



A LEGAL & POLICY PRESENTATION

LEGAL FOUNDATIONS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

International legal and theoretical frameworks, Malta's laws and policies, and how global instruments shaped Maltese legislation.



I

International Frameworks



II

Maltese Laws & Policies



III

OECD SEN Framework

How This Presentation Is Structured



International Legal Foundations

1948–2015 — nine global milestones that shifted disability from charity to a human right, and inclusion from a privilege to an obligation.



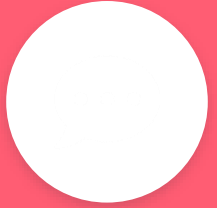
Maltese Laws & Policies

How Malta moved from segregation to systemic inclusion — the Education Act, the Spiteri Report, the External Audit, and today's national frameworks.



The OECD Framework

The OECD's three-category model of special educational needs, and how it compares with Malta's own approach to classification and support.



BEFORE WE BEGIN

Is education a right — or a privilege?

- Turn to the person next to you: was that always true, everywhere, for everyone?
- Keep that question in mind — we'll trace exactly how the world answered it, one document at a time.

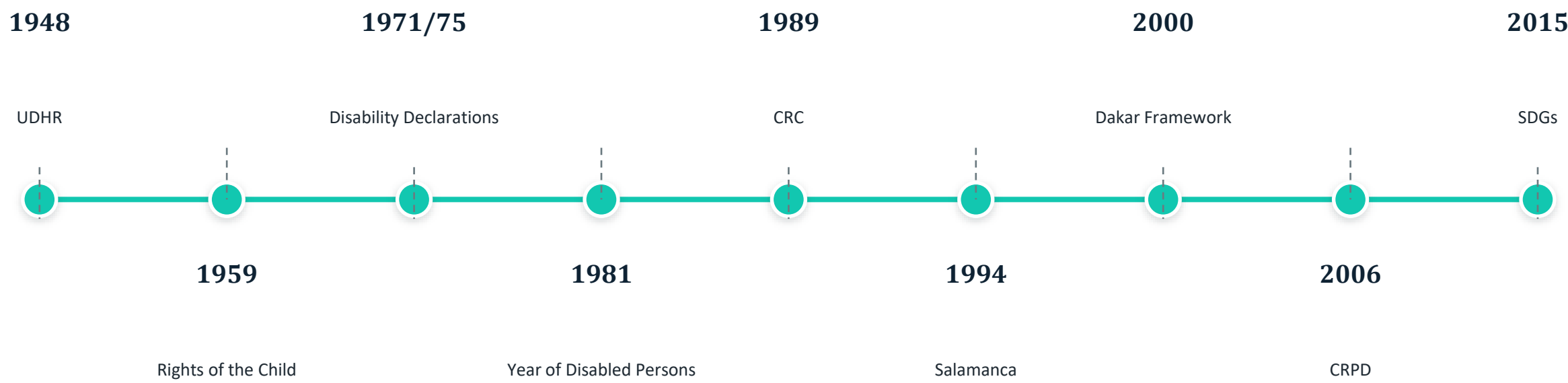


PART I

International Legal Foundations

1948 – 2015 · Nine milestones that shifted global thinking from charity to rights

The International Timeline at a Glance

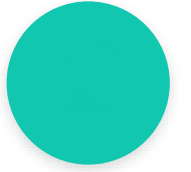




Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

Key Article: Article 26 — “Everyone has the right to education.”

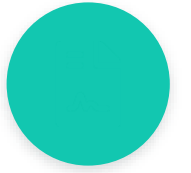
- Inclusion is rooted in human rights, not charity.
- UDHR establishes education as a universal entitlement, laying the foundation for later disability-specific rights.
- Although disability is not explicitly mentioned, the principles of non-discrimination, dignity, and equal opportunity underpin all future inclusive education frameworks.
- UDHR marks the shift from exclusion as a social norm to education as a global obligation.



Declaration of the Rights of the Child

Key Principle: Children with disabilities should receive “special treatment” suited to their condition.

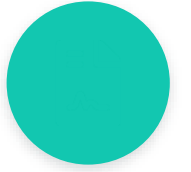
- This document still reflects a medical/charity model — disability is seen as a condition requiring special care.
- Important because it is the first international recognition that disabled children have rights.
- Sets early expectations for states to provide support, even though inclusion is not yet mentioned.



UN Disability Declarations

1971: Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons 1975: Rights of Disabled Persons

- These declarations begin shifting global thinking from charity to rights.
- They introduce concepts of equal treatment, access, and participation, though still framed through medical language.
- These documents paved the way for later, stronger commitments like Salamanca and CRPD.



International Year of Disabled Persons

Theme: “Full participation and equality.”

- This year triggered global reforms, including early integration policies.
- It reframed disability as a social issue, not a personal tragedy.
- Many countries, including Malta, began expanding support roles (e.g., early LSE equivalents).



UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

Key Article: Article 23 — Disabled children have the right to special care and support enabling access to education.

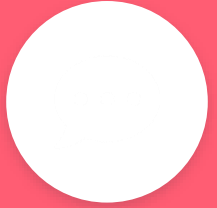
- CRC is crucial because it recognises disabled children as rights-holders, not passive recipients of care.
- It obliges states to ensure access to education, participation, and development.
- CRC heavily influenced Malta's early SEN policies in the 1990s and early 2000s.



Salamanca Statement & Framework for Action

Key Quote: “Schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions.”

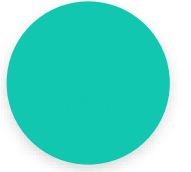
- This is the birth of modern inclusive education.
- Salamanca shifts responsibility from the learner to the school:
 - Schools must adapt.
 - Barriers must be removed.
 - Diversity is normal.
- Emphasise that Salamanca rejects segregation and promotes inclusive pedagogy, collaboration, and whole-school reform.
- This document directly shaped Malta’s 2005 Inclusive Education Policy.
- [Global Evolution of Inclusive Education & Disability Rights | Salamanca, UDHR & UN Policies](#)



PAUSE & DISCUSS

“Schools must adapt.” Easy to say — hard to do.

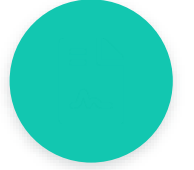
- Name one barrier in a real classroom that has nothing to do with the learner, and everything to do with the environment.
- Who has the power to remove that barrier?
- [Bridging Policy and Practice: Making Education Reform Work in Real Classrooms](#)



Dakar Framework for Action (Education for All)

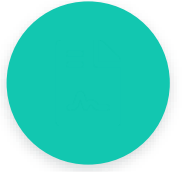
- Positions inclusion as essential for achieving universal education.
- Emphasises equity, access, and participation.
- Encourages states to remove systemic barriers, not just provide special programmes.

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)



Key Article: Article 24 — “States Parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels.”

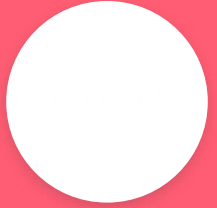
- CRPD is the strongest, legally binding global commitment to inclusive education.
- It requires states to:
 - eliminate segregation
 - provide reasonable accommodation
 - ensure accessibility
 - train teachers
 - support participation and achievement
- CRPD marks the shift from integration/mainstreaming to full inclusion.
- This treaty is the single most influential document shaping Malta’s modern reforms.



Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

SDG 4: “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education.”

- Inclusion becomes part of global development policy.
- Links inclusion to wellbeing, equity, and lifelong learning.
- Influences Malta’s 2024–2030 National Education Strategy.
- [Sustainable Development Goal 4 - Quality Education - Rorden Wilkinson](#)



QUICK CHECK

Nine milestones, one direction: charity → rights.

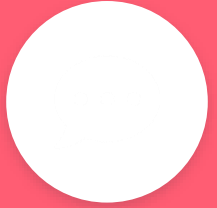
- Which single document do you think mattered most for education specifically — and why?
- Now let's see how these global shifts actually landed in Malta.



PART II · SLIDE 10

Maltese Laws & Policies

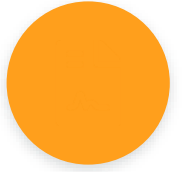
How Malta's legislation and national policy evolved — and how international frameworks shaped that journey



THINK ABOUT MALTA

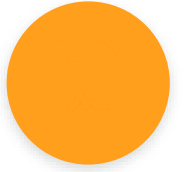
Segregation → Integration → Inclusion.

- Where would you place your own school on that journey today — and what's the evidence for your answer?
- Keep a mental note — we'll come back to this after the Spiteri Report and the External Audit.



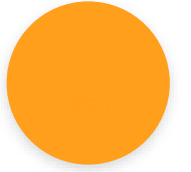
Institutionalisation & Segregation

- Malta followed European norms: disability understood through charity and medical models.
- Special schools run by religious orders; mainstream access was rare.
- No formal SEN policy; exclusion was systemic.
- International influence minimal — Malta mirrored global segregation trends.



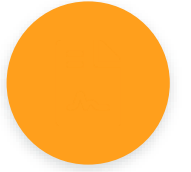
Integration Era & Introduction of the LSE Role

- Integration begins: learners with disabilities start entering mainstream schools.
- LSE role introduced to support individual learners — initially task-based, not pedagogical.
- Influenced by global movements: International Year of Disabled Persons (1981), CRC drafting.
- Marks Malta's first shift away from segregation.



Salamanca Statement → Malta's Early Inclusion Thinking

- Salamanca's principles strongly influence Maltese educators and policymakers.
- Encourages mainstream placement and barrier removal.
- Leads to expansion of LSE roles, resource centres, and early SEN guidelines.
- Sets philosophical foundation for Malta's 2005 policy.



Malta's First Inclusive Education Policy

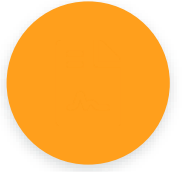
Document: Inclusive Education Policy (2005)

- First formal national commitment to inclusion.
- Emphasises access, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility.
- Begins shifting language from “special needs” to “inclusive education.”
- Strongly shaped by Salamanca (1994) and CRC (1989).
- Marks the beginning of systemic reform.



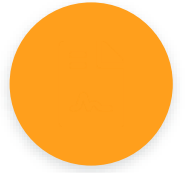
Inclusive and Special Education Review ("the Spiteri Report")

*Published June 2005 by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment, Floriana, Malta —
authored by the Inclusive and Special Education Review Working Group.*



Inclusive and Special Education Review

- The Spiteri Report on Inclusive and Special Education in Malta was published in June 2005.
- It was authored by the Inclusive and Special Education Review Working Group and published by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment, Floriana, Malta.
- The report provides a comprehensive review of the inclusive and special education system in Malta, including background, statistical framework, special needs education in Europe, and recommendations for repositioning and parallel programmes.
- It also addresses the legal framework and the challenges faced by children with individual educational needs.



Why the Spiteri Report Was Commissioned

- In the early 2000s, Malta was experiencing a rapid expansion of integration practices, with more learners with disabilities entering mainstream schools.
- The LSE role had grown quickly, but without a clear national framework, leading to inconsistencies in practice.
- Internationally, inclusion was gaining momentum — especially after the Salamanca Statement (1994) and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).
- Malta needed a system-wide review to understand:
 - how inclusive its schools truly were
 - whether integration was effective
 - what structural reforms were required
- The Ministry therefore commissioned the Inclusive and Special Education Review Working Group, chaired by Lino Spiteri, to produce a comprehensive national review.



What the Spiteri Report Is

- Published June 2005 by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment.
- A full system audit of Malta's inclusive and special education provision.
- It is one of the first Maltese documents to explicitly use the language of inclusive education rather than special needs.
- Examines:
 - historical development of SEN in Malta
 - statistical trends
 - European comparisons
 - legal frameworks
 - school-level practices
 - challenges faced by learners with individual educational needs
 - recommendations for restructuring the system

Structure of the Report

a. Background & Historical Development

- Traces Malta's movement from segregation → integration → early inclusion.
- Highlights the influence of Church-run special schools and early mainstream placements.

b. Statistical Framework

Provides data on:

- number of learners with SEN
 - distribution across mainstream and special schools
 - LSE deployment
 - resource allocation
-
- Shows a rapid increase in learners requiring support, stressing the need for systemic planning.

European Comparison & Legal Framework

c. Special Needs Education in Europe

- Compares Malta with EU member states.

Notes that Malta was ahead in access (integration) but behind in:

- teacher training
 - collaborative practice
 - whole-school inclusion
-
- Highlights European trends toward rights-based inclusion.

d. Legal Framework

Reviews Maltese legislation and identifies gaps:

- SEN rights not fully embedded in the Education Act
 - reliance on circulars rather than statutory obligations
 - lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities
-
- Calls for stronger legal alignment with international human rights instruments.

Challenges & Recommendations

e. Challenges Faced by Children with Individual Educational Needs

Identifies systemic barriers:

- inconsistent support
 - unclear LSE role
 - limited teacher training
 - fragmented communication
 - lack of coordinated multi-disciplinary services
- Emphasises that many learners were present but not participating.

f. Recommendations for Repositioning & Parallel Programmes

Proposes restructuring the system to:

- clarify roles
 - strengthen teacher responsibility
 - improve collaboration
 - develop parallel programmes for learners needing specialised pathways
 - shift from reactive support to proactive planning
- Calls for a national inclusive education strategy.

Role Confusion & the Policy–Practice Gap

a. Role Confusion

- Teachers often delegated responsibility for the learner entirely to the LSE.
- LSEs were used as “shadow teachers,” undermining inclusion.
- Schools lacked shared ownership of inclusion.

b. Policy–Practice Gap

- Policies spoke of inclusion, but classroom practice remained integration or mainstreaming.
- Learners frequently worked on separate tasks, limiting participation.

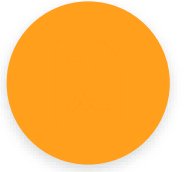
Fragmented Systems & the Need for Rights-Based Reform

c. Fragmented Support Systems

- MDTs were inconsistent.
- Communication between professionals was weak.
- Support depended heavily on individual staff rather than system design.

d. Need for Rights-Based Reform

- The report emphasised that inclusion must be grounded in legal rights, not goodwill.
- Called for alignment with international frameworks (CRC, Salamanca).



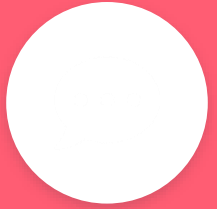
Why the Spiteri Report Is Important for Inclusive Education

- It was the first comprehensive Maltese review of inclusive and special education.
- It exposed systemic weaknesses that were previously unacknowledged.
- It provided evidence that inclusion cannot rely solely on LSEs — it must be whole-school and systemic.
- It laid the groundwork for:
 - the External Audit Report (2014–2015)
 - the LSE Role Reform (2018)
 - the National Inclusive Education Framework (2022)
 - the Quality Assurance Framework (2023)
- It shifted Malta’s narrative from “supporting the child” to “changing the system.”



SLIDE 24 · KEY NOTE

“The Spiteri Report was Malta’s wake-up call. It showed us that access alone is not inclusion — and that real inclusion requires clear roles, strong legislation, and whole-school responsibility.”



PAUSE & DISCUSS

“Access alone is not inclusion.”

- Give a real example of a learner who is physically present in a classroom — but not actually included.
- What would need to change for that to become genuine participation?

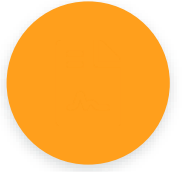
The Education Act — Malta's Legal Backbone for Inclusive Education



The Education Act is not just a legal document — it is the foundation that allows Malta to build a modern, rights-based, inclusive education system. Every policy we use today stands on the shoulders of this Act.

The Education Act:

- Establishes the right to education for all learners in Malta
- Provides the legal structure for compulsory schooling, governance, curriculum, and support services
- Embeds principles of equity, access, and participation
- Forms the foundation for all later inclusion policies and reforms
- Evolved over time to align with international human rights instruments (CRC, CRPD, SDGs)



Why the Education Act Matters for Inclusion

Although the earliest versions of the Act did not explicitly use the term “inclusive education,” they embedded core principles that later became essential for inclusion:

- Right to education for all learners
- Non-discrimination and equal access
- State responsibility to provide appropriate educational services
- Provision of support structures and specialised staff

These principles created the legal space for Malta to gradually shift from segregation → integration → mainstreaming → full inclusion.



Early Limitations (Pre-CRPD Era)

Before Malta ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2012, the Education Act:

- Focused mainly on access rather than participation
- Treated special educational needs through regulations and circulars, not deeply embedded rights
- Reflected a system still influenced by medical and charity models
- Allowed integration but did not yet require barrier removal or inclusive pedagogy

This is important to highlight: the Act provided a foundation, but not yet a rights-based inclusive system.

Post-CRPD Evolution of the Education Act

Article 24 requires:

- An inclusive education system at all levels
- Elimination of segregation
- Reasonable accommodation
- Accessibility
- Trained personnel
- Support for participation and achievement

This led to:

- Stronger legal language on equity and inclusion
- Recognition of the need for support services (e.g., resource centres, MDTs)
- Formalisation and professionalisation of the LSE role
- Alignment of national policy with international human rights obligations

The Education Act as the “Umbrella” for All Later Reforms

Every major Maltese inclusion policy is built on the Education Act’s legal foundation:



LSE Role Reform (2018)

- Clarified responsibilities, qualifications, and professional expectations.



National Inclusive Education Framework (2022)

- Embedded UDL, whole-school inclusion, collaboration, and barrier removal.



Quality Assurance Framework (2023)

- Made inclusion a measurable indicator of school quality.



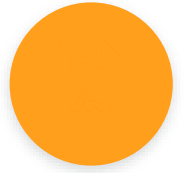
National Education Strategy (2024–2030)

- Positioned inclusion and wellbeing as central to educational transformation.



External Audit Report (2014–2015)

“Education for All: Special Needs and Inclusive Education in Malta” — European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education.



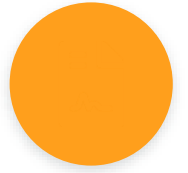
Context: Why Malta Commissioned an External Audit

By 2014, Malta had made significant progress in integration and mainstream access, but concerns persisted about:

- inconsistent inclusive practices
- unclear roles (especially LSE vs teacher)
- fragmented support systems
- uneven quality across schools

The Ministry recognised the need for an independent, international evaluation to:

- benchmark Malta against European standards
 - identify systemic strengths and weaknesses
 - guide future reforms
-
- The audit was conducted by the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, a respected international body specialising in inclusive systems.

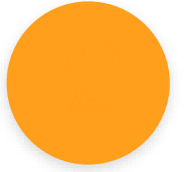


What the External Audit Report Is

- A comprehensive, system-wide evaluation of Malta's inclusive and special education provision.
- Conducted throughout 2014, published February 2015.
- Uses the Agency's Framework of Standards — a set of internationally recognised benchmarks for inclusive education systems.

Based on:

- school visits
- interviews with educators, SMT, parents, LSEs
- focus groups
- policy analysis
- data review



What the Audit Set Out to Achieve

- To assess how far Malta's education system aligns with rights-based, inclusive education.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of current structures (LSEs, resource centres, MDTs).
- To identify barriers preventing full participation of learners with individual educational needs.
- To provide evidence-based recommendations for systemic reform.
- To support Malta in aligning with CRPD Article 24, which requires an inclusive education system at all levels.

A Multi-Layered Audit Approach



Document Analysis

- Reviewed Maltese legislation, policies, circulars, guidelines, and statistical data.



School Visits

- Observed classroom practice, collaboration, and support structures.



Stakeholder Interviews

- Teachers, LSEs, SMT, parents, students, specialists, NGOs.



Comparative Analysis

- Benchmarked Malta against European inclusive education systems.

Strengths

a. Strong National Commitment

- Malta had already embraced inclusion at policy level.
- High access rates: most learners with SEN were in mainstream schools.

b. Support Structures Exist

- LSEs, resource centres, and specialist services were well established.
- Parents generally valued the support provided.

c. Positive Attitudes

- Educators and leaders showed willingness to improve inclusive practice.
- Inclusion was seen as a national value.

Systemic Weaknesses

a. Role Confusion

- Teachers often delegated responsibility for the learner entirely to the LSE.
- LSEs were functioning as “shadow teachers,” not collaborative partners.
- This undermined teacher ownership and inclusive pedagogy.

b. Policy–Practice Gap

Policies used the language of inclusion, but classroom practice often remained:

- integration
- mainstreaming
- parallel teaching
- Learners were present but not fully participating.

Systemic Weaknesses, Continued

c. Fragmented Support Systems

- MDTs were inconsistent across schools.
- Communication between professionals was weak.
- Support depended heavily on individual staff rather than system design.

d. Lack of Shared Understanding

- Different stakeholders interpreted “inclusion” differently.
- Some saw it as physical placement; others as academic participation; others as social belonging.
- This inconsistency led to uneven implementation.

e. Limited Whole-School Structures

- Inclusion was often seen as the responsibility of the LSE, not the entire school team.
- Leadership structures for inclusion were underdeveloped.

Strengthening Legislation and Capacity

a. Strengthen Legislation and Policy

- Develop clearer, rights-based inclusive education policies aligned with CRPD.
- Embed inclusion more explicitly in legal frameworks.

b. Build Whole-School Capacity

- Train teachers in inclusive pedagogy and UDL.
- Reduce reliance on one-to-one support.

Clarifying Roles and Building Standards

c. Clarify Roles

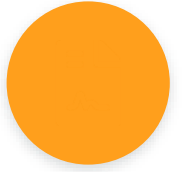
- Define teacher, LSE, SMT, and MDT responsibilities clearly.
- Promote collaborative planning and shared ownership.

d. Improve Coordination

- Strengthen MDT structures.
- Improve communication between services, schools, and families.

e. Establish Standards & Monitoring

- Create national standards for inclusive practice.
- Monitor implementation consistently across schools.



Why the External Audit Report Is Important

- It provided an independent, evidence-based evaluation of Malta's system.
- It validated strengths but clearly identified structural weaknesses.
- It became the foundation for Malta's modern inclusive education reforms.
- It shifted Malta from “integration with support” to systemic, rights-based inclusion.

How the External Audit Shaped Later Maltese Policies



a. National Inclusive Education Framework (2022)

- Directly responds to audit recommendations.
- Embeds UDL, collaboration, barrier removal, and whole-school inclusion.



b. LSE Role Reform (2018)

- Clarifies responsibilities and professional expectations.
- Addresses role confusion highlighted in the audit.



c. Quality Assurance Framework (2023)

- Makes inclusion a measurable indicator of school quality.
- Introduces standards and monitoring — exactly as recommended.



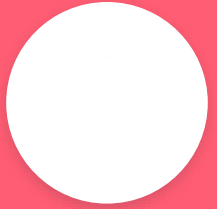
d. National Education Strategy (2024–2030)

- Places inclusion and wellbeing at the centre of system transformation.
- Aligns with CRPD and SDG 4, reflecting audit guidance.



SLIDE 42 · KEY NOTE

“The External Audit Report was Malta’s turning point. It gave us the evidence we needed to move from integration to true inclusion — from individual support to systemic reform.”

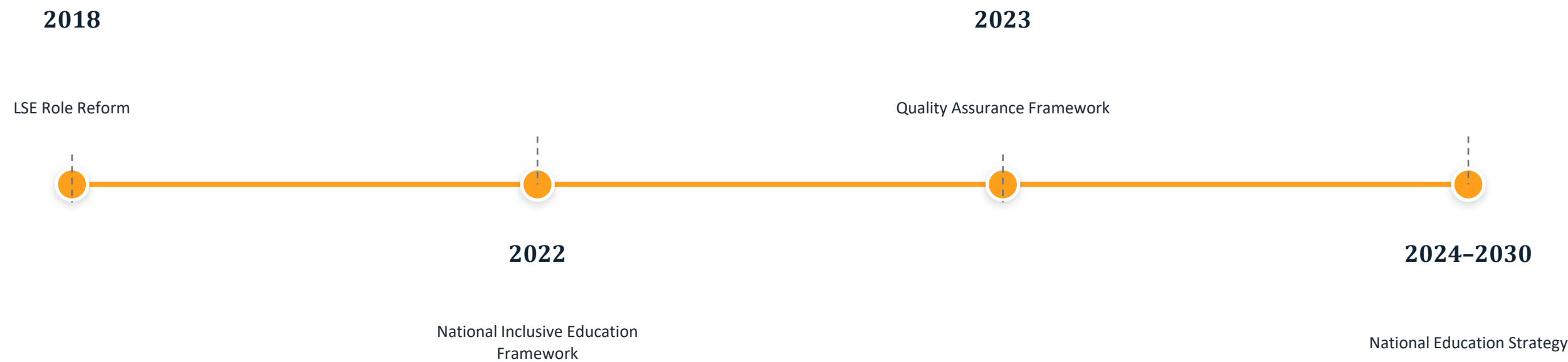


ROLE CHECK

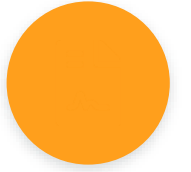
“Shadow teachers” vs. collaborative partners.

- In your experience, who ends up “owning” inclusion in a classroom — the teacher, the LSE, or both?
- What does genuine collaboration actually look like, day to day?

Malta’s Modern Policy Landscape (2018–2030)

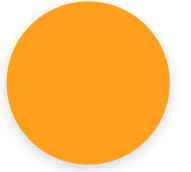


LSE Role Reform



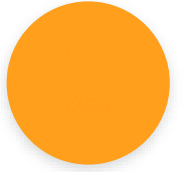
Document: LSE Grades 1–3 Framework

- Professionalises the LSE role.
- Clarifies responsibilities, qualifications, and progression.
- Aligns support with CRPD expectations for trained personnel.
- Shifts LSE work from task-based support to pedagogical collaboration.



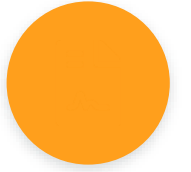
National Inclusive Education Framework (NIEF)

- Malta's most comprehensive inclusion document.
- Embeds Universal Design for Learning (UDL).
- Defines inclusion as a whole-school responsibility.
- Clarifies roles of teachers, LSEs, SMT, MDTs.
- Focuses on participation, wellbeing, and equity.
- Directly aligned with CRPD Article 24 and SDG 4.
- Marks Malta's shift from integration/mainstreaming to full inclusion.



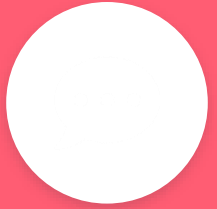
Quality Assurance Framework (QAF)

- Inclusion becomes a measurable indicator of school quality.
- Schools must demonstrate evidence of UDL, collaboration, and barrier removal.
- Aligns with EU and UNESCO quality standards.
- Reinforces inclusion as a core component of educational excellence.



National Education Strategy

- Places wellbeing and inclusion at the centre of educational transformation.
- Aligns with SDG 4 and EU 2030 targets.
- Emphasises equity, participation, and whole-school culture.
- Represents Malta's long-term commitment to inclusive education.



QUICK CHECK

From reports to reform.

- Of the four modern documents — LSE Reform, NIEF, QAF, National Education Strategy — which do you think has changed classrooms the most so far?
- Now let's zoom out to an international lens: how does Malta's model compare to the OECD's?

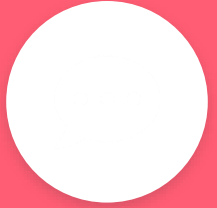


PART III

The OECD Framework & Comparison with Malta

A standardised international model for classifying special educational needs

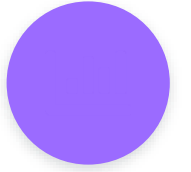
[What is the OECD? Explained.](#)



TRY IT YOURSELF

A, B, or C?

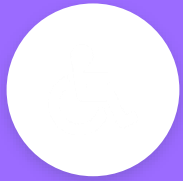
- Think of a learner you know. Would the OECD classify their need as a disability, a difficulty, or a disadvantage?
- Does that single label capture the whole picture? Why or why not?



Three Categories of Individuals Included in Special Educational Needs

In its influential 2003 framework, the OECD developed a standardised international classification system to help countries report and compare data on learners requiring additional educational support.

Because nations define “special educational needs” differently, the OECD introduced a three-category model to capture the full spectrum of learners who may need additional resources.



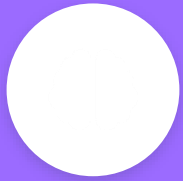
Disabilities

This category includes learners whose difficulties arise from organic, medical, or biological conditions. The OECD describes these as needs “attributable to organic impairments.”

Examples include:

- sensory impairments (hearing, vision)
- physical disabilities
- intellectual disabilities
- neurological conditions
- chronic health conditions

These learners typically require specialised support, adaptations, or assistive technologies. Historically, this group was most likely to be placed in segregated settings, although modern inclusive systems emphasise participation in mainstream classrooms.



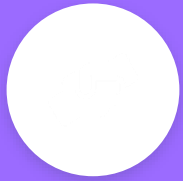
Difficulties

Category B refers to learners who experience learning or behavioural difficulties that are not caused by organic impairments. The OECD defines this group as students with “learning or behavioural difficulties not attributable to organic disorders.”

Examples include:

- dyslexia and other specific learning difficulties
- dyscalculia
- ADHD
- emotional or behavioural regulation challenges
- language processing difficulties

These learners often struggle with curriculum access or classroom routines and require targeted interventions, differentiated instruction, and structured support. Their needs arise from challenges in learning processes rather than medical diagnoses.



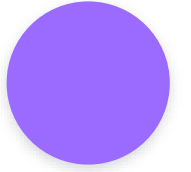
Disadvantages

The third category includes learners whose educational needs arise from socio-economic, cultural, or linguistic disadvantage. The OECD describes these as needs “arising from socio-economic, cultural, and/or linguistic factors.”

Examples include:

- children living in poverty
- migrant learners
- students from minority cultural backgrounds
- learners whose home language differs from the language of instruction

These learners may not have disabilities or learning difficulties, but their circumstances create barriers to participation, achievement, and equitable access. This category highlights that inclusion is also about addressing structural inequalities.



Comparing OECD (2003) SEN Categories with Malta's SEN Framework

Malta's SEN framework, shaped by the National Curriculum Framework (2012), the National Inclusive Education Framework (2022), and the CRPD (ratified in 2012), shares similar intentions but organises support through a different structure.

A comparison between the two systems highlights both alignment and divergence in how special educational needs are conceptualised and operationalised.

Disabilities vs Malta's "Learners with Disabilities"



OECD Category A

OECD Category A refers to learners with medically-defined disabilities such as sensory impairments, physical disabilities, intellectual disabilities, and chronic health conditions.



Malta's Approach

Malta similarly recognises this group through formal documentation processes involving medical or psychological assessments. The LSE role, originally created during the integration era, was primarily designed to support this category. Today, Malta's approach is more holistic: disability is understood through the social model, emphasising barrier removal, UDL, and whole-school inclusion.

While OECD focuses on classification for statistical comparability, Malta focuses on rights-based participation aligned with CRPD Article 24.

Difficulties vs Malta's "Learners with Learning and Behavioural Difficulties"



OECD Category B

OECD Category B includes learners with learning or behavioural difficulties not caused by organic impairments (e.g., dyslexia, ADHD, dyscalculia, emotional regulation challenges).



Malta's Approach

Malta mirrors this category through its recognition of Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLDs) and behavioural/social challenges. Support is typically provided through differentiated instruction, targeted interventions, and collaboration between teachers, LSEs, and specialist services.

Malta's framework places stronger emphasis on inclusive pedagogy rather than categorisation, encouraging schools to adapt environments rather than withdraw learners for separate instruction.

Disadvantages vs Malta's "Learners at Risk of Social Exclusion"



OECD Category C

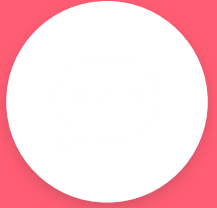
OECD Category C captures learners whose needs arise from socio-economic, cultural, or linguistic disadvantage.



Malta's Approach

Malta recognises similar groups through policies addressing migrant learners, multilingual learners, students from low socio-economic backgrounds, and those at risk of social exclusion.

While OECD frames this as part of SEN classification, Malta typically treats disadvantage as part of equity and wellbeing policy, not SEN — supported through community outreach, language support programmes, guidance services, and whole-school wellbeing initiatives.



FINAL DISCUSSION

OECD classifies. Malta commits to rights. Which one shapes YOUR daily practice more?

- Can a system do both at once — classify for resourcing, and stay rights-based in the classroom?
- What's the one change you'd make first, starting Monday?



CLOSING

Key Takeaways

- International law moved disability from charity to a binding human right — from the UDHR (1948) to the CRPD (2006) and SDG 4 (2015).
- Malta's journey mirrors this arc: segregation → integration → systemic, rights-based inclusion, driven by the Education Act, the Spiteri Report, and the External Audit.
- Every major modern Maltese policy — the LSE Role Reform, NIEF, QAF, and the National Education Strategy — traces back to these legal and evidentiary foundations.
- The OECD's classification model shows how Malta shares international intentions but applies them through its own rights-based, whole-school approach.

Sources & Key Documents



International Instruments

UDHR (1948)

Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1959)

UN Disability Declarations (1971, 1975)

CRC (1989)

Salamanca Statement (1994)

Dakar Framework (2000)

CRPD (2006)

UN SDGs (2015)



Maltese Legislation & Policy

Education Act, Laws of Malta

Inclusive Education Policy (2005)

Inclusive and Special Education Review — the Spiteri Report (2005)

External Audit Report — European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (2014–2015)

LSE Grades 1–3 Framework (2018)

National Inclusive Education Framework (2019, revised 2022)

Quality Assurance Framework (2023)

National Education Strategy (2024–2030)