

Continuous Education is a right: Equal Opportunities for all

Education is considered in all developed countries as a right of each and every individual. This is not just basic education but also in continuously improving oneself. In Malta, a lot has been said in this respect but the reality is far from the words spent.

Any person coming from the main industries will confirm that our basic education system needs a substantial reform. There is still a substantial difference between the education provided in private schools and that in state schools. What the policy makers have consistently failed in seeing or implementing is a holistic system. Certain skills necessary in a person's working life are still heavily lacking in certain school leavers. On the other hand parents that have recognised this and can afford to pay are investing in ensuring to educate their children to be adequately prepared to face the family, social and working life. This in itself is creating a different level of opportunities in the education system. The state has the obligation to ensure that all have equal opportunities to learn and this should happen in their localities.

It is amazing that nowadays there still exists a substantial difference in quality delivered even between state schools and that parents have to resort to various measures to try and ensure that their children are transferred to a better school which sometimes is away from home. The administration should ensure that quality is in all schools and persons in all localities have access to adequate education

The education opportunities are flawed throughout. In spite of the stipend at University of Malta, Malta still does not give the opportunity to all to proceed in their studies. First of all if one comes from a school that does not deliver the way it should the student will be at a disadvantage in passing through the necessary examinations to enter the University of Malta. Apart from this, in spite of the stipends, due to various circumstances, not all can go to University but are obliged to enter the working world immediately. Those really willing to go ahead with their studies usually go towards part time study. Most of these have no other choice but to do this with private organisations. These, not only are not assisted, but have been continuously ignored by the current administration. In fact even when the Malta Government Sponsorship Scheme was launched part time study was excluded. So once again the Government has put at an advantage those who can stay away from work and has failed to assist all.

In spite of the various denials, certain part of the education system attracts VAT. Those institutions that represent foreign organisations and act as intermediaries for example for Distance Learning programmes can vouch for this. In fact in terms of the VAT Act, since the service received through distance learning is received by the intermediary, then that part is subject to VAT which is not refundable in view of the fact that the intermediary is usually exempt. In this respect, persons who for various circumstances choose to study in this manner are not being treated in the same manner as students that choose other form of study. Why is there a discrimination against this type of study? Why are these being treated differently?

An education system within a modern and developed country requires that the education opportunities are open and equal to all persons from all strata of society. Furthermore the education system should be designed in a manner that really prepares our human resources to the future needs of our economy and prepares them appropriately for their family, social and working lives.

www.ivanbuttigieg.com