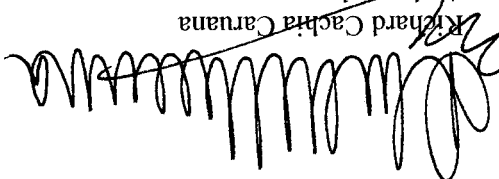


Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport

Enclousures: 2009 National Report on the implementation of the Education and Training 2010 work programme

Richard Cachia Caruana  
 Ambassador  
 Permanent Representative



Yours Sincerely

Attached please find Malta's National Report.

Reference is being made to your letter dated 4 February 2009 on the 2009 National Report on the implementation of the Education and Training 2010 work programme.

**2009 National Report on the implementation of the Education and Training 2010 work programme**

Dear Ms Quintin

29 May 2009

Ms Odile Quintin  
 Director General  
 Directorate General for Education and Culture  
 European Commission  
 B - 1049  
 Brussels

DIRA - ADONIS N°					
05 JUN 2009					
A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	IPC
X					

PR 422/09

*Dir A + your info. (+ enc)*  
 The Permanent Representative

Rappreżentant Permanenti

RECUC  
 04.06.2009 14:55

PERMANENT REPRESENTATION  
 TO THE EUROPEAN UNION



RAPPREŻENTANZA PERMANENTI  
 GĦALL-UNJONI EWROPEA

MALTA

PA →

**European Union Directorate-General for Education and Culture**  
**Lifelong Learning: horizontal policy issues and international affairs**

**Lifelong Learning: contribution to the Lisbon process**

# **Malta**

# **National Report**

**2010 Joint Report**  
**on the implementation of the**  
**Education and Training 2010 work programme**

**May 2009**

# CHAPTER 1:

## KEY COMPETENCES FOR LIFELONG LEARNING AS PART OF COHERENT AND COMPREHENSIVE LIFELONG LEARNING STRATEGIES

*Preliminary note: Malta has a population of just over 400,000 persons<sup>1</sup> and 7,000 years of history and culture. The State provides for a two-year kindergarten education starting at the age of 3, a six-year primary education and a five-year secondary education. At the end of secondary education students may join the general academic sixth forms or the vocational education and training institutions. About 39% of students attend compulsory education in non-State educational institutions that follow the State system of education. Malta has a University, a Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology, an Institute for Tourism Studies as well as a number of smaller non State educational institutions providing further and higher education. Malta has a very wide range of non-government organisations that provide informal and non-formal education. Malta's Government considers education and training as a major pillar for social and economic development and is intent on making Malta a regional centre of excellence in education by 2015.*

**QUESTION 1: In what concrete ways has your country developed its provision for Key Competences since 2006? Has there been any link to your country's lifelong learning strategy? Which actors have been involved? What use was made of the European framework and the work of the cluster on key competences (if possible, please provide concrete examples)?**

The Maltese system of education and training has been thoroughly analysed in various areas and at different levels before substantial reforms were implemented during the last ten years. The related reports produced by specialists with the appropriate expertise and experience in the different fields proposed the philosophy, principles, policies, strategies and objectives backing the reforms. In preparing for reforms, intensive and extensive top-down and bottom-up consultation was carried out, involving policy makers, teachers, parents, children, the teachers' union as well as civil society. A new collective agreement for the education grades facilitated the implementation of the revised Education Act. Various binding documents refer, directly or indirectly, to these Key Competences and Malta's lifelong learning strategy<sup>2</sup>.

The Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education (DQSE) established through the Education Act to set standards and ensure quality education while monitoring and supporting curriculum delivery, prepared a policy together with a strategy, National Policy and Strategy for the Attainment of Core Competences in Primary Education, to tackle core competences attainment in Literacy, eLearning and Mathematics. This policy primarily targets pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 in primary education. Teachers are given training on how to identify, by using checklists, pupils who have not mastered core competences by the time they are 8 years old. Teachers are trained in how to support pupils to reach, at least, a minimum level of attainment.

In the primary education sector new Mathematics textbooks which etch a new methodology for the teaching mathematics were introduced across the six-year levels in conjunction with the new syllabus. The new syllabi for the different subject place a strong emphasis on learning outcomes and on how children are trained to think for themselves and devise solutions to non-standard problems.

---

<sup>1</sup> Reference is made to the size of the population so that statistics anent education and training would be assessed within this perspective

<sup>2</sup> Refer to Appendix

In the secondary education sector, new Mathematics textbooks were introduced also across the five forms. Four schemes were phased in: Scheme A for the high achievers while scheme D targets students who have difficulty in basic mathematics acquisition. The textbooks in both the primary and the secondary sectors promote more investigative work that empowers children. Teachers have undergone training on how to make the best use of the new textbooks.

For the better performing students, the mathematics department within the DQSE organises sessions on a monthly basis so that gifted and talented students are exposed to mathematical situations where they have to devise strategies to solve them to become better equipped to face challenges, take new initiatives and later on become more entrepreneurial adults. The mathematics department also organises a biannual Mathematics Olympiad to foster team spirit as well as to enhance the teaching and learning of mathematics through setting problem-solving tasks.

The Science Curriculum gives Inquiry Based Learning a more centralised role. Formative assessment was formally introduced in years 4 and 5 in the primary education sector. In-service education and training courses for Primary Teachers of Years 4 and 5 emphasised an investigative approach. Seminars were held for University Bachelor of Education (Hons) students specialising in science subjects. There was an increase in science resources available in primary schools. The drafting of a new Science and Technology Syllabus is being undertaken for the Inclusive and Special Education Network within the primary sector. Two science oriented television series were produced aimed at students whose age group varied from 5 to 13 years. Theme based hands-on learning science activities were held at a variety of venues. A science booklet was produced to commemorate Einstein. Students participated in various Comenius Projects. The Faculty of Science within the University in collaboration with the Curriculum Management and eLearning Department were responsible for the *Xjenza* TV programme on Channel 22, the Education Directorates' official television station. The National Student Travel Foundation, Playmobil Funpark (Malta), Heritage Malta, Local Councils and the College are participating in hands-on science activities. Students participated in the NSTF Science Week.

The revised Science syllabus in secondary schools was designed for learners to acquire a competence in science and technology based on knowledge, skills and attitudes aiming at further learning in knowledge based society. The syllabi facilitate learning with emphasis on well-defined learning outcomes and to enable science students to acquire a level 2-3 NQF qualification that lead to studies at post secondary education. The practical component was strengthened through an investigative approach and problem solving applications. A pedagogy that nurtures an enquiry-based science teaching and learning approach is promoted. The hands-on learning activities held at the Science Centre and other venues serve to enhance science skills and develop a spirit of enquiry by encouraging curiosity and reasoning. The activities serve to introduce, complement or supplement the curriculum delivered within the school and emphasize science as an integral part of our life, whilst promoting the idea of lifelong learning. Examinations in science subjects aim at the learning of higher order skills. Training of secondary school science teachers is undertaken in such fields as astronomy, earth science and biology during in-service training courses.

The design and structure of science laboratories was reviewed and an application for EU funding for the procurement of science and technology equipment for Integrated Science, Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Design and Technology subjects at secondary level was accepted. A television production aimed towards public awareness of science was funded through the EU Sixth Framework Programme. A Masters degree in Science Education was initiated by the University, with an initial intake of 16 post-graduate students in 2005-06 and a similar second intake in 2008-09.

The in-service education and training of teachers is a vital initiative in the promotion of continuous professional development (CPD). The Department for Curriculum Management and eLearning (CMeLD) involved Assistant Directors of Education, Education Officers, heads of departments and teachers in the implementation of new syllabus design and examinations. The Faculty of Education

within the University is preparing student teachers in this area. A ministerial committee with representatives from the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education, the CMELD and from the Faculties of Education and Science is working on the implementation of a National Strategy for Science Education.

The annual training of teachers by the CMELD and the new Masters degree in Science Education provide an excellent opportunity for continuous professional development (CPD). The CMELD is involved in the implementation of new syllabus design and examinations with the Faculty of Education within the University of Malta being responsible for initiating a Masters degree in Science Education.

A new Design and Technology (D&T) syllabus was developed, tried and tested in pilot schools and issued to all Design and Technology teachers. The pedagogy nurtures a constructivist D&T teaching and learning approach leading to a Secondary Education Certification. Training was held for all secondary school D&T teachers exposing them to constructivist teaching and learning together with health and safety practices. Training was also held for all secondary school D&T technicians to be able to support the teachers in their laboratories. The D&T laboratories were restructured and redesigned and provided with the required equipment and tools in the majority of the secondary schools. A number of specialist teachers together with the Education Officer visit schools regularly to support teachers. The provision of laptops to all teachers together with 4 personal computers per laboratory strengthened the implementation of an ICT pedagogy in D&T. ProDESKTOP, a computer aided design software, has been installed on all laptops to strengthen this strategy. Teachers are availing themselves of opportunities for training on computer aided machines. The majority of the primary year 6 pupils visit the Design and Technology Learning Centre for a day of practical experience using Food, Textiles, Electronics as well as computer design and computer aided laser machines to raise awareness of Design and Technology. The annual in-service training of teachers, the hands-on training to the teaching staff and courses on ProDESKTOP software provide an excellent opportunity for continuous professional development.

Mention will be made to a number of specific initiatives. In order to tackle the problem of students who have reached the secondary education sector without mastering core competences, the DQSE is providing training to teachers from the state and non-state secondary schools. A one-year, part time course trains teachers to prepare material that can be used with these students. At risk students are first screened at the end of the primary cycle. Once the students have been identified, they are given a special Basic Skills / Foundation Course spread over the five years at secondary level. Students who show a marked improvement are transferred to a higher setting.

During the last three years, the English department has carried out the following curricular and training initiatives: updating of English Language Syllabi; pegging of attainment levels and learning outcomes to the CEFR; introduction of an Alternative English Literature Syllabus for students who do not intend to follow the Secondary Education Certificate Literature Syllabus; introduction of continuous assessment of daily spoken interaction, and its crediting (10%) in the annual mark; introduction of two new course books and materials which are in line with CEFR; revision of Level Descriptors; provision of annual INSET training in content and methodology with particular reference to learning to learn skills and differentiation.

In 2006, the Maltese primary education syllabus was revised to be in line with modern approaches in mother tongue teaching. In 2009, a national policy and strategy was devised to ensure that core competences regarding literacy and oracy be mastered by all learners in the first three years of the primary education cycle. An in-service education and training course for teachers teaching these classes updated them with the latest teaching strategies of the core competences.

Modern methodology in the teaching of foreign languages is solidly based on the CEFR. Assessment criteria are directly referred to the CEFR and teachers have had continuous training in this field. The

Italian department introduced a new series of textbooks directly linked to the CEFR for the teaching of Italian while a new textbook for the teaching of Italian culture was carefully planned in conjunction with the author so that CEFR levels are adhered to. Developments were also evident in the other major modern languages, namely German, Spanish and French. New textbooks were introduced in these subjects with levels linked to the CEFR. The French department is adopting elearning with some focus on the language of SMS and on emails. The department has also created its own portal. The Arabic language syllabus was changed in line with that of the CEFR and new Arabic text books are being introduced. The teaching of the Arabic language was extended to adult learning evening courses.

**QUESTION 2: Describe briefly how each of the eight key competences (Mother tongue; Foreign languages; Mathematics, science and technology; Digital competence; Learning to learn; Social and civic competence; Initiative taking and entrepreneurship and Cultural awareness and expression) is included in (i) the national framework curriculum (or equivalent document, including for example at the regional level) for general education, and (ii) for VET?**

***Preliminary note:** The National Minimum Curriculum, Creating the Future Together (2000), currently under review, adequately caters for the key competences for kindergarten and compulsory education. It covers ages 3 – 4 at kindergarten, ages 5 – 10 at primary, and ages 11 – 16 at secondary education levels. During their secondary education students may opt to follow vocational subjects together with core subjects. However, higher secondary education and training courses are covered by different curricula developed and implemented by the general academic and vocational education and training institutions generally leading to areas of specialisation incorporating a number of subjects. Hence, students continue building on the cross key competences covered earlier during their five-year secondary education.*

### **Mother tongue**

The key competence of Maltese, the mother tongue and national language, is taught at the primary, secondary and higher-secondary education levels. The syllabuses specify listening, speaking, reading and writing competences as well as cultural and literary components.

The National Minimum Curriculum considers bilingualism, Maltese and English, as a key element of the educational system. Bilingualism entails the effective, precise and confident use of the country's two official languages: Maltese and English. This goal must be reached by the students by the end of their compulsory schooling experience. While children are in the process of strengthening the first language, they are familiarising themselves with the second language. Some may even start school using English already.

In the primary education area a set of readers have been introduced by a team of educational experts and class teachers choose textbooks they consider appropriate to their students from the recommended list. The Maltese Department from this year started preparing three examination papers: Mainstream, Intermediate, and Foundation to cater for the different ability levels.

Students and teachers are provided with a number of textbooks, including learning materials on literature, culture and grammar, developed by the teachers of Maltese under the direction of the senior Education Officer. Besides in service education and training courses, all teachers in the primary sector are being trained during Continuing Professional Development sessions on the latest rules regarding Maltese orthography. Teachers actively participate on a yearly basis in in-service education and training courses in which lectures and workshops are organised on various areas.

The mother language is mostly used in Mathematics as the medium of instruction for students following Foundation / Basic Skills classes.

A competence programme has been developed with regard to vocational education and training at higher secondary education level.

### **Foreign languages including the official language**

The practice encouraged by the National Minimum Curriculum is generally found in other European countries: knowledge of foreign languages is developed following one's knowledge of the native and national language – Maltese. English is one of the two official languages (the other being Maltese, the national language). English is a compulsory subject at primary and secondary levels and it is the recommended language of instruction and examinations for most subjects at all levels of education. There are specific syllabuses, namely: Primary English Language Syllabus, Secondary English Language, Secondary English Literature, Alternative Secondary English Literature Syllabus.

Two consecutive evaluation exercises carried out by the Education Officer for Italian through the use of extensive questionnaires to all teachers of Italian (2007, 2008) have shown that the textbook and the syllabus cover these language and culture competences extensively. Situations referred to in the textbook are carefully chosen in order to put the students in roles that train them for such competences. Italian teaching in less motivated classes makes use of the mother tongue in order to help the students consolidate their own tongue and to help them understand better the concepts in the foreign language.

The French Resource Centre is a focal point for the training of teachers, meetings, exchange and dissemination of ideas and good practice, stocking of teaching and learning materials and launching of initiatives. The intention is to promote a new relationship in teaching between the teacher and his/her students. In an effort to include the learning of French, technology and fun, the Centre organised internet activities with the participation of schools, transforming SMS French into standard French. Hundreds of students were encouraged to design and produce Christmas using French. The Centre launched two blogs, one for primary and one for secondary students with the aims of pluridisciplinarity, written expression and use of communication technologies. Teaching materials were produced to help teachers prepare students to participate in these activities. Primary education pupils are introduced to the French language, as part of foreign languages awareness, through visits to the French Resource Centre. An Association of Teachers of French was set up.

A new syllabus and new textbooks are being introduced according to the CEFR for Arabic as a foreign language. Various other initiatives are being taken in the teaching of German and Spanish.

### **Mathematics**

The acquisition of core competences in mathematics during the early primary education years is considered essential. If children do not acquire these skills by age 8 there is special intervention. At secondary level, students who are identified as lacking basic skills in mathematics follow a Foundation Course / Basic Skills Course in order to acquire mathematical skills that equip them to tackle situations outside the school environment. With the National Minimum Curriculum and the Malta Qualifications Framework as the background to reforms, the Mathematics sector endeavoured to bring the teaching of mathematics in line with the set targets. The syllabus was reorganised into four Schemes - A, B, C and D in descending order of difficulty to reflect Secondary Education Certificate (SEC) requirements as well as to cater for students with lower ability who do not sit the SEC examination in the final year of their secondary education. Scheme A caters for Paper A of the SEC examination whereas Scheme D caters for students who are at basic skills level. Learning outcomes bring into focus the gradual development of concepts and skills required at each level of secondary education, from Form I to V, in line with students' ability.

Old textbooks were replaced with modern textbooks introduced over the last three years. Textbooks incorporated new teaching strategies in line with the basic competencies required at the end of secondary education such as investigative work, task oriented work, calculation strategies excluding the use of electronic equipment, use of computer software, and tasks aimed at bringing together groups of students in collaborative learning. Textbooks match the difficulty level of the schemes and encourage and enable private study considered a precursor of the lifelong learning strategy.

Summative assessment for benchmarking strategies is incorporated in the plan. Annual papers are set for each Form and students sit for an examination according to the scheme they followed throughout the year. Mobility of students from one scheme to another is achieved once students demonstrate, through continuous assessment by their teacher, that they have mastered sufficiently the material in a particular scheme. In order to avoid unnecessary slowing down of the learning process, Heads of School are encouraged to move students from one scheme to another at the earliest opportunity without waiting for the end of a particular year. A continuous assessment process is being incorporated on a modular basis for further assistance. The syllabus was designed in modular form to facilitate action by the teacher.

Mathematics is incorporated in the national curriculum as one of the basic subjects. A pass at Secondary Education Certificate (SEC) level is required for further academic achievement. Through the schemes it is hoped that by the end of the fifth year of secondary education all students will have equipped themselves with basic skills in mathematics. This in turn should enable further learning and training in vocational subjects throughout their adult lives.

In service education and training of teachers was undertaken during three successive years to familiarise teachers with the new textbooks and the new teaching strategies being adopted. Various stake holders were involved to achieve the set objectives. The Heads of Department (HoD's) were involved in all the stages of the project especially in planning and implementation. The Heads of School in liaison with the HoD's and teachers provide the set up and guide students into sets with the appropriate scheme. Parents' cooperation is sought for the full benefit of the students. Students themselves are involved because the success of their learning depends on them.

### **Science and Technology**

Objective 12 of the National Minimum Curriculum emphasises the role of science and technology in everyday life "to create an open environment which triggers curiosity for science and technology in children by reinforcing science and technology education at all levels and by promoting interest and full participation among children from all backgrounds". The document highlights the importance of knowledge, skills and attitudes that students need to develop. The philosophy of the framework aims to nurture science teaching and learning strategies through observation, curiosity, enquiry, role models and the use of ICT tools. The content of science syllabi, textbooks, educational materials and assessment procedures reflect these strands. This approach develops the ability in students to observe, measure, analyse, solve problems, gather and interpret data and design experiments through individual work and / or team work. The framework supports an attitude for the application of scientific concepts to everyday life and for safeguarding the natural environment for sustainable development.

The Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) has developed new courses ranging from foundation to diploma to degree courses in aspects related to science and technology.

## **Digital competence**

In an era characterised by the digital transformation, the education system is not only targeting digital competence to skills subjects, such as mathematics, but it is also promoting digital competence as a form of dialogue, information, cultural expression and exchange of practices.

Malta is one of six European states where all schools are provided with Internet. All teachers are provided with laptops, personal computers are found in every primary school class and computer laboratories are used in secondary schools. Interactive boards are increasingly evident in classrooms. Digital competence is targeted in the early years of primary education as essential eLiteracy and is used as a tool to enhance other subjects such as Mathematics and Literacy. In the secondary education sector, digital competence is used to enrich the teaching and learning of Mathematics, besides most other subjects, through the use of software programmes that make learning mathematics more meaningful. The internet is also a useful tool that teachers use. Students are encouraged to participate in interactive material that they can also access from home. Such activities and exercises ensure that the learning of mathematics is interesting and will equip students with the skills needed to learn how to learn.

Teachers are encouraged to use ICT in their planning and delivery of English Language and Literature lessons. New methodologies include the use of Webquests and modern technology in the teaching of Italian. The last three in service education and training sessions held for teachers of Italian were conducted by an author of a textbook who emphasised the use of modern technology in language teaching. Many teachers use their creative talents to make use of such technologies in the teaching of Italian. The Arabic language has developed its own website and blog for students and other interested parties to interact in Arabic and share views about the language and its culture.

Members of the eLearning and ICT in Education section endeavour to explore and exploit the potential of ICT to enhance the quality of teaching and learning experiences and practices for students and teachers. The section also provides ICT teachers and state secondary schools with the necessary ICT tools, resources, expertise, advice and support to make delivery of ICT in Education more effective. The section is responsible for strengthening the ICT based community in state schools by offering Internet connections, e-mail accounts and related services. The Skola portal <http://skola.edu.mt> is the official gateway into the Internet; it aims to provide localised content, news and links to other educational websites. The eLearning Centre is responsible for the co-ordination of the ECDL® programme, the international qualification that enables people to demonstrate their competence and skills as computer users (<http://ecdl.skola.edu.mt>). eTwinning is an action supported by the European Commission and promotes collaboration between schools in Europe. The National eTwinning Support Service provides information in relation to eTwinning and international ICT mediated school collaboration; it organises and participates in seminars and staff development activities, and provides personalised support in technical and pedagogical aspects in connection with eTwinning (<http://etwinning.skola.edu.mt>). The unit offers courses in ICT to all teachers. The aim is to empower teachers with innovative technological tools, upgrade their pedagogical skills and knowledge with emphasis on curricular integration. The section offers a number of short courses ranging from beginners level to more advanced levels such as Advanced ECDL to improve the ICT skills of teachers and help them apply ICT in their lessons through a sound pedagogical background (<http://courses.skola.edu.mt>).

## **Learning to learn**

Learning should be through active participation and experiential learning. Hence, the focus tends to be on the required shift from text-book learning to experiential, more active learning that generally leads to better understanding.

In service education and training courses always aim at equipping teachers with strategies and methods that can be instrumental in teaching students learning-to-learn skills together with the knowledge and attitude that enable them to become independent life-long learners ready to change, adapt and develop as they grow. Syllabi stress the importance of autonomous learning as well as peer teaching. The textbook and the teacher's guide emphasise the importance of imparting such skills to the students. Libraries and resource centres in schools are instrumental in developing the ability to look for information and carry out research on one's own. Through the use of the internet as well as investigative work assigned by teachers during practical work in the workshop, the laboratory or during fieldwork, students are encouraged to seek how to learn about various topics and issues.

Students and teachers of Arabic, for example, visit the Arabic Language Centre during their academic year to participate in talks, discussions, exchange of information or in-service courses. Peer learning method is encouraged during these sessions. .

### **Social and civic competence**

Social and civic competence is acquired by students mainly within active citizenship and within a democratic environment rather than for citizenship since students are already citizens today. This competence is expected to mature gradually as they grow and become adults. The various areas of knowledge and experiences contribute to the maturing process.

The history curriculum promotes understanding and tolerance and tries to combat racism and discrimination and their negative impact. It encourages the use of evidence and different sources to nurture the idea that different viewpoints may be equally valid. Students reach conclusions while respecting and tolerating other people's viewpoints, thus eradicating bias or prejudice. This is done through the study of national history within a wider Mediterranean and European perspective so as to give a more global dimension, the study of the common European cultural heritage and shared historical experiences, an appreciation of the contributions made by minority groups to the culture of the larger nation state and their aspirations for integration, and various contributions to peace. The development of citizenship and a democratic environment (Objective 2 in National Minimum Curriculum) is well catered for students of History through the study of the history of democracy, the concept of democracy, Malta's constitutional history and democracy in practice.

Environmental education is being given great importance. Students are helped to develop the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes and values so that, as active citizens, they would take care of, embellish and utilize the environment with a sense of responsibility towards the present and future generations. Hence students helped to foresee, identify and solve environmental problems by participating more actively and in a more responsible and effective way in the care of the environment. They thus develop a sense of responsibility and solidarity by understanding how personal and local actions could have national, regional as well as global repercussions. A number of schools have achieved Green Flag status as part of Eco school initiatives.

Social Studies include themes dealing with the promotion of respect and tolerance and combating racism and discrimination. Topics covered include basic human rights, the maintaining of peace among nations, the importance of women in society, the refugee issue, migration, the Third World, citizenship and democracy, law and government, the educative role of laws and regulations, conflict solving and peace-making processes and the role of values. Through them students develop such attitudes as appreciating the importance of a democratic environment, respect for the country's Constitution and institutions, respect for basic rights and the need for participation to generate a strong sense of democracy. Recently, the Social Studies Secondary Education Certificate syllabus (for 2011) has been revamped so that students preparing for this examination at the end of their secondary education will have achieved a wider experience of modern day increasingly changing society. Greater emphasis is being given to the European perspective, with Malta being a Mediterranean State within a European dimension.

At the primary education level social and civic competences are taught through the Social Studies Syllabus. Commemoration and remembrance events at schools nurture in students social awareness towards issues related to racism and xenophobia, like the Holocaust Day, Human Rights Day, etc. Emphasis is laid on the themes of justice, democracy and entrepreneurship through initiatives and projects, including Students Councils which have become statutory, visits to the Law Courts, School Co-operatives (Scoops), Global Action Schools and Conectando Mundos.

Personal and Social Development: At both primary and secondary education levels the Personal and Social Development (PSD) syllabus covers social and civic competences. PSD aims at empowering individuals to develop skills that enhance their well being, by identifying and developing their character, personality and potential, thus enabling them to participate effectively in their social environment.

### **Initiative taking and Entrepreneurship**

Students are encouraged to devise strategies when carrying out investigative tasks together in various subjects. For example, Mathematics' trail and web quests help students to work in groups – they learn the importance of each one carrying one's tasks since neglecting to do so will mean that the rest of the group will bear the consequences. This approach tends to lead them to become competent and reliable future entrepreneurs. Students are encouraged to take the lead in their own learning. For example, the Italian department launched a competition for all secondary schools in which students are encouraged to have their say in their learning and their research, under the guidance of their teachers. Moreover schools take initiatives and twin with Italian schools and student exchanges are frequent.

A conference on entrepreneurship education was organised in May 2009 together with the Ministry of Finance, Economy and Investment in order to promote entrepreneurship on a wider scale and its importance to the economy.

### **Cultural awareness and expression**

Cultural awareness, intercultural dialogue and creative expression are expected to run somehow through and enrich all subjects and not be restricted to any particular subject or group of subjects. Culture is not only heritage but includes also the appreciation of all forms of visual, plastic and performing arts.

The Maltese language programme at the secondary education level has a five-year programme specifically on Maltese cultural awareness and expression, including specific projects on folklore, Maltese role-models, language awareness and a 'systems of knowledge' approach to the analysis of Maltese culture.

Foreign language learning without appreciating the culture of the country of the target language is incomplete. The English department sees culture as an inseparable component of language. The syllabus strongly promotes the students' exposure to the enriching variety of English cultures via reading texts, literary works and audio visual material.

The Italian department has introduced a text for the teaching of Italian culture. The text gives students the opportunity to carry out webquests and enjoy the beauty of Italy's wide heritage. A competition organised between schools has given a wide opportunity to students to delve in the culture of Italy. The author of an Italian textbook addressed teachers during an in service education and training course about the subject and discussed feedback obtained through research which the responsible Education Officer carried out. The Secondary Education Certificate syllabus includes the testing of

Italian culture. Importance has been given to intercultural competence where students understand their own culture, appreciate diversity and accept differences through learning about and comparing with other cultures. The programme which is being carried out in primary schools lays emphasis on cultural awareness and the importance of learning the notion of cognates, for example seeing the sound relation which exists between the Italian and the Maltese languages. Once a year students of Arabic together with their teachers organise a school based cultural project usually related to literature, food, costumes, traditions or landmarks of the different Arab countries.

The Drama Unit, mainly through its Theatre in Education projects, reaches all secondary education students at the Drama Centre to take part in interactive theatre projects which are organized and prepared with specific age groups in mind. Cultural awareness is well catered for in the syllabus. Themes vary from socio-related problems such as bullying, child abuse, internet abuse, etc. to syllabus related topics. Other projects aim at introducing Maltese and foreign authors, mainly dramatists. These projects are often followed up during school visits by drama teachers. Direct participation in drama is meant to enable individuals to express themselves, gain confidence, think, listen and work individually and in groups.

Physical Education content has become wider to include areas previously excluded, such as outdoor adventure, dance incorporating more modern themes, swimming, and the inclusion of more team and individual games. In terms of pedagogy, teaching is not simply the imparting of knowledge but more essentially scaffolding on the level of each individual. The subject has become more culturally open to various activities and to regard these activities as intrinsically culturally enriching.

Art, forming part of creative expression and encompassing also craft, drama and music at primary education level, is taught as part of Cultural Accretion at secondary level. From Form 3 to 5 (ages 13 – 16) Art is offered as a subject option. Students are helped to develop an aesthetic sensibility in addition to aesthetic values and criteria which they can apply not only to their own artistic production but also to evaluate Maltese and international works of art.

Music teaching in primary schools offers pupils in all streams the opportunity to develop their personality and gain confidence, self-esteem and fulfillment in the process. Through music education, pupils are introduced to a wide range of music which helps broaden their cultural horizons. Lessons in music encourage pupils to take initiatives through activities such as rehearsing, planning and performing expressively individually and in groups for different audiences, venues and occasions. In addition, pupils are given the opportunity to be creative by composing simple music themselves.

Social Studies include a theme, treated at the secondary school level, environment and culture, where emphasis is put on the local natural and cultural environment, including not only the built-up environment but also local traditions. Visits to cultural places are organised for students. Work between the Directorates of Education and Heritage Malta is underway to create more cultural programmes for pupils at different levels of their educational experience.

**QUESTION 3: By what means (e.g. learning material or learning support) does your country seek to support schools and teachers to ensure that *all* young people leaving initial education and training (i.e. including the educationally disadvantaged) have developed these competences to a level that equips them for adult life?**

State schools have been subdivided into ten colleges in order to facilitate lateral and vertical networking between schools. Each college is led by a Principal and is composed of a number of secondary schools together with their feeder primary schools. This networking is helping schools to smoothen the children's transition from the primary to the secondary education sector. Educational leaders and practitioners pool and share ideas, expertise and experiences and have the opportunity to meet and discuss common educational themes, issues and problems in search new methodology,

pedagogy and solutions as well as set common objectives. Moreover, resources and services are better shared among the schools within the same college. At the higher level, College Principals meet their central authorities to discuss direction and offer the feedback of experiences at school and classroom levels. Many ideas presented in this report are the result of the new way educational leaders at different levels are working together. Non-state schools may join State Colleges in the network if they so decide to benefit from networking and to avoid potential isolation. The growing school autonomy from the centre is respected while the schools within each College develop their particular identity, personality and character.

Reference has been made earlier to the launch of a strategy and policy for the Acquisition of Core Competences at the Primary level. The e-learning strategy for all schools is being developed in a way that schools can create networks of resources, information and knowledge. This should eventually lead to new pedagogies, resources and textbooks. In addition at the secondary education level provision is made to ensure that learners facing difficulties in the core areas are given additional teaching to ensure that they acquire competence in these areas.

Together with Maltese, English is one of the key subjects taught in Basic Skills or Literacy programmes in schools, targeted at disadvantaged students. The English language syllabus for secondary schools encourages the provision of differentiated teaching opportunities that can help create conditions for giving individual attention to each learner and ensure that every learner is being helped to succeed. National examinations are specifically provided for these students. Specially trained teachers and Learning Support Assistants are provided for classes requiring additional educational support within an inclusive education scenario. Teachers and Learning Support Assistants work together in class in order to provide differentiated teaching and Individual Educational Programmes (IEPs) for students with a statement of needs identified by a team of specialists. Small classes are allowed where required.

Formative Assessment is being emphasised across the curriculum while summative assessment methods are carried out. One needs to stress the need to use better the materials of the annual examination for formative assessment of learning.

Activities for the high achievers in Mathematics are carried out on a regular national basis in certain areas. During these sessions, aimed at 14-16-year olds, a topic is tackled from a different perspective than students normally encounter at school as part of their learning. They are encouraged to discuss how to tackle the problem and also to describe how they arrive at their solutions. Lower attaining students are also targeted so that they finish compulsory education with at least the basic skills needed to live a normal independent adult as well as be employable.

Peripatetic support teachers as well as the Education Officers visit the schools on regular basis to support teachers and students. The setting up of ten colleges across the island has provided further opportunities for inclusive education, where students with a range of educational interests, potential and needs learn together in a differentiated teaching and learning class environment. This fosters a participatory role for students of different abilities in Science and Technology education. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds liable of becoming school drop-outs are given an opportunity to become Technology literate.

History and social studies have undertaken the following initiatives: the updating of the History syllabus for all classes; the development of a new syllabus for those specialising in History (Option Groups); the uploading of a History website and the introduction of new textbooks and materials; the drawing up of Level Descriptors and Learning Outcomes in the subject, and the provision of annual teachers' in-service education and training in content and methodology. In cooperation with the Inclusive and Special Education Network, Attainment Level Descriptors for children with special needs have been developed to improve access to the History and Social Studies syllabuses. Specially trained teachers are provided for these classes. Small classes are allowed in such cases.

It is envisaged that teachers give the necessary skills to all the students in the learning-to-learn process. For example, in the case of Arabic, a language offering specific challenges, teachers teach the students how to use the dictionary, how to search for certain data in Arabic search engines on the internet, how to write letters and how to write a simple curriculum vitae in Arabic.

Physical education assessment procedures are being changed to celebrate achievement rather than focusing on individual deficiencies. It is essential that each individual becomes physically literate as this will enhance the opportunity for that individual to be physically active throughout life. Teachers are expected to satisfy the needs of the individual child. Initiatives are taken, such as the upgrading of level descriptors and the various in-service education and training courses and seminars organised to create a culture of sport. In order to encourage and support physical education and sports activities within the community, sports facilities in schools are being opened to the use of the community, generally in collaboration with the Local Councils and / or sports organisations.

The Drama Unit attempts to ensure that children develop some competence in drama. Students have about five to ten sessions a year in the primary and less lessons in the secondary sector. In-service courses encourage school teachers to continue the work in drama, though owing to syllabus and time constraints they often find it difficult to do so. However, interested teachers often include drama in their teaching.

The Music Department is developing a new syllabus as well as new workbooks for primary education. Music tuition is spreading in primary schools while the Music Option together with a new syllabus is being piloted in three secondary schools. At the same time the department is working on musical activities as artistic experiences for the students and teachers as well as on a project for the Year of Creativity and Innovation: an artistic experience for the students. Workshops with Music teachers are held at both primary and secondary levels. The department is developing a website to be a point of reference for teachers and students to help increase their awareness of the many musical practices that are being implemented in schools locally and abroad.

Giovanni Curmi Higher Secondary School is providing an excellent educational service to students who have not succeeded in obtaining the necessary formal paper qualifications for a course they wish to pursue at a higher level or in order to find employment. It offers a very wide range of subjects at ordinary, intermediate and advanced level in order to provide a second opportunity to students to reach their goals.

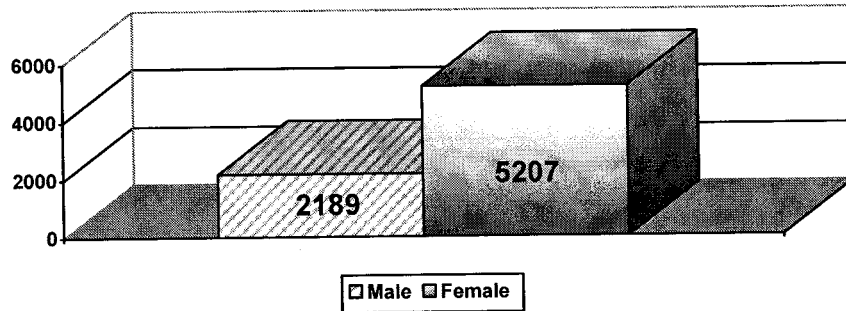
**QUESTION 4: What progress has your country made towards ensuring that all adults have opportunities to develop and update their key competences?**

The Adult Learning Unit within the Directorate for Educational Services, is one of the leading providers of adult education. It aims to provide learning opportunities to all those who would like to acquire and / or improve their skills and knowledge in the subject/s of their choice while disseminating and supporting the concept of a dynamic knowledge-based society and economy and a lifelong learning culture. It monitors learning opportunities offered to ensure relevance and quality. Local Councils are often involved in the provision of these opportunities either in collaboration with other agencies or on their own initiatives.

A number of education and training institutions at post compulsory education level provide courses at foundation level where key competences are given due importance in preparation for a higher level for education and training. Evening courses are offered to students who do not succeed in obtaining appropriate formal certification in the key competences by the end of their compulsory education.

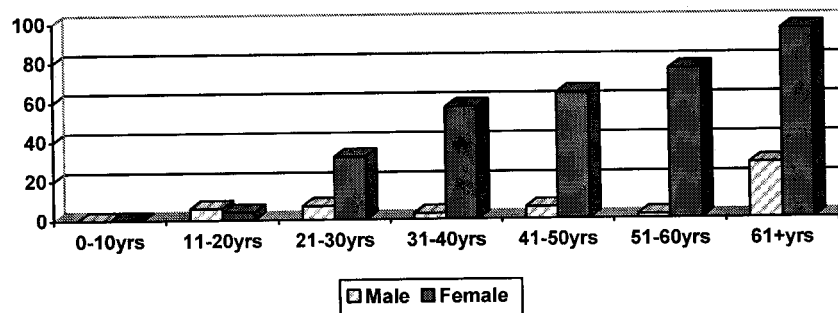
**QUESTION 4.a: What, if any, are the current adult target groups and the specific provisions put in place for them?**

The Adult Learning Unit is currently offering 391 courses in Malta and 59 courses in the smaller sister island of Gozo. These courses vary in type and depth. Courses aim to reach any learner who would like to continue with his/her studies in any of the key competencies. The comprehensive number of learners attending evening and adult classes is 7,396. This is a graphical representation of learners (by gender) attending these courses.



The State Lifelong Learning Centre is expanding its provision. The number of adult learners attending day classes in the last quarter of 2008 was 364 (70 male and 294 female). The courses offered include basic literacy courses in the Maltese and the English Language, as well as a range of academic subjects leading to Secondary Education Certificate level examinations, equivalent to a compulsory school leaving certification. Conversation Courses in various languages are run while courses in Computer, Entrepreneurship, social and civic competencies are also organised. Courses in Science are being launched.

This is a graphical representation of adult learners by age groups at the Lifelong Learning Centre.



Evening courses provided by the Adult Learning Unit help students who may have originally failed in acquiring the necessary entry qualifications to higher and post secondary education institutions, such as MCAST, ITS and the University, to achieve these requirements. These courses contribute to achieve a higher percentage of students continuing their further and higher education.

The basic literacy courses are having the desired effect so that the illiteracy rate primarily among adults is on the decrease. According to the 2005 Census, the illiteracy rate represented 7.2% of the population, mainly adults. Since 55% of illiterate persons are concentrated in the Southern and Harbour area, the Adult Learning Unit is focusing a programme of basic literacy in this region.

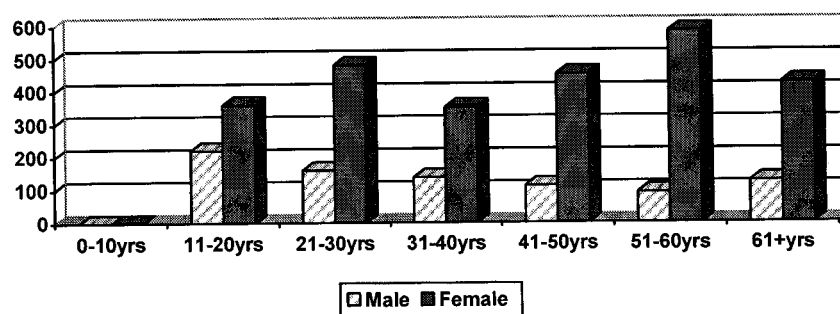
Another area in which progress is being registered is the result of new initiatives among the increasing immigrant community. New courses in basic English and basic social and civic competencies are introduced to help this sub-group integrate within the Maltese community.

The syllabus for languages is revisited and reformed annually according to the feedback received from teachers. For example, the Arabic Language Centre since 2006 introduced Business Arabic & Functional Arabic courses for adult learners in the evening. The three level courses namely Beginners, Intermediate and Advanced were aimed at the corporate communities. Successful candidates are awarded a Certificate of Competence in the four language skills linked to the EQF.

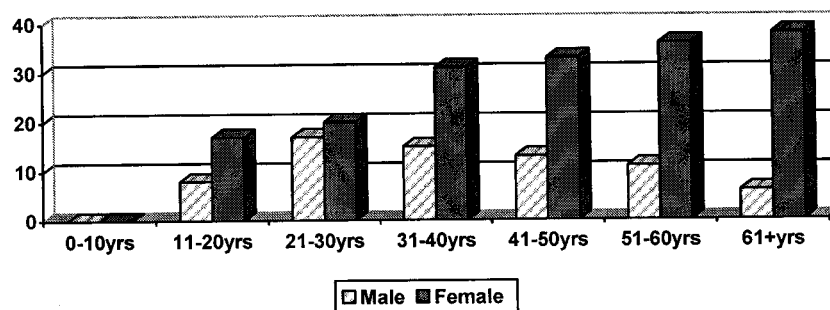
Learning outcomes are continuously highlighted. Teachers are fully aware that a syllabus is not a mere list of grammatical notions to be taught. Malta's education system is gradually and steadily detaching itself from the grip of summative assessment methodologies and moving towards formative assessment in order to facilitate lifelong learning to become a real protagonist in our education.

**QUESTION 4.b: What national data are available on the participation of adults (and any adult target groups identified as priority) in provision designed to develop their key competences?**

The traditional evening courses (one-and a-half hour lessons twice weekly) are aimed to help adults achieve a number of competencies and they reach a very wide spectrum of adults. The response is positive and reaches several age groups as represented by the following graph.



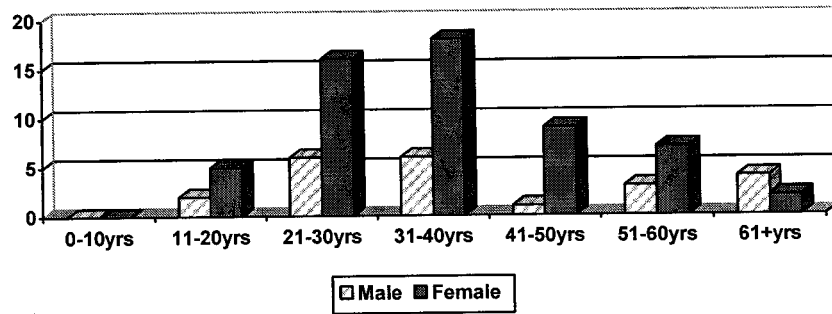
Other courses are targeted specifically for particular needs of adult learners. Through Local Councils, a series of Basic English and Basic Maltese courses are organised in 20 different localities. During 2008, 245 adults (70 males and 175 females) attended courses in Basic English literacy. This is the distribution according to age groups.



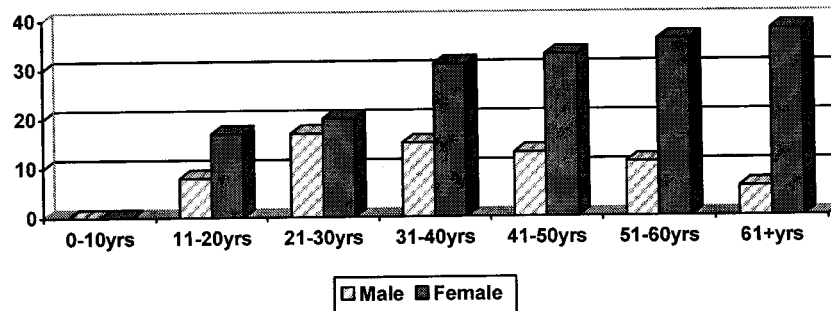
Two Local Councils organised courses in Basic Maltese for 13 adults. One Local Council organized a course in Spanish for 19 adults.

The Adult Learning Unit is conscious of the fact that the number of expatriates living in Malta is on the increase. Therefore, the Unit offers basic literacy for foreigners. 79 adult learners attended courses in Basic Maltese while 77 adult learners attended courses in Basic English. This is the distribution by age groups.

For Basic Maltese:



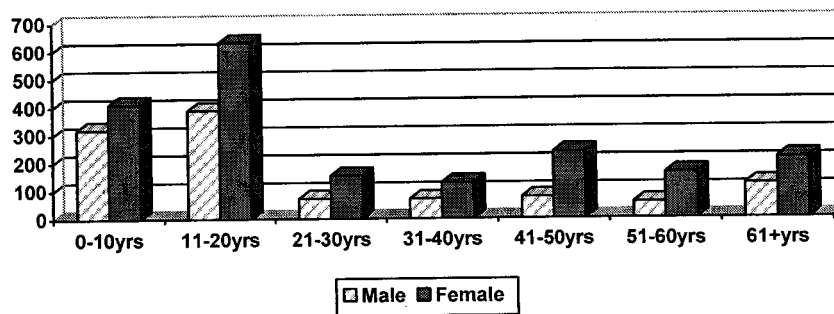
For Basic English:



The Adult Learning Unit coordinates the teaching for adults in a number of Centres order to reach specific target groups, like substance abusers, persons with disability as well as other organisations who offer their premises and facilities to organise particular courses.

The Adult Learning Unit is responsible also for a number of Visual and Performing Arts Schools. These schools provide learners with competencies in cultural awareness and expression.

During 2008, the aggregate number of students attending these schools stood at 2,905 which represents 39.3% of learners registered with the Adult Education Unit. Apart from the vast range of courses in expressive and creative subjects, these schools organise various cultural initiatives and events. The following is the distribution of learners according to age groups and gender.



University of the Third Age (U3A) was launched in January 1993 to provide educational opportunities to older persons as an end in themselves. Its objectives include promoting the academic learning of its members in cultural, historical, social and other fields for their continued education, catering for the social and cultural activities of its members for their own self-fulfilment so that they will continue to feel as an integrative part of society and to contribute to it, attending to the requirements, inclinations and aptitudes of its members - and potential members in general - so as to enhance its activities and make them more attractive to third agers, appointing from its members competent leaders on a voluntary basis for all its activities, keeping up a proper balance between the cultural and social activities, as well as joining international organisations and tend relations with U3As and other organisations for the elderly abroad and promote international exchange. The U3A academic activities are run by a board of academics. This 'association' co-ordinates and organises the extra circular activities such as travel tours, leisure outings and spiritual encounters – which provide an opportunity for members to meet, others to lead and organise, and above all to enhance solidarity amongst U3A members.

**QUESTION 4.c: In designing the provision for adults, what collaboration is in place with representatives of other policy areas, social partners and other stakeholders?**

As indicated above, the Adult Learning Unit is involved with other stakeholders in providing adult learning courses. The Unit is discussing the expansion of partnership with Local Councils and Non-Governmental Organisations with the aim of targeting more specific learning opportunities according to the needs of individual and groups of adults to acquire the key competences.

Adult education is also provided by the University, the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology, the Institute for Tourism Studies, the Employment and Training Corporation, the central Government Staff Development Organisation, the Foundation for Educational Services, the School of Art, the School of Music, the School Drama, professional organisations, industry, various non-profit making institutions as well as a number of private commercial organisations, some of which acting together with foreign institutions, including foreign universities. One appreciates the contribution of non-government organisations, including various Church organisations, as well as the smaller entities, sometimes one-man/woman entities who offer private lessons to paying clients. The range of courses on offer is really vast, some of them short courses, others ongoing (as it is often the case of non-government organisations), mostly held in the evenings and weekends. In the case of advanced courses leading to certification from recognised institutions, prior learning and experience are often taken into consideration as an entry / joining qualification. The fact that there is an ever growing market for education and training is indicative of the interest that is being stimulated by the lifelong learning culture and the move of industry from strictly manual skills to a more knowledge-base.

**QUESTION 5: How have curricula, statements of teacher competence requirements, or equivalent guidelines, for (a) initial and (b) in-service teacher education been developed to ensure that teachers are equipped to implement a competence-based approach (e.g. the teacher as co-constructor or facilitator of learning, team teaching, collaboration between teachers and parents, participation in school development, formative assessment techniques, and self-directed professional development)? Have any specific measures been taken in the area of VET teachers and trainers?**

During in-service teacher education and training, as an integral part of continuing professional development programmes, the constructivist approach to learning is stressed by the Curriculum and eLearning Department so that teacher-trainers are encouraged to adopt this approach as well as team-teaching and collaboration with all stake-holders. These issues form part of the range of topics that Education Officers are being exposed to in their professional development sessions. Education Officers who are responsible for in-service education and training courses ensure that both they themselves and teachers undertake self-directed professional development. Education Officers continually reinforce the subject-based competences while focussing on the issues of creativity, differentiation and eLearning. The Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education emphasises the importance of eLearning leading to the use of an eLearning Platform in state education. The Directorate is implementing the reform programme to reduce the negative impact of the examination in the transition of students from the primary to the secondary education sector. A conference on eLearning was held in May 2009 with the aim of pooling and sharing of good practice among teachers.

A national conference was organised on entrepreneurship in order to see how entrepreneurship can be further included within the curriculum.

The Faculty of Education at the University is responsible for initial teacher education. In its deliberations about the future and structure of teacher education programmes, six working groups incorporating all members of staff and other stakeholders, have drawn up competences required by newly qualified teachers. These competences are being considered by Boards of Studies while reviews of current programmes are being conducted.

**QUESTION 6: What approaches (including new ways to organise learning) does your country take to promote the acquisition of transversal key competences in general education (primary, lower secondary and general upper secondary), VET, adult learning and teacher training (in particular learning to learn, social and civic competence, initiative taking and entrepreneurship, and cultural awareness and expression)? Where appropriate please refer back to Question 2 on curricula.**

At the primary education level, teaching is mainly centred on general education with special emphasis on the core competences. The class teacher is responsible for the teaching of most subjects in the curriculum. However, there are peripatetic teachers of Maltese, English, Personal and Social Development, Physical Education, Art, Drama, Science and Technology, and Information and Communication Technology who support the class teacher particularly in promoting new methodologies and ideas, though the responsibility for teaching remains on the class teacher. In such a context the teacher is in an excellent position to ensure that there is take-up of the transversal skills. One area that is being given attention at the primary area is that of Science and Technology since more needs to be done across all levels in this crucial area. Multilingualism is also being given importance even at the primary level where, together with the mandatory learning of the two official languages, English and Maltese, a programme of foreign language awareness is carried out in a