

Family friendly education

The level of education obtained by a country should be measured on the amount of skills gained by the population. Malta is portrayed as a country whose workforce is at a skilled level. However, it seems to be a difficult task for employers to find the required skills when recruiting employees. This may be due to the fact that the employers are not aware of the skills available among the workforce, or alternatively the said skills are not actually there.

A solution to this problem might be the introduction and implementation of the ECVET, a European system created for recording the learning achievements of individuals obtained abroad. The proposed system has its benefits but it also has considerable disadvantages such as a change in the type of education obtained. It might cause a shift from tertiary education to vocational or informal training.

The introduction of the ECVET system will highlight the fact that Malta is lacking certain skills and is falling short in respect to certain education areas. This will be more obvious when Malta is compared to other EU countries.

In recent years, Government emphasised on the number of intakes in our schools and on the high investments made in the education sector. What is actually relevant is not the student intake or investments incurred, but the level of apprehension and the skills gained by the students over the years. Given the feedback received from the employers, one questions whether our education system, curriculum and methodology are giving the necessary results for Malta.

When looking at the past, one can see that Malta constantly failed in planning for the needs of its workforce. It was only recently that we realised the need for more people in the IT industry in Malta. This was brought into light with the decision of implementation of the Smart City project. Education should be one of the elements included in the long term economic plan.

In our country, education level differs according to the area. Unfortunately, education is not being distributed fairly across the country. Education in the South and South East areas of Malta has been poorly planned. In spite of the considerable population growth in such areas, especially in the localities of Fgura, Marsascala and Zejtun, the education plan does not cater for the increasing need for education.

Having adequate education resources at all levels and ensuring that the outgoing students are properly educated are two fundamental issues that will aid the improvement in the employment sector. In this way the students will be more able to compete in today's business world. Having a proper level of education among the young families is very important nowadays. Young parents need to be properly educated in order to be able to raise their children in certain values where education is one of the priorities.

In order for our country to remain competitive, it is important that education is continuous. Unfortunately continuous training in Malta is not at the level it should be. Our culture needs to embrace this ideology. Although large business entities invest in such training, other smaller scale businesses have not yet recognised the importance of this aspect and they are not encouraged to do so either. It is important that these businesses are informed on the advantages of continuous training and they should be encouraged to invest in such training for their employees. The schemes launched so far are too complicated and they are not entrepreneur friendly because they did not reach the desired results. It might also be the case that the adequate information is not available, or that the schemes were not promoted in a proper way. To add insult to injury, those interested in the schemes who are enquiring for more information are not being guided appropriately.

These schemes need to be promoted in a better way in order for business entities to be more aware of them. It is useless having such schemes that are known by very few. If managed properly, these schemes could not only help businesses but they could also ensure better use and transferability of our workforce.

Education and training are fundamental for our competitiveness and for the employability, maturity and well being of our families. Investment should be planned in a better way especially in certain areas, where population is rapidly increasing when compared to other areas in Malta

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