

Adult Education in Malta

Peter Mayo

Institut für Internationale Zusammenarbeit des Deutschen Volkshochschul-Verbandes
dvv international

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The reports, studies and materials published in this series aim to further the development of theory and practice in the work of the Volkshochschulen (VHS) as it relates to international aspects of adult education – and vice versa. We hope that by providing access to information and a channel for communication, the series will serve to increase knowledge, deepen insights and improve cooperation in adult education at an international level.

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dvv international

Obere Wilhelmstraße 32 · 53225 Bonn

Federal Republic of Germany

Tel.: +49/228-975 69-0 · Fax: +49/228-975 69-55

info@dvv-international.de · www.iiz-international.de

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Preface

Issues and problems in the field of adult learning can no longer be successfully tackled and resolved in self-sufficient isolation in each country on its own. They arise in a framework of conditions that shape and influence the social development in the entire European region, and they claim answers and solutions that have to be fed from the joined intelligence and experience of adult educators in the entire region. At *dvv international* we are convinced of the benefit of pooling knowledge, experience, resources and commitment with partners all over Europe and, indeed, globally, in order to advance the availability as well as the accessibility of learning opportunities since we believe that learning which is not confined to schools, colleges or universities, is indispensable for people's self-fulfilment as well as for the development of democratic communities at all levels.

It seems that in this conviction we are not at odds with global politics. There is no government which would not subscribe international declarations that attest to learning opportunities at all age levels as a human right. However, there is a significant difference between political statements adopted at international UNESCO- or World Bank conventions, and their implementation at home in every day politics. It is therefore up to civil society, and in this case to us, the committed institutions and organisations that provide learning, or advocate and facilitate its provision, to keep an attentive watch over our governments and remind them of their commitments.

dvv international strives to comply with that function at home in Germany and at European and global levels. To this end it is affiliated and actively supports the *European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA)* and the *International Council for Adult Education (ICAE)*, as well as other regional adult education associations in Asia, the Pacific, and Latin America. All these associations facilitate professional exchange and cooperation, networking and political advocacy work at national and regional levels. In daily cooperative work contacts, however, it becomes apparent that factual knowledge of the work conditions and focus points of the partners even in our neighbouring European countries is skimpy at best. Cooperation in professional ventures and exercising political influence with political decision makers in order to improve the framework conditions for adult education presupposes detailed knowledge of the respective weaknesses and assets, traditions, convictions and values of the partners in order to take positive advantage of them in the pursuit of the common goals. And such knowledge should not be confined to the academic niche of a few specialists in the domain of comparative educational studies but must be easily available and presented in such a way that the practitioners of further education, administrators, developers of curricula, teachers, and also people in local and regional governments, may benefit from them and make use of them in their common work.

To collect such basic yet sufficiently detailed information on the adult education situation in various countries and make it available is the objective that *dvv international* pursues with its series of monographies called "*International Perspectives of Adult Education (IPE)*". Rather than aiming at encyclopedic comprehensiveness we have concentrated on brief up-to-date descriptions of the current state of the art of adult learning and its historical traditions in our partner countries in and around Europe. We have so far covered all Baltic countries, Poland, Russia, Hungary, Slovenia, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Turkey, Afghanistan and, of course our own country Germany.

Naturally, the extension of the European Union through the recent accession of 12 new members opens up significantly broader and more numerous opportunities for European partnerships and cooperation. But we have never restricted our view to the formal boundaries of the European Union. Europe is more than the 27 countries that currently constitute the EU. And Europe, be it the 27 countries or be it the wider Europe that encompasses Russia, all of the Balkans, Turkey and the Caucasian countries, is in itself adjacent to neighbours with who it is bound to cooperate, the more so since problems and conflicts transcend the limits of our continent.

In our view cooperation with, as well as among the Mediterranean countries, including North Africa and the Near East, is of crucial importance. This has forever been a space for religious, cultural and economic encounters, and we all know that they have rarely been peaceful ones. The Mediterranean has produced and nurtured the most important religious, philosophic and scientific roots that determine our thinking and our values up till today. And some of the most volatile and explosive political constellations are located here, and have to be resolved here, that may endanger the peaceful co-existence of peoples and countries far beyond the Mediterranean region.

There is hardly another place where the encounters between North and South, West and East, cultures, religions and empires have left such evident traces as in the tiny island state of Malta. And it comes as no surprise to us that here in Malta we find an adult education scenery with singular complexity, developed from multiple sources, rooted in solid academic research and teaching, and boasting an impressive range of rich and diverse learning opportunities that reach out not only to the country's own population but to learners all over Europe and beyond. We can certainly profit from a closer look at the efforts and achievements of Malta in the field of adult education.

Peter Mayo, a partner and a friend of many years standing, is probably the best authority available to document this field in his country. He is also decidedly committed to closer regional cooperation within the Mediterranean region, and in mutual coordination with the European Adult Education Association and its members. For all of this, he merits our gratitude.

Michael Samlowski

Introduction¹

The Republic of Malta

Malta and Gozo are the two most substantially inhabited islands in the archipelago (consisting also of Comino, Filfla and Kemmaunet) that constitutes the Republic of Malta. The total population is around the 400,000 mark. The country has a long history of foreign domination and influence. Its history includes such periods as those of the Phoenicians, the Carthaginians and the Romans, the Arab period, the Sicilian period and the period of rule by the Sovereign Order of St. John (known as the Knights of Malta), the French (only a two year period), and the British. Malta officially achieved independence on 21 September 1964 and became a Republic on 13 December 1974. The British military bases, which had remained on the island after independence, were closed on 31 March 1979. As far as education goes, compulsory education was introduced following the compulsory education ordinance of 1946. Schools had existed before then but were not available to everyone. Adult education sponsored by the state was introduced well before that period, as I shall show later on in this text.

Adult Education: Some Preliminary Considerations

Adult education is indeed an amorphous field (Torres, 1987) and one encounters great difficulty in trying to establish its parameters. Different people attribute different meanings to it. There have been several Maltese agencies claiming to engage in adult educational activities. After all, the term “*adult education*” has gained currency in Maltese educational debates. When used by those who defend the current system of educational provision, it serves as an indicator of the Maltese education system’s “*coming of age*”. Alternatively, when used by the system’s detractors, it serves to indicate the standard from which we are supposed to be light years away. Adult education is thus used as a powerful indicator of the sort of “*sophisticated*” educational provision believed to exist in countries (generally European or North American) which, given our Eurocentric mindset, we seek to emulate. The cause of adult education also received an important boost with the popularisation of the notion of Lifelong Education (Wain, 1987) in the 1980s, which caught the local imagination to the extent that a commitment towards it has for quite some time now been appearing in the electoral programmes of both major political parties and in the Bishop’s pastoral plan for the islands. Nowadays there is a preference for the more fashionable term “*lifelong learning*,” as used first by the OECD and later the EU, and with

1 I am indebted to Professor Godfrey Baldacchino, currently Canada Research Chair in Island Studies at the University of Prince Edward Island, for his comments on an earlier draft. Any remaining shortcomings are mine.

an ideological underpinning and conceptualisation that differs from that of Lifelong Education as promoted by Unesco. Lifelong learning is often used interchangeably with adult education (even though it is supposed to be an all embracing concept comprising all learning from “the cradle to the grave”) and one reason for this could well be that the term is quite attractive for funding (especially EU funding) purposes.²

For others, especially people sensitive to “Third World” issues, including priests who have had some pastoral experience in Brazil or other parts of Latin America, engagement in adult education signifies an option for the poor and is therefore associated with community action in the less affluent areas of the country. This often involves the provision of literacy and other basic education experiences for the traditionally disenfranchised. And, of course, there is also the ever so fashionable discourse concerning “Human Resource Development,” the new euphemism for vocational training. This is strongly associated, in the minds of many, with adult education. There are many who would justify prioritisation of this aspect of adult education by employing the now outworn cliché that the biggest asset of an industrially developing micro state such as Malta is its labour force, a view which has been called into question in the critical literature on small states (Jules, 1994/95; Baldacchino and Mayo, 1996 a). For those employed in the public sector as civil servants, tourist guides or state school teachers, as well as in the ever expanding services sector, adult education might well be associated with access to university diplomas and degrees, often offered in the evening or online. These qualifications constitute the means for them to partake of that ever expanding phenomenon once termed by Randall Collins “The Credential Society.” Furthermore, the popularity of the terms “adult education”, “non-formal learning” and “lifelong learning” has made several organisations realise that many of the activities they had been carrying out for years were educational in nature and therefore suitable to be included under the rubric of adult education.

The emphasis on adult education within the context of lifelong learning became even stronger in the 90s and especially in the build-up towards Malta’s accession to the EU. The lure of funding opportunities provided by the EU’s Grundtvig action within the Socrates programme and the Leonardo programme made more people join the field. Moreover, Malta is not immune to the forces of globalization, which are manifest in various ways, not least through the presence of private institutions providing attractive qualifica-

2 In 2006 three Grundtvig 2 projects were coordinated by Maltese. The agencies involved were the Department of Health & Safety (Education Division, Ministry of Education), Computer Domain Ltd and the Malta Epilepsy Association (NGO). Thus far there have also been Maltese partners in centralized programmes, including one on prison education. The Commission used this as an example of good practice. One of the problems for Maltese organizations, with coordinating centralized programmes, has been the issue of co-funding. It was argued that Government should provide a fund into which successful organizations could tap. A number of programmes such as one on small states and one on multimedia packages of adult learning were successful as Leonardo projects. (Taped interview with personnel from the EU Programmes Unit (EUPU) at its premises in Valletta, July 2006).



Evaluation session with coordinators of community lifelong learning centres

Source: Peter Mayo

tions at degree and diploma levels granted by recognised foreign (mainly British) universities which include the Universities of Leicester, London (which had always made many of its degrees available through its external service), Sheffield, Sheffield Hallam, Sunderland and York, besides the Maastricht School of Management, the University of Grenoble and the European University (Geneva). Among the most widely advertised programmes are those leading to qualifications in IT and in Administration and Management. These institutions are challenging the University of Malta's long standing monopoly in granting degrees (monopoly has always been a feature of life in small states, as Sultana and Bal-dacchino, 1994, point out) not only in this field but also in such fields as the Humanities (especially English) and Education. The University's monopoly in Higher Education is also being challenged by the re-established Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST).

According to Malta's National Office of Statistics³, 17,490 persons participated in "formal and non-formal lifelong learning" activities in 2005, thus representing 5.5% of the adult population. The term lifelong learning is here being used interchangeably with adult education, and mainly takes into consideration participation in "evening courses" offered

3 Information provided by the National Office of Statistics, Malta, dated 11 December 2006 and released at 11.00 hrs. Source: http://www.nso.gov.mt/statdoc/document_file.aspx?id=1895 · Accessed on 26 December 2006. The statistics concern adult learning participation in 2005.

by certified state and private educational agencies. 50%⁴ of these persons are women, who constitute 75% of the 3,470 persons attending government evening classes centres, excluding the Malta College of Arts Science and Technology. These statistics are to be viewed with caution since “evening classes,” which, as I shall show, are often equated, in government education circles, with adult education, also include students attending formal education institutions such as schools during the day and supplementing their studies for certificates by attending these centres – hardly the sort of students who would qualify as adult learners. By focusing on evening classes, these statistics leave out data regarding participation in such programmes as those provided by the Education Division’s Lifelong Learning Centre, which operates during the day and attracts mainly women. Furthermore, according to the information provided by the Statistics Office as a result of responses to a survey, no less than 9805 students (48% of whom were women) participated in the fifty large private “evening classes” centres that responded. While IT and Management courses are the ones most widely advertised, the survey indicates that courses in the Arts and Humanities are the ones most widely frequented, followed by courses in “Business and Administration” and Computing. The 2005 survey also indicates that around 2758 persons attended evening courses at MCAST, 72% being men, with the Maritime Institute courses and those in “Art and Design” being the most popular. 950 students attended the adult literacy classes provided by Government, the majority being women (68%).

Finally, around 687 persons attended the University of the Third Age with around 60% being 70 years of age and over 74% being women.⁵ If we broaden the spectrum of adult education to comprise the field of adult training, including continuing vocational training (CVT), then the picture inevitably becomes more revealing. The Employment and Training Corporation is a key player here as I will show later on in the section on vocational education and training. We have seen some of the statistics for MCAST, another major player in the field. The Office of Statistics also indicates that, according to a survey carried out between 2000 and 2001, with 1999 as the base year, 437 enterprises provide CVT courses, and prominent among these are enterprises involved in the electricity, gas and water supply sector and enterprises in the financial sector.⁶ It was estimated then that 1,068,232 paid working hours were allocated by enterprises to employees, amounting to an average of 37.2 paid working hours per course participant. There is an obvious male bias in that men benefited from the allocation of 60.7% of these hours.⁷ In a Eurostat sur-

4 See also the earlier National Office of Statistics table indicating the distribution of students attending Government and private evening classes centres classified by field of study, age group and sex 2002–03. http://www.nso.gov.mt/statdoc/document_file.aspx?id=1767 · Accessed 26 December 2006.

5 Ibid.

6 Statistics provided by the National Office of Statistics – Malta. http://www.nso.gov.mt/statdoc/document_file.aspx?id=929 · Accessed 26 December 2006.

7 Ibid.

vey, the level of participation of Maltese adults in adult education compares well with that of other European countries, according to the Director of Further Studies and Adult Education, who cites Eurostat data in this regard.⁸

The statistics by Malta's NOS are very partial and focus primarily on people attending established, easily identifiable and, in several cases, certified educational institutions. In many cases, the education provided is formal or, in certain instances, can best be characterised by the intermeshing of formal and non-formal approaches, the two not being mutually exclusive. While this information might appear sufficient to provide an indication of the growth of the field (as far as adult participation is concerned), taking into account the various provisos made earlier on, it does not cover the whole gamut of adult education provision and participation in Malta, a substantial amount of which occurs outside the context of institutional learning and takes the form of not "courses" but projects. In what follows I will try to provide an account, mainly grounded on perusal of documents, literature and excerpts from recorded and electronically communicated interviews, of both the formal and non-formal processes of adult education in Malta. I will do this without any attempt to provide an exhaustive survey of the field. Given the broad nature of adult education, this is well nigh impossible.

Despite the relatively recent popularity of the concept of adult education, there have been important developments in this sector of educational provision which can be traced back to the second half of the previous century. The overview starts with an identification of some of these developments.

8 Taped interview with Mr. Degiovanni, Director of Further Studies and Adult Education at his office on 7 July 2006. See the following Eurostat website regarding evidence for such a claim: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?_pageid=1073,46870091&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL&p_product_code=SDI_ED1220. In this particular survey, "Life-long learning refers to persons aged 25 to 64 who stated that they received education or training in the four weeks preceding the survey (numerator). The denominator consists of the total population of the same age group, excluding those who did not answer to the question 'participation to education and training'. Both the numerator and the denominator come from the EU Labour Force Survey. The information collected relates to all education or training whether or not relevant to the respondent's current or possible future job." – from the above website. Accessed 29 December 2006. See also Eurostat data provided in Kailis and Pilos (2005), regarding the performance of EU member states with respect to different aspects of participation in lifelong learning.

A Historical Outline of Adult Education in Malta

Canon Paolo Pullicino (1815–1890)

With respect to state provision, one can safely say that the origins of systematically-organised adult basic education owe much to the efforts of the Rev. Paolo Pullicino, a much travelled cleric who received his tertiary education at the universities of Malta, Rome (La Sapienza) and Paris (The Sorbonne). Pullicino is generally credited with having laid the foundations of the Maltese education system. He also provided an initial and systematic effort in developing teacher education through his role as incumbent of the Chair of Pedagogy at the University of Malta (see Zammit Mangion, 1992: 20; Camilleri, 2001: 107–108 on this).

Pullicino also set up adult education schools on the lines of those established in Italy. He set up a Scuola Serale (evening school) at Zabbar in 1850, which attracted eight adult learners, all male. This initial venture was, however, short-lived since the school was closed in 1851. There is evidence, however, that at least two other evening schools were opened during Pullicino's term of office as Director of Primary Education, one at Floriana and the other at Valletta (October, 1884). 85 males frequented the Valletta evening school (Zammit Marmarà, 1995: 38), where technical subjects were taught alongside language and basic mathematical skills. In addition, a highly important report, written by Patrick Joseph Keenan, an Irishman, during the same period, refers to the establishment of six "Sunday Schools" for instruction in basic reading, writing and arithmetic (Vancell, 1991).

Pullicino's successor, Sigismondo Savona, eventually closed the Sunday Schools, perhaps acting on the advice of Keenan, who was probably annoyed by the fact that English was not being taught. Keenan had made strong recommendations concerning the Maltese education system, and particularly regarding language policy, which led to strong reactions from the "Anti-reformists" who promoted Italianità (Zammit Marmarà, 1995: 21, 22). The "Anti-reformists" aim was to prevent the recommendations in Keenan's report from being realised, having considered them an attempt to wipe out what they regarded as Malta's Italian-influenced cultural identity and replace it by an Anglicised one (ibid). This brought to the fore the "Language Question" (see Frendo, 1975, 1988, 1991; Hull, 1993; Zammit Marmarà, 1995), a long struggle over the cultural and political primacy of the English or Italian influence, which dominated the Maltese political scene till the outbreak of the Second World War (Zammit Marmarà, 1995: 17). It was the struggle through which English was to gradually replace Italian, traditionally the language of the elite, throughout the country's "civil society" (the term is here used in the manner adopted by Gramsci – the network of dominant ideological institutions that cement the existing he-

gemony – and not the way it is widely used nowadays, referring to the third sector of NGOs and social movements alongside the State and industry sectors). The indigenous language, Maltese, was, for the most part, considered a “*language fit for the kitchen.*” The struggle for the supremacy of the English Language was part and parcel of the British colonial authorities’ Anglicisation project for the islands.

The concept of Scuole Serali, however, survived well into the 1920s and early 1930s. The twenties also saw the setting up of Women’s Night Schools in nine different localities. The sexist thinking behind this development is reflected in the words of the then Director of Education, A.V. Laferla: “*by educating the mother we shall be furthering the education of the child*” (sic) (Vancell, 1991: 40).

Emigration: Education for Export

Other interesting adult education ventures during the period included the setting up of a Community School at Tarxien, intended to serve as a centre for adult learning and leisure, and the opening of a Migrants Training Centre at Ghammieri in 1938 (York, 1990; Vancell, 1991; Zammit Marmarà, 1995). The issue of emigration was for long a recurring one in Maltese adult education circles (see Attard, 1989; Vancell, 1991; Mayo, 1994a; Borg, Camilleri and Mayo, 1995; Zammit-Marmarà, 1995). It was a feature of the history of the Maltese islands for the greater part of the century.

Under British rule, Malta was made to rely on a Fortress Economy (Baldacchino and Mayo, 1995: 229, 230). The whole economy of the island was fashioned in such a way as to cater exclusively to the requirements of the British garrison. No foundations for the industrial development of the country were laid during this time (see Borg, 1995).

Years characterised by a boom in employment (the war years) alternated with others marked by poverty and unemployment in what were, ironically, years of peace. Emigration became the “*demographic safety valve.*” It is a feature which Malta shared with other developing micro-states where resources are limited. Labour became “*an exportable commodity*” (Baldacchino and Mayo, 1995: 229; see also Jules, 1994/5, regarding the Caribbean). The greatest exodus, through emigration, occurred in the post-war periods. During these periods, thousands of Maltese were laid off from military and naval services. Attard (1989) states that, following the First World War, no fewer than 15,602 people suffered this fate (p. 12). Countries like Canada, the US and Australia attracted large numbers of Maltese migrants who required some initial training in technical skills, mainly agricultural, and some exposure to lessons in the English Language.

The emphasis on agricultural skills (see Casolani, 1930: 23) in the adult training programmes was in response to the receiving countries’ preference for people of rural background (city dwellers constituted a class of “*undesirables*”). There was a demand for people who were prepared to live and work close to nature, being engaged, for example, on sugar-cane farms in Queensland. This explains why the 1938 Ghammieri Training Centre was set up primarily as an agricultural training centre. Barry York (1990) states that this

centre had all the accoutrements to replicate Australian conditions (pp. 102, 103).

Emigration remained a feature of state sponsored adult education provision in Malta even after the Second World War, the period which incidentally saw the enactment of the Compulsory Education Ordinance (1946). Delia (1984) states that, during the period 1948–1955, a target of 10,000 emigrants per year was set by Maltese governments (p. 17). “*Basic English*” therefore became a very important feature of the post-war adult literacy programme (1946–1973), first managed by E.B. Vella and eventually by Paul Bugeja (1913–1993). Bugeja gained expertise in the area of “*Basic English*” when he served as an interpreter in the British Army. He then made his mark as an adult educator teaching English to prisoners of war. On his return to Malta in 1945, he conducted courses on adult learning methods for prospective teachers of adults and was eventually entrusted with the task of running the adult literacy programme. He employed professionally trained teachers, used volunteers and organised the classes in schools, band clubs, social clubs and workplaces (e.g. the Dockyard). Bugeja also wrote textbooks to be used during evening classes (e.g. *English for Adults*, 1948) and supplemented the “*face-to-face*” teaching with his own adult education broadcasts on the cable radio system (rediffusion) (Vancell, 1990: 6–9).

His programme was, however, restricted to the teaching of English, Maltese and Arithmetic, with Italian eventually brought in as an added option. The main concern, in a country with an illiteracy rate of 33% (1948 Census), was the “*eradication of illiteracy*” (Bugeja, 1966). There is evidence that a lot of importance was attached to the teaching of English, with preparatory courses for teachers and supplementary material made available. With regard to the teaching of Maltese, teachers were left to their own devices. English was the one language that was given prominence in the campaign. In fact, with respect to the question of illiteracy, it is not clear on what criteria a person was judged to be illiterate. Did the ability to read and write in the native Maltese language render a person literate or did one require knowledge of English? By then, English had been well established as the language that mattered, the key to jobs and possibly social mobility. Maltese, on the other hand, continued to be given lip service. The following excerpt from a taped interview with Paul Bugeja is quite revealing as regards the promotion of English in the post World War II campaign:

Paul Bugeja: *„I never interfered ... (as far as teaching Maltese goes). The teacher had a free hand when teaching Maltese ... I didn't check whether the teacher taught Maltese ... it all depended on the teacher. I never provided them with a programme in Maltese. ...”* **Interviewer:** *“So Maltese was always on the back burner. There was a lot of emphasis on English and Maltese was of secondary importance.”* **Paul Bugeja:** *“... ignored ... secondary (importance). You're right. You're quite right there.”⁹*

9 Taped interview with Mr Paul Bugeja at his residence in Sliema on 14 August, 1991.

Anglicisation on Two Fronts

The tailoring of state sponsored adult education to the imperatives of emigration strengthened the process of Anglicisation in education. It has been argued elsewhere (Baldacchino and Mayo, 1995: 231) that the adult literacy programme contributed to a process of Anglicisation on two fronts, in Malta and in the country of settlement. It provided a good opportunity for the widespread promotion of the English Language in Malta. And this applied not only to the post-World War II literacy effort but even to the ones, connected with emigration, which preceded it. In fact, there were people in the mid twenties who were so opposed to the teaching of English in Malta that they proposed Argentina and other parts of Latin America as areas of settlement for Maltese migrants (Attard, 1989: 15). One must also keep in mind that the evening classes provided Maltese migrants with, at best, only a smattering of English. As a result, they were kept in a marginal position in the country of settlement. However, this situation must also have led them to recognise the dominant Anglo culture as the invisible norm created by the existence of the “*ethnic other*”. The evening classes therefore contributed to the consolidation of the Anglicisation project in the receiving country (adapted from Baldacchino and Mayo, 1995: 231).

Religious Provision

In several countries, however, it is not only the State that provides adult education. The Roman Catholic Church, also through its larger network, has historically played a very important role in Maltese adult education, as is commonly the case with established religious institutions in countries having a dominant belief system. Catholic Action traditionally constituted the leading organization among Maltese Catholic lay organizations. Established in Malta seven years after Pope Pius XI re-launched it through the encyclical “*Ubi Arcano*”, in December 1922, Catholic Action is described by the Maltese Ecclesiastical Directory as “*a movement of lay people of goodwill who strive together to be better Christians and to help directly and officially the Hierarchy*” (1993, p. 251). It provided the “*prevalent model of participation by lay people in the preconciliar church*” and was considered by a succession of popes “*to be the long hand of the priest which could reach where he could not*” (Pace, 1997: 43). In short, lay persons were educated for participation not as members of the Church in their own right but as adjuncts to priests. Through the publication of a weekly newspaper called *Lehen is-Sewwa* (The Voice of Truth), and the presence of its members in key positions within the institutions of civil society, Catholic Action, described by Antonio Gramsci as “*the official party of the Catholic Institution*”, traditionally targeted progressive initiatives and reforms that could destabilize the “*Hierarchy*” (in Borg, 1995, p. 111; see also Borg and Mayo, 2006, pp. 114, 115) .

The Society of Christian Doctrine (popularly known as MUSEUM) and the Social Action Movement (MAS) are two long-standing Catholic organisations. The former is a lay religious society which owes its origins to a secular priest, the Rev. Gorg Preca (1880–1962) who, in 1907, gathered around him and trained young men mainly for the purpose of

evangelisation. This society was responsible for popularising theological debate that had hitherto been the prerogative of priests. It is they who were intended to interpret basic religious tenets to the *"bifolchi"* (masses), to use the term which the Bishop in Preca's time used with reference to his work; Preca went through *"a long and painful judicial process ... at the hands of the local curia"* (Pace, 1997: 43). Relying on a special cadre of persons (priests) to interpret religious concepts was very much a hallmark of Catholic contexts prior to Vatican Council II. These made pre-Vatican II Catholic institutions differ from those connected with Protestantism with its promotion of literacy at all levels so that people could read the bible – no one was to stand between their conscience and God (see Sultana, 1997: 28). Preca's relevance to the politics of adult education in Malta, in view of his use of the vernacular, ability to connect with popular *"frameworks of relevance"* and his popularisation of religious knowledge, is the subject of an illuminating study (Sultana, 1996; 1997).¹⁰

The Social Action Movement (MAS), for its part, was founded in 1955 by another secular priest, the Rev. Fortunato Mizzi. It was meant to work *"for the cultural, moral and economic betterment of society and especially of workers"* (Baldacchino, 1990: 105). The setting up of this organisation ought to be viewed against the backdrop of the Church's policies during the post-war period characterised by the perceived threat of Communist organisations in Europe. The founding director admitted, in an interview with me, to having feared the threat of communism at the time, not so much for its *"desires"* but more because of the underlying atheism manifest in the policies of the Soviet Union and other countries embracing *"actually existing socialism,"* and what he regarded as these countries' curtailing of freedom.¹¹ One might argue that there seems to have been a struggle for the control of the social field between Catholic and communist forces, the kind of struggle which often translated into village or small town politics of the type brilliantly satirised by Giovanni Guareschi in his Don Camillo-Peppone series. Fr. Mizzi however stresses that the Movement was not primarily set up for *"negative" purposes, that is to say for preventing communist forces from taking root in Malta, but mainly to help create in Malta "a community based on justice, brotherly love and liberty, the principal elements for social peace."*¹² MAS drew its inspiration from the Catholic Church's social thinking notably *Reum Novarum*, *Quadrogesimo Anno*, a number of speeches by Pope Pius XII and encyclicals by Pius XI that underlined the importance of social issues. It also drew its inspiration from social thinking that emerged from Europe, mainly from Belgium, Germany, France and Italy.¹³ A year following its establishment, the Movement set up the Centre for Social Research with the task of *"organising adult education courses, lectures, sem-*

10 Gorg Preca is being canonised in June 2007.

11 Taped interview with the Rev. Fortunato Mizzi at the MAS centre in Valletta. 1 August, 1991.

12 Taped interview with the Rev. Fortunato Mizzi at the MAS centre in Valletta. 1 August, 1991.

13 Taped interview with the Rev. Fortunato Mizzi at the MAS centre in Valletta. 1 August, 1991.

inars etc. in political economy and social leadership" (in Mayo, 1990: 16). Much of this work is now handled by the Centre for Social Leadership. MAS sought to promote cooperatives in various sectors, including the agricultural and fishing sectors (Baldacchino, 1990: 105). MAS was inspired, in its work, by such foreign centres as the Coady Institute in Antigonish, Nova Scotia, Canada, with its echoes of the Antigonish Movement and the reform minded priests dubbed "*Bolsheviks of a better sort*" by Fr Jimmy Tompkins, a key figure in the Canadian adult education scene (Welton, 1995: 230).

Learning activities for agricultural workers were organised in rural areas. There were also learning activities for fishermen held in fishing villages. Non-formal, "*outreach*" settings were used throughout, including the jetty at the fishing village of Marsaxlokk.¹⁴ MAS gave rise to this movement which, as well as other organisations and two unions, one focusing on women and one on workers and families (in 1956), was intended to continue to develop on its own.¹⁵ Foremost among the organisations whose emergence was inspired by MAS is Caritas, a leading player in adult education in Malta as elsewhere; it is often listed as a major adult education player even in neighbouring Italy (see Lichtner, 1992) and an important player in Egypt (Washedv, 2002). I will refer to Caritas' contemporary adult education work in the section that follows. A year after MAS was established, another Catholic organisation, the Cana Movement, came into being and started organising marriage preparation courses, thus becoming "*the Church institution that has entered into contact with the greatest number of adults.*" (Pace, 1997: 44) It has continued to be active until the present day, changing its pedagogical approaches to keep up with contemporary communication trends. Two years later, the Malta Biblical Society was established. It has been organising Bible courses ever since, attracting a large number of participants. It stepped up its adult education work with EBDA (Edukazzjoni Biblika Dejjema għall-Adulti that translates as Permanent Biblical Education for Adults) (Pace, 1997: 48).

Key Figures

Gorg Preca, who stands out as an important educator in the history of adult education in Malta, has been given his due recognition in this section. Other figures who stand out include the English Jesuit, Fr Charles Dominic Plater (1875–1921), who spent the last moments of his life recovering in Malta and utilised his short stay on the island, where he is buried, to deliver speeches intended to contribute to the organisation and education of Catholic workers. His inspiration eventually led to the emergence of the Malta Catholic Social Guild (Sant, 1971) that engaged in a series of educational activities, including seminars, publications and cable radio broadcasts on social issues such as broadcasting and

14 Taped interview with the Rev. Fortunato Mizzi at the MAS centre in Valletta. 1 August, 1991.

15 These unions eventually merged with the union of government employees to set up the Unjoni Had-diema Magħqudin (UHM).



Participants in the Adult Education Network Meeting in August 1991, Malta

Source: Peter Mayo

workers' participation in industry, all tackled from the perspective of the Catholic Church's social teachings.

The other figure who stands out in the history of adult education in Malta is the social reformer and activist, Manwel Dimech (1860–1921) who received his education in prison while he was serving time for a commuted death sentence. Dimech eventually died in Egypt, having been exiled by the colonial government. His role as an adult educator is being given prominence in adult education research (see Zammit Marmarà 1995, 1997; Caruana, 1997).¹⁶ Dimech was the founder of a small group, *Ix-Xirca tal-Imdaulin* (circle/network of the enlightened), of political activists who were to engage in radical political education among the poor. The intention was for the poor to gain the consciousness necessary to react against their exploitation by the colonial masters, the clergy and the Maltese political elite. The teaching

“... was to be carried out not merely by lectures in the classrooms, but by public meetings, in street corners and in squares, and in the theatres. It was to be encouraged by social activities...Journalism literature and social gatherings would continue to play their parts as these had done before Dimech's departure for Italy; but they would now be better organised and much more dynamic, on a more popular scale”.

(Frendo, 1973: 130) ¹⁷

¹⁶ For biographical accounts of Manwel Dimech see Frendo (1973), Azzopardi (1975) and Montebello (2004).

¹⁷ Also cited in Wain and Mayo, 1992: 257.

In addition and in keeping with radical traditions of adult learning in Europe, Dimech also helped produce a satirical political newspaper, *Il-Bandiera tal-Maltin* (the flag of the Maltese) to shed light on the plight of the Maltese. He incurred the wrath of the reactionary Maltese clergy with his writings including those concerning the exploitation of women. Zammit Marmarà (1996: 156) considers Dimech's approach to adult education as that which comes closest to the repressed tradition of *"Independent Working Class Education"* as described by Sharp, Hartwig and O'Leary (1989). He argues that *"Dimech is different from the others in that his adult education initiatives were part of a planned scheme to effect social change in the Maltese island"* (Zammit Marmarà, 1996: 156).

Contemporary Adult Education Provision

The Political Parties

That there exists a growing interest in the development of adult education in these islands can be seen from the various pronouncements on the issue made by the political parties contesting the general elections. Adult education features prominently in the various manifestos and policy papers issued by the major parties. It seems to have become a trendy term which any party wanting to be taken seriously, in terms of its educational policy, can ill afford to leave out, and this despite the fact that, for many years, adult education was given low priority in the Education Department. It always featured in a very subordinate position with respect to the formal schooling system and was often remedial in nature. This is very much the case with most micro-states, which depend, more than larger states, on foreign sources of funding (Bray, 1991) and in turn always give priority to the formal schooling system (see Jules, 1994/95).

The parties have also brought a number of important adult education agencies into being. In 1976, through funding from various sources, notably the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, the Nationalist Party launched the Academy for the Development of a Democratic Environment (AZAD).

“Over its 30 year existence, the programme offered by AZAD has changed a lot, in accordance with the perceived needs of the times. The decisions on the contents of the adult education programmes are taken from a perspective rooted in AZAD’s main mission to develop a democratic environment – with democracy understood broadly to imply a necessarily evolving idea of emancipation and popular participation in Maltese public life.”¹⁸

Its courses are organized in terms of:

- **Political education:** *“political thought, challenges for policy makers, political history, European, regional and global governance, international politics.”*
- **Personal and life skills:** *“self-empowerment (e.g. thinking skills, time management), managing relationships (e.g. psychology of children and adolescents, communication skills.”*
- **Culture and civilisation:** *courses regarding Maltese culture and heritage (often emphasising inherent diversity) and other cultures and civilisations.”¹⁹*

AZAD employs part-time educators and holds most of its courses in the evening even

¹⁸ Interview with AZAD Chairperson, Mr Ranier Fsadni, carried out electronically August 2006.

¹⁹ Ibid.

though it occasionally offers morning short courses when requested to do so by certain organisations. Because it has, for years, been one of the few adult education centres in existence, it used to have around 1,200 participants for its courses. The number has decreased to 700 in recent years, roughly divided in terms of gender composition. The Chairperson explains:

*"But that figure (1,200) dates from a time when there was much less provision of adult education courses in Malta. The increasing provision – especially the courses provided by MCAST – is leaving its mark."*²⁰

The Malta Labour Party has two organisations that are closely connected to it. The older of the two is the *Guzè Ellul Mercer (GEM) Foundation*, which was established in 1984 when the Malta Labour Party was in power. This adult education organisation is named after a prominent Labour politician, writer and intellectual, Guzè Ellul Mercer (1897–1961). GEM is not statutorily connected to the party, though its Board of Directors is split between representatives of the Malta Labour Party and the General Workers Union, the two organisations that gave rise to GEM.²¹ Relying on the work of volunteers, it has provided different forms of "social purpose" adult education, including courses in consumer education, parent education and women's issues, and research projects concerning different neighbourhoods that drew close to the idea of "participatory action research." It once operated a theatre group, *Politeatru*, incorporated a film appreciation club (CINEFORA) and the *Klabb Ferhanin Flimkien*, the last mentioned being responsible for the organisation of work camps and the provision of voluntary service. It also provides summer adult literacy courses in a number of localities with funding forthcoming from local councils or the German SDP oriented funding agency, the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. According to its Executive Director, it draws inspiration from the writings of Paulo Freire and other traditions, mainly European ones.²²

The other Labour oriented organisation is the *Mikiel Anton Vassalli Foundation* that is statutorily affiliated to the Malta Labour Party. It is named after the scholar, linguist and social reformer, Mikiel Anton Vassalli (1764–1829) who did much to promote the Maltese language. The Foundation's purpose has been described by one of its key officials, Desmond Zammit Marmarà, as that of serving as

*"... a catalyst of social change and progress through organizing educative and socio-cultural activities; (b) a think-tank for Leftist intellectuals and (c) an entity helping in the political education of the masses."*²³

20 Information and quote obtained from the above interview with Mr Ranier Fsadni.

21 Taped interview with Mr David Caruana, GEM's Executive Director, 5 August 1991.

22 Ibid.

23 Interview with the Executive Director, Mr Desmond Zammit Marmarà, carried out electronically, August 2006.

It holds seminars on a variety of topics, most recently on the different sectors of the Maltese education system, including adult education. According to Zammit Marmarà:

*"Recently, a seminar on the rights of farmers led to the latter uniting in a protest march which led to their acquiring badly-needed concessions from the Government."*²⁴

State Sponsored Adult Education

The Malta Union of Teachers, despite not having an adult education section, attached importance to adult education in its memoranda to political parties on the eve of the 1987 and 1992 General Elections. In its 1986 memorandum, published in its periodical *The Teacher*, it stated

"The first point to be recognised is that the responsibility to educate the adult should be shared between government and other institutions with which the adult mixes in a manner that affects the quality of his life (sic), but government, with its greater power and resources, needs to be the senior partner. In Malta, the first step the state should take is to set up an Adult Education Division in the Department of Education."

(Malta Union of Teachers, 1986 b)

The Nationalist Government, which took office in 1987, seemed to be following the MUT's recommendations when, in September 1988, it set up a unit for adult education within the Education Department. In its initial year, the Unit carried out a pilot visual education project among the elderly at Paola, collaborating with the local parish organisation, and, in tandem with the Media Education Centre (see Xuereb, 1997) and the Education Department's *Drama Unit*, embarked on a project of correspondence education, through radio, called *"Tajjeb Titghallem"* (Borg, 1997: 136). The radio project involved a series of weekly programmes focusing on a particular topic (e.g. social studies). The participants joined the *Klabb tas-Semmiegha* (Listeners' Club) through which they carried out follow-up exercises for each programme and received feedback from a tutor on their written responses. Six series were carried out, focusing on such issues as *"Social Studies"*, *"Economics in Everyday Life"*, *"Maltese Literature"*, *"Basic Science"* and *"Child Development"* (Mayo, 1989: 35–9).

Adult Literacy

Perhaps the Unit's greatest task was that of coordinating a national state-sponsored, adult literacy programme which was launched by the International Literacy Year (Malta) Committee in January 1990 (Vancell, 1991; Mayo, 1994a; Zammit Marmarà, 1995; Falzon and Mifsud, 1996). Over 33 literacy centres were opened in different Maltese and Gozitan localities over the year. Approximately 1,500 participants were registered during the

24 Ibid.

initial stages of the project. Publicity for this campaign included TV adverts involving the Education Department's *Drama Unit* as well as announcements made by priests in various parish churches at the end of Sunday mass. As is usually the case with such campaigns, the number of participants decreased as the programme entered its second year. The 1990 event provided visibility to the field of adult literacy but the major criticism of this programme was that it was held in schools without any proper adjustments being made for them to accommodate adults. Much depended on the school teachers employed as adult educators since, despite the short induction week course in adult education, some replicated methods used with children while others were innovative in their approach.²⁵ Other sites, such as parish halls, could have been used, as was the case with the initial pilot visual education project at Paola. These were avoided. One wonders whether schools, being government property, give ministers greater visibility and legitimacy, indicating that it is they and their ministries that are providing the services and funding. In using band clubs, parish halls and other sites, a Minister runs the risk of not being given the credit for the service and funding provided. The late M. Kazim Bacchus writes with respect to small states:

"... the chief concern of the elected officials is not always the achievement of greater rationality or efficiency of the educational system. Rather, it is usually to satisfy as much as possible, the demands of the population for services and constantly to remind them that it is the elected Government which is funding these services. This is one way to help ensure that the political party in power would be returned to office at the next election." (Bacchus, 1990: 4)

In contrast with the one run between 1946 and 1973, the 1990 state-sponsored adult literacy programme placed the emphasis on the native Maltese language. Eventually, English Language classes were introduced alongside those in the Maltese language based on the consideration that, although one should start from the learners' indigenous culture (an important feature of progressive adult education programmes), unless one learns a language of international currency in a micro-state, one remains at the periphery of economic/political life (see Mayo, 1994a; Baldacchino and Mayo, 1996a). The specific economic set-up of microstates, which depend on tourism, banking, the provision of yacht berths, transhipment and bunkering, to enhance their "*rentier status*" (Baldacchino, 1993: 40), is often cited as an important reason for this.

The Unit expanded its activities in adult literacy by, apart from introducing English language classes, also: (a) setting up an adult literacy circle at the Centre for Rehabilitation of Drug Addicts (St. Mary's Hospital, Luqa) (b) introducing, in 1990, a programme of Maltese for foreigners, and (c) organising, in 1993, a course in adult basic education for em-

25 Impressions gathered by author from his visits, as officer in Charge of Adult Education, to the various centres in 1990.

ployees at Marsa Shipbuilding. In all cases, state schoolteachers were employed as adult educators, being paid evening classes rates. For a long period of time, there was no full time cadre of adult educators available (this is gradually changing), a characteristic of micro-states (Baldacchino and Mayo, 1995, 1996 a and b; Symeonides, 1992) where specialisation is limited and where people take on multifunctional roles (Farrugia and Attard, 1989). It is quite common, in Malta, to find people doubling up as school teachers and adult educators during the scholastic year (this is also a common occurrence in Cyprus) and then broadening their repertoire in the summer months by teaching English to foreigners (Baldacchino and Mayo, 1995).

One ought to remark that the Education Department is not the only body organising literacy classes. The Church, through its commissions and their subgroups at the parish level, has also carried out work in the adult literacy area. So too has the GEM Foundation, as I have shown.

In the mid-nineties, a reorganisation occurred within the Ministry of Education. The Ministry was split into different divisions, with the Education Division organised into various departments, the Department of Further Studies and Adult Education being one of them.



IT course from the Department of Further Studies and Adult Education

Source: Peter Mayo

This department incorporated work carried out by the then Evening Classes section of the former Education Department, and its remit became wider. It incorporated all sorts of courses from academic subjects to crafts. The courses included computer studies, Basic English, Maltese and adult literacy. It incorporated schools such as those of drama, music and art in both Malta and Gozo (Ministry of Education, 2004–2005). Local council premises began to feature as sites in which adult literacy classes were carried out, and the latter programme is now being supported by a “state of the art” manual and audio

material provided by a team specifically commissioned to carry out this work which also included practitioners.²⁶ In addition to supporting material, studies around literacy and adult basic skills have been commissioned and have been completed (see for instance Mifsud et al, 2006) with a view to enhancing provision in this field.

The Education Division, originally Education Department, did not confine itself to work in adult basic education and other evening courses. In fact, in 1993, through the efforts of the Commission for the Advancement of Women, the Department introduced an access course for women intending to complete their secondary level and advanced level education. Though not advertised by the Education Department as being specifically for women, the course attracted a lot of women, mainly homemakers, in view of the fact that it was held in the morning. The course was first held at a sixth form complex, and the adult educators employed were teachers at the sixth form who added adult education classes to their regular teaching load. When the programme was moved to temporary premises in Valletta, retired schoolteachers were employed as adult educators, in view of the absence of a cadre of full time, specifically trained adult educators (see Enriquez, 1995). The centre is now held in a specific site, refurbished specifically for adult students, situated in the grounds of a University sixth form complex. It is called the Lifelong Learning Centre, employs full time adult educators, many of them with an appropriate academic background in the field (ranging from a certificate in community education to Master's degrees with an adult education focus), and is considered by the Director of Further Studies and Adult Education to be one of the most important developments in Maltese state-sponsored adult education of the decade. It represents a breakthrough since for perhaps the first time we have an institution exclusively devoted to adult education that is not regarded, in this context, as simply an addendum to the mainstream education system.²⁷

As far as the Education Division of the Ministry of Education is concerned, its Youth section is also being sensitized to the need to provide accreditation of the non-formal learning of young people in NGOs, although there is still a long way to go here.²⁸ Schools have also been clustered into college networks²⁹ and it is envisaged that community learning should be carried out within these college networks, in keeping with what is stipulated in the 1999 National Minimum Curriculum document, namely that schools be developed as community learning centres (Ministry of Education, 1999; see also Mayo, 1994b). Finally, the Department of Further Studies and Adult Education is also responsible for the

26 Taped interview with the Director of Further Studies and Adult Education, Mr Anthony Degiovanni, at his office on 7 July 2006.

27 Interview with Mr Anthony Degiovanni, Director, Department of Further Studies and Adult Education, at his office in Floriana, on 7 July, 2006.

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid. See the document *For All Children to Succeed. A New Network Organisation for Quality Education in Malta*, 28 June 2005, Ministry of Education, Malta: http://www.education.gov.mt/ministry/doc/pdf/for_all_children_to_succeed.pdf. Accessed 4 January 2004.

educational TV station, Education 22. The Director admitted, at the time of the interview, that the station was still confined to disseminating information about educational opportunities and has as yet to embark on the area of distance education.³⁰

Foundation for Educational Services: Parents, Family and Community Learning³¹

The work of the Education Division has been complemented, since 2001, by the Foundation for Educational Services (FES), which has been involved in a variety of initiatives including those connected with adult education. This foundation was set up with a view to providing greater flexibility in the process of educational restructuring and reform. The Foundation is allocated an annual budget by central government. In addition, the FES has tapped EU funds through the Grundtvig adult education action of the Socrates Programme and through the European Social Fund element of the Structural Funds Programme for the Malta 2004–2006 cycle. “FES intends to continue tapping ESF funding in the coming cycle.” Funds from the HSBC Cares for Children Fund, the Education Division and Maltese book publishing houses have also been tapped. Support, in the form of a grant, has also been forthcoming from the American Embassy in Malta and the British Council in Malta.³²

It has a strong community orientation and has made a bold effort to introduce community learning centres in various localities throughout Malta, relying on ESF funding which nevertheless restricts the range of provision to “employability”. This has provided great cause for concern during the various seminars for community educators that have been carried out, since the FES has a broader remit than that of tackling education for employability. Parent education and involvement programmes³³ feature prominently in the FES work. In the words of the Foundation’s Chief Executive officer:

“FES is helping parents to become aware of their rights as parents in relation to schools, doing away with the idea that, at the school doorway, parents abdicate their rights and obligations as the primary educators of their own children, conferring the sole rights to school functionaries. It is helping to foster a climate of cooperation, heading towards an ideal scenario where parents and educators become partners ... The FES courses for parent-leaders have made some headway in this regard, helping parents to develop a range of educational roles and services which they are fulfilling

30 Ibid.

31 On the subject of community learning in a regional context see Caruana, 1999. On the subject of adult participation in sports activity and education in a local community see Zammit (1998).

32 Interview with FES Chief Executive Officer, Ms Nora Macelli, carried out electronically, November 2006.

33 See the bi-annual reports of the Parents-in-Education Programme of the FES available through the FES website (www.fes.org.mt)

within their school and local community. This is just the beginning. A wider dialogue needs to be facilitated so as to rope in educators in order to build the badly needed trust between the two sides.”³⁴

The Family festival is one of the Foundation’s major events.

“The FES is a family-learning focused organisation. It takes every opportunity possible to encourage families who have participated in one or several educational programmes, to come together with teachers with whom they have collaborated to present their learning outcomes. The Family Festival is essentially a learning celebration. Teams of parents plan and lead workshops on themes that they consider crucial for their understanding of the educational system and current teaching and learning methodologies being used. FES tutors and participating parents across programmes put up exhibitions on their learning gains and resources created. It is a truly unique and lively occasion which could easily become a tool to showcase best practices in schools across Malta.”³⁵

It is, however, in the area of developing schools as community learning centres, incorporating adult community education, that the FES has made one of its most telling contributions to the Maltese adult education scene.

“From its inception, the FES has worked with many schools to extend the school day for after-school educational initiatives. Starting with the introduction of mixed ability after-school family literacy programmes called Hilti Clubs targeting the early years of primary education, it moved on to day-school family literacy programmes, courses for parents at morning, afternoon and evening level, the provision of a range of teacher training opportunities, and linking schools and families to the broader community.”³⁶

In many primary schools, FES has been instrumental in refurbishing rooms specifically to accommodate adults in non-formal learning settings.

“Many Heads of Schools are very open to maximizing the use of physical space and facilities to attract members of the wider community to the school. They are also becoming more open to the idea of involving parents not just in fundraising and organizing of one-off activities but in offering learning opportunities to other parents.”

In short, parents are to be conceived of not simply as “adjuncts” but as learners, hopefully with a view to participating more directly in the life of the schools. This is what par-

34 Interview with Ms. Nora Macelli carried out electronically, November 2006.

35 Ibid

36 Ibid.

ents called for in another parental involvement project, not carried out by the FES, in a working class community in Malta (Borg and Mayo, 2001 a).

The ESF funded project Community-based Lifelong Learning Centres has enabled schools to open their doors wider to the community.³⁷ Schools like the Zebbug Primary A and Zebbug area Boys Secondary School became hubs of community learning throughout the project cycle.

"The IT labs at the Zebbug Boys Secondary school, for example, were open for ICT courses at introductory and ECDL levels at all times of the day during the summer and in the afternoons and evenings throughout the scholastic year. The Fortini Boys Secondary school at Birgu and the Verdala Junior Lyceum for Boys at Bormla also welcomed community members for ICT courses until late in the evening and on Saturdays. The Senglea Primary School was another hub of community learning during the project cycle with innovative courses being piloted there that were later replicated elsewhere."³⁸

The FES activities have certainly helped forge closer links between schools and communities and made adult community education an important aspect of the programme. The foundation has added a strong degree of flexibility to educational provision in Malta and has certainly played its part in placing adult education firmly on the agenda. There is the challenge of funding to be faced so that the Foundation does not become ESF dependent for its community education programmes, which are normally broader in conception than those intended towards employability. A further challenge for FES and other adult education agencies, in my view, is to be wary of the extent which any corporate sponsorship might reach in view of the international literature (e.g. Giroux, 2001) that exists regarding the increasing corporatisation of schools and other educational institutions.³⁹

Prison Education

There are other types of state-financed adult education programmes. One such programme is being carried out at the central state prison, the Corradino Correctional Facility. Various NGOs had been involved in adult education activities in prison over the years, including the Mid-Dlam Ghad-Dawl group led by Fr Mark Montebello, a radical Dominican priest who attracted large numbers of inmates with his lectures on philosophy at the correctional facility. The Education Department also provided the prison facility with a

37 See Mifsud and Mifsud (2005) on this.

38 Ibid. Ms Macelli states that *"They included a course for adults with a family member with a disability or specific learning difficulty who met twice a week for many months at the school in the evenings to learn more about various issues of concern. The group subsequently formed itself into a self-help group and has now acquired its own premises."* (Group called: Gwardjola)

39 See Darmanin, (2002) with respect to HSBC's educational involvement in Malta.

teacher in the past, and education was high on the agenda when a consultant from Chicago, Jim Rowland, was brought over to Malta to advise on prison reform in the wake of unrest in 1993.⁴⁰ A varied and extensive programme was introduced in 1997, through the initiative of two academics at the University of Malta's Faculty of Education who coordinate the Faculty's Prison Education programme.⁴¹ An education unit was set up at the Corradino Correctional Facility. A section in one of the prison areas was refurbished for this purpose. A library was also set up. Two full time coordinators, with a background, at Master's degree level, in adult education, were employed on a full time basis. A variety of subjects was offered, and areas explored included sociology, philosophy, chess and computer literacy. Some of the inmates obtained valuable qualifications as a result of these courses and gained access to University from where they graduated.

"The subjects successfully taken to competitive examination levels included sociology, philosophy, languages, psychology, mathematics, religious knowledge, and computer skills. Available subjects also included chess, art, music, pottery, life-skills, and creative thinking. Three students were granted prison-leave to attend university. A number of inmates did 'correspondence courses'. The University Radio also offered distance learning opportunities. The Malta Government agency 'Employment Training Corporation' organized a number of work-related courses. The University of Malta ... loaned a number of guest lecturers. The Edward De Bono Foundation sponsored a pilot project programme to teach 'thinking skills' at the Facility. Students were also responsible for 'peer-education' whereby students could share lifelong learning experiences. Students also met informally and organized discussions." (Calleja, 2006)

The present writer had the experience of teaching one of the courses in Sociology, in 1999. The setting was one that is conducive to non-formal learning and the motivation on the part of the learners was great. The greatest challenge is widely believed to be that of equipping inmates at the facility with skills that render them marketable after their release from prison and therefore employable, no mean task given the prejudice which is likely to accompany any application for employment on their part in a small island archipelago where people are easily well known.⁴² The general tendency internationally is to equip such persons with the skills to become self-employed, and some University graduates who emerged from the correctional facility education programme have been very successful as self-employed persons following release from prison.⁴³ Another option would be to educate for the creation of cooperatives. Although as Calleja (2006) argues:

40 See Vella (1996) for an evocative account of the situation concerning life in prisons written from an educator's perspective.

41 These are Dr Joseph Giordmaina and Dr Anthony Vella.

42 Taped interview with Dr Anthony Vella, one of the coordinators of the prison education programme at the University of Malta.

43 Ibid.

"The author believes that non-formal/informal adult education programmes that incorporate 'incidental learning' with 'learning networks' in Correctional Facilities ought to be based on granting autonomy to residents to design their own curriculum. This curriculum ought to strive to achieve 'critical citizenship' by encouraging 'self-directed learning', 'Perspective transformation' and 'transformative development' can be achieved if prisoners are allowed to engage in lifelong learning that is not simply restricted to employment demands. Though employment skills are essential to re-integration back into the economy upon release, it is also important to ensure prisoners are capable of understanding such notions as 'structured inequality', 'alienation', 'anomie', 'social justice', 'individual responsibility', 'individual freedom', 'impartiality and objectivity', and 'dependency' and how these can be articulated by 'affirmative action'. Prisoners need to leave the Platonic cave and move from 'doxa' to 'episteme'."

The programme at the correctional facility has encountered several problems over the years. An experienced educator involved confided that the programme is

"Just surviving. Many people have predicted, over the last few years, that the Education Unit of the Corradino Correctional Facility would eventually be closed down. Thanks to the efforts of the teaching staff, this has not occurred ... yet!"⁴⁴

The number of coordinators has been reduced from two to one and the teaching staff has never been accepted as part of the set-up.⁴⁵ The teachers continue to be seen as outsiders. It is even difficult to attract the best teachers:

"Teachers are still paid at Lm 3.75 per hour, and those working at the Education Division pay 35% tax as the amount is added to their salary. When one also subtracts petrol expenses, teachers are left with little more than Lm 2 an hour for their efforts! How can one recruit the best teachers at this rate?"

There are also problems of budgeting and coordination:

"Nobody even knows whether the funding intended for education is all used as such. A recent request for new cartridges for the Education Unit office computer printer was met with the comment that one had to see if there was any money still available first! ... Co-ordination at the CCF is near to nil. Work, gymnasium practice, the Prison Fellowship party at the end of the month, are all held during teaching hours. This negatively affects attendances at lessons."⁴⁶

44 Electronic interview with experienced educator at the correctional facility.

45 Ibid.

46 Ibid.

The programme is built around the inmates' requests. My own experience when teaching there taught me that the inmates require respect as co-investigators of knowledge as well as competence on the part of the teachers. They expect their teachers to be well prepared and not to bluff their way around:

"The educational programme is built on the requests of the inmates, nothing else, nothing more. The Co-ordinator and the teaching staff are highly respected by the inmates. They (the inmates) have never been a problem, they are an asset to the future of the educational programme. ... The inmates do not tolerate incompetence on the part of the teaching staff. Once, a teacher used to come unprepared for lessons and tried to kid the inmates by digressing into irrelevant conversations. One day, the students stood up en masse and left the teacher alone in the classroom! The next day, they asked the Co-ordinator to find them a new teacher. In this manner, they sacked the incompetent teacher."⁴⁷

Prison education needs the full backing of the authorities and other employees of the correctional facility if it is to take off. Wardens and other staff need to be sensitized to the importance of this programme as a matter of social justice and correctional behaviour. This is one area of adult education where a great effort needs to be made since there is local expertise and determination on the part of adult educators to make this sector work.

Vocational and Workers' Education

As in most countries, however, the growth area, as far as adult learning is concerned, is that of adult vocational education. Malta has a thriving hidden economy. People often take on two or three jobs in order to keep up with ever burgeoning consumer trends (see Sultana, 1994) or, in certain cases, simply to eke out a living in a restructured global economy where people are being confined to the secondary "peripheral" labour market characterised by part-time and therefore unstable conditions of work. The pool of people with enough disposable time to partake of non adult vocational education is conspicuously shrinking. This is more likely to be the case with working class people. They would be attracted to courses that provide them with strong economic returns (including the possibility of gaining employment, holding on to one's job and gaining promotion) and this is probably why programmes of adult training and continuous professional development are the ones most likely to attract them. This is therefore one reason why adult vocational education is the sector, within adult education, which is likely to enjoy the greatest expansion in the forthcoming years. As expected, there is a scramble for EU funds made available for adult vocational education, through the European Social Fund. The emer-

47 Ibid.

gence of agencies involved in adult vocational education is not a bad thing. On the contrary, it could serve to relieve the school system of the burden of training (Baldacchino and Mayo, 1995). As Sultana (1992) and others have argued, schools are not the best places to prepare people for the changing vocational needs of the economy. These changes cannot be predicted and schools, encumbered by the bureaucratic set-up in which they operate, have notoriously been slow to respond to them (pp. 296–308). And, of course, I subscribe to the view that schools should concentrate on providing a broad and holistic education, not one that mortgages the child's future.

Projects involving work-school relationships had been introduced in the past, most notably the Dockyard School (Sultana, 1992, 1995) and more recently the Extended Skill Training Scheme (ESTS), the latter having been introduced in 1979 to provide, among other things, more hands-on experience, at the place of work, for students emerging from the trade schools and technical institutes.

There are now some major projects in the area of adult vocational education, the guiding philosophy for such programmes being undoubtedly Human Capital Theory or, to use the much more popular euphemism these days, Human Resource Development. The leading Maltese agency in this area is the Employment & Training Corporation that replaced the former Auxiliary Workers Training Scheme (AWTS). The AWTS scheme was launched by the Ministry for Social Policy following the change in political administration in 1987. Then it was established that over 5,000 people were registered for employment, over 4,000 others had been enrolled in the local *"Dejma"* (a paramilitary organisation which provided short-term employment) and over 2,000 were *"irregularly employed"* (Council of Europe, 1988). The new government of the time intended the AWTS to operate on the lines of Britain's Manpower Services Commission, which subsequently became the Training Agency. Use was made of the Education Department's Trade Schools and technical institutes for the operation of this scheme. These constituted the only vocational training and education centres available and were, therefore, used for the *"training side"* of the programme. Vocational training was to be combined with a modicum of learning in traditional academic subjects, mainly in Maltese, English and Mathematics. As with other state-sponsored programmes in Malta and elsewhere, especially in small states, where the cost per capita of facilities is higher than in larger states and, therefore, where the pressure to make multifunctional use of them is great, schools built for children and adolescents were used as centres intended to accommodate adults. It is not surprising therefore that, in the case of the AWTS, the centres were run on the lines of the traditional school system. As a result, men (there was an obvious gender bias here), some of them in their forties, were exposed to the most traditional pedagogical methods and settings.⁴⁸ At one particular site, adult learners were included in the same prize day ceremony as

48 I visited two of these sites, one at Naxxar and one at Floriana (Ospizio) in the summer of 1989.

trade school students. It was very clear that the AWTS programme was an “add-on” to the basic work of the institution, namely the education of the mainstream students.⁴⁹

The Employment & Training Corporation, which was launched in the autumn of 1989, was intended to be a more sophisticated system involving a partnership between state and industry. The idea of such a partnership makes sense in a micro-state where the state must shoulder a substantial part of the responsibility for the vocational preparation of adults. Small companies do not enjoy the necessary “economies of scale” to render in-house training a viable option. They also face the danger of “poaching.” The ETC, which set itself up as one of the main providers of vocational education and training, acted in partnership with the then Education Department (and more recently with such agencies as the Paulo Freire Institute and the University’s Literacy Unit) to provide literacy courses for the unemployed, a great number of whom lack literacy skills – more than 80% of ETC registrants, referred to as “clients” by the organisation, have at most secondary level education, with a percentage of them hardly having attained Ordinary level standard; about 20% of those registering for work are functionally illiterate.⁵⁰ Basic Skills is also another area which attracts a large number of participants for the reasons just outlined. But the ETC has provided programmes in a variety of “non trade” areas, including office skills, small business management, and computers and marketing (ETC Annual Report, 1994/5). As far as trade courses are concerned, one noticed the usual gender stereotypes in the earlier courses.⁵¹ As indicated in the report for 1993–94, women “opt solely for office skills based programmes and catering skills programmes.” (ibid)

Other and more recent areas tackled by the ETC include ECDL courses, a Dangerous Goods certificate course, and a whole range of courses from hospitality to Basic Management skills. The ETC also provided a number of courses (many being IT related) through the Night Institute for Further Technical Education (NIFTE)⁵² which was set up in 1998

49 This point was made most clearly to a delegation from the Council of Europe’s “Adult Education and Social Change” topic group focusing on “Adult Education and the Long-term Unemployed” at a study visit to the Naxxar site in November 1989.

50 Information obtained from taped interview with Mr Joe Cutajar, ETC’s Training Services Senior Manager, held at the ETC’s Valletta office on 5 December 2003. Mr Cutajar explains that, at the time of the interview, the ETC relied on the registrants’ own declaration regarding whether they were literate or not and he admits that some prefer to state that they were illiterate to avoid courses and remain on unemployment benefit. He mentioned the introduction of evaluation tools, which were to be introduced in 2004, to gauge the registrant’s literacy level. He also mentioned the imminent introduction of profiling – personnel to be engaged in this area were trained for this purpose with placements abroad (with FAS in Ireland).

51 For a discussion on gender and training in ETC programmes in Gozo see Galea (1998). For a discussion on women and the labour market in Malta see Camilleri (1997), the set text for the “Gender and the Labour Market” unit in the Adult Training & Development diploma course to be referred to later. For a more general discussion on the type of education provided within ETC settings see Vancell (1999).

52 Information provided in the Training Services section of the ETC website, <http://www.etc.gov.mt/site/page.aspx?pageid=2011> · Accessed on 29 December 2006.

through collaboration with the Ministry of Education, the Malta Development Corporation (now Malta Enterprise), the Federation of Industries and the Israeli organisation ORT-Union College for Sciences and Advanced Technologies (Cardona, 2000). The original intention was to involve several sectors of Maltese industry in offering their sites and facilities for the further technical training of adults. Originally there was no charge involved but expenses are now being charged on a cost recovery basis. The Corporation also provides a training subsidy scheme for employees in micro-enterprises and also sponsors the participation of registrants in courses offered by other organisations, including private ones. The ETC has also introduced a system of short flexible traineeships with and tailored to the needs of industry (involving on the job and off the job training) and, as expected, has been bidding for ESF funded projects. It was successful with six out of the 30 bids submitted in 2003.⁵³

The kind of pedagogical approach best suited for adult learners registering for work was an object of concern for the ETC from the very start. The following quote from a taped interview with former ETC consultant, Wendy Zammit, herself a trained adult educator from Australia, testifies to this:

*"Our biggest problem here is getting trainers to get away from teacher centred attitudes, who are prepared to just stop talking and let the students work. And this is an enormous problem in the Maltese educational system. It's so teacher centred. We have to retrain all our people to...in fact we prefer to get people with a social work background than a background in education, simply because they've got listening skills. We've more or less abandoned trying to work with some of the teachers."*⁵⁴

In an effort to improve the quality of adult education in this area, the ETC funded and designed, with the Faculty of Education, the first two year evening course leading to the Diploma in Adult Training & Development. The course, introduced in 1994, targets people working or aspiring to work in the area of personnel development. It is designed with the intention of preparing its participants as adult educators who can engage in critical reflection on issues relating to education and the world of work. It is also intended to render course participants (prospective "trainers") sensitive to the specific issues involved in teaching adults (Baldacchino and Mayo, 1995). This is one of the most popular courses in the Faculty of Education's Adult Education programme.

It is commonly argued that training programmes are often narrow in scope and, socio-logically speaking, serve a "functionalist" purpose. They prepare people to "fit" the system. The diploma course for adult educators is however, quite broad in scope and reflects

53 Taped interview with Mr Joseph Cutajar, ETC's Training Services Senior Manager, at the ETC's Valletta office on 5 December 2003.

54 Taped interview with Ms.Wendy Zammit on 30 August 1991. The ETC was in its initial stages at the time of the interview.

a much wider agenda than that normally associated with training programmes. For instance, one comes across the expected units in the “*management of resources*” and “*training procedures*”. There are, however, also units in “*industrial relations*”, “*women and the labour market*”, “*work and difference*” (including social difference and, more recently, biodiversity) and “*critical perspectives on work education*”. The intention of the Board of Studies, which reflects wider interests than simply those of management, is that of providing a more democratic approach to the world of work.

Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST)

The other major player in the field of vocational education is the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) re-established in 2001. It is run by a Board of Governors which includes experienced educational administrators and many representatives from the industrial sector. This institution had existed before and came to a close in 1978 with the Higher Education reforms (to be discussed later) that turned this institution into a New University and subsequently merged it with the University of Malta. The idea of a vocational college that will cater for full time and evening courses in a whole range of subjects not provided by the University and other institutions was mooted in the mid 1990s. MCAST comprises virtually ten institutes, including the Gozo Centre. Its mission is “*to provide a universally accessible vocational and professional education with an international dimension, responsive to the needs of the individual and the economy.*”⁵⁵

It provides numerous evening training programmes in various skills, and anyone over 16 years of age can register for these programmes. There is no limit to the age of participants beyond 16. Evening courses provided by MCAST are taken up by persons for a variety of reasons. Some take them up for their continuing professional development. Others follow such courses for vocational reorientation. There are those who enrol in such courses to develop the sort of skills that represent an alternative to those employed in their daily work. The last type of course participants engage in a new form of adult education that provides relaxation within a technical and vocational context. Most of the participants in the evening courses are already employed.⁵⁶

Many of the evening courses lead to certificates of attendance but a number of them are geared toward formal foreign certification (*City & Guilds and B.Tec*). There are also plans to open the B.Tec Higher National Diploma in Mechanical Engineering on a part-time basis.⁵⁷

Courses are also tailored to the needs of enterprises and firms that seek to upgrade the qualifications of their personnel in certain areas, e. g. technicians, welders, hairdressers.

55 See http://www.mcast.edu.mt/downloads/quicklinks/strategic_plan.pdf. Accessed 30 December 2006.

56 Taped interview with Mr Kevin Bonnici Administration Manager at MCAST Paola campus on 2 October 2006.

57 Ibid.

They avail themselves of MCAST's considerable economies of scale in the use of facilities, and its ability to tap into the required teaching expertise, for which they provide the funding. There is a "Training for Industry" programme for this purpose which also includes programmes of re-skilling. Then there are also market-driven "mass courses" in a variety of areas, including "interior design" that attracts around 80–100 applicants each term.⁵⁸

The setting up of MCAST is a welcome development in Maltese vocational education and adult vocational education. There is room for closer coordination between MCAST, the ETC and the University and for the pooling of resources in a variety of areas. The Night Institute for Further Technical Education, for example, allows ample scope for collaboration between MCAST and ETC.



Library and Resource Centre
MCAST Source: Peter Mayo

The Trade Unions

The main focus above is on education for employment. There is another side to the area of education and work often referred to as "workers' education" in which trade unions and related organisations play an important part. The largest trade union in Malta is the General Workers' Union, which was officially founded on 5 October 1943.

It has eight sections and has, in recent years, established its adult education wing⁵⁹ – the Reggie Miller Foundation named after the Union's founder Reggie Miller (1898–1970). The Foundation, which is located at the Workers' Memorial Building in Valletta, the Union's main premises, consists of ten schools that

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ See General Workers' Union website: http://www.gwu.org.mt/page.aspx?n=gwu_origins · Accessed on 1 January 2007.

*"... cater for the teaching of Languages, Music, Art and Crafts, Theatre and Drama, Information Technology, Health and Safety, Leadership, Academic Subjects, General Courses and Courses held abroad, mainly in the United Kingdom."*⁶⁰

These schools comprise a broad range of courses covering such areas as Gender Issues and Drama. Interestingly, *"besides seeing to the education of the workers and their families,"* the Foundation *"also provides a service to the general public. It also targets the private enterprise, companies and management. All the above seek the help and educational courses and materials of the Reggie Miller Foundation."*⁶¹

Needless to say, ample space is afforded to *"tool"* and *"issue"* courses for members and officials; issue courses take the form of seminars, around specific topics, for members and social partners.⁶² Priority is given to the education of shop stewards and the Foundation was set up primarily for this purpose.⁶³ This includes a one day induction course for those who have just become shop stewards. Shop stewards are then encouraged to participate in an intensive course consisting of four days spread over a three week period. This course, attended by around 30 persons, involves workshops and role plays, as well as talks by people from within and outside the union. This course is then followed by a one day immersion course dealing primarily with communication skills. Shop stewards, who can avail themselves of a detailed manual provided by the Union, are encouraged to enrol in other courses organised by the Foundation.⁶⁴

The Reggie Miller Foundation often carries out its work in collaboration with other bodies such as the University's Centre for Labour Studies (to be discussed shortly) and organises a number of seminars for workers and other interested parties, as well as the general public. The average rate of participation per month is 60 persons. The Reggie Miller Foundation also comprises the *Unlilang School of Languages*, where Trade Union English is taught to foreigners. Prominent foreign trade unionists feature among the participants, who are sponsored by their own trade unions and come from places that include Finland and China.⁶⁵ The Union's policy document, *Twemmin (Belief)* places lots of emphasis on adult education and workers' education, and the Reggie Miller Foundation is the main vehicle in this regard. The Union and its Reggie Miller Foundation also tackle the issue of the cultural formation of workers and their families in a broader context. The Workers

60 See Reggie Miller Foundation website: http://www.gwu.org.mi/page.aspx?n=Reggie_Miller_Foundation · Accessed on 1 January 2007.

61 Ibid.

62 Taped interview with Mr. Michael Parnis, Reggie Miller Foundation Director, carried out 11 July 2006.

63 Ibid.

64 Ibid.

65 Taped interview with Mr. Michael Parnis, Reggie Miller Foundation Director, carried out 11 July 2006.

Memorial Building, where the Foundation is located, houses a museum (Museum Egalité)⁶⁶ regarding the history of the trade union movement and the working class in Malta and Gozo. It also has an art gallery, *Gallarija Libertá*⁶⁷, the workers' theatre, where congresses, rallies, conferences and other assemblies are held and cultural performances are staged,⁶⁸ and childcare facilities.

With a complement of around 100 educators and around 2,500 participants a year (excluding participants in seminars held outside the premises), the Reggie Miller Foundation is undoubtedly one of the largest adult education agencies in Malta. It is also heavily involved in EU projects, mainly concerning trade unions, both as coordinators and partners. Perhaps one of its main tasks in the forthcoming years is to further develop Labour Studies courses to a level (possibly a higher degree level in conjunction with the University of Malta or a foreign institution of equivalent status) not currently catered for by the Centre for Labour Studies at the University.

The Confederation of Malta Trade Unions was established in 1959 and has had education committee in place, one of its main aims being that of "promoting trade union training for workers" (in Mayo, 1990). Its specific courses over the years have included the "course for activists," held in the evening and catering for union members within the CMTU, and courses in social studies. There was a time when the course in social studies for the general public, held at the CMTU premises, Valletta, was carried out in conjunction with Ruskin College, Oxford, with the final certificate being signed by representatives of the two organisations. The CMTU comprises a number of unions including the *Unjoni Had-diema Maghqudin* (UHM), referred to earlier in the discussion on MAS. This union has been organising a number of courses over the years including courses in various subjects in preparation for examinations to enter the civil service, courses in IT and ECDL courses.⁶⁹ The UHM set up, in 2003, the Salvinu Spiteri Foundation in honour of the first UHM President, Salvinu Spiteri (1926–1996). Its main aim is:

"The furtherance and the promotion of the development of human resources in Malta in the light of the following motivations: (a) that Malta's richest resource is its people and that its economic and social development is highly dependent on its ability to nurture and utilize the abilities, skills and motivation at work; (b) that, in order to further

66 360 degrees Museum tour: <http://www.gwu.org.mt/page.aspx?c=museum360> Picture Gallery of Museum at: <http://www.gwu.org.mt/page.aspx?c=photofile&cid=2> Manwel Dimech, mentioned earlier, is to be seen on right, in picture five, starting from top. · Accessed 1 January 2007.

67 360 degrees Gallery tour: <http://www.gwu.org.mt/main.aspx?ctrl=gallarija360> · Accessed 1 January 2006.

68 See workers' theatre picture gallery: <http://www.gwu.org.mt/page.aspx?c=photofile&cid=7> Information on workers' theatre provided at http://www.gwu.org.mt/page.aspx?n=Workers_theatre · Accessed 1 January 2007.

69 See UHM website: https://www.uhm.org.mt/events_overview.aspx · Accessed 2 January 2007.

these abilities and skills, and to encourage higher motivation, it is necessary to create and enhance an awareness of the need to develop and to provide workers with adequate and directed training on a continuing basis. This will enable them to meet the present and future challenges in a changing and increasingly competitive international environment; (c) that the need is felt to retrain workers for future requirements in the use of modern technology in a world where production systems are changing radically; and (d) that investment of energies in the provision of such services in the upgrading of human resources is in the prime interest of the workers of Malta.”⁷⁰

The trade union's embracing of HRD is very much in evidence in the above quote from the UHM's official website. It seems to be a reflection of the times (an age characterized by the intensification of globalization) in which unions are operating (Baldacchino, 1997). Nowadays, the concern to attract investment and jobs seems to take precedence over the traditional trade union concern regarding employees gaining greater control at their place of work through a broad workers' education programme, unless the term HRD is being redefined and recast to incorporate these latter concerns. In this case, one would be subverting the dominant discourse to obtain support for programmes which include a strong trade union rather than simply a utilitarian management agenda.

One other prominent CMTU member union is the Malta Union of Teachers which, as this account of Maltese adult education shows, has played an important role in the development of adult education in Malta especially with regard to the continuous professional development of teachers (as will be indicated shortly with regard to the introduction of evening degree courses at University), with its emphasis on the development of adult education in its memoranda to political parties and most recently with its contribution to the development of Teaching English as a Foreign Language to Adults (TEFLA) through its setting up, in Valletta, of its Capital Language School.

The courses offered range from General to Intensive Courses. Business English and one-to-one courses are also offered. Other courses (ESP) such as English for Medicine and English for Tourism are also available. Capital Language School is introducing [an] English Course for Trade Unions in Trade Union jargon.⁷¹

Together with the General Workers' Union, the CMTU and UHM are represented on the Board of the University of Malta's Centre for Labour Studies (CLS). It is to the CLS that I now turn.

⁷⁰ See UHM website <https://www.uhm.org.mt/content.aspx?id=9310> Accessed 11 January 2007.

⁷¹ See the appropriate section on the MUT website: <http://www.mut.org.mt/capital.htm> · Accessed 2 January 2007.

Centre for Labour Studies

The Centre for Labour Studies (formerly known as the Workers' Participation Development Centre) at the University of Malta has, since its inception in March 1981, been an important adult education agency in Malta (see Baldacchino, 1985; Rizzo, 1985; Mayo 1996). It was set up following recommendations to this effect made in a study by a Dutchman, Gerard Kester (Kester, 1980). The study focused on the participatory and workers' self-management experiences at the Malta Drydocks, Melita Knitwear and Cargo Handling. Kester argued that there should be a research and monitoring institution to support these experiences (Kester, 1980: 235, 236).

This agency was also to impart the knowledge and skills that workers needed in order to exert greater control at their workplace and participate effectively in the administration and management of the firms by which they were employed. The agency was to strive to foster a culture receptive to the idea of workers' participation and also to engage in consultancy work in the area. Furthermore, the General Workers' Union, through its Secretary General, George Agius, had argued for the establishment of an agency which would counterbalance the presence of management interests at University, following the establishment of a Faculty of Management there in 1978.⁷²

The Centre would fulfil this role by catering for the formation of union officials, shop stewards and other worker representatives (Baldacchino and Mayo, 1995; Mayo, 1997). Short courses for workers were initially organised through the University's Extension Studies Board (ESB) in the early 1980s,⁷³ possibly in response to the fact that the Labour Government of the period was, in the words of one ESB Chairperson, "*anxious to bring tertiary education to the workers.*"⁷⁴

This Centre has, for the most part, concentrated the bulk of its efforts on the two year evening course leading to the Diploma in Social Studies (Labour Studies), subsequently converted into the Diploma in Social Studies (Industrial Relations). At the outset, Drydocks workers⁷⁵ (including several manual workers) attended the course but, later, there was a preponderance of white collar workers.

72 Taped interviews with the WPDC Director, Prof. Edward Zammit, 17 July, 1991 and with George Agius (cf. Mayo, 1997, p. 312).

73 Red 28 in University Registry File Number 039/81. It consists of a memo by the then ESB Co-ordinator, Mr Roger Vella Bonavita, to the University Registrar with cc to Rector and Finance Officer. It mentions the "*first of a series of foundation courses on 'The Maltese Worker at Work and in Society' in which 'about 30 workers are participating.'*"

74 Red 4 in University Registry File Number 039/81/1. Minute 19 of the ESB Meeting of Wednesday 4 March 1981.

75 The Dockyard was always an important source of adult learning, both formal and systematic, through the dockyard school, and non-formal/informal (see Sultana, 1995). It has provided a rich resource for preliminary research on how members of the working class learn through non-formal and informal means (see Mifsud, 1996).

Research, carried out in the early nineties (Mayo, 1997), has shown that the participation of women has been low in “Labour Studies” courses over the years, and the persons interviewed in the research, including several women participants, have provided numerous reasons for this. Lack of publicity strategies targeting homes, in a country where the majority of married women are home-makers, was considered to be one reason. In this context, the timing of the course (an evening course) is also another reason for low female participation. Others pointed to the patriarchal nature of Maltese society that is reflected in the structure of its institutions, including the Centre, and the androcentric content of the labour studies course itself (pp. 324–326). This situation provided cause for concern, with several initiatives being taken to rectify it. These included affirmative action in the choice of applicants for the Labour Studies/Industrial Relations courses and the establishment of a “Women & Development” programme which started off as a certificate day course attracting, in the majority of cases, women who work as home-makers. The programme subsequently evolved into a very popular diploma course. As with all the other diploma courses offered by the CLS, the course recently led to a Diploma in Social Studies with a focus on “Gender and Development”. This course has provided university access for several women, some of whom develop the confidence to later enrol in mainstream degree programmes, although the use of the term “gender,” in the course title, suggests that the focus is on gender in all its dimensions, comprising masculinities and femininities. This diploma course, however, has the merit of foregrounding women’s issues. The CLS strengthened its provision of university continuing education (UCE) by organising one other diploma course in Social Studies. As with the “Industrial Relations” course, this diploma programme is provided on a part-time evening basis and focuses on “Occupational Health and Safety” (WPDC, 2001, pp.10–24). This course is accredited by the UK-based Institute for Occupational Safety & Health (IOSH). While it attracts students because of its technical and professional format, it allows people at the CLS to discuss “labour” issues with individuals who would otherwise not have any exposure to them.⁷⁶

It has been argued (Mayo, 1997, 2006) that the Centre offers possibilities for working /educating for social change “in and against” the state-sponsored university system. The contradictions that arise in this situation are many, including the need to conform to the regulations and procedures of an institution whose *modus operandi* might appear to be at odds with the philosophy of participation that the Centre strives to promote. The Centre may even have to employ lecturers to teach in its courses who are recognised experts in their particular field but who may not share the CLS’s ideals. Their pedagogical approach might, as a result, well undermine the very notion of participation that the Centre attempts to promote. On the positive side, the CLS partly succeeds in eschewing the traditional approach to learning and research carried out at the University. It is one of the

76 I am indebted to CLS Director, Professor Godfrey Baldacchino for this point. Electronic communication 4 January 2007.

very few places at University where Maltese is used as the language of instruction in its courses and where participants can write their assignments and project reports in the native language. The Centre also provides its participants, who would otherwise not be able to follow a full-time University course, with access to the resources of an institution funded out of public taxes. These resources include the University Library, probably the finest on the island. Most important of all, the Centre has promoted trade union issues, and more recently women's issues, at an institution where they would otherwise be neglected, except for a few other areas.



Participants in a diploma course of the Centre for Labour Studies

Source: Peter Mayo

The University and Adult Education⁷⁷

The CLS programmes are not the only ones in adult education provided by the University of Malta. This university, which has a history that dates back to 1592, when it was founded as a Jesuit college (*Collegium Melitensis*), has, for years, been one of the main providers of adult education. The earliest recorded University courses, organised for adults in full time employment, were in the areas of public administration, commerce and education (Zammit Mangion, 1992). These occurred in the immediate post war period, and the majority of courses were the result of recommendations made by foreign experts, mainly from Britain, regarding future developments of the University in accordance with the perceived development needs of the country.⁷⁸ In 1960, following consultations with

⁷⁷ The entire section on University Continuing Education (UCE) is reproduced from Mayo (2003). Permission granted by Publications Committee, Faculty of Education and NIACE.

⁷⁸ I am indebted to Mr. Joseph Zammit Mangion, former Deputy Director of Education, for this information.

the Malta Union of Teachers,⁷⁹ the University introduced the first BA General evening degree.⁸⁰ A BSc evening degree was also introduced but the programme was never completed since the rate of failure was high.⁸¹ Several BA evening courses followed, roughly at the rate of one every six years. As a result of Vatican II, the Faculty of Theology introduced, in 1967, an evening diploma course in Sacred Theology. At its meeting of 19 April 1967, the Faculty Board of Theology accepted in principle the idea of holding such a university course for laypersons. It was argued that

“Vatican Council II exhorts and encourages laymen (sic) to take an active and responsible share in the life and work of the church, especially “in spreading and intensifying the kingdom of Christ in the world. Therefore let the laity,” the Council goes on, “strive skilfully to acquire a more profound grasp of revealed truth and insistently beg God the gift of wisdom.”
(Lumen Gentium 35.)⁸²

The 1978 Higher Education Reforms and University Continuing Education (UCE)

Both the BA and Theology diploma evening courses became firmly established areas of UCE. They provided many adults with opportunities of access to University. These opportunities seemed to be severely jeopardised by the sudden changes that occurred at University through the 1978 Higher Education reforms introduced by the Labour Government headed by Prime Minister Dom Mintoff. These reforms, while leading to the institution of new faculties, such as those of Education and Management, led to the abolition of the Faculties of Arts, Science and Theology as well as the amalgamation of the Malta College of Arts Science and Technology (temporarily transformed into the New University) with the University of Malta. Tertiary education became strictly utilitarian, i.e. tailored to the perceived needs of the economy (see Wain, 1987, pp. 30–31). It looked as though the 1976/77–81 BA evening degree course was the last of its kind, thus seeming to bring to an end an aspect of UCE provision which dated back to 1960. As for the Theology diploma course, this no longer remained a University of Malta course since the 1978 Reforms forced the Faculty of Theology into becoming an entity entirely separate from University. The Faculty of Theology continued to provide accessible evening qualifications for the laity, upgrading its provision, in this regard, to degree level (the diploma course was still retained and it nowadays leads to the *Diploma in Religious Studies*). Through its In-

79 Red 1 in University Registry File Number 337/59.

80 Red 48 in University Registry File, Number 337/59.

81 Red 101 in University Registry File, Number 337/59.

82 Red 9, “*setting up of an Evening Course leading to a Diploma in Theological Studies for Laymen (sic)*” in University Registry File Number 380/66. Other documents (Constitutions) cited in Red 9 (University Registry File Number 380/66) include “On the Church and the Modern World” and “*Gaudium et Spes 62.*”

stitute of Religious Studies, the Faculty introduced a BA degree in Religious Studies with lectures held at the Catholic Institute, Floriana. The BA Religious Studies degree was a much sought-after degree. It filled a void at the time, being the only BA evening degree available on the island in the early eighties. Furthermore, the Church, as the sponsoring institution, never had any problems in obtaining prestigious international recognition for the qualifications it awarded.

The 1978 Higher Education Reforms involved a "Worker-Student" scheme. In this scheme, the university student alternated five and a half months of work with five and a half months of study at University. He/she was provided with a basic wage throughout the year, paid monthly at the same rate during both the study and work phases as well as during the one-month vacation period. Salaried employees were also allowed to join the scheme with the possibility of retaining their salary while carrying out their studies under conditions similar to those for mainstream students. It was mainly people from the public sector and parastatal bodies who benefited from the "Worker-Student" scheme, since the private sector seemed very reluctant to sponsor its employees and prospective "Worker-Students."

The abolition of the Arts and Science faculties led some academics to leave the island in search of pastures new. Those who remained were offered the opportunity to join other faculties, notably the newly formed faculties. Around 1983, however, certain academics and the Rector engaged in efforts to reintroduce courses in the Arts and in Mathematics, Logic and Computing. These courses, however, were reintroduced at evening diploma level. They were the type of courses that allowed participants to progress from one diploma level to another, obtaining only one qualification at the end. Three diploma levels were established, the final level being equivalent to the standard of a first degree. This form of UCE provided the means of circumventing the Government's established policy regarding the University. The fact that such a development was allowed to occur suggests that the policy regarding the Arts and Sciences at University was not cast in stone and that there was room for negotiation. There might have been a variety of reasons for such a development, possibly a sense of unease, felt in influential political and government circles, regarding the way the Humanities and Sciences were being handled. There might also have been some concern that the University had a number of academics in its employ whose skills and expertise, if not used properly, would have deteriorated considerably over the years.⁸³ The content of these courses suggests that there must have been a

83 Taped interview with the Coordinator of the Diploma courses in languages, Professor Daniel Massa. Lecturers were also encouraged to teach courses or give lectures in programmes organised by the ESB. Some were reluctant to do so, probably in view of the dismantling of the Faculties of Arts and Science to which they had been attached. The then ESB Coordinator, Mr Roger Vella Bonavita, states, in a memo to the Registrar, that "There is a considerable feeling in certain faculties against the Extension programme. This is only partly because of the upheavals in tertiary education in recent years." Red 28 in University Registry File Number 039/81.

rethink of the way certain Arts courses, especially language courses, were to be developed. The issue of “relevance” was of concern, and a number of diploma courses began to be characterized by the linking of the traditional areas of literature and linguistics with Communications Studies, perceived to be a growing area at the time.⁸⁴ It can be argued that UCE provided the vehicle for the introduction of “*Communications Studies*” at University. It was conceived of as an area that could cut across the traditional Arts disciplines. There was also a separate evening course, held in 1984, leading to a Diploma in Journalism.⁸⁵

The Extension Studies Board (ESB) was in place in the seventies and early eighties. It offered short courses in a variety of areas. These included: “Popular education”, defined as “*raising the interest level and awareness of the general public*”; “*specialised courses*” defined as “*ad hoc courses for specialised groups to raise their level of competency and proficiency*” and “*enrichment courses*.” The notion of outreach was underlined: “*The University should go out to the people and organise courses where it best suits the participant. This applies especially to Popular Education*.”⁸⁶ The work of this board however fizzled out in the 1980s and there is hardly anything comparable currently in place.

In 1988, the University set up a Centre for Distance Learning (henceforth CDL). The CDL was set up as part of Malta’s contribution to a project known as “*A Commonwealth of Learning*”, which involved cooperation among Commonwealth countries in distance learning. The Centre, however, never really took off even though there were provisions in the University’s Strategic Plan for distance education initiatives to be pursued further. There was, however, a lack of adequately trained personnel in the area of distance education. The University also set up its own radio station, Campus FM, which has made it possible to transmit different courses to a variety of people in their homes.

The University also has a European Centre of Gerontology. Europe has an ageing population, and educational gerontology is playing an increasingly important role in the development of adult education (Jarvis, 1992, p. 409). The issue of ageing has been identified throughout several important European institutions as one of the most crucial for adult education in the forthcoming years. The Council of Europe, for instance, identified “*Adult Education and the Ageing*” as one of the two topics to be studied in the course of the work programme for its last “*Out of School Education*” project “*Adult Education and*

84 Taped interview with Professor Daniel Massa, who was instrumental in developing the area of Communication Studies within the context of these diploma courses, having benefited from a Fulbright Research Fellowship at Michigan State University in the area. Efforts were made to establish cooperation agreements between the University of Malta and Michigan State University in this regard.

85 University of Malta Guidelines for the Diploma in Journalism evening course, 1984. Communications Studies eventually became an area in its own right, and a Centre for Communications Technology was developed, in the early 1990s, for this purpose.

86 Red 20 in University Registry File Number 467/82. Letter by the then ESB Chairperson, Dr Francis Chetcuti, to University Council President, 18 November 1982.

Social Change”, which came to an end with a conference in Strasbourg in March 1993.

The importance of this area has, for years, been felt in Malta, and the setting up of this Centre (formerly the University’s Institute of Gerontology) and the UN Institute for the Ageing, which often includes adult education in its short international courses in Social Gerontology, testifies to this. For years, Caritas (Malta), an important adult education agency, has been organising projects involving the education of the elderly, apart from other projects in such areas as drug awareness. Besides imparting to many the skills of adult learning facilitation and helping in the setting up of 22 parish-level commissions, Caritas (Malta) claims to have trained over thirty teams of volunteers, the majority being elderly people, who run social clubs for the elderly within parish communities. So action in this ever-expanding and important area of adult education has been occurring for years. But the University’s European Centre of Gerontology has been responsible for one of the most publicised developments in Maltese adult education. It set up the country’s first University of the Third Age (*Università tat-Tielet Età – U3E*); plans for setting up a U3A had also been prepared by MAS in the late 1980s.⁸⁷

University of the Third Age

The U3E was set up in 1993. Its activities have included lectures on a variety of topics, participatory projects and cultural visits to foreign countries (Schembri, 1997; Schembri



University of the Third Age

Source: Marvin Formoso

87 Taped interview with the Rev. Fortunato Mizzi, MAS Director, 1 August 1991.

and Agius, 1997). Most of its activities are centrally located, although there have been attempts to open branches in other parts of Malta and Gozo. The choice of location in this regard can condition the social class composition of participants. The U3E's programmes have been the subject of a sophisticated piece of analysis, involving empirical and qualitative research, which draws on, among other sources, Pierre Bourdieu's work, *Distinction: a social critique of the judgement of taste*, and the writings of Paulo Freire (Formosa, 2000a, 2007). One of the major points of criticism made is that the U3E programmes are too academically oriented and that the entire project reflects a strong middle class "cultural arbitrary" (Formosa, 2000a, 2000b). The middle class orientation is reflected in the nature of the activities on offer and in the composition of the adult education clientele. As Formosa (2000a) and others have shown, however, this is typical of most Third Age Universities.

University Continuing Education (UCE) in Gozo

One other important initiative that contributes to the continuing education of adults was the introduction, in the late 1980s, of a maturity clause that spares prospective adult learners the task of having to fulfil time-consuming University entry requirements. The other noteworthy initiative by the University of Malta in UCE is the setting up of a University centre in Gozo. This centre was established in 1992. It is intended to cater for the continuing education needs of Gozitans holding full time employment in Gozo who would encounter enormous logistical constraints if they were to attempt to enrol in UCE courses on the main campus at Msida.⁸⁸ This situation is not unlike that faced by other inhabitants of islands having a structurally induced peripheral relationship with the mainland or main island/s within an archipelago. The success or otherwise of UCE provision in Gozo depends, to a large extent, on the readiness of lecturers, from the main campus, to engage in part-time work, especially during the weekend. The rate of remuneration for part-time teaching at University is hardly attractive (except for those short courses commissioned, on a commercial basis, through Malta University Services Ltd.⁸⁹ As far as the Gozo courses

88 See the survey among Gozitan teachers carried out by Ms. Simone Attard in 1996. She states that "57% of the students replied that it would involve a great deal of travelling; that is a half an hour trip by boat to the Maltese harbour and about an hour and a half bus trip to the University premises at Tal-Qroqq in Malta. This trip can be undertaken only when the weather is good, since the boat does not cross over when it is stormy." (Attard, 1996, p. 46).

89 This University-owned commercial entity operates as a limited liability company. Its main objective is to "make the facilities and expertise of the University available on commercial terms to the community at large and to initiate and to promote technology transfer." (p.2) Among its several functions, including consultancy, technology transfer and special projects, testing and publishing, it runs the International School of English (one of the many schools in Malta in the area of teaching English as a Foreign language) (p.14). It also carries out other education and training courses in such areas as "Management Development", "Management of Information Systems," "Health and Safety", "Computer Systems and Applications", "Advanced Manufacturing Technology", "Quality Management", "Professional

are concerned, part-time teaching involves giving up the best part of the weekend and, in the case of lecturers from Malta, a certain amount of travelling and an overnight stay. For this reason, the Director of the University's Gozo Centre has had to come up with a series of incentives to render teaching in Gozo more palatable to lecturers from the main campus.⁹⁰ One can avail oneself of the teleconferencing facilities available at the main campus and the Gozo Centre.

The Gozo Centre has been offering a variety of courses, ranging from Master's (e.g. MEd) and first degree courses to various diploma courses for which there is a demand. The Centre also interacts with other University entities that have potential for providing UCE. These include the U3E. The latter avails itself of the Centre to provide courses in Gozo. The Centre's Director states that the way forward for the Centre is not simply to replicate courses provided at the main campus but to develop its own niche areas/centres of excellence. He proposes Marine Studies as one of these areas.⁹¹ The idea of a University outreach centre in Gozo is indeed an excellent one. Nevertheless, the University's Gozo Centre is, in many ways, held hostage by the University's main campus on which it depends for qualified teaching personnel in the various areas for which there is a demand. On the other hand, it is virtually impossible for the Centre to cultivate its own expertise given that the demand for full time courses in specific areas is not large and steady enough to necessitate full time employment, except for those one or two areas in which the Centre can develop domains of excellence not to be found on the main campus.

The University has also been active in the preparation of adult educators. The University's Faculty of Education, for many years a faculty of schooling, has not yet set up a department of adult continuing education, but there have been important developments in the area over the years. The Faculty has an Adult Education programme. From the late nineties until 2002, there was an optional Adult Education component in the BEd (Hons) course. This was based on the consideration that, in micro states like Malta, several adult educators will work part-time:

"The critical mass constraints of a micro-island state like Malta often mean that the country can rarely possess all the specialisms it feels it ought to have, particularly in areas for which demand is limited. And even were such expertise locally available, the small scale condition makes its practising difficult. For many specialist occupations, demand is not large enough to warrant the employment of even one person."

(Baldacchino and Mayo, 1997: XXVI; 1996a: 30)

Engineers Development", "Accounting, Finance and Economics" and "Marine Biology" (pp. 12–13). Source: *Malta University Services Ltd Company Profile*, MUS Ltd., University Campus, University of Malta, Msida MSD 06, Malta. See also *Training and Education. Setting the Agenda for Change. Programme 2001–2002* (brochure), Training & Education Division, Malta University Services Ltd.

90 Taped interview with the Director of the University of Malta's Gozo Centre, Professor Lino Briguglio.

91 Ibid.

It is for this reason that versatility and flexible specialisation (Bennell and Oxenham, 1983; Brock, 1988) become important features of the work of educators in small states. The problem here is that people who are trained only as schoolteachers and who have not been sensitised to the special demands of adult education can replicate with adults the methods used with school children. Extensive research is needed to examine the validity of this concern, although some preliminary research by Enriquez (1996), with respect to the women's access programme, suggests that it is not unfounded. In a context characterised by the presence of multifunctional educators, it would be better to form prospective educators in such a way that they can perform their different tasks, with different types of learners, well. This is why the pre-service BEd (Hons) programme had specialisation clusters in adult education. It was an attempt to prepare prospective educators to wear different hats properly.

The Faculty has also provided courses leading to diplomas in different aspects of adult education. Apart from the course in Adult Training and Development, the Faculty has provided a two-year evening diploma course in Adult Education for people wanting to work in such fields as workers' education, adult basic education, community education and women's studies. Both diploma courses had a practical component in which the participants worked in teams of three, conceiving, designing and implementing projects in such areas as *"Education for Road Safety"* (carried out in various localities), *"Drug Prevention"* (a community education project), *"Women's education"* (held in a house for victims of Domestic Violence), *"Workplace learning"* (among employees in a holiday complex), *"Customer care"* (among employees of a state run hospital) and *"Cooperative Learning"* (among people intending to set up cooperatives). It was felt that, through these projects, the diploma participants made a direct contribution to the community.

The Faculty has also sought to strengthen research in the area of adult education. Apart from the publication of studies in different aspects of the field by members of staff, including academics working in such related areas as Sociology of Education, Philosophy of Education, Labour Studies and Curriculum Development, there have been a number of dissertations on different aspects of adult education carried out by participants in the Faculty's BEd (Hons) and MEd programmes. The amount of graduate research in the field has been stepped up, as the Faculty has been organising an MEd degree programme with a focus on Adult Continuing Education.

The Church and Catholic Inspired Adult Education

In the previous chapter, I gave ample space to the role of the Church and its larger network in the context of the history of adult education in Malta. Many of the organisations mentioned in the section are very active today. Other institutions connected with the church and its larger network, or initiated by clerics, have made their mark in the last twenty years or so.

One can mention the Catechesis Secretariat, based at the Catholic Institute, Floriana,

whose work dates back to the mid-60s. The Secretariat organises adult catechesis education groups in various parishes throughout Malta. It gives importance to the teaching of adults. A seminar on adult education, to help prepare those involved in running the various adult catechesis groups, was held on 17 March, 2007. In its recent work, the Secretariat is drawing on experiences from the Brazilian Christian Base Communities (CEBs). One notices the involvement of priests who have lived and worked in Brazil and gained direct experience in this area. The Secretariat has published, in Maltese translation (*Konferenza Nazzjonali tá L-Isqfijiet tal-Brazil*, 2006), the document *Com Adultos, Catequese Adulta*. This document emerged from the Brazilian Bishops' Conference (CNBB) and was originally published in Portuguese in 2001.⁹²

Mention of Brazil brings to mind the Prophetic Church. There are priests and nuns, as well as lay religious, who espouse the notion of the "prophetic church", some of whom have had pastoral experience in Latin America, Africa or some of the industrially underdeveloped regions of the neighbouring Italian Mezzogiorno. There are those who draw their inspiration from Paulo Freire and Don Lorenzo Milani, the latter being a cleric from Tuscany who adopted a radical approach to pedagogy with his students at *San Donato di Calenzano* (adults and youths) and later at Barbiana (school "drop outs"). We had occasion to witness this during the Freire Commemorative Evening that was held in our country in October 1997, a few months after Freire's demise.

The Rev. Angelo Seychell, a prominent socially-committed activist in Malta, was certainly among the first Maltese clerics to be acquainted with Freire's writings,⁹³ having read translations of Freire's work in English and Italian. He was influenced by both Freire and Milani. Both Milani and Freire⁹⁴ emphasised the strong relationship between education and politics. Fr Seychell has for years been adopting Freirean pedagogical approaches in his literacy work and in his work with married couples in the predominantly working class locality of Zejtun.⁹⁵

An institute in honour of Paulo Freire has been set up, also in Zejtun, by members of the Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice. This institute (The Paulo Freire Institute) is engaged in community action, including adult literacy education and the organisation of parents groups to place demands on the public school.⁹⁶ This organisation, which started functioning in 2000 and is directed by Fr Edgar Busuttil, is heavily involved in adult literacy work, parental involvement in education, social work in the community, non-formal edu-

92 Information obtained from the Rev. Joseph Pace and Fr. Gigi Sapiano, OP, from the Catechesis Secretariat, Malta.

93 I am indebted to a friend, Caesar Attard, for this information.

94 See the following dissertations connecting Freire to Maltese education including adult education: Zarb (1993), Bondin (1998) and Cachia (2000).

95 Personal communication between author and the Rev. Angelo Seychell, 2005.

96 Taped interview with the Paulo Freire Institute's Director, Fr Edgar Busuttil, SJ.

cation for children and literacy work with the unemployed. The Institute relies on the work of volunteers. Seminars and workshops on the ideas of Paulo Freire are often organised as part of the preparatory work for those engaged as educators and organisers in the Institute's projects. Some university students earn their extra curricular credit by carrying out work at the Institute, while students following the diploma course in adult education often carry out their practicum at the Centre, which also draws on the community work of students attending a Jesuit-run sixth form.⁹⁷

This is not the only organisation that claims to be inspired by Freire's work. For Freire appeals to a variety of adult educators – Christian, socialist, left leaning, progressive and some who are often accused of “co-opting” Freire.⁹⁸ Is this the result of the “eclecticism” of which Frank Youngman (1986) once accused Freire? It remains to be seen however to what extent the programmes and projects such organisations and adult educators have been developing foster a critical reading of the world. I am referring to that sense of “reading the word and the world” that Freire advocated and which the Director of the Paulo Freire Institute reaffirms as one of the aims of the institute he directs.⁹⁹ There is therefore an urgent need for research projects focusing on this aspect of educational provision in Malta. To what extent is the brand of pedagogical politics involved genuinely Freirean? Is, for instance, carrying out literacy activities for employment (literacy for jobs), on behalf of the ETC, genuinely Freirean? To what extent does such a programme have the critical literacy dimension that is the distinctive characteristic of the Freirean approach? The exploration of such research questions would hopefully enable the organisations themselves to take a critical look at their own work to avoid the danger of distorting Freire. In order to avoid such dangers, the educators and organisers involved must engage in a deep and thorough reading of Freire's own work to grasp its overarching philosophy. This can, in turn, stimulate creative reinventions of Freire's work that take into account the contextual specificities of the Maltese archipelago.

The Jesuit community in Malta is also greatly involved in solidarity activities with refugees, mainly through the Jesuit Refugee Service that has recently been the target of scathing criticism and violence (mainly including arson) by right wing individuals opposed to immigration. Also worthy of note is the *Daritama* (House of Hope), situated in the harbour city of Bormla in the Cottonera area, which engages in a number of projects, including the operation of a community radio service, and work among marginalized groups in Maltese society, notably current and former prison inmates. Equally active is

97 The Paulo Freire Institute at Zejtun, which is closely connected to the Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice, has the following website: <http://www.jesuit.org.mt/justice/freire.html>

98 This is particularly true of adult education agencies. A compendium of writings on adult education in Malta (Baldacchino and Mayo, 1997) highlights the influence of Freire in the conceptualisation of different facets of this amorphous field. Paulo Freire is the most prominent international figure referred to in this volume. There are 23 separate entries on Freire listed in the book's index.

99 Taped interview with the Paulo Freire Institute's Director, Fr Edgar Busuttil, SJ.

the Third World Group of Catholic inspiration which engages in such areas as “justice in trade” among other activities. Many of these activities have a strong deliberately educational component in the form of seminars, workshops, discussion groups and awareness raising activities. We can also point to at least one important non-governmental organisation, the John XXIII Peace Laboratory, founded by a Franciscan friar, which promotes the idea of a Church whose option is in favour of the poor and disenfranchised. This organisation, which promotes peace and is active in adult education, including education for peace (see Laboratorju tal-Paci, undated), and in work with immigrants, has a weekly radio programme dealing extensively with the issues of poverty and dependency in the so-called “Third World”, in which such figures as Fernando Cardenal, Dom Helder Camara and Freire himself have been given prominence.

These voices, however, are very much in the minority, although they lead us to view the Church, and any other institution within civil society (once again used in the Gramscian sense), as a potential site of struggle. Freire’s writings on the “Prophetic Church” (Freire, 1985) also lead us in this direction (see Borg and Mayo, 2006).



Building House from the Paolo Freire Institute in Zejlun
Source: Peter Mayo

Teaching of English as a Foreign Language to Adults

The kind of adult education provided by the above institutions is mainly socially oriented. Nevertheless the country has its fair share of commercially oriented adult education, as indicated earlier on, especially in the introductory part of this volume. One of the growth areas as far as commercially oriented adult education goes is that of teaching English as a Foreign language:

“The teaching of English as a foreign language to young and middle aged adults (TEFLA), has gained ground both as an economic sector and as an area of educational specialisation. This is still carried out mainly during the summer months when our island’s natural assets draw foreign students and adults to TEFL and TEFLA schools. TEFL teaching is also becoming more regulated but it is doubtful whether specific TEFL for adults is being provided.” (Caruana, 2004)

Many of the schools involved in this enterprise have been organised within a federation (Federation of English Language Teaching Organisation, Malta – FELTOM). Others continue to emerge, with a number operating outside the Federation. The success of this enterprise can be measured from the following statement on FELTOM's website:

*"In 2005, it attracted nearly 62,000 foreign students or 9.4% of the total tourist arrivals from non-English speaking countries. This amounts to 5.3% of all tourist arrivals in Malta!! The average length of stay of these TEFL students totaled 17 nights when compared to the national tourist average of 8 nights. The growth rate of English Language student arrivals over the last 4 years averages an impressive 2,500 annually, which is highly significant when compared to mainstream tourism growth rates over the same period. There was a healthy increase of 6,029 students in 2005 over the previous year. The estimated foreign earnings for Malta stand around E 82 million representing some 6% of the estimated foreign earnings from tourism. FELTOM member schools represent the 17 leading and well-established schools that together receive almost 70% of all student arrivals. Most of the other active schools opened over the recent years and cater for the remaining student arrivals."*¹⁰⁰

Furthermore Domas (2004)¹⁰¹ stated in 2003:

"The largest group of these students, about 15,000 in number, arrive yearly from Germany. Hence Malta has overtaken the UK as the most favoured destination for studying English as a foreign language, at least as far as German students are concerned."

The growth of this veritable industry over the years has led to efforts being made in the preparation, by the more serious institutions, of the adult educators involved. The degree of preparation of the educators involved serves to separate the wheat from the chaff as far as the language schools are concerned (Borg and Marsh, 1997). The issue of the preparation of adult educators, to provide a quality service in the area in which they are called upon to teach, remains a recurring one in Maltese adult education and applies to most of the areas covered in contemporary adult education practice in Malta.

The contemporary adult education scene comes across as being rich and diverse. Once again, this is a very broad field. In the last section, I shall take critical stock of this scene and suggest some options for future action and policy.

100 http://www.feltom.com/_mgxroot/page_10760.html · Accessed 2 January, 2007.

101 2003 "Lifelong Learning in the Mediterranean", conference address by Mr Helmut Domas, Deputy Head of Mission at the German Embassy, Malta.

Final Analysis

... of the Current Situation Regarding Adult Education in Malta

While there have been interesting developments in adult education through the emergence of new NGOs working in the field, the increase in programmes provided by the Department of Further Studies and Adult Education (Education Division, Ministry of Education) and the Foundation for Educational Services, besides the impact of the EU's funding policies and structures, adult education still remains the "Cinderella" sector of the Maltese education system. The National Minimum Curriculum (NMC) document placed adult education on the agenda, with an emphasis on schools as community learning centres, a process that stalled presumably because of the country's financial difficulties. We recently had lifelong learning community centres funded through the ESF, which places emphasis on "employability" and therefore restricts the range of adult education provision. This programme was brought to a halt in 2006, presumably because of failure to get the ESF funding agreement extended or renewed. This is one of the problems of being totally ESF-dependent.

The "EU Memorandum on Lifelong Learning" and other EU recommendations in this field have led the Government to appoint a team of people to develop a draft document outlining a National Strategy for Lifelong Learning – an all-embracing strategy for education which would surely allow ample space for the development of adult education. This draft document was completed a couple of years ago; a presentation of the contents was made to the Faculty of Education at its 2004 Faculty seminar. This document was meant to be placed in the public domain to generate a public debate, as was the case with the draft NMC document in 1998. To date, the draft strategy has not been circulated. I wonder why. Has the country's financial situation anything to do with this? Did the draft document stray significantly from the "economism" of the Lisbon objectives? Alas, there have been lots



Building House from the Paolo Freire Institute in Zejlun
Source: Peter Mayo

of promises and noise about promoting adult education within the context of lifelong learning, but a lot of difficulties stand in the way. This is typical of adult education in many parts of the world, where the rhetoric surrounding the need to promote the area is rarely matched by adequately funded action in this regard.

Thanks to the EU's Grundtvig action within Socrates and the Leonardo programme, lots of people are being attracted to the field.¹⁰² This can be regarded as a positive development; more and more people see themselves as adult educators or adult education organisers. The flip side, though, is that the promise of EU funds is luring to the field people who lack an adequate preparation in the area.¹⁰³ There is the danger, therefore, that unless they are particularly creative, these people will not add anything new to the theory and practice of adult education in Malta and Gozo and, worse, as far as the EU projects are concerned, some of them will probably fail to deliver.

... of Options for the Future

I welcome the idea of developing a national strategy for lifelong education, a strategy that gives due importance to adult education (a key component of lifelong education). Once again, however, the document in question should have been placed for discussion in the public domain. We should also explore the means of implementing the recommendation, in the National Minimum Curriculum (NMC) document, concerning the development of schools as community learning centres (SCLCs). The Focus Group working on this aspect of the NMC document developed a detailed action plan for the implementation of this concept. There are many other initiatives that can be developed. I will suggest just a few of them. In the first place, local councils should play a prominent part in the development of SCLCs and in the fostering of a community education culture. I wonder whether the budget for local councils ought to be increased with a substantial amount reserved for educational programmes and allocated and spent solely for that purpose. The Malta Labour Party is promising such a development in its discussion document on education, produced last year, although it is not clear how it will ensure that the extra funding will

102 There are certain bureaucratic procedures concerning auditing that could stifle NGOs in any attempt to propose and coordinate centralized projects. NGOs with an exiguous staff, and voluntary staff at that, do not have the strength to compete with larger entities abroad. As far as coordinating centralized programmes goes, some NGOs even fear having to manage large sums of money and distribute it among the partners since they do not have the administrative capacity to do so. Also the issue of financial guarantees scares off NGOs from engaging in the coordination of such projects. Taped interview with EUPU officials at EUPU premises in Valletta in July 2006.

103 Only 17 Grundtvig 2 proposals were accepted out of 45 applications. The EUPU office also maintains that the quality has improved markedly with respect to the situation of four years ago. Some of the applicants still conceive of adult education within the context of formal institutions rather than non-formal ones. In Leonardo mobility projects, employers often express surprise at there being no formal courses, only alternative learning experiences, for their employees. Taped interview with EUPU officials at EUPU premises in Valletta in July 2006.

be allotted solely and exclusively for educational purposes.¹⁰⁴ The programmes could be developed in connection with the SCLC in the specific locality. Projects would include the development of a viable and attractive community library, on the lines of the one opened at Fgura, and an IT centre (both could be part of the service provided by SCLC), the latter intended to serve as a means to bridge the “digital divide.”

The other development I would like to see taking place is in the area of educating older adults. We need to ensure that a cadre of trained people is provided in the area of Educating Older Adults so that these people can be employed at old people’s homes to ensure that these homes, which are mushrooming in view of the requirements of an ageing population, become hives of activity that can have a salutary effect on the lives of their residents. The residents would thus be viewed as active and not passive beings. Government homes (e. g. St Vincent De Paul) can serve as initial models in this regard.

The other key issue is that of immigration. Adult education has an important role to play here. How about the idea of transforming the present detention or open centres into Immigrant Lifelong Learning Centres, with due focus on education for resettlement, given the situation concerning immigration in micro-nation states like Malta? In this respect, Malta’s representatives in various fora, including the European Parliament, should continue to lobby for help, in this regard, among other European countries. Included among these European countries are those that have a moral obligation towards the people of Africa in view of their past colonial policies that have no doubt contributed to the current state of impoverishment and underdevelopment in the African continent. Walter Rodney’s classic text, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Rodney, 1973) is worth revisiting in this context. The potential receiving country should help in the financing and provision of resources for programmes at the centres that will equip migrants with the linguistic and other skills necessary for them to relocate. The programmes should target both those who need to relocate and those who intend to stay in Malta. Intensive short in-service programmes in intercultural education should be provided for those sectors of Maltese society directly dealing with immigrants, including members of the police force, the army, the entertainment industry, the teaching profession, the broadcasting media and the judicial sector. “*Inter-cultural competence in a culturally diverse Maltese society*” is identified by Ranier Fsadni, AZAD’s Chairperson, as one of the main challenges facing Maltese adult education in the forthcoming years.¹⁰⁵ As a matter of fact, I would like to see such an educational programme, comprising a strong anti-racist education component, become a feature of all sectors of the education system, from initial to university education, and include continuous professional development courses in various fields, given the appalling racism

104 “Pjan tá Politika għall-Qasam Edukattiv f’Malta u Ghawdex,” Malta Labour Party, July 2006 http://www.mlp.org.mt/rizorsi/dokumenti/downloads/EDUKAZZIONIFORPRINT_1.pdf. Accessed 4 January 2007, p. 49.

105 Electronic interview with the Chairperson of AZAD, Mr. Ranier Fsadni, August 2006.

and xenophobia that have been witnessed throughout the country for quite some time. It is heartening to note that the Reggie Miller Foundation Director claims that his institution is taking issue of immigration and racism seriously and that they feature in the Foundation's adult learning projects, including projects in collaboration with the Red Cross.¹⁰⁶

On another note, museums are increasingly being considered, throughout Europe and other parts of the world, to be important lifelong education centres. Malta has its share of museums. As Carmel Borg and I wrote (Borg and Mayo, 2002):

"Despite these developments, Museum Education is an area which remains considerably underdeveloped within the context of adult education in Malta. It is one of the areas which is not dealt with in the above-mentioned compendium [Beyond Schooling] (Baldacchino and Mayo, 1997) and it does not feature in the Draft New National Curriculum document, even though both publications emphasise the importance of "alternative sites of educational practice", reminding us of "the multiplicity of settings in which learning takes place" (Giroux, 1997, p. 246). There seems, to date, to be very little effort channeled into the formation of personnel specialising in Museum pedagogy."

(Borg and Mayo, 2000a: 78; 2000b: 103)

And yet Malta has its fair share of museums and an abundance of historical sites to warrant such an investment, to make these places sites of cultural contestation (see Borg, Cauchi and Mayo, 2003) and guided learning.

"And yet there are sufficient museums on the two main islands in the Maltese archipelago to warrant a considerable investment in this area. Smack in the centre of the Mediterranean, Malta was contested, throughout the centuries, by various powers vying for supremacy in the region and elsewhere. They sought to avail themselves of the archipelago's strategic location. Malta boasts a concentration of important historic relics attesting to the impact of different cultures on the islands. The language spoken by the inhabitants (a Semitic language with a Romance script) and the place-names testify to the two hundred years of Arab rule. The two main islands, Malta and Gozo, also contain one of the greatest concentrations of megalithic remnants, over a given area of land, to be found anywhere in the world. Despite its historic links with the Phoenician, Arab and Punic worlds, ... [Malta is a country whose]... most affirmed cultural connections have been predominantly Western European. They are often connections with strong Roman Catholic overtones. This is reflected in much of the country's "artistic heritage" (that which is extant) that testifies to an unmistakably Eurocentric colonial legacy. The aforementioned historical scenario (greatly simplified, given the space limitations) naturally provides the backdrop to one's appreciation of the various

106 Taped interview with Mr. Michael Parnis, Reggie Miller Foundation Director, carried out 11 July 2006.

museums scattered throughout Malta and Gozo. These include around eighteen state-run museums and archaeological sites open to the public,¹⁰⁷ a number of church museums (including three Cathedral museums,¹⁰⁸ eight parish museums¹⁰⁹ and, as indicated by Azzopardi (1995, pp. 135, 136), a small number of museums run by religious orders) and private museums.¹¹⁰

(Borg and Mayo, 2000 a: 78, 79; 2000 b: 104)

It would be important for Heritage Malta and the University to develop a postgraduate diploma course in museum education to prepare a cadre of people who can serve as museum educators. The course could initially be offered as an in-service programme for people already employed with local museums. They would receive preparation in pedagogical approaches to deal with children and adults in the context of lifelong education and learning. There is sufficient international expertise into which the country can tap (including Maltese expatriate expertise) to develop this course on professional lines. Local councils could be encouraged to develop community museums that would enhance the process of education within the community. These should be collective endeavours involving different members of the community who would thus experience a sense of ownership of the museum.

I would like to see greater importance being attached to the preparation of adult educators. Pedagogy has all too often been taken for granted as far as adult education is concerned. Some people are very creative and develop innovative pedagogical approaches. Others simply replicate with adults approaches normally used with school children. I would also like to see greater recognition of learning occurring through non-formal means and I think the country needs to invest more in the development of expertise

107 I am including here places of historic interest which are run on the lines of a conventional museum, such as the newly refurbished Hypogeum, the Tarxien and Ggantija Neolithic temples and the Windmill Museum (an ethnographic museum) in Xaghra, Gozo. Information provided by the National Tourism Office, Malta.

108 The Cathedral museums are: the Cathedral Museum at the former capital city of Mdina; the Cathedral Museum in Victoria, Gozo, located in the Citadel, which also boasts four state-run museums; and St. John's Co-Cathedral Museum in the 16th century capital city of Valletta.

109 The best-known parish museum is the one connected to the late-baroque Sanctuary at Zabbar. This is one of very few museums in Malta and Gozo where the building was erected with the specific purpose of serving as a museum. The Museum, erected on the initiative of the Rev. Joseph Zarb (1927–1985), was opened on the 5 September, 1954. (cf. Bonavia, 1994). There are eight parish museums in Malta, including the Museum of St Paul's Collegiate Church, Rabat (Wignacourt College), the Vittoriosa Collegiate Museum and the Attard Parish Museum (Azzopardi, 1995, p. 133).

110 They include museums that are open to visitors by appointment, and museums operating on commercial lines, such as the Gozo Heritage Museum and the Mdina Dungeons, the latter very similar to the Klink Museum in Southwark, London. Also included is the Pomskezillious Museum of Toys in Xaghra, Gozo, which, as its name suggests, features Edward Lear and his "nonsense verse". One of the most recent private museums is the Great Siege Museum in Birgu (Vittoriosa).

in such areas as Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR). We also need to engage with this area critically and to ensure that what is valued through this exercise is not simply competence-based learning but an array of other and broader types of learning.

... of the Relationship Between Adult Education and the Economy

Much of the present discourse regarding adult education, worldwide, centres around the economy. That there should be a link between adult education and the economy is understandable. This is one sector that cannot be ignored and I have earlier discussed the setting up of the Employment & Training Corporation (ETC) and more recently the re-establishment of the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST). I have shown that both institutions attach importance to adult education and training. We also need a lifelong learning guidance and counselling service in this area that would be accessible to different people at different places, as Sultana (2003) argues. The current postgraduate diploma course in this area, a joint venture between the University's Faculty of Education and its Centre for Labour Studies, is most welcome.

Furthermore, under the impact of globalisation, it is difficult for micro-states like Malta to attract outsourcing of manufacturing jobs that are labour-intensive and so efforts must be channelled in preparing adults through adult education programmes, in the direction of those "quality" jobs that are knowledge-based.

It is worrying to see the dominant, all-pervasive discourse regarding adult education worldwide centring on the economy. This discourse is often neo-liberal in nature and seems to project the notion of the learner and citizen as "producer" and "consumer." It neglects a larger though repressed tradition of adult education that emphasises the role of the citizen as social actor, and the role of adult learning as a vital activity within social movements, including labour movements. This is why, in the University programme, the diploma course in Adult Training and Development, which allows ample room for critical perspectives on the relationship between education and work, is complemented by the more community-oriented diploma course in Adult Education. There is more to adult learning than simply learning for "employability", which does not necessarily mean employment.

Furthermore, an increase in investment in adult education or all education for that matter, with economic returns in mind, without a corresponding reciprocal investment in the economic sector, perpetuates, and probably exacerbates, the situation of "education for export" that has been a characteristic of colonial and neo-colonial policies to date.

... of the Relationship Between Adult Education and the Trade Union Sector

Trade unions have an important role to play in the development of adult education in this country and it is heartening to see that education constitutes an important element in their thinking, especially of the larger unions. This does not mean that the trade unions, espe-

cially the more general ones, should confine their interest in education to adult education or simply workers' education. They have a role to play in advocating measures for and participating in changes occurring in the Maltese schooling sector. In fact, with the exception of MUT, which has a direct professional interest in the areas, union participation in discussions concerning policy making in these areas has been negligible over the years. However the main focus of this volume is adult education, and the unions should be in the forefront of any national policy making process with regard to adult education and lifelong learning more generally. They have a stake in such broader opportunities of learning that can affect present and potential members. Unions should also strive hard to ensure that paid educational leave is actually realised and does not remain a principle which is accepted on paper but overlooked in reality. The unions should also use their bargaining and negotiating skills with employers to ensure that the programmes of education and training provided to workers are broad enough to extend beyond instrumental, narrow skills transmission and contribute to the development of the entire personality.

Unions should attach importance to lifelong learning guidance and counselling to ensure that this is available to everyone at every stage of his or her life (see Sultana, 2003). It is important that Unions collaborate with other organisations to facilitate the provision of such a service. It is also important that the major trade unions develop their workers' educational facilities to ensure the provision of courses in labour studies, an area which has been identified with the trade union movement, and in "tool" as well as broader "issue" courses. Having said this, the area of labour studies needs to be revitalised and broadened, as is the case in trade union education in certain countries, to incorporate such areas as: gender studies, ethnicity, cultural studies (an area that, in Britain, owes its origins to the adult education field), industrial relations, environmental issues, political economy and sociology.

Needless to say, the approach should also be one that reflects an alternative attitude to learning and the investigation of knowledge and issues. As far as possible, dialogue, participatory activities, action research, workshops and group learning that emphasise the collective dimension of learning and knowing should be encouraged. The participants' everyday experience should constitute the basis of their learning, although one has to gradually move beyond that to gain a coherent sense of the larger picture. One of the major challenges is to sensitize organisers and educators in trade union education to innovative ways of teaching and learning that critically engage the learners' experience. Furthermore, there is an even greater challenge to engage in outreach activities rather than to rely solely on teaching and learning taking place in centralised locations.

... of Adult Education and "Civil Society"

As someone who has spent the last twenty years or so committed to a Freire-inspired critical approach to education (Mayo, 2004), I am attracted to the type of adult learning that occurs within the context of progressive social movements. Unfortunately, in the Mal-

tese and Gozitan contexts, there is not much of a “civil society” tradition to speak of, and I am now using “civil society” in the way it is conventionally being used these days, recognising that the term has had different uses from the time of the “Scottish Enlightenment” onward. We do not have a strong progressive social movement culture, the kind of culture that promotes the idea of adult education for social transformation, an ongoing process that entails a constant engagement in the struggle for social justice and for challenging the status quo. On the contrary, we have recently witnessed the birth of an organisation that can at best be termed reactionary and, judging from the sounds of its spokespersons, espouses very conservative views with regard to immigration, “national identity” etc. Luckily, there are resources of hope. Environmental lobby groups, organisations concerned with “justice in trade” and such residents’ groups as the one safeguarding rural community interests in Manikata (see Cardona, 2006), show us the way forward in this regard. It is these groups that provide fertile ground for the kind of citizenship education to which I am referring. Internationally, the best traditions of a critical education for a genuinely active citizenship have emerged in those social and political movements which have struggled to promote and realise the idea of a society not as it is now but as it should and can be. Their efforts in promoting adult education are motivated by a concern for social justice, ecological sensitivity (Enriquez, 1999) and the strengthening of democracy. This is based on valuing social difference and biodiversity. Their efforts also involve an engagement in the struggle to recuperate public spaces – these public spaces have been shrinking over the years. They have often been the target of corporate encroachment and have often been commodified.

As I stated earlier, my fear is that much of the dominant international discourse concerning adult education nowadays is very vocationally and market-oriented. The tenor is utilitarian and functional-rational. Even the 2005 document for the setting up of a Commission for Higher Education¹¹¹ – adult continuing education is an important component of Higher Education – reproduces this kind of discourse. One notices the use of such very problematic and outdated terms as “human capital” (!!). In my view, this document suggests little in the way of enhancing the role of higher education institutions in strengthening the public sphere, not least through their promotion of adult and community-oriented education programmes.

Nowadays, the term adult “learning” is preferred to adult “education”, with the term “learning” placing the emphasis less on the provision of structures and more on the individual’s responsibility for her or his own learning. This discourse allows the state to abdicate its responsibilities in this regard and can allow underachievement to be explained away in “blaming the victim” terms. This is in keeping with a neo-liberal discourse that

111 The Future of Higher Education in Malta, National Commission for Higher Education and Secretariat for Higher Education, 26 October 2005 http://www.education.gov.mt/ministry/doc/pdf/national%20commission_for_higher_education.pdf · Accessed 4 January 2007.

places the emphasis on individual rather than on collective and social responsibility. It is an insidious discourse that minimises the role of the State and leaves everything to the market. Policy documents promoting these fashionable ideas should be the subject of constant critical scrutiny by discerning educators. Too much of the discourse contained in international policy documents is often taken on board uncritically in Malta and Gozo.

... of Adult Education and the University¹¹²

The first point to be made in this context concerns the much discussed “*stipends system*” which was introduced by the Nationalist Government in 1987 to replace the former wage linked to the “*Worker-Student*” scheme. This system of funding clearly discriminates against students on the basis of age since those enrolled in full-time courses, over the age of 30, are excluded from the funding. This measure also fails to take into consideration the needs of people at different ages to continue their studies.¹¹³ The measure often adversely affects persons, usually women, who interrupt their studies because of family concerns, particularly caring for children in their early years. They often wish to return at a later age (often in their 30s) to take up further studies, including those that will enable them to re-join the labour market (e.g. the Post-Graduate Certificate in Education course which allows them to take up teaching). Needless to say, single parents are the hardest hit in these circumstances. This situation alone provides a strong case for the introduction of means testing with regard to student funding.

Apart from funding, the issue of alternative entry qualifications also needs to be considered. The introduction of the “*maturity clause*” is commendable. The country, probably through an independent body, must, however, develop effective procedures for the proper evaluation of alternative qualifications (including alternative learning experiences). This would enable potential participants who do not possess the formal entry qualifications to gain proper recognition for what they have learnt through alternative routes. This recognition should provide them with access to University courses, including evening courses. Once again, the country requires expertise in the much-debated area of the Accreditation of Prior Learning.

With regard to honours degree courses, the traditional reluctance to make these degrees accessible to those who cannot afford to undertake full-time studies smacks of elitism. The University of London has, for years, been making its courses available to adult students either on a part-time/evening basis or through its external service. A good many Maltese (studying in Malta) have benefited from this latter opportunity, including some who are now established professors at the University of Malta. There seems to be no le-

112 This section has been reproduced from Mayo (2003). Permission granted by Publications Committee, Faculty of Education and NIAACE.

113 For thorough discussions on the issue of mature women’s access to higher education see Agius (2002), Attard, Panzavecchia and Zahra (2005) and, with respect to evening courses, Friggieri (2005).

gitimate academic reason why degree courses at the honours degree level should not be made available to Maltese adult students as evening UCE courses. Happily, a BA Honours evening degree course in Youth Studies has been introduced. One hopes that this is the first of many programmes offered in the evening at Honours degree level to adults who cannot afford full time studies. There is currently also a very restricted choice of evening first degree programmes available to adults in full time employment on the main island (Youth Studies and Religious Studies are the areas which feature regularly).

As is the case with most adult education provision throughout Malta and Gozo, there is a constant need to take the issue of pedagogical approaches to adult learning seriously. Pedagogy in general is often taken for granted at the University. This situation, of course, is not unique to the University of Malta; it applies to many universities worldwide. The Quality Assurance Committee¹¹⁴ of the University of Malta has provided courses in a variety of areas, intended to help academic and other staff improve the quality of their teaching and research. Attendance is on a voluntary basis. Some members of the academic staff have to make the shift from teaching mainly young people (although there are now an increasing number of adult students) in the full-time daytime courses, to teaching widely experienced adults in the evenings and at weekends. It is important, therefore, that the concerns of adult course participants, calling for different pedagogical approaches, should be included in the programme of continuing professional development devised for university teaching staff by the Quality Assurance Committee.

With regard to the provision of the appropriate organizational structures for the provision of UCE, one approach which is often mentioned is that of investing in and developing the area of distance learning. We have seen how the Centre for Distance Learning never really took off and was eventually dismantled. Distance learning, however, continues to be mentioned as an area worth developing at the University. For example, the University's Draft Strategic Development Plan 2002–2006, states that there will be *"fresh attempts to develop Distance Education through radio, T.V. and E-Education coupled with on-campus learning for local and foreign students"* (University of Malta, 2002: 14). The University can avail itself of this medium to complement its existing UCE provision for those who cannot come to the main university campus on a full-time basis. The small-scale feature of the islands forming the Maltese archipelago makes it possible for the University to combine distance education with face-to-face teaching either at the main campus or at the Gozo centre. The setting up of a University radio station, Campus FM, has been an important development since it can play a key role as far as distance education courses

114 Quality assurance for post-compulsory education, including adult education, is about to be introduced via the Commission for Higher Education and the Malta Qualifications Council, which have the responsibility to provide accreditation of post-compulsory institutions, the more so now that MCAST is part of the higher education scene. Taped interview with Mr Anthony Degiovanni, Director, Department of Further Studies and Adult Education, at his office in Floriana on 7 July 2006.

intended for Maltese and Gozitan participants are concerned. It is imperative, however, that the University invests sufficiently to provide the required nucleus of staff equipped with the skills needed to provide effective distance learning. This includes being able to write and prepare effective distance learning packages, including websites and other material.

With regard to adult education in its broader context, this already exists as one of the official programmes within the University's Faculty of Education. Various courses in the area, at diploma and Master's levels, and at the level of unit options in the BEd (Hons) course, are provided. A considerable research profile is also being developed in Adult Continuing Education through staff publications and student dissertations. There is, however, room for expansion to the level of a department in the area. Such a department would cater for the provision of formal qualifications in the field. There is also the need for a University extension wing that would add substantially to the institution's UCE provision.

The proposed wing could also stimulate and coordinate the initiatives of individuals in the field of university outreach. These initiatives would be in keeping with the role of academic staff as public intellectuals who make the University resources, funded for the most part out of public taxes, available and accessible to those who would never dream of attending University. The University requires a coherent and coordinated policy in this regard. It should be a comprehensive policy that recognises the work of academic staff engaged in such initiatives as a valuable feature of University work within a democracy.



Graduate students in Adult Education, Faculty of Education, University of Malta

Source: Peter Mayo

This should be a policy that provides the University with an ongoing steady programme of university outreach, possibly involving partnerships between University staff and other educators and community activists. Priority should be given to those localities that have traditionally and consistently been severely under-represented at the University of Malta (Baldacchino, 1999: 210). There are a number of interesting international developments in “*engaging the academy*” in areas of popular education and community development. The University would do well to take notice of these.¹¹⁵ Projects such as these would enable the University to engage with other partners in helping to revitalize the public sphere in an age in which public spaces are shrinking considerably, internationally, through increasing privatisation and commodification (Giroux 2001). Alas, this age has seen the ascendancy of neo-liberalism, resulting in the market-place ideology and technical rationality taking precedence over attempts to provide the tools for active citizenship in a participatory democracy. In a genuinely participatory democracy, people would be regarded as social actors rather than simply as consumers/producers (Martin, 2001).

115 These include the Popular Education Network coordinated by scholars at the University of Edinburgh and the New Approaches to Lifelong Learning Project coordinated by scholars at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/University of Toronto (website: www.nall.ca). See the following website for various discussions on the theme: “*Popular education and the university: Encounters, missed encounters and oblivion*” [online] available at http://fcis.oise.utoronto.ca/~daniel_schugurensky/open/discussion.html

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Journals

The **Mediterranean Journal of Educational Studies** is a scholarly international refereed journal. It carries articles on all aspects of education, including adult education, related to the Mediterranean and the diaspora of Mediterranean people. Correspondence directed to: Prof. Ronald G. Sultana, Editor-in-Chief, MJES, Euro-Mediterranean Centre for Educational Research (EMCER), University of Malta, Msida, MSD 06. Fax (356) 317938 E Mail ronald.sultana@um.edu.mt

The **Journal of Maltese Education Research** is an online scholarly refereed journal. It carries articles on all aspects of education, including adult education. Correspondence directed to: Dr Carmel Borg, Editor, JMERE, Faculty of Education, University of Malta, Msida MSD 06, Malta. E Mail: carmel.borg@um.edu.mt Journal can be accessed at <http://www.educ.um.edu.mt/jmer/>

The Teacher is the magazine of the Malta Union of Teachers. It carries articles on trade union matters and education, including adult education. Correspondence directed to Mr Charles Magro, Editor, *The Teacher*, Malta Union of Teachers, 213, Teachers Institute, Republic Street, Valletta.

Organisations

Adult Education Programme

Rm 225, Faculty of Education,
University of Malta, Msida MSD 06

AZAD

224 Republic Street, Valletta

CARITAS (Malta)

5 Lion Street, Floriana

Centre for Labour Studies

University of Malta
Msida MSD 06

Daritama

Matty Grima Street, Bormla

Department of Further Studies and Adult Education

Education Division,
Ministry of Education, Floriana.

Employment & Training Corporation

Hal-far

Fondazzjoni Mikiel Anton Vassalli

National Labour Centre, Hamrun

Foundation for Educational Services

1st Floor, Sir Temi Zammit, School Complex
Mtarfa

Guzè Ellul Mercer Foundation

PO Box 132, Valletta

John XXIII Peace Laboratory

Hal-Far (Limits of B'Bugia)

Paulo Freire Institute

Dar Guzeppi Delia,
16, Misrah it-13 tà Dicembru, Zejtun

Reggie Miller Foundation

Workers' Memorial Building, South Street,
Valletta

Social Action Movement

15 Old Mint Street, Valletta

Society of Christian Doctrine

"Dar Centrali", Blata l-Bajda.

University of the Third Age (Malta)

31, St. Christopher Street, Valletta

Adult Education Chronology Malta

- **1850** Rev. Paolo Pulicino sets up a *Scuola Serale* at Zabbar.
Two other evening schools opened, one at Floriana and one in Valletta.
Existence of "*Sunday Schools*" as reported by Patrick Joseph Keenan.
Pulicino's successor, Savona, closes Sunday schools, probably on Keenan's advice.
- **1907** *Society of Christian Doctrine* founded by Rev. Gorg Preca.
- **1911** Manwel Dimech founds the *Network of the Enlightened*.
- **1920s** Malta Language Question: struggle between Italian and English for cultural supremacy.
- **1920s** *Scuole Serali* still in existence.
- **1920** Fr Charles D. Plater active in Malta and urges the education of workers from a Catholic perspective based on the Church's social teachings.

- **1929** *Catholic Action* established in Malta.
- **1938** *Migrants Training Centre* at Ghammieri set up as agricultural centre to accustom potential migrants to life on plantations.
- **1943** *General Workers' Union* formed.
- **1946** *Compulsory Education Ordinance*.
- **1948** Census illiteracy at 33%.
Emigration very much a feature of postwar Malta.
Immediate postwar years see the introduction of the first evening courses for full time employees at the University of Malta: public administration, commerce and education.
- **1946** "Basic English" introduced through adult literacy campaign – Paul Bugeja coordinator.
Bugeja learnt Basic English as Interpreter in the British Army and taught it to prisoners of war.
- **1946** Start of organized Maltese Broadcasting.
- **1954** Catholic Church establishes the *Social Studies Commission*, giving rise to the Malta Catholic Social Guild.
- **1955** *Social Action Movement (MAS)* founded by Rev. Fortunato Mizzi.
- **1956** *Cana Movement* founded.
- **1958** *Malta Bible Society* founded.
- **1959** *Confederation of Malta Trade Unions* founded.
- **1960** First BA evening degree course offered to the public by the University of Malta.
The *Catholic Institute* inaugurated. It is a major centre for Catholic oriented adult education.
- **1966** *UHM* founded.
- **1966** Setting up of the *Catechesis Commission*.
- **1967** Diploma course in Sacred Theology accepted in principle by Faculty of Theology Board at University in the wake of Vatican Council II.
- **1971** John XXIII Peace Laboratory established.
- **1976** *AZAD* founded.
- **1978** Higher Education Reforms introduced.
- **1979** Extended Skill Training Scheme.
- **1981** Setting up of the *Workers' Participation Development Centre* (now *Centre for Labour Studies*) at University.
- **1984** Setting up of *GEM Foundation*.
- **1984** *Health Education Unit* set up.
- **1984** International Conference in Malta: Lifelong Education Initiatives in the Mediterranean.
- **1988** Adult Education Unit established in the Education Department, Ministry of Education.
- **1989** *Council of Europe Seminar* cum Study Visit "Adult Education, Work and the Long-term Unemployed" held in Malta.
- **1989** The idea of the *Employment & Training Corporation (ETC)* launched.
- **1990** Adult Literacy campaign launched throughout Malta and Gozo by International Literacy Year Committee (Malta).

- **1990** ETC established.
- **1990** White paper announces pluralism in broadcasting, ending state monopoly.
- **1992** First official appointment in Adult Education in the Education Department (level of Education Assistant).
- **1992** University Gozo centre established – provider of University Continuing Education.
- **1993** First academic appointment in Adult Continuing Education at the University of Malta.
- **1993** Launching of the *University of the Third Age*, Malta (U3E Malta).
- **1993** Launching of first Diploma in Adult Education course at University.
- **1994** Launching of ETC funded first course leading to the Diploma in Adult Training and Development at University.
- **1995** Restructuring of the Ministry of Education with Further Studies and Adult Education becoming one of the new departments in the Ministry's Education Division.
- **1995** International Conference: *Educating the Elderly. A Right or Obligation?* Hosted by U3E (Malta).
- **1995** International Conference on Adult Education in Small States and Islands held in Malta with papers published in a special issue of *Convergence*.
- **1997** First Master's degree course in Adult Education launched at the University of Malta. First major edited compendium of writings on adult education in Malta published. Prison Education Programme launched at Corradino Correctional Facility.
- **1998** *Night Institute for Further Technical Education (NIFTE)* established. *Reggie Miller Foundation* established by the *General Workers' Union*. Draft National Minimum Curriculum document places emphasis on Adult Education when it promotes the idea of developing schools as community learning centres.
- **1999** The section on schools as community learning centres remains intact in the final *National Minimum Curriculum* document.
- **1999** Ministry of Education applies to European Commission for participation in its educational and cultural programmes, including Grundtvig and Leonardo.
- **1999** European Union Programmes Unit established to coordinate the management of five programmes including *Socrates II* and *Leonardo da Vinci II*.
- **2000** Paulo Freire Institute established at Zejtun. Fondazzjoni Mikiel Anton Vassalli set up at National Labour Centre (*Malta Labour Party* headquarters) Hamrun.
- **2001** Establishment of the *Foundation for Educational Services (FES)*. Re-establishment of *Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST)* with a strong adult vocational education component.
- **2003** International Conference: *Lifelong Learning in the Mediterranean (IIZ/DVV)*.
- **2004** Malta joins the EU.