



MALTA

Focal Point: Mr. George Borg

GUIDELINES FROM COMMONWEALTH OF LEARNING (COL)

1. Key challenges and opportunities (not more than 3 each) for 'learning for development' in your country
2. Status of distance education/eLearning in your country
3. Identify (not more than 5) top priorities that you would like COL to take up during the next Three Year Plan 2012-15.

MALTA

Key Challenges and Opportunities

- The Implementation of the Education Reform
- Redesigning the School Curricula
- Use of ICT as a teaching Resource across the curriculum to enhance learning
- External Review mechanism for compulsory education institutions
- National Literacy Strategy
- Implementation of new process of transition from Primary to Secondary

Participation in COL activities

- Malta was represented at the Commonwealth meeting in June 2010 held at Stoke Rochford Hall, Conference Centre, Lincolnshire, UK re- *Protocol for the Recruitment of Commonwealth Teachers.*

Status of ODE in Malta

Policies

While, at this stage, a formal policy on Open and Distance Learning is not yet available, it should be noted that the Ministry of Education, Employment and the Family has within its structures a Department responsible for Curriculum and eLearning. The Department

has in fact offered an online course to teachers and has also collaborated with other agencies to promote and provide learning opportunities on these lines.

Additionally, the Directorate responsible for Lifelong Learning within the Ministry of Education, Employment and the Family, has recently introduced Government-sponsored scholarships available through distance learning.

Initiatives

- Through European Social Funds and Government funded scholarships for post-graduate studies leading to Master and Doctoral level a good number have been awarded to persons to pursue their studies through Open and Distance Learning.
- The Sir Temi Zammit Foundation at the University of Malta has embarked on one ambitious and far-reaching initiative which is the development of a number of online courses for SMEs intended to enhance competitiveness through ICT use and improved business practices, such as digital marketing and search engine optimisation. These courses are available online (<http://vle.ftz.org.mt>) in 8 languages.

Teacher Education

During 2010 the Curriculum and eLearning Department continued to carry out the implementation of the eLearning Strategy. Schools were also equipped with computers, in particular Science and Technology Labs through ERDF funds. Connectivity was also carried out in a number of schools.

- In Service Training (INSET) Courses were organised for two Church Schools, for Kindergarten Assistants and for Home Economics Teachers.
- A three-day eLearning/Art course for Art Teachers was delivered.
- An INSET course on Computing was held in July at the Higher Secondary School Naxxar for Advanced and Intermediate Level Students.
- A European Computer Driving License Conversion Course for students was organised.
- The Department organised voluntary teacher training courses in ICT during the winter which attracted 160 participants. The summer courses attracted 180 participants.
- ESF funds were utilised during 2010 for to train 1700 parents and teachers re-Office applications to enable them to get the ECDL certification

Infrastructure

- By the end of this scholastic year all classrooms in Primary Schools, including kindergarten classes and special rooms, will have access to the internet.
- All labs in the secondary schools are connected to the internet and at the present moment about five secondary schools have all their classes connected to the internet. In the near future an interactive whiteboard will be installed in all Primary and Secondary schools classrooms.
- A eLearning platform will be available in schools during the forthcoming scholastic year. It is envisaged that this will start being availed of initially in Primary schools and later on in Secondary schools.

Content

eLearning Teachers in the Primary Schools and Support Teachers for the Secondary carried out the following:

- Schools piloted a number of emerging technologies both in terms of hardware and software, including: Nintendo Wii, Nintendo DS consoles, digital and video cameras, talking books, robots and a number of software packages. Various meetings demonstrating the educational use of the Nintendo Wii consoles were carried out.
- Various websites are being maintained and updated regularly including www.curriculum.gov.mt, <http://schoolnet.gov.mt/cs/>, <http://elearning.skola.edu.mt/>

TOP PRIORITIES FOR 2012-2015

1. Training of teachers on the use of Interactive White boards and on the eLearning solution that will be in place in the next couple of years.
2. Professional training of teachers in the area of visual and hearing impairment, autism, Social, Emotional, Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) and intellectual disabilities.
3. Professional training in Psycho Social Services.
4. Sharing of already available modules of ODE amongst Commonwealth member countries so that with some modifications these could be used by other educational institutions to meet the needs of their countries.
5. Support in the development of a Policy on Open and Distance Learning.