

# A Brief History of the Development of Guidance and Counselling in Malta; 1968-1987

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## INTRODUCTION

The need for vocational guidance has long been felt in Malta where, as it has been stated over and over again, there are no natural resources except human resources. The optimal use of skills and abilities has historically been identified as the best, if not only strategy to ensure national and economic development. and as Sultana (1992) has pointed out, '*human capital theory*' (now also referred to as 'human resource development') has been the guiding framework for several governments, irrespective of their partisan colour or political ideology. Vocational guidance and counselling constitutes one of the services in a range of strategies that can be used in order to 'ensure' a better fit between education and the economy, a range which includes 'man'power planning, first introduced in Malta at about the same time as the guidance and counselling unit of the Education Department was established (Sultana 1992. p.176). Calls for some form of vocational guidance and counselling go back at least to the turn of the century. Clearly, the discourse and vocabulary linked to the formal field of guidance had not yet developed, but we do find expressions of concern about the lack of responsiveness of the educational sector to the needs of the labour market. A case in point is the critical position adopted by Casolani, the superintendent of emigration between 1918 and 1930, who often took the Education Department to task for producing nothing but "clerks", giving no attention at all to the needs of the local economy, or to those of the host countries receiving Maltese migrants. As he noted in one report, hundreds of young people were '*unloaded every year by our schools*', and while a minority of these did follow a University career to enter a profession, and a few others succeeded in getting a post with the government, "the bulk, whose literary and business training is most incomplete - are thrown upon a market that

is already overstocked with their kind' (*Reports of the Working of Government Departments*. 1924-5, C2, para. 9. cited by Sultana, 1992, pp. 130-131).

This chapter sets out to present a brief synthesis of the origins and development of school guidance and counselling services from 1968 to 1987. A more detailed account is available in DeGiovanni (1987). In this context, I have opted to describe the main landmarks in the development of guidance - and particularly vocational guidance - providing information about the key actors promoting the field, the structures that were established in order to deliver services, and the vicissitudes that marked the Guidance Unit since this was set up within the Department of Education in 1968. While emphasis will be placed on the contribution made to guidance and counselling by the Unit, it is nevertheless important to consider, albeit briefly, the activities of a large number of organisations and groups, since these generated a consensus about the need for a national guidance service, structured within and delivered through the school system.

## **GUIDANCE SERVICES BEFORE 1968**

Prior to 1968, guidance and counselling was provided informally within the context of voluntary youth organisations (such as the *Teenagers' Correspondence Club*, the *Young Christian Workers*, and the *Malta Youth Consultative Council*), non-governmental bodies and unions (such as the *Cana Movement*, the *Malta Union of Teachers*, and the *General Workers Union*), and some work places (particularly the *Malta Drydocks*). Within the formal education sector, individuals working for the Parents' and Students' Associations and the Education Department also declared the need for educational and vocational guidance and counselling, and organised activities in order to promote such services.

A brief word about each of these bodies and organisations, as well as a note about how their respective activities served as a catalyst in the setting up of formal guidance and counselling services, will provide the reader with a sense of the origins and development of the field in the

Maltese islands. Given the local context, and particularly given the time frame that is being considered, it is important to point out the extent to which religion and culture were then even more intimately intertwined than they are presently. Personal counselling was mainly a question of providing pastoral and spiritual direction, while youth work was often carried out by priests or deeply committed lay volunteers, often under the direction of the clergy. This is the case of the Teenagers' Correspondence Club, for instance, which was founded in 1963 by the Rev C. Fenech. Teachers, social workers, psychiatrists, lawyers and parents worked " together to offer assistance to youth through correspondence, telephone conversations and personal interviews, and a sub-committee was eventually set up to counsel youth on issues related to vocational guidance. The latter group published pamphlets. organised lectures and courses, introduced aptitude tests, and provided a careers guidance service-

Another dynamic Church organisation, the Young Christian Workers, took a further step forward by organising a survey among 4000 youths in 1966. A main conclusion from this early research showed that a large number of students were leaving school without any preparation for life. and that there was a felt need for vocational guidance. The **YCW** urged immediate action, and there was consensus that the responsibility for providing such a service lay with the Education Department. The YCW recommended that officers be trained to offer a quality vocational guidance service in all schools, that guidance and counselling be introduced in the curricula of teacher training colleges, and that visits to factories and other work places should be organised to help young people become familiar with industrial settings. Five years after the completion of the survey, a national workshop about '*Adolescent Problems in Malta*' was organised by the Cana Movement, a voluntary Church organisation set up in 1959 in order to educate and prepare young engaged couples for marriage. The workshop reiterated the findings of the YCW research, and further alerted the public about the importance of vocational guidance for a successful insertion into the world of work.

Similar views were expressed by members of Parents' and Students' Associations, concerned as these were by the lack of guidance that students had at school, especially where this concerned career opportunities. Likewise, the *Malta Union of Teachers* argued for a comprehensive guidance and counselling service for all students, and in a report which it presented to Professor Lewis in 1967. listed a number of points which it felt needed to be considered now that educational planning and secondary education for all were being placed on a solid footing. The MUT noted the need for trained personnel who would help identify the abilities and aptitudes of individual students, and guide them to appropriate educational and vocational tracks.

The movement in favour of guidance and counselling services within schools came to a head when a Council of Europe Swedish expert on pupil guidance visited Malta in 1968. The recommendations drawn up by Ms Margherita Vestin will be dealt with in detail in a later section of this chapter, given that her visit was instrumental in the development of guidance and counselling in schools. At this stage, it is important to point out that several organisations which have already been referred to, and which were involved in working with young people, exploited Ms Vestin's presence in order to make a number of proposals. The Malta Youth Consultative Council, for instance, submitted a memorandum to Ms Vestin expressing its concern about the lack of vocational guidance in Malta, a concern it had been expressing since its foundation in 1949. The MYCC's memorandum contained reference to the importance of establishing a sound educational and vocational guidance system led by professionally trained personnel, and to the need for stressing equality between the genders in the transition between school and work.

The Malta Drydocks too was keen on making its set of recommendations and proposals to Ms Vestin. The Malta Drydocks had recently reintroduced its own apprenticeship scheme; closely modelling on the English system, the scheme offered technical courses of a very high quality, and registered an impressive annual success rate, attracting some of the most promising youths on the island. During discussions held with Ms Vestin, Drydocks officials pointed out that there existed a need of greater awareness in schools with regards to

career opportunities. Such views reflected concerns that had long been expressed by the General Workers Union; given its awareness of the problems of young workers, and particularly so those employed in the technical sector, it had striven for the introduction of apprenticeship schemes and had stressed the need for an effective national youth employment service which would offer, among other things, a sound vocational guidance service.

While the Education Department had not established systematic guidance and counselling services in its schools prior to 1968, it had nevertheless developed a close collaboration with the Department of Labour through the services of the Youth Employment Officer of the time, Joseph J. Portelli. Portelli, who is probably the first Maltese to have obtained a formal qualification in the field of vocational guidance, was responsible for the organisation of talks on career orientation with Standard VI students. Such seminars were held separately with parents and students in Malta and Gozo, and focused mainly on employment opportunities. Portelli also published the first two books related to guidance and counselling in Malta. The first was intended for students who wanted to further their studies in order to have access to better options later on in life, and was entitled *From School to Work - A Guide to Careers*. The second book, written in Maltese, was meant for students who opted to take up a job on attaining the compulsory school leaving age, and was entitled *Ghajnuna għall-Ghazia tal-Karriera għat-Tfal li Għalqu t-Tlethtax-il Sena* (i.e. *Choosing a Career - A Guide for 13 year olds*). Portelli's unstinting efforts earned the appreciation of several parents and organisations, and indeed Ms Vestin acknowledged the importance of a close relationship between the Education Department and the Department of Labour - the foundations of which had already been laid by Portelli - arguing that they should jointly set up a Standing Committee in order 'to facilitate the necessary frequent co-operation concerning plans, actions, evaluation, material and other aids, etc. (Vestin, 1969, p.79 para.216).

## **THE SETTING UP OF THE GUIDANCE UNIT**

The initiatives that have been briefly outlined in the previous section can be considered to be 'grass-roots' movements in favour of guidance services for young people, articulated by different groups working at the chalk face and in different capacities with Maltese youth. Their activities, reports and proposals prepared the ground for - and led to - the establishment of a formal system of guidance and counselling within the education sector. This development was facilitated by a number of foreign education experts who visited Malta after the acquisition of political independence in 1964, and who were sent over by UNESCO to serve as consultants to the government in the attempt to strengthen and expand Malta's educational infrastructure and services. Among the more important of these consultants was J.L. Lewis, who's report on educational planning made a clear statement about the need for the development of guidance and counselling facilities in the school system (Lewis 1967, para. 70).

The recommendations made by Professor Lewis were taken up, and on the 13th of August 1968, two male teachers, Martin Vella Haber and Abel Giglio, were relieved of all teaching duties and were assigned the task of setting up an **Educational Guidance Unit** within the Department of Education. Both teachers had been awarded a Commonwealth Bursary and had successfully completed a course in Education Guidance in U.K. the previous year. They were initially assisted by Mr V. Cancio, but this latter officer left the Unit in March 1969 on being appointed Inspector of Science.

Vella Haber and Giglio sought the co-operation of Mr J.Cameron, a UNESCO expert, who was in Malta working on the follow-up of the Lewis report. The two officers were also informed that the Government of Malta had sought assistance from the Council of Europe and that, as a result, Ms Margherita Vestin, an expert in Pupil Guidance at Primary and Secondary Level was soon to come on a consultancy visit to Malta.

Vestin in fact visited Malta on two occasions, from the 21<sup>st</sup> October to the 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1968 and from the 11<sup>th</sup> June to the 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1969. Her terms of reference were:

- To review any existing educational and vocational guidance services in Malta.
- To study the need of an organised educational and vocational guidance service, taking into consideration the recommendations of *the* Lewis report on educational planning.
- To consider the setting up of a Guidance and Counselling Unit within the Department of Education.
- To advise the Minister of Education, Culture and Tourism on the steps necessary to achieve this aim.

Vestin's brief also included visits to schools to hold discussions with principals and to offer advice as to how such a unit for pupil guidance could be set up and as to what its functions were to be. She was also expected to state how teachers could be trained for this purpose and what qualifications they were expected to obtain in order to become pupil guidance officers. Vestin's findings were published in a report entitled *Memorandum on Pupil Guidance* in November 1969. She made a list of recommendations covering four key areas, namely those concerning goals and directions, those concerning the different actions that needed to be taken, those concerning administration, central bodies, and their respective duties, and those concerning the training of staff and teachers.

Initially, the Guidance Unit's main task was the creation of an infrastructure for the proper functioning of guidance in the state education system. A scheme for the setting up of an Educational Guidance Unit within the Department of Education was finalised in October 1965. The scheme was approved *in toto* by the then Director of Education, Chev. S. Gatt. Unfortunately, several attempts to obtain a copy of the proposed plan proved fruitless, but interviews with the founding officers of the Unit revealed that the aim of the scheme was to establish guidance as an integral rather than as a peripheral activity within the education system. It was also planned that guidance and counselling services would be offered by professional personnel who had been trained in the relevant disciplines for the purpose.

The plan submitted by the newly established Guidance Unit was given full support by the Education Department. A circular issued in December 1968 (Circ.No. 288/68 - Educ. 967/67) by the Director of Education requested all Heads of Schools to afford Messrs Vella Haber, Cancio, and Giglio every assistance they might require while carrying out duties connected with Educational Guidance.

1968 also saw the visit of another UNESCO expert to Malta, J. Cameron. His task was to conduct a study concerning the introduction of secondary education for all. His brief included the working out of details for a new school structure, teaching and support staff, buildings and facilities, costs, and so on. Naturally, all this was of particular interest and concern to the newly set up Guidance Unit, since Cameron's recommendations would have implications for the guidance programme. Indeed, one of the issues that was to have an impact on the practice of vocational and educational guidance and counselling was the fact that secondary education for all was introduced on the basis of a tripartite structure. This meant that guidance officers were obliged to carry out assessment and evaluation work linked to the streaming and channelling of students towards particular schools, and streams and courses within schools. Vestin (1969, p.20) had indeed issued a strong warning about this, arguing that:

*'...one thing is evident: from the aspect of guidance it is most important that the streaming of pupils does not begin too early. All too easily, the placement in a stream fixes the child in a direction where its capacities cannot be all-round development. The label 'grammar' or 'technical' or 'general' could indeed be fatal. Not because the education itself should not be good in each stream, but because of the very hard conquered, settled attitudes among pupils, parents and teachers, ranking the streams perhaps unconsciously'.*

## **THE INTRODUCTION OF CUMULATIVE RECORD CARDS**

One of the Guidance Unit's major task soon after its establishment was the introduction of cumulative record cards in all schools. This was an

important initiative, since it lay the foundation for the recording of information about students in such a way as to facilitate the delivery of personalised guidance and educational support. Before deciding on the final draft of the record cards, the Guidance Unit studied various systems which had been adopted abroad, held pilot projects in local schools, and discussed various drafts with Heads of Schools, School Inspectors, and with the Assistant Director and Director of Education.

Primary Schools Cumulative Record Cards were introduced in 1969/70. Cards for Secondary Schools were ready to be introduced in 1971/72 and those for Infant Classes were finalised in 1971/72. Cumulative Record Cards were designed in a way that would clearly portray the child's educational and personality development year by year. The Infant Record Card was meant to provide a basis for observation in order to assist in the physical, psychological and social development of the child. The Primary School Record Card was meant to provide the head of school with an objective basis for the drawing up of a report when pupils left the primary and went to the secondary level of education. In the latter sector, the Cumulative Record Card provided a comprehensive assessment of academic achievement and personality development, and such information was used to guide students in their consideration of further education and work opportunities.

## **TEACHER TRAINING**

Clearly, the establishment of a Guidance Unit and the increasing attention given to guidance services within schools meant that educators, particularly teachers, had to be made aware of the nature of guidance and its hoped-for effects. In addition, the Guidance Unit required teachers in schools to be in a position to collaborate with what can be referred to as a 'guidance approach' to education. Towards this end, Mr Vella Haber and Mr Giglio launched a series of lectures in May 1969 for teachers assigned duties in Educational Guidance. Among the topics discussed were 'the meaning of guidance', 'adolescents and their problems', 'basic principles of evaluation', and 'guidance services in schools'. The in-service training of teachers was also accompanied by the promotion of awareness of the guidance field

among pre-service student-teachers at the Teacher Training Colleges of Education. Indeed, October 1969 saw a team of four - Mr M. Vella Haber, Mr A. Giglio, Mr S. Debono and Ms L. Rizzo - commence lectures on the subject of pupil guidance. The latter two officers had been seconded to the Guidance Unit in September 1969, having successfully completed a year's training in the U.K. leading to the award of a Diploma in Educational Guidance.

During that same year, talks on guidance-related issues were organised for pupils in the Primary and Secondary Sectors in both State and private schools. The talks were delivered by guidance officers and covered various topics including career planning and personal development.

## **THE GUIDANCE UNIT AND SELECTION PROCEDURES**

The tripartite structure of secondary education, and the resultant preoccupation with selection and channelling, led to a concern with educational assessment as a means of feeding students into a differentiated system. In 1969 the Education Department acquired the services of another Unesco expert, C.J.S. Tuppen, who was to act as a consultant on the development of a policy for educational assessment- Up to this time, the selection procedure used in the transfer of pupils from the primary to the Secondary Sector consisted of a written test in English and Arithmetic open to pupils between ten and fourteen years of age. Tuppen carried out pilot studies of standardised tests which could be utilised for selection as well as for educational guidance. He was assisted in his work by officers from the Guidance Unit.

In his final report Tuppen (1970) drew up a plan by which the traditional examination could be replaced by a four-part assessment of the pupil based on tests of English, Arithmetic and Verbal Ability and assessments of school work conducted by the headteacher. The guidance unit was very much interested in the proposed new selection procedures as they would be of great assistance in the transition of

pupils from the Primary to the Secondary sector. The introduction of secondary education for all in 1970 therefore brought with it new admission procedures. The guidance unit was actively involved in the whole process and was responsible for the collection and redistribution of all record cards. The cards were discussed with heads of secondary schools where the pupils had now been transferred, thus creating a vital link between the two sectors.

Another UNESCO expert who had visited Malta to assist in selection procedures was Dr. R.B. Cluff. Cluff drew up a report in 1971, outlining strategies for educational testing and measurement, and arguing that guidance officers had a crucial role to play in the transition of students from the primary to the secondary school sector. Cluff (1971, p.182) in fact recommended that: '...a new system of guidance and evaluation [should] replace the existing arbitrary selective written examination for entry to secondary education. This will be achieved by Cumulative Record Cards, Standardised Tests and Teachers' Assessments.'

### **THE GUIDANCE UNIT'S INVOLVEMENT IN TESTS AND TESTING**

Following the Tuppen and Cluff reports, a new focus was placed by the Education Department on the development of modern methods of assessment. This required a survey of the existing system of examinations and testing at Primary and Secondary level, including the admission examinations to secondary schools and technical institutes; the introduction of standardised tests: the adoption of a uniform system of grading/marking by heads of schools; and the revision of admission procedures. Cluff (1971, p.68) had recommended that the 'official responsibility for examinations and testing be removed from the Guidance Unit and vested in the Examinations Unit.'

Such a service was indeed set up in 1971. The Test Construction Unit, as it was called, worked in close collaboration with the Guidance Unit, and was engaged in the construction of various standardised tests and in the drawing up of reports on assessment and testing. The TCU developed two progress tests in English and Arithmetic, and these

were used by all head teachers in both state and private schools in order to make a more objective assessment of pupils. The first-ever standardised tests to be held in Malta consisted of an English Word Reading Test, a Maltese Word Reading Test, and an Arithmetic Skills Test. These tests were constructed and standardised by J.M. Falzon, a member of the TCU, and who was to eventually become the first Professor of Educational Psychology at the University of Malta. Falzon constructed another three standardised tests, namely English Reading Comprehension Tests A and B, and a Maltese Group Reading Test. These were standardised for Year 6 pupils, and used for the final assessment of Primary school children and for the assessment and identification of slow learners in Secondary schools. In 1975, the TCU was entrusted with the setting of Year 6 Primary and all Secondary school examinations at a national level, and in 1981 the TCU was given the responsibility of setting of entrance examination papers for the newly established Junior Lyceums. Examinations were set for entrance into forms I to V. As from 1985 entrance examinations were limited to form I. With effect from 1982 the TCU was also entrusted with the setting of national annual examinations for Junior Lyceums for forms I through V. Also in the same year Primary schools examinations from Year 3 upwards were nationalised.

The TCU also carried out research on all exams. Another service given by the TCU was a Mean and Standard Deviation exercise of each subject in each Form or Year at a national and school level. The focus of the TCU on assessment practices freed up guidance officers to invest their energies more directly in the development and strengthening of vocational, educational and personal counselling services within schools.

## **THE DISSOLUTION AND RE-INSTALEMENT OF THE GUIDANCE UNIT**

At a moment when guidance and counselling appeared to be moving from strength to strength, a decision was made by the education authorities to dissolve the Guidance Unit. This decision was communicated to the Unit's members on 12<sup>th</sup> October by means of a

letter carrying the signature of Mr A. Raimondo, the acting Director of Education. All members of the Unit, now including S. Debono, L. Rizzo, A. Sammut, J. Sammut and J. Farrugia besides M. Vella Haber and A. Giglio, were assigned teaching duties in Secondary schools with immediate effect.

The work carried out by the Unit during the period 1968-72 had laid the foundations of a much needed service that had become very popular among pupils. Great benefit was being reaped and the service had left an impact on the education sector. Notwithstanding the dissolution of the Unit, guidance work in schools continued to be offered, albeit unofficially, by dedicated officers who were sacrificing their free time to assist all those who were in need and so as not to let the service dwindle away.

The next three years (1972-75) were years of negotiations between the Government and the Malta Union of Teachers. A re-organisation agreement was being negotiated and the MUT, conscious of the sterling work that the Guidance Unit had done since its setting up in 1968, included provisions in the agreement by which a **Guidance and Counselling Service** was once again set up. The Agreement was concluded in 1975. Subsequent to the Agreement, posts of guidance teachers, Counsellors and Education Officer (Guidance and Counselling) were created.

Guidance teachers were to be assigned a reduced teaching load equivalent to half the normal load, so that they could dedicate the other half to guidance duties. The complement of guidance teachers was to be regulated by the ratio of 300 pupils per guidance teacher. Ten posts of Counsellors were set up. Further discussions between the authorities and the MUT led to the drawing up of lists of duties to be performed by guidance teachers, Counsellors and the Education Officer. These were communicated to officers concerned through Education Circulars 38/75, 245/75/7 and 266/75/12 respectively. M. Vella Haber was appointed Education Officer (Guidance and Counselling) in 1976 following the publication of a call for applications in accordance with the provisions of the Agreement. Vella Haber was assisted in his work by a group of officers who had received training abroad. These officers were: A. Giglio, S. Debono, Ms L. Rizzo, A.

Sammut, J.Sammut, J.Farrugia, Ms M'Anne Agius, G.Xuereb, P. Sultana Trevisan, Ms. J.Baldacchino. P.Bartolo, R. Sultana, P. Fava. Ms L Calleja and R. Zammit. Many of these had been trained at the University of Reading or of Keele in the U.K., but some of the counsellors had gone to Universities in the U.S.A., Canada, New Zealand and Australia.

The complement of guidance teachers was made up of 58 teachers, 47 in the Secondary sector and 11 in the Technical sector. There was a considerable wastage of trained personnel who opted to take up administrative duties in schools. In 1987 this amounted to 62%. The Guidance and Counselling Unit organised various in-service courses of short duration in order to maintain a pool of trained guidance teachers, but the need for more qualified personnel was recognised. In response to this need, the Faculty of Education of the University of Malta organised its first Diploma Course in Educational Guidance and Counselling in 1985. This was a part-time evening course aimed at staff wanting to become guidance teachers, and was made up of 30 units of 16 hours each. In July 1987 a total of 16 teachers and instructors were awarded the Diploma in Educational Guidance and Counselling. This was also the first time that a group of instructors attended such a course and their successful completion of the Diploma course augured well for the organisation of a good service in Trade Schools.

The 1975 Agreement contained no provisions for the appointment of guidance teachers in Primary schools and this lacuna was referred to by the Education Officer in his memorandum to the Advisory Council for Education. Vella Haber (1978. para.3.1), noted that '*...The lack of an organised guidance service at Primary level often results in lack of important information on the educational and social background of the child which is of vital interest when he begins his Secondary education.*'

In the Secondary Sector the service was not considered to be adequate on account that teachers were assigned duties in guidance on a year to year basis and, on many occasions, their approval was communicated in the second term of the school year. The problem was worse in Trade Schools, which had been introduced in 1972 and which had not yet benefited from the provision of a guidance and counselling service. In this regard, Vella Haber (1978, para.3.2) pointed out that 'At present over 2000 students proceed to Trade schools every year- There is no person responsible to guide these students and to see the Cumulative Record Cards that accompany them from Secondary schools are kept up-to-date so that good use be made of them during their stay in these schools or for vocational guidance before they leave school.' This particular problem was only addressed eight years later, when instructors reading for a Diploma in Educational Guidance and Counselling at the University of Malta were assigned guidance duties in Trade schools in 1986. Even then, no such service was made available in Girls' Trade Schools.

The need of having an established service at the New Lyceum and Higher Secondary schools was also felt and eventually Mr P. Sultana Trevisan was appointed Education Officer I (Guidance) responsible for this sector.

While careers and vocational guidance was now being catered for by guidance teachers in schools, the Guidance and Counselling Unit also attempted to further develop this area by organising talks and seminars for school leavers;. It also built on the achievements of its Careers Information Service, which had been set up in April 1972. in order to launch a national annual Careers Convention as a vehicle for the promotion of information about the different occupational opportunities available in Malta.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Guidance and Counselling Unit had, by 1987. developed several important services. In the space of almost twenty years, it had built up a team of qualified staff whose duties included:

- Regular guidance and counselling sessions in schools

- Counselling individual students referred by Heads of Schools
- Organising talks and seminars for school-leavers
- Preparing career orientation conventions
- Collecting information about different careers and passing on this information to interested students
- Providing information and guidance regarding educational opportunities
- Supporting the Heads of schools in the exercise of streaming, and student choice of optional courses
- Organising orientation visits to institutions of higher and further education, industries and other work places
- Meeting parents in order to facilitate understanding of school policy regarding subject option choices
- Liaising with other government departments and helping agencies (including the Department of Labour, the Department of Social Welfare, the Youth Service Organisation, the Forensic Department, the Special Education Section, the Health Education Unit, the Child Guidance Clinic, the Youth Employment Service and Caritas).

On the basis of such achievements, the Guidance and Counselling Services could look forward to increased commitment to the needs of students, in response to changes in the educational system, in social mores and values, and in the structure of opportunities in Malta's employment market.

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