The Educator

A Journal of Educational Matters

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The Educator

A journal of educational matters

The objective of this annual, peer-reviewed journal is to publish research on any aspect of education. It seeks to attract contributions which help to promote debate on educational matters and present new or updated research in the field of education. Such areas of study include human development, learning, formal and informal education, vocational and tertiary education, lifelong learning, the sociology of education, the philosophy of education, the history of education, curriculum studies, the psychology of education, and any other area which is related to the field of education including teacher trade unionism.

This journal accepts articles from teachers, academics, administrators, graduate students, policy-makers, education specialists and any other author or researcher whose work contributes to the different facets of education and related areas.

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b. The examination of educational issues from a cross-cultural perspective.
c. The inclusion of substantive findings that may be of help to policy-makers and practice.
d. The examination of information technology in the field of education.
e. The implementation of research methods and measurement processes which are clearly presented.
f. The presentation of theories, models or conceptual frameworks in the field of education.
g. The exposition of research findings derived from comparative and cross-national studies in education.
h. The presentation and discussion of material derived from primary sources including archival documents, primary data and resource persons.
i. Any other dimension which the editorial board deems compatible with the overall objectives of the journal.

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The Use of Technologies in Learning Maltese for the Early Years

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This article aims to guide early-years teachers in integrating technology into Maltese language instruction. Anecdotal evidence suggests that teachers often face challenges in finding suitable teaching materials for Maltese. Since Maltese is less widely spoken than languages such as English, understanding the underlying causes of this resource shortage would require further study beyond the scope of this article. Given my expertise in literacy, particularly digital literacy, this article is specifically intended to support early-years educators.

In preparing this article, I reviewed several books, including *Literacy and Education* (Pahl & Rowsell, 2012) and *New Media in the Classroom: Rethinking Primary Literacy* (Burnett & Merchant, 2018), along with academic articles and official documents, including *DigComp 2.2* (Vuorikari et al., 2022). Since this article explores digital resources and their effective use by students, *DigComp* has been fundamental in shaping my research approach.

The document *Early Childhood Education and Care* (Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education, 2021) emphasizes that children should be given "Meaningful opportunities for learning about, with and through digital technology to enhance the development of responsible multi-literacy communicative repertoires enabling children's successful participation in a digital society" (3.2.6).

My doctoral research was the catalyst for my continued exploration of digital resources in Maltese. As I began to observe various apps, I started to recognize the challenges faced by the teachers who participated in my study on learning Maltese. My study focused on the pedagogical value of tablets and the challenges they present to teachers. For my doctoral research, I conducted a relatively short but focused study, carrying out weekly observations for about five months in a school in Malta. Through my observations, I identified the benefits that certain open apps offered in learning Maltese. This sparked my desire to investigate further the learning of my country's language. I believe the main results of this research can provide evidence related to the challenges of learning Maltese from an early age.

In this article, I will examine studies that can assist in pedagogy and review existing resources related to the Maltese language in early years education. I will discuss how integrating technology into this field is both essential and challenging. Given the limited resources available in Maltese, this article presents practical approaches for educators and proposes effective tools to foster digital literacy from a young age.

Critical view

Due to the evident limited digital resources in Maltese, also due to the language being spoken by a relatively small population, educators are often compelled to rely on open-ended applications to create teaching materials. The *DigComp 2.2* framework highlights several main themes that guide this article: information literacy and data, communication and collaboration, digital content creation, digital security, and problem-solving skills. Using *DigComp 2.2* as a foundation, I will review studies on effective 21st century pedagogy within these domains.

The limited availability of Maltese-specific resources undoubtedly presents challenges, but integrating open-ended digital applications and AI tools opens up valuable opportunities for educators. By personalizing learning, offering real-time feedback, and boosting engagement, these technologies provide new ways to support young learners effectively. Through the thoughtful use of these tools, teachers can foster essential skills like communication, collaboration, and problem-solving, all of which are foundational for a successful outcome.

Information literacy and data

Technology has become pervasive in homes. Burnett et al. (2014: 161) have observed that while schools primarily emphasize written literacy, literacy practices at home are often multimodal. This observation is supported by O'Mara and Laidlaw (2011) who found that children initially engage with direct and transmissive learning but quickly grow bored, favouring apps that allow them to explore, create, and interact with content. Minogue and Jones (2006) further examined this trend, focusing on multisensory interaction through digital tools, particularly tablets.

Digital resources help students as creative builders to participate more actively in the learning process. As Gatt notes (in Camilleri Grima and Portelli, 2017: 59-60), resources are important because they "foster in students a sense of autonomy and independence in their own learning and help them build confidence in the subject they are studying." This principle is one of the achievements of digital literacy initiatives prepared locally (Digital Literacy Malta, n.d.).

This section highlights that technology can bridge the gap between school-based literacy and multimodal literacy at home. Children benefit from tools that allow them to explore, create, and interact with content, supporting their growing digital literacy in an engaging way.

Communication and collaboration

Yelland and Gilbert (2018: 154) underscore the importance of applications that enable students to create multimodal texts, which supports both the expression of ideas and comprehension of information. Today's children frequently use portable devices that facilitate communication and collaboration (Murphy, Farley, Lane, Hafeez-Baig, & Carter, 2014). Preparing students for this digital reality includes promoting both online collaboration and face-to-face interactions through technology. For example, Mercier and Higgins (2013) studied an application allowing students to collaborate on a shared project via tablets, projecting their work onto an interactive board.

Existing digital platforms can further promote collaboration, particularly through project-based learning. As Grant and Basye (2014, p.2) assert, students thrive in dynamic, collaborative, and relevant experiences where everyone feels involved. With the plethora of online solutions and applications available, schools must find ways to integrate these technologies into teaching and assessment.

Ultimately, collaboration is essential for understanding each other, as well as our environment, identity, and culture.

The ability to communicate and collaborate is increasingly vital in today's digital landscape. By incorporating tools that encourage both independent expression and group work, educators can better prepare children for meaningful interactions within a digitally connected world.

Digital content

Moore (2017) notes that one of the primary challenges in integrating technology is selecting appropriate applications. This challenge is particularly relevant in Malta, where digital and printed resources frequently depict foreign environments, such as the iconic London bus, which does not reflect Maltese cultural context. This section will address such challenges by focussing on two areas: the digital competencies required by educators to develop their own resources, and the competencies children need to explore creativity and create content effectively.

Similarly, Kucirkova et al. (2013: 116) characterize personalized stories as being intrinsically relevant to children's sociocultural experiences, thereby aligning more closely with their lived experiences than many commercially available digital narratives. Presently, a multitude of applications exist

to aid in the creation of digital books, posters, and videos. Cavanaugh, Hargis, Munns, and Kamali (2013) assert that tablets and other digital literacy tools have the potential to transform the classroom into a vibrant and engaging community. As a result, educators require support in adapting their pedagogical strategies to incorporate these emerging tools effectively.

The issue of grammatical accuracy presents a significant concern when children engage in writing; however, this phenomenon is well recognized within the local educational landscape. While the instruction of proper grammar is undoubtedly important, it is equally essential not to penalize or diminish the creative expressions of students. Celce-Murcia (1991: 464) explains that children possess a more holistic understanding of language compared to adults.

Furthermore, the interconnection between reading and writing is underscored by Kucirkova and Sakr (2015) who emphasize that multimodal stories significantly enhance children's creativity.

In conclusion, selecting culturally relevant and age-appropriate digital content is essential for engaging Maltese children. Empowering educators to develop their own resources ensures that digital content resonates with students' experiences and supports their creativity and understanding.

Safety and the interests of children

The acquisition of knowledge concerning internet safety and protection commences at a young age, as many children are exposed to portable internet-enabled devices from early childhood (Edwards et al., 2016: 322). The small size of our nation does not mitigate the risks associated with children encountering online dangers while navigating the internet in our native language. Search results can still yield inappropriate content, regardless of the language used.

Furthermore, the use of cameras – integral to the development of various digital competencies, including creativity, communication, and collaboration – can present substantial risks if not adequately managed. Lorenz and Kikkas (2011) identify several potential dangers, including cyberbullying and interactions with undesirable individuals, which have been exacerbated by the proliferation of mobile phones. Numerous scholars, including Plowman & McPake (2013: 31) and Moore (2017), underscore the critical role of parents in monitoring their children's online activities, providing assistance when necessary, promoting the responsible use of technology, and acknowledging their children's initiatives.

An essential competency for becoming proficient digital citizens – particularly in the context of searching, reading, and writing in Maltese – is the ability to maintain focus. Wakefield and Smith (2012) observe that students may easily experience confusion when transitioning between various applications.

As technology becomes integral to learning, ensuring children's safety online is critical. Educators and parents must work together to monitor and guide children's digital interactions, helping them develop a sense of security and responsibility in the digital world.

Problem-solving skills

Games and activities provide an excellent way for children to enhance their problem-solving skills, with teachers serving as facilitators throughout the learning process. Shukla (2014) argues that creative engagement allows students to thrive (p.91) and enriches their language skills (p.89). Effective use of digital tools can significantly improve language abilities and support problem-solving. Official documents, such as the *Learning Outcomes Framework* (Ministry for Education and Employment, n.d.) and various scholars, including Dubin and Olshtain (1986), underscore the importance of aligning content with both the syllabus and desired student achievements.

Flewitt et al. (2015) highlight concerns among professionals regarding the rapid development of technology and its impact on the perseverance and patience required for writing and reading. These skills are crucial for reflection, deep thinking, and the craft of writing, which remain important. However, it is also essential to recognize the role of technology in increasing motivation, a key element in fostering children's reading habits (Ciampa, 2012: 2).

Digital tools, particularly educational games and interactive activities, provide valuable opportunities for enhancing problem-solving skills. Through these tools, children can practice perseverance and develop critical language abilities, building a foundation for lifelong learning.

The methodology used

The empirical research for this article involved observing 20 lessons over five months as part of my doctoral studies. The participants were ten first-year students, aged between 5 and 6 years (M = 5.2 years), from two different classes. The school, referred to as St. John Paul, was

selected based on the voluntary participation of teachers and students who were interested in experimenting with in-class technology. The school's population was predominantly Catholic and from a working-class background, as inferred from conversations with parents and the head of school.

Developing a methodology based on these concepts was a meticulous process. It was essential to construct a framework that accurately reflected the children's experiences, while striving to avoid, as Christensen and James (2000: 12) caution, interpreting these experiences solely through an adult perspective. However, complete elimination of adult interpretation was not possible, as I was conducting the analysis.

Two teachers, referred to as Ms Yosanne and Ms Roberta (pseudonyms), volunteered to participate in this study. Both were enthusiastic and dedicated, showing a strong willingness to engage with the children through play and song. One of the teachers held a degree in Education.

Additionally, this study examines existing resources designed to support early Maltese literacy development. Specifically, resources such as the *Naqra Naqra* app and other digital tools featured on the **malti.skola.edu.mt** website were analysed to assess their effectiveness in teaching foundational literacy skills. The study focused on tools that engage young learners through interactive activities, like phonetic exercises, word-picture matching, and interactive alphabet games, which aim to build children's listening and visual-spatial abilities. By integrating these resources into the observed lessons, this research also explores how culturally relevant digital content – aligned with the *DigComp 2.2* framework – can enhance early years literacy education in Maltese.

Findings

This section presents the key findings from the study, highlighting the impact of digital tools on early years Maltese language learning. Each subsection addresses a specific area of digital literacy, including information and data literacy, communication and collaboration, digital content creation, safety considerations, and problem-solving skills. These findings underscore the unique benefits and challenges of integrating technology into Maltese language education for young children, offering insights into how digital resources can enhance both foundational literacy skills and critical 21st century competencies.

Together with the apps observed during the observations, **malti.skola.edu.mt** offers a variety of resources specifically designed for first-year Maltese language education, including syllabi, reading materials, speaking and listening exercises, writing activities, and grammar. It also provides interactive and digital tools such as educational videos and creative exercises that engage students with Maltese in age-appropriate and culturally relevant ways.

While this study references various digital tools, a detailed exploration of specific options falls outside this paper's scope, given that these materials are frequently updated. The focus here remains on digital literacy competences that support Maltese language learning, emphasizing skills like information literacy, communication, and content creation. This approach ensures that, regardless of resource updates, educators have a framework for effective technology integration aligned with the *DigComp* competences.

Information and data literacy

During the period of observation, one of the few applications available for early years Maltese literacy was *Naqra Naqra* (Figure 1). This application was utilized in Observation 7 by Ms Roberta, who acknowledged the benefits and opportunities it provided.

The application *Naqra Naqra* consists of exercises where children compare words with pictures to strengthen their phonetic knowledge and basic listening skills by recognizing different word sounds.

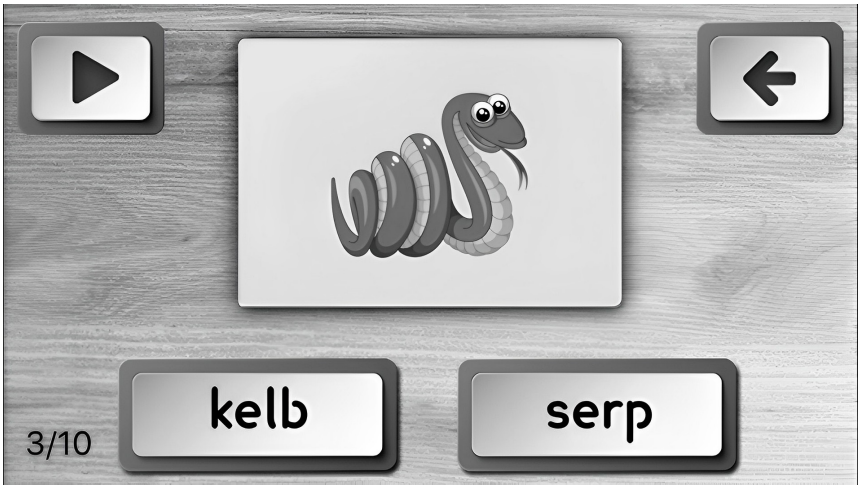

Fig.1: Naqra Naqra application

Fig.2: Żaqqinu jagħżel x'jiekol

Various themes can be introduced to foster different skills in children. For example, in Observation 6b, Ms Yosanne used the app *Żaqqinu jagħżel x'jiekol* (transl. His Belly Chooses What to Eat) (Figure 2) and a small activity called "Before" through Educreations. This activity helped Ms Yosanne build on the children's prior knowledge from a morning discussion about the importance of healthy eating.

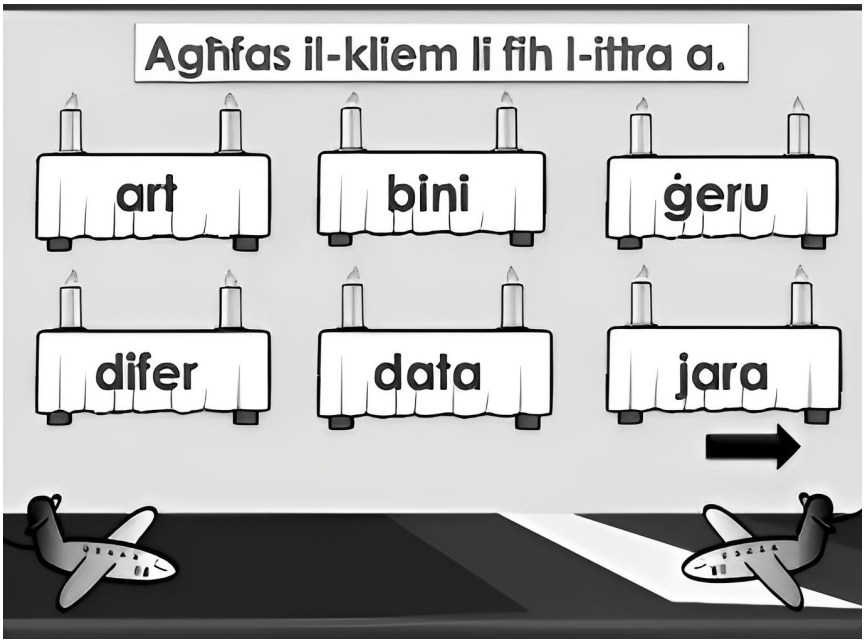

Fig.3: Letter 'a'

This study also explores the website **malti.skola.edu.mt**, looking closely at its resources and their impact on Maltese literacy education. The page "il-Grammatika" offers interactive games with letters (Figure 3). These games are designed to help children learn the Maltese alphabet and improve their literacy skills through engaging activities.

As Pahl and Rowsell (2012: 44) argue, reading encompasses not only the ability to recognize letters but also involves the visual comprehension of text and the development of students' visual-spatial abilities.

The website **malti.skola.edu.mt** offers a variety of digital resources for reading, which can be accessed at this link. These resources include applications available for download from Google Play for use on portable devices such as tablets, interactive board activities, and several presentations (Figure 4).

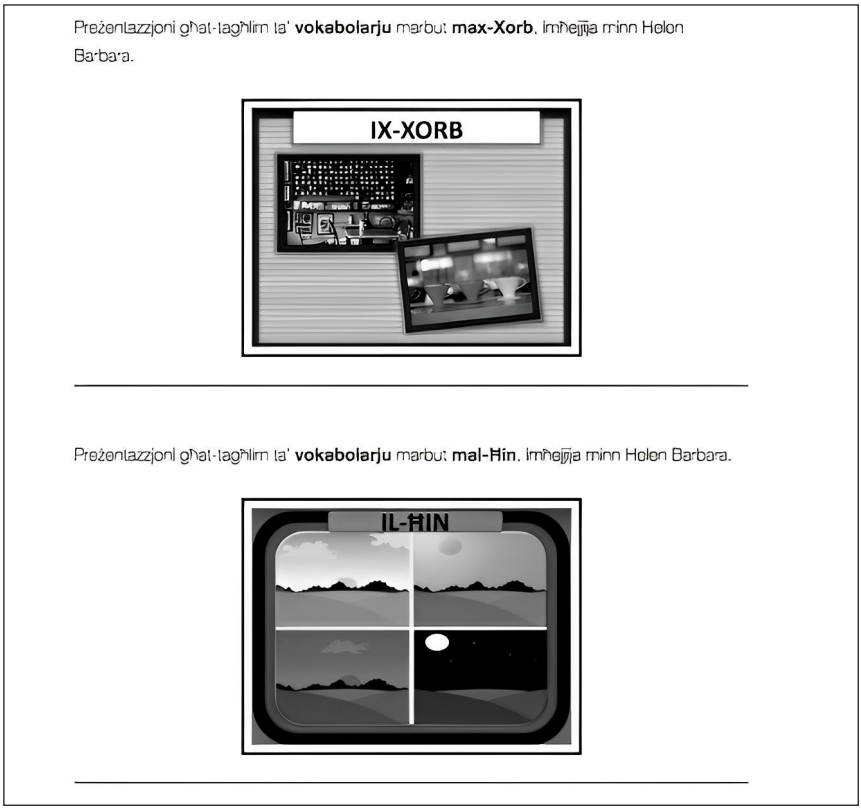

Fig.4: Educational resources in malti.skola.edu.mt

Communication and collaboration

The user-friendly nature of the software and the functionality of integrated tools, such as the camera on tablets, encouraged teachers to foster greater creativity among students. This shift resulted in the production of texts that were more intuitive, immediate, and easily modifiable. During Observation Number 12, the children were asked to select a colour and write a word using that colour. This exercise could have been expanded further to enhance the children's creative expression. However, the lesson progressed to allow the children to use a pre-existing application, 'Drawing Desk: Draw & Paint Art,' for drawing. This application featured 3D brushes, various other brush types, shapes, erasers, rulers, pencils, and a wide range of colours. This aligns with the argument made by Burnett and Merchant (2015: 272) that children's literacy experiences are not solely about accumulating words but also about providing them with contexts in which they can express what arises from their experiences and imagination.

As the children began reading their own writing aloud, it became evident how portable devices can assist students in developing good pronunciation and intonation.

Digital content

Understanding various content forms and the alphabet, is essential for children to develop meaning. In Observation Number 14, the teacher asked the students to identify which word began with a particular sound, followed by an activity where they drew that word. This lesson involved listening to words and helped the children strengthen their competencies, including creativity. Most importantly, the children enjoyed the learning process.

The example mentioned in Observation Number 12 clearly illustrates what March et al. (2015) found in their study – certain applications encourage children to create original texts and artifacts, such as visual creations, drawings, and stories. In this case, the various brushes available helped spark the children's imagination, even within the limitations of their young age.

We must also consider the ease with which educators can create materials, including quizzes, through specialized applications. These applications allow teachers to generate original digital content, while the students can also contribute by recording their voices. For example, the teacher created a video using GoAnimate and then incorporated questions using Zaption.

Quizlet was another tool utilized to create content in Maltese. This application includes a feature that reads the text aloud. Since this could pose challenges with the Maltese language, the teacher instructed the children to focus on spelling.

Pierre: A box
Ms Yosanne: Now write it, ('kax', 'kax')
Pierre: 'A'
(Ob 5, 13-4-2016, Ms. Y video 6)

This application also effectively helped the children recognize the difference between phonemes and graphemes.

Safety and the interests of children

Portable devices, such as tablets, have proven to be safer for children compared to larger tools like laptops. They pose less risk of physical injury. While virtual reality devices can be more immersive, they also carry greater potential risks. Nevertheless, precautions were taken to ensure children handled tablets carefully and avoided exposure to bright lights.
While I did not observe explicit discussions about internet safety, the strong bond between children and technology was evident. This aligns with Nieuwenhuys' (2011: 411) assertion that digital tools can empower children as agents of their own learning. For instance, Ms Yosanne's class used a puppet named Orsino during Maltese spelling activities, fostering a sense of companionship. Similarly, the tablet became a trusted companion on children's educational journey. Despite being school property, children expressed a desire to personalize their tablets:

Pamela: *Miss, my cover is white, but we will change it next year. I will get a pink one.* [00:03:54] (Ob5 13-4-2016 MsY video 2)

This highlights the importance of ongoing care and supervision to ensure that technology remains a beneficial tool and not a source of harm.

Problem-solving skills

Through my observations, it emerges that games are not only enjoyable for children but also contribute to the development of various skills, including problem-solving. For instance, in Observation 11, a Maltese language lesson focused on numbers. The children first used a camera to capture an image of a number and then added it to the EduCreations app. Subsequently, they were tasked with collecting the exact number of balls

corresponding to the displayed number. If the card showed the number 5, they had to find 5 balls. This innovative approach, seamlessly blending digital and non-digital elements, showcases the exceptional ability to integrate language learning with digital competencies.

QR codes also played a significant role in enhancing the learning experience. In Observation 8, these codes directed the children to specific information prepared by the teachers. This integration of technology with traditional learning methods exemplifies how multiple skills can be acquired simultaneously, yielding substantial benefits.

Recommendations

This research aims to explore how technology can enhance the effectiveness of Maltese language learning. To achieve this, I propose a set of principles inspired by the recurring themes in Rowsell and Pahl's book *Literacy and Education* (2012). These principles serve as a guide for Maltese language instruction.

a. Tangible and material literacy

In vocabulary acquisition, I would recommend utilizing storytelling within the Metalanguage Program: Level 4 - First and Second Primary Years (**malti.skola.edu.mt**). When reading stories, it is beneficial for teachers to incorporate visual aids and express emotions. Communication is more than sounds; children observe gestures and facial expressions.

However, technology empowers children to demonstrate their comprehension. This can be achieved through:

- *Interactive activities:* Use quizzes, digital comparisons, and annotations of pictures and text on tablets
- *Student-created content:* Encourage children to record videos and create their own books

These activities foster children's ability to "compare pictures/graphics with texts/stories... show that they have understood the association of ideas and the sequence" (Metalanguage Program).

While online platforms offer various educational activities (e.g., matching, fill-in-the-blanks, crosswords), student-centred learning encourages diverse self-expression and demonstrates text comprehension.

b. Literacy in everyday life

Understanding the daily lives of children and how they express themselves is crucial. Gatt (in Camilleri Grima and Portelli, 2017: 62) explains that content should be "built on real experiences from the students' lives". This principle is well reflected in the preparation of the Maltese syllabus (**malti.skola.edu.mt**). Among the suggested themes in the speaking section are places in the house, the family, and other familiar topics.

To support this, we can encourage children to watch videos about family members, such as this one: Family Members Video. Additionally, on the site **malti.skola.edu.mt**, there are various activities about the family that children can engage with.

We must also acknowledge that the digital world is an integral part of children's environments today. As Burnett et al. (2014) state, educators need to recognize that children seamlessly transition between the digital and non-digital worlds. Therefore, when discussing the daily lives of children, we must also consider the games they play, the virtual realities they explore, and the movies they watch on various platforms that have become part of their everyday experiences.

c. *The integration of culture, community, and identity in literacy*

Children absorb and form their own unique identities. In my observations, children mentioned that they have tablets at home and use them to watch their favourite videos, such as *Peppa Pig*, *Dora the Explorer*, and *My Little Pony*. During a snack time, in observation number 15 (time 1:31), a girl saw a rainbow on the screen and called it "Rainbow Dash", referencing a main character from *My Little Pony*. This builds on the points mentioned in the previous section.

Prinsloo and Rowsell (2012) emphasize that even if semantic forms are the same, the interpretation of meaning can vary according to culture and individual understanding. Pahl and Rowsell (2012) suggest that we should strive to understand the construction of knowledge in children's homes. They propose that literacy should provide opportunities to connect children's home experiences with what they learn at school.

For instance, when we provide material, such as asking children to listen to a story, it is beneficial to encourage them to share their knowledge with others. We can ask children to record themselves describing a character from the story or another part of it. Once they finish, they can save the recording and send it to the teacher.

d. Literacy in today's times

In the early years, significant changes have been made to encourage children to use colours. The knowledge of letters and numbers begins in the first year of primary school. However, this should not exclude children from continuing to express themselves in various ways. A number of applications should be used for both free and guided expression, as both are important.

Technology should never be used superfluously. The projects we undertake in the classroom and the choice of resources should embrace "the principles of the curriculum while the content links clearly with syllabus 70 of the subject" (Gatt, in Camilleri Grima and Portelli, 2017: 62). We cannot ignore artificial intelligence as a new reality that our children are living in. As time passes, they will develop skills to use it effectively. This can change teaching methodologies, and we cannot rule out that what children write today might be created with the help of artificial intelligence. The same applies to drawing, which is already well-developed at the time of writing this article.

e. Multimodal literacy

From the construction of knowledge at home, as mentioned in previous sections, we learn that children download stories through different applications, record their voices, search for various topics, and create different animations. They spend a lot of time playing in an unstructured way, which allows them to develop a number of competencies without it being planned.

In the classroom, we can build on this by, for example, asking the children to imagine something fantastical. We help them use their senses by asking them what their name is and how they feel in their shoes. After sharing their ideas with their friends, we can guide them to create a digital book.

Conclusion

This article addresses the challenges teachers face when integrating technology into Maltese language education. While recognizing the difficulty posed by limited resources, this study also highlights the potential of technology to enrich early literacy by enabling children to explore their imagination, create original content, and build communication and collaboration skills. By examining specific tools and applications, I wanted to present realistic, experience-based solutions directly relevant to teachers' everyday practice.
Beyond technical and support challenges, teachers also encounter

conflicts between new technological approaches and traditional values, as Brickner (1995) has argued. Understanding these secondary-level challenges is essential to ensure that technology integration aligns with teachers' educational philosophies.

Although digital literacy research in Maltese is growing, significant gaps remain. By incorporating the *DigComp* framework, this article provides a fresh, structured approach to addressing these challenges. It is my hope that this research contributes to both educational practice and the preservation and promotion of our national language. Future research could continue to explore ways to expand Maltese digital resources and examine long-term impacts on children's literacy development.

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The Teachers' Code of Ethics and Practice – some reflections and deliberations

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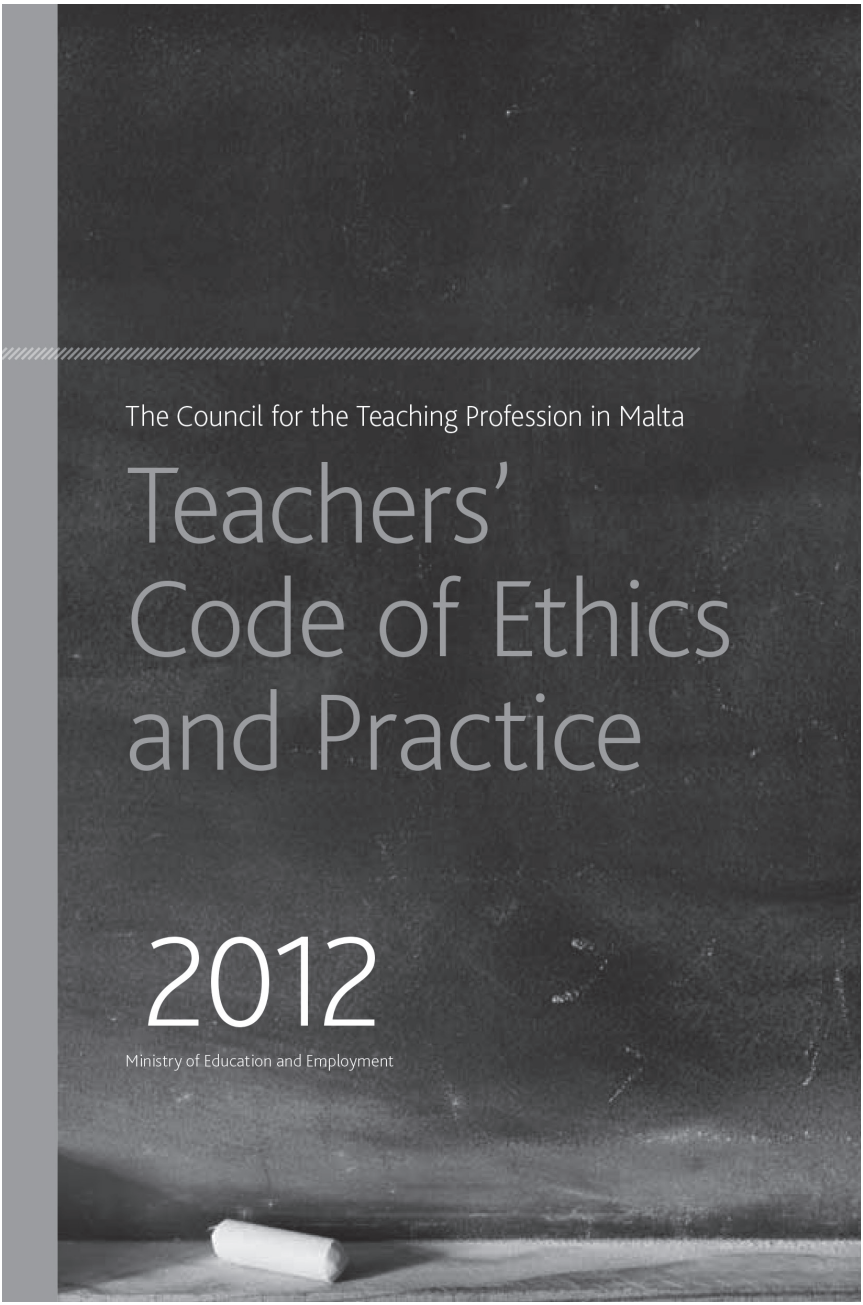
Ethics is based on standards of right and wrong that prompt persons on what they ought to do in relation to rights, obligations, fairness, or virtues. The concept is subjective as one tends to equate ethics with their feelings. However, following one's feelings may deviate from what is ethical. The same can be applied to liken ethics to religion, law, or whatever society may accept as the norm. All these examples may sway ethics from one standpoint to another. If religion is taken into consideration, there is a risk that ethics may only apply to the devout religious people and not the atheists. Law often incorporates those ethical standards to which the citizens should abide by. However, like feelings, law can skew to extremes – for instance, the old apartheid laws in South Africa. Moreover, if a citizen accepts society's standard behaviour, the norm can still easily deviate from what is ethical. An appropriate example of such would be Nazi Germany where society was generally morally warped to say the least. With all these issues under consideration, ethics should be based on well-founded standards of right and wrong including reasonable obligation to refrain from stealing or murder and enjoin virtues of honesty and compassion. Ethics is a continuous journey of analysing our own moral beliefs and moral conduct and striving to ensure to live up to standards that are well-founded and solidly based (Velasquez et al., 2010).

Both ethics and morals refer to 'right' and 'wrong' conduct. Ethics usually refers to rules from an external source such as at the workplace. These are external standards provided by the institution for the individual to follow. For instance, teachers, doctors, and lawyers, among other professions, must follow an ethical code regardless of their morals. On the other hand, morals refer to an individual's principles of what is right or wrong, which may be influenced by society or culture but still hold a personal influence created and upheld by the individual (Diffen, 2024).

A code of ethics is an authoritative guideline for the members of a specific group. It provides a morally permissible formulation to these members simply because they are part of this category. A code may derive from various sources, such as consent, custom, tradition, convenience, law, fairness and others. However, to be a code of ethics one of its sources of authority must be moral (Laas et al., 2022). It should reflect the profession's values through moral principles by fulfilling vital obligations to respect and treat all individuals fairly (Schur, 1982 in Fischer, 2022). Codes of ethics can establish well-defined standards where common sense and work tradition cannot be adequately implemented. As established previously, being of authoritative formulation, the code can be of guidance to those new to the profession as also to those experienced professionals who might need a refresher throughout the years. Additionally, it can settle



Source: https://education.gov.mt/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/New-Code-of-Ethics-Doc-EN.pdf

disputes and provide clarification to the public on what is expected of the members of a particular organisation or group. A formal code can also hold a legal basis, and courts can appeal to it (Laas et al., 2022).

Despite all codes having a basis in morality, the document may take one of three forms.

a. An aspirational code – a set of ideals without the intention of enforcing right and wrong behaviours.

b. An educational code – to guide professionals to make informed decisions in morally ambiguous situations.

c. An enforceable code – a set of ethical guidelines backed by rules to ensure compliance and offer consequences if violated (Frankel, 1996 in Fisher, 2012).

The Council for the Teaching Profession (CTP) has various responsibilities to maintain the standards of the education profession as established by the Education Act (Cap. 327) in Maltese law. It bears the obligation of preserving the principles for the teaching qualification in state schools; approve or refute applications for the teaching warrant and recommend to the minister who should obtain the warrant; and provide continuous assessment to newly qualified teachers. This is implemented in the best interest of educators, learners, parents, and the community (Government of Malta, 2024). The Education Act Chapter 327 was enacted in 2008 and was amended in virtue of Act XIII of 2012. The Council has legal power to investigate criminal transgression and unprofessional demeanour. All these guidelines have been collected under the Code of Ethics and Practice (ACT XI of 1994, as amended by Legal Notice 425 of 2007 and Act XLV of 2020 and Act XIX of 2021). It can also be found under the subsidiary legislation 327.02 which specifies the Teachers' Code of Ethics and Practice Regulations. The code has six main principles (Leġiżlazzjoni Malta, 2012):

1. Maintain trust in the profession.
2. Maintain professional relationship with students.
3. Respect the uniqueness and diversity of students.
4. Work in a collaborative manner with colleagues, parents, guardians, and carers.
5. Act with honesty and integrity.
6. Keep professional knowledge and practice up to date.

The CTP suggests that the Code of Ethics is a guide and a means by which the community is informed on the expected conduct of educators. This means that the Maltese Code of Ethics suggests what teachers' demeanour should be, including in teaching and learning settings.

In comparison, England's Code of Conduct, issued by the Department for Education, which came into effect in 2012 and updated in 2021, focuses on two main parts.

Part One – Teaching

1. Set high expectations which inspire, motivate and challenge pupils.
2. Promote good progress and outcomes by pupils.
3. Demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge.
4. Plan and teach well-structured lessons.
5. Adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils.
6. Make accurate and productive use of assessment.
7. Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe learning environment.
8. Fulfil wider professional responsibilities.

Part Two – Personal and Professional Conduct

In this section, it is stated that a high standard in behaviour, attitude and ethics is expected from all professionals both within and outside the school environment. It emphasises safeguarding pupils' boundaries and wellbeing, showing tolerance, and not undermining British values (Department for Education, 2021).

In 2004, the General Teaching Council for England issued the 'Code of Conduct and Practice for Registered Teachers' where it outlines its role and responsibility within the Education framework. What is written is akin to what has been attributed to the CTP in Malta. It explains that the Council holds disciplinary functions under the legislation for the 'Teaching and Higher Education Act of 1998' where it can proceed against registered teachers who have been found accused of misconduct or incompetence. The document further illustrates certain examples of such demeanour in three sections.

Section One – Unacceptable professional conduct

- Demean and discriminate against students and their families.
- Failing to keep the students safe.
- Failing to maintain standards of honesty and integrity.

Section Two – Conviction of a relevant offence

- The Council may proceed with disciplinary action if the teacher has been convicted of a relevant criminal offence.

Section Three – Serious professional incompetence

- This includes failing to uphold their responsibility and professional competence which is expected of a registered teacher (General Teaching Council for England, 2004).

In contrast to England and Malta, where the Code of Ethics is drafted and implemented by a Council, Finland's ethical principles of teaching is enforced by the Trade Union of Education, OAJ. The ethical code for Finnish teachers was issued in 2010 and encompasses four basic values.

1. Dignity – respect for everyone.
2. Truthfulness – honesty with oneself and others.
3. Fairness – towards learners both individuals and groups, and towards the community.
4. Responsibility and freedom – teachers are entitled to their own values but are still held responsible to maintain their standards within the legislation and the curriculum (OAJ, 2024).

As other professions also have their code of conduct which provide a guide on duties and responsibilities with the aim of a harmonious relationship between all involved, some examples are indicated here. One such is the Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Conduct for Nurses and Midwives. It was formulated by the Council for Nurses and Midwives in 2020 and comprises four main values.

1. Respect towards the patient.
2. Upholding professional responsibilities and accountability.
3. Respect towards colleagues.
4. Maintaining public trust and confidence in the nursing & midwifery profession (Council for Nurses and Midwives Malta, 2020).

Another example is the Code of Ethics for engineers which holds a somewhat diverse set of guidelines for its warrant holders, and which forms part of the Engineering Profession Act Chap 321. The Chamber of Engineers focuses on ideal behaviour towards the environment and others whilst rendering a service to provide a holistic balanced return. The core values are referred to as duties towards:

1. Society
2. The profession
3. Colleagues
4. Employers

These rules of conduct are essential to achieve:

1. Credibility
2. Professionalism
3. Quality of service
4. Public confidence (Chamber of Engineers, 2017).

The basis of such documents encapsulates complementary ideologies. Several core ethical principles in the diverse range of careers, some of which are indicated above, are the foundation of moral practice, depending on the specific profession. For instance, similarities with the medical profession which highlights compassion, honesty, and integrity imply that it would be difficult to imagine a medical practitioner who does not hold these values even in his personal life. The convergence between professional and personal values is vital. This demonstrates that such professions, including that of the educator, hold a social responsibility in diligence and impartiality, which in the case of educators is applied daily in the classroom. The difference between moral and ethical principles with the focus on social norms, customs, fashions and others, induces one to categorise them as values, prompting the question of 'Whose values?'. With learners coming from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds, there are identifying factors to define the moral and social aspect of these values (Campbell, 2003). Both Maltese professions mentioned above have common denominators with the teaching profession – such as, respect towards the student / patient / the environment; being professional on the workplace; work in a collaborative manner with colleagues; and being honest and embracing integrity.

The common aspect and perception of the code of ethics is apparent as well amongst various countries. The examples discussed above, regarding England and Finland, hold similar factors reflected within the

Maltese code. The two codes of ethics in England appeared in 2004 and 2012, that of Finland was set in 2010, while the Maltese document was promulgated in 2012. These ethics documents indicate that the morality of the individual professional and the society in which they operate are not much different from one another. Using a code of ethics as a blueprint should be a helpful guide for individuals and organisations to navigate ethical decision-making, and that is a reason for such codes of ethics in the different countries.

However, it is important to recognise that ethical situations can be complex and nuanced, and a code of ethics may not cover every possible situation. It, therefore, makes rational sense to keep in mind that such codes of ethics cannot be followed exclusively for there will always be scenarios where an exceptional grey area presents itself which may require flexibility when addressing the issue.

Even though the code may not be exhaustive and should be interpreted critically, it is perhaps helpful to clarify specific scenarios or present examples to guide teachers better. England's code of ethics tackles such situations by providing instances where an educator may be prosecuted when / if in breach of the conduct due to unprofessional behaviour or incompetence. Nowhere in Malta's legislation or in the document of the code of ethics itself is there an indication of which occurrences or behaviours may be best avoided to keep upholding the best standards for the profession. This can also be referred to other key aspects such as maintaining trust in the profession, professional relationships with students and colleagues, and continuous professional development, amongst others. While these principles are essential, providing concrete examples or case studies could guide teachers in the avoidance of certain situations and circumstances for their own benefit and that of their students.

What happens if there is a breach in the code of ethics? What kind of enforcement mechanisms are applied if this occurs? According to Eurydice (European Commission, 2023), offences are to be reported to the Head of School, not later than five days from the breach. If deemed necessary, a written warning is to be given to the teacher. It is vital that the Head of College Network is always informed, and if necessary the case is referred to the Director General Education Services. If the allegations are of a more serious nature, the CTP has the remit to investigate further, and its actions may include that the teacher involved is given a reprimand or even have their Permanent Teacher's Warrant revoked. Furthermore, were the allegations to indicate a crime, then the Public Service Commission

will be involved. It would be beneficial to outline these procedures in the legislation of the Code of Ethics and Practice so that the educators are further aware of the process involved had one to encounter such a situation. While this information is found on the European Commission website it is not included in the Maltese legislation or on the website of the CTP.

The examination of ethics and codes of conduct within the teaching profession reveals a complex landscape shaped by cultural, legal, and societal influences. Through a comparative analysis of the codes in Malta, England and Finland, it is evident that codes of ethics serve as vital frameworks for guiding professional behaviour and promoting integrity within the teaching profession. Whether derived from legislative mandates, institutional guidelines or professional organisations, these codes play a crucial role in shaping the moral compass of educators and safeguarding the wellbeing and realisation of students. Unfortunately, adherence to ethical standards is not always guaranteed and breaches may occur which incur consequences. Remedies, therefore, focus on enforcement and accountability measures to prevent as much as possible instances of inappropriate or transgressing behaviour.

The various proposals, as can be gleaned throughout this discussion, should help to make the code of ethics and the operations related to it, stronger and clearer.

- Provide examples or case studies of which behaviour should be avoided, as has been adopted in England's code of ethics.

- Indicate clearly the kind of enforcement mechanisms applied if a breach occurs.

- List the fines / punishments provided in the legislation; see that these are not only featured on the Eurydice website; assure that these pertain specifically to education and not generalised as the ones mentioned in Chapter 369 (Leġiżlazzjoni Malta, 1994).

- Ensure continuous professional development, which includes the promotion and explanation of the guidelines to assist educators in navigating the ethical predicaments when necessary.

It is hoped that by emphasising the requirements of the code of conduct, educators are made further aware of their responsibilities to society, are alerted to their status as role models and of their position of *in loco*

parentis while on their place of work. The code of ethics should not be regarded as a restrictive and punitive tool wielded by authorities, but as a proactive guide for the better performance and higher standing of the members of the teaching profession. Involving all stakeholders, promoting transparency and prioritising ethics, helps to create a safer environment for students, while upholding the highest standards among educators.

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A Brief History of Malta's Educational Broadcasting

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The year 1948 was a milestone in the history of Maltese broadcasting. A special wing, known as the School Broadcasting Unit, was established within the Education Department.[1] It had the specific aim of introducing radio broadcasts for primary and secondary school students, utilising the Rediffusion services. The reader must bear in mind that in the mentioned period, responsible government had been re-introduced in Malta and women acquired the right to vote in future electoral appointments. The new Labour Government elected in 1947 also introduced compulsory education, and in due course this would radically upgrade Malta's literacy and numeracy skills.[2] Reforms were also undertaken by the University of Malta which changed the major course structures. "This abolished the existing preparatory courses and... substituted them by admission courses leading to the various faculties."[3] The BA (Honours) course was also introduced. In 1948, more than 40,000 Maltese and Gozitan pupils attended primary school.[4] Since 1949, the Colonial Office began to issue the publication *Sound and Television Broadcasting in the Overseas Territories,* demonstrating a vibrant broadcasting scenario in the British Empire.[5] Malta was no exception to this development as this paper will reveal.

Over the years, the Maltese school broadcasting unit fell under different government agencies or departments. The list of responsible authorities included the Central Office of Information, the Department of Information, Xandir Malta and the Ministry of Education. According to a report drawn by UNESCO in 1981, these "constant changes have led to a high wastage rate and turnover of staff which in turn has weakened the capacity of the Unit to produce material of an acceptably high standard."[6]

Although this report looked at this venture with gloom, it is fair to add that the analysis was drawn in a period when the unit seemed to be moving fast to closure and most probably it was losing its *raison d'être*. In fact, the mentioned report indicated that the responsible committee for school broadcasting had not met for two whole years (1979-1981) and Education Minister Philip Muscat was eager "to extend the scope of educational broadcasting in Malta."[7]

The birth of radio broadcasting

Radio broadcasts were commenced on a regular basis in Malta by the Rediffusion company in 1935. It was a political initiative taken by the British colonisers to counteract Italian fascist propaganda at a time when war was brewing. During the Second World War, this broadcasting service played a strong role "in keeping morale at a high level".[8] The service was

not free of charge and was tied to a membership scheme. The Rediffusion subscription cost two and a half pence daily. "It had two channels, the BBC link in English used channel A, while channel B transmitted mostly locally produced programmes in the Maltese language. The (mentioned) broadcasting venture started with some 2,200 subscribers of which only 594 were Maltese, a figure that was well below expectations."[9]

It was the era of broadcasters Effie Ciantar, Ġużè Chetcuti and George Zarb. Over the years, thanks to Effie Ciantar, the Rediffusion developed a local channel promoting culture and education for the different communities of listeners. In fact, in 1946, "broadcasts in the Maltese language started to be transmitted on a more organised and regular basis".[10] Ciantar introduced the reading of novels, literary programmes, religious programmes, classic music programmes, magazine programmes intended for women, and so on. Mr Effie Ciantar was appointed Head of Programmes in 1947.[11] Ciantar's efforts raised the number of subscribers. The company also set up its first studio depot in il-Ħamrun.[12] One should also add that Mr Ciantar was an actor. He took part, for example, in *Il-Burraxka* written by Nikol Biancardi and staged at the Orpheum Theatre in il-Gżira.[13] Effie's father, Karmenu, was also involved in theatre with one of his abilities being that of adapting operas into plays.

A very active broadcaster in this same period was Baron Kelinu Vella Haber from in-Nadur, Gozo. Vella Haber founded the *Moviment tal-Malti*, which soon became a national movement that promoted the use of the Maltese language and its literature. Radio was one of the means which this group employed to promote the language.[14] The *Moviment* also encouraged schoolchildren to participate actively in such broadcasts. According to Vella Haber, his movement's programmes were 'killed' by *Il-Ġabra Letterarja,* which was produced by Ġużè Aquilina, the head of the Department of Maltese at the Royal University of Malta.[15]

The role of teachers at the Rediffusion

Irrespective of the School Broadcasting Unit (SBU) venture, Rediffusion had a limited number of teachers amongst its broadcasting lists who worked with the entity on a part-time basis producing cultural radio programmes. For instance, the frontliners for children's programmes were Salvinu Tellus, Frans Said and Ġużi Mallia. They adopted a more familiar name to communicate with their young listeners: iz-Ziju Salv, iz-Ziju Frans and in-Nannu Peppu, respectively.[16] Tellus "eventually became executive producer of Rediffusion's programmes for children, commissioning others to produce individual programmes..."[17]

Various sorts of programmes were created by this exceptional trio. As Sant notices, "children's programmes were never produced by full-time Rediffusion employees."[18] But undeniably, Rediffusion invested thoroughly in radio for children. In fact, irrespective of the SBU schedule, "by the end of the 1960s, the children's hour had become a daily programme, and it went on until the early 1970s."[19] Mallia was very keen on adapting foreign literary texts for children's radio series, the most famous being *The Find Outers* based on Enid Blyton's stories.[20]

The creation of the School Broadcasting Unit


Dr Godwin Ganado

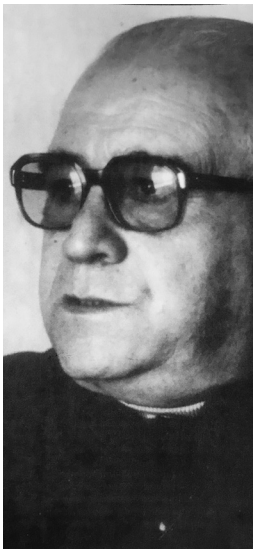
The initiative to set up the school broadcasting wing was taken by the Department of Education. The Minister at the time was Dr Godwin Ganado whilst the Director of Education was Mr J.P. Vassallo. According to Cutajar, some months before the foundation of the School Broadcasting Unit (SBU), Vassallo had appointed teacher Romeo Micallef to host a weekly half-hour broadcast for schools. The Director wanted Mr Micallef to broadcast stories with musical interludes.[21]

During the same period, the Ministry of Education was seriously assessing the quality of education in Malta, and it was decided to put more emphasis on the teaching of Arithmetic and English. The SBU was also an outcome of that report. The scheme of the SBU was inaugurated by Archbishop Michael Gonzi on 1 April 1949 at 9:30 a.m.[22]

This Unit was to produce the programmes while Rediffusion would relay them. For this reason, Rediffusion sets were installed in all schools. New textbooks for English were also published by the Department during this period. The radio broadcasts continued for the next thirty-nine years and ended when the state station concluded its cable activities.[23]

The target of these broadcasts was that of "supplementing the work of the classroom teacher".[24] For the inauguration ceremony Prime Minister Paul Boffa and Education Minister Godwin Ganado were among the special guests who addressed the teachers and pupils who were present for the

event. The inauguration speeches were followed by an explanation of the Gospel at 10:20 by Mgr Mikiel Azzopardi.[25]


Mgr Mikiel Azzopardi.

The SBU's base was in St Christopher Street, Valletta. Its philosophy was that the programmes were to be tailored for the different categories of students. The target audiences were three: the infants, the pupils from Standard I to Standard III, and those from Standard IV to Standard VI.[26] It was a period when illiteracy or semi-illiteracy was still quite high at 38 per cent.[27]

The SBU employed teachers, not broadcasters. Their communication and broadcasting skills were of course examined though a meticulous process of selection. Interviews were conducted by Ms Margaret Mortimer and Mr Toni Pellegrini. Others were handpicked by Pellegrini himself after observing them acting in plays produced by the Malta Union of Teachers. This was the case of Manni Spiteri.[28]

The initial staff of the unit consisted of the head of the wing, a secretary and ten teachers. Four teachers were employed on a full-time basis, and thus seconded to the Unit. A further six full-time teachers were employed on a part-time basis.[29] The latter taught in schools in the mornings and wrote scripts and participated in live broadcasts in the afternoons.


Manni Spiteri

At first Lawrence Mizzi was a part-time broadcaster, teaching in the morning at Tarxien Primary and joining in broadcasts in the afternoon.[30] When Mizzi joined SBU, the team consisted of Manni Spiteri, Lewis Portelli (who joined in 1941), Karmen Azzopardi, Turu Pace, Charles Micallef, Pauline Psaila, Joe Sammut, Eddie Sammut, Tony Parnis, George Agius, Victor Mercieca, Ineż Carbone, Ġużi Mallia, Joe Muscat Drago, John Curmi, Karmenu Vassallo, Pawlu Aquilina, Carmelina Xerri, Rina Falzon and Rose Abela.[31] Later on Mizzi was engaged on a full-time employment with SBU.

The SBU, as indicated above, was under the direction of Toni Pellegrini. In the early 1960s, Pellegrini joined the political fray when he occupied the post of Secretary-General of the Malta Labour Party. In 1961, he founded the Christian Workers' Party with the help of the Capuchin Friar Feliċjan Bilocca. Pellegrini was initially a teacher in the primary school sector,[32] and then studied radio production at the BBC. Other SBU contributors included Ġanni A. Cilia, Anthony Valletta and Mgr Mikiel Azzopardi.[33] Valletta was known for his keen interest in nature studies and this dedication was vividly evident in the publication of his *Nature Study Series*.[34]

The role of teachers within the School Broadcasting Unit

Director of Education Vassallo explained to the teacher corps that in its first months the SBU was aiming "to train children to listen."[35] He stressed that the service was not there to replace the teacher in class but "to assist the process of education by arousing the interest of pupils and stimulating mental activity."[36] The SBU was to create a product that "will widen the interest of the curriculum".[37] The producers intended to utilise the techniques of interviews, stories, semi-dramatizations and dramatizations in their broadcasting operations.

J.P. Vassallo evidenced the project's three pillars: the preparation for the broadcast, the actual broadcast, and the follow-up. Schools were going to receive "monthly circulars in advance giving details of school broadcasts".[38] Teachers were expected to prepare the students for the broadcast but had to refrain from giving too much information in order not to "dilute the interest during the actual broadcasts".[39]

Teachers were expected to ensure that the broadcasting set was adequately positioned to ensure that every single pupil in the classroom could follow. Each broadcast lasted fifteen minutes. The teacher was also expected not to disrupt the broadcast at any stage. During these broadcasts, nobody was allowed to enter or leave the classroom. The teacher "should manifest interest and not do any other work during the broadcast".[40] For the follow-up session, teachers were instructed to discuss the programme while taking care not to kill the pleasure of radio listening by "excessive or tiring follow-up routine".[41]

The management of the SBU's programmes

SBU's broadcasts were held on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, whilst Tuesday and Thursday were reserved for the writing of scripts. Broadcast schedules for the whole month were published prior to the broadcasts.

Broadcasting would take place in the mornings between 9:00 and 11:00. "Later on, it was changed to the afternoons and remained at three to four o'clock".[42] In the late 1950s, programmes for the infant classes, and for Standards I to III were broadcast at 3:00 p.m. The sessions for Standards IV to VI were broadcast at 3:30 p.m. The explanation of the Gospels remained on Friday mornings.[43]

In 1958 there were 196 schools following the SBU programmes.[44] Three years earlier, Rediffusion had moved to its new building in Gwardamanġa.[45] During the scholastic year 1962-1963, "subjects which many primary school teachers were not specialised in, were introduced."[46] Topics varied. "Subjects treated in these first years were Maltese, Literature, History, Civics, Music, famous people and others".[47] Originally the intention was to provide broadcasts for both primary and secondary level but the latter was dropped after the initial months of service due to the "crowded state of the timetable, the difficulty of procuring suitable scripts and the fact that the secondary schools functioned only in the morning".[48]

Broadcasts were also monitored, and their quality was assessed. Members of the Broadcasting Board made it a point to listen to broadcasts with classes in different schools, "whenever possible and thus to see for themselves to what extent children follow and profit...".[49] The Unit also received programmes from the School Broadcasting branch of the BBC. Such programmes were not relayed on Rediffusion but provided the SBU with ideas, material and content.[50] Before 1951, SBU broadcasts aired live.[51] The same applied to Rediffusion programmes as the concept of recording was non-existent before 1951. At times, this created odd and funny moments. Sound effects were also invented by the producers themselves.

SBU shifted from the Education Division to the Department of Information

It was in 1955 that a major overhaul relating to the School Broadcasting Unit took place as it was decided that the Unit should no longer remain under the auspices of the Ministry of Education. That year marked Mr Mintoff's landslide victory in the general elections with Integration being the main target of his government. Gozo also saw the introduction of the broadcasting services in 1955.[52]

The agency responsible for SBU was now the Central Office of Information (COI), which would later become the Department of Information (DOI). All members of staff were now employed on a full-time basis. The transfer

of the SBU to the COI also meant more staff than before. Besides the head of the section and the secretary, the Unit now employed three full-time typists and sixteen teachers.[53] These teachers were employed as scriptwriters and were obliged to work under Civil Service conditions.[54] Six more teachers joined on secondment.[55] "The subjects treated were very much the same as those which had been covered during the previous years."[56] The COI pushed the government's Integration philosophy and Pellegrini had a strong role in presenting the government's take on the theme.[57] Radio service offered a good propaganda tool in this case.

Beside the SBU programmes, the COI produced a considerable number of other programmes that were aired on Rediffusion. In fact, Mizzi noted that the COI produced more radio programmes than the Rediffusion company itself.[58] *Radio College* was one of COI's programmes, which offered, for example, French and Italian lessons. Notes and handouts were also published so that the audience could follow the lessons. Listeners could subscribe to the service and the sheets were promptly posted to them before the programme was aired. The series was known as *Language by Radio*, where lessons began at 7:15 p.m.; one Italian course was concluded on 29 September 1959.[59]

The COI also translated news bulletins from the BBC, and these were broadcast at 2:00 p.m. and at 6:00 p.m.[60] Professor Ġużè Aquilina was a regular broadcaster with the COI. In fact, from 1947 to 1960, Aquilina estimated that he had delivered 455 talks, which he later published in several books. He also moderated 138 discussion programmes and presented 93 editions of the programme *Brains Trust*.[61]

The first ever Maltese participation in an International Radio Conference

In 1959, Malta participated in a conference on *Radio in Education* that was held in London between 21 and 28 July.[62] The conference was supported by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and the respective colonies were encouraged to send their delegates. Malta did not have a Maltese government at the time since the 1947 Constitution had been suspended following the 1958 riots and Prime Minister Dominic Mintoff's resignation. The event was being hosted by the BBC, and delegates were expected to fill out a questionnaire on the "use of radio in education" in their country. The conference welcomed participants who were "concerned with broadcasting, those concerned with the administration and supervision of education, and those concerned with the teaching in schools and training colleges".[63]

The Assistant Director of the DOI suggested that two scriptwriters should attend the conference, with the Assistant Director of Education Mr S. Gatt agreeing that this would be "of great help to the Department".[64] The questionnaire was compiled by mid-November 1956 and revealed interesting data on the status of school broadcasting in Malta at that juncture.[65]

From the questionnaire, several details emerged.

1. The Department of Information (Broadcasting Section) planned broadcasting for schools.
2. There was a School Broadcasting Advisory Board comprising the Director of Education, Schools Inspectors and representatives from the DOI.
3. Broadcasts were relayed through the Rediffusion company.
4. 535 hours per month of SBU broadcasts were in English.
5. 485 hours per month of broadcasts were in Maltese.
6. 10% of the SBU broadcasts were of a musical nature.
7. 20% were talks.
8. 35% of the broadcasts were drama plays.
9. 20% of the programmes were of a features nature.
10. Other programmes amounted to 15%.
11. The BBC transcript service was used.
12. 54,000 primary students followed the SBU service.
13. 4,500 secondary students listened to the programmes produced by SBU.
14. The Maltese government was spending 4,000 pounds sterling to maintain the Unit.

The Maltese representatives at the conference were Carmelo A. Micallef, Publicity Officer at the DOI, and Saviour Gatt from the Education Department. The conference tackled issues such as direct teaching by radio; radio as a supplement to the curriculum; and the use of radio in the teaching of English. A total of thirty-four delegates participated in this conference.

A year after the conference a report regarding the conference was sent to the Administrative Secretary by the Director of the DOI. Two key points emerge from this communication.

1. Although the teacher in class cannot be replaced, "the additional element of the reality of vividness and of drama which they bring into the classroom fully justify the expenditure of time, effort and money in their preparation".[66]
2. The Maltese delegates noted that the Maltese service of the SBU was quite high when compared to that of many other countries.[67]

The Young Listener initiative

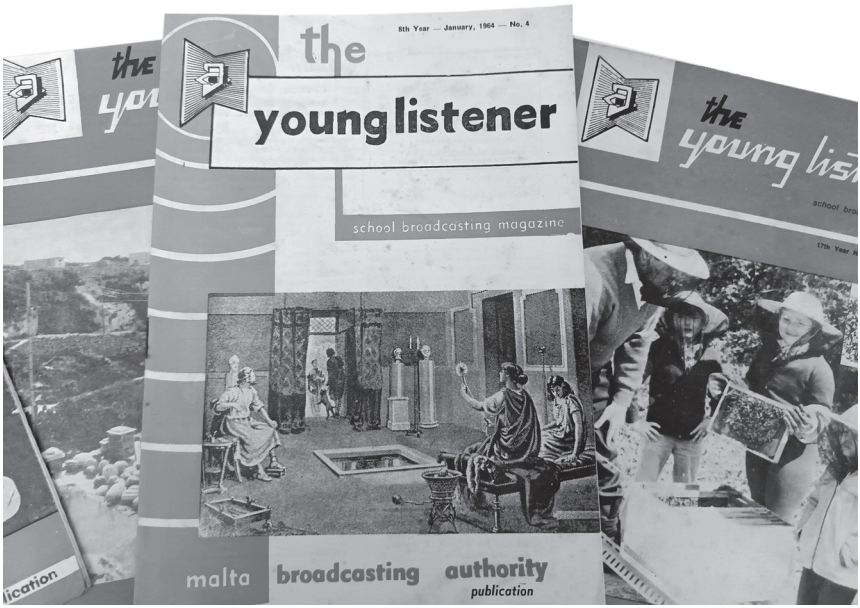
An interesting activity coordinated by the SBU production team was the monthly magazine, *The Young Listener*. This publication was to be used in conjunction with the broadcasts. Every broadcast was accompanied by the content in the magazine. *The Young Listener* was usually printed in two-colour and was bilingual, following the languages employed in schools. Subjects included Religion, Nature Study, English, History, and Geography.

The Young Listener – issue no.1

The first issue of *The Young Listener* was published in October 1956, with the front cover featuring a map of Malta and Gozo, emphasising that school broadcasts covered both islands thanks to COI.[68] A short message from J.P. Vassallo, the Director of Education, was included in this issue.[69] The contributors were all teachers.[70]

Readers had to pay one penny to obtain a copy of the magazine. Ten thousand copies of the first edition were sold.[71] For the December 1956 edition, 15,000 copies were printed.[72] The magazine's publication continued when the SBU was taken over by the Malta Broadcasting Authority (MBA), and its presentation improved when it passed under the latter.[73] While the design already was in two-colour, now the layout improved with better spacing and the larger fonts which made it easier to read.

By means of *The Young Listener* magazine a quiz was organised among schools following the SBU broadcasts. Children found questions tailored on the broadcast which were to "be on the Question Master's card."[74] The students were also encouraged to keep a notebook in which to record the answers. Thirty-two schools were set to participate in the quiz, with each team comprising eight members.



More recent issues of *The Young Listener*

Headteachers were to submit the names of three pupils from every class (IV, V and VI) in their school. "An ad-hoc sub-committee of the School Broadcasting Advisory Board will make the selection of the representative team of four boys and four girls by lot. The same procedure will be adopted for round two, and for the quarter-finals and semi-finals.... For the final, both teams will be selected by the head teacher of their respective schools."[75]

Only the quarterfinals, semifinals and finals were to be broadcast. The method used was that each question was to be allotted ten points. Also, "Each question will be directed at one particular pupil. If that pupil fails to answer it, the team loses four points out of ten. The remaining... may be obtained if one of the pupils' teammates volunteers to answer it. If the second pupil fails, another three points are deducted, and a last try may be attempted by another teammate". A silver shield and a silver cup were presented to the winning team, with the shield having to be returned to the COI after ten months.

During the scholastic year 1968/1969, an edition of *The Young Listener* magazine for the junior classes was launched.[76] During this period, the *Moviment Qawmien Letterarju* started to publish *Sagħtar*, a popular magazine for school children. Later, this magazine was taken over by the Malta Union of Teachers due to friction among the Movement's committee members. In the 1980s, Trevor Żahra spent nearly a year drawing pictures for this popular school magazine.[77] *The Young Listener* was subsequently replaced by another loved magazine *Il-Merżuq*.

Two international broadcasting initiatives

The SBU followed closely two international initiatives – the Colonial School Transcription Unit and the Centre for Educational Television Overseas.

The Colonial School Transcription Unit was set up in 1953 and was based in London. It had two objectives: to bring to classrooms the experience of radio education and "to help build up local school broadcasting services in the colonies and overseas territories".[78] It was a BBC initiative. The programmes were aimed at the primary and secondary school levels. The programmes produced were fourteen-and-a-half minutes long. "These are processed on disks and dispatched together with scripts, publicity and notes for teachers to colonial overseas territories".[79]

Malta was not on the distribution list of the Colonial School Transcription Unit. Amongst beneficiary countries were the Bahamas, Barbados, Fiji,

Jamaica, Trinidad, Uganda and Zanzibar. However, in the report for 1959 it was noted that the Maltese side intended "to supplement our own scripts by BBC Transcription services".[80] This report referred to two Maltese contributors: Miss L. Pace from Valletta and Mr A.J.B. Soler.

Meanwhile, Great Britain was also experiencing the Centre for Educational Television Overseas. According to a press statement issued by this entity, "its policy will be to provide the educational material the overseas services want". Later, the Centre would provide programmes for the MBA's educational scheme employing the television service. This was launched in 1966.[81] In fact, on 10 January 1966, Minister Dr Antonio Paris inaugurated the Malta Educational Television. The British Council assisted the Maltese authorities by bringing over a television expert in the field.

The launching of a national television station for Malta

By 1960, the Colonial Government in Malta was adamant about opening a television station on the island. It was also decided to set up an independent authority to control and monitor broadcasting in an era when the sector was dominated by monopolies. By December of the same year, the government was negotiating with the Rediffusion company to provide a television service and to continue with its commitments in the sound broadcasting field. Meanwhile, especially after 1947, Rediffusion was offering its services in most of the colonial territories. Furthermore, Italy's national network, Radiotelevisione italiana (RAI), relayed from Sicily and was much followed in Malta.

By 1961, the Malta Broadcasting Authority (MBA) was established. Sant argues that because of this new authority, "the government could no longer produce its own broadcasts as had been done for some years through the DOI".[82] The novel authority took under its wings the SBU.[83] The MBA was legally enshrined by Ordinance No. XX of 1961.[84] At this juncture the SBU staff list was decreased to become "one Head who was seconded from D.O.I., two Typists and four Seconded teachers, transferred from D.O.I."[85] Later, the staff was increased by a seconded teacher from the school sector. In fact, Manni Spiteri was "transferred to the MBA along with six other DOI employees to work on the schools' broadcasts."[86] Spiteri commissioned other scriptwriters apart from his staff to produce broadcasts for children.[87] Television, apart from radio, was to be used as a vehicle to air educational programmes, and this was a challenging feat as the two media were completely different.

Aims of the Malta Broadcasting Authority

John Manduca, the first Chief Executive of the Malta Broadcasting Authority, summed up the MBA's rules as follows:[88]

1. To provide sound and television services in Malta and Gozo
2. To prescribe, produce and pay for a limited number of programmes of its own, with the majority of the programmes being provided by commercial contractors (Rediffusion and the Malta Television Service).[89]
3. To supervise and regulate programmes and advertisements, ensure objectivity and fair play between contending parties and interests, and maintain, and whenever possible improve, standards.[90]

It thus transpires, as Manduca had noted elsewhere, that Malta's Broadcasting Authority differed from its counterpart in the United Kingdom. The local authority organised school and political broadcasts,

Students on an educational visit to the Offices of the Broadcasting Authorithy and to Radju Ta' Malta at Blata l-Bajda – Mr Laurence Mizzi, Head of Radju Malta is standing first from the right (Source: https://ba.org.mt/about-us)

besides other sound and television productions.[91] MBA and SBU were producing "over 210 sound broadcasts a year directed at 112 government primary schools".[92] The drastic change was here. The DOI stopped producing broadcasting material and several employees with the DOI were shifted to MBA.[93] As Mizzi had noted, "the 1962 Borg Olivier-led government could not now exploit the airwaves through the DOI the way the Labour government, and up to a certain extent, the colonial administration, did".[94]

So, besides radio, television now provided another avenue and challenge for broadcasts of an educational nature. The emphasis in the television sector seemed to be correctly on the scientific bent. The medium was perfect for illustrating scientific experiments and for explaining abstract concepts. In fact, SBU, as stated, commenced using television in 1966. Programmes from the Centre for Educational Television Overseas were also broadcast.[95] Thanks to this development, it now inaugurated broadcasts for secondary schools. According to Vassallo, "for the scholastic year 1962/1963, the school broadcasting programme consisted of 221 scheduled broadcasts made up of 39 Friday morning broadcasts, 25 programmes for children in Stages I-II and Class I, 49 programmes for pupils in Classes II-III; 61 programmes for students in Classes IV-V; and 47 programmes for children in Class VI and school leavers."[96]

An instrument to gauge teachers' feedback

A year later Manni Spiteri joined MTV and was replaced by Lawrence Mizzi who became the new head of the Unit and held this post until 1982.[97] In 1965, Mizzi introduced the card system. "These cards were sent to teachers to be filled, by giving their comments and suggestions on programmes transmitted to schools. Moreover, during this year, progress has been made in the school transcription service."[98] Mizzi would also visit schools to note the pupils' reactions to the broadcasts.[99] In 1966, MBA was budgeting 7,000 pounds sterling for the SBU programming, which was a considerable sum.[100] Just a year earlier the MBA had been complaining about the lack of funds, pointing out that "only 43.7% of the licence fees are being used by the government for broadcasting purposes".[101] MBA received no funds from the Education Ministry.[102]

More developments in educational broadcasting

It was during the scholastic year 1969-1970 that sound broadcasting was introduced for private schools.[103] During 1970-1971 an experiment was tested in that parallel radio and television broadcasts were introduced.

This meant that radio broadcasts would be used to consolidate the teaching points that would be raised during television programmes.[104] However this experiment failed to achieve what was intended. This was also the time when Malta changed to decimal currency and strong winds were blowing in favour of republicanism.

Charles Xerri was responsible for the series *Physics Now*. It was intended for students sitting for the GCE Physics. Another educational programme transmitted on television was *English for Today*.[105] In 1967-1968 a biology series of programmes was broadcast under the name of *Biology for Schools*.[106] During scholastic year 1969-1970, English language programmes utilised native English speakers.[107] Meanwhile, a basic change was introduced in educational broadcasting, with the process moving away from the scripted to the on-the-field presentation.[108]

By 1970, the SBU Staff consisted of a Head who was directly employed by the MBA, an Assistant for Radio, another Assistant for TV, one sound officer, two seconded teachers (later increased to three) and two clerk-typists (from the MBA).[109] A further development was seen in 1972, when the SBU introduced religious programmes for secondary schools.[110] The year after, TV programmes were launched for primary schools. In 1973, then, the MBA opened the radio station Radio Malta, followed later by Radio Malta 2 and Radio Malta International. During the early 1970s, trade schools were set up and the School Broadcasting Unit prepared programmes for this sector during the scholastic year 1977-1978.[111]

Meanwhile, another service was maturing by which a library of taped programmes was put at the disposal of schools. This material would serve to complement classroom activities. It was possible to use these tapes according to each teacher's discretion and which would not thus interfere with the school timetable. It was noted that this transcription service had a very encouraging start.[112]

The Labour government takes over broadcasting

In 1975, the Labour government took broadcasting under its control although the MBA continued to exist. As shown by Grech, Mintoff had realised from the outset the importance of the broadcasting media in politics.[113] The government took control of the three channels owned by the MBA, and the radio and television services owned by Rediffusion. Telemalta, which was set up by the Labour government, incorporated these services under its responsibility.[114]

This move meant that the School Broadcasting Unit was transferred to Xandir Malta with the staff compliment being the Head, one Assistant for Radio, a producer (later increased by two Xandir Malta producers) and a typist.[115] In January 1978 the English Service on Cable Radio Two was discontinued with Radio Malta One filling the vacant frequency with its programmes. This was a period when the defence agreement that had been signed in 1972 was nearing its end. Malta would soon close the British military base. In 1979, Radio Malta Two, which was essentially a music station, closed and Radio Malta International shifted to the VHF/FM band.

In February 1980, School Broadcasting transferred back to the Education Department, its staff consisting of a Head (MBA), an Assistant for Radio (MBA), one producer (MBA), two producers (Xandir Malta), and a typist (Xandir Malta).[116]

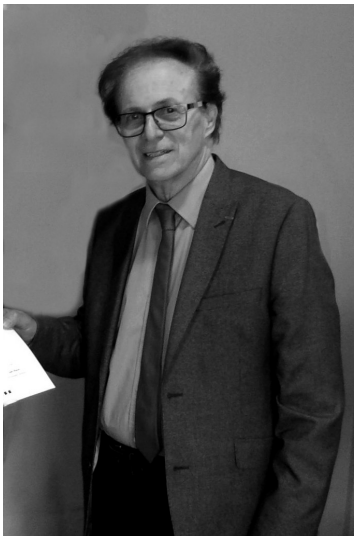
In April 1980, television programmes for secondary schools were stopped to be replaced by evening programmes. SBU staff at this stage included the Head, 1 Assistant (Radio), 1 producer, 4 producers (seconded teachers), a graphic artist (seconded teacher) and a typist (student worker).[117] A major development took place in 1981 when TVM began broadcasting in colour. Meanwhile, Toni Pellegrini quit politics and Prime Minister Mintoff chose him to direct the national broadcasting.

The effects of the 1981 Elections

Things became quite difficult following the 1981 general elections. The Nationalist Party insisted that the polling results were perverse and that these did not reflect the electorate's mandate. In fact, the Nationalist Party had received most votes but did not have enough parliamentary seats to reflect that result and were thus precluded from forming a government. The Labour government was accused of gerrymandering. Be that as it may, the circumstance led to five years dominated by political strife. The Nationalist Party directed one of its members, Richard Muscat, to open a clandestine radio station in Sicily to broadcast its messages.[118]

The period 1984-1985 was marked by a teachers' strike ordered by the Malta Union of Teachers, and this lasted nine months. The teachers forming part of the SBU decided to join their colleagues, with the government's response being that of transferring them to the schools after these having been many years away from the classroom.

In 1985, the Director General of the Education Department entrusted teacher Charles Xuereb to run *Taqsima Xandir Edukattiv* (which replaced



Dr Charles Xuereb

SBU). The mentioned appointment was approved by the Minister of Education, Dr Karmenu Mifsud Bonnici, who was also Malta's Prime Minister in that period. Xuereb at this stage reformed the Unit which led to the creation of the Media Education and Broadcasting Centre.

Meanwhile, the school radio broadcasts were stopped in 1986. Arthur Pace, the Director of Information, himself one of the past broadcasters, explained that these had stopped because "schools were facing reception problems" and the "cable sets available in schools were of no further use".[119] MEBC, under Xuereb, coordinated with the Education Department for the installation of a video player and a 28-inch monitor in all the primary schools. MEBC started "to build a video library with imported foreign educational titles" but also produced "local TV series in Maltese on various interesting subjects".[120] Private schools too used this library, which also included audio cassettes.

Following the 1987 elections, the Nationalist Party was returned to government after an absence of sixteen years. By this time the educational broadcasting unit, "had developed into a fully-fledged educational broadcasting and media centre, and, after pluralism in broadcasting was introduced in Malta in the early 1990s, it launched its own education channel, known as Education 22 in 1996".[121]

A revolution in the field of broadcasting was taking place at this stage. Cable television was introduced in Malta and furthermore, private individuals / companies could also apply for a radio and later, for a television, licence.[122] The national broadcaster now had to face competition not only to win audiences but also to secure advertising slots.

The Minister of Education, Dr Ugo Mifsud Bonnici, had decided to relocate MEBC to Bighi with a new head, as Xuereb was promoted to EO Media. The new Minister of Education, Michael Falzon, decided to revisit his predecessor's decision and moved the Centre from Bighi to Blata l-Bajda, while the number of staff was increased to sixteen.

An Educational TV Channel for Malta

Logo of *Education 22*

The Education Ministry launched Education 22, a television channel directed by Charles Xuereb, on 18 October 1996. It was inaugurated by then Minister of Education Michael Falzon with a live transmission from the National Library in Valletta.[123] Since the Media Education & Broadcasting Centre had also introduced media education as an interdisciplinary subject in primary schools, several teachers had hands-on training in TV production with a special emphasis on the connection between the academic curriculum and the art of edutainment. Media advisors from the UN and Council of Europe were engaged to give guidance regarding this new approach.[124]

Within eleven years of such courses more than 300 educational broadcasts were produced.[125] For instance, in October 1991, forty teachers and many B.Ed. students completed a week's induction course in Multimedia and Education in Broadcasting which was organised by the Multimedia Education and Broadcasting Centre. This course consisted of about 30 hours of workshop experience in the production of sample programmes, which were then screened and analysed on the last day of the course. The course was co-ordinated by Charles Xuereb, who was head of MEBC and ran Education 22. These were regular courses with 1991 being the eleventh year, with successful candidates contributing to educational broadcasts and involving themselves on other commercial broadcasting stations.[126]

When, in 1996, Labour won the general elections, Prime Minister Dr Alfred Sant wanted to dissolve MEBC. However, these plans were abandoned when the PN won the 1998 elections. Minister of Education Dr Louis Galea was supportive of Education 22, but funds remained limited. Still, Xuereb disagreed with the policies and the decisions taken in this period by the Education Department regarding the restricted future of educational broadcasting and thus decided to leave. Xuereb was succeeded by Stephen Florian in 2000, while in 2005, the latter was replaced by Stephen Azzopardi.

> Irrespective of the limited resources, a good number of programmes were produced in that period. Innovative approaches to educational games (*Teżor*), new ways of teaching literacy (*Bum Bum il-Ktieb*), grand celebrations of children's abilities and talents (*Ħu Ċans, Ħames Ċagħkiet,*

Scooters, Ara x'Sibt) were the order of the day. TV series included appetising shots at history with a location trip *Minn Żmien għall-Ieħor*. Media education itself was a common tool to combine critical analysis with analytical criticism (*Cicero, Ulisse, Newstory*), the backbone of educational programming as different from encyclopaedic information.[127]

A staggering 30% of the broadcasts were BBC productions.[128] An innovative first was the broadcast of a live marathon transmission from the Naxxar Fair Grounds during *Eduka 96*.[129] *Galileo,* a series of programmes dealing with science, won the Broadcasting Award for Children's Programmes.[130] The station was placed under the responsibility of the Department of Adult Education and Further Studies of the Division of Education. At the end of the day, financial constraints seem to have led to the closure of the station.

Conclusion

In this brief history of educational broadcasting in Malta one notes how much the broadcasting experience was affected by politics and politicians. Yet, the contribution to the people's education was considerable, especially during the period when illiteracy was the order of the day. New broadcasting media and advances in the field of technology made radio broadcasts gradually more ineffective and ultimately obsolete. On the other hand, producing television programmes involved considerable sums of money which local governments were not always ready to grant.

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Problematising the Contribution of Entrepreneurship and Innovation to Malta's Socioeconomic Development

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Entrepreneurship and innovation can have an instrumental role in a country's socioeconomic development; however, certain inequalities might persist even when a country becomes richer. Defined as "the pursuit of opportunity beyond resources controlled" (Eisenmann, 2013), entrepreneurship consists of the identification, evaluation and exploitation of opportunities and the creation of value through innovation (Stokes et al., 2010, p. 8). It "involves…the development of something *new*, *useful*, and better than what currently exists—and that creates some kind of value (socio or economic)" (Baron, 2012, p. 4).

Mitra (2012) maintains that the relationship between innovation and entrepreneurship finds its meaning in the creation of value. While innovation is concerned with the creation of new products, services and processes, entrepreneurship involves finding and exploiting opportunities for making these products and services available on the market (Mitra, 2012). According to Szirmai et al. (2011), innovation also includes exploiting new markets and forming new business models. Together with entrepreneurship, it engages in value creation because it may involve bringing an innovation to new customers (Szirmai et al., 2011).

One of the reasons for which contemporary education puts a premium on the cultivation of entrepreneurial and innovative capacities is that these can help boost a country's socioeconomic development. However, education also needs to help people understand that this positive influence is not always as clear-cut as policymakers sometimes make it out to be. By means of empirical data, this article analyses how entrepreneurship and innovation have contributed to Malta's socioeconomic development. It also problematises this contribution and evaluates some of the ramifications of the country's increasing wealth.

Economic growth

Even though a country's socioeconomic development is not only indicated by economic growth, an increase in productive capacity finances investment in education, healthcare, social welfare, etc. (Szirmai, 2015). Gaining independence in 1964 after being part of the British Empire for more than 150 years, Malta is an archipelago in the Mediterranean Sea inhabited by around 542,000 people (National Statistics Office [NSO], 2023i). Ever since becoming independent Malta's economy has grown very rapidly, with its GDP per capita rising eleven-fold and the conditions of average Maltese people improving by 46 times (Grech, 2015).

According to the most recent statistics, the country's GDP in the second quarter of 2023 amounted to €4.7 billion, an increase of 9.7% over the same period in the previous year (NSO, 2023d). In terms of volume, GDP growth went up by 3.9% (NSO, 2023d). Whereas in 2004 – the year of Malta's accession into the EU – its GDP stood at 65% of the EU average, it now stands at two percentage points above the average (Eurostat, 2023b). In 2024, the growth rate of Malta's economy continues to "remain robust" and among the best performing in all the EU (European Commission, 2023a, p. 102).

The social dimension

Some of the main indicators of socioeconomic development concern a country's education, healthcare and social welfare. While school enrolment at primary and secondary levels in Malta has remained at around 99% for the past few years, enrolment in tertiary education has remained below 75% (UNESCO, 2023). The literacy rate among 15- to 24-year-olds stood at almost 99% in 2021, while government expenditure on education amounted to 5.6% of the country's GDP (UNESCO, 2023).

Life expectancy at birth is 83 years and the infant mortality rate is 5 per 1,000 births (UNESCO, 2023). In 2018, Malta's healthcare system was ranked 27th out of the 35 countries that participated in the Euro Health Consumer Index, a drop of five places over the previous year (Health Consumer Powerhouse, 2019). Government expenditure on healthcare amounted to €970.7 million in 2021, while expenditure on social protection – pensions, children's allowance, childcare and other social benefits – equated to 25.3% of the total (NSO, 2023c). The latter was the government's primary expenditure function.

Despite its subjectivity, another key indicator of socioeconomic development consists of a population's life satisfaction and confidence. According to a recent Eurobarometer survey (European Commission, 2023b), 94% of Maltese respondents are either satisfied or very satisfied with the life they lead, which is 11 percentage points higher than the EU average. Optimism about the future is also among the highest in EU member states. Regarding their personal job situation, 71% of respondents indicate that this is very good or rather good. A highly positive attitude is apparent with respect to household finances too. Expectations related to respondents' personal job situation and the financial situation of their household are also positive.

Most Maltese respondents (73%) consider the current situation in their country to be very good or rather good, and an equal percentage expect

things to get better or remain the same. These are some of the highest levels of optimism in the EU. Perceptions of the country's economy are also very positive, with 75% of respondents stating that Malta's economic situation is very good or rather good. Once again, this is amongst the highest levels registered in the EU. Attitudes towards the employment situation in Malta and the country's future economic prospects are very positive too.

Entrepreneurship and innovation

In line with the capitalist belief that entrepreneurship and innovation are what propel the kind of socioeconomic development outlined above, Malta supports entrepreneurs by means of several fiscal and financial measures, including investment aid, soft loans, interest rate subsidies, tax refunds, double taxation agreements, workforce training support, and favourable personal tax rates (Malta Enterprise, n.d.).

Since 80% of Malta's businesses are family-run, the government has implemented certain incentives aimed at providing them with support (Government of Malta, 2019). These include advantageous loan debt financing, micro investment in the form of tax credits, education and training for business owners and employees, and low stamp duties on the transfer of businesses and immovable property from parents to their children (Government of Malta, 2019). The above measures and incentives act as some of the entrepreneurial framework conditions that influence the flourishing of entrepreneurship in a particular environment and its contribution to socioeconomic development (Bosma & Kelley, 2019).

Given the emphasis placed on entrepreneurship and innovation as the main drivers of socioeconomic development in Malta, it is worth considering the current situation with respect to these two phenomena. Some of the most significant indicators of a country's entrepreneurial performance include enterprise registration rates, rates of active business units, rates of employment, turnover, and innovation performance. With respect to the first three indicators, it can be pointed out that in 2022 the number of active business units in Malta amounted to 58,386, an increase of 2.2% over the previous year (NSO, 2023a).

While more than 93% of all business units were micro entities that employed less than 10 individuals, only 107 units employed more than 250 people, thus being considered as large undertakings (NSO, 2023a). The disparity between the registration (10,293) and deregistration (6,595) of businesses in 2022 amounted to 3,698, which indicates a higher success

rate for businesses (NSO, 2023a). In the first quarter of 2023, the number of self-employed individuals amounted to 43,593, 27% of which have employees working for them (NSO, 2023f). One of the reasons for this is that Malta offers several advantages to small businesses that opt for self-employed status, including a lower tax rate than that levied on larger companies and no limited liability.

In terms of Malta's innovation performance, it is noteworthy that while expenditure on innovation for 2020 was at more than €178 million, in the preceding two years 843 enterprises of 10 employees or more engaged in innovation activity (NSO, 2022). Innovation was in terms of either product or business processes, or both. However, only 10.7% of enterprises applied for such kinds of intellectual property rights or licences as registering a trademark or applying for a patent (NSO, 2022). Innovative activities were hindered by excessive competition in the market and the high cost of innovation.

Research and Development (R&D) is a key driver of innovation, and R&D expenditure and intensity are significant indicators of a country's channelling of resources into innovation. With respect to Malta's expenditure on R&D, this amounted to €99.9 million in 2021, which equated to 0.67% of the country's GDP and marked an increase of €13.7 million over the previous year (NSO, 2023h). However, this still means that Malta has one of the lowest rates of expenditure on R&D in the EU (Eurostat, 2023e). In 2021, the business enterprise sector contributed to 64.3% of the total expenditure on R&D (NSO, 2023h). Labour costs accounted for more than 61% of all R&D expenditure. The government's budget allocation for R&D amounted to more than €37.1 million in 2021, an increase of €1.2 million over the previous year (NSO, 2023h).

Besides Malta's possible lack of investment in innovation, it is also important to consider what kind of R&D the country is primarily engaged in. R&D consists of three types of activity: basic research, applied research, and experimental development. The first type constituted 45.4% of all R&D in Malta in 2021 (NSO, 2023h). The highest expenditure was in engineering and technology (55.2% of the total), followed by the natural sciences (14.4%), and the medical sciences (14.3%) (NSO, 2023h). The number of people employed in R&D amounts to 3,087, of whom only 41.7% work on R&D projects on a full-time basis (NSO, 2023h).

Employment and population

A country's employment rate is one of the key indicators of entrepreneurial performance referred to above. Since becoming independent, Malta's

economic structure has become heavily focused on services, which has boosted the demand for labour and minimised the rate of unemployment (Grech, 2015). As of June 2023, the number of people registering for work amounted to 875, which is 79 fewer people than the corresponding month the previous year (NSO, 2023g). Most of these people are considered frictionally unemployed, i.e., in between jobs or about to start a new job. Only a small proportion of them are unemployable for some reason or other. This helps explain how the country's unemployment rate is the second lowest in the EU (Eurostat, 2023a).

The government's various incentives to facilitate business development have led to a number of industries growing exponentially in the past few years. For example, major growth has been registered in the tourism (Malta Tourism Authority, 2022) and construction industries (KPMG, 2017). In some cases (e.g., gaming, blockchain and cryptocurrencies), industries that did not exist in Malta up to a few years ago have managed to very rapidly become vital sources of revenue and employment (Mifsud, 2017). The growth of these industries has led to a population boom over the past decade (Farrugia, 2022).

In 2022, Malta's population increased by 4.2% over the previous year and the main reason for that was net migration, i.e., immigration less emigration (NSO, 2023i). Malta had the highest population growth rate of all EU countries, its population increasing by 41.2 per 1,000 people (Eurostat, 2023d). This growth amounted to 24 times the rate registered across the entire EU. At 41.0 per 1,000 people, Malta had the highest crude rate of net migration (Eurostat, 2023d). The continued increase in migration is linked to the significant economic growth the country has experienced over the past few years (Grima, 2018).

While in 2002 there were only around 4,000 foreign workers in Malta, at the end of 2022 there were more than 96,000, the majority of whom being third country nationals (Jobsplus, 2023). With 65% of businesses indicating that they intend to expand their operations, the likelihood is that more foreign workers will be required to avoid wage inflation and its negative effects on the country's competitiveness (Macdonald, 2019).

Ramifications

The wealth generated by the increase in entrepreneurial activity in Malta has not resulted in positive outcomes only, suggesting that socioeconomic development is far more complex than how it is understood from a capitalist perspective (Goldin, 2016; Szirmai, 2005). Several issues have

also accompanied this new level of wealth and the very population that is benefiting from the country's economic growth is also experiencing some possibly difficult conditions. For example, Malta is one of the EU countries with the highest rates of complaints about problems concerning noise, pollution, dirt and other environmental issues (Eurostat, 2019, 2021, 2023c). According to a national survey, the increase in traffic, corruption, and the number of foreigners living in Malta are the topmost concerns for the Maltese population, all three being labelled "problems of success" (Sansone, 2018).

Some of these concerns are prompted by the fact that Malta's rapid economic growth has led to bottlenecks in the educational and housing sectors given that supply cannot meet the huge increase in demand (Macdonald, 2019). The social backlash registered in some quarters of society due to the increase in the number of foreign workers is worrying (Cilia, 2018). However, the government has warned Maltese citizens that if they want their standard of living to be maintained, the current pension age to be retained, and the welfare system to remain what it is, then they must accept that more foreigners are needed for the economy to keep growing (Macdonald, 2019; Martin, 2019).

The conditions experienced by some of the foreign workers who are contributing to Malta's economic growth are at times questionable. This is probably most evident in the construction industry; wherein local developers are collaborating with international firms in order to complete major projects. This has resulted in a substantial increase in the number of foreign workers given that local labour is in short supply. For example, the completion of large infrastructural and development projects over the past few years has resulted in hundreds of foreign workers being brought to Malta (Camilleri, 2019a). The disconcerting side to this is that such workers are typically paid the minimum wage and are housed in substandard living quarters (Calleja, 2023).

Despite Malta's increasing wealth, there still exist certain inequalities in society. For example, the country ranks as one of the lowest among 41 of the world's richest countries in terms of children's reading scores at the age of 15 (UNICEF, 2018). It also registers similar levels of inequality in primary and secondary school levels, placing in the bottom third of all wealthy countries. Moreover, even though Malta in the past claimed that the number of homeless people was very low (Carabott, 2018), research by YMCA (2022) contradicts this. Similarly, Caritas indicates that around 50 people a day turn up for food and a bed at a temporary shelter it runs (Grech, 2019).

Even though in 2021, the average gross household income stood at around €43,000 there were more than 102,000 people at risk of poverty or social exclusion (NSO, 2023b). This figure represents around 20% of the Maltese population. The persistent at-risk-of-poverty rate is higher in single-parent households in Malta than it is on average across the EU (Eurostat, 2023c). In addition, the country has an income inequality coefficient that is above the EU average (Eurostat, 2023c).

Conclusion

Malta's increasing wealth might lead some to assume that a high level of socioeconomic development is being enjoyed by the entire population, and that the main contributors to this have been entrepreneurship and innovation. However, this might not be entirely correct. Firstly, as shown above, despite the increase in entrepreneurial activity and economic growth, innovation is still somewhat insufficient. Porter et al. (2002) argue that in order for an economy to transition from efficiency-based development to innovation-based development, governments need to play a direct role in nurturing a high rate of innovation via public and private investments in R&D, higher education, and regulatory systems that facilitate the start-up of advanced technology firms.

The Maltese government has encouraged investors to see the country as "the world's blockchain island" and one of the best places in which to invest in artificial intelligence (Wolfson, 2018). However, despite climbing a few places on the Global Competitiveness Index, Malta is still some way off from fully consolidating the pillars of business sophistication and innovation that will lead its economy to transition to innovation-based development (World Economic Forum, 2020).

Secondly, socioeconomic development involves changes in a broad spectrum of outcomes; it is simplistic to associate it solely with economic growth (Szirmai, 2015). It is true that increased entrepreneurial activity and economic growth have led to developments in the social dimension. For example, one of the main achievements brought about by the rise in the number of foreign workers in Malta is that the rate of female participation in the labour market has surged and is higher than the EU average (Jobsplus, 2022). However, in other cases the same level of equity has failed to materialise.

For instance, despite the country's low unemployment rate, the employability rate of persons with disability is one of the lowest in the EU (Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability [CRPD], 2020).

In fact, several businesses prefer making mandatory contributions to a government fund aimed at enabling people with a disability to start working rather than employing such people (Falzon, 2018). This suggests that for the country to vaunt a high level of socioeconomic development it must ensure that various inequalities in society are effectively addressed.

Hence, while it is important that education continues to underscore the cultivation of entrepreneurial and innovative capacities, people also need to be aware that socioeconomic development does not automatically spring from a country's efforts to maximise entrepreneurship and innovation. In enabling people to understand this, education can play a vital role in ensuring that a wealthy society like that found in Malta is not only characterised by entrepreneurial and innovative sophistication but is also one that prides itself on equity, equality, inclusivity and fairness.

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The state of history education in Maltese secondary schools: The use of sources and multiperspectivity

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As with any other subject, the conventional pedagogy used in teaching history has undergone changes and developments over time. Investigations into such changes and developments are routinely conducted by the respective researchers of the different fields. This is also the case with the subject of history, both internationally and in Malta. The main methodology that is currently used to teach history is known by various names amongst which one finds "new history", "historical literacy", "source method" and "critical skills" (Ahonen, 2020: 147), as well as "Total History" (De Giorgio, 2008, 10). Henceforth, the term "Source Method" will be employed consistently throughout this article to denote this methodological approach.

The core principles underpinning the "Source Method" can be classified into two categories. The first domain encompasses an array of sources of evidence, which constitute the bedrock of this methodology. Notably, history education globally has progressively shifted towards employing sources rather than depending solely on textbooks (Ojha, 2016). Conversely, the second domain pertains to the sophisticated historical thinking skills and concepts utilized in the meticulous analysis and interpretation of these sources, thereby ensuring an intricate and academically rigorous approach. As noted and explained by various authors such as Haydn et al. (2015), this process of learning involves second order skills and concepts, including source interpretation and analysis, cause, consequence, change, continuity, chronology, terminology, significance, empathy, and communication and writing skills. Both categories – sources, and skills and concepts – function synergistically within the "Source Method". This intertwined relationship ensures that the utilization of diverse sources is complemented by the development of relevant skills and conceptual understanding. Such an approach not only enriches the teaching and learning process but also fosters a more comprehensive and nuanced engagement with historical content.

At the outset, it is imperative to acknowledge that the degree and level with which students engage in the analysis and interpretation of sources must be tailored by educators to align with the unique needs and capabilities of their students at any given moment. Through the "Source Method", students would be learning history while at the same time, they would be mastering the thinking skills and concepts by using sources. This approach was best described as a method that "…lays less emphasis on content and more on the process of learning" (Jones, 1973: 14).

In this article, it will be argued that the utilization of sources, and more specifically, the incorporation of multiperspectivity within the use of

sources, is indispensable for the fostering of comprehensive and holistic historical knowledge. Such an approach ensures that learners engage with diverse perspectives, thereby attaining a higher quality, more nuanced and multifaceted understanding of any subject matter in history (Martin, 2022; Council of Europe, 2018). A second consideration which will be considered relates to the issue of misinformation.

In contemporary times, as in any other period, sources of evidence can be fallible, and some may be intentionally crafted to mislead the reader – a phenomenon widely recognized today as "fake news." Consequently, students must not only possess a degree of awareness but also cultivate a critical consciousness regarding the multiple interpretations a single source might yield, while acknowledging that no source is infallible (Black, 2011). Additionally, learners should be endowed with the requisite skills to discern fake news and develop resilience against its pervasive influence (Barton, 2022; Endacott et al., 2020). This is something that can be fostered through multiperspectivity in history.

The present author posits that in Malta, a significant number of educators, are already implementing the "Source Method" in their teaching practices. This implementation, whether consciously or inadvertently, integrates the principles of multiperspectivity, thereby enriching the educational experience and promoting a more nuanced understanding of historical events and contexts through sources. This article draws on data from the author's own research involving fully anonymous questionnaires which were distributed to history educators electronically (Borg, 2023) to illustrate the quality and extent to which the multiperspectivity of sources is being employed.

History education in Malta – a brief history

To adequately interpret the forthcoming data, it is essential to first establish the contextual framework and background within which the gathered information was analysed. This introductory glance will involve a brief review of the history of history education in Malta and is aimed at ensuring a more comprehensive and nuanced interpretation of the presented findings.

Although school history teaching in Malta can be traced back to the 19th century (Cassar & Vella, 2011), it is notable that "…there was no official curriculum as such, prior to 1988, and even here, only a few sentences were ever allotted to history" (Vella, 2017: 48). During this time, significant theoretical and practical research on history teaching was taking place in

Britain and other countries, led by influential figures such as Jones (1973) and through initiatives like the nationwide School Council History Project (Shemilt, 1980). However, in Malta, the absence of an official history curriculum meant that the subject did not receive comparable attention and development at the time.

After 1988, and particularly into the 2000s, numerous initiatives and publications emerged to advance history education in Malta. Notably, Raymond Spiteri[1] and the History Teachers' Association of Malta (HTA) made significant contributions. For instance, Spiteri's work *Żmien il-Medjuevu: Ktieb ta' Tagħrif u Attivitajiet fl-Istorja* was published in 2005, among a few others (Cassar & Vella, 2011). Another pivotal figure in this pedagogical evolution was Michael A. Sant, who, since the 1980s, advocated for the "Source Method." His first major initiative in 1986 involved incorporating a special section for sources in the History O-Level examination (Vella, 2015). Sant's extensive body of work includes, "...a number of articles on the history of education. He also completed a set of workbooks on various historical sites..." Cassar & Vella, 2021: 2).

While these efforts significantly bolstered history teaching and the "Source Method", it was not until 2008 that the first textbook specifically built on and around this method was published. This innovative textbook, *From the Coming of the Knights to EU Membership*, was designed for history option groups at Years 9 to 11 (Vella, 2020). Cassar and Vella (2011) note the far-reaching objectives of this textbook:

> This book aims at addressing certain shortcomings in the teaching of history, so still undeniably present in Maltese schools. The HTA felt that this book should enter into the secondary schools and become an established textbook replacing the very dated and anachronistic *Ġrajjet Malta* series. ...the authors of this book did their utmost to provide that much-needed boost and modern touch to history teaching in Malta with a dose of skills and concepts and other *New History* elements (Cassar & Vella, 2011: 94-95).

Later on, the new textbook was rigorously compared to its predecessor, *Ġrajjet Malta*, as well as to the work by Laspina, *Outlines of Maltese History* (Azzopardi & Buttigieg, 2018). Azzopardi and Buttigieg noted a major and positive development in the new textbook, stating that it inculcated "...the perception of history as a process of rational investigation of the past, based on a variety of evidence from different viewpoints, which in turn is bound to leave a profound impact on pupils' values" (2018: 204). The textbooks

designated for Years 7 and 8, entitled *Ninvestigaw l-Istorja ta' Malta*, were published in 2019 (Vella, 2019a; 2019b). These educational resources were meticulously developed to enhance students' understanding of Malta's history, offering an engaging and insightful exploration of the subject matter. All the three textbooks incorporate exercises specifically designed by history teachers and were rigorously tested in real classroom settings to ensure their effectiveness (Vella, 2020). Furthermore, the History Teachers' Association has produced various workbooks to further support history education. Their most recent publication, entitled *How to Move Away from Mediocre Use of Historical Sources* (Vella, 2023), underscores the ongoing commitment to providing useful and inspirational material for history educators, thus maintaining a continuous effort to improve the quality and depth of historical teaching in Malta.[2]

It is evident that, although the development of history education and the "Source Method" in Malta had lagged somewhat when compared to advancements in Britain and elsewhere, substantial progress was made in recent decades. Dedicated and continued efforts, such as the Michael A. Sant Memorial Lectures and the numerous publications by the History Teachers' Association, have significantly contributed to modernizing the approach to history education in Malta, aligning it with contemporary educational standards and practices. The extensive progress in history education in Malta has been meticulously detailed in studies conducted over the last three decades by Vella (1996), De Giorgio (2008), and Borg (2023). These comprehensive studies do not merely note the advancements and developments but provide an in-depth examination and analysis of the substantial strides made in the field as regards history education in the Maltese islands.

Multiperspectivity

In the context of history education, a source is a piece of evidence that can be meticulously analysed and interpreted to reveal insights about the past. These sources encompass a wide variety of forms, including written documents, visual materials, archaeological findings, and audio recordings. Each type offers unique perspectives and contributes to a richer, more comprehensive understanding of historical events and contexts. The "Source Method" as exemplified in *From the Coming of the Knights to EU Membership* and *Ninvestigaw L-Istorja ta' Malta*, empowers students to analyse individual sources or sets of sources, thereby fostering the development of their own arguments and conclusions. This method diverges from the traditional approach of presenting a generalized narrative for memorization. As Azzopardi and Buttigieg (2018) observed,

it encourages critical thinking and a more profound engagement with historical material, enabling students to construct a deeper and more personalized understanding of history.

A single source can seldom provide anything close to a comprehensive understanding of any topic; therefore, multiple sources are indispensable. However, merely presenting several pieces of evidence does not automatically achieve multiperspectivity. For true multiperspectivity to be attained, there must be a range of evidence from diverse viewpoints, allowing for thorough analysis and evaluation. This process is essential for developing well-rounded arguments and drawing informed conclusions. Stradling aptly defined multiperspectivity as "…a way of viewing, and a predisposition to view, historical events, personalities, developments, cultures and societies from different perspectives through drawing on procedures and processes which are fundamental to history as a discipline" (2003: 14).

Martin (2022) emphasized the significance of multiperspectivity in her article for the Observatory on History Teaching in Europe (OHTE). Multiperspectivity encourages empathy, embraces diversity, and fosters open-mindedness to various points of view. This approach can lead to more nuanced and complex arguments on any given topic. Martin further elaborates that multiperspectivity has profound impacts on history educators, as it enables the exploration of diverse perspectives from sources in the past, the present, and those bridging the past and the present. To achieve this, educators must employ scaffolding techniques, which help students articulate opinions, beliefs, and viewpoints, ultimately allowing them to develop well-rounded arguments and conclusions.
The importance of multiperspectivity also extends to the concepts of enhancing historical thinking as well as promoting democratic citizenship (Strading, 2003). Multiperspectivity fosters socio-cultural diversity, self-efficacy, tolerance, empathy, flexibility, and adaptability, as highlighted in the principles and guidelines document by the Council of Europe for a quality history education in the 21st century (Council of Europe, 2018). One crucial aspect highlighted in this document relates to critical thinking, and educators are encouraged to "…incorporate a multiperspective approach to enable students to engage with different views to build a more informed understanding and to reflect critically" (Council of Europe, 2018: 24). Another important aspect has to do with fake news, especially when considering that today there are many sources of such news, hoaxes and deceptive information (Barton, 2022; Kropman, van Drie & van Boxtel, 2022). The Council of Europe puts much emphasis on the importance of dealing and combatting propaganda, misinformation and fake news. This

is particularly crucial as it is indicated that "Two thirds of EU citizens report coming across fake news at least once a week" (2023, Facts & figures section).

The use of sources and multiperspectivity in Maltese schools

In Malta, numerous studies have examined the state of history education within Maltese schools. Most notably, the research conducted by Vella (1996) and De Giorgio (2008) stands out. These seminal studies have laid the groundwork for subsequent investigations, including the present author's research (Borg, 2023). These foundational studies have provided critical insights and data, which have been instrumental in shaping and informing the present author's research, ensuring a robust and well-documented understanding of the evolution and current state of history education in Malta.

Drawing on responses from thirty-seven anonymous participants, all of whom were practicing history teachers, in a comprehensive voluntary online questionnaire conducted in 2022, the present author developed a snapshot of the status of history education in Malta. This study provided valuable insights and a broad understanding of the various facets with regards to history education in Malta. The data gathered also offers a substantial foundation for further research and development in this field, ensuring an informed approach to enhancing the educational landscape. Among the questions posed to the participating educators, a specific set aimed to uncover the types of sources most frequently used and the rate with which each type was utilized. This data collection facilitated an investigation into whether there was any indication or correlation suggesting that educators were employing various sources in a way that could indicate multiperspectivity. By analysing these responses, it became possible to detect patterns in source usage that might reflect a commitment to presenting diverse perspectives in history education. This approach provides valuable insights into the integration of multiperspectivity within the teaching practices of Maltese history educators.

The participating history educators were asked to specify the frequency with which they employed various primary sources in their teaching practices (Figure 1). The survey offered five options ranging from "never" to "always", providing a nuanced understanding of the regularity with which these resources were utilized. The primary sources were categorized into seven distinct groups, namely: "Written Sources", "Oral or Audio Sources", "Archaeological Sources", "Artefacts", "Visual (Paintings)", "Visual (Photos)" and "Visual (Video)" (Borg, 2023: 52). This categorization allows for an

analysis of the varying degrees of use of different types of primary sources. The delineation into these specific categories underscores the breadth of resources available to educators, each with its unique application and relevance to the educational process involved in history. The range from "never" to "always" captures the diversity in the adoption and integration of these sources, reflecting both personal preferences and institutional priorities within the educational landscape.

An immediate and important consideration regarding data in Figure 1 is that participants might have classified a photo of an architectural source as a visual source rather than an archaeological source. The same consideration must be made for the artefacts where the participants might have classified a photo of an artefact as a visual source rather than as an artefact.

The inclusion of a diverse array of primary sources highlights the multifaceted nature of educational resources and their application in enriching the learning experience. "Written Sources" encompass a wide range of textual materials, from historical documents to literary works, offering rich, contextual insights into various subjects. "Oral or Audio Sources" provide a different dimension, capturing amongst others spoken word recordings and interviews that bring history and contemporary issues to life through the power of voice. "Archaeological Sources" and "Artefacts" offer tangible connections to the past, allowing students to engage more directly with physical remains of history. Meanwhile, each of the three categories of visual sources – "Visual (Paintings)", "Visual (Photos)", and "Visual (Video)" – bring its own distinct strengths. Paintings can offer deep cultural and artistic insights; photos provide a snapshot in time; and videos integrate movement and sound for a dynamic learning experience. Together, these categories represent a comprehensive toolkit for educators, each element contributing uniquely to the pedagogy. Furthermore, by examining the frequency of use across a broad spectrum of source types, the study (Borg, 2023) hoped to reveal patterns and preferences. This analysis was aimed to highlight the degree of importance given towards different types of primary sources.

The participating educators were also asked to articulate their opinions about primary sources across six categories: "Useful", "Practical", "Enhancing", "Could not do without it", "Could do without it" and "Waste of time" (Borg, 2023: 49) (Figure 2). This framework provides a structured way to capture educators' subjective evaluations of primary sources in a more general sense, revealing how these materials are perceived beyond just their practical application. It was hoped that the distinctions between

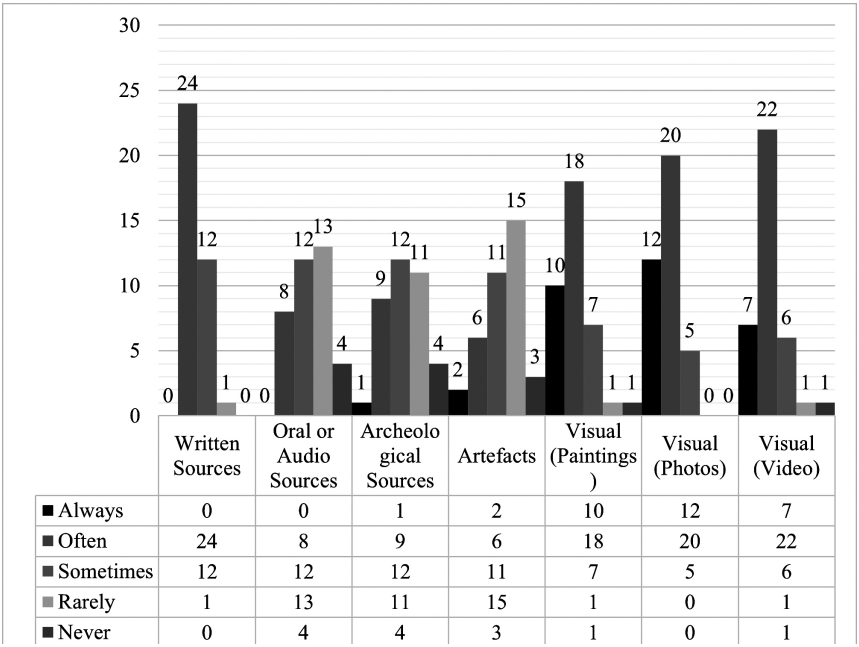
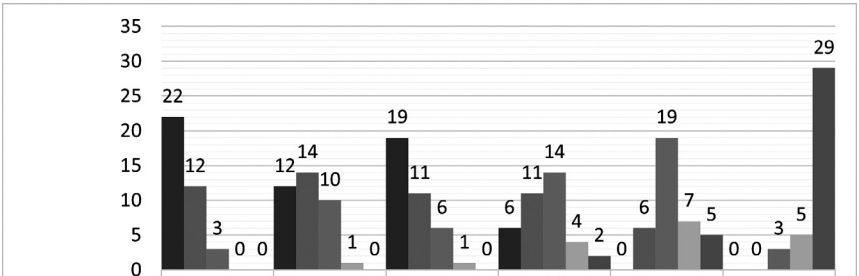


Fig.1: A cluster column bar chart representing the frequency with which educators employed different types of sources during their history lessons (Borg, 2023: 52)

these categories would offer insights into the value educators place on sources, extending our understanding of their perceived efficacy and importance in the educational process.

"Useful" and "Practical" denote the functional aspects of primary sources. The term "Useful" suggests that educators find these sources beneficial for achieving specific educational goals, while "Practical" implies they are feasible and manageable within the constraints of the classroom. Together, these categories highlight the dual aspects of utility and functionality that primary sources bring to the educational experience. "Enhancing", on the other hand, suggests that these sources offer an added value to the learning experience, enriching the curriculum and providing depth that other materials might lack. These three categories collectively underscore the positive contributions primary sources make to education, each from a slightly different angle – be it usefulness, practicality, or enhancement of the learning experience.



	Useful	Practical	Enhancing	Could not do without it	Could do without it	Waste of time
Always	22	12	19	6	0	0
Often	12	14	11	11	6	0
Sometimes	3	10	6	14	19	3
Rarely	0	1	1	4	7	5
Never	0	0	0	2	5	29

Fig.2: A cluster column bar chart representing the opinions of educators about primary sources (Borg, 2023: 49)

The categories "Could not do without it" and "Could do without it" offer a starker contrast in educators' dependency on primary sources. "Could not do without it" indicates a perceived indispensability, suggesting that these sources are integral to their pedagogical approaches and curricula. This reliance underscores the significance placed on primary sources in some educational contexts, where their absence would be profoundly felt. Conversely, "Could do without it" suggests that while these sources may be beneficial, they are not essential. This hints either at a level of flexibility in teaching methods and resource selection or a preference for more traditional teaching methods, such as the chalk-and-talk approach. This category captures a degree of ambivalence or practical adaptation, where educators can substitute these sources without significantly impacting the quality of education.

Finally, the category "Waste of time" represents a critical perspective, where educators view primary sources as irrelevant or unproductive within their specific educational contexts and pedagogical approaches. This category was vital as it aimed to uncover any potential gaps between the intended educational value of primary sources and their perceived efficacy in practice. Such critical feedback is essential for continuous improvement in educational resources and pedagogical strategies.

The notable variance in response frequencies across categories highlights differing levels of engagement and reliance on these sources. Visual and text sources appear to be more integral to teaching practices, with high usage percentages suggesting their widespread acceptance and perceived effectiveness in the educational context. In contrast, artifacts and audio sources, with their lower usage rates, might indicate logistical challenges, lack of accessibility, or simply a preference for more traditional or visually oriented resources.

Understanding these patterns is crucial for any educator who aims to enhance the integration of diverse primary sources in curricula. For instance, by recognizing that some sources are used less than others, strategies can be developed to address potential barriers and promote the use of underutilized resources. This ensures a more comprehensive and engaging learning experience, where students benefit from a rich variety of primary sources that cater to different learning styles and enhance their overall educational development.

The data in Figure 2 reveals that more participants indicated they sometimes could do without the use of primary sources than those who indicated they sometimes could not do without them. Specifically, 46% answered that they often or always could not do without the use of primary sources, while 32% rarely or never could do without primary sources. This suggests that while a significant portion of educators view primary sources as integral to their lessons, such that they cannot do without them, others consider that they can sometimes do without these sources. The mixed responses highlight the variability in the dependency on primary sources among educators, which indicates a range of teaching methodologies and therefore, also a variety of resource preferences.

Moreover, with 92% often or always find primary sources to be useful, 70% often or always find them practical, and 81% often or always find them enhancing, demonstrates a strong consensus among educators for the value and benefits of primary sources in educational settings. The perception of primary sources as useful, practical, and enhancing indicates their significant role in enriching the curriculum and supporting effective teaching practices.

The disparity between those who feel they cannot do without primary sources and those who can, reflects the dynamic nature of educational strategies. Some educators may rely heavily on primary sources to provide authentic, engaging, and context-rich learning experiences, while others might integrate them more selectively, balancing them with other

teaching tools and methods such as pre-prepared notes and textbooks. This flexibility can be influenced by various factors, including subject matter, availability of resources, and individual teaching styles.

Overall, the data underscores the importance of primary sources in education according to the participating history teachers, while also highlighting the possibility of a certain flexible approach to their integration. By recognizing these varying degrees of reliance on primary sources, it might be the case that educators are actively tailoring their teaching strategies in accordance to their personal styles, as well as to meet diverse learning needs and preferences, while broadly ensuring that primary sources continue to play a valuable role in enhancing educational outcomes.

The individual categorized data displayed in Figure 1 was cross-tabulated and presented in multiple tables (Figures 3 to 6). This allowed for a detailed analysis, aiming to ascertain the degree and frequency with which different types of sources were used by educators in their lessons. Examining these tables provides a comprehensive overview of the varied use of primary sources, which also helps to reveal indications regarding the frequency of use of sources within individual lessons.

Figure 3 illustrates the cross-tabulation of written sources versus videographic sources. Among the twenty-four respondents who frequently utilized written primary sources, 92% also often or always incorporated videographic sources into their teaching practice. Conversely, of the twelve respondents who occasionally used written primary sources, 58% often or always employed videographic sources. Meanwhile, Figure 4 illustrates the cross-tabulation of written and photographic sources. Among the twenty-four respondents who frequently used written primary sources, 92% also often or always utilized photographic sources. Of the twelve respondents who occasionally used written primary sources, 75% often or always incorporated photographic sources into their teaching practice.

These two sets of data underscore a significant trend toward the integration of multiple types of sources, which enriches the educational experience by offering more avenues for multiperspectivity as well as reflecting a diverse approach to history education. These cross-tabulations clearly also indicate that educators use a mixture of sources in their lessons, particularly a mixture of photographic and videographic evidence alongside written sources.

		Visual (Video)					Total
		Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	
Written Sources	Always	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Often	6	16	2	0	0	24
	Sometimes	1	6	4	1	0	12
	Rarely	0	0	0	0	1	1
	Never	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total		7	22	6	1	1	37

Fig.3: A table showing the cross-tabulation of data from the categories "Visual (Video)" and "Written Sources". (Borg, 2023: 95)

		Visual (Photos)					Total
		Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	
Written Sources	Always	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Often	7	15	2	0	0	24
	Sometimes	5	4	3	0	0	12
	Rarely	0	1	0	0	0	1
	Never	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total		12	20	5	0	0	37

Fig.4: A table showing the cross-tabulation of data from the categories "Visual (Photos)" and "Written Sources" (Borg, 2023: 96)

Figure 5 illustrates the cross-tabulation of archaeological and photographic sources. Among the ten participants who often or always use archaeological sources, 80% also frequently utilize photographic evidence. Among the twelve participants who sometimes employ archaeological sources, 92% often or always incorporate photographic evidence into their teaching practice. Finally, from the fifteen participants who rarely or never use archaeological sources, 87% often or always utilize photographic evidence. Meanwhile, Figure 6 illustrates the cross-tabulation of artefacts versus photographic sources. Among the eight participants who often or always use artefacts, 75% also frequently utilize photographic evidence. Of the eleven participants who sometimes employ artefacts, 82% often or always incorporate photographic evidence into their teaching practice. Finally, from the eighteen participants who rarely or never use artefacts, 94% often or always use photographic evidence.

The data presented in Figures 5 and 6 underscores a trend towards a strong reliance on photographic evidence and provides support to the

possibility that history educators are using photographic sources to deliver archaeological sources and artefacts to their students. Furthermore, this data also highlights the integral role of photographic evidence in history education.

		Visual (Photos)					Total
		Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	
Archaeological Sources	Always	0	1	0	0	0	1
	Often	3	4	2	0	0	9
	Sometimes	6	5	1	0	0	12
	Rarely	1	8	2	0	0	11
	Never	2	2	0	0	0	4
Total		12	20	5	0	0	37

Fig.5: A table showing the cross-tabulation of data from the categories "Visual (Photos)" and "Archaeological Sources" (Borg, 2023: 96)

		Visual (Photos)					Total
		Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	
Artefacts	Always	1	1	0	0	0	2
	Often	1	3	2	0	0	6
	Sometimes	4	5	2	0	0	11
	Rarely	6	8	1	0	0	15
	Never	0	3	0	0	0	3
Total		12	20	5	0	0	37

Fig.6: A table showing the cross-tabulation of data from the categories "Visual (Photos)" and "Artefacts" (Borg, 2023: 97)

The data depicted in the six Figures featured above leads to a number of indications. Firstly, the data strongly suggests towards the critical importance given by educators with regards to employing a diversity of sources in a way which contributes to multiperspectivity. Visual and text sources emerge as integral tools, suggesting that their accessibility and effectiveness are highly valued by educators. It is abundantly clear that educators do find value in using primary sources. Besides further indicating a trend towards embracing multiperspectivity, it is clear that primary sources are seen as practical, useful and enhancing, and even as elements that educators cannot do without.

If it is the case that educators are using diverse sources to promote multiperspectivity, this holds significant implications for history

education. By encouraging the use of a wide range of sources and addressing potential barriers, educators can create more engaging and comprehensive learning experiences. This approach not only helps in developing a deeper understanding of historical events but also fosters an environment where students can critically evaluate different viewpoints, ultimately leading to a more nuanced and informed perspective of the past.

Moreover, thanks to multiperspectivity and the nature of the "Source Method," students are equipped with essential skills to tackle biased sources, hidden agendas, and fake news. These skills are invaluable, extending far beyond the history classroom into the broader world. Students learn to analyse and interpret information critically, preparing them better to navigate the complexities of the modern information landscape. Furthermore, the use of diverse sources in history education ensures that students are exposed to multiple narratives and perspectives, enriching their understanding of historical contexts. This diverse approach encourages students to think independently and develop well-rounded arguments, thereby enhancing their overall critical thinking abilities.

Addressing potential barriers to the use of varied sources, such as accessibility and resource availability, may provide further support towards the effective integration of these materials into the curriculum. Educators can adopt strategies to overcome these challenges, ensuring all students have the opportunity to engage with a wide array of sources. This comprehensive approach not only enhances the learning experience but also promotes equity in education by providing all students with access to high-quality educational resources. Ultimately, it is important to emphasise that the integration of diverse sources and the promotion of multiperspectivity in history education play a crucial role in developing informed, critical, and engaged citizens. By equipping students with the skills to analyse and interpret a wide range of sources, educators are preparing them to navigate an increasingly complex and interconnected world with discernment and insight.

The data collected strongly suggests that multiperspectivity is being utilized, although it remains unclear whether this is done consciously or subconsciously (Borg, 2023). Nonetheless, educators have consistently indicated that the incorporation of primary sources enhances their lessons, highlighting their usefulness and practicality. This reinforces the significance of employing diverse sources to enrich the educational experience and promote a comprehensive understanding of historical events.

Conclusion

This article has endeavoured to highlight the critical importance of multiperspectivity in history education and its use by history educators through the "Source Method". It has been argued that the application of multiperspectivity is not only essential for providing students with a well-rounded, multi-perspective view of history but also crucial for equipping them with the necessary skills to address fake news, bias, and hidden agendas. These skills are increasingly vital in today's information-rich environment, where the ability to evaluate sources critically is paramount. Furthermore, the data gathered from this study strongly indicates that history educators are employing a diverse array of sources and engaging with multiperspectivity, whether consciously or unconsciously. This suggests a deliberate or instinctive effort to enrich the educational experience by incorporating multiple viewpoints. By doing so, educators are not only fostering critical thinking and analytical skills among students but also promoting a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of historical events. This approach ultimately helps to prepare citizens for an informed, critical, and engaged attitude which equips them to navigate the complexities of the modern world.

Endnotes

1. At the time of writing, Mr Ray Spiteri is the Education Officer for the subject of history.
2. A more comprehensive list of resources and materials produced includes: *Is-Seklu Dsatax bil-Cartoons*, *Various Skills in the Teaching and Learning of History*, *Għaxar Fuljetti Simultai għall-użu fit-tagħlim ta' l-Istorja*, *Work Book għall-Form 5*, *Political Cartoons Source Exercises*, *Use and Misuse of history*, *Żmien il-Medjuevu: Ktieb ta' Tagħrif u Attivitajiet fl-Istorja*, *Malta fis-Seklu XIX u XX: Ktieb ta' Riżorsi u Attivitajiet fl-Istorja,* and, *Kunċetti u Ħiliet fit-Tagħlim* (as indicated in Cassar & Vella, 2011), *Teaching Change & Continuity in History – Religion in Medieval Malta* (Vella, 2010), *Using history to teach about Multicultural Malta – A History Teachers' Resource Book* (Grima and Vella, 2022) and *How to move away from the mediocre use of historical sources* (Vella, 2023).

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School visits in the early twentieth century – the case of Mosta Primary (1900-1925)

George Cassar

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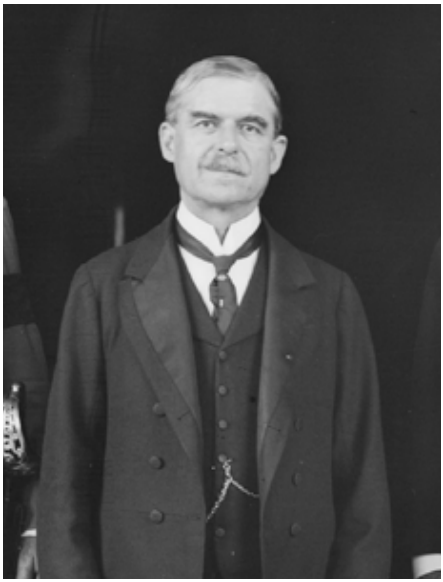
The village of Mosta got its purpose-built school in 1898. This was one of the earliest of such buildings in Malta carried out by the colonial government, because schools up to the first half of the twentieth century were generally rented houses. Many of these proved utterly inadequate for schooling purposes.[1] From a 1900 report by the Acting Inspector of Primary Schools Prof. Enrico Magro, it transpires that the Government had 48 schools (38 in Malta and 10 in Gozo) of which 35 were rented private properties. This meant that the school of Mosta was one of only 13 owned by the Government.[2]

The students and teachers in the Mosta Primary School building – divided into two separate schools, one for the boys and another for the girls, according to current practice – were fortunate in that they could carry out their educational experience in a more suitable environment. Their work was bound to be of better quality given that the classrooms were generally spacious and welcoming; essential amenities were more available – such as a yard for recreation and assembly; and the building itself was big enough to handle all those who wished to gain an education. The Mosta building, at the time consisting of a ground floor, was, up to the first quarter of the twentieth century, ample enough to accommodate all the children of the Mostin who registered them to attend school.[3]

As was the praxis till quite recently, headteachers kept a detailed logbook for their school. In it were entered all the important happenings and those others which *is-surmast* and *is-sinjora* (as the male and female headteachers were respectively called in Maltese) considered significant enough to be included. Thus, the logbook provided a running commentary of all happenings in each school, events which in some cases unfolded over several days or even weeks, while others were one-offs.

Among the one-offs or rare events would fall several visits to the school by personalities and officials, spanning from governors to politicians, bishops to government officials to other individuals of higher standing. In the period 1900 to 1925 the schools of Mosta welcomed a range of such persons who visited for varied reasons. Many of these visitors also signed the visitors' book which each school kept, and in which some of these personalities also wrote comments.

The first significant visit of the twentieth century happened on the afternoon of 14 February 1901 when the Chief Secretary to Government, Lord Gerald Strickland, accompanied by his consort, Lady Edeline Strickland, went to both the boys' and the girls' school. It is known that Chief Secretary Strickland tested some of the boy pupils in the three languages



Lord Gerald Strickland

current in schools at that time, that is, English, Maltese and Italian. Lady Edeline, on the other hand, quizzed a few of the boys who were present, in the English language. All this was recorded by the headteacher Andrea Sammut.[4] The Stricklands then moved to the girls' school but all we know is that they arrived at 3.15 p.m. The headteacher, Marianna Pace, did not go any further in her annotation of this visit.[5]

Following this visit, other dignitaries stopped at the Mosta schools on specific occasions. Lord Grenfell, Governor of Malta, distributed prizes to both girls and boys during Prize Day on 18 December 1902. While this occasion was held at the girls' school premises, it consisted of a joint ceremony with the boys' school as was indicated in the latter's logbook.[6] Furthermore, with the Mostin, there were also students from Mellieħa Primary School who also received their prizes during that same event.

From the logbook entry by Marianna Pace, it transpires that this Prize Day ceremony commenced at 3.30 p.m. and was presided over by Lord Grenfell. The headteacher added that the Governor was accompanied by his daughter; but this was incorrect as Lord Grenfell did not have any children from his first marriage; so, whoever came with him was not who Pace had presumed.[7] The Governor's entourage also included Lieutenant Colonel Nicholas Grech Biancardi, Adjutant to the Governor. Welcoming them to the school were the Inspector of Elementary Schools Prof. Enrico Magro, the Assistant Inspector Francis John Reynolds, the Director of Education and Rector of the University Prof. Napoleone Tagliaferro, Mrs Roseanne Magro, Mrs Maria Tagliaferro (from the Grech Mifsud Family and wife of Prof. Tagliaferro),[8] Miss Teresina Levi Grech (of the Grech Mifsud Family), the Archpriest of Mosta, Rev. Dr Giovanni Sarreo, and many of the parish clergy. Furthermore, there were Mr Walter Salomone (a future politician and minister with the Constitutional Party) and his daughters, and a good number of other persons. The Prize Day event included singing, acting and rhythmic gymnastics accompanied by music. According to

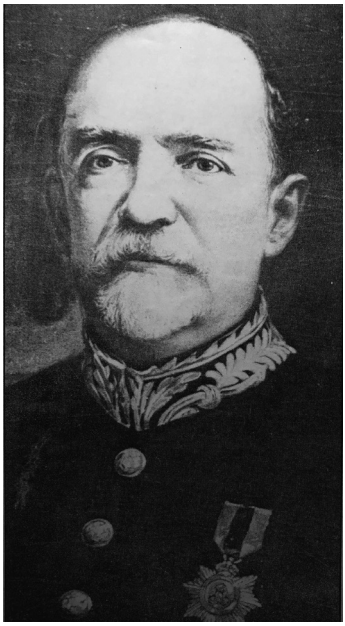
Governor Lord Grenfell

the headteacher's entry in the girls' school logbook, the highpoint of the performative part of the afternoon was reached with the students' "welcome" to those present and the reciting of a dialogue in Maltese titled "GioMaria u Catarin". When the time for the prize giving arrived, Lord Grenfell presented the prizes to the meritorious students, while the woman who had accompanied him distributed medals to the students with good school attendance. At the end of the ceremony a boy student read the address thanking, on behalf of the teachers and students at the schools of Mosta and Mellieħa, the Governor for honouring them with his presence and the interest he showed in their education. A girl student offered Lord Grenfell a bouquet of flowers. When all this was over, the Governor of Malta delivered his speech through which he expressed satisfaction for the educational progress that was being achieved in the elementary schools. He encouraged the children to study as much as they could and take advantage of the short time that their parents afforded allowing them to attend school. He expressed his disappointment that Maltese children were generally withdrawn from education while still quite young, which meant that they had to strive harder while they were still at school. Before he departed, Grenfell granted a holiday to the schools present for the event.[9]

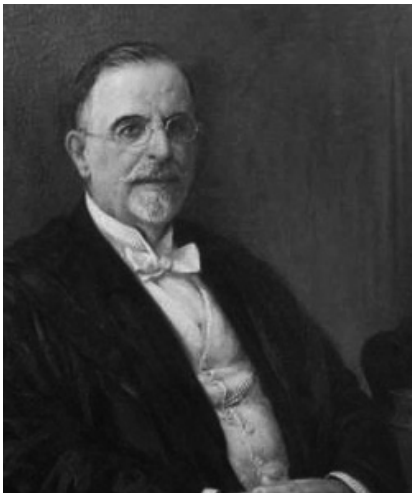
Education up till the first years of the twentieth century was still quite sporadic as legislation had not yet been passed by which to oblige parents to register their children and keep them in school for a stipulated number of years. This meant that any parent could send their child to school but then decide when to stop doing so without any restriction. Such decisions were normally taken on the basis of familial circumstances. With poverty being a hallmark of most of the population, no pair of hands could be spared in the family's effort to subsist another day. Children were a valuable resource that was tapped by their parents as soon as they were able to do some work. Boys were either sent as apprentices with craftsmen and traders, or else helped in the fields, workshops, and other activities with their relatives. Girls, on the other hand, were either

utilised in the home doing domestic work and helping with the numerous siblings, or else helped relatives in crafts and other chores. Whichever was the case, children thus contributed towards the family's income and survival. This educational situation was partially fixed with the enactment of Act XXII of 1924, which regularised attendance in schools. This law, which became effective on 1 January 1925, obliged those parents who registered their children in school to continue to send them regularly.[10] Absences would be unwaveringly condemned.

Back to life in the Mosta schools, on 19 December 1902, the Assistant Inspector of the Elementary Schools, Francis J. Reynolds, was back at the school where he delivered a presentation about the voyage of the Duke and Duchess of York on H.M.S. *Ophir*. His talk was illustrated with slides projected by means of a magic lantern. The audience was made up of the boys and girls attending the school and several adult guests. These included Miss Teresina Levi, Mr Walter Salomone and wife, the local businessman Mr Riccardo Amodeo and wife, and some of the village clergy. However, it seems that one of those present did not appreciate what was being said, as the headmistress Marianna Pace noted in the logbook that, 'everyone was disappointed at the bad behaviour of a certain person whose name is unknown'.[11]


Prof. Napoleone Tagliaferro.

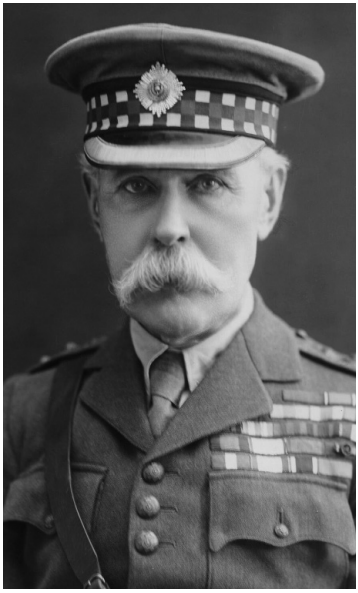
The next prominent person who visited was Prof. Napoleone Tagliaferro. This visit was in 1905. Tagliaferro was married to a Mostija from the Grech Mifsud Family and was quite kindred with the Mostin. He had been the first president of the village band club occupying the positions between 1869 and 1888, and during his presidency, in 1879, the band club was named for the Maltese composer Nicolò Isouard (1775-1818), who had made a name for himself in France.[12] Tagliaferro made his school visit on 3 February 1905 some months after the termination of his position as Director of Education and Rector of the University of Malta.[13] At this same time, he stopped forming part of the Council of Government. Prof. Tagliaferro was accompanied by his wife Maria on this occasion, during which he distributed prizes to the students.[14]



Prof. Edoardo Magro

In another Prize Day falling on 19 June 1907, the prizes were handed out to the students by Major-General Folliott Stuart Furneaux Stokes C.V.O., Commanding Infantry Brigade, Malta, and his wife.[15]

A surprise visit took place on 17 March 1909 when the Director of Public Instruction, Prof. Edoardo Magro, called at the boys' school and was welcomed by the headteacher, Salvatore Meilak. Magro is noted to have advised the head to carry out periodic exams and enter the results obtained in the school logbook. During his duty call the Director inspected school amenities, which caused him to complain about the toilets and the storage room. He thus gave instructions that these two rooms should be better attended to.[16] Such visits were a regular practice and were mostly done by the school inspectors, if not by the director himself. Their purpose was two-fold: to assess the students and their teachers, and to review the school premises. At the end of such inspections there would be a summary of the findings, while advice and instructions would be forthcoming, addressed especially to the teaching staff and the school administration.[17]



Field Marshal Methuen

The visitors' book of the boys' school reveals a visit of excellence for the year 1916, a time when World War One was raging in various parts of the globe. It was on 21 February that the Governor of Malta, Field Marshal Paul Sanford Methuen, 3rd Baron Methuen, made his visit, and it seems to have left him satisfied with the Mostin and their school. This emerges from the remarks he wrote. While transmitting a positive impression, the Governor also noted that he could observe the differences from one teacher to another as reflected by the students in each class. He further remarked that

the teaching of geography was rather weak in all the schools. Methuen continued that emigration had made the students of Mosta aware of the need to study more as their emigrated fathers, who had gone to such places as San Francisco and Western Australia, were alerting them that if they wished to have a good future, they needed to learn English and a trade. Finally, the Governor of Malta stated that he felt that the Mosta school's quality of education was higher when compared with the other medium level schools of Malta.[18]

The emigration remark was based on experiences that had been transmitted to the Maltese colonial government along the years. It was a fact that Maltese emigrants to Australia had found difficulties to integrate with those already settled in the country before them. Two main reasons for this negative experience were: that the Maltese knew little to no English, which made communication, to say the least, very difficult, and this was compounded by the inhospitable attitude of the Australian workers who did not take a liking to foreign hands. The number of Maltese who had emigrated to Western Australia by 1913 had reached around 100. This territory needed field workers to till the earth as this was still largely uncultivated.[19]

Regarding emigration to the USA, the situation was not much different. The Maltese faced several problems which hindered their chances to settle. One such was related to the islanders' being prone to various types of illnesses, while another concerned the state of dire poverty which many suffered from. One condition for emigrants to be allowed to enter the USA was that each one had to demonstrate that they were in possession of at least 25 dollars. For many Maltese this amount was out of their reach. Moreover, a decision had been taken in 1911 that emigrants needed to have some knowledge of the English language. Later, in 1917, the Americans passed the Literacy Test Act which meant that all those Maltese wishing to travel to the USA had to be able to read at least a short passage in English and another in a different language. Up to 1911 the Maltese in San Francisco numbered around 200, and many of these worked in the fields. At that same time new employment opportunities became available connected to commerce and especially related to seafaring, which thus created further chances of employment.[20]

Lord Methuen returned to Mosta on 14 April 1916 as the visitors' book of the girls' school indicates. On this occasion the Governor reveals a mixed reaction when passing judgement on this school. He admitted that the students were lively, clean and content, but he could not keep back from showing his disappointment that the girls were weak in geography, and

expressed his hope that when he revisited, the situation would have been resolved. Not to end on a negative note he concluded by giving his best wishes to the headteacher, Miss C. Scicluna.[21]

The Governor meant what he had said in the last visit to the Mosta Girls' School as he did indeed return the year after. It was on 19 April 1917 that Lord Methuen visited both schools and it seems that he liked what he saw. Regarding the boys, he observed that the higher standards fell within the normality and no remarks were felt necessary. For the lower classes Lord Methuen noted that these were showing positive signs of progress.[22] When he went to the girls' school, which was in the same building, the Governor of Malta, this time round seemed to have liked what he had witnessed. Standard VI was the best class overall. He also appreciated the presence of the Archpriest of Mosta, as it was well-known that Rev. Paolo Mallia took great personal interest in the local school.[23] This Archpriest was a habitual visitor to the girls' school and along his tenure of the parish, ending in 1930, Dun Pawl carried out regular, once-monthly, visits during which he tested the students on religion and catechism while also offering other services.[24]

The year 1917 was a busy one as besides the Governor, now also the Bishop of Malta, Mgr Maurus Caruana, made a visit to the Mosta primary schools. The event took place on 7 May at the end of which we know that the prelate left quite satisfied from the girl's school.[25] He was positively impacted by the students and staff and he even stated that for him this was the best school he had visited.[26] With regard to the boys' school the reaction was similar in that Mgr Caruana noted that the boys of Mosta generally possesses an intelligence above the average when compared to all the other schools he had been to. This vitality also applied to the teaching staff who were, in his view, competent and diligent.[27] Though schooling in colonial Malta was still developing and had yet a long way to go, it seems that some schools had indeed progressed a little more than others. This could be said for the Mosta primary, and especially more so for the

Mgr Maurus Caruana,

boys' school in 1917, with both the Governor and the Bishop announcing their praise and concurring about the commendable level reached.

Regarding the solid progress being registered, this was further confirmed during Lord Methuen's third visit to the schools of Mosta on 12 April 1918. On completing his school round, the Governor repeated what he had said in the previous call, in the sense that for him the boys' school was one of the best in all of Malta and Gozo. He added that the new headteacher – A.J. Diacono Reynaud – had taken charge of that school in September 1917, while his staff demonstrated a strong sense of duty, and were diligent in their work. He also underlined that the Mosta schools were very grateful for the profound interest which Archpriest Rev. Paolo Mallia showed towards their needs and the education of the students.[28] The praise directed to the boys' school was also showered on the girls' school as the Governor underlined that both schools of the village were excellent. In fact, in the visitors' book of the girls' school Mathuen remarked that what he had written in the boys' visitors' book applied equally to the girls'.[29] This positive outlook on the girls' school tallies with another report drawn up some time before by the Elementary Schools Inspectress Marietta Busuttil following her inspection of the school in one of her routine visits. This inspectress had noted that the school's performance was praiseworthy, while the teaching staff presented themselves as prepared and full of energy. Likewise, the school discipline was admirable.[30]

Quite soon after Lord Methuen's visit, the girls' school was to receive the Lieutenant Governor William Robertson. He came to the school on 26 April 1918, barely two weeks after his chief. Robertson was accompanied by the Director of Elementary Schools, Francis J. Reynolds. When they arrived at the boys' school, they discovered that the headteacher, A.J. Diacono Reynaud, could not welcome them as he was sick at home. Robertson did not let this hinder him in any way and proceeded with his school round. When entering his comments in the visitors' book, it was evident that he had remained quite impressed as he noted that the teaching was good, the students were interested in their work and demonstrated intelligence in their answers. Furthermore, the school discipline and order were excellent.[31] The Lieutenant Governor also went to the girls' school and seems to have also remained satisfied with what he saw. According to him the teaching level was above average and for this he complimented the headmistress and her staff. From the comment entered in the visitors' book we know that the visiting party included a Miss Whelan who, after watching the students working lace, opined that these children of Mosta possessed a great talent.[32]

Lord Methuen seemed to have found time to squeeze in a last visit to the school in Mosta on 28 March 1919. In May of the same year, he retired from the governorship of the colony. It transpires that Methuen had an admiration for the people of the colony as he saw them as self-controlled, thrifty and hardworking.[33] In this last visit the Governor went to the girls' school and may not have had time or simply decided not to also visit the boys' school next door. The absence of an entry related to such a visit in both the boys' logbook and the school's visitors' book seems to indicate as much. The girls' visit went well with Lord Methuen being quite satisfied; so much so that in his entry he simply noted that he had nothing else to add to what he had previously written regarding this admirable school, and which was an honour to its excellent headmistress.[34]

Though the life at school could be quite routine, such visits peppered the school calendar with a dose of colour, excitement and variety. One can imagine that visits that were announced beforehand and involved personalities such as governors, bishops and high officials would exert a certain pressure on the school staff and more so on the headteacher. Of course, other unexpected visits by education officials would not have been less stressful. The Mosta schools seem to have had a good dose of both types of visits.

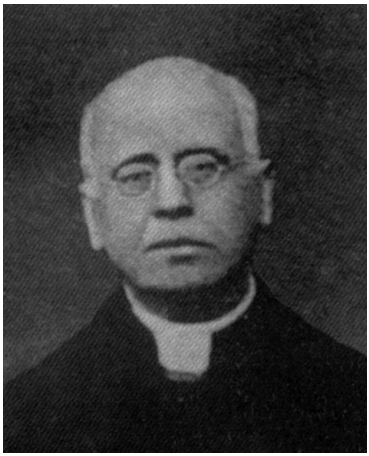
Another VIP visit in 1919 was that of the newly arrived Governor of Malta Field Marshal Lord Plumer. He had set foot on Malta on 10 June, just three days from the start of the *Sette Giugno* riots and agitation which spanned from 7 to 9 June 1919. Lord Plumer did his best to meet people from different walks of life to study the situation and calm the populace. He visited the schools in Mosta on 10 October of the same year at 3.00 in the afternoon. It may have been a public relations stunt at such a delicate time. In fact, at the end of this visit, the Governor granted a holiday to the children as a token of his first call to their school.[35] This may have been intentioned to show the magnanimity of the new Governor who represented the British Sovereign.

Lord Plumer

About a year later, on 22 October 1920, Lieutenant Governor W.C.F. Robertson decided to call again on the school after his previous visit in 1918. He came with Rev. Paolo Mallia and in his comments Robertson praised the girl students who he called 'bright'. Regarding the teaching,

he felt that this was generally good and carried out with thoroughness.[36] It is not clear whether Robertson stopped also at the boys' school during this visit.

It seems that William Napier Bruce also dropped at the school on 10 March 1921. Bruce, a lawyer who was a very influential educationalist in England and Wales, had just retired from his latest official position the previous year, that of principal assistant secretary,[37] and this is indicated in the visitors' book of the boys' school where he signed as 'late, Board of Education, England'. He did not include any further comments, however.[38] Bruce was accompanied by the Director of Elementary Schools Dr Albert V. Laferla.[39]


Mgr Francesco Ferris

Malta was at this time passing through an intense and interesting period with the granting of the first Self-Government Constitution which was promulgated on 14 April 1921 while the first Maltese Parliament was inaugurated by Edward, the Prince of Wales, on 1 November 1921.[40] In the Executive Council, among the first cabinet of ministers, Mgr Francesco Ferris was appointed Minister of Public Instruction. He did not loose time to visit the schools of Mosta which he did in December of 1921. The Minister examined the boys' school finding discipline to be adequate. After quizzing the students on the English and Italian languages, as also on geography and religion, he concluded that as all his questions had been answered adequately, this indicated that the headmaster, Ġ.M. Camilleri Borg, and his teaching staff were doing a good job. Ferris was also particularly struck by the cleanliness of the school, which thus reflected positively also on the caretaker/s.[41]

When Ferris entered the girls' school and went around, he admitted that the students' intelligent glances and their cleanliness impressed him. He added that some questions were put to the two senior classes which revealed how alert these students were in their manners. Turning to the headmistress, the Minister observed that Miss C. Scicluna was a capable administrator.[42]

Politicians were now also important visitors to the Mosta school, and following the Minister's visit in 1921, during 1922 another member of the political class decided to go to Mosta. It was on 12 October that Notary Salvatore Borg Olivier, a Member of the Legislative Assembly, Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees, visited both the boys' and girls' school.[43] This visit seems to have been in the company of Mgr Ferris and may have been motivated also by the fact the two belonged to the Unione Politica Maltese and in 1921 had both been elected from District VII.[44]

Salvatore Borg Olivier

In 1923 the students of the Mosta schools welcomed other visitors. One could say that this was quite a full year in this regard. The first was on 20 February, when Mgr Ferris, the Minister of Public Instruction, together with Miss Clotilde Ferris, the Inspectress of Elementary Schools, came to the school. It may be assumed that this was not a courtesy visit. In the evening, the night school greeted the Head of Ministry (equivalent to Prime Minister) the Honourable Joseph Howard, whose entourage included Dr Albert V. Laferla, Director of Elementary Schools since 1920, and Mr Henry Casolani M.B.E., Superintendent of Migration.[45] It can be ascertained that this was not a courtesy visit considering that the night school catered for adults who wished to obtain some education in the hope of finding better employment. The presence of Casolani indicates that the newly established Maltese Government wished to explain to these Mostin the prospects of emigration, especially if they managed to gain some knowledge in certain subjects such as the English language. According to the *Emigration Report* which had been issued on 1 March 1921, there were groups of Maltese who could be considered 'suitable for immediate emigration'. Encouraging such persons to emigrate, it was proposed, would relieve some of the pressures which the country was experiencing. These sections of the locals included: the unskilled and illiterates; the

Head of Ministry
Joseph Howard

educated who were 'passive and unproductive' and who were not practical in manual and technical occupations; the skilled unemployed; port workers who constituted a large chunk of the unemployed class; men who were practical in seafaring including those with skills such as that of steward and stoker; and people involved in agricultural and field work.[46]

A visit relating to the Empire Day celebrations took place on 24 May 1923. On that day the children of both schools gathered in the infants' hall at 7.30 a.m. and heard the King's and Queen's messages played to them on a gramophone. The day before this gramophone and a record had been collected from the Elementary Schools Office by one of the teachers. Following the messages, Governor Lord Plumer, who was present, took up the theme and explained it better to the students. At the end of the ceremony the students sang the *God Save the King* to the tune played on the gramophone.[47] No chance was ever lost to keep the colony in touch with the Empire.

Rev. Dr Enrico Dandria

A more unusual visit which took place on 30 May 1923 involved the Minister of Public Instruction who, being a priest, celebrated Mass for all the Mosta school at 6.00 a.m. This was a Friday, and at the end of the religious celebration Mgr Ferris granted a holiday for the rest of the morning while, on the request of the Archpriest of Malta who was the school spiritual director, the following Monday was also given as a holiday to one and all.[48]

The year was not yet over and the Mosta school had still one last V.I.P. to welcome. This was the new Minister of Public Instruction, Rev. Dr Enrico Dandria who in October of 1923 was appointed to this ministerial position. He visited the school on 4 December in the afternoon; an expected part of his new duties. In the visitors' book he did not leave any comment accept that he had been to the school.[49]

The Mosta Primary School in the late 20th century – originally it was only the ground floor

The last visit to the school in the first quarter of the century was that of the Governor of Malta Lord Plumer who was nearing the termination of his administration of the colony which happened in the same year. The Governor, accompanied by his wife Annie Constance,[50] went to Mosta on 24 April 1924. They were escorted by the Governor's Aide de Camp Major V.C. Micallef and the Director of Elementary Schools Albert V. Laferla. At the end of his farewell visit to both schools, Methuen did not miss granting a holiday to all the children and staff.[51] On the day of Plumer's departure from Malta, that is the 15th of May, the schools closed in the afternoon to mark the occasion.[52]

The logbooks and the visitors' books do not indicate any special visit to either of the two primary schools of Mosta during 1925.

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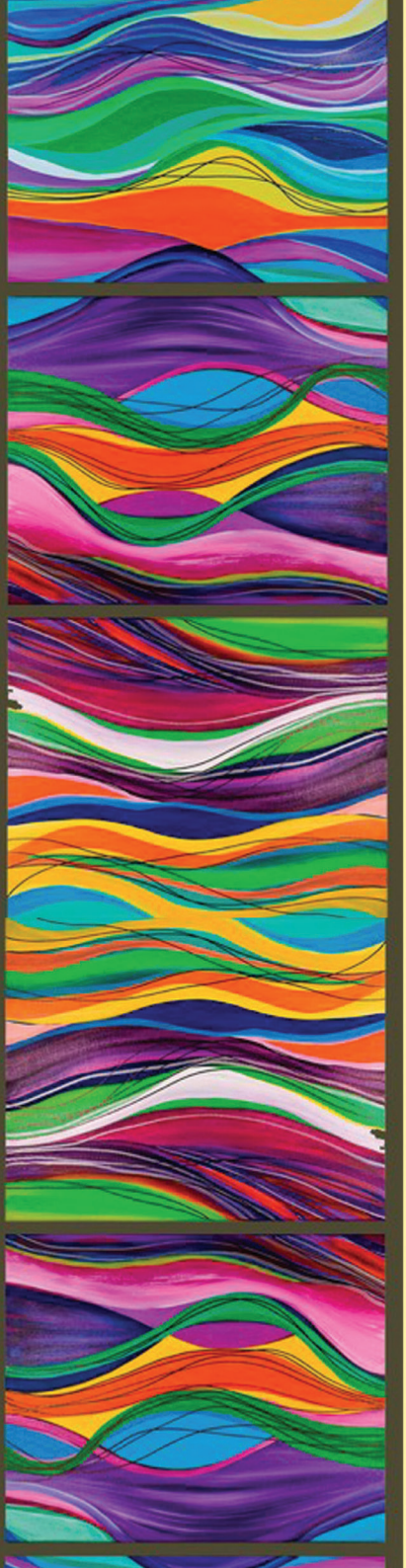
19 About emigration to Australia see, Attard, L. E. 1983. *Early Maltese Emigration (1900-1914)*. Malta: PEG., 46-54; York, B. 1985. "Maltese immigration into Australia: 1883-1949" in Br. Hilary (ed.), *The Malta Year Book 1985*. Malta: De La Salle Brothers Publications, 393-399.
20 About emigration to the USA and especially to San Francisco see, Attard, 29-35. Also see, Vella, B. 2009. "Maltese settlement in North America, 1905-35" (unpublished bachelor's dissertation, University of Malta).
21 *Visitors' Book, Musta Girls' School*. Note: 14 Apr 1916.
22 *Visitors' Book, Musta Boys' School*. Note: 19 Apr 1917.
23 *Visitors' Book, Musta Girls' School*. Note: 19 Apr 1917.
24 *Ibid*. Various note entries between 1914 and 1930.
25 *Log Book III*, Girls' Primary School (4 May 1917 – 9 Jan 1928). Note: 7 May 1917.
26 *Visitors' Book, Musta Girls' School*. Note: 7 May 1917.
27 *Visitors' Book, Musta Boys' School*. Note: 7 May 1917.
28 *Ibid*. Note: 12 Apr 1918; *Log Book V*, Boys' Primary School (29 Apr 1913 – 23 Dec 1918). Notes: 5 & 12 Apr 1918.
29 *Visitors' Book, Musta Girls' School*. Note: 12 Apr 1918.
30 *Log Book III*, Girls'. Note: 17 Dec 1917.
31 *Visitors' Book, Musta Boys' School*. Note: 26 Apr 1918; *Log Book V*, Boys'. Note: 2 May 1918.
32 *Visitors' Book, Musta Girls' School*. Note: 26 Apr 1918.
33 Abela, A. E. 1991. *Governors of Malta*. Malta: Progress Press Company, 75.
34 *Visitors' Book, Musta Girls' School*. Note: 28 Mar 1919.
35 *Log Book VI*, Boys' Primary School (2 Jan 1919 – 31 Dec 1927). Notes: 6 & 10 Oct 1919. *Visitors' Book, Musta Girls' School*. Note: 10 Oct 1919.
36 *Visitors' Book, Musta Girls' School*. Note: 22 Oct 1920.
37 Rees, J. F. 1959. "BRUCE, WILLIAM NAPIER (1858 - 1936), educationalist and lawyer" in *Dictionary of Welsh Biography*. Available at https://biography.wales/article/s-BRUC-NAP-1858
38 *Visitors' Book, Musta Boys' School*. Note: 10 Mar 1921.
39 *Log Book III*, Girls'. Note: 10 Mar 1921.
40 For details about this constitution see for example, Pirotta, J. M. 2012. "The 1921 Self-Government Constitution" in H. Frendo (ed.), *Landmarks in Maltese Constitutional History 1849-1974*. Malta: Central Bank of Malta, 33-40.
41 *Visitors' Book, Musta Boys' School*. Note: ? Dec 1921 (the day is not legible, but may possibly be the 5th, if this visit took place on the same day when the Minister visited the girls' school).
42 *Visitors' Book, Musta Girls' School*. Note: 5 Dec 1921.
43 *Visitors' Book, Musta Boys' School*. Note: 12 Oct 1922; *Visitors' Book, Musta Girls' School*. Note: 12 Oct 1922.
44 In this first election under the Self-Government Constitution, Mosta was within District VI.
45 *Log Book VI*, Boys'. Note: 20 Feb 1923.
46 Chircop, J. 1992. "Maltese emigration: political control and underdevelopment in the inter-war period" in *Society* 4(2), 4.
47 *Log Book III*, Girls'. Note: 24 May 1923; *Log Book VI*, Boys'. Notes: 23 & 24 May 1923.

48 *Log Book VI*, Boys'. Notes: 30 May & 4 Jun 1923; *Log Book III*, Girls'. Note: 31 May 1923.
49 *Visitors' Book, Musta Boys' School*. Note: 4 Dec 1923.
50 *Visitors' Book, Musta Girls' School*. Note: 24 Apr 1924.
51 *Log Book VI*, Boys'. Notes: 24 & 25 Apr 1924.
52 *Ibid*. Note: 16 May 1924.



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