

Master of Arts in Community Action and Development

Course overview:

Community Development is an interdisciplinary academic paradigm with a long tradition. The MA in Community Action and Development delves into the intellectualizing of issues such as community education, empowerment and emancipation, citizenship, inclusion and exclusion, social movements, social capital, globalization, sustainable development and education for sustainable development. The programme of study also targets problematisation and deconstruction of prejudiced and stereotypical cultural notions and attitudes and social problems. It advocates a rethinking of citizenship: By drawing on emancipatory schools of thought, the programme of study challenges assumptions that citizenship 'just happens'. It also fosters critical engagement with social change and its academic study.

Methodologically, the programme of study engages with 'concerns within the community' by means of formal, informal and non-formal pedagogies. Moreover, on the basis of consultation meetings with relevant stakeholders, the programme of study is hybridized into the varied interests of potential students. Thus, the richness and calibre of this Masters' degree lies in its ability to bring together diverse scholarly and professional practice components into one organic whole to develop community practice that caters for the local, global, European and globalised social contexts.

This programme of study addresses the increasing need and demand of contemporary communities (in Malta and overseas) to be resourced in a decentralised manner (including virtual/online tools and spaces), with human resources who have the required human capital and level of professional practice, and who are specifically based in respective communities on a long-term basis.

The programme of study is designed around five distinct yet interrelated knowledge dimensions:

1. Community studies, sociology, politics and governance;
2. Community pedagogy and educational intervention;
3. Community activism and participation;
4. Community psychology;
5. Professional practice.

The programme of study targets the understanding of these knowledge dimensions and related critical intellectual development within a framework of globalization that is balanced by sustainable development.

Learning outcomes:

The learning outcomes of the programme include:

- (a) Development of professional practice rooted in an academic and rigorous research culture of social engagement that seeks sustainable community development and regeneration;
- (b) Ability to develop, implement, co-ordinate and support policy that is grounded in the scientific knowledge based (described in (a));
- (c) Experiential learning, particularly during the placement / practical component of the programme of study;
- (d) Engagement with education as a concept and a lifelong practice that goes beyond schools and schooling, i.e. extending to informal and non-formal dimensions;
- (e) Generation of primary data, identification and effective deployment of secondary data to address poorly understood / vulnerable community and relational dynamics;

For this to occur, the targeted key/transferable skills and skills relevant to personal development and employability include:

- (a) Critical engagement with established paradigms, policies, literature and data;
- (b) Interpersonal and networking skills;
- (c) Leadership, team and team-building skills;
- (d) Training-the-trainer skills that are grounded in emancipation of self and context;
- (e) Advanced professional practice rooted in ethics of practice;
- (f) Relevant corporate and organizational skills;
- (g) Relevant ICT skills (with special focus on online media campaigns/dissemination and online analytics);
- (h) Community profiling;
- (i) Advanced research skills;
- (j) Project and resource management (with special attention to local regeneration and gentrification projects).