



REPORT COMMISSIONED BY THE EUROPEAN TRAINING FOUNDATION
USING THE OECD CAREER GUIDANCE QUESTIONNAIRE

REVIEW OF CAREER GUIDANCE POLICIES

FINAL REPORT

MALTA

Author:

Ronald G. SULTANA

Director, Euro-Mediterranean Centre for Educational Research

University of Malta

This report was the subject of an official consultation process during May and June 2003 with the Maltese Ministries of Education and Social Policy. The text has not yet been subject to final editing or language revision.

This national report (based on the OECD questionnaire on career guidance policies) was prepared in October 2002 by:

Ronald G. Sultana who is Professor of Sociology and Comparative Education at the University of Malta, where he directs the Euro-Mediterranean Centre for Educational Research. He trained as a counsellor in the UK, and his main research interests include VET, teacher training and transition-to-work issues. He is the author or editor of 13 volumes, including *Careers Education and Guidance in Malta: Issues and Challenges* (coeditor, 1997 – PEG, Malta), has published over 80 articles and chapters in refereed journals and books internationally and has recently authored the Cedefop synthesis review of career guidance in 28 European countries. Professor Sultana is a member of the editorial board of the British Journal of Guidance and Counselling, and of the European Commission's Expert Group on Lifelong Guidance. E-mail for correspondence: ronald.sultana@um.edu.mt

Contents

Methodological Note	1
Section 1. Overview	2
1. Arrangements for information, guidance and counselling in Malta	2
Section 2. Key goals, influences, issues and initiatives	4
2.1. Key objectives and goals of national policies for information, guidance and counselling.....	4
2.2. The major social, educational and labour market influences	5
2.3. The most important issues facing policy makers in Malta.....	7
2.4. Recent initiatives and changes	9
Section 3. Policy instruments for steering services	10
3.1. Legislation as policy/steering instrument	11
3.2. Other instruments used for policy steering.....	11
3.3. Relations between regulation, funding and provision	11
3.4 Co-ordinating mechanisms	12
3.5 Barriers related to coordination	12
Section 4. The roles of the stakeholders	13
4.1. The role of employer organisations.....	13
4.2. Employers organisations' initiatives	14
4.3. Employers' involvement in information, guidance and counselling services	14
4.4. The role of trade unions	15
4.5. Trade union initiatives	15
4.6. Trade unions' involvement in information, guidance and counselling services	15
4.7. Policy initiatives to encourage other stakeholders	16
Section 5. Targeting and access	16
5.1. Target groups and priorities	16
5.2. How priorities are expressed.....	17
5.3. Active steps towards special target groups.....	18
5.4. Methods referring to specific target groups.....	19
5.5. Individuals required to participate in guidance and counselling.....	19
5.6. Policy favours - targetted/comprehensive?	19
5.7. Major gaps in the provision of information, guidance and counselling	20
5.8. Services for adults	20
Section 6. Staffing	21
6.1. Staff categories	21
6.2. Number of staff	22
6.3. Education and training required	22
6.4. Types of competencies required	23
6.5. Changing qualifications	24
6.6. Opportunities to upgrade	24
6.7. Policies to make use of non-professional groups	25
Section 7. Delivery settings	25
7.1. Career education lessons in schools	25
7.2. Alternative ways to integrate career education	26
7.3. Requirements of work experience.....	26
7.4. The characteristics of schools services.....	27
7.5. The characteristics of services provided by the public employment service	32

7.6. Guidance counselling services in tertiary education	28
7.7. The private sector	29
7.8. Government steps taken towards private organisations	29
7.9. Other organisations involved in guidance activities	30
7.10. Government initiatives to increase other organisations' role	30
Section 8. Delivery methods	31
8.1. Government policies and influence on methods	31
8.2. Internet-based information, guidance and counselling	31
8.3. The use of screening tools	32
Section 9. Career information	32
9.1. The public sector's role	32
9.2. Formats used for presenting careers information	32
9.3. Career information and client groups	33
9.4. Methods used to gather information.....	33
9.5. Steps taken to ensure accurate and timely information	33
9.6. Steps taken to ensure user friendliness	33
9.7. Distribution methods	34
9.8. The private sector's role	34
9.9. Initiatives to increase the private sector's role	34
9.10. How is labour market data included in information materials.....	34
Section 10. Financing	35
10.1. Methods in government funding.....	35
10.2. Individual payments	35
10.3. Expenditure and costs	35
10.4. Best available estimate on government costs.....	36
10.5. Levels of salaries	36
Section 11. Assuring quality	36
11.1. Government steps taken to ensure quality.....	36
11.2. Existing standards to information, guidance and counselling services.....	37
11.3. Existing standards - staff competencies.....	37
11.4. Formal requirements for staff qualifications	37
11.5. Guidelines on information quality standards	37
11.6. Other professional groups working to enhance quality	37
11.7. Professionals' influence on policies	38
Section 12. The Evidence Base	38
12.1. Information available about the use of guidance services.	38
12.2. Procedures to clarify community needs and demands for guidance services	39
12.3. Criteria used to judge benefits of information, guidance and counselling.....	40
12.4. Studies that provides details of costs, outcomes and benefits	40
12.5. Initiatives to provide insight into the impact of guidance counselling.....	40
12.6. National research centres	41
12.7. Government's use of research results	41
12.8. Government steps to increase the evidence base through research	41

Annexes

Annexe 1	
Organigram of the top structures of the Education Division.....	43
Annexe 2	
Organigram of the Maltese education system.....	44
Annexe 3	
Organigram of the Employment and Training Corporation.....	45
Annexe 4	
List of Courses offered by the General Workers' Union.....	46
Annexe 5	
Position Descriptions of School Counsellors and Guidance Teachers.....	47
Annexe 6	
Web site addresses.....	48
Annexe 7	
Course outline for Diploma in Social Studies (Occupational Guidance).....	49
Annexe 8	
Elements of a Guidance Programme in Maltese schools.....	50
Annexe 9	
Curricular Goals for the SCOOPS project	51

Methodological Note

Other than desk research, the preparation of this report entailed consultation with and/or e-mail, telephone or face-to-face interviews with the following entities and individuals. Persons marked with an asterisk (*) have also been asked to comment about the report.

Guidance and Counselling Unit, Education Division

Josephine Baldacchino* (Asst. Director, Students Services), Mona Vella* (outgoing Education Officer, Guidance & Counselling Services), Mary Rose Farrugia (counsellor)*

Employment and Training Corporation

Elaine Bonello* (Director HRD), Sue Vella* (Director Research), Felix Borg (Deputy CEO), Nathasha Saliba, Jonathan Bartolo (Employment advisors)

University Counselling Services

M'Anne Agius* (co-ordinator of service)

University Students Advisory Service

Manwel Debono* (co-ordinator)

Malta College of Arts, Science & Technology Counselling Unit

Roseanne Borg (counsellor)

Corradino Correctional Facility

Desmond Zammit Marmarà (co-ordinator, educational services)

National Commission for Persons with Disability

Joseph M. Camilleri (chairperson)

Sedqa

Stephen Camilleri* (guidance teacher on secondment)

General Workers' Union

Charles Vella (Information and research office)

Unjoni Haddiema Maghqudin

Joe Morana

Economics and labour market specialists

Godfrey Baldacchino,* Gordon Cordina

HRD specialists

Antoinette Caruana* (Brandstatter), Alfred Darmanin, Vincent Cassar

Ministry communications officers

Alan Camilleri – Ministry for Social Policy

1. OVERVIEW

Here we would like a brief overview of arrangements for information, guidance and counselling services in your country.

1.1 Please provide a brief (no more than one page) overview of national arrangements for career information, guidance and counselling services in your country.

In answering this please describe the principal service providers, and indicate the extent to which the provision of career information, guidance and counselling overlaps with or is integrated with other services. Indicate how responsibility both for managing and for funding information, guidance and counselling services is divided: between different Ministries (for example Education and Labour); between different levels of government; and between governments and other providers. If possible, include as an Annex the contact details and homepages of key players and main providers of services. (Note: questions that allow more detailed descriptions of services can be found elsewhere in the questionnaire).

The task of providing career information, guidance and counselling in Malta is shared by two different Ministries, that of Education and that of Social Policy. There are few private providers of career information and guidance, and these are generally based in Private Employment Services that are more concerned with making job placements than with actual guidance and counselling.¹ Some vocational and educational guidance is also offered through trade unions, and in the many youth and community-based organizations on the island. Much of this provision is informal, and offered by non-specialised personnel.

In the public sector, the Ministry of Education plays a major role in offering information, guidance and counselling services, and has done so since 1968, when a fledgling Guidance Unit was set up.² Presently, guidance and counselling services fall under the aegis of the Department of Student Services and International Relations, one of six Departments in the Education Division, each of which is headed by a Director.³ This Department has three main responsibilities, catering for (a) student services, (b) special education, and (c) international relations. The Guidance and Counselling Unit is located within the Student Services Section, which is headed by an Assistant Director.⁴ The Unit is led by an Education Officer,⁵ and is responsible for personal, curricular/educational and career guidance of students, and for the further training of Counsellors and Guidance Teachers.

The roles of counsellors and guidance teachers differ in a number of ways (see Annexe 5). Counsellors focus more on personal/developmental issues rather than vocational/career issues, a focus legitimated by a separation of roles formalised by a Malta Union of Teachers (MUT) agreement. Counsellors are attached to the central unit, have no formal teaching duties, but have to spend a minimum of three days per week in one or more schools. They offer counselling to

¹ There are 33 such private agencies registered in Malta, of which only three have some importance.

² See J.P. DeGiovanni (1997) 'A brief history of the development of vocational guidance and counselling in Malta: 1968-1987.' In R.G. Sultana (ed.) *Careers Education and Guidance in Malta: Issues and Challenges*. Malta: PEG, pp.29-42; and J.M. Sammut (1997) 'Malta's guidance and counselling services: 1987-1996.' In R.G. Sultana (ed.) (*ibid.*), pp.43-54. Another key milestones in the development of the guidance services include the 1974 Agreement between the Government and the MUT, which established the post of Guidance Teacher and Counsellor in the secondary and post-secondary sectors, and the post of EO for Guidance and Counselling.

³ The organigram of the Education Division is presented as Annexe 1.

⁴ Other than Guidance and Counselling, the Student Services Section includes the School Psychological Service, the Education Medical Service, the Schools Library Service, the Welfare Section, the Schoolgirl Mothers' Unit, the Safe Schools Programme (which includes the Child Protection, the Anti-Bullying and the Anti-Substance Abuse services), the Art Therapy Unit, and the Sports Section.

⁵ The post became vacant in March 2002, with the retirement of the EO.

individuals/groups of students and/or parents, facilitate referrals of students to other agencies or other specialists, and monitor the work of guidance teachers. The latter are assigned duties in one secondary school, along a pre-established ratio that presently is 1:300 students. Guidance teachers spend half of the normal teaching load in classes teaching curricular subjects they are specialised in.⁶ They spend the rest of the time leading individual and group sessions with students and parents, in running a careers and further education information room, and fulfilling other duties associated with their role as guidance personnel, including administering a cumulative record card system. There are no Guidance Teachers assigned to primary schools, and while in theory there ought to be five Counsellors dedicated to the primary sector, there is presently only one servicing the eighty state primary schools on the island. Post-secondary establishments and the University of Malta also have counsellors attached to them, who cater for the whole range of personal, educational and vocational guidance needs of students.⁷

The non-state education sector, which includes 30% of all students and which is made up of church, independent, and parent foundation schools, also provides guidance teachers and counsellors, and these generally have the same profile and range of responsibilities as their counterparts in the state school system. They often join their colleagues from the public schools for further and in-service training sessions. The guidance/counsellor to student ratio in non-state schools is not regulated. Some of these private schools have guidance teachers and counsellors, while some have the former but not the latter.

Over and above the information and guidance provided through the Guidance and Counselling Unit, the orientation towards the world of work and further studies is also given through the curriculum, where at both the primary and secondary levels different aspects of both areas are tackled in several subjects, especially social studies, personal and social education, home economics, business studies, and religion.⁸ At the secondary level, form teachers meet their classes on a regular basis, and discuss matters of concern to students that very occasionally include aspects of vocational and educational guidance.⁹

Information about post-secondary educational pathways as well as opportunities for further studies and adult education is provided by another department of the Ministry of Education, i.e. the Department of Further Studies and Adult Education. The DFSAE annually publishes a detailed prospectus of post-secondary courses, and this is distributed free of charge to all households with a young person reaching the end of compulsory schooling.¹⁰ The DFSAE also publishes a catalogue of Adult and Evening Courses that is distributed to Local Councils, district libraries and various industrial enterprises. In addition to that, it disseminates information through its web site and through advertising on the community TV (Channel 22). One of the DFSAE's immediate goals is the establishment of Guidance and Counselling services for adults.

A limited vocational guidance service is also available at the Public Employment Service of the **Ministry for Social Policy**, the Employment and Training Corporation.¹¹ The ETC targets a clientele that includes the unemployed, women returning to the labour market, and individuals with special needs requiring advice on accessing supported employment units. It provides one employment adviser for every 550 clients, and offers its services both centrally and through its four regional offices. Employment advisers are principally concerned with job matching, maintaining contacts with employers, and referring job seekers to the relevant training programmes in order to increase their employability options. They have no specific training in

⁶ This amounts to 14 sessions of teaching, each session being 45 minutes long.

⁷ All state post-secondary establishments fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, with the exception of the Institute of Tourism Studies, which is catered for by the Ministry of Tourism.

⁸ See J. Mallia & M. Mallia (1997) 'Bells and punch-clocks: schooling for work in Malta.' In R.G. Sultana (ed.) *Careers Education and Guidance in Malta: Issues and Challenges*. Malta: PEG, pp.73-101.

⁹ 'Form' or 'class' teachers also fill in Cumulative Record Cards for students under their care, in consultation with the Guidance Teacher, who has custody of the record cards.

¹⁰ 7,500 copies of the Post-Secondary Courses Prospectus were distributed to fifth formers attending state and non-state schools in July 2000. Until 1997-1998, this Prospectus was prepared by the Guidance and Counselling Unit.

¹¹ See Annexe 3 for an organigram of the ETC.

vocational guidance. They interview clients and draw up a profile and an action plan for each interviewee on the basis of the registrants' work experience, qualifications, aptitude and work preferences. Employment advisers tend to suffer from both a role and case overload,¹² and the administrative functions take precedence over the vocational guidance function. There is very little structured collaboration between the guidance services of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry for Social Policy – each has its own budget, and establishes its own operational and training targets independently.

There is very little scope, in Malta, for vocational guidance to be offered by employers within the context of firms, since most enterprises employ fewer than ten workers and do not have the capacity to provide formal information or guidance services.¹³ At most, some larger enterprises offer occupational guidance informally, through the HRD departments, in response to specific situations, such as when an early retirement scheme is introduced.

While Trade unions do offer a lot of careers information and guidance to their members, much of this activity is informal, and in response to situations that arise when members call at the office when facing redundancies, for instance, or when changing jobs.

2. KEY GOALS, INFLUENCES, ISSUES AND INITIATIVES

Here we would like you to provide information about the broad goals for information, guidance and counselling services, about the influences that are shaping these services, about the key issues in their organisation, management and delivery, and about important recent initiatives.

2.1 What are the key objectives and goals of national policies for information, guidance and counselling services in your country? Please describe differences in objectives and goals that might exist between Ministries. Where a legislative basis exists for these objectives and goals, please provide details.

The legislative framework outlining the key objectives for education nationally is set out in the 1988 Education Act,¹⁴ which amplifies constitutional provisions, supplies the legal framework for the education structure, and is the main legal instrument governing education provision in Malta. The Act, while reinforcing the constitution's emphasis on the compulsory nature of education, which the nation commits itself to provide free of charge to all its citizens, further elaborates on the dual goal of education: liberal (knowledge for its own sake) and utilitarian (knowledge to further personal and national goals). In a country where the only natural resource is its people, education is mandated to both form human beings holistically as citizens, and as producers. The Act, therefore, while not referring to guidance and counselling directly, stresses the principle that education should equip each Maltese citizen with the skills, trade, professional or vocational competencies that are required by the labour market, and highlights the view that education is the best investment in the development of the talents of the Maltese people.

Guidance and counselling are therefore generally seen to be important instruments by which citizens can attain their own personal fulfilment, while at the same time facilitating a better fit between the demand for and supply of skilled labour. While these twin goals are shared by the two main public providers of guidance and counselling services, i.e. the Ministry of Education and the Ministry for Social Policy, the former tends to give more importance to the personal, developmental and educational guidance needs of their clientele rather than to the vocational and

¹² See J. Bartolo (with C. Micallef) (2002) ETC's caseload management system analysis. Malta: ETC (mimeo).

¹³ Of a total of 23,660 enterprises in Malta, 94.7% are micro enterprises, 4.3% are small and 0.9% medium-sized firms.

¹⁴ As a member of the Council of Europe since 1964, Malta has long followed policies similar to those of the EU Member States in the field of education. Consequently, Malta is aligned with the principles provided by EU Resolutions, Declarations, Conclusions, and Recommendations (including equality of opportunity, illiteracy, safety in schools, etc). Maltese legislation and practice are also generally in line with the *Acquis*.

career guidance aspects that is also considered to be their role. Teachers are also generally uncomfortable with their role of 'channelling' persons towards skills profiles required by the economy: as the Guidance and Counselling *Services Manual* states, 'Guidance programmes are person-centred and are, therefore, primarily concerned with empowering pupils to take responsibility for themselves, their own development and learning rather than imposing particular standpoints, values and decisions.'¹⁵

While Maltese guidance teachers engage a wide spectrum of activities that create bridges between school and the world of work, ETC officials have often criticised the guidance personnel working in school contexts, considering that they are not sufficiently knowledgeable about the labour market and therefore badly placed to provide information and advice. Such criticism has been echoed by employers' associations – the Federation of Industry, for instance, has often taken the Guidance Unit to task for having neither the required knowledge regarding employment prospects, nor the skills to interpret labour market trends. There is also a feeling that the emphasis on 'choice' based largely on the personal likes and aspirations of students (or their parents) leads to skills bottlenecks. The FOI has indeed often urged guidance teachers to 'be familiar with actual – as opposed to imagined – current skill demands by employers. This has to be done not only by studying statistics and reports, but also by conducting visits to employers' establishments and communicating on a regular basis with management and technical personnel.'¹⁶ On their part, guidance teachers often complain that very few firms, factories or private and parastatal companies accept students on vocational visits, with guidance teachers having to rely on their own knowledge or experience of different employment sectors when advising students.

There are few linkages between the employment services and schools. One of the key reasons accounting for this is that there is as yet no national policy clearly outlining the overall goals for guidance and counselling, where government defines the objectives of specific activities, by means of Acts or other sorts of regulations. This could arguably provide a common platform for the articulation of objectives and strategies that would facilitate the transition between compulsory schooling and further education and work.

As for the ETC, and as specified by the Employment and Training Services Act, (Act no. XXVIII) of 1990 which established the corporation, one of its overriding goals is to help the integration or reintegration of individuals in difficult situations in the labour market. This it does through a variety of services which include: assisting in the search for jobs, helping employers find suitable employees, increasing employability of clients through training and schemes, and providing special Supported Employment Services to target groups such as persons with disability, very long term unemployed, ex-substance abusers and ex-convicts.

2.2 What are the major social, educational and labour market influences that are currently shaping national policies for information, guidance and counselling services?

One of the major defining categories that helps make sense of contemporary **Maltese society** is the notion of 'transition' – Malta is indeed, and in many ways, a society in transition.¹⁷ Various factors are contributing to the modernization of Maltese society, not the least of which being the attempt to measure up to the *acquis communautaire* of the European Union, as Malta prepares itself for adhesion as a full member by 2004. Economic restructuring, liberalisation of the media

¹⁵ Guidance & Counselling Services (2000) *Description of Services Manual*. Floriana: Education Division, p.9.

¹⁶ FOI (1992) Position paper on the system of apprentice training (mimeo, 19.10.92), p.1. More recently, Olaf MacDaniel (2000), in his report 'An overview of Vocational Education and Training in Malta' (Turin: ETF), also made the same point (see p.17).

¹⁷ See R.G. Sultana & G. Baldacchino (eds) (1994). *Maltese Society: A Sociological Inquiry*. Msida, Malta: Mireva Publications.

and of the economy, increased openness to globalization forces, increasing secularisation, and so on have accompanied, and in many cases contributed to changing values and a degree of insecurity as past certainties are challenged, and as family and church lose some of their hold on younger generations.¹⁸ In this context, one can understand why politicians with a Christian democrat persuasion have expressed concern that while in the past family and church could be counted upon for the reproduction of values and lifeskills from one generation to the next, it now increasingly falls on schools to ensure the continuation of such a process. Indeed, this was precisely one of the reasons why Personal and Social Education (now Personal and Social Development – PSD) was formally introduced as part of the core curriculum in 1989.¹⁹ This move reinforced the role of guidance teachers and counsellors in schools, with both groups of teachers often working closely together. Much of the PSD curriculum concerns guidance-related issues, and indeed, some PSD staff are also guidance teachers.

The role of guidance, while not formally articulated through specific legislation, or even targeted as a policy concern, is ripe for further development given the implications of the government's overall vision and objectives for education. These have been most recently articulated in two key policy documents, both of which were the subject of wide debate with educators, parents and social partners, and around which a national consensus has been mobilised. The two documents, namely *Tomorrow's Schools: Developing Effective Learning Cultures*²⁰ and the new *National Minimum Curriculum*²¹ are based on the four principles of Entitlement, Equity, Efficiency and Economy, and have formalised and supported the shift towards an educational service that is more student-centred, more responsive to individual learning needs, and more focused on output rather than input. There is an increasing dissatisfaction with a system which orients students through a high stake formal assessment at the end of primary schooling, and that channels pupils to different secondary schools in such a way that, to a great extent, determines educational and consequently occupational trajectories. In such a context, the scope of 'guidance' is obviously limited. Increasingly it is argued that the education system has to be able to include all kinds of learners and to guarantee them access to a minimum entitlement of learning that enables them to be productive and fulfilled citizens in a democratic and high-ability society. There is therefore a slow but perceptible shift away from a culture of selection, channelling and exclusion that marked educational practice and structures in the past, to one that is more concerned with an efficient and equitable distribution of life chances to all. Such a shift in culture is accompanied and vehicled by new practices, that include school development planning, increased parental involvement, a greater emphasis on continuous and formative assessment, student profiling, individual education planning, and the mainstreaming of students with special needs. Structurally too there has been the phasing out of lower secondary trade schools in an attempt to reduce early differentiation.

A related aspect of the overall vision for education in Malta is the reduction of drop-outs and the retention of as large a percentage as possible of each age cohort in post-compulsory education and training.²² Such a policy is considered to be critical to the successful modernization of the economy and the restructuring that is required if Malta is to become a service-oriented, high skilled society that can compete on a level footing within the common European market. Lifelong and lifewide learning feature increasingly on the agenda and in policy discourse, a development signalled by the setting up in 2001 of the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology

¹⁸ See A. Abela (1991) *Transmitting Values in European Malta: A Study in Contemporary Values of Modern Society*. Rome & Valletta: Editrice Ponteficia Università Gregoriana; A. Abela (1994) *Shifting Family Values in Malta: A Western European Perspective*. Malta: Discern.; A. Abela (2000) *Values of Women and Men in the Maltese Islands: A Comparative European Perspective*. Malta: Commission for the Advancement of Women, Ministry for Social Policy.

¹⁹ See R.G. Sultana (1992) 'Personal and social education: curriculum innovation and school bureaucracies in Malta', *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 20(2), pp.164-185.

²⁰ K. Wain *et al.* (1995) *Tomorrow's Schools: Developing Effective Learning Cultures*. A Ministerial Consultative Committee of Education monograph. Floriana: Ministry of Education and Human Resources.

²¹ Ministry of Education (1999) *Creating the Future Together: National Minimum Curriculum*. Malta: MoE.

²² In 1990, 56% of all students finishing their compulsory schooling went into further education. In 2000, the number had risen to 65%. Similarly, while only 1000 students attended the University of Malta in 1987, the number had increased to over 7600 students in 2002, with around 17% of each age cohort proceeding to University studies.

(MCAST), a community college that, through its modularised delivery of courses, aspires to cater for the training needs of young people and adults alike. The MCAST is also a key strategy adopted by the government in its attempt to modify the academic drift among students, by offering them a more vocationally oriented educational trajectory that enjoys parity of esteem with the general stream in further education. On its part, the ETC, which runs apprenticeships in collaboration with the MCAST and other training institutions, is striving to facilitate pathways back to learning, and contributing to the development of such important initiatives as the accreditation of prior learning and the establishment of a National Vocational Qualification Framework.²³

Most of the directions being adopted within the formal educational and training system demand a diversification and intensification of guidance and counselling services. The making of appropriate choices is pivotal to reducing the phenomenon of early school leaving and the maintenance of motivation to remain within formal education. Educational guidance and professional support is increasingly required if the goal of catering for individual learning needs is to be fulfilled. Students and workers are likely to want improved access to information and to guidance as government opens up further education and training pathways for all young people and adults. The restructuring of the economy requires adults to think differently and more flexibly about their employment trajectories. It is likely that they too will need improved access to guidance services that will provide them with the required information and support as they move between training, re-training, and occupations. This is particularly true given the educational gaps in relation to adults with no formal qualifications, a concern that has been most recently signalled by the Joint Assessment of the Employment Policy Priorities for Malta (JAP), which has noted that education levels in Malta's labour force are low, with 51.9% of the working age population not having completed secondary school – when the corresponding EU average is 40%. More and more women are opting to return to work after a brief interlude of child-rearing. The phenomenon of 'women returnees' has direct implications for the delivery of guidance services, particularly those offered within the context of the PES and further education and training institutions.

2.3 What are the most important issues facing policy makers in your country in the organisation, management and delivery of information, guidance and counselling services?

The most important issues in guidance and counselling provision facing policy makers in Malta can be described as follows:

The need to ensure that guidance staff in schools are knowledgeable about the world of work and the opportunities that exist in the labour market and the economic trends that are likely to have an impact on the opportunity structures available to students.²⁴ There are also concerns that guidance personnel in schools tend to have a bias against industry when they come to offer advice to students. This tends to reinforce the academic drift noted earlier,²⁵ and in some cases even encourages students to take up employment in the public sector, as educators tend to present private entrepreneurs as so imbued by the profit motive as to exploit their employees.²⁶

²³ LN 215 of October 2000 established the *Malta Professional Vocational Qualification Awards Council* (MPVQAC) as an independent body with the goal of developing a unified Vocational Qualification framework that helps to establish qualification standards in non-regulated vocational fields, in such a way that skills profiles are more readily recognised and certified. More recent legislation (LN 162 of 23 July 2002) applies to professions and professional activities (Mutual Recognition of Qualifications act).

²⁴ Cognizant of the criticism levied at it by the world of work it is expected to bridge, the Guidance and Counselling Services section has resolved to commence a training programme of its personnel which includes seminars on the Maltese labour market, visits to and short placements in industrial concerns, and stronger linkages with the employment service section of the ETC with a view to regularly up-dating guidance teachers with developments in the labour market.

²⁵ See O. MacDaniel (2000) 'An overview of Vocational Education and Training in Malta'. Turin: ETF (mimeo), p.17.

²⁶ See F. Borg (1997) 'Employers and education: a response to Sultana.' In R.G. Sultana (ed.) (*ibid.*), pp.133-138.

The need to improve co-ordination between guidance staff in schools and those working in the Public Employment Service. Such cross-sectoral co-ordination would ensure a more productive collaborative approach to providing reliable and timely information to students as they go about making their choices.²⁷ Cross-sectoral co-ordination would include enhanced co-operation with other helping agencies.

If Malta does indeed become a member of the European Union, a EUROGUIDANCE service that provides information, counselling and orientation services focused on European career pathways needs to be established.

Guidance personnel at the ETC require specific training in responding to the needs of the clientele normally dealt with by the Public Employment Service. The JAP (2001, p.17) indeed notes the need for vocational guidance personnel at the PES to 'modernise the ETC's job matching services and to improve the profiling of job seekers and their matching with appropriate job vacancies and/or training programmes.' An internal audit at the ETC has highlighted the fact that while progress has been made in these areas, as well in the development of a caseload management system, further action must be taken to ensure appropriate and effective standardised profiling, and better client follow-up.²⁸

There is as yet no formalised quality auditing procedure in order to ensure that guidance services in schools and at the ETC are attaining objectives. While guidance teachers are monitored by counsellors, they are not peer mentored, and while they do have a regular forum that provides opportunities for discussion and professional development, the general feeling is that there is much that still needs to be done to ensure a quality service.²⁹ There is also no mechanism in place to measure the effectiveness of vocational guidance in orienting people towards new skill areas, nor a formally approved ethical code of conduct to guide personnel. The recent setting up of a national Association for Counsellors is likely to have a positive impact on the establishment and maintenance of standards, though the Association's focus is on personal rather than career guidance. Similarly positive is the recent publication and distribution of a *Services Manual*,³⁰ which is to be followed up by a *Quality Service Charter*, to be drawn up in consultation with the National Quality Charter unit.

Clients in Malta, whether young or adult, generally have ready access to guidance personnel. Distances are short, and staff is present both in-house (in schools, in the case of the education sector, and in regional offices, in the case of the PES), and at the central office (the Guidance and Counselling Unit of the Education Division; the ETC Headquarters). Information is also readily available through the free distribution of brochures, and through excellent links with the community through local councils, the Church, the community TV (Channel 22) and radio programmes. There is, however, an aspiration to also provide on-line career guidance accessible from schools and homes, which would enable students and adults search education, employment and training opportunities.

There needs to be improved knowledge of the skills profiles required by the Maltese economy, so that such information can be used by all those involved in guidance and counselling services to advise young people regarding the opportunities that are likely to arise. Indeed, the JAP (2001, p.13) notes that Government has entrusted the PES with drawing up a national human resources development policy and strategy in 2001 – which will be available by the end of 2002 – and

Generally speaking, however, empirical research on the messages that guidance teachers give students regarding the world of work is still largely missing.

²⁷ See the JAP (2001) report, p.13.

²⁸ See J. Bartolo (with C. Micallef) (2002) ETC's caseload management system analysis. Malta: ETC (mimeo).

²⁹ The areas for evaluation suggested in Annexe I of the *Services Manual* are useful in that they propose a comprehensive check-list to help guidance teachers focus on different aspects of their role.

³⁰ The Guidance and Counselling *Services Manual* recommends that 'evaluation of guidance should take place at least annually, with perhaps a limited number of aspects, to be tackled in depth each year. This could be based on the feedback of all parties involved' (p.39).

recommends that a mechanism for the systematic monitoring and analysis of skill shortages be introduced and maintained. The latter goal is now being fulfilled through the Employment Barometer exercise.

The issue of lifelong and lifewide occupational guidance has to be addressed, and while the DFSAE is planning to establish an adult guidance and counselling service, it is within-house provision by enterprises and trade unions that is likely to be most effective in responding to the needs of workers.

2.4 Please describe any recent (last five years) initiatives and changes that are of particular significance for the organisation, management, funding, staffing, or delivery of information, guidance and counselling services.

For example you might like to describe initiatives such as: government reports that have recommended new approaches or new priorities, new methods and philosophies of providing services (for example within the context of lifelong learning), new or proposed legislation and regulations, new or upgraded services or the down-sizing or elimination of existing services, changed priorities for access to services, changed responsibilities between agencies for the provision of services, new education and training requirements for staff, initiatives to engage citizens in the planning and delivery of services, changes in the involvement of the private sector, technological developments that have made a real difference to the ways in which services are delivered and/or accessed

Some of the more important initiatives and changes that have had – or are expected to have an impact on guidance and counselling services in Malta have already been outlined in the preceding sections. A number of other initiatives can be detailed below:

Educational System:

The publication of the new National Minimum Curriculum, which attempts to redefine and in many ways emphasise the importance of school-to-work links, and which therefore has implications for guidance and counselling services (see 7.2 for further details).

Two key initiatives that have an impact on guidance-related activities in schools – even though not organised or co-ordinated directly by guidance personnel³¹ – are the Coops in Schools Project (SCOOPS),³² which was launched in October 1995, and the Young Enterprise Malta scheme.³³ Both initiatives are part of the extra-curricular educational programme. SCOOPS sets out to provide secondary level students with an opportunity to organize themselves into cooperative units to run and manage their own creative projects, and to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes which will help them to identify their occupational strengths, their potential contribution to the local labour market, and to create for themselves a viable self-employment option. Over a 7000 students have participated in this scheme thus far. The Young Enterprise scheme – first piloted locally in 1988 – is now a regular feature of most sixth form (upper secondary) establishments, including vocational ones. The scheme has helped over 3,500 students to build up a variety of business skills as they set up and run a live company – properly incorporated, manufacturing saleable products, and selling competitively in the Maltese (and occasionally overseas) market. In both cases, but especially in the latter scheme, employers are involved in giving advice, in preparing business kits, and in generally being available to guide teams as they go about achieving their goals.

³¹ The Guidance Unit provides a Counsellor as a co-ordinator in SCOOPS.

³² See G. Baldacchino & S. Rizzo (1997) 'Cooperative experiences in schools: a review of the SCOOPS project.' In R.G. Sultana (ed.) (*ibid.*), pp.271-281.

³³ See J. Harper (1997) 'Vocational learning: the Young Enterprise model.' In R.G. Sultana (ed.) (*ibid.*), pp.283-292. See also *The Malta Independent on Sunday (Gallarija)*, 1.09.02, p.12.

A new careers orientation pack has been produced in Maltese, containing interactive exercises to help students clarify their knowledge and thinking about the work options that are open to them. This pack, which is aimed at the lower forms in secondary schools, and at academically weaker students in upper forms, is accompanied by a teachers' handbook. There is also a plan that the ETC produces leaflets with 10 job descriptions every year, which could be used by guidance teachers in their work in careers education.

Given the central place of tourism in Malta's economy, The Malta Tourism Authority has published a booklet entitled *Careers in Tourism*. It has also launched a programme, called 'Choice', in order to raise awareness among secondary schools students on careers within the tourism industry. The programme entailed travel overseas, and visits to hotels, restaurants and travel agents to obtain experience of work practices in the industry.

Post-school sector

One of the more important recommendations regarding guidance services emerged from the national debate on the provision of LLL opportunities in Malta, in the process of articulating a formal policy on lifelong learning.³⁴ Among the many strategies tabled to enhance LLL and to maximise opportunities and pathways back to learning, the document proposed a re-thinking of guidance and counselling. While the many achievements of the services offered both by the Ministry of Education and that of Social Policy were acknowledged, it was also argued that 'a new breed of job/career brokers needs to be developed in Malta.... They would need to be highly skilled in ICT in order to extend their knowledge to career and job opportunities elsewhere in Europe' (p.12). The document calls for strong, cross-sectoral collaboration so that in joining forces, the different providers could come up with 'a coherent national strategy for the provision of a Job Brokerage Service' (p.12). The point was also made that different Ministries should provide their employees with guidance and counselling 'to mitigate employee/job mismatch and burnout,' and that special approaches ought to be developed to effectively target disadvantaged groups in need of specialised guidance.

Initiatives within the context of the ETC:- The corporation has adopted a caseload management system, in which employment advisors classify clients according to specific categories in order to ensure that their service responds more effectively to the needs of registrants.³⁵ This is followed up by a personal action plan that guides registrants towards the labour market or further training. Several new schemes have also been adopted by the corporation over the past two years, most of which facilitate re/integration of at-risk groups in the labour market, and others – such as the web-based job-matching services- are directly linked to aspects of vocational guidance.

3. POLICY INSTRUMENTS FOR STEERING SERVICES

Here we wish to know about the key policy instruments that are used to steer information, guidance and counselling services, and about how policy goals are translated into service delivery.

3.1 How important is legislation in steering information, guidance and counselling services in your country? Please briefly describe the main pieces of legislation that directly affect information, guidance and counselling services. More complete details and examples can be provided in an Annex.

³⁴ See MoE (2001) 'Report on the National Consultation Process on Lifelong Learning' (mimeo, July). The report was the outcome of debate and wide social partner consultation in response to the LLL Memorandum of the EU (i.e. Commission of the European Communities (2001) *Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality*. COM(2001) 678.

³⁵ The client categories are:- registered disabled, very long term unemployed (5 years and over), youths (16 – 24 years of age), 25 years and over, over 40's, and special cases (e.g. ex-substance abusers, ex-convicts, social cases).

There are, at this stage, no comprehensive formal/legal documents outlining the government's key policy objectives for guidance and counselling in Malta, and there is no equivalent to, for instance, the Act on Educational and Vocational Guidance in Denmark, which provides the overall legislative steering instrument applied to guidance and counselling. Malta's National Employment Plan, which is expected to provide some important policy leads in this area, is still in preparation. The fact that formal policy documents are unavailable has one significant implication: that specific targets, measures to attain such targets, and mechanisms to monitor progress in achieving targets are largely absent.

3.2 What other instruments are normally used for the political steering of information, guidance and counselling services and to monitor implementation?

For example you might like to describe the use of instruments such as outcomes targets, mandatory or voluntary service quality standards, mandatory or voluntary competency standards and qualification standards for staff, competitive tendering for services and the like.

Despite the lack of legal instruments, one can nevertheless extract some of the more significant policy directions from Electoral Manifestos,³⁶ Ministerial speeches, circulars, Ministerial orders and guidelines, as well as declarations made at high profile and public events, such as during Budget speeches, the launching of the Joint Assessment Paper (November 23rd 2001), or at national conferences on education. Similarly influential can be other 'soft' steering instruments such as campaigns, often decided upon by the Ministry or the Education Division. Examples of such recent campaigns include those focusing on 'bullying', 'child abuse' and 'drug abuse', which led to special in-service training of guidance personnel, as well as to publications that were distributed to students and families. As noted earlier in section 2.3, the development of a Guidance and Counselling Services Manual (and in due course, Charter) is expected to lead to a clearer articulation of the role and function of guidance personnel, establishing clear standards that all the corps aspires to.

3.3 Please describe how government regulation, funding and provision of information, guidance and counselling services are related to one another. Is the same (government) body typically responsible for all three, or are they carried out by separate agencies?

Guidance and counselling services are financed by the state through the annual budgetary allocation made available to the Ministry of Education (for guidance and counselling services in schools), and to the Ministry for Social Policy (for services offered through the PES). These service providers are entitled to articulate their own priorities in the use of such funding, as long as they follow and implement leads indicated by the policy makers. In the post-compulsory education sector, including the Institute for Tourism Studies, MCAST, the Junior College and University, block funding is made by the state, with the managing bodies of the different institutions deciding how much is allocated for guidance and counselling purposes.

³⁶ The party in government, the Nationalist Party, declared in its manifesto that the ETC should be 'better equipped to answer the needs of all those who are registering for work, especially those who are older than 45 years, the long-term unemployed and persons with special needs who are seeking work' as well as for the training needs of married women who wish to return to work' (1998, p.11).

3.4 What mechanisms, if any, exist for co-ordinating information, guidance and counselling services: between different Ministries; between different levels of government; between governments and other parties such as employers, trade unions, the private sector, and community groups; between services for youth and for adults; and between the different agencies that provide services?

As noted in section 2.3, there is a lack of cross-sector collaboration and co-ordination in guidance and counselling services in Malta. Indeed, some social partners have recommended that, given Malta's small size, it would make sense to streamline existing resources and provision through the setting up of a national body, operating from a national resource centre for Guidance and Counselling.³⁷ There is no professional association of career guidance personnel in Malta, though an Association for Counsellors has recently been set up.³⁸ School guidance teachers and counsellors are co-ordinated by the Guidance and Counselling Unit, described in Section 1. Despite the lack of formal co-ordinating mechanisms, Malta's small size leads to frequent meetings between practitioners, whether these are based in schools, in the employment service, or in youth, church or other types of associations in the community. The lack of co-ordination, particularly between the guidance services offered by the Ministry of Education and those offered by the Ministry of Social Policy, has recently led the Guidance and Counselling Unit to invite staff from the ETC to address guidance personnel on issues related to the labour market. Currently, improved strategies and mechanisms to facilitate the flow of information from the ETC to guidance personnel in schools are being explored. The Careers Convention, the SCOOPS and Young Enterprise schemes, the apprenticeship schemes, and visits to industry provide good opportunities for co-ordination between schools, the PES, employers and trade unions. Generally, however, the perception is that such opportunities are rarely exploited to the extent that they should be.

3.5 What barriers exist to co-ordination of services and to networking among providers?

One of the main barriers of successful coordination is the sector-divided structure of guidance and counselling provision, with those responsible for provision referring to different central authorities. This division is only partly explained by the fact that the different sectors cater for different client profiles.

4. THE ROLES OF THE STAKEHOLDERS

Here we wish to know about the roles played some key stakeholders other than government Ministries -- such as employer organisations and trade unions – in information, guidance and counselling services.

³⁷ See MoE (2001) 'Report on the National Consultation Process on Lifelong Learning' (mimeo, July), p.12.

³⁸ There are also two professional associations catering for psychologists, but the focus here is largely on clinical work, and careers counsellors and vocational guidance personnel do not generally qualify for membership. It is important to point out that the Counsellors' Association draws a clear distinction between the roles fulfilled by counsellors in schools (largely personal counselling), and those fulfilled by guidance teachers (largely educational and career guidance), and that its main concern is with the former.

4.1 What role do employer organisations play in regulating or funding information, guidance and counselling services?

For example by participating in advisory and co-ordination bodies; by contributing to common funds for information, guidance and counselling services; through providing employee leave to take part in career guidance; or through participation in programme management committees.

As noted earlier, there is no national body co-ordinating guidance and counselling activities, and hence there is no formal and regular forum – equivalent, say, to the National Council for Educational and Vocational Guidance in Denmark – which includes stakeholders, public authorities and social partners, and which functions as an advisory body to the relevant Ministries. Up to a few years ago and since the mid-1980s, an Education-Industry Unit used to operate, with the person in charge of the Guidance and Counselling Unit having regular meetings with the business community generally, and the Federation of Industry in particular.³⁹

The role of that Unit is to be taken up by a National Association for Industry-Education Co-Operation, one of the proposals made by the NMC Working Group focusing on the links between school and work.⁴⁰ The work of this autonomous body is to be complemented by the setting up of a unit within the Education Division charged with the responsibility of supporting schools in their endeavours to introduce the world of work across the curriculum. Even if both bodies have not yet seen the light of day, the social partnership model that is being adopted by all government entities is already leading employer associations and individual employers to play an increasing role in aspects of Malta's educational set up, even if not directly linked to guidance and counselling. Employers are formally represented on the National Curriculum Council, which was set up in 2001. They are also present on School Councils, which have a largely advisory and fund-raising role, and are composed of representatives from parents and teaching staff, and in post-16 institutions, students. School Council Presidents are nominated by Local Councils from an approved list proposed by the MoE, and at the secondary school level, the President is often chosen from the business community in order to facilitate partnerships between schools and industry.

In the VET sector, the Institute of Tourism Studies requires the Board of Governors to collaborate with social partners in the management of the institution, and thus includes representatives from the hospitality industry. The MCAST is also managed by a Board of Governors that puts a premium on integrating social partners in decision-making. The College's statute makes provision for the setting up of a Partnership Office, which is to have a number of roles, the most relevant of which in this context is the development of partnerships with the industrial and services economic sectors on the island.

Employers are also represented on the development boards of the MPVQAC, the Council that has been given the responsibility to establish a Malta Vocational Qualification framework, and the definition of standards for the different callings. The Malta Federation of Industry (FOI) regularly issues position papers, some of which have directly dealt with VET and LLL policies. The impact of these position papers is hard to assess, though it does seem that many of the ideas tabled have entered the policy-making network.⁴¹

Employer organisations do not have much of a role at all in directly funding information, guidance and counselling services in schools. Indirect funding comes through when such organisations, or

³⁹ One of its achievements was the production of a *Skills and Training Needs Survey Report* (Malta, mimeo, 1987).

⁴⁰ See A. Caruana (2000) 'Links between schools and the place of work.' In J. Giordmaina (ed.) (2000) *National Curriculum on its Way*. Malta: MoE, Education Division & Faculty of Education, pp.351-353. Also pp.333-349.

⁴¹ For a review of FOI Position Papers on education and training, and their impact on policy-making, see R.G. Sultana (1997) 'Employers and education in a Mediterranean micro-state: the case of Malta.' *Journal of Education and Work*, 10(1), 37-58.

individual enterprises belonging to employer associations, pay a fee to buy exhibition space in the annual Careers Convention organised by the Guidance and Counselling Unit. Some of the major firms also incur expense in producing information leaflets about their own occupational sector, which are distributed at the fair and also exhibited in the careers and further education information room that some schools have.

It is relevant to point out that, in the case of the ETC's employment advisory service, which partly depends for its job-matching process on vacancy submission surveys with employers, the latter do not seem as co-operative as expected in ensuring a flow of information.⁴²

4.2 What initiatives do employer organisations take to help provide information, guidance and counselling services?

For example: involvement in career information programmes in schools and tertiary education; the provision of guidance and counselling; organising careers fairs and exhibitions; or the production of career information.

Employers facilitate work orientation visits organised by guidance personnel, and in the case of apprenticeships, offer work placements and study visits. Employers participate in Career Conventions, and contribute brochures to stock careers information rooms in schools. They are often invited to address students in order to provide first hand information about their particular enterprise, especially at the key decision-making points in the students' lives, when course options or further education routes have to be chosen. They also contribute advice and act as mentors to students taking part in the Young Enterprise Scheme.

4.3 Does employer involvement in information, guidance and counselling services tend to be:

In answering this question please tick the box that best applies. You might also like to add some descriptive material in support of your response.

Seldom		Occasional		Regular
1	2	3X	4	5

	Mostly local, but some national	50-50	Mostly national, but some local	National
Local 1	2X	3	4	5

⁴² See J. Bartolo (2002), p.11.

Trade Unions

4.4 Do trade unions play a role in regulating or funding information, guidance and counselling services?

For example through participating in advisory and co-ordination bodies, or in programme management committees.

Trade unions are generally not active at all in regulating or funding information, guidance and counselling services.⁴³ Trade union officials will typically spend a lot of time listening to and advising members facing such challenging circumstances as redundancies and redeployment. They are also often contacted by employers and managers asking for recruits, references or recommendations. Due to their extensive contacts with the world of work, trade unions tend to be, in a way, job centres in their own right. Much of this activity, however, tends to be in response to specific needs and situations, and not the result of a co-ordinated and formally organised strategy. Trade unions offer several courses to members, and some of these are directly linked to the world of work (see Annexe 4 for an example).

4.5 What initiatives do trade unions take in providing information, guidance and counselling services?

For example involvement in career information programmes in schools; providing guidance and counselling; or producing career information. Here also describe any initiatives taken by trade unions to provide information, guidance and counselling services to their own members.

There are no initiatives to report. At best, some unions take part in careers information fairs and produce some information material. No study or survey regarding the guidance needs of workers has been commissioned on the part of unions, and while, as noted in Section 4.4, careers advice is provided informally, there is no professional guidance or educational service dealing with the career plans of unemployed members.

4.6 Does trade union involvement in information, guidance and counselling services tend to be:

In answering this question please tick the box that best applies. You might also like to add some descriptive material in support of your response.

Seldom		Occasional		Regular	
1	2X	3	4	5	
Local		50-50		National	
1	2X	3	4	5	

⁴³ It should be pointed out that the MUT has a very powerful role to play in the articulation and execution of educational policy, and historically has been very much at the forefront in promoting the development of guidance services. One of its past presidents, and the present secretary general of the Union, received professional training in vocational guidance and counselling. The former was one of the two pioneers responsible for the establishment of the Guidance Unit.

Other Stakeholders

4.7 Please describe ways in which policies encourage other stakeholders – such as parents, associations of students, alumni, community organisations, educational institutions or the end-users of services -- to play a role in information, guidance and counselling services.

For example through roles that are expressed in legislation; through policies to contract service provision to non-government organisations; through membership of advisory bodies; through membership of programme management committees.

The social partnership model has been increasingly adopted by the government in view of its aspiration to become a member of the EU. Other than employers and trade unions, parents and, in the case of post-secondary educational institutions, students, are represented in a number of formally constituted educational fora. These include School Councils and governing boards. Parents are also officially represented on a number of ministerial advisory committees, as well as on the National Curriculum Council.⁴⁴ In these and similar fora, matters linked to guidance and counselling can be raised, although most times, parents have largely voiced concerns about issues linked to such problems as drug and alcohol addiction, bullying, stress caused by examinations, and similar challenges rather than ones focusing on occupational guidance. Alumni are often invited to address school-leavers in order to share with them their experiences of transition from education to employment, and to give an account of their further education and career trajectories.

Other stakeholders, such as the Commission for the Advancement of Women and the National Commission for Persons with Disability, have on occasion drawn attention to specific issues they feel guidance services should deal with, including the gender-stereotyped manner in which subject and career tracks are chosen, and the lack of specialised vocational support for disabled students.

5. TARGETING AND ACCESS

Here we want to know about priorities for access to information, guidance and counselling services. This section also asks about how services are provided for adults.

5.1 Please describe any priorities or target groups for information, guidance and counselling services, including how priority needs are established.

For example target groups might include: school students; young people; adults; unemployed people; those receiving social welfare benefits; tertiary education students; employees; refugees and members of ethnic minorities.

Most career information, guidance and counselling services in Malta are addressed towards young people, especially at key decision-making points in the flow through the school system. These include the transition from the primary to secondary school sector (age 11+), the choice of subject options at the end of Form 2 (in Junior Lyceums at age 13+) or Form 3 (in Area Secondaries at age 14+), and choice of further education or work options at the end of Form 5 (age 16+) and Form 6 (age 18+).

⁴⁴ Parents are formally represented by the Association of School Councils, which was established in 1996, and which attempts to provide parents with a national platform by means of which agendas can be articulated.

Target groups that are offered special attention include female teenagers, who are often encouraged to think beyond traditional stereotypes in their choice of occupational futures,⁴⁵ and increasingly students who are at risk. No guidance teachers are assigned to special schools, and the vocational guidance needs of students with disabilities in mainstream school are not presently catered for.⁴⁶ The Guidance and Counselling section also runs a Schoolgirl Mothers' Unit, targeting pregnant teenagers who might otherwise give up on schooling.⁴⁷ The Safe Schools Programme for Primary and Secondary Schools, which was established in January 2000, focuses on issues related to child abuse, bullying, and substance abuse.

Outside the formal educational system, the ETC largely targets young unemployed – who are guided towards employment opportunities or back into training – women returners, long-term unemployed, disabled clients, and clients who are in special need, such as ex-substance abusers, ex-convicts, clients from economically depressed areas,⁴⁸ and more recently, unemployed refugees.⁴⁹ Other guidance-related activities are aimed at those intending to set up their own small business. Such guidance is also provided by the Institute for the Promotion of Small Enterprises (IPSE) and the newly set up Business Incubation Centre within IPSE.

Occupational guidance is also offered informally to prison inmates attending the Corradino Correctional Facility. Here, help is provided by the Education Unit and by the 'Welfare Desk', which is run by a social worker who is not, however, formally qualified in guidance. Clients are provided with information as to the likelihood of openings in specific occupational areas, and are helped to find work through contacts with employers and through the ETC. Occupational guidance can also include informal individual interviews where advice is given to the resident as to educational opportunities that can be followed in order to obtain qualifications that could lead to new occupational paths. Links with local educational institutions are then established to facilitate access to courses of study.

5.2 How are any such priorities or targets expressed?

For example give details of any legislation that provides rights or entitlements to services for particular groups.

While there are as yet no legislative basis for the identification of priorities in the field of guidance and counselling, nevertheless policy directions are signalled by central government through policy documents, which often help to focus attention on particular challenges. Thus, the National Commission for Persons with Disability within the Ministry of Social Policy has published a *National Policy on Special Education in Malta*⁵⁰ that is very much in line with the Salamanca Statement, to which Malta is signatory. The Commission has also published another key document, entitled *Employment and Persons with Disability: National Policy*,⁵¹ where a number of

⁴⁵ See M. Darmanin (1997) 'Gender, identity and vocational guidance.' In R.G. Sultana (ed.) (*ibid.*), pp.195-224. Guidance teachers are instructed to 'avoid all gender stereotyping of careers, and to ensure equality of opportunity regardless of gender' (Guidance & Counselling Services (2000) *Description of Services Manual*. Floriana: Education Division, p.26.).

⁴⁶ This is the view expressed by officials at both the National Commission for Persons with Disability and the Education Division's Student Services. A case for the development of guidance services for students with disabilities has been made by A. Bezzina, J. Camilleri & E. Galea-Curmi (1997) 'Common human needs: career education and vocational guidance with students who have disabilities.' In R.G. Sultana (ed.) (*ibid.*), pp.225-242.

⁴⁷ During the year 2000, 114 new unmarried teenage mothers contacted the unit, with 85 girls attending the programme offered. Counselling was offered to 49 girls as well as their partners and parents (cf. Annual Report, 2000, Education Division, p.18).

⁴⁸ See ETC Annual Report, 2000-2001, pp.9 ff.

⁴⁹ A legal notice of May 2002 established that refugees have the right to register for employment and can benefit from the same services as local citizens. The ETC keeps a separate register for such refugees.

⁵⁰ See National Commission for Persons with Disability (1994) *Special Education in Malta: National Policy*. Malta: Centru Hidma Socjali.

⁵¹ See National Commission for Persons with Disability (1995) *Employment and Persons with Disability: National Policy*.

points made are directly relevant to the provision of guidance and counselling, given that they focus on the assistance that should be provided to persons with disability in their transition from school to work, and in the provision of suitable employment opportunities and sheltered workshops guided by the principle that Malta has the duty to create a least restrictive environment conducive to the integration of every disabled person. The Commission effectively functions as a pressure group, encouraging various sectors of society to become more aware of disability issues, and offering resources and training so that the needs of persons with disability are better catered for.

Other priorities – which have recently included the articulation of a code of school behaviour, national policies on child protection,⁵² and campaigns against bullying, drug addiction and alcoholism – are announced centrally by the Minister of Education, often in response to the perceived rise of a new challenge, or to evidence suggested by research. Other priorities and target groups are identified at the school level, particularly now that each school community has to draw up a development plan that sets out specific targets that facilitates management by objectives.

5.3 Where such priorities exist, what active steps are taken to ensure that access to services is possible for target groups?

For example “one-stop-shops”; drop-in services that do not require appointments; telephone help-lines; use of community organisations for service delivery; targeted advertising.

Schools with a higher incidence of at-risk students are provided with a larger number of guidance teachers. Groups that are considered to be at risk also have easier access to support thanks to special seminars that are organised for them, both during and after regular school time. Other special measures include in-house campaigns, the publication of special brochures, the carrying out of surveys to better identify problems and issues and to facilitate the articulation of the view of the clients, and so on. Given that Malta has two inhabited islands, the second of which is Gozo with a population of 25,000, the issue of regional disparities becomes important. Special efforts are indeed made to ensure that Gozitan students get the same opportunities as the rest of the Maltese, and thus, the Careers Convention venue shifts to Gozo every alternate year. Similarly the ETC has a regional office catering for the needs of Gozitan unemployed.

Additionally, the ETC has set up a number of special schemes which, while not directly linked to vocational guidance, do assist targeted groups in finding employment. These include:
the *Job Start Youth Initiative*, aimed at unemployed youths between 16 and 24 years of age, to enable them to integrate in the labour market in the shortest time possible. Job plans are drawn up, and a meeting between client and employment advisor is held once every four weeks to discuss career choices and the difficulties being encountered;
the *Job Experience Scheme*, which exposes young registrants to the realities of the labour market, and sets out to improve clients' employability by offering in-house training and work experience (maximum of 13 weeks on a 24-hour week) with a view to effective integration in work. The scheme is aimed at those aged 16 and over with no work experience.
The *Basic Employment Passport Scheme*, which provides basic employment skills to young school leavers leaving the educational system with little or no skills and qualifications.
The *Youth Outreach Programme*, which helps young people from economically depressed areas in developing basic lifeskills and job search skills.

Malta: Centru Hidma Socjali

⁵² See Education Division (1999) *Child Protection: National Policy – Procedures for Schools*. MoE, Safe Schools Programme: Malta.

5.4 Typically, are different methods used to provide services for different target groups?

Staff use a variety of approaches when offering guidance and counselling services, and it is difficult to generalise as to whether any special methods are used when working with specific target groups. Generally speaking, the foundation of most approaches used in Malta tend to be client-centred and Rogerian in orientation.

However, there is an increasing number of counsellors who follow specialist courses abroad, and who practice – and train colleagues – in the use of approaches and strategies provided by, for instance, gestalt, drama, hypnotherapy, art, play and rational-emotive therapies. Most of these are used in the context of personal rather than vocational guidance, where interest inventories remain the most popular tool. Adlerian approaches with difficult/challenging students are promoted by one specific association, which has become increasingly influential given that it regularly organises conferences and training seminars.

5.5 Do examples exist in which individuals are required to take part in guidance and counselling?

For example to continue to receive social security benefits or pensions; or to avoid expulsion from school.

Registered unemployed are obliged to have an interview with an employment advisor on a monthly basis. Failure to attend the interview leads to the removal of the client from the unemployment register for six months, and the consequent loss of benefits.

At the school level, vocational guidance is, in principle, not obligatory. However, since many of the guidance-related objectives are now integrated in and across the curriculum, through such compulsory subjects as social studies, PSD and religion, students end up having little option but to participate in guidance-related activities. This is also true of the extra-curricular activities and seminars that are organised for them. In the final year of primary schooling, pupils (and their parents) are expected to attend meetings held for them by the guidance unit in order to make the transition from primary and secondary as smooth as possible. At the end of second and third year of secondary schooling, students are invited to attend meetings organized for them by the guidance teachers so that they can be well informed about the option choice. Form 5 students attending state schools are requested/invited to attend a day careers' seminar organized by the guidance unit and other meetings and vocational outings organized by both the school and the Guidance Unit.

In all these cases, of course, students constitute what can be referred to as a 'captive audience'. It is not unusual for teachers, form teachers, heads of schools and occasionally parents to refer an individual to the guidance services, and while there is always the option for the student to remain silent and uncooperative, the referral does nevertheless create a pressure on the student. Individual guidance sessions are, however, normally organised at the request of the client.

5.6 Do policies for information, guidance and counselling services favour:

- A comprehensive approach (so that services are universally accessible and meet a wide range of needs); or
- A targeted approach that favours those in greatest need; or
- Both of these approaches.

Guidance and counselling services are available to whoever requires them. Other than this comprehensive provision, however, and as noted in 5.1, guidance and counselling services are also targeted at specific groups considered to be at risk or in greater need.

5.7 Please describe the major gaps, if any, in the provision of information, guidance and counselling services. Are there any groups whose needs appear to be met less effectively than others?

There is no comprehensive study that would provide an evidence base pointing out the major gaps in the provision of information, guidance and counselling. However, there would probably be consensus over the claim that more needs to be done for specific groups of young people, particularly those who are in difficulty at school, and those who have disabilities. While both males and females are systematically encouraged to think beyond gender stereotypes when considering future educational and occupational paths,⁵³ trends indicate that not much headway has been made in this regard, especially when it comes to the choice of VET. Similarly, some social partners and policy makers are of the opinion that the academic drift on the part of students in further education is at least partly the result of the orientation and advice provided by the guidance services at the secondary school level. Overall, guidance staff in schools – as noted in 2.3 – tend to have little knowledge of labour market trends, and are badly placed to advise students on employment opportunities.

There is also a consensus over the fact that a comprehensive information database regarding further education and employment opportunities should be made available on the internet. This would include a web-based national gateway with links to all existing services of information, guidance and counselling – one that could operate from a national resource centre as proposed in 3.4.⁵⁴ Recent considerations of the PES in view of the drawing up of the JAP, the VET monograph, and the NEP have suggested that the guidance services offered by the ETC are less than adequate, and that these have to be strengthened by the further training of their staff. Finally, there is as yet no tradition in either the public or the private sector to offer guidance services to employees, who might be encountering difficulties in meeting work-related challenges including burn-out, stress, relationship problems with colleagues or management, and the anxiety and insecurity that can be caused by the demands of a changing work environment that calls for the development of new knowledge, skills and attitudes, as well as by retirement.

Services for adults

5.8 Please describe how information, guidance and counselling services are organised and provided for adults in your country.

For example: which agencies (educational institutions, community organisation, the public employment service) typically provide services for adults; are these different from the agencies that provide services for youth; how are different agencies co-ordinated; what priority do services for adults have compared to services for youth; what recent initiatives have been taken to provide services to adults.

⁵³ Guidance teachers and counsellors are particularly targeted by the NMC in the promotion of gender equality, given that their attitudes will have a strong influence on the choices that students make.

⁵⁴ One positive move in this direction is the launch, in September 2000, of a website managed by the Department of Further Studies and Adult Education which provides detailed information regarding post-secondary courses offered in state institutions, as well as other information required by prospective local and overseas students. See http://www.education.gov.mt/edu/studies_adult.htm

Adults, especially those wanting to be re/integrated in the labour market, have free access to information and guidance services at the Public Employment Service, which publishes brochures and disseminates details of specific opportunities over the mass media, and particularly through Channel 22, the community television channel. The ETC has outreach regional centres in Valletta, Cospicua, Mosta and Victoria (Gozo), other than at Hal Far, its headquarters.

Some special interest groups offer information and informal guidance services to target clients – a case in point would be the National Commission for Persons with Disability. The major unions – e.g. the General Workers' Union (GWU), the Unjoni Haddiema Maghqudin (UHM), the Malta Union of Teachers (MUT) – would also offer guidance and information to their members (though see Section 4.4). The National Consultation Process on Lifelong Learning initiated in 2001 noted that vocational guidance has to accompany citizens throughout their life, but no initiatives have been put into place to implement the suggestions made.

6. STAFFING

Here we wish to know about the types of staff that provide information, guidance and counselling services in your country, and about their qualifications and competencies.

In answering this section, please describe differences between staff in the different settings in which information, guidance and counselling services are provided: for example schools, tertiary education, community organisations, public employment services.

6.1 What types or categories of staff are employed to provide information, guidance and counselling services in your country?

For example information librarian, classroom careers teacher, school counsellor, public employment service counsellor.

In compulsory secondary school settings, there are two categories of staff: (a) guidance teachers are generally attached to one school,⁵⁵ and dedicate half their time to teaching a subject, and the rest of the time to vocational and educational guidance in individual or group settings. They are also responsible for administering a careers and further education information room,⁵⁶ run seminars on leadership, relationships and communication, lead parental skills courses,⁵⁷ ensure smooth transitions (between primary and secondary schools; between compulsory and post-compulsory education; between school and work), organize visits to industries and constituted bodies, and manage a cumulative record card system profiling the educational and personal development of students. Form teachers, PSE teachers, religion teachers and spiritual directors also often offer guidance support, generally by mobilising basic helping skills; (b) counsellors are responsible for a number of schools, focus mainly on personal development issues, handle cases referred to them by guidance teachers, and provide further training to the latter. They do not have any formal teaching responsibilities, though they do lead group counselling sessions on a variety of issues related largely to personal development. Counsellors are complemented by a small group of staff that have specialised training in particular areas, such as child abuse. Other support is provided by psychologists.

'Counsellors' are also attached to the different institutions in the post-compulsory education system, including the Junior College, the Institute of Tourism Studies, the MCAST, and the University. These counsellors are expected to cover the whole range of guidance, namely career, educational and personal guidance and do not have formal teaching responsibilities, though they

⁵⁵ Girls' schools are allocated female guidance teachers; boys' schools can have male and female guidance teachers.

⁵⁶ About half the secondary schools have a careers information room. In most cases, there is no computer available to help guidance teachers perform their tasks more effectively.

⁵⁷ Parental skills courses are generally co-ordinated by facilitators trained specifically for the purpose, and include PSD teachers besides counsellors and guidance teachers.

do run seminars on a variety of topics, such as stress management and leadership skills. At the University, the task of providing information about courses and career opportunities opened up by the different degrees and diplomas is also fulfilled by a Students Advisory Services, which collaborates closely with the Counselling service. The Students' Union also provides students with information.

In the PES, there is only one category of guidance personnel. Employment advisors operate from four job centres, the most important of which is located in Valletta. Job centres handle requests for manpower from employers, as well as applications for work from job seekers, and advertise vacancies. Employment advisors guide jobseekers in finding an occupation, and also inform clients about possible training opportunities.

6.2 What is the best information that can be provided on the number of staff, by type or category, who are employed to provide information, guidance and counselling services in your country? Please indicate if information on their age, gender and equity group structure is available.

Sector	Category	Total number	Total Females	Total Males	Age range
Compulsory schooling	-Counsellors	16 (state) *6 (private)	11 4	5 2	40 – 50
	-Guidance teachers	84 (state) *31(private)	44 20	40 11	25–60 (majority 30-40)
Post-compulsory schooling	-Counsellors	6	4	2	40 – 55
	-Guidance teachers	10	6	4	35 – 50
University	-Counsellors	2	1	1	38, 58
	-Student Advisors	2	/	2	27, 27
Public Employment Service	-Employment advisors	13	8	5	24 – 60 (24-35: 7) (43-58: 6)

* For the private (non-state) school sector, no distinction is made between guidance teachers serving the compulsory school levels and the senior school levels.

6.3 What education and training qualifications are the different types or categories of career information, guidance and counselling staff required to have? (Where qualifications are required, please indicate whether it is government or a professional association that requires them, and describe relevant professional licensing bodies).

For example teaching qualifications, university degrees in psychology, special diplomas in guidance and counselling, post-graduate qualifications, completion of in-service courses and so on. Please describe the length of the education and training and the type of qualification that it leads to. Please describe any differences in requirements between the different settings in which services are provided.

Guidance teachers are not required to have specific training, even though around 40 have followed a diploma-level course in guidance and counselling at the University, and most if not all

have followed short, specialised though non-credentialed in-service courses. In the state school sector, guidance teachers are chosen by interview after a call for applications from among teachers with at least two years' classroom experience. Applicants with a diploma in guidance are automatically appointed to vacancies. Other applicants are chosen on the basis of criteria used by the interviewing board, which include: qualifications, experience in schools and in community organisations, suitability for the post, recommendation by head of school, personality, and professional competence. Appointments are renewable every two years.

To qualify as counsellors, guidance teachers need to have eight years' teaching experience, five years' experience as guidance teachers, and a professional qualification. This diploma-level certificate is generally obtained from the University of Malta.⁵⁸ Several counsellors would have also completed a Masters' degree, mostly overseas.⁵⁹ Staff aged 40 and below would have also, as a rule, followed a four year honours degree in teaching, or a three or four year degree in such areas as humanities, sciences or psychology, followed by a one-year full-time teacher training course.⁶⁰ Older staff would have generally been trained at one of the two teacher training Colleges, whose two-year courses were replaced by that offered by the Faculty of Education, set up in 1978. Some would have a first degree followed by a post-graduate certificate in education.

Employment advisors in the PES have no specialised certified training in guidance, and have developed their knowledge and skills on the job. The ETC has now engaged the Workers' Participation Development Centre at the University of Malta to provide it with a tailor-made two-year diploma course on occupational guidance, given that the Diploma in School Counselling offered by the Faculty of Education is considered by them to be too focused on personal rather than vocational guidance issues. School Guidance teachers will also be eligible to follow this new course.⁶¹

6.4 What, typically, are the types of competencies (or knowledge and skills) that these different types or categories of workers are required to have?

For example communication skills, group facilitation skills, individual and group assessment skills, labour market knowledge, knowledge of career development theory.

Typically, guidance teachers and counsellors in educational settings would be required to have a set of foundational personal skills or traits that would include understanding, openness, honesty, integrity, genuineness, and so on, as identified by the *Services Manual*.⁶² On the basis of this profile, guidance teachers and counsellors need to have the following competencies if they are to respond effectively to the demands that are made upon them:

Communication skills; group facilitation skills; individual and group assessment skills; knowledge of career development theory; labour market knowledge; information management; awareness of gender issues and their impact on choice and decision-making processes; knowledge of further education opportunities; leadership training skills; skills in working with colleagues and with

⁵⁸ This Diploma in Guidance and Counselling was first offered in 1985. After catering for three cohorts of students, the name of the course was changed to Diploma in School Counselling, and this was also offered three times. In all there have been 109 graduates from the two Diplomas. Some of these graduates would no longer be practising guidance counselling, as the diploma has often served in the past as a backdoor to upward mobility into administrative grades in the teaching profession.

⁵⁹ A new Masters in Psychology course has been offered recently within the Department of Psychology of the Faculty of Education at the University of Malta, with a strand specialising in educational counselling.

⁶⁰ The Post-Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE).

⁶¹ See Annexe 7 for an outline of the study units to be offered in this diploma-level course.

⁶² See Guidance & Counselling Services (2000) *Description of Services Manual*. Floriana: Education Division, p.10.

school administration; skills in ICT; knowledge of specialised helping agencies to whom clients can be referred; ability to work with parents.⁶³

There is presently no job description for employment advisors in the PES. The competencies required by ETC staff would overlap those of guidance teachers in schools, with an emphasis placed on the ability of employment advisors to establish a good relationship with clients, on having a sound knowledge of labour market opportunities and requirements, and on motivating clients to actively search for employment and to learn new skills that enhance employability.

6.5 How are the competencies or knowledge and skills required of those who provide information, guidance and counselling changing, and why? What is being done to meet these changing knowledge and skill needs?

There are at least six key areas where guidance personnel will need to develop fresh competencies:

The first concerns new challenges arising from changing lifestyles in Malta, and from an increasingly differentiated group of young people who would want to manage their transitions from school to work differently and not necessarily in a linear fashion.

A second challenge arises from the increasing need of guidance and counselling staff to be more aware of labour market realities, and to be sufficiently knowledgeable about the world of work and the emerging trends to better advise students regarding local and European employment opportunities.

A third challenge concerns the modality of delivering guidance services, which need to be better integrated with the services that can be offered at the local level, through youth organisations, the PES and the local council. In other words, staff should have stronger competencies in cross-sectoral collaboration.

Fourthly, guidance personnel should receive further training to better exploit the opportunities of information management that ICT provides.

Fifthly, they should be better prepared to provide the appropriate specialised guidance support to students with disabilities and other target groups.

Finally, they should develop more skills in the adult guidance area, given the implications of labour market restructuring and the needs of lifelong learning.

In addition to this, PES staff involved in the apprenticeship schemes will need to develop skills in following up apprentices, since the school-to-work advice that can be so effectively given within the context of such schemes has been subject to criticism by those providing education at the MCAST.

6.6 What opportunities exist for information, guidance and counselling service staff to update their knowledge and skills?

For example: Do industrial agreements allow time for recurrent education and skills upgrading? What time, and what programmes, do government agencies provide for the purpose? What recurrent education and skills upgrading courses are provided by tertiary institutions?

Following the collective agreement between the MUT and government in 1994 – and the upgrading agreement of February 2001, all teachers – including guidance staff – have a statutory obligation to attend in-service courses of at least three days' duration every year. Over and above these obligations, however, guidance personnel have several other opportunities to upgrade themselves, though most of these are short courses that do not lead to any formal qualification.

⁶³ See Annexe 8 for a school guidance programme proposed by the Services Manual.

Such short courses – which are generally offered in-house through a general meeting of all personnel once monthly – target either specific skill development, or consider issues that are identified as needing attention. The University, mainly through the Faculty of Education and the Psychology Department, offers in-service training opportunities through the organisation of seminars and conferences. There is a demand on the part of guidance and counsellors for a Masters degree to be offered in their field.

The ETC has provided interim in-house training through an ‘Employment Advisory Skills’ Programme with four modules (eight four-hour sessions) in intrapersonal, interpersonal, and helping skills, and in principles of career choice and development. Staff have also had other in-service training opportunities, principally through a two-week Leonardo placement with FAS (the Irish PES) in Dublin. Three ETC employees have also benefited from an observation visit to the Job Centre Plus in London, as preliminary training for the role of EURES advisors to facilitate job mobility of workers within EU countries (EUROGUIDANCE). Eventually, these three employees will receive further training on an EU Commission-sponsored scheme.

6.7 Please describe any policies that exist to systematically make use of groups such as alumni, parents and local employers in delivering services.

For example by acting as mentors, or by visiting classes to provide information on careers.

The use of non-professional groups is not a matter of policy, but is the result of the personal initiative taken by guidance teachers themselves. Thus, parents, alumni and employers are often called upon to address students during career orientation seminars, Career Conventions, and so on, in order to share their knowledge and career and further education experiences. Employers are also expected to be pro-active in helping apprentices adapt to the world of work.

7. DELIVERY SETTINGS

Here we would like to know about the delivery of services in different settings.

Schools

7.1 Are separate career education lessons a normal part of the school curriculum? If so, for each school grade, please indicate whether or not such lessons are required and the mandatory number of hours per year.

Career education is not a stand-alone subject in the Maltese curriculum, though guidance teachers organise a variety of extra-curricular activities at key transition in the school life of students (e.g. when choosing subject options at the end of Form 2 or 3; or when choosing further education or work paths at the end of Form 5 and Form 6) in order to provide information as well as decision-making skills. Such sessions take the form of ‘careers seminars’, consisting of a full-day session where students learn about post-secondary courses and schools, learn how to make a CV and how to behave in an interview. Reference has already been made in Section 2.4. to the SCOOPS project, which teaches about co-operatives and the world of work in an experiential and innovative manner.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ See Annexe 9 for an overview of the knowledge, skills and attitudes that form part of the SCOOPS curriculum.

7.2 If separate career education lessons are not provided, are policies in place to integrate career education into other subjects? Details can be provided in an Annex.

There is an increasing awareness – signalled by several passages in the *Description of Services Manual*, issued by the Guidance and Counselling unit in 2000, that ‘all members of staff in school make important contributions to guidance programmes’ (p.9), that ‘guidance and curricular work are not separate entities ... although the school counsellor and the Guidance teachers are at the core of the programme, their work can be much more effective if it integrated with that of the staff of the school, the parents, the community and other support agencies... Guidance is a structured *wholeschool* programme’ (p.14).

Indeed, education about the world of work features as a topic in social studies during the last year of primary schooling (Year 6), as well as in different years at the secondary school level. The topic is also addressed by the religious studies, home economics and business studies curriculum, and is generally tackled by PSD teachers.

The new NMC – currently in its implementation phase – places a great deal of importance on knowledge about the world of work, and requires teachers to prepare students to participate in a global economy, and to inculcate skills and orientations that are needed by a knowledge-based society, including commitment to lifelong learning, knowledge and proficiency in ICTs, flexibility, creativity, management and leadership skills, ability to work in groups and teams, communication and negotiation skills, and so on. The NMC also requires teachers to help students develop a critical understanding of the business world, of different forms of entrepreneurship (including co-operatives), of the changing work environment, of workers’ and employers’ organisations, of the European labour market, of workers’ rights and responsibilities, of health and safety issues, and so on. The NMC document recommends that teaching about the world of work should be done in a project-based, experiential manner, with importance given to the development of specific skills such as the preparation of a *curriculum vitae*, self-presentation skills, skills in managing one’s income, and so on. While the implementation process is still in its early stages, a number of structures have either been recommended or, in some cases, already set up in order to ensure that the NMC provisions are followed. Thus, a ‘School and the World of Work’ Focus Group has been working to ensure that all secondary school teachers are aware of the need to make schools more relevant to the world of work, and to come up with a strategy to implement work-related themes across the curriculum. Guidance staff is also being asked to develop further ways of facilitating the transition between school and work. In addition to this, the NMC has recommended that a specialised unit be set up within the Education Division in order to guide and support schools in their endeavours to introduce the world of work across the curriculum, and that a National Association for Industry-Education Co-operation be also established.

Career education features regularly in the post-secondary vocational sector. The induction into the world of work is here not the subject of formal lessons as much as the socialisation into skills, attitudes and the work ethic that is specific to a particular calling. Such socialisation takes place through example, mentoring, and formal and informal guidance – particularly during practical sessions at the educational institution, during the apprenticeship phase in industry and during internships.

7.3 Are periods of work experience⁶⁵ required as part of the secondary school curriculum? For each school grade please indicate whether or not such experience is required, and how many hours per year are required.

65. This refers to periods that students are required to spend in workplaces in order to assist their career decision

While many secondary schools do organise brief orientation visits to industries, there are no formal requirements of work experience in the 11-16 curriculum, though some secondary schools do offer a one-week job-shadowing programme to their fifth formers. Such programmes are however rare. It should be noted, however, that student participation in the world of paid work – what is sometimes referred to as ‘the twilight economy’ – is widespread, especially for males.⁶⁶ Work experience is a feature of the post-secondary curriculum – largely through apprenticeship schemes and, in the case of the Institute of Tourism Studies, through local and international internships.

7.4 What other types of career information, guidance and counselling services are typically provided for school students (that is, apart from career education lessons and work experience)?

For example careers fairs; personal counselling; access to career libraries; alumni programmes; parent involvement programmes; internet or computer-based programmes.

Typically, the career information, guidance and counselling services in the secondary education sector, other than career education lessons and orientation visits in industrial settings and further education institutions, would include: individual and group guidance, running a career and further education library, holding meetings with students and parents (particularly in relation to the choice of subject options and post-secondary pathways), and preparing information packs. Staff used to also administer a career interest inventory based on the Rothwell-Miller test, but this is no longer done.

Some schools organise a careers market or fair. The Guidance Unit also organises a national Careers Convention on an annual basis, but for a number of reasons – including lack of personnel – the initiative has started showing signs of decline, especially since Counsellors are expected to generate the required funds by selling advertising space to industries that wish to exhibit.⁶⁷ Occasionally schools invite parents and alumni to address students on careers-related topics.

7.5 What information, guidance and counselling services are provided by the public employment service?

For example: what is the relative balance between career and job information services and guidance and counselling; what types of clients typically seek and receive assistance; how are these services related to overall national labour market and employment policies?

Details of the service provided by the PES has been given in a number of earlier sections (see 1, 2.1, 5.8, 6.1). The ETC’s job placement advisors focus mainly on providing support to unemployed youth and adults, as well as to those who might wish to change their jobs. A key role of the guidance personnel is to help clients clarify their life goals and understand their strengths and aptitudes, and to provide information on education, training and jobs. They offer advice as to which education and training opportunities exist (most of which are available free of charge or at

making and in order to understand the world of work. It does not refer to those periods of workplace experience that are included in vocational education programmes in order to allow students to develop or practice the work-related skills and competencies included within the vocational education curriculum.

⁶⁶ See R.G. Sultana (1993) ‘Practices and policies in child labour: lessons from Malta’, *British Journal of Education and Work*, 6(3), pp.45-60. See also R. Borg (1997) ‘Factors determining career choice.’ In R.G. Sultana (ed.) (*ibid.*), pp.149-164.

⁶⁷ For the past few year, Government allocated Lm5000 for the Careers Convention initiative, but this could only be used if at the end of the event the balance was in the red.

a nominal fee at the ETC itself), provide training in job-search and self-presentation skills, and draw on the ETC's databases to direct clients to job vacancies and opportunities.

In addition to this, the ETC hosts Form 5 and Form 6 students in order to familiarize them with the range of services it offers as an employment agency. During such orientation visits, ETC officials provide details regarding the apprenticeship schemes run by the PES, and help students understand better issues regarding the world of work, including rights and responsibilities, wage regulations, and so on.

Tertiary education

In answering this section, please separately describe services in university-level tertiary institutions (those offering programmes at ISCED-97 levels 5A and 6) and in non-university-level tertiary institutions - such as community colleges and polytechnics (those offering programmes at ISCED-97 level 5B).

If applicable, also describe services in post-secondary non-tertiary institutions (those offering programmes at ISCED-97 level 4) and in institutions offering continuing education or further education and training programmes.

7.6 Please describe information, guidance and counselling services that are provided within tertiary education.

For example: Are they a normal and standard service within tertiary institutions or are they only provided in some institutions? Are they normally provided separately from or together with personal and study counselling services? Are they normally provided separately from or together with job placement and graduate recruitment services?

Post-secondary and tertiary level institutions in Malta and Gozo offer guidance and counselling services as an integral part of their mission to cater to student needs. Guidance counsellors are available on campus, meet students individually on appointment, organise seminars and short courses on such areas as study skills, leadership skills, stress management, and so on.

At the post-secondary level in non-vocational institutions (ages 16+ to 18+), students have access to a counselling service that fulfils all the three functions described in various sections above, namely personal, educational/curricular, and vocational guidance. The service is in charge of organising and disseminating information about careers, as well as about further educational opportunities. Counsellors organise seminars inviting staff from the different University and MCAST faculties and institutes so that students can better orient themselves to the courses available.

Most post-secondary level in vocational institutions (ages 16+ onwards) are being integrated within one community college, the MCAST. This is serviced by two full-time counsellors,⁶⁸ who form part of the Information and Support Centre.⁶⁹ The Institute of Tourism Studies, which will remain a separate entity, employs one full-time and one part-time counsellor. Both institutions operate a web-site which carries information about courses on offer, and the employment opportunities that these lead to.

⁶⁸ A reduction in guidance and counseling services has been noted with the establishment of the MCAST: while the institutes that previously fell under the aegis of the Department of Further Studies and Adult Education each had guidance personnel, the bringing together of many of these institutions under the College umbrella means that only two counselors are available to over 1100 MCAST students, and that at the central campus.

⁶⁹ The Information Centre also provides advice and information on all full-time and part-time day and evening courses at the MCAST. It also offers information on grants, and includes a Basic Skills Unit to support students who need assistance with literacy and numeracy in order to be able to follow their course.

Malta has only one university-level institution. This has a complement of two full-time and two part-time counsellors who, while focusing on personal counselling, also offer educational and vocational guidance, though the duty of providing information is formally assumed by the Students Advisory Service, appointed by the University Council for the purpose. Limited educational and career information is provided by the Students' Union, which also regularly organises career fairs. There is a proposal to establish a careers information room in collaboration with the ETC. A separate unit offers advice to students who wish to go abroad to participate in European Union exchange programmes. Counselling is also offered by the spiritual directors operating from the chapel on the university campus. Aspects of guidance are also catered for by the Student Ombudsman office. A specialised unit offers support and advice to students with disabilities.

Besides guidance and counselling offered centrally, some University faculties also operate an informal student advisory service, which can range from providing information about courses and further studies locally and overseas, to organising personal support through the use of mentors, either from among staff or elder students. Each faculty also has its own web-site, managed centrally by the University's Communications Office, which generally carries information about educational, and occasionally employment opportunities. Given the scale of the island, it is quite common for each faculty to have extensive networks with employers, and to recommend graduates for vacancies.

The private (for-profit) sector⁷⁰

7.7 What is known about career guidance and counselling services provided by the private (for-profit) sector: such as management consultants, outplacement services or private practitioners?

For example describe their client base, the level of their fees, the sorts of services that they provide, and what is known about growth in these services over time.

Little is known about the private guidance and counselling service sector as this is unregulated. Much of this service is concerned with personal counselling, and offered by psychologists and psychotherapists that have specialised in particular fields (e.g. educational psychology; marital counselling). Typically, fees charged for a one-hour session range from Lm10 (€24) to Lm15 (€36).

7.8 Please describe any steps that governments have taken to try to encourage private (for-profit) organisations to provide guidance and counselling services or to regulate the ways in which such services are provided.

For example by providing vouchers that can be used to purchase services; by changing legislation; by contracting out services; by setting staff qualification levels; by regulating fees that can be charged.

The Maltese government has not taken any particular steps to encourage private organisations to provide guidance and counselling services.

70. Section 8 asks about the role played by the private sector in producing educational and occupational information for use in information, guidance and counselling services.

Other organisations

7.9 What role do other organisations -- for example in the community sector -- play in providing information, guidance and counselling services? What types of clients do they serve? What types of needs do they attempt to meet?

Malta has a large number of voluntary organisations working with children, young people and adults, both at the national and at the local level. Several NGOs, particularly those working with young people, offer counselling services free of charge. Some of these organisations are specialised to deal with specific areas in the counselling field, such as marital counselling (*Cana Movement*), or substance abuse (*Sedqa, Caritas, Alcoholics Anonymous*) and child abuse (*Appogg*) counselling. Others work with people with disabilities (*Eden Foundation, Arka Foundation, Richmond Foundation, Dar il-Kaptan*), or offer support to prisoners and their families (*Mid-Dlam ghad-Dawl*). Most of the NGOs would be concerned with personal rather than with educational or career guidance. A number of these organisations also have a high national profile through programmes they lead on the media, and especially on the radio, where guidance is offered in relation to questions made by participants.

Another category of organizations, such as the Foundation for Human Resource Development, have an interest in guidance-related issues but do not offer a professional service themselves.

7.10 Have governments attempted to increase their role (for example by contracting out services)? If so, why? Have they attempted to regulate the ways in which they provide services?

The Maltese government has not taken any initiative in order to increase other organisations' role in guidance and counselling, even though, generally speaking, the trend in various other areas of state activity, government increasingly desires to adopt the role of a partner with the private sector, rather than merely be a provider. Outsourcing is also becoming an increasingly accepted practice on the part of government entities.

8. DELIVERY METHODS

Here we would like to know about delivery methods, including the ways in which they are influenced by government policies.

8.1 Career information, guidance and counselling services can be delivered in a variety of ways. In the last five years, how have these been influenced by government policies? (These might be policies to improve the use of resources, policies to increase access, policies to better meet client needs, policies to encourage equity, or other types of policies. To guide your answer, a list of some of the ways in which information, guidance and counselling services are delivered is given below in **in bullets).**

- Batteries of psychological tests
- Telephone information, guidance and counselling
- Group guidance and counselling sessions
- Individual face-to-face interviews

- CD-ROM-based self exploration and job-search packages
- Internet-based self exploration and job-search packages
- Careers fairs and exhibitions
- Educational experiences such as transition years
- Organised workplace experience or community experience
- The systematic use of community members such as employers, parents or alumni: for example as sources of career information or as mentors and role models
- Career information libraries
- Paper – and – pencil self assessment techniques: for example the Holland Self Directed Search

Guidance and counselling have not featured centrally in the government's overall vision for education, and have therefore not been greatly influenced by central policy leads. There have been few policy statements that have steered guidance and counselling in new directions, and most of the initiatives have come through from practitioners in the field.

Nevertheless, the general policy regimes of the present government will have had an indirect influence on guidance and counselling providers, in that certain priorities that have been signalled in the social, educational or labour market policy arenas will have sent clear messages across several fields. Thus, it is clear that the government's concern that all students should experience a degree of success at school, that students with disabilities are, as far as possible, integrated in a mainstreamed setting, that the vocational education route becomes an attractive pathway enjoying parity of esteem with other pathways, that parents are included as equal partners in the educational enterprise – all have implications for guidance in schools, and in some cases may have mobilised and focused guidance-related activities to support that policy direction.

Similarly, the state's commitment to the development of e-government will eventually impact on the method of delivering information, moving in the direction of a web-based portal as recommended by the national report on Lifelong Learning. The government's policy of decentralisation towards local councils could also lead to guidance delivery that is more firmly located in district offices, with terminals encouraging career exploration and assessments, self-directed searches, and access to information about further education and career opportunities. As noted earlier in 7.2, the new NMC makes several recommendations in order to support government policy to have more effective bridges between schools and the world of work. Such proposals are likely to lead guidance teachers and counsellors to be more pro-active in developing links with industry, once the implementation phase of the NMC is in full swing.

8.2 Please describe any recent or current initiatives to develop Internet-based information, guidance and counselling services.

The use of internet in the guidance and counselling field is largely restricted to the provision of information about further education opportunities. Most post-compulsory educational institutions have now developed their own web site, though a national education portal is still to be created. While most guidance teachers have received training in the use of IT, there is no computer-aided career guidance (CAGC) system in use in schools, though an initial attempt to consider such software programs as JIG-CAL had been made in the mid-1990s. The Students Advisory Services at the University has been making use of CASCAID for the past three years in order to help students clarify directions on the basis of interest inventories, and handles several requests for information by e-mail. Guidance teachers do not, generally speaking, have a PC in their careers room. No CD-Roms have been produced to support self exploration and job searches.

The co-ordinator of counselling services at the University used to use Sigi-plus, a computer-based tool to test skills and aptitudes, but this proved to be too costly and is no longer available.

The PES has its own web site for both job-seekers and employers. The site provides details of ETC employment and training services, and includes some interactive facilities for clients. Job vacancies are also advertised through this site (www.etc.org.mt).

Some privately managed web sites – such as Malta’s main portal <http://www.di-ve.com/> – as well as www.xol.com.mt – advertise careers vacancies.

8.3 Can examples be provided of the use of screening tools to match client needs or client type to the type of service provided? If such screening tools exist, please describe the reasons for developing them, and describe where they are used.

The ETC employment advisors use a profiling and caseload management system which ensures the consolidation of information about a client in view of finding a match with available vacancies.

9. CAREER INFORMATION

Here we wish to know about the educational and occupational information that is used in information, guidance and counselling services.

9.1 What is the public sector’s role in producing career information?

For example indicate which Ministries are responsible for its production; how it is produced; whether it is produced on a national level or at the regional/provincial/state level. Also indicate if governments legislate to control how information is classified, distributed or stored.

Career information used by guidance personnel in schools is generally either provided centrally by the Guidance and Counselling Unit, or collated from a variety of sources – including industry – by the guidance teachers themselves. There is no government legislation controlling the classification, distribution and storage of such information.

The ETC has a Labour Market Research Section which collates, analyses and interprets labour market information and conducts research on issues related to the labour market. It also runs a National Employment Database on an Informix system, which facilitates data warehousing and information management. As from this year, and at six monthly intervals, the ETC carries out an Employment Barometer exercise which provides an opportunity for an exchange of information between employers and the PES.

9.2 What forms does career information typically take?

For example: printed guides containing information on a large number of jobs and courses; individual leaflets or information sheets; CD-ROMs; Internet-based services.

Typically, schools provide career information on individual leaflets, often grouping similar market sectors (e.g. helping professions) together. Some of these leaflets are produced in-house by guidance officers themselves. Occasionally, larger industries (e.g. Brandstatter) provide schools with their own information leaflets. The ETC also circulates information and leaflets.

There are no print, CD-Rom, or web-based directories that offer a comprehensive description of career possibilities in Malta. The Students Advisory Services at the University of Malta has, however, recently produced a CD that carries all the relevant information regarding undergraduate courses.

9.3 Typically, which client groups is it aimed at?

For example school students; public employment service clients; tertiary students; the general public.

Most of the career information is aimed at school leavers and their parents, and at students in further education. PES information is distributed nationally, and is particularly aimed at its own clients. Some brochures are sent to educational establishments.

9.4 What methods are used to gather it?

The Guidance and Counselling Unit, as well as individual guidance officers, have personal networks with industries and with employers' associations, and information is gathered regularly through such contacts. Efforts are being made to strengthen the flow of employment-related information from the ETC to the Guidance and Counselling Unit.

The PES gathers its information on vacancies and on labour market trends through constant contact with employers, and through skills surveys and studies. The Employment Barometer study, first carried out with a sample of employers in March 2002, attempts to identify occupation and skills gaps. The survey covers the perceptions of employers for the six months before and after the exercise, and gathers information regarding which occupations are most in demand, issues related to shortage, surplus, and recruitment.

Some research institutes (e.g. Workers' Participation and Development Centre, Market Intelligence Services Co. Ltd. – MISCO) or other entities (the Students Advisory Service) occasionally carry out surveys that provide relevant information that can be used in vocational guidance. MISCO also keeps track of the number of job vacancies in particular occupational groups, and together with the local newspapers, provides classified advertisement services which link up supply with demand in the job market.

9.5 Please describe the steps that are taken to ensure that it is accurate and timely.

No particular steps are taken by the Guidance Unit in this regard. For the PES, refer to Section 9.4.

9.6 Please describe the steps that are taken to ensure that it is user-friendly and oriented to user needs.

The Guidance and Counselling unit employs a Graphic Art Technician in order to make its publications as attractive and user-friendly as possible, and to support the setting up of careers information rooms. Special efforts are made to have material available in Maltese, or in English

with a Maltese translation, wherever possible. No special efforts are made so that students with visual impairment have access to the material and brochures produced by the Unit. Neither have there been any surveys carried out to evaluate the effectiveness or perceived usefulness of the careers information material made available. The PES, on its part, generally makes extensive use of the media in order to make sure that the material it produces reaches potential clients.

9.7 How is it typically distributed?

For example through career information centres; through public libraries; through community organisations; to schools and tertiary institutions.

Most of the material is distributed free of charge through schools (intended for students and their parents), or through the PES offices (intended mainly for the unemployed). Some of the material is also accessible in school libraries and guidance rooms, as well as in libraries managed by the local councils in districts, or in downloadable format from the internet. Extensive use is made of the Education Channel and of radios. The ETC also advertises its services on large bill boards placed strategically in main arterial thoroughfares. MCAST has done the same, and has in addition advertised its courses through inserts in the local newspapers. University courses are also advertised in the press, as well as on radio and TV.

9.8 What role does the private (both for-profit and not-for-profit) sector play in providing career information?

For example: What is known about the size and nature of the market for privately published guides to jobs or to tertiary education? What examples can be provided of privately funded career information web sites? Are there examples of the mass media taking an active role in providing career information?

There are no private companies in Malta that publish guides to jobs or to further education. Newspapers regularly publish information about job vacancies. A number of websites (e.g. www.searchmalta.com) also carry job adverts.

9.9 Have governments tried to increase the role of the private sector in providing career information?

For example by contracting out the production of material.

The Government has not taken any direct steps to increase the private sector's role in providing career information.

9.10 Please describe the ways in which labour market data is typically included in career information.

For example through inclusion of data on unemployment rates and earnings; through the inclusion of data on regional variation in employment and unemployment for particular occupations; through inclusion of the results of graduate employment and course satisfaction surveys.

Labour market data on unemployment rates and number of job vacancies in particular employment sectors are rarely found in career information brochures produced by guidance

personnel, largely because this would require constant up-dating, which is beyond the capacity, resources and training that guidance personnel have.

10. FINANCING

Here we wish to know about: the ways in which information, guidance and counselling services are funded; the ways in which costs are shared; and the financial resources devoted to information, guidance and counselling services.

10.1 What method(s) do governments use to fund information, guidance and counselling services?

For example: direct service provision; contracting out/tendering; public-private partnerships. If possible indicate the percentage of total government funding of information, guidance and counselling services that flows through each of these methods.

As noted in Section 3.3. guidance and counselling services are generally financed by the state through the annual budgetary allocation made available to the respective Ministries and entities.

10.2 Are individuals required to meet some of the costs of government information, guidance and counselling services? If so, what sorts of clients are asked to pay, and what is the typical level of fees charged?

Clients making use of government-provided guidance and counselling services are not charged any fees.

10.3 Please describe what cost and expenditure data is available to government and to stakeholders -- for example on the relative costs of different delivery methods, or the cost of achieving particular outcomes, or the costs of providing services to particular types of clients -- when making policies for information, guidance and counselling services. Describe the ways in which this information is used, providing specific examples if possible.

The central Guidance Unit of the Education Division is allocated around Lm8000 (€19,200) annually for capital expenses, materials and supplies, and training costs. Another Lm5000 (€12000) are allocated annually to cover any outstanding costs incurred in the organisation of the Careers Convention.

At the ETC, there is as yet no service-based costing system.

10.4 Please provide the best available estimates of the cost (most recent year) to governments of providing information, guidance and counselling services.

In answering this, where possible provide information on the ways in which this cost is divided between different Ministries and between different levels of government. Where possible, provide information on trends in costs over time. Where possible break costs down by type: for example staff costs; information production costs; capital and equipment costs.

In answering this, it might be helpful to include an Annex describing the problems that are involved in providing expenditure and cost data for information, guidance and counselling services in your country.

Ministry of Education	Salaries	Materials, training, etc.	Total
Guidance teachers	€750000	€31200	€959200
Counsellors	€178000		

* Rough estimate for 2001-2002

10.5 Please provide an indication of the statutory salaries of information, guidance and counselling service workers. As a base, take the case of guidance officers/counsellors with a guidance or counselling qualification at ISCED-97 level 5 (i.e. a university degree or equivalent) and indicate:

- The starting salary for those with the minimum required training
- The salary after 15 years' experience
- The number of years from the starting salary to the top salary
- Where available, please provide equivalent information for other categories of guidance and counselling workers

Salaries for guidance teachers vary according to the scale they occupy. The average between the starting salary of a teacher (Lm5353), and the top salary (Lm7416) is Lm6,384 (or €15300 annually). This would have to be divided in two, since only half of the time of a guidance teacher is dedicated to guidance work. In addition, the guidance teacher receives Lm120 annually as an allowance, since guidance is considered to be a post of special responsibility. School Counsellors earn a Scale 7 salary (Lm7416 - €17800), in addition to which must be added allowances for diploma and post-graduate degrees that they have acquired.

11. ASSURING QUALITY

Here we wish to know about the ways that the quality of information, guidance and counselling services is evaluated, maintained and enhanced.

11.1 Please describe the steps that governments take to maintain and increase the quality of information, guidance and counselling services.

In education, as in other government sectors, one aspect of quality assurance is the further professional training of guidance teachers and counsellors. In addition to this, however, a key initiative has been the production of a Guidance and Counselling Services Manual. A Quality Service Charter is being prepared with the aid of the government's Charter Support Unit.

Quality assurance in the education sector has generally been maintained through 'passive measures', i.e. through the employment of inspectors/education officers. There is a post for such an education officer for guidance and counselling, which, however, is presently vacant. Counsellors monitor the work that guidance teachers do in schools. Guidance teachers are also required to write a bi-annual report on their activities, which is evaluated centrally at the Guidance Unit.

In the PES, services are monitored continuously in terms of operational outputs.

11.2 Do standards exist for the delivery of information, guidance and counselling services? How and by who were these developed? What status do they have? Do they differ between providers?⁷¹

No set standards have yet been developed.

11.3 Do standards exist for the competencies required by information, guidance and counselling services staff? If so, how and by who were these developed? What status do they have? Do they differ between providers?⁴

Formal standards of staff competencies in the information, guidance and counselling services have not yet been developed. However, see Section 6.4.

11.4 Are there formal requirements, for example expressed in regulations or legislation, for the education and training qualifications required by information, guidance and counselling staff?⁴

See Section 6.3.

11.5 Do guidelines exist on information quality standards to help groups such as tertiary institutions, industry associations and individual enterprises produce career information?⁴

There are no formal guidelines or quality standards that providers are obliged to follow in producing career information.

11.6 Please provide details of any professional groups, bodies or associations of information, guidance and counselling services workers in your country.

In answering this please describe the extent to which such professional groups, bodies or associations: work to raise standards of professional practice, for example through the professional development and recurrent education of their members; are actively involved in lobbying governments on professional issues, for example relating to service quality; and have an industrial role to improve the employment conditions of their members.

71. Please provide details in an Annex.

Guidance teachers and counsellors generally belong to the Malta Union of Teachers which is most active in improving the employment conditions of its members. The recently set up Malta Association for the Counselling Profession has drafted an ethical code of conduct for its members, and is working hard to ensure that further training at the post-diploma level is available to counsellors.

11.7 Please describe any ways in which career information, guidance and counselling professionals are involved in the development of policy: for example through formal roles for professional associations; or through providing feedback to service providers.

Guidance teachers and counsellors can act as lobby groups within the teachers' union, which has a major influence on the policy-making directions adopted by the government. The professional associations for psychologists can also have an influence on policy-making, though they are presently in a weak position because of rival claims to legitimate representation of the profession. The recently formed Malta Association for the Counselling Profession is still too young to be effective in policy-making, though it has already had various meetings with the ministers of Education and Social Policy and with the respective shadow ministers.

12. THE EVIDENCE BASE

Here we wish to know about the ways in which the delivery of information, guidance and counselling services is evaluated and supported by data and research evidence. In answering this section please refer in particular to national evidence where this is available, rather than to studies conducted in other countries.

12.1 What information is available about the extent to which information, guidance and counselling services are used? What is known about differences in levels of use and access as a function of factors such as: socio-economic status or family background; geographical location; gender; age; educational level; and levels of disadvantage? Do regular national statistical collections monitor access? Have access and usage levels changed over time?

There are no statistics providing regular details regarding the access to and use of guidance and counselling services in Malta on a national level, though now schools are requested to keep data on how many students have gone to the guidance teacher. One study, carried out in part-fulfilment of the requirements of a Masters degree in education, does provide us with some data, though this is now somewhat dated. The survey involved a random sample of 292 fifth formers in Junior Lyceums which, for the scholastic year 1990/1991, represented 25% of all students in that sector, and 13.7% of all students at the secondary school level. The study revealed that 85.6% of all students who answered the questionnaire had been to see the guidance teacher. 34.2% of all students had a meeting with the guidance teacher only once, while 36.3% went once every term. 52.7% of the girls and 33% of the boys who had a meeting with their guidance teacher reported that the interaction took place in the context of a group session, with the whole class being present. The study also suggests that more boys than girls make use of the guidance service; boys are also more likely than girls to view guidance teachers as an effective source of information and help.⁷²

Some educational institutions do write up an annual report, which includes the number of clients that they have seen throughout the year. This is the case for the Counselling Unit at the

⁷² R. Borg (1997) 'Factors determining career choice'. In R.G. Sultana (ed.) (*ibid.*), pp.149-164.

University, where, on average, around 375 students make use of the counselling services annually. For the year 1996-1997, 153 students were seen for guidance in educational matters, 13 in vocational guidance, while the rest wanted personal guidance.

The tables below show the number of clients catered for by the ETC between January and June 2001, in comparison to data for 2002.⁷³ The two tables include new registrants, repeats (i.e. those who register again after strike off period) and number of clients who have sought help at Job Centres.

2001	January	February	March	April	May	June
New Registrants	323	242	250	212	216	159
Repeats	1246	945	952	864	894	713
Job Centres	4271	3678	3704	4392	5289	5235

2002	January	February	March	April	May	June
New Registrants	475	267	343	378	244	189
Repeats	1352	924	788	1053	947	800
Job Centres	4368	4011	3540	4288	4403	3943

The following is an ETC website trend analysis from October 2001 to June 2002:

Website Trend Analysis	Oct 2001	Nov 2001	Dec 2001	Jan 2002	Feb 2002	March 2002	April 2002	May 2002	June 2002
No. of Hits on ETC Website	101691	154761	165679	355651	255562	291783	207918	147485	232865
No. of Hits on recent vacancies	2950	4291	4249	9247	7111	7939	5875	4191	7301
No. of Hits performed by Occup.	1654	2478	2638	5584	3648	3478	2665	1929	3213

12.2 How is the level of community need and demand for information, guidance and counselling services established (for example by use of surveys, rates of service usage, waiting lists)? What is known about the expectations that clients have of services?

There are no formal, established procedures to clarify societal and individual needs and demands for information, guidance and counselling services. Guidance staff occasionally carry out needs surveys on their own initiative.

⁷³ All three tables provided by N. Saliba, from the ETC's Employment Services.

12.3 What criteria are normally used to judge the benefits or outcomes of information, guidance and counselling services?

There are no official formulated criteria to judge the benefits or outcomes of information, guidance and counselling activities. However, the Services Manual suggests a list of areas for evaluation, meant to help the guidance counselling team in a school judge the effectiveness of their efforts.⁷⁴

These include such indicators as:

- More effective learning and higher educational attainment
- Greater social cohesion at school
- Smoother transition between primary and secondary schools
- Lower incidence of disruptive behaviour on the part of students judged to be 'difficult'
- Less truancy and absenteeism
- More students seeking advice when making educational or career-related decisions
- Stronger and more positive links with parents
- Decrease in incidence of dropping out
- More students being satisfied with the curricular choices they have made
- A more positive environment at the school, with lower incidence of conflict, bullying, aggression and violence
- Improved relations between students, and between students and teachers
- More students seeking to continue their studies after the completion of compulsory schooling

Some guidance teachers also prepare questionnaire surveys in order to gauge the extent to which they are effectively responding to client needs.

No study has been carried out to monitor the effectiveness of the ETC's career information and guidance services, though a report on the caseload management system analysis provides indicators for the improvement of the work done by employment advisors.

12.4 Please provide details of any recent (last five years) studies that have been conducted of:

- The costs of providing information, guidance and counselling services.
- How costs vary as a function of the type of service delivered and the characteristics of clients.
- How the outcomes or benefits of information, guidance and counselling services relate to their costs.
- How the benefits or outcomes of information, guidance and counselling services are related to the type of service provided and the characteristics of clients.

Thus far, there are no studies available that help establish a relationship between costs, outcomes and benefits.

12.5 Please provide details of any recent (last five years) initiatives or pilot projects that have been designed to provide insight into: the impact of careers services on individuals' career choices; the ability to use career information; the impact of services upon employers; the impact of services upon the development of a learning society.

⁷⁴ See Annexe I, pp.43-45 of the *Services Manual*.

There are no Maltese surveys done specifically to provide insight into the impact of careers' services on individuals' career choices, the ability to use career information, the impact of services upon employers and the development of a learning society.

12.6 Do any national research centres specialise in career information, guidance and counselling services? Do they specialise in evaluative and policy studies: or do they mainly focus upon guidance techniques and methods?

There are no national research centres specialising in career information or guidance and counselling services in Malta. The function of research is largely, though not exclusively fulfilled by the Faculty of Education. The Guidance and Counselling Unit, however, has developed an important database, from 1990 to the present, on the basis of a tracer study it carries out annually. These tracer studies provide useful information on the trajectories followed by students after completing their compulsory education, with the data being differentiated according to school type and gender, and educational or occupational destination.

Some research is carried out by practitioners themselves. In 1992, for instance, the Students Advisory Services at the University, carried out research into the employment situation of University Graduates, gathering information about various aspects of the graduates' employment such as their employment conditions and their attitudes about work.

The ETC's research function has been consolidated with the establishment of a research department, which has commissioned studies of, among others, the school-to-work transition process in Malta. This study is still in progress.

12.7 How useful have governments found the work of research centres in developing policy for information, guidance and counselling services?

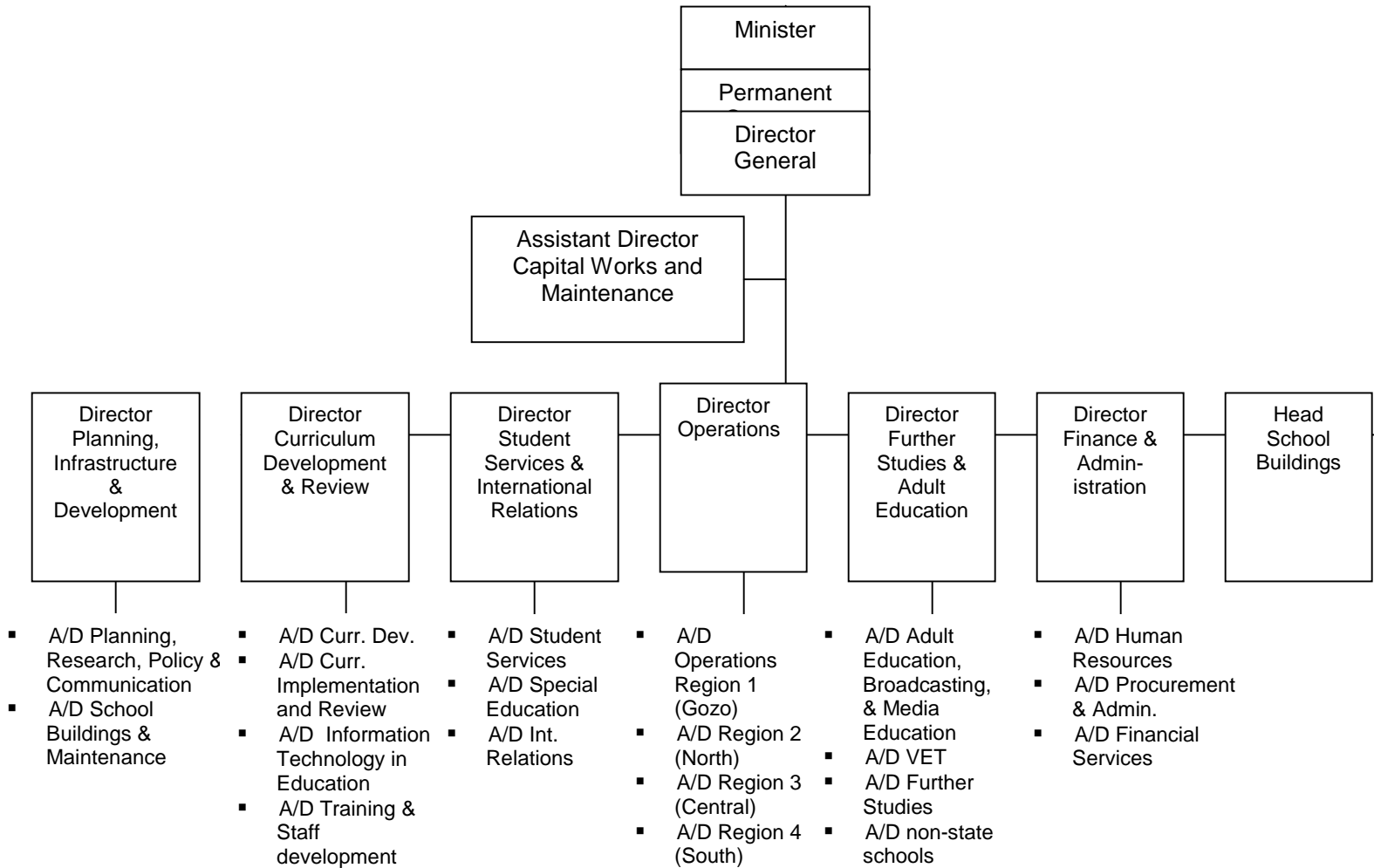
While government has often been criticised by scholars for not being research-led in its policy-making practices, the environment is slowly changing, with different state departments actually commissioning research reports and surveys in specific priority areas with a view to engage in more rational planning and implementation of goals.

Other research is produced as part of the normal function of professors at university. A case in point is the impact that the research on bullying in schools and at the work place had on the development of a campaign for safe schools in Malta, largely led by the Student Services Section.

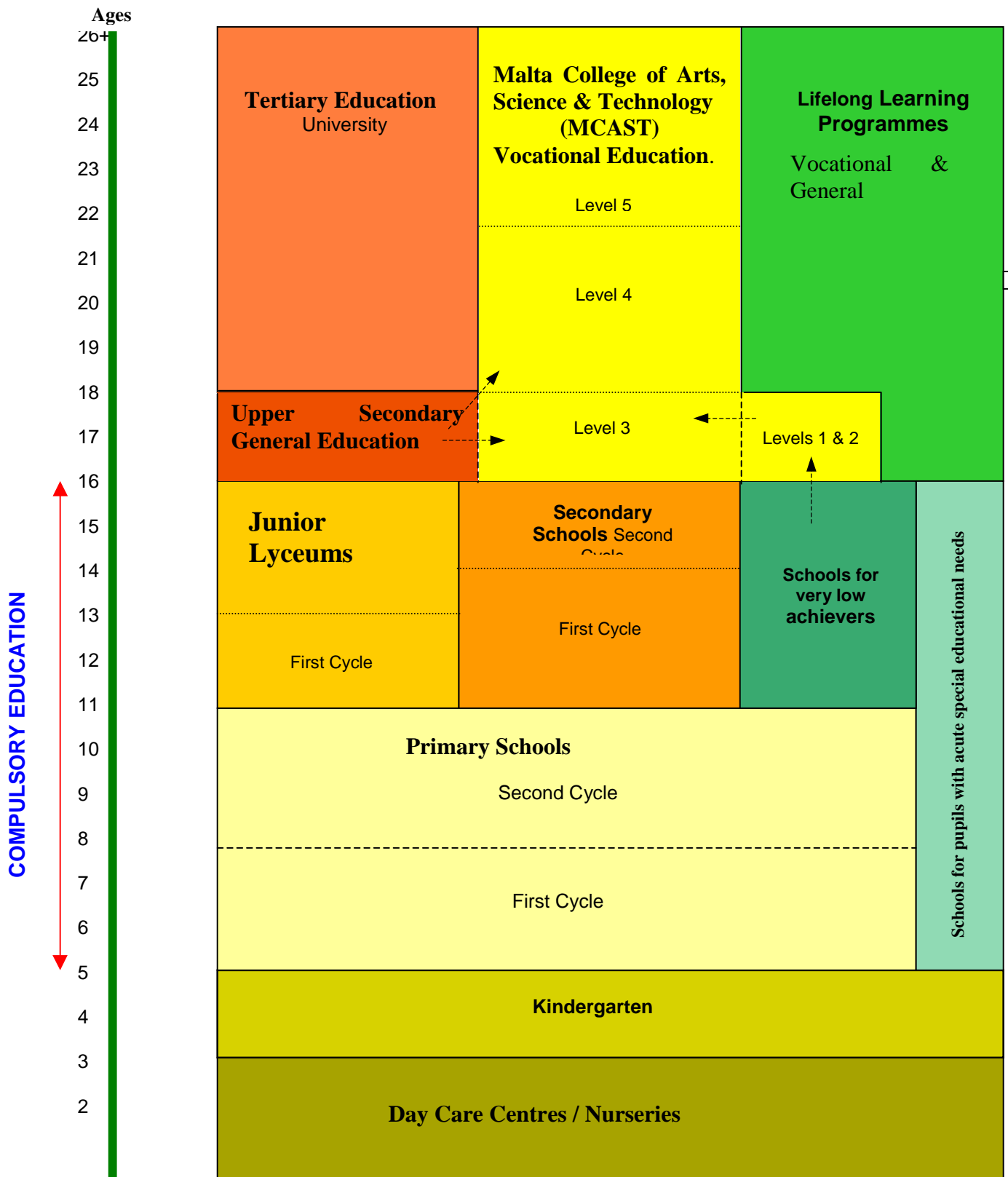
12.8 Have governments taken steps to increase the evidence base for information, guidance and counselling services through support for relevant research centres? Has such support been on the basis of individual commissioned studies, or are more on-going forms of support used?

The government has not provided any direct support, or taken any other practical steps, to increase the evidence base for information, guidance and counselling services. Indirectly, of course, research entities – particularly at the University of Malta and the ETC – can allocate resources to address specific issues related to guidance and counselling, resources which ultimately come from the state.

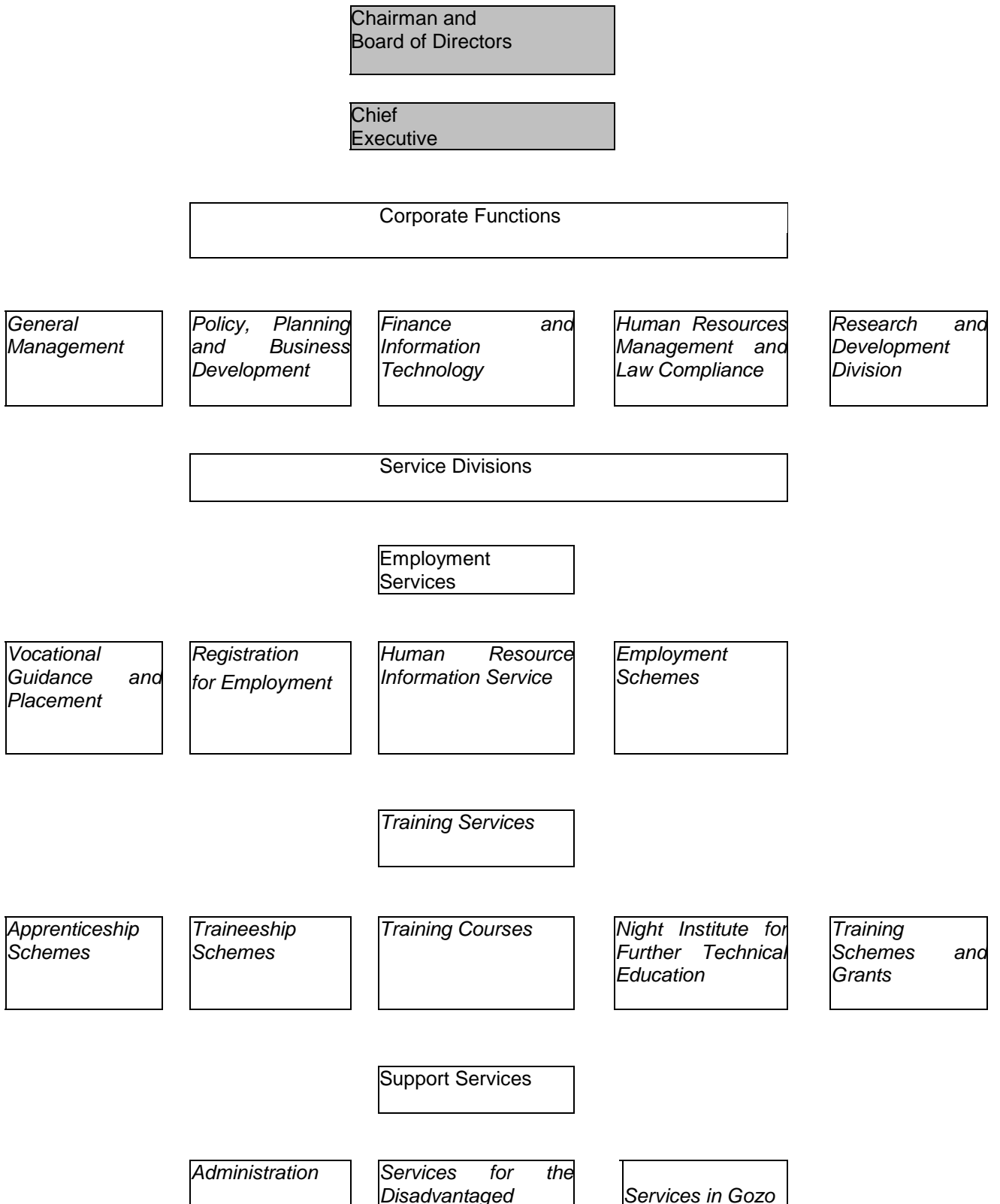
Annexe 1: Top Structures of the Education Division



**Annexe 2: Organigram showing
Malta's educational system**



Annexe 3: Organigram of the Employment and Training Corporation



Annexe 4: List of Courses offered by the General Workers' Union



GOAL

To offer continuous education to members, their families and the general public, in the most professional and financially accessible manner

LIST OF COURSES

LANGUAGES

- MALTESE
- ENGLISH
- ITALIAN
- FRENCH
- GERMAN

CRAFTS

- GANUTEL
- LACE
- SEWING
- PAPER
- HANSA

MUSIC

- FUN WITH MUSIC (Jun)
- FUN WITH MUSIC (Sen)
- VIOLIN
- GUITAR
- PIANO

COMPUTERS

- JUNIORS BEGINNERS
- JUNIORS INTERMEDIATE
- JUNIORS MULTIMEDIA
- OFFICE APPLICATIONS Beg.
- OFFICE APPLICATIONS InT.
- OFFICE APPLICATIONS Adv.
- INTERNET
- MICROSOFT WORD
- MICROSOFT EXCEL
- SAGE
- ORDINARY LEVEL STUDIES

HEALTH & SAFETY

- SAFETY REPS EMPLOYEES
- FIRST AID
- SAFETY AWARENESS
- VDU's SAFETY
- SAFETY AT HOME

COURSES RELATED TO OVERSEAS

- CHANGE AT WORK
- ENVIRONMENT
- EUROPEAN UNION
- COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS

ART & DRAMA

- ART
- CONTEMPORARY DANCE
- DRAMA
- UNIKIDS

OTHER SUBJECTS

- MATHEMATICS
- MATHEMATICS (Matsec)
- BREAST SCREENING
- PREPARATION OF EO's
- WORK RETIREMENT

GENERAL COURSES (Trade Union Education)

- INDUCTION COURSE
- INTENSIVE COURSE
- INDEPTH COURSE
- LEADERSHIP COURSE
- PUBLIC SPEAKING
- UNDERSTANDING ACCOUNTS
- STRESS MANAGEMENT
- COMMUNICATION SKILLS
- THINKING TOOLS
- MANAGING AS PARTNERS
- TIME & MOTION STUDY

Many of these courses are offered at different levels: basic, intermediate and advanced.

Annexe 5

Position Descriptions of School Counsellors and Guidance Teachers, as articulated in the *Services Manual* (June 2000), Education Division, Malta.

Position Description of School Counsellor

Main responsibilities:-

1. Is responsible for the running of a guidance and counselling service in one large school, or a number of small schools;
2. Works in continuous collaboration with the Education Officer, Guidance and Counselling;
3. Liaises with the Guidance teacher/s in the school he/she is posted to, and with the Guidance Teacher/s in the other school he/she is assigned;
4. Advises parents and helps students in making educational and vocational choices;
5. Co-ordinates the work of Form Teachers and Guidance Teachers in collaboration with the Heads of Schools concerned;
6. Advises heads of schools and staff on the compilation and use of cumulative record cards, and ensures that these record cards are properly kept;
7. Advises on the profiling of students;
8. Advises on and encourages a healthy all-round development of students;
9. Helps students with problems;
10. Conducts personal counselling sessions with individuals, and/or with groups of students;
11. Facilitates referrals of students to other specialists and services;
12. Organises activities and services, during normal school hours at institution and systems levels, in collaboration with the Education Officer, Guidance & Counselling;
13. Organises any other activities on a voluntary basis.

Position Description of Guidance Teacher:

Main responsibilities:-

1. Performs the duties of a Teacher;
2. Assists and guides students in their personal, education and emotional development;
3. Caters for particular needs of students referred to him/her by other teachers or school administrators, and prepares any reports and makes the necessary contacts with the Education Division for external referrals if, and when required;
4. Advises parents on the personal development and behaviour, subject options and career choices of their children;
5. Organises meetings (including talks, discussions, seminars, etc.) for parents as agreed with the Head of School;
6. Prepares students and provides the necessary information for subject options and career choices;
7. Organises visits by students to educational institutions and career related establishments;
8. Co-operates in the organisation of Guidance and Counselling activities and services at school and system level;
9. Works under the direction of Counsellor and Guidance and Counselling Education Officer/s;
10. Facilitates the transition from primary to secondary school, and from school to another school, or to school leaving;
11. Organises guidance and counselling spaces and facilities at school.

Annexe 6 Relevant Websites

Ministry of Education:-
<http://www.education.gov.mt>

Ministry of Social Policy:-
<http://www.msp.gov.mt>

Department of Further Studies and Adult Education:-
http://www.education.gov.mt/edu/studies_adult.htm

Employment and Training Corporation:-
<http://www.etc.org.mt>

Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology:-
<http://www.mcast.edu.mt/>

Institute of Tourism Studies
<http://its.gov.mt/>

University of Malta:-
<http://www.um.edu.mt/>

University of Malta Students Advisory Service:-
<http://home.um.edu.mt/sas/>

University of Malta Counselling Service:-
<http://www.um.edu.mt/counsell.html>

Misco:-
<http://www.miscomalta.com/>

Job advertising:-
<http://www.di-ve.com/>

<http://www.xol.com.mt>

**Annexe 7: Course Programme for the
Diploma in Social Studies (Occupational Guidance & Career Counselling)**

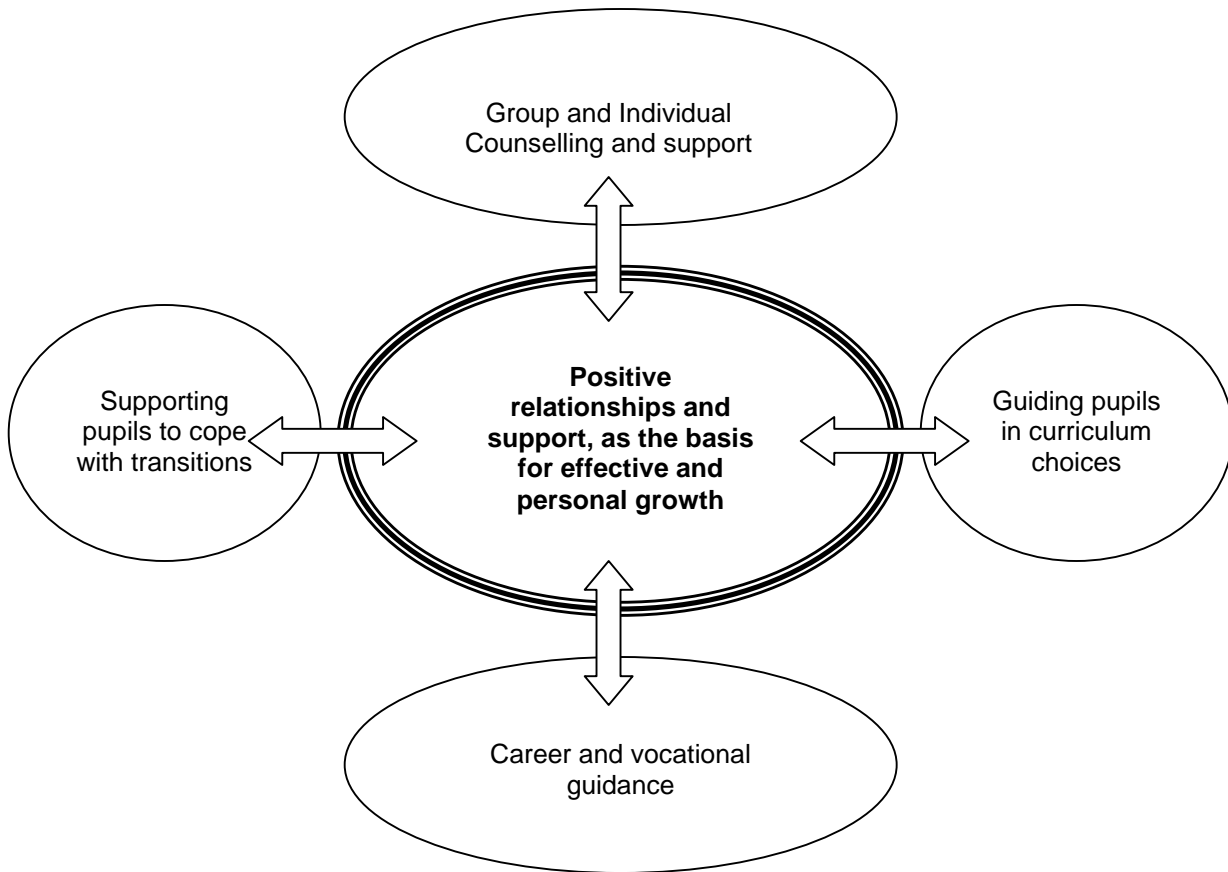
Study-Units

WPR 0401	Induction (including study, writing and reporting skills)	1 credit ⁺
WPR 0402	Trends in the Labour Market / Labour Economics	2 credits
WPR 0403	Sociology of Work and Maltese Work Ethics	3 credits
WPR 0404	Principles of Labour Law	3 credits
WPR 0405	Theories & Principles of Career Counselling	2 credits
WPR 0406	Sourcing, using & analysing Labour Market Data	2 credits
WPR 0407	Counselling Skills	2 credits
WPR 0408	Placement Skills	2 credits
WPR 0409	Orientations to LL and Evolving Labour Markets	2 credits
WPR 0420	Work, Unemployment, Social Dialogue & Inclusion	3 credits
WPR 0421	Work Design & Job Classification	2 credits
WPR 0422	Profiling, Personality Audit & VG Practice	2 credits
WPR 0423*	Principles of Management & Employer Needs	2 credits
WPR 0424*	Gender Issues at Work	2 credits
WPR 0425*	Career Information & IT Applications	2 credits
WPR 0426*	Sensitivity Training	2 credits
WPR 0427*	Evaluation of Employment Schemes	2 credits
WPR 0428*	Research Methods / Survey Techniques	2 credits
WPR 0429*	Issues in Occupational Guidance & VG	2 credits
WPR 0490*	Extra Curricular Credit / Elective Study Unit	2 credits

* = Optional / Elective Courses

⁺ 1 credit is equivalent to 50 hours of student commitment, 14 of which are normally contact hours.

Annexe 8: Elements of a Guidance Programme



Source: Guidance & Counselling Services (2000) *Description of Services Manual*.
Malta: Education Division, p.19.

Annexe 9: Curricular Goals for the SCOOPS project

Knowledge:

- about the meaning and value of work.
- about the duties and the rights of the Maltese worker.
- about safety regulations.
- on the global economy and its effect on the local economy.
- on social and political history concerning the Maltese worker.
- about workers unions and movements.
- on the Maltese Co-operative Movement.
- on social benefits of different categories of employees
- about the taxation system.
- about the range of job vacancies available and their requirements.
- about finding a vacancy.
- on subsidies and financial schemes.
- on work ethics.

Skills:

- Working in groups and self control in critical times.
- Planning and organisation.
- Developing one's own potential.
- Discussing issues and negotiating deadlocks.
- Time management.
- Project management.
- Evaluation of one's activities.
- Presenting of Projects or Business Plans.
- Finding solutions to problems encountered during work.
- Concentration.
- Detecting dangers and concern for safety at work.
- Interpreting regulations, instructions, orders and directives.
- Choice of one's career.
- Handling an interview.
- Writing of a curriculum vitae and presenting one's portfolio.
- Financial Management of one's earnings.
- Keeping up to date with one's field of work.
- Preparation for temporary unemployment.
- Awareness and experience of information technology.
- Literacy, numeracy and operacy.

Attitudes:

- Appreciate that business requires long term planning.
- Appreciate that motivation in education is important for one's future career.
- Generate respect for all trades and professions.
- Appreciate the need of workers to join groups.
- Appreciate the importance of accountability and initiative.
- Appreciate life long education.