Executive Summary

A structured review and presentation of a far reaching change in a policy area such as the national curriculum has, not surprisingly, generated considerable discussion and debate. A review of the analysis of the formal feedback received by the Directorate of Quality and Standards in Education in the Ministry of Education and Employment shows conflicting tensions facing the different stakeholders that are, directly, and indirectly, involved in the education sector as a result of the changes proposed in the draft National Curriculum Framework. Amongst the tensions discerned are the following:

(i) Agreement with the general principles and aims of the draft National Curriculum Framework – such as entitlement, diversity, learner centred learning, continuum of achievement, - and yet concern is expressed with the minutiae and the detail of recommendations presented in the draft NCF of how such general principles and aims are to be met.

(ii) Teachers who are ‘winners’ because more emphasis is directed towards their subject.

(iii) Teachers who are ‘losers’ - who interpret a reduction of hours assigned to their subject, in order for the curriculum to allow for emphasis towards other learning areas and subjects, as a marginalisation of their subject as well as their status.

(iv) Parents who are concerned that the changes proposed in the National Curriculum Framework will lead to “experimentation” at the time when their children are making important transitions in their education: from the Early Years to Primary School; from Primary School to Secondary School; and from Secondary School to Sixth Form and Post-Secondary education.

(v) Parents whose children are in the late Secondary School years and who are concerned that any reforms will disrupt one of their children’s important milestones in life: the sitting of the MATSEC examinations.

(vi) School management who have built a localised ethos that reflects the status and segment of society from which the students in their College and / or School come from and who interpret certain changes as incursions in their ability to retain such achievement secured through flexibility and autonomy.

(vii) Church and Independent schools that are, proud of the best practices in education that they introduced and improved over lost time and who fear that the best practice standards they have attained will be lost unless their autonomy is firmly guaranteed.

(viii) Stakeholders who believe that they could have played a role in the design of a new national curriculum and hence adopt, in part, a critical attitude to recommendations presented in the draft National Curriculum Framework.

(ix) There are cohorts of stakeholders, particularly from State Schools, who believe that the consultation process should have been more extensive whilst there are others that have praised the consultation strategy adopted to "use the [National Curriculum Framework] document to open up a general public debate about crucial educational themes - a strategy evidenced by the extensive consultation period offered that provided an opportunity for interested parties to air "their concerns and suggest ways forward".

The above are some of the countervailing tensions that are felt, and, at times, evident, as one weaves through the considerable feedback documentation. That these countervailing tensions are present should not, it is believed, be a matter for concern – indeed, it would have been disconcerting if the consultation process would have resulted in a dearth of feedback as it would demonstrate a serious disinterest in one of the most important policy sectors within Malta’s polity: the moulding and development of Malta’s future human capital.
The disparate, volume and conflicting feedback received shows that the process leading to the design of a new National Curriculum Framework demands consensus building amongst the different stakeholders to find common ground on the right path that Malta’s educational system must be directed to – as decisions taken today with regard to the reform of the national curriculum would affect – positively, indifferently or negatively – Malta’s future well-being: which is dependent on the quality, value system and development of its human capital.

Although there are different and conflicting views amongst the many constituents who presented formal feedback there is, nonetheless, a high level of convergence of views expressed - whether positive or critical or whether they relate to statements, issues or recommendations - across the different cohorts of stakeholders assessed: (i) Colleges and Schools; (ii) Directorates within the Ministry of Education and Employment; (iii) the University of Malta and Higher Education institutions; (iv) Constituted Bodies and Civil Society; and (v) Parents and individual presentation:

- There is quasi unanimous agreement on the general principles and the aims of education as presented in the draft National Curriculum Framework.

- That generally the challenges and issues raised for discussion pertain primarily on the detail presented in the draft National Curriculum Framework on how the said principles and aims are to be achieved.

- There is agreement that the vision presented with regard to Science Education is exciting; that the proposed Core Science subject should not become a soft option; that students should be allowed to choose one Science subject; that well planned re-skilling is required with current teachers who are mainly grounded in Mathematics and Physics.

- There is general agreement that considerable and sustained investment is required to strengthen, up-skill, re-skill and re-tool teachers and educators if the principles and aims of education as presented in the draft are to be successfully achieved.

- There is general agreement that the successful implementation of a differentiated teaching environment needs investment in capacity building; increased teacher resource allocation; improved teacher to student ratio; less syllabus content; more flexibility to a teacher with regard to his / her approach in the classroom environment; that such an environment may negatively affect high flyers.

- There is quasi unanimous agreement that a student centred learning as well as an inquiry based environment approaches respectively require a significant reduction in the syllabi content.

- Learning Area on Citizen Education is, in the main, criticized particularly that it will result in the marginalisation of Geography, History and Social Studies as separate disciplines which are considered to be important subjects in the development of students.

- There is consistent agreement that implementation should be carefully planned, that it must be phased, and that teachers and parents are placed at the heart of the reform process.

- Where expressed, there is agreement with the recommendation to re-introduce Accounts and Economics as Option subjects.

- Where expressed, there is concern on how the proposed reforms will impact the Personal and Social Development subject.

- In the main there is agreement that the introduction of a separate Ethics subject that allows those parents who do not wish their children to be educated in the Roman Catholic Faith is a positive development - although it is stated that this approach should not impinge on the autonomy of Church schools given that the ethos of Church education is based on the value system as underpinned by the Roman Catholic Faith.
- There is universal critique that the timetables presented in the draft National Curriculum Framework, particularly those with regard to the Primary level of education, are too rigid and inflexible and that they do not reflect the ethos espoused within the draft National Curriculum Framework itself that there should be more autonomy and flexibility at College, School as well as classroom level. The critique is also expressed with regard to the fact that the introduction of the professional development time is limited to the Secondary education cycle only – and that this should be extended also to the Primary education cycle.

- Whilst in general agreement is espoused with regard to the introduction of an Ethics subject various and different views are expressed on what should constitute the syllabus of this subject; who should formulate the syllabus, etc.

- Whilst there is agreement on the need of a language policy there a myriad of different recommendations with regards to what should constitute a language policy.

- There is quasi universal agreement that Malta has become a multi-cultural society and that all schools should be in a position to provide children and their parents with language support in Maltese and English so that these achieve a basic working knowledge of these languages at the earliest possible in order to allow them to integrate quickly.

- The feedback is mixed on the recommendation to expose pupils in Primary Schools to a foreign language: some maintain that this is a positive proposal as it provides pupils with the opportunity to develop an interest in a new foreign language as well as a foreign culture whilst others maintain that Primary Schools should concentrate on ensuring that pupils obtain a sound grasp of the Maltese and English Languages respectively particularly given the noticeable depreciation in the command of either Language.

- There is universal agreement that the recommendation to establish English Literature as an Option in Form 3 (Year 9) subject is not correct and that this recommendation will have negative impact on the quality of English.

- There is general agreement that if the recommendation to reduce the number of hours for the Third Foreign Language in the Secondary level of education is maintained then the syllabus and content for that respective Language is to be reduced accordingly.

- There is a quasi-universal agreement on the proposed balanced approach to assessment and evaluation.

- There is quasi universal concern that the parental involvement in the education of the child is important and yet there is a strongly perceived and noticeable reduction in parental involvement as increasingly both parents are active in the labour market.

- There is critique that the pilot Form I syllabus is far too rigid and that it does not reflect the principles and aims espoused in the draft National Curriculum Framework with regard to its general principles and aims - such as there is far too much content that does not allow for an inquiry based learning environment; that it is far too rigid in that it allows very little room for teacher autonomy in the classroom, etc.¹

- There is quasi universal concern that the successful implementation of the principles proposed in the National Curriculum Framework requires a continuum of education in higher and Post-Secondary education which the NCF does not address.

- There is across the different stakeholders cohorts limited feedback on Mathematics; Technology; e-Learning; Education for Sustainable Development; Education for Entrepreneurship; Creativity and Innovation; Student Involvement; School Management; Discipline, amongst others.

¹ Revisions have in effect already taken place following a review exercise during the first term of the scholastic year 2011/12 by the Department of Curriculum Management.
- Whilst certain stakeholders criticized the draft National Curriculum Framework that it makes limited reference to gender issues the fact is that the draft NCF establishes principles of education diversity and entitlement which encompass gender.

- Despite the issues raised by speakers as well as from the floor in the two day conference on the draft NCF held in December 2011 on the contention that the Curriculum:
  - Does not address in depth issues relating to challenging behaviour, discipline, bullying, etc.
  - Is too utilitarian in its approach given that it places undue emphasis on preparing students for the labour market as well as that it places lifelong learning as an individual responsibility as against a responsibility that the State has for the provision of Life Long Education
  - The ensuing discussion on these matters in the feedback presented by any of the stakeholder is limited.

In the articulation of a final post consultation National Curriculum Framework by the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education following the analysis and review of feedback received, this Report recommends that such a framework should be supported by supplementary papers on:

- Relationship between the Draft National Curriculum and Higher Education.
- Implementation Strategy.
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# Glossary

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<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AD</td>
<td>Alternattiva Demokratika</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AE</td>
<td>Arts Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APLCCS</td>
<td>Association of Parents of Children in Church Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APLD</td>
<td>Association for Professionals in Learning Disabilities (Malta)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AZ</td>
<td>Agenzija Zghazagh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CE</td>
<td>Citizen Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEER</td>
<td>Centre for Environmental Education and Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>CGHE</td>
<td>Civic, Geographical and Historical Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRE</td>
<td>Catholic Religious Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT</td>
<td>Classroom Teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td>CTA</td>
<td>Classroom Teacher Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCeL</td>
<td>Department for Curriculum Management and e-Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DES</td>
<td>Department for Student Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>DQSE</td>
<td>Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education</td>
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<td>DRD</td>
<td>Department of Research and Development within the DQSE</td>
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<tr>
<td>DSS</td>
<td>Department for Student Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECI</td>
<td>Entrepreneurship, Creativity and Innovation</td>
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<tr>
<td>EO</td>
<td>Education Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>EPF</td>
<td>Equal Partners Foundation</td>
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<tr>
<td>ES</td>
<td>Environment Science</td>
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<td>ESD</td>
<td>Education for Sustainable Development</td>
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<td>FES</td>
<td>Foundation for Education Studies</td>
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<td>FLAP</td>
<td>Foreign Languages Awareness Programme</td>
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<td>GUG</td>
<td>Grupp Universitarji Ghawdxin</td>
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<td>Individual Education Needs</td>
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<td>INCO</td>
<td>Inclusion Coordinator</td>
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<td>INSPIRE</td>
<td>INSPIRE (Eden and Razzett Foundation)</td>
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<td>Kummissioni Interdjocesana Ambjent</td>
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<td>LA</td>
<td>Learning Area</td>
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<tr>
<td>LGBT</td>
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<td>LLL</td>
<td>Life Long Learning</td>
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<td>LSA</td>
<td>Learning Support Assistant</td>
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<td>Learning Support Centre</td>
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<td>Learning Support Zone</td>
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<td>MATSEC</td>
<td>Matriculation Secondary Examination</td>
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<tr>
<td>MCCEI</td>
<td>Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry</td>
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<tr>
<td>MCST</td>
<td>Malta Council for Science and Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>MCWO</td>
<td>Malta Confederation of Women's Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>MEDE</td>
<td>Ministry of Education and Employment</td>
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<td>MIA</td>
<td>Malta Institute of Accountants</td>
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<td>MGRM</td>
<td>Malta Gay Rights Movement</td>
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<td>MHA</td>
<td>Malta Humanist Association</td>
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<td>MPSDA</td>
<td>Malta Personal and Social Development Association</td>
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<td>MQC</td>
<td>Malta Qualifications Council</td>
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<td>Malta Writing Programme</td>
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<td>NCF</td>
<td>Draft National Curriculum Framework</td>
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<td>NCPE</td>
<td>National Commission for the Promotion of Equality</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCW</td>
<td>National Council for Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCHE</td>
<td>National Curriculum for Higher Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>NMC</td>
<td>National Minimum Curriculum</td>
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<td>NPSPD</td>
<td>National Parents’ Association of Persons with Disability</td>
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<tr>
<td>NTM</td>
<td>Nature Trust (Malta)</td>
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<tr>
<td>OCD</td>
<td>Obsessive Compulsive Disorder</td>
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<tr>
<td>PE</td>
<td>Physical Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PN</td>
<td>Partit Nazzjonalista</td>
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<tr>
<td>PL</td>
<td>Partit Laburista</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PrT</td>
<td>Peripatetic Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMDP</td>
<td>Performance Management Programme and Development Plan</td>
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<td>PSD</td>
<td>Personal and Social Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSHE</td>
<td>Personal, Social and Health Education</td>
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<td>QAD</td>
<td>Quality and Assurance Department</td>
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<tr>
<td>RAY</td>
<td>Revolving Around Yourself Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>RE</td>
<td>Religious Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>S Cubed</td>
<td>Science Students’ Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>SDP</td>
<td>School Development Plan</td>
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<td>SMT</td>
<td>School Management Team</td>
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<td>SE</td>
<td>Science Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>SRE</td>
<td>Sexual and Relationships Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>UoM</td>
<td>University of Malta</td>
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<tr>
<td>UMGS</td>
<td>University of Malta Geographical Society</td>
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## Definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early Years</td>
<td>Means the pre primary years cycle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>Means a network of State Schools and State education facilities and / or resource centres that are clustered within and reporting to a defined College structure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entities</td>
<td>Means Constituted bodies, civil society and Non Governmental Organisations, and Political Parties.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Higher Education</td>
<td>Means any continued formal education following the completion of Secondary School.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Secondary School</td>
<td>Means the Post-Secondary cycle leading to formal preparation for Advanced Matriculation Subject Examinations - traditionally known as Lower and Upper Sixth Form.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary School</td>
<td>Means the primary cycle from Year 1 to Year 6.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaire Participants</td>
<td>Means all those education participants who took part in the Questionnaire.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondents</td>
<td>Means all those persons who gave an answer to a particular question (that is non-respondents were not taken into consideration in the ensuing calculations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>Means a State School, a Church School, and an Independent School.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unless otherwise stated in the document when the term State School is used in the Report this also includes State College.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unless otherwise stated in the document when the term School is used there is no differentiation between a Primary School and a Secondary School.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unless otherwise stated in the document when the term School is used this includes State, Church and Independent Schools respectively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary School</td>
<td>Means the secondary cycle from Year 7 to Year 11 - traditionally known, as Form I to Form V.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary Education</td>
<td>Means formal academic education at a recognised University or research institute.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
01.1 Terms of Reference

A team independent of the Review Committee that worked on the conceptual design and the drafting of the draft National Curriculum Framework (NCF) was appointed in December 2011 to analyse the feedback received by the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education (DQSE) within the Ministry of Education and Employment (MEDE). The rationale supporting the decision to appoint a team that is with the mandate to analyse the feedback received independent of the Review Committee as well as the DQSE and is based on the importance of assuring that the analysis is a fair, neutral and unbiased assessment of the considerable feedback received.

The specific Terms of Reference established for the analysis of the consultation feedback are as follows:

(i) To carry out a segmentation analysis of every individual formal consultation document received in accordance with the key components of the draft NCF.

(ii) To analyse the segmented consultation feedback by the stakeholder cohort.

(iii) Where possible, to analyse the segmented consultation feedback across different cohorts of stakeholders.

(iv) To present an overview of the main considerations raised in the consultation feedback with regard to (i) agreement with the draft NCF; (ii) disagreement with draft NCF; (iii) concerns and issues with regard to the draft NCF; and (iv) recommendations presented for consideration.

The segmentation and analysis of the consultation feedback received was carried out between December 2011 and March 2012. The drafting of a report that presents an overview of the main considerations raised in the consultation feedback was initiated in April 2012 and completed in July 2012.

01.2 Methodology Applied for Analysis of Consultation Feedback to the Draft National Curriculum Framework

During the 1st Phase of the Consultation process the DQSE carried out 56 consultation meetings with, amongst others, constituted bodies, political parties, representatives from State, Church and Independent schools, entities representing disabled persons, general public. Appendix I presents a list of when the meetings were held and with whom.

Stakeholders were invited by the DQSE to submit formal feedback at the two day conference on the Curriculum held on the 2nd and 3rd December respectively by the MEDE and DQSE – with the feedback to be submitted to the DQSE by the end of 2012. Table 1 below presents the total number of formal feedback received from the different stakeholder categories.

Table 1: Formal Documented Feedback Received on the Draft National Curriculum Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder</th>
<th>Number of Formal Documented Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colleges (State Education Sector)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Schools</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Schools</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Malta and Higher Education Institutions</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constituted Bodies, Civil Society, Political Parties, etc</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directorates</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents and Individuals</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>220</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix II presents the stakeholders within each cohort who participated in the consultation process.

The methodology applied for the analysis of the consultation feedback to the draft NCF is discussed hereunder.

01. The stakeholders who participated in the national consultation process are categorised as shown in the Table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder</th>
<th>Sub-classification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feedback from Colleges and Schools.</td>
<td>State Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Church Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Independent Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The analysis of this feedback is presented in Chapter 03 of this Report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback from Directorates within the Ministry of Education.</td>
<td>The analysis of this feedback is presented in Chapter 04 of this Report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback from the University of Malta and Higher Education institutions.</td>
<td>The analysis of this feedback is presented in Chapter 05 of this Report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback from Constituted Bodies; Civil Society; Political Parties; etc.</td>
<td>The analysis of this feedback is presented in Chapter 06 of this Report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback from Parents and Individuals</td>
<td>The analysis of this feedback is presented in Chapter 07 of this Report.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

02. In order that a comparative analysis could be carried out on the feedback presented by an individual participant within a stakeholder cohort as well as amongst a specific stakeholder cohort as well across the different stakeholder cohorts a common template was designed to allow for a consistent analysis of the feedback received. The template is designed around the seven components that underpin the draft NCF. The template is organised as follows:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Principles</th>
<th>Aims of Education</th>
<th>Cross Themes</th>
<th>Curricular Learning Areas</th>
<th>Effective and Teaching</th>
<th>Assessment and Evaluation</th>
<th>Parental Involvement</th>
<th>Support Structures and Capacity</th>
<th>Management of Change</th>
<th>Other Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principles</td>
<td>Life Long Learning</td>
<td>Early Years and Primary Education</td>
<td>Cross Concept</td>
<td>Curricular Learning Environment</td>
<td>Assessment and Evaluation</td>
<td>Parental Involvement</td>
<td>School Management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Support</td>
<td>Employability</td>
<td>Languages Maltese English Foreign</td>
<td>e-Learning</td>
<td>Differentiated Teaching</td>
<td>Quality Assurance</td>
<td>Local Community Involvement</td>
<td>Teacher Roles and Responsibilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>Education for Sustainable Development</td>
<td>Syllabus</td>
<td>Student Involvement</td>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science Education</td>
<td>Education for Entrepreneurship; and Creativity and Innovation</td>
<td>School Outings and Extra Curriculum Activities</td>
<td>Facilities and Support Structures and Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology Education</td>
<td>Intercultural Education</td>
<td>Special Needs</td>
<td>Children in Class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Education</td>
<td>Physical Education</td>
<td>Social Needs</td>
<td>Time Table</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Home Economics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>90 Minute Curriculum Development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. It is recognised that Early Years and Primary Education are not designated as Learning Areas in the draft NCF.
2. Includes matters such as Bi-lingualism and Multi-lingualism, language policy, etc.
3. It is recognised that these are presented as two separate Cross Curricular themes in the draft NCF. They are placed together in this document as the feedback to either one of these Cross Curricular themes is limited. The fact that for the purpose of this document they place together does not imply nor should it be interpreted to mean that their importance as individual Cross Curricular themes is diminished.
4. Technology Education includes feedback relating to Design and Technology and Digital Literacy.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Principles</th>
<th>Aims of Education</th>
<th>Learning Areas</th>
<th>Cross Curricular Themes</th>
<th>Effective Learning Teaching and Assessment and Evaluation</th>
<th>Parental and Community Involvement</th>
<th>Support Structures and Capacity</th>
<th>Management of Change</th>
<th>Other Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>Geography</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts Education</td>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Vocational</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Accounts</td>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>Sex Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
03. In segmenting each individual consultation document on the basis of the above template careful review of each document was undertaken and statements within paragraphs and across each were identified and correlated against the appropriate attribute.

This constituted painstaking review and attention to detail as a particular paragraph within a consultation document may include statements, issues, criticisms and recommendations relating to different aspects of the draft NCF.

04. In segmenting each individual consultation document into segments and categorising these under the appropriate attributes within the said template, careful attention was undertaken not to change the original drafting of the text. The actual nuances of text lifted from feedback documents reflect not only the opinion of the author / s but also an author’s feelings vis a vis the language applied on the part of the draft NCF that he or she is expressing her / himself on – which may range from carefully articulated statements and unequivocal commendations to outspoken anger and disappointment.

To the extent possible, changes to the nuances of the text as presented by the author in his or her consultation document are limited to instances where editing could not be avoided to improve the original draft to render it more comprehensive or were the text is presented in Maltese (very limited feedback is presented in Maltese).

05. A further level of analysis carried out is that of ascribing a code to each and every segment categorised under an attribute within the said template. The codification applied is shown in Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| C+   | Definitive statement in a consultation feedback document that is **positive** with regard to the draft NCF. | “Supports placement of Kindergarten, Year 1 and Year 2 in the same category as currently there is not enough communication between Kindergarten and Year 1.”
“Enhanced communication will lead to a better transition between Kindergarten and Year 1 in Primary.”
“Cross curricular themes a very positive innovation.” |
| C-   | Definitive statement in a consultation feedback document that is **negative** with regard to the Draft NCF. | “Timetable models do not reflect classroom realities as they do not take into account class disturbances and daily classroom practices such as collecting of forms, money for outings, etc.”
“Has a strong utilitarian orientation as it directs students to well-paid jobs and not to societal needs.”
“If [subject is] reduced to one lesson a week [it is] impossible to cover [the] syllabus.” |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S</th>
<th><strong>A categorical statement in a consultation feedback document on the existing state of play within the educational system or the draft NCF.</strong></th>
<th>Examples are:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Children should be exposed to good models of spoken English given exposure to America TV channels or not sufficient exposure to English at home.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Learning Support Assistants need to receive proper pedagogical training to have sufficient knowledge as they cannot be all-rounders.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Primary Schools with large physical setting population are impossible to allocate just 15 minutes for assemble and settling in.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I</th>
<th><strong>A statement in a consultation feedback document which identifies an issue or challenge with regard to the existing state of play within the educational system or the draft NCF – yet, in raising such an issue there is no rejection of the NCF matter under discussion.</strong></th>
<th>Examples are:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Syllabi do not take into account a differentiated teaching environment.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Parents of high flyers complain that teachers are holding back their children from reaching their full potential.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Syllabus prescribed text books is not suitable for use by lower ability students.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>R</th>
<th><strong>A recommendation put forward in a consultation feedback document.</strong></th>
<th>Examples are:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Early years are crucial for educational development and children who seem to be lacking should be identified early and given adequate support.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“School Management Team needs to gather feedback and necessary information for School Development Plans (SDP) to be effective.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Introduction of Subject teaching in the late Primary years might help for a smoother transition to the secondary years.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

06. An independent quality review exercise was carried out to ensure that the segmentation and the subsequent categorisation in the template and the codification analysis process carried out with regard to each consultation document was carried out. The validation process was carried out as follows:

**Feedback from the State Education Sector:** By College Principals.

**Feedback from Church and Independent Schools:** By the respective Head of School.

**All other feedback:** By a person independent to the Review Committee and the team mandated to undertake the consultation analysis.
07. In the carrying out of the analysis of the consultation feedback the following was taken into account:

(i) There are instances where a person who presented a feedback may have based his or her reaction on either (i) an editing error in one of the draft NCF documents for which an errata was publicly made and issued by DQSE or (ii) on the basis of a misunderstanding of the text in the draft NCF.

Be that as it may, the analysis reflects the feedback as presented and does not seek to re-interpret or correct the said feedback.

(ii) The draft NCF documents were placed in the public domain in May 2011. In the scholastic year 2011/2012 a new syllabus for Form 1 (Level 7) was piloted. The implementation of the pilot led to the identification of a number of issues - issues which generated discussion and feedback in the consultation process.

The DQSE monitored the progress of the pilot implementation and discussed arising issues and lessons learnt with stakeholders. It is noted that in a number of instances agreement on calibration between the DQSE and the stakeholders was reached. One agreed measure that is being implemented is the review of the piloted syllabi content.

Be that as it may, any issue raised in a consultation feedback document with regard to the pilot Form I (Level 7) implementation is represented in this document is reflected in the analysis even though, since the publication of the draft NCF, the matter was discussed and resolved.

08. All teaching professionals coming from the State, Church and Independent Schools were asked to take part in and complete an extensive questionnaire having both quantitative and qualitative based questions.

The analysis of this questionnaire was carried out by the Department of Research and Development (DRD) with the DQSE.

The analysis is printed in Chapter 08 of this Report.

09. All students in Primary and Secondary education from the State, Church and Independent Schools were asked to take part in and complete a questionnaire that was primarily quantitative based.

The analysis is presented in Chapter 09 of this Report.
02.1 General Overview Analysis of Feedback to the Draft National Curriculum Framework

The draft NCF, together with its supporting documents, constitutes a comprehensive and detailed body of work. The draft NCF presents an excellent articulation of the aims and principles it seeks to achieve as well as detailed discussion with regard to the rationale behind the recommendations it presents.

A structured review and presentation of a far reaching change in a policy area such as the national curriculum is, not surprisingly, bound to generate discussion, debate, disagreement, etc. In spite of the extensive consultation process embarked upon by the DQSE, prior to as well as following the drafting of the NCF, it would have always been highly unlikely, given the sensitivity of the policy area under review and the different and conflicting interests of the myriad of stakeholders involved, that consensus would be reached, at the outset, on a way forward.

A review of the analysis of the feedback received shows conflicting tensions and pressures facing the stakeholders directly, and indirectly, involved in the education sector vis-à-vis the changes proposed in the draft NCF. Amongst the tensions discerned are the following:

(i) There is agreement with the general principles and aims of the draft NCF - entitlement, diversity, learner centred learning, continuum of achievement, etc. Be that as it may considerable concern expressed with the minutiae and the detail of recommendations presented in the draft NCF of how the general principles and aims of education are to be met.

(ii) Teachers who are ‘winners’ because the draft NCF places more emphasis towards their subject.

(iii) Teachers who are ‘losers’ - who interpret a reduction of hours assigned to their subject, in order for the curriculum to allow for emphasis towards other Learning Areas and subjects, as a marginalisation of their subject as well as their status.

(iv) Parents who are concerned that changes proposed in the NCF will lead to “experimentation” at the time when their children are making important transitions in their education: from the Early Years to Primary School; from Primary School to Secondary School; and from Secondary School to Sixth Form and Post-Secondary education.

(v) Parents whose children are in the late Secondary School years and who are concerned that any reforms will disrupt one of their children’s important milestones in life: the sitting of the MATSEC examinations.

(vi) School management who have built a localised ethos that reflects the status and segment of society from which the students in their College and / or School come from and who interpret certain changes as incursions in their ability to retain such achievement that can only be secured through flexibility and autonomy.

(vii) Church and Independent schools that are proud of the best practices in education that they introduced and improved over time and who fear that the best practice standards they have attained will be eroded unless their autonomy is firmly guaranteed.

(viii) Stakeholders who believe that they could have played a role in the design of a new national curriculum and hence, instinctively, in part, adopt a critical attitude to recommendations presented in the draft NCF.

(ix) There are cohorts of stakeholders, particularly from State Schools, who believe that the consultation process should have been more extensive whilst there are others that have praised the consultation strategy adopted to "use the [NCF] document to open up a general public debate about crucial educational themes - a strategy evidenced by the extensive consultation period offered that provided an opportunity for interested parties to air their concerns and suggest ways forward".

The above are some of the countervailing tensions that are felt, and, at times, evident, as one weaves through the considerable feedback documentation. That these countervailing tensions are present should not, it is believed, be a matter for concern. Indeed, it would have been disconcerting if the consultation process would have resulted in a dearth of feedback as it would have demonstrated disinterest in one of the most important policy sectors within Malta's polity: the moulding and development of Malta's future human capital.

The disparate, volume and conflicting feedback received shows that the process leading to the design of a new NCF demands consensus building amongst the different stakeholders in order to find common ground on the right path that Malta's educational system should be directed to – as decisions taken today with regard to the reform of the national curriculum of education would affect – positively, indifferently or negatively – Malta's future well-being: which, ultimately, is dependent on the quality and value system and development of its human capital.

That the Ministry of Education and Employment (MEDE) has adopted a consensus building approach with regard to the design of a new national curriculum of education should not be doubted. The approach leading to the design of the curriculum and the long consultation process on the draft NCF when this was first presented, testify to this. The investment made in both time and resources to study and understand the reactions, positive as well as critical, stemming from the consultation process underlines that the approach to consensus building a sincere and honest approach.

As stated in the previous Chapter, it is evident that, at times, some of the feedback presented was based on a wrong understanding of the motivations behind the proposed reform and / or a potential misunderstanding of what the rationale and recommendations seek to achieve.

02.2 Analysis of Consultation Feedback Across the Different Cohorts of Stakeholder Feedback Analysed

It is to be noted that, to a large extent, there is convergence of views expressed - whether positive or critical or whether they relate to statements, issues or recommendations - by the four different cohorts of stakeholders. That such a high level of convergence can be found across the different stakeholders implies, in the view of this Report, a confluence of society's view of what constitutes the compelling pressures points in the NCF. Thus:

- There is quasi unanimous agreement on the general principles and the aims of education as presented in the draft NCF.

- That generally the challenges and issues raised for discussion pertain primarily on the detail presented in the draft NCF on how the said principles and aims are to be achieved.

- There is agreement that the vision presented with regard to Science Education is exciting; that the proposed Core Science subject should not become a soft option; that students should be allowed to choose one Science subject; that well planned re-skilling is required with current teachers who are mainly grounded in Mathematics and Physics.

- There is general agreement that considerable and sustained investment is required to strengthen, up-skill, re-skill and re-tool teachers and educators if the principles and aims of education as presented in the draft are to be successfully achieved.

- There is general agreement that the successful implementation of a differentiated teaching environment needs investment in capacity building; increased teacher resource allocation; improved teacher to student ratio; less syllabus content; more flexibility with regard to a teacher's approach in the classroom environment; that such a teaching environment may negatively affect high flyers.

- There is quasi unanimous agreement that a learner centred learning as well as an inquiry based environment approaches respectively requires a significant reduction in the syllabi content.
- The proposed Citizen Education (CE) is, in the main, criticized particularly given that it will result in the marginalisation of Geography, History and Social Studies which are considered to be important subjects in the development of students.

- There is agreement that implementation must be carefully managed; that implementation must be phased; and that teachers, students and parents are placed at the heart of the reform process.

- Where expressed there is agreement with the recommendation to re-introduce Accounts and Economics as Option subjects.

- Where expressed, there is concern on how the proposed reforms will impact the Personal and Social Development subject.

- In the main there is agreement that the introduction of a separate Ethics subject that allows parents who do not wish their children to be educated in the Roman Catholic faith is a positive development - although it is stated that this approach should not impinge on the autonomy that Church schools have given that the ethos of Church education is based on the value system as underpinned by the Roman Catholic faith.

- There is universal critique that the timetables presented in the draft NCF, particularly those with regard to the Primary level of education, are too rigid and inflexible and that they do not reflect the ethos espoused within the draft NCF itself that there should be more autonomy and flexibility at College, School as well as classroom level. The critique is also expressed with regard to the fact that the introduction of the professional development time is limited to the Secondary education cycle only – and that this should be extended also to the Primary education cycle.

- Whilst, in general, agreement is espoused with regard to the introduction of an Ethics subject various and different views are expressed on what should constitute the syllabus of this subject; who should formulate the syllabus; etc.

- Whilst there is agreement on the need of a language policy there a myriad of different recommendations with regard to what should constitute a language policy.

- There is quasi universal agreement that Malta has become a multi-cultural society and that all schools should be in a position to provide children and their parents with language support in Maltese and English so that both students and parents achieve a basic working knowledge of the language at the earliest possible in order to allow them to integrate quickly within the Maltese society.

- The feedback is mixed on the recommendation to expose pupils in Primary Schools to a foreign language: some maintain that this is a positive proposal as it provides pupils with the opportunity to develop an interest in a new foreign language as well as a foreign culture; whilst others maintain that Primary Schools should concentrate on ensuring that pupils obtain a sound grasp of the Maltese and English Languages respectively particularly given the noticeable depreciation in the command of either Language.

- There is universal agreement that the recommendation to establish English Literature as an Option subject is not correct and that this recommendation will have a far ranging negative impact on the quality of English.

- There is general agreement that if the recommendation to reduce the number of hours for the Third Foreign Language at the Secondary level of education is maintained then the syllabus and content for that respective Language is to be reduced accordingly.

- There is a quasi universal agreement on the proposed balanced approach to assessment and evaluation.
- There is quasi universal concern that the parental involvement in the education of the child is important and yet there is a strongly perceived and noticeable reduction in parental involvement as increasingly both parents are active in the labour market.

- There is critique that the pilot Form I syllabus is far too rigid and that it does not reflect the principles and aims espoused in the draft NCF with regard to its general principles and aims - such as there is far too much content that does not allow for an inquiry based learning environment; that is far too rigid in that it allows very little room for teacher autonomy in the classroom; etc.\(^2\)

- There is quasi universal concern that the successful implementation of the principles proposed in the NCF require a continuum of education in higher and Post-Secondary education which the NCF does not address.

- There is across the different stakeholders cohorts limited feedback on Mathematics; Technology; e-Learning; Education for Sustainable Development; Education for Entrepreneurship; Creativity and Innovation; Student Involvement; School Management; Discipline, amongst others.

- Whilst certain stakeholders criticize the draft NCF that it makes limited reference to gender issues the fact is that the NCF establishes as principles of education diversity and entitlement which encompasses gender.

- Despite the issues raised by speakers as well as from the floor in the two day conference on thedraft NCF held in December 2011 on the contention that the Curriculum:
  - does not address in depth issues relating to challenging behaviour, discipline, bullying, etc;
  - is too utilitarian in its approach given that it places undue emphasis on preparing students for the labour market as well as that it places lifelong learning as an individual responsibility as against a responsibility that the State has for the provision of Life Long Education; and
  - the ensuing discussion on these matters in the feedback presented by any of the stakeholder is limited on either matters.

Of particular note is that whilst State, Church and Independent Schools have expressed their agreement with the NCF's recommendations relating to autonomy at a College and / or School level - indeed, in instances expressing that the NCF could have been more bold in this regard - the feedback from the Directorates within the MoE is that decentralisation and autonomy has been allowed to go too far and that will negative impact an unitised approach to education.

### 02.3 Proposed Recommendations

In the articulation of a final post consultation NCF by the DSQE following the analysis and review of feedback received, it is believed that such a framework is better served if it is supported with supplementary papers proposed hereunder:

#### 02.3.1 Expected Outcomes of the New NCF for Malta

The draft NCF, irrespective of the extent one agrees or disagrees with it, presents a detailed and comprehensive discussion and analysis of the ‘inputs’ and ‘process’ that are to be introduced to support its implementation. A particular limitation, however, of the draft NCF is that it provides restricted discussion on the target ‘outcomes’ and ‘outputs’ that the NCF should secure and the reasons of why such outcomes and outputs are expected to be achieved.

The draft NCF assumes that it will result in an improved education system that builds on the successes reached to date and the strengths of Malta education system as well as by addressing

\(^2\) Revisions have in effect already taken place following a review exercise during the first term of the scholastic year 2011/12 by the Department of Curriculum Management
lessons learnt and challenges that continue to be faced. The post consultation NCF document should set out output and outcome indicators that will result as a direct (and indirect consequence of the NCF) with regard, though not limited, to the following:

- the return of human capital accumulation.
- the quality and efficiency of basic education.
- the levels of literacy and numeracy to be achieved.
- the spillover onto the economy due to the attainment of a competitive life-based skills set.
- the spillover onto the social fabric of Malta's polity due the inculcation of the principles and aims set for education.

The identification and presentation of target output and outcomes for the new NCF alone, however, will not suffice. As important, is the need to identify the critical success factors that need to be in place so that such target outputs and outcomes are, indeed, rendered realisable. Thus, it is proposed that the post consultation NCF document is supported by a supplementary paper that:

- Where so possible reviews the performance of national curriculum strategies in a overseas jurisdictions that are based on principles similar to that espoused in the draft NCF and identify the lessons learnt and the critical factors on successes as well as challenges experienced.
- A comprehensive rationale of how performance in core subjects is expected to behave during the term of the new NCF - as a minimum over a period of 11 years: from when a pupil embarks on Primary Year I to Year II (Form V) in Secondary School.
- A comprehensive rationale of how output and outcome education performance is expected to behave with regard to progression from Second School to Upper Secondary School to Tertiary education to the labour market.
- A clinical assessment of the critical success factors that need to be in place within the education system and by when so that such projected outcomes and outputs are met.

02.3.2 Relationship between the Draft National Curriculum and Higher Education

The primary emphasis of the draft NCF is, as it should be, directed towards the Early Years, Primary and Secondary years of education. This emphasis is correct: for a national curriculum addresses the foundation years of formal education: from the first level of entry (Year I) to the Secondary school leaving certificate (Year II) - a period of 11 years.

Be that as it may, to many stakeholders, such as teachers, parents and students amongst others, the issues relating to the discussion of a proposed national curriculum transcend beyond the official remit of the DQSE vis-à-vis the design of a NCF that addresses the compulsory education. Rather such stakeholders embrace salient, and legitimate, questions of how other important elements of the education system will be transformed, and by when, in order that they are rendered congruent with the principles aims of education that a new NCF will achieve.

A sensitive concern that emerges from the consultation on the draft NCF relates to the MATSEC examinations, and how the syllabi of the SEC examinations will be re-designed to address the aims and principles of the draft NCF – such as, for example, an inquiry based student centric system of education. As the analysis of the consultation presented by the State, Church and Independent schools, one of the stakeholders analysed, shows there is unanimous agreement that unless the current level of content present in the syllabi of subjects is significantly reduced, then, it is expected that it will be difficult for the draft NCF to meet the goals it has set for itself.

There is a degree of concern expressed by all stakeholders with regard to the nebulousness present within the current draft of the NCF pertaining to the changes that have to be undertaken in the MATSEC system to render this congruent to the general principles and aims of education; on how the new syllabi are to be re-designed to meet the goals of the draft NCF, and on how examinations papers will
be set, on when will changes occur; on whether students who are mid-stream in the Secondary level of education will be affected.

Additionally, there is concern expressed by all stakeholders that a reform of the existing educational system on the basis of the general principles and aims of education as established in the draft NCF cannot stop at the Secondary cycle of education. The point is made, repeatedly, that such a far reaching reform has to, also, embrace Post-Secondary education, and thereafter Tertiary and Higher Education.

A reform that does not embrace Post-Secondary education and Tertiary and Higher Education would, it is argued, result in the deconstruction of the achievements reached in developing students on the basis of learner centricity, inquiry based thinking; etc as such students progress to a higher level of education that continues to be based on traditional principles of education.

This Report posits that, either:

(i) The final post consultation NCF document should seek to address these and the related concerns of how the transition between a new NCF and Post-Secondary and Tertiary education will take place; or

(ii) In the event that such a task is outside the remit of the DQSE, as it is believed to be, then the National Commission for Higher Education (NCHE) is assigned the locum of responsibility to work with the DGSE and other stakeholders such as the MATSEC Board to assure congruency between the general principles and aims of education established for the Primary and Secondary cycles of education - and in doing so securing a continuum in the education process throughout a person's education life journey.

There is a danger, slight as it may be, that the concerns raised in this regard may have a detrimental effect on the implementation of a new Curriculum. Although there is quasi unanimous agreement on the general principles and aims of education the uncertainties that exist on how the continuity in education between the Primary and Secondary cycles of education on the one hand and Post-Secondary and Tertiary education on the other hand will be achieved may lead to resistance in adopting such principles and aims due to arising concerns and disquietude in this regard.

02.3.3 Implementation Strategy

Literature on strategic policy reforms of a magnitude similar to that which will result from the implementation of a new NCF is consistent in stating that implementation is their 'Achilles' heel. This Report asserts that it is imperative that the design of a strategy for reform – in this regard a new curriculum framework – should be designed with the politics of change in mind: that is, it must be steeped in reality.

Feedback arising from the consultation process charge that whilst the draft NCF is an excellent thought out exposition of what an ideal national curriculum framework should look like it will be difficult to realise as it should position the starting point of the reform process on the state of prevailing play of the education system. It should be noted that a sizable number of feedback consultation documents emphasise, directly or indirectly, the importance of mapping out the implementation process and of avoiding 'big bang' implementation approaches.

This Report contends that the final NCF document should be complemented by the articulation of an implementation strategy that would include, though not limited to the following:

- The structures that need to be in place to ensure a sustained focus of the implementation process: a recognition that a new NCF calls for a multiple pronged and complex programme of change that has to be undertaken simultaneously.

- The phasing of the different prongs and stages of the many different reforms required to support the implementation of a new NCF.
- The capacity building required with regard to new human resources as well as the professional development of teachers and other players in the education sector who are in post, and when and how these will be implemented.

- The re-training and re-skilling required with regard to teachers and other players in the education sector who are in post in order to ensure that they are prepared for the new responsibilities under a new NCF and how this will take place.

- The timing of when discussions are to take place and be concluded with the MATSEC Board, the NCHE, the MUT, etc.

- The timing of when discussions are to take place and be concluded with the appropriate Departments within the University of Malta with regard to the development of future teaching and other professionals in the education sector.

- The roll out of the e-Learning platform complemented by the appropriate e-Content and tools and the training of the teachers to optimally leverage these tools for pedagogical purposes through active and proper use.

- The monitoring of the implementation process of the reforms with regard to pace, application, and actual realisation of critical success factors as and when they are expected to happen, together with established and well defined review periods to allow for corrections to occur at the right time.

- The monitoring of the implementation process of the reforms with regard to outputs and outcomes together with established and well defined review periods to allow for corrections to occur at the right time.

- The expected cost of the implementation of a new NCF, and its financing.

The articulation of an implementation strategy as part of or supplementary to the final post consultation NCF document should, in the view of this Report, also include an assessment of the pilot implementation of the new syllabus in Form 1 (Level 7). An assessment of the new syllabus and the publication of the arising review would show the extent to which the new Form 1 (Level 7) syllabus worked; what did not go as planned; the degree it was embraced by teachers, students, parents; the lessons learnt; the calibrations required, etc – injecting a degree of transparency and openness that could calm – or for the matter re-inforce - imagined concerns through empirical evidence.
Analysis of Consultation Feedback from Colleges and Schools to the Draft National Curriculum

Chapter 03
The analysis presented in this Chapter is based on a segmentation analysis of the original documents submitted to the DQSE by State, Independent and Church schools. The segmentation analysis document is presented as Appendix III to this report.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Discussion</th>
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<tr>
<td>General Principles</td>
<td>Most of the feedback presented by Colleges and Schools is positive on the principles presented in the draft NCF. Indeed, most Colleges and Schools underline the importance of the principles that are to underpin a new curriculum framework. Examples include, though are not limited to the following:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Principles</td>
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<td>- &quot;The NCF is a breath of fresh air for 21st century educational reality: stakeholders have long felt the need for a development in educational system in light of the changing nature of societies, including globalisation and cosmopolitanism.&quot;</td>
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<td>- &quot;Welcomes initiative to develop a new NCF that takes into account today’s realities and tomorrow’s requirements: changes in society require that the curriculum framework is kept under constant review in order to ensure that children do indeed receive a sound education that will serve them well in their adult life.&quot;</td>
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<td>- &quot;The NCF encourages interaction between teachers and students which will facilitate a teacher’s ability to identify the skills and abilities of each individual student – which promotes creativity of students.&quot;</td>
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<td>- &quot;Vision is an excellent step forward to ensure quality scientific background for all students to gain Science literacy through the Core Science programme as a well as providing a strong foundation of scientific knowledge and skills in different branches for those who aspire to further studies in Sciences.”</td>
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<td>- &quot;Merging various subjects into Learning Areas would definitely contribute to establish links between and across learning in order to motive pupils and reinforce learning. Integrating the cross-curricular themes in the curriculum would result in presenting pupils with organised, holistic and relevant learning.&quot;</td>
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<td>- &quot;Agreement of focus being provided and gearing a holistic education for a child.&quot;</td>
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<td>- &quot;Children in the NCF are seen as becoming lifelong learners who acquire knowledge, skills, values and attitudes which reflects our teaching style both in support teaching and in teaching PSHE (Facilitator approach to teaching where we try to plan lessons and educational activities with a clear view to enabling pupils). This is a learner centred teaching style in which we try to provide learners with learning options that may give them a new way of understanding not only of the tasks assigned but how to learn.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- &quot;Overall viewed as a step in the right direction and while there is an understanding that this will pose a number of challenges, teachers feel that it is relevant for the 21st century.”</td>
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</table>
- "In the Early Years sector, the NCF mirrors the best practice of the school in a number of areas such as nurturing positive dispositions towards learning, enhancing curricular links, respect of learners' cognitive maturity and activities to stimulate the curiosity among children".

- "NCF provides a good vision for holistic education."

- "All in all the practitioners ... view the NCF as a positive, as well as an ambitious, project. All share its ideals. The fact that the NCF promotes a framework is seen as a great advantage as it leaves space for autonomy, initiative and flexibility to each educational institution. All share the vision and desire to offer a quality education for all students. All practitioners are confident that such a major change would reap desired fruits though the introduction of mixed ability techniques, with diversity teaching methods, with strengthened support structures, more professional development, more collaboration and improved technology. The improvement that most practitioners were struck by is the apparent shift away from selection by ability, including setting, to the selection of mixed ability students according to their subject choices. ... The staff is full of praise for the document “A Vision for Science Education in Malta”. The exercise is stimulating, interesting and its implications are wide and far reaching."

- "All stakeholders [in this Independent School] are in general agreement with the rationale of the NCF which is presented within a lifelong learning perspective and providing a quality education for all. These are also the principles held by the school, by teachers and parents as individuals. The principles and aims should not only be the heart of the curriculum but permeate each lesson. The philosophy of [this Independent School] is that each child achieves his / her personal best. The importance of quality education for all is essential".

It is, nonetheless, pertinent to underline that, to a large extent, the positive acceptance of the NCF is at a high level – at the level of the underpinning principles and aims.

In general, most consultation feedback received is exacting with regard to recommendations presented on how such principles are to be achieved and implemented.

It is to be noted, that:

- A number of State Colleges assert that they are already practicing the constructivist student centered pedagogy proposed in the draft NCF.

- Church and Independent schools, in the main, state that they have already embarked on reform and processes directed to meet the principles as established by the draft NCF.

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<tr>
<th>Teacher Support</th>
<th>The majority of Schools are of the opinion that the implementation of the draft NCF will not be realisable unless a Classroom Teacher (CT) is provided with the appropriate tools and abilities to be in a position to deliver on the principles established in the NCF.</th>
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<td>There is concern that unless a CT’s development is ongoing, focused and sustained on a critical mass, then a Teacher will not be in a position to handle a differentiated teaching environment given that this requires a different teaching and ‘classroom management capability. Concern was also expressed that a direct outcome of the draft NCF’s is that a CT will be transformed into an &quot;all rounder&quot;.</td>
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A further issue raised is that a CT would not be in a position to teach the proposed new subjects: for example, Science teachers who, it is asserted, primarily have a background in Mathematics and Physics, would not be able to cover the Chemistry and Biology themes in the newly proposed Core Science subject, or that a Primary School Teacher will not be in a position to deliver the teaching of Physical Education (PE) or Science subjects respectively.

Church and Independent Schools, which, in the main state that they have experience with the implementation of the education principles that underpin the draft NCF underline that the implementation and transition to the education environment espoused in the NCF constitutes a considerable challenge that requires time and focus with regard to the ongoing development of teachers.

It is pertinent to underline that Church and Independent Schools, whilst acknowledging the same concerns (couched in the terms of a ‘challenge’) expressed by Colleges and State Schools (mostly couched in terms of a ‘difficulty’ or ‘issue’) have explicitly expressed their apprehension that the implementation of the education principles espoused in the NCF will have considerable impact on teacher and other supporting staff capacity as well as facilities and supporting structures and systems - an impact for which they do not have the financial resources to address.

Church and Independent Schools unequivocally underline that, on their own, they are not in a position to fully implement the draft NCF. It is stated that for Church and Independent Schools to implement the draft NCF the MEDE is to render accessible to them resources that it is directing to State Schools – ranging from training of teachers; design of supporting materials for teachers; access to the e-Learning platform and content, etc.

Some argue that the draft NCF if implemented will bring increased teacher responsibilities and the employment and pay conditions of teachers would, therefore, have to reflect the new responsibilities.

The issue is raised by teachers in the Primary education cycle that a consequence of the draft NCF is that they “are expected to become a Jack of all trades, with the fear that we might end up being masters of none” – compounded by the “fact” that “most” may not be equipped with the necessary skills to teach subjects like technology or digital literacy.

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<tr>
<th>Autonomy</th>
<th>The feedback provided by Schools is that whilst the draft NCF espouses the principles of autonomy, in the actual detail of the recommendations proposed the NCF is in fact introducing a ‘centralised’ regime.</th>
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Two issues are consistently brought up in this regard by Schools. The first relates to the timetables proposed in the draft NCF. Most Schools interpreted the recommendations on the time-table - a feeling that is more persistent amongst Primary School educators - as an attempt by the NCF to introduce an ‘one size’ fits all boiler plate structure across Schools even though individual schools would, over time, have developed a School timetable that works for their particular students.
The second relates to the pilot Form I syllabus introduced for the scholastic year 2011/12. The pilot Form I syllabus is criticised, particularly by State Schools, as being far prescriptive and that as a result of such prescription it neutralises the professional value of teachers as well as the teachers’ judgement with regard to how they manage their students in class.3

A consistent position presented in the consultation feedback by Colleges and Schools is that teachers (as well as Heads of School) should be provided with far more autonomy: with autonomy to include, amongst others, involvement in the selection of student text books and flexibility with regard to the teaching delivery approaches they adopt in a Classroom to meet the requirements of the syllabus for respective subject.

The general response to the draft NCF on this matter is that it does not emphasise ‘autonomy’ strongly enough. There is a fear that once the NCF is finalised, Education Officers (EO) will seek to interpret the NCF in a restrictive manner so that they retain control to the extent possible. A key recommendation to counter the realisation of such an event is that the post consultation NCF document should be unequivocal with regard to the autonomy and flexibility that is to be decentralised to Schools and teachers.

Church and Independent Schools express disappointment to the restricted recognition that the NCF provides to the character, identity and autonomy of such Schools and the best practice teaching models that they have secured over time. Church and Independent schools underline that they have developed best practice curricula with great responsibility for the benefit of the students and that they should be allowed to continue to do so.

One important criticism presented by Church schools is that such Schools have at the heart of their essence the spiritual and moral development of the students placed under their care and that they do not focus solely on learning but also on the development of holistic skills that the School can give its students a chance in life. In this regard, the NCF is perceived as an attempt to limit the Church’s school autonomy with regard to religious teaching.

The reaction to the recommendation in the draft NCF with regard to the devolution of the design of College based examinations was generally mixed - and where the reaction expressed is in the negative the main concern raised relates to the danger that current standardised settings may be compromised.

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<th>Aims of Education</th>
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<tr>
<td>Lifelong Learning</td>
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<td>Employability</td>
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3 Revisions have in effect already taken place following a review exercise during the first term of the scholastic year 2011/12 by the Department of Curriculum Management
In the few instances where this aim for education is debated the feedback is mixed. The statement is made that focus of the curriculum should be broader than that of rendering future adults who are employable in the labour market.

It is articulated that an education system should also imbue a value system within students that would result in a far more understanding, embracing democratic society that is able to challenge negative societal behaviour through positively addressing issues such as sexism, racism, dissenting views, etc.

Additionally, it was stated whilst it is important for students to be active in the economy, within a context of too much emphasis on education as the preparation of workers to fit the economy, it is felt that the draft NCF makes no mention of the need for a critical approach to the economy and work. It is believed that changes in this regard should be towards transformation rather than the preservation of the status quo and for this purpose it is proposed that this Aim is amended to read: “learners are capable of reading their world with the aim of transforming it”.

One Church School, on the other hand, states “students are not well prepared for work / job opportunities” whilst another one states that its practitioners welcome the notion that the “labour market is being included as a stakeholder in our National Educational Project” - although it underlines that the purpose of education is not solely that of developing potential workers and emphasises the need for “vigilance” to continue to educate values and teach subjects which may offer little potential to a future career but offer much in the development of a fully participative, mature, positive, well balanced and socially conscious citizens.

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<th>Early Years, Primary Education and Learning Areas</th>
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<td>Early Years and Primary Education</td>
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<td>There is positive feedback pertaining to the importance that the draft NCF assigns to a child's foundation in his or her educational cycle - a recognition that the draft NCF, for the first time in the design of education national curricula, gives due importance to a child's early formulative years to his or her educational development.</td>
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<td>There is agreement with regard to the proposed focus in the Early Year towards providing and gearing a holistic education for the child - and that the draft NCF, as proposed, will assist a child in the Early Years to develop a better sense of well being during School and to become a more confident and independent child.</td>
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<td>There is general agreement with regard to the position adopted in the draft NCF to bridge the gap in the transition years between Kinder and Year 1 of Primary education.</td>
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<td>Observations raised in this regard include, but are not limited to the following:</td>
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<td>- Given the large difference between Kinder and Year 1, children who do not reach the necessary skills levels or are struggling with language competencies should not be allowed to progress to Year 1.</td>
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- The curriculum of Secondary education should build upon the Primary education curriculum and that the transition has to consolidate and build upon the learning experiences of Primary education and prepare learners for the wider challenges they will face. The curriculum should shape the students for later on in life and should build upon the strengths of children.

- Kinder Year 2 should constitute a sound preparation for formal schooling - it is, underlined, that it is not acceptable that children in Year 1 of Primary education do not know how to hold a pencil and that children in Year 2 of Primary education do not know how to write their names. Be that as it may, it is also stated that once a Child move Year 1 of the Primary education cycle that child is expected to grow up and start formal learning – a change which is seen as too challenging and the result of a demanding syllabus which the teacher has to follow, regardless of the different abilities within one class.

- The concern is expressed that within the space of one scholastic year a child is expected to move from learning the formation of letters to writing whole sentences – a learning process that does not reflect the smooth transition proposed in the draft National Curriculum Framework.

- There is need for further analysis to understand why children in State Primary Schools are not attaining the requisite level of literacy skills over a six year period; and why students who struggle are allowed to reach Year 6 of the Primary level of education with limited literacy skills. One of the recommendations proposed in this regard is the design of a Policy for Early Intervention.

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<tr>
<th>Languages</th>
<th>Education</th>
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| There is quasi universal agreement on the need of a National Language Policy – though there is considerable difference of thought with regard to what orientation such a policy should take. It is pertinent to underline that a particular school of thought mooted was the need to develop a National Framework on Literacy. The following are some of the different views expressed on the issue of the application of language in the Classroom:

- English should be given more importance as standards are falling “drastically” - with an increasing number of students who are “illiterate in the English language”.

- Code-switching should not be allowed during language lessons.

- Code-switching should be at the discretion of the teacher.

- Cold-switching should be limited only in lessons that involve challenging concepts - Mathematics, Science, etc – with exception of use of English in Primary Years should be limited to the use of Maltese in Religion, Social Studies and Maltese.

- Multi-lingualism is a reality in the classroom due to mixed nationalities. Code-switching is, therefore, quasi inevitable, given the fact that a teacher is faced with a mixed ability classroom.

- It is important that teaching of English language is strengthened given that it is the common language used for research by means of the Internet and other ways.

- Primary School teachers should be given the opportunity to teach one language so that the students may associate the language with the teacher.
Colleges are to adopt a different language policy that allows mathematical and scientific concepts to be explained in English and Maltese— which in turn demands that the examination paper is set in Maltese and English.

- Language subjects should be delivered in the specific language of the subject being taught.

- Once an explanation is started in a specific language it should be completed by that language and no code-switching should be allowed.

It is pertinent to add, that a particular issue expressed by a College is that a “majority” of teachers code-switch between Maltese and English when delivering a lesson is because they are “not competent to use the English language consistently” during a lesson.

The feedback to the draft NCF was positive to the fact that Languages as a LA is promoting the 4 language skills - resulting in the teaching of a positive communicative language.

Maltese

There is consensus that the a new NCF must ensure that every effort should be made to value Maltese and give it the dignity it deserves as a national language.

There is concern, however, that the Maltese syllabus is too rigid and loaded— forcing the teachers to prepare students to ‘pass’ the examination as against building a strong foundation that would serve a student well in life.

There is also a general concern that, as the trends in the MATSEC examinations seem to indicate, that parents give more attention to the learning of English than to Maltese.

The increase in the number of lessons in the Maltese subject is unanimously well received.

A further concern expressed is that teachers have limited resources available to support them in the teaching of Maltese - for example, text books available do not reflect the new rules on the orthography of the Maltese language and there is limited e-Content in Maltese.

An additional concern raised is that a number of students who are not sitting for the Maltese MATSEC examination is increasing.

English

The following is representation of the main matters raised in the consultation process:

- In the event that the recommendation in the draft NCF to separate English Language and Literature and where-in English Literature is offered only as an Option Subject it is proposed that those students who do not select English Literature should have an extra lesson in the foreign language option.

- English Literature as an Option Subject in Form 3 (Year 9) may result in fewer students choosing this subject due to the fact that it is not popular amongst students.

- The English syllabus as currently structured does not reflect the aims of the draft NCF.
A concern raised is that a number of students are not sitting for the English SEC examination is increasing.

Foreign

The feedback response to the introduction of a third foreign language in Primary level of education is mixed – though it borders toward the negative. Those who took a position against the introduction of a third foreign language present the following arguments:

- There is a need for more emphasis on the grafting of the basics of Maltese and English prior to including other languages and subjects.

- The introduction of a third foreign language "steals" time that could otherwise be allocated by the teacher to help children assimilate skills in English, Maltese and Mathematics.

With regards to the teaching of foreign languages at the Secondary level of education there is disagreement with the recommendation to allocate 3 lessons a week for 5 years to the teaching and learning of Foreign Languages – which if implemented is expected to jeopardise the attainment of the expected learning outcomes at Form V (Level 11) level.

Mathematics

The consultation feedback on Mathematics as a LA is limited. One statement put forward is that whilst the principles and objectives underpinning the Mathematics Area were perceived to be sound the discussion about Mathematics in draft NCF seems to be void of new proposals and innovations.

Where a discussion ensues, the general concern expressed is that the syllabus content for the Mathematics subject is vast and leaves little time for discussion, hands on work, and projects.

There, also, is a quasi unanimous view that setting in Mathematics should remain - though some argue that it should be re-defined and consolidated.

One particular issue raised is that the draft NCF does not refer to the use of "mental work" which, however, it is given due importance in the benchmarking and SEC examinations.

There is also agreement that the use of modern technology to teach Mathematics is a positive development since this helps students to visualise abstract concepts – though the concern is expressed that the current e-Learning content available today is limited, and work is required to integrate it in the teaching of Mathematics.

A view that is presented is that Mathematics is easily adaptable to be more hands-on and practical through the application of "to life" notions and the recommendation is presented that an 'Everyday Mathematics' subject is introduced as an Option subject leading to a SEC examination.

There is also agreement amongst teachers, particularly in Colleges, that the subject cannot always be taught in English as some students have problems understanding the subject; and as with Science, the examination paper should be presented in Maltese as well as English.

Additionally, it is proposed that it is important to introduce investigative and problem solving activities as early as possible in the Primary level of education.
It is stated that the method of teaching Mathematics in Primary State Schools is too complicated with one method applied up to Year 3 and then a vertical method of borrowing and carrying introduced in Year 4. It is stated that this leads to unnecessary complications especially for low achievers and too often confusing parents who were educated on the vertical method of borrowing.

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<th>Science Education</th>
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| The draft NCF vision is on the whole welcomed (and it is expressed by all stakeholders that the NCF should have been complemented by similar well defined visions for all of the LAs proposed).

There is, in the main, a recognition that the proposed Core Science subject will allow for a more holistic approach to the teaching of Science.

It is pertinent to underline that there is agreement with the concept presented in the draft NCF that the teaching of Science should be “inquiry based”: that Science should not be a "dry" subject but that it should actively involve a student's participation through "applied exercises and experimentation".

Nonetheless, it is underlined that there is a gap between the principles as espoused in the NCF and what is actually happening in Schools. It is expressed that the new ‘pilot’ Form I (Year 7) syllabus is too loaded – which is not only at cross purposes with but defeats the general principles and aims of education set in the draft NCF that learning should be inquiry based.

Additionally, a further general concern expressed relates to the proposed allocation of 45 minutes for a Science lesson. It is stated that it is not possible to achieve ‘inquiry’ based teaching of Science within such a short time period.

A particular concern raised is that there may be a significant cohort of teachers who will not have the desired level of competence or qualifications to teach certain Sciences modules and that this will result in a lower standard of teaching. There is agreement that well planned re-skilling is required with current teachers who are mainly grounded in Mathematics and Physics.

Concern is expressed on the recommendation that a student is limited to choose two Science subjects. This position is seen to be limiting given that students who wish to follow a career in Engineering do not need to take two Science subjects when the important subject that is required for this career is Physics.

A further consequential danger of the requirement that compels students to choose two Science subjects will lead them, or under the influence of their parents, to opt for the Core Science subject instead as this may be perceived to be a potentially easier option (which, in the main, is the way the proposed Core Science Subject is interpreted). In this regard, the feedback recommends that the Core Science subject should have the same standard level as the other three Science subjects.

Moreover, there is a danger that the placement of Physics as an Option subject may result in a state of play where few students will select Physics given that it is perceived to be a “difficult” subject.

There is also agreement amongst teachers, particularly in Colleges, that Science subjects cannot always be taught in English as some students have problems understanding the lesson unless this is presented in Maltese. It so follows, therefore, that the examination papers for the Science subjects should be presented in Maltese as well as English.
With regard to the teaching of Science in Primary Schools, the concept presented within the draft NCF that the subject should be taught through play and experimentation and where it is leveraged as a vehicle to develop a child's natural curiosity is perceived as pertinent and important.

The statement is presented that the teaching of Science in Primary Schools should be strengthened so that pupils moving into Form I (Level 7) have a basic foundation of Science. Additionally, it is proposed that there is a need for a common framework for a Primary Science curriculum that specifies learning outcomes at different cognitive levels directed to meet the needs of all students.

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<th>Technology</th>
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<td>The ensuing discussion in the consultation process on this LA is limited. Where presented the feedback was primarily directed towards the teaching of ICT as a subject and Digital Literacy as against Technology Education as a LA. Thus for example, one recommendation put forward is that one needs to differentiate between the visual and scientific subjects. Graphical communication, Technical Design, Computer Studies, ICT, Design and Technology should not be placed in the same basket and it is proposed that the subjects could be divided into Technology and Design and Digital Technology / Literacy. The key concern raised is that the number of students in a Technology class is far too large and given that the teaching of Technology requires hands on laboratory practice and project work it becomes difficult to adequately reach all of the students. It is proposed that the size of a Technology class should be similar to that now established for a Science class.</td>
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<th>Health Education</th>
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<td>There is agreement that the priority assigned to Health Education (HhE) in the NCF is a positive development given that Malta is one of the top three European countries with high incidences in health conditions such as Obesity and Diabetes II. It is, for example, recommended that legislation should be introduced that does not allow mobile vans selling junk food to be within 200m of the school during school time given that they present a contradiction with the educational message on healthy living. Be that as it may, it is remarked that there needs to be a clearer explanation in final post consultation NCF report of what is expected of, and the role of the CT in the Primary School as opposed to the Teacher Specialist in the teaching of PE. Statements in the draft NCF that seem to imply that a PE teacher assumes responsibility for HhE classes are misleading and may be interpreted by CTs that they do not have the appropriate skills for this LA. The final post consultation NCF report should, also, be clear with regards to the launch of lessons that are to be allotted in the HhE LA. It is stated that there is much confusion and uncertainty amongst PE, Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Home Economics teachers on how they will be affected and what role they are expected to play. Teachers of PSD in State Schools are universally in agreement with regard to:</td>
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<tr>
<td>- The number of lessons identified for PSHE is not clearly articulated.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- The draft NCF neither makes reference to nor is it congruent with the Career Guidance Policy and Strategy for Compulsory Schooling in Malta which states that PSD should be allocated two lessons a week.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- There is no reason for the title to be changed from PSD to PSHE.

- The development of Personal and Social Skills is secured through specific pedagogy that is applied only in PSD and which the draft NCF takes no consideration of given its readiness to interchange PSD with Citizenship, Home Economics and HE.

- PSD has 3 elements: information; skills development; and service to students where-in they can talk, are monitored, and feedback presented - a service which is not supposed to have an outcome in terms of knowledge or skills but is a maintenance for feelings and emotional management - and surveys show that PSD is a favourite subject with students.

- Self esteem, communications, relationship building, puberty and sexuality are the staple of PSD and require, at least 2 sessions, weekly for these skills to be developed.

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### Home Economics

There is general agreement that Home Economics (HmE) sessions should be timetabled and offered in all schools. It is suggested that the subject should be mandatory for all students and that it should be taught by specialist HmE teachers to avoid confusing students with conflicting nutrition and healthy eating messages.

In general, there is disagreement (expressed also by PSD teachers) on the draft NCF recommendation that PSD and HmE are integrated.

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### Physical Education

The feedback on PE is limited. Amongst the observations made on PE are the following:

- The NCF’s reference to PE and sport as a means to develop a child’s physical skills and agility needs to be revised as it restricts PE to just skills and agility.

- Objection is expressed to swimming being missing from list of PE activities and this is seen to be contrary to the aim of education as proposed in NCF on the development of skills and competencies for LLL.

- Physical Literacy should be included as one of the aims of development in the NCF.

- Physical / psychomotor competences are missing from the list of 5 competences set in the draft NCF and that these should be introduced.

- The term 'Sport' is to be used separately from PE – the latter is to be timetabled while the former should be referred to as an extracurricular activity.

The general consensus is that the number of lessons for PE should increase.

With regard to Primary Schools, there is a unanimous rejection of the recommendation in the draft NCF to introduce a 30 minute daily PE lesson - the reasons vary from issues relating to what uniform is to be worn for School to the logistical impact this would have on other subjects.

Primary School teachers raise the concern that they are not trained to teach PE – and that the teaching of PE requires a Specialised Teacher who can manage and monitor the physical changes in the children.
Citizenship Education

The feedback with regard to the introduction of citizenship Education (CE) as a LA is mixed.

One important point that is made is that the draft NCF should secure a clear definition of what is meant by Citizenship Education. It is argued that there is a dire need for students to become aware of real life situations as only thus can they become critical thinkers discussing, among other perspectives, causes and effects, change and continuity, etc. It is further stated that students need help to discover their local, national, regional identities and that Citizenship Education should start at the primary level.

Those who support this recommendation state that the introduction of CE as a LA:

- will ensure that every person should know his / her rights and responsibilities vis-a-vis his / her country.
- will ensure that citizenship increases awareness of general knowledge, culture issues and what is happening around one's self.

A limited discussion takes place on whether the title of the LA is the most appropriate. One recommendation, for example, is that it is more appropriate for this LA to be titled 'Humanities'.

Those who disagree with the introduction of CE as a LA underline that:

- Not all teachers are qualified to teach a subject that integrates the three areas of History, Geography, and Social Studies.
- The recommendation for the CE LA as presented diminishes important topics that are tackled in individual subjects: whilst, for example, there, it is recognised that there are important cross curricular links between History, Geography, Environment and Social Studies there is a strong general concern, however, that the integrity and autonomy of each of these subject areas will be significantly reduced if the recommendation on CE is implemented as presented in the draft NCF.

History

There is uncertainty across Schools whether History will still be considered as Option Subject. There is consensus that History should remain a separate subject that is allocated the appropriate hours that will lead to a MATSEC examination.

Geography

There is uncertainty across Schools whether Geography will still be considered as Option Subject. There is consensus that Geography should remain a separate subject that is allocated the appropriate hours that will lead to a MATSEC examination.

Social Studies

There is uncertainty across Schools whether Social Studies will still be considered as Option Subject. There is consensus that Social Studies should remain a separate subject that is allocated the appropriate hours that will lead to a MATSEC examination.

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4 This uncertainty was the result of a publishing error where Geography as an Option subject was inadvertently omitted in the English Version of the draft NCF.
5 This uncertainty was the result of a publishing error where Social Studies as an Option subject was inadvertently omitted in the English Version of the draft NCF.
The recommendations with regard to the Religion Education (RE) LA generates considerable debate and leads to different views - which include, but are not limited, to:

- Religious instruction at school should be minimal and that emphasis should be directed to the imparting of moral values, which are deemed to be of importance in today’s world.

- Myriad RE should provide instruction on different beliefs to develop tomorrow's adults to be receptive to an inclusive environment and so that mutual respect is promoted.

- That in Years 4 to 6 of Primary Education there should be no RE examination given that Religion is about personal and social responsibility, dignity and the creation of a better society.

- The timetable allocated to RE should be reduced as children have to compulsory follow Roman Catholic faith doctrine classes to proceed to take the sacraments.

- The Maltese Constitution identifies that the religion of the Malta is the Roman Catholic religion and given that the overwhelming majority of the Maltese population are Roman Catholic religion, RE based on the Roman Catholic faith, should continue to be taught, unapologetically, in Schools.

- There is general agreement that an Ethics subject should be introduced for those students whose parents do not wish them to be taught or brought up in the Roman Catholic faith. Be that as it may, there is no agreement on how such an Ethics subject is to be designed and implemented, who is to design the curriculum for this subject, etc.

- There is a recognition that there may be teachers who do not have the appropriate skills-set to teach Ethics and, therefore, the introduction of Ethics as a subject should be supported by the appropriate training to the teachers who will be assigned responsibility for this subject.

Church Schools are unanimous in the view that the essence of their Schools is the fact that this education system is deeply rooted in a core set of beliefs derived from the Gospel and that the Catholic Schools aim to educate a community of service to society. The position of Church Schools is that a final post consultation NCF report is to be explicit on the right of a Church School not to provide an alternative to Catholic Religious Education. Church schools underline that teaching of Ethics is not recognised as an alternative to a Catholic Religious Education.

Additionally, Church Schools underline that 2 lessons weekly for the RE is not enough to uphold the Catholic ethos.

There is general consensus that in the Early Years creative art should be taught through a cross curriculum approach and integrated in the other subjects as a means of expressive art. Thus, it is recommended that Primary School teachers should receive appropriate adequate training in at least one or more art disciplines and that they should be assisted by professional teaching support through the college network or from cultural institutions and / or artists.

A particular consideration presented is that the Arts Education (AE) LA should be designed with a broader focus than extending the ability of students who seek to major in its different domains. Rather, it is argued, the AE LA should be directed to:
- Improve the artistic and appreciative abilities of students.
- Help students develop skills to express opinions and appreciate art.
- Encourage the development of students’ abilities and increase their level of artistic skills.
- Appreciate different kinds of art and respect those who create them.
- Develop and embellish the surrounding environment such as school and home.

The feedback from Colleges is generally negative. The main concerns raised include:
- The goals presented in the draft NCF on this LA may be difficult to implement as current conditions do not facilitate the attainment of such goals.
- The resources available for Music and, to a lesser extent, for Art need to be strengthened.
- In the Art option difficulties arise in integrating students who chose the subject in Form I (Year 7) with those who choose the subject in Form III (Year 9).
- In the event that an art lesson in a particular week is missed this has an negative impact on the teaching of Art given that the time allotted for Art is further restricted: it is alleged, for example, only one lesson a month allocated for Drama.

One particular recommendation argues for the incorporation of music, visual and performing arts to be placed under the mandate of a special College focusing on Creativity - which would support Schools by providing the services and resources as appropriate.

### Other Subjects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocational Subjects</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The consultation feedback on Vocational subjects is limited. Where a discussion ensues there is agreement with the recommendation to reintroduce vocational subjects within the curriculum. Be that as it may, a number of issues are raised – primarily:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- The proposed way forward is narrow when compared to previous trade schools.
- Vocational subjects require hands-on activity by students so that they see relevance between life and learning - yet the time allotted for the Vocational subject does not seem sufficient which will limit the time for hands-on projects.
- It is believed that it will be difficult to adapt Vocational subjects to a differentiated teaching environment.

Where expressed, there is consensus amongst teachers that other models are required to reach students who are not interested in the academic aspects of education.
Accounts and Economics

The discussion in this regard is limited. Where discussed, agreement is expressed with the re-introduction of Accounts as an option subject in State Schools - a practice which has, however, been maintained in many Church and Independent Schools. It is recommended that the regulation that exists at MATSEC level that students cannot sit for Accounts and Economics with Business Studies is removed especially given that the syllabi of these three subjects has developed over the years and focus on different areas.

ICT

The feedback presented on ICT is limited. Where expressed the following are considered to be salient points raised:

(i) As designed, the draft NCF gives rise to the risk that State Primary School students moving into Form 1 (Year 7) of the Secondary level of education will not have the level of Digital Literacy desired. Indeed, a concern is expressed that school research carried out by students in Form V (Year 11) of the Secondary level of education is not being carried out well as a significant number of students lack the basic skills of how to properly navigate the Internet for research purposes.

(ii) It is argued that more ICT resources are required. The presence of one IT Support teacher, for example, amongst 8 Primary schools within a College results is a considerable constraint. Moreover, there is a need for an increased number of skilled IT technicians to support both the Computer Laboratory as well as to provided technical support to teachers in Secondary Schools.

(iii) It is recommended by certain State Schools that students should be allowed to carry out home work and projects electronically as well as encouraged to make good use of the Internet for research purposes - thereby rendering students to become e-literate to the extent possible from an early age. On the other hand, certain Church and Independent schools state that they encourage the use of ICT for school work assigned, for providing information to parents on the child’s performance, for work covered by teachers, etc.

(iv) It is recommended that teaching ICT through an experiential approach is more effective than the current College (unit teaching) and Church School (spiral) approaches. It is argued that an experimental based approach builds up knowledge and fosters problem-solving skills. This is seen to be far more effective as it allows students to solve a problem / task through different methods and approaches in so far that they manage their time effectively. The application of such an approach to the teaching of ICT allows a teacher to become an observer and mentor of the problem-solving skills of a student as the student acquires and hones his or her all-adaptability and improvisation skills.

A particular general concern raised on the teaching and pervasive presence of ICT within the School room environment and outside of it is that students may be "overloaded" with technology at the expense that it will negatively affect their social skills.

Additionally, it is expressed that Schools in designing ICT school work and programmes should take into account that there are students who do not have access to a computer as well as the Internet at home and thus measures are to be designed to assure that such students have access to technology.
Moreover, the overuse of ICT by students for chatting, gaming, etc. is seen as an issue which limits students time for exercise and face to face socialising as well as it leaves a negative influence of text messages on writing skills.

Financial Literacy

The introduction of a Financial Literacy programme, which was promised in the National 2011 Budget, should be introduced in the NCF directed at students in Secondary Schools.

A Financial Literacy programme should be based on the following modules: (i) Making Choices; (ii) My Earnings; (iii) Saving Up; (iv) Spending; (v) Helping others; (vi) Debt and Debt Management; (vii) Planning.

Cross Curricular Themes

The general response is that the Cross Curricular concept is a positive innovation that would help students to understand better important complex matters such as diversity, sustainable development, financial capability, well being, etc.

There is a recognition, however, that a Cross Curriculum thematic approach to learning can only succeed if CTs are provided with the appropriate support such as, for example, guidelines of how thematic themes are to be embedded across the LAs, the preparation of material, etc.

Be that as it may, it is recommended that the final post consultation NCF document should present a far more detailed articulation of how the Cross Curricular approach to education will be achieved, the supporting structures that will be in place to assist teachers with the ability to apply this approach, etc.

Additionally, it is stated that the current approach to EOs would need to change once the Cross Curriculum thematic approach is adopted given that, it is alleged, that EOs too often tend to work in silos - within the narrow confines of their respective area / subject of responsibility.

One Independent Primary School that has introduced a Cross Curricular approach to teaching underlines that this approach is best taught through the design of a pre-set syllabus that links the subjects together. It is nevertheless recognised that current textbooks do not support a Cross Curricular approach which means that the CTs require to compile their own workbooks on the Cross Curricular linkage.

e-Learning

The feedback with regard to e-Learning in State schools, though limited, is positive. Particular matters raised in the consultation feedback include:

- The training provided to date on the Interactive White Boards (IWB) is not sufficient and will not allow for the optimal use of the technology as a pedagogical tool.

- Teachers require on-going and extensive support on how they are to integrate e-Learning within their respective pedagogical approach as well as how it will complement the teaching of the subject syllabus.

- Teachers will not be in a position to develop the e-Content and that the MEDE is to ensure that it builds the appropriate critical mass that will secure a sustained basis for the provision and updating of e-Content.
- The IWBs in State Primary schools are fixed at a height that renders it difficult for pupils to use the Boards.

- IWBs should be linked to the Internet as otherwise they will not be optimally maximised.

Church and Independent schools present e-Learning as one of the resource areas that they are not in a position to finance, and where-in they expect that the Government will make available to them the necessary access to the MEDE’s e-Learning platform as well as the supporting e-Content.

Indeed, e-Learning is presented as one of the examples where the principle of ‘entitlement’ that underpins the draft NCF will fail to be met as in the absence of support students attending Church and Independent schools will, for financial reasons, be denied access to.

| Education for Sustainable Development | The consultation feedback on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) as a Cross Curriculum theme is limited. Where a discussion ensues, emphasis is placed on the importance of the College becoming a role model in the application and implementation of this theme by involving teachers, students and parents to help the College become a “living” ESD zone.

   It is proposed that this can:

   - Involving students in green friendly projects such as renewable energy, recycling, landscaping, etc.

   - The application of Green procurement.

   - The application of a health food policy for the Tuck Shop, and extracurricular activities, etc. |

| Education for Entrepreneurship; and Creativity and Innovation* | The consultation feedback on the Cross Curriculum themes Education for Entrepreneurship and Creativity and Innovation, is limited. Where a discussion ensues there is agreement with the introduction of EIC as Cross Curriculum themes - though some express the view that the element of class control as a direct result of a subject's syllabus content is so regimental that it defeats the draft NCF's aims with regard to EIC.

   The view is presented that skills such as curiosity, autonomy, creativity, initiative and team spirit are essential and which the education system should strive to inculcate and instill in the "DNA" of tomorrow's adults. Be that as it may, it is expressed that unless such skills are formally recognised within the curriculum and that subject syllabi are re-structured by considerable cropping of content to allow for such inculcation, the principles and aims for education established in the NCF will remain aspirations which will not be realised.

   Furthermore, the statement is also made that Entrepreneurship as a cross thematic theme as used in the document is misleading and that the draft NCF seeks to try to satisfy needs imposed elsewhere. It is added that a closer look at what entrepreneurship means in the NCF document reveals that what is meant is very different from the meaning commonly attributed to the term. It is proposed that the word ‘entrepreneurship’ needs to change to reflect what is actually intended. |

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* Please refer to note 3 in Chapter 01.
There is consensus that students should be exposed to “entrepreneurial” activities such as the holding of “Jumble Sale” activities for a particular course, the organisation of School cooperatives such as SCOOPS, participation in Young Enterprise, etc - activities which would help to spur the EIC spirit within children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intercultural Education</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is unanimous agreement amongst Colleges that the number and presence of foreign students from different countries with different cultural and religious backgrounds has increased considerably over the past years.</td>
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</table>

A concern expressed unanimously is that most of these students upon joining a school have a poor understanding of English and / or Maltese (at times if at all) which creates difficulties in imparting knowledge to such students. As disconcerting is that the language limitations render it far harder and painful for such students to integrate.

A general recommendation is that Colleges should have an intensive fast track Maltese and / or English programme that is provided to such a student (and to his or her parents) to ensure that the student reaches a basic understanding of Maltese and / or English, as the case may be, in the shortest time possible.

Additionally, it is further recommended that given the increasing reality of multi-cultural classrooms teachers should be trained on how they are to manage and handle a multi-cultural environment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effective Learning and Learning Environment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The consultation feedback expresses positive recognition with regard to the fact that the draft NCF takes into account today’s realities and tomorrow's requirements: changes which demand that the curriculum framework is kept under constant review in order to ensure that children do indeed receive a sound education that will serve them well in their adult life.</td>
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</table>

Moreover, the approach in the draft NCF that seeks to achieve interaction between teachers and students is seen to be a positive measure that will facilitate a teacher’s ability to identify the skills and abilities of each individual student — and, thus, the principle of a student centric approach that underpins the NCF is seen to be positive.

Additionally, there is general positive response to the fact that the draft NCF seeks to prepare students from a young age by teaching them the necessary skills they need to allow them to develop into independent and active persons in society – as well as the fact that the focus for learning is directed towards inquiry based learning.

It is further proposed that EOs should work ongoing with teachers to identify best practice of how best to implement the proposed Cross Curriculum thematic approach to education. On learning and the learning environment in Primary Schools, the majority view is that:

- Children should be exposed to more hands on activities which should be concurrent with information, explanations, etc.
- Children should be diagnosed very early and parents should be made aware of early intervention programmes to help their child develop into a better learner.

- There should be increased promotion of hands on activities; different activities within the same lesson in group work and where each group is rotated; preparing activities for pupils with different needs, etc.

- Greater emphasis should be directed towards nurturing children to develop a positive and resilient approach to life, healthy lifestyle and basic understanding of personal and social responsibilities as well as how one’s choices and actions may positively and negatively influence oneself, others, communities and the environment.

The view, however, is also presented that the learning environment presented in the draft NCF is far too broad with regard to the skills, values and attitudes that it presents. This leads to the risk of a loss of focus leading to diluted emphasis on what the education authorities consider to be the main priorities for the foreseeable future.

It is proposed that the NCF should, explicitly, state that literacy, numeracy and digital competences should be the main focus of the national curriculum as they are the basis for the successful development of the full potential of children as LLL, the ability to sustain their chances in the world of work and their engagement in a constantly changing world.

A particular issue raised by most stakeholders is that the draft NCF provides no certainty with regard to the disposition of those institutions responsible for Post-Secondary and Higher Education to accept the changes presented in the NCF and to incorporate them not only in their admission regulations but also in their respective education systems.

The considered opinion is that certainty is required for a seamless transition between the compulsory education framework as espoused in the NCF for the Primary and Secondary cycles of education and the Post-Secondary and Tertiary education environments. It is emphatically argued that if there is no such seamless transition then the likely event is a deconstruction of the student’s learning process garnered during the Primary and Secondary cycles of education as a student would migrate from an inquiry based education environment to a prescriptive and content imposed environment in Post-Secondary education.

The reference to gender is limited. A recommendation presented is that the drafting of a new NCF presents an opportunity to re-visit whether State and Church Schools, similar to Independent Schools, should become gender mixed at Primary and Secondary school levels.

One other statement put forward is that whilst the draft NCF refers to the need to cater for diversity, it does not consider gender as a form of diversity that, it is argued, cannot be left out. It is underlined that the NCF should consider the issue of co-education as a means of furthering this aim.

On a wider level it is stated that there does not seem to be a gender perspective to the NCF that attempts to address Malta’s patriarchal society – which would help to counter the emphasis on the participation of women in the labour market on purely economic reasons.
Differentiated Teaching

Most Schools agree with the principle of differentiation – and there is a recognition that the current education system as it stands today works against students with basic and lower abilities.

It is pertinent to underline that both Church and Independent schools state that they have adopted or are in the process of implementing a differentiated teaching environment. Amongst experiences learnt by Church and Independent Schools, and shared in the consultation feedback are the following:

- The application of a core curriculum around which values, skills and knowledge that are important to everyday life on all subjects - Mathematics, Religion, Languages, History, Science, etc - suggest that this is a sound way forward.

- As is discussed later in this Section, the importance of breaking a class in different groups to allow for a more individual and personalised level of teaching.

Be that as it may, however, most Colleges raise concerns, in part or otherwise, with regard to the differentiated teaching concept presented in the draft NCF. It should be noted that such concerns, to varying levels of degree, are expressed by all Colleges - though the language of expression by some Colleges on this principle of effective learning and teaching is very direct and explicit.

Whilst the concerns raised are many, the following constitute a general trend of the issues and challenges raised in the consultation feedback:

- A differentiated teaching environment is directed towards the ‘average’ student which means that Malta will create a future society that accepts ‘average’ as a norm.

- Lack of streaming is creating considerable problems on teachers and students alike - and inadvertently, as different assessment are given to different students in the same class the teacher is indirectly streaming and labeling students.

- A differentiated teaching environment is not reflective of real life: real life is competitive and future adults should be made aware of this as otherwise they will suffer as adults.

- A consequence of the differentiated teaching environment is that students who are ‘high flyers’ will not be sufficiently challenged to achieve their full potential.

- Stigmatisation will still take place: it will happen within the Classroom as high flyers and above average students will refuse to team up with students who are recognised to be weak or poor as such students will be seen to drag the quality of work of the said high flyer students down or that they would have to carry the poorer students.
- There are major challenges for CTs to deliver in a differentiated environment that would need to be overcome given that, for example, a differentiated teaching environment demands more resources than that required under the traditional education system and yet, it is alleged primarily by State Schools that today they are still not provided with the appropriate resources required. One example repeatedly presented in the consultation feedback is that in a differentiated setting CTs need support from classroom aides and other sources in order to cope with the planning, preparation, delivery, assessment and monitoring needed for effective teaching in a differentiation environment.

- 4 differentiated schemes in the current syllabus of the Mathematics subject are viewed to be far too much, with the two bottom schemes (C and D) leading to "nowhere".

- A need to explain to parents what a differentiated approach to education means as parents may fail to understand why their child is not provided the same level of homework as other pupils / students in their child's class and are likely to complain that their child is being held back.

### Syllabus

There is quasi unanimous agreement that the NCF will not achieve the outcomes and outputs for which it is designed if the content of the syllabus is not reduced to a far more smaller load that will allow, at the first instance, for a student to learn the basic foundations of each subject, and, thereafter, to develop an inquisitive mind.

It is stated that a negative impact of the current heavily loaded syllabi is the pressure from parents onto the School and the teachers as they demand that the School and teachers meet the syllabus requirements and complete them within the scholastic year. The pressure stemming from the overloaded syllabi and the pressure placed by parents, for the respective syllabi to be met in full results in the existing mechanistic teaching state of play.

There is recognition, therefore, that unless radical and complete change is reached with regard to syllabus design and content then, laudable as an inquiry based approach to education is, its achievement would be defeated by the afore stated pressure points.

There is, also, quasi unanimous agreement that the current syllabi are not realistic and not flexible resulting in an overall frustration amongst both the teacher and the student – as well as the parents who see their children struggling to keep up with the pace of teaching as the curriculum content has to be completed by the end of the scholastic year.

Teachers and educators, particularly in Colleges, are disappointed that the ‘pilot’ Form I Syllabus, which afforded a unique opportunity to break away with the past with regard to syllabus design and content given the principles espoused in the draft NCP, maintained a continuum of the status quo.

One positive remark stated is that the design of a Teaching Objectives Framework to outline the syllabus and a related Learning Outcomes Framework for every year in every LA is an important step forward for teachers as these tools will allow them to identify goals and to be aware of the various strategies that can be used by them in order to render their teaching delivery more effective.
A particular recommendation is that a Syllabus Committee should be set up for every subject to review the current syllabus - which Committee would be constituted of experts, administrators and teachers - and thereby ensuring that the Committee would have access to knowledge and information of the challenges forced by teachers.

With regard to the Syllabus in State Primary schools the following observations are made, which include but are not limited to:

- ABACUS is the only syllabus provided for Kinder and it is suggested that a similar literacy based syllabus should be provided.

- The overall syllabus is vast and too many subjects are taught at the Primary level of education - for example:
  - The syllabus for Year 6 is vast – established to meet the frantic preparation for the Junior Lyceum entry examinations and that the syllabus has not changed even though the entry examination is now removed.
  - The Social Studies syllabus is vast.
  - There are too many Mathematics lessons.
  - The introduction of a third foreign Language distracts from the need to consolidate the learning of the core Languages: Maltese and English.
  - The Year 1 syllabus should be lessened so that the first term, at least, should be dedicated as a reception period for (i) proper pencil control; (ii) proper letter formation; (iii) letter recognition in language.
  - That the teacher’s time with the children could be better spent by organising meaningful activities targeted at the children’s acquisition of basic language skills such as listening, speaking, phonological awareness and reading; before moving on to writing as such.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Outings</th>
<th>School Outings should be revised as there are too many of them and they limit teaching time of core subjects.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extra Curriculum Activities</td>
<td>There is uncertainty on whether School outings and Extra Curricular activities are a formal part of the proposed draft NCF and if clarity is required on how they will be integrated within it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback with regard to School Outings and Extra Curriculum activities was limited - and included the following:</td>
<td>In the event that School outings and Extra Curriculum activities are to be carried out by CTs after school hours then these are to be held against payment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Outings</td>
<td>That whilst parents should be encouraged to attend School outings they should not be allowed to interfere with a teacher's handling of the class and that they should not be allowed to concentrate on taking care of their child. Rather, it is proposed, that parents partaking in such activity should assist the teacher as an “extra pair of eyes” in the supervision of the class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra Curriculum Activities</td>
<td>Parents should be invited in groups of 2 or 3 on a rotation basis and they should be invited well in advance to allow them to prepare and schedule as appropriate.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Special Needs

The key observations raised with regard to special needs include, but are not limited to the following:

- The process that leads to the identification of statementing for Individual Education Needs (IEN) and the allocation of appropriate supporting resources, including the assignment of a Learning Support Assistant (LSA), takes too long.

- Students that are statemented are being pushed to reach a standard of education or sit for an examination which they are not capable to attain. It is proposed that examination papers for students with special needs should be adapted to reflect levels they can truly reach.

- Increased support is required for students suffering from Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) and Autism conditions and that more investment is required with regard to the level of Inclusion Coordinator Capacity (INCO) as such support is not present in all schools.

- That when a student is seen by a professional specialist - for example a speech therapist - feedback should always be provided to the teacher.

- Kindergarten Assistants (KAs), teachers and LSAs are only informed at the beginning of the scholastic year of the condition / s of the student / s they are to assist which renders it difficult for them to prepare and make the necessary adaptations to assist the child as appropriately as possible. It is recommended that teachers should be informed as early as possible during the summer period so that the necessary preparatory work can be carried out thoroughly.

There is agreement that the introduction of technology and IWBs increase the reaching out to children with special needs particularly due to the increased use of visuals. It is recommended that there should be an increased use of AE as this is seen to make a significant contribution to the learning environment of students with special needs.

It is stated that there are still a number of Schools where not all of the school facilities and premises are universally accessible to students with special needs.

It is further recommended that the University of Malta should prepare students reading for the teaching profession on how to handle students with learning difficulties.

### Social Needs

Feedback relating to social needs and disciplinary issues is limited, and presentations are submitted.

A particular concern raised in the consultation feedback is that teachers are, at times, abused by some of their students and that the educational framework does not provide the level of support and protection that teachers and educators should receive. This exposure to "abuse" creates stress and pressure on teachers that, at times, results in burn out.

A recommendation on the management of indiscipline and abuse is that the education authorities should design and introduce guidelines on application of discipline. The drafting of such guidelines should be carried out together with teachers, parents and students. Moreover, it is stated, that recognising that they have responsibilities and duties as well as rights. Additionally parents should be educated on the importance of discipline as a tool to nurture for the growth of their children into responsible citizens.
Some feedback responses criticise the draft NCF for assuming that all students are teachable - which is not always the case as teachers face students with low motivation, social difficulties, challenging behaviour, etc who have a negative impact on teaching as well as the learning environment. It is argued that a NCF cannot ignore this aspect of reality within the education system which negatively impacts the learning environment. It is proposed that the final post consultation NCF document should discuss and present recommendations of how such students are integrated within a value system that emphasizes not only students’ rights but also duty and responsibilities.

More generally, the discussion primarily related to but is not limited to the following:

- Although it is recognised that there are support structures for students with challenging behaviour where-in they are routed to attend Learning Support Zones (LSZ) and Learning Support Centres (LSC) when needed, it is stated that are many students whose behaviour is detrimental to other students who are not managed within the existing framework.

- Whilst there is recognition that LSZs are working in some aspects there is concern that the governing policy for LSZs is rigid given that it stipulates that attendance is limited from 6 to 9 weeks and a student once referred cannot be referred again to a LSZ during that as well as the next scholastic year. It is also stated that such a policy should also account on how such students are re-integrated within the classroom environment as, too often, once they are assigned back to the classroom they revert back to their disruptive behaviour.

- Consideration should be given to alternative learning opportunities that allow students who manifest challenging behaviour conditions to acquire skills that are not necessarily academic: such as applied and social skills.

- Students should be educated that they have obligations that they are to live up to, and when they do not meet such obligations, willfully or by intent, then there are consequences.

- Disruptive students together with low academic students should be placed in the same Set group.

- Whilst teachers appreciate the carrying out of complementary lessons to children with challenging behaviour they are concerned that such children will always be missing some lesson or another delivered by the CT: the merits of the 'pull-out' system by complementary teachers is, therefore, debatable.

- Schools should invest time to educate the parents on the importance of discipline and why there may be a need for it to be applied to a student given that parents, at times, rather than working with the School on disciplinary matters, tend to react negatively and seek to defend their child.
The feedback from the consultation also led to the following issues being discussed:

- There is a concern that a differentiated teaching environment may create situations of low self-esteem and a sense of inferiority amongst students with basic skills, and also encourage bullying between students.

- The level of absenteeism is a concern – and it is particularly those students who need individual attention most who are the ones who are frequently absent and generally end up disrupting the lessons.

- Schools should be sensitive and equipped to recognise the different social backgrounds that students come from and that they are able to provide additional appropriate support to such students.

- Schools should provide support not only to students coming from difficult social backgrounds but also to parents: helping the parents to learn how to read and write and other educational - and not necessarily academic - matters.

### Assessment and Evaluation

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<tr>
<th>Assessment and Evaluation</th>
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<tr>
<td>The general feedback is that the examination and assessment framework should constitute a balance of formative and summative assessment: which would provide a fair framework for all students. It is underlined that the adoption of a balanced assessment framework would have to be reflected in annual results for progression from one level to another; in the MATSEC examinations; and in the school leaving certificate.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

It is further stated that should a concept of continuous balanced formative and summative assessment framework be adopted then this should be supported by clear directives and set criteria which will provide guidance to the teachers on how they are to assess their students in a fair and equitable manner. The articulation and dissemination of directives, however, should be supported by the provision of appropriate training. Feedback was significantly positive with regard to:

- The application of the assessment of the Language subjects on the basis of the four language skills – though it is stated in a number of responses that guidelines should be developed and disseminated with regard to the carrying out of the oral examination.

- That an assessment policy should be drawn up as this will lead to more standardisation.

- That certain examinations will be based on the B-TEC accreditation.

The consultation process raised a number of issues and challenges which include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The provision of one graded paper for all levels, despite the principle of differentiated teaching, means that some students will always have low marks: 25% maximum.

- There has to be conformity with SEC examinations - a requirement that is seen to be imperative to the success of the reforms proposed in the draft NCF.
- There is no certainty with regard to the transition between Secondary education and Upper Secondary education; as well as between Upper Secondary and Tertiary education.

- There is uncertainty on what happens to students who attain lower levels than that desired at Form V (Level 11) and what level of accreditation would be ascribed to a School Leaving Certificate and the student's portfolio of work.

- A determination is required on whether there should be one graded examination paper or more - and that given the importance of the new Level Descriptors (and that these are further clarified where so necessary) in the evaluation of a student's progress it is critical that appropriate communication sessions are held with all stakeholders - particularly parents - to explain what these signify.

- The carrying out of a formative assessment is seen as time consuming and it is stated that the process should be explained to parents given that many parents do not understand it.

- Doubt is expressed with regard to the multiple approaches towards assessment given the time required to carry such assessment well, and on whether project work or similar practical tasks are a reliable source of assessment.

- The decentralising of examinations to Colleges will result in different standards.

- Teachers, parents and students are not culturally prepared to adopt an autonomous learning evaluation process.

- There is a need for the design of a National Homework Policy.

- There is need to hold half yearly College based examinations that are graded.

- The logistics related to the holding of oral examinations should not be underestimated.

- There is a need to re-introduce streaming.

- There is a need to issue a merit certificate based on continuous assessment of coursework activities for those students who do not sit for SEC examinations.

With specific regard to examinations and assessments in Primary Schools there is uncertainty on what the proposed national benchmarking assessment that will take place in Year 6 will assess – whether it will reflect the global vision of the draft NCF or whether it would have a more narrow focus.

There is general agreement that assessment in the Early Years should be formative and based on an ongoing assessment carried out by a teacher to ensure that a pupil understands the topics presented in the classroom. The view is expressed, however, that given that Junior 3 constitutes the link between the Early Years and the Primary level of education a summative assessment should be carried out at both the mid-year and as an annual examination.
Specific concerns raised with regard to assessments in State Primary Schools include:

- That whilst the concept of checklist assessment is positive the carrying out of such assessment is time consuming on the teacher.

- Teachers at times find it difficult to carry out a checklist assessment particularly where specific activities cannot be measured through tests.

- There should be school based observation booklets and not all schools are forwarded with the stated checklist.

**Quality Assurance**

The general response by Church and Independent schools to Quality Assurance is that whilst this is necessary and that practitioners are favourable of the audit process as it assures that Schools are learning institutions a concern expressed is that the current approach is somewhat rigid. It is stated, for example, by one non State School that whilst the external reviews carried out by the Quality Assurance Department of the DQSE are useful they would be far more meaningful if they are undertaken with a sense of respect towards a teacher’s sense of individuality and personality and a sense of awareness of the School and class environment.

The general response by Colleges to Quality Assurance is more negative: the underlying feeling is that Quality Assurance is “intrusive” and that it is “degrading” to professionals who are already “checked and filtered and assessed”.

A further general comment is that there is an appreciable amount of time required with regard to the application of administrative procedures in order to conform to the demands of the Directorate. Recommendations to improve the Quality Assurance methodology include, amongst others, that Quality Assurance:

- Should be carried out verbally.

- The Quality Assurance paperwork should be minimised to the extent possible.

- Should be carried out in groups.

- Should be based on self evaluation.

- Should be based on a 360° methodology that includes parents and students to determine whether the quality of teaching is meeting the goals and expectations of these important stakeholders.

A number of issues are raised on the new Performance Management and Development Programme (PMPDP) - which include though is not limited to the following:

- Whether the PMPDP will have an effect on the career progression of a person in the teaching profession, and if yes in what way.

- Whether it will be objective or whether it still would have an element of subjectivity as with the previous Performance Management Programme.

- Whether class observations would link into the PMPDP and how this will be achieved.
- How the PMPDP is to be equitably administered with regard to those teachers who are be fully loaded with lessons and have no chance in participating in activities that could enhance their performance.

One general concern raised by teachers is how the Quality Assurance framework generally and the PMPDP specifically will work in a differentiated teaching environment given that a teacher’s success with regard to the progress of his or her students will be constrained by the fact that he or she will teach a classroom of students with mixed abilities. It is feared that a teacher will face the real risk that the 'high flyers' students may now become bored and turned off as they are not sufficiently challenged and where the 'basic' students will be unable to progress irrespective of the efforts made due to their intrinsic limitations.

### Parental and Community Involvement

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<th>Parental Involvement</th>
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<td>Colleges and Schools perceive parents as close partners as they re-inforce at home the values and education that children are taught at school. Yet across State, Church and Independent Schools there is a recognition that this partnership is being increasingly beset by challenges and issues. There is a general emphasis on the following themes:</td>
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<td>- Education taught in school needs to be re-inforced at home: yet the reality is that a larger number of families now constitute of both parents working. A direct consequence of a working family is that the re-inforcement at home by parents of education taught at school decreasing.</td>
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<td>The concern is expressed by Schools that working families seem to abdicate the responsibility for the education of their children totally with the Schools.</td>
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<td>There is also a recognition that not all parents are in a position to provide such education re-inforcement for reasons that include a poor level of education, low prioritisation given to education.</td>
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<td>- Parents should be &quot;educated&quot; to ensure that their children continue with some form of learning during the summer holidays - particularly with pupils in Primary Schools - so that during the summer period there is a re-inforcement of what the children would have learnt in the outgoing scholastic year and are prepared for the new one.</td>
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<td>Teachers recognise that it is becoming increasingly difficult to organise time with parents to discuss a child’s progress or for parents to be present in school activities given that there is an increasing larger number of working families.</td>
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<td>A recommendation proposed to counter the pressure arising from changing family norms is that meetings with parents could, occasionally, be held by a School in the evenings. It is stated that evening school meeting should be an educational function that is directed at the parents in order to induce them to attend - such as inviting a specialist speaker such as medical doctor, a nutritionist, psychologist, etc to assist parents in their parenting skills and knowledge and empower them to support their children.</td>
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</table>
Concern is expressed by teachers that the pressure to increase School hours stems from the need to accommodate working families. It is stated that in extending hours to accommodate working parents teachers are being rendering into “baby sitters” and not educators.

- The recommendation is presented that parents should be involved in the Quality Assurance process given that they are the “guardians” of the education received by their children.

- The recommendation is presented by certain Colleges that parents should be provided the opportunity to interact with a teacher through electronic mail.

- The recommendation is presented that parents should be involved through various initiatives such as (i) inviting them to speak to classes attended by their children on their career or job; (ii) specific initiatives such as Open Day, Parents Sports Day, Cooking Day, etc.

It pertinent to underline, that in a number of instances, Schools strongly express that there should be a clear demarcation line between the role of a parent and that of a teacher - such as, for example, that parents involvement in a classroom should not be to assist a teacher, given that as parents they are not qualified to do so, but to learn and observe how their children learn new skills.

Local Community Involvement

The point was made that whilst it is important that the draft NCF looks at students as individuals so that they are more than a uniform outfit deserving one size fits all approach it is crucial that the individual is considered as part of a wider community. It is argued the draft NCF should placed more emphasis on this matter.

It is underlined that given today’s fragmented and individualistic society, albeit globalised and interdependent world, a community approach to education is advocated. The development of social skills is of paramount important; and in this regard it is proposed that cooperative learning should feature as one of the cross curricular themes being proposed.

Various matters are discussed in the consultation response to the draft NCF with regard to the involvement of local and community to School relationships. The most recurring matters raised include:

- A School could be established as a base for the delivery of Adult education in the afternoons or evenings and in doing so rendering a School is rendered more accessible for the local community.

- The opening of the School library to the community as is the case with other facilities available on the School premises.

- The organisation and holding of activities by a School for the its local community - the activities proposed include Choirs, Talent Shows, Plays, the display of students’ work, etc.

- Involvement of enterprise and civic society within a Community such as the butcher shop, pharmacy, stationery, band club, football club, etc to promote the activities held by a School within the said locality.

- Involvement of retired teachers to help children with homework or in the teaching of storytelling, crafts, etc.
Students Participation

One particular observation is that practically none of the feedback received from Schools makes reference on the importance of involving students in the NCF reform.

One recommendation presented in this regard, is that Schools should encourage students through the Student Councils to be involved in the monitoring of the implementation of the new NCF and in providing ongoing feedback.

Additionally, it is observed, that students, as one of the important stakeholders in the educational system, should be included in the Quality Assurance review process.

It is to be noted that feedback on the recommendation that there should be a framework for student peer review is mixed - with views expressed ranging from statements that this is an effective tool as it boosts a child's safe esteem to others that state that such an approach would result in "a lot of bullying".

One other observation made by State Schools is that student participation in School activities such as prize days, shows, etc are limited to the best students as teachers select the highly talented students / pupils to represent a particular School at the expense of marginalising the rest.

Support Structures and Capacity

Discussion with regard to school management and administration is limited. The following are observations raised:

- The School Management Team (SMT) should inform CTs of the students they are to be assigned in a forthcoming scholastic year before the start of the Scholastic year so that they can assess the performance and history of their new students and, therefore, be far more better prepared at the start of the scholastic year.

- The SMT is overloaded with projects, meetings and paperwork and it is difficult for teachers to be allocated time with them to discuss issues.

- The SMT should dedicate time to be present in the classroom environment to obtain a hands-on understanding on the learning environment in the School, to build relationships with teachers, as well as to have contact with the pupils - as against being bogged down with administrative work. The suggest is presented that the SMT should be supported by administrative and secretarial support staff to allow them to devolve administrative related work to the extent possible in order to allow them to provide leadership to the College or School and to be more available to staff and students alike.

- The SMT should be more receptive to ideas and recommendations from teachers and other staff as well as students and the SMT should be encouraged to instigate formal mechanisms to allow this to happen.

- The draft NCF does not provide an appropriate level of discussion on the role of the College Principle and SMT: vis-a-vis their role in the setting of the School's vision, strategy, targets, etc.

- Both Directorates within the MEDE need to complement each other so as to facilitate the SMT in their respective Schools. College Principals and
Heads of Schools, for example, should be entrusted with the deployment of staff members since a College Principle or a Head of School has an overview picture of staff members’ expertise and students’ needs.

- The complement classification exercise should be confirmed in June so that a Head can meet with his or her staff to discuss curriculum and plan for the coming year.

**Teacher Roles and Responsibilities**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Teacher Roles and Responsibilities</th>
<th>There is agreement that for Schools to implement the NCF, the CT is to be supported by a Classroom Teacher Assistant (CTA) and not a Learning Support Assistant (LSA).</th>
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</table>

Whilst there is, on the whole, general consensus in State Schools that a LSA should be subject based it is understood that this may not be feasible to achieve due to the resource demands it would require. It is pertinent to note that the approach in Church and Independent Schools is mixed: some have subject based LSAs, others are incrementally moving to such a model, whilst other operate a class based LSA model.

There is, however, general consensus by State Schools that an approach to adopt a Subject based LSA model demands that a higher LSA position with a higher level or responsibilities as well as the appropriate level of professional competence towards which competencies LSAs in post should be professionally developed.

Additionally, there is general consensus with the recommendation relating to Subject teachers. It is to be noted, however, that it is proposed in the feedback that there is a need for a clear definition and articulation of the roles and responsibilities of the different types of teachers so that such important resources are leveraged optimally: it is expressed that there is unclarity with regards to the roles of Specialist teachers, Subject teachers, Complementary teachers, Learning Support Assistants, etc.

The following are recommendations presented by State Schools on which there is general consensus on the management of teaching resources:

- A pool of general based trained teachers over and above the complement of teachers should be set-up to act as a capacity pool to fill in for teachers who are absent. The setting up of such a pool of teachers will ensure continuity in the provision of teaching - particularly so given the proposed timetables based on a 25 / 26 week school programme where-in under existing circumstances any lessons missed or lost due to teachers’ absences will compromise the delivery of the full curriculum content.

- The aforementioned teacher capacity pool should act as a source to fill in for ICT so that he or she can follow appropriate professional development programmes (a re-occurring issue raised in the consultation feedback is that CTs are unable to attend such programmes when Peripatetic Teachers (PrT) are absent) as well as to make full use of their curricular hours for continuous development.

- Supply teachers should be better trained given that most of them are assigned to a School to teach without a sound understand of the underpinning pedagogical principles.
With regard to primary education in State Schools there is a general consensus on the following issues:

- The teaching of Physics and Science should be carried out by teachers who trained accordingly in the disciplines.

- The teaching of Information Technology should be carried out by Curriculum Support teachers - though teachers should make effective use of such support.

- Despite the presence of a Curriculum Support Teacher the delivery of the main teaching content should remain with the CT.

- The majority view is that Science, PE, IT, and Technology subjects should be taught by Subject Specialist teachers and not by the CT supported by Curricular Support teachers.

- PrTs should plan their lessons with the CT.

- Not all teachers have the necessary skills to teach all subjects – and the assumption that a teacher can teach everything is not correct. There is, for example, strong disagreement with concept that PSD, HmE, Art, Music, Drama and elements of PE are to be taught by a CT.

- The position of a CTA should be established, and that the such a CTA should be assigned with each CT to assist the CT with guided teaching, peer observation, management of mixed ability cohorts, provision of continuity when the CT is absent, etc.

- That PrT should replace a CT when the latter are engaged in the carrying out of the Core Competencies checklists for the identified pupils.

- There is disagreement to the requirement that a CT in a Primary School is to be present during a lesson conducted by a PrT. It is argued that a PrT is a professionally qualified teacher who is trained to conduct a teaching lesson on his or her own and to assume responsibility of the class during the lesson for which he or she is responsible for.

**Mentoring**

There is general agreement on the recommendation in the draft NCF to introduce a mentorship framework that provides support, particularly, to newly engaged teachers. Observations in this regard include:

- The mentor should aid a teacher from the start of the scholastic or at the induction programme level rather than at a later date in the scholastic year as, allegedly, was the case in the 2011/12 scholastic year; therefore providing the newly appointed teacher with a stable point of reference to help him or her throughout the year.

- The mentor should ideally be from the same School rather than the same College as this would ensure that the mentor is familiar with the School and the practice of the School where the mentoring is being undertaken.
The comments presented by Colleges are generally negative – stating, amongst others, the following:

- There is a need for the setting up of a Resource Centre\(^7\) within each School which is subsequently networked to other Resource Centres - at least within the College.

- The school grounds are not adequate in a large number of schools for outdoor play, PE and sport activities.

- There is a need for the setting up of a Nurture Zone in every school.

- There is a lack of resources to enable holding of video conferencing lessons and e-twinning sessions - including webcams, digital cams, VOIP, fast internet, etc.

- The services of Psychologists, Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language pathologists need to be more available.

- Laptops should be made available to KGA and LSAs.

- There should be a Laboratory Technician in each School to provide support to the ICT environment which is now integral to the delivery of education.

- Teachers are not necessarily aware of the many services provided by a School or by the College (social worker, career advisor, anti-bullying support, child safety, etc) and there is a need for teachers to be inducted to these resources so that they are optimally leveraged.

- Software education supporting tools should be in both Maltese and English.

- With regard to Primary schools:
  - Classes are small which limits or prohibits group work or physical activity.
  - A number of classes do not have washing facilities.

A particular issued asserted in the feedback is that Colleges work on the assumption that their respective resource deficits will be made up by a teacher's personal home resources: printing, cameras, speakers, etc - a sacrifice that a teacher will make due to his or her commitment to his / her students.

On the other hand, Church and Independent schools express their concern that they can never mirror the level of resources that the MEDE makes available to Colleges and that they would not be able to implement the draft NCF if the Government does not assist Church and Independent schools in this regard.

Indeed, Church and Independent schools underline that unless the Government assists them to reach the same level of resources, facilities and equipment made available to Colleges, then the principle of ‘Entitlement’ as presented in the draft NCF will be compromised given that students who attend Church and Independent schools will not have the same level of entitlement to resources that is available to students attending Colleges.

\(^7\) Resource Centre is defined as a centre where learning materials are available to teachers and students.
It is pertinent to add, that a recommendation presented by Colleges, Church and Independent Schools is for the design and implementation of a sustained networking framework amongst the three education sectors that would allow for the sharing of resources to secure common attainments for all.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Text-Books</th>
<th>The consultation feedback on text book resources is limited. Where a discussion ensues concern is expressed - which includes but is not limited to:</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Text-books should be current and should reflect the principles espoused in the draft NCF otherwise the teaching and reference material available to students will be at odds with the education principles and aims as proposed in the NCF: where expressed, Colleges state that most of their books are not cross-curriculum theme based.</td>
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<td>- Text-books do not cater for students with different learning abilities, or for students with different cultural backgrounds.</td>
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<td>- There is a need for more books in Maltese as well as for text books to be published by Maltese professionals for students setting out contextual examples which Maltese students can related to.</td>
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<td>- Text-books should reflect a multi-culturally society which is what classrooms are becoming.</td>
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<td>- There needs to be advanced planning with the introduction of new text books - a good best practice example that some suggested should replicated is the process adopted with the introduction of the 'Klikk' textbook for Year 3 pupils.</td>
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<td>- Books and Workbooks of subjects like Social Studies are in Maltese – in the presence of English speaking students the topics have to be translated.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Children in Class</th>
<th>There is unanimous agreement that the differentiated teaching approach presented in the draft NCF will be difficult to achieve if the students assigned to a class remain of the same size – potentially, even if the position of a CTA is introduced to assist a CT to manage his or her class in this regard.</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Both Church and Independent Schools state that their experience in implementing a differentiated environment shows that the most successful way to achieve this education principle effectively is to split students in a class in smaller groups so that students are provided with appropriate individual attention and more activities are included in the lessons.</td>
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<td>There is quasi unanimous agreement that an implementation of a differentiated teaching approach requires a different mindset and approach with regards to how teaching is delivered - that is the size of the class as well as the supporting facilities required for a teacher to handle such a class.</td>
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<td>The general consensus is that the final post consultation NCF should present recommendations with regard to the necessary action required to successfully and effectively achieve a differentiated teaching environment: that the appropriate ‘Teacher to Student’ ratio should be reduced.</td>
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</table>
One statement presented by a Church School is that whilst the ‘Teacher to Student’ ratio required for a differentiated teaching environment to be effectively delivered will be naturally achieved in State Schools due to the demographic changes which result in fewer students attending State Schools, Church Schools cannot reduce their student population as this would affect their funding and administrative structures.

Additionally, Church and Independent Schools assert that they will not be in a position to implement the principle of differentiated teaching in education beyond what they have achieved to date or are in the process of achieving unless MEDE provides them with the same level of resources and supporting framework that is being invested in Colleges.

Timetable

The proposed timetables in the draft NCF generated considerable debate and, is the one area that generated the highest level of critique. Whilst it is not possible to present all the points raised in what constituted a considerable discussion across all three education sectors the following provides a good representation of the sentiment expressed on this matter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early and Primary Years</th>
<th>There should be no mandatory timetable established centrally for Primary Schools. Teachers should continue to enjoy the flexibility they are empowered with today to manage the classroom’s needs as appropriate.</th>
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<td>The 30 minute daily PE activity is not possible: considering the time required to take and bring back the students from the appropriate facilities this will place far more pressure on teachers to meet the rest of the timetable – as well as the fact that a number of Primary schools do not have adequate sports facilities.</td>
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<td>No time is allotted for the preparation and the undertaking of school activities.</td>
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<td>The timetable is prescriptive and does not take into account classroom realities such as class disturbances and daily classroom practices such as collection of forms, money for outings, etc.</td>
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<td>Primary School students when taken out on their break and called back to class take a long time to settle down – thus, increasing breaks by 30 minutes would end up disrupting other daily activities.</td>
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<td>8 lessons a day are far too much and these should be reduced to 5-6 lessons daily (lessons in KG / car care day should be kept short and should not be extended to beyond 1430hrs as the children would have by then tired).</td>
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<td>The transition period between lessons has to be taken into account.</td>
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<td>As proposed, the timetable leaves no time for a teacher to bond with his or her pupils.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The timetable is too crammed and does not reflect the needs of Primary School environment.</td>
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</table>
- Teachers will become timetable oriented.

- The proposed first break of 15 minutes is too short.

- Numeracy lessons should be carried out during the morning session given that the children would still be fresh at that time.

- The professional development time proposed in the draft NCF should also be introduced in the primary cycle of education.

Secondary - A 30 week programme is not realistic as the scholastic year actually 25 weeks - the proposed timetable render it impossible for teachers to give individual time to students.

- Concern with regard to the time allotted to the core subjects.

- Subjects for which the lesson time is reduced would need to have the syllabus content reduced.

- The 6 day timetable and 3 minute locker time are not realistic.

- All the timetable models assume that teachers will have to spend more time at School. This cannot be pre-supposed as it does not reflect the Collective Agreement signed between MEDE and MUT - and unilateral decisions on this issue will result in conflict between the parties.

- CFT4 Option: The implementation of this option will result in school transport management organisation problems.

- CFT2 Option - The reduced lesson time may impact certain teachers who would not be able to complete the syllabus.

- The proposed timetable models do not take account for activities / sick / outings: it assumes full optimal productivity where-in teachers will miss no lessons and no unplanned activities will occur.

- The proposed 6 day cycle timetable option is seen to be confusing to certain students.

- The teaching of the Science subject is far more effective when conducted in the morning half of the school day when both the teacher and the students are fresh.

- The breaks should not be longer than 40 minutes, and a 1 hour break is seen as too long.
- 4 consecutive lessons is seen as too much as this will be very tiring for both teacher and students.

- Lesson times should be rounded to be more practical.

- Each Church and Independent School has developed its own timetable in a responsible manner: For example, Independent Schools have developed a very flexible timetable giving students a broader variety and combination of subjects and have included Dance, Drama, Ballet and more PE across the curriculum. There is no reason why Church and Independent Schools should be requested to move away from successful timetable models.

**Students**

The reaction of students is mixed with regard to a longer School day. On the positive side students believe that this will:

- Result in longer break.

- Lessons will be less crammed.

- There will me more time available for sports; library; etc.

On the negative side, students believe that a longer School day will:

- Mean that they will arrive late at home.

- Impact on private lessons.

- Impact on extracurriculum activities such as dancing and ballet, sport activities such as swimming, athletics, gymnastics.

- Impact on time with family.

- Impact on ability to cope with homework, studies and recreational.

- Impact on participation in national sports.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>90 Minute Curriculum Development</th>
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<tr>
<td>There is unanimous agreement on the recommendation to introduce pre-defined slots in the timetable to allow for structured sessions relating to curriculum development and professional development.</td>
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</table>

With specific reference to State Schools, it is proposed that teachers should be invited to draw up the Agenda for such sessions, and that a particular focus of such sessions should be related to curriculum and professional development work related with a new NCF.

It is additionally proposed that KGAs and LSAs should have similar regular meetings as those proposed for teachers so that they, too, are in a position to plan activities, share resources, and exchange best practice experiences.
The concern is expressed particularly by Teachers in the Primary cycle of education that where the schools are small it is difficult to find time for teachers to meet and that given that no two colleagues teach the same year group it is difficult to find common grounds to discuss.

**Professional Development**

As stated earlier under ‘Teaching Support’, Schools and teachers recognise that they require structured and continued professional development if the implementation of the NCF is to be successfully sustained.

There is general agreement that teacher training and professional learning opportunities are positive as they help a teacher to grow developmentally on matters such as, for example, effective teaching delivery so that a teacher can improve how he or she reaches students irrespective of their needs and abilities.

It is disconcerting to note that there was an occasional response by Colleges that “professional training is being imposed on the teachers”.

Critical responses to the professional development programmes delivered to teachers in State schools included but is not limited to the following remarks:

- The content of the training programmes does not always reflect classroom practice.
- Professional development sessions tend to include too much lecturing from speakers with very little time dedicated to the teachers to express their feelings or thoughts.
- The professional development programmes are at times repetitive and theory based and not practical. The professional development curriculum should be extended to include learning areas such as first aid, differentiated teaching, phonics, handling of mixed classes as well as knowledge on behavioural, social and disability problems.
- Teachers should be given an option to choose professional development programmes according to their needs.
- The professional development programmes should be congruent with the objectives set in the SDP as well as between one SDP and another.
- KGAs state that the professional development sessions should be more suitable to their needs and that they should target subjects that are more beneficial to them.

**Financing**

This is a particular feedback that is raised by Church and Independent Schools which state that for Church and Independent schools to introduce the necessary measures to implement the draft NCF considerable financing is required.

Church and Independent Schools underline, unequivocally, that they do not have the necessary financial resources to fund the supporting measures on which the success of implementing the draft NCF’s principles and aims of education is dependent.

Both Church and Independent Schools strongly emphasise that they require Government financing and support if they are expected to implement a NCF that is based on the principles and aims set in the draft NCF.
The main feedback presented underlines the following:

- The apprehension is expressed that one reason why parents favour to send their children to Church or Independent schools is because the State education sector tends to be "too experimental" - rendering it prone to many sudden changes.

- The pace of implementation for the ensuing reform should be one that is measured and deliberate and that allows for deep-rooted change - and that change should be assimilated and consolidated as there is a general feeling amongst Colleges that there is far too much change happening far too quickly.

- Teachers are main players in a NCF reform and, hence, it is imperative that they are not only actively involved in the reform process but they are also actively empowered to deliver and perform.

- “Learning Communities” should be set up to explore, within and across school networks, ways of implementing the draft NCF which would help Colleges and Schools to collaborate and to generate and adapt new ideas and practices as part of the process of developing their School's curriculum and in the formation of professional learning organisations.

- The Faculty of Education should re-orientate itself to instill, in student teachers, the concept that their pedagogy should be inquiry based and should not be centered on the transmission of content to the children entrusted to them.

- Aspects of the draft of NCF should only be implemented after they are piloted with the appropriate full underlying support required to make them work and thereby allowing for an appropriate evaluation of what works and does not and what refinements are required.

The following issues and challenges are presented by different Colleges and Schools:

- The implementation of the Pilot Form I syllabus, which is based on the NCF principles and recommendations, gave the general impressions that decisions had already been made.

- The NCF projects a state of play that does not give due credence to all that has been achieved in the past.

- The fact that the draft NCF introduces many changes demoralises both Schools and teachers as it seems that induced change is required rather than allowing the education structures and systems to develop naturally over time.

It is also added that the final post consultation NCF document should:

- Be supported by a practical action plan as to how the proposed recommendations are to implemented.

- Should not only mention principles and aims of education but should articulate by when these will be met.
Analysis of Consultation Feedback from Directorates within the Ministry of Education to the Draft National Curriculum Framework

Chapter 04
The analysis presented in this Chapter is based on a segmentation analysis of the original documents submitted to the DQSE by different Directorates within the Ministry of Education. The segmentation analysis document is presented as Appendix IV to this report. It is to be noted that the feedback from this Stakeholder cohort makes limited reference to Church and Independent schools and the emphasis of the arising discussion is particularly limited to the State Education Sector.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Discussion</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Principles</td>
<td>Most of the feedback presented by the Directorates within the MEDE is positive on the overall aims and principles presented in the draft NCF and to a large degree underlines the importance of the proposed changes. Examples include, though are not limited to the following:</td>
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<td>- “We strongly agree with the general principles related to entitlement, diversity, continuum of achievement, learner centred learning and with teacher support.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- “All the principles are relevant and all-encompassing. They bring together the principles, aims, objectives and values that we have been familiar with since the publication of Tomorrow’s Schools in order to ensure the learner’s entitlement to a holistic education. As they are presented they are a progression and point to a way forward.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- “Curriculum promotes concept of class as a community and students are looked at as individual learners with different attainment levels. This should facilitate creation of working groups with individual abilities. Where individual’s strengths are brought forward for the benefit of the working group and by extension the class ... Curriculum gives emphasis to independent learning and the application of all possible mental and creative abilities which should provide more for creativity, research and students’ input ...”.</td>
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<td>- “The NCF endorses diversity and differentiated teaching throughout the different assessment practices and procedures. If these approaches and techniques are put in practice then teachers are better prepared to meet diverse students’ needs. By means of differentiation and adaptation of teaching levels, student achievement is raised and a greater equity of student outcomes is achieved.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- “All the principles in the NCF are relevant and all encompassing. The three aims cover a wide area of competencies that encompass the requirements of a holistic education and are highly relevant.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- “The proposed NCF should serve as a welcome adjournment of our educational system. ... The importance given to a student-centred learning is positive.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- “As a general comment this proposed NCF provides a natural direction to enable students to develop their capacities as successful lifelong learners, confident individuals able to communicate effectively and be innovative as well as responsible citizens and effective contributors to society.”</td>
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</table>
"We agree with the general principles as these define 21st century educational needs. We strongly agree with the aims since they lay emphasis first and foremost on the development of an individual’s personal and social skills which form the basis for the development of other skills and competences needed to become independent, respectful and resilient citizens.”

It is to be noted that this positive acceptance remains for the most part at the conceptual level and concern is expressed that in presenting such a wide sweep of skills, values and attitudes the NCF tends to lose a degree of focus on what the educational authorities consider to be the main priorities for the foreseeable future.

Some of the feedback suggests that narrower and more explicit aims like literacy and numeracy should be stated as the main focus whilst others suggest that other principles such as entitlement are over emphasised and that moral values, responsibility and accountability should be given much greater importance.

The feedback presented also projects the distinct impression that there is a high degree of doubt on whether the necessary will, investment in resources, both human and material, will be provided in order to translate the aims and principles of the NCF into actual reality.

It is, nonetheless, pertinent to underline that, to a large extent, the positive acceptance of the NCF is at a high level – at the level of the underpinning principles and aims. In general, most consultation feedback received is exacting with regard to recommendations presented on how such principles are to be achieved and implemented.

Teacher Support

It is evident, from the feedback presented that there is a degree of concern, that without substantial investment in terms of training and ongoing professional development of CTs, tools and facilities the implementation of critical components of the draft NCF such as differentiated teaching and assessment for learning will be difficult to realise.

Indeed most of the feedback indicates that teachers should be extensively trained prior to the initiation of implementation, particularly if the paradigm shift in pedagogical approach is to be successfully introduced. Concern as to aspects such as the time when such training is to be held or the impact of the time allocated for training on the school’s timetable is expressed and that the organisation and logistics of the undertaking of such a large scale of re-training and up-skilling should be factored in the implementation planning.

Additionally, it is underlined that through the proposed NCF changes a number of teachers who are to be assigned to teach the Core Science will require well planned re-skilling as they are mainly grounded in Mathematics and Physics.

Similarly, as with this cohort of educators there is concern that if the training underpinning the process towards the adoption of the recommendations in the draft NCF will involve only a short number of sessions or an inset, the position stated is that teachers will not be adequately prepared to tackle the subject properly and this at a detriment of their students.
With regard to the Early Years and Primary Education, it is stated that KGAs require appropriate training with regard to the teaching of religious and ethical issues which are seen to be central to the holistic formation of a child – where-in such training needs to be planned in a way that will allow the teacher to transmit such important concepts to pupils through in-context, concrete experiences within the School and the community.

It is recommended that the final post consultation NCF document should provide a far more detailed exposition of the training and re-skilling programme required to support the process leading to the adoption of the strategic and policy orientation set by the NCF.

Furthermore, concern is expressed that unless the NCF implementation process is not accompanied by constant central support, Colleges and teachers may be overwhelmed as a result of the many concurrent changes that need to be brought about in a relatively short time.

The feedback also suggests that the perception is that implementation whilst constant, should be gradual and over a longer period of time, involving systemic preparation and development in the whole educational macrocosm including changes in the way prospective teachers are taught at University in order to provide them with the necessary tools they will need to implement key concepts proposed in the draft NCF, such as inquiry-based learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Autonomy</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The feedback provided by the Directorates, especially by EOs is that there is an aversion to a greater degree of autonomy, at least in the State education sector.</strong></td>
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<td>The main contention expressed by this stakeholder cohort is that if Colleges are provided with increased autonomy in their application of syllabi and choice of timetables, then, this will inherently undermine and potentially render ineffectual the concepts of unitised syllabi and the design of national examination papers.</td>
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<td>EOs, in particular, are of the considered opinion that College principals have already too much say and autonomy. They further underline that the fact that College Principals express that, today, they are not sufficiently consulted in matters that relate to the curriculum leads to the conclusion that further devolution of decision making from the Directorates to Colleges will have an adverse, and not positive impact on the education system.</td>
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<td>Furthermore, it is argued that further autonomy and devolution will, likewise, undermine the DQSE’s attempts at implementing and managing the appropriate Quality Assurance framework necessary to ensure the smooth implementation of the NCF.</td>
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<td>Further critique in this regards includes, though is not limited to the following:</td>
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<tr>
<td>- In general EOs feel that they are not consulted as often by the Principals of Colleges and State Heads of School when they believe that they could effectively contribute to decisions taken at each respective level with regard to curriculum related matters.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- The state of play today is that it is the College Principal who has “complete power“ and that the EO, who is the “expert specialists“, is at times not even consulted.</td>
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<td>- EOs have limited opportunities for leadership within the current context, and the proposed NCF does not seem to tackle is issue.</td>
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Concern is expressed on how a unitised syllabi and national examination papers can be designed (to avoid overburdened content) if Colleges will work on different time allocations for particular subjects.

Concern is expressed on how the Education Assessment Unit can prepare annual examination papers if the time allotted on the timetable for individual subjects is different between Colleges and within Colleges.

A recommendation presented by EOs is that given that a considerable degree of decision making is being devolved to Colleges, the process of decentralisation should be on the basis of “controlled” decentralisations where College decisions regarding curriculum matters should only be reached after a close consultation with and on the advice of the relative subject EO.

**Aims of Education**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aims of Education</th>
<th>Feedback</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Life Long Learning</td>
<td>The feedback on this matter is limited.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employability</td>
<td>The feedback on the aim of education that learners should be capable of sustaining their chances in the world of work generated limited feedback. One concern expressed is that the draft NCF portrays too narrow a view of the individual with the danger of reducing him or her to an economic unit and that more should be made of his or her human value. The feedback underlines the importance of dedicating the appropriate level of attention towards those skills which are actually required by the market.</td>
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**Learning Areas**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Learning Areas</th>
<th>Feedback</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early Years and Primary Education</td>
<td>There is limited direct feedback presented on the recommendations in the draft NCF relating to the Early Years and Primary Education – other than that presented by the appropriate EOs. The inclusion in the draft NCF on the Kindergarten years as part of the first cycle of education and emphasises on the transition between the Primary and Secondary cycles of education are welcomed. It is, nevertheless, underlined that whilst the draft NCF proposes a holistic approach to development, the actual curriculum taught in class is often fragments and focused on acquisition of academic skills. Additionally is class is often teacher led and predominantly based on a product approach. Furthermore, it is underlined that amongst educational professionals there is a “widely spread misconception” that the ‘free play time’ is a time for adults to prepare materials for crafts – which, indeed, should be created by the child. It is also feared that the experiences and ideas of children are not taken into account that their participation is often tokenistic: which, too often, disempowers the child and results in lack of self confidence and self esteem which may result in behavioural problems. It is recommended that for the primary cycle of education to cater for the individual needs of every child there is a need for constant support and monitoring from all stakeholders: not only educational professionals but also parents, the community etc.</td>
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</table>
Furthermore, the learning environment should be one places play, positive attitudes and enjoyment at its centre with regard to all activities directed towards the child so that real and long term learning actually takes place.

Additionally it is underlined, that whilst the Principles and Aims with regard to the Early Years and Primary Education are “highly commendable” however all educators should be given training “in these principles, in pre-service training and further support in in-service professional development” if these are to be successfully met. Moreover, KGAs, too, should be provided with the opportunity to meet and plan so that they can share experiences, etc.

One stakeholder agrees with the proposed learning outcomes for the Early Years - as these are seen to be a sound basis for students before they start their formal Personal and Social Development. One other respondent states that whilst the recommendations presented in the draft NCF provide a broad range of desirable outcomes and achievements evidence shows that it is not easy to measure the performance of the child.

There is some limited indirect reference in the consultation feedback that the proposed reform to the teaching and learning of Science as presented in the draft NCF should start in the Primary level of education - if not in the Early Years. This respondent adds that there should be a greater continuation between education at the Primary level of education and Secondary level of education.

### Languages

There is general agreement that the issue of a National Language Policy requires prioritisation and needs to be tackled with urgency to address the issues of bilingualism and the language of instruction in order to raise standards in both students and teachers.

It is perceived that there are currently no clear directions on this important policy matter and that students are falling short of acquiring the appropriate communication skills. Feedback in this regard includes, but is not limited to the following:

- There is a need for a national discussion on the language policy issue. It is stated that the 1999 National Minimum Curriculum (NMC) document failed to provide clear directions on the way forward with the result that, today, students are falling short of acquiring the appropriate communication skills in Maltese and English.

It is proposed that an effective way forward is that of placing a language policy in each SDP and subsequently implementing it.

- Concern is expressed that the draft NCF does not provide guidance as to the language of instruction of SE. It is suggested that clear guidelines regarding the language of instruction in the classroom should be identified for each LA.

### Maltese

There is limited feedback presented on Maltese. It is underlined that more careful attention should have been directed to the Maltese version of the NCF as it has typographical, orthographical, grammatical and lexicon errors.

One recommendation presented is that of including Maltese “Culture” in the Maltese syllabus in order to address the limited emphasis present in the education system with regard to imbuing students with a Maltese identity.

### English

Feedback is mainly concerned with two issues namely: the proposal to separate English Language and Literature and the possibility of reducing the amount of English Lessons – both of which are seen as detrimental to ensuring that students finish school with a strong command of English.
More specifically, the following concerns are raised:

- The draft NCF recommendation that English Literature is offered as an Option subject raises a number of issues such as – when will students choose English Literature as an Option – at the end of Form II (Year 8); how many lessons will be allotted to the Option (at least a minimum of 3 lessons weekly is recommended); will those students who do not opt for English literature be deprived from being taught at least a basic English literature course as part of the English Language subject?

- The proposal to remove most of the “English Literature content” without stipulating that the literary aspects of English should still feature in the English Language subject lessons does not do justice to the fact that literature presents an enriched form of English that is linguistically enriching and intellectually provoking. As proposed in the draft NCF the teaching of English as a language is reduced to a number of assessable skills.

- It is proposed that English Literature should form part of the teaching of English. It is argued that the draft is not consistent when on the one hand it emphasises the importance of cross curricular themes and seeks to join other subjects together through designated LAs and then it separates literature from language.

- It is recommended that English Literature should be removed from the list of Optional subjects and that it should be, as it has always been, a compulsory subject that is taught in conjunction with the English Language.

- The proposal of giving schools the option of reducing English lessons to four per week should be removed. Given the importance of English today, English requires at least the five weekly lessons it presently enjoys. Any reduction in the allocation of English lessons is bound to have a serious impact on the standard of English.

- The notion that English teaching and learning will improve or will have “advantages” as a result of reducing the number of lessons is refuted.

Foreign Languages

The feedback on the proposals in the draft NCF with regard to Foreign Languages is in agreement with the declared NCF aim at developing multilingualism. Be that as it may, it is argued that this aim is subsequently neutralised by the fact that the programme can be reduced to only one foreign language at the discretion of the respective College.

Furthermore, it is stated, that there is a lack of information concerning the criteria that will be used to decide the College-based decision as to what Foreign Language/s will be taught. Other concerns mainly revolve on Specialised and Support teachers and the time allotted to the tuition of Foreign Languages - and these include, though not are not limited to the following:

- It is proposed that Foreign Languages are allotted 120 lessons in a year - which means 4 lessons a week for the duration of 30 weeks which amounts to 12 units in all. If the recommendations proposed in the draft NCF are implemented this means that Foreign Languages are assigned three lessons per week - with three units, or 60 lessons, being removed from the Form I (Year 7) and Form II (Year 8). The proposed changes to the Foreign Language syllabus means that students would be exposed to 105 hours less of teaching during the Secondary level of education.
- There should be provision for a qualified Language Assistant to support the teaching of a Foreign Language in the classroom.

- Fully qualified support teachers, such as Language Assistants or qualified native speakers, for oral skills teaching should be introduced in Colleges.

- To date there is no provision for Foreign Language specialists in the State Primary schools. Currently the teachers servicing the Foreign Languages Awareness Programme (FLAP) in State Primary schools are fully qualified language teachers seconded from the Secondary education sector.

- The FLAP cannot be considered as teaching of a L3 standard at the Primary level of education and, therefore, should not be considered as a reason for the reduction of contact lessons for L3 which is proposed in the Secondary school education level.

- If different State Primary schools choose a different type of timetable, the result would be an uneven continuum of learning in the subject when the students start Form I (Year 7) and it is proposed that a 24 hours of language awareness should be provided in any timetable model selected.

| Mathematics | There is limited feedback presented on Mathematics One recommendation proposed is Mathematics should be offered also as an Option subject. This would be an additional module, over and above Mathematics as a Core Subject, which would be offered to those students who struggle in Mathematics and who require additional support. A further recommendation is that the load of five lessons in Mathematics weekly is distributed on the basis of one lesson a day to minimise disruptions arising as a result of lessons lost due to public holidays, school activity, etc. |
| Science Education | There is positive feedback with regard to the proposed inquiry based approach pedagogy that will start from the Primary education cycle level, as this is seen to promote a deeper understanding and critical thinking in the students. There is, in the main, a recognition that the proposed Core Science subject will allow for a more holistic approach to the teaching of the Science subject and that it will enable all students to achieve basic scientific literacy. Furthermore, there is recognition that the introduction of the Core Science subject should help to diminish the common impression that Science is a difficult subject. There is, however, concern that due to the latter fact, the Core Science subject may be viewed as a ‘soft-option’ with the unintended consequence of having more students opt for the Core Science rather than the three other Science subjects. It is emphasised that the Core Science subject should be designed to the same level of standard as the other Science subjects as well as to enable those students who opt for the subject to be provided with a solid education as otherwise students might find it too difficult to cope with the content of Science subjects at A level. |
Furthermore, the feedback emphasises that SE vision needs to be strengthened with regard to the interlink between Secondary education and Post-Secondary education. It is, indeed, underlined that the gap between the O level and the A level syllabi will widen when the proposed optional Science subjects come into place.

Additionally, given the possible choice combinations of the Science Option subjects and the awareness of students to make informed choices (for example, in Physical Science there will be a lot of Chemistry principles and there is doubt whether a student would be able to keep up unless he or she also take up the Material Sciences subject) it is argued that sufficient guidance should be provided to students prior to making their choices in this regard.

A degree of concern is expressed in view of the fact that it is, allegedly, stated that many teachers who will teach the Core Science subject might not have an adequate preparation in the Biology and Chemistry tracks, and they will eventually find themselves teaching a subject in which they are not confident. It is underlined that teachers who will be assigned to teach the Core Science subject will require well planned re-skilling as they are mainly grounded in Mathematics and Physics.

Further feedback includes but is not limited to the following:

- The concern is expressed that in Primary Schools the CT is often not present in class when the Science PrT conducts the lesson which limits proper follow-up that can be carried out by the CT during the following week when s/he.

- The concern is expressed that in the Primary Schools the time allocated on the timetable to science learning is frequently ‘taken-up’ by extracurricular activities in the School.

- The concern is express that there is limited training for Primary school B.Ed students whilst at University.

- The concern is expressed that if students are asked to choose two Science subjects, it is feared that few students will select this option given that many students at Form 3 (Level 9) do not have a clear vision of what may be their future career. There is a real risk that many students will simply opt not to choose two Science subjects since there is a perception that Science as a subject is difficult. Be that as it may that alternative view is also presented that in the event that students are allowed to choose only one Science subject then the purpose of the proposed reform will be defeated.

- In order to render the Science subjects options more attractive, it is proposed that students should be provided with the option to choose one Science subject, a decision which should not limit the possibility to opt for a combination of two subjects. The adoption of this recommendation, it is argued, will afford the students with the opportunity to specialise in one Science subject and at the same time consider other options.

- There is consensus with regard to the option where students should be asked to choose 3 Sciences subjects given that there is a concern that students who opt to choose from two of the three subjects would have some important themes from the third subject missing.
The draft NCF places considerable responsibility on students at Form 2 (Level 8) when they choose their options for future careers.

The proposed changes in names of the Science subjects limit the ability to make the connections and links between the subjects and in this regard it is the syllabi which will show the content that needs to be covered - and hence, the syllabi should be made available for discussion.

The concern is expressed that the Science Vision falls short of providing details as to what will be the consequences of this reform in the post-secondary sector and that the said Vision contrasts with the teaching strategies in post-secondary sector, both in terms of content and in terms of the teaching process that is applied.

The concern is expressed that the proposed Vision will hinder students who wish to further their studies abroad given that the proposed nomenclature for the Science subjects may not be recognised by tertiary institutions abroad and that the entry requirements for many universities in the UK include 3 A Levels. Be that as it may, the recommendation for 5 Intermediate and 2 Advanced level subjects is seen as positive by some.

- Prior to embarking upon the implementation process one must ensure that the necessary discussions with Post-Secondary institutions are made to ensure that prospective students in the particular area have a clear idea about the educational path they will follow.

Satisfaction is expressed with regard to the important role given to Science in Primary education. The shift in the "logistical teaching" of Primary Science with the "onus and responsibility being placed on the CT" is seen as logical as it would allow the Primary Science PrT to concentrate on his or her role as subject leader, curriculum development and support provider.

It is emphasised, however, that for this recommendation to work substantial training is required to ensure that CTs are well training and subsequently willing to teach Primary Science. Additionally, the revised role of a Science PrT will require a delicate balance between delegation and control.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Technology Education</th>
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<td>Whilst the inclusion of 45 minutes per week for technology in Primary education is welcomed as a positive step forward it is stated that the Design and Technology review recommended 180 hours for the Core Study of Design and Technology. It is argued that Technology Education should be included under Science given that Technology Education puts scientific principles into practice.</td>
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It is also suggested that digital literacy should be a cross-curricular theme that could be developed in other LA.

Likewise it is suggested that Design and Technology can also be a cross-curricular theme, and consideration should be given to developing units in Primary Education that specifically combine aspects of study from Science and Mathematics.

Recommendations presented in the Children's Conference is that there should be more access to computers and access to the Internet. One statement presented in the Conference is that the "Internet is useful for research and creativity but we are not allowed to use it".
There is limited feedback presented on HhE as a LA. One respondent states that they "disagree" with the HhE LA as presented in the draft NCF.

The feedback highlights that there are objections to the placement of PSD under HhE and CE. It is put forward that these are ill-fitting LAs which would result in negative ripple effects on the holistic development of each student, in fields such as personal identity, sexual health, addictions, gender issues, abortion, adoption, blood donation, the world of work etc – which it is stated are covered within the current PSD syllabus.

Additionally, there is disagreement with the proposed change in name from PSD to PSHE since whilst Personal, Social and Development are considered general terms, Health is considered to be a specific one. It is argued that the new title may give the misleading impression that Health is a key factor in the subject when in fact this is not the case.

It is underlined that the aims of education, in particular “learners who are capable of sustaining their chances in the world of work”, are well served through the PSD subject – which it is emphasised lends itself to helping the education system achieve this particular aim. It is strongly recommended that PSD needs to be reintroduced in Year 3 once again – and PSD lessons in between Forms III (Level 9) to Form V (Level 11) should be doubled from 1 to 2 lessons a week. This is necessary, it is argued, because students from the Early Years are being “bombarded” by messages and subtle messages regarding career choices and the world of work (TV programmes such as “Bob the Builder” and “Postman Pat”) and that research shows that career education should start as early as possible.

It is emphasised that the aims of PSD are, primarily, to:

- Provide opportunities for students to learn, achieve and develop emotional literacy, self-confidence, self-worth and self esteem.

- Enable students to cope confidently with change and become independent and responsible members within the school and the community by providing opportunities for sharing and working together.

- Help students understand their identity and social responsibilities within the local and international community.

- Provide students with the opportunity for exploration of knowledge, the clarification of values and attitudes, and the growth of skills necessary to build healthy relationships, develop good communication skills, make informed choices and decisions about one’s health and sexuality, the environment and career development.

- Prepare students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life through the development of skills related to problem solving, critical analysis and conflict resolution.

It is argued that basic aspects of PSD such as group building, trust, the development of themes, etc would not be possible in a modular system within a LA: indeed it is underlined that these elements would be ‘forfeited’ if PSD is placed within a modular system and without retaining at least the same number of lessons currently allotted per week – particularly, given the fact that “external agencies” state that more PSD lessons are needed in later years of the Secondary education cycle to cover such themes.
Indeed, with regard to the time allocation, the question is raised on whether the placement of PSD within the HhE LA is in fact motivated by the need to reduce the number of subjects in the timetable due to limited curricular time.

As with the concerns expressed with regard to the Geography and History subjects respectively, the general sentiment is that the PSD subject will be diluted and potentially undermined to the detriment of the holistic development of each student given that students will need more support in their development as they go through the second part of the secondary cycle. Learners are not only learners but also individuals with their own emotional intelligence - for this reason they need to express themselves more and need to ask questions related to their development, relationships and well-being.

It is believed that there are not enough PSD lessons proposed and that as presented in the draft NCF it is not certain what the hours allocated for the teaching of this subject actually are and how the PSD subject will be integrated with the CE and HhE Las respectively.

**Home Economics**

There is limited feedback presented on HE. One respondent states that there is unclarity with regard to the hours allocated for the teaching of this subject. One other respondent recommends that HmE is important to a student's wellbeing and, thus, the amount of lessons for this subject should be increased together with planned extra curriculum activities that involve teachers, parents, and students.

**Physical Education**

Detailed feedback is presented by the appropriate EO – otherwise the feedback is limited. PE is seen not only as a component of HhE but also as a component that contributes to Technology (IT in PE); Science (body systems, projectiles of flight of balls, etc), Language (vast vocabulary particular to the use of sports as a communication medium), and Citizenship (working in a team, nurturing values, etc).

It is stated that a number of creative and innovative schools overseas have the students jumping while doing mathematics; learning geography through basic trekking activities, where-in the emphasis is placed on less passive learning and more time spent on active learning - the important thing is that students spend less time learning passively and spend more time learning actively. Additionally, the emphasis is for classes to be supplemented by “brain gym activities” and where classes need focus on simple movement activities such as walking, jumping, running, agility, balance, coordination and speed.

It is also underlined that PE contributes to the cross-curricular themes of e-learning, sustainable development, intercultural education, entrepreneurship and creativity and innovation given that through a more holistic dimension it helps to develop a student through psychomotor, cognitive and affective domains.

It is further proposed that whilst it makes sense to assess students upon the progress they make from one year to the next the assessment should not be a ‘mark’. Rather the student should be assessed in four areas - individual activity, team activity, outdoor and fitness in each of the basis of level descriptors in each of the 4 strands. In this way the student is given a choice upon the area that he can be assessed and an emphasis to assess on the strengths of the students.
It is, nevertheless, emphasised that for the goals for PE to be achieved there is a need for educational authorities to conceive of spaces and areas for in ways that are different from traditional notions given that the areas required for group work, interaction, stimulating activities that capture the students' interests and needs in both the newly built schools and older ones require “reshaping”.

Additionally, it is underlined Curricular Support Teachers should assist the Class Teacher, particularly in the Primary Years 4 to 6 given that the expertise required in these specific years is fundamental as they constitute the foundation base on which subsequent achievements are built. It is stated that Colleges and Schools are experiencing problems in most Secondary Schools - especially girl’s Schools – as students give up and do not participate in PE lessons due to a lack of skills.

It is recommended that as PE is important to a student's wellbeing and the number of lessons for this subject should be increased together with planned extra curriculum activities that involve teachers, parents, and students and that teachers should refrain from punishing students by leaving them out of PE lessons.

Citizenship Education

The concept of CE as a LA is primarily criticised throughout the feedback presented by this Stakeholder category. It is argued by most that CE neither be called a LA nor a subject but an objective and hence each subject and every educational experience contributes to training in citizenship. It is further stated that, at best, CE should be presented as a cross curricular theme. Others feel that CE is not a matter of theoretical instruction but, rather, should be promoted by democratic practices and good examples of responsibility and accountability.

The criticism is amplified as a result of the recommendation to position Geography and History within the CE LA. There is a general feeling that these two subjects are important essentials in the educational formation of students and by placing them under CE these two subjects run the risk of being diluted and potentially undermined.

Additionally, attention is focused on the fact that Geography contains a high element of scientific instruction and therefore if it were to be placed in a specific LA, it is argued that it should be the Sciences and not CE.

The following portrays a general overview of the concerns raised with regard to this LA:

- The statement is presented that CE should be inbuilt within the ethos of the College and School and, therefore, should be a cross curricular theme and not just limited to a few subjects. Rather than a LA it is argued that Citizenship is an objective.

- The concern is expressed that the draft NCF is not clear on how CE will bring the separate subjects together.

- The draft NCF gives no clear indications as to whether Geography, History and Social studies are to be considered discrete subjects or whether the intention is for these subjects to be integrated, in which case such integration would inevitably dilute and potentially undermine the said subjects.

- The inculcation of CE should be promoted through democratic practices rather than through a taught environment.
- It is a perceived to be a mistake to position Geography, History and Social studies under an ill-fitting LA named CE - which in turn is suspected to be a policy measure to address pressures arising as a result of the limited curriculum time.

**History**

As stated, there is objection to the placement of the History subject under CE not least due to the expressed explicit concern that the subject will be diluted and potentially undermined. Furthermore, there is a concern that not enough is being done in regard to the promotion of local history. Some argue that Maltese history should be elevated to a subject in its own right - one that should be compulsory and that runs throughout the Secondary education cycle.

Additionally, it is stated that the draft NCF should act as a vehicle that secures that students are familiar with their cultural and historical roots and share in their Nation's identity.

**Geography**

As stated there is objection to the placement of the Geography subject under CE due to the perception that in doing so the subject will be diluted and undermined. This it is felt, is compounded with a reduction in the number of lessons allotted.

Additionally, it is stated that Geography contains a substantial element of science given that geographic enquiry embodies the "scientific method" of systematic observation, testing and revision of hypotheses and if it is to be placed under a LA then it should be positioned under SE. The steps in the.

Moreover, there is concern, that by placing Geography under CE, there might be a shift of emphasis in the Geography curriculum from the transmission of facts and knowledge to one based on attitudes and ideological beliefs. Further feedback expressed includes:

- The reduction in the number of lessons allotted on the timetable for Geography and / or its integration with other subjects is likely to result in a decline in the importance of the subject. It is further remarked that as fewer students sit for MATSEC examinations this will lead to a smaller numbers of students who will select Geography at University level, fewer recruits into teacher education and eventually fewer subject specialist teachers.

- Geography can play a significant part in promoting citizenship education through for example; providing opportunities to students to reflect upon and discuss topical environmental and economic issues; thereby, encouraging students to participate in decision making in relation to local planning issues and developing pupils’ understanding of the world as a global community and the issues and challenges of global interdependence and responsibility.

- There is disagreement that at the Secondary level of education Social studies (Civic), Geography and History are integrated into one subject given the importance for these three disciplines to continue to be clearly distinct.

- The Geography syllabus should not be replaced by a new agenda of values and attitudes (for example environmentalism, sustainability and cultural tolerance) and personal life skills. The subject should focus on learning how to understand systems such as the atmosphere and should be more concerned with telling students how to think and act in relation to the world around them.
- The emphasis on the teaching of values and attitudes through Geography as indicated by placing Geography under the area of CE will come at the expense of the knowledge about the subject. In such a way students will know everything about poverty, gender awareness, anti-racism and little about rivers, plate tectonics and the weather.

It is underlined that it is necessary for the final post consultation NCF document to be clear about the purpose of Geography in school, not as an undisputed ‘end’ in itself but how it contributes to the education of young people: that is a means to an end.

A recommendation presented in the Children's Conference is that it would "make more sense to combine History, Geography, Social Studies, Home Economics and PSHE into one subject."

### Social Studies

The feedback on social studies came from the students themselves and it expresses a degree of disaffection for the subject as it is currently taught - mainly that:

- The current structure of Social Studies is annoying as students learn the subject by rote where-in the teaching is directed towards preparing students to "pass" the examination as against debating current affairs and issues through discussion.

- The subject is not taught in an interactive manner where students are challenged to think, reason and argue.

### Religious Education

The general feeling is that religious, moral and ethical education should be given a higher priority and value in the draft NCF. Nevertheless, it is felt, that a fresh approach in the teaching of Religion is necessary.

It is stated that lessons are currently predominantly based on reading from textbooks and that more discussion and learner centred learning should be employed. Furthermore, it is highlighted that the focus should shift from the mechanistic acquisition of knowledge to one centred on nurturing actual attitudes and values.

Feedback from the student’s conference expresses the desire that examinations in the subject should lead to automatic eligibility for Holy Communion and Confirmation and that Religious / ethical and moral education should become obligatory subject in the Secondary education level.

### Arts Education

The feedback highlights that there is an inconsistency with regard to the subjects placed in the AE LA: with different subjects listed in the different areas of the NCF.

It is stated that one would have expected that the draft NCF would have resulted in fresh ideas related to art and culture. It is underlined that it is difficult to promote culture and art when students attend after school sessions on academic disciplines they attend at school and within such a framework it is difficult to meet the NCF's goal for art. It is suggested that a possible way forward would be through the creation of music schools and / or schools of art which would specialize in such disciplines whilst still providing academic subjects.
One main concern raised with regard to the AE LA is the number of tuition hours allocated to the related subjects as well as what is considered to be a perceived lack of appreciation and implementation of AE subjects in Colleges despite the importance accentuated in the draft NCF. It is underlined that the teaching of AE is bedeviled by a perceived lack of resources available - including Music teachers.

The concerns raised in the consultation feedback include, but are not limited to the following:

- Whilst the draft NCF accentuates the importance of Music and its appreciation, in reality this is not being fully adhered to at Colleges given that, for example, the general music appreciation programme is not being offered in Form 1 (Level 7) by most State Secondary schools.

- The absence of music appreciation lessons in Colleges deprive students from the continuation of the musical experience attained at the Primary level of education.

- Although College Music teachers are provided with a new general Music programme for a lesson a week throughout the scholastic year it is pertinent to underline that the programme is not included in the timetable of most State Secondary schools within Colleges. It is asserted that no clear instructions are given to Heads of Schools to implement this programme and in some State Schools Music is substituted by related activities such as dancing and singing – in others neither Music nor related activities are offered at all.

- Two lessons a week do not suffice particularly if they are to be shared between three subjects - especially considering the fact that AE comprises the subjects of visual arts and music.

- A visual AE should not be available just as an Option in Form 1 (Level 7) but, rather, should be taught to all College students, irrespective of their artistic ability, up to Form 2 (Level 8). Thereafter, the subject as an Option should be offered in Form 3 (Level 9).

- Aesthetic appreciation and creative expression should be given their due importance and should not be placed secondary in importance to other areas. Aesthetic appreciation and creative expression should be timetabled and taught by professionals. A curriculum should be introduced for the subjects in this LA.

- One recommendation proposes that ‘dance’ should form part of PE so as not to reduce time available for the three subjects that constitute AE.

- It is proposed that the curriculum should consider the possibility of offering the Option of specialising in either Art or Music or Drama.

- There should be structured cooperation and communication between the Music section within the DOSE and the Music section within the Faculty of Education at the University. Such enhanced cooperation would secure consistency between the Music teaching course at the University and the newly introduced content and practices as featured in the new Music curriculum.

- One lesson a week in General Music education should be compulsory in all State Schools at Secondary level in order to satisfy the principles aims of education as expressed in the draft NCF.
There is general agreement that more resources should be allocated to Music teachers – including a proper music room, suitable visual and sound system, musical instruments and the provision of Syllabus music notation software.

With regard to pupils in the primary cycle of education is stated that the teaching of Art is not directed towards self expression but rather for the acquisition of skills necessary for writing.

Other Subjects

Vocational Subjects

There is little feedback other than the odd statement that the introduction of vocational subjects is positive.

Accounts and Economics

Whilst the feedback on this matter is limited, where discussed the reaction is positive. Be that as it may, disappointment is expressed with regard to the non consideration of a proposal to introduce Business Studies from the first year of Secondary School.

It is further stated that whilst the draft NCF introduces a LA that covers most subjects it does not give the same due consideration to Commercial studies which constitute a natural LA.

Moreover, it is stated that the re-introduction of Accounts and Economics necessitates that more Heads of Departments are to work in these specific areas, as well as the need to have EOs to cater for the Commercial subjects especially in the design and drafting of new syllabuses for Accounts and Economics.

Media

It is argued that whilst Media Education was included in the NMC in 1999, the draft NCF omits reference to it. It is underlined that the EU Media Literacy Experts’ Group has the mandate to explore whether it would be possible for Member State within the European Union to introduce Media Literacy in the Compulsory Curriculum.

It is proposed that Media Literacy should be included as a Cross Curricular Activity (it is acknowledged that it would be difficult to include another option in a National Curriculum which is loaded with different subjects) given that that a “National Curriculum Framework without Media Literacy has a missing vital element in it.” It is underlined that Media Literacy can be easily appended to other subjects such as Language Studies, Social Studies, Personal and Social Development and Religious/ Ethics Education.

Cross Curricular Themes

Cross Curricular Concept

The feedback with regard to a cross curricular approach to education is mixed. Some EOs believe that this constitutes a welcome innovation that will emphasise the various interconnections between separate subjects and thus provide students with a holistic education, teaching them how to utilise skills developed in one field into another.

On the other hand, however, others express the disquiet that the emphasis of certain attitude based values, such as gender-awareness, environmentalism etc introduced in cross curricular themes may serve to inseminate subjects with ideological as opposed to educational objectives.
Furthermore, whatever the opinions presented, the feedback portrays a near unanimous sentiment that unless there is substantial support in terms of specialised teacher training, CTAs, tools and facilities – it will prove difficult to implement thematic teaching successfully.

Likewise, it is expressed, that without clearly designed content and guidelines, involving the explicit outlining of potential links between subjects, the implementation of cross curricular thematic teaching may not succeed given that, otherwise, the burden for identifying and establishing such links would fall on the CT - who with his or her day-to-day teaching requirements would not be in a position to dedicate the appropriate time to successfully achieve this.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>e-Learning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feedback for the most part is positive, however perception especially of the new e-learning platform itself, seems to be rather confused as to its exact implementation and how it will assist in teaching and assessment exactly.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The general concern raised relates to a lack of resources in equipment such as the provision of high speed bandwidth, laptops and classroom computers which might inhibit any meaningful implementation of the new e-Learning platform.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The concern that teachers should be sufficiently trained in the use of IWB is also raised.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feedback from students reveals enthusiasm and a high level of expectation; however, they also indicate that a lack of resources such as classroom computers and access to the Internet are likely to negatively impact the implementation of e-learning.</td>
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<th>Education for Sustainable Development</th>
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<tr>
<td>There is limited feedback presented on ESD as a cross curricular theme.</td>
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<td>The main feedback presented argues that whilst agreeing on ESD as a Cross-Curricular theme, it cannot merely be considered solely as such. It is stated that the whole school as a community has to be the first living example to induce within the soul of the school community such values based on sustainability – where-in its lifestyle and environmental values should be a witness to all who come in contact with the school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thus, the core of the school’s ethos should be built and intertwine with the real needs within and around the school’s environment. Additionally, at the same time a new identity of the school should emerge, by the appreciation of the local culture and the various cultures which is incorporated in the whole school context and this includes the various cultures which come along with both students and staff. In this way and through the participation of all school community member a school should become the educational environment where and environmental mentality should be the soul for its educational activities.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Education for Entrepreneurship and Creativity and Innovation</th>
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<tr>
<td>There is limited feedback with regard to Creativity and Innovation. The feedback with regard to Entrepreneurship is also limited with the exception of a detailed position presented by the responsible EO.</td>
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It is underlined that Entrepreneurship education encourages students to handle uncertainty and respond positively to change, to create and implement new ideas and ways of doing things, and to take and manage risks, and the drive to make ideas happen, raising their aspirations – and that through it students learn to:

- Be innovative and work creatively with others to solve problems.
- Work beyond their comfort zones, developing a ‘can do’ attitude.
- Develop a positive view of risk-taking, learning from mistakes.
- Make decisions, show leadership, manage risks and present to others.
- Take on new challenges, develop self-reliance, be open-minded, show respect for evidence, be pragmatic and committed to making a difference.
- Be adaptable, flexible and creative, develop confidence, initiative and autonomy, show perseverance, determination and the drive to make things happen
- Reflect on what they have learnt and articulate how they have developed and demonstrated enterprise capability, and why these skills and qualities are important for their future.

It is proposed that for students to achieve such outcomes they need to be exposed to opportunities to:

- Experience a range of teaching approaches in subjects across the curriculum that encourage active learning, including problem-based approaches, collaborative and cooperative activities, coaching and mentoring.
- Learn in an environment where they are given autonomy to tackle relevant problems or issues that involve an element of risk and uncertainty about final outcomes, as well as regard for their successful resolution.
- Work to deadlines with limited resources, organising themselves to fulfil roles and complete tasks.
- Get involved in a range of enterprise activities, including business and community projects, minienterprises, simulations, work and community placements, and enterprise days and events.
- Work with partners, for example other schools and colleges, education-business partnership organisations, voluntary bodies, business, social and community enterprises, governors and parents.
- Create and implement project plans that include setting targets, managing budgets and monitoring progress.
Additionally, the following are the entrepreneurial capabilities which are the life skills and qualities students will need to face their future with confidence and to which they should be exposed to at home and embedded into the school life and the curriculum: (i) team work; (ii) risk management; (iii) negotiating and influencing; (iv) effective communication; (v) creativity and innovation; (vi) positive attitude; (vii) initiative; (viii) organisation and planning; (ix) decision making, problem solving and identifying opportunities; (x) leadership; (xi) making judgements on issues with an economic and ethical dimension; (xii) financial literacy; and (xii) product or service design, development and production process.

The point is made that Entrepreneurship education is not a subject – rather a theme that can be embedded in all subjects at every level of the education cycle that demands a whole school approach to learning that should be reflected in everything the student experiences.

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<tr>
<th>Intercultural Education</th>
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<td>Feedback is mainly concerned with a recognition of Malta’s growing cultural diversity and the importance of instilling greater cultural tolerance.</td>
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It is pertinent to underline that it is emphasised in the feedback that an increasing multi-cultural society in Malta should not be taken to mean that there should be less emphasis on Malta’s national identity and culture. Indeed most feedback indicates a greater need for education on local identity and culture including, as described already, the possible introduction of Maltese History as a subject in its own right.

Another issue raised in the feedback and already highlighted, is that the draft NCF tends to give restricted relevance to a number of conceptual considerations that are intrinsically related to local culture whilst in some instances giving value to conceptual considerations that possibly alien to the local and Mediterranean culture.

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<th>Effective Learning and Teaching</th>
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<tr>
<td>Learning and Learning Environment</td>
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<td>The feedback portrays a positive consensus that the draft NCF proposes changes such as assessment for learning, differentiated teaching and inquiry-based learning that should lead away from the current mechanistic system of education to one that is more student centred, sound, holistic and meaningful education that strives to (i) maximise the potential of every individual whatever that may be, (ii) imbue students with skills and attitudes that promote good citizenship and (iii) which will serve students well throughout their lives.</td>
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Nonetheless, one concern that is expressed is that the principles espoused in the draft NCF, such as entitlement, are over emphasised and that moral values, responsibility and accountability should be given greater importance. It is pointed out that educational philosophy in the draft NCF makes next to no reference to the local cultural backdrop – and in instances is, possibly, at odds to the local realities and to the Mediterranean culture.

Mention is also made that more emphasis should be given to multi-sensory teaching to maximise the different learning styles of individuals, and that there is a need for more hands-on activities and group work, whilst feedback from the children’s conference also indicates a desire for students to undertake community work as part of their learning.
In the discussion on the introduction of LAs the concern is expressed that such LAs may develop into ‘umbrella subjects’ who would inevitably dilute the constituent subjects and potentially undermine them altogether.

One respondent underlined that there are a number of concerns about the practical implementation of ICT as a cross curricular theme or as a way to enhance learning and teaching especially in Secondary schools. It is stated that it is difficult for a teacher, for example to use ICT as a cross curricular approach given that computers are not available in class. High speed broadband connectivity is also important for all Schools to be able to exploit ICT fully.

The feedback presented portrays a general sentiment that the infrastructure required to enable student centred learning is either lacking or that end users are not well informed and adequately trained as how to make best use of potential aids and tools such as e-Learning and IWB.

For example, there is uncertainty how the e-Learning platform will assist in assessment purposes or how the IWB will change the traditional method of frontal teaching and whether, without the provision of laptops or computers in classes, the principle aims of the draft NCF to make the students the centre of the learning process could be achieved.

Finally, it is felt that training is inadequate, not just on how to make best use of tools as just mentioned, but also on pedagogical approaches to make lessons more interactive, lively, interesting and enjoyable.

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<tr>
<th>Differentiated Teaching</th>
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<td>In principle, the feedback presented by EOs for the most part welcomes the concept of the introduction of a differentiated teaching environment, yet at the same time, betrays a degree of doubt that it can be implemented successfully without the substantial investment in teacher development, resources and facilities that is perceived necessary.</td>
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As stated in the category titled ‘Principles’, this is a constant concern that runs throughout all aspects of the feedback received from this Stakeholder cohort and is also expressed by other Stakeholder cohorts.

The concern is expressed, that it will be parents that will be most resistant to the introduction of a differentiated teaching environment and who will bring pressure to bear on teachers - as well as education authorities - to ensure that their children are taught to the maximum of their potential and that they are not to be, potentially, slowed down by those children with lesser abilities.

Despite, the expressed support in principle of the introduction of a differentiated teaching environment, doubt about the concept of differentiated teaching itself, is expressed such as, though not limited to:

- The principle expressed in the draft NCF that states that students learn best when they engage with each other and learn from one another is challenged on whether such a principle can actually be met in a differentiated classroom environment given that some students may feel embarrassed in front of their peers whilst others may keep back from reaching their full potential.

- The concern is expressed on how College students with a lower ability will be able to keep up with the pace of teaching if there will be only one syllabus that is directed to all students within a classroom irrespective of their respective ability.
The concern is expressed that there is a real risk that students might have problems moving at their own pace as teaching might be slowed down to incorporate and cater for students at lower levels in the same class and, therefore, negatively impacting the ability of the brighter cohort of students within a class to reach their respective maximum ability and potential.

The demands that are placed on a CT to be able to meet the objectives of the draft NCF in raising the overall educational ability of all students in a class irrespective of each student's ability by adopting and adapting different approaches according to the said abilities cannot be understated. There is agreement that a differentiated learning environment cannot be successfully introduced if this is premised on existing resources that are available to a State School and a CT today.

There is consensus that one resource area where investment is required for the goal of a differentiated educational environment to be met is the introduction of a CTA with the role and responsibility to support the CT in the management of a mixed ability class and in the application of different pedagogies directed at the appropriate ability levels of the students within the class.

Syllabus

There is agreement that the syllabus is overloaded with content and that the draft NCF, with its emphasis on inquiry-based learning, will not be successfully realised unless this important matter of content is addressed. It is repeatedly pointed out that inquiry-based learning is time demanding and that one cannot expect that a teacher is able to cover the same amount of content in the same set of time if it is to be meaningfully implemented. Furthermore, unless one reduces the content, one cannot envisage an increase in hands-on activities.

As with differentiated teaching, there is also concern that parents will prove resistant to the reduction of subject content that will need to be removed to implement inquiry based learning.

Paradoxically, some of the feedback highlights the fact that a reduction in content at the Secondary level of education may lead to a bigger gap between the Secondary and Post-Secondary syllabi.

The feedback underlines the importance that the draft NCF cannot be limited to the Primary and Secondary level of education cycle only and must embrace the transition to the Post-Secondary level of education to ensure that the principles and aims for education continued to be applied as a student's progresses to Upper Secondary. Likewise, the feedback underlines that given that the Post-Secondary level of education feeds the University, the issue of whether entry criteria to the University and how University programmes and lectures are designed and delivered may, also, need to be addressed.

Likewise, the change in the Science subject names may potentially create problems when it comes to presenting certificates to foreign universities or institutions.
The feedback also makes it abundantly clear that a reduction of content should not translate into a reduction of lessons. As is shown feedback on the timetable section, with the odd exception, there is the distinct and negative impression that the amount of lesson time in practically all subjects in the timetables proposed will further undermine teachers from teaching and students from learning the respective subjects.

Additionally, there is also the critique vis-à-vis certain learning objectives such as Music appreciation or Media Education which are seen to be omitted altogether in the proposed syllabus, despite emphasis of their merits in the consultation document. Finally there are various contentions on what subjects should be made compulsory and at what stage.

Moreover, with specific regard to pupils in the Primary cycle of education the curriculum design is designed on a top down subject based methodology resulting in a product oriented approach that takes out the fun and motivation which is an inherent aspect of effecting learning and teaching.

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<tr>
<th>School Outings and Extra Curriculum Activities</th>
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<td>The feedback in this area, whilst limited, is mixed. Whilst some, including students, want to see greater emphasis and time allotted to outings, fieldwork and other extra curriculum activities, others express concern that the teaching time is being eroded year after year due to an increasing rise in intra and extracurricular activities.</td>
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Indeed, a particular demand presented in the feedback is that the final post consultation NCF document should establish a limit to the total annual hours that are allocated to such activities in a scholastic year. Recommendations with regard to how such a balance could be articulated in the NCF include:

- Intra and extracurricular activities should be carried out after school hours under the supervision of teachers who will be remunerated accordingly.

- Schools should be encouraged to name two days or mornings annually in which all Forms (Levels) will organise out of door activities where-in different Forms may carry out fieldwork associated with different subjects. Additionally, the adoption of such a recommendation should solve the problem of substituting the absent teachers (those who accompany the students in their activities) and, thus, students do not lose lessons due to the absence of teachers.

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<th>Special Needs</th>
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<td>The statement is presented that the draft NCF is mainly directed to &quot;typically developing children&quot; and that there is little consideration for children with difficulties - and whilst the principles of diversity and inclusive education are mentioned in the NCF the emphasise is on concept and not application.</td>
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The feedback on students with special needs emphasises the need for more specialised training to be provided to teachers and support staff not only on specific conditions such as dyscalculia but also on specific difficulties such as literacy or numeracy.

The feedback underlines that the final post consultation NCF document should make reference to the SpLD Unit and how this inter-relates with all the appropriate stakeholders such as the health services, professionals in both government and the private practice, and the role these play with regard to assisting students who have development difficulties with languages and mathematics. Furthermore, it is underlined that Colleges should be more dyslexia friendly through policy and practice.
Emphasis is also laid on the need to make teaching more multi-sensory and flexible to accommodate the needs of the individual and that special needs students are entitled to a support structure guided by a specialist.

Feedback also highlights that assessments of SpLD students should focus on the assessment of skills rather than content and that the SpLD service needs to monitor and co-ordinate transitions of SpLD students between the Early Years and late Primary, Primary to Secondary, and Secondary to Post-Secondary and in doing so, facilitating a continuum of achievement.

**Assessment and Evaluation**

A general consensus arising from the consultation process clearly indicates that formative assessment needs to play a more important role yet not to the complete detriment of summative assessment – and that a fine balance needs to be struck between the two.

Enthusiasm for formative assessment is, however, somewhat dampened by the recognition that for it to be implemented substantial investment in professional development and resources is necessary. Moreover, it is likewise recognised that Level Descriptors for continuous assessment are essential and that these have to be developed and teachers need to be trained in their use and parents informed accordingly.

It is underlined that an assessment policy should not just be a recommendation of the draft NCF but a policy direction that backs teachers on various issues like constructive focused feedback. The policy should seek to inform parents and involve them in the learning process of their children. Thus, an assessment policy should be based on input from both parents and students so that they are not only informed about such policy and what it involves but that through their input in its design they own it.

Moreover, it is stated that reporting should include assessment information on strands of learning area and that in this regard it is recommended that such assessment is based on the achievements of a student towards the known learning objectives. It is premised that this is possible if process success criteria are established for every learning objective.

A concern raised is that formative assessment is time consuming and that lessons have to be lengthened if it is to be meaningful. Either way, this would impact either the length of the school day or the number of lessons covered.

The feedback also indicates that the draft NCF should give more importance to assessment reports, including determining the frequency of such reporting.

Additionally, it is proposed that the formal record of a CT’s assessment of each respective student should move with the said student if and when he or she is transferred either to another teacher or to a different School.

It is pertinent to underline that there is general consensus with regard to the abolishment of mid-year examinations. There is general agreement that apart from the financial resources expended, the holding of the mid-year examinations take up approximately a month of teachers' time that could otherwise be spent in tuition, causing teachers to rush through the curriculum to the detriment of their students.
Other concerns and suggestions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- More case studies might need to be developed in the field of assessment so that more good practice is disseminated amongst Primary schools.

- A voluntary accreditation scheme for good practice in assessment, standard setting, recording and reporting, such as that introduced in language schools that teach English as a Foreign Language, should be introduced.

- The DQSE and the Faculty of Education at the University need to work more collaboratively so that as appropriate teachers are trained to incorporate assessment for learning practices effectively in their teaching.

- It is recommended that future syllabi should be crafted into three areas: Core, Statutorial and Option subjects - all summative assessment/s should be based on the Core and Statutorial component whilst all formative assessments would take into account the Option subjects.

- The introduction of external monitoring in all learning areas through sampling of students' work over a cycle of 5 years may prove to be more difficult to achieve given that this entails human resources and well devised national strategies and procedures.

- It is proposed that students who have significant educational needs should not be asked to sit for examinations which are centrally based, but should sit for papers that are prepared by the CT, in consultation with the Head of School and the INCO. The undertaking of examinations can be moderated as necessary.

- A national benchmarking exercise should be carried out at the end of Form II (Year 8 - A1 level CEFR) and Form IV (Year 10 - A2 Level CEFR). Certificates of proficiency should be issued accordingly and added to the Secondary school certificate. In this way students can show what proficiency they would have reached during their Secondary education journey.

- The final post consultation NCF document should articulate in detail how ICT, especially now that Colleges are introducing the e-Learning platform, is to be leveraged in order to assist in assessment purposes.

- It is recommended that SpLD students are entitled to an adequate assessment of their skills. Whilst it is recognised that access arrangements may be necessary, the SpLD service should not be restricted solely to that of recommending access arrangements and that the undertaking of such assessment should focus on the assessment of skills and not content.

- It is recommended that students are taught and be exposed to certain skills from their Early Years of schooling obviously without being assessed summatively - thereby ensuring that students from a young age are helped to acquire certain skills which they will subsequently use during their summative assessment – that is children are exposed to orals and mental situations from when they are still young through various activities so that when they will be eventually assessed summatively, they will find it less difficult.
- It is stated that the information given with regard to assessment strategies for pupils in the Early Years is not as comprehensive as that provided with regard to students in the Primary and Secondary levels of education and that the final post consultation NCF document should rectify this matter.

- For the goal stated in the draft NCF that education practitioners are to go beyond control and transmitting knowledge to be achieved practitioners need to engage in a continuous cycle of design, observation, document, reflection and discussion to inform and evolve teaching practices and that whilst Assessment through Learning Stories is laudable it is seen time consuming and hence a mixture of assessment methods might be a more appropriate approach.

- It is recommended that the report books should be developed to include the Teacher’s, the SMT’s, the parents’ and the students’ comments.

- Whilst it is underlined that the vision of assessment for the Primary level of education is appropriate the final post consultation NCF document should elaborate on the statement in the draft NCF on what constitutes “valid and reliable assessment methods”.

- The draft NCF emphasises the need for continuous recording and reporting on each child’s performance and, whilst this is a desirable practice, it is unclear to what extent the impact of such continuous recording and reporting on the teachers involved has been assessed - the ability for teachers to manage such a continuous assessment process should not be underestimated.

- Assessment reports which are the primary means of reporting progress to parents, pupils and teachers can be given more prominence in the framework.

- The recommendation for the setting of coursework in more than one subject or in more than one LA, whilst seen as a valid proposition, is difficult to implement in State Secondary schools for logistic reasons that might render it difficult to establish consistency and monitoring.

With regard to assessment and evaluation methods in the State Secondary education sector the general feeling is that the draft NCF presents a good balance of mix between formative and summative assessment - though there is an imperative need for the proposed way forward to be adopted by the MATSEC Board.

| Quality Assurance | The feedback indicates that whilst the Quality Assurance mechanisms proposed are wide ranging and effective - in that they include internal and external evaluation, national and international benchmarks – it is felt that too many assessment procedures are referred to and that a clear direction as to which measures are more likely to be effective should be explicitly stated and described with regard to how they will positively impact teaching and learning. |

The response from the Educational Assessment Unit is that they cannot monitor standards single-handedly, and that such monitoring requires the collaboration of the EOs within the department for Curriculum Management and e-Learning, and possibly that of the Quality Assurance Department as well as the Research departments within the DQSE.
On their part EOs are of the considered opinion that they are not consulted by some College principals and that the latter have too much autonomy which is detrimental to assuring standards in the curriculum and the methods to deliver it. EOs remark that Quality Assurance mechanisms should include support visits to teachers by the respective subject EOs.

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<tr>
<th>Parental and Community Involvement</th>
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<td><strong>Parental Involvement</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th>Local Community Involvement</th>
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<td><strong>Local Community Involvement</strong></td>
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It is also recommended that the participation and support of various sectors of the economy should be sought by Colleges to promote learning also outside schools.

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<th>Support Structures and Capacity</th>
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<td><strong>School Management</strong></td>
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Additionally, it is believed that College Principals have very limited opportunities for leadership and management and that the draft NCF does not comprehensively address this issue.

Furthermore, it is also argued that even Heads of Schools have very limited autonomy, since it is the College Principle who has the final say and must approve and can impose what each Head of School must implement.

Other feedback highlights the need for the draft NCF to improve leadership management functions not least by clarifying the roles of the personnel and ensuring that all leaders should be held accountable.

One other concern raised is leadership that the SMT should show with regard to ESD. It is underlined that though much has been done to improve the physical aspects of schools much more needs to be done to really bring out the real meaning of ESD as described in the draft NCF.

It is argued that ESD is not only cross-curricular concept but also an administrative and a managerial issue which every SMT member, members of academic staff and other staff should be responsible for this area. The school not only has to show its eco-responsibility by providing the necessary personnel to transmit knowledge and skills for ESD but it has to be the one who has to “walk the talk” on ESD.
It is recommended that schools should plan as how to reinforce their corporate and social responsibility towards the rest of the community within and around the school – including through taking stock of what the school is doing to safeguard and support sustainable development.

**Teacher Roles and Responsibilities**

There is a consensus, that for the NCF to be successfully implemented the CT needs to be assisted by PrT, CTAs and LSAs especially in mixed ability classes and in specialised subjects such as Art, Music, Dance, etc. this would allow for more differentiation, assessment, group work and activities.

Some feedback, however, indicates that in all other areas were such specialised skills are not required, the onus for teaching should remain on the CT if policies and practices are to become engrained in the teaching process.

It is also highlighted that in certain subjects such as Sciences and Technology Education respectively, the introduction of more laboratory technicians is of assistance in the preparation of experiments and activities.

**Mentoring**

There is limited feedback presented on this matter. A reservation is raised with regard to the usefulness of mentoring to facilitate the implementation of the draft NCF in Colleges and Schools unless the current method of mentoring is changed and unless the mentor is knowledgeable in the subjects in question.

Furthermore, the need for mentors to actually attend and observe lessons is recommended as against the current practice of simply discussing matters with the Teacher/s concerned. It is also remarked that a Head of Department can and should mentor teachers at various levels but that they should not be bound with professional secrecy, since it is felt, this is in conflict with their role as Heads of Departments.

**Facilities and Support Structures and Services**

The comments presented with regard to facilities and equipment is limited. One observation made is that the NCF does not address the current ICT state of play, nor does it give guarantees that all teachers in all Colleges will be able to follow the proposed pedagogy, as being encouraged by the new syllabuses and subject handbooks - a realisation that may not necessarily materialise given the current and possibly future lack of resources and tools.

It is also underlined that more resources should be allocated to Music teachers – including a proper music room, a suitable visual and sound system, musical instruments and provision of Sibelius music notation software.

**Text-Books**

The feedback on this matter is limited. The need for more books in Maltese or at least books which offer greater local context is expressed. It is, nevertheless, recognised that besides the fact that such an exercise would be a time consuming task, it will be very difficult to find teachers with the necessary expertise in writing textbooks in Maltese that reflect the paradigms proposed in the draft NCF.

**Children in Classroom**

There is unanimous agreement that a differentiated teaching environment together with the continuous assessment approach presented in the draft NCF requires a reduction in the size of the classroom if it is to be successfully realised.

**Timetable**

The timetable options proposed in the draft NCF generate considerable debate – and it is not possible to discuss all the points raised. Be that as it may, a number of common strands of concerns expressed are summarised.
There is unanimous objection to the proposed six day schedule, with most stating that this will be difficult to implement as it is unlikely to find support by teachers, administrators, students and parents alike.

The disagreement expressed to the alternative six-day cycle model as is suggested in CFT4 and CFT 5 is also consistent with the contention that the new subject curricula are written with a five-day week in mind and that a six-day cycle creates logistical problems which is likely to unsettle and disrupt both teachers and students since there would be a different timetable to follow every week.

It is stated that lessons need to be, at least, one hour long if effective assessment for learning and inquiry-based teaching strategies is to be successfully attained. It is recognised that extending the lesson time to one hour will impact the length of the school day or alternatively, the number of lessons per day.

It is further stated that the timetables as presented where-in they indicate the number of lessons for each LA are misleading. It is proposed that in the final post consultation NCF document the timetables should clearly specify the time allocation or the number of lessons dedicated to each specific subject and not a single time allocation for the whole LA.

Additionally, as a result of increased decentralisation and autonomy being provided to Colleges (which would allow them to design their timetables, and in doing so allocate different time allocations to particular subjects) the approach towards an unitised syllabi and the preparation of national examination papers may be compromised.

Additionally, the feedback also clearly indicates a common sentiment amongst EOs that a reduction in the allotted time for particular subjects would defeat the purposes of the draft NCF as they will dilute the quantum and subsistence of teaching provided.

The following presents a reflection of issues raised in the consultation feedback:

- Two lessons a week for AE are negligible if they are to be shared between three subjects especially considering the fact that Art AE itself comprises in this instance the subjects of visual arts and music.

- In order for students to gain basic skills that will help them lead healthier lifestyles, particularly to gain important practical skills, more lessons in HnE would be necessary.

- PSD lessons in Form 3 (Level 9), Form 4 (Level 10) and Form 5 (Level 11) should be increased from 1 to 2 lessons a week.

- It is important that 5 lessons for English are retained irrespective of the timetable opted for. If the number of English lessons are decreased this decision would be detrimental to the implementation of the curriculum.

- The proposal of providing schools with the option of reducing English lessons to 4 per week should be removed. Given the importance of English, the subject requires at least the five weekly lessons it presently enjoys. Any reduction in the allocation of English lessons is bound to have a serious impact on the standard of English in Malta.

- The notion that English teaching and learning will improve or will have "advantages" as a result of reducing the number of lessons is seen to be "absurd".
With the reduction in the number of lessons allocated on the timetable for Geography and/or its integration with other subjects there is likely to be a decline in the importance of Geography.

The proposed timetable CFT C option is not agreed to as it allocates less than 4 lessons a week to Option Subjects. It is stated that students who follow the 3 lesson model will require extra tuition to cover the content material required for them to be able to sit for the MATSEC examinations.

The planned reduction in the number of lessons allocated to Geography, History and Social Studies from Form 3 (Level 9) onwards to two lessons a week as proposed in most models is criticised. Some respondents underline that Geography is one of the most relevant and important subjects the children today should learn yet through such planned changes such knowledge will be minimalised.

Considering the nature of the subject that is Design and Make and Evaluate, 10 hours are not enough to develop the subject accordingly.

Although observing that the draft NCF proposes an increase in the teaching time allocated for Science in the Primary Schools' timetables (a maximum of 2 hours), it is argued that more time is required to develop a proper learning programme at the Primary level of education.

The time allotted for SE is greatly reduced by 14 hours in CFT 4 and 5 options. The proposed reduction in hours will have an impact on the assessment and setting of the annual examination papers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>90 Minute Curriculum Development</th>
<th>There is agreement that professional development will benefit if more time is allocated for regular meetings or seminars as proposed in the draft NCF. The introduction of the proposed structured time for curriculum and professional development will allow teachers and EOs to share their experiences, and where specialised guest speakers would impart the benefits of their knowledge and experience.</th>
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It is further recommended that all teachers should have the necessary time to reflect on their assessment for learning practices given that, unfortunately, not all teachers have the opportunity to meet during the present curriculum time.

It is argued that such meetings are essential to create the learning communities of teachers that will develop practices and collaboration necessary for the paradigm shift envisaged in the draft NCF to happen - where-in proposed strategies, policies, directives, guidelines should be discussed during curriculum time or subject meetings.

Professional Development

As stated earlier with regard to 'Teacher Support', the feedback presented highlights that teachers, SMT and EOs recognise that unless there is extensive and ongoing professional development, not only in subject specialisation but also in pedagogical techniques to effectively implement concepts such as continuous assessment for learning and inquiry-based learning, the successful implementation of the draft NCF may be compromised.

The concern is expressed that the draft NCF does not discuss the issue of funding for professional development opportunities abroad and that it does not address the extensive bureaucracy required to apply for special leave which discourages individuals from applying for continued professional development or in many instances approval is not forthcoming in time.
Questions are raised on whether teachers will be encouraged to undertake professional development during school hours and what provisions would be made for replacement teachers if this were the case.

Recommendations proposed include the possibility of incentives such as periodic sabbaticals allowing teachers and EOs to further their development at diploma or post-graduate levels or the award of more short term scholarships or subsidies on the basis of performance based records.

Management of Change

The feedback presented on the management of change is limited. One particular observation is that a number of teachers remain tied during their career to teaching a particular age of students - a behaviour that indicates the degree of conservatism prevalent amongst the teaching class and a potential indicator of the extent that change may be resisted.

One recommendation presented is that the implementation process should consist of small yet constant steps that assure that the necessary support is garnered in tandem with changes and reform to the teaching methods. It is argued that the provision of support to teachers is likely to render them more receptive to the new paradigm proposed in the draft NCF.

Additionally, it is stated that it is important that each State School has a Head of School. It is argued that this is a critical success factor to the success or otherwise of the draft NCF as Heads of School are the link between the "grass roots" and the Eos. Heads of Schools it is underlined are the catalysts of change.

One concern that this Report identifies is that the feedback presented by Colleges and the Directorates within the MEDE are at odds with each other on the principle of autonomy: the former seeking increased decentralisation and autonomy and the latter seeking to restraint further decentralisation and autonomy - if not the curbing back of decentralisation and autonomy measures introduced to date.

These opposing pressures reflect the tension between the level of decision making sought by SMT at a College and individual school basis and the maintenance of the supremacy of the centre with regard to school management decision making.

The supporting paper to the post consultation NCF document that this Report recommends should, it is suggested, address how such tension is to be managed as such tension is likely to be one of the critical factors to the successful implementation of the NCF.
Analysis of Consultation Feedback from Departments at the University of Malta and Higher Education Institutions to the Draft National Curriculum Framework

Chapter 05
The analysis presented in this Chapter is based on a segmentation analysis of the original documents submitted to the DQSE by different Faculties and Departments within the University of Malta. The segmentation analysis document is presented as Appendix V to this report.

### Subject Discussion

#### General Principles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principles</th>
<th>The following presents a representation of the positive reaction to the principles and aims of the draft NCF:</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Welcomes the publication of the NCF as it feels that it manages to identify and address several pending concerns in the formal education ... unlike the two previous National Curriculum the current document went a step further by presenting tangible ways of how these concerns could be addressed ... Another important feature of the current document is that it is a framework that outlines the basic principles of the curriculum thus presenting schools with guidelines on which to structure a curriculum based on their specific realities ...&quot;.</td>
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<td>&quot;The publication of the NCF is a significant step forward in the provision of quality of education.&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;Overall the document [NCF] provides a wide view of learning which allows for flexibility by the professionals in the classroom. It proposes many valid principles and values which we agree to.&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;The Department acknowledges the effort involved in the drawing up a new NCF and welcomes a number of proposals included therein, as they are generally considered to be positive for the future of education in Malta.&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;The approach presented in the NCF ... is attractive as a democratic approach that gives equal importance to and valuing of all children whatever their group membership and individual characteristics ... democratic approach to diversity is further enhanced by an emphasis on a student centred approach to teaching and learning ...&quot;.</td>
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<td>&quot;General comment that there are positive issues raised in the NCF and it is hoped that the recommended changes will bring about an improvement in the quality provided to students.&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;General consensus that the document outlining the new vision for Science, based on the principle of entitlement, stands out in terms of coherence, inclusion and a refreshing approach to the teaching and learning of the subjects / areas involved without any decrease whatsoever in the amount of disciplinary rigour necessary for pupils to master the Science document. It is felt that the Science document can serve as a model for syllabi design in other areas since it embodies all the positive aspects of the NCF draft.&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;The following are positive elements of the NCF - which the Science proposal incorporates most fully and coherently:</td>
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<td>- Desire for entitlement curriculum, less student stratification, and less insularity between subjects.</td>
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<td>- A shift to more inquiry based pedagogies and active learning.</td>
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<td>- A continuous programme matched to developmental stages.</td>
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<td>- A continuum of achievement toward criterion referencing.</td>
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<td>- A recognition of diversity.</td>
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<td>- A more applied approach and valorisation of the vocational.</td>
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</table>
- A shift to supporting schools and resourcing teachers in classrooms rather than individualised supports.
- Preparation consistent with childhood rights to learning for its own sake, within preparation for life and work.
- Importance to biodiversity which was lacking in the NMC.
- Importance to critical thinking and the development of the imagination.
- A compulsory science throughout the entire schooling period.
- More attention to the arts, sports and health.*

* "NCF promotes new methodologies and resources to facilitate teaching and learning - this is the way forward denoting a curriculum which is striving to remain relevant to modern lifestyles and which tries to address new challenges ...”.

**Teacher Support**

The feedback indicates a general concern that teachers will face several challenges in the implementation of the principles and aims of the draft NCF. It is acknowledged that teachers, particularly in Colleges, will face difficulty to adjust to a new culture that is required as a result of new concepts such as inquiry based learning, differentiated teaching and continuous assessments.

Furthermore, the feedback highlights that for the most part teachers lack the necessary training and classroom experience. Consequentially, unless teachers undergo sustained and intensive in-service courses, and unless there is a significant investment in increased support structures at every level in the form of Social Workers, Counselors, Speech Therapists, Psychologists, etc to support teachers while helping students, the implementation of the NCF will not move as smoothly as desired to the detriment of the students:

Additionally, feedback includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Teachers are the participants who “can make or break” the changes - challenges surface and revolve with regard to a change in the mentality of the teachers about what the teaching / learning process is about.

- The issues related to a differentiated teaching environment constitute a major challenge as teachers, generally, are not trained to teach such classes and lack experience. A lack of expertise on the part of Secondary teachers, therefore, may have negative repercussions on students’ learning environment.

- The teachers need to be more aware that they need to be patient with themselves as they learn to use new teaching strategies: a process which is demanding and will take years to mature and which requires constant reflection about their classroom practices.

- It is not clear how teachers can refer to the support structures, for instance on how to train adequately and who to turn to with difficulties in relation to differentiated pedagogy.

- The provision of a CTA to assist the CT to help low achievers while improving group-work monitoring is seen to be imperative to the success of the principles and aims in the draft NCF.

- In the implementation of the new syllabus considerable importance and investment should be given to the training of teachers – a training programme that is structured on the basis of in-service courses and that is sustained, and not three day seminars.
The NCF, if implemented, will necessitate changes in Initial Teacher Education and it is believed that these changes can take place concurrently with the changes being implemented in the schools.

Continuous support and in-service training for teachers on a practical level to help them face difficulties when providing differentiated learning and assessment and to help them cope when covering syllabus with the constraints of 3 or 4 weekly lessons.

Another concern expressed, specifically involves the tuition of the proposed Core Science subject. It is asserted, as is, indeed, underlined in the feedback presented by the College and Schools and the Directorates stakeholder cohorts’ feedback respectively, that a considerable number of Secondary teachers may not be in a position to teach the Core Science subject given that most of these teachers do not have undergraduate training in the three distinct areas of science: Physics, Chemistry and Biology.

It is underlined that the re-training programme for such Science teachers should involve the same rigour and depth as a module in a Science degree for it to suffice to adequately re-skill teachers appropriately.

**Autonomy**

The feedback presented portrays a mixed reaction with regard to curricular autonomy. On the one hand it is argued that greater autonomy given to Colleges and Schools to follow the NCF will lead to different outcomes and, potentially, a continued repeat of the low patterns of achievement at the individual, school, sector and national level whilst the choice given to schools to exclude certain subjects or LAs for all or some of their pupils may seriously disadvantage pupils whose parents cannot argue for a more demanding curriculum.

On the other hand, it is argued that the draft NCF as proposed is too prescriptive and if interpreted to the letter would place Church and Independent Schools in a quandary mainly given that there is no obvious differentiation between the three education sectors and would thus undermine the autonomy that they currently enjoy.

A further issue raised concerns greater Teacher autonomy and their empowerment to implement innovative teaching and learning strategies, that whilst this is desirable, there is concern that the cumbersome hierarchy that teachers have to answer to together with constraints of implementing what is a content crammed syllabus will impact the successful implementation of the NCF.

**Aims of Education**

Life Learning Long The feedback raised with regard to LLL is limited. A particular concern raised is that is that the NCF and the education system might succumb to displaced priorities and the valuation of “utilitarian” benefits above the human person where education is subservient to the economy - which may result in confusing priorities that are detrimental not only to persons but also to institutions and society in the long term.
In this regard, it is recommended that in defining the aims of education, the final post consultation NCF document should make more explicit the centrality of the human person and goal of developing the full potential of every individual. Likewise, the final version of the NCF should aim at developing learners whose capability of living out meaningful relationships that give them fulfillment in life should not be secondary to academic success.

Further feedback presented underlines that the NCF should not adopt a language that seeks to emphasise the "atomised" individual "fully and solely (or together with parents)" to be responsible for his or her learning and therefore life chances. A discourse on LLL that is based on the "politics of responsibilisation", which indeed has been the main emphasis in recent years, absolves the State of any responsibility in providing its citizens education to which they are entitled to for life - like health, pensions, etc.

It is argued that the “responsibilisation discourse” should be used in a manner that sees people primarily as social actors with a range of human dimensions and not solely those of productivity and consumption: where education is to be seen primarily as a public and not consumption good. Whilst it is not being recommended that the NCF deliberately adopts such a conservative approach it is believed that it is important that this alternative discourse to the current mainstream one on LLL that has emerged from the OECD and the EU is presented.

The notion of Lifelong Education, therefore, rather than LLL is preferable since it allows the State to retain its responsibility for ensuring that every person, at what age, gains access to educational experiences which he or she is entitled to.

Additionally the final post consultation NCF document should resist pressures by the European Commission to make displaced emphasis on the economy which inherently promotes the values of competition as against solidarity and cooperation - demonstrated by the increased importance on assessment programmes such as PISA, TIMS and PRILS which imply that the lower a country's ranking, the lesser the possibilities of attaining economic growth and consequently of increasing standards of living.

Employability

The feedback on this aim of education is limited. One respondent states that work is a "society activity work" that overshadows all other examples of social action in terms of the proportion of time and energy that people in general dedicate to it.

The consequence of this is that education cannot remain insensitive to the dynamics of the world as otherwise it runs the risk of being marginalised. It is further stated that the influence, formal and otherwise, which the school exerts on individuals in the choice of their eventual occupations careers constitutes one of the formal links between education and the world of work.

Additionally it is expressed that as the structure of the labour force changes under the impact of the various forces of the knowledge based and globalised economy, the emphasis put on the various subjects in schools tends to alter, thereby fostering a close link between the curriculum and the economy. In terms of the curriculum this may be interpreted as the need for the cultivation of skills commensurate with the ever changing demands of the labour market.

Nonetheless, whilst the curriculum needs to cater for the cultivation of skills commensurate with the ever changing demands of the labour market, it is further argued that it should not be perceived as a “mere device pandering to the dictates of the economy rather than aiming at enhancing the human dignity and self development of the person".
In essence, it is stated that the ultimate aim of the curriculum development is to find the ideal balance in the “bond it establishes between the inherent values of the learning process with the demands of the economy”. In this light, it is argued that the contents of a new school curriculum, along with the pedagogies developed in its implementation, could serve as the ideal transmitters of the principles and practices governing this involvement and participation, which in turn contribute to a more wholesome democratic society.

In relation to work, the knowledge that is imparted together with the skills that are learned and the attitudes that are instilled should provide the tool kit that would enable and empower individuals to participate effectively in various spheres of life and particularly at the place of work.

One other respondent states that the OECD review of transition presents six key features of transition systems: (i) a health economy and a well functioning labour market; (ii) well organised pathways; (iii) workplace experience combined with education; (iv) tightly knit safety nets for those at risk; (v) good information and guidance; (vi) effective institutions and processes. It is underlined that the transition features are not clearly developed in the draft NCF nor are they linked together in ways that support such transitions. It is recommended that a final post consultation NCF document should be careful not to present the economy as a “reality” for which schools “need” to prepare but rather a state of play which students are to engage critically - and, therefore, a continuum of the critical education process.

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<tr>
<th>Learning Areas</th>
<th>Focus on Early Years and Primary Education</th>
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<tr>
<td>The feedback on this area is generally positive in that it welcomes the fact that explicit attention is given to the Early Years and that the sections in the NCF regarding this level are comprehensive. There is agreement on the set competencies and outcomes.</td>
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<td>There is concern, however, that the implementation of the NCF principles with regard to the Early Years may be hampered by two aspects of the teaching culture namely: (a) set syllabi that have been designed without consideration to subject ‘topics’ or over riding ‘themes’ (the latter would umbrella various subjects); and (b) the local tendency to be ‘textbook driven’ while planning; again current textbook content organisation mitigates against an integrated approach.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Additionally, the concern is highlighted, however, that the reference to outcomes that pupils are expected to achieve prior to the later Primary years may erroneously be interpreted that there is to be a common standard or a set of learning outcomes which all children should reach by a set time. It is recommended that in the final post consultation NCF document it should be clearly stated that these outcomes are guidelines towards which educators are to provide support to young children in striving towards their attainment.</td>
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<td>It is further expressed that whilst the draft NCF emphasises the importance of the Early Years learning environment it does not elaborate on the importance of its organisation in a way that provides variety (open-ended material rather than readymade toys / games), access and choice to allow child initiated and child developed activities to emerge, based on their ‘here and now’ interest (hence helping children to develop responsibility, become decision makers).</td>
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With regard to communicative competences it is noted that this area in the NCF narrowly focuses on the use of language and digital literacy as a way for children to communicate and thus not giving enough attention to notions and multi-literacy. The multiple ways young children use to interact and which in the early years sometimes precede language, such as drawing, gestures and facial expressions, movement, music, mark making and the use of visual literacy amongst others are not given their due importance.

It is highlighted that the literature adds more aspects to discourse which include a classroom that opens out to the real world; reading, writing and mathematics in relationship to real world discoveries; authentic learning materials that are normally a part of the real world; student explorations of the real world guided by the teacher; learning based on encounters with the real world, resulting in ideas, insights, revelations, reflections, observations and more. It is thus, recommended that it may be appropriate for these and / or similar features of developmental learning are explicitly spelt out in the document in order to ensure the intended interpretation.

The feedback also portrays a broad recognition that more energy and resources need to be invested in the Primary level of education and that a national effort is required to encourage reading from an early age.

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<th>Languages</th>
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<td>There is general agreement for an urgent need for a National Language Policy that charts a way forward and for which educators have for a time felt a need for this policy lacuna to be addressed.</td>
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The focus on oral competence and fluency presented in the draft NCF is well met. Nevertheless, it is argued that the NCF presents too strong a focus on the communication aspect of language and does not give due emphasis to the organic relationship between the various aspects of language and the need for continuity in the development of language study - which is seen to demand consideration of all functions of language: ideational (i.e. communication of ideas, etc), expressive, social, sonic, performative, recording, instrument of thought and identifying functions.

Additionally, it is stated that the instrumental function of language should have led the draft NCF to examine in some detail the use of language in non-language subjects and its relation to the study of language: for example it is underlined that the present use of Maltese for Social Studies in Year 6 of the Primary level of education ranks as reasonably high (suitable for MATSEC Level – B1 on CEF) whereas the level of language in the actual Maltese lessons for the same year is much lower.

The suggested approach to Bilingualism and Multilingualism drew some criticism - which includes:

- The statement in the draft NCF that “Second language teaching can be successful if lessons are learnt from mother tongue acquisition...” is queried and the issue is raised on whether this means that Colleges and Schools are to teach English through the use of Maltese.

- The position of the NCF with regard to those Schools which specifically choose to establish English is the dominant language.

- The management of bilingualism and multilingualism entails a need for translation and interpretation skills which should be considered as an asset to the modern Maltese person and constitutes another essential component in the holistic education of the student.
It is underlined that ethnic minority children should possess a good command of Maltese and/or English languages as early as possible. In this regard, it is proposed that the final post consultation NCF document should highlight the need for schools to organise intensive language courses for children (and parents) of minority groups. This should not be construed as some kind of remedial teaching but merely a focused deployment of a Second and/or foreign language teaching in order to fast track the ability of such students to integrate as quickly as possible in their learning environment.

The recommendation in the draft NCF that “schools may design curricular programmes for students who are still experiencing difficulties in the core languages”, is considered to be a positive one though queries are raised on how such curricular programmes will be organised and whether they will replace the teaching of however a foreign language.

It is also emphasised that the NCF besides catering for the needs of weaker students as well as for the needs of those with learning difficulties, should, with urgency, address the needs of those students who show excellent proficiency in one or more languages (as well as in other subjects).

**Maltese**

The importance that the draft NCF gives to literacy and Maltese as a first language as well as the provision of allocating the Maltese language 4 lessons per week is greeted positively.

It is, however, noted that in presenting its timetable models the draft NCF is being contradictory as it places Maltese at a disadvantage as it places it twice weekly after the mid-day break when concentration normally diminishes as students are tired.

It is also felt that at the Secondary level of the education the number of Maltese lessons should be equal to those allocated to English lessons and that there is a need for more Maltese textbooks as well as Maltese software to facilitate e-learning.

The draft NCF proposal of a new emphasis on literacy skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking, instead of focusing exclusively on grammar and literature is also welcomed.

It is also recommended that focus on mastery of Maltese by ethnic minority children is given similar attention as that given to English.

**English**

The feedback portrays significant concern with reduction of hours allocated for English language in general and the fact that English Literature is proposed to be assigned as an Option subject. The rationale behind both measures is questioned.

The concern is also expressed that the pilot English Language syllabus for Form I (Level 7) introduced in the 2011/12 scholastic year barely covers enough Literature to give students an appreciation of it. It is stated that a consequential effect should students in Form I (Level 7) and Form II (Level 8) receive a limited introduction to Literature in the first two years of Secondary school, then this will result in a small number of students who will chose English Literature as a subject in Form III (Level 9).

The end result is that the introduction of this measure will severely undermine a student's ability to cope with Post-Secondary education given that English Literature is an integral component of the English ‘A’ Level examination. It is, thus, argued that the proposal in the draft of NCF with regard to the offering of English Literature as an Option subject only should be re-considered.
It is underlined that the language of instruction and assessment at the University of Malta is, in the main, the English language. The concern is expressed that the standard of English of students following Tertiary education is already considered as poor and apprehension is expressed that the proposals in the draft NCF will not redress this state of play.

Foreign

The feedback portrays a general concern with the reduction of the number of lessons per week for foreign languages. This is seen as a limitation and in conflict with a number of statements on the importance of language teaching articulated in the draft NCF.

This is especially so when recent research indicates an element of decline in the level and proficiency attained by students who acquire a third language, especially where Italian is concerned. Furthermore, it is also contended that this will have an impact on the work load of teachers who are already engaged in schools as well as on future employment possibilities.

It is suggested that more attention needs to be paid to the understanding, reading and writing capabilities of students in learning a third language – it is contended that currently, students who claim to have a third language do not have the level of skills required for the purpose of using this language in assisting them in their studies at Tertiary level.

Feedback recommends that efforts should be undertaken to enhance the learning of a third Language in a manner that assists students to use such a language in their learning at Tertiary level: for example, a sound knowledge of French or Italian would provide a high added benefit to students following the law degree programme.

It is further recommended that a radical change in the syllabi and in the examination set-up is needed at Intermediate and Advanced Level – to fortify the listening component of language which is, it is claimed, to be given relative attention. Additionally, it is proposed that the final post consultation NCF document should provide increased emphasis with regard to foreign language learning vis-a-vis vocational training.

The higher importance attributed to the Spanish language in the Maltese Education system is welcomed and recommendations are presented for a similar emphasis on the importance of Arabic.

The proposed pedagogical shift towards a learner-centered approach is also welcomed. Likewise, the proposal in the NCF with regard to Language Awareness Programmes is deemed as a step in the right direction and it is proposed that the number of hours dedicated to the programme should be increased and that the programme itself should be extended to Secondary and Post-Secondary level. Similarly, the proposed plan of foreign language teachers visiting Primary schools to promote the individual languages is lauded.

Mathematics Education

The feedback presented is limited. The point is made that the “poor” state of Mathematics is evidenced in the results of the SEC examination. The concern is expressed that there is a “significant” number of students who do study Mathematics if this is not a specific entry requirement for their chosen University degree programme. It is noted that, despite increasing numbers of students following Science subjects at Post-secondary level, the numbers of students taking Mathematics has decreased.
It is underlined that it is not only students who are following the path of least resistance. The increasing difficulties encountered by students in Mathematics, and the negative impact that such difficulties have on the pass rates of topics heavily reliant on Mathematics have resulted in a number of changes, starting from the syllabi of SEC Mathematics, where the elimination of logarithms from the syllabus is seen to be a “most ill-advised decision” as well as the fact that the syllabi of various science subjects at Advanced level are “watered down” with regard to the Mathematical skills by the MATSEC panels.

It is thus recommended that there is a need for a re-examination of the strategy for Mathematics education – and that the draft NCF presents no proposals in this regard.

The feedback draws attention to use of inconsistent terminology with respect to this subject in the draft NCF and that if the different terms used, namely Mathematics and numeracy, are intended to highlight differences then such differences are not rendered clear.

The concern is raised that that the draft NCF over-emphasises the utilitarian aspects of learning Mathematics and should give more importance to the satisfaction that can be derived from studying Mathematics for its own sake. Nevertheless, it is underlined that the importance of Mathematics as an essential tool for Science students should be made clearer.

The question is raised whether the Handbook on the Teaching of Mathematics which was written and published prior to the closure of the consultation period will be changed if this proves to be inconsistent with the final post consultation NCF document.

It is recommended that Algebra is added to the other stated strands of Mathematics.

Science Education

The view of SE taken in the draft NCF (based on inquiry and promoted through inquiry based learning) is, in principle, welcomed by most. It is, however, to be noted that the Faculty of Science considers the proposed curricular changes as “probably” ambitious a step to contemplate at this stage until the other necessary changes referred to in the Vision document are implemented to affect the paradigm shift required by the “perceived” crisis. It is underlined that the state of crisis in SE is not prevalent throughout the entire country, but is limited to a section of Malta’s youth and thus, it is questioned whether the “significant upheaval” proposed in the nature of SE in those schools that account for the majority of students taking up science subjects at SEC level, and posting significantly high Paper A pass rates.

Be that as it may, however, there is a general concern that the tuition time allocated to SE is insufficient to seriously implement this form of pedagogical approach. It is recommended that a preliminary study on the amount of time required to teach Science using the inquiry based approach should be undertaken to balance more appropriately the theoretical and inquiry based sessions. Furthermore, it is highlighted that such a shift requires greater investment in terms of Science teachers and other Science-related personnel to support the SE reform proposed, and in laboratories – where more practical work would be required.
Whilst there is a desire that the reform of inquiry-based learning should extend to beyond the Secondary level of education, where the teaching approach is still considered traditional, there are doubts given that inquiry-based learning is time consuming on whether the content covered would provide sufficient preparation for prospective university degrees. Thus, it is stated that achieving the objective of changing the pedagogy to inquiry-based learning will mean that “all teachers need re-training in methods of teaching – a challenging task which should not be under-estimated. It is underlined that graduates in physics and mathematics, teaching one of these two subjects, may, if they are the product of a state school, never have studied Chemistry and Biology even at SEC level and it is, therefore, “inconceivable” how such an individual may become able to teach Physical Chemistry by a process of being “easily re-trained”.

Concern is raised on the fact that the draft NCF does not provide a road map on how the proposed approach to SE in the Primary and Secondary education cycles would graft and provide for a smooth transition for Post-Secondary education.

It is recognised, that the proposed reform in the teaching of Science will lead to a radical change in the Teacher's role: from being the source of knowledge to helping students discover scientific principles - a change that should also occur at the Post-Secondary level where the approach is considered to reflect the current traditional system of education.

It is pertinent to underline that the feedback is unequivocal that in the presentation of a new vision for Science the NCF cannot stop abruptly at the Secondary level of education but should also provide on how this will be integrated with Post-Secondary education where inquiry-based learning of Science should be introduced at Sixth Form level too.

It is further recognised, that an inquiry-based learning of Science requires more time and the draft NCF is not clear how this will be achieved given, particularly, if the content of the identified Science subjects remain unchanged to that present today.

It is pertinent to note that some are apprehensive that the reform in SE will cause drastic upheavals in the content and structure of Science teaching with detrimental consequences for both teachers and students.

The re-packaging of the formal Science subjects, has solicited for the major part a critical reaction – whilst others state that unless the nature of the three suggested Science subjects is clarified further and elaborated on, they are not in a position to give sufficient feedback.

It is to be noted that the MATSEC Board highlights that if the decision is taken to implement the draft NCF's proposed introduction of Core Science as a compulsory subject in the Secondary school curriculum and Physical Science, Materials Science and Life Science at SEC Level, then there is an urgent need for agreement to be reached between the stakeholders on how to develop the examination syllabi for the new subjects which are usually taught in Form III (Level 9), Form IV (Level 10), and Form V (Level 11).

Additionally it is emphasised that the final post consultation NCF document needs to consider and articulate a way forward with regard to the relation between the teaching syllabi and the examination syllabi and the role of MATSEC Board in syllabus development.
Apprehension is expressed that the proposed Core Science may be insufficient to prepare students for Post-Secondary education and that by re-packaging Science into a LA the three classical scientific subjects will be diluted and that this will further hamper students at the Post-Secondary level of education.

Furthermore it is argued that whilst the introduction of Core Science at Secondary level of education might improve the overall basic scientific literacy, it could limit the options of science-oriented student at a later stage. The MATSEC Board’s feedback, for example, argues that the current compulsory Physics offers more flexibility because students who opt for non Science subjects at the end of Form II (Level 8) or Form III (Level 9) can still change their mind in Sixth Form and opt to study Mathematics and Physics at Advanced level to become Engineers. To mitigate this concern, a common recommendation is that students should be allowed to opt for at least one Science subject without it necessarily being the newly proposed Core Science subject.

Additionally, it is argued that the gap between Secondary and Post-Secondary in the Science subjects is wide and the concern is presented that to lessen this gap one may be tempted to shift some topics to University or that students entering tertiary level institutions with the intent to study Science will, whilst having a possible sounder understanding of the discipline, have less broad scientific knowledge. This, it is argued, will place increased demands on the scientific programmes of study in the first years of University. Thus, it is stated, that if one is not to sacrifice quality for quantity, it may then be necessary to lengthen the duration of scientific studies at the tertiary level to achieve “current knowledge” learning outcomes - thereby requiring, in order to ensure conformity with the provisions of the Bologna Agreement, that courses are split into first and second cycle degrees, thus leading to students possibly opting for longer periods of study before entering the productive workforce.

The proposal for a different organisation of Sixth Form whereby students start studying five Intermediate MATSEC subjects in the first year and then continue to study two of those subject to Advanced Matriculation level in the second year is seen as unrealistic. It is stated that such an approach if adopted would cause problems at the Post-Secondary level - including, amongst others, the following:

- There will be too many examinations in the first year of Sixth Form.
- There will not be enough time in the second year of Sixth Form to cover the rest of the Advanced Matriculation syllabus since the second year scholastic year actually runs from October to March at most.
- It will give rise to logistical and organisational implications with regard to the structuring of the Matriculation Certificate examination, the length of the Post-Secondary second year and admission to University courses.
- That whilst some of the concepts posited in the draft NCF with regard to the system of Post-secondary education are valid in principle, the proposals of what the ramifications of changes at this level will involve are “lukewarm” at best.

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<tr>
<th>Technology Education</th>
<th>The feedback on technology highlights that the definition of ‘Digital Literacy’ in the draft NCF is incomplete: whilst it is acknowledged that reference should be made to information processing concepts, it is argued that it should not be restricted to them.</th>
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<td>It is, therefore, proposed that more importance is given to knowledge building, the acquisition of a set of instrumental skills relating to the operation of hard and soft technologies, and the ability to use digital technologies to mediate different forms of learning and social interaction.</td>
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Furthermore, it is argued that Digital Literacy is more about participating in the “creation of digital artifacts than about the consumption of digital content and the use of digital media and technologies”. Thus, the final post consultation NCF document should give more importance to the “creative, constructionist and participatory nature” of the Digital Literacy.

The perceived shift proposed in the draft NCF, from the teaching of the use of software towards a broader and more situated approach which emphasises insight into core computing principles and their application in a knowledge society is seen as positive. Satisfaction is also expressed that Design and Technology is described at various points throughout the NCF and the subject’s inclusion in the Technology Education LA is appreciated.

The perceived commitment to reinforce and consolidate IT across the curriculum and to further increase computer literacy throughout the educational process is likewise commended and satisfaction is also expressed that Design and Technology will be offered as an Option subject to all Form III (Year 9) students.

The concern is expressed, however, that to meet the descriptive, prescriptive and tacit knowledge that Design and Technology demands the time allotted for the teaching of this subject must be more than the 70 hours proposed in the draft NCF. It is stated that within such a time allocation it will not be possible to teach the Design and Technology subject in a manner that allows students to be innovative through project work including risk taking through the development of their own products.

Health Education

The recommendation for the establishment of HhE as one of the LAs is seen as a positive measure given that HhE covers the whole spectrum of a child’s development. One other respondent welcomes the emphasis on health and social and emotional education in the NCF as it strongly encourages the goal of having academically, socially and emotionally literate children and young people in Maltese society.

Likewise there is appreciation that HhE and Textile Studies are retained as possible Option subjects in senior Secondary.

The feedback, however, highlights concerns of how components of the HhE LA will be implemented logistically. It is argued that is unclear of who exactly is responsible for the tuition of HE, PSHE and PE. Thus, for example, whilst the draft NCF states that with regard to the Primary level of education it is Primary School teachers who are responsible for the teaching and learning of HE, including PE the NCF also states that subject specialist Primary school teachers are to replace class teachers to teach HE. The exact roles and responsibilities with regard to the teaching of components within the HhE LA need to be clarified.

The feedback recommends that Food and Healthy eating should be taught through practical and investigative components by trained HhE specialists and that all Primary Schools should be equipped with adequate facilities so that children can participate in investigative and practical food and consumer choice tasks.

The feedback expresses that it is unclear on whether the PSHE subject will be taught by a PSHE specialist, a CT or with the support of an HhE teacher. Additionally, it is stated that the draft NCF is unclear on the amount of teaching hours that is to be allocated to the PSHE subject.
Furthermore, the recommendation is presented that the PSHE subject should give increased prominence to Sexual and Relationship Education (SRE).

**Physical Education**

The feedback denotes appreciation that the draft NCF promotes a more cross-curricular, thematic, inter-disciplinary approach to PE which hitherto been viewed as a separate extra subject.

Be that as it may, it is felt that not enough importance is attributed to PE in the draft NCF. It is contended, for example, that the ‘Aims of Primary Education’ do not refer to the physical development of children and that physical literacy is not included as an important aspect of holistic development. Furthermore, it is further underlined that PE and its objectives should be clearly defined, for as it is there is a distinct lack of consistency in different parts of the draft NCF with the subject sometimes referred to as PE; sometimes as PE / Sport; and at times the word education is totally omitted such as Physical / Sport Activities.

The feedback further recommends that a distinction should be made between Lessons and Activities as these are not the same thing and can cause confusion, notably with respect to time allotment. It is stated that the latter should be seen as extracurricular while PE should not.

Additionally, it is argued that the final post consultation NCF document should give more consideration to PE as a core subject - given that PE does not equate to the holding of activities during break time or after school hours (a “distorted” view of PE that is present throughout the document given that PE and recess are distinct). It is articulated that PE goes beyond the physical domain and, thus, the draft NCF should be more reflective of this broader view.

Likewise, it is suggested that the final post consultation NCF document should clearly and separately show the time allocation for PE and PSHE and that for clarity and logistical purposes it is recommended that the subject area responsible for delivery of specific topics is still indicated on any future syllabuses and school timetables. All possible overlaps in the NCF between PE and PSHE should be identified and common points placed in a specific section.

The proposed increase in PE in the Early Years is deemed to be positive and it is recommended that this should also to be considered in the Secondary level of education.

**Citizenship Education**

There is a mixed and highly contrasting reactions to CE. Some of the feedback agrees with the introduction of CE as a distinct learning area and that the subjects grouped under it do possess common concepts and strands of learning to warrant the change.

Others, whilst lauding the notion in principle, disagree with the choice of subjects grouped under CE, arguing that the change will inevitably dilute the importance of the constituent subjects, most notably Geography and History, to the detriment of the students.

Moreover some have argued that CE is best taught “not by talking about it” but through the “application of active citizenship” of students throughout their school life, by examples of responsibility and meaningful activities. Others still voiced their apprehension that certain subjects, for example Business Education, are omitted from CE, despite their important contribution to education for good citizenship.
Whilst it is acknowledged that the draft NCF advocates the development of “responsible” citizens, which is, it is expressed, a worthy educational goal for students, there is a need to emphasise that "responsibility" should not function as a mode of control and regulation - and that students should be taught to recognise that there are entitlements and obligations as well as rights pertaining to both the State and to citizens.

It is recommended that the term ‘Humanities’ is a more suitable generic title than CE. History in the draft NCF is clustered within CE together with Geography, Social Studies, – all of which possess concepts and notions in common and in particular situations it might make sense to assign them a common branch title.

The following is a representation of the positive feedback in this regard:

- The focus on enhancing observation, fieldwork and recording skills through CE is positively acknowledged.

- A positive aspect of draft NCF is that through the area of CE, topics are more inter-related and thus provide a better context for integrated learning – CE provides a solid groundwork for educational attainment at Post-Secondary education since the various skills students develop in this LA are seen to be highly useful in the context of tutorial sessions, presentation, assignments, etc.

- CE provides an inter-disciplinary approach which will be of benefit to students.

- The presentation of CE as one of the core LAs whilst social studies remains an optional subject is considered positive since it enables students to acquire a basic knowledge of the topics offered under CE whilst also providing students with the option to further their studies in a particular subject area.

The following is a representation of the negative feedback in this regard:

- The concern is expressed of whether students will truly learn to appreciate the attributes of one subject as distinguished from those of another and it is queried whether such an approach to education will lead to a form of “hotchpotch” education with no clear boundaries between one subject and another.

- There is a degree of anxiety with regard to the understanding that the draft NCF implies that the subjects within the CE LA will seize to exist as separate academic subjects in their own right and will be taught only be means of an integrated approach to teach CE.

- There is a degree of doubt on whether the pedagogy within the CE LA will be effective given that, for example, Geography is proposed to have its learning time shared with History and Social Studies.

- It is underlined that whilst History, Geography, and Social Studies, can be applied to help develop a child’s sense of democracy and citizenship it is, however, emphasised that, by far, this is not their sole function.

- Whilst the introduction of CE is laudable in ensuring a holistic approach – there is a real danger that Geography and History will be engulfed by the CE LA and that their status as individual subjects will be greatly reduced.
It is to be noted, that overall, the feedback conveys a high degree of uncertainty on how exactly CE will be constituted and organised, both in the exact intention of its aims and details on the exact role its constituent subjects will play as well as and how and who shall implement it.

It is recommended that given the ever growing need for economic literacy, financial capabilities, cultivation of entrepreneurial attitudes and skills, inculcation of ethical business attitudes and corporate social responsibility, general awareness of duties and rights as workers, consumers, citizens and entrepreneurs, amongst others, Business Studies as a subject is introduced within the CE LA.

**History**

Concern is raised with regard to the placement of History under CE - and it is seen that this may undermine the subject. It is, also, argued that the purpose of teaching History is often conflicting with that of CE given that whereas citizenship is concerned with developing attitudes and values which currently prevail in a society, History is about questioning evidence.

Whilst the link between Maltese and International History as emphasised in the draft NCF is appreciated, there is apprehension that no mention is made of the importance of the teaching of Maltese History – this being deemed as an important subject that accentuates the Maltese National identity and that Maltese History should consequentially be introduced in Secondary schools.

It is stated that in the 1980s in Britain where a similar approach to History as is proposed in the draft NCF was introduced the History subject inspectors were alarmed at how standards subsequently fell and that the teaching of History had become just an outline of facts and information. It is further stated that an integrated approach in general was criticised for creating undemanding tasks and for presenting a watered down version of the subjects.

It is underlined that as part of the group of subjects forming CE the separate identity of History as a subject is diluted (less time also allocated to this subject as a separate discipline) and that the proposed approach to reduce the teaching time of History will result in a reduction in the number of students studying these subjects at Post-Secondary level and will also mean that fewer students will choose the subject even at an Intermediate and Advanced level respectively.

**Geography**

As stated above, the positioning of Geography under CE generated negative feedback.

It is argued that geography education is *the* subject which engages the student to the realities of a rapid changing world and provides them with skills and competencies to address this challenge.

Moreover, the pedagogy of Geography has always been at the forefront of effective learning in engaging students in role playing and decision making, skills based activities, hands on experiences, outdoor engagement and a learning by doing approach – which is carried out with the ultimate aim to apply knowledge in a practical concept with children analysing, exploring and experimenting.

The recommendations in the raft NCF generate concern that Geography will be diluted and potentially undermined not only by grouping it with other subjects but also because it will enjoy less lesson time in the proposed timetables and that it will not be offered as an Option subject in Form III (Year 8).

Indeed, it is argued that far from diluting it, Geography should be given greater importance than it has enjoyed hitherto, not least by making it a distinct LA in its own right.
It is stated that the grouping of Geography under CE is ill-fitting and is strongly discouraged and recommendations in this regard vary - from maintaining the "holistic traditions" of Geography as a standalone subject to the placement of Geography together with Science, Social Studies and History, under a LA to be called Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (similar to the approach adopted in Ireland).

Social Studies

The feedback highlights that although in the draft NCF, Social Studies is under the CE LA, it should be considered as a distinct subject, even at the Primary level of education.

It is argued that CE is a component of Social Studies and it should not substitute it. Another concern raised is that although Social Studies has always been considered as one of the core subjects which is part of the curriculum for all Schools, there are a number of non State schools that do not give this subject its due importance or, worse, ignore it outright.

It is stated that the draft NCF makes no reference to the Post-Secondary education level in that while CE exposes further the significance of Social Studies the NCF does not make direct reference to Sociology or how the changes being undertaken will impact on its study. It is, thus, recommended that the curriculum of the Social Studies and CE topics in general could be taught through wider introduction of basic theoretical knowledge to ensure a smoother transition to sociological understanding at Post-Secondary level.

Religion Education

The feedback portrays that there is a broad consensus that the inclusion of RE as one of the LA is positive and that this constitutes a vital element in the holistic educational process of the human person, to which all students are entitled regardless of their belief system.

There is, however, a perceptible degree of tension on what form Religious and moral education should take. Citing Malta’s growing secularism and multiculturalism, there are those who are inclined to see a shift towards a more universal and inclusive system of ethics as the predominant compulsory discipline with religion, particularly the Catholic Religion being offered as an option for those that want it. On the other hand, there are those who fear that the issues of tolerance and inclusion are in fact canards to dilute and undermine RE.

The following presents a general representation of the discussion surrounding Religion and Ethics:

- It is stated that in the Early Years only moral and spiritual education are mentioned. It is argued that this is not correct and that RE should be included in the Early Years since RE maintains and develops the other two aspects. Ignoring the religious dimension implies ignoring a fundamental aspect of an individual’s life. Religion, Mortality and Spirituality complement each other and in many instances are interlinked. Thus, it is further argued that it would be counter-productive to educate children in the Early Years in any one of the three areas in isolation or by ignoring the other areas.

- It is underlined that whilst the religious, spiritual and moral dimensions in many ways overlap and sustain each other, they are, however, autonomous of each other: so if one neglects any of the three dimensions one would present a very limited understanding of the other dimensions and the draft NCF, whilst pointing to a wide understanding of RE which integrates the 3 dimensions, at various instances indicates a fragmented and partial understanding of this LA.
- The statement presented with regard the “Ethical Education Programme” is somewhat brief to understand its nature and goal. Judging only by its title, it seems to condense RE to only one of its elements, moral development. If the parents’ objection is to the fact that Catholic Religion Education is a Catholic approach, then one has to re-think the nomenclature of such an alternative programme. One has to avoid giving the impression that this programme is an option subject instead of CRE.

- It is recommended that the RE syllabus should focus more on the spiritual and religious dimensions of the human person, which dimensions are universal in character and present in every denomination – such a change is seen to be increasingly important given that the presence of different ethnic groups in Malta is on the increase.

- The recommendation in the draft NCF that the teaching of RE is to be provided only to those students whose families have requested it is seen as positive. Additionally, it should be kept in mind that there may still be parents who opt out from the Ethics subject (Ethics). It is proposed such students should be offered the possibility of exemption, as occurs in England.

- It is noted that one inter-cultural issue that is formally recognised, indeed, for the first time by a NCF, is that of religious diversity. The stating of the rights of non catholic students by offering them an alternative to RE is seen as a step in the right direction as it provides an official recognition that such children are entitled to an alternative choice to RE as against being perceived as “misfits”. It is further stated, that in keeping with the draft NCF principles of inclusion, non Catholics should be allowed to exercise their right to an education in their faith and that the appropriate amount of time and relevant facilities are provided, including time and facilities for worship.

It is stated that the final post consultation NCF document should consider the impact on Church and faith-based schools, where religion is the defining article of their raison d'etre and where, therefore, religion should remain compulsory and not be opted out of.

**Arts Education**

The feedback portrays positive consensus that the arts are generally given a central position in the draft NCF and that AE is now listed as one of the LA's in any child's education. Likewise the possibility for students to choose it as an Option subject and the focus on a themes-based approach are considered to be steps in the right direction.

The greater emphasis on the Expressive Arts is welcomed and there is also agreement that the Expressive Arts should be taught by Specialist teachers - though it is acknowledged that there are not enough teachers in post today who are specialised in Expressive AE to implement this recommendation in the immediate and the short term.

An identified limitation raised is that it is contended that there is no specialisation in the Arts within the Faculty of Education unless it is for teachers to teach Art or Music at Secondary level. An interim solution presented to enable the implementation of the measure relating to Expressive Arts is that the respective Directorates within MoE should promote the utilisation of teachers presently attached to the Drama Unit, Music teachers from the School of Music and elsewhere.
It is recommended that it would be beneficial if the final post consultation NCF document stipulates that the two lessons per week are consecutive lessons (rather than two single lessons) as experience shows that it is difficult for Art teachers to offer practical sessions in a single lessons.

The adoption of consecutive lessons for AE, therefore, ensures that all students can experience the actual creation of artistic works, as against the mere appreciation of works made by others. It is critical that the actual creation of art is not replaced by the understanding or appreciation of art by others; the latter plays a central role in helping students contextualise their own work and ideas but should not become the sole objective of an art lesson.

### Other Subjects

#### Vocational Subjects

There is general consensus that the proposals in the draft NCF on the introduction of vocational subjects is a positive development which may lead to more vocationally oriented subjects being offered in Secondary Schools.

It is stated that the current B.Ed (Hons) NFCS programme does not provide a good basic grounding in the areas of 'Hospitality' and 'Health and Social Care' options that. It is, thus, proposed that there should be a parallel review of the B.Ed(Hons) NFCS programme to ensure that adequate pre-service training is given to prepare NFCS graduates for the teaching of Vocational subjects.

A concern is expressed on linking 'Engineering' to vocation courses which provides a misleading impression that that the only path leading to a career in Engineering is through vocational courses. It is stated that the final post consultation NCF document should clarify that students can also pursue a professional career in Engineering by following studies through a recognised University and the attainment of the Engineering Warrant.8

It was underlined that for a person to follow a course on a voluntary subject the said person has to pay a considerable fee and that this not only acts as a barrier that prevents persons from undertaking such courses but also negates the concept of a right to education and, subsequently, is contrary to an entitlement vision.

#### Accounts and Economics

The feedback expresses satisfaction with the re-introduction of Accounts and Economics as Option subjects and it is added these subjects should complement and not replace Business Studies.

One recommendation argues that Economics as an Option subject should be introduced at Form IV (Year 10) rather than Form III (Year 9) as the learning of Economics requires a level of maturity from students.

It is recommended that the possibility of sitting for SEC examinations in Business Studies alongside Accounts and that Business Studies should be offered as an Option subject in Post-Secondary institutions at Intermediate and Advanced levels alongside Accounting, Economics and Marketing.

#### Sexual and Relationship Education

The discussion on SRE is presented by one respondent only. The feedback on SRE expresses concern that despite that the National Sexual Health Policy (2010) points towards the need to implement an effective education about SRE, the draft NCF does not give SRE due importance, possibly, it is argued, due to institutional and cultural barriers - a conclusion that is inferred from the fact that the draft NCF only makes two references to SRE.

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8 The DQSE has reached agreement with the University of Malta that all of the four of the vocational subjects proposed in the draft NCF would, if implemented, be recognised as subject that meet the entry criteria.
It is argued that the final post consultation version NCF document should give SRE higher prominence in the core curriculum on the grounds that SRE:

- Affirms that students are sexual beings and that sexuality forms an integral part of their development.
- Engages students in how they come to understand and perceive sexualities.
- Acknowledges multiplicity of sexual desire in relation to students development.
- Encourages dialogue with and respect for people of differing beliefs and practices regarding sexualities in the context of multicultural pedagogies.
- Promotes positive ways of understanding and living sexuality as an expression of care etc without regarding it as an aspect of life which has necessarily to be feared and repressed.
- Supports students in exploring how sexuality is constitutive of gender identities and encourages them to interrogate effects of power relations related to sexualities and gender identities within interpersonal relationships and in society.
- Promotes critical reflections on choices surrounding sexual experiences.

Environmental Science

It is to be noted that the feedback conveys disappointment that despite Environmental Science (ES), which combines elements of Geography, Social studies and History, being introduced in 1995 it is still not considered as a Science subject.

It is proposed that ES should be introduced as a Secondary subject as either an Option Science subject that is offered with Material / Physical / Life Science; or as an alternative to the proposed Core Science subject - particularly given that ES is seen to appeal to students who may not be comfortable with fundamental sciences.

Cross Curricular Themes

The general feedback with regard to a cross curriculum thematic approach is mainly positive and that the shift in approach would be particularly relevant in the Early Years.

It is pertinent to underline, however, that concern is expressed in that an a cross curricular approach to education is likely to be hampered by a number of factors namely that: (i) set syllabi are designed without consideration to subject topics or overriding themes and (ii) the predominant "textbook driven" teaching culture mitigates against a cross curriculum approach.

Furthermore, it is also highlighted that a thematic approach demands a good level of general knowledge on the part of teachers and that this might be a limiting factor unless practitioners are offered specific guidelines on how to integrate themes particularly if no accompanying changes are to be made in syllabi and textbooks.
The following recommendations are also presented:

- The addition of social and emotional education as one of the cross curricular themes in both the Primary and Secondary school curricula with more discussion on how the CT can build caring classroom communities through their relationships, pedagogy and classroom management.

- It is proposed that respect of diversity should be included as another cross curricular theme.

- It is recommended that digital literacy cannot be learned in isolation from the contexts to which it relates and should be embedded in all learning situations as an integral facet of all curricular subjects.

- It is recommended that PE should be promoted as a cross-curricular, thematic, interdisciplinary approach - as against the view, which has prevailed for the past 30 years, that it is a separate extra.

- It is stated that a strong disciplinary base does not preclude a judicious and meaningful thematic approach.

- The addition of Logic to ECI as a cross curricular theme.

- Agreement is expressed with the placement of ESD as a cross curricular theme.

**e-Learning**

It is underlined that the concept of Technology Enhanced Learning should be evolved along three dimensions: (i) the development of digital competence; (ii) the use of digital technologies for knowledge deepening; and (iii) the use of digital technologies for knowledge creation.

It is, thus, proposed that Technology Enhanced Learning in the Primary and Secondary levels of education ought to enhance (i) teaching, learning and creative inquiry as well as interaction among peers; (ii) interactions between students and teachers; (iii) interactions with parents / guardians; and interaction with the community.

It is pertinent to note that the concern is raised with regard to the statement made in the draft NCF that Church and Independent Schools are in a position to be able to implement or upgrade to an e-Learning framework without support from the Government which is seen as an assumption which is not necessarily correct.

It is also emphasised that there is a need for more Maltese and indigenous content to facilitate e-Learning.

**Education for Sustainable Development**

The feedback in this regard is positive where-in it welcomes

- The emphasis given to a holistic approach perspective of sustainable development - that is, a perspective that strives to integrate environmental, social and economic concern.

- That the establishment of ESD as a cross curricular theme is seen to be a positive step towards the formation of a citizenry which is aware and responsible towards the environment and is a fitting national contribution towards the UN Decree on Education for Sustainable Development.
In the ensuing discussion the following recommendations are presented:

- The ESD cross curricular theme should be designed on the basis of a whole school approach that besides providing educational material related to sustainable development also ensures that Colleges and Schools adopt sustainable practices that address their respective environmental, social and economic realities.

- The appropriate Directorates within MEDE are to provide clear guidelines for curriculum developers on how to integrate ESD as a cross curricular theme in the design of subject syllabi; and for teachers on how to integrate sustainable development principles in their respective subject material.

- The design and promulgation of pre and in service professional development programmes on sustainable development issues and ESD.

- The design and promulgation of out of class activities that would allow teachers to utilise the environment and the surrounding community as an educational resource.

- The training and appointment of qualified persons who would monitor and ensure that ESD is addressed in the curriculum and is truly entrenched as a College and School priority.

- The active engagement of students whenever there is a debate on environment matters in order to imbue the principle that students also have a stake in the outcome of decision making for a better environment.

It is to be noted that concern is expressed that the draft NCF gives due importance to the “hidden” curriculum: that is teaching of ESD principles by example. It is underlined that teaching of ESD “by example” can be a more effective methodology than formal teaching and that, therefore, the final post consultation NCF document should ensure that the implementation of the ESD cross curricular theme should also embrace, amongst other matter, the:

- Application of green procurement in Colleges and Schools.

- Carrying out of sustainable audits in Colleges and Schools.

- Establishment of an ecological footprint for each College and School.

- Learning through the use of a College’s and a School’s landscapes – with space and gardens acting as learning tools.

It is stated that research shows that changes at the school level are more likely to occur if there are role models that contribute to change and, thus, it is considered as important that teacher education is re-oriented towards ESD.

The feedback on ECI is limited. There is positive recognition with regard to the introduction of Entrepreneurship as one of the 5 cross-curricular themes. It is recommended that given that Marketing is a key tool in business it should form an integral part of any syllabi drafted for the application of Entrepreneurship as a cross curricular theme - particularly given the concern that the re-introduction of Accounts and Economics at Secondary level may have a negative impact on the eventual selection of Marketing at the Post-Secondary level.

It is further recommended that it is appropriate to define in more detail the terms ‘entrepreneurship’ and ‘risk taking’ given that these may be interpreted in different ways.
It is also recommended that in the appropriate sections in the draft NCF ('Critical and Innovative thinking' and 'Aesthetic Appreciation and Creative Expression') reference should be made to the application of creativity through digital tools or technology mediated design approaches.

Intercultural Education

The discussion in the feedback is not on the proposed intercultural cross curricular theme but rather on cultural diversity within the educational system. The matters raised includes but are not limited to the following:

- In view of the increasing number of learners coming from ethnic minorities, there is a need for a more proactive strategy directed to ensure that the education system will cater for such students. It is recommended that a working group is set up to formulate a strategy and policy framework for the education of such learners in Malta.

- It is proposed that the final post consultation NCF document should provide a more specific reference to the education of children from ethnic minorities.

- It is underlined that whilst, the presence of children belonging to different minority groups within Colleges is a reality, there is limited preparation underway that ensures that Colleges, teachers and other staff are prepared to effectively respond to this phenomena.

- It is recommended that one way of implementing the principle of diversity proposed in the draft NCF is through the commemoration of major festivities of school children coming from different minority groups.

- The association of children from minority groups with 'special needs' is incorrect as this implies that children from minority cultures are somehow intellectually or physically impaired.

- It is underlined that there is a need to specifically address issues related to cultural diversity since the progress made in the deconstruction of stigma about persons with disability has not transferred to the stigmatisation of persons from minority groups who have and continue to suffer from xenophobia.

- It is recommended that in order to address the needs of students from minority groups teachers need to be assisted through training and development to be (i) able to recognise one's own ethnocentrism; (ii) be knowledgeable of the students' cultural backgrounds; (iii) able to understand the broader social, economic and political context; (iv) be able and willing to use culturally appropriate management strategies; and (v) willing to commit to the building of a caring classroom - an approach that is implied in the draft NCF as it has adopted inter-cultural education as one of its five cross curricular themes.

- The statement is presented that the draft NCF could have been designed with a stronger multi-cultural focus.

- It is recommended that in order to avoid a stereotyping process - where the image of an ideal student is, traditionally, one who is Western, White, Catholic, middle class, heterosexual, Male and able bodied - the final post consultation NCF document should recognise the social forces that impinge upon and structure the learning process with issues concerning social class, ethnicity, gender, and other forms of social differentiation.
It is recommended that the focus directed towards the integration of students with disabilities and developmental delays into mainstream education should be replicated with regard to students coming from minority groups.

**Effective Learning and Teaching**

The feedback on the aims of the NCF with its emphasis on diversity, holistic education, informal and non-formal teaching, life-long learning and inquiry-based learning was for the most part positive.

It is recognised that the greatest change that the draft NCF poses is the shift towards a development model of education which is quite different from the model based on end-of-cycle examinations at all levels. There is a positive receptiveness to the arising impacts of such change which are seen to include a greater focus on the learner hence ensuring a smooth transition from one cycle to another, a greater emphasis on ensuring a relevant curriculum, acknowledging each diversity of learning needs and methods and a widening of the educational experience to include the non-formal and informal sectors.

It is recognised that these changes impact the very heart of how learning and teaching occurs in Schools: changes that are not simply mediated by the introduction of guidelines and resources but also of the milieu and culture of teachers - who are, it is emphasized, the ultimate implementers of these changes.

Whilst the greater attention to informal and non-formal teaching learning presented in the draft NCF is welcomed, the view is expressed that a clear definition of what constitutes both types of learning is lacking and that this should be remedied in the final post consultation NCF document. It is suggested that the introduction of the requirement for a student to keep a portfolio of activities might be a good way of documenting his or her participation in both the formal and non-formal contexts.

Likewise, whilst emphasis in the draft NCF on problem solving is deemed commendable as this is consistent with the shift to more inquiry based pedagogies and active learning, concern is expressed that excessive belief in solving problems can result in the mistaken view amongst students that there is a clear answer to any question raised.

To counter this potential perception the recommendation is proposed that the final post consultation document should include “problem posing” to problem solving which would coherently fit the NCF vision of fostering a critical and competent generation. It is pointed out that little attention is paid to “memorisation”, particularly within the Secondary level of education where memorisation becomes an essential skill for Secondary students preparing for the Post-Secondary level of education.

Another concern that is expressed is that many of the key areas presented in the draft NCF are of a “hybrid” nature and a consequence is that may result in a watering down of the curriculum to the detriment of the students.
The feedback portrays that whilst greater emphasis is placed on health and social and emotional education in the draft NCF it is stated that many aspects of discipline, including practices such as (i) Reading, Writing and Mathematics in relationship to real world discoveries; and (ii) learning based on encounters with the real world, resulting in ideas, insights, revelations, reflections, observations and more are not explicitly spelt out in order to ensure the arising interpretation of the NCF in this regard is correct.

Additionally, whilst the increased mention to holistic education is positively greeted, it is not deemed to reflect, at least as much as is expected, the importance of this area and it is felt that social and emotional education should enjoy a more central role in the school at both curricular and cross curricular levels.

It is emphasised that the social, emotional and economic realities and challenges facing children and young people today underline the need to provide a relevant and meaningful education for the realities of the 21st century, one that leads to the formation of academically, socially and emotionally literate young people who have skills, abilities and emotional resilience necessary to navigate the uncertain but fast moving environmental realities.

Furthermore, it is argued that the constructivist learning strategy proposed in the draft NCF, will prove challenging to students and that they will need support as they shift from the traditional "passive" learning role to a role where their contribution needs to be constant and interactive. A number of suggestions towards this end are put forward - mainly:

- The new role student is exposed to a spectrum of feelings (anger, joy, etc) which although part of the traditional scenario were not so much at the forefront: learners' emotions need to surface and be part of the new learning strategy as any learning devoid of emotions has questionable value.

- Students' feelings and attitudes towards making mistakes in the classroom needs to be reviewed: learners need to internalise the fact that making mistakes is "ok" and that learning follows when one reflects on his / her mistakes.

- Learners need to be made aware that their learning of a concept starts from their prior knowledge and this is the only relevant starting point.

- Although encouraging students participation in self assessment is a valuable exercise it is felt that at this stage this is somewhat premature given that the Maltese educational context does not seem to be ready for this.

A fear is expressed that an approach to learning based on LAs may lead to a dilution of constituent subjects possibly creating "hotchpotch" umbrella subjects which would not only limit the students' knowledge in particular subjects but also inhibit their appreciation of the attributes that distinguished one subject from another.

The opinion is expressed that whilst the draft NCF stresses the Early Years learning environment it does not elaborate on the importance of providing students with open-ended material that would allow child initiated and child developed activities to emerge.
Additionally, the feedback indicates that the communicative competencies are too narrowly focused on the use of language and digital literacy and do not give importance to other forms of communication as is done for the Primary level of education, such as drawing, gestures and facial expressions, movement, music that usually precede language.

A specific reference to the learning environment concerned minority groups. It is stated that the draft NCF attempts to mainstream all issues of diversity, including those of disability, of minority culture groups, and of ability under one approach and one strategy rather than addressing the specific needs of each different minority groups needs.

One of the salient concern raised addresses the potential exacerbation of the gap between Secondary and Post-Secondary education. It is argued that whilst the draft NCF makes various statements on the need to link with the world of work to avoid early selection and to introduce more vocational subjects in the late Secondary school years, it stops short however of defining a clearly articulated strategy on how the educational system will facilitate the transition from the Secondary level of education to Post-Secondary education and subsequently to the labour market.

It is claimed that transition features are not clearly developed in the draft NCF nor are they linked together in ways that support such transitions. On the contrary, it is highlighted that curriculum ends at the Secondary level of education and does not provide a vision for Post-Secondary education. It is underlined that there are a number of issues that need to be addressed, including:

- Students accustomed to an inquiry based teaching in the Secondary level of education as a result of the implementation of the draft NCF principles and aims for education may find it difficult if they are suddenly faced by a content based method of education at Post-Secondary education. The final post consultation NCF document should, therefore, contain clear proposals on how to minimise the gap between Secondary and Post-Secondary and how inquiry based teaching will be achieved at the Post-Secondary level of education.

- If teaching at Post-Secondary is to be shifted towards an inquiry based method more time and resources would be required to cover the same content - potentially, an extra year will provide the necessary time to fill in the gap between the two levels.

- The management of the difficulties that student phase as the move from a small classroom environment in Secondary to a larger learning group in Post Secondary education.

| Differentiated Teaching | The feedback portrays, that in principle there is an agreement for the need for differentiated teaching to promote greater diversity and inclusion, and as a method to maximise the opportunities for each individual to learn to the best of his or her potential. Be that as it may, however, the feedback reflects several concerns with regard to the concept of differentiated teaching as presented in the draft NCF. These concerns mainly include: doubts on whether the educational system is adequately prepared namely due to the fact that a differentiated teaching environment: |

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- Creates substantially greater demands on teachers in terms of effort, time and training.

- The substantial investment necessary in support structures that are to be introduced to allow CTs to meet the arising teaching, assessment, attention, and other challenges that such an environment gives rise to.

- A perceived lack of reference as to what strategies are most suitable and that the appropriate ongoing monitoring to ensure that a differentiated teaching environment is not allowed to result in detrimental effects, especially to the more capable students.

Furthermore, there is the concern that there is no clear indication on how Colleges, Schools and teachers:

- Will operate a graded assessment and certification system that is “criterion” rather than “norm referenced” and which can lead to certification of the level of achievement or competence reached by every student in every subject also at the end of the Secondary education cycle.

- That the ‘Secondary School Certificate and Profile’ referred to by the NCF is not seen as a failure by parents, students as well as employers to obtain passes MATSEC certification and that it will constitute an accredited and recognised record of broader competences.

Additionally it is stated that:

- Whilst it is encouraging to note the increasing attention to diversity issues in the various aspects of the draft NCF the clustering of all mixed abilities into one group may not render justice to the different educational needs of such groups.

- A number of considerations underlying the draft NCF involve differentiated teaching and the development of a modular system of education and concerns are raised with regard to the extent that teachers are prepared to embrace this major change in the education system.

- The practicality of such a differentiated teaching environment approach to education is queried as even with appropriate support teachers are likely to be stretched when teaching such classes.

- The flexibility in lesson planning is a must since teachers have to cope with students’ different abilities. Moreover, teachers need support to apply differentiation in teaching – the time required by a teacher to plan his or her lessons will increase considerably and, ultimately, translates in an increased workload which is to be done at home, evenings and holidays – an increased work load that teachers would have to be adequately compensated for.

- The proposed reduction in the draft NCF in the number of timetable hours in certain subjects whilst at the same one is introducing a differentiated teaching pedagogy is a matter of concern. The need to cater for different abilities require more, and not less, input and time from a teacher in order to disseminate learning and knowledge to a mixed ability classroom. As disconcerting is the fact that a decrease in the teaching hours is likely to mean that the students will have less opportunity to learning being imparted. The solution is in ensuring that a differentiated training environment is allocated the appropriate level of hours that the pedagogy demands as against a simplification of the syllabi or rendering them significantly lighter - which will have a consequential impact on the student’s
- A differentiated approach to teaching may result in students with high potential to be not afforded the opportunity to develop their competences to their maximum potential - and that the draft NCF makes little reference to the needs of the high achievers.

- The practical repercussions of the phasing out of streaming (which in theory is positive) need to be assessed and monitored (e.g. increased bullying, exhaustion for teachers, the concept is unpromising for high achievers) so that policy calibration is undertaken as appropriate.

- The setting of differentiated work to cater for differentiated learning needs might pose classroom problems – a student who is set more demanding work may feel that he or she is being penalised by the Teacher; whilst on the other hand, a student who because of his or her abilities is set less demanding work may feel embarrassed and humiliated in front of his peers. Alternatively, the parents of such a child may feel that the Teacher is, unfairly, holding their child back.

- The final post consultation NCF document should recognise that teachers will continue to require curricular and in-service support to adapt their teaching approach and strategies to a mixed ability class environment and to a criterion referenced assessment framework.

- The recommendation to offer the possibility to students to acquire certification for vocational subjects within the regular Secondary curriculum without requiring tracking is, prima facie, is a step in the right direction.

- The final post consultation NCF document should provide more attention of how a differentiated teaching environment can be applied with regard to children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

### Syllabus

The reaction to the syllabi piloted in Forms 1 (Level 7) during the 2011 / 12 scholastic year generated criticism. Besides the fact that such syllabi are seen in some cases as highly prescriptive, over-burdened with content (contrary to the principles and aims presented in the draft NCF) and do not factor different school contexts and realities, the process of how the syllabus itself was developed is criticised as being conflicting with the participatory climate in curriculum development espoused in the draft NCF by excluding stakeholders – particularly teachers - from the design process.⁹

It is further stated that Post-Secondary educators in particular should be directly involved in the formulation of new syllabi given their first hand experience with Intermediate and Advanced level programmes.

One other issue presented in the feedback is that no detailed information concerning the actual topics that will be taught is provided, thereby precluding a thorough assessment of the proposed syllabi changes. Consequently, it is suggested that provisional syllabi should be produced and handed out for discussion before change is actually implemented.

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⁹ Revisions have in effect already taken place following a review exercise during the first term of the scholastic year 2011 / 12 by the Department of Curriculum Management. In the revision of the Form 1 syllabus and in formulating the Form 2 syllabus, an invitation was issued to teachers and to Faculty of Education staff to participate in the process.
Given the draft NCF’s emphasis on more time demanding pedagogical methods such as inquiry-based learning and differentiated teaching, this in turn leads to questions such as whether the subject content of the syllabi will remain the same or whether it will be reduced and if so, how and to what extent will the content be reduced. These are seen as important questions that the final post consultation NCF report should address.

Finally, it is stated that if the 'O' level syllabus of the proposed Scientific subjects is changed significantly there may be the need of an additional Post-Secondary year to meet the demands of the 'A' level syllabus and smoothen the gap between the two levels.

### School Outings and Extra Curriculum Activities

The feedback presented conveys mixed reactions on the holding of extra curriculum activities. On the one hand, it is expressed that whilst draft NCF mentions the importance of stakeholders and puts great emphasis on hands on and experiential learning the stress on outdoor learning experiences is somewhat limited. The concern is expressed that the number of such activities may be decreased will give a mistaken but very strong message to parents and educators that out of class and extracurricular activities are a waste of time.

Indeed, the other view expressed is that the scholastic year is packed with extracurricular activities, school life activities and educational outings and that as a result some subjects are suffering from a state of play where students miss an excessive amount of lessons due to such activities.

### Special Needs

The feedback contends that it is wrong to associate disability with issues of level of intellectual ability - and this is the reason of why Malta started to use the term Individual Education Needs instead of Special Educational Needs.

The concern is raised that syllabi that address the needs of all students are not in place for all subjects and teachers are, at times, at a loss and have to design the syllabus themselves. In essence this results in a state of play where children with special needs are placed at a disadvantage given that teachers may not have specialised training on syllabus design for students with specialised needs.

Additionally, the state of play is further compounded by the fact that there is, today, no national standard regarding the assessment of students with particular educational needs. It so follows, therefore, that it is imperative that EOs are given the necessary training to design syllabi that account for all types of students.

It is proposed that students who require temporary withdrawal from the classroom should be provided with the appropriate material and information covered during the lesson as otherwise the student would miss out on learning content which his or her classmates would have covered and hence his or her educational level will regress.

Furthermore, it is recommended that a teacher should be informed of any students who have a physical or a mental disability before the student is assigned to his or her class so that the teacher can learn about the disabilities of his or her students and undertake the appropriate preparations prior to the start of the scholastic year in order to be in a position to cater for the individualised educational needs of the student.
It is pertinent to underline that it is stated that some Independent Schools do not assign LSAs to students with special needs. It is contended that the employment conditions offered to LSAs employed by Independent Schools result in on-going personnel changes as incumbents use the LSA position as a stepping stone until they find better employment elsewhere. The consequence of this ongoing change of LSAs is that a child is repeatedly and frequently is “dumped” by his or her LSA.

It is also expressed that support services for individualised learning needs for Post-Secondary students need to be reinforced and developed further.

Social Needs

It is underlined that draft NCF makes limited reference to the needs of learners from disadvantaged social backgrounds - students who as a direct consequence of the social problems their families face are at a higher risk of early school leaving, absenteeism, school failure, social exclusion and challenging behaviour issues.

It is stated that almost one in four children in Malta are from families living in or at-risk-of-poverty. It is further stated that presently approximately 37% of Maltese students are opting out of education at the end of the Secondary school - rendering Malta with one of the highest rate of early school leavers amongst the EU27.

Early school leaving, it is argued, is correlated to social disadvantage and low education backgrounds and one way of breaking the cycle of poverty and social disadvantage is to keep young people from opting out of school early. In essence, this means the NCF must recognise the specific needs of students who due to the constraints of their social backgrounds, are more inclined to opt out of the education system.

It is, therefore, proposed that the final post consultation NCF document should discuss more specifically how the needs of such learners will be addressed at universal curricular level as well as at an emotional and psychological support level related to:

- The tackling of absenteeism.
- Exclusion and early school leaving.
- The raising of academic expectations through the provision of family and parental education and support.
- The provision of more adequate support for students with social, emotional communities.
- The promotion of caring relationships in the classroom and whole school level.
- The undertaking of active desegregation policies with regard to the student mix in a School.
- The taking of every effort to ensure that the Nurture Groups and the Learning Zones operate as effective centres for emotional literacy, resilience and behaviour support for students in difficulties.
It is stated that whilst the draft NCF makes reference to various documents including reports commissioned by the Directorate itself, it does not make reference to the recent report commissioned by the Education Directorate on students with social, emotional and behaviour difficulties in Malta.

It is underlined that the recent opening of Learning Centres for students with SEBD may be in clear conflict with the principles of inclusive education enshrined in the NMC as well as the draft NCF, and at odds with the findings of international research which clearly shows that segregating students with challenging behaviour from the mainstream is counter-productive in the long term.

### Assessment and Evaluation

The feedback is positive on the position in the draft NCF on the need to shift to a balanced assessment that embraces the principles of assessment for learning and an assessment of learning. It is, nonetheless, underlined that the adoption of such a balanced approach to assessment and evaluation demands a fundamental change in the mindset of both teachers and parents.

It is stated that the need for this fundamental change in the mindset of teachers and parents will not be well served by the introduction of a National Benchmarking examination at Year 6 of the Primary level of education as the risk exists that this National Benchmark examination may be interpreted as a replacement to the Junior Lyceum examination. Additionally, it is emphasised that in the event that the National Benchmarking Examination is introduced then it should apply equally to Church and Independent schools who should be obliged to participate.

It is to be noted that the MATSEC Board highlights that the draft NCF promotes skills such as speaking and listening skills in languages and practical assignments in the Science subjects that are already assessed at SEC level. The MATSEC Board emphasises that given the changes that may be required with regard to subject content, skills to be assessed and the weighting of the coursework discussions by the appropriate stakeholders with the Panels working on the teaching syllabi are to be initiated at the earliest stage possible. The undertaking of such discussions is deemed as imperative so that there will not be significant differences between the teaching syllabi at the Secondary level of education and the examinations syllabi set by the MATSEC Board.

The MATSEC Board also highlights the need to address the issue with regard to a significant percentage of students who either do not sit for or fail to obtain passes in MATSEC examinations. In this regard, it recommends that an appropriate way forward to address this issue is that of offering examinations in certain subjects at a lower level than SEC pass rate as against compromising current standards of the MATSEC examinations.

Furthermore, the issue is raised on whether it is the NCF’s intention to retain the names of the A level MATSEC courses as Physics, Chemistry and Biology or whether they are to be known by the ‘new’ names recommended. Additionally, it is important that the new SE subjects are accredited according to the European Competence Framework and the Malta Qualification Framework to enable students to take up their studies abroad.
The final post consultation NCF document, it is stated, should present a clear road map of how the progression of studies from Secondary to Post-Secondary is to take place. It is pertinent to note that the definition presented in the draft NCF that an Intermediate subject is to be weighted as 1/3 of same subject at 'A' level is not deemed as acceptable particularly given that the definition is seen as vague and as articulated it can be interpreted in a different number of ways (time, syllabus, content etc).

Additionally, the recommendations presented in the draft NCF that students should sit for Intermediate examinations in the first year of Sixth Form and that in the second year of Sixth Form students are subsequently to choose two of these subjects to follow them at A level is considered as unrealistic.

The following provides a representation of specific detailed recommendations presented:

- The need for National Level Descriptors as outlined in the draft NCF is considered to be an issue given that the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages provides a basis for mutual recognition of language qualifications, and is used as a tool in most European Countries to facilitate educational and occupational mobility.

- The Arabic Paper B SEC Ordinary level should be less taxing (currently the difference with Paper A is considered to be minimal) to encourage more students to study the subject.

- Students who at Form II (Level 8) decide to go into further depth should be able to choose Business Studies and Accounts or Economics and sit for the SEC examination – on the other hand those students who continue the standard Business Studies weekly lesson, should be able to sit for Business Studies Paper B Sec exam (a similar situation already exists in PE).

- A revision in the Maltese Ordinary, Intermediate and Advanced Level examinations is needed, corresponding with the changes proposed in the NCF.

Quality Assurance

The feedback highlights the need for continuous monitoring, review and support especially of newly qualified teachers particularly by EOs and the DQSE.

It is underlined that unless such monitoring and support is in place, it is feared that new teachers in particular, who are capable of motivating their students by using modern approaches to teaching, could quickly become “institutionalised” and inevitably resort to traditional methods of teaching.

Additionally, it is highlighted that the approach to Quality Assurance should not be dogmatic or intrusive but should be respectful of the autonomy of the teachers and Schools, in particular where it comes to Church or Independent Schools.
### Parental Involvement

The thrust in the draft NCF on parental involvement is commended as it is acknowledged that parents are a child’s first and main educators. It is, thus, emphasised that parents are to be viewed as partners in the educational development of their children.

In this regard, measures which see parents being drawn into the educational system and process are to be supported - and should include amongst others an approach where Schools sit down with parents to explain the curriculum, approach to education, desired outcomes, etc.

It is underlined that the implementation of the NCF requires investment and time by the education authorities across all levels to explain to parents the new objectives being set and the reasons behind such changes.

The potential time required to communicate and educate parents should not be underestimated given the perception and understanding that parents view the value of education in a narrow way: attaining the appropriate high marks in examinations to be able to follow a Tertiary education.

The management of expectations and the mobilisation of support amongst parents are also constrained by the reality of Malta's changing social fabric: the increase of working families as well as the increase of single parent families.

A consequential outcome of these fundamental changes to the make-up of the Maltese society is that parents spend increasingly less time with their children - to follow up on their homework, assist them in the discovery of learning etc - and that the responsibility for education is increasingly being abdicated onto the education system.

### Local Community Involvement

The feedback provided in this regard whilst limited commends the thrust presented within the draft NCF on the importance of the need to strengthen the relationship of a College or School and the community within which it is sited.

It is acknowledged that there is considerable value and much education gain for Colleges and Schools when they open for both the parents and the community. It is stated that recent research shows that it is not only the children who benefit from community involvement in schools but rather all participating adults; indeed the lives of families as a whole may be improved and transformed.

The dimensions of community involvement may include family education where the school offers space for learning both during the day and in the evening to family and community members; participation in curriculum development and evaluation; participation in decision making processes; as well as participation in learning where community members act as resources to support a teacher’s work.

One specific recommendation presented is that the final post consultation NCF document should emphasise the role of Youth Workers who are seen to play an important role, especially in Learning Zones.
It is stated that the final NCF document should not only emphasise the importance of this role but should also re-visit it to enable it to embrace other important activities that Youth Workers can carry out on behalf of Colleges and Schools vis-a-vis the strengthening of the relationship between the College and School and the local community. It is stated that give their formation, Youth Workers are well equipped with the requisite "forma mentis" and specialist skills to take on a more leading role in building a network between Colleges and Schools and the community.

It is also recommended that the final post consultation NCF document should emphasise the importance of students volunteering and participating in the local community and in doing so strengthening community ties.

It is believed that there is merit in building a sustained relationship between a College and School and the local community with regard to the ‘informal’ teaching of ESD where the College or School assumes a role model responsibility to promote a sustainable environment that is not limited to its school precincts but that embraces the community where it is sited.

There is a consensus, that for the draft NCF to be successfully implemented, the CT needs to be assisted by PrTs, CTAs and LSAs especially in a mixed ability classes and in specialised subjects such as Art, Music, Drama, etc as this would allow for more differentiation, assessment, group work and activities.

It is to be noted, however, that feedback indicates a degree of uncertainty as to the exact role and responsibility of each category of Teacher and that such roles and responsibilities need to be more explicitly defined. Moreover, it is acknowledged that besides new expenses that need to be taken on by the Directorates, the implementation of having specialist teachers in schools entails substantial effort in the form of multiple strategies such as changes in expansion and integration of resources, classroom facilities, smaller class group numbers and a change in mindset.

Another matter raised is that without the necessary data collection, analysis and evaluation, for example statistical data regarding ethnic minorities living in Malta, effective planning for and deployment of resources, as in the type, quality and quantity of the support services required, may not be systematic and focused as appropriate – and it is hoped that an emphasis in the final post consultation NCF document in this respect will underline the need for such data to be collected, analysed and published.

Feedback also indicates preference that Support teachers should not be shared amongst too many schools; proposing that ideally Support teachers would be school based in order to foster a sense of belonging.

Finally, the role of ‘Subject Coordinator’ is recommended. This is defined to mean a key person within a College or School who is assigned responsibility for supporting and guiding colleagues in a particular subject (e.g. Mathematics, Maltese, English, etc).
The following constitutes a general representation of further feedback provided in this regard:

- It is underlined that LSAs are not meant to act as a substitute for teachers but as a resource that is assigned to assist a CT in enabling the child to learn and develop as appropriate.

- It is stated that the role of a Support Teacher is one of collaboration with a CT where-in the Support Teacher assists the CT (rather than necessarily taking over the class) and encourage team-based teaching.

- It is argued that a CT should always be aware of what is being taught in subjects that are taught by PrTs or Support teachers and that the CT should be involved in the planning and implementation of such lessons. The continued involvement of the CT ensures that continuity is secured between the work done by the Support Teacher and the CT.

- It is suggested that Religion should be included in the list of subjects where a Support Teacher is recommended. This suggestion is presented on the basis that due to changing norms and beliefs there may be Primary School teachers who may not feel comfortable with teaching Religion. Thus a balance might need to be created between the CT’s responsibility, the children’s needs and the respect for the content of this subject.

- With regard to the PrT for the Expressive Arts it is suggested that the Drama Unit, which is made up of a number of specialists and theatre practitioners as well as educators with a wealth of experience in Theatre in Education, retain aspect of their work unless they will be absorbed by the Schools as the specialist teachers until more teachers are trained in Drama education.

- It is recommended that LSAs should be up-skilled to become CTAs where-in they will support the learning of all the children in a class through a form of team teaching.

- It is stated that LSAs have an important role in participating fully in the different learning plans and should therefore be trained professionally to fulfill these responsibilities.

- It is stated that LSAs would be better at teaching particular subjects or topics and can relate more to children.

- It is stated that the experience of other countries shows that teachers who themselves are of migrant or minority background have a positive influence on migrant achievement in schools. It is, therefore, recommended the NCF should encourage Schools to hire educated individuals from ethnic minority communities. In collaboration with the Faculty of Education appropriate programmes should be designed for such persons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facilities and Support Structures and Services</th>
<th>The feedback is primarily related to the availability and standard of the technology and science supporting framework which should match the expectation that each child, irrespective of what type of School he or she attends, has a right to access adequate learning technologies.</th>
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It is recommended that strategies for technology requirements directed to assist students with special needs should be articulated. An example presented is that a student with a hearing impairment requires hearing aids / cochlear implants, relevant acoustic classroom arrangements, more use of visual communications amongst others.
Such a strategy should take into account the fact that more resources are needed to cater for the needs of students with individualised educational needs – for example, physical resources are particularly lacking in PE where specialised apparatus for such students is not yet available.

It is also stated that many school grounds are inadequate and cause crowding which deters students from participating in physical activities.

It is also contended that despite that several counseling services are available for students starting their Post-Secondary education there is limited initiative by Tertiary education institutions to help the students familiarise themselves with course availability and entry requirements necessary for particular courses - a state of play that should be rectified so that students obtain all the possible support to make the right choices.

Likewise, it is stated that more responsibility should be placed on teachers at the Secondary level of education to make sure that they are themselves familiar with the courses offered at university so they can direct students to further their training depending on student capabilities in different fields.

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<tr>
<th>Text-Books</th>
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<tr>
<td>The feedback presented is very limited and is restricted to an observation which underlines that if the changes in the principles and aims of education as presented in the draft NCF are embraced than the textbooks currently in use need to be reviewed as the textbooks have to be congruent with the new pedagogical approach.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Children in Class</th>
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<td>The feedback is unanimous that efforts should be made to reduce the class size particularly given that pedagogical approaches such as differentiated teaching will place greater demands on teachers.</td>
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<th>Timetable</th>
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<td>The feedback raised on the timetables models proposed in the draft NCF is mainly concerned with the perceived lack of adequate lesson time allocated to the teaching of several subjects; the need for an increase in weekly school hours; the concern that extracurricular activities impact tuition time; opposition to the six day cycle timetable; and for greater autonomy and flexibility to be given to Schools to set their own timetables.</td>
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The following provides, though is not limited to, a representation of general feedback presented in this regard:

- There should be more time devoted to SE (3), CE (3), AE (3), and RE (3).

- Whilst acknowledging that there are union issues that need to be taken into consideration it is underlined that the appropriate hours in the education system required to meet the students’ development cycle can no longer be ignored – particularly given the reality that working families are on the increase. The NCF, therefore, should push forward the concept of longer learning and school hours given the current needs and the current aspirations of the country.

- The statement is made that the school year is packed with extracurricular activities, school life activities and educational outings. The view is presented that some subjects are currently suffering from a situation whereby students miss too many lessons due to these activities.

- The general view is that the 6 day cycle timetable will result in confusion as learners would get mixed up in the things they have to take to school.
There is consensus that the timetable should not be too rigid and in the case of Church schools and Independent schools these should be left to the respective School's discretion.

- The statement is made that most schools apart from being unique already have adequate feedback of what works and so any timetable should be flexible to care for differences in and lessons learnt by Schools.

- It is stated that with regard to smaller schools the number of hours per subject could be more controlled than with larger schools which cater for a much larger number of students.

More specifically with regard to the Early Years and Primary education feedback includes, but is not limited to the following:

- The draft NCF states education in the Primary Years constitutes to 800hrs of teaching / learning time. Whilst on paper this appears correct and appropriate, it is underlined that it may not in fact be a realistic baseline given that the time actually dedicated to teaching is less.

- It is noted that the non-teaching and learning time appears to be on the increase in Schools.

- It is recommended that Primary schools should work on a 35 hour week (at least) where students are allowed longer recreation time (at least one and a half hours a week for mid-morning break and three hours a week of mid-day break).

More specifically with regard to the Secondary education feedback includes, but is not limited to the following:

- The current average of 27.5 hours devoted to learning per week as well as the time allocated to recreational activities and extra curricula activities should increase. It is proposed that the time that Secondary School students should spend in school should be 35 hours overall per week.

- The teaching of Geography in Form I (Level 7) and Form II (Level 8) should be 2 lessons per class per week: the long term repercussions of any reductions on the teaching and learning of Geography is seen as potentially harmful to an integral education.

- Concern is expressed with regard to the recommendation that the number of Geography lessons allowed to Track 3 (ex-Junior Lyceum) Form I (Year 7) and Form II (Level 8) is reduced from 2 to 1 lesson per week – which gives the impression that Geography is not important and this is expected to lead to a decrease in number of students choosing this subjects.

- With regard to Forms I (Level 7) and Form II (Level 8), HhE is indicated as alternating with Design and Technology on the timetable and it is not clear if the lesson is a single or double lesson - either way, this does not allow for adequate time to effectively cover a basic syllabus addressing topics from areas of food, nutrition, health etc.

- The concern is expressed that the teaching time will actually diminish in some schools that have 2 or more weekly lessons of PE.
There is agreement with the recommendation that the number of Maltese lessons is equal to that made available for English lessons.

There is consensus that if the pedagogy for SE is to be inquiry-based teaching then more time has to be allocated for Science lessons.

**Professional Development**

It is stated that the need for ongoing professional development of educators in the form of retraining, in-service courses and specialisation permeates throughout the feedback on all aspects of the draft NCF.

In addition, it is underlined that teachers should be trained to develop their social and emotional literacy and that opportunities for persons who pursue their training should be made clearer.

It is also highlighted that due to the introduction of thematic education, university entry requirements such as those for B.Ed Science need to be reviewed, specifically demanding that students would need to have all three sciences at SEC level in order to ensure that prospective teachers already have the basis required to be able to teach integrated subjects.

**Management of Change**

It is underlined that teachers need to be actively involved in the design and implementation of a new NCF so that they own the change. The broad NCF consultation exercise is seen as a good strategic approach - and one that should be followed up by the drafting working group on the NCF - which should include teachers within it.

Statements, however, are also presented that the consultation process should have been more extensive, more time should have been made available to it, etc. Be that as it may, it is recognised that consultation and communication should be ongoing and should not stop once the final decisions with regard to the NCF are made.

It is emphasised that the recommendations for a new NCF, be what they may, should be implemented gradually and over a lengthy spread of time since changing entrenched beliefs and behaviours - amongst parents as well as teachers - requires time, belief in and commitment to the changes, and continuous re-inforcement through examples of good practice.

It is also noted that a number of tasks required for the implementation of the NCF will stretch participants and stakeholders beyond practical limits and it is, therefore, important that the process of change and the tasks within it are prioritised so that the reform is managed by all concerned.

Additionally, it is emphasised that the process of change should be monitored: moving from conceptual thinking to reality may result that what seemed to make eminent conceptual sense may not be realisable in reality. The monitoring of the reform process, therefore, will enable decisions to calibrate changes as a result of lessons learnt as and when appropriate.

It is maintained that parents are more likely to accept the changes in the draft NCF more readily if they are to be presented with a roadmap that shows how students can follow various paths from Secondary to Post-Secondary to University and other higher education institutions.
It is pertinent to state that whilst the MATSEC Board is of the considered opinion that the articulation of clear transition pathways between Second and Post-Secondary education is important it recognises that the remit and place for such articulation does not rest with the DQSE and the NCF respectively.
Analysis of Consultation Feedback from Constituted Bodies, Civil Society, Political Parties and other Entities to the Draft National Curriculum Framework

Chapter 06
The analysis presented in this Chapter is based on a segmentation analysis of the original documents submitted to the DQSE by Constituted Bodies, Political Parties, and Civil Society. The segmentation analysis document is presented as Appendix VI to this report.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Discussion</th>
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<td><strong>General Principles</strong></td>
<td>Generally speaking, the feedback presented by most entities about the aims and principles of NCF is positive. Examples of statements made in this regard include:</td>
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<td>- &quot;Agrees that the education system should aim to develop the full potential of each individual.&quot;</td>
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<td>- &quot;Greatly appreciates the emphasis laid on the importance of constructivist pedagogies since such strategies increase learning by making education more meaningful and relevant to students’ experiences.&quot;</td>
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| | - "Instilling the principles of dignity, rights, equality, non discrimination and social justice in children from Early Years is imperative in their development and learning throughout their education and later in the world of work – ... agrees with NCF ... The emphasis on acquiring skills is also a very important part of the education of a person – it is also an important point that the curriculum aims to be student centred and not subject oriented."
| | - "Agrees wholeheartedly with the emphasis on curricular themes. This provides a paradigm shift from a fragmented world view which the current system promotes ... this provides an excellent vehicle for a critical education which should be the hallmark of a relevant and vibrant curriculum framework." |
| | - “The National Curriculum Framework is a commendable project both in method and content which hopefully should help the entire community in this country to grasp the real needs and demands of the educational process and their implications for a better and more humane society … endorses this project and vision for education in Malta … share[s] the same concerns that are universal and that author and philosopher Martha C. Nussbaum calls “the silent crisis” in education ... welcomes the NCF as an important milestone for Education in Malta in the coming years.” |

Be that as it may, it is to be noted, that there is a correlation between the specific interests of an entity and the respective issues addressed or raised in their specific submission - a correlation that is understandable given that entities represent specific sectors of society and / or interest areas.

Environmental organisations, for example, welcome the emphasis on the environment. On the other hand, those entities that work with persons with disability state that the draft NCF does not articulate how the proposals will be implemented and how the issue of disability is to be addressed to ensure that the rights of all students are safeguarded.

The Malta Union of Teachers (MUT), while acknowledging that there is merit in the principles of the proposed curriculum, expresses doubt on whether, overall, the principles and aims will be achieved in reality. The MUT laments the "lack" of adequate consultation and involvement of teachers and educators in the drawing up of the draft NCF. On the other hand, parents express concern on an "expected" increase in pressure and stress on them and their children.
The Youth Agency underlines that the draft NCF does not include the concept and the role of youth work - this in spite of the fact that youth workers are playing an increasingly key role in Secondary Schools and given their particular training they could play a pivotal role in bridging the School with the local community. It proposes that the NCF should provide increased emphasis to a collaborative and cross sectoral approach that involves schools, the Youth Agency and youth NGOs in addressing and providing for the holistic development of young people.

In the political field, the Partit Laburista (PL) emphasises the need, and importance, that changes should be introduced gradually and not imposed but in agreement with all stakeholders while it underlines that the NCF should be based on 3 underlying principles – (a) human rights; (b) social justice; and (c) economic development. The Alternattiva Demokratika (AD), on the other hand, while acknowledging the positive aspects of the draft NCF, states that the latter should have delved deeper into the type of society Malta wants to develop - given that today's pupils and students are tomorrow's adults.

The Partit Nazzjonalista (PN) states that the aims and principles of the draft NCF constitute a paradigm shift and that if Malta manages to successfully transpose the said principles and aims the Malta’s human capital development process would be significantly strengthened.

The Secretariat for Catechesis of the Archdiocese of Malta speaks of the “silent crisis in education” and quoting Nussubaum refers to:

- Radical changes in what democratic societies teach the young and which have not been well thought through

- Trends in education that may be producing generations of useful machines rather than complete citizens who can think for themselves, criticize tradition, and understand the significance of another person’s sufferings and achievements

- Competitiveness in the global market as the driving force that almost eliminates the humanities and the arts from the curricula as well as from the minds and hearts of parents and children

and states that whilst the NCF as it stands away “seems to steer away from finely becoming engulfed in this crisis” it needs to grasp profoundly the details of what is going on in the dominating vision of life in society in general and in this country in particular that education authorizes “we cannot afford to forget about the soul”.

Others emphasise that the basic principles should guide the design of the NCF: human rights, social justice and economic development - where-in the education system should serve to “liberate” persons in order that they develop their own individual personality within a context of solidarity with other persons.

Gender organisations express disappointment about “lack” of gender perspective in the draft NCF in contrast with the NMC. On a positive note, the draft NCF is praised for instilling the principle of dignity, rights, equality, non-discrimination and social justice in children from Early Years.
Entities representing students with disabilities are critical that the transformational aspect needs to be acknowledged ensuring that we are making a difference by authentically and productively engaging and re-engaging marginalised students in their own education within the context of pedagogical reciprocity and that “overall the NCF lacks how things will be done and how the issue of disability is to be addressed to ensure the rights of everyone concerned”.

A number of organisations express concern with regard to the "absence" of clear time-frames for implementation of proposals.

Teacher Support

The feedback shows that there is a general consensus on the need for teachers to be trained and re-skilled and to be provided with the necessary tools and resources to be able to implement the proposed changes of the draft NCF.

It is positively noted that the promotion of initial Teacher education and further opportunities for training and support in the use of pedagogies that are inclusive in nature and cater for diversity is seen to be a good step forward - a development which would also ensure that diversity in classrooms is addressed.

It is, however, noted that the developmental model of education implies a change at the core of how learning and teaching occurs in Colleges and Schools, a change that is not simply mediated by guidelines and resources but by actively involving teachers to own the changes underway, and ultimately the system of education.

It is argued that to attract more students towards Science, Guidance teachers and Science teachers respectively need proper training in order to direct more students towards careers that are related to Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.

It is also stated that NCF is sufficiently bold in identifying and addressing certain issues such as the emphasis placed on the learner’s developmental process, smooth transition between the Early Years, Primary and Secondary education cycles, the consideration of diversity as an educational opportunity and the integration of various stakeholders. Be that as it may, it is nonetheless argued that the draft NCF “held back” somewhat in debating "controversial" which might bring it in conflict with other stakeholders who may hold strong views on matters such as subjects on offer, extending school time and adequate remuneration that reflects the new skills and re-training / re-skilling required.

A concern expressed by entities representing parents is whether teachers will cope with a classroom of mixed-ability students and underline that the planning and carrying out of training for teachers is imperative to help them implement the proposed changes.

Some stakeholders contend that in Primary Schools there is lack of male teachers to act as role models for children, - particularly with regard to children who come from a single parent (female) family where the father is absent in the home environment.

Others underline that the NCF recognises that training of the practitioners is of paramount importance when providing for the child in the Early Years age range but the draft NCF does not specify the sort of "theoretical base" that these educators ought to have. It is pertinent to note that concern is also expressed on the lack of any mention on the involvement of a multi-disciplinary team to support and provide professional input to teachers and support staff.
In this context, the feedback suggests that there is an understanding that if there is a too broad a range of abilities in same classroom it may be difficult to achieve the principles and aims set in the draft NCF: namely that every child is entitled to a quality education experience and has a right to be educated to his or her maximum potential through the delivery of a learning experience that is within reach to all. The apprehension prevails that in a context of a large and broad spectrum of mixed ability learners the realisation of the underpinning principles may not be attained.

It is to be noted that the MUT raises concerns about a number of proposed changes such as the re-deployment of Physics teachers and the Curriculum Managers and what would constitute their role and responsibilities. Additionally, the MUT deems as unacceptable recommendations that are in breach with the present Collective Agreement such as, for example, the proposal to double allowance to newly qualified Science teachers as an incentive to attract more Science teachers.

Autonomy

The feedback provided on the notion of autonomy and flexibility to Colleges and Schools with regard to taking curricular decisions independently from the DSQE generated a mixed reaction.

Some express agreement with the need for a clear focus in Colleges and Schools on meeting the needs of all learners through increased curricular autonomy. Others, however, are of the considered opinion that one of challenges that will be faced in the implementation of the NCF will be the management of strategies and policies with regard to flexibility and autonomy.

Furthermore, strategies and policies with regard to flexibility and autonomy will have different implications. The autonomy of a School and its management, for example, to give a cleaning contract or employ staff does not carry the same import on a unitised curriculum as the autonomy provided to Colleges and Schools to choose which timetable to adopt which may result in different standards between Colleges and Schools.

Statements are presented that a NCF must allow flexibility to enable Colleges and Schools to continue building on the positive experience gained over the years with regard to practices introduced that reflect the individual characteristics of a particular College or School or the unique social issues that arise due to the community base a particular School serves.

Others still express that autonomy should be taken to its lowest level of decision-making: where-in teachers are perceived to be in a position to cope with the demands of a new curriculum if they are involved directly and by empowering them with the proper professional autonomy.

Since Schools operate in different social realities, the concern is raised of how the educational environment will be managed and monitored to balance on the one hand, the empowerment that will be afforded to Colleges and Schools through increased autonomy and flexibility they need, whilst at the same time ensuring that, within a decentralised and autonomous environment, all children are provided with a high quality education that helps them achieve their potential.

Similarly, it is stated that the draft NCF is characterised by a tension between the declared intention of providing more autonomy and flexibility to Colleges and Schools and the need to manage the process of reform that the implementation will give rise to. Moreover, it is underlined that it is “high time” that the College system delivers in terms of the goals set for it – including those relating to autonomy and decentralisation.
It is, nonetheless, to be noted that there is general agreement that the draft NCF tends to be biased towards a “one-size-fits-all” conceptual philosophy which militates against the principles of flexibility. Additionally, it is stated that while the appropriate Directorates in MEDE should provide policy direction, development of policies should occur at a College and School to the extent possible.

**Aims of Education**

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<tr>
<th>Life Learning</th>
<th>Long</th>
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<tr>
<td>The feedback on this matter is limited. The feedback suggests that the LLL process should be a unified process with all changes, the syllabi, the assessment methods and the progression from one cycle / level to another are interlinked together from the Early Years to the Post-Secondary education and beyond.</td>
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Furthermore, the view is posited that the learning experience should lead to an environment where students are attracted to learning not only as a requirement mandated by formal education but as a value which appreciates that learning is continuous and necessary throughout one’s life journey.

**Employability**

| The feedback on this matter is limited. The PL states that the draft NCF is biased towards the view that the role of education is primarily to satisfy economic needs - which, although this is acknowledged to be important, it is argued that the role of education should never be placed in a subservient role to the economy particularly if the child is to be placed at the very centre of the educational system which the draft NCF espouses as one of its fundamental principles and goals. |

The PN emphasizes the “ethos” of the education process should be two pronged: on the one part imbuing and inculcating in students a value system based on a democratic, tolerant, open and inclusive society; and on the other resulting in the development of students into leaders and persons equipped with the appropriate life skills and abilities as well as the knowledge and the competences to challenge, analyse, think, risk, be entrepreneurial that will allow them to face life and actively participate in it – including formal employment.

One issued raised by an economic oriented constituted body is whether school leavers from the formal education process are mature enough to enter the labour market given the fact that in Malta the formal education starts when children are of a young age which results in students completing their compulsory education age at a young age.

The recommendation is presented that the NCF needs to emphasise further the uptake of ICT both as an integral part of the curriculum as well as through programmes such as ECDL given that employability in a services oriented economy, which encompasses emerging economic sectors such as financial services, ICT and higher value ended industries, is highly dependent on a person’s ICT literacy.

Additionally, the strengthening of the teaching of Maltese and English Languages is a fundamental requirement for employability - and the general consensus amongst employers is that emerging students are having difficulties express themselves in either language.

One other concern that is expressed is that the education system seems to inculcate an inherent negative bias amongst female students to choose professions in science and technology and that, therefore, the NCF should graft within it a gender policy that encourages female students to consider science and technology as a career path.
It is also stated that the draft NCF makes limited reference to career guidance and only issues pertaining to academic careers are addressed. It is emphasised that there is a need, particularly in the final years of Primary and Secondary education for a structured and sustained approach to career guidance.

**Learning Areas**

**Focus on Early Years and Primary Education**

The emphasis on Early Years in the draft NCF is considered positive and generally welcomed. Also the development process directed towards instilling the principles of dignity, rights, equality, non discrimination and social justice in children from the Early Years as proposed in the draft NCF is considered positive as it will contribute towards imbuing in students a value system.

A general comment made concerns the crucial phase of a child’s life (0-3 years) which, it is argued, should be given more importance in the draft NCF. It is stated that the learning outcomes can be extended to this age group too but would need more breadth and depth so that educators in the Early Years can have more clear guidelines when working with children of such a young age.

Additionally, it is proposed that increased investment is required in the development of education centres for children who are under three years of age, in part to mitigate the disadvantages that children with difficult social backgrounds are, from the Early Years, provided with all the assistance necessary to overcome challenges which may otherwise be a handicap that they would carry during their education process.

In this context, the need for high quality childcare in Malta is strongly felt especially in view of today’s changing society where female employment (between the age of 16 years to 35 years female employment reflects the EU average) and the number of working families is on the increase. It is recommended that it is important that registered childcare centres are to have specific guidelines to follow such as those provided by the draft NCF.

It is suggested that the NCF drafting committee should review and study frameworks for the Early Years introduced in overseas jurisdictions and understand what was successful and why, and lessons learnt - such as, for example, the Te Whariki and the New Zealand Curriculum Framework (1996), Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework for the UK (2008), and Belonging, Being and Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (2009) – all of which cater specifically for the Early Years and include the 0-3 age range.

It is stated that the draft NCF appears to describe the learning objectives for this education cycle in a general manner but does not provide extensive detail – whereas the curriculum frameworks referenced above are stand alone documents that clearly highlight the importance of these formative years.

It is further stated that the education in the Early Years cycle should be woven in a holistic process that interlinks the Primary, Secondary, Post-Secondary vocational and academic and tertiary education cycles, as well as with the continuous development and the informal education. The education system should, it is underlined, link together all levels and cycles in order to counter potential weak links which may have a detrimental effect on students.

Additionally, it is emphasised that more coordination is required between KG and Year 1 in order to secure a smoother transition and to generate more creativity as well as to stimulate educational experiences. Moreover, it is proposed that a multilingual policy is required from this age – Maltese, English and another language (familiarisation) – a requirement that is also necessitated by the fact that students from minority groups are increasing.
A concern raised by the MUT relates to the reduction of entry age for KG pupils by 3 months - to 2 years 9 months. The issue raised is that the younger the child the greater is the demand for child handling placed on KGAs such as, for example, assisting the children during toileting - which raises the issue with regard to the level of assistance that will be provided to KGAs on this matter.

Languages

The fact that the draft NCF attaches considerable importance to Languages is considered to be a positive outcome of the NCF. It is underlined that Languages are invaluable tools for students, including the fact that it renders it possible for student to further their studies even abroad. It is, nevertheless, noted that while the design and the introduction of a Language policy is seen as a must, different views are expressed with respect to which direction such a policy is to take.

There is consensus that in Primary education, the teaching of Maltese and English needs to be strengthened. One line of thought is that the Language issue requires in-depth study to guide the teachers more specifically as to when and how the Maltese and English Languages should be taught in the Early and Primary years of education. In this regard, it is proposed that some form of identified targets (at a College or National level) are essential to ensure that adequate and appropriate Language policies are implemented and that they effectively meet the goals sought in the Early and Primary years of education.

It is stated that with regard to the Language of instruction, which should be kept simple and devoid of “higher-order terminology”, uncertainty is expressed on the Language to be applied for the different subjects and what Language should students be encouraged and allowed to use when being assessed in the respective subjects. It is argued that, especially in Primary Schools, the concept of multi-linguism should be maintained; particularly also given the ever increasing number of foreign students.

It is further stated, that the recommendations of the draft NCF contrasts with the emphasis on language provisions placed at EU level. The concern is expressed that the pilot Form I (Level 7) syllabus will result in cramming as against learning given that the syllabus continues to be overloaded with content.

Maltese

The feedback submitted about the teaching of the Maltese Language does not address any major issues.

One point made is that in Primary Schools, students who are weak in Maltese (or English for the matter) should be given extra support in this core Language rather than being introduced to another language.

Another observation is that a new pedagogy is required which is suited for different realities and the NCF should provide the appropriate space to enable Schools to teach Maltese and English in a modern way by also looking at how international schools teach English to foreign students.

One other suggestion is that a Maltese culture component should be included in the Maltese Language syllabus.

English

The draft NCF proposal to place English Literature as an Option subject in Form 3 (Year 9), together with changes in the present provision of Literature Appreciation, is criticised as it is believed that such a proposal will signal the wrong message that Literature is no longer an essential element of Language teaching.
Foreign

It is stated that the proposed reduction in the number of lessons in Foreign Languages at the Secondary level of education gives rise to concern particularly given the fact that this results in a reduction of 60 lessons across Form I (Level 7) and Form II (Level 8). In the event that this position is maintained in the final post consultation NCF document it is recommended that the syllabus content for the said Foreign Language will have to be reduced accordingly.

In addition, it is argued that given this considerable reduction in the time allocated to the teaching of a Foreign language, the NCF presents no measures vis-à-vis the level of education that students will now have to reach at the end of Form V (Level 11) for students to be able to move on to higher education.

A number of entities suggest that Foreign Languages available in Schools for teaching should be extended further through partnerships entered into between Colleges and Schools and locally based cultural institutes; and in doing so providing opportunities for students to learn Chinese, Indian and Portuguese which are expected to become important business languages in addition to English.

Moreover, such partnerships should be extended to allow Foreign Language teachers and students exchanges’ thereby providing for a richer learning experience which would allow them to obtain a richer exposure to spoken language, including the accent, as well as the respective culture.

Mathematics

The feedback on this LA is limited. No particular issues are raised other than the belief that at Secondary Level, especially for children opting to take Science subjects, the draft NCF does not delve deeply enough into how the teaching of Mathematics links with SE. The need for a smoother transition between Secondary and Post-Secondary SE and Mathematics education is highlighted.

Science Education

The draft NCF vision for Science and the identified purposes for SE, in particular the aim to establish a strong foundation for learners who wish to pursue a Science career, is generally welcomed.

The proposal to teach SE in a formal way in Primary Schools is considered commendable as is the proposed concept that the Science subjects will be integrated to cater for students who are not interested in specialising in different aspects of sciences. The MUT expresses, on this matter, its disagreement with the recommendation in the draft NCF that would see the role of the peripatetic teaching services transformed into a support teacher role particularly given the fact that such teachers are seen to provide a good scientific experience to Primary School students.

There is general consensus with regard to the NCF recommendation that a Core Science subject is introduced. A general concern that is expressed, however, is that the Core Science subject should not be seen by students (as well as parents) as a softer option, thus reducing motivation and effort.

It is posited is that the existing Science subject titles (Physics, Chemistry and Biology) should be retained to ensure comparability and recognition both locally and abroad.

It is to be noted that concerns are expressed about the recommendation in the draft NCF that prohibits a student from selecting and following one Science subject. It is argued, strongly, that this presents an unnecessary limitation the implication of which is that it will hinder students who seek to pursue a career which although not scientific oriented requires a strong grounding in Physics - for example, Engineering.
Similarly, it is stated that the Option subject framework that obliges a student to select Physics with another Science subject might result in fewer students choosing the subject as presently Physics can be taken with different subject options such as Art or Computer Studies. Besides, should the position as presented in the draft NCF be maintained, there is the risk that since students cannot choose just one of the three Science subjects this may result in fewer students taking up Science options and instead opting for the Core Science subject.

Further to this, it is proposed that misconceptions by guidance teachers about Science subjects should be addressed and it is recommended that at least 25% of all guidance teachers have a background in a Science-related subject where-in career guidance advice and support is improved through investment in staff and training in science, research and innovation.

A key issue raised is that the draft NCF does not provide a road map of how the Core Science subject will affect the transition from Secondary to Post Secondary education and how SEC examination will be revised.

The feedback emphasises the importance of the NCF to comprehensively address the syllabi, content and process covering all levels of SE to ensure a seamless transition from Primary to Secondary to Post-Secondary education and onto Tertiary education in order to improve quality and secure the required increase in the number of Science, Engineering and Technology students and researchers. The feedback adds that for such a seamless transition to be achieved across the SE education cycles the enabling environment requires appropriate resourcing which includes, but is not limited to dynamic teaching staff, materials, infrastructure and equipment.

It is further argued that care needs to be taken in the implementation of inquiry based approaches vis-à-vis the development of the new curricula for the different Science areas. There is a danger that teachers who disagree with an inquiry based approach as they may see this as time consuming may actually resist the implementation of this important teaching principle.

It is stated that it is, therefore, important that a balance is reached between, on the one hand, the extent of the content of the Science curriculum for each subject and, on the other hand, the time required to actually cover such content by means of an inquiry based approach. Additionally, it is underlined, that inquiry based learning in SE requires adequate resources and that a number of Colleges and Schools do not have sufficient Science laboratories to cater for groups of students who perform practical work simultaneously.

Moreover, it is underlined that it is not possible to have inquiry-based learning of Science in half an hour given that the process of experimenting, observing and drawing conclusions needs time – one-hour long science lessons would be more appropriate for this approach, allowing for adequate investigation, reflection and discussion.

Similarly, it is felt that measures are needed to overcome issues such as the reluctance of Primary School teachers to teach Science, the lack of skills in using ICT to teach Science and the professional up-skilling of teachers in order to provide them with the abilities to cater for the diversity of learners.

The issue is raised that Physics teachers are concerned that the changes as proposed in the draft NCF will result in a surplus of this cohort of teachers, given that Physics teachers do not, it is claimed, have the appropriate grounding and discipline to teach Chemistry and Biology - the two other science streams that will be integrated in the Core Science subject.
Some entities state that there will be a need for a significant number of Science teachers to be retrained in one or two Science subject areas in order for them to be able to teach the Core Science subject in Forms III (Level 9) to Form V (Level 11) - particularly given that it is contended that over half of the teachers hold a qualification in Mathematics and Physics.

Be that as it may, it is underlined that any changes made through the NCF are reflected in the training of science teachers at University of Malta and continued professional development. In this context, the point is made that once the Malta Council for Science and Technology opens its National Interactive Science Centre (NISC) in 2014 continuous professional development courses related to Science communication could be offered to Science teachers.

It is stated that setting in the SE continues to be a major requirement given the broad range of students' abilities and for the need to provide all students with the best entitlement.

Technology Education

The feedback underlines that Digital Literacy should be emphasised by the draft NCF as an entry level competence for any career - and that the definition of Digital Literacy should be established as “... the set of knowledge, skills and understanding required to achieve digital competence: the confident and critical use of ICT for work, leisure, learning and communication” that is based on the following Digital Literacy strands:

- Data sources and manipulation – the ability to identify and access sources of digital data, search for data in various digital formats, critically evaluate its relevance and accuracy, judge the credibility and reliability of a variety of digital data sources, store, organise, manage and selectively retrieve such data and digitally manipulate it in various ways and by various means.

- Information Communication and Presentation – The ability to creatively synthesise information from a variety of digital data sources, present this information in a variety of ways to a variety of audiences, and communicate the information using a variety of digital media.

- Programmed control - The ability to interface with and control digital technology, from the simple act of pressing a button or buttons to activate functionality, through figuring out a user interface, the use of iconic programming environments, to the use of textual scripting systems.

- Social, Ethical and Personal aspects – The ability to project oneself digitally, to participate safely in social networks, to use digital technology ethically and responsibly (including awareness of legislation relating to data protection, intellectual property and computer misuse), and developing a positive attitude towards the use of digital technology to support LLL, collaboration, personal pursuits and a digital lifestyle.

It is argued that the draft NCF should clarify the term ‘Digital Literacy’ at Primary and Secondary level (it currently only elaborates the term at Primary level) and should highlight a smooth progression from Primary Year 1 to Form V (Level 11); on how the competence "Using new information and communication technologies" varies in terms of knowledge, understanding and abilities at Primary and Secondary level respectively; the use of a matrix to bring the differences out and how the Secondary level of education builds onto the Primary level of education in terms of competence acquisition; the need to emphasise the importance of learning Digital Literacy within a cross-curricular context; and the importance of referencing ICT lessons in Secondary Schools to the ECDL model and improvements to the model as they arise.
Additionally, it is proposed that Digital Literacy and Design and Technology are not grouped up under one umbrella term ‘Technology Education’ given that such a grouping projects the impression that (i) these two subjects are related when Design and Technology is more of a craft and vocational type of subject whilst Digital Literacy is a core competency; and (ii) Digital Literacy should be given a meaningful context – that is, it should be ingrained across the curriculum rather than as a stand-alone slot.

The feedback highlights the need for computing concepts to be recognised as core concepts by the NCF and introduced in appropriate contexts across the curricula with each syllabus. It is recognised that the implementation of such an approach has implications on pedagogy, resources available for teaching and the up-skilling of educators as appropriate.

Another matter raised is that Digital Literacy should be implemented within the curriculum through programmed projects embedded across curricular areas. The projects, it is proposed, should be designed to encapsulate learning outcomes from both the curricular area and from the Digital Literacy subject itself. It is stated that the application of such an approach requires a pedagogy which promotes learning and teaching that is:

- Contextualised and situated: wherein learning outcomes are embedded in meaningful contexts and not as content to be learnt.
- Cross-curricular and interdisciplinary: where-in computational thinking is not exclusively limited to Computer Science but runs through the curriculum.
- Constructionist: where-in the creation of digital and computational artefacts, and not their use, is at the centre of the Digital Literacy subject.
- Collaborative: on the basis of the principle espoused in the draft NCF which promotes both collaborative teaching and learning.

One other stakeholder proposes that Technology Education should during the later Secondary years include mechatronics (combination of Mechanical, electronic, Computer, Software, Control and System Design engineering in order to design, and manufacture useful mechanical products and electronics) and robotics. This is seen to be important given the importance that Malta is placing on establishing itself as a centre of excellence for high value added manufacturing - which requires indigenous human capital development for such a sector to be sustained and subsequently grow.

Other feedback presented ranges from the highlighting of the importance of the initiative for a laptop per child, to expressing uncertainty on whether the Design and Technology subject should be amalgamated with ICT. In the context of the Design and Technology subject, it is argued that there are no details about the effect of Engineering on Design and Technology and it is stated that there seems to be overlap in content of the two subjects.

The need for students to take up subjects in emerging areas such as financial services, ICT and higher value added industries are highlighted with suggestions to give more exposure to ICT needs and for this to be given to Secondary level students both as an integral part of the curriculum as well as going beyond the ECDL examinations which stops at giving students a basic grasp of back office related software.

The new forms of communication such as the Internet, Social Media, new mobile technologies as well as new digital printing media are seen as becoming a major challenge for teachers who have to find ways of communication to attract students to education. As importantly, therefore, teachers, too, have to be trained to use the new communication technology forms.
It is also proposed that the NCF strategy should seek to secure a laptop per child target as such an initiative promotes a technology and ICT mindset from a young age together with a self-teaching mentality which instills greater self-efficacy and self-confidence in the child.

**Health Education**

The time allocated for HhE LA at 88 hours (together with PE and PSD) is considered to be an issue when compared to other LAs - for example, Mathematics has 105 hours allocated to it. Furthermore, physical activities including a healthy lifestyle whilst mentioned in the draft NCF are, it is stated, subsequently not given the importance they merit. It is further stated that the NCF should act as a vehicle that ensures that good and healthy habits are instilled from a young age.

It is argued that the draft NCF is unclear with regard to how the roles and responsibilities in the teaching of HhE are to be delineated between the CTs and Specialist teachers in Primary Schools. Moreover, it is underlined that teachers and support staff need to be exposed to health education and promotion activities for themselves whereby they can be provided with opportunities to improve their health status - and in doing so present themselves as role models for students as well as demonstrating a personal commitment to the school health programme.

It is further proposed that the components of HhE should include the:

- Effective instruction of functional HhE through the provision of opportunities and resources to acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary for making health-related decisions that support the adoption, development and maintenance of health enhancing behaviour.

- Development of personal values and beliefs that support healthy behaviour.

- Promotion of practices and norms which are conducive to healthy enhancing behaviour leading to the development of a culture in the Malta that values a healthy lifestyle.

It is recommended that there should be coordination in the teaching of HhE across Colleges and Schools in order to eliminate gaps in knowledge and harmonise accessibility to all students on the development of health enhancing behaviours for all students, whilst, at the same time, minimising risky health attitudes and behaviour.

The establishment of a HhE implementation team, that is supported through the active involvement of the Health authorities, designated to focus on the development of health-enhancing life-skills of students and monitoring and evaluating progress, is seen as important and a concrete way forward in this regard.

It is also recommended that HhE as a LA should comprise of three discrete strands – PE, PSD, and HhE given that these three subjects address important aspects of health from different approaches, including content and teaching methodologies.

Two of the major issues raised with respect to PSD are the time allocated to the subject and the proposed change in name of this subject.
The feedback proposes an increase in the number of hours allocated specifically to PSD and that the subject is placed within both the HhE and CE LAs. It is added that PSD should also include Career Education in order to support and prepare for career guidance.

It is argued that the name of the subject should not be changed from PSD to PSHE. It is underlined that the focus of PSD is the personal and social development of individuals through the coverage of different topics of which health is only one. A decision to move away from PSD to PSHE give rise to a number of issues as, it is argued, should health be included this means that other themes which are currently not included such as the environment, citizenship, etc would seen to be left out.

It is further stated that the proposed new name means that the subject will lose the broader scope and emphasis with regard to ‘development’ by limiting it only to education. It is underlined that ‘development’ is more encompassing than ‘education’ as it supports formation instead of the giving of knowledge and reflects more the pedagogy used in the Maltese PSD model.

It is emphasised that topics like “career education”, “drug education” and “values and diversity” cannot be simply taught. Instead students have to be facilitated to make their own decisions based on what they value and what they find important. It is posited that such facilitative type of learning is the basis of the draft NCF that emphasises the importance of learning through induction or through experiential learning. Thus, it is believed that the practice to PSD today is, indeed, already in line with the pedagogical approach presented in the draft NCF.

This position is shared by the MUT which states that there is no rationale provided for changing the name of the PSD subject to PSHE. It proposes that the number of PSD lessons is increased so that more time is invested into Career Education thus supporting Career Guidance. It underlines that PSD should be introduced in the Primary Years 1 to 3 as this subject is seen to be important to the development of a child at this early stage of his or her life.

An entity representing students with special needs emphasises the importance of diversity as an important theme that is to be included in PSD lessons as well as University B.Ed degree courses. One other entity is of the considered opinion that given that some of the elements mentioned for the teaching of the proposed Ethics programme are already found in the pedagogy of PSD, then PSD could be a natural starting point for the design and implementation of the proposed Ethics syllabus.

The feedback further suggests that “mediation” should be introduced as a sub-theme in the PSD subject - to be offered to students starting from Form I (Level 7). It is stated that the introduction of such a sub-theme enables students to understand and appreciate the value of mediation and compromise as a means of dispute resolution.

Entities representing gender equality underline that certain subjects such as sexual orientation, race, disability, religion and gender should also be catered for through specific slots in the timetable such as those for PSD.

| Home Economics | The feedback on this subject is limited to that presented by Home Economists in Action (HEIA). It is stated that Home Economics is a subject which is supported by constructivist pedagogies as the subject lends itself to the use of active methodologies while providing students the opportunity to construct their own knowledge and ideas. It is believe that students, through Home Economics, nurture attitudes which promote responsibility and commitment and gain a lot of lifelong skills. |
It is argued that Home Economics should be a distinct component of HhE rather than a component of another subject – and HEIA proposes that the HhE LA is comprised of three discrete strands – Physical Education, Personal and Social Development and Home Economics.

Amongst the other recommendations presented, the HEIA suggests that First Aid is included as part of the Home Economics core component at both Primary and Secondary level (given that it is already taught within HE as an Option subject). HEIA further recommends that HE teachers are allotted time to recertify themselves every 3 years or as currently recommended by the competent authorities.

| Physical Education | While the new emphasis on PE is welcomed, especially in the Early Years, the questions are raised on whether Primary teachers are able to teach PE and on whether they are willing and able to incorporate PE into the classroom programme to achieve the increased physical activity recommended by the draft NCF. The concern is expressed that PE activities do not include swimming which is considered to be an important physical activity. A further concern that is presented is the degree of overlap between the learning outcomes of PSHE and those of PE. Additionally, it is argued that there should be a clear distinction between PE and Sports. Another issue raised concerns the recommendation that a 30 minute PE session is to be held daily in Primary Schools. The applicability of this recommendation is queried on the basis of whether CTs are able to carry out such a lesson without added support; a number of State Primary Schools do not have appropriate premises; and that this will result in logistical issues on the school uniform that should be worn. |
| Citizenship Education | The feedback on the CE LA is mixed. On one hand, it is argued that students will learn skills related to the generic concept of citizenship and hence they will be brought up as "good" future citizens of a society. It is underlined that CE should be underpinned by the proposed cross-curricular approach which, however, would require effective monitoring as the risk exists that the subjects in the CE LA may be marginalised - which should not be allowed to happen given the importance of this proposed LA. On the other hand, some entities are not convinced of the value addedness of this LA: they underline that the integration of History, Geography and Social studies will lead to a reduced focus on these three topics and query how the resulting educational milieu will help children to become good citizens "of the world" when their knowledge of Society, History, and Geography is reduced. The MUT is critical to the proposed CE LA. It states that the terminology used in the draft NCF to describe the CE may be misleading and does not wholly reflect what is usually understood in accordance with the Council of Europe and European Commission definitions. It adds that the inclusion of the designated subjects within the CE LA will erode the identity of each individual subject. More specifically, as presented, the draft NCF gives rise to uncertainty unnecessarily due to the fact that it does not show how the time allotted to each individual subject will be divided. The MUT adds that ESD is not well addressed in the draft NCF given that this area is being given so much importance in various policies. Additionally, it underlines that the draft NCF minimises the importance of Maltese History and culture - which, respectively, should be an important feature of Malta's educational system. |
Other stakeholders raise questions on how the subjects under the CE LA and under the HhE LA will complement one another and how the teachers of the different subjects across the two LAs will work together to ensure that there is a common line of thought and overlap between one subject and another as well as one LA and the other is minimised to the extent possible.

Others propose that instead of titling the LA as CE, the title of this LA should be changed to Civic, Geographical and Historical Education - which, it is proposed, would be constituted of eight strands of learning, complete with Level Descriptors which will be identified and developed by a team of subject experts, namely the EOs for Geography, History and Social Studies and Primary Education.

At Secondary level of Education it is underlined that it is important that Civic (Social Studies), Geography and History continue to be clearly distinct as subjects and that these are not integrated. Additionally these subjects should, it is argued, be compulsory and an equally divisible number of hours are allocated per week for each subject with one to two lessons each per week.

**History**
The feedback submitted on History is primarily critical. The criticism expressed in this regard, further to that discussed above, includes:

- As a subject History is not given its due importance particularly given that Malta as a country has a heavy dependency on the tourism sector.

- The recommendation presented in the draft NCF to replace the History subject at the Secondary level of education by a hybrid subject should be reconsidered particularly given that where such steps were taken in other jurisdictions, the UK is mentioned as one example, steps are now being taken to revert back to original state of play.

- It is underlined that at the Secondary level of education it is important that History retains its status as a clearly distinct subject and that it is not integrated in a LA and that it should remain compulsory with a minimum one lesson per week.

- Maltese History should be introduced and taught throughout the Secondary level of education in order to ensure that Maltese students learn to identify with their nation’s identity process.

**Geography**
With regard to Geography, similar concerns are expressed as those relating to the History subject.

It is stated that Geography is a highly-respected academic discipline and geographers have been at the forefront in addressing pressing problems of environmental management. Moreover, Geography is a discipline characterised by a broad scope and an essentially multi-disciplinary approach in dealing with a broad range of issues – where-in its practitioners gain unique skills which are appreciated by organisations and agencies involved in research, management, planning and policy formulation.

It is argued that the practical approach which is nowadays used to teach geography is congruent with the approach suggested in A Vision for Science Education which explains how sciences should develop skills and ways of thinking such as inquiry, observation and accurate measurement, critical thinking, considering alternative interpretations and communicating conclusions.
Thus, it is argued, that in seeking to “pigeon-holing” this discipline into a LA is counter-productive given that Geography is a core learning area which is crucial to the formation of children and young adults. It is stated, for example, that geo-information skills are vital for Europe’s economy and that they play a significant part of the EC Digital Agenda 2020 as they are needed for future industrial and commercial developments. Moreover, it is further stated that in the last year several countries have decided to integrate geo-technologies, delivered by geography throughout their secondary school curricula because this is becoming one of the key growth areas and in Europe we currently have a skills shortage of more than 30,000 workers.

It is further argued that the adoption of the approach proposed in the draft NCF to the teaching of Geography will deprive students of badly needed skills which have proved crucial to Malta over the last few decades.

One proposal that is presented is that for Geography to fulfill the curricular objectives, it might need to be restructured and a new syllabus developed for the Secondary years – amongst others it should increase teaching of geographic knowledge of Malta and its relationship to other countries around the world, and also include hands-on sessions on Geographic Information Systems which is not present in the current SEC syllabus.

Similarly to the arguments raised on History, it is underlined that not enough consideration is given to lessons learnt in foreign jurisdictions where such experiences have not worked as desired and the process is being reverted to a state of play where Geography is retained as a separate subject. Indeed, it is stated that Malta is moving towards reducing the allocated time for Geography whilst “many” European countries are increasing curriculum time for Geography due to its relevance and the essential skills it provides young people.

It is underlined that studies carried out by HERODOT show that almost all European countries offer Geography to all pupils until at least 14 years and that most national curricula allow students to continue their geographical studies until at least 16 or 19 years of age.

Social Studies
The feedback on Social Studies is limited. One feedback is that the recommended timetable for Primary Schools, especially with regard to PSD, is seen as ambiguous - leading to queries such as how time will be shared with subjects like Social Studies, where Health and Citizenship topics overlap.

Another issue raised is that while Social Studies is not included as an Option Subject in the English version, it is present in the Maltese version. Thus, there is uncertainty whether Social Studies is still considered as Option Subject.

Religion Education
The Secretariat for Catechesis of the Archdiocese of Malta underlines that education cannot afford to forget the soul – which is defined to mean “the faculties of thought and imagination that make us human and make our relationships rich human relationships, rather than relationships of mere use and manipulation”. It is maintained whilst there is no doubt that good scientific and technical education should be basic ingredients of a new vision for education in our country this cannot be achieved at the cost of other abilities which are equally crucial to the system.
It is underlined that the Secretariat in August 2010 concluded a new vision of RE in schools. In August 2010 the Secretariat finalized its own Policy Document to propose its vision for RE and believes that this is in harmony with the new vision for education as set in the NCF that the Church Secretariat articulates its guiding principles for Catholic Religious Education in schools.

The aim of this Policy Document is to define better the role of RE in the context of the schooling system as it is today and to delineate the aims and objectives of RE in the broader context of today’s society and culture. RE is seen to be broader than a syllabus content and one that acknowledges the context within which it takes place – where-in in Malta’s context, RE is understood as CRE.

It is stated that religion in the context of Maltese society is what connects society most to its roots and that CRE should aim, at the first instance, to empower the younger generations with a critical sense and render them aware of the pitfalls of individualism and whatever characterises today's culture.

Education, therefore, is seen as a spiritual journey, and RE in particular, through virtues and attitudes, seeks to enable students to connect with themselves, with others in true and authentic relationships, and with God. CRE, thus, aims to find a common focus for one's spirit-seeking heart and a knowledge-seeking mind that embraces reality in all its amazing dimensions (Parker J. Palmer) and is seen as an area of learning in schools meant to identify and address the questions of ultimate meaning in life making it possible to connect fruitfully a tradition received with the demands in life to form a personal worldview.

The Secretariat welcomes the recommendation in the draft NCF on the introduction of an Ethics Education Programme in State schools for those who opt out from the CPE programme. the Secretariat, however, underlines that Church schools, having their own ethos as Catholic schools in Malta, and therefore should be left free to choose whether or not to introduce such an option.

The draft NCF recommendation to introduce an Ethics education programme for Primary and Secondary school students is lauded by most other stakeholders since it is argued that ethical formation does not necessarily require a religious foundation. It is stated that while RE places too much emphasis on doctrine and much less on moral and ethical development, one must actively construct a framework where intellectual freedom (as articulated in the NMC) truly exists.

In this context, it is felt that non-Catholic and non-Christian students deserve a comprehensive education irrespective of their respective religious beliefs. The study of Ethics is a non-denominational approach to ethical and morality issues (the latter approached from a rational perspective); and as such it is, therefore, equally valid for any religious denomination as well as non-religious ones.

It is presented that the understanding of an Ethics education programme should be one which engages in issues related to education in morals – as morals constitute a basic human marker of right conduct and behaviour while ethics is more akin to a set of guidelines that direct accepted practices and behaviour through argument and reason.

It is suggested that the Ethics programme (specifically tailored to Malta's cultural and social milieu) should be constructed around a small number of core values and subsequently based around a spiral approach where the same concepts are visited again and again at an increasing level and complexity. The Ethics lessons should be a “straightforward” replacement for Religion lessons for those students not following CRE lessons.
Issues are raised on who will be assigned the responsibility to design the syllabus for the Ethics Education Programme and whether this programme will run parallel with the present Religion subject resulting in a softer option for students.

It is stated that given the limited discussion in the draft NCF on the proposed Ethics programme as well as the fact that Church Schools are, strongly, of the considered opinion that CRE is integral to their education mission this recommendation has given rise to concerns. It is, therefore, proposed that the final post consultation NCF document should be more detailed and specific in its recommendations on this matter.

Arts Education  The limited feedback submitted with respect to AE is critical since it is felt that the framework as proposed in the draft NCF does not sufficiently provide learners with opportunities to enhance creative and artistic expression. It is stated that the impression garnered is that AE is being pushed onto an extra curriculum framework that is supported by private Art institutions operating in the private sector.

In fact, it is argued that the draft NCF allocates limited hours to Art, Music, Dance, Drama and Literature. Furthermore Art, Music and Literature are given less importance by not being provided to all students and the fact that Colleges and Schools may decide whether to leave out some of these subjects will result in varied curricular entitlement by different schools.

It is proposed that the pedagogical aspects of Drama should be included in the NCF and that the present role of Drama teachers be maintained. Music, it is also argued, should be given its due importance as a medium that leads towards the appreciation of culture and, hence, more time should be allotted to this subject in the Primary School timetable modules for Years 1 to 3. It is further expressed that Performing Arts should, like Music, be made available as an Option subject.

Other Subjects  It is to be noted that feedback with regard to this recommendation is critical. The view is posited that the introduction of vocational subjects may detract student interest in subjects such as Design and Technology, HhE and ICT. It is suggested that a decision on whether vocational subjects should be introduced as a formal component of a national curriculum warrants further discussion as they may provide a soft substitution to formal academic subjects - and thus leading to different results than that sought through the introduction of such subjects.

Some entities express the view that they are not confident that Colleges and Schools are applying the right approaches and methodologies to the teaching of vocational subjects. Furthermore, whilst some express agreement with the introduction of vocational subjects as a safety net to students who may struggle with academic subjects they recommend that more research ought to be carried out on this matter - including positive experiences of the now defunct Trade Schools.

Others state that in the Secondary level of education, a new pedagogical development of "learning by doing" is required and that vocational subjects need to be introduced across all Colleges and Schools, – and that such vocational subjects can be designed in collaboration with institutions such as ITS and MCAST and benchmarked on international standards.
Suggestions are presented to include the teaching of First-Aid (from early years) and Driving (in later years of secondary) in the list of vocational subjects.

Accounts and Economics

The re-introduction of Accounts and Economics is welcomed as this provides a level playing field for students attending State schools and those attending the Church and Independent schools. It is emphasised, however, that the introduction of these subjects would necessitate more Head of Departments to work in these areas and Education Officers to cater for the commercial subjects. Queries are raised with regard to how the teachers of these subjects shall be identified - whether past teachers would be automatically given the opportunity or whether appointment would follow an internal call for applications.

Sexual Education

A specific issue raised in the consultation feedback relates to the Sexual Health Strategy which recommends that teachers and other educational professionals should develop preparedness and technical skills to discuss sexuality and relationships and sexual health matters with students.

It is further stated, that the said Strategy also recommends the setting up of targets and standards for the delivery of sexuality and relationships education in Schools with the subject being introduced as a multi-disciplinary curriculum subject with a holistic coverage. In this context, it is proposed that the final version of the NCF should establish for improved coordination between the respective Ministries (Education and Health) so that these work together to meet the goals set in the said Strategy through the new NCF.

First Aid Education

The submission is presented that First Aid should be introduced as a compulsory subject for students from age of 3 years to 16 years where-in assessments are carried out by means of practical sessions where relevant first aid procedures are carried out and appropriate certifications awarded.

It is further proposed that refresher programmes should be held every three years for the teaching personnel involved. It is underlined that the current attitude of teachers that they are not responsible for anything that happens to a child in class due to the fact that they have no knowledge of first aid should change.

It is further suggested that a First Aid Day is organised potentially in combination with Sports Day and that students compete for a First Aid Challenge Cup.

Driver Education

The submission is presented that driver education is introduced for senior classes in Secondary schools directed to teach students theory and behaviour.

Cross Curricular Themes

Among the relatively few stakeholders that commented on the proposed cross curricular approach, there is general agreement with this concept. The emphasis in the draft NCF on the cross curricular approach is seen to provide a paradigm shift from a fragmented world view which the current education system promotes. Additionally, a cross curricular approach to education is seen to increase the opportunities for educators to work together.

Environmental and heritage entities commend the draft NCF in this regard, and express their willingness to support the NCF through the creation of outreach programmes (implemented in the classroom and in other settings by the respective teacher) and complemented by an actual visit to a museum / site - though, it was stated that for such programmes to be created they would require the input of the teachers involved.
One statement put forward is that a cross-curricular approach proposed should not be limited only to the development of the individual, but that the concept should be extended to develop a co-operative and community ethos. Thus it is recommended that “Cooperative education” should be one other cross-curricular theme.

Feedback recommends that the cross-curricular approach should be nurtured through University courses especially the B.Ed degree so that future teachers are effectively trained to implement the system from the very beginning.

**e-Learning**

The feedback presented on e-Learning is limited. One entity underlines that e-Learning in the Primary and Secondary education should be driven by the need to increase access to learning which can be facilitated through:

- A shift to constructivist education philosophies.
- A move from Teacher to student-centred learning activities.
- Accessing both local and global resources.
- Making full use of the potential of technologies to enable children to show and create knowledge.
- An increased complexity of tasks and use of multi-modal information. In this regard, the position is made that e-Learning should be emphasised as a tool and a vehicle in the process of learning.

It is further stated that the design of the draft NCF and the introduction of the e-Learning platform, which are considered to be two major and fundamental changes, have to be implemented in tandem and in a coherent and cohesive manner. It is stated that both these changes affect pedagogy, the subject content, work practice, etc which will have profound implications on both the professional development of teachers as well as the development of students and that if these initiatives fail to seamlessly converge then the arising implications will be negative.

Be that as it may, the feeling is expressed that there is limited information about the e-Learning platform and how it will affect the delivery of teaching given that new technologies require time to master. It is suggested that the final post consultation NCF document should include the e-Learning strategy as a supplementary document.

**Education for Sustainable Development**

The placement of ESD in the Primary and Secondary education cycles generates positive feedback primarily from environmental entities. The NCF, for example, is welcomed for the emphasis given to a holistic perspective of sustainable development, i.e. a perspective that strives to integrate environment, social and economic concerns as well as for the positioning of for ESD as cross-curricular theme and hence one of the main priorities of the curriculum.

Be that as it may, the concern is expressed that there still continues to be a weak understanding of ESD – with the term sustainability being used across the board with too many people using it without grasping the concept. A consequence is that this may result in the absence of comprehensive approach that should lead students to adopt a sustainable lifestyle.
Additionally, the adoption of sustainable processes with only a shallow awareness of natural systems runs the risk of rendering short term results. A deeper understanding of ESD is achieved through knowledge of different habitats in our environment, the plants and animals that live in same and how they interact, the conditions they need to survive, how we depend on these habitats and the ecosystems they support, how we are effecting the balance and how we must change our lifestyle to stop the damage we are causing.

Thus, whilst the draft NCF is seen as being clear on desired outcomes, it does not discuss the strategies that are to be introduced to enable such desirable outcomes to be achieved. The adoption of ESD, it is stated, requires a whole-school approach that besides providing educational pedagogy related to sustainable development should also ensure that Colleges and Schools should adopt sustainable practices that address their environmental social and economic realities.

It is further stated that clear guidelines need to be provided for curriculum developers on how to integrate ESD in the design of the subject syllabi and for SMT on how to integrate sustainable development principles in a College or School milieu. It is also believed that ESD requires the facilitation of out-of-class activities that allows teachers to utilise the environment and the surrounding community as an educational resource as well as the training and appointment of qualified persons who would monitor and ensure that ESD is addressed in the curriculum and in College and School policies.

It is recommended that ESD classroom and outdoor learning, therefore, should be modeled as follows:

- Emphasis placed on the pivotal role of natural environment to one’s existence.
- Providing diverse opportunities for children to experience, discover, connect with, learn from, and protect the natural environment.
- Enabling children to learn first-hand about the connections and interactions between humans and the world around them.
- Providing the knowledge, values and skills that allow children to participate in decisions about how we do things individually and collectively both locally and globally.
- Ensuring the continuity of biodiversity through direct and indirect conservation action

Moreover, it is proposed that the final post consultation NCF document should make to the reference to participatory processes in the carrying out of pro-environmental behaviour more explicit given that these are seen to be vital to community sustainability. It is added that such a goal should not only be sought through the engagement of students or citizens in the decision-making process, important as this may be, but also through the presentation of ideas which would otherwise be overlooked, the opening up of new spaces for advocacy and increasing student and citizen-ownership of discussions and decisions on ESD.

It is underlined that there needs to be added emphasis on a closer link between educational processes and real life, especially the stress on outdoor learning experiences – where-in students are exposed to natural, physical, social and cultural environment scenarios and the various services and manufacturing industries, etc through first-hand experience.
While pre-/in-service professional development programmes on ESD need to be provided, a number of environmental entities believe that they can contribute by providing training and material for the ESD coordinators and by supporting teachers and schools in their efforts to promote ESD.

A NGO underlined that it will continue to contribute on this cross curricular theme by providing training for ESD coordinators as well as continuing to support Colleges, Schools and teachers in their efforts to promote ESD through programmes such as EkoSkola.

**Education for Entrepreneurship; and Creativity and Innovation**

The fact that ECI are identified in the draft NCF as two of the five cross-curricular themes, is generally welcomed. It is emphasised, however, that entrepreneurship programmes should be included in Primary and Secondary schools and that the education system should develop the full potential of each student individually so that new entrants to the labour market will be well equipped with employability skills.

Recommendations presented in this regard include:

- The development of an entrepreneurship culture within the educational system at all levels and the creation of increased awareness on entrepreneurship education as a career.

- Giving entrepreneurship education more prominence in the final post consultation NFC document by drawing out clearly the difference between entrepreneurship and traditional business subjects.

- Replacing Business Studies with an Entrepreneurship education subject;

- Devising methods of assessment for entrepreneurship, like for example, an Entrepreneurial Driving License (similar to ECDL) which would provide employers with increased confidence that the candidate has a sound understanding of innovation, being proactive in change, etc and making the student more employable.

- Training the current teachers in entrepreneurship education, especially in the Primary level of education where the inculcation of entrepreneurship is of critical importance to it’s nurturing across the education life cycle.

- Including entrepreneurship education systematically in training programmes for educators as well as making entrepreneurship mandatory for students reading the B Ed course.

**Intercultural Education**

The discussion in the feedback is not on the proposed intercultural cross curricular theme but rather on cultural diversity within the educational system.

The Secretariat for Catechesis of the Archdiocese of Malta recommends that a fundamental part of the education of the younger generations has to be their enculturation into the tradition of the community to which they belong – seen to be best achieved by traditional disciplines. The idea presented is that of instilling in young people the best of the culture of which they are part – which as Malta’s society becomes multicultural, the more complex this task will become.
The NCPE welcomes the inclusion of Intercultural Education in the draft NCF. It adds that one particular outcome of such a policy is the establishment of support structures that will fast track the understanding of Maltese and English amongst students from minority groups in order to assure that they obtain a basic command in either Language at the earliest possible.

It is emphasised that social integration, let alone effective learning, of children from minority groups is dependent on their ability to communicate.

Additionally, it is stated that the statement in the draft NCF with regard to the urgent need to develop policies related to diversity and inclusion is positive as are the points referring to the fact that children should strengthen their ability to appreciate social, cultural, national and geographical realities and appreciating diversity and difference.

Moreover, the NCPE posits that it can play a consultative role with the drafting of such policy, specifically in relation to gender and racial inclusion and non-discrimination.

The feedback submitted varies from agreement with the broader principles of the proposed learning models to uncertainty about what will these mean in practice and also what needs to be done in addition to what is being proposed to address specific learning needs such as those of persons with disabilities.

The developmental model of learning as proposed in the draft NCF is seen to imply a greater focus on the learner and is seen as ensuring a smooth transition from one education cycle to another, greater emphasis on ensuring a relevant curriculum, acknowledging a diversity of learning needs and methods, and a widening of the educational experience to include the informal and non-formal sectors. Be that as it may, the criticism is leveled at the draft NCF that it is silent with regard to the development process of a child’s ability.

Agreement is expressed with the thrust in the draft NCF that the educational system should provide support to all learners to achieve and succeed irrespective of their backgrounds, needs and aptitudes, goals that will be met through and with the creation of active, inclusive learning communities which will place learning and learners at the heart of the education system.

The feedback suggests that there are mixed opinions with regard to the introduction of LAs. The concern is raised that the NCF in recommending the amalgamation of different subjects into different areas does not show how the teachers of different subjects will work together to ensure that there is a common trend in teaching and that there will be no overlap between one subject and the other. Moreover, the view is also expressed that the clustering of subjects by LAs is an idealistic approach and it is perceived that students as well as teachers will face difficulties given that teaching within the current curriculum and syllabi framework, which is far less complex than what is proposed, constitutes a challenge.

Whilst some entities express general agreement with the introduction of LAs in the Secondary years others suggest that the LA approach should be limited to the Primary level of education. Disagreement is expressed with a 2+3 model regarding choice of Option subjects at the Secondary level of education given that, it is argued, this is what is in place today and which has not resulted in the desired level of education outcomes and outputs.
The MUT raises questions about, for example, the inquiry-based learning approach in Core Science given that, in its opinion, there is a gap between Secondary and Post-Secondary education. Additionally it queries the extent to which content, in this regard, will be reduced.

Furthermore, the MUT asks how will subjects come together within a particular LAs as well as who will be responsible to ensure that the cross curricular themes are covered in different subjects. It adds, that a student-centred learning approach requires a complete review of current syllabi including the MATSEC examinations since the present syllabi are content biased and teachers are forced to focus more on preparing students to pass examinations rather than for student to actually learn the subject.

In this context, the entities representing persons with disabilities state that alternative means of facilitating learning should be encouraged and that the final post consultation NCF document should explain how learning will be facilitated for students with a disability.

One other issue raised is that girls and boys have different learning styles and that the draft NCF does not addressed gender matters. It is also observed that stereotyping hinders learners from fully reaching their potential and unless such issues are addressed, developing learners who are capable of sustaining their chances in the labour market will not suffice to ensure equality of opportunity nor would it be enough to ensure that individuals reach their full potential.

It is observed that no mention is made to ensuring the physical and emotional safety of students in the context of the notion that safety is a pre-condition for learning and that the absence of any reference to addressing bullying is of grave concern.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Differentiated Teaching</th>
<th>Despite the emphasis placed by the draft NCF on differentiated teaching and its importance, only a few of the stakeholders provide feedback on this principle.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A statement made is that the setting of students is a major requirement given the wide range of students’ abilities and the need to provide all students with the best entitlement to learning.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>It is also stated that given that Level Descriptors will be used for preparing and planning lessons and also for assessment, there should be guidelines that should support teachers on how to handle students with learning difficulties.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>It is recommended, that whilst differentiated methods of teaching should be implemented children learn in different ways. Thus, it is underlined, that the use of visual aids should be promoted as an important facet in facilitating the learning process and to render a lesson more interesting, as well as that numicon should be considered as an alternative method to the acquisition of numeracy.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A concern raised is whether students will sit for the same examinations at the end despite a differentiated teaching process over the educational life cycle as proposed by the draft NCF.</td>
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<td>One stakeholder expresses the concern that whilst differentiated teaching is appealing for better schooling for all, the danger exists that gifted students will fall &quot;in the crack&quot; of such an educational system - and thus, while less gifted students should be given extra attention and help, gifted students should also be given such privileges so they perform to the maximum of their potential.</td>
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Additionally, one entity underlines the in order to meet the requirements of a differentiated teaching environment the traditional systems of teaching as well as the existing support structures may no longer be viable. It recommends that for a differentiated teaching environment to be successfully implemented the NCF should be complemented by a process that will identify, plan and implement measures such as:

- the level of re-training and re-skilling that teachers require with regard to a differentiated teaching pedagogy; how this training will be carried out and when it will be carried out.

- whether a differentiated teaching pedagogy requires a smaller classroom so that the teacher is in a position to provide greater attention to the students and how will the process to move from the current size class to a smaller class size take place.

- whether a differentiated teaching pedagogy requires that the classroom teacher is supported by an assistant who will prepare in the planning, teaching and evaluation of students with a set of abilities within the mixed classroom and how will such additional support, if so required, be introduced.

**Syllabus**
The feedback is limited. One entity underlines that Malta’s education system is content intensive and that success is gauged by the number of successful subjects passed: placing pressure on parents, students and teachers – resulting in a system of education that places emphasis on rote and which stifles a student's creativity and negates a process where a student acquires analytical skills that sharpen his or her ability to question and query, to follow up, and to construct new ideas.

It is recommended that the appropriate stakeholders should at the earliest possible establish a formal process that will result in the re-structuring of the existing syllabi to ones that reflect the principles presented in the NCF to allow for the successful achievement of a learner centred learning approach.

The MUT states that the pilot Form I (Level 7) syllabi does not give teachers the freedom to monitor and adapt the content to the needs and abilities of the students. The Union further adds that a direct result of the piloted Form I (Level 7) syllabi is that creativity and the self-realisation of the Teacher is removed. Moreover, it adds that the pilot syllabi are directed towards a “standard ability student” with no consideration for gifted students or under achievers.

A concern is expressed on whether the draft NCF focuses on coverage rather than mastery - which is a matter of the syllabus versus the need of the child - given that the pilot Form I (Level 7) syllabi, it is claimed, are weighted towards quantity rather than the educational needs of the child.

One entity contends that the pilot Form I (Level 7) syllabi, which it says were implemented quickly in the 2011/12 scholastic year, should be reviewed again and that the DQSE together with the appropriate stakeholders should not undertake this important process with undue haste.

Additionally, it is stated that the Primary Schools’ syllabi are seen to be overloaded especially in Years 4, 5 and 6 and cannot be covered in stipulated time and that these syllabi need to be reviewed in order to develop the creativity of pupils as well as to cater for students’ different abilities and learning styles. It is emphasised that in the review process teachers should be involved and their expertise maximised and therefore allowing for both a top-down and bottom up approach.
It is recommended that in the development of the syllabi for the CE LA it is important that concepts and skills are taught by educators as far as possible through the use of active learning methodologies, or with the support of educators, who are trained to do so effectively. One further recommendation is that new syllabi are to be introduced for Accounts and Economics.

It is pertinent to note, that one statement made in the Children's Conference is that it is positive that the NCF results in a reduction of considerable homework demanded weekly.

### School Outings and Extra Curricular Activities

| School Outings | There is general agreement with the NCF’s emphasis on hands-on and experimental learning. It is, however, stated by some that the current policy that restricts the number of out-of-class activities that teachers can plan for their class should be revised. Teachers should be provided with the autonomy to organise such activities subject to the condition that such activity is planned and visibly integrated in their scheme of work.

Others, however, state that different Colleges and Schools should have a common schedule for structured and well-organised study visits and for programmed school outing activities to effectively support the curricular needs these should be allocated formal timetable time as well as be integrated in the evaluation and assessment framework.

It is stated that the Work Orientation Experiences organised by Secondary Schools should be underlined in the final post consultation NCF report and afforded a higher priority and should be governed by an appropriate policy framework that is supported by guidelines. The concern is expressed that given that State Schools do not organise after school activities students coming from certain difficult social backgrounds may be at a disadvantage as their parents may not be in a position to afford to pay for extra curriculum activities. It is proposed that one way of overcoming this issue is through the holding of extra curriculum activities during School hours.

Suggestions presented on the type of outings schools should organise include visits to natural habitats, visits to museums and heritage sites, farm visits and supermarket visits to understand the importance of nutrition and healthy eating together with the actual exposure / introduction / opportunities to eating varying healthy food and visits to science centres.

| Mainstreaming | The entrenchment of the principle of diversity in the NCF demonstrates a sensitivity to Malta’s changing society as it is evolving into a multi-cultural society. The draft NCF is commended for placing emphasis on diversity and respect towards and between students given that the focus on such diversity, respect and the holistic development of all learners will lead to the benefit of society as a whole.

Additionally, it is stated that the fact that the draft NCT openly espouses the principle of diversity is a clear reflection of the increased maturity of Malta’s society through the recognition that Malta’s population is increasingly becoming heterogeneous and that every individual irrespective of his or her beliefs, abilities, sex, ethnicity, etc is entitled to a quality education experience.

It is underlined that whilst much has been done over the past decades to integrity disabled persons in mainstream education it is now recognised that the concepts which have, to a large degree, worked successfully with this cohort of Malta’s population need now to be extended to other sectors of Malta’s indigenous or migrant population.
The concern is expressed by one entity about the absence in the draft NCF of any specific reference to issues that affect lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) students – and that that inequities exist in the curriculum and that the DQSE should be committed to enabling all LGBT students to see themselves reflected in the NCF through providing students with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours needed to live in a complex and diverse world by, though not limited to the following:

- Ensuring that respect for diversity and inclusion on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expressions permeate the curriculum in all subject areas.

- Ensuring that any language or behaviour that deliberately degrades, denigrates, labels, stereotypes, incites hatred, prejudice, discrimination, harassment towards students or employees on the basis of their real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identification will not be tolerated.

- Requiring schools to specifically include the prohibition of such language and behaviour in their student Codes of Conduct as well as examining and challenging homophobic and heterosexist curriculum in order to ensure inclusivity.

- Developing a process to determine whether discriminatory biases related to sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression are present in existing learning materials, programmes or practices.

- Supporting student leadership programmes that address homophobia and transphobia and developing and providing both academic and service programmes and supports in all curriculum areas to meet the needs of underachieving LGBT students facing discrimination because of their own or their family members’ sexual orientation or gender identity.

One important minority issue mentioned is the absence of discussion on masculinities and femininities from public discourse at all levels, including the education environment, which, it is stated, needs urgent attention. It is observed that gender equality should be addressed in both the formal and non-formal education process as well as in the communication between teachers and Students in order to eliminate stereotyping and discrimination.

The recommendation is presented that a gender policy is key particularly in the “patriarchal mentality which still permeates our national psyche”. The statement is now that it is now time for stakeholders to discuss and decide on whether the current model where boys are segregated from girls in the State School sector continues to hold and whether reforms are required in this regard.

The Malta Confederation of Women’s Organisations expresses concern with regard to the “missing” gender perspective in the draft NCF in contrast with the NMC. The MCWO recommends that the draft NCF is thoroughly reviewed to introduce the appropriate gender perspective in the context of the Government’s gender mainstreaming policy that has been in place since 20/6/2000 (OPM Circular No 6/00).

The issue is also raised by the PL and the AD with regard to how the NCF should act as a vehicle to secure “true equality” between boys and girls in Schools and that whilst there should be increased effort for more boys to succeed. Be that as it may the NCF should also address the reality that many boys are falling behind girls in both Primary and Secondary Schools – a view that is also shared by the MCWO.
The National Council of Women recommends that the final post consultation NCF report should present recommendations on how the education system, should encourage females to undertake career paths which are normally associated with males (IT, Engineering, Physics, Mathematics) – and, on the hand, males should undertake career paths in caring and teaching which are normally associated or tend to be linked with females.

The NCPE underlines that the strategy to reduce the early school leavers should be looked at from a gender perspective to ensure that it would stratify the different gender needs and pressures that result in a male or female student exiting formal education and / or higher education.

Special Needs  

It is stated that the draft NCF is not sufficiently explicit about what inclusion means: that is that a child with special needs is fully included and is allowed to participate in a class and thus have roles like all the other children.

Whilst it is noted that the principles and aims espoused in the draft NCF are forward looking and innovative, it is underlined that the NCF, however, does not address the limitations in the education system that impede disabled students overcome their physical and intellectual difficulties to fully participate in the education system through the provision of appropriate support frameworks that includes technology resources, human support, adaptation of the surrounding environment, etc.

The issue is raised, for example, that students with intellectual or other disabilities who do not obtain the appropriate qualifications to continue with Post-Secondary education are not being afforded alternative systems of assessment and evaluation that would otherwise allow them to continue further their education.

Thus, the principle in the draft NCF to achieve quality life-long education for everybody irrespective of his or her intellectual, social, communication competences and learning disposition will not be met. Indeed, one NGO underlines that benchmarking which, it is stated, "insists on not providing full access arrangements necessary for each child (eg. Readers) abusive".

It is, thus, underlined that the post consultation NCF document needs to discuss and propose alternative frameworks that will guide College Principals and Heads of School on this important matter as appropriate. Thus, for example, the final NCF document should present pathways on how:

- Teachers and support staff are trained to manage students with special needs and that Colleges and Schools should have regular and practical workshops on inclusion and disability issues and that children with special needs should be allowed to attend school even when the LSA is not present.

- Teachers and LSAs are encouraged to introduce approaches to learning which encourage such students to develop their potential by allowing them to explore for themselves at their own pace and not having adults finishing the work for them to save time.

- Specialised teachers are engaged to give basic literacy, numeracy and IT courses to mild to severely intellectually disabled persons like those attending Day Centres.
- Different methods are adopted so that children with special needs learn in different ways, where-in the use of visual aids becoming an important facet in facilitating the learning and to render the lesson more interesting: numicon, for example, could be considered as an alternative method to the acquisition of numeracy.

- The LSA is the key to the learning and stability of a person with special needs and, hence, the skills of LSAs are upgraded to allow them to achieve a high level of competency and professionalism.

- The importance of instilling a culture of communication and honest feedback with thrice yearly reviews between the LSA, teacher and the parent to be held during a scholastic year so that clear goals are set and progress is monitored.

- Examination papers may be adapted and tailored according to the level and ability of a disabled child reflecting the work they have been doing on the basis of approved standards.

- The teaching of a third language to children with SpLD should be taught without the use of the printed text as the main teaching resource.

- Educational programmes attended by disabled children outside school hours are acknowledged and accredited in the child’s school leaving certificate.

### Social Needs

The feedback submitted on this matter although limited is critical. It is stated that the draft NCF does not address to the degree expected, students' behaviour as a result of their social status - such as poverty which limits access to technology, lack of family care and attention which results in absenteeism, low attainment and retention rates.

It is underlined that the NCF should address the issue of discipline given that a well defined framework for practical and effective disciplinary measures together with the strengthening of the current pastoral set-up would help in the handling of difficult students and unaccepted behaviour such as bullying.

The design of a practical and effective disciplinary framework should be supported by training of teachers and support staff both in the application and interpretation of such a framework as well in how to handle difficult students and how to engage parents and support networks to help such students.

### Assessment and Evaluation

The emphasis that the draft NCF places on assessment for learning and that this should balance formal examinations is welcomed. One entity underlines that emphasis of the current education process that a student’s success is solely determined by his or her ability to pass examinations needs to be changed and recommends that:

- the examination no longer remains the sole determinate of the level of learning that a student garners during his or her formal education – but that the process of assessment is augmented by course work, project work, honing of life skills and abilities such as leadership, organisation, etc that are not from garnered from the formal education process but from extracurricular activity.
the recognition that not all students have the abilities to acquire the 'academic' aspects of the education process and that such students may have the abilities to garner 'applied' knowledge and hence the vocational subject element within the education process and the weighting that this is given in the assessment process should be reviewed.

It is further underlined that the present system of summative assessment is seen to be time consuming and taxing on the system. Thus, it is suggested that the drive towards the introduction formative assessment should be founded on adequate time allocation being provided to teachers to perform such tasks.

Whilst it is acknowledged that self-evaluation by students and the concept of student portfolios can improve the student's learning experience, concern is expressed that self-assessment is based on the assumption that learners have a high level of psychological maturity and intelligence and this could, therefore, favour above average students.

It is stated that examinations at the Primary and Secondary level of education need to assess how much the student has learnt to think and question – and thus, the assessment process should evaluate both the soft and hard skills that the student develops - and thereby shifting away from assessment based solely on subject knowledge.

Whilst there is general agreement with assessment strategy for all the three cycles of education the concern is expressed that the Benchmarking Examination that is proposed to take place at the end of Year 6 of Primary education may metamorphose into a common entrance exam. In this context it is argued that a process of adequately controlled balanced assessment from Year 4 of Primary education together with a monitored school examination would constitute a workable alternative to the proposed national Benchmarking Examination.

In Secondary education, the MATSEC Board should adopt (ideally immediately) a more flexible approach towards SEC examinations directed to allow students to sit for any examination if they feel competent to do so. Moreover, examinations should be held twice a year and thereby doing away with the re-sit system.

A common concern expressed is whether the changes proposed in the draft NCF (such as those encouraging thinking skills and acquisition of lifelong learning skills) will be reflected in the SEC examinations framework and whether the SEC syllabus will be changed to reflect the new principles and aims of the NCF.

The feedback emphasises that changes in the NCF must be reflected in the Post-Secondary and Tertiary education. It is, strongly, underlined that the changes in the principles and aims of the curriculum are seamlessly reflected in the Post-Secondary and Tertiary sectors of education to guarantee a continuum of learning across the education life cycle.

It is strongly emphasised that the NCF that is ultimately implemented must, unequivocally, be in sync with the SEC syllabus and examination framework - which demands a well defined transition and interlinking process between Secondary education and Post-Secondary as well as Tertiary education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Assurance</th>
<th>There is almost no feedback whatsoever about Quality Assurance except for the MUT which states that the proposed reviews should be carried out by personnel who have the necessary years of experience in the sector they are reviewing.</th>
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<td></td>
<td>In this regard, it adds that seniority and track record are major factors in selecting the right personnel.</td>
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Parental Involvement

There is consensus on the importance of parental involvement through all the cycles of education given that parental involvement helps the child to manage his or her evolution and growth as he or she progresses across the educational system. Moreover, it is recognised that parental involvement plays a significant effect on a child's educational achievement from an early age and as he or she moves adolescence and adulthood.

A recommendation presented is that the education authorities should development a framework that guides SMT, teachers and support staff on how to best engage parents in the education of their children as well as in the College's or School's eco-system.

The role and degree of the father's involvement is emphasised as research shows that there is a direct correlation between the quality and content of father's involvement and a child's educational development and outcome. The concern is raised that the increase in working families is increasingly limiting the interaction between the College or School and the Teacher with the parents.

It is emphasised that a social model that sees a continued increase in working families is a reality and the Colleges and Schools have to adopt a flexible approach on developing new ways of re-establishing relationships with parents. Indeed, one entity underlines that the changing society norms and behaviour demands that all the stakeholders re-think concepts of parental involvement that may have worked well in the past but no longer hold in today's society – and that all the stakeholders, including the teachers and MUT, should embark on an open discussion to identify the potential pitfalls and arising issues if change is not forthcoming and to decide and agree on what is the best appropriate environment required to address such emerging issues.

A number of other issues are raised with regard to the College or School to parents' relationship and these include, though are not limited to, the following:

- Parents must be empowered – education authorities should reflect on the need for training for parents so that they are empowered and involved in decision-making process in Schools.

- Parents have an important role in the student development and the success of the NCF – ways are to be found to encourage parents to form active partnerships with teachers and not only through Parent Teacher Associations.

- Parents should help their children to develop values such as generosity, solidarity, responsibility, and discipline – ways are to be found to involve parents in PSD lessons.

- Parents from different social backgrounds must feel that they are not discriminated and Colleges and Schools should introduce transparent policies that demonstrate to parents a College's or School's value system in this regard.

- The holding of family learning sessions which can result in a range of benefits for both parents and children including improvements in reading, writing and numeracy, greater parental confidence in helping their child at home and in their child's abilities, as well as a strengthening of relationships.
between the School and the Teacher and the parents and the child.

For example, one entity emphasises the importance of grafting measures within the day school as well as after school programmes that allow for parental involvement. Examples mentioned include in-class parental involvement through seminars and writing activities held for children and parents; writing clinics for parents whose children are in project schools to discuss their children’s progress with regard to writing and how parents can best support their children.

- The holding of education lectures targeted at parents - for example health education delivered to parents which can result in developing healthy families which should enhance the outcomes of the efforts being made directly with the student in the School setting.

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<tr>
<th>Local Community Involvement</th>
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<tr>
<td>Almost no feedback is submitted on the involvement of the local community in education. While the NCF ought to recognise the value added nature of entities, it is stated that more partnership agreements with entities are necessary to find ways to reduce duplication and to leverage the experience of entities working in the various sectors.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Students Participation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Almost no feedback is submitted about the importance of involving students other than one entity stating that more needs to be done to address the issue of “the student’s voice” as an essential component of the educational process.</td>
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It is, thus, recommended that students should, through Student Councils, be involved in the monitoring of the implementation of the new NCF and in providing ongoing feedback.

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<tr>
<th>Support Structures and Capacity</th>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher Roles and Responsibilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>An important issue raised in the feedback submitted is that the revised role of the Primary Science PrT will call for a delicate balance between delegation and control. This is believed to be a result that PrTs, should the NCF be implemented, have more time to dedicate to undertake lateral tasks such as Science familiarisation activities while also keeping track of what is going on in individual classes in terms of curricular issues and pedagogy.</td>
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The organisation of Science Educators feels that that the existent group of Science PrTs needs to be given the opportunity to further their studies in their area of specialisation – the establishment of a Diploma Course in Primary Science as proposed in NMC would offer such an opportunity.

In this context, the MUT states that PrT are currently providing a good scientific experience to Primary School students and their role should not be reduced to become “advisors” to Primary School teachers. The Union also states that PrTs ought to be given the autonomy to teach students rather than advise CTs as is proposed in NCF and that they should remain in charge of the class during the delivery of their particular subjects as they are specialists in that area.

The Union underlines that the proposal to change working conditions of PrTs to act as support teachers is not acceptable while it notes that the reduction of 15 minutes in peripatetic time will certainly affect the present provision.

Another entity, on the other hand, emphasises the need for clear terms of reference to be articulated to distinguish between the role of a Subject PrT and a Cross-curricular Themes Support teachers (such as EkoSkola teachers).
The concern is also raised on whether the implementation of the NCF will be supported by appropriate capacity building measures given that there may be learners who may need extra assistance.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facilities and Support Structures and Services</th>
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<tr>
<td>A general concern elicited from the feedback is that inquiry-based and mixed-ability learning require adequate resources which a number of Colleges and Schools do not have (for example science laboratories and apparatus to cater for group work).</td>
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It is underlined that unless the Government supports Colleges and Schools to have in place the appropriate support services and infrastructure then the absence of such resources will constitute an obstacle to the successful realisation of the principles and aims of the draft NCF.

The feedback further underlines that support services and infrastructure that the MEDE provides to Colleges - such as e-Learning, professional development programmes, etc - should also be made available to Church and Independent schools so that the principle of entitlement espoused in the draft NCF is achieved across the three education sectors.

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<tr>
<th>Text-Books</th>
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<tr>
<td>The feedback on this matter is limited. The concern is expressed that the approach towards a differentiated teaching environment and a cross curricular approach has to be supported by appropriate textbooks, workbooks, audio-books, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Children in Classroom</th>
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<td>It is to be noted that the feedback on this matter is limited. Where this matter is discussed unanimous agreement is expressed that the mixed-ability teaching approach requires smaller classes - the presence of a smaller number of students in each class would allow a Teacher to provide more individual attention to his or her students.</td>
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<th>Timetable</th>
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<td>The discussion on the timetables proposed by the NCF generated substantial feedback - although the actual discussion itself stems from a small number of entities. This feedback ranges from general comments made and issues raised, to more specific suggestions for timetable setting.</td>
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One recommendation presented by is that social partners need to discuss the possibility of extending the scholastic year as well as the number of hours that a child spends in School.

A particular statement presented is that the timetable should not be set by NCF. Rather, it is argued, a NCF should only be responsible for the determination of the minimum hours for a scholastic year. It is further stated that SMT together with teachers should be reasonably competent to design time-tables.

The flexibility and autonomy to choose from among different timetable models is not viewed, by some, favourably. The argument is put forward that a decentralised and autonomous approach by Colleges and Schools to the design of timetables will result in the lowering of standards. A "pragmatic" recommendation that is proposed is that the NCF should establish what constitutes mandatory and option subjects and content in all syllabi and the number of hours that are to be allocated, with benchmarking and assessments to be set on the mandatory subjects and content part of the syllabi.

The MUT addresses the issue of the proposed timetables from various aspects. It states that rigid timetables defeat the purpose of a cross-curricular approach to education. It underlines that timetable models should be based on the total number of school hours included in last Collective Agreement between Government and the Union. It adds, that the timetables as proposed demand a
longer day of 6.5 hours which is not acceptable unacceptable. Also deemed as unacceptable is the recommendation in the draft NCF that teachers are to provide pastoral care and supervision duties during mid-morning breaks.

Moreover, the MUT is of the considered opinion that one timetable should be eventually implemented across State schools; underlining disagreement with an education system that allows Colleges to establish different timetable models that best reflect their respective local characteristics. Be that as it may, the Union adds that its preference is that the final post consultation NCF document should establish the weekly time allocation for the various subjects and not detailed timetables.

Furthermore, the Union adds that the proposed timetable options for Primary Years, especially with reference to PSD, are ambiguous – leading to the raising of issues such as how is time going to be shared with other subjects like Social Studies; how do HhE LA and CE LA topics overlap; how much time will be allocated to PSD; are there plans to start teaching PSD in Years 1, 2 and 3, etc.

Additionally it underlines that Years 1 and 2 timetables and range of activities should be similar to that established for the Early Years in order to facilitate transition. The introduction in the Secondary level of education of a 6 day timetable is not seen as feasible as this model is seen to lead to additional stress and confusion especially amongst students who share homes between two parents – students will generally find it hard to adapt to such a rotating system.

One other entity notes that out of the 3 proposed timetable models for Primary schools, only Model C has a School Based Choice slot allotted. It suggests that all proposed timetable models should feature the inclusion of a School Based Choice slot – this space would facilitate teacher to teacher interactions as well as student committee meetings.

A gender organisation suggests that the flexibility in the timetable that the NCF is proposing could also include non-discrimination, equality and stereotyping training.

Concerns are also raised by an entity on the allocation of time for the LAs with questions raised on whether the approximately 800 teaching / learning hours or 32 weeks exclude SDP and PD sessions, public / national holidays, prize / celebration days etc and how will the variation in time allocation models per Learning Area affect the designing of the Primary curriculum (syllabus).

One other entity, while agreeing with the 1.5 hours allowed for teacher planning time, presented the following specific recommendations with regard to the design of a Primary time-table, wherein in any particular week:

(i) Years 1 and 2 pupils should have 5 hours of Mathematics; 3.75 hours (45m x 5 times) English and Maltese lessons; 3 hours (45m x 4 times) HE; 2 hours (30m x 4 times) RE; 1.5 hours (45m x 2) Science and Technology; 1.5 hours CGHE and Arts Education; 30m Handwriting (Maltese and English), Storytelling, Reading session and Talk-about session; and 1 hour School-based choice (in total 25 hours);

(ii) Years 3 to 6 should have 5 hours of Mathematics and English each; 4 hours of Maltese lessons; 3.25 hours (39m x 5 times) HE; 2 hours (30m x 4 times) RE, 2 hours (40m x 3 times) CGHE; 1.75 hours Science and Technology; 1.5 hours Arts Education, and 30m for L3 (in totals 25 hours).
### 90m Curriculum Development

No feedback is presented on this matter other than one entity which queries whether this is realistic to implement, especially in small schools.

### Professional Development

The feedback presented on professional development is consistent with the feedback discussed under 'Teacher Support'. There is unanimous agreement that the draft NCF can only be successfully realised and implemented if teachers are supported by appropriate and sustained professional development.

In this context, it is underlined that teachers need to be trained and re-skilled and to be given adequate tools and resources to be able to adopt and adept to the proposed changes presented in the draft NCF.

It is observed, for instance, that should the change in roles of PrT Science teachers be implemented, extensive training would be required so that Primary School teachers would be able to teach Science.

Emphasis is placed on the need for a detailed training programme for current teachers to be in a position to teach the new curriculum taking into account the cross curricular approach.

As an example of such development, it is suggested that short exchange programmes for teachers for their personal development could be piloted in language fields which would also expose students to foreign languages and cultures.

### Financing

A concern expressed by entities representing students attending Church and Independent Schools, is whether such Church and Independent Schools have the necessary funds to finance the implementation of changes proposed in the draft NCF.

They are of the considered opinion that children attending Church and Independent Schools will be disadvantaged compared to students attending non-Church Schools.

### Management of Change

One entity emphasises that this process of national consultation is of fundamental importance as it ensures that policy making fuses top-down (the draft NCF) thinking with bottom-up thinking (consultation and active participation) and in doing so allowing for the weaving of the best policy approach as the experiences, thoughts, concerns of the different stakeholders – not least the teachers, parents and the students themselves – is not only listened to but incorporated in the policy making process. It underlines that the authorities responsible for the final design of the NCF should adopt a sincere approach to the bottom-up policy process: that where relevant and as appropriate bottom-up recommendations are incorporated in the final design of the NCF.

The feedback is consistent that the strategy to implement the NCF should be gradual and phased and should be embarked upon following the attainment of consensus amongst all stakeholders. Moreover, the strategy for reform should not be etched in stone but should be continuously monitored to reflect realities, changing circumstances, lessons learn, etc. Feedback includes but is not limited to the following:

- The NCF does not provide an analysis of what has been achieved, the state of play, and how the recommendations will improve the state of play as well as the resulting outcomes.
The starting point with regard to the design of a NCF should be an honest and detailed analysis of the current state of play of the education system: what is working; what is not working; why, etc. This analysis should be carried out within the broader EU and global context and how Malta’s education fares in comparison to other jurisdictions and how such jurisdictions are evolving their respective education systems.

The MUT expresses its disappointment that unlike previous work on the national curriculum carried out in the past, it was this time not invited to be represented on the drafting committee.

It is reported that the consultation process, albeit broad was, in reality, short and limited for such a major change to be studied in depth. It is contended by some that educators are concerned that decisions on the NCF have been taken and that the consultation process will have limited impact on such decisions. This particular concern stems as a result of the launch of the pilot Form I (Level 7) students in September 2011 while the process of consultations was still underway.

The reform process should be under continuous evaluation and assessment and that actual outcomes are monitored and lessons learnt applied.

The stakeholders – that is the teachers, parents, students and SMTs – are to be continuously and actively involved in this ongoing review: they are the actors and players who have firsthand knowledge of how the NCF will behave between concept and reality and hence their input is invaluable. Indeed, the Council for Teaching Professions underlines that whilst it considers the draft “NCF a great achievement that relates to the social changes that we are experiencing” it cautions that unless it is embraced by most teachers then the “whole exercise will be futile”.

The conceptual design of the NCF cannot be distinct from the politics of implementation: that in establishing the goals and outputs that will stem from the NCF there must be a supporting strategy that establishes the fundamental building blocks that need to be introduced or improved or sustained as the case may be in order to ensure that the concepts set out in the NCF are, ultimately, realisable.

The tempo of change should be given careful study and consideration so that there is no unnecessary stress and reform fatigue on the stakeholders involved.

The process of implementation has to be supported with the appropriate resources: human, technology, policy, finance, etc or otherwise successful realisation may be compromised.

It is best practice to introduce certain changes by means of pilot projects rather than embarking on a nation-wide reform without understanding the potential arising consequences.

It is the believed by some entities that the main challenge posed by the draft NCF lies in the actual implementation of the various proposals and they recommend that the final post consultation NCF document should address the various implementation challenges brought up in the consultation process given that the success of the new NCF requires commitment from all stakeholders involved.
Analysis of Consultation Feedback from Parents and Individuals to the Draft National Curriculum Framework

Chapter 07
The analysis presented in this Chapter is based on a segmentation analysis of the original documents submitted to the DQSE by Parents and Individuals. The segmentation analysis document is presented as Appendix VII to this report.

The following presents a high level overview of the feedback presented by parents and individuals to the draft NCF. The number of responses presented by this cohort of stakeholders is small and given the strong presence of personal emphasis in the responses submitted, the analysis is primary based on quoting the feedback received.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Discussion</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>General Principles</strong></td>
<td>The feedback presents a mixed response to the draft NCF. As can be seen from references quoted the feedback ranges from strong praise to strong criticism.</td>
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- "We feel that the NCF documents present a very wholesome and positive picture of what Malta’s education framework can achieve and we agree wholeheartedly with the spirit of it, as well as with many of the details of its implementation. In particular, we welcome the underlying tenets that a curriculum should foster the holistic development of children, and not just cater for academic needs."

- "The idea of lifelong learning and more focus on sciences, more practical experience and more self development including spirituality is very promising and very good thinking."

- "As a head of school with extensive experience, I am convinced that the changes elicited in the NCF and the wide consultation that has taken place and is still ongoing, will result in greater respect and dignity towards the teaching profession. I am certain that this respect and dignity will encourage the same educators to impart on their students the same spirit of change and enthusiasm that are embraced in the NCF."

The following presents feedback stated on the principles of the draft NCF amongst those parents and individuals who expressed themselves critically:

- "After listening to certain people like Professor Serracino Inglott, M.U.T and other people in the education section voicing their concerns, we are sincerely of the opinion that most of the proposals will not help our son and other students to achieve better quality in education."

- "I totally disagree with the new curriculum."

- "I also feel that the main shift in this proposed NCF is for the teacher / school to provide everything for the student. There is no mention of the parents as primary educators and care givers!"
Autonomy

In the main, the feedback stems from educators as well as parents who have children in Church Schools express the concern that the NCF might threaten the autonomy of their schools, particularly that of their ethos and the ability to set their own syllabi and timetables. Thus, for example:

- "We preferred our son to attend a church school – during the past years we have seen total dedication from the school where the students progress is given priority and we would appreciate if such schools would be allowed space to adopt their own policies and continue developing their unique identities. This can only be done if they reserve their autonomy."

- "I am writing here as I am concerned regarding the NCF - our son attends a church school and it seems they cannot enhance and practice their own policies to continue to develop their own unique identities."

- "The proposed timetables as well as the as the new Form 1 frameworks for various subjects simply make the teacher feel tied down to doing what is written done on the paper rigidly. There is no room for the teacher’s creativity and personality! What are we contributing to our students’ personalities and characters? Not all schools’ needs are the same and hence different schools should be given the space to make their own timetables (as we have done so far)."

- "Such decisions should not be included in a curriculum framework - they belong at school level. Homework (like timetables and text books) is the responsibility of the Head (and the staff). Do respect the creativity, ethos and leadership of individual schools."

### Aims of Education

#### Life Long Learning

The feedback presented on lifelong learning as an aim of education is limited to one such statement:

- "The idea of lifelong learning and more focus on sciences, more practical experience and more self development including spirituality is very promising and very good thinking."

#### Employability

The feedback presented on the employability as an aim of education is limited to two statement statements:

- "I must say that it is quite positive. I am pleased with the aims that were listed. In today’s world good certificates are important but being able to communicate, respect those around you, self-confidence, ethics and morality are fundamental."

- "I do not agree ... that one way to test the NCF is by seeing how it affects us as an employable society. I see this as an attempt to find a measuring tool to validate the whole process, but surely it is not the right way to measure the success or otherwise of an educational venture?"
Learning Areas

Focus on Early Years and Primary Education

The feedback presented on the Early Year is limited and includes the following statements:

- "Happy to note new aspects like the emphasis on early years along with smooth transition from kindergarten years up to secondary years given importance in the NCF."

- "I am of the opinion that children should be taught how to deal with accidents from their early years. They should be provided with a first aid course and taught how to react in such circumstances."\(^{10}\)

- "There is an apparent gap between Kinder and Year 1. The students attending Kinder 1 last year never wrote letters or numbers in class. Now, in Year 1 they are already being given short sentences to spell and read when they are supposed to be learning how to write letters and numbers. Whilst in Kinder they wrote nothing they are now suddenly expected to read and spell in class. I believe that they should be taught very basic literacy in Kinder, because teachers in year 1 cannot be expected to perform miracles. One moment students are playing and in the next expected to read in Maltese and soon in English!"\(^{10}\)

Languages

Amongst the feedback presented there is consensus on the importance of a national language policy. Statements presented include:

- "We do not feel that the issue of a National language policy (or rather the lack of it) is addressed adequately in the NCF. Whilst we appreciate that the formulation of a National language policy is not the responsibility of the NCF, we feel, that given the failure by the relevant authorities themselves to address this pivotal issue, more could have been achieved if the NCF had presented a stronger case for the development of a language policy in education ... We also do not feel that Malta is at the stage where each school can be left to decide its own language policy, as experience has shown that some schools have not acted on the 1999 recommendations to this effect."

- "We also have considerable concern that not enough study and emphasis has been given in the NCF regarding bilingualism."

Maltese

Amongst the feedback presented is the following:

- "I am alarmed to find my 6 year old coming home with Maltese home-work and school magazine with the words KOWT, HELOW, JOTT etc. I am sure there are Maltese words for these. I looked up the word KOWT on the internet and it is related to the terrorist group of the TALIBAN. Why are we teaching children HELOW and not INSELLIMLEK? FELUKA is a Maltese word for a yacht. Taking foreign words and misspelling them is confusing children. When the children are then asked to write these words in their English lesson, they write them the Maltese way. Children need to distinguish between different language and this method of teaching is not helping. I am sure as my child gets older more of these words will be given to him, when I am sure for a little bit more effort an actual Maltese word can be found. If absolutely no Maltese word exists I favour what was taught in my day. We used to write a composition in Maltese for example and if we had to write a word in English, we would write it in inverted commas."\(^{10}\)

\(^{10}\) The position made during the Conference on the National Curriculum Framework that First Aid should feature in all cycles of education is acknowledged.
"I am proposing that the Maltese Sec examination will be divided into two separate exams. Just as it is in the English examination. Students who are targeting of studying languages at a Post Sec education will obviously need the two exams others who like my daughter targeting for engineering course finds no reason for studying Maltese literature. In fact lots of students and parents agree with this thought."

Amongst the feedback presented is the following:

- "Is it wise to propose English literature as an option subject in the higher classes when paradoxically, the NCF also wants to enhance arts, culture and literature?"

- "Proficiency in English and Maltese is a must, yet some teachers are not confident in teaching in the language relative to their subject. You cannot teach science, mathematics, physics, accounts etc in Maltese and then expect a student to sit for an exam and express himself in English. The Maltese and English proficiency exams are not doing enough for the B.Ed students graduating from our university."

Amongst the feedback presented is the following:

- "Since we are living in a globalised environment and we need to interact with foreigners on a daily basis, I would like to suggest that the foreign language is introduced in primary schools in grade 3 and not later."

- "We agree that multilingualism is important and beneficial, but in practice, as parents, we are more concerned with effective and articulate communication rather than the number of languages our children appear to know. We feel that if, in the early and primary years, our children are equipped with the skills for acquiring language and communicating effectively, then later on, they can learn any number of languages they choose. Our educational system may well support multilingualism, but we do not feel confident as yet, that it nurtures effective communication in different languages, and that is much more important.

Among the feedback presented is the following:

- "In my opinion, the new core subject: “Science” is not the great innovation that it is purports to be! I consider myself equipped with very strong evidence in support of my position, because I happen myself to be one of the very few students who studied “General Science” during my secondary school years. ... Up to this day, I believe that my choice of General Science (at the time, it had been offered as an option) had been erroneous. I still regret having chosen the subject, which has helped me very little in life. My teaching experience in the field of environmental studies, then can yield one important truth, namely, that students tend to get confused by the complexity and vastness of the subject and they end up discouraged by the idea of having to study three subjects combined into one. Indeed students who do not choose any of science subjects as their option subjects should be made to choose any one science subject (form physical, materials or life studies) rather than the core science subject!"

- "Will the proposed changes in the NCF be backed up by the MATSEC board? Physics, Chemistry and Biology, having different names and core science being taught throughout the secondary cycle, to mention a few; what are the implications of all this?"
As parents we need to be assured that the proposed changes in the science subjects are fully endorsed by the University of Malta. We have been informed that in the past, certain decisions in a number of subjects (such as accounts, economics, and IT) were not supported by the university of Malta, with the consequence that students had to find a more stressful environment in sixth form or take private lessons.

Health Education

Among the feedback presented is the following:

- "We are concerned that all areas proposed for inclusion under “Health education” will lead to the soft option of keeping children contained and controlled while they are instructed in how to eat properly, for example, at the expense of more physical activity. We agree fully that education should reflect and reinforce the idea that health includes a wide range of issues including balanced nutrition, as well as mental and physical activity among other things. However, we would like to be reassured that talking and instructing will not be favoured over action and activity."

- "I must also affirm that health education is a repetitive subject in the new curriculum, because it is already included under the syllabi of Social Studies as well as PHSE. I consider it shameful that so many lessons have been lavished on this new subject at junior as well as senior levels, while sacrificing lessons and livelihoods centred upon environmental studies."

Among the feedback presented is the following:

- "In the proposed NCF timetables, PSD is only included under health education. Thus PSD is not assigned enough hours to be able to contribute in all the areas which are of main interest to it."

- "My concerns are mainly that although it is clear from the PSD syllabus that it covers numerous topics which fall under Health, Citizenship and Career education, in the proposed NCF timetables, PSD is only included under health education. Thus PSD is not assigned enough hours to be able to contribute in all the areas which are of main interest to it."

- "PSD is a subject that has always been undermined by the fact that it lacks official certification and the fact that it imparts important values is always underestimated. Despite the emphasis placed by the NCF on ‘well being’ and ‘personal and social growth’ this is not reflected in the time allocated to PSD in the proposed timetables."

Physical Education

There is one statement presented which recommends that with the "introduction of 30 minutes PE session every day, I think it is worth considering phasing out the school uniform and adopt the idea of a PE Kit for the whole school week for years 1 till 6 ...".

Citizenship Education (Including Geography, History and Social Studies)

One individual raised a number of issues with regard to CE, Geography, History and Social Studies. Concerns raised include but are not limited to the following:

- "The way in which citizenship education, as a learning area, is made to include not only social studies, history, geography and environmental studies but also "aspects from Personal, Social and Health Education and Home Economics" is also very misleading. The inter-disciplinary approach should not be dragged too far, in such a way that the identity of a subject becomes blurred. So in my opinion, the cited words must be omitted."
- "The indication is that, under the new curriculum framework, certain subjects such as Environmental Studies (meaning History, Geography and Social Studies) are being outright degraded, while others with no academic value whatsoever (such as health education) are being exalted beyond all reasonable proportions".

- "I have skimmed through the new curriculum framework, giving particular attention to pages 59-61 and appendix II of book 3. These pages incorporate the various timetables and timetable models for the junior and senior years of secondary education. As I analysed them in detail, I was appalled to discover the negative way in which the document looks upon environmental studies subjects, namely history, geography and social studies."

| Religion Education | Among the feedback presented is the following:
|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------
|                   | - "There is much talk of autonomy but there is also talk of 'ethics classes' rather than religious education. I teach at a church school and choose such a school for my children, precisely for the religious ethos of these schools. Space and autonomy should be given to church schools to enhance their religious ethos further."
|                   | - "There is much talk of autonomy but there is also talk of 'ethics classes' rather than religious education. I teach at a church school and choose such a school for my children, precisely for the religious ethos of these schools. Space and autonomy should be given to church schools to enhance their religious ethos further."

| Arts Education     | Among the feedback presented is the following:
|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------
|                   | - "In my school I think it would be better if we should have drama at least twice a week."
|                   | - "Music and the arts need to be taken on board more seriously – college of music and the arts promised by the minister needs to be created sooner rather than later."
|                   | - "In my opinion, the D&T, HhE & Arts education for years 9 to 11 should not be available as alternating modules through the academic year: they should feature as another separate fully fledged option stream."

| Other Subjects     | Among the feedback presented is the following:
|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------
| Vocational Subjects | - "Maybe other subjects can be added, such as health and well-being (which would interest future doctors and beauticians). Of course, I must make it clear that the present proposal of a fully fledged stream of non-academic subjects most likely to interest future professionals presupposes that the VET option has been removed from the NCF. ... The VET proposed in the NCF purports to generate more flexibility. In truth however, the VET stream is distorting the true nature of vocational education. Vocational Education is to be defined as Post-Secondary training in a particular sector of industry. What the NCF is doing is distort the true nature of vocational training and degrade it to training for practicing a craft. Maltese secondary schools are being turned into craft schools by virtue of the NCF innovation."
"Hopefully NCF will promote the learning of life skills for those students in secondary especially those with moderate to profound learning difficulties, who we know for fact will not sit for Sec exams. The academic curriculum is totally unsuited for them. With life skills these children would have a chance of being independent and not a burden on society. This will need to include community training."

Sexual Education Feedback is limited to one respondent, who amongst other matters, remarks that "I am very perplexed and concerned with the new national curriculum. As you are aware the long awaited (and still not finalised) national sexual health policy contains as its most fundamental and essential element a review of sex education in schools. It is a fact that in many cases sex education is sporadic, subject to individual “preference” and all too often, too little, too late. The new curriculum mentions the world sexual health once and that is it. No detail whatsoever ... I’m sure you will agree with me we couldn’t even begin to address the problems of teenage pregnancies, condom non-use, increasing STIs etc without a vigorous modern sex education programme based on peer reviewed research, rather than on individual’s idiosyncrasies."

Environment Studies Feedback is limited to one respondent who amongst other matters states "As I read the NCF, I could not help wondering why some teachers, especially teachers of Environment Science subjects, are being treated like second-grade educators. What is ironic is that this attitude of discrimination against us is being committed at a time when so many new Social Studies publications are being placed on the local market!"

Cross Curricular Themes Feedback is limited and includes:
- "Welcomes inclusion of ESD as a cross curricular theme."
- "Recommends ongoing literary, artistic, crafts competitions for primary and secondary school students and the introduction of awards such as student of the year for example for talent or creativity."

Effective Learning and Teaching Environment Feedback is limited and includes:
- "We welcome with great enthusiasm the efforts by the NCF to emphasise the importance of a more balanced environment which is much more sensitive to the real needs of all children, we are happy to see that this also means time allocated to more physical activity and arts education."
- "The kind of learning that will be taking place in the classroom seems positive."
"The modular setting for certain subjects, such as the arts education, technology education and health education is not adequately explained in the document. The term ‘modular’ does not always mean to convey the way in which one subject may be found to alternate with another during the same academic year. Indeed, I further believe that the modular approach should as far as possible be avoided in any curriculum, because what it entails is a very superficial teaching of the subjects concerned. Superficial teaching is not conducive to true learning for the simple reason that as its name implies, it can never qualify as quality teaching."

Differentiated Teaching

Among the limited feedback presented the feedback is mixed. Positive feedback is as follows:

- "I do hope however that students who may not be as bright as others would really be given the support required. I have heard of cases where the teacher gave up on so called ‘hopeless students’. I am aware that teaching such students may not be so easy. I suggest that if for example a student is not so good in let's say Science, instead of letting him mess up his situation they should suggest studying in another subject leading to an area that he likes."

- "As regards students needing more individual attention and help to improve their education we fully agree and give our full support with hope that these students will benefit and they will be on the same level as students who might find it easier to understand certain subjects. But we also hope that in this process hard working students who study hard to get good results will not be impeded in their ways to achieve their goals."

Negative feedback, however, reflects the following sentiments:

- "I'm really sorry to say that I do not agree at all with the idea of having children mixed up. This is because unfortunately it works the other way round. Let's name them good and less good. The first one is more likely to be influenced by the second one instead of the opposite. We are already experiencing this because last year a particular student was in my child's class and with his/her behaviour and bad attitude kept interrupting the whole class including the teacher who struggled to do a proper lesson. Is this right??? Certainly not. I'm very sorry but it is putting a strain on teachers and students who want to learn."

- "Not all schools have the luxury of enough LSAs to help the teacher out in large classes of 29 students. How then are we supposed to cater for all the differentiation in learning and inclusion which is supposed to take place? I am a teacher, but above all, I am a human being with a family of my own. As it is, I already take home too much from my job: lesson planning, corrections and preparation of resources as well as setting of exam papers. Inclusion and setting, therefore are fancy words and in reality a teacher cannot honestly cater for ALL needs of individual students in a class. Mixed ability teaching does not work. Our brighter students are being left by the wayside because we are catering and focusing too much on the weak students who cannot cope."

- "I see the issue of having classes of mixed abilities as problematic. One cannot compare church schools with those of the state. Teachers are against this measure, because as everyone knows it's a double edged sword, where those who wish to strive ahead cannot and where those who cannot cope won't keep up and fall further behind."
## Syllabus
The feedback, limited as it is, suggests that a draft NCF should result in reduced syllabi and content:

- "With the new framework, I hope this will reduce significantly. There is no time for consolidation, love for learning and even the children that are ‘typical’ cannot enjoy life – let alone those who have some difficulty. Also more time can be spent developing other skills such as emotional literacy, communication etc. Less homework and less demands – curriculum change needs to take place top down. We are expecting too much (material heavily loaded on memory and study rather than reflective thinking and reasoning) at sec and SEC level."

- "I believe that students are being overloaded and that the school time is becoming too short for the work load that is being fostered on the students. A lot of class work that used to take place at school is now being carried out at home with the parents with the consequence that children are becoming increasingly tired and have little time for rest. Apart from this not all parents have the luxury to spend all that time with their children on homework, and the time the children spend with the family as a family is too short. I see the difference between winter and summer where in the latter children seem to be more calm and happy. The syllabus is too vast to be covered in the limited time that children spend at schools, and this will become more so with other lessons such as PSD, music etc."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Outings</th>
<th>Extra Curricular Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The feedback, limited as it is, suggests that a critical attitude to school outings and extracurricular activities:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| - "Longer breaks / more extracurricular activities: this should not be rule of thumb for all schools. As parents, my husband and I want to be able to take our children ourselves to their after school sports activities etc. we do not want a longer day so that others take care of our children whilst I 'baby sit' other people’s children. Once again parents should be the main educators of their children."
| - "I am really concerned about the new curriculum, in that I think that it is not fair for children in the secondary years to have too many extracurricular activities especially in Form 4 and Form 5, as required by the new school leaving certificate... Nowadays, they have to do all O’ Levels in Form 5 (which I do not agree to either – as I think that one should have the option to do O’ Levels during Form 4 as well), with a much higher standard than our days. Malta is having a problem with young teenagers with depression and I think this is the problem – they have too much stress during their secondary education, let alone have to do other extra curriculum activities during this period of great study."
| - "I hope that certain activities shall be done in the evenings. Today all parents nearly carry out a full or part time job. Many offices end at 5.00 pm. Others even later so one must understand that not everybody’s job finishes at 2.30pm. one cannot keep taking days off each time there is an activity, so I hope that schools would take this into consideration."
| - "Recommends that extracurricular activities can be easily organised within school premises – during after school hours and even evenings. Eg: Museum lessons, Sports activities, Music, Drama, Crafts etc – this would bring more life to schools in the form of edutainment."
Special Needs

Although the feedback is limited it recommends the need for the strengthening of resources directed towards students with special needs.

- "B. Ed students need more input on how to cope with an inclusive classroom. Hence here inter-professional collaboration comes into play. Students should have input from professionals such as OTs, SLPs, PTs, SEBD specialists – surely this can take through liaison of the faculty of education with that of health services."

- "The education of students with physical disabilities in the secondary schools needs to be looked at closely. A lot of resources are needed. Are we truly inclusive by having a child in the class, all the time to the detriment of the physical and mental development of such children? If we cannot cater for the needs of such children then we should rethink and come up with alternative modes of practice. ... Far more students than are statemented need support especially if they have learning difficulties. May I recommend here the student services and add that in my experience all students with significant disabilities are seen in good time by the statementing board – it is the students with learning difficulties that are accumulating and left behind. With the present curriculum still loaded on memory work unfortunately these cannot succeed without support and adaptations in classes."

- "As parents of an autistic child, we recommend that in the benchmarking in year 6, autistic children are given all the support possible like grid charts, multiplication charts – even if necessary a calculator. This is not so that these children get high marks but as to encourage them since they tend to easily lose attention. At the end of the day both the teachers and us parents would know where these kids really ability stands. We have suggested this because in the booklet you have circulated nothing is mentioned in this regard."

Social Needs

As is shown here under the feedback is limited and is directed towards pressures that teachers face in managing children with challenging behaviour and the reality that children who come from social backgrounds need support structures to help them overcome arising difficulties.

- "I very often come across teachers literally at their wits end trying to cope with students who have very challenging behaviour. Teachers need to be supported. They need more practical strategies on how to cope with challenging behaviour in the classroom. I am aware that professional help is available but we need people who have firsthand experience in the classroom; some strategies work min theory and on a one to one basis but not in a classroom. Maybe some CPD can be organised nationally with experts from abroad who can offer practical classroom strategies."

- "We cannot exclude the fact that more children are coming to school from very difficult and unstable home environments that although schools provide better teaching and more fun ways of learning, unfortunately some children have to face other distractions within their family situations which will be carried into the classrooms too. So such children will have less concentration span to cope with others and develop their abilities - teachers today, have to have ongoing training because apart of the syllabus and the rest of the curriculum, they have to face situations as mentioned above. I know that today there is the service of LSAs in the classroom but this service may be limited as well compared to the number of applicants and actual needs, not forgetting at times, the limitations in resources."
**Assessment and Evaluation**

Feedback drew mixed response on the suggested reforms to reduce the emphasis on examinations:

- "I hope that all form of assessment will be school based and not based on homework or projects done at home, since the latter most of the time reflects parents' competence and not the student's real performance."

- "I think that O' Levels' standard should be reduced. I am concerned of greater stress and more exams. I am feeling the pressure of the Benchmarking, as my child is in Grade 5 in a church school and before children in church schools had no other external examinations."

- "I agree with assessing the child all year through and give constant feedback to both child and parents, with more focus on the child developments and abilities so to be able to support further on what the child prefers to do in life and what she/he is able to cope with rather than focusing only on exams."

- "I just want to point out that there seems to be no lines/guidelines that tackle students that are failures. Do students with low results/marking/assessment go on to the seventh transitional year or is there a system for these students which can help them within this same framework – because it seems up to particular schools that have to take care of this."

- "Underpinning the NCF provisions that deal with assessment, there is a frightening reluctance to resort to fully fledged, summative assessment by means of formal examination. Indeed the word 'examinations' is deliberately avoided and seems to be taboo in the minds of the NCF creators. On the other hand coursework, the need to record non-formal learning in the SLC and in Profile, peer reviews, portfolios, self-evaluation techniques, on-going assessment in the context of innovative teaching methods - these are only some of the new methods of assessment that are being given a boost by the NCF. I consider this to be of grave consequence. Indeed, I believe that if such soft assessment methods are allowed to prevail over the traditional methods, the entire educational system will be doomed to failure! ..They try to justify a lowering of educational standards by assuming the workplace does not really need big brains and far reaching theoretical knowledge after all!"

One other feedback presented is that the placement of extra curriculum activities on a School Leaving Certificate will be unfair to families who may not afford sending their children to such activities given that non State schools hold such activities against payment:

- "I would like to draw your attention to the extracurricular subjects listed on the school leaving certificate. I think this is somehow only to the privileged ones since sending your children for example to music lessons in piano, violin, drama, ballet etc cost money, or even scouting and lots of more. Did anyone consider people with low income how can these afford of doing so. An example of this is being done in our church school. All the extracurricular subjects are being done after school hours and at a cost, and believe me not a minimal one. In my case I find it very unfair for people like myself having my daughter finding herself in a situation where her class mates talk about after school sessions. Unfortunately this situation hurts a lot. Therefore kindly consider enforcing after school extracurricular in the public area government school where a means test be introduced."
Parental and Community Involvement

Feedback was mixed with regards to greater involvement of parents in school activities but agreed on the need for further outreach to parents to provide them with more information and in certain instances also support:

- "I am against the proposal to involve parents further in school activities. It is the teachers who belong in schools and not parents – it is they after all who have teaching experience. The fact that in most cases both parents work also makes this difficult if not impossible."

- "Extracurricular activities such as field trips / cultural visits / exhibitions could also include parents - this would foster environment of collaboration and sense of community involving students, parents and teachers."

- "I think those parents who cannot involve themselves in school councils or parent teacher associations, have a right to know what has been discussed. There should be a school web site or electronic link where parents can share their opinions even if they cannot be presented."

- "In my opinion schools have to find ways and means to reach parents (being both parents or single parents) more, especially those who have difficulties within family environments, those who have more difficult situations with their children such as in parenting and even those who make no contact at all with the school. Therefore I see that there should be more social work support in schools and more guidance teachers / counselors and maybe support groups for parents in the evenings to reach both fathers and mothers and nowadays even support to grandparents who are very much hands on with child minding etc."

Support Structures and Capacity

Feedback is all from parents and it is unanimous in the claim that the state should aid Church in providing the necessary resources:

- "Realities in church schools are different to those in state schools. An example of this is the lack of laptops for teachers in church schools whilst teachers in state schools are equipped with such tools. Interactive white boards have to be bought by and paid for by church schools whereas they are provided by the government in state schools. Where is the fairness and equality in all this? Why do our children have to be at a disadvantage? Church schools are not even given VAT exemption on these resources!"

- "We find the lack of resources truly unfair four our children. We pay taxes and our children aren't given the same resources like that of state schools. We are talking of children that all will be making a contribution to the future of this country."
"The document speaks of ‘resources’ i.e. smart boards, laptops for teachers, robots and other expensive tools used by students and teachers alike. Presumably these resources allocated to state schools are publicly funded. It seems that at present church schools do not enjoy these same privileges. Presently, church schools have to purchase their own resources by funding them from “donations” or fund raising activities. Moreover church schools do not enjoy a VAT exempt status for these educational materials. I believe that this is a discrimination against the parents of children who are attending church schools and therefore the matter should be addressed as a high priority item.”

"Resources should be for the church and independent schools too if this is a national curriculum which all are expected to take on board.”

"Resources – this is an excellent proposal, provided that the government supplies the church schools with these resources as doing and rightly so to the state schools – after all these resources are funded from the people’s taxes and it’s only fair that all students benefit from these resources. From the donations that church schools receive from parents they obviously cannot afford to do what is proposed – after all there must be no discrimination between children.”

Feedback highlighted fears that unless classes are reduced in size it will be very difficult to implement new concepts such as differentiated teaching:

- “To cater for diversity this needs to be kept low. 26 students with 1/3 having additional needs is too much.”

- “I was expecting to find in the NCF a greater importance on the need to reduce the amount of children in class. This is the essence of everything we have started since the elimination of the Junior Lyceum exams – and without this being addressed I expect nothing but total failure in the implementation of the proposals in the NCF – primarily those concerned with ‘multilevel teaching’ were a teacher needs to address students with different capabilities according to their needs. Smaller classes are today possible; with a declining birth rate, we have less children in schools and I am certain smaller classes will find approval from teachers, parents and students alike.”

An overriding response especially by parents and students was that school hours should not be lengthened. A particular correspondent suggested that if it was being contemplated to lengthen school hours, this should be done on a voluntary basis whilst another correspondent also highlighted concern that schools start too late and current opening hours are detrimental to working parents:

- "We do not feel that the emphasis on a more balanced education requires extended school hours. While the proposed changes in timetables suggest that these present ‘family-friendly’ measures, we would prefer to see the commitment to holistic education realised in practice, before our children are required to spend longer hours in school.”
It is being mentioned regularly that the current school hours are not adequate and need to be extended. I personally think they are long enough and they are exactly what our children need so that they can still have enough time to play and to spend with their parents. "If there are indeed plans to extend school hours, then I suggest that this is done on a voluntary basis – ie – school hours remain as they are and parents who want to leave their children longer at school would be able to do so – basically along the same lines of Klabb 3-16. I am suggesting this for both primary and secondary students"

"If the idea of shorter breaks, longer days and more possibilities of subjects are going to be considered then children have to have their free time after school in order to do other personal interests not having more handwritten homework to do at home. They need their time to play too."

"Our school time should totally be the same."

"As a working mother, I am also finding great difficulty with the school opening hours. 8.30 AM is too late. Where else do you find an office or work place where workers report at 8.30AM? Children are ready to begin proper lessons before 9AM. An hour later they go out for their first break. I believe school should start at 8AM and finish at 3PM and this way the teachers might have more time available to undertake class work where students can ask their teachers about any difficulties they may encounter."

"There is mentioned that the breaks and lessons will be longer. Timetables were not mentioned, but I consider this to be a bad idea if this means that school will finish after 2.30 p.m. After this time will be too tiring for children, considering there is homework and study to be done, children are now attending sports in the afternoon at the college and 2 times muzew or other youth group they might attend later on, learning an instrument and its study too etc etc. children need free time and some time they can spend with the family especially where the mother, like in my case, works most Saturdays and during the summer as well. One must consider work-life balance."

In the feedback, discussed, there is specific critique directed towards limited allotted to particular subjects - mainly to Geography, History, Social Studies, Environment Sciences, PSD and Sexual Education.
08.1 Introduction

All teaching professionals from the State, Church and Independent Schools sectors were invited to participate in an extensive questionnaire having both quantitative- and qualitative-type questions. The questionnaire was distributed among teaching staff in September, 2011 at the beginning of the school year, and had to be completed by mid-October. The present report gives an overview of the results of the quantitative questions.

The sample population towards whom the questionnaire is directed is shown in Table 4 below.

### Table 4: Total number of education practitioners as at November, 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State Schools Sector</th>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>Assistant Head of School</th>
<th>Head of Department</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Kindergarten Assistant</th>
<th>LSA</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>809</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>645</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1655</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
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<td>109</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>1897</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>583</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2718</td>
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<tr>
<td>Upper Secondary</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>251</strong></td>
<td><strong>89</strong></td>
<td><strong>2941</strong></td>
<td><strong>464</strong></td>
<td><strong>1376</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th>Church Schools Sector</th>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>Assistant Head of School</th>
<th>Head of Department</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Kindergarten Assistant</th>
<th>LSA</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
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<td>47</td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
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<td>1018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Upper Secondary</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>69</strong></td>
<td><strong>21</strong></td>
<td><strong>1106</strong></td>
<td><strong>47</strong></td>
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<table>
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<th>Independent Schools Sector</th>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>Assistant Head of School</th>
<th>Head of Department</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Kindergarten Assistant</th>
<th>LSA</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
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<td>Secondary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Upper Secondary</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>35</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>415</strong></td>
<td><strong>102</strong></td>
<td><strong>59</strong></td>
<td><strong>0</strong></td>
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As can be seen from Table 4, 68.2% of teaching staff are employed in State schools, 23.4% give a service in Church schools while the Independent schools’ teaching staff accounts for 8.4% of the total.

Participants’ background information was collected in the first part of the questionnaire. Participants were asked to indicate their current teaching grade and the educational sector and cycle in which they performed their duties.

### Table 5: Returned, useable questionnaires: by Educational Cycle and by Teaching Grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cycle not indicated</th>
<th>Early Years Cycle</th>
<th>Primary Cycle</th>
<th>Secondary Cycle</th>
<th>Upper Secondary Cycle</th>
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<td>63</td>
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<td>274</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Head of School</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of Department</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
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<td>218</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
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<td>775</td>
<td>1429</td>
<td>1387</td>
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</table>
An overall response rate to the questionnaire is 48.04% was reached - a total of 3,672 completed and submitted usable questionnaires by the set deadline. The number of respondents, by educational cycle and by teaching grade, is shown in Table 5 above.

Table 6 gives a breakdown of the response rate by Grade. The highest response rate by Grade is among Heads of School where a 55.24% response rate is registered.

Table 7 presents an analysis of the response rate of each category of education practitioners according to the education cycle they pertain to. It is observed that 9 out of the 11 LSAs performing duties at upper secondary level completed the questionnaire thus giving the highest response rate of 81.82% of any category of any education cycle. These are followed by teachers of the Early Years and Primary cycles where 993 out of a possible 1,372 teachers returned the questionnaire, representing 72.38% of this grade at these cycles.

It is to be noted that 2,204 out of the 3,343 education practitioners performing duties in the Early Years and Primary cycles responded to the questionnaire, representing a share of 65.92%. This percentage is approximately twice that of the secondary cycle which amounts to 34.68% of all grades in the three sectors. Nearly 9% of staff performing duties in the upper secondary cycle responded to the questionnaire. A general trend observed is that the response rate got lower across all the teaching grades the higher the education cycle one performed duties in, with the exception of LSAs in the upper secondary cycle.

A total of 54 participants did not indicate the education level where they are employed while a total of 274 respondents did not indicate their grade.

Table 7: Response rate as a percentage of each Grade by education cycle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Level not indicated</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
<th>Number of Questionnaire Participants</th>
<th>Total Staff by Grade</th>
<th>Percentage Response Rate</th>
<th>Total Staff by Grade</th>
<th>Percentage Response Rate</th>
<th>Total Staff by Grade</th>
<th>Percentage Response Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head of School</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>67.82%</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>36.54%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Head of School</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>59.00%</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>23.29%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of Department</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>44.12%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>993</td>
<td>1372</td>
<td>72.38%</td>
<td>863</td>
<td>2823</td>
<td>30.57%</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten Assistant</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>589</td>
<td>51.78%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Support Assistant</td>
<td>660</td>
<td>1088</td>
<td>60.66%</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>852</td>
<td>29.93%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others (INCO)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade not indicated</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>66.93%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2204</td>
<td>3343</td>
<td>65.93%</td>
<td>1387</td>
<td>3999</td>
<td>34.68%</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>301</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
08.2 Questionnaire feedback

08.2.1 Introduction
The curriculum questionnaire was designed to include a mix of quantitative - and qualitative - type of questions. This report analyses only of quantitative related questions.

The questionnaire was made up of a number of general items that are of relevance across the different education cycles together with other questions that pertain to and target particular cycles.

In most cases respondents were asked to state whether they strongly disagree, disagree, agree or strongly agree with statements concerning the curriculum and its implementation.

The areas covered by the quantitative-type of questions are:

- General Principles
- Aims of Education
- Learning Areas
- Effective Learning and Teaching
- Assessment and Evaluation
- Parental and Community Involvement
- Support Structures
- Key Ideas emanating from the NCF.

08.2.2 General Principles
An analysis of the responses provided to the question asking how much does one agree or disagree with the general principles underlying the draft NCF shows that there is widespread and overwhelming consensus with these six principles among all teaching grades.

08.2.3 Entitlement
While 96.57% of all respondents coming from the three educational sectors state that they either agree or strongly agree with the fundamental premise that each child is entitled to a quality education experience and with the way that is proposed for this to come about only 1.17% of respondents indicate that they disagree or strongly disagreed with this proposal. On the other hand 2.26% of respondents chose not to answer this question. Heads of School are the teaching grade most in agreement with this principle with 79.75% of them stating that they strongly agree with what is proposed.

08.2.4 Diversity
The Heads of School cohorts represents the category of education practitioners with the largest and firmest support for the ideas promoted in the draft NCF on this principle. 79.75% of all Heads of School state that they strongly agree with the underlying premise. Respondents declaring that they agree or strongly agree with the principle of diversity amount to 95.67% of all those who answered this question, representing 96.45% of State Schools respondents, 96.47% of respondents coming from the Independent Schools sector and 96.88% of respondents hailing from Church Schools. In contrast 2.51% of all respondents stated that they either disagree or strongly disagree with the recommendations, while a further 67 persons (or 1.62%) did not provide an answer to this question.

08.2.5 Continuum of Achievement
95.34% of all respondents coming from the three educational sectors either agree or strongly agree with the principle that the draft NCF is to be based on a developmental approach to education. While 2.5% of all teachers state that they either disagree or strongly disagree with this principle, all Heads of School assert that they either strongly agree or agree that this principle should be one of the basic ideas of the NCF. Those who did not give an answer to this question represent 2.56% of all respondents.
08.2.6 Learner-centred Learning

94.53% of the respondents agree or strongly agree with the statement that the NCF should promote the development of a learner-centred approach to learning and teaching. Conversely 3.3% said that they either disagree or strongly disagree, while 2.18% did not answer the question. The 94.53% aggregate ranged from a high of 99.34% of Assistant Heads of School who replied that they strongly agree or agree to a relative low 93.82% of teachers who are in agreement.

08.2.7 Quality Assurance

Close to 92% of respondents declare that they strongly agree or agree with the principle that a quality education for all can be realised through a system of ongoing self-evaluation, monitoring and review within schools complemented by an external review system. On the other hand 5.26% of respondents state that they either strongly disagree or disagree with these measures while another 2.75% chose not to reply to this question.

When analysing replies by teaching category it results that while nearly 71% and 61% of Heads of School and Assistant Heads of School maintain that they strongly agree with this principle, the percentage of education practitioners of a similar opinion is somewhat lower. In fact 47% of Heads of Department, close to 39% of teachers and LSAs and 35% of KGAs said that they strongly agree with the principle of quality assurance.

08.2.8 Teacher Support

94.12% of respondents said that they are strongly in agreement with or agree with the initiatives being set out to effectively and efficiently utilise available resources. 3.62% of respondents indicate that they either strongly disagree or disagree with the proposed measures facilitating teacher support.

08.3 Aims of Education

The NCF sets out broad educational aims that, in conformity with the general principles facilitate all children in developing into confident and successful LLLs who are fully engaged in the community of the world around them.

08.3.1 Learners who are capable of successfully developing their full potential as lifelong learners

Close to 95% of respondents state that they agreed to a large or moderate extent with this statement and with the proposed NCF measures. When analysing by teaching grade it results that nearly 72% of Assistant Heads of School agreed to a large extent with these proposals while at the lower end nearly 55% of KGAs and LSAs respectively agree. A total of nearly 3% of respondents assert that they either agree to a small extent or not at all with these proposals while close to a further 2% did not answer this question.

It is to be noted that while nearly 89% of the teaching grades of Upper Secondary institutions agree to a large extent with these proposals, only 50% of Secondary schools education practitioners agree to a large extent to the way this aim is proposed to be attained by the NCF. On the other hand approximately 61.3% and 62% of teaching grades in the Early Years and Primary Years respectively agreed to a large extent with the initiatives proposed by the NCF.

08.3.2 Learners who are capable of sustaining their chances in the world of work

Educational practitioners who agreed amounted to 91.29% of all respondents, while a higher percentage (of 6.07%) state that they do not agree at all or only to a small extent with the draft NCF. 64.71% of Heads of Department agree to a large extent while, on the other hand, only close to 41% of KGAs are of the same opinion.

While the number of education practitioners who are negative to the proposed NCF initiatives is very small (0.32%), 18.5% of the teaching grades performing duties in the Upper Secondary sector state that they only agree to a small extent. Conversely, 3.1%, 4.5% and 8.5% of education practitioners in the Early Years, Primary Years and Secondary Years cycles are of the same opinion. The percentage of those choosing not to answer this question is 2.64% of all respondents.
08.3.3 Learners who are engaged citizens in constantly changing local, regional and global realities.

86.87% of respondents state that they either agree (to a large extent (44.34%) or to a moderate extent (42.54%)) with the NCF proposals. 10.35% indicate that they either only agree to a small extent (9.91%) or not at all (0.44%). When these results are analysed by the education cycle provenance it results that education practitioners that most agreed with the proposed initiatives are those of the Primary Years cycle, where 50.5% state that they agree to a large extent with the proposals.

On the other hand, 39% of the education grades of the Secondary Years cycle express the same view. These are preceded by educators from the Early Years cycle and those of Upper Secondary schools with 42.5% and 48% respectively stating that they agreed to a large extent. A total of 102 respondents, or 2.78%, did not provide feedback to this question.

08.4 Learning Areas

One of the principal ideas that the NCF proposes is that contrary to current practice, where the primary and secondary curricula are partitioned into single, distinct subjects that tend to present learners with a fragmented view of knowledge, a merger of various subjects into learning areas is to be put in place so as to present a body of more relevant, purposeful and connected knowledge and skills.

08.4.1 Early Years competences – Well-being

92.13% of the respondents state that they respectively agree (26.88%) or strongly agree (65.25%) with the proposals for this LA, including a total of 97.68% of all education practitioners performing duties in the Early Years’ cycle whilst 91.86% of respondents were of that opinion. On the other hand 1.01% of respondents indicate that they are not in agreement with, or strongly not in agreement with, the NCF proposals while 7.14% of participants did not reply.

08.4.2 Early Years competences – Social competences

98.2% of Early Years’ practitioners state that they either strongly agree or agree with the recommendations proposed, while 91.86% of respondents coming from all the different education cycles were of that opinion. On the other hand 1.01% of respondents indicate that they are not in agreement with, or strongly not in agreement with, the NCF proposals while 7.14% of participants did not reply.

08.4.3 Early Years competences – Communicative competences

Approximately 91% of respondents are in agreement or in strong agreement with the stated draft NCF proposals for imparting communicative competences to Early Years’ children, including nearly 65% of all education practitioners of the Early and Primary years who indicate that they strongly agree with the stated aims and the methods suggested in the NCF. In contrast 1.39% of participants state that they disagree with the proposed methods and 0.16% said that they strongly disagree with the NCF in this area. A total of 276 persons (or 7.52%) did not respond.

08.4.4 Early Years competences – Learning dispositions.

56.86% and 33.52% of respondents respectively express either strongly agreement or agreement with the NCF proposals (for a total of 90.39%, or 97.59% of those who chose to give an answer to this question). The percentage of education practitioners expressing themselves as being strongly in agreement with the NCF proposals is consistent across the three different education sectors with replies ranging between 57% and 59.5% overall.

7.38% of participants opted not to state their views regarding this competence and how it is being proposed to be imparted to children by the NCF, another 2.23% stated that they either not agree or strongly not agree with the NCF’s outlook. Conversely,

08.4.5 Early Years competences – Intellectual competences

A total of 97.46% of those education practitioners who express an opinion about this question are either in strong agreement (57.65%) or in agreement (39.81%) that it is important to develop the intellectual competences of children in Early Years’ children. On the other hand 2.54% of respondents specify that they either do not agree (2.3%) or strongly do not agree (0.24%) with the
stated aim and implementation methods. 283 (or 7.71% of participants) chose not to answer this question.

08.4.6 Primary and Secondary Years competences – Languages
The low responses by educators is interpreted to arise from the realisation that educators responded to questions relating to their respective area of teaching (for example, Primary cycle of education for teachers in Primary schools).

Of those who do provide an answer a high percentage state that they either strongly agree or agree with the NCF proposals in this regard. The percentages of those falling within the above-mentioned criteria were 96.7% and 97.8% respectively for replies provided to the Primary and the Secondary cycles’ questions. Those stating that they strongly disagree with the proposals amounted to approximately 0.5% of respondents in each case.

08.4.7 Primary and Secondary Years competences – Mathematics
The low responses by educators is interpreted to arise from the realisation that educators responded to questions relating to their respective area of teaching (for example, Primary cycle of education for teachers in Primary schools).

Thus, once the non-replies are removed, it emerges that there is agreement with the mathematical competences proposed and the measures to achieve them. Indeed 98.64% and 98.36% of respondents state that they either strongly agree or agree with the proposed measures for the Primary and Secondary years respectively. Teachers stating that they strongly agree with the NCF proposals for Primary and Secondary years amounted to 62.6% and 55% respectively of all teachers providing an answer.

08.4.8 Primary and Secondary Years competences – Science
The proposals presented in the draft NCF regarding the science competences with regard to the Primary and the Secondary years’ learners are met with near to total approval by the education practitioners who answered these two questions (with non-responders being nearly 10.3% and 22.1% of the total sample for the Primary and Secondary years’ questions respectively). 96.63% and 96.92% of respondents stated that they either agree or strongly agree with the proposals presented in the NCF, with approximately 50% of the respondents saying that they strongly agree with the initiatives being set out for both the Primary and Secondary cycles. On the other hand, approximately 2.6% of respondents are not in agreement with the draft NCF proposals while a further 0.6% and 0.5% are strongly against the Primary and the Secondary years’ programmes as proposed in the NCF.

08.4.9 Primary and Secondary Years competences – Religious Education
Education practitioners across the three education sectors state that they strongly agree with the proposed NCF measures regarding the religious education programme and / or the ethics education programme for the Primary years - which represented a share of 42.2% of participants. A further 40.39% said that they agree with the draft NCF on this matter. 5.72% and 0.98% of participants indicated that they respectively either disagree or strongly disagree with the measures. A further 10.89% of participants chose not to reply.

When analysing by educational sector it results that 7.35%, 6.7% and 1.18% of all educators coming from State, Church and Independent schools respectively declare that they either disagree or strongly disagree with the proposed measures for religious education for the Primary years.

When examining for replies to the same question but directed to the Secondary years it results that 6.25%, 5.45% and 1.18% of educators coming from the State, Church and Independent schools sectors respectively maintain that they disagree or strongly disagree with the NCF recommendations - representing an average 5.96% of all educators taking part in the questionnaire. 71.7% of respondents from the three educational sectors report that they either agree or strongly agreed with the proposed measures.

An overall 22.33% of participants did not reply to this question.
While 10.7% of all participants did not reply to the question regarding the Primary years, this proportion went up to 22.69% when the issue concerned the Secondary years’ curriculum. Participants choosing not to reply to the Primary years’ question amounted to 8.63%, 17.53% and 15.29% of State, Church and Independent schools’ staff respectively, while 22.4%, 22.86% and 30.59% of State, Church and Independent school’s staff respectively did not answer the Secondary years’ question.

The respondents’ replies being in strong agreement or in agreement with the NCF proposals for citizenship education for both the Primary and the Secondary years are remarkably similar to each other. In fact 95.24% and 95.88% of respondents agreed or strongly agree to the Primary and the Secondary years’ NCF proposals respectively. Of these, education practitioners are strongly in agreement with the Primary and the Secondary years’ combination of disciplines making up CE amount to 51.91% and 59.74% respectively.

Once non-replies (totaling 10.54% and 22.49% of all participants for the Primary and Secondary years’ questions respectively) are removed, favourable replies stand at 95.59% and 97.58% of replies respectively for the Primary years’ and Secondary years’ questions. Additionally those being strongly in favour of the proposed technology education measures in the Primary and Secondary years amount to 55.56% and 64.13% respectively.

When examining by teaching grade it emerges that the categories that are predominantly in favour of the NCF recommendations are Assistant Heads of School, Heads of School, Heads of Department and Teachers in that order for the Primary years and Heads of School, Heads of Department, Assistant Heads of School and Teachers for the Secondary years’ curriculum. Education practitioners stating that they are strongly against the proposed measures totaled 0.7% and 0.42% of all respondents for the Primary and Secondary years respectively.

The recommendations proposed in the NCF for the formulation of the Arts Education LA for both the Primary and Secondary years are met with approval. Indeed, 57.08% and 58.5% of all respondents state that they strongly agree with the proposed formulation of the Primary and Secondary years’ curriculum respectively. Another 40.43% and 38.87% declare that they agree with the proposed measures for a total approval rate of 97.51% and 97.37% for the Primary and Secondary years’ proposals respectively. Teachers stating that they strongly agree with the measures proposed for the Primary years and the Secondary years amount to 58% and 59.55% of all teachers who answered these questions.

On the other hand education practitioners stating that they strongly disagree with the Primary years’ curriculum formulation stand at 0.12% of all respondents while 0.44% of respondents were of the same opinion when they consider the NCF recommendation for the Secondary years’ curriculum.

The NCF proposals for HhE LA are met with approval from those education practitioners who chose to answer the questions with regard to the Primary and the Secondary years. 65.43% of all respondents were in strong agreement with the proposals for the primary years which, together with the 32.53% stating that they agree with the proposals, gave a total of 97.96% in favour. Education practitioners stating that they are strongly against the measures amount to 0.56% of the sample.

On the other hand education practitioners stating that they strongly agree or agree with the proposed measures with the Secondary years’ HhE LA amount to 67.57% and 29.66% respectively for a total of 97.23% of all respondents. Those strongly disagreeing with the proposals represent 0.49% of all respondents.

The NCF proposes a curriculum for the Secondary Years based on the 2 + 3 model whereby all learners have practically a common curriculum for the first two years of the Secondary cycle (the only difference being the choice of the second foreign language) and then choosing two areas of
specialisation for the last three years of secondary school. Participants were asked to state if they agree or not with this arrangement.

The non-response rate for this question represented 25.82% of all participants with these coming mainly from the Early Years (46.06% of all early years’ practitioners did not give an answer) and from the Primary years (33.52%). When only those persons answering this question are taken into consideration then it emerges that 25.73% and 68.17% respectively strongly agree or agree with the NCF proposals: resulting in a total of 93.91%. This level of agreement with the proposed measures is represented throughout the three educational sectors of State, Church and Independent schools.

08.4.15 Secondary Years – Range of subjects on offer
Education practitioners were asked to state to what degree they agree with the range of subjects being proposed in the draft NCF to be offered to students starting Year 8.

A large proportion of education practitioners from both the Early Years and the Primary cycles do not respond to this question. Indeed 47.1% and 34% respectively of the various teaching grades at these levels chose not to give an answer for a total non-response rate of 26.36% across all the teaching grades.

Those in agreement with the range of subjects offered represent 41.53% of all participants while the percentage of participants that is strongly in agreement with the range of subjects of offer stood at 28.96%. At the other end of the scale only 0.46% of participants indicate that they are strongly in disagreement with the NCF recommendation.

08.4.16 Cross-curricular Themes – eLearning
90.6% of all participants declare that they strongly agree (57.9%) or agree (32.7%) with this cross-curricular theme and the teaching and learning processes to be implemented in both Primary and Secondary classes. 1.63% of participants are either in disagreement or in strong disagreement with the proposed measures. A total of 7.76% of all participants did not give a reply to this question.

08.4.17 Cross-curricular Themes – Education for Sustainable Development.
91.53% of all participating teachers replied that they strongly agree or agree to this cross-curricular theme specifically. Approximately 8.5% of all participants (made up of 9.5%, 4% and 20% of all participants coming from the State, Church and Independent schools sectors respectively) did not answer this question. Of those who did give answer, 89.13% (or 97.47% if non responses are removed) indicate that they either strongly agree or agree that this cross-curricular theme should be included in the curriculum as a recommendation in the NCF.

08.4.18 Cross-curricular Themes – Intercultural Education
If non-respondents to this question, who amount to 8.55% of all participants (and nearly 30% of KGAs), are not taken into consideration, the remaining respondents are primarily either in agreement or strongly in agreement with the recommendation.

Indeed, approximately 97% of respondents state that they strongly agree or agree with the recommendation in this regard. Of the remaining 3% those expressing strong disagreement with this idea amounted to 0.12% of respondents. The range of those showing strong agreement is evenly spread throughout the different teaching grades and ranges from 43.4% of LSAs to 59.5% of Heads of School, with the exception being KGAs where a relatively low 26.6% stated that they strongly agree with these proposals.

08.4.19 Cross-curricular Themes – Education for Entrepreneurship
The percentage of participants stating their agreement or strong agreement with this cross-curricular theme is high - reaching 95.8% of all respondents. The combined percentage of education practitioners who express disagreement or strong disagreement with the proposed education for entrepreneurship theme stands at 4.2% of respondents (with 0.18% saying they strongly disagree with this initiative). A total 8.55% of all participants did not reply to this question.
08.4.20 Cross-curricular Themes – Creativity and Innovation

A total of 90.6% of all participants declared that they strongly agree (57.9%) or agree (32.7%) with this cross-curricular theme and the teaching and learning processes to be implemented in both primary and secondary classes. 1.63% of participants are either in disagreement or in strong disagreement with the proposed measures. A total of 7.76% of all participants decided not to give a reply to this question.

08.5 Effective Learning and Teaching

08.5.1 Learning Outcomes for the Early Years

The percentage of non-respondents for all of the five questions present in this part of the Questionnaire is similar to each other and ranged from 10.48% to 10.76% of all participants. These figures represented approximately 4.3% and 16% of education practitioners coming from the Primary years and the Secondary years respectively, which constitute the cycles with the greatest percentage of non-respondents.

The level of education practitioners’ agreement with the five learning outcomes presented in the draft NCF with regard to the Early Years is strong, as well as remarkably analogous for all questions. Indeed, those respondents who either strongly agree or agree with the five learning outcomes for the Early Years constitute 98.5% of respondents for each of the NCF proposals. At the other end of the scale it results that the participants stating that they either strongly disagree or disagree with the NCF recommendations for the Early Years amount to approximately 1.5% of participants coming from State schools, 0.8% of staff from Church schools and no one from the Independent sector.

08.5.2 Timetable models for the Primary Years

The low responses by educators is interpreted to arise from the realisation that educators responded to questions relating to their respective area of teaching (for example, Secondary school educators did not answer this question as it did not directly affect them).

The timetable model with which there was most strong agreement is Model A with 22.69% of all respondents and another 51.45% asserting that they agree with how this timetable is formulated (for a total of 74.14%). On the other hand, education practitioners that were in favour of timetable Model B and Model C represented 69.05% and 68.78% of respondents respectively (with teaching staff being strongly in agreement amounting to 19.42% and 17.96% respectively).

Those education practitioners indicating that they strongly disagree with the timetables as proposed in the draft NCF total 6.07% of respondents for Model A, 6.65% for Model B and 7.12% for Model C. When examining for these timetable models by education sector it emerges that the timetable that got the most favourable responses is timetable Model A. 74.56% of respondents from State schools, 72.3% from Church schools and 75.46% from the Independent sector state that they either strongly agree or agree with the proposed Model A.

When considering timetable Model B, education practitioners from the State sector who stated their choice of this timetable amounted to 69.45%, while 66.8% of church school and 75% of independent school respondents were of the same opinion.

On the other hand timetable Model C was the timetable least favoured by respondents from all education sectors with 69.62%, 66.14% and 61.54% of respondents respectively from State, Church and Independent schools stating that they either strongly agreed or agreed to this proposed timetable.

08.5.3 Timetable models for the Primary Years – Other formats.

When education practitioners are asked whether they would prefer some other timetable instead of the three models that proposed in the draft NCF, 57.24% of all participants state that they would propose the formulation of another different timetable while 14.03% assert by their reply that they would prefer one of the proposed timetables. A further 28.73% of participants declined from giving an answer to this question.
08.5.4 Timetable models for the Junior Secondary Years

All five questions in this part of the Questionnaire are characterised by substantial non-response rates ranging from 40.63% to 45.72% of all participants. In each case the highest non-response rates are reported from the Early Years cycle (approximately 68% of all teaching grades) and the Primary Years cycle (with a non-response rate hovering approximately the 53% mark). Approximately 15% of Secondary years’ education practitioners did not express an opinion about any of the five options - slightly higher than the 13% average non-response rate for teaching staff in the Upper Secondary cycle.

The percentage of respondents stating that they are in strong agreement with the proposed timetables is relatively low in all cases and ranges from a high of 21.74% for CFT 1 to a low 11.59% for CFT 4. Conversely, the timetable models that receive the most negative responses are CFT 4, with 22.18% of respondents stating that they strongly disagree with the proposal, and CFT 5, with 23.23% of respondents expressing strong disagreement.

When considering together responses indicating that education practitioners are either in strong agreement with or in agreement with the proposed timetable models the following rank order is established:

| Table 8: Timetable models for the Junior Secondary Years |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly agree |
| CFT 1 | 9.40% | 14.22% | 54.63% | 21.74% |
| 23.62% | 76.38% |
| CFT 3 | 9.67% | 20.09% | 52.86% | 17.37% |
| 29.77% | 70.23% |
| CFT 2 | 8.87% | 21.30% | 55.02% | 14.81% |
| 30.17% | 69.83% |
| CFT 4 | 22.18% | 28.75% | 37.48% | 11.59% |
| 50.93% | 49.07% |
| CFT 5 | 23.23% | 29.15% | 35.73% | 11.89% |
| 52.38% | 47.62% |

When the different education sectors are examined separately from each other, the rank order is somewhat changed as is shown hereunder (with the percentage of respondents stating that they either strongly agree or agree with the proposed timetables in brackets):

State schools: CFT 1 (76.53%); CFT 3 (71.10%); CFT 2 (71.03%); CFT 5 (51.93%); CFT 4 (51.07%).
Church schools: CFT 1 (75.83%); CFT 3 (66.81%); CFT 2 (64.71%); CFT 4 (38.72%); CFT 5 (33.12%).
Independent schools: CFT 2 (82.05%); CFT 1 (76.32%); CFT 3 (75.68%); CFT 4 (52.78%); CFT 5 (44.74%).

08.5.5 Timetable models for the Senior Secondary Years

Once again a high non-response rate is present for each of the five questions in this part of the Questionnaire. Approximately, 68% and 54% of teaching staff from the Early Years’ and the Primary years’ cycles respectively did not respond. When examined by teaching grade it results that approximately 50% of both Heads of School and Assistant Heads of School respectively, together with 37%, 78% and 45% respectively of teachers, KGA’s and LSAs did not respond.

When all the returned responses are analysed it results that timetable models CFT 1 and 2 are the ones that receive positive feedback with CFT 2 slightly edging out CFT 1 as the most favourite option. The table below provides a breakdown of each option’s degree of agreement or otherwise:

| Table 9: Timetable models for the Senior Secondary Years |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly agree |

This rank order, however, does not exactly reflect the preferences of teaching from the different education sectors. The following are the options selected for by the teaching staff from the different education sector:

State schools: CFT 2 (77.39%); CFT 1 (76.61%); CFT 3 (69.57%); CFT 4 (55.98%); CFT 5 (53.79%).

Church schools: CFT 1 (71.24%); CFT 2 (71.02%); CFT 3 (66.74%); CFT 4 (40.77%); CFT 5 (36.56%).

Independent schools: CFT 2 (78.38%); CFT 1 (74.36%); CFT 3 (73.68%); CFT 4 (58.97%); CFT 5 (52.63%).

08.6 Assessment and Evaluation

08.6.1 Assessment and Learning

The response rate for the three assessment-related questions in this part of the questionnaire ranges from 81.73% of all participants for the Secondary years to 89.52% for the proposals for the Early Years. In all the three questions the highest non-response rate by teaching category is always that of KGAs. This ranges from an average of 44% for the last two questions to 12% for the question on assessment for the Early Years. Other high non-response rates are registered by Assistant Heads of School (21%), teachers (15.2%) and both Heads of School and LSAs (close to 16.5% for each teaching grade) when providing feedback to the Secondary years’ assessment proposals.

The recommendations in the draft NCF generated broad consensus from education practitioners. Respondents state that they either strongly agree or agree with the proposals amount to 90.20%, 96.27% and 95.53% respectively for the Early Years’, the Primary years’ and the Secondary years’ visions as set out in the NCF.

When analysing responses by education sector it results that the proposals with the lowest percentage of respondents being in agreement with them are always those concerning the Early Years. Indeed, respondents stating either their strong agreement or agreement with the NCF’s assessment vision for the Early Years represented 90.82%, 87.86% and 89.33% of respondents coming from the State, the Church and the Independent schools sectors respectively. Conversely, the proposals for the Primary years met with the highest approval from all sectors when 96.52%, 94.92% and 100% of respondents from the State, the Church and the Independent schools sectors expressed their on these proposals.

08.6.2 Evaluation – Quality Assurance Mechanisms

The response rate for these four questions in this part of the Questionnaire stood at 92.93% - with the largest non-participating teaching category being that of KGAs with an average non-response rate of 13.56%.

When analysing for the level of education practitioners’ agreement or strong agreement with the evaluation mechanisms proposed in the draft NCF it results that the highest approval rating, at a total of 94.59% of all respondents, is given to the implementation of school development plans as envisage in the NCF. 54.23% of respondents assert that they strongly agree with these measures and only 5.41% of respondents state that they either disagree or strongly disagree with school development plans.
It is evident when studying Table 10 that an evaluative tool such as SDPs that education practitioners are today familiar with is more readily acceptable than other less familiar quality assurance mechanisms. When comparing the level of disagreement with the various mechanisms one notices that while only 0.84% of respondents report that they are strongly in disagreement with the SPDs disagreement increases by more than eleven times with regard to external reviews. This result is repeated at the other end of the scale: while respondents declare that they strongly agree with the implementation of external reviews represent 18.78% of all respondents, this level of agreement increases nearly to 300% with regards to SDPs.

Heads of School, Assistant Heads of School and teachers show a strong support for SDPs. 67%, 62.5% and 47% of all participating Heads of School, Assistant Heads of School and teachers respectively, the corresponding level of support for external reviews as marked by the same teaching grades amount to 31.6%, 30.3% and 13.5% of all participating Heads of School, Assistant Heads of School and teachers respectively.

The strong degree of agreement with the concept of SDPs as evaluative mechanisms can be taken to mean that education practitioners are much more comfortable with those mechanisms that are controlled by the Schools themselves and where audits are carried out ‘in house’ by each School. On the other hand educators are wary of external reviews though it has repeatedly been pointed out that the scope of external reviews has much to do with providing support than with acting as a normative mechanism.

### Table 10: Quality Assurance Mechanisms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Development Plans</td>
<td>0.84%</td>
<td>4.57%</td>
<td>40.36%</td>
<td>54.23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td>5.41%</td>
<td>9.24%</td>
<td>51.29%</td>
<td>37.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Management and Professional Development Plans</td>
<td>11.21%</td>
<td>88.79%</td>
<td>5.46%</td>
<td>10.87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External reviews</td>
<td>16.33%</td>
<td>83.67%</td>
<td>9.74%</td>
<td>20.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30.43%</td>
<td>69.57%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Heads of School, Assistant Heads of School and teachers show a strong support for SDPs. 67%, 62.5% and 47% of all participating Heads of School, Assistant Heads of School and teachers respectively, the corresponding level of support for external reviews as marked by the same teaching grades amount to 31.6%, 30.3% and 13.5% of all participating Heads of School, Assistant Heads of School and teachers respectively.

The strong degree of agreement with the concept of SDPs as evaluative mechanisms can be taken to mean that education practitioners are much more comfortable with those mechanisms that are controlled by the Schools themselves and where audits are carried out ‘in house’ by each School. On the other hand educators are wary of external reviews though it has repeatedly been pointed out that the scope of external reviews has much to do with providing support than with acting as a normative mechanism.

### 08.7 Parental and Community Involvement

A total of 87.53% of respondents state that they either strongly agree or agree with the recommendations in the draft on NCF on this matter. This figure constitutes of respondents who state that they are in strong agreement with the proposals and 51.05% who state that they agree. When the replies of the education practitioners stating that they strongly agree with this principle is analysed by teaching grade it emerges that school administrators are that category that most strongly support these recommendations. In fact 55.5% and 46% of Heads of School and Assistant Heads of School respectively say that they strongly agree with the NCF proposals while the level of strong agreement of Heads of Department, teachers, KGAs and LSAs amount to 39%, 32.5%, 30% and 44.5% respectively.

When analysing these results by the different educational sectors it emerges that 87.72%, 87.14% and 84.71% of staff in State, Church and Independent schools respectively state that they strongly agree or agree with the proposed measures. On the other hand an average of 4.77% of all participants assert that they either strongly disagree or disagree with these initiatives while a further average 7.71% of participants do not reply.
08.8 Support Structures

08.8.1 Student services
93.53% of all respondents either agree or strongly agree with the NCF proposals with regard to the allocation of student services. The proportion of those strongly in agreement with these services total to 50.22% of respondents, a level of support similar across educational sectors. When analysing the results by teaching grade the support shown to these measures stands at 49% for all teaching grades except for KGAs where around 35% maintained their support for these measures. The non-response rate amounted to 7.82% of all participants and ranges from 3.8% of Heads of School to 19.16% of Kindergarten Assistants.

08.8.2 Human resources
Strong agreement or agreement is expressed in favour of all the four schemes proposed in the draft NCF – with regard to the level of support to be provided to teachers (such as Curricular Support Teachers, cross-curricular themes, etc) with particularly high scores of 94.74% and 93.82% reserved for scheme C and scheme D respectively. The strongest disagreement is levelled at the proposal concerning the deployment of Curricular Support teachers when 5.57% of respondents maintained their strong disagreement with this initiative.

08.8.3 On-going professional development
Strong agreement for this theme is expressed by 52.18% of respondents (or close to 48% of all participants) which, when combined with those education practitioners expressing agreement with the proposed professional development measures reaches a total of 92.72% of respondents. This level of support is also evident across the three educational sectors. Respondents maintaining a level of strong disagreement represent 0.68% of all those who expressed themselves.

08.8.4 Mentoring
The initiatives proposed in this regard in the draft NCF garnered a strongly agreed or agreed of 36.17% and 48.61% respectively of all respondents - a total of 84.78%. On the other hand respondents affirming that they strongly disagree with this service amount to 3% - with close to 4.5% of KGAs being of this opinion. The non-response rate amount to 8.91% of participants.

08.8.5 Legal and psycho-social services for teachers
Those expressing strong agreement or agreement with the provision of legal and psycho-social services stood at 78.37% of respondents – whilst, a level of strong disagreement or disagreement is expressed 5.1% and 16.53% a total of 21.63%.

08.8.6 Leadership of key practitioners
87.32% of respondents were in agreement with or in strong agreement with the NCF recommendation. On the other hand, 11.25% and 1.43% of participants state that they either disagree or strongly disagree with the recommendations in the NCF with regard to the development of leadership qualities of key practitioners. The highest percentage of teaching grades declaring their disagreement are teachers (11.61%), LSAs (9.88%) and Assistant Heads of School (9.21%).

08.8.7 Support for curriculum development and implementation
87.82% of respondents say that they either agree strongly or agree with the NCF proposals. Strong agreement for this support measure is consistently high across all the teaching grades with the highest percentage of support being expressed by members of school senior management teams. Approximately 9% of participants did not express their view on the type that support for curriculum development and implementation should be introduced.

08.8.8 LSA deployment in the Secondary Years
An average of 29.11% of participants did not provide feedback for any of the three questions presented in this part of the Questionnaire. The education cycles with the highest non-response rates are those of the Early Years and of the Primary years while when analysed by teaching grade it emerges that KGAs provided the least feedback followed by Assistant Heads of School and teachers. The replies given to these three questions were analysed in six different permutations as shown in Table 11.
In these six different analyses, the LSA deployment model that receives most support is always that of having LSAs attached with specific subjects. The level of strong agreement or agreement given to this deployment mode is always above 84% and even reached 88.37% of respondents when only the replies of LSAs giving a service in all cycles is considered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 11: LSA deployment in the Secondary Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strongly</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>disagree</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Disagree</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agree</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strongly</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>agree</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All teaching grades in all cycles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSAs with Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSAs with Subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36.92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All teaching grades in Secondary Years' cycle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSAs with Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSAs with Subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSAs with Sets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSAs in all cycles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSAs with Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSAs with Subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.32%</td>
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<tr>
<td>8.31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSAs with Sets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>35.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSAs in Secondary Years' cycle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSAs with Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSAs with Subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSAs with Sets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSAs and teachers in Secondary Years' cycle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSAs with Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSAs with Subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSAs with Sets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers in Secondary Years' cycle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSAs with Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSAs with Subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSAs with Sets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75.43%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In these six different analyses, the LSA deployment model that receives most support is always that of having LSAs attached with specific subjects. The level of strong agreement or agreement given to this deployment mode is always above 84% and even reached 88.37% of respondents when only the replies of LSAs giving a service in all cycles is considered.
When assessing the level of strong agreement expressed by LSAs for this type of deployment (LSAs attached to subjects) the level of strong agreement reaches 57.32% and 57.08% of LSAs performing duties in Secondary schools or performing duties in any educational cycle respectively. Conversely, the strongest disagreement or disagreement expressed by LSAs is with them being attached to Sets. 35.81% of LSAs performing duties in secondary schools and 35.24% of LSAs giving a service in all education cycles indicated their lack of agreement with this option.

08.8.9 Professional development
Nearly 92% of respondents indicate that they either agree a lot or to some extent with the way that the NCF discusses and responds to the issue of professional development. Approximately 15% of participants do not provide a reply to this question.

08.8.10 Models for incorporating professional development – CFT 1 to CFT 5
This part of the Questionnaire concerned the Secondary years cycle only. Thus it is not surprising that the non-response rate of other cycles is high: an average of 43% of participants for the five questions. The highest percentage of those who did not respond are from the Early Years’ and the Primary years’ cycles with averages close to 61% and 50% respectively.

| Table 12: Timetable models for incorporating professional development |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly agree |
| CFT 2 | 7.67% | 18.40% | 53.24% | 20.69% |
| | 26.07% | | 73.93% | |
| CFT 3 | 9.39% | 20.27% | 50.60% | 19.74% |
| | 29.66% | | 70.34% | |
| CFT 5 | 19.05% | 23.22% | 42.60% | 15.13% |
| | 42.27% | | 57.73% | |
| CFT 1 | 19.64% | 23.14% | 41.60% | 15.62% |
| | 42.78% | | 57.22% | |
| CFT 4 | 18.96% | 24.94% | 42.22% | 13.88% |
| | 43.90% | | 56.10% | |

The incorporation of professional development meetings into the various timetables is considered to be best provided for by timetable model CFT 2. This is evidenced by the fact that 73.34% of respondents state that they either agree strongly or agree with this proposal as envisaged in the NCF. As is shown in Table 8, a larger percentage of education practitioners express themselves as partially agreeing with the proposals rather than asserting strong agreement with them. This seems to suggest that although a clear choice of timetable model is made yet some reservations still exist as otherwise the level of strong agreement would have been higher.

08.09 Key Ideas emanating from the National Curriculum Framework

The non-response rate for the last ten items of the Questionnaire is an average of 9.14% of all participants. The lowest non-participation rate of 8.33% is registered for item (b) which deals with the level of support that is envisaged for all learners to achieve and succeed. The highest non-reply rate, 10.81% of all participants, is to item (j) which refers to the cycles of quality and evaluation.

When the replies of those respondents stating their agreement or strong agreement to the NCF tenets are added together it results that the level of support is generally high and evenly spread out among all teaching grades. This level of support is expressed by an average of 96.86% of all respondents for the ten items - with the highest that for promoting the development of LLL with an approval rating of 99.08%. 
When analysing the results for the level of ‘strong agreement’ only, the level of support surpassed the 50% mark for all ten items except for that promoting the cycles of quality assurance and evaluation which, however, still had 48.43% of the respondents stating that they are in strong agreement.

Strong agreement surpassing the 60% mark is expressed for four of the items with the highest reaching 70.44% of all respondents when stating their view on the support that is being envisaged for all learners to achieve and succeed. Conversely, the highest level of strong disagreement is expressed by 1.13% of respondents when reporting on the promotion by the NCF of cycles of quality assurance and evaluation, with the average level of strong disagreement with the ten tenets being 0.43% of respondents.

When analysing replies by teaching grade it results that in five of the items more than 50% of all the teaching grades reply that they strongly agree to the proposals of the NCF. The level of strong agreement shown by Heads of School and Assistant Heads of School surpasses the 50% mark for all the ten items, while more than 50% of LSAs express strong agreement with nine of the items.

The level of support for these ten tenets is comparable across the three educational sectors with only minor variations being evident with the most striking difference being that posted by education practitioners hailing from the Independent sector when none of the respondents replied that they have any kind of disagreement with seven of the ten items.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 13: Key ideas emanating from the NCF</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The development of lifelong learners</td>
<td>0.21%</td>
<td>0.72%</td>
<td>34.41%</td>
<td>64.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.92%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>99.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for all learners to achieve and succeed</td>
<td>0.27%</td>
<td>1.84%</td>
<td>27.45%</td>
<td>70.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.11%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>97.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An increased curricular autonomy</td>
<td>0.51%</td>
<td>3.74%</td>
<td>44.55%</td>
<td>51.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.25%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>95.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The creation of active, inclusive and accountable learning communities</td>
<td>0.33%</td>
<td>2.90%</td>
<td>41.12%</td>
<td>55.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.22%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>96.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A seamless progression</td>
<td>0.33%</td>
<td>2.62%</td>
<td>35.47%</td>
<td>61.58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.95%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>97.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning which is active, personalised, relevant and purposeful</td>
<td>0.27%</td>
<td>1.76%</td>
<td>31.80%</td>
<td>66.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.03%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>97.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning that emphasises the application of knowledge and skills</td>
<td>0.15%</td>
<td>1.56%</td>
<td>38.97%</td>
<td>59.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.71%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>98.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A curriculum that focuses on learning areas</td>
<td>0.42%</td>
<td>2.72%</td>
<td>43.24%</td>
<td>53.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.14%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>96.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment and evaluation</td>
<td>0.67%</td>
<td>3.40%</td>
<td>43.72%</td>
<td>52.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.07%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>95.93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycles of quality assurance and evaluation</td>
<td>1.13%</td>
<td>5.89%</td>
<td>44.55%</td>
<td>48.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.02%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>92.98%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
09.1 General Characteristics of Sample Base to Primary and Secondary Students

The DQSE in the MEDE carried out a comprehensive survey in Colleges and Schools with students. The Table below presents the respondents who participated in the Survey.

Table 14: Respondents to Survey by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Primary Schools</th>
<th>Secondary Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>693 29.07%</td>
<td>819 31.49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>1,691 70.93%</td>
<td>1,782 68.51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,384</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,601</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen from the Table above the total number of respondents for Primary and Secondary schools are 2,384 and 2,601 respectively. Of particular note is that the responses by female students is by far higher than that of their male counterparts.

The Table below segments the respondents by the type of school they attend - that is, State, Church and Independent schools.

Table 15: Respondents to Survey by College or School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Primary Schools</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Secondary Schools</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>1,304</td>
<td>57.19</td>
<td>993</td>
<td>39.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church</td>
<td>883</td>
<td>38.73</td>
<td>1,494</td>
<td>58.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>2.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is to be noted that the largest number of respondents at the Secondary level of education stems from Church Schools at 58.8% with Colleges representing a reasonable large response of 39.08% - which is, quasi, a mirror image of the response at the Primary level of education - where the largest sample, at 57.19%, is from Colleges followed by Church schools at 38.73%.

As can be seen from Table 16 below the core of the response base in Primary Schools is aged between 8 and 10 years. This implies that the respondents are of an age that they understand the question they have been asked to answer. With regards to Secondary Schools, the respondents are nearly evenly distributed between 11 and 15 years of age; with the respondent base at 13 years and 15 years at 13.93% and 15.70% respectively being slight lower with the stated age group.

Table 16: Age distribution of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 Years</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>5.75</td>
<td>10 Years</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Years</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>5.80</td>
<td>11 Years</td>
<td>580</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 Years</td>
<td>632</td>
<td>27.76</td>
<td>12 Years</td>
<td>520</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 Years</td>
<td>721</td>
<td>31.66</td>
<td>13 Years</td>
<td>354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Years</td>
<td>578</td>
<td>25.38</td>
<td>14 Years</td>
<td>518</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Years</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>15 Years</td>
<td>399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16 Years</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17 Years</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>18 Years</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
09.2 Analysis of Survey to Primary School Students

84.85%, or 1,871 of the respondents, answered that they agree to a teaching environment take takes into account the different abilities of students in the Classroom (Question 4). 7.8%, or 172 respondents, however answered that they disagree with such an approach, whilst 7.35% answered that they do not know.

With regard to the question that a student should be able to read, write and speak in Maltese as well as English (Question 5), 94.75% (2,057) answered in the affirmative whilst 2.81% (61) stated that they did not agree and 2.44% (53) that they did not know.

The response of students to the question that they are taught how to use technology (including Internet and Computers) in all subjects as a tool for learning and increased fun in learning (Question 6) 93.01 (1,995) answered in the affirmative. Those that answered negatively or that they did not know stand at 3.96% (85) and 3.03% (65) respectively.

The respondent base answering in the affirmative to the question that students should have a 30 minute break for physical activities (Question 7) is at 73.18% (1,558) somewhat lower when compared to the previous questions - with 17.29% (368) stating that they do not agree and 9.53% (203) answering that they did not know.

Only 54% (1,142) of the respondents agreed with the question that the breaks should be increased to allow for more time for sports, rest and other activity (Question 8) with 33.05% (699) answering in the negative and a further 12.95% (274) saying that they do not know.

With regard to the question on whether students would wish to learn an additional foreign language in Year 6 of Primary (Question 9) 78.67% (1,660) answered in the affirmative, 14.12% (298) answered negatively, and 7.2% (152) answered that they do not know.

82.07% (1,730) answered positively to the question that they wish to discover and understand the 'world' [dinja] through science and technology throughout the Primary School years (Question 10) - whilst 9.06% (191) answered negatively and a further 8.87% (187) answered that they do not know.

It is interesting to note that 74.21% answered positively to the question that the examinations in Maltese, English and Mathematics should have a part of the examination which would not be in writing to allow them with a better opportunity to demonstrate what their knowledge (Question 11). 15.44% (324) answered in the negative whilst 10.34% (217) answered that they do not know.

The response of the students to the question of whether teachers took note of their performance during the class so that the pass rate is not totally dependent on the final year examination (Question 12) 84.59% (1,768) answered in the affirmative, 7.66% (160) answered negatively, and 7.75% (162) stated that they do not know.

The majority of the respondents - 74.81% (1,559) agree with the statement that examinations do not determine which class or school I am assigned to but whether assist me in determining in what I am doing well and where I need further effort to strengthen my knowledge (Question 13). 14.49% (302) disagreed with this statement whilst, 10.7% (223) answered that they do not know.

Question 14 allowed for an open answer to the question of what the students suggest should be introduced so that they enjoy their learning more. There were only 15 responses. The answers include more activities, more painting, more specific activity days say as pasta days, etc.

09.3 Analysis of Survey to Secondary School Students

61.82% (1,525) of the respondents answered that they Full Agree (21.2% or 523) and Agree (40.62% or 1,002) with the statement (Question 4) that the final examinations at the Primary School should not determine which Secondary School the student should attend but rather should determine a students' progress. The level of respondents that agree with this statement is lower than that expressed to the same question by Primary School students - which stood at 74.81%.
The respondents that showed that they disagree with this statement stood at 26.79% - 16.09% (397) expressing that they are not in full agreement, whilst 10.70% (264) saying that they do not agree at all with the statement. 11.39% (281) expressed that they do not know.

72.1% of the respondents expressed agreement to the statement (Question 5) that at Secondary School teaching should reflect the subject level - with 29.68% (722) expressing full agreement and 42.42% (1,032) expressing agreement. 13.77% (335) and 8.75% (213) respectively answered that they do not fully agree and totally disagree.

With regard to the question of whether students agree on changing the nomenclature of 'Form I to Form 5' to 'Level 7 to Level 11' (Question 6) 65.3% (1,329) answered that they disagree - of which 47.24% stated that they full disagreed with the recommendation. On 12.16% (293) answered that they fully agree whilst a further 14.61% (352) stated that they agree with the recommendation.

The response to the question on whether the time for breaks should be increased (Question 7) the majority answered in the affirmative - with 40.72% (979) declaring that they fully agree and 16.72% (402) stating that they agree. 14.52% (349), however, state that they disagree whilst 23.88% (574) state that they fully disagree.

The response to the statement that the timetable should be reorganised to minimise loss of time due to holding of assembly and movement from one classroom to the other (Question 8) solicited a mixed response: 47.4% (1,132) expressing agreement and 44.5% (1,064) expressing disagreement.

89% (2,112) of the respondents expressed agreement to the statement that students should be taught how to leverage technology across all subjects to increase learning and the fun of learning (Question 9). Only 7.29% (173) expressed disagreement.

Once again, the overwhelming majority of the respondents answered in the affirmative to the statement that a student should be able to read, write and speak well in Maltese as well as English (Question 10): 93.11% (2,202) expressing agreement.

32.58% (767) and 35.51% (836) of the respondents answered that they full agree and agree respectively to the statement that students can continue to choose a third language as well as a fourth language should they to do so from a larger choice of languages (Question 11). A quarter of the respondents, however, answered in the negative: 13.76% (324) stating that they disagree and 10.49% (247) stating that they fully disagree. The respondents who answered that they do not know stood at 7.85% (180).

The respondents answered in the affirmative to the statement that there should be more lessons directed towards health and creativity during the secondary level of education (Question 12) - with 25.47% (597) stating that they fully agree and 38.01% (891) stating that they agree. Slightly more than a quarter of the respondents answered in the negative -- 28.5% (668). 8.02% (188) of the respondents answered that they do not know.

The response to the question with regard to the introduction of a Core Science subject (Question 13) is positive: 21.28% (496) answered that they fully agree and 34.75% (810) answered that they agree. 29.9% (699) of the respondents stated that they disagree. Be that as it may a high number of respondents answered that they do not know how to respond to this question: 13.99% (326).

The response to Question 14 of whether Physics, Chemistry and Biology should be redesigned to reflect applied sciences (Life Science, Physical Sciences and Materials Science) provides mixed results. Full agreement stood at 13.86% (322) whilst categorical disagreement to the question stood at 17.18% (399). 31.47% (731) answered that they agree and 22.64% (526) answered that they disagree. The respondents who answered that they do not know how to respond to this question is comparatively high: 14.85% (345).

The majority of the respondents answered that they agree with the statement that they would be able to choose amongst four vocational subjects and that these would carry accreditation weighting as a SEC subject (Question 16) - 64.95% (931). 21.68% (501) answered negatively whilst 13.37% (309) answered that they do not know how to respond to this question.
With regard to the statement that State Schools should also start to offer Accounts and Economics as Option subjects (Question 16) 69.44% (1,602) of the respondents answered in the affirmative - although a relative high percentage responded that they do not know how to answer this question: 13.44% (310).

66.37% (1,528) of the respondents answered in the affirmative with regard to Question 17 which states that a School will set aside an hour a week that will allow it to utilise as appropriate to address the needs of students. Slightly less than a quarter answered in the negative whilst 9.08% (209) answered that they do not know.

The overwhelming majority of respondents answered in the affirmative to Question 18 which states that assessment would be based on performance during the year as well as the final annual examination: 82.02% (1,884).

There were only 15 responses to the free text question (Question 19). The comments are varied and include that there should be more PE lessons, lessons should be more interesting, and there should be more out of school activities that no changes are made to the Physics subject.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 17&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; May 2011</td>
<td>Launch of National Curriculum Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday 18&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; May 2011</td>
<td>Meeting with Directors and Principals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday 24&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; May 2011</td>
<td>Meeting Assistant Directors of Education and Education Officers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; June 2011</td>
<td>Malta Chamber of Small &amp; Medium Enterprises Association of General Retailers &amp; Traders (GRTU)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; June 2011</td>
<td>MATSEC Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday 3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; June 2011</td>
<td>Kummissjoni Nazzjonali Persuni b'Dizabbilta' (KNPD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday 3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; June 2011</td>
<td>National Commission for Higher Education (NCHE)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday 3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; June 2011</td>
<td>Malta Qualifications Council (MQC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday 11&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; June 2011</td>
<td>NCF Meeting Public Meeting – Malta</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday 13&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; June 2011</td>
<td>College Principals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday 20&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; June 2011</td>
<td>Commissioner for Children</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday 20&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; June 2011</td>
<td>St Francis Girls' Secondary School, Msida</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday 21&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; July 2011</td>
<td>Seminar for College Principals, Heads of Schools (State and non-State Schools)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday 21&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; June 2011</td>
<td>Malta Union of Teachers (MUT)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday 22&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; June 2011</td>
<td>Heads of Further &amp; Higher Education Institutions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday 22&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; June 2011</td>
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<td>Event details</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>B Ed Faculty Students – 1st meeting</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Wednesday 22nd June 2011</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>St Michael’s Secondary School, Sta Venera</td>
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<td><strong>Thursday 23rd June 2011</strong></td>
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<td>Dissemination of NCF Documents to Student Support Services</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Thursday 23rd June 2011</strong></td>
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<td>Malta Humanist Association</td>
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<td><strong>Thursday 23rd June 2011</strong></td>
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<td>KS Paramedic Solutions</td>
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<td><strong>Thursday 23rd June 2011</strong></td>
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<td>FORUM Unions Maltin</td>
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<td><strong>Friday 24th June 2011</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Seminar for College Principals, Heads of Schools (State and non-State Schools)Gozo Meeting</td>
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<td><strong>Friday 24th June 2011</strong></td>
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<td>Year 6 Teachers – Gozo College</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Friday 24th June 2011</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>NCF Meeting Public Meeting – Gozo</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Monday 27th June 2011</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>B Ed Faculty Students / Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) Students – 2nd meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Monday 27th June 2011</strong></td>
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<td>Union Haddiema Maltin (UĦM)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Monday 27th June 2011</strong></td>
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<td>Malta Employers Association</td>
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<td><strong>Monday 27th June 2011</strong></td>
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<td>Kummissjoni Nazzjonali Persuni b’Dizabbilita’ (KNPD) - 2nd Meeting</td>
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<td><strong>Monday 27th June 2011</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Association of Parents of Children in Church Schools (APCCS)</td>
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<td>Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry</td>
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<td><strong>Tuesday 5th July 2011</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Heritage Malta</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday 5(^{th}) July 2011</td>
<td>Alternattiva Demokratika (AD)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday 7(^{th}) July 2011</td>
<td>Partit Nazzjonalista (PN)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday 7(^{th}) July 2011</td>
<td>Partit Laburista (PL)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday 11(^{th}) July 2011</td>
<td>Social Affairs Committee, House of Representatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 12(^{th}) July 2011</td>
<td>University of Malta - Faculty of Education Seminar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday 13(^{th}) July 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday 15(^{th}) July 2011</td>
<td>Malta EU Steering Action Committee (MEUSAC)</td>
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<td>Wednesday 20(^{th}) July 2011</td>
<td>Employment and Training Corporation (ETC)</td>
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<td>Wednesday 20(^{th}) July 2011</td>
<td>Malta Enterprise</td>
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<td>Thursday 21(^{st}) July 2011</td>
<td>National Council for Women (NCW)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday 21(^{st}) July 2011</td>
<td>Malta Council for Economic and Social Development (MCESD)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday 22(^{nd}) July 2011</td>
<td>MATSEC meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday 22(^{nd}) July 2011</td>
<td>Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday 26(^{th}) July 2011</td>
<td>Chamber of Scientists / Faculty of Science</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday 27(^{th}) July 2011</td>
<td>College Principals – NCF Consultation Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 28(^{th}) July 2011</td>
<td>General Workers Union (GWU)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday 28&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; July 2011</td>
<td>Malta Council for Science and Technology (MCST)</td>
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<td>Thursday 28&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; July 2011</td>
<td>De La Salle College / Stella Maris College</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday 14&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; September 2011</td>
<td>Council for the Teaching Profession</td>
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<td>Friday 23&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; September</td>
<td>De La Salle College</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday 24&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; September 2011</td>
<td>MCESD – Gozo Regional Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 27&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; September 2011</td>
<td>Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 27&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; September 2011</td>
<td>Department of Youth and Community Studies, Faculty of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 29&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; September 2011</td>
<td>Kunsill Nazzjonali taż-Zgħażagħ (KNŻ)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday 29&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; September 2011</td>
<td>Malta PSD Association (MPSDA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday 29&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; September 2011</td>
<td>Association for Professionals in Learning Disabilities (APLD)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix II: Formal Consultation Feedback Submissions

Colleges
Gozo College
Maria Regina College
St Benedict College
St Clare College
St Ignatius College
St Gorg Preca College
St Margaret College
St Nicholas College
St Therese College
St Thomas More College

Church Schools
Archbishop Seminary School
Directorate for Educational Services - Secretariat for Catholic Education
Reactions / Suggestions / Recommendation by Heads of Departments
A Vision for Science Education
Response Dwar l-NCF u l-Implikazzjonijiet fuq it-tagħlim tal-Malti
De La Salle College
Gozo Church Schools
Heads of Department (Science)
Lasallian Schools
Our Lady Immaculate School
Sacred Heart Convent
Savio College
Stella Maris College
St Albert the Great College
St Aloysius College
St Augustine College
St Dorothy's Junior School (Sliema)
St Dorothy's School (Zebbug)
St Elias School
St Michael School
St Francis School (B'Kara)
St Francis School (Cospicua)
St Francis School (Msida)
St Francis Secondary School (Sliema)
St Jean Antide School
St Joseph School (Blata l-Bajda)
St Joseph School (Sliema)
St Monica School (B'Kara)
St Monica School (B'Kara / St Monica School, Mosta)
St Monica School (Gzira)
St Paul’s Missionary College
Independent Schools
Chiswick House School
San Anton School
St Andrea School
St Martin’s College
St Michael's Foundation Senior School
St Michael's Junior School

MEDE Directorates
Bonello Catherine, EO Religion
Borg Christine, EO Italian
Bugeja Gaetano, EO Physics
Buhagiar Jane, EO Complementary Teacher
Busuttil Paul, EO Design and Technology
Calleja George, EO History
Callus James, EO Primary (ICT)
Camilleri George, EO English
Camilleri Marie Anne, EO English
Camilleri Stephen, EO Personal and Social Development
Camilleri Marcelle, HOD Business Studies
Caruana Paul, HOD Business Studies
Cashu Sammut Melanie, EO Primary Mathematics
Cassar Mariella, EO Music
Ciantar Philip (Dr), HOD Music
Cucciardi Mario, HOD Personal and Social Development
Degabriele M Anthony, Assistant Director, CMeLD
Debattista Antoinette, EO Primary (English)
Falzon Mario, EO Chemistry
Farrugia Anthony, EO Primary (Science & Technology)
Farrugia Marisa, EO Arabic
Farrugia Sina, EO Art Education
Firman Christine (Dr), EO Literacy
Galea Mariella, EO Mathematics (Secondary)
Gauci Christine, EO Media Education
Gerada Benardette, EO Documentation
Gilson Edward, EO Geography
Grima Joanne, EO Assessment for Learning (AfL)
Grima Stephen, EO Physical Education
Hamilton Dunstan, EO Personal and Social Development
Laferla Antoinette, EO Religion
Mallia Elizabeth, EO Home Economics and Textile Studies
Mallia Borg Felicienne, EO Inclusive and Special Education
Mangion Tania, EO Early Childhood
Mifsud George, EO Maltese
Muscat David, EO Maltese
Muscat Frank, EO English
Muscat Mario, EO Science
Pace Tony, EO Primary (Social Studies)
Privitelli Rose Marie, EO Early Childhood
Said Zammit George, EO Social Studies
Satariano Anthony, HOD, Assessment for Learning (AfL)
Scicluna Kenneth, EO Health and Safety
Scicluna Bugeja Desiree, EO Biology
Spiteri Marie Anne, Assistant Director, CMeLD
Spiteri Paris Antoinette, EO German
Vassallo Josephine, Assistant Director, CMeLD
Vassallo Peter, Assistant Director CMeLD
Vella Geraldine, EO Assessment for Learning (AfL)
Civic, Geographical and Historical Education
Educational Practitioners
Entrepreneurship Education
Drama Unit Teachers
Geography Department, CMeLD
Malta Writing Programme
Science Education Seminar – October 2011
SPLD – Whole Group Feedback
Teachers of German
St. Ignatius College Boys Secondary School, Tal-Handaq – Physics Teachers’ Feedback

University of Malta and Higher Education
Centre for Environmental Education and Research
European Centre for Educational Resilience
Faculty of Education:
  Business Education
  Department of Arts and Languages in Education
  Department of Educational Studies
  Department of Primary Education
  Department of Mathematics, Science and Technical Education
  Department of Youth and Community Studies
  Euro Centre for Educational Resilience and Socio Emotional Health
  Programme for Culturally Responsive Education
Faculty of Dental Surgery
Faculty of Engineering – Academic Affairs Focus Group
Faculty of Law
Faculty of Science
Geography Division, Mediterranean Institute
G F Abela Junior College
  Biology Department
  Chemistry Department
  Physics Department
  Systems of Knowledge, Music and Art Department
Giovanni Curmi Higher Secondary School
MATSEC Examination Board

Bartolo Paul (Prof) – Programme for Culturally Responsive Education
B.Ed Students – Vision for Science Feedback
Briffa Charles (Prof) – Comments on the section of Languages
Bonanno Philip (Dr) – Centre of Educational Technology, Research and Innovation
Bonello Cassar A – G F Abela Junior College, Department of Environment Science
Briguglio Lino (Prof)
Calleja Colin
Cauchi Bernard
Gellel Mario (Dr) – Department of Arts and Languages in Education, Faculty of Education
Grech Michael
Mallia Josephine – Business Education, Faculty of Education
Portelli John R – Post Secondary Education
Rizzo Saviour (Former Director), Centre for Labour Studies
Xuereb Paul – Vice Principal University of Malta – Junior College

**Constituted Bodies, Civil Society, Political Parties, etc**

Aġenzija Żgħażagħ
Alternattiva Demokratika
Association for Professionals in Learning Disabilities (Malta - APLD)
Association of Parents of Children in Church Schools - APCCS
BirdLife Malta
Council for the Teaching Profession (CTP)
Driver Education
Equal Partners Foundation
E Skills Alliance (Malta)
EUROGEO
Geography Teachers' Association (Malta)
Grupp Universitarji Ġhawdxin
Foundation for Educational Studies
Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Directorate
Heritage Malta
Home Economics in Action - HEiA
INSPIRE (Eden and Razzett Foundation)
Kummissjoni Interdʒoċesana Ambjent
Malta Association of Science Educators
Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry
Malta Confederation of Women's Organisation
Malta Council for Science and Technology
Malta Enterprise
Malta Gay Rights Movement
Malta Humanist Association
Malta Mediation Centre
Malta Personal and Social Development Association – MPSDA
Malta Qualifications Council - MQC
Malta Union of Teachers
National Commission for Higher Education
National Commission for the Promotion of Equality
National Council for Women
National Parents' Association of Persons with Disability
Nature Trust (Malta)
NCFCP A (questionnaire)
Paramedic Solutions
Partit Laburista
Partit Nazzjonalisti
Pestalozzi Programme – Ms Cassar, Charlot
Revolving Around Yourself Programme – RAY Programme
Secretariat for Catechesis of the Archdiocese of Malta
Science Students’ Society
**Public and Individuals**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abela Noel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abela Diane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bezzina, Charlie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonello Tonio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonnici Sarah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borg Josef</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buhagiar Mary Anne (Dr)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buhagiar Nathalie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buhagiar Victor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cachia Sarah</td>
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<tr>
<td>Camilleri Josette</td>
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<tr>
<td>Camilleri Kim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calleja Joanne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calleja Matthew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carabott Philip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cassar Lorainne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cauchi Edward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chetcuti Audrey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ciantar Fiona</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cordina Joanne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conti Louise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curmi Joseph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curmi Michael</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellul Sarah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghirxi Kevin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grech Kimberly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grech Sarah and Robert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Izzo Anton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magro Peter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mallia Andrew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mallia Josianne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micallef May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mifsud Doriane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mifsud Louis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mifsud Sylvia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moore Charlotte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phillippi Nathan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pisani Anthea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portelli Raymond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sciberras Etienne and Leona</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiteri Tagliaferro Romina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stensten Josette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sultana Joseph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vassallo Myriam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vella Annabel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vella Isabelle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vella Kaia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Vella Mariella
Zerafa Janice
NCFCP A

Other
Children’s Conference
NCF December Conference
Appendix III: Analysis of Consultation Feedback from Colleges and Schools to the Draft National Curriculum

Presented as an accompanying document.
Appendix IV: Analysis of Consultation Feedback from Directorates within the Ministry of Education to the Draft National Curriculum Framework

Presented as an accompanying document.
Appendix V: Analysis of Consultation Feedback from Departments at the University of Malta and Higher Education Institutions to the Draft National Curriculum Framework

Presented as an accompanying document.
Appendix VI: Analysis of Consultation Feedback from Constituted Bodies, Civil Society, Political Parties and other Entities to the Draft National Curriculum Framework

Presented as an accompanying document.
Appendix VII: Analysis of Consultation Feedback from Parents and Individuals to the Draft National Curriculum Framework

Presented as an accompanying document.
Appendix VIII: The National Curriculum Framework 2011 – Consultation Process
The National Curriculum Framework 2011 – Consultation Process

The process of consultation is crucial for the success of the updated national curriculum framework. The consultation strategy presented in National Curriculum Framework, Document 4 has been designed with the aim of enabling a wide-ranging and authentic discussion and debate which enables all stakeholders to engage with the draft document in a positive way and participate actively in the formulation of the final version.

The consultation process itself is divided into three phases:

**Phase 1: Reflection for Action May 2011 to August 2011**
This phase serves to present the updated national curriculum framework and prepare the various stakeholders for the consultation process. The meetings with the stakeholders serve to highlight the main recommendations of the updated national curriculum framework;

the implications arising for the various stakeholders as envisaged by the updated national curriculum framework; and

the role of the stakeholders in the consultation process, in terms of both their personal contribution to the process and their role in bringing together the feedback and responses of the learning communities for which they are responsible.

In addition, this phase allows all participants sufficient time to read through the documents and consider in some detail their content and implications.

**Phase 2: Reflection in Action from September 2011 to November 2011**
This phase will provide stakeholders opportunities to share and consolidate their ideas within and across different institutions. The aim of this phase is to invite and encourage stakeholders towards actively participating in generating a national, reflective professional discussion and debate about the updated national curriculum framework proposals, thus initiating a process of sharing critical and constructive feedback in preparation for the final version of the updated national curriculum framework.

**Phase 3: Reflection on Action from November 2011 to December 2011**
This phase will bring together all the stakeholders and the feedback offered by the various institutions. The highlights of this phase include a two-day national conference and the submission of written feedback. Once the working group reviews the proposed NCF in light of the feedback received, the working group will submit a final NCF document to the Minister for approval.

Prof Grace Grima, as chairperson of the National Curriculum Review Committee invites all society stakeholders to participate actively in this consultation process so that the final approved document will be a true expression of our hopes and aspirations to provide a relevant quality education for our children which meets the current and future needs of our country.

The National Curriculum Framework - Feedback Guidelines Document here-below, is in essence a reference document designed to assist stakeholders in the formulation of an open format feedback document.

Feedback may be sent to Mr Joe Buttigieg on email address: joe.c.buttigieg@gov.mt or by post as follows: Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education, attn Mr Joe Buttigieg, Great Siege Rd. Floriana VLT 2000

Joe Buttigieg

I/Prof Grace Grima
Chairperson
## General Principles

1. How much do you agree or disagree with the general principles underlying the National Curriculum Framework (NCF)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entitlement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuum of Achievement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learner-centred Learning</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality Assurance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher Support</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Please provide your comments regarding the six general principles outlined in Consultation Document 2 – Rationale and Components.

3. In your opinion to what extent do you think that the aims of education (Consultation Document 2 - Rationale and Components) included in the NCF are relevant and comprehensive?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aims of Education</th>
<th>To a large extent</th>
<th>To a moderate extent</th>
<th>To a small extent</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Learners who are capable of successfully developing their full potential as lifelong learners</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Learners who are capable of sustaining their chances in the world of work</td>
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<tr>
<td>c) Learners who are engaged citizens in constantly changing local, regional and global realities.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Please provide your comments regarding the aims of education indicated in Consultation Document 2 - Rationale and Components.
**Learning Areas**

5. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the competences in the Early Years as proposed in Consultation Document 3 – The Three Cycles?

*Please tick one choice in each row*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Areas</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Well-being</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Social competence</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>c) Communicative competence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Learning dispositions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Intellectual competences</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

6. Please provide your comments regarding the Early Years competences included in Consultation Document 3 – The Three Cycles.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

7. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the Learning Areas in the Primary Years as proposed in Consultation Document 3 – The Three Cycles?

*Please tick one choice in each row*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Areas</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Languages</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Mathematics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Science</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Religious education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Citizenship education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>f) Technology education</td>
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<tr>
<td>g) Arts education</td>
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<tr>
<td>h) Health education</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

8. Please provide your comments regarding the Learning Areas in the Primary Years as proposed in Consultation Document 3 – The Three Cycles.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

9. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the Learning Areas in the Secondary Years as proposed in Consultation Document 3 – The Three Cycles?

*Please tick one choice in each row*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Areas</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Languages</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Mathematics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Science</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Religious education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Citizenship education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) Technology education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10. Please provide your comments regarding the Learning Areas for the Secondary Years as proposed in Consultation Document 3 – The Three Cycles.

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

11. How much do you agree or disagree with the proposed 2+3 model regarding the choice of options during secondary education?

*Please tick one choice*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

12. If you strongly disagree or disagree please provide reasons and propose alternatives.

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

13. How much do you agree or disagree with the proposed range of subjects on offer during the secondary education cycle as proposed in Consultation Document 3 – The Three Cycles?

*Please tick one choice*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

14. Which subject/s, if any, would you propose removing from the list in Consultation Document 3 (pg. 55)?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

15. Which other subject/s would you propose adding to the list of subjects listed in Consultation Document 3?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

**Cross-curricular Themes**

16. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the cross-curricular themes as proposed in Consultation Document 3 – The Three Cycles?

*Please tick one choice in each row*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cross-curricular Themes</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) eLearning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Education for sustainable development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>c) Intercultural education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Education for entrepreneurship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Creativity and innovation</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
17. Please provide your comments on the proposed cross-curricular themes.

__________________________________________________________________________

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__________________________________________________________________________

18. Would you like to propose any other cross-curricular theme to be added to the NCF? Please give reasons and amplify.

__________________________________________________________________________

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__________________________________________________________________________

**Time Allocation and Targets**

19. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the outcomes in the Early Years (Table 1 in Consultation Document 3 - The Three Cycles pgs. 25 -28)?

*Please tick one choice in each row*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) A strong sense of identity</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) A positive self-image</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Socially adept</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Effective communicators</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Engaged and confident learners</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20. Please provide your comments regarding the proposed outcomes in the Early Years.

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

21. With reference to the proposed timetable models for primary schools (Consultation Document 3, Appendix 1) how strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed model/s for primary schools?

*Please tick one choice in each row*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Model A</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Model B</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Model C</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

22. Which model/s do you think best fits the implementation of the NCF in schools?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

23. Would you like to propose other timetable format/s?

   Yes □  No □

24. If yes, please amplify.

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________
25. With reference to the proposed timetable models for the secondary cycle (Consultation Document 3, Tables 5 and 6, pgs. 60 – 61 and Appendix II pgs. 71-81) how strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed model/s?

a. Proposed Curriculum Framework Timetables (CFT) for Years 7 and 8

Please tick one choice in each row

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Table 5 Col. C, CFT 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Table 5 Col. D, CFT 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Table 5 Col. E, CFT 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>d) Table 5 Col. F, CFT 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Table 5 Col. G, CFT 5</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b. Proposed CFTs for Years 9-11

Please tick one choice in each row

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Table 6 Col. C, CFT 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Table 6 Col. D, CFT 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Table 6 Col. E, CFT 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Table 6 Col. F, CFT 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Table 6 Col. G, CFT 5</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

26. Would you like to propose other timetable format/s? If yes, please amplify.

__________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________

27. Please provide your comments regarding the proposed secondary school timetable (Consultation Document 3; Tables 5 and 6, pgs. 60 – 61 and Appendix II pgs. 71-81).

__________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________

Assessment

28. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the assessment strategy for the three cycles of education as outlined in Consultation Document 2 - Rationale and Components and Consultation Document 3 – The Three Cycles?

Please tick one choice in each row

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Assessment in the Early Years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Assessment in the Primary Cycle</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Assessment in the Secondary Years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
29. Please give your views on the proposed assessment strategies.
   a) Assessment in Early Years

   b) Assessment in Primary Years

   c) Assessment in Secondary Years

Quality Assurance
30. In your opinion would the quality assurance mechanisms indicated in Consultation Document 2 – Rationale and Components adequately facilitate the implementation of the NCF in schools?

   Please tick one choice in each row

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very much</th>
<th>To some extent</th>
<th>Very little</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) School Development Plans (SDP)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Mentoring</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Performance Management and Professional Development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) External Reviews</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

31. Please provide your comments regarding the quality assurance mechanisms outlined in Consultation Document 2 – Rationale and Components.

Parental and Community Involvement
32. Consultation Document 2 – Rationale and Components addresses the role of parental and community involvement. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposals indicated in the document?

   Please tick one choice

   Strongly agree    □  Agree    □  Disagree   □  Strongly disagree □

33. In your opinion which aspects of parental and community involvement if any, need to be addressed further in this document?
Support Structures
34. In your opinion do the support structures indicated in Document 2 – Rationale and Components adequately meet the needs of your College/School in implementing the NCF?

Please tick one choice in each row

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A lot</th>
<th>To some extent</th>
<th>Very little</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a)</td>
<td>Student services</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b)</td>
<td>Human resources</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c)</td>
<td>On-going professional development</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d)</td>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e)</td>
<td>Legal and psycho-social services</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f)</td>
<td>Leadership of key practitioners</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g)</td>
<td>Support for curriculum development and implementation</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

35. Please provide your comments regarding the support structures outlined in Consultation Document 2 – Rationale and Components.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

36. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed levels of support to be provided by the peripatetic service?

Please tick one choice in each row

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a)</td>
<td>Curricular support teachers</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b)</td>
<td>The teaching of art, music etc.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c)</td>
<td>Cross-curricular themes</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d)</td>
<td>Implementation of specific policies</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

37. Please provide your comments on the proposed levels of support.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

38. If you would like to propose other/s level/s of support please amplify.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

39. More specifically how strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed models for the deployment of LSAs in secondary schools as proposed in Consultation Document 2 – Rationale and Components Appendix II?

Please tick one choice in each row

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a)</td>
<td>LSA attached to teachers</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b)</td>
<td>LSA attached to subjects</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c)</td>
<td>LSA attached to sets</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
40. Please provide your comments regarding the proposed models for deployment of LSAs as outlined in Consultation Document 2 – Rationale and Components.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

41. If you would like to propose other model/s of LSA deployment please amplify.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

**Effective Learning and Teaching**

42. In order that the learning process and teaching pedagogy indicated in Section 3 of Consultation Document 3 – The Three Cycles are realised;

I need to

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

I expect the school to

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

I expect the College to

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

I expect the Directorate for Educational Services to

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

I expect the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education to

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

**Leadership**

43. In your opinion how will the introduction of the new NCF affect the leadership and management functions of the different practitioners in our education system?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Professional Development

44. To what extent do you think that the NCF addresses adequately the issue of professional development?
   A lot ☐ To some extent ☐ Very little ☐ Not at all ☐

45. Please provide your comments on the issue of professional development.

46. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed model/s for incorporating professional
development sessions in the timetable?

   Please tick one choice in each row
   
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) CFT 1</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) CFT 2</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) CFT 3</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) CFT 4</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) CFT 5</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

47. Please provide your comments on these proposals.

48. If you would like to propose other model/s, please amplify.

49. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the ten “Key Ideas” which emanate from the NCF?

   Please tick one choice in each row
   
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) The development of lifelong learners who are engaged and responsible citizens and active in the economy</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) The support for all learners to achieve and succeed, whatever their backgrounds, needs and aptitudes</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) A clear focus in colleges and schools on meeting the needs of all learners through increased curricular autonomy</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) The creation of active, inclusive learning communities which put learning and learners at the heart of all that they do and are accountable to their stakeholders</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Seamless progression through early, primary and</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary years in the skills and competences required for lifelong learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f)</td>
<td>Learning which is active, personalised, relevant and purposeful</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g)</td>
<td>Learning that emphasises the application of knowledge and skills in different contexts and settings as well as breadth of knowledge and depth of understanding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h)</td>
<td>A curriculum framework that focuses on learning areas. Creating links and synergies across traditional subjects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i)</td>
<td>Assessment and evaluation which use information and feedback formatively to inform planning for improvement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j)</td>
<td>Cycles of quality assurance and evaluation which recognise that continuous professional learning is an essential part of educational practice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

50. Please provide other comments that you may have about the NCF hereunder

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
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________________________________________________________________________
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________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Information about Entity/Organsation/agency completing the questionnaire (Optional)

Name of Entity: __________________________________________________________________________

Position of person completing the questionnaire: __________________________________________________________________________

Please send your feedback to:

Mr. Joe Buttigieg,  
Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education  
Great Siege Rd.  
FLORIANA VLT 2000

Or

by email to: joe.c.buttigieg@gov.mt

Thank you for your contribution during the NCF consultation process
THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK (NCF) – CONSULTATION PROCESS

Feedback from Education Practitioners

Background Information

1. What is your current grade?
   Please tick one choice
   a) Head of School
   b) Assistant Head of School
   c) Head of Department
   d) Teacher
   e) Kindergarten Assistant
   f) Learning Support Assistant (LSA)
   g) Other (please specify below)

2. In which education sector do you currently work?
   Please tick one choice
   a) State schools sector
   b) Church schools sector
   c) Independent schools sector

3. In which educational cycle do you currently work?
   Please tick one choice
   a) Early Years
   b) Primary Years
   c) Secondary Years
   d) Post-secondary Years

General Principles

4. How much do you agree or disagree with the general principles underlying the National Curriculum Framework (NCF)?
   Please tick one choice in each row
   Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree
   a) Entitlement
   b) Diversity
   c) Continuum of Achievement
   d) Learner-centred Learning
   e) Quality Assurance
   f) Teacher Support

5. Please provide your comments regarding the six general principles outlined in Consultation Document 2 - Rationale and Components.

---

11 Early Years covers kindergarten and primary Years 1 and 2.
Aims of Education
6. In your opinion to what extent do you think that the aims of education (Consultation Document 2 - Rationale and Components) included in the NCF are relevant and comprehensive?

Please tick one choice in each row

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To a large extent</th>
<th>To a moderate extent</th>
<th>To a small extent</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Learners who are capable of successfully developing their full potential as lifelong learners</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Learners who are capable of sustaining their chances in the world of work</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Learners who are engaged citizens in constantly changing local, regional and global realities.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Please provide your comments regarding the aims of education indicated in Consultation Document 2 - Rationale and Components.


Learning Areas
8. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the competences in the Early Years as proposed in Consultation Document 3 – The Three Cycles?

Please tick one choice in each row

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Well being</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Social competence</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Communicative competence</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Learning dispositions</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Intellectual competences</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. Please provide your comments regarding the Early Years competences included in Consultation Document 3 – The Three Cycles.


10. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the Learning Areas in the Primary Years as proposed in Consultation Document 3 – The Three Cycles?

Please tick one choice in each row

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Areas</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Languages</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Mathematics</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Science</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11. Please provide your comments regarding the Learning Areas in the Primary Years as proposed in Consultation Document 3 – The Three Cycles.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

12. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the Learning Areas in the Secondary Years as proposed in Consultation Document 3 – The Three Cycles?

Please tick one choice in each row

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Areas</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Languages</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Mathematics</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Science</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Religious education</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Citizenship education</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) Technology education</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g) Arts education</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h) Health education</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13. Please provide your comments regarding the Learning Areas for the Secondary Years as proposed in Consultation Document 3 – The Three Cycles.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

14. How much do you agree or disagree with the proposed 2+3 model regarding the choice of options during secondary education?

Please tick one choice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15. If you strongly disagree or disagree please provide reasons and propose alternatives.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

16. How much do you agree or disagree with the proposed range of subjects on offer during the secondary education cycle?

Please tick one choice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17. Which subject/s, if any, would you propose removing from the list in Consultation Document 3 (pg. 55)?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
18. Which other subject/s would you propose adding to the list of subjects?

Cross-curricular Themes
19. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed cross-curricular themes?

Please tick one choice in each row

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cross-curricular Themes</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) eLearning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Education for sustainable development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Intercultural education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Education for entrepreneurship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Creativity and innovation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20. Please provide your comments on the proposed cross-curricular themes.

21. Would you like to propose any other cross-curricular theme to be added to the NCF? Please give reasons and amplify.

Time Allocation and Targets
22. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the outcomes in the Early Years (Table 1 in Consultation Document 3 - The Three Cycles pgs. 25-28)?

Please tick one choice in each row

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) A strong sense of identity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) A positive self-image</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Socially adept</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Effective communicators</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Engaged and confident learners</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

23. Please provide your comments regarding the proposed outcomes in the Early Years.
24. With reference to the proposed timetable models for primary schools (Consultation Document 3, Appendix 1) how strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed model/s for primary schools?

*Please tick one choice in each row*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Model A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Model B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Model C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

25. Which model/s do you think best fits the implementation of the NCF in your school?

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

26. Would you like to propose other timetable format/s?
   Yes □ No □

27. If yes, please amplify.

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

28. With reference to the proposed timetable models for the secondary cycle (Consultation Document 3, Tables 5 and 6, pgs. 60 – 61 and Appendix II pgs. 71-81) how strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed model/s?

a. Proposed Curriculum Framework Timetables (CFT) for Years 7 and 8

*Please tick one choice in each row*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Table 5 Col. C, CFT 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>□</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Table 5 Col. D, CFT 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>□</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Table 5 Col. E, CFT 3</td>
<td>□</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Table 5 Col. F, CFT 4</td>
<td>□</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Table 5 Col. G, CFT 5</td>
<td>□</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b. Proposed CFTs for Years 9-11

*Please tick one choice in each row*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Table 6 Col. C, CFT 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>□</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Table 6 Col. D, CFT 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>□</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Table 6 Col. E, CFT 3</td>
<td>□</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Table 6 Col. F, CFT 4</td>
<td>□</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Table 6 Col. G, CFT 5</td>
<td>□</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

29. Would you like to propose other timetable format/s? If yes, please amplify.

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
30. Please provide your comments regarding the proposed secondary school timetable (Consultation Document 3; Tables 5 and 6, pgs. 60 – 61 and Appendix II pgs. 71-81).

Assessment
31. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the assessment strategy for the three cycles of education as outlined in Consultation Document 2 - Rationale and Components and Consultation Document 3 – The Three Cycles?

*Please tick one choice in each row*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Assessment in the Early Years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Assessment in the Primary Cycle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Assessment in the Secondary Years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

32. Please give your views on the proposed assessment strategies.
a) Assessment in Early Years

b) Assessment in Primary Years

c) Assessment in Secondary Years

Quality Assurance
33. In your opinion would the quality assurance mechanisms indicated in Consultation Document 2 – Rationale and Components adequately facilitate the implementation of the NCF in schools?

*Please tick one choice in each row*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very much</th>
<th>To some extent</th>
<th>Very little</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) School Development Plans (SDP)</td>
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<td>b) Mentoring</td>
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<td>c) Performance Management and Professional Development</td>
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<td>d) External Reviews</td>
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34. Please provide your comments regarding the quality assurance mechanisms outlined in Consultation Document 2 – Rationale and Components.
Parental and Community Involvement

35. Consultation Document 2 – Rationale and Components addresses the role of parental and community involvement. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposals indicated in the document?

Please tick one choice

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

36. In your opinion which aspects of parental and community involvement if any, need to be addressed further in this document?

Support Structures

37. In your opinion do the support structures indicated in Document 2 – Rationale and Components adequately meet the needs of your College/School in implementing the NCF?

Please tick one choice in each row

- A lot
- To some extent
- Very little
- Not at all

a) Student services
b) Human resources
c) On-going professional development
d) Mentoring
e) Legal and psycho-social services
f) Leadership of key practitioners
g) Support for curriculum development and implementation

38. Please provide your comments regarding the support structures outlined in Consultation Document 2 – Rationale and Components.

39. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed levels of support to be provided by the peripatetic service?

Please tick one choice in each row

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

a) Curricular support teachers
b) The teaching of art, music etc.
c) Cross-curricular themes
d) Implementation of specific policies

40. Please provide your comments on the proposed levels of support.
41. If you would like to propose other/s level/s of support please amplify.

42. More specifically how strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed models for the deployment of LSAs in secondary schools as proposed in Consultation Document 2 – Rationale and Components Appendix II?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please tick one choice in each row</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
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<tr>
<td>a) LSA attached to teachers</td>
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<td>b) LSA attached to subjects</td>
<td>□</td>
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<tr>
<td>c) LSA attached to sets</td>
<td>□</td>
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43. Please provide your comments regarding the proposed models for deployment of LSAs as outlined in Consultation Document 2 – Rationale and Components.

44. If you would you like to propose other model/s of LSA deployment please amplify.

Effective Learning and Teaching

45. In order that the learning process and teaching pedagogy indicated in Section 3 of Consultation Document 3 – The Three Cycles are realised;

I need to

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

I expect my school to

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

I expect my College to

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

I expect the Directorate for Educational Services to

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________
I expect the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education to

Leadership
46. In your opinion how will the introduction of the new NCF affect the leadership and management functions of the different practitioners in our education system?

Professional Development
47. To what extent do you think that the NCF addresses adequately the issue of professional development?
   A lot ☐  To some extent ☐  Very little ☐  Not at all ☐

48. Please provide your comments on the issue of professional development.

49. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed model/s for incorporating professional development sessions in the timetable?
   Please tick one choice in each row
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
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</table>
a)  CFT 1        | ☐     | ☐        | ☐          | ☐            |
b)  CFT 2        | ☐     | ☐        | ☐          | ☐            |
c)  CFT 3        | ☐     | ☐        | ☐          | ☐            |
d)  CFT 4        | ☐     | ☐        | ☐          | ☐            |
e)  CFT 5        | ☐     | ☐        | ☐          | ☐            |

50. Please provide your comments on these proposals.

51. If you would like to propose other model/s, please amplify.
52. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the ten “Key Ideas” which emanate from the NCF?

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<th>Strongly agree</th>
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<tr>
<td>a) The development of lifelong learners who are engaged and responsible citizens and active in the economy</td>
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<td>b) The support for all learners to achieve and succeed, whatever their backgrounds, needs and aptitudes</td>
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<td>c) A clear focus in colleges and schools on meeting the needs of all learners through increased curricular autonomy</td>
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<td>d) The creation of active, inclusive learning communities which put learning and learners at the heart of all that they do and are accountable to their stakeholders</td>
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<td>e) Seamless progression through early, primary and secondary years in the skills and competences required for lifelong learning</td>
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<td>f) Learning which is active, personalised, relevant and purposeful</td>
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<td>g) Learning that emphasises the application of knowledge and skills in different contexts and settings as well as breadth of knowledge and depth of understanding</td>
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<td>h) A curriculum framework that focuses on learning areas. Creating links and synergies across traditional subjects</td>
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<td>i) Assessment and evaluation which use information and feedback formatively to inform planning for improvement</td>
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<td>j) Cycles of quality assurance and evaluation which recognise that continuous professional learning is an essential part of educational practice</td>
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53. Please provide other comments that you may have about the NCF hereunder

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Thank you for your contribution during the NCF consultation process
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