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Godfrey Baldacchino and Peter Mayo

Multifunctionalism, Volunteers and the "School Culture"

Adult Education in the Maltese Context

Introduction

The term "adult education" appears prominently in the discourse on education in the micro island state of Malta. Representatives of the political parties regularly highlight this aspect of the educational system in interviews and documents in the run up to the country's general elections.¹ During this period, the country's largest teachers' union reserves an entire section in its 'manifesto to the political parties' to adult education.² Furthermore, the last decade or so has witnessed a proliferation of agencies claiming to engage in activities which fall under the rubric of adult education. In this context, we shall only deal with organised adult education activities. We shall not touch the myriad informal processes that can lead to adult learning since we confine ourselves in this paper to providing a critical discussion orientated around some of the most visible Maltese adult education agencies.

Education for Export

As with other micro-states where labour is regarded as an exportable commodity,³ emigration has been of central concern in Malta. It constituted an important economic and demographic 'safety valve', especially in the immediate post war periods when thousands of Maltese workers were laid off from naval and military services, who then

1 See the interviews with Alfred Sant (then President of the Malta Party and now Leader of the Opposition) and Ugo Mifsud Bonnici (then Opposition Spokesperson on Education, subsequently Minister of Education and now President of the Republic), in: *The Teacher*, May 1986, pp. 14-17 and October 1986, pp. 10-11.

2 See the MUT Memorandum to Political Parties, in: *The Teacher*, December 1986.

3 See JULES, p. 6; see BALDACCHINO (in press).

comprised the mainstay of productive employment. In the aftermath of World War I, 15.602 people were discharged from such services and that of the mercantile marine; a figure equivalent to some 20% of the genuinely occupied population.⁴ In fact, there has been a strong link between adult education provision and emigration in this country. Illiteracy was considered to be a great stumbling block to profitable jobs in the receiving 'host' destinations. As a consequence, the Emigration Committee in Malta sought to combat illiteracy by opening eighteen adult education classes in Malta and two in Gozo in 1920.⁵ Prospective emigrants to places like Canada had to pass a literacy test. The superintendent of emigration, Henry Casolani, underlined the need to eradicate illiteracy and called for the establishment of an effective school system, including a strong technical sector to prepare people for emigration.⁶ As a result, various migrant training centres were set up with emphasis on forming and industrial skills.⁷ Much of the state sponsored adult education, organised by the Education Department, continued to focus on the requirements of emigration even after the Second World War. Between 1948 and 1955, Maltese governments set a target of 10.000 emigrants per year, this at a time when illiteracy, according to the 1948 national census, stood at 33%.⁸

What were the criteria for judging a person to be illiterate? Did the ability to read and write in the native Maltese language render a person literate or did one also require some knowledge of English?⁹ In a struggle referred to as the "language question", English gradually supplanted Italian, the language of the elite in Maltese administrative circles, and was eventually established as the language that mattered, the key to jobs and to social mobility.

4 See ATTARD (1989), p. 12.

5 See *ibid.*

6 See CASOLANI (1930).

7 Receiving countries like Canada and Australia welcomed Maltese emigrants who were prepared to work on the land rather than dwell in cities. See ATTARD (1989), p. 18; see *ibid.* p. 72 and p. 83; see ATTARD (1983), p. 38 and p. 51.

8 See DELIA (1984), p. 17.

9 It was probably understood that a person who is illiterate is somebody who cannot read and write in Maltese and English.

Anglicisation

The situation regarding adult education and the imperatives connected with emigration served to consolidate the entire process of anglicisation in education. It can be stated that such classes contributed to a process of anglicisation on two fronts. They promoted the teaching of English in Malta. In fact, the historian Lawrence Attard argues that there were people in Malta who, opposed to the teaching of English in Maltese schools, suggested Latin America as an area of settlement for Maltese migrants.¹⁰ Furthermore, these classes provided prospective emigrants with only a smattering of the English language. This must have kept them still in a marginal position in the country of settlement, but it must also have enabled them to recognise the dominant Anglo culture as the invisible norm, presupposed by the existence of the "ethnic other".¹¹ Such classes therefore contributed towards the consolidation of the anglicisation project in the country of settlement itself.

Different Sites of Practice

Different media and sites of practice were mobilised to strengthen the post World War II literacy programme. Perhaps for the first time ever, state sponsored adult education in Malta extended beyond the confines of the conventional classroom to encompass "band clubs, social clubs and workplaces (the Dockyard)"¹². The "face to face" teaching occurring at the different sites was supplemented by radio broadcasts.¹³

The use of different sites and media as well as personnel drawn not exclusively from the teaching ranks (volunteers were used) indicate a departure from conventional schooling. Nevertheless, Paul Bugeja, who organised and coordinated the adult literacy classes from 1948 to 1972, insisted on using a system of "delegated instruction"¹⁴ in his preparation of teachers. According to this system adult educators were exposed to lessons in

10 See ATTARD (1989), p. 15.

11 See BORG/MAYO (1994), p. 221.

12 WAIN/MAYO (1992), p. 250. In the case of the Dockyard, the programme took place following an agreement between the British Admiralty, which managed the place at the time, and the General Workers' Union.

13 See VANCELL (1990), pp. 6-9.

14 VANCELL (1991), p. 73.

English, which they, in turn, delivered to students at the various centres, therefore ensuring a "top down" transmission style.¹⁵ As part of his publicity campaign to encourage people to attend the classes, Bugeja often exploited possibilities offered by a variety of local institutions, notably the local cable network and the Church.¹⁶

Strong Religious Sponsorship

Traditionally, the Church has been a major player in adult education in Malta, and many agencies involved in adult education operate within its wider network.

Caritas (Malta) organises social clubs for the elderly and activities for other target groups on the parish level.¹⁷ It also provides training and educational services.¹⁸ Moreover, there are lay organisations, carrying out educational activities among different sectors of society, which are inspired by the Church's teachings. These include the Catholic Action and the Young Christian Workers. There is also one important lay religious organisation, the Society of Christian Doctrine (referred to as M.U.S.E.U.M.), which performs sterling work in the field of adult education. It was founded in 1907 by a charismatic diocesan priest, Gorg Preca (1880-1962).¹⁹

In contrast to the state sponsored literacy campaigns, the emphasis in the activity of M.U.S.E.U.M. was on the vernacular. This was quite revolutionary for colonial Malta, given the nature of the "language question", with Maltese, as the language of the people, having been given a subordinate status.²⁰ Ideals, which invite parallels with those advocated by a number of educationists, including N. F. S. Grundtvig and his emphasis on the "living word",²¹ are believed to have inspired the religious pedagogical activities of M.U.S.E.U.M. As Sultana indicates, the ideas and preachings of Gorg Preca constitute a constant source of reference for the educators and educatees involved.²²

15 See MAYO (1994b), p. 32.

16 See VANCELL (1990).

17 See the entry on "Caritas Malta", in: MAYO (1990), pp. 11-14; in 1990, there were 22 commissions and four of them organised literacy classes, run mainly by volunteers, including school teachers.

18 See the entry on "Djakonija Commission (B' Kara)", in: MAYO (1990), p. 32.

19 See SULTANA (in press).

20 See *ibid.*

21 See LUNDGAARD (1985), pp. 60-61.; see JACOBSEN (1992), p. 276.

22 For an exposition of Grundtvig's ideas see SULTANA (in press).

The notion of outreach, underlined in the activities of M.U.S.E.U.M., characterises the more progressive traditions of adult education. It is based on the principle that one starts, in the learning process, from the culture of the learner. There seems to be a dissatisfaction with centralised programmes targeted at traditionally disenfranchised groups. To a certain extent, the location of a centralised activity can determine the nature of the adult education clientele. Unfortunately, the country's small size can easily lead one to think in terms of organising centralised activities.

Another Catholic organisation engaged in outreach educational activities is the Social Action Movement (MAS).²³ To a certain extent, it is a product of the post war climate in which the Church and its inspired lay organisations sought to provide alternatives to the Marxist-Leninist option in the political and socio-economic spheres. In the economic sphere, MAS gave rise to the creation of two trade unions, the Women Employees Union being one of them.²⁴

One of MAS's earliest initiatives was the promotion of cooperatives in various sectors, including the consumer agricultural and fishing sectors. In fact, courses for people being trained for cooperative economic activity were held either at the MAS premises or in such informal "outreach" settings as the fishermen's jetty at Marsaxlokk.²⁵

Other Forms of Adult Learning

The two largest political parties also have the potential for extensive outreach adult education programmes since they run clubs (kazini) located in every Maltese town and village. Both have personnel entrusted with the task of organising educational activities, often in the form of public seminars. The Education Department organises the state run adult educational activities mainly in the form of outreach programmes. The University of the Third Age, which hitherto held its activities in Valletta, is now attempting to

23 See the taped interview with the Rev. Fortunato Mizzi at the MAS-Centre in Valletta, held on 1 August 1991.

24 It was established in 1956 to work towards parity between the sexes in the sphere of employment. This was quite revolutionary at the time, especially if one considers that Maltese society remains, even today, very patriarchal. Women are still severely under-represented in several important sectors of society. See *ibid.*

25 Similarities can be found in Latin American non-formal adult education; see for instance, the well documented accounts of popular education activities in Latin America by LA BELLE (1986), IRELAND (1987) and TORRES (1990).

provide outreach programmes and has opened centres in Sliema and Mosta. The choice of location in such a project will often determine the social class composition of the adult education clientele involved.

The Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are able to provide the most innovative approaches to adult learning. MAS's cooperatives programme offers the most graphic illustration of this, even though this organisation has its own formal learning setting, consisting primarily of a well furnished lecture hall within its premises. Regarding state provision by the Education Department, it is only now that a centre specifically furnished for adult educational activities has been set up. It is centrally located, within a post-secondary education complex. Schools, for the most part, are used for the Department's outreach programmes.

'Tokenism'

As a matter of fact, one may argue that the traditional school culture has hitherto characterised adult education provision in this sector and it continues to do so. The recent Department reorganisation has established adult education for the first time as an important division within the country's formal educational set-up. In spite of this development, adult education has been only granted a token presence and the amount of staff constituting the Adult Education Unit has never increased over the years. At the same time, programmes have increased substantially. The person presently in charge of the Adult Education Unit is the only full-time incumbent, responsible for the coordination of the National Literacy Programme, the Morning Access Programme (intended mainly for women), the English Language Programme, the Programme of Maltese for Expatriates and the Drug Rehabilitation Adult Basic Education Programme. In terms of personnel, the Unit, therefore, has never been brought on a par with other Education Department Units.

Transposing the School Culture

The predominance of the school culture is also reflected in the projects carried out by the Unit. State schools were the only premises made available to the Unit for the literacy

classes, reopened in 1990 as part of the activities for the International Literacy Year.²⁶ The only people allowed to apply to work as adult educators were school teachers. The same applies to the access course by the Unit and the Commission for the Advancement of Women, although, in this case, retired school teachers are employed. This course is held during the day and naturally has attracted a large number of female participants, mainly homemakers, given that Malta has a very low participation rate of married women in the formal labour market.²⁷

The use of schools as adult education centres is typical of small nation states where resources are limited and therefore are put to multifunctional use. In order to make proper multifunctional use of such premises, however, a certain amount of restructuring has to take place within the schools so that a wing of the building is reserved specifically for adults and incorporates learning settings suitable for them. Rather than a school in the traditional sense, a multipurpose learning centre is needed, something the educational authorities and architects should have to consider when building new schools. The problem with Maltese adult education, though, is that no such organisational and architectural restructuring of schools takes place. Adults, therefore, encounter learning environments intended primarily for children. The situation reaches ludicrous proportions in many villages where the only school available is the primary school. Furthermore, the 'culture of the school' prevails in other ways. For instance, the adult literacy programme follows the same calendar as schools.²⁸ Adult education does not function, within the Department, as an entity on its own, but operates within the culture of schooling, the culture the Education Department continues to promote. As various international studies in the Sociology of Education show, this is the sort of cultural violence which continues to pre-programme a number of working class people for failure. Returning to traditional school settings represents, for the participants in the literacy programme, a return to a site that they might well associate with a sense of failure. The culture of traditional schooling also makes its presence felt with respect to the recruitment of adult educators.

26 There was a huge response when the programme started in January 1990. Approximately 1,500 participants enrolled. The number of participants in 1992/93 was 563 and the figure decreased to 310 in 1993/94; see the statistics compiled by the Adult Education Unit, Department of Education.

27 The rate is calculated at approximately 8%; see TABONE (1991). Of the 216 participants, this year, 211 are women. Each year, women consistently constitute over 90% of the participants; see the statistics compiled by the Adult Education Unit, Department of Education.

28 See MAYO (1994b), p. 36.

Teacher Centred

It remains to be seen whether the educators who take on multifunctional roles,²⁹ do replicate the methods used with children when teaching adults. Empirical research in this area is needed.³⁰ Paul Bugeja insisted that he preferred volunteers to professionally trained teachers³¹ (school teachers), because the latter were set in their ways and often ignored his instructions to treat adult learners as adults and not as school children.

A Response from the Tertiary Sector

Through its adult education programme, the Faculty of Education at the University of Malta is seeking to tackle the situation concerning the adequate preparation of adult educators. It is running two evening diploma courses: one is for adult educators employed or wishing to be employed in a variety of areas of adult education. The other, sponsored by the Employment & Training Corporation (ETC), is intended specifically for those working or aspiring to work as trainers in the area of personnel development in industry or the public sector. However, the nature of educational provision in micro-states is such that educators continue to perform multifunctional roles.³² For the Faculty's intervention in this area to be more effective, a substantial adult education course component should be built into the B. Ed. (Hons.) Programme, with the students involved being allowed to carry out one of their 'teaching practice' periods also in this field. Adult education would thus serve as a subsidiary area in the B. Ed. (Hons.) Programme.

29 See FARRUGIA/ATTARD (1989).

30 Some pioneering work already exists. This involves in depth interviews and classroom observation, regarding the access course for women. It suggests that while many of the teachers attempt to treat their adult students differently from the way they treated school children, many persist in adopting "banking education" methods; see ENRIQUEZ (1995).

31 See VANCELL (1990).

32 Hence, units on adult education are included as options in the initial teacher preparation degree course (a four year full time course leading to the B. Ed. (Hons.) degree) and are meant for those prospective teachers who intend to combine their full time work teaching school children with work in the evening in the area of adult education.

Adult Vocational Education

Private Training Agencies

Another area in which the State is heavily involved is that of adult vocational education. Many private companies continue to overlook the necessity to set up their own training infrastructure and this has led the State to take up this role. In recent years, the situation has slightly improved and we have witnessed the emergence of a number of private agencies in this field, e.g. agencies like MISCO, CIMIRA, the Foundation for Human Resources Development, Trade Club Training Services. A proliferation of such agencies would help to foster an adult learning culture and would take the burden of training away from the state school system where the educational provision should be broad in scope and not take on a distinctly vocational character. Schools are not the best places to cater for the needs of the economy, since they are not quick enough to adapt to change. In addition, one cannot predict the future needs of the economy and so schools cannot provide the skills which will be needed in future.³³ There should be more to education than just training; the latter, on its own, reflects only one agenda in the curriculum, that of the business class.³⁴

Education or Training?

The major agency in this field remains the Employment & Training Corporation (ETC). The Corporation, set up by an Act of Parliament in 1990, reflects a partnership between the State and the industry. It has acted in partnership with the Education Department to provide literacy courses for the unemployed, a great number of whom lack functional literacy skills. But it also offers programmes in a variety of "non trade" areas, including

33 See SULTANA (1992), pp. 296-308.

34 This point has been extracted from an interview which Peter Mayo gave to Silvio Debono: "Is it Training or Education?", in: BASE, Journal of the Foundation for Human Resources Development, 10 (1995), January-March, p. 12.

office skills, small business management, computers and marketing.³⁵ ETC is making an effort to ensure that the range of courses offered is broad enough to accommodate such areas as life skills and that the teaching involved is not authoritarian.

Furthermore, ETC has sought to enhance the quality of teaching in the area of vocational preparation by funding and designing, with the Faculty of Education, the two year evening diploma course in *Adult Training & Development*. This course has been structured in such a way as to eschew the traditional approach to training. It is intended to prepare its participants as adult educators who can reflect critically on issues related to education and the work process as well as gain sensitivity to the specific issues involved in teaching adults. There is quite a balance in the content covered, with units in the "management of resources" and "training procedures" being offered alongside others in "labour relations", "women and the labour market" and "perspectives on work education".

A Critique of Vocationalism

Vocational adult education has traditionally been very narrow in scope, consisting mainly of skills transmission. Such programmes reflect only industry's concerns. Traditionally, this area has been dominated by Human Capital Theory, with all the exploitative connotations this theory has. This particular adult education sector is bound to enjoy the greatest expansion in the forthcoming years, especially if the present government is successful in its bid for Malta's accession to the European Union.³⁶ The Maltese society is characterised by a thriving underground economy, as a result of which a person's enrolment in an adult education course can well mean the forfeiting of an extra

35 In 1993/94, the course which had the largest enrolment was the one in basic literacy and numeracy, with 769 participants, 22 of whom were women. The second most popular course, that year, was the one on computers. There were 350 participants, split equally between men and women. The ETC also provides courses in a variety of trades, including printing, plumbing, basic electronics, auto mechanics, electrical and water system installation and tile laying. Only three women participated in the trade courses, two in the area of food preparation and production and one in the area of woodwork; see the statistics compiled by ETC and also ETC: Annual Report 1993-94. As indicated in the report for 1993/94, women "opt solely for office skills based programmes and catering skills programmes." Ibid. (The conventional gender stereotypes prevail.)

36 If this happens, there is likely to be a scramble for funds made available for this adult education sector by the EU through the European Social Fund. This is the area which is likely to attract the greatest number of adult learners.

source of income. Working class people often find themselves in this situation and would therefore have little disposable time to devote to adult education. In order to enable them to do so, there must be, thus, the possibility of a strong economic return, including the possibility of gaining employment, holding on to one's job and/or gaining promotion. Therefore, this sector of adult education should reflect the agenda of not only one interested party - the industry - but of others, foremost among them being the trade unions. The area of adult training should be a site of contestation.³⁷ Trade unions have an important role to play in the area and should be involved in the development of the curriculum for these programmes. They should include the whole issue of training programmes, both private and state sponsored, in their negotiation agenda. The area of adult training could provide trade unions with a useful avenue for the introduction of issues and areas of study geared towards greater worker empowerment. As a result, the training programme would become broader in scope, more balanced and more democratic.

'In and Against the System'

One agency in Malta which has close connections with the trade unions is the Workers' Participation Development Centre (WPDC). It is located at the University³⁸ and was established in 1981 as a consequence of a study by Gerard Kester, a Dutch researcher, on the experiences of participation and self-management in such enterprises as the Malta Drydocks, Melita Knitwear and Cargo Handling. Kester argued that there should be a research and monitoring institution to monitor and support these experiences.³⁹ WPDC was also to impart the knowledge and skills which workers needed in order to exert greater control over their workplace and to participate effectively in the administration and management of the companies. The agency was meant to foster a culture of worker participation. The General Workers' Union argued for the establishment of an agency at the University which would see to the formation of its officials. WPDC was also

37 See EDWARDS (1980).

38 The University is a major provider of liberal adult education. It offers evening degree and diploma courses in a variety of areas and short continuing professional development courses.

39 See KESTER (1980).

intended to fulfil this role.⁴⁰ This centre, which primarily relies on the university for funding, concentrates the bulk of its resources on the two year evening course leading to the *Diploma in Labour Studies*. When this course was first introduced in 1983, the majority of the clientele were from the Drydocks, in subsequent courses, however, white collar workers have tended to predominate. Individual mobility rather than the imperatives of participation at the workplace seem to have become the prime source of motivation for participation in this course.

The participation of women in this diploma course has been quite low over the years and this has definitely provided cause for concern among the organisers and educators operating at the Centre. After all, the concept of participation, as developed by WPDC, is being used in its widest context to incorporate the struggle for greater democratic spaces waged by traditionally marginalised groups. A "Women and Development" certificate course has been held consistently over the last few years. As of this year, the course is being upgraded to diploma status, following the success of a morning certificate course in Women's Studies.

WPDC's location at the University has its positive aspects as well as its contradictions. It renders the University's resources accessible to the course participants, places its fields like Labour Studies on the University agenda, besides legitimatising them, and foregrounds trade union issues at an institution where these issues would otherwise be conspicuous by their absence. On the other hand, WPDC's location at the University means that it must be brought in line with the all encompassing regulations of such an institution. It would also have to employ lecturers who might not share its ideals and whose pedagogical approach might undermine the very notion of participation that the centre seeks to promote.⁴¹

WPDC has historically ruptured the traditional approach to learning and research carried out at the University. It must have been one of the few places to use Maltese as the language of instruction in its courses and to allow participants to write their project reports, dissertations and assignments in Maltese.⁴² Elsewhere, this would have sounded

40 See the taped interview with the WPDC Director, Edward Zammit, at the University of Malta, July, 17, 1991.

41 See the case study in: MAYO (1994a).

42 See *ibid*.

anathema in an institution where English is widely used as the language of instruction and examinations. So while compromises have to be made in order to survive within the institution, there are important breakthroughs to be registered, all part of the process of being "in and against" the established system.

Adult Education for Political Action

Another adult education agency, which, like WPDC, has strong ties with trade unions, is the Guzè Ellul Mercer (GEM) Foundation. GEM was founded in 1984 by the General Workers' Union and the Malta Labour Party, the two having been statutorily merged at the time. It provides access courses for people seeking to obtain certification, but also ventures into the organisation of seminars and public discussions on various social issues, e.g. cinefora, literary evenings, theatre and literacy programmes. It has also given rise to an activity which approximates the idea of participatory action research. It consists of research, intended to lead to ameliorative action, carried out in specific localities by people from those very same localities.⁴³ Once again, the notion of outreach is brought to the fore in the activities of GEM and this has also been a characteristic of its literacy project. Different media, ranging from film to theatre, are explored by the GEM Foundation when carrying out its adult educational activities. It appears that GEM makes an effort at trying to attract audiences and people from outside the Labour Party and the General Workers' Union.

Another agency closely connected to the other major political force, the Nationalist (Christian Democratic) Party, is the Academy for the Development of a Democratic Environment (AZAD). It was founded in 1976 and has provided courses in political issues as well as symposia on a variety of topics. It also boasts of an impressive list of publications and its stated aims are those of "fostering a wider understanding of democratic principles", encouraging "exchange of view on matters of public concern" and encouraging research.⁴⁴

Both AZAD and GEM are engaged in generating debates concerning Malta's future. They can be regarded as fora, where consensus building for the values underpinning the

43 CARUANA (1992/93), p. 2.

44 MAYO (1990), p. 7.

respective political movement to which they belong can take place. Both are formally autonomous and therefore have no statutory and administrative ties to the political parties with which they are associated.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The foregoing was intended as an overview of the issues which arise from the actions of some of the Maltese agencies engaged in adult education in Malta. For reasons of space, this article does not take into account market driven adult education provision, especially the work of the many schools engaged in teaching English to foreigners (TEFLA) and agencies engaged in liberal adult education such as the Magister Academy.

A Concern for Special Groups

As far as options for the future are concerned, the earlier comments regarding adult training have to be underlined. We also argue that there should be greater concern among agencies for the needs of and issues concerning traditionally underprivileged groups. This applies especially to agencies involved in "social purpose adult education". This concern should lead to marginalised groups gaining greater access to and exerting greater control over the adult education programmes. Both the programmes and the organisational structure of the agencies themselves should reflect greater democratic representation. In the case of women, there should be stronger female representation in the organisational and teaching sectors of the adult education agencies concerned. If this is not done, it will be no surprise that few women will bother to enrol in the programmes. We reiterate the need for schools to be converted to multipurpose learning sites. Furthermore, we propose a stronger adult education set up in the Department of Education. People entrusted with the top positions in this area should have the necessary experience, qualifications and attitudes to be able to lead the way in a refreshing and inspiring manner. The Adult Education Unit has to be adequately staffed. The issue of credentials also needs to be addressed. Representatives of the various major providers of organised adult education should be involved in discussions and in the creation of a scheme for the accreditation of learning experiences derived from various adult education projects and courses, including those carried out in non-formal settings.

Towards a Comprehensive Policy

Moreover, we argue that the State should take the initiative to develop a comprehensive adult education policy for Malta, which should reflect a strong input from the major agencies involved in Maltese adult education. The potential for the creation of the right infrastructure for such work was established in the summer of 1989 when a network of Maltese adult education agencies was created. A second network meeting took place in 1991. We recommend that this network should be revived since it can provide the basis for the creation of a comprehensive adult education policy. In its August 1991 meeting, a resolution was passed calling for recognition of the Maltese workers' right to paid educational leave. This provision has recently been included in the submission of the Expert Working Group set up by the Parliamentary Secretariat for Education and Human Resources in tabling its revised draft of the Conditions of Employment Regulation Act (CERA) of 1952. This revision has long been overdue. This is another area in which Maltese trade unions can play a major role, by making the right to paid educational leave an important item in their negotiation agenda 'vis à vis' the employers.

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