During 2014, the Office of the Permanent Secretary within the Ministry for Education and Employment was responsible for the following Directorates / Departments:

1. **OFFICE OF THE PERMANENT SECRETARY**

2. **DIRECTORATE FOR EDUCATIONAL SERVICES**  
   - STUDENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT  
   - DIRECTORATE FOR LIFELONG LEARNING AND EARLY SCHOOL LEAVERS  
   - SCHOOL RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

3. **DIRECTORATE FOR QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN EDUCATION**  
   - CURRICULUM AND ELEARNING DEPARTMENT (CMELD)  
   - ELEARNING DEPARTMENT (ELD)  
   - QUALITY ASSURANCE DEPARTMENT (QAD)

4. **CORPORATE SERVICES DIVISION**

5. **HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTORATE**

6. **RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

7. **EU AFFAIRS DIRECTORATE**

8. **DIRECTORATE FOR PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION**

9. **EXAMINATIONS DEPARTMENT**

10. **DEPARTMENT INFORMATION MANAGEMENT UNIT**
1. OFFICE OF THE PERMANENT SECRETARY

A. Routine duties of the Office

- Advising the Minister on policy issues and decisions as required;
- Supporting the Parliamentary Secretariat for Sports, Youth, Research and Innovation;
- Leading and coordinating the Ministry’s top management structure;
- Conducting regular consultation meetings with all stakeholders;
- Updating and issuing of appointments of membership on Boards and Committees within the remit of the Ministry;
- Updating of the Ministry’s Website;
- Liaising with other Ministries in implementing Government commitments and policies;
- Liaising with core Departments such as Finance, PSC and PAHRO.

B. During 2014, the Permanent Secretary led and coordinated a number of policy initiatives aimed at enhancing and/or reforming the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of the services provided by the entities which fall within the portfolio of the Ministry:

1. The Malta National Lifelong Learning Policy

   This strategy is one of a number of initiatives aiming to realise the Government’s commitment for Malta to become a learning nation.


   The policy is aimed at supporting young people between the ages of 13 and 30 and was issued for consultation up to October 2014.

3. Strategic Plan for the prevention of Early School Leaving in Malta

   This strategy is meant to reduce Malta’s relatively high rate of Early School Leaving. The strategy aims to help young people continue their educational path and is in line with European Commission targets for 2020.


   This strategy includes over 100 policy measures and is meant to ensure that all children, youths and adults have the opportunity to acquire the competencies required of them to lead fulfilling lives. The strategy adopts a lifelong perspective with a clear emphasis on the first and early years.

5. The National Employment Policy 2015

   The Policy takes account of both the economic and social aspects of employment in order to provide a comprehensive set of initiatives and measures that will enhance the concept of making work pay. The policy was launched in May 2014.


   In close collaboration with the economic sectors and civil society, the Ministry for Education launched a consultation process in February 2014. The strategy outlines
the essential pillars for Maltese education in the coming years.

7. **Respect for All Framework**

Launched in October 2014, *The Respect for All Framework* finds its roots in a philosophy of values-based education and supports active citizenship. The educator promotes this philosophy in the way that he develops relationships and promotes positive human values. However, the process does not rely only on the input of the educator. This framework places responsibility on each member of the school community to internalise these positive human values and to act as role models for the school community.

8. **Addressing bullying behaviour in schools**

The anti-bullying policy was launched in November 2014, addressing different forms of bullying including cyber-bullying and racial discrimination.

9. **Inter-ministerial effort to combat absenteeism – financial grant to parents.**

The Ministry for Education and Employment, in conjunction with the Ministry for Social Policy introduced an incentive to encourage parents to send their children to school regularly. This involves a child supplement of €400 per year for the first three children in a family.

This policy is already bearing fruit, with school attendance up by 1.8%.

C. **During 2014, a number of reforms were carried out within the Ministry for Education and Employment:**

1. **Substance Abuse Prevention Programmes and Interventions in State Schools**

Choosing the best approach to drug education is a key task for all stakeholders in the field of prevention. These guidelines aim to reduce repetition and minimise class disruptions while ensuring that effective drug prevention programmes are in place. They also aim to give clear guidelines on how the different stakeholders can complement each other’s interventions within a school setting.

2. **Reform of the new Student Maintenance Grant system**

The Permanent Secretary led the development of the student maintenance grant reform whereby the smart card was replaced by a direct payment allowance into the student’s bank account.

3. **Youth Guarantee**

The Ministry launched the Youth Guarantee, offering an opportunity to those who are not in employment, education and training to either access the labour market or education and training. The principle is to empower youth to achieve their aims for a better future with a better job. This initiative is supported by EU ESF funding.

4. **Alternative Learning Programme**

The Awards follow successful training which forms part of the Alternative Learning Programme, a programme directed at secondary school students with the aim to provide an alternative pathway to their education. Two Award Ceremonies have so
far been organised, for 260 and 16 students respectively.

5. **Free childcare service**

The free childcare service was initiated in April 2015. Practically all childcare centres in Malta and Gozo have signed up to the Government scheme. This family-friendly measure will ensure that children start their education on a level playing field. It also falls in line with Government’s commitment to encourage more women to enter employment or continue with their education.

D. **Inauguration of the new MCAST Gozo Campus in Ghajnsielem**

The MCAST Campus in Gozo is an extension of the ten Institutes which form part of MCAST in Malta. The opening of the MCAST Gozo Campus is in line with the general policy of the Government to offer services to Gozitans in Gozo rather than imposing excessive travel on them. MCAST aims to offer vocational education and training, not only to teenagers but to people of all ages. The MCAST Gozo Campus will therefore be providing a service to the Gozitan community in general. To date, the campus has 23 courses on offer.

E. During 2014, the Office of the Permanent Secretary established a number of Inquiry Boards to carry out the following investigations:

- Bord Investigattiv dwar **SkolaSajj u Klabb 3 – 16**
- Inquiry into Allegations of mismanagement and various irregularities at the **Marsa Racing Club**
- Bord ta’ Inkjestà: **Incident f’SkołaSajj – Fgura 2014**
- Board of Inquiry entitled **“Recovery of Overpaid Students’ Maintenance Grants – Financial Year 2012”**

F. The Grievance Unit is also housed in the Office of the Permanent Secretary. During 2014, the Unit received 160 requests.
2. DIRECTORATE FOR EDUCATIONAL SERVICES (DES)

INTRODUCTION

The Directorate for Educational Services (DES) was established following the enactment of the amendments of the Education Act Chapter 327 in 2006.

The mission of the Directorate is to ensure the effective and efficient operation and delivery of services to the colleges and state schools within an established framework of decentralisation and autonomy and includes the general function of planning; providing and allocating resources, human and otherwise; services, and learning tools, both of a pedagogical, psychosocial, managerial and operative nature as well as other additional support tools, as required in the state colleges, schools and educational institutions.

The Directorate for Educational Services (DES) is responsible for the following Directorates:

STUDENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT;
DIRECTORATE FOR LIFELONG LEARNING AND EARLY SCHOOL LEAVERS
SCHOOL RESOURCES DEPARTMENT (SRD).

I. STUDENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT (SSD)

MISSION STATEMENT

To ensure the effective and efficient operation and delivery of services to the colleges and state schools within an established framework of decentralisation and autonomy.

GENERAL FUNCTIONS

OBJECTIVES

To support and encourage schools and Colleges in the promotion of School Library services and cultural activities within schools;

To ensure the provision of effective services of counsellors, social workers, psychologists and other professional persons according to the needs of students and their families in collaboration with the Colleges;

To provide the resources required for inclusive and special educational programmes and for other schemes related to individual educational needs in conjunction with Colleges and schools;

To ensure the supply and the coordination of vocational and career guidance services, including the implementation of programmes aimed at achieving improved school-workplace correlation and assist in the transition stages, including those from school to work;

To ensure the provision of services required to deal effectively with issues of good conduct and discipline, of child abuse, of bullying and of drug abuse;

To promote the physical and mental health of students through health information and promotion, medical screening services and healthy life-style programmes;

To support the Colleges in the organisation of special initiatives and projects;
To co-operate with local and foreign institutions, and encourage and facilitate a better participation in programmes, and the international exchange of students and personnel, particularly in the institutions and programmes of the European Union.

PROFESSIONAL STAFF

To achieve this aim the following management staff makes up Student Services, one Director and four Service Managers. The four Service Managers are managing the following sections:

EDUCATION PSYCHO-SOCIAL SERVICES
SPECIAL EDUCATION AND RESOURCE CENTRES
INCLUSIVE EDUCATION
PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

The Centre now houses various facilities to complement the services offered by the above-mentioned sections. These include:

- A fully equipped playroom for early intervention services;
- Counselling rooms;
- Assessment rooms;
- Access to Communication and Technology Assessment Lab;
- Training Facilities.

EDUCATION PSYCHO-SOCIAL SERVICES

The Education Psycho-Social Services within the Student Services Department (SSD) seeks to provide quality service by qualified personnel to clients within the educational system according to the specific needs of students. These services are intended to assist students in their holistic development as individuals, and help them become active and responsible members of society.

The Education Psycho-Social Services is comprised of the following Services:

School Psychological Service; Psychotherapy Service; Social Work Service; Safe Schools Programme which incorporates the Child Safety Service; Anti-Bullying Service; Anti-Substance Abuse Service; Career Guidance Service; Servizz Għoża; Counselling Services; College Prefect of Discipline; Youth Workers; and Education Medical Services

Professionals working under the remits of the Education Psycho-Social Services are either based at the College or are operating from the Centre Student Services Department whereby they give their service to the respective colleges.

SERVICES OPERATING FROM STUDENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT TO COLLEGES

Career Guidance Teachers; School Psychological Service; Psychotherapy Service; Safe Schools Programme; Principal Social Worker; and Education Medical Service.

PROFESSIONALS WHO ARE BASED AT THE SCHOOL OR AT THE COLLEGE

College Counsellor; Counsellor; Trainee Counsellors; College Career Advisor; Trainee Career Advisors; School Counsellors; Guidance Teachers; College Prefects of Discipline; Social Workers; Social Support Workers; and Youth Workers.
CENTRE SITUATED AT QORMI: SERVIZZ GĦOŻŻA

EMPLOYMENT OF NEW RECRUITMENT – INVESTMENT IN MORE MANPOWER – NEW POSTS / POSITIONS

As from September 2009 to date, different professionals have been employed with the Student Services Department within the Directorate for Educational Services.

All personnel are working on a 40 hour weekly basis all year round whereby, in our schools there is now a continuation of services even during the summer holidays, school holidays and even after school hours. The introduction of a 40 hour week employment has proved to be of great benefit to both students and parents.

This year, the counsellors, the psychotherapists, the psychologists and the guidance teachers who work in specialised sectors, were once again given personal and group professional supervision sessions. This service is still ongoing and was very useful for the individuals in the development and professional knowledge regarding their work and also was a learning experience for their personal development.

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICE (SPS)

MISSION STATEMENT

The School Psychological Service strives to promote the optimal psycho-educational environment that facilitates the learning and development of children and young people. This is undertaken through collaboration with parents, school staff and other child professionals and services.

SERVICES

The main services offered by the School Psychological Service during 2014 included:

- psycho-educational assessment;
- emotional and behavioural assessments;
- intervention for children and young people with learning, behavioural and/or emotional difficulties;
- issuing of reports for special examination provisions for school as well as for SEC exams and ECDL;
- reports for the purpose of statementing;
- crises intervention in schools;
- one-to-one therapeutic work with children and adolescents;
- work with parents and families;
- classroom interventions and peer support programmes;
- attendance for case conferences and IEP meetings;
- pre-referral consultations;
- advice to SMTs in colleges and schools;
- delivery of Professional Development Sessions to other college staff/ professionals;
- telephone consultation with parents, school staff and professionals in other agencies/services;
- liaising with other services within the Student Services Department of the Directorate for Educational Services and with external child-support agencies;
- supervision and mentoring of trainee psychologists and assistant psychologists; and
- participation in the development of the national early screening tool for young children.
**FORMAL INDIVIDUAL REFERRALS**

Closed referrals (received during or prior to 2014 **not including** those for SEC arrangements): 483; assessments for SEC examination access arrangements: 329; cases in process: 233.

**TRAINING AND SUPERVISION**

The School Psychological Services is committed to the continued training and supervision of junior personnel. Apart from the internal supervision of psychologists and psychology assistants, SPS was involved in placement supervision of trainees undertaking professional training at either the University of Malta or the University of East London.

One member of staff is currently training for the Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology (Lond.) another member of staff completed his professional training (M.Psy) at the University of Malta.

**PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES**

A group of psychologists trained in Crisis Intervention go to school immediately following a crisis / traumatic event in order to debrief and support students and staff who may be effected and to see what follow-up action, if any, needs to be taken.

**COLLABORATIVE WORK WITH THE CHILD GUIDANCE CLINIC (CGC), ST. LUKE’S HOSPITAL**

As from 2010 the Student Services Department liaised with the Child Guidance Clinic (St. Luke’s Hospital) to offer better access to the services of a psychiatrist. These consultative meetings continued to be held during this year.

**PSYCHOTHERAPY SERVICE**

The main service offered by the psychotherapists comprises psychotherapeutic intervention in cases of psychological, emotional and behavioural difficulties experienced by children and young people.

During 2014, the service increased its personnel whereby the therapists are presently serving the colleges and contributing to the development of inter-disciplinary and transdisciplinary college professional teamwork.

The majority of referrals were made through Heads of School and these requested support relating to depression, death wishes, self-harm, school refusal, anxiety, obsessive compulsive disorder, disorganised and disruptive behaviour, transition difficulties associated with fostering, adoption and care placements as well other developmental and clinical issues.

Data is included in the two tables below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Individual Sessions</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Other Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January – December 2014</td>
<td>786</td>
<td>285</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Number of sessions held by Psychotherapists during 2014
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psychotherapy Cases</th>
<th>Open</th>
<th>Closed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary School</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary School</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Cases in Primary, Secondary and ALP programmes

PROFESSIONAL TASKS HELD DURING THE YEAR INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING:

- One-to-one therapeutic work with both primary and secondary school children as well as group therapy;
- Filial work and family based interventions as part of therapeutic programme;
- Interventions in the classroom as part of in-situ behaviour modification programmes;
- Working relationally with teachers/ learning support assistants and youngsters to increase the understanding of student’s needs and process and to develop individualized strategies for encouraging positive behaviour change;
- Immediate intervention measures involving individual, family and school support in traumatic situations;
- Telephone consultation with parents, school staff and professionals in other agencies/services;
- Consultation meetings using a collaborative approach in addressing client needs with guidance and counselling services, senior management team, other SSD support service;
- Child Guidance Clinic and outside agencies who are also involved with DSS clients;
- Participating in decision-making processes during IEP meetings, case conferences and review meetings;
- Screening of cases together with college team professionals in order to prioritize cases effectively;
- Contributions to professional development of school personnel;
- Actively encouraging healthy dialogue on a whole-school level on positive approaches to students’ increased well-being;
- Attendance for individual and group supervision on a regular basis;
- Attendance at activities for continuous professional development.

SOCIAL WORK SERVICE

MISSION STATEMENT

To provide an effective social work service to all students of compulsory school age in support of their education and personal growth, working within the students' educational, family and social environment.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

To ensure that all students develop their full learning potential. Specific Aims of the Social Work Service are the following:

- To intervene early and effectively to reduce the rate of habitual absenteeism in state schools;
- To improve the quality of life of students with particular attention to the most vulnerable and excluded;
- To provide social work services within the Colleges;
- To build and enhance formal and informal support networks for the benefit of the students;
- To strengthen students’ learning potential through support and empowerment.
SERVICES OFFERED

The Social Work Service provides the following services:

- Serving as links between the school and home through social work intervention with habitually absent students, their families and school staff. School visits and home visits are carried out as and where necessary;
- Providing practical assistance to families of habitually absent students including teaching them home management, parenting and interpersonal for the benefit of the education of the children;
- Supporting and guiding students on personal matters, including stigmatisation, scapegoating, labelling, self-fulfilling prophecies, bullying, substance abuse, challenging behaviour and relationship difficulties;
- Working with families concerning home situations that relate to school attitudes and performance;
- Promote and disseminate the Addressing Attendance in Schools Policy, Strategy and Procedures with students, parents and school staff accordingly;
- Implement the measures indicated in the Addressing Attendance in Schools Strategy and Implementation;
- Implement and promote anti-discriminatory practice;
- Empowering students, parents and school staff to access available opportunities and resources to fully develop each student's learning potential;
- Acting as liaison with students, parents, school staff and community resources;
- Ensuring the law on compulsory education is adhered to by parents, keeping track of truant students and addressing issues that are leading to absenteeism;
- Working within a multidisciplinary team in the respective College;
- Referring students to other professionals and specialist agencies as and when required and subsequently monitoring the student's process;
- Organizing and participating in case conferences and inter-agency liaison meetings;
- Providing the necessary support to students, parents or guardians and other family members, School Management Teams and teaching Staff and act as a mediator between the school and family;
- Preparing and presenting social reports for, and participating in, Regional Tribunal Sittings, and the Juvenile Court, Malta and Gozo;
- Providing consultation on relative matters to College Principal, School Management Teams, teachers and other professionals within DES;
- Assessing and vetting applications for school exemptions.

TASKS RELATED TO THE ADDRESSING ATTENDANCE IN SCHOOLS POLICY, STRATEGY, PROCEDURES AND IMPLEMENTATION

During summer 2014, the new Addressing Attendance in Schools policy together with the strategy, procedures and implementation were formulated.

The policy was officially launched on the 1st October 2014 and it was also presented to all Church and Independent Schools.

A letter circular was issued by the Ministry to inform the parents about the new procedures. Schools were given direction to start following the new procedures as from the 17th November 2014. Together with the letter, the parents also received a Medical Certificate Record Card (MCRC) which is one of the new initiatives taken to increase attendance.

The MCRC is to be filled in by the GP issuing a medical certificate for the student to cover school absence due to sickness and is to be presented to the school together with the medical certificate.
WORKING WITH EARLY SCHOOL LEAVERS

During the third term of scholastic year 2013-14, career advisors, social workers and social support workers worked jointly to identify fourth formers who are at risk of becoming early school leavers in their respective College. This initiative entailed the identification of 4th Formers who did not intend to sit for any Matsec O Level. Priority was also given to those students who are low academic achievers as well as habitual absenteeees. An individual meeting was scheduled with the students to explore their career paths.

This year the social workers and social support workers identified those students amongst the above who were not attending school and made contact with them mainly through home or office visits to explore their interests and vocational aptitudes and consequently served as a link with the career guidance service provided at College level. Social workers and social support workers also give their input in programmes organised for these students at College level. These students were referred to the Alternative Learning Programme (ALP) 2014-15.

With regards to the ALP scholastic year 2013-14, the social workers and social support workers followed students who were not attending regularly. Attendance of ALP students was forwarded each week so that the workers could take immediate action by contacting the student and his/her parent through phone calls, home visits or scheduled office visits to explore and tackle source of absenteeism. The workers also gave their regular input as they were included in a rota system issued by the Service Manager, Education Psycho-Social Services, whereby they had to be on the respective ALP premises to monitor and support the students ongoingly.

SUMMER INITIATIVE: TACKLING PRIMARY SCHOOL ABSENCES

Like previous, during summer 2014 the social workers conducted office visits with most of the parents of primary school children who were absent from school for more than 20 unauthorised days during scholastic year 2013-2014.

This year they also included primary students who missed several schools days covered by medical certificates. The parents/guardians of these students were notified through a letter of an office visit scheduled with the social worker held at the respective schools or office. When parents did not turn up and they could not be reached by phone a surprise home visit was conducted. All these students are currently being followed and/or monitored according to the outcome of the summer interventions.

SOCIAL WORK CONTRIBUTION DURING JUVENILE COURT HEARINGS

One of the roles of the social work service with SSD is to attend Juvenile Court hearings and advice the Magistrate presiding the hearing with the following information regarding school aged offenders; student’s school attendance; behaviour of student at school and if social worker is in contact with the family provide information regarding behaviour at home and in other social settings; interventions carried out on behalf of the student by professional services provided by the Directorates; and updates regarding any programmes student follows through Student Services Department such as the Individual Educational Programme (IEP).

The social worker also acquaints the Magistrate about current programmes and services within the Directorates that the student might benefit from. Another role is that of liaising with the probation officers who are assigned to follow individual students. During 2014, the social worker attended 13 hearings.

As from this year, arrangements were made so that the social worker working at the Gozo College attends the Juvenile Court hearings in Gozo.
CREATING AWARENESS IN SCHOOLS REGARDING THE IMPORTANCE OF SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Social workers and social support workers attended meetings held with parents in Primary and Secondary schools respectively during the first term as part of the service’s strategy to increase awareness regarding the importance of regular school attendance and promote the newly launched policy as well as explain the related procedures.

OTHER INPUT AT COLLEGE LEVEL BY SOCIAL WORKERS AND SOCIAL SUPPORT WORKERS

The social workers and social support workers give their input in several programmes and initiatives organised at College Level. The following are the projects the staff assisted according to the respective College:

ST GORG PRECA COLLEGE

- Social workers assisted in the organisation of the transition visits for year 6 students in January;
- Attended meetings with parents organised by the school at the beginning of the scholastic year;
- Participated in Career Exposure Experiences by visiting number of students at the place of work as supervision;
- Attended co-ed meetings organised for parents;
- Participated in Career Day organised in primary schools;
- Participated in mid-break activities for Form 5 students at Ħamrun Boys Secondary between November and December;
- Participated in summer college youth club.

ST MARGARET COLLEGE

- Social worker attended weekly sessions and other activities organised by the College Youth Club between January and August;
- Social worker and social support worker participated in College Activities, for example, the annual Pool Marathon.

ST THOMAS MORE COLLEGE

- Social worker participated in transition activity for Year 6 girls titled Moving On.

ST THERESA COLLEGE

- Contributed on a weekly basis to the College Youth Club and participated in all activities organised;
- Assisted in the organisation and facilitation of Flus F’Idjema, a seminar for parents and year 6 students attending Msida Primary organised in collaboration with Access Msida.

ST IGNATIUS COLLEGE

- Social worker attended meetings regarding the LEAP project.
ST NICHOLAS COLLEGE

- Assisted in the Co-Ed transition program coordination;
- Presentation and meeting with Newly Qualified Teachers regarding social work.

LEGAL MEASURES TO IMPROVE ATTENDANCE

Social Workers attend Regional Tribunal sittings to give feedback to the Commissioner of Justice presiding the hearing regarding their interventions with habitually absent students. This information assists the Commissioner when passing judgement. Meetings are also held with the Commissioner of Justice to discuss the way forward regarding tackling cases of habitual absenteeism.

Since the present legal system lacks enforcement measures recommendations to improve the effectiveness of the system were presented and discussed with representatives from four Ministries: Ministry for Education and Employment, Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity, Ministry for Energy and Health and Ministry for Justice, Culture and Local Government.

The PSW scheduled meeting with representatives from the Regional Tribunals of Lvant, Nofsinhar and Tramuntana respectively to initiate links and encourage the need to take the necessary action to collect due fines as a deterrent and improve enforcement system.

The co-operation of all Tribunals is also being requested to implement a joint project with the Office of the AG in relation to pending fines.

CREATING LINKS WITH LOCAL GP’S

During their interventions, social workers come across situations where parents provide medical certificates to cover absences from school. In most instances certificates are provided by the same GP and they do not indicate health and psychological problems that provide the student with a reason for why he is not attending school for a long period of time. Social workers hence were asked by the PSW to identify those primary school students who had more than 15 absent days covered by medical certificates during scholastic year 2013-14. Heads of School were requested to identify those students who were genuinely sick.

Consequently, the schools provided a copy of the medical certificates of these students. Meetings were then scheduled between PSW and the respective College social worker to identify GP’s and to explore how best to co-work to ensure that the students they follow do not miss school because of ‘health’ reasons during the scholastic year. The SSW is assisting the PSW in this exercise.

OTHER TASKS

PARTICIPATION IN TRIPARTITE COMMITTEE APPOINTED TO TACKLE SCHOOL ABSENTEEISM AND DRUG USE

The PSW was initially appointed to represent the DES in the sub-committee dealing with the Legal Aspects and the Justice System in relation to school absenteeism and drug use. This sub-committee was founded by the Tripartite Committee members involving 4 Ministries: Ministry for Education and Employment, Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity, Ministry for Energy and Health and Ministry for Justice, Culture and Local Government. Whilst the Service Manager Education Psycho-Social Services was appointed on the sub-committee titled Co-ordination of Services. Both representatives attended several Tri-Partite Committee Meetings.
The final report of the Tri-Partite Committee was formulated and presented to representative of the 4 Ministries involved in October 2014.

DATA GATHERING EXERCISE

In co-ordination with the Service Manager Education Psycho-Social Services, the PSW was also involved in a data gathering exercise with regards to students who missed more than 30 unauthorised school days during scholastic year 2013-14. All College Principals were asked to collect the following data regarding these students from the schools within their College:

Students attending with/without support; students not attending; students who have a statement of needs; students who attend Learning Zone, Nurture Group or Learning Support Centre.

The PSW also liaised with SIS to provide attendance of present scholastic year of all students in the list. All data collected was separated per College per School and divided in 5 categories which were presented to MEDE and DG DES. Consequently, the PSW is making follow ups with the respective Heads of School to ensure that those students who are attending school this scholastic year are receiving adequate support.

PROVISION OF PROFESSIONAL SUPERVISION

Supervision is a very important tool in social work as it provides continuous professional development whilst ensuring that service users are receiving a professional service.

The PSW and SSW provide regular supervision to all the team members. It was also agreed that the same supervisor will supervise social workers and social support worker working in the same College to provide a better service. This will ensure observation of team dynamics as well as on time intervention and it also places the supervisor in a better position when it comes to case allocation since she is to identify social work cases which are to be handed over to the social support worker.

Regular case consultation and case discussion were also provided by the PSW and SSW whenever requested.

INTERVENTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Intervention</th>
<th>No. of Interventions</th>
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<td>Home Visits</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Visits</td>
<td>3579</td>
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<tr>
<td>Office Visits</td>
<td>888</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Visits</td>
<td>300</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contact with family/significant others</td>
<td>765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Reviews</td>
<td>112</td>
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<tr>
<td>Case Conferences</td>
<td>117</td>
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<tr>
<td>Referrals to other services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Case Discussion and Case Consultation</td>
<td>850 hrs</td>
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<td>Meetings with professionals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phone calls with clients</td>
<td>3411 (1361 hrs)</td>
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<td>Phone calls with professionals/significant others</td>
<td>2220</td>
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<td>Supervision</td>
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<td>Type of Intervention</td>
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<td>----------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
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<td>Training</td>
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<td>Team Meetings</td>
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<td>Administrative Tasks</td>
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<td>Exemptions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Case discussion/supervision WT SSW/supervision social work</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervision student social work</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juvenile court (including preparation work)</td>
<td>189 hrs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CASELOAD STATISTICS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of Social Work Cases leading to School Absenteeism</th>
<th>Prim</th>
<th>Sec</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students with physical health problems</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with mental health difficulties</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with parents/carers who lack parenting skills</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students victims of bullying</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students suffering from addictions</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with parents suffering from addictions</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with parents victims of domestic violence</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students suffering from abuse (Child Protection issues)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD's)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students suffering from bereavement</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with family facing financial difficulties</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students suffering from school refusal (including diagnosed school phobia)</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students suffering from separation anxiety</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with parents facing relationship breakdown/separation</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students who miss school because system does not cater for their individual needs</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-school culture</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Un-cooperative parents</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students missing school because of hearing impairment</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teenage pregnancy</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students with parents suffering from mental health problems</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students suffering from anxiety</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>356</strong></td>
<td><strong>499</strong></td>
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</table>
### Nature of Other Social Work Cases Followed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents/carers having financial difficulties</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents/carers who lack parenting skills</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents/carers with mental health problems</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parents/cares with addictions</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents/cares facing relationship breakdown/separation</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with mental health difficulties eg suicidal cases</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students with physical health problems</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parents with learning difficulties</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students with special needs</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students in out of home care</td>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents in prison</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents suffering from serious or terminal illness</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with Learning difficulties</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>School transfers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Un-cooperative parents</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents with physical health problems</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parents experiencing severe domestic violence</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>115</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### REGIONAL TRIBUNAL SITTINGS

During this year the social workers attended the 66 Tribunal Sittings.

Absenteeism reports (SEWO) submitted by schools during scholastic 2012 – 2013

| Number of absenteeism reports (SEWO) sent by schools and processed by the clerks of the Social Work Service* | 10,247 |
|                                                                                                             | (3541 of these reports were referred to the Tribunals) |

| Number of Students attending state schools whose parents were arraigned in the respective Tribunals because of school absenteeism. | 1398 |
| Independent/Church Schools | 10 |

*All schools are obliged to report to the Social Work Service when students miss school for more than 3 days in a month.

### JUVENILE COURT SITTINGS

*Number of sessions* Juvenile Court (Malta): 13 and Juvenile Court (Gozo): 2

### SCHOOL EXEMPTION ISSUED DURING SCHOLASTIC YEAR 2013-2014

There were 450 exemption issued as follows: 438 exemptions for students who are +16 and 12 exemptions for students who are -16 years of age. A total of 15 cases were refused. Students who apply for an exemption have to be at least 15 years old.
THE SAFE SCHOOLS PROGRAMME

The Safe Schools Programme is composed of the Child Safety Service, Anti-Substance Abuse and Anti-Bullying Service.

CHILD SAFETY SERVICES (CSS)

Child Safety Services (CSS) is a specialized service working in the area of child abuse. It is an educational, coordinating and therapeutic unit, offering interventive and preventive services to students, parents and school staff. CSS strives to offer effective and professional services catering for the needs of children who have experienced abuse.

Child Safety Services has the following functions: prevention; consultation; monitoring of cases and coordination of services; training; intervention; research; tracing; and multidisciplinary team work.

The service is made up of six members. Five members cater for the colleges in Malta and another member is responsible for the Gozo college.

PREVENTION

Prevention work is a continuous process in schools. This includes awareness raising sessions with parents and prevention sessions with students.

The parental session is an informative talk on the different types of abuse, positive discipline and parents’ attitude when a disclosure about abusive situations takes place.

Prevention programmes are offered mainly to Year 4 students at the primary level in both Malta and Gozo state schools. The Year 4 programme includes an interactive story focusing mainly on child safety from abusive situations.

In the Gozo College a Year 6 and a Form 2 prevention programmes are also offered. The Year 6 programme includes a class based powerpoint presentation on Internet Safety whilst the Form 2 programme addresses the four types of child abuse. Should any disclosure be made during or after these sessions, the guidance teacher will take on the case and refer accordingly.

Prevention talks for primary and secondary students are also delivered in church and independent schools upon request.

The above mentioned programmes aim at equipping students with the necessary knowledge about child abuse and necessary skills to protect oneself. Children are then followed on a one-to-one basis.

CONSULTATION

Consultation with various schools has always been a main priority for CSS. School staff or other professionals within the Directorate for Educational Services call CSS for consultation. These consultations are carried out over the phone or at the school premises with the members of staff concerned.

The aim of these consultations is to decide whether the school needs to refer the case for investigation or if the case needs to be followed closely by the school before referring. When the school needs to follow the case further, CSS together with the school design an observation programme which also includes a time frame. On other occasions, parents, other professionals working within the Student Services and other agencies, request consultative advice from CSS.
When the consultation’s outcome leads to the need for a referral, the school sends a referral to Appoġġ to start investigating the case. A copy is also sent to CSS.

In other circumstances, CSS staff consult with Appoġġ for further guidance before a referral is made.

**MONITORING OF CASES AND CO-ORDINATION OF SERVICES**

Once a referral is received, Child Safety Services monitors the case and co-ordinates any work that needs to be done by other student services and/or other agencies. In most cases a team of professionals from different agencies are involved with the case.

CSS offers to be a link between schools and service delivery units of the Student Services Department and/or other agencies/professionals outside the Directorate of Educational Services. Very often, upon the start of investigation, a school meeting is called for.

CSS organises these meetings with all the professionals involved. During these school meetings the latest information about the case is gathered and a way forward is usually planned.

**SUPPORT GIVEN TO STUDENTS**

All CSS members are following and supporting students who disclose abuse. When requested by Appoġġ, CSS offers counselling to students who have suffered abuse and whose case has been already investigated.

**TRAINING BY CSS**

CSS participates in staff development meetings in schools, upon request. Generally, a presentation of the four forms of child abuse is done, that is, physical, neglect, emotional and sexual.

Members of staff are trained to identify as early as possible those students who are victims of any form of abuse. In conclusion, information about the main points of the National Policy for Child Protection is given, especially with regards to what a member of staff should do if a case of child abuse arises.

Other training programmes were delivered by CSS staff during the year on request by different institutions.

**TRACING**

CSS is often asked by Appoġġ to trace students in schools following calls to 179. There are other instances when tracing is requested in order to investigate or follow up cases of child abuse as well as when there are concerns about the present wellbeing of a particular child. The E1 system helps alot in tracing the concerned children in schools. When students are not found in state schools, most often, church and independent schools are contacted to confirm if the student is listed in one of their schools.

During 2014, CSS received 165 requests for tracing from Child Protection Services and the Initial Family Support Services at Appoġġ.
PROFESSIONAL TEAMS

CSS has continued to be part of the Professional Team at Senglea Primary School. Professional Teams consist of a multidisciplinary team that caters for children with learning difficulties. It also tries to identify and help students at risk with social, personal and family issues.

CONTINUED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN 2014

REFERRALS

In the year 2014, Child Safety Services received 227 referrals of child abuse of which 9 cases were re-activated. 90 cases were closed during 2014.

The following table shows the types of cases referred to CSS in 2014:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Abuse</th>
<th>Number of Referrals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neglect</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional and Neglect</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional, Neglect and Physical</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional, Neglect and Sexual</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional and Physical</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional, Physical and Sexual</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional and Sexual</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neglect and Physical</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neglect and Sexual</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neglect, Physical and Sexual</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical and Sexual</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

STATISTICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consultation to Senior Management Team</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation given to parents</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation and Co-ordination (with police/parents/counsellors/guidance)</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Conferences</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Meetings with Appoġġ</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Reviews</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals’ Meetings in Schools</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings with Service Manager, Education Psych-Social Services</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings with College Principals</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMT Meetings (re Policy and Services)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Guidance Meetings</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Meetings with Appoġġ and other Agencies</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Training (PD)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training for members of Senior Management Teams (Heads)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training for members of Senior Management Teams (Asst. Heads)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselling Session</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary safety programme – Year 4’s (including individual follow ups)</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary safety programme – Year 6</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary safety programme – other classes</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Schools Prevention Programme</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents’ Awareness Programme for Primary Schools (Kinder)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents’ Preparatory Meeting for Year 4’s Programme</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents’ Awareness Programme Year 4 and Kindergarten</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents’ Awareness Programme Secondary</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracing</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Building Activities within the Colleges</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Anti-Substance Abuse Service forms part of the Safe School Program within the Education-Psycho Social Services and seeks to empower youth and adults (mainly teaching staff and parents) with factual information about drugs so they can make informed decisions and lead a drug-free life.

**THE ROLE OF THE ANTI-SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICE**

During the year 2014 all Focal Persons working within the Anti-Substance Unit strived to give an effective and timely help to students experiencing substance abuse while at the same time ensuring a safe school environment. Focal Persons strived to:

- Plan primary prevention programmes for students, parents and members of staff;
- Train schools’ staff where substance abuse issues are concerned with the aim of curbing substance abuse;
- Develop and administer intervention services within the DES;
- Co-ordinate procedures for early identification of students at risk for substance abuse and also students manifesting indicative symptoms of substance abuse;
- Provide group/individualized support to students affected by substance misuse or those who either demonstrate concerns related to substance abuse or are at risk;
- Facilitate conferences with all stakeholders involved to review, discuss and implement the appropriate strategies for intervention;
- Work in co-operation with all stakeholders involved in developing and following through with after care plans;
- Co-ordinate the referral system and treatment options with all stakeholders involved;
- Conduct research on latest developments in the area of addiction.

During 2014 Focal Persons worked towards reaching the following aims and objectives:

- To ensure understanding of the implications and possible consequences of use and misuse of any substance and the law;
- To widen understanding about related health and social issues e.g. sex and sexuality, crime, HIV and Aids etc.;
- To help develop the moral courage to fight peer pressure that may lead to the experimentation with illegal substances;
- To provide pupils and other individuals with accurate information about drugs and other harmful substances and make them aware of the potential consequences of substance misuse;
- To enable pupils to make healthy, informed choices by increasing knowledge, challenging attitudes and developing coping strategies;
- To actively discourage the use of illegal drugs and to treat cases of drug usage by pupils as serious misconduct, that will be followed according to procedures, and may lead to the imposition of sanctions against pupils;
• To enable pupils who may be in difficulty and whose achievement and performance is impaired due to substance misuse to identify sources of appropriate support;
• To ensure that schools are a safe environment that is conducive to learning.

ANTI-SUBSTANCE SERVICE MISSION STATEMENT

The Anti-substance Service, together with schools, are acting upon the community’s and parents’ expectation that the schools are to provide a conducive learning environment recognising that unless schools and their students are substance (drug and alcohol) free, optimum conditions for learning will not exist.

As already stated, Focal Persons, with the help of every member of the schools’ staff, are to ensure that every individual on school premises is free of substance abuse.

Focal Persons make every effort to prevent student involvement with drugs, alcohol, tobacco and other harmful behaviour-health concerns by providing age appropriate education, programs and supportive roles.

Throughout 2014, students, parents and school staff received detailed information and training about the procedures and consequences, legal and health-related material of the dangerous substances and tobacco.

SERVICES OFFERED BY THE ANTI-SUBSTANCE ABUSE FOCAL PERSONS

CONSULTATION SERVICES

Focal Persons offer assistance to schools whenever cases of alleged substance abuse occur. The Service offers technical advice on matters of policy and procedures regarding school referrals. This is an integral part of the service offered because it strives to strike a balance between the needs of the alleged user and the safeguarding of the school.

INTERVENTION SERVICES

During 2014, a total of 141 referrals were received at the Anti-Substance Abuse Service. More details are shown in the tables below. These cases involved a total of 494 sessions, including individual sessions with the students, meeting with parents/guardians, SMT, Guidance Teachers, Social Workers (Youth in Focus) and the Police Drug Squad. Other professionals such as Prefects of Discipline, Trainee Counsellors, Counsellors and others were also involved. Very often case conferences are also organised to discuss the best possible way forward to help the student.

Some of the cases needed to be referred to Sedqa, (Appogg) Youth in Focus or Caritas (Malta) so that the student will be given further assistance.

Focal Persons also asked for feedback from the agencies concerned and supported the students accordingly.
### State Secondary Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No of Referrals</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Marijuana</th>
<th>Alcohol</th>
<th>Cigarettes</th>
<th>Ecstasy</th>
<th>Cocaine</th>
<th>Heroin</th>
<th>Pres Drugs</th>
<th>Energy Drinks</th>
<th>Inhalant</th>
<th>Meow</th>
<th>Meow</th>
<th>At Risk</th>
<th>Alleged</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>124</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Church/Independent Secondary Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No of Referrals</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Marijuana</th>
<th>Alcohol</th>
<th>Cigarettes</th>
<th>Ecstasy</th>
<th>Cocaine</th>
<th>Heroin</th>
<th>Pres Drugs</th>
<th>Energy Drinks</th>
<th>Inhalant</th>
<th>Meow</th>
<th>Meow</th>
<th>At Risk</th>
<th>Alleged</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>1</td>
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### PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES

During the year 2014, the Anti-Substance Abuse Team worked on Preventive and Intervention Programmes with 1242 students (486 boys and 756 Girls) coming from the following groups:

- **Form 1**: 68 students
- **Form 2**: 9 students
- **Form 3**: 196 students
- **Form 4**: 583 students
- **Form 5**: 374 students
- **6th Form**: 12 students

This programme was delivered in all colleges.

As from scholastic year 2014-2015, the guidelines for the substance abuse prevention programmes and intervention in state schools was launched. The service offers prevention sessions on all Primary School levels on request. At the secondary level, the service will complement work carried out by the guidance teachers and PSCD teachers. The service is also meant to organize a drug prevention workshop in collaboration with Drama Unit for year 9 students.
PARENTS PREVENTION EXERCISE

As a unit, in conjunction with personnel from schools and other agencies, the Focal Persons aim to inform and equip parents with skills to assist their children in this challenging and stimulating part of their life. The parental prevention exercise takes the form of a formal meeting. Substance abuse educational and training programs are provided for parents on a regular basis at various times and locations.

During this scholastic year, talks were held at St Benedict College and San Ġorġ Preca College. A Focal Person was also invited to deliver a number of talks to parents at the Tarxien Christian Doctrine.

INFORMATION SESSIONS FROM DRUG SQUAD

During Scholastic year 2013/2014, the Drug Squad was invited to deliver talks in various colleges targeted at Form 5 students. During these talks, the legal aspect related to drugs was explained. Samples of the various drugs were also shown. The drug squad delivered talks in practically all colleges in Malta and Gozo.

MEETINGS, TALKS AND SEMINARS

During this period, the Anti-Substance Abuse Service was invited to deliver various talks during School/Staff Development Sessions. Talks were also delivered to the newly appointed Assistant Heads and Heads.

During these meetings, all school personnel were given information on the nature of substance problems with particular emphasis on their potential negative impact in the classroom as well as to the appropriate referral procedures about students who may be suspected of experiencing problems related to substance abuse. Substance abuse educational and training programs are provided for parents and teachers on a regular basis at various times and locations.

Focal Persons also delivered talks to staff at St Thomas More College, San Ġorġ Preca College, St Clare College and also at Verdala International School.

The anti-substance service also took the initiative in organizing informative meetings with Caritas and Appoġġ (Youth in Focus).

COMMITTEE ON SMOKING AND HEALTH

In February 2014, a focal person from the Anti-Substance Abuse Service was appointed to act as a member of the Committee on Smoking and Health for the next two years.

ESPAD MEETINGS

The European school survey project on alcohol and other drugs [ESPAD] uses standardised methods and instruments to measure drug and alcohol use among representative samples of school students who turn 16 during the calendar year.

HEALTH PROMOTION UNIT MEETINGS

During this scholastic year, Focal Persons from the Anti-Substance Abuse Service and personnel from the Health Promotion Unit, met on various occasions and discussed possible and effective ways of collaboration when dealing with issues of teenage smoking.
TRAINING AND RESEARCH

Focal Persons always feel the need to continuously keep themselves updated and informed about the current trends that develop from time to time in our area. In keeping oneself updated, Focal Persons participated and attended various meetings and conferences. Meetings with Oasi, Sedqa, Appoġġ: Youth in focus; Caritas and Drug Squad are made on a regular basis.

ANTI-BULLYING SERVICE

The Anti-Bullying Service forms part of the Safe Schools Programme in the Education Psycho-Social Services within the Student Services Department.

MISSION STATEMENT

Personnel aim to ensure that schools are providing a safe and secure environment, where students are allowed to flourish in their social capacities and academic capabilities. Their role is to ensure that students are feeling secure in a non-threatening environment, and to encourage and motivate students to respect each other, as well as accept and allow for personal differences.

THE SERVICE

During the year 2014, the team has been working on the new Addressing Bullying Behaviour in Schools policy which was launched on the 10th November 2014. The policy addresses ‘new’ forms of bullying such as Cyberbullying and bullying aimed at all minority groups.

Interventions are held in all cases referred to the service. Support is provided in a timely manner to individuals (students, parents and staff) so as to enhance their skills in competency and confidence, especially in coping with bullying behaviour.

Assertiveness training is offered to the victims of bullying behaviours. This is generally carried out through role-play and other activities.

The alleged perpetrators are supported and guided towards taking responsibility for their actions by means of restorative justice practices. Anger management techniques are taught and sessions encouraging self-control are held on a regular basis. In addition, therapeutic sessions are held in order to help the alleged perpetrator deal with any underlying issues which might be catalysing such manifestations.

The team also supports schools to identify the various forms of bullying and clearly distinguish where incidents are of a challenging nature, rather than bullying. Referrals are received from both staff and parents via telephone, email and drop-in service.

Awareness and prevention programmes are held with students in both primary and secondary sectors. Additionally, parents’ meetings and informative talks are also offered, alongside with continuous professional development sessions for staff.

The team also liaises with various professionals

The anti-bullying service promotes and participates in school-based activities, thus moving the focus towards a more positive outlook to healthy friendships and acceptable behaviour amongst peers whilst being in line with the Respect for All Framework (2014).
AWARENESS PROGRAMMES

AWARENESS IN SCHOOLS

The service aims to raise awareness about the nature and effects of bullying, by taking a positive and proactive approach. This is achieved through meetings, class interventions and sessions with parents as well as staff development for teaching staff.

The anti-bullying guidance teachers aim to help parents make a distinction between conflict and bullying – this is further reinforced through the new policy and presently brochures are being drafted towards this effect.

Schools are offered talks for students, dealing with topics related to respect and the value of friendship, how to choose friends and different ways of assertively coping with bullying behaviours whilst emphasising the difference between conflict and bullying. Furthermore, other talks address Cyberbullying and provide examples of why it is important to keep ourselves safe online.

Continuous Professional Development opportunities are organised. These focus on increasing teachers’ awareness of their important role in addressing bullying behaviour.

AWARENESS THROUGH THE MEDIA AND COMMUNITY

This service participated in TV and radio programmes when requested to raise awareness about various topics such as bullying and aggressive behaviours in children and adolescents. Personnel are also interviewed for articles in local newspapers and magazines.

Team members are invited to give talks, seminars and workshops in social gatherings and meetings held by local councils, church organizations, scout groups, and parents’ meetings.

AWARENESS AND PREVENTION PROGRAMMES IN SCHOOLS

The service organises a number of prevention activities in schools, focusing more on the value of mutual respect. Sessions are also held with the aim of promoting empathy, mindfulness, developing positive prosocial behaviours, whilst focusing on the richness of diversity. Anger management sessions are held with students who have been identified with bullying tendencies.

INTERVENTION PROGRAMME

Strategies responding to the issue of bullying behaviour are continuously discussed amongst the team members and updated accordingly. These are held with individuals, groups, classes, staff and parents.

REFERRALS

Referrals are made by guidance teachers, counsellors, Heads of Schools, parents of either victims or perpetrators themselves. Referrals were also made by social work services, school psychologists, counsellors and guidance teachers, social workers from Appoġġ and Support Line 179 (Appoġġ). Moreover advice is often given over the phone when requested.
In the year 2014 referrals received by the anti-bullying service were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Boys’ Sec</th>
<th>Girls’ Sec</th>
<th>Co-Ed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State (Malta)</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church (Malta)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent (Malta)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State (Gozo)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church (Gozo)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The total number of referrals during 2014 was 280.

Contact is kept with parents and schools. All ten state colleges as well as some independent and Church schools were visited during 2014 for purposes of staff development, parents’ meetings, individual cases and/or class contact.

Throughout this year, the Careers Guidance team delivered 65 seminars to Year 10 classes, which also included 6 seminars within Servizz Għożża. The sessions held at Servizz Għożża, are tailor-made to cater for the needs of teenaged pregnant girls. The Career Guidance Team also gave 410 one-to-one sessions to students, and 115 group sessions in relation to the Career Exposure and the Alternate Learning Programme. Telephone sessions followed by one-to-one sessions helped to encourage students to participate in the Alternative Learning Programme.

Furthermore, career guidance teachers were also part of the team that conducted interviews for the selection of students to different sectors involved in the Career Exposure.

CAREER EXPOSURE EXPERIENCE

The Career Exposure, now being called Career Exposure Experience (CEE) has taken place for the second year running.

With the launching of the Career Exposure Experience Guidelines, the experience has somehow taken a new perspective. It is still spread throughout the scholastic year as opposed to previous years whereby the National Job Exposure was held over a two-week period from end of June till first week of July. The ten colleges are now to abide by the same guidelines, whether Consent Forms, or other practical procedures such as the Reflective Booklet.

CAREER-EXPOSURE EXPERIENCE

The CGT are collaborating with the ECC – MFSA in providing placements to Form 4 students within the Financial Sector.

The CGT are collaborating with MITA in order to provide placements to Form 4 students within the ICT Sector.

The CGT are collaborating with the MFH (Ministry for Health) in order to provide placements for Form 4 students within the Health Sector.

The CGT are also collaborating with the MTA in order to provide placements for Form 4 students within the Tourism Industry.

Also, fifteen parents/guardians of school-age children accessed the services of the team via email, phone or visited the team at the DSS, seeking information or guidance in order to be able to make informed career decisions.
Apart from being involved in college-based activities, the career guidance teachers carried out other duties to improve performance within schools whilst also increase the bond with respective colleges.

With regards to the first Alternative Learning Programme, two meetings were held with the ALP Director and MCAST coordinator and teachers in order to plan a celebration Day for ALP Students. This resulted in a joint venture between the CGT posted at MCAST Naxxar and MCAST Paola.

Together they organised a joined Open Day for all ALP MCAST Students. The aim of this Open Day was to:

- expose the work done during the ALP at MCAST;
- share the ALP experience with all stakeholders. A parent and a student gave their testimonials;
- promote Life Long Learning and encourage students to apply for MCAST Level 2;
- receive feedback from parents; and
- present a certificate to all ALP students who successfully completed the programme

The CGT followed up the ALP also by obtaining feedback from students as well as Professional Academic Staff at ETC, MCAST Naxxar and Paola, SkyParks and Youth.Inc.

The CGT has embarked in the second Alternative Learning Programme. On 15th September 2014, the CGT attended two Parents Information Meetings for prospective ALP students of scholastic year 2014-2015.

This year, the CGT’s involvement within ALP has shifted more on delivering Career Interventions to the students. The CGT is visiting the students once a week to deliver group and/or one-to-one Career Intervention Sessions. Two CGT are also Focal Persons to the MCAST cohort. These CGT are liaising with the class LSA to give support when needed. A number of meetings were held with the LSAs as well as the MCAST LSU coordinator and ALP overall Coordinator to plan the way forward.

Training for Guidance Teachers (Financial Sector) – the Career Guidance Services collaborated with ECC (Education Consultative Council) within the MFSA in order to organise a whole day seminar to 16 guidance teachers so as to give them the possibility of deepening their awareness of the Financial Sector. From informal feedback gathered, the outcome was very positive.

Training for Guidance Teachers (Caring Industry) – the Career Guidance teachers in charge of the Health Sector collaborated with CareMalta to organise a two and a half CPD session for one guidance teacher per Secondary School. Two groups of 15 guidance teachers each had their training on a Monday afternoon; namely the 1st and 15th December. The CPD session was also extended to College Career Advisors and Trainee Career Advisors. Their session is to be set some time in January 2015. The aim of these CPD sessions is to inform as well as update guidance teachers and career professionals within our schools to what regards careers within the Caring Profession.

Compilation of Statistics – the career guidance teachers supported the DES in compiling statistics related to the various transitions students undergo throughout their schooling, namely sessions held by guidance teachers in view of Year 6 to Year 7 (Form 1) transition, Subject Choice in Year 7 (Form 2), and Personal guidance sessions.

Tracer Study – for the first time the CGT has been asked to perform the tracer study. Compiling of statistics was performed and results were obtained, which were later published in a Tracer Study booklet.
**Group Supervision** – for the first time the CGT had the provision of professional supervision sessions.

The Career Guidance Team is committed to its continuous professional development.

**ORGANISATION OF VISITS TO WORKPLACES AND POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS**

The team co-ordinated visits for State-school students to the following places including the Malta Police Force, St Vincent de Paul Residence, The Armed Forces of Malta and MCAST.

**Year 9 (Form 3)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
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<tr>
<td>Armed Forces of Malta</td>
<td>160 students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Police Force</td>
<td>475 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism Industry</td>
<td>(through MTA) – various entities within the industry: 400 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage Malta</td>
<td>315 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT Industry</td>
<td>ICT firms (through eSkills Alliance): 210 students, Swatar Training Centre: 164 students</td>
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**Year 10 (Form 4)**

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<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
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<tr>
<td>Health Sector</td>
<td>Mater Dei Hospital: 195 students, CareMalta: 153 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Sector</td>
<td>Middle Sea Insurance: 268 students, Malta Stock Exchange: 200 students, Malta Financial Services Authority: 244 students, and Central Bank of Malta: 216 students</td>
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<tr>
<td>AFM talk in schools</td>
<td>3 schools</td>
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**Year 11 (Form 5)**

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<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institute of Tourism Studies</td>
<td>439 students</td>
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<tr>
<td>MCAST</td>
<td>1826 students visited at least one Institute. Data includes both Main Campus and Satellites.</td>
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**EDUCATION HEALTH SERVICES**

**ADMINISTRATION OF REGULAR MEDICATION AT SCHOOLS**

**VISITING NURSING SERVICES AT SCHOOLS**

During scholastic year 2013 - 2014, the administration of medicines and other nursing services in state mainstream schools continued to be offered to 215 students, on a daily basis and covering Malta and Gozo. All requests from parents of students who were medically certified, and requiring regular medication during school hours for chronic conditions were met.

**HEAD LICE SCREENING PROGRAMME**

Scalp scanning continued to be offered in State Schools.
HEPATITIS IMMUNISATION PROGRAMME

The Unit continued to approve the Hepatitis B vaccination programme of staff working at the Resource Centres (ex-special schools). This service is financed by the Student Services Directorate, and administered by the Health Directorate.

SERVIZZ GĦOŻŻA

The programme at Għożża seeks to achieve its objectives by promoting the psycho-social and emotional well-being of unmarried teenage mothers encouraging them to adopt a positive attitude towards motherhood, as well as emphasising the importance of education and employment by empowering the girls to pursue their career paths.

The team provides all the necessary support to the unmarried pregnant minors before and after the birth of their offsprings.

THE REFERRAL SYSTEM RELIES ON THE FOLLOWING PROCEDURES

After informing the Head of School pregnant girls of compulsory school age, may choose to follow one of the following three options:

- continue attending school regularly and approach Serviżz Għożża for counselling and to seek any other relevant information;
- stop attending school until she gives birth and attend the full programme at Servizz Għożża;
- decide to attend the unit on the days when the programme is held; mainly Monday, Tuesday and Thursday while attending school on Wednesday and Friday. At this stage, such an arrangement is at the discretion of the Head of school.

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<tr>
<th>Age of Pregnant Girls</th>
<th>Number of Pregnant Girls</th>
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<tr>
<td>12 years</td>
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<td>13 years</td>
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<td>14 years</td>
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<td>17 years</td>
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<td>18 years</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>18+</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>69</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th>Pregnant Girls referred to Servizz Għożża</th>
<th>Number of girls</th>
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<tr>
<td>Under the age of 16</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Between the age of 16-18</td>
<td>49</td>
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<tr>
<td>Above the age of 18</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>69</strong></td>
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From January 2014 till December 2014, Servizz Għożża dealt with 69 new cases of unwed teenage mothers.
PREVENTION PROGRAMME - NIFHUM L-ULIEDNA FIL-BIDLIET

The Aim of the talk is to make parents of Form 1/ Year 7 students aware of the physical, sexual and psychological changes that children experience when reaching puberty and how these parents can identify such changes and deal with them.

These talks are regularly carried out on Wednesdays and throughout the past scholastic year (2013-2014) these talks were held in 10 State Colleges, and 7 Church Schools.

BANDIERA BAJDA- A PREVENTION PROGRAMME AIMED FOR TEENAGE BOYS

The pilot project ‘Bandiera Bajda’ was launched in April 2013, and this year (2014) with intake of Boys at Form 4 level. In June 2014, 8 colleges have applied for the programme.

JIEN SER INBENNEN? - A PREVENTION PROGRAMME AIMED FOR TEENAGE GIRLS

Throughout 2014 a pilot project aimed at teenage girls was initiated.

A number of Girls’ Secondary Schools took part in the project which was launched in March 2014 and as from September 2014, the programme has been offered to all Girls’ Secondary Schools with particular reference to girls at Form 4 level.

LIASING WITH DAR ĠUŻEPPA DEBONO – GOZO

As in previous years, Servizz Ghożża and Dar Ġużeppa Debono in Gozo have strengthened their collaboration and another live-in involving-pregnant girls as well as young mothers attending the mother and baby support group took place in May 2014.

COUNSELLING SERVICE

The team has invested in new publications pertinent to the experience of the young pregnant student and also in the psychology of teenage pregnancy.

NEW INITIATIVES/PROGRAMMES

A First Aid Course was organised in collaboration with Red Cross and this took place in April 2014.

CAREER GUIDANCE SERVICE IN THE SCHOOLS

The College Career Advisors, School Counsellors, guidance teachers and trainee career advisors assist learners in managing life situations more effectively and acquiring the necessary key competences so as to attain their curricular performance goals while developing holistically as a person.

WALK-IN SERVICE OFFERED AT THE COLLEGES DURING SUMMER 2014

For the second year consecutively, an event which marked the end of scholastic year 2013/2014 was the Walk-In Service. The Walk-In Service was held by the College Career Advisor and the Trainee Career Advisors in each respective College across Malta.

Students’ response was very encouraging and during Summer 2014, figures show that Career Advisors held one-to-one sessions with 368 students across the Colleges of Malta, 213 females and 155 males. Whilst 177 parents sought advice from this service.
WALK-IN SERVICE DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS AT HIGHER SECONDARY

Career guidance service was offered to all the students who sought advice regarding the post-secondary courses at the Higher Secondary. The number of students who sought the service of career guidance in 2014 was 316.

COUNSELLING SERVICES IN THE SCHOOLS

The College Counsellors, School Counsellors, guidance teachers and trainee counsellors give their service in all the schools at primary and secondary level. Students usually ask for counselling themselves, or are referred by teachers or by the parents. In some cases parents may be sent for. Counselling could range from crisis interventions to personal counselling. There are also a great number of referrals made to other helping and support agencies.

WALK-IN SERVICE OFFERED AT THE COLLEGES DURING SUMMER 2014

The walk-in service was continued in our schools through the College system during the summer months of 2014.

During summer 2014, the College Counsellor and the trainee counsellors followed 273 students across the Colleges of Malta, 140 were females and 133 were males. Whilst 123 parents sought the service.

PREVENTIVE AND INFORMATIVE PROGRAMMES

Several meetings were organised for both students and parents during 2014. Counsellors, guidance teachers and trainee counsellors identified particular needs which were then dealt with during the seminars, talks and discussions. Issues tackled centred round leadership, relationships, communication, internet safety, self-esteem and other relevant topics.

PARENTAL SKILLS

Sessions were held throughout the year and delivered by trained facilitators for groups of not more than 20 parents. Requests were forwarded to the Unit, especially by the primary schools. A six-session parenting programme called Nifhmu 'l Uliedna was carried out. Topics included self-esteem, decision-making, communication, relationships, drug abuse, assertiveness, health and sexuality.

COLLEGE PREFECT OF DISCIPLINE (CPD)

The College Prefect of Discipline is part of the multidisciplinary team working in the schools in the respective colleges. The concept of the College Prefect of Discipline forming part of the Education Psycho-Social Services is now in its fourth year and seeks to encourage a holistic approach towards our students.

Once a referral is received, the CPD monitors the case and co-ordinates any work that needs to be done by other student services and/or other agencies including Learning Support Zones, Nurture Groups and Learning Support Centres.

Interventions are of a varied nature depending on the case or issue arising. Very often other services are involved and hence a lot of teamwork and liaising is necessary.

All the students in state schools could avail themselves of these services. The interventions consisted of sessions with students and parents as well as follow-up work with other agencies including Psycho-Social Services. Personnel also collaborated with other professionals within the
respective Colleges on certain cases such as participation in the youth club during the summer months.

YOUTH WORKERS

Six Youth Workers are working within the Colleges and Learning Support Centres.

The Youth Workers Support Learners attend programmes in the Learning Support Zones and offer whole school programmes as well. The Youth Workers also organise Youth Clubs and other related activities after school hours, bringing to the forefront the various talents of the learners.

Youth activities are also carried out during the summer recess. The learners had the opportunity to develop their artistic skills together with learning and experiencing other skills related to various areas of media communication. The below includes the various projects, activities, programmes co-ordinated by the youth workers.

During scholastic Year 2013-2014, 87 projects/initiatives were held for various students, whereby they had the opportunity of discovering several skills.

SPECIAL EDUCATION AND RESOURCE CENTRES SECTION

The Special Education and Resource Centres offers the following services:

- Peripatetic Teachers for students with visual impairment in mainstream schools;
- The Early Intervention Service for children with special needs who are still of pre-school age or have started their school experience at kindergarten level;
- Home Tuition Peripatetic Teachers for students who are absent from school on a long-term basis due to chronic illness or injury;
- Teacher and one LSA for students who attend the Young People’s Unit of Mount Carmel Hospital;
- Two teachers, five kindergarten assistants and one LSA working on the Children’s Wards at Mater Dei Hospital;
- Transition Organiser;
- Two Speech and Language Pathologists, Three Occupational Therapists, one LSA working in the Access to Communication and Technology Unit (ACTU);
- Four Peripatetic teachers working in the Autism Spectrum Disorder Team;
- Peripatetic Teachers for the Hearing Impaired who offer support to students with a Hearing Impairment attending mainstream schools;
- Social, Emotional, Behaviour Difficulties (SEBD) specialists to support schools who have students experiencing social, emotional, behaviour difficulties.

SERVICES FOR THE HEARING IMPAIRED

The mission of the Service for Hearing Impaired students is to provide a quality educational and audiological service for deaf, hard of hearing and hearing-impaired students in Malta and Gozo, from the point of diagnosis and throughout their educational experience in the home and in mainstream schools.

During 2014, EUPA awarded the Student Services Department with a grant of €44,640 to be used during two mobilities during the period 2014-2016 under the Erasmus + Programme - Key Action 1.
SERVICE FOR THE VISUAL IMPAIRED

The Section for the Visually Impaired caters for a range of pupils who are precluded from making adequate progress due to various conditions in their vision. Some of these conditions may be severe while others less so. Members of the team offer their services at home or in a pre-school centre to children of pre-school age, in the classroom or in a separate room, to school aged students.

During scholastic year 2013/2014, a regular service was provided for children from 0 to 16 years.

AUTISM SPECTRUM SUPPORT TEAM

The Autism Spectrum Support Team aims at empowering educators and parents to meet the individual educational needs of the child with autism, facilitating learning, supporting behavioural and social development and maximising the students’ abilities in mainstream and resource environment. The autism spectrum support team recognizes that each student is an individual, and seeks to maximise the student’s potential.

During scholastic year (2014-2015) the Autism Spectrum Support Team observed around 240 students in 70 different primary and secondary, state and church schools in Malta.

ACCESS TO COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY UNIT (ACTU)

This Unit was established in September 2006 with the aim of providing the necessary support to enable students with learning and/or physical disabilities to access the curriculum and learning through the use of Assistive Technology.

The Unit also provides assessments and the support necessary for children with Complex Communication Needs who require Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) to use their systems and access the curriculum.

During 2014, the unit received 83 new referrals. This is a 19% increase from the previous year’s referral rate.

The Team took on 26 new cases. 30 other cases were discharged as they no longer required ACTU services.

Due to the increasing numbers of children waiting to be seen, this year the Team began a screening system to ascertain the priority of children referred. 78 children were screened during 2014.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appointments offered</td>
<td>1347</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cancellations</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNAs</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Therapists at ACTU also have a role in providing student supervision to undergraduate therapists currently studying at the University of Malta. In 2014, therapists provided 225 hours of supervision for 4 students.
SEBD SPECIALISTS

MISSION STATEMENT

For the child to be engaged and learn in the classroom, the child needs to feel safe, loved and have a sense of belonging. A child’s social and emotional needs must be met before any learning can take place.

During the summer of 2014 the SEBD Specialist in charge of supporting Primary School children offered the service of doing one-to-one sessions with students with SEBD. These sessions were aimed to give children skills in Emotional Literacy, Anger Management and Impulse Control. These sessions were done on a weekly basis. Meetings with the parents of these children were also held so as to give them skills on managing their child’s behaviour at home. The SEBD Specialist also visited Skola Sajf and Club 3 – 16 whenever difficulties in behaviour arose so as to support the care workers and coordinators in managing difficult behaviour.

HOME TUITION SERVICE

MISSION STATEMENT

To provide the student with a continuous education and to minimise, the effects of absence from school. The service also helps the student to reintegrate back in school at the appropriate time. Home tuition is given to students in different localities in Malta and Gozo who are unable to attend school for various medical reasons.

EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICE

MISSION STATEMENT

The Early Intervention Service aims to provide a family centred and comprehensive support system for children with developmental disabilities or delays and their families in the first five years (0-5) of life. The principle is to minimize the delays and maximize the chances of reaching typical milestones in development. It also supports and implements screening procedures to increase the early identification of difficulties and provide the family support as early as possible to families.

The Resource Workers organised a number of whole school approaches in various schools in Malta and Gozo throughout 2014.

THE YOUNG ADULT EDUCATION RESOURCE CENTRE

The programme at this Centre has been designed to provide an opportunity for learners with Individual Educational Needs (IEN) to further their studies at post-secondary level and prepares them for adult life. This programme helps learners to acquire the requisite competencies to satisfy these needs. The programme is divided into two sections – therapeutic and vocational. Learners attending the Centre are 16 – 22 year old adults.

Throughout scholastic year 2014–2015, the Centre continued to benefit from the 2012 Entrepreneurship Project “Hands On”.

In 2014, the Resource Centre concluded successfully the BITSE 2012-2014 Project. As its name implies (Barriers which inhibit transition from school to employment for persons with disability) the aim of this project was to categorize, and propose solutions for such barriers.
As a result of this project, a work exposure team was set up at the Resource Centre. Such team is responsible in the organization and planning of work exposure as well as in the coaching of students in using public transport.

Throughout the scholastic year 2013-2014 another Entrepreneurship Project was assigned to the Centre. The project was named “We Too”. Through this project 16 members of staff benefitted from 60 hours of training on Job Coaching and Cooperative Start-ups and Management of which they gained a certificate. This training boosted the idea of social in house cooperatives such as our Centre tuck shop managed by our students supervised by our staff.

The Resource Centre was also awarded Kreativ Funds for a project named “Different Artisitic Abilities”. Through this project our Centre invested in setting up a network and contacts of 3 Creative Partners specializing in Dance and Movement Therapy, Ceramics and Dance and Creative movements.

GUARDIAN ANGEL SECONDARY EDUCATION RESOURCE CENTRE

Guardian Angel is a Resource Centre for Secondary students, aged between eleven and seventeen years. The number of full-time students presently attending the Resource Centre is forty five. Twenty part-time students come from mainstream secondary schools and attend for one, two or three days a week. The students follow the National Curriculum and their learning programme includes eleven subjects that are differentiated according to their individual needs.

The Resource Centre follows adapted Schemes of Work of subjects that are part of the National Curriculum that is taught in Secondary mainstream schools. Subject teachers deliver differentiated lessons, taking into account the different learning needs and diverse attainment levels of students in their class.

Helen Keller Resource Centre for Secondary aged students and Young Adults caters for students with PMLD between the ages of 13 and 22 years. Students have physical, sensory and Learning Difficulties. The Curriculum followed is based on the NCF, adapted through the Equals Curriculum for students up to 16 years of age, whilst the Moving On Curriculum is followed by the students who are over 16 years.

Students come to the Centre from San Miguel Resource Centre or from the Primary/Secondary Mainstream.

During 2014, the Centre hosted 1 student from a Church Secondary (part-time); 4 students from San Miguel; and 1 student from a State Secondary.

In May, the Centre took part in Festa Patata organised by the Qrendi Local Council where the students presented crafts made out of potatoes. For World Book Day the Centre participated with all the other schools in St. Benedict’s College to celebrate a Literary Evening.

Opportunities were given to the students to socialise and participate in activities outside the school. They participated in EMBED, supported the U17 team at the National Stadium and all attended one or more performances of the ŻiguŻajg Festival. School outings included Villa Francia and San Anton Chapel and gardens.

During 2014, the Centre embarked on the ECO Skola Project where students, staff, families and friends were taken on board. The Centre also participated in the Green Pack plastic bottle caps campaign and collected the largest amount of caps per student.
SANNAT SPECIAL UNIT

During scholastic year 2013/2014 the Unit continued to give support in the three main programmes: Full-time, Part-time and Services.

During this scholastic year, Year 4 students from 6 mainstream schools in Gozo participated in Reverse Inclusion sessions.

A group from a respite centre in Denmark visited the Special Unit in April 2014 to observe the different sessions being carried out.

LEARNING SUPPORT CENTRES

LEARNING SUPPORT CENTRE SECONDARY BOYS, ST VENERA

The Boys Learning Support Centre provides temporary, individualised, supportive programmes for secondary-age boys with severe social, emotional, behavioural difficulties (SEBD). Students with grave SEBD cannot function and engage in any learning in the mainstream.

The Learning Support Centre aims to provide students with an alternative educational provision and to offer support during the reintegration process. Students receive a balanced curriculum at the learning support centre alongside intensive programmes on emotional literacy, self-esteem, anger management, and social skills training. The students also have one-to-one sessions with the in-house psychotherapist.

The centre has a youth worker programme which liaises with several agencies including Agenzija Żgħażagħ and ŻiguŻajg to compile various projects and activities. These initiatives help the students to engage in hands-on activities and drama which develop their life-skills.

The programme at the LSC also aims to reintegrate students back into their mainstream school.

During the scholastic year 2013/2014, fourteen (14) new students attended the LSC.

LEARNING SUPPORT CENTRE, PRIMARY MARSA

The Marsa Learning Support Centre (LSC) is a centre for students with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The centre offers support to students on both a part time and full time basis.

Outreach services include liaising with mainstream schools to ensure communication and contact between the mainstream schools and their students and supporting the students when they start their reintegration back to their mainstream school. Furthermore, the learning support centre outreach services entails support and training to mainstream staff and peer preparation programmes during the student’s stay at the learning support centre and during the reintegration transition from the learning support centre to the mainstream school. The LSC also supports past students and their mainstream schools when the said mentioned students revert to inappropriate behaviours.

During the year 2013-2014, the Centre supported 6 students at the centre and two other children benefited from the outreach services in their mainstream schools. Of these, five were reintegrated while one is still carrying out the programme at the centre.
LEARNING SUPPORT CENTRE, GIRLS SECONDARY NAXXAR

The Learning Support Centre aims to provide students with an alternative educational provision and to offer support during the reintegration process. Students receive a broad and balanced curriculum at the learning support centre alongside intensive social skills training.

During this scholastic year a youth work programme was set up. This programme worked with several agencies including Agenzija Żgħażagħ and ŻiguŻajg to complete certain projects and activities. Additionally, the centre also took part in the Kreattiv Project. These initiatives helped the students to engage in hands on activities and thus develop further important life-skills.

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SECTION

During the year, the number of Learning Support Assistant/Supply Learning Support Assistants, employed to support students with special needs is 2468 (State, Church and Independent). These LSAs/SLSAs are supporting 3913 identified learners.

In order to facilitate the transition from primary to secondary school, a transition exercise for students with special needs were held. These were conducted by the Inclusion Coordinators (INCOs). Primary and Secondary school personnel were also involved in the process. In all 142 sessions were held between April and July 2014 across the ten Colleges.

LEARNING ZONES AND NURTURE GROUPS (LSZ/NG)

During 2014, LSZ and NG were introduced in Primary and Secondary schools. These zones are within the schools and managed by SEBD specialist teachers with the support of an LSA. The principal aim behind the zones is to support learners with Social, Emotional Behavioural Difficulties. At the beginning of the scholastic year 2013-2014, the number of Learning Zones was 25, while Nurture Groups was 33.

During scholastic year 2013 - 2014, 801 learners were supported within the Nurture Groups and 676 learners were supported within the Learning Zones.

STATEMENTING MODERATING PANEL

During 2014, the Statementing Moderating Panel statemented 648 referred students, which were given the support of a Learning Support Assistant. Moreover, the review board analysed 149 cases.

PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES SECTION

This section works closely with all State and Non-state schools in Malta and Gozo, with the President’s Office and various Ministries, as well as with NGOs and other entities.

HELP PROGRAMME

The Projects and Initiatives Section is represented on the HELP committee. This year, the HELP Committee organised the third edition of the Healthy Lifestyle Award Competition.

SCHOOL COUNCILS

The Projects and Initiatives Section coordinates the School Councils in State schools. Preparations are underway so that new elections are held in January 2015. A number of new School Council presidents were appointed so that each Council will have a School President.
EU MILK SCHEME

This Scheme is open to all State and Non-state schools: Kindergarten, Primary and Secondary, as well as Childcare Centres. Participating schools and centres can claim part of the expenses spent on the milk that is distributed to the children free of charge. During scholastic year 2014 - 2015 there were 42 Primary State Schools and 2 Resource Centres benefiting under this scheme.

EU SCHOOL FRUIT AND VEGETABLES SCHEME

This is an EU funded scheme known as the School Fruit and Vegetables Scheme (SFS). This year all pupils in Year 1 were given a School Fruit Scheme lunch-box; pupils from Kindergarten till Year 6 were given a Calendar with Healthy Recipes and pupils from Year 3 to Year 6 were given a bookmark.

SCHOOLS LIBRARY SERVICE

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

The central database (the online catalogue) increased to 261,341 items, of which 31,805 items were added during 2014. This data includes more than 5733 original cataloguing entries. Weeding of library collections was also carried out in a number of schools and a total of 4599 books were either recycled or added to the Special Collections Scheme.

BOOK PROCESSING FOR SCHOOLS OUTSIDE THE COMPUTERISATION PROJECT

A number of schools are in the process of having their libraries upgraded. SLS staff members visited 63 schools.

ARCHIVES

The SLS is the custodian of school admission registers of schools that have closed down. The total of such registers now amounts to 119. All the registers that were available in the state secondary schools (Malta only) in 2003 were microfilmed and a digital version was also made. A number of databases were also forwarded to the SLS by the STS. During 2014 a total of 496 school attendance certificates and 9 School Leaving Certificates were issued.

WORLD BOOK DAY

The ceremony to celebrate World Book Day was held on 23rd April. An essay competition for primary students and a crossword puzzle competition for secondary students was organised. Twenty-seven state and non-state secondary schools participated and submitted 965 entries. There were also 532 submissions from 19 state and non-state primary schools.

CULTURE CARD

This Section works in collaboration with the Ministry for Tourism to promote the use of the Culture Card by secondary students in Form 1, 2 and 3. This year, a total of 3927 Culture Cards were distributed to students in Year 6 in June 2013.
II. THE DIRECTORATE FOR LIFELONG LEARNING AND EARLY SCHOOL LEAVERS

The Directorate for Lifelong Learning and Early School Leavers (DLL ESL) is responsible for three main areas: the Adult Learning Unit, the Early School Leavers Unit and the Visual and Performing Arts Schools. In August 2014, the previously separate Early School Leavers Unit became part of the Lifelong Learning Directorate to ensure further complementarity between the two areas and maximisation of resources.

The Directorate is guided by a vision that lifelong learning empowers citizens through more personalised and innovative approaches to education. The Directorate offers policy guidance and organises courses to improve people’s experience of learning. It aims to ensure that there are learning benefits for individuals, communities, employers and society.

In 2014, the Directorate received a total of 16,913 applications for adult learning and visual and performing arts courses to be held throughout the scholastic year 2014-2015. At least 50% of applications were submitted online and the website www.lifelonglearning.gov.mt attracted 69,698 users and 1,639,964 page views.

ADULT LEARNING UNIT

The Directorate has the mission to increase participation in adult learning and to address the imbalances in participation to achieve a more equitable state of affairs. It is responsible for the selection, recruitment and placement of adult educators within its different centres, namely the 8 evening classes’ centres, the Lifelong Learning Centre in Msida (LLC) and courses offered at community level.

The DLL ESL employs 17 part-time adult educators and subject coordinators and 300 part-time adult educators for the teaching and support of adult learning classes. The Directorate trains and recruits adult educators who are specialised in various fields, including digital competence, family learning, languages, maths, science and technology, sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, social health and civic competences, vocational and educational training.

Throughout 2014, the DLL ESL received 12,128 applications for adult learning courses. Of these applicants 66% were female and 34% were male.

The Directorate works with the National Commission for Higher Education (NCHFE) to ensure that its courses are accredited according to the Malta Qualification Framework. In 2014 the following courses were successfully accredited at level one: Greek Language, Internet Awareness, Personal Beauty Care and Digital Photography. The following subjects were also accredited at level 2: Greek Language, Mathematics, Maltese as a Foreign Language.

Members of staff participated in quality assurance training through the EU-funded training project called Net-QAPE led by the NCFHE.

ADULT LEARNING COURSES

The Directorate is one of the leading providers of adult learning in Malta and Gozo. In 2014, 12,128 prospective learners applied to attend courses held in 9 centres, 40 Local Councils and 17 community centres. Open day activities were organised in April and May and the launch for the learning year took place on 18 August. A communications strategy was implemented to promote these courses using a variety of media.
Adult learning classes are also referred to as second chance opportunities for adult learners. Each lesson is generally made of 3 contact hours per week.

**LIFELONG LEARNING CENTRE, MSIDA**

In 2014, the Lifelong Learning Centre (LLC) continued to offer both morning and evening classes and this resulted in an increase in the number of adult learners attending classes at this centre. The number of adult learners registered for one or more courses offered at the LLC increased to 3,622.

Around 40 part-time adult educators offer their services for morning classes where a range of courses in 35 subjects are held. These short courses are mainly focused on language and language conversation classes; scientific and mathematical courses; digital and vocational courses (VET) and health and civic related subjects.

The Centre was also involved in an EU Grundtvig project – *The Practical Young Woman Education Programme* in collaboration with organisations from Italy and Turkey.

Academic and other VET evening classes' courses were also open at the LLC. As initiated in 2013, through 2014 the LLC continued to offer short courses from 7:30pm onwards. This was done to address the needs of the self-employed and employees of small businesses and to encourage adult learning amongst the small business community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group Minimum Age</th>
<th>Age Group Maximum Age</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>356</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>519</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>508</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>750</td>
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<td>41</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>455</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>594</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>807</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>1071</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66 +</td>
<td></td>
<td>268</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>2573</td>
<td>1049</td>
<td>3622</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ADULT COURSES IN THE COMMUNITY**

The Directorate works with the Department for Local Government (DLG) to implement the scheme called *Lifelong Learning in the Community* which was first launched in 2010. In 2014, 40 local councils and 17 NGOs and Community Centres participated. Through this scheme the DLL ESL reached 3,107 learners, this is an increase of over 1,000 learners when compared to the previous learning year 2013.

**NATIONAL DIPLOMA IN ADULT TEACHING**

In March 2014, the Directorate launched the *National Diploma in Teaching Adults* which was accredited by NCHFE at level 5. The aim of this diploma is to improve the quality of adult education in Malta.

In 2014, the first 5 modules were developed on the following subjects: principles of adult education, theory and practice, lesson planning and preparation, lifelong learning guidance and assessment for learning. Approximately 141 students applied for each module.
13, an award ceremony was organised for students who successfully completed the first 3
modules.

NATIONAL LIFELONG LEARNING STRATEGY 2020

The National Lifelong Learning Strategy for Malta 2020 focuses on adult learning, specifically
the participation of people aged 25 to 64 years in lifelong learning. It covers post-compulsory
education, vocational education and training (VET), higher education and adult education.

The Ministry for Education and Employment (MEDE) published the draft strategy on 30
October 2014 during a consultation meeting of the Malta Council for Economic and Social
Development (MCESD). This strategy was adopted as final in December 2014.

EUROPEAN INITIATIVES AND FUNDING

The Directorate also collaborates with European and international partners and is the national
coordinator responsible for the implementation of the EU Agenda for Adult Learning. The
Directorate participates in the EU’s Working Group on Adult Learning and the Expert Group on
Adult Skills. The DLL ESL is a member of the European Basic Skills Network (EBSN) and the
European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA).

EUROPEAN AGENDA FOR ADULT LEARNING

The EU Agenda project 2012-2014 was implemented and finalised in 2014 and the following
objectives were implemented:

- Organisation of an initial and final of conference and a Peer Learning Activity (PLA) to
  share examples of best practices, areas of improvements and disseminate results and
  material developed through project. The PLA dealt with work-based learning and was was
  held from 5 to 5 May 2014;
- Setting up of an inter-ministerial committee to raise awareness and to encourage more low
  skilled or low qualified adults (employed, unemployed and inactive) to participate in lifelong
  learning to upgrade their skills and educational level;
- Networking of stakeholders for adult learning to identify low skilled and/or low qualified
  adults, their training needs, and to develop actions to motivate them to participate in adult
  learning basic skills;
- Investment in capacity building through a training programme for adult educators through
  the National Diploma;
- Developing campaign material to disseminate information related to adult learning and
  promote participation in adult learning and training;
- Participating in relevant transnational Peer Learning Activities organised by other National
  Coordinators to share experiences.

In 2014, the DLL ESL successfully applied for funding for the next EU Agenda programme for
National Coordinators (2015) and was awarded €94,470 by European Agency for Culture,
Education and Audiovisual (EACEA) under the Call for Proposals EACEA 12/2014.

EUROPEAN PLATFORM FOR ADULT LEARNING

The European Commission launched the Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe
(EPALE).

The Directorate secured €107,700 in EU funding to be Malta’s National Support Service for
EPALE (Call for Proposals EACEA 14/2014). The Directorate’s role is to offer assistance and
disseminate information on the use of this platform.
BREAKING BARRIERS – ENHANCING LITERACY THROUGH DIGITAL MEDIA

The DLL ESL was successful in drawing up a proposal and applying for funding under the ERASMUS+ Programme (Key Strategy 2) and was granted €413,000 to implement a 3-year project: *Breaking Barriers: Embracing literacy through digital media*. The first partners’ meeting and workshop was held in December with the participation of five international partners from Norway, UK, Italy, Cyprus and Macedonia.

*Breaking Barriers* aims to tackle the need of the cohort of low-skilled literate adults aged between 25 and 65 and to help learners build new skills and improve career prospects.

EARLY SCHOOL LEAVERS UNIT

The document *A Strategic Plan for the Prevention of Early School Leaving in Malta* was launched on 10 June 2014. The Directorate is responsible for the implementation of this strategy. In line with the recommendations and strategic actions found in the strategy, the following actions and programmes have been implemented in 2014.

INTER-MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE

An ESL Inter-ministerial Committee was set up in July 2014 and is now meeting on a regular basis. The Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) falls under the responsibility of the Permanent Secretary with the mandate to assess and propose strategies, policies and actions directed to address the challenges of ESL across different Government Ministries with the necessary support of pertinent Government agencies in order to ensure that actions are taken in a coordinated, coherent and consistent manner, leading to effective and tangible results.

SEC REVISION CLASSES IN SUMMER

The Directorate was responsible for the organisation of MEDE’s initiative to offer SEC Revision Classes in the core subjects as preparation for SEC resits. Classes were offered in Maltese, English Language, Mathematics and Physics. The revision classes were offered free of charge and were partially funded by the European Social Fund 2007-2013 as part of the Youth Guarantee Project.

The revision classes were held over 5 weeks. This was an intensive programme which covered the subject over a short period until resits. The aim was to help students improve their grades, facilitating their entry into post-secondary institutions, thus reducing the risk of early school leaving.

Eligible students were those whose grade in Maltese, English Language, Mathematics and Physics is 6, 7, U or were absent. Students could apply for up to 3 subjects. The table below presents percentages of students who successfully got a result of 4 or 5 in their Resit Session.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students getting 4 or 5 in Sep-14 Session</th>
<th>Students who ATTENDED revision classes</th>
<th>Students who DID NOT ATTEND revision classes</th>
<th>General Matsec Statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maltese</td>
<td>53.9%</td>
<td>38.1%</td>
<td>43.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>63.7%</td>
<td>57.4%</td>
<td>59.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>60.7%</td>
<td>47.2%</td>
<td>51.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ALTERNATIVE LEARNING PROGRAMME (JAN – JUNE 2014)

The Alternative Learning Programme (ALP) is a pull-out, centrally organised, programme and offered in different campuses belonging to different institutions within MEDE. It is an emergency intervention measure taken in the scholastic year 2013-2014 to address the needs of form 5 students who had not applied to sit for any Secondary Education Certificate (SEC) examinations at the end of the scholastic year in May 2014. These students were almost de facto early school leavers. To encourage them to consider going into further education, MEDE put together a varied programme with the help of ESLU, the Vocational Education Unit and the psychosocial services at DSS. This was based on VET, basic skills, ICT and soft skills. This was made possible through the cooperation of MCAST, ETC, Microsoft, Aġenzija Żgħażagħ, and FES.

Out of a possible 350 students who were interviewed, 230 showed interest in joining this ALP. The aim was to give these students the possibility of obtaining an MQF level 1 qualification and entice them to consider going into further education at MCAST, ITS or the Youth.Inc programme.

In June 2014, the first ALP programme was brought to an end and certificate giving ceremonies were organised in relation to ETC, Youth.Inc and MCAST. The target to support the students during the ALP programme has been reached and completed for scholastic year 2013 – 2014.

Number of students placed in different institutions:

- 102 students were placed at ETC. They followed two courses from the following options: vehicle spray painting, welding, tile laying, stone masonry, plastering, electrician's mate, plumbing, carpentry, sales, cleaning, and gardening;
- 43 students followed the Youth.Inc programme;
- 35 students attended MCAST Naxxar (Institute of Construction Engineering);
- 12 students followed a welding course at MCAST Corradino (Institute of Mechanical Engineering); and
- 16 students followed a Hairdressing course at MCAST Corradino (Institute of Community Services).

ALTERNATIVE LEARNING PROGRAMME (SUMMER 2014)

As part of the framework of the Youth Guarantee Project, students who followed the ALP programme were offered ICT training for the summer of 2014. A group of 144 students, 116 students from Malta and 28 students from Gozo, applied for training in up-and-coming IT topics. The IT training project consisting of six IT courses namely, programming application and coding, robotics and social media, 3d printing, digital gaming, web design and soft skills.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Applicants</th>
<th>144</th>
<th>100.0%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Students who started the course</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>61.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Students who attended more than 80% of the lessons</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>57.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ALTERNATIVE LEARNING PROGRAMME (OCT 2014 – JUNE 2015)

A second ALP is being carried out in the scholastic year 2014-2015, hosting about 250 students with the aim of enticing them to remain in education after the completion of
compulsory education. In December 2014, sixteen students were given a MQF Level 1 intensive welding course in metal arc welding and mig welding at the Motherwell Bridge Ltd in Hal Far. As part of the ALP, a group of 11 students with behavioural difficulties were identified to follow a 17-day experience with the Armed Forces of Malta.

THE VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS SCHOOLS

The Directorate is responsible for the Visual and Performing Arts Schools in Malta and Gozo.

In 2014, a total of 4,202 learners applied for courses organised by the Visual and Performing Arts Schools. Courses are offered in art, drama and music. The Directorate is now working to ensure more collaboration between the different schools.

JOHANN STRAUSS SCHOOL OF MUSIC (JSSOM)

The Johann Strauss School of Music offers tuition to 1,653 learners registered in 2014, to attend practical and theory courses. A new officer-in-charge was appointed in September 2014 and part-time adult educators were recruited to ensure that more students can participate in music classes.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS SCHOOL GOZO

The Visual and Performing Arts School was founded in August 2014 and opened its doors to the students on 1 October 2014. This was a new initiative that brought together the 3 different schools which were previously based in Nadur (drama), Sannat (music) and Ghajnsielem (art).

In 2014, 1,180 students registered and are now successfully attending the various courses organised over 6 days every week. The VPA school offers 17 art courses, 18 drama courses and 11 music courses, amounting to 46 different courses in the three disciplines. To accommodate such courses, the school invested in a considerable number of resources including easels, bandsaw and hi-fi systems. All studios were further equipped with first-aid kits.

The VPA school organised several initiatives and concerts to enhance the learners’ experience.

SCHOOL OF ART, MALTA

The Malta School of Art offers a range of courses in Drawing, Painting, Sculpture (Modelling and Casting), Sculpture (Wood and Stone Carving), Artistic Printmaking, History and Appreciation of Art, Gold and Silversmithing, and Gilding. On Wednesdays the School of Art offers courses in Junior Art for students from 7-11 years of age; Creative Techniques in Life Drawing and Painting.

In 2014, a number of initiatives were organised by the School of Art.

MALTA DRAMA CENTRE

In 2014, the Malta Drama Centre received 803 applications and increased the number of applications by around 50% when compared to 2013. A new officer-in-charge was appointed to oversee the administration of the centre and the organisation of drama courses.

The Malta Drama centre organised a number of events and performances through the year.
III. SCHOOL RESOURCES DEPARTMENT (SRD)

EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES AREA

HEALTH AND SAFETY IN SCHOOLS

The Educational Facilities Service Manager is responsible for ensuring the servicing of a number of operations of State Schools and Directorates’ Sections. The areas of responsibility include the provision of School Transport Services, the Health and Safety (H&S) Unit and H&S issues that arise at College School level, the facilitation of Agreements between Schools and Colleges on the use of school facilities and management of the School Lab Technicians set-up. The Service Manager also chairs the Injury Board of the DES.

SCHOOL TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT

The Directorate for Educational Services (DES) provides transport to approximately 11,000 students every day, to and from State Primary and Secondary Schools and Resource Centres within the ten Colleges.

Daily routes in mainstream schools amount to 484 services. In addition, 27 routes are provided with the means of lifter vans and cabs for students with special needs.

The School Transport Unit also provides 49 twice daily transport trips to Learning Support Centres and Resource Centres for students with special needs who are enrolled in such Centres.

During 2014, the School Transport Unit also expanded the service provided to cater for transport provision for the Alternative Learning Programme (ALP) as well as the Third Country Nationals (TCN) programme by providing daily transport service. Currently, 36 daily routes are being provided for the ALP 2014-2015 programme to four different educational institutions, whilst another 7 daily routes to 3 different educational institutions are being provided for the TCN 2014-2015 programme.

SCHOOL FACILITIES 3RD PARTY AGREEMENTS

The Educational Facilities Section within the School Resources Department also facilitates the process and ensures DES interests in 3rd party agreements for use of school facilities, mostly outside school hours. The role of the Educational Facilities Section, within DSR, is to ensure that the best and maximum use of school facilities is made, and at the same time ensuring that the interests of the school and the Directorates are safeguarded. It has now become standard procedure that use by 3rd parties of school facilities is officialised through written agreements.

HEALTH AND SAFETY IN SCHOOLS

TEACHING AND OTHER EDUCATIONAL SERVICES IN SCHOOLS

Health and Safety (H&S) educational programmes in schools were maintained throughout all age groups. A structured continuous program in First Aid Awareness that was introduced in the previous scholastic year was maintained in primary schools to year 4, 5 and 6 students. A new project aimed at early years was introduced this year.

A risk assessment was prepared for all State schools and regular emergency evacuation drills were held in all schools. Throughout the year, teachers received various training to further empower them in assisting schools with high quality support.
REVISION OF BOMB THREAT PROCEDURES

The bomb threat procedures for schools were re-evaluated in collaboration with the Armed Forces of Malta. All schools have now been notified about the current bomb threat procedures.

FIRST AID

A number of First Aid Awareness talks were organised for parents. A number of full Basic First Aid courses were delivered in colleges when requested. Full Basic First Aid courses were held for the staff at schools.

CHILD CARE CENTRES, FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

Throughout this year, all FES Child Care Centres were offered the same H&S services as those offered to regular College primary schools (with the exception of lessons to pupils). In fact, all FES Child Care Centres received risk assessment reports as well as support in various areas such as emergency evacuation planning and fire safety.

HEALTH AND SAFETY EXPO

The Health and Safety Unit organised a Health and Safety EXPO specifically aimed at primary and secondary school children. Another session was aimed for ETC Job Bridge students.

Students from various State and non-State schools visited the EXPO, where various training stations were set up to offer the possibility to experience training in Food Hygiene, First Aid, Fire Safety, Road Safety and Internet Safety. During this event, parents were also given the opportunity to complete a full Basic First Aid (BFA) programme leading to official certification and recognition.

FREE CHILD CARE SCHEME

With effect from the 1st April 2014, the School Resources Department was entrusted with the management of the Free Childcare Scheme launched by the Government.

By the end of the year, 77 Childcare Centres had enrolled in the scheme and a total of 3,857 children have been registered to join the scheme. The scheme is open to those children whose parents are at work or studying. Children can remain in the scheme until they become eligible for entrance into State Kindergarten classes. In the first nine months, the Government paid out €5.2 million towards the financing of the scheme.

BREAKFAST CLUB SCHEME IN PRIMARY STATE SCHOOLS

The service of Breakfast Clubs in Primary State Schools was launched in April 2014 and was run in partnership with the respective Offices of the College Principals.

The service continued to operate during the commencement of the new scholastic year 2014/2015. Online applications were launched for parents to apply for the scheme as well as for staff to be able to participate in the running of the scheme. On average, 950 students attend the breakfast clubs on a daily basis.

UNIFORMS

During 2014, the Directorate for Education Services launched a process called Request for Proposals for Uniform Suppliers to submit proposals in connection with the sale of school uniforms for State Schools.
The aim was to reduce the cost of uniforms while maintaining the quality standards. The process resulted in one successful bidder being chosen as the official supplier of the Directorates to supply school uniforms. This process also resulted in reducing the overall costs of uniforms by 10%.

**ICT IN EDUCATION**

The ICT in Education Section aims at ensuring the effective and efficient delivery of services to Colleges and Schools through a framework of decentralisation and autonomy. The Section is currently providing various services to all State Schools, the Learning Support Centres (LSC), the Education Resource Centres (ERC) and other Education Units and nucleuses within the remit of the MEDE.

During 2014, the educational set-up was made up of 145 units which encompassed about 33,366 students, 497 senior/supporting staff and 4,038 teachers. Furthermore, the set-up included 1,922 LSAs and 533 Kindergarten Assistants.

**LAPTOPS PROVISION**

During the year 2014, the Directorate for Educational Services provided 279 laptops to various applicants such as Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs), Class teachers, Senior Management Teachers (SMTs), etc. Out of these, 180 were newly-purchased laptops.

**INTERACTIVE WHITEBOARDS (IWBS)**

A tender was issued and awarded to procure 118 Interactive White Boards. Installations were carried out during September.

**BANDWIDTH UPGRADE**

In May 2014, the Ministry for Education and Employment, together with MITA, carried out an evaluation exercise with regards to schools' bandwidth utilisation. The aim was to upgrade both the schools’ WAN links (the local fibre to each school) and the internet gateway (the Géant European Network).

**3. DIRECTORATE FOR QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN EDUCATION (DQSE)**

**INTRODUCTION**

The Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education (DQSE) was established following the enactment of the amendments of the Education Act Chapter 327 in 2006. The mission of this Directorate is to regulate, establish, monitor and assure standards and quality in the programmes and educational services provided by schools, whether State schools or not, as provided for in this Act.

The DQSE is led by a Director General and supported by three Directors responsible for specific Departments:

- DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT (DCM)
- QUALITY ASSURANCE DEPARTMENT (QAD)
- DEPARTMENT OF ELEARNING (DEL)
I. DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT

The Department of Curriculum Management is responsible for the management of the sections falling within the Department with the Director co-ordinating the work and being responsible for the finances allocated to the Department.

The Department is responsible for the following areas: Summative Examinations and Assessment for Learning; Humanities; Languages; Literacy Agency and Literacy Support Programmes; Early Years, Expressive Arts; Continuous Professional Development; Mathematics and Sciences and Documentation.

EARLY YEARS

A one week pre-service training was organised for students following the National Diploma course in Child Care at MCAST. A six week training programme was held in Malta for kindergarten assistants who were hosting students from MCAST and a seven day programme was held in Gozo for Kindergarten assistants from state and non-state schools. Two in-service courses were coordinated in July for kindergarten assistants from selected Colleges.

Professional development sessions were held with the medical staff from the Well Baby Clinics and with Heads of School from the Gozo College.

Two family literacy programmes were organised at Xgħajra and Kalkara Primary Schools. The aim of programme was to strengthen home-school links and parental involvement and empowerment. In collaboration with the Paediatric Occupational Therapy Department, the Education Officers worked on a resource pack for promoting Fine Motor Skills in the Early Years.

In collaboration with the Commission for Children’s Rights, work was carried out on the production of a story book in Maltese in a big book format. Working contacts were also kept with other Entities or NGOs.

PRIMARY CURRICULUM – ENGLISH

Training Sessions were held in conjunction with the Education Assessment Unit (a) for new teachers teaching Year 6 classes on the testing of oral skills in the Benchmark assessment; and (b) an evaluation meeting for Year 6 teachers and SMT members regarding performance in the Benchmark Assessment 2014 and implications for teaching and learning. Following the Year 3 Assessment in 2013, an Evaluation Report was-drawn up concerning the performance of students in the English tests.

Curriculum design entailed the writing of a syllabus designed to guide the teaching and learning of English for foreign students attending the Third Country Nationals (TCN) Centres.

The validation of curricular e-content resources necessitated the evaluation of over 248 Reusable Learning Objects (RLOs) for primary English. Each RLO is a digital lesson which is made up of learning activities and an assessment task. The resources target learners of English in Primary Years 3, 4, 5 and 6.

SECONDARY CURRICULUM – ENGLISH

The English Secondary Section organised training for Core Curriculum Programme (CCP) teachers of English who teach CCP classes in Forms 1, 3 and 4. In collaboration with the EFL Monitoring Board, the English Language Section within the Department held an In-Service course.
ENGLISH LANGUAGE RESOURCE CENTRE (ELRC)

The Language Resource Centre for teachers of English provides resources, such as books, journals, magazines, CDs, DVDs that have a bearing on the teaching and learning of the English Language and Literature are regularly updated.

These resources are made available to the teachers of English in the State, Church and Public Sectors. The ELRC is also the venue for regular meetings between Education Officers and Heads of Department of English.

LITERACY

Support was given to schools in the drafting and the implementation of literacy Action Plans. A set of schemes and an assessment tool were designed and thereon adopted in the Third Country Nationals programme.

EUROPEAN FUNDED PROJECTS

The Education Officer for Literacy coordinated two EU funded projects: the Core Competences Online Assessment Tool (CCOAST) and the Reading and Spelling Software (RESS).

MEDIA EDUCATION

In collaboration with Cine Circle the biennial Cine Circle Secondary School National Short Film Competition was organized. Work was also carried out with Creative Desk Europa (Malta) to promote The Young Audience Film Day.

In liaison with other Education Officers and Heads of Department, the Plastic Oceans Clean up the Sea/Beaches project was planned and will be finalised in March 2015. Together with the Malta Film Foundation and an Education Officer, the team developed a project Film Festival for Early Years which will be piloted at Valletta Primary School in the second term of scholastic year 2014-2015.

A pilot project Media and Language Enhancement was launched at Tarxien Primary School with Year 3 classes and at Siggiewi Primary with Year 4 Classes. A professional development session was held at Tarxien Primary on the project.

MALTA WRITING PROGRAMME (MWP)

The Malta Writing Programme (MWP) worked with twenty-six (26) State Schools and supported sixty-three (63) primary school teachers in the implementation of the writing process methodologies.

Two writing workshops were organised for parents of learners in Year 4-6 in two schools in St Benedict College.

The MWP team contributed to “Ilħna Miktuba”, an initiative by St Benedict College on a number of activities related to written and expressive communication. The pupils’ writings and drawings were then published in a book. Three workshops were also delivered in at Maria Regina Middle School Naxxar as part of the Animal Awareness Week activities.

In collaboration with the Department of Maltese of St Clare’s College Girls Secondary a full day writing seminar was organised in April. The one hundred and twenty (120) Form IV students who attended this seminar had the opportunity to write independently as well as
collaboratively in different genres. This event was submitted by the school for the award of the Premju Frans Sammut and which the school won.

Fourteen (14) two hour Professional Development Sessions on Writing Process Methodologies were organised in various schools. A total of six hundred and ninety-one (691) educators attended these writing sessions.

The MWP 13\textsuperscript{th} Invitational Writing Institute (IWI) was held between 10\textsuperscript{th} March – 11\textsuperscript{th} April 2014. The twenty three (23) participants were teachers from Primary and Secondary Schools and Literacy Support Teachers. An anthology of the participating teachers’ writings was published.

A training programme on Differentiation was open to teachers of Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 and Forms 1 and 2 and was followed by twenty nine (29) participants. Another training programme was organised after school hours.

The Let Me Learn (LML) Centre Malta in collaboration with the Malta Writing Programme (MWP) and the Writing Support Unit within the Secretariat for Catholic Education organised a Let Me Learn-Writing Seminar at St Monica School Gżira.

The MWP regularly issued and disseminated the newsletter E Link to update past participants of MWP training programmes with the latest events being organised. The MWP maintained its website: http://mwp.skola.edu.mt/. This website is also linked to other classroom blogs and school blogs which promote writing as an effective learning tool for learning: http://mwp.skola.edu.mt/category/school-blogs/.

The MWP is also visible through its Fronter Room which has the latest editions of the E Link and a direct link to the MWP Website.

**DOCUMENTATION - Procurement of Textbooks**

All primary schools were provided with textbooks before the start of the Scholastic Year 2014-2015.

This year saw also the introduction and distribution of the following textbooks: a new Music textbook for years 4, 5 and 6 classes in primary school; a new Geography textbook for Form 4, which is a departmental publication; a new Accounting teacher reference book and a textbook for Form 3 students; the Maltese novels for Forms 1 and 2; the last phasing in of Spanish and Social Studies textbooks, and the English version of the Religion textbook for Form 2 and Year 5.

**UNITED WORLD COLLEGES (UWC)**

The Malta Alumni Association helped to finance the expenses of four Maltese students who participated in the UWC short course “Youth for Community” which was held in Shetland in August 2014.

**THE LET ME LEARN UNIT (LML)**

The Let Me Learn team continued with the teacher training in the LML Process. In October 2014, the LML team organised a teacher training course which is scheduled to end in May 2015. This year, an LML training initiative was conducted at the Boys Secondary School in Gozo.
Throughout the year, LML was also involved in the continuation of in-class mentoring provision to both past training participants and newly graduated B.Ed. students who covered Credits in the LML process at University of Malta. This service, includes LML awareness sessions, validation of inventories and profiling, co-teaching and study skills embedded with LML practices.

In September 2014, the LML Unit started a new initiative, whereby two members of the LML team are presently working on a project at Floriana Primary and Valletta Primary Schools, San Ġorġ Preca College. A whole school approach was adopted within the two schools.

A number of Professional Development Sessions were held in both state and non-state schools in Malta and Gozo and at MCAST.

The LML team has also started working on the preparations leading to the LML Summit Conference which will be held in July 2015, as part of the celebrations of the 20th Anniversary from when the Let Me Learn Process was conceived. Initial activities involved networking between classes within local schools and peers in American schools through Skype, to share ideas about our two different cultures and also to exchange ways of how the LML process is being implemented across borders.

ART

The Heads of Department Art participated in several events, organised local Art competitions / exhibitions, assisted in the promotion of a publication by local artist Doris Micallef in school libraries, and managed in-service course for teachers of Art in Secondary Schools.

Other meetings were held to discuss the way forward in connection with Visual and Performing Arts, the new Expressive Arts Curriculum and Music, proposals to strengthen Arts Education and Art Education vis-à-vis the Framework for the Education Strategy for Malta (2014-2024).

MUSIC

A training session on Music Education was given to Kindergarten Assistants. A one day training session on the use of the Sibelius Software was held for newly appointed teachers of Music in secondary schools. Also a choir composed of teachers of Music was set up.

Courses on the use of the Recorder were held for newly appointed peripatetic teachers of Music in Malta and Gozo.

Meetings were held with stake holders to discuss the Expressive Arts Syllabus (Music) for Form 1 and the setting of the option Music annual examinations papers 2015.

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY CURRICULUM – MALTESE

The Education Officers in charge of Maltese Language in the primary and secondary curriculum:

- were members of the National Benchmark Examination Board for Maltese. Follow-up feedback sessions for Heads of School and Year 6 teachers were held in Malta and Gozo;
- assisted and advised teachers in the setting up of college-based Half-Yearly Examinations;
- gave professional support to teachers and parents on teaching and learning during several school visits;
organised together with Kumitat Festi Nazzjonali, Jum Dun Karm, a special ceremony commemorating the Maltese National Poet;
- maintained and updated the website of Maltese Language as a teaching resource for Primary and Secondary teacher;
- published two books of short stories in Maltese to be used in Middle Schools; and
- co-produced eleven short films on Form 1 and Form 2 poems with MCAST Art and Design Institute.

SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFICULTIES SERVICE (SPLD SERVICE)

SpLD Service has continued to organise a number of courses for parents and teachers so as to contribute to better support and understanding of the student with dyslexia.

A highlight of the earlier part of the year was the 7-week teachers’ course ‘Supporting the dyslexic student in the classroom’.

A 2-day conference was organised collaboratively with the Ministry for Education and Employment on Teaching Foreign Languages to dyslexic pupils.

The annual parents’ course was also very well received. Over 100 parents attended this course which aimed at facilitating understanding of the implications of dyslexia and empowering parents to support their child more effectively at home.

A number of parents also attended courses, at the SPLD library, which focused more specifically on the development of reading.

An innovation this year has been the introduction of extended library opening hours. Parents and students now have the possibility of visiting the library in the evenings and also on a Saturday morning.

As has been done in previous years the SPELLING PROJECT was also carried out in a number of schools so as to further contribute to the multisensory teaching. This year, Year 5 classes with larger number of dyslexic students were targeted. Class teachers were invited to participate and co-teach.

A major focus of the work of SPLD is that of assessments – this year like previous years, assessments for MATSEC access arrangements continued to take up a considerable portion of time.

This year the Transition Exercise again formed a considerable part of the SpLD work. SpLD teachers visited schools, interviewed children, discussed difficulties and provided intervention in areas in which students claimed they required more support.

NATIONAL LITERACY AGENCY

The National Literacy Agency was set up in June 2014 to lead and facilitate the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy for All in Malta and Gozo that had been launched a few days before the setting up of the agency.

The main scope of the National Literacy Agency is to spread and increase good literacy practices in all life experiences and for all ages including children, youth, adults, third world citizens and other people who need support in developing their literacy skills.
The National Literacy Strategy needs to ensure that better results in the field of literacy are achieved, for instance, by increasing inclusive practices and ensuring that more young people achieve competences and qualification, so as to increase work opportunities.

Since the launch of the National Literacy Agency, the following work projects have been held in coordination with the Department for Curriculum Management within the Ministry of Education and Employment:

Ten Literacy Teams have been set up, one in each college, so as to enhance coordination between the literacy programmes of each college in order to address the literacy challenges from Early and Primary Years, class by class, school by school, in each and every community. Each Literacy Team is coordinated by the Head of Department (Literacy) and consists of Language Support Teachers, Complementary Teachers, SPLD, AfL, LSA and classroom teachers.

Thirty centres around Malta and Gozo have been set up to promote literacy programmes for Early Years through the ‘Aqra Miegħi/Read with Me’ initiative. Weekly sessions are held as part of this programme, which is free of charge, during which animated reading sessions are organized by parents who have been trained for the purpose by the Agency for parents and guardians of children aged 0 to 3 to promote the love for reading from early years. Seven hundred families have already benefitted from this programme.

A reading campaign has been initiated, with the support of 20 ‘Reading Ambassadors’, some of whom visit primary school classes every fortnight, reading stories for children and discussing with them interesting themes.

The programme ‘Aqra kemm tifla/Enriching classroom libraries’ was launched. Through this initiative, each Year 1, 2 and 3 primary school class will be receiving 100 reading books and accompanying resources so that children will have more reading opportunities in the classroom. During the scholastic year 2014-2015, sixteen schools will benefit from this project.

A prize giving ceremony entitled ‘Promoturi tal-Qari/Reading Champions’ was held at Valletta in which students who are ardent readers and others who have improved their reading skills were celebrated. It is anticipated that other students who promote reading amongst their friends will also be given recognition in future public events.

**DRAMA UNIT**

The Drama Unit aims to perform lessons in all schools and to put up Theatre in Education projects for children and students of all the different ages.

The Unit worked with various NGOs who wish students in schools to be more informed about the roles they play in society. During the past year the Unit worked with the Office for Consumer rights and took part in the Global Money Week with a number of workshops with students in Secondary schools about how Banks work and what services they provide.

The Drama Unit worked with PSD groups on various topics and also, took part in National Projects including Fiera tal-Ktieb; Paddy Boom; Ghidli storja; ŻiguŻajg and others.

The Unit worked on a number of projects which amalgamate both the lessons and the Theatre in Education Projects so the students had the same number of contact hours with the subject but could work deeper into the subject.
ARABIC

A number of meetings were organised for all teachers of Arabic. These meetings were well attended and suggestions put forward for the teaching and learning of the subject. Support and assistance was also given to the Independent School Mariam el Batool.

FRENCH

The French Section within the Curriculum Management Department carried out projects and activities during the year under review, including: activities for secondary schools students held at the Centre Franco-Maltais, Msida; and French cooking and tasting sessions for 30 students who study French were organized at the Centre.

Heads of Department also worked closely with the APFM (Association de Professeurs de Francais a Malte) in the launch of a competition, sponsored by the APFM in collaboration with the Ambassade de France.

The Francofête competition was held at San Ġorġ Preca College Boys’ Secondary School Hamrun and consequently a prize-giving ceremony was held for students in Form 1, 2, 3 and 4. The French ambassador attended this activity.

GEOGRAPHY

The Geography Section was involved in the writing of 54 digital lessons as part of the EU funded project for the procurement of digital content to secondary schools. The team working on this project, consisting of four Heads of Department and the Education Officer designed scripts for the development of 108 interactive learning activities and 54 formative assessment tests in the stipulated timeframe. The team also provided additional support material such as images, sketches, maps, videos and web-links. Regular feedback was given by the Geography Section indicating the modifications required so that the lesson developed will reflect the educational goals and learning outcomes as stipulated in the Form 1 and 2 syllabi.

The Geography Section was engaged with the preparation and writing of a Core Curriculum Programme for Form 3 students. The new course provides a consolidated element of continuous assessment and places emphasis on real-life experiences and active learning approaches. To supplement this programme, three out-of-class fieldwork sessions were designed and distributed to teachers. The Form 1 and 2 Geography syllabi were amended and refined as a result of feedback received.

A new syllabus for Form 4 Geography mainstream classes was also prepared. A new textbook entitled Id-Dinj a Darna 2 authored by the Geography Education Officer, was distributed to all Form 4 students.

The Geography Section was also involved in the running of the Geography Teachers Association (GTA). It currently has a membership of about 50 and provides curricular advice on a voluntary basis by organising lectures, fieldwork sessions and educational excursions. Each year a teachers’ resource pack is published on DVD by the society. GTA publishes a resource pack on DVD on a yearly basis.

As in previous years, the Geography Section organised Global Education Week in collaboration with the North South Centre. The main activity involved students and link teachers from 7 participating schools discussing sustainable lifestyles with the Minister for Education and Employment and the Minister for Sustainable Development, the Environment and Climate Change.
Various other activities tackling the theme Go for a Sustainable Lifestyle! were carried out by each participating school and these were further complemented by presentations conducted by students themselves as well as held workshops at the National Curriculum Centre.

**GERMAN**

The German Section, carried out a number of activities:

- Embark on the Landeskunde project with teachers of German to promote culture and intercultural understanding of German speaking countries whereby teachers address the cultural aspect of language learning through topics addressed in class and link to events happening in the German speaking world;
- Continue work on the Reading project with teachers in different Forms, promoting reading in the German Foreign Language Classroom and launch a Pilot project with readers (at different levels);
- Launch a reading template to guide students while reading in the foreign language;
- Organise Staff Development Courses for teachers of German in collaboration with the Goethe Institut (Brussels), the German Maltese Circle and the Catholic Secretariat;
- Organise the PASCH school initiatives through the support of the German Embassy;
- Participated in the organisation of activities at Verdala and Cospicua schools;
- Set up an Internet Goethe site for IWB lesson material in state and public schools in collaboration with the Goethe Institut Brussels;

**HISTORY**

The History Section partook of the following activities:

- The development of 108 digital lessons as part of the eContent resources prepared for Forms 1 and 2 students;
- The development of a Core Curriculum Programme (CCP) for Forms 3 and 4;
- The upgrading of the History webpage entitled Storja Skejel Sekondarji which can be viewed on http://schoolnet.gov.mt/history/;
- The uploading of further support education resources which may be used by teachers during their lessons when accessing the History website;
- Providing support in the teaching of related subjects such as Environmental Studies and European Studies;
- Further cooperation with Heritage Malta especially through the secondment of a teacher with the Agency;
- Participating in the writing of the Learning Objectives Framework (LOF).

**ITALIAN**

The Italian Section provided Inset training for over 70 teachers from the state and non-state sector in collaboration with Società Dante Alighieri.

In the months of July, August and September, the Subject Proficiency Assessment Syllabus was set up. The Education Officer worked closely with members from the Department of Arts and Languages (DALE) at University of Malta to create a programme which enhances the use of four language skills to secondary school students.
The Italian Section, throughout the year collaborated in initiatives set up by the Istituto Italiano di Cultura a Malta and the Italian Embassy.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT (PSCD)

Personal and Social Development (PSD) has seen the addition of education aspects related to Careers, and has become Personal, Social and Career Development (PSCD). New syllabi for Forms 3, 4 and 5 have been designed, reflecting both the introduction of Career Education within the subject and the increase of one to two lessons per week in the upper forms. Also, PSCD:

- participated in a policy-making working group regarding Substance Abuse Prevention Programmes and Interventions in State Schools document;
- developed Reflective Journals for use by the pupils in class;
- participated in international conferences;
- organised training for all secondary PSCD teachers regarding Career Education;
- participated in EU funded projects - Be Smart Online;
- collaborated with Malta Communications Authority in the distribution, filling and collection of a questionnaire re. ‘Access, Use and Perception of the Internet’;
- worked on the development, distribution of publication on aspects of personal and social awareness.

PHYSICAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

The Inset held in July 2014, dealt with the new PHE syllabus. The working group provided detailed presentations on all the areas, namely Fitness, Athletics, Invasion Games, Net Games, Gymnastics, Athletics and Dance. Teachers were given the possibility to discuss ways of teaching contents and how best assessment can be conducted in each of the teaching areas.

SOCIAL STUDIES (SECONDARY) AND EUROPEAN STUDIES

During 2014, the Social Studies (Secondary) Section organised a programme of scheduled school visits for Form 4 students to the Courts of Justice. During the year under review, about 750 students visited the Courts of Justice. Also the Unit organised a programme of scheduled visits for Form 4 students to the House of Representatives. About 900 students visited the House of Representatives. Furthermore, the Unit organised a programme of scheduled visits for Form 4 students to the Office of Prime Minister and the Auberge de Castille.

SOCIAL STUDIES (PRIMARY)

The SSAR (Social Studies Assessment Reorganization) project that was introduced in all Year 5 Primary state schools in September 2013 was evaluated by means of a questionnaire in February 2014. Feedback was quite positive and can be viewed by accessing the following website: http://primarysocialstudies.skola.edu.mt/?p=2397

During summer, a number of identified class teachers were tasked on voluntary basis with validating all resources created by the Education Officer. After validation, resources were uploaded onto Fronter and the Social Studies website at: http://primarysocialstudies.skola.edu.mt.

SPANISH

Four Maltese Language Assistants went to Spain so as to spread Maltese Culture through the teaching of the English Language.
THE SECONDARY SCHOOL CERTIFICATE AND PROFILE (SSC&P)

2014 was the second year during which the certificate was assigned to students who ended their secondary school cycle in June 2014.

Meetings were held in all schools and parents were informed and encouraged to send their offspring to after-school educational activities. Further informative meetings for staff and SMTs were also held in all State Colleges as well as in Church and Independent Schools in order to explain the rationale behind the SSC&P.

As from this year, students can choose three core subjects from among the following four: Maltese, English, Mathematics and a Science subject. This modification now addresses students whose mother language is not Maltese. Meetings were also held with the aim of informing parents of Year 6 students in Primary Schools.

EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT UNIT

In 2014, three hundred and fifty (350) different examinations were held; this involved the printing of 394,277 booklets.

The Unit also organised the End of Primary Benchmark 2014. Overall, a total of 3733 students, from 91 different schools, sat for the End of Primary Benchmark 2014, which represents 93% of the national Year 6 cohort.

MATHS PRIMARY

- Year 2014 was marked with the revision of the Primary Mathematics Syllabus. The revised syllabus was put into effect as from September 2014. The revised syllabus is aligned with the rationale and aims of the National Curriculum Framework;
- Drawing on suggestions put forward by different stakeholders, the Alternative Annual Primary Mathematics Written Papers 2014 were designed by the Department of Curriculum Management;
- In October 2014, the Education Officer, together with 6 Mathematics Support Teachers (MSTs) and other educators from Malta, participated in the 2ndScientix Conference which was held in Brussels. The goal of the Conference was to showcase various European and National initiatives in STEM education and to present the different tools, resources and methodologies in STEM education across Europe;
- The third issue of the online newsletter Maths Matters was issued in December 2014;
- Workshops for Parents, Maths Clubs, Maths Trails, Themed Maths Fun Days, Mathematical Problem Solving and Investigation Sessions were also organised;
- Furthermore, the X’hemM? Mathematics and science popularisation event was launched this year on a national scale. The aim of the event is to engage students in hands-on mathematical and scientific activities promoting a problem-solving approach, outside the classroom. In March 2014, Year 6 students, from state and non-state schools, were invited to participate in the X’hemM? il-Birgu event;
- The Education Officer, together with the MSTs has validated over 200 Mathematics Digital Lessons (including activities and assessment) as part of a National EU funded project;
- A pamphlet with suggestions and recommendations for parents has also been designed and made available to parents.

MATHS SECONDARY

In February 2014, an intensive Core Competences Programme (CCP) Training Programme was held for teachers who were teaching CCP level for the first time or who would be teaching
this level during the following scholastic year. Teachers from Non-State schools participated in this training programme.

A Core Curriculum Programme (CCP) was introduced for Form 1 students. Professional Development sessions were held for Form 1 CCP teachers, where guidelines on assessment tasks were given.

Education Officers and Heads of Department were involved in the eContent script writing of Reusable Learning Objects (RLOs) for Forms 1 and 2 learning objectives in the Mathematics curriculum. Education Officers contributed in the eContent INSET held in July 2014.

Mathematical activities for Gifted and Talented Form 4 students were re-introduced. These hands-on activities were held after school hours and were open for students in both State and Non-State Secondary Schools. Students who attended four sessions were awarded a certificate of participation valid for the SSC&P criteria for informal education.

A number of Secondary Schools participated in the 8th edition of the SuperTmatik Mental Math International Championship. Malta has obtained an overall 7th placing among 61 participating countries.

**SCIENCE PRIMARY**

In a bid towards Science popularization, the members of the Primary Science Peripatetic Team have, conducted the ‘X’hemM? Il-Birgu, and X’hemM? Villa Rundle Gardens projects for Year 6 and Year 3 pupils.

The Education Officer now forms part of the team of local experts for Science as a Subject with regards to the ongoing LOF project and worked closely with, other bodies directly related to Science teaching and learning.

**BIOLOGY**

The Biology Section finalised the CCP programme for the Form 4 ‘living world’ and compiled examination questions as part of the Form 3 annual CCP paper.

The Section collaborated with various environmental NGO’s to promote the role of education for sustainable development in local schools.

A fieldwork booklet including activities in both sandy and rocky beaches was compiled by the the Section aiming to collect photos and other material to be uploaded on the Plastic Oceans website.

**PHYSICS**

Training in differentiated teaching and learning in a Physics classroom with a mixed ability setting was provided for teachers in a compulsory course during the July INSET. The 5E model was presented as an instructional model that could be used in a Physics classroom followed by a workshop on its use on a selection of themes from the current Physics syllabus.

Work continued on the development of the CCP Science and D&T programme related to the Physical world in Form 4 and Form 5. Guidelines for teachers that teach track 1 students was also designed and disseminated to the teachers concerned.

The Physics Section collaborated in various science activities in collaboration with various organistaions on themes such as Xjenza at Handaq.
A training session in the use of the Interactive Whiteboard in Science teaching and learning was organized for all 3rd Year B.Ed students of Science subjects. This training highlighted various use of computer software.

CHEMISTRY

At the end of the last scholastic year, the Chemistry Department participated in a three day in-service course organized for Science teachers in Church schools. The course took place at the University of Malta and two foreign speakers from Bristol University were also invited.

Also, the Chemistry Department participated in the Science Safari which took place in Pembroke.

INTEGRATED SCIENCE

2014 centred around the writing of form 1 and 2 eContent resources. Two hundred and sixteen (216) scripts were written by a number of Heads of Department, teachers and the Education Officer for Integrated Science. Science teachers were introduced to these digital lessons during July INSET.

Form 1 and 2 science curricula were revised. Changes were based mainly upon teachers’ feedback. The issue of time management was also taken into consideration. A new Form 1 Core Curriculum Programme (CCP) catering for level 4-6 students, was also designed. The new revised Form 1 and 2 Science curricula and the new Form 1 CCP were launched before the July INSET.

A new science popularization event, Science Safari, was held in March 2014. Around 170 Form 2 students participated in a science oriented treasure hunt. Students from the state, Independent and Church Schools took part in this event.

The Unit supported other science events such as X'hemM il-Birgu?, the NSTF science week and the first Junior Science Olympiad.

DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY CENTRE (DTLC)

During 2014, the Centre collaborated with the Education Officer for Graphical Communication to develop a new Form 1 curriculum following the directives set by DCM Circulars 57/2014 and 58/2014. The new curriculum was finalised in May 2014.

The Centre coordinated with the FTS to setup seven new D&T labs and two new machine shops.

The DTLC together with the Science Centre also developed the CCP curriculum for Form 4 Science and Technology and started working on the same programme for Form 5.

The Centre also produced another learning programme for Youth Inc. students, aimed at achieving MQF Level 1 in D&T.

The support staff at the Centre was responsible for delivering the July INSET Course which focused on the 2014 Form 1 curriculum and other skills related to all D&T areas of learning. The staff also delivered a course for newly-engaged D&T technicians.
Around 500 Year 6 students from both state and non-state schools visited DTLC as part of a Science and Technology programme designed in collaboration with the Primary Science Section staff with the aim of introducing D&T to primary school students.

GRAPHICAL COMMUNICATION

The following is a list of activities and initiatives taken by the Graphical Communication Section during the year under review:

- Collaborated with the Education Officer for Design & Technology in the design and compilation of the Graphical Communication syllabus as a component of the new Form 1 Design & Technology syllabus;
- Designed and compiled the Graphical Communication workbook which is meant to help the students develop their drawing skills and communicate better their design ideas;
- Collaborated with the Faculty of Education of the University of Malta to redesign the study unit MST 1203 titled Communicating Graphically;
- Designed the Learning Outcomes Framework (LOF) logo.

HOME ECONOMICS (HE)

The Home Economics Department developed the syllabus for the Alternative Learning Programme and the Year 7 (Form 1) HE curriculum.

The HE Department actively participated in the following policy-making groups and Inter-Ministerial meetings/workshops held in 2014, namely:

- Obesity Strategy Implementation Group;
- Healthy Lifestyle Committee – the Home Economics Seminar Centre (HESC) staff were involved in the reviewing of the Healthy Eating Lifestyle Plan (HELP) document;
- Healthy Plate Committee set up by the Directorate for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention [DHPDP] – participation in the drafting of preliminary dietary guidelines and national food graphic;

In the course of 2014, the HE Department was part of a working group in liaison with the DHPDP, to promote healthy lunchboxes in schools through the compilation of literary resources.

ICT

Tasks carried out throughout the year under review:

- Carried out analysis and research on the current ECDL programme of studies as used in ICT and produced a position paper re. the ICT curriculum;
- Designed a new CCP – ICT syllabus for Form 3 which started to be implemented for the first time during this academic year;
- Designed a new CCP – ICT syllabus for Form 4, based on the syllabus of Form 3;
- Produced and presented a weekly ICT radio programme on RTK with the sole aim of promoting good use of ICT technologies;
- Updated syllabi across all Forms in view of the recent introduction of the new ECDL as part of the phasing-in and phasing-out processes;
- Produced the ICT strategy action plan;
- Conducted analysis and evaluations of study programmes in conjunction with applications for certifications by training providers who applied for recognitions with NCHFE.
COMPUTING

The Education Officer coordinated the recently compiled framework document entitled ‘Computing as a Core Entitlement – Introducing Computing as a core entitlement to all students’. The document that has been approved by the Minister for Education and Employment, involved coordination between different stakeholders namely: MITA, Crimsoning, University of Malta, and the Malta Union of Teachers (MUT).

Related Workshop training sessions were conducted during a number of conferences particularly the MCA conference about Digital Security/Digital Citizenship. A number of free-admission public sessions related to technology are also delivered on a fortnightly basis after office hours.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATIONAL

The BTEC vocational subjects have been transformed into home grown subjects, at MQF level 3 qualifications. The subjects being taught in a number of schools are Information Technology, Engineering Technology, Hospitality, Health and Social Care and Agribusiness. Students at Form 3 choosing this subject have started their SEC ongoing examination as early as Form 3.

New teachers are being trained in the pedagogy and content of these subjects so as to be able to roll out these vocational subjects in more secondary schools as from 2015-2016, in state and non-state schools. An audit of the required resources for rollout is being carried out.

ALTERNATIVE LEARNING PROGRAMME

A number of Form 5 students who had not applied for SEC examinations were offered an Alternative Learning programme of studies as part of the Early School Leaving strategy to reduce the number of early school leavers in the community. A school at Paola was refurbished to offer these learners a mix of hands-on practical subjects such as gardening, welding, hospitality, hairdressing and other subjects together with other traditional subjects such as Maltese, English and Mathematics embedded with the vocational. All courses offered were pegged at MQF Level 1 qualification.

About 120 students attended this alternative learning programme. Special short-term ad hoc programmes such as an army booting camp were held to encourage these learners to integrate and to enjoy learning. The programme provided a caring atmosphere for all learners. The programme aims to encourage learners to continue with their studies after compulsory education.

CORE CURRICULUM PROGRAMME

The Core Curriculum Programme is based upon ongoing and summative assessment. It is a criterion reference programme where learners are encouraged to provide and collate evidence of learning. The programme is pegged at the MQF level 1 certification.

The Core Curriculum Programme in secondary schools continued during 2014-2015, and expanded into Form 4. Training sessions for teachers in this programme were provided on a regular basis by the Education Officers for the subjects. A number of initiatives were taken at college and at school level to encourage these learners to enjoy learning and to obtain the necessary basic skills for life.
LEARNING OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK ESF 1.228

A €3.6m ESF project entitled ‘Design of Learning Outcomes Framework, associated Learning and Assessment programmes and related Training’ was launched during 2014-2015. A Head of Project and an Administrative Assistant were selected by interviews. An international tender was published to choose a contractor for the programme. A number of local curricular experts were chosen to develop and to align the learning outcomes of the 8 Learning Areas, 6 Cross Curricular Themes and 48 subjects as identified in the National Curriculum Framework document.

A large number of consultation sessions with College Principals, Heads of Schools, Education Officers and teachers were held to provide information about the project and to collate feedback. The project is expected to continue in 2015 and should end by December.

II. QUALITY ASSURANCE DEPARTMENT (QAD)

VISION

The Quality Assurance Department (QAD) is set to nurture and monitor a quality holistic educational provision in Maltese compulsory schooling, which seeks to assist every individual achieve his/her own full potential and reach personal fulfilment through lifelong learning, participation in the world of work and active citizenship for all.

MISSION STATEMENT

As part of the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education (DQSE) the mission of the QAD is to regulate, establish, monitor and assure standards and quality in the programmes and educational services provided by Maltese State and Non-State Schools, as provided in the Education Act.

ROLES & FUNCTIONS - SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

In line with international developments, and recommendations by the seminal document published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) entitled Synergies for Better Learning (2013), the QAD has been investing its efforts in merging Internal and External Review processes into what is being referred to as the Integrated School Improvement Framework (see models below).
Diagram 2 – Integrated School Improvement Framework

While Assistant Directors for Internal and External Reviews have distinct responsibilities for their respective areas, the shift to an Integrated School Improvement Framework approach led to a greater collaboration and sharing of responsibilities. The same Human Resources have always been serving both spheres.

INTERNAL REVIEWS

Nurturing a culture of Self Evaluation, at individual, organisational and system level by initiating, coordinating, monitoring and reviewing (as may be required):

- School Self Evaluation through the effective adoption of School Development Planning;
- Individual Self Evaluation through the Performance Management and Professional Development Programme (PMPDP), particularly with Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) and Educators voluntarily requesting to participate in such programme;
- Reviewing and consolidating the Induction Programme for NQTs;
- Supporting State and Non-State Schools in Quality Assurance issues, particularly by establishing and maintaining the QAD State College Focal Person role;
- Creating synergies with External Reviews; and
- Coordinating ongoing QAD Professional Development initiatives.

EXTERNAL REVIEWS

Planning, coordinating, administering, monitoring and reviewing external school reviews, this includes:

- Proposing schools to be reviewed following established guidelines and parameters;
- Coordinating initiatives related to the Standing International Conference of Inspectorates (SICI). This is an association of national and regional inspectorates of education in Europe covering 32 member inspectorates aiming to support the improvement of education through improving inspection processes;
- Creating synergies with Internal Reviews;
- Assisting in the coordination of Professional Development initiatives for QAD staff members.

COLLEGE QAD FOCAL PERSON

Apart from performing work related to internal and external reviews as may be required and scheduled by the Director and Assistant Directors, each Education Officer has been assigned a State College (Gozo and Non-State Schools covered by ADEs) with which s/he needs to fulfill the role of the College QAD Focal Person (QAD FP). In this role they are expected to offer support to Educational Leaders (primarily the College Principal and the schools' Senior Management Team - SMT) by acting as a Critical Friend, Consultant, Liaison Officer & Monitor, on the areas specified in Diagram 1 which collectively form part of an increasingly cohesive Integrated School Improvement Framework.

EDUCATION REGULATORY COMPLIANCE SECTION

The Education Regulatory Compliance Section (ERCS) is particularly responsible for the Non-State Educational Sector, namely Church Schools, Independent Schools, International Schools and Independent Summer Clubs. The main functions of this section are to:

- regulate and ensure compliance on the part of Non-State Schools;
- register new schools and summer clubs;
- approve the appointment of all staff recruited by church schools;
- approve the appointment of S/LSAs and confirm teaching staff in Independent and International Schools.

ERCS ensures that all schools follow the National Curriculum Framework and adhere to the National Minimum Conditions as outlined in the Education Act of 1988 (amended in 2007), and the related legal notices.

SUPPORTING MALTESE LIVING ABROAD - EUROPEAN SCHOOLS

Coordinate related initiatives and tasks together with the educational officials given the additional roles of responsibility related to European Schools, namely the Maltese Representative on the Board of Governors for European Schools (David Muscat – EO Malti) and the Maltese Inspector for European Schools (George Mifsud – EO Malti) (Anthony Grech, EO QA, is currently being proposed for nomination to the Board of Governors as the second Inspector for European Schools).
Ensure Malta’s compliance with agreements made with the European Commission, particularly by seconding the stipulated number of educators to European Schools.

Act as a point of reference on issues related to European Schools for major stakeholders, including representatives of Maltese Parents of students attending European Schools.

Liaise with various entities, including the University of Malta and other Further & Higher Educational Institutions to ensure eligibility of Maltese students attending European Schools in comparability with Maltese students attending local institutions.

**SUPPORTING THE TEACHING OF MALTESE IN EMIGRANT COMMUNITIES**

COUNCIL FOR MALTESE LIVING ABROAD

Liaise with the Director at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs responsible for the Council for Maltese Living Abroad on requests being made to support the teaching of Maltese abroad.

Seek Ministerial approval and act upon initiatives to support the Teaching of Maltese to emigrant communities (currently initiating recruitment to second a Teacher of Maltese to the Victorian School of Languages for a period of one year with a possible extension to two years as a pilot project).

**SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT – INTERNAL REVIEWS**

The main highlights of the School Improvement Section in 2014 were:

- the review and consolidation of the Induction programme for Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs). This involves the review and consolidation of the mentoring process; and review and consolidation of the first year and second year PMPDP progress;
- exploring the possibility of introducing the Performance Management and Professional Development Programme (PMPDP) for supply teachers;
- augmenting support structures to help schools in administering mentoring, PMPDP and School Development Plans (SDP);
- creating synergies with the external reviews;
- the development and implementation of a professional development programme for the QAD staff; and
- reviewing School Self Evaluation and establishing new SDP to be launched in 2015.

**THE REVIEW AND CONSOLIDATION OF THE INDUCTION PROGRAMME FOR NEWLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS**

An Induction Seminar for Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) was organised during September 2014 based on the experience and feedback obtained during the last four seminars organised by the QAD. As in previous seminars, NQTs from the church schools were invited to attend on the first day.

One hundred and sixty one (161) NQTs who are currently following their first year of induction and one hundred and twenty two (122) NQTs who are working on their second year (PMPDP) were included in the induction process for the scholastic year 2014-15. A further twenty one teachers who requested mentoring also availed themselves from this service.

Following the Mentoring courses which were organised during 2012-2013, a further 9 Induction Co-ordinators (IC) and 24 Teacher Mentors (14 state schools and 10 church schools) completed their practicum during 2013-2014 and have been certified in their respective role following the teaching component they had followed previously. A presentation of certificates was held in October 2014.
In July 2014, the evaluation seminar to evaluate the induction process efficacy was replaced by separate evaluation sessions in each of the colleges. This was augmented by three online anonymous questionnaires distributed in May and June 2014. Feedback from the participants was quite positive. Following suggestions from different stakeholders, the option of filling first and second year PMPDP is being offered electronically to NQTs and their appraisers as from scholastic year 2014/2015.

PILOTTING SCHOOL SELF EVALUATION AND ESTABLISHING NEW SDP TO BE ENFORCED IN 2015

A pilot study was held with all Heads of Schools (HoS) in Gozo so as to establish the new SDP which is to be enforced in 2015. The Assistant Directors presented the newly revised SDP format to all Heads of Schools and the College Principal during a Council of Heads session held in Gozo. All schools were then visited during the year and feedback was collected from all Heads of schools. The SDP document was fine-tuned according to the collected feedback.

During scholastic year 2013/2014, following requests from HoS, the QAD formulated and distributed sample questionnaires to be used with parents, teachers and learners during the internal self-evaluation process. These sample questionnaires were aligned with the set guidelines for the external reviews. At the end of scholastic year 2013/2014 the Assistant Directors along with a number of EOs attended various SDP sessions and facilitated the writing of Action Plans through various workshops.

The final version of the self-evaluation process and the SDP document were presented to all Heads of Schools in Malta and Gozo in October 2014. These presentations were held on various days for various groups of Heads in collaboration with Prof J. Portelli as part of SDP training.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT – EXTERNAL REVIEWS

SICI ACTIVITIES

In March 2014 the QAD organised a SICI conference in Malta. The Standing International Conference of Inspectorate (SICI) is the organisation of national and regional inspectorates of education in Europe. SICI serves as a medium for the members to: exchange information, improve professional work, cooperate, and access information from member or non-member countries.

IMPLEMENTING THE QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK FOR SCHOOLS

The QAD has continued external reviews in state, church and independent schools.

Thirteen primary and secondary schools and nine Kindergartens were reviewed

Reports were written after each review and findings were disseminated amongst all stakeholders as established in the External Review Parameters. Unannounced follow-up visits were held in all reviewed Schools. In these follow-ups reviewers checked, whether the school has started working on the recommendations of the report. They also serve to confirm that the review week was a typical school week. Short reports were issued after each follow-up visit highlighting to what extent the school has worked on the recommendations made in the External Review report.
MAXIMISING LEARNING TIME IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

A review was conducted between February and December 2014 focusing on the perceived worth of initiatives, activities, policies and services provided by specialist teachers in primary schools when one considers the learning time taken up.

The review was conducted with all SMT members and teachers in state primary schools in Malta and Gozo. A section in the reports of external reviews held during 2013/2014 also focused on the services provided by the specialist teachers.

The results from the questionnaire were analysed and a preliminary result was drawn up. Questions arising from this preliminary analysis were discussed in focus groups of teachers and peripatetic staff.

FOREIGN GROUPS FOLLOWING THE EXTERNAL REVIEW PROCESS

Three separate groups of foreign educational professionals chose to follow our national external review process.

A group from Moldova, which included the Director General, spent a week in Malta observing our external review process and discussing our documents. The aim was to formulate and discuss ideas so as to set up a new Quality Assurance Department in their country. This group joined the review team during the review week so as to have first-hand experience. Two groups from Poland visited Malta in July and August consecutively. These groups presented their external review practices and shared ideas with QAD members of staff. They also visited a number of schools which were reviewed during scholastic year 2013/2014 and discussed the outcomes of the Review process with Heads of Schools.

A number of State, Church and Independent schools were externally reviewed in 2014, apart from Follow-up visits performed in relation to External reviews held in the previous year. Due to the logistics related to schooling, external reviews are actually organised around the scholastic year.

EDUCATION REGULATORY COMPLIANCE SECTION

The Education Regulatory Compliance Section (ERCS) caters for 142 Non-State Educational Institutions, which collectively employ 2,017 educators and give service to 24,567 students.

The main tasks carried out by the Education Regulatory Compliance Section during 2014 were:

- 7 full Compliance Checks were performed: 4 were held in Church Schools and 3 in Independent schools; 2 partial Compliance checks were also held in connection with issuing of school licenses;
- 1,459 approvals of staff members recruited by Non-State Schools were processed in 2014; 180 of these were S/LSAs employed by the Independent and International Schools whose salary is reimbursed under the Government Scheme to support students with SEN in such school;
- Customer Care service with the community, was mainly dealing with complaints from parents on perceived and/or actual disservice to their children; these were all investigated and remedied through cooperation with the respective schools;
- Following the Government’s decision to shift Child Care under the responsibility of MEDE, transitional meetings started being held with the DSWS to establish a transitional plan of action and subsequently act upon it;
In 2014, an intensified effort continued to be made to align the provision of S/LSAs to be assigned to students having a Statement of Needs in Non-State Schools with the State Sector;

Temporary Licences of Non-State Compulsory Schools were renewed as applicable and New Registrations included Child Care Centres as Educational Establishments and Non State Summer Schools;

69 applications under the 15.25% Grant Scheme were processed in 2014. Invoices submitted with these applications reached the amount of €5,210,830.72, hence the approved refundable value according to the parameters established within the same Scheme from the VAT Department for schools was €794,651.68;

28 applications under the Per Capita Grant Scheme were processed in 2014. The approved refundable value according to the parameters established within the same Scheme for Independent Schools was €885,302.17.

SUPPORTING MALTESE LIVING ABROAD - EUROPEAN SCHOOLS

Liaised with the Higher Secondary School and the University of Malta to ensure eligibility of Maltese students attending European Schools in comparability with Maltese students attending local institutions, whilst considering the contextual limitations for students attending European Schools.

III. THE DEPARTMENT OF ELEARNING (DEL)

The Department of eLearning worked with SIVECO who won the contract to create interactive digital content for Primary and Secondary schools.

The project was co-financed by the EU. Education officers, Heads of Departments and peripatetic teachers and eLearning support teachers from the department worked on the scripts of the eLearning content which complemented the main subjects in the primary and seven subjects in Form 1 and 2 at secondary level.

This interactive digital content is accessible from the electronic platform (iLearn VLE) for State schools and through DVDs for the Church and Independent schools.

Content is already online and teachers will be able to start using it from January 2015. It covers the Primary School from the third to the sixth year in Maltese, English, Mathematics, Social Studies and the Science while in Secondary schools it covers the first two years in Maltese, English, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, Geography and History.

These add up to 835 digital lessons in the primary and 1188 in the secondary. In Geography, History and Social Studies the user can choose to view the reusable learning object either in English or in Maltese.

Each digital lesson is made up of what is known as a reusable Learning Object (RLO). There are three RLOs for each digital lesson in the secondary and two RLOs for each lesson in the Primary (totalling 5234 RLOs).

The participation of local experts ensured that the digital content was designed according to the Maltese context where required and therefore most RLOs reflect our environment and culture.
DIGITAL TOOLS

As part of the same project, a new tool was designed and created for teachers of Secondary schools in the seven subjects. Teachers will now have a chance to create their own new interactive material. This will continue to increase the amount of digital content produced this year. The created digital content will be made available via the virtual learning environment.

TRAINING

In July 2014, over 600 secondary teachers who teach Form 1 and 2 in the seven subjects, received training in pedagogy and how to use these digital lessons in the classroom.

These teachers were trained in the use of the authoring tool and how to create new content. This training was delivered by the eLearning department support staff who in turn had received the appropriate training in a train-the-trainer approach from SIVECO.

DIGITAL CONTENT TEAM

In September, the Department of eLearning started exploring and experimenting on the production of apps for Maltese content which will work on all platforms and accessible through different technologies.

A group of elearning support teachers have created new interactive content that was recommended by Education Officers.

The first prototype was finished by December 2014 and the first interactive eBook in Maltese for year 2 students will be launched in February 2015.

DIGITAL CITIZENS

Over the past two years, the Department collaborated with the Malta Communication Authority (MCA), on the project BeSmartOnline. Teachers from the Department visited schools where students were given instruction on how to be safe online.

From November 2014, in collaboration with the same authority, the Department of eLearning has been introducing our students to the concept of digital citizenship.

For this purpose, the eLearning Department devised a scheme of work and materials to continue building on the work done in the previous year. This will enable students to continue achieving digital competencies that are essential in today’s digital world.

The first National Conference on Digital Literacy on the theme of ‘Internet use: creating a positive experience’ took place in November 2014.

TABLETS

The project, ‘One Tablet Per Child’ was launched this year. Over 340 students in 20 schools of the State, Church and Independent Schools throughout Malta and Gozo are participating in the pilot project.

This exercise will end in March 2015. Research and evaluation has already started and the final report will provide recommendations on how best to realize the project at national level.
The tablets will eventually be distributed to all Year Four students in State, Church and Independent Schools in October 2016. This will allow sufficient time for teachers and schools to prepare for this new technology in the classroom.

The eLearning support teachers assigned to help the pilot project designed and delivered in service training and profession development sessions to class teachers participating in the One Tablet Per Child project. They delivered in house workshops with eLearning primary support teachers (school-based) regarding pedagogies used in 1:1 classrooms. They recommended a number of apps/websites which can be used on the tablet and checked which worked well on the different devices. They coordinated with representatives of the Achieve 3000 reading scheme to set up accounts for learners and coordinated with the representatives to organise online PD sessions about the reading scheme software. Numeracy and Literacy lesson ideas were uploaded on the VLE in the Tablets Pilot Project Room regarding the use of 1:1 technologies in the primary classroom.

The research group determined the research framework to be adopted and formulated the research document, observations schedule and interview questions (teachers).–91% was completed during 2014.

SPECIAL NEEDS

The project Eye Gaze Tracker. Special needs students benefit from digital technology and find a vital bridge to develop their coordination. This project helps students live a more independent life.

The Department of eLearning embarked on the Eye Gaze Tracker in collaboration with other departments within the Ministry for Education.

THE DIGITAL PLATFORM

The digital platform (known by several names: Fronter, iLearn, VLE or MLE) is increasingly gaining in popularity as teachers gain confidence and ownership.

Towards the beginning of 2015, the platform will be available in Maltese as work done during 2014 on the user interface comes to a close. This initiative was taken by the Department after the launch of the VLE in State Schools in Malta and Gozo. The user will have a choice between two interfaces - Maltese or English. This work required translating about 11356 lines of instructions which included technical words directly associated with language that is understood by the system.

The Education Officers for Maltese and eLearning monitored the work carried out by the translator specially.

Preparations have also started to give access to parents. The virtual rooms have been prepared during the year and it is expected that the first parents will gain access in early February 2015.

The general public will also be invited to visit a number of rooms under the generic user name and password “guest”. Material and resources were prepared during 2014.

eTWINNING

The number of registered teachers on the eTwinning Portal has increased from 99 to 158 teachers. The number of eTwinning Projects has increased from 84 to 99 partnerships.
The introduction of National eTwinning has enhanced the take up of eTwinning whereby Maltese teachers are now able to form projects together with their peers, even from the same school.

The ongoing objective for this year was to make sure that the National Support Service makes full use of the EU budget to increase awareness of the eTwinning Action amongst Maltese teachers. This year there was an increase of 31.3 % funding, which meant that €32,500 were available for use on projects.

44% (€60,000) of the grant focused on teacher training. 40 teachers were sent abroad to attend Seminars, PDWs, Future Classroom training and the eTwinning Conference.

One of the projects was to create an eTwinning learning zone and in 2014 €7,000 was allocated for this project

OTHER AREAS

The eLearning Department is also an accredited ECDL centre and in this respect the eLearning staff coordinates the ECDL Standard, Advanced and ECDL CAD examinations for Secondary, Higher Secondary students and Education Department staff.

The eLearning department support staff coordinated a number of Robotics Workshops for Primary and Secondary Students; the Code week workshops event in October and the Malta Robotics Olympiad workshop event in May 2014.

4. CORPORATE SERVICES DIVISION

INTRODUCTION

The Corporate Services Division provides support services and advice to the Permanent Secretary and to the Directorates, Departments and Organisations/Entities within the Ministry on issues related to procurement and administration, financial planning and management, human resources management and office management. The Division co-ordinates activities of a corporate nature and seeks to achieve uniformity in implementing policy directives issued by the Office of the Prime Minister and the Ministry for Finance as well as by the Ministry itself.

The Division is organised into the following Departments/Units/Sections: the Procurement and Administration Department comprising Procurement, Transport, Inventory, Registry and Stores, the Precincts Management Unit; the Travel Unit, the Injuries Board, as well as the Finance Department and the Human Resources Department.

1. PROCUREMENT AND ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT

Procurement Section

The Procurement Section handled a total of 288 requisition forms for the procurement of goods, works and services which were issued for the Departments and Directorates within the Ministry.

Moreover, 47 Departmental Tenders (16 of which electronic) and 16 sealed quotations were processed. In addition, the section was involved in an expression of interest for the allocation of tuck shops in schools. A Request for proposals awarded by Negotiated procedure for Uniforms for the Ministry of Education and Employment were issued and awarded.
The Departmental Contracts Committee (DCC), chaired by the Head of Procurement on behalf of the Director General Support Services met on a weekly basis to go through the evaluation reports and tendering procedures of all tenders valued up to €120,000 excluding VAT and all EU funded tenders valued up to €47,000 excluding VAT, issued by various entities and departments within the Ministry for Education and Employment. During 2014, 50 sessions in total were held. The Board reviewed tenders from 16 different Contracting Authorities falling under Education and Employment. Of these, 261 cases (i.e.64%) were recommended for award, 49 cases were disagreed with and referred back to the respective entity, while 52 requests were referred back for rectification/clarification and 35 calls were cancelled. 7 cases resulted as not being within the remit of the DCC.

**PRECINCTS MANAGEMENT UNIT**

The Precincts Management Unit carried out new projects and refurbished premises on behalf of the Ministry, Departments, Directorates and some Entities. Projects initiated/ concluded by this Unit in 2014 include:

- The full refurbishment of the new Youth Agency, St. Venera;
- Continuation of the refurbishment of floor -1 of the Education Division Building in Floriana and of part of level 2 (Ministry Level);
- Works related to the shifting of various offices to the Education Division and to other buildings;
- Preparatory Works at a block at Maria Assunta for the new School of Music;
- Finalising alterations at the Gżira Primary School in preparation for a new Child Care Centre, including the refurbishment of the building per se and the outside areas;
- Commencement of intense refurbishment works at Ospizio for the new Archives Stores and law courts stores;
- Continuation of works for the refurbishment of the Support Learning School and the Youth Agency at Umberto Calosso;
- New offices for the Precinct Management Unit, St Venera;
- Structural works at the Examination Branch and the building of various retaining walls in schools;
- Refurbishment of facades of the Youth Hostel, M’ Xlokk.

**TRANSPORT SECTION**

During the year 2014, Transport Pool received 6426 transport requests that make approximately 15,250 journeys. These journeys were carried out by 12 vehicles, three of them are Minibuses. Two vans from the Transport Pool provided transport to Unit Għozza. One of the minibuses carries out a daily journey from Ċirkewwa to various places and the minibuses also provide transport for school outings.

The Transport Section has special vehicles that are based in special schools and centres (Tail lift vans). The section has 7 vehicles in all. All vehicles are maintained in a very good condition and are fully VRT certified.
II. **THE STUDENTS MAINTENANCE GRANTS SECTION (SMGS)**

In terms of LN 372 of 2005, the Students Maintenance Grants Board is appointed by the Minister to manage the allocation of the Students Maintenance Grants and to advise the Minister on policy issues related to these grants.

The Students Maintenance Grants Section main responsibility is to ensure that all post secondary and undergraduate students received their stipend, the one time grant (previously the smart card) and the supplementary grant where applicable in line with established criteria and in a timely manner. During 2014, the Section received and processed over 5600 online applications of both 1st and 2nd year students attending Junior College, Giovanni Curmi Higher Secondary, Sir Mikelang Refalo (Gozo), St. Aloysius College, St Edwards College, De La Salle College, St Martins’ College, Verdala International, Foundation for Educational Services (Youth Inc.), ETC Job Bridge and Malta Youth Ballet.

For the first time this year payments of the one-time grant were directly credited to the Student’s account through the Central Bank of Malta. This office together with SMG Board officials filtered all data of students from all institutions including the post secondary institutions, University of Malta and MCAST before authorizing said transactions.

During this scholastic year, the Section monitored attendances of all students attending the institutions concerned and made the necessary deductions from payments due in line with absenteeism records received. 39 new claims for refunds of overpayments were issued to students during 2014, whilst other letters for refunds of overpaid maintenance grants recorded in previous years were periodically issued.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
<th>QUANTITY</th>
<th>SOURCE OF REQUEST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flag sheet</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>Projects &amp; Initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Rights</td>
<td></td>
<td>5,500</td>
<td>Commissioner for Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be Smart on Line</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>Ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat</td>
<td>Secondary/Primary</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>Puttinu Cares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Il-Wiċċ Gdid tal-Ewro</td>
<td>Secondary/Primary</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>Central Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiko u l’id</td>
<td></td>
<td>3,690</td>
<td>Commissioner for Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L-Avventura madwar l-Ewropa</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>4,200</td>
<td>EU Commission Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ŻiguŻajg Festival Information booklet</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>9,000</td>
<td>St. James Cavalier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calendars 2015</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>EU Commission Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childrens’ Rights colouring book</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>2,604</td>
<td>EU Commission Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L’Avventuri ta’ veru ta’ Pina u Salvinu</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>Curriculum Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posters</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>7,032</td>
<td>Commissioner for Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture Cards</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>Projects &amp; Initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snapchat</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>6,978</td>
<td>Commissioner for Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>2,395</td>
<td>Commissioner for Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask Cards</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>2,217</td>
<td>Commissioner for Children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table: Printed material delivered to schools during the year.
During 2014, the Student Maintenance Grants Section and the Student Maintenance Grants Board issued postings to circa 1,700 students who applied for the University Students' Summer work phase scheme. Some other 200 applications of ineligible students were received. The Section and the Board also monitored attendance and payment of students allocated with MEDE and other organisations.

III. CORPORATE SERVICES DIVISION - FINANCE DEPARTMENT

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

During 2014, the Finance Department incorporated three main sections, all having financial management functions, namely the Finance (Ministry) Section and the Financial Services (Education Directorates) Section, and the Finance (Gozo) Section.

The staff complement of the three Sections during 2014 totalled to 22 on average.

FINANCE (MINISTRY)

The Finance (Ministry) Section continued to provide assistance to Director (Finance), the Director General (Corporate Services), and to the Permanent Secretary with regard to financial planning and management.

Monthly revised estimates were prepared in respect of recurrent and capital expenditure in order to keep financial commitments on track and to act upon necessary measures in cases where projected funds were found to be insufficient. Continuous liaison was maintained with the Ministry for Finance, by means of regular financial management reporting. Also, appropriate action was taken to pre-empt, reduce and collect overpayments as they arise. The section assisted in the collection of arrears of revenue.

The Section also monitored the revenue and expenditure of all entities within the Ministry’s portfolio and recommended to the Budget Office the release of funds required for their operation. Continuous support was given to entities to ensure maximum efficiency in their financial operation.

The Finance (Ministry) Section assumed a major role in the drafting of the 2014 Financial Estimates for the Ministry. Financial Plans submitted by departments and entities falling under the responsibility of the Ministry were analysed and a holistic document was drawn up for the Ministry for Finance.

During the year, the Section devised new reporting mechanisms to facilitate the gathering of information necessary for the preparation of reports. Action was also taken to address issues raised by the National Audit Office and by other bodies.

Other work carried out included the preparation and timely submission of the Accrual Accounting returns on a quarterly basis, the preparation of draft replies to parliamentary questions, and the preparation and submission of other information requested by the Office of the Prime Minister, the Budget Office, the Treasury and the National Audit Office.

FINANCIAL SERVICES (EDUCATION DIRECTORATES) SECTION

The Financial Services (Education Directorates) Section provides all the Departments, Sections and State schools, which fall under the responsibility of the Directorate for Educational Services and the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education, with support services related to all Government financial matters. It also implements monitoring and control mechanisms necessary to keep the Educational Directorates’ finances in line with Government financial regulations.
The Financial Services (Education Directorates) Section is mainly responsible for the evaluation of the two Directorates’ Financial Plans and their compilation into a single holistic document consistent with Government’s policies and programmes. This document formed the basis of discussions with the Ministry for Finance for the 2015 Estimates.

Recurrent and Capital Votes and Items of expenditure were regularly monitored during the year. Monthly financial reports were also submitted to the Budget Office in the Ministry for Finance.

In particular, items such as allowances and school transport remained to be closely monitored to analyse the effect of the increase in the respective rates payable. In the case of supervision allowances, the Accounts Section continued to monitor returns from schools with the main aim of keeping the number of personnel authorised to carry out such duties within the relative agreements and to ascertain that payments were actually due.

Imprest funds for Materials & Supplies and Repair & Upkeep were allocated to primary and secondary schools in Malta. Schools filed both interim and final reports for the year 2014 on the expenditure incurred on these items for monitoring purposes. During the year, no school audits were carried out.

Imprest funds for capital expenditure were allocated to schools by the Finance Section, which continued to monitor such expenditure through the capital imprest returns submitted by schools to ensure that all capital expenditure transactions were made in accordance with the Government financial and procurement regulations.

The School Council Funds returns for the year 2013 were reconciled and queries were discussed and cleared with the respective Heads of Schools. A list of bank accounts was compiled and administered by the two Directorates, all Units and Schools and the respective returns were sent to the Treasury Department.

The Finance Section processed and issued relative payments for all items and services procured by the Directorate for Educational Services and the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education.

The Financial Services (Education Directorates) Section continued to compile statistical data on education expenditure for the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (Overseas Development Aid), the Ministry for Finance, the National Audit Office, the National Statistics Office, data related to parliamentary questions, and for senior management as required.

**FINANCIAL (GOZO) SECTION**

The Financial (Gozo) Section is inter alia responsible for all financial planning and functions related to Gozo including the computation of salaries of those employees deployed in the Gozo College and Education Office Gozo, under the Ministry for Education and Employment. Gozo Accounts Section is mainly responsible for the processing of all payments charged to Cost Centre I09 (as per Financial Estimates), in full compliance with Government financial regulations. All recurrent payments including school transport and capital expenditure entertained by the Financial (Gozo) Section are also closely monitored on an ongoing basis.

**5. HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTORATE (HRD)**

**MISSION**

To plan, develop, and provide a comprehensive range of centralised HR functions and related management services that strategically support the Education Directorates within the Ministry
for Education and Employment in delivering their respective functions as stipulated in the Education Act (Cap.327).

**CORE FUNCTION**

To ensure that from an HR perspective the Directorate for Educational Services (DES) provides the effective and efficient operation and delivery of services to the Colleges and State schools within an established framework of decentralisation and autonomy and in a way that strongly supports the fulfillment of the functions and the targets of the Directorate for quality and Standards in Education (DQSE).

The Human Resources Directorate incorporates the following Sections:


As from April 2014, the functions of the Leaves Section were integrated within the different Human Resources sections according to their function. This year marked the transition from HRIMS to DAKAR for Absence Recording. The Leaves Officers also started to input the leaves approved of teaching grades directly in STS. This facilitated the replacement/deployment of teaching grades commencing a period of leave/resuming from a period of leave.

Towards the end of the first term of scholastic year 2014/2015 the Directorate for Educational Services had a total headcount of 6601 officers as listed in Table 1. The total number of employees within the Ministry for Education and Employment at the end of the year 2014 was 9037.

**Table 1 - Teaching Staff**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>Peripatetic &amp; Support</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Grand Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heads of School</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSC Managers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asst Heads of School ^1</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heads of Dept ^2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers ^3</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>707</td>
<td>555</td>
<td>1218</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructors</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supply Teachers</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KGA II ^4</td>
<td>431</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KGA I</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KGA</td>
<td>36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supply KGA</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSA II ^5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>413</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSA I</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSA II</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KGA (special needs)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLSA indefinite status</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLSA I</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>2611</td>
<td>745</td>
<td>1901</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. including 5 Assistant Heads on Maternity/Parental/Career Break/Unpaid Leave and 11 Acting Heads of Schools.
2. including 4 HoD’s on Career Break/Pre-Retirement/Parental Leave.
3. including 227 Teachers on Maternity/Parental/Career Break/Unpaid/Study/Responsibility/Pre-Retirement Leave/Long Sick. Total also includes 26 Learning Support Zone Teachers, 31 Nurture Group Teachers, 36 Health & Safety Teachers, 123 Guidance Teachers and 75 Teacher Librarians.
4. including 17 KGA II on Maternity/Parental/Career Break/Unpaid Leave.
5. including 66 LSA II on Maternity/Parental/Career Break/Unpaid Leave. Total also includes 24 LSA II in Learning Support Zones and Nurture Groups.
6. including 45 LSA I on Maternity/Parental/Career Break/Unpaid Leave. Total also includes 14 LSA I in Learning Support Zones and Nurture Groups.
7. including 1 LSA on Parental Leave.
8. including 1 KGA (special needs) on Parental Leave.
9. including 11 SLSA (indefinite status) on Maternity/Parental/Career Break/Unpaid Leave.
10. including 42 SLSA on Maternity/Parental/Career Break/Unpaid Leave. Total also includes 3 SLSA in Learning Support Zones and Nurture Groups.

Recruitment Section

The core function of the Recruitment Section as from the start of Q2 of 2014 is that of assisting the Ministry for Education and Employment, in the filling of vacancies (new and replacements), by facilitating the whole recruitment process from capacity building monitoring and reconciliation, call drafting and publishing, to liaison with PSC, PAHRO and Selection Boards and the processing of recommendations and letters of appointment.

During the course of the year, 42 calls for applications were issued: 30 Public Calls; 8 Service-Wide Calls and 4 Departmental Calls.

The section processed 45 different selection boards appointed in respect of the call for applications for the post of Teacher. Furthermore, in support of the capacity building exercise, 1047 recommendations were submitted for verification by PAHRO and subsequent approval by the PSC. Moreover, at the beginning of Q4 the Section was assigned the task of coordinating the issuing of letters of appointment. A total of two hundred and thirty-six (236) letters of appointment were issued in the ensuing three months.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND PLANNING SECTION

The core functions of the Secondary Schools and Planning Section are that of serving as the planning arm of the Directorate for Educational Services and that of ensuring that in full liaison with the Colleges and the various directorates, secondary/post-secondary schools and the various peripatetic/support services have the required teaching complement at all times. Moreover, the Section oversees the operations of the Schools Information System (SIS) Unit.
During the year under review, the Section had an active role in the planning required for the introduction of the middle/co-ed concept across all Colleges, an Alternative Learning Programme (ALP) and a number of new subjects (PHE, PSCD, Accounting, Ethics). This involved projections, advice on sustainability, designing of time-table models and capacity building considerations.

The core functions of the SIS Unit are that of offering software support to schools and that of providing training to clerical and administrative staff in the use of school software. The Unit also co-ordinates the Good Shepherd Project on behalf of the Student Services Directorate.

During 2014, the Unit ensured the complete phasing-in of the new e1 Finance application for the recording of financial transactions of all Imprest and School Council Funds.

Similarly, the Unit ensured that Secondary Schools would be in a position to start using the e1 student database for assessment recording purposes.

INCLUSION AND SUPPORT SERVICES

The core function of the Inclusion and Support Services Section is that of ensuring full liaison with the Colleges and the Student Services Directorate, all Kindergarten Centres, Primary Schools, Secondary Schools, Resource Centres, Learning Zones, Nurture Groups, Learning Support Centres and the Alternative Learning Programme (ALP) have the required Learning Support Assistants according to the statement of needs of students being statemanted throughout the scholastic year.

CUSTOMER CARE SECTION

As from the start of 2014, the core function of the Customer Care Section is to provide a service to all clients by assisting the Ministry for Education and Employment, in serving and helping clients with all processes concerning calls for application, receiving all Directorate for Educational Services transfer applications, scholarship and sponsorship applications, recruitment processes, auditing of applications, deliverance of GP47 to clients, updating salary forms and FS4 and the signing of contracts and teachers’ appointment letters by the Hon. Minister. Furthermore, the Section is also responsible for staff support service and the registration of foreign students.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS, RESOURCE CENTRES AND FIELD PLACEMENTS SECTION

The core function of the Primary Schools, Resource Centres and Field Placements Section is that of ensuring that in full liaison with the Colleges and the Student Services Directorate all Kindergarten Centres, Primary Schools and Resource Centres have the required teaching complement at all times. Furthermore, the Section is also responsible for co-ordinating the process for the allocation of field placements required by Initial Training Education service providers and, or by individuals wishing to be attached to a school in connection with an educational project they are pursuing and which meets the standards of the Education Directorates.

A data protection compliance audit was conducted to determine whether the HR Directorate’s data processing activities are carried out in accordance with documented policies and procedures and the requirements of the Data Protection Act.

The key objectives of this audit were to ensure that appropriate data protection policies and procedures are in place, assess the level of compliance with such policies and procedures,
identify breaches or potential breaches of compliance and recommend any changes in control, policy and procedure.

Furthermore, at the request of, and in conjunction with the Institute of Community Studies at MCAST, a total of 220 placements in state kindergarten centres and primary schools were given to MCAST students.

At the request of, and in conjunction with, the Teaching Practice Coordinator of the Faculty of Education, a total of 1092 placements in state, private and church schools were given to B. Ed (Hons) and PGCE students for their Teaching Practice or School Experience and/or Observation during 2014.

**GENERAL SERVICE GRADES & BACK OFFICE**

During 2014, the DES employed twenty one (21) new part-time clerks in colleges and schools. Furthermore, twenty three (23) officers on clerical duties were deployed during the school summer recess.

During the school summer recess, the DES issued eighty-five (85) deployment notifications for technical grades. Meanwhile, the eighty technical staff were promoted / employed in the technical grades. Twenty nine (29) education staff were attached to Voluntary Organisations in accordance with PAHRO circulars 6/2014 and 10/2014.

During 2014, the Human Resources Directorate shifted part of its back office operations to the HR Back Office Unit in Gozo. The Unit is responsible for the sickness verification exercise and for the recording of sick-leave in the DAKAR. Furthermore, this Unit carries out customer care duties pertaining to MEDE.

**HUMAN RESOURCES ADMINISTRATION**

During the year, more than 2000 requests for the Service and Leave Record form (GP 47) were processed.

The section continued to monitor termination of employment in observance of the applicable provisions concerning Notice Periods as applicable to definite and indefinite contracts of employment arising out of PAHRO Circular 7 of 2014 and PAHRO Circular 3 of 2013. A total of 509 terminations were processed. Moreover, the section co-ordinated the various processes resulting in the Inter-ministerial transfer of 177 public officers.

The section processed the pension papers of a total of 163 staff members who reached retirement age during the course of the year 2014, 39 of whom were entitled to the Treasury Pension.

Furthermore, following the signing on 14th May 2014, of the addendum to the Agreement on the Classification and Regrading of the Industrial and Supervisory Grades 55 public officers in salary scale 20 were assimilated in the Grade of General Hand in Scale 19/18, by virtue.

Also, the section implemented the provisions of the Addendum to the Agreement between the Government and the Malta Union of Teachers signed on 26th September 2013. In this regard, a total of 15 applications from among Teachers were processed, leading to the successful ‘bridging of service’ in the grade of Teacher. Moreover, the section actively worked to convert the employment of numerous employees on definite contract to indefinite status with the Public Service and with the concurrence of the Public Service Commission. Both these exercises are now an ongoing process.
Consistent with Government’s policy of promoting family-friendly measures the section provided advice to assist officers to achieve a balance between their career and their family life, as well as regarding the implementation of certain Family-friendly Measures particularly Telework. During the course of the year, employees on telework rose to a total of 117 office workers during the period from 42 teleworkers in the year 2012.

The Discipline Section is responsible for coordinating the disciplinary matters within the Ministry, in terms of the Public Service Commission Regulations (Discipline) 1999. Continuous liaison is maintained between the Discipline Section and the Public Service Commission, the Law Courts, the Commissioner of Police, the Employment Relationship Management and internal sections. This section dealt with 332 cases during 2014, of which concluded 206 cases.

CUSTOMER CARE SECTION

As from the start of 2014, the core function of the Customer Care Section is to provide a service to all clients by assisting the Ministry for Education and Employment, in serving and helping clients with all processes.

RECEPTION AREA

During 2014, reception personnel had contact with approximately 29,000 customers. Incoming calls at reception area are directed to the appropriate section.

CUSTOMER CARE MAIN OFFICE

Customer Care Office handles acceptance and assistance of application forms for all recruitment of educational staff and vacancies within the Ministry. During 2014, a total number of 6,066 applications were handled.

Customer Care Section took care of the filling of all related recruitment forms and the signing of definite contracts. In total all newly recruited employees were given the appropriate documents, such as the commencement and acceptance forms. During 2014, a total of 1,716 forms were processed.

STAFF SUPPORT SERVICE

A total of 626 counselling sessions were held, covering 104 clients.

REGISTRATION OF FOREIGN STUDENTS

A total of 1,575 foreign students were registered into state schools. College Principals were duly informed about these registrations concerning calls for application, receiving all Directorate for Educational Services transfer applications, scholarship and sponsorship applications, recruitment processes, auditing of applications, deliverance of GP47 to clients, updating salary forms and FS4 and the signing of contracts and teachers’ appointment letters by the Minister. Furthermore, the Section is also responsible for staff support service and the registration of foreign students.

6. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

OVERVIEW

The Research and Development Department has the following main areas of responsibility:
Implementing International Assessments at the national level;
Housing the Eurydice National Unit;
Carrying out educational research at the national level;
Regulating and aiding research in state schools;
Collating education statistics.

INTERNATIONAL ASSESSMENTS

Malta’s participation in international assessments is one of the tools available within the Education Directorates enabling policy makers and practitioners to arrive at informed decisions in achieving school improvement. These studies also provide an evaluative snapshot of the national education system within an international perspective.

During 2014, the Research and Development Department carried on with the preparatory work for the implementation of four international assessments. These preparations included:

- Carrying out the Field Trial of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) with around 1,250 15-year-old students;
- Holding the Field Trial of the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). This involved a sample of around 1,100 Year 9 students from 22 schools;
- A sample of Maltese Year 9 students participated in both the Piloting Phase and the Field Trial of the International Civics and Citizenship Study (ICCS). The Piloting Phase involved about 150 students, 60 teachers and eight Heads of School while the Field Trial was carried out with about 1,200 students;
- Preparations are also in hand for the carrying out in early 2015 of the Field Trial of the Programme for International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) while the Main Survey will be held in 2016.

In January 2014, a training meeting was held in Malta for around 280 representatives from the over 70 countries participating in PISA 2015. This meeting was a great success in all respects: the training sessions were all held within schedule while the social events organised by the Research and Development Department were all well received by the foreign participants and OECD officials.

PISA 2015

PISA is an international study that was launched by the OECD in 1997 and follows a three-yearly cycle. PISA focuses on young people’s ability to apply their knowledge and skills to meet real-life challenges. This orientation reflects a change in the goals and objectives of curricula which are increasingly concerned with what students can do with what they learn at school and not merely with whether they have mastered specific curricular content.

PISA is unique because it develops tests which are not directly linked to the school curriculum. The tests are designed to assess to what extent students, at the end of compulsory education, can apply their knowledge to real-life situations and are equipped for full participation in society. The information collected by means of a number of background questionnaires also provides context which can help analysts interpret the results.

TIMSS 2015

TIMSS is an international assessment of the mathematical and scientific knowledge of Year 5 and Year 9 students around the world. TIMSS was developed by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) to provide valuable information that helps countries monitor and evaluate the success of their mathematics and science education programmes across time and grades. TIMSS was first administered in 1995 and every four
years thereafter. Malta participated in 2007 with Year 9 students and in 2011 with Year 5 students.

Students are expected to complete the test items as well as a background questionnaire. Heads of School and class teachers also reply to a specific background questionnaire. Information from these questionnaires will provide the contextual framework in which the learning and teaching of mathematics and science takes place.

ICCS 2016

Countries around the world face persisting and new challenges in educating young people for citizenship, amidst changing contexts of democracy and civic participation. Participating in ICCS 2016 will provide countries with reliable, comparative data in this critical learning area to help them evaluate and guide educational policies with evidence-based decisions.

ICCS 2016 is intended to assist countries in:

- Investigating the ways in which young people are prepared for citizenship, providing internationally comparable indicators of civic knowledge and engagement to inform policies and practices;
- Monitoring changes in students' civic knowledge and engagement over time;
- Following new challenges in civic and citizenship education in order to improve countries’ understanding of issues such as students’ role in the peaceful functioning of school communities, how to help students become effective participants in the complex world of economics, and the role of new social media in students’ civic engagement;
- Exploring specific topics of common interest through the establishment of optional regional instruments.

PIRLS 2016

PIRLS 2016 is the fourth cycle of the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), an assessment of reading comprehension of Year 5 pupils that has been monitoring trends in student achievement at five-year intervals in countries around the world since 2001.

The PIRLS 2016 assessment will provide internationally comparative data about how well children read after four years of primary schooling. Like the previous PIRLS cycles (conducted in 2001, 2006, and 2011), the study will also collect extensive information about home supports for literacy, curriculum and curriculum implementation, instructional practices, and school resources in each participating country. This will be the second time that Malta is participating in PIRLS after taking part in the 2011 survey.

EURYDICE NATIONAL UNIT

The Research and Development Department houses the National Unit of the Eurydice Network and coordinates all Maltese activities associated with this European network.

The Eurydice Network provides information on and analyses of European education systems and policies. As from 2013 it consists of 40 national units based in all 36 countries participating in the EU’s Lifelong Learning programme (EU Member States, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland). The work of the Eurydice Network includes the formulation and publication of descriptive studies and comparative analyses as well as the collation of education and training indicators and statistical data.
The Research and Development Department has the responsibility of monitoring, drafting and disseminating accurate and comparable information on the Maltese education system within the wider landscape of European education.

During 2014, the Maltese Eurydice National Unit participated in or completed the following projects:

**Eurypedia** – During this year the Research and Development Department continued its work connected with the updating of information on the Maltese education system in Eurypedia – the online encyclopaedia that aims to present the most comprehensive and accurate picture of education systems and reforms in Europe. The site covers 41 European education systems within the countries participating in the EU's Lifelong Learning Programme (all 28 EU Member States as well as Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey).

**Report on Financing Schools in Europe: Mechanisms, Methods and Criteria in Public Funding** – This report provides a framework for understanding the structure of funding systems of primary and general secondary education. It delivers an analysis of authority levels involved and the methods and criteria used for determining the level of resources for financing school education. The authority levels involved in the transfers and provision of school funding is inextricably linked to the political and administrative set-up in individual countries themselves. With the help of national diagrams on funding flows, the report explains the different mechanisms, methods and priorities when it comes to funding staff, operational goods and services and capital goods.

**Report on Adult Education and Training in Europe: Widening Access to Learning Opportunities** – Through a comprehensive overview of policies and data related to the renewed European agenda for adult learning, this Eurydice report aims to support the exchange of policy and practice between countries. The report concentrates on measures to ensure that the most vulnerable groups of adult learners, in particular those with low basic skills or insufficient qualifications, have appropriate access to lifelong learning opportunities. The report's six chapters cover background statistical data on adult education and training, national policy commitments to adult learning, main types of publicly subsidised programmes, learning flexibility and progression pathways, outreach initiatives and guidance services as well as targeted financial support. Alongside Eurydice information, it also includes data from a range of research projects and statistical data from international surveys.

**Report on Tackling Early Leaving from Education and Training in Europe: Strategies, Policies and Measures** – This joint Eurydice/Cedefop report sheds light on what is a serious challenge in many EU countries: early leaving from education and training. The report aims to add value to Member States' individual efforts as well as to the European Commission's endeavours in this area by monitoring developments in the design and implementation of strategies, policies and measures to combat early leaving and support student learning. Key areas addressed are: data collection, strategies and policies against early leaving, the role of education and career guidance, governance and cross-sector cooperation and early leaving from the perspective of vocational education and training.

**Report on Assuring Quality in Education: Policies and Approaches to School Evaluation in Europe** – This report analyses the structures and organisation of school evaluation in primary and compulsory secondary level across Europe. Schools form the basic building blocks of education and training systems, and school evaluation is an important way to monitor and improve their quality, as well as to enhance the quality of education at large. The report analyses the two major types of school evaluation: external evaluation, conducted by evaluators who are not staff members of the school concerned, and internal evaluation,
performed primarily by members of its staff. The report contains country-specific descriptions and a comparative review of school evaluation in Europe.

**Update on Instruction Time** – The annual data collection report on instruction time mainly targets the intended recommended instruction time during compulsory education and includes the compulsory and non-compulsory part of the curriculum that students are entitled to receive in public schools. Quantitative information is provided on the intended curriculum, its goals, structure, subjects and the notional workload for the pupils/students. This year the update has been amalgamated with a similar exercise carried out by the OECD.

**Update on Teacher and School Heads Salaries and Allowances** – This annual Eurydice report contains national descriptions and a comparative overview on teachers and school heads' salaries in Europe. The report covers full-time, fully qualified teachers and school heads at pre-primary, primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education levels. Main topics covered in the report include:

- Decision-making bodies responsible for fixing teachers' salaries;
- Salaries in the private sector;
- Minimum and maximum statutory salaries relative to GDP per capita and in relation to actual salaries (comprised of statutory salaries plus allowances);
- Salary progression in relation to experience;
- Latest increase/decrease in teacher's salaries;
- Different types of allowances and the decision-making bodies responsible for their allocation.

**Update on Fees and Support in Higher Education** – The national system information sheets aim to give an overview of the public fee and support system by means of a diagram that illustrates the main characteristics of the system, while the text provides complementary key points to enable the reader to have a good overall understanding. Information refers to public or government-dependent private higher education institutions. Information covers students in the first and second cycles only.

Each country sheet provides information on:

- The level of support in the form of grants is differentiated by the concepts of need-based and merit-based grants. This reflects reality in the majority of countries;
- Information is also provided on student support systems including;
- Loans: this element appears if there is a national student loan system, and around 5% of students take out a student loan;
- Tax benefits for parents: this element appears if there are tax benefits for parents of students in higher education;
- Family allowances: this element appears if parents of students in higher education receive family allowances.

**Update on Budgets in Education** - The specific country sheets present data on national education budgets; there are no comparisons on total education budgets between countries. However, when possible, comparison across the years for individual countries is made. The published country sheets focus on the budgeted amounts for educational expenditure and not the real expenditure on education. The presented information thus gives a picture of the total budget for education distributed by education levels and categories of expenditure; changes in the total education budgets in 2014 compared to 2013; changes in current and capital expenditures, in personnel costs and in public subsidies to parents with children in education in 2014 compared to 2013 and changes in the budget allocated for specific programmes of education support.
EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH CARRIED OUT AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

LAUNCHING OF THE FRAMEWORK FOR THE EDUCATION STRATEGY FOR MALTA 2014-2024

Following the launch by the Minister for Education and Employment in February 2014 of the Framework for the Education Strategy for Malta 2014 – 2024, the Research and Development Department was closely involved in the following initiatives connected with this Framework. In fact members of staff addressed a number of audiences, both at College level and at school level, during which the principles behind this Framework were expounded to all educational stakeholders. Further meetings were held with trade unions, the main political parties, Government Ministries, entities and agencies, NGOs, parents’ associations and constituted bodies. Following these meetings extensive feedback was collected and collated into manageable formats.

All state colleges and schools were encouraged to dedicate time to assess policies in place, existing practices and available resources in the new context being put forward by the Framework. Members of staff were thus urged to put forward their concerns and suggestions as to how to address any shortcomings so that solutions would be sought. The feedback that was sent to the Department was then collated according to the different areas these were addressing. This feedback was then forwarded to the different directorates so that a three-year plan of action would be drawn up in order for these concerns to be addressed.

STANDARDISATION OF YEAR 4, YEAR 5 AND YEAR 6 EXAMINATION RESULTS

The Statistics Section within the Research and Development Department carried out the task of standardising the Year 4 and Year 5 results achieved in the 2014 primary state schools’ Annual Examination as well as the scores achieved by Year 6 students in the 2014 End-of-Primary Benchmark Assessment scores.

The Department provided support to all College Principals and Heads of School during the banding exercise as well as guidelines and models that were meant to be applied to the grouping and classification process. After completion of the banding process, a monitoring exercise was carried out and variations from the guidelines model calculated. A reflective exercise ensued during which Principals and Heads of School were encouraged to give their views, voice their concerns and make suggestions regarding the whole process.

These standardised scores were eventually utilised by Heads of School to implement a new banding policy launched by the Ministry for Education and Employment regarding the way students are grouped in classes. Banding ensures that the ability spread of students in a class is more manageable for teachers to provide their students with the appropriate teaching experience that is most relevant to their competence level.

LAUNCHING OF THE SCHOOLS’ PERFORMANCE DASHBOARD

The Research and Development Department has developed a new tool for policy makers, Directors, College Principals and Heads of School that enables authorised users to monitor students’ progress at school level, at college level and at a national level.

This new tool, the State Schools’ Performance Dashboard, provides information that is displayed in graphic and tabular form to facilitate comparative analysis. So far this tool is available to Directors and College Principals but it is envisaged that Heads of School will have access to it by mid-2015. Information that is available includes that on students’ performance in Maltese, English and Mathematics from Year 4 up to Year 10; students’ achievement in the SEC examinations; the relative levels of Secondary School Certificate and Profile (SSC&P)
certificates awarded to students in different schools and also on student attendance during the school year. This comparative tool is assisting education officials in identifying areas of concern that need to be addressed as well as success stories that should be celebrated.

**BMI SURVEY OF ALL STUDENTS IN COMPULSORY EDUCATION**

During the latter part of 2014, the Research and Development Department was preparing for the implementation of a large scale survey in collaboration with the Ministry for Health and Energy. The results of this survey will provide a first ever baseline of the Body-Mass Index (BMI) of Maltese school-age students. This survey will also feed into the formulation of a policy initiative entitled “A Whole School Approach to a Healthy Lifestyle: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Policy”. The department was involved in extensive plans to formulate an exercise whereby all compulsory school-age students are weighed and have their height measured. Students’ school bags will also be weighed while students reporting any back pain will also be followed up by a team of physiotherapists. This whole exercise is expected to be carried out and completed by mid-2015.

**REQUESTS FOR LOCAL RESEARCH**

The Research and Development Department contributes to local educational research by encouraging, supporting and monitoring research in state educational institutions. This research, which mostly consists of studies carried out by university students, also includes the analysis of statistical data and other documents housed at the Education Directorates.

During 2014, the Department assessed and approved 230 requests for research to be carried out in state schools by students from the University of Malta, MCAST, foreign universities and private researchers and academics. The research carried out in state schools was at the level indicated below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Requests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.Ed.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.A.</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.Sc.</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.Ed. (Hons.)</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.A. (Hons.)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.Sc. (Hons.)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCAST courses (at National Level, Higher National Level and Degree Level)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma level</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-graduate Diploma level</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignments</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long essays</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilot Study</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publications</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erasmus Research</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project and Research Studies</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Screening Study with the Ministry for Health and Energy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>230</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On completion of their studies, researchers submit a copy of their work to the Documentation Centre of the Education Directorates. In order to promote future studies, these documents are available for reference and perusal by students and researchers.
STATISTICS

The compilation and analysis of statistical data is another area that is the responsibility of the Research and Development Department. Data is sourced from the Students/Teachers/Schools (STS) System for state schools and from the Education Regulatory Compliance Section of the Quality Assurance Department for schools from the non-state sector. Data collection focuses mainly on pupils, students and teaching staff. Data related to Special Education Needs students is still being collected from each school through the medium of the Quarterly Returns as this data is as yet not collated by STS. The analysis of the data provides objective indicators utilised for the planning of educational initiatives and policy formulation by all departments within the Education Directorates. Data is also made available, on request and following strict data protection procedures, to researchers, other government departments as well as to national and international agencies.

7. EU AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS DIRECTORATE

INTRODUCTION

In 2014, the EU Affairs Directorate coordinated the Ministry’s response in EU fora, as well as monitored developments in the areas of employment, education, youth, sport, research and innovation at EU level and formulated the Ministry’s position, after consultations with internal entities, other Ministries as well as non-governmental stakeholders, whenever this was required. The Directorate also provided feedback to other Ministries when called upon to do so. Moreover, the Directorate coordinated the participation of Ministry officials in various conferences, meetings, and other events taking place abroad.

During 2014, participation in EU and International-related events included various Ministerial meetings covering Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs (EPSCO) Council formations, Education, Youth and Sport (ECYS) and Competitiveness Council formation, as well as Informal Ministers’ meetings. Moreover, this Directorate carried out various EU Presidency meetings with all relevant stakeholders in preparation for Malta’s Presidency in the EU in 2017.

PARTICIPATION IN TECHNICAL FACT-FINDING MISSIONS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE EUROPEAN SEMESTER

In January 2014, the Directorate liaised with the EU Secretariat and MEDE officials for the organisation of technical fact-finding missions within the context of the European Semester in relation to research, education and employment, that took place in January and March 2013. The topics included: skills entrepreneurship, research and innovation strategy, Horizon 2020, early school leaving, apprenticeships, skills, VET, lifelong learning and childcare.

The Directorate also liaised with MEDE entities for the provision of feedback for another technical fact-finding mission related to competitiveness which was being lead by another Ministry.

INFRINGEMENTS/COMMISSION EU PILOT REQUESTS

In July 2014, the Ministry for Education and Employment received two infringement letters from the Commission (EU Pilot 6757/14 and EU Pilot 6772/14).

EU Pilot 6757/14 referred to an alleged discrimination with regard to university fees of non-EU nationals benefiting from a right to equal treatment with nationals under EU law in matters concerning education.
The Maltese authorities amended the University Fees Regulations (Legal Notice 258 of 2009) in order to clarify that the rights of third country nationals are fully in line with the requirements established by EU legislation. This amendment has been published in the Malta Government Gazette.

EU Pilot 6772/14 referred an alleged requirement of possessing a Maltese e-residence card as a precondition to completing the registration forms needed for the enrolment of children of non-Maltese EU nationals in local Maltese schools.

The Maltese authorities informed the Commission that the presentation of the e-residence card is not a pre-condition for enrolment of students in local schools and hence non-Maltese EU students are not put at a disadvantage in relation to Maltese nationals. In addition in order to ensure compliance, action was taken by the Government through information sessions to ensure that schools and the relevant Government departments were made aware of the application of this requirement through information sessions.

The Commission has accepted Malta's replies in both cases.

2017 MT PRESIDENCY

During the year 2014, the Directorate coordinated the various facets of the 2017 MT Presidency in relation to the areas of Research and Space, Education, Employment, Youth and Sport.

The Directorate was instrumental in planning and following up the several aspects related to the preparation of the MT Presidency, such as priorities setting, the calendar of events and activities, and recruitment needs. This has been achieved through several meetings with different MEDE experts and the Presidency Unit within MEAIM. All the facets of the 2017 MT Presidency are updated regularly.

The Directorate provides regular feedback as requested by the EU Presidency Unit and informs all stakeholders allowing them to take the Presidency into account in their respective planning. The Directorate also liaises with different Ministries when work related to the Council formations such as EPSCO and Competitiveness is shared.

EMPLOYMENT

The Directorate prepared documentation and provided feedback as necessary in relation to the following items within the EPSCO Council configuration:


The EPSCO Council meeting of 19-20 June 2014 took note of the progress reports on the Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on establishing an European Platform to enhance cooperation in the prevention and deterrence of undeclared work and the Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on a European Network of Employment Services, workers’ access to mobility services and the further integration of labour markets (EURES). A policy debate on the European Semester 2014: Contribution to the European Council (26-27 June 2014) was held. This approved the Draft Council Recommendations on the National Reform Programmes 2014 to each Member State, including Macro-economic Imbalance Procedure (MIP), endorsing the opinion of the
Employment Committee on the Examination of the National Reform Programmes (2014) and the implementation of the 2013 Country-Specific Recommendations (CSRs), the joint EMCO and SPC opinion on the Scoreboard of employment and social indicators, the Employment Performance Monitor and Benchmarks (prepared by EMCO), EMCO Labour Market report, and EMCO Report on the Implementation of the Youth Guarantee.

The EPSCO Council meeting of 16 October 2014 reached a general approach regarding the Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on establishing a European Platform to enhance cooperation in the prevention and deterrence of undeclared work. It held a policy debate on the Europe 2020 Strategy: Mid-term review, including the evaluation of the European Semester, endorsing the Joint opinion of the Employment (EMCO) and Social Protection (SPC) Committees.


EDUCATION

The EYCS Council adopted:

- The Council conclusions on efficient and innovative education and training to invest in skills - supporting the 2014 European Semester;
- Council conclusions on effective teacher education;
- Council conclusions on multilingualism and the development of language competences;
- Council conclusions on quality assurance supporting education and training;
- Council conclusions on entrepreneurship in education and training.

The education policy debates focused upon:

- developing skills and enhancing employability in the light of PIAAC and PISA results;
- education crossing borders: new opportunities and challenges;
- the economic case for education and training in the context of the mid-term review of the Europe 2020 strategy.

The Directorate liaised with the Mutual Recognition Coordinator regarding Malta’s position to be used at meetings of the Group of Coordinators for the Recognition of Professional Qualifications.

ATTENDANCE AT EU MEETINGS

The Directorate coordinated the participation of Malta’s delegations attending several meetings organised by the European Commission and the Presidency of the Council of the EU, among which was the the 2013 annual peer review on Vocational Education and Training (VET), that took place during the meeting of Directors General for VET on 11 November 2013 in Vilnius (Lithuania). This peer review followed up the key issues on VET highlighted during the 2013 European Semester and embedded in the Bruges Communiqué and addressed the country specific recommendations to the Member States in relation to VET. Malta participated.
in the cluster on ‘making work-based learning (WBL) and apprenticeships attractive for learners and companies’.

YOUTH

During the Education, Youth, Culture and Sport (EYCS) Council Meetings lead by the Italian and Greek Presidencies the following youth dossiers were adopted: Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on the overview of the structured dialogue process including social inclusion of young people; Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on a European Union Work Plan for Youth for 2014-2015; Council conclusions on Promoting youth entrepreneurship to foster social inclusion of young people; Council conclusions on promoting young people’s access to rights in order to foster their autonomy and participation in civil society.

The EYCS agendas also included two youth policy debates which focused on the cross-sectoral approach to youth policy as a tool to better address socio-economic challenges and have more targeted policies for young people and subsequently on Promoting a youth entrepreneurial mindset. Consultations were carried out with Agenzija Żgħażagħ, the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity (MFSS), and the Ministry for the Economy, Investment and Small Business (MEIB) on issues related to social inclusion and entrepreneurial matters.

The Greek Presidency organised the first European Youth Conference and the Meeting of Directors General for Youth on the 10 to 12 March 2014. Policy makers and youth representatives from all Member States of the European Union, candidate and EFTA countries participated in the Conference to discuss the results and the process of the Structured Dialogue with young people.

The overall topic of the Conference was in accordance to the Trio Presidency (IE-LT-EL) theme of the Social Inclusion of young people, with particular emphasis on the inclusion of young people through entrepreneurship. The Hellenic Presidency focused on Youth Entrepreneurship as one of the solutions to combat youth unemployment so as to foster the social inclusion of young people. The topics of the workshop were based on the outcomes of the Structured Dialogue national consultations. The main topic of discussion of the DG Youth Meeting, was on “Youth Dimension of Europe strategy 2020 Strategy - can youth sector address the problems that the other sectors cannot?”

The Italian Presidency organised their European Youth Conference in Rome (13-16 October) under the leadership of Italian Minister for Labour and Social Policies, Giuliano Poletti, together with the participation of the European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth, Androulla Vassiliou. This event sought to support and promote discussion between youth organisation representatives and political leaders under the heading, “Promoting Access to Youth Rights and Improving their Autonomy and Participation in Society”. During the course of the different work sessions, subjects connected to the identification of key youth rights were tackled, such as their access to jobs, social welfare systems, and access to funding and support from youth organisations. At the end of the conference, participants (including Malta) published their conclusions, based on their discussions, as part of the new structured European dialogue with youth.

The European structured dialogue with youth has enabled young people to get more involved in European political debates and the dialogue with decision-makers. The dialogue is structured into 18-month cycles and is pursued during national consultations and European youth conferences, at a European level. At the end of each cycle, the conclusions are submitted to the European Ministers for Youth Council, which will decide whether to include them in the discussion texts. During the most recent Youth Council on 22 May 2014, ministers
decided to improve the rules for European dialogue with youth, in light of the experiences obtained during the first three cycles between 2010 and mid-2014.

**SPORT**

During the EYCS Council Meetings held at Ministerial level on 20-21 May and 25 November respectively, the following sport dossiers were adopted: Council Conclusions on Gender Equality in Sport; and the Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on the European Union Work Plan for Sport (2014-2017).

Malta also participated in the following two sport policy debates which focused on: economic, social and environmental sustainability of major sport events; and sport and physical activity at school age.

There was an EU Sports Forum between 1-2 December 2014 in Milan followed by the EU Sport Directors meeting on 2-3 December attended by KMS. The EU Sport Forum was organised by the Commission in order to provide a platform for discussion and consultation with leading representatives from European and International sport federations, European and national sport umbrella organisations (leagues, clubs, athletes, the sport for all and leisure/fitness sector), as well as national Olympic committees, national sport umbrella organisations, representatives of the sport industry, and leaders of projects selected under the 2012 and 2013 Preparatory Actions in the field of sport.

The EU Affairs Directorate initiated discussion on the European Week of Sport, an initiative which was launched by the Commission. This Directorate organised a meeting with all relevant stakeholders to gather information on the feasibility of carrying out a EWOS in Malta. The Sports Council (KMS) nominated a national coordinator to manage all the activities and funds linked to it. The Directorate also encouraged the Sports Council to apply for ERASMUS+ sports funds.

From an international stand point, the Directorate coordinated the Ministry’s response in various international fora; the Council of Europe meetings organised by the international organisation Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS) and also the WADA Foundation Board meetings.

On 28 July 2014, Chris Agius Parliamentary Secretary was nominated as the Trio Representative on the WADA Foundation Board. Chris Agius, Parliamentary Secretary for Research, Innovation, Youth and Sport was unanimously selected as one of the three officials representing the European Union on the Foundation Board. The other EU representatives are the Ministers responsible for Sport of Belgium and Luxembourg. Chris Agius is representing our future Trio Presidency (made up of The Netherlands, Slovakia and Malta) on the WADA Foundation Board, WADA’s supreme decision-making body is composed of 38-member representatives from the Olympic Movement and from Governments.

The Maltese Government has always embraced WADA’s main aims to protect the clean athlete and provide a level playing field for all, which requires the will of everyone who wants, and believes in, pure and fair sport. The Maltese Government considers that representation in the WADA Foundation Board provides it with an opportunity to renew its commitment towards setting the fight against doping as a top priority and sustain a zero-tolerance policy towards cheating.
RESEARCH

The following dossiers were adopted during the Competitiveness (Research and Space) Council meetings: Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area; European Research Area Progress Report 2014; Research and Innovation as sources of renewed growth; and Underpinning the European space renaissance: orientations and future challenges.

Additionally, two policy debates were held on: Science with and for Society; and; Competitiveness of the European space sector as a key driver for the European economy.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Forming part of the EU & International Affairs Directorate, the International Relations Unit coordinates with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs on matters related to bilateral affairs that are not directly linked to the ambit of the EU.

Besides the drafting, ratification, implementation and review of Education-related agreements in which Malta appears as a signatory, the Unit is also responsible for the formulation of MEDE’s position on various issues for intervention at international fora, via an extensive consultation process with all Directorates/Department/Entities falling within MEDE’s portfolio.

During 2014, the International Affairs Unit coordinated and assisted in the process, from the issuing of calls to the provision of assistance to the students during their stay for the scholarships falling under the various bilateral agreements. The Unit also coordinated the drafting of various new bilateral agreements including the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and China.

The Unit also analysed documentation originating from international institutions related to the Ministry’s portfolio and liaised with different Directorates and Entities on International Affairs.

COMMONWEALTH

Commonwealth Day was on 10 March 2014. The theme for 2014 was 'Team Commonwealth'. In order to mark Commonwealth Day in Malta, an activity for about 100 primary school children was organised by the MEDE to celebrate Commonwealth Day with the Prime Minister at Castille. A special Painting exhibition for Secondary students was also organised on the day.

8. PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION DIRECTORATE (PID)

Introduction

Throughout 2014, the Programme Implementation Directorate has increasingly focused on its core functions:

- Monitored the implementation of the 2007-2013+2 Structural Funds Projects, and supported Project Leaders of the different departments, directorates and entities forming part of the Ministry’s portfolio in the reporting of projects-related activities including disbursement of funds, vetting and processing of payments;
- Monitored the implementation of the Electoral Manifesto Programme and offered organisational support to all Proposal Owners;
- Coordinated and monitored the implementation of MEDE’s Budgetary Measures 2014, and assisted the Department of Finance in the preparation for Budget 2015;
Coordinated and monitored the implementation of MEDE’s Simplification Procedures 2014, and assisted MEDE’s Heads of Directorates, Departments and Entities in the preparation for Simplification of further Procedures for 2015;

- Coordinated the compilation of the National Reform Programme, and monitored the implementation of education and employment measures detailed in this programme;
- Led the development of a Screening Programme for Special Learning Difficulties;
- Took over the Scholarships Unit which now forms part of the Programme Implementation Directorate;
- Provided guidance and support regarding the forthcoming 2014-2020 EU Funding so that the Ministry for Education and Employment (MEDE) makes the best use of such funding opportunities.


The Directorate continued to closely monitor and report upon ERDF and ESF projects being implemented by the various departments and public organisations forming part of the Ministry’s portfolio, examined all important developments, issues and problems emanating from the projects, and ensured that projects were on track. Projects’ progress was monitored through the review of monthly updates by the Beneficiary on the Manifesto Implementation System, the review of Project Status Reports submitted by Beneficiaries portraying the progress achieved, the current main issues and the main problems being encountered over the period being covered by the report, the examination of bi-annual Project Progress Reports submitted for all ESF and ERDF projects, attendance in Bilateral Monthly meetings organised by PPCD, convened three Ministerial Projects Steering Committees and participated in the Intermediate Body Steering Committees held in respect of EU co-financed Aid Schemes being implemented by the Employment and Training Corporation. These various monitoring mechanisms not only helped the Directorate to oversee the expenditure and indicators reached by each project, but also facilitated the early detection of issues that may hinder the smooth and timely implementation of projects.

By the end of 2014, in line with the above-mentioned, the Directorate oversaw a total of sixty-six, €208,191,987 ERDF and ESF co-financed projects that have reached different stages in their implementation.

From a total of thirty-four ERDF projects with a total public eligible value of €114,987,712, twenty-two ERDF projects with a total public eligible value of €44,781,904 were fully delivered and disbursed. There are still twelve ongoing ERDF projects, with a total public eligible value of €70,205,808, of which €47,412,721 were fully disbursed. Of these ongoing projects, 4 projects started in 2014 and two which started during 2013, which fell very behind schedule vis-à-vis implementation and disbursement.

As regards ESF projects, from a total of thirty-two, with a total value of €93,204,275, thirteen ESF projects with a total value of €10,246,844 were fully delivered and disbursed. There are still nineteen ongoing ESF projects, with a total value of €82,957,431, of which €59,400,434 were fully disbursed. Thirty projects are mainstream projects, and two projects are Aid Schemes (ESF 3.64 and ESF 2.65). Of these ongoing projects, 6 mainstream projects started in 2013, one started in 2012 and another one started in 2011, which fell behind schedule vis-à-vis disbursements.

The PID also assisted in the implementation of five projects co-financed through Integration Funds.

During 2014, PID performed spot checks of ESF1.125, ESF2.85, ESF1.209, ESF1.229, ESF3.231, ESF2.201, ESF3.113, and ESF1.227 projects. On the other hand, the PID also provided support to Beneficiaries during the implementation of projects. Whilst overseeing the
implementation of EU co-financed projects, during 2014 the Directorate also held various meetings with beneficiaries to discuss issues relating to projects. Through this constant liaison with beneficiaries, besides keeping itself abreast with any difficulties being encountered where and when possible, it provided guidance and support for a way forward.

Besides maintaining ongoing communication with beneficiaries within MEDE remit, the Directorate also continued to work constantly and in close collaboration with such key stakeholders as the Managing Authority (PPCD) within the Ministry for European Affairs and the Implementation of the Electoral Manifesto, the EU Funds Management Unit within Treasury and the Department of Contracts, so as to promote the effective implementation of all EU co-financed projects falling within MEDE remit. Through ongoing communication with all stakeholders, the Directorate kept itself adjourned on administrative requirements governing the implementation of EU co-financed projects and disseminated such information to all beneficiaries. On behalf of Line Ministry, the Directorate always liaised closely with project leaders and project administrators to ensure compliance with administrative procedures and promote accurate and timely action.

The PID regularly assisted and guided project leaders in the compilation of the Accruals and Creditors Template every three months, and upon request from the Accounting Methodology and Compliance Unit (MFIN), the PID compiles data into a number of reports namely the Overall accruals and creditors template, the Analysis of debtors-creditors template, Accrued expenses template, List of arrears of revenue (Debtors) and Accrued Income, Arrears of Revenue Template, and the Accrued Income Template. In the event of irregularities, PID ensured that all relevant funds were recovered from the respective entity, and returned to the Accountant General (MFEI).

Upon request by the Audit Authority or the National Audit Office, the PID also generated the Funds Status Payments and Receipts and Commitments Enquiry Print Outs from the Departmental Accounting System, did copies of Structural Funds Purchase Orders, and followed up any issues arising from audit checks.

In collaboration with PricewaterhouseCoopers, the PID contributed in the compilation of information on indirect costs that were incurred during the implementation of 2007-2013 structural funds projects. This information was used by the Managing Authority to determine applicable flat rates for projects to be co-financed in the 2014-2020 programming period.

EU FINANCED PROJECTS – PROGRAMMING PERIOD 2014-2020 (2023)

In its commitment to promote the best use of EU Funding, during 2014 the Directorate disseminated information about the 2014-2020 EU Funding opportunities across the MEDE’s remit. Notifications were sent out regarding opportunities for tapping European Regional Development Funds (ERDF) and European Social Funds (ESF), and ERASMUS+; and for possible participation as partners in twinning ‘light’ projects, and EaSI Call for proposals, 2014-2020 Programme.

ADVISORY SERVICES

Throughout the last quarter of 2014 the PID initiated the process for the provision of Advisory Services aimed at all entities and departments within the Ministry interested in applying for decentralised European Funding under the 2014-2020 Programming Period. These services will continue in 2015 and beyond.

These services are catered around project concept pitching, idea generation and development. A dedicated team within the Directorate was made available to discuss
feasibility, eligibility of projects and to provide guidance during the application stages of the projects.

Services included:

- Assistance in identifying and matching funding opportunities; programmes and strands best suited for the projects an applicant may have in mind;
- Determining deliverables, outputs and results for projects before proposal drafting stage;
- Interpretation of eligibility rules, explanation of funding calls and manual of procedures;
- Assistance to create and ensure a high standard of applications and other required documents;
- Direction in determining and drafting appropriate procurement strategies for projects before project application stage;
- Early identification of risks, potholes and complications that may arise in order to pre-empt and abate such issues from the onset through the design phase of the project.

ELECTORAL MANIFESTO PROGRAMME

The Manifesto Project Management has undergone considerable development during the year under review.

At the beginning of the year, MEDE was responsible for 133 manifesto proposals which increased to 144 proposals (MEDE 114; MEDE-PS 30) following various re-allocations from and to other ministries. This migration of proposals as well as changes in managerial positions within MEDE necessitated considerable changes of proposal owners and delegates and the granting of access into the MIS system of a considerable number of officers.

The percentage mark of achievement stood at 20% at the beginning of the year which grew to 57.17% by the end of December 2014. (MEDE 56.34%; MEDE-PS 62.43%). At the end of the year 39 proposals were rated 100% complete, whereas the other proposals were in various stages of completion.

BUDGETARY MEASURES 2014

The PID coordinated the reporting on implementation of 41 budgetary measures entrusted to MEDE. On a monthly basis, the PID requested updates from the various directorates and entities. By end of December 2014, 38 budgetary measures were implemented successfully; 1 was carried forward to 2015 due to data protection issues that arose; 1 was withheld and will be dealt with again once direction is provided; and another 1 may be rethought and reproduced accordingly.

SIMPLIFICATION OF BUREAUCRACY

The PID coordinated the reporting on implementation of 27 procedures for simplification. On a monthly basis, the PID requested updates from the various directorates and entities. By end of December 2014, 20 procedures were simplified; 6 due to be implemented in 1st quarter 2015; and 1 may be rethought and reproduced accordingly. Out of 27, 3 belonged to PID itself.

NATIONAL REFORM PROGRAMME

During 2014, updates on the National Reform Programme were given to the Ministry for Finance on a tri-annual basis. This included asking the various directorates and entities to submit updates on current initiatives that were taken according the country’s specific recommendations (CSRs). Once all this information was gathered this was then collated into one document per CSR and table as per subject and forwarded to the NRP team within the
Ministry for Finance. Further clarifications were then sought as requested and this at times took the form of meetings with various entities when the initiative involved more than one entity or directorate. Furthermore, at the end of the year new measures were asked of each entity or directorate according to how such new measures mentioned in the budget speech of the coming year affected the CSRs.

SCREENING PROGRAMME FOR SPECIAL LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

Towards the end of the year a Public Health Specialist was recruited to head the Screening Programme. The aim of such screening is to further enhance a student-centred education, promoting the holistic healthy development of students in schools resulting in a decrease in social and health inequalities.

Various meetings took place with all stakeholders, following which a draft report was prepared, highlighting the services and resources required to carry out such a project. This included input from the Screening Working Group. This group met on a fortnightly basis to discuss the feasibility, logistics, resources and offer support in the Screening implementation process. It is envisaged that the first programme is to be launched during autumn 2015.

SCHOLARSHIPS

The Scholarship Unit is an integral part of the Directorate. The PID started reviewing working practises aiming at improving the service offered to hundreds of scholarship applicants and awardees.

The number of awardees in 2014 was 63 - MGSS-PG; 187 - Master it!; 10 - Malta Arts Scheme and 14 - Malta Sports Scheme.

MGSS-UG scheme was migrated to the Stipends and Maintenance Grants Board.

Prior to migration, an online application system was tested. This system will be used to all other schemes in the near future.

An internal evaluation exercise was conducted analysing existing similarities of the Scholarship opportunities currently on offer. This exercise was intended to address certain shortcomings observed within the current modus operandi regulating scholarships. The PID is intending to merge the current scholarship opportunities in order reduce the bureaucratic and administrative burden of administering these schemes while enhancing synergies and pooling resources available in order to offer a single set of scholarship regulations. This initiative has also been undertaken to herald and facilitate the introduction of EU co-finance scholarships under the current programming period. The ultimate aim is that applicants will no longer be faced with a multitude of different options that may be used to finance the same tertiary degree. A ‘concept note’ proposing the new system was also presented to the heads of the various scholarship boards and approved.

The PID has also initiated the process of designing a Post-Doctoral Research Grant Scheme. Throughout 2014, a study was made of similar opportunities offered in various European countries. After gaining a better understanding of such opportunities an initial concept note proposing a system that can cater for the country’s specific needs was drafted. Several Consultation sessions where held with the relevant stakeholders such as the university of Malta, The Research Innovation and Development Trust, as well informal focus groups with doctoral graduates and post doctorate holders. The ‘concept note’ was then adjusted to reflect the feedback received and an initial high level meeting between PPCD and MEDE is scheduled for the beginning of 2015 in order to gauge the effectiveness of the scheme against
achieving the required National Commitments listed Malta’s 2014-2020 European Structural and Investment Funds.

This year has seen the starting up of preparatory work for the new programming period 2014-2020. During this year, PID’s intervention was necessary to ensure that preparation of the 2014-2020 projects starts. Lessons learnt from the 2007-2013 Programming Period will certainly place the Programme Implementation Directorate in a better position to continue monitoring the implementation of EU co-financed projects in the years to come.

9. EXAMINATIONS DEPARTMENT

MISSION STATEMENT

To administer local and overseas examinations that fairly and fully allows the demonstration of the candidates’ learning abilities.

MAIN OBJECTIVES

The Department organizes examinations for the induction and progression of candidates within the Public Service; to process registrations and organize examinations on behalf of the MATSEC Board; to act as agents for overseas Examining Boards and to process and conduct examinations on their behalf; to uphold and improve the quality of the Department’s service to ensure equity, impartiality and fairness throughout its operations.

The organisation of the SEC and MATSEC examinations constitute a significant portion of the department’s activities year after year. The same applied during the year under review where 10,683 candidates applied for the SEC and MATSEC May session while 4,679 applied for the September session. A drive was carried out to ensure that schools register their candidates online. This had reasonable success as indicated below.

The Department also conducted various other examinations on behalf of several examining bodies, both local and foreign, including Edexcel, University of London and other foreign universities where candidates reading for degrees and diplomas sat examinations, Local Public Examinations, European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) for state school candidates, English as Foreign Language among others.

In 2014, candidates sitting local examinations benefitted from the possibility of having resits in examinations which hitherto did not have this possibility.

ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

Requests for access arrangements during MATSEC examinations were all referred to the MATSEC Support Unit of the University of Malta. These were considered by the ADSC. The number was the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEC Access Arrangements</th>
<th>May 2014</th>
<th>552</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>September 2013</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MATRICULATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS MAY/JUNE 2014

Advanced & Intermediate Single Subject Examinations May 2014

A total number of 4075 candidates sat the May 2014 Session for Advanced & Intermediate Level Examinations with a total of 6619 subject entries at Advanced Level and 9684 subject
entry at Intermediate Level. The total number of candidates who qualified for waiving of fees on Social Security grounds was 24. Special Arrangements were granted to 55 candidates.

September resits 2014

A total number of 2597 candidates sat the September 2014 session with a total of 1261 at Advanced Level and 2045 at Intermediate Level. The number of candidates who benefitted from Special Arrangements was 22.

In 2014, twenty seven schools in Malta applied online while from 10 schools both online and manual applications were received. Fifteen schools applied only manually. In Gozo all schools applied online.

EUROPEAN COMPUTER DRIVING LICENSE (ECDL) TESTING 2014

During 2014, the Examinations Department conducted 2 ECDL Automated Test sessions which were held in January/February and July 2014. There were 5568 applicants from both Junior Lyceums and Secondary schools (Scholastic year 2013/2014) who sat for over 10,700 tests in the various modules.

10. DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT UNIT

INTRODUCTION

The office of the CIO, formerly known as the Information Management Unit, leads the Ministry for Education and Employment ICT strategy and aimed to augment ICT service delivery standards. The function is led by the Chief Information Officer, whose role is to ensure alignment of information and IT with business objectives and priorities. The office is the Ministerial central ICT point of reference, providing ICT support in terms of operation, strategy, project management, consultancy and governance to departments and entities within the MEDE’s remit.

The OCIO operates in close collaboration with MITA on all matters relating to ICT. It obtains expertise and direction and implements the Policies, Standards and Directives set out by the Agency.

USER AND DEPARTMENTAL SUPPORT

The OCIO provided general technical support to the Ministry and its users. Support calls varied in nature from the simple to the more complex. The OCIO support provided consisted mainly in provision of minor ICT equipment, data transfers, general user support, video conferencing support, installation of non standard software, smartphone synchronisation, mapping of network drives, and troubleshooting related to printers and networks.

The OCIO also offered ICT services to a number of Departments within the Ministry related to diverse aspects of ICT ranging from Project Management, consultancy, advice and technical support.

REQUEST FOR ICT SERVICES

The OCIO logged and decided on requests for ICT services required by users across the Ministry and its Departments. All final approvals were granted only through the OCIO to ensure better governance and security when giving access to information systems while costs for services are also monitored and kept under control. The requests vary and include among
others: provision of domain, email and Internet accounts, access to information systems, teleworking facilities, generic mail boxes, modification of mail quotas, access to shared folders and unlocking of network ports.

EXEMPTIONS AND WAIVERS

The OCIO received a number of ICT requests which due to GM ICT policies required a formal exemption from the MITA ICT Compliance Department in order to be implemented. The process for coordinating the submission and eventual processing of exemptions by MITA was fully coordinated by the ICT Governance function within the OCIO.

PROCUREMENT, SUPPLIER AND CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

All ICT procurement for the Ministry and its Departments was centralised within the OCIO. This mechanism ensured more control on ICT spending and while allowing the OCIO to monitor and ensure that suppliers delivered services/products in accordance to specifications, service agreements and/or contractual obligations. This office also checked the legitimacy and accuracy of various invoices related to the procurement of ICT equipment prior to authorising payments. The OCIO was also involved in managing suppliers and coordinating repairs on electronic equipment that needed to be carried out by third party suppliers. The OCIO prepared the equipment for pick up by the supplier, kept track of such equipment and ensured that the equipment was properly repaired and returned to its user/s The formulation of a number of maintenance and support agreements related to hardware and/or Information Systems that are implemented within the Ministry or its Departments also fall within the remit of the OCIO.

TRANSFER AND STORAGE OF ICT ASSETS

The OCIO coordinates the transfer of ICT assets between Government Departments. This includes transfer of the equipment, compiling transfer of asset forms, updating of the inventories (AMS – Asset Management System) and renaming and/or re-installation of the asset. This procedure ensured that the use of assets was optimised to the full without having assets lying idle.

ICT BUDGETING

The budgeting process to submit the Operational (OPEX) and Capital (CAPEX) ICT budgetary requirements for the Ministry and its Departments for 2015 was collaborate with all relevant stakeholders including MITA project managers in order to assess the ICT requirements for the coming year. The finalised ICT Budgeted requirements were forwarded to MITA on the stipulated deadline.

WEBSITES

The OCIO was involved in works related to web support and development. Apart from keeping the Ministry's web portal updated, this office assisted a number of Departments in launching their new website.

The OCIO was directly or indirectly involved in the requirements gathering stage and coordination of the various stakeholders to ensure that the final result was of the required standard. The OCIO was also in charge of the contracting and budgeting aspects. Most of the new websites were based on Microsoft SharePoint. The OCIO was also responsible for taking the necessary actions to address technical vulnerabilities discovered on the Departments’ websites following web security audits carried out by MITA.
Furthermore, this office assisted the business owners as well as their software suppliers with planning and executing system migration from the current Web Framework 1.0 to the new environment which will be referred to Web Framework 2.0.

**ICT DEVELOPMENTS AT MEDE**

Along 2014, MEDE embarked on a number of different initiatives, mainly focusing on a user (public) oriented mind frame to simplify for a more efficient service. This was approached by implementing a number of online registrations residing on the corporate eForms platform:

- Staff Breakfast Club registration
- EFL Conference registration
- Scholarship registration
- Revision Classes registration
- Maintenance Grants online application form.

**ONE TABLET PER CHILD**

The aim of this project is the introduction of tablets within the Primary classroom and maximise the benefits that this technology brings to teaching and learning. In 2014, a Pilot Phase project was launched to evaluate and have an oversight of all requirements prior the national implementation. These vary from the hardware and software procurement, pedagogical training and the technical/infrastructure upgrades requirements. The pilot phase will be closed for evaluation by March 2015.

**DEPARTMENTAL AND SCHOOL TOPOLOGY**

MEDE strategically embarked on a project plan in revisit the current departmental and school topology to plan out the required structure in to address MEDE needs. The main objective is to integrate all services through a consolidated infrastructure such as: Data; Telephony; Intercom capabilities; CCTV; Video; Access Control; Time & Attendance; Intruder Alarm; Alternative Energy Systems Monitoring and Services Support Utilities through fixed IPs.