



## Daħla

Gilbert John Żahra, Ċerpersin



Din hija l-ewwel edizzjoni tal-eNewsletter wara l-vaganzi tas-Sajf. Dan inqis bħala żmien ta' mistrieħ u riflessjoni li kull għalliem ikollu bżonn biex b'hekk nerġġhu nidhlu għal sena skolastika b'fiduċja li ser nagħmlu differenza f'ħajjet tant nies.

Il-Youth Section għamilna l-istess. Fis-Sajf ippreparajna fuq li preparajna sabiex l-ewwel harġa tal-eNewsletter għal din is-sena tkun xi ħaġa speċjali. Dan permezz tal-eżibizzjoni tal-arti imtella' minna. Din ser issir fix-xahar ta' Novembru fis-Sala Antonio Galea fi ħdan it-Teachers' Building tal-MUT. Din ser tkun opportunità tajba biex wieħed jeżebixxi xogħolu peress li f'dan il-perjodu l-MUT ser tkun għaddeġja b'ċelebrazzjoni tal-anniversarju. Aktar informazzjoni tinsab f'din l-edizzjoni.

Ma setax jonqos li l-Lenti Fuq... ta' din l-edizzjoni taqa' fuq lan Karl Coleiro, l-membri tal-MUT Youth Section li kien il-moħħ wara din l-attività. Dan l-ispazju joffri opportunità sabiex wieħed "jiltaqa'" ma' lan u l-hsieb li wassal għal din l-attività.

F'din il-harġa nsibu wkoll artiklu ta' riċerka li saret minni u minn Eric Żahra fejn staqsejna lill-istudenti għalliem fuq l-ispejjeż finanzjarji li jiltaqgħu magħhom waqt it-Teaching Practice. Hawn joħroġu ħafna punti validissimi fuq l-istress li jridu jħabbtu magħhom sħabna l-istudenti għalliem kif ukoll kritika serja lis-sistema li biha jittqassmu l-fondi għall-istudenti terzjarji.

Nispera li din il-harġa tnissel ħsieb fost il-qarrejja tagħha. Nispera wkoll li narawkom fil-wirja tal-arti mtella' fis-Sala Antonio Galea bejn id-9 u s-29 ta' Novembru.

## The Cost of

# Teaching Resources amongst Student Teachers

Eric Zahra and Gilbert John Zahra

*N.B. document developed by Malta Union of Teachers Youth sections and Malta University Student Teachers.*

### Introduction

Following the publication of the study 'The Cost of Teaching Resources' in January's edition of the newsletter, where light was shed upon the financial costs incurred personally by educators in order to serve students in the best possible ways (Zahra, 2015), this article turns its eye on student teachers and the expenses incurred by them during teaching practice. This study is carried out jointly by the MUT Youth Section and the Malta University Student Teachers (MUST).

Needless to say, teaching practice is different from a scholastic year. Although teaching practice is a much shorter period than a scholastic year, where student teachers deal with fewer classes than full-time teachers, they might feel, being novices, under more pressure to do their job. The period is also crucial for one's studies, as student teachers are observed by tutors from the University of Malta who comment on the student teacher's performance. Student teachers can either pass or fail their teaching practice.



### Descriptive Statistics

Information was collected through an online survey designed using Google Docs and analysed using Microsoft Excel and IBM SPSS statistics. There were a total of 200 participants with 171 (85.5%) being females. This percentage of females is in line with that in other studies involving educators (Borg & Giordmania, 2012).

On average, respondents claim to spend the sum of 243.89 Euro (mean) in one teaching practice, with numbers varying from 0 to 1,000 Euro. The majority claim to spend about 200 Euro in one teaching practice (Figure 1). These numbers are comparable to those claimed to be spent by educators in a whole scholastic year (Zahra, 2015).

*(Continues on page 3)*



188, The Strand Gzira, Malta Tel: +356 21314453

Sistina is offering a  
**20% discount**  
for persons participating  
in the upcoming Art  
Exhibition (see page 2).  
More information will be  
provided on application.

**Aghfas fuq l-indirizzi biex  
tidhol fil-paġni tal-MUT:**

-  <https://www.facebook.com/groups/mutgroup/>
-  <https://twitter.com/MaltaMUT>
-  <http://www.youtube.com/MUTCampaigns>
-  <http://edcommut.blogspot.com/>

# **The MUT's Youth Section**

# **ART EXHIBITION**

• **The Malta Union of Teachers' Youth Section is inviting artists interested in exhibiting their work to participate in an Art Exhibition. Participants are asked to submit only ONE work for this exhibition.**

**The work can either be Two-Dimensional, of not more than 80cm in height and 90cm in length, or Three-Dimensional, as long as it does not exceed 100cm in height, 100cm in length and 60cm in width.**

**The event will be held between the 9th and the 27th November at the MUT's Main Hall: Antonio Galea Hall. The premises provides good exposure, as the Union will be holding various activities during its anniversary celebrations throughout November.**

**Applications will be accepted by the Union between the 26th and the 30th October, during office hours. Participants will then be contacted by the Youth Section to inform them once their work has been approved by the exhibition's board of selection. Participation is limited due to space restrictions.**

**A fee of €10 for MUT members and €20 for non-MUT members applies. While the participating artists are not being restricted by any particular theme or title, the participants are advised to be sensitive enough to exhibit work which is suitable for the educational environment the MUT premises has been designed for.**

**Interested applicants are kindly asked to download the necessary Application Form from the MUT's Youth Section Facebook page or contact the MUT's Youth Section on: [info@mut.org.mt](mailto:info@mut.org.mt) or on [mutyouth@gmail.com](mailto:mutyouth@gmail.com).**

# Lenti fuq...



Minn Dirk Muscat, Deputat Ċerpersin, MUT Youth Section

Din id-darba se nitfa' l-lenti tiegħi fuq membru mill-istess Youth Section, Ian Karl Coleiro. Tinsieq, darb'ohra jmiss lilek!

## 1) Tgħidilna xi haġa fuqek personali?

Ilni naħdem bħala għalliem tal-Arti u d-Diżin mas-Settur Pubbliku għal dawn l-aħħar sitt snin, apparti li kont ngħalliem l-Arti sentejn oħra qabel ġo skola tal-Knisja. Minn dejjem niftakarni nuri nteress kbir fl-arti, speċjalment fid-diżinn u fil-pittura. Kull meta nsib ċans kont u għadni nara kif ha nkattar u niżviluppa l-aspett Prattiku, kif ukoll dak teoretiku relatat ma' kull forma ta' diżinn u pittura.

## 2) X'inhu l-irwol tiegħek bħala edukatur u fi f'ndan il Youth Section?

L-għan prinċipali li nsir membru tal-kumitat tal-Youth Section kien u għadu dak li nissalvagwardja l-għanijiet u l-prinċipji tal-Union, kif ukoll l-interessi tal-għalliema kollha, speċjalment dawk tal-Arti. Jien nieħu ħsieb l-aspetti artistici u kreattivi relatati mal-MUT Youths, fosthom kont ħadt ħsieb id-diżinn originali tal-logo stess tal-MUT Youth Section. Dan il-logo kellu l-intenzjoni prinċipali li jagħti wiċċ ġdid lill-Youth Section tal-MUT, filwaqt li jesprimi l-enerġija u l-kollaborazzjoni bejn il-membri tal-MUT u tal-komunità edukattiva per sè.

## 3) Inti l-moħħ wara l-eżibizzjoni ta' l-arti li se tittella f'Novembru; min fejn ġiet din l-idea u kemm ħaditlek xogħol?

Kien ilni nara kif ħa norganizza attività li tagħti l-opportunità lill-għalliema u lil kull artist, speċjalment lil dawk li għandhom bżonn jesponu ruħhom għax-xena pubblika. Kien ilni xhur sħaħ norganizza din l-attività mal-membri l-oħra tal-MUT Youths u tal-MUT stess, u kien hemm sensiela ta' ostakli li kellna negħlbu, fostom ir-restrizzjonijiet tal-ħin u n-nuqqas ta' riżorsi fiżiċi u umani, pero' fl-aħħar kollox qed jaqa' finalment f'postu.

Għaldaqstant nixtieq niringrazzja lil Louise La Rosa, li qiegħda tirrapreżenta l-ħanut tal-arti tant renomata lokalment, is-Sistina ta' The Strand, Gżira, talli offriet sponsor ta' 20% roħs għal kull parteċipant ta' din l-eżibizzjoni li jixtri l-materjali necessarji, inkluż il-gwarniċ tiegħu/tagħha, minn għandhom.

## 4) Hemm xi għan partikolari li nixtieq li jintlaħaq min din l-attività?

Nixtieq biss li kull min jipparteċipa f'din l-eżibizzjoni miftuħa għall-pubbliku joħroġ sodisfatt u jithajjar jerga' jipparteċipa f'attivitajiet oħra li be ħsiebna norganizzaw.

## 5) Ħsibijiet għal attivitajiet oħra jeżistu?

Għandi sensiela ta' ħsibijiet li nixtieq niżviluppa 'l quddiem, fosthom diversi attivitajiet kulturali u artistici li jinvolvu kemm l-għalliema, u kif ukoll l-istudenti. Però nelabora fuq dawn l-ideat aktar 'il quddiem.

(Continued...) The Cost of Teaching Resources amongst Student Teachers

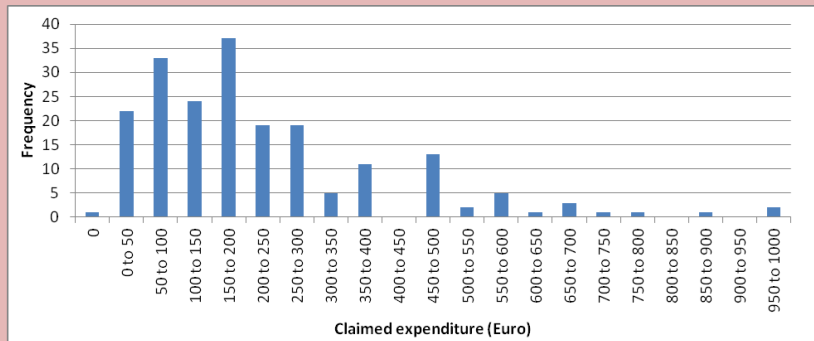


Figure 1: Responses in the whole sample (n=200)

## Gender Differences

From the respondents, 171 were female while 29 were male. Females claimed to spend an average of 263.67 Euro while males claimed to spend on average 127.24 Euro (Figure 2). With a mean difference of 136.43 Euro, the t-test ( $t=5.164$ ,  $df=57.692$ ,  $p<0.000$ ) shows female student teachers on average spend more than male student teachers.

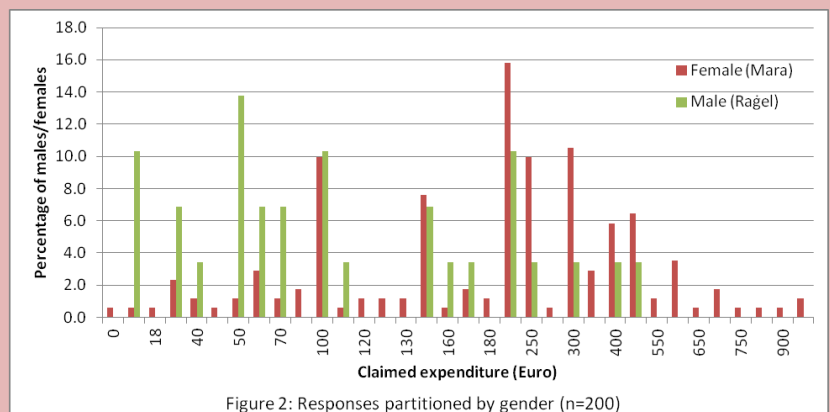


Figure 2: Responses partitioned by gender (n=200)

## Course Entry Differences

Upon submitting for the Bachelor of Education course there are three different options:

- Early childhood education and care: eligible to teach from Kinder 1 to year 3;
- Primary school teacher: from year 1 up to year 6;
- Secondary school teacher: from year 7 (form 1) up to year 11 (form 5).

The majority (58%) of the 200 respondents come from the Secondary School sector while only 5% come from the Early Years sector (Table 1). From the data collected, Early Years teachers claim the highest mean expenditure (Table 1), however, one has to keep in mind that only 9 participants responded from that area. On the other hand, secondary school teachers are the ones with the least mean expenditure at 187 Euro. Of these differences, only the one between secondary school student teachers' and primary school teachers' claimed expenditure is statistically significant (mean difference=244,  $t=4.544$ ,  $df=126.6$ ,  $p<0.000$ ). Such difference was also noted in a previous study conducted by Zahra (2015) amongst teachers.

Table 1: Responses partitioned by course entry

Course	Number of Participants	Claimed mean expenditure (Euro)
Early childhood education and care	9	432
Primary school teacher	75	309
Secondary school teacher	116	187

## Year of Study Differences

Claimed expenditure by participants' year of study is shown in the table below (Table 2). The only statistically significant difference is that first year students claim to spend less than the students in the other years (mean difference=150,  $t=6.36$ ,  $df=36.0$ ,  $p<0.000$ ). This could be because secondary school teachers' experience in their first year is limited to observation rather than actual teaching practice while early years and primary teachers have a shorter teaching practice period. When PGCE respondents (22) are compared to other respondents (178), the difference in mean claimed expenditure of 21.48 Euro is not statistically significant ( $t=0.497$ ,  $df=198$ ,  $p=0.620$ ).

(Continues on page 4)

Table 2: Responses partitioned by year of study

Year	Number of Participants	Claimed Expenditure (Euro)
First Year	16	106
Second Year	54	231
Third Year	30	291
Fourth Year	78	268
PGCE	22	225

### Subject Choice Differences

Secondary school teachers are divided according to the subject/specialisation. The largest group of respondents (21%) specialise in Nutrition, Family and Consumer Studies (NFCS), while the rest are clustered through the remaining subject specialisations.

Language student teachers claim to spend 227 Euro while non-language student teachers claim to spend 170 Euro. This difference is not statistically significant (mean difference=56,  $t=1.892$ ,  $df=114$ ,  $p=0.061$ ). Science student teachers claim to spend 193 Euro while non-science student teachers claim to spend 186 Euro. This difference is also not statistically significant with a mean difference of 6.47 Euro ( $t=0.183$ ,  $df=114$ ,  $p=0.855$ ). This is also valid for student teachers associated with more practical subjects (i.e. Art, Design and Technology, NFCS, Science, Graphical communication and music) who claim to spend more than other student teachers but differences are, again, not statistically significant. Thus all tested differences between subjects are not statistically significant.

### Qualitative Data

Student teachers, it turns out, spend a considerable amount of money in just a few weeks of teaching practice when compared to what teachers spend in a whole scholastic year. This could be due to a number of reasons.

Some student teachers remarked how schools discriminate between teachers and student teachers when it comes to providing resources. In fact, virtually all respondents claimed to purchase their own stationary including markers and pens. One respondent also accused teachers of being obstructive by removing all classroom decorations and not providing the text books used while numerous others indicated that student teachers are not allowed to collect money from students to cover printing fees in some schools. On the other hand, respondents claimed that some schools provided printing and some resources with one respondent mentioning the possibility to laminate cards at schools. As suggested by Zahra (2015), the reality of financial support is different in different schools. A 4th year science secondary school teacher said that schools do offer resources that some or most student teachers are unaware of and suggested that student teachers ask what help is available from individual schools.

As indicated earlier, teaching practice is a period of examination. Many student teachers noted that visiting tutors expect a number of things, such as classroom decorations, various activities, and colourful worksheets that require a financial investment. "Many tutors are impressed and favour such resources" (4th year language secondary school teacher). Moreover, one must add the financial cost that technology imparts on student teachers especially if these want to perform well in their teaching practice:

*I have not included the 800 Euro laptop which I bought just for the sake of having a reliable machine to work with in class. Student teachers should be allowed to use a teacher's laptop (...) not suffer the cost of technology from their own (many times empty) pockets. Much more support is needed for student teachers who not only suffer the most tense time during their studies, but who are also punished by low marks if they do not have the correct and up to date technology in class to work with. (PGCE language secondary student teacher)*

(Continues on second column)

Respondents noted that the money received through their stipend and smart card is not enough, especially for some courses. Participants claimed to be getting the money needed from their families, savings, and by participating in part-time employment. "This is also unfair to any students who do not come from a financially stable background and end up leaving from the course just because the stipend and smart card does not cover the teaching practice expenses" (4th year primary school student teacher).

*Although we got our smart card, that amount were used for books and printing of assignments for the first semester. Moreover, we are full of lectures and in order to be able to continue studying, I am ending up working during the weekend being left with no time for myself, from university to work to home. It's a pity that we do not get a good stipend. (...) Unfortunately, a student (teacher) who does not get financial help from his family would not cope with this course, and it is a shame. (2nd year NFCS secondary school student teacher)*

A number of respondents claimed that it is unfair that other university students are entitled for higher stipends while student teachers, with all expenses involved in teaching practice, are not. Many suggested that student teachers should also benefit from a higher stipend. Others argued that they should be able to present fiscal receipts and get all or some of the costs reimbursed.

*I feel that student teachers, as well as teachers, must be given a voucher with a reasonable sum of money from a particular stationery so that these can be used. And to avoid student teachers / teachers from taking advantage from this, it is important to issue vouchers rather than provide a sum of money into their personal account. (4th year science secondary school student teacher)*

### Conclusions

This study suggests that student teachers spend a considerable amount of money during their teaching practice period. This period for many is a stressful one, especially financially, while others claim they also require emotional support. For some reason which was not tapped in this research, females claim to be spending more than males. On the other hand, there is no difference arising from one's area of specialisation (e.g. science or languages). Nonetheless, as is the case for teachers (Zahra, 2015), primary school student teachers claim to be spending more than their secondary school colleagues.

Reasons for this high expenditure were sought and could include (i) lack of help from some schools, (ii) unawareness of the help provided by some schools, and (iii) high expectations from tutors. There are, as claimed earlier (Zahra, 2015) numerous differences between schools.

While participating student teachers are frustrated by the situation and demand financial support in the form of student cards, higher stipends, and reimbursement on presentation of receipts, most continue to spend freely on their teaching practice. Some however pay more attention, others work to sustain their studies or tap into their parents' funds – where available – while others still fade along the way.

### References

- Borg, M., & Giordmaina, J. (2012). *Towards a quality education for all – The college system examining the situation*, Report presented to the Malta Union of Teachers on 11 June, unpublished, available: [www.mut.org.mt/files/College Research 2012.pdf](http://www.mut.org.mt/files/College%20Research%202012.pdf)
- Zahra, G. J. (2015, Jan). *The cost of teaching resources*. MUT Youth eNewsletter, 2015(1). Retrieved from [http://www.mut.org.mt/youth%20section%20\(membership\).htm](http://www.mut.org.mt/youth%20section%20(membership).htm).