Editorial Note:

Dear PSCD teachers,

This scholastic year has progressed and we are already in March.

This edition of the PSCD newsletter is once again packed with so much good practice that has been taking place during PSCD, in primary, middle and secondary schools. Thanks to all the contributors of this edition.

We also thank all those who have found the time to reply to our survey request to get a better insight of your needs in the classroom, in particular the physical setting.

We take this opportunity to thank Ms. Pauline Gingell and Speranza Spiteri for their unwavering service and wish them all the best on their well-deserved retirement.

A number of UOM and IfE PSCD students are currently on teaching practice. Thanks for welcoming them and supporting them in your schools.

We are happy to note the initial high interest to attend the seminar workshop “Career Learning and Development Framework – How can the framework be implemented in our schools”. The link to register online to attend on one of the two available days, after consultation with Head of School, will be shared in the coming weeks.

We hope you find this edition inspiring and look forward to receiving more great articles from PSCD teachers sharing good practice to include in the next edition of the PSCD newsletter.

Stephen Camilleri and Dunstan Hamilton
EOs PSCD
World Kindness Day is a global day, celebrated on 13\textsuperscript{th} November of each year. The aim of this day is to help every person to reflect upon and practise one of the most significant human principles, i.e. to show kindness in various ways. This day is aimed to promote small acts of kindness which can bring people closer together.

During PSCD, I organized several activities to highlight the theme. At Zebbug Primary School I focused on the genuine kind acts that pupils can do and encouraged them to continue to do so, by words and actions. During the lessons, pupils discussed how kindness is characterised by being generous, friendly, gentle, respectful, altruistic and considerate towards others. For this occasion, the pupils came to school wearing colourful clothes to emphasize the point that when we are kind with each other, we really colour the world with kindness! To inspire pupils to be always kind, I stressed that kindness increases our personal happiness and enhances our emotional wellbeing.

Short video-clips and open discussions encouraged pupils to share their views and to reflect more on the importance of promoting and practising kindness. The pupils were asked many processing questions to help them think and analyze how kindness can take many forms.
They proudly and eagerly mentioned many examples how to be kind with others. For them, one way to be kind is to look around you and take action when you see people in need. It was emphasized that when we spread kindness, we shall enjoy the opportunity to connect easily with others and build a stronger sense of unity and solidarity with families and friends. Another way to be kind is to be keen to notice when others are not feeling well. Moreover, a kind word, a joyous smile, emphatic concern for others and an encouraging compliment can all be acts of kindness. Kindness is also shown when one is eager to celebrate someone else's successes or when telling the truth in a caring and gentle way. However, one must remember that kindness includes, also, being adequately kind to oneself, taking good care of one’s health and be happy with yourself.

During the lessons, the pupils participated in some activities to consolidate the value of kindness. Year One pupils coloured some shapes representing a human heart, to remember to be kind in what they say and do. Year Two pupils traced their hand and coloured it as a promise to show kindness at home, at school and everywhere, thus helping their family members and friends to feel happy and better by their acts of kindness. Year Three pupils, also, came out with ideas how to let kindness bloom like flowers and their suggestions were written on the flowers’ petals on a big chart. They also enjoyed playing a board-game on the topic which reinforced what they learned. Year Four to Year Six pupils, apart from discussing how kindness can be expressed, they also reflected on how they felt, when, on different occasions, someone else was kind to them! Year Four and Year Five pupils designed a card for their family and wrote a message of appreciation, while Year Six pupils wrote a message to a friend containing kind and gentle words. Moreover, Year Five and Year Six pupils, also, coloured a bookmark for the occasion.
The Archpriest of Zebbug, Can. John Sultana also addressed the students on the importance of showing kindness to each other. The students concretely showed their sense of generosity and kindness by bringing many food items to be offered to Caritas Gozo to be distributed to families in need. Later, all the students gathered together in the school ground and formed the four letters of the word ‘KIND’ in order to commemorate this day and to promise to continue to spread kindness, which, in turn, can put a burst of sunshine into someone’s day. Before going back home, pupils were also offered a treat to remember to be always ‘sweet’ and ‘kind’ in what they say and do, wherever they will be!

Indeed, the lessons and activities helped to enrich and enhance the pupils’ knowledge about ‘kindness’ and to motivate them more to persevere in showing their kindness to everyone, because all this can, not only make great difference in other people’s lives and strengthen their own friendly relationships, but can also certainly, foster a sense of satisfaction and fulfilment in their own life.
60 Christmas cards done by students during PSCD lessons, were presented to Ms Lara Farrugia & Mr Roderick Billocca from Hospice Malta during today’s special assembly. These Christmas cards were donated to patients of Hospice Malta Daycare for Christmas. Ms Farrugia & Mr Billocca explained to us, the services that Hospice Malta offers.

Remember: giving your time to others to make them feel loved is very important and always seek professional help when you are in difficulty.

Heartfelt thanks to participating students who made the beautiful cards, to my PSCD colleagues for making this happen and Head of School Mr Saviour Agius for giving us his full support on this initiative.

Thank you Hospice Malta for the priceless service you give to our community.
In a Year 2 two class, two interventions were done to tackle a lying issue. I decided to use parts of the Pinocchio story where the Blue Fairy talks to Pinocchio about where he had been and the stolen golden coins. After animating this part with the use of puppets, children were split in 2 groups and a set of Friendship cards was given to them to process Pinocchio’s feelings and bad moves while he was lying. After they reflected on what he was doing, they decided on the good moves Pinocchio should have taken. Finally, children had to reflect how Pinocchio could fix the situation by using the ‘Making up’ Friendship cards.
We started the second session by asking the children themselves to animate the same part of the story using the puppets. This time the children had to put themselves in the Blue Fairy's shoes. Children used sticks on the Feelings Friendship cards to show how they think the Blue Fairy felt and discussed how would they feel. We discussed what good moves could the Blue fairy do to help Pinocchio tell the truth. Finally, children came up with an ending for the story, most of them said that Pinocchio would realise that it was wrong lying, and he would eventually say the truth and feel happy again. All in all, with the help of the Friendship cards, these sessions were very effective and lying in this class has diminished a lot whilst they have also started to empathise with one another.
Immediacy Lesson About Depression
Ms Marie Micallef
PSCD Peripatetic Primary

Whilst processing some questions about bullying with a Year 6 class, the words ‘depressed’ and ‘suicide’ were often mentioned. When I asked more about this and we trashed it out, I found out that a couple of students in that class had first hand experiences with family members going through depression, and some also experienced suicide within their families. After consulting with Mr. Stephen Camilleri, it was decided that I treat this as an immediacy issue and prepare a lesson about depression adapted for 10 to 11-year-old students.

The Learning Outcomes of the lesson were:
- I can talk about what depression is.
- I can discuss which feelings are associated with depression.
- I can outline different things I can do to get help if I or someone I know is experiencing depression.

The lesson started off by introducing the Friendship Feeling cards and doing a round of feelings using the cards. Shortly after, I also introduced the characters through the puppets: Jude, Bailey, Mum, and Dad. The eBook started off with Jude describing their situation at home and processing was done whilst reading the story. Apart from discussing the feelings that different family members were feeling, multiple myths about depression came out during processing, such as the myth that depressed people are crazy, and the myth that depressed people always end up being addicted to alcohol.
Something which struck me was an example which one student gave me when she mentioned the aforementioned myth. When we delved deeper into where these myths come from, we concluded that media plays a vital part in stereotyping mental disorders, and in this student’s case, she admitted that she only knows one person who has depression and so, she thinks that this person is an example of what depression always looks like. This also brought to light how careful we must be when creating stereotypes based off a small number/a single person of a given population.

We finished off the lesson by doing a True or False exercise, where students were able to self-assess how much they’ve learnt about depression.
As the day of anti-bullying week was approaching, we liaised with the Head of school, SMT and Ms Lara Borg Fenech, the friendship teacher (Anti-Bullying Guidance Teacher) to organise activities during that week. During the PSCD lessons, together with Ms Lara, we discussed the topic of Bullying. On anti-bullying day which was on Thursday, 17 November, students were told to wear orange t-shirts and sing along a song of Kendra K, Be kind accompanied with signs during assembly. The song and signs were rehearsed in class with us and their respective class teachers. Hands on activities were done during PSCD lessons to create hope in the midst of bullying, to reinforce the idea of being compassionate towards each other and to take a stand against bullying.
Don't be a bully be a star

Don't stand by! Stand strong stand together
During week starting 3rd November 2022, as part of the PSCD lessons, students had slots for awareness about bullying. Students discussed how not to be bullies, where to seek help whether one is a bully or a victim of bullying and how to be active bystanders to decrease bullying around them. At home, they made posters which where displayed in the school foyer, during week starting 14th November 2022.

On 14th November a whole school special assembly took place where the Head of School addressed the students about the matter. Two students presented a short sketch presenting a scenario how when one gets toothpaste out of the tub, one cannot put it back inside, similar to our words and behaviour.

We closed the session by a short talk by our college anti-bullying practitioner, Ms Maria Jones, who shared her experiences within our school, whilst reminding the students of what services are available within reach.

We are proud to say that in our school we have a strong anti-bullying policy and promote positive behaviour. As a PSCD department, we work on this area across this topic, through relationships, developing personal skills and more.
As a consolidation of the diversity lessons discussed during our PSCD lessons, we booked two training sessions, carried out by Vanessa and Blaine at Zebbug Primary School, on the 10th of November 2022. Each session was 45 minutes long. One was for year 3 and year 4 students and one was for year 5 and year 6 students.

Vanessa and Blaine are two Disability Equality trainers employed with the CRPD, who themselves are persons with different kinds of disability; namely Autism and Mobility Impairment. They gave their experiences of when they were at school and about their everyday life routines.

Topics discussed during these sessions were about inclusion, accepting diversity and no tolerance to bullying. To start off the session, an educational video was shown to the students and this was followed by discussions and answering questions.

The students and teachers enjoyed these sessions very much. I was also very happy to see that one of the LSEs went to speak to Blaine, after the session, to seek some advice from him regarding the student she supports, who has severe autism. Blaine suggested that this boy would benefit if he starts using headphones purposely made for people with autism, to shut off the noise from outside, something which Blaine himself does. Blaine even gave the child his own headphones to try them on and the boy really looked calm and happy afterwards. It was beautiful to see this interaction between different professionals.

Through these sessions, the trainers showed students that people with a disability can also succeed in life in general when it comes to independent living, studies, working, socialization and building a family and parenting.

We would like to thank the trainers from CRPD for taking the time to come to our school and give these sessions, which have surely been a success!
Year 9 students of San Gorg Preca College Hamrun Secondary were able to understand the importance of a balanced diet in order to promote a healthy lifestyle.

The students were asked to highlight their favourite dish and outline the different components of such a dish using different colours to identify these components, so Red was for protein, Green for fibre and Yellow for carbohydrates.
On another lesson the students were then asked what a healthy meal should entail and to compare this with their favourite food.
The Pink October & Movember Awareness week, saw a collaboration between PSCD and various other subjects amongst which History, Art, PTI & HE, VET: Hospitality, Spanish & Social Studies etc. Funds raised through these activities were donated to Richmond Foundation & Action for Breast Cancer. https://fb.watch/j1GoKzV3M9/

As part of the bBrave Anti-Bullying week students were encouraged by PSCD teachers to come up with a T-Shirt/Hoodie message to #Reach Out. Students work was displayed around the school and also shared online. https://fb.watch/j1GlhI6TYj/
During the first term, Year 11 students of Mosta Secondary School (Ex Lily of the Valley), were given the opportunity to reflect on and identify different ways on how one’s actions can have positive outcomes on the community. One of the topics discussed in detail was volunteering and the students came up with various ways of how and where they can volunteer.

Something which was mentioned often by our students was the idea of helping at an animal sanctuary. I discussed with my students whether they would be interested to put into practice what we were talking about during the lesson. A good number of students were interested to volunteer and join us on this outing. After this lesson, I started contacting various animal shelters to check if they accept students as volunteers. Tomasina Cat Sanctuary were eager to accept a group of students to spend a couple of hours helping around the shelter.

The number of students allowed to join us was limited, however, my colleague Ms Vanessa Miceli (PSCD Teacher) came up with the idea of collecting cat food donated by students and staff to be taken with us to the sanctuary. Through this initiative more students could participate in helping this sanctuary, either by helping at the shelter or by donating cat food. Ms Miceli prepared a box which was placed near the school entrance and the students could leave the donated cat food there.
On the 15th of December, together with another PSCD Teacher, Ms Anabelle Portelli, we left for the animal sanctuary. There the students were welcomed by some of the volunteers who shared information about the shelter and how important the input of volunteers is to keep the shelter open. The students then were divided in small groups and spent the morning helping by feeding the cats, cleaning the premises and the cats’ bedding. On our way, back to school, the students shared how satisfied they felt by helping others.

To acknowledge and thank those students who participated in this outing, we prepared for them a certificate of appreciation. The following lesson, the students shared their experience with the rest of the class. Some students even started encouraging other students to volunteer during their free time!

Apart from participating volunteering, the experience gave the students an opportunity to practice other skills such as team work, cooperation, communication skills, altruism and problem solving skills.
Schools rarely spend time and energy studying student quarrels and conflicts and thus tend to deal with conflicts in a disciplinary way only and rarely adopt strategies for dealing with them constructively. However, individual children in conflict are in the process of developing and learning. Trying to take away their conflicts or taking over their conflicts would mean taking away an opportunity for them to grow and learn (Hakvoort; 2010). During conflicts, emotional regulation or expression is viewed as an opportunity for a student to develop a deeper understanding of themselves and others and process his or her emotions and those of others effectively (Heydenberk & Heydenberk; 2007).

The aim of this Erasmus project ‘Arguing at School’ is to see what tools and strategies exist in dealing with conflicts in schools in the different countries taking part in this study and develop methodological guidelines and a Toolkit for teachers to make methods more transferable. The project partners are Italy, Croatia, Malta, Romania, France, and Belgium.

During the first multiplier event of this project, Mr Stephen Camilleri (EO - PSCD), made a presentation where he emphasized that, conflicts are a normal and unavoidable part of interactions between even the most well-meaning individuals. He also talked about the different conflict resolution processes that can empower children to learn skills to deal with everyday conflicts (Figure 1). Schools and colleges need therefore to develop a comprehensive system for managing student conflict.

Figure 1. Conflict Resolution programmes - adapted from Cohen, 2005

https://eu.metododanielenovara.it/progetti/arguing-at-school-en/
Over the years, Safer Internet Day has become a landmark event in the online safety calendar. Starting as an initiative of the EU Safe Borders project in 2004 and taken up by the Insafe network as one of its earliest actions in 2005, Safer Internet Day has grown beyond its traditional geographic zone and is now celebrated in approximately 180 countries and territories worldwide.

From cyberbullying to social networking to digital identity, each year Safer Internet Day aims to raise awareness of emerging online issues and current concerns.

This edition was extra special as it marked the 20th anniversary of this milestone event which was held at the entrance to Valletta.

We as EOs PSCD form part of The BeSmartOnline! Project and participated in the Saturday morning event.

The BeSmartOnline! project is implemented through a consortium coordinated by the Foundation for Social Welfare Services (FSWS) and brings together the Office of the Commissioner for Children, the Directorate for Learning and Assessment Programmes (DLAP) represented by the EOs PSCD and the Malta Police Force - Cyber Crime Unit. The consortium is supported by the expertise and experience of a number of strategic partners’ who contribute through a purposely set up Advisory Board.

All partners work together to raise awareness and educate children and teens, parents/carers and educators on the safer use of the Internet. The partners also established and promotes www.childwebalert.gov.mt, an online reporting facility for illegal online content, particularly child abuse material and offers support services to respective victims.
During the morning special assembly we spoke about Internet Safety Day which happened to be celebrated the following day, 7th February. The school has its own eSafety policy which was drawn up to protect students, staff and other stakeholders. During PSCD and ICT lessons, students were also being taught skills about internet safety. As part of this campaign, students from 9.1 who are involved in the eTwinning project 'Harbourers of the Sea', were awarded the European Code Week Certificates for their participation and contribution in this project. The students came up with pro-active ideas of how to use various technological tools to preserve our marine environment.

The Internet is such a wonderful tool, when used appropriately. Let's all be mindful and together unite for a Safer Internet for Us all.
As part of Safer Internet Day, following their related PSCD lesson, Yr. 9 students were invited by their teachers to share positive messages online. Below are some of the positive digital footprints created and shared by students for their PSCD task.
Whilst taking the opportunity to thank all contributors for sharing their activities with all of us. We would like to share with you a link to a form [https://tinyurl.com/pscdmtnl](https://tinyurl.com/pscdmtnl)

This link will help you share with us any initiatives to be included in any future edition of *Connections*.

Feel free to send in your articles at any point of the scholastic year.

Thanks in advance for your contributions!

*Jahel, Mario & Melanie*