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P18

A CLOSER LOOK
AT THE MUT

**100 YEAR
ANNIVERSARY
CELEBRATIONS**

HIDMET L-MUT F'DAWN L-AĦĦAR TLIET SNIN

Bhall-ewwel mitt sena tal-eżistenza tagħha, għall-MUT dawn it-tliet snin kienu żmien ta' sfidi kontinwi... **p4**

KIF L-MUT WIEĠBET GĦALL-PANDEMIJA TAL-CORONAVIRUS

Dak li hasbu hafna nies li mhumix midhla tal-professjoni tal-għalliema, jiġifieri li l-għalliema kienu... **p22**

IS-SAGĦTAR ILBIERAĦ, ILLUM U GHADA

Fl-1970 il-Moviment Qawmien Letterarju, li bħala wiehed mill-għanijiet tiegħu kellu li jgħid 'il quddiem l-ilsien Malti... **p24**

WORK-LIFE BALANCE DURING COVID-19: AN MUT SURVEY

MUT has been receiving consistent information from members about the impact of the work-life balance of educators caused by the closure of schools and the shift towards online teaching. Whilst educators have continued to provide the best educational experience to students in the current circumstances, the effort involved to shift resources to online platforms, to reach students and to provide feedback whilst juggling between work and family commitments possibly resulted in a work-life imbalance. This led the MUT to run a survey to analyse the situation better. Six hundred and ninety-two educators participated in the survey, which was conducted during the last week of April and the first week of May 2020. The survey included thirteen questions and responses were anonymous. The outcome shall assist the Union in its discussions and decisions.

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Dettall mill-monument tal-Malta Union of Teachers, mikxuf fil-Ġnien tal-Mall, il-Furjana, fis-6 ta' Dicembru 2019 bħala parti miċ-ċelebrazzjonijiet tal-anniversarju tal-100 sena mit-twaqqif tal-MUT

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© Malta Union of Teachers, 2020. Id-drittijiet kollha miżmuma. L-ebda parti minn din il-pubblikazzjoni ma tista' tkun riprodotta, ikkupjata jew trażmessa f'xi forma jew bi kwalunkwe metodu, minghajr il-permess bil-miktub minn qabel tal-Malta Union of Teachers.

L-opinjoni esposti f'Il-Hsieb mhumiex neċessarjament daww tal-Malta Union of Teachers. Inghatat l-attenzjoni kollha meħtieġa biex il-kontenut ikun fattwali u preċiż, iżda l-Bord Editorjali ma jerfax responsabbiltà għal xi żbalji jew nuqqasijiet li jista' jkun hemm fl-artikoli, il-grafika u l-illustrazzjonijiet.

DIN IR-RIVISTA SE TKOMPLI SSAĦĦAĦ IR-RWOL PROFESSJONALI TAL-UNION



Insellmilkom u nistedinkom taqraw l-ewwel edizzjoni tar-rivista *Il-Hsieb*. L-MUT ilha taħseb biex toħloq pubblikazzjoni bħal din minn meta temmet il-ħruġ tar-rivista *The Teacher*. Filwaqt li l-komunikazzjonijiet frekwenti li toħroġ l-MUT, imsejha *News Updates*, naqqsu l-ħtieġa li l-MUT toħroġ rivista sabiex tinforma l-membri bl-aħħar aġġornamenti, ħassejna li l-Union ma kellhiex il-mezz sabiex twassal informazzjoni dwar suġġetti varji u relevanti għall-qasam edukattiv.

Kien għalhekk li t-tmexxija tal-MUT iddecidiet li terġa' tibda toħroġ rivista b'mod regolari. L-MUT minn dejjem kellha rwol doppju, dak professjonali u dak trejdnunjonistiku. Il-pubblikazzjonijiet li ħargu mill-MUT fil-passat kienu ħafna drabi ta' natura professjonali, u għaldaqstant din ir-rivista ser tkompli ssaħħaħ dan ir-rwol. Dan filwaqt li l-infomazzjoni f'waqtha dwar aspetti trejdnunjonistiċi tibqa' tiġi mħabbra minnufih permezz tal-mezzi diġitali li qed tuża l-Union.



It-titlu tar-rivista hu ispirat mill-missjoni doppja tal-MUT, li twaqqfet biex tiehu hsieb l-interessi tal-membri tagħha filwaqt li taħdem biex is-sistema edukattiva trawwem fl-istudenti l-hsieb kritiku u intelligenti. It-tliet snin li għaddew kienu miżgħuda b'ħidma kontinwa li ħalliet ħafna frott. Jien kburi li l-MUT kompliet tikber, kemm fid-daqs, fir-rappreżentanza kollettiva f'istituzzjonijiet edukattivi kif ukoll fis-servizzi għall-membri.

Hekk kif wasalna fi tmiem din il-legiżlatura, nieħu l-okkażjoni sabiex nringrazzja l-ewwel nett lill-membri kollha tal-għajjnuna li dejjem tagħtuna, lid-delegati, il-membri tal-gruppi ta' ħidma, is-sezzjoni tal-membri ritirati, il-membri tal-Kunsill, l-istaff tal-Union u fuq kollha lil shabi l-uffiċjali Norman Grech, Elaine Germani u Carmen Dimech. Insellem u nringrazzja minn qalbi lil Norman li ser ikun qed jirtira fil-ġimgħat li ġejjin filwaqt li nawgura lil Elaine u lil Carmen aktar ħidma flimkien fl-MUT fil-legiżlatura li jmiss.

Is-Sur Marco Bonnici - President



Dan l-artiklu qasir qed jinkiteb fiż-żmien li l-legiżlatura preżenti tal-MUT qed tasal fi tmiemha. Ċertament li kienu żminijiet mimlija ħidma imma fl-istess ħin kienu żminijiet eċitanti. Il-ħidma f'dan iż-żmien kienet tvarja. Ta' min wieħed isemmi n-numru ta' agreements li ġew negozjati. Wieħed jista' jibda b'dak settorali, li għab bidliet u avvanzi għall-impjegati fil-gradi tal-għalliema li jaħdmu fis-settur governattiv. Dan ħa ħafna żmien u saru bosta laqgħat,

FIL-ĦIDMA TAL-UNION KULĦADD JIĠBED WIEĦED

imma kien ukoll il-bażi għal agreements oħra, bħalma huma daww mal-iskejjel tal-Knisja u ma' numru ta' skejjel privati. Wieħed jista' jsemmi wkoll il-ftehim mal-MCAST u dak mal-ITS. Il-ħidma fejn jidhlu agreements għadha u tibqa' għaddejja.

Però l-ħidma tal-Union hija ħafna iktar minn hekk. Ta' kuljum jidhlu numru kbir ta' telefonati mingħand membri li jkollhom xi mistoqsijiet jew diffikultajiet. Barra minn hekk, jinżammu bosta laqgħat u anke appuntamenti individwali. Dan ix-xogħol jibqa' għaddej ta' kuljum u ċertament huwa ta' sodisfazzjon li tipprova taqdi lill-membri.

Matul dawn it-tliet snin kompli bis-shih it-tkabbir tal-Union, sew fin-numru ta' membri kif ukoll fl-aspett fiziku, bix-xiri ta' propjetà, inkluża binja li qed tiġi żviluppata f'uffiċċju ġewwa Għawdex. Żdiedu wkoll in-numru ta' impjegati, biex b'hekk il-membri jkunu jistgħu jinqdew aħjar.

Ċertament dan kollu ma setax isir kieku kull min hu involut fil-ħidma tal-Union ma jiġbidx ħabel wieħed, u dan naħseb li hu wieħed mill-vantaġġi li għandha l-MUT. M'għandix dubju li din il-ħidma se tkompli bl-istess ritmu fis-snin li ġejjin.

Is-Sur Norman Grech
Viċi President Anzjan

HUWA TA' PJAĊIR GĦALINA LI NŻOMMU L-KUNTATT MAL-MEMBRI



Merħba għar-rivista *Il-Hsieb*, pubblikazzjoni ġdida li l-MUT se tkun qed toħroġ perjodikament biex isservi bħala mod ieħor ta' komunikazzjoni mal-edukaturi. Din hija wahda mill-aħħar holoq fil-katina ta' ħidma li l-MUT kienet impenjata fihom matul dawn l-aħħar snin.

Huwa ta' pjaċir għalina li nżommu l-kuntatt mal-membri bil-mezzi kollha possibbli. Fil-fatt, minbarra n-*News Updates* li nibagħtu regolarment, matul dawn l-aħħar xhur introduċejna wkoll paġna ta' Facebook tal-MUT, li ntaqgħet tajjeb ħafna.

Fl-aħħar xhur waqqafna wkoll il-Fondazzjoni Sagħtar, li jien iċ-chairperson tagħha. L-għan tal-Fondazzjoni hu li sservi bħala l-fergħa professjonali tal-MUT. Permezz tagħha l-membri se jkollhom spazju ieħor fejn jistgħu jikbru professjonalment, billi norganizzaw korsijiet, nippubblikaw xoghlijiet u nagħmlu riċerka. Il-Fondazzjoni se tkun qed tiegħu hsieb ukoll il-pubblikazzjoni mill-ġdid tar-rivista tant popolari *Sagħtar*.

Dan kollu minbarra li noffru assistenza kontinwa u s-sapport lill-membri, li huwa l-qofol tax-xogħol tagħna. Kif tafu, norganizzaw ukoll ammont ta' laqgħat biex naġġornaw lill-membri b'dak li jkun qiegħed jigrri kif ukoll niġbru feedback u nikkonsultaw dwar sitwazzjonijiet li jkollna quddiemna. Dan filwaqt li saħħahna l-preżenza tagħna f'numru ta' bordijiet fis-setturi kollha tal-qasam edukattiv, kemm dak lokali kif ukoll dak Ewropew. Xtrajna wkoll propjetà f'Għawdex biex inkunu nistgħu noffru servizz iktar mill-qrib lill-membri Għawdxin.

Nikkonkludi dan il-messaġġ billi nringrazzja lil shabi l-uffiċjali Marco, Norman u Carmen, lill-membri tal-Kunsill u l-kollegi għall-ħidma bla waqfien matul din il-legiżlatura. Ma nistax ma nringrazzjax ukoll minn qalbi lilkom l-edukaturi, li anki fiċ-ċirkustanzi straordinari li ninsabu fihom, qegħdin tagħmlu dak kollu possibbli għall-ġid tal-istudenti. Fl-aħħar nett, bħalma għamilt f'dawn l-aħħar tliet snin bħala Viċi President, inwiegħed li nkompli bl-impenn shiħ tiegħi lejn l-edukaturi kollha u l-qasam edukattiv. Il-ħidma tkompli.

Is-Sa Elaine Germani
Viċi President

L-MUT HIJA UNION HAJJA BIS-SEHEM TAL-MEMBRI TAGĦHA

F'dawn l-aħħar xhur id-dinja għaddejja minn ċirkustanzi straordinari minhabba l-pandemija tal-COVID-19. Rajna impatt enormi fuq id-dinja tax-xogħol kif konna ngħixuha, u impatt akbar fuq l-ekonomija ta' pajjiżi differenti. F'Malta xejn anqas. Imma minkejja dan kollu l-ħidma tal-edukaturi tkompli, u hekk ukoll il-ħidma fejjieda tal-Union ewlenija li tirrappreżentahom – il-Malta Union of Teachers.

Huwa f'dan l-isfond li qed tiġi fi tmiemha l-legiżlatura tal-Kunsill 2017-2020 – legiżlatura li rat żvilupp kbir fix-xogħol trejdjunjonistiku u professjonali ta' din il-Union, li tirrappreżenta l-maġġoranza assoluta tal-edukaturi f'kull settur u livell tal-edukazzjoni.

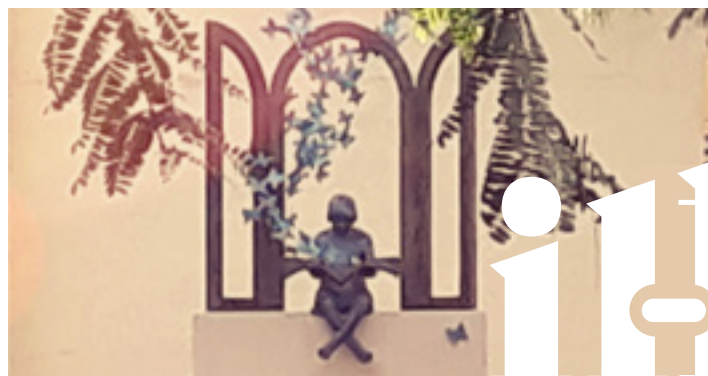
Kien f'din il-legiżlatura li l-Malta Union of Teachers, l-ewwel union f'Malta, għalqet il-mitt sena minn mindu twaqqfet. U għalhekk kien xieraq li bħala parti miċ-ċelebrazzjonijiet tal-mitt sena rajna l-inawgurazzjoni tal-binja l-ġdida li minnha twassal il-ħidma għall-membri kollha kif ukoll tilqa' l-membri tagħha, li llum ilaħħqu viċin l-għaxart elef membru, f'dak kollu meħtieġ fix-xogħol tagħhom ta' kuljum.

Matul din il-legiżlatura l-MUT ma kabbritx biss il-binja imma wkoll is-servizzi li tagħti lill-membri. It-telefonati u l-emails tal-membri ma waqfux, l-appuntamenti mal-membri, is-servizz tal-avukat, is-servizz psikoterapewtiku, il-lectures u l-konferenzi tkomplew. Dan kollu flimkien mal-laqgħat ta' kuljum li wasslu għall-konkluzjoni u l-iffirmar ta' 7 agreements ġodda u oħrajn li waslu biex jiġu finalizzati u ffirmati. Dan kollu ma kienx iseħħ kieku ma kienx hemm l-impenn assolut tal-Uffiċjali eletti, is-sostenn tal-membri tal-Kunsill u l-ħidma tal-impjegati fis-Segreteria.

Dan l-impenn ħalla wkoll riżultat pożittiv fil-qasam professjonali tal-MUT, bit-twaqqif ta' Fondazzjoni Sagħtar. Din il-Fondazzjoni qed terġa' tagħti l-hajja lill-magażin tal-istudenti b'mod aktar reali għad-dinja u l-esiġenzi tal-lum.

Il-Malta Union of Teachers hija union ħajja bis-sehem tal-membri tagħha. Għalkemm għalqet mitt sena, għadha żagħżugħa u qed tkompli tikber biex tkun ta' servizz għall-edukaturi u l-edukazzjoni issa u fiż-żmien li ġej.

Is-Sa Carmen Dimech
Segretarju Ġenerali



ĦIDMET L-MUT F'DAWN L-AĦĦAR TLIET SNIN

L-uffiċjali u l-Kunsill preżenti tal-MUT inġatru fl-2017 u t-terminu ta' din il-leġiżlatura qed jintemm propju f'nofs din is-sena, l-2020. Bħall-ewwel mitt sena tal-eżistenza tagħha, għall-MUT dawn it-tliet snin kienu żmien ta' sfidi kontinwi imma wkoll ta' opportunitajiet ġodda u ħidma kbira favur l-edukaturi, l-istudenti u l-edukazzjoni f'Malta u Għawdex, fl-oqsma u s-setturi edukattivi kollha fil-pajjiż.

Matul dawn it-tliet snin l-MUT kellha diversi kisbiet ta' nota, fosthom dawn li ġejjin:

Ftehimiet (Agreements)

- 7 agreements konklużi bejn l-2017 u l-2020
 - » il-Ministeru għall-Edukazzjoni u x-Xogħol
 - » is-Segretarjat għall-Edukazzjoni Kattolika
 - » l-MCAST
 - » l-ITS
 - » St Martin's College
 - » San Andrea School
 - » St Edward's College
- negozjati li għaddejjin bħalissa fuq 6 ftehimiet oħra
 - » l-Università ta' Malta
 - » il-Managers fl-MCAST
 - » il-gradi Supply
 - » il-gradi tal-iStudent Services
 - » l-LSEs f'San Andrea School
 - » San Anton School
- Għandhom jinbdew ukoll in-negozjati fuq għadd ta' agreements oħra

Kisbiet tal-għarfien ewlieni

- L-MUT irnexxielha tikseb l-għarfien ta' żewġ gradi ġodda – il-Managers fl-MCAST u l-Learning Coaches fl-ITS – kif ukoll tal-entità Institute for Education (IFE). Għalhekk illum il-ġurnata dawn il-gradi huma rappreżentati mill-MUT.
- Fl-istess hin l-MUT tinsab ukoll fil-proċess li titlob l-għarfien ta' gradi oħra.

Proġetti varji li l-MUT kellha sehem fihom

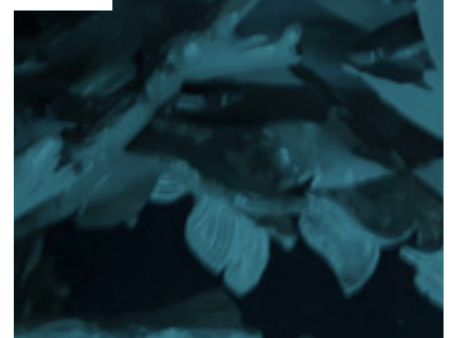
- Twettqu b'suċċess tliet proġetti kofinanzjati mill-fondi tal-Unjoni Ewropea flimkien ma' partners Ewropej. Dawn kienu l-proġetti Praline, Sequences u Get Up.
- L-MUT ukoll iffirmat l-impenn tagħha għal proġett ġdid li se jkun qed jitwettagħ fuq iż-żmien li ġej.
- Fl-istess hin l-MUT dejjem tesplora proposti ġodda li jistgħu jkunu ta' opportunità għall-edukaturi Maltin.

Xogħol ta' infrastruttura

- Il-garaxx li jmiss mal-binja tal-MUT fil-Hamrun sarlu x-xogħol meħtieġ biex ikun jista' jintuza ta' kuljum mill-ħaddiema u l-membri li jżuru l-Union.
- Sar xogħol estensiv f'parti mis-sular ta' fuq tal-binja sabiex illum il-ġurnata l-Union għandha żewġ boardrooms u uffiċċju ieħor mgħammra b'kolloxx f'dan is-sular.
- Sar ir-restawr tal-faċċata tal-binja u l-manutenzjoni u t-tindif tagħha qiegħed isir b'mod regolari.
- L-MUT investiet fi proġett sabiex jittella' l-ilma minn ġiebla kbira taħt il-propjetà sabiex jintuza fil-binja.
- Il-Union qed tinvesti b'mod sostanzjali fil-pannelli tax-xemx, li se jiġġeneraw id-doppju tal-enerġija li tikkonsma l-Union f'sena.

*Bħall-ewwel
mitt sena
tal-eżistenza
tagħha, għall-
MUT dawn it-tliet
snin kienu żmien
ta' sfidi kontinwi*





- Sar xogħol ta' tisbiħ fil-binja biex tilqa' b'mod xieraq lill-membri li jżuruha. L-iktar ta' nota huma l-wirjiet tal-istorja tal-Union u tal-pubblikazzjonijiet tagħha matul is-snin, fuq żewġ hitan prominenti fil-binja.
- Sar xogħol ta' rinnovament u tisbiħ ukoll fil-kamra fejn jiltaqa' l-Kunsill u f'kamra oħra li sservi bħala klassi, filwaqt li qed tithejja wkoll librerija ġdida.
- Uffiċċju ġdid f'Għawdex – Għall-ewwel darba l-MUT qed tinvesti f'uffiċċju f'Għawdex. Il-Union xtrat u bdiet il-ħidma tagħha fuq propjetà ta' 85 metru kwadru fil-Belt Victoria, biex tikkonvertiha f'uffiċċji għas-servizz tal-edukaturi Għawdxin.
- L-MUT qed taħdem biex tikseb il-permessi għal dik li se tkun magħrufa bħala MUT Hub – spazju kummerċjali ta' ħames units mifrux fuq tliet sulari li jlaħħaq it-800 metru kwadru. Dan se jkun jinkludi wkoll multifunction hall.

Skemi għall-membri

- skema għall-ġbir tal-arretrati li kienet suċċess kbir fl-aħħar xhur.
- skema għall-edukaturi li jingħaqdu magħha, li wkoll kienet suċċess.
- skema li tirrikonoxxi l-lealtà tal-membri lejn il-Union.
- In-numru ta' membri kompli jizdied u llum iqarreb l-10,000.

Riċerka

L-MUT qed tinvesti fir-riċerka dwar is-settur tal-

edukazzjoni. Is-sena l-oħra kkummissjonat riċerka dwar il-partecipazzjoni ta' pajjiżna fl-istudji internazzjonali PIRLS, TIMSS u PISA. Din ir-riċerka giet ipprezentata waqt konferenza dwar l-istess tema. L-MUT għamlet ukoll stħarriġ mal-membri dwar il-proposta msejja "Malta Education".

Partecipazzjoni

Waqt konferenza straordinarja tal-MUT li saret is-sena l-oħra, tressqu emendi għall-istatut sabiex tissaħħaħ il-partecipazzjoni tal-membri fid-deċiżjonijiet tal-Union kif ukoll biex tissaħħaħ is-sezzjoni tal-membri ritirati, li hi attiva ħafna.

Affiljazzjonijiet

L-MUT hi attiva ferm fl-affiljazzjonijiet internazzjonali u lokali tagħha. Matul dawn l-aħħar xhur tat kontribut f'diversi seminars u konferenzi Ewropej u internazzjonali, partikolarment l-Education International u l-European Trade Union Committee for Education – l-ETUCE.

Fuq livell lokali, l-MUT hi attiva ferm fil-Forum Unions Maltin (For.U.M.), konfederazzjoni ta' 13-il union li qed tkompli tissaħħaħ u tikber. L-MUT hija affiljata wkoll mal-Kunsill Nazzjonali taż-Żgħażaġh (KNŻ), l-Alleanza ta' Organizzazzjonijiet ta' Pensjonanti, u l-Kunsill Nazzjonali tan-Nisa.

Sostenn lill-edukaturi permezz ta' korsijiet u lekċers

F'dawn l-aħħar xhur l-MUT bdiet torganizza serje ta' korsijiet u lekċers maħsubin biex iservu ta' għajnuna u sostenn għall-membri tagħha b'mod speċjali iżda wkoll għall-edukaturi b'mod ġenerali. Bejn Jannar u Marzu 2020 ġew organizzati żewġ korsijiet u lekċer, li kienu:

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the Classroom (6 laqgħat)
- Mental Health in Education (7 laqgħat)
- The new Minor Protection (Alternative Care) Act, Chapter 602 of the Laws of Malta (lekċer).

L-edukaturi kollha li attendew dawn il-korsijiet u lekċer kellhom kliem ta' tifhir għal din l-inizjattiva tal-MUT u lkoll qablu li l-laqqgħat kienu utli ferm fl-iżvilupp professjonali tagħhom. Il-korsijiet u l-lekċer saru minn professjonisti magħrufa u tal-esperjenza fil-qasam partikolari li kien diskuss, u dawk li attendew il-korsijiet ingħataw ċertifikat ta' attendenza. Min-naħa tagħha l-Union tapprezza u tfahhar l-impenn tal-edukaturi li attendew wara l-hin tax-xogħol tagħhom u l-interess kbir li wrew, u l-hsieb hu li dawn il-korsijiet u lekċers jgħaddu f'idejn Fondazzjoni Sagħtar biex jibqgħu jkun organizzati b'mod regolari fis-snin skolastiċi li ġejjin.

Attivitajiet u pubblikazzjonijiet f'għeluq il-100 sena tal-Malta Union of Teachers

- 3 ta' Lulju 2019 – attività fl-Università l-Qadima, il-Belt Valletta, li ttrattat diversi aspetti tal-istorja tal-MUT.
- 9 ta' Ottubru 2019 – il-ftuħ uffiċjali tal-binja tal-MUT fil-Ħamrun.
- Novembru 2019 – giet irreġistrata Fondazzjoni Sagħtar (VO/1824), li se jkollha f'idejha l-ħidma tal-lat professjonali tal-Union, inkluża l-pubblikazzjoni mill-ġdid tar-rivista *Sagħtar*, kotba u pubblikazzjonijiet oħrajn, l-organizzazzjoni ta' korsijiet u lekċers għall-iżvilupp professjonali tal-edukaturi, il-librerija tal-MUT u ħafna xogħol ieħor.

- 21 ta' Novembru 2019 – Konferenza bit-tema "Malta Education in the EU Context", bil-partecipazzjoni ta' mistiedna internazzjonali.
- 22 ta' Novembru 2019 – Quddiesa u riċeviment fl-anniversarju tal-100 sena mit-twaqqif tal-MUT.
- 6 ta' Diċembru 2019 – kxif ta' monument kommemorattiv tal-bronż maħdum mill-artist Malti Chris Ebejer fl-Italja, fil-Ġnien tal-Mall, il-Furjana, post prominenti u storiku għall-MUT, taħt il-patroċinju tal-Eċċellenza Tiegħu l-President ta' Malta Dr George Vella.
- RTU001 – pubblikazzjoni li tirrakkonta u tiċċelebra l-istorja tal-ewwel 100 sena tal-MUT filwaqt li tħares 'il quddiem lejn aktar ħidma fejjieda b'risq l-edukaturi. (RTU001 huwa n-numru tar-reġistrazzjoni tal-MUT bħala l-ewwel union f'Malta).
- Mitt Sena 100 Ritratt – ġabra ta' 100 ritratt storiku mill-kollezzjoni tal-MUT, bejn antiki ħafna u oħrajn iktar moderni, li jirrakkontaw l-istorja rikka tal-Union fl-ewwel seklu tagħha.



Artificial Intelligence (AI) can be daunting for many, let alone children. Because of this, it is essential to explain it in an easy way, using concrete examples which they can understand. This can be easily achieved in three simple steps: give a definition of AI, provide examples and point them towards fun resources which they can explore.

First, let's start with the definition. AI can be defined as a computer program which is capable of performing a task which requires intelligence. This task is usually something which a human being or an intelligent animal can accomplish, such as learning, planning, solving a problem, etc.

coward ghost which escapes as soon as Pac-Man is closing by. Pac-Man is a simple game, but the AI's actions can be seen in practice and can easily be understood. Similar AI mechanics can be found in most games. In football games such as FIFA, the opposite team is controlled by the AI. In simulation games such as The Sims, most of the other characters are handled by the AI. Practically all games use some AI!

Finally, having understood what it is and having realised that we all use it regularly, the time has come to have some fun with it too. There are loads of resources online which educators and children can use. The following is a non-exhaustive list of some of the most interesting:

EXPLAINING AI TO CHILDREN

Prof. **Alexiei Dingli**

Second, the most obvious example to showcase AI is in games. Children are experts at playing games, and play is probably the single most popular activity with kids of any age.

A classic game which is fun and requires no introduction without any doubt is Pac-Man. The game takes place in a maze. The player controls Pac-Man, whose task is to eat all the dots placed in the maze while avoiding four coloured ghosts. What's interesting to note is that the four ghosts have their own personality, controlled by the central AI system. Blinky (red) is the leader and consistently follows Pac-Man. Pinky (pink) is a slow ghost which tries to ambush Pac-Man by predicting where he is likely to go. Inky (cyan) is a shy ghost and tends to follow Blinky. Finally, Clyde (orange) is a

- Chatting with a machine
- Eliza is one of the first chatbots ever created (1964). It is somewhat limited; however, it is still fun to chat with it. It can be accessed here: <https://tinyurl.com/AIEx-Eliza>
- Mitsuku is one of the most advanced chatbots currently in existence. It won various prizes and can talk about most topics. It can be located here: <https://tinyurl.com/AIEx-Mitsuku>
- Machines that process languages
- The Sentiment Analyser takes a typical sentence as input. It then determines whether the sentence has a positive, negative or neutral meaning.

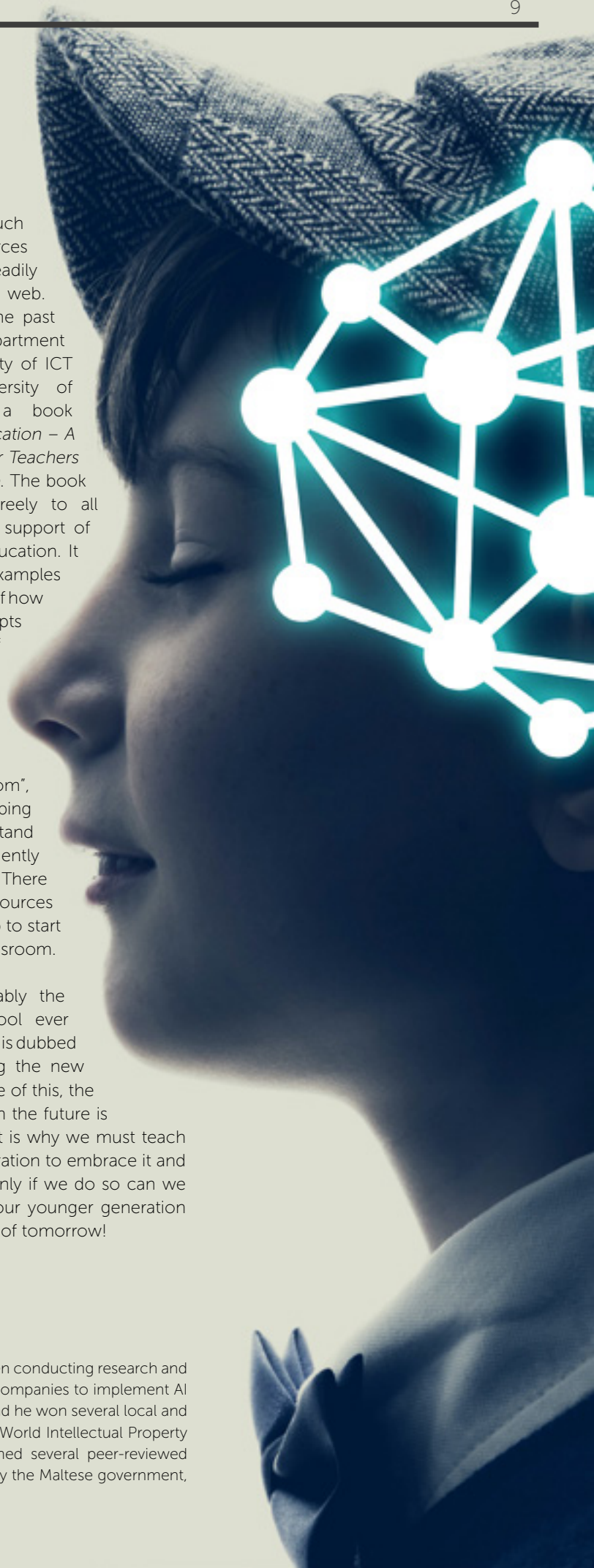
The program can be found here:
<https://tinyurl.com/AIEx-Sentiment>

- The Thing Translator takes a photo of an object and gives us a description of it using a natural language (such as Spanish, Italian etc.) of our choice. The demo can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/AIEx-Translator>
- Machines that see
- The Sentence Generator gets an image as input and creates a caption for that image. It does so by understanding the objects which make up the image and giving them a label. The demo can be accessed here: <https://tinyurl.com/AIEx-See>
- The Emoji Scavenger Hunt uses AI to identify emojis in the real world using the mobile device's camera. The game can be played here: <https://tinyurl.com/AIEx-Emoji>
- Playing with a machine
- Quick, Draw! is a game whereby the user must draw something and the AI has to guess what it is. The game can be played here: <https://tinyurl.com/AIEx-Draw>
- The Intelligent Piece of Paper shows how a program can play the game of Tic-Tac-Toe and win by following straightforward rules. The instructions of the game can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/AIEx-TicTacToe>

AI can be so much fun, and the resources to teach it are readily available on the web. Furthermore, in the past months the Department of AI at the Faculty of ICT within the University of Malta released a book entitled *AI in Education – A Practical Guide for Teachers and Young People*. The book was distributed freely to all schools, with the support of the Ministry of Education. It contains further examples and fun exercises of how to teach AI concepts to children of any age. The Malta Union of Teachers also organised a short course on "AI in the Classroom", aimed at helping educators understand AI and subsequently use it in their class. There are loads of resources which one can tap to start using AI in the classroom.

AI is most probably the most powerful tool ever invented by man. It is dubbed by many as being the new electricity. Because of this, the only way to design the future is to work in AI. That is why we must teach the younger generation to embrace it and use it as a tool. Only if we do so can we hope to prepare our younger generation for the challenges of tomorrow!

Prof. Alexiei Dingli is a Professor of AI at the University of Malta. He has been conducting research and working in the field of AI for more than two decades, assisting different companies to implement AI solutions. His work has been rated World Class by international experts and he won several local and international awards (such as those by the European Space Agency, the World Intellectual Property Organization and the United Nations to name a few). He has published several peer-reviewed publications and forms part of the Malta.AI task force which was set up by the Maltese government, aimed at making Malta one of the top AI countries in the world.



MENTAL HEALTH IN EDUCATION

Matthew Bartolo

HOW MANY STUDENTS HAVE YOU WORKED WITH IN THE PAST YEAR WHO NEEDED INDIVIDUAL EMOTIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT?

HOW MANY OF YOUR COLLEAGUES ARE CURRENTLY IN NEED OF A BREAK FROM IT ALL?

This might be due to burnout, mental exhaustion or other mental health issues.

Matthew Bartolo spent years teaching PSCE in private and Church schools, locally. He was also Head of Department and School Counsellor at one of these schools. He taught a variety of subjects to young offenders in a youth prison (aged 14 to 18) at Wetherby, UK. Here he was also involved in a pilot project at Keppel Unit, a

prison ward housing 50 of the most vulnerable youth sex offenders in the UK. At Keppel Unit all staff were trained in behaviour management and de-escalation of tense situations.

Since he moved back to Malta in 2011, he founded Willingness Team, a team of

professionals who offer training and services supporting other professionals and individuals. Bartolo is very passionate about supporting professionals to help them improve what they are already doing. He believes that education is what shapes society and hence needs to be taken more seriously.

The Malta Union of Teachers, in collaboration with the Willingness Team, has organised a series of talks and workshops about mental health in education. The course, offered to educators, targeted two aspects of mental health. The first aspect was the educators' mental wellbeing. The adults in our schools are the most valuable resource in our education system. They are expected to manage their budgets and resources. They adapt to an ever-changing culture. They deal with different management styles and colleagues' personalities. Apart from this, their job is mostly performance-based, meaning they are performing in front of an ever more demanding audience which is used to Ultra HD, and whose brains are overstimulated.

All this affects one's mental health, unless the same professional does not know how to manage their self-care. How often do you take breaks? How do you destress? How do you spend the rest of your day? Do you spend it doing corrections, or doing more of the same by giving private lessons?

During this course the Willingness Team discussed all these issues and gave practical tips on how one can take better care of their mental wellbeing.

One of the tips that kept coming up in almost every workshop was that it is very important for professionals to do their best within their role and with the resources they have in hand. People in the helping professions tend to push themselves beyond their limits and expect too much of themselves. This is one of the main causes of burnout.

Managing one's time and energy throughout the year was another tip that the

participants found extremely helpful. Some tend to give too much at the start of the scholastic year, to then feel exhausted by the end of the second trimester. Pacing oneself and asking for help promote a sense of community and a sense of wellbeing.

The course covered the basics in mental health and what can go wrong. The participants were then asked to reflect on the purpose of their careers: "why" we do what we do is extremely important. It gives purpose to what one is going through. It helps one stay motivated against all odds. The energy in the classroom is different when the educator is in touch with "why" they're doing what they're doing.

Job satisfaction is an inside job. There are moments when it feels like it is you against the world... you do not feel acknowledged... you do not feel appreciated. It seems like you're the only one who gets this, so all these situations and feelings push you towards quitting and switching your career to one in which you would be paid better and in which you will be treated better. Then you take some time off and all seems lighter. You take time to reflect and you remind yourself that "your place is in the classroom" because nothing gives you more satisfaction than a student saying, "Aha! Now I got it!"

Some of the workshops were used by the participants to share best practices and frustrations. The more participants met the more it was clear how much these kinds of groups are relevant and important. It was mentioned that other professions who are in contact with children have supervision. Supervision is time with a mentor in which one can ask for guidance, share their concerns and



help reflect on the purpose. Social workers get it at work. Therapists, psychologists and counsellors are all encouraged to attend their own individual supervision.

These adults are facing several students coming from various backgrounds and realities. It is a fact that we are encountering more children suffering from mental health conditions or facing mental health issues, be it their own or those of their families.

The course covered mental health in educators and students alike, covering topics ranging from sexuality to grief. Participants had the chance to learn in detail about certain conditions which they come across frequently, among students and colleagues alike. They also had the chance to discuss cases and help each other with ideas about how to manage such cases differently.

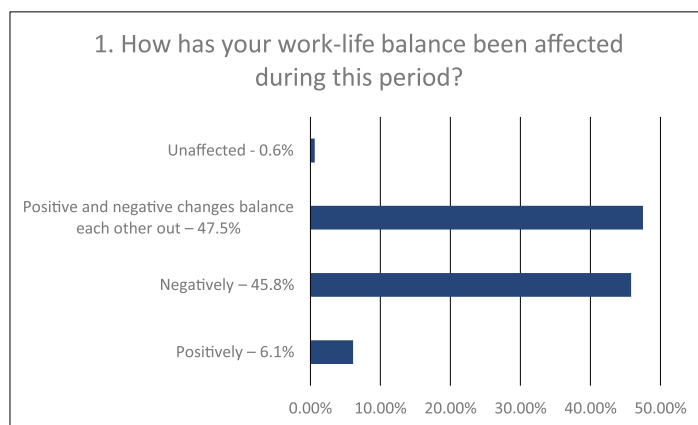
All those who attended could learn and share ideas on how to understand better and support students who are going through a rough time. The same rough time is usually the cause of the students' misbehaviour in class.

Some ideas that were shared were:

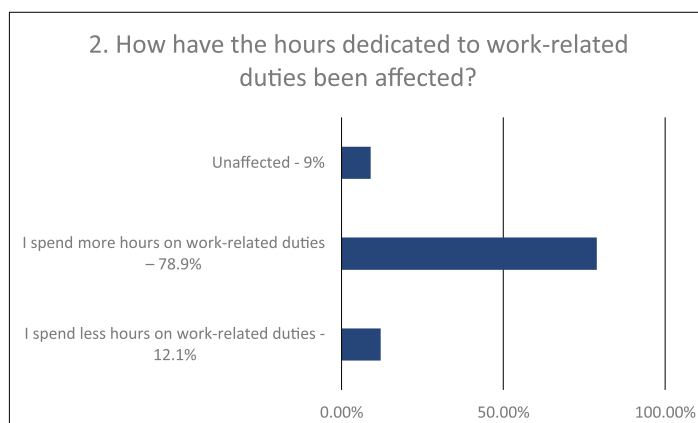
- Focusing on what is important. A school is an organisation and consists of many different stakeholders. This might lead to clashes between priorities and vision. Focusing on one's own goals and priorities helps educators feel less overwhelmed.
- Accepting the fact that educators can't effect change in all their students; focusing on the small steps, and the human connection triggers changes that sometimes we won't be aware of until we meet some ex-students and they quote some advice we would have told them or feelings we might have triggered in them years back.
- Admitting that educators need help sometimes; being self-aware enough to be able to look for help when needed.

WORK-LIFE BALANCE DURING COVID-19: AN MUT SURVEY CONTINUED FROM p1

RESULTS FOLLOW:

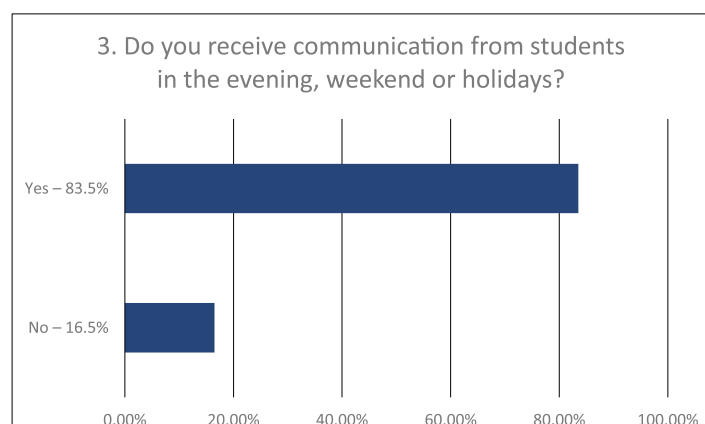


Q1 Asked whether their work-life balance has been affected, only 6.1% of respondents stated that it was affected positively in comparison with 45.8% who claimed that the work-life balance was affected negatively. However, it is interesting to note that 47.5% of respondents claimed that positive and negative aspects balance one another.

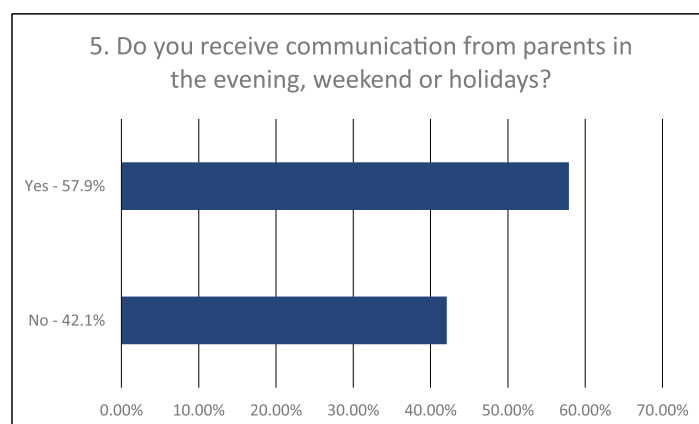


Q2 The effect of this period on the hours of work is evident. Almost 79% of respondents claimed that they spend more hours dedicated to work during this period in comparison to 12.1% who affirmed that they spend less hours on work-related duties.

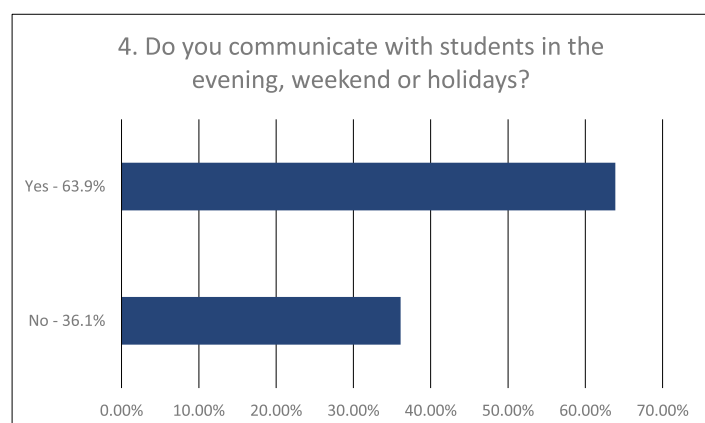




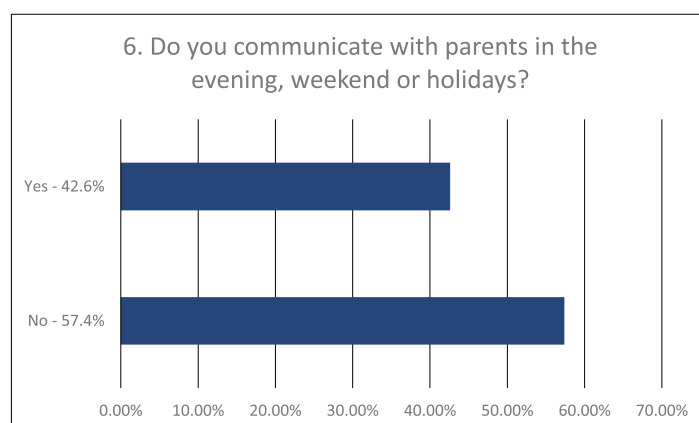
Q3 The lack of parameters particularly delineating school and after-school hours is evidenced in this response. 83.5% of respondents claim they receive communication from students in the evening and weekend or holiday periods.



Q5 Online teaching led to increased communication between educators and parents. 57.9% of respondents claim they receive communication from parents in the evening, weekend and holidays.

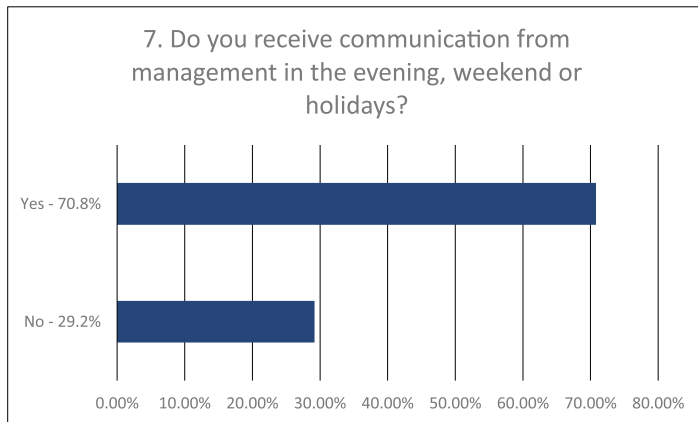


Q4 Although the receipt of communications from students during the evening, weekend or holidays does not imply replying to such communications during these hours, 63.9% of respondents claimed that they reply to such communications. Asked to provide reasons for this action, most respondents claimed that if they do not do so, work will otherwise very easily pile up, while many others said that in order to balance time between teaching duties and taking care of their own children and families, it's almost impossible to stick to school working hours. Some educators even said they feel obliged to answer emails and messages at any time, especially since certain students are hardly showing any interest after all, so they would not want to put them off by delaying their reply, and because the present situation is difficult for everyone.

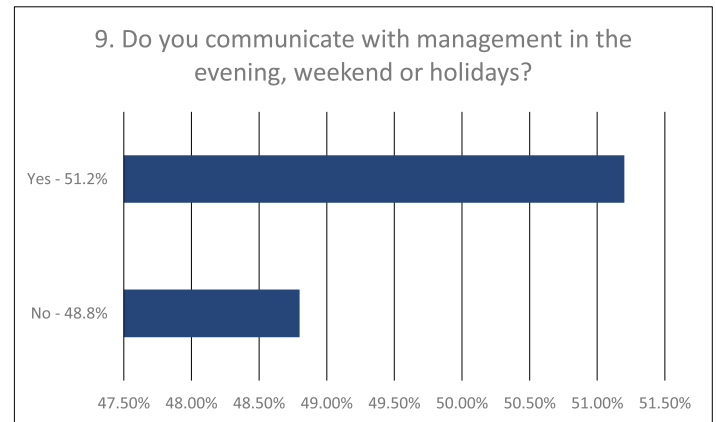


Q6 57.4% of respondents claim that they do not communicate with parents in the evening, weekend or holiday periods. Reasons provided include not wanting to cross the line of privacy and time for oneself and one's own family. Many respondents feel that personal time is a fundamental right, and answering parents' emails and messages would give the impression that educators are available 24/7; on the other hand, they said they expect parents to know better. Furthermore, certain educators said they do not communicate with parents, especially those who teach adolescents and older students. This is in contrast with the response to Q4, in which the majority of educators (63.9%) claimed they communicate with students during the said hours.

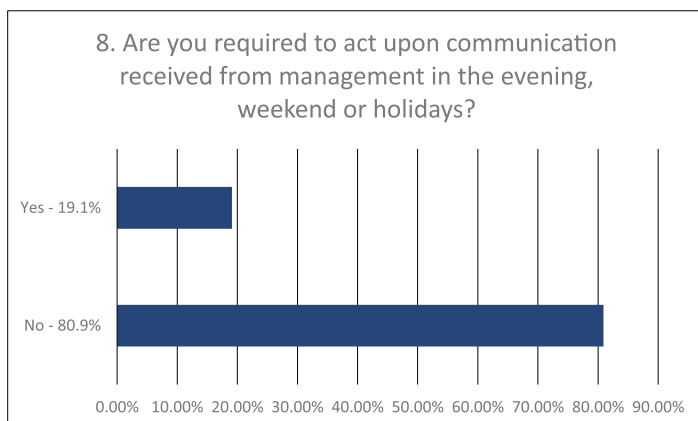
WORK-LIFE BALANCE DURING COVID-19: AN MUT SURVEY



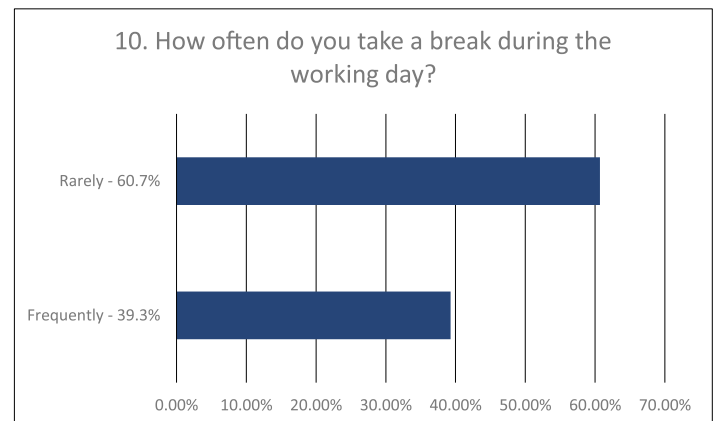
Q7 Almost 71% of respondents receive communication from management in the evening, weekend or holidays. This further confirms the absence of the delineation between working hours and beyond.



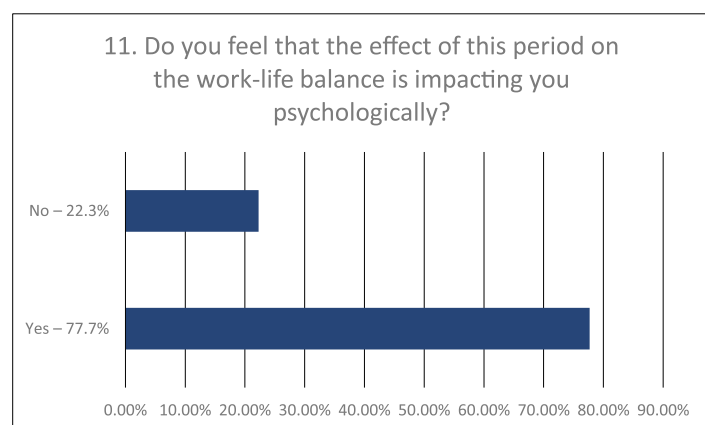
Q9 To further confirm that work is continuing beyond the official working hours, 51.2% of respondents claim they communicated with management in the evening, weekend or holidays. The most common reason given for this was the urgency for a reply, or the importance of the matter which requires communication outside school hours. Other respondents expressed the need for guidance and support from the management when dealing with certain students and/or parents. As for previous questions, a substantial number of educators said they have to send emails and messages when they have time, because of their own family commitments, and would thus resort to communicating with the management in the evenings, weekends or holidays. Some even said they have lost track of time and weekends in the extraordinary present circumstances.



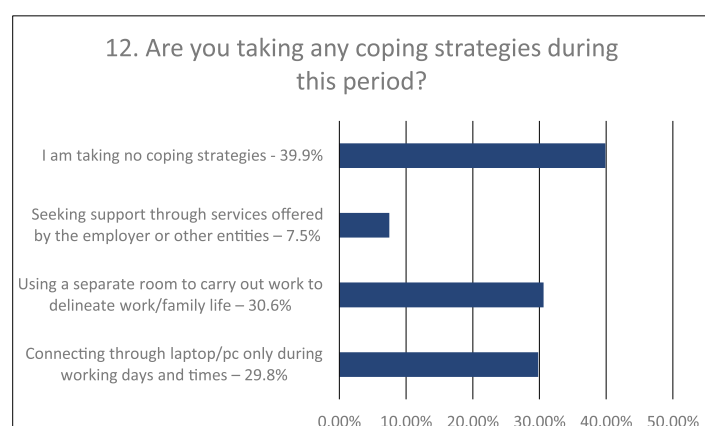
Q8 Whilst communication may be received from management without the requirement to act upon it outside working hours, 19.1% of respondents claim that they were required to act upon the communication received from management in the evening, weekend or holidays. The main reason given for this was the urgent need for an immediate reply; very often an actual deadline would be avoided, but the request for a swift reply would have been made and educators said they find it hard to mentally switch off on such instances. A few educators even claimed they would be frowned upon if they ignored such communication, and that the management expects them to be available 24/7 since they are working from home.



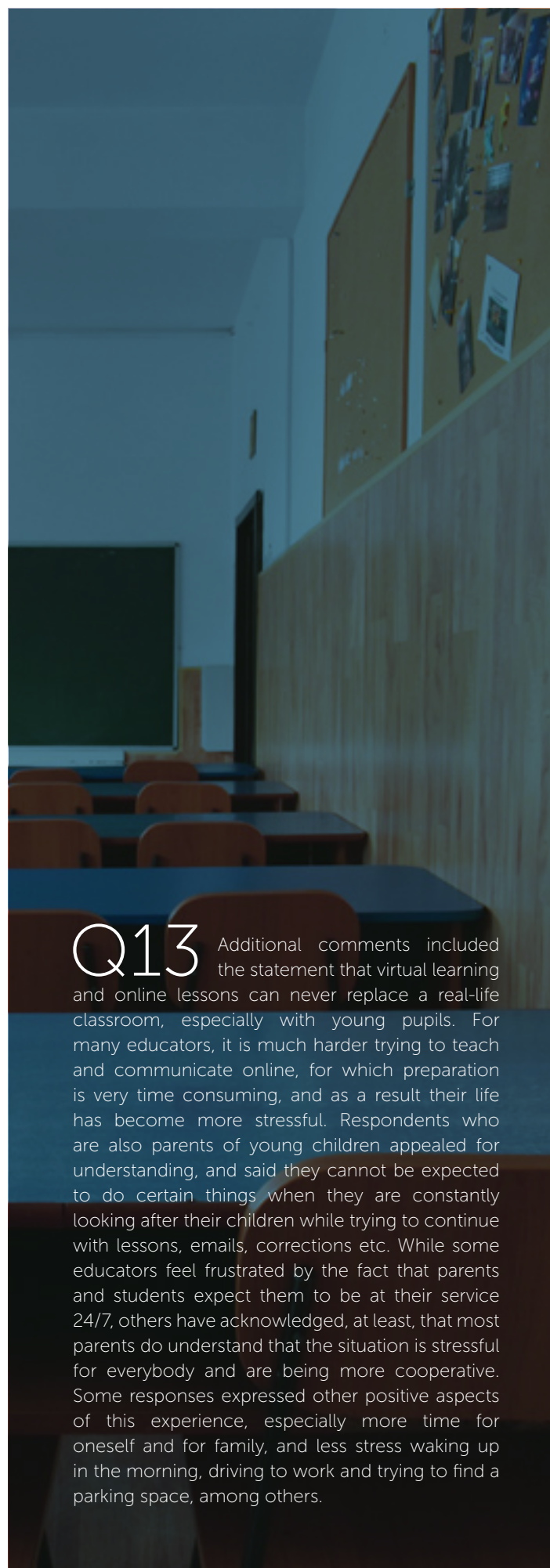
Q10 Working from home clearly affects the basic routine including break time. 60.7% of respondents claim they rarely take a break during the working day.



Q11 Asked whether the effect of this period on the work-life balance is impacting educators psychologically, 77.7% of respondents confirmed this impact.



Q12 Most respondents claim they are taking coping strategies during this period. 30.6% of respondents are using separate rooms to carry out work, 29.8% are connecting devices only during working days/times whilst 7.5% are seeking support through services offered. Other strategies were mentioned, the most common being some form of physical exercise, such as frequent walks and yoga sessions. Other respondents mentioned taking frequent breaks every now and then, reading, gardening, cooking and mutual support given by fellow colleagues.



Q13 Additional comments included the statement that virtual learning and online lessons can never replace a real-life classroom, especially with young pupils. For many educators, it is much harder trying to teach and communicate online, for which preparation is very time consuming, and as a result their life has become more stressful. Respondents who are also parents of young children appealed for understanding, and said they cannot be expected to do certain things when they are constantly looking after their children while trying to continue with lessons, emails, corrections etc. While some educators feel frustrated by the fact that parents and students expect them to be at their service 24/7, others have acknowledged, at least, that most parents do understand that the situation is stressful for everybody and are being more cooperative. Some responses expressed other positive aspects of this experience, especially more time for oneself and for family, and less stress waking up in the morning, driving to work and trying to find a parking space, among others.



GIFTED STUDENTS HAVE NEEDS AS WELL

Warren Zammit

We are now in a time when we have to acknowledge that gifted students have needs that need to be catered for.

Our education system is constantly striving to meet the needs of students who are struggling. Plenty of resources are spent on these students. One of the reasons for this is that we are afraid to lose such students since the majority of them cannot grasp the standard curriculum.

However, we are now in a context whereby we are forgetting those students who are above the standard curriculum in various areas. There are a number of reasons for this.

First and foremost, we might be adopting a narrow definition of giftedness. In Malta, there are no policies on the topic and thus no official definition. As teachers, we tend to apply our own definition, which might be too narrow. When doing so, we might be neglecting students who are gifted in particular areas such as art, music or sports.

Another factor is exams. Some of these students pass their exams with ease. In light of this, as teachers, we are satisfied and feel that our duty is completed since they are grasping what we are expected to teach.

However, in the process of doing so, we are denying them the chance to develop their whole potential.

Related to the above, we may think that gifted pupils do not need us and can cope on their own. In fact, we can recall various occasions when we left these students alone since they will make it nonetheless. Other times, we used them as a resource to help the other students.

The moment we acknowledge that we are not doing enough for our high ability students is the moment when we will be catering for their needs.

So, what are the needs of this population of students?

There is no straightforward answer to this rhetoric question since gifted students are not a homogenous group and thus their needs differ. However, their needs can be divided into two sets. These are the academic and the social and emotional needs. It is when we are catering for both sets of needs that we can say that we are trying to help the gifted and talented students.

With regards to the academic needs, it is essential that these students are challenged in areas which they excel in. These might be traditional subjects or else other domains such as creative arts and sports. In this context, it is essential to adopt a strength based approach in which we focus on the areas which they excel in and not on those that they might struggle in.

A positive school environment is also a need for gifted students. The environment of the school should be one which enables the students to nurture their talents. Various studies show that gifted students underachieve in an environment in which they do not feel comfortable. Here, it is essential that our schools be equipped to cultivate the talents of our students.

Gifted students also have unique social and emotional needs. In this scenario, it is important to provide these students with services such as guidance teachers and counsellors. Some social and emotional needs of gifted students include peer relationships, the avoidance of risk taking, perfectionism, anxiety, multipotentiality and unrealistic expectations. Failing to cater for such needs might mean that these students will underachieve.

In order to meet these needs we should abolish the idea that by giving resources to the gifted, we will make this population of already advantaged students an elitist one. When doing so, students coming from low social economic backgrounds will suffer most since their parents do not have the means to meet their needs. Therefore, we should look at all students in a holistic manner and guide them to further develop their strengths.

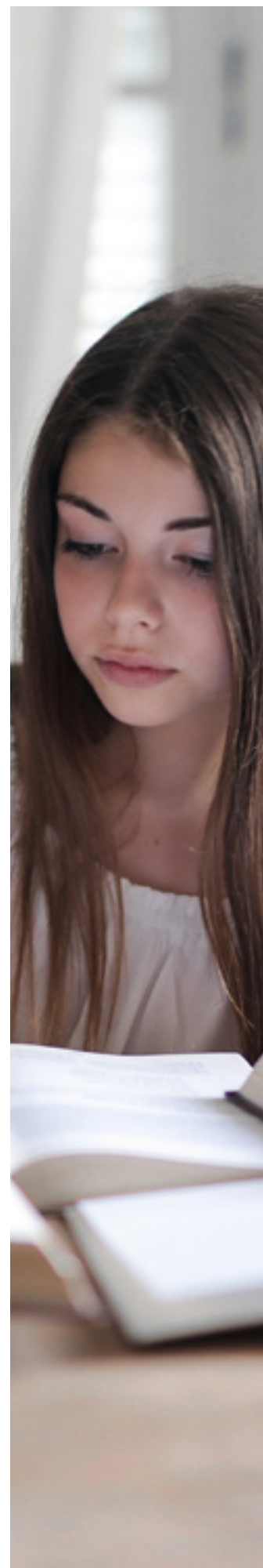
To conclude, it is essential to understand that all students have their strengths and weaknesses.

Moreover, there are those who have exceptional strengths in one or more areas. These are the students who desperately need us teachers to help them in their growth. We might be teaching students who have the potential to change our world and so it is imperative to nurture their talents.

“With regards to the academic needs, it is essential that these students are challenged in areas which they excel in.”

Warren Zammit is a 27-year-old teacher who graduated from the University of Malta in 2015 with a Bachelor of Education degree specialising in primary education. He has been teaching at a primary State school for the past five years.

Warren was always very interested in gifted education and completed a postgraduate diploma specialising in giftedness with Radboud University, Nijmegen. He also obtained certification from the European Council for High Ability. His goal is to create more awareness on gifted education in Malta and to take an active role in meeting the needs of gifted and talented students.





A CLOSER LOOK AT THE MUT 100 YEAR ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

Last year the Malta Union of Teachers celebrated its 100 years since its foundation on 22 November 1919. As the first trade union registered in Malta, the MUT organised a series of activities and initiatives to commemorate this special day.

3 July 2019

Multimedia Performance

The celebratory activities kicked off with a multimedia performance by More or Less Theatre, who created a show to provide the audience with a historical outline of the Malta Union of Teachers. Divided into different eras, Malcolm Galea and his colleagues explained the achievements, difficulties and many interesting anecdotes in a lively and accessible way. This activity also included readings, music and short performances written by educators.



9 October 2019

MUT inaugurates its new headquarters

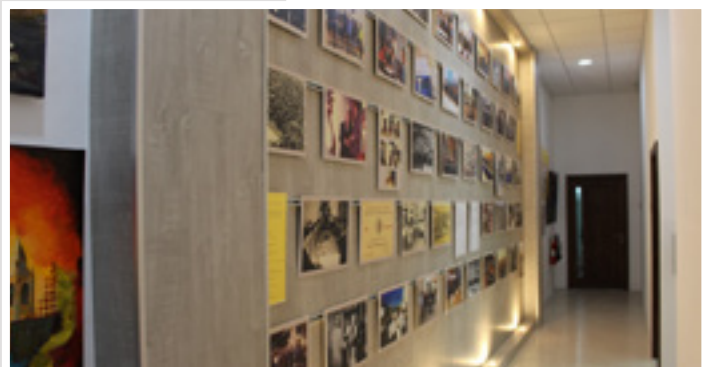
As one of the main centenary activities, the MUT officially inaugurated its new premises in Triq il-Kbira San Ġużepp, Hamrun on 9 October 2019. During the inauguration activity MUT President Mr Marco Bonnici stated that "we are proud to deliver the best space for the Union to operate in and to be accessible for our members. This is a very special year for the Union, it being its 100th year anniversary, and we are consolidating our efforts for the years to come." Minister of Education and Employment Hon. Evarist Bartolo and H.E. Mons. Charles J. Scicluna, Archbishop of Malta, presided over the unveiling of the commemorative tablet.



October 2019

MUT Centenary Art Exhibitions

As part of the activities related to its 100th year anniversary, the Malta Union of Teachers organised two separate exhibitions which were both inaugurated on 9 October 2019, along with the new premises. The first was a temporary visual art exhibition. Following a call for artists and a selection process, it was open for public viewing until the end of October, with 21 artists participating. The second is a permanent exhibition related to the history of the Union based on its dual role, as trade union and professional body. This can still be viewed if one visits the MUT headquarters.



12 November 2019 **100 Trees for 100 Years**

Another activity marked the 100th anniversary, this time in collaboration with the Hamrun Local Council and all schools situated in Hamrun. In fact the MUT donated 100 trees to the Hamrun community, which is the locality where the Union inaugurated its new headquarters, to increase awareness about the importance of greenery in the locality. The MUT and the Hamrun Local Council distributed these trees, which are currently in pots, to all schools in Hamrun. Each school received approximately ten to fifteen trees so that the school community, particularly students, can contribute towards the experience. At the end of this scholastic year, participating schools may either keep the trees to be planted within the school environment or, depending on the respective facilities, return the trees to the Local Council in order to find a permanent place for them in the locality.



21 November 2019 **MUT International Conference**

The MUT also held an international conference entitled "Malta Education in the EU Context". This included a presentation of a study and analysis on the Malta Education proposal conducted by researcher and statistician Dr Vincent Marmarà on behalf of the MUT. It also included an intervention by the Minister of Education Hon. Evarist Bartolo, Ms Susan Flocken, the current European Director at European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE), and a keynote speech by Prof. Kirsti Lonka, Professor of Educational Psychology at the University of Helsinki, Finland. The latter's topic was related to "Trust and responsibility – a successful strategy for Finnish teachers and schools".





A CLOSER LOOK AT THE MUT 100 YEAR ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

22 November and
4 December 2019

Get-togethers for active and retired members

On Foundation Day, 22 November, as per tradition, the MUT organised a get-together for its Council, delegates and other people who continuously contribute to the running of the Union and those who regularly collaborate with it. This year it was held at the Magazino in Floriana, after a commemorative mass for the occasion. Similarly, the MUT held a special activity for its retired section members on 4 December. This year it was held at MCAST, Paola, with the Deputy Principal of MCAST and the MUT President addressing the activity.



6 December 2019

MUT unveils its 100th anniversary monument

In the history of the MUT, this day will be remembered as the day in which it unveiled a monument celebrating the Union's 100th anniversary. Entitled "L-edukazzjoni tittrasforma l-persuna u tiftaħ bibien ġodda", the monument depicts the figure of a girl, seated, reading a book. Behind her is an open door, signifying an open mind through education. All around her are butterflies flying around, signifying wisdom. The monument was created by local artist Chris Ebejer and will be permanently displayed at the Mall in Floriana. The site is very close to the San Ġorġ Preca College Floriana primary school, where the first meeting of the MUT had been held in 1919, and it is also a historical area which houses a considerable number of monuments. This event was held under the patronage of H.E. Dr George Vella, President of the Republic of Malta.





Other initiatives

Apart from the aforementioned activities, the MUT coordinated a series of other initiatives which also commemorated this special occasion. The Union held a number of schemes to incentivise regular membership and also for new members (this was called 'Skema Mija'). It also issued three publications, the first on the occasion of the inauguration of the new premises, the second with 100 photos representing the 100 years of the Union, and the third being a special edition of *The Educator* which included a historic look at the MUT by Prof. George Cassar. Last but not least, the MUT also commissioned and collaborated with WE Media on a special television programme of *Bijografiji* on the history of the MUT. This was broadcasted on the State television station and is now available on the MUT YouTube channel for viewing.

Conclusion

The first 100 years were difficult in many ways, but also satisfying in the knowledge that educators coming together to defend their rights, to enhance their conditions and to share their experiences was the best way it could have been done. The Union thanks all members, past and present, for their contribution throughout these 100 years. The MUT also thanks everyone for their continued support and looks forward to continuing to work together for the benefit of educators and the education sector in Malta.

**KIF L-MUT
WIEĠBET
GĦALL-PANDEMIJA
TAL-CORONAVIRUS**

Sal-Milied li għadda aktarx li hadd kien għadu ma sema' bih, u ltqajna u ċcelebrajna l-festi tal-Milied u l-Ewwel tas-Sena mal-familjari u l-hbieb tagħna kif għamilna kull sena, bla ma qatt kien jghaddilna minn mohħna l-prinċipju tas-social distancing li illum sar kważi r-regola ewlenija fil-hajja tagħna ta' kuljum. Mal-bidu tas-sena l-ġdida, imbagħad, l-gharfien dwaru beda kulma jmur jiżdied, sakemm eventwalment l-aħbarijiet ta' kuljum fuq kull stazzjon ta' kull pajjiż bdew ikunu ddominati għalkollox minn numri u statistiċi relatati ma' din il-marda ġdida.

Haġa minn awl id-dinja li għallimna l-COVID-19 kienet li l-mard ma jħares lejn wiċċ hadd u kulhadd, kbir jew żgħir, sinjur jew fqir, jista' jintlaqat bl-istess mod. Għalhekk l-MUT, bħal f'kull kwistjoni jew eventwalità li tinqala' minn żmien għal ieħor, mill-ewwel bdiet issegiwi l-iżviluppi fid-dinja u b'mod speċjali f'pajjiżna fir-rigward ta' din il-marda, sabiex tkun pronta tiegħu l-azzjonijiet neċessarji għall-harsien tal-edukaturi membri tagħha l-ewwel u qabel kollox, iżda fl-istess ħin ukoll għall-harsien tal-istudenti li jiltaqgħu magħhom ta' kuljum u l-familji tagħhom.

Fin-newsletter li tintbagħat regolarment lill-membri, f'nofs Frar l-MUT kienet diġà qed titkellem dwar is-sugġett, billi tiftaħ għajnejn il-membri biex joqogħdu attenti x'informazzjoni jaqraw minn fuq il-mezzi soċjali u biex isegwu l-istruzzjonijiet tal-awtoritajiet tas-saħħa dwar kif wieħed iħares saħħtu u saħħet dawk ta' madwaru. Sal-aħħar tax-xahar, imbagħad, l-MUT kienet proattiva billi ħabbret sett ta' direttivi għall-membri tagħha, fosthom li ma jaċċettawx xogħol mingħand studenti li jkun ma jifilthux, ma jattendux okkażjonijiet b'ħafna nies, bħal assemblies u ħarġiet b'numru kbir ta' studenti, li ma jkunux aċċettati studenti ma jifilthux fl-iskejjel, li studenti li żaru pajjiżi li dak iż-żmien kienu diġà affettwati sew mill-marda ma jattendux l-iskola, u li jiġu provduti hand sanitizers u sapun fl-iskejjel. Tajjeb li ngħidu li dawn id-direttivi kienu pass qabel il-miżuri ordnati mill-Gvern, li illum indraw sew, pereżempju li jkun limitat in-numru ta' nies miġburin fi gruppi. Fl-istess ħin il-Union qablet u ggwidat lill-membri li kienu msefrin f'numru ta' pajjiżi fil-ġranet preċedenti biex isegwu l-kwarantina ta' 14-il jum, u ħadmet sabiex dawn il-ġranet ma jinqatgħux mil-leave tal-edukaturi.

IL-CORONAVIRUS ĠIE FUQNA LKOLL BĤAL SAJJETTA FIL-BNAZZI.

Fil-bidu ta' Marzu, imbagħad, meta l-affari ggravat fil-pajjiżi ta' madwarna, il-Union żiedet mad-direttivi tagħha billi ordnat li ma jsirux okkażjonijiet bħal Jum il-Ġenituri u Jum il-Premjazzjoni, u biex l-edukaturi ma jaċċettawx laqgħat u attivitajiet fuq ġewwa fejn ikun hemm 30 persuna jew iktar. Fl-istess ħin, billi wkoll feġġew l-ewwel każijiet tal-COVID-19 f'pajjiżna u kienu jinvolvu tfal tal-iskola, l-MUT mill-mument tal-aħbar investigat u assigurat ruħha li l-istudenti involuti ma kinux attendew skola minn meta ġew minn barra u li għalhekk l-istudenti shabhom u l-edukaturi tagħhom ma kinux fil-periklu. Sadanittant is-sitwazzjoni żviluppat b'tali mod li l-assenteiżmu fl-iskejjel żdied b'mod qawwi minħabba l-biża' li beda jitnissel li l-COVID-19 jista' jixtered ħafna fost l-istudenti, u għaldaqstant l-MUT talbet li ssir laqgħa urgenti mal-Prim Ministru biex tissuġġerixxi li jingħalqu l-iskejjel. Din id-deċiżjoni bla preċedent ittiegħdet b'responsabbiltà kbira sabiex tkun proattiva peress li n-nuqqas ta' azzjoni tal-awtoritajiet edukattivi kien qed jikkawża din is-sitwazzjoni ta' paniku li żgur ma kinitx sostenibbli, kif ukoll biex tithares is-saħħa tal-edukaturi, l-istudenti u dawk kollha li jiffrekwentaw l-iskejjel.

“
“

il-mard ma jħares
lejn wiċċ hadd

”

Hadd qatt ma kien jimmaġina eventwalità bħal din, iżda dik kienet ir-realtà fl-ewwel nofs ta' Marzu – l-edukaturi u l-Union li tirrapprezentahom laqgħu b'sodisfazzjon id-deċiżjoni drastika li jingħalqu l-iskejjel, l-ewwel għal ftit ġranet imbagħad b'mod indefinit. F'dawk is-sigħat stess l-uffiċjali tal-Union kienu minn ta' quddiem biex tkun iffurmata task force li nhatret biex l-għeluq tal-iskejjel isir b'mod għaqli u biex jitfassal pjan kif l-edukazzjoni tibqa' għaddejja permezz tal-mezzi teknoloġiċi u soċjali tal-lum il-ġurnata, filwaqt li jitharsu l-interessi tal-istudenti kif ukoll tal-edukaturi. Bl-għajjnuna tal-MUT, ngħidu aħna, l-edukaturi assiguraraw ruħhom li ż-żmien li fih l-iskejjel kienu se jkun magħluqa la jtnaqqsilhom mil-leave u lanqas jitqies bħala vaganzi, li ma jkollhomx jagħmlu tajjeb għal dan iż-żmien fis-sajf jew f'xi vaganzi oħrajn, u li l-paga u l-allowances jibqgħu jirċevuhom shah b'mod normali.

Hawnhekk il-Union sabet ma' wiċċha sfida ġdida għalkollox – li tassigura li filwaqt li l-edukaturi jibqgħu jwasslu t-tagħlim lill-istudenti tagħhom b'mod effettiv u regolari, billi jadattaw il-mod ta' tagħlim tagħhom għall-użu tal-mezzi teknoloġiċi, jagħmlu ċert li xogħolhom jibqa' jkun apprezzat u d-drittijiet tagħhom jibqgħu jkun mħarsa, u ma jiżdidux xogħol żejjed u pressjoni bla bżonn fuqhom. Fuq kollox, l-MUT kontinwament tishaq li għandu jkun hemm bilanċ fost l-edukaturi bejn il-hajja tax-xogħol mid-dar, bil-lezzjonijiet online, ix-xogħol mogħti lill-istudenti, il-korrezzjoni tiegħu u l-bqija, u l-hajja privata tal-individwu, b'mod speċjali permezz tal-hekk imsejjah 'right to disconnect'.

Dak li ħasbu ħafna nies li mhumieħ midħla tal-professjoni tal-għalliema, jiġifieri li l-għalliema kienu qegħdin vaganza u li qed jithallsu mingħajr ma jagħmlu xejn, mhux talli ma kienx minnu, talli diversi edukaturi esprimew is-sentiment li dawn il-ġranet u ġimgħat tal-pandemija fil-verità spicċaw kienu iktar impenjattivi minħabba l-ħin u x-xogħol rikjest biex wieħed ihejji lezzjoni online li tkun effettiva u interessanti daqs lezzjoni normali. Dan biex ma nsemmux ukoll id-diffikultajiet li jġibu magħhom dawn il-metodi straordinari ta' tagħlim, bħall-problemi bl-internet, studenti li ma jidhlux online għal-lezzjonijiet u ħafna oħrajn. Fid-dawl ta' dan, l-MUT saħansitra ħasset il-bżonn li torganizza sħarriġ dwar il-bilanċ bejn il-hajja tax-xogħol u l-hajja personali tal-edukaturi fi żmien il-pandemija, meta l-iskejjel huma magħluqin. Ir-rispons għal dan is-survey kien tajjeb ħafna.

Dan hu li jagħmel union b'saħħitha u relevanti għaž-żmien li fih tkun teżisti – il-kapaċità li tadatta ruħha u toħroġ bi proposti konkreti, b'saħħithom, innovattivi u proattivi fi żminijiet daqshekk partikolari u f'sitwazzjonijiet diffiċli bla preċedent. It-tama tal-MUT, bħal ta' kulhadd, hi li dan iż-żmien iebes jghaddi minn fuqna kemm jista' jkun malajr u l-edukazzjoni terġa' lura għar-rutina normali illum qabel għada, għall-ġid tal-istudenti u l-edukaturi kollha.

IS-Sagħtar



saghtar.org.mt



ILBIERAĦ, ILLUM U GĦADA

Fl-1970 il-Moviment Qawmien Letterarju, li bħala wieħed mill-għanijiet tiegħu kellu li jgħib 'il quddiem l-ilsien Malti u l-letteratura miktuba bih, ħabbar il-Kampanja Lsien Malti. Il-Moviment xtaq inissel fil-poplu sens ikbar ta' identità lokali, u wieħed mill-aqwa mezzi biex jasal għal dan l-iskop kien billi jroġ rivista bil-Malti li tkun gabra ta' kitbiet varji b'Malti tajjeb. Il-messaġġ kien wieħed: il-Malti jista' jithaddem tajjeb u bih nistgħu nfissru ruġna f'kull qasam tal-ħajja. Mhux biss "fil-kċina", imma anki fejn jidhru x-xjenza, il-letteratura, ir-religjon, il-politika, l-edukazzjoni u l-oqsma importanti kollha fil-ħajja tal-bniedem. B'hekk setgħet tinholq bħal enċiklopedija tal-kultura Maltija, li tixfet dawl fuq l-oqsma ewlenin tal-ħajja tagħna bħala Maltin, bit-ħaddim tajjeb tal-lingwa nazzjonali – il-lingwa Maltija.

“
Il-Malti jista'
jithaddem tajjeb
u bih nistgħu
nfissru ruġna f'kull
qasam tal-ħajja.
”

Fost l-imħuħ wara l-pubblikazzjoni ta' din ir-rivista tant popolari kien hemm Mario Azzopardi, wieħed mill-aqwa poeti u kittieba Maltin tat-tieni nofs tas-seklu għoxrin, u l-Professor Oliver Friggieri, għalliem u lettur ta' eluf ta' studenti fl-Università ta' Malta, ħassieb profund, kittieb prolificu, akkademiku u studjuż mill-ifjen tal-ilsien Malti u l-letteratura Maltija u barranija. L-ewwel passi biex ikun ippubblikat dak li sar magħruf ma' kulħadd bħala s-Sagħtar ma kinux eħfef mill-ewwel passi ta' tarbija li litteralment tkun għadha

qed issib saqajha. L-oppożizzjoni li sabu kienet qawwiya, id-diffikultajiet li ħabbtu wiċċhom magħhom kienu kbar, u kien hemm saħansitra min anki heddihom u kellimhom ħazin, biex ma jirnexxi il-pjan tagħhom. Hekk jikteb Oliver Friggieri f'ħarġa numru 50, ta' Ottubru-Novembru 1977, li fiha jirrakkonta l-istorja tar-rivista mill-bidu tagħha sa dak iż-żmien.

It-titlu *Sagħtar* intgħazel wara ħafna ħsieb u konsiderazzjoni. Kien Mario Azzopardi li kien qed "ifttex xi kelma qadima, safja iżda sabiħa, tiftiehem iżda mhux komuni", u flimkien ma' Oliver Friggieri, fid-dar ta' dan tal-aħħar, waslu għat-titlu *Sagħtar*. Il-kelma 'sagħtar' "kienet tirrifletti l-ħsieb tal-Kampanja Lsien Malti, kelma Maltija safja iżda mhux stramba, fiha l-għmiel tal-ħoss u tevoka l-fwieħa ta' ħaxixa li tiżghed fi għiritna". Minn hemm 'il quddiem is-Sagħtar beda bil-mod il-mod jieħu isem u jsir parti integrali mill-ħajja edukattiva u letterarja tal-istudenti Maltin. Minn Jannar 1976, imbagħad, is-Sagħtar għadda f'idejn il-Malta Union of Teachers, għax, jgħid Friggieri, "minħabba li... ħa statura, il-MQL ħass... li kien jaqbel li jgħaddi l-organizzazzjoni tar-rivista lil xi istituzzjoni li tista' żżomm u tkabbar is-suċċess miksub."

Mill-1971 sal-2015 is-Sagħtar ħareġ nistgħu ngħidu kull xahar matul kull sena skolastika. Wara l-ewwel 37 edizzjoni mill-Moviment Qawmien Letterarju, l-MUT ħadet ħsieb tippubblika aktar minn 300 ħarġa oħra. Matul is-snin, eluf kbar ta' studenti stennewh bil-ħerqa u ferħu kull xahar meta ħaduh f'idejhom mingħand l-għalliem tal-Malti jew il-librar tal-iskola. Mijiet ta' kittieba, edukaturi, studjużi, riċerkaturi jew personalitajiet oħra kkontribwew fih b'xi mod jew ieħor. Mijiet ta' studenti bagħtu ittri, ċajt u kitbiet oħrajn biex ikunu ppublikati fir-rivista u wiċċhom xegħel

meta raw isimhom stampat fuq il-paġni tagħha. Eluf ta' qarreja, anki adulti, qraw artikli, stejjer, poeziji, bijografiji, xoghlijiet ta' riċerka u kitbiet oħrajn u infurmaw ruħhom, tgħallmu, irrilassaw u fuq kolloxx ħadu gost b'dak li raw fis-Sagħtar. U l-lingwa Maltija kompliet tikber fl-istatura, għax issa kien hemm mijiet ta' artikli studjati u riċerkati miktuba biha u miġbura flimkien f'pubblikazzjoni ta' kwalità, mijiet ta' stejjer interessanti u avventuri eċitanti għat-tfal, poeziji mqanqlin u informazzjoni utli fl-edukazzjoni ta' ġenerazzjonijiet shaħ ta' studenti Maltin, u kien hemm mijiet ta' eluf ta' qarreja tal-Malti. Kważi ħamsin sena wara nistgħu ngħidu li l-għan ewlieni tal-Moviment Qawmien Letterarju ntlahaq... u qed ikompli jintlaħaq!

Propju għalhekk l-MUT tinsab fi stadju avvanzat fil-preparamenti tagħha biex mis-sena skolastika li jmiss terġa' tibda tippubblika r-rivista *Sagħtar* kull xahar bejn Ottubru u Mejju. Il-ħsieb tagħha hu l-istess kif kien matul id-diversi snin li fih ħareġ is-Sagħtar, imma l-mezzi biex isegħ dan il-ħsieb mhumieħ biss daww tradizzjonali, iżda wkoll mezzi oħrajn moderni li llum saru parti integrali minn ħajitna – l-internet, l-awdjoviziv u mezzi teknoloġiċi moderni oħrajn. Għalhekk f'April, permezz ta' Fondazzjoni Sagħtar, l-MUT nediet is-sit saghtar.org.mt u fih tellgħet l-edizzjonijiet passati kollha li kienu ppublikati fl-istorja tar-rivista bejn l-1971 u l-2015. Dan jista' jitqies bħala teżor ta' kultura lokali fil-linja tal-ħsieb li kellu l-Moviment Qawmien Letterarju meta ħolom li joħloq ir-rivista, u wieħed jista' jaċċessah xhin u meta jrid mill-kumdità ta' daru jew fejn ikun, anki minn fuq mobile jew tablet. U mhux hekk biss; f'dawn l-aħħar ġimgħat bdew jittellgħu anki siltiet moqrija f'verżjoni awdjo biex jakkumpanjaw il-paġni stampati tar-rivista, biex wieħed ikun jista' wkoll jisma' filwaqt li jaqra l-istejjer u l-artikli li jinteressawh.

Ix-xewqa ta' bosta hi li s-*Saghtar* jerġa' jiehu l-*ħajja* u jerġa' jibda jfewwaħ il-libreriji tal-iskejjel u d-djar tal-qarrejja Maltin u Għawdxin, u l-MUT, permezz ta' fondazzjoni msemmija propju għar-rivista nnifisha, hija kommissa li twettaq din il-ħolma. Il-ħidma tkompli biex dan il-għan jintlaħaq u t-teżor ta' informazzjoni u letteratura jkompli jtkattar b'risq l-edukazzjoni ta' wliedna u l-ġieħ li jisthoqqlu l-ilsien nazzjonali.

Fondazzjoni Saghtar tibda l-ħidma tagħha

Fix-xhur li għaddew l-MUT irreġistrat fondazzjoni ġdida (Fondazzjoni Saghtar – VO/1824) li nħolqot biex tiehu ħsieb l-aspett professjonali tal-MUT, sabiex din twettaq aħjar l-irwol doppju tagħha bħala organizzazzjoni trejdnjonistika u professjonali. Is-sena l-oħra l-MUT żiedet impjegat biex flimkien mal-Bord tal-Fondazzjoni, immexxi miċ-Chairperson is-Sa Elaine Germani, Viċi President tal-MUT, ikun jista' jintlaħaq dan il-għan. Il-Fondazzjoni diġà bdiet taħdem fuq pubblikazzjonijiet, taħriġ u attivitajiet b'rabta mal-professjoni edukattiva.

Il-Fondazzjoni thares lejn il-promozzjoni tal-edukazzjoni b'mod wiesa', u għalhekk trid tikkontribwixxi b'diversi modi għall-ikbar ġid tal-professjoni tal-edukaturi, il-livell tal-edukazzjoni u fuq kollox l-istudenti nfushom. Fost l-oħrajn, Fondazzjoni Saghtar beħsiebha tiehu sehem fi programmi u proġetti rilevanti għaliha u torganizza korsijiet, seminars u attivitajiet għall-edukaturi sabiex dawn jiksbu t-taħriġ meħtieġ li jservihom bħala parti mill-iżvilupp professjonali tagħhom.

Parti integrali mill-ħidma ta' Fondazzjoni Saghtar se tkun il-pubblikazzjoni u t-tixrid ta' materjal edukattiv kemm għall-edukaturi u b'mod speċjali għall-istudenti. Ewlenija fost il-pubblikazzjonijiet fil-ħidma tal-Fondazzjoni se tkun ir-rivista *Saghtar*. Kull min iħobb il-lingwa Maltija jew iħobb jaqra, żgur li jiftakar sew is-*Saghtar*, bl-artikli informattivi u l-istejjer interessanti li kien ikun fih, il-logħob u ċ-ċajt, jew minħabba l-posters tal-kantanti u personalitajiet oħrajn. Wara li ttellgħu l-edizzjonijiet passati kollha online, b'xi wħud mill-artikli moqrijin u mtellgħin anki f'audio files, l-MUT qed taħdem biex terġa' tibda tippubblika r-rivista mis-sena skolastika li jmiss, bl-użu prominenti tal-format diġitali, li jappella għall-istudenti tad-dinja tal-lum u li jwassal l-informazzjoni, it-tagħlim u d-divertiment b'mod attraenti u modern.

Izda x-xogħol ta' Fondazzjoni Saghtar fir-rigward tal-pubblikazzjonijiet jinvolvi wkoll kotba u materjal ieħor li jgħin sabiex jintlaħaq l-għan tal-Fondazzjoni, li xxerred kemm jista' jkun materjal edukattiv fost l-istudenti u l-edukaturi tagħhom. Barra minn hekk, il-Fondazzjoni se tkun qed tagħmel xogħol ukoll fejn jidhlu riċerka u taħriġ.

Permezz ta' Fondazzjoni Saghtar ukoll l-MUT qed tippjana li terġa' tagħti l-*ħajja* u tkabbar il-librerija tagħha. Din għandha sservi ta' għajjnuna addizzjonali u għodda għall-edukaturi biex issostnihom f'ħidmithom u tgħinjom jikbru fil-professjoni tagħhom.





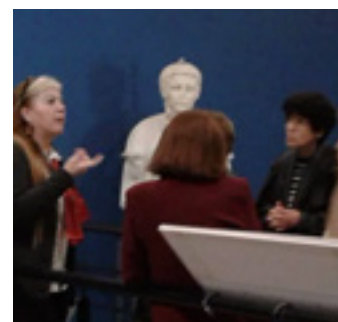
MUT-RES

The MUT Retired Educators' Section (MUT-RES) is a very active section within the MUT. It organises a series of activities throughout the year and is also part of the *Alleanza ta' Organizzazzjonijiet ta' Pensjonanti*. All its activities are open to all members who are now enjoying their retirement. The newsletters and circulars which are sent regularly are testament to the energy and willingness of these retired members to visit different places and educate themselves in the process, while meeting and enjoying each other's company.



All active MUT members who are about to retire are reminded that they may opt to retain their membership within the Union by becoming retired members. Please contact the MUT for more information.

These photos show some of the activities which were held during 2019 and 2020, before activities had to stop abruptly because of the COVID-19 pandemic.



These activities were:

11-13 October 2019

7 November 2019

29 November 2019

4 December 2019

24 January 2020

28 February 2020

Weekend break in Gozo

Visit to H.E. Dr George Vella, President of Malta

Visit to the Domus Romana in Rabat, Malta

Foundation Day activity for our section at MCAST, Paola, on the occasion of the 100th year anniversary of the MUT

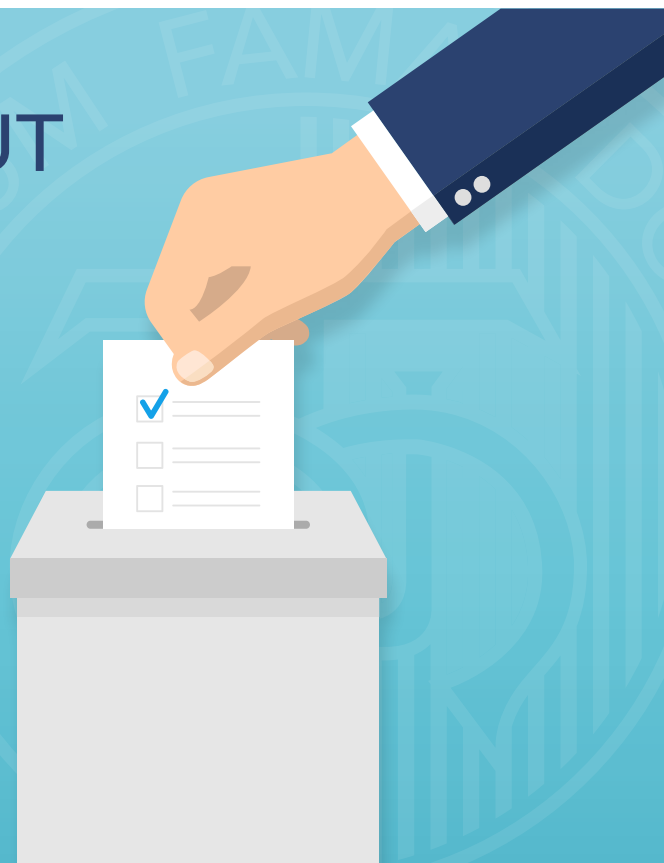
Visit to MUŻA, Malta's museum of contemporary art

Visit to the Busy Bee factory in Mrieħel

Elezzjonijiet tal-MUT

ĠUNJU 2020

Il-partecipazzjoni tiegħek fl-elezzjonijiet tal-MUT li ser isiru f'Ġunju 2020 hi meħtieġa sabiex issaħħaħ ir-rappreżentanza ta' kull grad u settur fl-istrutturi tal-Union.



Grazzi tal-partecipazzjoni tiegħek

Bhalma thabbar fix-xhur li għaddew, l-MUT, permezz ta' Fondazzjoni Saghtar, għaddejja bil-preparamenti sabiex terġa' tibda tippubblika r-rivista popolari Saghtar. Għaldaqstant nitolbuk biex jekk tkun tista' tikkontribwixxi b'xi mod fl-edizzjonijiet il-godda tas-Saghtar, tikkuntattja lill-editur permezz tal-email editor@saghtar.org.mt.



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