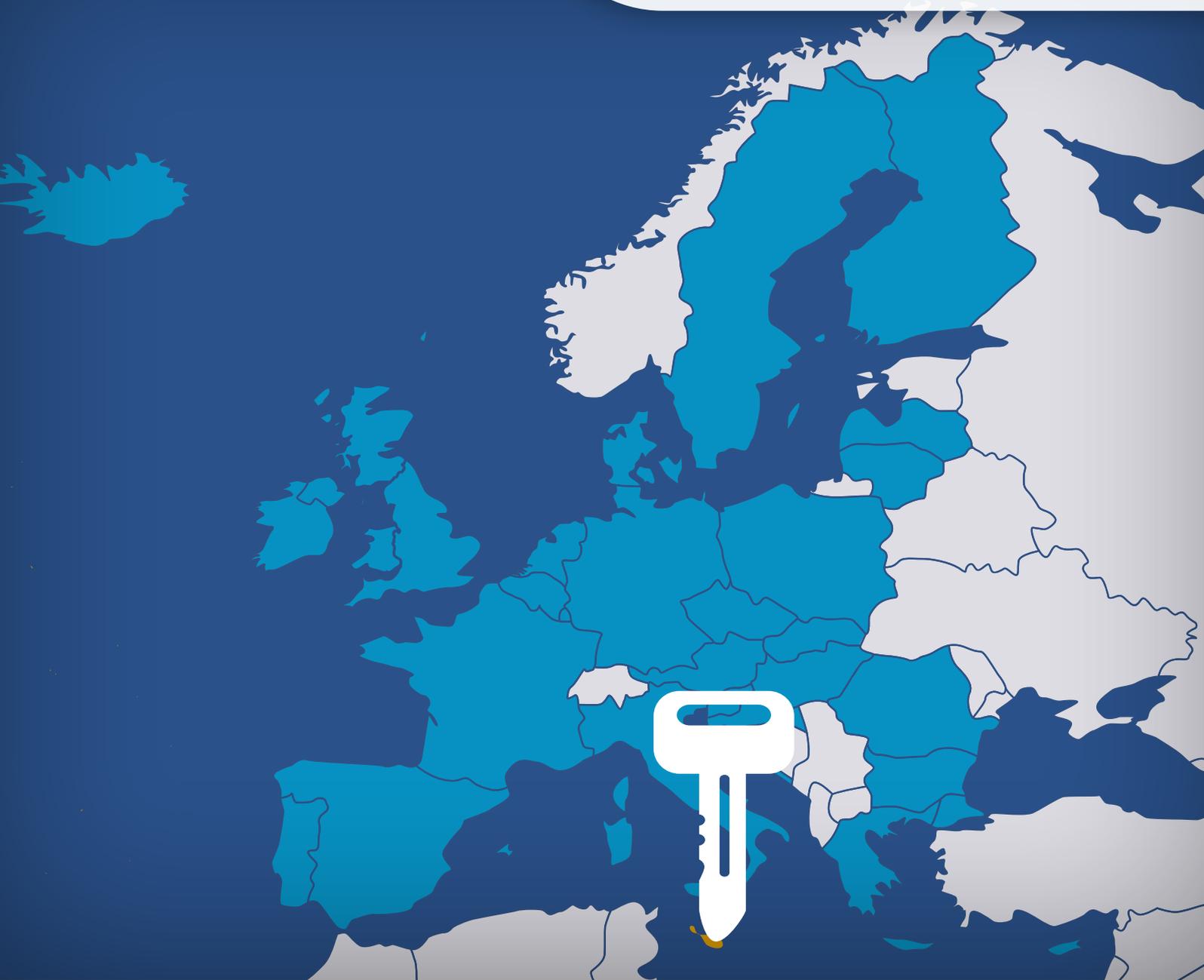


COUNTRY OVERVIEW

MALTA 2014



<http://keyconet.eun.org>



SHORT SUMMARY

Providing a national description contextualizing key competence development in your country [rationale, objectives etc.]:

Key Competence Development in the Maltese Educational system is experienced through the definite subjects taught from the Early Years, through the Primary cycle and consequently the Secondary cycle. The National Curriculum Framework For All issued in 2012 gave rise to the curriculum reform which promotes a clear focus on improving the quality of education and raising student achievement levels. It also advocates a readiness to depart from the traditional curriculum structures and practices that may restrict learning and it encourages flexible learning programmes providing diverse and integrated learning experiences that cater for a wide spectrum of learners within nationally accepted parameters. The NCF moves away from an exclusively subject-based approach that favours fragmentation and compartmentalisation of knowledge to a more cross-curricular, thematic, interdisciplinary and collaborative approach that reflects real life situations and encourages transfer of skills from one learning area to another. The NCF establishes definite Learning Areas for the Junior and Secondary School cycles of education to be Languages, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Health and Physical Education, Religious and Ethics Education, Humanities, Education for Democracy and Visual and Performing Arts. Moreover, the NCF establishes also a number of Cross-Curricular themes which permeate each Learning Area. The Cross-Curricular themes are Literacy and Digital Literacy, Learning to Learn and Co-operative Learning, Education for Sustainable Development, Education for Entrepreneurship, Creativity and innovation and Education for Diversity.

In April 2014, the Ministry published the Framework for the Education Strategy for Malta 2014-2024 and it is in the consultation phase. It aims to develop the learners' personal and social potential and acquire the appropriate knowledge, key skills, competences and attitudes through a value-oriented formation including equity, social justice, diversity and inclusivity. The framework has four broad goals in line with the European and world benchmarks.

KCD INITIATIVES:

What relevant key competence related initiatives (e.g. curricular reform/national strategy/pilot project/public consultation etc. in relation to students' curricula and assessment, teacher training, school organisation, and learning resources) have taken place in your country over the past five years, and which are planned in the future? You may also refer here to the 2012 case notes produced for your country, and any other initiatives which will be the focus of the 2013 case notes.

The NCF (2012) has established the curricular entitlement of all learners in Malta, whilst the consultation document 'An Early School Leaving Strategy for Malta' of 2012 has highlighted the need to address the learning needs of potential early school leavers in the state secondary sector. In view of this the Core Curriculum Programme (CCP) was developed in May 2013 in order to address this requirement. The CCP ensures exposure and appropriate mastery of all the core components of the curriculum. It also aims to develop lifelong learning skills within



the learners and thus increasing the probability of employment and/or further or higher education. Since its inception in May 2013, the CCP has developed on two levels. Learners who commence the secondary cycle with a deficit in languages and mathematics are provided with an alternative programme that aims at scaffolding the learners according to their needs. This programme adopts a constructivist pedagogy that is based on experiential learning and an assessment that includes a diversity of tools. Consequently, very low achieving learners identified at the end of the second year of the secondary cycle are directed towards a CCP that has the following key elements:

- it ensures exposure and appropriate mastery of all the core components of the curriculum;
- it provides learning programmes that have a strong element of continuous assessment whilst
- leading to an MQC Level 1 certification, with the possibility of progression therefrom;
- it develops lifelong learners.

The Assessment adopted in the Core Curriculum Programme has a formative approach and aims to enhance learning since it exposes the gaps in learning for the individual learners and provides opportunities for learning to take place. Final assessment is based on a combination of continuous assessment and a final examination (not necessarily pen and paper). The continuous assessment incorporates the greatest percentage. This assessment reform was crucial in the paradigm shift required in the teaching methodology since assessment drives teaching and consequently learning.

Case note on the Core Curriculum Programme: http://keyconet.eun.org/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=9d5f93ee-8be3-42e3-bf27-6d03bf74caea&groupId=11028

Case Study on the Core Curriculum Programme: http://keyconet.eun.org/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=f669cede-5d6c-4d37-bbff-18a7dd83bcoe&groupId=11028



OVERALL KCD APPROACH:

How would you characterise the overall approach to key competence development in your country? Is it a holistic approach characterised by an overarching strategy, or rather a targeted approach focusing on one or more specific dimension of the education system (student curriculum, assessment, teacher training, school organisation, learning resources etc.)? Does it cover formal and non-formal learning, both primary and secondary school levels?

Key Competence development is a holistic systemic approach that permeates all the years of compulsory education. In the early and primary and secondary years, key competences are presently experienced as specific subjects.

A Strategic Plan for the Prevention of Early School Leaving in Malta 2014 <http://education.gov.mt/esl/Documents/School%20Leaving%20in%20Malta.pdf> together with the Framework for the Education Strategy for Malta 2014-2024 http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/upload/Malta/Malta_framework_for_the_education_strategy_2014_2024.pdf form the overarching strategies that drive the curricular reform where the acquisition of key competences is given priority.

Consequently, a National Literacy Strategy for all in Malta and Gozo 2014-2019 has been launched in June 2014 by the Ministry of Education and Employment <http://education.gov.mt/en/Documents/Literacy/ENGLISH.pdf>

The National Literacy Strategy for All seeks to:

- Consider literacy as an important element in the field of social inclusion. Therefore concrete measures are to be taken in order to ensure that everybody has the opportunity to obtain the skills required for them to participate fully in society.
- Promote a literate community which provides opportunities for learners to make sense of their experiences and to make connections with their histories, cultures and communities. Through increased access to books and the language arts participatory democracy is strengthened.
- Promote a policy of bilingualism and biliteracy in Maltese and English.
- Ensure that parents and the class teacher have a primary role in the literacy development of the child. The support services in schools should complement the vital work of the classroom teacher.
- Consolidate and integrate better existing initiatives and programmes in the field of literacy to ensure increased effectiveness and impact.
- Promote Balanced Literacy teaching and learning where the technical aspects of reading and writing are taught in the context of making meaning through text. Balanced literacy is a curricular methodology that integrates various modalities of literacy instruction. Assessment-based planning is at the core of this model. The balanced literacy approach is characterized by explicit skill instruction and the use of authentic texts. Through various modalities, the teacher implements a well-planned comprehensive literacy programme that reflects a gradual release of control, whereby responsibility is gradually shifted from the teacher to the students.

Moreover, the Core Curriculum Programme (CCP) was developed to cater for low achievers in the secondary cycle. Learners in the CCP are exposed to all the key competences both through specific subjects but also through mentoring sessions during which the soft competences are explored. This is done through tasks or projects which the mentor develops with the learners throughout the course. file:///C:/Users/schools_home/Downloads/CCP%20Mentor%20Guidelines.pdf



KEY COMPETENCES ADDRESSED:

Is there a focus on any particular EU key competence/s or a combination of them, or perhaps there is more of a focus on alternative/complementary competences defined at national level?

The main focus is presently on Literacy. However, the NCF (2012) promotes all the Key Competences as Learning Areas and Cross Curricular themes as explained earlier. These will be incorporated in the Learning Outcomes Framework that will be used as the Learning and Assessment Programme in compulsory Education.



STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

Who are the main stakeholders involved in key competence development in your country?

The main stakeholders involved in these approaches to competence development in Malta are:

- The Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education
- The Department of Curriculum Management
- The Department for Early School Leavers
- The Learning Outcomes Framework Committee
- The National Curriculum Framework Committee
- The Malta Union of Teachers



KCD IMPLEMENTATION PROCESSES:

How does the implementation of key competence development/reform in school education function in your country? (*e.g. process followed, political commitment, consultation with stakeholders and their respective roles, incentives for stakeholders, dedicated funding, teaching material, definition of goals and standards, assessment and evaluation mechanisms, impact on teacher training/professional development and school practices/leadership, scaling-up approach, based on research/evidence? etc.*)

Key Competence development in school education is aligned with present curricular reforms.

The Development of the Learning Outcomes Framework.

The Learning Outcomes Framework will incorporate the Key Competences in the form of outcomes at different levels of achievement. In this respect all initiatives at all levels of education are aligned with this main reform.

The Development of Key Competences within the Core Curriculum Programme.

The learners' needs are a priority in the CCP and therefore this was the focus when defining the goals of this programme. Imparting Key Competences will result in a functioning, employable citizen who is capable of lifelong learning. Teachers who used to teach low achieving learners were consulted and so were Education Officers who wrote the learning programmes. Funding was budgeted per year for this programme and teachers are receiving on-going training in pedagogy and assessment practices. Moreover, educators have access to an e-learning platform which can be used to obtain information and to share initiatives with regards to creating exposure of key competences.

OBSTACLES AND FACILITATORS:

What would you identify as obstacles and/or facilitators to developing and implementing a key competence approach in your country's education system, or to more generally introducing any type of educational reform related to the definition of key competences and revision of the curriculum, and to joint collaboration on such issues relying on the input from those working on different dimensions (e.g. teacher training, learning resources etc.)?

Obstacles:

- Time for professional development
- Financial resources to create interdisciplinary projects
- Time for reflection on practice and networking between teachers

Facilitators:

- The use of a variety of assessment tools that cater for the different learners' needs and capabilities.
- Keeping parent informed about the learning programme their son/daughter is following and be updated about the progress.
- Involve all stakeholders: curriculum planners, school senior management teams, teachers, parents, union and the wider community.
- Use e-learning for professional development and for parental involvement.
- Develop an alternative learning programme (learning while working) to the traditional one that happens in a school ambience.



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/USEFUL URLs:

-  Core Curriculum Programme Case Study
http://keyconet.eun.org/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=f669cede-5d6c-4d37-bbff-18a7dd83bc0e&groupId=11028
-  A National Literacy Strategy for All in Malta and Gozo 2014-2019
<http://education.gov.mt/en/Documents/Literacy/ENGLISH.pdf>
-  A Strategic Plan for the Prevention of the Early School Leaving in Malta 2014
<http://education.gov.mt/esl/Documents/School%20Leaving%20in%20Malta.pdf>
-  Framework for the Education Strategy for Malta 2014-2024: SUSTAINING FOUNDATIONS, CREATING ALTERNATIVES, INCREASING EMPLOYABILITY
http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/upload/Malta/Malta_framework_for_the_education_strategy_2014_2024.pdf
-  The Core Curriculum Programme Mentor Guidelines
<http://curriculum.gov.mt/en/Curriculum/Form-3-to-5/Documents/CCP/CCP%20Mentor%20Guidelines.pdf>

ABOUT EUROPEAN SCHOOLNET

European Schoolnet is the coordinator of the KeyCoNet project.

European Schoolnet is a network of 31 Ministries of Education from across the European member states, leading educational innovation at European level. As a major international think tank, European Schoolnet operates key European services in education on behalf of the European Commission, member Ministries of Education and industry partners.

European Schoolnet's activities are divided among three areas of work:

- Policy, research and innovation: information sharing and evidence building.
- Schools services: enhancing cooperation between schools across Europe.
- Advocacy: how ICT and digital media contribute to transforming teaching and learning processes.

Join us on

-  <http://europeanschoolnet.org>
-  Key Competence Network on School Education – KeyCoNet
-  #21skillscourse  #KeyCoNet
-  <http://www.europeanschoolnetacademy.eu/web/keyconet>

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