



Ensuring Inclusive Education for Persons with Disabilities in Malta

By

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Project Title: Ensuring Inclusive Education for Persons with Disabilities in Malta

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Executive Summary

Education is a core human right and the foundation for a just, inclusive society. Malta has taken important steps toward inclusive education, but students with disabilities still face significant barriers. This project outlines a comprehensive, rights-based strategy to transform Malta's educational system in alignment with international and national legal obligations. Emphasis is placed on accessibility, tailored curricula, therapy integration, educator training, and fostering a culture that embraces disability as part of human diversity. The goal is a national education system that empowers every student to thrive, participate fully, and contribute to society.

1. Introduction

Education empowers individuals and fosters full societal participation. For students with disabilities, inclusive education not only affirms dignity and rights but is also crucial for social integration and lifelong empowerment. Malta, as a signatory of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), is committed to inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all.

This project assesses the current educational landscape, legal context, challenges, and offers concrete, sustainable recommendations for achieving an inclusive education system for students with disabilities in Malta.

2. Legal Framework

2.1 International Frameworks

- **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)**
 - Article 24: Right to inclusive education at all levels.
 - Article 5: Non-discrimination.
 - Article 21: Access to communication and information.
- **Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)**
 - Article 23: Right to education for children with disabilities.

2.2 EU Frameworks

- **EU Charter of Fundamental Rights:** Equal access to education.
- **European Disability Strategy 2021-2030:** Emphasis on inclusive education.

2.3 National Legislation

- **Constitution of Malta (Art. 32):** Protection against discrimination.
- **Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) Act (Cap. 413).**
- **Education Act (Cap. 327):** Inclusion mandate.
- **Persons with Disability (Employment) Act (Cap. 545):** Links inclusive education to employability.

3. Current Situation in Malta

Despite policy commitments, the practical implementation of inclusive education in Malta faces challenges:

- Inaccessible school buildings and facilities.
- Shortage of specialized support personnel.
- Inconsistent implementation of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs).
- Over-reliance on segregated education models.
- Limited awareness and training among teachers and peers.
- Absence of therapy services in most mainstream schools.
- Inadequate transport solutions tailored for students with disabilities.
- Students are often left in wheelchairs without encouragement for mobility or physical engagement.

4. Objectives

1. Ensure full alignment with UNCRPD Article 24 and Maltese law.
2. Promote inclusive education across all mainstream schools.
3. Enhance accessibility to infrastructure and transport.
4. Provide embedded therapy and support services in schools.
5. Develop adapted curricula focused on strengths and functional learning.
6. Train educators and school staff in inclusive pedagogies.
7. Raise public awareness to normalize disability and celebrate diversity.

5. Recommendations

5.1 Infrastructure & Accessibility

- Audit all school facilities for accessibility compliance.
- Retrofit schools with ramps, lifts, accessible bathrooms, and tactile surfaces.

5.2 Inclusive Transport Services

- Introduce specialized, door-to-door transport for students with disabilities.
- Ensure all school buses meet accessibility standards.

5.3 School-Based Therapy

- Integrate speech, occupational, and physical therapy within schools.
- Employ multidisciplinary teams working alongside educators.

5.4 Mobility Support

- Encourage physical engagement and reduce unnecessary long-term wheelchair use.
- Provide mobility aids and regular physiotherapy.

5.5 Individualized Curriculum

- Develop general, adapted syllabi tailored to each student's needs and abilities.
- Reduce overload by assigning only core subjects and functional skills.

5.6 Educator Training

- Train teachers on inclusive education principles and classroom strategies.
- Provide continuous professional development.

5.7 Awareness & Inclusion Campaigns

- Implement peer-sensitization programs.
- Promote school-wide inclusion activities to build empathy and acceptance.

6. Rights Protection and Legal Recourse

- Establish easy-to-access complaint and appeal systems.
- Strengthen the role of KNPD in monitoring compliance.
- Guarantee students and parents the right to legal remedies.

7. Implementation Plan

Action Area	Timeline	Responsible Entity
Accessibility Audit	Q3 2025	Ministry for Education + Infrastructure Malta
Therapy Deployment	Q4 2025	Ministry for Health + Education
Curriculum Review	Q1 2026	Curriculum Directorate
Transport System Reform	Q1 2026	Ministry for Education + Transport Malta
Educator Training	Ongoing from Q3 2025	Institute for Education
Awareness Campaign	Annual	Agenzija Sapport / NGOs

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

- Create a National Inclusion Monitoring Board.
- Publish annual progress reports.
- Gather feedback from students, families, educators.

9. Conclusion

Inclusive education reflects a commitment to equity, human dignity, and social justice. Malta has a legal and moral obligation to ensure that all children—regardless of ability—can access and benefit from high-quality, inclusive education. By implementing this strategy, we invest in a future that celebrates diversity and provides every learner the opportunity to flourish.

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