



1

Malta Union of Teachers

A PROFESSIONAL ORGANISATION REPRESENTING EDUCATIONAL GRADES WITH A LEGACY IN INDUSTRIAL EXPERIENCE

MARCO BONNICI – MUT PRESIDENT

19TH MARCH 2021

MUT History



2

- ▶ Founded in 1919 by Antonio Galea – a teacher
- ▶ First registered trade union in Malta
- ▶ Dual role – professional and trade unionistic
- ▶ Member of the European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) & Education International (EI)
- ▶ Member of the For.U.M. confederation of trade Unions.
- ▶ Apolitical Union
- ▶ The Union for Educational Grades across all sectors

MUT Setup



3

- ▶ General Conference (held every 4 years)
- ▶ MUT Council (elected every 4 years)
- ▶ Current administration - officials and council elected in June 2020
- ▶ Four full-time officials: President – Marco Bonnici; Senior Vice President – Elaine Germani; Vice President – Claudette Mintoff; Assistant General Secretary – Chris Vella
- ▶ School Delegates and/or school committees
- ▶ Working groups

Recent activities of MUT



4

- ▶ Last year MUT launched a foundation called Fondazzjoni Saghtar as the professional arm of the union. The foundation is already very active – www.saghtar.org.mt
- ▶ MUT is widening its membership base with recognition and collective representation of allied professionals working in the education sector
- ▶ MUT is offering new services to members including free therapeutic services by professionals in the field
- ▶ During the past year the union has been working on the mitigation of the effects of the pandemic in schools, the protection and support to members and the safeguards to ensure that educators do not suffer financial deductions or redundancies due to the pandemic

The Maltese Context



5

Government:

- ▶ Major employer of educators
- ▶ Educators employed within the Public Service – Collective Agreement regulating all Public service employees and a separate Sectoral Agreement for educators (negotiated between the Government and MUT)
- ▶ Educators employed within the Public Sector – Semi-autonomous educational institutions regulated by separate Collective Agreements (negotiated between the Government and MUT)

The Maltese Context



6

Church:

- ▶ Each church school is a separate employer
- ▶ Semi-autonomous structure as salaries of educators are paid by the Government
- ▶ Educators are regulated by a Collective Agreement (negotiated between the Government and MUT)

The Maltese Context



7

Independent:

- ▶ Each independent school is a separate employer
- ▶ Autonomous structure (with some restrictions) as the salaries of a group of educators (Learning Support Educators) are paid by the Government. Government sustains also schools financially in expenditure on resources
- ▶ Educators are regulated by separate Collective Agreements (negotiated between the respective school and MUT)

MUT's collective achievements: past four years



8

1. Signed the Sectoral Agreement for State Schools with Government
2. Signed the Collective Agreement with Church Schools
3. Signed the Collective Agreement with the Institute for Tourism Studies – a post secondary institution
4. Signed the Collective Agreement with the Malta College of Arts Science and Technology – a post secondary vocational institution
5. Signed the Collective Agreement with St Martins' Institute- an independent school
6. Signed the Collective Agreement with San Andrea- an independent school
7. Signed the Collective Agreement with St Edwards- an independent school

Works in progress - negotiations



1. Collective agreement of the Junior College within the University of Malta
2. Collective agreement of Student Services in State Scholls
3. Collective agreement of Supply Grades
4. Collective agreement of managers at the Malta Council of Arts Science and Technology – a post secondary institution
5. Collective agreement of San Anton - an independent school
6. Collective agreement of The Institute for Education – a pedagogical training institute for educators

Whole-school approach: the Maltese experience



10

- ▶ Malta experienced a considerable increase in its foreign workforce, particularly during the past eight years
- ▶ The number of foreigners registered officially in the workforce is estimated at 15,000+ per year. This has seen changes during the pandemic but this trend is expected to re-apply in the coming years
- ▶ The majority are Europeans but there are also a considerable number of TCNs
- ▶ Considering the Maltese population which was stable at 450,000 for a number of years, the impact of the foreign workforce is considerable
- ▶ The population of foreign workers including their families was estimated at 100,000 before the pandemic.

The educational provision



- ▶ This increase in foreign workers impacted the educational provisions. Some Primary State schools which were closing due to decline in birth rates have seen the student population increase rapidly in the past 8 years
- ▶ Demographics of foreign workers is changing from an average age of 45 to the recent data indicating an average age of 35. This shall affect the student population growth which shall not continue to increase at the same rate.

Good practices – School A



12

- ▶ Primary school in the northern area with 70% foreign population
- ▶ Students come from over 60 nationalities, some are predominant and present in great numbers
- ▶ Whole school approach starts from school management's attitude which is reflected in the day-to-day running of the school.
- ▶ Support given by migrant learners unit – support personnel often from native people and through local religious leaders
- ▶ School creating welcoming atmosphere but everyone has to abide by rules and regulations set by the school management
- ▶ A strong ethos of the Maltese culture and all students are expected to learn Maltese as a foreign language

Good practices – School B



13

- ▶ Secondary school in the central area
- ▶ 88 students from Libya (70% of the cohort) mainly due to the Libyan revolution and an Islamic secondary school which was closed down.
- ▶ School experienced an increase of radicalisation and extremism due to the sudden increase of foreigners and the formation of gangs
- ▶ Whole school approach through sensitising management together with teaching grades with seminars organised from educators from a local Islamic school
- ▶ Support from centre through deployment of Arabic-speaking support workers
- ▶ Ongoing discussions between School and Imam as to how best to tackle situations
- ▶ History, Geography and Social studies are being taught in English through the use of digital resources and exam papers in both languages
- ▶ There is also an initiative to try to integrate Italian students through the use of language

National initiatives



14

- ▶ Ethics education introduced in State Schools in the past 6 years for students who do not want to study Religious Studies
- ▶ Induction programme for Migrants in State primary and secondary schools
 1. To ensure the emotional well-being of the students
 2. To equip the students with the communication skills that will enable their integration in the community
- ▶ Support programmes for Migrants parents (voluntary)
- ▶ Maltese as a foreign language

National research



15

- ▶ Government concluding a study entitled Migrants Students in the State School Sector being undertaken by a team of academics
- ▶ Project aims at exploring the impact of migrant students in primary and secondary, to map out experiences, issues, opinions and concerns of migrant students and their parents, maltese students and parents, teachers and management.
- ▶ Results will play a crucial role to influence the educational strategy and policy of the coming years.
- ▶ Other studies/research are being carried out independently

Conclusion



16

What matters most for the outcomes of immigrant and non-immigrant pupils is whether the school and education system fights or reproduces inequality. ...most studies conclude that inclusive schools and education systems are more successful when they also target the specific needs of immigrant pupils.”

Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX), Education (2015)

Thanks for your interest – STAY SAFE

- ▶ marco.bonnici@mut.org.mt
- ▶ www.mut.org.mt
- ▶ www.marcobonnici.com