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Editorial:
Stop, Stop, Stop!

We are all convinced that Gozo is a very special place, and not just for Gozitans. It is special because of what it is, what it has been from the beginning. Those who come to visit appreciate the difference. The worst thing that can happen to Gozo is to turn it into the mediocre banality that most tourist places elsewhere have been turned into.

There are obviously many and varied conflicting interests. There is the ever increasing population of Gozo which in the last decade has swollen by almost 25 per cent. There is the ever-increasing desire of the better-healed compatriots from the sister island to have a pied-a-terre in Gozo, a desire which quickly turns into actuality when economic conditions allow such a luxury. There is, most ominously of all, the craving of those wishing to get rich quick by building more and more flats to accommodate the needs of the tourist industry - one taxi-driver was heard bragging that he now owned ten flats!

Politicians, finding themselves squeezed between the demands of developers and the increasing clamour of conservationists, talk of sustainable development, which a stretchable enough concept, meaning different things to different people. Hard decisions are difficult to make and are likely to have a severe negative effect on popularity. Hence the need for an approach to such problems that has the consensus of all major political parties, thus reducing the risk of the issue degenerating into a political football.

Here are some unlikely suggestions for the future. One thing which appears clear to most is the fact that Gozo does not need any more flats and apartments. The monotony of developments that scar the periphery of our villages should be a thing of the past. There should be a strict moratorium on building flats and apartments for the tourist industry.

Secondly, new building permits should be limited to those residents who need accommodation as their first home. No permits should be issued to build a second home/flat/apartment anywhere in the island. There should be taxes on second houses severe enough to make such holdings prohibitive. In particular, one must face the fact that not every well-off person in Malta can own an apartment in Gozo - there is simply not enough space for this to happen.

Priority should be given to newly-wed couples wishing to establish a home in Gozo. These should be helped to find an existing home, with considerable incentives to obtain an older house rather than building a brand new home. In this respect politicians must have sufficient intestinal vigour to rectify once and for all the injustices generated by the pre-war renting legislation which have succeeded in perpetrating a mentality of fear and distrust between landlord and tenant.

There should be an effective propaganda against the overuse and abuse of land. An ethos should be established that shames all those who feel they need palatial accommodation where a smaller house could serve their needs equally well.

What is the alternative? A laise-a faire policy will ensure that Gozo will lose its attraction as a quiet semi-rural jewel in the Mediterranean ideal for those who prefer to escape from the hurly-burly of life in the major cities of Europe. By turning Gozo into yet another ordinary tourist spot with all the amenities available everywhere else in Europe, one is simply hastening the demise of the tourist trade in Gozo - a sure way of killing the goose that lays the golden egg. Why come to Gozo when there are so many more attractions in the major cities and countries of Europe?

It is also well to realise that Gozo cannot be all things to all people. There is always going to be limitation on what we can provide. A decision has to be made about the direction to take. Niche tourism requires specialising in a certain direction, involving the provision of a special product desired by a section of the population. When however, such needs conflict with the long-term viability of Gozo, and particularly when its very special characteristics, its flora and fauna and its natural beauty are threatened, then it is certainly time to stop and consider. No short term development should over-ride the long-term effects on the eco-system of the island, and none should be permitted, whatever the political cost.
Introduction

Islands are much more than a source of inspiration for romantic narratives. They are home to the hard-wearing and innovative islanders engaged in a perennial struggle for survival in their restricted and isolated homelands. By their very nature, small islands are less ecologically variable than larger land masses and can support fewer species diversity and smaller numbers of flora and fauna. Besides, adverse environmental conditions like drought, epidemics, and related calamities can generate disproportionately great impacts on all parts of the ecosystem, while the islands’ fragile economies have a limited capacity to respond to and recover from such disasters.

In several instances, this innate sense of vulnerability and isolation triggered the inception of closely-knit social groups dominated by fervent and intricate religious beliefs that were in turn manifested via the creation of distinctive and awe-inspiring artistic outputs. Some of the better-known examples are the monumental sculptures of Easter Island and the British Channel Islands, and the megalithic compounds of Majorca and the Maltese islands. A potential explanation for these grand artistic achievements is that they were not simply something pleasing to look at, but a powerful tool to work magic and guarantee their survival.

Malta’s Prehistoric Temples

The huge investment required for the erection and eventual running of the Maltese megalithic complexes highlights their central role in the temple builders’ communal life. Their construction and layout qualify them as theatres for ceremonial and ritual deeds for the invocation of supernatural forces, namely some form of being or beings related to fertility and the regeneration of life. In this respect, the said temples must have had a strong link with agriculture, the backbone of the temple builders’ subsistence economy, to the extent that their location seems to have been dictated by the footprint of the most favourable crop-cultivation

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**Figure 1:** Major Temple Period Sites in Gozo (4100 - 2500 BC)

1. Ta’ Marziena (temple), & Taċ-Ċawla (settlement)
2. Ġganija, Ta’ Għejzu & Santa Verna (temples), & Xaghra Stone Circle (hypogeum)
3. Il-Ĉnus ta’ San Ġwann (temple)
4. Borġ l-Għarib & L-Imrejżbiet (temples), Tal-Qigħan (?), & Għajnsielem Hut (settlement)
5. Il-Ħaġra il-Wieqfa (?)

Dotted line marks extent of the Rabat-Għajnsielem plain
plains in the Maltese islands, defined by Grima as ‘ecological windows of opportunity’.\(^6\)

This distribution pattern is particularly evident in Gozo (Figure 1), where, besides the well-known and imposing twin temple complex of Ġgantija, one comes across several more contemporaneous sites, including five more temple ruins, two settlements, and a hypogeum.\(^7\) These sites are all sitting within or along the perimeter of the fertile and vast plain extending from Rabat to Ghajnsielem.\(^8\)

**The Rabat-Għajnsielem Plain**

The Rabat-Għajnsielem plain has a surface area of some 10 km\(^2\), and consists of an undulating district lying at heights between 85 and 105 metres above sea level. It is dominated by the Xagħra and the Nadur mesas on the northern side and by the Ta’ Ċenċ upland running along the south-facing flank. Apart from being the most extensive area of level land in Gozo, the Rabat-Għajnsielem plain is also of prime agricultural importance because of the prevailing soil types.

Soil is earth material which, after being acted upon by chemical, physical, and biological agents, is able to support rooted plants.\(^9\) Maltese soils are characterized by their close similarity to their parent rock, and are classified under three main categories: terra soils, carbonate raw soils, and xerorendzinas.\(^10\)

Terra soils are relic soils formed during the Pleistocene (circa 1.8 million to 10,000 BP) and little affected by the present climatic region. They are found mainly on the karst-landscapes of the Upper and Lower Coralline Limestone. The terra soils are rather fertile, but occur mainly as small and shallow pockets that are generally dry, compact, and difficult to cultivate.

Carbonate raw soils develop on weathered Green Sands and Blue Clay. Clays enhance the soil’s inherent capabilities of water retention and aeration.\(^11\) Besides, in several instances the carbonate raw soils outcrops are aided by spring seeps, thus supporting the most productive arable plots in the Maltese islands.

Xerorendzinas form mainly on Globigerina Limestone and provide a rather meagre soil mantle on the gently rolling landscape. In most cases, the fields in which this soil is found are strongly terraced with rock-cut faces at the back of the terraces. Many of such fields were partly produced by mining, while the resultant soil cover is usually very loose, dry, and has poor water conservation capabilities.

The soil cover of the Rabat-Għajnsielem plain is fairly deep and consists of a well-balanced mixture of carbonate raw soils and xerorendzinas. This excellent blend is reflected also in the detailed crop cultivation survey carried out by the University of Durham between 1955 and 1958, whereby it was confirmed that the Rabat-Għajnsielem plain is the most appropriate region in Gozo for the cultivation of a varied mix of cereals, fruits, and vegetables.\(^12\)

**Abundant Water Supplies**

Fresh water resources and human settlement have an enduring relation. Gozo’s only fresh water source is the rainfall.\(^13\) As in all Mediterranean areas nearly 70 per cent of the Maltese islands’ annual rainfall occurs in the six months period October-March. Moreover, a closer look at the mean annual figures reveals drastic contrasts between the respective years and notable regional variations.\(^14\) The latter is of particular relevance for Gozo despite the islands’ surface area of only 67 km\(^2\).

The rainfall of the Maltese islands originates mainly from rising currents in turbulent air-masses and the configuration of the Gozitan land-mass with its maximum height of circa 190 metres above sea level, stimulates or delays the yield from a precipitating or unstable cloud. The sheer-cut cliffs characterizing the south-west coast delay rainfall, while the more gently rising uplands running along the north-east coast encourage precipitation. As a matter of fact, western Gozo receives an average annual rainfall of 500mm, whereas the north-east mesas and adjoining Rabat-Għajnsielem plain get about 600mm. (Figure 2)

A substantial amount of rainwater is eventually absorbed by the porous rock and accumulated in the aquifers or water tables from where it either seeps out or is pumped up by man. The Maltese islands have two types of water tables, one in the Upper Coralline and another in the Globigerina and Lower
Coralline formations. The largest aquifer is stored in the Globigerina and Lower Coralline layers better known as the mean sea-level or lower water table. However, no effort seems to have been made for organised public exploitation of this fresh water supply until the mid-nineteenth century.  

The upper or perched water tables consist of accumulated rain water that after percolating through the Upper Coralline and Green Sand layers is prevented from infiltrating any further by the impervious Blue Clays. Consequently, whenever the Upper Coralline / Green Sands and Blue Clay interface is exposed, water seepage in the form of fresh water springs is likely to occur. Nonetheless, the storage capability of the perched aquifers depends on the surface area and thickness of the Upper Coralline / Green Sand blocks forming the respective mesas. The ones to the west of Xaghra are relatively restricted in surface area to store any appreciable quantity of water, whereas the extensive Upper Coralline / Green Sands caps overlooking the Rabat-Għajnsielem plain have the capability to store much larger volumes of water (Figure 3). As a result, many of the water springs in western Gozo have a heavily reduced or insignificant flow during the dry summer months, while the ones running at the base of the Xaghra, Nadur, and Qala mesas maintain an abundant flow throughout the year.  

Again, this overview on the island’s annual rainfall pattern and distribution of water springs confirms that the Rabat-Għajnsielem plain features the most favourable combination of fresh water resources in Gozo.  

A Natural Choice  

The aforementioned distribution pattern of temple period sites in Gozo suggests that the agro-economy of the temple builders was greatly dependent on the highlighted favourable environmental conditions of the Rabat-Għajnsielem plain. The said plain offered also good accessibility to the sea, particularly through the wide-floored valleys leading down to the north-facing bays of Marsalforn and Ir-Ramla, and the more sheltered havens characterizing the southern coastline. Significantly, the respective temples are located in strategic locations close to the main valleys leading down to the sea and, as suggested by Pace, this set-up may infer an attempt to define the central land-bound resources as opposed to the coastal frontier zone. Within
this scenario, the advantageously-located Xaghra plateau, particularly the southern lip, seems to have been the socio-religious hub of the island.

The temple builders’ strong dependence on the Rabat-Għajnsielem plain was eventually echoed in the settlement patterns of the successive periods, even though the political and economic centre of gravity was shifted to the Rabat plateau during the successive Bronze Age. A series of settlement growth maps for the years 1530, 1842 and 1956 respectively (Figure 4), show a consistent concentration in the immediate environs of the Rabat-Għajnsielem plain.\textsuperscript{19}

Another recurrent trait is the unproportionally high number of temple units. As illustrated in Figure 1, the temple builders erected at least six megalithic temples on Gozo. Likewise, a late Punic inscription in the Gozo Museum of Archaeology makes reference to the existence of at least four Classical temples, while Agius De Soldanis lists well over a hundred late Medieval / early Modern churches and chapels.\textsuperscript{20} Throughout the ages, the people of Gozo invested huge efforts to worship their deities. The strong urge to establish an effective communications link with the almighty seems to have stemmed from the predominant sense of vulnerability and isolation highlighted in the introduction.

**The End of the Temple Culture**

Towards the middle of the third millennium BC, the highly-sophisticated temple culture disappeared abruptly and mysteriously. One of the most convincing hypothetical explanations points towards over-exploitation of the Maltese islands’ natural resources.

The process of deforestation, land reclamation, and consequential soil erosion initiated by the Ghar Dalam settlers in the early stages of the fifth millennium accelerated drastically by the temple builders.\textsuperscript{21} As a result, the soil cover must have become increasingly thinner and poorer in nutrients and micro-organisms, and seems to have lost its ability to generate sufficient food supplies and support the ever-growing population. Famine,
poverty, and poor health prevailed, and social and political breakdown was inevitable. In a nutshell, the population grew too much and in no way proportionate to the real material possibilities of Malta and Gozo.

Notes:

7 The temple sites are Ta’ Għejżu, Sta. Verna, Ta’ Marżiena, Borg ġ-Gharib, l-Imrejsbiet, and Iċ-Ċnus ta’ San Ġwann. The settlements are Taċ-Ċawla and the Għajnsielem Hut, while the said hypogeum is the Xagħra Stone Circle. Other contemporaneous sites that cannot be classified securely on the basis of the available archaeological data include Il-Hagħra l-Wieqfa, Tal-Qigħan, Borg ġ-l-Imramma, and il-Pergla.
8 Godwin Vella, ‘Man-Land Relations in Prehistoric Gozo’, Unpublished BA (Hons.) dissertation presented to the University of Malta, 1995
16 The only abundantly flowing water springs in western Gozo are sited at the foot of the Ġhar Ilma and Il-Mixta mesas respectively.
17 The neighbourhood of Ġgantija is known as ta’ ġ-Għejjun (abounding in springs).
18 A. Pace, ‘The Artistic Legacy of Small Island Communities: the Case of the Maltese Islands (5000-2500 BC)’, in Pace (ed.), 1-12.
21 Surveying work conducted by the Anglo-Maltese team engaged in the Xagħra Stone Circle excavation confirmed that the landscape was cleared rapidly of its climax vegetation; A. Bonanno et al., Monuments in an Island Society; The Maltese Context, World Archaeology, 22, 2 (1990), 190-205.
Broadcasting in Gozo
KEVIN AQUILINA

Introduction

Since the advent of pluralism in the Maltese islands following the enactment of the Broadcasting Act in 1991, a number of local radios have sprung up, both on a nationwide and community level. Gozo has not been an exception to this phenomenon. One of the nationwide radio stations – Radio Calypso – used to broadcast from Gozo. Currently ten radio stations of a community nature broadcast within Gozo and the Broadcasting Authority also has a pending application for a nationwide television station originating from Gozo. Furthermore, Gozo has contributed to raising programme standards in the archipelago’s media landscape.

Nationwide radio stations

There are 12 nationwide radio stations, divided as follows:

Public Service Stations: Radju Malta
Radju Parlament
Campus FM

Political Stations: Radio 101
Super 1 Radio

Religious Stations: RTK
Radju Marija

Commercial Stations: Bay Radio
Calypso 101.80
Smash Radio
Capital Radio
Xfm 100.2

Out of the twelve nationwide radio stations none of these operate from Gozo although Radio Calypso – not to be confused with the radio with the same name currently operating from Malta – used to broadcast from Gozo.

The rise and fall of Radio Calypso

The liberalization of radio broadcasting attracted considerable interest from the commercial sector, so much so that demand outnumbered the supply of nationwide radio broadcasting frequencies. When the Broadcasting Authority, in 1993, came to allocate the last two remaining radio frequencies which had not yet been assigned from the original ten, it had received three applications but had only two frequencies available. In the circumstances, it was decided to give precedence to and to assign one frequency to the Gozitan Radio Calypso on the grounds that it would be the only company operating a national radio from Gozo, whilst the second frequency ended up being shared between the other two applicants – the University of Malta and the Social Action Movement.

In July 1992, the Broadcasting Authority received an application from Radio Calypso Ltd. for a 24-hour mainly music service aimed at the 30+ population. The programme format was described as being middle-of-the-road / easy listening music and had to include news and speech programming covering the arts, culture, interviews, and competitions. What was original about this nationwide radio station application was that it would originate from Gozo and would present the Gozitan dimension on a national level. Furthermore, it was also stated that morning and lunchtime programmes were to include relaxing music interspersed with appropriate news items, quizzes, and competitions as well as religious programmes. Finally, Radio Calypso, it was proposed, had to devote 75 per cent of its transmission time to English programmes and the remaining 25 per cent to programmes in the Maltese language.

The station’s application was approved by the Broadcasting Authority and a licence was issued to Radio Calypso Ltd. on 30 March 1993. Radio Calypso commenced regular transmissions from its stations in Gozo on 1 August 1993.

From a promise of performance exercise carried out by the Broadcasting Authority in 1994, it resulted that the station’s programme content based on an average week’s performance
produced the following breakdown:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme Genre</th>
<th>Weekly Average</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>152.00 hrs</td>
<td>90.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussions</td>
<td>6.00 hrs</td>
<td>3.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News</td>
<td>5.00 hrs</td>
<td>2.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous (incl. adverts)</td>
<td>5.00 hrs</td>
<td>2.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>0.4 hrs</td>
<td>0.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Information</td>
<td>0.05 hrs</td>
<td>0.13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Following its first year of operation, although Radio Calypso kept to its promise to be a 24-hour mainly music station, the Broadcasting Authority reported that it had not adhered strictly to its programming content in so far as news, religious programming, and the Gozitan dimension were concerned.

When the Broadcasting Authority had announced the awarding of Radio Calypso’s broadcasting licence, it was stated that it was the first radio service with an element of foreign expertise and shareholding and that it was also the first station to be based in Gozo.

Calypso Radio Ltd.’s original licence expired on 29 March 2001. It was, nonetheless, renewed for a further eight-year period till 29 March 2009. However, the then station owners decided to transfer the company’s shares to another company which owned a community radio station broadcasting from Rabat, Malta. It was Radju Marija which took over Calypso Radio’s broadcasting frequency and hence Calypso Radio ceased to broadcast. The relative transfer of shares was approved by the Broadcasting Authority on 1 July 2004. Since then, there have been no other nationwide radio services which originate in Gozo.

**Community radio stations in Gozo**

There are ten community radio stations which broadcast from Gozo to locations situated on the same island. The table hereunder gives the list of these Gozitan radio stations, their respective frequency in the FM band, and the locality of their catchment area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Radio Name</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Radju Katidral</td>
<td>90.9MHz</td>
<td>Victoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Radju Viżitazzjoni</td>
<td>92.4MHz</td>
<td>Gharb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Radju Sokkors</td>
<td>95.1MHz</td>
<td>Kercem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Radju Margerita</td>
<td>96.1MHz</td>
<td>Sannat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Radju Bambina</td>
<td>98.3MHz</td>
<td>Xaghra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Radju Prekursur</td>
<td>99.3MHz</td>
<td>Xewkija</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Leħen il-Belt Vittorja</td>
<td>104MHz</td>
<td>Victoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Radju Sacro Cuor</td>
<td>105.2MHz</td>
<td>Fontana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Leħen il-Qala</td>
<td>106.3MHz</td>
<td>Qala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Radju Luminaria</td>
<td>106.9MHz</td>
<td>Nadur</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All the above radio stations tend to be predominantly of a religious nature, contrary to the position in Malta where community radio stations can be philanthropic or musical in character or run by clubs, whether sports or band ones. Nevertheless, at the moment of writing, it appears that the phenomenon of opening non-religious community radio stations has not yet caught up in Gozo.

In Gozo, the first two-year community radio to be awarded a broadcasting licence was Radju Leħen il-Qala which started broadcasting on 25 July 1996.

**Broadcasting Authority Programme Awards**

The Broadcasting Authority’s Programme Awards were designed to stimulate healthy competition between broadcasters working in the various radio and television services; to demonstrate that talent is appreciated and rewarded; and to achieve excellence – both in content as well as technically – in television and radio programming which, in turn, would enhance the status of programme producers.

**Radju Leħen il-Qala**

One of the winners in the 2002 Broadcasting Authority Awards was Radju Leħen il-Qala through the programme ‘L-Edukazzjoni ta’ Uliedna’, co-produced by Lelio Spiteri and Horace Mercieca. According to the Broadcasting Authority jury’s report, this discussion programme on the subject of the National Minimum Curriculum was a simple programme technically, yet both the host and the invited guest were well-versed on the subject. Although the jury considered the topic to be a daunting one for the lay person to understand,
complex jargon was clearly explained, facilitating further dialogue. Phone-ins were sensitively handled and both the host and guest rendered the topic approachable.

Independent production houses in Gozo

A reputable independent production house in Gozo which has made a name by, amongst other things, winning various Broadcasting Authority and Institute of Journalists awards is Citadel Video Communications. This company produces ‘Ghawdex Illum’ which has won the Broadcasting Authority’s Awards in 1996, 2000 and 2001 as well as ‘Żmeraldi’, itself a Broadcasting Authority Awards winner in 2003, both programmes broadcast on the public service broadcaster, Television Malta (TVM). Moreover, Citadel Video Communications under the leadership of Mr Alvin Scicluna has also won the Broadcast Film Journalism category of the 15th Malta Journalism Awards organized by the Institute of Maltese Journalists.

In its 2003 report, the Broadcasting Authority Jury commented on ‘Żmeraldi’ as follows:

‘Another quality children’s programme that avoids worn-out clichés and patronisation. It is well presented and researched and has a very good impact. Camera technique and picture quality are of the highest quality particularly on location. Sound quality is consistently good as is the editing, lighting and graphic design of the programme.’

As to ‘Ghawdex Illum’, the Broadcasting Authority Jury Panel was of the opinion that:

‘The series of ‘Ghawdex Illum’ is way above others in most aspects, particularly in presentation, photography and the technical aspect. In fact some episodes are indeed exceptional. Although dealing with the niche subject of the little sister island, it is varied enough in the themes that it tackles during each programme to qualify as a magazine programme. Footage is relevant and of exceptional quality and, most importantly, the aim of a magazine programme is reached – it keeps the viewer interested by means of varied, light subjects moving smoothly from one to another.’

Telever

On 28 March 2001 the Broadcasting Authority received an application from Gozo from Ver Co. Ltd. to operate a nationwide television station by the name of Telever. The aim of this station is to provide formation and information, education, and entertainment. Insofar as formation is concerned, Telever will aim, when operational, to contribute to the formation of the whole person through art, spirituality, culture, current affairs, science, and faith. It intends also to provide information through local, regional, and international news services. With regard to its educational mission, it aims to be a religious station where space will be provided to voluntary and humanitarian organizations and with programmes focusing on cultural and social themes. As to the entertainment component of the proposed television station, it is proposed that this will be based on programmes aimed at the leisure market as well as attempting to introduce new sources and performers.

On 21 March 2002 the Authority approved a television broadcasting licence to Telever. It did so after it had examined the relative application
from the legal, financial, and programme content point of view. But the station was not authorized by the Authority to commence broadcasting as the company had to purchase the relative transmission equipment and to carry out the necessary test transmissions. Naturally, the broadcasting frequency assigned is an analogue frequency whilst recent developments in the broadcasting landscape require that new television licences be issued for digital broadcasting. Hence the position at the moment of writing is that Telever is studying the current television broadcasting scenario to determine how it will proceed in the near future.

Court case instituted by Radju Katidral

Radju Katidral (previously known as Radju Belt Vittorja) had applied for a one-off community radio licence and for a two-year radio licence. Similar applications for both a one-off community radio station and a two-year radio station were filed by Leħen il-Belt Vittorja.

In 1999, the Broadcasting Authority had decided to issue a licence for one-off events to both stations but refused to grant a two-year community radio licence to Radju Katidral (owned by the Victoria cathedral) and to Leħen il-Belt Vittorja (owned by the Victoria basilica). Such a decision was then based on two reasons: (1) that the station names were similar; and (2) that they were both religious stations transmitting the same type of programmes within the same community.

The first problem was solved as Radju Belt Vittorja was re-designated Radju Katidral. As to the second reason for refusal, the Broadcasting Authority insisted that both stations should unite as they were both religious stations transmitting to the same community in Victoria, Gozo. The Authority requested its chief executive to meet both applicants. On 17 February, 2000 the Broadcasting Authority chief executive called both parties concerned to a meeting in order to inform them of the Authority’s decision and to learn their views thereon.

Both radio stations agreed to explain to the Broadcasting Authority their respective positions in writing and also requested a meeting with the Authority to answer any queries it might have in their respect and to put their case to it. The matter was preceded by a court case instituted by Radju Katidral against the Broadcasting Authority which was decided by the court of appeal on 17 November 1999. This was (and still is) the first court case which was instituted by a community radio station against the Broadcasting Authority. The judgement, nevertheless, did not decide the merits of the case but restricted itself to a procedural issue in terms of which the court of appeal decided that the appeal had been filed fuori termine, that is, after the time limit for filing the appeal from the Broadcasting Authority’s decision had elapsed.

Following discussions with both radio stations, the Authority decided to review its original decision not to permit two radio stations of the same genre to broadcast to the same locality. This change of policy was conditional to a declaration in writing that the radio service would not be used to propagate sectarian interests. Radju Katidral’s licence for a long-term community radio station was eventually issued by the Broadcasting Authority on 1 December 2000.

Conclusion

Were it not for the enactment of the Broadcasting Act in 1991 which did away with the State’s monopoly in broadcasting, it would not have been possible to have a proliferation of radio and television stations, independent production houses, as well as the development of a broadcasting industry. However, broadcasting is not only a matter of numbers. On the contrary, it is of the utmost essence that pluralism in broadcasting is coupled with good quality programming. Without the latter, pluralism of the airwaves would have served no purpose unless and until the programmes broadcast form one’s character, impart good values, are educational and informative, and at the same time are entertaining.

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Kevin Aquilina. Dip. Phil., BA, BA (Hons.), MA, LL.M., LL.D., Ph.D. (Lond.) (LSE) is chief executive of the Broadcasting Authority and senior lecturer in the Department of Public Law, Faculty of Laws, University of Malta.
Ramla Bay - An Ecological Gem with an Economic Contribution
CAROLINE CAMILLERI ROLLS

Introduction
Ramla Bay is one of the last unspoilt sandy beaches on our islands. It is the venue for thousands of visitors, especially during the summer months between July and September. Locals and tourists alike, in an attempt to escape from the oppressive summer heat, flock down to Ramla to enjoy the combination of sand, sea, and the unspoiled natural surroundings of the ideal ‘holiday brochure’ beach.

Rich in biodiversity
Ramla Bay is very rich in biodiversity and supports a number of endemic and threatened species. According to the State of the Environment Report, between March and July 2000, around fifty-eight species of plants were identified as well as around thirty-eight varieties of insects, some of which are endemic to the Maltese islands and include some only found at Ramla.

There are several species of molluscs, arachnids, crustaceans, reptiles, mammals, and birds. The beach itself is naturally replenished by the valley system which lies between the two plateaux of Nadur and Xagħra.

The valley leads to the site of the largest sand dunes on the Maltese islands. The Ramla Bay sand dunes themselves have enormous ecological implications as they are the largest in the islands and the only dunes left in Gozo. There are only three dune systems left in the Maltese islands, which originally housed many more. Many sand dunes have been built over to cater for the tourist industry and so, sadly, very few remain.

The beaches need a valley system behind them in order for them to regenerate and many are now threatened. The sea will simply continue to wash away the sand without it being replaced until the beach disappears completely.

Unfortunately, many people are not aware of this reality and the majority of the Maltese people do not appreciate the importance of sand dunes.

Cultural heritage
The bay also has a rich cultural heritage which includes Roman ruins, the remains of a blockhouse of the Nadur Battery, an underwater sea wall built in 1715, and a statue dedicated to Our Lady of Hope.

A survey carried out by the present author in 2005 among persons visiting Ramla Bay showed that around 68 per cent of respondents were aware of some of the important cultural features at Rambla Bay. The Roman Villa remains are perhaps the best-known of these. Other cultural assets are not so well known. Only around 23 per cent of respondents to the survey were aware of the existence of the underwater sea wall.

Recreational appeal
The recreational appeal of Ramla is undeniable. Again, referring to the survey carried out by the present author in 2005, almost all the respondents said the main reason for going to Ramla was, unsurprisingly, to swim and soak up the sun.

During a week in August 2005, the average number of people on the beach at noon was about 500; in spite of the fact that on two of the seven days there was an infestation of jellyfish and on another the wind was so strong that there were only approximately sixty-five people on the whole beach brave enough to enter the water. On one day in the last week of August 2005, between 9:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., no fewer than 2,172 people visited Ramla in spite of the occasional sighting of jellyfish. At 7:00 p.m., however, many local people, were still on their way down to the beach to have their evening meal on the sand or to enjoy a barbeque, taking advantage of the cool breeze before the sun went completely.
The restaurants attract many people who enjoy the calm, quiet atmosphere of eating next to a beach which is so isolated from the hustle and bustle of so many of our other coastal sites: so many people in fact that it is often wise to pre-book a table, especially at the weekends.

The main attractions of Ramla for the respondents in the survey were the sandy beach, clean water, and natural, uninhabited surroundings. When asked what they would like to see happen to Ramla in the future, 70 per cent responded that it should remain untouched as it is. The rest only suggested that there should be in place better toilet and shower facilities and the presence of lifeguards, emergency, and medical aid facilities. Only 3 per cent suggested the presence of water sport facilities, bars, and nightclubs.

The economic value of Ramla Bay

Placing an economic value on such a unique site is important for various reasons. Ecosystem services have a value as without them the Earth’s economies would all be brought to a standstill. However, they are often given very little credit for their provision of goods and services and policy decisions are often made with a lot of weight being put on manufactured capital and economic services without giving much thought to natural services. Economic valuation of the environment therefore is important as it can be used for deciding and justifying how public spending on preservation, conservation, and restoration projects should be allocated while at the same time taking into consideration the values of the public and in promoting public participation in environmental projects.

Valuation can also be used to compare and contrast different environmental programmes so that a priority can be made on restoration and conservation issues where environmental benefits can be maximized for each unit spent.

Over the past couple of decades, there has been an increasing awareness regarding the state of the environment and the resulting problems arising from increases in pollution and loss of natural resources and habitats. Public concern over such issues has grown as it has gradually become aware that the negative effects of environmental degradation are beginning to have a harmful and a damaging effect on human well-being.

Within the market-place, goods and services have a market value – consumers can see the price tag attached to each item and can thus choose according to their preferences or values. Consumers in the market place therefore can reveal their particular choices by comparing the price of the good or service to their willingness to pay for it.

Unfortunately environmental goods and services do not have such price tags attached to them and so more often than not their true value is uncertain and underestimated, and excess demand and degradation ensues. Most environmental assets often fall into the category of being public goods and as such it is hard for a market to develop for such goods and services.

Visitors to this beach put a high value on assets which do not have a market price such as the clean water, sandy beach, practically untouched natural surroundings, and ideal sun worshipping conditions. I believe that the underlying value of Ramla Bay is very much understated. Sadly, as is often the case, we may only appreciate the true value of such a site when it is too late.

Caroline Camilleri Rolls is following a course leading to the MA in Islands and Small States Studies at the University of Malta Gozo Centre.
The Maltese Islands became members of the European Union just over two years ago. The country has gone through dramatic changes, not all easily visible, with many slowly transforming the way we Maltese think and operate. In recent months, the materialisation of projects funded through European Union funds is starting to be seen and felt, not least in Gozo where projects and initiatives of different kinds are today very noticeable.

Certainly, projects that are tangible and that one comes across in daily life are the ones mostly known, with road works probably topping the list in people’s minds. With the heavy road reconstruction works currently underway on the Victoria-San Lawrenz three kilometre stretch that is presently closed off one cannot but be aware of the heavy investment that is coming Gozo’s way through the funds that the island managed to obtain from the European Union.

Yet, the 8.6 million Euros that are being specifically invested in Gozo, and that constitute 10% of the Structural Funds that Malta, as a country, obtained, are not being solely directed towards the road rebuilding programme but also towards ‘softer’ projects that could also have an immediate as well as a longer-term effect on the island’s economy.

Such ‘softer’ projects include the courses currently underway at the University Gozo Centre, at the Wistin Camilleri Gozo Centre for Art and Crafts and at the Institute of Tourism Studies temporarily transferred to Xewkija. The courses being offered are funded through the EU’s European Social Fund, and range from agriculture, business studies, e-commerce and IT, and environment planning and management – such as those offered at the University Gozo Centre, to craft disciplines, and tourism and hospitality-related courses offered at the other two institutes.

The attendance to these courses, being offered free of charge to Gozitans over sixteen years of age having an O’level standard of education or equivalent, is quite positive with certain courses having to shortlist the number of participants attending and other courses being offered twice this year to accommodate the number of applicants.

Gozitans are realising the benefits that educational opportunities can offer, not just for one’s personal interests or hobbies but also for one’s advances in a modern and ever changing world. Gozo too, although small in size, can – and should – face up to the changes out there, not simply by strengthening and upgrading its physical infrastructure and providing newer services but also by having a work force and a human resource base that is flexible and ready to embrace change and keep itself at the forefront of what happens outside one’s border.
Although every educational opportunity serves as a bonus to any community, the aim behind the organisation of these EU co-financed courses is not simply to offer an even wider range of possibilities on Gozo but also to present opportunities for adults to acquire those additional skills needed in view of sustainable career prospects.

For, considering the continuous changes brought about by globalisation, and the shift in the island’s economy from a traditional manufacturing to a more services-oriented market, Gozo has to orient itself towards producing products and services of quality that provide value-added and that yield a higher return to the providers. Yet, these products and services will not fall from the sky but have to be created by the entrepreneurial spirit so inherent in the Gozitan who can seize any opportunity available.

Certainly, tourism – encompassing niche activities that enhance the tourism product – remains the mainstay of the island’s economy, followed by agriculture and emerging services such as those related to information technology.

Many of the courses offered will be repeated during the next academic year, with newer courses, such as those in the crafts area, to be introduced later on this year. Interested persons should contact the relevant centre or institute and ask for additional information. These courses are being partly financed by the European Union under the Structural Funds Programme for Malta 2004-2006. Additional courses and schemes will be made available in the following budgetary period, again for the benefit of the human resource base in Gozo.

Marion Zammit is the Communications Co-ordinator at the Ministry for Gozo.
Introduction

In April 2006, the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Islands and Small States Institute of the University of Malta organised a workshop on economic resilience building in small states. The workshop was attended by various experts from the United Nations, the World Bank, the Commonwealth Secretariat, Wider Institute, the Food and Agriculture Organisation, the Pacific Forum, the Foundation for Development Cooperation, the Indian Ocean Commission, the Australian National University, the University of the West Indies, the University of the South Pacific and the University of Mauritius.

Objectives

The objectives of the workshop were to discuss the methodology of indicator construction and to propose ways in which an economic resilience index can be constructed with the aim of (a) supporting decision-making relating to resilience building to enable small states to withstand their inherent economic vulnerability and (b) setting targets, monitoring developments and establishing good practice benchmarks with regard to resilience building. Another aim of the workshop was to issue a statement on the need for economic resilience building in small states.

During the workshop a number of indices were presented and discussed. These included:

- Indicators of Sustainable Development (United Nations)
- The Human Development Index (United Nations)
- The Environmental Sustainability Index (Yale University)
- Constructing a Governance Index (World Bank)
- Country and Policy and Institutional Ratings Assessment (World Bank)
- The newly compiled Index of Economic Resilience presented by members of the Economics Department of the University of Malta.

The discussion focussed on the need for resilience building in small states. This need for resilience building has been given centre stage at the “Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action”, which was adopted by the International Community in January 2005.

The Economic Resilience Index

Professor L. Briguglio and Mr. G. Cordina delivered a presentation on developing an economic resilience index. The index attempts to measure what a country is doing to mitigate or exacerbate its inherent vulnerability.

Prof Briguglio explained that small jurisdictions tend to be economically vulnerable and this reality is well-documented. The main factors leading to such vulnerability are a very high degree of economic openness, a high degree of dependence on a narrow range of products and a high degree of dependence of strategic imports, notably food and fuel.
Although economic vulnerability poses serious development constraints, many small jurisdictions do not perform badly by international standards. Prof. Briguglio called this reality the “Singapore Paradox” referring to an inherently economically vulnerable small state that has managed to cope with its vulnerability through deliberate economic development policies. He argued that, therefore, economic vulnerability need not necessarily lead to poverty or underdevelopment. On the other hand, larger countries, including those endowed with natural resources, may remain economically backward if they fail to adopt good governance and sound economic policies.

The “Singapore Paradox” can be explained in terms of the juxtaposition of economic vulnerability and economic resilience. Mr Gordon Cordina referring to such juxtaposition, proposed a methodological approach whereby economic vulnerability is confined to inherent features which are permanent or quasi-permanent, while economic resilience is associated with man-made measures, which enable a country to withstand or bounce back from the negative effects of external shocks.

In this regard the term “economic resilience” would refer to a country’s ability (a) to recover quickly from a shock (shock counteraction) and (b) to withstand the effect of the shock (shock absorption). Mr Cordina argued that the issue of resilience is of particular importance for small jurisdictions, because it relates to a country’s ability to move on economically in spite of their high exposure to downside risks.

Mr Cordina put forward the argument that policies that promote macroeconomic stability and improve flexibility in market adjustment are important for economic success in small jurisdictions, be they politically independent or otherwise. He said that the methodological approach proposed by juxtaposing vulnerability and resilience can be used to put forward the argument that being small and vulnerable need not lead to economic backwardness in a particular jurisdiction, if suitable policies are adopted to strengthen economic resilience. It also supports the argument that small jurisdictions states, should not take a complacent stand in the face of their economic vulnerability, but should take action to build up their resilience. Finally the exercise points to the need for the international donor community to support small island developing states in building their economic resilience.

**Economic Resilience and Good Governance**

Throughout the workshop, it was emphasized that economic resilience does not depend on economic variables only, with good governance being singled out as an overarching condition in this regard. Social development was also considered as important contributory factor towards economic resilience building. The index of economic resilience proposed by the Economics Department of the University of Malta attempts to bring all these factors together and to quantitatively estimate the extent to which countries have adopted resilience building policies.

**Final Statement**

At the end of the workshop, participants adopted the following statement

1. Twenty-five experts from Commonwealth countries and international/regional organisations participated in a workshop on constructing an index of economic resilience of small states, held at the University Gozo Centre, Malta, between 10 and 12 April 2006. The participants included policymakers, practitioners and academics from the World Bank, the United Nations, the FAO, the Indian Ocean Commission, the Pacific Forum Secretariat, the Commonwealth Secretariat and from Universities of a number of small island states.
Eight University of Malta post-graduate students and two researchers from the Central Bank of Malta attended as observers.

2. The workshop built on the outcomes of the workshops held in Gozo (Malta) in March 2004 and March 2005 where the concepts of economic vulnerability and resilience were defined and a preliminary index of economic resilience was developed. The April 2006 workshop sought to further develop the framework for the measurement of economic resilience primarily by considering its potential relationships with other indices intended to measure one or more facets of resilience including Indicators of Sustainable Development, Human Development Index, Environmental Sustainability Index, Governance Index, Country Policy and Institutional Assessments and Competitiveness Indices. The Workshop also explored policy orientations towards developing economic resilience in order to mitigate the effects of economic vulnerability.

3. The workshop took into account the outcomes of the Mauritius International Meeting to review the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, held in January 2005. The Mauritius Meeting confirmed that SIDS as a group face particular handicaps as a result of their economic, environmental and social vulnerabilities, and called for work on the development of a resilience index. The workshop also took into consideration the Gozo Statement on Vulnerable Small States which emerged from the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting held in Malta in November 2005, which stated that inter alia “small states face well-recognized vulnerabilities, and that they are now confronted by new challenges.” The statement recognizes the “significant efforts that small states have made within the limits of their resources and capabilities to build levels of resilience to their vulnerabilities” while urging “the international community to take stronger and more effective action to help vulnerable small states”.

4. Participants discussed various issues that influence the economic vulnerability of small states including:
   • their exposure to international trade;
   • international trade arrangements including the erosion of preferential trade arrangements;
   • governance weaknesses;
   • climate change and natural disasters;
   • HIV/AIDS and other major health problems.

5. Participants reaffirmed that the concepts of vulnerability and resilience and their importance of small states are now internationally recognised. Vulnerability arises from an inherent exposure to adverse external shocks beyond the country’s control, as well as structural handicaps, exacerbated by inter alia a high degree of openness, export concentration and high dependence on strategic imports, remoteness and high transport costs, susceptibility to natural disasters and climate change. Although these conditions pose serious handicaps for the sustainable economic development of small states, participants noted that a number of small states have been able to mitigate the effects of these difficulties through appropriate policy orientations focused on building resilience.

6. Participants agreed that resilience building in small states should be given top priority in view of the high exposure of these states to external shocks.

7. Participants recognized the need for a focused conceptual framework on resilience building in addressing the vulnerability concerns and promoting sustainable economic growth, as well as in strengthening national and regional policy approaches. The building of economic resilience has been recognized to emanate from good policy
practices in sustainable development, including: macroeconomic stability; microeconomic market efficiency; governance, social development and cohesion, and environmental management.

8. Participants considered the further work that has been undertaken on an index that attempts to measure the degree of economic resilience with regard to these dimensions, based on available information. The participants agreed that the work carried out so far as presented in the workshop constituted a valid contribution to the development of a methodological framework and the measurement of economic resilience. This work should in future continue also with a view to effective policy orientations towards resilience-building by strengthening country policies and institutional performance through consultation and collaboration with international organisations.

9. Participants also recognized the need for integrated, participatory and collaborative schemes, involving all major stakeholders, to ensure the success of resilience strategies, principally through capacity building.

10. Participants recognised that the primary responsibility for building national resilience lies with the individual countries themselves. At the same time participants recognised the role that the international community can play in supporting countries in this endeavour.

Recommendations for Small States

11. Participants agreed that available evidence and expert opinion supports the view that the building of resilience requires an integrated approach covering a wide range of policy dimensions. Among the various policy issues in this regard, participants highlighted the following:

(a) prudent and sound macroeconomic policies within the context of promoting competitiveness within a framework of sustainable economic growth and development;
(b) appropriate microeconomic policies aimed at promoting the efficient use of resources;
(c) promotion of good governance in the public and private sector to facilitate sustainable economic growth, ensure security and respect for the rule of law, eradicate corruption and to promote accountability, transparency and efficiency;
(d) education, training and lifelong learning to promote human capital, including entrepreneurship;
(e) social development and cohesion through programmes aimed at eradicating poverty and promoting dialogue among stakeholders in development;
(f) the enhancement of ecological capital and sound environmental management through horizontal and vertical integration of environmental sustainability, and the acknowledgment that environmental resilience is an integral part of economic resilience;
(g) capacity-building towards the formulation, effective implementation and evaluation of policies and programmes aimed at building resilience;
(h) enhancement of capacity to efficiently utilise external resources to build resilience;
(i) identification of best practices and sharing of experiences in the development of resilience; and
(j) building greater awareness among policy makers and all stakeholders regarding the need for resilience building.

Workshop lunch at the central courtyard of the University Gozo Centre

Regional and International Dimensions

12. Participants agreed that the negotiating capacity of small states, particularly SIDS can be enhanced by appropriate analytical tools including vulnerability and resilience indices. The support of regional and international organisations was urged in this regard.

13. In particular, participants welcomed the
mandates of the UN General Assembly of July 2005, the UN-DESA Regional Meetings culminating in an inter-regional meeting in Rome in November 2005 and the continuing support being committed by the UN to SIDS through each UN agency to provide support to these states.

14. Participants discussed regional cooperation and integration as instruments in the structural adjustment process in building resilience.

15. Participants commended the work of international and regional organisations that have supported efforts by small states to promote their sustainable development and in strengthening their negotiating capacity.

**Future Work**

16. Participants recognized the potential value of the resilience index as a tool for planning and development and commended the work presented so far in improving the evidence base for building and measuring economic resilience of small states. They agreed on the need for further research work in the area of resilience, particularly by using the results obtained to identify the best policy orientations for small states to develop their economic resilience to assist national and regional policy-making. In particular, participants urged the undertaking of research to identify cases of best practice regarding resilience building among small states from which important lessons can be derived for other small states and for the international community. This research should encompass a sufficient cross-section of small states, taking into account differences in their economic, social and cultural characteristics.

17. Participants requested the Commonwealth Secretariat and the University of Malta to organise an international conference aimed at disseminating information about resilience building at fora which attract high level participation from SIDS and support from key stakeholders, including the 9th Annual Conference of the Global Development Network (GDN) will be hosted by the Oceania Development Network (ODN) in Brisbane, Australia, in January 2008. The ODN has supported inter-regional networking on SIDS’ issues and participants were invited to consider the possibility of a contribution to GDN 2008 or a side-event focusing on resilience building for small states, which could attract high level participation and support from key stakeholders.

**Expression of Gratitude**

20. Participants expressed their gratitude to the Government of Malta and the University of Malta for their hospitality and warm welcome and for creating congenial conditions for a successful meeting.

21. Participants also thanked the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Gozo for their contributions to the deliberations, and the support expressed by both ministers in promoting measures in favour of small states.

22. Participants requested the Chairman of AOSIS to circulate the workshop outcomes to the members of AOSIS, and other international organisations to note and disseminate this final statement.

Nadia Farrugia, MA (Economics), is a freelance economist and a part-time lecturer at the University of Malta.

Stephanie Vella, MA (Economics), is a freelance economic consultant also working as a part-time lecturer at the University of Malta.
Extra-curricular Activities at the University Gozo Centre (January - June 2006)
JOSEPH CALLEJA

The Gozo Lace Day

On 30 April, the Lace-Making Programme at the University of Malta Gozo Centre organized the annual event ‘Gozo Lace Day’ for the tenth consecutive year. The event was held at the University Gozo Centre premises and consisted of a number of exhibitions and demonstrations of Gozo lace and a number of talks on matters related to lace-making. Present for the event were Hon. Anton Tabone, Speaker of the House of Representatives, His Excellency Mons. Nikol Cauchi, and Ms Consiglia Azzopardi, coordinator of the Lace Making Programme.

In her introductory talk, Ms Consiglia Azzopardi mentioned the three-year course on Lace making, which has been offered at the University Gozo Centre for many times. She stated that the idea of offering a University course leading to a Diploma in Lace Studies has become a reality. In fact the first Diploma in Lace Studies course started in October last year. Ms Azzopardi said that this course is covering various aspects of lace studies such as History of Art, Lace History in Malta & Europe, Economic Aspects, Lace Textiles in Costume and Vestment, Modern Design and Lace in Islands of Europe.

In his talk the Hon. Anton Tabone, praised the initiative taken by the University of Malta to approve the Diploma course in Lace Studies and he said that he is very happy that the course started last year. He referred to lace making as an art and he said that Gozitans should feel proud that such a craft has been practiced for a great number of years in Gozo without interruptions. Hon. Tabone also augured that the next step would be that of upgrading this unique course in Lace Studies to a Degree. Finally, he congratulated the students who successfully completed courses in Lace Making for which they were to be awarded by a Certificate.

His Excellency Mons. Nikol Cauchi, delivered an interesting speech on the history of crafts guilds in Europe including the Maltese Islands. He described how guilds originated and how they developed over time. Mons. Cauchi also said that nowadays cooperatives are being set up instead of guilds. He described what a cooperative is and showed how important cooperatives are to our society.

Ms Consiglia Azzopardi showing exhibits to participants
The event then continued with the award of certificates by Ms Consiglia Azzopardi to a number of students. Those present were then invited to visit the exhibitions of Lace Programme projects and textile crafts. Other exhibitions were mounted by the International Organisation of Needle and Bobbin Lace (OIDFA) and by the Malta Lace Guild. There were also demonstrations of sprang, embroidery, tulle Lace, ganutell, card weaving and information about short courses in different aspects of Maltese Lace. A number of stands were mounted by the Koperattiva Ghawdxija tal-Bizzilla u Artigjanat with lace making materials.

Publications

The fourteenth edition of the Gozo Observer was published in January. It contained a number of interesting articles, including an article by George Said analysing the relationship between sea level changes and the physical size of the Maltese Archipelago.

Godwin Vella wrote on the exploration campaign executed by A.A. Caruana in 1891 in Victoria, Gozo, while Raymond Ellul and Martin Saliba described the work carried out by the ‘Background Trace Gas Monitoring Station’ on Gozo. An interesting article was written by Gordon Cordina, who gave a description of the draft socio-economic development plan for Gozo. Other articles related to the effect of increase in the price of ferry tickets on Gozo’s economy and the future of the agro-industry in Gozo.

Ġieħ Ghawdex Awards

On 29 December, the Circolo Gożitano organised the first event of the Ġieħ Ghawdex awards. The occasion, which marked the 200th anniversary on the birthday of Saverio Cassar, honoured persons and organisations who have distinguished themselves for their contribution to Gozo and the Gozitan people.

The awards were conferred at a dinner held at Palazzo Palina Hotel ta’ Ċenċ, Sannat. One of the recipients of the awards was Professor Lino Briguglio for his contribution to higher education in Gozo. When receiving the ‘Ġieħ Għawdex’ medal Professor Briguglio said that the award was an honour for him and for the University, and he said that it was a privilege for him to be able to contribute to the welfare of the Gozitan people.

The other recipients of the award were:

Dr Ċensu Tabone (Former President of Malta)  
Prof John Cremona (Former Chief Justice)  
ET Nicholas Cauchi (Former Bishop of Gozo)  
Il-Ħajja F’Għawdex (Monthly Magazine)  
L-ARKA Foundation
International Course in Lace-Making

The Lace Making Programme of the University Gozo Centre organised, for the sixth consecutive year, the ‘International Course in Lace-making’. The course was held at the University Gozo Centre between 7 and 13 June 2006 and was attended by four foreigners. It included twenty four hours of tuition in the making of Maltese lace using the Maltese pillow and bobbins.

The participants of the International Course in Lace-making together with Ms Consiglia Azzopardi (1st from left)

The programme of the course also included various activities and excursions. The participants had the opportunity to visit a number of museums, churches and private lace collections, as well as other historical landmarks on the island. They also visited a local village festa and were taken for a full day excursion in Malta.

A practical session of the course in progress

Visit by the Prime Minister

In March, the Prime Minister Dr Lawrence Gonzi, accompanied by Hon. Giovanna Debono, paid a visit to the University of Malta Gozo Centre.

The Prime Minister Dr Lawrence Gonzi talking to Prof. Lino Briguglio during a video lecturing session. Also present are Hon. Giovanna Debono, Minister for Gozo and Mr Joseph Calleja, administrator of the University Gozo Centre

During his visit, Dr Gonzi was called at various classes and saw the students following various courses, some of which are partly financed by the European Social Fund under the Structural Funds Programme for Malta 2004-2006. He also had the opportunity to speak to Professor Lino Briguglio, Director of the University Gozo Centre, through the video conferencing system. Dr Gonzi stated that he was impressed with the number of courses being held at the University Gozo Centre and with the technological advances made in education.

The Prime Minister making a point during a lecture on G.I.S. applications, as part of a course leading to the Masters in Islands and Small States Studies.

Joseph Calleja is the administrator of the University Gozo Centre.
Nicoline Sagona was born in Attard, Malta in 1979. She is a member of an artistic family, her father being Gozitan painter, sculptor, and decorator Joseph Sagona (b.1942), while her brother Mark (b.1976) is one the leading new generation of artist. Nicoline was brought up in an artistic environment, receiving her first artistic training in her father’s studio, which facilitated the development of an artistic inclination from early childhood. Over the years, she has assisted her father in various projects of stucco decoration, both in churches and in private homes.

From 1997 to 2001, Nicoline deepened her knowledge of art and art history by reading for a BA (Hons) degree at the University of Malta, presenting her dissertation on the artistic career of Esprit Barthet (1919-99), one of the primary exponents of the development of modern art in Malta.

Sagona held her first personal exhibition in April 2004 which was entitled ‘Female Icons: a colour spectacle’. As the title suggests, all of the works depicted female images. The human figure often acts as a source of inspiration for the artist, especially the female figure which the artist finds particularly intriguing. From a young age, Sagona developed a great affinity for fashion design, the colourful world of which, with its own artistic merits, often served as a springboard for her creations. While also working in other genres, including landscape painting, the artist’s favourite remains the depiction of the female figure.

In spite of their common line of thought, the works in Sagona’s exhibition may be classified into different categories, or rather, different styles of expression. There are, for instance, a group highly expressionistic works dominated by bold and vigorous brushwork and which share the same idea of an outline figure in black, merging into bare areas of white canvas, with a kaleidoscope of vivid colour in the background. They are also highly charged with emotional content, as different from other works which are less turbulent and where the emphasis may be more on the sinuosity of line. Other works incorporate collage, with the artist employing either textile or paper to create an embossed effect to impart a three-dimensional aspect to the painting.

Besides being an artist and art historian, Nicoline Sagona is currently curator of the Ggantija Temples with Heritage Malta, the National Agency for Museums, Conservation Practice, and Cultural Heritage.