogħtija. Il-kontribut tiegħek huwa ta' valur għal dan l-istudju. Filwaqt li niringrazzjawk bil-quddiem, nittamaw il-quddiem għall-parteċipazzjoni tiegħek.

Dejjem tiegħek,

Prof Andrew Azzopardi

Ms Olga Formosa



**L-Università
ta' Malta**

**Faculty for
Social Wellbeing**

University of Malta
Msida MSD 2080, Malta

Tel: +356 2340 2672
socialwellbeing@um.edu.mt

www.um.edu.mt/socialwellbeing

FORMOLA TA' KUNSENS - Diskussjoni fi Grupp (Focus Group)

Il-Fakultà għat-Tisħiħ tas-Socjetà fl-Università ta' Malta, qiegħda taħdem fuq riċerka, wara ftehim mal-Kunsill Lokali tal-Iklin. B'din ir-riċerka nixtiequ nifhmu aħjar xi jfisser illi wieħed jgħix fil-komunità tal-Iklin.

Grazzi talli qed tikkunsidra tiegħu sehem f'din ir-riċerka. Jekk jogħġbok imla dil-formola wara li taqra l-folja tal-informazzjoni u l-informazzjoni inkluża hawnhekk. Jekk għandek xi mistoqsijiet, jekk jogħġbok staqsi lir-riċerkaturi qabel tiddeċiedi li tiffirma dil-formola tal-kunsens u tipparteċipa fir-riċerka.

Jiena, is-sottoskritt/a, nagħti l-kunsens tiegħi sabiex nipparteċipa fir-riċerka immwettqa minn Prof Andrew Azzopardi u Ms Olga Formosa. Din il-formola ta' kunsens tispeċifika t-termini tal-parteeipazzjoni tiegħi f'dan l-istudju ta' riċerka.

1. Irċevejt, qrajt u fhimt l-ittra ta' informazzjoni bid-dettalji ta' dan l-istudju; staqsejt għall-informazzjoni kollha li għandi b'zonn biex nkun parteċipant/a f'dan l-istudju u li l-mistoqsijiet kollha ġew risposti.
2. Jien qed nifhem illi l-parteeipazzjoni tiegħi hija b'mod volontarju u għandi d-dritt illi nagħżel illi nipparteċipa jew nirrifjuta, jew li nwaqqaf il-parteeipazzjoni tiegħi mingħajr il-b'zonn illi nagħti raġuni u mingħajr penali. F'każ illi nagħżel illi nirtira l-parteeipazzjoni tiegħi, d-data tiegħi ser tiġi mħassra sa fejn hu teknikament possibbli u sa fejn it-tħassir tad-data ma jagħmilx impossibbli jew ifixkel b'mod drastika il-kisba tal-għanjiet tar-riċerka. Jekk nagħżel illi nipparteċipa, nista' nirrifjuta li nwieġeb għal kwalunkwe mistoqsijiet magħmula lili.
3. Jien konxju/a li l-parteeipazzjoni tiegħi se tikkonsisti f'diskussjoni fi grupp (focus group) li ser issir f'darba, sabiex niddiskuti l-esperjenza u l-fehmiet tiegħi dwar il-komunità tal-Iklin. Nifhem illi din id-diskussjoni fi grupp ser tiegħu madwar siegħa u nofs. Nifhem ukoll illi din ser isseħħ online fuq Zoom, f'ħin konvenjenti li jkun miftiehem qabel. Barra minn hekk, peress illi din hija diskussjoni fi grupp (focus group), nifhem illi ser ikun hemm parteċipanti oħrajn preżenti u li għalhekk il-parteeipanti jistgħu jkunu identifikabbli minn xulxin.
4. Jiena konxju/a li, jekk nagħti kunsens, id-diskussjoni fuq Zoom tkun vidjow irregistrata għal analiżi għall-iskop tar-riċerka u li din ser tiġi transkritta. Din ir-registrazzjoni ser tagħmel użu mill-karatteristiċi ta' sigurtà ta' Zoom, b'ħal 'encryption end-to-end'. Ir-registrazzjoni ser tiġi mħassra fi żmien sentejn minn tmiem ir-riċerka.
5. Jiena konxju/a li fit-traskrizzjoni, d-data tiegħi se tkun psewdonimizzata, jiġifieri l-identità tiegħi ma tkunx innotata fuq traskrizzjonijiet jew noti mid-diskussjoni bl-użu ta' kodiċi. Il-kodiċijiet li jgħaqqdu d-data tiegħi mal-identità tiegħi ser jinħażnu b'mod sigur

u separat mid-data, b'mod kriptat (encrypted) fuq kompjuter tar-riċerkatur protett b'password u r-riċerkaturi biss ser ikollhom aċċess għal din l-informazzjoni. Kwalunkwe materjal stampat ser jinżamm f'post imsakkar u sikur separatament minn kwalunkwe informazzjoni ta' identifikazzjoni. Kwalunkwe materjal li jista' jidentifikani bħala parteċipant f'dan l-istudju ser jinħażen b'mod sikur sa tmiem l-istudju u ser tingered fi żmien sentejn minn tmiem ir-riċerka.

6. Nifhem illi, jekk nagħti kunsens, siltiet mid-diskussjoni (focus group) jistgħu jiġu riprodotti fil-pubblikazzjoni tas-sejbiet b'mod anonimu, bl-użu ta' psewdonimu (isem magħmul jew kodiċi eż. parteċipant A) u li fil-pubblikazzjoni tar-riżultati tar-riċerka ser issir referenza għall-komunità tal-Iklin.
7. Jiena konxju/a li l-identità tiegħi u informazzjoni personali mhux ser jiġu żvelati fl-ebda publikazzjoni, rapport jew preżentazzjoni li tirriżulta minn din ir-riċerka.
8. Jiena nifhem illi d-diskussjonijiet fi grupp għandhom jitqiesu bħala kunfidenzjali u li ma għandix niżvela d-dettalji ta' dawk li qed jipparteċipaw u / jew tan-natura tad-diskussjoni lil haddieħor.
9. Nifhem li l-parteċipazzjoni tiegħi ma tinvolvi l-ebda riskju magħruf jew antiċipat.
10. Nifhem ukoll illi ma hemmx benefiċċji diretti marbuta mal-parteċipazzjoni tiegħi f'dan l-istudju iżda l-parteċipazzjoni tiegħi ser tikkontribwixxi sabiex tiġi mifhuma aħjar il-komunità tiegħi.
11. Nifhem li l-informazzjoni kollha li tiġi miġbura se tiġi mmaniġjata skont il-proviżjonijiet tal- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) u leġiżlazzjoni lokali, u għandi d-dritt li naċċessa, nirrettifika u fejn applikabbli nħassar data dwari nnifsi.
12. Nifhem illi d-data miġbura ser tiġi miżmuma b'mod anonimizzat u li ser ikollhom aċċess għal data mhux ipproċessata r-riċerkaturi biss. Id-data ser tiġi mħassra fi żmien sentejn minn tmiem ir-riċerka.
13. Jiena ġejt ipprovdut/a b'kopja tal-ittra ta informazzjoni u nifhem li ser ningħata kopja ta din il-formola ta' kunsens, li tinkludi d-dettalji tar-riċerkaturi.

Jiena qrajt u fhimt id-dikjarazzjonijiet ta' hawn fuq u naqbel illi nipparteċipa f'dan l-istudju.

Isem tal-parteċipant

Firma tal-parteċipant

Data

Isem ir-Riċerkatur Akkademiku: Prof Andrew Azzopardi

Email: andrew.azzopardi@um.edu.mt

Tel: 23403720

Isem ir-riċerkatriċi: Ms Olga Formosa

Email: olga.formosa@um.edu.mt

Tel: 23403720

Appendix E



Faculty for Social Wellbeing

University of Malta

Msida MSD 2080, Malta

Tel: +356 2340 2672

socialwellbeing@um.edu.mt

www.um.edu.mt/socialwellbeing

Project Leader

Name: Prof Andrew Azzopardi

Email: andrew.azzopardi@um.edu.mt

Contact no: 23403720

Research Support Officer

Name: Ms Olga Formosa

Email: olga.formosa@um.edu.mt

Contact no: 23403720

The Faculty for Social Wellbeing at the University of Malta will be conducting research, in collaboration with the Iklin Local Council. We wish to gain insight into what it means to live in Iklin.

We would like to invite you to participate in this questionnaire regarding your experience within the Iklin community. You can complete the questionnaire by filling in a printed form (available from the Iklin Local Council or the Iklin Parish Church) or by visiting <https://forms.gle/GkPYFLSHgGfDMMWk9>. Residents of the community of Iklin can complete this questionnaire and should only submit it complete once. Questionnaires are to be submitted by Friday 20th August 2021. Your participation would help contribute to a better understanding of the community of Iklin and of the assets and opportunities of the neighbourhood. Any data collected from this research will be used solely for purposes of this study.

Completing the questionnaire should take between 5-10 minutes. Questionnaires are anonymous and will only be accessed by the team of researchers involved in the project. Any data gathered will be destroyed within 2 years of completion of the study: any digital data will be deleted and any printed material will be deleted and shredded within 2 years of completion of the study. Until then, any printed material will be stored in a locked, safe location. Throughout the publication of findings, reference will be made to the community of Iklin.

Participation in this questionnaire is entirely voluntary; in other words, you are free to accept or refuse to participate, without needing to give a reason. You are free to withdraw your participation at any stage before submission. Since the data you provide will be provided anonymously in an unidentifiable manner, it will not be possible to withdraw or edit any of this data once it is submitted. Submission of this questionnaire indicates your acceptance to the terms of participation as outlined in this document.

Please note that there are no direct benefits that will be extended to you should you choose to complete this questionnaire, other than helping to better understand your community. Additionally, completing this questionnaire does not entail any known or anticipated risks. Thank you for your time and consideration. Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact us by phone or email.

- 1. Gender**
(please select one)
- Male
- Female
- Other

2. Nationality
(please state)

- 3. Age**
(please select one)
- Up to 18
- 19 to 30
- 31 – 40
- 41 – 50
- 51 – 60
- 61 – 80
- 81 or over

- 4. Education**
(please select one)
- Primary level of education
- Secondary level of education
- Post-Secondary / Vocational level of education
- Tertiary level of education
- Postgraduate level of education
- Other (please specify)
-

- 5. Employment Status**
(please select one)
- Self-Employed
- Full-time employment
- Part-time employment
- Other (please specify)
- Casual employment
- Unemployed
- Retired
-

- 6. Household Status**
(please select one)
- Individual occupant
- Couple living together (no children)
- Household with residing children
- Household caring for other family member
- House-share
- Other (please specify)
-

- 7. Religion**
(please select one)
- Roman Catholic
- Christian (but not Catholic e.g. Orthodox, Protestant, etc.)
- Other (please specify)
- Muslim
- I do not practice a religion / Non-believer
-

Church

8. Do you participate in any civic activities?
(select at least one or more)

- Local Council
- Ġieħ I-Iklin
- None
- Other *(please specify)*

9. Do you wish to see any more of these in Iklin?
(please select at least one or more)

- Cafés
- Public Spaces
- Green areas
- Amenities for children
- Outdoor gym
- Public transport services
- Services for youth
- Services (e.g. hairdresser, fish shop, etc.) *(please specify)*
- None
- Other *(please specify)*

10. Where do you live in Iklin?
(please indicate area of Iklin you reside in according to number e.g. Area 1, 2, etc.)



I reside in Area _____ *(indicate number from 1 – 6)*

Residing in Iklin temporarily

11. How long have you been living in Iklin?
(please select one)

- Less than 3 years
Between 3 – 8 years
8 or more years

12. Where you brought up in Iklin? *(select one)*

- Yes
No

13. Why did you choose to live in Iklin?
(please specify)

14. How would you rate your experience of living in Iklin?

(please circle one number to indicate your answer – 1 indicates least positive whilst 5 indicates most positive)

1 2 3 4 5

15. Life Satisfaction

How satisfied do you feel with your life in general at this time?
(please circle one number to indicate your answer – 1 indicates least satisfied whilst 5 indicates most satisfied)

1 2 3 4 5

Akkademiku
Prof Andrew Azzopardi
Email: andrew.azzopardi@um.edu.mt
Tel: 23403720

Riċerkatriċi
Ms Olga Formosa
Email: olga.formosa@um.edu.mt
Tel: 23403720

Il-Fakultà għat-Tisfih tas-Socjeta' fl-Università ta' Malta, qiegħda taħdem fuq riċerka, wara ftehim mal-Kunsill Lokali tal-Iklin. B'din ir-riċerka nixtiequ nifhmu aħjar xi jfisser illi wieħed jgħix fil-komunità tal-Iklin.

Nixtiequ nistednuk tipparteċipa f'din ir-riċerka, billi timla dan il-kwestjonarju dwar l-esperjenza tiegħek fil-komunità tal-Iklin. Tista' timla dan il-kwestjonarji billi tuża l-formola pprintjata (disponibbli mingħand il-Kunsill Lokali tal-Iklin) jew fuq is-sit <https://forms.gle/GkPYFLSHgGfDMMWk9>. Kull resident mill-komunità tal-Iklin j/tista' j/timla dan il-kwestjonarju u jista' jissottometti l-kwestjonarju komplut darba biss. Il-kwestjonarju għandu jiġi mimli sa nhar il-Ġimgħa 20 ta' Awwissu 2021. Il-kontribut tiegħek jista' jgħin sabiex nifhmu aħjar il-komunità tal-Iklin u l-assi u l-opportunitajiet li toffri din iż-żona. L-informazzjoni u d-data miġbura f'din ir-riċerka ser tintuża biss għall-iskopijiet ta' dan l-istudju.

Il-kwestjonarju għandu jieħu madwar 5 sa 10 minuti biex jimtela. Il-kwestjonarju jimtela b'mod anonimu u ser ikun aċċessat biss mir-riċerkaturi direttament involuti f'dan l-istudju. Kwalunkwe data miġbura ser tiġi distrutta fi żmien sentejn minn tmiem ir-riċerka billi tiġi mħassra u materjal stampat jitqatta'. Sa dakinhar, id-data miġbura tkun miżmuma b'mod sigur u msakkra. L-isem tal-komunità tal-Iklin ser jkun imsemmi fil-pubblikazzjoni tar-riżultati tar-riċerka.

Il-partecipazzjoni tiegħek f'dan l-istudju hija b'mod volontarju u għandek id-dritt illi taċċetta jew tirrifjuta li tieħu sehem, mingħajr bżonn li tagħti raġuni. Għandek id-dritt illi tirtira milli tipparteċipa jew timmodifika r-risposti tiegħek f'kwalunkwe ħin qabel ma tissottometti r-risposti tiegħek. Peress illi d-data miġbura ser tiġi pprovduta b'mod anonimu, mhux possibbli li tirtira jew timmodifika d-data tiegħek wara li tiġi sottomessa. Is-sottomissjoni ta' dan il-kwestjonarju tindika li aċċettajt it-termini ta' partecipazzjoni kif deskritti f'dan id-dokument.

Mhux ser ikun hemm kumpens għal partecipazzjoni iżda ser tkun qed tgħin biex insiru nafu aħjar il-komunità tiegħek. Il-partecipazzjoni ma tinvolvi l-ebda riskju magħruf jew antiċipat.

Grazzi talli qed tikkunsidra tieħu sehem f'din ir-riċerka. Jekk għandek xi mistoqsijiet, jekk jogħġbok staqsi lir-riċerkaturi qabel tiddeċiedi li tiffirma dil-formola tal-kunsens u tipparteċipa fir-riċerka.

1. Sess Raġel
(*agħzel waħda*) Mara

Oħrajn

2. Nazzjonalità (agħti dettalji)

3. Età

(agħzel waħda)

Inqas minn 18

19 to 30

31 – 40

41 – 50

51 – 60

61 – 80

81 jew aktar

4. Edukazzjoni

(agħzel waħda)

Edukazzjoni tal-primarja

Edukazzjoni tas-sekondarja

Edukazzjoni post-sekondarja/vokazzjonali

Edukazzjoni ta' livell terzjarja

Edukazzjoni Postgraduate

Oħrajn (agħti dettalji)

5. Sitwazzjoni ta' Impjieg

(agħzel waħda)

Self-Employed
(naħdem għal rasi)

Impjieg każwali

Impjieg full-time

Qiegħed/qiegħda mix-xogħol

Impjieg part-time

Irtirat/a

Oħrajn (agħti dettalji)

6. Sitwazzjoni ta' residenza

(agħzel waħda)

Okkupanti waħdu / waħdeha

Koppja li tgħix flimkien (mingħajr tfal)

Residenza bi tfal residenti

Residenza fejn tiegħu h̄sieb membru ieħor tal-familja

House-share (tgħixu flimkien iżda mhux qraba jew koppja)

Oħrajn (agħti dettalji)

7. Reliġjon

(agħzel waħda)

Kattolku/a (Roman Catholic)

Musulman/a

Nisrani/ja (mhux Kattolku/a eż.
Ortodoss/a, Protestant/a, eċċ.)

Ma nipprattikax
religiġjon / Ma nemminx

Oħrajn (agħti dettalji)

8. Tippetċipa f'xi attivitajiet ċiviċi?

(agħzel waħda)

Knisja

Kunsill Lokali

Ġieħ I-Iklin

Xejn

Oħrajn (agħti dettalji)

Cafés

Spazzji pubbliċi

9. Tixtieq tara iżjed minn dawn fl-Iklin?
(*agħżel waħda jew aktar*)

- Żoni ħodor (green areas)
- Kumditajiet għat-tfal
- Gym fuq barra (Outdoor gym)
- Servizzi ta' trasport pubbliku
- Servizzi għaž-żgħažagħ
- Servizzi (eż *hairdresser*, ħanut tal-ħut, eċċ) (*agħti dettalji*)
- Xejn
- Oħrajn (*agħti dettalji*)

10. Fejn tgħix l-Iklin?
(*agħżel iż-żona tal-Iklin li tgħix fiha billi tagħżel in-numru taż-żona kif indikat fuq il-mappa eż. Żona 1, 2, eċċ.*)



Jiena ngħix go Żona _____ (*indika n-numru taż-żona li tgħix fiha*)

11. Kemm ilek tgħix l-Iklin?
(*agħżel waħda*)

- Ngħix l-Iklin b'mod temporanju
- Inqas minn 3 snin
- Bejn 3 – 8 snin
- Iżjed minn 8 snin

12. Trabbejt l-Iklin?
(*agħżel waħda*)

- Iva
- Le

**13. Għalfejn
għażilt li tgħix
l-Iklin?**
(*agħti dettalji*)

**14. Kif
tikklassifika
l-esperjenza
tiegħek fl-Iklin?**

(*agħmel ċirku man-numru li jindika r-risposta tiegħek – 1 jindika l-inqas
pożittiv filwaqt li 5 jindika l-iżjed pożittiv*)

1 2 3 4 5

**15.
Sodisfazzjoni
fil-ħajja**

Kemm tħossok sodisfatt b'ħajtek in ġenerali daż-żmien?
(*agħmel ċirku man-numru li jindika r-risposta tiegħek – 1 jindika l-inqas
sodisfatt filwaqt li 5 jindika l-iżjed sodisfatt*)

1 2 3 4 5